

Interview with Hilda Kuper, Wednesday, 14 September 1988

No. 1. Have you seen the latest copy of the "American Ethnologist"?

No. 2. No.

No. 1. It is very interesting, there's an interview there by the Comaroffs with Isaac Shapera.

No. 2. Oh yes.

No. 1. It's absolutely fascinating. I've got a copy of it. I will bring it in for you tomorrow and show you it, because it is very revealing. In part the questions I want to put to you are, and you will see when you read it, are framed by the nature of Isaac Shapera's answers to the Comaroffs. Probably because I think your answers will be very different to many of the same questions and I think that's enormously interesting, two people; a similar period; and I think in some ways a very different style of anthropology. I don't know what you think. OK let me start with the first one. In the Stocking Collection your essay, which I loved very much, the Reflections on 50 years. You noted in the opening remarks the extent to which you thought racial conflict and racism in South Africa, and just being South African, influences anthropologists. Influenced many of the anthropologists who took up anthropology to take up anthropology. The Comaroffs put the same question to Isaac Shapera and he said "No, he didn't think so". He didn't think that that made any impact and I was absolutely astonished by that. And so I was going to ask you may be to elaborate. In your essays there are sort of elusive remarks in the introduction saying that you do think that this was a very powerful shaping force. I am sorry, I know I am jumping way from the notebooks now and going back to something else.

No. 2. I am surprised by Sakkie Shapera's answer, because I would have thought that he recognised that it came from the Gaborone, you know from somewhere

No. 1. Somewhere amongst the Nama.

No. 2. Yes.

No. 1. Ghanzi, was it Ghanzi?

No. 2. Ghanzi, Ghanzi, it came from Ghanzi, and I think there were 2 things. There was a question of, in my case I felt it - the question of coming from a family in which the parents came from outside, they were not British and it was a British colony, and my mother was Viennese, my father came from a little

place in Russia. I grew up with a feeling that life was very happy, very easy and very _____ until the war, World War I, and then my mother's brothers were all recruited for the German army and my father was very, had been in the Rhodesian pioneers, very strongly pro-British and the day before Armistice my mother's youngest brother, _____ was killed so I remember Armistice as a day of immense tension. My mother weeping and my father in the ambivalent position of having to celebrate the victory. I was the youngest of five and I still remember the sort of confusion of that experience, that was an acute situation. I don't think that many of the anthropologists had that kind of experience. Ellen Hellman came from a German background, very strongly German. One was aware of one's identity.

No. 1. The other question that it raises, is the question of being Jewish and again in your article, I think the two things are very closely linked in your article. You suggest that being Jewish shaped that same consciousness in a similar way, and again Isaac Shapera faced with the same question said "No, he didn't think so".

No. 2. He was a strange man.

No. 1. I am beginning to get a sense of that.

No. 2. He was a wonderful scholar, but I think that had the Comaroffs interviewed him earlier his answers might have been different. Did you read my little profile on him in "The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences".

No. 1. I didn't even know about it.

No. 2. You know they have major figures after 1917. It was one of the extras that they put out. And I sent it to him before I published it. Before it was published. I asked him for corrections and I modified some of it. I emphasized his scholarship. I think I said again that he belonged to that small group of anthropologists. But if he of course was always more conservative, when I wrote that initial article about the rain ceremony and Sobhuza putting the opening paragraph and saying that Schoeman's article had been _____ .

No. 1. Was this in 1935? When Schoeman's article came out, and your's came out in the same year.

No. 2. And Shapera was very angry with me for getting Sobhuza to do that. And so all my colleagues said the most terrible things. How can somebody who is ignorant, and one of them said "It's like asking an animal to look at

itself". Shapera didn't say that, but I had the most terrible time.

No. 1. I am glad you cleared that up, because from your article, the one that's in The Stocking it's not clear the nature of your colleagues responses and why they objected and somebody more sympathetic to your colleagues might read it that the objections were asking the people you were studying to pronounce on your study. In fact, that which you are saying is much more serious. If you were saying that there was an assumption that the subjects couldn't have an opinion that was worthwhile.

No. 2. That they could not see themselves. They could not describe their own customs and that they needed an anthropologist to interpret.

No. 1. It's remarkable.

No. 2. But there were two things. The one is that there was an Anthropological Association. It wasn't called an Anthropological Association, but it was an organisation, Shapera was on it, and Eiselen and all the establishment, and they said why didn't I go through them, I should have brought my criticism to them, and I said I didn't see why I should. Even Mrs Hoernle was a little disturbed by it and I said I felt very angry it was blatantly incorrect, written by somebody who looked on Africans as inferior people and also I could never have worked with the Swazi again if I had just stated the . And I was much less establishment oriented really because I was doing so much with the Swazi at this time when they were complaining about the land and they were trying to get certain concessions and Shapera worked very hard with good administrators in Botswana. I worked with the administrators in Swaziland, some of them were good, some of their intentions were very good. A.G. Marwick was a very paternalist, kind man, but he was paternalist and he was critical of the Colonial Office but he wanted very much to introduce a new morality, not the Christian morality, he was very critical of the missionaries, but he didn't want direct confrontation at that stage and I remember after one of the Incwalas the SPCA complained and wanted, wrote letters protesting against the killing of the bull and A.G. who was then the acting as Resident Commissioner came down to speak to Sobhuza and the people about it and they had a meeting under a tree, I was there. And he began by emphasizing the value of African tradition and this was a custom which he thought was very fine but he said, "Something had to be done about the killing of the bull".

No. 1. Central moment.

No. 2. SPCA had written again and again. It was really given too much publicity and it was a barbaric custom and the Swazi replied, "But it is an essential part of the ritual". They were quite eloquent about it. Marwick said, "I realize how important it is, but somehow or other I suggest you make it very secret, that you don't let people be present, that you don't let the SPCA know". And I think that it was at that point that someone said to me the Queen, I got up, I was very young at that stage, much less restrained than I am now and I remember saying, "In England there is fox hunting, in Spain they kill the bull, they have all these pleasures associated with destruction.

And here the national ritual, a bull which is very symbolic, is pummelled to death by young boys imparting their strength - the Kingship. I thought Marwick would never speak to me again because the reaction of the people was so strong in support that they gave. He went away from that meeting without saying goodbye, he had been very friendly, very helpful, I liked him and I liked his wife particularly. And I thought, this is the end, I am going to be turned out of Swaziland, but he was a big man in many ways. He came back to me later on and said to me, "You have your opinion, I have mine and it is clear that your's is the one which would go because of the Swazi determination to carry on with the ritual". I don't suppose, Shapera would ever have had a confrontation like that and when we were in Machudi he took a group of his students, Ellen Hellman, I think you would know about that trip.

No. 1. I think it was again in the Stocking article, and he described

No. 2. Yes. And his approach to field work was so different from mine.

No. 1. You have a very vivid description of setting up with his informants.

No. 2. Yes. And his questions were very good and it was so different from mine, I really participated perhaps too much because I identified, I know that I went overboard very often in demonstrating my support of the Swazi. At a show for example, an agricultural show, I went there with some of Sobhuza's children and there were some whites who were friendly to me, and there was actually special segregation, they beckoned me to come across and I said I can't.

No. 1. Poor things.

No. 2.

No. 1. That story about Marwick is really a powerful story because it

captures a host of those contradictions of the time, and it just gets it all, the sense of how, of kind of Colonial policy, really in a bit of crisis and that what we call a determination of the Swazi, and in a sense it was a wider determination than just about the moment of ritual. But a much wider one about a Swazi assertion.

No. 2. It was Swazi nationalism and independence. This was what they were really asserting. The Kingship of the Swazi. And that Kingship of the Swazi they constantly asserted in different ways. In the biography of Sobhuza I give some of those ways. The whistle when Prince Edward arrived.

No. 1. I think your position in a situation like that, at a moment when I imagine that Colonial society was feeling itself being pushed back, must have been very disturbing to white Mbabane.

No. 2. At independence the wife of the What's his name? The man who ran ... Hind. Doctor Hind senior, not the son, the son the senior was a very upright man, very rigid and he couldn't bear me. First of all because the minute people came into the hospital they had to stop taking any drink.

No. 1. That's right, that was his crusade.

No. 2. That was his crusade. And I said he killed somebody, but he couldn't have. It was terrible.

No. 1. I am sure it's literally true.

No. 2. It was literally true. I don't remember now who it was but this man was Drink was food it really was terribly important. To be taken into the hospital was a frightening experience for them, some of the people who had never been there before. And then not to be allowed to drink at all. And at independence his wife came up to Leo, because I don't know why they're making such a fuss about her.

No. 1. Sounds like 30 years of annoyance and venom in that.

No. 2. Yes, yes. She died a sad death, a terrible death. This doesn't go in but I might as well tell you the story because it is quite pathetic. Her sister came on a visit and they were saying goodbye. Her sister was driving or Hind was driving, at any rate they had said goodbye and his wife, Hind's wife was behind the car and the car slipped back and killed her.

No. 1. My God.

No. 2. So this, oh I've got to put in my drops. But any rate my standing with the missionaries was, to put it mildly, not high. And when I took part

in the Umcwashu, which I might as well tell you, I wore my jodhpurs to it, because I was a little embarrassed. They prayed in the church.

No. 1. For you.

No. 2. And they prayed that I would leave and they wrote to Marwick and they asked that he remove me.

No. 1. And how did Marwick handle this. Clearly he wouldn't feel the alarm that they felt but he was in that difficult position where he had to mediate between everybody and all opinions.

No. 2. He said, that, as far as I know, he told them that the work that I was doing was in the interests of the country, and he had no intention of sending me back, I had been sent by an international scholarly group, everything had been arranged through the British government. You know we had very privileged standing as the International African Institute really had Colonial status.

No. 1. Why do you think Marwick did support you? I mean it is one thing to get an order saying "Here comes Hilda Beemer - look after her", and suddenly he has got a trouble spot right there.

No. 2. He was a good man and we got on so well at so many levels. I liked his interest in the people. He liked mine. We were both honest people. And his wife was a marvellous woman and she and I got on very well and his daughter was a very good friend of mine. It was a tragic family in many ways one son was killed, we are not quite sure, committed suicide driving a car on the Pretoria Road. The older son followed very traditional interests. He became a leading member of the NRC. Protective of the well-being of the people, but thinking the mines were good ways of bringing in income and so on. The second son Donald met this tragic death and the third son Graham who was a brilliant and beautiful young man fell in love with a young Jewish girl, the family broke that up and he married somebody who was typical of the Swazi White set up and he committed suicide.

No. 1. That whole society living like that, especially getting later on in the century, one imagines what the tensions were in it.

