CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this introductory chapter, an overview of the research shall be given. The aim of the study as well as the definition of relevant terms shall be discussed. The motivation for the study and a general outline of the scope of the study as well as the research methodology shall be discussed.

1.1 Aim of the study

The main aim of this study is to examine the extent to which nature is a source of inspiration in Zulu poetry.

Bowra has the following to say about a poet and inspiration:

The primitive poet asserts that everything comes to him from some external, supernatural power and that he himself is little more than its mouthpiece, while modern (poet) takes more credit to himself for what he does, and indeed usually does a good deal to polish and complete what has come to him in inspired moments.

(Bowra, 1955: 3)

The study shall attempt to establish the extent to which nature as a source outside of the poet’s control, inspires Zulu poets to express their feelings, emotions, experiences and ideas.
Trefethen remarks as follows about the poet and inspiration:

Something the poet sees or has heard may light up a corner of his mind, illuminating association that needs to be stated in poetry.

(Trefethen, 1975: 3)

In her description of a poet Trefethen has the following to say:

One quality that sets the poet apart from most people, is a quality he shares with the creative scientist – an enlarged capacity of observing things around him. His five senses are more often at the ready to experience thoroughly the sights, sounds, tastes, smells and tactile impressions he encounters.

(Trefethen, 1975: 3-4)

1.2 Definition of terms

1.2.1 Nature

The word “nature” in the context of the title of this study refers to the broad elements of creation which are fauna, flora, water, soil, air/wind and the sun. These are natural or biological or wildlife resources of the earth.

Natural includes both organic and inorganic matter. Biological excludes inorganic matter and is generally limited to fauna and flora.
1.2.2 Source

This is that thing from where something comes; where it starts or originates.

*A place, person or thing from which something originates.*

(Fowler & Fowler, 1992: 1163)

1.2.3 Inspiration

Inspiration is an intrinsic creative force which stimulates artists such as poets, musicians, carvers, etc. to write or produce artistic work.

According to The Concise Oxford Dictionary:

*Inspiration is a supposed creative force or influence on poets, artists, musicians, etc. stimulating the production of work of art.*

(Fowler & Fowler, 1992: 613)

Shelley contributes to our understanding of inspiration in the following words:

*A man cannot say, “I will compose poetry.” The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power rises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it develops.*

(Simpson, 1972: 430)

1.2.4 Zulu

The word “Zulu” historically referred to both the Zulu people and the language they speak. The latter is now often referred to as isiZulu. The context in which the word “Zulu” is used in the title of this study
refers to both the Zulu people’s poetry and poetry written in isiZulu. The term basically means the South African indigenous people who speak isiZulu as a mother-tongue. E.J. Krige describes the Zulu (s) as:

“The most famous of the South African Bantu tribes (which) rose to power only when Shaka … became their ruler …

(Krige, 1981: 1)

1.2.5 Poetry

Three authors provide succinct definitions of poetry as follows:

L. Simpson defines poetry as:

…the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility …

(Simpson, 1972: 444)

According to O. Mtshali in Perspectives of African Literature by C. Heywood:

… poetry is a mirror that reflects …man’s (a poet’s) aspirations, his hopes, disappointments, his joys and sorrows, his love and hates.

(Mtshali, 1976: 122)

On the other hand, S.M. Serudu has the following to say:

Poetry, like most literary genres, is a revelation or a microcosm of the accumulated experience of a particular society. It is from these accumulated experiences that the poet draws his materials for his poetry. He cannot isolate himself from the period in which he lived and drew inspiration.

(Serudu in Limi, 1981: 95)

1.2.6 Natural Resources

Those things which we need in order to survive – air, water, soil, plants and animals (and the sun).

(Oliver & Wright, 1985: 21)
1.2.7 Fauna

All animal life indigenous to an area or region.

1.2.8 Flora

All plant life indigenous to a region or area.

1.2.9 Water

A very essential element in life generally.

\[ \text{A colourless transparent odourless tasteless liquid compound of oxygen and hydrogen.} \]

\[ \text{(Fowler & Fowler, 1992: 1386)} \]

1.2.10 Soil

\[ \text{The upper layer of earth in which plants grow, consisting of disintegrated rock usually with an admixture of organic remains.} \]

\[ \text{(Fowler & Fowler, 1992: 1156)} \]

According to Horrocks:

\[ \text{The superficial layers of the earth’s surface which is a mantle covering the solid rock below.} \]

\[ \text{(Horrocks 1953: 253)} \]

The context in which the term soil is used here refers to both the soil itself and geological features such as mountains and rocks and/or stones.
1.2.11 Air/Wind

An invisible gaseous substance surrounding the earth, a mixture of mainly oxygen and nitrogen.

(Fowler & Fowler, 1992: 25)

It is an indispensable requirement for life. Wind is air in motion especially from an area of high pressure to an area of low pressure.

1.2.12 Sunlight

Light from the sun. Sunlight is vitally important to life. The sun according to The Concise Oxford Dictionary is:

The star around the earth which the earth orbits and from which it receives light and warmth.

(Fowler & Fowler, 1992: 1222)

1.2.13 Phenomenon

A fact or occurrence that appears or is perceived especially one of which the cause is in question.

(Fowler & Fowler, 1992: 893)

1.2.14 Element

A part of or component part of something.
The context in which the term is used in this research is parts which constitute poetry or a poem such as images, symbols, etc.
1.2.15 Object

*A material thing that can be seen or touched.*

(Fowler & Fowler, 1992: 817)

1.2.16 Biodiversity

*Biological Diversity – or diversity: is the number and variety of living organisms on earth, the millions of plants, animals and micro-organisms and the ecosystems, ecological processes, and landscapes (and seascapes) of which they are integral parts.*

(Kotze & Morris, 2001: 48)

1.2.17 Imagery

By imagery is meant figures of speech which are simile, metaphor, personification and symbolism.

According to Heese and Lawton:

*An image may be defined as a reference to or a description of something concrete by means of which the writer wishes to tell you about something else.*

(Heese & Lawton, 1979: 62)

These two authors further say that the following kinds of images can be distinguished, namely: simile or comparison, personification, metaphor and symbol.

According to E.T.Z. Mthiyane:

*The art in the hands of a skillful writer to create living vivid pictures which intensify, clarify and enrich his descriptions is called imagery.*

(Mthiyane, 1971: 1)
(a) Simile

Cohen defines this figure of speech as:

*A figure of speech which makes a direct comparison between two elements and which is usually introduced by like or as.*

(Cohen, 1973: 195)

D.B.Z. Ntuli divides similes into various categories, such as:

Common similes, compounded and extended similes, etc.

*We expect every poet to demonstrate his ability to put his originality behind such a figure of speech.*

(Ntuli, 1984: 151)

(b) Metaphor

According to Kreuzer:

*A metaphor is defined in the dictionary as “a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another by way of suggesting a likeness or analogy between them.*

(Kreuzer, 1955:76)

(c) Personification

Heese and Lawton describe this figure of speech as:

*That kind of image where the ‘something concrete’ relates to human beings, while the “something else” is not human, for example: ‘the hands of the wind scrabble at the window-pane’.*

(Heese & Lawton, 1979:63)

(d) Symbolism

According to Fowler and Fowler symbolism is:

*The use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities, symbolic meaning attached to objects.*

(Fowler & Fowler, 2001: 923)
1.3 MOTIVATION

My primary motivation for selecting this topic has been my intrinsic and deep relationship with nature over the last twenty-eight years. Another motivation is the apparent lack of significant studies of Zulu poetry in general, and on the theme or subject of this research in particular. The view that research on Zulu poetry is limited is confirmed by Msimang when he gives an historical survey of poetry books published between 1935 and 1980. When referring to the number of analyses during this period he says:

\[\text{Leli nani lezinkondlo liyakhombisa ukuthi abalimayo babhukulile impela kanti abahlakulayo \ldots\ldots sisho phela abahluza lezi zinkondlo – bona bazithele ngabandayo.}\]

(Msimang, 1986: 2)

This quantity of poems reveals that, while poets are indeed prolific analysts are not to be found in abundance.

The desire to make a contribution to the knowledge of nature as a source of inspiration in Zulu poetry in particular and in poetry in general, has been a motivating factor.

The study has also been motivated by my study of comparative African literature at post graduate level some years ago.

Another important motivator is the alleged lack of local expertise with reliance on foreign scholars whose competence in African literature is doubtful.
As Gerard emphasises:

_A few of these (African languages native speakers) have had the opportunity to receive the required training in the literary discipline, thus the task had to be tackled by foreign scholars whose linguistic competence was at best doubtful._

(Gerard, 1983: 57)

It is thus hoped that the results of this research will contribute towards finding solutions to this analytical backlog, which will lead to the development and revival of positive attitudes towards further literary analyses. These will simultaneously help to ensure the conservation of our natural heritage for the long-term benefit of mankind, and enable its continuity in serving as a source of inspiration to mankind.

The abundance of natural resources in our country in general and in KwaZulu-Natal in particular has been another motivating factor for this study. This province is one of the richest regions in natural resources in South Africa. Wherever Zulu poets live there are natural resources in abundance as South Africa is one of the richest countries in the world, in terms of fauna and flora. This view is confirmed by Bristow who comments as follows:

_South Africa is a beautiful corner of the world … (It has) a wildlife and floral heritage that is unparalleled anywhere in the world._

(Bristow, 1993: 17)

In addition to such fauna and flora, rock formations and oceans also contribute towards making KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa the fascinating paradise that they are. Not to mention the abundant insect and bird life.
Smithers, an international insect collector expresses his experience and appreciation of insect life as follows:

_Insects have always fascinated people. Many insects are beautiful._

(Smithers, 1982: 7)

For example, Sinclair and Mendelsohn claim that:

_More than 800 species of birds – a tenth of all those known to man are found in South Africa. Few regions in the world can boast such an avian heritage._

(Sinclair & Mendelsohn, 1984: 7)

If the unique characteristics of insects and birds inspire poets of other parts of the world and other parts of South Africa who are not first language speakers of isiZulu, why should Zulu poets be any different?

Fascination is also derived from flowers.

Perry states that:

_On joyful occasions flowers seem to have a close affinity with happiness …….. _

(Perry, 1982: 6)

_We also look at flowers to aid us in expressing grief or in alleviation of distress._

(Perry, 1982: 6)

This research intends to discover to what extent Zulu poets are inspired by these multi-dimensional elements of nature: the flora and fauna, the rocks and oceans, the birds and insects.
1.4 DELIMITATION OF SCOPE OF STUDY

Selected poetry books covering the period between 1935 and 1975 have been studied.

According to Msimang, (in *Izimbongi Izolo Nanamuhla Umqulu 1* (1986:1) 39 Zulu poetry books were published between 1935 and 1980. The number of books published after 1980 has not yet been established. It can be safely said however, that the number of these is unlikely to be less than those of the period between 1935 and 1980. It may even be double this number.

The study of nature inspired poetry will seek to establish circumstances in which poets being studied were inspired by different natural resources and phenomena. Aspects which have had the greatest influence on poets of various periods since the birth of modern Zulu poetry up to 1975 will be identified.

The delimitation of this scope may be seen as being rather over ambitious when viewed against the vastness of the period and the number of poems and books to be read. But when viewed against the fact that poetry books to be studied contain poems on a variety of themes this delimitation is justifiable. Therefore, the number of books does not necessarily reflect the number of poems which embody the theme of nature.
Since as many books as possible will be selected, comparative critical comments on selected poems from some of these books will be made. The study hopes to indicate the types of poems which emerge as a result of nature’s inspiration.

The study will also attempt to find out what dimension of natural phenomena inspires Zulu poets the most – whether it be appearance, song or sound, movement, scent or odour, taste, utility or other physical features of a resource where applicable.

What the study hopes to highlight is the popularity of natural resources for Zulu poets at certain times and what possible reasons there could be for that. Msimang, one of the leading scholars of Zulu poetry remarks as follows:

\[\textit{Lezi yizindikimba ezinewozawoza ezimbongini zamaZulu. Phambili yindikimba yothando, amanzi, umculo, ilanga, infundo, izehlakalo, izindawo eziligugu kanye namaqhawe omlando}\]

(Msimang, 1986: 3)

(These are the most popular themes for Zulu poets. Top of the list is the love theme followed by: death, protest, water, music, sun, education, incidents, historical sites and historical figures respectively.)
Ntuli, another great scholar of Zulu literature comments as follows on influences:

*It is common knowledge that an artist cannot work in a vacuum. For him to produce anything a number of influences work on him. In the first place these influences are his experiences which he expresses in the medium of his choice. In the second place he is influenced by the models of expression found in his cultural and artistic environment.*

(Ntuli, 1984: 15)

A critical analysis of the poetry of various periods will be made in an attempt to identify those poets who were more prolific or periods in which poets were more prolific, using nature as a subject or theme.

Answers to questions such as the following will be sought:
Is there any Zulu poet who can be described as having had an extraordinary sensitivity for the natural environment such as that of the famous Afrikaans poet, Louis Leipoldt?

*Hy was buitengewoon gevoelig vir kleure en geur, en het natuurindrukke met so ’n kleurerykdom op en langs mekaar gestapel dat baie van (sy) gedigte … vertoon.*

(Malherbe, 1955: 93)

(He had an exceptional passion for colour and scent, and was highly impressed by the richness of colour as reflected in his poetry.)

Some observations will be made and conclusions drawn from the comparative critical analysis. In this way it is hoped that our appreciation of the Zulu poet’s art of writing about nature will be deepened.
1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Extensive and critical reading of the relevant literature has been undertaken. This includes literary criticism, analysis and poetry writing.

Selected poets whose works have been analysed have been interviewed and information gathered from them has been included in analyses.

Selected books in other African and non-African languages have also been read.

The methodology that has been used in this study has been based on both the communication theory as postulated by Berlo in his communication model, and on Heese and Lawton’s theory of the critical analysis of poetry.

1.5.1 The communication model

Berlo’s communication model is relevant to this study in that it comprises all the main elements, namely: the source, the message, the medium or the channel, the receiver or decoder and the code or language. In the context of this study the poet (source) writes a poem in his language (code). The content of the book is the message that is communicated to a reader (receiver/encoder). Berlo, however, argues that the encoder is the writing mechanism employed by the poet and
among these he mentions type-writers (computers nowadays), typists and printers. The book itself is the medium and the reader is the decoder (through eyes) and ultimately receiver through his/her brain (the central nervous system).

The relevance of Heese and Lawton’s theory of critical analysis of poetry lies in the fact that it poses two important questions to two key aspects of understanding poetry, namely:

1. What does the poem communicate? In other words, what experience, emotion, or idea does the poem convey to the reader (receiver)?
2. How does the poem communicate? In other words, what elements are employed by the poet to convey his experience, emotions or ideas (message)?

Heese and Lawton further argue that the source’s message cannot be understood unless the elements in his/her writing (book/medium) and his/her management of the code (language) are understood.

Through Practical Criticism you can refine and deepen your appreciation of the poet’s art. You can appreciate him not just as the creator, transmitter and stimulator of feeling or truth or beauty or laughter or instruction. You can appreciate him as a meticulous artist in words, in patterns of words, in integrating and shaping thoughts.

(Miller and Currie, 1970: 3)
Kane as quoted by Egujuru comments as follows on images and communication:

*(The) image which has been presented to me by my inspiration … is the fruit of my sensitivity, my culture … And the fruit of my mother tongue. The image a person uses has to symbolize what he feels and wants to communicate to his reader.*

(Egujuru, 1978: 67)

With regard to the elements which have been employed by poets of various periods to communicate meaning, major poetry types have been distinguished and classified.
CHAPTER 2

POETRY OF THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1935 AND 1945

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This period was undoubtedly Vilakazi’s age in the history of Zulu poetry. His works were the first collections in modern Zulu poetry. Ntuli maintains that:

He (Vilakazi) was the first Zulu to publish a collection of poems in book form.

(Ntuli, 1984: 1)

Although Vilakazi claims in one of his poem about nature that the beauty thereof is an inspiration to him, we do not find many poems which are devoted entirely to this theme.

In the poem KwaDedangendlale; Vilakazi says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ngiph’ indawo enjengalena} \\
\text{Wena Thongo likababa,} \\
\text{Lapho ngiyoba namandla,} \\
\text{Ngiqoq’ umqondo kaZulu} \\
\text{Ngiwuval el’ embizeni} \\
\text{Ngihay’ amahub’ enkondlo} \\
\text{UShak’ ayihay’ engoba,} \\
\text{Eqa kwaDedangendlale,} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Vilakazi, 1945: 20)

(Give me a place like this one
You spirit of my father
Where I shall have power
To collect the thoughts of the
Zulus and close them up in a pot.
I shall sing poetic songs
Which Shaka sang conquering,
Crossing over The Valley of a
Thousand Hills,
 ..........)

Vilakazi lived during a time when natural resources were in greater abundance than now especially for those living in rural areas. Therefore, as a pioneer and experimenter of modern Zulu poetry he could well be expected to have been greatly influenced by natural resources such as fauna, flora, water and soil, and the sun.

Yet, out of 41 poems only six can be regarded as specifically nature orientated. Those are: *Inqomfi, We Moya, Impophoma YeVictoria, Cula Ngizwe, Ukuthula* and *KwaDedangendale*. And even these poems do not deal entirely with nature alone.

2.2 COMMUNICATION OF MEANING

Whether Vilakazi writes his poetry about a specific aspect of nature or uses some scenes from nature to clarify some aspects of his poetry, his life experiences are always clearly reflected in his message.

Beuchat confirms that:

*Vilakazi) has been able to convey his feelings of frustration, of longing for the past, his aspirations and deceptions …*

(Gerard, 1963: 243)
What the author shall attempt is an investigation into the extent to which Vilakazi’s poetry demonstrates that he was indeed a rural boy who lived closely to nature. That he understood and appreciated nature and was inspired by nature to communicate his messages through the medium of written poetry.

2.2.1 *We Moya* (O, Wind)

In this poem the poet does not only reflect on his experiences in relation to the wind specifically, but he also reflects on the wind in relation to other aspects of nature such as forests, grasses, the sun, sedges, shrubs and water.

With regard to forests he has the following to say:

_Ngiyafisa ukubona_
_Leyo ndod’ ephefumula_
_Kunyakaz’ ihlathi lona_
_Limahlamvu khazimula._

(Vilakazi, 1935: 13)

(I wish I could see
That man who breathes
Moving the forest which
Has glittering leaves.)

It is clear from this stanza that, although the poet’s composition may specifically be about a particular aspect of nature, his inspiration is beyond the inspiring natural resource. In this stanza he imagines the wind as coming or originating from an imaginary person, which in the context of Vilakazi’s poetry in general, may refer to God or the ancestors. The blowing wind moves forest tree branches. His
admiration does not end with this movement. For the movement of
tree branches exposes the shiny colour of leaves which he also
admires.

In the fourth and twelfth stanzas there is reference to grasses in
different contexts. In the fourth stanza the reference is to dry thatch
glass.

\[
\text{Ngibe ngisangen’ endlini,} \\
\text{Ngizw’ uthint’ ezintini} \\
\text{Nangaphandl’ etshanini.}
\]  
(Vilakazi, 1935: 12)

(When I go indoors
I hear you touching poles
And (thatch) grass outside.)

On the other hand in the ninth and twelfth stanzas reference is made to
sedges, cyprus fastigatus (ikhwani) and Salacia alternifolia (ibhonsi).

\[
\text{Uw’ esizwa ngaw’ icons} \\
\text{Sinuk’ iphunga lamakhabe} \\
\text{Ephakathi kwezigabe-} \\
\text{Lamazele nebhonsi.}
\]  
(Vilakazi, 1935: 13)

(It is through you that we get raindrops
And waft scent to melons
Growing among young pumpkins-
Green stalk of alternifolia shrub.)

The first verse in the above stanza can be interpreted in two different
ways. Denotatively, it means that we get rain as a result of air action.
It is well known that the survival and flourishing of flora is dependent
on rain (water) and rain is brought about by the actions of air. A
connotative interpretation could be asserted thus:
The rain and resultant flourishing
of plants can also symbolise the
spiritual productivity which the Holy
Spirit brings about.

(Ntuli, 1984: 92)

2.2.2 *Inqomfi* (The Lark)

In this poem, Vilakazi expresses his appreciation of the bird’s song, its colour, flight and the colour of its eggs. His knowledge of this bird in relation to his own culture is clearly noticeable. In the first, second and fourteenth stanzas he refers to the bird’s habitat types:

… Tshiloza nyoni yamahlungu!
(… Sing you bird of newly burnt grass!)
*Tshiloza uzixinge njalo nyoni yesikhotha!*
(Sing and show off all the time, bird of long grass!)

*Siqhunyisw’ izintaba namagquma namafusi.*
(Vilakazi, 1935: 14 &17)
(It (springs) originates from mountains, hills and land lying fallow.)

His description of these areas shows beyond doubt that he must have been intimately associated with this environment.

His reference to some cultural beliefs and customs such as the following is testimony of his true-life experiences:

*Ma uthi ntenene (ntinini) phambi kwalowo oyindlela*
*Bathi abadala izindaba zimi kahle.*

(Vilakazi, 1935: 15)
(When you run in front of a traveller
The elders claim that all goes well.)
Some reference is also made to the Zulu way of life and practices such as hunting. The latter is referred to twice, firstly in the tenth stanza and secondly in eleventh stanza.

\[
\begin{align*}
  \text{Udedel' abazingeli} & \\
  \text{(You allow hunters) } & \\
  \text{Nant' uphondo lomzingeli} & \\
  \text{(Here is the hunter's horn) } & \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Vilakazi, 1935: 16)

The above two verses refer to the lark’s retiring before sunset after which, once darkness has fallen the hunters enter the territory. Hunting parties were traditionally summoned by blowing a horn-trumpet.

The poet’s admiration of this bird leads to even further inspiration from other natural resources, as stated under “We Moya”.

Let him beware that one above whom
You call flapping wings
Hovering like ground hornbills …)
This is a more focused poem, dealing specifically with a description of a waterfall. It is evident throughout the poem that the poet was inspired by the scenic beauty and roaring of the waterfall.

Ntuli argues with Gerard that Vilakazi composed this poem without first-hand experience of the Victoria Falls. Ntuli bases his argument on the fact that the poet focused on the waterfall itself and excluded the surrounding features.

*We note that the poet concentrates on the waterfall itself and does not give a description of the wider landscape where the waterfall is found. The description could apply to any waterfall.*

(Ntuli, 1984: 83)

Kunene’s confirms Ntuli’s opinion, arguing that:

*After reading the poem we still have no idea of the waterfall, except in a vague sort of way.*

(Kunene, 1962: 206)

However, I would contest Ntuli and Kunene’s theory as being simplistic and shallow. In my opinion the poet’s vivid description of this waterfall convincingly reflects his first hand experience of it.
For example, in the following stanzas we learn the following:

*Kuyinjabulo ngisho ukuthinta
Umphetho weminyibe yesibhamba
Esigamfule ukhalo lweVictoria.*

(Vilakazi, 1935: 20)

(It is a pleasure even to touch
The edge fringe of the knot of the girdle
Which binds your waist.)

*Uma ngiling’ ukuchaza phansi
Ngalol’ usib’ olugcobhoz’ uyinki
Isimo sobukhosi nobuhle-
Ngenzela nokuvus’ uthando kubo
Abangazange bakubone ngeso.*

(Vilakazi, 1935: 21)

(By trying to describe in writing
by means of this ink-pen
(Your) Highness and beauty –
I am doing it to revive love in
Those who have not seen you.)

This is surely sufficient evidence to prove that the poet physically saw this waterfall.

Furthermore, the poet’s experience is easy to share due to his effective personifying of the fall. He shares his admiration of the fall’s beauty through the use of the rainbow:

*UNkulunkul’ ogcobe isimongo
Sekhanda lakho ngomudwa wotingo
Lwenkosikazi, nenkung’ engapheli
Egubuzele izinyawo zakho.*

(Vilakazi, 1935: 18)
(God has anointed the forehead
of your head with the a line
of a rainbow and the unending mist
Which covers your feet.)

The poet’s spiritual life is clearly shown throughout this poem. In the fourth stanza he says:

_Nezinkanyezi zesibhakabhaka_
_Ezikhanyise zilind’ imini_
_Yomyalo wengelosi laph’ umhlaba_
_Uyakudazuluk’ uncibilike,
_Uvulekele phezu kukaThixo,
… .

(Vilakazi, 1935: 19)

(And the stars of the sky
That are shining waiting for daylight
For the angel’s command where the earth
Will weep and melt
Opening above God.
… .)

It is evident in this poem that the poet’s social and spiritual life is inextricably interwoven with his experiences of the natural world. Thus he does not see and admire the waterfall in isolation. Instead, he mentions many other natural resources which he uses in various contexts. These include locusts (_izintethe_), soil (_inhlabathi_), the ocean (_ulwandle_), the sun (_ilanga_), hyenas (_izimpisi_), tree branches (_amahlamvu_), wind/air (_umoya_) and rocks (_amadwala_).

The effective use of these and other natural resources in the poem’s imagery contributes towards its richness. Their mention serves to enhance the extent of the poet’s absorption in the waterfall’s allure.
When one reads this poem in depth a religious tone becomes more than evident. The waterfall is anthropomorphised into a human being who has been anointed by God:

\[
UNkulunkul’ ugcobe isimongo \\
Sekhanda lakho … \\
… nenkung’ engapheli \\
Egubuzele izinyawo zakho.
\]

(Vilakazi, 935: 18)

(God has anointed the forehead of your head … … and the neverending mist covering your feet.)

Msimang confirms this interpretation arguing that:

\[
Lesi sidalwa ungathi umuntu ngoba \\
Sinesimongo nezinyawo. Kepha-ke uma \\
kungumuntu, lo muntu ungogcotshiweyo kaNkulunkulu.
\]

(Msimang, 1986: 67)

(This creature is likely to be a human being because it has a forehead and feet. However, if it is a human being, this person Is a God anointed person.)

It is clear that the intensity of inspiration enduced by this waterfall urges the poet to transcend the ordinary world. The use of the absolute pronoun – \textit{wena} (you) indicates something beyond that which can be seen by the human eye. Msimang confirms this notion thus:

\[
Kusobala ukuthi nanxa ebhekene nempophoma ubuso nobuso, kusengathi amehlo akhe abona ngale kwayo.
\]

(Msimang, 1986: 68)
(It is obvious that although the poet is confronting the waterfall face to face, it appears that his eyes see beyond it.)

2.2.4 *Cula Ngizwe* (Sing That I May Hear)

In this poem, it is evident that the poet is inspired by the wind, a bird and a flower. It is the sounds or music of these that soothe his pain or sorrow and help him to forget his loneliness. He pleads with the wind to lull him to sleep.

*Cula ngizwe Moya*
*Khona ngizolala sengozela,*

………..

(Vilakazi, 1935: 35)

(Sing that I may hear wind so that I may be lulled to sleep, ……..)

Intense feelings of sorrow are evidenced in the following stanza:

*Inhliziyo yam’ izokwethaba*
*Ukuqaqamb’ okunokwesaba*
*Kuyawuthiy’ umqondo.*

(Vilakazi, 1935: 35)

(My heart will rest content Great pain full of fear That darkens my thoughts.)

The poet wishes to end this sorrow and attain new love and peace. He calls on a bird to assist him.

*Cula ngizwe Nyoni*
*Phansi kwalowo magatsh’ amnyama*
*Khon’ umphefumul’ uzokweyama*
*Emazwini akho!*

(Vilakazi, 1935: 35)
(Sing that I may hear bird,
Underneath those shadowy branches
So that my soul may get comfort
Beneath your music!)

It is obvious that the poet is alone at sunset. Although he does not specifically refer to the setting sun, his call for dusk implies that. The shadowy branches that he refers to, also allude to the context of sunset. He must thus be referring to a nocturnal bird.

In the same stanza he elaborates specifically upon the sorrow and loneliness which emanate from his remaining alone.

\[\text{Ngifis’ ukukohlwa yizinhlungu} \]
\[\text{Zezifo, nezwe nesizungu} \]
\[\text{Sokusala ngedwa.} \]

(I wish to forget about pain
Of disease (death), the world and the loneliness.
Of remaining alone.)

The poet’s sad life experiences are well communicated here. He is in desperate need of love and social support.

He addresses the flower, bees, water, (rain) drops, soil, stars, grass, sun, dew and wind (air) in a further attempt to expel his loneliness.

*The poet invites the wind, the bird and the flower to sing for him in order to detract his attention from his loneliness.*

(Ntuli, 1984: 92)
In Vilakazi’s second poetry volume *Amal' Ezulu*, only two poems deal specifically with natural resources.

2.2.5 *Ukuthula* (Peace)

The poet’s life experience is communicated clearly in this short poem which was inspired by the peace of the seashore. Peace is something Vilakazi cherishes deeply.

\[
\begin{align*}
Lapho & \text{ kugcwel’ ukuthula komhlaba nezulu} \\
Yiyo & \text{ le ndawo eyenza mina ngiqumbelane} \\
Usikisiki & \text{ lomphefumulo nonembeza.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Vilakazi. 1945: 10)

(Where it’s full of peace of earth and heaven
It’s this place which makes me brim with
Ecstasy of inspiration of soul and conscience.)

