

**A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE PRAISE SINGER  
YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW**

by

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## **DEDICATIONS**

It is my utmost pleasure and gratitude to dedicate this piece of work to my beloved husband, family and friends who backed me up when life's hurricanes tossed me from all angles and when I was financially weak, they supported me. I dedicate this work to those people who, when I was spiritually down, they were my strength. When I felt that I cannot stand any pressure, they gave me hope and their social support. To me it was like an injection to my helplessness to keep on going.

# DECLARATION

Student number 3161-036-6

I declare that, "A critical study of the Praise singer yesterday, today and tomorrow"; is my own work and that sources that I consulted or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

Signature

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Date

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I pray that, "Our heavenly Father earnestly bless them".

## **SUMMARY**

The study sets to establish trends with regard to the role of the praise singer, the changes with regard to the traditional praise singer's rendition/performance and the material or content of his/her poetry. Thus the study highlights the distinction observed between the praise singer of the past and the present praise singer. The study also shows that the praise singer's performance, in terms of his/her role and content, is in the state of flux.

The study also demonstrates that the singer of the past and the present praise singer have the same role and their chants or poetry or songs have the same effect. It also highlights situations where praises are chanted in modern times. These are graduation ceremonies, weddings, political gatherings and traditional ceremonies, for example, the annual rain making ceremonies. These events or occasions are inextricably linked to traditional praises. The study also highlights the fact that traditional praises present the history and heroic deeds of members of the clan to which the beneficiary belongs. They also express the deep feeling of royalty and loyalty. Like in the past they boost morale.

### **Key terms**

Poetry, praise singer, poet, musician, music, ancestral worship, appeasement, love praises, traditional praises, traditional performances, traditional ceremonies, ancestor worship.

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# CHAPTER 1

## 1.0 A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Doubtlessly, there is no one in his five senses who will dispute Mokgohloa's (2006:12) statement that, "Nothing brings the world together like the power of music. Whether it is for celebratory reasons or for venting, mourning, or just plain chilling, music is a powerful communication tool that gets people talking about issues, love, pain, happiness and just plain expressions..." (Mokgohloa 2006:12, uncut parade June).

Mokgohloa's (2006:12) statement clearly shows that music is vital in human lives and it is powerful. It is a tool which evokes emotions, passion and it penetrates to the hearts of people right to the marrow of every joint of existing human if it is properly presented in any given occasion. When emotions are directly appealed to, art has achieved its goal. That is one reason why this research is for the motion that music or praise singing is the most powerful and essential weapon to use when doing anything, like when encouraging, discouraging, warning, fighting, even enhancing happiness or reinforcing joy or otherwise. Acknowledging Mokgohloa's (2006:12) statement above, Tracy (1958:56) mentions that, "There is a correspondingly wide range of musicians to be found on the continent from the most complex folk melodies and rhythms to the simplicities of important dance music." This therefore reflects that music is very powerful and cannot be ignored in the African way of life.

Since praise singing is chanted and sung in fabulous language in order to facilitate the power of language in poetry, it is of paramount importance to note that, poetry and human existence are inseparable, even from dawn of creation to the present day, and presumably into the infinite future. That is one reason why in any African setting, there is a piece of music to accompany it. To this, Owomoyela (1979:15) rightly observes that, "Songs play an important role in all aspects of African life, and there is hardly any occasion or occupation that does not involve singing." That is true and it tallies well with Makgohloa's opening remarks that, "... music is a powerful communication tool that gets people talking about issues, love, pain,

happiness and just plain emotions”. This means music is power. One can do anything, or vent and evoke emotions through this art.

This is typical of African culture. This tallies with Heese’s definition of music, which he considers to be a form of poetry. Heese (968:30) states that, “Poetry is a form of music, its appeal being through the ear direct to the emotions.” It vehemently therefore reflects the verisimilitude that music and poetry as a form of art are very powerful. It also shows that political songs like any other form of music will not be phased out from the past, today and in the future for the old saying goes, “there is power in music”. Owing to the fact that music is occasion and generation oriented, there is music and poetry which suit each occasion and generation. It is for the generational differences that there are generational deviations in poetry and music. For that reason, the study focuses on the praise singer yesterday, today and in the future. This will help the researcher to understand why poetry as a form of art changes or varies from generation to generation.

## **1.1 AIM OF THE RESEARCH**

The aim of the research is to critically make a study of the value of the praise singer yesterday, today and in the future, depicting the gradual changes of praise singing from traditional, Christian and the modern point of view. Kinder (1973:315) cited by Eerdman (1973:315) concerning poetry and the various changes says, “poetry is a highly specialized branch of literary art, produced by the few for the few”. So the question one would ask is, “why is it that today some poems are produced by a few to the whole nation even the world yonder?” An example of such poems is the song “Ishe Komborerai Africa” (God Bless Africa). It is sang by a few on behalf of Africa. This is what the researcher is aiming at. To reveal what causes these changes from generation to generation, it is the number one priority of the researcher who also intends to highlight the changes.

Though there are changes here and there in how poetry is presented and variation in their purpose, there are some traits of the traditional ways which have stood the test of time. The researcher’s zeal is also to picture what sustained praise poetry from yesterday, today and maybe in the future that is across generations.

## **1.2 JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH**

The research endeavours not to repeat what other people have researched on. This dissertation focuses on the praise singer yesterday, today and in the future. The main issue is extracting how the praise singer survived from generation to generation and who represented the praise singer in today's day living. Since praise singing in the past has with it its packages what then drives today's praise singer to do his or her praises.

Since other people who did a research on praise singing focused on praise singing in the past, this study focuses on the issue which keeps the praise singer going and also why it is diverting from public aduration to secret aduration of ancestors and especially in rural areas not in towns.

The researcher too, wants to find out the power in praise singing as linked to our past, present and our future. Furhtermore,the researcher too, wants to establish some similiarities and differences between praise singers from generation to generation.

## **1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Nyandoro (1994:12) rightly recognizes the importance of observing what other authorities have established when embarking on a research and he states that; "when embarking on a research, there is need to highlight what others have already covered in the field". This enables a researcher to know the gaps that have been left and therefore need to be plugged.

The issue raised above by Nyandoro (1994:12) concurs with Pongweni (1990:172)'s observation that:

Every researcher must be aware of the work that has been done by others in his field of specialization. By being constantly aware of the work of one's predecessors as well as that of contemporaries one is directly engaged in a debate with them.

This therefore means that the authorities above and many more looked at praise singing but the issue of generational gaps has not been looked at.

Various authorities have researched and written on various aspects of praise singing in various ways. Concerning praise singing, Murwamphinda (1993:72) states that:

“Praise poems maybe chanted anywhere if the reciter feels like chanting, he is free to do so at any moment.”

This idea clearly shows that the issue of praise singing revolves around everything created on the universe. An example is Kumbirai’s poem “Wandishamisa Zame” (You amaze me God) in which the persona marvels at God’s greatness and patience as compared to man’s impatience. Here it reads:

Wandishamisa Zame, Wandishamisa  
Ndikatsika chiva chinondikobora

Asi kana isu tave kukuruma,  
Hautinakuri, hautipwanyizve  
Unotifuridzira patinokuruma

*(Mabvumira Enhetembo, 1969:88)*

You amaze me God, you amaze me  
If I step on a snake, it bites me

But when we bite you,  
You do not push us aside, you do not crush us  
You nurse us when we bite you

Another example is when Ntuli (1984:64) praises Shaka as “the morning star”, who foretold the coming of education and enlightenment.

The issue of praise singing has to do with adoring something or situation. That is why Brooks (1996:7) notes, “It is important to remember that poetry is not a thing separate from ordinary life”. Brooks (ibid: 7) goes on to say that, “Poetry is valuable in that it springs from a basic human impulse and fulfils a basic human interest, therefore, it is not an isolated and accentric thing but it springs from the most fundamental interests which human beings have.” This is a clear indication that if praise poems have to do with praising, then whoever is praised, the praises

go to the heart of the praisee because the praises also emanate from the heart of the praiser. Heese (1988:30) also notes that, "Poetry is a form of music. Its appeal being to the heart through the ear direct to the emotions".

For the reason that the authorities above just focused on praise singing and how it benefits the people in that era, they tend to turn a blind eye on its functional purposes in this generation. The researcher wants to make it clear that praise singing, like religion, is dynamic. It works with the ideology of the day. That is why the present day, praise singing, though it still exists, has been pushed to rural areas and portrayed and associated with peripheral people like headmen, the uneducated, the poor and even the aged. Above all, Christianity has done more harm to praise singing than good. People tend to look at praise singing with a scornful eye and it is pushed behind doors and is commonly now practised when people visit *sangomas* (traditional healers). Those who do visit these traditional healers or those who practise ancestral worship, do it during the dark hours especially when they have problems and rarely in times of happiness, which makes today's praise singing different from that of the past.

As a result of the idea that the ideology of the day counts a lot on praise singing, a lot of people have seen that gospel music is now very marketable, millions of praise singers have now ventured into this industry.

Owomoyela (1979:15) also believes what the other authorities cited above say concerning poetry. He says, "Songs play an important role in all aspects of African life, and there is hardly any occasion or occupation that does not involve singing." Basing on Heeses' definition of poetry, we can see that songs and poetry serve the same purpose of arousing the emotions as well as adoring, admiring or expressing approval of a duty performed. This is supported by Murwamphida (1993:73) who rightly observes that, "Praise singers usually chant during working hours ... to lighten the burden." This idea of praise singing during working hours, is now a passing shadow especially at work parties (*nhimbe*) because nowadays people no longer work for beer but hard cash. The authorities who dealt with praise singing tend to have ignored this element.

Damane (1968:24) like Murwamphida (1993:73) observes too the issue of praise singing at work parties where it reads, “The praises were performed at work parties as people rested after labouring on the chief’s lands”. As the researcher mentioned earlier on, it is quite clear that singing praises still exist, but in many places it has been shifted from urban areas to rural areas and is associated with the poor and uneducated minority. The rest does praise sing but Christianity tends to be on the lead because during the colonial era, such practices of praise singing were condemned as demonic and barbaric by the colonial rulers.

Owomoyela’s (1979:15) observation of songs is that they are inseparable with African life. He states that, “Songs play an important role in all aspects of African life, and there is hardly any occasion or occupation that does not involve singing”. This singing according to Heese’s (1968:30) definition of music, “is a form of poetry ...” It therefore shows that there is no doubt that people praise sing from time to time. It only depends on where they are and the purpose of being there. Finnegan (1970:102) acknowledges what the authorities above say by observing that, “An expert hunter may have special songs sung for him by fellow hunters (men) ...” An example of a hunting song is seen in Chivaura’s poem entitled. “Rwiyo rwokuvhima Mhuka” (A song for hunting animals) which reads:

Kwachena vadzimba mose momuka  
Svinurai tinovhima mhuka  
Tifambe kunze kuchiri kutema  
Tinotora tutaka vana vari kuchema  
(Mutihimira wedetembo 1965:8)

Its early hunters wake up  
Wake up that we go on a hunting expedition  
That we may cruse while it is still dawn  
That we may bring livers for the crying babies

This clearly shows how the hunters encourage each other to do their work and the reasons for doing so, like meeting the needs of crying children.

Chiwome (1996:19) maintains that, “The Shona song abounds in the context of subsistence farming, hunting, domestic chores, recreation and contemporary forms of menial work.” Chiwome (ibid:19) goes on to mention that, “The songs

divert the mind from the strenuousness and tedium of labour". An example of such songs is the song gathered from the war veterans' offices in Rusape town in Zimbabwe on 30 June 2005 which they said was sung at Pungwe meetings to boost their morale during the war. It goes:

Hazvina mhosva nyangwe zvorema  
Takamirira zvakaoma  
Kurema kwazvo,  
Kunoda madzimai

No matter how tough  
We are ready for anything  
The way it is tough and difficult  
Needs womenly support

The song above goes in line with Milubi (1988:22) who cited the concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English, concerning a song. He remarks that, "It is a short poem set to music or meant to be sung, short poem in rhymed stanza". This is one reason why the poem *Vimbai Mwana akanaka* (*Vimbai the beautiful girl*) written by Hamutyinei, was sung by Marshall Munhumumwe, a Zimbabwean artist, word for word when he sings the song:

Vimbai mwana akanaka  
Mwanasikana chichekererwa sechereni  
Chitoramoyo pakaperera shungu dzaMwari  
Ndiye akatora moyo kwete wangu ndega  
(Mabvumira Enhetembo, 1969:33)

Vimbai the beautiful girl  
A well moulded girl like a ten cent piece  
A heart taker, where God's creativity and talent ended  
She took my heart, not mine only

The poem above is a clear indication of a praise poem of a girl's beauty and praised God for her beauty. This brings us back to the issue that poetry is music. Tracy (1958:56) supports the idea above that poetry is music. Concerning the government of his country and music, Tracy says, "They may make new laws for us to obey them..., but if they try to stop us singing, then, I promise you, there would be a revolution in two days." Tracy's remarks clearly shows that Africans

cannot be separated from praise poetry, which Heese (1968:30) equates with music.

In today's world, various media are used to show appreciation of an act done. This is contrary to life in the past where newspapers were a terrifying thing because they were just, but a dream. Pertaining to disseminating the required information, Kahari (1968:155) points out that, "It is an accepted truism that the song is the newspaper of non – literate societies."

Having seen that praise poetry is a form of communication to show appreciation of an act done, it therefore reflects that, it was, and it is still, and shall remain a type of a newspaper to inform the world of events as they unfold. This brings us back to Owomoyela (1979:15) who concurs with Guma (1980:102) who mentioned that, "Songs play an important role in all aspects of African life, and there is hardly any occasion or any occupation that does not involve singing."

That is one reason why the researcher is making a critical study of praise singing yesterday, today and in the future. It is to establish the merits and demerits of praise singing. Looking with a critical eye, in the remote past when people could neither read nor write, praise singing was the avenue to many unattended souls.

In the past, during a war or after a battle, warriors were honoured through praise singing. With regard to this, Milubi (1988:63) mentions that, "In most cases, praises are recited for warriors who have gone to battle and proved their valour".

In line with Milubi's (1988:63) view above, Nkuzana (1988:5) states that, "Praise poems were used for people who had achieved heroic deeds and had gained public recognition." All these show that praise singing in the past was people's daily bread. However, all the authorities mentioned above in 1.3 did not highlight on praise singing in an enlightened, educated and sophisticated world. They just dealt with praise singing in their time. That is what this study wants to look at with the backing of Stuart (1968:27) who rightly says, "anyone can tell tales, sing, shout praises ...". Owing to this statement by Stuart (ibid:27) the researcher is compelled to take it as one reason why today musicians have sprouted like mushroom.

Praise singing is also discussed by Guma (1988:51) who states that, "Praise poetry is based on the actual deed or actions connected with the particular individual who is praised". Concurring with Guma above Muloiwa (1975:5) commented, "... for everything we can see, hear, and imagine, a praise can be composed." This is a clear indication of African culture and a true fact that praise singing maybe silent in public but very lively behind locked doors. Africans and music are inseparable. Owing to this, Tracy (1958:56) rightly observes, "... if you wish to get to the heart of an African quicker than any other way you must be able to participate in the enjoyment of his music..." It is a true fact that praise poetry has to do with things prevailing in the society in the days concerned. With regard to this, Guma (1980:140) points out that, "There may be a grain of truth and factual statements where the reciter draws from existing or prevailing prejudices in society such as those between the traditionalists and the Christians."

In praise poems, actions and characteristics of animals were described mostly in admiration. An example is the praise of Bere (Hyena) totem from Dandaro nenhetembo by N. Mwanaka which reads:

Maita Ngare!  
Maita Magondo!  
Vanogara muhunza;  
Chifamba-usiku nyika irere,  
Nyanzvi yokurara  
(Dandaro nenhetembo, 1991:73)

Well done hyena  
Well done hyena  
Those who stay in caves  
Those who travel by night when  
the world is at rest  
An expert in sleeping

Kunene (1971:143) mentioned that at times in chanting these praises, in uttering these admirations, "Sacarstic humour" may be used. An example is seen in this poem by Mutswairo (1982:35) which reads:

O Nehanda nyakasikana kunozove riniko  
Isu vaNyai tichitambudzika?  
Mweya unoera! Kunozove riniko

Isu vaNyai tichidzvinyirirwa?

.....  
Vana vacheche vatinobereka, vawakatipa  
Iwe Samasimba, vanova ndivo vadyi  
Venhaka dzedu nhasi vokura vakasunzumara

O Nehanda Nyakasikana until when  
We the Vanyai being troubled?  
Totery spirit until when  
We the VaNyai being oppressed?

.....  
The children you gave us  
You almighty, the heirs  
of our inheritance, today they  
grow up without happiness

We can therefore see that in the process of praise singing one portrays one's sentiments. In the poem above, though Nehanda is a very powerful spirit medium, she has with her problems of letting people suffer from various problems. In the poem above, the Vanyai are suffering from oppression and she seems not to care. Apart from what has been espoused by other authorities concerning poetry, Mkanganwi (1998:6) remarks that,

Kashoko kanobva parere moyo... paya paunonga  
Wava kudeketera panhamo, pakufara, pakurwara  
Pakushushikana, parufu, parudo kana pamwewo  
Pakangodaro saka nhetembo mazwi akapetwa  
akagozungurwa

Poetry is words from the heart ... when you chant,  
when in problems, in happiness, in sickness, in troubles,  
at funerals, in love or at any given situation. So poetry are  
specially selected words.

In other words, people, knowingly or unknowingly, their lives are poems because in life they go through problems, joy, even hatred and they express such feelings verbally and that is poetry.

## **1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In carrying out this research, a variety of methods were used. These methods include among other things, reading books, magazines, newspapers and journals. All these sources were used to shed a clear picture on the issue of praise singing.

Besides the aforementioned methods of data collecting, face to face interviews were carried out. Among the interviewed people were the Mahendere brothers, Mercy Mutsvene, Pastor Sithole who are all musicians. These interviews were held in order to collect as much data as possible on praise singing especially tracing its origins from the remote past to the present day, in actual essence, why it stood the test of time.

Another method is that of questionnaires. Most of the questions used were open ended questions. This method was used in order to extract as much information from the interviewees as possible. In some cases, where the interviewee could not write, the researcher jotted down notes and later wrote down the information.

## **1.5 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH**

In the world and yonder there are many ways by which people can communicate to both the living and the dead. This is done through praise poetry, music and sometimes accompanied by dancing. If one needs to understand the Shona culture, one needs to understand first their communication systems, their way of worship, their norms as well as their values.

Considering all the above issues, there is no doubt that it injected the researcher to look into the issue of praise singing yesterday, today and in the future. This is because there are some areas which need special attention since some authors who visited the same field of study left some gaps on the issue of what keeps praise singing surviving. Besides, the issue of praise singing, like religion, take the shape of the ideology of the day. A common expression goes, "The amount of wine one consumes, determines how high one dances." The same applies to praise singing. The number of the situations prevailing determines the various

praises to be chanted. To this, Muloiwa (1975:5) argues, "... for everything we can see, hear and imagine a praise can be composed." Concurring with Muloiwa (1975:5), Tracy (1958:56) notes that:

... If you wish to get to the heart of an African quicker than any other way, you must be able to participate in the enjoyment of his music ...

