

SOME THEMES AND TECHNIQUES IN THE POETRY OF C T MSIMANG

by

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Declaration

I, **Armstrong Nkosenhle Zibani**, declare that the project entitled *Some themes and techniques in the poetry of C.T. Msimang*, is my own work in its conception and developments. All sources that have been used and quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.



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DATE : 25 MARCH 2000

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Chapter One

1.0 Motivation and Modus Operandi

1.1 Aim of the Study

The need for a study of themes in the poetry of C.T. Msimang arose from a survey of this poet's interest and success in handling different themes. The interest and success are seen in a number of poems he has published, both as an author and an editor. After I had read his two books, Iziziba zoThukela (1980) and uNodumehlezi kaMenzi (1990), there came a willingness to critically analyze Msimang's works with an aim of trying to find their meaning and place in modern literature. This study is an investigation into the themes and techniques in Msimang's poetry. The study will try to look into the existence of techniques and devices used in the portrayal of themes in the poetry of C.T. Msimang. The approach from the angle of themes and techniques appears to throw a fresh light on the value of the writer's work and its place in literature.

Zaal (1978:8) says the following about the nature of a work of art :

All the arts have to make their appeal through the senses. The literary artist must emulate the plasticity of the sculptor, the colour of painting, the magic suggestiveness of music. His task is restated as by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel. It is before all to make you see. He has to accomplish the perfect blending of form and substance.

The aim of this study is to see if Msimang does emulate the plasticity of the sculptor. Does he make us see and feel what he desires us to see and feel in his

poetry ? It is the aim of this study to see if the form and substance in his poetry are well blended.

1.2 Motivation

Investigation shows that nobody has attempted to look into the themes and techniques in the poetry of C.T.Msimang. The topic is chosen in order to look at the variety of themes that one comes across in the poetry of C.T.Msimang, with the emphasis on the application of the literary techniques.

It is hoped that the study will contribute to placing Msimang's work into proper perspective. Peck and Coyle (1984:13-14) have the following remarks about themes :

The central themes of poetry are familiar topics from everyday experience – love, death, nature, religion. What the poet does is to take one of these familiar themes and write about it in a striking way. Our interest as critics is in seeing how the writer takes this sort of ordinary idea and makes it new by the way he or she orders the ordinary language.

As Peck and Coyle say above, the writer picks themes from familiar topics and shapes them into specific moulds. The aim of this study is to find out in what striking way Msimang takes ordinary daily experiences and creates something new using the vehicle of language. This study is based on the two anthologies by C.T. Msimang :

1. Iziziba zoThukela (1980)
2. UNodumehlezi kaMenzi (1990)

A close look at these two publications shows that Msimang treats a variety of topics such as : music, love, nature, death, historical places, historical heroes, religion and education. The study does not claim to be exhaustive but aims to treat some of the themes raised by these topics.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

One may wonder why we chose the topic *Some themes and techniques in the poetry of C.T. Msimang*. As previously pointed out nobody has attempted to look at the themes and techniques in the poetry of C.T. Msimang. Therefore, this study is an attempt to look closely at Msimang's poetry mainly from the angle of themes raised and techniques used. We will discuss the issues or central ideas raised in the poetry of C.T. Msimang. Naturally ideas involve the experience of the poet, they also involve the intentions, feelings, emotions and attitudes, both conscious and unconscious. Elements employed would involve rhythm, rhyme, metre, repetition and parallelism.

1.4 Research Methodology

Palmer (1982:2) says the following about literary criticism :

If the purpose of criticism is to display as accurately as possible the genuine quality of work, then our aim should be to use or evolve criteria which will be the most helpful in bringing out that genuine quality.

Criticism tries to bring out the quality of the artist's work. What is more important is to look at the method one uses in criticism. There are many different types of critical theories that a researcher can choose from. These theories are modernism,

post-modernism, reader-response theory, defamiliarizing, Anglo-American New criticism, phenomenological approach and many more.

The study shows that the reader-response theory engulfs other approaches. The main questions focus on : what is the reader doing ? What is being done to him ? and to what end ? What frames of reference are brought by the reader to the text ? It is perfectly reasonable for an interpreter, either as a reader or critic, to enquire into the activity in which she or he is engaged. The aim of criticism is to find the writer's individuality and creativity. In this regard, Palmer (1982:2) says :

If the purpose of criticism is to display as accurately as possible genuine quality of work, then our aim should be to use or evolve criteria which will be the most helpful in bringing out that genuine quality.

As Palmer points out, that criticism tries to display the quality of work, our aim is to try and bring out the quality of the work of C.T.Msimang. The focus will be placed on conventional techniques that Msimang uses in tackling themes in his poetry.

1.5 Definition of Terms

The terms to be defined here are those that appear in the topic. Other terms are those that appear from time to time in the ensuing discussion.

Theme

Many writers and critics have tried to define what theme is. The following few definitions will help us to understand the general nature of the theme in the work of art in general and in poetry in particular.

Reaske (1966:42) views theme as :

..... the central concept developed in a poem. It is the basic idea which the poet is trying to convey and which, accordingly, he allows to direct his imagery. Most of the images, in other words, are designed to present the central theme or main idea of the poem. The theme, in other words, is the poet's reasons for writing the poem in the first place. It is usually an abstract concept which becomes concrete through idiom and imagery.

The definition by Reaske is all-encompassing and dynamic. Firstly, he says the theme is the central idea which the poet tries to convey to his readers. Secondly, the theme reveals the poet's intentions, emotions, attitudes, experiences and thought processes. Thirdly, these abstract thoughts and feelings are made concrete through a skilful use of the language. The definition is quite appropriate when one is dealing with the study of themes and techniques in poetry. This definition gives us a guide that in order to grasp the theme in any work, we have to find out the kind of general experience that links all its details together. In this definition of theme Reaske is supported by Msimang (1986:133) where he says :

Theme is the central idea in a story. It is the subject of discourse. The fact that the theme is central implies that everything else is concerned with conveying that theme. Moreover, if the study is the work of art, the thematic structure will draw all these elements into a unity. Theme gives meaning to a story.

Msimang emphasizes the point that the theme is the central idea in the work of art and that it basically gives meaning to the whole story or poem. Whatever material

the author or poet uses to shape his piece of work, all shed light on the central idea that the poet has in mind.

Nxumalo (1988:72) adds to the definition of a theme by giving possible areas from which themes can be drawn : beliefs, society's problems, customs, traditions, the list is endless.

Finally, Cuddon (1976:695) as if summarizing, says the following about theme :

Properly speaking, the theme of work is not its subject but rather its central idea which may be stated directly or indirectly

There is one thing that one should note after looking at these definitions of theme. There are familiar themes, but what is of basic interest to critics and readers is the particular or striking way in which the theme is handled in a particular author's work. As critics we should move from the general to the particular. Just as a designer might make a beautiful piece of furniture out of something as common as wood, so the poet makes something original out of ordinary material – the daily experiences of this life that might pass unnoticed.

Style

It is not quite feasible to talk about themes without touching upon the style of the author. One should understand style as the totality of techniques that the author employs in expressing his feelings and deepest thoughts. The basic element of style is the effective use of language to reach one's desired effects. Van Gorp (1984:291) makes this remarks about style :

Style is the characteristic way in which someone expresses himself in a language.

Van Gorp maintains that style is the characteristic way in which the writer manipulates the language to suit his or her desired ends. Looking at this definition makes it clear that style includes choice of words, sentence construction, figures of speech and any possible linguistic technique the writer may apply to fully represent his or her ideas in a written form.

In this definition of style, Van Gorp is supported by Abrams (1981:90) who regards the question of style as :

..... a manner of linguistic expression or a manner of expressing whatever the author wants to say in prose or verse.

As the topic of this study implies, its basic aim is to find out what manner of linguistic expression Msimang applies in his poetry. It is also to see how effective those expressions are in contributing towards the form of his poetry. This means that the study will look at the means C.T.Msimang uses to make his poetry effective and meaningful to his audience. Pretorius and Swart (1982:10) say about style :

Style is the way in which the writer uses the linguistic means at his disposal to produce a definite effect on the reader.

Pretorius and Swart point out that style involves any linguistic technique that the writer may use to produce a definite effect on the reader, because in the end it is the reader who will savour the taste of a complete work.

Imagery

Imagery presupposes the quality and craftsmanship of the writer and the peculiarity of style. Abrams (1981:78-79) defines imagery as follows :

Imagery (that is "images" taken collectively) is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other works of literature whether by literal description, by allusion, or in the analogues used in its similes and metaphors.

What Abrams suggests in these remarks is that the writer can create vivid pictures whereby abstract ideas and complex feelings and experiences can be described in concrete terms. This means that imagery makes these abstract feelings, ideas and experiences readily perceptible to our senses.

Forgle (1962:22-23) says the following in support of what Abrams says about imagery :

Poetic imagery has to be judged according to its creative power, connotative richness of its content and the harmonious unity and fusion of its elements.

What is remarkable from this broad definition of imagery by Forgle is that the writer may use figures of speech such as similes, personification, metaphor and many more linguistic devices to create a harmonious unity and richness of expressive language to enhance the beauty of his work.

Miller and Currie (1970:61-62) say the following about the work of a poet :

The quality of a poet, and hence of poetry, could be established by the originality and fitness of his metaphors and similes employed To be effective, the metaphors and similes of poetry have to be fresh, vivid and original.

As Muller and Currie point out, we aim to establish the originality and fitness of imagery employed by Msimang in his poetry. We want to find out how fresh and vivid his imagery is.

Symbol

The symbol is a factual detail that represents an idea. In poetry or literature, the audience is not told what the symbol stands for, the reader has to find out for himself. The symbol is therefore a form of indirect metaphorical speech which is meant to carry a hidden reality.

Boagey (1977:40) says :

The word symbol is related to the Greek word 'Symbolon', which was half a coin carried away by each of the two parties to an agreement as a pledge of their good faith. A symbol is therefore like half a coin – it is an object, the other half of the coin is in the idea it represents. Everything depends on the two parts coming together.

Boagey suggests that it is up to the reader to put two and two together and work out the meaning of the symbol from the text. Looking at the nature of a symbol as pointed out above, one can see that there are many examples that are used in everyday life which an average person can fairly recognize as a symbol representing something else. The colour white symbolizes purity, a crown

symbolizes kingship, a cross symbolizes the Christian faith, a dove symbolizes peace and so forth.

Ntuli (1984:176) says the following about symbolism :

A poet may not be aware that his images form a pattern which can be interpreted symbolically. He may not have intended to give any symbolic significance to such images. One reader may see symbolism in a poem in which the other person sees none.

Ntuli agrees that the reader is free to say whatever he can say about the work under scrutiny as long as he supports his assertion by referring to the text. But at the same time Ntuli warns against reading into the poem symbols which are not there.

Technique

Technique can be defined as the writer's attempt at using available literary devices to arrest or capture the reader's attention and compel his momentary interest not to flag. Technique is the writer's way of manipulating the language to make the reader become eager to know what is next in what he reads. It might be the use of a highly suggestive and gripping title, expository argument, figures of speech, structural devices such as parallelism, refrain and rhyme. The basic questions in technique are : How does the writer or poet succeed in interesting his readers ? In what forms does the writer shape his work ?

From the above, it becomes clear that technique has more to do with diction : choice of words, sentence constructions and the appropriate manner of expression. Technique differs accordingly to different authors. It is obvious that each will

have his own peculiar style. Some techniques are more appropriate and more effective than others. Techniques are not abstract and cannot be separated from the ideas and feelings expressed by the authors. They rather enhance the beauty of the author's work. We are going to investigate what techniques Msimang uses, and how effectively and appropriately they are used.

One may ask : What are the differences or similarities between technique and style ? The two are almost the same but slightly different because style is the totality of techniques that the author uses in expressing his thoughts and experiences in a written language. As pointed out above, Pretorius and Swart (1982) say that style is the way in which the writer uses linguistic means to produce a definite effect on the reader. Technique is the device that the author uses to make his style unique or different.

1.6 Chapter Division

Chapter One : Introductory Chapter – Preliminaries

This chapter contains a brief description of this project : aim of the study, motivation, statement of the problem and methodology. The definition of terms treated in this chapter are : theme, style, imagery, symbol and technique. The division of chapters is also treated.

Chapter Two : Themes on Music and Love

We look at the messages contained in the poems on music. We find Msimang saying that music helps to dissipate sorrow, pain and tension. Music is known to bring entertainment to the lonely. We find Msimang singing praises cheering in honour of composers like Mzilikazi Khumalo, who took pains to compose music in their native languages despite negative criticism from their peers.

Concerning the theme of love we find Msimang aspiring to know what love is. He wants to know the secret that takes totally different people from different places and makes them one in the bonds of love. Msimang ultimately comes to the conclusion that complete and sanctifying love is the love that springs from the heart of man unto the Supreme Being.

Chapter Three : Themes on heroes and death

In the poems on death, Msimang shows that death is the ultimate end of any living organism. He is not hesitant to acknowledge that it is not an easy thing to come to terms with the reality of death. Everytime death strikes, the pangs seem new as though they have never struck anyone else before. Msimang points out the injustices and frustrations caused by death. He comes to the conclusion that the

clouds of death never last forever. As a Christian, Msimang finds consolation that death was conquered in Calvary.

Msimang sings praises in honour of heroes such as B.W. Vilakazi in education, M.G. Buthelezi in politics and Desmond Tutu in religion. What binds these heroes together is that they have achieved much against all odds. These people showed love and determination to reach for the stars despite unlikely and trying circumstances. Therefore these people are worthy to be called heroes, as a result they are worthy of our praise, admiration and emulation.

Chapter Four : Themes on historical places and water

The human race loves history, the reason being that we have much to learn from historical events and historical places.

In his poems, Msimang makes historical places look more attractive and interesting as they are part and parcel of the history of the Zulu nation. He writes about places like Ihlathi laseNkandla (Iziziba : 23) and Isandlwana (Iziziba : 41).

The Nkandla Forest is the place where King Cetshwayo, the son of Mpande, was laid to rest. The ensuing discussion will also show that Nkandla Forest is the last battlefield between the Zulu people and the White people. ISandlwana is also a historical battlefield where the Zulu's fought against British colonialism at Rorke's Drift on the 22nd and 23rd of January 1879. Besides their historical importance, these places are praised for their natural scenic beauty.

Msimang says three important things about water. Firstly, he says water gives a serious challenge to the faint-hearted ones. Water drowns those who cannot swim, but those who can swim against and across high tides deserve our praise and admiration. Secondly, water is a cleansing medium in baptism and provides

sanitation in our households. Thirdly and most importantly, whoever drinks the water that Christ gives never gets thirsty again, as Jesus told the Samaritan women in the Bible. We find all these as we glean through the poems : Iziziba zoThukela (Iziziba : 64) and La Manzi (UNodumehlezi : 70).