Being in this peaceful environment gives Vilakazi total tranquility as he appreciates the different natural resources that are associated with the seashore.

2.2.6 *KwaDedangendlale* (The Valley of a Thousand Hills)

Vilakazi’s life experiences are again well communicated in this poem. Although it may be argued that this poem deals more with landscape than with nature, one could equally argue that this geological feature, is indeed a constituent of nature.

It is clear from the first stanza that the poet finds the Valley of a Thousand Hills reminiscent of his home environment:
Once Vilakazi is reminded of his home country-side, his memories bring back to him all the natural resources which occur in the Valley of a Thousand Hills. For example in the second stanza he refers to: Ficus siberana trees (imikhamba or imikhambathi) wasps (imivi), mountains (izintaba) precipices (amawa) and rocks (amadwala).

Apart from specific natural resources to which reference is repeatedly made in this beautiful poem, the poet emphasises his intimate contact with his environment by using the first person repeatedly in this poem.

Nami kaningi nginjalo
Ngidakwa yilezi zintaba,
Ngilahleka ngingatholwa
Ngedukile ngezizigodi
Eziqhakaz’ izimbal
Zihlanganisil’ iphunga
Leminduze namazibu
Aqhakaz’ ezizibeni
Ahlobis’ amanz’ athule
Ecwebe ngoh laz’ oluhle.

(Vilakazi, 1945: 19)
(I also have frequently
Been intoxicated by these hills
Wandered and not been found
Being lost in the valleys
Mantled by a wealth of flowers
Mingling the scent
Of Natal lilies and water-lilies,
Which flower in pools
And decorate tranquil water
With green blossoms.)

This stanza sums up Vilakazi’s life experiences with regard to the natural environment. Vilakazi was indeed a son of Zululand soil. His life experiences were derived from the wild Zululand. He confirms this observation in his words when he says:

…………………………
Um’ unenhlizi’ egcwele,
Uyohlala phans’ ubunge
Amathong’ oyihl’ omkhulu
Akuza lela kwaZulu
KwaBuhle-bungayindawo
Kwamful’ isagcwel’ amanzi
Kwatshani-buseluhlaza.

(Vilakazi, 1945:18)

(If you have a tranquil heart
You will sit down and praise
Your ancestral spirits
Who brought you into being in Zululand,
Where beauty is unchanging
Where streams are full of water,
Where grass is ever-green.)

Those natural resources which were in abundance during his days in Zululand must not only have inspired him to produce poetry of unsurpassed quality but also engendered in him an unflagging love for
his country. Although there are some parts of Zululand which are still as pristine as Vilakazi described them fifty eight years ago, most of this “unchanging beauty, streams full of water and evergreen grass” has changed over the years. This has been due to environmental degradation caused by socio-economic and political changes which have occurred in the lives of the inhabitants of that area.

Vilakazi maintains that he owes his very existence to the natural environment of his countryside:

\[ \text{Ngabon’ uzavolw’ engikha} \\
\text{Ngaseenge’ abantabakhe,} \\
\text{Ngalala phansi kwenyanga} \\
\text{Ngibelethwe ngumhlabathi.} \\
\text{Isiphuku kungutsheni} \\
\text{Ngicame’ esinqundwini} \\
\text{Ngishay’ uegoqinthiso} \\
\text{Ngibukel’ izinkanyezi} \\
\text{Ziphuma zishon’ enzansi} \\
\text{Nomthal’ uguquka nezwe.} \]

(Vilakazi, 1945: 19-20)

(I saw the night-jar watching me
I milked for his/her children
Then I lay beneath the moon
Being carried on the back by the soil.
My blanket being grass
Grass tufts being my pillow
Turning my head over heels
Gazing at the stars
Rising and falling far away
The milky way revolving with the earth.)

The entire essence of Vilakazi’s life experience is embodied in this one poem. It is as if he is literally touching every natural resource by which he has been inspired.
2.3 ELEMENTS OF POETRY EMPLOYED TO COMMUNICATE MEANING

2.3.1 Introduction

Vilakazi’s poetry communicates abundant aesthetic experiences to the reader. He achieves this through his careful selection and use of different elements of poetry which he portrays in an integrated manner.

Harmonious integration of poetic elements is essential for the effectiveness of a poem:

… the words the poet uses, the word order he establishes for his words, … his figures of speech, his arrangement of sounds, his images, his use of irony or paradox or ambiguity all contribute harmoniously to the total effect of the poem.

(Kreuzer, 1955: 6)

2.3.2 Images in Vilakazi’s poetry

Imagery can be defined usefully as follows:

… We employ the word image as a general term and words ‘simile,’ ‘personification, ‘metaphor’ and ‘symbol’ as specific terms indicative of different kinds of images.

(Heese and Lawton, 1979: 150)

Furthermore the term imagery is commonly used to refer to images in a collective sense. M.H. Abrams clarifies that:
… “imagery” … includes not only visual sense qualities, but also qualities that are auditory, tactile (touch), thermal (heat & cold), olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste) and kinesthetic (sensations of movement).

(Abrams, 1993: 87)

In this chapter, images are explored in relation to the messages they are intended to communicate. Selected lines or verses shall be dealt with to illustrate the poet’s employment of comparison or analogy in his pioneering works.

(a) Simile
We find very effective use of the simile in a number of Vilakazi’s poems in both *Inkondlo KaZulu* and *Amal’ Ezulu*. For example, in the poem, *We Moya*

```
Laph’ amandl’ akh’ egxilile
Njengemizi yamaNganga.
```

(Where your strength is as deep
As amaNganga homesteads.)

```
Laph’ umphefumulo wami
Uphelelwa abangane
Ihlamuka njengekhwane
Nemihlobo yonke yami.
```

(When my soul
Loses friends
Like ikhwani sedge
All my relatives deserting me.)

(Vilakazi, 1945: 13)
In *Inqomfi* the poet communicates his message via simile as follows:

*Tshiloza nyoni yamahlungu!*
*Noma engekho okubonayo ngimi njengesela.*
*Ngibek’ indlebe kuwo wonke’ umlozi wezinhlungu*

\[\text{…………..} \]

(Vilakazi, 1945: 14)

(Call bird of burnt grasses!
Although no-one sees you I am standing like a thief
Listening to all the call of your pains
……………..)

*Niqhekeze amaphiko nenz’ umlozi kuhle*
*Kwezinsingizi lizophendula.*

(Vilakazi, 1945: 15)

(You have opened your wings like calling
Ground hornbills before a storm.)

In *Impophoma YeVictoria* where it is apparent that similes are used in a broad manner, Ntuli makes the following valuable comment about Vilakazi’s use of a simile:

*A more startling simile is found when different senses are involved in the perception of a stimulus. We normally expect the poet to make an acceptable concordance between the stimulus presented in the image and the sensory organ perceiving it. Vilakazi sometimes extends his image over many sense domains:*

*The auditory, the gustatory and the tactile. In the poem ‘Impophoma YeVictoria’ the poet first uses a simple simile and then a second one which is slightly extended:*

(Ntuli, 1984: )

Employing all the senses, Vilakazi writes this:

*Umsindo wakh’ unjengoju lwenyosi,*
*Unjengesandla somzanyan’ ekhanda,*
*Selul’ iminwe sithungath’ unwele*
*Silulalisa siluvusa phansi.*

(Vilakazi, 1945: 21)
(Your sound is like honey of the bees,
It is like a wetnurses’ hand on the head,
When it stretches the finger and searches
through the hair,
Smoothing it and raising it.)

In *KwaDedangendlale* Vilakazi employs similes in an equally rich manner. Hence:

*lapho sigingqika khona*
*Sihuba njengomoya,*
*Sikhwelana nemimango*

...........
(Where we roll down
Singing like wind,
Climbing up the hills
...........

*Yebo, nami ngiyothela*
*Ngigcwal’ amajikijolo,*
*Ngiyetha njengamasundu*

...........
(Yes, I will bear fruit
Be full of berries,
Drop like palms
...........

(Vilakazi, 1945: 19)

The poet expresses himself more specifically and more meaningfully by making comparisons through the use of a simile. In this way he communicates beyond meaning to the realm of feelings and sensations. “Bearing fruit, being full of berries and then drop like palms” obviously communicates much more than the denotative meaning.
Likewise the simile of ground hornbills communicates both a direct and an implicit meaning. When ground hornbills open their wings and call, it implies an imminent thunderstorm. Thunder storms often go hand-in-hand with the destruction of crops (food), houses and even human life. So the mention of hornbills opens up a whole wealth of extra meaning.

(b) Metaphor

A succinct definition of metaphor is offered by Cohen:

*Metaphor: a figure of speech in which One element substitutes for another.*

(Cohen, 1973: 189)

Kreuzer adds to this confirming that:

… *Metaphors, like similes, are extremely important in producing images and in making the abstract concrete.*

(Kreuzer, 1955: 88)

In other words, instead of saying that one thing is merely like the other as in the simile, here one thing is said to be the other.

In the poem, *We Moya* the poet writes that:

*Ngifisa ukubona*  
*Leyo ndod’ ephefumula*  
*Kunyakaz’ ihlathi*  

………..  

(Vilakazi, 1935: 12)

(I wish to see  
That man who breathes  
(And) branches move  
………..)
The word ‘indoda’ (man) in the context of this quotation refers to the wind. Again, Vilakazi makes effective use of metaphor in *Impophoma YeVictoria*.

\[
\text{Ngiyafisa ukubon' umoya} \\
\text{Onyakazis' izihlahla} \\
\text{Okwendod' iphefumula} \\
\ldots
\]

\[
\text{Kuyinjabulo ngisho ukuthinta} \\
\text{Umphetho weminyibe yesibhamba} \\
\text{Esigamful’ ukhalo lwesibhamba} \\
\text{Laph’ imichilo yemvul’ eyehlayo} \\
\text{Ixoshan’ ishayek’ edwaleni} \\
\text{Kuqhuma imiqhele yamagwebu,} \\
\ldots
\]

(Vilakazi, 1935: 20)

( It is a pleasure even to touch
The edge of the knots of your belt
Which is around the waist of Victoria
Where the ropes of falling rain
Chase one another and falling on rocks
And head rings of froth/foam appear.
\ldots)

There is no denying that the words “umchilo” and “imiqhele” are metaphors which the poet has used most effectively.

In “KwaDedangendlale” the poet employs identifying copulatives in order to achieve effectiveness. Thus:

\[
\text{Isiphuku kungutshani} \\
\ldots
\]

(Vilakazi, 1945: 21)
(The grass is the blanket
..........)

(c) Personification

Personification is described aptly by Kheswa and Mthiyane.

_Isenzasamuntu wuhlobo lwesifenqo, lapho
kuthathwa khona into engaphili inikwe izimpawu zobuntu._
(Kheswa and Mthiyane, 1991: 46)

(Personification is a type of figure of speech, where a non-living thing is given attributes of a living thing.)

Most of the poems discussed are rich in personification. In some even their titles are personified. For example, *We Moya, Cula Ngizwe*, etc.

Some good examples of personification in *We Moya* occur in stanza nine:

_Ngizw’ izinkulumo zakho_
_Zingiph’ ubuthongo bakho_
_Nenjabul’ kungeyakho:_

(Vilakazi, 1935: 13)

(I hear your talks
They give me your …
And joy which is yours.)

In the above extract all the wind’s attributes are human. It is only human beings who can talk, after all.
In *Impophoma YeVictoria* the reference to dancing is likewise a human connotation.

\[
\text{\ldots amagagas’ emzansi} \\
\text{\ldots\ldots} \\
\text{Asin’imini nobusuk’ engemi. (Vilakazi, 1935: 19)}
\]

\[
(\ldots \text{waves down over there} \\
\text{\ldots\ldots} \\
\text{Are dancing day and night without stopping.})
\]

(d) Symbolism

Some schools of thought argue that a symbol is nothing more than an extended metaphor.

A Shorter Contemporary Dictionary provides the following precise definition of the term symbol. It is:

\[
\text{A sign, something that stands for something else, as the Cross is a symbol of Christianity. (Witty, 1983: 280)}
\]

Heese and Lawton offer a more extensive explanation:

\[
\text{A symbol is more difficult to define \ldots} \\
\text{The word can \ldots be read simply as a synonym for \textquote{sign}. (Heese and Lawton, 1979: 64)}
\]

Heese and Lawton further say:

\[
\text{(it) \ldots can be described in terms of the dictionary definition;} \\
\text{that is, symbols which are traditional and long established by this process of \textquote{general consent}; Such symbols are often meaningful in a very wide context being known not only to Western peoples but to Indian and Chinese people as well. One example of a symbol which is very widely known is the use of the sun as a symbol of the deity. Other symbols again may have}
\]
I concur fully with the above. People not acquainted with the Christian religion, for example, will not accept the symbolism of the sun as deity.

Wildlife such as the lion, the leopard and the elephant symbolise royalty among Zulu people – uniquely. Languages and cultures do have their own specific symbols.

In *Impophoma YeVictoria* the symbolism of the rainbow is effectively used:

\[
\text{Kuqhume imiqhele yamagwebu,} \\
\text{Kudamuzeko nentuthu yamanzi} \\
\text{Iveza nothingo lwencosikazi} \\
\]

(Vilakazi, 1935: 20)

Crowns of froth/foam appeared spreading the smoke of water

(and) showed/exposed the rainbow

Black people in general and Zulu people in particular regard the appearance of the rainbow, especially after an aggressive thunderstorm, as a symbol of the clearing of fierce weather. Connotatively, the rainbow is regarded as a sign of peace and unity. In South Africa
after 1994 it is regarded as a symbol of representiveness as well as unity of the country’s people.

Another effectively used symbol is that of livestock. Among pastoralists anywhere in the world livestock ownership is a symbol of wealth. The owner’s social and economic status is judged on the basis of the size of livestock he owns.

_Lapho ngibheka ngaphansi_  
_Kwemiseng’ ebiseduze,_  
_Ngibon’ imihlambi emihle_  
_Yezimbuzi neyezimvu._  

(Vilakazi, 1945: 18)

*(When I look below  
Underneath the cabbage trees  
I see nice and beautiful flocks  
Of goats and sheep.)*

It is more than apparent then that:

“In Vilakazi’s poetry whenever live-stock is mentioned it is also implied that people in the vicinity are satisfied.”

(Ntuli, 1984: 179)

The examples that have been used above from Vilakazi’s various poems illustrate that the quality of poetry of the period under discussion is indeed enhanced by the effective use of natural images.

It has been observed that Vilakazi likes water. All forms of water inspire him. He gets inspiration from sea water, rain water, waterfall water, fresh river water, dew, clouds and mist. As water is an important source of life it is not surprising that the poet used it in its
various forms. He does not only use it literally but in many of his poems it is used symbolically. This view is confirmed by Mthiyane who says:

One of the striking features of Vilakazis’
... Poetry ... is the use of
water as a focus of symbolism.

(Mthiyane, 1971: 1)

2.4 TYPES OF POEMS

I now intend to explore the types of poems according to Boulton’s categorisations:

... epic, lyric, and dramatic narrative.

( Boulton, 1979: 98)

As these are broad categorisations only relevant subdivisions of the above-mentioned types will be discussed. For example odes, elegies and the sonnet. An epic may also be a narrative as it can tell or narrate a story.

All the poems under discussion with the exception of KwaDedangendlale are lyrics. The latter is a narrative.

A lyric is defined by Cohen as:

A poem, generally short, presented by a single speaker, either the poet or some voice imaginatively adopted by the poet, and expressing some basic emotion such as sorrow or love.

(Cohen, 1973: 188)
The poem titled, “*Inqomfi*” is often described as an ode by analysts who perhaps regard it as an emulation of Shelley’s “Ode to the Skylark.”

Indeed, Ntuli points out a number of similarities between Shelly’s poem and Vilakazi’s poem. For example:

\[
\text{Thou lovest – but never knew love’s sad safety.} \\
\text{(Shelly as quoted by Read & Dobree)} \\
\text{(Ntuli, 1984: 37)} \\
\text{Unothando kodwa alukagazingwa lusizi.} \\
\text{(Ntuli, 1984: 37)} \\
\text{(You have love which has never been subjected to suffering)}
\]

It is also opinioned that Keat may have had an influence on Vilakazi’s *Inqomfi*:

\[
\text{In the same poem, *Inqomfi* we find more evidence of the impact of Keat’s poetry on Vilakazi.} \\
\text{(Ntuli, 1984: 38)}
\]

Unlike these lyrical poems, *KwaDedangendlale* may be classified as one of the best of Vilakazi’s narrative poems. Here, the poet skillfully narrates his experiences while standing on top of Table Mountain (Mkhambathi near Maqongqo East of Pietermaritzburg). In stanza four the poet communicates as follows:

\[
\text{Nami ngimile phezulu} \\
\text{Ngqoshem’ eMkhambathi} \\
\text{Ngibuka phansi enzansi} \\
\text{Ngabona kuthunq’ intuthu} \\
\text{……….} \\
\text{(Vilakazi, 1945: 17)}
\]
(I am also standing on top
Squatting on my haunches on Table Mountain
Looking down overthere
I saw rising smoke
………..)

It is clear from the poet’s imaginative description that he is fully absorbed by this landscape of unparalleled scenic beauty.

2.5 OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSION

My conclusions are broadly as follows:

Interestingly, the poet says nothing about perceived and anticipated changes that could occur to the very nature which has inspired him. As a visionary, he could be expected to be aware of both natural and unnatural causes which could damage the beauty in question, e.g. droughts, storms, fires, man’s physical interference with the environment such as denudation when constructing roads and dams as well as overstocking. Yet he never mentions these. Yet, there isn’t a single of Vilakazi’s poems from the 1935–1945 period where there is no mention of any natural resource either directly or indirectly. Indeed, out of 41 poems there are only three poems, “Ngizw’ Ingoma”, “Wena-ke Uyotheni?” and “Yini’ Ukwazi?” where nature is not used at all or is not used in any significant way.

In those poems where nature is used, it is used in varying degrees and in different contexts. Although Vilakazi shows so much admiration
and appreciation of nature he does not show sufficient concern about its long term survival for the benefit of mankind. We do not find much said in defence of these natural resources against exploitation by man. In poems such as: “We Moya, “Cula Ngizwe” and “Impophoma YeVictoria”, the poet could be expected to say something about the various values of these natural resources. However, this is not the case. The poet’s appreciation of the values of air/wind and water in both the natural and the social environments is thus not sufficiently shown. It would have been expected of him to express concern about their degradation and dwindling in his poetry.

The tone of much of Vilakazi’s nature poetry is religious and indicative of Biblical or Western religious influences which must have influenced him.

Vilakazi is inspired more by what he hears than what he sees, smells, touches and tastes. For Vilakazi, taste and utility come last in the list of inspiring characteristics of nature.
CHAPTER 3

POETRY OF THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1946 AND 1955

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Having set the scene for and pioneered written modern Zulu poetry, Vilakazi inspired poets of subsequent periods who then emulated him in various ways. The next ten years saw the emergence of five Zulu anthologies by different poets between 1950 and 1955. During this period a total of 231 poems were written. From a quantitative point of view this was a positive development in Zulu poetry.

Ntuli argues that:

“Zulu poets like to describe nature.”

(Gerard, 1983: 68)

In the investigation that follows I shall explore to what extent the above statement is true.

3.2 Umyalezo: E.T. Mthembu (1948)

3.2.1 Communication of meaning

In Umyalezo, Mthembu has five poems which deal specifically with nature. However, this discussion focuses on three poems only.
Mthembu’s nature poetry is more focused than that of the previous period. Even the poem titled, *Isikhathi* whose title is not on nature as such, has a nature orientated content.

The period in which Mthembu wrote his poetry was one in which natural resources such as water, soil, fauna and flora were still in abundance. The rate of environmental degradation was limited. Even air was purer than in the subsequent periods.

(a) *Impophoma* (Victoria Falls)

This poem resembles Vilakazi’s Victoria Falls poem in many respects. In the very first stanza and first line the poet refers to eternity when he says:

\[
\begin{align*}
Ubaphakade udalelwe \\
Ngqikithi yezimfihlo \\
Senabelo sezinyawo \\
Zobuphakama bezulu, \\
\ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \\
Ebnzini kuwena, \\
\ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \\
\text{(Mthembu, 1948: 34)}
\end{align*}
\]

(You were created for eternity
Reality of secrets
Mat for feet of
Heaven’s highness,
……………
On your forehead.
……………)

Where Vilakazi speaks of “isimongo” Mthembu speaks of “ibunzi”. Ibonzi is part of isimongo. Vilakazi speaks of … *ukujul’okungaziwa*” (immeasurable depth) while Mthembu speaks of *emgodini*
ongakhawuki (an unending hole). Thus Vilakazi’s influence on Mthembu is made apparent.

Admittedly, Mthembu tells us much more than Vilakazi does about factual matters such as the whereabouts of the fall. He makes reference to a number of places, personalities and tribes found in Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) such as Zambezi, Livingstone, Ngwe (places) Mzilikazi (personality) and Mashona and Thabele (Ndebele) (tribes) which are indigenous to the country where this fall is found.

The poet compares the immortality of the fall with the mortality of human life. In his unexpected deviation from eternity to mortality, Mthembu uses Zulu regiments who lived, died and disappeared.

Msimang explains this thus:

Naye uMthembu uyibona ibalulekile ngaphezu
Kwesidalwa esingumuntu ngoba ubala amaningi
Amabutho empi yakwaZulu athi ayafika edlule.

(Msimang, 1986: 69)

(Also Mthembu sees it (fall) being more important than a human being because he mentions many Zulu regiments whom he says appear and disappear (born and die).

(b) Izintaba ZoNdi (Drakensberg Mountains)

This is the first of this poet’s poems where his life experiences in relation to the natural world are reflected clearly. In the very first stanza he says:
**LuKahlamba olunqinde Amangwane**  
*Ngikubonile khona ngiseyisikhundlwane,*  
*Isithunzi sakho sangeleka ngakhothama*  
*Okwemvu ize kubagundi boboya.*  

(Mthembu, 1948: 53)

(Drakensberg which stopped Amangwane  
I saw you while I was still very young,  
Your shadow overcame me and I bowed  
Like a sheep before shearers.)

Reference is made to various natural resources such as the ocean,  
elands, mountains, water, sky, cloud, birds (cattle egret), wind/air and  
insects (dragon flies).

The effective use of these other aspects of nature to clarify some  
aspects of this poem is commendable, as it gives us more exposure to  
the poet’s life experiences and clarifies his message. The eland  
(*impofu*), and rivers are used very appropriately in this poem.

**Mina ngane echathwe ngolwandle**  
*Ikhambi lezimpofu zoNdii lingixakile*  

(Mthembu, 1948: 53)

(I, child who has been given a seawater enema  
The Drakensberg eland herb confused me  
………..)

**Imithambo uyithumele yonk’ olwandle**  
*Iqumbile yagcwal’ igazi elimhlophe*  

(Mthembu, 1948: 53)

(You sent all the veins to the sea  
Swelling full of white blood  
………..)
The majority of KwaZulu-Natal’s major rivers originate from the Drakensberg. The poet’s apt metaphoric use of other natural resources to describe his experiences in the Drakensberg is very clearly demonstrated in the following stanza:

*Imithambo uyithumele yonk’ olwandle*
*Iqumbile yagcwal’ igazi elimhlophe*
*Kwaze kwabubul’ iNjesuthu ikhala*
*Idlula ngakwaNtabamhlophe ebusika.*

(Mthembu, 1948: 53)

(You sent all the veins to the sea
Full of white blood
Until Njesuthi roared crying
Going past Ntabamhlophe in winter.)

Rivers are referred to as veins and water as white blood. Njesuthi is a tributary of Thukela river and Ntabamhlophe is one of the smaller mountains found near the Drakensberg. The crux of inspiration to the poet here, are the Drakensberg mountains which, because of their geographic height, gather clouds which produce rain even in winter. As a result of the heavy rain that falls, rivers such as Njesuthi become full and roar.

The words and phrases employed by the poet can either be used in a straightforward everyday speech such as in the first line of the above extract or they may acquire an extension of meaning characteristic of poetic diction which stimulates and delights the reader’s imagination such as the second to the fourth line above. Here a second level or connotative meaning is found.
Reference to his culture as well as to local tribes is also of significance here. He refers to witchcraft where two “thunderstorm” witchdoctors (*Ndaba* and *Mazibuko*) take advantage of the natural situation which is as a result of natural causes, attacking each other by means of lightning. They must be members of either Amangwane or Amahlubi (*Bhungane*) tribes.

The poet cannot conclude this poem without making reference to God and some Zulu regiments. He questions the use of lightning by witchdoctors insisting that the Drakensberg mountains which are responsible for its origin are not God’s creation:

```
UNdi lolu Mbekwa ngitshene
Kunga isinyathelo sezinyawo Zakhe
Noma isibaya sezimpofo zobunyanga
Ezitshekule zehlisa iMpofana?
```

*(Mthembu, 1948: 56)*

(This Drakensberg Mbekwa tell me
Is it a mat for His feet
Or a kraal for elands for witchcraft
Which lept down Mpofana (river)?)

Christianity was an important part of Mthembu’s upbringing. Therefore, it is no wonder that his life experiences are dominated by a Christian tone. He remembers chief Zwane making announcements to women’s religious associations. He says that he heard this chief’s announcements from since he was still a boy until he was a young man:

```
Lizwe lini leli elihleli liswakeme
… lingudondolo …
Olusisindo salo Zwane uyasizwa
Ngob’ usimemezele kulo umenyane.
```
What kind of country is this one
which always experiences bloodshed
… which is a stick …
Whose weight you Zwane feels
Because you announced it to a women’s
Church-group.)

Izwi lakho ngilizwile ngisengumfana
Ngaze ngalizwa sengiyibhungwana.

(Mthembu, 1948: 55 )

(I heard your voice while I was still a boy
I heard it until I was a young man.)

The poet’s apparent deviation from his theme and focus which is the
mountains to the incidents of his social environment and the
inseparability of his experiences with regard to the natural and the
social environments is inevitable, considering his context.

(c) Uthekwane (The Hamerkop)

According to Msimang the hamerkop is an omen of both good
luck and bad luck. He remarks as follows:

Uthekwane: ........................
................................. Uma
ekhwishiza ehhoyiza ubika ilumbo. Uma
edlalisela ubika ubuhle uma kulowo mazi
awubikelayo kunezinsizwa ezeshelayo zisuke zizoqonywa
nakanjani.

(Msimang, 1975: 159)

(The hamerkop ..............................
......................... When flying over calling it
announces misfortune. If it flies over playfully it
is an omen of definite luck in love making
if that homestead over which it flies has
young men who are still courting girls.)

The poet makes reference to the bird’s habitat, its identification, its habits and its importance as an omen. He refers to it as a bird of ravines and deep ponds. He describes the shape of it’s tail, the size of its legs, the colour of its toes and its diet. In the first stanza he says:

\[
\text{Hamba nyoni yemihosha neziziba,} \\
\text{Wena mashweza, sisila simbaxa;} \\
\text{……………………………} \\
\text{(Mthembu, 1948: 71)}
\]

(Go away bird of ravines and deep pools, You rustler that is fork-tailed; 
………………………………)

The poet further says:

\[
\text{Ngiyakubona wena magagamela} \\
\text{Ogagamele waze wakhal’ isililo} \\
\text{Phezu – kwesiziba simnyama,} \\
\text{Ngqakala yinhle ngobuluhlaza bayo} \\
\text{Majamel’ inhlanz’ inyonyophele} \\
\text{……………………………} \\
\text{(Mthembu, 1984: 71)}
\]

(I am seeing you chancer upon Who chanced upon the banks of black deep pools, until you wept Beautiful foot-edge because of its green colour Starer of fat fish 
………………………………)

The bird’s legs are not green or blue but:

\[
\text{……… pinkish at first, later brown.} \\
\text{(Maclean, 1985: 62)}
\]
Although this bird does feed on fish it is not its staple diet. Its staple diet according to Maclean is:

(Mainly adults and tadpoles of Plantannas Xenopus lavae.

(Maclean, 1985: 62)

Mthembu believes the bird is an omen, arguing that:

.......... kazi yini, konakele masoka
Kazi kunamuhla ulethe mbiko muni,
.......... (Mthembu, 1984: 71)

(.......... it is wondered, what is wrong
recognised lovers of girls
It is wondered what message you are bringing
today,
..........)

Apparently the poet has more experience about this bird’s being an omen. With the exception of the last stanza, there is direct reference to this experience. However, the poet does not confirm the known fact as stated by Msimang above about this bird’s being both a good and a bad omen. He repeatedly refers to its being an omen of bad luck, especially in regard to love matters.