All the above mentioned factors made the researcher to look into the issue of praise singing from dawn of creation and into the infinity future.

The researcher would like to mention that, since various authorities have discussed praise singing and focused on their present time, but never the past nor the future, the researcher endeavours to establish all three aspects which are the praise singer yesterday, today and in the future. This is going to be done through various methods. Since the praise singer is spontaneous, the researcher will try and establish likely changes that may occur to praise poetry in the future through interviews, assessment of current linear trends and the assumption that African culture will not divorce itself from praise singing or music.

In conclusion, I would want to mention that, this thesis presents the following: Chapter 1: A general introduction, Aim of the research, justification of the research, Literature review, research methodology, and scope of the research.

Chapter 2: consists of: A general discussion of some key terms which are: poetry, praise singer, singer, poet and musician. In chapter 2, again, there is a comparison of the praise singer, poet and musician.

Chapter 3: deals with the praise singer yesterday. In this chapter the types of praise singers which consists of: the traditional praise singer, war praise singers, love praise singers, intimate praises and similarities between the traditional praise singer and religious praise singer are discussed. This chapter again, looks at what keeps praise singing surviving, as well as the value of the traditional praise singer and his praises today.

Chapter 4: presents the praise singer today. Issues looked at in this chapter are the types of praise singers, among which the poet, the musicians, the traditional songs, are looked at. In addition to this, it highlights God worship, ancestral worship, rainmaking ceremonies and appeasement.

Chapter 5: presents the praise singer in the future (tomorrow). The issues discussed in this chapter are praise singing and gender equity, praise singing and politics, praise singing and religion and finally the analysis of the questionnaires.

Chapter 6 comprises a summary and conclusion of the thesis.

## CHAPTER 2

### A GENERAL SURVEY OF THE KEY TERMS

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

To understand a given article, terms should be made clear and explicitly defined or discussed. That is what this chapter is aimed at. It is aimed at discussing key terms.

#### 2.2 A DISCUSSION OF KEY TERMS

##### 2.2.1 Poetry discussed

Before the written form we have today, poetry was there from the dawn of creation. In reference to the book of Psalms in the Bible, Eerdman (1973:327) defines the book of Psalms thus, “The Psalms express the whole range of human feelings and experiences, from dark depression to exuberant joy”. Eerdman’s definition agrees with Heese (1968:30) who defines poetry as, “a form of music ..., its appeal being through the ear direct to the emotions”. It becomes clear that poetry has to do with one’s emotions or one’s feelings. The issue of poetry having to do with human emotions is acknowledged by Nkuzana (1988:14) who rightly states that poetry is “... a verbal expression of emotions, based upon truth and beauty”. Concurring with the above authorities, Phythians (1970:122) cited by Nkuzana (1988:14) defines poetry as, “... the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, it takes its origin from emotions.” Having established that, it becomes clear that poetry is all about verbalised emotions, be they of joy, sorrow, depression and various others.

This then suits Magwa’s view of poetry. Magwa (1997:1) states that, *nhetembo muupenyu hwavaShona dzakakosha nokuti dzinodzidzisa tsika, rayira magariro, dzinotaura nezvezvitendero ukama nezvimwewo.*” (Poems in Shona are of paramount importance for they portray culture, warn, portray belief, relationships and many other things.) All these are shown when emotions are verbalized. Another author who looked at poetry but from a different angle, is Boulton.

According to Boulton (1959:1) cited in Nkuzana (1988:14), “poetry are things most interesting and of value to an individual and are extremely difficult to define. Thus attempting the impossible”. Grace (1959:55) vehemently acknowledges Boulton (ibid:1). According to Grace (ibid:55), poetry is, “something unusual and distinct ... something hard to define of the highest importance”. The two authorities above concur that poetry cannot be defined.

Even though Boulton (1959:1) and Grace (1965:55) have failed to define what poetry is, the majority of authorities have established that poetry has to do with one’s emotions. Emotions, as has been alluded to, cover happiness, sorrow, love, hatred and many more. An example of a poem which shows sorrow is one by Musiiwa in which people were mourning over a widow who had passed away. The poem reads:

Chemai waro kuti nhasi atisiya  
Munyaradzi wevanosuwa nedambudziko

Mourn that today she has passed away  
The comforter of the troubled ones

In the above poem, people are showing emotions of sorrow from the loss they have experienced, yet they too praised the widow for her kindness and love. Therefore, the two authorities who failed to define what poetry is are to be disputed sharply.

Having established what poetry is, it is of paramount importance to note that in everyday life, no one can fail to express emotions. When people cry, laugh, sing and the like, they will be expressing their emotions. So, poetry as the authorities above have established, are emotions which are verbalized.

### **2.2.2 Praise singer**

Just as writers varied on what poetry is, so they vary again on how they view the praise singer. According to Damane and Saunders (1974:24), a praise singer is, “a seloki (praise singer) who composes or recites praises”. He is a special person with a peculiar talent, and a special memory and in African settings, the person is

commonly a man. This is because most events recited have, in most cases, to do with wars and other heroic valours. This 'Seloki' (Praise singer) in Zulu is an 'Imbongi'. According to Stuart (1968:28), an imbongi (praise singer) is , "someone who records the praise names, the victories and glorious qualities of the chief and his ancestors and recites these in lengthy high sounding verse on occasions which call for public adjuration of the ruler."

The link here is that, a 'seloki' (praise singer) and an 'Imbongi' in Zulu (praise singer) are linked by the fact that they both recite praises, be they of chiefs or kings or both. The issue remains that they praise sing.

With regard to the praise singer, Guma states that the issue of praise singing, "has to do with praising one's successes and little of one's failures," (Guma 1980:153). This too was observed by Stuart (1968:28) who says, "the praise poem contains criticism and praise..." Guma (ibid:153) adds that, "The special position held by the praisee enables him to criticize, with impunity certain aspects of the chief's personality or actions either by overt criticism or covertly by the omission of praise". An example is seen in Ugo Hwamadzinza AvaShona by Hodza which reads:

*Chamakatazirwa chii chamusingatauri?  
Mhuri yangu yazonga kugara iri pahukwe  
Chisakiso chacho chinobva pai patisingaoni?  
Igwangwadzai rinopindwa naro ramusingadziviriri  
Ndoita sendakazvibereka nyamba imi muripo*  
(Ugo hwamadzinza avashona, 1974:49)

What grudge do you hold against us  
My family is always sick  
What is the cause that you do not know  
What passage is being used which you fail to close?  
I seem to have given birth to myself  
Yet you are there.

This shows that the praise singer in some cases criticizes the person praised, in this case the ancestors for failing their duty of looking after the family.

Owing to the fact that Heese (1968:30) defines poetry as, “a form of music ...” and Guma (1980:153) mentioning that, “...the praise singer’s position enables him to criticize, with impunity certain aspects of the chief’s personality or actions either by overt criticism or covertly by the omission of praise”, the researcher doubtlessly regards the musician as the praise singer. From Heese’s (1968:30) definition of poetry, the researcher feels, since the real traditional praise singer is scarce and rare to come by especially in Shona Culture, the musician cannot escape the trap of taking over from the praise singer. Not that the praise singer does not want to exist, but the circumstances surrounding him. Today the Shona militate against their existence and regard such traditional praise singers as uneducated, barbaric and are associated with poor people who live in the rural areas. This perspective shows the dynamism of society. If people want anything to do with these praise singers they visit rural areas to see the old people who can still sing praises. However, the musician on the other hand is taking over. He sings in public, praising or rebuking a bad habit. An example is a song by Leonard Zhakata a Zimbabwean music artist who appeals to God to intervene and save the poor who are treated unjustly by corrupt leaders. He sings:

Vakuru woye ndipeiwo kamukana kangu  
Vamwe vakaita mhanza yokukwira pamusoro  
Ndokutanga kudzvinyirira vari pasi  
Vaye vaye vamunodzvanyirira  
Kuchema kwavo munamato kumatenga  
Tenzi tarirai tosakadzwa sechikwekwe

Lord give me my chance  
Some were lucky to go up the ladder  
And they started oppressing others  
Those whom you oppress  
Their cry is a petition to the Lord  
Lord look, we are being over used

In the song above, Zhakata is appealing to God to intervene because the poor are being oppressed by the rich. Zhakata appeals to God because he believes God is just. Just like the praise singer, when things go wrong, he believes the ancestors should intervene so that justice prevails.

For the reason that the functional value of the praise singer and the musician are married, musicians are cited in this research. Murwamphinda's (1973:74) observation of these functional values of the praise singer cannot go without mentioning. Muramphinda (1973:74) notes that:

“Praises were chanted to show an appreciation of what has been done... at ceremonies such as of caliber including weddings, religious gatherings, graduation ceremonies...”.

An example is taken from Ugo Hwamadzima Avashona (1974:48). In the poem when there was a newly wedded person in the family. It reads:-

Zvino ndati ndikuzivisei varidzi wemunhu  
Mungati muroora akasvika sei mumusha  
Ndisina kuziva  
(Ugo Hwamadzima Avashona, 1974:48)

I decided to notify you the family owner  
About the daughter-in-law who joined the family  
That you may not complain that you were not told

In the Shona culture, if a person marries, it was the duty of the elderly to inform the family ancestors about this new development in the family as shown in the poem above. Having found out what various authorities say about poetry, the researcher has established that poetry is verbal expression of one's emotions, be they of joy, sorrow, sympathy, or any type of emotions. The researcher strongly disagrees with Boulton (1959:1) and Grace (1965:55) who fail to define what poetry is yet the majority of authorities established that poetry has to do with emotion. The researcher says so because there is no one who can fail to express how one feels and the words expressed verbally or documented are poetry. That is why even at a funeral, especially in Shona culture, poetry is spontaneously rendered. An example of a poem gathered at one funeral reads:

Wagonzi wadiiko nhai Martha  
Watizirweiko naNoah uyu?  
Ati unogosara uchidii nevana?  
Unochengetwa naaniko shamwari  
Yako yaenda nhai Martha?  
Nhai Mwari magodarireizve?

What did they say you have done, Martha?  
Why has Noah run away from you?  
What are you going to do with the children?  
Who will look after you?  
Your friend has gone Martha  
Oh God! Why have you done this?

This is a poem recited when one expresses sorrow, grief and disbelief of loss. So it is a clear indication that when emotions are verbalized a poem is rendered.

Magwa (1997:1) observes that:

*Nhetembo muupenyu hwavaShona dzakakosha nokuti  
dzinodzidzisa tsika, rayiro, magariro, zvitendero, ukama  
nezvimwe zvakangodaro.*

(Poems in Shona culture are of paramount importance for they warn, teach, portray beliefs, relationships, and many others).

In Magwa's words, the issue of portraying emotions is mentioned. An example of religious praise is seen in Hodza's (1983:59) poem entitled Shangwa (Bad Luck) which reads:

Nemiwo mose vamasango namatenhere  
Tinochema nemi musikarudzi  
Kana nemiwo muri pasi muchizvinzwawo  
Pashaye anozoti, Handina kuudzwa"  
Newe musiki – Nyadenga – Chikara  
Tinewe mukutambudzika kwedu  
Vashe vavanhu  
(Nduri dzeZimbabwe, 1983:59)

To you in the forests and bushes  
We appeal to you great grand ancestors  
Even you the spirits if you can hear this  
Let there be no one who would say, "I did not hear it"  
Even you God – the one on high – the awesome one  
We are with you in our problems  
Lord of the people.

The poem above portrays, how people turn to their ancestors in times of troubles. Above all, it is their belief that God knows all these problems. It is important to mention that praise singing is tremendously moving from purely praising to

praising in conjunction with remuneration. As mentioned earlier on, the fact that the Shona Culture, is fast changing because of Christianity, praise singing has and is still shifting from being a public event and has become a thing associated with the illiterate and with the old and poor people. As a result, the musician is taking over and is doing it publicly and performs the same duties of praising, at times criticizing and portraying peoples' beliefs, as shown in Hodza's poem above, and in one of the Zimbabwean music artist, Simon Chimbetu, who appealed to God about the misfortunes which befall people of losing their beloved ones. It goes:

Sei muchindidaro, sei vakuruwe?  
Kundikandira pakati pakati kati pegugwa  
Ndoshingirira kusvikira kumahombekombe

Why do you do this to me, why my elders?  
Throwing me at the centre of the ocean?  
And I strive to reach the shores.

In the song above, like the researcher mentioned earlier on, the musician is taking over from praise singing and performs the duties of the former. In the song above, Chimbetu appeals to the ancestors and in a way that has some criticizing elements in that the ancestors are neglecting him. Since the ancestors are believed to have power and authority in Shona culture, he quires why they allow people to experience calamities in life. In the song above, though Chimbetu, praises the ancestors, for other things, but in this song, he blames them for negligence of their duties of taking care of their families.

Having seen what the authorities above have said, the researcher is tempted to stamp that everyone is a praise singer because nearly everyone sings praises in church, traditional dances, when alone repeating other people's songs or when meditating on other things of joy or depression. Eerdman (1973:327) who, concerning the book of Psalms in the bible, upholds the view that, "... it expresses the whole range of human feelings and experiences from dark depression to exuberant joy". Who on earth does not go through an experience of depression or joy in the walk of life? Surely nobody, and these feelings and experiences are expressed verbally as poetry.

Therefore everyone trying to verbalise one's feelings or emotions, becomes a poet or a praise singer. In this case, the researcher contradicts Damane (1974:22) who believes that, "Praise singers were men of outstanding ability". The researcher is tempted to dismiss Damane's statement because the issue of expressing one's feelings does not need experience and has nothing to do with gender. No one needs experience to express love, grief, joy or a complaint. Definitely no-one. That is why the researcher feels that the issue of experience does not work. What one feels is what exactly one says. Stuart (1968:32) like Damane (1974:22) also mentioned that these outstanding people, "need special ability and special memory for he has to memorise not only the praises of the chief but the praise names of all his ancestors as well, and he has to memorise them so perfectly..." Stuart's statement is indebted to be more valuable than Damane's because, Stuart's statement does not dwell on special ability only, but it is combined with special memory to memorise names of the chief's ancestral lineage. Hence, the researcher is compelled to concur with Stuart's view.

### **2.2.3 Singer**

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995:1104), defines "singer" as, "a person who sings praises especially in public". This view marries Finnegan's (1970:84) definition of a praise singer, which says:

Its someone who records praise names of victories, and glorious qualities of the chief and his ancestors and recites these in lengthy – high sounding verse on occasions which seemed to call for public aduration.

From the above information, it is crystal clear that the issue of praise singing has to do with singing in public. Concurring with the authorities above, Damane and Saunders (1974:24) define a praise singer in terms which cover even the singer. According to Damane and Saunders (ibid:24) the praise singer, " composes or recites praises." This tallies with the above authorities who view a singer as, "one who sings praises especially in public..." (Oxford dictionary 1995:1104). This can be seen in Hosea Chipanga, a Zimbabwean musician's song, which goes:

Gushungo makanaka  
Gushungo munopa

Asi vakakupoteredzai  
Ndiwo wakaora  
Makapa vanhu mapurazi, asi vamwe  
Vave nematatu matatu

Gushungo you are very good  
Gushungo you give  
But the people around you  
Are corrupt  
You give people a plot each  
But others own three each

This clearly shows that a praise singer and a singer can serve the same purpose. The difference is that some singers may sing without praising but criticizing, yet the praise singer though he may criticize here and there, his special duty is to praise through singing. In the song above, Hosea Chipanga sings in praise of the Zimbabwean president that he is good and he does his best but only that his subordinates are corrupt. They misuse state property and the blame is unfortunately shifted to the president.

Even though this blame is shifted to the president, the singer praises the president for giving people things which are in turn misused.

Another example of a praise which was sung as a song is the poem by M.A Hamutyinei which reads:

Vamwene vangu vanonetsa nhai vakomana imi  
Ndiswere zvangu ndakachena  
Hanzi ihwenzva varume  
Ndiswere ndichiitawo basa  
Hanzi inguruve yomukadzi  
Nditi ndivapewo zvinhu  
Hanzi vandigovera sepwere

My mother in law is troublesome my friends  
When I am smart she complains  
That I am after boyfriends  
Then, when I work and become dirty  
She likens me to a nursing pig  
If I get some stuff and give her some  
She complains that I have treated her like a baby

The song above is a poem by M.A. Hamutyinei and is sung by Patrick Mukwamba. It therefore shows that a praise singer and a musician are one and the same thing. They compose and recite. There is no way a singer can sing, and not sing publicly. In most cases, the singer sings aloud and normally does that in public. This therefore brings us back to Heese's (1968:30) definition of poetry which reads that, "It is a form of music...". What this definition intonates is that a singer sings. The poem above suits Stuart's (1968:28) view that in praise singing, "criticisms can be made".

#### **2.2.4 Poet**

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1974:24), a 'poet' is, "a writer of poems." This agrees with Damane and Saunders' (1974:24) view. They define a poet as, "someone who composes or recites praises." The Collins New English Dictionary (1956:755) also defines a 'poet' as, the author of a poem, one skilled in making poetry, an imaginative writer."

A poet is therefore, a person who has the ability to compose or recite poems publicly.

An example is seen from a poem by Ntuli entitled "Ngephasika" which reads

Usungulo Lungenamahlo' akungena  
Lubhoboz' inyam' olungezwa zinhlungu

The nail without shame entering  
And piecing moist flesh and binding it  
With the dry wood that feels no pain

This poem by Ntuli above is a clear indication that a poet is someone who is very creative and imaginative. As the authorities above have mentioned, poets compose and recite poems.

### **2.2.5 Musician**

The Oxford Learner's Dictionary (1995:766) defines a 'musician' as, "a person who plays a musical instrument." The Collins New Dictionary (ibid: 665) also defines the musician as, "composer or skilled performer of musical compositions." The two dictionaries here do not go hand in hand because the Oxford Dictionary is concerned with playing musical instruments yet the Collins Dictionary says, "someone who composes and performs musical compositions." So the Collins New English Dictionary supports Damane and Saunders (1974:24) who define a praise singer as, "... one who composes or recites, praises". An example is seen in 1.3 when Marshal Munhumumwe a Zimbabwean music artist sings the song "Vimbai Mwana Akanaka" (Vimbai the beautiful girl) which is a poem by Hamutyinei. In this scenario, Marshal Munhumumwe recites praises of a beautiful girl. The way Hamutyinei's poem above is sung by Marshal Munhumumwe, brings us back to Heese (1968:30) who defines poetry as "music".

### **2.3 A COMPARISON OF THE PRAISE SINGER, POET AND MUSICIAN**

Having seen how the three aspects: praise singer, poet and musician have been defined above, one deduces that there are more similarities than differences. Looking at the praise singer, one can see that his performance is spontaneous and sometimes is from past experiences, needs no licence and can weave in situations as they arise and can praise sing on anything.

