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THE LIFE HISTORY OF Z.S. ZOTWANA

by

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**A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the
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Supervisor: Dr. M.A.B Nyamende

DECLARATION

I declare that THE LIFE HISTORY OF ZANEMVULA SYDNEY ZOTWANA is my own work and has not been submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been acknowledged and indicated by means of complete references.

Signature: signature removed

Date: 25-03-2003

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I explore the life story of Zanemvula Sydney Zotwana, a Xhosa writer of novels, essays and grammar books. Considering him to be one of the prolific writers of Xhosa literature, I felt encouraged to do a study of his life. My attempt for writing **Chapter 1** as an introductory chapter is in order to render a theoretical background to the entire research study.

Therefore, the Aim and Motivation, Scope and Approach are thoroughly examined, with the intention of showing my objective for writing this work. The brief inclusion of the writer's background is for enlightening readers about the importance of Zotwana's name in this study. The method I have applied for collecting his data can be scientifically regarded as being quantitative, since I had to deal with interviewing single individuals and not groups from the beginning to the end of this thesis.

Chapter 2 gives much attention to the entire life history of Zotwana from his early childhood stages until his present stage as a Sworn Translator and a Chief-Editor of the South African Parliament. His life is further explored from his career as a teacher, writer, educationist, politician as well as his social involvement with the Xhosa community of Gugulethu, in Cape Town.

An attempt to analyze Zotwana's essays in Imfincamfincane is carried out in **Chapter 3** with a view to compare and capture whether they adhere to the accepted conventional norms of both the traditional Western writings and traditional African writings. In addition his essays are analyzed in accordance with how they link with human behaviour in Xhosa communities.

The study further focuses on examining Zotwana's style of writing Xhosa novels and the various figures of speech that have been applied. This we read in **Chapter 4** as we attempt to identify his style of writing in Imijelo veGazi. A broader picture of South African political situation is discussed when dealing with the uneducated Black Farm Workers. The character of Mhlabunzima takes precedence over all other characters in this novel because he becomes one of the leaders of school boycotts.

Once again, the same attempt is further pursued in **Chapter 5** where the discussion about the novel Amanzithinzithi KaMzingisi is taking place. This novel brings in the situation of the past Apartheid Regime and all the hardships that Black Workers had to confront in the workplaces. Mzingisi assumes the position of a pioneer in workers' struggles in South Africa. In the process of saving others he loses his own life.

Finally we have a general conclusion of this study in **Chapter 6** with some quotations on definitions about literature, general observations about the study and about the author, and a way forward for future research developments. The exploration in this Chapter concerns itself with reviewing the previously written findings and seeks to address future research developments by pointing the way forward.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Aim and Motivation

This thesis is an attempt to create a recorded life history of Zanemvula Sydney Zotwana, who is one of the significant writers of Xhosa literature. My motivation to do this has been triggered by the noticeable lack of existing critical materials that deal with the writers' biographies in Xhosa literature. To a large extent I hope to contribute more written works to the visible lack of critical material in this field. In so doing I will be developing Xhosa literature and promoting the writing of Xhosa writers' biographies, as well as those of the other indigenous South African languages.

If we remember properly, we will realize that before (and since) 1994 all of the indigenous African languages of South Africa were marginalized. Only Afrikaans and English had the status of being official languages and the rest had no official status at all. After 1994 there was an implementation of various strategies that were intended for the improvement of all South African languages under the control of the new democratic government that took over the ruling of the country. Nine indigenous African languages were elevated to the same official status as Afrikaans and English. Xhosa was one of them.

According to Klima (1976:228), " among a group of more than ten other indigenous languages only four became standard languages towards the middle of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century", in South Africa. Included in that group Klima mentions Xhosa as being the first one, then Tswana, Zulu and Sotho. Gerard (1981:187-8) also confirms that Xhosa was the first African language to accept literary form when one of its writers, H.M. Ndawo, produced "the first vernacular novel Uhambo lukaGqobhoka (The Journey of a Convert, 1909).

Creating a literature of this kind, that deals with the writers' biographies may just be the beginning of uplifting the standard of Xhosa literature in order to reach the standards demanded by literature scholars in the entire continent of Africa. And not only that, but my objective is that Xhosa literature may if possible attain the minimum standard set by World Literatures in languages such English, French, Spanish, and so on.

Thus far, no writer-critic has written anything regarding the life history of Xhosa writers. In the past some Xhosa writers had a tendency to neglect writing biographies. Perhaps they did not consider the writing of biographies as being much beneficial to the Xhosa communities. On the other extreme, when we look at English literatures we find that novels, essays, poetic works, drama and the writers' biographies all flourished and developed at the same time. I feel that my task as a student of literature is to research and write about the biography of S. Zotwana, who I feel deserves recognition for the tremendous work he has done in developing and promoting the growth of

Xhosa literature. I feel that it would be unfair to overlook the contributions of such a man, who has worked so hard to promote Xhosa literary studies.

1.2 Scope and Approach.

I base my approach on existing evidence that has been applied by various theorists and critics of literatures. According to some theorists there are only two approaches that can be applied in this study, that is, the Western traditional approach and the African traditional approach. In view of these two approaches to literature Larson (1971:23) affirms:

This merging of two distinctly different worlds into one – a syncretism of two in one – might well be regarded as the key to understanding what Janheinz Jahn has called "neo-African Literature." For negritude and a great amount of what is now regarded as contemporary African literature has leaned toward a coupling of the cultural and aesthetic forms of the two worlds of traditional African and traditional Western.

African writings, as compared to the Western writings, may pose a problem if approached in a similar way by literary critics, because they are culturally and theoretically two distinct genres. Serudu (1993:18) claims:

The emergence of African writings in French in West Africa, in English in East, West and South Africa, together with the emergence of literatures in the various African languages of the subcontinent since the beginning of the century, (which, sad to

say, still appear to be unknown to the outside world), created a growing concern among critics that the so-called universal approaches may fail to do justice to the true African mode of literary expression.

In supporting the above argument Serudu (p.18) makes reference to Swanepoel's concerns:

The concern roots in the fact that "imported" theories may cause one to disregard, or even to deny specific cultural features which may be woven into at least some creative writing in the various literatures.

Therefore, if the essence of this study involves accumulating data about Zotwana who is a Xhosa writer, such an approach must be applied. It is also worth observing that we as Africans cannot totally exclude the use of the Western traditional approaches because literature has been brought to Africa through their influence. Some of these approaches will be discussed when I deal with the literature review. At present I shall concentrate on the fact that data on Zotwana has to come from a variety of sources, as I have already mentioned in the introduction above. The gathering of this information involved dealing with various kinds of people in Xhosa society. And that means that the first person I have consulted was the author himself, who is the focus of my study. Secondly I had to meet some people who know about his life, including his past students. Thirdly, I had to collect some information from the books Zotwana had written. And finally approach any other sources

of information I could get concerning his life as a teacher, writer, academic, editor and translator for the present South African government, et cetera. In order to carry out this task I have explored the above sources by visiting various places such as libraries and some individuals he taught as a teacher, and also made numerous visits to parliament in order to speak to him (Zotwana) personally.

As a result of the above-named facts my approach to this study depends on the successful collection of the relevant data about this writer. It is significant to bear in mind therefore, that as I mentioned under the previous sub-heading that there is no critical or relevant material in Xhosa literature concerning the written biographies of Xhosa writers. Therefore, criticizing writers is not mostly welcomed among Xhosa writers and other indigenous South African writers, because it has not been done in the past and therefore, can create some misunderstandings if not handled in an appropriate and decent manner. The only existing well-researched biography of a black literary figure is that of Sol Plaatje, one of the earliest Tswana writers who had used the indigenous languages of South Africa extensively (Willan, 1984). Looking at the entire African continent and concerning African writers and critics, Iyasere (1971:22) illuminates:

We Africans must be sympathetic and encouraging to our writers but we must not allow our patriotic zeal to blind us to their faults. Indeed, it is our duty to point them out when they occur. It is only through sensitive and informed criticism that we can establish a healthy tradition of criticism of African literature.

The statement above was meant to remove suspicion between writer and critic and to allow African critics to criticize African writers in a constructive manner for the benefit of all parties concerned. My approach in criticizing Zotwana will not be any different from the one that is applied by other scholars and critics of literary works. My views are based on what he has written, and on the information that I collected about his life from all the relevant sources.

Stating his views on the subject of criticism Lukacs (cited in Amuta, 1989:30) points out that:

For the writer, a "good critic" is one who praises him and attacks his neighbour; a "bad critic" is one who scolds him or promotes his neighbour. For the critic, then great body of literature represents a dreary livelihood that demands much pain and effort.

This argument shows that the writer and critic each has his/her role to play in the shaping up of literature for the nations of the world. Criticism is not meant to embarrass any writer for his/her mistakes but rather to exalt him and encourage him in the way that pupils and students are encouraged to learn at school. Therefore, in order for Xhosa literature to advance to another stage, writer and critic should hold hands and lift the standard of literature together.

1.3 The author's background

In writing about Zotwana's background the following information is essential for his readers in order to have a full understanding of this author: personal information about the author, his formative years and his contributions. One South African scholar, and a critic of the Sotho language, Serudu (1993:15) highlights the following concerning the necessity in understanding an author's life history:

Historical – biographical information on the author, his formative years and outlook, were necessary for an understanding of the background of his novels, the reconstruction of their thematic worlds.

In the argument above Serudu was elaborating on some truths about Matsepe's life history, as one of the Sotho writers of this century, and what he says here about him is also true about Zotwana as it is true of all other writers. In this day and age the biographical information of any writer is too significant to be overlooked. Essentially, African people throughout the entire African continent are trying to unite under the banner of African Renaissance, the initiative of the South African President Thabo Mbeki for a united Africa. As a result thereof, African cultural exposure has reached even the European continent, and many people are interested in visiting Africa. Therefore writers

in indigenous African languages also need exposure since there is an increasing global interest in the promotion and development of African cultures.

Zotwana was born at Kroonstad in 1943. He was the fourth of six children. He began his primary school education in Transkei after his parents had moved from Kroonstad. After passing standard six at Tsembeyi Primary School (Lady Frere) in 1958, he moved to Freemantle Boys High School where he passed standard 10 in 1963.

It would seem that he was influenced into writing books by one of his ex-High School teachers, a certain Mr. N. N. Vaphi, who in Zotwana's view, influenced him during the early stages of his life, to love his language, Xhosa. But, Zotwana says that it took him a much longer time to actually engage himself in writing.

More discussions about Zotwana's life history, his contributions to education, and his involvement in community projects will be discussed fully in Chapter Two. There is no work that has been written about Zotwana so far except for an unpublished Honours' thesis submitted by Lumka Antoinette Kiviet (department of African languages, Unitra, 1994).

1.4 Review of Literature.

Literary theorists have in the past attempted to define literature, but not one of them has come up openly and declared that this is what they think literature is. Eagleton (1983:1) agrees with this statement:

There have been various attempts to define literature. You can define it, for example, as 'imaginative' writing in the sense of fiction – writing which is not literally true.

Even to theorists such as Eagleton, the definition stated above seemed insufficient to describe what literature is, and therefore he had to use other views, from other theorists, in order to approach this subject. He does not seem certain when he says, "Perhaps literature is definable not according to whether it is fiction or 'imaginative', but because it uses language in peculiar ways". On this note he makes reference to the Russian critic Roman Jakobson who says that literature represents an 'organized violence committed on ordinary speech' (p.2).

As we all know that literature deals with language, we may agree with the statement of Eagleton above, in claiming that literature involves the use of language 'in peculiar ways', and that it 'transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviates systematically from everyday speech'. But then, because he wants to convince the reader he further argues and says (p.22):

Literature, in the meaning of the word we have inherited, *is* an ideology. It has most intimate relations to questions of social power. But if the reader is still unconvinced, the narrative of what happened to literature in the later nineteenth century might prove a little more persuasive.

In elaborating on this point Eagleton further shows his readers how literature continued to be transformed towards the end of the nineteenth century through the growth of English studies, although according to him this promoted what he calls 'the failure of religion'. And this, he considered problematic as it meant according to his terms 'deep trouble' for what he considered to be the traditionally reliable, immensely powerful ideological form during that mid-Victorian period.

Different African writers have also defined literature differently as they perceived it in their own views. During the interviews that Lee Nichols (1984:17) undertook with some African writers between 1973 and 1978, he met many writers with different views on literature. One of them was Yulisa Amadu nicknamed "Pat" Maddy of Sierra Leone who (p.17) claimed:

Literature is the mother of politics. If there is no culture, no literature, I cannot see how politics can really be strong. Because any sensible politician can work from the premise of his culture.

In defining what is meant by "African literature" Emenyonu (1971:1) elucidates:

To others African literature means "a new literature of the world" with its authentic and original genre, themes, and messages. To a few it is simply a political document of protest against the assumptions of colonialism and imperialism as they relate to the world of the black man. To yet other people African literature in its ramifications represents a mere appendage to British or French literature since most of the African writers write in English or French.

Concerning the literature of the indigenous African people of South Africa, Jordan (1973:3) points out:

The history of the literature of South Africans begins long before these people knew anything about writing and long before the advent of the European.

According to Jordan, "the period that immediately succeeded that of Ntsikana's disciples may be regarded as one of literary stabilization amongst the Xhosa-speaking Southern Africans." In supporting this statement he claims (1973:53) that the following events took place among the Xhosa:

The Bible had been translated into Xhosa and Tiyo Soga, one of its translators, had also translated *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Part 1). These two books had a profound influence on the thought and style of African writers. The idea of individual, as against communal, formulation had taken root, but writers did not abandon the traditional style in their expression, nor did they cast aside their folklore. New experiments in versification began to appear, but the traditional forms asserted themselves all the time. It must be remembered that this was a transitional period in every detail of the people's lives.

In Jordan's view from the above statement, this was just a time of preparation for the greater literary material that was to follow these early writers. In other words, there had to be a foundation on which the succeeding writers could build. Of course, he does not forget to mention William W. Gqoba (p.64) as one of the early literary poets 'in the field of verse', and the fact that he became famous for his two "Great Discussions", which Jordan says, one was between the Christian and non-Christian, and the other on education.

The struggle that early writers of African languages had to confront was that

there was no existing and acceptable literary material that they could use as models for their writings, apart from " the translated versions of the Bible, biblical pamphlets and other religious documents" (Serudu 1993:2). This plight could have discouraged most of the enthusiastic African writers and scholars. The control of the missionaries over their literary converts was obstructive to literary progress in that they not only expected these converts to preach and interpret God's word in the church, but also restricted their writing to works that the church would approve.

Gerard (1982:3) elaborates on his views about the influence of Church missionaries:

It was only during the nineteenth century that Protestant missionaries, encouraged by the humanitarian anti-slavery movement, began to make some significant efforts towards the improvement of the lot of the people of Africa. To reach the people they had to study their languages and reduce them to writing. They had to establish schools, to spread literacy in the vernacular and produce reading material for the newly literate and – above all – enable each person to become cognizant of and to interpret the words that God has spoken.

In view of the fact that the early writings were intended to promote Christianity rather than Xhosa literature during that time, Zotwana (1993:iv) sums up his argument in the following way:

It was for this context that Xhosa literature was born. It was produced to promote the interests of the Christian Church and therefore those of the British Crown. Its production was controlled by the missionaries, the owners of the publishing houses, but it was produced by the Christian and literate Xhosa most of whom had studied in mission schools. It was produced to crush the past and any aspirations that were in conflict with those of the Christian church and the British imperial designs. In short, it was literature against its people.

That period of colonial administrators and missionaries not only disturbed some European critics and writers, but also to a large extent some African writers in the continent of Africa. One of those writers was Ngugi wa Thiongo who resents the kind of attitudes the missionaries and colonialists showed, and remarked as follows (1986:69):

The printing press, the publishing houses and the education context of the novel's birth were controlled by the missionaries and the colonial administrators ... the literature Bureau would not publish an African novel which had any but religious themes and sociological themes which were free from politics.

In South Africa African writers had to use metaphor in order to express their political views. During those days no individual was allowed to criticize the

State and its statutory laws. This meant that no individual was allowed to voice his/her opinion overtly in speech or writing. Concerning this particular treatment of writers by the State, Satyo (1980:in the introduction) confirms that all African writers were subjugated to government policies that restricted writers from presenting anything that was considered treacherous or influential. He continues to say that writers of literatures were then compelled to abandon the writing of novels and choose other genres such as poetry, and other literary forms.

According to Gerard (1971:52) the birth of the imaginative Xhosa novel took place over an extended period of time. He proposes that:

All the same, the process of acquiring the basic techniques of modern imaginative writing has normally extended over several generations. The first generation of Xhosa writers put their new writing skills to two main uses: the recording of traditional lore, and the composition of Christian hymns. It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that the Western genre of imaginative prose fiction was introduced into Xhosa literature, most prominently by a man who – somewhat paradoxically – was also perhaps the last of the great tribal bards.

The one and only tribal bard that Gerard refers to above here is none other than Samuel Edward Krune Mqhayi who was born in 1800 and is considered by famous scholars like B.W. Vilakazi to be “the father of Xhosa Poetry” in imaginative writing. In his own view Gerard (1971:63) suggests that Henry

Masila Ndawo should be considered the founder of the Xhosa novel because of his novel Uhambo lukaGqobhoka, which was printed in Lovedale 1909, and the same is still considered to be the first written Xhosa novel. Gerard also points out that Ndawo's novel exemplifies another version of W. Bunyan's Pilgrims' Progress (p.63). In Gerard's opinion, either way, Ndawo should be considered the founder of the Xhosa novel. He further adds that as the Xhosa novel progressed, the Xhosa drama was born and great writers like Guybon Sinxo (p. 67) were also born (1902). According to Gerard's claims, with Sinxo and other emergent writers who were also born at the turn of the century, "new themes and new genres were introduced". Numerous Xhosa scholars such as Satyo, Mkhonto, Nyamende, Mtuze, and others who wrote about Sinxo's books may agree with Gerard's claim that Sinxo indeed wrote on a variety of themes and topics.

For example, in Unojayiti Wam Sinxo wrote about urban men who are being ruled by their wives. It describes a social theme that depicts urban lifestyle as opposed to rural lifestyle. Another topic was that of Umzali wolahleko (a prodigal parent), where Sinxo explores the delinquency of children by observing the behaviours of negligent parents in Xhosa societies. I will not go on with Sinxo because our discussions are not only about him.

Satyo (Gerard, 1981:81) also asserts that Sinxo's style of writing is different from that exhibited by most Xhosa writers because unlike them, he wrote on a variety of topics that affected the lives of Xhosa communities. In support of this, he notes that B. W. Vilakazi accepts Sinxo as "the one to break the ice in

literary activity during this period," of "intellectual advance" in the South African's black man's history.

However there is but one scholar who does not agree with the fact that Ndawo is the first writer to publish a Xhosa novel. This scholar is Themba Sirayi, whose claim is that Mqhayi's novel USamson was published in 1907: i.e. before Ndawo's Uhambo lukaGqoboka in 1909. In his argument about the assessment of the Xhosa novel in order to fit "the universally accepted generic standards", he makes reference to Jafta concerning this inevitable lack. Sirayi (1989:1) notes:

The novel as a genre in Xhosa has not been given as much prominence as poetry and drama.

There is another significant figure in Xhosa literature, A.C. Jordan who made a memorable contribution to Xhosa literature by writing his classic novel, Inggumbo yeminyanya (1940). This novel exerted a great influence on both the contemporary writers of his time and those that followed him. Because he was writing about the traditional experiences of the Mpondomise people, he succeeded in creating a convincing novel. From his time onwards a number of Xhosa writers also followed this genre and began creating novels that dealt with traditional and cultural values of the Xhosa people and, showed how the then new generation disrespected those values. Among those writers I may mention; W.K. Tamsanqa with his two novels, Ukuba Ndandazile (1967), and Buzani Kubawo (1958), and, D.M. Jongilanga's Ukuqhawuka kwembeleko

(1982).

Satyo (Gerard, 1981:71) again makes reference to A.C. Jordan in his argument about features that were found in the literature around 1870 "during the last phase of the Wars of Dispossession" according to his statement. He claims that Jordan says that the legacy of these writers is demonstrated by

the unconscious co-operation between them and the tribal lords. The intellectuals write straightforward narratives, and the tribal bards compose and recite praise-poems in the traditional, often making references in figurative language to the incidents narrated by the intellectuals.

Still arguing about the subject of those early writers, what he calls in his terms, "the beginning of the thirst of literary activity among the Xhosa" he (p.75) quotes Jordan who notes:

... the first truly literate generation of Xhosa speakers was in a position to make contributions whose literary merit established once and for all the status of this dialect as the literary medium, not only for the original Xhosa-speaking people, but also of the Mbho people (so-called 'Fingos') who found sanctuary with the Xhosa about 1834, and of other sections of the Nguni whom literacy was beginning to reach through various missionary bodies throughout the Cape Province.

It is quite obvious that among the early and the modern writers there were some who were politically aware of the oppressive situations they lived under. Those are the writers that used metaphoric language and explored political themes in order to address the political situation of their country. According to Sirayi (1989:321), among those writers was Mahlasela, whose view (1973:2-3) of Xhosa literature is that it could be traced back to the early 1800s during the painful period of tribal wars amongst the indigenous inhabitants of South Africa. He further asserts that Rev. Joseph Williams of the London Missionary Society founded Tyhume Mission Station (later called Old Lovedale) in 1816.

Concerning the writing of Xhosa literature Satyo (cited in Gerard, 1983:72) supports Mahlasela's claim concerning the beginnings of Xhosa literature and the fact that it can be traced back to as early as 1800. But, in contrast to the above statement Mahlasela also gives us a later date than the one that he gave earlier about the beginnings of Xhosa literature, by claiming that it was put into writing as early as 1828 by Dr. John Philip of the Church of Scotland, who recorded Ntsikana's hymns in writing. In addition he states that the man Rev. John Bennie who arrived earlier than Dr. J. Philip became instrumental in planning an alphabet and orthography, and recorded every hymn in written form.

From Mahlasela's point of view (1973:2-7) we learn that Xhosa literature was first published in book form by the Wesleyan Church, in 1837. This "first issue of a paper" was called Umshumayeli weendaba (Preacher's News). According to Mahlasela there were numerous other newspapers that followed

this one. Among them IKhwezi (Morning Star), Iindaba, Isigidimi, Imvo, Umthetheli, and Inkqubela and Bona (magazine) are the more recent publications, and there are also many others. He further points out that John Tengo Jabavu, who is one of the Xhosas' greatest intellectuals also became a contributor as an editor of Isigidimi and Imvo.

In addition Mahlasela (p.7) states that Rev. W.B. Rubusana published a book – Zemk'iinkomo maqwalandini (Away go the cattle ye Cowards, 1906). In view of this opinion we may say that the first Xhosa writer is not Mqhayi with his book USamson (1907) or Ndawo with Uhambo lukaGqoboka (1909), but Rubusana.

In his article on "Xhosa literature" and its origin Satyo (Gerard, 1981:72) argues that Xhosa literature began prior to the establishment of Tyhume Mission station by Rev. John Brownlee in 1818. One may assume that these writers are in disagreement concerning the beginnings of Xhosa writing, but their point is about the exactness of dates. Furthermore Satyo (p.83) points out that Xhosa literature coincides with the arrival of white people in Southern Africa. In support of that he says the following:

It is not unfair to claim that Xhosa literature in general may be regarded as presenting a continuum of Xhosa life since the advent of the white man. In fact, as intimated above, it is no accident of history that the emergence of written literature among the Xhosa coincided with the arrival of the white nations in this land.

Although these writers may differ about the preciseness of dates, the fact that Xhosa literature was written in the early years of the nineteenth century can be deemed to be the real truth. I say this in reference to writers such as Janheinz Jahn who wrote at an earlier date than them, and whose claims are similar to theirs. Jahn (1968: 100-2) claims:

It is extremely clear that oral literature existed among the black indigenous languages before 1900. The only form of literature found at that time was the Bible and translations of Christian literature such as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* by Tiyo Soga into Xhosa (1867), and the Zulu version (1895).