3.3 Umuthi Wokufa Nezinye Izinkondlo: E.H.A. Made (1950)

3.3.1 Communication of meaning

Not a single poem could be found in Made’s book which deals specifically with nature.
Made’s book was the fourth Zulu poetry anthology, written by someone who was born and brought up in the rural area (Western Natal) during the days when natural resources such as grasses, trees, insects, (e.g. cycads, millipedes, etc), mammals, (e.g. eland, Bushbuck, etc.) and water from the Drakensberg were still abundant in his home environment. Therefore, it could be expected of him to derive immense inspiration from these natural resources. Of course, the air was still much purer and the effects of the sun still very impactful on the environment.

Out of forty poems only 50% of them use nature to clarify some aspects of a poem.

The poem in which Made refers to nature the most is, “Afrika”. He uses all natural resources in this poem. The poet has the following to say about snakes and soil.

*Iminyundu yenhlabathi,*  
*Nezinyoka zemigodi,*  
*Eziswini zemigodi,*  
*Ngesineke esikhulu*  
*Kuvuma ukunyathelwa*  
*Ngabenane nabakhulu*  
*Ngolaka nokwedelelwa*  
*Kufela igama lakho;*  

.........  
(Made, 1950: 37)

(The millipedes of the soil,  
And the snakes of the holes,  
Always inside the stomachs of the soil  
With great patience  
Accept being trampled
By small/young and adults/big
One/important people
Angrily and despisingly
Dying for its name.
.........)

The poet’s use of the possessive concord ye- and ze- to precede nouns
inhabathi and imigodi to indicate either possession or locativeness as
well as the locative eziswini, confirms ownership (belonging) of
nature to Africa to which the poet also belongs.

3.4 Izithopho Nezibongo: A.S. Kunene (1952)

3.4.1 Communication of meaning

Out of 95 poems in this collection, 9 poems are specifically about
nature. Only three poems will be discussed below.

(a) Uju (Honey)

Kunene’s display of an intimate knowledge of bees and their
honey shows clearly that Kunene must have himself looked for
honey combs (ukusinga). In his first stanza he explains the state
of honey and he explains in the fifth and ninth stanzas its origin
and says:

Lungamanzi ajiyile
Luconsa kubiyiwe
Ngamakhekhe abunjiiwe
.........

(Kunene, 1953: 36)
(It is thick water (liquid)
It drops even when contained
In the built combs
..........)

Lwakhiwa yizimbongi
Ezingesabingozi
Yezimbali zinoshevu
Nomoya ozib(h)engu
.......... 

(Kunene, 1953: 36)

(It is made by bees
Which fear no danger
Of poisonous plants
And blowing wind
..........)

Only the structure and the prosaic diction of this poem leaves much to be desired. Otherwise it is an excellent poem.

(b) Ingwenya (Crocodile)
The poet himself claims that this poem consists of praises for the crocodile.

It should be noted that, whilst

They (praises) are naturally inclined to
Be in praise of a person, but they may
just as well be in criticism of him.

(Cope, 1968: 26)

Kunene’s praises of the crocodile are entirely negative. The poem is mainly a description of this fearful aquatic animal. He
begins his poem by giving us some information about the
behaviour and temperament of the crocodile. In his introductory
stanza he says:

……………………….

*Lungwengwe lweziziba*
*Engibasalwengule*
*Lwangigxagxamela*
*Ngabasalijamele*
*Lwangihwaqabela*
*Ngathi ngiyalwengama*
*Nganethwa yimikhizo*

……………………….

(Kunene, 1953: 40)

(……………………….
Cynodon grass of pools
Whenever I skimmed it off
It moved towards me
Whenever I stared at it
It frowned at me
When I stood over it
It threw water at me
………………………)

The above description of the crocodile’s attitude (towards the
poet) and his (poet’s) description of other parts of this animal’s
body such as the tail, teeth, mouth and skin, show beyond doubt
that the poet knows the crocodile well. It is true that when this
animal moves about in water with abundant algae, the latter
tends to be carried by the back of the crocodile. Hence the
reference to it as *ungwengwe* (cynodon grass) by the poet. The
poet must have swum in pools containing crocodiles. His
description of the crocodile’s teeth shows that he must have
observed this animal basking in the sun with its mouth wide open. Thus:

\begin{verbatim}
Nxakanxaka
Mazinyo azimbemba
Agawule thole nankabi
Agawul’ umziki nenxala
Zisezwa amanzi nomhlanga
Agawula inja nesangci
Zisaxhaph’amanzi
Agawula mfazi nengane
Besabelethene.
\end{verbatim}

(Kunene, 1953: 40)

(Overcrowded
Large teeth
Which chopped down juvenile cow/bull and ox
Which chopped down bushbuck and mountain reedbuck
While tasting water and reed
Chopped down a dog and an aardwolf
While licking water
Chopped down woman and child
While carrying each other.)

Kunene is familiar not only with the dentition of the crocodile but, with the kind of prey that it likes. He shares with us his observations about the behaviour of this carnivorous reptile.

It causes havoc, not only to animals (domestic and wild) but also to human beings. The poet’s selection of water loving-mammals such as bushbuck and mountain reedbuck is very appropriate and displays his true-life experiences.
Throughout his praise of this extremely dangerous animal, Kunene’s tone is one of utmost sarcasm.

(c) *Imbali* (Flower)

Although the poet does not refer to a specific aquatic plant flower, he does indicate in the first stanza that the flower that he admires is of an aquatic plant:

\[
Mbali, Mbal’ eqhakazile \\
Ngasemfuleni \\
 .......... \\
\]

(Kunene, 1953: 149)

(Flower, Flower that is blossoming 
Near the river.) 
 ..........)

According to the poet the flower is very attractive. As a result it attracts many kinds of organisms such as: ants (*izintuthwane*), children (*abantwana*), bees (*izimbongi*), birds (*izinyoni*) and flying beetle (*ibhungezi*). In addition to this function of providing nectar and pollen to organisms, the poet mentions other functions such as being used for decoration in homes and natural decoration in the wild. About wild decoration the poet says in the eighth stanza:

\[
Uhlobise izinkalo \\
Kanye nezintaba \\
 .......... \\
\]

(Kunene, 1953: 150)

(You decorated plains 
And mountains)
Kunene’s admiration of the flower does not occur in isolation but rather in relation to other living organisms. He must have been very observant to be able to see insects as small as ants. His reference to landscape when he refers to natural decoration, reflects the kind of country-side where this poet must have grown up. He concludes his poem by desiring to be a flower himself so that he can be attractive.

*Mbali, Mbali yezimanga,*  
*Mbali yemimango,*  
*Kungangingaba njengawe*  
*Ngibungwe njengawe.*

(Kunene, 1953: 150)

(Flowe, strange flower  
Flower of steep-hills,  
I wish to be like you  
(And) Be attractive like you.)

3.5 *Imbongi YakwaZulu* E.E.N.T. Mkize (1953)

3.5.1 Communication of meaning

In this anthology which contains 61 poems on a variety of themes, 12 poems deal specifically with nature. Our discussion shall focus on four poems only.

(a) *Isikhova* (Owl)
According to Gcumisa and Ntombela there are twelve species of owls. There is the true owl (*isikhova sempela*) which is the spotted eagle owl. The barn owl is *umabhengwane* (p.103).

In the first stanza and last stanza the poet addresses *mabhangwane* (barn owl) where he says:

\[
\begin{align*}
Mab(h)\text{engwane vuka ungibhule,} \\
Mab(h)\text{engwane vuka ungesule.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Mkize, 1953: 20 & 21)

(Barn owl wake up and beat me, 
Barn owl wake up and wipe me.)

These are the introductory and concluding verses of this poem. It is not very clear whether the poet knows that *isikhova* and *umabhengwane* are two different bird species. Even if it can be argued that in the first stanza it is *isikhova* that is addressing *mabhengwane*, the last lines of the last stanza are confusing. They are a repetition of the first two lines in the first stanza.

But they are also part of a first person narration which begins with the second stanza and ends with the fourth line of the last stanza.

According to Gcumisa and Ntombela, *vuk’ungibhule* is the wood owl whose call according to Maclean (p 345) is, “Whoo-hu, Whoo-hu-hu-hu-hu.” It does seem that the poet’s reference to the above-mentioned sound, suggests that *mabhengwane* and
vukungibhule is one and the same bird or the above sound is uttered by mabhengwane.

There is reference to three species of owls in this poem. Apparently the poet has done this unintentionally due to his paucity of knowledge about owls.

When the poet says:

Amehlo aqalekisiwe awami
Amehlo angaboni emini awami.

(Eyes which have been cursed are mine
Eyes which do not see during the day are mine.)

He refers to the wood owl (vukungibhule) which is strictly nocturnal. But in the sixth stanza the poets says:

Ngidla ukudla ngedwa,
Emini ngilala ngedwa,
Ammahlmvu izihlobo zami

(I eat food alone
In day time I sleep alone
Branches are my relatives
.........)

This cannot refer to the wood owl as these are usually in pairs. It cannot refer to the barn owl either as these are also usually in pairs but it may refer to the spotted eagle owl which is usually nocturnal and solitary.
Reference to various rodents in the eighth stanza which form part of the owl’s food indicates that the poet is talking about the barn owl (*umabhengwane*) which feeds mainly on rodents. But overall it is clear that the poet has no first hand knowledge of the birds that he is talking about.

(b) *Infene* (Baboon)

Hanks describes the baboon as follows:

*General body colour is brown, yellowish-brown or olive brown above (and) paler on the inside of the legs and on the underparts.*

(Hanks, 1980: 45)

It is untrue that the baboon is black in colour. It could perhaps be acceptable had the poet said it is grey. In his description of this primate the poet gives us an impression that his knowledge is limited. He makes a number of incorrect statements, such that this animal’s tail is straight:

*Umsila wakho ub (h) eke emuva,*  
*Uneziboya yonke indawo,*  
*…………*  

(Your tail is straight,  
It has hair all over,  
…………)

(Mkize, 1953: 36)

The baboon’s tail is not straight. It is characteristically carried up and then down as if it is broken. It is the baboon’s buttocks which are hairless. This becomes conspicuous in females during the mating season.
The poet further says:

………

*Impandla yakho ayinasicoco,*
*Kuhlala isagila qede yophe.*

(Mkize, 1953: 36)

(………
Your bald head has no headring,
When hit by a headed-stick it bleeds.)

*Unamagwegwe ezithweni zakho,*
*Amaxhayi okubiyela izinkomo,*
*Uyakhwembeza ngemicondo yakho.*

(Mkize, 1953: 37)

(You have rickets on your legs,
Improperly constructed cattle fence,
You walk with crooked thin legs.)

The baboon has no bald-head. It is also not true that this animal has rickets and thin legs (*amagwegwe nemicondo*).

However, his description of the baboon’s diet, that it feeds mainly on scorpions and dregs of beer, is correct. As is his description of the animal’s habitat. He must have been told or read about this. He further refers to the use of the baboon as an animal ridden by witch-doctors. Otherwise his knowledge of the physical aspect of the baboon is most unconvincing.

(c) *Umoya (Wind/Air)*

Mkize derives inspiration from dangling tree branches as they are blown by the wind. In his surprise he foresees imminent damage. To this effect he has the following to say:

*Uma umoya uvunguza,*
*Untengisa imithi yonke,*
Although the wind or air is a natural resource, it nevertheless occurs everywhere even in the man-made environment. The poet does not necessarily have to be in a natural environment in order to be inspired by this natural resource. It is only the effects of this natural resource in relation to other natural resources that is a proof of the poet’s exposure to the wider influence of the wind or air.

Mkize refers to the effects of the wind on clouds and birds in the sky saying:

_Amapu ayabaleka phezulu,_

…………

_Izinyoni ziphazele phezulu_  

…………

(Mkize, 1953: 54)

(Clouds run away high up,

…………

Birds flapping wings high up

…………

)

In the last three stanzas the poet shows his appreciation of the wind and is impressed by its sound as it blows in-between the trees and over them, over precipices and over grasses. He even
appreciates dust which moves up the hills. He praises the wind for causing the formation of rain which in turn brings about plenty of crop yields.

\[
\begin{align*}
Vunguza-ke sivunguvungu, \\
Uthwale izintuli ziye phezulu \\
Zithele emagqumeni izinkungu \\
Zinyamalale ezikhaleni phezulu, \\
Usilethele imvula siphole, \\
Nokudla emasimini sikuthole.
\end{align*}
\]

(Mkize, 1953: 55)

(Blow strong wind,  
Carry dust high up  
Throw it on hills mist  
Disappear in the openings high up,  
Bring rain to cool us,  
And get a good harvest from our fields.)

In his criticism of this natural resource, the poet gives more minor examples of the detrimental effects of the wind on life.

The poet does not provide sufficient negative consequences of strong winds on many other aspects of the environment such as crops, fruit trees, indigenous trees, birds’ nests and mammals (if wind is cold and strong). However, he does express his appreciation of the power of invisible wind in the sixth and seventh stanzas.

There is no shadow of a doubt that the poet knows this natural resource well. His experience is, however, limited to its well-known and common effects.
(d)  *Inhlabathi* (Soil)

The focus of this poem is the value of the soil as a natural resource. In this poem we are told about various uses of the soil such as: its use in farming, as a primary habitat for fauna and flora, for house building and for being a home after death.

Having stated in his introductory stanza that:

```
*Inhlabathi* …………,
*Iyimpilo ezintweni zonke,*
*Inhlabathi ingumthombo wokudla,*
*Okupilisa umhlaba wonke.*
```

(Mkize, 1953: 102)

(The soil …………
Is life to everything,
The soil is the source of food,
Which feeds the whole world.)

more details could be expected on specific aspects in the subsequent stanzas. However, the poet is rather vague as he mentions well-known and obvious things about the value of this natural resource. He even repeats himself as he says the same thing in the fifth and the ninth stanzas, namely the importance of the soil in house building.

When he refers to the value of the soil in collaboration with rain, he could have mentioned the sun, provider of warmth and light, without which there could be neither seed germination nor plant growth. The poet has underestimated the value of this indispensable life support system/resource. Hence his vague
and shallow reference to the dependence of other natural resources on the soil.

3.6 *Itshe Lesivivane*: Dlamini S.Z.S (1955)

3.6.1 Communication of meaning

Dlamini’s sixty poems contain eleven which deal specifically with nature. I shall focus only on the following four in this analysis.

(a) *Uthekwane* (Hamerkop)

Dlamini’s poem about the hamerkop deals solely with the bird’s appearance (identification) and feeding habits (food).

The poet repeats what is often said to have been said by the hamerkop, viz:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ngawumuhle thekwane} \\
\text{Woniswa yilokhu nalokhuya.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Dlamini, 1955: 18)

(You would be beautiful hamerkop, 
You are spoilt by this and that.)

Having said that this bird’s appearance was spoilt by its crest in the first stanza the poet expresses his appreciation of the crest in the second stanza thus:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{........} \\
\text{Ugedl’ oselwamane} \\
\text{Lwangijabulisa nokho,} \\
\text{Luchaz’ ubuhle bakho.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(........
The crest which has
Pleased me nevertheless,
Describes your beauty.)

What the poet says above is sarcastic. Arguing first that the hamerkop is ugly due to its crest and other characteristics, such as its obviously thin legs, is serious criticism of the bird by the poet. And then later to say that the bird is beautiful as a result of its crest implies a sarcastic way of expressing the opposite to what is said.

With regard to the feeding habits of this bird the poet mentions crabs, gnats and frogs as constituting this bird’s diet. He puts it thus:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Kuyin’ ukudla kwakho} \\
\text{Ngaphandle kwensensane?}
\end{align*}
\]

(Dlamini, 1955: 18)

(What is your food
Except gnats?)

(b) \textit{Isinil’ imvula} (Rain has fallen)

Although Dlamini titled his poem “\textit{Isinil’ imvula}” he begins his first stanza with, \textit{Selinile izulu} …, which means the weather has fallen (it is raining).

According to Doke and Vilakazi the term, I (li) zulu means: 1. sky, heaven. 2. weather. 3. lightening.

(Doke & Vilakazi, 1972: 889)

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Nom’ imvul’ ifike kancane,} \\
\text{Imithi notshani kuyeluleka;} \\
\text{Konke kuyenama, kanye nezinsensane.}
\end{align*}
\]
(Dlamini, 1955: 19)

(Even if little rain has fallen
Trees and grasses grow
All are excited, together with gnats.)

He stresses the value of vegetation which provides food to livestock in the third and sixth stanzas. In the third and fifth stanzas reference is made to crop production. In the latter stanza he is very specific:

*Mhlu’ imisebenzi yemvula,
Izimpahla zikhawul’ ukuzula;
Zifuna zingaz’ amanzi akuphi,
Nohlaza zingaboni zingalutholaphi.*

(Dlamini, 1955: 20)

(Rain does a lot of good,
Livestock cease roaming about;
Looking for water not knowing where to find it.
And not knowing where to find vegetation.)

The poet expresses appreciation of the rain’s effect on vegetation. He commends God, the rain-maker in at least three stanzas.

(c) *Ilanga* (The sun)

This is perhaps one of Dlamini’s best poems, especially with regards to nature. In the very first verse of the first stanza the poet says:

*Phuma sikothe langa!*

(Dlamini, 1955: 30)

(Rise you sun so that we bask in you!)
What is of significance here is the warmth that the sun provides. In the subsequent stanzas the poet focuses on the effects of the sun on reptiles which he says are afraid of the sun:

Izihuluhul’ ezingehlangane nobuso bakho,
Zidonsekel’ emigedeni zacasha ngamaphindo?
Nasemigodini zazisonga zidl’ ingqondo,
Zikhand’ amas’ okusabalal’ ekushoneni kwakho;
Lapho ziyophuma zihlway’ okwasethunjini.

(Dlamini, 1955: 30)

(Wrigglers which cannot meet you face to face,
Retreated into caves coiled and hid themselves,
And into holes and coiled themselves thinking,
Making plans of going out at sunset;
When they will go out looking for food.)

The focal point here is the intensity of the heat which is a result of sunshine.

The poet knows the behavior of snakes especially on very hot days. It is true that biologically, they lack resistance to tolerate the heat of the sun. The survival of these reptiles is indeed dependent on them hiding themselves in caves and holes which remain cool even during the hottest part of the day. The relationship between various natural resources such as the sun itself, rocks (caves) and soil (holes) is well reflected.

Dlamini twice refers metaphorically to the sun as a star. Although this reference may be debated by scholars such as Msimang who in Izimbongi Izolo Nanamuhla Umqulu 2 disputes the categorising of the sun as star as follows:
The sun is a star. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines the sun as: *the star round which the earth orbits and from which it receives light and warmth.*

(Fowler & Fowler, 1992: 1222)

The poet refers to livestock once in relation to the sun as he says:

\[ Nkanyezi' ephakamele phezulu \\
Kwath' izinkomo zaziphil' ezihlahleni, \\
Zingencintisane nokugwaza kwemisebe yaphezulu, \\
\]

(Star that has risen high up,
And cattle hid themselves in the trees,
Being unable to compete with the goring of your rays

(Dlamini, 1955: 30)

I would argue that connotatively the term *ilanga* may be referring to any warmth in life or even creation or the creator (God).
3.7 ELEMENTS OF POETRY EMPLOYED TO COMMUNICATE MEANING

3.7.1 Introduction

As in the previous chapter I shall now assess how these different poets employ elements of poetry to communicate meaning to their readers. Of particular interest will be their use of images or figures of speech, namely: simile, metaphor, personification and symbolism.

3.7.2 Images in poetry for the period between 1946 and 1955

(a) *Umyalezo* by E.T. Mthembu (1948)

(i) Simile

Similes will not be assessed according to any categorisation, but rather generally.

.........
*Isiqhamukile iza kalusica*
*Njengomkhunkuli nomqondisi.*

(Mthembu, 1948: 5)

(.........
It has emerged coming crushingly
Like a witchdoctor and director.)

Owing to its devastating effects, the sun is compared with a witch-doctor whose death-causing medicines can be as damaging as the scorching rays of the sun.
Another good example is the poem *Uthekwane* where the human generation is compared to a crab:

```
..........., sihamba sikekela
okwenkalankala iqond’ emanzini.
```

(Mthembu, 1948: 72)

(........... walking sideways
Like a crab heading towards water.)

(ii) Metaphor

To say that humans or people walk sideways like a crab means that they are crabs, metaphorically. This expression indicates their thoughtlessness and defective judgement. They do things the wrong way.

In *Impophoma* (Victoria Falls) where the poet refers to African intellectuals such as Aggrey, Dube and Vilakazi as “izintaka” (Redshouldered Widows). Both the black colour and the perching of this bird on tall grass are very relevant.

```
Izintaka zezigodi
Ngezigodi zaseAfrika.
```

(Mthembu, 1948: 37)

(Redshouldered widows of shallow valleys
Shallows valleys (countries, of Africa.)

Another example is in *Izintaba zoNdi* where rivers are referred to metaphorically as veins. Obviously, water is compared to blood in veins.

```
Imithambo uyithumele yonk’ olwandle
Iqumbile yagcwal’ igazi elimhlophe
```

(.............
(You sent all the veins to the sea
They are swelling out full of white blood
…………)

(iii) Personification

*Impophoma* offers a vivid depiction of personification:

*Isiphehlelelo siyimbasa
Ebunzini kuwena,
Zonk’ izizukulwane
Zophephel’ emaphikweni
Akho ……….

(Mthembu, 1948: 34)

(Your brand is a shining object
On your forehead
All generations
Shall be safe on
Your wings ……….)

It is well known that a waterfall does not have a forehead. Only a human being has a forehead. A waterfall does not possess wings.

(iv) Symbolism

Mthembu uses symbols in various ways in order to communicate meaning. In *Izintaba zoNdi* he writes as follows:

*Ntaba’ enemithombo yemifula yonke
Nkomazi esengwa zinsuku zonke
Kwaze kwagcwala onk’ amathunga
Kwesutha nezingane zikaNdaba.*

(Mthembu, 1984:54)

(Mountain which has sources of all the rivers
Cow which is milked everyday until all milking pails became full
And Ndaba’s children became satisfied with food.)
In *Uthekwane* the poet says the following addressing the hamerkop directly:

*Kazi namuhla ulethe mbiko muni,

...........

(Wonder what message you are bringing

..........)

The hamerkop is regarded by some people as an omen of bad luck which is either death or the striking of lightning. It is a symbol of misfortune.

(b) *Umuthi Wokufa Nezinye Izinkondlo* by E.H.A. Made.

In Made’s poems the following images are found:

(i) Simile

*Zalanani nande*
*Nenabe njengezimpande*

...........

(Made, 1950: 1)

(Give birth and increase
Spread out like roots

..........)

Although the simile, “spread out like roots” may be regarded as an ordinary idiomatic language which has lost its effect through repeated use, there is, however, a second level or set of association in the context in which this simile is used above. Some plants have fibrous root systems while others have a taproot from which many lateral or side roots develop. As additional sideroots develop from other lateral roots the “family
of roots” represents many generations of a human family, hence, “spread out like roots”.

*(Umuthi Wokufa Ingxenye 1)*

*AbakwaMzabokwe nabo balunguza; Ezixhotsheni balunguz’ okwamaza;*

(Made, 1950: 57)

(The Mazabokwes’ also peep; In the lump of bushes peeped like water; ...........)

(ii) Metaphor

*Wena Qhina laphum’ embizeni Ondini,*

........

(You steen buck which escaped from a claypot at Ondini ........)

*MaSwazi bophani izinja zenu,*

*Zingabadla kuyawukonakala!*

(Made, 1950: 60)

(Swazis chain your dogs Should they bite them you will face the music:)

Both the words *iqhina* (steenbuck) and *izinja* (dogs) are metaphors in the context of the poem “Izibongo Zika” D. Mck Malcolm.

(iii) Personification

In *Afrika Ngingekudele*, a wonderful example of personification is to be found:

*Izinhlanzi emanzini*  
*Nodibi lwenkalankala*
Kuhlamba ekupholeni
Kuthi lapho kuphefumula
Okhakhayini lwamanzi

(Made, 1950: 37)

(Fish in the water
And a crab the porter
Washing in the cool (area)
And then when breathing
On top of the head of water

In the context of this poem, the word *udibi* (porter) refers to a person working as a luggage carrier.

On the context of the above extract it is the crab which is said to be a luggage carrier for a fish. The species of both the crab and the fish are not mentioned. The crab is given (by implication) physical human characteristics which will enable it to carry the luggage.

The word *ukhakhayi* means crown (top) of the head usually a human head. The reference to water as possessing a crown of the head gives an impression of water as being a human being. It is indeed the fish and not necessarily crabs which emerge and submerge in the water as they swim. In terms of the above extract both the luggage owner and the porter (fish and crab) emerge above the water surface for breathing purposes.
(iv) Symbolism

E, iLanga liphumile
B(h)ekan’ ukukhanya kwalo;
Masivuke sekusile
Sidumis’ uMenzi walo.

(Made, 1950: 2)

(O, the sun has risen
Look at its brightness
Let us wake up it’s dawning
Praise its creator.)

The context in which the sun (ilanga) is used in the poem “E, Ilanga Liphumile!” is both a metaphor and a symbol. It is a symbol in the sense that it symbolizes hope and life. Here it stands for opportunities in general revelation, educational and religious opportunities which people need to seize.

E, iLanga liphumile
Bhekan’ ukukhanya kwalo;
Masivuke sekusile
…………

(Made, 1950: 21)

(Oh, the sun has risen
Look at it’s brightness;
Let us wake up it’s dawning
…………)

(c) Izithopho Nezibongo by A.S. Kunene

Kunene uses images very effectively in his poetry.

(i) Simile

In his very effective use of simile Kunene has the following to say in his poem titled, Uju:
Kalunjengalubisi
Lungaphuzwa yizinyoni

...........

Ludliwa ngamaphisi
Lwesatshwa yizimpisi
Kalunyama, kalumasi
Lwaziswa ngamakhosi

...........

(Kunene, 1952: 36)

(It is unlike milk
It may be drunk by birds

...........

It is eaten by recognized hunters
It is being feared by spotted hyenas
It is neither meat nor maas
It is appreciated by traditional leaders

...........

Honey is being compared with other delicious, nutritious foods such as meat, milk and maas (curdled milk or sour milk).

After having compared honey with various nutritious foods by describing it as food for adult snakes and soothing coughs the poet compares it with another nutritious food, i.e. milk by saying it is unlike the latter. It is the best of all other nutritious foods.

In Ingwenya the poet has the following to say:

Madumel’ ajinje njengegwala
Mlomo mude umabibiyela.

...........

(Kunene, 1952: 41)

(Assailant who grabs and swallows fast like a coward
Widemouth who swallows without chewing

...........)
In his very effective use of the above simile the poet compares the crocodile’s feeding (eating) habits with those of a human being who is a coward. A coward eats quickly like a thief in fear of being caught red-handed. In fact what makes the crocodile eat rapidly is the fact that it does not chew its food as it does not possess molar teeth.

(ii) Metaphor
Kunene uses more metaphors where he has used personification in the whole poem, i.e where he addresses the object directly as if he is talking to another human being. The poem Ingwenya, is a typical example of this.

…………
Lungwengwe lweziziba
Engibesalwengule
Lwangigxagxamela,
Ngabe salijamele
Lwangihwaqabela
…………
(Kunene, 1952: 40)

(…………
Coastal buffalo grass of pools
Whenever I skim it off
It walked with long strides,
Whenever I stared at it
It frowned at me
…………)

The poet calls the crocodile cynodon grass. Indeed, with its rough skin carrying thick algae it looks like a grass creeper.
The combination of the crocodile’s temperament with its physical appearance make this reptile very fearful. The poet’s choice of images to describe this aquatic animal is very appropriate.

(iii) Personification

Kunene likes to personify his poems by using the apostrophe as in the following examples:

_Netha Mvula, Viliza Nkanyezana, Uthekwane, Ngingamazolo_ and _Ingwenya_ to mention only a few. In the poem, _Ingwenya:_

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{.........} \\
\text{Wayedonsa ngomlomo} \\
\text{Izandla zambambada amanzi} \\
\text{.........}
\end{align*}
\]

\text{(Kunene, 1952: 40)}

(.........
While pulling with the mouth
The hands were splashing the water
.........)

As the crocodile does not have hands but only primates such as man have hands it is obvious that the poet is referring to claws.

_Ngingamazolo_ dew _amazolo_ has the following to say about itself as if it is human:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ngiyinhlambi yesokusa ........} \\
\text{Ingeza zikhotha umqedantuli} \\
\text{Isiziba esibakhabe begenquka} \\
\text{Ezinye iziziba zibaminzisa} \\
\text{.........}
\end{align*}
\]

\text{(Kunene, 1952: 20)}

( I am a swimmer of dawn ........
Cleaner of tall grass and dust remover

85
A pool that has kicked them and they fall over
Other pools drown them
…………)

Only human beings and hoofed animals such as cattle, horses, buffalo, giraffes, etc., are able to kick. Dew (*amazolo*) is speaking as if they are human beings. Dew may look insignificant by comparison with other forms of water such as sea, dam and river water which drown people. However, in spite of its size dew can cause humans to fall over as if they are drowning.