The praise singer has been defined as, "someone who composes or recites praises" (Damane and Saunders, 1974:24). On the other hand, the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (1995:890) defines a poet as, "a writer of poems". Since a poet writes poems, it therefore means, he sits and claims he thinks of what to write. So, the one who composes songs and sings them is a praise singer. It therefore portrays that a poet, is a praise singer because he also composes. When the praiser singer recites his poem, a composer of music sings. So they all can sing and produce humour as well as imagination. A good example of a poem which is normally sung is the poem written in *Mabvumira Enhetembo* (page 33), by

M.A Hamutyinei entitled “Ndiye Wandaireva” (she is the one I talked about) which reads:

Vimbai mwana akanaka Mwanasikana  
Chichekererwa seshereni  
Chitoramoyo pakaperera shungu dzaMwari  
Ndiye akatora mwoyo kwete wangu ndoga

Vimbai the beautiful girl  
A beautiful girl rounded like a ten cent piece  
A heart – taker where God’s creativity was displayed  
She took my heart, not mine only

Marshal Munhumumwe, a Zimbabwean music artist, sings this poem written by Hamutyinei. This therefore makes it clear that a poet and a praise singer are one and the same thing. The poet above and Marshal Munhumumwe both praise Vimbai. The praise singer and the poet are the same because they both do their recitation or singing in public. With regards to this, Stuart (1968:27) advances that, “Anyone can tell tales, sing songs, shout praises...” Murwamphida (1993:72) supports Stuart (1968:27) when he states that, “Praise poems may be chanted anywhere if the reciter feels like chanting, he is free to do so at any moment”.

This shows that if anyone can tell tales, sing songs or shout praises, anywhere at any time, then it portrays that everyone at some point is a praise singer. What this denotes is that a poet is a praise singer too. To the researcher, a praise singer is a poet because the big deal is in the composing and recitation. When one expresses one’s emotions verbally then a poem is there and is portrayed through praise singing.

Still on the issue of the aspects at stake, the poet, the praise singer and the musician, one is compelled to believe that the three are the same in some way. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (1995:766), the ‘musician’ is defined as, “the person who plays a musical instrument.” Honestly speaking, no musical instrument goes perfectly well without a piece of music, especially in Shona.

As deduced from other authors above, poetry and music are one and the same thing. Owing to the similarities of the two, Heese (1968:30) says that, “poetry is a

form of music, its appeal being through the ear direct to the emotions.” In line with the statement above, Milubi (1988:22), citing the concise Oxford Dictionary of current English, says, “A song is a short poem set to music or meant to be sung, short rhymes stanzas”. An example of a song cited in Mtumane (2000:167) is, “Everyman gotta right” sung by Bob Marley. He referred to the oppressive system in Rhodesia during the Smith regime. He sang:

Every man gotta right  
To decide his own destiny  
And in his judgment  
There is no partiality  
So arm in arm with arms  
We fight his little trouble  
Coz that’s the only way  
We can overcome our little troubles  
Natty dread it in a Zimbabwe

So Bob Marley’s song is surely a poem which is set to music, and it appeals to the emotions of the oppressed and they joined hands to fight their oppressor. The only difference is that musicians have instruments yet the others do not have. This is true to a certain extent because in Shona when a king or a chief is praised people play instruments. Hodza (1979:4) in support of this view states that, “when the king goes out, he is surrounded and encircled by the marombes (praise singers), who recite the praises to him with loud cries, to the sound of small drums iron and bells, which help them to make louder and clamour.” Hodza (ibid: 4) points out that there is also, “a class of people, great musicians and dancers, who have no other office than to sit at the first room of the king’s palace at the outer door, and around his dwelling, playing many different musical instruments and singing to them a great deal of songs and discourses in praise of the king, in high and sonorous voices”.

One can therefore conclude that there is no difference because there is hardly any Shona celebration and occasion without a song and a drum. It therefore shows that, praise singers, poets and musicians all use instruments depending on the occasion and the origin of the people.

One can state that the praise singer yesterday used drums, today he uses keyboards, guitars, lyres and even drums. In addition to this, one perceives and foresees a possibility of everything being computerized in the near future since the technology is developing so tremendously.

In conclusion, the researcher became convinced that a poet and a musician are inseparable, and the idea that the praise singer, especially in Shona culture the musician cannot escape the trap of taking over from the praise singer. Above all, as long as people continue to have feelings, praise singing and music will continue to exist on the face of the earth.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE PRAISE SINGER YESTERDAY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Praise singing is of paramount importance in African culture. It is therefore quite a default to believe that African culture can do without praise singing. That is one reason why it becomes a true fact when Gunner and Gwala (1991) comment that praises flourish in virtually any context and for almost any person. This shows that praises are popular art. What one deduces from their view of praise singing is that, poetry is a powerful weapon or rather medium to send an appropriate message to the intended audience or person. It is for the reason that it is a powerful weapon, that some politicians tend to use it a great deal. To support this, Gilman and Lisa (2002:42) mention that, "political parties in contemporary Malawi organise their female members to dance and sing songs or praise at their public functions." This brings us back to the idea that praise singing was normally done in public to inspire each other for the task ahead of them or an act done.

Praise singing has been there from the dawn of creation. This is exemplified in the book of Psalms and proverbs which were written and are poetic in form and content. It shows greatly the importance of praise singing from creation times up to today.

In the book of proverbs in the Bible, Solomon, son of David, speaks of a woman of noble character where he praises the perfect woman one could ever get. Here it reads.

- V10 A wife of noble character who can find?  
She is worth for more than rubies
- V11 Her husband has full confidence in her  
And lacks nothing of value
- V12 She brings him good, not harm,  
All the days of her life  
(Proverbs 31:10 – 12)

This clearly shows how praise singing is powerful from yesterday up to date and presumably in the future.

David in Psalms also praised God for his protection when his adversaries needed him most. Here its written:

- V1 If the Lord had not been on our side,  
Let Israel say
- V2 If the Lord had not been on our side,  
When man attacked us,
- V3 When their anger flared against us,  
They could have swallowed us alive
- V7 We have escaped like a bird  
Out of the fowler's snare  
And we have escaped
- V8 Our help is in the name of the Lord  
The Maker of heaven and earth  
(Psalms 124:1 - 3, 7 – 8)

Here, David, Like Solomon above, praises the Maker for his mercy. So the issue of praise singing can be traced from the origin of the earth, because the Bible clearly shows that man was created with the power to appreciate or praise things. That is why Genesis 2 verse 23 when Adam awoke from his deep sleep and found Eve whom God had created from Adam's rib, Adam praises Eve, saying:-

- V23 This is now bone of my bones  
And flesh of my flesh  
She shall be called woman  
Because she was taken out of man

In nature and context, these words are poetic and Adam praise sings when he saw Eve.

### **3.2 TYPES OF PRAISE SINGERS**

The true fact about praise singing is that, poetry cannot be detached from art. Poetry is art which has the potential to communicate right to the emotion from the

past, the present and into the future generations. That is why even before poetry could be written in verse as seen through the book of Psalms and Proverbs in the Bible, the San people drew paintings on rocks as a way of communicating through art. In the past, the praise singer was seen in various occasions and situations. With regard to this, Murwamphida (1993:73) quotes Stuart (1968:270) who says “praise poems may be chanted anywhere if the reciter feels like chanting, he is free to do so at any moment.” As a result, it reflects that when the occasion and situation are found wanting, then, the praise singer could recite praises to the people in question at that occasion. Acknowledging the statement above, Tracy (1958:57) says, “There is a correspondingly wide range of music to be found on the continent from the most complex folk melodies and rhythms to the simplicities of imported dance music.”

Tracy (ibid:57) goes on to state that, “... if you want to get to the heart of an African quicker than any other way, you must be able to participate in the enjoyment of his music, and have an understanding and sympathy for his social customs.” This shows that praise singing was there in the past (yesterday) as part of the African people’s life and in various forms, as some of the types are shown below.

### **3.2.1 Traditional praise singers**

These praise singers were in various categories depending on the given situation and occasion. Tracy (1958:57) as mentioned above remarks, “The Africa we know today is by no means a single and homogenous unit, and its folk music are correspondingly diverse.” It should be borne in mind that in this study, poetry and music or songs, are inseparable because, as Heese (1988:30) puts it, poetry “is... a form of music...”. This therefore points to the fact that even traditional praise singers were found in diverse forms, among which were praise singers, intimate praise singers between spouses and farmer’s praises, just to mention a few.

### 3.2.2 War praise singers

The praise singer of such calibre could recite a praise pertaining to war before or after the battle to strengthen and give assurance to the warriors. This is supported by Guma (1980:102) who, concerning war songs points out that, “ war praise songs were sung before or after war to give people strength and assurance.” Even clans could sing war songs to show their determination against their enemy. To this, Hodza (1979:31) says, “The clan war song was sung to hearten its members and incite them to action. It was a way of encouraging the warriors not to turn back but to look forward to win a battle before them.” In support of this, Chiwome (1966:21) points out that, “During the (1964 – 1979) Chimurenga war of liberation from colonialism, songs played an important role of keeping the morale of the peasants and guerilla high during times of massive destruction of property and human life.” An example of a song sung during the liberation struggle reads:

Ndiro gidi vakomana  
Richatonga Zimbabwe  
Richatonga nyika yedu  
Nyika yedu yeZimbabwe

It is the gun boys  
Through the gun Zimbabwe  
Our Nation will be liberated

This was pure assurance to the freedom fighters that they will be liberated through fighting and victory was a sure case, no matter what it could cost. The freedom fighters were determined to win and the songs of liberation were a morale booster.

Another example is a song sung in South Africa during the apartheid era which reads:

We shall overcome x 2  
We shall overcome someday  
Deep in our hearts  
We do believe  
We shall overcome someday

The use of the pronoun “we” reflects an element of oneness in trying to do away with apartheid rule. They believed that they would rather die fighting or otherwise.

Besides wars between whites and non whites, there were also tribal wars between the non whites over ruling powers, for wealth or to obtain women and wealth such as cattle and land. An example is seen in Zvarevashe's "Gonawapotera" where Murowasango, concerning the issue of leadership, power and authority remarks:

Tichatonga navanaTafirenyika vakafire nyika  
Nyikayaramba akasara, nhasi otonga ndiani?  
(Gonawapotera ; 1978:136)

Tichatonga and Tafirenyika died for the nation  
Nyikayaramba was left, who will reign today?

This is a clear indication that the issue of war praises was there from the past generations to this present generation. However, with the change of times, it seems the inter-tribal wars were let go.

There were also songs sung by hunters in order to encourage each other for the job ahead. Women would sing praises thanking their husbands for bringing game meat to their families. In support of this view, Hodza (1976:36) states that, "A wife will thank her husband with his full clan praise for bringing back meat from his hunt." This is clearly shown in the poem of the mheta clan given below. It reads:

Titambire nyoka, titambire mheta yangu yiyi  
Zvaitwa mheta  
Zvaitwa nyoka  
Vari kuna Mozi kuna Panga  
Vanopona nehuruva  
Vanofamba nedumbu  
Mwana waKandamiviri  
Vakakanda miseve miviri  
Dzviti rikatiza  
Zvaitwa nyamutemera kuodza  
Zvaitwa shato yangu yiyi  
Vane unyiri nyiri hwakapedza mbudzi

Well done python  
Well done snake  
Those who dwell in the Mozi and Panga mountains  
Who fed on dust  
Who crawl on their stomach  
The son of Kandamiri  
Who drew two arrows and Dzviti warriors ran away

Those who bite for no cause  
Well done python  
Those with attractive sports that trick the goats  
Until they are all eaten

Having heard my source reciting these praises for her husband, it became clear to the researcher that Stuart (1968:27) is right when he states that, "Praise poems may be chanted anywhere if the reciter feels like chanting." Murwamphinda (1973:74) also acknowledges Stuart (ibid:27) when he states that, " Praises were chanted to show an appreciation of what has been done ...." Here the deed done is bringing home game meat.

### **3.2.3 Love praise poems**

These are poems which deal with affection as well as one's passion. Concerning love poems, Hodza (1979:37) states that, "The composition of praises starts early, along with the dances and songs in which the boys and girls join and in which they begin to understand their complementary roles in life. Love praises express approval of admiration, to speak well of a job welldone, to glorify..." (Murwamphinda, 1973:74) Murwamphinda (ibid:74) goes on to mention that, "Praise poems show an appreciation of what has been done..." Concurring with Murwamphinda (ibid:74), Stuart (1968:27) argues, "Praise poems may be chanted anywhere if the reciter feels like chanting, he is free to do so at any moment." Without any doubt, it therefore proves that love is not excluded when it comes to praise singing. This strengthens the old saying that, "Love is not love until you give it away." So the one chanting gives away love to the one being chanted to.

Love on its own is in various dimensions, among which those in courtship and couples are included. Concerning these courtship love praises, Hodza (1979:37) states that, "They are recited during courtship." Hodza (ibid: 27) adds that, "sweetheart to his friends or *sekuru* or *vatete* when introducing her to them." Besides the above mentioned occasions, Hodza (1979:37) also states that "love praises could also be recited when the two are together when they meet at the well."

An example of courtship praise is Makonese's "Ndokuudza sei Fadzai" (How can I tell you Fadzai). It reads:

Fadzai, Fadzai, Mhandara yomusikana,  
Ndingakuudza sei, nditaurire, Fadzai?  
Ndingakuudza sei kuti ndinokuda?  
Pfungwa dzangu mwanawe, ndingakunyarira sei?  
Unokushuwa sei moyo wangu!  
Hana yangu inogaropanga iwewe, Fadzai,  
Mhandara yomusikana  
(Nhetembo: 1972:205)

Fadzai, Fadzai, The virgin girl  
How can I tell you, tell me Fadzai?  
How can I propose my love to you?  
How can I tell you my mind?  
How my heart misses you!  
My heart always misses you, Fadzai  
The virgin girl

This courtship praise poem clearly shows how Fadzai is admired and praised. In the past when media was, but a dream, poetry took full control of communication. Unlike today where there are phones, radios, televisions or when people could write letters, in the past people had to do praise poems like the one above.

Another example of courtship poetry is Hamutyinei's praise poem entitled "Swedera pandiri mudiwa Sekai" (Come closer darling Sekai), which reads:

Rega ndikutaurire mudiwa, ruva rangu  
Kana usipo ndiri nherera, remunzanga  
(Mabvumira Enhetembo, 1969:28)

Let me tell you darling, my flower  
When you are absent, I am an orphan  
A beggar during drought season

So, to this person, Sekai is really someone who deserves all the honour and praise just as Fadzai does in the preceding poem. Besides the above praise poems, in 2.3 a poem by Hamutyinei sung by Marshal Munhumunwe a Zimbabwean artist, supports Nkuzana's (1988:14) statement that, "poetry is a compressed and often highly emotional form of expression." By singing the song

'Vimbai Mwana akanaka' (Vimbai the beautiful girl), Marshal Munhumumwe has proven a fact that praises can be chanted or sung.

### 3.2.4 Intimate praise singing between spouses

These are praises between spouses. Hodza (1979:36) remarks, "These are praises uttered to each other by married people." In support of Hodza (ibid:36), Chigidi (1988:60) says, "*Panhetembo idzi pane madanha anodetembwa nevakadzi kune varume vavo, kwozoita zvirevereve zvinoitwa nevarume kuvakadzi vavo. Chinangwa chenhetembo idzi ndechekutenda pane basa guru rinenge richiitwa mumagudza imomo.*" (Among these poems, there are madanha uttered by women to their husbands and there are *zvirevereve* uttered by men to their wives. The main purpose is to thank each other for the great job done in the blankets).

An example of such madanha praises is:

Maita Beta  
Ishwa yangu  
Ishwa inodyiwa nemambawa  
Zvaitwa hanzu, mubuda kwanaya  
Zvaitwa Beta, hekani mugari wemuchuru  
Ndanzwa parere moyo, gono ranguri  
Zvirambe zvakadaro nemagwana

Thank you Beta  
My flying ant  
The flying ant, which is consumed with its wings  
Well done clothes  
Those who only come out after torrential rains  
Well done beta, those who dwell in an antihill  
I am satisfied my bull  
Let it be the same in the future.

This is a typical example of the "madanha" of Dhliwayo family. One source consulted highlighted that, in the past, the aunties and grannies encouraged the young growing girls to observe the practice of 'madanha' if they wanted their weddings to last long. Despite the differences they might have had during the course of the day, but at night, that was the time to mend the torn patches and to make the time worthwhile. Thus "madanha" was encouraged. This was to make

the man feel that he is man enough and that he was doing the best. In the trance of the enjoyment, the man would also respond saying a lot of utterances in praise of his wife. These are called “Zvirevereve”. With regards to this, Chigidi (1988:60) states that, *“Panhetembo idzi pane madanha anodetemberwa nevakadzi kuvarume vavo, kwozouyavo zvirevereve zvinoitwa nevarume kuvakadzi. Chinangwa chenhetembo idzi ndechekutenda pane basa rinenge richiitwa mumagudza imomo.”*

(Among these praise poems are ‘madanha’ uttered by women to their husbands and there are ‘zvirevereve’ uttered by men to their wives. The main purpose is to thank each other for the great job done in the blankets).

Another example the researcher found in Haasboek (1988:305) reads:

Ndatenda baba,  
Gono ren’ombe  
Vakandi vembeu  
Vanonyaradza mai panhowo  
Ndapungurwa moyo  
Iwo wachiti dhogo  
Kuti ndo-go nekugotsi

Thank you father  
The ox bull  
Those who throw the seed and quietens  
the women in bed  
My heart is taken  
I am fighting  
And I fall backwards

This poem is crystal clear about how thankful this woman was. She feels all the joy one can have on earth and she runs short of words, which shows her total commitment to the job being performed in the blankets. It therefore shows that, besides the enjoyment the two experience, at that time, the two are brought together and their differences are done with. That is why the man utters words which too are not a poem as such, but which show appreciation to the woman concerned. One source consulted in (December 2004) who is unmarried but who is a professional harlot, confessed that they too use “madanha’ of their own making which has nothing to do with the man’s totem. She mentioned that even

the men, utter “zvirevereve’ because the joy people experience outside their marriage is intense. According to her, stolen love brings great pleasure, so ‘madanha’ and ‘zvirevereve’ are practised heavily in marriages and extra marital affairs.

### **3.2.5 Traditional religious praises**

As seen above the traditional praise singer was always available for a given situation or occasion, for there is normally no African function without praise singing. To this, Owomoyela (1979:15) says, “songs play an importance role in all aspects of African Life, and there is hardly any occasion or occupation that does not involve singing.”