Chapter Five : Conclusion

This chapter points out the highlights and findings of the study as a whole. It remarks about the way Msimang tackles each theme, as each theme involves form, technique, imagery and symbolism. It indicates how Msimang creates vivid pictures whereby abstract, complex feelings and experiences are described in concrete terms, thus making them readily perceptible to our senses.

Chapter Two

2.0 Themes on Music and Love

2.1 Introduction

Our main concern on the subject of music is : What are the messages contained in the poems on music ? Msimang shows that music covers a wide spectrum : Where there is joy of wedding bells, music forms part of the celebration. When writing about music, Sithole (1968:6) says :

“The Zulu people sang all the time. Women sing as they plough, weed and harvest. Men sing as they build a cattle-kraal, as they go to war and even as they drink beer. A Zulu person cannot imagine life without music. Music is not only beautiful but tasty”.

C.T Msimang also wrote many poems on the subject of love. On reading these poems, one finds that Msimang would like to know what love is. On this subject of love, we will concentrate on these poems :

1. Uthando (Iziziba : 8)
2. Uze unghuzise amanzi (Iziziba : 12)
3. Xola Hleziphi (UNodumehlezi : 36).

In this subject of love, we find Msimang being amazed by the mysterious nature of love, its capability to bring joy and hatred. He finds that love can be as cold as ice or as bitter as gall. Msimang finally comes to the conclusion that complete and sanctifying love is the love that springs from the heart of man unto the Creator. In

short, Msimang writes about the mystery of love : The love among human beings, love for created phenomena and the love for the Supreme Being.

On the subject of music the focus is on these poems :

1. Umculo (**Iziziba:56**).
2. Nezinyoni ziyamdumisa (**UNodumehlezi:34**).
3. KuMzilikazi (**UNodumehlezi:49**).

2.2 Themes of Music

What effects does music have on the hearts and minds of human beings ? What is the meaning and place of music among the African people, especially the Zulu people ? These are some of the questions we grapple with on this subject of music. Msimang is aware that music plays a major role in the lives of any people. He shows to have sentimental and passionate feelings for music. He is also optimistic that his audience will share the same feelings as his. He writes both poems glorifying music purely as music and poems glorifying the composers of music. In the poem Umculo depicts the joy and soothing effects of music.

*Mculo Menamisi !
Uju lwengoma yakho lumtoti,
Ilunambithe inhliziyo yanethezeka,
Nomphefumulo wami waduduzeka*

(Iziziba : 56).

*Music Consoler !
The honey of your song's savoury,
My heart tasted it and got satisfied,
My soul was consoled.*

Msimang notes that music rejuvenates the heart with joy. He acknowledges that music helps to dissipate sorrow, pain and tension. Mlondo (1994:63) agrees with Msimang where he says :

“Music is known to console a depressed and dejected soul. It is known to bring happiness and delight to the sorrowful. It is also known to bring entertainment to the lonely”.

Msimang uses a highly figurative language in the poem Umculo. Personification is a figure of speech that is used predominantly. He refers to music as a Consoler,, a Rejuvenator, a Reviver and many more. What is observed in all these names is that they all reveal a positive influence of music. Metaphor is also fruitfully used. Here Msimang refers to music as a soothing honey itself. The soothing ointment heals the dejected soul :

Nomphefumulo wami waduduzeka.

(Iziziba : 56).

My soul was consoled.

This consoling nature of music made Mlondo (1994:64) to be reminded of a common chorus :

Ukuhlabelela kuyamthokozisa,

Odabukileyo, hlabelela.

MEANING IN THE POETRY OF D.B.Z. NTULI.

Singing delights,

The sorrowful, sing on !

The reading of the poem Umculo shows that Msimang has a way of finding the thought, molding and clothing it with apt, significant words and expressing it accurately. It seems like Msimang would like to persuade his audience to view things from his own point of view. Anyway this is what the poet is at liberty to do, as it can be seen in Elliot (1975:3) where he says the following about the poet and the enjoyment of his poetry :

“Apart from the variety in which the poets have used their art with greater or lesser success, with designs of instruction or persuasion, there is no doubt that the poet wishes to entertain or divert people. He should normally be glad to be able to feel that entertainment or diversion is enjoyed by a large number of people as possible”.

The aim of section is to highlight what Msimang says on the subject of music. What persuasion he has, what entertainment or diversion he proposes ?

The sixth stanza of the poem Umculo is quite a remarkable summary about the nature of music and how it affects mankind :

*Mculo Kuphila kwami!
 Umkenenezo wakho ufana nephilisi,
 Umphefumulo ogulayo uyawuphilisa,
 Ingoma yakho injengesithobo.
 Izidubulo namaxhwala iyawathoba,
 Igekle lakho lingumjovo
 Izinhlungu neminjunju liyayijova.*

(Iziziba : 56).

*Music My Life !
 Your melody is like a tablet,
 The troubled soul is healed,*

*Your song has a soothing effect.
Pains and ailments are healed,
Your trumpet is an injection,
Pains and ailments are healed.*

The atmosphere of delight and healing in music is conveyed to the reader like an infectious laughter. This stanza shows Msimang's wizardry with language. It shows that he is never short of the right words to express his appreciation and admiration of music. He is capable of using linguistic techniques such as personification and metaphor with ease. It has been shown above that he uses personal nouns such as Consoler, Reviver, Rejuvenator and Joy when referring to music. As a poet, Msimang is aware that in personification the inanimate things are made to share the qualities of animate things. Simpson (1972:443) defines personification as :

"A figurative use of language in which human qualities or feelings are attributed to non-human organisms, inanimate objects or abstract ideas. Personification may be the representation of an abstract quality or idea by a human figure."

In this definition of personification, Simpson is supported by Reaske (1966:39) who says that personification is the process of assigning human characteristics to non-human objects, abstraction or ideas.

The poet takes his poem to another level. Msimang stops from personifying music and takes it to another level where he calls music his life itself – what a wonderful metaphor when he says :

*Mculo Kuphila kwami !
Umphefumulo ogulayo uyawuphilisa*

(.Iziziba : 56).

Music My Life !

You heal the troubled soul.

Here Msimang elevates music to life itself, something you cannot live without. He sees music as something indispensable, for music heals the troubled soul. He therefore extends his metaphor by calling music joy itself :

Mculo Kuthokoza kwami !

Lapho uhaqe inhliziyoyami,

Ngiyinkosi yesigodlo ngokunethezeka.

(Iziziba : 56).

Music My Joy !

When you hug my heart

I am like a king in his palace.

When you look at this poem, you find that Msimang sings praises to music : its nature and how it affects people spiritually, physically and emotionally. This is seen in the techniques he applies to make his voice heard. Look at the metaphors he uses : he calls music the joy itself, it is his life itself. These are wonderful examples of metaphors. In metaphor the poet or writer makes an instant comparison and an imaginative fusion of two objects under comparison. This means that the first object is readily replaced by the other. Reeves (1987:152) defines metaphor as follows :

“Metaphor : the application in prose or poetry, a word or expression to some other word to which it does not apply literally. There is always an implied or compressed comparison” .

The definition of a metaphor by Reeves above shows that in metaphor the poet's expression receives clearer imaginative force and vividness. The poet gains clarity of expression where meaning is impressed more indelibly and memorably as seen in the following verses from Umculo.

*Igekle lakho lingumjovo,
Izinhlungu neminjunju liyayijova.*

(Iziziba : 57).

*Your trumpet is an injection,
The pains and ailments are healed.*

The poet now refers to the trumpet as an injection. It is not likened to injection, but there is a compressed comparison where we find the trumpet being an injection itself. Literally music is not an injection, but the poet makes use of a metaphor to create an imaginative force and vividness of what he feels when he listens to music.

Msimang likes the very nature of music. This can also be seen in the poem "Nezinyoni ziyamdumisa" where he says music soothes the heart, prickles the mind, opens up the eyes and ears too :

*Huban'ingom' eyenway' inhliziyo,
Huban'ingom' ethunuk' ubuchopho,
Evul' amehlo ivul' izindlebe,
Kuvulek' ingqondo nemicabango.*

(UNodumehlezi : 34).

*Sing the song that soothes the heart,
Sing the song that prickles the brain,
That opens up the eyes and opens up the ears,*

That opens up the mind and opens up the thoughts.

One may sum up that music heals in totality for it heals the body, mind and soul. The above viewpoint leads Msimang to conclude that music prickles the mind, thoughts and ears to be opened up to the love of God, the full manifestation of greater love :

*Ngiluzwe nami udumo nomdumo,
Lapho nimdumisa ngezindumiso;
Nimdumisa ukuphuma kwekhwezi;
Nimdumisa ukuphuma kwelanga;
Nimdumisa ukwethwasa kwehlobo;
Nidumisa indalo yonke yoMdali.*

(UNodumehlezi : 35).

*And I feel the glory and the rhythm,
When you worship Him in hymns,
When you worship Him from the rise of the morning star,
When you worship Him from sunrise,
When you worship Him from the coming of the summer,
When you worship the Creator of all creation.*

Msimang points out that music makes one to be together with God. Music prickles the mind of God, touches His heart and makes Him long to be with those who worship Him in song. This assertion reminds me of a story in the Bible, Acts 16. Here we find Paul and his co-worker, Silas, imprisoned at Philippi. About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake which shook the foundations of the prisons, the chains fell of the prisoner's hands and the doors were open. This episode of singing supports Msimang's viewpoint that the power of music makes one to be together

with God beyond the cloud. This idea to be together with God beyond the cloud seems to be the poet's deepest desire as it can be seen in the following verses :

*Nginikeze amaphiko omculo,
Ngimpampe ngawo ngithilileke.*

.....

Ngihlanganiswe ngale kwamafu noKhonziwe.

(Iziziba : 57).

*Give me the wings of music ,
That I may fly leisurely.*

.....

And be together beyond the clouds with the Worshipped One.

As T.S. Elliot (1975) has pointed above, the poet wishes to persuade and entertain his or her audience. The poet wishes that his persuasion, entertainment or diversion should be enjoyed by a large number of people. When Msimang sees the birds singing, he pleads with the birds to allow him and his audience to joint in the song in praise of God. This is at the same time a plea to the audience to share his feeling of praise :

*Vumani simdumise nathi,
Sishaye amagekle nemitshingo,
Sibong' ukuqhakaza kweminduze,
Kuhakaze nakith' ithemb' elisha.*

(UNodumehlezi : 35).

*Allow us to praise Him together with you,
To beat upon the flutes and trumpets,
And be thankful for the blossoming trees,
That in us the new hope may blossom.*

Msimang re-iterates the idea that music makes one to delight in glory and honor of God. Music lightens the burdens in our hearts and makes the countenance radiant with hope and joy unsurpassed as we behold God's creation – the blossoming trees and flowers.

The above stanza reminds one of David, the Jewish poet who says in Psalm 150 :

*Praise Him for His mighty acts,
Praise Him according to His excellent greatness,
Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet,
Praise Him with the timbre and dance,
Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.*

(King James Version).

The way Msimang writes his poetry makes one to agree with Deutsch (1952) who says that poetry has grown, not out of literature, but out of life and in turn poetry nourishes life. Msimang discusses issues that affect us all in this life. Indeed Msimang's poetry nourishes life, it extends one's horizons and makes one part and parcel a new knowledge of reality.

2.3 The Honour due to the Composer

The previous paragraphs have looked at what Msimang says about music purely as music. The emphasis on the following paragraphs will be on what he says about the composers. The discussion will be based on the poem :

KuMzilikazi

(UNodumehlezi : 49).

Msimang introduces a new dimension on the subject of music. He now glorifies the talent of the composer who turns ordinary words and create harmony. Msimang thinks of the sleepless nights spent by the composer coining and developing the sweet melodies. The days spent preparing the song from tonic solfa to staff notation, trying to know where to fit the soloist, duet, the choir, the orchestra and the possibility of a mass choir. Msimang is quite aware that the composer is never applauded when the song is rendered on the stage. It is normally the choir and the conductor that receive a warm round of applause and everybody forgets the composer.

This sad state of affair we find the composer being forgotten to be applauded was also remarked by Mlondo (1994:78-79) who says :

“It is the common knowledge that whenever a musical item is rendered, it is the choir that is applauded with a shiny shield. It is also the conductor who may even be elevated and carried high in appreciation of his conducting skills. It is also the soloist who is applauded for singing so sweetly and finally be awarded a trophy. The composer is never remembered – the person who in fact should be ranked number one.”

In the poem KuMzilikazi, Msimang reminds the audience that the composer should be given the honour due to him. It is also in this poem that Msimang seems to detect Mzilikazi is not applauded :

*Umagiya ogiye ngamanothi,
Ngob’ ugiye enkundleni yomculo
Kodwa ontanga abamshayelang’ ihlombe.*

(UNodumehlezi : 50).

The dancer who danced on notes,

*He danced on the dance floor,
Yet the peers never applauded.*

The poet paints a picture of a person on the dance floor, yet he receives no applause. The reader is worried, then Msimang gives the reason for the absence of applause :

*Bebeth' uMzilikazi uyayon' ingoma,
Ngob' ugiy' ebheke kithi KwaZulu,
Kant' ontanga bagiya ngomphesheya.
Bagiya ngesihlangu sikaMozathi,
Bagiya ngesihlangu sikaHandeli.*

(UNodumehlezi : 50).

*They claim Mzilikazi spoils the music,
For he sings the Zulu based music,
When the peers sing in European.
Singing in the style of Mozart,
Singing in the style of Handel.*

Despite the absence of applause from fellow African composers, Msimang applauds Mzilikazi's attitude in composing music. Msimang has reasons why he applauds Mzilikazi :

*Kant' uMzilikazi ugiya ngesikaMalandela,
Khona eyozwiwa kithi kwaMalandela.
Kuzwe nabaphansi kuvume nabaphezulu.*

(UNodumehlezi : 50).

*But Mzilikazi sings in the style of Malandela,
For him to be heard by the people of Malandela.*

Even ancestors will hear, and the living will nod.

Msimang gives an applause to Mzilikazi's determination to stick on music that reveals and treasures the African heritage, especially the Zulu culture. He encourages Mzilikazi to go on composing songs in Zulu against all odds. Zulu, so says the poet, is the language understood by the large and various number of people, as well as the ancestors. The poet says that the songs in Zulu appeal even to the unlearned, which is the bigger percentage of the people of Malandela. The ancestors who knew nothing about the European style of Mozart and Handel will enjoy and appreciate music in their own language.

The message is loud and clear; being learned does not mean to forget your own people, language, background, culture and heritage. Mzilikazi is learned and well-versed in the European styles of music :

Umagiya ogiy' enkundleni kwa-UNISA,

Wagiya qede bamgax' iziqu.

