WITCHCRAFT IN THE RELIGION OF THE HLUBI OF QUMBU: FOCUSING ON THE ISSUES OF SICKNESS AND HEALING IN THE SOCIETY

by

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DECLARATION

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“I declare that WITCHCRAFT IN THE RELIGION OF THE HLUBI FOCUSSING ON THE ISSUES OF SICKNESS AND HEALING IN THE SOCIETY” is my own work and the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

______________________________  ________________
Signature                     Date
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ABSTRACT

This research sought to investigate the impact of a belief in witchcraft as an explanation for all the ills in the Hlubi community and South African societies in general – which becomes a good tool for inadequate governments. Our approach in this study has been interdisciplinary and the utilization of comparative analysis and a combination of phenomenological and qualitative research models. Economic problems create social tensions and are manifested in various ways, including witchcraft craze. The Hlubi scenario found parallels in Europe and America. Witchcraft and ancestors are considered to be the main causes of diseases but nature and ecological or environmental dangers are other factors. Pragmatic and obvious response to such phobias is seen in the protective and preventive devices provided by *isangoma, amaqhira, amaxhwere, inyanga* and faith healers. It is hypothesized that as long as all existential needs exist in Hlubi society witchcraft will continue to be with us, perhaps forever.

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Chapter 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction
In all societies, whether developed, developing, first or third worlds, attempts are made by individuals, families and communities to explain what appears to be unusual. This is where the religious factor in the explanation of strange phenomena is generally acknowledged. According to Ray (1976:150), unlike Western religions, African thought does not conceive the source of evil to be a fallen god or spirit like Satan or the Devil. He argues that instead, the source of evil is located in the human world in the ambitions and jealousies of humans. The origin of evil is therefore, traced to demonic humanity personified by the witch or sorcerer - the antisocial person. Belief in witchcraft is common in Africa. So common that two heads of State in Africa have accused their political rivals of bewitching them (Mair 1969:195). Everywhere within the continent as well as in the industrialised countries, people not only believed in witches but frequently attribute misfortunes which befell them to witches - the evil and the one who causes the disruption of order (especially the breaking of ties of kinship and its consequences). Although Africa has been singled out as the proverbial abode of witchcraft, it is interesting to note witchcraft beliefs were prevalent in Europe and America in the past centuries. In pre-Christian Europe there was a fairly generalised belief in witches and also in evil spirits that copulated with human beings. Fear of witchcraft often manifests itself in the persecution of people (Lea 1978:178). Christians accused witches of making pacts, bringing misfortune, engaging in illicit sex, eating the flesh of infants, and observing ‘black Sabbaths’. In 1645, Essex of England was a
scene of organized campaign against suspected witches, which culminated in mass witch trials. A combination of exorcism and torture resulted in hundreds of people being put to death as allies of Satan. Studies of the accused indicate they were often older women or beggars who lived alone or who were regarded unneighbourly or abrasive. It is indicated in a study of 1258 West German witches who lived from 1562 to 1684 that 84 percent were women; the group included only three aristocrats, none of who were executed (Lea 1978:187). In America the world witnessed the outbreak of witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts during 1692. Although the first hanging of a witch in New England occurred in 1647, it was at Salem in 1692, when the craze was already fading in Europe that the colonies produced their most spectacular series of witch trials, in which nineteen persons were executed.

Again extant literature in North America indicates that witchcraft belief is not peculiar to Africa. In many American Indian and Alaska Native groups, illness and misfortune are attributed to numerous causes, ranging from taboo violation or wrongdoing to other forms of supernatural interventions that may occur as a result of witchcraft or sorcery. For example, in one tribe a condition such as epilepsy may be viewed as the consequences of unsanctioned behavior such as incest. In another, the same condition may be attributed to supernatural causes such as soul possession or witchcraft. Within the supernatural explanations, illnesses or misfortunes are thought to be caused by agents or evil forces that intend to do the individual harm. These agents or forces may be conceived by willful beings. It may be believed that a person becomes ill or dies as a result of some supernatural force or agent engaged by another who desires harm or misfortune to its victim. At the level of the individual patient, various agents may also be identified as methods of creating illness. For example, the method used may consist of object intrusion, whereby unsuspecting victims of witchcraft may become ill due to foreign objects.
placed in or on their bodies. A diagnostician or healer therefore has to remove such objects by a ritual ceremony that may involve sucking or cupping. Soul loss may be the diagnosis, as in the case of a patient who suddenly becomes unconscious or exhibits other forms of incoherent behavior such as autism, where one is unable to relate to the environment or external stimulus. Ceremonies and treatments utilized in these cases often require procedures to coax the return of the soul to the body. Sometimes persons with soul loss are seen as victims of witchcraft. At other times, soul loss may be attributed to the influence of other spirits; usually those of departed ancestors who wish the patient to join them. The role of supernatural forces is also central in cases of soul possession, in which an unnatural force replaces the soul of the individual. In some tribes seizure disorders or other forms of violent outbursts may fall under this diagnosis. The treatment for these conditions requires various rituals of exorcism. Illnesses and misfortunes can also be attributed to other forms of witchcraft such as placing spells on objects intended to do harm or to bring death to an individual. Sometimes these items contain pieces of a victim's clothing, hair, nail paring, and other personal items. The intervention in this instance is focused on retrieving or removing these objects, thereby breaking the intention or spell.

In spite of modernization we still hear of witchcraft in Euro-America world although it has taken new forms. The current version of witchcraft, commonly called Wicca, attempts to put itself into a more benevolent light. Wicca was the original Anglo-Saxon spelling of the modern English word `witch’ (Adler 1979:1). Wicca as a modern religion is popular and mainly found in Britain and North America. Wiccans state that they are not Satan worshippers and try to disavow themselves from Satanism, at least not deliberately (knowingly) practicing satanic worship. They do continue to cast spells, however, now they
call them a pleasing sounding "I direct my will towards a goal." Wiccans openly proclaim their paganism.

The word "Witchcraft" dates back many hundreds of years and means literally "The craft of the wise." This is because the witches of old were the wise ones of their village, knowledgeable in the art of healing, legal matters, and spiritual fulfillment. A witch was not only a religious leader, but also the doctor, lawyer and psychologist of the village.

Today, people have reclaimed this word in their pursuit of Wicca religion. A Witch is an initiate of Wicca, one who has earned the right to call themselves Priest, or Priestess, through study, self evaluation, and spiritual living. Wicca itself is an attempt to re-create European (mostly) Shamanistic Nature Religion, adapting it to fit our modern lives. Many people in the West consider as mere myths the supernatural elements, which were associated with witchcraft in the past, and the mystical aura, which once shrouded the practice, has evaporated. The mystery, which people now associate with witchcraft, is limited to the rituals and ceremonies performed during the initiation of new aspirants and other events. Witchcraft in the West is becoming an intellectual and philosophical discourse rather than a supernatural activity.

The question is whether there is any difference between African witchcraft and witchcraft in Euro-American world and elsewhere. African witches (in the generic sense, including sorcerers) are believed to harm others either because they have powers (of which they may not be aware) that come from their abnormal personalities or because they perform antisocial magic. At the same time they resemble witches in other continents since they are believed to utilise certain types of animals or familiars as their servants, spirits or messengers. Like their counterparts elsewhere, they belong to associations that
meet periodically at night or around fire to discuss matters of common interest and to celebrate antisocial accomplishments. These associations are exact opposite of the societies in which they exist. They reverse the normal ethical standards by indulging in acts of promiscuous activity, going naked, frequenting forbidden places such as graveyards, and by murdering and eating human beings who are relatives. The difference in Africa is that witches are believed to attack their neighbours and relatives rather than distant and unrelated persons. Furthermore, there is a striking similarity with other parts of the world in which women are targets of witchcraft accusation. A few notable African exceptions are Azande of Sudan, Bemba of Northern Province (Zambia) and Tonga in Gwembe Valley in Southern Province of Zambia. There is also some parallel as to what happens to people who are accused of witchcraft activities. The penalty for those persons found guilty of witchcraft was that they were traditionally burned. Finally, as in other parts of the world, the belief in witchcraft and other components of the religious system provides an explanatory framework by which misfortunes that afflict people may be understood and avoided in future. To summarise, witchcraft in the less industrialized countries, particularly in Africa is practised in secrecy; it is still in its perennial state and it maintains all the supernatural dimensions associated with it. To put it more bluntly, Bannerman-Richter (1982:30) rightly argues that the kind of witchcraft said to be believed and practised in Africa today is practically the same kind of witchcraft believed to be practised in pre-Industrial Europe. The common denominator is that witches can transcend their physical bodies in the form of astral projection that enables them to consciously perform actions, sometimes in a physical setting, but most often in the so-called spiritual world. To Bannerman-Richter, the only point of departure between the witchcraft of the pre-Industrial West and that of modern
Africa is that the Western brand has religious dimensions to it, while the African type carries no such overtones.

In Christianity, with its belief in a supernatural power of evil, the witch became a human associate of the devil, closely associated with demons and occasionally indistinguishable from them. The witch came to be seen as a pawn of Satan, a tool used in his efforts to destroy humanity and block God’s plan of salvation. Thus the witch in Christianity was a minor symbol of that transpersonal evil of which Satan was the major symbol (Russel 1987:423).

The belief in the physical embodiment of evil is the concern of many religions. For example, Pope Paul VI stated (in 1972) that `evil is an effective agent that sows errors and misfortunes in human history'. It should be noted that in all societies where witchcraft is a component of the belief system witchcraft beliefs are of utmost importance since they offer explanation for the persistence of evil and the ability of humans to eradicate it. J.D Kringe (1947) has aptly summarized thus:

``Witches and sorcerers are considered (by the Lovedu) to be the embodiment of malignant forces ever on the alert to enter into unholy matrimony with the criminal impulses of the human heart. Witchcraft particularly (as opposed to sorcery) is the essence of all evil, vicious and inscrutable, that swirls through the universe and seeks asylum in sinful souls in which the germs of wickedness lie ready to be quickened into life'’.
While witch hunts and persecutions were a serious social problem in Western Europe and in North America, it is assuming antagonistic and alarming proportions in Africa in general and South Africa in particular.

In Africa, witchcraft has become a topical issue in conversations as all kinds of misfortune are attributed to witches. This, according to Idowu (1973:195) is because the concept of witchcraft is real to Africans. In writing about witchcraft, he argues, the belief of Africans must come first. Absurd as it may seem, an African head of State suggested the use of witchcraft to end Apartheid government of South Africa in the early 1970s.

According to Kohnert (1996:1351-2) magic and witchcraft beliefs have been instrumentalized in three ways for political purposes over rival politicians. First, politicians document their power in the spiritual realm by attributing personal magic powers to themselves (e.g. Nigeria and Benin of West Africa). Secondly, autocratic leaders also use magic and witchcraft beliefs in an offensive way, either by attacking rivals directly by means of `black ‘(e.g., poisoning, psycho-terror) or psychological warfare e.g., by threatening potential voters and political opponents under the pretext of being able to see who is voting for them, and threatening to react accordingly (Schatzberg 1993:448-450; Ellis 1993:471-72). Opposition against the belief in witchcraft may be used as a cover or convenient means to discredit other political opinions (Kadya Tall 1995:196-99; Elwert-Kretzschmer 1995). For Kohnert, occult forces have in the form of magic and witchcraft therefore, become a weapon in the battle for supremacy for over rival politicians. The African believes that witchcraft is ubiquitous, that it permeates all sectors of life such as farming, hunting, fishing and other occupations. Sarpong (1980:12) argues that witchcraft beliefs are part of African culture and cannot be eradicated. This is buttressed by numerous studies of witchcraft in Africa and elsewhere
confirming this prediction by Sarpong. Nineteenth-century scholars such as Sir James Fraser and Bronislaw Malinowski predicted that belief in witchcraft and magic would disappear, to be replaced by scientific rationality. Unfortunately recent studies have revealed a different scenario. For example articles in Camaroff 1993) have demonstrated that witchcraft beliefs adapt to new economic and social realities. These studies indicate that belief in witchcraft may be a reaction to an increasing ‘conflict-producing potential’ caused by processes of social differentiation in the context of the evolution of a market economy and ‘modernisation’ of economy and society (Drucker-Brown 1993, Geschiere and Fisiy 1994, Jong 1987b, Kohnert 1983, McLeod 1975)

This is still arguable because it appears witchcraft belief existed in pre-industrial rural communities of Europe and yet it was eradicated. It is not merely an outdated Elizabethan philosophy derived from the Old Testament. Moreover, as societies develop so do beliefs fall away.

In South Africa, specifically in the Northern Province and Mpumalanga and the former Transkei of the present Eastern Cape, incidents of witchcraft accusations are often reported. In almost all the cases, women (especially the aged and the poor) are the accused. Such victims have either their houses burnt down or even lynched. Those often attacked are the poor and those on the margins. They are the powerless who are seemingly at the mercy of decision-makers in the black African community - in this case the rich, the educated and the young men. In order to put the discussion in the right perspective it will be worthwhile to present the scenario as depicted by the media in South Africa black communities.

Newspapers have recorded many serious crimes committed as a result of what people claim to be superstition. Below are a few extracts from dailies and magazines
Associated Press of South Africa, October 30, 1999 a mob of youths burned down the homestead of grandmother Joanna Siboto, accusing her of being a witch. She escaped. Mrs Siboto was one of the few lucky ones in this remote region of South Africa not to die in the wake of rampant accusations of sorcery. Commenting on the sad event, Capt Prince Mjali, a police researcher reported `from 506 in 1997, the number rose to 676 last year. This year, the accusations total 837 already through September’

September 3 1994... Daily Dispatch of East London, Eastern Cape ...`Justice Jones sentenced Mbuseli Songelwa to 15 years imprisonment in Sept 1992 for neck lacing Mrs Nomte Ngange in the belief that she was a witch. The judge said `Sometimes the veneer of civilisation in this modern, Christian South Africa is very thin'.

August 1994 Bona magazine pp 32-33

`Villages surrounding Pietersburg in Northern Province have recently become killing fields where people - particularly elderly women - are hunted out, stoned and burned to death on the mountains for practising witchcraft

October 17, 1995 ...Daily Despatch Of East London, Eastern Cape.

`Alleged witch killed'

`KOKSTAD - An elderly woman accused of being a witch has been murdered here, radio news reported yesterday.

Focus Forum 1997 Vol 4 No 5 p.25 – During the period 1990 – April 1995, 455 witchcraft related cases were reported to the South African Police Services (SAPS) in the Northern Province. According to a SAPS report, 45% of these cases were reported between 1990 and 1993, while the remaining 55%
were reported between April 1994 and April 1995. In the period January to May 1996 alone, 104 cases of witchcraft related incidents were reported and 11 arrests were made. The report also states that 164 people were removed from their homes to places of safety after having been accused of witchcraft practices. While all the victims were 50 years or older, the majority of the perpetrators varied in age between 16 and 25 years. Furthermore, the report states that suspects usually co-operated with the investigating officer because they did not believe that they had done anything wrong, and that the fines imposed by courts usually ranged from R200 to R250 (Hulme & Ntsewa, 1996).

Although the above account in the media of how people come to be branded witches and sorcerers is not exhaustive, yet this is what is reported almost everyday about the sordid state of affairs in black South Africa communities. One might argue that belief in witchcraft is endemic and that the phenomenon has been with us for centuries and so the recent explosion of witchcraft accusations and persecutions should not alarm us. Indeed, the Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7 support this. The intrusion of the Whites culminating to the Frontier Wars and population increases, due partly to pressure previously exerted upon other Nguni-speakers as a result of Tshaka Zulu’s conquests, created a very volatile situation in the Eastern Cape. But the most serious predicament of the inhabitants was the lung-sickness epidemic that decimated the cattle in 1855 at the same time the maize crop failed to produce an adequate harvest. Not only did the inhabitants feel there was something wrong with their land but they also saw starvation and defeat in war staring in their faces. In keeping with the holistic approach to life, the next line of action and for that matter the only option was to seek for an ontological, mystical causation so that remedial action could be undertaken to restore homeostasis and holistic harmony. It was during this seemingly
hopeless situation that we see Mlanjeni and Nongqawuse appearing on the scene. Mlanjeni, the Riverman proclaimed that the Xhosa land was full of `ubuthi (witches)’ and that this was the cause of so much disease and death among both men and cattle. He therefore, ordered his people to cast it away and come to him to be cleansed (Berlin Missionberichte, p.38, Quoted by Peires 1989).

Mlanjeni erected two witchcraft poles outside his father’s compound. People who wished to remove the suspicion of witchcraft walked between the two poles. In the opinion of the Xhosa the ban on witch finding by the Colonial government (represented by its official, Commissioner John Maclean) gave witches a free hand to embark on their nefarious magic and destroy the Xhosa nation from within. The Xhosa attributed the major cause of the terrible drought of 1850 to witches and this was why, Mlanjeni, the Riverman appeared on the scene (Peires 1989: 1-4, 7,126-7).

The two incidents show how the two people were accepted as mediators between visible and invisible realms and their ability to receive and transmit messages between the two realms. Under the prevailing circumstances of seemingly polluted condition of land and cattle nobody questioned the abilities
of the two to determine the cause of their plight and their suggestion for a remedial action. The messages the two proclaimed reflected the condition of despair and hopelessness that the Xhosa land was facing. The messages, gullible it might sound to our present generation, were spiritual solutions and answers to ‘why us’ and ‘not them’ which relate to witchcraft and misfortunes.

Peires makes two arguments relevant to this discussion. One is that the cattle-killing beliefs were not "traditional", where there is a stark opposition between the traditional and the modern, nor were they an irrational reaction against modernity, science etc. Instead, he argues that the cattle-killing beliefs combined idioms drawn from indigenous culture and Christianity. They linked the relation of spiritual pollution and evil-doing to bad things happening in the community /nation /world, leading to a need for purification through sacrifice, with other idioms they adopted and transmuted from interactions with Christian missionaries, particularly that of resurrection of the dead (Nongqawuse's uncle was not only a "priest diviner" but had lived for several years in the household of Archdeacon Merriman of the Anglican church, and preached a version of Christianity, leaving when he realized that Merriman was incapable of respecting his ideas and beliefs). Peires shows that the beliefs were rational in the sense of internally consistent given certain assumptions about the way the world works, which is all consistent given certain assumptions about the way the world works, which is all "science" can claim too, as we understand better after the fall of Newtonian science. The Xhosa did not intend to destroy themselves, but the contrary, to save themselves. They were just wrong in thinking the chosen method would work.

Peires' second major point shows that the meaning (in the sense of social consequences) of the cattle-killing did not lie so much in the beliefs and conditions which caused it, or even in the deaths of the animals and burning of
crops themselves, as in the advantage which the British Governor of the Cape Colony, Sir George Grey, took of the disaster. He makes a compelling and convincing argument that Grey used the destitution which resulted to on the one hand drive tens of thousands of Xhosa into labor for white farmers in the Eastern Cape, and on the other hand, to seize large areas of land for white "ownership"

Whether Sir George Grey was responsible for this catastrophe or not, the biggest culprit here was belief - the same kind of belief that has guided millennial movements with apocalyptic revelations throughout the ages. Ten years before Nongqawuse's time there was the Millerite fiasco, also known as the "Great Disappointment". William Miller, an upstate New York farmer, predicted the end of the world in 1843, when Christ would come and bring all his saints with him. More than a century after Nongqawuse, thousands committed suicide by drinking poison in Jonestown, Guyana, because they believed the world was coming to an end. We saw that ten years before Nongqawuse's time there was the Millerite fiasco, also known as the "Great Disappointment". William Miller, an upstate New York farmer, predicted the end of the world in 1843, when Christ would come and bring all his saints with him. More than a century after Nongqawuse, thousands committed suicide by drinking poison in Jonestown, Guyana, because they believed the world was coming to an end.

The point being made here is that witchcraft persecutions and activities which is prevalent in the study area in particular and South Africa in general stem from belief and this makes our study more pertinent.
Coming back to the prevailing situation in South Africa, the picture, which emerges from the stories, narrated above make a mockery of the human rights rule, customary beliefs and of life itself.

The account in the media reveals the most striking social correlation between witchcraft and women. More women were accused than men. The question is whether it is mere coincidence to read of such parallels in the history of witchcraft in Europe and North America. In Europe, although in certain areas and for brief periods of time more men were accused than women, the opposite has always been true, and over the entire history of the witch craze women outnumbered men by at least three to one. In New England for example, 80 per cent of the accused were women. One pertinent question which comes to mind is to what extent do women in traditional African societies and Hlubi women in particular) constitute an homogenous grouping which, in terms of power, status, and privilege make up an analysis which shows that in society worldwide, women as a class of people are those with least rights, particularly those in the ‘Third World’ or non-industrialized countries. On the other hand, Lupri (1983:3, Osei 1994) cautions that even if women, although a numerical majority, do comprise an underprivileged group, it must be recognised that not all women share the same interests, needs and desires, neither do they experience the same degree of oppression. This is especially true of African women where there are further variations in the ranks of different ethnic groups (Lemmer, 1987:31). Since women do not constitute a social category, it is still a puzzle why women should continue to be victims of witchcraft accusations.

To recap, the Xhosa visionary, Nongqawuse, spurred the Cattle Killing in 1856 and 1857. After armed Xhosa chiefdoms suffered defeats in wars against colonial invaders and with lung sickness in the early 1850s ravaging cattle, and
another disease in the fields that left the maize whimpering and blighted. It penetrated the roots and destroyed the stalks before the corn was ripe. Nongqawuse claimed that Xhosa people were being punished for surrendering to polluting forces. She promised deliverance, but only after a supreme propitiation—the total destruction of grain and cattle—brought ancestors back to cleanse the earth. As her followers killed their cattle, some Xhosa skeptical of Nongqawuse’s prophecy refused, igniting civil strife. By the end of 1857, 40,000 Xhosa had died, most from starvation, while 400,000 cows were rotting in grass and bush (Peires 1986: 443-61, Quoted by Carton 2003:7-8).

Again, there seems to be parallels with regard to the function of African witchcraft on one hand and European witchcraft on the other. The case in Tudor England of the 17th century is not an isolated instance. Witchcraft prosecution has been described as a means of effecting decisive social change from the egalitarian mutually dependent village community to a more individualistic and stratified social structure; the old values of mutual aid were in fact undermined, while on the surface, they were maintained by witchcraft accusations (Macfarlane 1970:302-303). We have also seen parallels in the African context on one hand and the Native American and Alaskan on the other. In keeping with their holistic approach to life, they all try to seek for an ontological and mystical causation to unusual and seemingly inexplicable problems so that remedial action could be undertaken to restore homeostasis and holistic harmony. It was during this seemingly hopeless situation among the Xhosa that we see ‘spiritual agents’ Mlanjeni and Nongqawuse appearing on the scene.
1.1 Statement Of Problem

The consequences of the accusations - generally accompanied by wanton destruction of property by the powerful or decision-makers - to the society are manifold. Socially, there is a dislocation in the community in the sense that the relatives of the accused are hurt. This brings perpetual hostility between the accused's family and those who were involved in the destruction of the accused's property. The whole of witchcraft centres on conceptualisation as well as power structure and it becomes problematic when accusers display a stance as actors and judges at the same time. Since the African community anchors on collectivity, such wanton destruction of property undermines the basic foundation and values on which the African society is built - `ubuntu` in the South African context. This calls for the need to investigate the phenomenon of witchcraft and how it manifests itself.

A belief in witchcraft provides an explanation and a scapegoat for misfortunes, illness and death, one's failure and the success of others; it can also allow people to resign themselves to their fate - a life of ill-health, poor housing and poor sanitation, poor diet and no luxuries. It might seem ludicrous and frivolous but such a situation certainly could provide a scapegoat for a ruling government, which is unable to deliver, and would, therefore, not discourage the belief. It is here proposed that the impact of witchcraft on both the individual and society could have a detrimental effect on future generations if it becomes a crutch supporting an inadequate government.

1.2 Objectives of the Research

The study will seek to answer the following questions.
1. To what extent does belief in witchcraft offer an explanation for misfortune, illness and death, success and failure in life?
2. Why are women the targets of witchcraft accusations?
3. What is the role of women in witchcraft?
4. What is the relationship between witchcraft and development?
5. How does the phenomenon of witchcraft manifest itself in South Africa in general and Hlubi society in particular?
6. To what extent is the phenomenon of witchcraft a psychological bother and therefore a suggestion that Africans are in conflict with themselves?
7. What are some of the tensions and oppositions of witchcraft and their relatedness to health?
8. What are the attitudes of some of world religions to witchcraft and their coping strategies (or response) to the threat?
9. Is the drift to AIC or New Religious Movements an attempt to resolve tensions and thereby getting their healing?
10. Is belief in witchcraft likely to be eradicated in the Hlubi society?

1.3 Literature review

A brief literature review shows that the belief in witches and witchcraft is strong in Africa. Sarpong (1980:12) argues that witchcraft beliefs are part of African culture and cannot be eradicated. This is arguable because it appears witchcraft belief existed in pre-industrial rural communities of Europe and America and yet it was eradicated. The witchcraft craze gradually flicked out at the end of the seventeenth century with the Essex witch trials in England and the Salem witch-scare in America as late as 1692. It is not merely an outdated Elizabethan philosophy derived from the Old Testament. Moreover, as societies develop so do such beliefs fall away?
Kluckhohn (1967) observes that among the Navaho people of the southwestern United States, witchcraft belief serves to emphasize good and correct conduct by dramatically defining the bad. But Sawyer (1968:80) suggests the belief in witchcraft in Mende society of Sierra Leone is chiefly the result of an attempt to explain physical phenomena, which defy explanation in terms of categories known to them.

Assessing data gathered about the Pondo and the Nyakusa of South Africa, Wilson (1951:307-13) indicated that she saw witchcraft beliefs as the standardized nightmares of a group.

**1.4 Justification for the Research**

A review of literature on the topic with respect to South Africa reveals that almost all writing on the subject reflects the early 1960s, and that between 1960 and 1995, attention to the topic has waned. Does the change mean witchcraft is no longer a worrying phenomenon in the South African black community? One might suppose that with the advent of education, technology and industrialization, people will abandon their beliefs in witchcraft. Strangely enough, the belief in witchcraft still persists and this confirms that in South Africa (like any other African country) witchcraft has a grim reality on most black Africans.

Furthermore, the study is a response to the clarion call to African scholars to further investigate pertinent issues in African Traditional Religions. In view of the fact that the persistent belief in witchcraft is one of the problems in black South African communities, a research involving the topic is very necessary. The present effort (together with studies by other scholars) hopefully, will make a contribution to solving social issues at a global level. It is an extension
of my master's dissertation and also a contribution to social change (e.g. religion, a just society and human rights), which will benefit, first of all, the immediate subject of enquiry, the Hlubi and then by extension, the society at large.

From time immemorial, black women have been accused of witchcraft activities and it is not clear whether such accusations are not part of the discriminations against women. The extent to which such a notion is valid will need to be examined. A study eliciting responses of people about their own experiences is absolutely necessary. People's perspectives must be sought out and presented. This to me will go a long way towards solving the 'problem of witchcraft' in South Africa's black community.

There is no doubt that a sense of wholeness of the person is manifested in the African attitude to life. For a wholesome life people not only have to be at peace with themselves, but also must be fully integrated into the community. But disease is one of the forces that undermine a wholesome life. Mbiti (1975:133) argues disease is not just a physical condition, according to African interpretation and experience. For him, it is also a religious matter. To deal with it, people use religion to find out the mystical cause of the disease, to find out who has been responsible for it or has sent it to the sick person. They also use religion to prescribe the right cure, part of which is often the performance of certain rituals those diviners and herbalists may specify. In African Traditional religion, this sphere of diagnosing illness and prescribing the right cure is generally the domain of women. Interestingly, this is where the phenomenon of witchcraft comes in. Almost invariably, witchcraft is believed to be the cause of misfortunes or illness and women are the accused. Paradoxically, these same women who function as traditional healers (sangoma and inyanga) in the African community, restore wholeness of life,
work for order and stability are the very people who are branded antisocial elements, and work at night to prey on the souls of fellow human beings, create suffering and chaos in the society and, therefore, must be annihilated. The point being made here is that there are apparent irreconcilables, which are brought into relationship by witchcraft. In other words, the reality of witchcraft poses so many oppositions: youth and elders; women and men; rural and urban; stable and unstable; night and day; sickness and healing and so on. My contribution in this thesis is to show, among other things, that witchcraft attempts to mediate some of the various contradictions and tensions that characterise the life world - in this case - between illness and healing.

1.5 Methodology

In this study, I have chosen to do qualitative research rather than quantitative research. Qualitative methodology in the broadest sense refers to the research that produces descriptive data: people own written or spoken words and observable behaviour (Taylor and Bodgan, 1984:5). In other words qualitative method places the emphasis on knowing the internal dynamics of the situation as experienced by the participants. Since this research aims at investigating the experiences of men and women, this method seems to be the best.

I heavily relied on participant observation as a means for doing my research because I feel this method has the advantage of allowing researchers to share in some of the participants' experiences and blend them into their own lives to a limited extent.
1.6 The Phenomenological Method

The research has relied heavily on phenomenological approach. This approach is deemed necessary in the light of paucity of research on witchcraft in the Transkei Region generally and the Hlubi area in particular. It is against this background that this study is conducted to ascertain how witchcraft manifests itself in the Transkei Region. A phenomenological method is adopted as a tool to identify the experiences of Hlubis in relation to illness and healing. The merits and demerits of the phenomenological method are subsequently discussed.

The phenomenological method, which can be traced to the philosophy of Husserl, to a large extent, accommodates criticisms levelled against the psychological and sociological approaches to the study of religion. The last two approaches tend to reduce religion to something other than itself. The phenomenologist, on the other hand, is convinced that religion is observable and that it is something, which is apparent. The phenomenologist also believes that, not only is a phenomenon not illusive but that it can be studied and understood.

In phenomenological method the researcher is not required to negate his or her own religious convictions or practices although prior assumptions regarding another's religious orientation must be held in abeyance during the investigation. In the approach researchers try to enter into the worldview of another as far as possible but not to the abandonment of their perspective. Rather researchers try to hold the different perspective in temporary suspension

Kruger (1982:18ff) opines that phenomenology attempts to understand the phenomenon of religion as a specific phenomenon. The phenomenological
approach is characterised by the use of two basic principles as propounded by Husserl, namely epoche and eidos. Kruger (1982:18ff) succinctly states that `it is the effort to re-discover and re-experience life itself directly underneath the layer of secondary scientific constructions.' The challenge is how to see clearly and how to describe accurately what we see, before we make any attempt to explain the phenomena.'

Much of society's current understanding of witchcraft has come from functionalists' approach to the subject. They have either not utilised or become aware of the tools of phenomenological method. To put it bluntly, they have not made any serious attempt to rediscover and re-experience life as black Africans see it (from their world view). An attempt will be made in the study to discover the essence For example, writing about witchcraft belief in South Africa, Junod said `most of the natives when the absurdity of the idea is pointed out to them, laugh and say nothing’

Various criticisms, of course, have been levelled against the phenomenological method. The method has been criticized as being 'intuitionistic', without method and misusing the name phenomenology. It is also generally asked whether any objective study of phenomena is possible. Some critics also argue that phenomenology assumes that the nature of religious experiences as well as the essence of phenomena are the same in all people and all places. Others also feel that there is an inherent contradiction in the two basic ingredients of phenomenological method. This is because, whereas epoche emphasizes the suspension of criticism, value judgement, pre-suppositions and prior assumptions, eidetic vision emphasizes suspension of objectivity (King 1983:103-8,217-20). In the light of these views it is understandable if there has been certain reluctance in adopting the approach
1.7 Research Design

The successful completion of this dissertation has necessitated the use of phenomenological method, taking into perspective the contributions from history, theology, anthropology and social sciences in general.

Data was collected in two ways:

Primary Sources of Data: This involved interviews of the ordinary Hlubi as well as the headmen of the tribe. The interview was tape recorded and transcribed. Field assistants were used to conduct as well as to transcribe the tapes, after I have trained them.

Secondary Sources. The materials from Journals, books and unpublished documentation in the form of theses and other archive materials were examined.

1.8 Research Location

The three administrative areas in which this study took place are part of the Qumbu Magisterial District. The predominantly Hlubi areas where the search was conducted include Mdeni, Tsilitwa, Qanqu, Maqubini, Kalankomo, Gqwesa, and Nqxaxa. Qumbu plays an important role in the region. This is due to its position as administrative seat of the Emboland Regional Authority which includes the Magisterial areas of Kwabhaca, Qumbu and Tsolo which together, according to the Hawkins Associates Report of 1990 and the Osmonde Lange report of 10982, had a population of 267 417 in 1975.
1.9 Fieldwork

The fieldwork was done at weekends and during vacations from November 1995- May 1997 because of two reasons. First, as a full time worker I could only utilize these days when I did not have committed engagements. Secondly, it was realised that many of the informants were at home during weekends. To make the sample of respondents representative, I drew up two open-ended questionnaires - one in Xhosa and the other in English. During the fieldwork, I gathered information on illnesses, deaths, healing and rituals from traditional healers and about people who consulted them and the nature of their illness.

1.10 Interview

In order to obtain a wide range of detailed information as well as clarification of some issues, personal interviews were used at some stages. The entirely `structured' type of questionnaire which would demand either the interviewee or the interviewer to fill in selected answers from a set of predetermined options was rejected in view of the predominantly illiterate background of the respondents. It was felt that because the study was aimed at ascertaining cosmology and socio-religious conditions and the status and roles of the marginalized, a structured questionnaire would limit the ability of interviewees to discuss problems freely. Issues and formulated questions were given to interpreters who were asked, however to work with the researcher to obtain comments and input from the tribal authorities. This proved to be valuable.
1.11 Sampling

Since the areas surveyed were not exclusively Hlubi villages, it was felt that it was not necessary to use sampling technique to select a sample. An attempt was therefore made to contact specifically Hlubi homesteads.

1.12 Interpreters

My two interpreters were a male and a female who had a good command of English. The male was an "old" Fort Hare history graduate, a retired principal of the oldest secondary school in the Qumbu district and a de facto Hlubi headman. The other interpreter, a lady, was a retired principal of a junior primary school. As both lived among the Hlubi in the district surveyed, there was rapport and trust with the interviewees. Moreover, being locals and highly respected, the interpreters were greatly interested in the research as the information, which was being gathered directly, affects their own communities.

1.13 Entry Into The Village And The Household

Before starting the research, it was necessary to obtain "official" permission to be in the area. For this reason the Hlubi headman was selected. He approached other headmen before I paid any visit to any household in the village.

1.14 Clarification Of Terms

1.14.1 Attitudes

These are positive and negative feelings about the object in one’s psychological world. It involves a blend of belief and values feeling about a particular object in terms of its assumed relationship to one’s values.
1.14.2 Belief

Assumptions about the probability that an object exists. This serves as a guide for action, as a signpost indicating which lines of behaviour are possible and which would be improbable if not impossible.

1.14.3 The Study of religion

Wilson and Slavens (1982: 3) define the study of religion, also referred to as Religious Studies, as a scholarly inquiry into the religious aspects of human societies and the cultures associated with them. This study involves diverse topics like cultic institutions dedicated to religious ends; patterns of religious authority and behaviour that diverge markedly; conceptualizations of religious beliefs that vary widely; collections of religious meaning in relationship to given cultures; charismatic figures; and innovative movements with differing significance to larger societies.

1.14.4 Religion as a concept

The term religion derives from the Latin root religare `to bind’. It was used sparingly in antiquity in several forms but its meaning in contemporary critical usage derives from the Enlightenment. In modern usage, the term identifies an interconnected set of beliefs and patterns of behaviour (or rituals) that apparently express as a system the basic shape of texture of the culture or subculture under observation. In its contemporary usage therefore, religion has come to signify an abstraction from what is, in the
first instance, a lived and comprehensive reality (Wilson and Slavens 1982: 3-4).

1.14.5 Defining Religion

Modern definitions of religion are so numerous and varied that the situation has led to questions about the validity of the concept. The implication is that religion cannot be adequately defined. According to Wilson and Slavens some definitions are attempts to suggest the intensity and uniqueness of reflection upon life within a culture from the participant’s point of view. An example given by the authors is that of Alfred Whitehead’s dictum ‘religion is what an individual does with his solitariness’. This position, they argue, is in line with W.C. Smith’s suggestion that religion is reified when interpreted as if it identified a given object reality. It is reasonable to conclude from the above that religion only exists through the faith of those who act on its basis (Wilson and Slavens 1982: 7-8).

It must be noted that most definitions of religion are coloured by prejudices of the writers. This can be supported by definitions given by 19th Century critics of religion as discussed below. If the word evokes negative emotions the definition is negative; if it evokes positive emotions the definition is positive. Wilson (1982: 23-27) discusses a few of such definitions.
Sigmund Freud (1865-1939) contends `religion is an illusion, a neurosis born of the need to make tolerable the helplessness of man, and built out of the material offered by memories of the helplessness of his own childhood and childhood of the human race’ (Quoted by Wilson 1982: 23). This definition is relevant for our study in that there is a tendency for people to explain away witchcraft beliefs and its associated persecutions as groundless and therefore, a fiction of one’s imagination. But such an assumption will never touch the core of witchcraft persecutions and contributes nothing to solving the pandemic problem in South Africa.

Karl Marx maintains that religion `is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of the heartless world, the soul of the soulless conditions, it is the opium of the people’ (Quoted by Wilson 1982: 24). Marx here reduces religion to something insignificant.

Ludwig Feuerbach defines religion ` as the dream of the human spirit’ (Wilson 1982: 25). Religion in this sense originates within the human being. It is a collection of people’s highest dreams for themselves and their world. The definitions of Karl Marx and Ludwig Feuerbach are, to some extent related to the psychological concept of projection in which human beings use religion as infantile projection of their dreams or wishful thinking. In Hlubi witchcraft discourse, it will be a projection of one’s enemy or competitor as a witch due to tensions, conflicts, contradictions,
ambiguities and antagonisms. Solomon Reinach also defines religion as a 
`sum of scruples which impede the free exercise of our faculties’ (Wilson 
1982: 25). For Reinach, religion is whatever keeps one from being really 
free. Again witchcraft could be an impediment for the achievement of 
abundance that is so important in the Hlubi primal worldview.

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Anthony F.C Wallace defined religion as `a set of rituals, rationalized by 
myth, which mobilizes supernatural powers for the purpose of achieving or 
preventing transformations of state in man and nature’ (Wallace 1966:10). 
Behind this definition lies a recognition that people, when they cannot `fix’ 
through technological or organizational means serious problems that can 
cause them anxiety, try to do so through manipulation of supernatural 
beings and powers. This requires ritual, which can be seen as the primary 
expression of religion, or `religion in action’. The rationale behind ritual 
then is to reduce anxiety and keep confidence high, necessary to keep 
people in some sort of shape to cope with reality. It is this that gives 
religion survival value. From the definition, religion, then, may be
regarded as organized beliefs in the supernatural and the associated ritual by which people try to interpret and control aspects of the universe otherwise beyond their control. The relevance of this definition is captured by the pragmatic response by the Hlubi to misfortunes and problematic situations in their life through the consultation with traditional medical practitioners and faith healers who give them psychological and physical assurances through various rituals.

However, our view is that this definition does not take into account the existence of variability in different societies. While the definition may be applicable in primal societies whose technological ability to manipulate their environment is limited, it may not apply to industrialized societies.

The French sociologist, Emile Durkheim believes religion is the means through which a society presents itself, that is to say, orders life so as to overcome the chaos that is an ever-present threat (Haralambos 1984: 455-457). In the context of this study the latter perspective, which emphasizes the collective aspects of religion is much more significant than those perspectives that give primary attention to individual or personal experience as the starting point for analysis. But it must be noted that even the supposedly opposed definitions are linked together through recognition that there is a basic human impulse to give order to the world
1.15 Projected Chapter Outline

The study consists of seven chapters.

Chapter 1 - will review the background to the study and also focus on the problem, which is to be investigated. The chapter will also describe the methods of data collection and the analysis to be used.

Chapter 2 - The chapter will focus on previous studies on the topic. A theoretical model for the study will also be presented in this chapter.

Chapter 3 - This chapter will concentrate on the Hlubi locations particularly the historical and socio-religious economic background.

Chapter 4 – The chapter will deal with the elements of witchcraft beliefs among the Hlubi. E.g. acquisition, meetings, deeds, sociological position of witches, education, money, cattle and witchcraft; kinship stresses, sexuality and witchcraft etc.

Chapter 5 - will concentrate on traditional protection against witches and of their detection. Attention will also be given to the role of traditional healers (sangoma/inyanga) and ancestors. The chapter will examine the cosmological link between ancestors, traditional healers \( \text{sangoma} \) and \( \text{inyanga} \) and witches.

Chapter 6 - will focus on World Religions and witchcraft among the Hlubi. Issues to be discussed include the traditional attitude of various religious faiths, the powers of evil and witchcraft, African healing
churches and witchcraft, witch hunting `prophets/`imans', traditional healers (inyanga) etc and the task of various world religions.

Chapter 7 - will synthesize the arguments or issues raised in the preceding chapters. The chapter will also be devoted to the making of recommendations.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The objectives of this study have been discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter furthers the inquiry into witchcraft by focusing on those studies related to witchcraft discourses in South Africa.

However, a few quick comments have to be made here. First, the review of literature in this thesis heavily leans on anthropological data. This does not imply that the approach adopted in this work is from an anthropological perspective. Rather, if the material reveals an anthropological bias at all, it is because a lot has been done in this field. Moreover, as I have indicated in chapter one, it is my intention to make use of material from other disciplines where the need arises.

Second, the literature on witchcraft is so extensive that it covers Europe and African countries. A comparative analysis is expected to provide a deep insight into the particularity of the Hlubi society. This expectation is based on the fact that, while very little work has been done in South Africa on the subject, there is a substantial body of work on witchcraft in East and West Africa.

It is also worth noting that most of these studies have focused on one particular area or community because it will be ridiculous to present a uniform view of witchcraft for the entire African or Euro-American worlds. Again it will be gross generalisation to say witchcraft is understood and used as an explanation for illness and misfortune in all places in the African continent. On this score
Forde F Jacobson has cogently argued that the Beja of Sudan do not conceptualise witchcraft as malevolent substance used to harm people. He rightly points out ´although the notion is present among Beja people, however, I have never heard about a concrete episode where people applied a specific incidence to a witch´ (Jacobson 1998:36,37). Although Jacobson makes a moot point this does not mean witchcraft activity in one area cannot shed light on such activity in a different region of Africa or within the same country. On this issue, Geschiere (1997), Wilson (1971:307-313) have explained that an appropriation of new, non-domestic terms for witchcraft in different parts of Cameroon reflects the impact of urbanization and of an industrial, capitalist economy.

Another approach to the study of the subject is to examine the phenomenon of witchcraft as part of religious issue. In the study of witchcraft by Robert Pool and Eric de Rosny in Cameroon witchcraft and divination are seen as ´meaning-making´ activities and attempts to come to grip with reality. The tension with such an approach is that religious issues are integrated with healing, medicine, and divination in a way that shatters the demarcation of religious questions from the totality of human experience (Rosyny 1985, Pool1994).

Another school of thought that incidentally includes recent scholars emphasises the socio-political dimensions of witchcraft. Although this is not new, the approach operates within the discourse of modernity. The basic consideration is about the impact of urbanisation, political economy, power, and gender issues. The last group have written about the phenomenon of witchcraft from theological and philosophical perspectives. In this case, specific problems are perceived among people when charges and accusations are made by one person against another (Michael Jackson 1989,1998).
Introduction

Writing about witchcraft in Africa, Idowu (1973:195) says:

*In Africa today, it is ‘real’ that the majority of the people believe that there are witches and there is witchcraft. Witches and witchcraft are sufficiently real as to cause untold suffering and innumerable deaths.....When I speak of witchcraft, I am referring to that which is disturbingly real as to affect the lives of Africans in every walk of life. And by Africans I mean not only the illiterates who carry on their traditional customs intact, almost as they were received from their forebears: I mean also ‘educated' men and women in the civil service, in the mercantile houses, well known politicians, university professors, university graduates and undergraduates, medical doctors, Imams, Alhajis, Archbishops or Bishops, and a host of Christian ministers, Muslims and Christians. To most of the persons in these categories, witchcraft is an urgent and very harassing reality; it is diabolical, soul-enslaving presence.....I will assert categorically that there are witches in Africa; that they are as real as the murderers, poisoners and other categories of evil workers, overt and surreptitious. This and not any imagination is the basis of the strong belief in witchcraft.*

2.1 Definitions of Witchcraft

Witchcraft as a subject has been studied extensively. But there is no agreed meaning on what it is.

Macfarlane (1970), for instance argues that among the subjects upon which there is most disagreement, although this is usually implicit rather than explicit, are the very terms `witchcraft' and `sorcery. He points out that the terms `witchcraft', `sorcery' and `magic' are notoriously difficult to define. He
maintains that there is no consensus of opinion on their meaning, either among present-day historians and anthropologists or among writers living in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (1970b: 4).

Generally, definitions offered by theologians, historians, and sociologists vary greatly. But since they tend to come from a European point of view, the question is whether these definitions do relate and are relevant to African experiences, particularly from their own perspectives.

Standefer (1972:135) already hints there may be some problems. He suggests recognition of native's symbolic classification. For him the main question that must be asked is why the `image' of the witch takes the form it does from society to society throughout Africa and indeed throughout the world. For as Richard (1964:188) noted there is a similarity in the witch's images in all these societies. And the similarity of this image - one of `evil, anti-social and somewhat abnormal being' is not of course limited to East Africa'. It may, in fact be universal. But the characteristics of the witch, says Middleton (1954,1955) in studies on the Lugbara of East Africa, are as follows:

`A witch has the characteristics of an abnormal person. His face is grey and drawn, `like a corpse, he may have red eyes or a squint, he may vomit blood, he walks at night, and is associated with night creatures `(1955:258).

A witch is, therefore, a person thought capable of harming others supernaturally through the use of innate mystic power, medicines or familiars, and who is symbolized by inverted characteristics that are a reversal of social and physical norms.
The tendency of scholars is to give definitions that are normally comparable with those in literary studies. This, according to Standefer (1972:115), does not give one a clear idea of precisely what witchcraft is.

For instance, although the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* of 1911 devoted three pages to witchcraft, the emphasis was on `black' magic. Witchcraft was defined "as magical practices of all sorts, but here confined to the malevolent (`black') magic of women" (Volume 28:755). The emphasis on `black' magic in the domain of women was equally applicable to European communities as well (1911 Volume 28:755).

The same volume refers to data from the Congo, Australia and India as classical examples of `primitive' witchcraft. Among other things, similar images of witchcraft are stressed: they fly through the air; use medicines concocted from human bones and herbs gathered from cemeteries; eat flesh of the victim and so on.

In the 1968 edition, witchcraft is defined as follows:‘the human exercise is alleged supernatural powers for antisocial, evil purpose (so-called black magic). A female held to have such powers might be called a witch or sorceress, the male counterpart being named wizard, sorcerer, or warlock. Belief in witchcraft survives in modern technologically developed cultures and remains a potent factor in most primitive societies (1968 Volume 23:604).’

*The Oxford English Dictionary* (1961) defines witchcraft as the practices of a witch/or witches; the exercise of supernatural power supposed to be possessed by persons in league with the devil or evil spirits.... Acts or instances of this; magic arts (1961 Volume 12:207).
A close examination of the definitions (both in the dictionary and in the encyclopaedia) shows that essential concepts such as duality, inversion, reversal or opposition are the necessary ingredients of a good definition. Consequently, my own proposition is to restrict the term `witchcraft' to mean the employment (or presumed employment) of some supernatural means of doing harm to other people in a way that was generally disapproved of by the mass of society (Thomas, 1970:48).

2.2 Belief In Witchcraft

Extant literature on witchcraft in Africa appears to be interdisciplinary. Scholars from disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, history and religion have conducted research into the phenomenon. Such scholars include Evans Pritchard (1937, 1965)), Debrunner (1961), Parrinder (1963) to mention but a few. Unfortunately these eminent scholars have delved into the subject from the vantage point of their respective disciplines. Emphases and conclusions, rightly or wrongly, have reflected the worldview of the authors and not those of the studied people. A classic example is seen in Evans-Pritchard's (1937:21) definition of witchcraft as `an imaginary offence'. Among other things, he argues that a witch cannot do what he is supposed to do and has in fact no real existence. To him a witch performs no rite, utters no spell and possesses no medicine, and that an act of witchcraft is a psychic act.

Generally, European writers argue from the Christian point of view and are prejudiced by their own cultural and religious background. Hence Parrinder (1963:20) could conclude that `witchcraft is a pathetic fallacy' and that everything should be done to destroy it through the introduction of a `pure and an enlightened religion'. It seems to me Parrinder displays his cultural
arrogance by elevating his religion (although not stated explicitly) at the expense of other religions. But his position is not peculiar.