### **3.2.6 Similarities between the traditional praise singer and religious praise singer**

The traditional praise singer and the religious praise singer, in a way, are similar. What makes the two singers twins is that they both praise their ancestors and God respectively. Here the only difference is that the religious praise singer praises the Trinity, that is God the father, the son and the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, the traditional praise singer praises everything including people of mighty valour, the land, ancestors and even God. According to one source consulted, the researcher was told that in the past when they venerated their ancestors, at the end, they said, “*Motivitsirawo kuna Musikavanhu*” (We ask you to take our pleas to God the Creator). This shows that, though both traditional and religious praise singers praise God the traditional praise singer has no limits, yet the other is focused on the deity.

An example is seen in Vilakazi (1962:61) who quotes imbongi Khonwangekhanda Mdlesthe, a devout Nazarine who explained their position as follows: “pray all of you to your kin, praise your own kin ... pray to the Almighty after that, but begin with your own kin.” So the traditional praise singer serves the ancestors and God, but their ancestors are served first because they are their kins. To portray that the traditional praise singer is different from the religious praise singer, Murwamphida (1993:73) in concurrence with Stuart (1968:27) remarks, “Praise poetry may be

chanted anywhere if the reciter feels like chanting, he is free to do so at any moment.”

The statement above marries again the traditional praise singer and the religious praise singer in that they can praise sing anywhere at any given moment. This is a true fact in the sense that in some denominations like Zviratidzo Zvavapostori (The Vision of the Apostles), Rujeko (The Light) and many other denominations, one could just sing a praise song when the preacher is busy delivering God’s message.

In a research carried out in Nyanga it was established that Zviratidzo Zvavapostori (The visions of the Apostles), the praise singer known as the “Hakirosi” (The praise worshipper) sings in the midst of the sermon. They interrupt the preacher. One of the praise songs reads:-

Taidzivanepi nyasha  
Dzokunzi vana naMwari x 3  
Ngavakudzwe Ishe Jesu

Munoshamisa Ishe Jesu  
Mandiregerera zvitema zvangu  
Mandibhabhatidza nemweya wenyu  
Munoshamisa Jesu

Where could we have found God’s favour  
To be called the children of God x 3  
Let God be praised

You are so wonderful Jesus  
You have forgiven our sins  
You have baptized me with the Holy spirit  
You are wonderful Lord Jesus

It therefore shows that the practise of praise singing anywhere at any time when they feel like doing so, marries the traditional praise singer and the religious praise singer as has been shown above when the ‘hakirosi’ (the girl praise worshipper) praised God while the preacher was busy preaching.

Another thing which makes the traditional praise singer and the religious praise singer similar, is that, those who believe in ancestral worship believe their ancestors attend to their pleas. On the other hand, those who praise and worship God also believe that God hears their pleas and their praises. That is one reason why both parties praise their ancestors and God respectively.

An example of such praises with pleas to the ancestors, Nehanda in particular, was extracted from a novel Feso, by Mutsvairo. In this poem the VaNyai people are asking Nehanda for peace to reign among them. It reads:

O Nehanda Nyakasikana, kunozova riiniko?  
Isu VaNyai tichitambudzika?  
Mweya unoyera kunozova riniko?  
Isu vaNyai tichidzvinyirirwa  
(Feso 1956:35)

O Nehanda Nyakasikana  
How long shall we the Vanyai groan and suffer?  
Holy tutelary spirit  
How long shall we, VaNyai suffer oppression?

In the praise poem above, the writer has got grievances due to oppression, but the writer also has hopes that Nehanda is the answer to their problems. The person has a strong belief in that, if Nehanda wishes, liberation will come.

On the other hand, the religious praise singers in the same predicament as the VaNyai above, who suffer oppression also show a strong belief in God when they sing the religious praise poem which goes:

Ishe Komborerai Africa  
Ngaisimudzirwe zita rayo  
Inzwai miteuro yedu  
Ishe komborerai  
Isu Mhuri yayo

God bless Africa  
Let her name be exalted  
Hear our prayers  
Oh, God bless us  
We, her family

Another religious praise poem is a song similar to the one above is:

We shall overcome x 2  
We shall overcome some day  
Deep in our hearts  
We do believe  
We shall overcome some day  
We can see the desert is getting greener by day  
The people oppressed by the rule of  
oppression getting freed.

The two songs above point to the fact Christians believe strongly in God for miracles when the worse comes to the worst. In the two songs, the person believes that one day, Africa will be freed from oppression. In the first song, the person asks God to bless Africa and to exalt its name. This shows hope and a sense of belief in the God the person worships.

In the second song, the belief is explicitly clear when the person says, “they can see the desert getting greener”, meaning where there is no hope of life, the persona sees life. That makes the two, the traditional and the religious praise singer similar because they both have a strong belief in a god and God respectively.

Concerning the last, song, “we shall overcome”, Milubi (1988:208) remarks, “Then we shall overcome,” and “deep in our hearts...” show a deep seated commitment for liberation on the part of the oppressed. So the religious and the traditional praise singers have proven to have more similarities than differences.

### **3.3 FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SURVIVAL OF PRAISE SINGERS**

As was mentioned earlier that poetry is a form of art and also having established that poetry deals with emotions, it therefore means that as long as emotions live, praise singing will live. Dundens (1965: 308), concerning the issue of protest poetry says, “when ever there is injustice and oppression, one can be sure that they will find some solace in folklore.” This clearly indicates that, praise singing if it is associated with a deed done, it will never perish. This is because oppression and injustice will continue to surface in every organization. That is why today, even

in churches where there should be hope for perfection, but none is found, the reason being that there are some leaders who, in the true sense should not have been leading, but because they are rich, find themselves occupying top posts. It is unbelievable.

As long as there is injustice, people will continue to praise sing. One need not forget that in praise singing criticisms are found. The other thing, which keeps praise singing alive is Shona names given to newly born babies. In Shona, even in Venda, when a child is born, the name given normally goes hand in hand with the present situation prevailing in the family. To this, Murwamphinda (1993:20) citing Muloiwa (1975:12) says, “the giving of names in Venda is usually done by elderly women and each name is usually linked with a certain historical event or some pent up emotions because of that, each name has its own praise.” This shows that praise singing will never die, because in Shona, names like Sekai (Laugh), Hazvinei (No matter), Taurai (Talk), and Tatenda (Thanks) just to mention a few, still prevail. These names point to the predicament the people will be going through. The last name shows appreciation of a job well done. So praise singing will survive the odds of times.

Another aspect which makes praise singing stand the test of time, are those people who perform exceedingly well. Those people will continue to be honoured for their great deeds and praise singing will continue to survive through that. According to Murwamphinda (1988:29), citing Milubi (1988:84 – 85), such praises are thus, “...addressed to individuals who have distinguished themselves, either in battle or in one way or another.” In Zimbabwe we have a Heroes’ Day for example, when liberators of the struggle, are commemorated and there are songs which are sung which suit the occasion. An example of such songs is as follows:

Mbuya neHanda/VaChitepo kufa vachitaura  
Kuti zvino ndofire nyika  
Shoko rimwe ravakataura  
Tora gidi uzvitonge

Nehanda/Chitepo died saying  
Now I am dying for the struggle  
One word they mentioned was

Get in arms and get liberated

Another song reads:

Ndochema kuZANU  
Kuti inunure mhuri yeZimbabwe  
Ropa zhinji kwazvo rakasara paChimoio  
Ropa rakawanda rakasara paNyadzonya  
Nehanda mudzimai wekutanga akafire Zimbabwe

I appeal to ZANU  
That It liberates the children of Zimbabwe  
A lot of blood was shed at Chimoio  
A lot of blood was shed at Nyadzonya  
Nehanda the first woman who died for Zimbabwe

As long as Zimbabweans continue to commemorate the Heroes' Day, remembering liberators for the struggle, praise singing will never perish. And as mentioned earlier, the musician is the one who is seen praise singing. He is taking over from the praise singer we knew before.

Another incident which indicates that praise singing will never perish is when Kirsty Coventry, a Zimbabwean swimmer, returned from the Olympic games held in August 2004 in Athens, Greece, having won three swimming medals which were silver, bronze and gold. Kirsty Coventry is a white person who does not have a praise totem, but on the day she returned to Zimbabwe, having brought the nation such great pride, on radio Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe television, people who were interviewed about what they think about Kirsty, slogans like "our Kirsty, our prosperity" and "Kirsty daughter of the soil," were heard from the adoring fans. The Edgars Club magazine of Nov/December vol 100 of 2004 page 12, also mentions what the radio and ZTV say concerning the fans who were at the airport. A lot was commented pertaining to Kirsty's performance. Some mentioned that Kirsty was of the Dziva (dam) totem and one man from the crowd screened on Z.T.V started praising her with the Dziva totem.

Zvaitwa Dziva  
Zvaitwa Sambiri  
Vagari vemumvura  
Gumbezi iriyo mvura

Well done dziva  
Mighty swimmer  
Those who dwell in the water  
Their blanket being the water

This clearly shows that praise singers were there in the past, and are still there and will still continue to be there in the future. No matter the variations here and there, it is characteristic of folktales, praise singing will continue to live and as seen from the incident above, they will continue to be sung publicly.

As long as the Shona people live, praise singers will never perish for the reason that, when there are insecurities in the family, elderly people praise sing to the ancestors. In support of this view, Stuart (1968:32) maintains that, "Praises were sung in times of insecurities in the family or at times of change such as puberty ...". An example of such a praise poem is one of Mheta totem which was recited for a person going to town to seek employment. Insecurity and uncertainty leads them into singing a praise. It reads:

Vari kumatenga  
Ndirori jeché renyu  
Rave kuenda kumangerengere  
Kunotsvaga chouviru  
Mumutarirewo svova, murwirei kuvavengi  
Murwirei kumweya yakaipa  
Zvaitwa vari kuna Muozi, varere muna Panga  
Vanopona nehuruva  
Vanofamba nedunhu  
Mwana vaKandamiviri  
Akakanda miseve miviri Dzviti rikatiza  
Varere muna Panga  
Zvaitwa nyamutemera kuodza  
Varere muna Panga  
Zvaitwa shato yangu yiyi  
Vane unyiri – nyiri kwakapedza mbudzi

Those on heavenly heights  
Here is your baby  
Who is getting into town to seek employment  
Take care of him python, protect him  
From our enemies  
Protect him from evil spirits  
Thank you those who dwell in Muozi  
Those who are resting in Panga mountains

Those who feed on dust  
Who crawl on the stomach  
The son of Kandamiviri  
Who drew two arrows and the Dzviti ran away  
Thank you, he who bites for no cause  
Well done python  
Those with sports that attract and trick the goats  
Until they are all eaten.

The bond between the Shona people and ancestors will take long to just let go. It therefore, means praise singing will continue to live. To this, Berglund (1976:197) states that, “there is no existence of the survivors separated from that of shades (ancestors) nor a realm of the shades separated from the living.” This shows that praise singing will never die but it will survive as the relationship links or ties continue to exist.

Funerals are one area which keep praise singing alive. With regard to this, Chiwome (1996:22) remarks, “dirge and elegies are part of funeral gatherings, where people gather to recite and perform poetry to strengthen one another in times of depression, a reaffirmation of life.” So praise singing is sometimes rendered unconsciously. It has been established that, at funerals, many people indulge into poetry when they question death’s unfairness. Others recite to the bereaved how to cope with the problems ahead of them and in guard to learn to live without a loved one. This is seen in 2.2.2.

Besides the aforementioned aspects of Shona culture which help to retain praise poetry, work is one area in which praise singing finds refuge of surviving. In the past people at beer parties used to sing together, but today even one person doing a piece of work sings to lighten the burden. To this Murwamphinda (1973:73) says, “Praise singers usually chant during working hours ... to lighten the burden.” During these woshipping moments, praise singing promotes a spirit of oneness, a sense of belonging and it also reminds people about their history or where they came from. People also consolidate their identity through the tradition of praise singing that they follow.

In support of the above mentioned aspects, Damane (1974:30) adds that, "Praise brings about conformity to the approved modes of behaviour." Concurring with Damane (1974:30), Finnegan (1970:120) states that, "Praises stress acceptable values." This then is another area, which keeps praise singing going. Norms, values and identity are at the core of praise singing. Opland (1975) cited by Vilakazi (1965:39) argues that, "The contemporary praise poetry has four basic functions, namely, individualizing, sensitizing, educating and entertaining." Owing to these roles one surmises that praise singing will survive and not die.

It therefore rightly proves that, there is no one who does not want his history to continue. There is no one who wants to be detached from things they value much, for example the land in the case of the Shona people. That is why today in Zimbabwe there is the third Chimurenga, which is the struggle for land. No one ever wants to be detached from great rulers. Above all there is no person who wants to be associated with evil. Every person envies approved values and approved modes of behaviour even if they know they are unable. That is why even a thief, when caught, he argues, "They are saying I stole," yet he knows very well that he has surely stolen. On analyzing all these, one strongly believes that praise singing will never perish. Although the young generation does not believe in some of the ancestral veneration on praise and the like, they praise sing through the type of music they sing. Based on the arguments presented above, one is convinced that praise singing will never perish, it will stand the odds of the times.

#### **3.4 VALUE OF THE TRADITIONAL PRAISE SINGER AND HIS PRAISE TODAY**

It is quite a fact that there are a lot of things which make life worth living. These things are valuables. In each and every culture, they value certain aspects of their tradition which make that particular culture distinct. In Shona it is the traditional praise singer and his praises that help make the culture distinct.

Having seen the resistance praise singing has from changing times, many things can be learnt from it. Murwamphinda (1993:74) points out that "praises were chanted to show an appreciation of what has been done... at ceremonies of such

calibre such as weddings, religious gatherings, graduation ceremonies and bone divining.” Hence, from praise singing one can learn a lot in terms of practices related to culture.

Needless to say, knowledge acquired can be applied by the present generation at weddings, religious gatherings and graduation ceremonies.

Having seen that the Shona way of life is inseparable from music, the researcher can therefore conclude that since praise singing existed from the infinite past, paved its way into the present generation, the researcher feels praise singing can safely pave its way into the future. It might have gone through diverse changes, but whatever the case may be, the fact remains, praise singing will never be phased out from the face of the earth. As long as emotions continue to exist, praise singing will continue to prevail in human existence especially in our Shona culture, where girls are taught by elderly people to praise their husbands by their totems whenever a good deed is rendered. Above all, as Murwamphida (1993:74) points out occasions including “weddings, religious gatherings, graduations and bone divining”, just to mention a few. It therefore supports that as long as people believe in graduating in various disciplines and consulting the traditional healers, praise singing will continue to exist. Though it may not exist in its original form of praise singing we know in the past, but the musician, who is taking over will do the same job, as a result, praise singing will be there to stay.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE PRAISE SINGER TODAY

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Praise singing is as old as creation and as present as today and as new as the future. This is shown in the book of Psalms and Proverbs which are poetic in nature and new songs which arise from various musicians day by day. Needless to say, today people modify what has been there in the past. The great and diverse change brought about by technology has also caused major changes in the music industry which, in the definition of terms, has been established as poetry by Heese (1988:30). Poetry and music are one and the same thing, only that the former is meant to be chanted and the later is set to rhythm and meant to be sung.

Due to the changes in technology as mentioned above, the praise singer today has a driving force to advance forth from the oral practice to more advanced and enlightened ways of praise singing. Instead of retaining information orally, various ways have been adopted. Today's praise singing, unlike in the former generation, when technology was but a dream, and remuneration was just basically having a closer place to the chief or king or a piece of land to till, today has more benefits than in the past.

As alluded earlier, today's praise singer includes poet and musicians. Unlike in the bygone generations, where praise singing was basically done orally, in this generation, they do various things, like writing books of poetry, compose songs and sing. The musicians do live shows and make people pay to attend to these shows. These singers, unlike in the past, vary from solos, quartets, mass choirs and many more such as the traditional musicians, the religious and the occasional musicians.

## 4.2 TYPES OF PRAISE SINGERS

### 4.2.1 The poet

With poetry defined in 2.2.1, the researcher could not hesitate to deduce that a poet is any person who manages to express his or her emotions verbally or document them for public use. Groenewald (1990) citing Opland (1975:39) remarks that, there are various categories of colonial praise singers who include, “the traditional poet, the poet of the colonial times, today’s poet, traditional imbongi (praise poet) who praises orally and who documents his or her poetry as well as the new poet, the ‘worker poets’ who perform at mass rallies and funerals ...”

One can say a poet is the mouthpiece of the nation. A voice for the voiceless, a politician in his own right. Acknowledging the above, that is, the poet being the speaker of the voiceless, Amuta (1989:176) points out that, “The poet speaks not for himself only but for his fellow men. His cry is their cry, which only he can utter.” This is true of praise singing because the poet has the licence to say anything. In praise singing, it is the praise singer who can praise and at the same time partly criticize the chief or the king. He puts his cry or even other people’s pleas as he praises the king or chief.

Though the poet today is in some way the same as the praise singer yesterday in the sense that they both speak for the silent nation, they raise their voices above other people’s voices without any remorse. The difference between the traditional poet and the poet today is that, instead of passing information orally, the poet today stores his information in more modern ways than the oral methods used in the past. The poet of this generation knows that his bread is in his voices so he preserves his stuff by tape recording it, put it on CD’s and documents all his information for present and future use.

Now that books are available for use to the public, today’s poet is different from the praise singer of yesterday. Today’s poet has stuff written down. In that way, it retains its originality. That is one reason why it is easy to prescribe one text to

students in various schools, colleges or universities. The students receive the same information without any alterations, and this makes the poet distinct.

As alluded to earlier, poets are the eyes and mouth pieces for the nation to the nation. This is due to the fact that they observe what happens to people on a daily basis. They then put it in writing or in words pleading for people, praising for people, rebuking for people or showing dissatisfaction for the voiceless majority. An example is seen when Masiwa (1986:22) citing Chivaura, writes a poem in which Chivaura is yearning for the past life before people were removed from good fertile lands to dry, sandy and stony areas where their livestock was reduced in number. It reads:

Ndinoshuwa seiko zveshure  
Zvikuru kumatongo okwedu  
Kwandakazvarirwa zvino kwakure  
Kwataifudza mbudzi nemombe  
Navashamwari tichifara  
(Mutinhimira wedetembo, 1965:22)

I long for the past life  
Especially our old dwelling place  
Where I was born but its now very far away  
Where we used to pasture our goats and cattle  
With our friends we used to be happy

Here the poet becomes the people's mouth piece to their dissatisfaction about lives which were drastically affected negatively by the oppressive system and the torture the people went through due to the fact that even their livestock was reduced. Unfortunately, they cannot reserve anything just because the poet is saying that "The old dwelling place, but which is now very far."

Another example where a poet speaks for the people is seen in Pongweni where the poet appeals to the ancestors to take care of them so that they can win the struggle. It reads:

Nhandi vaTakawira mudzimu wedu baba  
Nhandi vaNehanda mudzimu wedu baba  
Titarirei mambo, tidzoke Zimbabwe

Oh! Takawira our ancestor father  
Oh! Nehanda our ancestor father  
Look after us Lord that we may return to Zimbabwe  
(Pongweni, 1985:51)

The poet is appealing to Takawira and Nehanda to look after them during the struggle for liberation.