No. 2. And Hazel the daughter was a lovely girl and when I went to live in Johannesburg came and lived with Leo and me for some time. Fell in love with a young, fine young man, he was a German Jewish refugee and A.G. Marwick said, "I could not have Hazel marry him", and they broke up Hazel's marriage.

No. 1.

No. 2. They lived a hard life. A beautiful young woman she was. I have often thought of writing the Marwick's story in a fiction because it is a most dramatic and in some ways an illustrative picture of Colonial society.

No. 1. You would be interesting perspective. It would be fascinating, I've thought a lot about that, and I think very fascinating from your perspective, with in a sense one leg in that world. Not just as much as one leg but at least something and the rest being more based in a way in Swazi society.

No. 2. A lot more based in Swazi society and in the world of the Colonial officials I had a certain standing too. There was a doctor, Dr Jameson, marvellous, thoughtful, huge, warm hearted person and whenever I was, while I was at Lubombo he came there every ... probably about twice a month at least, and I arranged for him to examine people. He was very helpful.

No. 1. A striking contrast to Dr Hind.

No. 2. Oh, absolutely. And he drank a lot and he was liked and liked and he was a dear person and he used to embrace me warmly and I used to say "Cha" and he was a very human person and when I went to bush country he came there, he sort of kept an eye on my health and when he heard I was being treated by a Swazi doctor, I said look I have got mpalapo which is a sort of abscess, but I said its alright not only had I had empalybor I had been cured by him in between your visits. He said "How did they cure you?" and I said "They gave me some medicine and in the end I had to leap over a fire, a little fire" I said "that worried me", and I said I had to show some pain.

They were good people, and I used to get a lot of information on the few occasions when I went with Reilly, who was a tin manager, was the father of that very nice young man . . .

No. 1. Father of Ted.

No. 2. Father of Ted. Now Mickey Reilly, the father, was a wild Irishman. He was a hard task master, I was furious I thought he treated his people abominably and I said to him "How can you do this?". He said "I earn my living". I said "There are other ways". We used to argue. I used to go up there and talk to him and we used to argue and his wife who's now married to Captain somebody or other, Billy who's they had two children and it was an odd relationship, they'd say come down to the tavern and occasionally I would go down, particularly when I was really tired and I wanted a hot bath. And when I went to the Marwicks the first thing I did was to have a hot bath.

I was living very hard and I must say that leg of mine was in Western society. I'd go swimming in the river, bathing in the river, I also had a canvas bath, and they'd fill it up with water, but the occasional bath in a hotel or in the Residency, the Marwicks were very hospitable, meant something, gave me

No. 1. Of course. It not even ... it's not, it's not I don't think the polarity between the kind of Western civilised and more lifestyle. It's actually going back to what you're most familiar, it's they way you've been brought up and although ... and you make tremendous efforts I imagine, and I have had that experience in Swaziland as well. To live in another culture and it is draining of one.

No. 2. It's draining because you don't know the language well and the way in which I was taught the language was very interesting because I had a lot of academic training.

No. 1. In Zulu.

No. 2. In Zulu by Doke.

No. 1. Right.

No. 2. I had then gone to LSE and the School of Oriental Studies, I had attended a year of learning language phonetically. So when I came to Swaziland I had a good background in both in the grammar and in phonetics. But I couldn't speak anything and it was extraordinarily difficult. Sobhuza chose for me an attendant, MNYakaza Ngwenya, I mentioned him earlier in "African Aristocracy". He was a very complex character, and he was told that he had to interpret for me, cook for me, not leave me if he did he would be killed. If anything happened to me he would be held responsible.

No. 1. A dreadful charge.

No. 2. A dreadful charge. And I very soon learned that his way of teaching the language was to speak to me in Siswati, which I couldn't understand, to repeat it word for word, to repeat it and repeat it until I could repeat it to his satisfaction.

No. 1. He was drilling.

No. 2. He was oh, he had tremendous stamina in repeating and teaching me that way, and I remember one day I just burst into tears. I was tired, I had asked him a question, and I learnt very quickly the words like 'angiqhondzi', I do not understand. And if I asked him in English he said "amakhosi". Then he

said "khuluma siSwati". And it was so difficult and it was a hot day and I burst into tears. I said "I will never learn this language. I don't want to learn the language". It was very miserable. And that was one day when I had got into the car and drove out to Mbabane.

No. 1. It's that, its that, it's the cross-cultural effort that one has to make it can be so depleting, but no matter what context, and I think people mis-interpret it when they think - Oh it's to get back to the luxuries, or anything like that. It is to get into a context where you know the code so well you don't have to think.

No. 2. Yes, you don't, you're not, when you're first there and the queens were wonderful, or some of them were absolutely marvellous . They'd often laugh heartily, and I would laugh with them, I knew I had made a big gaff. But sometimes I would feel they were laughing at me and I couldn't understand what they were laughing at and it was very, very painful, and it was only, I don't know how long it took me but they said I was very quick in learning , once I got key words. And I was looking at this notebook, notebook 3, which I happen to have. Oh I must put that back. And I notice the words which I, on this side I sometimes wrote words which, like inyambetsi mgubo yekulala. what all these things mean, and then I would have to work through it with MNyakaza but I did learn, and I must say that by the time Mrs Hoernle came to visit me I was pretty good and Doke came to see me one day. MNyakaza was drunk. Now I am just talking at random, because I am following your advice, I am just talking.

No. 1. I think that's just great. I think let's do that and then we'll sort it out.

No. 2. MNyakaza drank a lot, his food was mainly beer and the occasional hunk of meat, he didn't eat vegetables, and it was a hot day and I was taking a few minutes rest in the bedroom part of my two-roomed hut at Lobamba. And all of a sudden I heard a knock at the door, a loud knock.

No. 1. Which suggested to you that you had a visitor, a white visitor.

No. 2. Yes, so I got up, I noticed MNyakaza with his mouth wide open and his head down. The door opened, but even I think before I got to it, and there was Doke, he hadn't let me know, and I sort of greeted him and I looked, and I looked there was MNyakaza on the big seat and I said sit down, there were 4 chairs, and I got MNyakaza, I shook him and I said "Phuma, phuma" it was

terribly embarrassing there this minister.

No. 1. What a lovely story.

No. 2. And I got M'Nyakaza out and he was very angry and he went outside and he started swearing. Now I don't know if you have ever heard the Swazi swearing in the height of intoxication, it goes on for a long time, seldom repeating itself, and I pretended I didn't understand, and said to, began talking to Doke about asking him how long he was going to be here, trying to carry on ...

No. 1. He probably followed pretty clearly what was going on.

No. 2. We spent quite a long time while I was telling him the sort of work I was trying to do. Get information, topics I was interested in - kinship, food, politics and kind of learning the language, I got some quite interesting information. He went back and he said to A.G., "Why don't you see this female, she seems to be getting a lot of information but she doesn't understand anything of the language". So I thought I carried off that very well.

No. 1. Well you'd done the genteel thing under the circumstances.

No. 2. Oh dear! Living with the people does give one a different feeling from getting your informant to your desk. You might get very rich material, the rich material is extraordinarily rich and well ordered. You should see his notebooks and his notes. Well you will see them soon I hope. And he was a, he was, you know we were engaged for a little while.

No. 1. I didn't know that. I didn't know that.

No. 2. I was supposed to set to work in Botswana and got changed to Swaziland.

No. 1. Let me ask you one question here before I loose it. It is going to go back to the beginning of the conversation. You said that even Mrs Hoernle was upset about the Schoeman, your critique of Schoeman. Why was, I don't understand the nature of the upsetness, with her and even with the establishment.

No. 2. Well she felt I should have written to Schoeman and said look I have begun this fieldwork and this is what

No. 1. Why, why would that be the appropriate, I mean I.

No. 2. Well I don't know either. I think it was just White protecting White.

No. 1. That was the implication.

No. 2. And also to say that they were protecting anthropologists was an absolute joke, because they would have ruined the field for anthropologists. But it was a, it was very difficult and when I ... the only person who really supported me when she came there was Audrey Richards.

No. 1. In some ways her experience was sound. Her approach sounds a little bit similar to yours, because she also went in in the same way.

No. 2. It was much more my approach.

No. 1. I read her - I have forgotten what the book is "Food and

No. 2. Yes, Hunger

No. 1. That's right "Hunger and Work".

No. 2. "Hunger and Work".

No. 1. I got a sense of that there.

No. 2. She came with me when Lomawa died and Sobhuza wired me. And we very nearly were killed on the way over at a train crossing and arrived very shaken and I said to her when we left, "Audrey we're going but I am not going as an anthropologist, I am going as one of the family.

No. 1. As a .

No. 2. And she kept on saying to me, "Hilda, why don't you take notes?" I said "Audrey I can't, I am not going to write a word of description

I am not here for that. I am here because I loved this woman, she was wonderful to me". She said "I know how you feel but you're failing in your duty" and I said "In that case that depends on where you find my duty". Now I, you see that's where I did go over. I could have ... I should have, I should have. That's the point I should have . Malinowski when we first arrived, there were these hordes of little children, some of them with flies in their very beautiful little faces and one was particularly fly ridden and I took my handkerchief and I went like this, and Malinowski said "Count them, then kill them". Now he was being funny but I have never forgotten that.

No. 1. Very vivid. Thinking about that difference between you and Shapera and then thinking about Audrey Richards, there is a question I have always been curious about is - to what extent do you think you were able to do things the way you did because of being a woman, rather than a man.

No. 2. Um

No. 1. Part of it of course is that one, as women we are socialised in a

different way. We have different emotional responses and we reach out differently to people, there's that aspect. The other aspect would be - what Swazi society expects from a woman.

No. 2. That in Swaziland they have an indlovukazi, and she paid the dual role of the mother of the king, member of an liqoqo. When she attended the libandla they spoke of her as the man. She was treated in that way and I was treated similarly. I was allowed to all the men's discussions, they used to say "Woza indoda yemabandla".

No. 1. As a man.

No. 2. And I know that as far as the regimental life was concerned there I was treated as a woman and the women aren't allowed into the barracks except on occasion. So I could get all my information only through men, but the fact that I was allowed to attend the Council meetings, that all the cases under reprieve I was allowed to participate in. That was because they reckoned a woman had a role in Swazi society that she didn't have in Zulu society. Max Gluckman commented on that if you remember. He said the Zulu women are much more excluded, the men are really much more dominant and a beautiful Swazi man, is described sometimes as beautiful as a woman, I can't imagine that happening to a Zulu.

No. 1. No never.