Debrunner (1961:177-179) writing as a missionary and assuring his congregation of the powerlessness of witches had this also to say:

`Christ's powerful spirit can act and make you strong not only in the fearlessness of witches but in having pity for all those held the sway of fear and who are possessed by neurosis that they are witches themselves.'

The extent to which such statement of assurance helps the native Christians to solve their problems on witchcraft is problematic. The people continue to believe in the existence of witches in spite of what he says. The way African scholars have reacted to the issue is, contrastively, to over generalise the particular. They take a local experience and put it within a universal frame. The witch in Ghana appears similar to that in Zimbabwe. And within Ghana itself there is no respect for the variations that may be necessitated by location, population size, and exposure to Western civilization.

Bannerman-Richter (1982) stated that in Fanteland and for that matter the whole of Ghana, a witch could cut part of her body in payment for her regular contribution to the company, which he belongs in place of a full human being. This, in my view, is a gross over-simplification and generalisation. Ghana is a vast country. There are different ethnic groups with various cultures and many languages. As a result of the diversity in Ghana, it would not be advisable to generalise on issues concerning traditional beliefs and practices. As Idowu (1973:87) rightly pointed out, it is `foolhardy to generalize in so far as belief and cultural practice are concerned'. And probably reacting to the tendencies in scholars to oversimplify and gross generalise, Auslander (1992:170) pointed out that since witchcraft discourses are profoundly implicated in local and
regional contradictions and conflicts, they are not homogeneous even within one particular community.

Indeed, recent scholarship locates witchcraft and sorcery in contexts with which, it had long been assumed (Shaw 1992), they could not be coeval:, the postcolonial state (e.g. Geschiere 1988; Geschiere with Fisiy 1994; Rowlands and Warnier 1988; Ciekawy 1998) literate, Westernised, urban worlds (e.g. White 1990; Meyer 1992; Bastian 1993); and new forms of capitalist enterprise (e.g. Apter; Auslander 1993; Matory 1994).

Simply reflecting on the diversity of issues in the literature it is my contention that witchcraft cannot be dismissed as a mere fantasy. There is evidence to show its existence. The fact is that the ‘educated’ and the illiterate, the rich and the poor, whether living in the city or the village, the young and the old hold tenaciously to the belief in witchcraft. Besides, self-confessions, revelation by the diviners, as well as inexplicable deaths, to a large extent, give credence to witchcraft existence. It may, of course, be difficult to prove scientifically.

2.3 Motives Of Witches

Mair (1969:15-16) argues that witchcraft is said to be unambiguously evil. She maintains that often times it is ascribed to the ill-feeling generated in some quarrel, which is remembered when one of the parties falls sick or meets with some other misfortune. Explaining further, she says ill-feeling is always held to be unjustified; the witch may have had good cause for anger, but if he had not had an evil disposition he would not have expressed his anger in this way. To her, the anger of a witch is by definition not `righteous anger.'
Rene Girard's (1977) theory of religion proposes an explanation of envy as the motive for witchcraft activities. According to Rene Girard, human desires are never spontaneous and direct. He argues that external mediation never gives rise to tension because the psychic distance between mimic and model (imitator and the imitated) is too great. However, since the psychic distance between imitator and imitated (the model) is smaller, it can lead to serious tension and even violence between them. For him, we desire things because they are desired by other people. Human beings mimic the desires of others. It can be argued that witches mimic the desires of others - usually important others in the immediate family and that this results in accusations, violence and disorder. He also explains religion in terms of a concept such as the `scapegoat mechanism'. Applying the scapegoat mechanism to our conceptual framework, it is reasonable to say that even at the extreme, the elimination of the witch or wizard restores a chaotic situation to sanity. While `mimetic desire' affords valuable insights in many fields, it is doubtful whether it fully explains the world of desires. Girard's theory does not explain why people who live in a neighbourhood and are not related are said to bewitch their neighbours.

2.4 Witchcraft Within World Religions Perspective

Christians, from the time of Job, have believed that a just God might let His servants suffer to test the strength of their faith (Mair 1969:12-13). But according to Ray (1976:150), unlike Western religions, African thought does not conceive the source of evil to be a fallen god or spirit like Satan or the Devil. Ray argues that, instead, the source of evil is located in the human world, in the ambitions and jealousies of humans. The origin of evil is, therefore, traceable to demonic humanity personified by the witch or sorcerer -
the antisocial person. In the Hindu philosophy there is a slightly different explanation. The philosophy considers God as the ultimate controller of all cosmic forces, both constructive and destructive. The destructive force is vested not in the devil but in the disincarnate spirits that seek to hinder human evolution (Gelfand 1967:13).

Within the World Religions there is a lot of scepticism about witchcraft. But there is no emphatic refutation of the belief too. In fact whatever explanation one gives in scientific terms or to impersonal causes, the question still remains, `Why me? Why just then? It can be argued therefore, that the position of the World Religions does not exhaust the issues. All travellers do not have accidents and even when they are involved in accidents do not die. All persons exposed to environmental dangers or pollution do not contract diseases. Lightning does not strike all houses. In Europe these incidents are explained in terms of accidents. In Africa it is quite different. The events violate natural order.

2.5 Illness And Health

According to Buhrmann (1984:32-39) the word `chance' does not appear in the world-view of the people of Africa. Africans are constantly searching for a `cause', for the how, why and the by whom of events that have befallen them (p32). If someone gets ill, this is usually either ascribed to ancestor activities or to witchcraft. In the traditional Xhosa society an ill person can be treated with `home remedies', but if the patient does not respond sooner or later the igqira would be consulted for his opinion.

Ngubane (1977:22-29) identifies nature as a factor in Zulu illness. She maintains that the Zulu, like Xhosa see natural forces as operating at two
levels. The first is concerned with the body itself as a natural biological entity that presents somatic symptoms to indicate illness. The second is much more concerned with the role of ecological factors on health. Seasonal changes also bring about umkhuhlane. Outbreaks of diarrhoea (uhudo) and hay fever (isithimulane) are both associated with summer.

Susceptibility to certain types of disease is believed to run in certain families. These diseases include epilepsy (isithuwane), chronic chest complaints such as asthma or chronic bronchitis and an unhealthy skin condition marked by a tendency to develop sores, boils and other forms of skin complaints. Imbecility and strains of madness are also sometimes believed to run in families. Such diseases are referred to as ufuzo (resemblance).

Some people are considered much more vulnerable than others to environmental dangers. These are infants, strangers in the territory, people who are allowed a long stretch of time to elapse between treatments, and finally persons who are considered polluted.

Witchcraft and the whims of the ancestors are other causes of illness (Hunter, 1936:272, Krige, 1943:222). In the view of the Zionists, ancestors cause loss and mishap rather than serious illness or death. They also believe that neglect of the ancestral spirit is general cause of barreness. Fatal disease (ukufa kwabantu) is caused by ubuthakathi (witchcraft). The prophet, God's representative in the Church, can also cause illness. The curse of the prophet may cause madness or aimless wandering (Sundkler 1961: 228).

To summarise, a good health is the concern of many an African. This implies a harmonious working and coordination with the universe. Disease disturbs a person's relationship with the universe. And witchcraft and ancestors are considered to be the main causes of diseases. The African also recognises
other factors that may contribute to illness. These factors include nature and ecological or environmental dangers. Genetic factors are also accepted as causes of illness. And some African Independent Churches suggest illness is caused by sin.

2.6 Strategies To Cope With Illness And Misfortunes

In the African context nobody is willing to resign himself to a sickness. The gravest concern of the African is his/her health. Every effort is made to identify the cause of the change in health. It is here that the evil machinations of the witch come in. Assimeng (1989) argues that the core of witchcraft beliefs is the search for an extraordinary power that enables a person to regenerate a phenomenon from destruction, or to prevent a phenomenon from falling into the hands of evil and destructive intentions and machinations of human being. He, therefore, explains that the theory of witchcraft has implications for certain social action.

Appiah-Kubi (1977:120) gives some of the reasons for the attraction of Indigenous Churches to issues of witchcraft. He suggests that the African elements - particularly the supernatural powers of the prophets and the healing miracles that counteract the forces of evil, disease, and witchcraft - are sought by those unhappy and dissatisfied with the strictly western nature of most of the mission churches. For him the most important single reason why people join the Indigenous African Christian Churches is healing. In his research, and specifically to the pertinent question of `why did you join this particular church, people invariably and quickly replied that they had been ill for a long time, they had tried all forms of treatment to no avail, they were directed to, for example Prophet Prah, and behold, they are fit as a fiddle.' Praise the Lord, Hallelujah (1977:121).
Emphasising the importance of healing in contemporary African setting, Sundkler has this to say:

While the Roman Catholic Church is an Institute of grace through its sacraments, and the Protestant Church in Africa appears as an Institute of the Word through teaching and preaching, the Independent Church, Zionist type, is an Institute of Healing (1977:120). The Healing Message is the pivot of all church activity. This is not a church, it is a hospital' one prophet told his congregation. The usual answer to the question as to why a person has joined a Zionist church is `I was ill. They prayed for me. Now I am well.

It can be argued that the pursuit of health is the gravest concern of the Zulu. Thus prayer for the sick may not be sufficient to calm the nerves. In the Zulu context, no one is prepared to resign himself to fate when sickness or misfortune strikes, since this will mean succumbing to evil forces. Efforts are made to seek the assistance of religious functionaries. This explains why people, old and young, rich and poor, literate and ill-literate flock to Independent Churches, while others consult traditional healers under the cover of darkness. Moreover, the most conspicuous feature of the Zionist Churches is prayer and healing testimonies.

2.7 African Witchcraft Idiom As A Discourse Of History And Power

Witchcraft is not merely a concept of evil, but it is also a very specific manifestation of power. Throughout Africa witchcraft is conceived of as a power of the dominated. Witches are persons who are deprived and driven by
motives of envy and desire to harm the more fortunate (Marwick 1965:25; Packard 1986:257).

Revisiting Atinga Anti-Witchcraft Movement in Nigeria, in a dialectic fashion, Apter (1992:111-128) construes the Movement as a complicitous assault on female power in its social, economic and ritual domains. It was a movement that subjugated women and forced them to accept existing order.

Yet, witchcraft beliefs and practices do express `structural contradictions between basic principles of social organisations (Schwab 1955, Lloyd 1960, 1962, 1970, Bender 1970, Bascom 1962:42, Forde 1951:10-15; Fadipe 1970: 97-146). For example, witches are often symbolically associated with animals. By combining human and animal attributes in a disorderly mixture, witches transcend the abilities of ordinary persons (Evans-Pritchard 1958:50-63, Ruel 1970, Niehaus 1995). The creature that combines such attributes has an absolute power and is either revered or feared depending on the circumstances of encounter.

Basically though, witchcraft is not a purely negative power. It can be channelled towards more positive ends, such as empowering the king and community against rivals, enemies, and imminent disasters (including the deadly appetites of witches themselves).

There is, of course another dimension of the power expression. In all witchcraft discourses one encounters the local politics of class, gender and generation. Old people and women are generally the principal targets of verbal and physical violence. They are assumed to be jealous and responsible for many evils: among them, frequent miscarriages, sickness, and death; the growing AIDS epidemic, and the failure by young Nguni men to prosper either as short-term labour migrants or to take successful advantage of state-
sponsored maize-for-cash schemes. These are some of the contradictions in society. The elderly are ordinarily treated with great respect in the village communities. But surprisingly, they are also the objects of public ridicule. For Auslander (1993:167-192), the processes of local schisms, struggles, and power relations in witch finding (and probably witchcraft accusations) is an attempt to produce what he terms a 'particular kind of moral map' for the empowerment of young men at the expense of women and older members of the community, most especially elderly women.

Auslander (1993:172-174) offers an explanation for local politics of class conflicts. For youths, elders may be said to constitute a class which `exclude others', and is prone to subverting the positive potential of the young. As 'less beautiful,' less able to procreate, and closer to death, old people are held to be jealous of the good looks, procreative abilities, vitality and energy of the next generation. The aged are thought to have secret powers of their own, associated with the knowledge they have gained over their long lives.

As with generation, so with gender. Women, too, may be said to constitute a class of excluded others,' being debarred from most public activities. Men who do not share resources with their womenfolk risk the negative reciprocity of witchcraft. According to Packard (1986) the introduction of migrant labour and cash crops generated opportunities for Bashu men in eastern Zaire to accumulate wealth, but greater work for women. In this context a concept of female witches, who devour the life energy of men emerge. By accusing assertive women of witchcraft, men reassert their own dominance.
2.8 Theories Of Witchcraft

As rightly pointed out by Assimeng (1989:66), analysis of witch-beliefs has hitherto appeared to be moralising, unsystematic, and largely unsociological. On the few instances when theory has been brought to bear on analysis, as demonstrated in the works of Christensen (1954), Goody (1957) Debrunner (1959/61) Field (1960) and Macleod (1965) such works have been written from the point of view of foreigners who are outside the dominant intellectual and value orientations of African culture. This indictment would certainly necessitate a new approach to the study of the belief.

Anthropologists have written an enormous amount of literature on witchcraft since Evans-Pritchard's classical study of witchcraft among the Azande. Mary Douglas (1970) distinguishes two directions among them. Some of the writers such as Evans-Pritchard (1937/65) himself saw witchcraft accusations as a means to explaining the inexplicable. These studies (Marwick 1965, Mitchell 1956 and Turner 1965) looked at witchcraft from a political point of view. They interpret the accusation of witchcraft primarily as an instrument for breaking off relations (Douglas 1970:xxi).

From a psychological point of view Buhrmann (1984:21) perceives the fantasy, about and the images of, the ancestors and ‘abathakathi’ (witches and sorcerers) in the Xhosa cosmology as projections from their unconscious, especially the cultural and collective layers. For him the ancestor and witch concepts are nothing but archetypal. It is these layers of the psyche that are unconsciously touched during healing ceremonies by traditional healers who transform and restore their patients’ health and vitality. `Amagqira’ ‘magic’ in the healing systems is not really ‘magic'. Rather Carl Gustav Jung and his followers, as argued by Buhrman here, base it on sound principles of depth
psychology as formulated. The amagqira have not systematised their methods as is customary in the Western, scientific world. But they have, perceived their methods intuitively, and used them.

Witchcraft in Africa has been analysed in terms of the orderly release of tensions in social relations (Turner 1965). Foster (1965) approached the issue of witchcraft as notions of a `limited good' in contexts of economic change. Gluckman (1965) also views it from the ambiguities of power and authority in local political dynamics. Austin (1993: 92) also views the conception of witchcraft as an ambiguous attribute of power within Africa is often presented in ahistorical terms, as a timeless reflection of the tension between communal values and selfish individuals and anxieties about national threat to subsistence. Generally, witchcraft has been taken for granted as part of a cultural corpus of `traditional beliefs' and has been associated with Western meanings of `the illogical' and `the primitive.'

Several theories have been advanced for the explanation of witchcraft beliefs. Some people ask why such beliefs are so tenacious and so widely held. Others, lumping beliefs and accusations together, are more concerned with the `function' these beliefs perform in societies in which the beliefs are held. To such people the crucial question is whether these beliefs contribute something significant to the maintenance of ordered social relations. For others, they would want to ascertain the correlations between different ways of directing accusations, or better still the proportion of misfortunes attributed to witchcraft, and the structure of different societies.

2.8.1 Functional Theories
Basically, this type of theory seeks to show that witchcraft beliefs meet a necessity of social existence that must be met in one way or another. Looking
at it from a different angle, witchcraft as a phenomenon makes some contribution to a socially desirable end. In studying the Navaho of the United States from a functional perspective, Kluckhohn (1966) interprets witchcraft beliefs primarily in terms of their significance for the individuals who hold them, in facilitating their adjustment to the society in which they have to live. He argues, `man craves reasons and explanations and that they usually involve the personification of the agencies responsible for the events to be explained' (Quoted by Mair 1969:199).

Marwick (1952:225-7), another psychologist has developed further Kluckhohn's theory. He confirms that all persons experience tensions that need to be resolved. For him, rather than locating the solution in the deflection of hostile feelings from a dangerous to a harmless direction, it should be matters where conflict is recognised and the means of resolution should be through judicial proceedings, the type of licensed rudeness between persons in specified relationships that anthropologists call `joking', and accusations of witchcraft.

It appears Evans-Pritchard was also a functionalist. To him witchcraft belief enables people to put a name to their anxieties and feel they can take action to relieve them (1950). Beatie (1963) thinks it provides a `stereotyped response' in situations of anxiety. According to Kluckhohn (1967:45-72), the Navaho's belief in witchcraft is not based on the fact that they are worried about specific circumstances, but because witchcraft belief canalises all anxieties arising from `generalised tensions produced by white pressure' as well as the frustrations that living in society imposes on us all. In other words, witchcraft belief provides for the displacement of aggression as well as of anxiety. People who would like to fight their parents or siblings, but are restrained by the rules of social behaviour, discharge their aggression on the imaginary person whom
it is proper to fear and hate. He argues further that few other means of expressing aggression are available to the Navaho and suggest without some means they would become a population of neurotics (Kluckhohn, 1967:45-72). The conclusion here is that the ascription of witchcraft gives people a golden opportunity to vent their pent-up feelings on persons who under normal circumstances, would have been absolutely impossible to accuse. Arguing further Kluckhohn maintains that witchcraft belief reinforces confidence in magic for curing sickness, since its failures can be ascribed to the interference of witchcraft rather than its inherent inadequacy; that the image of the witch is capable of every forbidden act allows people to contemplate such acts with a clear conscience; and finally that it affirms solidarity by dramatically defining what is bad (Quoted by Mair, 1968:201).

Evans-Pritchard (1937/65) emphasizes the practical rather than the emotional value of witchcraft beliefs to those who hold them. He reminds us of the experiences of missionaries, doctors and anthropologists and argues that functional theories do not explain the selective incidence of disease or what we call accident. For him, although there may be search for explanations through chance or providence, the workings of witchcraft are inscrutable (Mair, 1969:202).

Virtually all-existing work at least in Africa indicates that witchcraft efficacy is held to be a direct function of the intimacy between the witch and the victim. The majority of accusations and rituals involve relations between peers, kin, and co-wives. The corollary being that, with greater social distance, such accusations tend to decline (Douglas 1970, xxx-xxx; Marwick 1982:377ff). Recent research, however, shows African urban elites to be afraid of those left behind in their villages. The latter can bewitch them or for the state projects with which they identify (Geschiere 1988; Ciekawy 1990;
Bastian 1992). Also, while formal witchcraft accusations against the powerful and wealthy are rare, it has `become a common place observation in African studies' (Rowlands and Warnier 1988:121) that ascendant individuals are perceived to be witches.

In summary, there are two types of theoretical explanation: that which looks for characteristic `patterns' of accusation and explains them by `tension' in particular social relationships, and the form of functional theory which sees accusations of witchcraft as socially valuable because they `relieve and release tensions'. The latter has been called the `cathartic' theory, and where accusations have been associated with the division of a social group, it has also been described by the word `obstetric'. The directions of accusations are based on social structure - people who are closely related, either by marriage or blood.

While functionalist explanation of witchcraft belief affords insights into worldview of the African, it does not explain tensions in illness and healing. Functionalist theories also do not show any ways of structuring experience so that the world, which in William James’ phrase presents itself, as `a blowing, buzzing confusion’, can be made meaningful, and therefore, can be seen to make sense. As Geertz (1966) argued, human beings cannot tolerate ambiguity, and chaos that flows from it. It is true that human beings find the uncanny very disturbing and that everyone in this world wants to live with an untroubled mind. The identification of ambiguity, although valid, does not tackle the process of restoration in illness and healing.

Mary Douglas (1970) has stimulated a great deal of interest in social structures and has also given adequate attention to religious beliefs and actions. Among other things, she has focused on pollution that defies ritual purity of sacred
space. She argues that witchcraft is social equivalents of beetles and spiders that live in the cracks of the walls and wainscoting. They attract the fears and dislike which other ambiguities and contradictions attract in other sought structures, and the kind of powers attributed to them symbolise their ambiguous, inarticulate status.

Once again this approach only highlights ambiguities in relationships and how witchcraft manifests itself in various societies. Such an approach does not explain the tensions and contradictions from the African world-view.

Contrastively, Turner (1969) relies on Van Gennep's (1960) model of three phases in analysis of social structures. The use of this model assists us in seeing the positive and negative aspects of witchcraft, particularly its association with illness. Illness, to the traditional African, is alienation. The sick is always alone in the hospital, confined to bed, and even on the sick bed at his home. He or she is removed from many or most of daily occupations and contacts. The sick bed is in fact a prison (Shorter, 1985:38-39). Alienated from the world of everyday life the sick enters into a `liminal phase'. It is in this middle phase of initiation rite or rite of passage that people are suspended in a stage of statuslessness. The neophyte belongs to neither the old nor the new. Turner compares this liminal stage to both tomb and womb in which the neophyte is moulded by society. Turner sees the liminal phase as where people are most creative and where in Shorter's words, time is ‘a deeply felt spiritual experience which has a continual function as regards the health and progress of society’. In this phase, we see ‘communitas’ of spirit developing among people. The picture that emerges in this phase is not normally tolerated in societies. This is the stage where one encounters equality and freedom. Such an atmosphere becomes problematic because there is no line drawn between
power and authority. Almost all age groups are lumped together and leadership in this situation is not based on age.

It must be noted that this situation is temporary. This does not mean that the societies involved are indulgent. In African communities, sick people are not usually sacrificed or punished. Their sickness is viewed as being inseparable from a condition afflicting society as a whole. And in treating them, the society is carrying out a social therapy. The community becomes a therapeutic ward in which the members act as healers to one another. The restoration of social harmony and wholeness is an object of communal concern and the ritual that are used are a celebration of social healing. Unfortunately, the restoration of social harmony is very costly because witches may have to be eliminated completely from the society. Turner's approach touches on social upheavals inherent in modern African societies in which witchcraft belief and accusations is one of the contributing factors.

It is against this background that we propose a thesis that takes cognisance of functionalism and liminality as contextual elements in Hlubi worldviews. Our contention is that witchcraft belief mediates tensions within the society, by offering resolutions for overcoming or disguising the contradictions between illness and healing, good and evil, darkness and light and reason and emotion.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

In spite of ethnic variations and divergent cultural backgrounds, I have occasionally generalised in this way because there are common themes in African world-views that share a root paradigm (Turner 1974:34-44).
According to Turner, root paradigms are patterns of assumptions about the fundamental nature of the world and humanity, which underline social actions but most clearly manifest themselves when a culture encounters severe conflict situations. These constitute the basic cultural assumptions on which any theory of equilibrium or restoration must be grounded. First, is the unitive view of reality whereby there is no dichotomy between matter and spirit, sacred and profane, secular and religious. The world of reality is conceived of as being two dimensional - visible and invisible. Not only is the human being seen as composed of body and spirit but also as one person with visible and invisible dimensions. The dead, although not seen on earth, exist in the invisible realm of the world. They inhabit the same world with visible human beings but are invisible. These spirits (either good or capricious ones) live and interact freely and constantly with human beings. Unfortunately, human beings do not see them (spirits) (Hammond-Tooke 1998; Peter 1995: 27; Ikenga-Metuh 1981:52; Mbiti 1970:9, 1975:30).

The second important aspect of African worldview is the divine origin of the universe and the web of relationships between Supreme Being, humanity and the cosmos. The universe is considered as one life. There is an existence of a web of relationships involving Supreme Being, humanity and the cosmos. In this kind of relationships, everything revolves around human beings (Temples, 1959:25; Anyawu, 1981:90-92).

Another important feature of African worldview is that of the sense of community - the fact that a person is a person because of his/her relationship with other human beings. In other words his/her personhood finds fulfilment in his/her relationship with others. Oduyoye (1979:110) argues that humankind is seen as the custodian of the earth: and its past, present and future generations form one community. The individual, therefore, defines his/her identity by the
community to which he/she belongs. Pobee (1979:49) has twisted the Cartesian dictum cogito ergo sum (I think therefore I exist) to say cognato ergo sum (I am related by blood/I belong to a family therefore I exist). Death and illness are explained not in terms of natural cause but in terms of negative forces like witchcraft in the community.

The last aspect of African worldview is the emphasis on the concrete rather than on the abstract, on the practical rather than on the theoretical (Pobee, 1978:55). Placid Temples (1967) has come up with the concept of `vital force' to interpret African worldview. He uses this concept to explain all misfortunes that befall the African in areas of diminution of power, each traceable to an externalised and personalized power greater than or hostile to human beings. In order to deal with such a power, he argues, the traditional African spends a great deal of his or her energies to normalise a situation so that he or she can be more successful in his or her endeavour than his or her neighbour. Not only is this `vital force' deeply rooted in the African worldview but also it is subject to fluctuations. The vital energy could also be manipulated by the witches and sorcerers with evil intent or by the traditional healers who arrest and cure patients.

In African Traditional Religions attempts are made to assist people to cope with `life's contingencies, the vagaries of nature, with the potential impotency, bad luck and malevolent spirits of witches and sorcerers (Maimela 1985:). A variety of protective rituals to immunize potential victims from witchcraft, thieves, evil spirits, barrenness, are organised. There are also religious rites which are performed to 'keep the angry ancestors happy' when it is realised that they are offended. They can also be petitioned to support and protect their surviving descendants. The attempts in African Traditional Religions are to
mediate tensions and contradictions in the society, to bring and restore order, and to establish equilibrium within the system.

This is why I maintain that functionalist explanations do not discuss how the accused and accusers in witchcraft discourses return to sanity. It is here that the role of African Independent Churches (AIC) becomes relevant to this exercise. The assumed task of the AICs is to help their congregations (or African societies) to return to equilibrium in the face of social evils—misfortune, poverty, illness, witchcraft, bad luck etc. The effort is to allay the telling effects of social order by treating and repairing the physical and spiritual body of the African. The AICs provide comfort and counsel to Africans in areas where other churches have been unable to help, especially on the issues of witchcraft and evil-possession.

2.10 Witchcraft Among The Hlubi

There is a paucity of information on amaHlubi regarding witchcraft belief. But Monica Hunter (1961) has written on the Pondo. And since the Pondo share borders and also live among the amaHlubi, it is easy to draw an inference on the similarity. Indeed, there are similar strands in religious expressions of these. A gross over simplification or generalisation can fail to explain the variations within or between the ethnic groups.

Basically, in spite of the advent of Western education, science and technology, and Christianity, witchcraft belief permeates the whole of Hlubi life. Their belief in witchcraft revolves around the desire for health, both of human beings and of the beasts. The amaHlubi believe that some illnesses are caused naturally. And they avoid foods that they think will make them sick. Also death from old age in human beings is considered to be natural. Any slight
illness (*umkhuhlane*) is also regarded as natural. Some diseases such as influenza, whooping cough, skin diseases (*impuza*) are in fact, regarded as infectious. Accidents are sometimes said to be accidents. But at times they are said to be the result of sorcery and witchcraft.

2.11 Summary

The dictionary and encyclopaedia definitions of witchcraft reveal that a witch is a person believed to be capable of harming others supernaturally through the use of innate psychic power. A witch is symbolised by inverted characteristics, both physically and socially. Numerous writers have engaged in witchcraft discourses but anthropologists are very prominent in this field. Not only have African and non-African scholars approached the topic from the perspective of their various disciplines but they also have interpreted the concept of witchcraft from their cultural backgrounds.

Functional theories of witchcraft indicate that witchcraft beliefs meet a necessity of social existence. In other words, it makes a contribution to a socially desirable end. All existing work particularly in Africa indicates that witchcraft efficacy involves kith and kin - between peers, co-wives, nephews and uncles, grandmother and grandchildren. In recent time, research shows urban elites are afraid of those left behind in their villages because they can bewitch them.

The African does not consider seriously the word `chance’ in his/her worldview. That is why s/he is always constantly searching for the `cause’ of events that have befallen him/her. Not only does s/he look for the cause but also for the remedy. Illness is something dreadful. The African attributes it to the work of ancestors and witches. S/he seeks the assistance of religious
functionaries - either overtly or covertly. The springing up of numerous independent churches and other 'protection' institutions is not unconnected with the search for a solution to the machinations of evil forces in these societies. The review has also indicated that witchcraft is a theory of power and authority.

I have also argued that functionalist explanations emphasise the 'symptoms of a disease' by concentrating on the social function of witchcraft and the direction of accusation in societies.

It is against this background that I propose an African 'social therapy' perspective. My contention is that witchcraft beliefs mediate tensions and irreconcilables in illness and healing. In the next chapter I shall examine the Hlubi world-view, its construction of problematic situations, and the attempts the people make to cope with such situations. This will help to explain the 'social therapy' that takes recognition of ambiguity, tension, transition, and restoration.
Chapter 3

THE STUDY REGION: THE HLUBI OF QUMBU

Introduction

In chapter two extant literatures on the phenomenon of witchcraft as well as a theoretical framework for the study was examined. This chapter focuses on the historical and socio-religious economic background of the Hlubi society of Qumbu. The primary interest here includes the origin of the people and places they settled, and when and how Christianity was introduced. We shall also look at the specific factors aiding or have aided the spread and the problems that Christians have encountered.

Tradition exercises a tremendous influence on the African. The African follows tradition out of a sense of family cohesion, out of religious sentiments and out of fear. African belief is that any infidelity incurs the wrath of the dead and of evil spirits. Again, religion is a single entity integrated with individual, family, social, economic and political life (Baeta, 1968:294-5). It can therefore, be concluded that there is a relationship between religion and the family. It is because of this relationship between religion and family that this chapter also seeks to examine briefly the conception of family as well as to outline the beliefs and practices of the Hlubi.

With regard to the historical aspects of this chapter, I greatly relied on one of the headmen, a retired school principal and a University of Fort Hare history graduate. Apart from the facts he gave me, he also provided me with volumes of history books as well as journal articles and unpublished papers.
3.1 Geographic Overview Of The Surveyed Areas

The three administrative areas in which this study took place are part of the Qumbu Managerial District. Qumbu plays an important role in the region. This is due to its position as administrative seat of the Emboland Regional Authority which includes the Managerial areas of Kwabaca, Qumbu and Tsolo which together, according to the *Hawkins Associates Report* of 1990 and the *Osmonde Large Report* of 1982, had a population of 267,417 in 1975.

In an agro-ecological classification of this region, Hawkins Associates Report (1980) identifies two main patterns or systems in the Qumbu district.

Areas with relief characterized by rolling hills, but with rugged plateau remnants

b) Areas with an undulating to rolling relief

3.1.1 Soils

Soils in Qumbu area are partially hydro-morphic, shallow to moderately gray soils, with Kroonstad and Cartel soil identified. Cartel is a shallow soil and Kroonstad is a soil with clay subsoil. Both can support grazing, and agriculture, and are suitable for urban development, although they are poorly drained.

3.1.2 Climate

Qumbu district has an average annual rainfall of 815mm per annum, falling predominantly in summer between October and May. The highest rainfall usually occurs in March. Eighty percent of the district’s rainfall falls during
October and May. Thunder is experienced on 50 days per year and hail three and half days.

The temperatures in the vicinity of Qumbu range from 27°C to 13°C during the hot months, such as January and in colder, mid-winter months, such as July they drop to between 17°C and 0°C.

Winds are fair to moderate, blowing predominantly from the southwest. In short, Qumbu district has a healthy climate, and this, coupled with the favourable soil composition mentioned earlier, makes it ideal for agriculture and grazing.

### 3.1.3 Population

Rural and urban Population

In 1975 the population of the magisterial district of Qumbu stood at 82,617, composed of urban and rural inhabitants as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1975</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>65103</td>
<td>81867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68819</td>
<td>82617</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Statistics and Survey conducted in September 1979

Concerning population distribution, the surveyed areas had a population of 20,346 (unpublished results of 1992 census). This has been estimated to grow at an annual rate of 2.7 percent. Osmonde Lange (1982:17) and Thomas (1982:16-18) had earlier projected this trend.
A survey conducted by an independent organization indicated that 11 percent of the population is absent. Most able-bodied men are in town either working or seeking work. The men migrate to mining cities and cities such as Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. The majority of the absentees are economically active and this accounts for the relatively low number of males living in the areas surveyed. Qualified women are also drawn away to larger towns in the former Transkei and to cities such as Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town and East London. Most people especially the elderly are illiterate, very few have gone beyond primary education and fewer are in teaching and nursing professions.

### 3.1.4 Vegetation

Like most of the former Transkei, grassy veld extends over the surveyed areas. Light forests are also found in mountains. There are also artificial forests found in Maqubin, Kalankomo and Qhancu. Sweet grasses are located in valleys and river basins. Furthermore, sour grassveld is found on the Great Escarpment inland.

### 3.1.5 Agriculture

As already indicated favourable environmental conditions include mild climate, rich soils, and expanses of grazing land and irrigation potential from many of the rivers in the surveyed areas. It follows therefore that cattle, sheep and goat farming are the main pastoral activities. Maize, sorghum and legumes are the main crops cultivated. There is a division of labour along gender lines. Men uproot trees, plough and build homes. Cattle, sheep and goat farming are also the prerogatives of the relatively few men left behind, whilst the major crops cultivated for subsistence are the domains of women. Women also plant, hoe, cut thatching grass and raise chicken and pigs. The taboo on women which forbids them to work with cattle has prevented them from assisting in
planting when ploughs are used, and ploughing is now regarded as the work for the boys and young men of the umzi. For tasks such as hoeing, women hold work parties (amalima). Women brew beer and invite neighbours to work on their fields. In recent times Hlubi migration is less common, except when women accompany their husbands to their workplace in the mining cities (which, incidentally is a rare phenomenon). Wealthier men loan out cattle to their neighbours for ploughing.

At this juncture, a few comments are worth making. Hlubi women today work harder with fewer resources and with less economic reward. As increasing numbers of men migrate to the cities and urban areas, the women and children are left behind to cope with a reduced labour supply and with an increased workload. Under such circumstances the main tasks rest on the women, and family stress becomes more pronounced. Like any other African community the Hlubi survive on subsistence economy. The absence of young men, the fathers of families who went to work in the mines and on white farms placed an unbearable yoke on the Hlubi women left behind. Jobs are hard to come by but they had to work hard to increase (or at least maintain) agricultural production for feeding themselves and, sometimes their absent sons and spouses and, worst of all absent husbands’ parents. It should be noted that most of these women still lived in their absent husbands’ households where they were subordinate to their mothers-in-law. It seems reasonable to assume that the amount of time Hlubi women spent in cultivating gardens increased tremendously while they still had to perform their traditional duties of childcare and cooking. They also had to send the cattle and sheep to the veld – duties that were supposed to be reserved for men. Besides, the husband’s absence meant that the poor Hlubi wife was the major decision-maker for virtually all matters. Families who are lucky to have relatives living in urban areas and cities depend on remittances sent by them. Any time there is a
disappointment on the part of a relative in the cities in sending in money, families in the villages find themselves at the mercy of fairly stable workers such as teachers, nurses and shop owners. As incredible as it may sound, one often sees women exchanging mealies for salt with owners of grocery shops in their villages. One also hears of stories of parents pawning their sheep, goats and valuable items for money to pay their children’s school fees. In short, there is a picture of stark poverty and no wonder such people become targets of witchcraft accusations and persecutions since there is a correlation between poverty and witchcraft persecutions.

An Hlubi woman narrated the following story.

`She recounted that her niece suddenly fell ill at night and she had to rent a taxi to send the child to the nearest hospital at Sulenkama that was 15 kilometres away. She had to spend R60 for this purpose. Some few days later, her three children were sent home for defaulting school fees. R150 was given to the children to pay for fees in arrears. As a result, instructions to fence the house with the remittance were not carried out. The husband, on his arrival, was angry about this job not being done and would not listen to or accept any explanation. Such is the plight of Hlubi women. What these experiences bring to the fore is that Hlubi women are experiencing ambivalence regarding their role. As `family heads’ they are burdened with responsibility but not given proper authority to carry out that responsibility. Consequently, they go through a series of stress and no wonder they are accused of being witches. Also worth noting is the fact that these women live with their in-laws. People do not suspect others of using witchcraft unless there is tension According to Bourdillion (2000:147) concern about witches and witchcraft is particularly common among a group of people who are forced to live together and cooperate, and who have no alternative ways of dealing with conflicts that
arise. In-laws in this case are forced to live together in the absence of alternative accommodation’.

3.1.6 Health Services

The district as a whole is served by the Nessie Knight Hospital at Sulenkama, about 36 kilometers from Qumbu. Permanent clinics are located in the hinterland. Mary Terese Hospital at Mount Frere is utilized by some of the surveyed areas. These include locations such as Qhanqu, Kalankomo, Tsilitwa and Mdeni.

In conclusion, the general impression of the surveyed areas suggests a relatively cut off marginalized rural population, located in a fairly rugged landscape. There is a sexual division of labour. Services are poor and access to them is often a severe problem. On the whole people are very poor, and therefore live on subsistence economy levels. The population is a mixture of a number of tribes, and conflicts from the past appear still to be an issue. In view of socio-economic conditions of the Hlubi society a discussion of poverty as a concept will help us appreciate the kind of situation in which they find themselves.

3.2. What is Poverty?

Poverty has many faces, changing from place to place and across time, and has been described in many ways. Most often, poverty is a situation people want to escape. So poverty is a call to action -- for the poor and the wealthy alike -- a call to change the world so that many more may have enough to eat, adequate shelter, access to education and health, protection from violence, and a voice in what happens in their communities.
Among the Hlubi, however, poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not being able to go to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom

3.2.1 Dimensions of Poverty

To know what helps to alleviate poverty, what works and what does not, what changes over time, poverty has to be defined, measured, and studied -- and even lived. As poverty has many dimensions, it has to be looked at through a variety of indicators -- levels of income and consumption, social indicators, and now increasingly indicators of vulnerability to risks and of socio/political access.

When estimating poverty worldwide, the same reference poverty line has to be used, and expressed in a common unit across countries. Therefore, for the purpose of global aggregation and comparison, the World Bank uses reference lines set at $1 and $2 per day in 1993 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) terms (where PPPs measure the relative purchasing power of currencies across countries). It has been estimated that in 1998 1.2 billion people world-wide had consumption levels below $1 a day -- 24 percent of the population of the developing world and 2.8 billion lived on less than $2 a day. These figures are lower than earlier estimates, indicating that some progress has taken place, but they still remain too high in terms of human suffering, and much more remains to be done. And it should be emphasized that for analysis of poverty in a particular country, the World Bank always uses poverty line(s) based on norms for that society.
Because of the time involved in collecting and processing the household survey data upon which these figures are based and the complexities of the estimation exercise, these figures appear with a lag, and are updated only every three years. (About the World Development Report 2000/2001)

3.2.2 Attacking Poverty
At the start of a new century, poverty remains a global problem of huge proportions. Of the world's 6 billion people, 2.8 billion live on less than $2 a day and 1.2 billion on less than $1 a day. Eight out of every 100 infants do not live to see their fifth birthday. Nine of every 100 boys and 14 of every 100 girls who reach school age do not attend school. Poverty is also evident in poor people's lack of political power and voice and in their extreme vulnerability to ill health, economic dislocation, personal violence and natural disasters. And the scourge of HIV/AIDS, the frequency and brutality of civil conflicts, and rising disparities between rich countries and the developing world have increased the sense of deprivation and injustice for many.

Actions are needed in three complementary areas: promoting economic opportunities for poor people through equitable growth, better access to markets, and expanded assets; facilitating empowerment by making state institutions more responsive to poor people and removing social barriers that exclude women, ethnic and racial groups, and the socially disadvantaged; and enhancing security by preventing and managing economy wide shocks and providing mechanisms to reduce the sources of vulnerability that poor people face. But actions by countries and communities will not be enough. Global actions need to complement national and local initiatives to achieve maximum benefit for poor people throughout the world (www.worldbank.org).
3.3 The Historical Background Of The Hlubi

The Hlubi people are part of the Nguni speaking and present-day Xhosa peoples. Before introducing the Hlubi it is necessary to identify and make a relationship between the Nguni/Xhosa and the Hlubi. The Nguni peoples of South Africa in modern times constitute two-thirds of the Bantu speaking peoples of South Africa, which includes the two largest groups, the Xhosa and the Zulu. Scholars argue that the term Nguni is a term of academic linguistic convenience arbitrarily settled upon by an earlier generation of historians (Mostert 1992:80). The Nguni lived in widely scattered homesteads and their beasts were the central focus of their existence. The Nguni had a cattle culture with its ritualistic features, which directly influenced their lives and customs. Geographically, they lived below the great Escarpment, on the narrow coastal belt between the mountains and the sea that runs from the cape to Natal. Historical evidence indicates that when the whites arrived in South Africa, the Nguni were distributed from around the Kei river all the way to Northern Natal and it was the richest habitat in Southern Africa, with the highest rainfall, ideal country for the flourishing of herds (Mostert 1992:80).

The Xhosa were often described as pastoral nomads and although they engaged in seasonal transhumance had fixed residence. Their nuclear homesteads were often scattered like their herds, across the hills and valleys where they lived. According to Mostert (1992:81), Xhosa traditions indicate that they came as a people from a river called Dedesi, which they described as having part of the headwaters of the Mzimvubu river, which flows down from the Drakensberg into the sea half-way between East London and Durban.

The Xhosa-speaking people are all grouped in the Cape Province of South Africa and they originally consisted of three main groups, the Pondo, the
Tembu and the Xhosa proper. As a result of inner turmoil and divisions, union with Khoikhoi groups, and the arrival in their midst of refugees from wars in Natal the original Xhosa—speaking nations were broken into a diversified communion of chiefdoms and peoples (Mostert 1992:186). It was around this period that the Hlubi arrived in their present settlement in the former Republic of Transkei.

In sum, the Hlubi are part of the present-day Xhosa people who are also better known as Nguni group. It is said the recorded oral history of the Hlubi goes to an unspecified, semi-mythical time, when according to tradition, their ancestral chiefs lived near the Lubombo mountains which lie along the eastern border of present-day Swaziland (Wright and Manson 1983:1-2). Surprisingly, nothing else is known about these chiefs—not even their names. Wright and Manson suggest that how and when these people came to be called Hlubi has long been forgotten.

The Hlubi are of Makalanga origin. The name Hlubi, however, is of a comparatively late date. According to the genealogical table for the tribe, there are sixteen names of ruling chiefs, covering approximately a period of 400 years before the tribal name was changed on the death of Ncobo, the sixteenth in descent from Ludiwu. Halfway between these two names occurs that of Mhuhu. From this time down to that of Ncobo, the tribe was called Imi-huhu. The change of the tribal name from Imi-huhu to Ama-Hlubi took place on the death of Ncobo, the sixteenth in line of descent from Ludiwu (Soga, 1930:1930:403-6).

Norman (1976:2-3) argues that the Hlubi tribe was one of the largest, perhaps the largest of the historic eMbo Nguni. These Nguni who entered Natal as far back, perhaps, as the 13th century, were aggressive. Norman (1976:3) asserts
that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Zulus were a tiny insignificant clan and from a higher social pinnacle the Hlubi could look down upon them as being simply despised tobacco sellers. He maintains that as the Zulu star ascended the fortunes of the Hlubi declined. The Ngwane then turned on the Hlubi, still numerous tribes though by internal dissensions. The broken remnants of the Hlubi finally fled under the shadow of the mountain, some, indeed, crossed over it and grappled with the Sotho clans. The years, which followed, were full of confusion and death, drawing one tribe after another into bloody conflict. The story of these battles is not the focus of this study, so nothing more will be said about them. Suffice it to say that after the dispersal of most of the Hlubi, a small portion of the tribe, comprising about 7000 men, women and children, remained in their tribal home extending along the Buffalo River from its source to its junction with the Thukela. It can be said then that the Hlubi represent only a segment of the tribal hordes who were uprooted due to the seemingly endless conflicts in Zululand and resultant flooding of immigrants into the colony.

Norman (1976:4ff) further explains circumstances leading to the weakening of Hlubi power. He suggests that the Hlubi were sprawled across the Drankensberg foothills. As a result of Chief Langalibalele, a rainmaker and a man of mystical attributes and human failings, the Hlubi, along with neighbours, were ‘eaten up’ as a punishment for Langalibalele’s resistance to the government of Natal and his stand against the imperious Shepstone, the so-called Moses of the black people. In fact, Chief Langalibalele’s popularity helps to shed light on the Hlubi history. Theophilus Shepstone was the designated Diplomatic Agent to the Native tribes in Natal. The title, ‘the Moses of black people’, as used by Norman probably stems from the fact that his affection for the Africans was undeniable. Norman (1976:4; 135) vividly describes Shepstone as follows:
He set to rivet his authority in the minds of the people in his charge. He therefore put on the mantle of a patriarch – a nineteenth century Moses…. Every discussion with a chief or an `induna` was converted into indaba’ He humbled the man squatting before him with the coldness in his eye. Each slow and deliberate nod of the leonine head was a confirmation of omniscience and every spoken decision was an interpretation of the Law engraved on a tablet in his mind.

When one goes back to the biblical stories of the Old Testament, one cannot but accept that the picture portrayed by Norman aptly fitted Shepstone. It is against this background that Chief Langabalele’s popularity helps to explain the dispersal of the Hlubi tribe.

Tribes are often called by the names of their chiefs. For instance, the Xhosa were named after their chief Xhosa, a descendant of chief Nguni, after whom all Nguni peoples were named. Through Mtimkulu, scholars are able to trace the whole Hlubi society. Today, the descendants of Mtimkulu I are found throughout Southern Africa, namely in the Republic of South Africa and former homelands of Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana and Zimbabwe.

Jolobe (1959 in Lamla 1991:2ff) has tried to trace the original geographical area of the Hlubi before the dispersal of the tribes following the wars of Shaka Zulu. All indications are that the Hlubi lived between the upper reaches of the Tukela (Tugela) and Mzinyathi (Sundays) rivers, east of the Lundi (Drakensberg range of mountains) in present day Natal.

Lamla (1991:5ff) reports that the descendants of Mtimkulu II settled permanently at Qhanqu in the Qumbu district. The second house of Mehlomakulu (another Hlubi chief) produced Milani whose descendants are found at Kubuse and Nxaxa on the Tina River in Qumbu.
Since the upheavals that began in the early nineteenth century, namely, the dispersal or `mfecane’, annexation of the various native territories by colonial authorities, movements in search of living space, inter-tribal skirmishes, frontier wars, labour migration, urbanization, etc, it is difficult to find areas that are still occupied exclusively by the Hlubi (Lamla 1981:4).

To summarize, oral history indicates that Hlubi ancestral chiefs lived near Lubombo, which share borders with present-day Swaziland. African historians suggest that the Hlubi society evolved in southeastern Africa before the eighteenth century but no one knows how and when the Hlubi came to be so-called. The Hlubi tribe was one of the largest of the eMbo Nguni. Chief Langalibalele’s resistance to the government of Natal, as well as his stand against Shepstone, led to the demise of Hlubi power. The migration of the Hlubi was probably also due to the wars of the Zulu king, Shaka. Through Mtimkulu, scholars are able to trace the whole Hlubi society, found in southern Africa.

3.4 The Hlubi Of Qumbu

Life amongst the Hlubi is organized according to traditional and stereotyped gender roles. Men are entrusted with heavier and dangerous work while women attend to tasks close to home. It must be pointed out, however, that these functions are complimentary, depending upon the needs of the particular society or environment.

The Hlubi man is traditionally considered the warrior, the hunter and the stockman. The most precious game is herds of cattle. Traditionally cattle represented the ultimate wealth, calculated not so much in quality as in quantity. Like all other Xhosa-speaking Nguni, cattle were the only means of
economic exchange, other than assegais, which were difficult to make. Today cattle are important not so much as a source of food but as a means for men to obtain wives through the ‘ukulobola’ system. They also act, although unofficially, as one of symbolic indicators of how one is accorded respect in the Hlubi society.

3.4.1 Life As A Group
An Hlubi believes he or she is not born to live alone. He or she is born into a family and his/her responsibility is to that family and its ancestors. He or she is a member of the clan of Hlubi and must be loyal to his/her chief or headman, who is not so much an individual as the embodiment of the whole tribe, one who acts on behalf of the tribe even if, at times, his decisions appear to be against its best interests.

Family life revolves around the head of the house, the provider and defender, and those who make it a home. Females are prohibited from holding the head of lineage position because of menstrual taboos forbidding contact with sacred objects. The explanation for preventing women from holding this position is bound up with the concept of ritual impurity. The belief is that menstruation devalues the potency of medicine; the blood of the woman renders it powerless. The family is the backbone of the whole Hlubi system for it is the social and economic unit at the root of clan tribal life. Each member has clear-cut responsibilities regarding rewards and benefits apportioned in terms of age and gender. Sons will found new families and homes of their own but will maintain links with their father and brothers and indeed with far distant members of the family.

This actually explains the genesis and establishment of the chieftaincy system. Each person belongs to his/her tribe, which in turn belongs to its chief. The
head of a clan and all its members are descended from a common ancestor. Below the head are subordinate chiefs with lesser roles and under them the various groups and families.