Wagiy' enkundlen' enkulu eWits,

Wagiya qede bamgax' iminyezane.

(UNdumehlezi : 50).

He danced on the stage at UNISA,

And he was adorned with a degree,

He dance on a big stage at Wits,

And he was adorned with hoods.

This stanza is adorned with imagery, the use of language and the shape it assumes. It reveals Msimang's craftsmanship and the peculiarity of his style as a poet. Abrams (1981:78-79) defines imagery as follows :

“Imagery (that is ‘images’ taken collectively) is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other works of literature whether by literal description, by allusion or in the analogues used in its similes and metaphors”.

This definition of imagery suggests that the poet can create vivid pictures whereby abstract and complex feelings and experiences can be described in concrete terms. Imagery makes these abstract experiences readily perceptible to our senses.

The above stanza is rich with parallelism. Cope (1968:4) refers to perfect parallelism and parallelism by linking. He says that perfect parallelism repeats the idea with different words whereas parallelism by linking puts forward the idea with identical words.

It is noticeable that Msimang adopts the praise poems’ techniques such as linking, parallelism, allusion, repetition and many more. We see initial linking in the following verses :

Wagiya qede bamgax’ iziqu,

Wagiy’ enkundlen’ enkulu eWits,

Wagiya qede bamgax’ iminyezane

(UNodumehlezi : 50).

The interesting example of perfect parallelism is where Msimang uses different words in his final linking :

..... bamgax’ iziqu,

.....bamgax’ iminyezane.

The words iziqu and iminyezane both mean or refer the academic regalia, being used together shows the poet's skilful manipulation of language.

Msimang uses an appropriate metaphor where he refers to Mzilikazi as a skilful hunter. The great hunters among the Zulu people use knobkerries instead of guns. Mzilikazi is thus called a hunter who uses treble clefs, the knobkerries for creating sweet melody :

Oze nezagila zomculo ngaseMantungweni,

Mhla ephuma inqina yonqambothi,

Wathakazis' izagila zavum' invunge.

(UNodumehlezi : 51).

Who came with trebble clefs from Mntungwa people.

When he went out on a hunting spree of melodies,

He shuffled the trebble clefs and created sweet melodies.

The trebble clef really does look like a knobkerrie. The hunter prepares himself before going out for hunting, and the composer takes his time to find the right words in composing his song. Metaphor refers to an instance where you directly call something by another thing without actually comparing them. According to Cuddon (1976:391) metaphor is :

"A figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another.

The comparison is usually implicit".

In this definition of metaphor, Cuddon is supported by Reaske (1972:36), who says :

“Usually a metaphor is created through the use of some form where the poet transfers the qualities and associations of one object to another in order to make the latter more vivid in our mind. The metaphor in other words establishes an analogy between objects without actually saying that it is establishing this contrast”.

To sum up, one may say that Msimang ranks Mzilikazi high in the society. The composer is encouraged to continue composing music against all odds, his works shall never go unnoticed and his labors are never in vain. The poet gives a hearty applause to Mzilikazi for having persisted and stood firm in spite of criticism. What Msimang encourages most is the use of Zulu language. He says that it is preferable to compose in one’s native language because many of the composer’s people would understand and appreciate music ;

*Kuseyiwo umlozi engawuzwa,
Ngeluse uchibidwane kababa,
Ngawuzwa ngingezwa ngawushay’ indiva,
Sengiwuzwa ngiwushayel’ ihlombe,
Sengiwuzwa ngolimi engiluzwayo.*

(UNodumehlezi : 35).

*‘Tis the same melody I heard,
When I looked after my father’s cattle,
I heard it without understanding, and I ignored it,
Now I understand it and applaud it.
For I hear it with a language I understand.*

2.4 Theme of Love

C.T. Msimang also writes poems on the subject of love. We find him being amazed by the mysterious nature of love that is capable of bringing joy and hatred. He writes about love among fellow human beings, love for created phenomena and love for the Supreme Being. He views complete and sanctifying love as the love from man unto God.

The discussion on the subject of love will be based on the poems :

1. Uthando (Iziziba : 8)
2. Uze ungiphuzise amanzi (Iziziba : 12)

Msimang is quite aware that love is mysterious. The atmosphere of uncertainty about the nature of love can be seen in the first stanza of the poem Uthando :

*Uyimpicabadala weBathabisile,
Uyinqabakayitshelwana weDuduzile,
Uyindida weBathandekile,
Uyinkinga weBazondekile,
Uyingwijikhwebu Bahlukanisile.*

(Iziziba : 8).

*You're a mystery Joyful,
You're a mystery Comforter,
You're a puzzle Loving-One,
You're a problem Hated-One,
You're so mysterious Separator.*

The poet uses different words such as, “impicabadala, inqabakayitshelwana, indida, and ingwikhwebu” to show that love is a feeling that can neither be readily explained nor understood. To make his idea concrete, Msimang uses personal nouns. The first three personal nouns are endearing names :

1. Joyful (Thabisile)
2. Comforter (Dudzile)
3. Loving-One (Bathandekile)

The last two names show the negative side of love :

1. Hated-One (Bazondekile)
2. Separator (Bahlukanisile)

Looking at these personal names, the positive one count three, the negative ones count two. This implies that generally love has a positive effect on the lives of human beings. Love comforts and brings joy but one should not overlook the fact that love can hurt so bad sometimes.

The poet looks at the way love captivates both men and animals alike. He looks at the cattle as they show their love by grooming each other and say :

*Ngisho nezinambuzane uzihungile,
Izintothoviyane zaze zafa zibeletene,
Abantu bona bazethuke sebakhe emkhathini.*

(Iziziba : 8).

*Event he insects you've taken them captive,
The elegant grasshopper died on the other's back,
The humans built castles in the air.*

The theme developed here is that love makes one not to see things as they really are. One can see bright light on a dark and stormy night. The person in love sometimes does what is contrary to the real life situations – as the poet says he sweats on an ice-cold day. If one looks at the whole poem : Uthando, one can make a conclusion that the poet says love is blind, love makes one to look through blurry eyes. This is supported by the lines :

*Imamba nendlondlo zaphenduk' iziquzi,
Amagquma nezikhisi kwaphenduk' amathafa.*

(Iziziba : 8).

*The Mamba and Black Mamaba became little creeping lizards,
Lofty mountains and deep valleys became plateaus.*

These lines substantiate the idea that a person in love does what is contrary to the real life situations. He sometimes overlooks things that might put him in life threatening situations. The highly dangerous and venomous snakes are seen as harmless creeping lizards, high mountains are seen as flat areas that one can traverse without any difficulties. Life is like high mountains, valleys and gorges that need one's strength to be exercised with tact. These high mountains and deep valleys are like hurdles that need to be jumped with caution if one has to succeed in this life.

At last the poet paints a gruesome picture of love. He cries out like a woman in pains and says :

*Yebuya luthando unuka njengeqaqa,
Umuncu njengomhlonyane,
Ubaba kunesibhaha,*

Uqanda kuneqhwa.

(Iziziba : 8).

Oh ! Love you stink like a polecat,

You are bitter like an aloe sap,

You are bitter like gall,

You are colder than ice.

The poet makes his readers aware that love is not always wonderful but sometimes can stink like a polecat or bitter like gall. The polecat is a beautiful creature with black and white stripes from head to its fluffy tail. The beauty of this lovely creature is spoilt by its bad smell that is hard to tolerate. The above stanza's beauty lies in the similes used :

..... *njengeqaqa,*

..... *njengomhlonyane,*

..... *kunesibhaha,*

..... *kuneqhwa.*

Ntuli (1984:68) defines a simile as follows :

"The poet usually compares two things from otherwise dissimilar fields because those things share a common feature. In a simile this comparison is explicitly announced by the words "as" or "like" which in Zulu is the prefix "njenga" or similar formatives".

The list of comparisons shown above show the emphasis that the poet would like to put on the seriousness of the issue under discussion. The poet demonstrates his ability to put originality behind a figure of speech and his manner of expression. It is not enough to point out the figure of speech used by the poet but what is equally

important is to how to what degree such a figure of speech contributes to the success of the poet. The aloe sap, the gall and polecat are all unpleasant things. When love is compared to these things, one realizes that love is sometimes unpleasant. Altembend (1966:18) says the following about a simile :

“A figure of speech in which similarity rather than identity’s asserted. The figure of speech which includes one of several words such as “like”, “as” and “than”.”

In these lists of associations and comparisons one finds that Msimang applies a simile as a technique to achieve crisp conciseness and concentrate as much meaning as possible in his poetry. These examples offer us a moment to pause and reflect on the everyday life experiences that might pass unnoticed if the poet had not captured them in poetry. Miller and Currie (1970:61-62) say that the quality of a poet, and hence of poetry, could be established by the originality and fitness of his metaphors and similes employed. To be effective, the figures of speech has to be fresh, vivid and original. This is what Msimang does in the application of such techniques in his poetry.

2.5 Love and the Beloved One

Absence makes the heart to grow fonder. This is a pithy saying that most of the poets seem to enjoy and entertain. The point that Msimang puts forward on the subject of love is that love relationship should be forever. He says that lovers should be ever-willing to be together because that makes their love to grow from strength to strength, Msimang says the most important thing about love relationship is that the lovers should always enjoy and long to be together :

Lapho ukusa kuqhakaze amazolo,

*Ngikubone uza, ukhashwa
Amakha amnandi kusasa.
Ngiyokulindela ngasemthonjeni,
Ngikulindele, ngikulindele.*

(Iziziba : 12).

*When dawn is lively with dew drops,
I'll see you coming, accompanied
By the fresh scent of the morning.
I'll be waiting by the fountain side,
Waiting for you, waiting for you.*

The poet knows that true love never fails and that good things of this life, and life to come, come to those who truly wait. The poet uses a metaphor of a fresh scent to depict how he loves his beloved one. The poet wants to make it clear to his readers that true love conquers all. There should be nothing in this life that stops or hinders the love relationship.

The poet is always concerned about the society and its activities. Koenig (1957:21) regards the society as a group of people held together by common traditions, customs or common culture which exists among members. In such a case one can argue that the subject matter of poetry is mainly concerned about the human nature in its social relations. Therefore poetry carries a social responsibility. Bateson (1950:59) says the following about the subject matter of poetry :

“Even important things like economic or political system cannot be the subject matter of poetry except as the objects of human emotions and reflections. The inner meaning of poetry is the synthesis of conflicting attitudes”.

Msimang tries to show that everybody has a social duty to carry out for the betterment and welfare of the community. He cherishes the view that the union of male and female should be voluntary both in its conception, commencement and duration. This union should be governed by the mutual feelings of the individuals concerned, for the poet says :

*Uyazi bengizimisele,
 Ukukuwola ngikugone,
 Libantubahle nawe umuhle.*

(Unodumehlezi : 36).

*You know I was so willing,
 To embrace you in my arms,
 At noontime when you're most beautiful.*

The poet seems to have a social responsibility to make his readers aware that marriage should be an enjoyable institution, an everlasting bonding of man and his beloved wife. Happy couples make happy homes and that happy homes are the backbone of a healthy nation. In this regard of the stability of home and family life, Goodman (1947:44) says :

"Happy homes are the backbone of a nation. The yardstick by which South Africa can measure its true greatness is not the wealth which lies at the bottom of its gold and diamond mines, its latent mineral wealth or agricultural resources, but by the strength and moral fibre of its inhabitants, and the stability and permanence of home life."

The reading of the poem Xola Hleziphi reveals that the poet longs for this stability and permanence of home life as he says :

Inyang' eqhakazis' uthando,
Ibiyolunisel' olwethu,
Luqhakaze luze luthela,
Nezinkanyezi zilukhwezele
Bekuyoze kuphum' ikhwezi,
Elibikezel, ukusa
Nethemba lothando olusha.

(UNodumehlezi : 36).

The moon that makes our love to blossom,
Would water our love,
And make it to blossom and bear fruit,
The stars would make it bright
Until the rise of the morning star,
That heralds the dawn.
And our love made new.

The rise of the morning star gives rise to the hope that their love is will be renewed day by day. This is the hope that lovers should cherish. Maybe this would be a cure to what we see nowadays, love relationships and marriages crumbling against the rocks day by day.

The language used by Msimang in the above stanza is characterized by terseness of expression. The moon is personified as a person watering the poet's love. This love is metaphorically referred to as a flower that blossoms and bears fruit. What fruit ? Possibly the poet speaks of love that blossoms until the two decide to get married for he says : "The stars would make it bright". The poet hopes that the children would make their marriage happy. The poet is concerned about the

stability and permanence of home and family life in the society. He is mainly concerned about human nature in its social relations. Milubi (1983:14) says the following about the successful application of imagery :

“A successful poet makes use of words that carry pictures so as to evoke a sense of feeling in readers. He uses “mental pictures” so that his audience may experience imaginatively that which has come to them through his words. They are able to grasp the complexity of total situation”.

Msimang’s use of imagery reveals his ability to identify with other people and his capability to find adequate words to express himself.

2.6 Money and Love

In the poem Hhawu ! NgoMaganedlula, Msimang looks at the love of money. He looks at the uses of money, elusive nature of money, the way people go into extremes trying to have a lot of money and lastly the different names given to money. What is left to say is : What is so poetical that the poet says about money ?

Msimang introduces his poem by using a metaphor. He refers to the coin as a beautiful lady :

Ngiyithandile le ndilingana bo !

Kanti uyindilingana nje

Uyagingqilika.

(UNodumehlezi : 25).

I just loved this round-faced lady !

You are round-face thus,

You roll away.

The poet looks at the cylindrical shape of the coin and says it is in its nature to roll away. He then sounds a note of warning that the people who worry themselves about money soon find themselves in trouble – both physically and spiritually :

Umuntu ekulandela,

Angay' abamb' ulwandle.

Umunt' ekulandela,

Angay' aminz' olwandle.

(UNodumehlezi : 25).

When one desires after you,

May find oneself embracing the sea,

When one desires after you,

May find oneself drowning at sea.

The imagery of the sea above is so impressive that one vividly imagines the perils of desiring after money that slips so easily from one's hands. One may even go to stokvels or money-lenders trying to find money. Trying to make repayments with its exorbitant interest rates make one to feel like being tossed in the giant waves of the oceans. Desiring after money makes one to find oneself in great difficulties, embracing the oceans and catching the phantom or illusion.

Biblical influences and biblical allusions feature from time to time in Msimang's poetry. With regard to biblical influences and allusions in Zulu poetry, Ntuli (1984:47) says :

Biblical influence is evident in Zulu poetry. During the early stages of modern education among the Zulu, the missionaries played an important

part. In school much emphasis was laid on reading and studying of the Bible. This accounts for the abundance of Biblical stories and excerpts in Zulu poetry”.