No. 2. It's the structure of Swazi society and the personality of the Indlovukazi and of Sobhuza combined to make my entry much easier than it would have been in other societies, I am sure. Made my role as a woman easier. Leo came there, he was accepted as a son, as a son-in-law. I could move from one side to another without any internal conflict and I could speak for women. The question of polygamy was always very interesting because the women at that stage accepted polygamy and inkosikati used to say to me "When is Kuper going to take another wife?". What did he give for her, what did he give?, etc. And I think in the case of the Bemba too, there was this role of a woman. It was recognised by Phyllis Kaberry was recognised as one of the baby elephants. You see it was the structure of the society which I think either makes it difficult to move across or easy to move across. And I know that if I had been in Zulu society I would have had a more difficult time.

No. 1. Alright, let me try to tell you when I did my field work, I had two things, I think this made a lot of difference and I wonder if you have any

similar thing. When people heard that I was from South Africa it was obviously a real difficulty, people would hold back being a white South African and it was quite a difficult thing, and I was quite up front about my politics at the right sort of moments and I found that made a lot of difference. One day somebody said to me, "If you were a white man we wouldn't even bother to ask you, because we would assume that any white man coming in here had different purposes. In other words somehow, for the people I was talking to ...

No. 2. In Swaziland.

No. 1. In Swaziland. They were much more prepared to accept the fact that I ... much more ready to listen to the idea that one might not be a symbol of white South African racism. That in this one person's words, he said, if you were a white man we wouldn't ask, we wouldn't even listen to whether there was any other possibility. And I was curious about whether this, such that white men in a sense had been such symbols but much more so in the past. This was a very elderly person who said this to me. So often in that context the administrators, the labour recruiters, those sorts of people with those sorts of meanings, whereas white women in a sense are slightly different. I wondered if, I wondered if a white man would have had a more difficult time in your position if ... Would you have imagined. I know it's difficult to think in those terms.

No. 2. Yes, I think he would have had a more difficult time being accepted in the double role, but I don't think it would be very more difficult for him to be accepted by the men.

No. 1. Right.

No. 2. Like this young man Michael Fine, but he wasn't South African.

No. 1. Right.

No. 2. And I don't know, it might. But now look at ... of course he's not really South African. This young man who I recommended who is now tutoring in mSwati, Martin Russell. He came from England.

No. 1. Although in that context, then, I was thinking it wouldn't be that one would be a South African, the fact that just being identified with the colonial administration.

No. 2. Yes.

No. 1. That a man, a British man ...

No. 2. Look at Brian Marwick.

No. 1. Right.

No. 2. He was accepted very much by the Swazi men. He didn't try to get much information from the women, you know he realised that this would definitely be dangerous ground.

No. 1. Right.

No. 2. So he, it wasn't they knew that the Marwick ... that his family came from South Africa. No I think that whiteness was the main thing. When I came along and they used to say to a child in the beginning, she'll kick you, if you cry she'll kick you, and then somewhere or the other, right after I had been there some time one of the, my very good friends from the Sigodlo said to me said ... Oh, I said "But this isn't what you told me before". She said, "Oh La Beem, we deceived you like anything when ...".

No. 1. Ja, I loved that.

No. 2. So, I'm often not so, what is true and what is not in some of these early ... whiteness. I was described as umlumbi. I was an umlumbi.

No. 1. Which is something strange.

No. 2. Yes. Able to perform lumba's strange magic. I wrote an article in a book edited by Victor Turner on Colonialism in Africa. I haven't got the book for a long time, but I know that one of the things that I looked at was this question of terminology.

No. 1. Colonialism in Africa.

No. 2. At a certain period.

No. 1. I'll find that. Don't worry.

No. 2. The character of the rulers in these hierarchical societies is immensely important. Look at the things that this young Mswati used to make. Simply because he's now Ngwenyama siyesikhulu these old men tremble before him. The indlovukazi this one.

No. 1. The young.

No. 2. The present one. Now she is not much respected.

No. 1. No, she's not.

No. 2. Her past is still with her, her link with Mfanasihilu.

No. 1. the dreadful stories, whether they are true or not, the fact that they circulate is the great problem, and also when you speak to people about Dzeliwe a tremendous sense of shame that people feel.

No. 2. Have you met Dzeliwe.

No. 1. No. I had one interesting moment when all of that was happening, it was in 1983, I was going up to old Lobamba to an interview, old Zombodze. And I saw a group of people in the distance, I thought Oh! my interview has got a bit bigger than I thought it was going to be and I started to approach and I was held back, and I realised it was Dzeliwe up there and she had obviously been driven out of Lobamba, left Lobamba, and was trying to rally support at the libandla at old Zombodze. It was obviously one of those critical moments in 1983 and there I was just on the edge of it thinking it was ... and I had my tape recorder and people were looking at me and you could see that there was a great worry of people who didn't know me. They were terribly worried that I was journalist or someone trying to follow the political movements. So I abandoned the interview for the day.

No. 2. How amazing

No. 1. But it was a powerful moment, because she was, she was just someone I couldn't see who it was who was speaking, but I was told that that was what was going on. Said she was trying to rally support against Mfanasibili and the other party.

No. 2. Well, when I was there at Mswati's coronation I was terribly aware of the extent of the opposition and just wondered if Gaben and Dzeliwe and my friends would ever come back into power. Bekhimpi was somebody I never really trusted. Mswati has put these ... you know they are all released now, they're no more ... even Mfanasibili and I thought that was a mistake.

No. 1. Yes, I also thought so, such an unscrupulous character. In some ways I think they timed, Gabeni. I think they moved quite ... I thought they moved quite well in getting back into the political scene without causing ... one would imagine that with the sort of coup and counter-coup feeling to it. It was a tremendous crisis in legitimacy that seemed to have been managed well after Mswati's coronation. That was when

No. 2. managed very well. Some of the appointments were very bad, but those you could see were made by .

No. 1. Yes.

No. 2. Some of those have been overthrown. When Sobhuza in the '30s, Sobhuza's respect for his mother was immense he never came to Lobamba without first going to her. She was very wise. There was a very orderly system.

This old Gwamile had really trained her very well in every thing. Now I don't even know to what extent the rain rituals are practised. Do you know?

No. 1. No, no.

NO. 2. I would think that Mswati would try to revive them, that he wouldn't know them. He would have to find people.

No. 1. Ja. What a crisis there.

No. 2. You're tired.

No. 1. No, I was Are you? I was going to ask you. My watch still says 3 o'clock. I haven't changed it yet.

No. 2. It's twelve o'clock. Would you like to come and have lunch at the Faculty Centre.

No. 1. Is that what you are going to be doing? That would be nice. Can I ask you one thing before we go? Something that has been intriguing me. I don't know how to put the questions, so bear with me for a minute, but In the two books, "The African Aristocracy" and "The Uniform of Colour" you take on a question, a question sort of really for Southern Africanists, really modern questions about the nature of rule and domination and things like that, which is slightly at odds in a way with the other anthropology of the time. I think that that makes your work still of tremendous excitement, today. I had read "African Aristocracy" for the first time in about 1980 and have treated it almost as a secondary source, and as I come back to it I am fascinated all the time by .. you could be writing now, that's my feeling. It's not a work that is so, if I compare it to Eileen Krige's work, the kind of staticism of that Social System of the Zulu, the bald ethnographic interests that she has. Of course her approach and her style was all different as well, but how would you respond on that, the idea that it just isn't .. neither of those works are characteristic of the field of anthropology at the time - to me. I don't know, maybe you would say they are, but they seem to be shaped by interests, different questions - as though you were asking different questions,

No. 2. Well I had come from LSE and I think that I'd worked ... one of my close friends was Jack Simons and he was in Malinowski's class. And I attended and I was interested, very interested in politics at one time and this was a society that was ... had all those elements of power, the economic sub-structure. I couldn't look it as a society that was different

in terms of major interests. I looked in "The Uniform of Colour" at ... I said there you had incipient class structure. I think that I was more attuned, or interested, not in the past as past but in what was part of the irregularities of history. The comparative approach. I was very aware of conflict. No, they thought they had developed conflict in the '40s concept of

But I was terribly aware of conflict from an early ...

No. 1. It's clear, it's absolutely clear.

No. 2. ... an early stage and I was aware of racial conflict, religious conflict, economic conflict. Wherever I looked I saw competition and also different interpretations of power. Somebody said that I romanticised Swazi society.

No. 1. I think the opposite. I think the opposite.

No. 2. I never romanticised. I romanticised perhaps my own position there. That feeling of identity and security. But in a way it was finding myself in a society which was full of life, vitality, beauty, conflict, co-operation, challenge. It was a ... in this book of Hayley's, "African What does he call it again? That big first book of his.

No. 1. Oh, yes. "Colonial Administration" - something like that.

No. 2. I did one section of that, and he acknowledged. And Lucy Meyer, who is my born enemy, one of the few people who I could not, did not want to get on with, was editing it and she was pedantic, she was , she was like Shapera very good . And she didn't like some of those. But Hayley kept it in. Kept in. And there I was trying to show the vitality of resistance, of not so much resistance, in rough stage I called it acquiescence. But it wasn't acquiescence. It really was enforced acquiescence. And when I was told that the Swazi had been given a good deal by Gray in his demarcation of Swazi areas, I said it might have been at that time. Because he said he that had given some of the best land to the Swazi, and look what had happened. And I said "Look what had happened because they didn't have enough land at that time, they didn't have the techniques. So that always I was aware of both the Swazi viewpoint, the paternalist Colonial approach and the more I read of history in general and the history of indigenous people, the more I realise that the British had good intentions very often, but they were not ...

No. 1. The villains of the piece.

No. 2. No, not ... they were villains in peace really. But not intentionally.

No. 1. No. And especially not at the individual level because as soon as you look at the individual administrators and policy makers, they are so much more complicated.

No. 2. So much more complicated. In "Bite of Hunger" the administrator there is based on Marwick.

No. 1. I wondered about that.

No. 2. And, I know, I know that Laskie made quite a big impact him. I was reading the books. I think that that early period of radicalism, which is never really should come more critical of the Marxist approach, was very present in my writing.

No. 1. It marks ... I think. I think it marks your work amongst the body of Southern Africanist ethnography. This is in some ways why, one of the reasons I wanted to talk to you, because I think it stands apart. Absolutely apart. And part of it is because you asked those kind of questions.

No. 2. Yes. I asked questions of power, of power and race. And I always said that race dominated class in those early years, and I still cannot go along with the ... what's the name of this new - the political science man in Swaziland - who was running ? It begins with a D. He was on the university staff.

No. 1. With a D?

No. 2. And he was dismissed. He was one of those whose contracts was

No. 1. John Daniel.

No. 2. John Daniel. I think he's an intelligent man but I don't go along with his reductionism.

No. 1. It is reductionism, and sometimes his tools are crude.

No. 2. Yes, they're crude. Its reductionism and in an extraordinary way he does not deal with the dialectic.