Therefore, we cannot refute the fact that these scholars do not agree on the basis of the exactness of dates concerning the period of writing Xhosa literature because they all bring forth the same undiluted fact that they all tend to agree about the nineteenth century as the same period of writing the said literature.

1.5 Theoretical Background

Instead of using biographical literature as a base for my argument under this topic I have opted for a collaboration of both Western and African approach to my study, because of the unavailability of existing Xhosa biographies in Xhosa literature. Therefore I am compelled to base my views in part on the theoretical background of literature by using Western theoretical definitions from some of the Western theorists such as; Derrida, Lukacs, Eagleton, Fox, Larson and others, as well as some African theorists such as Chidi Amuta, Abiola Irele, Emmanuel Obiechina, including others like them who have discussed a lot about African literature, that is; what it is and how it must be handled.

Written literature of any form demands the creation of images and imaginations about life's experiences in the mind of a writer. Novel writing is also included in such creativity. In suggesting a philosophical approach to literature Fox (1937:49) points out that "novel-writing is a philosophical occupation". By making reference to Wuthering Heights, Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe et cetera, he claims that they "are great precisely because they have this quality of thought behind them, because they are highly imaginative, inspired if you like, commentaries on life."

About the artfulness of literature, there is evidence that different scholars agree on this subject although they have many angles from which they approach literature as art. Kwetana (2000:1) makes reference to Abraham who states:

The view that regards literature as an 'art' of different form and status above the rough – and – tumble of every day social, economic and political reality is thus today a well-recognized fallacy.

On the other extreme great critics like Mao Tse-tung (Amuta, 1989:122) associate literature and art to having close links with politics by declaring the following statement:

Literature and art are subordinate to politics, but in their own turn exert a great influence.

According to this statement, even though literature and art are like servants to politics they still have their power to influence any social sphere.

Regarding the involvement of literature in politics Dikeni (1992:168) quotes Murray who says this about literature:

In truth, it is literature in the primordial sense, which establishes the context for social and political action. The writer who

creates stories and narrates incidents which embody the essential nature of human existence in his time not only describes the circumstances of human actuality and the emotional texture of personal experience, but also suggests commitments and endeavors which he assumes will contribute most to man's immediate welfare as well as to his ultimate fulfillment as a human being.

Indeed all literature writers including Zotwana have the great task of addressing not only social and economic issues in their writings but also political tasks as well. In dealing with all those tasks one cannot dissociate literature from the society it represents.

The following statement bears witness that we can never fully understand a society's literature unless we know something about their culture, social structure and politics. In support of this Dikeni (1992:167) quotes Diamond who comments about literature and society in this way:

The literature of a society tells us much about its culture, social structure and even politics... In particular, fiction may give us special insights into how culture and history intersect with and reshape, or are reshaped by the lives of people ordinary and extraordinary.

Considering the fact that culture and history combined together have an

ability to reshape society's lives, we can therefore, assume that we cannot dissociate that strong link that exists between history and literature. In elaborating on the link between literature and history Amuta (1989:78) makes reference to Hegel who according to him saw an organic link between history and literature, and thus declares:

Every work, belongs to its age, to its nation, and to its environment, and depends upon particular historical and other ideas and aims. For this reason art scholarship further requires a vast wealth of historical information of a very special kind.

In his argument about history and literature Derrida (1992:131) points out that:

This history was also a history of literature if one accepts the idea that literature was born in it and died of it.

Derrida's statement is suggesting an unbreakable alliance between history and literature to a degree that if one of them dies the other one will die as well.

He further adds:

... but that the very concept of history has lived only upon the possibility of meaning and truth. Outside this system, it is impossible to resort to the concept of history without re-

inscribing it elsewhere, according to some specific systematic strategy.

According to this critic writers may be short sighted if they ignore the link of literature's co-existence with the metaphysical traditions that must be taken into consideration by literary critics. Fearing what this unforeseen ignorance might cause on the minds of the writers, he (1992:54) awakens them:

There is a sort of paradoxical historicity in the experience of writing. The writer can be ignorant or naïve in relation to the historical traditions which bears him or her, or which s/he transforms, invents, displaces.

Finally I wish to say that in all the theories I have discussed above here what remains significant is that they reveal the fact that literature is engaged with man's living situation throughout his/her life. Dikeni (1992:17) confirms this by making reference to Eagleton who says:

Literature, we are told is initially engaged with the living situation of men and women.

Therefore, by referring to the above literature theorists in my approach in discussing African literature, I feel somewhat vindicated and in line with the conventions of scholarly work. Chapter 2 deals with Zotwana's life history from the biographical data that I have collected from diverse sources but this

is further explained in the next sub-heading that deals with the organization of this study.

1.6 Organization of this study

In this way Xhosa literature may be in a similar vein uplifted to reach the standards maintained by other African countries in the continent of Africa, and if possible to match the basic standard earmarked for World literatures such as English, French, Spanish and other European literatures.

Therefore, Chapter 1, which is now under my discussion, will have to follow a similar scholarly approach that is required of all academic works. That approach entails the following sequence: expressing one's aim and motivation to write, scope and approach, historical background of the writer, review of literature and theoretical base. And as I have already said, because there is a lack of biographical information on Xhosa writers in Xhosa literature and other South African indigenous literatures I will then be obliged to use theorists of Western literatures in dealing with biographical material.

Chapter 2 is about Zotwana's life history from the biographical data I have collected from diverse sources. These sources include among them: friends, people who know him, and the books I read as well as the information I accessed via the internet from the computer database.

Chapter 3 focuses on discussing and analyzing his essays in

Imfincamfincane. Although I will not be able to discuss and analyze all essays, but I will dwell on a few that I will select, and that means that only those that have similarity will be dealt with.

Chapter 4 is based on the analysis of a novel called Imijelo yeGazi. I will be looking at the style of writing in comparison with his contemporaries and other traditional Xhosa writers. Most significantly is its theme and historical construction.

Chapter 5 is also devoted to analyzing another novel of Zotwana called Amanzithinzithi kaMzingisi. Seeing that both novels are similar because they both deal with the struggle and history of a Black nation there is a lot of overlapping to be expected. Similar to the above novel the theme and style of writing are important to observe, and, also other writing techniques that have been used by Zotwana in his books.

The concluding chapter, which is Chapter 6 is a summation of all the findings of the study and gives some way forward and future recommendations on research in this area of study. Thereafter, I will finally furnish the reader with all the bibliographical material work I received from the existing number of sources of information I have consulted.

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In conclusion, I must say that we now have a clue of how the layout of this thesis is constructed. And, therefore let us prepare our minds for the discussion that is to follow in Chapter 2, which deals with Zotwana's biography as insinuated earlier in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

The Life-History of Z.S. Zotwana.

2.1 Biographical data

Zanemvula Sydney Zotwana, who is affectionately known to his admirers as "Bra Zet", was born in Kroonstad in the Orange Free State on the 12th of October 1943 as I have already stated under the subsection about his background in the previous chapter. Of six children he was the fourth. His father is Bomvana Edward and his mother is Winifred Nobantu Zotwana. As a Xhosa he comes from the "Qoco clan" whose praises are the following: "Zikhali", "Jajo", "Tiyeka", "Mbizana", "Mabambo", "Buisoiobentonga".

2.2 His early life and education

According to the information I have gathered about Zotwana, he was still a very young boy when his parents decided to leave Kroonstad and came to live in Transkei at Lady Frere, in the farthest region of the Eastern Cape. He began his junior and senior primary education at Tsembeyi where he passed

standard 6 in 1958. From there he registered at Freemantle Boys' High School and passed standard 10 in 1963.

Due to the fact that there were no existing Universities in Transkei and its surrounds at that time, he was bound to proceed to the University of Fort Hare at Alice in 1964 for his tertiary education, and that is where he qualified as a teacher in 1965, receiving his South African Teachers Diploma there.

2.3 His career as;

2.3.1 A teacher

I have been told that Zotwana began his career as a teacher at Fezeka High School in Cape Town in 1966, teaching Xhosa and Latin. Mr. Bucks Baloyi a principal at Fezeka Senior Secondary School in Gugulethu, whom I interviewed with regard to Zotwana, told me that Zotwana was his educator from form 1 to 3 (grade 9 to 11), which means that he taught him from 1966 to 1968. Baloyi is certain that both he and Zotwana were newcomers at the school at that time. In answering the question, how he perceived him as a teacher, he said: "As an educator he was a very strict person who demanded much respect from his learners." He calls him a "Disciplinarian", or, an "Authoritarian" who regarded respect as a priority over individual freedom. However, the fact that he was a sociable person who hated hooliganism at school made him a favourite to the learners at his school. If one remembers correctly, this was the period when corporal punishment was still used at

schools, and Baloyi says that Zotwana used a "rod" because as a Caretaker he also had to supervise night study.

When I was still wondering what they actually meant when they regarded him as being very strict, Dr. A.B. Nyamende, my current Supervisor for this work took me by surprise when he also confirmed that Zotwana was really a strict teacher to his students especially those boys who had a rebellious character, as Nyamende puts it. I had no idea that Dr. Nyamende was a student at St. John's College at the same time when Dr. Zotwana was teaching there.

In relation to the classroom situation I managed to interview the deputy-principal Mrs T. Mangxola who claimed that although Zotwana was very strict in the classroom, every student felt safe and free with him around. She does not forget his fatherly kindness to his students. Thereafter she began to endow Zotwana with attributes like he was patient, diligent, zealous, conscientious, enthusiastic, and with good communication skills. All these words were meant to describe Zotwana's character in her view. As an interviewer I was startled when she used all these words, but her answer to me was that she was describing Zotwana the way she knew him to be like.

Full of humour she bursts into laughter when remembering that as school children they had given Zotwana a nickname, calling him 'Mensa' because he was teaching them Latin as one of their school subjects. In addition to that Mr. Baloyi and Mrs. Mangxola could not leave the interview without mentioning that Zotwana had a very bright student, Mr. Wallace Mgoqi who

used to be top of the Latin class, obtaining highest marks ranging from 80% and above. Mr. W. Mgoqi is now in the top leadership of the Western Cape Provincial Council. And the man who receives credit from these two ex-high school students of his for being instrumental in shaping and moulding Mr. Mgoqi is none other than Zotwana. Because they said that although Mgoqi was a brilliant student at school, he was also one of the naughty students.

Both Mr. Baloyi and Mrs. Mangxola agree that Fezeka Junior Secondary School was promoted to being a Senior Secondary School (high school) in 1969 after it achieved the highest results in 1968, and became one of the top schools in South Africa, receiving a floating trophy known as "Phindakhethe." This was a special trophy that was given only in recognition of a high achievement by any South African school at the time. For that achievement they agreed with one voice that Zotwana was a great contributor because before him something of that nature had never happened to that school.

I cannot forget to mention what Mrs. Mangxola says about Zotwana's sense of belonging as she puts it. She said that, "although they were not allowed to use vernacular at school, but only English, I noticed that Zotwana's sense of belonging was with *isiXhosa* because he could speak Xhosa eloquently: as purely as an illiterate person." Further than that she says that he held onto his culture and that he instilled culture into his learners. In addition to this Mr. Baloyi says that Zotwana has an impeccable knowledge of *isiXhosa* and other African languages. He also says that Zotwana did not want to look Westernised with all the education he had even at that time.

And being such a persistent person who had a tremendous passion for education he continued with his studies at Fort Hare and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts' degree in 1969, with Xhosa and History as his majors. He then moved to Umtata in 1971 where he taught the same subjects at St John's College until 1973.

At the beginning of 1974 he accepted a post at Rhodes University in Grahamstown and assumed the duties of a Language Assistant, specialising in Xhosa until 1980. His pursuance of his postgraduate studies earned him a B. A. Honours degree in African linguistics and oral literature under the University of South Africa in 1981. At that time he involved himself with Nzululwazi High School in Alice by accepting a post as a deputy – headmaster and a Xhosa teacher between July 1981 and March 1983.

Thereafter, in about March 1983, he was appointed to a senior position as a Headmaster of Amabhele High School that is also in Alice. He served in this post from April 1983 to December 1984. Simultaneously, he held the post of Xhosa and History teacher at the same school. After some time he returned to Kroonstad in the Orange Free State where he got an appointment as a Headmaster of Bodibeng High School in 1985. At this point he taught English and History.

2.3.2 A University Lecturer

It was obvious that this man was moving up the ladder of success when he became a lecturer of Xhosa literature and linguistics at the University of Cape Town in 1986. During those years he studied for a Master's degree at the same institution and he wrote a thesis entitled "Socio-linguistic aspects of Second language learning and teaching." This degree was awarded to him in 1988.

Once again his zeal and motivation encouraged him to study further, and he registered for the Doctor of Philosophy degree under the same University. The title of his thesis was "Literature between Two Worlds – The example of the Xhosa Novel and Poetry." In 1993 he received this degree from the African Languages' Department at the University of Cape Town. Because of his extremely high expertise in the field of African Languages and Linguistics he became a course Coordinator for Xhosa Intensive in the same department.

Then, he began to initiate a study of Xhosa for Beginners in the department of Adult education and extramural studies at the same University. By that time, just like any other academic of high calibre who had a position of being a senior lecturer in the department of African Languages, Zotwana increased his contribution in the department. He designed a syllabus and course material for Xhosa Intensive and Xhosa for Professional Purposes. He also assisted in the selection and appointment of tutors for Xhosa Intensive and was responsible for orientating them. His presence was intensified at this University when he became a member of the University's Conditions of Service and the Chairperson of the Black Staff Association.

Due to his unwavering desire to uplift his own people he involved himself in various organizational structures. He became a member of the following organizations: African Languages of Southern Africa (ALASA), South African Applied Linguistic Association (SAALA), and lastly for the Trust for Christian Outreach and Education. Being a linguistically zealous person who has a flair for languages he has an ability to speak and understand at least half the number of South African languages. His claim is that he has a passive competence in Tswana and a basic reading ability in French.

2.3.3 A Writer

His career as a writer was as I have already stated under his background, largely influenced by his ex-High School teacher, Mr. N. N. Yapi who was then teaching at Freemantle, in Lady Frere, of whom he speaks boastfully in Imijelo Yegazi, (1994) as a man who was responsible for teaching him to be proud of his own language. Zotwana claims that it took him some years before he could create any writing on his own. Beginning by associating himself with other experienced writers he teamed up with A. P. Hendrickse of Rhodes University, and together they collaborated to write Xhosa Relativization (1975). As a writer who was then also an academic he has co-authored with prolific writers such as S. C. Satyo and N.N. Yapi, his ex-teacher, and other writers. Together, Zotwana and Satyo have written Sasinoncwadi Kwatanci (1990), a book of Xhosa oral literature. Prior to this collaboration, his sole creation was a book called Imfincamfincane (1987), a collection of Xhosa

essays, and a book that won him a First Prize for the Best Xhosa Essays at the Fort Hare University Festival of Xhosa Arts in 1987. With this book Zotwana could claim possession of his own creation. Later on it was published by Via Africa, Pretoria in 1989.

Having started writing some books, without a pause he continued to write more books including two Xhosa grammar books successively, beginning with Xhosa in Context – from Novice to Intermediate (1991). He then followed with Xhosa Learners' Companion (1994). And it was in this same year in which he wrote another novel called Imijelo Yegazi (1994), which was published by Skotaville publishers. Similar to the previous literature books this one also scooped an award for its author, a Runner – Up Prize in the Skotaville – Bertrams Writers' Competition for the Xhosa Novel.

The theme of this book was largely influenced by the past experiences that the writer was exposed to during the recent apartheid era. When asked about his reasons for writing this book he said, " It is planned to be an outline of the psychological effects of apartheid on the psyche of the oppressors and their supporters; to link literature to history; to be cimetographic; to portray farm life as well as the lighter sides of hardship." By looking at the above statement anyone can conclude that it is factual that historical experiences play a role in shaping an author's text. Before he puts his pen to paper, and sets his mind on writing, history has already laid a foundation for him on what to write about. There is sufficient evidence to support the link that exists between literature

and history. Commenting on the literature that is written in South Africa Ogude (1991:9) declares:

South African literature is both history and literature in the sense that it is a record of the black man's life in the apartheid South Africa, and literature in the sense that it is an imaginative recreation and realisation of black experience in South Africa.

There are numerous other novelists and theorists who feel very strongly about this subject. Among them I may mention Amuta (1989:80) who summarizes his argument about history and literature as follows:

History is conceived in its materialistic sense as the complex of material forces and objective conditions which shape social experience and therefore furnish the raw material for literature. Because it consists of the activities of real people in active roles in equally real situations, history is not only knowable but also a process resulting from human activity.

Therefore then, Zotwana's writing of this novel was triggered by the vast knowledge he had of the bitter experiences he was exposed to under the apartheid regime as a black man. These historical experiences include among other things; the economic conditions, social, political and historical events.

After Zotwana had written Imijelo Yegazi and had published, the following year he wrote Amanzithinzithi kaMzingisi that was published by Adlit Publishers in 1995. Once again the theme of this novel explores the experiences of a black man in the apartheid past. But this time the person who is the subject of discussion has been taken away from his rural milieu and placed in the urban workplace where he suffers the hardship of being exploited by his white employers.

Judging by the fact that this book was written for adult literacy programmes it is then natural to assume that the author decided to follow the topic of the black man's struggle on a totally different view than the preceding novel.

When asked about the reason for writing this other novel he had this to say, "To contribute to the development of Xhosa literature for graduates of literacy programmes; but also to portray the typical path travelled by non-professional workers in the apartheid era; also link literature to culture and contemporary history.

As a writer who is conscious of what his society needs to know Zotwana writes his novels focusing on those needs. Cook (1977:3) confirms the attitude of such a writer by saying:

The socially conscious writer does not set to work in a vacuum, but urges his society from what it is towards what it might be.

Zotwana fits the above description in that both of his novels are addressing the Xhosa society's bitter past experiences during the apartheid period in

South Africa. Not only does he do so but, through his characters like Nkcithakalo in Imijelo Yegazi and Mzingisi in Amanzithinzithi KaMzingisi he exalts his readers into doing what is considered morally acceptable to the cultural values of their society. Both these books reveal Zotwana's experiences that speak of his involvement with the society among which he was living. According to the principal of Fezeka Senior Secondary School in Gugulethu, Mr. Bucks Baloyi, Zotwana was not totally absorbed in books and in his job as a principal of Fezeka Junior Secondary School, but that he had ample time to socialise with the community as well.

Once again, a year later, another book followed and this one was called Uncwadi Lwemveli Ezikolweni (Folklore at schools, 1996), also published by Adlit Publishers. His earliest script was a pictorial language laboratory manual called Xhosa Through the Ear (1974), and that was written at Rhodes University in Grahamstown.

Apart from all the books and conference papers that he wrote he also has a number of abridged versions that he has translated and we will speak about these later on under subheading 2.4.

2.3.4 A Translator and an Editor

Looking at his academic track record it is quite obvious that he should be seen as a suitable candidate for the parliamentary duties with which he is involved at present. The fact that he surpassed all other applicants in 1994

speaks for itself that he was an ideal candidate for the position of a prospective Sworn Translator. This is not astonishing considering his matchless talents and capabilities in the field of translation. Most of his successes can be attributed to his extensive knowledge and experience in this field as well as in the field of editing.

As an official candidate whose application was successful and whose work was significant to the parliament he had to be sworn into that position by the Supreme Court of South Africa at the Cape of Good Hope Provincial division immediately on March that year.

During this time of transition in his life, which brought about a transformation in his academic career, he became a highly respected parliamentary official who had to deal with translation at higher levels of the government. This proved that he had attained a high level of achievement. And it is also evidence to many other South Africans that moving up the ladder of success is achievable but it needs much effort.

According to Zotwana, his work is very demanding in terms of time because it involves meetings on a daily basis. As an interpreter, he served the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in June 1997. The head of this commission at that time was Advocate Dumisa Ntsebeza. This commission soon followed immediately after his appointment by the Pan South African Language Board in March the same year.

By the time of his appointment he was already an elected deputy head of the translation unit at Parliament. One issue which was discussed at the Language Board Interview was the need for the acceptance of English by all South Africans as the 'country's binding language'. Zotwana's contribution was that South Africa did not need another lingua franca. In his argument he stated:

We just need to accept that English is the language that is accessible.

(<http://www.anc.org.za/anc/newsbrief/1996/news0307>)

The statement above suggests that Zotwana was strongly opposed to any opinion that was put forward advocating the rejection of English as a country's medium of communication for all the people of South Africa. Today we can begin by thanking man like him who put up such a resistance for the betterment of the entire nation of South Africa.

Shortly after resuming his duties as a Sworn Translator on March simultaneously he was made a deputy Editor of Hansard Translation Unit for the South African Parliament in May of the same year. He held this position until October of 1998 after which he was promoted to the post of Chief – Editor for the same unit in Cape Town. Apart from that he was elected as a Chairperson of Parliamentary African languages Practitioners' Forum.

If we were asked to do some retrospection of his life therefore, it would not be hard to find that Zotwana has acquired most of his editorial skills whilst he was working for publishing houses such as; Maskew Miller Longmans of South Africa, and Oxford University Press in Cape Town. Furthermore he has worked for the South African Cancer Association and the South African National Red Cross Society of Cape Town. Being an experienced Editor as he was the Translation and Editing Unit at parliament gave him the task of translating and editing a Xhosa version of the South African Constitution, and not only that but also translated the Constitution of the Western Cape Provincial Government into Xhosa.

Therefore, it is not astonishing to find his name mentioned every time we open some of the Xhosa literature books. For example, his name appears in the preface of Izwi labantu (1994), a book jointly written by Jeff Opland and Peter Mtuze. In this particular case his contribution is acknowledged for having given a tremendous assistance and helpful advice in the construction of this book that was later published by Oxford University Press. In another instance his name is mentioned in A.B. Stuurman and F.P. Magqashela's book Phantsi Kwentab'etafile (1995). In this book he comes up as an Editor for Oxford University Press.

In each and every career that Zotwana has had, it is easy to observe that he did not hold one portfolio in each of his positions, but always had dual portfolios or more, at the same time. Likewise when he was promoted to Chief Editor for the Hansard Translation Unit in 1998, he simultaneously became a

member of the PANSALB's Steering Committee for the Professionalisation and Regulation of Translating and Interpreting.

In conclusion, as readers of his life history, we are able to learn that there is nothing that comes easy in life. Without our efforts we will not achieve nor attain our goals. Zotwana was willing to humble himself to his predecessors, and that included also the writers' who had more experience than him in writing books whilst he had none.

In Chapter 3, I will devote my time to analysing some of his essays from the book entitled Imfincamfincane (a collection of Xhosa essays written by him).

2.4 Other contributions

Apart from his own creations he has compiled and simplified several abridged versions from books written by other authors. He did this to prepare them for use by second language learners of Xhosa. Naming just a few of them we have: Umzali Wolahleko (A prodigal parent, 1975) that was written by Sinxo. Secondly he abridged Buzani kuBawo (Ask Father, 1976) whose author is W.K. Tamsanqa. Lastly it was an abridged version of a book by P.M. Ntloko called Ungodongwana (1977).

Further than this, he has translated a record number of children's books-to be more precise, it was more than a hundred of them-that he prepared for publishing by various publishing houses. Adding to the number of awards he

has won, his work received recognition, and was chosen as an outstanding contribution to the development of Xhosa language and literature by the Western Cape Teachers' Forum in 1997. Then, in 1998 without any doubt he was exclusively selected a winner of the Honour List of the International Board on Books for Young People (BBY).

Zotwana was also cited by Jeff Opland (1983:XI) as having assisted in the translations of Xhosa texts whilst Opland was busy writing his book, Xhosa Oral Poetry that was published by Ravan Press in the same year as above.