(iv) Symbolism

In the poem *UShaka Nehlambo* the poet has the following to say symbolically:

\[
Izimamba\ zewusa\ amahlathi\ zinyobozela
Zesaba\ nokukubheka\ ngolaka.
Izinyathi\ nezimbube\ zamoyizela
…………
\]

(Kunene, 1952: 94)

(Mambas moved slowly up the forests
Being afraid even to look at you due to your temper.
Buffaloes and lions smiled
…………)

The poet skillfully uses fearful and dangerous animals to symbolise danger. Snakes such as both types of mamba as well as buffalos and lions are fearful and very dangerous animals which are always associated with fierce fighting and death. But the poet chose lions and buffaloes among royal animals and says that they are not afraid of Shaka. Instead they smile.
(d) *Imbongi YakwaZulu* by E.E.N.T. Mkize (1953)

In the following discussion I shall discuss the four figures of speech as defined elsewhere in the dissertation. I shall examine the author’s employment of these images in his poetry in order to communicate meaning effectively.

(i) Simile

A very pertinent example of Mkize’s use of symbolism is found in the poem *Amanzi Omfula*:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ngithukuthelisa okwengonyama,} \\
\text{Ngizamula kudume izihosha,} \\
\text{Ngishaye ingoma yobuqhawe,} \\
\text{Ngilekelelelana nowethu itshe} \\
\text{……………} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Mkize, 1953: 14)

(I become as angry as a lion, I roar and the kloofs echo, I sing a heroic song Singing together with my contemporary the rock …………..)

The choice of a lion in this simile is very appropriate. The lion is not only fearful it is indeed a very powerful cat. Contrary to what is said in the above quotation, lions are more dangerous when they are quiet or not roaring. Lions often roar loudly after a successful kill, roaring or and moaning does not reflect anger.

In the poem *Ubuhle Bemvelo* the poet refers to trees as drunkards as follows:
Trees are dangling like drunkards, 
Greeting those who are this side and that side, 

(Mkize, 1953: 42)

(ii) Metaphor

In the poem *Amanzi Omfula, Isikhova and Indunduma Yamalahle*, the poet employs metaphor in a skilful manner:

\[ Mina ngiyinyoka ende, \]
\[ Engalali imini nobusuku, \]
\[ ........... \]

(Mkize, 1953: 14)

( I am a long snake, 
Which does not sleep at day time and at night time ...........) 

\[ Bathi ngiyinkunzi emnyama, \]
\[ Ngoba ngithibela amavaka, \]
\[ Athi gagaga aphindele emuva. \]

(Mkize, 1953: 15)

(They say I am black bull, 
Because I make a threatening movement, 
............)

\[ Ngibone ishongololo lamawa, \]
\[ Liphuma emthashweni wamalahle, \]
\[ Lizungeza ligudla amawa, \]
\[ ........... \]

(Mkize, 1953: 129)

(I have seen a millipede of precipices, 
Coming out of a coal mine, 
Moving along around precipices, 
...........)
(iii) Personification

Mkize uses personification in a number of his nature poems. In the poem “Amanzi Omfula” almost the whole stanza one is personified thus:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{…………..} \\
\text{Angilali imini nobusuku,} \\
\text{Futhi nempilo yami yinde,} \\
\text{…………..}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ngihamba ngehlisa amaqele,} \\
\text{Ngilibhekise kumama olwandle,} \\
\text{…………..}
\end{align*}
\]

(Mkize, 1953: 14)

(…………
I do not sleep day and night,
Also my lifespan is long,
…………,
I walk down the slopes,
Going to my mother (in) the sea,
…………)

To say that the river walks as its water moves down towards the sea and also to refer to the sea as a mother is effective use of personification. In this poem it is the river (-water) itself that is talking to the reader as if it was a person.

(iv) Symbolism

Mkize employs mainly traditional symbolism with prominent use of the sun and water.

Water is a symbol of health and life as every aspect of life is dependent upon it:
Zonke izinto ziphila ngami
Abantu bangithwala ngezinkamba,
Izinkomo zingidonsa ngomlomo,
………
( Everything depends on me for life
People carry me by means of claypots,
Cattle sip me through the mouth.)

Similarly, Mkhize writes about the sun as follows:

Ilanga ………
………
Lifudumeze oLakeni noMuseni,
Nabantu bonke bezwe,
Isipho esikhulu soMdali,
………
(Mkize, 1953: 43)

(The sun ………
………
Provides warmth to bad and good ones,
And all the people of the earth
A great gift from the Creator.)

Birds are also used by Mkize in a symbolic manner. He often
uses bird calls to symbolise dawn both literally and figuratively.

They suggest or imply new life. In Ubuhle Bemvelo the poet
writes lyrically that:

Izinyoni ziyahlabelela emthini,
Zisho ngamaphimbo amahle,
Zijabulela ilanga lasemini,
Elifudumeza ababi nabahle,
………
(Mkize, 1953: 43)

(Birds are singing in the trees,
Singing with their melodious voices,
Enjoying day light,
Which warms the bad and the good ones,
………..)
(d) *Itshe Lesivivane* by S.Z.S. Dlamini (1955)

Dlamini’s poetry is not characterised by images because it consists predominantly of nursery rhymes. However, in a few isolated cases the following images are found:

(i) **Simile**

In the poem *Ngesaba Izinyoka*, the poet says:

> Phinde ngiyibhek’ imamba,
> Ngisho noma ngihamba,
> Noma ngithe vathe ngejubane,
> Ngiyesabisa okonyazi.

(Dlamini, 1955: 23)

(Never shall I ever look at a mamba,
Even when I am walking,
Even when I am running,
I fear it like lightning.)

There is nothing that is feared as much as lightning when there is a thunderstorm. The lightning simile is very relevant in the context in which it is used in the above extract. There are very few cases where the result of a lightning strike, especially upon humans, is not fatal.

In *Izibongo ZoMnumzane*, J. De Jager the poet uses images in a delightful way:

> Ezansi wafika bathatha ngejubane,
> Ngob’ utheleke wangena njengenyambane;
> Amavukan’ azifihla ………

(Dlamini, 1955: 36)

(Lower (down) he arrived and they ran away,
Because he arrived speedily like lightning;
Young bulls (teachers) hid themselves ……….)
It is obvious that Dlamini fears lightning. Again, he builds his simile around the effects of this phenomenon. The poet claims that J. De Jager would enter school premises unexpectedly and without being noticed by the teachers. He must have been very fierce to be compared with lightning. He must have been a very active man. Lightning strikes very fast.

(ii) Metaphor

In the poem *Ilanga*, Dlamini’s use of metaphor is clearly evidenced:

\[
\text{Mlilo wothathe ngokuthath’ amaZolo,}
\text{Akhumbule kubo kwasibhakabhaka;}
\text{La engazifihla khona \ldots\ldots\ldots.}
\]

(Dlamini, 1955: 31)

(Fire of the long dry grass which burnt dew,
Which then remembered their birth place in the sky;
Where they could hide themselves \ldots\ldots.)

The word *amazolo* is also a metaphor in the context of this poem. It refers to common and unimportant people (junior teachers in this case). J. De Jager must have been very intimidating especially to young junior teachers. These images were aptly chosen to describe someone who was very fierce and moved with incredibly fast speed.

(iii) Personification

In *Uthingo Lwenkosazana*, Dlamini’s use of personification is beautifully demonstrated. Thus, writing about Victoria Falls:

\[
\text{Isimongo sakho sihlobe siyakhithika,}
\text{Izitho zakho zifana nelanga:}
\]

(Dlamini, 1955: 40)
(Your forehead is well decorated, 
Your sheens are like the sun:)

*Uhleka maqed’ izulu liphangalale,  
Kuth’ amaf” aphamban’ odwana:  
Imisebe yelang’ ivel’ isabalale,*

………… (Dlamini, 1955: 40)

(You laugh and then thunderstorms die,  
And then clouds move across each other:  
Sun rays spread across  
…………)

There is no doubt that Dlamini was influenced by Vilakazi’s personification in *Impophoma yeVictoria* (Victoria Falls). One will recall that it was Vilakazi who wrote:

*UNkulunkulu ngcobe isimongo.  
Sekhanda lakho ngomudwa wothyino  
Lwenkosikazi ……….* (Vilakazi, 1935: 18)

(God has anointed the forehead of your head  
By means of a line of a rainbow  
Of a woman ……….)

(iv) Symbolism

An example of Dlamini’s successful use of symbolism is found in these words:

*Sezaphel’ izikhathi zezikhali negazi,*  
…………  
*Liphumil’ ilanga kwelakwaZulu:*  
………… (Dlamini, 1955: 9)

(Gone are the days of weapons and bloodshed,  
…………  
The sun has risen in Zululand:  
…………)
The sun in the context of this poem symbolises progress and civilisation. Education has been and still is regarded as light. In the poem *Imfund' Wubulawu*, the poet describes it as follows:

\[
\text{Ngithand' ukubona' ilanga liphuma kulolu khalo;}
\]

\[
\text{Imfund' ikhanyise ngokuphelele}
\]

\[
\text{Education lighting in full}
\]

(Dlamini, 1955: 32)

(I wish to see the sun rising on this plateau; Education lighting in full)

### 3.8 TYPES OF POEMS

#### 3.8.1 Introduction

As in the previous section, types of poems which will be found and analysed include lyrics, (odes and elegies), praise poetry, narrative, epics and didactical types.

The nature poetry for this period is predominantly of the lyrical type. Inclusive here are elegies. Poems such as: *Ilanga* and *Uthekwane* by E.T. Mthembu; *Nginganikela Ngokwami Konke* and *Qinisela Mphefumulo wami* by E.H.A. Made; *Netha Mvula* and *Uthekwane* by A.S. Kunene; *Amanzi Omfula* and *Ulwandle* by E.E.N.T. Mkize and *Uncede* and *Ngesaba izinyoka* by S.Z.S. Dlamini are all examples of lyrics.
A lyric, (it will be remembered), is generally defined as a musical poem which expresses the poet’s thoughts and emotions. In *Imvula*, Mkize clearly expresses his thoughts and feelings about the value and effects of rain:

\begin{align*}
\text{Ngikuthanda ucabaza ophahleni,} \\
\text{Ungishishizela ukuba ngilale,} \\
\text{Okwezinyoni zintenga ezithlahleni,} \\
\hline
\text{(Mkize, 1953: 47)}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
\text{(I love you falling on rooftops,} \\
\text{Lulling me to sleep,} \\
\text{Like birds dangling on trees,} \\
\hline
\text{(Enough food becomes available when you have fallen} \\
\text{Food (crops) becomes plentiful} \\
\text{Crops grow luxuriantly due to your help} \\
\text{Become excited/happy day and night,} \\
\hline
\text{………..)}
\end{align*}

There are also a few praise poems, defined by Msimang as combining qualities of more than one poetry type.

According to C.T. Msimang:

\begin{quote}
*Praise-poetry combines the qualities of an ode, eulogy and epic.*
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
(Msimang, 1981: 51)
\end{quote}

Kunene, *Isitimela* by E.E.N.T. Mkize and *Izibongo zoMnumzane J.*

*De Jager* by S.Z.S. Dlamini.

Made praises Malcolm thus:

> Sinakanaka esimehlo luhlaza
> Kwandoda yaseLangeni uMpumuza!
> Wena ngwaz’ endala yaseMkhomazana
> Eyaqala ngamabuz’ eMkhomazana,
> Walusel’ ezimfundeni zemifula,
> Weq’ amavuzamanzi nezikhukhula!

(Made, 1950: 56)

(Strutter with green eyes
Like a Langeni man Mpumuza!
You old achiever of Mkhomazana
Who started with brown field rats at Mkhomazana
You herded livestock in low lying veld of river.
Jumped over water-snakes and floods!)

There are also many narrative poems in the poetry under discussion. These are poems which relate stories about people, wars and great events. Examples include *Impi YakwaZulu* by E.T. Mthembu, *Umuthi Wokufa* by E.H.A. Made, and *Phuma Langa* by A.S. Kunene.

Narrative poetry may also describe objects as is evidenced in Mkize’s *Imfene* which describes the body colour, habitat and food of this primate.

> Umsila ub(h)eko emuva,
> Uneziboya yonke indawo

> .........
> Umbombo wakho mude,
> Ikhala lakho lisemlonyeni,
> Izinzipho zakho zinde,

> .........
(Mkize, 1953: 36)
(The tail is facing backwards, 
You have hair all over the body 
………)

Your bridge of nose is long, 
Your nose is on the mouth, 
Your nails are long, 
………)

However, some scholars categorise narrative poetry separately, placing it together with nursery rhymes. In his narration of creation in his Umuthi Wokufa (Ingxenye Yokuqala) Made says:

Umuntu esebunjwe ngenhlabathi 
Ebomvu bude buduze nehlathi, 
Izinto sezidaliwe, 
Umsebenzi usufeziwe, 
Waphumula uMenzi 
Wabusiza umsebenzi

………..

(Made, 1955: 1)
(Man having been created by means of soil 
Red soil next to a forest, 
Things having been created, 
The Creator rested 
Blessed the work 
………..)

Many of the poems under discussion tell well-known heroic stories. However, they are too short to be classified as true epics. They may thus be termed “Epic Narratives”.

Some schools of thought categorise religious poems and satires as didactic poetry. These are poems written essentially to teach a lesson,
i.e. they have a moral purpose. Although there are many such poems in most of the studied books, for example: “E! Wena Onenhlanhla”, “Ningesabi”, “Ubuisiwe Esifazaneni”, in Kunene’s Izithopho Nezibongo etc. I did not separate these as a category of their own as most poems written during this period have a religious and didactic tone.

3.9 OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Although there are variations here and there in terms of style, choice of themes and quality of content, the poetry of the period under discussion reflects general features such as rhyme (an obvious emulation of the pioneer, B.W. Vilakazi), as well as didactism and a religious tone.

1. Mthembu

Although Mthembu lived during a time when natural resources were still in abundance and were relatively undisturbed, his poetry is not characterised by as extensive a use of these resources as could be expected.

There is a dominance of a christian tone in Mthembu’s poetry, which shows the effects of early missionary influences on him. Even poems which are not religious do have a christian lyricism.

Vilakazi’s influence is evident in many of Mthembu’s poems. Impophoma has been shown to be an obvious emulation of Vilakazi.
Even the choice of certain topics and themes resembles those of Vilakazi. Examples include: Impophoma (Victoria Falls) and Isililo SabaThembu KwaSanti (Mariannhill). Indeed, the poet frequently refers to Vilakazi, especially in his odes.

One of the poems in which natural resources are appropriately and impressively used is, Amagugu Lawo Ayashabalala.

There is also overt didacticism in many of this poet’s poems. The quality of his poetry is marred by his attempts to produce poetry with end rhyme. He forces the presence of rhyme even where its use renders a piece of work meaningless.

His use of nature is unconvincing. Otherwise his poetry is beautiful in some parts.

2. Made
Vilakazi’s influence on Made is overt, for example the use of a rhyme scheme which the former experimented with in his Inkondlo KaZulu. Surprisingly we are unable to find any utterance by the poet to the effect that he was influenced by Vilakazi or praising Vilakazi. Instead we find some praises directed at Mafukuzela.

3. Kunene
Unlike his predecessors, Mthembu and Made, Kunene refers to many more resources other than the resources which the poems are about. In
the poem Ingwenya, for example, the following natural resources are used: bushbuck (umziki), reedbuck (inxala), aardwolf (isangci), fly (impukane), mosquito (umiyane), crab (inkalankala) and python (inhlwathi). Like Vilakazi he skillfully manipulates such resources in order to enrich his poetry. His poetry shows a sound knowledge and appreciation of his environment. Most of Kunene’s poems which are not specifically nature orientated, are very much enriched by his able use of many natural resources. Indalo, which is basically about creation is enriched by the use of at least 38 types of natural resources. He does the same in the poem Ngingamazolo where he refers to at least 26 types of natural resources.

4. Mkize
Mkize’s poetry is characterized by being structurally neat. He attempts to employ rhyme in a meaningful manner rather than using forced rhyme all the time.

The poet does not display an adequate knowledge of some of the things (Natural resources) that he writes about. His handling of Isikhova is a good example of this weakness.

Although Mkize shows a wide knowledge of natural resources it is not of the same depth as Kunene’s. The poems titled, Ubuhle Bemvelo, Ukuba and Umoya are examples of this weakness.

5. Dlamini
Dlamini’s use of natural resources to clarify aspects of his poems is very limited. In more than 50% of his poems he uses only 1-3 resources once or thrice. He also uses less variety of these in any one poem. Unlike his predecessors, Dlamini impoverishes his poetry by not making reference to a variety of natural resources related to the theme in question.
CHAPTER 4

POETRY OF THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1956 AND 1965

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This period saw a dramatic change in the development of Zulu poetry. There was a dramatic increase not only in the number of poems but also in the number of books that were published. The period also saw the appearance of anthologies to which many new poets contributed. Ten books and 620 poems were published during this period. The discussion that follows reflects the quality of poems published during the period in question.

The messages that are communicated in all the nature poems in these anthologies can be analysed using D.K. Berlo’s “Communication Model” described in chapter 2 of this study. This model will be reflected upon in the first section of each book analysed where possible.

4.2 Inzululwane: Dlamini J.C. (1958)

Communication of meaning

As a result of Dlamini’s insignificant contribution to Zulu poetry about nature, his poetry may be seen as unworthy of inclusion in this
research. However, due to his being held in high regard, a brief
discussion of his contribution is included.

Qhakaza Mbali is the only poem specifically about nature in this book
of 28 poems.

Qhakaza Mbali (Break open flower)
In this four stanza poem, Dlamini’s direct reference to the flower is
reflected on in the first stanza where he directly addresses the flower.
Here we are shown how he is inspired by various characteristics of the
flower which touch his various senses.

In the rest of the poem he compares the beautiful flower with human
beings. His use of personification in the very first line in the first
stanza, followed by reference to the colour, odour, nectar and
appearance of the flower, sums up the essence of flowering. He says:

Qhakaza mbal’ uhlek’ usincamise
Ngombal’ omuhle’ uhlek’ uhlobise
Ngonqambothi loju size sidakwe simunca;
Ngobuhl’ obuphelele saneliswa sibuka
Ngokuphela kwemvelo sikholwe sidlinza.

(Dlamini, 1957: 13)

(Break open flower laugh and satisfy us
With beautiful colour laugh and decorate
With your sweet nectar so that we suck until we be
drunk;
With complete beauty we be satisfied with sight
With nature only/alone we believe pondering.)

The poet sees the flower as a symbol to be emulated. He wishes
(humans) to have faith and praise. We must be exemplary in our
actions and behavior. To him the flower symbolises harmony. We must live harmoniously with our neighbours. To this effect he says:

........
Ngobuhle’ obuphelele bobuntu saneliswe,
Saneliswe, ngokwanelis’ omakhelwane.
(Dlamini, 1957: 13)

(........
With complete human beauty be satisfied,
We be satisfied by satisfying neighbours.)

The poet seems to have experienced bitterness and bad neighbourliness. As a result he is advocating harmony among neighbours. Harmony and friendship which must be characterised by uncontrollable laughter, co-operation, and ever smiling. The sharing of love and hope is characterised by the absence of deceit (ukukhohlisana), betrayal (ukuyenga), cunningness (ubuqili), witchcraft (ubuthakathi), and drunkenness (ubudakwa). According to the poet all these are evils which divide communities. They are the sources of bitterness and unhealthy neighbourliness. Dlamini encourages community spirit “ubuntu”.

The symbolic use of the flower embodies a religious feeling of love and hope, e.g.:

Ngombal’ omuhl’ omhlophe, sihlobise,
Sihlobis’ imiphefumulo yawomakhelwana;
........
Sibenozibuthe kaThemba noThando.
(Dlamini, 1957: 13)
(By means of a beautiful white colour, we decorate,
We decorate the souls of neighbours
………..)
So that we have the magnet of Hope and Love.
………..)

There are numerous examples in Dlamini’s poetry where, despite using simple everyday language, he enables one to derive both denotative and connotative meanings from his philosophising. It is likely that by flower he is referring to a young, beautiful girl. The beauty of a girl is often associated with that of a beautiful flower. In such a case the flower has been used both metaphorically and symbolically. The white colour is also a symbol of peace and purity especially among neighbours in the context of the above poem.

4.3 Imisebe Yelanga series: Nyembezi S. et al

For the first time one sees the appearance of anthologies containing contributions mainly by first time writers. These are Imisebe Yelanga 1, 2 and 3. This is a graded series. Imisebe Yelanga 1, 2 and 3 shall be excluded from this study as they are not worth researching due to the quality and level of poetry they contain. In the anthologies which followed these we are not going to follow the structure and content of the text as has been done thus far.

4.4 Amahlungu Aluhlaza: Nyembezi S. (1963)

This anthology consists of 74 poems by 18 poets. However, only 12 poems are specifically on natural phenomena. The rest are on a variety of different themes. Only five poems will be analysed.
4.4.1 Communication of meaning

(a) Flora

(i) Hlabelelani Maqabunga (Sing leaves): O.E.H.M. Nxumalo
In this poem Nxumalo is inspired by the musical sounds which both green and dry leaves make.

In this magnificent but simple poem the poet refers to the various habitats where plant-leaves sing. Without any reference to specific plants which bear such leaves, he says:

\[ \text{Hlabelelani maqabunga hlabelelani} \]

........

\[ \text{Phansi kwamawa, ezikhoxeni;} \]
\[ \text{Eduze nemifula, emithonjeni;} \]
\[ \text{Emaqelen’ohlaza, emadlelweni;} \]
\[ \text{Emakhaya emuva kwezindlu;} \]
\[ \text{Ezikoleni, emagcekeni okudlala;} \]
\[ \text{Hlabelelani maqabunga hlabelelani.} \]

(Nyembezi, 1963: 11)

(Sing leaves sing

........

At the bottom of precipices, hollow low lying places;
Near rivers, near springs
On steep slopes of greenery, on grazing velds;
At homes, behind houses;
In schools on playing grounds;
Sing leaves sing.)

The poet rather unclearly differentiates between the sound made by plant-leaves on their own, as a result of wind action and the sound made by the wind on its own. The only association mentioned between the wind and the leaves is in the second stanza where it is
said that the wind respects leaves in such a way that it brings the scent of flowers to the leaves.

\[\text{Umoy’ uyanihlonipha ngokuhwelela} \]
\[\text{Unidobel’ iphunga lazo} \]
\[\text{Ngesikhathi niculela phansi,} \]
\[\text{Nis(z)ululeke nezimbali zenanele.} \]

(Nyembezi, 1963: 4)

(The wind respects you when it becomes dusk
It attracts their scent
When you sing softly,
Roaming about with flowers echoing.)

According to the poet, the soothing or consoling effects of the music of plant-leaves is so powerful that it causes grass to grow, lulls animals to sleep, stops sunset shadows from advancing towards leaves, comforts wild animals, (such as dassies (izimbila), red winged starlings (amasomi) and spotted-eagle owls (izikhova).)

After touching on the reactions of plants and human beings to the melodious music of leaves, the poet concludes his poem by advising leaves to sing like school children. From the fifth to the seventh verses of the last stanza he specifically refers to the inspiration derived by poets and musicians from leaves as follows:

\[\text{.........} \]
\[\text{Niyazimis’ izimbongi phansi} \]
\[\text{Kwenu nilalele zivukwe ugcqozi,} \]
\[\text{Abaculi baqamb’ amacul’ angagugi; } \]
\[\text{.........} \]

(Nyembezi, 1963: 12)
You stop poets underneath
You and listen (to them) while inspired,
(And) musicians compose songs which never age;
(.........)

(ii) Mbal’ enhle (Beautiful flower): O.E.H.M. Nxumalo

In this poem Nxumalo using simple language as usual describes
his admiration of the flower using typically simple language.
Using words such as ntengemuka .........., yenda ........,
qhakaza ........., hleka ........., he gives life to the flower,
enhances its utility and intensifies the depth of the entire poem.

Suluzela mbal’ enhle
Ethintwa nanombani ahogele,
Esikwa nanombani ahlobise,
Ebakwa nanombani athokoze;
Yenda udlalisele wenelisiwe.
(Nyembezi, 1963: 13)

(Move with swaying motion pretty flower
Which is touched by anybody and smell it,
Which is cut by anybody and decorate with it;
Which is looked at by anybody and be pleased;
Sway and show off and derive satisfaction.)

The focus here is equality. According to this stanza we are all equal
with regard to beauty. Another connotative meaning is found in the
third stanza where this is summed up by the last line which reads as
follows:
The lesson to be learnt from the beauty of a flower or any good things is that we must not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed and destroyed by any odds which are against us.

(b) Fauna

(i) Culani (Sing): W.V. Ngiba

Ngiba reflects on a number of natural resources which inspire him. These range from the wind, to fauna (birds), flora (trees and grass) and water (waterfalls and rivers). The poet is impressed by the noise which natural resources make when they are blown by the wind. He is also inspired by the singing of little birds. With regard to trees and grass Ngiba says:

_Culani nani zihlahla,
Yiz’ izindebe singaziboni,
........._  
(Nyembezi, 1953: 1)

( Sing you trees,
Although we see no lips,
.........)

_Culani ziganga zotshani,
Sengathi nithulis’ abantwana,
Kant’ aninagazi njengathi,
Cha, elenu lingamanzi._

(Nyembezi, 1963: 1)
(Sing round-topped hills of grass,
As if you are lulling children,
Whereas you have no blood like us,
No, yours is water.)

The poet makes no specific reference to any tree or grass species.
While clearly impressed by the sounds of waterfalls, river water and
sea water, his life-experiences are only limited to the general nature of
those natural resources and phenomena that inspire him. As a result,
he does not mention any of these objects by name.

(ii) Inyosi (Bee): M.J. Khumalo
Khumalo refers metaphorically to the bee as a bride (umakoti).
He admires the bee’s diligence, its voice and its defensive sting.
He draws some comparisons between the bee, a bird (inyoni),
and a grey-duiker (impunzi) when comparing their speed of
movement. He also allows for a comparison between the bee’s
voice and the human being’s (in terms of sound making) as well
as the cockroach and human being (where comparing body
structure) The bee and warrior are compared in terms of
bravery:

\[ Makoti’ ovuke ilanga lithi bekebeke, \]
\[ Wavuka walingisa inyon’ enamaphuphu’ \]

…………
(Bride who woke up early at sunrise,
(And) woke up like a bird which has chicks
…………)

…………
………… esegijimisa okwempunzi;
…………
Ngimthande ebang’ umsindo nasemenweni,
Esho ngomzimba othi awufane nowephela.

(I liked her making a noise even in overgrown vegetation,
With the body which resembles that of a cockroach,

Umakot’ ohamb’ ehlomile okwebutho,
(A bride who goes around being armed like warrior,

(Nyembezi, 1963: 14)

The poet’s reference to the presence of a honey-guide bird and also to the honey badger is very appropriate as both are associated with bees as they feed on their combs and honey. The fearless fighting of the bee when threatened is also very well explained in the sixth and seventh stanzas. Excellent poetic language is appropriately used to describe this insect’s action, e.g.:

*Inhlav’ ikubuke ngelokuhl’ insimu,*
*Ikubuke maqede yaluhlek’ usulu,*

(Nyembezi, 1963: 7)

(The honeyguide stared at you,
It looked at you and then laughed mockingly

The poet’s knowledge of bees seems to be very intimate. He knows that bees that manufacture honey are female bees. He also knows that
drones are useless members of a bee colony when it comes to the
defence of the colony, hence the following utterances:

*Umakot’ ohamb’ ehlomile okwebutho,
Ngithe ngiyamxhawula wangigwaza,
……….*

(A bride who is armed like a warrior,
When I tried to shake hands with her she stabbed me.
……….)

*Ngokufika kwamasel’ ezokweba,
Ugadlis’ okwendoda wawumbela wonke,
Kwasalel’ umkhonto wakho ……….*

(When thieves arrived for stealing,
You attacked like a man and pushed,
Your spear remained behind ……….)

*Kepha’ isidoxo sevil’ owasigana,
Indod’ engasebenzi nakancane nje;*

………

(However, oh my, the lazy man that you married,
A man who does not even do just a little bit of work;
………..)

(Nyembezi, 1963: 14-15)

(iii) *Nyoni yemilozi (Bird of soft whistling): Einand*

*In this poem, Einand addresses a dove directly thus:*

*Ngimi ngaphansi ngibheke wena,
Ngibuka wena nyoni yemilozi,
Ngibona isifuba sinyakaza,
Ngibona nobuhlalu obumnyama.*

(Nyembezi, 1963: 15)

(I am standing underneath looking at you,
I am looking at you bird of soft whistling,
I am seeing the chest moving,
I am seeing black beads.)
In this well structured stanza we find initial rhyme in the first four verses, oblique linking in the first two verses and initial linking in the last two verses.