The last example of a poem where the poet speaks for the voiceless, is the poem which deals with domestic issues found in Mabvumira Enhetembo where the persona is complaining about her husband's unexpected promiscuity. It reads:

Murume wangu unouya ndapinduka runa  
Unonga uchishanda chinyi zuva rakotsira?  
Unonga uchitsvaga chinyi chandisina?  
Bonde rako ndini, chido chemoyo wako ndini  
(Mabvumira Enhetembo: 42)

My husband you come home very late  
What will you still be doing after sunset?  
What will you be looking for that I physically lack?  
I am your mate, your heart's desire.

As mentioned earlier on, that the poet speaks for the nation to the nation, this poem is appealing to all men who misbehave to shun their foolish behaviour. For the reason that the poet through the persona complained about the bad behaviour of an unfaithful husband, it is an appeal to every man that they should be well behaved.

Many generations will read this work and the culprits will undoubtedly continue to receive the undiluted message of what is expected of an ideal husband. He should be a husband who comes home early, a husband who is satisfied with the wife he has, a husband who nurtures his family.

Not only do they learn the cultural practices but other aspects, for example, at weddings they learn the joy of sharing, the joy brought about by the bond of marriage. They also learn to receive, give and share. They receive love, they give

it to others, they also share the food prepared. They also learn the value and commitment attributed to marriage.

Another thing, people can inherit from praise singing is to appreciate others verbally on what they have done. This issue of appreciating others verbally is suiting Nkuzana's (1988:14) definition of poetry which reads, "It is a compressed and often highly emotional form of expression." Nkuzana's (1988:14) definition of poetry concurs with Jennings (1976:38) cited by Nkuzana (1988:14) where it reads, "Poetry is a verbal expression of emotions...". So from praise poetry, people learn to express their emotions and they learn approved modes of behaviour and values. With regard to this Damane (1974:30) remarks that, "praise bring about conformity to the approved modes of behaviour." As has been mentioned earlier on, no normal person wants to be a social misfit in society. We all want to be accepted in our societies, and we too need to be loved.

Apart from the aforementioned, praise poetry also unifies people of different tribes. It brings about solidarity. To this effect, Stuart (1968:31) points out that, "praise poems for the chief, build up tribal loyalty and solidarity for the chief present... they serve as unifying forces among different tribes." An example is the song sang on Heroes Day in Zimbabwe. It reads:

Tochema ku ZANU kuti inunure  
Mhuri yeZimbabwe x 2  
Tochema kuZanu  
Kuti inunure mhuri yeZimbabwe  
ZANU! ZANU ! ZANU ! ZANU !

We appeal to ZANU  
That Zimbabweans be liberated  
We appeal to ZANU that Zimbabweans be liberated  
ZANU ! ZANU! ZANU ! ZANU!

Here "Zimbabweans" includes different tribes. They feel brought together by the liberation they pleaded for under ZANU PF. Here they express their union.

Worth mentioning in this discussion is that, praise singing is good for record keeping. One's history can be traced in praise names. Though today we can have

CD's, computers and the like, the point is that praises have vital information. This information is passed on from one generation to another. Praise singing is a way of data capturing and information storing and that information is passed orally through generations.

The greatest thing one can inherit from praise singing is verbal expression. It teaches the young public speaking since many praises were chanted publicly. For today's generation, the ability to speak publicly is of paramount importance for the sake of those who get employed in various sectors. For example, there are some jobs which require speaking publicly, like those who work in studios, teachers, ministers and musicians just to mention a few. They build confidence in reciting poetry at school and they carry with them the confidence as they grow.

It is worth mentioning that people learn appropriate use of registers for example the register for a job well done and the register for rebuking an act which is disapproved.

To the researcher, praise singing moulds the total being. There is no way people can run from their past. It will always catch up with them. People need their roots and as established earlier on, people want identity. They portray them as people with a history, people with a vision and a mission. This brings us to the old saying that, "The crow no matter how it bathes itself, it remains black." Therefore, no matter how people try to run away from their past, in one way or the other, their past will catch up with them. In short people keep learning from their past.

In conclusion one can easily say that, praise poetry is very valuable to people's daily lives from the past to the present day and into the future. It moulds a total being since it rebukes culprits, encourages, warns and even appeals to people's ancestors for various things. Above all, praise poems are a method of retaining and disseminating information from generation to generation and needless to say it is passed on orally.

#### 4.2.2 The musician

The musician is a poet in his own right. The difference here is that the musician has set the poem to rhythm and sings it, while the poet chants it. According to Heese (1968:30) “poetry is a form of music...” It’s a clear indication which shows that poetry and music are the same in their functional value. According to Gunner (1995:59), “Poetry and music are both used to criticize and ridicule people whose behaviour is unacceptable in terms of societal norms and expectations.” A typical example of such character in the extended family life is the *vamwene* (mother-in-law) who is making life unnecessarily difficult for her *muroora* (daughter-in-law). A good example is Hamutyinei’s poem entitled “Muri parumananzombe varoora” (you are in trouble daughters-in-law) which reads:

Zvirokwazvo muri muchoto varoora  
Madzimwene enyu shanje yavagara madundundu  
Achichenesa zvipfeko zvake muroora  
Yowe, yowe, hunzi ihwezvavarume yomunhu  
Achiita tsvina achisevenza.....  
.... hunzi mwana akatora nguruve nzveve  
Achiti kuvana chinhu ndondopawo vamwene  
Muromo fundumwa, hunzi wandigovera sepwere  
(Mabvumira Enhetembo, 1969:21)

Surely you are in trouble daughters in law  
For your mothers-in-law are jealousy  
When you are smart  
They accuse you of being after boyfriends  
When you work and become dirty ....  
....they liken you to a nursing pig  
When you get some stuff  
And gives some to her mother-in-law  
She complains that she has treated her  
Like a baby

This song by Marshal Munhumumwe above is a clear indication that poetry is music and a lot of musicians adopt and adapt from the written poetry. Another example is Hamutyinei’s poem entitled “Muri Parumananzombe varoora” (you are in trouble daughters-in-law).as reflected above.

The poem above and Marshal Munhumumwe’s song as written above, reflect clearly the statement of Heese (1968:30) that, “poetry is a form of music”. In

support of Heese (1968:30) Milubi (1988:22), states that, “Music is a short poem set to rhythm and meant to be sung.” It therefore becomes clear that the poet and the musician are one and the same thing. The only difference is that the poet chants and the musician sings.

#### **4.2.2.1 The Traditional Musician**

Music dates back into the beginning of creation. In the past, the musician had a great deal of job since he was the only source of entertainment before the vast and numerous forms of entertainment found in this era. Traditional singers were there to serve numerous purposes including beer parties, celebrating the full moon (jenaguru) and even at funerals, just to mention a few. At such occasions and gatherings, the traditional musician had something to remind people of and had to educate them about what is important in life. It was the duty of the traditional musician to address social issues in that area and even beyond. The traditional musician had also a duty of bringing broken souls to life through his singing as well as through the musical instruments accompanying those melodies. The idea that it is the duty of traditional musicians to address social issues is supported by Hodza (1979:37) when he states that, “The composition of praises starts early, along with the dances and songs in which the boys and girls join and in which they begin to understand their complementary roles in life.” An example of such songs is found in Chidzero’s “Nzvengamutsvairo” where expected norms and values are spelt out explicitly by Mhangwa to Mutigimu who was courting her. She sings:

He-e he, maroyaka iwe  
He maroya  
Mukomana endawo kubasa  
Bhurugwa renzungu rabvaruka  
He maroya  
(Nzvengamutsvairo, 1957:13)

He-e he maroyaka iwe  
Young man go to seek employment  
The trousers bought from peanut sales is torn  
He-e maroya

In response, Matigimu also sings to Mhangwa and her friends reminding them of the expected values from girls, that they should shun promiscuity. Matigimu sings:

Ini handiroore  
Nzenza, ini handiroore, nzenza  
Ini handiroore  
Nzenza, ini handiroore chokwadi  
(Nzvengamutsvairo, 1957:14)

I will not marry a prostitute  
I will not marry a prostitute  
I will surely not marry a prostitute  
I will not marry, surely I will not marry

In the two songs above, it is clear that poetry and music retain expected societal norms and values. In the first song, a young man is expected to seek employment and in the second song girls are expected to behave well and shun sex before marriage. The culture condemns promiscuity and this song above serves to warn offenders.

These norms and values are conveyed through music which is sung and danced accompanied by instruments. Clive and Kileff (1970:72) citing Sango (1970): say, "During these dances, drums and mbira (lyre) are the main instruments." Turner (1998:196), concerning values and norms says, "These izahosho (praise poems) are an instrument assisting people to internalize the social norms and values of their society, the acceptable practices and roles of behaviour, thus helping them to accept and understand their culture." It becomes quite clear that the traditional musician had a burden for his country on his or her shoulders to maintain the country's norms and values. Besides, he also had the duty to entertain people through recreational songs. About this, Kgobe (1997:55) remarks, "These consist of all the songs that are sung solely for amusement." He goes on to mention that, "It is the type of folksongs that refreshes one after a tedious day's toil." (Kgobe, 1997:55). An example of such songs gathered, reads:

Mujinga regomo iwe  
Waitambira mujinga regomo nevakomana

They used to play

They used to play with boys  
At the foot of the mountain

Another example of such entertainment songs is a song where people sing about the economy of the country as follows:

Dhora rakadonha  
Zunzai mazakwatira  
Nhonga dhora usasiye  
Usaise mubhutsu inosviba

The dollar has collapsed  
Shake for more money  
Pick one dollar not two dollars  
Do not put it in the shoe it will be dirty

The traditional musician had also the duty of uniting people through music and the dances which followed such singing. To do this effect, Kgobe (1997:54) states that, "People in the community may decide to come together for a brief social meeting which will be marked by singing and dancing while drinking beer." He goes on to mention that, "Various types of dances associated with ceremonies involving birth and marriage are performed, (Kgobe, 1997:54). An example of such a birth song is:

Tsuwa Tsuwa  
Mwana wenyu mwanasikana  
Ndichamutengera kahembe  
Mwana wenyu wemukomana  
Ndichamutengera kabhachi

Surely surely  
Your baby girl  
I will buy her a dress  
Your baby boy,  
I will buy him a jacket.

This song was normally sung in the morning on the way to the river to perform some rituals to lull a baby who unnecessarily cries a lot. People could go to the river and wash the baby in very cold water believing that the baby will stop crying and because of faith and belief, the baby thereafter would surely stop crying without any good reason.

A marriage song which still exists and is still sung even today in trying to prove the daughter-in-law's tempers is:

Amainini muromo unenge dafi ratsikwa neUnited  
Muroora muromo unenge dafi ratsikwa neUnited

Sister-in-law your mouth resembles one  
Which has been overrun by the United Bus Service  
Sister-in-law your mouth resembles one  
Which has been overrun by the United Bus Service

Another marriage song reads

Mushauri: Ndine musoro  
Iye ahiye x 2

Vadaviri: Muroora amai wako hevo vari kuuya  
Mushauri: Ndotangei nhai?  
Kuhuni ndaenda  
Kutsime ndaenda  
Zvose ndaita  
Ndotangei nhai?

Vadaviri: A! ndivamwene wako navatete vako  
Mushauri: Ndine musoro  
Iye ahiye

Vocalist: My head is aching  
Yes, yes, yes x 2

B. Vocalist: Sister in law there is your mother coming  
Vocalist: What can I do first?  
I have already fetched firewood  
I have already fetched water  
I have done everything  
What can I do first?

B. Vocalist: A! its your mother-in-law and your aunt  
Vocalist: My head is arching  
Yes! Yes! Yes!

This is sung to rebuke a bad habit whereby the sister-in-law exudes more love for her own parents than the husband's. This song was more of drama than music since it was sung in role playing, with the sister-in-law becoming ill if she finds out

that her husband's relatives had visited. She pretends to have a headache, but if it were her relatives she could not know where to start because of joy.

So, those are some of the traditional musicians' duties to entertain, rebuke and pass accepted norms and values from generation to generation. It is the duty of these traditional musicians to keep on singing these songs to retain information. The musician helped to retain historical incidents which make a people's history, and will be passed on from one generation to the next orally. Having observed the above information, it is clear that traditional musicians were the people's history books or records during the precolonial era. They informed people of places of their origin, places resided, principal names, their prowers and where they were going. An example is seen in 3.2.1 where a wife thanked her husband by his clan name and puts it clear that the husband originated from Nyanga, and is the son of Kandamiviri and they overpowered the Dzviti in war and that they are tricksters just like the python.

#### **4.2.2.2 The religious musician**

The church today is one place where people find joy and solace through music and instruments. Some of the instruments include marimba (keyboards), drums, tambolines, harps and flutes, just to mention a few. This is supported in the Edgar's club Magazine volume 100 November/December edition of 2004, page 11 where it states, "It starts with vibrant declarations of faith, brass and electric guitars to support the message. It then dances its way through jubilant praise..." This piece of work in the Edgar's club magazine (ibid:11) clearly shows that religious music like the traditional music, provides a source of entertainment. It is an occasion one would enjoy himself and praise God Almighty, for it is God's will and purpose that people should praise and worship Him. In the process of praising the Lord Almighty, the singers entertain people as portrayed by the Mahendere Brothers, a Zimbabwean gospel music group, at the Mutare Agricultural show, as shown below (taken from the Manica Post of 7 – 13 October 2005). Figure 1 below shows the Mahendenre Brothers providing entertainment to the people at the Agricultural show.

Figure 1

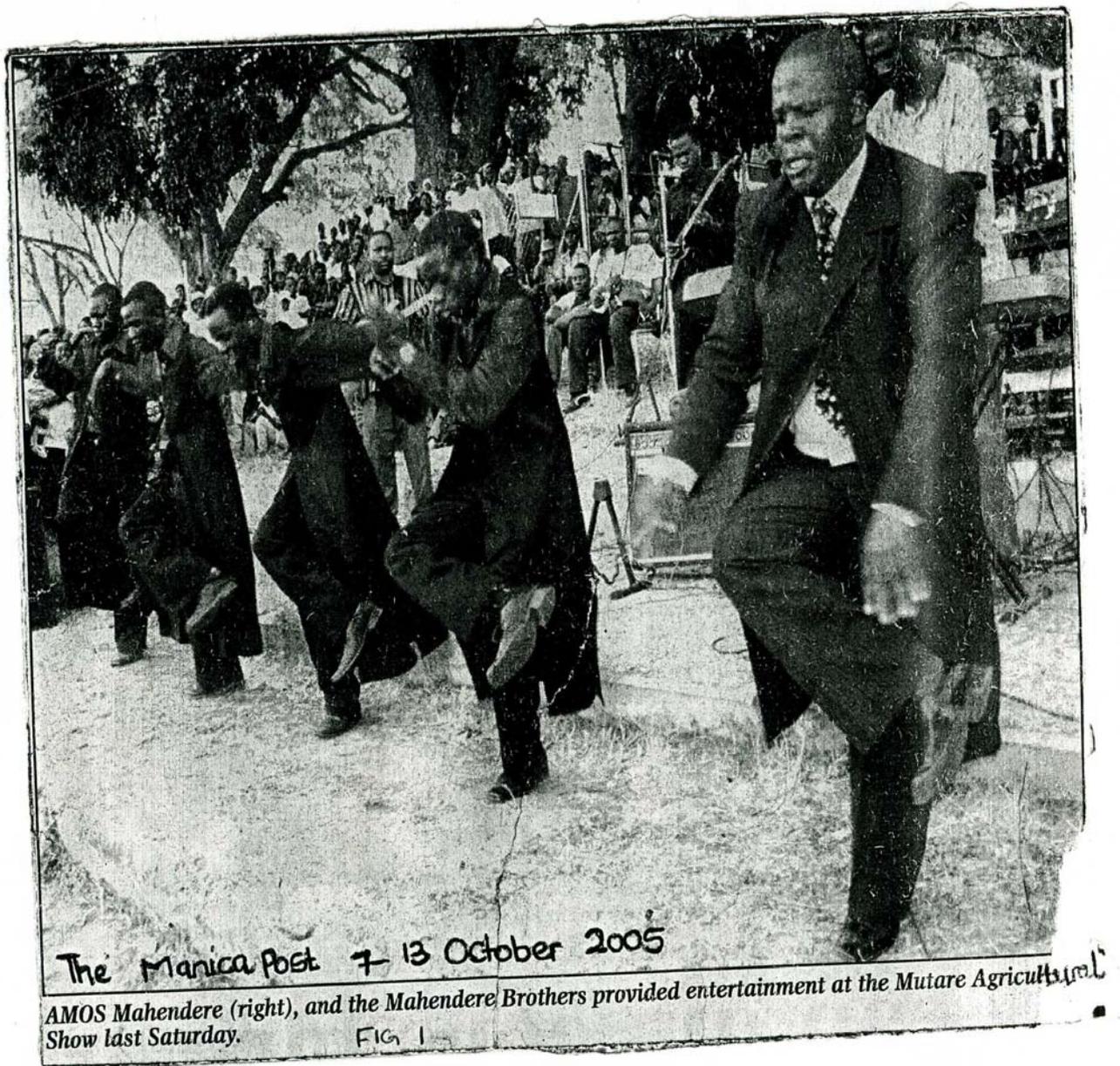


Fig 2, The group, Mercy Mutsvene below, plays the same role of entertaining too.



Like in the past where praises were rendered when people graduate through passage of time like from boyhood to manhood, Mercy Mutsvene above praise sings for Roselyn Mupfumi who has graduated, thus she entertained people at the graduation party as shown above.

Though the church music and dance today is advanced in technology, its origin is from the traditional singer. Instruments may differ but the rhythm is the same. This is supported in the Edgar's club Magazine Volume 100 page 11 where it reads; "it starts with vibrant declaration of faith.... It then dances its way through jubilant praise, the African rhythms bringing the soul to life." With regard to this, Tracy

(1958:56) remarks that “If you wish to get to the heart of an African quicker than any other way, you must be able to participate in the enjoyment of his music and have an understanding and sympathy for his social customs.” It therefore shows clearly that come what may, Africans will never be separated from music and poetry. It consoles the heart of the singer and the audience. Concerning the issue of music, Tracy (ibid: 56) (referring to the government of his territory), points out that “ the government may make new laws for us to obey and we shall obey them, but if they try to stop us singing, then, I promise you there would be a revolution in two days.” The statement above is doubtless an indication that Africans are inseparable from music be it religious music, work music, occasional music or recreational music.

Since it has been established that the instruments used in the religious sphere are nothing new but to a greater extent an advancement of the old instruments, so is the purpose of the preacher. According to Tracy (1958:56), “while one of the traditional roles of the imbongi was to mediate between the people and the chief,” in the religious context the preacher and the praise worshipper could be said to be mediating between the supernatural and the congregation. This is done through the praises they render to the chief and to God respectively.