The stanza above where Msimang wants to praise Him by beating upon the flutes and trumpets has an allusion to Psalm 150, where David, the Jewish poet says :

*Praise Him for His mighty acts,
Praise Him according to His excellent greatness,
Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet,
Praise Him with the timbre and dance,
Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.*

(King James Version).

Mdumiseni ngenxa yezenzo zakhe zamandla,
Nimdumise ngenxa yobukhosi bakhe obukhulu,
Mdumiseni ngezwi lecilongo,
Nimdumise ngogubhu nehabhu,
Mdumiseni ngesigubhu nokusina,
Nimdumise ngezigubhu ezinezintambo nemitshingo.

The birds and other natural phenomena sing praises to God, so human beings must willingly join in singing hymns and praises to the Creator to whom love and music go together. The similarities between the poem and this biblical excerpt is evident. What is interesting to note is that the poet does not retell or take the biblical story as it is, but he uses it as a nucleus from which he develops something new.

2.7 Concluding Remarks

On the subject of love, Msimang says that love should be eternal. The couples should always be aware of their vows :

*Mina kunye engikwaziyo Nomali,
Sisobabili sokwehlukaniswa wukufa !*

(UNodumehlezi : 26).

*I know only one thing Money,
Together we stay until death do us part !*

But still Msimang warns that the readers should not be made blind by any kind of love :

*Ngakhangwa ukukhanya kumnyama khuhle,
Imamba nendlondlo zaphenduka iziquzi,
Amagquma nezikhisi kwaphenduk' amathafa.*

(Iziziba : 8).

*I saw the bright light on a pitch dark night,
The mamba and black mamba became little lizards,
Lofty mountains and deep valleys became plateaus.*

In short, the poet says when you are in love, you should never lose sight of the harsh realities of life around you. He concludes that perfect love springs from the heart of man unto the Creator.

On the subject of music, Msimang says that music is a soothing medium. He says there is music fit for every situation – from weddings to funerals, from

entertainment to worship. Msimang says that music makes us to be one with God in the clouds above :

Ngigcwalise ngamandla omculo.

.....

Ngihlanganiswe ngale kwamafu noKhonziwe.

(Iziziba : 57).

Fill me with the power of music.

.....

And be together beyond the clouds with the Worshipped One.

Msimang is also disgruntled by the fact that the composer does not get any recognition or applause after all the work he has done. The work of turning ordinary words and create harmony to bring joy and life itself to people. Instead of being applauded, the composer is forgotten and the applause goes to the conductor of the choir.

Msimang then writes a poem, KuMzilikazi, where he encourages composers to go on against all odds. Mzilikazi's case is exceptional for he composes music in Zulu, his native language. The poet says even though Mzilikazi is ridiculed for that, he should stick to it because Zulu is the language that is understood by the large number of people – both learned and unlearned. It is the language understood even by the ancestors :

Kant' uMzilikazi ugiya ngesikaMalandela,

Khona eyozwiwa kithi kwaMalandela,

Kuzwe nabaphansi kuvume nabaphezulu.

(UNodumehlezi : 50).

But Mzilikazi sings in the style of Malandela,

*For him to be heard by the people of Malandela,
Even the ancestors will hear, and the living will nod.*

Msimang says music can be experienced through the senses of touch, taste, hear and sight. He says music has a soothing touch, tastes like a healing tablet, hearing a trumpet injects life and one dances for joy. The stimulation of these senses brings joy inexplicable :

*Imizwa yokwenama iyakitazeka,
Ngename ngokwenama komntwana
Ngingcebeleke ngokuncebeleka komakoti,
Ethokozele umyeni*

(Iziziba : 57).

*The senses of delight are prickled,
I delight with a delight of a baby,
I'm entertained with an entertainment of a bride
As she is delighted for her bridegroom.*

The discussion also showed that Msimang uses language in a delightful way. He has a way of expressing himself using most of the linguistic devices such as simile, metaphor, personification etc. Msimang's poetry makes one to agree with Deutsche (1958:255) who says that poetry is at its best when the wild spirit of imagination is wedded to concrete fact. It is the poetry in closest and most intimate union with the positive realities and complexities of life.

Chapter Three

3.0 Themes on Heroes and Death

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with heroes as they are found in different spheres of life. Msimang looks at heroes in education : B.W. Vilakazi and D.B.Z. Ntuli, heroes in politics : M.G. Buthelezi and heroes in religion : Desmond Tutu. It is in the interest of this discussion to look into the central idea developed by Msimang in these poems on heroes and death.

We are interested to know how he originates and expresses his thoughts. How he proposes new avenues in developing and supporting his ideas.

Roberts (1988:10) reminds us the following about the thematic analysis :

“The first requirement of the finished theme – is that it has a central idea. We will consider the theme as a developed set of paragraphs, all related systematically to a central idea. Everything should be directly connected to the idea or should contribute to the reader’s understanding”.

We will look at the themes developed in the poems on heroes and death, more especially at the techniques that Msimang uses to mould his poetry and contribute to the reader’s understanding.

3.2 Heroes on the Field of Education

This section will be based on the following poem :

1. Ku D.B.Z. Ntuli (Iziziba : 9)
2. UBhambatha kaMakhwatha (UNodumehlezi : 46).

3.2.1 KU D.B.Z. NTULI

Msimang says that D.B.Z. Ntuli is one of the leading examples of people who achieved much against all odds. He is a person who deserves our praise and emulation. Looking up to Ntuli evokes a response of determination to succeed no matter how high the obstacles and hurdles are, the sky is the limit. Msimang says that D.B.Z. Ntuli regards education highly, but he knows that attaining it requires man to cultivate perseverance and determination. This is seen in that Msimang uses the word “shikisha” which can be translated as, “be determined, struggle along”.

Umshikishi wendlela,
Ayishikishe owabo baze badinwa,
Uyishikishe ephikelel’ eNdulinde,
 Owabo bathi iyaqansa.

(Iziziba : 9).

The determined-one along the way,
 Who was determined whilst peers lost hope,
 He was determined to be at Ndulinde,
 Whilst the peers thought it cumbersome.

The repeated use of the word “determined” is a technique in its own. It is parallelism where the poet uses initial linking to draw the reader’s attention into the theme developed. The reader begins to look at D.B.Z. Ntuli as a hero. Not because everything was plainsailing but his determination put

him where he is today – a professor, prolific writer, an all-rounder who successfully writes poetry, novels, drama, language, manuals, essays and short stories.

The word “shikisha – to struggle” permeates the whole poem as if the poet wishes the reader could see the results of determination – not losing hope when things seem dark and unpromising. This word elevates the standard and tone of the poem :

Wayishikis’ ephikelel’ aMalanihili,

Owabo bathatha baduba,

Washikisha ephikelele phambili.

(Iziziba : 9).

He was determined to reach Marianhill,

Whilst his peers gave up,

He was determined to look forward.

The repeated use of the word “washikisha” imprints in the minds of the readers that determination breeds success. The faint hearted villains faint along whilst the determined heroes struggle along and succeed. The poem traces Ntuli’s education from Ndulinde Primary, Ndaleni Secondary, Marianhill High School to the University of Zululand where he completed his B.A. degree in 1963.

This movement from one educational institution to another is supported by UNIZUL CONVONEWS (1988:12) where it says :

“Deuteronomy Bhekinkosi Ntuli was born at Gcotsheni, in the district of Eshowe on 8 May 1940. He received his primary

education at Gcotsheni and Ndulinde Primary Schools, and his secondary education at Indaleni Institute. He did his matriculation at St. Francis College, Marianhill. He completed his B.A. degree in 1963 at the then University College of Zululand”.

The calculations show that Ntuli completed his B.A. degree at the age of 23, quite a tender age and amazing achievement considering the time in which he grew up. Soon after being appointed a lecturer at the University of South Africa in 1967, he furthered his studies to obtain Hons. B.A., M.A. and crowned it all with his doctoral degree entitled “The poetry of B W Vilakazi” in 1978. It is therefore no surprise that after achieving so much against all odds that Msimang refers to Ntuli as a brave giant :

Ingqwayingqwayi yaseGcotsheni.

(Iziziba : 9).

The brave giant of Gcotsheni.

There is a good metaphor that the poet uses when he compares the hero and the villains. Reeves (1987) has been quoted above saying metaphor always has an implied or compressed comparison. In this poem Ku D.B.Z. Ntuli, the hero is compared to the peers who failed along the way because of their lack of determination.

The poet uses a metaphor, he refers to the hero as a brave giant whilst the failures are referred to as owls and ravens :

Omandukulu nezingwababane,

Kukhale kwababaza.

(Iziziba : 9).

Owls and ravens,
Screamed in howling.

Nobody would like to be called an owl or a raven. Msimang encourages the readers to have the same determination and faith shown by Ntuli, the hero. One should have a goal in life and strive to achieve that goal despite adversities, thus one can become a hero, a person who succeeds in spite of problems.

Ntuli is applauded as a hero for having done what was extra-ordinary at his age. The eighth stanza is a tribute to the works that D.B.Z. Ntuli has published thus far :

Okhiphe amangwevu osiba,
Wahloma ngezikhwili,
Wahloma ngemicibisholo,
Amadoda akwaZulu ahlom' amehlo,
Athi lukhulu luyeza,
Aphendukis' amehlo kaZulu,
Akhangwa wuthingo lwenkosazane,
Uthingo lwamnik' ithemba,
Ithemba lendandatho.

(Iziziba : 9).

He who fought bravely with a pen,
He prepared the fighting sticks,
He prepared the fighting arrows,
The Zulu men gazed in wide eyes,
And hoped for the great things to come,
The Zulu men turned their eyes,

They saw the rainbow,
 The rainbow brought hope,
 The hope of the ring,
 The ring of engagement.

The stanza above is highly poetic with rich, figurative language with expression receiving clearer imaginative force and vividness. The ignorant eye would not see that the stanza lists some of the books published by D.B.Z. Ntuli. The underlined words in the Zulu version show the titles of these books :

1. AMANGWEVU : Zulu poetry, 1990.
2. IZIKHWILI : Short stories, 1980.
3. IMICIBISHOLO : Short stories, 1982.
4. AMEHLO KAZULU : Zulu poetry, 1976.
5. UTHINGO LWENKOSAZANE : Short stories, 1980.
6. IMVUNGE YEMVELO : Zulu poetry, 1972.
7. ITHEMBA : Zulu drama, 1979.

Everybody likes to look up to the hero. Msimang would like his readers to look up to D.B.Z. Ntuli as a hero that is worthy of our praise and emulation. Msimang shows himself to be one of those people who were influenced by Ntuli, both as a poet and a person :

*USontandwase umntaka Ntuli,
 Ngibe ngiyambheka ngamthanda,
 Kanti sengingenwa ugqozi,
 Ngabe ngiyambheke ngamthanda,
 Ngaphinda ngangenwa lugqozi.*

(Iziziba : 11).

The Loved-One the son of Ntuli,
 When I beheld him I loved him,
 It was the time I was inspired,
 I beheld him again I loved him more.
 I was again filled with poetical inspiration.

This disclosure of Msimang's secret as a poet is wonderful, he beheld a hero and followed in his steps. Like Ntuli, C.T. Msimang has published many books as an author, co-author or an editor. One can mention only a few books such as :

1. IZIZIBA ZOTHUKELA : Zulu poetry, 1980.
2. UNODUMEHLEZI KAMENZI : Zulu poetry, 1990.
3. IZINSUNGULO : Zulu poetry, 1980.
4. IZIMBONGI IZOLO NANAMUHLELA, UMQULU 1 : Literary Criticism, 1986.
5. KWESUKASUKELA : Folklore, 1987.
6. FOLKTALE INFLUENCE ON THE ZULU NOVEL : Literary Criticism, 1986.

Msimang admits that he looked up to the hero and became what he is today. He therefore calls upon people from all walks of life to have the same determination shown by the heroes who know that the good things of this life come to those who work hard to get to the top.

3.2.2 UBHAMBATHA KAMAKHWATHA – Dr. B.W. Vilakazi

The poem UBhambatha kaMakhwatha is written in the form of praise poetry. There are also many parallels between the poem and the praises of famous Zulu kings. Msimang reveals that Vilakazi was still very young when he showed an exceptional longing for education :

*Iguq' elibhonge ngomfutho lisankomfuza,
Lisaxhofuz' olwesithol' esihle samaNgwane.*

(UNodumehlezi : 46).

The young bull that fiercely bellowed whilst a suckling,
Sucking the milk of a beautiful Ngwane's heifer.

The poet uses apt language. Look at the beautiful oblique parallelism :

..... lisankomfuza,
Lisaxhofuza

These verses remind us of the verses in the praises of Dinuzulu which say :

*Ithole lakakaMsweli
Elanyise liguqile.*

(Nyembezi, 1958:105).

The calf of Msweli's heifer
That sucks whilst on knees.

Msimang uses the word Nggabashiya to show that Vilakazi was a brilliant scholar. This word can be translated as "sprinting, cruising, dashing". The poet says :

*Ivukan' elitehe ukusuka langqabashiya,
Langqabashiya liyowel' iNkobongo noMhlali,
Langqabashiya liyophuz' uMvoti noMadidiba.*

(UNodumehlezi : 46).

The calf that soon sprinted,
It sprinted crossing Nkobongo and Mhlali,
It sprinted and sipped Mvoti and Madidiba.

The words ngqabashiya and phuza which can be translated “spring and sip” respectively show that the hero accomplished everything with ease because of his brilliance. This brilliance can be seen in that Vilakazi acquired his degrees within a very short time. Vilakazi’s educational endeavors were an inspiration to other African scholars. This earned him a place of honour among the African pioneers who raised the torches and gave light to the multitudes in the dark. Msimang says the following when congratulating the graduates in the poem Onoziqu bakwa-Unisa :

*Halala nakini zinhlabi zokujula !
Nin' enijule naphuma nesikhuni emanzini
.....
Kunamuhla lokhu ningikhumbuza izingqalabutho,
Ningikhumbuz' oLangalibalele benoVilakazi.*

(UNodumehlezi : 43 and 46).

Praise be unto you divers of the deep !
Who dived into the deep and rose with burning torches
.....
‘Till today you remind me of pioneers,
You remind me of Langalibalele and Vilakazi.

Msimang views Vilakazi as one of the African pioneers in the field of education. These are the people who built the foundation on which we stand today; the road on which we travel and the raised light that we still follow. These are the people who are worthy of our praise, admiration and emulation. Msimang encourages his readers to take this torch, as in the relay games, and run forward making it sure that the torch never dies out but extended to the future generations.

