

POETRY PORTFOLIO:

IZIYALO

and

MINI-DISSERTATION:

REIMAGINING THE POETRY OF B.W. VILAKAZI AS THE SOCIAL TOOL FOR
'UKUXWAYISA' (DETERRENT) AND PROTEST.

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Declaration

I, Menzi Zamokwakhe Thango declare that the collection of isiZulu poems '*Iziyalo*' and the mini-dissertation '*Reimagining the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi as the social tool for 'ukuxwayisa' (deterrent) and protest*' are my own work and that all the sources that I have used have been acknowledged by means of complete references.



Date: September 2021

Menzi Z. Thango

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I dedicate this body of work to my mother, MaShandu, my wife, MaMkhize and my sons, Aphile, Mfundo, Sbonokuhle and Lubanzi. *Ngibonga ukungibekezelela kwenu, ngokuthatha isikhathi senu ukuze ngenze lo msebenzi.*

Abstract

This study consists of two parts. The first part was the creative writing component (poetry portfolio) which entailed a manuscript of forty-five isiZulu poems written by the researcher of this study/project. The poems found in the creative component dealt with several themes; among them were themes on culture, Ubuntu, love, awareness, protest, and nature. These themes resemble the themes found in the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi. The title of the creative component, '*Iziyalo*' (to raise awareness and rebuke), speaks to the dissertation. The creative component was aimed at warning and alerting society about critical social matters and protest. For example, the poem, '*Makholwa*' (Believers), is critiquing how churchgoers/believers conduct themselves in places such as churches, at weddings, in terms of family affairs, and at funerals.

The second part of this study was the mini-dissertation wherein the study analysed selected poems from the two anthologies of B.W. Vilakazi, namely *Inkondlo kaZulu* (1935) and *Amal'ezulu* (1945). The dissertation examined the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi as a social tool for '*ukuxwayisa*' (deterrent) and protest. The emphasis was on the term '*ukuxwayisa*' thus it is the only one translated in the title while the term 'protest' is not translated into isiZulu. This was aimed at showing the reader that there is a link between '*Iziyalo*' and '*ukuxwayisa*'. The term '*Iziyalo*' was used for the poetry portfolio and the term '*ukuxwayisa*' for the mini-dissertation. Therefore, this shows that there is a synergy between the poetry portfolio and the mini-dissertation. Most of the poems found in the poetry portfolio and in both poetry collections of B.W. Vilakazi carry the same message, which is to rebuke society. The poems analysed in the mini-dissertation incorporated several themes, among which were protest poetry, culture, tradition, Western influence and the influence of the Romantic poets in Vilakazi's poetry. Moreover, this study found that B.W. Vilakazi was inspired by the ancestral spirits to become a poet (*imbongi yesizwe*). He was a traditional and cultural poet who never wanted to lose himself. For instance, when he arrived in Johannesburg, he was not happy to be in the city. He missed his rural life. Moreover, B.W. Vilakazi was the voice of the voiceless because he was advocating for the rights and dignity of black people in the mines and in society. Furthermore, the study ascertained that Vilakazi's poetry was influenced by the Romantic poets. This is evident in his poem entitled '*kwaDedangendlale*' ('In the Valley of a Thousand Hills'). Furthermore, there is a

synergy between some poems found in the collection (poetry portfolio) and the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi which were analysed in the mini-dissertation. Both the poetry portfolio and B.W. Vilakazi's poetry share themes which speak to protest poetry, nature, love, culture and traditions.

Benedict Wallet Vilakazi was not just an ordinary writer but the pioneer of isiZulu modern poetry and literature. Vilakazi was the first to write and publish modern Zulu poetry. This study's main aim was to analyse the poetry of Benedict Wallet Vilakazi with a focus on what was happening in the country at the time of his writing and how his poetry remains relevant in our contemporary times. The main argument of this study was that his poetry reveals a man who lived in two worlds: that is, the world of African tradition and that of Western influence.

Key terms: Reimagining, protest poetry, B.W. Vilakazi, traditions, culture, social ills, Romantic poets.

Isethulo

Leli qoqo lezinkondlo ngilethula ngokukhulu ukujabula nokuzithoba. Ngibonga kakhulu uMdali ngokungipha umfutho nomqondo wokuloba lezi zinkondlo ezikuleli bhuku. Ngiyethemba uzozithokozela lezi zinkondlo. Leli qoqo lezinkondlo zesiZulu liqukethe izinkondlo ezidingida izihloko eziningi ezithinta indlela okuphilwa ngayo esikhathini samanje, ukuphela kobuntu ebantwini, ubudlova, ubugebengu, ukuchitheka kwemizi nemishado, uthando, imfundo kanye nezinye izihloko ezingqala. Lezi zinkondlo zigcwele kakhulu umuzwa wokukhuthaza, wokuyala, wokukhuza kanye nezinye ezivula umqondo nezakhayo. Kunezinkondlo ezikhuluma ngothando, imikhuba eyenziwa abantu besilisa nabesifazane bezifihla ngaphansi kwegama lothando. Kwexwayiswa kakhulu abesimame asebephenduke okhamisa ngithele befuna ukusetshenzelwa abantu besilisa ngendlela enokungathembeki kanye nokweba ingcebo yabo, baphinde bangathembeki kulabo abathandana nabo.

Isihloko sale ncwadi naso siyakufakazela lokhu uma sithi '*Iziyalo*', uzobona nawe mfundi uma ufunda lezi zinkondlo ukuthi eziningi zazo ziqukethe iziyalo nezexwayiso mayelana nendlela osekuphilwa ngayo kulesi sikhathi samanje. Kuphinde kubekhona nezinkondlo ezikhuza ukuhlukumezana kwabantu abashadile, abathandanayo, abefundisi bamasonto abaphume endleleni kanye nokuhlukunyezwa kwezingane.

Lo msebenzi wehlukene iminxa emibili, umunxa wokuqala liqoqo lezinkondlo zesiZulu, owesibili lucwaningo ngomsebenzi ka-B.W. Vilakazi. Lolu cwanningo lubheke kakhulu imisebenzi yezinkondlo ka-B.W. Vilakazi okungamaqoqo amabili, *Inkondlo kaZulu* (1935) kanye nelithi *Amal'ezulu* (1945). Izinkondlo eziseqoqweni lami elithi '*Iziyalo*' kanye nezinkondlo zika-Vilakazi zinakho ukuhlobana okuthile. Okokuqala nje, yikho ukuthi zidingida izindikimba zokubhikisha noma ukulwisana nezimo-mpilo emphakathini, izimo ezifana nokucindezelwa komuntu ompisholo, ukusebenza ngaphansi kwezimo ezinzima ezimayini nasemafemini, ukusebenza kwagobiqolo, ukulahlwa kwamasiko, ukuphela kobuntu, ubuhle bemvelo, ububha, ubugebengu, njll. Ukwenza isibonelo, enye yezinkondlo ezivela eqoqweni lezinkondlo '*Iziyalo*',

esihloko sithi 'Makholwa', icubungula indlela abantu abasontayo / abakholwayo abaziphatha ngayo ezindaweni ezifana namasonto, emishadweni, ngokwezindaba zomndeni, nasemingcwabeni. Le nkondlo iyahlobana nenkondlo kaVilakazi ethi 'Izinsimbi zesonto'. Kule nkondlo uVilakazi wexwayisa abantu ngezimfundiso zabafundisi bezenkolo yobuKhristu. UVilakazi lapha ugxeka kakhulu izimfundiso zenkolo yobuKhristu ngokuthi ziyedukisa, zedukisa abantu ekutheni balahle amasiko abo. Uma ngibheka inkondlo kaVilakazi nalena ethi 'Makholwa', ngizibona zombili zikhuza imikhuba yesimanje esithe chithi saka. Emingcwabeni akusangcwatshwa ngendlela okwakungcwatshwa ngayo kwaMadala eJuteni kepha abantu sebelahle isintu bathatha izinto zabokufika kwaba yizo abaziqhakambisayo. Asisekho isizotha uma kufihlwa umuntu osendele kwelaphakade, sekusha ingevu sengathi kusesipotini. Ubuntu abusekho, sekusabalele imikhuba.

Lezi zinkondlo ezilandelayo ziqukethe indikimba efanayo naleyo evame ukudingidwa ezinkondlweni zikaVilakazi okuyindikimba yezothando lwemvelo kanye nethonya lezimbongi zaseNtshonalanga. Lezi zinkondlo zincoma ubuhle bemvelo. Inkondlo ethi 'KwaZulu' incoma ubuhle bedolobha lasoNdini. Ubuntu babantu bakhona kanye nezintaba zakhona ezihleleza umoya opholile. Sizwa imbongi ithi 'kuheleza umoya opholile, kuheleza umoya wobuntu, kuheleza umoya wothando, kuheleza umoya wesintu, kuheleza umoya wokubambisana'. Inkondlo ethi 'Umbola Ongashi' yona itusa umfula wendawo yaseNkonjeni esigodini sakwaNomdiya, khona belu endaweni yasoNdini. Imbongi ithi lo mfula awushi, uyimpophoma egeleza njalo. Ubunjalo balo mfula abupheli. Imbongi iphinde income ubuhle bezintaba zaseQwaQwa. Ithi lobu buhle bungafaniswa nobuhle bentokazi. Uthi uvuka ekuseni ubona zona izintaba, zinkulu ngendlela eyisimanga. Lezi zinkondlo ziyafana nezinkondlo zikaVilakazi ezihlaziywa ocwaningweni. Inkondlo kaVilakazi ethi 'kwaDedangendlale' idingida umqondo ofanayo nalona odingidwa enkondlweni ethi 'Izintaba zaseQwaQwa'. Zombili lezi zinkondlo zitusa ubuhle bezintaba. Ngakho-ke, izinkondlo ezitholakala eqoqweni elithi '*Iziyalo*' ziyahlobana nezinkondlo zikaVilakazi ezihlaziywe ocwaningweni. Lezi zinkondlo zihlanganisa izingqikithi eziningana, phakathi kwalezo yizingqikithi zezinkondlo zemibhikisho/zokukhononda ngokuthile okwenzeka emphakathini, ukulahlwa kwamasiko, isiko, ithonya

laseNtshonalanga kanye nezimbongi zothando eziphinde zibe nethonya ezinkondlweni zikaVilakazi.

PART ONE

1. POETRY PORTFOLIO

TITLE: *IZIYALO*

The following poems form part of the body of work for the MA Creative Writing. In this instance, the poetry portfolio is named as the first part of this body of work. The first part is the creative writing component (poetry portfolio), which entails a manuscript of forty-five isiZulu poems written by the researcher of this study/project. The poems found in the creative component deal with several themes. Among them are themes on culture, Ubuntu, love, awareness, protest, and nature.

Aim and rationale of poetry portfolio

The aim of this portfolio was for the researcher of this study to demonstrate his creative writing skills and link the creative component with the research component. The structure of this dissertation, which has two parts – part one being the poetry portfolio and the second part being the mini-dissertation – is the requirement for the MA Creative Writing. However, the author/researcher of this study decided to create poems which speak to the themes covered in the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi. The main reason for this, is that the researcher is fond of the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi, ever since he was at school. Hence, the title of the poetry collection, '*Iziyalo*' is aligned with the title of the dissertation, in terms of the term '*ukuxwayisa*'. Both these terms provide the core message, which is to rebuke, and/or raise awareness on certain societal issues or matters.

The title of the creative component, titled '*Iziyalo*' (to raise awareness and rebuke), speaks to the dissertation title. The creative component was aimed at warning and alerting society about critical social matters and protest. For example, one of the poems from the collection of poems, entitled '*Makholwa*' (Believers), is critiquing how churchgoers/believers conduct themselves in places such as churches, at weddings, in terms of family affairs, and at funerals.

UMdali

UMdali wezinto zonke,
Konke kwavela Ngaye,
Konke kuvela Kuye,
Akaguquki kulokhu ayikho.

UMdali usithanda sonke,
Akekho ozondwayo,
Usidale ngokwehluka,
Sehluke ngebala:
Kukhona abamnyama;
Kukhona abamhlophe;
Sehluke ngezilimi:
Kukhona abakhuluma isiNgisi;
Kukhona abakhuluma isiZulu;
Kukhona abakhuluma isiXhosa;
Kukhona abakhuluma isiSwati;
Kukhona abakhuluma isiNdebele;
Kukhona abakhuluma olwaBathwa;
Kukhona abakhuluma iSipedi;
Kukhona abakhuluma isiSuthu;
Kukhona abakhuluma isiTswana;
Kukhona abakhuluma isiTsonga;
Kukhona abakhuluma isiVenda;
Kukhona abakhuluma ngezandla,
Kepha sonke sivela Kuye,
Akekho ongcono.

Pho okwani ukucwasana?
Ngoba sonke sidalwe ngenjongo eyodwa,
Akekho ozidalile,
Yilowo unegalelo lakhe,
Komunye nomunye,
Akekho oziphilelayo,
Sonke siphila ngabanye,
Umuntu umuntu ngabantu.

Igazi

Linye igazi,
Alikho elingcono kunelinye,
Omnyama uyanikela ngegazi,
Lifakwe komhlophe,
Nomhlophe uyanikela ngegazi,
Lifakwe komnyama,
Pho okwani ukuzondana?
Komnyama nomhlophe,
Eyani inzondo?
Ngoba sivela ndawonye,
Simunye egazini,
Igazi leNkosi,
Yilo elisihlanganisayo,
Ngoba sonke sivela Kuyo,
Igazi layo lisisindisa sonke,
Alikhethi bala lamuntu,
Pho elethu lehluke ngani?

Ubuqhophololo

Kazi obani ubuqhophololo?
Uhola izizumbulu,
Kodwa aweneliseki,
Uthola amathenda,
Aweneliseki,
Uhlala nomntakabani,
Aweneliseki,
Udla emahhotela aphezulu,
Aweneliseki,
Udla intela yabasebenzi,
Aweneliseki,
Kazi waneliswa yini?
Waneliswa ukufa kwabantu?
Waneliswa yindlala esizweni?
Waneliswa ukuzibona umkhulu?

Empeleni nawe kawuzazi,
Wabona kwenziwa,
Nawe wase wenza,
Wabona kukuhle,
Ngoba kuzuza wena,
Okubuhlungu kubantu,
Kuwe kuyahlekisa,
Uza namaqhinga,
Amaqhinga aphelayo,
Engabe uza namaqhinga amahle,
Okwakha isizwe,
Kepha uza namaqhinga okuhlukumeza,
Ahlukumeza isizwe.

Umoni

Uyajabula moni
Ezakho ziyaziwa,
Zaziwa kwaMhlaba,
Zaziwa nakweliphezulu,
Yonke iminwe ikhomba kuwe,
Bonke bacasha ngawe,
Ngoba wena awufihli,
Ukona kwakho kusobala,
Insindiso iseduze kuwe,
Ngoba awuzifihli,
Awuzenzi ngcono ngabanye,
Angisho ukuthi kuhle okwenzayo,
Kuphela ngithi usizo luseduze kuwe.

UMdali uyakubona,
Awumfihlelanga lutho,
Awufani nabazenzisayo,
Abenza sengathi balungile,
Kanti bafihle ukonakala,
Bakhohlwe ukuthi akukho okufihliwe,
Okungayikwembulwa,
UMdali uyasho encwadini yakhe engcwele:
Ngiyokulandela moni,
Kuze kube phezu kwethuna.
Pho bazikhohliselani?
Labo abagiya ngezono zabanye,
Bakhohlwe ezabo,
Akekho olungile kwaMhlaba,
Sonke siyizoni,
Kuphela sona ngokwehluka,
Kwazise asikho isono,
Esikhulu kunesinye.

Jaji elikhulu,
Elingusiyazi,
Hlukana nokwahlulela,
Ngoba nawe uzokwahlulelwa,
Linye kuphela ijaji,
Yilowo owasidalayo,
Nguye owazi iziphambeko zethu,
Mina nawe siyizidalwa zakhe,
Yekela ukuzenza uMdali,
UMdali mbumbulu,
UMdali owonayo ukhona kambe?

Muntu wakithi

Vuka emaqandeni,
Uthe ufuna umsebenzi,
Wawuthola,
Ngakho sebenza,
Uyeke ubuvila,
Ucevuza izindaba,
Abantu badinga usizo,
Ezindabeni uhamba phambili,
Emsebenzini uza emuva,
Kanti uqashweleni?
Uholela ini?

Awukwazi ukukhuluma,
Abantu ubathatha kancane,
Ubakala ngamehlo
Kuhle kwamanzi okupheka ipapa,
Ukhohliwe ukuthi usebenza nje,
Kungenxa yabo,
Ubuvila bumi ngenhla,
Isikhathi senhlabakhefu,
Saziwa nguwe kuqala,
Esokubuyela emsebenzini,
Kawusazi nhlobo,
Uyadembesela nje.

Usuphendule isizwe sakithi inhlekisa,
Sesaziwa ngobuvila bakho,
Ukungathandi umsebenzi,
Ukwedelela amakhasimende,
Ukungakwazi ukukhuluma,
Ukulibala yingevu,
Ingevu yomshonisa langa,
Ngesikhathi somsebenzi.

Vuka uzithathe!
Uhloniphe umsebenzi,
Uthande abantu,
Ubasize ngenhliziyo emhlophe,
Yisona sinkwa sakho lesa,
Isinkwa sengomuso lakho,
Isinkwa sabantwana bakho.

Khangeziwe

Kuyoze kube yinini ukhangezwa?
Izandla zakho zikhubazekile yini?
Inggondo yakho ayisebenzi yini?
Amehlo akho awaboni yini?
Ingani indlela ibuzwa kwabaphambili,
Kungani ungabuzi uma ungazi?

Uyaphiwa aweneliseki,
Kunalokho ufuna ingalo yonke,
Kungani ungabongi?
Uyasizwa kaweneliseki,
Okufunayo ukufuna ngendluzula,
Uyalwa ushisa izakhiwo,
Ushisa imigwaqo,
Ujikijela abantu nezimoto,
Ucekela phansi impahla yomphakathi,
Ukhohliwe ukuthi uzoyidinga ngomuso.

Kungani ufuna ukwenzelwa konke?
Kungani ungazenzeli okufunayo?
Awufuni ukusebenza,
Kodwa okuhle uyakuthanda,
Bukela entuthwaneni vila ndini!
Uyeke ukukhononda njalo,
Sukuma uzenzele!
Impilo imnandi ngomvuzo wokukhandleka,
Usebenzele isinkwa sakho,
Usebenzele umndeni wakho,
Uhulumeni uthuthukisa umphakathi,
Hhayi ukuwenzela izinto zonke.

Umqhele wameva

Yekanini ukungazi
Impilo kayikhulelwa,
Impilo iyasetshenzelwa,
Ubani owathi omdala wazi konke?

Impumelelo iyajulukelwa,
Ikusasa lihle ngokujulukelwa,
Nawe zikhandle,
Ze uthole isinkwa sakho,
Isinkwa samachwane akho.

Uhlulwa abantwana abancane,
Abavuka ekuseni ngovivi,
Beya kwaMfundo,
Bevukela ikusasa labo,
Abalibona liluvindi,
Kepha baphikelele,
Behla benyuka,
Ngenxa yokomela ulwazi,
Ulwazi lwaphakade.