As an editor he edited a Xhosa book entitled Phantsi Kwentab'etafile written by A.B Stuurman and F.P Magqashela and was published by Oxford University Press in 1995. Apart from that, his contributions for giving sound advice in the construction of *Izwi labantu* (1994) are appreciated by Jeff Opland and Peter Mtuze. The latter book was published by the same publishing house, that published the former book above. His name also appears in the author index designed by P. Mtuze (South African Journal of African Languages, vol. 13, 1993, pp. 14-26). He is among the recognised contributors of Xhosa writing in the twentieth century.

In one of the interviews that I held with Mrs. Mangxola she informed me that Zotwana was a Moderator for *isiXhosa* Higher Grade for Grade 12 Exam Papers from 1996 to 2000. By working with him and other examiners she said that, "he managed to encourage unity among all other examiners of the

three papers. And what she learnt from him again was his knowledge and expertise in solving problems.

2.5 Political involvement

Zotwana was not only an educator but also a political activist who was much involved in the battlefield of the struggle for Black liberation in South Africa. As a politician he was affiliated to the Azanian People's Organization with full membership. According to him he was involved at a very critical time in the history of Apartheid South Africa. Those were the years when the Black youth took South Africa by storm between the years of 1975 to 1977.

Zotwana told me that he accepted an office as a treasurer, for the Grahamstown Branch of the People's Convention, which was one of the leading activists' groups that fought to bring South Africa's apartheid government to its knees. In the interview I held with him, I asked him about his imprisonment that I became aware of from Kiviet's thesis (1994). He also said me that he was arrested in October 1976, and had to serve 18 months, 9 of which were suspended.

Enquiring about the reason for his arrest, he said that, yes he was arrested "for having organized a stay-away in Grahamstown to mourn the children killed in Soweto in particular and also elsewhere in the country". I became curious to know more reasons about this incident, and he said that they arrested him "for political activity – under the General Assemblies Act – charged with "plotting" to overthrow the government.

I further asked him for a reason why he entered Parliament before his political party accepted the South African Black Parliament. He said, "Hoping to participate in African languages development from an institution that was well placed for that. Did not get in as a member, so political affiliation was not an issue." He also claimed that the translation field offered him new challenges.

With regards to Zotwana's political involvement Mrs. P. Maseko who is presently a Xhosa lecturer at the department of African languages and literatures at the University of Cape Town, also claimed knowledge of his involvement in politics. In an informal interview she told me that she knows Zotwana as a friend and associate of her late husband, Professor S.S. Maseko of the University of the Western Cape. Their association resulted from sharing similar aspirations regarding politics in the Western Cape. They were both members of the same political party namely, AZAPO (Azanian People's Organization). Zotwana claims that he is not presently active in this organization.

2.6 Community involvement

Whilst he was a deputy – headmaster at Nzululwazi High School in Alice between July 1981 and March 1983 he claims that he was already involved as a Finance Committee member of the Governing Council for the Zingisa Project in King Williamstown. According to him he held this position from 1980 until 1984. Then, from 1984 he accepted another position as a Treasurer for the Alice Circuit Principals' Association. During those years he got much involved in communal work to such a degree that he was also elected as a Western Cape Representative and Organizer in the South African Linguistic Association Executive Committee, a position he held until the end of 1989.

About Zotwana's involvement as a member of the African Languages' Forum in the Western Cape Mrs. Mangxola claims that Zotwana played a major role in assisting teachers with whatever problem they had regarding *isiXhosa* as a language. Because there was no available funding at the time for developing indigenous languages, Zotwana took some initiatives to raise funds for this cause. He together with other teachers created chances of raising money such as; the celebration of Mqhayi Day, the acknowledgement of *isiXhosa* writers and other cultural celebration days.

It is clear though that Mrs Mangxola, as an ex-student of Zotwana later met him again as a teacher and began working with him as a colleague. This is where she claims that she began to learn of his other self, the fact that Zotwana possesses an extreme sense of humour, and the magnetic art of

speaking that Mangxola claims to keep his audience glued to their chairs. Because of his hard work as an organisation they felt that he should be awarded for his contributions, and therefore they gave him *imbasa* (an award) on behalf of the Western Cape Language Committee.

Mrs. Mangxola says that Zotwana was skilful in educating people both young and old with patience and zeal especially with aspects dealing with editing and translation, which he offered to do voluntarily. Furthermore, Mr. Baloyi adds that Zotwana was recognised by Gugulethu community for his social participation and his powerful skill of implanting positive attitudes to his learners. Because he has been responsible and instrumental for everything that involved the promotion and development of the Xhosa language in the Western Cape, and yet wanted to keep a low profile by wanting to remain anonymous in all his efforts. Therefore, the Western Cape African Teachers' Committee still extends an appreciation to him for his unreserved input.

In conclusion I can assume there is now not a cloud of doubt to the readers of this work concerning the reason why I chose Zotwana as my subject of study, considering his contributions to educational facilities in South Africa.

And, as I have already mentioned, Chapter 3 will be devoted to the analytic discussion of Zotwana's collection of essays in Imfincamfincane. So, our main focus will rest just on that in the coming chapter and nothing else other than that.

CHAPTER 3

Imfincamfincane (1989)

3.0 Introduction

This above-named book is a collection of Xhosa essays concerned with human activities and their daily interactions. These include, among other things mentioned in the essays, their engagements in different social activities such as games, shopping, celebrations and various other human activities. A short explanation of the title and what it means has been given by the author in the preface who states that the word 'imfincamfincane' refers to a juicy shrub which is capable of attracting ants, flies, mosquitoes, bees and children to it because of its delicious juice.

My dealings with this chapter will be devoted to the analysis and discussion of these essays. And, because, each essay topic stands alone, that is, each with its own significance to the reader I shall deal with the analysis of each essay individually under a certain category as I see fit. In other words, all the essays that discuss similar issues of human actions will be categorized in the same group.

Again, in realising that analysis and critical work involving essays is not a common genre among the African languages and literature, especially Xhosa literature, one has to work purely with their analysis. Therefore, before

embarking on the analyses of these essays I saw it fit to apply a suitable scholarly approach while dealing with them.

Because there is quite a notable lack regarding this kind of material, in my approach I will concentrate in combining ideas and elements from both African and Western critics in pursuance of studying the style of writing applied by Zotwana in his use of the theme, and the significance of those techniques to Zotwana's readers. Without wasting any time I must also add that it is vital to see whether or not Zotwana has used the normal conventions of essay writing: i.e., how they conform in style and nature to works that have gone before, and how they have been received by the audience. The only way to evaluate his essays is by applying both the Western traditional approach as well as an African traditional approach to essay writing. In other words among the critics that I will use, there will be theorists from the Western tradition and there will also be African traditional theorists.

3.1 Origins and Definitions of Essay writing

Essays are one of the oldest types of expressions applied by human beings in writing. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (vol. 3, 1974) they originated among Greeks and Romans as a form of a prose narrative.

Thereafter Michel Montaigne, a French writer by late 16th century invented his form of composition and coined it "Essais" because in them he "chose to emphasize that his compositions were attempts or endeavours, feeling their way toward the expression of his personal thought and experience." The first

volume was published in 1588. After him great men such the Englishmen Francis Bacon (1597) and Alexander Pope (1733) followed with their works.

Heilker (1996:13-4) affirms the statement above by maintaining:

Many argue, including Phillip Lopate, that, essays go back at least to classical Greece and Rome. Bonamy Dobree, for instance, asserts that the essay, " a friendly, personal, informal piece of writing about anything you like, has existed from as early as the gay writings of Lucian in the second century B.C (Before Christ)."

Seeing that the above statements are in agreement about the origins of essays, it is now in my best interest to provide readers of this study with relevant definitions of what an essay or essay writing is. In beginning that argument I must start with the definition given by the above stated encyclopaedia (1974:963 - 4), which summarizes the definition of an essay as follows:

An essay is a literary composition of moderate length, dealing in an easy, cursory way with a single subject, usually representing the writer's personal experience and outlook.

It is now clear to us that the English people are not the ones who invented essays, but they are responsible for bringing this genre to the Southern

African subcontinent. There are still more theoretical views that have been given by various theorists to this subject.

Abram (1981:56) describes an essay in the following way:

Any short composition in prose that undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view, or persuade us to accept a thesis on any subject whatever. The essay differs from a "treaties" or "dissertation" in its lack of pretension to be a systematic and complete exposition, and in being addressed to a general rather than a specialized audience; as a consequence, the essay discusses its subject in non technical fashion, and often with a liberal use of such devices as anecdote, striking illustrations, and humour to augment its appeal.

In light of the definitions cited above, we may conclude that the essay as a composition of the writer, about his/her experiences, is specifically intended to urge readers into accepting [or understanding] the writer's view in the subject that he/she presents to them. The writer therefore, stands as a creator of essays for his/her readers and presents his/her thoughts and feelings to them through his/her creation.

Presenting his view of what he thinks is a genuine essayist Heilker (1996:90) makes reference to Alfred Kazin who states:

The genuine essayist . . . is the writer who thinks his way through the essay – and so comes out where perhaps he did not wish to . . . He uses the essay as an open form – as a way of thinking things out for himself, as a way of discovering what he thinks . . . (A)n essay is not meant to be the ‘whole truth,’ the sociological truth, the abstract and neutral truth . . . (It is instead) an expression of the self thinking . . . In an essay it is not the thought that counts but the experience we get of the writer’s thought; not the self, but the self thinking.

Furthermore Heilker (1996:90) provides us with another definition of an essay that he thinks will open up the reader’s mind into realising what is really meant by an essay. Again he quotes Douglas Hunt’s opinion:

Essays are not reports of objective truth but explorations of (the writer’s) own attitudes and thoughts . . . That struggle, that essaying to clarify the writer’s views, should really be included in the definition of an essay.

After having been brought to the African by the Western writers and theorists, essay writing spread its wings to the South African region as well, and its introduction was widely welcomed even amongst the early Xhosa writers.

Jordan (1973:54) concerning the early writers, has this to say:

The dominant figures of this period were Tiyo Soga who wrote essays ... and William Gqoba, essayist, historian...

Regarding Xhosa essay writing Satyo (Gerard, 1981:86) comments:

The essay is still going to play an important part in Xhosa literature for a number of reasons. Many essayists seem to regard the essay as a convenient medium to demonstrate the permanence of certain cultural norms and beliefs, and to document, as it were some matters of historical interest to the Xhosa.

Satyo further provides an additional list of Xhosa writers whom have written collections of essays. They include;

- K.S. Bongela who wrote Iphulo.
- P.T. Mtuze who wrote Inggagaba.
- G.S. Budaza who wrote Khawufan'ucinge.
- L.L. Sebe who wrote Ucamngco.

This genre was not only for Xhosa speaking scholars in South Africa, but was brought and introduced to all Southern African literary scholars. After this type of writing became popular amongst scholars, some insisted on the relevance of its subject matter. Among those scholars we may cite Dlamini (1975:62) who, concerning this relevance makes reference to Prof. J. M. Leighton's demand that the subject matter of the essay "must be a realistic

portrayal of manners, morals or experiences, presented from a point of view that reflects the critical intelligence and wisdom of the author."

An essayist should take his time pondering over his topic in order to come with a beneficial production for his readers. This means that, just before presenting his finished work to publishers and readers alike, the writer has to assess the quality of his work, and determine its permanence and quality for the benefit of his readers.

About such kinds of essayists, Dlamini (1975:63) writes:

This is an example of a "personal essayist" reflecting over a topic. The essayist may, however, be less personal, only "setting forth, passing judgement and drawing inferences from his data." Such an essayist is objective.

As I have already mentioned, Zotwana's essays deal with diverse topics on human activities and the exposition of these activities is manifested in the form of human behaviours in different social settings. This subject of human behaviour has been dealt with of researchers in the field of social psychology. Among those researchers we may mention Baron and Byrne (1974) who have conducted research surveys based on trying to understand original sources of human behaviour, that is, how it functions, and what stimulates an individual to behave in a certain manner, and what are the influences that shape human behaviour.

However I will not use a sociological or a psychological approach in dealing with literary texts. As mentioned in my introduction, the following sub-headings will be pursued through the use of an approach that is relevant to both African and Western literature, and apply whatever is suitable for this genre. I must add that within my analysis, the style of Zotwana's writing, his language use, his narrative techniques, and also the relevance of these essays to readers of Zotwana's works will be explored.

3.2 Human activities

3.2.1 A study of Xhosa interactive behaviour

Zotwana has presented the reader with some essays that expose the functioning of Xhosa people in their daily undertakings and interactions with others. In my approach to some of these essays, I must reiterate that the author's style of writing, his language use and other various narrative techniques he uses in his writing about these various behavioural patterns, that are found among the Xhosa communities are among the most important elements of this study. In order to present a coherent analytic discussion of these essays, I have categorized some of them under section 3.2.2.1 (Individual patterns of behaviour), and the other group under section 3.2.2.2 (Collective patterns of behaviour).

3.2.2.1 Manifestations of individual patterns of behaviour

Beginning with the topic of "Uncumo" (a smile) I would like us to observe how Zotwana deals with this subject that takes place regularly in our daily interactions with other people and look at its significance from the writer's point of view. According to Zotwana (p.4), a smile is one of the excellent gifts that a human being can possess. Concerning point of view, Sirayi (1989:234) says:

Point of view signifies the means through which the fiction writer attends to the various technical aspects of the narrative. It is a narrative medium the literary artist has of discovering, exploring, developing, evaluating the subject matter and communicating its theme. Point of view has significant bearing upon character delineation, plot and theme.

Even though in this regard point of view may be looked at differently as meaning Zotwana's view of a smile, it is still significant in literature because it is something that happens in our daily living and among our society. About literature and society Dikeni (1992:165) makes reference to Chapman who quotes Irele. He says:

Literature has no meaning detached from the feelings of the people who it represents. It is not the work itself which in the last resort is of

value, which is sacred, but the human being behind the work and it is out of their lives that literature draws its significance and its truth.

Every work, therefore, must be seen as a summing up of experience, in some profound way must be centred at the live centre of the collective interest and the common experience of the writer's group.

Zotwana (pp.1-3) metaphorically describes "Uncumo" in this way. He says "sisitshixo sokuvula iingcango" (it is a key for opening doors), "yincwadi ekufundwa kuyo" (it is a book in which we are able to learn"), "Uncumo lusisondlo esisongo saso sibondla kakuhle ubudlelwane" (a smile is a nourishment whose ingredients perfectly nourish human fellowship). By constant use expressive language he brings in a Xhosa phrase in his argument and claims that:

Ukuhleka kuyatyebisa (P.1)

(Humour makes one physically fat).

He also admits that people are compelled to be ambivalent in their approach to this topic. In looking at the ideas of other people in the Xhosa communities he suggests that some people might have other views and begin to quote certain cases of people who smile and laugh most of their time but never get physically fat as he supposes that they will. Yet he continues to praise the power of a smile by creating an imaginary idea about the significance of a smile. He (p.4) notes:

Apho kukho uxolo bukhona ubutyebi basemphefumlweni, kuba uxolo lugxotha zonke iingxushungxushu ezixukuxa zixubayelise umxhelo ngokuwuxhokroza.

(Where there is peace there is riches in your soul because peace chases away all the turbulence that brings sorrow to one's soul by boring it).

Zotwana's use of richly concrete and artful expressions can be detected in the above extract as a form of adding taste and aroma to his writing. In his writing he has combined two figures of speech, that is, alliteration and onomatopoeia and that alone has an added rhyme through the deliberate use of Xhosa clicks.

In contrasting "Uncumo" which is a morally acceptable behaviour to pride, which is characterized by the lifting up of one's nose, Zotwana brings forth the issue of the loneliness and solitude experienced by certain individuals that are ruled by pride and says that they become spiritually and physically empty. In this regard he (p.4) says:

... ubutyebi bomntu ongafuni bantu buzala ukuhlwempuzeka
emphefumlweni kuba akukho nkomo idla yodwa inokubuva kakuhle
ubuncwane bobomi.

(...the riches of a person who does not want other people leads to poverty in spirit because there is no cow that eats alone and still enjoys the sweetness of life).

Without following the personification that he has used about a cow, I shall emphasize on the irony of the statement above. Basically riches are supposed to make one's life much easier and full of happiness with friends flocking all around you but, ironically Zotwana highlights a very significant point that some people may miss and that is, the fact that riches have a tendency to make one lonely and unhappy, things that may result in spiritual emptiness. In many instances people who are rich are not necessarily happy because some rich people have a tendency to neglect their spirituality and as a result of that they become spiritually empty.

Humour and satire are some of the tools that Zotwana uses in his strategy of emphasising a point to his readers. Regarding satire in Xhosa literature, Dowling (1996:92) has this to say:

Satire in Xhosa literature might be easily identifiable than parody and irony [*sic*] because of the changing nature of political and social institutions. A reader who is unaware of historical events will miss any ironic or parodic content.

Still bent on the same topic of satire and word-play as a form of characterisation in Xhosa literature she further argues and notes:

Satire and word-play are widely utilized to characterise in Xhosa literature, while irony and parody, being more indirect forms of humour are used to comment on social and political mores.

Satirically he refers to those who are physically thin as, *intswazana* (woodsticks). In this way he makes use of figurative language that is, a metaphor to create a humorous situation for his readers.

However, in my opinion he does not go deeper into this subject of smile as we would expect him to. Firstly, he does not explain to us what a smile is. Secondly, he does not tell us what type of living creatures are capable of smiling. Not that I am too critical about this matter but my view is he should have at least explained the two causes I stated above. And, as I have already said, only man is capable of expressing a smile as compared to animals. God gave him this unique gift to express his feelings of happiness and friendliness to other people. Unfortunately, other creatures both wild and tame have been deprived of this wonderful gift.

In his explanation of *uVuyo* (Joy), which brings about a smile to many, Shasha (1992:7) declares:

Ngumoy'omhl'otyhutyha – tyhutyh'umzimba.

(It is a good spirit that permeates inside the body).

Furthermore he also exclaims, “*uVuyo luyahlekisa, kanti luyalilisa*” (Joy enables one to laugh, but it is also enables one to cry). From what Shasha says we are able to see that we have mutual agreement about smiling and laughing, that they are expressions of joy, happiness and friendliness. Human interactive behaviour is extremely different from that of animals. Animals cannot speak, smile or laugh they express their feelings by displaying certain actions. For an example a dog wags its tail as a gesture of happiness on seeing its owners.

Quite a few of the Xhosa Writers agree with each other on this subject of smiling and laughing. Budaza (1980:19) describes a smile in the following way:

Ukuhleka sisiphiwo esadalwa kunye nomntu, ukuze abe nakho ukuzikhulula kwiimeko ezibuhlungu, ezilusizi...

(Laughing is one of the gifts that were created with man, in order to release his body and mind from grievous and sad situations...)

I always hold this view that a smile and a laugh are the same in every respect. My assumption is that the only difference between these two behavioural patterns is that a smile is soft and soundless, whereas a laugh is hard and loud. But Budaza's extract above gives us a glimpse about the origins of laughing and its meaning to humanity. The last part of this reference answers the question, "Why do people laugh or smile?" The same answers by stating that man releases himself from the trouble of keeping grief and sadness in his heart by smiling or laughing.

On the other extreme Budaza also argues that there is what is called a 'cynical smile.' This kind of smiling carries bad connotations in that people use it for mockery. They apply it on bad, painful and sad situations, things that are viewed to be serious and not ridiculous or amusing to sensible people. He cites the example of Noah's children who laughed at his nakedness and were cursed by their father as a result of doing that.

In exposing some hidden secrets about man – made, fake laughter, Peteni (1980:62) shows us that in the past Xhosa herbalists had powers to create laughter and a smile by using some *muti* called *uvelabahleke* (*muti* that makes other people laugh at one's appearance). This was the purpose of this African herb. Mostly, it was given to those men who were proposing love to women for the purposes of winning their love. In Peteni's above-mentioned novel this kind of *muti* was given to Ntabeni in order to poison Zuziwe and make her love him.

Firstly, the lesson taught by the author about a smile is that it forms a significant part of our daily lives. Secondly by using many exhortations to the readers he teaches them that there is a very high value attached to a smile among the societies we live in. Thirdly, he shows how smiling can keep communities intact, happy and successful.

Moving away from "Uncumo" let us take yet another kind of individualistic behaviour which is, "Ubugwala" (Cowardice). In approaching this topic Zotwana sees this kind of behaviour as being intolerable. He bases his argument on the experiences he has had in his interaction with other people. "Ubugwala" is one of those individualistic behaviours that emanates from possessing a spirit of fear. From time immemorial this behaviour has been much hated by the Xhosa communities to such an extent that whoever possessed it became a thing of mockery.

Jolobe (1940:19) speaks of the complete opposite of cowardice, which is, bravery and says:

Ndithe ndakucinga ngale ndawo ndafikelwa yingqondo yokuba le nto
ikukukhalipha mayibe iyinto ngokwenene ukuba ixatyiswe kangaka
luluntu nazizizwe.

(When I began to think about this matter something crossed my mind
that bravery must really be something very important if it is so highly

valued amongst people and it is also commended by all nations of the world).

Zotwana's focus of this behavioural pattern is concentrated on its external manifestations. He associates "Ubugwala" to an incurable disease by saying:

Ubugwala nqwa nezi zifo zingeva yeza.

(Cowardice is just like incurable diseases).

By the deliberate use of sarcasm and satire we are able to see that Zotwana manipulates his language as a technique to drive a certain point, and simultaneously create a humorous situation for his readers. Concerning such a tactic Kwetana (1987:17) confirms:

Another rhetorical technique is irony or satire or gross exaggeration.

The author is not concerned about the origins of this spirit, and how we can counteract it so that it may not affect our lives in any way. Instead he continues to show the bad side of this behavioural pattern and how it manifests itself from the outside. By revealing how much he hates cowardice, he gives his readers an example of cowardly bigger boy who is always found bullying smaller boys than him. He (p.16) says:

Ngumnyew'onawo namanyala le nto.

Sisinyolu-nyolu esithathela kuso

Yonk'into engathi ithe vatsha.

(This is a sly promiscuous thing.

A voracious person who takes

all things for himself).

However he (p.14) also draws a distinction between cowardice and fear by suggesting that, although cowards have fear, but not all people that have fear are cowards. He claims that everyone possesses fear, even brave people, but that is not a bad thing. By making use of metonymy showing how the fear in a coward's heart can lead him into a dangerous situation, even death, for fearing the unknown. He (p.18) sums up:

... amagwala afa kaninzi phambi kokuba afikelwe kukufa.

(cowards die many times before their actual death).

Exaggerating this boy's bullying attitude towards the younger boys the author (pp15-6) humorously says:

Wofika lo mngxu wenkwenkwe uphephezelisa iintshebe phakathi kwezi zithondotyana zalusa amathole. Uyathelekisa. Uyabetha.

Ngumnyew'onawo namanyala le nto. Sisinyolu-nyolu esithathela kuso yonk'into engathi ithe vatsha. Yonk'into yeyakhe.

(You will always find this tall boy wagging his beard among these little boys, and also shepherding calves. He loves strife. He enjoys beating other boys. His behaviour is filthy. He is voraciously greedy, grabbing everything that is good for himself. Everything belongs to him).

My opinion about cowardice and fear is that I beg to differ from what the above authors say about cowardice and fear, because I consider the two as one, and, also being inseparable to some respect. They are distinguishable by explanation only but they bring out similar psychological responses when provoked. For instance, one can be known to be bold in every respect, but, when something comes even if it comes once or twice in one's life and awakens fear in one, I consider that person a coward for that very moment or hour in his life.

Jolobe (1940:101-6) speaks of the latter in this way. Among Xhosa people who lived in the past there were those who feared thunder, and those who feared certain kinds of birds such as owls, thinking that it is bad luck to see such a bird. In addition to this he argues about other types of fear that brought anxiety to the lives of many Xhosa people. Some of those feared

omens were; seeing a frog and being made to drink poisonous substances by those who were believed to have the power of witchcraft.

In his own view Bongela (1977:60) describes fear in the following way:

Le nto ikukoyika apha emntwini yenye yezinto eziyindalo.