No. 1. Yes, yes. I think you're right. And he doesn't have an understanding .. my, I find he doesn't have an understanding of the real power of tradition. For him it is just dismissed as a kind of, something superstructural and illusionary false consciousness. Something like that.

No. 2. It's false consciousness. It's domination, but its not irregular.

I would have liked some ... I would have liked to have been more sophisticated myself. But I did, I think get some of the struggle.

No. 1. I find that astonishing. To me it sets both of those books apart. If I am going to set up Shapera as the opposite, because there is such a naivety in dealing with the same questions in his work. That just isn't there in yours. And if you get onto someone like Krige.

No. 2. But Krige's "Realm of the Rain Queen" ...

No. 1. Is different. Ja.

No. 2. And I don't know if you have read "A Black Byzantian" by Nadel.

No. 1. No.

No. 2. That is brilliant. Nadel was an extraordinarily sophisticated sociologist, anthropologist, psychologist, musicologist. And his "Black Byzantian" and his book on structure were excellent. There were "The Three Mandarin's" when I was in Malinowski's seminars. Nadel I would put at the top and then there was Fortes, whose Tallensi work is very good, but it is very good, I should not say any "buts" because it is very, very good. There are certain things that I felt were static and Baily picked those up - Fred Baily. And Hofstreff, but at LSE it was an electric atmosphere and I just bloomed. I think that that gave me a different position.

No. 1. But there's a question that's curious. In looking at power and starting to look at its bases and the way in which it works and all the things that you do say in "The African Aristocracy". If you are thinking of "The Uniform of Colour" the way you analyze, I can understand that as being a task that you could undertake, in a sense under Sobhuza's patronage, because it came as ... it's a privilege. Then you went, well before that really with "African Aristocracy" you did the same thing, but you did it for, in a sense, Sobhuza's own power. And it looks like it was such a complicated terrain to negotiate because you're talking, you're working with someone, you yourself in a sense become politically significant as the anthropologist in the circumstance. At his invitation

No. 2. I have been told that I have wrongly written Swazi history.

No. 1. No, I don't, I don't think, I just wonder how you, I mean you undertook a bold enterprise, you were writing about Swazi power almost from within Swazi power. It was as though it was a study. I mean did Sobhuza ever

expect you to produce such a study in inviting you, about the very nature of his own power base?

No. 2. You mean in the Sobhusa biography?

No. 1. No, I mean in "The African Aristocracy". In that period. You probed deeply the kind of whole underpinnings of Swazi society, of the Monarchy, all those things.

No. 2. He was amazing. We used to spend hours talking. When he got the book he read it through. He didn't make and he said to me "Kulungile". It was really a great relief.

No. 1. Did he know it was your project? When did you know it was your project?

No. 2. I didn't. I got three-quarters of an ethnography written, I hoped in a sort of lively style. And suddenly I said "No, look there's a certain

What have I lived?

What do I feel? Who am I in this society? What are the dominant things in this society? It's not a society like the western society. Where, and I asked myself, where does power lie? What is this thing called pedigree. How much does it seep into everything? I wrote to Max Gluckman and I said, "Max, I have got the key, its pedigree and I am going to look at that in all its aspects". It was terribly exciting, because then I began to write really quickly, and I got the awareness of the narrowness of identifying a single power drive or line. As though it were never challenged. I broke away, as you saw in the Conclusion, from the national character approach of the Americans. Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead. I looked at Margaret Mead's "Sex and Temperament". I thought God, this isn't correct, she contradicts herself. Why does she contradict herself? And then I realised that because she was identifying with a particular single historical force. And this historical force is like a cracker, a firework, it shoots out in different directions and sometimes it lights up one part. The sudden realisation of the interaction between the iNcwala and the power of kingship. And the song of hatred which Max then developed in his Rituals of Rebellion. Why was there hatred? Well because there was. There is hatred of power. There's fear, there's hatred. And these tibongo that Thoko collected, which I hope will be published soon.

No. 1. With criticisms?

No. 2. The criticism of the King? Wonderful. And I had the self-assurance then, of feeling very afraid to say what I thought, what I wanted to say. I often wonder, it's a very good thing, it's a very good thing to feel just

. I am going to say this, and I can't help it. I think Eileen Krige was limited to some extent by Jack Krige who was a very good lawyer and contributed a great deal to her research. And you must read her "Realm of the Rain Queen". They raise interesting questions.

No. 1. "Kulungile" is an ambiguous thing, really. It's an ambiguous way of receiving ... to say "Kulungile" to your book is, I mean it's ambiguous. What do you think he thought?

No. 2. Well he ... I know this that when somebody came and asked him about customs he'd sometimes say "Look in her book".

No. 1. So you got all that stuff dead right.

No. 2. And Sencabaphi read some of it. They say "Wamangala This is a story I have never checked it but I have been told it by a couple of people. When the question of independence was being discussed and they went to Marlborough House or wherever it was that they were debating the new constitution and they were trying to reach some agreement. The Mbokodvo people, Sobhuza's people carried with them a copy of "An African Aristocracy" and Zwane's people carried "The Uniform of Colour".

No. 1. This is fantastic. Isn't that amazing?

No. 2. Whether that's true or not I don't know but this was told me by

No. 1. How vivid! I just wondered, in a way, just by setting it down on paper and maybe by thinking about it in more overt terms than even Sobhuza himself might have thought necessarily about how all the connections are made. Sometimes when you are busy making them in your life you don't have the consciousness of an outsider who then sees, makes explicit what you do so naturally and so appropriately. I wonder whether it was shocking, and also possibly if there was a fear that it was too revelatory for the ordinary reader in a sense that you had showed the way in which power was maintained and all these things. In a way that would make it vulnerable. Do you think he had any sense of those sorts of things? Once somebody says on paper that this is what the incwala does, in a way it could be interpreted as, if you want to change this, if you want to undermine it, that's where you have to

start. And I wondered if it ... I mean part of it is I suppose the mystery in which it ... the fact that it is such a royal terrain and yet by writing it you suddenly make it accessible in a way that it might not be normally. I don't know if I am right or I'm right off beam. What do you think about it? From Sobhuza's point of view? I suppose that is what I am wondering. Where the book would have been alarming in those terms. Or if you just ever had any sense of it.

No. 2. He was an extraordinary man. He used to say to me very often "One must learn the truth". And I said "It's very hard to know where the truth lies". I can only do what I think best. He once said to me "You know you shouldn't write my biography until after I am dead". And I said "Well if I don't write your biography somebody else is going to". . That's true.

No. 1. Dead true.

No. 1. There were people who wanted to write it . I don't know, I really don't know but I ... you see when they carried out the burial rites Motsa didn't look properly through the book and he mis-interpreted, and he did things at different times. He said he did them at the right time. They weren't at the right time in accord with tradition. I don't know how this book will be regarded by future generations of Swazi. Sobhuza kept on saying "She's writing a book for our people. She's putting on to paper ... his words were "She has shown the world that we are people". This was translated in ... when I was introduced publicly in the Sibaya by Mandanda, not by Mandanda, by Mshutelwane who was a big Induna, a stupid old man at that stage, bit drunk and he said "Look at her", I have written the exact words ...

"Look at her, recognise her, when her car gets stuck in the mud, or if she is in trouble, help her. Those are the words of the King. She's going to go around and she's going to ask you questions. Speak to her". So that was the introduction, a sort of helpless person who's car would get stuck in the mud.

Sometimes

No. 1. I am sure it did.

No. 2. They didn't understand what I was ... many of them didn't understand what I was trying to get at, but others did. Fakudze, Maboya Fakudze understood very well, Sishaya understood.

No. 1.

No. 2. And Sobhuza understood, Sobhuza knew just what I was trying to get at.

His comment on Evans Pritchard's article, book, on witchcraft on Azande witchcraft. He read it from cover to cover and he said to me "I have read it through, looked at it, read it through, doesn't satisfy me". I said "Why?". He said "He doesn't say if he believes in witchcraft or not".

No. 1. What a wonderful perception. That's terrific. Maybe we should stop now. I think I have made you talk for over an hour, solidly.

Interview 2.

No. 2. You see, until we left for America the first time, it was in 1947, that is from 1934 to 1947 I would go frequently to Swaziland, but I didn't take, yes I'd take notes, yes. I have I think pretty good record of most of my visits to Swaziland in 1947. In 1947 we went to North Carolina. When Leo got out of the army I was teaching at Wits before then. He came out of the army while I was teaching and I resigned. After we worked at the National War Memorial Health Foundation in Johannesburg, executive secretary. It was a wonderful ... do you know about the National, South African National War Memorial, living war memorial.

No. 1. No.

No. 2. It is an amazing thing. They started it "Up North". A few founders. When Leo comes home you must ask him about that. And every soldier was asked to give two days' pay to establish a living war memorial and it was going to go to preventive health for Africans,

No. 1. It's wonderful.

No. 2. Now that, that's been written up quite a lot, because it really was an extraordinary thing. A few of us were working on the press in Johannesburg and they gave us a lot of publicity too. Leo will tell you about that time in the army and it really was a time when there seemed to be hope because, "What was the war being fought for?". And then we went over to the States and then Jenny was born in North Carolina and then we had to fly back for family reasons, my sister was dying in Johannesburg. So we went back to Johannesburg and then he couldn't get a job. Now I already had published "An African Aristocracy", but I was then pregnant with Mary and they offered him a job in Coventry. So he left for Coventry and I joined him, we were supposed to go together, I got ill and was taken to hospital and he had to go to London without me. And then when Mary was born we went over to Coventry. I don't

His comment on Evans Pritchard's article, book, on witchcraft on Azande witchcraft. He read it from cover to cover and he said to me "I have read it through, looked at it, read it through, doesn't satisfy me". I said "Why?". He said "He doesn't say if he believes in witchcraft or not".

No. 1. What a wonderful perception. That's terrific. Maybe we should stop now. I think I have made you talk for over an hour, solidly.

Interview 2.

No. 2. You see, until we left for America the first time, it was in 1947, that is from 1934 to 1947 I would go frequently to Swaziland, but I didn't take, yes I'd take notes, yes. I have I think pretty good record of most of my visits to Swaziland in 1947. In 1947 we went to North Carolina. When Leo got out of the army I was teaching at Wits before then. He came out of the army while I was teaching and I resigned. After we worked at the National War Memorial Health Foundation in Johannesburg, executive secretary. It was a wonderful ... do you know about the National, South African National War Memorial, living war memorial.

No. 1. No.

No. 2. It is an amazing thing. They started it "Up North". A few founders. When Leo comes home you must ask him about that. And every soldier was asked to give two days' pay to establish a living war memorial and it was going to go to preventive health for Africans,

No. 1. It's wonderful.