Imfundo iyisikhali,
Sokunqoba izinkinga zobuphofu,
Kunzima namhlanje,
Ukubona intsha,
Igcwele izinkalo,
Ifuna imisebenzi,
Imisebenzi engekho,
Bafundile laba bantu,
Bazuza imiqhele,
Yibo laba behlobile emakhanda,
Bethwele imiqhele yokunqoba,
Yokunqoba kwaNgqondonkulu.

Lapho bethi yalu yalu,
Befuna imisebenzi,
Lutho imisebenzi,
Usubona ngamabhodi emasangweni,
Elotshwe ukuthi: awukho umsebenzi.

Pho benzenjani?
Iziqu sezibanga umunyu,
Abanye sebezisola ngokufunda,
Babuka isikhathi abasichithile,
Abazali nabo bakhalela izimali,
Bakhalela iminyaka befutha umxhaka,
Babuka izingane zabo,
Zibhuqwabhuqwa yiminjunju,

Iminjunju yokungasebenzi,
Pho izovelaphi imisebenzi?
Ngoba nezwe lihlaselwe yinzikamnotho,
Kwabanye ubugebengu sekuyisisombululo,
Izidakamizwa sekuyisisombululo.

Qina idolo!
Ungabe usazisola,
Unqobile ngemfundo,
Thatha ikhono lakho,
Olizuze kwaNgqondonkulu,
Ulisebenzise,
Ungathembeli ekuqashweni,
Nawe ungaqasha,
Uvule amathuba emisebenzi,
Uzobathola abadinga umsebenzi,
Uzobathola abafuna ukufaka imali,
Ngaphansi kwebhizinisi lakho,
Bonela kwabanye,
Ukhule udlondlobale.

Lusha amashushu

Luyavutha bhe,
Luvutha amagalane
Insizwa yehluleka ukuzibamba,
Ayideli ukubona intokazi,
Pho ikhona nale ntokazi,
Ishaya ngezifaca,
Inyathela ngabantwana,
Inesineke.

Nensizwa yakhona,
Isukile egabadeni,
Uswahla lwensizwa,
Ishaya ngehwanqa,
Lezi zithandani,
Zimile zibhekene,
Yilowo uyamamatheka,
Bami ngaphansi kompheme wezimoto,
Izimoto zasemsebenzini,
Lapho kusebenza khona intokazi.

Insizwa ishiya lapho isebenza khona,
Izobona isingqazu sayo,
Isinqandamathe sayo,
Ayideli ukumbona ekhaya.

Uyadela wena,
Uthando lubuzwa kubo laba,
Abacikeki ukubonana,
Bedingida ezabo,
Ezasemnyangweni wezothando,
Lapho kufudumele khona,
Izisebenzi zakhona zihlale zimamatheka,
Ziconsa amathe,
Ungafunga ukuthi yizaguga
Zidla amaswidi,
Ubona ngokujuzwa kwamathe,
Kudliwa uju lodwa,
Kuyateketiswana,
Kubizwana ngoswithi,
Indoda endala ibizwa ngo-*baby*
Cha ngibheme ngakholwa,
Luhle uthando,
Kuhle lokhu engikubonayo.

Emangcwabeni

Kusho uhleko,
Kudliwa ingevu,
Yisikhathi sokubingelelana,
Akekho ozongcwaba,
Kuzoxoxwa ezamzukwana,
Umfundisi uyashumayela,
Abantu bayaxoxa,
Emakhaya bathe bazongcwaba,
Kuseyikho ukungcwaba lokhu?

Eyezingane angisayiphathi,
Uzibona zilunguza ethuneni,
Ungafunga ukuthi umbukiso,
Kanti umngcwabo nje,
Sasazi umngcwabo uhlonishwa,
Izingane zivalelwa endlini,
Abadala kuyibo abangcwabayo.

Namhlanje sekufana nomshado,
Sekuhlotshiswa sengathi umcimbi,
Ungafunga ukuthi ubulindelwe,
Kukhalwa kuvele unyembezi olulodwa,
Ubone nje ukuthi yinsambatheka lena,
Sekwenzelwa amehlo abantu,
Umuntu akhale sengathi yingane incwetshiwe,
Akhale azibhuquze phansi,
Kanti yimbuqo yodwa,
Inhliziyo ijabule,
Futhi iyanconcoza,
Ingani usehambile ukhathazile,
Uhlupho.
Umuntu obeyisithikamezo kuye,
Usezosala azibuse,
Azenzele umathanda.

Usubona emuva komngcwabo,
Ukuthi bekungakhalwa,
Bekujatshulwa,
Usubona ngo-*after tears*
Imikhuba esingayazi,
Yichilo phela leli,
Sekuphilwa impilo yobuhlathi,
Impilo yokungazazi,
Impilo yobuthatha,
Impilo yokuchanasa,

Zona izingubo ezimnyama zivelaphi?
Zisho ukuthini?
Ukufa ubumnyama?
O mhlawumbe,
Nakhu phela oshonelwe,
Naye uyagezwa
Emuva komngcwabo.

Ingabe sivelaphi lesi sinyama?
Bebhlala ndawonye laba bantu,
Bedla ndawonye,
Belala ndawonye,
Bethandana,
Manje isinyama singenaphi?
Besingekho besendawonye?
Usenesinyama ngoba eseshonile?
Cha kuyamangaza.
Ngichazeleni ngiqonde!
Ngoba ngiyakweshwama lokhu,
Kusha kimi!
Kusha kwabakwethu.

Makholwa!

Emasontweni yini,
Emishadweni yini,
Ezindabeni zemindeni yini,
Ekuxabaniseni yini,
Ekuhlebeni yini,
Ekuzondeni yini,
Ekudleni yini phambili,
Kudla nina kuqala,
Abanikazi bomcimbi
Bona abayilutho,
Abagqibayo emangcwabeni,
Bathola imvuthuluka,
Nina senishaye esentwala,
Nibekelwa amatafula aphezulu,
Ahlotshisiwe,
Abashonelwe bona?
Bazosala bedlani?
Ingani benizoduduza bona?
Nisaduduza njalo?
Benizokwelekela abashonelwe,
Kepha seniwumthwalo.

Izinhliziyi ziba zimbi,
Uma senibona ukudla,
Nikhetha iphela emasini,
Abangakholwa seniyababona,
Kepha emangcwabeni besisonke,
Siniculisa amaculo enu,
Sibambisene kumnandi,
Kwafika ukudla,
Yonakala indaba,
Kwavuka ukucwasana.

Makholwa hlanganani!
Yakhani isizwe,
Nisakhe ngobuqiniso,
Yekelani ubuqhalaqhala,
Yekelani ubugovu,
Thandani abantu,
Izwi likaNkulunkulu liyahlanganisa,
Kepha nina niyahlukanisa,
Niyabandlulula,
Nihlebana nodwa,
Nigugumba nokudla,
Nithi basale bedlani abasemanzini?
Nizicabangela nodwa,
Osingabo nithi bazozibona.

Lafa izwe

Izingane seziyadlubulundela,
Zenza umathanda,
Zivula amasango ziphume,
Zibuye ngesikhathi sazo,
Esikoleni othisha bathwele kanzima,
Bezwa ngezingane,
Kazi zibe zazini?
Ngoba emakhaya zithe zizofunda,
Ingabe kuseyikho?
Kuhakanjiswa ilungelo lengane,
Phezu kwelomzali,
Ingane ikhulela umzali,
Umzali aphenduke ingane,
Cha ngiyakweshwama okunje!
Ngigeza izandla.

Nxa konakele,
Kubhekwa umzali,
Kumele enzeni umzali?
Ngoba unqunywe izandla,
Enganeni yakhe ayizalayo,
Kugqama umthetho kaHulumeni,
Cha liyafa izwe,
Muva nje,
Sesizalela uHulumeni,
Kazi akazizaleli ngani?
Ngoba ezethu lezi zingane,
Kulandwa imikhuba yakwamanye amazwe,
Izokwenziwa lapha,
Sithi siyalungisa,
Kanti siyabhidliza.

Isilonda seminyaka

Yeka kuseyizwe lethu,
Sasilima sitshala,
Sidla izithelo ezimnandi,
Imvelo ibuzwa kithi,
Sibambene siyimbumba,
Engekho osola omunye,
Uma konakele,
Sibuyisana sodwa,
Sithelelane amanzi.
Sikhumelane umlotha.

Yonakala indaba,
Kwafika isitha,
Umxabanisi uqobo lwakhe,
Wasixabanisa sanukana sodwa,
Saphenduka inkukhu nempaka,
Bafika bazinza,
Ezweni lethu,
Basiguqula ukucabanga,
Sacabanga isikubo,
Saphila isikubo,
Okwethu sakubona ubuze,
Sakubona kuyimfivilithi,
Saphakamisa usikompilo lwabo,
Sayeka ukutshala,
Kwatshala bona,
Ushintsho salubona luyimpucuzeko,
Kanti siyalahla,
Namhlanje sekubuhlungu,
Uba bethi yibo yibo ekutshaleni,
Thina kasazi lutho ngokutshala.

Ungafunga ukuthi izandla asinazo,
Kanti sinazo,
Izifo zibuzwa kithi,
Ngoba asisadli okwakithi,
Sidla okwezifikanamthwalo,
Imizimba yethu imangele,
Imangazwa yilokhu esikudlayo,
Sizenza esingeyikho,
Nesingakudalelwanga.

UMdali wayazi,
Mhla esidala,
Ukuba mnyama,
Akusho ubumnyama,
Yibala nje
Esaliphiwa uMdali,
Inggondo iphelele,
Ayimnyama,
Ngakho-ke masizithande,
Sizamukele ubuthina,
Singazenyenzi,
Zingabi othathekile,
Sibambisane kwesikwenzayo,
Sibe yisizwe esisodwa,
Isizwe esiyimbumba,
Siyeke ukumonelana.

Yeseka omunye,
Ze nawe akwesekele kusasa,
Kwazise izandla ziyagezana,
Umona awubuyiseli,
Awunambuyiselo nhlobo,
Asivuke sizithathe,
Sithuthukisane sodwa,
Njengezinye izizwe.

Uthando

Luyini uthando?
Luthando uma kwenziwani?
Lubonakala kanjani?
Uma kuthandwana,
Ubani onothando?
Owesilisa noma owesifazane?
Uma kungowesilisa, uthanda kanjani?
Uthanda ngomlomo?
Uthanda ngezenzo?
Yiziphi lezo zenzo?
Umshado?
Umshado uyisisombululo sothando?
Nomaumphumela wothando?

Uma kungowesifazane othandayo,
Uthanda kanjani?
Ngokubheka imali?
Imali iyalwakha uthando?
Uma kungowesilisa othandayo,
Kepha evulela isibhaxu,
Uthando lolo?
Owesifazane uthanda kanjani?
Uma engathembekile?
Ebhanqa amadoda?
Imali kayilwakhi uthando,
Kepha inguvuvuzela njengosawoti.

Othandweni kuyabanjiswana,
Kuyaboniswana,
Kuvulelwana izifuba,
Kuyahlonishwana,
Akekho ovelela yedwa,
Kuyalekelelwana,
Ihlazo lomunye liyafihlwa.

Ubani owathi bonke abantu
Kumele bashade?
Ngoba umshado uvela kuMdali,
Umshado uyisibusiso,
Esingehleli wonke umuntu,
Umshado awulona ithikithi lothando,

Emhlabeni akufananwa,
Kukhona abaphiwe umshado,
Kukhona abangawuphiwanga,
Kukhona abacebile,
Kukhona abahlwempu,
Uma bengaceba bonke,
Akekho oyohlonipha omunye,
Uma beshada bonke,
Akekho oyofunda komunye,
Uma befunde bonke,
Akekho oyolalela omunye.

Uthando aluwona umshado,
Uthando lunguNkulunkulu,
Ukuthandana kusho ukwesaba uNkulunkulu,
Umshado uyisabelo
Esivela kuNkulunkulu,
Ngakho masithandaneni,
Njengezimvu zakhe uMdali.

Impatho

Kuphele impatho,
Kwasala ukudlobongela,
Insizwa kayisazazi ubuyona,
Sekusele ubuhuzu,
Imizi iphethwe ngamanga,
Izingane ziyakhala,
Umama uyakhala,
Kungena yena ngesango
Kubaleke amakati nezinja,
Esefikile umthakathi wezindaba.

Umama uzivalela ekameleni,
Izingane ziyocasha,
Umlisa ndini
Ungena ngezicabha,
Efuna ukudla angakuthenganga,
Uqhakambisa ubunumzane,
Ubunumzane obungasekho,
Umama uphithana ikhanda,
Ezama icebo lokwenza ukudla,
Phezu kwalokho,
Ungiyabonga akaziwa,
Kukhala isibhaxu,
Lingekho icala,
Umuzi uphethwe ngomshiza.

We mlisa ndini!
Awukho umuzi wewisa,
Awukho owakhiwa ngomshiza,
Wakhiwa ngothando,
Wakhiwa ngokubambisana,
Wakhiwa ngeqiniso
Wakhiwa ngokubekezelelana,
Wakhiwa ngokukhumelana umlotha.

Ngikubhekile

Noma ungangibuka,
Ngeke ungenze lutho,
Amehlo akho axoxa indaba,
Indaba yakwaMnyama,
Awungifiseli okuhle,
Ungiholela ophathe,
Ngezinkulumo zakho ezimbi,
Ufuna ukungiketula,
Udliwa umona.

Ngihlale ngizibuza,
Ukuthi ziyephi izandla,
Ngoba unazo,
Pho kawenzi ngani?
Ngoba uphiwe ingqondo,
Uphiwe izandla,
Noma zinqanyuliwe?
Uthi zinqamuke kanjani?
Ngoba okubi uyakwenza,
Uhlulwa yini ukwenza okuhle?
Uyakwazi ukucabanga okubi,
Uhlulwa yini ukucabanga okuhle?

Inhliziyo yakho ibolile,
Uyofela kwasihogo,
Uyofa ushunqa.

Kwanyama kayipheli

Bathi kukwanyama kayipheli,
Kuphela amazinyo endoda,
Inyama ibiza kahle,
Inyama zinsada,
Akusikho ukudla,
Nxa yona ingekho.

Zishintshile izinto,
Kwakukudala lapho,
Inyama isachithiwe,
Namhlanje inyama iyabiza,
Isidliwa omntakabani,
Isidliwa yizimpunyela,
Abampofu bayigcina ngephunga.

EGoli kwamntanami wendelephi na!
Ezweni lobuqhoboka,
Ezweni lezintandane,
Ezweni loguluva,
Kwabugebengu kabupheli,
Kuphela impilo yomuntu,
Abukho ubuntu,
Umuntu udliwa ebhekile,
Athathelwe okungokwakhe,
Ngaphandle kwemvume.

Namantombazane awabhedile,
Avutha bhe,
Alutha abafana nxa zonke,
Nokungabafana othathekile,
Bathatheka kalula,
Umfana ushiya kubo,
Ayokondla kubo kwentombi,
Akhohlwe yikubo,
Aphenduke usibali-makoti,
Akhohlwe yizingane zakhe,
Adliwe asale enganalutho,
Ahloniphe aze ahloniphe nenja yakhona,
Kudliwe umuntu,
Kudliwe imali yomuntu.

Vuka sithothobala!
KuseGoli lapha,
Sebenza usebenzele ekhaya,
Ungazodlala amantombazane,
Awafuni ukusebenza,
Athanda izinto,
Athanda ubucwebe,
Athanda impilo ephezulu,
Kodwa ayavilapha,
Afuna okuza kalula,
Awafuni nokufunda,
Kodwa afuna abafundile,
Ungamthini umuntu onjalo?
Umuntu onjani lowo?

Uzalo

Kubhekenwe ngeziqu zamehlo,
Impi isesendeni,
Umama ulwa nobaba,
Izingane ziklwebhana zodwa,
Akwaziwa okubangwayo.

Okuhle kuyabaxabanisa,
Okubi kuyabahlanganisa,
Owehlelwe umshophi,
Uyaduduzwa,
Ovelelwe okuhle useyisitha,
Kuliwa naye,
Uma eshada,
Kuzanywa amaqhinga okubhidliza,
Ubaba umisa umshado,
Ethi ingane yakhe isencane,
Hhayi ngoba incane,
Kuvinjwa okuhle,
Ungafunga ukuthi ifuyiwe,
Ungafunga ukuthi iyathandwa,
Kanti izondelwa ukufa.

Omnewabo yibo izitha kuye,
Bafuna afane nabo,
Bafuna ahlupheke,
Impilo yakhe ime nse,
Aphenduke umquba ekhaya,
Aphenduke umhambuma,
Kuhle kohlanya lwendawo.

Abayesweli into yokuxabanisa,
Abazwanayo kabafuneki,
Bayaxatshaniswa,
Omunye atshelwe okubi ngomunye,
Baqanjelwe amanga,
Ze bezoxabana.

Ingene wena,
Uthi uyalamula,
Izosala nawe,
Bakubize ngexoki,
Bakujikele,
Bahlangane ngawe,
Ngoba bethakasela ingxabano,
Kabalufuni ubumbano,
Kabalufuni uzwano,
Kungamane kuphume isidumbu,
Kunokuba kuxolelwane,

Kuphilwa esivumelwaneni esidala,
Isivumelwano seso ngeso,
Kuyaloywana,
Kudliwa umuthi othi thi,
Kuyagqunywa,
Kuyaphalazwa,
Lutho impumelelo,
Kuphumelela yena lo ozondwayo,
Bona lutho,
Bayimiphuphe,
Kabayindawo ngempilo,
Bangomahlalela bokugcina,
Okhamisa ngithele.

Mcindezeli

Ngiwa ngivuka.
Ngizama impumelelo.
Ngenza konke okusemandleni,
Ukuthatha imiyalelo,
Ngenze njengoba ungiyalela,
Ngibuyise okulungisiwe
Wena ukushaye indiva,
Ungicindezele.
Ushintsha njalo,
Eziphakamisweni zakho,
Ngiphenduke isiphukuphuku
Awuvumi amaphutha akho,
Amaphutha okungilahlekisa
Njengomphathi wami
Kujika kube yimi,
Wena uhlale umsulwa,
Ngoba nakhu ufunde kakhulu,
Ongiyalela khona ngiyakwenza,
Angisazi ukuthi ufunani,
Noma ufuna ngifeyile?
Noma ufuna ngikukhothamele?
Ngididekile kuyimanje.

Ngiyakubona usukhohliwe
Ukuthi konke kuvela kuMdali,
Impumelelo yami,
Kayincikile kuwe,
Uthanda ungathandi,
Ngizophumelela,
Uzosala ukhexe umlomo,
Mcindezeli ndini!
Uzicindezela wena,
Ucabanga ukuthi ulaya mina,
Kanti uzilaya wena,
Mina uyangakha,
Uzomangala sengiphezulu,
Ungazi ukuthi ngedlule kanjani,
Impilo injalo,
Ithatha osemsamu,
Imbeke emnyango,
Osemnyango imbeke emsamu.

Futhi bakithi!