When an Hlubi dies, his heir provides for his widow. Among brothers and sisters, brothers are given a `start in life’ and are expected to care for their sisters until they are married. If a male should need help he calls on his brothers. It is said that in earlier days chiefs could call on young men and women reaching maturity to serve in their households without expectation of payment. In return, they were treated as members of the household, fed and clothed according to the financial strength of the chief.

The concept `communitas’ is very helpful for defining the Hlubi worldview. This term expresses unity and oneness in a traditional situation. The Hlubi live as a group and any member of that group, even a complete stranger, is accepted as being entitled to a share of whatever the others may have. During feasting occasions, although no one is asked to attend, every one is expected to be present. In the same vein, if there is work to be done all must give a helping hand. A stranger in trouble is entitled to help of protection, while a transgression against the rights of an individual is at the same time a wrong done to all members of his/her group.

Like all other Xhosa-speaking Bantu, to live in the Hlubi community is to share all the good things of life – the responsibilities, the dangers and the losses without thought of reward. The kind of attitude is ingrained in every Hlubi from birth. He or she must cultivate the habit of sharing his/her life with others. It is amazing to see that when a child is given a drink he shares it with his peers, rather than hiding it to feast on later. This is in line with Mbiti’s (1969:113-120) twist of the Cartesian `cogito ergo sum’ which is appropriate
here. Mbiti says ‘I belong, therefore I am’. Temple (1987:103) also argues that Bantu ontology is opposed to European concept of individuated things — things that exist in themselves in isolation from others. Such an assertion confirms the African concept of solidarity of the family and extends to include the tribe. For Temples, humanity in the African context is not being but a ritual force, which interacts with others, and is itself influenced by other beings.

In theory, all men and women are considered brothers and sisters and are all members of the race of humanity. Based on this principle, the tribe lives as a rigidly defined, extremely conservative and well-regulated community with established rules and laws, which govern every one of its members and all they stand for. This truth must be acknowledged along the recognition of current inter-tribal conflicts, which were prevalent even in pre-colonial times.

### 3.4.2 Home And Family

The Hlubi is considered as the true owner of all his/her cattle, but in earlier days only the chief who personalized the whole tribe had full right to the land each one occupied. When the tribe arrived in a new area it was the responsibility of the chief to allocate the available land to heads of the various households, based on their needs. He usually set aside grazing land and hunting grounds for the tribe or clan as a group and allotted fields to each head on the basis of one for each wife.

In establishing a home, the head of the household had to build his ‘umzi’ or group of huts, normally sited to face east to the precious ‘ubuhlanti’ or byre in which he would keep his cattle. The criterion for site for the ‘umzi’ of a householder was a sloping place to allow for drainage in wet weather and the assurance that the ‘umzi’ was fairly close to a source of fresh water.
Like other Bantu tribes, the Hlubi views hut building as basically a communal activity, with the entire family, friends and neighbours giving a helping hand. The head of the `umzi` will probably have many wives, and of these the chief and each of the lesser wives will have her own living hut, sire hut, children’s hut and cooking arrangements so she has complete charge of her household.

Each hut has a hearth in the middle where a fire is lit at night and in rainy weather. It is said the back of hut and the right hand side are reserved for the head of the family and other males, while women occupy the rest. Mealies still on the cob hang from the rafters, against the back wall lean sacks and calabashes of `amasi`, the fermented milk, which is the Hlubi’s staple diet.

Behind the hut is the cooking area, which is the woman’s domain. Each is supposed to fetch her own water and fuel and cook her family’s food in three-legged and other pots: gruel or porridge first thing in the morning and the evening meal when she returns from working in the fields. The meal may include fermented milk; porridge or a gruel of maize or millet; whole stamped mealies, alone or with beans; bread baked from ground corn or green mealies; the tops of pumpkin runners cooked as a vegetable stew, by themselves or with meat. Meat is reserved for special occasions, or when a beast has died. The women have an assortment of pots, wooden spoons and sticks to stir the porridge, a stamping block, a grinding stone and a kneading trough.

By way of summary it can be said the Hlubi society is patriarchal. There is a sexual division of labour. Whilst men are in charge of economic production, women are anchored in the area of reproduction and the preservation of domestic activities. Not only do men occupy prestigious positions but also exercise authority over women. Barriers to the achievement of gender equality can be attributed to environmental or external structures and internal
attitudinal factors ascribed to by society in general. They believe in and have
the sense of belongingness. There is no doubt that urbanization; western
education, Christianity and technological changes have had a tremendous
impact on the Hlubi society. It is against this background that the study
attempts to ascertain the extent to which the clash of cultures and world-views
has affected witchcraft beliefs in the Hlubi society. The next chapter begins to
tackle this issue.
Chapter 4

HLUBI'S BELIEF SYSTEM

Introduction
This chapter raises a number of pertinent issues. Among other things, it reveals the religiousness of the Hlubi. The world of the Hlubi of Qumbu is that of a dynamic equilibrium, which demands that the cosmological order must be sustained in balance when natural disasters or anti-social forces threaten it. It has also been revealed that their world remains subject to manipulation both by individuals and spirit forces. Witchcraft as a typical example is perceived as an anti-social force used by human beings to disrupt social order. In a world full of status instability and social dynamics, status seeking is a continuous process. Thus people are indirectly asked to strive to live a transparent and honest life to avoid suspicion, acrimonies, accusations and attacks. Hlubis therefore, know from life experience that the spirits but individuals living in society do not cause the disequilibria in society. Thus the architect of social and moral order or disorder is humanity in society. The individual is held accountable for his/her sins, and s/he faces retribution here on earth, if discovered. However, it is debatable whether there was the concept of `sin’ in traditional Africa. In my view African religion subscribes to the concept of `sin’ but this is not systematized. Idowu (Quoted by Smith1956:296) says that `they have not made out a theology of sin’. Writing about the Yoruba’s he maintains that any taboo is a `sin’ and breach of any of these `sins’ offends the deity, divinity or the ancestor. It was found out that `sin’ in the Hlubi society is mostly concerned with transgression of morals or community norms. There is a difference in the severity of a `sin’ if it is something done to someone of
your same ethnic group and someone of another group. In the Christian reality
sin is against and in rebellion to God. ‘Sin’ in the Hlubi society is in fact
defined not so much in terms of nature of the act itself but rather of its
consequences. Since witchcraft activities disrupt the harmony of the cosmos
and also harmful to the interests of Hlubis it is ipso facto evil

The following discussion shows that there are two different theoretical
explanations of witchcraft accusations. Among the Hlubi of Qumbu witchcraft
beliefs reject the Western idea of chance. The concept of chance explains
events by means of a probability of cause and effect sequences, which explains
how things happen. The snag is that this concept of chance does not
adequately explain why something happens. So like other Nguni ethnic groups
in South Africa, the Hlubi do not fully trust the concept of chance. Although
they accept death from old age and minor illnesses such as cold and stomach
disorders, yet to them the sources of all deaths and misfortunes are two
external agents - ancestors (sending misfortune as a form of punishment) and
human beings - a witch or sorcerer.

Hammond-Tooke (1974: 335) argues that both religious and magico-
witchcraft belief systems provide alternative theories to the causes of evil,
ilness and misfortune - and whether one or other is employed raises important
questions of values and structural relations. It is as if both religion and the
witch myth recognize a duality in the universe: that between a state of affairs
that is right, moral, normal, good, healthy and safe, and one which is wrong,
immoral, bad, unhealthy, abnormal and dangerous - and provide explanations
for them and techniques for converting one to the other. A state of negative
imbalance between natural and social forces must be returned to equilibrium in
which good relationship to the gods, to the forces of nature and to one's
fellowman, must be achieved. The signs of this imbalance are essentially,
among the South African Bantu, immediate, obvious and physical. Sickness, misfortune, drought, are all signs that balance has been upset, and one of the main objects of religious ritual and the resort to divination and protective magic is to restore it. Both religious and witchcraft beliefs are utilized to explain and control misfortune. But, it is the witch beliefs, which more specifically handle the problem of evil in the universe.

Zuesse (1979:4) classifies religions into two main groups by way of intentionality, namely, religions of structure and religions of salvation. Religions of structure, according to Zuesse, find fulfillment precisely in the norms and eternal relationships, which structure all processes and changes in the world. Religions of salvation, on the other hand, have a low estimation of all that is relative, due to their longing for what is absolute, immutable, final and real. Thus African Traditional Religions, according to Zuesse are religions of structure while Christianity and Islam are religions of salvation.

Like Zuesse, Theo Sundermeier (1993: 124-146) is of the view that the world’s religions can be divided into two groups, namely religions of salvation and religions of reconciliation. Including African Religions in the category of religions of reconciliation, he states that in the case of a religion of reconciliation, the world forms the center of human activities. These activities focus themselves on the fellow human being or neighbour with whom one wants and has to live in harmony since there is otherwise no survival possible. The question is whether Hlubi traditional religion fits neatly into any of the categories postulated by Zuesse and Sundermeier.

An examination of the primal worldview of the Hlubi reveals the emphasis on observation of norms and living by the values in which the society cherishes and this constitutes the `first line of defence against the dreaded monster of
total annihilation’ (Kwenda 1999:2). Thus the ‘ubuntu’ concept among other things, places an emphasis on group solidarity and interest over the whims and egocentricities of the individual. This aspect of group solidarity and communalism sometimes is manifested in burial ceremonies and other rites of passages as well as ‘amalina’ activities. From the foregoing, one will be tempted to describe Hlubi Traditional religion as fitting into this category of religion of structure. But by emphasizing on norms and eternal relationships Zuesse’s typology ignores the salvific and reconciliatory dimensions of the Hlubi traditional religion. Such a reductionistic approach does not touch all the aspects of religion as postulated by Ninian Smart (1973).

It is against this background in which witchcraft activities constitute an anti-social act that seek to deprive an individual and the community and Hlubi society at large of enjoying abundant life. Alleged transgressors or perpetrators of witch activities are ostracized from the community or even sometimes killed. Besides, the stigma and humiliation that the family of such a suspect goes through and that will haunt the family forever is too enormous. Wherein lies the reconciliation in this classic example?

I am a bit uncomfortable with the taxonomical approach of the two writers and would not like to classify the Hlubi religious orientation as either of structure or reconciliation. I see Hlubi religious belief system as overlapping categories and not mutually exclusive. It could have two or more characteristics and therefore mingle the two types of intentionalities.

In chapter three an attempt was made to discuss the historical and socio-economic background of the Hlubi. Among other things, this chapter also deals with the religious history of the Hlubi. Here the aim is to ascertain the
extent the introduction of Christianity impacted on the Hlubi traditional religious discourse.

Secondly, the focus of this chapter is an examination of the phenomenon of witchcraft beliefs in the Hlubi society of Qumbu and South African society in general. Stories and incidents of witch-hunts are documented from interviews with people as well as reports from the public media. Two significant observations can be made on the basis of my fieldwork. First and foremost, older men and women are generally the targets of witchcraft accusations. Secondly, those who spearhead accusations and the punishment of the alleged witches are members of the younger generation. The leaders of witch-hunts are young men, sometimes `Comrades' who are formal or informal members of SANCO (South African National Civics Organisation).

4.1. Supernatural Beliefs And Practices

Like any other primal society, religion permeates Hlubi ontology and no aspect of culture can be discussed without reference to religion. One of the principles underlying the religious world of the tribe is a sense of holistic well being and since supernatural beliefs and practices form religious orientations a brief discussion of this issue will throw light on this study.

The Hlubi believe in a higher order of being, which is a single creator `umdali' or Supreme Being (uthixo). They also believe in the spirits of ancestors (izinyanya) who are the Hlubi’s mediators with the `powers of good’. Thus central to the Hlubi religious ideas is the belief in the multiplicity of spirits in the universe. The Hlubi cosmos is divided into `two inter-penetrating and inseparable, yet distinguishable parts’ namely the world of spirits and the world of human.
Whenever they find themselves in serious trouble, the head of the family calls in a diviner (*igqira*), to interpret the wishes and demands of the ancestors. It must be noted that this office is not hereditary and the diviner holds it through supernatural possession, which usually manifests itself in a strange disease generally, diagnosed only by the `isanuse’, the most skilled and specialist diviner of the locality.

It is believed by the Hlubi that the chief opponents of the diviners are witches and sorcerers whose familiars are feared as much as the witches and sorcerers themselves. At this point it will be worthwhile to explain briefly what these familiars are in Hlubi society. In the astral dimension, witch elements assume the shapes of regular animals that live in the physical world. Witch spirits can assume forms of baboons, dogs, centipedes, snakes, birds, lizards, and insects. Most witches have familiar spirits that serve them in various ways in the para-physical and regular worlds. These spirits have animal forms and appear as birds, reptiles, and domesticated as well as wild animals. But they are more powerful than their physical counterparts. They can think, communicate with their witch masters and fly in the air just like their masters. Not only are most familiars kept for their beauty but also for self-protection, for attacking other witches and spirits, and for various other purposes. They also believe that the crocodile lures humanity to certain destruction; that the horned owl’s cry is an indication of disaster; the iguana and the snake are to be feared. The wagtail
bird, which is always found among grazing cattle, is considered semi-sacred, for to kill it will bring poverty. Should one be found alive in a trap the herd boys will immediately free it. If it is already dead, they will reverently bury it with an offering of a few white beads.

The Hlubi fear the ‘impundulu’ lightning bird, which, it is believed, sets its own fat on fire and so causes lightning as it streaks through the sky. Any time lightning strikes an ‘igqira’ is summoned immediately to prevent a second occurrence.

The Hlubi also believe in ‘uthikoloshe’, a little man covered in coarse hair who normally plays with children on the banks of rivers where he lives, telling them funny stories. The creature can be mischievous and malicious when frustrated by adults.

The above is not meant to imply that there are no Christian and Moslem converts among the Hlubi. One cannot underestimate the impact Christianity, together with Western culture, has had on the Hlubi. This has led to a dilemma in the experiences of many Hlubi. At least two kinds of African Christians have emerged: first, those converts who were able to break completely with their traditional religion and second those with a ‘foot in both worlds’.

Archbishop Tutu (1976:366) speaks of such a tension created as a result of the clash as ‘religious schizophrenia’ in which ‘believers were doing no more than giving lip-service to Christianity’. There is no doubt that urbanization; western education, Christianity and technological changes have had a tremendous impact on the Hlubi society. It is against this background that the study attempts to examine shortly how Christianity was introduced, factors, which aided the spread, and the problems, which Christians encountered. In addition
an attempt is made to ascertain the extent to which the clash of cultures and world-views have affected the persistence or otherwise in belief in witchcraft.

4.2 The Early Missionaries

Before a discussion on the introduction of Christianity is embarked upon some clarification has to be made. Even though traditional religion is prior, the introduction of Christianity among the Hlubi is discussed first because the objective in the subsequent sections is to explore Hlubi belief system in depth. The introduction to Christianity is examined to ascertain the extent it had an impact on the Hlubi belief system.

The general perception of Europeans was that Africans were `primitive', `heathen', `savages', `pagans', and `thiefs' (sic). As Winwood Reade, an explorer in Africa remarked:

`The Negroes are a people without any religion, they have certain practices and certain superstitious fancies, but they have no creed to which they cling like the Mohammedans (sic), the Buddhists and the Jews. They suppose that each people have its own God: and that the white man's God is more powerful than theirs, because the white men are so much richer than themselves’

Wangerman, a German missionary, had made a similar sweeping statement.

`The Kaffir has no God, no religion, no temple, no altar, sacrifice, priest, no prayer, no faith, no resurrection of the dead, no judgement and just retribution, no heaven, no hell

African Religion to the early missionaries is not documentary or scriptural. It lacks a coherent system of theological thought.
Some whites, indeed, felt that it was useless sending missionaries to Africa. They considered it a waste of money and did not think Christianity would have any significant impact on Africans. For them, the money, energy and time wasted could have been more effectively used to help the poor and needy in Britain. For instance, Winwoode Reade vehemently opposed the attempt to evangelize in Africa. The paper he presented to the London Anthropological Society in 1865 states:

*British Christianity ..can never grow in an African soil…I do not say that Christianity in its Eastern form might not teach the Negro honesty and truth and elevate him from his degrading fetish worship to a knowledge of the One God* (1865:cixvi)

There are, some Europeans however, who felt it was their moral duty to assist Africans to get rid of their `fetishes'. A classic example is by Burnard Owen (1865:clixviii), a missionary, who responded to Reade's paper argued that the degraded superstition does not create a situation in which a pure faith such as Christianity can be taught. He further maintained that their conception of Supreme Being was too vague or too erroneous and that the people cling tenaciously on their charms for existence.

Although there were disagreements as to the value of missionary activities in Africa, majority opinion favoured evangelism in Africa for the simple reason that Christian civilization, among other things, would socialize Africans into western civilization. Thus in 1873 a missionary remarked:

*When I carry my torch into the caves of Africa, I meet only filthy birds of darkness* (Blyden 1887:65)
Wonton Schouten also had this to say about Africans in 1665:

`The Khoikhoi although descended from our father Adam, yet show little of humanity that truly they more resemble the unreasonable beasts than reasonable man...having no knowledge of God nor what leads to their salvation. Miserable folk, how lamentable are your pitiful condition! And oh Christians, how blessed is ours' (Elphick 1977:195).

The early missionaries felt that they were prepared to `sacrifice their lives' to go to Africa on a `civilizing mission.

The missionary ideology was based on the fact that there was nothing in the non-Christian culture on which the Christian missionary could build, and therefore every aspect of the traditional non-Christian culture should be destroyed before Christianity could be built up.

### 4.3 Christianity Among The Amahlubi

The Hlubis of Qumbu may be regarded as `newcomers' in Emboland\(^7\). Historically they hailed and migrated from Matatiele and Herschel of Transkei and Escort of Kwazulu-Natal in about 1880). Originally from Natal, branches of the Hlubi chiefdom had been scattered to parts of eastern and north-eastern Cape; a considerable portion, including those under Chief Ludidi, moved into what became the Witterberg reserve, or Herschel, and from there into East
Griqualand, especially the Matatiele district, in the 1860s and 1870s. A number of the Hlubi families were also Christian, progressive cultivators, owners of wagons and ploughs. Chief Ludidi moved back to Matatiele after a disagreement with his son about the distribution of land, but Mtengwane his son, retained control of a large block of Qumbu district, which later formed four substantial locations.

The Hlubi location included Qhanqu, site of Mhlonhlo’s ‘great place’. In 1886, an Anglican Church site was demarcated near the spot (Beinart and Bundy 1987: 111-113). It is interesting to note that in 1922 the rebellion of Hlubi women in Qumbu was traced to this locality. The women staged a boycott to picket shops and blocked customers. This is strange because this was a predominantly Hlubi settlement which previously was noted for its loyalty and support to the state.

The arrival of the Hlubi was a blessing in disguise. They came to Qumbu during the misfortunes of the Pondomise when the might of the Cape government descended on them. The Cape government had asked the Pondomise of Qumbu to assist in crushing the Basutos. Umhlontlo, the Chief of the Pondomise on the advice of his wife felt there was no need to fight his fellow Africans and so he refused to join the forces of the Cape government) the then Qumbu Magistrate remarked

‘it is said this baboon won’t go and attack the Basutos. He has forgotten that we are whites and we wield power’

To show their might and anger some soldiers from Qumbu and Shawbury and its environs attacked the Pondomise of Qumbu. The Pondomise naturally
fought back and killed Hamilton Hope, magistrate at Qumbu and two junior officials. Interestingly, the Pondomise fled to the Basutoland to seek refuge. It was during this time the Hlubis settled in the areas.

Soon after the rebellion a large number of Hlubi people moved into Qumbu under their chief Ludidi and his son Mtengwane. They had also remained loyal and provided levies during the rebellion of 1878-80. They settled close to the missionaries who introduced them to Christianity. And they accepted the new faith faster than their neighbours, the Pondomise, who, according to an interviewee, Canon Bayete, were deeply steeped in their African beliefs and practices. As a result there were many missionaries from various denominations who came there to propagate the gospel. These denominations include Anglican, Methodist, and the Presbyterian. The established denominations in Qumbu at present are Anglican, Methodist, Order of Ethiopia and Bantu Presbyterian. But, in the Hlubi area, the outstanding missionaries have come from the Methodist and the Anglican churches.

4.3.1 Anglican
The Anglican came to the Qumbu district through Society of Saint John Evangelists (S.S.J.E), which had established a mission station at St Cutberts, Tsolo (about 30 kilometres from Qumbu). In fact, Qumbu district relied on the SSJE for its religious needs and change of life. During the Pondomise rebellion in 1880, the staff of this society at Tsolo, true to their mission and purpose as evangelists, took great care of the rebek. The mission station at Tsolo is still in existence although the missionaries have all gone back to England. But the last priest, Father Shrive, appears to have integrated so well
into the African society that he wrote to a member of the Hlubi royal family at Mdeni and pleaded to be buried in Qumbu when he died.

Various accounts have been given for the origin of the first mission station of the Anglican Church at Qhanqu. A Canon Bulwer of St John's College at Umtata is reported to have travelled from Umtata to Mt Frere, Ncayi and Qhanqu to pastor his congregation. According to an informant, Qhanqu which was said to be the first Anglican mission station in Qumbu was under Mt Frere. It was reported that a fat register confirmed, among other things, that Qhanqu was under Mt Frere.

The first mission station of the Anglican was established by the 'sisters and fathers' (missionaries) from Tsolo at Qhanqu now called St Mary. This was a small rectory for Europeans in Qumbu Village. Prominent among the first cream of priests were Revs Buckley, Pringle and Bowen. Minor stations were also established at Culunca, Katkop, Ncoti, Lower Tyira and Tsilitwa (St Jude)\(^1\). Revs Buckley and Pringle are singled out as prominent in effecting changes in the Hlubi area. It is reported that Revd Buckley was the brain behind the building of St Mary Church and mission station at Qhanqu. And that he also established a rectory at Qumbu Village. Fr Buckley (nicknamed inkomo enemata, because he had a streak of eccentricity around him) is credited for the building of Qhanqu Primary School where the bulk of the current black priests in Qumbu were educated. Revd Buckley's successor, Revd John Hugh Pringle, who was later transferred to Kokstad in Griqualand as Archdeacon for supervisory duties, is also credited for the building of St Mathias Church at Mdeni. A woman called Lady Katherine is said to have
planted a tree in memory of Father Pringle for his contribution towards the material and spiritual development of the Hlubis.

In their zeal to Christianise the people in the Qumbu area, Anglican priests from England and Scotland secured financial support from their mother churches overseas to erect church buildings. A classic example is that priests got funds from England to build St Mary Anglican Church and Rectory at Qumbu. The erected church buildings were very strong and well designed.

To ease their transportation problems some of the missionaries managed to import vehicles from their native countries. In very remote areas where it was absolutely impossible to get access to the people for evangelical purposes, horse-drawn carts sent from overseas were used.

Most of the missionaries established schools. Although they secured financial support from mother churches abroad, they utilised community labour to erect the school buildings. African priests also helped missionaries in all their activities. One of the products of Qhanqu Primary School was Canon/Archdeacon C.K Ngewu who was both a preacher and a teacher. The church school depended heavily on lay preachers as teachers and preachers. At Lower Tyira one Revd Msinyathi from Fingoland and some preachers used to come to Qumbu for revival meetings.

4.3.2 Methodist

According to Pauw (1975:19) the vigour and vision with which Wesleyan or Methodist missions were started among the Xhosa dominate all missionary adventures and had tremendous influence on the whole development of churches among the Xhosa. The pioneering effort is traced to the arrival in 1820 of the British settlers on the Eastern frontier of the Cape Colony. Pauw maintains that one group of Settlers was accompanied by Rev. William Shaw,
a Wesleyan minister, who settled with them and ministered to their spiritual needs.

Since the 1830s, the Methodist mission stations, strung out in a chain between the Cape and Natal, had provided foci around which Christian Mfengu and Xhosa families could settle, together with those converted from local chiefdoms (Beinart and Bundy, 1987:111-112). Rev William Shaw established the mission station in Qumbu district at Shawbury around 1843. The missionary station is popular for its Teacher training College and High School (also named after the minister of religion). The station also grew out of Buntingville; the last link in Revd Shaw's chain. The name Shawbury was given by the missionaries to honour their distinguished leader. His activities went beyond Shawbury and spread to the Hlubi area.

Other missionaires who feature prominently in the christianisation process among the Hlubis are Revs Charles White and E. Gedye. Revd E. Gedye followed Revd Charles White (who was at Shawbury from 1858 to 1864). Not only was he a conscientious and an indefatigable worker but he was also an evangelist who travelled long distances to preach. He travelled far afield to visit the homes of Europeans and black Africans (including Hlubis) living on the foothills of the Drakensberg. He laid the foundations of Christianity of the present Tsitsana, that is the Mdeni area. He also arranged to place an evangelist with Chief Umhlonhtlo of the amaMpondomise, who shared borders with the Hlubi. Naturally, the activities of the evangelist spilled over to the Hlubi area. Sub-division stations were established at places such as Mahlubini, Nyanisweni, Kalankomo and Upper Culunca. These villages were chosen because they were relatively larger communities and also centrally located. Black local preachers managed these minor stations. The missionaries assisted by the members built Church schools.
4.3.3 Order of Ethiopia

The Order of Ethiopia was originally an offshoot of Methodist Church. It was formed by James Matta Dwane as an independent church at about 1900 at convocation of priests (nombefundisi) and affiliated to the Church of the Province of South Africa. The objective was, together with other leaders of the Ethiopian Movement, to unite the oppressed, and to recover their personhood in order to find their rightful place in society (Dwane: 1989:5). To accomplish this cherished objective, the leader strived to make Christianity more African by incorporating the essential features of African religion and thus make Christianity more meaningful to the African. Those who played a leading role in the establishment of the Order of Ethiopia in Qumbu were the Mpumlwana family who settled at the Emboland in the 1900's. But Ethiopianism among the Hlubi can undoubtedly be traced to a Michael Mpumlwana. On arrival in Emboland to evangelise the Mpumlwanas approached the chiefs of five villages. These villages were Mdeni, Nyanisweni, Cokomfeni, Lwandlana and Ncoti. The Church drew a large support from the people of these villages because the leadership of the church appealed to the people with one message - Ethiopianism was the only church of Africans particularly those who were dissatisfied with the mainline churches led by their white oppressors.

Michael Mpumlwana had a son who was also a minister of religion. Pumelele Mpumlwana, a University graduate teacher, was advised by the father to leave the teaching profession to join him in the propagation of the gospel in Qumbu. Pumelele was given the task of overseeing the flock in the Emboland. And his basic objective was to spread the gospel among the Hlubi and the Pondomise tribes of Qumbu. One of the cardinal aims of the Order of Ethiopia was to work for the development of human resources for both short and long terms. Pursuing this lofty and noble idea, Pumelele Mpumlwana founded St Bartholomew Secondary School at Mdeni in 1945. The school was named
after the Mdeni Church and Mission. It had pupils who came from different areas of the present Eastern Cape. The amaHlubi are very proud of Pumelele, the school’s first Principal. And St Bartholomew today boasts distinguished scholars and businessmen and women, among whom are doctors, lawyers, school principals and teachers, university and technikon lecturers, nurses, nationalists, ministers of religion and many more.

So successful was the spread of Ethiopianism that Chiefs and headmen of villages offered sites for the building of the churches. As a rebel and separatist group, led by black Africans the Ethiopians were, of course, financially handicapped. The priests and converts, unlike the white missionaries, had to raise funds for the erection of church buildings and mission stations from local sources. But the emphasis on ‘black consciousness and/or Africanness' made such a significant impact on the people, that people usually responded positively to the appeal for funds. For the church buildings were perceived by both the members of the church and the entire village as a ‘community property'.

In the 1970's a Revd Gqwabaza Zalisile (1970-85, 1987-89), a Hlubi was appointed as the priest in charge of the Mdeni mission station, which is a predominantly Hlubi area. Although not an architect by profession, he had an exceptional gift of a trained or graduate of Architecture. He is credited with the designing and erection of most of the church buildings in the stronghold of Ethiopianism; namely, Stagameni, Nobamba, Debeza, Lower Lwandlana, Mdeni, Ncoli, Nyanisweni, Cokomfeni and Lwandlana. Other priests include Revds Manyaole (1989-1991), Eric Busakwe (1992- May 1995) and Qondile Alfred Solilo (June 1995 to date).
4.3.4 Effects of Christian mission on the Hlubis

Christianity in Hlubi has been part of a historical process that brought the Hlubi into the modern world economy, providing them with a mission education, and beliefs that prepared them to become labour migrants and workers in the urban areas and mining cities in South Africa. Anglican, Methodist and Order of Ethiopia converted a large number of Hlubi. These churches have produced schoolteachers, civil servants, university teachers, entrepreneurs, and politicians. The picture offers a glimpse of a community that has witnessed tremendous changes. Within a span of five decades, the AmaHlubi have witnessed the penetration of Europeans, the arrival of Christian missionaries, the establishment of schools, the construction of roads linking other tribes and villages, and the establishment of a modern state.

Christianity with its doctrines and teachings introduced a new cluster of beliefs and bound it to the economic and political processes of the global world. The Christian concepts of God (Uthixo), Jesus (Jesu), the Holy Spirit (Umoya), Satan (Satana) and angels (uwelo) were meant to explain problems of evil and realities in life. The features of the new religion, to a lesser extent, were linked to similar features of the traditional religious discourse. The image of Uthixo/Umkulunkulu, the omnipresent, aloof creator, and Jesu as his son and a spirit were on the same order as the concepts of Supreme Being, divinities and ancestor which were features in Hlubi traditional religion. Satana, even though subordinate to God was described as the source of all evil and misfortunes. It should be noted that Africans were not embracing Christianity in a completely new way when they adopted the Christian faith. It is worth noting that the primary function of traditional religion had been to give protection to the individual and community from evil. With the introduction of Christianity the fight against the forces of evil involved the same approach, which meant that the ‘new faith’ retained the functions of African traditional
religion. The Christian features such as exorcisms, the use of holy water, the wearing of rosaries and the use of symbols of Maria to cast out evil have parallels in the use of charms, medicines and amulets in African religion and therefore, not new to Africans. For Ntsikana, Christianity was not something totally new and alien, but something which fulfilled what he already knew (Louis Pirouet 1990).

Unfortunately, the Jewish view of women as inferior as well as Biblical portrayal of women not as a primary necessity, but as a helper to man only exacerbated the plight of women in the Hlubi society.

The mission churches and the colonial government did not recognize either ancestors or witches. This always put Chiefs, Christian headmen and heads of descent groups and their subjects in a dilemma. Villagers expected the chief to perform the annual harvest and planting rituals to his ancestors for their welfare. The chief was also to help solve witchcraft accusation issues. As a Native Authority, the chief was supposed to uphold the colonial law prohibiting practices related to witchcraft and the adjudication of witchcraft disputes. In the eyes of the colonial government witchcraft was not a ready explanation for mundane mishaps and misfortunes.

Respondents gave a number of reasons that aided the work of the missionaries in the Hlubi area. First and foremost, it was alleged that the missionaries tried to get close to the traditional leaders and influence them. The missionaries felt that the success of their enterprise was contingent upon securing the goodwill of the chiefs. In the initial stages of their missionary enterprise, they sometimes requested the chiefs to assist them to assemble people at the chief's kraal for the purpose of intimating the people the objective of their visit. They
also approached the chiefs for permission to establish in their area and preach freely and also give them sites for mission station. It was normal for the royal family to be given some presents such as tobacco, blankets, iron equipment, wagons and matches, and drinks to ensure their much-needed co-operation. Besides ingratiating themselves with the royal family the `goods of civilization' were given as the fruits and symbol of Christianity. Although the chiefs could not be used to persuade people to accept the new faith, they were a great asset to the missionaries as far as establishment of schools was concerned. An informant (a headman) suggested that it was a deliberate attempt, so to speak, to get close to them in order to break their front and undermine their customs and traditions (which in fact were not comprehensible to them). In their relations with these leaders, they attacked all but encouraged few of the religious practices of the African people. For instance, the missionaries discouraged boys' initiation rites (abaqweta) into manhood. Specifically, the circumcision of the initiates by traditional leaders was an objectionable feature. The missionaries felt it was safer for the abaqweta to be circumcised by doctors trained in Western medicine.

Through their sermons, the missionaries introduced western ways of life. For them, to be illiterate was tantamount to being in complete darkness. What made them more convinced was the fact that pupils went to school almost naked. School children put on tribal wear such as ngubela. This was a short loincloth worn around the waist with the penis put in or encased in a sheath. With the advent of the missionaries Hlubis, like any other Nguni tribes, started wearing shirts and shorts and this naturally enticed people to flock into the churches and the church schools. The emerging Western way of life however, became a differentiating influence separating Christians from non-Christians with their old ways. Existing social order was therefore undermined. Christian converts also found themselves in two worlds - as Africans and Christians. But
gradually as the community began to grow in numbers and the new faith was spread over the district the dividing wall between Christians and non-Christians got broken as they all lived together providing power for unifying society.

Some mission stations also operated in atmosphere of inter tribal conflicts and these centres appeared to be safe to reside. They could act as a refuge for people considered deviants in the Hlubi society. Such people include escapees from forced marriages, those accused of witchcraft, widows and elders neglected, young girls in love with men at the stations and people running away from field work. Mission stations also provided clinics for the communities. By providing schools, churches, teaching of hygiene and child-welfare by clinics, modern agricultural methods, missionaries served as agents of rural development. It is an understatement to say Christianity had and still has an impact on the Hlubi. Hlubi Christians had imbibed the doctrines, teachings and values of Christianity. Many Hlubi Christians followed and practiced the teachings within the tenets of Christianity. At the same time converts continued to participate in African traditional rituals and customs. The implication is that Christianity was therefore accepted in addition to, not in place of, traditional conceptions.

Many Hlubi Christians practiced certain African traditional rituals like *ukubuyisa* (the ritual of re-incorporation of the living-dead), *imbeleko* (ritual inclusion of babies into the clan) and *ukwaluka* and intonjane (rite of passage into adulthood) and *lobola* (the traditional process followed in customary marriage by *isiXhosa* speaking people). Also, they recognized the African traditional world of spirits, for they were staunch adherents of the prayer-movement known as *Indaba zosindiso*. The movement is a Christian attempt to cope with the existence and effects of traditional spirits upon the individual.
and its rituals include inspired singing, prayer, the blessing of water and other personal accessories. To be sure, this was necessary as response to a range of African experiences and beliefs that were ignored by the mainline Church. However, this latter dimension in converts’ identity was exercised discreetly outside the Church because they realized that missionaries were demanding the abandonment of so many customs and culture. This resulted in what seemed to be a split personality and an identity crisis because it led to the denigration and destruction of their Africanness.

Indeed, not unexpectedly mainline Christian Churches, because they are purely and historically Western, had ignored and undermined African traditional ways of seeing, being and doing that were an integral part of many African Christians’ lives. The Hlubi realized that missionaries were undermining and demanding the abandonment of so many customs and culture (including lobola, polygyny and circumcision). Consequently many Hlubi Christians left mainline Churches and joined the African Initiated Churches (AIC’s) where they believed they could express their Africanness and for that matter feel at home. Those who left mainline Churches did not want to abandon either the Christian faith or their Africanness and thus have found a place in the AIC’s where they feel at home as Africans and as Christians. Their attempt was to be loyal to both identities as Africans and Christians. This is not to say this is the major reason for the emergence of AIC among the Hlubi. Scholars like Sundkler (1948, 1961), Pauw (1960) Oosthuizen (1968), Daneel (1971,1984), Mbiti (1976), Kiernan (1990), Jules (1991) for example have given explanations for the emergence of AICs in general but since this is not the objective of this chapter nothing further will be said about it. Suffice it to say the AICs emerged as a result of the clash of the two orientations and also served as a place where African customs and or traditional rituals could be
accepted and combined with Christian symbols and Christian ritual language to accommodate both African traditions and the Christian faith.

The account indicated here does not mean that there were undue misunderstanding and bad feelings between missionaries and the Hlubi. If there was that sordid relationship, it is unlikely that the gospel would have taken root and made the strong impact that it had, in fact, made. The churches were a new type of community among the Xhosa. Pauw (1975:21) paints a general picture of such new communities. These were a collection of individuals living together different from their traditional kinship-based social structure. They were now under the authority of the missionary, not under their chief. Their problem now is to do away with all their traditional Xhosa beliefs and practices including ancestor veneration, witchcraft and sorcery, divining, and medicines, as well as many customs like traditional dancing, giving and receiving *ikhazi* (marriage goods) and polygyny. Pauw maintains that the pattern of division of labour was changed, the skill of reading and other knowledge-based subjects were introduced in Western schools and new occupations were introduced. Western styles of clothing, housing and residential settlement replaced those of Xhosa culture (Pauw 1975: 22ff).

If there were any bad feelings at all, it was because the beginning of the missionary work among the Xhosa in general coincided with a period of intense unrest and conflict. The missionary adventure began in a period described by Peires (1989: 71) as South Africa’s Hundred Years’ War. What was considered to be skirmishes between white settlers and Xhosa inhabitants of the eastern Cape had blossomed into full-scale wars, the Frontier Wars. Between 1778 and 1878 there were at least nine major battles for which history maintains Britain supplied soldiers and weaponry for the white population. The scenario was a battle between a cavalry that used firearms and
supported by a `super power' on one hand and foot soldiers who were armed only with spears and came from loosely organised chiefdoms on the other. The other provocative policy was the fact that white settlers were repeatedly established intentionally either along the borders with the Xhosa (the 1820 settlers) or in their midst. This can be illustrated by Sir George Grey's example in which he settled German legionaries beyond the `borders' in 1857 ostensibly to serve as `good examples' to the Xhosa. The period was also marked by havoc wrought by the armies of the Zulu king Tshaka among many different tribes to the north and north-east of the former Transkei, causing numerous migrations of tribes including the Hlubi, which created a need for more land and cattle. Towards the end of the period was the prophetic activity associated with the clash between Whites and Bantu (Zarwan 1976: 520-21; Peires 1989: 33-36). Mlanjeni, the Riverman and a diviner exhorted the Xhosa to drive the Whites into the sea. Among other things, he said he had extraordinary powers and assistance of the ancestors to do this and make the enemies cannon balls and bullets turn into water.

The climax of the prophetic activity was the tragic cattle killing of 1856-57. Nongqawuse, the niece (or adopted daughter) of Mhlakaza, a diviner claimed to have seen important tribal ancestors accompanied by Russians who had been fighting the English in the Crimean War and who had now come to help the Xhosa against the British. This prophecy was given an utmost importance because it came from a supernatural realm of spirits. According to Nongqawuse the message indicated that the people were to purify themselves by getting rid of all witchcraft and then ritually kill their cattle and destroy all supplies of grain. It can be seen that this was a major step beyond the prophecy of Mlanjeni, the Riverman, who exhorted the people to slaughter only dun and cream-coloured cattle so as to assure victory against the whites. Nongqawuse maintained that once the injunction was carried out the British would be driven
into the sea and therefore, the people would have their freedom. They were also going to experience the abundance of maize and cattle and the return of their dead loved ones. The result was a catastrophic death of cattle and destruction of food and the effects of starvation. The tragic and lamentable situation has been described as a millennial dream closely associated with the tension of the contact situation, and typical of the nativistic movements of primitive folk on the margins of the white man’s civilized world’ in which the prospective and retrospective mythology meet, and ‘the vision of the future is a new path to follow back again into the past’ (Redfield 1962:126-7). It must be understood that Nongqawuse proclaimed the message during a condition of despair and hopelessness that the entire Xhosa land faced. She was only articulating the concern of the Xhosas who were in dire need of supernatural intervention of a precarious situation.

From the discussion of the religious history of the Hlubis, it is not an understatement to say that many Hlubis (or Africans) became Christians by means of formal education. It is for this reason that missionaries and churches used schools as an agent of recruitment. Many missions in the Qumbu area are thus known because of their schools and colleges. The question that can be raised, at this stage, however, is the extent to which Hlubis have been Christianised, and if so, the degree to which Christian concepts have replaced the African worldview. This observation is necessary because of the persistence and tenacity with which traditional religious beliefs are still held and the continued participation of the people in traditional rituals and ceremonies. Against this background, we propose to examine the Hlubi belief system in the following sections.
4.4 The Concept Of Hlubi Witchcraft

In attempting to understand witchcraft among the Hlubi, it will be important to try and place it within a wider framework because witchcraft beliefs are part of a wider system of concepts that underlie and reflect perceptions of the world and of humanity’s place in it. The cognitive system is usually referred to as a cosmology, or world-view. Kearney (1975: 247) regards world-view as virtually synonymous with cognitive anthropology, relating to a minimal set of concepts such as those about the self, the other, relationship, classification, space, time and causality. Hammond-Tooke (1989: 33) has broadly defined world-view as `all cognitive ways of conceptualising and classifying the world, including kinship terminology, botanical and zoological taxonomies, the nature and treatment of disease, notions of `good’ government, and even such types as knowledge as the geographical and technical. Hammond-Tooke argues that most descriptions of non-western idea systems, `world-view’ has been treated as coterminous with religion, and rightly points out that would seem contrary to intuition to limit the concept of world-view to religion. But Kiernan writes about the multiple dimensions to the notion of `world-view’ and `cosmic model’, namely religious, metaphysical and secularly physical. According to Hammond-Tooke, `world-view’ then refers to all attempts to make intellectual sense of the world and of life, so that in the broadest sense it involves theories of explanation. World-view purports to explain or interpret, and making use of symbolism frequently does this. In sum it is principally an attempt to make sense of the world, and to impose meaning on it. In other words worldviews are the conceptions, explicit and implicit, an individual or society has of the limits and workings of its world (Haviland 2002: 352). It can be said that over a period of time a worldview is formed in the mind of the child through enculturation and this is one of the reasons why belief in witchcraft becomes endemic and problematic.
Against this background witchcraft fulfils an important social function. It is an avenue through which people can deal with hatred, hostility, frustration, jealousy and guilt. This is why Singleton (1980:14-15) thinks the witch epitomises the exact opposite of what a given culture considers normal and normative. Belief in witchcraft is:

`... part and parcel of a fundamental outlook on, and basic option about, life in the world and in society. It is not just an ugly excrescence that can be excised without jeopardizing the whole. Remove witchcraft, and substantially sound edifice could crumble' (Singleton 1980:31).

The study of witchcraft is therefore, important since protection from witchcraft activities has become a common concern. Almost all indigenous churches include exorcist activities in their programmes since failure to do so amounts to losing members to churches that include such activities. Thus some scholars now observe the `pentecostalisation of Christianity’ (Owusu Bediako 1999, Allan Anderson 2001) as an effort of African Initiated Churches to liberate their congregation from the shackles of witchcraft and demons.

The Hlubi word for witchcraft is *ubugwirha*. A witch is also called *umtakati* (used for both male and female). Though the word `witch' applies to both sexes among the Hlubi, females are the ones generally accused of bewitching people. Female witches are believed to outnumber the males by a considerable margin. It is also believed that females are more active in bewitching and use their power more frequently to cause harm than to do well. Their brand of witchcraft is considered to be more potent, and they are more aggressive in their witching activities than males. Generally, witches in Africa are portrayed as antisocial and considered as enemies of life. Bosch (1987:46) uses Xhosa word to describe witches.
\textit{Umona}' means malice, avarice, envy, selfishness, individualism, exclusiveness, and vindictiveness. In Xhosa culture umona signifies the quintessence of witchcraft, the personification of evil. The person who has umona has turned his or her back on the community and is seeking gain at another’s expense, acting in vile self-interest and refusing to share with others what he or she possesses. For the witch, 'hell is other people', the witch is the utter egotist whose behaviour subverts the social order.'

The quotation raises a number of pertinent issues. The activities of witches and sorcerers are directed against humankind. These forces that are always at work prevent the individual from enjoying abundant life, or fulfilling his/her destiny. The predicament of the individual also impacts on the immediate family, community and the entire society since they are also not able to enjoy the fruits of labour of members of their society. In such situations the society is called upon to shoulder the burden brought about by the activities of these antisocial forces. The value of Xhosa society, which thrives on the popular saying \textit{`umntu ngumntu ngabantu'} (I am because we are), is therefore, undermined.

Data collected revealed that social inversions may also be categorised with and or utilised in some way to characterise witches. It is also possible that those appropriating the image of the witch will combine these inversions with physical inversions. People who are quarrelsome, secretive, fussy, inquisitive, greedy, talkative, ugly and have strange or unusual features and particularly old women are accused of witchcraft practices. People with `inverted' personalities such as a woman who has a beard and a moustache may be a witch. Fussy mothers-in law and rival wives may be accused of practising witchcraft. Bestiality, insanity, and theft are associated with witchcraft. Lazy
and envious relatives and neighbours of witchcraft may also accuse prosperous people.

Witchcraft is an accepted reality in the Hlubi society, although some of the respondents expressed serious doubts as to its existence. According to my informants witchcraft is not often talked about because of the social disruption it causes through revenge or elimination from society. Most misfortunes such as death, sickness, bad luck and lack of progress in life, withering and failure of crops, drying up milking cows and nursing mothers, barrenness, impotency and so on are attributed to witches. The witch is the source of all evil. A spiritual force, for example, is responsible for a car, which overturns - *umtakati utakate ubani* (a witch has done it). Thus the Hlubi general understanding of witchcraft conforms to the definition that it is the use of an inherent or esoteric or psychic power for a definite purpose, either to cause injury to health and property or to do good.

The statement below by a 50-year-old Hlubi and Deputy Principal of a High School aptly expresses witchcraft as an ever-present threat and an existential predicament.

"The inability of doctors to find a cause for my brother's sudden illness, just a day before his marriage only confirmed my belief in witchcraft.

After I had explained natural causes of death and mysterious deaths, an informant asked me a question "*Mlungu*" (Xhosa word for a white man but also used for a foreigner who always speaks English), how do you explain three mysterious deaths in a family, one following the other at short intervals?"

Although the remarks above come from an individual and unexpectedly an enlightened person it echoes how Hlubis value the beauty of life. Any threat to
life means an alienation from the community. Illness, together with other forces undermines a wholeness of life.

Those who subscribe to the existence of witchcraft perceive it to be part of African culture. Instances were cited when witchcraft were positively used. A classic example was when lightning was utilised to fell trees but in recent times lightning, they averred, is used to strike and kill human beings. It was also expressed that in the 1980's the trend was the use of witchcraft for political gains.

Some educated people argue that witchcraft is a superstitious nonsense that should be rooted out by education and Christianity. To them, witches do not exist since we are now living in a world ruled by biology, physics, Christianity and modern technology. This group consisted of Christians who argue that it was an evil spirit, which forced individuals to commit evil because of jealousy and greed. It is interesting to note the inconsistency displayed by this group. This group, by identifying the source of `evil spirits' are indirectly acknowledging the existence of strange or anti-social forces - even if they are not called `witches'.

Yet many of these educated people, while publicly dismissing and denouncing witchcraft as superstitious balderdash, privately believe in it. To them, witchcraft is a reality beyond dispute, whether or not they had personally experienced its nefarious effects. Die-hard sceptics of witchcraft frequently find themselves face to face with phenomena and events that defy reason and rationality. The powers of witchcraft are part of mysterious forces of nature, which only the initiated understands and could exploit, either for good or evil.

However, some of the educated informants tended to be philosophical and non-committal about witches being the cause of misfortunes and deaths in the
surveyed area. Respondents in this category maintained that whilst one was inclined to dismiss witches as a bunch of poppycock, it was very difficult to prove its non-existence scientifically. They argued that the more one reflected on the strange incidents the more one was compelled to accept the reality of witchcraft. Two incidents below were narrated to buttress this point.

Expressing his opinion about witchcraft, a 32 year old young man at Mdeni village had this to say `Witchcraft is a belief but people cannot prove it scientifically. Sometimes one is inclined to dismiss it, yet the more one thinks of strange incidents the more one is compelled to accept it as a reality in the Hlubi society. A friend disappeared after watching a soccer match and after a drinking spree. It was later learnt that a car had knocked him down after alighting from a taxi. The question then is how can a university student be so careless and cross the road without ascertaining if a car was coming from the other side of the road? The post mortem report revealed that he had a tumour in the brain and also he was drunk. ' For the informant, the scientific or medical explanation was insufficient and therefore unacceptable. Some anti-social forces were responsible for the brain tumour and the drunkenness!

The second incident also goes as follows: `Two weeks ago, a 26-year-old bricklayer was burnt to death in a veld. The bricklayer was on his way to a morning duty when he met his brother who had come from Umtata the previous night. His brother asked him to take a `tot' of a brandy. No sooner had he finished drinking than visitors started streaming into the brother’s room. In spite of protests by the bricklayer, his brother asked him to stay for some time. The bricklayer realised later that he was drunk so he decided to go and sleep. At about 13h00 when he woke up from bed he observed that the house was deserted. On enquiring he learnt that his relatives have all gone to the mountain to stop an inferno. He also joined the group but unfortunately he
went to the wrong place. He was caught in a wildfire and could not get out of the inferno. He was burnt like a piece of paper. The community felt that the man died under mysterious circumstances and that witches had a hand in this unnatural death! But he was drunk and the fire was strong!