Msimang congratulates Vilakazi for having completed his Masters and Doctoral degrees within a short time, which amazed many people :

*Uvava lwakithi lwase Mzwangedwa,
Aluphonsi luchoma ngazo zombili,
Ngoba luchome u-M.A. beno D.Litt,
Abezindlu nezindlwana bayikhex' imilomo.*

(UNodumehlezi : 48).

The experienced bull of our village Mzwangedwa,
It doesn't fight it works wonders,
It was then adorned with M.A. and D.Litt,
Those of mansions and ghettos marveled.

In his book "The Poetry of B.W. Vilakazi", Ntuli (1984:2-6) shows that Vilakazi completed his Masters degree in 1937, with the dissertation entitled : "Conception and development of poetry in Zulu". Soon after that still working at the Witwatersrand University, Vilakazi topped all his educational efforts in 1946 with a doctoral degree with the thesis entitled : "The oral and written literature in Nguni".

Vilakazi was also a prolific writer among the books he published we find the following :

1. NOMA NINI, Zulu Novel, 1935.
2. INKONDLO KAZULU, Zulu poetry, 1935.
3. UDINGISWAYO KAJOBE, Zulu novel, 1939.
4. NJE NEMPELA, Zulu Novel, 1943.
5. AMAL'EZULU, Zulu poetry, 1945.

In the poems on heroes, Msimang wishes to show his readers that a person needs to have goals, aspirations and dreams in this life. The person should stop at nothing to realise those dreams and aspirations. Doke (1947:187) who was a colleague of B.W. Vilakazi says the following about him :

“Vilakazi ... who was obsessed with a great desire for the intellectual upliftment of his people believed that his people are capable of rising high in intellectual achievements, devoted his energies, not only to himself but to the self-effacing and unselfish end of encouraging and advising many.”

The thematic analysis of C.T. Msimang's poetry reveals that he, like Vilakazi, is concerned with the issues touching the daily lives of the people. Msimang's organizational skills and craftsmanship with the language is highly commendable. His poetry tallies with what Reeves (1987:71) says about the experience reading poetry :

“If the reading of poems is not an enlargement of life, it is a waste of time. We read a poem with the purpose of trying to discover the essential life within it, both conscious and unconscious”.

The essential life within the poems on heroes is that one should stop at nothing, except death, to realise one's goals in life. Msimang devotes his energies to encourage his readers to look up to these heroes such as Langalibalele Dube, B.W. Vilakazi, D.B.Z. Ntuli and many others as heroes and pioneers who took pleasure in the struggle to emancipate their people from ignorance.

3.2.3 THE HEROES ON THE POLITICAL FIELD

This discussion will be based on the poem :

UMntwana Wakwa Phindangene

(Iziziba : 34).

It is important to note that the poet is not writing historical facts but he uses them together with his artistic innovation inspire a literary work. Drew and Connor (1961:4) say the following about the poet and his work :

"... the poet presents a new individual vision. A poet is always first and foremost an individual. His art is the assertion of his personal identity. Even if he is writing in an established convention, he is always saying implicitly : This is how I personally have experienced things, come and share my sensations; feel it through my mind and observation, look through my eyes, hear it with my ears."

The basic questions as we deal with the subject of heroes are : What sensations shall we feel together with the poet ? What shall we experience and see through his eyes ? What conclusions shall be made according to his observations ?

The poem UMntwana wakwaPhindangene shares many characteristics with the praises of Zulu kings, especially King Shaka, as we see in these lines :

*Indaba yenziwe yinkomo yasOsuthu,
Yon' ekhal' iphezulu kwaDlamahlahla.*

(Iziziba : 34).

The matter was started by the bull of Osuthu
That bellowed in the hills of Dlamahlahla.

These lines remind us of the verses from King Shaka's praises :

*Inkom' ekhal' eMthonjaneni
Izizwe zonke ziyizwil' ukulila.*

(Nyembezi, 1958:20).

The bull that bellowed at Mthonjaneni
The while tribes heard it's bellowing.

In these lines, Msimang reveals that King Zwelithini made a call inviting M.G. Buthelezi to be his Prime Minister. Osuthu is the district where the royal palace KwaDlamahlahla is built. It is also where many members of the Zulu royal family are buried.

Msimang likes to congratulate and praise the people for their achievements, especially in education. We find him remarking about Buthelezi's educational achievements :

*Oshaye induku yabamhlophe,
Waze wahlabana ngosiba,*

*Ngob' ephuz' amanzi aseFotheya,
Waze wathunga isicoco sabeLungu.*

(Iziziba : 34).

He who danced with the White man's stick
And won using a pen.
For he drank the waters of Fort Hare,
He weaved the White man's headgear.

Msimang praises Buthelezi as a hero for winning the battle using the pen and achieving higher education at Fort Hare University. As an enlightened political leader, Buthelezi is seen fighting for the liberation of his people.

*Mweli weliphesheya,
Owel' ephindelela,
Owele bamshayel' izandla.*

(Iziziba : 34-35).

He who crossed to overseas,
He crossed repeatedly.
Who crossed and the people applauded.

The masses applauded Buthelezi when he went overseas to plead for the liberation of his own people from oppression during the apartheid era. Msimang is aware that not all the people applauded Buthelezi's political activities for he hints on the assassination attempts on Buthelezi's life. In the seventh stanza the poet suspects that even the people from Buthelezi's political party were involved in the assassination attempt :

*NabeNkatha ngibasolile,
Mhlazana ephikelel' e Grafrinethi.*

*UShenge abamcabelang' indlela,
Bamyekele kwezinomeno.*

(Iziziba : 35).

Even the Inkatha people are suspected,
When Shenge went to Graaf-Reinet.
They never ensured safety precautions,
They let him walk on overgrown grass.

It seems from the above stanza that sometimes the Inkatha members never believed in Buthelezi's cause. They deliberately ignored to tighten safety measures, possibly because they wanted his position or they conspired with his enemies. Buthelezi was determined to realize his goal of seeing his people liberated despite problems and assassination attempts. This is the reason why Msimang hails him a hero who never quits when the going gets tough.

As we pointed out above, the poem has many parallels with the praises of King Shaka. Even in this assassination attempt, we find similar parallel in the following lines :

*OZihlandlo kaGcwabe ngibasolile,
Abasokoco.
Inkosi abayitshelanga izibuko,
Bayiweze ngelicons' amathe.*

(Nyembezi, 1958:21).

The Zihlandlo's of Gcwabe are suspected,
The witches.
They never showed the king the right ford,
They made him cross on the blood-dripping ford.

The poet seems to be saying that just as Shaka succeed to unite many black tribes under one Zulu Kingdom despite problems and assassination attempts, so Buthelezi will succeed in uniting both blacks and whites as a united people of the new South Africa.

The reading of the poems shows that Buthelezi knew those who made death plots on his life. This is seen in that several members of the old KwaZulu Government Parliament were cast out or had their membership terminated :

Inyath' ehlab' ezakubo
Ihlabe uHlengwa,
Ngaphakathi eshayamthetho.
Yahlaba uDladla,
Ngaphakathi eShayamthetho.
Yabakhiphela ngaphandle
Akwaba ndaba zalutho.

(**Iziziba** : 39).

The buffalo that fights his own,
 He fought Hlengwa,
 Inside the Parliament.
 He fought Dladla,
 Inside the Parliament.
 He cast them out,
 And nothing mattered.

From there the poet moves away from the in-fighting within the Parliament to the fight against oppression by the apartheid nationalist regime. The

poet puts an emphasis on the point that Buthelezi became an outspoken spokesman for the blacks :

Indida kwezimnyama.

Indid' edid' ezimhlophe

Ngoba kudidek' ezikaPawula.

(Iziziba : 37).

The mysterious man among the blacks,
He surprised many among the Whites
For he surprised the grandchildren of Paul.

As a political hero, Buthelezi shows to be an untiring spokesman for his people. The poem mentions many cabinet ministers and Prime ministers of the Nationalist Government to whom Buthelezi spoke face to face, pleading for the equal opportunities for all people irrespective of their colour or creed :

Ngimthanda ekhuphuka ngeziqongo zezintaba,

Mhla ephikelel' e Pitoli esigodlweni,

Wafike wamthibela uFostela.

.....

Mhla ephikelel' e Kipithawini,

Waphinda wamthibel' uFostela.

Abelungu kuze kwasa bengalele.

(Iziziba : 37-38).

I love him crossing the high mountain ranges,
Heading for the Union Building in Pretoria,
And came face to face with Vorster.

.....

Again went down to Cape Town,
 And again came face to face with Vorster,
 All the Whites had sleepless nights.

What enhances Msimang's poetry is his command of the language. His diction is quite amazing and exceptional. Look at the way he uses the word thiba. This word is normally used in Zulu when referring to a bull giving a frightening stance with an angry look on its face. This gives the opponent a sign that the things are bad, an unforeseen danger might come very soon if it is not being watchful. The crossing of the high mountain ranges is a sign or symbol showing that it was not an easy road that Buthelezi traveled but he did for he had a motive that pushed him behind, i.e. the desire to see the liberation of his people. The Union Building is referred to metaphorically as a palace (isigodlo).

Everybody knows that it is not an easy undertaking to go and visit a king's palace anyhow and anytime. But as a daring hero that is what Buthelezi did and thus deserves an applause. In the very same stanza above we find the poet using a hyperbole :

Abelungu kuze kwasa bengalelele.

(**Iziziba** : 38).

All the Whites had sleepless nights.

We are now living in a post-apartheid era because of such heroes as M.G. Buthelezi, N.R. Mandela, Tony Leon, Julius Nyerere, Albert Luthuli and many others who stood up against evil forces. When they acted it seemed as if they were up against the wall but today we enjoy the fruits of

their determination to have a democratic South Africa. These are the heroes worthy of our praise and adoration.

3.4 The Theme on Death

3.4.1 INTRODUCTION

The subject of death comes soon after the discussion of heroes as a fitting reminder that anybody, including the hero, will finally meet up with death, which is an ultimate end of any living organism. It might be the death of a flying creature, creeping creature or human being, but what is known is that it is not an easy thing to come into terms with the reality of death. The poets from different ages and races have tried to express their feelings and experience about death – portraying its injustices and frustrations it causes.

The poems about death might look at how death affects the bereaved or just at death itself and its nature. When commenting about death, Msimang (1986:121) says :

“..... yizinkondlo ezibalisa ngokufa kwembongi. Ziningi izinkondlo esithola kuzo izifiso zembongi ezisitshela ukuthi imbongi ifisa ingcwatshwe kanjani, izilelwe kanjani imizwa yembongi nxa ishiywa ngabazali bayo, ngabantwana bayo, nabanye bomndeni noma ngabangane nezihlobo”.

(“..... poems lamenting the death of a poet. There are many poems where we find the wishes of a poet, how he should be buried, how the family should pay homage to his death. There are poems dealing with the poet’s feelings on the death of his parents, his children, other members of the family or friends and relatives”).

The poet may write anything from the nature of death to the death of a close relative and the death of people in general. Ntuli (1984:111) says the following about the theme of death :

“Because death is an invisible phenomenon, poets use many devices to present it as a concrete image. Most of the poets personify death”.

This chapter aims at studying the theme of death in the poetry of C.T. Msimang as found in the following poems :

1. Ngiyakhumbula (Iziziba : 52)
2. Siwela iMoretele (UNodumehlezi : 14)
3. Ifu elimnyama (UNodumehlezi : 30).

The central idea or theme of these poems is Msimang’s laments over the causes and effects of death. These poems should therefore be viewed within the parameters of an elegy. Abrams (1981:46) says that the term “elegy” refers to a formal and sustained lament, and usually consolation for the death of a person. The poems on death show a passionate expression of grief resulting from death. Peck and Coyle (1984:15) say that the poem might start by grieving over death but ends where the poet comes to terms with the problem of death by creating an ordered response. It is therefore in the interest of this study to find what ordered response does Msimang come to when dealing with the subject of death.

3.4.2 THE DEATH OF A RELATIVE

In the poem Ngiyakhumbula we find Msimang lamenting the death of his father at an early age :

*Wafika kufa wasihlutha amaphiko.
Wafika wagalela kubaba ungasaqali
Ngoba uMgqabula wamthatha eseliklume.*

(Iziziba : 54).

Death came and plucked us off of feathers,
You struck a heavy blow to our father.
You took Mgqabula whilst a sapling.

There are many linguistic devices or techniques that are applied in this stanza. Firstly, death is personified – is seen coming and plucking off the feathers from the family. Secondly, to show how destitute the children were left at the death of their father, the poet uses a metaphor of feathers. We all know that the feathers cover the body keeping it warm. The plucking off of feathers removes the warmth and the well being of a family. The children were left young by a father who was still very young – as seen in the word “sapling”. The poet shows the cruelty of death and the suffering it causes. This beautiful use of imagery reminds us of the fact that imagery creates vivid pictures whereby the abstract experiences and complex feelings are described in concrete terms. Imagery, as seen in the stanza above, makes these abstract experiences about death readily perceptible to our senses.

Fogle (1962:22-23) says the following about imagery :

"Poetic imagery is to be defined broadly as analogy or comparison having a special force It is to be judged according to its creative power, connotative richness of its content and the harmonious unity and fusion of its elements.

In this poem Ngiyakhumbula, Msimang likens death to a monster that is so powerful that even a brave warrior cannot escape its grasp :

*Wambamba wamsobozela,
Ubaba owayengabhekani nensizwa.*

(Iziziba : 54).

You grasped him and devoured him,
My father who was a brave warrior.

The poet's father was a brave man, never afraid to take a stand and win against any assailant. But death conquered him, death – the ultimate end of any living organism.

Mlondo (1994:221) is also aware that nobody can escape the fate of death :

"The very fact that death usually strikes when people are unaware of any danger : joking and enjoying themselves, causes one to be sorrowful and sympathetic. The atmosphere of sorrow is aggravated by the fact that people can definitely not escape the fate of death".

The atmosphere of sorrowfulness in bereavement is made vivid by the poet's metaphor of chickens plucked off of their feathers :

Wafika kufa wasihlwitha amaphiko

(Iziziba : 54).

Death came and plucked us off of feathers.

The chickens left without feathers or wings to fly cannot fend for themselves. This could lead to their own death after the death of the father who was the only breadwinner that supported the family. Death is a cruel foe.

Peck and Coyle (1984:15) above say that the poet may end up coming to terms with the problem of death by creating an ordered response. Msimang comes to the conclusion that time is a great healer. He concludes that as time goes by, the grief over death passes by. The theme deduced is that even though we cannot escape the fate of death, we find comfort in that time heals and life has to go on as normal :

Akulanga liphuma lingashoni,

yebo impela ngiyakhumbula.

Akumnyama uhlala uhleli.

Ladlula lelofu elimnyama.

(Iziziba : 54).

There is no sun that never sets,

Yes I really do remember.