Umntu udalelwe ukuba oyike ukwenzela ukuba angazisi engozini eyibona. Ngamanye amazwi, le yindlela indalo ekhusela ngayo umzimba womntu kwizinto ezilutshaba lwawo. Njengoko sisazi, umntu akoyiki kuba efuna kuyazenzekela. Nasezilwanyaneni, olu loyiko lukho luyindalo.

(Fear in man is one of the natural things. Man was created to fear so that he may not approach danger with his eyes wide open. In other words, this is one of the ways by which nature protects man's body from being hurt by harmful things. As we know, man does not fear because he wants to, it happens automatically. Even in animals this natural fear is present).

In his approach to any of his subjects, whether he praises or discredits it, Zotwana is fond of using simile. For instance in his argument about this behavioural pattern of a coward, he assimilates such a person to a grudging

baboon. He states, that a grudging baboon does not subside unless it has reiterated to the guilty party.

In his concluding statement about cowardice the author states yet another type of cowardice that may elude other readers, and which is that of standing firm in one's views. He says that some people are afraid to express their views about life's hardships that are confronting them in their everyday life interaction with others. He warns that these people might be led to the danger of being buried alive by their own actions. Coupled with these are those characters that are afraid of taking decisions for anything that affects their lives. To these two types of people Zotwana admonishes that they may lend themselves in unforeseen dangers. Some people may distinguish the two types by associating the fear of the unknown which is the fear of taking risks to be real cowardice, whereas they may take the other type such as; the fear of death and associate it with respect. In this case we may conclude that the writer speaks of Fear vs Respect.

The author explores another type of behaviour that also falls under individualism. This is a quest for "Udumo" (Fame) that is discussed in Chapter 4 of this essay book. A lot of people who embark on this type of behaviour present some characteristics that reveal their behaviour as being a mysterious kind of interactive behaviour. The main aim of their behaviour is to seek recognition and prominence among their peers. By numerous examples taken from observing other people's deeds the author points out clearly that some people will seek fame no matter what the cost is.

In criticizing some of these cunning people that wander about cheating others through their evil deeds Zotwana applies some idiomatic expression in the use of his language to show that these people have to use some skills to succeed in their process of cheating. He uses the following Xhosa phrasal expression:

... baqaba abantu ngentshongo emehlweni ngezincomo ezimenza angaboni lowo uqhathwayo.

(they smear nicotine in the eyes of other people so that they may not see that they are being cheated).

By putting this point across the author is trying to warn the innocent people in the community who may not be intelligent enough to detect these cunning tactics that are used for their detrimental end.

The author argues that people have to work hard for fame if they want recognition from others. To show that "Udumo" is meant for a group of people and individuals Zotwana insinuates that it is an award or recognition to a group of people or an individual for his achievements that have been shown by excellently performing a heroic task. At other times it may come as an event such as the one that the writer has given as an example. This is a Biblical event about the birth of Jesus Christ in the small, little-known city of Bethlehem that received fame after this birth occurred.

Drawing our attention to certain individuals who are famous the writer selects historical figures such as chief Hintsa of the Xhosa and Adolf Hitler of the Germans. Chief Hintsa was a prominent and loved person among his people. His kindness and hospitable behaviour received an acknowledgement from other ethnic groups who were not of the Xhosa origin. According to the writer he became famous for his kindness and hospitality when he received refugees who were running away from their lands because of persecution by other groups and sought protection from him in his land.

Hitler of the Germans became famous for his great input in Second World War, and in that way, became a national hero to the Germans. But to those people who were not Germans and who hated what he did, he is regarded as an abomination according to what the author implies in his argument.

What Zotwana teaches his readers here is that, what is good for another person may be bad for the other, and that people do not necessarily share the same aspirations about the heroic deeds of another group of people, who consider those historical deeds memorable in their eyes. And again the other group may consider a certain person a national hero, and yet to others he is not a hero, but a villain.

Towards the end of this essay Zotwana sympathizes with everyone who seeks fame because he says that it is something that passes away and

leaves those who were hungry for it in a state of being mocked and gossiped by other members of the community.

And, what is inevitable is the fact that the author exposes that people's opinions may differ on certain issues regarding the way they perceive truth and morality in their everyday lives. For as long as we are diverse people we share diverse views about life.

The last individualistic behavioural patterns I want to devote my time explaining are those of an "Imbongi" (a Xhosa Praise-Singer). In his argument about the art of *ukubonga* (a verb for *imbongi*) Gough (1981:11) says:

Up to this modern day and age, among the Xhosa oral traditions, the art *ukubonga* is still one of those oral art forms that can be referred to as truly unshakable, both in its manifestation and presentation as an art.

Scholars seem to share the same view about the existence of *imbongi* because Wainwright (1978:1) has also claimed:

One of the most interesting figures in traditional Xhosa society and one which has survived to this day, is the praise poet or *imbongi*.

In Western terminology they talk of a Poet. We may be misled to think that

these two people share common behavioural patterns with each other, but they do not. There is a vast difference between them. They do not function in the same way and their art is not similar although they both work with oral communication and the delivering of messages to their communities.

It has been notable though, that some people who call themselves the *Xhosa imbongi* have changed with modern times. But let me say, that not all of them have been like that, but there has been some visible signs especially now that South Africa has become a multi-cultural country after 1994, that some people who have taken the role of an *imbongi* have adapted themselves to cultural dynamics by accepting the Western influences and cultures that are exhibited in their style of praising.

But we may then be forced to distinguish the present praise-singer from the traditional Xhosa bard. Expressing her views about the traditional Xhosa bard Jافتا (1978:59) says the following:

Imbongi plays a very important role among the Xhosa speaking people. There is no occasion of national importance where he does not feature. He is the backbone of the nation because he is capable of building the solidarity of the nation.

Zotwana's use of a poetic language is seen in the following words when he speaks of *imbongi*. He (p.64) says:

Kwizinto zendalo ezibonakala kumntu wonke *imbongi* yona wofika ibona izinto ezizezinye...

Kubuhle bendalo esithi sityebise nje amehlo ngabo, *imbongi* yona iyakubona ubungangamsha beTshawe.

(In natural things that are visible to anyone, *imbongi* will see other deeper things...

To the nature's beauty that we enjoy watching with our eyes, *imbongi* will see the mighty power of God).

Through excessive repetition of words, Zotwana creates rhythmic sounds in the ears of the reader in order to emphasize his cry about the unacceptable change that has taken place among the social lives of the Xhosa communities causing them to depart from their traditional cultures and customs and follow those of the West. He (p.54) declares:

Kodwa ke loo nto ingathatha imiqulu ngemiqule yeencwadi, kuba kaloku kungafuneka ilandwe kwimiba ngemiba, kwizizwe ngezizwe...

(But that would take volumes of books, because it must be researched from various angles, from diverse nations...)

According to him Western cultures have had a negative influence on the behaviours of some Xhosa people, and that has actually led them to discard

their cultures, including those aspects of culture that were intended to maintain discipline among the Xhosa communities. Another aspect he raises is that of the Xhosa people who have lost their respect for human lives.

Therefore he urges them to look back and see where they have gone wrong.

My perception is that the author's chastisement on this subject is mainly focused on the modern Xhosa Youth.

By constantly reminding his people about the art of praising, he begins to show them that praising comes from some long time ago, and it is here to stay with the Xhosa communities because it is embedded in Xhosa culture. He tries to prove that the art of praise forms part of the Xhosa people's traditional customs and therefore cannot be separated from them. This fact is further emphasised by the fact that the spirit of Xhosa people get stirred up when they listen to the "imbongi's" praises, especially when he hints at certain aspects of their traditions.

Wainwright (1978:1) points out that the Xhosa *imbongi* "is something of a public spokesman and as such mediates between the ruler and the ruled." In his argument the duty of the *imbongi* at the mines he further argues (p.27):

It is evident also that the *imbongi* is concerned with social harmony, with "correct" behaviour on the part his audience, as when he encourages people to forget tribal differences, or pronounces moral norms and directives, and with and with regards to authority figures when he criticizes them for abusing their position or for not acting in

terms of the workers' expectations. He attempts to restore the balance rather than to unbalance or overthrow.

The excessive use of a simile in his argument regarding the praises of *imbongi* can be taken as Zotwana's style of presenting some logical facts to his readers, and, that fact is that he sees the *imbongi* as someone who possesses a lot of integrity when performing his duty to the communities. This is made obvious by his stylish way of praising without hurting anybody's feelings. He praises the chiefs with dignity according to the author because he wants to be received by the people as an Adviser and not a Critic.

Wainwright also sees *ukubonga* as an extraordinary individualistic gift that came to an individual as an "inspiration" to encourage, or reprimand the Xhosa communities or chiefs not to act in ways that are contrary to ancestral expectations. He further says that his speech can also serve to exhort cowards into taking up arms, or a bold action towards resistance.

About the Xhosa *imbongi* Satyo (1980: introduction) says:

limbongi zamaXhosa azisoloko zibongela nje ukubonga, zibongela nokufundisa. Le nkinge ke yeyokuba umntu makabongele ukubonga na okanye makabongele nokufundisa ngezibongo zakhe yinto eyahlala emilebeni yabaxoxi ukusukela kwimihla yooAristotle nooPlato. Isasambethe le ngxaki nathi bantu baxubusha uncwadi lwesiXhosa kuba ababhali bethu bawa ngokuwa.

(The Xhosa *iimbongi* (plural) do not just praise for the sake of praising but they also praise for teaching purposes. The problem is whether a person has to praise for the sake of praising or he must praise for didactic purposes in his poems has long been a subject of argument from the early times of Aristotle and Plato. We are still faced with the same problem, all of us who are busy with literature).

We can easily see that the Xhosa *imbongi* takes the role of a biblical prophet (Isaiah 6: 1-10) who acted as a mediator or representative for his community by receiving messages directly from God and gave them to the people. The only difference with them is that the Xhosa *imbongi* receives his messages from his forefathers the ancestors and pass it on to the communities. In that way, the role of a mediator is performed by the ancestors.

Therefore, we can sum up this essay by arguing that Zotwana's intentions were for teaching his readers that there is this wonderful gift among the Xhosa communities, and that this particular gift cannot be shared among individuals, but, it can be possessed by certain individuals at different times as an endowment from ancestors. In his use of words about *imbongi* and the art of praising Zotwana (p.64) has been very selective.

3.2.2.2 Manifestations of collective patterns of behaviour

Zotwana has also discussed the Xhosa collective behaviour from different angles, and through the use of diverse topics. One of these topics is about "lindwendwe" (Visitors). From a variety of angles, he shows his readers the significance of welcoming visitors into their homes. Welcoming guests into one's home has been an inter-cultural behaviour that comes from ancient times past and is also taking place right now nationwide. People welcome visitors into their homes or communities as a friendly gesture. Welcoming of guests with open arms is the kind of behaviour that is shared by both Blacks and Whites globally. As a gesture that is expected of everyone, people tend to have high expectations concerning it, but, may not be blamed as this is differs everywhere in the way in which it is exhibited by different people of the world.

The Author looks at two types of visitors, that is, the one who visits for only a few days, and the one who visits for the purposes of staying a longer time. He argues that he does not see any problem with the passing guest. But, what concerns him is the one who stays for a longer period of time, and who finally gets involved with the affairs of the family he/she has visited. Such kind of interactive behaviour is uncalled for and is unacceptable, according to the author.

In his art of writing he exposes the role played by the Xhosa woman to her visitors. What is notable according to him is the kind of hospitality she shows

her visitors and the extreme hard working attitude she exhibits all the time the visitors are still around her home.

By praising the attitude displayed by this Xhosa family, the author shows the capabilities of Xhosa communities regarding the treatment of any valuable thing. According to him guests are valuable and so must be given a special treatment or, else, they will spread bad rumours about that family or community that they are unable to welcome guests. To Xhosa communities such rumours were treated with reverence because no one wanted to be known as such.

In continuing with another essay that is under this category, let us look at "Imidlalo" (Games). *Imidlalo* are popularly known as strong tools in shaping patterns of interactive behaviour. In order for observers to notice this kind of behaviour focus must be directed at individuals who are participants in a game. Different individuals exhibit different characteristics. Each individual's action is different from another, but still, in a game the role he/she plays in a team must be to a large degree be a cohesive one. And this attitude can only be achieved when everyone in the team follows the principles of the sport they are playing. Again, players must conform to the kind of interactive behaviour that is expected of them when playing games.

Players in a team are not playing to please themselves but are playing in unity with and for their team. Sometimes the performance of gaining victory has to be acquired by individual players but the interactive behaviour in games

stresses that you cannot do it alone without the help of other team members and the success they earn as individual players is shared and celebrated by all players.

To a large extent this is true if we follow the norms and values of interactive behaviour that forces one to dispose of those values that one uses outside the field of games, and binds you to follow the rules and principles of the games.

The entire team has to display a certain kind of behaviour that is acceptable to the sports' officers. Although their actions are united under the banner of their team's name but there is individual punishment for every action that is displayed by each player. The referee will pass judgement on every player that shows misbehaviour in his interaction with other players of the opposing team.

Still on this topic of games I want to say that it is interesting for readers to note that people of different cultures around the globe have ways and means of enjoying themselves in their particular communities. The Xhosa people are also not exempt from sharing those aspects of culture that bring about joy in their lives. Concerning the Xhosa African song and dance Jafta (1978:27) says:

The social songs and dances are part of the social organisation of the group in traditional Xhosa life. Each age group has its own song and dance but these are also open to the other members of the community.

Unlike the individual's behaviour, the collective behaviour has a tendency to reveal itself in what the people do collectively. From what I have stated above, under interactive behaviour concerning games, I must admit that to a large extent this influences the behaviours of all the people concerned. Each individual player gets credited for the excellent performance he displays, and, more than that, he earns fame. In sport the fame you get as a player is shared between you and your team members including the management. You celebrate your victories and you grieve over your losses as a team.

Nowadays games are played locally, nationally and internationally. Because of this players and referees must display certain international standards of behaviour required by the sports' officials. This goes for their behaviour as well as their standard of playing. Selling games, bribery and cheating is viewed collectively by all countries as intolerable behaviour and is a serious crime that is worthy of a heavy penalty.

In all the levels of games, whether it is local or international, professional or amateur, there are rules and principles attached to them. There are collective behavioural norms and values that players must abide with. In playing football one is allowed to kick the ball and not his/her opponent because it is not kickboxing or karate whereby one is allowed to kick one's opponent. The same applies to a boxing game no one is allowed to kick his contender but they must only box with their fists.

Games shape individuals' behaviours and in a team the behaviour is shaped collectively because they all share the same rules by which they must abide. When victory has been gained over their opponents they mutually celebrate by dancing and singing victory songs such as the one the author (p.20) has written that goes like this:

Siqhel'ukuy'ezizweni zonke

Sibuye sinal'udumo thina

(We are acquainted with going out to all nations

And return with victory).

During the celebrations no one is expected to display a violent behaviour or make use of a vulgar language as to offend other players of the opposing side and its supporters. According to the rules of the games (sport) all players must participate in the celebrations in order to express his or her feelings of happiness for their achievement. In all sport followers or fans are seen as being part of the team. The Writer's idea (pp12-3) of games goes deeper than what an ordinary reader of this book may think. He lays down the importance of sport at a national level as an amicable tool for combating crime, and for the uplifting economic power in all the governments of different countries. In supporting this statement he declares:

Imidlalo iyabulwa ubundlobongela. Ubudlelwana obubangwe yimidlalo phakathi kwamazwe buzala ubudlelwane kwezorhwebo. Ukuba

imidlalo le ibingekho ndiyakrokra neemfazwe ngezininzi apha elizweni.

(Games serve as a tool to combat crime. Relationship caused by games between countries has made economic relationships possible to those countries. In the absence of games I suspect that there would be many existing wars).

Among the Xhosa rural communities there were games that were played by Xhosa boys such as 'stick fighting' and this was traditionally viewed and accepted by many as forming part of Xhosa culture prior to the arrival of Western culture.

In a story titled "Umfana wasema Tolweni" (a young man from the Tolo clan) Jordan (1972:27-33) tells us that this boy was fond of stick fighting to such an extent that he gave up his education because of this game. The author of this story says that this boy's parents as well as his teachers prohibited him from joining with *namakhwenkwe amaqaba* (red-ochred boys) to traditional celebrations like *imitshotsho* (a boys' dance). We are not told about the reason why the parents and teachers would not allow him to be with these particular boys. My guess is, that these other boys were not going to school. Another reason could be the fact that these celebrations were at night and in the morning there was stick fighting, according to the Writer. Jordan says that this boy was nicknamed Ntongenombane (a stick with lightning) by those who appreciated his gift in this game.

In the past stick fighting among the Xhosa was seen as just one of those exciting games that are being played by boys. Among other villages fame was earned for being skilful in stick fighting. Displaying skills in stick fighting showed that this was not just a game but art. Generally among the Xhosa this game is known as 'the boys' game.' Mtuze (1986:5) agrees with this statement by stressing that boys played this game wilfully. He supports this by showing us that this game was unavoidable especially to those boys who were ready to go to initiation school. The name of this character that had reached the stage of circumcision was called *Ndokwenza* (I will do you).

According to Xhosa tradition a boy who reaches this age had to excel in stick fighting in order to prove to other boys that he is ready for manhood. Mtuze reveals that boys have to be brave in order to be able to launch challenges among other boys to as a proof of his braveness. Remember that only the boy who thinks that he is invincible can challenge other villages. Some parents also encouraged stick fighting and tribal wars by claiming that they do not want their children to be cowards. They did not foresee any danger in stick fighting but there were isolated cases of death such as the one of Katana in Peteni's KwaZidenge (1980:83) where he was attacked and killed in a feud between Hlubi and Thembu boys.

Collective behaviour does manifest itself a lot before and during Christmas time according the essay about "Ikrisimesi nezayo" (Christmas and everything attached to it). The writer explains that collective behaviour is shared among young and old. He also states that during this time the Xhosa communities

are fond of they expressing their happiness through singing their traditional songs and dances. By the use of compound alliterative words and syllables the writer strongly expresses the feeling that is strong at work among these communities at this time. He (p.32) notes:

Njengokuba ulutsha luzinxada-nxada nje ezisela kwindebe
yolonwabo, omama bona bangamadasa-dasa antyumpa-ntyumpeka
kwelinjani lona ichibi lokuxakeka.

(Meanwhile the youth is occupied with indulging in pleasure, their mothers are absorbed in the ditch of problems).

According to the author Christmas is meant to be a time of happiness and joy, but it has turned out to be a time of anguish and great pain to some, particularly to parents. To support his claim about the dying individuals of the community he refers his readers to newspapers, radios and the television, claiming that he acquired all that knowledge from them. He (p.34) says:

Banga ababhuhileyo, banga abangxwelerhekileyo, banga
abasindileyo.

(So many have died, so many have sustained injuries, so many have been rescued.

Although he does not go deep into all the intensions of remembering the

Christmas day, as Christians would do, in their evangelistic approaches yet, he agrees with some aspects of Christianity view about remembering Christmas as a day of bringing about a state of joy and happiness in the communities' lives. The bible also shows us that Christ was born to bring joy, peace and man's restoration to God. The remembrance of this day then, focuses much on the lastly mentioned point as God's intention of sending Christ to the world, to restore man to him by saving him (Isaiah 9:6, Matthew; chapters 1 & 2).

The author also tells readers that while other people are busy preparing for the great day others are dying in road accidents. About their extravagant behaviours Zotwana (p.35) says:

Obu buqholo bengcuka benza kwa obu buchithi nasezingqondweni
zabantwana.

(This wolf's scent does the same to parents and children alike).

The author admonishes these people by showing them that because of this extravagant behaviour they lavish all their monies on useless spending and forget that Christmas is only for a day and that it is passing by. And his cry is that they are left with nothing to begin the New Year with, as well as they struggle to pay for school fees and the furnisher's account they opened before and during Christmas time.

By using again another technique as his style of writing he applies a rhetorical question. He (p.37) says:

Iyakuba yiloo nto ke unyaka lo. Umntu elelo xhoba lendlala namatyala neenzima ezingapheliyo... Lithini ke icebo? Ukuba abantu banokuzikhumbuza nje ukuba luyintoni na kanene olu suku, kungaphela mhlawumbi oku kuzirhintyela ngamatyala kangaka, noku kuzibizela indlala izihlatéle.

(The entire year will be like that. The person being a prey for hunger and debts and never ending hardships... What is the plan then? If people would remind themselves about the significance of this day, this act of piling debts may be can come to an end, and this invitation of a far away hunger).

In my opinion I would think that Zotwana draws from his past experiences about the parents' struggle to pay for learner's school fees because he was both a teacher and principal at various schools and so, he could see that struggle taking place in front of his very eyes. He has observed the negligent behaviour of parents towards the payment of their childrens' fees as their failure to comit themselves to saving money for school fees.

I believe that the author teaches his readers to be aware of the above dangers by using idiomatic expression to deliberately stress the extent of damage caused by business people to these innocent Xhosa communities.

Concerning "Impucuko nezayo" (Civilization and everything attached to it), the author tends to focus on aspects of culture among the Xhosa communities. In this way he is showing his displeasure about the extensive damage caused by westernization in the minds of the Xhosa people, and also mentions the negative change in their behavioural patterns that are now easily noticeable. He claims that they have thrown away their traditional customs and cultures and have exchanged them for the White man's culture. In this regard he (p.58) adds:

Jonga ukuthomba. Zisekho iintombi ezithombayo? Izinyanya zona zisawanyuselwa amadini, zikhe zisezele amanqath'eenkomo zesizwe...? Zizinto ezaba semva zonke ezo kuba kaloku impucuko ithi makukhonzwe ezindlwini zetyalike kuyekwe izinto zobuhedeni.

(Have a look at *ukuthomba* (a ceremony performed for a girl who has shown signs of reaching womanhood), Are there still girls out there who are engaging in this ceremony? Are there still sacrifices that are made for ancestors, so that they can inhale the fat of the nations' cattle...? Those are things that are considered old-fashioned because civilization says let us worship in the church buildings and leave those things that are associated with heathenism).

This is evident to us that the author excels in his manner of using rhetorical questions as his style of writing. And it can also not elude us as his readers

that he is fond of this technique in exploring his topics in these essays. He does this in order to increase his readers' awareness of the deteriorating situation concerning the practice of traditional customs. It is also one of his artfulness to inject some awareness to both Xhosa and other African communities so that they do not become complacent in having the Western culture in total control of their own lives.

In dealing with another essay titled "Amaphupha" (Dreams, p.44-52) his emphasis is on the role played by dreams in the social lives of the Xhosa traditional communities. And with an appreciative attitude he (p.44) praises their role amongst Africans, and says that they serve as a guide to their future destinations. However, on the contrary he sympathizes with those that shun dreams and prefer to rely on other people's dreams.

The author sees dreams as forming a great part in the Xhosa communities' cultural way of living. According to him (p.45) dreams form a religious link between a particular race and their God, and also serve as their forum for intercession. Zotwana also states that for this latter reason nations have people that are called prophets. He says that this is an exception in African traditional religion in that they do not have prophets amongst them for that reason ancestors take the role of the prophets and speak to God on their behalf. Some Xhosa people still strongly rely on dreams both individualistically as well as communally. The writer dwells on the individual's dream as a way of providing a significant dream for the entire community. This point is supported by the fact that ancestors visit individuals and not the

entire community at each time. For that reason the dream or vision that they bring to an individual may not be for his benefit but it may be for the benefit of the entire community (p.52).

In my opinion I perceive dreams, poetry and music as being inter-cultural practices and also form part of collective behaviours. Dreams are a part of human psychological behaviour and they happen instinctively to people of all races, languages or cultures. Mostly, it occurs in our sleep. From a Biblical viewpoint, 'a dream comes through a multitude of business' (Ecclesiastes 5:3). Others may view this quotation as suggesting that if your mind is not busy then you are not apt to dream at all. I suggest that this should be approached with an open mind as one of the wise sayings of the Preacher (Solomon, the son of king David), and also bearing in mind the fact that he was famous for his wisdom.