We are told in the fifth stanza that the poet is addressing a dove by his reference to a Biblical story of Noah which is found in the book of Genesis 7, 8 verse 11.

*Ijuba lafi ka kuye ngakusihlwa; bheka, kusemlonyeni walo iqabunga lomnqumo elikhiweyo.*

(Ibhayibheli Elingcwele, 1987:11)
(The dove arrived to him in the evening; look, in its beak there was a leaf of a black ironwood tree which had been removed from the tree.)

4.5 *Izimpophoma Zomphefumulo*: Nyembezi S. (1963)

This 162 page book includes 20 poets’ contributions, and 151 poems on a variety of themes. My focus will be on 2 poems by 5 different poets.

Although this book contains some of the best Zulu poems from a quality point of view – poems by poets such as B.B. Blose, D.B.Z. Ntuli, O.E.H. Nxumalo and others – the number of poems about nature is not significant either quantitatively and qualitatively.
Introduction

Although only a few poems are specifically about nature, many types of natural resources appear in other poems which are based on different themes.

4.5.1 Communication of meaning

(a) Fauna

_Thekwane Nyoni Yamashwa_ (Hamerkop bird of misfortunes):

A.M. Nzimande

According to Krech _et al_, “… the language of a people is a key which unlocks their culture.” (p 239) In this poem, Nzimande communicates his cultural knowledge about the hamerkop which, in the title of his poem he describes as a bird of misfortunes. Culturally, it is common knowledge amongst Zulu people that this bird is associated with misfortune or bad luck.

As the poet indicates, it is widely believed that if the hamerkop flies over a homestead (_umuzi_) disaster will occur or strike that _muzi_. Usually the bird is associated with lightning. However, historically, members of a homestead would only panic if _thekwane_ called or made some noise and flapped its wings as it flew over a homestead. Otherwise the results of its being an omen of death varied.
The poet shares nothing with the receivers of his message about the bird itself, that is, its body build, habits, etc. The poet has the following to say about this bird and lightning:

*Basho nokusho ukuthi wena
Um’ udabul’ umuzi womuntu
Kulandel’ izulu namashwa
Kanye nosizi nezinyembezi.*

(Nyembezi, 1963: 139)

(They even say that when you
Fly over a person’s home
Lightning and bad luck follow
Together with sadness and tears.)

(b) Water

*Amafu* (clouds): O.E.H.M. Nxumalo

A cloud is hydrologically said to be a mass of condensed water vapour which forms rain or from which rain originates. For this reason clouds have been included as water in this analysis.

In his appreciation of clouds the poet communicates his feelings about nature:

*Lapho amaf’ ezikhatha ezimhlophe,
Engamele izintaba nezintatshana,
Esibekela amadundu ohlaza,
Encwele emkhathini phezulu,
Kulapho ngibonga isiphiwo samehlo,
Nginconcoze ngizwibene nemvelo.*

(Nyembezi, 1963: 29)

(When clouds are rolled-up and white,
Hanging over mountains and small mountains
Covering hillocks of greenery,
Trimmed up in the sky,
It is then that I became greatful for sight,
Become thankful whirling with nature.)
Apart from the scenic beauty that the clouds present to the poet, they also provide him with a soothing effect:

\[
\text{Ngibuka ngiqolozele kuwo umkhathi,} \\
\text{Kulapho ngithola ukwaneliswa} \\
\text{Ukweneliswa okungathengwa.}
\]  
(Nyembezi, 1963: 30)

(……….  
I look and stare at the atmosphere,  
It is where I derive satisfaction.  
Satisfaction which is never purchased.)

While the main message communicated is of the beauty of clouds in their various forms, shapes and colours up in the sky, another important message that is communicated covertly is of the glory of God, the creator of nature. This is obvious when he writes:

\[
\text{Ngijamele phezulu nginkemile;} \\
\text{Ngiwabone amandla asesakhiweni} \\
\text{Salowo esimazi ngakwenzile.}
\]  
(Nyembezi, 1963: 30)

(……….  
I am staring up being in a helpless state;  
I see the power of the greatness  
Of that one whom we know by his deeds.)
The poet does not refer to rainwater as a product of clouds anywhere in his good poem. His appreciation ends with the clouds as clouds.

4.6 *Imikhemezelo*: Nyembezi S. (1961)

Owing to the amateurish nature of poetry in this book it is not included in this analysis.

4.7 *Iqoqo Lezinkondlo*: J.S.M. Matsebula (1964)

4.7.1 Communication of meaning

In this 136 page book containing 59 poems on a variety of themes by 10 poets, only 4 poems by 3 poets will be discussed for their relevance to the focus of the research. Others will only be referred to when and if necessary.

(a) Flora
There are no specific poems on flora in this anthology. However, several poets refer to flora in different contexts in their poems on other themes. Reference has been made to flora at least thirty six times.

(b) Fauna
This anthology contains no specific poem, on fauna as such. There are, however, many references to different animals by different poets especially in the following poems: *Ilanga* (sun) by E.E.N.T. Mkize
where he refers to *Izibankwa* (lizards) *onoh(h)a* (baboons), *izinhlanzi* (fish), *oxamu* (water monitor lizards) and *izinkalankala* (crabs). *Ngamenzela okuhle* (I did good things for him) by E.H.A. Made where reference is made to the following: *amasele* (frogs), *izinyoni* (birds), *iminyundu* (earthworms), *izinyoka* (snakes), *izinhlanzi* (fish), *izintwala* (lice), and *izimbungulu* (bugs).

(c) Water

(i)  *Ezihlabathini Zolwandle* (At the sea sand): Gili KaNobantu.

In his poem *Gili KaNobantu* communicates his life experiences in different contexts. To him the sea is like short fresh grass (*amahlungu*), while ships in the sea represent whales. He marvels at the white man’s skills of building ships and driving them. He also laments the defeat of King Cetshwayo which he claims saddens him.

```
Ngimi ezihlabathini zolwandle,
Ngizwa iminjunju yokwehlulwa;
OkaMpande uMntwana,
Engasenakulwa,
Embusweni wakhe esengaphandle,
Inkululeko sekuyinganekwane

...........
```

(Matsebula, 1964: 3)

(I am standing on sea sand,
I feel severe pains as a result of defeat,
Mpande’s child,
Will never fight,
When he has been unseated,
Freedom being like a legend,
............)
(ii) Umfula (River): E.C. Mango

In his rather structurally disorganised poem Mango expresses his appreciation of the value of water in life generally. He mixes, sometimes in one verse or stanza the actions of the sea and those of the river. But his focus is on sea water. In the first three stanzas he refers to huge rivers as follows:

\[ Gobhoza \ mful' \ omkhulu. \]
(Flow large river.)

\[ Zizibakazi \ zomfula \]
.........
(Large river pools)
.........)

\[ Mful' \ omkhulu \ ogobhoza \]
.........
(Large river, which flows)
.........)

(Matsebula, 1964: 43)

The poem focuses on the ocean as most of the animals referred to occur in the sea. However, ocean water does not flow although it does move. Connotatively this is acceptable. The gist of the poet’s message is summed up in stanza 6 where he refers to the value of water to life as follows:

\[ Mfula-ndini \ besiyoshonaphi \]
\[ Ukuba \ ubungekho \ nosizo? \]
\[ Beziyoshonaphi \ izidalwa \ zonkana? \]
\[ Mana \ njalo \ wena \ wondl' \ usapho! \]

(River where would we go to
If you were not available?
Where to would all creatures go?
Long live you who looks after all.)

(Matsebula, 1964: 43)
Mkize, in this difficult to categorise poem communicates his appreciation of the various aspects of nature such as flora in the form of flowers (izimbali), mushrooms (amakhowe), trees (imithi), grass (utshani), air (umoya), water (amanzi), fauna represented by birds (izinyoni) and geological features (amatshe) rocks/stones. The gist of Mkize’s message is the various functions or purposes provided by the above-mentioned life forms to other life forms.

Mkize is also inspired by flowing water. In expressing his appreciation he says:

Ayanyibilika amanzi omfula,
Adlula ngapha nangapha kwamatshe,
Ahuba ingoma yokuthula,
Ebheke enzansi ……….

(Matsebula, 1963: 90)

(River water is flowing loosely,
Passing this side and that side of stones,
Singing a song of peace,
Flowing down ……….)

With regard to trees the poet graphically states that:

Imithi iyantenga okwezidakwa,
Ibingelela abangapha nabangapha,
………..

(Nyembezi, 1963: 90)

(Trees are dangling like drunkards,
Greeting those who are this side and that side,
………..)
Mkize further appreciates the music of birds:

\[
\begin{align*}
&Izinyoni \ ziyahlabelela \ emthini, \\
&Zisho \ ngamaphimbo \ amahle, \\
&Zijabulela \ ilanga \ lasemini, \\
&Elifudumeza \ ababi \ nabahle,
\end{align*}
\]

(Matsebula, 1963: 90)

(Birds are singing,
Singing with their melodious voices,
Enjoying the midday sun,
Which warms bad and good ones,
..........
)

4.8 **Ikhwezi**: O.E.H.M Nxumalo (1965)

4.8.1 Communication of meaning

As indicated elsewhere in this research this poet’s contribution in previous anthologies contains abundant reference to natural resources. The poet has been referred to as one of the poets who have produced quality poetry thus far. However, the inclusion of nature is very limited in this book both in terms of the number of poems on nature and the number of poems containing natural resources as elements.

*Leso sihlahla*

The poet knows this tree very well although he does not even know its name. He must have seen this tree several times. He knows neither the age of the tree nor the circumstances surrounding its planting in the cemetery. That is why he asks it rhetorical questions such as:
Kazi sihlahla wabekwa ntoni lapha?
Kaz’ ulapha kusukela nini?
(One wonders what put you here?
One wonders for how long
have you been here?

The poet likens the tree to a minister of religion.

Noma ngingakweth’ elobufundisi
Lisakuphela sihlahla sakwabo;
---------
(Even if I call you minister
It befits you extraordinary tree;
---------

He also likens it to a soldier, a security guard or watchman because of
its stationary position all the time. The poem achieves depth when the
poet calls the tree an angel in an emotive stanza.

Nelengilosi lisakuphela sihlahla;
Ungaval’ amehlo nezindlebe
Nxashan’ asebesemagceken’ akho
Benxus’ ukub’ ubacelele
Intethelelo; ubusuku nemini.
---------
(Even the name of an angel befits you tree;
Don’t close eyes and ears
When those already on your yard
Plead with you to ask for
Forgiveness for them at night and in day time.)

The depth of the poet’s inspiration is enhanced by what is said in the
seventh stanza where the poet attributes the luxuriant growth of the
tree to the moisture provided by the tears of many mourners who bury
their deceased at Mountain Rise cemetery.
Comparison is limited by the analysis of a single poem.

4.9 ELEMENTS OF POETRY EMPLOYED TO COMMUNICATE MEANING.

4.9.1 Introduction

In the poetry of this period deliberate integration of the elements of poetry is found in some poems while in others, especially in the anthologies, integration appears to be more coincidental than purposeful. J.R. Kreuzer’s comment cited at the beginning of this section in Chapter 2, applies here.

4.9.2 Images

1. J.C. Dlamini

(a) Simile

In, Qhakaza Mbali, Dlamini has the following to say:
We have forgotten to break open like a flower;  
To laugh uncontrollably and break open  
With a beautiful colour, we decorate,  
Decorate our neighbours souls;  

What is of great significance in this poem is the breaking open or blossoming of the flower. According to the poet the flower breaks open unaware. Rather, it happens automatically. The poet is advising us to make laughing a habit so that we do it like a flower.

In our expression of merriment (laughter) or excitement, Dlamini wants people to do this noisily, sincerely and genuinely. He would like to see and hear colourful laughter among neighbours.

Dlamini effectively uses simile in *Isondo*:

( I shall be rewarded by resting as a result of death,  
Wondering about in shallow valleys like a waif,  
Crossing plateaux like a recognized lover of girls,  
Walking where there is no path in fallow land like a lunatic  
End up by scampering like a calf.  

…………)

(Dlamini, 1958: 54)

(Dlamini, 1958: 13)
His effective use of the simile in terms of diction and his style of reconciling these with both initial and final rhyme – without forcing these together – enhances the quality of his poetry.

(b) Metaphor
As indicated previously, the word, *Imbali* in the poem, *Qhakaza Mbali*, is metaphorically correct. It is common knowledge that babies and children are often referred to as flowers (*izimbali*). A kind-hearted person is also referred to as a flower, sometimes.

(c) Personification
A perfect example of this type of imagery is found in the words:

\[ Qhakaza mbal’ uhlek’ usincamise \\
Ngombal’ omuhl’ uhleke sihlobise \\
........ \\
(Dlamini, 1958: 13) \\
(Break open flower laugh and satisfy us \\
With your beautiful colour, laugh so that we may decorate \\
........)

Only human beings laugh. The poet has given the flower human characteristics.

(d) Symbolism
For Dlamini “*Qhakaza*” symbolizes love and peace. When people “break open” like a flower they demonstrate their love for one another
and peace with one another. White as a colour symbolizes innocence and purity.

The verb “qhakaza” used in the context of bursting into flower means to show beauty. It symbolises beauty and kindness.

To this effect the poet says:

Qhakaza mbali, usifundise, Qhakaza!
(Dlamini, 1958: 13)
(Blossom flower, educate us, blossom!)

4.10 TYPES OF POEMS

Dlamini’s poetry generally consists of lyrics including elegies and the ode. Narrative poems are found occassionaly. The poet writes serious poetry which expresses his emotions, feelings and thoughts. The poem Qhakaza Mbali, is one of such lyrics.

4.10.1 Images in Amahlungu Aluhlaza

(a) Simile

In Hlabelelani Maqabunga, O.E.H.M. Nxumalo says:

Hlabelelani njengezinyosi zimbali
Noma nina ningenamaphiko,
Ningencele luju ezimbalini
Nokubukela eduze amagceb-‘azo;
U moy’ uyanihlonipha ngokuhwelela
Unidobel’ iphunga lazo
Ngesikhathi niculela phansi,
Nisululeke nezimbali zenanele.

(Nyembezi, 1963: 11)
(Sing like bees of flowers
Although you have no wings,
You may suck no nectar from flowers
And viewing their petals closely,
The wind/air respects you in the evening
It attracts their scent
When you sing softly,
Roaming about with flowers echoing.)

Nxumalo is inspired by the sight of flowers on an obviously windy
day – hence the noise which the poet interprets as music or singing by
flowers. He then compares this sound with the sound made by honey
bees while collecting nectar and pollen from flowers.

In *Inyosi*, one recalls that M.J. Khumalo has the following to say:

\[Umakot’ ohamb’ ehlobile okwebutho,
Ngithe ngiyamxhawula wangigwaza,
………….\]

(Nyembezi, 1963: 14)

(Bride who walks about armed like a warrior,
When I tried to shake her hand she stabbed me
………….)

Although Khumalo employs common similes which are used in
everyday life and language, his selection of words such as – *zinyosi*
and – (i) *butho* bring about greater effectiveness. It is the female
honey bee which possesses a sting. It is the worker bee in the hive. It
is for this reason that come across this bee when they interfere with
bees’ nests and not drones.
(b) Metaphor

Nxumalo uses the word, “Makoti,” several times in his poem, “Inyosi” to describe the bee.

\[
Makot’
\text{ ovuke ilanga l}
\text{ithi bekebeke,}
\]
\[
Wavuka walingisa inyon’
\text{enamaphuphu,}
\]
\[
\ldots\ldots\ldots\quad \text{(Nyembezi, 1963: 14)}
\]
\[
\text{(Bride who woke up before sunrise,}
\]
\[
\text{Woke up like a bird which has fledglings}
\]
\[
\ldots\ldots\ldots\quad \text{)}
\]

Culturally, it is expected among Zulu people that the newly married bride does not sleep for long hours. She wakes up early everyday to fetch water from the river. A bird which has young ones to feed does the same. It wakes up very early to catch insects before they become active.

(c) Personification

The title of Hlabelelani Maqabunga, personifies leaves as they cannot sing.

\[
Ngesikhathi niculela phansi,
\]
\[
Nisululeke nezimbali zenanele.
\]
\[
\text{(Nyembezi, 1963: 11)}
\]
\[
\text{(When you sing softly}
\]
\[
\text{Moving about slowly flowers echo.}
\]
\[
\ldots\ldots\ldots\quad \text{)}
\]

Again, with reference to Inyosi, one could argue that referring to a bee as, makoti (bride) is a well used personification.

\[
Umakot’
\text{ ohamb’ engena wonk’ amanxuluma,}
\]
\[
\text{Ngithe ngimbona wayesegqoke eyiphuzi,}
\]
(d) Symbolism

It is difficult to find effective use of images such as symbols in this publication.

One small example does exist, however.

The word *uju*, in the poem *Culani* ... by O.E.H.M. Nxumalo is used both metaphorically and symbolically in the third stanza. It is used symbolically to symbolise melodious music as follows:

*Culani ngilalele ngithambalale,*
*Culani niqhweb’ ziNgilosi zeZulu,*

.........

*Ngizw’ uju lwamaphimb’ enu.*

(Sing I am listening lying down,
Sing and attract the angels of Heaven
.........
(So that) I feel/taste the honey of your voices.)

4.11 Images in *Izimpophoma Zomphefumulo*

(a) Simile

There is no doubt that O.E.H.M. Nxumalo likes to use images in his poetry.
His effective use of the simile in his *Amafu* enriches his poetry.

*Lapho amaf' ezikhatha ezimhlophe,*
*Engamele izintaba nezintatshana,*
 ..........
*Enyelela edundubalana sakungcweka,*
*Ehlangana ehlukana izibeba,*
 ..........
*Lapho endlaleke kwakweluka,*
*Kubonakal' imizila yesibhakabhaka,*
 ..........
*Eluleke sakushiseka njengazoqho,*
*Ezebhungu lomlungu ekhanda,*
 ..........
(Nyembezi, 1963: 29-30)
(When clouds are white and rolled up,
Covering mountains and hills,
 ..........
Moving slowly crossing over as if they,
Moving together and moving apart.
 ..........
When they spread and become elongated,
And streaks becoming visible in the sky,
 ..........
Elongated and burnt exactly like them,
Of a young white man’s on the head,
 ..........)

The effectiveness is brought about by the dramatic presentation in the introduction of each stanza as well as the appropriate use of formatives such as “*sakungcweka*” (crossing over), “*kwakweluka*” (become elongated) and “*sakushiseka njengazoqho*” (elongated … like them). It is the poet’s choice and arrangement of similes in verses which enhances the above extracts.
(b) Metaphor

M.J. Khumalo in his, *Ulwandle* has the following to say about the sea:

*Bath’ alikho idlelo elinemfuyo njengawe*

*Yekani amangcwaba akuleli dlelo,*

(They say there is no veld which has as much livestock as yourself

Oh, those graves which are in this grazing veld.

)  

Whilst the poet is impressed by the myriads of biological diversity which is contained by the sea he is depressed by the thought of lives lost through drowning.

The poet refers to the sea as a livestock grazing veld and sea fauna as livestock.

(c) Personification

In, *Isigod’ esimagqum’ ayinkulungwane*, R.J.K. Myeza writes:

*Wena sigodi omise okwenxuluma lakwaBulawayo.*

*Liqel’ eligqok’ amaqhugwan’ omdabu,*

*Izindlu, imigaqo nezindlela konke kuthule*

(You valley which resembles the Bulawayo Royal residence.

Slope which is covered with indigenous huts,

Houses, roads and footpaths all are quiet

)
The Valley of a Thousand Hills resembles King Shaka’s Bulawayo residence according to R.J.K. Myeza. His use of effective personification to describe the scenery creates a clearer picture to the reader.

(d) Symbolism

B.B. Ndelu’s very able use of images elevates the quality of his poetry. In *Iso Eliqaphelayo* which is about a hawk he refers to many other non-natural resources, saying symbolically that:

*Izwi elihebezayo linenza nixwaye*
*Nanjengezimpangele ummbila ziwusola,*
*Keph’ impundu yezalukaz’ ibuya ibuye*

………… (Nyembezi, 1963: 86)
(The shouting voice make you alert
And like guinea fowls being cautious about mealies,
However, the old women’s meat returns
…………)

*Impundu* is the narrow part of a mammalian liver. According to Zulu culture this part of the liver is reserved for old women only as it is believed that eating it causes you to be forgetful. In the context of the above extract “impundu” is a symbol of forgetfulness.

4.12 Images in *Iqoqo Lezinkondlo* by J.S.M. Matsebula

(a) Simile

………… Ngiyabesaba abeLungu;
Ngubesaba okwembube enamanxeb’
Egqolozele ngamabili kanti iyekufeni.

(Matsebula, 1964: 2)
I fear white people; I fear them like a wounded lion,
Which stares whereas it is going to die.

In *Ezihlabathini Zolwandle*, Gili KaNobantu compares white people to a wounded lion. A wounded lion is a very dangerous animal. He maintains that they (whites) are as dangerous as a wounded lion, while in fact he is praising them for their bravery.

E.C. Mango successfully uses simile in praise of a river in his poem, *Umfula*:

_Hamba njalo ushosholoza_
_Njengenyok’ eshokoshayo,_
_Uz’ uyongenisa khon’ olwandle._

(Matsebula, 1964: 44)

(Go/move fast (and) continually
Like a snake which moves away quickly,
Until you enter the sea.)

Another interesting example of effective use of the simile occurs in E.E.N.T. Mkize’s *Ubuhle Bemvelo*.

_Imithi iyantenga okwezidakwa,_
_Ibingelela abangapha nangapha,_

...........

_Kuqabulana amahlamvu ngapha,_

...........

(Matsebula, 1964: 90)

(Trees are dangling like drunkards,
Greeting those this side and that side,
...........) Branches kissing each other this side,
...........
The effectiveness of the use of this simile is in its combined use with effective personification. Action words such as *dakwa, bingelela* and *qabulana* refer to human actions. If trees move like drunk human beings when they are blown in different directions this demonstrates not only the type of human movement but also the intensity of drunkenness.

(b) Metaphor

Gili KaNobantu makes abundant use of this image in *Izihlabathi Zolwandle* where he refers to the sea as newly burnt growing green grass and the ship as a whale.

\[
\text{Lawo mahlungu angeke azondle} \\
\text{Iziklabhu zakithi ngaphezulu.} \\
\text{(Matsebula, 1964: 1)}
\]

(That newly burnt green grass which will never feed Our sheep on top above.)

\[
\text{Umkhomo ompondo ziyashunqa,} \\
\text{Ngingazange ngiwubone umpondo umkhomo;} \\
\text{……….} \\
\text{(Matsebula, 1964: 1)}
\]

(A whale whose horns are smoking, Having not seen a whale with horns; …….)

The poet has chosen the burnt, green grass to represent the colour of the apparently clear sea water. He refers to the ship as a whale which does not only indicate the shape but also the size of the floating object (ship). The whale is the largest sea animal.
(c) Personification

In *Umfula*, Mango personifies the river and talks to it as if he is addressing another human being.

\[
\begin{align*}
Hamba mful’ oholob(h)ayo, \\
Ngukuhlokom’ okuletha itwetwe \\
\text{...........}
\end{align*}
\]

(Matsebula, 1964: 43)

(\text{Go away rumbling continuously,} \\
\text{With fearful rumbling ...........})

In the same abovementioned poem Mango further personifies the river as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
Siyayithanda belu nengoma yakho \\
Oyivuma emihla namalanga; \\
Hamba njalo njengenyok’ eshosholozayo, \\
Uz’ uyongenisa khon’ olwandle.
\end{align*}
\]

(Matsebula, 1964: 44)

(\text{We admire your song} \\
\text{Which you sing everyday,} \\
\text{Go for good like a wriggling snake,} \\
\text{Until you get into the sea.})

Although natural resources such as birds are said to be singing when they call the vocal production of a sound which is referred to as singing is that of human beings. Singing a song (ingoma) is only done by human beings who utter musical sounds with a set tune. Water flows and does not walk. The poet has used the verb “*hamba*” (walk) as if water has feet like a human being. It is such personification which gives the above extracts effectiveness.

In his, *Umfula*, Mkize employs this figure of speech very effectively when he says:
Becoming drunk, greeting each other and kissing one another are all human actions.

4.13 Images in *Ikhwezi* by O.E.H.M. Nxumalo

(a) Metaphor

Nxumalo uses this image abundantly in his poetry. In *Leso Sihlahla*, he uses it effectively several times. Tree branches are referred to as hands as well as wings.

*Izandla zakho ziphakeme*
*Zicel’ umusa zicel’ uxo lo,*
*Amaphik’ akho asengumthunzi wabo.]*

(Nxumalo, 1965: 2)

(Your hands are high
They are asking for forgiveness asking for peace,
Your wings are now their shade.)

(b) Personification

At the risk of repetition, Nxumalo obviously likes to use personification. In *Leso Sihlahla*, the poet addresses the tree directly as if it hears him and will respond verbally to what he is saying.
The reference to tree branches as hands under metaphor above is also a good example of personification as only human beings possess hands. The choice of the word “izindlebe” for the branches of a tree which the poet claims receive his messages and communicate them to those left behind after his death, is very appropriate.

In Sengathi Kungebe Kusasa, the poet says the following using a simile:

\[
\text{Nawe kusa ngingakuvimba} \\
\text{........ ngikwakhele umthangala} \\
\text{........ ubuzothubeleza} \\
\text{Kuwo njengamanzi ........}
\]

(Nxumalo, 1965: 54)

(And you dawn I can stop you \\
........ I can build a barrier \\
........ through which you were going \\
To move like water ........)

(c) Symbolism

According to Heese and Lawton:

........ a writer (poet) may employ a symbol
Which does not quite answer to the dictionary definition.  
(Heese and Lawton, 1979: 65)

In this regard Nxumalo writes in *Leso Sihlahla*,

\begin{verbatim}
Nxashana ngilalelisisa ngiyezwa
Amazwi ab’ eswesweza
Emacemben’ akho lapho
Imisebe yokugcina yelanga
Ihlabe kuwe ngibeza
Benvunga ngokujabula,
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
.............(Nxumalo, 1965: 3)
\end{verbatim}

(When I listen carefully I hear
Their voices speaking softly
In your leaves when
The last rays of the sun
Fall on you I hear them
Grumbling happily,
............)

The last rays of the sun which make those that are buried grumble happily, symbolises eternity. They are rejoicing instead of expressing grief for departing from this world to the world of eternal life. Their happy grumbling symbolizes eternal happiness.

In the poem, *Kufa* the poet says:

\begin{verbatim}
Ngibone notshani bushazwa,
..........
Ngigxumel’ ezimbali’ ezibuna
Zahlume ziqhakaze kahle,
..........
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
...............(Nxumalo, 1965: 11)
\end{verbatim}

(I saw the grass withering
.............
I jumped to the flowers which were withering
Regrowing blossoming well

Withering symbolises death in the context of this poem.

4.14 TYPES OF POEMS

(a) As in the previous period, the poetry of 1956-1965 is also predominantly lyrical. Poems such as, *Qhakaza Mbali*, by J.C. Dlamini in *Inzululwane, Culani*, by W.V. Ngiba and *Hlabelelani Maqabunga* by O.E.H.M. Nxumalo in *Amahlungu Aluhlaza, Amafu* by O.E.H.M. Nxumalo and *Ulwandle*, by M.J. Khumalo in *Izimpophoma Zomphefumulo, Ezihlabathini Zolwandle*, by Gili KaNobantu and *Ilanga*, by E.E.N.T. Mkize in *Iqoqo Lezinkondo* and *Leso Sihlahla* by O.E.H.M. Nxumalo in *Ikhwezi*, are all examples of lyrical nature poetry.

Although many of the poems referred to lack the musical element of a lyric they are sincere expressions of the poets’ thoughts and emotions. They are thus lyrics in subject though not necessarily in form or structure.

The poet’s skillful management of diction, i.e. choice and arrangement of words in sentences, phrases in images and even in rhyme (such as in E.E.N.T. Mkize’s *Ubuhle Bemvelo*) give the poem its true lyricism.

*Ziyakhonya izinkunzi emathafeni,*
*Ziqephuza iziduli ngezimpondo,*
*Zilingisa izinkukhu emabaleni,*
*Ziqhwanda emazaleni ngemicondo,*
(Matsebula, 1964: 90)

(Bulls bellow in the plains,
Tearing up ant heaps by means of their horns,
Emulating fowls on the yards,
Scratching in rubbish heaps by means of their thin legs,

………..)

The above extract is an excellent example of a lyric. While the poet expresses his thoughts and emotions his employment of rhyme, i.e. both initial and terminal rhyme schemes, suits the structure of his stanza. Each line or verse consists of three words. Each of the first three words in each line has four syllables.

Although there are many narrative poems, and odes in the publications under discussion only *Iso Eliqaphelayo*, by B.B. Ndelu is about nature. In this poem in which the poet narrates various incidents he has the following to say about a hawk:

………..