Imikhuba siyayibona.
Wake wakuzwaphi lokhu?
Umuntu akhishwe ngomunye?
Bekuyini ukulinda?
Akusehlukanwa,
Umuntu ukhishwa ngomunye,
Kuqanjwe amanga,
Kudlalwe ngengane yomuntu,
Bahlangane ngayo,
Bavumelane ngayo,
Kuhlekwe,
Kube mnandi,
Bethi ushaywa ngesitini,
Nesitini singcono,
Ngoba siyaphihlika,
Ushawa ngembokodo nje,
Inguzunga yetshe,
Elingaphihliki,
Elikushaya kuzwele,
Ubuhlungu obulapho,
Usulahlwa
Ulahlelwa omunye,
Sebekubona izici,
Izici ebezingabonwa,
Ngenkathi kusemnandi,
Kusakhohliswana.

Omunye ubephephisela omunye,
Kwethukwe ngisho netshe,
Uma seliqhuzula omunye,
Kanti ikhohlisana ihlomile,
Alubonwa uthando,
Kudlalwa umacashelana,
Inkohliso yodwa,
Uyisibambiso sakhe,
Ulinde umuntu ngawe,
Ubalekela umzwangedwa,
Mhla wafika lowo muntu,
Ulahlwa phansi,
Udinsike okomthwalo,
Ulahlwa yimbongolo,
Usale unkemile,
Uncela isithupha,
Nabaya beyoshona,
Bebambene,
Beyozithokozisa,

Wena usale uziduduza,
Ukhala ezimathonsi,
Izinyembezi ziyagobhoza,
Yize kuthiwa indoda kayikhali,
Besho bekhuluma insambatheka,
Indoda iyakhala,
Umuntu nayo,
Inemizwa nayo,
Ikhala ukwedlula owesifazane,
Ikhalela uthando,
Yiyo enothando phela,
Owesifazane uyathandwa,
Akathandi,
Uyaqonyiswa,
Aqome,
Unikezwa uthando,
Alwamukele,
Alunakekele.

Umdatshukelwa

Uyolokhu udatshukelwa,
Kuyoze kube yinini?
Kungani ungazenzi?
Njalo nje uyakhala,
Wenza sengathi nguwe wedwa,
Okwazi ukukhala,
Sonke siyakwazi ukukhala,
Sithule kodwa,
Ngoba impilo siyayiqonda,
Ukuthi iyajulukelwa.

Pho-ke wena siyakwazi,
Yonke into iliphupho kuwe,
Udlala ngabantwana babantu,
Ufafuna yonke into,
Awuzenzi ngani wena?
Ngoba izandla unazo.

Uliqola, uqola izinsizwa.
Uzibekela usizi lwakho,
Ngoba uyazi uzodatshukelwa,
Kazi awudeli yini?
Uyenga abafana,
Wenze sengathi uyabathanda,
Kanti phinde!
Uthanda lokhu abanakho.

Ubachutha besale bempampatha,
Lapho awusabonwa,
Usuyobhubhisa phambili,
Ukhohlwe ukuthi impilo ayilona iphupho,
Akuyona le edlalwa kumabonakude,
Impilo iyimpilo ngokuhlonishwa.

Impilo iphatha kahle,
Lowo oyihloniphayo,
Uma udlala ngabanye,
Nayo izodlala ngawe
Bese uyakhala,
Uthi unamashwa,
Kanti phinde!
Aphume nobomvu.

Izintaba zaseQwaQwa

Yinhle indawo,
Igabe ngemvelo,
Yinhle ngezintaba,
Izungezwe yizintaba zoKhahlamba.

Yayinhle indawo,
Ubhle bemvelo,
Hhayi obekwenziwa,
Macala wonke yizintaba,
Eziluhlaza cwe,
Uvuka ekuseni,
Ubona izintaba,
Akusibo ubuhle lobu,
UMdali uyadala,
Njengegama lakhe,
Ngathi wayezibumba
Kuhle komuntu.

Zinhle okwentokazi,
Intokazi emhlophe qwa,
Uphuma langa sikothe,
Indoni yamanzi,
Inzalabantu,
Isimomondiya,
Uma ubone yona,
Ulala uphuphe kamnandi,
Uphefumule umoya omnandi,
Oheleza ezintabeni,
Eziheha okwentombi,
Iheha izinsizwa,
Ngobuhle bayo,
Obungapheliyo.

Izintaba ezinesithunzi,
EzikuJamela sengathi unecala,
Zikubuka uzizwe wonile
Sengathi uMdali uqobo,
Ekujamele ngamehlokazi akhe,
Amehlo emvelo,
Amehlo olaka,
Amehlo ayizimbulungakazi,
O ngiyazisa ngalezi zintaba,
Ezihlobise kwelabeSuthu,
Kuheleza umoya waseLesotho
Kushintsha umoya manje,
Liyidlive esikhaleni,
Izintaba zigcwale iqhwa,
Iqhwa elimhlophe qwa.

KwaZulu

Kwelakithi KwaZulu.
Ezweni lokhokho,
Ezweni elinegama nesibongo,
KwelikaMthaniya,
KwelikaPhunga noMageba.

Phezulu emagqumeni,
Phezulu ezintabeni,
Kuheleza umoya opholile.
Kuheleza umoya wobuntu.
Kuheleza umoya wothando.
Kuheleza umoya wesintu.
Kuheleza umoya wokubambisana.

Kwelakithi KwaZulu,
Ondini olumahlikihliki,
Amahlikihliki abonwa yiSilo uCetshwayo
Ubona ngamahlikihliki ezihlahla
Amahlikihliki ezakhiwo
Amahlikihliki amaqhugwane
Izinxuluma zakithi.

Kwelakithi Ondini,
Kudliwa ngenkezo,
Isintu siyancelwa,
Ulimi luyancelwa,
Inhlonipho iyancelwa,
Konke kuyancelwa,
Kuncelwa kuwo belu,
Umbele ogwansile,
Umbele kaZulu.

UMbola Ongashi

Ngizwa inhlokomo.
Ngizwa impophoma.
Ngizwa amanzi ehaza.
Ehaza ubusuku nemini.
Ngisho likhipha umkhovu etsheni,
Iyaqhubeka njalo le mpophoma,
Ihaze kuhle kwemvunge,
Kwehluleka ondlebezikhany'ilanga
Lapho bethi bazodonsa wona la manzi,
Lutho ukuphela nanamuhla lokhu,
Kwaphela umdlandla wabo
Umdlandla wokuzokweba okwakithi.

Le mpophoma ikubiza ukude,
Ithi woza kimi
Ikudonsa ngomoya omtoti
Umoya ototisa umzimba uphole,
Kuphele isifuthefuthe,
Kuphele umjuluko.

Izinsizwa nezintombi zihlanganela lapha,
Indaba iqala lapha, iphelele lapha.
Izinsizwa zigadla maqede,
Zihlambe khona lapha.
Izimayi nazo yiso lesu
Nazo ziphuza khona lapha,
Ziphuza maqede zetshise,
Zidansaze izisu kube njeyaya.

Umfula ongashi
Impophoma yangempela
Umondli wesizwe.

Emadwaleni

Yeka ngiseyiklume.
Ngisalingana nomvemve.
Ngingazi noma liyaphuma noma liyashona.
Kepha impilo isho ukungiqeda.
Isho ukungijjuqa,
Ngingazi engikonile emhlabeni.

La madwala ayefana nesiguqo kimi.
Lapho enganguqa khona,
Ngikhulume noMhlengi wami,
Ngangiya kuwo nginethemba
Ithemba lezimpendolo,
Ithemba losizo,
Ithemba lenjabulo.

Kuwo belu la madwala,
Amadwala akwaVezunyawo,
Emihosheni yezinkomo,
Lapho izwi lomemezayo,
Ngangilizwa ekujuleni komhlaba,
Ilanga lingihlabane kwenanele inhliziyo,
Eshayela phezulu.
Isithunzi sesihlahla
Kwakungathi yisithunzi somuntu.

Ngangidliwa okwakungidla,
Kuphela ngingakwazi,
Ngangidliwa yindlala,
Ngangidliwa yimicabango,
Imicabango yenhlupheko yakwaMhlaba,
Kuwo belu lawo madwala,
Izinyembezi zazigobhoza kuhle kwempophoma,
Kungekho ngisho nesikhongozelo,
Engangingakhongozela ngaso.

Ngangima kuwo la madwala,
Ngikhuleke kuSomandla,
Ngicele inyathuko,
Ngicele iziyalo,
Ngicele intethelelo,
Ngicele usizo,
Ngangidazuluka kwenanele inhlokomo,
Kube sengathi wona la madwala ayangizwa
Kanti phinde!
Ngangibona izimayi ziphekuzisa izindlebekazi zazo,
Kube sengathi ziyangizwa nazo,
Ngibuye ngizwe imayi ebhongayo,
Kube sengathi yizwi lomemezayo engiphendula,

Kanti yimi ngisemhlabeni wami,
Umhlaba wenhlupheko,
Umhlaba wosizi,
Umhlaba ononya nenjabhiso.

Imbewu

Nansi imbewu yesizwe.
Nansi imbewu yekhaya.
Insika yekhaya.
Idinga isandla esifudumele,
Idinga ukunakekelwa,
Idinga uthando,
Idinga isineke,
Idinga ukukhuliswa kahle.

Naso isihlava ezweni,
Nansi imfundisoze isabalele,
Qaphela mhlwanyeli!
Uhlwanyele emhlabathini ovundile,
Ungahlwanyeli edwaleni,
Ungahlwanyeli emeveni.

Nazi izinyoni zezulu zisabalele,
Zifuna le mbewu
Mama nawe baba,
Gcinani nansi imbewu!
Gcinani igugu lesizwe!
Niliphathe kuhle kwezikhali zamaNtungwa,
Siyeza isomiso,
Iyeza indlala.

Ngiyazisa ngesomiso esizayo,
Isomiso sokuphela kothando,
Isomiso sobuntu,
Isomiso samadoda aqotho,
Ngenxa yokwentula inkuliso eqotho,
Ukwentula ukunakekelwa,
Ukwentula imfundiso,
Ukwentula ikhaya elifudumele.

Imbewu enhle,
Wonke umnumzane uyayifuna,
Wonke umzali uyayifuna,
Imbewu ezokwandisa izithelo,
Imbewu ezohlwanyeleka emhlabathini ovundile,
Ikhule kahle,
Ingaminyaniswa amaloyi.

Imbewu ethela izithelo,
Yileyo enakekelwayo,
Yileyo ehlakulelwayo,
Yileyo eniselwayo,
Echelelwa amanzi,
Ze ingomi,

Yileyo ezimpande zayo
Zidephile,
Zidephele ukumunca amanzi emhlabathini.
Imbewu enhle,
Imbewu yezithelo,
Imbewu yesivuno.

Kulukhuni

Uyadela owaziyo,
Ukuthi konakalaphi?
Uthi uyakha kubhidlike,
Impela kunzima.
Le nto yehlula amaxhegu,
Agcina ngokuzinikela ophuzweni,
Ngisho nesithembu sahluleka,
Baqinisile abathi 'ubudoda kabukhulelwa',
Usathola insizwa encane iganiwe,
Uthole ixhegu lizulazula,
Engekho umlingani,
Uma ekhona, sekuyimihabulo yebandla,
Uzwe abanye bethi kulukhuni ukuba yindoda,
Besho beqinisile,
Akuyona iminyaka ukuba yindoda,
Akusikho ukuganwa kuphela,
Kepha kuyindlela yokuziphatha,
Ukuba ngoqotho,
Ukuziphatha ngesinono,
Ukukhuluma ngesizotha,
Ukuhlonipha abanye abantu,
Ze nawe uzohlonishwa,
Konke lokho kuwubudoda.

Kulukhuni ukuba yindoda,
Ngoba kudinga ubuqotho,
Kulukhuni ukuba yindoda,
Ngoba kubiza izinkinga,
Izinkinga ezingapheli,
Eziphela ebandleni,
Ingani injobo ithungelwa ebandla,
Okwehlula amadoda kuyabikwa.

Ngifisa ukwazi

Ngiyafisa ukwazi,
Ukuthi ngiwazela kuphi,
Amacala enu?
Njengoba nami nginawami nje,
Eyezinhlanhla yona kangiyazi,
Ukuthi ngizozithatha kuphi,
Ngoba nami ngiyazidinga.

Abantu behluleka ukuzehlisa,
Bavume amaphutha abo,
Balungise lapho bone khona,
Baqoma ukulanda mina,
Ngimangale ukuthi mina,
Ngizobasiza ngani.

Ngingcono mina,
Ngiyawavuma amaphutha ami,
Ngiyavuthuzwa ngenduku,
Liphele icala,
Wena uhlale uphika,
Awuvumi lutho,
Isisombululo sakho yimi,
Kube kungeyimi,
Isisombululo sakho nguwe,
Zifune uzithole, uzilungise,
Lapho wone khona.

Ngilandwa ngiseqeleni,
Ngizidlela uhlaza,
Nginombela emithini,
Ngidla amaqabuka,
Kumnandi kudelile,
Kanti bangihlelele umcimbi,
Ngibulawelwa ukuyoshwelezela bona,
Ngiyoshweleza amacala abo
Amacala engingawazi.

Inkosi impela ngiyafisa ukwazi,
Ukuthi ngonani mina,
Njalo nje ngihlale ngiyinhlawulo yenu,
Anizihlawuleli ngani nina amacala enu?
Ngoba niyawazi,
Mina kangiwazi nhlobo.

Iqola

Iqola,
Inyon' emabala amhlophe namnyama,
Inyoni engugombela,
Inyoni edla ezinye,
Ethi ingabona enye,
Iyibulale, qede iyidle,
Ayifuni ukubona enye,
Ifuna kuphumelele yona,
Ezinye cha.

Kazi umona owani?
Olwani unya olungaka?
Wena ufuna ukuphumelela wedwa?
Abanye bengaphumeleli?
Ungumuntu onjani wena?
Udla abanye abantu,
Ubonakala ngemibala emibili,
Ukuthi awuqondakali,
Akekho okuqondayo,
Uzazi wena kuphela,
Udla amandla abanye,
Bayazizamela,
Wena uyabephuca,
Ubona kufanele wena,
Cha awudeli!
Qola lansondo!

Uyadela Dade!

Cha uyadela bo!
Thina siwa sivuka,
Wena ulala uvuka,
Ufuna siphe wena,
Konke esikuzuzayo?
Cha ngeke!
Lingawa licoshwe zinkukhu.

Impela baqinisile,
Abathi isambane,
Simba umgodi singawulali,
Siwa sivuka,
Siyozizamela impilo,
Wena ulele,
Ukhohliwe ukuthi:
Ayikho inkomo yobuthongo,
Ikusasa liyafukuzelwa,
Akekho ofukuzela omunye,
Esinakho kungamandla ethu.

Nawe unezandla,
Vuka uzithathe,
UMdali usiphile sonke,
Inggondo nezandla,
Amakhono nesikhathi,
Isikhathi sokwenza konke,
Konke esikucabangayo,
Pho wena ulindeni?
Ulinde amathonsi abanzi?
Awazi ukuthi izinsuku
Zingomathanda ukwenzelwa?

Mfundisi

Mfundisi weNkosi,
Musa ukwedukisa isizwe,
UMdali akasiye umlungu,
UMdali akabonwa,
Akayona inyama.

Ukushumayela ngesiNgisi,
Akusho lutho,
Ushumayeza abamnyama,
Kepha ngesiNgisi,
Uqondeni ngalokho?
Ushumayela bashaye ihlombe,
Ucabanga ukuthi bayakuzwa,
Kanti ukhuluma wedwa,
Bakwenza isiphukuphuku,
Bakwenza isithuphethu,
Ingani uyilulwane,
Unguthathekile,
Shumayela ngolimi lwakho,
Bazokuzwa.

Ulimi lwakho,
Luhamba nemizwa yakho,
Okusho ngolimi lwakho,
Kusheshe kuzwakale,
Ngoba kusuka enhliziyweni,
Okusho ngesiNgisi,
Kuyathathela,
Ngoba akusuki enhliziyweni,
Kusuka ekuzaziseni,
Nasekuziphakamiseni.

Waguga mhlaba

Waguga sifika,
Siyothi sabonani?
Uma singakubonanga,
Sikuzwa ngendaba konke,
Akukho esikwaziyo,
Konke kuwumlando,
Pho ugugelani mhlaba?

Nathi sisafisa ukukubona,
Pho sokubona kanjani?
Uma usuguge unje?
Abakwazi usemusha,
Baxoxa abaqedi,
Ngobumnandi owawuyibo,
Thina sixoxa ngobubi bodwa,
Ubugebengu insakavukela umchilo wesidwaba,
Ukucwasana kudlangile,
Ingabe kuseyikho?
Izilwane zilwa zodwa,
Iziboshwa zilwa zodwa,
Abampofu balwa bodwa,
Abacebile bahlakaniphela abampofu.

Abadala bathi umhlaba uyagoqwa,
Bathi kwakumnandi kudala,
Ihlazo lomunye lalifihlwa,
Kwakunakekelwana,
Kwakungekho ukuklwebhana,
Kuhle kwamakati nezingcanga,
Uthando lwaluyingqayizivele,
Hhayi lolu lwanamhlanje,
Umjolo usubizwa ngothando,
Uma omunye ethi uthanda omunye,
Kucatshangwa ukulalana.

Zahamba izinsuku,
Umhlaba uyagoqwa,
Umhlaba uyakhathala,
Ubuyela lapho uvela khona,
Ukhathele yithi,
Kazi sizoba yini?
Ngaphandle kwakho Mhlaba?
Kungenzeka nathi siyagoqwa?
Mhlawumbe sekunjalo,
Nakhu kungcwatshwa nsuku zonke,
Ukufa kudlangile,
Kudla ifumuka, kudle isitshodo.

Sgelekeqe

Ungena ngomfanti,
Ungena kuvaliwe,
Ngoba uhlose ukweba,
Awuchithi sikhathi,
Ubheka intuba ungene,
Angisayiphathi eyabashiya
Bevule iminyango ezindlini,
Awubuzi lutho.
Uvele usho phakathi,
Ufike utape konke.
Ushiye ongakudingi,
Bayothi befika abanikazi,
Bathole kukhala ibhungane,
Usushaye wachitha nezimpahla zabo.

Lapho isililo,
Ubumaye maye!
Bekhalela okwabo okungasekho,
Obekuyigugu labo,
Igugu lokuqala lokugcina.

Lapho kudlule wena khona,
Kuyabonakala,
Obathole endlini basala bemidwa midwa,
Kwazise awubancengi,
Uthatha ngendluzula,
Uzisikela kwelinonile,
Ushiye izinsalela,
Onqwahayo, uyamlwisa,
Ovumayo awumthinti,
Lapho sewenelisekile,
Uyedlula,
Uyobhubhisa phambili,
Nakhona yiso lesa,
Ulwa nokulwisayo,
Unethezeke kokuthambelayo.

Ukuba Ngiyazi

Anginayo impendulo,
Okwenzekile,
Sekufana nokudaliwe,
Sengifana nesivakashi,
Kweyami impilo,
Konke okwenzakalayo,
Kuyangethusa,
Kuyangidida,
Kuyangicanuka,
Ngiba sathe ngiyaninga,
Lutho impendulo,
Izinto zimane ukwenzeka,
Kwala noma sengizibalekela,
Kepha ziyangilandela,
Sengize ngamukela,
Njengoba kudaliwe,
Angeke ngiphikisane nendalo,
Kuphela ngizitshela into eyodwa,
Ukuthi okwakwaMhlaba,
OkwakwaMhlaba.