As mentioned earlier on, it is a clear indication that the new Christian religion adopts a lot of things from African way of life. Even in songs, they refer to familiar aspects and practices in the African way of life. An example is a song from the United Methodist Church which goes:

Ndofamba x 2  
Ndoshuwa kudenga  
Kunyika yaTenzi isina nenhamo  
Madzinza ariko  
Afara zvikuru  
Aona yonyenye mufiri wevose.

I am journeying x 2  
I long to be in heaven  
To God’s land where there are no problems  
Our clans are there  
They rejoice greatly  
Seeing Christ, the sacrificial lamb

This song becomes acceptable and familiar to any African because the issue of clans is not something new. They believe in it, they live it, and they hope for a future life, living in clans. In short, religion is not far from original African songs and instruments. This is because the Methodist congregation uses both drums, lyres, (hosho) and even horns to blow so systematically that one gets carried away and surely foresees oneself living in those future clans where our grand-grand parents are already residing.

#### 4.2.2.3 Occasional songs

These are songs sung anywhere by anyone who finds the occasion fitting. They are situation oriented, which means that they even cover children songs, lullabies, communal songs, recreational songs and ritual songs. According to Guma (1980:102) recreational songs which are sung after a tedious day's toil to freshen one's feelings, are "action songs...". According to Guma (ibid:102) action songs, are sung at work, thus accompanying action, in order to increase its effectiveness of long working hours." Guma (ibid:2003) goes on to say that, "others were sang during communal actions such as cultivating, tanning an ox, threshing corn..." An example of a cultivating communal song reads:

Ndorima musana wandirwadza  
Pakudya, ndomera manhenga

When I hoe, my back bone aches  
But when its time for dining, I develop wings.

This shows how lazy people enjoy eating yet they struggle concerning the issue of labouring. Another example of a threshing song is from Hodza's "Ugo Hwamadzinza Ava Shona". It reads:

Mushauri : Ho, Makari, Chisimuka tipure zviyo  
Vadaviri : Savanhu, hiya ha-a Savanhu hiya ha-a  
Mushauri : Ho-o haachagoni kusumuka chimuregai  
Vadaviri : Savanhu, hiya ha-a, savanhu hiya ha-a  
(Ugo Hwamadzinza Ava Shona, 1974:69)

Vocalist : Ho Makari, stand up that we resume threshing the sweet  
corn (rapoko)

B. Vocalist : Savanhu, yes, yes Savanhu yes  
Vocalist : He can no longer stand up leave him  
B. Vocalist : Savanhu yes Savanhu, yes

Like in the above song, Savanhu and Makari drank beer excessively that they can no longer stand on their own to resume working again, a sign of laziness.

Concerning occasional songs, Kgobe (1997:55) points out that, "These are functional songs which include love, marriages, death, hunting and war songs." Kgobe (ibid:55) adds that, " It is therefore, in occasional songs that the musical tradition of the society tends to be preserved." The two songs above reveal that there are a lot of people who enjoy eating yet they do not value the working aspect. They are lazy.

Praise singing, is normally associated with great events, deeds and special qualities. In most cases a theme of some sort is attached to each praise, for example, success in war, being a good hunter, or a hard worker. That theme was preserved through the praise formed. With regard to themes, Nyandoro (1994:93) points out that, "... a theme is another important element of any literary work, irrespective of whether it is a poem, play, short story, folk tale or novel." Nyandoro (ibid:93) who cites Davids, Broughton, and Woods (1977:149) concerning a theme remarks, "Theme refers to the subject matter which an author brings under spot light." Nyandoro (ibid:93) adds that, "it points to the issue or concerns which he wants to alert his readers on." That is why earlier on, the researcher mentioned that a praise singer speaks for the people to the people. He is their mouth piece. So, occasional songs, are sung by anyone anywhere when the occasion is found fitting, in other words, when the theme is found suitable.

An example is a work song sung when people are threshing rapoko or millet at a threshing floor as shown in the songs above. Another example of such threshing songs goes:

O! hiye hiye rukweza  
O! hiye hiye takarurima

Oh yes!, yes rapoko  
Oh yes, yes, we grew it in abundance

This helps people to work with vigour and with the spirit of oneness since they thresh in unison and that makes a rhythm that entertains them. Needless to say, occasional songs have variations as occasions also vary. What one has to bear in mind is that for each occasion, a suitable song can be sung. This becomes typical evidence that occasional songs have been there and are still there and the researcher is convinced that they are there to stay, because occasions will continue to occur. That is one reason why when one is at work, one sings, or repeats another singer's song so as to lighten the burden at hand.

### **4.3 SOME PURPOSES OF PRAISE SINGING**

Praise singing is of various forms and purposes. Some of the purposes are the ones discussed below.

#### **4.3.1 Political purposes**

Praise singing and politics are married from the infinity past to the present day. In traditional kingdoms and empires, before warriors went to war, or after the war, praises were chanted as a way of encouraging each other to face the enemy without any fear and remorse.

Besides, these praises were chanted as a way to unite people of different tribes who were facing the common enemy. With regard to politics and praise singing Gunner (1984:12), points out that, "Praise singing, was a vehicle for expressing and reiterating deep feelings of royalty and solidarity towards the king and he nation." Stuart (1968:31) acknowledging the issue of loyalty and solidarity says, "Praise poems for chiefs built a tribal loyalty and solidarity for the chief, they served as unifying forces among different tribes." An example is Chinx Chingaira, a Zimbabwean music artist and the police Band's song entitled 'Hondo Yeminda' (The struggle for land) which reads:

Hondo yemuno muZimbabwe  
Hondo yeminda

Our battle in Zimbabwe  
Is the battle for the land

This song, was sung regardless of the races in Zimbabwe, they all joined hands to take back the land from the whites. Another example of such songs is one of Olivia Charamba, a Zimbabwean artist, on the album “Daily Bread” sang at the time when the struggle for land (the third Chimurenga) was at its peak. She sang:

Holy spirit  
Help Africa now  
Let it choose the right voice to believe x 2

Some people are saying,  
Africa shall remain a residence of poverty  
Some people are saying, Africa  
Shall remain a place of civil war  
Some racists are saying, Africa  
Shall remain a very dark continent

But Jehovah God says Africa  
You better stretch your hand to the lord  
Prophets are saying Africa  
Shall quickly stretch your hand to the lord

I say restore your identity  
Africa x5  
I say restore your identity  
Africa x5  
Whose report are you going to believe?  
Believe x2

This song does not only unite tribes but Africa as a whole to resist racists' ideology that Africans will live in poverty, in civil wars and that it is a dark continent. The former song embarked on the struggle for land. This is one reason why, without land, one has no voice, since land is power. Olivia Charamba's song is acknowledged by Chief Buthelezi's speech in Orlando Stadium cited by Berglund (1976:197) when he says, “Africans had to unite to survive the on slaughters of racist white dominance ...” This speech appeals to all black people in Africa who are from time to time dominated by the whites. By that speech, the Africans feel a sense of solidarity, belonging and being true Africans.

Another purpose of praise singing is to bring about inspiration and upliftment of people's morale especially in oppressive situations. To this, Berglund (1976:197) states that, “In another sense the praises both royal and chiefly are powerful

inspirations for the present, they provide a much needed sense of continuity and present an image of achievement and strength which people can identify.” An example is the poem written by Chirikure Chirikure in “Rukuvhute”.

It reads:

Dai vari kuMatenga mavapa simba, masimba makuru  
Dai majaya nemhandara vati nyadzi muguru pu – u  
Tichisadharara pamwe nevarwi ava  
Dai iwe neni, isu tose vana vanyamunhu  
Dai tachimira mumashure memagamba aya,  
Tinonge chose chatinokwanisa kurwisa nacho  
Tiponde ponde, titsike tsike, timare – mare, ...  
Muvengi aita tirase nhaka yedu  
(Chirikure chirikure, 1989:19)

I pray that the Heavenly one might give them mighty power  
That the bachelors and the spinisters  
Should avoid being shy  
That we as a family join hands with the freedom fighters  
If you and me, all of us  
Stand strongly behind them  
And pick anything we can get hold of  
And we destroy them, we scratch the enemy  
The enemy who is making us lose our wealth

The poem above acknowledges Berglunt (1976:197)’s statement above. It inspires the freedom fighters, knowing well that they have support from the masses. Besides, the masses too are united by the poem because they have a common enemy to fight.

Besides the issue of inspiration, sense of loyalty, sense of achievement and strength, praise singing also serves a lot of things. Damane (1974:29) states that, “praises help the audience’s awareness of itself as an historically continuous community, with a powerful attachment to its land, and with proud tradition that is embodied above, in its chief, the heir and descendant of the great rulers of the past.” The issue above by Damane (1974:29) is true in the sense that these praises teach the audience their history, that is, where they come from, their present and where they are going. The poem above says “Dai vari Matenga mavapa simba guru” (I pray that those in the Heavenly ones give them mighty power). This shows that the people know they have their ancestors who can help

them. They believed their ancestors had great deal to help them with to win their struggle. They, therefore, sing songs to inspire themselves and the masses. An example of a song which was sung during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe goes:

Baba naamai, kana mandishaya  
Ropa rangu munoriwana  
Pasi pemureza wezimbabwe

My father and mother, if I fail to return  
After the struggle,  
You will find my blood under the Zimbabwean flag

This was pure assurance that there was no going back concerning the struggle. They encouraged each other to stand and face the enemy even though it meant death. Needless to say, it was for the benefit of Zimbabwe's independence.

Another song which was praise sung during the liberation struggle was follows:-

Mudzimuwoye mudzimuwoye  
Mudzimuwo vana tanetseka  
Takawire woye, Titarire mambo  
Nhai vaKaguvi titarire mambo, tirwire Zimbabwe

Oh! ancestors, please ancestors  
Ancestors, your children have suffered  
Oh! Takawira, look after us Lord, that  
We fight for our Zimbabwe

This is a clear indication that when politics is at its climax, the people praise sing to their ancestors to take them through. The purpose here is to uphold African belief that ancestors are at their mercy.

Besides concentrating on the issue of the war, the ideologies which go with it, people were and are still encouraged to observe the acceptable norms and behaviours and values of their society. During the liberation struggle, this was highly observed. With regard to this, Damane (1974:30) mentions that, praise brings about conformity to the approved modes of behaviour." Acknowledging Damane (ibid:30) Finnegan (1970:120) adds that, "praises stress acceptable

values.” Though people are struggling to fight their oppressor they are still reminded to behave and this is sung through praise. An example during the liberation struggle was slogans borrowed from Mau Tse Tung. During the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, the slogans were sung, thus:

Tisawe tinotora, zvinhu zvemass yedu  
Bhadharai zvamunotenga nenzira dzakanaka  
Tisaite cheupombwe muhondo yeChimurenga

Lets not take things from the masses  
Pay fairly for what you purchase  
Shun promiscuity in the Chimurenga war

The song above portrays how people are encouraged to behave, even the freedom fighters, were encouraged not to take things through violence from people, to pay for what they purchased as well as to shun promiscuity. It is therefore a clear indication that, though people will be struggling for liberation, they still stand their ground to maintain humanity, and that is enhanced through praise singing as seen above. So praise singing enhances societal beliefs, norms and values as shown above.

#### **4.3.2 Remuneration purposes**

Another purpose of praise singing in this generation is earning a living (remuneration). There are many praise singers today (musicians) who are singing gospel music not because they belong to any denomination, but just because they have the talent and that they want to earn a living. In such cases the purpose may be met but the motive for such singing will be economically oriented.

An example of such songs is one sung by Brenda Fassie which reads:

Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King x 2  
Singing Halleluyah  
Halleluyah, halleluya  
We are going to see the King  
No more dying there, we are going to see the King x 3  
Halleluyah, Halleluyah, we are going to see the king

It was a well known issue that Brenda Fassie was a drug addict, and her venturing into gospel music was solely for remuneration purposes as has been mentioned earlier. However, even though there are such cases where people's motives are not set right, the fact remains that praise singing is helpful through its maintenance of moral values, religious beliefs, unification of people and inspiration as well as upliftment of people's morales especially during tough times. To this, Chiwome (1987:83) cited by Viriri (1999:94) points out that "pungwe was a means of recreation and entertainment since war was strenuous it was hard and tedious and was characterized by death and much suffering." Chiwome (1987:83)'s statement above brings us back to the idea that poetry are emotions expressed verbally. This idea is supported by Meller (1976:77) cited by Viriri (1999:92) who rightly notes that, "Men sang out their feelings long back before they were able to speak their thoughts."

Besides the purposes mentioned above, praise singing gives us a truthful depiction of religious life. Praise singing portrays the various religions available, among them is ancestral worship and worshipping God. Besides the purposes of worshipping mentioned above, praise singing serves political purposes as well.

### **4.3.3 Worshipping**

#### **4.3.3.1 God worshipping**

In appreciation of the magnitude of God's dealings with people today, the present generation is worshipping God more than before. Man's conscience is focused on praising and worshipping God Almighty. This is achieved through music, praying and sharing of his word. An example of a scripture people can use to share the word, pray and sing is Psalms 23:1 – 4 which reads:

- V1 The Lord is my shepherd,  
I shall not want
- V2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures,  
He leads me besides still waters
- V3 He restores my soul  
He leads me in the paths of righteousness

For his name's sake

- V4 Even though I walk through the  
Valley of shadow of death  
I will fear no evil  
For you are with me,  
Your rod and your staff,  
They comfort me  
(the Holy Bible – New King James Version)

This passage is one in which people can share the word of God and praise God. They too can praise Him for his generosity. The congregation repeats the words as a prayer. Lastly, there are many songs from the same scripture. By so doing the Lord God is praised and worshipped. That is why Xozwa, a Xhosa preacher, when interviewed by Senkame in Kaschula (1995), cited by Hodgson (1980:68) on whether he sees his poetry as a gift from God, and whether he sometimes produces that poetry when preaching, and he explained that, "Sometimes, the way I express myself when I preach, it is in a political way. I preach in a poetic way... I do not know how to preach if I am lecturing in a room. I am just a born poet, this applies when I am on the pulpit." This then shows how praise singing can be used when in church, worshipping and through preaching, singing and praying.

Since a preacher of God's word can intermix the word with praise songs, it shows that Christians like any other praise singers in the past, are inseparable from these praises. They praise God for His creation, His present protection and care as shown in Psalms 23 above. God too, is praised for taking people through problems as mentioned again in Psalms 23 above. In short, God is praised for everything, because to the Christians, in God they lack nothing because in God they said they shall not want. Christians and God are inseparable.

#### **4.3.3.2 Ancestor Worship**

Those who are not Christians also praise and worship their ancestors. Berlund (1976:197) states that, "There is no existence of survivors separated from that of the shadows (ancestors) nor a realm of the shades separate from the living." Berlund (1976)'s statement above is a clear indication that Africans and ancestral worshipping can never be separated. These ancestral worshipping ceremonies are

very diverse but rain making and the appeasement ceremonies are the ones which are looked at in this research. But before looking into the ceremonies above, it should be borne in mind that Africans and their ancestral spirits are married. That is why Khonjwangekhanda Mdletshe, a devout Nazarine who explained their position as fellow Shembe, notes the following concerning ancestral worship. According to Vilikazi (1965:61), citing imbongi Konjwangekhanda Mdletshe says, “pray all of you to your kin, praise your own kin .... Pray to the Almighty after that, but begin with your own kin.” This shows that though Africans believe that there can be many gods, and God above, the first thing to do is to worship their ancestors first before any other. That is why whenever they worship their ancestors they end by saying, “*Motivitsirawo kuna Musikavanhu*” (pass our message to the God Almighty). So, to them their kin is the best before any other God.

#### **4.3.3.2.1 Rain making ceremonies**

This ceremony is held when there is drought or signs threatening drought. It is Shona culture and custom to brew beer to appease the rain making spirits. To this effect Gombe (1993:77) remarks, “*Mukwerera ibira raiitwa navakuru vedu zvikuru kana mvura yaramba, kana yanonoka kunaya yaiva tsika yavo yokuti kana munhuruka voda kusvika vaitomboita mutambo uyu saka wakanga usingangomiriri kuitwa nguva yokushaikwa kwemvura kwete.*” (Rain making ceremony was carried out by our elders especially when there were no rains or when the rain season had delayed. It was their tradition that towards the rainy season they carried out this practice. This tradition was not just practiced during the drought season, but it was their custom).

The above information clearly shows how and when, the Shona conducted ancestral worship. They believed that the ancestors would meet their pleas. According to Gombe (ibid:77) the rain making beer was brewed by elderly persons or spinisters who had never had any sexual intercourse or old grannies who, too, could no longer conceive. Those young ladies who helped the grannies in grinding the mealie – meal for brewing beer would also suspend mating with their husbands until the exercise was over. When the beer was ready for consumption,

the spinisters and the grannies are the ones who carried it to the venue of the ceremony or sacred place. On the way and at the place of the ceremony, old grannies could sing songs which are highly provocative to the males because they make mention of their male organs or make reference to private parts in their singing.

Examples of songs sung are presented below:

Mvura ngainaye woye  
Yowerere, ngainaye  
Vari mabweadziwa woye!  
Yowerere, ngainaye mvura ngainaye  
Nhai vari kumatonjeniwe!  
Yowerere ngainaye ngainaye  
Tabaikana nezuva ngainaye

Let it rain!  
Yes, let it rain  
Those at mabweadziwa (Matopo hills)  
Yes let it rain  
Those at Matonjeni (Matopo Hills)!  
Yes, let it rain again, let it rain  
We are sun scotched, let it rain

The other song is:

Harahwa dzekuno dziripiko? Ndidairei  
Yowerere ndidairei  
Ko twurume, tweekuno twuripi? Ndidairei  
Twuripi ndidairei  
Ndaona kupfeka midhebhe  
Ndikati muri varume  
Ndidairei ndaiti muri murume  
Ndazotarisisa ndikaona urume hapana  
Chokwadi hwapera nekutya  
Urume hwakapera  
Hwakapera urume nekutya madzviti

Where are the grandfathers? Answer me  
Truly where are they answer me  
Where are the young men? Answer me  
I saw you wearing trousers  
And thought you are manly  
Answer me, I thought you were man enough  
At closer range I discovered that,

You have lost your manhood  
Surely you lost your manhood  
Because you were scared to fight,  
The Dzviti people

When they reached the place of worship, men took over and appeased the ancestors as shown in fig 3 below.

Figure 3



Although the men were provoked during the ceremony as portrayed in the second song, they did not react whatsoever.

Worshippers danced and drank beer until they could drink no more. The remaining beer was spilt all over on the pretext that ancestors would consume it. It is said that if the process was well carried out, rains could fall on that same day, or catch them up on their way home. If some misbehaved or had intercourse, the spirit medium would come out and identify the culprit and the whole process would be nullified and the spirit mediums would order the whole process to be repeated, and the culprit fined at the chief's place. In most cases they were to pay a goat or an ox. If all went on well, they could receive heavy rains immediately after the ceremony.