No. 2. Now that, that's been written up quite a lot, because it really was an extraordinary thing. A few of us were working on the press in Johannesburg and they gave us a lot of publicity too. Leo will tell you about that time in the army and it really was a time when there seemed to be hope because, "What was the war being fought for?". And then we went over to the States and then Jenny was born in North Carolina and then we had to fly back for family reasons, my sister was dying in Johannesburg. So we went back to Johannesburg and then he couldn't get a job. Now I already had published "An African Aristocracy", but I was then pregnant with Mary and they offered him a job in Coventry. So he left for Coventry and I joined him, we were supposed to go together, I got ill and was taken to hospital and he had to go to London without me. And then when Mary was born we went over to Coventry. I don't

think you have ever been to Coventry.

No. 1. Was it like being "in Coventry"?

No. 2.

No. 1. Just lets, hold on a minute, I want to just ... OK

No. 2. There's only fifteen months between the two of them and I obviously couldn't do anything. I was offered a readership at LSE. Shapiro was already over, and I got this very nice letter which I still think I have from whoever did the appointments there, offering me a job. And I was going to take it. They were most considerate, they were going to sort of arrange my lectures to fit in, just a day or so.

No. 1. So you would commute?

No. 2. Mm. But then I again got ill and I couldn't ... I cancelled it. So during that period I did, wrote those things for the Ethnographic, the Daryl Ford one.

No. 1. Survey.

No. 2. The Swazi and the one on the Ndebele, Hughes did the ... I did the Shona, and I did free lancing for the Third Programme with the BBC. It was a very, very tough time. And then Leo was offered the position of Head of the Department of Sociology in Durban and we decided that we should go back. Oh, I had been teaching in North Carolina at Chapel . That's right. But we had come over on the wrong visa, so I couldn't get paid, except as a sort of minor, very minor graduate student I think. Then we got a letter saying that I didn't, if I earned any more, they'd deport me. So during that period I communicated with Sobhuza, I don't know if I have any of those letters. And we went back.

No. 1. Can I ask you a question? Why did you go back? What was your thinking about South Africa at that point? How were you feeling about being out of the country? What did it mean?

[End of tape one.]

No. 2. He was a quite wonderful stimulating teacher. He didn't read much himself, he had very bad eyesight, that was why he left Chemistry and his article "The Tragic Agnostic" is one. It is very seldom referred to, I haven't a copy of it anymore, but's its very interesting, where his Mother

took him on pilgrimage when he was about 18 to have his eyes miraculously cured and the hope and then the description of the hope. And he was very, he was extremely sensitive and he could be biting, could be devastating and he treated, this you don't put down, he treated Shapera abominably.

No. 1. Why?

No. 2. I don't know. Because I think Shapera at that stage was a very shy young man, very sensitive, he had a tough life and he really was very conscientious in his work, no great leaps of imagination. They were incompatible in a way, and Selligman was somebody who Shapiro thought, ah well you know, just a very ordinary ethnographer, still Selligman wasn't, he was a good scholar sometimes. But I worked with Malinowski as his research assistant on Coral Gardens and . And he acknowledges various people in them, and he acknowledges Godfrey and myself and he acknowledges Fortes and others. Because he gave us his manuscript to criticize and he was wonderful in responding to criticism. He didn't just show you the manuscript, and that I found stimulating because I'd been much more inclined to accept what was written, than to be critical of it. I think Shapera when he taught me before that year encouraged us to be critical, but we didn't really know how, we didn't quite know what sort of questions to ask. And Malinowski's charts, his fieldwork was a series of fascinating charts. He developed those afterwards. And his enquiring mind, and the odd insights, I found this absolutely

No. 1. that's your telephone.

No. 2. ... people became anthropologists, and it's interesting that in The Stocking article, anthropologists, I make the point that it wasn't being Jewish or as far as I know or being a woman or something like that, it was the stimulus of a particular teacher, that you were interested in the situation in which you were and then Mrs Hoernle stimulated me, but I had wanted to be other things. I said what I wanted, I wanted to be a drama ... I wanted to write, I wanted to be a lawyer, criminal lawyer. Things like that. And Shapera, was I think always interested more in books. I was interested in the dramatic and the response to poetry, to people. He was influenced by Radcliffe Brown and his ideas, I was influenced by Mrs Hoernle. But this is one factor in a whole series of factors. When I had completed my honours at Wits I had been working at the Institute of Race Relations as their first researchist, Rheinallt-Jones' first research assistant. And he said to me

"There are two things to your disadvantage, one is you're a woman and secondly you're Jewish". I was absolutely taken aback and I said "Maybe they will both serve their purpose".

No. 1. Why did you take that job? It's the same sort of question in a way that lies at the root of it, is what, what makes some white Southern Africans conscious of those sorts of issues and others who come from much the same background, much the same circumstances, oblivious. Or wanting to cut you, I mean you obviously wanted to confront the whole question of what was then race relations. And somebody else coming ... you know probably kids you were at school with, maybe went through the same trajectory, went to university even. I mean its, I don't know that there's an answer to a question like that, but that is the question really that lies at the root of a lot of this. What is ... I could ask the same question about myself, you know my school friends, a lot of them are raving reactionaries.

No. 2. Yes.

No. 1. But what is it that does it?

No. 2. Well I think I said yesterday that the awareness of conflict, an awareness of injustice had come through very early in my life. I had my Mother's sister who lived with an Hungarian officer after the Dreyfus affair came to Rhodesia. Wonderful story. And he was an amazing man. They bought this farm. He'd never been a farmer before. She'd never been out of any place except Vienna, she was born there, exquisite woman. And she ran this farm, they had Africans working there, we used to go and spend our week-ends there, and one day we saw my uncle whip one of the men working there. A man whom we always liked very much and my sister I don't remember I just remember Ellie the one who was closest to me, screaming and weeping, begging him to stop. It was a most horrifying memory, and that sort of thing hits a child. I think that it's impossible to tell what it is which really makes one take a crucial step. I do know that conflict and injustice and at the same time duty and love were all part and parcel of this growing up. Beauty of the country, excitement, history they take us to Khami Ruins and to the Motopos and there were all these myths about these areas, so that it was different from being brought up in Johannesburg I think, we did have a lot of history around us.

No. 1. But still one wonders why you were different from all the other little

girls and why your development ... I can remember in my own ... I think this is a key thing, is in the household that I grew up there was a woman who worked for my parents who I was tremendously close to, but I can remember very clearly a moment when I was very young of stopping thinking about her as sort of part of the furniture and being intensely aware of her as a human being. And there were all sorts of reasons why that happened. And I see that as a key thing, where, especially in South Africa, where you're meant not to see black servants as humans. Your telephone is ringing again. But that's an aside. But one wonders whether it is those key moments as in your story of seeing somebody whipped and what that means for a child's consciousness and what the child then thinks about the rest of the world and how it is being presented. Who knows.

No. 2. I don't know. I know that my sister and my _____ who was older and I felt very, very close in all these sorts of situations. And when I wanted to go into the field my Mother was terribly upset 'A good Jewish girl going out to live with the "Schwartzes"'. She was very good to the people who worked for us, they loved her, but still they were not entirely acceptable. And I said "No", and when I came back ... and she sent me off with tears in her eyes, oh she wept. I never asked her consciously. When I came back and looked well and was obviously very happy, I think she felt even more distressed! God bless her! No, I don't think one can really pin these things down to any particular moment as a rule. Yours may have been a particular moment of transformation.

No. 1. I don't know.

No. 2. But I think that ... also Mrs Hoernle's interests fitted in so well in the direction that I was going.

No. 1. What propelled you into the Race Relations job, then? How did it come about?

No. 2. Well, I needed a job. We had been fairly well off and then my father died when I was six, an uncle of mine stepped in and suddenly the family ... he died mysteriously, tragically, and the family was left with very little. We used to live in a big house in Parktown, Sammy Marks's. In St. Andrew's Road. Beautiful house. Three and a half acres.

No. 1. My father also grew up in St. Andrew's Road.

No. 2. And his name was?

No. 1. Hamilton.

No. 2. Was he at the corner of St. Andrew's, and what is that ... ?

No. 1. I can't remember, I remember the house it had gables, I think, those pointed gables.

No. 2. There was a family called Ingham at the corner, I'll never forget them, they were wonderful friends.

No. 1. I don't know. I just know it was St. Andrew's Road. Anyway that's just an aside.

No. 2. So I needed a job and I wanted to do ... I had been teaching elocution. Yes, because I wanted to be an actress and I taught elocution in my spare time and then Rheinallt-Jones wanted this work done on beer brewing on the mines. He wanted to get some information so he ... I don't know if it was Mrs Hoernle or ... who recommended me but I took on that job. Did some work on recreation, or the absence of recreation facilities for Indians.

the Indian priest. So that, you know, this all happened in the process of development.

No. 1. I made a list of all the things that we had to ...

No. 2. And you know, also Shapera doesn't ... I don't know, he must have recognised that Malinowski was a superb writer, for himself, a of anthropology. And he read very widely, or had read very widely, he was interested, he would get me to read aloud because his eyes were not good. And I don't think he would ever let me ... I don't think Shapera would read aloud for anyone.

No. 1. There was that annoyance of having to give him a massage or something.

No. 2. That was me.

No. 1. Now Shapera also has a strong consciousness of history in a way.

No. 2. Yes.

No. 1. And I think it is a different consciousness of history.

No. 2. He was very particular about dates.

No. 1. Mm. That's it.

No. 2. Maybe he was quite right to be particular about dates.

No. 1. And then his sort of archival work, you know editing the papers, that type of ...

No. 2. And I found that ... not, not what I really wanted to do. Spent quite a lot of time in the archives and I would get frustrated if nothing really

turned up, but he just was interested in checking, going through case after case after case.

No. 1. A very clear distinction between two different kinds of minds. The other thing that Shapera notes is that problem of being introduced by Chiefs into Tswana society and the difficulties caused by it. In a way you had that same problem exacerbated. I know it is a question you must have been asked a hundred times, but I suppose I have to ask it. To what extent do you think it closed doors - having Sobhuza's patronage, the way you had it? Or did it over time cease to matter? To the same extent. I don't know.