Ngonile

Ngonile ngiyazi,
Ngicela uxolo,
Ngicela intethelelo,
Thambisa inhliziyo,
Wamukele uxolo lwami,
Ze kube nokuthula,
Ayikho impilo yenzondo,
Inzondo iwukufa,
Xola uxolile,
Impilo yiyo leyo,
Uma uxolela,
Nawe uzoxolelwa ngomuso,
Kepha uma kungenjalo,
Nawe usele nokona kwakho.

Siphephelo Sami

Ngiyowa lapho owa khona,
Themba lami,
Wangethembisa,
Ukungithanda,
Ukungihlenga,
Ungiphephise kokubi,
Ungeseke kwezakwaMhlaba,
Ungeseke kwezakwaZulu,
Ze sibonane futhi,
Kulo elizayo,
Sisaphilelana.

Angifisi ukweduka,
Kweyakho inyathuko,
Inyathuko eya kwaZulu,
Lapho kuculwa khona amahosana,
Kudliwa amagilebhisi,
Kuphuzwa ubisi,
Kudliwa noju lwezinyosi,
Lapho sesihlangene,
Sesithi 'Halala'
Hosana kweliphezulu!
Kungasekho ukukhala,
Ubuhlungu bakwaMhlaba,
Buyobe bungasekho,
Abalilayo bayobe sebesulwa izinyembezi.

Abanqobayo kwaMhlaba,
Bona bayokwethweswa imiqhele,
Abanqotshwayo bayokwahlulelwa,
Behlulelwa liqiniso Lakho,
Iqiniso laphakade,
Iqiniso elisindisayo.

Yize kulukhuni kwabanye,
Ukulivuma nokulithatha,
Ukulamukela ngezandla zombili,
Bakhona nabachomayo,
Ngezinto abanazo zakwaMhlaba,
Abanye bachoma ngobuhle babo,
Bakhohlwe ukuthi ubuhle obuphelayo,
Ubuhle besikhashana,
Bunye ubuhle obungapheli,
Ubuhle bokwazana Naye,
Ophezu kwakho konke.

Impisi

Impisi egqoke isikhumba semvu,
Umzenzisi,
Iphixiphixi,
Udlala ngabanye abantu,
Uzenza ozwelana nabo,
Kanti ubahleka usulu,
Bakubikela usizi lwabo,
Wena usizakala ngabo.

Umuntu onjani,
Odicilela abanye phansi?
Ulala kanjani ebusuku?
Uma omunye enenkinga,
Uphupha kamnandi?
Kuyehla ukudla?
Umxoshisa kanjani,
Omunye emsebenzini?
Wena uqhubeke usebenze?
Ezakho izingane ziyadla,
Ezomunye zibulawa yinkemane,
Kusuke ingxabano emndenini,
Ngenxa yezidingo ezingasafezeki,
Wena uhambela phezulu,
Uhlonishwa yonke indawo,
Ngoba abantu abakwazi,
Uzifihle ngobuntu obungekho.

Ziyokwembuleka izinge ngelinye ilanga,
Kuyophela ukuhlakanipha,
Kusale ubuwula,
Bayokuzwela abanozwelo lokudlala,
UZenzile akakhalelwa,
Kukhalelwa uZumekile.

Ubulwane

Umdala ungaka!
Ungumzali onjani?
Uletha siphisibonelo?
Usubona intombi enganeni?
Baphi ontanga yakho?
Ukhule wedwa?
Usaba ontanga,
Uqinela izingane,
Sikhohlakali sendoda!
Futhi awusiyo indoda,
Awusiye umfana,
Uyisilwane nje.

Isilwane phela asikhethi,
Sithatha kwasani,
Kuhle kweqhude,
Phakathi kwezikhukhukazi,
Liyazenzela nje,
Liyazikhethela,
Noma yinini,
Kwazise yilo lodwa phakathi
Kwezikhukhukazi,
Alibangiswa muntu.

Pho wena uyigilelani imikhuba?
Udlala ngekusasa lezingane,
Akuzona izinkukhu lezi,
Abantu bafana nawe,
Hlonipha izimbali wezwe,
Ube yindoda,
Uyeke ubulwane,
Yenza into ozoziqhenya ngayo,
Nozoyithanda yenziwe enganeni yakho,
Hhayi la manyala owenzayo.

Mthakathi Ndini!

Uthi welapha abantu,
Kanti ukhuluma ilumbo,
Kawelaphi muntu,
Kuphela ungumthakathi nje,
Wake wezwaphi ngale nto oyenzayo?
Welapha ngezicubu zomuntu?
Yimikhuba le oyenzayo,
Singabantu sakhile,
Siyakuqala lokhu,
Futhi kuvela ngawe,
Selokhu ngavela,
Umuntu welashwa ngezihlahla,
Imithi yemvelo,
Esayiphiwa uMdali,
Umuntu akayona imvelo,
Umuntu udalelwe ukuphila,
Abuse phezu komhlaba,
Hhayi ukubulawa,
Kwenziwe ngaye imigilingwane,
Yekela ukusebenzisa ubunyanga,
Ngoba ufuna ukufeza ukungcola,
Ungumthakathi nje wena,
Uyinyanga-mbumbulu,
Alikho iqiniso kuwe,
Ungumbulali,
Sigebengu sansondo!

Gawula ubheke!

Hamba uzicwecwe,
Kusemhlabeni lapha,
Kalufakwa,
Lubuya nokufa.

Izifo ziphume inqina,
Zifuna abaluvanzi,
Abangenasinge,
Abangabambeki.

Gijima ubuye nganeno,
Iya empini uhlo mile,
Ungangeni ngobuso,
Vula amehlo!
Ungacwayizi nakancane,
Wacwayiza uzosisola,
Usuwedwa egunjini laphakade,
Igumbi elingathandwa muntu,
Igumbi elimnyama,
Akukhanyiswa kuleli gumbi,
Kuhlalwa ngobumnyama,
Kuhlale kulelwe,
Lamukela uwonke wonke.

Hlala ngentombi!
Hlala ngensizwa!
Thatha iziyalo,

Kwazise indlela ibuzwa kwabaphambili.

Imbuyiselo

Imbuyiselo kayisizi,
Kuphela iyabulala,
Igadla kuwe menzi wayo,
Okwenze okubi,
Menze okuhle,
Indaba izosala naye,
Wena uqedile,
Uyidlalile eyakho indima.

Umenzi wokubi,
Ungumuntu ufana nawe,
Singabantu siyefana,
Ukujabula kuyashintshana,
Namhlanje yimi,
Kusasa nguwe,
Nokona kunjalo,
Namhlanje yimi,
Kusasa nguwe,
Uma wahlulela,
Nawe uzokwahlulelwa,
Xola ze uzoxolelwa,
Ungavumeli umoya omubi,
Umoya wenzondo,
Umoya wamagqubu,
Yenza kahle komunye,
Nawe uzokwenzelwa okuhle.

Isehlukaniso

Kwehlukana' amawele,
Kwehlukana okungahlukaniseki,
Ngempela okwani ukwehlukana?
Uma kusala kunje?

Kwehlukana inhloko nesixhanti,
Kusala ubuhlungu,
Kushabalale amathemba,
Kugqame ukuzisola,
Kuvele amahlazo obala,
Kuvame inkombankombane,
Umdlalo wamabhungu namatshitshi.

Izingane zisale dengwane,
Zisale zingenamelusi,
Zidideke okokugcina,
Kuhanjwa izinkantolo,
Kuphele izimali,
Lutho isiphetho.

Kubhekwana ngeziqo zamehlo,
Kuhlalwe ngokwehlukana,
Omunye ule...
Nomunye ule...
Izingane zididekile,
Zifunzwa inzondo,
Uthando luphelile,
Bakhohlwe yizifungo,
Zona ezingacimeki,
Ingani zenziwe kuMdali.

Iqiniso livela obala,
Mhla kuwa omunye,
Uthathwa asiwe kwakhe,
Kulowo ayesinelene naye,
Ngoba umendo awupheli,
Uphela emaphepheni kuphela,
Kuphela uthando,
Ngoba olwabantu.

Isihlava

Kuphele uthando,
Kwaphela ubuntu,
Abadala baphenduke izingane,
Badlala umacashelana,
Amanga adla lubi,
Iqiniso yisitha.

Ubuqola buhamba phambili,
Indoda iyakhohliswa,
Intombi iqoma namhlanje,
Iqome kusasa,
Iqoma ize iquleke,
Ukuqoma sekuyinsakavukela
Umchilo wesidwaba,
Akuqonyelwa uthando,
Kuqonyelwa imali,
Kuqonyelwa izinkanuko.

Amantombazanyana amancane,
Athathe lowo mkhuba,
Awenza isikompilo,
Ongajoli yisilima,
Ojolayo uvulekile,
Ungubaqwe,
Unembeza kawukho,
Kwande inkohliso namanga.

Kuvikwa ngegama lothando,
Kubanjwane kube njeyaya,
Indoda isondezwa eduze,
Ibekwe enjinini,
Injini eshisa bhe,
Indoda ilutheke,
Ijabule ikhohlwe,
Kanti bathi lala lulaza,
Ngizokwengula,
Lapho ivula amehlo,
Selidume ledlula,
Bekuhanjiswa isikhathi nje,
Bekuzodliwa yona indoda,
Uthando yiphupho,
Yinto engekho.

Saze savelelwa!
Kulukhuni ukuba yindoda,
Abesimane yibo amadoda namhlanje,
Bayeshela,
Amadoda aseyaqoma,
Indoda iphenduke isithothobala,
Kanti isifunziwe,
Idansela isiginci sentokazi,
Intokazi ichanase,
Ifake amadoda,
Kungabi ndaba zalutho,
Emini libalele,
Indoda ibhekile,
Pho izothini?
Ingani isifunziwe,
Nayo yakhamisa,
Yadla kuhle kosana,
Lufunzwa inesitamu.

Kugug' othandayo

Kuphuza ubaba,
Kuphuze ingane,
Kubhema ubaba,
Kubheme ingane,
Ingane icela isikefu
Ubaba ayinikeze
Kuhlangene obhululu,
Umzali usewafa,
Ingane seyafa,
Kwasala abangani.

Ingane iyajola,
Ubaba uyajola,
Ingane ifika nentombi,
Ubaba ubona intombi,
Uyashela,
Intombi nayo ibone isoka kubaba,
Ingabe isapholisa maseko,
Ivumele phezulu,
Ivele iqome,
Kusuke impi ekhaya,
Kumfana noyise,
Sekubangwa le ntombi,
Ubaba uncamela ukungezwani nendodana,
Ngenxa yentombi ebangwayo.

Ikhehla linyonyobela izingane,
Libangisane nabafanyana
Alikwazi nakweshela
Leshela ngemali,
Alinandaba nokuqolwa,
Alinandaba nokudliwa,
Inqobo liyadla nalo,
Alizibekile phansi,
Liyadla liyakhafula,
Liyadla liyathimisa,
Liyaluma liyamfifitha,
Maqede liphimise,
Alinandaba nomonakalo,
Likhohliwe ukuthi lizele,
Lizele intombazane,
Nayo abazoyenzakalisa
Sekunguye eyikhalela
Esebona amadlozi afuna inyama
Kanti yimisebenzi yakhe,
Okwenza ngenhla
Kwehlela ngezansi,
Impilo injalo.

Ziyabushosha

Zithi zisancela ubisi,
Ubone sezincela amankwebevu,
Amankwebevu aphenduke incence,
Ezinganeni ezincane,
Azibuphuzi ziyabushosha,
Zibuvukela ekuseni,
Lize liyozilahla.

Zibuphuzela ukubukwa,
Ungafunga ukuthi zenzela umuntu,
Ongaphuzi yimpatha,
Kualwa izikole,
Kualwe amanzi,
Zidla amponjwana.

Lapho azedeleli,
Ziyabukisa,
Abantu abaziwa,
Bayahlokolozwa nje
Bakhonjwa ngeminwe,
Bephucwe ukudla ngenkani,
Bashaywe kubenjeyaya,
Abazali yizinkukhu zinqunywe imilomo,
Bafela ngaphakathi,
Besabela impilo yabo.

Kuphelile

Sekusele ubuwula,
Ubuntu abusekho,
Buhambe nosiyazi,
Abafana nawe
Uvune okutshalile.

Wawuthi kuyoba njani?
Udlala ngabantu,
Udlala ngemindeni,
Udlala ngekusasa,
Udlala ngegeja kuziliwe.

Waweqa uthango,
Weqela abafana,
Weqela izinkathazo,
Weqela izifo,
Weqela omwa....mwa...
Weqela umkhaba,
Umkhaba wezinyanga
Baqeda bakulaxaza,
Wasala wedwa,
Udliwa yiminjunju.

Namhlanje uyatetema,
Usungumdatshukelwa,
Usele nama-*choice assorted*,
Usele nenkambabeyibuza
Isilonda saphakade,
Impilo ayikho,
Isiyenanwa
Kuhle kwesalukazi
Uyibhola lezifo,
Usuyinto nje,
Uphungelwa izimpukane.

Concluding remarks

We have come to the end of the poetry portfolio/creative component. The creative component was aimed at warning and alerting society about critical social matters and protest, hence the title of the collection '*Iziyalo*' (to raise awareness and rebuke). The next part of this body of work is part two, which is the mini-dissertation.

PART TWO

2. MINI-DISSERTATION

REIMAGINING THE POETRY OF B.W. VILAKAZI AS THE SOCIAL TOOL FOR 'UKUXWAYISA' (DETERRENT) AND PROTEST.

The dissertation examined the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi as the social tool for 'ukuxwayisa' (deterrent) and protest. The study analysed the selected poems from the two anthologies of B.W. Vilakazi, namely *Inkondlo kaZulu* (1935) and *Amal'ezulu* (1945). The poems analysed incorporated several themes, among those themes were protest poetry, culture, tradition, Western influence and Romantic poets' influence on Vilakazi's poetry.

Chapter 1

Introduction and Background

This chapter presents the introduction to the study, significance of the study, the existing research and the theoretical tools employed in the study. The mini-dissertation is entitled “Reimagining the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi as the social tool for ‘*ukuxwayisa*’ and protest”. The use of the term ‘reimagine’ suggests rethinking, a new era, or change. On the 12th of February 2021, during the official annual opening of the University of South Africa, the newly appointed Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Prof. LenkaBula, delivered a speech in the context of abnormal conditions of running an institution under the COVID-19 conditions. She coined her talk ‘Rethinking higher education’. In this talk, she proposes that “The abnormal normal allows us the opportunity to rethink higher education in our world. It ushers in an opportunity, a new dawn, a new era in terms of how various institutions, including higher education institutions, should be run” (<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Research-&Innovation/News-&events/Articles/Rethinking-higher-education>, retrieved, 3/3/2021).

Drawing from Prof. LenkaBula’s speech, it can be stated that the two terms, ‘reimagine’ and ‘rethinking’, are related. They both emphasise change and transformation in the present situation or condition. In the context of poetry, it is very much relevant and correct to use the term ‘reimagine’ instead of ‘rethinking’ because poetry is an imagined literary genre. Poets imagine things; they do not just write, but instead, they start by having images in their minds. For instance, a poet writes about what he sees and not what society necessarily sees nor notices. O’Siadhail (1991:4) submits that “it is poetry which can offer us images which can release us into the future”.

Moreover, while in the context of reimagining the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi, this suggests that rethinking his poetry and applying it to the present society is important to transform and change the conditions of society. If we need change in society that is affected by many social ills such as poverty, crime, lack of Ubuntu, slavery and abuse, the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi becomes relevant poetry to be brought into the space for literary discussions because it is pertinent to the present time and society even though it was

written in 1934 and 1945, respectively. The themes covered in his poetry are still relevant today. For instance, the theme of slavery of black people in the mines still exists even today in the mines.

Moreover, Soyinka (1988:64) states that there is a relationship between literary work and society. Any literary work is the product of society. Therefore, when society receives and reads the literary work, its members should reflect on their societal issues, which may include their standard of living, politics, poverty and many more. In the South African context, such literary work should speak to our present issues, which involve political instability, corruption, rape, child and women abuse, education, higher-education funding crises, poverty, unemployment, political killings, crime, and many others (Soyinka, 1988:64).

1. Aim and Rationale

This study's main aim is to analyse the poetry of Benedict Wallet Vilakazi with a focus on what was happening in the country at the time of his writing and how his poetry remains relevant in our contemporary times. The main argument of this study is that his poetry reveals a man who lived in two worlds: that is; the world of African tradition and that of Western influence.

This study will analyse selected poems from the two anthologies of B.W. Vilakazi, namely *Inkondlo kaZulu* (1935) and *Amal'ezulu* (1945). It is worth noting that these two anthologies, particularly the first one (*Inkondlo kaZulu*), were written during the colonial era in South Africa. During this era, most of the literary works by black African writers were about defining the African middle class, giving some social history, and progression and to show the Europeans that the African middle class should be trusted and not despised (Ntshangase, 1995:4).

This study will also look at the life and times of B.W. Vilakazi as the colonial era's poet and show, through his poetry, how he was constantly caught between two worlds that emphasised class identity and urban-rural identity.

My line of reasoning is that the purpose of poetry is for the poet to address certain social issues and thereby give voice to concerns, opinions or appreciation of those issues in the form of poetry.

What motivated me to conduct this study was the fact that I have always been inspired by B.W. Vilakazi's poetry. First, his poetry does not die, change, or fade with time; instead, it is unique and always remains fresh and relevant. Zondi (2020) has done

extensive research into Vilakazi's works and examined the issues he addressed in his poetry. She argues that "the issues Vilakazi addressed in the first half of the 20th century remain relevant to social issues today" (Zondi 2020: 4). The poetry of Vilakazi touches on pertinent issues of culture and traditions which are deemed unfashionable by many educated black people of today. In one of Vilakazi's poem entitled '*Wo! Leli khehla*' ('O! This elderly man'), Vilakazi is portraying a picture of an old Zulu man who has abandoned his Zulu culture and traditions. Vilakazi is criticising this old man for abandoning his culture and traditions.

2. Problems and issues to be investigated; questions to be asked

Studies conducted in the field of language planning and policy reveal that the stigma associated with the use of African languages in both basic- and higher-education institutions still exists. Gxilishe (2009) argues that there are few books published in African languages and that there is no market for them. In my view, literature written in English is the only literature regarded as 'African literature' in South Africa or in the world. Moreover, literature written in African languages is not recognised; hence, when most aspiring black writers think of writing a piece of creative literary text, they think of writing in English rather than in their own African indigenous languages. Furthermore, the stigma associated with African languages and writers of African languages makes it hard for even the best writers, such as B.W. Vilakazi, to be recognised as 'classic'. Ndimande (2004:68) aptly captures this notion when she says, "the hegemony of English continues to perpetuate the low utilization of African languages".