Besides the praise singing of the elderly people, the grannies, the old men, normally the chiefs of the affected areas would speak to the Mhondoro (the rain making spirit) praising and appealing to it to help allieviate the calamity which will have befallen the people. An example is seen in Hodza's poem entitled 'Doro Romukwerera' (Rain making beer) which reads:

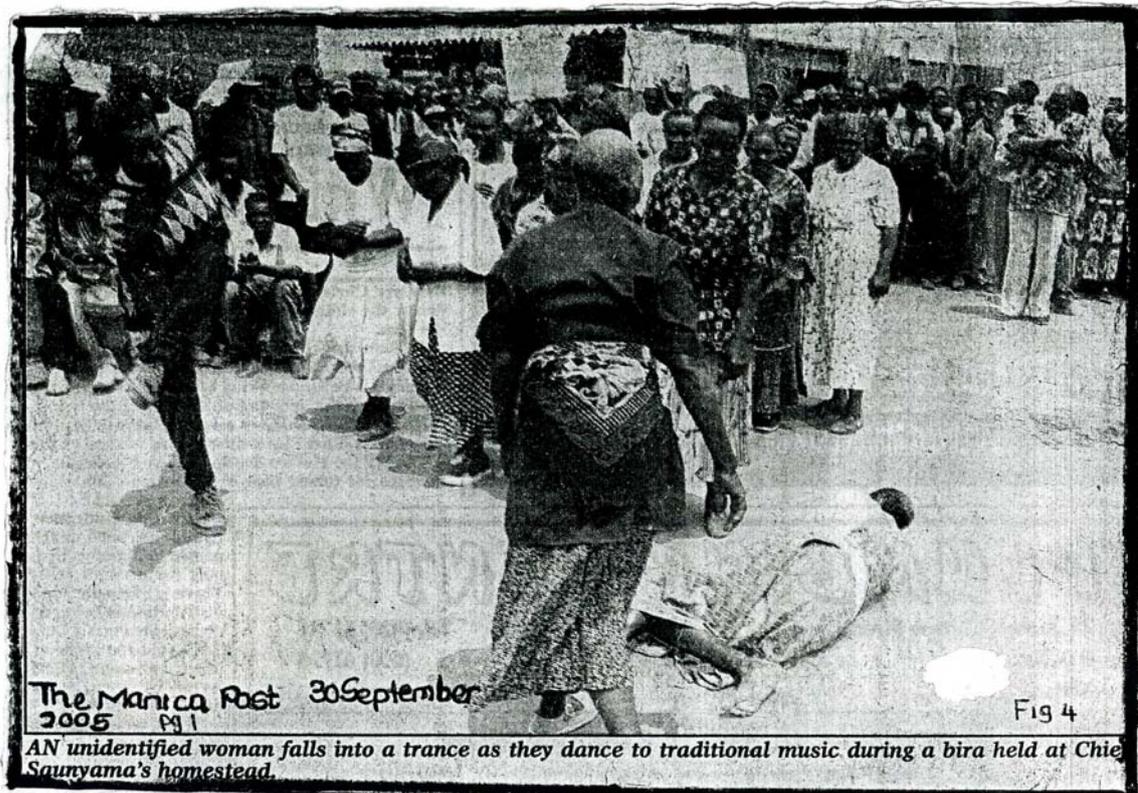
E – Tateguru Dzivaguru  
Dzorai mwoyo sekuru vavanhu  
Gore rinotchademba vana voziya nenzara  
Nzara yadongorera pamikova yedu  
Kusanaya kwemvura kunozvara nzara  
Mbeu dziri kuoma nezuva takatarisa  
Tipeiwo donhwe tivane kudya

Chaminuka  
Hwahwa, uhwo  
Hwebira guru ravasekuru  
(Ugo Hwamadzinza AvaShona 1974:46)

E- Grand ancestor Dzivaguru  
Have mercy grandfather of people  
We are to regret this year  
When children faint of hunger  
Hunger is knocking at our doors  
Drought causes hunger  
Our fields are drying before us  
Just give us a drop  
That we may have food to eat  
Chaminuka  
There is your beer  
For the great rain making ceremony

After the elderly men had appeased the rain spirits (mhondoro), people sang and danced as shown in fig 4 below.

Figure 4.



#### 4.3.3.2.2 Appeasement

The Collins English Dictionary (1974:21) defines appeasement as to, “make quiet, calm by giving what is wanted.” This again is a way of praising and worshipping the dead. Berglund (1976:97) mentions that the ancestors and the living are inseparable. It is true. The issue of appeasement varies with tribes and cultures. According to Gombe (1993:132), “Ngozi haitipikwi inoda kuripwa”. (An avenging spirit should not be ignored but be appeased). This is in line with Hamutyinei’s poem in “Mabvumira Enhetembo” page 14 entitled “Ngozi yerombe igandanzara” (the avenging spirit of a wanderer is dead). It reads:

Mushonga wengozi kuiripa  
(Mabvumira Enhetembo, 1972:14)

The only remedy for an avenging spirit  
Is to pay compensation

According to the source consulted, amongst the Ndau people, when one kills a person, the spirit of the deceased comes back as an avenging spirit (ngozi). The family that committed the murder is required to appease the avenging spirit so as to save lives that could be taken by the avenging spirit.

The procedure is to approach the family of the deceased, through a *sahwira* (family friend) and admit that they are guilty. The murderers are taken to the bereaved family where arrangements for compensation are made. This is in the form of a girl and some cash. This girl is expected to be impregnated by a chosen person in the offended family and should give birth, to a baby boy who is given the name of the murdered. After that, she is free to go back to her family. If the girl does not give birth to a baby boy but girls, she will be taken back to her family and leaving her children and they demand another girl to replace the first girl. When the second girl gives birth to a boy, the offended family will address the avenging spirit that he has now risen and the new born baby is named after him and people celebrate. They recite poems to appease the avenging spirit and to request the deceased to stop fighting. An example of such poems gathered from my source is as follows:

Changamire vasekuru  
Vakuru vedu vari pasi  
Ndimi varidzi wemhuri  
Chiudzaiwo jeche renyu richirega kurwa  
Imi murege kuzoshamisika muchiti  
Sei musina kuziviswa  
Tati, vaNembire vakaripa mhaka dzavo  
Hanzi takatadza hoyo mukadzi uyo  
Vanyayewo pahuro nevamwe kwavariyo  
Mochitichengetera mhuri yenyu iyi vasekuru  
Motiudzirawo nevari mberi

Grand grandfather  
Our ancestors who rested long ago  
You are the family owner  
Tell your child to cease fire now  
And you too should not panic

And cry foul that we never informed you  
That Nembire accepted his case and paid for it  
He is saying sorry by giving us a wife  
And the wife says she wants to brew beer for you  
That you may drink with friends wherever you are  
Then, look after your family grand ancestor  
Pass on the great news to those we know not

After this, there will be parting and beer drinking. From there on, there will be no more deaths in the offending family because the appeasing spirit will come out and spit some water on every relative of the compensating family and announce with its own voice that, "it is over".

From the above mentioned purposes, it becomes clear that praise singing is very valuable in African way of life. Pure Africans can never be separated from praise singing. Owing to this, Murwapmpida (1973:74) remarks, "praises were chanted to show an appreciation of what has been done ... at ceremonies such as of such calibre include weddings, religious gatherings, graduation ceremonies and bone divining." The statement above shows that praise singing will continue to be there because the above mentioned things are part and parcel of Shona people's lives.

Having seen that African way of life is strongly attached to praise singing and music, the researcher has concluded that, praise singing and music are inseparable from the African way of life. This has been shown by the fact that, Shona people use praise poetry at work, during parties, at funerals and even at leisure times. So, in short poetry is part of African way of life.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE PRAISE SINGER TOMORROW

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Praise singing in the future can be two fold. It is bound to continue existing but with a lot of changes here and there. Most of the young artists are faced with Western influence and their praise singing is drifting from the one which we are all familiar with to rap music which is full of rhyme and rhythm. Owing to the challenges facing the new generation on the praise and singing arena, it goes well with Tracy (1958:57)'s statement that, "... there is a suicidal tendency, particularly among literate Africans, to destroy their indigenous art forms and substitute them with simpler, less aesthetic foreign styles most of which do little or no justice to their innate musical or artistic talents." This is a clear indication that the music industry is faced with a critical problem of pressure from other countries. Music surely will never perish, but the researcher, is convinced that though music will last forever it will have been altered in many ways.

#### 5.2 PRAISE SINGING AND GENDER EQUITY

The issue of praise singing is not, and was not talent or men neither women based. The only problem which made women in the past not recognized was that they were marginalized because of male dominance. Men, have been looking at females with a scorning eye scaling their female counterpart lowly as much as they could. Women have been given least places in society like the kitchen and the places around the kitchen and not the front part of the homestead. It was regarded as men's place, that is, the *dare* (sitting place) where they relaxed and fed from and disseminated information and imparted education to the young generation.

Women have been marginalized, and for quite some time, women accepted this marginal label that was placed on them. Nkuzana (1988:14), citing Jennings (1976:38) says, "poetry is a verbal expression of emotions", it therefore means that no one fails to express feelings such as those of love, hatred, joy, praise and many

more. Heese (1988:30), concerning poetry, states that, “poetry is a form of music...”. Acknowledging Heese (1988)’s statement, Nkuzana (1988:14) citing Jennings (1976:38) points out that, “poetry is a verbal expression of emotions”. Owing to this, the researcher is convinced that women praise singers were there in the infinite past, long back, though males were dominant, but unfortunately for males, some of the things they used to praise sing on are changing, unlike the daily chores for women. To this Tracy (1958:56) says, “With no enjoyable inter – tribal wars permitted these days, a whole wealth of male song are vanishing, no wars , no “war dances, “ no warriors.” Tracy (Ibid:56) also mentions that, “The women’s work is still the same eternal round particularly in the domestic chores, children care... the cooking ...” So, women poets, though they seem not to have been there in the past, the researcher believes they existed but were marginalized. This suits Krog (2001:23) who believes that, “The time has come for women’s voices to set up plans for changing the sound of the continent.”

The male counterpart became dominant in that, he dealt with public themes, the real world. To this Comaroff (1975:30) states, “male story telling was seen as more important because it dealt with the real world, it belonged to the glamorous world of public male power.” From Comaroff’s (ibid:30) statement of uplifting male voice, one can safely say that, unlike male voices dealing substantially with the so called public themes, African women poets today treat both public and private themes with equal ease. The likes of Miriam Makeba, the late Brenda Fassie, Rebecca Malope just to mention a few. These are African music artists. They deal with any aspect of life, be it social, economic, religious and even spiritual. African women have the potential to praise sing and groom. For example, Rebecca Malope groomed Vuyo Mokwena and Lundi. The researcher believes that women can give birth to a vibrant music industry.

According to one source interviewed in August 2005, it was established that in the past, it was the duty of females to praise sing for their husbands when they brought some game meat after a hunting expedition. It was mentioned that women could praise sing for their husbands and it was expected that when one got married, one should put an effort to learn the totem of one’s husband and could use this to praise sing to one’s husband when need arose. Thus, although males

were dominant in praise singing, women too were praise singers though not in public places.

It is for the reason that women were marginalized that men seemed to dominate in the poetry arena. Krog (2001:20) observes that, "... the male praise singer and female story teller are two similar story tellers though the female is hardly visible compared with the male praise singer, the predominance of women as story teller has been so widely and consistently noted that it cannot be without substance." Surely it cannot be just ignored because in story telling, it would liven the entertained. So, women from the old times, were poets though marginalized.

Though the males seemed to have been dominating the poetry arena, women outgrew them because as has been mentioned earlier, women could deal with both domestic and public themes as compared to their male counterparts. Examples of female artists who were, and are still outstanding include among other artists, Mirriam Makeba, (Mama Africa), Rebecca Malope (Queen of the gospel music), Dolly Partons and new Zimbabwean music artists like Olivia Charamba and Fungisai Zvakavapano just to mention a few. No one doubts that these are prominent artists and their music is like poetry.

Gender equity has been the talk of Africans due to the fact that most African societies are dominated and ruled by men. Most societies were and some are still patriach.

The issue of sidelining women has been highlighted by Graham (1995:185) who remarks that, "Izibongo are therefore in some of their manifestations not only cultural power brokers, they also place women on the margins and ascribe very limited categories to them." Women in the past had to abide by set rules and regulations and as a result they did not have an opportunity to show their talents. With regard to this, Hofmeyer (1993:16) states that, "We have come a long way. We are everywhere, yet we are nowhere." Women are numerous as compared to men yet their silence is all over, they just sit and bear children, play in the kitchen and do household chores.

The idea that women are dormant does not necessarily mean that there are no women writers or poets, but nobody seemed to care about their works, Krog (2001:15) commented that, "Not that we did not tell stories, not that we did not write poems, but nobody bothered to record, publish or recognize these voices until the last days of the old millennium." So what made the females so dormant was that they were marginalized. Men viewed females as incapable of doing anything. Some wonder as to why this is the case. It might be for the sole reason that men have been the ones who set rules for women and they expected these women to abide by the set rules.

If men and women can be able to talk, both can be able to perform, they cannot waste the chance if given to them. But what is needed is a break through in some areas where women are still being looked at with a scornful eye. As has been already observed by Graham (1995:185) where he states that, "Izibongo are therefore in some of their manifestations not only cultural power brokers, they also place women on the margins and ascribe very limited categories to them." So its the issue of culture which hindered some women to praise sing but not that they were unable.

If women were able to utter "Madanha" (praise poetry recited by women to their spouses during sexual intercourse) there is no way women should be excluded from public praise singing. According to The Edgar's Club Magazine (2005: 19 vol 105) "Miriam Makeba is now a woman of stature. She began singing in her church choir as a young girl. But turned professional as far back as 1950..." On page 20 of the same parade, it is mentioned that, "Mama Africa is described as one of African music's first and foremost world stars." So women are capable.

The researcher strongly believes that if binary opposition and marginalizing of women is done with, women like any man, created in God's own image, can reach for greater heights.

### 5.3 PRAISE SINGING AND POLITICS

Zimbabwean History can be of great vitality with the reference to Nehanda Nyakasikana (a female heroine). Nehanda Nyakasikana is one of the heroines in Zimbabwean politics. She fought the whites strongly and when she was giving in she prophesied that though she was dying it was just but the beginning of Zimbabwean resistance to colonial rule.

In actual sense, Nehanda is a heroine who is remembered for her dedication and for the words that she would die for the nation (Zimbabwe) but her grandchildren would see it to finish. The question of heroes is mentioned by Milubi (1988:84 – 85) when he points out that, “Praises are addressed to individuals who have distinguished themselves, either in battle or in one way or another.” It is also said that it was not common for a person to praise himself but others could do it for him. With regard to this, Murwamphinda (1993:30) states that, “It is not normal for one to praise himself although a person such as a warrior could stand up and praise himself... The normal practice is that of being praised ... rather than praising oneself, for praises are a record of powers of great personalities.” This then becomes true of Nehanda Nyakasikana. Praises of her are inseparable from Zimbabwe’s history. Her bravery is praised in the present ruling party’s songs. An example is as follows:

Ndochemba ZANU, kuti inunure mhuri yeZimbabwe  
ZANU, ZANU, ZANU, ZANU} Chorus  
Nehanda mudzimai wekutanga  
Akafire Zimbabwe

I appeal to ZANU that it may help Zimbabwe  
Nehanda the first woman  
Died for liberating Zimbabwe

Another example of praise songs which portray that women, from the past, had a role to play is a song again in which Nehanda Nyakasikana is praised for her acts of bravery which goes:

Mbuya Nehanda kufa vachitaura  
Kuti zvino ndofire nyika ino

Shoko rimwe ravakandiudza  
Torai gidi muzvitonge

Nehanda dies saying  
I am now dying for this country  
Her only words of advice were  
Go in arms that you can liberate yourselves

The two songs above are a true picture of how women can do anything man can do. Concerning politics, Murwamphinda (1993:30) says, "Political leaders were praised during rallies." This is to make a public adulation for such a leader. An example of such activities is the one witnessed in March 2005 when Amai Mujuru, the vice president of Zimbabwe was appointed. People praised her by singing the following song:

Amai Mujuru  
Mbiri yechigandanga ndiyo mbiri yacho  
Mbiri yechigandanga ndiyo mbiri yacho  
ZANU PF  
Mbiri yechigandanga ndiyo mbiri yacho

Mrs Mujuru  
The popularity of bravery is your honour  
The popularity of bravery is your honour  
ZANU PF  
The popularity of bravery is your honour

Women mentioned in this research and many unmentioned in this research are a reflector that even though women in the past were silenced by binary opposition laws, they were not removed from the system. It was only their voices which were not heard, as has been mentioned by Krog (2001:15) that, "not that we did not tell stories, not that we did not write poems, but nobody bothered to record, publish or recognize these voices until the last days of the old millennium."

The organizations established to empower women, the researcher believes are there only to give women some voice because from the past, the same women, though sidelined, but contained the talent. One can take away many things from a person but not one's ability and talent.

This issue of sidelining women in the past as if they did not do anything is also mentioned by Madziyire (2005:15). According to the Apostolic Faith Mission (A.F.M) president's wife, In the A.F.M Magazine, "Celebrating the role of women in Ministry' volume 2, Madziyire (2005:15) rightly observes that, "There are a lot of great things that women have done over the years but save for a few testimonies in churches and at conferences, our role have not been documented". This clearly shows that women have been silenced all over the show, be it in church or other sectors, women, though they did great and important things, they were silenced, they had no voice yet of late they gained their ground as portrayed by Krog (2001:20) where he asks, "what could be the reason that African women, despite the world's most oppressed and deprived, have achieved a reasonable degree of movement from marginalized story – teller to a place in the centre where they treat a wider variety of themes than do their male counterparts?" Krog (ibid: 230) adds that, "the time has come for women's voices to set up plans for changing the sound of the continent. The time has come for women's voices to invade the merciless male narrative of Africa."

So, women have now stood on their feet. They now have the voice, they now have the ground and no one will silence them any longer.

In support of the above authorities, Krog (2001:20) and Madziyire (2005:15) Gilman and Lisa (2002:42) points out that "political parties in contemporary Malawi organize their female members to dance and sing songs of praise at their public functions."

This proves that the male counterparts have now recognised that women are of great importance. They have discovered that women are able to do anything given the chance. They can influence people, they can mobilize people into politics.

#### **5.4 PRAISE SINGING AND RELIGION**

In the whole world, every person has a belief. Above all, it is important to note that, though people vary in their beliefs, many people at the end of whatever they believe in, acknowledge God's existence. Even in African culture where ancestors

are honoured, they still believe that, above all, there is Musikavanhu (Human Creator) or Dzivaguru (Big dam) and many other names attributed to God.