There is no darkness that never passes by,

The dark cloud at last passed by.

The poet uses the images of the sun and darkness to show that joy and sadness alternate in this life but all pass by. The poet concludes that death is part of life, for in this life we taste both bitterness and sweetness, interchangeably. That is why the poet says :

Inhlaba bangikhamela yona ngayiphuza,

Noju olumtoti lwaconsel' ulimi nganambitha.

(Iziziba : 55).

The aloe was crushed and I drank it,
The sweet honey dropped to my tongue and I tasted it.

Life, concludes the poet, is never a bed of roses, even the roses grow amongst the thorns. We must exercise our strength to shoulder whatever fate comes our way. We must learn to persevere in hardships and tribulations, rejoice in happiness and jublations.

3.4.3 DEATH OF PEOPLE IN GENERAL

Tompkins (1980:46) says that a book is not only a book, it is the means by which an author actually preserves his ideas, his feelings, his modes of dreaming and living. It is our aim in this section to find out what ideas, feelings and dreams are preserved by Msimang about the death of people not so close to him. The discussion will be based on the poems :

1. Ifu elimnyama (UNodumehlezi : 30)
2. Siwela iMoretele (UNodumehlezi : 14)

The poem Ifu elimnyama is Msimang's lament on the death of people in the black-on-black violence perpetrated by political intolerance among the blacks in South Africa. The poet centers on the historical incidents where the blacks killed one another. It relates the history of bloodshed amongst the blacks in the years from 1984 to 1986. The emphasis is on the places in the Vaal Triangle, Brakpan, Pretoria, Soweto and neighboring areas. This short background to the poem is found in Msimang (1990:82).

The television programme "Truth Commission Special Assignment", hosted by Max Du Preez in 1996-1997 revealed that this black-on-black

violence was instigated and perpetrated by the third force that wanted to destabilize unity among the black people. It seems as though the poet was aware of this third force as he says :

Limhlophe ndod' emhlophe limhlophe wu!
Kalinasicubu kalinamnkantsha kalinamvove.
Liphonse kodw' ungejwayeli njengenja,
Ziyokunuka ezomhlahlo ngengomboco.

(UNodumehlezi : 33).

The bone is white O! White man white as snow !
 It has neither flesh nor marrow nor anything.
 Throw it in but never get used like a dog.
 The diviners will point you out on the day of divination.

The poet is aware that the people are fighting like dogs but the bone over which they fight is without meat. The questions are : What did the white man throw in to cause a fight amongst the blacks ? What does the poet mean by the great day of divination ? The answers might differ but what is seen is that the poet laments :

..... *sikhihl' isililo,*
sililel' izizukulwane
sikhihl' isililo sefu elimnyama.

(UNodumehlezi : 30).

We lament a lament.
 We lament for the generations
 We lament for the dark cloud.

Scott and Kirchen (1989:7) say that form in poetry refers to the pattern and structure of the poem. In this definition Scott and Kitchen are supported by Peck and Coyle (1984:13) who say :

“Content is what a poem says, what is about, its subject matter. Form is the way in which it says it, how it is written, the language it uses, the pattern it employs. If we are to come into grips with poetry it does seem essential that we try to account for it’s most obvious feature, its use of patterned language”.

The poet tries to show that violence and death come so soon and unexpectedly finding people having nowhere to hide :

*Ngob’ izulu laduma kwacekeceke,
La kungekho munga kungekho mtholo,
Kungekho hlamvana lokusithela.*

(UNodumehlezi : 36).

For the thunder raged on an open space,
Where there is neither robust thorn nor acacia,
Neither a tiny branch for hiding.

These lines are reminiscent of the praises King Cetshwayo :

*UZulu ladum’ obala,
Lapha kungemunga kungemtholo,
UHlamvana bhul’ umlilo.*

(Nyembezi, 1958:83).

The thunder that raged on an open space,
Where there is neither robust thorn nor acacia,

The tiny branch that quells the fire.

The poet tries successfully to change the words to suite his own purpose to show that violence is so destructive like war that comes finding innocent people defenseless.

Ntuli (1984:11) points out that because death is an invisible phenomenon, poets use many techniques to represent death in concrete terms. Thus Msimang uses an image of a cyclone. The African people believe that a cyclone is a big multi-headed snake that lives in water and it is never seen by naked eyes. In violent times the people saw what they should not see :

*Inkanyamba sayibona ngamehlo,
Sayibona kwajilingan' igazi emithanjeni,
Sayibona kwashub' umnkantsha ethanjeni.*

(UNodumehlezi : 31).

We saw a cyclone with naked eyes,
We saw it and blood clotted in veins,
We saw it and the marrow curdled in bones.

We find the following pattern of initial linking in the above stanza :

Sayibona
Sayibona

What is striking and commendable is the use of synonyms following the word sayibona. The words "jilingana" and "shuba" refer to the change from liquid to solid. Both the blood and marrow are liquids, but as soon as shock comes as a result of violence, the liquids clot or curdle. The poem

Ifu elimnyama, deals with weighty issues of life and death. In this poem the poet is baffled by so many questions but he receives no answers. He is wondering : Why are the people pointing fingers at one another ? What has happened to their conscience ? He then condemns violence that makes people lose brotherly love and turn into hyenas and lions.

What ordered response or conclusion does Msimang come to in this problem of black-on-black violence ? Msimang concludes that through prayer alone we can see an end to this violence. Msimang dedicates the last three stanzas to the prayer for the nation. He pleads with the ancestors of the various ethnic groups to hear and answer the prayers of the victims of violence :

*Mathongo amakhulu abona konke,
Nikelani ezikhungweni zempi yomndeni.*

(UNodumehlezi : 33).

Great ancestors that see everything,
Rush to the battlefields of civil war.

Violence is found in a civil war, the war among related families or tribes. The poet pleads for the intervention of the ancestors :

*Mathong' amahle amoya muhle,
Phephethani ngomoya wempepho.
Kuphephethek' inkungu nencindezi,
Yomlalamvubu namafu amnyama.*

(UNodumehlezi : 34).

Great ancestors that are kind-hearted,
Blow away with the smoke of frankincense,

Blow the fog and oppression,
The mist and dark clouds.

The poet assumes that the people slaughter one another because their eyes are blurred by the fog, the mist, the dark clouds. He pleads that these hindrances might be blown away by prayer, as he mentions the frankincense. In religion incense symbolizes prayer. When the poet looks at the earth, he finds that it is polluted by the blood of his fellow men. He then prays that the heavy rains might fall and wash away the dirt and the people might welcome the summer. He says :

*Umhlaba wevathiswe ngezevatho eziluhlaza,
Uvunule ngembali yehlobo, umpingizane.*

(UNodumehlezi :34).

The earth adorned in green robes
Adorned with summer flowers, the lilies.

In this treatment of the subject of death, Msimang shows to have a compassionate understanding of human frailty and a sound view of man trampled by social circumstances. This is also evident in the poem *Siwela iMoretele*. In his own words, Msimang (1990:15) says that this poem commemorates the incident that happened on the 21st of November 1985. This is the time when the residents of Mamelodi East crossed the Moretele River to meet with the residents of Mamelodi West to organize a protest march against the rates' hike by the Municipality Offices. What happened that day was unexpected – the police brutality :

*Yasithibel' inkomo kaHaga ngenganono,
Yayithibel' imithonselana yemithelela.*

(UNodumehlezi : 15).

The police took a threatening stance in guns,
They took a stance against the defenseless small group.

The poet is trying to reveal that the police opened a fire on a defenseless people. This was a sheer brutality from the police. Even the nature was puzzled by what happened :

*Amadwala phansi abamba ongezansi,
Izinhlanzi zakuyek' ukutshuza zakhex' imilomo.*

(UNodumehlezi : 15).

The rocks underneath stood in amazement,
The fish stopped swimming and gazed in amazement.

The rocks and fish are personified, they stood in amazement, running short of words of shouting. Msimang laments the death of the innocent residents of Mamelodi. There is a beautiful symmetry that Msimang creates in this poem. He begins with a picture of a poet in soliloquy – speaking to himself about the way the people gathered on the banks of Moretele River. He ends with another soliloquy – speaking to himself as he recalls how the people died :

*Abaningi abayiwelanga okwesibili,
Balibona liphuma, abalibonanga lishona.
Nanamuhla amanzi asalila lesosililo.*

(UNodumehlezi : 15).

Many never crossed the river the second time
They saw the sunrise, but never saw the sunset.
To this day the waters are lamenting that lament.

The poet says the waters are still lamenting, thus he persuades his readers to grieve with him. How can the people keep silent when the rocks, the fish and the waters are still lamenting ?

3.4.4 THE VOICE OF PROTEST IN MSIMANG'S POETRY

Like any other form of art, poetry reflects the values of the age in which the poet lives. The poet concerns himself about what is going on around him, may it be the codes of conduct in social, political or moral spheres. In the subject of death, we find Msimang being more aligned to the voice of protest in poetry.

Verschoor (1972) writes at length about the voice of protest in English poetry. Verschoor says that in the poetry of protest the writer desires to express his awareness of what is evil and condemns such conditions as they occur in his society. In the poem "Ifu elimnyama" we find Msimang condemning the black-on-black violence. We find him in the poem "Siwela iMoretele" protesting and condemning the police brutality in manner in which they handled the Mamelodi Protest March of 1985. In the same poem Ifu elimnyama we find Msimang protesting against and condemning the manner in which the so-called right-wingers or third force perpetrate violence amongst the blacks.

The writer in protest poetry wishes to expose the circumstances and conditions that he finds it difficult to bear. Verschoor (1972:3) says :

"..... the poetry of protest is something more powerfully felt than the mere desire to rebuke or reprimand. Protest involves a state of mind as well as intention. It implies that the poet is profoundly,

often painfully, aware of the world of man around him, fully cognisant of what to him seems reprehensible and wrong with it and deeply disturbed thereby”.

Msimang's poetry about death shows that he is more disturbed and painfully hurt by the politically motivated deaths of his people. He protests against racial discrimination. This protest against racial discrimination finds its voice in the poem Imibala mihle yonke.

Ngiyithandile le ngwe emabala.

.....

Ithi lihle ibala elimnyama,

Ithi lihle ibala elimhlophe.

Ithi mahle kakhulu

Amabala amnyama namhlophe.

Ingwe iwakhotha onk' amabala.

(UNodumehlezi : 7).

I love this spotted tiger.

.....

It says the black spot is beautiful,

It says the white spot is beautiful.

It says all its spots are extremely beautiful.

The black and white spots.

The poet seems to derive his theme from the singer, Stevie Wonder who says ebony and ivory stay together in harmony on a piano. He protests against the apartheid system that divides the people along the colour lines in South Africa. So, there is a voice of protest in the poetry of C.T. Msimang. Thank God the apartheid system has collapsed.

3.5 Concluding Remarks

On the subject of heroes we find Msimang's theme of congratulating the people who achieve much against all odds. He says these are the people we should look up to – the people who show perseverance and determination despite the hurdles along the way. He congratulates people such as Dr. B.W. Vilakazi and Prof. D.B.Z. Ntuli in education, Dr. M.G. Buthelezi in political field and Desmond Tutu in socio-political field.

In the subject of death, Msimang finds that death strikes cruelly leaving orphans, widows and widowers without anyone to take care of them. But he comes to the conclusion that death is part of life and thank God the pain passes by as time goes by. He laments and condemns the death of people on violence and prays to the ancestors to intervene and bring peace and stability.

Chapter Four

4.0 Themes on Historical Places and Water

4.1 Introduction

The human race loves history, the reason might be that we have too much to learn from historical events and historical places. This love of history is seen in many poetic works such as :

1. Kwa-Dedangendlale, by B.W. Vilakazi (Amal'ezulu)
2. Izintaba zoKhahlamba, by S.Z.S. Dlamini (Itshe Lesivivane)
3. UMgungundlovu, by N.J. Makhaye (Isoka laKwa-Zulu)

On this subject of historical places we are going to deal with the following Msimang's poems :

1. Ihlathi laseNkandla (**Iziziba** : 23)
2. Isandlwana (**Iziziba** : 41).

Many of these places are part and parcel of the history of the Zulu nation and thus attract our interest and attention. Some of these places are important just for their scenic and natural beauty, the beauty that makes the poet to marvel at the wonders of God's creation. At times we find the places that are important to the life of the poet, not to the nation as such.

Msimang says three important things about water. Firstly, he says water gives a serious challenge to the faint-hearted ones. Water drowns those who cannot swim, but those who can swim against high tides and across are the heroes that deserve

our praise and admiration. Secondly, he says water is a cleansing medium in baptism – a symbol of purity. Water provides sanitation in our households.

Thirdly and most importantly, he says whoever drinks the water that Christ gives never gets thirsty again, as Jesus told the Samaritan Woman in the Bible. On this subject of water, we are going to deal with the following Msimang's poems :

1. Iziziba zoThukela (**Iziziba** : 64)
2. La Manzi (**UNodumehlezi** : 70)

Most of the poems on this section are characterized by themes of praise and nostalgia. The poets who write such poems are known as the Romantics. Romantic poetry presents natural goodness of human beings and events. They also cry out for the general beauty of yesteryears that seem to be vanishing from the minds of the majority. Peck and Coyle (1984:62) say the following about Romantic Poetry :

“The romantic poets repeatedly turn to nature, finding there a truth and value which had been lost sight of by rational philosophers”.

The concept of imagination is central in poetry for it is the creative insight of the poet that makes him to both perceive and create an order in the natural world. In this section, we would like to know how Msimang stirs our emotions, and enlarges the horizons of our imaginations. How does Msimang awaken social awareness as regards to some themes on historical places and water ?

4.2 The Historical Places

In the poem Ihlathi laseNkandla we find Msimang looking at the Nkandla Forest expressing his awe and respect :

*Nzima lemnyama yawobabamkhulu,
Bengingubani mina ukusondela kuwe ?
Bengiyokweneliswa yikho ukukweba.*

(Iziziba : 23).

The pitch black bull of our ancestors,
Who am I to come nearer to you ?
I'm satisfied by standing a far and look sneakingly at you.

The poet is aware that the forest commands awe and respect because it is a place where King Cetshwayo was buried.

The Nkandla Forest embraces the heritage of Zulu culture and therefore historically important. The poet's reverence for the forest reminds him of the praises of King Cetshwayo's praises :

*Inzima lemnyama,
Engabubende bangonyama.*

(Iziziba : 23).

The pitch black bull,
Which is like the clotted blood of the lion.

The reverence for the forest makes the poet to make repeated allusion to the praises of King Cetshwayo :

Ngoba ubumnyama bakho buyesabeka,

Lobo bumnyama bungiyengile

(Iziziba : 23).

For your darkness is awesome,
That darkness allured me.