The study will focus on addressing the following main research objectives:

- The role and relevance of B.W. Vilakazi's poetry during both his time and the present time.
- The relationship between the poet as a member of society and his works.
- The life and times of B.W. Vilakazi and his poetry.

Therefore, the assertions by Ngwenya and Zondi that the works of B.W. Vilakazi need to be recognised as 'classic' will be explored. Furthermore, the views they hold concerning the criteria used in English literature, which they argue should apply to Vilakazi's works, will also be examined.

3. Outline of chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

This chapter presents the introduction to the study, significance of the study, the existing research and the theoretical tools employed in the study.

Chapter 2: The life and times of B.W. Vilakazi and his poetry

This chapter will analyse poems that speak to the issues of class identity and urban-rural identity. I will analyse the works of B.W. Vilakazi collectively, in comparison to his life and argue that his works reveal a man obsessed with a search for identity. I will select six poems from both collections (*Inkondlo kaZulu* and *Amal'ezulu*) and analyse them to establish the relationship between his life and poetry. I will argue that our understanding of B.W. Vilakazi, the person, tells us so much about the African middle class of his time.

Chapter 3: The relationship between the poet as a member of society, and his poetry

This chapter will analyse poems in which B.W. Vilakazi protests about the social ills suffered by the masses of poor people. In one of his great poems entitled '*Ezinkomponi*' ('On the mine compounds'), he speaks about industrialisation and how it turned black people into slaves. This poem is a clear indication that B.W. Vilakazi was a man who was concerned with the living conditions of people in society, especially the voiceless black people in the mines.

Chapter 4: Short Conclusion

This chapter will provide a short conclusion of the study. The summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations will be presented in this chapter. The study will provide conclusions about the role and relevance of B.W. Vilakazi's poetry during both his time and the present time. It will establish whether the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi is still relevant to the present society or not. Moreover, it will conclude that the works of B.W. Vilakazi need to be recognised as 'classic'.

4. The conceptual and theoretical framework to be used

Introduction

This section aims to present the theoretical approach that will be used in this study, which analyses the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi. The theory I have selected is Gramsci's theory of cultural construction. This theory will be used to demonstrate how poetry and society are interrelated and how it transforms society.

Gramsci's Theory of Cultural Construction

Gramsci is one of the scholars who supported the Marxist view that everyone in society is a philosopher and that one has the capacity to think and engage in several activities in society (Gramsci 1971).

However, it is important to note that there are social classes in society. There is also a struggle between these social classes. There is no mutual agreement as to how a society should be constructed. The upper classes want to push their own culture and ideology, while the lower classes are compelled to accept the identity of the upper classes. The theory is suitable in the study of Vilakazi's poetry, which addresses social ills such as class structure.

Furthermore, Gramsci, as quoted in (Inglis and Thorpe, 2012:81), advances that escaping physical repression by the ruling classes is not enough to transform society. There is a need to get out from under the ideological and cultural repression. Gramsci's assertion suggests that the ruling classes' ideology is more powerful than that of the lower classes. The ruling classes' ideas are taken more seriously than those of the lower classes. This is an important point to note, particularly for the present study. It must be noted that, even though poetry needs to transform and move with the times, the issues of lower classes and upper classes should not be overlooked. As much as poetry must change, it should not be influenced by the notions of the ruling classes / upper classes.

5. Research Methodology

Poetry can be described as an effective tool to transform and engage society on pertinent social issues. González-Gutiérrez (2017:122) postulates that "poetry, as a

literary genre, has an unusual force in the construction of subjectivity, beyond reflecting on the act of the word in social relationships and day-to-day life”. This point suggests that poetry and society are intertwined and inseparable. This is because a poet is a member of society, and therefore, he or she writes about what they witness in society. However, the mood depends on what the poets value and how they perceive society, particularly personal interpretations of the norms and behaviour of people in that society.

The focus of this study is to analyse the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi and establish the role and relevance of his poetry both during his time and the present time. The other element of the study is to establish the relationship between the poet and his poetry. The last aspect will be a review of the life and times of B.W. Vilakazi in relation to his poetry. To achieve the outcomes, this study will analyse the selected poems from his two anthologies, *Inkondlo kaZulu* (1935) and *Amal’ezulu* (1945).

Research methodology is one of the critical parts of any research project. It gives a researcher time to plan and design the type of research methods. There are two main paradigms of conducting research: qualitative research and quantitative research methodology (Mason 2002 and Furman 2007). This study will adopt poetic enquiry as a critical qualitative methodology. Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge (2007:7) maintain that qualitative research is “concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. It aims to help us understand the social world in which we live and why things are the way they are”. I agree with this definition because it suggests that qualitative research is concerned with human behaviour in society. It deals with how people view society, their opinions and ideas about society, and society's issues. Taking the point forward, Brown (2018:107) upholds that “poetry, in research, takes the existence of truths within attitudes, feelings, or ideas and illuminates them through prose that speaks to the mind and heart of readers”. Thus, poetry is a powerful tool to use to get to the heart of a reader.

The rationale for adopting the qualitative research method in this study is to get an in-depth understanding of society; that is, the social ills and issues dealt with in the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi. Furthermore, the qualitative methods are suitable for this study because the study is an enquiry into the role of poetry and poets in society, particularly the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi and of him as a poet. For the purpose of this study, I will

select poems that address issues that are still relevant in the twenty-first century, such as poems that talk to nature and Ubuntu. I chose these kinds of poems because they inspire me, and I also like to write about nature and Ubuntu. Most of my poems emphasise the spirit of Ubuntu and respect.

A systematic approach that will be used in this study is as follows:

- (a) Firstly, recognising that the poems to be studied spread across two volumes, namely, *Inkondlo kaZulu* (1935) and *Amal'ezulu* (1945). As part of the way I am going to carry out this study, I will familiarise myself with all the poems in each of the volumes.

The creative component of the MA relates to the topic of the dissertation. The poems found in the creative component deal with several themes; among them are themes on culture, Ubuntu, love, awareness, protest, and nature. These themes resemble the themes found in the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi. The title of the creative component, titled '*Iziyalo*' (to raise awareness and rebuke), speaks to the dissertation title. The dissertation examines the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi as a social tool for '*ukuxwayisa*' (deterrent) and protest. The creative component is aimed at warning and alerting society about critical social matters and protest. For example, one of the poems from my collection of poems, entitled '*Makholwa*' (Believers), is critiquing how churchgoers/believers conduct themselves in places such as churches, at weddings, in terms of family affairs, and at funerals.

- (b) Secondly, I will select, from both volumes, poems with themes that I wish to explore.
- (c) Thirdly, I will analyse the poems against the research questions posed in this study.
- (d) Fourthly, and finally, I will discuss the findings, recommendations, and conclusions.

6. Literature Review

The literature review is the most important component of any research. It informs the researcher about what research has been done in that field and what gaps need to be closed in the study under investigation. Moreover, it assists the researcher to become familiar with the key, burning issues in the field and provides a better picture of what has (not) been researched in the field. Randolph (2009:2) summarises the significance of the literature review in his assertion that “conducting a literature review is a means of demonstrating an author’s knowledge about a particular field of study, including vocabulary, theories, key variables and phenomena, and its methods and history”.

This study originates from the existing research on the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi. Many scholars have extensively researched the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi focusing on the social ills and protest angle. Scholars such as Ngwenya (1998) conducted research on B.W. Vilakazi as an inspired prophet. Ntshangase (1995) looked at his poetry focusing on the issues of identity, that is, class identity and urban-rural identity. Zondi (1996) looked at the protest elements in B.W. Vilakazi’s poetry.

Furthermore, Zondi (2020) advocates for the revisiting of the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi with the focus on utility and meaning of African languages literature at institutions of higher learning. However, my study is building on the existing body of knowledge. My study starts with the premise that poetry does not die or diminish with time but that, due to its uniqueness, it remains relevant when it touches on society and humanity. Similarly, the poetry of Benedict Wallet Vilakazi has been found to still have relevance, especially in the context of South Africa, a society it talks to. His poetry still influences and inspires new poets in isiZulu literature even today; hence, I agree with Zondi (2020), who submits that B.W. Vilakazi should be labelled a ‘classic’.

This section will review relevant literature in the African continent to establish how the works of Benedict Wallet Vilakazi continue the narrative of African writers. It will demonstrate how his works epitomise the poor black masses for whom he becomes a voice. It will further explore how, while experimenting with the Western ways of writing, he still wrote about what affects black people. His poetry continues to be relevant since it speaks to contemporary times, which is the period beyond post-apartheid. My study deals with the relationship between poetry and society in the

South African context with a focus on the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi. The study argues that South African poetry must be about the social issues pertinent to South Africa as well as the country's politics and ideology. Soyinka (1988:64) aptly captures this sentiment:

a literature that can concern itself with social experience becomes in a manner of perception, an ideological perception. It is this form of literature that holds the most promise for the strengthening of the bond between experience and medium since it prevents the entrenchment of the habitual, the petrification of the imaginative function by that past or present reality upon which it reflects.

Soyinka reiterates that literary work is understood within the context in which it is written. Ordinarily, the writer reflects on his environment while commenting on social issues that affect society. Here we can mention phenomena such as crime, poverty, and unemployment. Soyinka's assertion submits that there is a relationship between literary work and society. Literary work is a product of society. Therefore, when society receives and reads literary work, it should reflect on its societal issues. In the South African context, literary works should speak to our contemporary problems such as political instability, corruption, rape, abuse of women and children, education, higher-education funding, poverty, unemployment, political killings, and crime.

6.1. African literature and society

In the same way as Vilakazi demonstrated his passion for black people by putting their interests at the centre of his works, Chinua Achebe also serves as a good example of an African writer whose works are Afrocentric. He demonstrated this in his works, *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *Arrow of God* (1964). After their independence, African countries had several social problems that they had to deal with. Many writers resorted to writing literature that highlighted such concerns in their respective countries.

On the significance of literature, Achebe (1988:117) argues that regardless of how it is handed down, it enables us "to encounter in the safe manageable dimensions of make-believe, the very same threats to integrity that may assail the psyche in real life; and at the same time providing through self-discovery which it imparts, a veritable weapon for coping with the threats whether they are found within problematic and

incoherent selves, or in the world around us”. Furthermore, Achebe’s views are thus important in the present study, firstly, because the study intends to show and establish how the works of B.W. Vilakazi address the issues pertinent to black people—particularly the impoverished black masses in South Africa. Secondly, the study wants to establish if the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi is still relevant in the twenty-first century.

Asante (2009:1) takes up the question of Afrocentricity by advocating for the removal of Europe from the centre of the African reality. Asante’s views are similar to Achebe’s views in the sense that both scholars emphasise the point that African ideas and values be expressed in the African context and not in the European context. These views suggest that African literature should be more about African society or African people. This means that when an African poet writes a poem, the poem should be about the African community. The issues discussed in the work of art should address the social issues of the writer’s community.

In my study, it is evident that Vilakazi espouses a similar idea of advocating for African issues experienced in the African context and not in the European context. By assuming the role of a traditional bard, which was to be a connection between the king and his subjects, he appealed to the capitalists – represented by the mine magnates in his protest poetry – not to be oppressive towards miners. As a mouthpiece of the oppressed, he used poetry to expose their wrongdoings, such as enriching themselves at the expense of the poor. In that sense, he put the suffering masses at the centre of his protest poetry. However, he also experimented with Western forms to talk about issues related to black people. This was due to acculturation, which took place as his culture and that of the West crossed paths in his schooling career. Vilakazi (in Attwell, 2005:81) sees himself as a man who did not neglect or despise the past but who interpreted it through his own imagination. Hence, his poetry reflects various encounters and influences that include the Western ways in which he was schooled (Zondi, 2018).

Owonibi (2014:289) also argues for approaches that consider people’s contexts. He writes:

a work of art can neither exist in a vacuum, nor can it be divorced from the myriad of socio-political factors or social realities that negatively

or positively influence the worldview of man. These factors can either be political, historical, biographical, or sociological.

According to Owonibi, there is absolutely no way in which literature can be separated from socio-political factors or social realities. This is precisely because literature derives its main essence from life. The creative writer may write with the purpose to sensitise, educate, and entertain people in society.

Remarkably, the works of B.W. Vilakazi – in which he protests about the social ills suffered by the masses of poor people – reflect Afrocentricity. In one of his great poems entitled *'Ezinkomponi'* ('On the mine compounds'), he speaks about industrialisation and how it turned black people into slaves.

Mutiso (1974:3) agrees with Achebe and Asante when he says that “all literature, to the extent that it deals with individuals in society, contains elements of social and political theory”. According to Mutiso’s statement, whatever the creative writer writes about should be related to his society. The point being emphasised here is that authors need to reflect on the people's experiences in their environment. Therefore, as Gakwandi (1977:126-127) maintains, literature and society should be viewed as interrelated and inseparable.

According to Rowell (1989), there is a relationship between society and literature, and, as such, literature should play a role in transforming society. Thus, creative writers have a role in changing and developing society. This they can do through their texts and themes which they write about, particularly the themes which address socio-political issues and social realities of society.

Olaniyan (2017:105) corroborates ideas on writing about what affects societies. He says, “The consensus among literary critics is that every work of art must have been influenced by the historical-social realities in which the author finds himself”. Olaniyan contends that every creative work of art is influenced by the realities of the place and time where the writer or author resides. In this case, the writer enacts and interprets the social problems for the people in the form of a work of art. This may be done in the form of poetry, a novel, short story, or drama.

In summarising the ideas raised thus far, the African authors who have been presented above have one common view: that writers need to situate their imagination on issues that affect society. These include, among others, the ways of living, influences of modernisation and the role of traditions in social development. They need to address the minds, hearts, and spirit of the people. Consequently, literature must play an important role in society by developing people and encouraging them to transform their communities in culturally sustainable ways.

Within the South African context, authors such as Kaschula and Diop (2000) are worth examining. These scholars argue that South African poetry is shaped by the country's politics. They point out that "the oral word is a powerful political tool, hence oral poetry and song have increasingly been used and manipulated as part of political rhetoric" (Kaschula and Diop, 2000:16). They maintain that African poetry is no longer independent; instead, it is now influenced and manipulated to suit the needs and aims of the ruling classes and not the needs of the working-class people. In addition, this calls for the reclaiming of our own literature and bringing it back to our societies, meaning that our literature needs to serve our interests and agendas and not otherwise.

Similarly, Mlama (1995:24) declares that African poetry has been influenced by the political concerns of the day. In the South African context, this practice can be evidenced in isiZulu and isiXhosa poetry. I agree with Mlama because this issue is evident mostly when it is the State of the Nation Address in South Africa, wherein the oral poets are requested to recite a traditional poem to introduce the president in the legislature. In this case, the poet praises the president even though he is facing criminal allegations, but the poet does not reflect on that matter; instead, he will say only good things about the president, whereas the public has a different picture of the president at that time.

In the poem by Jolobe entitled, 'The ones who will bring about freedom of the nation', Mona (2015:66) perceives the role of poetry as a political commentary. He maintains that poetry entails the political influence on South Africa's generation by informing the reader of the heroes involved in the struggle for liberation. Furthermore, he argues that Jolobe's poetry plays a pivotal role in the birth of poetic discourse in South Africa (Mona, 2015:67).

Another scholar who is worth bringing forward here is Taylor (1935:163). He is relevant in this study for the contribution he made in the works of Vilakazi. Commenting on the two volumes, he sees Vilakazi's works as having a purpose "to preserve history and knowledge and to keep it for the next generation to come so that they will not lose their self" (Taylor, 1935:163).

Another scholar who is passionate about Vilakazi's works is Ngwenya (1998:129). Not only did he concern himself with the former's poetry, but he also studied his other critical works. These brought him to the conclusion that "Vilakazi's poems and his critical writings reflect his awareness of the inherent contradictions underlying the challenging task of having to ensure the continuity and preservation of Zulu traditions while simultaneously devising new strategies and forms of poetic expression to suit the modern context". Ngwenya's remark suggests that Vilakazi was a man who lived in two worlds. Firstly, he made sure that he preserved and promoted his Zuluness in his poetry. Secondly, he also incorporated the themes—or rather, topics that addressed the social issues, particularly the issues of the modern society to which he too belonged as he was an educated Zulu man living in the apartheid regime of South Africa.

It would be an oversight if I left out Zondi, a scholar who has worked extensively on Vilakazi. Beginning with her master's dissertation (1995), entitled "Protest in B.W. Vilakazi's Poetry", she has journeyed with the readers to help them see Vilakazi's commitment to societal inequalities that existed in South Africa before the country gained its democracy. Subsequent to that study, she has gone to great lengths in unpacking the genius of this author. In the article co-authored with Canonici (2005), they dissect the poem, '*Ngoba...sewuthi*' (Because...you now say) to demonstrate how the great author Vilakazi 'effectively broke the silence by bringing the plight of the black masses to the attention of the world (Zondi and Canonici 2005: 83). Zondi's third contribution on Vilakazi is an article whose title profoundly captures the essence of the study. Titled, 'Three protagonists in the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi's '*Ezinkomponi*' ('On the mine compounds'), Zondi (2011:173) "reflects on the three protagonists of the drama that plays out in front of him; the miner, mine magnates and the heavy machinery; all things that drive the entire enterprise of enslaving the workers".

Furthermore, to show her commitment to Vilakazi, Zondi delivered an inspiring inaugural lecture at the University of Pretoria in 2018. Titled 'Revisiting the poetry of Benedict Wallet Vilakazi: The utility and meaning of African Languages and Literatures in Higher Education', it received so much interest that it was published in a reputable journal under a slightly different title (Zondi 2020). In this article, Zondi proposes that the works of Vilakazi should take centre stage in higher education as a way of furthering decoloniality agenda and promoting African languages, which are still marginalised in South Africa's democratic context.

While I have conducted more literature review than I have presented in this section of the chapter, more reviews will be brought forward in the course of the study. The works provided here have been cited as a way of situating my study and to demonstrate that have indeed familiarised myself with literature that is relevant to the study. In essence, I have presented some of the relevant literature in the African continent as well as in South Africa with the objective of establishing how the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi continues the narrative of African writers. This review's central argument was that writers need to situate their imagination on issues that talk to communities' concerns.

Chapter 2

The life and times of B.W. Vilakazi and his poetry

In the previous chapter, a platform was created to place this research in context by presenting the aims and objectives of the study in relation to the research problem and providing a relevant theoretical background and literature to the study. The review's central argument was that writers need to situate their imagination on issues that talk to communities' concerns. This chapter will analyse poems that speak to the issues of class identity and urban-rural identity. I will analyse the works of B.W. Vilakazi collectively against his life and argue that his works reveal a man obsessed with a search for identity. I will select six poems from both collections (*Inkondlo kaZulu* and *Amal'ezulu*) and analyse them to establish whether he was indeed searching for his identity. In the end, I will argue that our understanding of B.W. Vilakazi, the person, tells us so much about the African middle class of his time.

Before I can elucidate further on this chapter and its focus, I think it is of utmost importance that I first unpack the term 'identity'. Identity is such a complex term to define because it differs from context to context and purpose. Buckingham (2008) defines identity as something we uniquely possess. Furthermore, it is something that distinguishes us from other people. On the other hand, it is about the relationships we have with other people and social groups. Therefore, this definition leads us to the different types of identities that connect us as people; these are: national identity, cultural identity, and gender identity (Buckingham (2008:1).