No. 2. In the beginning it opened doors because he sent me to people who he knew would just accept me on his recommendation. Chiefs who were friendly to him. They were intelligent men like Mnisi and Mkaba (?). And he sent me to doctors whom he used, diviners, and there were other people whom I know resented my being there, resented the fact that I could see Sobhuza when they couldn't. After a while it was definitely a question of "Could I make rapport on my own?" Having me there they had to accept me. And from those people who knew they had to accept me I had to select people whom I thought would be my friends. And not go only for the good informants, people who talked a lot. And I would say that if Sobhuza had not given me his support I would have got nowhere. And I think that this came out ... or I would have got very little, not nowhere, but I would have got very little information except on what happened in a minute area, not the national perspective. Because the ramifications of Kingship were very, very marked. Whether I went to the north or the south I had this man who people knew had been selected .. who informed them immediately "incusi nkhosi". This is Mnyakaza the messenger of the king, I am bringing her here. And sometimes the message would go to the District Commissioner. So that I feel greatly indebted to Sobhuza's help and support.

No. 1. I am going to ask you a question which may be mistaken now. And I am not sure if it is. It seemed to me just ... that a very impressionable level that you'd spent more time in central and northern Swaziland than in the far south.

No. 2. I did. I spent ... Lobamba was always my base. The north was an area that had so many historic associations. The history, these are the outposts of Mswati and so on. And the chiefs there were very important. But I spent three months in Nomahasha, and I spent, oh a long time in the south. It was

in the south that I picked up malaria. And the difference in development was always astonishing to me. Mawkaiyana-Hlathikhulu area. Very much less developed. But I had good contacts there and I think that I got a fairly good idea of the difference in the position of some of the chiefs in the south. Of the hostility, for example, the Mahlalela, of the division among the Maziya. One group supporting Sobhuza and the other could not. So that it was not really so badly out of line to spend more time at the capital, going across to Lozithoa going to Zombodze. Swaziland is so small really, people don't realise that this is just a country which you can cross.

No. 1. You can drive across in a day.

No. 2. You can drive across in a day. When Adam came we drove him right around the country in one day. When Malinowski arrived Sobhuza drove us right through to the bushveld. He drove us up to the asbestos area.

No. 1. Havelock.

No. 2. And Barberton. And I had come in through different areas, when I drove out to Johannesburg back usually tried a different route. I could see differences.

No. 1. Have you seen Jonathan Crushe's book "The Struggle for Swazi Labour".

No. 2. He sent me a copy.

No. 1. Because in that he's arguing that the south, especially I suppose his period is round about 1905.

No. 2. Pardon.

No. 1. About 1905, but much earlier than you were there. I think he is arguing that the south was very resistant to rule from Lobamba and from the centre. It wouldn't be Lobamba, yet. But I am curious to what extent those tensions were still there by the time you were there.

NO. 2. Well, the Maziya tension was still there, the Mahlalela were further towards the east.

No. 1. How did you see it? How did you experience it? How did you come to know about that? I now suppose I am going into the details of it. I am curious how, how it was you discovered it and saw it and how it impinged on your work and those ... the sort of matrix of you operating in that context?

No. 2. Well in part at the time of the incwala there were certain chiefs who were not there, they had their own ritual. I realised that there must be something that went on there. The Mamba group was very

interesting, because Bokweni was both loyal and disloyal. He was quite a character. And I got the feel from what people said to me. When they stressed, "We were kings in our day, our ground, our land was larger than it is now". Somebody said "Bake Dlamini basekelwa ebelungu", Dlamini was supported by the whites. You were aware that there were still these tensions. The position of the Ndwandwe some of them, the Maseko, or some of them still say, "Really we are the rightful chiefs". So that there were these quivers, they spoke about them, it wasn't anything that They never, as far as I know, said "We would like Sobhuza to die" or "We'd like to drive him out". Nothing as crude as that. This happen, happen, they resented that. They carried on.

No. 1. What did Sobhuza do in the, say in the, I suppose from the period you got there till the '60s to counteract that? What was the nature of his strategy and and I assume it was a changing strategy as well? Did you have any sense of him, his ...

No. 2. He never interfered in their local politics really. He only ... his role was in the recognition of a successor, the recognition of a chief. And he didn't have the power to make them bring men to labour at Lobamba. Some of them did. When he would send out word that reeds were required from a certain area, or they were building, rebuilding one of the old royal villages. And some of the men would come, would be sent out, under an induna. The sense of Sobhuza as representing the Swazi nation became more pronounced after the land had been divided. Of that I am sure. Because he was the one who went overseas to plead their case.

No. 1. Ja, I think that's what I am getting at. I am trying to get a sense of what it was with those forces that pulled together that feeling of nationalism and it seemed so successful by the 1960s. Late 1960s and then came all that other political turmoil.

No. 2. It was that confrontation when they heard that he was going to try and get back their land and this grandmother of his had a lot of power. Now her power was based very much on the firm belief that she could make rain and make people suffer and she taught it to Lcmawa. But they said Lcmawa was not as good at making rain as Gwamile. And then they tell of stories about how whites did this and this and then they mocked Gwamile's power. And on their way back to wherever they were the rain fell on them out of a clear sky and

all these sort of things. And this was a very important political adjunct.

No. 1. Enormously powerful in its connotations.

No. 2. You probably heard about it all the time. They give you instances of how the rivers overflowed because she had said this white man had challenged "You won't be home tonight". The river And the point is that this was done in good faith, because I was at Lobamba when these rain rituals were performed. And there were arguers. You know it wasn't as though it was a hocus pocus business. I was interested in a comment that Shapera made about the diviner who remains absolutely calm, and it's the family that is anxious. I have noticed that too. I have noticed that there is a formula that many of them use. But I also noticed that some of the most powerful, during their period of divining really went through a lot of emotion. They were not just acting like builders putting up a structure which could be moved here or there. They thought about it quite a lot even when they worked for the queen. And this Dr Amos Zwane, Dr Zwane's son, who was the Doctor who went over with Sobhuza. I have photographs of him doctoring my hut because Sobhuza said "When she is there she is in danger". I have him doctoring my hut and he knew exactly what the formula should be and everything that should be done. There was consecration on his part. He didn't go through anxiety, one didn't expect him to go through anxiety. He was trying to perform a ritual which would act as a protection. I think that he's confusing diviners in different situations, and using different techniques. And some would actually permit mechanical techniques. You know the voice that comes from the calabash He was just there as the interpreter. His magic is the thing that takes place. So that there was a . . . possibly a difference in the total situation among the Tswana and the Swazi, where the king himself really believed in the power of these potions, the mother believed in the power of these potions, and the people who performed these rituals believed in them as well. There was no . . . there wasn't hocus pocus.

No. 1. Ja.

No. 2. I think I didn't answer the question you asked which was . . .

No. 1. Let's go back, what was it? I have lost the thread as well. Lets stop and see.

No. 2. Money from the NSA. And I arrived there and that period was really one of the most profitable because the British said Swaziland is not ready for independence. And Sobhuza said "Well it's your fault, you've had us for a long time and you could have prepared us for independence". But the idea of independence was new. It had come very ... as much of a shock to many peoples in Africa, that within ten years there would be a wave of independence.

No. 1. And after such a long period of struggle over precisely that issue so long before.

No. 2. So I had been ... come out and I went to the Independence celebrations in Botswana. Adam was there. I didn't go to the one in Lesotho but at Botswana I established contact with two Swazi friends, one of them being Bekhimphi who at that stage was one of the representatives. And they drove me back to Swaziland, and I worked with the Swazi and I worked ... I tried to follow what was happening at the British end.

No. 1. Who did you know best at that point on the British end and what were they like?

No. 2. Mike Fairlie. He was a very intelligent man and Huw Jones. Huw Jones from the World Bank and he keeps up his correspondence and he sent me something on Swazi regiments now, which I haven't ... should have replied to. He's now retired And George Murdoch, now George Murdoch was the geographer who did those ...

No. 1. The soil things and all that.

No. 2. He was very good. And this was a time also of the Peace Corps people. Oh, I know, in between one of my students, I know when David Kuby came out he did his thesis there on a religious group. He became a reborn member of one of their You should look at his thesis.

No. 1. Cooby with a C.

No. 2. K U B Y. K U B Y.

No. 1. And it's a UCLA thesis?

No. 2. UCLA thesis. And he started the Anthrop Department there. And then another very dear friend and student, student and friend, Beth Rosen Prince. She was then Beth Prince. Well she ... yes Beth Prince and got married, and she's taught also at the University of Swaziland. And she did her research there. Now you see I ... all the exact dates I cannot remember, but I kept Beth's letters and I kept some of David's. David did some very rash things,

including wanting to send out questionnaires. One of which had the question "Do you think a monarchy is better than ...".

No. 1. Ag.

No. 2. They wanted to kick him out of the country and I had to do all I could and finally they let him stay on.

No. 1. When you think back on the political tension What do you think, how do you think of it and what do you think Sobhuza's big picture was at that point? And how did he ... you know if we think about your book, if we think of "African Aristocracy" and we think about it as something that looks at power, then by the time you were there in 1966 you were looking at 'power in crisis'. I am curious how you thought about it and how you thought he thought about it.

No. 2. He thought about it still in terms very much of an African King rules as well as reigns. I felt still that the Swazi king was a pivot of unity in the country. That ... that very much that they should be ... greater participation at different levels throughout the country. I hope ... Sobhuza's concept of it Inkundla was a very interesting one. I still think it was, but it didn't work out. In the same way that some of the resettlement schemes didn't work out.

No. 1. Why didn't it work out? I am sorry I am firing the questions, but it's a very, it a difficult, very difficult moment to get at in Swazi history, this

No. 2. I think there were first of all people who were interested in seizing power for themselves and not really in sharing power. That very few of the chiefs in the Inkundla had a real grasp of what local government integrated into a central system, under modern conditions, required. And it's a very difficult thing to work out. And the areas of development were not even. Lobamba was sacred and kept apart - that was fine. But everything was concentrated on Mbabane and Manzini, other areas were neglected. There was a lot of rivalry, a lot of people claimed the King's support. He had a group, more of uncritical nominees than the type of independent thinkers which guided him in the 30s and 40s, he was criticised .

No. 1. That's an interesting point.

No. 2. He had established himself through his Mbokodvo movement as a king, and his relationship with Zwane was always very interesting. He would have

loved Zwane to be one of his ministers but not on terms of Zwane coming in with an opposition group. I think a lot of that is in the biography.

No. 1. Mm.

No. 2. If you read that carefully you can see some of the reasons, I think.

No. 1. Ja. They are there.

No. 2. And in this blue book which I could also lend you to take home to night. There are copies in Swaziland, I think. You know, the new edition.

No. 1. Ja, ja.

No. 2. I think you might find that ...

No. 1. That would be nice.

No. 2. Sobhuza was not at all venal. But in a way I think that people who were venal manipulated him. The prime example, I think is the Tibiyo and he saw that very much as a royal endowment for national development, not for ...

No. 1. Royal enrichment.