When referring to the pitch-black bull in the praises of King Cetshwayo, the bard says the following, which is reminiscent to what the poet says when looking at the forest :

Inzima lemnyama,

.....

Ubumnyama bayo buyesabeka.

(Nyembezi, 1958:83).

The pitch black bull,

.....

It's darkness is awesome.

The beauty and awesome nature of the forest commands a respect which makes the poet feel not worthy of coming closer. The poet feels that the old forest knows much more than anyone living in these days. Nobody can explain or understand why the forest commands such dignity except the ancestors :

Jula nokujula kolwazi,

Ngoba ezinzulwini zomhlaba,

Ziyafinyelela ezakho izinzwani.

Phansi ezweni labaphansi,

Zifunde mthamo munye nabaphansi.

(Iziziba : 23).

Sink deep into the depth of knowledge,

For in the depths of the earth
 Your toes do get down there.
 Deep into the land of the ancestors,
 They eat together with the ancestors.

It seems like the poet has discovered the secret that makes the forest awesome. The forest is always in constant communication with the ancestors. The forest is personified as having the toes that reach into the depths of the forest and eats together with the ancestors. Msimang (1986:185) says the following about the Nkandla Forest :

"Yebo nemilando yaziwa yilo leli hlathi. Phela ngisho uHlamvana bhul' umlilo – uCetshwayo kaMpande ufihlelwe kulo leli hlathi. Phela nempi yokugcina phakathi kukaZulu nabelungu yalwela eMome, phakathi kuleli hlathi".

(Even the history is known by this forest. Even Cetshwayo, son of Mpande is buried in this forest. Even the last battle between the Zulu people and the Whites were fought at Mome, deep in this forest).

Standing afar, afraid of coming nearer, the poet feels the hands of the forest (personification) leading him as a guide through the forest :

*Ungibambe ngengalo sehli's iNkunzana,
 Sakhulek' endlini kaCetshwayo,
 Nokho akasiphendulanga.
 Ubepheth' umkhonto epheth' isihlangu.*

(Iziziba : 24).

You held me in your arm down Nkunzana River,

We saluted at King Cetshwayo's hut,
 Nevertheless he responded not.
 He held a spear and a shield.

As if it is in an educational tour, the poet is guided through the forest. He is shown Nkunzana River. Deep inside the forest, he sees and salutes King Cetshwayo's gravestone. He sees Cetshwayo's statue carrying a spear and a shield. In this poem, Msimang makes Nkandla Forest to look more interesting and attractive as part of the history of the Zulu nation and heritage.

Right through the poem the emphasis falls on the awesome and majestic nature of the forest and the respect it commands. Twice the poet says his feet tremble and fail to carry him. When he stands before Cetshwayo's monument, he says :

*Ngimbhekile kwashayana amadolo,
 Izinyawo zehlulekile ukungibeletha.*

(Iziziba : 24).

When I beheld him I trembled,
 My feet failed to carry me away.

Again, when he was taken to Nkunzana River, the poet is reminded this river was once drunk by His Majesty, King Cetshwayo and other historical heroes :

*Sagudla umful' iNkunzana,
 Ophuzwa yinkunzi yakithi oNdini.*

.....
*Ngadideka ngadiyazela,
 Izinyawo zehlulekile ukungibeletha.*

(Iziziba : 25).

We walked along the banks of Nkunzana,

Where the Bull of oNdini drinks.

.....

My mind went dizzy and dim,

My feet failed to carry me away.

The poet feels that even the Heavens respect the awesome splendor of Nkandla Forest. This respect is due to the forest because it has been there for ages past and will be there for ages to come ;

Simakade weminyakanyaka,

Iso lezulu elimnjonjo,

Liyakhophozela lakufika kuwe.

(Iziziba : 25).

Oh ! Desire of all ages,

The scrutinizing eye of heaven,

Bows in obeisance in respect unto you.

Msimang stands in amazement when he realizes that even the heavy rains and tornadoes never do any harm to the forest. These powerful natural phenomena lose power before the majestic forest.

What is supposed to be the destroying torrential floods simply flow down the river shyly and slowly, eventually running away to the sea :

Izivunguvungu zamazwibela omoya,

Zithunsuzeka kuwe ziphel' umfutho,

Zibubule njengempisis zikhukhule.

Isihlambi nesichotho nesangquma.

Kushay' amagatsha kuzisole,

*Imvula ingegobhoze nje nempela,
Inyobozela yehle ngezingatsha.
Simakade ungephazanyiswe.*

(Iziziba : 25).

The heavy whirlwinds,
Bump against you and lose power,
They howl like hyenas and run away.
The drizzle, heavy rainfall and torrential rains,
Beat against your branches and shy away.
You calm the rain that it may gush not,
It slithers down the branches.
Eternal-One you may never be disturbed.

The dignity that the forest commands makes the rain to respect it, the rain never washes away its soil, it never breaks its trees and their branches. Above all else, the poet sees the forest as the place where only the ancestral spirits live :

*Nkandla ulikhaya lamathongo,
Ngimfunge uCetshwayo eseNkandla !
Nkandla ungubaba nomama.*

(Iziziba : 25)

Nkandla you're a dwelling place for ancestors,
I swear by Cetshwayo who is at Nkandla,
Nkandla you're a father and a mother.

The technique that Msimang uses most in his poetry is a well rounded form in which he arranges his words and verses. According to Gurrey (1968:92) form is defined as follows :

“Form is the shape which the poet’s experience takes under strain of words, as well as the shape which the words take when subjected by the poet to a significant design”.

Form is the essence of poetry. It is the new meaning that comes into being when words start to interact. The poets use the main forms of figurative imagery such as simile, personification, metaphor and symbolism to create a harmonious unity and richness in that works.

In this poem **Ihlathi laseNkandla**, Msimang shows that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings taking their origin from emotion. He then tries to express this feeling of love and respect for the forest in a very accurate, expressive language and linguistic techniques as a oblique parallelism in this pattern.

Nkandla
 Nkandla

The poet swears by King Cetshwayo who was laid to rest at Nkandla Forest. Swearing is taking on oath meaning that what you say is true and you cannot change your statement. Msimang swears that Nkandla is a dwelling place for the ancestral spirits. He then goes on to say the forest is “a father and a mother”. Your parents are everything that you will ever wish to have around in this whole world. So the forest is the whole cultural heritage that the Zulu people have and should care for.

To sum up, although Msimang is not canvassing people for touring the place, he seems to succeed in awakening the love for visiting Nkandla Forest and learn much about this awe-inspiring historical place. He ends up by saying : “you are a

father and a mother”, which shows that the forest is everything that matters to him just as parents are everything that matters in the life of the growing child.

4.3 ISandlwana

ISandlwana is also one of the historical places in Kwazulu-Natal. It is the battlefield where the Zulu people fought against the British Colonialism. According to Knight (1992:34) the battle was fought for two days, 22nd and 23 of January 1879. This is also what we find when Msimang says :

UMakhasana wakh' umkhanya ngo 1879,

Zingamashumi mabili nambili

KuMasingana nawe wabasinga.

(Iziziba : 41).

Makhasana wanted to see closely in 1879,

On the twenty-second

Of January you wanted to see closely.

In Zulu we say, Uyadela uMakhasana, as an idiomatic expression meaning, “Happy is the person who is there seeing the events at first hand”. The poet is wishing he were there that day when the Zulus were showing their bravery looking face to face with the barrel of the gun. The absence of fear is seen when the poet says :

Wacija ngoMcijo,

Wakhanda ngoKhandampemvu,

Wabagoba ngeNgobamakhosi.

(Iziziba : 41).

You were sharpened with Mcijo,

You took a stand with Khandampemvu,
 You bent them with Ngobamakhosi.

The poem has an implication that the Zulus were fully prepared for the battle seeing the words used such as “sharpened, take a stand and bend”. Even the names of the regiments show preparedness :

1. Mcijo (The-Sharpended-Ones)
2. Khandampemvu (The-Experienced-Ones)
3. Ngobamakhosi (The-Ones-for-bending-the-kings).

The poem proves that the battle was raging furiously on both sides, neither side wanted to give in :

*Ilanga labaleka lathuthumela,
 Labaleka lasithela eNtshonalanga,
 Libona isidumbu phezu kwesidumbu.*

(Iziziba : 41).

The poet uses a personification here as a technique to show the nastiness of war. The sun is personified as a person running away in fear, running away from the horrible sight of human corpses lying waste. These corpses were terrible, with wounds of firearms and the wounds of pangas and spears.

Msimang says that the Whites hoped to accomplish a sweeping victory, but were surprised at the stance taken by the Zulu warriors :

*Beza bemagange abakaKhwini,
 Bezibona bengofeleba,
 Bakha izinqaba eSandlwana.*

Bathi duma zulu, laduma

Bathi banika mbani, labanika.

(**Iziziba** : 41).

The Queen's soldiers came in full vigor,
 They thought of themselves as the invincible,
 They built barricades at ISandlwana,
 They said let it thunder, it thundered.
 They said let the lightning strike, it struck.

The poet takes pride in the way his fellow men fought at iSandlwana. The British thought of themselves as the invincible but they were surprised when even many of their own people died in the battle. The sun ran away seeing both black and white corpses lying on top of each other.

Msimang ends up his poem in a prayer note. He prays for the reconciliation between the two races that fought at iSandlwana :

*Ubumnyama bedlula laphuma ilanga,
 Sandlwana sebaba mathambo – mhlophe.
 Angcwabe womabili amathambo,
 Elimnyama nelimhlophe
 Abedlule nokwedlule kungcwatshwe.*

(**Iziziba** : 42).

The darkness passed away the sun rose,
 Sandlwana they are now white-boned,
 Bury both the bones,
 The black bone and the white bone,
 Let all pass with the past and be buried.

Msimang ends up the poem by preaching the gospel of reconciliation. He says let us forgive and forget, let the bygones be the bygones. The darkness has passed by, the sun has risen therefore let all pass with the past. He says we must now look forward to the new beginning. Ntuli (1984:81) says the following about the historical episodes in literatures ;

The poet may use historical facts as a starting point. His poems must show his creativity very clearly”

Msimang’s creativity is clearly seen in these poems on historical places. He does not include unnecessary details that can be omitted for the sake of brevity and concentration in poetry. Msimang is commended for his ability to capture the drama and atmosphere of the incidents raised in his poetry. It seems that Msimang first made a research about these historical places before writing his poems. His details in the poem iSandlwana are further supported in history. Coupland (1948:9) says the following about the wars fought by the Zulus :

“Twice the Zulu were at open war with the White men, with the Boers in 1838 and with the British in 1879. Both these wars began with Zulu victories so complete, so decisive at moment, so grimly dramatic that they will never be forgotten. The scene of the second victory was at iSandlwana”.

If one reads Sir Reginald Coupland’s book, “Zulu battle piece : iSandlwana”, one finds that the British Colonialists in Natal wanted to colonize the whole of Natal and thus break the power of the Zulu Kingdom under King Cetshwayo. ISandlwana as a bloody battlefield is also supported by Knight (1992) who says that although the most valuable evidence is missing and the earliest recollections

are littered with contradictions, it is true that many of the senior British Officers who were taking major commands never survived the war.

4.4 Concluding Remarks

To sum up, the above remarks and recollections about ISandlwana support Msimang's understanding and love for the historical places. Msimang is also aware that there are always mutual mistrusts and fears between the blacks and whites in South Africa. He then uses his poetry as a springboard to preach the gospel of forgiveness, reconciliation and nation-building based on mutual understanding and acceptance. Msimang wishes to see the past with its absurdities passing by and being forgotten. He wishes to see everybody letting the bygones be bygones and starting the new beginning on a clean slate.

Chapter Five

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to give some concluding remarks about the findings on this discussion of Msimang's themes and techniques. The main focus will be on the use of language and the shape it assumes. We will also look at the quality of Msimang's craftsmanship and the peculiarity of his style as a poet. The poet uses the main forms of figurative imagery such as a simile, metaphor, personification and symbolism to create a harmonious unity and richness in their works. Miller and Currie (1970:61) say the following about the work of a poet :

“The quality of a poet, and hence of poetry, could be established by the originality and fitness of his metaphors and similes employed ... to be effective, the metaphors or similes of poetry has to be fresh, vivid and original”.

What Muller and Currie presuppose is that the poet can create vivid pictures whereby complex and abstract feelings and experiences can be described in concrete terms. How does Msimang describe the abstract and experiences ? How does he make these abstract ideas readily perceptible to our senses ? These are some of the questions that have been discussed in the previous paragraphs. They are now summarized in a form of a conclusion. These questions suggest the use of poetic imagery as it is found in the poetry of C.T. Msimang. Fogle (1962:22-23) say the following about poetic imagery :

“Poetic imagery is to be defined broadly as an analogy or comparison having a special force. It is to be judged according to its creative power, connotative richness of its content and the harmonious unity and fusion of its elements”.

This discussion will be looking at how Msimang applies the figures of speech such as a simile, metaphor, personification and symbol in his poetry. It is in our interest to know how vivid, how fresh and how original does Msimang apply the linguistic techniques in discussing his themes.

5.2 Personification

Richards (1964:302-303) places a great emphasis on the critical act that protects us from all irrelevancies. He proposes that the good reading of the poem is the secret of good judgement; it is the secret of finding the associative value of words that create rhythm and pattern in poetry. Boulton (1959:152-155) says that poetry is made of words, and obviously the choice of words is important in poetry. The poet uses words to convey his meaning in as few words as possible. This section tries to examine how Msimang applies personification as part of imagery to achieve crisp conciseness and concentrate as much sensible and desirable meaning in his poetry.

Abrams (1981:61) says personification is a term :

“.... in which either an inanimate object or an abstract concept is spoken of as though it were endowed with life or with human feelings or attributes”.

This definition suggests that in personification, objects can be addressed or referred to as humans. Thus the poet breaks up the barrier between the human and

inhuman. We find many instances where Msimang employs personification in his poetry. We find him referring to death as a greedy or selfish person :

Nawe kufa uligovu,

Ngob' uhlwith' uMaShezi.

Wangemuk' ithemba.

(**Iziziba** : 11).

Death you're a selfish one,

For you took MaShezi.

You took my only hope.

The poet speaks of "death" as if it is a person with emotions, cunning, pitiless and full of hatred. To show that death is pitiless, the poet uses the word "hlwitha", which can be translated "to snatch away forcibly". The poet motivates why he says death is pitiless. He says "death" snatched MaShezi away shortly before witnessing the first graduation ceremony of her son :

Ngithi sekuseduze saMome,

Asibone isicoco sezicoco

(**Iziziba** : 11).

When it was so near as Mome,

To witness the crown of crowns.