*Lapho kuyendayenda khon’ uheshane
Egenqezis’ ikhanda efunel’ amaphakathi,
Njengolak’ adiliikele phezu kwechwane.*

(Nyembezi, 1964: 86)

(………..
Where the hawk is hovering
Bobbing his head up and down looking in the middle
Violently fall upon a chicken.)
The poetry of the period under discussion is dominated by Christianity, education, death themes as well as various other themes on social issues. The latter characterises the works of poets such as J.C. Dlamini and O.E.H.M. Nxumalo. This is not surprising as the influence of Christianity in the introduction of education to Black people was very dominant.

Nature is definitely not an important cause of inspiration in J.C. Dlamini’s poetry. His rare reference to natural resources could justifiably be attributed to his paucity of knowledge about nature. This could be attributed to his isolation from it during his formative years, as he was born and brought up in a peri-urban environment during most of his active life. However, having spent much of his working life in Eshowe he could be expected not to resist being attracted by the magnificent fauna and flora which used to be very abundant in Zululand.

With regard to the poem, *Inyosi* by M.J. Khumalo in *Amahlungu Aluhlaza*, it is surprising that the poet makes no direct reference to the deliciousness of the bee’s honey. He should be inspired and impressed by the taste and goodness of this healthy food.

The analysis of the poetry of the period under discussion reflects the quality of poetry of this period in general and the poetry on nature in particular. This poetry is characterized by emulations of the works of
earlier poets as well as the works of amateur poets, with the exception of a few seasoned poets in publications such as *Izimpophoma Zomphefumulo*. 
CHAPTER FIVE

POETRY OF THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1966 AND 1975

5.1 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This period saw the appearance of 18 poetry books consisting of 12 books by individual poets and 6 anthologies containing contributions by a number of poets. In the analysis that follows only selected samples from the said publications and poets shall be discussed.

According to Berlo’s communication model (1960) the message is sent out inter alia through text. This means that it is the responsibility of the text to convey the intended message to its intended receivers or readers. In this chapter the poetry of the period in question shall be analysed in order to determine the extent to which this poetry complies with what this research investigates.

5.2 *Imisebe Yelanga 4*: Nyembezi S. (1966)

5.2.1 Introduction

This anthology, which is the 4th in a series, contains poems on a variety of themes written by 15 poets. In terms of quality, poems in this book are regarded as of the highest standard in the series.
This anthology has only six poems with a specific nature focus. There are no specific poems on water, soil, wind or air.

5.2.2 Communication of meaning
(a) Flora

Whilst there is only one poem specifically on flora *Intebe* by J.G.N. Hlongwa – flora is referred to many times in poems that are general or on other themes.

(i) *Intebe* (Common Arum Lily)

The poet reveals knowledge of an Arum Lily as he refers accurately to the colour of its flower as well as its habitat. His experience of this plant is closely associated with his religious experiences. He appreciates the beauty of its flower.

*Ekudabuleni kwami amagquma nezinkalo,*  
*Awuzang’ umoya wami ukufuman’ ukuthula,*  
*Ekuchengenyekeni lapho ngigudla imifula,*  
…………

*Ngibone kukhephezela izimbali ezinhlophe,*  
…………

(Nyembezi, 1966: 1)

(When I crossed hills and plateaux,  
My soul found no peace,  
Walking proudly along rivers,  
…………  
I saw white flowers growing luxuriantly  
…………)

The habitat for the Common Arum Lily is marshy areas. No wonder the poet claims to have observed this plant growing
luxuriantly along the river. Its flowers are white in colour as stated in the above extract. This is the first level meaning.

The last line in the following extract reflects the second level meaning of the colour of the flowers. The flower itself may represent Christianity and its colour symbolizing holiness.

_Noma sengidlulile ngibe ngilokhu ngijeqeza._
_Kuthi make ngizikhaze inhliziyo yeneliswe._
_Ngalokhu kuhlambuluka nesigqi sale mbali._
_Engingakungabazi ukuthi kumelokwaphezulu._

(Nyembezi, 1966: 2)
(Even after walking past, I keep on looking back I feel like purging to have the heart satisfied, As a result of this flower’s clearness and dignity Which I do not doubt represents heaven.)

The poet’s references to heaven, church building, preaching and holiness reflect the poet’s religious (Christian) experiences. The flower may connotatively represent an angel. The first line in the last stanza sums up the poet’s experiences thus:

_Ubungcwele emhlabeni bumelwe yiyo le mbali,_
...........

(Nyembezi, 1966: 2)
(Holiness in the world is represented by this flower ..........)

(b) Fauna
Although there is only one poem about fauna specifically in this anthology there are a number which relate to it broadly.
For example: *Vukuthu Lami* by M.M. Ndlanzi also represents the poet’s experiences of both joy and bitterness:

\[
\text{Linosizi lelo lizwi lakho,} \\
\text{Wena ntombi yasemagatsheni,} \\
\text{Liyawuhlupha umoya wami} \\
\text{Ngokububula kabuhlungu,} \\
\text{Libalisa ngenhlupheko zami,} \\
\text{Libalisa ngenjabulo zami,} \\
\]

\[
\text{.........} \hspace{1cm} \text{(Nyembezi, 1966: 6)}
\]

\[
\text{(That voice of yours has sadness,} \\
\text{You maiden of branches,} \\
\text{By moaning sadly,} \\
\text{Brooding about my troubles,} \\
\text{Brooding about my happiness,} \\
\text{.........)}
\]

The tone of the poem is one of love and appreciation of the pigeon in his sadness. The poet’s love of this bird is also shown by his reference to it as a woman (maidens). Women are respected and regarded as important in all societies.

Other poems include *Ukushona Kwelanga* (Sunset p.7) by O.L.S. Shange which refers inter alia to cattle egret, *Mntakwethu* (My Darling) by E.E.N.T. Mkize which refers to *Umnyovu* (Wasp) (p.36), *Izinyosi* (Bees) (p.37) by F.N. Mkize, *Izingonyama* (Lions) (p.45), *Izinyoni* (Birds) and *Izinyosi* (Bees) (unspecific) (p.106) by E.E.N.T. Mkize.

\[
\text{Kuqabulana amahlamvu ngapha,} \\
\text{.........}
\]
(i) *Ukushona Kwelanga* (Sun Set) by O.L.S. Shange: In this poem the poet communicates his appreciation of the setting sun. He uses symbolism, metaphor, personification and similes to express this:

_Seliphezu kwezintaba ilanga,_  
_Laphenduka isikhatha somlilo_  
_Intaba yaggqok‘ulwembu lwefolode,_  
_Latanasa njengenkosi isibuya_  
_Empini yalolo suk‘inqobile._  

(Nyembezi, 1966: 7)

(The sun is on top of mountains,  
It is turning like glowing fire,  
The mountain is dressed in a golden web,  
It walked slowly like a king returning from  
A battle of that day having conquered).

This poet mentions mountains, clouds, birds, (cattle egrets specified) and rivers in relation to the setting sun. He uses these other natural resources appropriately and successfully shares his experiences of the setting sun with his readers.

The poet appreciates not only the appearance of the sun but also the appearance of the mountain in relation to the golden looking setting sun. He is also impressed by the slow majestic movement of this star whose gait he likens to that of a king.

The sun is referred to in various contexts in a number of other poems such as, *Kawunoni Mhlaba* by W.M.V. Ngiba (p.17), *Uthingo Lwenkosazana* by O.L.S. Shange (p.21), *Uthando Lwami Lungunaphakade* by F.N. Mkhize (p.37) and others.
(d) Water

(i) *Ingoma* by J.G.N. Hlongwa is a poem specifically about water. It focuses on the sound of falling or running waterfall- water which the poet compares to praise singing by an “*imbongi*” (bard).

The poet’s reference to a waterfall in the first and the third stanzas as follows confirms that he is more impressed by the sound of the waterfall water than its appearance or taste, smell, etc.

*Lapho ngizihlalele empophomeni,
Ngizilalelele ukugubha kwamanzi,
Ngizwa kuthinteka inhliziyo yami,
Ngiyizwe isingikhumbuza ngezami.*

(Nyembezi, 1966: 28)

(When I am seated at a waterfall
Listening to falling water,
I feel a touch in my heart,
I feel reminded of mine.)

From a denotative point of view the poet focuses upon the tone and timber of the “voice” of water. But the connotative meaning and tone of this entire poem is the poet’s repeated reference to praise singing by a praise-singer (referred to seven times) which clearly shows that the poet’s imagination is beyond that of the sound of the waterfall water. Although some scholars may classify this poem under music in the context of this study it is water that makes the noise (sings) and then inspires the poet.
The last stanza further indicates that the poet is indeed inspired beyond the worldly realms of water and praise singing:

\[
\text{Ingom’ ingihlumelela ngidangele,} \\
\text{Ngilibon’elimadlelo aluhlaza,} \\
\text{Nezindawo zenduduzo kodangele} \\
\text{Ngim’ ithemb’endlelen’ey’ekuphumuleni.} \\
\]

(Nyembezi, 1966:29)
(The music revitilises me when depressed, 
(And) see green pastures, 
And places of comfort to a depressed one, 
(And) be optimistic about the path to rest.)

The poet links traditional praise singing and angels singing in heaven to the sound of the waterfall and running river water.

5.3  \textit{Ikhwezi LikaZulu}: Sikakana J.M. (1966)

5.3.1 Introduction

\textit{The poet draws his materials for writing his poetry from the knowledge and experiences he has accumulated.}

(Serudu in Limi,1981: 95)

It is evident from the analysis which follows that much information is drawn from experiences and knowledge which the poets have accumulated over time.
5.3.2 Communication of meaning

In this book of his which contains 42 poems, Sikakana has 11 poems about nature specifically. Only 3 poems will be discussed in this study.

(a) *Mina Mhlabathi* (I, soil)

In this very emotive poem which is the longest in this anthology the poet communicates his knowledge and genuine feelings about the soil. His use of personification gives this poem life to speak for itself. The poem is basically about the suffering of the soil under various circumstances. The poet expresses his deep concerns about the bad treatment of the soil by water, the sun and man through various activities such as tilling, mining, building houses and road construction.

_Sikakana, 1966: 23-24_

_Ngaze ngakubona ngakubeletha_
_Ukuhluphek’okukhul’okubuhlungu_
_Okuyisabel’esinzim’esingisindayo_
_Engasabelwa mandulo nguMenzi wento zonke_
_Mhlazane nam’engahlukanisa namanzi,_

...........

(What suffering that I have seen and shouldered
Suffering that is immense and painful
Which is a difficult and heavy gift
Which I was given a long time ago by the Creator of all things
When he separated me from water,
............)
The poet devoted two stanzas of 8 lines each to his complaint about water caused soil erosion.

*Izimvula zaphezulu ziphelela kimi,*  
........
*Ngisale ngiyimpandla*  
*Yendod’ eyingegelez’ ukuqothuka.*  
(Sikakana, 1966: 24)

(Rains from above fall on me  
........
I remain a bold-headed  
Man that is bold with no hair.)

Interestingly, Sikakana appropriately mentions other natural resources which contribute towards the destruction of the soil, namely: moles, aardvark, elephants, springbok and ants.

The poet clearly communicates the value of the soil to life in general noting that it provides man with precious metals such as gold, silver, diamonds and lead.

The soil also provides man with space to build houses and roads, to farm, to grow natural vegetation, and as a source of water. According to the poet, the soil retaliates against the bad treatment it endures under man’s hands by creating punishing earthquakes and also swallowing man when he dies (burial!).

*Ubogawul’ ubheka, fun’ ushabalale kimi.*  
(Sikakana, 1966: 28)

(Be careful lest you disappear in me.)

*Likulindel’ igodi lakh’ emathunjun’ ami.*  
(Sikakana, 1966: 28)
(Your grave is waiting for you in my intestines.)

(b) *Phephetha We Moya!* (Blow you wind!)

In this poem about the wind the communicated message is rather shallow. Personifying the wind the poet uses simple and well-known action words such as, *phephetha* (blow), *vunguza* (blow strongly), *khwishiza* (blow violently) and *heleza* (blow gently).

It is common knowledge that some of the results of a blowing wind are that soil is carried and thrown into human eyes and that plant leaves are blown in different directions if the wind blows violently. It is also well known that a strong wind flares up fire especially wild fire. While it is true to say that the blowing wind has some effect on the movement of seawaves the wind is not the cause of water movement in the form of waves in the sea. To this effect the poet says:

*Bethabetha, moya womtata,*
*Ugidis’ amagagas’ olwandle,*
*Usinis’ amadlamb’ omfula*

………..

*(Sikakanaka, 1966: 53-54)*

*(Blow sea breeze),
Cause sea waves to dance,
Cause river waves to dance *

………..)

The poet’s experience with regard to the wind is clearly shown in the 9th and 10th stanzas where he talks about the fact that the wind can neither be seen nor touched. It can only be heard and smelled. In the last two stanzas the positive effects of the wind are reflected. In
addition to saying that the wind (air) gives health the poet states that we all breathe the same air irrespective of our social status.

\[
\text{Wena ophefumulwa ngabantukazana,} \\
\text{Wena ophefumulwa nangababusi} \\
\text{Kungabindabazalutho!} \\
\]  
(Sikakana, 1966: 54)

(You who is breathed by ordinary people,  
You who is breathed by governers,  
And nothing happens!)  
……….)

The cooling effect of the wind concludes this poem as follows:

\[
Phephetha, we moy’ omnandi, \\
Ungipholise ngijulukile, \\
\]  
(Sikakana, 1966: 54)

(Blow you nice wind,  
(And) cool me I am sweating,  
……….)

(c) **Waze wamuhle we mbali!** (How pretty/beautiful are you flower!)  
The poet shares his appreciation of a pretty flower with his readers. He is impressed by the sight of a flower which attracts him to it and enables him to touch and see it. He sees wild fire as a threat to the flower. To this effect the poet says:

\[
\text{Ungikhang’ ungholele kuwe,} \\
\text{Ngilinge ngikunjampune,} \\
\text{Ngikunuke ngekhala lami,} \\
\]  
(Sikakana, 1966: 65)
(You attract me towards you,
Tempt me to pick you up,
Smell you with my nose
………..)

The poet’s use of the word flower has both a denotative meaning and a connotative meaning. It can refer to both the real plant flower and a young person. The poet is quite emotional in the last stanza as he says:

Ngiyabazis’ obakh’ ubuhle,
Wena mbal’ enhle!
Sengathi awuseyikubuna,
Sengath’ awuseyikubuye wome!

(I admire your beauty,
You beautiful flower,
As if you will never wither,
As if you will never get dry!)

(Sikakana, 1966: 66)

The content of the above stanza applies equally to a young, good looking person who may one day be spoilt (in character) and die even at a very tender age.


5.4.1 Introduction

In this 60 page long book which contains 25 poems 4 of which were written by M.V. Bhengu, only one poem is specifically about nature. The majority of poems in this anthology are love lyrics. The poems that are not specifically about nature contain very little information on natural resources. The anthology shall not be analysed.
5.5 *Umzwangedwa*: Nxumalo O.E.H.M. (1968)

5.5.1 Introduction

Nxumalo’s *Umzwangedwa* is his second poetry anthology after *Ikhwezi* which was published in 1965.

5.5.2 Communication of meaning

(a) *Ihlathi*

This poem is about an exotic wattle plantation. The following confirms this view:

*Usengichathazel’ umam’ eguleni*
*Lolwazi, leli hlathi kaliziqhibukelanga*
*Kwakhowe, intambo yezinkabi nguye*
*Owayibamba, mhla lokho kuqequebuka*
*Isoyi, ingen’imbewu yomtholo;*

………

(Nxumalo, 1968: 6)

(My mother has informed me of
Knowledge, this plantation did not shoot forth
Like a mushroom, the rope of oxen was held
By herself, when the turning of
A sod (was done) seed of wattle entering;
………

The term *umtholo* is the name of the Acacia caffra which is indigenous in Southern Africa:

Other than calling this alien plant with its tremendous commercial value, *Watela* – a borrowed word from wattle – the plant has no Zulu name.
The poet’s early life experiences are very well reflected here. For example:

*Ngikhumbul’ ihlathi lakwagogo,*  
*Ngiyisithohlongwane kulo ngabona*  
*Kwedlul’ imishungo yezinsizwa*  
………… (Nxumalo, 1968: 6-7)  
(I remember my grandmother’s plantation  
While I was still very young in it and I saw  
Groups of young men passing  
…………)

In his description of the plantation and his experiences related to this plantation it is clear that the poet admired, valued and respected his grandmother’s plantation.

In the very first two stanzas the poet displays knowledge of a variety of other natural resources as he refers to: *umoya* (air), *ilanga* (the sun), *izintaba* (mountains), *imisesane* (Acacia tortilis), *uqunga* (Tambootie grass), *isivunguvungu* (wind), *inyoni* (bird), *indlondlo* (very old mamba) and *izikhova* (owls).  

The poet’s close association with the plantation is demonstrated throughout the poem. He has a passion for it as can be seen below:

*Ubabamkhulu wehl’ enyuka*  
*Nekhuba, namuhla lingaphezu*  
*Kwabatshali, liyisibuko senkuthalo;*  
………… (Nxumalo, 1968: 6)  
(My grandmother moved up and down  
With a hoe, today it is above  
Its planters, it is a mirror of diligence.  
…………)
Also on page 7 the poet communicates a message about his grandfather in relation to the plantation:

_Umkhul’ usashona lamsithelela,
Kuphel’ izimpande zalo ezimdonsela,
Umculo wamacemb’ alo alalele,
Athuthuzelek’ alal’ ubuthongo._

(Nxumalo, 1968: 7)

(My grandfather passed away,
Only its roots which attract,
Music of its plant leaves and he listens,
And be lulled to sleep.)

(b) **KwaNogqaza (At Nogqaza)**

Being the third poet to write about a waterfall after E.T. Mthembu (Umyalezo – 1950) and B.W.Vilakazi (Amal-Ezulu – 1945), it is inevitable that the influence of Nxumalo’s predecessors will reveal itself in this poem. C.T. Msimang compares some extracts from this poem and from Vilakazi’s *Impophoma YeVictoria* as follows:

_Dilika manz’ awayo, vuma … Nxumalo_
_Gobhoza kuze kube nini manzi … Vilakazi_
_Gqanquluka njalo mpophoma,_
_Usikhonzel’ nakwangaphansi komhlab’_
_Abalolozelayo… Nxumalo_
_Dilika njal’ uzubikele bonke_
_Abenzalo ye-Afrik’ abezayo … Vilakazi_

(Msimang, 1986: 70-71)

(Flow down falling water …
For how long are you going to flow water …
Bound along waterfall
And give our regards to those who are buried underground
Who will …
Flow down and report to them all
The children of Africa who are still to come …)
Communicating his deep appreciation of what he saw the poet says:

\[
\text{Ngama nginkemil' usungithakathe ngozibuthe} \\
\text{Wakho ngajolozel' amehl' akasuka.} \\
\text{(Nxumalo, 1968: 25)}
\]

(I stood still when you bewitched me with your magnet 
I stared my eyes were fixed.)

(c) **Ekhaya** (home)

The poet communicates his feelings as he remembers his home area where he was born and brought up. First and formost he remembers a local river called *Mgcikazi* as well as the mountains through which this river runs. He is reminded about forests and especially a plantation (likely to be "*Ihlathi lakwagogo*”) in his home area, Ngoje in Louwsberg.

\[
\text{Engiyabona ukuthi ngisezintabeni zasekhaya} \\
\text{Esengasithela kuzona zacish'ukungikhohla.} \\
\text{(Nxumalo, 1968: 34)}
\]

(I realize that I am among my home area mountains 
From which I have disappeared nearly forgotten them.)

Out of 14 stanzas, 6 are devoted to the Mgcikiza river. This is clearly a special river to the poet.

\[
\text{Thubeleza mfulakazi wansondo wehle} \\
\text{Emahlathin' uqekelek' emathafen' uhuluzela} \\
\text{Ugudl' amaggum' alephuk' amagade.} \\
\text{(Nxumalo, 1968: 35)}
\]

(Move slowly large river and move down 
In plantations and on open veld slowly 
(And) move past hills with falling sods.)
The poet winds up his poem by referring to Zulu history and culture directly, in at least 2 stanzas:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Amabuth’ oSuth’ adabula kuyo} \\
\text{Le mihosha …….} \\
\text{Mhla ebambene noH(h)amu …} \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Nxumalo, 1968: 40)

(Usuthu regiments walked through from these Valleys ………. 
When they were fighting H(h)amu …)

The poet makes several relevant references to other natural resources such as \textit{inhlaba} (aloe), \textit{umthente} (Imperata cylindrica), wild animals such as \textit{izimbila} (dassies), \textit{izimpungushe} (side striped jackals), wind, clouds, etc. He makes very limited specific reference to Ngoje (Louwsberg) mountain after which his home area the poem is about was named.

5.6 \textit{Izikali Zembongi:} Masuku T.M. (1969)

5.6.1 Introduction

Due to the low quality of poetry that this book contains it will not be analysed.

5.7 \textit{Ithongwane:} Mazibuko M.T. (1968)

5.7.1 Introduction

In this 66 page long poetry anthology containing 36 poems on a variety of themes, 6 poems are specifically about nature. This volume is also not worth analysing due to the quality of its poetry on nature.

5.8.1 Introduction

This anthology containing 50 poems on a variety of themes is the first poetry book written by Ntuli alone.

5.8.2 Communication of meaning

(a) *Ilanga Eliphumayo* (The rising sun) and *Ilanga Elislonayo* (The setting sun).

In these two poems which reflect on two opposing times of the day, namely the rising and the setting of the sun, the poet is communicating two or more meanings in each poem.

With regard to *Ilanga Eliphumayo* the poet’s source of inspiration is the sun as a star which he sees rising from the east:

\[
\text{Ngiyikubukisise ngamabili iMpumalanga,} \\
\text{…………} \\
\text{Ukuba ubuye uvuk' ebuthongweni Langa.} \\
\text{Nangempela wahuzeza ubuso obubomvu.} \\
\text{(Ntuli, 1969: 23)} \\
\text{(I looked thoroughly with both eyes at the east,} \\
\text{…………} \\
\text{So that you rise again from sleep sun,} \\
\text{Indeed you exposed your red face.)}
\]
On the other hand in the poem *Ilanga Elishonayo*, the poet explicitly says that he is viewing the setting sun while seated alone on a hill after a hard day’s work:

\[
\text{Ngihlezi ngedwana egqumeni,} \\
\text{Umhlab’ usuhwaqabala futhi} \\
\ldots \ldots \ldots \quad \text{(Ntuli, 1969: 49)}
\]

(I am seated alone on the hill, The world is becoming overcast again at dusk \ldots \ldots)

The above are denotative meanings of both poems. Connotative meanings are reflected in the rest of each poem. The first poem refers either to the birth of a baby (human being) or to education. It could also refer to Christinianity. The second poem could refer to the death of a human being. In both poems the poet uses the second person approach by addressing the sun directly. He personifies the sun.

\[
\text{Nangempela wabuveza ubuso obubomvu.} \\
\text{(Ntuli, 1969: 23)}
\]

(Indeed you exposed the red face.)

\ldots \ldots

\[
\text{Ngeminwe yakho emide ubavula amehlo.} \\
\text{(Ntuli, 1969: 23)}
\]

(\ldots \ldots By means of your long fingers opening their eyes)

The last stanza of the first poem sums up the connotative meaning beautifully as follows:

\[
\text{Khanyisa unomphela Langa kulelo lizulu,} \\
\text{Nabangakavuki uze ukhanyise kubona,} \\
\ldots \ldots \ldots \quad \text{(Ntuli, 1969: 23)}
\]

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D.B.Z. Ntuli divides similes into various categories, such as: Common similes, compounded and extended similes, etc.

\[ \text{We expect every poet to demonstrate his ability to put his originality behind such a figure of speech.} \]

(Ntuli, 1984: 151)

(Bring light for good sun in that heaven,
Even those who have not yet woken up to see your light,
..........)

The two messages are clarified in the above extract. Reference to those who are still fast asleep refers to both people who are not yet converted educationally as well as those who are not yet converted religiously.

The fourth stanza of the poem *Ilanga Elishonayo* clearly brings out the message about death:

\[ \text{Sengath’ uth’ angikuhlangabeze.} \]
\[ \text{Kudel’ asebekuhlangabeza.} \]

(Ntuli, 1969: 48)

(It is as if you say I must meet you.
Satisfied are those who have already met you.)

In each of these poems the poet reflects on his appreciation of the real sun as well as the thoughts the sight of a rising or setting sun brings to him. It is for this reason that we find mixed messages conveyed in one poem.
(b) *Ngiziphumulele Ezhlahleni* (I am resting underneath trees) and *Hlabelelani* (sing)

Whilst communicating his experiences when resting under the trees in the first poem the poet simultaneously expresses his appreciation of birds’ songs. In the first stanza the poet states:

```
........
Leyo nyoni ehaya ngayodwa,
Engilunguza ngezikhala zamagatsha
........
```

(That bird which sings alone,
Which peeps through tree branches
........)

(Ntuli, 1969: 26)

Instead of communicating his experiences regarding trees and their value to him the poet introduces his poem by reference to birds singing in the trees. It is clear in this poem that the poet is now in an urban environment hence his reference to a wall which separates him from his rural home environment.

In the second poem, *Hlabelelani*, the poet makes reference to birds (*izikhova*), insects such as crickets (*izinyendle*) and the wind. All these are noise-making natural resources. Here too, the poet communicates his experiences of music performed by natural things and his appreciation of other natural resources. He mentions the sun, mountains, the moon and stars. He makes special reference to birds:

```
Hlokomani zinyoni ngamaphimbophimbo!
```

(Sing birds by means of your variety of voices!)

(Ntuli, 1969: 55)
(c) *Ukhozi* (Eagle)

Most of Ntuli’s poems are open to two or more interpretations. The poem, “*Ukhozi*” is a straightforward poem on an old and familiar practice of the eagle and the hen. But the poet’s language management of using idiophones brings more life to the poem and communicates the message better. The whole third stanza consists of idiophones as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
Shwi! Hlwi! Dwi! \\
“Tshiyo, tshiyo, tshiyo!” \\
“Kwe! Kwe! Gokogo!” \\
“Heshane! Klebe! Kudl’ izinkuku!”
\end{align*}
\]

(Ntuli, 1969: 24)

Instead of communicating the message about the taking away of a hen’s chick by an eagle in narrative form, the poet skillfully uses idiophones to describe the eagle’s actions (1st line), the chicks expression of fear and pain (2nd line), the hen’s reaction and anger (3rd line) and the owner of the hen and chick’s reaction and anger (4th line).

Here too, the whole incident could refer metaphorically to apartheid and its brutal effects on people.


5.9.1 Introduction

This was the only poetry book which was published in 1970 and is the second collection of poem’s by this poet. The poet’s classification of his poems according to themes and types is confusing and therefore
incorrect. It is acceptable that it is not easy to classify poetry into rigid compartments.

… types cannot … be very sharply defined; there will be possible subdivisions, exceptions, overlaps …

(Boulton, 1979: 99)

Mkize’s classification excludes three poems namely: Ingonyama, Umzwilili and Zithini Kanti? – from the poems on nature.

Out of 92 poems contained in this anthology only 8 poems are specifically about nature, although the poet’s claim is that 24 of them are on this theme.

Although I shall refer to as many poems as possible in this anthology, my focus shall be on 3 poems only, namely: Igolide, Isihlahla Somuthi and Zithini Kanti?

5.9.2 Communication of meaning

(a) Igolide (Gold)

Like most of Mkize’s poems this beautifully structured poem reflects two issues, namely: the value of gold as a stone and its mining as an activity. Both these are related in a rather vague manner. In the first and the last stanzas the poet has the following statements to make:

Egugwini njalo luyindaba
Luyigugu zonke izikhathi.
(It is always the subject for discussion,
Which is always highly priced.)

Igolide lingumcebo ochumile,
………. 
In his comparison of the White gold diggers and the Zulu diggers who are sacrificing themselves for engaging in this activity Mkize states:

\[
\text{Bethungatha leli tshe eliyinqaba.}
\]

They are looking for this wonderful stone.

(Mkize, 1972: 11)

It is clear from this comparison that miners from the two races dig gold for different purposes, namely: Whites dig and employ Zulus to dig for them in order for the former to amass wealth, while on the other hand Zulu miners’ purpose of digging is for remuneration in order to purchase cattle back at home.

(b) \textit{Isihlahla Somuthi (Tree)}

Using first person narration the poet makes the anonymous (non-specific) tree talk to us about itself as well as its relationship with other aspects of nature such as its habitat, movement, loneliness or isolation, its relationship with the wind, water (rain), mountains, the sun and flora or vegetation (grass).