The main question to ponder here is that in the South African context, what do we mean by identity? How do we define identity? Are we talking about race, ethnicity, cultural identity, tribal identity, acculturation, enculturation, bicultural identity, multicultural identity, or some other form of identity? Do we embrace our identity? However, I am not going to dwell much on these questions; the purpose was to trigger some sense about this crucial term 'identity', particularly in the South African context, which is diverse in terms of language, culture, gender, and political aspirations.

In analysing the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi, I focus primarily on the aspects of self-identity, cultural identity, and community identity. I find these identities crucial in understanding

B.W. Vilakazi and his study. Therefore, for optimal understanding of what lies ahead in his study, they will be defined. Self-identity is usually not imposed by anyone or from any external source. An individual can choose to have a certain identity. It is a choice that may be influenced by social, economic, and political factors. In this case, I can argue that Vilakazi chose to be educated and still be a traditionalist. He lived in two worlds, which were urban life and rural life.

Cultural identity is reflected in the values, beliefs, and worldviews of indigenous people. Those who belong to the same cultural group share the same values, beliefs, and worldviews (Weaver, 2001:240). Vilakazi belonged to the Zulu culture; hence, he valued the Zulu culture, beliefs, and traditions. Ngwenya (2008:49) attests to this notion by stating that “Vilakazi’s poems and his critical writings reflect his awareness of the inherent contradictions underlying the challenging task of having to ensure the continuity and preservation of the Zulu traditions and value system while simultaneously devising new strategies and forms of poetic expression to suit the modern context”. This suggests that while Vilakazi advocated for the preservation of Zulu culture and traditions, he was also looking for strategies for poetic expressions that would suit the modern context. It is evident that Vilakazi took it upon himself to advance isiZulu poetry while at the same time making sure that his culture did not perish.

Community identity asserts that the identity of other people is confirmed by other people in the community. For an individual to be fully human, he or she must belong to a community. Each community has its own identity. The community identity is shared in terms of traditions, culture, and history (Weaver, 2001:245). Vilakazi was also a human being who belonged to a particular community. We witness this in his poem entitled *‘kwaDedangendlale’* (‘In the Valley of a Thousand Hills’). In this poem, Vilakazi is imagining himself on top of the mountain *‘eMkhambathini’* (‘Natal’s Table Mountain’). He talks about the life he used to live while he was still in Natal wherein boys and girls *‘bayeshelena emgwaqeni’* (‘proposing each other on the road’). To him, this is his culture of living in the rural areas; that is how he grew up as a boy.

Benedict Wallet Vilakazi (1906 - 1947)

Before I can start with the analysis of B.W. Vilakazi's poems, I think it is important to start by offering an insight into the background of his life. First, the study is looking at his poetry in comparison to his life and times. Second, Vilakazi is not just an ordinary writer but the pioneer of isiZulu modern poetry and literature. Vilakazi was the first to write and publish modern Zulu poetry. Ntshangase (1995:1) posits that "Benedict Wallet Vilakazi can rightly be considered the father of Nguni literature". Accordingly, it is very important that before his work is analysed, he must be well introduced to the reader.

B.W. Vilakazi was born and raised in KwaZulu-Natal in a place called KwaDukuza. His love for poetry started while he was still in KwaDukuza. In one of his poems entitled 'Ugqozi' ('Power of Inspiration'), he talks about his inspiration to write about Zulu history in his poetry. In this poem, Vilakazi is telling us about his initiation as a poet in KwaDukuza, KwaZulu-Natal where he was visited by the princess Mkabayi¹ kaJama spiritually (in a dream). During this visit he learned to be a poet, as he was taught by the princess Mkabayi of Jama.

Last stanza, line 3-7

Ngivuswa nguMnkabayi² ethi kimi:

"Vuka wena kaMancinza!

Kawuzalelwanga ukulal' ubuthongo.

Vuk' ubong' indaba yemikhonto!

Nank' umthwal' engakwethwesa wona."

(Vilakazi 1945,1)

(I am awakened by Mnkabayi³ saying to me:

"Wake up you son of Mancinza!

¹ The names Mkabayi and Mnkabayi are used interchangeably to refer to the Zulu princess, a daughter to Jama. This is due to the orthographic developments in the isiZulu language. The meaning is the same, but the writing systems of the times differ.

You were not born to sleep.

Here is the burden which I laid upon you.”)

Vilakazi was dreaming at the gates of KwaDukuza and looking for Mkabayi but he could not see her. He saw the gates were closed and Dukuza was dead. His tongue filled his mouth, and he could not talk. That is the day he started to be a poet. This poem is a true reflection of Vilakazi’s beliefs and cultural aspirations. It tells us that Vilakazi believed in dreams and ancestors. He believed in culture as he valued people from the Zulu royal family, particularly Princess Mkabayi. In addition, he believed in their wisdom and guidance. Wherefore, I synchronise with him because in Zulu culture it is believed that people from the royal family are the carriers of culture and the king is the custodian of culture and traditions. Thus, the commoners always look up to the people from the royal family for guidance and direction in society.

In another poem entitled ‘*Wo! Leli khehla*’ (‘O! This elderly man’) Vilakazi is portraying a picture of an old Zulu man who has abandoned his Zulu culture and traditions. In stanza one, Vilakazi is honouring this old man by saying that his grey hair shows that he is old, and he has lived his life. However, he himself (Vilakazi) is jealous of him because one day he also wishes to be old like him.

First two lines of stanza one:

Zinesithunz’ izinwele zakho!

Zibik’ imigwaqo yeminyaka,

(Vilakazi 1945, 11)

(Your hair is dignified!

They show your journey of ages,)

However, when reading stanza two, we are introduced to another aspect wherein in the poet is telling us that the old man was once a cultural man who obeyed the Zulu cultural beliefs and traditions but now, he has abandoned them. This poem is an indication that Vilakazi loved his Zulu culture and traditions. He did not like or respect someone who had abandoned his culture. For him, culture defined who you are and where you come from. Therefore, if one abandoned his culture, he was deemed a lost human being. Culture is the foundation of humankind.

Stanza two:

Endlebeni yakho ngibona lapho
Kwahamba khon' uphawu lukaZulu.
Namhl' iziqhaza zokuhloba
Uzikhiphile wazilahla phansi;
Awazi nalapho zasala khona,
Namanxiwa lapho zawa khona.

(Vilakazi 1945, 11)

(I see on your ear,
Where there was a Zulu symbol.
Today, the Zulu earplugs,
You removed them and threw them away,
You do not even know where you left them,
And where they fell.)

In this stanza, the poet is expanding on his complaints about this old man who has lost or abandoned his culture. The poet uses the word '*iziqhaza*'. These are traditional Zulu earplugs which are worn by the Zulu people, a symbol of practising Zulu culture and tradition. The poet further explains that the holes in the old man's ears show that the old man had '*iziqhaza*' before but now he has abandoned them because he has lost the Zulu culture and its practices. Therefore, this poem is an indication that B.W. Vilakazi was passionately advocating for the preservation of Zulu culture and traditions.

Later, B.W. Vilakazi was called to Johannesburg to teach at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). He was the first black African to teach at Wits University in the early 1940s while the university was still a white university.

It is evident that B.W. Vilakazi was a typical Zulu man who was rooted in his Zulu culture and origins. He was not comfortable with moving to Johannesburg. The move from KwaZulu-Natal – the province in which he was born – to Gauteng was not a favourable decision for him because it meant that he would have to adapt to a

completely new environment which did not appeal to his cultural norms and values. In his poem entitled '*Wo, ngitshela Mntanomlungu*' ('Wo, Tell me, son of the white man').

Stanza one:

Wo, ngitshela mntanomlungu!
Ungiletheleni lapha?
Ngingen' amadol' angisinde,
Ngicabang' ikhanda lizule
Ngibona kuhlwe' emini,
Ilanga liphenduk' inyanga.

(Vilakazi 1945, 8)

(Why did you bring me here?

I enter with heavy knees,

I think and my head spins.

I see the sun set at midday,

The sun turns into moon.)

In this first stanza, Vilakazi does not seem to like the life and the environment. The place does not appeal to his personal and preferred way of living. Furthermore, the environment is not appealing to him and his ancestors. Koopman (2005:73) comments:

When Vilakazi left Natal to move to Johannesburg, he did so in the full knowledge that he was leaving behind the place where he was born and where his ancestors lay buried. He knew he was cutting himself off from those links of time and place. He knew he would only be able to return 'in his mind's eye'.

I concur with the points raised by Koopman. Vilakazi was not impressed with city life, even though he agreed to come to Johannesburg. He was worried about his roots and culture, which suggests that Vilakazi was obsessed with his identity and culture. He did not want to lose himself due to adopting an urban way of life.

In stanza two, he posits that his ancestors instructed him to sleep in a rondavel house or room. We witness this as captured in these lines of stanza two:

Ngizongenaphi kulezizindonga?

Obabamkhulu bathi sebefa

Angolala phansi kotshani kwaGuqa,

(Vilakazi 1945, 8)

(Where will I enter in these walls?

My ancestors when they died.

They said I must sleep in the rondavel.)

When looking at these lines, one can see that Vilakazi was not happy with the long and tall buildings of Johannesburg; instead, he remembered his place and the instructions he was given by his ancestors that he must sleep in a rondavel house and not these buildings that so epitomised city living. This poem testified to the fact that Vilakazi was not willing to lose his culture. For him, coming to Johannesburg suggested a shift from his culture to a new culture which was strange for him. Moreover, his move to Johannesburg meant that he had to live in two worlds simultaneously—that is, the rural and urban worlds. However, living an urban life was going to be full time for him whereas the rural part of life was only going to be imaginary (spiritual world).

Furthermore, the poem entitled *'Imfundo Ephakeme'* ('Higher Education') tells us that Vilakazi was not satisfied with the curriculum taught at the time, particularly at the institutions of higher learning.

Stanza one:

Uma ngibheda ngangicabanga

Ngithi ngiyothol' ukujabula

Uma ngigogodana nencwadi,

Ngiquaq' amafind' abhaliweyo,

Ngiwachaza njengoba ngibona.

Namhla ngizwa kuqaqamb' ikhanda.

(Vilakazi 1945, 6)

(When I was wrong, I would think.

Thinking that I would be happy.

When I study books

Untying the knots,

Explaining the way, I see.

Today I feel the throbbing head.)

In this poem, Vilakazi seemed to be regretting studying. He stated that when he was young, he thought he would be happy after attaining academic degrees but instead he finds he is not. In stanza two of the same poem, line one and two:

Sengachith' isikhath' esiningi

Ngiphendulana namaqabunga

(Vilakazi 1945, 6)

(I have wasted a lot of time.

Turning over the pages)

These two lines tell us that Vilakazi is not impressed with studying, particularly studying books written by a white man. One may argue that Vilakazi is of the view that Western education is brainwashing the black man to think that his knowledge and ideas are not worth studying and that only the knowledge and ideas of white men have any worth. This goes further to the issue of culture. Vilakazi was afraid of losing himself; that is, his culture and tradition. He was worried that his culture was not recognised and that his forefathers' knowledge and wisdom was not considered in the academic sphere. Only the knowledge and wisdom of white men was recognised hence they studied books written by white men.

In stanza three:

Ngavakash' izimbong' ezimnyama

Zihay' imiqondo yamakhosi,

Nezinye zibong' utshwal' emsamo.

*Ngafak' ukuhlakanipha kwazo,
Ngakudiya nokwezabamhlophe.
Namhla zixaben' ekhanda lami.*

(Vilakazi 1945, 6)

(I visited black poets.
Reciting the kings' ideas,
Others thanking traditional beer at the ancestral platform.
I infused their ideas,
And combined them with those of white people.
Today, they are conflicting in my head.)

In the above stanza, Vilakazi tells us that he visited black poets reciting poems about kings. Others thanking traditional beer at the ancestral place. He infused their ideas and combined them with those of the white people. However, those combined ideas are now conflicting in his head. By these lines, Vilakazi is telling us that the education we get from institutions of learning only incorporates the ideas of the white man. Hence, he tried to combine both the ideas of the white man and of the black man but still they do not intersect. Vilakazi wanted to merge both the Western and African ways. Zondi (2020:13) posits that Vilakazi did not pretend that the challenge of merging African traditionalism and Western modernity had no impact on him; instead, his poems reflect “his awareness of the challenging task of having to ensure continuity and preservation of Zulu traditions while simultaneously devising new strategies and forms of poetic expression to suit modern contexts” (Ngwenya, 1998:129). Both Zondi and Ngwenya agree that Vilakazi was eager to agglutinate the African traditions with Western modernity provided there was a balance between the two practices. Vilakazi (in Attwell, 2005:81) sees himself as a man who did not neglect or despise the past but who interpreted it through his own imagination. Hence, his poetry reflects various encounters and influences that include the Western ways in which he was schooled (Zondi, 2018).

Vilakazi (1938:127) argues that “if we imitate the form, the outward decoration which decks the charming poetry of our Western masters, that does not mean to say that we have incorporated into our poetry even their spirit”. Here, Vilakazi was emphasising

the fact that if we employ the Western form of poetry, but we only take what will improve our poetry in order to match with the modern society. I agree with Vilakazi's notion when it comes to modernity. He was the true reflection of a poet who had the background of a traditional rural community but he was able to live in the urban area and still adapt. He was the first Zulu poet to infuse the Western form, rhythm, and images in Zulu poetry. Attwell (2005:89) as quoted in Zondi (2018: 18) praises Vilakazi by stating that "we can now see that Vilakazi's seemingly obsessive fondness for rhyme, together with his interest in prosody, were essentially means to end, which was to enable Zulu writing to acquire abstraction, distance, monumentality and perfection- broadly speaking, the qualities of aesthetics".

Moreover, Vilakazi also shows us that he was obsessed with the issues of nature and culture. We see that in his poem entitled '*kwaDedangendlale*' ('In the Valley of a Thousand Hills').

Stanza one:

Ngikhumbule kud' ekhaya
Laph' ilanga liphumela
Phezu kwezintab' ezinde,
Lishone libomv' enzansi
Kuze kusondel' ukuhlwa
Nokuthul' okucwebile,
Laph' uphuma phandl' unuke,
Uhogele ngamakhala,
Uzigqum' umzimba wonke
Ngomoya wolwandl' omanzi.

(Vilakazi 1945, 23)

(I remember far away at home
There, where the sun rises
Above the tall hills,
And goes down shining red

Until night comes
With its pure silence,
There, where you go outside and smell,
Breathe in deeply,
And feel your whole body affected by
The moist air of the sea.)

In this stanza, Vilakazi describes the beauty of the Hills of KwaZulu-Natal. Vilakazi's obsession with nature shows that his poetry was influenced by English Romantic poets. The first work of Romantic poetry was the 'Lyrical Ballads' by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth, published in 1798. The second generation of Romantic poets comprised George Gordon, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats. Romanticism was an artistic and philosophical movement that revolted against the Enlightenment and Neoclassicism in Europe towards the end of the 18th century. The features of Romantic poetry involve the joys and tribulations of daily life, love of nature, the beauty of nature, creativity, the value of the individual, imagination, memory, and emotions (Wilson, 1994).

From the above features of Romantic poetry, I can state that Vilakazi incorporated many of them in his poetry and writing. I can also state that the poetry of Vilakazi and that of Wordsworth is very similar. They both wrote poems that talk about nature. Wordsworth's 'Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey' is a good example of this.

Stanza one, lines 1-8

*Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! And again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.*

(Wordsworth 1798)

In this poem, Wordsworth tells us about Tintern Abbey, which he once visited five years ago, and on his return he finds it is still the same. Wordsworth is not only telling us about this place in general, but he is praising the beauty of this place that has lasted all that time since he visited five years ago. It is still beautiful. He still hears and sees what he heard and saw five years ago. This poem is similar to the one written by Vilakazi, which is entitled '*kwaDedangendlalei*' (In the Valley of a Thousand Hills). Therefore, I can say that Vilakazi learned from Wordsworth how to be a Romantic poet. I am not saying the other English Romantic poets did not have similar poems to Vilakazi, but I am saying both Vilakazi and Wordsworth had more poems that talk about nature and its beauty in common. Shelley wrote a poem entitled 'To a Skylark'. Stanza one:

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

(Shelley 1820)

In this poem, Shelley is amazed at the bird's 'blithe' spirit (expression of happiness), which is witnessed in the essence of a singing skylark and how human beings fail to reach that kind of happiness. In this stanza, the poet begins by spotting a skylark flying above him. Similarly, Vilakazi had a similar poem addressing the theme of a bird singing. The poem is entitled '*Inqomfi*' (The Lark). In this poem, Vilakazi is amazed when he sees a bird singing, and he is wondering who taught a bird to sing. In another poem entitled '*Cula Ngizwe*' (Sing so that I hear), Vilakazi tells us about the effects of listening to a bird while it is singing. In this poem, the poet uses images of drunkenness, drugs, and untimely sleep, which echo themes to be found in the writings of Keats.

It is evident that Vilakazi wrote this poem when he was in Johannesburg. He is captured saying 'I miss home far away'. This line tells us that he was missing the beautiful hills of KwaZulu-Natal where he comes from. In this poem, Vilakazi is praising the beauty of nature, particularly the mountains, hills, ocean, and air. For instance, in

stanza 4, Vilakazi is imagining himself on top of the mountain 'eMkhambathini' (Natal's Table Mountain). In stanza 7, Vilakazi talks about the boys and girls proposing each other.

Ngabona nokushelana

Kwezintombi nezinsizwa.

(Vilakazi 1945, 23)

(I saw boys and girls

Proposing each other.)

In this stanza, Vilakazi is telling us that he was missing his village lifestyle. One may argue that the culture of proposing in the rural areas differs from that of the city. Vilakazi was now staying in the city of Johannesburg, but he still missed the life back home.

In another poem, Vilakazi is found fighting Christianity in the Zulu territory. The poem is entitled 'Izinsimbi Zesonto' ('The bells of the church'). The bells of the church refer to the bells of St. Paul's Anglican Church in Durban. In this poem, Vilakazi is criticising the teachings of the missionaries. He argues that the teachings of Christianity are destroying the Zulu culture.

Stanza six:

Ji! Kuhle ngihlale phansi ngibuke.

Mlungu, wahlule wachith' uZulu!

Ngiyakubon' ukujaja kwakho.

Ngihlekwa nayizindonga zakho,

Zisukum' emhlabathini, Zulu,

Zimi phezu kokuhlakanipha

Kwendumo yolwandle namathongo

Okuthiw' aphephe konk' ukwazi.

(Vilakazi 1945, 20)

(Ji! It is best that I sit down and see.

White man, you defeated and destroyed Zulu!
I see your judgement,
I am being laughed at by your walls,
They rise from the ground, Zulu,
They stand on top of the wisdom.
The noise of the sea and ancestors
Those who are said to have all knowledge.)

In this stanza, Vilakazi is criticising the Christian missionaries for destroying the Zulu culture. He laments that missionaries found Zulu people living in peace next to the sea and obeying their ancestors. But now his people adopt Christianity and abandon their own culture and traditions.