The two incidents indicated above defy explanation. They are associated with `carelessness' and `coincidence/accident'. For the Hlubi such an explanation is unacceptable. The source of the `inexplicable incident is traced to anti-social forces working against natural order, denying the university student and the bricklayer the opportunity of reaping the fruits of their labour.

Looking at witchcraft from a medical point of view, an Hlubi medical doctor did not dismiss the belief. `It is something connected to mental frames and people have become victims. It is an attempt to look for an answer regarding something unpleasant in real life situations. It could be a physical injury, running stomach and so on. The battleground is in a setting where people do not relate cause and effect in any one instance. It is hoped something better can come out of it ---INGAKA i.e. strength to recover'.

**4.5 Women And Witchcraft**

Whilst the existence of witchcraft is not disputed or confirmed, it can be argued that in a patriarchal society such as the Hlubi, it is not difficult to explain why women are often accused of witchcraft activities. Men wield power and, therefore, generally tend to be accusers. The incident below is a classic example of how vulnerable women are as far as social injustice is concerned.
A nurse at Mtonzelo who was working at the Nessie Knight Hospital at Sulenkama, had children who were said to be doing very well both in school and at their workplace compared with other mothers in the area. People attributed it to witchcraft. Apart from her own salary, her working children provided her with all her material needs. As a result she was a target of gossips. Obviously, the reason for the hostile attitude towards the nurse was nothing but sheer envy. If she was employing witchcraft to protect and enhance the potentialities of her children, why can’t other women and men at Mtonzelo use witchcraft to do well just like this lady and her children? Why are African societies still suffering from HIV/AIDS and other chronic diseases, underdevelopment, political instability, economic malaise and brain drain if witchcraft, sorcery and other African spiritual science can be used to change disorder and let Africans live in comfort and luxury?

At Ncoti recently, there was an incident involving a 35-year-old man who killed an old couple. He accused them of bewitching him. The son of this murderer engineered another mischief. He incited some young men at a memorial service to kill a woman he believed has been practising witchcraft. That same evening the plot was reported to the headman at Mdeni Great Place. It was later alleged that the woman was kidnapped by the youth (including her own son!) and sent to the forest. She was forced to drink acid (from a car battery), her body soaked with petrol and set alight later. The burnt corpse was left in the forest to be licked by dogs. When the news got to the headman, he alerted the police who apprehended the youths involved. It was reported on 20 March 1997 that two of the accused were jailed for 20 years and another imprisoned for 16 years.

Women are taken as symbols of disorder. `Disorder' can be used in either of two basic senses: first, there is the socio-political sense of `civil disorder' as in
a rowdy demonstration, a tumultuous assembly, a riot, a breakdown of law and order. Second, ‘disorder’ is also used to refer to an internal malfunction of an individual, as when we speak of a disordered imagination or a disorder of the stomach or intestines. The term thus has application to the constitution of both the individual and the state. Women, it is held, are a source of disorder because their being, or their nature, is such that it necessarily leads them to exert a disruptive influence in social and political life. Women have a disorder at their very centres - in their morality -, which can bring about the destruction of the state. Women thus exemplify one of the ways in which nature and society stand opposed to each other. Moreover, the threat posed by women is exacerbated because of the place, or social sphere, for which they are fitted by their natures - the family. It should be noted that the very concept of being an Hlubi is based on the notion of social collective (ubuntu). At the same time the social field also contains another set of beliefs related to the individual, women who have witchcraft. Arising from this social field is that the aim of the witch (either a man or woman) is not directed towards the ‘ubuntu’ principle but to the individual and his or her knowledge, aspirations, and social goals (Bond 1976.135). This therefore, raises the issue of contradictions and oppositions inherent in witchcraft discourse.

Those who accuse women of disorder reflect on the role of the woman as mother and creator of societies (Sadik 1989). The central role of a woman is to produce children to maintain the family or the clan (Rattray 1927). They also nurture and maintain the home. It is women who reproduce and have the major responsibility for educating the next generation. It is the mother who turns a social, bisexual babies into little ‘boys’ and ‘girls’. Women's guardianship of order reaches beyond motherhood. Within the shelter of domestic life women impose an order, a social pattern, and thus give meaning to the natural world of birth and death and other physical life. Women are direct mediators
between nature and society (Bond 1976: 114). It is clear from the foregoing that this belief in the essential subversiveness of women is of extremely ancient origin and is deeply embedded in mythological and religious heritage.

As agents of disorder (and as indicated in incidents in the chapter) women undermine the element of balance between natural and social forces, which the Hlubi cherish and strive for in all their endeavours. There is however an inherent contradiction in the position of women as mothers and as destroyers of life.

The question that comes to the fore is whether virtually every woman is a witch. The explanation why women constitute a majority of the accused in witchcraft activities might be that they outnumber men but there is no evidence to indicate that women outnumber men in all African societies. The other tension with this argument is whether women constitute a homogeneous group and therefore their experiences, interests and desires in societies are the same. Following the implementation of the Apartheid policy, Hlubi men, like any other ethnic grouping South Africa were drawn to the larger cities and mostly to the mining areas to seek work. Women were living alone more than men. In view of the patriarchal nature of Hlubi society, a woman living alone without the financial and moral support of father and husband had little legal or social redress for wrongs and were therefore susceptible to psychological stress. Not unexpectedly, they naturally tend to grumble or curse more than persons having effective influence in society. A physically weak, socially isolated, financially handicapped, and legally powerless old woman could fight back with her spiritual powers. Again this explanation is not applicable in all situations.
4.6 Acquisition Of Witchcraft

According to the Hlubi of Qumbu, witchcraft can be acquired in several ways. It can be acquired by birth. If the mother is a witch her child inherits it. A woman who is not a witch can also give birth to a witch. This is related to the ecological influence on health. Witches and sorcerers are believed to pollute the environment by their activities at night. It is believed that witches wash their filth in nearby streams before returning home after their nocturnal activities. The stream thus becomes riddled with dangers including witchcraft. The first woman who steps into the stream to fetch water for her household chores would have the next child infected with the witch spirit. The unfortunate babies thus born realise their predicament only when they are fully grown.

Another way of acquiring the spirit is through the contact with objects amenable to witchcraft. These objects may be unconsciously picked up, swallowed or received. A witch may symbolically present his or her power in the form of a bead, a piece of cloth, ear-rings, necklace, an egg and so on to a person with whom s/he has a favourable disposition - either relatives especially grandmothers or people who are not even related by blood. Below is the story of a self confessed witch.

`I was 12 years old and my grandfather told me he would bless me because he had affection for me more than his sons. He took me to a forest near a stream. Some few minutes later a snake appeared and licked up my whole body. The snake went back into the stream. No sooner had the snake coiled into the river than a voice said `I will marry you'. I realised later that the voice was a `river woman' (a snake). I was then given some sweet concoction to drink. After
drinking I noticed that I was full of evil. That was the beginning of my witchcraft activities.

Witchcraft can also be purchased for prosperity in trade, to use against enemies and/or rivals. In the business world people believe buying cheap things can lead one to acquire the spirit accidentally. It can also be acquired from the devil. It is believed demons can at times thrust the evil power of witchcraft on people and coerce them into using it against their neighbours.

The image, which emerges with the method of acquisition of witchcraft, is related with dualism. This is in line with structuralists’ assertion that human mind likes to categorise in complimentary and opposed pairs: chaos and order, nature and culture, animal and human, female and male, good and bad and so on.

4.7 Activities

Informants listed a number of activities of witches. Their activities are nocturnal and witches are believed to operate in groups. A self confessed witch and now a converted Christian gave startling information. ‘In Gwadana forest there are all sorts of people, young and old, rich and poor, teachers, doctors, priests and the like. Some of these people are treated as slaves’. The groups respect and observe hierarchy or institutional structures. It is said their activities are spiritual. They normally leave their bodies in their houses and their souls journey on animals such as baboons and horses. They also fly to their meeting places. It is believed that ‘when they leave the body they turn themselves upside down. They walk with their feet in the air, that is, with the head down and have their eyes at the back of the ankle joints’. They fly to Kappa (Cape Town) within seconds’ says a 50-year-old woman. Meeting
places include football fields and the top of trees. They often emit flames from
their eyes, ears, and armpits as they move and ‘walk’ on their heads on the
ground with their feet in the sky. Witches eat the soul of their victims and the
flesh of their victims is shared in order of ranks. They provide the flesh of their
victims in turns. Evils attributed to witches include the following. They inflict
material loss on people. It is believed they make people drunkards, cause
barrenness, impotency and other diseases. Witches are the architects of
accidents, falling trees as well as broken homes. Thus the Hlubi believe that
sickness and misfortune are caused by ubugqwirha. Witches are believed to
have ‘four eyes: two ordinary eyes and two invisible eyes. Witches also use
witch-gun, a mysterious weapon with which victims are shot from
considerable distances.

Before touching on confessions of a witch let us discuss parallels of African
and European meetings. At this juncture, some digression will be helpful here.
Various approaches to European witchcraft beliefs have been adopted in the
past. In a nutshell, there has been the tendency to describe all witchcraft as
‘bogus morbid phantasy, and vain superstition of the dark middle ages’
(Debrunner 1961:32). The situation only changed after 1921 when Professor
Murray, an authority on Egyptology excited students with the scientific
exposition of the existence of witchcraft cult in Egypt. Among other things,
she claimed that in those days the witches had been organised in covens, and
that the evidence of the witch trials must be taken seriously, and that the
credulity of disbelief was perhaps quite as inaccurate as the credulity of belief
had ever been. Debrunner (1961:32) maintains that in the Middle Ages in
Europe there must have been real witch meetings in the flesh, in groups of a
dozen and their leader, forming a so-called ‘coven’. He argues that the cult,
being the official religion of pre-Christian times, was gradually driven into
secrecy by Christianity, and degenerated into an antisocial magic counter
society, parodying the Church and indulging in orgies on their `sabat’. Debrunner adds that this was `a religious feast – the meeting of a secret society, an institute picnic, a drunken orgy, and a carnival all combined with the overriding sense of conscious rebellion against God and orthodox society, and with the threat of probable death, if there was discovery’ (1961:32). History tells us that towards the end of the witch-persecution, fewer meetings took place. Based on the foregoing and stories given in the discussion there seems to be some interesting similarities in witch meetings between European and African. The question is whether at our present time or in the past, the Hlubi witches also really met in flesh and body, as a secret society such as the European witches did. It is very difficult to answer such a question because there seems to be little or no literature on this issue. In spite of all the stories about the activities, boasts and lofty claims of witches, what are generally observed among the Hlubi are occasional meetings by various clans and families to discuss matters of common concern.

Below are some of the confessions of a Rev. Maci, who claims to have been a witch before he was converted to Christianity.

After I had undergone training for about two months under the sea, I started immediately putting into practice what I learnt from there. I went to meetings and conferences of witches. We used to go out and work at night. We normally took away a person to `gwadana’ or `bijolo’(forests and meeting places of witches) whilst sleeping and left a duplicate (ukuthwebula) of him or her in his/her room. I’ve killed people and sometimes took their kidneys and sold them. Somewhere in Cape Town I killed a white man and took his head and used it as a washing basin so that people will fear me.
Weird dreams are associated with witchcraft. Dreams of fighting people, or being beaten or chased of house burning, having intercourse with strange people particularly of the same sex are all signs of witchcraft.

Witches are believed to possess powers to manipulate supernatural forces. A classic example is when people in petty squabbles to settle scores use lightning. Rev Zongwana, an Anglican priest, narrated an incident in which a Madikiza ran away from his village to his church for hiding because he was going to be struck by lightning from a colleague (Mabanyaza). Madikiza went to the priest and told him that he had powers to cause lightning but he was not as powerful as Mabanyaza. Rev Zongwana and Madikiza fasted and prayed for three days. Whilst praying on the third day there came a terrifying thunder and they could feel that a fierce wind was blowing towards the church building. Strangely enough none of them got hurt. Rev Zongwana concluded that Madikiza went back home rejoicing and that was the moment of his conversion to Christianity. On the question why Madikiza came to the mission house for refuge, Rev Zongwana argued that it was because Madikiza acknowledged the omnipotence and sovereignty of the Christian God. He jokingly added that Madikiza might have heard of the arrival of a young and dynamic priest. When the priest was asked whether the incident (lightning) was not a sheer coincidence, he dismissed the suggestion and cited instances of the work of evil forces in the Bible. He maintained that God had given priests the authority over demons and that explains why some priests concern themselves with exorcisms. He said `although I do not doubt the existence of witchcraft I do not think they can bewitch me. I am more powerful than they are'. Rev Zongwana's argument, reasonable and sound as it may be, is a classic example of the predicament and conflict in many Africans who are living in two worlds - as Christians and Africans.
4.8 Types Of Witches

Two types of witchcraft are distinguished. These are the day and night witches (*abathwebuli*). It is believed that witches act in groups. Victims are collectively consumed at nocturnal predations (Shaw 1992). The rendezvous for these night witches are associated with curious places. For example top huge trees mostly at the outskirts of the location, seashore, inside a rock, a tree trunk, and in deserted buildings. My informants described the invisible `meeting places (*bijolo/gwanda*)' of thenight witches as filled with skyscrapers, luxurious cars and houses with gold and diamonds In the Hlubi cosmology, night is regarded as a time of danger and people who have to move about at night tend to do so in large groups. The witch on the other hand `works alone under cover of night' because s/he dare not be seen carrying out his/her nefarious activities. At this juncture it is worth interrogating the symbolism of the two types of witches. The two types suggest a compartmentalisation of human powers into daylight and those of the night. However, the night witches appear to cause atrocities although witches are generally anti-social and non-conformists.

In this study the term `witchcraft' refers to the activities of these evil workers (*ubugqwirha*) as witchcraft is used. It must be noted that in anthropological parlance the word covers the concepts of witchcraft and sorcery (Evans-Pritchard 1937). The use of `witchcraft' in this context refers to the witch herself/himself, or a familiar, as an agent of destruction, and `sorcery', the use of medicines (including poisons).
4.9 Modus Operandi Of Witches

Three methods of witchcraft are identified among the Hlubi: poison (magical medicine), sorcery and the use of familiars. Among the familiars they use are snakes (*nyoka*) and owls (*isikhova*), carnivorous animals, hyena, baboons, and *tikoloshe* (a small creature). The presence of owls in a village is an indication that there were many witches. As pointed out earlier most witches have familiar spirits as their paraphernalia and also use them to serve their masters in various ways in the para-physical and regular worlds. Since witchcraft is used for diabolical activities these familiars are used for attacking other witches and spirits, and for various other purposes.

Stories about baboons used as familiars abound in witchcraft activities in the Hlubi society. In most of the stories women were said to own baboons, which roamed at night and were ridden by women and particularly men. Women as agents of destruction often used birds. Any incident of blood vomiting was associated with a small and lightning bird *impundulu* which killed human beings.

Accidental deaths are attributed to witches. When a person dies through an accident (for example drowning and stabbing) a witch is blamed for it. The dead is said to be *uloyiwe* (bewitched). Although such a person is considered to be dead, the Hlubi believe that the person is duplicated (*uthwetyulwe*). An *impundulu* (lightning bird) is said to be used for such duplications. The Hlubi believe that the lightning bird possesses powers to change itself to that of the dead person. Whilst the dead person has been taken away to be used as a zombie, the *impundulu* pretends to take the identity of the dead person.

There was an incident in Qumbu area in which a young man, Tulethu escaped being used as a duplicate. He was about to board a taxi when the driver told
him there was no seat for him. He then got on the next available taxi. It was reported the taxi he was about to board was involved in an accident and one man died. The dead was identified as Tulethu. When he got back home Tulethu saw many people had gathered in his house and they were surprised to see him. To prove to the parents and the community that he was not dead Tulethu accompanied his relatives to the mortuary for identification of the corpse. The corpse was as identical as Tulethu - including his clothes. The young man shouted in dismay and said *uyafana nam lo mntu* (this man is just like me!). At the time of writing Tulethu was still in Komani hospital.

The Hlubis, like other Nguni tribes have a way of ascertaining the death of the real person. They also make sure the dead person is given a proper and fitting burial and that the zombie has to be re-captured. To re-capture the real person after the burial, the impundulu has to be buried. Men would keep watch over the grave in the presence of an inyanga (a traditional healer). It is believed that a day after a burial, the impundulu could escape from the grave and change to its original form. It is believed that if it is caught the dead man could return.

There are some unrecorded events among the Hlubi where a buried person came back from the dead after an inyanga had caught the impundulu. Respondents about Mamsamariya, about female faith healer at Cancele, gave many unconfirmed stories some few kilometres from Qumbu who, it is said, possesses powers to bring back to life people who were duplicated.

### 4.10 Snakes

As Hammond-Tooke (1989:80) suggests, `a snake in the body can be a distinguishing characteristic of witches in South Africa. Booyens (1981:11, Quoted by Hammond-Tooke 1989: 80) also indicates that the snakes `sent' to a child through witchcraft `eats' the child's food and the child itself. The
invisible snake concept that emerges here appears as something evil, a weapon of sorcery or witchcraft. Indeed snakes occupy a place in African cosmology as witches familiars, manifestations of ancestral and other spirits, and adjuncts to rainmaking and other rituals.

Both men and women often used snake as familiars. An incident was told of how a snake fell down from the body of a woman whilst a sermon was in progress. Interestingly, ‘ordinary’ members of the church did not see the snake.

In an incident at Maseleni village, (about fifteen kilometers from Qumbu) some boys murdered an old man who was their relative. The boys felt he was bewitching the whole family. Some mysterious deaths in the family were attributed to the old man. The old man, it was believed, bought a snake to kill his relatives. Before he was killed they took him to a nearby church (Ethiopian) and asked him a series of questions. They beat him up until he died. When the boys were asked why they killed the old man, one of them retorted ‘we are trying to free our village from the diabolical activities of devils who do not want our village to prosper…. those old men and women are good for nothing…. they have outlived their usefulness.’

In the two instances the picture, which emerges, is that snakes are used to do something evil relating to a wholesome life of human beings. The snakes are used to render people powerless and therefore, not living their full life in society.
4.11 Snake Bite

A 36-year old mother of five children died under some mysterious circumstances. Theresa, the youngest of her mother’s children was doing well. Her oldest son was in the High School, her hardworking and very responsible husband, had a good job in Johannesburg. Indeed, she was the breadwinner of the family. One day, Theresa had gone to work on her maize and wheat field when a snake bit her. She decided to go back home immediately for medical attention. On her way back home, the snake attacked her for the second time. She was sent to Sulenkama Hospital but when the doctors realized the seriousness of the situation they transferred Theresa to Umtata General Hospital where she died. Some weeks later it was rumoured that Theresa’s mother had confronted a friend who had promised that she was going to donate her daughter (Miriam) in their group. Apparently Miriam heard of the altercation and went to report the matter to their headman. Theresa’s mother was invited to the Great Place on this issue but rumour had it that she refused. Meanwhile the chronic sore on the ankle of Theresa’s mother had ‘disappeared’ and healed some few months after Theresa’s death. Before the death of Theresa, her mother asked for some money to settle her debt but when asked about the source of the debt her mother could not offer any tangible explanation and so the money was not given.

An explanation offered by a ‘sangoma’, after Theresa’s husband consultation, was that Theresa’s mother had the sore because she had persistently refused to donate any of her children although she had always enjoyed the flesh donated by members of her ‘witch group’. The sore became chronic because the ankle was dipped into a fire any time she refused to bring one of her children to the group for a nocturnal feast. With regard to the money requested by Theresa’s mother, she was going to give it to her group ‘as in
kind’ or as a symbolic representation of her daughter after she had realized that she had lost a precious daughter – the breadwinner.

The invisible snake concept that emerges here appears as something evil, a weapon of sorcery or witchcraft. Indeed as indicated above, snakes occupy a place in African cosmology as witches’ familiars, manifestations of ancestral and other spirits, and adjuncts to rainmaking and other rituals. But in this case it appears as something evil, a messenger to do the dirty work of a mother.

Mysterious and rare as the story is, it can be said the snakebite was accidental. The chronic sore of Theresa’s mother could be explained that she had diabetes of which she was not aware.

4.12 Tikoloshe

*Tikoloshe* is believed to be owned by women. They were usually sent to poison the food of human beings. Poisonous substances are said to be mixed with food or drinks and given to unsuspecting victims. At Ncoti village, (about thirteen kilometres from Qumbu), a carcass of a calf which was to be buried by the owner was eaten by a young man. Some few days later the young man died. Three women in the location were accused of bewitching the young man and, thereby, causing his death. Some youngsters murdered two of the accused. The life of the third accused was spared because of the intervention of the branch of SANCO (South African Civic Association) in the village. Meanwhile, the post mortem report of the young man revealed that he died of poison after eating the ‘dead’ calf*. 
4.13 Witchcraft And Modern Technology

It is interesting to note that ideas about witches among the Hlubi have undergone significant transformations to fit modern technology. Airplanes and cars are said to be used in their nocturnal activities. A self-confessed witch once said 'I was taught everything under the sea. I even learnt to drive a cache'. Some informants indicated that witches could fly to Kappa (Cape Town) within seconds. A story was told that three family members were admitted at a hospital following a 'car accident'. After an investigation, it was revealed that nothing happened at the scene they referred to.

At Tonjeni village the death of a middle-aged man and a local shop owner was reported. Some people in the village could not accept the reality of the situation. Three women were alleged to have used witchcraft to kill the man. Some school pupils attacked these women, beat them to death and then burnt them. The case is pending in court. An attempt was made to interview two of the boys while school was in session at St Bartholomew Senior Secondary School. But the boys declined. They politely explained that the case was still in court and that they could not say anything about the incident. The interesting feature of the incident is that the youngsters take sides by supporting the local petty bourgeoisie and eliminating the powerless and the marginalized. Once again, the youth arrogate themselves power to mete out justice to the unfortunate women.
An interesting observation is that for the first time we see decision-makers coming to the rescue of the vulnerable. These defenceless women were used as scapegoats before one woman was rescued by the powerful. We also see an inter-generational conflict here. The youth are pitted against the middle-aged defenceless women (the young against the old) and the rich against the poor. The other paradox is that the accusers display a stance as actors and judges at the same time. One is baffled by the tacit approval of the community for not doing anything about the physical violence to the powerless.

4.14 Second Universe

As in West Central Africa, Hlubi witchcraft is associated with a second universe, the Place of Witches’. Most of the informers described their ‘locations’ (as perceived by witches) as places of milk and honey at night. The Place of Witches was filled with skyscrapers, houses of gold and diamonds, Mercedes-Benzes driven down highways; witch airports with witch aircrafts.

European witches are represented as making their products public and visible, of having harnessed their powers of witchcraft to achieve material success and technological advancement and dominance in Europe and the USA. African witches, in contrast, are represented as keeping their ‘wonderful’ inventions hidden and failing to make available to their communities, thereby blocking Africa’s material development.

This connection with economic and technological development is often drawn in discussions of witchcraft. A story was told of an Hlubi boy who, attracted by the progress being made in life by some migrant workers in his village, also went to Gauteng Province to seek greener pastures. After two years sojourn in Gauteng, he came back to his village and started his own homestead and got
married. He took his new wife along against the will of her mother. Six months later he had a big boil on the back of the head. An incision and an abscess could not give him any relief. After a protracted illness the young man died. People did not understand why a young man in such a prime age with all the potentialities and opportunities should die. Naturally the only option left was to consult a traditional healer who revealed a ‘witch-gun’ was used to kill the young man because he was making tremendous progress in life, which was an embarrassment and disgrace to his older siblings who therefore, had to get rid of him. The irony is whether the benefits of the ‘progress’ made by the younger sibling were not going to be enjoyed by the nuclear family.

The above stories do not mean the Hlubi look at these Western science and technological advances with the greatest admiration. For them, European witches display their accomplishments through their witchcraft for the whole world to see, but unfortunately Europeans are not represented as sharing much of it, or indeed much of anything. The Hlubi understanding of ‘Europeans’ or ‘Western ways,’ indicates a range of anti-social behaviour – living a secluded life, exchanging abrupt greetings, not stopping to talk, individualism, not visiting others, and eating without inviting others – which are all part of Hlubi perception of Europeans. Unfortunately, these ‘qualities of seclusion, selfishness and greed’ are the typical characteristics of witches, in Hlubi thought. In this sense witchcraft is a ‘failed science,’ though not in the sense viewed by the nineteenth and twentieth century European intellectualists: The failure here is one of morality and not rationality (Camaroff and Camaroff 1993:xxv).
4.15 Ghosts

Another incident at Nonyikila village is worth looking at. A woman came to this location and claimed to have seen many graves, which were occupied by victims who have been bewitched. To her, these deaths were unnatural and, as a result, those `dead' people were trying to come back to their respective homes. She assured the community that she had mystical powers, which could help to bring them back to life (including the chief's relatives). The news spread like wild fire and people who wanted their relatives to come back to life responded. People did not only come from Qumbu and its environs, many also came from places as far as the Gauteng Province.

The woman set aside a day when the dead would be resurrected. Meanwhile families who wanted their families to come back to life were required to send food items, blankets and money for the upkeep of their dead relatives who were spiritually kept in roundavels in Nonyikila location. They were also to pay a fee of R800 on the day of `resurrection'.

When the roundavels where the so-called ancestors were living were opened, rotten food items, blankets and logs (symbolising the bewitched ancestors) were found. The matter was sent to law enforcement agents but no one came forward as state witness when the case was raised. Therefore the court dismissed it. This is a classic example of deception by a woman to cause disorder in a society. But the incident also shows how the youths have arrogated to themselves the power - to take the law into their own hands.

Guilty conscience or psychological anxiety can make people do certain things so as to free themselves of stresses. My own personal experience involved my landlady, a relatively wealthy woman (by rural and semi-urban standard). The story goes that the husband of the woman died under mysterious
circumstances and obviously the houses, cars and all the businesses of the husband were bequeathed to her. One day I returned from school to see a crowd in the homestead where I lived. They were slaughtering sheep, singing and drinking - a festive mood indeed! At about 1a.m, I was awakened by the beating of drums and singing. When I got up to see what was going on I saw traditional healers clad in their dress and with their paraphernalia, sprinkling some liquid around the homestead and reciting incantations. Further investigations revealed that my landlady used sorcery to kill her husband and this had been haunting her. The activities of powerful and well known traditional healers who had come from various parts of former Transkei and Kwazulu-Natal, (which have been going on for some years) were attempts to fortify herself against an attack by the late husband.

4.16 Zombie

It was also recorded that in some instances, a witch was not thought to kill its victim but rather to transform the victim into zombie (isithunzela). At Ridge village a story was reported that after an initiation ceremony, a 29-year-old young man went out at night and disappeared. After weeks of fruitless search, traditional healers were consulted about the man's whereabouts. It was `revealed' that some witches had turned him into zombie and he was residing near a river.

A Zionist priest with the power of the Holy Spirit also confirmed the story given by the traditional healers. The priest promised to bring home the young man. The youth of the village went and hid in the forest to find out if the priest would be able to accomplish what he had promised. The priest and the youth brought the `boy' (ikrwala) to the pastor's home. Meanwhile a fair complexion woman, who always wore black dress, was suspected of bewitching the young
man. As was expected she was very often harassed by the youth in particular and despised by the community. The matter was reported to the police. The court later, for lack of evidence, dismissed the case.

The young man is still alive but at times behaves abnormally. He always says he is afraid of a certain woman but does not mention her name.

One strange aspect of the incident is about the accused that always wore black dress. In some African societies black is a colour that is associated with witchcraft. Turner (1968:154) for example says black cat represents witchcraft. Black is also associated with misfortunes. Black is the colour of night, the time of concealment. The woman's appearance, which to many constitutes a deviation from the normal practice, is therefore, subject to interpretations by the Hlubi. It is not surprising that she was branded a witch.

A few comments have to be made about the role of priests and the youth in the two incidents cited at Maseleni and Ridge villages respectively. Whilst the Zionist priest at Ridge village played a prominent role in locating and bringing the alleged 'zombie' home and therefore saved his life, the priest at the Maseleni village could not save the life of the old man. We also see contrasting role of the youngsters in the two incidents. Although at Ridge the original intention of the youth was to trap the priest they helped him to send the young man home. No one knows what would have happened to the priest if he had not been able to accomplish such a feat. But at Maseleni it was the boys who punished and murdered the old man. It is not clear whether it was not another instance of a battle between the young and the old.

Another puzzling incident involving an Hlubi boy occurred in Mpeko near Umtata. Makaza died during a stick fight at a boy's initiation ceremony. Makaza was certified dead by the district surgeon of Umtata. The corpse was
given back to his relatives for burial. A few days after his burial, some boys allegedly saw Makaza at nearby dongas. The boys alerted some elderly people who immediately went to the dongas and brought Makaza home. He could not speak. Acting on the instructions of a diviner, Makaza's coffin was exhumed and burnt without opening the coffin. What was discovered after burning the coffin was a rubber-like human being identical to Makaza. Although it was believed after burning the coffin Makaza would be normal, yet he could not speak.

Meanwhile the boy who had allegedly killed Makaza was in police custody in Umtata. In view of the mysterious circumstances surrounding Makaza's death and the subsequent development, some people from Mpeko village went to the police to demand the release of the alleged murderer. The police arrested all the people involved in exhuming Makaza's coffin. The presiding magistrate found that there was substantial evidence that a human being had been murdered and the murderer had been identified. At the same time there was a mysterious human being in court. Makaza's killer was convicted but the court ordered Makaza to be re-registered. The judgement was that the person killed was a human being of unknown identity.

The story of Makaza, unbelievable as it may seem, was enthusiastically narrated. Makaza is still alive. Although he has an impaired speech, yet he can relate his own story. He says five women took him when he was involved in stick fighting. These women called him. After he had enjoyed his welcome he got fed up with them and started beating them up. It was during one of such quarrels with them that the boys who in turn called the elderly men saw him.
There is also an incident in which someone was alleged to have turned a youth into zombie. At Mdeni village, a youth died at an initiation (circumcision) school. Rumours had it that an old woman, a relative, bewitched him. A year later it was reported that someone had seen the young man in a forest near Mount Frere (about 50 kilometres away). Relatives of the youth were sent to the forest to find out. When they got there they saw a young man whose identity was questionable. In order to resolve the confusion surrounding the youth's identity, he was brought to the Great Place at Mdeni.

It was decided to allow the young man to settle in the Mdeni village. No sooner had he settled there than he started making advances to girls in his 'own homestead'. Meanwhile it was alleged that an old woman in his family had caused his death or disappearance. Unfortunately for the old woman, she fell ill and grew lean. The 'mother' of the youth reported the witchcraft incident to the chief of the village. Due to community pressure, the chief sent away the accused (the alleged witch) from the village.

The sick woman was hospitalised and when her condition was declared hopeless by the hospital authority, she pleaded with the nurses to be sent home to die there rather than at the hospital. Her request was granted and she was sent home where she died peacefully. The fact that she died peacefully meant that she was not a witch - and therefore not the cause of the boy's predicament at the circumcision school.

From the look of things, and for the people living in these areas there seems to be no such thing as death from natural causes or accidents. To them, everyone who dies has been killed by some wicked powers - by a witch or sorcerer. A death caused by an accident means that a witch has cast his or her spell over the person, a death by lightning means someone used magic, and death by any
other natural causes means someone has captured the person as a zombie.
However, this assertion refers to strange and unusual events that defy any
logic. It is in these situations that witchcraft is used as the cause for such
mishaps r misfortunes. After all, the Hlubi people in line with other Xhosa
speaking people, recognize that old people who have completed their life cycle
are expected to die.

Suspicion can be brought on by anything. You may be wealthy or you may be
the type who always keeps indoors, or you may just be considered too ugly or
you may have the wrong type of face - maybe too dark complexioned with
roving eyes.

Witchcraft and sorcery were never solely used for negative purposes - to
destroy people. In the rural areas there is still a practice of arranged marriage
in which a girl is betrothed or asked to marry someone without her consent. If
one of the parties feels it is not gaining an advantage there is recourse to
witchcraft, magic and sorcery. The result is that the young woman or the man
develops hysteria \(\text{amafufunyana}\). The intention is to make the young woman
or man develop love so that the marriage could take place. Very often, it is the
man's family that utilises the practice so as to win the woman over for
marriage.

Mr Mncwamkumbana, an Hlubi teacher at St Bartholomew Senior Secondary
School told a story of his own brother who developed \(\text{amafufunyana}\) some
few days before his wedding ceremony and so the wedding could not take
place.
Edwards (1988:240) distinguishes *amafunyana* from any kind of ceremonial spirit possession, from possession by ancestor spirits, from any kind of shamanistic possession, and from possession by the Holy Spirit. Edwards (1988:209) reports *amafunyana* spread from Zululand. She points out that, at the climax of the disorder, voices are heard speaking from the patient. The other features are (1) the voices heard are not those of the patient himself/herself; (2) the voices become agitated and aggressive and (3) at a particular stage of the illness the patient may evince inordinate strength.

Mr Mncwamkumbana’s brother lost the first wife in 1993 and wanted to re-marry in 1994. He suddenly fell ill - the first phase known as *ukutwetyuwa* (a kind of hallucination). The reason for the abortive marriage was due to jealousy and competition between two families of two girls. It is believed witches come to a person through evil spirit and may make him or her become violent and lose control of himself or herself. In such a situation the spirits take control of the person. His brother said he saw so many people who asked him a lot of questions. They had to contact diviners. In all their consultations they were given contradictory messages. All the herbs used to calm down his brother did not work. It was at the visit to the fourth traditional healer that some progress on his brother’s health was observed. Four months later his condition of health deteriorated. It was revealed by the herbalist that a woman had planted the sickness in the brother’s house. And so a ‘cleaning exercise’
had to be undertaken. After the exercise the brother went and stabbed his former girl friend. Apparently he was still interested in this woman (her former girl friend) who had jilted him for another man. The matter was taken to court. Since the case centred on an issue, which could not be proved, the court dismissed the case. Interestingly, the young man has recovered fully. In my view the young man could have been charged for stabbing her.

The incident shows how society's view of marriage can lead to conflicts. Marriage, to some people, is a means to gain an advantage without considering the implications of such a choice. Couples are not given the opportunity to remake their lives on the basis of love, sentiment and personal relations. Women occupy a particularly vulnerable position as they are politically and economically marginalized. As a result of high unemployment, lack of access to land, illiteracy and reliance on husband and children for subsistence there is always a domestic conflict. Daughters-in-law, because of tension within the household generally, accuse mothers-in-law. The cause of the conflict centres on the competition for the husband/son who is the `bread winner' of the household. Mothers-in-law are accused of using witchcraft to consolidate their domestic authority.
A story was told of a conflict between a woman (Nontembeko) and the mother-in-law (Memnti), a widow. The only son (Daluxolo), a migrant labourer in Gauteng had five children with Nontembeko. Remittances were regularly sent to Nontembeko through Memnti. At times part of the money meant for Nontembeko was drastically reduced for some reasons personally known to Memnti. On several occasions Daluxolo's children were out of school because they owed school fees. One day, money sent to the wife to complete the roofing of Daluxolo's house was given to Nomawele (Daluxolo's sister) to supplement money for her wedding without the express consent of Daluxolo. When Nontembeko protested she was ejected from the family home (Daluxolo's). On her way to her father's village, which was about five kilometres away, Nontembeko got drowned. Nontembeko's brothers, together with some youth attacked Memnti for being behind the death of their sister. The unfortunate incident defies any explanation. Although the death of Nontembeko is shrouded in mystery yet it could have happened to any one by sheer coincidence. But this is how witchcraft is used to explain the inexplicable. Since the death of Nontembeko defies any logic it led to the youth to arrogate to themselves power to punish Memnti - another case of inter-generational conflict. It is very rare in the Hlubi context to show disrespect to elders let alone subjecting them to physical and verbal violence.
As things stand now the elders are to accord great respect to the youth because of the powerful position they have assumed.

### 4.17 Curse As A Manifestation Of Broken Human Relationship

Curse in the Hlubi culture is used as an explanation of illness. According to Prince (1964:91), curse is one of the commonest causes of psychiatric disorder. In the everyday life of Hlubi people, a curse is usually uttered verbally, without any accompanied rituals or objects. But it can also be combined with acts of sorcery, and if a disease is attributed to an enemy rather than to supra human beings or witches, one may pay a traditional healer, or some other expert, to curse the malefactor with potent medicine and words (Morton-Williams 1960:34; Prince 1964:91,97; Simpson 1980:82; Buckley 1985: 141). Behind the beliefs related to the power of a curse, there is a certain understanding of the spoken human word. Among the Hlubi a word is considered as an extension of one’s personality, thus containing a person’s power. In the case of blessing and a curse the belief is that once uttered, such a word continues its existence and finally makes its original purpose come true. The incident below is an illustration of curse as a manifestation of broken human relationship.

Camagu a 40-year old Umtata civil servant has several times visited a traditional healer, Dr Mtimkulu for what may be a psychiatric disorder. The
medicines given by the herbalist have not been any help. He then visited Umtata Teaching Hospital, but again the treatment of University of Transkei professors has not brought any relief. Camagu was then advised to see a ‘specialist’ traditional healer, Dr Zongwana in his village. During the diagnostic session Dr Zongwana questioned Camagu about his human relationships. ‘How has he lived with his neighbours? With whom has he quarrelled lately? After succeeding in making Camagu admit that he has had altercation with his neighbour and therefore, located the genesis of the curse, Dr Zongwana asked him further questions. What was the quarrel all about? When did this take place? What did you say? What happened then? What did the other person say? With the traditional healer’s skilful and probing questions he was able to extract detailed information about the situation. The traditional healer advised Camagu that in order to be healed the patient must first be reconciled (with the neighbour). He cautioned Camagu that it was only after the broken human relationship has first been mended will his remedies become effective and for that matter be cured. The traditional healer, Dr Zongwana promised Camagu to arrange for the patient and his quarrelling neighbour a special reconciliation session if his (Camagu) initiative did not work.
The above story shows how serious the traditional healer viewed the curse as an explanation for Camagu’s illness. The other aspect of the story is how the healer dug deep with his searching questions about the curse to ascertain the broken relationships in Camagu’s life.

The issue of confession and curse reminds me of my own experience. As teachers (mfundis) with a stable and a regular income job in the village we were accorded respect. A divorcee, Nontutuzelo with five children and a victim of domestic abuse approached me for a job as a helper. Although she had no income her ex-husband was not supporting his children financially. For humanitarian reasons I had to employ her to assist me in our household chores and especially fetching water from the stream. I also assisted her financially to sell used clothing to supplement her income. When she lost one of her children I virtually paid for the funeral ceremony. Two weeks before one Christmas I pleaded with her to help with our household chores, which she agreed, because I was going to have visitors from Gauteng and Northwest Provinces. A week before Christmas I paid her wages so as to buy her needs for the festivities and also gave her some gifts for the children. This woman did not show up throughout the festive season, a critical time when I needed her most. A week later one of my friends told me he had given this woman a ride to Qumbu, our
district capital that is about 18 kilometres from Mdeni where I was a teacher. He added that from the look of things she was traveling and would not be back soon. Some few months later I secured a job at the University of Transkei. A year later I was invited to a ceremony at my former school. One of my colleagues, Mrs. Nkohla an elderly woman, approached me and told me that Nontutuzelo had asked her to give me a live chicken. As to why the ‘kind gesture’ from someone who abandoned me when I needed her most Mrs. Nkohla did not offer any explanation which naturally made me suspicious. When I refused the offer Mrs. Nkohla felt not only was I behaving ungentlemanly but also I was being cruel and unsympathetic. It was later explained to me that Nontutuzelo fell sick and this had continued for about a year and visits to doctors had not given her a relief. When she finally visited a ‘sangoma’ she was told she had offended and had been cursed by someone and this was the cause of her illness. The only solution to get relief from the illness was to appease the person. Racking through her brain she remembered the raw deal she gave me and that was why she asked Mrs. Nkohla to give me the gift. I had to assure Nontutuzelo that I bore her no grudge and that from the bottom of my heart I was going to pray for her to get well. This is an illustration of how traditional healers can play on the intelligence of people for an imaginary problem by extracting confessions from patients. This story is a
clear example of how guilty conscience can exert pressure to bear on people to act in strange ways.

In my seven years stay at Mdeni I heard of incidences of lightning strikes in the late afternoons during summer. Almost every year a number of people are either killed or struck by lightning. Sometimes some homesteads also got burnt because of lightning. There is a belief that there is a lightning bird `impundulu’ that is able to direct lightning at specific targets. Some Hlubi believe the moment a witch gains access to a lightning bird s/he can direct the bird to make lightning to strike so as to eliminate an enemy or rival. Consequently, the belief has led to a number of alleged witches being burnt, particularly after thunderstorms wherein someone or their homestead had been struck by lightning.

That witches can inflict material loss on the Hlubi is illustrated for example, in poor yield of farm products. If the yield of maize, sorghum, pumpkin, and beans is bad it is laid at the door of witches. It is believed a witch can change herself/ himself into a bird or a rat and in this shape eat her/ his neighbours’ crop.

**4.18 Cattle**

It is an understatement to say cattle are and have been the focal point of Xhosa existence. Historically cattle intricately and indissolubly bound the mundane and the sacred. They were the medium of sacrifice to the ancestral spirit
linking the living and the dead. They represented wealth and stability. As Henderson Soga put it 'livestock formed the tribal and family bank'. In ordinary daily life they supplied the principal item of dish, milk, as well as the meat for occasional feasting and leather for clothing. Cattle were also used to pay bride wealth *lobola*. The relationship between the Hlubi and for that matter the Xhosa and their cattle was intimate, emotional, committed and joyous. There is still continuity with regard to the place of cattle in the Hlubi society. Cattle are still used as a medium of sacrifice to the ancestral spirits, linking the dead and the living. Cattle are also regarded as index of wealth and Hlubis with a large livestock gain the admiration of many and are accorded much respect in the community. Cattle are also used to seal marriages (*lobola*). On the other hand, due to the impact of Christianity and other factors, the use of cattle in ancestral ceremonies has been under serious threats since some missionary churches preach against ancestor veneration. Again, instead of sealing marriages with cattle the equivalent in money is given by the bride’s family. Consequently any attack on the cattle meant attack on the family as a whole. The incident below was therefore an attack on the family and its resources.

A Deputy Principal of a Senior Secondary School, Mr Mdliva had a number of cattle. In my estimation his livestock was more than all the animals combined in the village. As a result he is and has been accorded the greatest respect in
the community. He was admired and loved by the community because he was a hardworking and helpful to the community. Within a few months he had lost about 20 per cent of his livestock through diseases like foot and mouth sore, abortion, while some of the cows isolated themselves and other sheep and cows grew lean. Instead of employing the services of a Veterinary doctor, Mr Mdliva went about treating his livestock. Although some Hlubis lost some of their livestock, the person who was affected most was Mr Mdliva. As a result many people could not find any explanation to what seemed to be an epidemic and attributed the unusual calamity to the work of witches. The young men attacked Mr Mdliva’s neighbours (all women) who were lucky to have escaped death.

Informants told me that imposition of sterility; sexual failure and adulterous living are within the capabilities of witches. Confessing witches claim to wreak impotency on men. In a male chauvinist society, like the Hlubi, where a man displays his macho by the number of concubines and children that he has, to be impotent can be more than ego deflating. So demeaning and embarrassing is impotency that some men have committed suicide because of erectile dysfunction. A very young, enterprising and hardworking Principal of a Junior Secondary School became impotent, because he failed to take care of her widowed sister and his children. When confronted by a ‘sangoma’, Yolisa revealed that she had hidden his brother’s testes in a graveyard. After some
ritual performed by the ‘sangoma’ the wife of Yoliswa’s brother got pregnant!!!

Men are not the only people whose reproductive organs can be tampered with through witchcraft; women, too, can be afflicted with equally grievous consequences. In the Hlubi society, a woman’s cherished aim is to ensure the continuation and perpetuation of her ancestral lineage, and her inability to produce children is a terrible blow to the social standing of any woman of childbearing age. There are numerous stories indicating how the witches have hidden women’s uterus. One story by a man goes that his sister was barren for some years, and on consulting a traditional healer she was told that a witch had stolen her womb, put it in an earthen pot and buried the pot. The witch agreed to return it, and told her what she should do. It was revealed the woman’s mother (witch) was upset because her daughter got married too young to a man against her consent.

Witches can interfere with the human brain and manipulate it to cause psychosis, stupidity, idiocy, mental retardation, schizophrenia, absentmindedness, and other mental diseases. A boy was unable to pass Standard Seven Junior examination after three attempts and therefore could not proceed to Standard 8 (senior secondary school). Unfortunately his brother who was four years younger passed the examination on just one attempt and
his classmates had already had their matriculation certificate (Standard 10) and he was still struggling to pass the ‘gateway’ examination to High School. His mother consulted a traditional healer who revealed witches have ‘stolen’ the boy’s brain. By ‘stolen’ is meant by the doctor that the witches have interfered with the vital airs, which activate the astral and physical capacities of the brain to function effectively. Though invisible in the physical world, the vital airs of all life forms have astral substance, and witches can transfer these energizing agents from a person’s astral organs and into physical objects. Traditional healers and other specialists of the supernatural can make a deal with witches to retrieve a victim’s ‘stolen brain’. After performing some ritual by the traditional healer the boy marginally passed the examination on the fourth attempt and proceeded to senior secondary school. One ‘sangoma’ told me:

_Witches can make a student dull and fail examination…. they make the candidate write nonsense during examinations. Witches can even make candidates sleep during examination sessions. At the same time they can make someone brilliant and pass examination even if he/she does not study…witches do this without the candidate’s knowledge._

Another havoc, which witches can wreak on people, is to ruin a person financially by plunging them in a police case and there spend huge amount of
money or get his property confiscated by the state. I was informed of a very rich and generous Agricultural Officer. His generosity was felt most during planting season. He had numerous ploughing machines and charged half of the price other business men took. He offered jobs to some of the unemployed young men in his village. I was even shown the church building he donated to his village. As normal routine procedure he had an audit inspection and was found to have misappropriated funds and diverted state funds to his private bank accounts. Consequently he was prosecuted and finally sent to prison. Although there was preponderance of evidence showing that he had been misusing government funds, people could not believe and understand why such a thing should happen to such an honest person. His family consulted a diviner who revealed he was bewitched by other businessmen and women for fear of competition. Although the Agricultural officer was a good community leader, the diversion, misuse and misappropriation of government funds, deprived his community the access to resources that could have helped in providing basic amenities for his community.

4.19 Witchcraft And Development

In one of my visits to the study region, a widow told me of her anguish and frustrations about losing the cream of her livestock following an epidemic. As if that was not enough her mealies and wheat farm was decimated by a heavy hailstorm and pests. She attributed her predicament to the work of her
neighbours out of jealousy. While talking about the atrocities witches cause to their victims some of my interviewees asked why those witches cannot use their witchcraft and work in collaboration with their African elites, to speed up discoveries and inventions and make the African live in comfort. Some of them asked why we cannot just copy from anywhere in the world and mix it with the good aspects of Africa’s cultures. One of them, an undergraduate of University of Transkei had this to say:

*Israelis famed progress is based on strong spiritual foundation via their Jewish religion. In fact I am always amazed how Israelis are able to mix their spiritualism with material progress. Almost all the business tycoons, scientists and renowned doctors in the world are all Jews. If they were Africans they would be labelled as witches and wizards. Granted that they are witches they are able to use their wizardry to contribute to development. They are not using their wizardry to destroy and disorganise their communities as in Africa.*

A Principal of a Junior Secondary School also remarked ‘We all know by now how Western capitalist development was founded on the Protestant Ethic as sociologist Max Weber tells us in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. For the past 500 years or so humanity, the West especially, has advanced remarkably in terms of better living, which is what all the so-called
progress or development is all about. The West has done so not because they are extremely brilliant or incredibly wise but because they have the humility and skill in appropriating the good from other cultures into their own. Why can’t we Africans do something like this?’ he quipped.

4.20 Can Witchcraft Be Eliminated?

When questioned about whether witchcraft can be eradicated an informant said

*I really do not know if witchcraft can be eliminated in South Africa. Witchcraft is a big problem. I have spent all my money to get my brother well by going to specialist doctors and traditional healers. If a combination of the two methods of healing the sick cannot work then what kind of world is this? These sangomas are charlatans! The medical doctors are no better. They are all cheats! Right now I can’t even pay my children’s college fees. But I regard my children as investment. I have abandoned my building project all because of my brother’s illness and yet doctors and sangomas cannot heal my brother. I do not know why God should do this to me and let me suffer. The government is not doing anything about witchcraft because the courts say witchcraft does not exist!*

One interviewee also had this to say.