According to the Old Testament, a boy called Joseph was born and he was a dreamer. In one of his dreams he saw his brothers' wheat bales surrounding his bale. This was not the only thing he did, the Author says, but that he also interpreted Pharaoh's dream of seven fat cows that were eaten up by seven lean cows. Many perceive that Pharaoh's dream became a historical reality and shaped many peoples lives in those days. Referring to another event he speaks of Shakespeare's book and recalls an occurrence where the dream of Caesar's wife became a reality after the members of the Roman Senators' house murdered him

Zotwana's view (p.45) is that dreams play an important role in the worship of all the people. Furthermore he appears to have an optimistic view about the reality of those dreams that certain people have had. The fact that he does not give us a deeper meaning of dreams is not entirely satisfactory. It would have been pleasing if in his explanations he could have included a large diversity of dreams, and also describe to his readers in detail, what entails a bad dream as compared to a good dream. In this manner I find his description of dreams lacking, and I do not say that with a bad spirit.

Although Zotwana does speak about general dreams that happen to any persons irrespective of their beliefs, culture or race, however he emphasizes on Xhosa dreams and vision and shows that it is the way in which their ancestors speak to them whilst they are sleeping. In addition he stresses the fact that these dreams may have significant bearing on the life of an individual or on the entire community is not to be ignored. He (p.49) also claims that "ubomi obungenazinjongo bufana nje nobuthongo obungenamaphupha" (Life without objectives is like a deep sleep without dreams).

In the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (Ninth edition) Thompson (1995) explains dreams as 'a series of pictures or events in the mind of a sleeping person.' In her description she also adds that there is also what is called 'daydreaming or fantasy.' The writer does not mention these other kinds of dreams in his topic and so, in my view I strongly feel that the reader should know about them. When supporting his perception about the reality of dreams he mentions Mtuze's book UDingezweni and states that Dingezweni's

mother appeared to him in a dream sobbing and grieving about his misbehaviour.

Furthermore, by giving us more examples of this kind he is convinced that his readers will be persuaded to share the same opinion as him. He does this by referring his readers to the Xhosa traditional literature such as that of W.K. Tamsanqa and his book Buzani Kubawo where Nozipho dreams of her brother Gugulethu being sentenced to death. Once more, he claims that Nozipho's dream became a reality. In my view some dreams do not come true, and some are not really dreams at all, but fantasy. If those dreams that are written in books are all considered to be true, then most of the dreams that we dream in the real world are not to be considered real at all.

Sometimes people wake up happy and thrilled after having had splendid dreams, like seeing themselves receiving loads of cash and possessing big houses and smart cars. And when they wake up they find out that this was all fantasy playing with our imaginations.

Also in this essay, the author's intention of teaching the Xhosa communities about the value of dreams in their lives is evident, and must therefore be appreciated and received without questioning for the sake of the future generations.

Writers' view of man is that man has changed from being a beautifully, creative human being that God had created and has become a dreadful

destructive creature that is more dangerous than fearsome animals.

According to him man's behaviour has compelled him to invent dangerous and powerful weaponry for the sole purposes of protecting himself from the other humankind. This aggressive human behaviour has terrorised both man and animal alike. He goes on to explain these aggravating circumstances in the following way:

Akukho konwaba nasezilwanyaneni namhlanje ngenxa yezixhobo anazo umntu.

(There is no happiness even in animals today because of the weaponry that man possesses).

However, in his concluding words he admits that civilisation brought easy life to all the people of the World. Yet on the other hand he admits the negative effects it has had on Xhosa people's lives. The negativity of these effects is visible in their act of disposing themselves of their traditional cultures and customs and followed the cultures of the White man. I strongly support his view in this case from the little experience that I have of Africans that come from some areas of the African continent as well as those who are in the area in which I live. The entire African race in the whole continent of Africa has undergone a tremendous change in their behaviour and that is also obvious from what we see daily on television and in the newspapers.

In my perception the change in their behavioural patterns has to a large extent been influenced by their constant interaction with Whites. In South Africa it can be seen as being due to the integration and exposure to the multi-cultural atmosphere the country has.

The last essay under collective behaviour deals with issues that some readers may consider insulting, and as having negative repercussions on sensitive people, especially those that do not take pleasure to being openly criticized. The reason for this use of names can be attributed to deliberate satire and criticism. Zotwana's claim is, that the following ways of using teasing and praising names are largely used by Xhosa communities. He gives all these names under the topic of the essay titled "Ukuba mfutshane" (to be short).

Judging by the fact that he often says, that people in the society use these names, I can assume that his discussions here is based on his past experiences, that is, in his interaction with other Xhosa communities to which he belongs. The number of phrases he has used supports this claim that they are from the members of the Xhosa communities. Some of his phrases are sarcastic, diminutive and are presented through figurative speech like the use of simile and satire for the purposes of creating a humorous situation for his readers.

In this regard Dowling (1996:9) makes reference to Turner who suggests:

These praise are often given to a child when young as a form of teasing, or perhaps when mildly chastising him for reproachable behaviour.

Such phrases are; "utsho ngobufutshane ngathi yindlela ebhek'egoqweni" (you are as short as the way that goes to a pile of wood) (p68). At other times the Xhosa people use words such as *isishunqwana* (a small piece, as in a piece of wood). They use all of these words in referring to physically short people. When talking about the behaviour of these people who call others by different names the author confirms that in their attitudes they do not intend to hurt short people at all, although he says, underlying those names there is subtle mockery.

In another vein Dowling (1996:9) again uses a reference from Mulkay who maintains the following about mild criticism:

It appears that not only is teasing a form of amusing play, but is regularly used as a way of formulating reproof, scepticism, correction, ...

The writer also admits that there is an incalculable vocabulary of such names in Xhosa. By stating a few of those names like; *idyakana* (a small fox), and *iponana* (a small breed of a horse). He shows that these names are used for praising physically short people but they have a bit of mockery in them as well. Society has a role to play in shaping peoples' behaviours but I assume

that in this case, negative behavioural patterns may be produced as a result of name-calling.

To people who are familiar with Xhosa cultural ways this name-calling is done not to cause any harm to people but as a way of creating humorous situations at that particular time even though these names may provoke some people to anger as a result of their satirical nature. As we have already mentioned in some references from our previous essays that one of the techniques of writing an essay includes satire as a form making the writing humorous to the readers. Therefore we are not surprised that these names are not only meant for a certain group in the Xhosa community but all. Even the tall persons are given their names.

To those who possess tall-structured bodies, the author claims that they also have their names of appreciation, as well as discouraging names. They are teased by using names like *Urhecizulu* (Touching heaven) as a form of encouragement. In discouraging them people would say, "Laa ngotyo-ngotyo kangximde, inguBani itsho ngobude ngathi yintshulube" (That tall thing Who is he, he is as tall as a worm).

Like I have already stated above that these discriminatory attitudes do not mean a thing to the Xhosa people because they are actually not taken as being discriminatory but as forms of endearment. In my experience, nowadays people embark on physical fights if they perceive that their rights are being violated by other people in being called by various names that they

do not like as a result of their heights or physical shapes.

Perhaps, in the distant past this behaviour did not matter at all, because people did not understand anything about human rights but now they do since the inception of the new democratic government in 1994. Another point is that Xhosa people nowadays are not as friendly as they used to be in the distant historical past.

In all these essays Zotwana has embarked on teaching his readers about various issues that concern their behaviours as they interact with others on a daily basis. He seems to say to his readers here are some of the things that one needs not forget as one carries out one's human activities on a daily interaction among the community.

From what we have discussed in the paragraphs above about individual and collective behaviour I think we can now be able to distinguish their differences and similarities. What has been obvious is that individual behaviour can be observed from the actions of an individual whereas collective behaviour can be observed from what people do collectively within that group. At times these behavioural patterns circumstantially overlap.

Chapter 4 will be devoted to the analytic discussion of one of Zotwana's novels Imijelo yegazi.

CHAPTER 4

Imijelo yeGazi (1994)

4.0 Introduction

Looking at the time in which this novel was written, surmise that it was just after the great political turbulence that took the whole of Southern Africa by storm. By that time the entire country of South Africa found itself being affected by a huge political resistance due to the Black people's oppression by the White minority. Owing to the fact that this situation caused unprecedented instability in the country, one is led to believe that Imijelo yegazi is without doubt a political novel.

Regarding the writing of a political novel Gikandi (1987:113) declares:

The political novel strives for a reason beyond the merely representational.

For that reason we, the readers, see not only the physical side of the prevalent conditions of uprisings in South Africa but also the hidden, internal causes of the struggle such as the repression of human rights. In strengthening the idea that this novel is political one learns by looking at its title that the period prior to its writing was bloody due to the resistance put up by the oppressed Black masses and many of whom were shot dead by South

African soldiers. Again by reading the same title one will assume that for the canals of blood to flow there has to be extensive injury to the body. According to Zotwana those that died were either victims of the soldiers' or police firearms. In order to approach the topics discussed in this novel I have chosen to write the titles of my analysis of this book in line with Zotwana's approach to this novel. In his approach he deals with the conditions and with the prevalent atmosphere that existed at the time prior to the writing of this novel.

In approaching the angle of this novel one can be forgiven if one claims that this novel is also historical. To a large degree the author deals with historical events that took place during the time of the Black South African struggle. The historical time mentioned here formed a critical part of South African politics and it dates back to the years before 1948.

4.1 The stability of Xhosa communal living.

The stability of Xhosa rural communities can be traced from the Xhosa people's traditional past. In reality some of the Xhosa writers agree that their past was entrenched by harmonious living among all their villages because of the respect that prevailed among the village communities. Regarding Xhosa communal living and sharing of wealth and possessions Mbobo (1997:56) says:

Ubesithi lowo sukuba efuna okuthile azame ukudibana nalowo unako

akufunayo akutshintshe ngoko anako, ibe iyindlela yentlawulo.

(The one who was in need of something had to try and meet someone else who was in possession of what he lacked in order to exchange with whatever one had with that particular person, that was the way of payment).

In his view Soga (1929:111) explains the traditional Xhosa unity among the Xhosa community in this way:

Ngabantu ababeyifunde nzulu egazini into yokuncedana imihla ngemihla. Bebebolekana, bencedana, bephatha kunqomana, besondlana, befukulana, abazizityebi befukula amahlwempu, abanezinto bethwala abasweleyo. Bekulinyelwana ngesisa, kuphiwane amasi, inyama, nezinto ngezinto endingezigqibi ndizibala ngazinye, ngesisa.

(They are people who had deeply learnt the art of helping one another on a daily basis. They lent each other certain things, they helped each other, they borrowed from each other, they fed each other and lifted each other up, those who were rich they lifted the poor, and those who

had plenty carried the burden of those who were poverty-stricken.

Some people even ploughed fields out of their own free-will in order to help those who could not, they gave each other *amasi* (sour milk), meat and other things which I cannot finish counting).

Talking of the kind of co-operation and unity that exists among the rural Xhosa communities Zotwana (pp. 1-3) highlights some of the workers' attitudes that have been discussed under the topic entitled *Abembi* ('gravediggers'). Unlike when he wrote his essay book called *Imfincamfincane* in this novel he allows his characters to speak for themselves. For instance Phongoshe (p.2), a relative of the deceased, addresses other men who came to help his family to prepare the hole for the burial, because it is customary to inform everybody that comes as a result of this occurrence, about the causes of this death and how Phongoshe's family intends to carry out the funeral arrangements.

Some Xhosa writers in their writings do encourage the kind of unity that existed among Xhosa communities in the old traditional past. Discussing this principle of Xhosa Unity that Kwetana (2000:11) views as "promoting ideas on beneficial interests to 'Natives' exclusively." He quotes a few of Jolobe's essays suggesting that they dealt with the subject of unity. Such essays are the following: *Abantwana bendlu enye* (Children of one house), *Inkokeli* (A leader), *Incoko* (A simple talk), *Isiko* (Custom) and *Ubutyebi* (Wealth). By this argument Kwetana supports the idea of Xhosa unity. And this is what we see, in chapter one as readers of this novel.

Although the occurrence in this novel is supposed to be viewed as being serious, Xhosa men who came to help with digging are able to handle this situation by assuaging it with the spirit of happiness in their midst. All this is done by joking and teasing each other with the intentions of making everybody to laugh. The younger men tease the older men. A young man asks an old man called Matshaya (a clan name) if he did not bring cockroaches with him when he came back from the mines. He says, "Amaphela wona wawubuya nawo wena emgodini?" (Did you bring cockroaches with you from gold mines?). Everyone laughs because they understand that this is a joke that was used by those who came from mines that these kinds of insects enable a person to be wealthy if he brings them from the gold mines.

Sityana (1978:39) gives his view about the life of Xhosa communities by saying:

Intlalo yamaXhosa amandulo yayineento ngezinto ezazisalatha isidima sabo nokubanjwa komthetho omisiweyo ungaze waphulwe bani.

(Xhosa traditional life was characterized by certain things that pointed to their dignity and uprightness in keeping with the stipulated laws so that no one could easily break them).

Regarding this African unity Kunene (1972:88) declares:

As you know, African life is organized in communal form, and the emphases are on the social obligations of the individual to the community.

Therefore this kind of unity displayed by the AbaThembu clan when one of the village families is faced with death can be viewed as a gesture of solidarity among the Xhosa communities. The general view that was held by the Xhosa people and other African indigenous people during the traditional past was a strong belief in a concept of "Ubuntu" (humanness) that stated that a person is a person because of other people. Soga (1929:120) sums up Xhosa unity that existed in the traditional past in the following way:

Bebethandana bevelana bona ngamaxesha okonwaba kude kuse kwawokufa nokufelana. Ofelweyo uyahlaliswa ngabanye bamlalise angabi sesithukuthezini ngokuthi nxwe yedwa.

(They loved and sympathised with each other in times of happiness and death. If any individual had a deceased member in his/her household others paid him or her a visit, and they stayed with him/her and slept with him/her so that he or she would not feel lonely).

Zotwana (p.3), through the words of one of his characters called Mpongoshe, highlights the fact that rural people are not really pleased with the kind of life they are living. Mpongoshe says, "Ibe ke ingenakuba ntle nento yokuba sithi

sakugqiba ukuhlala kakubi emhlabeni size kuhlala kakubi nasengcwabeni" (It will not be fitting to stay uncomfortable in the grave when we are already living a hard life on this earth). Mpongoshe was saying this to the diggers of the grave so that they should dig a proper burial hole. By what he says about being uncomfortable on this earth one can sense that he is referring to the oppressive apartheid laws that were focused on oppressing the Black people.

One of the characters called Vákutshiwo stood up after Mpongoshe had sat down and in his last words said, "Mabadubule bon'abadubuli x'ithuba lisabavumela; mabadubule bonele; kodwa imin'inye". (Let those who shoot us shoot whilst they can; but one day is one day). According to Zotwana oppression of the Black masses has taken away even the stability that existed in the Xhosa rural communities. Concerning this kind of historical fiction Hay (2000:205) admits:

Many students do not immediately recognize that historical fiction is a story about the past and evidence for the time it was written.

This is exactly what the author has done in this novel. He has presented his readers with historical fiction and mixed it with factual events of the past in order to show his readers memories of the past time.

4.2 Matters affecting Black Workers during South Africa's Apartheid Era

Zotwana's story has its setting in the Eastern Cape among the Tembu villages. His focus centres on the Mpondomise clan. Among his protagonists he has chosen Nkcithakalo and his grandson Mhlabunzima. According to him, everything was stable among those rural communities in the early years of the twentieth century until the Whites got involved in running the Black peoples' lives. This peacefulness existed until 1948 when the government of the Nationalists was established in South Africa. Later the following year (1949) a terrible drought hit the whole of South Africa, particularly the Eastern Cape.

The serious extent of the drought resulted in the dying of the Xhosa peoples' cattle. According to Zotwana (p. 11), the White farmers manipulated the entire situation by buying the Xhosa peoples' cattle very cheap. The selling price was not negotiable and there was nothing else they could do about the situation because if they refused, their cattle would die anyway. And so, they were forced to sell them cheap rather than to cling to them. The writer says that selling cattle is the last thing that can be done by African farmers for they know that they plough their lands with cattle and feed their families with them. The White farmers bought the cattle in order to feed them and save them from dying and they knew that as soon as the drought had subsided they would be able to resell these cattle to the Xhosa farmers at a higher price.

Anyone who did not have cattle and could not go to gold mines was thus forced to go and work in farms for a ridiculous salary in order to feed his family. Nkcithakalo was forced to work for a farmer called Pletseni as a Shearer. Shearers were paid six pennies per sheep (p.16) and at the end of their contract they were given one pound, seventeen shillings and three pennies (L1. 17s. 3d) for shearing a total of about 150 sheep. He was not alone in doing this but many other men who were doing the same job were with him. Zotwana says that they were forced to accept this salary without negotiating with their employer. Their employer made them work for an undisclosed salary that was only known by him. They began working, without a clue about how much money they would be given after finishing their work. Zotwana says they had no other choice but to accept his job offer, because anyone who wanted to enquire about the salary before doing the actual work was dismissed by Pletseni as being lazy and all the time he, when asked about the salary, reacted with anger.

On a previous occurrence Tyhelbhoyi, one of Pletseni's trusted men, told a group of farm workers that they were working for 6 pennies for shearing one sheep. That resulted in the gang of workers launching a complaint to their boss because he gave them 2 pennies on finishing their task. Pletseni (p.15) was provoked to anger when he heard that it was Tyhelbhoyi who promised those workers that they were working for 6 pennies. In his angry state Pletseni threw Tyhelbhoyi on the ground and put his knee on his chest asking him if that farm was his, and, if he had that kind of money to pay those men.

During this time Tyhelbhoyi was pleading for mercy from Pletseni who was too angry to listen to him.

Black workers were subjected to all kinds of harsh treatment from White farmers in the past. On addressing the issue of workers' rights Mbobo (1997:73) declares:

Abasebenzi zifama abangabanye abasebenzi abangamaxhoba phantse ngokulinganayo kunye nabasebenzi makhaya. Aba basebenzi nabo bahlawulwa imivuzo engaphantsi le kunaleyo enokuphilisa abantu abaxhomekeke kuye umsebenzi ngamnye. Kanti ngalo lonke elo xesha namaxesha okusebenza akwangalawo ahamba ngokuphuma nokutshona kwelanga kuphela. Uthi ke lowo ukhe wakhalazela ukuba imivuzo inyuswe kunye neendlela zokusebenza zibe nokuphuculwa, athi kanti uyinyathele emsileni. Ukuba akanakugxothwa kakubi kuloo fama, uyakubethelwa into yokuba afe ukuba unomxhelo omfutshane.

(Farm workers are also victims of unfair labour practises that are in the same level of victimisation as domestic workers. These workers are also paid below-standard salaries that are not able to sustain their dependants. And, in all that time, working hours last from sunrise to sunset. If any of them complains about salary increase and the improvement of working conditions, that person has provoked his

employers into taking an angry initiative. It is either that he/she will be fired from that farm or be badly assaulted even to the extent of dying if he/she is weak).

According to the above-named statement anyone can be led to believe that the farm workers' lives were more oppressive than any other kind of life lived by an ordinary South African in the entire country during the apartheid system of government in the past.

After finishing his job as a contracted Shearer, Nkcithakalo was offered a position as a foreman by Pletseni because he had saved Pletseni's cow and its calf from dying when it was giving birth to it. This particular position demanded that he should take his entire family with him to live on Pletseni's farm. On this occasion too, he was not told how much money was in store for him for this new position. Whatever good thing he did for his employer we are told by the author that he was not thanked for it, instead each worker was given a new nickname in accordance with how skilful he showed himself to be in the eyes of his employer. Dowling (1996:166) claims that the names that were used by Pletseni were "humiliating names".

Sirayi (1989:321-2) stresses the fact that "the black man was treated with contempt and was perceived as a savage by the colonial imperialists." He aligns his argument with Siyongwana's dogs in his allegorical novel Ubulumko

Bezinja who apart from their hard work for their owners were denied equal citizenship rights.

Nkcithakalo's life was no different from these dogs. With his wife and children he experienced an extremely hard life because as a foreman he was given a separate dwelling place, up in the mountain, away from everybody else. He had to wake up earlier than other workers and had to see to it that, everything was orderly, before the cows were milked by those who had to do that task. Zotwana says that there was no clear job description and no stipulated salary except that Nkcithakalo like all other workers was given a food ration including milk, and also new working clothes was bought for him. In all of this he could not ask anything concerning his salary.

Then the day he asked his employer about his salary (p.27) his employer threatened to kill him. Pletseni furiously said, "Ndifun'ukukuxelela le nto mna, Silem: uyabona apha kule iplasi umntu olidyakophu uya kuf'ejing'emthini, angatyiwa nangamaxhalanga" (I want to tell you Silem (Wise, the new name for Nkcithakalo) that clever people die hanging on a tree my farm without getting the privilege of being eaten by ravens).

Zotwana portrays Pletseni as a cruel employer who expects his farm workers to accept all conditions that he lays before them without arguing. He believed that they had no other choice, as legislation was in his favour. When these men are not working their discussion is about their employer, especially concerning things that they cannot discuss with him personally, which are

crucial in their lives as they form part of their work. One man called Ntsundu describes Pletseni as a person who wants to kill anyone who is dissatisfied about the money he offers. And, secondly, he describes him as a person who feels threatened that his workers want to dispossess him of his farm. Ntsundu (pp.27-8) argues that Pletseni always says, "ooKafile hulle raak nou wit" "kuba bafun'ukutya nabelungu etafileni batshate neentombi zabo, bagqibele ngokuthatha imihlaba yabo" (Pletseni says, "Kaffirs want to act as Whites" because they want to eat at the tables with Whites and marry their daughters, and finally dispossess them of their lands).

In the past farmers felt compelled to learn an African language that was mainly used by most of his workers for fear of being gossiped by them. He might not know the time when his workers were going to connive and conspire against him. Therefore the language they used to speak to their workers was mostly characterized by swearing and extreme use of bad language.

Dowling (1996:167) ridicules Pletseni for being linguistically incompetent and in that regard she quotes Apte who notes:

Individuals whose linguistic performance, for whatever reasons is consistently and noticeably defective in some way often become the butt of humour.

This was what really happened to most farmers in the past including Zotwana's fictional character, Pletseni. In order for farmers to curb their own

fears they had to win some of the workers and get them on their side so that whatever discussion takes place among the workers at least there will be someone to warn them. And these strategies that were used by farmers come from their fears as a result of their linguistic incompetence. Even if workers were seen laughing or showed any expression of anger towards other workers when arguing, farmers could not help being suspicious and anxious to an extent that they would quickly need a translator from the Xhosa group to explain to them what the problem was.

In the previous paragraphs above one of the workers called Ntsundu gives us his own opinion of Pletseni and how he sees him. Through this character Zotwana reveals some of the fears of the farmers that led them into exercising inhuman treatment to their workers. According to him the years between 1960-61 became extremely unbearable to farm workers because of the political struggle that took place in places like Cape Town, Johannesburg and Vereeniging. We are told that the farmers had to carry even if they were going to the lavatory for fear of the Black Communists such as African Nationalists and Pan Africanists' Congresses.

It is always advisable that we, the readers, be informed about the writing of this novel. In an interview with me Zotwana said "Imijelo yeGazi was planned to be an outline of the psychological effects of apartheid on the psyche of the oppressors and their supporters; to link literature to history; to be cinematographic; to portray farm life as well as the lighter sides of hardship".