Although this poem may be referring to a biological tree (denotatively) it may simultaneously be referring to a human being (connotatively), especially when it refers to harsh environmental conditions such as in stanzas 3, 9 and 10:
Hambani ningishiye ngintenga,
Ngumoya ungingishayisa ijadu,

…………
(Go away and leave me swaying to and fro,
As a result of the wind that sways me to dance.
…………)

Hambani ningishiye nelanga
Lizenzele intando kimi.
(Go away and leave me with the sun
To do what it likes to me.)

(Mkize, 1972: 24&25)

It is human beings who feel the effects of such harsh environmental conditions. Moreover, the natural resources mentioned above may have been used by the poet metaphorically.

(c) Zithini Kanti? (What are they saying after all?)

According to Gcumisa a bird’s song is: “Vocalization, a non-linguistic, non-phonemic sound unit vocally produced by a bird.”

(Gcumisa, 1992: 3)

The poem under discussion is about bird songs, and what the poet interprets them as saying. The poet does not claim either to know the birds or to have seen them. He only heard them singing and then he was told by other people what their names were. The birds referred to are ihobhe (Redeyed Dove), insingizi or ingududu (Ground Hornbill) umangqwashi or uzangqwashi (Rufous-naped lark), iqola (Fiscal Shrike), isikhova (Barn Owl) and phezukomkhono (Redchested Cuckoo.)
With the exception of the fiscal shrike no description or colour of any of these birds is given. The shrike is said to be striped. There is reference to the character of the Rufous-naped Lark where it is said:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Engahlangana naye okhalweni} \\
\text{Wangichathazela ezindlebeni} \\
\text{Wathi ngumacebose ongumangqwashi.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Mkize, 1972: 79)

(He whom I met in the veld
Poured into my ears
It was the cunning Rufous-naped Lark.)

The Barn Owl was said by the poet’s father to be a Barn owl. Only the Redchested Cuckoo’s song was interpreted and given a meaning. The poet explains:

\[
\text{Ithi abantu abaphendule.}
\]

(Mkize, 1972: 80)

(It says people must plough.)

5.10  *Inkwazi*: Nkabinde, A.C. *et al* (1971)

5.10.1  Introduction

Again only one poetry book was published this year. This reflects less prolificacy during this period.

This anthology contains poems by 42 poets. There are 132 poems on a variety of themes including nature. However, owing to the standard of the majority of poems in this anthology it is not going to be discussed.

5.11  *Imvunge Yemvelo*: Ntuli D.B.Z. (1972)
5.11.1 Introduction

In this anthology consisting of 30 poems on various themes only 8 poems are specifically about nature. This analysis will focus on 3 of these.

5.11.2 Communication of meaning

(a) *Umhlobisi Weziganga* (Beautifier of open veld)

In this relatively short poem, the author’s inspiration is rekindled by the sight of a beautiful butterfly.

*Bengithi yimbali ngabona usundiza,*
*Luve(m)vane oluhle manje ngiyakulandela,*
*Ngihehwa ngamabhadbhudu akhangayo,*
*Nxa ngikufica uxingela phambili.*

(Ntuli, 1972: 25)

(I thought it was a flower (and) I saw you flying, Butterfly which is beautiful now I am following you, I am attracted by your attractive colourfuness, If I overtake you looking forward.)

The poet is impressed by everything that his butterfly does and is. This is said in a denotative sense. However, connotatively, this poem has great depth.

The beautiful butterfly may symbolize a very beautiful girl.

The poet repeatedly refers to this beauty. The poet pleads several times with the “butterfly” not to desert him:

*Ungasuki* … (Don’t fly away …)
*Ungangishiyi* … (Do not leave me alone …)
*Ungandizi* … (Don’t fly …)
*Ungangilahli* … (Don’t forsake me …)
*Musa ukubaleka* … (Don’t run away …)

(Ntuli, 1972: 25)
Emotions had risen to a very high level when the poet uttered the above pleas to his butterfly.

It is evident what eventually happened to this woman (butterfly) in the following words:

_Ungandizi bo, ungangideli!
Ungangilahli bo!
Musa ukubalekela emeveni, ukungedukela!
Ngizo –, ngizokwenza ungangishiyi – kanje!_  
(Ntuli, 1972: 25)

(Do not fly away, do not forsake me!
Do not desert me!
Do not run into the thorns, and go missing!
I will –, I will make you not to desert me like this!)

_Awusathi nyaka Luvemvane lwami,
........
Ubuhle bakho bungeqhele kimi._  
(Ntuli, 1972: 25)

(You will not move away my Butterfly,
........
Your beauty cannot move away from me.)

Stanzas 5 and 6 reveal the consequences of the poets application of force in order to retain his beautiful butterfly.

What is significant and of relevance here is the poet’s choice of organism, namely “uvemvane” to represent or symbolize his lover and her beauty.

(b) _Izenze_ (Flea)

There is nothing wrong with Ntuli’s production of a poem on “izenze” (flea) although he hates this insect bitterly. His use of a derogatory locative prefix ku – confirms the view regarding his attitude towards this insect. This prefix has been used several times:
The poet is inspired by the flea’s ability to mix his blood after biting him with his dog’s blood after sucking it. He believes that the flea acquires the stamina to jump about “ukugxumagxuma” from the combination of the two bloods. His main concern is that in the flea’s eyes there is no difference between himself (owner of the dog) and the dog itself. They are the same. In this regard he comments:

*Mina nenja sondla izenze,
Ngegazi lethu.
Mina nginjengenja
Ephilisa izenze,
Ngingumniniyo,
Kuyinja yami?*

(Ntuli, 1972: 32)

(I and the dog feed the flea
With our blood.
I am like the dog
Which keeps the flea alive
Being its (dog’s) owner
Being my dog?)

Through its ability to bite and suck the blood of both human beings as well as animals the flea inspired this poet to compose this poem.

(d) *Ilanga* (The sun)
The sun is defined by the Concise Oxford Dictionary as: The star round which the earth orbits. The light or warmth received from the sun. (Fowler & Fowler, 2001: 912)
This is one of the most written about natural resources in Zulu poetry to date. Poets sometimes repeat what has been said similarly, but other times they employ different styles to their predecessors. Ntuli is one of the most prolific writers on this theme. C.T. Msimang claims that:

Kusukela ku-1935 kuya ku-1980 ayikho imbongi ehaya iphindelela ngelanga ukwedlula umfo kaNtuli, uD.B.Z.  
(Msimang, 1988: 85)

(From 1935 to 1980 no poet has repeatedly composed poetry on the sun more than Ntuli DBZ.)

Through the sun the poet reflects on God’s greatness. For this reason some analysts would describe this poem as a religious poem – about God rather than a poem about the sun. Both the length – 418 lines and the tone of the poem indicate that the sun is only being used symbolically. This view would be confirmed by stanzas 23 and 32.

Izwi elikhulu lenanelwa,  
Laphindwa ukuvuma kwamZulu,  
Kwaduma amagumbi amane:  
“… uLanga” “… uLanga”  
“… uLanga” “… uLanga!”  
(Ntuli, 1972: 49)

(A loud voice was echoed,  
It was repeated by the echoing of heavens,  
All the four corners (of earth) rumbled;  
“… the Sun” “… the Sun”  
“… the Sun” “… the Sun!”)

Manilalele kahle!  
NginguLanga,  
Umfowabo kaLanga  
UShayamaphiko  
Lo ocashe ngamafu.  
(Ntuli, 1972: 49)

(Listen carefully:  
Manilalele kahle!  
NginguLanga,  
Umfowabo kaLanga  
UShayamaphiko  
Lo ocashe ngamafu.  
(Ntuli, 1972: 49)
I am the Sun,  
Brother of Sun  
The highest being  
This one who is hiding in clouds.)

What is of relevance to our discussion is the poet’s choice of the sun out of all the other natural resources as a symbol of Godness. It is obvious that he derived his inspiration from this great star which is the most significant of heavenly bodies. The creator’s supremeness could be best portrayed through the symbolic use of the sun.

5.12  *Amehlo KaZulu*: Ntuli C.S. and Ntuli D.B.Z. (1972)

5.12.1  Introduction

This book consisting of 30 poems by two poets, contains a very limited number of poems on nature. My discussion shall focus on three nature poems in this anthology.

5.12.2  Communication of meaning

(a)  *UVete Ewindini* (A Reed Frog on the window): Ntuli C.S.

There are various species of reedfrogs – themselves constituting only part of over 100 species of frogs and toads in our country. The poet does not specify which one he is talking about. This could be as a result of the status of the frog or toad in Zulu society. According to Gcumisa and Ntombela:

\[
\text{Alithandwa. Liyesatshwa.}
\]

\[(\text{Gcumisa & Ntombela, 1993: 135})
\]

\[(\text{It is disliked. It is feared.})
\]
On the basis of the above it must be difficult for many Zulu speaking people to be able to identify frogs and name them accordingly and appropriately. There are no less than 10 different species of reed frogs in South Africa. The Painted Reed Frog (Hyperolious marmoratuss) is commonly called *uVete* in many parts of KwaZulu-Natal. Dr Vincent Wager one of the well known frog experts in this country describes this frog as follows:

They are *(Painted Reed Frogs) the prettiest of our frogs.*

(Wager, 1965: 17)

The poet derives great inspiration from *uvete* when he sees it climbing up a window pane at night.

Angivuke ngedwa kanti kwamabili!  
*Ak’ mi ngedwa kant’ engiqoph’ intaba,*  
Intab’ emshiphiliz’ ebushelelezi!  
*Ak’ imina ngedwa engidinw’ ‘buphansi*  
*Bomhlabathi wamashongololo!*  

(Ntuli, 1972: 2)

(I am not the only one awake in the middle of the night!  
It is not only me who is climbing a mountain,  
A mountain which is smooth (and) slippery!  
It is not only me who dislikes being down  
On soil level of millipedes!)

While it is clear that the poet is climbing the mountain of books (studying), in order to improve his educational qualifications, he wonders what Vete is doing on the window pane. In his short poem which has great depth the poet compares his progress with regard to his studies and says that, while he is not progressing smoothly he sees uvete climbing up with ease which is as a result of suckers under the toes of the frog’s feet.
Kule ntabakazi yamabhuku
Mina ngikhwela ngiyadilika:
Ngixhawul’ izinyawo nezandla,
Nezami zithol’ inomfi yezakho
Nginombele ngingashibiliki.     (Ntuli, 1972: 2)

(On this mountain of books
I climb and fall back/down:
Shake my feet and hands,
So that my hands and feet get suckers
So that I climb without falling back.)

The poet gets encouragement from the frog. He admires the frog’s company as he says:

Ha! Kwamnandi ukuvakashelwa!       (Ntuli, 1972: 2)

(Au! It is nice to be visited!)

Kodwa kimi, cha, uyisilomo:         (Ntuli, 1972:2)

(But to me, no you are important:)

The quality of this poem is enhanced by the poet’s skillful use of imagery.

(b)  Nyoka Enhle (Beautiful snake): D.B. Ntuli

Most of the poems studied thus far make reference to snakes although not many are critical of this reptile. This poet is impressed by the anonymous snake that he sees, writing:

Angilazi mina igama lakho,
Buggamile nokho ubuhle bakho.          (Ntuli, 1972: 8)

(I do not know your name,
Your beauty is nevertheless conspicuous.)
Moreover, the poet’s title of his poem means: Beautiful snake. He describes the beautiful colour of this snake from the end of the second stanza to the beginning of the third stanza.

The poet is not specific about why he likes this particular snake other than to say that he loves it for being what it is.

*Hhiya, ngiyakuthanda.*

*Ngithanda oyikhona*

………… (Ntuli, 1972: 8)

(Oh, I love you
I love what you are
…………)

The poet not only admires the shape and texture of the snake’s body build but also its attractive colours which he describes as:

*Ukwelukwa kokunsundu nokumpunga,*

…………

………… – *nyoka emabhanqu,*

………… (Ntuli, 1972: 9)

(Dark brown and grey woven
…………
………….. spotted snake
…………)

The poet’s selected words to describe the snake are stronger than what he claims are the reasons for liking the snake. Those are words such as:

------------ ngiyakuthanda (I love you)

------------ *mhlobo wami* (my relative)
The poet gave his poem a title which indicates that he is addressing an important and highly respected member of the Ndlovu family by saying: “Gatsheni”. The first line which introduces the poem reflects the same dignity and respect for an important person:

\[\text{Wen’ owakhula silibele!}\]

(You who grew up while we loitered!)

This is a very important salute to an important person. It is said by those who respect him highly. In the first two stanzas the poet describes the body build of the elephant. From the last two lines of the second stanza to the tenth line of the fourth stanza we are told about the might of the elephant. Reference is made to the time when this elephant fought with a black rhino as well as a lion:

\[\text{Oyindlu yamandla}
\text{Yebuya Gatsheni;}
\text{Ngimthanda mhlazana}
\text{Ecosh’ uBhejane,}
\text{Emhlwithis’ okwekhas}
\]

(You are a powerful house
Oh you Elephant;

(Ntuli, 1972: 70)
I like him/her when he/she
Picked up the Black Rhinocerus
Picking him/her up like a dry leaf.
…………

*Ngimthanda mzukwana
Ecosh’ uNgonyama,
Emhlwithis’ okwekhasi
…………

(I liked him/her when he/she
Picked up the Lion
Picking him/her up like a dry leaf
…………)

The description of the physical structure of the elephant is continued
again from the 11th line of the fourth stanza until the end of the 5th
stanza where the elephant’s trunk is described as:

“Mbombo kanyok’ onenhlwathi phambili!”

(Ntuli, 1972: 71)

(“Your mother’s ridge of the nose which has
a python at the tip!”)

This is indeed a very effective description as the elephant’s trunk as
its hand. Without it, it cannot live and survive. Similary it uses it
exactly like a python uses its body to fight and kill its prey and
enemies and also so as to feed itself. Its body is its most important
tool.

The focus of the poem is the elephant’s vocal communication which
the poet describes as “music”. The answer to the question posed in the
title of the poem, namely:
**Gatsheni, uthanda yiphi?**
(Edward the elephant, one do you like?)

is clarified in the 8th stanza where it is said:

\[
Ngibuz’ ingom’ ekusus’ usinga,
\]
\[
(Edward, what do you please)
\]

\[
(Ntuli, 1972: 71)
\]

Reference to music or singing or vocal communication is mentioned for the first time in the middle of the 6th stanza.

**Bathi nguwenya gagu lecilongo:**
(They say it is you melodious trumpet singer)

\[
(Ntuli, 1972: 71)
\]

Msimang has the following to say regarding what this poem is about:

**Empeleni le nkondlo igxile ezingomeni eziculwa yizilwane……….**
(In fact this poem focuses on songs sung by animals……..)

\[
(Msimang, 1986: 103)
\]

The poet would like to know what most pleases the elephant among the various animal calls (songs) of the wild. He mentions many other animals by describing their movement styles. What is emphasized in the poem is the respect that the inhabitants of the jungle afford the elephant. The poet claims that all the animals say unanimously:

\[
------, Gatsheni, kakho ongangawe:
\]

\[
(Edward, no-one is equal to you)
\]

\[
(Ntuli, 1972: 71)
\]

\[
(------, Elephant, no-one is equal to you)
\]
The poet himself is impressed by the Green Pigeon’s “ijubantonto” and the Cape Turtle Dove’s “ihobhe” calls (music/songs). He would like the elephant to join him when he imitates these two birds. According to Msimang the poet used the Cape Turtle Dove to relate the story of the elephant.

\[Le\ ndaba\ siyixoxelwa\ yihobhe.\]  
(Msimang, 1986: 104  
(This story is being told to us by the Cape Turtle Dove.)

The poet includes praises of Zulu people’s music towards the end of the poem. He then concludes his poem by asking the elephant again which singing/music or song prefers between that of a Cape Turtle Dove and that of the Zulu people.


5.13.1  Introduction

This is the second publication by this poet. The volume contains 40 poems on a variety of themes. There are only 2 poems on nature. Both these poems shall be discussed in our analysis.

5.13.2  Communication of meaning

(a)  \textit{Imbali Yasendle} (Wild Flower)  
The poet is impressed by the appearance and scent of the flower. It is a wild flower which he does not identify and call by name. He refers to it as “beautiful flower” at least 7 times. Addressing it as first person he introduces his poem by greeting it as follows:
Sawubona, mbali enhle,

..........  

Usaphila mbali enhle?  

(Masuku, 1973: 15)

(Good morning, beautiful flower,
Are you well beautiful flower? ..........)

The poet’s personifying of the flower gives more life to a poem which could have been very dull. After having asked the anonymous flower to kiss him at the end of the second stanza he tells the flower that he loves it very much twice in the third and fourth stanzas. In the fifth stanza he specifically mentions the reasons why he loves the flower and says:

Ngikhangwa wubuhle bakho  
Nemibala yakho,  
Nangalo iphunga lakho,  
Nangaso isimo sakho.  

(Masuku, 1973: 15)

( I am attracted by your beauty  
And your colours,  
And your scent  
And your appearance.)

He greets the flower, refers to its habitat, scent, associates it with love, colour and scent, refers to its habitat again, its creation (stanzas 6 and 7) and finally says:

Sala kahle, mbali enhle,  
Ezimilele ehlane.  
Sobonana, mbali enhle –  

(Masuku, 1973: 15)

(Good-bye beautiful flower,  
Which grows in the wild  
We shall see each other beautiful flower –)
A simplistic view of this poem especially if Masuku’s poetic style is taken into account is that he addresses a flower of a wild plant. However, a connotative meaning is that he is talking to a girl.

(b) *Izeze* (Flea)

In this poem the poet adopts a first person narration style. It is the flea itself that talks to the reader. The focus of this poem is the flea’s ability to bite.

\[
\begin{align*}
Ngubani ongaphika nami? \\
Ngubani ongahlula mina? \\
Ngiyizeze. Ngiyaluma. \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Masuku, 1973: 72)

(Who can compete with me? Who can defeat me? I am a flea. I bite.)

After having mentioned its diet the flea describes its thriving condition in the four subsequent stanzas. Then the flea has the following to state:

\[
\begin{align*}
Kuthiwa mina ngiletha ukufa, \\
Kuthiwa mina mangibulawe \\
\ldots\ldots\ldots \\
\end{align*}
\]

(Masuku, 1973: 72)

(It is said that I bring diseases, It is said that I must be killed \ldots\ldots\ldots)

For the rest of the poem, in seven stanzas, the flea justifies its right to survive on the pretext that, like a human being, it is a product of God’s creation. The flea claims that it does nothing wrong by biting humans and spreading diseases as it does what it was created to do for a living. It claims to be using its talents in a Biblical sense:
Ngiyawasebenzisa amathalente ami,
Ngiyakusebenzela nokudla kwami;
Ngiyalujulukela nosapho lwami.  
(Masuku, 1973: 72)

(I am using my talents,
I also work for my food;
I sweat for my children.)

The flea does not see anything wrong in what it is doing to people.

Mina angone lutho neze-neze-
(Masuku, 1973: 73)
( I have not done anything wrong – at all)

This poem has great depth. Its connotative meaning reflects the apartheid situation of a country like South Africa where one race was oppressed by the other. It is common knowledge that apartheid was both criminal and sinful. No wonder the flea has the following to say in the 14th stanza:

Hlukanani nami, Bantu bomhlaba –
Ninezono ezedlula ezami:
(Masuku, 1973: 73)

(Leave me alone people of the world –
You have more sins than myself:)

5.14  *Iyezane*: Mazibuko T.M. (1973)

5.14.1  Introduction

In this second volume of poetry by T.M. Mazibuko containing 28 poems, only 3 poems are about nature. In the analysis that follows I shall discuss two of these poems.
5.14.2 Communication of meaning

(a) *Inhlava* or *Ingede* (Honey Guide)

Maclean describes this bird’s habitat as follows:

Woodland, savanna, forest edge, exotic plantations, orchards, farmyards.

(Maclean, 1985: 411)

He further confirms the general notion in African society that the honeyguide leads or guides honeybee seekers to bees’ honey:

Guides man to bees’ nests -------

(Maclean, 1985: 412)

In his description of its habitat the poet says that the honeyguide is a bird of mountains, forests and rivers. He also refers to it as a bird of poor and indigent people as well as a bird of nature’s intelligence. The honeyguide is kind hearted, and sharp-eyed – in his opinion.

………. ngifundise ukusinga
Wena oso lakho ngingelichaze,
Wena onhliziyo emhlophe
………. 

(Mazibuko, 1973: 11)

(………. teach me to look searching for
You whose eyesight is not describable,
You whose heart is white (kind)
……….)

The poet has used the word: “Ngibize,” (call me) at least six times, imploring the honeyguide to call or lead him to clean honey combs which contain no pupae.
After referring to the honey guide as a generous and kind-hearted bird in the last stanza, he pleads with it not only to guide him to its honey but also to assist him to emulate it by being loving, kindhearted and generous even to his own enemies:

\[
\begin{align*}
&Ngiphe nami lolo thando \\
&Lokupha ngenhliziyo emhlophe, \\
&Khona ngoba nenhliziyo enjengeyakho \\
&Khona ngoba nesandla esiphayo \\
&Kulaba abazingela ukungiphonsa \\
&Esiweni ngibe ukudla kwamanqe.
\end{align*}
\]

(Mazibuko, 1973: 12)

(Give me also that love 
To give kindheartedly; 
So that I would have a heart like yours 
So that I would be generous 
To those who intend to throw me 
To a precipice to be food for vultures.)

(b) **Mandukulu Nyoni Yamashwa** (Pearl spotted owl bird of misfortunes)

According to the poet this bird has two habitat types, namely: forests and marshes. The poet describes this bird as a bird of misfortunes in the very heading of his poem.

Two names are used by the poet to refer to this owl: “Mandukulu” and “Sikhova”. “Phumungibhule” is used to refer to the bird’s call. However, according to Gcumisa and Ntombela, although the word
“isikhova” tends to be used as a generic name, the above three are names of three separate owl species. They explain this as follows:

*UMandukulu* (Pearl-spotted Owl)

*ISikhova (sempela)* (Spotted Eagle Owl)

*UVukungibhule* (Wood Owl)

(Gcumisa & Ntombela 1993: 103)

*Abanye behlulwa nangukwehlukanisa umabhengwane nomswelele kwezinye izinhlobo. Bamane bathi nje konke yisikhova, kanti kwakungenjalo kusadliwa ngoludala.*

(Gcumisa and Ntombela, 1993: 103)

(Some fail even to distinguish between the barn owl and white-faced owl from other owl species. They just refer to everything as isikhova, whereas it was not the case in olden days.)

The poet describes the owl under discussion as a bird of misfortune and bad habits (*Nyoni yamashwa nemikhuba*); as a bird that carries with it anger, misfortunes and mourning (death) (*uthwele ulaka amashwa nesililo*).

It is presumed that the following words all refer to a witch-doctor: *Maliwazigqiki, mkhunkuli, mthakathi* and *mkhonyovu*.

What the poet seems to fear or to be frightened of is the owl’s nocturnal singing. This is apparent when he says:
He repeatedly refers to the owl’s call as being music of different types and tones such as: *mpompoloza*, *ingoma* and *umculo*. He states that he is afraid of the message contained in the owl’s music:

_Umbiko wemvungemvunge yakho_  
_Ngiyawesaba:_  
(Mazibuko, 1973: 63)

(The music of your humming  
I fear it:)

Mazibuko is fearful of this bird on the basis of hear-say.

_Nyoni yabathakathi ngiyakwesaba_  
_Ngoba ngizwa bethi ukukhala_  
_Kwakho phezu kwendlu kubika_  
_Isifo namashwa._  
(Mazibuko, 1973: 63)

(Bird of witches I am afraid of you  
Because I hear it being said your calling  
On top of a house warns by omen  
Death and misfortunes.)

It is a common belief especially in African Society that the appearance and calling of an owl is an omen of misfortunes of various kinds, especially death. For that reason children chase it away by throwing burning firewood and adults summon traditional doctors to use their medicines to chase it away.

5.15  
_Ugqozi 1_: Ntuli, D.B.Z. (1975)
5.15.1 Introduction

One of the great Zulu English poets, O. Mtshali wrote convincingly that:

“A poet, or for that matter any artist, cannot contrive his subject matter or themes. He must know what he is writing about.”

(Heywood, 1976: 122)

To conclude this fifth chapter I shall assess two twin – anthologies, namely *Ugqozi 1* and *Ugqozi 2* which appeared at the same time. I shall again investigate the extent to which selected poets wrote their poems as a result of having been inspired by nature. As has been done in preceding chapters, their knowledge of the subject matter will be examined together with the images they employ and the types of poems they wrote.

5.15.2 Communication of meaning

In this anthology eight poems are specifically about nature. I shall focus on four of these poems.

(a) *Uményane*: Mhlongo M.M.

Even if it is stated in a sarcastic way, there is at least one thing that the poet admires about a mosquito, that is, its humming sound which tempts him to sleep.
Ngibesathe ngiyalala.
Wangilolozel’ unghlebela,
Ungiculela ngephimb’ elimnandi,

(When I was trying to sleep
You lull me to sleep whispering,
Singing with your melodious voice
………..)

The poet makes reference to the disappearance of his blood through
the mosquitoes’ actions. With regard to the disappearance of other
people’s blood the poet remarks:

Ngiyezw’ awuqali ngami.
Kade wawubatinyela ngomalaleveva
Basale beqhaqhazela bekwesaba,

(I hear I am not the first one.
You have been stinging them with Malaria fever,
They remain shivering fearing you,

Taking blood they remain helpless,
………..)

And yet, because of the stigma associated with this insect its
melodious music is seldom appreciated. T. Hlongwane comments as
follows about the disturbance he was caused by mosquitoes:

These vampirish mosquitoes which retard my sinking into
sleep, when they enjoy their drinking spree in my
nectarian blood.

(Ntuli, 1978: 40)
The poet demonstrates in the strongest terms the extent to which he hates mosquitoes at the conclusion of his poem.

(b) *UThukela*: (Mamba R.T./Mpungose M.J.)

Mamba and Mpungose’s poems on this famous river make reference to Zulu history with different approaches. Out of 26 lines Mamba devotes 13 lines to Zulu history. Both poets experience the Thukela river as being one of significant age. Mamba is more explicit in her statements about historical events dating back to Zwide’s, Shaka’s, Mpande’s, Cetshwayo’s and Mbuyazi’s times. Thus, more time or space is spent by the poet on events than on the water (river) itself.

*Ladabuka igoda wavela uMpande*

..........  
*Kwawela amakhehla nezalukazi.*  
(Ntuli, 1975: 15)

(A division occurred and Mpande crossed

..........  
Old men and old women crossed.)

Mhlongo, on the other hand, is more inspired by the river itself, especially by its movement. His choice of action words in all but one stanza is testimony to this – words such as: *geleza* – flow, *nyonyolozani (nyobolozelani)* walk slowly (timidly), *cucuza* (move dischargingly), *guduza* (make a path), *nyathela* (walk) and *shosholoza* (move fast). Mhlongo introduces his well structured poem with historical reference as follows:
The sight of Thukela river opens up old sores.

*Sinibuka sichiphiza, njalo*
*Sicabanga ngomlando kaPhunga*
*Ohlala njalo uqoshwe*
*Entendeni yedanda lenu.*

(We see you and always shed tears
Pondering over Phunga’s history
Which is always recorded
On your back.)

The third stanza of this poem is perhaps the deepest and most emotive one in the poem.

*........*

*Nakuba thina sesihamba*
*Phezulu kwenu ngeqholo;*
*Akukho qholo ngaphezulu*
*Ngaphansi kinina ulotshiwe*
*Umlandu wobabamkhulu.*

(........
Although we walk
On you proudly;
There is no pride on top/above,
Underneath you is written
The history of our grandfathers.)
Mhlongo’s deep thoughts about his land and his history emanate from the dignified slow flow of the Thukela river water. This is clearly reflected in the 7th stanza.

(c) *Chibikazi LaseKhosi* (Kosi Bay): Mahlangu R.B.

In his introductory stanza the poet showers respect on Kosi Bay without obvious reasons. He clearly likes its name – comparing it with a father-in-law’s name which is never mentioned by a son’s new wife.

*Elakh’ igama ngilihlonipha okukamakoti ehloniph’ elikayisezala.*

(Ntuli, 1975: 48)

(Your name I respect like a bride respecting her father-in-law’s name.)

The poet’s inspiration centres around the fame of Kosi Bay as a tourist attraction. Using a praise-poetry style, the poet gives a clear description of the geography of Kosi Bay in Maputaland. The little hills which he refers to such as “Nkovukeni”, “Madapha”, “Mhlungula” and “Bangizwe” which are covered by remnants of indigenous forest and are of the most pristine beauty, together with the lake itself, are a major attraction to the area.