*If you ask me this question about the eradication of witchcraft I’ll say ‘Yes’ and ‘No. Yes, because if we are all educated and enlightened about
the causes of diseases and hygiene we can prevent a lot of diseases. In this case accusation of witchcraft will decrease. Government has to provide basic amenities like tap water, electricity and hospitals, good roads and efficient public transportation system but this is a huge task. Religious leaders can also educate their congregation about witchcraft and its related issues and work on outreach program with non-profit organizations. But as I said this is not an easy task! I also say a big ‘No’.

As long as problems of poverty, problems related to children, marriages, employment, family needs, accommodation, bad or frightful dreams, drunkenness, mental breakdowns, recurring miscarriages, repeated unnatural deaths such as suicides and accidents, abnormal behaviour such as extreme anger tantrums etc.… in short as long as all existential needs exist, I am afraid witchcraft will continue to be with us, perhaps forever!

The above stories and other similar ones, although revealing frustrations and society’s in ability to provide solutions to problems, also indicate that Hlubi and for that matter African problems do not just depend upon scientific and modern development. They also stress the need to wage ‘spiritual warfare’ against these spiritual enemies to break free the African continent.
4.21 Summary

To recap, the discussion in the chapter indicates that witchcraft is a reality to many Hlubis including educated and Christians. This confirms the observation of Berglund (1976:269) that:

A denial of the presence of sorcery and witchcraft is a denial of the existence and activities of evil (Quoted by Bosch1987: 43)

It has also been revealed in the stories that social inversions manifest themselves in a number of activities that are in theory possible but which in practical terms were absolutely impossible to have been committed by the alleged accused. Classic examples are the eating of human flesh by the witch and accusation that the witch associates with animals instead of humans. It is also said that particular characteristics of people can be associated with or classified with witchcraft. Among others, filthy behaviour, being outspoken, being withdrawn, greedy, and envious or any type of behaviour that does not conform to social demands and in conflict with established norms, standards or values of the Hlubi society may be attributed to witches. Any behaviours or activities that defy reason or cannot be predicted by others may be ascribed to witches. In other words, a witch is a person who displays traits slightly different from those regarded as ideal. A witch is a queer person. Then also the physical appearance of a person is used to determine whether s/he is a witch. These include ugliness, deformity and a dirty unkempt appearance.

Case studies in the chapter, have shown that in spite of widespread assumptions (e.g., Monica Wilson 1947:120, Hammond-Tooke 1970; Mitchell and Mitchell 1980; Brain 1982:382), the incidence of magic and witchcraft does not necessarily decrease in the course of modernization and science.
According to many Africans, it has rather increased both in terms of frequency and effectiveness over recent decades (Drucker-Brown 1993:539, Kohnert 1983). People who have advanced educationally and financially are often concerned about protecting themselves from the witchcraft of those retaining a more traditional way of life. Generally speaking, this may be due to a psychosocial reaction to the African Crisis, as de Jong explains in the case of the njang-njang movement in Guinea-Bissau (Jong, 1987b).

Hammond-Tooke (1989:49) argues that witchcraft can also be explained in terms of social tensions and antagonisms of feudal system. Interestingly the witch was equated with a heretic. Hammond-Tooke maintains that a strong element of scapegoating in the system and anti-communist that the motives behind the witch myth lie deep in the human psyche and are not confined to traditional Africa. He observes similarity in the images of witch familiars in the confessions of accused witches in many of the trials in England and elsewhere on one hand and those in South Africa on the other. In almost all cases, he concludes, tensions resulting from social life are transferred onto an out-group.

The question is whether Christianity has been effective in changing the Hlubi belief system in general and witchcraft in particular. Earlier in this chapter, we saw how Christianity was introduced to the Hlubi. Among other things, most Africans became Christians through formal education. Africans were also brought into modern world economy with new skills and their religious horizons were broadened. They also learnt ‘Uthixo’ and ‘Satana’ were thought to be omnipresent and near to human beings. Hlubi Christians were told and given the assurance that Uthixo, or one of His representatives, in the person of Jesu listened to prayers without passing through ancestors as intermediary. At the same time Satana was always around to lead individuals.
astray. The question, which has been confronting both Hlubi Christians and non-Christians, was how could that which was good create that which was evil?

The picture which emerges from the Hlubi belief system as articulated in the chapter indicates that although Christianity has had a tremendous effect on the Hlubi it could not change the mindset of Hlubis, at least in their belief in witchcraft. Hlubis also continue to participate in traditional rituals and ceremonies.

Although an emerging Western way of life however, became a differentiating influence separating Christians from non-Christians with their old ways, Christians and non-Christians lived together. Existing social order therefore, appeared to be undermined. Christian converts also found themselves in two worlds - as Africans and Christians.

As far as the low view of women among the Hlubi was concerned the stereotype was perpetuated by Christian teachings. The Jewish view of women as inferior as well as Biblical portrayal of women not as a primary necessity, but as a helper to man only exacerbated the subservient position of women in the Hlubi society. For example Paul was simply behaving like a typical Jew in 1 Corinthians 14ff when he ruled women should not be permitted to speak in the church but should remain silent’ (subordinate). Other Pauline passages (Ephesians5: 24, 1 Timothy 2:1-11) stressed the need for women to be subordinate and submissive to their husband and for that matter to men.

In spite of the stiff opposition by the mission churches and the colonial government to the belief in ancestors or witches Hlubis continue to recognize these concepts. This is because Christianity, urbanization and technological advances have provided inadequate answers to misfortunes and mundane
mishaps. The Hlubi has no other option but to resort to occult entities to help
them explain the inexplicable, to establish the reason why an event has
occurred, to identify the forces involved and to provide remedy. It is against
this background that the role of traditional healers and ancestors are discussed
in the next chapter.
Chapter 5

HEALTH AND WHOLENESS AMONG THE HLUBI

Introduction
The preceding chapter focused on the Hlubi belief system. It was observed that belief in witchcraft was endemic and the advent of Western education; advanced technology and Christianity have not succeeded in changing the belief system of the Hlubi. A conclusion was drawn that witches are believed to act on the life – souls of their victims. This means that witches complicate the lives of individuals and collectivities, which undermine the wholeness of the individual in particular and the community in general. As observed by Dopamu (1985: 68), it is when a man is in good health that he can fulfill his social functions as well as his moral obligations. In such a situation the individual needs to be protected physically, mentally and spiritually and this impacts on the Hlubi community as a whole.

The objective of this chapter is first to look at the concept of health care and healing among the Hlubi. Secondly traditional protection against witches and their detection will be discussed as an aspect of the role of traditional healers. Thirdly, attention will be given to the role of traditional healers (sangoma/inyanga, amaxhwele and amagqira) and ancestors. Finally, the chapter examines the cosmological link between ancestors, traditional healers and witches. It must be pointed out that although the focus is on the Hlubi, we shall take the liberty of substantiating our findings with evidence from some other African peoples. This is necessary in view of the limited literature on the subject among the Hlubi, or even the Xhosa of which they are a part. By citing
instances from other African and particularly Nguni tribes we are not indulging in a gross generalization of similarities in African religious practices. In all sincerity, we are guided by Schoffeleers’ (1979:29) remarks that `we need to escape from the old idea of African religions as fundamentally similar.'

5.1. Health

There are various ways of analyzing health beliefs in African traditions. According to Spector (1996:9-11) one way of analyzing health beliefs uses the concept of holistic health – including body, mind, and spirit – and explores what people do from a traditional perspective to maintain health, protect health or prevent illness, and to restore health when necessary.

From this perspective health can be considered as a complex, interrelated, twofold phenomenon –the balance of all facets of the person – the body, mind, and spirit. The body includes all physical aspects, such as genetic inheritance, body chemistry, gender, age, nutrition, physical condition; the mind includes cognitive process, such as thoughts, memories, and knowledge of such emotional processes as feelings, defenses, and self-esteem. The spiritual facet includes both positive and negative learned spiritual practices and teachings, dreams, symbols, stories, gifts and intuition, grace and protecting forces, as well as positive and negative metaphysical or innate forces. These facets are in constant flux and change over time, yet each is completely related to the others and also related to the context of the person. The context includes the person’s family, culture, work, community, history, and environment (Spector,
The person must be in a state of balance with the family, community, and the forces of the natural world around him or her. This is what is perceived as health in a traditional sense and the way in which it is determined within most traditional cultures. This is no different from what prevails in the Hlubi tradition.

Illness, on the other hand, argued Spector, is the opposite – the imbalance of one or all parts of the person (body, mind, and spirit); this person is in a state of imbalance with the family, community, or the forces of the natural world.

Health is also looked at as the freedom from and the absence of evil. In this context health is synonymous with day, which equals good and light. Conversely, illness is synonymous with night, evil, and dark. Illness, to some is seen as a punishment for being bad or doing evil deeds; it is the work of vindictive evil spirits. Our point here is the apparent contradictions that are brought into relationship with evil forces that manifest themselves in witchcraft. We see here evil forces posing so many oppositions: health and disease, day and night, good and evil, sickness and healing.

To begin our quest for a deeper understanding in this chapter we must ask two fundamental questions. `What is health'? and `what is illness'? The answers to the first question are difficult. The word `health’ cannot be adequately defined because it is very elusive. Such a question is likely to elicit responses such as ‘homeostasis’, ‘kinetic energy of balance’, ‘functioning’, and `freedom from pain’. But this is all medical jargon, which is subject to various interpretations and meanings. Perhaps the definition given by World Health Organization will be helpful here. It says‘ state of complete physical, mental, and social well being and not merely the absence of disease.’

American heritage Dictionary defines health as
1. The state of an organism with respect to functioning, disease, and abnormality at any given time. 2. The state of an organism functioning normally without disease or abnormality. 3. Optimal functioning with freedom from disease and abnormality. 4. Broadly, any state of optimal functioning, well being, or progress. 5. A wish for someone’s good health, expressed as a toast.

Murray and Zentner (1975:6) define health as ‘a purposeful, adaptive response, physically, mentally, emotionally and socially, to internal and external stimuli in order to maintain stability and comfort’. These definitions – varying in scope and context – are good for those in the medical field. But does this satisfy the layperson? Interestingly, it is very difficult to give a definition of ‘health’ without using some form of medical concepts. The most widely and acceptable definition is that of WHO. The framework for this thesis is firstly to regard health as the absence of disease and also as a reward for ‘good behavior’. For example a mother admonishing her child would say ‘if you don’t do such and such, you’ll get sick’ and ‘if you neglect your ancestors things will go wrong for you’. In the Hlubi context these factors are very crucial before healing, exorcism, divination, diagnosis and the restoration to wholeness of an ill or disturbed person can be accomplished by the traditional healer.

To recap, the implication of the above discussion points to holistic healing and this basically involves health, growth and transformation on physical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions. This is a crucial issue not only for the individual but for the group and the surrounding environment of the Hlubi as well.
5.2 Some Traditional Views On Healing In South Africa

Edwards (1996:131-132) deals at length with some traditional views among Nguni speaking peoples. His work provides us with a lot of insight. According to Edwards (1996:131), all healing is universal, trans cultural and perennial and that a specific form of healing can be traced to the beginnings of recorded human history. He further points out that to heal means to make whole and healing implies a transformation from illness towards health. Traditional healing, for him, is concerned with perennial healing approaches that have been passed on over generations, often in the form of oral transmission of knowledge, beliefs and practices that serve to both preserve individual, family and community homeostasis and to transform individuals and societies towards health (p.132). In order to drive home what he terms as the psychology of traditional healing as a universal theme he quotes Mbiti’s popular dictum ‘I am because we are’ (Mbiti 1970). For Edwards, Mbiti’s dictum as essential psychology is revealed in ‘helping, healing human relations within the spiritual and community context, a pure psychology relatively undiluted by artificial academic distinctions, schools of thought or narrowed professional interests

Quoting from work of various authors indicated below (Torrey 1972; Wolberg 1982; Rogers 1980; Cheetham and Griffiths 1978; Brammer and Shostrum 1982; Corsini 1984; Edwards 1988; Katz and Wexler 1989) Edwards (1996:131-132) has delineated the universal characteristics of healing. We wish to utilize some of them for our discourse.

Healing dialogue. This involves the human helping dialogue
Spirituality. This concerns the beyond-the-self dimension. A typical example here is that the Supreme Being and revered ancestors are experienced as present in healing.

Healing power is recognized in all religious traditions.

Community. Healing is a resource to be shared.

Healer qualities/characteristics. Authentic, genuine care and empathy/understanding make the relationship acceptable to the sick and therapeutic.

Holistic healing. Consideration is given to spiritual, ecological and psychosomatic context of the sick.

Methods and techniques of healing. There are varieties of healing methods and techniques.

Shared worldview. This includes the aura and atmosphere of the healing situation made closer through a shared language and culture.

Victor Turner (1968) also discusses at length how healing of an individual becomes a community affair in his classic work, The Drums of Affliction. In spite of the fact that his fieldwork was about the Ndembu of the present-day Zambia, the venture reveals the corporate dimension of rituals embarked upon by traditional healers in their healing process.

The views expressed by the above authors are applicable to Xhosa-speaking people among which are the Hlubis. The universal characteristics of healing appropriately fit the healing process of Hlubi traditional healers – ‘amagqira (diviners), ‘amaxhwere’ (herbalists), isangoma and faith healers whose role in
the society will be discussed shortly. We shall therefore utilize these universal characteristics as a framework of understanding for the discussion of the role of traditional healer in the following section.

5.3 Some Traditional Views On Illness And Healing

Generally, traditional African views on illness and health are holistic and cosmological (Edwards 1996:135). This is because these beliefs and practices form a coherent system that has maintained individual and social equilibrium for generations. Secondly, in our predominantly rural African context where modern health care is either expensive or non-existent, traditional healing is the only option available. Running through the belief system is the belief in a Supreme Being (Thixo), approached through elder kinsmen, both living and the dead. Holdstock (1981:128) has aptly summarized the position:

`…the relationship with the ancestors and through the ancestors with God permeates all being…Ancestor reverence is a primary factor associated with continued good health’.

Berglund (1976:295) defines sorcery or `ubuthakathi’ as ‘the manipulation and expression of anger and the desire to destroy’. It represents all the forces of evil and illness. He maintains that traditional African religious and magical theories of illness and health are inextricably interlinked as evident in the popular beliefs that man (humankind) is most vulnerable to sorcery once for some reason, the ancestors are ‘facing away’, and should a man (person) then strengthen himself/herself and his/his family by performing appropriate rituals to the ancestors, this will ensure continued good health.
Murdock, et al (1980) have postulated theories of illness in underdeveloped societies throughout the world. For them it is important to draw a dichotomy between theories of natural and supernatural or supra-normal causation, which is similar to the 'umkhulane and ukufa kwabantu’ distinction made by Ngubane (1977). 'Umkhulane’ refers to the explanation of illness by natural causation in modern medical systems. These include infection, stress, organic malfunction and accident (Murdock et al 1980). Also in this category is epilepsy, asthma. 'Ukufa kwabantu’ on the other hand, attributes illness to supernatural causation. Ngubane argues that the name is used mainly because the philosophy of causality is based on African culture. This does not mean that the disease or rather their symptoms, are seen as associated with African peoples only, but that their interpretation is bound up with African ways of viewing health and disease.

Murdock, et al (1980) have divided their supernatural category into three basic divisions:

Animistic theories ascribe the disorder to the behaviour of some personalized supernatural agent such as a spirit or God e.g. the withdrawal of protection of the ancestral shades mostly caused by disharmony within the home.

Magical theories attribute the disorder to the covert action of a malicious human being who employs magical means to injure a victim. Examples are spirit possession attributed to sorcery including ‘amafuufunyana’, genital-urinary disorders, a disorder attributed to stepping over harmful concoction of a sorcerer.

Mystical theories explain disorder in terms of an automatic consequence of some act or experience of the afflicted person e.g. experiencing illness or adversity because of contact with places or people immediately associated
with major life and death events e.g. birth, death, sexual intercourse, and menstruation.


In the Hlubi society, illness is thought to be caused by psychological conflicts or disturbed social relationships that create a disequilibria expressed in the form of physical or mental problems. Psychological or spiritual factors, or both may cause disequilibria, that relate to Hlubi cosmology and ‘threaten the intactness of the person’. In the Hlubi society then, healing emphasizes righting these disequilibria. Again, this human condition of physical or mental impairment can cause suffering. The course of any debilitating sickness is likely to involve pain, suffering, worry, fear, anxiety, bitterness, unfamiliar surrounding, bed rest and consequent strains, lack of privacy, relative social isolation, and sense of human vulnerability and frailty. Furthermore, the patient and his/her family/relations may be faced with experiences involving guilt and forgiveness, diminished self-image, concerning the meaning of life, death, theodicy –why me?

Like any other African community, the Hlubi concept of health and the practice of healing are linked with Traditional Religion. Traditional Religion recognizes different ways of dealing with sickness and affliction through religious experts or specialists who have the duty of discovering the cause of disharmony in the community, society and in the universe at large. Religious considerations are given not only to matters pertaining to the restoration of health after sickness but also to its general preservation in the whole community. In spite of the fact that there is recognition and acceptance of
organic agents as cause of illness e.g. the patient has cholera because of an epidemic in the community, s/he wants the explanation why his community was stricken with cholera at that particular time and not another community.

It can be noted here that the Hlubi approach to healing contrasts with the Western medical system, which considers disease mainly to be the cause of organic agents or impersonal biological processes, while traditional medicine considers disease as a disequilibria in the whole body, sometimes, even including the whole society.

5.4 Hlubi Concept Of Healing

With regard to the concept of health and healing in Africa in general, but specifically Yoruba of Nigeria, Dopamu (1985:66,67) has argued that Africans from time immemorial have discovered that to be healthy is to live and that without life, there are no human persons. He explains that since illness or disease is an indication that means existence, or life itself is being threatened, and the gate to the grave is being gradually opened, man (humankind) must of necessity find means of combating it. He identifies three causes of illness. First is natural or physical causation, which manifests itself in minor illnesses such as cough, colds, influenza, slight fever, convulsion, venereal diseases, and other diseases, which cause infertility in women. Secondly, diseases are attributed to supernatural causation. In this case witches and sorcerers are believed to be responsible for serious, protracted, sudden or extraordinary illness. Difficult labour and chronic mental illness are sometimes believed to be caused by witches and sorcerers. Thirdly, diseases are attributed to spirits, divinities and ancestors as punishment for dereliction and offences of them.

Writing about the Zulu on this same issue, Sundkler (1961:222) has this to say:
‘The pursuit of health is the gravest concern of the Zulu today. Problems of diagnosis and of medical treatment arouse tremendous interest among them. The reason for this is of course the low standard of health, caused chiefly by malnutrition, which prevails among the Zulu in these times. This causes folks to be constantly on the move from one medical practitioner to another in the search for health’.

To the Hlubi, health means wholeness in the basic human existential relations. In addition to social relationships, the other two vital relations of a human are the historical and cosmic ones. The historical dimension of the human, which we are concerned with, becomes relevant, for example in connection with ancestral spirits. The attitude of the Hlubi toward the ancestral spirits is ambivalent. On one hand, the spirits are regarded as benefactors and helpers, and are also approached and venerated as such. On the other hand, the ancestral spirits are feared. In the practice of the Hlubi an insulted or neglected ancestral spirit as an explanation of an illness can be interpreted as a symbol of the patient’s guilt in connection with a significant human relationship with the patient’s past (Harjula 1986:87-95). Harjula argues that reconciliation with the spirit then becomes a prerequisite of the patient’s recovery. Without that the patient will still be a burden on the community and this constitutes an aberration. The highest aspiration of every Hlubi is to be healthy and enjoy abundant life. Indeed someone from a different cultural background would be confounded with the ambiguous position of ancestors. They no doubt instill strict conformity to moral values to many Hlubis since any recalcitrant would incur the wrath of the ancestors. Not only does the non-conformist attitude affect the individual but it impacts on the community as well. To me, their position is a double-edged sword and as long as there is no deviant behaviour the Hlubi has nothing to worry about.
Quoting World Health Organization (1946), Sills defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not just the absence of disease or infirmity. It follows therefore that when a person is healthy he will show this by his active participation and involvement in his/her society (Dube 1989:111).

The importance of active participation by an individual cannot be overemphasized because that defines his position and relationship in the society. Not only does he or she find fulfillment but he also fulfils society. If an individual cannot fulfill all roles expected of him then it means he/she is not healthy and that is why in the African context to be healthy does not simply mean a healthy body (Ngubane 1977:29, Gumede 1965:11).

5.5 Healthcares And The Community

The role of the community in health care in the Hlubi society cannot be underestimated. Because healing is an interactive process, when one member of a community suffers from disease, all suffer, but because all suffer, all are in some sense concerned with and affected by the need to address the malady of the diseased member. When misfortune hits the community or society, such as rain storm, floods, droughts, famine, and epidemics, these calamities are attributed to disharmony or broken relationships which must be restored before the community can regain its harmony (Ngong 1998:1).

In Hlubi thought and practice, the human person is viewed both in his/her collective aspect as a member of the community and in his personal or unique identity as an individual. As regards the conception of health, an individual is truly human in so far as he/she is an integral member of the community. In his Cartesian twist of Descartes’ dictum: *cogito ergo sum*: I think, therefore I am’,
and Mbiti highlights this point as `the individual is conscious of himself in terms of `I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am'. The concept of `ubuntu’ also aptly summarizes this point. `Ubuntu’ (a Zulu word) serves as a spiritual foundation for South African societies. It is a worldview enshrined in the Zulu maxim `umntu ngumntu ngabantu’, which means ‘a person is a person through other persons (Shutte, 1993:46). This traditional African aphorism articulates a basic respect and compassion for others (Louw, 19.11).

5.6 Agents Of Indigenous Health Care

As indicated in chapter 3 the religious system of the Hlubi includes a belief in the Supreme Being (Thixo), spirits and ancestors and constant indirect communication with the divine powers through sacrifice, ritual and ancestor veneration. There is also an invisible realm that is supernatural, spiritual or mystical which in Hlubi worldview, is the domain of these invisible and dynamic powers. One person who functions as a link of this communication with the divine is the traditional healer.

God (Thixo) is the source and the practice of medicine is a gift from Him. He dispenses this gift of healing through the agency of religious experts (the amaxwele, amaqhira, divinities, deities, ancestors and other supernatural agents who have connection with the practice of medicine), whose task, as a member of a religious system, is to discover the reasons for disharmony in the universe, and provide an antidote for these problems through religious means.

5.6.1 Protection

According to Ngubane 1977:26) the environment is polluted by undesirable tracks or by what is discarded in healing and also by sorcerers who place
noxious substances on a particular person’s pathway or scatter them along pathways to harm any passers-by. Added to this are the diabolical and nefarious activities of witches and the punishment meted to relatives by ancestors for negligence and not conforming to the social values of their various families. An individual in the society therefore faces three dangers and opposing forces – the environment, his/her ancestors and his/her fellow human beings either relatives or sorcerers who are agents of pollution and diseases. To survive in the midst of these dangers, everyone must make a conscious effort to fortify himself/herself so as to maintain a balance with his/her environment. Medicines are used to fight against this pollution and disorder caused by these opposing forces. Ngubane maintains that two groups of people are more vulnerable than others to environmental dangers – infants, strangers in the territory, people who have allowed a long stretch of time to elapse between treatments, and persons who are considered polluted. It is believed an infant is a stranger to the environment and also has fragile joints. To survive in such an unfriendly environment the infant has to be protected even before it is born.

Van Gennep (1960:26) also explains why strangers are susceptible to environmental hazards. The strangers must stop, wait, go through a transitional period, enter and be incorporated (also expressed as pre-liminal, liminal and post liminal periods)... The isolation has two aspects which may be found separately or in a combination: such a person is weak because he is outside a given group or society but he is also strong since he is in the sacred realm with respect to the group members for whom their society constitutes the secular world.

Such a notion of the status of a stranger being ‘strong and weak’ is illustrated in an incident at Mdeni, an Hlubi location. A wife of a colleague (West
African), on arrival from her country had a series of miscarriages within a year. The landlady and some Hlubi friends were advising him to consult with traditional healers. To them the solution was not medical at all but that the woman was a victim of influences of a strange region. A 14-year old son of the landlady even advised my colleague’s wife to smear the body with some mud in the village so as to be incorporated to the Hlubi environment! It is against this background that Hlubis make efforts to avert these vicissitudes in life by strengthening themselves through protective medicine so as to maintain a sort of balance with the environment.

Among other things, the classic study of the Azande of Sudan by Evans Pritchard revealed that the Azande were not actually interested in witches per se but only in witch activity. This is also true of the Hlubi and other Nguni-speaking peoples in South Africa. The concern of the Hlubi like the Azande was the function of witchcraft as agent on definite occasions and in his or her own interests, and not as a permanent condition of individuals. They are interested in the dynamics of witchcraft in particular situations (Quoted by Debrunner1961: 87).

Although the specter of witch activities always stares the Hlubi in the face s/he makes a conscious effort to counteract the activities of the witch by protecting herself/himself through detection of the witch. The situation, to the Hlubi therefore, is that since aggression begets aggression and the best form of defence is attack drastic measures must be taken to solve the problem. This explains why Hlubi people in the detection of and protection against a witch spend huge sums of money.

Interviewees stated that a witch cannot be detected in broad daylight, but there are subtle indications to identify witches. Some strange physical characteristics
compel neighbours or relatives to conclude that a person is a witch. For example, `a woman who has hair on her chest or chin’ may be regarded as a witch. Another example is the mere mention of the word `witch’ makes a witch feel very uncomfortable. A person may be alerted of the work of a witch through dreams. To dream of being pursued by a cow or a wild animal is an indication that a witch is after you. Stories abound that witches spiritually walk on their heads and their eyes are at the back. If one blew dust at the heels of a person suspected of being a witch, and if she really were practicing witchcraft, she would try to clean her eyes. Traditional healers often interpret these dreams or stories. One wonders why such a subjective interpretation by an individual who arrogates himself/herself the power as a prosecutor and a judge should be used by a society to determine the fate of an accused.

In order to find out the guilty person, Hlubi justice in the past often resorted to trial by ordeals. Fainting and loss of consciousness were taken as proof of guilt. Potions or concoctions are normally administered to suspected witches. It was believed any display of strange behavior later was an indication the alleged witch was guilty of the offence. As an example, following the death of a relative, the door of the hut of Mr. Majeke was kicked open. He was then forced to drink rat potion (or poison) after which he was beaten to death and his body left outside in the wet veld. In this situation the suspect witch had no opportunity to defend himself and seek redress. In another example, a self confessed witch was expelled from the village. A message was sent out to the next village, from which she would be also driven and so on. For the observer the perpetual exile is even a kinder alternative to death.

Responses received from informants as to why people accused of witchcraft activities were either killed or exiled revealed two dimensions. One dimension as pointed out in the previous chapter is the actual suffering inflicted upon
individuals and families. It is in this area in which the assistance of traditional healers is solicited to counteract the effects of the acts of witches. The traditional healer in turn asks for the guidance and support of his/her ancestors through divination to help in diagnosing the problem and providing herbs or rituals to remedy the situation. Should the traditional healer succeed in counter-acting the effects of witch activities, that leaves the malicious and evil forces untouched and the probability to strike again is very high and something had to be done. In order not to give another chance for the perpetrator of the evil to attack his victims one more time he or she needs to be eliminated from the society. By implication the witch-hunters believe that the aggregative aspect of the evil activities of witches calls for not only punitive action but corrective action as well and hence the punitive and corrective action of exile or ostracism.

The tension with this line of action and which makes it worrying is the fact that the accusers in such cases assume the position of prosecutors and judges at the same time. The situation becomes more problematic for the fact that it is absolutely impossible to prove scientifically and particularly the para-psychological factors demonstrating the influence of the mind over matter at a distance. In other words the `eating of flesh’, and `the use of guns’ for example to destroy victims or relatives via `remote control’ who are thousands of miles away from their village has no scientific basis. As an African and a Christian with some western education I find myself caught in a spiral web. Having been reared in a typical traditional African cultural milieu with due disregard of the theory of cause and effect as an explanation of every phenomenon, and having lived a life through enculturation from my infancy where emphasis is placed on invisible beings and evil forces as responsible for misfortune, illness, infertility, unemployment, car accidents and all the mishaps in life, there is the temptation to accept witchcraft as the cause of all misfortunes and illness. At
the same time as a Christian the tendency to dismiss witchcraft beliefs as imaginary is also strong. Besides, my educational background and training has not only given me the skills and tools to examine every phenomenon critically but also not to accept hook, line and sinker what my society offers me through enculturation. Our contention is that in times of socio-economic and political changes where there is apparent loss of control over these objective factors, ‘no one is safe’ and everyone becomes an enemy. It could be a prominent politician, a rich man, community leader, the poor widow in the village, the neighbor, the pretty and the ugly, the worker and the unemployed, the fortunate and the less fortunate, the political opponent etc.– in a nutshell ‘the haves and the haves not’ can be targets of witch-hunt. Witchcraft accusations in the Hlubi community can therefore, be explained in terms of socio-economic woes. The demise of the obnoxious apartheid policy led to the birth of a new democracy culminating in high expectations, hopes, radical changes and transformations in all spheres of life. Apart from the change in leadership in which black Africans found themselves in government, the economy has created inequalities in populations that in the previous generations were compelled to live in conditions of relative socio-economic parity (Ashford 1998:507). In spite of economic and political transformations the expected benefits of democracy is not within the reach of black South Africans both in the urban and rural areas. Related to the transformations is the growing awareness of the inalienable rights of most individuals and the young men arrogating themselves leadership roles something that was once wielded by the elderly. The negative aspect of this transformation is the marginalized and powerless (widows, women, children, the elderly) bearing the blunt of frustrations, disappointment, disillusion and dashed hopes of disgruntled youths. The situation is not different from the Hlubi community. Victims of witchcraft accusations who survive these attacks sometimes end up in
hospitals and also find themselves in the homestead of traditional healers; and these health issues impact on the Hlubi society as well as the clinics and hospitals which operate under scarce and strict budgetary conditions.

Witchcraft and magical beliefs play a part in the traditional conception of health. There is a relationship between humankind and evil. Human ambitions and jealousies become the source of evil – which is personified in the form of witch or sorcerer. For most Hlubis, witchcraft is an undeniable reality—reality, which Hlubis, like many African people take seriously. Western medicine has a serious limitation in this area. The advent of Christianity, urbanization and Western education has had a tremendous impact on the position and authority of traditional healers. Ironically, these factors seem to have contributed to a situation in which people feel compelled to consult these religious personages. In spite of the advances of western medicine, there are certain diseases that orthodox medicines cannot cure but which can be treated only by traditional medicine, for example psychic and supernatural diseases. Thus the work of traditional healers supplements the work of scientific medical practitioners. Basically traditional healers are consulted to provide protection against witchcraft.

5.7 Who Are Traditional Healers

It is an understatement to say the introduction of modern medicine has brought tremendous improvement in the lives and health in the Hlubi society and for that matter African people. Yet this alone does not adequately provide for the comprehensive or integral health care needs of the African. As a result, in many African communities and among the Hlubi the practice of simultaneous use of traditional and Western medicine continues.
In the rural areas where the majority of the population live and where hazards or problems are more acute, the national modern health facilities are often inadequate and in many instances nonexistent. In such areas maternal and child mortality and morbidity are very high. The life expectancy of the rural population is lower than that of the urban population. A quick review of the disturbing health situation is provided by the following Health Profile of Africa (Development and Cooperation, no 3, 1984).

About 100 million people in Africa have no access to adequate drinking water. Almost 70 per cent of the African population does not get enough to eat. About 72 million suffer from serious malnutrition. Twenty-two of the thirty-six poorest nations in the world are in Africa.

The African population continues to be more exposed than other populations to endemic diseases such as malaria and to diseases caused by poor sanitation, malnutrition, and poverty. Such waterborne and water-related diseases as intestinal parasites, gastrointestinal illnesses, and respiratory infections are the number one killers of African children.

About 90 per cent of African children who die between the ages of one year and four do so due to malnutrition, infectious diseases, and lack of hygiene. In Africa one child in seven dies prior to completing its first year of life. In Asia it is one in ten, in Latin America one in fifteen, and in industrialized countries one in forty. Nearly all African countries have infant mortality rate well above 50 per cent. Life expectancy in Africa is less than that of other developing countries and about twenty-seven years shorter than that of Western countries. In such sordid health situations it is the traditional healer who fills the vacuum and thus becomes the main agent of health care for the rural population. What then is traditional healing?
Traditional healing provides viable alternatives in societies where advanced technology and sophisticated understanding of diseases are lacking. Traditional healing thrives in societies where western medicine is also expensive and families cannot even get three square meals a day. Indeed, genuine human engagement and spirituality can be powerful tools promoting well being. It is in this situation that the traditional healer emerges. The traditional healer has always been a person of great respect in the community, a medium with the ancestors (amadlozi) and the Supreme Being (Ngubane 1977, West 1975, Cheetham and Griffiths 1989). The skills of traditional healers are highly respected. The healers are intimately involved with their patients and the community and they share in the results of their work. Names generally used by laymen are traditional medical practitioners, practitioners, traditional doctors, native doctors and traditional healers. In this study these words are used interchangeably. Traditional medical practice or traditional healing dates back to 4000 years. It was the sole medical system for healthcare before the introduction of modern health care system. It is still the means for the preservation of the health of the rural people who constitute about 70 per cent of the population. Traditional healers, according to WHO survey, treat 60 – 90 per cent patients in the Third World (Ngong 1998:3). The nearest hospital, which is at Sulenkama and managed by about three doctors, serves the Bhele, Pondo and the Hlubi tribes. There are some clinics around these areas managed by few nurses. In a situation where medical access is hard to come by people have to rely on traditional healers.

West (1975) gives three types of traditional healers in the Black Community of Southern Africa. The three types are the faith healer, the prophet and the isangoma or diviner. Included in the category of traditional healers are diviners, herbalists, ‘witchdoctors’, faith healer (umthandazi), therapeutic groups and a variety of healers specialized in the diagnosis and treatment of
illnesses, including mental disorders and deviant behaviours. The faith healer is generally a member of historic mainline church or an indigenous church. It is believed since his/her power comes from God, s/he has the power to heal. A faith healer may or may not go through any period of training. The genesis of the faith healer can be traced to the rise of the African Independent Churches (AIC) and it has been argued that many of the traditional functions of the isangoma has been taken over by the umthandazi (Lee 1969, West 1975).


`The faith healer (probably the smallest group although no figures are available) is a Christian who may belong either to a mission or independent church. The power to heal is believed to come from God (although in some cases it may be thought to come from God indirectly through the shades) and a period of training as a healer who may or may not have been necessary.’(West 1975:96). `The prophet is a healer who is found mainly in the Zionist and Apostolic churches, who has the ability to predict, heal and divine, and who draws power to do this from God. Although in many cases the power may come from God through the more direct agency of certain guiding shade.’(West 1975:98).

West points out that prophets usually heal through private consultations and most have a history of illness, which has been cured by another prophet. . He paints a picture of the main methods in order of frequency of a typical prophet as follows

(i) Prayer in 100% of cases

(ii) Holy Water in 79% of cases
(iii) Baths in 52% of cases

(iv) Steaming in 42% of cases

The isangoma, or diviner, may or may not belong to a church. His/her healing power is not said to be Christian, but rather to come directly from the ancestors.

Historically the traditional healer had a multifaceted role in the community including that of

Diviner/priest, accepted medium with ancestral shades and first creator God, religious head of society, prominent at all major rituals, e.g. concerning healing, fertility, life and death.

Protector and provider of customs, socio-cultural cohesion and transformation, legal arbiter at public divinations, ecologist, and rainmaker, etc

Specialist in preventive, promotive and therapeutic medicine including the use of traditional pharmacology (Edwards 1987).

The traditional healer is not the healer, but is the one who takes the responsibility for the creation of conditions by which healing may occur – the relationship of trust and acceptance. Within these traditional doctors can be found specialists in their own field of competence. They include

Orthopedic `surgeon’

Specialist stomach doctor

The listening or head diviner
Bone-throwing diviner

Faith healer of Zionist Churches (Edwards 1996:140-1).


The herbalists are generally known as men and women who are well versed in medicinal herbs and use medicines to treat forms of illness. They are not normally involved with nor rely on spiritual beings. Diviners use mechanical devices to establish the cause of illness or other misfortunes. They may use dreams to establish the reason why an event occurred, who was involved and then provide remedy. Through dreams, their ancestors may reveal the cause of the affliction and how to resolve it. Traditional healers hold an esteemed and powerful position in the Hlubi society. They function as physicians, counselors, pastors, psychiatrists, and priests. Their clients normally come with a variety of problems, which range from social dilemmas to major medical illnesses. It is therefore, not surprising that The World Health Organization and other official groups acknowledge the potential effectiveness of traditional healers as primary caregivers and the potential efficacy of their treatment in the battle against HIV and AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, and other infectious diseases.

Traditional healers undergo formal education and informal training in the Hlubi society. They are male (*inyanga*), women (*isangoma*) –both illiterate and educated and children. The words *amahxele* (herbalists) and *amagqira* (diviners) are often used to refer to traditional healers. Although *inyanga* and *isangoma* are Zulu words they appear to be popular words generally used in the Hlubi society. Krige (1962:288-299) distinguishes between only two
categories: the herbalist who he calls ‘inyanga’. For Krige this person is just paid to take his/her stick to go out to dig for certain herbs or to undo his medicine bag. On the other hand s/he is the diagnostician, the diviner or ‘isangoma’. Very often one person, who is then a doctor-diviner, fills the two roles. Supporting this point of view in the Zulu society, Ngubane (1977:101) differentiates only between an inyanga who is generally a male practitioner and isangoma who is a female. She calls them collectively ‘medical practitioners’ but when she refers to the inyanga she uses the term ‘doctor’ and to the isangoma only she uses the term ‘diviner’. Ngubane (1977:102) says:

A man who wants to be an inyanga (‘doctor’) gets himself apprenticed to a practicing inyanga for a period of not less than a year. At the end of the training period he pays his master a cow or its equivalent in money usually not less than R20. An inyanga may also pass on his skills to one of his sons who show an interest in the trade.

Ngubane (1977) and Gumede (1990) describe methods and remedies normally employed by these doctors. Some of these include:

(i) A liquid medicine taken by a pregnant woman over a period of time both as tonic and preventive medicine

(ii) Vomiting induced by an emetic to ‘clear’ out the system

(iii) Steam bath to induce perspiration and reduce fever in adults

(iv) Incisions made at the joints, believed to be most vulnerable areas of the body

(v) The Western equivalent of an immunization or preventive medicine – consists of skin and feathers and given to young children
(vi) Enema as laxative

(vii) A fermenting treatment applied in such cases as rheumatic muscular pain or aching, swollen feet.

(viii) Blood letting, e.g. for severe headaches (Edwards 1996:141-142).

According to Edwards (1996:14) such medicines are classified according to colour and administered in strict serial sequence and for example given at night, daybreak, and daylight. These include black, red and white medicine in the form of liquid and powder. (Ngubane 1977:110).

Ngubane (1977:12) maintains that diviners, who are usually women, share a comprehensive knowledge of medicine with the doctor (*inyanga*).

A person does not choose to become a diviner (*isangoma*), but is chosen by her ancestors, who bestow upon her clairvoyant powers. A neophyte learns about medicine from a qualified diviner to whom she is apprenticed for some time, but in addition some medicines are said to be revealed by her ancestors to her

In their healing process, the sick person and his/her family/relations feel that the healer is fully involved in and concerned about their suffering and their future. It must be noted that the roles of the traditional doctor as diviner and medical practitioner do not overlap. Her/his job as a diviner is to ascertain the causes of problems or misfortune. The *isangoma* will often refer patients for medical treatment to another *isangoma*.

Basically the role of traditional healers can be seen in three areas namely, prevention of and protection from problems, determination of the causes of these problems, and the eventual elimination of these problems.
5.7.1 Detection, Prevention and Protection

An important area in the role of traditional healers is to protect their clients from possible afflictions. The belief among Hlubis is that destabilizing forces cause most of their problems, and protection against these elements centers on warding off the negative forces of witchcraft and maintaining equilibrium with other people, the spirits, and the ancestors. Protection involves propitiation for real or possible offences that are intentionally or unintentionally committed against others. Protection is done by performing ceremonial acts, using medicines against disequilibria, or wearing amulets. The use of amulets is due to human desire for protection. At the back of the mind of the believer then is that powders, charms, amulets function to give additional strength to both personality and life souls. These theories have been confirmed by Field (1937, 1960) in the treatment of patients at anti-witchcraft shrines. Small cuttings in the group of three or five are made on all joints and the `medicines’ are rubbed in, thus making one bold to withstand the witches. Powder mixed with oil is smeared on the body of a sick person. Powders can be used to protect communities as well as individuals. A whole community is protected through the traditional healer who performs rituals. Witches are at times `fumigated away’. In the previous chapter a story was told of a Qumbu businesswoman who invited traditional healers from Kwazulu-Natal and Eastern Cape for such purpose. Rings, pots, beads, etc. are all used as anti-witchcraft charms. They are supposed to either just strengthen the wearer’s personality and life-soul, or work as counter magic to ward off evil forces.

5.7.2 Determination of Causes

Amagqira interact with the spiritual world by invoking and conferring with ancestors and other spiritual elements. As pointed out earlier the two most serious types of illnesses are explained by references to witchcraft and sorcerers, spirits and divinities. These two could be explained in terms of
mystical causation but all three type of causation are combined in the sense that natural causation can be a catalyst to mystical causation. Dopamu puts this assertion succinctly.

Consequently, in every form of illness that refracts and distorts the reason, in all that eludes understanding and explanation, in all that is strange, bizarre, portentous, deadly and unhealing, Africans feel the hands of supernatural or mystical agents (Dopamu 1985:70).

This explains why before the traditional healer begins to heal a patient he must first as diagnosticians examine the social, cultural and intellectual environment and background of his/her patient.

The procedure involves the use of substances that are sniffed, ingested or smoked in a ceremonial pipe. Sangomas also rely on dreams through which the ancestors convey messages and diagnostic insights, or the reading of thrown bones (divination). Some may `read' the entrails of an owl or a chicken or the elements in nature. One sangoma stated that `when a healer does not have an answer to a particular problem, he will seek a vision by consulting with the great creator’ and spirits of deceased relatives to find solutions’. A feature of the diagnostic process involves drumming, dancing and the performance of certain rituals such as washing with herbs. They normally dress in beaded necklaces and ceremonial clothes before they see their clients.

Amagqira determine the nature of the problems by examining the symptoms directly and by using questions to reveal the illness in the context of the patient’s life, social relationships, and physical environment. Some of the probing questions they normally ask include‘Do you have enemies?’ ‘Does someone wish you ill?’ ‘and are your ancestors displeased with you for any reason?’ Questions often asked are also based on the patient’s present and past
activities, emphasizing the behaviors that would be most likely to provoke conflict with others. Kiernan (1978:1072) suggest that ‘diviners are specialists in their social relations. The diviner performs the social cohesion role by performing or directing rituals, ceremonies and the observance of taboos.

5.7.3 Elimination of Afflictions

As a result of their training with experienced healers, trainees learn the appropriate use of herbs and animal products for various ailments. Based on the interviews of the study, it can be concluded that the main areas of traditional healers are in the psychosomatic and psychological illnesses. Since the Hlubi concept of well being centers around the spirit and the mind, the aim of traditional healers is to work with the patient’s mind and spirit. For Hlubi traditional healers, healing involves an attempt to remove impurity or disequilibria from the patient’s mind and body. Some of the illnesses they claim to have control over include fertility problems and curing impotence. Childbearing in Hlubi society is the aspiration of every one. A woman’s raison d’etre is to ensure the continuation and perpetuation of her ancestral lineage, and her inability to have children is a terrible blow to the social standing of any female of childbearing age. Childlessness is considered a curse and a stigma, and a disgrace to her ancestral spirits, her community, and humankind. It elicits insult from her community for which she cannot hit back. Any claim to have competence in that area of infertility therefore, accords such a healer respect and reverence. Other areas of their field of competence are AIDS, cancer, tuberculosis, impotence, stroke and epilepsy.

They also prepare and prescribe therapeutic medicines. Medicines are provided in the forms of powders, decoctions, infusions, or ointments. They are ingested with water, beer, liquor, or maize porridge; are used as inhalants, enemas, or vaginal suppositories; or are rubbed into the skin, often through
incisions. Some medicine of traditional healers can contain anything: green leaves, roots, bark, stems, bulbs, fruits, flowers, seeds, baboon flesh, elephant dung, and even an aspirin. Cures usually include preventive strategies to protect the patient from becoming ill again.

In spite of the aforementioned positive aspects of traditional healing, a group, ‘Doctors of life’, in their submission to the South African parliamentary committee on Traditional Healers and the Health Care System (1998) has nothing good to say about traditional healing. Speaking against official incorporation of traditional healers into the health care system of South Africa, the group contends such a compromise will lead to greater exploitation and suffering of many people, especially the rural people. Arguing against the holistic aspect of traditional healers, Doctors of life debunked this holistic feature (which to them is often exaggerated) by appropriating a report by the same World Health Organization (WHO). For them, WHO’s publication ‘Traditional Medicine and Health Care Coverage’ says ‘The evidence suggests that the family-oriented holistic argument for the incorporation of traditional healers into primary care program may be considerably weaker than is often assumed.’

Furthermore, for them, the argument that ‘African traditional medicine covers 80 per cent or more of our populations’ does not hold water. According to the professional organization, a recent scientifically sound survey done in a remote area amongst the Venda people in the Northern Province indicated that only 37.8 per cent of the general population preferred the traditional healer. The group also agrees with the statement that there should be ‘a caution against the uncritical acceptance of untested or untrue assumptions which will hinder rather than promote sound health policy and planning and service.’
Indeed, African traditional healing is limited in scope, and some practices are undesirable. We cannot deny the drawbacks of traditional medicine, which include incorrect diagnosis, imprecise dosage, low hygiene standards, and the secrecy of some healing methods and the absence of written records about the patient. Though there is certainly cause for concern, it is unfair to pass judgment on African healing systems on the basis of their worst outcomes. Many traditional healers are active in preventing and curing diseases in crops, animals and people. They may have their limitations, as some healers may be ill trained, be ill intentioned or demand too much in return for their treatment. A major challenge is to appreciate their strengths while challenging their weaknesses. In each situation, the best synergy between traditional practices and other practices can be identified through a process of participatory assessment and development.

5.8 Traditional And Modern Healing

Gumede (1990:153) has summarized the major differences between traditional and modern healers as follows:

Modern healers are originally Western in origin. Traditional healers are indigenous and African in origin.

Modern healing dates back to Hippocrates and the early Greek; traditional healers were in existence and practicing as they do today in Kush/Ethiopia some 4500 years ago.

Modern healing is regarded as scientific while traditional healers are regarded as unempirical and unscientific.
Modern healers are regarded as rational while traditional healers are described as irrational. Surgical procedures by modern healers are planned, scientific and based on the study of anatomy and operations are done under anesthesia. Surgical procedures by traditional healers are described as unscientific, crude and unplanned.

In terms of diagnosis modern healers probe what germ caused the illness whereas the traditional healer is more interested in who caused the illness.

The modern healer’s treatment is specific, individualized to meet the problem. The approach is to heal the affected part or organ. The traditional healer’s approach is holistic. For the traditional healer a person is a total being including body, mind and soul; and therefore, healing is a total process involving the living and the dead, the natural, prenatural and supernatural in addition to the patient.

The modern healer treats the disease; destroys the offending organism and the patient will be well. The traditional healer treats the patient within his environment – physical, spiritual, emotional, past and present.

The language of the modern healer is scientific in approach, etiology, symptomatology, diagnosis, epidemiologist, endemiology, curative, preventative, prognosis, rehabilitation, morbidity, mortality, etc. The idiom of approach of the traditional healers is social, political, economic, moral, religious and even recreational and change of environment, e.g. in hysteria.

Some few comments need to be made here with respect to the status of Hlubi women as religious experts. It is an undeniable fact that women are discriminated against in all aspects of life. Interestingly, and as has been
shown, Hlubi women play important roles in the traditional religious sphere. In the surveyed areas, the female traditional healers outnumbered their male counterparts. In the three administrative areas twenty traditional healers were recorded, of which only two were men. As might be expected, the men were thought to be more powerful. This is reflected in the name given to them, *makwekwete* (powerful). One puzzling thing is the fact that most of the diviners were women. As pointed out by Ngubane (1977:102), these diviners are chosen by their ancestors, who bestow on them their clairvoyant powers, while men have to simply learn the art. This is a clear indication that women are even respected by their ancestors in the spirit world.