No. 2. Royal enrichment. But he appointed, he also considered the royals had very definitely symbolic positions and that's why he wanted his sons educated as well as royal. Oh, when I think of the corruption that took ... that I heard of in Nigeria and these other areas, Swaziland was for a long time not corrupt. Now I think it's become as corrupt as ... and it had become so, I know in '73 Makhosini had a special meeting on that. And then Makhosini ... when rumours about Makhosini were very strange ... witchcraft is something which is very pervasive still, and it's not just a belief, it's accompanied by murders in several cases. Sobhuza believed very much in witchcraft. I was terrified at times. In Nomahasha I would be given medicine at Village X because Village Y was going to bewitch me. And I would go along chewing Village X's medicine. Village Y. Village X you come from there you had better be prevented from the ... and you would go on chewing some other medicine. It was ... it was terrible you know the belief, the belief and the things that happened if you followed some of those cases. They're grim. Grim reality. So why didn't the tinkundla system work. Because it was a ... ideologically it was a good system but you needed people who could face up to the modern challenge and could ... and had respect for the traditional participation at local levels. The local councils in the 40s, the Libandla meetings were very full discussions. In there you had outspoken criticism or it wasn't outspoken it was in the form of tibongo.

No. 1. You know, can I go back to yesterday? Because it is something that comes out of what we have been talking about now, and that is the question of 'power in crisis'. And a question that I started to ask you ...

No. 2. Power and crisis.

No. 1. And power being in crisis.

No. 2. Oh.

No. 1. And the question that I started to ask you but we went off it yesterday, was "Why Sobhuza wanted you?" and how he, I mean we talked about how he wanted the documentation to take place and you said "She will show that we are people". But at another level as he was watching you, I wonder if he saw you in other terms as well, in other words not merely as the interlocutor between the Swazi and the western world, but ... or how you even think your role was within Swaziland, amongst Swazis, or do you think it didn't have a dimension there.

No. 2. I think that for Sobhuza I was a stimulating ... I think that he could discuss with me things that he couldn't discuss with others, I know that. He knew that he could discuss anything that interested him. And that I wouldn't betray him to the government, wouldn't betray him to anyone. There were problems, there were domestic problems, personal problems.

No. 1. What kinds of domestic problems?

No. 2. Pardon?

No. 1. What kinds of domestic ... do you mean domestic political problems?

No. 2. No ... domestic family troubles. Domestic relationships. Tensions between him and Mshengu and Mnkwayi (?). Tensions between queens. Interactions. We could discuss ... you see for me it was wonderful to be able to discuss things with him because he was almost the only person in ... well he was the only person in Swaziland who spoke English to me in a Swazi idiom.

No. 1. So he was the other inter ... you were two interlocutors. Actually talking.

No. 2. Yes. It was a very deep relationship. Very, very deep. And I think that ... the young person Mnengwase was somebody with whom I could talk quite a lot. But it was lonely. There was a ... I couldn't talk to the Reilly's even about ordinary work situations or politics. And I think that the Swazis saw this and many of them didn't like it because he would drop along when he was at Lebomba at almost any time. It was an unusual situation, and I think

that is one of the reasons why I didn't want to have my diaries published, available. Because I think that most people when they write diaries want them published. Malinowski didn't, that's why he wrote in Polish and his very greedy second wife wanted to make money from them, from the data, I think. And if it hadn't been for Audrey and his children much would have gone in which would not have been a contribution to anthropology, would have not have built up his reputation any more. The Swazi ... well the rumours about the stories in Swaziland are quite fun. Thoka can tell you some of the stories that were circulating, and how he/she heard about them. But I did, I think I did play, at one stage, quite ... I don't know. No, I don't know whether it was an important role. The British government asked me for certain information about customs. I gave that, gave that. Wrote for the anti-slavery committee a long article, a long letter which McMillan, Hugh McMillan, reminded me of, he saw it, it would seem. He's gone into the records rather carefully.

No. 1. Hm. Hm.

No. 2. He's very good. But you see Shapera played an important role in Botswana - historical recordings.

No. 1. His interactions with the authorities appear to have been more direct as well.

No. 2. Mm. Yes because he ... the only work that I undertook . Well they asked me what the Swazi system of local government was. I wrote to them about that. They asked me about ... choice principals of succession, I sent them a memo on that. These were things which I felt were quite neutral. These were, these were factual statements.

No. 1. That they could really have got straight from Sobhuza if they had chosen to go that way.

No. 2. Yes, and the actual one on the government. He had submitted one, a very good one I thought, and notes on the Swazi diet, because I was interested in that, but I would never have published it if the Rheinallt-Jones' hadn't asked me if they could have it. No it was perfectly harmless.

No. 1. Right.

No. 2. But an anthropologist had quite an interesting position at that time. We were definitely not, or some of us were definitely not members of the colonial elite. And this myth that has, you know, circulated that

anthropologists were henchmen, not true in my case. That we felt that we had certain information which could benefit the people by being more widely circulated, I think that was a different matter.

No. 1. Can I ask you a question that's linked to that? And it's both you and Shapera chose to study people outside South Africa proper. Why? Do you think your reasons were different? I am still not sure exactly how you ended up in Swaziland.

No. 2. I ended up in Swaziland because I had put in an application for research. It was to the International African Institute. I knew they were interested in Africa. I wanted a society which I thought could interest me, the Pinn report had just come out. They stressed the backwardness of Swaziland, the recognition of tradition and I decided that that was the area which fascinated me and it was near to where my mother was. She was in Johannesburg.

No. 1. Right.

No. 2. Cape Town, she was in Johannesburg at that time. And then we had done some work, Ellen Hellman and I, both had done some work in Johannesburg and during my period of teaching I worked with Ruth First, she was one of my students and and another very intelligent woman. We did a survey of Sophiatown, but that was already after my choice of Swaziland and we worked with Swazi in Johannesburg.

No. 1. Because there were quite a few in Sophiatown at that point.

No. 2. Yes. And I think that it was in part that there was the idea among anthropologists that you go outside of your own society and study a foreign people. It gives you a perspective of them as well as of yourself. I think there is lot to that. I could just as well have studied as Harriet Ngubane did, the Zulu in Natal, or the Shembe movement or something like that.

No. 1. Right. So it was the distance and the apparently more, the less affected, the less touchedness of Swaziland.

No. 2. Yes, also there was a a sense of excitement. There was no doubt about it. That ... adventure, there was also an element. And when I'd go through Swaziland the first time, it was so beautiful. I, they looked so, little things that contribute to how one makes up one's mind. I used to work in a certain place, then working in Durban was something very different. I wanted, I needed to work, wanted to work, you'd want to go out of Durban and had this

wonderful opportunity of studying at the ... culture of a different society, working with different people.

No. 1. Let me go back to Sobhuza and your first sojourn. What do you think the most difficult internal political issues were for him at that time? As you saw it. Independent of the British. I am just thinking within Swazi society at that point.

No. 2. Well the problem of quarrels between chiefs. I noticed in one of my notebooks here. I was looking at yesterday. Because when the land was divided some of the chiefs had their lands considerably diminished. They didn't want to lose their people, because it wasn't so much land as people that they wanted. People who were available for labour and people who gave them prestige. And then there were the negotiations between chiefs. And there were fights across boundaries and huts were burnt and the subjects of Chief X would be set up in the land of Chief Y or intrude into that land. And there the two groups would fight each other. Sobhuza than had to regulate the boundaries and try and establish peace between the chiefs. This was a really difficult thing. The question of where to place Dlamini. There was at that stage a question of some of the princes, or other relatives, the relationship between the Ndwandwe and the, I think, Pica Magagula, the Magagula, I think it was the Ndwandwe and the Magagula. All these historically rooted situations seemed to be crystalised more in the early period that I was there.

No. 1. Did you see a lot of this at the Libandla. In his 'under the tree sessions'?

No. 2. Yes. Because the chiefs would come and make their complaint. I would go along to Lozitha. If you look through the files at Lozitha you will find these land cases. On the other front the questions about mission lands were important. How much land has this missionary really got and how much did But the issue of land was so important when he'd go with Malinowski and me through Swaziland on that first visit ... all the time we'd stop and he would say "You see that land really belongs to so and so, it was given to this farmer". He knew the country very, very well. The history of the country. I mean these were the problems that confronted him. And the other one was education, what sort of education was being given. But I think the land issue was paramount.

No. 1. How did those cases proceed? For example I am interested. What about

the history component? How was it brought in?

No. 2. They would bring old men along, the chief would bring along his ... the chiefs would bring along not only his kin, but chosen men from the district. Now there's a man called Isaac Dlamini, I don't know

No. 1. He passed away. Did you know that? He was the guy who used to tape record all the time. What a wonderful guy. It was, let's see, what are we '88 it must have been early in '87.

No. 2. Because he had the most wonderful tapes and ...

No. 1. I spoke to Mag, Maganeni and for the last two years before coming here he gave me a couple of tapes every week or so and we would put them onto cassette and index them and document ... he had them in a big heap in a room and they were out of Isaac's, really out of ... just out of his control because they needed such a lot of work to systematise them. So I have seen quite a lot of that material. I think they held back some stuff which they thought was too sensitive for that process. But I got the impression that was later. I think, if I try ... I think the earliest tapes, the old wire ones came from the '40s. If I remember correctly. Maybe a bit earlier. But Isaac had a remarkable memory for what he had.

No. 2. Pardon.

No. 1. Isaac had a remarkable memory for the content of that.

No. 2. Yes. Is Maboya Fakudze still alive?

No. 1. No.

No. 2. Because he also had ... now he had written down a lot.

No. 1. I didn't know that.

No. 2. Samuel Sukati had written down a lot. I don't know who has his material. There's a lot of stuff tucked away, or was tucked away in the Lobamba records. There's a certain amount in the mission records. But if you ask me what were the real problems, political problems. They were related to the rights of different chiefs, the hierarchy, to the disputes between chiefs, particularly the people like the Mahlalela who ... some of whom would not recognise Sobhuza's orders. The fact that the British kept on saying "You know we built up Sobhuza's power, that we do not know which of the clan heads would have risen if we had not, at the time that Sobhuza was a child, given him this ... the grammar, the backing". This is one of the arguments that the British ...

No. 1. I've never heard that, I didn't realise they argued like that. But this is the historian in me that's really interested here. What ... what ... it sound from the way you were speaking that Sobhuza himself had quite a strong historical consciousness so ...

No. 2. Oh yes.

No 1. And a store of historical knowledge.

No. 2. Very, very definite, and he kept on saying to me "Our history is important, history is important".

No. 1. So in those cases, did he engage in questioning and speaking to these old men who would come up himself, did he ever bring his knowledge to bear in that way?

No. 2. Yes, yes he did. Now cases are discussed without the presence of the king. That doesn't stop him from bringing people to him. And I remember, I remember well when Phica Magagula was telling me that he had been to Sobhuza, and he said "There I thought he ... I knew everything, and he corrected me!".