*Ingudlamahlathi egudl’ amahlathathi akwaMadapha nase Nkovukeni,*

*Yaye yagudla amahlathathi akwaMazambane nawakwa Mahlungula.*

(Ntuli, 1975: 49)

(Parallel runner along Dapha and Nkovukeni forests,
And ran parallel along Mazambane and Mahlungula forests.)
Not enough is said about the actual centre of attraction and no argument is provided as to why people come from all over the country and the world to see Kosi lake. Nor is the importance of the lake to local inhabitants made clear. It is not stated what exactly the lake provides to the community during times of food scarcity. It can only be assumed that it provides them with both water and food. The poet vaguely concludes his poem by saying:

*KwabaseMpumalanga unjengomame nomvikeli wabo,
Nxa lomisile umashayandawonye edlangile emuka nabo,
 ..........
Wena-ke njengomame wesul’ izinyembezi zabo ubancelise.*

(Ntuli, 1975: 49)

(To those in the east you are like a mother and a protector When it is dry with starvation devastating them.
 ..........
You as their mother you wipe their tears and feed them.)

5.16  *Ugqozi 2*: Ntuli D.B.Z. (1975)

5.16.1  Introduction

*Ugqozi 2* contains 50 poems by 5 poets, but only 2 poems are specifically about nature.

5.16.2  Communication of meaning

(a)  *Lisholani?* (Why is it saying?): Nxumalo O.E.H.M.

The poet is inspired by what he hears from a distance. He hears a Rock Pigeon calling:
The poet claims that the pigeon reminds him of past experiences he had when he was young. He describes its call as sad, reminding him of a sorghum field in Mandlakazi where his sisters used to guard against pigeons feeding on the sorghum. It reminds him of his brothers who used to trap pigeons. It also reminds him of old women’s folktales as well as precious indigenous food types such as sourmilk (maas). It reminds him of his roots as he states as follows:

*Lingikhumgbuz’ odadeweth’ abalinde
Amabele kwelakwaMandlakazi, nabafowethu
Abaeuph’ izife emafusini.*

(It reminds me of my sisters who are watching Sorghum in the Mandlakazi area, and my brothers Who are trapping (Rock Pigeons) in lying fallow land.)

The poet is complaining about urban life. His concern is the strange unfamiliar environment he now finds himself in and has the following to say:

*Lapha kulindwe amakhekhe abhakiwe,
Kuxoxwa ngezithombe nebhola …*

(Here baked cakes are waited for,
Films and soccer … are being discussed.)

In conclusion he says:

*Kungcono lithule lelo juba, ngoludala
Asisekuphinde sidle ngoludala, sakubona sakubeletha!*

(It is better that the Rock Pigeon keeps quiet
We shall never go back to good olden days!)
Using personification the poet speaks to a virgin girl called Mpevu.

About her personality he says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ntomb' endala ngebizo} \\
\text{Ibe ingendala!}
\end{align*}
\]

(Ntuli, 1975: 40)

(Old lady by name –
Whereas she is not old!)

The mountain which is called Mpevu, is very ancient. Its name is as old as itself. While in that sense it is old, in appearance it looks young and fresh both in human terms and geological terms. Msimang comments as follows about Mpevu as a virgin girl.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ngebizo intaba indala kodwa nxa uyibhekile intsha. Phela utshani buseluhlaza njengoba babenza kusukela mandulo. Kodwa ikakhulukazi intaba isalokhu inalokho kwakheka okufuze okwetshitshi. Itshitshi phela libonakala ngamabele amileo yo okwezimpondo zeguqa.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Msimang, 1985: 188)

(By name the mountain is old but when you look at it it is new. Moreover, the grass is still green as it used to be since long ago. But especially the mountain still has its original build which is similar to that of a virgin lady. A virgin girl is seen by her breasts which are shaped like the horns of a young bullock.)

In the second and third stanzas the poet indicates that the virgin under discussion was already where it is during Dingiswayo’s and Shaka’s times looking as pretty in appearance. The mountain is of magnificent scenic beauty.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ngikubon’ umi kahle} \\
\text{Simakahle kuhle kwegula lomnumzane,}
\end{align*}
\]

...........

(Ntuli, 1975: 40)
(I see you well shaped
Well-shaped like an important man’s sour milk calabash.
.........)

Geologically nothing is static. While weathering is indeed taking place on Mpemvu, the poet regards it as negligible, especially when compared to the ageing of human beings. The poet sees human attributes as belonging to the mountain. According to Maphumulo A.M:

*The most substantial characteristic of Gcumisa’s poetry is landscape, or descriptive writing concerning nature.*

(Maphumulo, 1985: 17)

5.17 Elements of poetry used to communicate meaning

5.17.1 Introduction

According to Kreuzer, poetry creates beauty through rhythm and through sound, through the pictures it produces, through the feelings it stimulates … through the thoughts it evokes … through its special use of language. (p.2)

5.17.2 Images in the poetry of the period between 1966 and 1975

(a) *Imisebe Yelanga 4* (Nyembezi)

(i) Simile

The poets in this book use this image effectively in many of their nature poems.
In *Ukushona Kwelanga*, O.L.S. Shange effectively uses the simile thus:

----------

*Latamasa njengenkosi isibuya*
*Empini yalolo suk’ ingobile.*

(Nyembezi, 1966: 7)

(----------
Bent down (set) like a king returning
From a battle of the day having conquered.)

*Amathunz’ esabekay’ obumnyama,*
*Abuya njengempi ekhankasayo,*
----------

(Frightening shades of darkness,
Return like warriors moving in horseshoe formation,
----------)

The poet’s selection of appropriate words such as, “*tanasa*” and “*khankasa*”, used with his carefully selected similes, elevates the quality of the poem. The connotative meaning of the poem is enhanced. The diction used reflects the status of the sun as a king who has a mighty army.

(ii) Metaphor

In the poem, *Vukuthu Lami*, (My Rock Pigeon) M.M. Ndlonzi refers to the Rock Pigeon as a maiden and a girlfriend. He effectively calls this bird, “*Duduzile*” which is a name of a girl and which means consoler. The word “*duduzile*” is both a metaphor and personification, depending on the context in which it has been used.
Linosizi lelo lizwi lakho,
Wena ntombi yasemagatsheni,
Liyawuhlupha umoya wami,
Ngokububula kabuhlungu,

(1966: 6)

(It is sad that voice of yours,
You maiden of branches,
It worries my soul,
By moaning sadly,

In his *Ubuhe Bemvelo*, (The beauty of Nature) J.N. Gumbi, employs appropriate use of metaphor when he calls a girl sorghum flower:

…………

*Ngahle ngaliqok’ elam’ ibele,*
*Ngiyinyon’ engangolidla.*

(1996: 10)

(…………
I then selected my sorghum flower
Being a bird which I would eat.)

(iii) Personification

As revealed in previous chapters, Zulu poets like to use personification to enrich their poetry. Poems about nature in the publication under discussion are no exception. In, *Vukuthu Lami*, M.M. Ndlanzi affectionately personifies the Rock Pigeon several times describing it as a shy girl which mourns incessantly.

…………

*Uhlushwa ngamahloni emthini.*
*Amahlamv’ esul’ izinyembenzi.*

…………

*Ngabe yini kangaka ntombenhle?*
*Ngithele yini ekuhluphayo?*

…………

*Udinda isililo yini na?*
(Are you worried by shyness in the trees, 
Branches wipe tears. 
What is it (that is worrying you) white maiden? 
Tell me what is worrying you? 
.......... 
Why are you mourning?)

In *Ukushona Kwelanga*, O.L.S. Shange addresses the sun in the third person. But his concluding line personifies it as follows:

.......... 
Isicelo sami sinye kuphela, 
Ukub’ uz’ ungashoni langa lami. 
(Nyembezi, 1966: 8)

(.......... 
My request is only one, 
That you do not set my sun.)

The use of the verb, *shona*, implies not only sunset but also refers to death.

(iv) Symbolism

O.L.S. Shange employs this image very effectively in the poem, *Ukushona Kwelanga*:

*Selphezu kwezintaba ilanga, 
Liphenduka isikhatha somlilo, 
Intaba yagqok’ ulwembu lwegolide, 
 ..........* 
(Nyembezi, 1966: 7)

(The sun is over the mountains, 
It turned into a ball of fire, 
The mountain was dressed in a web of gold, 
............)
Sunset symbolizes change. Change from daytime to night time as well as change from one life form to the other. These are two different levels of meaning.

(b) *Umzwangedwa* (O.E.H.M. Nxumalo)

(i) **Simile**

Nxumalo achieves effectiveness in his poetry by his ability to vary his formatives when he constructs similes such as, "Okwe-“njenge- ...,” etc. In his “*Ihlathi LakwaGogo*”, the poet has the following to say using a simile:

```
Nomlil’ owashis’ amadak’ esibayeni
........
Wakuhlonipha wena hlathi lokuthula,
Engani sengake ngawabon’ amanye
Eqhuqhumbiswa ngumlilo engenakubaleka,
Ekhungathek’ okweziduli zoomuhlwa,
Ngawabon’ efusekil’ okwezinsiba
Zenkankane ........
```

(Nxumalo, 1968: 9)

(And the fire which burnt cattle dung fuel in the kraal
.........
Respected you plantation of peace,
I have seen others
Being burnt by fire and could not run away,
Confused like termite teritories
I saw them smoked/ half-burnt like feathers
Of a Hadeda ibis ...........)

```
........ khon’ umoya
Uthuthuze’ iNkosi ngecilongo
Lamacembe njengezinyos’ ezeneme.
```

(Nxumalo, 1968: 10)

(......... so that the wind
Lulls the King by means of trumpet
Of leaves like excited bees.)
(ii) Metaphor

Through effective use of the metaphor the poet communicates the meaning of his poetry:

\[
Usengichathekel' umam' eguleni \\
Lolwazi ...........
\]

(Nxumalo, 1986: 6)

(My mother has poured out for me of a curdled milk calabash of knowledge ........)

The poet’s knowledge about this plantation is as a result of what was related to him by his mother. It is his mother’s experiences which enriched the poet about the plantation.

The poet further says the following about the plantation:

\[
........... liyisibuko senkuthalo; \\
Liyimisebe yemicabango emehlo \\
Acijile ...........
\]

(Nxumalo, 1986: 6)

(… it is a mirror for diligence; 
It is the sunrays of thoughts which are shap eyes …)

The existence of the plantation is a reflection of many values in the poet’s family. It reflects history, diligence, insight and foresight of the poet’s predecessors.

Nxumalo often uses enjambement which is outside the scope of our research, effectively together with metaphors as can be seen in the above examples.
(iii) Personification

Personification is abundantly employed in Nxumalo’s poetry. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this:

.........
_Namuhla limi lighwebana nezintaba._
(Nxumalo, 1968: 6)

.........
(Today the plantation is standing beckoning mountains.)

Through appropriate use of personification in this poem the poet displays not only his passion but also his respect for his grandmother’s plantation. It provided him with memories which he will never forget:

_Ngikhumbul’ ihlathi lakwagogo_
_Eliqweb’ ilang’ emagqumeni,_
_Eliqhakaz’ iphuz’ elikhazimulayo,_
.........
(Nxumalo, 1986: 8)

(I remember my grandmother’s plantation
Which beckons the sun
On the hills,
Which blossoms yellow
Shiny flowers,
.........)

_Elisinga kud’ imisebe_
_Yelanga .........
(Nxumalo, 1968: 8)

(Which is looking searchingly at rays
Of the sun .........)

In _KwaNogqaza_ the poet uses appropriate verbs to personify the actions of Howick Falls. Only human beings and to a limited extent animals (animate objects) “Khilikithela” (fall precipitately),
“nyobozela,” (move limply), “giya,” (dance), “qung’ isibindi.” (be brave), etc. The poet writes thus:

Laph’ uMngen’ ukhilikithela ngejubanekazi,  
Ngezwa ngikhungethwe yinguquko yamanzi,  
Mina engiwaz’ enyobozel’ ezihola,  
Ngankema ……..  
(Nxumalo, 1968: 21)

(Where/when the Mgeni (river) runs precipitately,  
I felt tongue-tied as a result of changes in water,  
Which I do not know moving limply and slowly,  
I became agape with amazement ……..)

Umangala nokumangal’ ukunqwamana newakazi,  
Nokh’ liqung’ isibind’ ……..  
(Nxumalo, 1968: 21)

(You are indeed surprised to encounter a precipice,  
Nevertheless you are brave ……..)

c) Amangwevu and Imvunge Yemvelo  
D.B.Z. Ntuli  
Ntuli is very fond of using symbols in his poetry. In Ilanga  
Eliphumayo, he says:

Khanyisa unomphela Langa kulelo lizulu,  
Nabangakavuki uze uKhanyise kubona.  
………..  
(Nxumalo, 1968: 23)

(Light up always Sun in that heaven,  
And those who have not woken up light up for them.)

Light symbolises progress and the word nabangakavuki symbolises lack of progress in its different contexts. In his poem Iconsi, the rain drop is used successfully as a symbol. It symbolises the achievement of great things in life through humble beginnings. Thus:
(d) *Ugqozi 2* (D.B.Z. Ntuli)

(i) Personification

It is believed that Gcumisa employed personification very effectively in *Itshitshi LakwaMthethwa*. He addresses the mountain as if he was talking to a young girl. The following two extracts from this poem sum up the poet’s ability to communicate with an inanimate object as if it were a biological object.

> **Mpemvu, Tshitshi lakwaMthethwa,**
> 
> .........
> 
> **Ngikubon’ ubhinc’ ubendle**
> 
> **Wagax’ umakhweyan’ emqaleni,**
> 
> **Waphulul’ imfibing’ emqaleni**
> 
> **Kuhle kwentomb’ incabangel’ umfokazi.**

(Ntuli, 1975: 41)

(Mpemvu, young girl of Mthethwa,
I have seen you girding on fringed girdle
Hung a musical wooden bow with a calabash around the neck,
Stroked the necklace of fruit seed on the neck,
Like a girl considering a love proposer’s request favourably.)

---

*Ithonsi (iconsì) elehla ngalinye,*

*Lizidele, licolele ukuphela*

*Ukuze kube yilo mfula.*

(Ntuli, 1972: 19)

(The raindrop which falls one by one,
Sacrifices itself, chooses to be finished
So that this river (Thukela) is formed.)
5.18 TYPES OF POEMS

5.18.1 *Imisebe Yelanga 4*

All the nature poems in this anthology are lyrics. *Intebe*, by J.G.N. Hlongwa, *Vukuthu Lami* by M.M. Ndlanzi and *Ukushona Kwelanga* by O.L.S. Shange all sincerely express the poets’ thoughts and emotions. The latter expresses himself in a rather narrative manner. In *Vukuthu Lami*, Ndlanzi has the following to say:

\[ Ngizwa njalo usizi lwafuthi, \\
Luvela phezul’ emagatsheni, \\
Lwehlela phansi lapha kimina, \\
\]

\[ \ldots \ldots \ldots \] (Nyembezi, 1966: 6)

(I always feel ever sorrow, 
Coming from above in the branches, 
Descending upon me underneath, 
\[ \ldots \ldots \ldots \] )

Shange has the following to say in *Ukushona Kwelanga*:

\[ \ldots \ldots \ldots \]

\[ Ukushona kufika nokwesaba, \\
Nokufa kudlange selishonile, \\
\]

\[ \ldots \ldots \ldots \] (Nyembezi, 1966: 8)

\[ \ldots \ldots \ldots \]

(Sunset comes with fear, 
And illness becomes more serious after sunset, 
\[ \ldots \ldots \ldots \] )

There is amazing depth in this lyric as reflected in the above extract. As revealed previously, the word *ukushona* means both setting (of
sun) and dying. Both *ukushona* (death) and the setting of the sun followed by darkness, bring about fear. Death after darkness is even more feared.

5.18.2 Umzwangedwa

Nxumalo likes to combine characteristics of a lyric with those of a narrative in one poem. The poem, *KwaNogqaza*, is a good example of such a combination.

*Izinkanyezi zicwayizela zimoiyizela phezulu.*
*Zikhwanga yimichil’ enqakana kaningi*
*Yamaz’ ajuz’ emhlubulweni wakho*

…………

(Nyembezi, 1968: 22)

(Stars blinking and smiling above
Being attracted by riems which catch each other several times
Of water flowing slowly on your side
…………)

The expression of deep feelings is enhanced by the poet’s careful selection and skillful use of personification. While narrating his experiences in both, *Ihlathi Lakwagogo* and *Ekhaya*, the poet communicates his sincerest thoughts and feelings about these places of his birth.

*Ngikhumbul’ ihlathi lakwagogo*
*Esasizitika kulo ngenhlaka,*

…………

(Nxumalo, 1968: 9)

(I remember my grandmother’s plantation
Where we ate too much resin:
…………)
In, *Ekhaya*, lyricism is clearly reflected in his writing about the Mgcikiza river:

*Usiqalaze nemimango yonke yaseNgoje,*
*Ngasenakusithola mntaka-Mgcikiza sesaduka nezwe –*  
(Nxumalo, 1986: 38)

(You look for us around on all Ngoje steep hills
Being unable to find us Mgcikiza’s child having disappeared –)

Though full of lyricism, Nxumalo’s poetry is predominantly narrative.

5.18.3 *Amangwevu*

D.B.Z. Ntuli’s *lyrics* are mainly *narrative*, and relate stories about everyday events. In *Ilanga Eliphumayo* and *Ilanga Elishonayo*, the poet narrates as follows, respectively:

*Ngiyibukisise ngamabili impumalanga,*
*Ngenkathi isibhejile ibheke ngabomvu,*
*Ukuba ubuye uvuk’ ebuthongweni Langa.*  
(Ntuli, 1972: 23)

(I carefully viewed the east with both eyes,
When it had become red looking red,
So that you wake up from sleep Sun.)

*Ngiyobuya ekuseni ngovivi,*
*Ngenkathi uMnyama esabopha,*
*Ngiqaph’ usahlamb’ eMpumalanga,*

..........  
(Ntuli, 1972: 49)

(I shall return early at dawn,
When Darkness is getting ready,
Watch while you wash in the east,
..........)
In *Eduze Nolwandle* and *Phesheya Kolwandle*, Ntuli narrates about the sea thus:

\[
\text{Ngibona bechacha emhlane wakho,} \\
\text{Kanti uma belambile ukhalela kubo.} \\
\text{(Ntuli, 1972: 40)}
\]

(I see them walking stealthily on your back, 
Just if they are hungry you eat them.)

\[
\text{Liza likhukhumala igagasi,} \\
\text{Libe liyintaba esheshayo,} \\
\text{Enesiwa esimhlophe nganeno} \\
\text{………..} \\
\text{(Ntuli, 1972: 112)}
\]

(The wave coming swelling 
Being a fast mountain, 
Which has white precipice this side, 
………..)

Although rather verbose in his diction the poet selects his words very carefully. In *Ukhozi*, his skillful use of carefully selected idiophones is clearly reflected as follows:

\[
\text{Shwi! Hlwi! Dwi-!} \\
\text{………..} \\
\text{“Kwe! Kwe! Gokogo!”} \\
\text{(Ntuli, 1972: 24)}
\]

Both R.T. Mamba and M.J.M. Mpungose in their poems titled, *UTHukela*, display lyricism as they express their sincere thoughts and feelings:

\[
\text{………..} \\
\text{Thukela mfula wezigemegeme,} \\
\text{Mehlomakhulu ngokubona lukhulu,} \\
\text{Abafazi namadoda kushabalala,} \\
\text{Thukela mqhathi wawoZwide benoShaka,} \\
\text{………..} \\
\text{(Ntuli, 1975: 14)}
\]
Some lyrics contain certain elements of an epic by including heroic and national figures as well as some geographic places.

5.18.4 Observations and conclusion

With the exception of a few poets such as O.E.H.M. Nxumalo, D.B.Z. Ntuli, C.S. Ntuli and M.S.S. Gcumisa, reference to nature is general rather than specific. With regard to fauna and flora most poets tend to say, “umuthi,” “utshani,” “isilwane,” etc., instead of calling the object by its specific name. Even poets such as E.E.N.T. Mkize who are very prolific in their nature writing are not specific in their reference. This reflects a paucity of the poets’ knowledge about their natural resources.

Zulu poets of this period, in particular D.B.Z. Ntuli, likes writing about the sun. Water is another natural resource that has been used a great deal by poets in their compositions. Relative reference is made to the air – more frequently than to the soil.

In the introductory remarks of his *Uphondo Lukabhejane* Masuku makes the following statements in a Zulu book:

………… Thukela river of great incidents,
Large eyes for having seen great things,
Women and men disappearing,
Thukela initiator of fights between Zwide and Shaka, ……….)

Some lyrics contain certain elements of an epic by including heroic and national figures as well as some geographic places.
African poets must study European poetry thoroughly …

Any puerile attempt to compose poetry without a thorough knowledge of rules of writing poetry is utterly ludicrous. …

It is, therefore very important for any aspirant African poets … to study first the techniques of the master before attempting to write poetry … in the real sense of the word. (Masuku, 1973: 2 and 3)

Masuku further makes the following bold statement:

It is necessary, … to follow a constant rhyme scheme … in the writing of poetry in African languages. (Masuku, 1973: 5)

Ngikhangwa wubuhle bakho
Nemibalabala yakho,
Nangalo iphunga lakho,
Nangaso isimo sakho.

(Masuku, 1973: 15)

(I am attracted by your beauty
As well as your colours,
And by your smell,
And by your appearance.)

Basically, the above stanza is about the colour of the flower. Three out of four lines are on this sub-theme. However, in order to have some rhyme scheme the poet repeated scent which belongs to stanza 3.

Ugqozi 1 contains some fairly high quality poems about nature. In a poem on the river, however, very little is mentioned about the importance of its water in life in general and to other forms of nature in particular (humans inclusive). Human history tends to mask
everything. The related history in Mamba’s poem, *uThukela* is muddled up.

Mahlangu’s poem on Kosi Bay could also be better if the poet was explicit regarding the cultural, economic and ecological values of the lake to local communities and the recreational and aesthetic values of the lake to tourists. Mabuya’s poem, *Hlabelelani* is vague without any indication of what the creatures sing. It is not apparent what the creatures are actually saying to the poet.

Ugqozi 2:
Poems such as *Ikusasa, Inhliziyo Yami Idangele* and *Awufani* by O.E.H.M. Nxumalo, *Ezingolweni* and *Bengithi Lizokuna* by C.S. Ntuli and *Qhakazani Zimbali* by H.K. Ngcobo may also be classified as nature poetry depending on the reader’s interpretation of the poem and its context. The quality of poetry in this anthology is very high in all respects.
CHAPTER 6

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSION

1. Introduction

The final chapter of this study presents a reflection on the entire research. It reflects on observations made and conclusions drawn during and from the research. It presents an integration of theoretical, researched and observed findings and synthesises analysis of information gathered throughout the research.

The study has investigated nature as a source of inspiration – inspiring Zulu poets to express their feelings/emotions, experiences, ideas and observations through poetry.

The study has attempted to establish the extent to which Zulu poets of the period between 1935 and 1975 have been influenced by natural resources to compose their poetry. Other aspects of the study were to establish the extent to which Zulu poets of the period under discussion employ images in their communication of meaning as well as the types of poetry which result from their writing about nature.

2. The poetry of the period between 1935 and 1945

The study has revealed that B.W. Vilakazi pioneered the writing of modern Zulu poetry by experimenting. According to D.B.Z. Ntuli and
this study, Vilakazi, through his synthesis of various traditional and western styles, produced a new blend of Zulu poetry which has been emulated by Zulu poets and other African poets in general, ever since.

It has been noted in this research that Vilakazi skillfully selected and employed the simile, metaphor, personification and symbolism in such a manner that he effectively communicated the meaning of his poetry.

It has also been observed that, although there are only a few poems that are specifically about nature in the poetry of the period under discussion, there is not a single poem in which nature has not been used. Another observation that has been made is the remarkable knowledge which the poet has of his natural environment.

The findings of the study also show that Vilakazi is more inspired by water than any other aspect of nature. He is more inspired by what he hears than by what he sees, smells, touches and tastes. The following conclusions have been drawn from the poetry of the period under discussion: Taking Vilakazi’s background and the times in which he composed his poetry into account it was inevitable for him not to be influenced by Christianity.

3. The poetry of the period between 1946 and 1955

The main feature which characterises poetry of the period between 1946 and 1955 is the emulation by poets of B.W. Vilakazi. It is
observed that five poetry books by different poets were published during this period. Some poets of this period did not only emulate Vilakazi in style but also in their choice of themes and subject matter.

It has been observed that A.S. Kunene, E.E.N.T. Mkize and S.Z.S. Dlamini have written more poems on nature than other poets of the same period. Kunene’s poetry shows his intimate knowledge of his subject matter. He is very specific about various natural resources. Mkize on the other hand, displays serious inaccuracies and even confusion regarding his knowledge of his subject matter. Thus, while his poetry may be aesthetically impressive it is spoilt by a vagueness emanating from the poet’s paucity of knowledge about what he is writing about. Dlamini on the other hand demonstrates neither adequate knowledge of his subject matter nor adequate skills to compose his poetry.

Like B.W. Vilakazi’s poetry, the poetry of this period is didactic and religious (christian) in tone. It has been observed in this study that Kunene tops the other poets of this period both in the choice and the management of his themes.

In conclusion it can be said that there is no doubt that some of the poets of this period were influenced not only by Vilakazi’s poetry books but also by their knowledge of the man himself. It appears from the quality of the poetry under discussion that there were still natural resources in abundance and that these were relatively unspoilt during the lives and times of these poets. It is for this reason that some of
them display such intimate knowledge of their subject matter. This period was still a continuation of experimenting with modern Zulu poetry. Zulu poetry in its written form was still in its infant stage.

Since the poets were still trying to find their way in written Zulu poetry it is not surprising that the dominant feature of their poetry is lyricism. Their management of images is satisfactory.

4. The poetry of the period between 1956 and 1965

One of my observations is the increase not only in the number of books but also in the number of poems in the period between 1956 and 1965. During this period one sees the appearance of poetry anthologies to which many poets contribute. It was also observed that since many of the contributors to anthologies are first time poetry writers, the majority of the poems of this period are amateurish in quality. Poems by poets such as B.B. Blose, D.B.Z. Ntuli, J.C. Dlamini and O.E.H.M. Nxumalo are, however, of particularly high quality. The poets’ integration of the elements of poetry such as images is well managed.

*Sometimes a poet’s best pieces (of poetry) can be those which are inspired by other poets. This happens when he has made an effort to improve on the material he has borrowed.*

(Ntuli, 1984: 236)

Some of the poets of the period under discussion strived to improve on the approaches such as the management of style and content
attempted by their predecessors. Their attempts to do so are clearly understandable as they had the material to build on.

5. The poetry of the period between 1966 and 1975

Anthologies continued to increase in the period between 1966 and 1975, as six poetry anthologies were published. It is my observation that there are generally more poems written about the sun than on any other aspect of nature. The sun is followed by water and then air or wind. The soil is the least written about natural resource. While a lot is written about both fauna and flora especially in poems which are not specifically about nature, more is written about wild animals than about wild plants. In both cases the majority of poems do not reflect an adequate intimate knowledge of the subject matter.

Of significance about poetry on the soil is Sikakana’s, Mina Nhlabathi. This is indeed a very emotive lyric.

The quality of poetry of this period was shown to be in general a significant improvement on the poetry of the two previous periods, namely 1946-1955 and 1956-1965. The poet’s management of their elements of poetry especially images and diction is commendable. Personification is the most abundantly and most effectively used image by the majority of poets.

One also finds poems in which poets such as Ntuli and Nxumalo combine the characteristics of a lyric and those of a narrative poem in
one poem. Such a combination enhances the quality of the poem as well as the meaning communicated.

The general conclusion from observations made is that some poets composed their poetry without adequate knowledge of specific natural resources. This state of ignorance could be attributed to the poets’ historical backgrounds. Poetry by poets who spent a long period of their youth in rural areas demonstrate a better knowledge and in some cases management of nature. It is also clear that the majority of poets do not conduct research on their chosen themes/subjects before they write their poems. The above situation can safely be attributed to the urbanization of these poets.

The following recommendations can be made:

1. That more intensive studies be conducted on the influence of nature on Zulu poetry as natural resources contribute significantly to the enrichment of the Zulu language.

2. That studies need to be conducted on the influence that poets of the past (and not only Vilakazi) have had on contemporary poets especially with special reference to nature motivated poetry.

3. That poetry anthologies specifically dealing with the nature theme be considered as such poetry would contribute meaningfully towards disseminating information about natural resources.
4. The conservation of biodiversity in general can be ensured if as much knowledge as possible is communicated about it – and what better way than through the language of poetry. People will conserve what they love. They will love what they know and understand.

In conclusion it needs to be admitted that although many Zulu poets of the period between 1935 and 1975 wrote poetry which contained shortcomings as pointed out in the preceding analysis, they nevertheless made a significant contribution to poetry in general and to Zulu poetry in particular. Limited though, their contribution to nature inspired Zulu poetry is commendable.

Zulu poetry under discussion embraces the Zulu society’s customs, traditions as well as their beliefs. Many poets of poetry under discussion find Zulu culture with its traditions, proverbs, idions and folklore inseperable with the natural environment. As a result of this their poetry highlights their adoration for nature and the beauty splendour and express this in ostention and glandeur.
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