What made the conditions of living worse for Nkcithakalo at Pletseni's farm was the involvement of his grandson Mhlabunzima in political struggle. When Nkcithakalo received a letter from the Free Mantle's Headmaster where Mhlabunzima was a student, he gave it to Pletseni to read it for him, not realising the contents of the letter. After Pletseni (p.37) read the letter he told Nkcithakalo that he does not want to see Mhlabunzima on his farm again otherwise he was going to call the police to come and arrest him. Again he warned him that he would fire him if he continued to keep his grandson on his farm. In rejection of this kind of injustice Matshoba (1979:27) utters his own view on this injustice and say:

... For the suffering of injustice is not the part of a man, but of a slave, who indeed had better die than live; since when he is wronged and trampled upon, he is unable to help himself, or any other about whom he cares.

Nkcithakalo is puzzled about Pletseni's declarations concerning his grand children because he thought that since they were born on that farm and were brought up there they had birth rights to be there. Again he knew that Pletseni made them work free and only gave them food to eat when they were still small children. In other words they did a non-paying work for Pletseni. This farmer practised child labour but never bothered to pay them as he only gave them food to eat as their payment.

In addition to Nkcithakalo's hardships Pletseni allowed him to breed his cattle with his, but he could not milk them because Pletseni said that he is the only one who has the right to milk them since they were feeding on his farm.

Another right that Pletseni had as the owner of the farm was to sell all the young bulls that Nkcithakalo's cows bore to the fund-raisers, and give the change of the money to Nkcithakalo after he (Pletseni) had taken his own share of the money for transporting the bulls. How much money was going to be taken by Pletseni for his transport, nobody knows; even Nkcithakalo did not have the boldness to ask him.

What one can at least appreciate about Nkcithakalo's character is the fact that he was a brave character who, apart from all the hardship he experienced, had not given up hope concerning the future of his grandchildren. Zotwana has shown him as a courageous person who made a solid decision, that his two grand children Nomfuduko and Mhlabunzima would be educated from his small salary, and would not be able to face such misery as he did because of being uneducated.

The farmers' treatment of their subordinates was of a subservient nature, like that of a king to his slave, and was meant to keep them at a distance from their employers, that is: not to eat with them at the same table, sit on the same chair, eat with the same spoon, drink with the same cup, sit or sleep in the same room, et cetera. In Zotwana's view the new owners who bought this

farm from Pletseni acted in the same way towards their farm workers to show that most farmers treated their workers with a slave or servant attitude.

4.3: Conditions that led to the outbreak of schools' boycotts

4.3.1 Socio-political context

During the apartheid regime Black people were living under oppressive laws that were targeted at them and their children. All those who are South Africans and who have political awareness about the situation in the past can agree that Blacks were fourth class citizens, after the Coloured Communities who were classified third, and who followed after the Indians who were second class. Because of these differences in colour, race or creed different people stayed in separate places and that was strengthened by the laws of separate development, particularly the Group Areas Act that divided people according to the different features mentioned above.

Black children grew up with the awareness that they are not equal to the White children. These differences became more evident especially on farms, where the social setting of Zotwana's novel is. According to Zotwana (p.39), Mhlabunzima who was selected as one of the speakers for the Standard 10 farewell function listed a number of reasons in the speech that he made trying to prove to everybody that was there that he was politically aware about the conditions under which their parents lived. In his speech he said (p39):

Kuni bazali ndingathi mhlawumbi nina nicinga ukuba asiyiboni indlela enibulaleka ngayo ngenxa yethu, kanti ke siyibona kakuhle. Siyazazi nezinto ezenzekayo kuni emisebenzini nizinyamezele ngenxa yokufuna ukuba sifunde; sazi nezithuko enithukwa ngazo; siyayazi nemithandazo enithandaza ngayo.

(To you parents I say, perhaps you think that we do not see your suffering because of our sake, but we see that very clearly. We also know about things that are happening to you at work and you bear them because you want us to learn; we also know that they call you vile names; we are also aware of your prayers).

The author shows the readers that the only time freedom fighters had to convince the communities was when they were given a platform to address an audience such as this one, that involved all structures of the community. Mhlabunzima had to grab this opportunity with both hands and use it to his fullest ability. As a boy who grew up in the farms he saw exactly what was happening to his parents, that is, the working conditions and the imbalances between them and their employers. He was also aware about their social conditions, the fact that they were marginalized through what was considered a prevalent oppression. They had to bear such situations including the huge task bringing up children without the means of doing so.

In order to portray the role played by hardship under the prevailing conditions of rural living Zotwana (p.31), says the following statement:

Yaba njalo ke intlalo yasemaplasini. Babehleli ubomi bentshontsho, yaye imini nganye yayiba ngathi ngunyaka ngakumbi ngexesha lasebusika, kodwa ke babaenyamezela bude bugqithe.

(Farm life was like that then. They lived an unbearable life, each day was like a year especially in winter, but they bore every aspect of it until it passed by).

Mhlabunzima and Nomfuduko were inspired to learn and become participant citizens in shaping their land. Unlike their parents and grand parents who had to tolerate cruelty and all sorts of hardships exerted upon them by their employers for packages that were below living standards they could practise contributing in their education through the debates that were held at their schools. A strong pillar behind them was their grand-father Nkcithakalo's support who also paid for their education. These children saw the calamities of those people who were uneducated because Pletseni treated them in the same way as their parents. As I have already said above, children worked very hard but did not receive any payment apart from food parcels that Pletseni gave them.

4.3.2: Educational context

Concerning the educational sphere that I will discuss under the following sub-heading, school children had to confront the same political problems that they

experienced at home even within the classroom environment. Alexander has more to highlight to readers concerning the structure of the socio-political context. In giving his views about the education crisis and the fact that it forms part of the socio-political context Alexander (1990:40) discloses:

Schooling is seen to be, and is in fact, so inseparably part of unequal life chances which defines racial capitalism, that almost anything can spark off a school boycott.

Some people who are not involved in the process of education may not be aware of the existing link between education and its role in their social lives. That existing link has been clarified to the readers by Alexander's statement in the extract above.

Zotwana shows his readers that the education of a Black child did not matter at all during the past apartheid era, and that there were many undefeated obstacles that had to be disposed of in order to reach a satisfactory condition for the majority of Black South Africans. Among the oppressed schools and institutions boarding schools were also highly affected. According to the author (p.36) Mhlabunzima went to Free Mantle Boys' High School for his secondary and high school education. This is where he got involved in political struggles. Because, being at a boarding school, students are offered ample time to read papers and engage in debates about their lives at school as well as the life outside school, which to a large extent inclusively affected their parents.

During the 1970s and '80s students shifted their focus from books, and concentrated on how to make the type of education they received work best for them, when they went out into the field of work. Their debates at school formed part of the struggle for liberation and were focussed on discussing both political and educational issues. To emphasize the existing bond between the students' lives at community level and at school Alexander again (1990:40) cites Lulu Johnson (the then president of COSAS) as having said in October 1984 in an interview with the Financial Mail:

Before they are students... the students are members of their community. Students are affected by rent hikes because it affects the amount of money their families have for their schooling... The school and the community are inseparable.

The writer deliberately shows us how his hero Mhlabunzima got deep into political struggle. By declaring his involvement as a junior student at his school. He says that he was the first Debating Society secretary ever to come from the class of Standard 8 of 1976 something that never took place in this school prior to his arrival. All other secretaries that were before him previously came out of the Matric class. Zotwana (p.36) claims that after one of the debating meetings Mhlabunzima attacked the Transkeian independence, and the medium of tuition used in their school, which took place through the use of Afrikaans language. From that time on the principal

closed the debating society saying that it was for learning English and not for political purposes. Because of his speech Mhlabunzima was strongly admonished by the principal that if the school should go on boycott he would be the first one to be expelled from school.

Apart from the closure of the debating society meetings the principal wrote a letter to Mhlabunzima's grandfather Nkcithakalo stating his warnings to the boy. Again Zotwana (p.39) marvellously paints a picture of Mhlabunzima's challenge to the principal Mr. Genter in an occasion where a function was called for the Standard 10 class of 1978. He claims that what they were fighting for as students may not have been known to the principal at that time but that later he would be enlightened concerning those issues. Although the author does not clearly declare to his readers the issues that caused the boycotts at various schools, but he leads them to conclude that the restrictions imposed to the students by the principal might have been some of the issues.

Anyone South African will have some idea regarding the kinds of issues that were perceived as threats by the previous regime and also those that were unacceptable to various schools in the past. Their unacceptability was judged first, by the government and then by the school management that received its mandate from the government. The fact that the apartheid regime involved itself in the running of the schools made matters tough for all schools especially for those of the Black children whose movements became were closely watched by the State. Unterhalter (1991:35) states the following

aspects regarding the formation of the Bantu Education's policy:

All consider that intrinsic to an understanding of African education is the citation of Verwoerd's notorious speech when introducing the Bantu Education Act of 1953, with its stress on segregation in education and the education provided for whites as 'forbidden pastures' from which Africans must be prohibited.

The writer indirectly implies that the legislation that was imposed on students was also imposed on their teachers. During the same speech that is mentioned in the paragraph above, that Mhlabunzima (p.39) had delivered, he also turned to his teachers and said boldly:

Zititshala zethu, siyabulela; kunjalo nje sibulela ngongazenzisiyo.
Umfuziselo eniye nawunikwa ukuba nisifunzisele ngawo, nisityise kakuhle, kuba ke naku side salapha kungabangakho uqunjelwa ade asishiye.

(Our teachers, we thank you; with a deep gratitude. The little bit you were given to feed us, you fed us well because we have come this far, and there is not one of us who has been malnourished).

After this farewell Mhlabunzima (p.50) went to goldmines and worked there for some few years according to the letter that he wrote to his primary school teacher Mr. Sangweni. In this letter he stated all the reasons why he did not

go straight to Fort Hare College after finishing his high school education. The next time we hear of Mhlabunzima is when he went back to Fort Hare in 1982 to study his law degree. According to the writer (p.51) Mhlabunzima's decision became a waist of time, because in the year that he went back to Fort Hare a school boycott started as a result of learners who refused to accept the President of the Ciskeian government. And the outcome was that he was among those who were arrested by the police.

The inadequacy of Bantu Education promoted commotion in all African schools: colleges, tertiary institutions, and universities at that time to the extent that these sectors were forced to form organizational structures that would protect and represent them should there be any problem regarding a misunderstanding between them and schools' authorities. And so, Congress of South African Students (COSAS) and South African Students' Organisation (SASO) was also formed. As a result of the instability at schools SASO made some of the following resolutions according to Sono (1993:78-9):

The declaration, furthermore, believed that "this (could) not be viewed isolated incident "that the "Black students have long suffered under oppression"; and that "this can be escalated into a major confrontation with the authorities". It was therefore resolved:

-that all Black students force the institutions/universities to close down by boycotting lectures;

-that the date when a simultaneous boycott of all classes be with effect from 1 June 1972 when it is expected that ALL TURFLOOP STUDENTS would be returning to Universities.

Furthermore Sono clearly states that all the varsities were engaged in political boycotts before the Soweto high schools' boycotts even took place four years later in June 1976. Among the universities he mentions, first it is Fort Hare (Mhlabunzima's university), and then, secondly, the University of Western Cape and thirdly, Turfloop University.

According to the statements and discussions made above anyone is obliged to feel tempted to draw some conclusions that the apartheid system of inequality is to a large extent responsible for the schools' uprising that took place in the past three decades.

4.3 The idea of death in the eyes of traditional Xhosa communities

Life and death become inseparable when it comes to dealing with human lives. During the olden Xhosa traditional times, Xhosa people feared death and viewed it as being horrific. Beginning with how to cope with the unavoidable situation of having a corpse in the household Budaza (1980:73) sums up the following:

NgesiXhosa isidumbu yenye yezinto ezoyikwa kunene. Ngqina oko besingagcinwa ntsuku-ngaphi phambi kokuba singcwatywe. Ngamanye amaxesha bekude kuvulwe nomgxuma eludongeni sikhutshwe ngawo xa siyakungcwatywa.

(In Xhosa tradition a corpse was one of the most revered things. To prove that it was not kept for long before it could be buried, sometimes a hole was opened in the wall of the house so that the corpse could be brought out through that particular hole in order to take it to the burial place).

In order to compare two diverse viewpoints about death Budaza (p.23) earlier on juxtaposed the view held by Christians to that of the traditional Xhosa people. In commenting he opens his argument by bringing in a Biblical point of view of death to his readers. By using the following Biblical reference he notes:

Kufa luphi ulwamvila lwakho?

Hadesi luphi na uloyiso lwakho?

(Death where is your sting?

Hades where is your victory?)

He continues and argues that these are the words that are often proclaimed by Christians all over the world. According to him Christians profess these

words in order to declare their testimony of faith in the Resurrection from death by the same way in which Christ had risen up and defeated the grave. But, in all that he says, there is no one, no matter what his faith or nationality is, who does not fear death. To strengthen his argument, he tells his readers how the different nations of the world have, in the past, embarked on various plans in order to destroy death. In addition to that he generalises by saying, "Thina bantu ke ngoko sisazinikele ekubeni ukufa akunakunqandwa kungenakubalekwa, kwaye akunantsimi yankosi, kufika kophantsi nophezulu, kutsho balingane totse phantsi kwezo nqumbi zomhlaba (We people therefore, we have surrendered that death is inescapable, and it has no chief, and it comes to the high and the low making them equal by being buried under the same soil, under a similar grave).

Furthermore Budaza explains what death is, by saying that, it is the separation of the soul and the body; and it is the end of life before reaching the grave. In his view he says that Christians believe that one overcomes death and the grave through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. According to him, that is a greatest hope among thousands of Christians all over the world.

Going back to the original Xhosas' traditional beliefs he (p.24) states that all Africans never had the boldness to challenge death; instead, they feared death from the beginning. They did believe in life after death where there is no sickness, hunger, sorrow or wars. He claims that they also believed that there is time for sowing seed and time for harvest: there is riches and

abundance everyday. Therefore, he says that, death was feared in the same way that the corpse was feared. Because the corpse was the result of death it was quickly disposed of, so that it will not be among the living.

Budaza (1980:25) mocks the modern times people for their lack of respect for death and for using death as a means to gain honour and profit by pointing out:

Mandibhekise kuthi bantu ngale ndaba yokufa. Ndithetha ngokuthandwa kokufa phakathi kwabantu abakhoyo, ngakumbi abahlala ezidolophini. Hayi andithethi ngezigwinta ezithanda ukuzisa ukufa kwabanye abantu ukuze zona zibaluleke emhlabeni. Andithethi ngabancamela ekuzibulaleni xa bexakwe ziimeko abahleli phantsi kwazo, mhlawumbi bangenziwa abafeli ngabashiyeke ngasemva emhlabeni. Mna ndithetha ngabo bantu banganyaliyo ukulwa ngesidumbu nomngcwabo ngenxa yokufuna inzuzo ezakuvela kwimikhonto yabantu. Mhlawumbi bethu ibakho nendawo yokuthanda amawonga nokutya, kuba kaloku eminye imingcwabo iba mikhulu, babe baninzi abantu, nokutya okunenyama kube kuninzi.

(Let me again refer to us Xhosa people concerning death. I am speaking about how the present time people love death especially in urban areas. No, I am not speaking about hooligans who are fond of bringing death upon other people in order to gain popularity on this planet. I am not speaking about people who choose to die because they cannot handle the situations surrounding them, perhaps they will

be widowed by those who inhabit the earth. I specifically speak about those people who do not feel ashamed of fighting about a corpse or a funeral because they want gain that will come from the contributions of other mourners. Perhaps there are some instances of loving honour and food because other funerals become exceedingly big and attract huge crowds of people, and food and meat come in large sums).

In his view on the way that the traditional Xhosa people perceived death Mbobo (1997:57) comments:

Kwaye kusithiwa kwakuba kukho oswelekileyo kubekho uzilo lokwenza nantoni apho kwelo khaya, nkqu isixeko eso okanye ilali leyo. Loo nto yaye isenziwa kuba kusoyikwa gqitha ukufa, kunjalo nje kuhlonitshiwe. Xa lidudumile kumzi wasemathileni, kwakusaziwa ukuba uQamat'uthethile nesizwe ngokuthi abe nokuthabathela loo mntu uthe wasweleka.

Ngelo xesha ubesithi ogqithayo nokuba yintlola engaziwa bani kuloo lali okanye esixekweni apho azibonele naye ukuba kukho ohambileyo ngaphandle kokuxelelwa. Wayesima bucala okanye ahlale phantsi anike imbeko yokugqibela, kungakhathaliseki nokuba uyamazi nokuba akamazi na lowo ulishiyileyo ihlabathi.

(People used to fast and abstain from all kinds of duties, whenever there was a dead person in that household, even the whole village or

district. That occurred because people did not just fear death but they respected it. When a single household had an occurrence of death, the village people knew that God had spoken to the nation by taking that particular person who had died to himself.

During that time anyone who was passing that home, whether or not he was a spy unknown to that village or district could afford to see without being told that there was someone who died recently. He would stand aside or else sat down to give his last respect, and it did not matter whether he knew the deceased or not).

According to Zotwana's comments (p.3-4) there is still a lot of respect for the dead among the rural communities. He shows this painting a picture of the baThembu audience that attended the funeral of Mhlabunzima. He says that they are at this home, well dressed and well mannered. Although they portray this kind of respect, but unlike in the traditional past they still have time to talk to each other, smoke with each other and embrace one another with love.

Even though people are able to lay aside their grief when they are in the process of engaging in a talk with others, but the first instance people learn of a relative's death, they cry to an extent that they refuse to be comforted. For instance, one could take the case of the women who were in Falakhe's house at the time Fort Hare's lecturers broke the news of Mhlabunzima's death.

According to Zotwana (p.54), women and children who were in the house

began to cry out loud and refused to be stilled.

All Xhosa writers seem to agree with one another about the way the Xhosa traditional belief perceived death. Soga (1929:131) shows what is expected to happen in a household situation the moment death strikes by claiming:

Bodliwa naxeshikweni bambike bengekamfuneli gqirha – into yokuqala akuwiswa kukugula umntu wenkosi bobetha bayazi into ababeyenzile nabo. Kwakuba mnyama bonke abantu mabahlanganisane baye kuhlamba njengoko sesitshilo kwakusasa wakube ufikile umbiko. Bakuba bebuyile bachebe iinwele bagugule, amasi bawazile; zeke kuxukuxwe kusasa ngengomso.

(They will pay a fine to the chief if they report the dead before getting a diviner for him/her when death has slain him/her down. They are bound to give reasons for that before the chief. To the common people they must go and wash their bodies early at dawn by the time the report of the death had come. On returning back the hair on their heads must be totally shaved, and they must abstain from drinking sour milk, and early in the morning they have to spool their mouth).

In addition to that Soga voices out his awareness that the modern times people, especially the elite among the Xhosa people, have discarded those traditional beliefs and have followed the Western trends of conducting burying people in coffins.

According to Zotwana (pp.56-8) Mhlabunzima's funeral proceedings take a different route. The author describes this event as astonishing because of the crowds of people who were there to attend. He claims that there were thousands of people who had come to pay their last respect to Mhlabunzima. As a common phenomenon in these modern times there were various speakers who delivered different speeches about the deceased. Among those speakers there were church ministers and preachers whose messages concentrated on those who died at the hands of their oppressors. The author also comments that comforting words from the Bible were used and thereafter the service was handed over to political activists who took the procession and gave back to the ministers at the graveyard.

Regarding these freedom fighters Zotwana asserts that it was like thunder when they took the platform and felt like the earth was trembling. There were whistles and shouting of "*Ama-a-a-a-andla!*" (Power) coming from the man who took the platform, and the audience would answer back and say: "Ngawethu." (Is Ours) Furthermore, as soon as he had finished addressing the crowd, he would give a chance to a number of speakers who also spoke on behalf of the deceased. Among those speakers there was a certain Mr. Sangweni, the principal of Mhlabunzima's ex-school in Mateyise. Sangweni surprised some of the crowd that was there by showing his support to the political struggle.

The writer presents the various speakers who were there as follows: some of

the delegates were from the workers' committees and unions from goldmines, and from football players there; others came from student representative council; others from political representatives; lecturers from the university; and others came from different societal structures. In addition to all of that there were condolences that came in the form of telegraphs, postcards and some of those were from overseas.

In Zotwana's perspective this is a kind of funeral that one would expect to find from political activists during the time of the struggle for liberation in South Africa. According to him comrades did not show sadness when one of their comrades had fallen down in battle instead they claimed that, that particular comrade is a hero of the struggle (p.57).

When asked about the character of Mhlabunzima, Zotwana said, "Mhlabunzima could be the son of anyone. Being illegitimate with his biological father unknown, and being brought up by his grand-parents, but able to rescue himself from farm life through rejection of oppression." In addition he said "But also proof that given a healthy environment children do not attach colour to life.

Finally I can say that this novel has shown that history does not die with those who have been killed but stays behind with generations after generations as a remembrance of things gone by. This novel has exposed some historical events that are relevant to the children of Xhosa people and also to other South African groups who will in future be interested in the history of that

South African Black man's struggle under apartheid.

Dealing with the idea of death, Dowling (1996:173) argues the point of unproductiveness of some people and suggests that Zotwana's mention of death and education (p.71) may be for "threatening his readers with a possibly unrestful hereafter if they do not become pro-active... " If taken positively, Dowling's statement may be good for awakening some of those readers even today.

In the next chapter I will devote most of my attention in analytic discussion of another novel written by Zotwana, entitled Amanzithinzithi KaMzingisi.

CHAPTER 5**Amanzithinzithi KaMzingisi (1995)****5.0 Introduction**

This particular novel deals with the suffering of Black people in South Africa during the past apartheid period. The writer's story focuses on addressing the Xhosa communities especially on educating the Xhosa adult learners.

According to Zotwana (on the cover page of this novel) the reason why he wrote this novel was for the purposes of creating literary material for Xhosa adult learners. He has skilfully selected Mzingisi Mandlakapheli as his protagonist and the hero of this novel. The narrator is the nephew of Mzingisi. The story is narrated in the first person by Mzingisi's nephew Magxakaxhali (p.2). Sirayi (1989:234) defines the narrative point of view as follows:

It is a narrative medium the literary artist has of discovering, exploring, developing, evaluating the subject matter and communicating its theme. Point of view thus has significant bearing upon setting, character delineation, plot and theme.

Therefore, in view of the statement above, the author has managed to lay a solid foundation concerning his geographical setting and his theme. First of all, his narrator informs the readers about his ancestral background, claiming that he is a Sotho speaker of the "Mvundle clan" from Herschell, but through

the exploration that his ancestors undertook out in the distant past, he has now become part and parcel of the Xhosa community at Glen Grey, in the Transkei. The narrator claims (p.8) that he narrates this story from Khayelitsha in Cape Town where he is residing at this time.

According to certain theorists and writers of novels, it is acceptable for novels not to have characters that are enacting different parts. And as a result of that it comes as no surprise to us, as readers of the novel to see it presented in this way. In supporting such a view Hawthorne agrees that this genre of literature can be told to readers in this way, in some cases. Entrenching such an idea Hawthorn (1985:3) points out:

The novel is a narrative: in other words it is in some sense a 'telling' rather than 'enacting,' and this distinguishes it in an important sense from the drama. Of course novels can contain very dramatic scenes, and often the reader may forget that what we learn of character and event is not direct (as in theatre or the cinema) but mediated through a particular telling, a narrative source.

Hawthorn's statement above answers all doubts about the absence of characters in this novel, and simultaneously addresses the presence of the narrator in this novel. There are of course significant aspects in this novel that I cannot leave out in my analytic discussion, and one of these aspects is the theme of the story and the setting. Regarding the setting of a novel Sirayi (1989: 53) maintains:

The setting of a narrative or dramatic work comprises mainly three divisions: social setting, geographical setting and historical setting.

If one looks at this novel, one will find that all the above stated three divisions are found in Amanzithinzithi kaMzingisi. The social setting goes back to the oppressive time of apartheid. And the geographical setting is Khayelitsha, where the narration of this novel has taken place, and lastly the historical setting has been given through the events that go back with time and are linked with social setting.