This application of personification by Msimang is so outstanding and amazing. It shows his ability to use picturesque language. It reveals Msimang's capability to make a way to the feelings of his audience and make it see the cruelty and wickedness of death.

Msimang uses personification so extensively in the poem Umculo. He uses it to express the joy that one derives from listening to music. He calls music in many endearing names such as the rejuvenator, the joy, the reviver and the life itself :

Mculo Mhlumelelisi !

Amandla omculo ayahlumelelisa.

(Iziziba : 57).

Music Rejuvenator !

The power of music rejuvenates.

Music is personified as someone who is a rejuvenator, the one who brings life to a dejected soul. We all know that music soothes the soul, therefore this personification is appropriate and supported by Reaske (1966:39) who says :

“Personification is the process of assigning human characteristics to inhuman objects, abstractions or ideas. Attributing personal form to such non-human objects and ideas is a standard rhetorical device of style” .

Personification is a rhetorical device used so widely and appropriately as a mechanical technique in the poetry of C.T. Msimang :

Amanzi eMoretele athenek' amandla nethemba.

Awagagamelang' okwamagagas' oLwandle Olubomvu.

.....

Alila isililo sezililo nesilokozane.

(UNodumehlezi : 15).

The waters of Moretele lost power and hope.

They neither rushed nor billowed as waters of the Red Sea

.....

They lamented a lamentation and cried bitterly.

Msimang shows that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings taking their origins from emotions. The poet then tries to express these feelings in a very accurate and expressive language. In the example of personification cited above, the waters of Moretele are presented as sympathetic spectators to the dilemma the Mamelodi's residents encountered. The rushing waters lower their speed in amazement. They never rushed to the sea or billowed like the waters of the Red Sea. Nobody passes by the accident scene as though nothing happened. The waters are therefore personified as people being amazed of what happens to the Mamelodi residents. They cry bitterly seeing the people dying in the hands of the police.

The sun too, is personified. The sun retreated, as a human being, in front of danger and death :

Nelanga elalisihola laholekela emuva.

(UNodumehlezi : 15).

The sun that led us retreated.

The sun gave light that led the Mamelodi residents on their protest march. As soon as danger and death came face to face with the protesters, the sun retreated, running away from the face of danger. The poet elevates these objects and thus indirectly shows his wish that his audience could listen to him and be sympathetic just like these objects. There are many more examples of the way Msimang employs personification to enhance meaning in his poetry. It is hoped that these few examples given will reveal how appropriate and extensive Msimang employs personification to achieve special effects in his poetry.

5.3 Simile

Simile is a figure of speech which draws an explicit or direct comparison between objects or things that belong to a normally different categories. In Zulu this figure of speech is normally introduced by explanatory conjunctions such as “*nganga, fana and njenga*”. Altembernd (1966:18) defines a simile as :

“A figure of speech in which similarity rather than identify is asserted. The figure includes one of several words such as ‘like, as, and than’”.

The definition of a simile above asserts that a simile will compare two different things which are not related, thus transferring the qualities of one thing to another by means of comparison. Ntuli (1984:151) defines a simile as follows :

“The poet usually compares two things from otherwise dissimilar fields because those things share a common feature. In a simile this comparison is explicitly announced by the word “as” or “like”, which in Zulu is the prefix “njenga” or similar formatives”.

It is not enough to point out the figure of speech in a poem, but what is more important is to see and explain how the poet demonstrates his ability to put originality behind such a figure of speech. It is also equally important to assess the degree to which such a figure of speech contributes to the success of an individual’s poetry.

We find Msimang using a strikingly good simile in the following example :

Mculo Mvuseleli !

Unjengezikhuni emalahleni alothayo

Unjengamafutha esibanini esivuthayo.

Unjengensika ethembeni elintengayo.

(Iziziba : 56).

Music Rejuvenator !

You're like wood on dying coals.

You're like fuel on a flickering lamp.

You're like a pillar on a diminishing hope.

Ntuli points out that in a simile the poet compares two different things from dissimilar fields because those things share a common feature. This is what Msimang does, and he does it so well in the verses above. When he listens to music, he finds it to be like wood on the dying coals. Wood brings life to the dying fires, so music brings life and joy to a dejected soul. He likens music to a fuel on a flickering lamp. If one puts fuel or paraffin on the lamp that begins to burn low, the lamp regains life and begins to burn so bright. He says music is a pillar that keeps the house upright, so it keeps the listeners hopes high and it is promising.

In these lists of associations and comparisons one tends to agree with Msimang that music really does revive the soul. It has been shown that a simile is identified by the formative “fana-”, “njenga-”, “nganga-” and similar formatives. This is what Msimang does in these examples :

1. Njengezikhuni,
2. Njengamafutha,
3. Njengensika.

What is remarkable about this application of a simile as a technique of style, is that Msimang employs a simile to achieve a crisp conciseness and concentrates as

much meaning as possible in his poetry. This allows the reader to see a lot in a little that has been said. The reading of Msimang's poetry offers the reader to pause for a moment and reflect on the everyday life experiences that might pass unnoticed.

5.4 Metaphor

In metaphor the poet or writer makes an instant comparison and an imaginative fusion of two objects under comparison with the use of explanatory prepositions or formatives. The first object is readily replaced by the other in a metaphor. Reeves (1987:152) defines metaphor as follows :

“Metaphor : the application in prose or poetry, a word or expression to some other word to which it does not apply literally. There is always an implied or compressed comparison”.

This definition by Reaske above shows that in metaphor the expression receives a clearer imaginative force and vividness. The successful application of a metaphor as a technique of style makes the writer to gain strength and clarity of expression. He or she impresses meaning more indelibly and memorably as seen in the following example :

*Igekle lakho lingumjovo,
Izinhlungu neminjunju liyayijova.*

(Iziziba : 57).

Your trumpet is an injection,
The pains and pangs are healed.

The poet refers to the trumpet as an injection itself. The trumpet produces music that heals, music that soothes the pains and pangs. This apt use of a metaphor is also seen in the poem Ngiyakhumbula, where we find the theme of death being depicted as a devouring monster :

Wafika kufa wasihlutha amaphiko,

Wagalela kubaba ungasaqali.

(**Iziziba** : 54).

You death came and plucked off our wings,

You repeatedly struck blows on our father.

Death here is not likened to a monster, but death is a monster itself. The children are left helpless, unable to fend for themselves after death had taken their father. The poet paints a vivid picture of death as a menace, a merciless monster. In the context of the poem, it becomes clear that this death-monster rejoices in anticipation of someone's death.

Msimang deserves a credit and a round of applause for the manner in which he employs a wide variety of metaphors with great artistic sensitivity in his poetry. His application of a metaphor shows his mastery and wizardry with language, as it can be seen in this example :

Ukhozi olunamaphilco azinkemba lwabasibekela.

Izigagayi zaphenduka isanhlaka senhlakanhlaka.

(**UNodumehlezi** : 15).

The iron-winged vulture hovered over them.

The ruffians turned into scattering.

Death is referred to as an iron-winged vulture that hovers over the heads of the protesters. What an appropriate metaphor for death ! We are all aware how dangerous it is when an ordinary vulture swoops down to snatch the chicks. We all know how sudden death comes when the vulture hovers over its prey.

How much more dangerous it is when an extra-ordinary iron-winged vulture descends to its prey ? The ruffians, the so-called the invincibles turned into ants that scatted all over the place when the threat of the police faced the protesters in Mamelodi. We all know that vultures stop at nothing to get to their preys, thus the poet succeeds to paint a picture how vicious and deadly the Mamelodi incident was.

5.5 Symbol

The symbol is a factual detail that represents an idea. In poetry or literature the readers are not told what the symbol stands for. It is up to the reader to put two and two together and work out the meaning of the symbol. The symbol is therefore a form of indirect metaphorical speech which is meant to carry a hidden reality. This suggests that when reading a poem, we should not stop at the literal level. The poet might be inviting us to see further significance in what is presented to us.

Boagey (1977:40) says the following about the symbol :

“The word symbol is related to the Greek word “symbolon” which was a half-coin carried away by each of the two parties to an agreement as a pledge of their good faith. A symbol is therefore like half a coin – it is an object, the other half of the coin is the idea it represents. Everything depends on the two parts coming together”.

Looking at these remarks by Boagey on the nature of a symbol, one can see that there are many examples that are used in everyday life which an average person can recognize fairly easily as a symbol representing something else. For an example, the white colour symbolizes purity, a crown symbolizes kingship, a cross symbolizes Christian faith, a dove symbolizes peace and so forth.

Msimang also uses different symbols to achieve different results in his poetry. In the poem Iziziba zoThukela we find Msimang yearning for spiritual cleansing and wisdom. He uses “water” as a symbol of this theme :

Ziziba zokucwengeka nicwengeni.

.....

Sicwebe isiziba somcabango,

Ngibone izimfihlo zokujula.

(**Iziziba** : 65).

Pools of serenity cleanse me.

.....

Let the pools of my thought be clear.

Let me find the secrets of deep wisdom.

The pools here symbolize a complete cleansing. The poet wishes the pools can impart their wisdom so that he might have the ability to discern between good and evil, that his joy might be complete.

In the poem Ngiyakhumbula Msimang also uses “water” but now as a symbol of the struggle one has to go through in order to succeed in life :

Ngaqonda ezizibeni ezinzulu,

Ngabafumanisa beshay' idadamu

.....

Abatshuza bajule bayavuzwa,

Abawela ngaphesheya,

Bagaxwa iminyezane

(Iziziba : 53).

I headed straight for the deep pools,

I found them swimming afloat.

.....

Those who dive into the deep get rewarded,

Those who swim across,

Are wreathed in garlands.

Water gives a serious challenge and brings fear to those who cannot swim. The pool, for the poet, is the field where he observes the people and their behaviour when faced with the challenges of this life. The people who win against such difficulties are wreathed in garlands as a token of their heroism.

We can go on citing as many examples as possible, but these few are reasonably sufficient to comment on the way Msimang uses a symbol in his poetry. He uses water as a symbol of cleansing and attainment of wisdom. The water cleanses the poet's thoughts so that he be able to see and think clearly. The closer analysis of the poem shows that the water represents Jesus Christ. Water sometimes symbolizes the obstacles that block the way to success. Those who jump and persevere amidst the obstacles and swim across are worthy of our praise.

Ntuli (1984:176) says the following about symbolism :

“A poet may not be aware that his images form a pattern which can be interpreted symbolically. He may not have intended to give any symbolic significance to such images. One reader may see symbolism in a poem in which the other person sees none”.

Ntuli (1984:176) above agrees with the general feeling of the theory of literature that the reader is free to say whatever he can say about the work of arts but as long as he can support his assertion by referring to the text.

But at the same time Ntuli warns against reading into the poem the symbols which are not there. The reader has the privilege to interpret a poem in any possible way provided those interpretations are not far-fetched.

5.6 Death and Deprivation

Msimang uses the dark cloud as a symbol of death and deprivation. The dark cloud symbolizes both material and spiritual deprivation :

Kunamuhla lokhu sikhahl' isililo

.....

Sikhahl' isililo sefu elimnyama,

Elisibekel' uhlanga olumnyama

(UNodumehlezi : 30).

To this day we lament a lament,

.....

We lament a lament for the dark cloud.

That covers the dark race.

The poet laments bitterly as a result of the dark cloud, the violent death of the black people in political intolerance. Msimang also uses the symbol of the dark cloud in the poem "Siwela iMoretele" to represent death :

*Isililo sezililo nesilokozane,
Amafu phezulu ahlanguana ehluhana,
Nelanga elalisihola laholekela emuva.*

(UNodumehlezi : 51).

A lament of laments and wailing,
The clouds above came together and dispersed,
The sun that led us retreated.

The clouds came together, the sun retreated and the clouds became dark. The poet uses the symbol of the dark cloud as a symbol of death and deprivation. When the shadow of death passes by, the poet says the dark cloud never lasts forever :

*Akumnyama uhlala uhleli,
Ladlula lelofu elimnyama.*

(Iziziba : 54)

The darkness never lasts forever.
That dark cloud passed by

The poet is reminded of the dark cloud that covered his family when his father died. The time seemed as though it was the end of the world. But as time passed by the darkness also passed by, for darkness never lasts forever. The theme put forward is that we should persevere through tough times for there is hope for a new beginning beyond the dark cloud.

5.7 Concluding Remarks

The study of themes in the poetry of C.T. Msimang shows that Msimang is capable of handling any theme without any difficulties. He is an all-rounder capable of any theme from political heroes and historical places, from music to nature, from education to death and many more. The study reveals that Msimang succeeds in achieving crisp conciseness in his poetry, capable of concentrating as much meaning as possible. His language is highly figurative, with linguistic techniques such as personification, pun, symbol, irony, metaphor, parallelism and many more.

Msimang is always aware that form matters most in poetry. He is aware that poetry is made of words, and obviously the choice of words is very important. Any literary critic is interested how the poet uses the words that will achieve his or her desired effect. The strength of poetry can never be pointed out to individual words, but the strength of poetry is from between the words that come together to bring something more than the sum of words apart. Gurrey (1968:92) defines form as follows :

“Form is the shape which the poet’s experience takes under strain of words, as well as the shape which the words take when subjected by the poet to a significant design”.

The definition of Gurrey (1968:92) above refers to the structural designs such as rhythm, forms or stanzas and other structural patterns. Heese and Lawton (1988:94) say the following about form :

“How does the poet communicate ? What elements does the poet use to express the experiences, emotions and ideas central to the poem ? These questions refer to the form of the poem” .

The poet does not introduce anything new, he simply arranges his material in a more deliberate shape, searching for a more expressive language. The poet finds his subjects from an existing wide range of ideas and experiences. Thus, the thematic analysis of Msimang’s poetry reveals that he is concerned about the issues touching the daily lives of the people. In the poems Siwela iMoretele and Ifu elimnyama we find Msimang discussing the subject of death and the plight that the people had to go through because of political intolerance in South Africa.

The theme being raised is that time is a great healer. The people should pray that the creator should give peace and understanding between the warring factions.

In the poems La Manzi and Iziziba zoThukela we find Msimang saying that amidst the hardships that we walk through in this life, we need to have quiet times to reflect about the Omnipotent One who is able to give us peace and understanding that is beyond comprehension.

The discussion has pointed out that Msimang adopts the praise poems’ techniques such as linking, parallelism, allusion and repetition. This influence of praise poetry (Izizibongo) on the poetry of Msimang has been highlighted.

The craftsmanship and the organizational skills with which Msimang approaches his poetry makes the readers feel the desire to share his desires, ideas, experiences, concerns and sentiments. That is no wonder he is counted among the noted Zulu poets such as D.B.Z. Ntuli, L.T.L Mabuya, D.B.K. Mhlongo, M.S.S. Gcumisa, O.E.H.M. Nxumalo and many more.

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