The poems analysed in this chapter portray Vilakazi as a man who was indeed obsessed with a search for identity. He was a man who was proud of being Zulu. He was of the opinion that a person who abandons his culture and traditions is the same as a dead man. Even when he was in Johannesburg, he was still proud of who he was and of his roots. Therefore, it can be said that the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi relates to the society of the time, to him as an individual, to the times he was living in as well as the place. For instance, during his time, people were proud of their roots and culture. Even when they were educated, they never abandoned their culture and traditions. Vilakazi is a good example of that because although he was educated, he never abandoned Zulu culture. Instead, he remained a proud Zulu man until his untimely death in 1947.

In this chapter, I analysed the poems of B.W. Vilakazi that speak to the issues of class identity and urban-rural identity. I also analysed the poems of Vilakazi in comparison to his life and times while also arguing that his poetry reveals a man who was obsessed with a search for identity. In the end, I showcased the aspect of Romantic poetry in the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi and further established that his poetry was influenced by the Romantic poets such as Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats. In the next chapter, I will analyse poems in which B.W. Vilakazi protests about the social ills suffered by the masses of poor people. For instance, in one of his great poems entitled '*Ezinkomponi*' ('On the mine compounds'), he speaks about industrialisation and how it turned black people into slaves.

Chapter 3

The relationship between the poet as a member of society and his poetry

In the previous chapter, I presented an analysis of some of the poems of B.W. Vilakazi which speak to issues of class identity and urban-rural identity. The analysis provided a backdrop of his life and times while also arguing that his poetry reveals a man who was preoccupied with a search for identity. The chapter also explored a background to the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi by bringing in the aspect of Romantic poetry and established that his poetry was influenced by the Romantic poets such as Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats.

This chapter intends to analyse the poems in which B.W. Vilakazi protests about the social ills suffered by the masses of poor people. The purpose of analysing these poems is to demonstrate that the duty of the poet in society is not just to write, cite and publish the work of art, poetic pieces, and self-enrichment, but instead it is a social responsibility. The poet ought to rebuke and build society, encourage good deeds, and discourage evils through his or her poetic expressions.

Since this chapter will deal with the protest poetry in B.W. Vilakazi's body of work – particularly the analysis of poems that speak against the ills of society such as slavery, oppression, racism, and inequalities – I think it is important that the term 'protest poetry' is unpacked. Onoja (2016: 2) set forth that "protest poetry attempts to overthrow all manner of man's inhumanity to his fellow man. The essence is primarily for equity in the distribution of socio-economic resources and fairness in political responsibilities". This definition suggests that protest poetry seeks to fight against the injustices imposed on people in society by either government or other structures of power in society such as churches, schools, businesses, and organisations. The themes addressed by protest poetry lament the detriment of African values and cultural pride with obstacles posed by the apartheid state which involved racial abuse, injustice, discrimination, unfair imprisonment and slavery (Onoja, 2016: 2).

However, the themes addressed by protest poetry may differ based on the times when the poem was written or cited. For instance, in the South African context, there are protest poems that address the issues of apartheid and others that address the issues

in post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, Hughes (1977: 18) postulates that “art belongs to all and is a ‘function’ of society”. This point suggests that the work of art is in existence to serve society. If the poet writes poetry, he or she must address the issues that affect the society in which they all live. The poetry needs to protest the ills of society and be functional on issues of politics social and economic issues.

Owonibi (2014:289) also argues for approaches that take into account people’s contexts. He writes:

a work of art can neither exist in a vacuum nor can it be divorced from the myriad of socio-political factors or social realities that negatively or positively influence the worldview of man. These factors can either be political, historical, biographical, or sociological.

According to Owonibi’s assertion, there is absolutely no way in which literature can be separated from the socio-political factors or social realities. This is precisely because literature derives its main essence from life. The creative writer may write with the purpose to sensitise, educate, and entertain people in society.

In this regard, Zondi (1995: 52) puts this into perspective by stating that “labour laws reserved certain skilled jobs for whites. Discrimination on the basis of colour clearly became part of the legal system”. Zondi brings a crucial point here when she argues that during the apartheid era, black people were discriminated against based on colour and job opportunities. This point is fundamental because it sheds light on what was happening during the apartheid dispensation. For example, Vilakazi’s (1935: 1) poem, ‘*Ngephasika*’ (‘On Easter’) illumines discrimination that was the order of the day in South Africa.

Stanza one and two:

Lenyang’ engiyibona yethwasa

Ihlephukile phezu kwamahlombe

Entshonalanga, laphaya ensansi

Isikhumbuz' izindab' ezinkulu ezindala.

Ngakho konke lokhu Nkosi

Sibonga wena.

Sikhunjuzwa wen' uthwabaza

Emhlabathini wezwe lakithi

Wona lona wabantu abamnyama,

Ungakhonzwa zigqili, nazichaka.

Ngenxa yalokho Nkosi

Siyamangala.

(Vilakazi 1935, 1)

(This moon I watch appearing now,

A broken bow that glows above

The shoulder of the western sky,

Recalls to all, great past events:

For this, O Lord,

We thank You.)

(And we remember too, how You

Wandered through this very land of Africa,

This land of peoples who are black;

No band of hirelings tended You:

By this, O Lord,

We are amazed.)⁴

In the first stanza of this poem, Vilakazi is talking about the new moon. He uses the first person 'ngi' ('I') to refer to himself, which suggests that he is paying attention to

⁴ The English translations were taken from Sibisi (2001: 75). The full reference is provided in the reference list.

this subject of the 'new moon'. The symbolic use of the new moon can be interpreted as an image that represents new beginnings in life. In this regard, new beginnings in Vilakazi's life. However, the use of the image '*ihlephukile*' ('broken bow') is a symbol of slavery that is imposed on black people by the Western colonisers. In this poem, Vilakazi is protesting the slavery of black people. He is talking on their behalf; therefore, he is their mouthpiece.

While in the analysis of this poem, Zondi (1995: 52) makes the following point about Vilakazi: "this is clearly demonstrated by Vilakazi's poem '*Ngephasika*' where he points out that blacks are discriminated against solely because of their colour". In this poem, Vilakazi at first is talking to himself about the events of the past, but in stanza two, he uses the pronoun 'we', which represents a group of people who are talking to God about their struggles as black people wherein they are discriminated against by white people on the basis of skin colour.

Apart from Vilakazi being the voice of the poor masses in South Africa, he is also seen advising the Zulu people to discern lies from real stories and refrain from believing everything they are told by other people especially people with whom they do not share the same beliefs, values, and traditions. In the poem entitled '*Inkelenkele yakwaXhosa*' ('The Xhosa Calamity'), Vilakazi reminds us of the calamity which occurred in 1856 in the Xhosa land and destroyed the Xhosa people.

Stanza one and two:

Umkhosi was' uhlatshwe walawulwa

Lonk' elikaKleli noSandile

Layizwa intokazi kaMhlakaza

Yon' eyayiwabonile lawo

Mathong' okoko bay' abangazange

Baze bawasikaze ngamehlo.

Ilanga labe selimiswa njalo,

Lapho ngisho wena salukazi

*Umxhilibana njengodade-nje,
Wawuzobilelwa ubutshitshi
Ukhunjuliswe lokhuy' okudala
Zithi kuwe izinsizwa: qoma.*

(Vilakazi 1935, 2)

(The announcement was out already
To the entire land of Kleli and Sandile
The message was heard by the daughter to Mhlakaza
The one who saw the ancestors
Ancestors of her forefathers
Whom others never saw.)

(The day was chosen then
Wherein even the older women
Older as my sister
In their young age
Remembered their youth days
When boys say to you: date.)

In this poem, Vilakazi reminds us of a story '*inganekwane*' ('folktale'⁵) wherein the white people used Mhlakaza who coached his daughter Nongqawuse to spread lies/ story that she has seen the ancestors who then instructed her to tell Xhosa people to burn their castle and warehouses, '*izinqolobane*'. This story may not be documented but it triggers some sense and ideas of what happened when the colonisers came to South Africa and took away our forefathers' castle and fortunes.

⁵ The story is not documented, it is a folkloric story among the Xhosa nation.

In this poem, Vilakazi is trying to advise Zulu people not to do what the Xhosa people did by taking things for granted and in this case, believing what Nongqawuse said to them. Sibisi (2001: 85) states that “the colonisers were playing on the superstitious beliefs of the Xhosa people”. It can be argued that the colonisers came with this plan because they knew that the Xhosa people were superstitious and cultural. They had a strong belief in their ancestors, hence they readily believed Nongqawuse.

A scholar of note, Zondi has written extensively on the works of Vilakazi. Beginning with her master’s dissertation titled, ‘Protest in B.W. Vilakazi’s Poetry’ (1995), she has provided an in-depth examination of his works. She went to great lengths to unpack his works as evident in her articles which she wrote in 2005, 2011, 2018 and 2020. Zondi proposes that Vilakazi’s works should be at the centre of higher education amidst an outcry of decoloniality and promotion of African languages, whose marginalisation is still the case in our democratic South Africa. I will delve into her works more to uncover the link between her arguments and recommendations I propose in my study.

The arrival of B.W. Vilakazi in Johannesburg made him realise that black people were treated like slaves in the mines. Hence, he wrote a protest poem entitled ‘*Ezinkomponi*’ (‘On the mine compounds’).

Looking at stanza one of the poem, ‘*Ezinkomponi*’:

*Dumani mishini yezinkomponi,
Nidume ngesokusa lize lishone.
Ngizovuka, musani ukungibelesela.
Dumani mishini ningalaleli
Ukugquma kwezisebenz’ ezimnyama,
Ziqaqanjelwa ngamanxeb’ omzimba,
Nezithubula zomoya zifuthelene,
Insila yomjuluko inuk’ emzimbeni,
Inqulu yenu niyithintitha kuthi do.*

(Vilakazi 1945, 60)

(Roar and clang - thunder away powerfully mine machines,
Roar from dawn till darkness falls⁶
I will rise up, don't persist for me,
Roar machine and don't listen,
A roar of black workers,
They suffer from physical wounds,
And the storm wind blows on it,
Sweat smells in the body,
You are pulling your bundles around.)

In this stanza, the poet is protesting about the enslaving of black mineworkers in the mines. In lines 5-9 of stanza one, he states that:

(A roar of black workers,
They suffer from physical wounds,
And the storm wind blows on it,
Sweat smells in the body,
You are pulling your bundles around.)

These lines are key in the content of this poem. First, they outline the real issues that black miners are faced with in the mines and these issues still exist in the mines to this day. One would therefore argue that the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi – particularly the themes he addressed – are still relevant even today though his poems were written during the apartheid regime.

In another poem entitled '*Ngoba...sewuthi*' ('Because...you now say'), Vilakazi is protesting about the abuse of black people in the mines.

Stanza one:

Ngoba ngimamatheka njalo,

⁶ The first and the second lines from the translation were taken from Zondi (2011:179) and the rest of the translations are my own.

*Ngikhombisa nokwenama,
Ngihlabelela ngephimbo,
Nom' ungifak' emgodini
Ngaphansi kwezinganeko
Zamatsh' aluhlaz' omhlaba-
Sewuthi nginjengensika
Yon' engezwa nabuhlungu.*

(Vilakazi 1945, 19)

(Because I am always smiling,
Showing happiness,
Singing with my voice,
Even though you put me in the mine.
Under difficult situations
Of green stones of earth-
Now you say I am a pillar.
The one who does not even feel pain.)

These cited lines depict the living conditions of black people in the mines. The black people are maltreated as they face the devastating effects of industrialisation. In this stanza, Vilakazi tells us that the miners are treated as strong people who do not feel pain. In stanza two of the poem, Vilakazi depicts another type of abuse which is hard labour. The poet uses this word to describe the feeling of miners '*Sewuthi nginjengedwala*' ('You now say I am like a stone'). This line suggests that the white man never treated the black people in the mines as human beings. They are given hard labour and are made to work under bad conditions. Their safety is not important because they are considered strong people since they are black.

In the poem, '*Woza Nonjinjikazi*' (Come, Monster of Steel), Vilakazi is against the arrival of the white people in the black communities wherein they created railway trains, lines and companies that took over our forefathers' land.

First four lines of stanza two:

Waleth' izihubahubane

Zazovukuz' umhlaba wethu

Kunamhla sibon' amagquma

Amhlophe njengezihlabathi

(Vilakazi 1935, 15)

(You brought machines.

To dig our land

Today we see hills.

Which are white like sand.)

In this poem, Vilakazi is talking about the trains that colonisers created. He refers to the train as a 'monster of steel' a literary term (metaphor) symbolising the dangerous nature of the train. It is well known that the train is mostly used to transport black people from different parts of the country (South Africa) to Johannesburg since it is the city of gold and industry.

Sibisi (2001:116) unpacks this aspect of industrialisation clearly by stating that "European expansion was accompanied by the development of a modern capitalist system of economic exchange which meant that the colonies were established with the intention of providing raw materials for the burgeoning economies of the colonial powers". The establishment of the railway train in South Africa was one of the strategies used by the colonisers to promote their interests and enslave the black workers by paying them a pittance. Their major interest was wealth generation. Therefore, the working conditions and safety of black workers were never a priority.

In this cited poem, the poet is fighting for the poor and silenced black masses of South Africa who are not treated with dignity as deserving of human beings.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi is worth revisiting because the themes he addressed during his time are still prevalent even today. In this regard, Zondi (2018:3) aptly articulates this sentiment where she writes:

issues Vilakazi addressed in the first half of the 20th century remain relevant to social issues today. The safety of black miners is one such issue, considering the recent fatalities at Sibanye Gold Mine in

Carletonville, where the death toll had risen to seven by the 7th of May (Times Live 2018) and the Lily Mine disaster in Mpumalanga two years ago, for which families of the victims have not found closure yet (ENCA 2018).

It is important to recognise that Vilakazi was among the first generation of black African writers in South Africa. Vilakazi was a literary scholar, novelist, and poet who was regarded as “the father of modern Zulu poetry” (Ntshangase, 1995:1). However, B.W. Vilakazi also considered himself as a poet who has a social role and obligation as a modern poet. He was the voice of the voiceless, particularly during the apartheid regime. This is noticeable in his protest poems such as *Ezinkomponi*, *Ngizw’ingoma*, *Woza Nonjinjikazi*.

In the poem, ‘*Ngizw’ingoma*’ (I hear a song), Vilakazi was calling for unity among the marginalised ethnic groups of South Africa, that is, the black working class. While on this aspect about Vilakazi, Dhomo (1977:64) advances that “this is the new Vilakazi. We think by identifying himself with the struggles of his people, the poet has gained in breadth, strength and stature”. This point suggests that Vilakazi gained more power and stature as a poet when, through his protest poetry found in both *Inkondlo kaZulu* and *Amal’ezulu*, he became the voice of the voiceless masses.

William Shakespeare was a renowned English playwright, poet and actor who wrote great plays such as *Hamlet* (1603), *Romeo and Juliet* (1597) and *Macbeth* (1606). These works are studied in schools and universities all over the world, including South Africa. Even though these plays were written in the early 1500s, they addressed issues that are still relevant today; for instance, the play *Romeo and Juliet* which is a tragedy about two young Italians whose death finally united their feuding families. Insofar as B.W. Vilakazi’s works go, Zondi (2020:5) advocates that “it is timely that 70 years after his passing the impact of Vilakazi’s work should be revisited and centralised in the South African literary establishment especially given that although his lifespan was a decade shorter than that of Shakespeare, he nonetheless accomplished a great deal”. In drawing this parallel, Zondi is clearly of the view that Vilakazi should be regarded as a ‘classic’. Ntshangase (1995: 2) argues that “African literature in South Africa is defined as literature about Africans and by Africans written in English and the literature

in African languages is not African literature but literature in indigenous African languages”. I find this point crucial and yet disturbing in the sense that in the African space, the African language literature is not recognised; instead, the literature written in English is the only literature recognised as African literature.

Perhaps, this is the root cause of not having black authors who write in African languages recognised as ‘classic’. At the same time, quality in African languages is defined using the lenses of European literature. To me, this is a serious issue in the literary fraternity, which needs to be addressed. This issue, therefore, calls for decoloniality in the South African literary canon. Who determines the criteria for a work of art to be labelled a ‘classic’? Why must we use the European criteria to assess African literature? Why is it that literature written in African languages is not recognised as African literature? What qualifies literature written in English to be called ‘African literature’? These questions are important to trigger some sense to the community at large about this canon used in the literary circle.

Another issue here is the belief that as Africans we must always depend on the West. This is a problem for the present and future generations if not addressed now. To support this notion about the said belief, we can look at the books written in the 19th century in South Africa. The book by John Langalibalele Dube entitled *Isitha Somuntu Omnyama Nguyena Uqobo Lwakhe* (The Enemy of a Black Person is Himself) and the book by SVH Mdhuli entitled *The Development of the African*, were meant to educate the African middle class to exchange their traditional ways for the Western ways. The purpose of these teachings (through these books) was to emphasise to Africans that they cannot do anything without the Europeans (Ntshangase, 1995: 5). Therefore, I argue here that such books were used as a tool to brainwash black people into thinking and believing that they are nothing without white people. This belief has caused a lot of damage in the Africans’ minds. Africans take almost everything from the West and implement it in Africa. We see this in education, creative writing, arts, and business. For the world to recognise the artist, especially the creative writer, he must have written in English and not an African language. This also applies to the great poets, such as Vilakazi, who is the pioneer of Nguni literature, but he was never labelled a ‘classic’, simply because he did not appease the Europeans by writing in their language; instead, he wrote in isiZulu. Wa Thiong’o (1998: 101) poses important questions about Africans’ tendency to believe in Europe rather than in themselves as

Africans. He asks, “what is the difference between a politician who says Africa cannot do without imperialism and the writer who says Africa cannot do without European languages?” Wa Thiong’o was asking these questions of African writers and reminding them that they have always complained about the neo-colonial economic and political relationship to Euro-America. He was cautioning the African writers that by continuing to write in foreign languages such as English, they are also continuing with a neo-colonial slavish and cringing spirit. These questions by Wa Thiong’o are relevant in this present argument, which is addressed in this chapter. The issue of Africans dependent on Europe is the one that creates the problems we face in the literary space. The issue of Vilakazi not labelled a ‘classic’ is created by the same belief that African languages cannot compete with English, which is a universal language. However, we as African writers have a duty to change the status quo by continuing to write in our languages and not in English.

To elucidate the point above, on the subject of ‘classics’ or rather ‘classical authors’, one may argue that there is still a gap between literature written in English and that written in African languages. In most cases, literature written in African languages is not recognised in the literary fraternity. Swanepoel (1996:20) as quoted in Ngwenya (1998:127) argues that “there seems to exist a South African literary history of which African-language literature is not part, and consequently finds itself in a position of marginality”.

Similarly, Zondi (2020:5) argues that:

when reading about William Shakespeare, for example, literary historiography and literary theory undeniably underscore that his works are central to the literary canon (of Britain, English literature and world literature). His works are labelled “classic”, and himself a “universal writer”.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasise the point that B.W. Vilakazi’s works deserve to be revived and be labelled as ‘classic’. Moreover, the issue of literature written in African languages not being recognised in the literary canon needs to be addressed because African languages – particularly in South Africa – are indigenous languages

and official languages of the country as mandated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

In the poem entitled '*Khalani maZulu*' ('Weep, you Zulu'), Vilakazi is reminding us of the bloody 1856 battle of Ndongakusuka wherein Mbulazi, the brother of Cetshwayo and his army were killed while Cetshwayo won the battle, took the throne from his father King Mpande, and became the Zulu king (Canonici and Cele, 1998: 73).