No. 1. On a detail of Magagula history.

No. 2. Mmm. He was really right. Matsebula will tell you the same story, James Matsebula, his knowledge of history was immense. His interest in it very great. You see when he had to appoint the heir to a chieftanship, he had to appoint somebody whom the family lusendvo had chosen. He didn't choose, but he would want to know why, particularly if there was somebody who was not satisfied. And he had an amazing memory for that sort of detail.

No. 1. So in the period, that early period that you were there, did he make a lot of appointments that you can remember or, was it, was it ... did you ever get a sense of it was more diplomatic for him to hold off appointing ...

No. 2. He did not make the ... did not choose, but he would say ..,

No. 1. He would confirm.

No. 2. He would confirm. And there were many places where no chief had been appointed. That were as it were chiefless. The people were waiting for the lusendvo to finally come to an agreement. This is one of the things that really struck me as so strange. That there were these areas which, in which there were the two sections of the family, and there was no agreement. And the libandla would carry on without a single chief. They would meet, because they would meet in the village, in the main village and they would talk, there would always be an Induna. And this is where Sobhuza said democracy lay. In

the fact that the Induna and his men were really the ones that carried on. That if a chief was appointed, then he had power over them.

No. 1. How did it affect Sobhuza's position, if there wasn't, if there wasn't an incumbent in the position, do you think?

NO. 2. It didn't because the Induna would have to send the regiments, local regiments ... the Induna would have to act as liaison. I have got in my notes some quite interesting cases of areas which had no recognised chief for a long period of time.

No. 1. And I noticed it again in the '60s that there were ... I went through some of the archive's records and saw at some points, something like 50% or more vacancies in the country, and that seemed extremely high.

No. 2. And at the same time they say we are people of bakamandla (?).

No. 1. Ja, Ja. So it's ... it seems an interesting phenomenon, but I haven't been able to put my finger on exactly what the implications are and why ... what had been happening.

No. 2. Yes, because there are so many ways of interpreting principles of succession, and then the fact that very often the heir is a child. Will that child grow into manhood? You can't appoint somebody who is just a child. You can only know that there is this child and in the past this child was often sent to Lobamba to grow up there or to Lozitha.

No. 1. So when you were there did you see a lot of those ... children ...

No. 2. Just the children "Mntwanwabani?" "Oh, mntwanwa of such and such a place siKhulu".

No. 1. Did you think less so later on?

No. 2. Yes, because they went to schools and ...

No. 1. Right. And how do you think it worked? Was that something at Sobhuza's behest?

No. 2. No, the father would come or the induna would come. Or the late father's brothers would come and say "We are giving you our son" .

No. 1. Do you think, again in the early period that there were any other areas of crisis for Sobhuza, or areas in which he felt his authority was weak, that needed bolstering?

No. 2. Yes. You see the whole ... the removal of criminal jurisdiction threatened the position of the king. The limitations on his revenue threatened the king. When whites had so much money, when Sobhuza was ...

liked to spend on clothes at one stage, he was in debt for about £20 or something like that. His Insila Motsa, Ngolotsheni was in debt. They didn't know book keeping. One of them, I am not sure which one it was, who died and left his books in a terrible mess, and then creditors kept on asking, and the wife said to me "Look, I have got nought, nought - that means nothing". I said, "No, that means 100". There was, there was It was pathetic. There was a lot of trouble too about ... internal trouble about people not responding to the call for labour. At a certain time the support of the Incwala fell away considerably.

No. 1. Why, why and when? Can you remember?

No. 2. You see an article of mine "The Incwala in Historical ... Royal Ritual in Historical Perspective".

No. 1. I think I saw that a while back. I can't remember now. When did that appear?

No. 2. It appeared in ...

NO. 1. I think I will chase that up . You know I have been reading your stuff like ... for almost ten years now. I can't remember when I ... of course as you develop you read ... I read your article differently and for different purposes.

No. 2. "Royal Ritual and Historical Perspective."

No. 1. I'll find it.

No. 2. Then another article in which I dealt with some of the problems was this "The Language of Sites in the Politics of Space".

No. 1. How interesting, where was that?

No. 2. That was when the ... that was published in "The American Anthropologist". "The Language of Sites and the Politics of Space", this was when the British wanted parliament to be built at Mbabane.

No. 1. Right, I must look for it. It sounds very interesting. Can you roughly when you wrote?

No. 2. I think it was about '73.

No. 1. That's close enough, I'll pick it up easily.

No. 2. "The American Anthropologist". What's the time? I'll have to make luncheon very shortly.

No. 1. So this is day 3.

No. 2. So you know where we are?

No. 1. I left ... should we do history?

No. 2. Well, I think that the point that I am ... one of the points that I want to make is that I have had a long standing interest in history, and history was one of my majors at Wits. And McMillan, Bantu, Boer and Briton and Margaret Hobson, were my lecturers. And the only person at the high school that I attended, which was Berea High, you know ...

No. 1. Oh yes.

No. 2. We had a good history teacher. We had a good history teacher and we had an English teacher who was very enthusiastic and encouraging. But history was something, the significance of which I think I realised early on. And Malinowski's functionalism was a contradiction of the importance of history. And the first article I ever, not the first article, but the talk that I gave when I was with the South African Association of Science, have you got my curriculum vitae?

NO. 1. Yes.

No. 2. I was chair of the section, anthropology section when I was teaching at Wits. Of the

No. 1. You marked that down, I think ... here. Is that it ... No.

No. 2. Oh, yes, that's right, that right in 1945. In 1945 and I gave a talk on anthropology and history. it wasn't a particularly good one, I was very young, but I did want to make a point. I referred to the emphasis on history which characterised some of the American writers. So that when I came to Swaziland and Sobhuza emphasised the importance of history it just reinforced my perspective, my time perspective. Not in terms so much of detailed chronology but in terms of movements, in terms of ideologies and shifting interests and so on. Had I had the time I would have done more history asking the same sort of questions related to conquest, to power, to organisations, to the treatment of the conquered. This extraordinary system of saving one child of the group that was given out or men very often destroyed and reinstating him in the land of the clan. I have got ... in "African Aristocracy" I mention one case. I have got about four cases of that.

No. 1. The autochthons in that way and the power of the autochthons.

No. 2. That's right. The recognition that the tie between the earth and these people who were there before is very deep.

No. 1. When you say "reinforced by Sobhuza" is it reinforced or were there changes that came to your thinking about history at that point.

No. 2. Well, there were changes in his interpretation of who had the right to certain territories and rights of the autochthons people were later taken over by some of the Dlamini when they were placed in these areas, and particularly with the land shortage.

No. 1. I meant for your own concept of history. If it was merely that you had a heightened sense of how important the history was, or whether you felt at any point your sense of history itself was changing.

No. 2. Well my sense of history itself changed. At one stage I became deeply interested in working out the ideas ... I was working for a little while with that man who Alan Paton described as "Casandra on a Maritzburg verandah".

No. 1. Who was that?

No. 2. You know him. The historian who was at Wits and who wrote about South Africa 19 ... something, Kepple Jones.

No. 1. Oh, Kepple Jones.

No. 2. Kepple Jones.

No. 1. Ha, ha, Casandra on a verandah!

No. 2. Well, Kepple Jones and I were working together on the analysis of the difference between the feudal system, we were working on Marc Bloch's analysis, and the African system. We never completed this, because then I left and I don't know what ... but it was a ... you see that was the perspective which I was working on later on broad themes, not on sequences so much and also I read more widely on general historical approaches.

No. 1. Ja, it comes through clearly in "The African Aristocracy" where your explanations of the power of things all the time have recourse to their historical significance. And I ... that came through very well.

No. 2. Because this whole interpretation of history in terms of changing bases of power when religion is ... traditional religion is undermined by Christianity. How is Christianity brought in to reinforce traditional power? Not to undermine, this is why Sobhuza cultivated the idea that there is one God. He believed very much, he was deeply religious, but he was one of those flexible religions. He could accommodate himself to almost any approach to powers. And an article which I think would give you some idea of how I interpret Swazi religion is in the Encyclopaedia of Religion edited by

Eliardi. It's not a long one. Not a long article. And a majestic, I think I described it as a majestic order of powers and powers is never in the singular but it's a word which, amandla, is always in the plural.

No. 1. I want to ask you a strange question. What do you think the word culture means? How do you understand ... when you use the word culture, what does it mean to you? I am sorry I know this is a terrible bore. If you don't want to do it, don't.

No. 2. No, but I have tended to use culture more in terms of things and customs rather than the organisation which I see as interaction between people. Culture, the material culture, the stories that are told, that the interpretation in terms of human group arrangements, social arrangements, I talk of much more as structure. That's a very simplistic distinction between structure and culture and I ... and structure as you know has gone through so many different ways of interpretation. But that the structure involves a system of relationships involving people even mental, mental ordering of these objects, of these stories, in how interpretations of mythology reinforce clan autonomy or rights to certain territories. This I consider more a structure, the land itself is part of the cultural heritage. That's not a good example. But a hut is something which you see, the relationships within a village are established between huts through peoples' interpretations of what these huts are used for. Who inhabits them, who may inhabit them, that I do feel more as structure.

No. 1. The historian in me notices that when you use the word culture in your books, you're so often talking about processes, and I find that unusual in your generation of anthropologists, you were talking about changes like we were talking about religion and you were immediately talking about adjustments and how Sobhuza was taking in ... all the words have a loading process.

No. 2. Well this term "process" which has now become one of the shibboleths - I thought in terms of process, because even while I was there in the beginning I saw a process of change. I was there when the ... I arrived when a new regiment was formed. It was a very dramatic summoning of all the youths to Lobamba, and as they came along singing their songs and the men

. I remember saying, I think to Malinowski, "You know these men would have been armed in the past" it was a military regiment and in the first article that I wrote on the emabutfo the military organisation I said

"They have been deprived of their main purpose, therefore they have to be reinforced because Sobhuza realises their value to him, both through his power, prestige and the labour and the functions of change, it has become an educational institution more than a military". So process, process is growth, process is what you see all the time, and it's not as I keep on stressing progress, I've never accepted that process can be interpreted with any moral justification.

No. 1. Shall we talk about Malinowski now?

No. 2. Yes, you see his reaction to women was different from his reaction to men, there is no doubt about it he was a most courteous, on the whole, most courteous and charming person, particularly to women. He was very courteous, very charming to me I found him a very fascinating person. And he was also extremely encouraging and Godfrey Wilson was there, we enrolled the same day and he was a delightful person. Malinowski was charming to him and he really drew us out in a way which Shapera describes I think quite rightly having prepared questions