The dominant theme of this story as the title suggests, is about the hardships that Mzingisi experienced in his life as a result of his low educational standard. It is then very difficult to even suggest that the theme of this novel is political only because it involves teaching the readers about the dangers of having low educational standards. According to Zotwana, the author of this novel, one of the reasons he wrote this book was "to portray the typical path that was travelled by non-professional workers in the apartheid era." Literally the title is about 'the trials and the tribulations' of Mzingisi, and therefore we, as readers who understand this language, are not at all surprised of Mzingisi's tribulations in life.

Through looking back at his uncle's life the narrator is able to reveal some historical and political events about him and those events categorise this novel as being both historical and political at the same time. The fact that it is

a historical novel is strongly supported by the form of its narration that puts the events in the remote past. Regarding a historical novel Sirayi (1989:53) says:

an historical novel will require accurate details regarding social setting, geographical setting and historical setting.

Considering the statement above one can only conclude that the closest possible conclusion to arrive at is that of a political novel. This brings up the fact that this novel, although it is fictional, still contains factual events concerning black South Africans. Education can never be left out as something that matters less in this novel because it forms the foundations of Mzingisi's socio-political struggles. And even though the novel itself deals with all those genres the dominant one above all is that which explores the political theme because it traces the involvement of the principal character in political strikes and his participation in workers' boycotts.

Firstly, I shall give a brief account of the entire story. The narrator begins his story from the time when Mzingisi's parents both suddenly died, and he had to leave school and make a sacrifice for his elder sister to finish her own education. In order for him to succeed in doing this he had to take a path that was common to all those workers with a lower standard of education and, that path was that of taking a join at Tebha, to go and work at the mines in Johannesburg.

Secondly, Mzingisi is portrayed as an interactive person who sacrifices everything for the sake of his fellow men. This point forms part of the plot structure and takes the story from the time that he made the first sacrifice for his sister, to the times of working at different work places, sacrificing all his rights for the sake of other workers. And lastly, the story builds up to his last sacrifice that he made for a neighbour's children who were trapped in the lake of fire. At that time he died as a result of receiving burns to his body.

5.1 Human dignity and the life of Mzingisi

According to the narrator, Mzingisi was forced by misfortune to go and seek employment at the Tebha mines in Johannesburg. He had just undergone a painful transition in his life, losing both his parents through death by natural causes. Because his parents had only two children, Mzingisi and his elder sister, he (Mzingisi) decided to leave his home village in pursuit of greener pastures, and in order to get employment and support his elder sister's education, who at the time was doing standard eight and was not very far from becoming a teacher.

As it was common in those days to all those who were taking jobs at Tebha, he made the necessary arrangements and undertook many programmes. He also did this in order to prove that he was competent and capable of taking that kind of a job contract.

Zotwana, as the writer of this novel, assumes the role of a back seat passenger and allows the narrator to present the experiences he has had in connection with his uncle's life, that is, Mzingisi's historical background. In rendering the story to his listeners he does not forget to tell them about Mzingisi's boyhood days. Similarly to other Xhosa novels this one is no exception in using praise-poems that are sung by other boys who are Mzingisi's contemporaries on his behalf. About this act of praising among the Xhosa youth Dowling (1996: 8) makes reference to Kuse who declares the following about personal and clan praises:

the crucial difference between *iziduko* and simple *izibongo* is that *iziduko* are inherited while *izibongo* are earned by the hero to whom they apply.

The narrator tells readers how that Mzingisi's peers praised him for being a playboy. He says that they (p. 14) remarked:

NguMahlabeledlula owahlukuhl'iselwa

Lada laphihlika

NguMahlohl'ubuhlalu

Owahlohlel'amaHlubikazi

Kub'efun'ukuhlutyelwa.

(He is the One who pierces whilst passing by

He who shook the calabash

Till it broke into pieces

He who filled the beads for use by Hlubi girls

In order to be shown a thigh).

Traditionally some Xhosa girls, whether they are from the Thembu or Hlubi tribe or any other tribe it was customary to show their appreciation for a boy by lifting their garments and expose their thighs to any boys that they fancied.

Zotwana through the mouth of the narrator states that Mzingisi was still doing his Standard 6 when his parents died. During that time in the history of Black South Africans Standard 6 was a low educational standard in view of the working sector, yet it was considered to be high among black communities. Being in possession of a standard 6 certificate, one could only go and work for a minimal salary that could not satisfy one's needs and the needs of one's dependants.

According to the narrator, the situation of workers was further crippled by apartheid legislation that gave very low living wages for Black people at that time. Even though standard six was recognised among Blacks as a better standard of education since most Xhosa people did not have that standard of education, yet, in the employment circles it was not recognized at all.

And, not that it was a poor standard of education for the majority of South Africans at the time but, because most employers who were White had a racist attitude towards Blacks and thus favoured their own people who had the

same standard of education to fill up offices in the work places. Through their indifference towards Black employees they treated those with that kind of a certificate with contempt, and gave vacant employment positions to their White compatriots.

It was not an uncommon thing to see during the past five decades that employment was determined across racial lines. There were unfavourable conditions for Black workers on all employment circles and the preference went first to Whites, then Indians, then Coloureds and finally to Blacks. One can actually assume what kind of a job opportunity was given to Black workers after the interests of the other groups were served.

McShane et al (1984:24) has this to say concerning Black workers in South Africa:

For Black workers have had to fight not only against a management that was determined as any in the world to resist their demands, but also against a state uniquely organised along racist lines to deny Blacks any say over their own lives.

In line with the statement above Black workers had to put up resistance against their employers and against the state. The government authorities took an abominable stance of denying the Black workers to voice out any grievance they had concerning their lives at work.

In this case Mzingisi is one of those members of the society who was not yet ready to lose his dignity by complying with inhuman legislature that was bent on depriving the indigenous Black people of their human rights as citizens of South Africa. In arguing about the aspects of dignity and self-esteem, Nyamende (1991:45) makes reference to Dikobe's novel and remarks that one of Dikobe's protagonists called Martha faced the same fate as Mzingisi. He further describes the extent to which Martha's life was affected by sorrow and grief. Concerning Martha's situation Nyamende (1991:45) comments:

She seems destined to wallow in endless misfortune and perpetual disgrace. Instead her short-lived success in the singing career elsewhere in the story stands out as an exception in her life's experience.

His view is that Martha was entangled into that situation whilst she was still in the process of establishing her identity as one of the community members in Doornfontein. He also shows his readers how that more and more misfortune befell her as she tried to focus on her musical career. We are also informed that her pianist George impregnated her and later fled to Durban, on hearing the news of Martha's pregnancy.

From the above stated opinions, we are enabled to see how Nyamende has cleverly presented Martha's persistence to his readers, and her zeal to bring up her children (p.32-3) no matter what the circumstances. On top of that we are told that she managed, among all those difficulties that were in her life to

get a house of her own with the help of Tereplasky. The writer also claims that the house was obtained in Orlando township. Thereafter her boyfriend George came back, and they were married after Martha had forgiven him.

So, what the writer tells his readers here is that Martha did manage to take hold of her life by maintaining a struggle to keep her dignity through difficult times, and also by defeating all obstacles that hindered her way to success.

Similarly, Mzingisi refuses to allow life's pressures to submerge him to a point of despair and helplessness. Without the slightest desire to surrender to his quest to liberate other workers from the bondages of being abused by their employers, he maintains a steady but focused attitude towards his goal.

Mzingisi's first struggle was that he had to deal with his emotions as a result of the fact that he had to leave his birth place as I have already said above, and start a new life in a far away place like Johannesburg, where he knew nobody except those men with whom he had been employed.

Behind him he was leaving his homestead with his uncle Mvingqi (p.16), the younger brother of his father to take care of his village home. His aunt (father's sister) Nozingqi is also left in this homestead as a helping hand.

Together with the other working crew they made preparations for their journey and were given new items such as clothing, musical instruments, and food on request, and the supplier was Gushumpu, one of the shop-owners who collaborated with Tebha in dealing with those men. These items were given only to those who required them. The worst aspect of that arrangement was

that all the workers thought for some time that those supplies were given to them freely but, as soon as they finished working their first month, they realised that their first month's wages had to pay for all those items that they took at Gushumpu's shop.

Concerning the conditions of their travelling, the narrator claims that the train in which they were transported was a third class carriage and was also in bad shape. With pain and grief he says that it was most unfortunate that all these workers, including his uncle had been put in the carriage behind the steam engine. Because of the bad organization of this train the workers were squashed together and were suffocating. Repeatedly the narrator empathizes with these men and suggests that they also had to tolerate the noise of the steam engine whilst suffocated until they reached their destiny. One can imagine the distance the train had to travel from East London to Johannesburg in that awkward condition.

In writing about a novel there is slight chance that the writer can avoid talking about his past experiences in his writings. Existing evidence about such a view has its support attached to that of Theodora Ezeigbo et al (1991:14) who argue and say the following about African novel writing:

These writers have been influenced by past and contemporary views of history, and the interpretation of the past in their work often shows this influence.

History shows us that in the past Blacks have had to suffer dehumanizing conditions in the hands of their White oppressors. It is obvious according to some writers that the only acceptable class in a train for transporting Blacks was a third class coach. It is also clear that the Railway authorities could not care less who the Black person was that they were transporting, and what his/her status was, and how much possessions or money he/she had, as long as he/she was Black, third class ticket was ideal for him/her. One can then assume that the third class situation was not an unusual class for black workers, but for an ex-junior high school boy like Mzingisi it was extremely odd. Reflecting on this situation of South African trains in the apartheid past Matshoba (1979:143) confirms:

I chose a simple means of transport, the people's, which means public
– a train and a bus, third class, people's class.

Still continuing on this subject he describes the condition of the third class carriage by saying:

The train was full of migrant workers, boys and men with all sorts of
baggage and many with the inevitable and regrettable radios.

Anyone is obliged to think that these degrading conditions under which Mzingisi finds himself crawling under were enough to strip anyone of his dignity, but it was not the case with Mzingisi. As a brave young man he was prepared to catch the bull by the horns and face his destiny without any hint of

coldness.

More surprises were still in store for them because when they reached Park Station in Johannesburg we are told that they were dumped into a truck as soon as they alighted from the train. The narrator (p.19) specifically likens this mode of transport to those trucks that are normally used for transporting sheep and cattle. In a similar way as the train that had brought them to Johannesburg, the conditions of this truck were no better, because in it too they were congested with apparently no space to stretch themselves.

Zotwana does not want his readers to wonder about what had happened next. Instead, he supplies his readers with more details of Mzingisi's story through the mouth of the narrator. He also gives them the version of the story at the time the workers met with the five security guards and the two mine clerks who had awaited their arrival at a place called Magqadaza. The narrator claims that it was so hard for these would-be workers to believe that these securities and mine clerks who came to receive them were also Black men, and that was influenced by the disgusting behaviour they had shown whilst receiving them.

In addition to that, the narrator shows us that they were welcomed with rudeness with words as the following (p.19), "Yihlani, Yihlani, zidenge zamajoyini! Apha kukwanyamayipheli, kuphel'izinyo lendoda!

Ubusiyaph'eGol'ungumntwana?" (Alight, alight, you foolish work-seekers!

Here is a place of never-ending meat where only the man's tooth disappears!

Why did you come to Johannesburg if you are still a child?").

The above remarks were enough to demonstrate to those newcomers what kind of treatment was still in store for them in their new jobs. With a tone of sympathy the narrator claims (p.20) that the most degrading experiences were yet to follow. He recalls an incident that his uncle had told him about, and he says that Mzingisi used to say that he would never forget the day when they were instructed to undress for the purposes of being x-rayed by the mine doctor. Mzingisi was extremely astounded by that as he remembers that men were ordered to strip and stand naked in front of boys and that was something that was and still is today culturally unacceptable for the Xhosa speaking men to do.

What readers can learn from the paragraphs above is that the writer uses his narrator as a means to convey the messages he has about his past experiences. Regarding this way of novel writing Serudu (1993:23) infers:

Writing a novel, to any writer, is a process of conveying his experiences to the reader. These experiences emanate from his/her daily living around his/her environment.

Additional to all the conditions that the narrator lays down, he does not forget the hard times that his uncle and other workers have had to confront.

Specifically, he notes the poor conditions under which they work. Beginning with working times he states that they had to work extremely long hours, that

is, waking up at 4 a.m. they had to start working at 5 a.m. on to 1p.m. and were given thirty minutes' break for lunch and rest. Thereafter they had to continue working until 5 p.m. that means that they had to work a full day, about a twelve-hour period. The narrator emphatically states the effects of such hard manual labour by stressing its results to the hardworking men. He claims that they suffered from blistered hands, sore shoulders and aching backs that in return gave rise to losing appetite or sleep. In addition he says that it took about two weeks for the men to get acquainted with this type of work.

The writer successfully hides himself behind the narrator and allows the narrator to become the voice behind his uncle's life story. This style of writing is guided by the fact that the writer uses the narrator from the beginning of the story till the end in order to tell his experiences to the readers. It is therefore visible to any reader of this novel that Mzingisi has shown characteristics of being strong from what the narrator tells us.

5.2 The expected leadership standards in Xhosa communal living

The Xhosa communities have very high moral standards in choosing an individual to become their leader. To a large degree this behaviour has been influenced by their traditional past when every thing was still strongly communal. Although it still manifests itself in certain individuals but it is not as obvious as we see it in the life of Mzingisi.

In his dealings with his fellowmen Mzingisi proves himself loyal, trustworthy and unselfish. Through the words of the narrator the writer is able to show some of the strong characteristics that Mzingisi possesses. These characteristics reveal that only few people are fortunate enough to have such characteristics as Mzingisi had. Those characteristics can only be found in some people who are born with those leadership qualities. The following points pinpoint some of those leadership qualities that the community expects, and which were also found in Mzingisi's life.

5.2.1 The availability of Mzingisi to his fellow men

When Mzingisi first went to the mines it was not his own liking but he was driven by circumstances that were beyond his control. Apart from those particular situations he had no idea what kind of circumstances were awaiting him at the mining industries. One might be tempted to think and say that it was his turning point in life. It was at this time that he learnt working together with other men and became part of a team.

According to the narrator, mineworkers performed all their tasks in unity. He claims that they worked together, sat together in the hostel's dining rooms, they collectively washed their clothes and played the ball, stick-fighting and mrabaraba together. He continues to say that they talked together, told stories to each other and competed with each other in dancing. In all these different social practices Mzingisi was involved and continued to intermingle with other workers.

The co-operative spirit he had with other people, and that of becoming a part of a group was not something that Mzingisi learnt from the mines but is integrated in Xhosa traditional cultures. And so, as a Xhosa he found no difficulty in mingling with other workers in all the working places in which he was employed. About the view that Xhosa people's culture encourages group structures Jafta (1978:70), sums up:

The social organization in a traditional Xhosa society is group centred. Modern society is largely individualistic so that the conflict is not based on non-conformity to group solidarity or anything which threatens group existence but on individual weakness.

The fact that he was always available to help others made other workers trust and rely on him. Mzingisi gave his services by reading and writing letters freely for some of his work mates who were illiterate. The narrator (p.23) suggests that the mine clerks charged the workers 3 pennies for writing or reading a single letter. Unlike them, Mzingisi shunned the idea of becoming like a prostitute who has to sell her services in order to live. Therefore he rendered his services to his fellowmen without charging them a single cent. By acting in this way he showed them that he was not greedy for money like the mine clerks and that money did not mean everything to him. The kind of character that he possessed also proved his commitment to his fellow workers, and stood as a symbol of his love and compassion for them. In other words his services were not for sale.

According to the narrator, reading other people's secrets did make him feel a bit uneasy and he desired to quit reading those letters but he was overwhelmed with sympathy. In his attempt to explain his views of what a true leader is, Jolobe (1940:63) declares:

Phofu igama eli lingathi liyazichaza. Inkokeli ngumntu okhethiweyo ukuba akhokele abanye kumcimbi lowo uphethweyo. Ngamanye amazwi ligosa eliyintloko kwiqela elo elimnyulileyo umntu lowo. Le ndawo ilula icacile kananjalo. Indawo enzima ukuqondakala kwabaninzi yeyokuba lo uyedwa unyuke njani na ukuze ade afikelele kule ndawo abekwe kuyo kuba kaloku yonke into inesiko nendlela eyenziwa ngayo.

(This word is actually self-descriptive. A leader is a person who has been chosen to lead others in a certain task. In other words it is a head steward in that certain group which has chosen him/her to lead them. This aspect is clear and comprehensible. The most difficult part to understand to many is how this particular person has risen up and reached this level where he/she has been placed, because everything has to follow a certain criterion or path).

Simply by looking at the above extract one will agree with the fact that Jolobe sees a leader as being a person who has been chosen by a group of people from among themselves. The other side that has not been followed by

Jolobe, and that is also a held belief that some leaders are born with leadership qualities that have been bestowed on them by God, the Creator. This is a common view that is commonly held by most people who profess to believe in God. Yet another view is that one held by some people who have achieved leadership by being taught from books. Either way leadership is not leadership until it becomes practical, and that, it becomes acceptable to people who in return will testify to the fact that, that particular person is a real or a born leader.

5.2.2 Resistance for one's rights and the rights of others

In view of what the narrator says about Mzingisi one can perceive that he had good qualities of humaneness crowned by a sense of cordiality for other human beings. A gesture that leads us to the commonly discussed ideology of *ubuntu* which characterizes the African way of life. Kwetana traces back the history of this "old African/Nguni proverb that kept these communities intact in their early histories. He (2000:102) this well-known proverb by saying:

Umntu ngumntu ngabantu.

("A human being enjoys full humanity in liaison with other human beings").

Mzingisi's way of showing his solidarity to his fellow men is further entrenched by the fact that he was not afraid to put up resistance up against

his employers. This he exhibits while he was in the employment of a road construction company. Through the eyes of the narrator (p.26), we, as readers are able to see that Mzingisi was being moved by the plight of other workers to take action on their behalf because they were suppressed and were not bold enough to stand for their rights.

Although Mzingisi was not directly affected by those conditions his involvement makes him to be part of those suffering workers. The narrator lists a detailed table of those conditions with which workers had to endure. He says the following; they were underpaid, they worked outside in cold and hot weather, they worked long hours from dawn till sunset, and also did unpaid overtime work.

At this stage Mzingisi was working comfortably in an office as a wage clerk, but being politically aware as he was he figured out that he could not allow the weak to be exploited in that fashion by those who were much stronger than them. He pledged his solidarity with them by advising that a workers' committee be formed. They played along with him. Having formed that committee (p.26) they elected him as the secretary of the committee, and he had to write down all the workers' complaints and then submit these complaints to the authorities according to the workers' expectations. The narrator mentions that this stance deeply provoked the authorities and they sacked all the members of the committee, claiming that the latter were creating havoc and rebellion among other workers. From that day on the authorities promised to hire a White worker who would look at the interests of

Black workers. The employers made it clear that they were only prepared to listen to that White worker and nobody else. By taking this shallow route of solving problems these authorities were actually reverting to their repressive strategy of putting trust in one of their kind and undermined Blacks who they considered inferior to them. In supporting the notion of White preference over Blacks as practised by the previous government Ncube (1985:38) maintains:

In essence the changes that were effected by this government irrevocably reinforced the syndrome of White superiority and Black inferiority, and obliterated the possibility of a common working class consciousness amongst the White and the Black masses. In its place a race consciousness that was preponderantly underpinned by legislation manifested itself.

The above statement clearly indicates the extent of racist determinism the previous government authorities displayed in keeping the Black worker down on his knees whilst they were in power. Their tactics concerning the administration of Blacks in any field in the country were centralised around the policies of the apartheid regime. At certain times they pretended to change their attitudes but all the tactics they used for the working class never changed.

Having been sacked by this company Mzingisi does not surrender his fight. Rather, he becomes more determined than ever to seek new employment, which he ultimately finds as a clerk at the South African Railways and

Services. According to the narrator, he (Mzingisi) then decides to further his studies by enrolling for the Junior Certificate at an adult night school. This is where Mzingisi gains more political exposure and becomes involved in political parties and workers' unions. We are told that this political awareness came as a result of intermingling and communicating with various characters that were attending the same night school as he did.

Furthermore, judging by the way the narrator tells his story (p.26-8) about Mzingisi, we, the readers, are able to see his unwavering persistence in struggling for the freedom of other workers. Similar situations arose at the South African Railways where Mzingisi and other workers combined to form a workers' union. Even at that stage the workers chose him as secretary. During those days all the companies and work places around the Republic of South Africa were governed by similar legislation and that included South African Railways as well. South African Railway Services authorities outrageously denied their workers any privilege to establish a forum for workers stating several reasons for such a refusal. The S.A.R.S. authorities claimed that they could only allow the establishment of a workers' union under the following conditions:

- (a) – that the committee members of the union were chosen by the work's authorities.
- (b) – that the constitution of this union was written by the authorities.
- (c) – that the elected representative from the authorities had to attend all the meetings of this union.

Mzingisi and other employees rejected having to work with the authorities' stipulations and opted to form their committee secretly, holding their meetings at night. We are also told that their agenda about politics and their position at work as well as the workers' conditions in general. Switching over to a new political strategy Mzingisi and his friends read many books and newspapers, especially those that dealt with the general workers' conditions and issues about the government.

As the story progresses, the narrator (p.28) comes to a point of explaining to readers how the previous apartheid government reacted to all those that rebelled against its legislation. He does this indirectly by arguing that his uncle's arrest and his being sentenced to three years at Robben Island for his participation in politics, was an unfortunate incident. He shows his readers the advantages of being in prison for politics and says with great relief that his uncle pursued his studies while he was at Robben Island and passed his Standard 10 in 1962.

Mzingisi displays his internal strengths in leadership by continuous perseverance in his quest to free Black workers no matter what the circumstances. The writer does not at any stage of the novel reveal to readers the vulnerability of Mzingisi. He cleverly paints Mzingisi's unwillingness to retreat from the constant struggle to gain freedom of his rights as well as other workers' rights, and in that way the author makes Mzingisi the hero of his novel. As far as the working conditions were

concerned in the entire South African Republic there was no better working place with favourable working conditions at that time.

From January 1964, after his release from prison, he resumed work at another factory. At that time conditions of work had not improved and were rather similar to those of the mining industries. The narrator points out (p.29) that they have to work shifts, with the first shift from at 5 a.m. till 1 p. m., and the last shift beginning at 9 p.m. Once again, even on this occasion Mzingisi was promoted to a similar favourable position as before, a wage clerk position, fairly earning a better salary than other workers. Even though circumstances seemed more pleasant for Mzingisi than they were for other workers, according to the narrator this, nevertheless, hindered him in the prospect of mixing with other workers and encouraging them to form a union for themselves. Although the employers tried hard to separate Mzingisi from other workers, because of his history of agitation, he nevertheless succeeded in forming a union among his fellow employees.

As part of the complaints that were handed to their employers they submitted a detailed list of the following demands:

- (a) Salary increase.
- (b) Working times.
- (c) Vacations.
- (d) Overtime pay.
- (e) Dangerous working conditions because of the use of chemicals,

behaviour of management towards their subordinates and the general working conditions.

Due to the extreme resistance that the workers showed their authorities, for a period of a week, the employers took a strong initiative to readdress all the grievances of the workers including some that were not listed in the memorandum. The success of their strike brought about the following innovations into place:

- (a) – The building of shower rooms and restrooms.
- (b) – The buying of sports' materials for workers.
- (c) –The introduction of a paid leave for one month.
- (d) –The introduction of a pension fund.
- (e) –The building of a first aid room with medicine, and an employed nurse to assist workers.
- (f) –The implementation of bursaries for all workers who were willing to pursue their studies. Lastly, a financial assistance was given to any worker's dependants who were still doing their studies at school.

Addressing the kind of determination that the workers had in the past McShane et al (1989:24) declare:

Black workers in South Africa have a long history of organising to improve their standard of living and to gain elementary trade union rights. Their history is a story of both bravery and fierce determination

to fight for "a better tomorrow," as one worker puts it recently. But it is also a story of tragic reverses.