Stanza two:

Seniyakhohlwa yin' ukuthi

Kuyinhlawulo yenu nathi

Ukuba mihla nayizolo

Sikhumbule iNdongakusuka

(Vilakazi 1935, 17)

(Have you really forgotten

It is your punishment to you and us

Today and tomorrow

To remember the battle of Ndongakusuka)

In this poem, the poet mourns for Mbulazi who was killed by his brother Cetshwayo. He reminds the Zulu people of this bloody battle and that they should mourn this tragedy and thus remember those who died. To me, this suggests that Vilakazi was protesting for peace and closure on this massacre. He is asking the Zulu people, particularly the Zulu army, to find closure and make peace. His tone and the choice of poetic words suggests that he was not eager to witness another battle in the Zulu nation.

Canonici and Cele (1998: 75) imply that "Vilakazi's poem *Khalani maZulu* can be considered a call for national reconciliation. It was composed on the death of Solomon kaDinuzulu (1933)". I support this notion because Vilakazi was pleading with the Zulu warriors to make peace and avoid further battles in Zululand. This poem gives an account of historical events in the Zulu nation and the poet is protesting the battles, killings, and bloodshed. He is for peace and unity in the Zulu kingdom.

In this chapter, I analysed the poems in which B.W. Vilakazi protests about the social ills suffered by the masses of poor people. The primary argument of this chapter was that the duty of the poet in society is not just to write, cite and publish the works of art, poetic pieces, for self-enrichment; instead, it is a social responsibility. The chapter gave a full scope of the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi which addresses the social ills, among those poems were: *'Ngephasika'*; *'Woza Nonjinjikazi'*; *'Inkelenkele yakwaXhosa'*; *'Khalani maZulu'*; *'Ngoba...sewuthi'* and *'Ezinkomponi'*. These poems portray Vilakazi as a social poet, *'imbongi yabantu'* ('people's poet'). As Dhlomo (1977: 64) correctly puts it, "we think by identifying himself with the struggles of his people, the poet has gained in breadth, strength and stature". In the next chapter, I will provide a short conclusion of the study. The summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations will be presented in this chapter.

Chapter 4 Conclusion

4.1. Summary of chapters

In chapter one, a platform was created to place this research in context by presenting the aims and objectives of the study in relation to the research problem and providing a relevant theoretical background and literature to the study. In essence, the chapter presented some of the relevant literature in the African continent as well as in South Africa with the objective of establishing how the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi continues the narrative of African writers. The review's central argument was that writers need to situate their imagination on issues that talk to communities' concerns.

In chapter two, I gave an analysis of some of Benedict Wallet Vilakazi's selected poems which speak to issues of class identity and urban-rural identity. The analysis provided a backdrop of his life and times while also arguing that his poetry reveals a man who was preoccupied with a search for identity. The chapter also laid a background to the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi by bringing on board the aspect of Romantic poetry. Over and above that, the chapter established that his poetry was influenced by the Romantic poets such as Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats.

In chapter three, I analysed the poems in which B.W. Vilakazi protests about the social ills suffered by the masses of poor people. The purpose of analysing these poems was to argue that the duty of the poet in society is not just to write, cite and publish the work of art, poetic pieces, and self-enrichment; instead, it is a social responsibility. The poet is ought to rebuke society, build society, encourage good deeds, and discourage evils through his or her poetic expressions.

This chapter will provide a short conclusion of the study. It will present the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations will be presented in this chapter. In aligning the poems which form part of the portfolio with those of Vilakazi, the study analysed the poetry of Benedict Wallet Vilakazi with a focus on what was happening in the country at the time. The main argument of this study was that his poetry reveals a man who lived in two worlds: that is, one world of African tradition and another of Western influence.

4.2. Discussion of findings and recommendations

The study found that B.W. Vilakazi was inspired by the ancestral spirits to become the poet (*imbongi yesizwe*). We witness this through his poem entitled ‘*Ugqozi*’ (‘Power of Inspiration’). This finding resonates with Dhlomo who posits that “spiritual revolution is taking place in the poet is evidenced by the number of introspective, meditative personal poems such as ‘*Ugqozi*’ (‘Power of Inspiration’)” (Dhlomo, 1977:64).

Furthermore, the study found that B.W. Vilakazi is a traditional and cultural poet who never wanted to lose himself. For instance, when he arrived in Johannesburg, he was not happy to be in the city. He missed his rural life. In the poem entitled ‘*kwaDedangendlale*’, he says ‘*Ngikhumbule kud’ ekhaya*’ (‘I miss far away at home’). In another poem entitled ‘*Imfundo Ephakeme*’ (‘Higher Education’), he is captured expressing his disappointment on the issue of education and his academic journey. Apparently, when he was young, he thought that once he had finished studying, he would have joy. However, he is not finding joy in studying. Moreover, his unhappiness can be attributed to the fact that he keeps studying and perusing the pages in the books written and prescribed by the white man. B.W. Vilakazi, in this poem, is talking about Western education which does not incorporate the knowledge and ideas of the black people. Koopman (2005:73) comments:

When Vilakazi left Natal to move to Johannesburg, he did so in the full knowledge that he was leaving behind the place where he was born and where his ancestors lay buried. He knew he was cutting himself off from those links of time and place. He knew he would only be able to return ‘in his mind’s eye’.

I concur with the points raised by Koopman. Vilakazi was not impressed with the city life. Even though he agreed to come to Johannesburg, he remained worried about his roots and culture. Therefore, this suggests that Vilakazi was obsessed with his identity and culture. He did not want to lose himself due to adopting an urban way of life in the city.

This finding is supported by Ntshangase (1995:11) who states that “for Vilakazi, the complete self can only be found in the culture and tradition, and culture and tradition

can only be found in the countryside”. The point raised here suggests that Vilakazi was a traditional man, yet he was also an educated man. This tells us that he was indeed a man who lived in two worlds, that is, the world of African tradition and the world of Western influence. He continued to love and practise his culture while he pursued his studies and lived in the city of gold. Zondi (2020:13) posits that Vilakazi did not pretend that the challenge of merging African traditionalism and Western modernity had no impact on him; instead, his poems reflect “his awareness of the challenging task of having to ensure continuity and preservation of Zulu traditions while simultaneously devising new strategies and forms of poetic expression to suit modern contexts” (Ngwenya, 1998:129). Both Zondi and Ngwenya agree that Vilakazi was eager to agglutinate the African traditions with Western modernity provided there was a balance between the two practices.

Moreover, the above findings resonate with Gramsci’s Theory of Cultural Construction which asserts that the upper classes always push their own culture and ideology, and the lower classes are then compelled to accept the identity of the upper classes. The fact that Vilakazi discovered that there is no incorporation of black people’s knowledge in academia suggests that the education system was made to push the interests and the agenda of the upper class. One may argue that the agenda involves the narrative that black people’s beliefs, traditions and cultures are worthless; therefore, black people should abandon their own traditions and cultures and adopt Western cultural beliefs. Vilakazi was against the same system during his time as a student in the white university (University of the Witwatersrand) wherein he saw that the system did not accommodate him as a black rural and cultural student. The books he studied did not have the ideas, knowledge, and history of his forefathers, hence in his poetry, he was protesting for the incorporation of both black ideas and white ideas so that there would be a balance of knowledge production in the institutions of higher learning.

The study also found that B.W. Vilakazi was the voice of the voiceless because he was advocating for the rights and dignity of black people in the mines and in society. Dhlomo (1977: 64) supports this finding by stating that “we think by identifying himself with the struggles of his people, the poet has gained in breadth, strength and stature”. In the poems entitled ‘*Ezinkomponi*’ (‘On the mine compounds’), ‘*Woza, Nonjinjikazi*’ (‘Come, Monster of Steel’), and ‘*Ngoba...sewuthi*’ (‘Because...you now say’) we find

him speaking on behalf of the suffering black people in the mines. The issue of land that was forcefully taken by white people is also incorporated in the poem entitled '*Woza, Nonjinjikazi*' ('Come, Monster of Steel'). Sibisi (2001: 116) unpacks this aspect of industrialisation clearly by stating that "European expansion was accompanied by the development of a modern capitalist system of economic exchange which meant that the colonies were established with the intention of providing raw materials for the burgeoning economies of the colonial powers". The establishment of the railway train in South Africa was one of the strategies used by the colonisers to push their interests and enslave the black workers by paying them peanuts. The dangers associated with the train were never a concern to the colonisers; their major interest was the generation of wealth. Therefore, the working conditions and safety of black workers were never a priority. Zondi (2011:174) posits that:

The move exposed him to both admiration and jealousy. In this solitary position, he ventured into the heart of industrialisation: the gold mine compounds, where he could easily identify with the displaced and exploited miners, as he was overwhelmed by the unceasing deafening noise of heavy machinery. This he saw as the symbol of heartless white exploitation, the unfeeling long hand of distant capitalist interests.

The above assertion suggests that the arrival of B.W. Vilakazi in Johannesburg made him realise that black people were slaves in the mines. Hence, he wrote the protest poem entitled '*Ezinkomponi*' ('On the mine compounds').

The study ascertained that Vilakazi's poetry was influenced by the Romantic poets. This is evident in his poem is entitled '*kwaDedangendlale*' (In the Valley of a Thousand Hills). I can say that Vilakazi learned from Wordsworth how to be a Romantic poet. They both love nature. Wordsworth tells us about Tintern Abbey, which he visited five years before writing about it, and he found it still the same on his second visit. Wordsworth is not only telling us about this place in general, but he is praising the beauty of this place that has lasted all that time since he visited it five years before. It is still beautiful. The influence of Romantic poetry in Vilakazi's poetry can also be traced in these poems: the poem entitled '*Inqomfi*' ('The Lark'). In this poem, Vilakazi is amazed when he sees a bird singing, and he is wondering who taught a bird to sing.

In another poem entitled '*Cula Ngizwe*' ('Sing so that I hear'), Vilakazi tells us about the effects of listening to a bird while it is singing. In this poem, the poet uses images of drunkenness, drugs, and untimely sleep, which echo themes to be found in the writings of Keats. For instance, Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, last stanza:

*O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."*

(Keats, Phillips, Bradner, Koch, & DeMerritt, 2003)

In this stanza, the poet talks about the urn, by saying that it is like eternity, in that it "doth tease us out of thought". He believes that when his generation is long dead, the urn will remain, teaching future generations its enigmatic lesson: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty". In this poem, Keats shows us that he is more interested in the nature of art while Vilakazi was interested in the beauty of nature. Therefore, this suggests that both Keats and Vilakazi use images or symbols which is a common poetic expression for most poets especially Romantic poets. In the last two lines of the stanza, Keats glorifies his urn as a beautiful piece of art. Additionally, Vendler (1983:134) said this about the last two lines of Keats' poem:

But the whole last sentence of the poem is the sentence of the speaker who, in his prophecy, recounts what the urn will say to succeeding generations.

These two lines suggest that indeed, Keats is also obsessed with nature. Therefore, both Vilakazi and Keats are interested in praising and valuing nature. Their choice of words in appreciating nature is found to be similar. Keats uses nature as a symbol to define the beauty of art.

Furthermore, Vilakazi (1938:127) as quoted in Zondi (2020:13) confirmed the influence of Romantic poetry in his work by stating that “if we imitate the form, the outward decoration which decks the charming poetry of our Western masters, that does not mean to say that we have incorporated into our poetry even their spirit”. Vilakazi is emphasising the fact that although we might employ the Western form of poetry, we only take what will improve our poetry to match with or echo modern society. I agree with Vilakazi’s notion when it comes to modernity. He was the true reflection of a poet who had the background of a rural traditional community but was able to live in the urban area and still adapt. He was the first Zulu poet to infuse the Western form, rhythm, and images in Zulu poetry. Attwell (2005:89) as quoted in Zondi (2020:14) praises Vilakazi by stating that “we can now see that Vilakazi’s seemingly obsessive fondness for rhyme, together with his interest in prosody, were essentially means to end, which was to enable Zulu writing to acquire abstraction, distance, monumentality and perfection—broadly speaking, the qualities of aesthetics”. This finding that Vilakazi learned modern poetry from the Romantic poets suggests that Vilakazi was indeed a man who lived in two worlds. He was able to continue living his traditional life in the city. He had to study and attain academic degrees, while on the other hand, he had to live a new life. The knowledge he consumed at the University of the Witwatersrand was not from his background; instead, it was Western knowledge. However, he continued to embrace this new knowledge and ideas with the hope of combining them with his traditional and cultural knowledge. He was always in search (and protection) of his identity. On the other hand, his upbringing also involved Christian principles due to the influence of the missionaries who took over during his time at school. But most importantly, when he left KwaZulu-Natal for Johannesburg, he was faced with the considerable challenge of adopting a new lifestyle that was totally new and strange to him.

Therefore, having made all the above points, I argue that the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi is relevant even today because it addresses the social problems we still have in our society. For example, the issue of slavery in the mines, and the issue of Western education which does not incorporate African knowledge and ideas. These issues are relevant to our present society even today. We still experience fatalities in the mines, but his poetry was written in the years 1935-1945. Therefore, Vilakazi proved to us

that he was a poet who was not only writing for his joy, but he was writing to transform society and to advocate for the rights, dignity, and well-being of the black masses of our country.

Moreover, the above findings motivate and support the call made by scholars of note such as Zondi (2020), who advocates for the revisiting of the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi with the focus on utility and meaning of African languages literature at the institutions of higher learning. Furthermore, this study argues that B.W. Vilakazi's poetry does not die, perish, or fade with time; instead, it is unique and always remains fresh and relevant. His poetry still influences and inspires new poets in isiZulu literature even today. Therefore, I agree with Zondi (2020:7) who submits that B.W. Vilakazi should be labelled a 'classic'.

However, I believe that for Vilakazi to be successfully crowned a 'classic', the issue of literature written in African languages and that which is written in English must first be addressed. Ntshangase (1995: 2) argues that "African literature in South Africa is defined as literature about Africans and by Africans written in English and the literature in African languages is not African literature but literature in indigenous African languages". I find this point crucial and yet disturbing in the sense that in the African space, the African language literature is not recognised; instead, the literature written in English is the only literature recognised as African literature. Perhaps, this is the root cause of not having the black authors who write in African languages recognised as 'classic'. At the same time, quality in African languages is defined using the lenses of European literature. To me, this is a serious issue in the literary fraternity, which needs to be addressed. This issue, therefore, calls for decoloniality in the South African literary canon. Who determines the criteria for the work of art to be labelled a 'classic'? Why must we use the European criteria to assess African literature? Why is it that literature written in African languages is not recognised as African literature? What qualifies literature written in English to be called 'African literature'? These questions are important to trigger some sense to the community at large about this canon used in literary circles.

Gxilise (2009) argues that there are few books published in African languages and that there is no market for them. In my view, literature written in English is the only

literature regarded as 'African literature' in South Africa or in the world. Moreover, literature written in African languages is not recognised; hence, when most aspiring black writers think of writing a piece of creative literary text, they think of writing in English rather than in their own African indigenous languages. Furthermore, the stigma associated with African languages and writers of African languages makes it hard for even the best writers, such as B.W. Vilakazi, to be recognised as 'classic'. Ndimande (2004:68) aptly captures this notion when she says, "the hegemony of English continues to perpetuate the low utilization of African languages".

Another issue at play here is the belief that as Africans we must always depend on the West. This is a problem to be faced by the present and future generations if not addressed now. To support this notion about the said belief, we can look at the books written in the 19th century in South Africa. The book by John Langalibalele Dube entitled *Isitha Somuntu Omnyama Nguyena Uqobo Lwakhe* (The Enemy of a Black Person is Himself) and the book by SVH Mdhuli entitled *The Development of the African*, were meant to educate the African middle-class to exchange their traditional ways for Western ways. The purpose of these teachings (through these books) was to emphasise to Africans that they cannot do anything without the Europeans (Ntshangase, 1995: 5). Therefore, I argue here that it is such books that were used as a tool to brainwash black people into thinking and believing that they are nothing without white people. This belief has caused a lot of damage in the African's mind. Africans take almost everything from the West and implement it in Africa. We see this in education, creative writing, arts, and business. For the world to recognise the artist, especially the creative writer, he must have written in English and not in an African language. This also applies to the great poets, such as Vilakazi, who is the pioneer of Nguni literature, but he was never labelled a 'classic', simply because he did not appease the Europeans by writing in their language; instead, he wrote in isiZulu. Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o (1998: 101) poses important questions about the Africans' tendency to believe in Europe rather than in themselves as Africans. He asks, "what is the difference between a politician who says Africa cannot do without imperialism and the writer who says Africa cannot do without European languages?" Wa Thiong'o was asking these questions of African writers and reminding them that they have always complained about the neo-colonial economic and political relationship to Euro-

America. He was cautioning the African writers that by continuing to write in foreign languages such as English, they are also continuing with neo-colonial slavish and cringing spirit. These questions by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o are relevant in this present argument which is addressed in this chapter. The issue of Africans dependent on Europe is what creates the problems we face in the literary space. The issue of Vilakazi not being labelled a 'classic' is created by the same belief that African languages cannot compete with English, which is a universal language. However, we as African writers have a duty to change the status quo by continuing to write in our languages and not in English.

In conclusion, this study has endeavoured to address all the themes which were posed in the introductory chapter of this study. The primary focus was to look at 1) the role and relevance of B.W. Vilakazi's poetry during both his time and the present time; 2) the relationship between the poet as a member of society and his works; 3) the life and times of B.W. Vilakazi and his poetry. The literature reviewed and the poems which were analysed in this study helped to answer and address the themes successfully. The major finding in this study is that Vilakazi was a traditional bard '*imbongi*' who did not just become *imbongi* for his own benefit; instead, *kwakuyimbongi yesizwe* ('he was the people's poet'). He was a traditional poet, or rather, man in the sense that he advocated for the preservation of Zulu culture and traditions. On another note, he advocated for the poor black people; he was their mouthpiece.

Another crucial finding is that Vilakazi was a man who lived in two worlds, that is, the world of African traditions and that of Western influence. First, he was a traditional man who grew up in the KwaZulu-Natal rural areas and later moved to Johannesburg. When he was in Johannesburg, he continued to value and live by his ancestral teachings while he also adopted city life. Second, he also studied further up to PhD level, but that did not influence him to abandon his culture and traditions; instead, he used the knowledge he obtained at university to develop isiZulu poetry; hence he was the first to pioneer isiZulu modern poetry.

As I conclude, I submit that the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi continues to be relevant even today. The themes addressed in his poetry are still prevalent in our present society even though his poetry was written in the 20th century (1935-1945). Vilakazi, therefore, deserves to be crowned a 'classic'. The criteria used in English literature to

acknowledge English authors as classical writers should also be applied to Vilakazi because he fully qualifies considering the impact of his works in society, its relevancy, purity, and the transformative nature of his poetry, which does not fade with time. It continues to transform the present generation.

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