As has been established in 5.2 under praise singing and gender equity, given the opportunity and chance in life, women can do anything, just like their male counterparts. The same applies to religion and praise singing. Praise singing can be recited by both women and men. It is only that man hold on to the patriarchal binary opposition in order to be always in power and the women being subservient. It therefore rightly points to the fact that man's power is constructed and its not natural. This tallies well with one of Shakespeare's great sayings which goes, "Some are born great, others achieve greatness, and yet some have greatness thrust upon them." Men, yes, there are some who are born great, yet others surely achieve greatness, but the whole lot of men are great because the binary opposition law thrust greatness on men in order to oppress females.

Despite what man can do, God has the final say concerning human life. The fact that women were there and were given the chance to take part in praise singing, like when the rains had failed, it was their sole duty to brew beer to appease the ancestors and to sing all the way until they reached the place of worship where men took over. That sheds light and hope that women can do anything.

The fact that women in African culture could praise sing as shown above, and could praise sing for their husbands after a hunting expedition and even thank them for any other good deed, the same roles were performed in christianity. Women in the Christian world, in most churches are given the opportunity to praise and worship, to preach and praise God in any way that they feel like praising. That is why we have a lot of women gospel singers (musicians) like Fungisai Zvakavapano, Spiwe Mutongorewa (amai Chimuti) and many other Zimbabwean gospel artists. In South Africa we also have prominent gospel artists like Rebecca Malope – (Queen of the gospel) and many more. These women are a clear evidence to prove that gone are the days when women were not recognized. That is one reason the statement in the Edgars Club Magazine of August 2005, Vol 105 page 15 states that, "Mirriam Makeba started her career by singing in her church

choir when she was a young girl,” holds water. It proves that when it comes to praise singing, talent has nothing to do with gender.

Mrs Masiyambiri, a Zimbabwean artist, is one gospel musician worth mentioning. She boomed the show with her first album “Handirambi zvamaronga” (I cannot oppose God’s plans) which made her famous. So, in praise singing women were just not given the opportunity to praise in public, yet behind locked doors they praised their husbands for a good service rendered.

The fact that religious praise singers broke the silence in praise singing, as in the other sectors, where women broke the silence and started performing publicly, gave women a grip in the area of praise and singing. This brings us back to Mrs Madziyire of A.F.M, who once mentioned that, “... women have done greatly over the years, but save for a few testimonies in churches and at conferences, our roles have not been documented”. (A.F.M Magazine Vol 2, page 15 2005, celebrating the role of women in Ministry). Krog (2001:15) supports Mrs Madziyire’s point that women were not silent, only that nobody bothered to record or document their works. Krog (ibid:15) states that, “not that we did not tell stories, not that we did not write poems, but nobody bothered to record, publish or recognize these voices until the last days of the old millennium”. So women were not silent it is only that no one bothered to record their works, and they seemed to be silent, yet they were not.

With such evidence and circumstances as above, it is pretty clear that the organizations which recognize women or which gave back powers to the women to some extent, also helped women. That is why for example, in the Apostolic Faith Mission Church, women were not recognized as pastors despite the fact that they would have trained for three years just like the men. It was until the late 1980s that they began to be recognized and given churches to pastor. Yet it did not mean that women stopped training in the past. They were there, training but at the end were marginalized. Though marginalized, that could not remove what was within them. Though some churches have freed women, others like Johanne Masowe, Johanne Marange and Madzibaba, just to mention a few, women are still not allowed to take part in church activities. They have to sit and listen to their

male counterparts preaching the word of God. They are not allowed to preach neither do they allow them to praise and worship, despite the efforts of organizations like the WAG (Women Action Groups) and YWCA (Young Women Christian Association), which are busy empowering women by giving them a voice. There is no doubt that, in the future, through empowerment and government support women are getting, they are going to have a voice and speak so loudly enough that everyone will hear them. Being shunned to take part does not mean that they cannot preach or praise and worship because in women's services when they are alone, they do everything, a sign that they can do anything.

Even though there were situations where females did not to have a voice, they now speak for themselves. They now sing, as has been shown in 5.2 under praise singing and gender equity. It was shown earlier that there are some male artists today, who are now recognized in the music industry because some women gave birth to them. By this we are referring to artists like Vuyo and Lundi who are direct products of Rebecca Malope. So women can make a contribution too. They write poems and music where they express themselves. An example of one poem by a woman is 'mhandu' (enemy) in "Mutinhimira wedetembo" which was translated to Shona by Gibson Mandishona yet it was written in English by Phillipa Christie. It reads:

Apo makute akandifidigira zvinyoro  
Ndinoona nyika yose yapinda muzororo guru  
Ndinotsonda tsukuviri mumusoro  
Inopa mumwoyo maronda makuru

When the clouds covered me  
I foresee the country resting greatly  
I destroying the double minded  
Which gives me great wounds in the heart  
(Mutinhimira wedetembo, 1965:44)

Phillipa's poem above justifies, the words of Krog (2001:15) where she says, "Not that we did not tell stories, not that we did not write poems, but nobody bothered to record, publish or recognize these voices until the last days of the old millennium".

The above words by Krog, reinforce that women used to recite a lot of poems and other artistic works, but it was only unfortunate that man was the ruler, and there was no way women could have published their work while they were under the patriarchal rule. No one could have proved women's artistic talents with the binary opposition existing, and Krog's words above, leave traces which manifest that women from the infinite past were not silent, but nobody could recognize, neither document their works as compared to their male counterparts. To emphasise women's ability to shout praises, 'madanha' (utterances by females during sexual intercourse) were common amongst the females. That was a clear indication that women could praise sing. Above that, women could thank their husbands with the totems, which means they can recite poems.

The fact that women's themes were confined to the domestic arena proves that nobody could document them unlike men because they were not associated with the public domain. When documentation started, poems like "Unouya ndapinduka runa" (You come home so late) "Vamwene vangu vanonetsa" (My mother-in-law is troublesome), "Muri parumananzombe varoora" (you are in trouble daughters-in-law) were published. In Mabvumira Enhetembo "Barika moto unopisa" (Polygamy is hot like fire) "Unopiwei chandisina" (what are you given that I lack), the voice of women are heard. The poems above portray domestic issues (themes) though written by man on behalf of women. Men were then aware that they are oppressing women. The researcher is convinced that, these male poets felt for the women and spoke for them. An example of one of Hodza's poems entitled 'unopiwei chandisina? (What are you given that I lack) reads:

Murume wangu, wandishungurudza  
Chinokubata mwoyo kwaunoswera chiiko?  
Chinokupa kubva wandikanganwa samadzihwa?  
Chaunowana ikoko chinomotumbi wakakura sei?  
Unokunda mutumbi wechandinokupa kuno?  
(Ugo Hwamadzinza avashona, 1974:62)

My husband, you make my soul bleed  
What attracts you where you spent the day  
What makes you forget me like mucus?  
What entertains you, and how big is it?  
That surpasses what I give you?

Through Hodza's positive contributions towards rebuking males' behaviour of ill treating females, females are moving towards freedom. This freedom is the one which makes females to be able to tackle both domestic and public themes. Hofmeyr (1993:21) supports the issue of females tackling both domestic and public themes when she writes, "... African women poets today treat both public and private themes with equal ease." Given such a scenario it is a true fact that women are able to recite or compose praise poems.

## **5.5 ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES**

From the sixteen questions given to various people of various age groups, it is worth noting that poetry will never cease as long as people continue to exist and to have feelings or emotions.

From the questionnaire, fifty percent (50%) have shown that males are dominant in the praise singing industry due to cultural perspectives, and societal norms and values. Forty percent (40%) believed that both men and women can praise sing at the same level, and ten percent (10%) said that women can do as men can do but only that women have been marginalized for too long.

On question two, of the questionnaire, it became quite clear that, despite male dominance which has given males much exposure and opportunity to perform publicly, eighty percent (80%) of the people felt that praise singing has nothing to do with gender whatsoever. They felt that praise singing has to do with talent and how one acts upon that talent to develop it. A handful of people, which is twenty percent (20%) of the people who answered the questionnaire, felt that praise singing has definitely something to do with gender.

It was quite evident from the questionnaire that, the issue of praise singing is inclined to both talent and cash. Sixty percent (60%) believed that praise singing, especially in today's generation, is attached to both talent and cash. This becomes a pointer that, as long as people continue to exist and needing some cash, praise singing is there to stay, and will always be vital in human existence. The forty percent (40%) was divided into two. The first twenty five percent (25%) believed

that praise singing, with the coming of technology, will lose its vitality and the remaining fifteen percent (15%) believed that praise singing and technology are both vital in today's generation.

Another aspect of great importance deduced from the questionnaire is that music is used to bridge generational gaps. The questionnaire issued to people, eighty one percent (81%) of the people believed that music bridges generational gaps. Only nineteen percent (19%) believed that it is not true that music bridges the gaps between generations.

From the questionnaire, a few people established that praise singers are cowards who cannot sit on the table to face facts but speak to themselves in a manner provoking other people's emotions. In response to the above statement only ten percent (10%) supported the motion and ninety percent (90%) objected to the idea that praise singers and musicians are cowards. Ninety percent (90%) believed that what the musicians do is for the good of the majority since the intended message is spread at one goal to a large number of people. Still on the issue of music, seventy three percent (73%) felt that music has the power to divide and rule people and twenty seven percent (27%) disputed the idea that music can divide and rule. This therefore shows that people and music are inseparable. Therefore praise singing will stay into the future.

Since we have discovered that music emanates from people's everyday activities, it will always be there depending on the occasion and situation at hand. According to the information from the questionnaire, eighty six percent (86%) believed that, with highly sophisticated technology and instruments, it means a high quality of music and music will never perish. Only fourteen percent (14%) believed that praise singing of the past without any technology attached to it will remain the best.

From the questionnaire, it was established too that praise singing or rather music has greater influence on human existence socially, economically, religiously and physically. As a result music will stand the test of time. People may change or perish but not music. According to the information from the questionnaire, ninety nine percent (99%) believed that music has the greatest influence on human

existence and cannot be put aside from human life. Only one percent (1%) believed that its not only music but many factors.

Another piece of information extracted from the questionnaire is that music is generation oriented. From the same questionnaire, it was established too that because people adapt and adopt from our past, we therefore have to rely on music, yet others disputed the above, believing that music is generation oriented. From the information above it was fifty percent (50%) for, and fifty percent (50%) against the issue of relying on music. The first fifty percent (50%) believed that since music is generation oriented, it is therefore biased. The other fifty percent (50%) which is for, believed that it is not biased because generations borrow from each other some techniques.

Concerning the issue of music, the information gathered through the questionnaire is that, some people believed that music heals broken hearts and others felt that poetry and music are just there to provoke sad memories to those who are experiencing such tragedies or had have such experiences and tragedies. On this question, it was a fifty – fifty issue. Fifty percent (50%) believed poetry and music help to heal broken hearts and the other fifty percent (50%) too, believed disgruntlement poetry provokes memories to those who had experiences of the issues mentioned in the poems and the music which shows dissatisfaction. Adding to the information above, most people believed that most poets and musicians capitalize on the things people are going through in the society.

Lastly on the continuity of praise poetry and music in the future, as well as the music industry, ninety four percent (94%) were for the motion that the praise singer and the musician are faced with the greatest challenge of technology. As a result they felt that it is more likely that though they will continue to exist, their performance will be greatly altered. A six percent (6%) continued to believe that the musician and the praise singer will permiate their way as the praise singer had been doing from ages up to date.

Having gone through the questionnaire, it became quite evident that praise singing will never perish from generation to generation into the infinite future. That is, as

long as people continue to exist and have emotions, be they of love, hatred, scorn, happiness, sadness, discouragement and many more, praise singing will continue to exist. As long as the AIDS pandemic exists, as long as hunger prevails, as long as marriage and divorce exist, and as life and death are still experienced on earth, people will continue to verbalise their emotions, and thus a praise will be formed. This then gives praise singing the value for life. That is, it has been valuable in the past, today and doubtlessly in the future. As a result of its value to African culture it will never perish.

Besides, Owomoyela (1979:15) earlier on states that, "songs play an important role in all aspects of African life, and there is hardly any occasion or occupation that does not involve singing." Having observed the African way of life, Owomoyela (1979:15)'s statement above shows that praise singing will continue to exist in African's life because African life is full of rites which need some music to accompany them. For example the Ndebeles in South Africa, the Baphedi, just to mention a few, still practice circumcision. It does not go without some music. Besides, in traditional African marriages, not to mention the Christian way of marrying, there is a lot of praise singing accompanying such occasions. Let alone deaths, there is no way Africans can shun praise singing at funerals.

From the above mentioned facts, it is quite indisputable that praise singing was there, and is there in the present and is there to stay. The researcher is convinced that though there maybe some alterations here and there which are caused by generational changes, praise singing will stand the test of time and is there to stay into the infinite future.

## CHAPTER 6

### 6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

From the information gathered in this thesis, it shows that poetry from the past, present and in the future has shown some traces that poetry is a permanent aspect of life through generations into the future. Generations may pass, but not with praise singing. There are various reasons why it is a true fact that as long as people exist, emotions will too exist, which means as long as people continue to exist and express their feelings or emotions verbally, praise singing will also continue to exist.

In Acknowledgement of the above, Kahari (1986:55) states that, "it is an accepted truism that the song is the newspaper of non literate societies." Where people could neither read nor write, at least, they could sing songs, they could recite poems, they could understand the messages put across in those poems or songs. Concurring with Kahari (ibid:55) Stuart (1968:27) also points out that anyone is capable of praise singing, or portray recitation when he puts it, thus. "anyone can tell tales, sing, shout praises...". The word "anyone" does not show any gender. It therefore means that both men and women can sing praises. No wonder Nkuzana (1988:14) sees poetry as, "... a verbal expression of emotions, based upon truth and beauty." If Nkuzana sees poetry as "verbal expression of emotions, based upon truth...", then this means that people will never stop expressing their emotions towards each other. People will continue to express feelings such as those of love, joy, remorse, hurt, just to mention a few. Devoid of human emotions, it means the world has ceased its existence, of which it's impossible. Therefore poetry will stand the odds of times into the infinite future.

As has been established earlier that praises and music are a particular way of enlightening or conscientising people of their history, their present and their future, it therefore continues to hold water that praise singing, though may have some alterations here and there, it will not perish. In conjunction with the authorities above, Owomoyela (1979:15) also stamps the continual existence of praise singing since nearly every African occasion needs a piece of music. He remarks,

“songs play an important role in all aspects of African life, and there is hardly any occasion or occupation that does not involve singing.” (Owomoyela, 1979:15). Owomoyela (1979) concurs with Tracy (1958:56) who states that, “If you wish to get to the heart of an African quicker than any other way, you must be able to participate in the enjoyment of his music...” In other words Tracy (ibid.:56) is saying one needs to take part in the praise singing in order to win Africans, or to know more about them. Tracy (Ibid:56) adds that, concerning his government, “They may make new laws for us to obey, and we shall obey them, but if they tried to stop us singing, then, I promise you, there would be a revolution in two days.” Tracy’s words are a true reflection of how Africans and music are wedded. Therefore praise singing is for life.

By injecting a unifying factor amongst different tribes, poetry will also find refuge in that and it will continue to exist. Stuart (1968:31) is in support of the above statement. Stuart (ibid:31) states that, “praise poems...serve as unifying forces among different tribes”. A good example is seen in the present generation in Zimbabwe where there are Ndebeles, Shonas, Vendas and Kalangas who are uniting in the third Chimurenga (Struggle for the land.) In line with this struggle, is a song by Chinx Chingaira a Zimbabwean music artist, which goes:

Hondo yemuno muZimbabwe  
Hondo yeminda

Our struggle here in Zimbabwe  
Is the struggle for the land

The phrase “our struggle” reflects that the pronoun “our” shows plurality. Besides, there is neither race nor tribe mentioned. The plural pronoun ‘our’ caters for various races, be they Indians, coloured and many other races. These races or tribes in Zimbabwe, feel unified by this song.

Another thing which facilitates information of the perpetual existence of praise singing is that, earlier on, it has been established that they serve as a form of retaining information and serve as a vehicle of retaining and expressing expected behaviours. To this, Damane (1974:30) states, “praise brings about conformity to

the approved modes of behaviour.” This goes in line with Finnegan (1970:120) who mentioned that, “praise stresses accepted values.” The question of reinforcing norms and values of societal expectations is honoured because no one wants to be a social misfit in society. Though people may fail to conform, but no one wants to be a social misfit or an outcast.

Besides the question of values and norms mentioned above, praise singing is a way of entertaining. It is also a vehicle for education. So, as long as people continue to exist on the planet earth, they will continue to learn. They too, will continue to seek happiness. To this, Opland (1973) cited by Vilakazi (1965:39) mentions that, “The contemporary praise poetry has four basic functions, namely, “...individualizing, sensitizing, educating and entertainment.” The above statement also put emphasis that praise singing will never perish.

As has been established in the questionnaire that praise singing has nothing to do with gender but talent, and besides, people are praise singing in order to earn a living. As a result, it will continue to exist because people will continue to strive to earn a living. Another thing which makes praise singing survive is that, praise singers praise sing on prevailing situations in their societies, which will make praise singing live for ever because societies will continue to exist with things happening in them and people expressing emotions verbally. One can easily conclude that praise singing is inseparable from human existence. It is as old as yesterday, as present as today and as new as the future.

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## APPENDIX A

### Questionnaires

1. Though males and females can have the same potentials in poetry or music, males are still regarded as the dominant figure in both fields. What are your views?
2. Poetry and music has nothing to do with gender. It's all about one's talent. Do you agree or not? State your reasons.
3. In politics, there is no greater weapon than music. What can you say?
4. Do you consider the issue of poetry and music as talent oriented or is money oriented in today's generation? Support your views.
5. Due to highly sophisticated technology, it is likely that live shows are going to be scarce and all performances will be computerized like robots, and revealed to people in one way or the other. Do you see technology having any such effects in the music industry? What do you think about those effects?
6. A smart way of revolutionalising people's ideologies is through music. Do you consider this way of dealing with matters appropriate? Give reasons.
7. Poetry is a perfect way of airing emotions or rebuking a bad habit than negotiations on the table. What do you think? Support yourself.
8. If Poetry and music are subtracted from people's lives, people's lives will be completely closed from the real world. What are your views?
9. In the past, praise singing was used to retain data, and it was passed on through generations. With the technology today, praise singing loses its vitality. Do you agree or not? Support your reasons.
10. In most cases, poetry and music are used as a platform to bridge the gaps between generations beliefs, clans and nations. What are your opinions?
11. Praise singers and musicians are cowards who cannot table out matters and face facts but they just speak to themselves in a loud manner provoking other people's emotions to support their views. They divide and rule people. What do you think? Support your answer.
12. In my opinion, poetry and music is nothing but a portrayal of sad emotions and unfulfilled hopes and ambitions. What can you say?

13. Poetry and music have greater influence on human existence, socially, economically, religiously and physically. What can you say on this? Give reasons.
14. Poetry and music are one of the arts we will never rely on due to the fact that they are generational oriented, therefore they are biased. What can you say?
15. Can we say poetry and music heal the broken hearted or they provoke sad memories to those who are experiencing or had had such experiences and tragedies?
16. What are your views on the music industry in the future?