Various explanations have been given for female participation in spirit cults in South Africa. As a result of apartheid women were forced to live separately from their families and it was believed they thus suffered a multitude of daily problems. It was also said even that for those who had jobs, wages were ridiculously low. They lived in fear that family members might be arrested and detained for opposition to apartheid. The reminders of their lack of citizenship in their own country were always present. Moreover they were and still are subordinate to their husbands. Those who stayed behind in their home state were lonely and left alone to fend for themselves and bear responsibilities as head of households. The above factors compelled them to resort to spirit cults for relief from the tensions of daily living and to create a community among their sister sufferers (Hay and Stitcher, 1984:90). It is claimed these females collectively deal with special problems they face as a result of gender roles.
assigned to them under apartheid. Whilst this explanation may have been valid during apartheid days, it does not explain the situation now that the policy has been removed from statutory books. In addition, it does not explain the phenomenon in other independent African countries. Once again the possible explanation may simply be the predominance of the female ratio over men in general in the former Transkei region. One can also add that it may be a subtle way for women to be on their own and for that matter to assert themselves in a male chauvinist world.

5.9 The Traditional Healer As A Therapist

The previous discourse indicates that the Hlubi traditional healer performs the role of a psychotherapist in her/his community. This discussion shows that the traditional healer embodies the three facilitative conditions of a psychotherapist namely, empathy, warmth and genuineness.

Torres (1972) argues that the components of psychotherapy are universal and comprise a shared world-view; that is a common language, common culture, beliefs and values; personal qualities of the therapist which make the professional relationship acceptable to the client and family; the aura of the therapeutic setting, linked to the status and qualities of the therapist; and particular techniques of therapy.

According to Torrey (1972) Buhrmann (1977:1982), Cheetham and Griffiths (1980) and Frank (1963), the therapist can only be effective if s/he is attuned to the beliefs, values and expectations of the people s/he serves. Besides, the therapist and the client should be able to understand and appreciate each other’s cultural values. The therapist should not have too great a socio-cultural distance from the client.
The traditional healer shares the same culture, common systems and traditional beliefs of his/her client and therapy is given in clearly explicable terms. The qualities of the traditional healer, factors such as regalia, proven powers of divination and social status in the community also help in the healing process of his/her patient. Not only does the attire of the traditional healer demonstrate dignity and majesty but his/her paraphernalia, which gains its power from its culturally determined symbolic meaning, also helps to arouse the patient’s expectations of help. Generally the therapeutic relationship between the traditional healer and the patient is open, frank, confident and respectful. The traditional healer’s approach of restoring confidence in his/her patient includes an explanation of the cause of the problem, the ancestral influences and ritual observance. The traditional healer’s objective is to provide warmth, support and reassurance and restore confidence in his/her patients. (Mkhwanazi 1989:277-8).

In sum the Hlubi traditional healer in recent times has received a degree of recognition in popularity, professionalization and recognition by modern medicine. A lot of studies have been done on traditional herbal and other pharmaceutical preparations, which have led to some breakthrough in medicinal discoveries. The introduction of reserpine into western psychiatry in the 1950s as a major tranquilizer is not an isolated instance. According to Torrey (1972) this product has been used in West Africa for centuries. A number of medicinal discoveries are still going on (Gumede 1990). Then also is the changing role of isangoma. There is a sex role differentiation in traditional healing. Traditional healers in recent times are predominantly women probably as a rebellion against more repressed, traditional female roles. Many diviners are also practicing traditional medicine. Also worth noting is the emergence of a faith healer who has taken over some of the functions of the diviner.
5.10 Role Of Ancestors

According to Griffith and Cheetham (1989:300) belief in the ancestors, their ‘immortality’ and their continuing communication with their descendants is fundamental to the Nguni culture and, indeed, represents the principal ‘religious’ component of these societies albeit a mediating one. The authors quote Soga (1931) to confirm this assertion.

The Xhosa worships the Supreme Being, Thixo, through the ancestral spirit…and very largely through the aegis of superstition. (this) may help to explain their loss of true inward meaning of religious worship in its highest form (Soga: 1931:1540).

Soga must be commended for giving the characteristic features of Nguni cosmology but he also recognized it as superstition. Although this worldview on the Nguni speaking peoples may not be the highest form of worship by Western standard and norm, they do possess religious and spiritual connotations. After all the import of Soga’s statement is about the significant position and role of ancestors in Nguni people’s cosmology. The utmost concern of ancestors is the welfare of their descendants.

In order to understand the importance of ancestors, one must realize that in the Hlubi thought and practice, death is not thought to sever human relationships. Rather those who die enter the spirit world in which they are invisible. Although the spirit world is a radically different world, it is also a carbon copy of the one, which the ancestors inhabited in this life.

Deceased ancestors are integral to the traditional African social structure. In the Hlubi culture where tribe, clan and family are of utmost importance, ancestors are the most respected members of the family. To be cut off from
relationships with one’s ancestors is to cease to be a whole person. Ancestors are the senior members of a social group. Not every dead person is an ancestor. In some African societies there are certain conditions, which should be fulfilled before one may be regarded as an ancestor. Children cannot be ancestors; the first condition is adulthood. But not every grown up person is and can be an ancestor. An adult is one who is married or who is the head of a community. Also to become an ancestor one must have died a natural death. People who die tragically or who died through unclean diseases such as leprosy and epilepsy cannot be ancestors. The belief is that an untimely death might have been the result of a hidden crime. People who die through accidents, childbirth or suicide are not considered ancestors. Generally, an ancestor should have lived an unblemished or exemplary life.

Like any other African society, the Hlubi believe that there is a continuous link between the living and the dead. The ancestors are known to be interested in the lives of the living, always remain close by, as part of the family, sharing meals and maintaining an interest in family affairs -just as before their death. They reward and punish their relatives according to their deeds.

The ancestors play a prominent role in the lives of the living. The ancestors are the custodians of the tribal laws. Among the Hlubi, there is the firm belief that the ancestors are always watching the activities of the living. The various taboos and customs, the violation of which brings retribution to the offender, ensure harmony in the society. The belief is that the ancestors would not hesitate to punish evil and so every attempt is made to please them by behaving morally and conforming to all the norms and sanctions of the society. They expect the living to live in harmony and to help one another.
The ancestors also play an important role in the economic life of the people. They are considered owners of the land. Family lands cannot be sold or transferred. Sacrifices have to be offered to them when new ventures are being undertaken. It is the belief of the Hlubi that an ancestor may send material help in the form of money and clothes to the living. This is revealed to them in dreams. Hidden and precious metals such as gold and silver may also be revealed in a similar way. Ancestors are thought to have advanced mystical power, which enables them to communicate easily with both the family and God. They are therefore, regarded as indispensable intermediaries (Partian, 1986:2). To express their gratitude to their ancestors many migrant workers come back home from cities such as Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth to perform sacrifices in the Hlubi area. Ancestors are believed to preside over meetings as unseen guests who are invoked before the commencement of such gatherings. They also influence decisions taken at meetings. They may also appear to the living relations in visions or dreams and provide vital information including an impending doom and/or catastrophe.

The ancestors eschew laziness. Rather, they encourage hard work and regulate the use of resources. A successor should not squander the wealth bequeathed to him by his/her predecessor. It is incumbent on him/her to properly maintain the property of his/her dead relative and if possible increase it through his own effort and hard work to enhance the prestige of the ancestor. An ancestor may punish a lazy and an extravagant successor.

Politically, the ancestors exercise considerable influence on the Hlubi chief and legitimize the institution of chieftaincy in many ways. The chief is the representative of the ancestors on earth hence his/her position is sacred. To insult the chief means the ancestor has been insulted. Traditionally, the
responsibilities are twofold; he is the representative of the people before the living-dead, and he is responsible for the peace and harmony of the community. He is responsible to the spirit-ancestors for his office. The fear of the gods and ancestors enables the chief to exercise control over his subjects. They understand and appreciate the authority and position of the chief.

The question is whether ancestors are fair in their protective role. This is because the very descendants sometimes persuade ancestors they protect to abandon one of their relations. In answering this question an elderly person indicated that there was no doubt ancestors are good and loving towards all descendants who, as equal members of the family are entitled to ancestral care and protection. He pointed out that just as five fingers of a person are not of the same size, so the fortunes of individuals in the family are different. Although they feel cheated in such cases, it is believed that their fate is not dictated by ancestors but by the wicked, envious, greedy and jealous members of the family. In this case ancestors are absolved from blame. This point may be illustrated with an example.

A teacher Andile Majikija, who refused responsibility for the pregnancy, was alleged to have impregnated Nontembeko, a student and member of Ludidi royal and extended family. Unfortunately there was no paternity test and nothing therefore happened to Majikija. After the baby’s birth, Nontembeko’s father killed a lamb and performed imbeleko ceremony to thank the ancestors for the child’s safe delivery and also to ask for his ancestors for the boy’s protection. The boy, Sibusizo, was therefore, traditionally adopted by Nontembeko’s parents. Sibusiso grew up and got married. With the stigma as an illegitimate child hanging over his neck, Sibusisso started looking for the biological father. Majikija secretly confessed he was his biological father and apologized to Sibusiso and started helping him financially. Sibusiso’s action
infuriated his adopted parents. Soon afterwards, Sibusiso experienced a series of misfortunes, car accidents, skin diseases and finally died. When his grandparents consulted with a traditional healer after Sibusiso’s death it was revealed his ancestors withdrew their protection and therefore caused his death for his obstinacy.

The functions of the ancestors can therefore, be seen as social, religious, moral, economic and political in nature. These functions, however, are by no means separate but are closely related and sometimes inextricably bound up together. The unique position of ancestors in African community has led to the use of ancestral cult being used as `instruments of discipline and control in a general sense (Idowu 1962:190ff). Idowu points out that among the Yoruba of Nigeria, the Egungun are masked figures who represent the dead ancestors, who make periodic visits from heaven during festival periods. Some African theologians like Opoku (1978:155-6) believe that this form of `traditional police’ serves as a positive and life-preserving force in African traditional society but Kato (1975:34) views it as repressive and coercive. Citing an example from his ethnic group, Byang Kato says the role of ancestors is primarily concerned with social control, all or most of which is directed towards the control of women and children. Maintaining unflinching loyalty to ancestors has caught many Hlubi Christians in a web. Much as they wish to maintain their relationship with and loyalty to their ancestors and for that matter conform to their cultural values, they have their moral obligation to follow the tenets of their Christian principles and doctrine. This is what Bishop Tutu described as religious schizophrenia. This has been and continues to be a dilemma of African Theology. Since this is not the issue in this study nothing further will be said about it.
5.11 Christianity And Ancestors

Christians in this context refers to mission churches, African Initiated Churches, Pentecostals and indigenous Pentecostal-type churches. The prominence given to many Africans to ancestors in their worldview has led to the labeling of African traditional Religion, rightly or wrongly as ancestor worship. This issue has been refuted by African scholars (Mbiti1969:9; Idowu1973: 186) and above all this is not the objective of this venture. Suffice it to say that Africans attitude is nothing but ancestor veneration. It is an attempt to keep in touch with the ancestors by means of tokens of food or drink, symbolic of family continuity and contact. Pauw (1975:205) has written about the support for the ancestor cult among African members of mission churches. Evidence indicates that the support has waned to some extent in recent times. Anderson (1993:26-39) has also argued that generally Christians have responded to the reality of the ancestor cult in two contrasting and antithetical ways. This was confirmed in the present study. Most members of these churches reject ancestor cult. In this category, they acknowledge the existence of ancestors but regard them as nothing but demons and idols. For them ancestors have no power over them as Christians since they have a greater power in the Holy Spirit who overcomes all of Satan’s power.

The other group maintains a stance of accommodation and compromise (Anderson 1993). This group believes the ancestors play an important role, and therefore must be respected and obeyed. Ancestors are viewed as mediators of God, who sometimes reveal the will of God to people, and who again inspire the prophets.
5.12. Cosmological Link Between Witches, Ancestors And Traditional Healers

As indicated in the previous chapter, the core elements of Hlubi traditional religious setting include a belief in a distant God, Uthixo and in the power of ancestors and witches to cause illness and misfortunes. The three concepts are important in the explanation for the past and present events. Although Thixo is thought to be the source of all spiritual powers, he does not concern himself with nor intervene in mundane human affairs and ordinary events. This is the domain of the ancestors, who are the only beings entitled to approach him directly. Witches and ancestors are believed to be near and deeply involved in the everyday affairs of the Hlubi. Both of them complicate the lives of individuals as well as the community. Not only do they provide an understanding of events in the uncertain world but also account for ordinary or mundane human affairs, illness and misfortunes. Although they offer ready explanations for human mishaps, they represent contrasting images and interpretations of the world. Bond (1976: 137) argues they are linked to different sources, and reflect contrasting moral orders. He explains that while ancestors are spiritual beings that relate human beings to God and use their spiritual authority for the welfare of the living, witches are living human beings who lack spiritual powers and seek their own personal interests. Witchcraft is the active expression of the individual, representing the negative powers of human agency, while ancestors are the active will of the collectivity, representing the spiritual force of some organized social unit such as the agnatic descent group.

Ngubane (1977:102) argues that a person does not choose to become a diviner (isangoma), but is said to be chosen by her ancestors, who bestow upon her clairvoyant powers. For her, a neophyte learns about medicine from a qualified
diviner to whom she is apprenticed for some time, but in addition some medicines are said to be revealed to her by her ancestors. It is believed ancestral spirits do not take possession of the body, but they are close to the diviner who `sit' on her shoulders and whisper into her ears. In times of epidemics, drought, or anything that threatens the peace and stability of Hlubi society traditional healers consult the spirits or resort to water gazing, mirror gazing or reading of the entrails of fowls to determine what to do to avert the situation.

The ancestors inform traditional healers in all matters on which s/he is consulted, for example when a patient is dying. Traditional healers then summon and counsel the family of the patient, advising them to take the patient home and to seek no further treatment `because God and the ancestral spirits are taking that person who has finished what he/she came to do in this world. The healers ask them to perform a ceremony in which they ask God and ancestors to take away the patient's pain and allow him/her to `go peacefully'. If a patient dies before this sequence of events can be completed, traditional healers grieve and are in shadow'. They cannot practice as healers; must not touch anyone; and must remove their ceremonial beads, ornaments, and clothes. They may practice again only after they have participated in a cleansing ceremony, which may involve other healers. The relationship between ancestors and traditional healers manifests itself in one important divination technique. The divination technique, which is regarded as the highest in the graded scale of divination, is the `whistling great ancestors' (Ngubane, 1977:103). Ancestral spirits are said to communicate directly with the clients by whistling out words, which are meaningful to the listener. According to Ngubane the whistling sound comes directly from the rafters of the thatched roof, particularly at the upper part of the roundavel hut opposite the doorway. The diviner sits almost in the center of the hut to help with the
interpretation of the words if the clients encounter difficulty. The clients have
the freedom to ask questions. The religious leader is therefore a communicator
between the visible and the invisible realms. While the lineage head offers
sacrifices for the family (and a chief for the clan) to appropriate ancestors,
becoming the social and political link between them and their descendants, it is
the diviner who stands as the mystical or religious connective between the
realms, uniting them into one complete whole. As Krige (1962:297) says, the
real link between ancestors and those who are living is the doctor.’

The Hlubi believe that diviners have many attributes of witches. This is
because diviners are endowed with mystical powers and special knowledge,
which help them to achieve their goals. No wonder religious leaders were
formerly called ‘witch-doctors’. Unlike witches their activities are directed to
public benefits and not their own personal and whimsical interests. After all, to
the Hlubi, they work for the welfare of the community and not against it. It is
therefore, not surprising that traditional doctors and other specialist of the
supernatural can make a deal with witches to retrieve a victim’s ‘stolen brain’.

When there is a one-to-one conflict between a traditional doctor and a witch,
then it is a matter of the stronger overcoming the weaker. If the witch is
victorious the traditional doctor goes away, and s/he can well do as s/he
pleases with her/his victim. But if the fetish spirit/traditional healer triumphs
over the witch, it orders her/him to report to the priest at the fetish grove to
await trial and punishment. The question is whether or not a priest can be an
ancestor. We have indicated that the most important criteria for being an
ancestor are to lead an exemplary life while in this ‘visible’ world. Also the
person should not have died tragically or through unclean diseases. That being
so, as long as the traditional healer does not undertake any venture that is
inimical to his/her family and his/her community then s/he qualifies to be an
ancestor even if s/he was a witch. To qualify to be an ancestor a person must be a good moral person. Turner’s definition of a good or moral person might illuminate our point.

`. (one) who bears no grudges, who is without jealousy, envy, pride, anger, covetousness, lust, greed, etc., and who honors his kinship obligations. Such a man is open, he has a white liver, he has nothing to conceal from anyone, he does not curse his fellows, he respects and remembers his ancestors’. (Turner 1968: 49 Quoted by Thorpe 1988:221).

Although this is how the Ndembu defines a good and moral person, this is applicable to the Hlubi of South Africa. It must be pointed out that since witchcraft is regarded as antisocial and therefore not sanctioned by ancestors, it can be argued that the witches’ position is not considered a `calling’ from the ancestors. This shows the unique and dominant position of the ancestors in Hlubi cosmology.

My investigations revealed that some Hlubi traditional doctors take potential victims of witches under their wings and protect them against witchcraft attacks. The implication is that some traditional healers are and can be witches. In line with the characteristics of witches they can leave their physical bodies at night and they also have psychic and clairvoyant abilities and can identify a witch in a crowd. They sometimes work in cooperation with other spirits and serve as the medium of the spirits and are entranced by them on special occasions. One traditional doctor explained that even if a traditional doctor who is a witch works as a partner of another spirit, s/he functions independently of her spirit allies and does so as an autonomous entity. The traditional doctor/witch has his/her own patients and uses her own medical knowledge and spiritual powers to cure and protect them. They normally fly

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around at night keeping vigil over their protégés and patients while they sleep to ensure their safety against witches. It was indicated that most of the traditional doctors have powers superior to those of the witches they fight, and they have antidotes against witchcraft attacks. They also have arsenals to neutralize and overcome witches’ powers. They know what herbs and plants to use to neutralize, entrap, and capture a witch.

5.13 Summary

In sum, there are various ways of analyzing health beliefs in health traditions. Health is also looked at as the freedom from and the absence of evil. In this discourse the framework is to regard health as the absence of disease and also as a reward for ‘good behavior’. This can only be achieved if the Hlubi do not upset the cosmological balance and natural order. Healing and prevention may be seen as being in opposition to witchcraft. Among the Hlubi, various agents such as nature spirits, the ancestors and witchcraft mainly cause illness. But generally speaking all illnesses are attributed to nefarious activities of witches and sorcerers. Like most South African Nguni tribes, the Hlubi also operate with a theory of double causality, which has been classified as naturalistic on the one hand and personalistic on the other (Evans-Pritchard 1965, Foster 1976, Gillies 1976). This of course is an analyst’s classification. From the indigenous perspective, the identification of causes is a different matter. This is because in the Hlubi society and most Africans, there is seldom a clear dichotomy between ‘rational’ and the ‘religious’ worlds. Religious and social
explanations of disease often overlap observations of natural causes. The idea of an `ultimate ' cause beyond a more directly observable natural one is common, particularly in cases of incurable and serious illnesses or when a natural therapy proves ineffective. Questions of `how’ are then supplemented with questions of `why now’, `why me’ and so forth. It is in this area that the traditional healer performs a pivotal role in his/her community. S/he fulfils a variety of roles: (i) as healer, either through divination or provision of (muti); (ii) as the center of social integration and cohesion; (iii) as seer or diviner; (iv) as protector of the people, their possessions and their environment (v) as mediator between ancestors and their descendants (vi) as psychotherapist; (vii) sociologist and finally (viii) ecologist. The traditional healer is a highly perceptive person and it is no wonder that s/he wields an influence in his/her community. Evidence shows quite clearly that healing in Hlubi thought patterns is more than the elimination of physical pain, suffering or the cure of a particular disease. It is the healing of broken relationship as well as the restoration of a patient’s physical health. The traditional healer concerns himself/herself with these issues. It has also been discussed that the Hlubi also believes in the immortality of their ancestors who play a mediatory role on their behalf and continuing communication with them is crucial for their existential needs and for that matter their quest for abundant life. Our discourse also revealed a cosmological link between traditional healers,
ancestors and witches. Having discussed the concept of health and healing and the fact that the level of aspiration of many a Hlubi is salvation and for that matter how to combat the vicissitudes of life, the next chapter discusses the response of the Hlubi to these activities of the evil forces who make life very unbearable for them.
Chapter 6

COMBATING WITCHCRAFT

Introduction
In the previous chapter the concept of health care and healing among the Hlubi was examined. We also looked at traditional protection against witches and their detection as an aspect of the role of traditional healers. The unique position and role of traditional healers (sangoma/inyanga, amaxhwele and amagqira) and ancestors in the Hlubi society was also discussed. The chapter also examined the cosmological link between ancestors, traditional healers and witches.

Like any other African, the issue of personal health is paramount to the Hlubi. Illness prevents the Hlubi from enjoying abundant life. In the physical sense the isangoma, amaqira, umthandazi are called upon to provide them with remedies when things go wrong – with the assistance of their ancestors. In the spiritual domain these same persons act as intermediaries by offering healing rituals. Behind all this is a religious interpretation of the cosmos by the Hlubi. In the world of humans are men and women who manipulate the spirit force for evil purposes. The nefarious activities of these forces (charmers, enchanters, sorcerers and witches) are always at work against human beings to prevent the enjoyment of abundant life. If Hlubis are to enjoy and live life to the fullest then all resources must be harnessed to maintain the cosmological balance or equilibrium. These are done through protective and preventive rites. Protective rites immunise potential victims from witches, sorcerers, charmers and bad traditional healers and evil spirits. Purificatory rites remove the danger
radiating pollution that would ordinarily destroy the personhood of the individual concerned, and which would prevent him or her from fully enjoying abundant life. Ancestral rites seek to perform both protective and purificatory functions. In analysing witchcraft behaviour in Hlubi society, therefore, we are interested in the two variables of belief and response. It is against this background that we focus on the response of the Hlubi to forces that prevent them from enjoying abundant life and for that matter salvation.

In this chapter we intend to review the typical attitude of some World Religions towards witchcraft among the Hlubi. We shall also examine the powers of evil and witchcraft and how African healing churches deal with this phenomenon. In addition we shall look at the role of some colonial authorities and traditional healers to combat witchcraft activities. Finally, the task of various world religions with regard to witchcraft activities will also be discussed.

During our discussion in the preceding chapter we reiterated that the concept of holistic health includes body, mind, and spirit and we explored what people do from a traditional perspective to maintain health, to protect health by preventing illness, and to restore health. Health in traditional context therefore, has three interrelated facets – physical, mental and spiritual (Spector 1996:10). Spector argues further that the traditional methods of health maintenance, protection of health, and restoration of health require the knowledge and understanding of health-related resources from within a given person’s ethno-religious cultural heritage. These methods may be used instead of or along with modern methods of health care. They are not alternative methods of health care in the sense that they are methods that are an integral part of a person’s given cultural heritage.
Traditional ways of maintaining health are the active, everyday ways in which people go about living and attempting to stay well, that is, their ordinary functioning within the society. Traditional health protection rests in the belief that harm, illness, and misfortune can be prevented by the ways in which one looks after oneself, how circumstances and people known to be harmful can be avoided, and how harmful elements that cannot be seen and understood can be avoided. Illness is not easily explained, and often people see it as a punishment for bad behaviour or a curse from a jealous neighbour or from a stranger. A restoration of health can be accomplished physically, mentally and spiritually. In the physical sense it could be accomplished by the use of traditional remedies. The restoration of health in the mental domain may be accomplished by the use of techniques such as exorcism, calling on traditional healers, and seeking family and community support. In the spiritual domain it can be accomplished by healing rituals, or the use of symbols and prayer, meditation, special prayers, and exorcism. These three traditional facets of personal health are predicated on the person’s knowing the health traditions of his or her ethno-cultural heritage, the family passing on and teaching these methods to following generations, and the ethno-religious community having resources available to the person to meet his or her needs. These traditions are shaped and altered by cultural phenomena that also affect health. It is for these reasons that we examine the role of religious functionaries in combating witchcraft.

6.1. World Religions And Witchcraft

6.1.1 Hlubi and witchcraft

For the African witchcraft is an existential reality. Idowu (1973:175) has brilliantly articulated this view
'In Africa it is idle to begin with the question whether witches exist or not… To Africans… witchcraft is an urgent reality...(therefore) the actual belief of Africans comes first.'

To the Hlubi witchcraft (ubuthakati) is more than a mere concept; it is real and a tangible phenomenon. The belief is taken for granted and only a few question it. The few who express doubts about the reality of witchcraft are usually Western-educated persons who think it is uncouth to hold such beliefs in such modern and sophisticated world.

It has been shown throughout the study that the effect of witchcraft activities manifest in death, illness and suffering.

In African Traditional Religion the use of witchcraft was for example one of the most common ways of driving away a wife who had become unpopular with the husband or his family. Also, charges of witchcraft were a major political tool; witchcraft against the chief or society was treason and charges of practising witchcraft were used in similar ways as charges of treason in Tudor England. This was a means for chiefs to enrich themselves and also get rid of potential rivals or powerful men. Rich men could be dangerous because they had power (wealth could be used to attract a large following); such men could be charged with witchcraft and much of their cattle ‘eaten up’ (i.e., confiscated as fines). It was also a way to oppose a policy; you would charge the leading proponent of that policy with witchcraft and thus put him out of political action.

6.1.2 Buddhism and witchcraft
According to Buddhists, at the root of suffering is craving or desire. In order to eliminate suffering, one must be released from all desire, whether for good or
for evil. Like Buddhism, Hinduism accepts belief in simplicity of life and asceticism and non-violence

Both religions accept belief in karma as a means of influencing the mobility of the individual soul in the scale of life but Buddhism says one can change his or her destiny through nirvana. While the two religions accept belief in reincarnation based on one’s karma in previous life, Hinduism explains that social mobility is determined by one’s behaviour in previous life hence the belief in caste system. But Buddhism preaches egalitarianism and explains that human beings could aspire to nirvana. Although these religions are not found in the Hlubi community, they are being mentioned here because of their teachings on desire and envy. This is more pertinent since jealousy or envy is generally offered as sociological explanation for witchcraft accusations and persecutions.

The demise of Apartheid in South Africa has brought about some transformations. It has given greater opportunities to Africans in government and the economy has created some inequalities in populations that in the previous generations were compelled to live as equals. Although opportunities have been created for a new middle class, the dreams, hopes, aspirations and expectations of majority of the population have not been realized. Unemployment is very high, access to housing, education and good medical care can only be afforded by black politicians and the rich few. These factors have created a climate for jealousy and envy. The plight of the poor and unfortunate majority can be measured against the few rich and the powerful. These factors give room to witchcraft accusations and persecutions. Our point here is that when there is loss of control over socio-economic and political developments ‘no one is safe’. As shown in chapter one the South African media has shed light on this issue. Based on the teachings of the two religions,
therefore, it will be reasonable to hypothesize here that the absence of envy, desire and the belief in simplicity of life and asceticism will prevent tensions or reduce witchcraft accusations. But one wonders if there are no witchcraft accusations and persecutions in India and for that matter any Asian country. Hinduism, which is the only religion of the two that has a significant following in South Africa, does not incorporate a belief in witchcraft in its system. It has other ways of dealing with envy and jealousy, e.g. law courts

6.1.3 Islam
In the study area, no Moslem was found but I was able to locate one ‘Coloured’ gentleman in Umtata who traced his descent to Qumbu. He maintained that in the Islamic worldview good and bad jinns (spirits) exist. He intimated that Shaitan (Quranic word for Satan) induces people to act strangely. For him witchcraft is real and cannot be dismissed as a figment of the imagination of Hlubis. He also confirmed the nocturnal activities of witches who fly as lights. Witches can communicate by some sort of mental telegrams. The issue of wholeness in health is the concern of many Moslems. As a result there are genuine and fake fortune-tellers as well as imams who for ages profess to have antidote to the evil and diabolical machinations of witches. Touching on sorcery, the informant said it is one of the major sins, for it is disbelief in Allah and association of partners with Him. He maintained that Allah has made it forbidden and the prophet Mohammed seriously warned against it. Sorcery destroys good deeds of the sorcerer for one can not become a sorcerer unless s/he has sought nearness to devils by obeying them, slaughtering for them, prostrating for a jinn, seeking aid from devils, calling unto them, urinating on a copy of the Glorious Qur’an, eating impure things, or perpetrating some other abominable acts. When s/he associates partners with Allah and obeys Satan, the jinn and devils will obey him/her, serve
him/her and provide him/her with his/her need in return for his/his associating partners with Allah.

The informant was of the opinion that sorcery is widespread among ignorant women and some despicable and ignorant men who use this vicious means to win undue favour and inflict harm on others. As for the bewitched person, s/he is regarded as the wronged one and Allah will come to his/her aid. But generally Moslems are forbidden to get involved with this kind of practice. To understand the term jinns a brief discussion below is undertaken.

6.1.3.1 The Jinn
The root meaning of the word Jinn is `something hidden or which cannot be seen’. The existence of the Jinn is firmly established by the Qur’an and the authentic Sunnah and the consensus of the Scholars (Ijma’). It suffices to say that the word Jinn and its derivatives occur more than 29 times in the Qur’an. A related word "shaytan" and its plural "shaytana" together occur more than 80 times. In fact, there is an entire Surah called Surah Al-Jinn, which speaks in clear explicit terms about the Jinn.

The reality, which we have to affirm, is that the Jinn live in an established world unseen to us. They eat and drink, and procreate. Similar to Humans, some are righteous while others are not. The Jinn were created before the creation of mankind. Their origin is from fire. The Qur’an verified these facts in Surah Al-Hijr: We can not ordinarily see the Jinn, unless they take a material form, which is usually in an unpleasant or ugly form such as a snake or a black dog, as opposed to angels who take pleasant and handsome forms. They can also take a human form. For example: In the battle of Badr, a kind of Jinn known as Iblis, assumed the form of a man named Suraqah Ibn Malik.
There are 3 types of Jinn. ` One type flies through the air, another type consists of snakes and dogs. A third is based in one place but travels about." The 3 types of Jinn are as follows

**Amir:** (Resident Jinn) used to mean that he is one of those who lives with people

**Shaytan:** Used for a Jinni who is malicious and has become wicked

**Ifrit:** Used for a Jinn who is stronger and more powerful than a Shaytan

The way of life for the Jinn is just like Human Beings. For Example: they are accountable for their actions, just as Human Beings are

There are believers amongst them, who will be rewarded, and disbelievers, who will be punished, as they admit in the following verse from the Qumran.

And indeed there are amongst us, Muslims and amongst us, wrongdoers. As for those who accept Islam, they have sought out the right path. And, as for the wrongdoers, they will be firewood for Jahannam. (Qur’an 72:14-15)

Whenever Allah sent a Prophet to mankind, the Jinn of that time could also receive his message. Thus, some Jinn came to Prophet Muhammad (saws) one night and he recited Qur’an to them, and taught them about Islam

They eat and drink, and have Fiqh regulations similar to ours. Just as we eat meat of animals slaughtered in the name of Allah, so do the believers among the Jinn. In addition, the Jinn are allowed to eat the bones of such animals. The Jinn also have conjugal relations; as evident from this verse: "Therein (in heaven) are (women) of modest gaze, whom neither human being nor Jinn have touched before."(Qur’an 55:56)
The Jinn, as any other living creature, will also die. This is mentioned in the Qur’an

Allah will say, ‘Enter you in the company of nations who passed away before you, of men and Jinn, into the Fire (Qur’an 7:38)

_Iblis_ is the Jinn who disobeyed Allah’s command to prostrate to Adam (as), and was consequently expelled from Heaven. Allah had promised him eternal Hell, but he had asked Allah to give him time before going to Hell to win over Adam’s descendants as their followers. Allah had granted him time, and Iblis has worked towards the destruction of mankind ever since. Shaytan is the term used to refer to Iblis and other disbelieving Jinn. Iblis has his throne in the sea, and he sends out his dispatchments of shaytan to aggravate people. The dearest of them to him is the one who causes the most fitna (tribulation). Because of this evil nature of the shaytan, the term "shayatan" is also used for those disbelieving human beings that are active in corrupting and fighting righteousness. Allah has said: ‘Thus, have We made, for every Prophet, an enemy, the shaytan of mankind and Jinn, inspiring one another with, adorned speech by way of deception.’ (Qur’an 6:112)

One of the shaytan’s endeavors in their attempt towards human destruction is to go up to the heavens and eavesdrop any news to carry on to earth. This news will be passed on to the fortune-tellers. Jinn, who try to incite him to evil, always accompany man but the Prophet (saws) was protected from this harm.

Moslems are admonished to seek protection from the Jinn. In an Authentic hadith related by Bukhari and Muslim, The Prophet (saws) has instructed us to
recite some supplications to protect ourselves from the harm of Satan. These include:

`La ilaha illallahu wah-dahu la sharika lahu; lahaul-mulku wa lahaul-hamdu wa-
hawa’ala kulli shay’in qadir’. (There is no God but Allah, alone, without any partner, His kingdom, and His is the praise, and He has power over all things).

Saying this statement 100 times in the morning provides protection till the evening. 100 times in the morning provides protection till the evening. In General, frequent remembrance of Allah and obedience to Him provide immunity from the Shaytan. Amongst the things that will keep the believer far away from falling into the snares of Shaytan is to refrain from excess in glances, words, food and socializing with people. By these four doors Shaytan gains power over the son of Adam and obtains what he wants from him.

One of the greatest fortresses, which protect the believer against Shaytan, is Knowledge. It is well known that Shaytan is with those who oppose the community. For that reason, the Muslim must keep to the Muslim community because that will keep him far from the errors and snares of Shaytan.

6.1.4 The Bible and Witchcraft

In the Bible, one of the few passages in the Old Testament where witches are mentioned is in the story of the `Witch of Endor’ with whom King Saul consulted before his last battle (1Sam.28: 9). It is argued that the woman was not a witch and neither is she even called a witch in the Biblical text. Both the Authorised and the Revised Versions of the Bible explicitly state `a woman that hath a familiar spirit’ while the Revised Standard Version has the word `medium’ (1Sam.28: 7). In the Hlubi society there are a number of `mediums
that claim to possess the ability to invoke the spirits of the dead. Such people are not called ‘witches’ because they do not fit the characteristics of a witch.

A second example is embedded in the Law itself, in the Decalogue ‘Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live’ (Exod. 22:10; Williams 1959:27). This was an oft-quoted verse used in justification of the persecution of witches in Europe by Protestant and Catholic Churches. Again the Revised Standard Version translates this as ‘sorcerers’. What is meant is a worker of evil magic who uses poison, and not a witch in a literal sense. The probability is that the Hebrew word was translated to mean ‘black magicians’ and ‘sorcerers’.

Ezekiel 13:17-23 explains the biblical attitude towards magic. Ezekiel speaks in the name of God, not against witches, but against women manufacturing aggressive charms ‘to catch souls’ by analogy-magic, and selling them for ‘handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread’. Throughout the Bible, however, all stories concerning witches are neutral in the sense that witches, devils, and demons are never elaborately conceptualised, and the existence of an all-encompassing supernatural, demonic world is never mentioned (Ben-Yehuda 1980:2). There are a number of references to evil spirits and demoniacs in the New Testament. Jesus even spent time casting out demons. Again we cannot regard these as witches as understood in the Hlubi context. In the New Testament we also read of demoniacs suffering from a torturing evil spirit but they are not said to wreak havoc the way Hlubi witches do. Not only did Jesus have compassion on them but also he healed them. As a matter of fact numerous stories by informants revealed that evil spirits also work behind witchcraft. Thus Paul’s assertion of principalities and powers could not have been a figment of his own imagination. The world abounds with tons of mysteries, and unfortunately no research has come out to repudiate or uncover them. It will therefore be hypocritical on our part to deny the existence of these
evil forces. Linked to these mysteries are the manipulation of forces through the use of magic and medicine.

Leading authorities on magic in classical Greece and Rome argue that magical processes were employed in both societies to produce rain, prevent hailstorms, drive away clouds, increase wealth and the like, but were also used for evil purposes (Baroja 1965, Hughes 1965).

To summarise, although there are references to witches in the Bible they do not fit the characteristics of witch as understood by the Hlubi worldview. A number of references to demoniacs suffering from evil spirits are also found in the New Testament. At the same time the phenomenon cannot be dismissed as simply superstition.

6.1.5 The Christian Attitude towards witchcraft

It has been pointed out elsewhere that the Victorian or Enlightenment worldview influenced Euro-American missionary ideologies, to a larger extent, and in that worldview there is no recognition for such issues as witchcraft and sorcery. For them there was no doubt in their minds that the belief in spirits and witchcraft was a superstitious balderdash and that with education, science, technology and urbanization this deep-seated neurosis will disappear. Comoroff and Comoroff (1991) have articulated that most of the missionaries who came to Africa from Euro-American world who brought the Christian faith felt that before Christianity could take root the African culture must make way for the Enlightenment culture. In short the `white man’s burden’ was to civilise Africa.

Western mission agencies coming from post enlightenment, rationalistic background approached the missionary adventure from this ideological frame of mind. For many in the adopted culture, Christianity was not accepted for its
a religion, which offered material blessings, to learn to read, to learn something of the ability of the European to control his environment and to evolve a superior material culture, factors, which to the African were bound with the white man’s worship of Christ, operated as strong motives for announcing oneself as a baptismal candidate. (Noel Smith 1960: 87. Quoted from C.G. Baeta)

In my observations among the Hlubi, the attitude of the missionaries and their African disciples towards the Xhosa primal worldview and the Xhosa culture was one of negation, a denial of the validity of supernatural powers. The impression given to the Hlubi was that witchcraft was not a reality but a psychological delusion and denigrated the healing activities of traditional healers as nothing but trickery. The dismissal of the existence of the supernatural realm of witches, sorcerers, magic and charms in the missionary task did not help the effort of the missions. Consequently they ended up producing Christians with double loyalties, as Asamoah (1955:297) pointed out.

Anybody who knows African Christians intimately will know that no amount of denial on the part of the Church will expel belief in supernatural powers from the minds of the Christian, and he becomes a hypocrite who in official circles pretends to give the impression that he does not believe in these things.

Arising from cultural differences, Euro-American missionaries felt illness and disease were caused by parasites, bacteria and viruses and not by witchcraft and ancestors as claimed by Africans. With this kind of jaundiced perception it was their moral obligation to teach them that illness and disease can be cured only by Western medicine. Consequently they combined their ministry with the building of missionary hospitals and clinics, and staffed these institutions
with western trained doctors and nurses. For them African traditional healing practices not only were ineffective but also were harmful (McCord 1951: 88ff, quoted by Hayes 1995:345). Not unexpectedly, Hlubis continued (and still continue today) to accept witchcraft as the cause of some of the predicaments whiles maintaining their relationship with the new faith. Looking at the examples from the Hlubi, they therefore, found themselves in two worlds of sickness - `isifo sabantu’ (African disease)’ and `isifo sabelungu’ (European disease). In such a situation the natural response of Hlubi who had `isifo sabantu’ would have to go to isangoma while s/he went to the hospital or clinic if s/he had `isifo sabelungu’. This back and forth attitude of Hlubi was naturally unacceptable by the missionaries. Hlubi who accepted the new faith wholeheartedly also accepted the interpretation of sickness and its attendant medical cure. But for others it was extremely difficult to sever ties with their traditional medical practices. It was the African Independent Churches (AIC) which re-contextualised the Christian message based on the missionary ideology in which witchcraft and sorcery formed part of the traditional religious thought and practices. These Christian groups in Hlubi society had always faced witchcraft head-on and also in an adversary situation. Indeed most of these African indigenous churches owe their existence to the people’s dread of witchcraft.

Our investigations revealed that many Hlubi Christians still believe in witchcraft and are eager for protection. My visits to faith healers and traditional doctors in the surveyed area confirmed the zeal of their clients for protection and improvement in their lives. Obviously this double allegiance to tradition and Christian faith makes them waver between their witchcraft belief and the teaching of the Church. It is not surprising therefore that Christians attribute sickness and death in Christian circles to witches and compel them to consult traditional doctor and faith healers or perform some traditional rites. It
was revealed that in some cases Hlubi Christians hide under the cover of darkness and consult these diviners or just delegate non-Christian relatives to make such trips on their behalf. They resort to this strategy for fear of being excommunicated from the church if they were caught visiting traditional healers. It is also not uncommon to encounter Church leaders who privately support such explanations and linking health and health problems to witchcraft. A protestant priest persuasively argued for the existence of witchcraft and went on to talk about how witchcraft activities have wrecked his family. At this juncture it will be worthwhile discussing the powers of evil and witchcraft. No wonder that we see Christians carrying lucky mascots, putting a St Christopher medal, crucifixes and crosses in cars so as to keep them safe from accidents. Such actions may be strange, absurd and superstitious but for the Hlubi it is a pragmatic response to phobias in which s/he is deeply engulfed.

In summary a brief examination of Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and African Traditional Religions indicate that the belief in witchcraft appears to be a universal phenomenon that features prominently in all religions. Generally envy and jealousy are used as functionalist and or sociological explanation for witchcraft accusations and persecutions and this has been a repetition of a pattern in history.

6.2 Powers Of Evil And Witchcraft

The idea of suffering among the world’s creatures, including humans, is considered by almost all philosophers and theologians to pose the strongest argument against the existence of a God that is loving and good. In theological terms this is what is called the Problem of Evil. But if we think of all suffering in the world, not just humans and not just that caused by humans we should
rather call it the Problem of Suffering. In this case we will include all natural, physical processes like droughts, floods, earthquakes, pestilence and predation within the web of life. The problem of suffering has most often been directed against Christian God because He is described as omni-benevolent, that is all good. The National Catholic Almanac describes God as supernatural, which means above and beyond nature, supreme, which means God rules all, perfect, omnipotent, which is all-powerful, omniscient, which is all-knowing, omnipresent, which means He is everywhere, immortal, immutable, and infinitely good (omni benevolent). Questions which humans wrestle with in all religions may include the following: Why would God, who is all-powerful, all knowing and all good, create a world with so much evil and suffering? Why would God set things up so that bad and even horrible things seem to happen in a largely random way to both good and bad people? Why would God create a world that imposes so much disease, starvation and injury? The answers given to these questions are given from two approaches: dualism and monism.

In dualism it is said good and evil come from two different and opposing superhuman agencies. To illuminate two different opposing superhuman agencies we cite a good example from the religion of ancient Persia. Ahura Madza, the good divine being, is opposed by Ahriman, equally eternal and powerful, the personification of evil (Widengren 1969:130-139, Quoted by Bosch 1987:38). These two divinities are involved in a fierce battle to the bitter end. In such circumstances human beings are used as puppets or pawns. An Akan (of Ghana) saying aptly illuminates the consequences of such a duel `When two elephants fight it is the grass which suffers’. The other explanation offered to the problem of suffering, monism, indicates that both evil and good come from one Supreme Being. This does not, however, mean that evil would come directly from God. Evil may come indirectly. This evil in the Hlubi
society manifests itself in the form of witchcraft and this is the kind of forces
the Hlubi society, including the Church, have been trying to eliminate.

The church, from missionary adventure to the present times, has made a
conscious effort to discourage and stamp out the belief in witchcraft. Apart
from the Church’s stance of dismissing witchcraft as ‘superstitious nonsense’,
the church has been ascribing witchcraft to the influence of the devil. By
presenting the devil and demons as the powers behind these evil forces and the
association of the gods with demons the missionaries strengthened the belief in
witchcraft, yet they failed to provide the holistic needs of the people. My
investigations among the Hlubi revealed that self-confessed witches claimed
they were tempted by the devil to cause havoc on their victims. Some of them
also said they were tempted by the devil to believe in witchcraft. It was
asserted by informants that all evil acts have their demonic counterparts. A
demon of fornication entered the one who fornicated while the demon of
murder entered the witch who drunk the blood and ate the flesh of his/her
victim with the view to killing. When questioned about the dedication,
sincerity and integrity about fellow members of their churches they gave
answers that their congregation was made up of both good and bad members
and that the bad members were in the clutches of Satan. As to how they knew
that Satan possessed them they indicated that such members confessed when
they fell sick and often asked the congregation for forgiveness. The crucial
issue here is whether or not there is an existence of evil powers and or Satan in
Hlubi and black South Africa primal worldview but a review of the ontological
view indicates that the equivalent of Satan is not discernible. Consequently,
Bosch (1987,40) has cautioned that Bible translators should not employ the
name of an evil divinity if they translate ‘Satan’ or ‘devil’ in the Bible.
Unfortunately many Hlubi and for that matter Xhosa Christians conceive of
Satan as the Son of God. To them Satan is God’s elder son.
To recap, a puzzling question facing humankind is why bad things happen to good people and the omnipotent, omniscient and the good Lord allows such things to happen. Answers to ‘the problem of evil’ as theologians and philosophers will call it, take the form of dualism and monism. Unfortunately these explanations are not convincing. Interestingly all the explanations offered point to evil forces that prevent human beings from enjoying abundant life. In the Hlubi society it is witchcraft activities and opponents of witchcraft view it as a diabolical practice and that the situation needs to be arrested and it is in this area that most African Indigenous Churches feature prominently.

Responses from interviewees revealed that Hlubis go to the African Indigenous Churches (AICs) in search of salvation that relates to here and now. Their requests include the need for healing, financial and economic problems, problems related to marriages, family needs, children, employment, because of lawsuits, others go there because they are struggling with drunkeness and they want to overcome it. For them all these problems are caused by demonic and witchcraft forces. These are day-to-day needs of real people, men and women, old and young, rich and poor, literate and illiterate. Through these AICs many Hlubis claim to have received salvation to otherwise an hopeless situation. For these people the concept of healing and salvation cannot be divorced from their existential needs. It is against this background that we discuss African Indigenous Churches in the Hlubi community.

6.3 African Indigenous Churches

Various names have been given to Indigenous African Churches. African Independent Churches indicate that they are independent in their origin and organization. But this description is confusing since the historic churches
though founded in Africa by missionaries are also independent from their mother churches in Euro-America. African Initiated Churches implies that they emerged at the initiative of Africans. The terminology Separatist churches is also used and this also signals that they have broken away from historic churches. But Sundkler (1961:18) points out that the term native was offensive to blacks in South Africa at that time and also he felt that it is suggestive that white secessionists were not `separatist’. Sundkler proposed to speak of `Bantu Independent Churches’. The term `Bantu’ shortly became even more offensive than `native’ to blacks in South Africa, because of its link with the apartheid ideology of the South African government.

Indigenous African Churches or independent Churches emerged in South Africa as black peoples’ struggle against the colonization of South Africa by Europeans and domination of religious life by Euro-American missionaries. Scholars like Sundkler (1961:39,57), Balandier and Anderson have argued that these independent churches responded to protect indigenous religio-cultural values against the onslaught of western European civilization and cultural imposition (Quoted by Kruss 1986: 22). Other scholars like Kuper and Knoob assign `ethnic’ factors, the result of separation from the lack of social security evoked by European colonial Christianity induced ethno-historical approaches in response to the crisis faced by the indigenous African religio-culture (Daneel 1987:69).

Arguably, the genesis of the indigenous African churches can be traced to the 19th century where Africans felt the need for ecclesiastical self-control in the mainline churches and for the right of black people to control their own destiny in Africa. A classic example is shown in the Ethiopian churches, which responded to the call `Africa for the Africans’.
The AIC epitomises a place to feel at home. Euro-American missionaries displayed negative attitude towards African culture and Africans were alienated from the gospel, which had Euro-American trappings. AIC therefore emerge as a protest against verbal and cerebral mode which puts Euro-Western Christianity beyond the reach of people’s comprehension and experience. Contrastively, the AICs offer a meaningful religion, making use of symbols, music and dance (Kunnie 1992: 2-6).

Whereas Western missionaries placed emphasis on Christology, the AIC focus on the Holy Spirit with its attendant power that manifests in healing, exorcism, glossolalia and mission. One of the features of AIC is the fact that they appropriate biblical texts to suit their context. A classic example is the appropriation of the exodus story of bondage in Israel to fit their repressive and oppressive local conditions.

The mainline churches have often been accused of emphasizing individualism and privatisation of religion, which was the effect of industrial revolution. This individualism goes against the cherished values of communalism (ubuntu) in South Africa. This sense of community is displayed in pilgrimages to their holy cities or headquarters, mutual aiding resources, and the sharing of a common vocabulary. (Pobee 2002: 1-3 www.wcc.what/ecumenical/aic-e.html. 5/22/2003).

The socio-historical context was therefore the major factor that led to the emergence of indigenous churches. Among other things there were political repression and oppression, economic exploitation, communal fragmentation as a result of the uprooting of people from their traditional land of residence, the imposition of an urban industrial, mining-based economy, family ossification precipitated by socio-economic, political and legislative structures and a sense
of personal alienation engendered by such structures led to a growing religio-cultural vacuum, the space which was filled by the formation of the indigenous Churches in the hundreds of communities across the South African landscape, most often in the urban and outlying areas of the country. It is within this scenario the role of healing came to assume primordial significance in the lives of people who were victims of a vicious racist-colonialist political and socio-economic system, and resultantly needed spiritual crutches and instruments to contend with an order of personal degradation and communal dehumanisation (Kunnie 1992:2).