Mzingisi, in view of the author-narrator does exhibit a brave heart and a brave spirit of resistance in order to defend his own rights, and the rights of other workers. This kind of bravery was much applauded by the indigenous people of Africa from their earliest histories. In supporting this view Kwetana (2000:164) says this about bravery:

It is true that bravery was prized high in Africa. The bravery we see here is the spirit to stand for what is right even in adversity, and an attitude of positively looking at oneself with confidence in one's worth and exorcising of inferiority complex. Bravery is a quality that is also consciously asserted as a characteristic that early Africans had.

Some readers may perceive the possibility of forming a union that would protect workers from being exploited by their employers as a useless step in the absence of bold characters. I also believe that, but through acquiring the right tools and the right weapons, even cowards can win any battle. By reflecting on this novel we learn that the only weapon workers had to possess was to embark on a successful strike action in order to force their employers to hear their voices. As a result of those circumstances, and, the fact that they were already exposed to extremely desperate nature of events under which they had to struggle for their survival, we, readers can assert that these workers were forcibly pushed to the limit, and therefore, had to use whatever

form of resistance that was deemed possible and nearer to them, as a way of liberating themselves. Having realised that they could not expect any external force to come for their rescue from those dreadful employment conditions, they had to bear their own crosses.

5.3 Mzingisi's sacrifices drastically come to an end

Zotwana has brilliantly drawn a realistic image of a South African worker who has had to suffer the terrible conditions of apartheid cruelty all his life. Mzingisi's suffering is not exempt from the sufferings that other South African political activists have experienced because of being marginalized by both the government and also workers' authorities. Therefore the author attaches great value to Mzingisi by putting him at the level of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. To the author-narrator Mzingisi is no ordinary political activist.

He is painted and portrayed to readers as a hero and an icon in the calibre of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, who was the first South African State President after the apartheid era, from 1994. We see this in the way that Mzingisi conducts himself. For instance, like Mandela, Mzingisi did not try to spare his own life, but was willing to sacrifice his freedom for the sake of freeing the majority of black workers. The author shows us the daring steps taken by Mzingisi that he acted as though he was not an ordinary man. Unlike some of the political activists we read about in newspapers he had no financial interest at heart but his predominant interest was to see freedom of the Black man at all workplaces. And because of that he took some action by making a

sacrifice with his own life knowing very well that he could get hurt and be killed by the previous apartheid government, by deciding to fight for the rights of the downtrodden majority of Black workers.

Mzingisi is a distinguished character that possesses those incredible characteristics that are found only in a legendary hero. His strong sense of determination and resistance can be likened to that of Mandela who, as a university student, refused to accept an office as an SRC's elected member for Fort Hare's University campus. According to Pampallis (2000:9) Mandela refused to take up this position because he felt that the majority of students did not vote for those elections. As a result of that stance, Fort Hare university authorities suspended him. Mandela reacted that way not for himself but for the entire student body. More than once in this novel, we see Mzingisi involving himself in issues affecting the lives and welfare of other workers (p.23). His stance to build a forum for workers and the formation of a worker's committee that would discuss their complaints (p.26) are clear indications that he made several sacrifices from the beginning to the end of the novel.

By making reference to D.V. Tom's Selani Ndithungile, Zotwana (1989:4) explains how Tom attaches great value to the importance of loving people and the value of being loved by them in return. He says that proper riches are to own people by being attached to their lives and being involved in them. He claims that the ability to do this was highly esteemed in the Xhosa traditional cultures. The reality of that statement is that there is no individual person who

can face the world alone without the help of other people, because life's challenges do need the involvement of others in one's life. This is seen in the life of Mzingisi that people survive life's hardships because there are others who are willing to give assistance in the time of need. Mzingisi is a living example of those many people who are in the world today that care for others' welfare to the extent that they indirectly become willing to sacrifice their own lives for the lives of others.

According to the narrator (p.14) the first time we read of Mzingisi making a sacrifice was when he decided to leave school after passing standard six in order to allow his own sister to finish her studies and acquire her teacher's diploma. This is quite a giant step on the part of this young boy after both his parents had deceased, one after the other with only a separation of few months in between. The narrator makes it his task to tell us about the number of sacrifices that Mzingisi has had to make in his entire life. To list just a few of them, as I have already stated above that after he (Mzingisi) had left his home as the narrator recalls, he became a worker in the mining industry and that was where he gave much assistance to his fellow workers who could not read nor write.

The narrator also informs readers that Mzingisi began to work for a road construction company in January 1955 after his contract with the mining industries had ended. Because of the narrator's accuracy about the dates and the events and the times in Mzingisi's historical background anyone is bound to perceive that research study was undertaken by the narrator prior to

the writing of this novel. I find it interesting to observe that almost in every place where Mzingisi worked his promotion resulted in him receiving the position of a wage clerk. This could also prove that there were no better posts for Black workers other than to become a clerk. The narrator seems proud to see that his uncle's lower educational standard was able to put him in an office. He proudly claims that it is his uncle's education that sees him rising to that particular position.

Observing by Mzingisi's ability to work with other workers and also his extensive experience in office work one would not agree with the narrator's point of view about the issue of a better position that his uncle was given by the authorities at work. Any rational person would assume that a more senior position than that of being a wage clerk was suitable for a man like him. But, because he was black the only superior position he could get was that of being a wage clerk, and all other positions he deserved were kept for the uneducated White workers. About the conditions of Black workers and the country of South Africa MacShane (1984:27) has this to say:

Not only was the country in the depression that affected the industrialised world, but it was faced with a government that was determined to break the power of black workers. The government saw this as being essential if it was to secure its objectives – the replacement of black workers by whites as a way of eliminating unemployment amongst whites.

Despite the fact that his promotion to the so-called better position gave him the capacity to earn more money than other workers, Mzingisi nevertheless continued to ponder the situation of those labourers who were struggling hard to make ends meet at ground level. In observing their plight and the poor conditions of work under which they were subjugated, Mzingisi could not help involving himself in their struggle for freedom. One of the ways by which he exerted his influence on them was to urge them to form a committee for workers in order to have power to voice out their grievances to the authorities. It was unfortunate that the employers responded negatively to their cries by taking drastic decision to sack all the members of that committee. This action however did not come as a surprise to the workers since White employers had dominion over them to such a degree that they could deal with any situation concerning Black workers as they saw fit.

Also at the time Mzingisi was employed by the South African Railways and Services (S.A.R.S) he did not surrender his hope and self-determination that one day there would be better working conditions for all those workers concerned. Repeatedly the narrator reminds readers that there were numerous unfavourable working conditions at the S.A.R.S that were prevalent and unbearable for workers. By that time Mzingisi did not only influence other workers to form a union but also to join political parties.

We have already read from previous paragraphs above how their employers had rejected their complaints, and how that instead of cancelling their meetings they decided to hold constant political meetings at night. The

narrator states (p.28) that the results of those meetings was that Mzingisi was arrested in 1960 and sentenced to three years at Robben Island where all other political prisoners were locked. Most of those political prisoners were considered by the then government as posing a threat to the security and stability of the country. Just to give an example of those prisoners let me make mention of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Robert Sobukhwe as well as a lot of others who were categorised as such.

In all the places Mzingisi worked at he could not afford to look at things happening in a way that they were not supposed to, and so every time he got himself involved in the struggle. Once more the narrator claims that his uncle (Mzingisi) received employment from a textile manufacturing industry immediately after his release from prison in 1964. As usual his job promotion entails the same position of a wage clerk. Nevertheless, even on this occasion he continues to sacrifice his time by forming a committee for workers. At this stage workers appoint him as a secretary for their committee. More evident still is the fact that Mzingisi is not the one who suffers pain and self-remorse as a result of unfairness at work, but it is his fellow workers who suffer, yet he makes the suffering of other workers his own, in the same way that Mandela spent twenty-seven years in prison for the liberation of the Black masses in South Africa. Such a stance cannot be considered lightly as it affected the entire South African nation. Some people go to prison still possessing confidence that they will become worthy citizens for their countries some day but as soon as they finish serving their prison terms all their dreams are shattered.

Pampallis (2000:49) quotes Mandela remarking as follows in one of his famous speeches about prison life. He notes:

The challenge for every prisoner, particularly every political prisoner, is how to survive prison intact, how to emerge from prison undiminished... Prison is designed to break one's spirit and destroy one's resolve. To do this, the authorities attempt to exploit every weakness, demolish every initiative, negate all signs of individuality – all with the idea of stamping out that spark that makes each of us human and each of us who we are.

Therefore, as the above statement shows, the road to political freedom is not an easy one as it affects one's moral esteem and degrades the emotional and spiritual aspects in one's life. In making a comparison of two different characters Nyamende (1991:21) juxtaposes Zwelinzima's life in The Wrath of the Ancestors and the life of The Marabi Dance's Martha and he tries to show how each of them acquired their difference of identities. However my viewpoint concerning these two characters is not focused on their identity but about the risk Martha is prepared to take in order to achieve her identity.

Nyamende (p.21) argues:

The tragedy in Zwelinzima's life in The Wrath is caused mainly by the absence of a common identity between him and his subjects; while in

The Marabi Martha fights to establish her true identity as an urban black at the risk of denying herself the cultural heritage of her traditional past and at the expense of forfeiting her parents' blessing.

According to Nyamende Martha pursued her identity by sacrificing what was considered to be of great value to her. In this case Martha knew that by taking the above risks she would ultimately be able to maintain her own dignity among the urban residents even though that meant losing favour with her parents. Mzingisi takes his sacrifices differently from Martha in that whatever he does he does not do that for his own benefit but for the benefit of all other workers. As one of the pre-requisites that one has to possess before making any sacrifices, is the boldness of heart that has to be accompanied by a passion to succeed in life, and a sense of pride to become a worthy person in life. These two characters Mzingisi and Martha have possessed those characteristics for the sake of maintaining their self-esteem as of utmost significance in their lives.

One of Achebe's (1958:1-2) protagonists, Okonkwo, had this sense of pride and the only difference between him and Mzingisi was that he (Okonkwo) fought his battles in order to achieve fame and recognition for his personal achievements from the people of his village. But Zotwana through the narrator makes it clear to his readers that Mzingisi did not look for fame and fortune in everything he did. Whereas Okonkwo who is Achebe's hero in his novel Things Fall Apart, gained honour for himself and his village by outwitting one of the famous and invincible wrestlers of that time who was called

Amalinze the Cat. At that time he was only eighteen years old.

Achebe specifically states that this young man had to create a future of respect for himself in order to maintain his dignity and his family's dignity that had been destroyed as a result of his poor and drunken father Unoka. Unlike his father Okonkwo could hold his head high among other men of the village. In describing Okonkwo's father Unoka, Achebe (1958:4) remarks:

Unoka was, of course, a debtor, and he owed every neighbour some money, from a few to quite substantial amounts.

Being the main character in Amanzithi nzithi kaMzingisi, Mzingisi holds the key to the struggle for workers' freedom unto death. The novel states that his efforts were not futile. According to the narrator (p.31) he died holding various positions in the workers' struggle. He states that he was the workers' spokesperson and the general secretary of the union for the workers of textile industries of the entire region of South Africa. Furthermore, Mzingisi did not only become a leader of the above-mentioned committees but he was much involved in the most significant meetings that the South African political parties during the liberation struggle. The narrator feels entertained and excited by the fact that his uncle's name is still remembered among workers, among the factory authorities and among the general society of black South Africans.

As the novel advances Mzingisi's contributions do not only focus on workers

but also on his kinsmen. Among the Mvundle clan he is respected and renowned for his experiences in traditional customs. In the novel (p.33) we also learn that he was requested by his younger brother to go and administer his brother's (Ntayithethwa) daughter's customary union with a young man from the amaNdungwane clan. According to customary law Mzingisi as an elder brother to Ntayithethwa is obliged to be present on such occasion as a sign of unity among his kinsmen.

The narrator also states that the venue for this occasion is site C at Khayelitsha. Mzingisi stays at an informal settlement called Crossroads and that is not very far from Khayelitsha in Cape Town. He just came to Khayelitsha because his brother had invited him. At this point in time the author becomes very specific about the social setting and geographical location of his novel and all the events that followed before Mzingisi's tragic death. After everything he has done his life tragically comes to an end without him enjoying the fruits of his hard work.

As the novel draws to an end he (Mzingisi) performs just one last sacrifice. The narrator (p.33) declares that Mzingisi prepared himself to go to a political meeting as a candidate for his political party at Johannesburg in 1993. Being a political parliamentary candidate for his party this was absolutely essential for him to make his representation on behalf of his party. According to the narrator this was a very busy time for politicians because they were preparing for national voting.

At this stage of the novel we learn of Mzingisi's commitment unto his relatives when he turns down his political manifesto as a result of his brother and decides not to go to Johannesburg for political candidacy. Instead he goes and administers the marriage of Ntayithethwa's daughter to the amaNdungwane clan. Like in all traditional occurrences a lot of beer was prepared, a lot of meat was available, and cultural dances followed immediately after the entire indaba between the Vundle and amaNdungwane was sorted out.

An unfortunate incident happened during that night when suddenly a shack in the surrounding informal settlement started burning. Men rushed outside to see what has to be rescued from the blazing fire. According to the narrator they managed to rescue all the cars that were on the scene. The novel states that Ntayithethwa's two children were sleeping inside this neighbour's burning shack because their home was hosting visitors at the time. Because of the cries of Ntayithethwa's wife for her two children Mzingisi because of his daring spirit, jumps boldly into the fiery furnace in an attempt to rescue these children, apart from the warnings he got from spectators that he must not do that.

According to the narrator (p.40-1) that jump into the fiery furnace by his uncle in order to rescue one remaining small child who was still in the burning house, costs him his life. The tragedy was that this very sacrifice that Mzingisi had made was a deadly one and also served as a vehicle for his death in front of the very eyes of the onlookers who warned him not to jump into the fire.

The last task that spectators had to perform for him was to be instrumental in retrieving his burnt body together with the small child's body for burial.

I must comment that I find Zotwana's style of writing in this novel completely different from his other novels. This point is supported by the way in which this book has been presented. Unlike in the writing of Imfincamfincane and Imijelo yeGazi, Amanzithinzithi KaMzingisi has adopted a different style that I consider uncommon to some of the writers of Xhosa literature. For an example, the chapters in this book are segmented differently to his other two books. And I also noted that the use of his language has been too simplified thus rendering this book unattractive in my view. The author's skilfulness or artfulness is invisible in this novel. Therefore, although its context is still interesting, I find that it still falls below Zotwana's standard of writing. I must also admit that I recognize the fact that it has been written in this way in order to accommodate Xhosa novice adult learners whose concern he has already stated at the beginning of this novel.

In my perception Zotwana may be trying to warn his readers in this novel not to become irrational in their approach to life, and act in a menacing way that puts their lives in danger of being destroyed, but must always think about the results of what they are doing, prior to taking a decision. He may also be saying, it is good to make sacrifices for other people but one has to be extremely careful about the cost involved before making the actual sacrifice. Therefore, the didactic nature of this novel's ending has a huge bearing on how the readers have to conduct their lives.

In Mzingisi's case the cost was heavy because it took his life away.

Throughout his life he struggled for liberation but just like other freedom fighters such as; Oliver Tambo and Chris Hani, he could not part take of the fruits of liberation that he fought so hard for.

In some of the Xhosa novels, most characters that began their lives struggling hard always come out victorious at the end. Unlike Mzingisi they strive and become rewarded as winners in their race. Such characters are like Zweni in Minazana Dana's Kufundwa Ngamava (1951:1-3) who struggled to get work at Sulenkama after finishing his teacher's course, and ultimately decided to volunteer to go and help in the war with the Germans. During that time he visited overseas countries such as; Italy, America, and various other countries where he decided to educate himself by learning all their cultures. According to the writer (p.89-98) when Zweni came back to South Africa after the war he became progressive teacher, a successful business-person and a prosperous farmer.

A similar case to the one above was the one of Ndimeni in Guybon Sinxo's Umzali Wolahleko (1976). Ndimeni who suffered bad treatment at the hands of his step-mother Nojaji but who ultimately becomes a successful businessman who attends big business meetings in urban towns and is also a prosperous farmer with a large livestock at the end of the novel (1976:75). In contrast to Ndopho, Nojaji's real son who, compared to Ndimeni becomes unsuccessful in life, and lives a low life of a drunkard and a thief until he dies.

Mzingisi has made his mark in the history of the struggle for liberation according to the narrator, and his name will never cease to be mentioned whenever workers in the entire South African region think or speak about those who led the struggle for workers's rights. It has become evident that the struggle for workers's liberation was inseparable from the struggle from oppression. Therefore Mzingisi's struggle was part of the popular struggle from the beginning to the end.

Unlike the characters I mentioned above by Dana and Sinxo whose goals were to get something out of life for themselves. Zotwana artfully presents Mzingisi as a mysterious character who is not greedy for money and fame but whose focus is to serve his fellow men. This may tell us something about the writer of this novel, that his teaching encourages moral and dignified living that is exempt from greed and exploitation of other people. Mzingisi enjoyed seeing other workers prospering at work and grieved with them in their hardship.

In the following chapter, that is, chapter six, I will devote my time to going back briefly into some of the relevant issues I have discussed in the previous chapters. And because it is my last chapter I will also make some observations, conclusions and a way forward for future research.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

6.1 Objectives of this chapter

The aim of this Chapter is to give an overall outline of all the chapters we have discussed and analysed in this study. This can be done only by, re-visiting the data we have already accumulated during the writing of this work. And now that we have brought this study to a close I feel more at ease than when I began. I cannot forget the extreme pain I had to go through in gathering the author's data for the task of writing his biography, yet my hope is that it will bring some elucidation for future readers of his works.

6.2 General Observations

Beginning from Chapter 1 of this work we have seen that I have stated my aim and motivation for writing this thesis. The scope, approach, literature review and theoretical background have all been supported by references and definitions from various literary scholars and theorists who have previously worked in some of these related areas of literature. In order to drag the reader with me I have constantly reminded him/her of my next motives.

Chapter 2 is the crux of my study, and in it I have gone deeper into exploring the life history of Zotwana from his early school days until he reached the tertiary level, and his vocation as a teacher and a principal in various South African schools that I mentioned in this study. We cannot forget Zotwana's political involvement, also his calling as a writer, his work as a University lecturer, and lastly his work as a translator and a chief editor, before, and after, he joined South African parliamentary matters in which he is currently involved.

We have already seen that the discussions and analytic approaches I have applied to his essays in Chapter 3 had their main focus based totally on communal and individual social activities.

And then, as we progressed we did some analytic work on his first novel in Chapter 4 in which the theme is on socio-political activities of the struggle for freedom by black communities. The same goes to the second novel in Chapter 5 that dealt with the socio-political matters of the old South Africa during the historical period of the mid-twentieth century when apartheid was still at its peak.

Chapter 6 therefore, is my last chapter of this work and, it is followed by the bibliography and all the references that have been quoted and stated in this thesis. The contents of this chapter include; general observations (6.1), general views about literature definitions (6.2), general views about the author (6.3), Future developments (6.4).

6.3 General views on literature definitions.

It is needless to say that it is entirely significant to focus on a scientific approach at all times whenever we look at literature. Most literary scholars view literature as being fictional and not factual and I think that Zotwana has done exactly that in presenting his first novel to his readers. On the other hand it is also extremely important to be able to draw literature from its fictional world and align it with the real lives of the ordinary people who live in our societies. Struggling with this idea of 'fact and fiction in literature Eagleton (1983:1) has this to say:

A distinction between 'fact' and 'fiction', then, seems unlikely to get us very far, not least because the distinction itself is often a questionable one. It has been argued, for instance that our own opposition between 'historical' and 'artistic' truth does not apply at all to the early Icelandic sagas. In the English late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the word 'novel' seems to have been used about true and fictional events, and even news reports were hardly considered factual. Novels and news reports were neither clearly factual nor clearly fictional: our own sharp discriminations between these categories simply did not apply.

Apart from the above information, this concluding chapter is written in order to make the reading of this literary work comprehensible for the readers of Zotwana's works. Not only that, but through writing his historical life story I have made it possible for readers to learn his works and, still have a vivid idea of the writer's life. In writing a novel it involves the writer's artful creativity that must be combined with his past experiences. Having the two tools in his possession he can manipulate both of them in his quest to convey his past experiences to the reader in his process of writing. Because of the fact that these experiences emanate from his daily interactions with the society he lives in, and the influence of his environment, he now has strong command over the messages he wants to send to his community.

About such kind of communication Serudu (1993:23) cites Arnold Kettle who quotes T.E. Hulme as saying:

Art is life – communicating, it must give us a sense that what is being conveyed across to us by the words on the pages is life, or, at any rate, has something of the quality of life.

And because of the writer's involvement with the society in which he forms part of, he has the power to draw all his writing material from the same society that has nurtured him. About the writer-society relationship Scholes (1968:8) asserts:

The soundly critical appeal is to the whole fictional world in comparison

with our own experienced and imagined world, commonly less integrated than that of a novelist. We are content to call a novelist great when his world though patterned or scaled like our own, is comprehensive of all the elements which we find necessary to catholic scope or though narrow in scope, selects for inclusion the deep and central, and when the scale or hierarchy of the elements seems to us such as mature man can entertain.

Going back to the kind of style I have selected in organizing the analysis of these chapters, I must say that this has been a sequential chapter to chapter discussion and analysis, starting from the beginning of Chapter 1 to 5. As we already know that in Chapter 4 and 5 we have had ample time analyzing first the lives of Nkcithakalo and his grand-son Mhlabunzima, and then in Chapter 5 we dealt with Mzingisi's tribulations. Finally we have a summation of all chapters.

6.4 Views on the author (Zotwana)

As I stated earlier on that my primary aim was to collect and record sufficient biographical information on Zotwana for the benefit of future Xhosa readers. In pursuance of this cause I have managed to access some hidden data about the author that I believe was not recorded in book form. The use of diverse sources of information that I have applied regarding this study has opened up wide doors for future students to carry on with this area of research.

By this time I may claim to know Zotwana better than I did at the beginning of my study. His life story speaks of the most dedicated and a highly motivated man I have ever met in my entire life. Mr. Baloyi and Mrs Mangxola, his ex-students have spoken highly about him, but with a smile, they still remember that although he had a huge sense of humour, he was also an "authoritarian" as they put it.

I do not regret the opportunity I have had in undertaking this project of writing a biography of a Xhosa writer as one of its pioneers. Concerning the biographical data of an author Serudu (1993:26) makes reference to Qangule who cites D.P. Kunene in this regard. He notes:

While I agree with the critics who assert that one's knowledge of the life of an author does not enhance one's appreciation of the author's writings, it seems to me that there is equally no doubt that the understanding of an author who is clearly dedicated to a campaign of social reform is enhanced by a knowledge of his social and cultural world, its effects upon him also of any factors which being external to his social milieu yet bombard it toward a forceful even cataclysmic change.

In this way I share the same feelings with Serudu (p.26) when he claims that "an understanding of a literary work, to some extent, can benefit from a knowledge of the author's socio-cultural background. He continues to argue

that this does not imply that one cannot understand the literary work itself without the knowledge of the author's life.

6.5 Future developments and the way forward

My trust and hope are that I have created a relevant study that satisfies the minimum standard required by all scholars and critics in approaching this qualitative study. I also see this study as not being completely "quantitative" as it sometimes involved group interviews of about three people simultaneously, and not just observations and interpersonal interviews. There has been a huge hunt for unrecorded information about the life history of Zotwana who is my subject of study, because there is no previous critic or writer who has done any work in this regard.

My highest hope is that this thesis will provide a new theoretical foundation on which future Xhosa literature students will base their studies in dealing with the analyses of Xhosa writers' biographies and texts. Not forgetting to mention of course that I would love to have them apply the use all the relevant material in this research to their maximum benefit.

Finally, my last hope is that this study has served much of the requirements for which it was written, such as; the creation and structuring of a relevant critical work on the biography of a Xhosa literature writer. In addition I wish

that it will inspire and encourage all those who wish to continue research in this field of study.

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