One of the predominant groups of indigenous churches in the socio-religious community in the Hlubi area is the Zionist Churches. Other popular groups include the Nazarite, the Apostolic Faith Mission, the Disciples, the Spirit Churches and the Messianic Churches.

6.4 African Indigenous Churches And Witchcraft

Since the missionaries were unable to deal with the situation satisfactorily, there emerged a prophetic ministry in South Africa, which announced a new dawn of Christianity, which manifested itself in the African Indigenous Churches. Healing and exorcism is and has been their concern in their services.

According to Kretzschmar (1986: 50-51), the AICs have provided comfort and counsel to Africans in areas where other churches have been unable to help. This is evidenced especially clearly in the issues of witchcraft and evil possession. She argues that the traditional mission churches either reject the idea of witches and bewitching altogether, or do not regard it as a necessary part of the church’s task to deal with (Loewan 1976: 410). Kretzschmar (1986:
50-51) maintains that in contrast, the AICs provide a mechanism for ‘witch smelling’ and the inducement of confession of sins previously unconfessed. In the service, the leaders, often under inspiration, accuse various individuals, or a group as a whole, of misbehaviour. At this point confessions of sorcery and sin pour out, and the guilty individuals are exposed to repentance, forgiveness and healing (Loewan p 411ff).

The AICs place a great emphasis on disease and healing. Because they do not have a Western physiological, cause/effect approach to health, illness may be blamed on other people or the ancestors, any of which may be making use of agencies such as weather, germs, events etc. the primary question regarding illness is not ‘what is it?’ but ‘who sent it, and why?’ (Kretzschmar 1986: 51). It can therefore, be argued that the drift by the Hlubis to these churches is a pragmatic response to seek an explanation and an assurance that the illness will be overcome.

The Hlubi will not deny the efficacy of Western medicine, but usually will insist that it deals only with the physical and symptomatic aspects of the illness. It never deals with the cause. It is unconcerned with ‘the who and the why’. For this reason Africans frequently say that Western medicine leaves the spiritual dimension of illness completely untouched’ (Loewan p 411). This is an area in which the AICs are of immense help. They satisfy their congregation through prayers and rituals to give them the much needed psychological assurance and boost.

It has been pointed out in the preceding chapters that anyone including Christians could be a witch; demon possessed or could inherit ancestral curses. It has also been revealed that in addition to material blessings, every Hlubi and
for that matter African Christian needs deliverance or healing from witchcraft, demons, ancestral curses or diseases, before they will be set free.

Faith healing as pointed out by the Bible is a trademark of a prophet (Daneel 1970:13). Various authors have pointed out the role of faith healing in different Southern African cultures (e.g. Kiernan 1990, Peltzer 1988, Pretorius, De Klerk & Van Rensburg 1991, West 1975, Sundkler 1976, and in Zimbabwe by Daneel 1970). Nearly all, if not all of indigenous church leaders recognise Jesus as a powerful healer and Christians believe that healing powers are invested in certain individuals and Jesus himself. For them what proves a church minister has received a calling from God is his ability to perform miracles. If s/he does not have the power of healing s/he is a fake or ineffective church minister and therefore going to lose his/her congregation to an effective church minister. Against this background all the indigenous churches in South Africa, devote attention to healing and their worship and theology, particularly in the South African situation, and rural communities of Africa, where hospitals are scarce and clinics are hard to come by. Daneel (1970:31) shows how patients who have been healed express their appreciation to the healer or healers by helping in other community needs, such as moulding bricks for new buildings, cleaning roads etc. We see here the ubuntu values being put into practice. Members of the community are enjoying the contribution of an individual who has been made well or healed. This is the kind of rehabilitation needed by alleged witchcraft transgressors to be brought back to the society to lead a normal life.

An important aspect of healing is the frequent use of water. Water is utilized in cleansing, purification, blessing and exorcism rites (Daneel 1970:29-31). As a mark of their emphasis on biblical text and taking a cue from the fact that Jesus was baptized with water in River Jordan and which invested him with
spiritual power to begin his ministry, AICs attach importance to the place of water in their theologies. Kunnie (1992:6) has this to say about the significance of water.

Water is symbolic of the power of the Creator, since water is essential to life itself. Without this rudimentary element, all life would disappear. Water, perceived as a gift from the Creator, is understood to have life-giving and life-invigorating power, upon it being blessed by either the minister or the inyanga (healer), called isiwasho (holy water) in Xhosa language where it constitutes a solvent for other ingredients.

Kiernan (1978), Williams (1982), and Hodgson have articulated that isiwasho is not limited to one thing; neither does it always have a water base. For instance in many African churches, holy water is given to the congregation to drink, the water serving as a bulwark of protection against illness and misfortune, concomitantly used as a means of purification. In fact, in Hlubi religious thought and practice, there is no rigid demarcation between purification and healing; both are seen as continuous with each other.

Kiernan (1978) has articulated the use of water and ashes in the curative work of Zionists. Water is also associated with ‘heaven’ and the source of being (Kiernan 1978:30). For him water has been elevated to a position of pre-eminence as a curative. According to Dube (1968: 121) myths of humankind origin are associated with water. When relations are strained between persons the ritual of ukuthelelana amanzi (to pour water for each other) is performed which is meant to bring about reconciliation. In his contribution to the significance of water in African Independent Churches Sundkler has pointed out that water is used as a medical remedy (1961:232).
The Hlubi healer also combines the function of a prophet and diviner. A healer in African Independent Churches is also believed to have certain divine powers. Sometimes it is believed that his/her ancestors help them. These prophets, for example, talk to the ancestors at appropriate times to ascertain what needs to be done to heal the sickness of individuals. As diviners they may provide diagnosis and explanation of illnesses followed by treatment. They are also able to work through dreams and visions.

Another important aspect of healing in these churches, especially Zionist, is healing by immersion. This is often done in contexts where it is believed an evil spirit is tormenting a person and exorcism is required.

Hlubi herbs are also used as instruments of healing. In many of the Zionist Churches investigated special herbal tea is given to members for the curing of illnesses and for the objective of warding off attacks of evil spirits. For a process of healing to be effective good conditions have to be created. The minister, herbalist or faith healer has to cleanse the patient’s mind and body so as to get rid of the evil or destructive thoughts and deeds of the patient. This is in line with the holistic approach of the healing process found in African religio-cultural traditions. The presence of the Holy Spirit is also considered important in the healing process of these churches in that it is believed it gives power to and through the faith healer to be able to heal his/her patients.

The faith healer also performs the role of psychiatrist. Unlike the modern western European psychiatrist who engages in therapy treatment for mentally challenged people without taking into consideration the spiritual dimension of his/her patient, the faith healer includes communication with the spirit as an aspect of his/her holistic approach in his/her treatment. This is why we observe
that although historic mission churches prohibited their congregation from going to diviners, African Christians continued to do so.

In this chapter we have devoted space to AICs because of the drift of African Christians from mainline or historic churches to the AICs. Also as Le Roux (1977) notes the role of the traditional healer is to an increasing extent being taken over by the Zionist priest or prophet in Hlubi society in particular and South Africa in general. To me this may be due to the fact that people view visiting AICs as more refined than consulting the traditional doctor. For them traditional healers are perceived as trademark of illiteracy and heathenism. Members of AICs therefore, see the synthesis of their theology in their churches and teachings of Christianity as effective and better alternative to purely traditional healing on one hand and the historic churches on the other where physical healing is nonexistent.

Some of the common features of faith healing in AICs are baptism; possession by the Holy Spirit; healing through prayer, holy water and laying on of hands; sabbatarianism; prohibitions against alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, traditional and modern medicine (Peltzer 1987, Turner 1979).

Faith healing in the AICs can be divided into three categories: healing during church services, healing by immersion, and healing through consultation with a prophet.

1 Witchcraft/sorcery related disorders

Poisoning, sorcery; abdominal trouble associated with the ingestion of magical ingredients.
Poisoning, magic; feet problems associated with stepping on ‘placed’ medicines

Foot disease

Social problems like bad luck, not getting a job

Safety and security (protect home, person, property)

2) Substance abuse and Chronic diseases

a). Alcohol abuse

b). Cannabis abuse

c). Smoking cigarettes

d). High blood Pressure

e). Tuberculosis

f). Diabetes

3) Children’s diseases Pulsating fontanels

4) Mental disorders

a) Madness

b) Ama afunyane

c) Sleeping disorders
5) Physical disorders such as sexually transmitted diseases, infertility, epilepsy, childbirth etc

Below are some typical examples for symptoms, etiology and faith healing treatments of illnesses/diseases (Peltzer: 1999:390-394), which were replicated in the study in the Hlubi, surveyed area.

Poisoning, Sorcery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Treatments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abdominal pain</td>
<td>Witchcraft</td>
<td>Steaming with holy water, Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>only at one <code>shebeen</code> queen</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prayer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Madness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Treatments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abnormal behaviour</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>Tie him/her with rope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smashing things</td>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abnormal movements...bewitched ...bathing with holy water

Isolation from community emetics

Alcohol Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Treatments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Always drunk                     bewitched         Prayer, confessions

Amafufunyane

Symptoms     Causes        Treatments

Irritable     Demons        Bathing with holy water

Isolates himself/herself     Witchcraft      Strong coffee

Inappropriate laughter         Prayer

Sleep disorder

Symptoms……Causes………………Treatments

Sleeping at work/school   bewitched, natural

Treatment, bath in holy water, emetics

`holy wool tied around hips, and. Prayer

6.5 Human Agents Of Evil

Like other Nguni-speaking peoples, there is a figure in Hlubi worldview, which, to some extent, resembles the Biblical picture of Satan. But this figure is not a supernatural rather a human one. The figure, the witch, together with charmers and sorcerers, constitute an anti-social force whose activities are directed against humankind. They are always at work against human beings in order to prevent them from enjoying abundant life. Hlubis also wrestle with the idea of ancestor curses where negligence of moral obligation and failure to conform to family values will necessitate the punishment of their ancestors.
Occasionally there were rituals to venerate the living dead but missionaries considered all these activities as nothing but devilish practices. It is for this reason that we want to submit in this study that religious activities as related to witchcraft among the Hlubi, are primarily related to the fears and obsession within their potentialities and constraints in their social structure. These fears, it must be admitted, manifest themselves in so many mundane and everyday matters namely unemployment, marriage and family problems, terminal illnesses, accidents, failure in examinations, epidemics, just to mention but a few. These fears have prevailed in the Xhosa society from time immemorial. For example in times of tension and difficulty in Xhosa history particularly during Frontier wars, as pointed out in chapter one, witchcraft accusations went up and whites began to warn that the danger of war was imminent. This was evidence of crisis in Xhosa society and that called for a response to normalize the situation. It is worth noting that this is a classic example of a repetition of pattern in history, a lesson which humankind cannot afford to ignore. It is for this reason that colonial governments in Africa came out with Witchcraft Suppression Acts.

6.6 Colonial Governments And Witchcraft

In spite of the fact that colonial authorities did all they could to suppress witchcraft accusations and protective devices, these attempts at suppression did not yield any dividend. An explanation often given for these failures is that most of these attempts at suppression did not take into account the metaphysical background of the people. But sometimes a number of scholars and administrators recognized the question of genuine fears of African people that was based on their primal worldview. Using psychoanalytic technique of ‘free association’ to probe the mentality of an African ‘witchdoctor’ in
Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Wulf Sachs (1937) described the psychology of the African as one of ‘Hamletism’ in limited copies of a cyclostyled document ‘Notes on Witchcraft In Its Relation to Administrative Problems’. Dewar, Assistant District Officer for Katsina in Nigeria in 1933, recognized the metaphysical background of the African. He needs to be commended for the simple reason that Evans-Pritchard’s classic work had not been published at that time. Below are his remarks.

‘The chief raison d’etre for the belief in witchcraft is that it offers an explanation for the fact that misfortune may befall a society or individual whose conscience is clear as far as the supernatural world of gods, spirits and ancestors is concerned. As such it serves the following purposes: (i) it reduces the fear of the unknown to the far less sinister fear of the known and explicable. As a result in the place of inaction in the face of disaster, the psychological effects of which are notorious, it gives an opportunity not only for action, but also for a type of action, which has an especial appeal to the primitive mind. (ii) It gives the priest an opportunity to place on other shoulders the blame for the apparent failure of his prayers and ritual’ (p.10).

Dewar then cautioned the colonial authorities:

… interference with tribal methods of witch finding and witch punishing may be expected to produce certain undesirable effects; and, unless these effects themselves can be adequately countered, such interference may well afford an example of the remedy being worse than the disease (p.13)

In South Africa, however, the situation was a bit different as the colonial authorities ‘officially’ regarded witch-beliefs as harmful tendencies. Indigenous South Africans, on the other hand, treated witchcraft as a ‘fundamental article of belief in the faith of a majority of the people.
Sections 14 and 15 Proclamation 110 of 1879 – according to which the former Transkei of Eastern Cape was annexed to the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope (Louw 1941:197) unequivocally states that:

Every person practising, or pretending to practise, witchcraft, or other acts commonly regarded as such, shall be guilty of an offence punishable by fine, or imprisonment with or without spare diet and with or without solitary confinement, or whipping not excluding thirty-six lashes, or by all or any of such punishments Any person falsely accusing another or practicing witchcraft, or other such acts, shall be guilty of an offence punishable as in the last preceding regulation provided

Subsequent Acts (Act No 24 of 1886 of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, The Witchcraft Suppression Act No 20 of 1897, and the existing Witchcraft Suppression Act No 3 of 1957, as well as the Amendment Act No 50 of 1970) echoed the same sentiments. Act No 3 of 1957 as amended (Act No 50 of 1970) consists of six sections with four subsections on possible punishments ranging from two to ten years’ imprisonment. The Act is a culmination of all witchcraft laws passed over the years. It reads

a) any person who imputes to any other person the causing, by supernatural means, of any disease or injury or damage to any person or thing or who names or indicates any other as a wizard.

b) employs or solicits a witch-doctor, witch-finder or any other person to name or indicate any as a wizard;

c) professes a knowledge of witchcraft, or the use of charms, and advises any person how to bewitch, injure or damage any person or thing, or supplies any person with any pretended means of witchcraft;
d) on the advice of any witch-doctor, witch-finder or other person or on the
ground of any pretended knowledge of witchcraft, uses or causes to be put into
operation any means or process which, in accordance with such advice or his
own belief, is calculated to injure or damage any person or thing;

e) for gain pretends to exercise or use any supernatural power, witchcraft,
sorcery, enchantment or conjuration, or undertakes to tell fortunes, or pretends
from his skill in or knowledge of any occult science to discover where and in
what manner anything supposed to have been stolen or lost may be found,
shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction.

f) in circumstances indicating that he professes or pretends to use supernatural
power, witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment or conjuration, imputes the cause of
death of, injury or grief to, disease in, damage to or disappearance of any
person or thing to any other person;

The wording and the consequences for the culprits of the Witchcraft
Suppression Act lends credence to the fact that witchcraft beliefs and its
subsequent wanton destruction of property and killings were a thorny issue for
the colonial authorities. The title (Witchcraft Suppression Act) speaks for itself –
that it was a calculated attempt to suppress any form of witchcraft beliefs,
practices, accusations, trials, and persecutions. It is interesting to note that the
present ANC government has done nothing to review this Act. Whereas the
government has repealed all the obnoxious and oppressive acts such as the
Communism Suppression Act, Mixed Marriages Act, Terrorist Suppression
Act, the Witchcraft Suppression Act has been left intact. This is an indication
of how the government views witchcraft beliefs and practices.

While prohibiting the imputation to and the use of witchcraft, the accusations
of witchcraft, the use of charms and the services of `witch-doctor’ and `witch-
hunter’, no attempt was made to provide an alternative and any means of trial by persons who may think have been bewitched. The purpose was to discourage irrational belief in and fear of witchcraft. The Act, by explicitly prohibiting practices of witchcraft unwittingly lends credence to the existence of the craft and perpetuates people’s irrational belief in and the fear of it.

One may also comment that people who had little or no knowledge of African beliefs and practices and did not bother to ask for the input of peoples for whom the Acts were prepared designed the Witchcraft Suppression Acts.

It can be said that the above Acts were a handiwork of colonial masters based on their experience. Indeed it is a reflection of their misunderstanding and distortion of the African reality. Based on their experience in Europe, the colonial masters viewed witchcraft as a mystical and innate power, which could be used by its possessors to visit calamity and death upon others. As indicated in chapters one and four witchcraft is as old as human society. In world history it is seen as a force to reckon with among the Arabians, Hebrews, Greeks, Romans and the modern nations in Europe and America. In Britain witchcraft was widely regarded as intercourse with evil spirits and was a capital offence until 1736. Before the Witchcraft Act of 1735, it was capital offence to practise witchcraft. (Vide Status, 1& 2 jac. Ic.12). A woman and her daughter aged 9 years were hanged at Huntington for selling their souls to Satan in 1716. 500 persons were burnt as witches in Geneva in 1515. Pope Alexander VI even nominated a Commission against witchcraft in 1494. Sir Mathew Hale condemned the Suffolk witches to be burnt as late as 1664, vide 6 States Trials 647. Vide also Jowitts Dictionary of English Law Vol III-Z; Blacks Law 274
The great Shakespeare even referred to witches as `the crew of wretched souls which stay the cure of maladies….' (Macbeth, Act 1, Scene I & III; Act 2 Scene III). In western tradition witchcraft has absolutely negative connotations. This predilection is borne out of their witchcraft tradition and history. This found ready expression in the laws of the territories they colonized. It is no surprise, therefore, that anthropologists have tended to portray African witches as by definition anti-social and evil whose proper abode is the prison. Their activities have been pre-judged adversely and painted in dim light due to the ethnocentric preconception of ethnographers’ (Alan Harwood 1970).

The position of colonial authorities culminating to the drafting of Witchcraft Suppression Acts indicates the level of misunderstanding and cognitive chasm that existed between the official section of colonial authorities, on one hand, and indigenous Africans, on the other. This misunderstanding between official and unofficial attitude to witchcraft still exists, although legislation still prevail in the country’s statute books that make witchcraft accusations illegal. It is respectfully submitted that the above views reflect an unfortunate misunderstanding of the South African, and most importantly African reality. The African conception of witchcraft is that of mystical power that its possessor is capable of utilizing for both sociality beneficial and maleficent ends. The mystical power has dual aspect. If the possessor of such power is good, he uses such power for the good of all. If on the other hand he is bad and self-seeking, such power becomes a potent weapon for evil. (Vide Alan Harwood supra).

Although Witchcraft Suppression Act has not been repealed the belief in witchcraft is still very strong in South Africa. As things stand now the gates of justice are firmly shut against those who may have genuine cases against
others based on witchcraft. To add insult to injury they potentially face
criminal charges. It is no wonder therefore, that people resort to `mob’ justice
to settle scores with the transgressors (witches). As shown in chapter one and
four there are several instances of suspected witches lynched, burnt to death
and ostracized. Even though such actions cannot be justified in any way one
can say that it is due to the fact that the legal positions favourably encourage
such action because justice in a way is denied.

The 1957 South African Suppression of Witchcraft Act is widely regarded by
African people as `white man’s law’. According to Hund (2000:388-389) the
lawmakers displayed their cultural ignorance and euro centrism by their
inability to draw the distinction between witches and sangomas. Worst of all,
the problem of witch killings and related violence that has been the bone of
contention was not even mentioned by these lawmakers. Hund maintains that
the 1957 Act was instigated at the request of judges who wanted to see
previous colonial anti-witchcraft laws in the various territories consolidated
and unified. While accepting the validity of this reason Hund believes the
deeper motive behind the Act was cultural (and ontological) imperialism. He
cites for example one Mr DC Barlow who complained that `witchcraft is
getting stronger.. you have witchdoctors everywhere and white people are
going to them’. Also one DL Smit stated during the debate that `we are, in
fact, here dealing with pagan institutions. These superstitions and deep-seated
beliefs in ancestral spirits….will disappear with the advance of Christianity
and civilization…these punitive measures are necessary to suppress the evil
practices of witchdoctors’. The intention here is not to test the validity of these
statements but suffice it to say that these `evil witchdoctors’ were respected
and revered traditional healers/doctors who were intermediaries between the
spiritual and physical realms and who held African societies together.
6.7 Some Traditional Methods Used To Combat Witchcraft

During pre-colonial era there were customary courts that administered customs and traditions. In these communities cases of witchcraft were handled at the local level according to custom without reference to the police or the customary law courts.

In order to identify a guilty person, some African societies in the past resorted to trials by ordeal. In this process murderers, adulterers, thieves, taboo-breakers and suspected witches were ‘found out’ (Debrunner 1961:101). Generally some concoction of the bark of a tree, snakes, spiders, lizards, herbs etc. were given to suspected persons to drink. Those who refused to drink or were unable to drink the whole concoction were pronounced guilty. Among the Gas of Ghana the person found guilty was caught by the feet, dragged through the scrub and over stones till his/her body was torn to pieces and s/he died (Debrunner 1961: 102). Captain Rattray describes among the Ashanti of Ghana that ‘A self confessed witch used to have a firebrand placed in her hand before being expelled from the village. A message was sent to the next village, from which she would also be driven and so on. This punishment really amounted to the death penalty’ (Quoted by Debrunner 1961:102). Again, Debrunner continues that in the past persons who were found guilty of witchcraft activities were either killed or sold into slavery. The property of the person executed, or forced to commit suicide on account of ordeal, or of being a witch, went to the chief. The relatives could ask the chief for forgiveness and were given part of the goods of the executed person. It is submitted here that colonial governments could only act by statutorily proscribing customs and or witchcraft imputation and its use. For the African such an action was deemed as just preventing cruelty and getting rid of people’s customs. This punishment might sound cruel to us today but it can be said that it was a form of social
control that helped to instill some sense of security among the aggrieved once the alleged transgressors were removed from the society.

My worry about this argument of maintaining social order is that some innocent persons might have been killed since no empirical evidence could be presented for the accusations. This will also set precedence and aggrieved people will take the law into their own hands and will destroy and vandalize property and murder people with impunity. One’s fundamental human rights are thus infringed upon and the victim has no recourse to justice.

In West Africa there was the establishment of anti-witchcraft shrines, which claimed to combat witchcraft activities, and for that matter provided an answer to the needs, aspirations and hopes of Africans. It was not uncommon to observe people with their children traveling thousands of miles from their home to another province and sometimes even neighbouring countries to anti-witchcraft shrines for protection against witches and rivals, for employment, promotion and for other mundane matters. These anti-witchcraft shrines also utilized the use of magic and medicine. Medicine and magic can be used for good or evil purposes, although the latter is witchcraft and heinous. These can be used for protection against supernatural forces. Most Africans would wear a small bag of these medicines to ward off evil forces or to achieve one’s wishes. As noted earlier in the previous chapter, traditional healers performed these functions. Their role was to diagnose the causes of serious cases of illness, bad luck, etc. Many specialized in ‘smelling out’ witches.

6.8 Witchcraft And Containment

We have argued elsewhere that the flocking of some Hlubis to traditional healers and African Initiated Churches is a pragmatic response to a fear of
witches. It is a form of containment with which people experiment. This finds parallels in the role of Pentecostalists and their special ways of exorcising witchcraft in Ghana (Meyer 1992).

Isak Niehaus, Diane Ciekway, and Cyprian Fisiy have also talked about the engagement of the state in witchcraft affairs. In their longitudinal study of witch-hunts in the South African Lowveld between 1990 and 1995 Niehaus and his team showed that the reinstatement of a “traditional chief” in a given area had immediate effects. Among other things they argued that it was due to his interventions that the witch-hunts in the 1990s resulted in less violence than in the previous years (Quoted by Ciekway 1998:7). Nyamnjoh has also pointed out how Mijikenda forms of witchcraft control were incorporated into forms constructed by colonial and postcolonial state authorities, creating strategic resources for politicians and for supporting everyday practices of state formation. In this situation it was the combined efforts of local people, politicians, and administrators to contain witchcraft. (Ciekway 1998:7).

According to Cyprian Fisiy the Eastern Province of Cameroon has been experimenting with its own form of containment since 1980. The state courts have launched a judicial offensive against the proliferation of witchcraft in the area. The judges rely on the nganga’s (traditional healer) expertise and this is the kind of paradigm shift that Africans are advocating elsewhere in postcolonial Africa.

Ciekway and Geschiere have pointed out the limitations of intervention of the state in these situations. For them the state agents’ use of new legal and policing mechanisms appear to produce more witchcraft discourse, violence, and crisis than they contain. Again they see chiefs and their moral authority, as suggested by Niehaus and Nyamnjoh, not invulnerable to the charge of having
themselves succumbed to witchcraft’s temptations. In their assessment it is only the role of Pentecostalists as suggested by Meyer that has merits. This is because, apart from the fact that the Pentecostalists recognise witchcraft as a reality unlike the historic churches, they claim to combat witchcraft without involving the state.

6.9 Administration Of Justice During Pre-Colonial Era

In general, Hlubi family heads had prime responsibility of controlling the family and make sure that members conformed to societal values. The next level was age groups and societies. Most importantly the emphasis was on collective responsibility and liability; e.g., in case of injury or death, the head of the family, not just the perpetrator, would be on trial. Fines had to be paid by the family. The penalties (usually fines) had to be paid to the chief. The rationale was that all the people belonged to the chief and the injury therefore was to the chief (but the chief would usually give part of the fine to the family of the injured party. This collective responsibility put strong incentives on the family to restrain more unruly members; the Hlubi family often had quite strong elements of leverage to bring to bear. It is in this area that we find the role of the chief and his headmen very significant. All petty offences that could not be handled by the nuclear and extended families were referred to the headman and later the chief.

In theory, he was the chief justice and controlled the court system and his court was the highest and final court. Everyone had a right of appeal to the chief, including appeals against the decisions of headmen or sub-chiefs. Thus, he was the final court of appeal.
Again theoretically, it was the Hlubi chief who made the decision. Court cases were handled very extensively. The chief, his indunas (counselors) and anyone else who wanted to attend the session sat and listened to everyone involved in the case - complainant, the accused, witnesses and anyone having evidence or relevant information. Anyone attending court sessions in the Hlubi Great Place (the palace and official residence of the chief) could ask questions and cross-examine all witnesses. When all the facts and evidence of the case had been heard, then discussions on the relevant law would examine all aspects. The chief normally did not participate in the questioning or the debates.

Procedures were very open ended; the object was to get at the truth, although, except in a case of witchcraft, torture was not used: anyone who had any evidence even remotely applicable could be a witness; anyone attending could ask questions and cross examine witnesses; anyone could join in the debates over the facts or over the points of law. Cases could go on at great length until a consensus was reached. In the rural areas of Xhosa society which Hlubi community is part, disputes end not in the punishment of convicted offenders but in social reconciliation. Apart from cases where the culprit is caught red-handed and punished violently on the spot, it is usual to settle a case by compensation when tempers have cooled down. Usually compensation is agreed upon and the guilty person is allowed to settle down again to a normal life as if nothing has happened. It is for this reason that we find the action of ostracism of alleged witchcraft perpetrators repulsive. It must be noted that the primary motive of ostracizing the alleged transgressors is to bring the society to social order and therefore normalizing relationships. Unfortunately it is done at the expense of another family with all the stigma and humiliation that will haunt such a family forever. We respectfully submit that alleged transgressors should be offered counseling, rehabilitated and allowed to settle down again to live a normal life. It is for this reason why in this study we
advocate ‘African social therapy’ for rehabilitating alleged perpetrators of witchcraft activities. At the local level the chief and his headmen have a role to play to make such a venture successful.

In the pre-colonial era the chief was central to African political systems. In theory, the chief was an autocrat with total power over his people: the chief owned all land. As chief judge he could confiscate their property, (especially cattle) and even had the power of life and death. In practice, most chiefs were much more like constitutional monarchs with many restraints and checks on their power. However, most Europeans failed to recognize this and regarded chiefs as despotic autocrats whose will were law. Currently, the image of chieftaincy is an ambivalent one. Firstly, it is perceived as an outdated institution, a vestige of the past, which can hardly be reconciled with the basic content of the democratization discourse, which is based on elective representation. Secondly, however, it is an institution that guarantees the stability of the socio-political system and respect for customary values within the African State undergoing various processes of socio-political transformations. We are convinced that chiefs can be utilized in dealing with witchcraft issues. According to Niehaus (1997), among the Tsonga and Sotho-speaking groups of the Transvaal Lowveld few killings occurred when chiefs acted as mediators in witchcraft accusation cases since both accused and accusers were given their day in court. As pointed out earlier on the issue of rehabilitation of alleged witchcraft transgressors is fully provided by most African indigenous Churches.
6.10 Protection From Witchcraft

6.10.1 Protection of house
This might be regarded as the strengthening ritual *ukubethela* i.e., to fortify. The objective of this ritual is to make a homestead and its occupants not vulnerable to mystic attacks particularly witches. According to Ngubane (1977:105) the ritual is rather prophylactic and not always considered as a response to illness. Most Zionist houses are identified by means of flags (Kiernan 1979: 19, 20). In our observations among the Hlubi, flags are normally put on poles and planted at vantage points within the homesteads. Sometimes they are on the roof inside the house. In some cases they are given specific instructions to dig a hole at the back of the house and bury a green flag with a white cross in the middle tightened with holy wool in the hole. In addition, holy wool is tightened under the top of the roof, on top of the windows and doorframes. Although there are variations in the colour and design of the flags the objective is to render the inmates immune to mystical attacks.

One other method is to take six-inch nails or some stones from the river smeared with ashes and bury them at the four corners of the yard. They also mix river sand with holy water, ashes and salt. This is splashed all over the yard and in and outside each and every roof of the house.

6.10.2 Protection of cars
Members are advised to take any kind of a toy, e.g. a small teddy bear or small gun, or small shield or spear and tighten it with holy wool and tie it onto the car mirror; sprinkle the car with holy water
6.10.3 Protection of body
Members also wear a badge all the time (in the case of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC)) members).

6.10.4 Referrals
When questioned about referring patients to any other health care agents (medical doctors or *inyanga*) most faith healers maintained that they do not make any referrals except in cases such as physical and chronic issues such as septic wounds, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, ulcers, fractures, sexually transmitted diseases, eye and ear problems when they become absolutely necessary.


6.11 Characteristics Of Faith Healers
Most faith healers were women and over forty years of age and had over ten years experience as faith healers.

The most common problems/illnesses treated by faith healers in this investigation were mental disorders, chronic diseases of lifestyle, substance abuse, physical disorders, fertility problems, and childhood disorders. The study revealed that traditional healers handled more cases of children’s diseases and sexually transmitted diseases than faith healers. Interestingly, faith healers also handled more cases of substance abuse and chronic diseases.
This confirms the study of other researchers (Peltzer 1998) indicating the special role of faith healers in intervening with diseases of life style.

6.12 Intervention techniques

Various intervention techniques were used. These include prayer, baptism, holy water, physical restraint, ‘purification’ measures (emetics), steaming, use of ash, prohibition of drugs, laying on of hands, confession, singing, preaching, Bible reading, worship, dancing, exorcism, dream interpretation, use of candles, immersion in the river, and ‘holy wool’ (Edwards 1983, Peltzer 1987, Schweizer 1980, Sundkler 1961). It appears the change from traditional to modern economy has led to the introduction and use of modern commodities such as tea and coffee replacing traditional Xhosa beer. Baptism through immersion in the river is explained as a rite of separation between washing the past life and sins away in the purifying water and rebirth into a new state and healthier life style (Sundkler 1961). Baptism can in this regard be compared with protection incisions by traditional healers. Through both baptism and protection incisions the patient should refrain from evil doings and be protected from evil influences.

6.12.1 Holy Water

It may be given to members of a congregation to cure a specific illness, or else it may be drunk to purify and protect against illness and misfortune (West 1972). Williams (1982:153) makes reference to a variation of isiwasho which is the ichibi. He concluded that women who suffer from infertility problem use ichibi. According to AICs water and any items are believed to be effective in healing once they have been prayed over.
6.12.2 Physical restraint
Binding or tying to a post are methods used in the management of severely agitated, aggressive psychotic patients. These measures are applied temporarily to prevent harm to self and others (Jilek 1993).

6.12.3 Hydrotherapy
Bathing with holy water is believed to have psycho-somatic effects of relaxation and simulation.

6.12.4 Purification
In order to purify the member from sins and evil influences, he or she may be sprinkled with blessed and unboiled water on his or her face, back, under both feet, and into both hands. In the biblical sense the body and in particular the mentioned body parts may have helped to commit sins and therefore have to be purified. The prophet could bless the water with the following prayer `God of…..I bless this water that everyone who comes here should be helped in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen’

6.12.5 Emetics and laxatives
These are administered with copious amounts of fluids (often water mixed with salt, oil, vinegar, or ashes), steam baths, and fumigation are procedures intended by the faith healer, and understood by the patient, as purifying and cleansing measures to get rid of `polluting’ or otherwise pathogenic substances. Newspapers are cut into strips and blessed so that they could be burned to purify objects and to heal (Lukhaimane 1980). Consequently they provide relief from anxiety (Jilek 1993, Kiernan 1990, West 1972:184).

6.12.6 Bloodletting
Bloodletting is sometimes performed so as to release, remove or expel potentially sick-making or `poisonous’ agents (Jilek 1993). According to
Daneel (1970) ‘injection’ treatment with a sanctified needle are used to puncture nose-cavities in order to remove ‘bad blood’ that flows into the ground.

6.12.7 Use of ashes
Among the Hlubi and other Nguni-speaking tribes’ ashes are used for purification and as a symbol of forgiveness and restitution. Zionists use ashes in accordance with Biblical practice (Sundler 1961).

Use of tea, coffee, salt etc.

Coffee and tea with or without milk are used to purify the blood, salt, to clean the stomach and excess bile, through vomiting. For example, in the case of an alcoholic, the supplicant drinks once in the morning on the first day of treatment 5 teaspoons of table salt dissolved in a cup of 250 mls cold water. Thereafter s/he stays for about one hour and then he or she drinks 2 teaspoons of Zion black tea. The tea prevents the client from vomiting but will together with the salt increase urinating so that the ‘poison’ in the body (blood) will be removed (Peltzer 1987).

6.12.8 ‘Holy Wool’
Wool of different colours is tied around afflicted parts of the body for protective purposes (Lukhaimane 1980, West 1972).

6.12.9 Confession
Confession acts like a ritual vomiting by which the evil in a supplicant is purged (Sundkler 1961). Among Zionists it was stated that the confession of sins and faith in God would render the use of the ‘medicine’ meaningful. Confession alone was believed to heal disease (Lukhaimane 1980).
6.12.10 Proscriptions
According to Kiernan (1979), moral rules among Zionists and Apostolics prohibit smoking, gambling, drinking, promiscuity, and promote a puritan ethic. Members are forbidden to engage in consumption of alcoholic beverages and in many cases the use of other drugs. As pointed out by some scholars (Jilek 1993, Peltzer 1987) this religious prohibition is associated with a readiness to rehabilitate a substance-dependent penitent as a patient in the context of the church’s healing mandate, usually without charge beyond general tithing.

6.12.11 Staff
Staff (*isikhali* literally means weapon) features prominently in the Zionist movement. Most of them are normally made out of woods. These are woods that grow besides water. Once again, the significance of water cannot be overemphasized. In some churches the staves are put together and left at the minister’s place at the end of the service (Kiernan 1979: 16). Before any service began, there would be the ritual distribution of staves by the minister. The significance of the staves and their distribution is that they are believed to be charged with power. It is interesting to note that the Zionist does not believe the power comes from the minister, but comes from the source of power, through the minister. The minister in this regard is just an agent and not the source of power.

6.12.12 Khaki and colours
Nearly all, if not all the indigenous churches use uniforms that have symbolic meanings. Khaki symbolizes that human beings are dust and to dust shall return. White also symbolizes purity, red of the blood of the Lamb. Also cloth crosses, worn by members, most often symbolize Christian identity or wooden crosses carried in processions (Pretorius & Jafta 1997: 223).
6.12.13 Rituals

Most of the AICs also use rituals in their healing service. Rituals also have symbolic connotations. Taking off one’s shoes symbolizes purity just as God commanded Moses to do when approaching the sanctuary. Incense (impepho) and candles are also used. Just as traditional healers use incense to invoke the presence of ancestors so also these faith healers use incense and candles to symbolize the presence of God (Pretorius & Jafta 1997:223).

6.13 The Role And Place Of Women

In the study area the preponderance of women in the AICs was observed. These women are patients, prophets, or prayer women. According to Kiernan (1974:87) their role as recruitment agents places them in a position where they are prey to ritual impurity and pollution. For him the situation becomes complicated if they belong to non-Zionist families. This exposure makes it absolutely necessary for them to seek mystical treatment and strengthening (Dube 1989:129).

In my observations among the Hlubi as patients, women, like their men counterparts, are fragile and so susceptible to any form of psychosomatic illness and would therefore, need the assistance of orthodox and traditional medical practitioners to help alleviate them from these illnesses. As patients they go to the church with problems of `ukufa kwabantu (disease of the African peoples), `isifo sabelegu’ and all other mundane problems such as unemployment, marriages, lack of promotion and harassment by mother-in-law and would want such problems to be solved and get assurance that as long as they become members of the church they will no longer go through such inexplicable misfortunes. Most importantly, these women will also need
psychological and spiritual assurance from faith healers as well as traditional doctors.

As recruitment agents Hlubi women find themselves in a spiritual battle between the recruiter and the recruit supported by members of their coven who feel that they are being decimated in that process and would therefore fight fiercely to retain their members. It also becomes problematic if the recruit is not voluntarily accepting the conversion. Keeping their members and recruiting new congregants will involve rituals that can be neutralized by their opponents. They are also wives of some of the prophets and founders that automatically make them leaders in the women groups of their congregation. Hlubi women’s role as founders of the churches confers on them administrative tasks. Not only do they seek the general welfare of members of the church but also their spiritual welfare is paramount – the primary motive of people joining her church. Failure to address her members’ lingering spiritual concerns and problems will precipitate a drop in membership at the advantage of other spiritually-minded churches. From the discussion there is no doubt that these women’s organizational and spiritual abilities will be put to the test.

Prayer women also constitute influential force in the church. Without these prayer groups the spiritual foundation of the church will certainly be in jeopardy. As mediators between the physical and spiritual worlds they are perpetually faced with spiritual battles on behalf of their supplicants including those who are not members of their church, who visit them for psychosomatic assistance. Their situation becomes more problematic as recruiters when they pray for both willing and unwilling potential members. They have to fight with ‘leaders’ in the spiritual world who do not want to release their members to join these Christian communities. Again, as Hlubi prayer women, they will be
confronted by the issue of who has the spiritual gift of praying which can also bring about divisions in the group.

Being in the midst of all shades of people- recruits, patients, prayer women, places Hlubi women at the risk of pollution from people who are contaminated with regard to reproductive situations, eating foods forbidden by their families and clans, menstruating women, sexual intercourse, birth, death and other ecological factors that make the environment dangerous (Ngubane 1977:77-81).

To fortify themselves against evil forces in their churches, non-members as well as `leaders’ of the spiritual world, these Hlubi prophets have to engage in mystical treatments and rituals to neutralize all the strategies of their opponents and fight back.

6.14 Healing Services

Most of the Hlubi churches conduct healing services twice each week. The type of healing we are interested in is the one that takes place whenever the Zionists hold their service. It is healing which is not necessarily occasioned by illness. In most cases it is protective healing and preventative healing. With the Hlubi worldview that the `iminyama’ (bad spirits who constantly attack innocent individuals) and good spirits permeate the world in mind, faith healers counter attack these `iminyana’ through prayers and `iziwasho’. The methods of healing make illness intelligible and capable of treatment. The healing instruments are expendable and are inexpensive (Kiernan 1978:31). This makes it affordable to people in both rural and urban areas who need to fulfill their health and life-increasing obligations when the healer prescribes manageable methods of staving off illness, for example, the use of chicken in
an essential offering instead of a goat (Williams 1982: 222, Quoted in Dube 1989:131). For the African, as Evans-Pritchard rightly observed (1956:207), the disposition of the heart is more important than the material offering. One significant thing about healing is that the spiritual and material dimensions of religion are brought together. As pointed out by Pretorius & Jafta (1997:223):

`While the head of the healer is in the spiritual world, his or her feet are deeply rooted in the natural world, especially in the use of water, mixed with green or sometimes dry plants, leaves, salt, or lime as medicinal resources (iziwasho)`

As was done in the past, protection from witchcraft activities has become a common concern. Formerly such protection was sought from the priests of the gods or from sorcerers and traditional healers. From the early part of the twentieth century, however, a variety of exorcist activities (anti-witchcraft shrine) have dominated African states. Even when the colonial regimes suppressed witchcraft activities because they hampered progress, they re-emerged within the Indigenous African Churches and later in a form of movement within the classical Pentecostal churches. As soon as one of these movements expends itself, another of a similar nature springs up with a larger following. As a result, at present, almost all churches include exorcist activities, referred to as deliverance in their programs, since such failure to do so amounts to losing members to churches that include such activities. Thus some scholars now observe the `Pentecolisation’ of Christianity in Africa.

There is no doubt that many Hlubi Christians have an ambivalent attitude to the practices of magic, witchcraft and divination. As pointed out in the preceding chapters we cannot underestimate the depth of the belief in witchcraft in the Hlubi worldview. While this worldview is in the process of transformation due to the influences of other cultural forces, it nonetheless
continues to have a firm grip on the minds of many Hlubis. Little wonder that many Hlubis make various attempts to protect themselves or join forces to combat witchcraft activities. What makes such attempts worrying is the fact that the witch hunter arrogates to himself/herself the power as public prosecutor, judge and executioner. Another feature of witch hunting or witch cleansing ceremonies involve the whole community and the victims go through humiliating experiences but are forced to comply with all demands and for that matter make ridiculous confessions because of social pressure. It is interesting to note that this kind of situation was prevalent in Europe too.

Perhaps views expressed by some African scholars will shed light on this issue. Milingo, the incarcerated Roman Catholic bishop of Lusaka, suggested that if Zambia wants to become truly modern, African and religious, it has to rid itself of one of the major obstacles to modernization, namely the belief in evil spirits (Schoffelers 1982:24).

Oosthuizen (1987:69-74) argues that Africans suffer from a `frustration syndrome’ because of their inability to adapt to the modern situation and this has as reaction a belief in the proliferation of the evil with its negative demonic forces. He identifies the prevalence of strong group-consciousness in Africa that could be tyranny or security. In a situation where group interest takes precedence over the individual preferences there is a tendency in which `interrelationships often stultifies initiative, innovation and the spirit of enquiry because tradition has all the answers and jealousy reigns where individual in the group excels and such a person easily becomes the object of witchcraft and sorcery’ (1987: 70).

Related to this frustration syndrome is the issue of the plight of women in modernization process in the male-dominated world of the Hlubi.
Consequently, women find themselves taking refuge in the religious sphere as ‘amaqhira’ and in the indigenous churches where they function as prophets and faith healers and members of ‘manyamos’ or women’s organizations. This is an area in which the church needs to step up its crusade and make its presence felt.

The first step is to accept the traditional framework and to minister to people accordingly. Among the several approaches under this he talked about the idea of pastors and theologians who advocate a pastoral and liturgical approach. Then also is the approach of accepting people’s basic interpretative framework to encourage Christians to clear their conscience by confessing witchcraft practices and then to be restored to the community. Prophet Elison Mutingwede of the Shinga Pastoa Movement in Zimbabwe has used this kind of method with regard to individuals guilty of anti-social behaviour and rehabilitated self-confessed witches. Daneel (1982:101; cf. Daneel 1974:277) has shed light on such a method. Instead of urging the traditional practice of ostracism, Elison preached a message of hope and reconciliation. In this respect his church became a haven to misfits and outcasts of society.

The second approach (pilgrim principle) according to Bosch (1987:52-55) is to help people change their overall interpretative framework to switch to a new paradigm in which God in Christ transforms a culture into what he wants it to be. These traditional forms of combating witchcraft have been the strategy that colonial government and historic churches from time immemorial have been using to stamp out witchcraft but unfortunately has rarely been successful. Although these have been used with good intentions something more effective should be devised. It is all the more reason why we believe a social therapy approach will be more pragmatic in combating witchcraft in the Hlubi society.
The South African Council of Churches was in the forefront in the struggle to dismantle all the oppressive forces and vestiges of Apartheid. In a similar vein its role in getting to the roots and essence of witchcraft activities would go a long way in ameliorating the plight of people who suffer because of witchcraft accusations. For this, its initiative through workshops is welcome. Some workshops have been organized under the auspices of South African Council of Churches in Pietersburg on 20 October and 10 November 1994. It expressed its concern about the escalating of crime in the country. Four types of crime were identified, namely the burning of witches, taxi feuds, theft and alcohol and drug abuse. It felt that churches should concentrate on their provinces whilst regarding the whole country as a backdrop (Dolamo 1996:345). Consequent on the theological reflection on these burning issues the church pledged its commitment to fighting and eliminating all these evils of society through evangelization and conversion of people to redirect them towards God. Through Christian education, men and women could have their attitudes changed in such a way that salvation would be experienced as liberation from insecurity and instability. The South African Council of Churches suggested the church could contribute towards structural change and transformation, the creation of support systems, job creation, and empowerment and towards a critical support of the government, its Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) and civic structures, as well as non-governmental organizations.

6.15 Traditional Healers And Witchcraft

As Bosch (1987: 48) succinctly puts it
`Because of belief in witchcraft, then all reality is divided into the wholly good and the irredeemably bad. Everybody is either on the side of the angels or on the side of the devil. There is no shades of grey'.

The menace of witch activities in the Hlubi society is such that everybody in the society marshals all forces to combat it. It must be noted that the attempt to eradicate witchcraft activities is not peculiar to the Hlubi community. Historically, the world has witnessed situations of witchcraft-cleansing or witchcraft eradication. Not only did it happen in Europe (Trevor-Roper 1984:90-192 quoted in Bosch) but also the twentieth century has witnessed a lot of movements in Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Zaire, Nigeria (Wilson 1973:849) and Ghana (Debrunner 1961).

Now we will look at some examples from the Hlubi. It has been emphasized in this study that the most important concern of the Hlubi is to maintain equilibrium in social relationships. But sorcery and witchcraft as anti-social forces tend to destabilize social relationships because of cultural explanation of envy. The activities of these anti-social forces affect the health and general well being of the victims. In the Hlubi society such disorganization of relationships can be restored through confession and performance of rituals to reconcile the parties whose relationships have been destabilized. Generally traditional healers perform this function by slaughtering a sheep or a black and white chicken that serve as a symbolic representation of the guilty party.

Hlubi traditional healers also provide purification rites for victims of sorcery and witchcraft activities. The purification rites are meant to fortify these victims against misfortunes or the onslaughts of the forces of evil.

On various occasions that I visited traditional healers I saw highly respectable men and women in government, the army and police, and in public schools
waiting for their turn in queues, and very openly parking their cars. To these ‘doctors’ many supposed victims of witchcraft flock for assistance. These witch-finders have been labeled as another source of evil, because they may prey on the ignorance of the people to extort gain for themselves, to accuse other people falsely of being witches, and to lead their clients to commit crimes against innocent people, usually close relatives.

6.16 Education

Advocates of this solution are of the opinion that an aggressive educational program by the government through a review of school curricula (elementary, second cycle and tertiary institutions), workshops, and political rallies with media support can make a tremendous impact on the belief system of Africans. One can conjecture that it was one of the reasons that Christian missionaries came to Africa and in addition why they condemned the traditional religious beliefs, which they felt, should be replaced by a new and more liberating and dynamic culture. But it must be noted that every system should be seen as dependent upon a unique configuration of a particular cultural, symbolic, and experiential background. It will be suicidal to ignore the cultural cognitive attributes of a people if the appropriate conceptualization of behaviour is to be understood. It is also interesting to note that although many Westerners suppose witchcraft beliefs to be something that belongs to a less enlightened past, in fact, witchcraft is alive and well in the United States today (Haviland 2002:377-382). According to Haviland, starting in the 1960s, witchcraft began to undergo something of a boom in the United States. With regard to psychics or spirit mediums, they are consulted by a growing numbers of people in the United States and England today and that they are middle class, often highly intelligent and most of them have something to do with computers (Kendall
1990, Quoted by Haviland 2002: 377-378) Haviland pointed out that belief in occultism is not peculiar to Africans. It is on record that Abraham Lincoln’s wife frequently invited psychics to the White House and it also caused a considerable stir when it was learned that President Reagan’s wife regularly consulted an astrologer.

In fact as South Africans and other African countries have become increasingly exposed to modern education and scientific training, their reliance on witchcraft as an explanation for misfortune has increased (Offiong 1985:152-165). Having discussed some of the attempts to combat witchcraft we offer shortly our humble contribution in combating witchcraft in what we call African social therapy.

6.17 African Social Therapy

Social therapy is a practical, non-diagnostic and non-interpretive, short-term method for helping people to re-initiate their emotional development through performance. By using performance, the social therapeutic approach challenges the assumptions of knowledge-based, problem-oriented, anti-developmental psychology including most forms of psychotherapy.

6.17.1 Performance

By performance we mean the uniquely human activity of going beyond yourself; being someone other than who you are; creating who you are by being who you are not. Picture the tragically common scene of a man storming around the house in a rage about to hit his wife. That man is unself-consciously acting out the role of an abusive husband, which he has acquired in learning how to behave like a man.
Crucial to his learned role is the assumption that when he is angry or upset he has no choice but to hit her. However, through social therapy he can learn that he does have a choice. He has the capacity to perform as who he is not. For example, in the moment he is about to hit his wife he could take his wife's hand and smile at her. In doing one of these things (or any other performance) he can change the form of his anger --- and of his life.

The social therapist does not possess the true interpretation or explanation of why a client feels the way he or she feels, or does what he or she does --- an underlying truth, which the client must come to understand in order to solve the problem. The social therapist is more like a theater director who helps the client to create, along with other people, new performances of affection, anger, anxiety, depression, desire, excitement, grief, happiness, humiliation, impotence, and panic --- new forms of emotional life. This is how performance enables people to give expression to the choices that they make and at the same time to see that they are capable of making choices. It is this self-conscious activity of continuously performing whom and how you are in the world, which is what we mean by development --- and how development is the cure.

6.17.2 Influences on Social Therapy
Social therapy has been strongly influenced by the writing of Lev Vygotsky, the acclaimed Soviet psychologist of the 1920s and 1930s who described early child development as emerging social-cultural-historical activity. His descriptions of the reciprocal processes of creative imitation and completion that goes on in the language-learning environment created by young children and their caregivers have been invaluable for social therapy. Equally influential are the writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein, considered by many to be the most significant philosopher of the 20th Century.
It has been shown in the study that to the Hlubi and most Nguni-speaking peoples in South Africa, witchcraft is real and tangible concept. Those few people who question it are usually Western-educated persons who argue that it is uncouth to hold such backward beliefs. In spite of the horrific tales and confessions by alleged perpetrators of witchcraft atrocities there are no empirical evidence to confirm it. Before discussing how social therapy can be used in the African context it will be worthwhile to discuss briefly the socio-religious needs of the Hlubi and the repercussions of witchcraft activities.

It is quite puzzling to note that if witches have the same kinds of social, emotional and spiritual needs as ordinary people, if they also have the dispositions of empathy and sympathy towards their families and relatives and if they also share the fears and aspirations of their family it is very difficult to comprehend why they do what they are accused of. One can only conjecture that as human beings they also have the frailty that is inherent in humankind. After all hardened criminals, including murderers also display love and sympathy. The point being made here is that in spite of ‘skepticism and alleged reality’ debate, people believe it, practise it and respond to this paranoia.

Repercussions of witch-hunts have been repeatedly pointed out in the study. Not only do lynching, wanton destruction of property, burning of houses, ostracism etc. affect the alleged perpetrator as an individual but also the nuclear and extended families as well. The permanent stigma and label of witchcraft accusation is more than something a family that has struggled to build its reputation can endure. Not only does such a scenario provide a fertile ground for tension but also a perpetuation of inter and intra-generational hate ideology which would not augur well for the Hlubi society. The question is, with such repercussions in mind, why would the Hlubi community embark on
such a venture? Since the conceptual framework of this study was grounded on the theory of equilibrium or restoration, the approach of the Hlubi, to all intents and purposes, is to restore order and establish equilibrium within the system. The normalization process albeit individualistic can be a situation that one can be more successful in his or her endeavour than his/her relative or neighbour. In this case an individual and his/her family’s suffering begin while another person and his/her family’s suffering end, thus giving them abundant life. Worse of all, the restoration process can result in the death of an individual but the bottom-line is an aberration that militates against the norms and values which disorganizes the society. Consequently, the restoration of the society to order will bring peace and tranquility. Besides, the witchcraft victim’s family and the entire community are going to benefit vicariously from the talents and potentials of the individual whose life has been spared due to the elimination of the perpetrator of witchcraft atrocities. But does not such a remedy undermine the cultural values of the Hlubi society?

The theory of equilibrium reveals some contradictions that Hlubi traditional religion generally espouses in the socio-religious sphere. First, there is a strong sense of sharing, solidarity and belongingness between kith and kin and people of the same clan (emkaya). Second, the nuclear and the extended families have been the pivots of the Hlubi social system. Third, efforts are made to secure and promote justice and peace within the community. Fourth, respect for authority, sanctioned by the ancestors, is strong and represents the common will. Finally, the poor and the sick are taken care of; widows and orphans are looked after. In the normalization process all these values are undermined and these are some of the contradictions that witchcraft tends to mediate.

Based on African system of justice, the perpetrators should be assisted to lead a normal life without fear of being persecuted and scorned by the community.
This will demand the Hlubi society displaying an empathetic and sympathetic attitude towards both the perpetrators and victims of witchcraft activities. This will go a long way to achieve group cohesion, family harmony and group interdependency. Again this necessitates the concerted efforts of the traditional doctor, the medical doctor, the family, the individual, state apparatus, non-governmental organization – in fact the entire community to help both the victim and the alleged witch towards rehabilitation. The alleged perpetrator of witchcraft activities should be accepted back to the society like the biblical story of the prodigal son.

6.18 Conclusion

From the discussion so far it can be argued that witchcraft belief goes with belief in rituals and practices of psychic assurance that are associated with the fear of evil. This is because the Hlubi, like most Africans believe witchcraft is an existential reality and that the effect of witchcraft activities manifest in death, illness and suffering. An obvious response to such phobias is seen in the protective and preventive devices provided by *isangoma, amaqhira, amaxhwere, inyanga* and faith healers to many Hlubis. Money and time is spent visiting clandestinely or openly traditional doctors and faith healers to find succour. The services provided by these health agents are aimed at restoration of health physically, mentally and spiritually. Traditional methods of health maintenance, protection of health and restoration of health are the privileges of faith healers and traditional doctors who have the knowledge and understanding of health-related resources from within their ethno-religious cultural heritage, in this case, the Nguni-speaking peoples. Caught in a deep immersion of the spiral web of African traditional worldview and Christian teachings, the Hlubi prefers to adopt an intervention strategy that will help
him/her to overcome the problems in everyday life. Although colonial authorities did all they could to suppress witchcraft accusation and protective devices, these attempts at suppression were not successful. The only Christian groups among the Hlubi, which face squarely the onslaughts of witchcraft in an adversary situation, are the African Indigenous Churches and obviously this explains the drift to these churches. Having discussed attitudes of various world religions towards witchcraft and attempts by colonial governments and various religious faiths to combat the canker in the Hlubi society, our next attention is to review and provide synthesis of the study and make recommendations.
Chapter 7

CONCLUSION - SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Introduction
Local media reports about serious crimes committed due to reasons of superstition makes it unsafe for Hlubis in particular and South Africans in general. What makes the situation so embarrassing is the kind of coverage given to this carnage by Western media. Such a picture has a serious security and economic implications and exposes the South African government’s capability to grapple with safety issues and thus preventing her from attracting investment from other foreign countries.

It is an understatement to say that witchcraft has generated diverse emotional responses since recorded history. Its sympathizers and practitioners view it as a phenomenon that helps to explain the place of human beings in creation; its opponents see it as a diabolical practice (Bannerman-Richter 1984:1). A witch is a person who displays traits slightly different from those regarded as ideal and so there is something abnormal about such a person.

This research sought to investigate the impact of a belief in witches as a scapegoat for all the ills in Hlubi community and South African societies in general – which becomes a good tool for inadequate governments. Although witchcraft activities are nothing new, not only has it caused widespread insecurity among the Hlubis but also the situation in South Africa generally has attracted public media worldwide and this constitutes an embarrassment to the country. Such a problematic situation calls into question the state’s ability and resources to deal with safety issues and therefore undermines the South
African government’s capacity to promote development. Our approach in the
study has been interdisciplinary because a lot has been done about witchcraft
in other areas (history, anthropology, sociology, religion, and psychology). We
also used comparative analysis that provided us a deep insight into the
particularity of Hlubi society. We utilized this approach because we realized
that while very little work has been done in South Africa on the subject, a
substantial body of work on witchcraft has been done in East and West Africa.
Again we used a combination of phenomenological, comparative and
qualitative approach in the research.

It was shown that definitions (both in dictionary and in the Encyclopedia)
reveal concepts such as duality, inversion, reversal or opposition and we
proposed a definition that restricts the term witchcraft to mean the
employment (or assumed employment) of some supernatural means of doing
harm to other people in a way that was generally disapproved of by the mass
of society (Thomas 1970:44).

This research revealed that three types of attitudes are generally adopted
towards witchcraft belief and practices: those who approach it from a field
research’s angle, usually cultural anthropologists, those who treat it as an
expose of the mentality of a primitive and superstitious people, and those who
assert it as being a credible practice. The study indicates that witchcraft is
indeed a reality to many Hlubis including those who are educated and
Christians. Some scholars such as Parrinder (1963), Debrunner (1961) and
Evans-Pritchard (1937) believe the phenomenon is impossible, a pathetic
fallacy and that people who profess to be witches suffer from neurosis.
Certainly these Euro-American writers approach this topic from the stance of
arrogance, misrepresentation, misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the
African worldview.
The research has confirmed our hypothesis that in times of economic woes and social disorganization there is a tendency for people to engage in accusations and ‘scapegoating’. Everyone becomes an enemy and witchcraft accusation is a typical example of the by-products of economic and social woes in South Africa. Although the realities of modern consumerism coupled with a new political dispensation has long been introduced into the social and political fabric of South Africa, a majority of the black population have not seen any tangible and significant improvement in their social and economic situation. Consequently, the pointing out of alleged witches readily blamed for social ills and personal misery is based on human beings inability to gain power, control and materially improve their lives. The Hlubi’s relationship with traditional medical practitioners and faith healers and their frequent engagement in rites are pragmatic attempts to reach out to the Supreme Being in search of ‘salvation’. This salvation has to do with concrete realities, things Hlubis can identify within their day-to-day lives. This attempt to secure salvation is to get rid of physical, spiritual and immediate dangers that prevent the individual or community from enjoying life in all its fullness. This effort is in line with and a continuity of the Hlubi primal view which indicates that to maintain and reactivate the protective presence of the benevolent force, the individual and his/her community must maintain the cosmological balance through protective and preventive rites.

7.1 Factors That Have Contributed To Persistence In The Belief Of Witchcraft

A number of factors have consolidated the belief in witchcraft. The witches are credited with being able to wreak havoc in all spheres of life. In the Hlubi society lean harvests and destruction of farms are said to be caused by witches.
This has been exacerbated by the application of scientific agriculture such as pest control, drainage, manuring, the use of fertilizer, which sometimes lead to poor harvest. One can also make reference to the debilitating effects of tropical diseases that lead to mental disturbances with its symptoms of restlessness. Venereal diseases can also contribute to sterility and stillbirths. Western education has brought about competitiveness geared towards promotion in the workplace through productivity and examinations. Persistent failures breed frustration, envy, fears, tension and anxiety. Such situations are attributed to witchcraft. To make matters worse local newspapers carry sensational stories, which keep witchcraft belief alive. The fact that Independent Churches also claim to have the ability to exorcise witch spirits lends credence to the existence of witchcraft. Due to male dominance over women in the Hlubi society witchcraft accusation is always put on women. Witchcraft is also used as the ‘theory of causation.’ Witchcraft is also used as the ‘theory of morality’. The behaviour of a deviant or a non-conformist is explained in terms of witchcraft. Dreams are considered as means messages are conveyed to the Hlubi. Bad dreams are therefore precursors of illnesses and misfortunes.

7.2 Summary Of The Findings

Selected informants in the Hlubi society indicated that the widespread fear of witchcraft is partly due to its subtle nature. Hlubis know it to be real, but they also know that it defies logic and cannot be confronted in a rational or physical manner. They find it very disconcerting not to be able to grapple with an enemy whose presence they feel but whom they cannot see and therefore cannot identify. For them this explains the prevalent paranoia that they feel towards witchcraft. However, rational and well-educated Hlubis experience the force of witchcraft in a way, which transcends mere belief. When this
happens, their intuition about its existence and malevolence is concretised, and
they have to deal with it in a direct manner.

In this regard, only two channels of escape are available to the Hlubi and other
Nguni-speaking peoples: the traditional method of dealing with witchcraft and
the Christian way. When the Hlubi is desperate for a solution to a pressing
problem, especially problems affecting the health of himself/herself or his/her
loved ones, s/he cares very little whether his/her associates would regard
him/her as superstitious or not. For this reason, many devout Hlubi Christians
often resort to traditional doctors and sorcerers when they suspect that they are
being victimised by witches. Conversely, many individuals who would
ordinarily never dream of stepping inside a church often find themselves
attending Zionist and Apostolic churches in anticipation of getting some relief
from witchcraft attacks.

Sometimes the victims of witchcraft are not only well-educated and scientific-
minded people, but also they are enlightened Christians.

The research links witchcraft to one’s own home, indicating that witchcraft
perpetrators are the kith and kin of one’s own family. The Akan of Ghana have
a proverb that says ‘It is the insect in your cloth that bites you’. This confirms
the observation of Geschire (1997) that witchcraft is the dark side of kinship.
Linked to this observation is the fact that witchcraft accusations and its
perpetration are due to jealousy and envy.

Even geographical distance does not debar a witch from causing havoc on
his/her relative or victim. The use of ‘gun’ by witches to attack their victims
through remote control’ indicates witchcraft is assuming transnational
dimensions.
7.3 Illness And Health

We identified the multidimensional ways of analyzing health beliefs in health traditions. Health is looked at as the freedom from and the absence of evil. In this discourse the framework is to regard health as the absence of disease and also as a reward for ‘good behavior’. Like other Nguni-speaking tribes, sickness in the culture of the Hlubi has social causes and consequences.

It was revealed in the study that good health is the concern of many an Hlubi and for that matter other Nguni-speaking peoples. The implication is a harmonious working and coordination with the universe. It was also revealed that witchcraft and ancestors are considered to be the main causes of diseases. Other factors include nature and ecological or environmental dangers. Sometimes genetic factors are also accepted as causes of illness but witchcraft is oftentimes cited as an explanation for misfortune, illness, death and failure in life.

Healing and prevention may be seen as being in opposition to witchcraft. Among the Hlubi, various agents such as nature spirits, the ancestors and witchcraft mainly cause illness. But generally speaking all illnesses are attributed to nefarious activities of witches and sorcerers. Like most South African Nguni tribes, the Hlubi also operate with a theory of double causality, which has been classified as naturalistic on the one hand and personalistic on the other (Evans-Pritchard 1965, Foster 1976, Gillies 1976). This of course is an analyst’s classification of dichotomy between ‘rational’ and the ‘religious’ worlds. Religious and social explanations of disease often overlap observations of natural causes. The idea of an ‘ultimate ‘ cause beyond a more directly observable natural one is common, particularly in cases of incurable and serious illnesses or when a natural therapy proves ineffective. Questions of
`how’ are then supplemented with questions of `why now’, `why me’ and so forth. Such a view leaves no room for pure chance; everything must be assigned a cause and a meaning. Witchcraft provides the explanation and, in doing so, also provides both the basis and the means for taking counteraction. It is in this area that the traditional healer performs a pivotal role in his/her community. S/he fulfils a variety of roles.

7.4 The Role Of Traditional Doctors

This study indicates that the work of traditional healers supplements the work of scientific medical practitioners. Traditional healers are consulted to provide protection against witchcraft. Basically the role of traditional healers can be seen in three areas namely, prevention of and protection from problems, determination of the causes of these problems, and the eventual elimination of these problems.

The study also confirmed that many of the traditional functions of the isangoma have been taken over by the umthandazi (Lee 1969, West 1975).

An interesting aspect revealed by the study is the fact that the traditional healer embodies the three facilitative conditions of a psychiatric therapist namely, empathy, warmth and genuineness.

The traditional healer in recent times has received ambivalent recognition in popularity, and professionalization by orthodox medical practitioners. A lot of studies have been done on traditional herbal and other pharmaceutical preparations, which have led to some breakthrough in medicinal discoveries. The introduction of reserpine into western psychiatry in the 1950s as a major factor in tranquilizers is not an isolated instance. There is also the factor of the
changing role of the isangoma. Traditionally there was a sex role differentiation in traditional healing. In recent times traditional healers are predominantly women probably as a rebellion against more repressed, traditional female roles. Many diviners, traditionally male, are also practicing traditional medicine today. Also worth noting is the emergence of the faith healer who has taken over some of the functions of the diviner.

The study revealed that the traditional healer performs a variety of roles. Below are some of their important functions in the Hlubi community; (i) as healer, either through divination or provision of muti; (ii) as the center of social integration and cohesion; (iii) as seer or diviner; (iv) as the protector of the people, their possessions and their environment, particularly against lightning; and, most importantly (v) as the religious head of the society and mediator between the ancestors (amadlosi) and their descendants, either for love and protection or propitiation for omission of required rites or for contravention of the social code (vi) as psychotherapist, (vii) sociologist and finally (viii) ecologist. The traditional healer is a highly perceptive person and it is no wonder that s/he wields an influence in his/her community. Evidence shows quite clearly that healing in Hlubi thought patterns involves more than the elimination of physical pain, suffering or the cure of a particular disease. It includes the healing of broken relationships as well as the restoration of a patient’s physical health. The traditional healer concerns himself/herself with these issues. It is worth noting that the Hlubi also believes in the immortality of their ancestors who play a mediatory role on their behalf. Therefore continuing communication with them is crucial for their existential needs and, for that matter, their quest for abundant life. Indeed the respect accorded the traditional healer is based not only on their healing abilities but also on their dominant, instrumental, social role within the community and their proved powers of divination. Their skills lie in the fields of physical, psychological
disturbances, comprehensive understanding and awareness of the ecology (Griffith and Cheetham 1989:299). Although our research has generally portrayed the traditional healer as a `saint’, however, numerous stories in the study area describe them as greedy, cheats, tricky and charlatan and quack doctors. Thorpe (1988:250) maintains that the role of the traditional healer presents us with a model whereby he/she provides a focal point for the positive health and unifying orientation of the community in both a societal and a spiritual sense.

7.5 Ancestors

We have also observed the functions of the ancestors as being social, religious, moral, economic and political in nature. It was noted that these functions, however, are by no means separate but are closely related and sometimes inextricably bound up together. However, maintaining unflinching loyalty to ancestors has caught many Hlubi Christians in a web...in what Bishop Tutu described as religious schizophrenia. Much as they wish to maintain their relationship with and loyalty to their ancestors and for that matter conform to their cultural values, they also have a moral obligation to follow the tenets of their Christian principles and doctrine. This in fact, has been and continues to be a dilemma of African Theology. The question is, if ancestors occupy a unique position in African cosmology, is it not absolutely necessary to encourage Africans who convert to the Gospel to continue to respect their ancestors? In my view any attempts to discourage African Christians from respecting their dead will be detrimental to the Church. Not only will such an approach compel them to venerate their ancestors in secret but also it will have a psychological effect of losing their identity. Until an attempt is made to
search for a lasting solution the Church in Africa will continue to grapple with this thorny issue.

7.6 Cosmological Link Between Witches, Traditional Healers And Ancestors

Our investigation also revealed a cosmological link between traditional healers, ancestors and witches. A person does not simply choose to become a diviner (isangoma), but is understood as being chosen by her ancestors, who bestow upon her clairvoyant powers. A neophyte learns about medicine from a qualified diviner to whom she is apprenticed for some time, but in addition some medicines are said to be revealed to her by her ancestors. The religious leader is therefore a communicator between the visible and the invisible realms. The Hlubi believe that diviners have many attributes of witches. This is because diviners are endowed with mystical powers and special knowledge, which help them to achieve their goals. Perhaps this helps to explain why traditional doctors were formerly called `witch-doctors'. Unlike witches, however, their activities are directed to public benefits and not to their own personal and whimsical interests. That being so, as long as the traditional healer does not undertake any venture that is inimical to his/her family and his/her community then s/he qualifies to be an ancestor (even if s/he was a witch).

Our discourse also revealed that the triangular and cosmological links between traditional healers, ancestors and witches impacted on the concept of good health and abundant life that was and still is the highest aspiration of Hlubis. Any disturbance in the flow of events led to the conclusion that some evil forces were around to make life very unbearable for them and therefore the situation had to be remedied through the assistance of traditional medical
practitioners, ancestors and of late faith healers. Like other Nguni-speaking tribes, sickness in the culture of the Hlubi has social causes and social consequences.

7.7 Witchcraft And Women

Stories and incidents of witch-hunts documented from interviews with people in the fieldwork as well as reports from the public media revealed two significant observations. First, older men and women are generally the targets of witchcraft accusations. Secondly, those who spearhead accusations and the punishment of the alleged witches are members of the younger generation. It follows therefore that witchcraft persecutions are both gender and age biased.

Findings of the study revealed that women of the lower classes were more likely to be accused of witchcraft. As a repetition of pattern of history we found parallels between Hlubi and for that matter African and the witchcraft trials of the 16th and 17th centuries, where more than 75 percent of those were women, most of them single or widowed and many were over 50 years old. Moreover, in both cases, almost all victims belonged to the lower classes, the poor and property-less. Women are generally regarded as sources of danger as expressed in notions about the concept of impure blood of menstruation and blood of childbirth of the Hlubi woman. Such notions of pollution underlie rituals intended to separate unclean women from contact with others or to neutralize the sources of pollution. Women, therefore, are anomalous creatures, intimately associated with the well being of society through their polluting qualities.

At this point it might be useful at to draw attention to the significance of blood in African traditional religion. In African society life is closely associated with
blood. For instance, when blood is shed in making a sacrifice. It means that human or animal life is being given back to God who is in fact the ultimate source of life. Indeed, blood is used to cleanse society and individuals and to propitiate or pacify the spiritual powers. It is used to establish links with the spirit world. Hence the practice of circumcision and clitoridectomy now banned as a violation of human rights. According to Mbiti (1970:18), the blood which is shed during the physical operation binds the person to the land and consequently to the departed of his society. The circumcision blood is like making a covenant, or a solemn agreement, between the individual and his people. Until the individual has gone through the operation, he is an outsider. Once he has shed his blood he joins the stream of his people, he becomes truly one with them.

As far as the low view of women among the Hlubi was concerned the stereotype was perpetuated by Christian teachings. The Jewish view of women as inferior as well as Biblical stories that portray women not as primary beings, but as helpers to man only exacerbated the subservient plight of women in the Hlubi society. For example Paul was simply behaving like a typical Jew in 1 Corinthians 14ff when he ruled women should not be permitted to speak in the church but should remain silent’ (subordinate). Other Pauline passages (Ephesians 5: 24, 1 Timothy 2:1-11) stressed the need for women to be subordinate and submissive to their husband and for that matter to men in general.

7.8 Witchcraft, Inter And Intragenerational Conflict

The leaders of witch-hunts are young men, sometimes `Comrades' who are formal or informal members of SANCO (South African National Civics Organisation). Armed with exuberance and intimidation tendencies the youth
are of the view that they are ripe to `take over' or participate in decision-making process in their community, something that was traditionally the prerogative of the elderly. This is seen as role reversal with its attendant change in social and political order. It is a clear manifestation of an appropriation of power by the youth and the subsequent powerlessness of the elderly. However, some of the elderly people viewed the situation as nothing but intimidation with calculated acts of personal vendettas.

7.9 Witchcraft And Poverty

Indicators of poverty include hunger, lack of shelter, being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not being able to go to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job. It is fear of the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom. As increasing numbers of men in the Hlubi society migrate to the cities and urban areas, the women and children are left behind to cope with a reduced labour supply and with an increased workload. Under such circumstances the main tasks rest on the women, and family stress becomes more pronounced.

The general impression of the surveyed areas suggests a relatively cut off marginalized rural population, located in a fairly rugged landscape. There is a sexual division of labour. Services are poor and access to them is often a severe problem. On the whole people are very poor, and therefore live at or below subsistence economy levels. There is an over-dependence upon families who are lucky enough to have relatives living in urban areas and cities surviving on remittances sent to them. In such a situation any delay or disappointment on the part of a relative in the cities in sending in the money, puts them at mercy of the petty bourgeoisie in the village. It was revealed that
it was not uncommon to find some women exchanging mealies for salt with owners of grocery shops in their villages. Again some parents oftentimes are compelled to pawn their sheep, goats and valuable items for money to pay their children’s school fees. Such hard times, frustrations and disappointments manifest themselves in abnormal behaviours leading to accusations of witchcraft. These scenarios, to a larger extent, contribute to the creation, promotion and escalation of witchcraft accusations that consequently lead to the wanton destruction of property and sometimes even to the lynching of human beings.

7.10 Witchcraft And Development

The fieldwork revealed that there is a relationship between economy and witchcraft. These economic problems created social tensions that manifested themselves in various ways, including a witchcraft craze. The Hlubi scenario found parallels in Europe and America. We therefore, showed how hysteria over witchcraft affected the lives of many Europeans in the 16th and 17th Centuries. Witchcraft trials were prevalent in England, Scotland, Switzerland, and Germany, some parts of France and the Low Countries, and even New England in America. Witchcraft was not a new phenomenon in the 16th and 17th Centuries. Although its practice had been part of traditional village culture for centuries, the medieval church made witchcraft both sinister and dangerous by connecting witches to the activities of the devil, thereby transforming witchcraft into a heresy that had to be extirpated. By the 13th Century, after the creation of the Inquisition, people were accused of a variety of witchcraft practices and, following the biblical injunction ‘Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live,’ were turned over to secular authorities for burning at the stake or hanging (in England). Magic and witchcraft beliefs have been used
and continue to be used for political purposes and therefore can be called upon to support any kind of political system. The belief in these occult forces has serious implications for development and cooperation. Kohnert (1996:1) argues that development projects, which constitute arenas of strategic groups in their struggle for precarious power and control over project resources, are likely to add further social stress to an already endangered precarious balance of power, causing witchcraft accusations to flourish. Added to this, witchcraft may also serve as indicator of hidden social conflicts, which are difficult to detect by other methods (Kohnert 1996:1).

7.11 Chiefs And Witchcraft

Although chiefs and headmen have been generally accused of collusion with witches and traditional medical practitioners, we are convinced that chiefs can be utilized in dealing with witchcraft issues. According to Niehaus (1997), among the Tsonga and Sotho-speaking groups of the Transvaal Lowveld few killings occurred when chiefs acted as mediators in witchcraft accusation cases since both accused and accusers were given their day in court. In the Hlubi community the chiefs and headmen effectively handled most of the witchcraft issues. It was only when issues involved murders, destruction of property and burning of homestead that the chiefs referred matters to the police.

7.12 Witchcraft And Contradictions

It has also been revealed in the stories that social inversions manifest themselves in a number of activities that are in theory possible but which in practical terms were absolutely impossible to have been committed by the alleged accused. Classic examples are the eating of human flesh by the witch
and accusation that the witch associates with animals instead of humans. Healing and prevention may be seen as being in opposition to witchcraft. Among the Hlubi, various agents such as nature spirits, the ancestors and witchcraft mainly cause illness. But generally speaking all illnesses are attributed to nefarious activities of witches and sorcerers.

This research has therefore, explored the domain of witchcraft and its capacity to explain human misfortunes in the Hlubi society. Among other things the research has elicited witchcraft ideas as a critical discourse within the hegemonic and ideological field of Hlubi community. It has also revealed how human agency and individual capacity can subvert ‘ubuntu’ ideals. In a nutshell witchcraft beliefs have indicated an ideology of individual self-interest. Envy is the motive most commonly ascribed, either envy of the rich by the poor or the fertile by the barren. Witchcraft, to some extent, is a mediation of contradictions. It shows opposition between genders, roles, ways of life, generational conflicts between old and young, poor and the rich, anxieties about the boundaries of life and death, and antagonisms between natural desires and cultural restraints. Contradiction and conflict are some of the characteristics of human existence. Witchcraft therefore, reflects this opposition and offer resolutions for overcoming or disguising the dichotomies between good and evil, darkness and light, reason and emotion, the above and below, nature and culture (Schmidt 1988:197).

It was one of the reasons why the Church and colonial administrators made conscious effort to stamp out witchcraft persecutions and witch-hunts. In my view, however much as these practices may have been hated, they nevertheless had a very definite social function. The fear of a curse was used to impose proper respect within a family. It was wise to fulfill one's obligations to a neighbour. Otherwise s/he might employ witchcraft or sorcery to get his/her
rights. A suspected witch should not be offended for fear s/he might retaliate with her/his mysterious power. Outward relations, at least, were therefore kept smooth. A person who was more successful than his/her neighbours - with stock or crops or children - might be suspect of using sorcery to his/her own ends. There was therefore a pressure towards equality and to put it mildly, a quest for an egalitarian society. In a small, intimate, society, with few technological resources for the material betterment of all, such sanctions might be important to preserve peace.

7.13 Witchcraft In World Religions

A brief examination of Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and African Traditional Religions indicated that the belief in witchcraft (except African Religion) appears to be seemingly non-existent, although jealousy and envy are found and dealt with in other ways. It was observed that the factors that are universal are jealousy and envy. In many world areas, and especially in Africa, these emotions are expressed through a belief in witchcraft. Generally envy and jealousy are used as functionalist and or sociological explanation for witchcraft accusations and persecutions and this has been a repetition for a pattern in history.

Although there are references to witches in the Bible they do not fit the characteristics of witch as understood by the Hlubi worldview. A number of references to demoniacs suffering from evil spirits are also found in the New Testament. At the same time the phenomenon cannot be dismissed as simply superstition.

Our investigations revealed that many Christians still believe in witchcraft and are eager for protection. Obviously this double allegiance to tradition and
Christian faith makes them waver between their witchcraft belief and the teaching of the Church. No wonder that we see Christians carrying lucky mascots, putting a St Christopher medal, crucifixes and crosses in cars so as to keep them safe from accidents. Such actions may be strange, absurd and superstitious but for the African it is a pragmatic response to phobias in which s/he is deeply engulfed. It might sound a bit controversial but it is my contention that one of the aspects in which African traditional religion is vastly superior to Christianity is its anthropocentric depiction of the universe, making the welfare of man the principal focus of religious theory and practice. Perhaps it is for this search for salvation or abundant life that we see a proliferation of African Independent Churches.

7.14 The Role Of African Independent Churches

Responses from interviewees revealed that Hlubis go to the African Indigenous Churches (AICs) in search of salvation that relates to the here and now. These are day-to-day needs of real people, men and women, old and young, rich and poor, literate and illiterate. Through these AICs many Hlubis claim to have received salvation in otherwise hopeless situations.

From the discussion so far it can be argued that witchcraft belief goes hand in hand with belief in rituals and practices of psychic assurance that are associated with the fear of evil. An obvious response to such phobias is seen in the protective and preventive devices provided by isangoma, amaqhira, amaxhwere, inyanga and faith healers to many Hlubis. Money and time is spent visiting clandestinely or openly traditional doctors and faith healers to find succour.
Caught in a deep immersion of the spiral web of African traditional worldview and Christian teachings, the Hlubi prefers to adopt an intervention strategy that will help him/her to overcome the problems in everyday life. Although colonial authorities did all they could to suppress witchcraft accusation and protective devices these attempts at suppression were not successful. The only Christian groups among the Hlubi, which face squarely the onslaughts of witchcraft and adversary situations, are the African Indigenous Churches and obviously this explains the drift to these Christian groups among the Hlubi. An interesting aspect of the study was the preponderance of women in the AICs. This was observed in such areas as patients, prophets, or prayer women and recruits. It is their prominence in these spheres, which put them at the risk of pollution and ritual impurity because they deal with all shades of people who for some reasons are rejected by their families, clan and the Hlubi society.

Case studies in our venture have shown that in spite of widespread assumptions (e.g., Monica Wilson 1947:120, Hammond-Tooke 1970; Mitchell and Mitchell 1980; Brain 1982:382), the incidence of magic and witchcraft does not necessarily decrease in the course of modernization and science. According to many Hlubis, it has rather increased both in terms of frequency and effectiveness just before and after the new political dispensation (Drucker-Brown 1993:539, Kohnert 1983). It is interesting to know that people who have advanced educationally and financially as well as less educated and poor are often concerned about protecting themselves from witchcraft. Many African scholars including civil servants, politicians, university professors, university graduates, medical doctors, Moslems and Christian ministers are of the view that witchcraft is an urgent and very harassing reality. A few quick comments have to be made here.
We have argued that Hlubi `visit’ to traditional and faith healers is a pragmatic response to the fears and other life threatening forces. In our view such consultation offers adherents golden opportunities to cling passionately to both their traditional and Christian beliefs and practices. It also accords women equal access to position of leadership within African Initiated Churches, unlike historical or mainline churches that have refused to ordain women into the pastorate. Women who believe have extraordinary spiritual gifts establish their own churches. As traditional healers, women also compete with their male counterparts for respect in their various communities. The proliferation of African Independent Churches has caused mainline churches to reconsider their beliefs and practices. We have also observed the drift of many Hlubis from top government officials to the very low in society to Zionist or other AICs.

There is the negative evaluation of such a trend. We observed that witchcraft accusation and persecution involved scapegoating. `Scapegoating’ prevents people from acknowledging the responsibility for their wrongdoing, their sins and their inadequacies and putting the blame on the marginalized in the Hlubi society. As a result of the teachings of these churches and intimidation of traditional healers, Hlubis are forced to confess anti-social behaviours. Such people become enemies of society and bear the scornful stigma forever, and thus instead of deliverance and healing leading to liberation, the psychosomatic conditions deteriorate and in extreme cases lead to death. From all indications, many of the symptoms as witchcraft or spirit possession can be explained away by medical sciences. For example the utterances of the elderly can be attributed to either senility or Alzheimer disease and unfortunately resources are not available to handle or manage such a disease in Africa. The socio-economic factor among the Hlubi causes many people to start their own churches or practise as traditional healers. We also perceive the subtle claim of
AICs as the only faith that is able to face the onslaughts of witchcraft and other threatening forces as a stumbling for a healthy ecumenism that creates unnecessary tension between AICs and other faiths.

7.15 Can Witchcraft Be Eliminated?

Belief in witchcraft has greatly influenced the life and thought of the Hlubi, young and old, men and women as well as the educated and the uneducated. In fact it is very difficult to make a prediction about the future of witchcraft. Just as there are several reasons contributing to the decline in belief so also there are many factors contributing to the persistence of the belief. As discussed in the study factors that have contributed to make witchcraft belief alive include media coverage, anxiety, kinship, stresses, the debilitating effects of tropical diseases, poverty, westernism and theories of causation and morality. On the other hand good education has made some Hlubis examine situations from a scientific point of view. They therefore regard witchcraft belief as an illusion. The advent of orthodox medical services has also impacted the Hlubi society. No longer do some educated Hlubis attribute misfortunes such as barrenness, impotency, miscarriages and infant mortality to witches. Rather these situations are explained by the theory of causation. Better economic conditions have also contributed to the decline of belief in witchcraft.

However, one can conjecture that as long as problems of poverty, problems related to children, marriages, employment, family needs, accommodation, bad or frightful dreams, drunkenness, mental breakdowns, recurring miscarriages, repeated unnatural deaths such as suicides and accidents, abnormal behaviour such as extreme anger tantrums and existential needs exist – witchcraft will continue to be with us – perhaps forever! In my view the belief in witchcraft will not be destroyed by a direct attack on alleged
perpetrators. The best remedy is to deal with the socio-economic causes, remove tensions and inculcate a positive approach to misfortune and the problem of evil in the world.

As pointed out in chapter one witchcraft is not peculiar to Africa. At present witchcraft in the Euro-American world is being practiced as Wicca religion adapting it to fit our modern lives. It is becoming an intellectual and philosophical discourse rather than a supernatural activity. Wicca religion has grown and diversified, exporting ideas and practices to all corners of England, North America and Australia. The only negative aspect of the situation is that over the past twenty years, chiefly in north America, forms of Wicca have mushroomed, resulting in confusion and conflation between Wicca, witchcraft and Paganism but has become very popular. Given that the Euro-American world has enormous amount of literature and aggressive and persuasive media vis-à-vis the vulnerability of the Third World accepting anything from the Euro-American world, Hlubi society and for that matter South Africa might become a victim of practicing these forms of witchcraft. It can be hypothesized then that the popularity of this area of spirituality will continue and perhaps become more standardized and with its intellectual and philosophical flavour will appeal to the enlightened and will not have tremendous impact on the Hlubi society which is at best predominantly semi-literate.

7.16 Recommendations

7.16.1 Education
All over the world education is said to be the panacea for `backward’ religious beliefs and practices. It is against this background that we suggest a collaborative effort of the state, the people, politicians and administrators to
contain witchcraft. Organising workshops, political rallies and media can do these programmes to arrest the situation.

Community leaders, elders, diviners and other religious personages well versed in African culture could be asked to give lectures in institutions. They could also participate in symposia organised by institutions of higher learning. As the African world is becoming more westernised the burden of the transmission of traditional values has been passed on to the schools. One area of concentration should be the elementary school where a concerted effort ought to be made to foster and encourage African religious values. People should also be enlightened to do away with outmoded traditions that infringed on people’s rights. The role micro organisms or biomedical germs play in diseases and how natural causes may offer explanation for events must constitute an important aspect of such workshops.

As pointed out in our explanation on the significance of blood, there is an urgent need to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women based on their natural biological functions. Already Christianity and urbanization are changing the attitudes of many people. However, it is only through education, both formal and informal that the minds of people can change for the better. Customs, as the saying goes, die hard. Only conscious and consistent educational programs mounted at all levels and on all fronts can defeat the tyranny of obnoxious customs and traditions, which discriminate against women. We therefore call on parents, teachers and religious groups and non-governmental organizations especially those dealing with women issues to get involved in the campaign to liberate women from all forms of sexual discrimination. We cannot afford to devalue the worth of women who apart from having an intimate knowledge and experience of the spirit world play
within the religious milieu a very functionally significant and economically relevant role in the religious life of the Hlubi as ritual specialists.

7.16.2 Legal machinery for combating witchcraft…State/Government intervention

As already indicated elsewhere legal machinery to combat witchcraft has been evident in two areas manifesting themselves in the form of witchcraft suppression laws and postcolonial legal institutions. It has been suggested that a judicious synthesis of what is right and fair with due respect and reference to the cultural practices of the society should be looked at (Fisiy 1999:160).

Cameroon judges, who accept witchcraft proofs because native people preside over courts is an anomaly. In such a situation what is the guarantee that these local people will be able to distinguish facts from accusations that are devoid of malice, jealousy and hatred? That notwithstanding, we are of the view that The Suppression of Witchcraft Act 3 of 1957 needs to be repealed. Whatever the outcome any policy to contain or eradicate witchcraft beliefs should take cognisance of the African worldview.

7.16.3 The Role of the Church

The Church could also strengthen its programme both in its preaching and Sunday school classes by educating its congregation and children on witchcraft issues, jealousy, disrespect for authority, individualism, spirit of generosity and most importantly on the overall matter of being human. The church is known for its attempt to assist its congregation through evangelisation, but this is not enough. It should also do something to assist people who are still outside the church. With regard to lynching, beating, harassing and wanton destruction of property of alleged perpetrators of witchcraft activities, the church needs to mount and step up its crusade by speaking loudly and clearly from the pulpit against such practices. As
discussed in the thesis many of these issues are inherent in Hlubi Traditional Religion. The church has the challenging duty of starting programmes for the education of men, women and children beyond basic literacy and primary education levels in order to combat witchcraft accusations as well as those that will make Hlubis self-sufficient, at least to a degree that would enable them to earn a decent living.

7.16.4 Traditional healers

Traditional medical practice or traditional healing was the sole medical system for healthcare before the introduction of modern health care systems. It continues to be the means for the preservation of the health of rural people who constitute about 70 per cent of the population. According to WHO survey, traditional healers treat 60 – 90 per cent of the patients in the Third World (Ngong 1998:3). Since some diseases are more effectively healed by either traditional or Western orthodox medicines, and since certain diseases are better cured by a combination of traditional and Western medicines, it is reasonable to consider both as complementary. African healers should be encouraged rather than being labelled as quacks and charlatans by the Western medical establishment. Various African governments should accord official recognition to traditional healers. They should also be allowed to form associations to facilitate an exchange of ideas, talents and knowledge among their members. Like any other professional association they must be empowered to weed out dubious traditional healers or members who contravene their code of ethics or who act unprofessionally. It is also well known that the African continent also is endowed with plants as sources of pharmaceutical products. That apart, some of African herbs have proved efficacious in the treatment of diseases. Given the fact that a greater percentage of Africans rely on medicinal plants and also that many of traditional medical practitioners are uneducated it is absolutely necessary for
chemical components of such plants to be studied with the view to ascertaining their side effects. Various African governments should work for cooperation, collaboration and dialogue between traditional medical doctors and Western orthodox medical doctors.

7.16.5 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
The study revealed that jealousy and envy are some of the motivating factors leading to witchcraft accusations. Lack of access to education, medical facilities, technical and basic skills and tools for working can contribute to envy and jealousy. The government cannot handle these issues single-handedly. Some non-governmental agencies can take the initiative to address this area of concern. Other social welfare institutions should also initiate programmes to help the young and old, unemployed men and women to obtain trade or vocational skills which will make them self-sufficient (or at least enable them to earn a decent living).

7.16.6 Health and Medical Systems
Whatever limitations traditional medical practice or traditional healing has, it is still a force to reckon with in rural parts of the Hlubi area. There is no doubt that the potentials for the use of medicinal plants are enormous and that the most common diseases treated adequately by traditional means include skin infections, respiratory infections, diarrhoea and gynaecological infections. It is, therefore, necessary for the State to increase its activities to strengthen collaboration between traditional health associations and state agencies that are active in this business so that they could, all together, move the health of the nation forward. In this vein, it is suggested that there should be encouragement for the cultivation and conservation of medicinal plants while protecting the indigenous knowledge and intellectual property of traditional medicine practitioners.
The teaching of traditional medicines should also be introduced in our medical schools’ programmes and more botanical gardens should be created. Further research programmes about witchcraft and other occult practices should be embarked upon in various South African universities.

As argued elsewhere, African traditional healing is limited in scope, and some practices are undesirable. Certainly we cannot deny that there are some drawbacks to traditional medicine. At the same time, it is unfair to pass judgment on African healing systems on the basis of their worst outcomes. A major challenge is to appreciate their strengths while challenging their weaknesses. Directly challenging traditional beliefs does very little more than create stress, confusion and resentment among people. After all similarities between traditional medical practitioners around the world are vast, techniques obviously might differ, but the substance or root remains the same. Good and bad, right and wrong are two extremes that are used to describe human nature. In the Hlubi spiritual world the sangoma personifies a symbol of good/positive and evil/negative result. Meddling in witchcraft (human) issues is regarded negative whereas his/her connection to ancestral world (spiritual) is considered good. In each situation, the best synergy between traditional practices and other practices can be identified through a process of participatory assessment and development. Orthodox Western medical doctors and traditional medical practitioners can learn from each other. A partnership and cooperation should be forged among the parties to create a fertile ground for the exchange of ideas.

7.16.7 African Social Therapy

Based on African system of justice the perpetrators should be assisted to lead a normal life without fear of being persecuted or scorned by the community. This will demand that the Hlubi society displays an empathetic and
sympathetic attitude towards both the perpetrators and victims of witchcraft activities. Members of the community should be enlightened to appreciate and foster qualities and values of empathy and compassion, co-operation, autonomy, problem ownership, appreciation of diversity and personal power. This will go a long way towards achieving group cohesion, family harmony and group interdependency. Again this necessitates the concerted efforts of the traditional doctor, the medical doctor, the family, the individual, state apparatus, and non-governmental organizations. In fact the entire community must be involved in helping both the victim and the alleged witch towards rehabilitation. The alleged perpetrator of witchcraft activities should be accepted back into the society like the biblical story of the prodigal son. This is important for their sense of identity and self worth. An effort towards consciousness raising in the community must be initiated. For example a group of alleged witchcraft perpetrators and/or victims might educate its members about our society’s overemphasis on professional success and power as the measure of a person’s worth and how this can lead to other social problems. Again such a therapy can focus more on helping the sick to adjust to society than achieving personal health. Any successful exercise in this kind of therapy will encourage victims to challenge destructive aspects of society.

7.16.8 Safety and Security Issues

The South African government should bring to justice persons who commit murder in the context of mob violence or under the pretext of so-called popular justice. The government should publicly denounce acts of violence and serious human rights violations and refrain from making statements justifying or supporting such acts on the grounds of respect for cultural or religious sensitivities. In this regard, the government should bring to justice those responsible for such abuses, to pay adequate compensation to the victims or their families and to prevent the recurrence of such violations. Again the
government should recognise its obligation to ensure the protection of human rights for all persons under its jurisdiction, take effective preventive measures to protect the security and integrity of those who are particularly exposed or vulnerable, and establish and support policies and programmes condemning the use of violence and promoting a climate of tolerance.

7.16.9 The plight of women
Since women are known for their role as converts and converters, the church can also assist women to build a more dynamic community of women by educating them to be their own advocates. The church is known for its attempt to assist women within a given congregation, but that is not entirely adequate. It should do something to assist women who are still outside the church. The Church can also provide assertive training programmes with a view to encouraging women to re-orientate themselves to vocational and technical skills. Again it is only women who can react to the stereotyped patterns that are always offered them. It is incumbent on educated women, with the assistance of sympathetic men, to start a consciousness raising campaign to help liberate other women psychologically. The formation of small groups in villages will help women to examine and reflect on their position and oppression. The government should renew its efforts aimed at protecting the security and the right to life of persons belonging to sexual minorities. Acts of murder and death threats should be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Again the government should adopt measures including policies and programmes geared towards overcoming hatred and prejudice against women and others who are marginalized, and by sensitising public officials and the general public concerning crimes and acts of violence against this group.
7.16.10 Poverty

The study revealed the poor conditions of the surveyed area. Like most Third World countries, the Hlubi aspire to a standard of living such as Western countries now enjoy, even though the gap between the countries of the world is widening rather than narrowing. Every year, some 25 million people slide below the poverty level. This is reflective of what is prevalent in the Hlubi community. This condition has led to the development of what anthropologist Paul Magnarella called a new ‘culture of discontent’ (Quoted by Haviland 2002:448), a level of aspirations far exceeding the bounds of local opportunities. No longer satisfied with traditional values, and often unable to sustain themselves in the rural areas, people all over the world are moving to the large cities to find a ‘better life’, all too often to live out their days in poor, congested, and diseased slums in an attempt to achieve what is usually beyond their reach. The South African government should step up her modernisation process in the areas of technological development, agricultural development, industrialization, and urbanization. This will go a long way towards assisting in cultural and socio-economic change that will have a spill over into the rural communities.

As pointed out in chapter three, poverty is a global problem and a link with the industrialized world is one way of attacking the problem. Bold and aggressive actions are needed in three complementary areas: promoting economic opportunities for poor people through equitable growth, better access to markets, and expanded assets, facilitating empowerment by making state institutions more responsive to poor people and by removing social barriers that exclude women, ethnic and racial groups and the socially disadvantaged, and by enhancing security by preventing and managing economy and by providing mechanisms to reduce the sources of vulnerability that poor people face. Nevertheless, actions by countries and communities may not be enough.
Global actions are needed to complement national and local initiatives to achieve maximum benefit for poor people throughout the world.

7.16.11 African Initiated Churches
That African Initiated Churches are playing an effective role in reconciliation and rehabilitation of the sick, oppressed and marginalized cannot be denied. In order for the leadership to achieve their objectives they need to equip themselves spiritually and academically. The historic churches have oftentimes accused the leadership of AICs of lacking academic and theological training. It is for this reason that we encourage these faith healers to equip themselves academically and professionally. AICs have something to teach mainline churches and vice versa. AICs for example can teach historic churches how to contextualise the Gospel in African cultures, so that the gospel can be rooted in African soil. Similarly the historic churches can teach, for example, various methods of Bible study. A better dialogue between AICs and historic churches will augur well for unity, partnership and fellowship in Africa.

7.16.12 The Role of traditional leaders
In spite of the fact that chiefs and headmen have often been accused of collusion with traditional religious specialists we suggest that they should be utilized in dealing with witchcraft issues. They are generally respected in their respective communities and their subjects respect their decisions normally taken in consultation with their induna (counselors).

It is hoped that this humble work has contributed towards the understanding and control of witchcraft persecutions in the Hlubi community in Qumbu in particular and in South Africa in general. Further research should be undertaken to unravel the mysteries about witchcraft in our African societies.


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