

**UNIVERSITY OF NATAL
PIETERMARITZBURG**

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF N.F. MBHELE'S
ONE-ACT PLAYS**

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A Critical Analysis of N.F. Mbhele's One-act Plays

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father, the Retired Reverend C. M. Khumalo, and my late mother, who had been there when I started this work but could not see it as it progressed into its absolute completion, my little sister, Khanyisile and my only son, Xolani.

DECLARATION

I, **Ellie Khumalo**, declare that unless specifically stated in this study, **A Critical Analysis of N.F. Mbhele's One-act Plays** is wholly my own original work. It has never been presented in part or as a whole in any other university.


.....

Signature

12-03-2002

Date

As the candidate's supervisor, I have approved this dissertation for submission.


.....

Signature

PROF. A.M. MAPHUMULO

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12-03-2002

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the appropriateness and the accuracy of Mbhele's artistry in writing his one-act plays from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo, Ishashalazi and Ezemihla Nayizolo**. It considers the formal literary elements which include characterisation, themes, setting, plot, dialogue and style of the writer inclusive of the language that has been used. It also involves different kinds of themes that are revealed by this dramatist in his work. His themes cover all the aspects of life. This includes the exploration of the previous political situation and its effect on the lives of the people, the effect of the Western influences on black South Africans and the people's perspectives on education and religion.

The theoretical framework that has been used in this study is the historical-biographical approach. The interview with the author has been very helpful in this regard. The purpose of the interview has been to develop some kind of understanding of the author's own ideas, his early life experiences, his educational background, and the sense of the situation the author writes about.

This study consists of six chapters; the first chapter serves as the general introduction for the whole thesis. The author's biographical notes, the identification and the discussion of

the research methodology and the definition of some important terms, form part of chapter one.

In each chapter, there is an explicit explanation of each formal literary element in relation to Mbhele's one-act plays. Chapter two deals with both characterisation and plot, because plot deals with all the events in a story and the way in which these events are connected. All the events in a story involve the characters.

Chapter three investigates the themes that are found in Mbhele's one-act plays, and the ways in which they are revealed.

Chapter four consists of the dialogue and style of the writer, which includes his use of the language and the form of address used by the characters to address each other.

Chapter five discusses the social background of the characters in relation to what they do in the plays. This includes their given social circumstances, the time and the place which the writer has created for them.

Chapter six is the general conclusion for the whole study. It includes the summary, observation and some implications for further research.

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is the general introduction for the whole research. It deals with the aims of the study; the chapter outline, Mbhele's biographical notes, and research methodology that covers the theoretical frameworks employed in this study.

People have different reasons as to why they read literature, that is, novels, essays, short stories, poetry and drama. Some people read literature for enjoyment purposes, and others read literature in order to gain some knowledge of the world around them. Carte (1993:3) claims that the study of literature focuses on its representation of everyday reality. Literature should be able to present a convincing, very similar portrayal of what is generally experienced as reality. The study of literature is very important because it is through the critical analysis of literature that people gain the knowledge of life as interpreted through the use of literary criticism. This is how Webster (1990: 5) puts it:

Literary theory, or rather theories, can offer various ways of defining literature or at least thinking about what the issue might be in attempting any kind of definition.

People read literature with an aim of improving their vocabulary. It is up to the author involved to see if his or her written work contributes towards the enrichment of the vocabulary and also if that particular work is interesting. It is within the scope of this study to see if N. F. Mbhele's one-act plays are interesting and has the ability to form new words in the Zulu language. For example, Mbhele has the ability to derive new

words from the other parts of speech. This will further be discussed in chapter four which is the dialogue and style of the writer.

Literature can be read with the aim of getting moral lessons. There is nowhere else where the researcher can get moral lessons if it is not through the actions of the characters that resemble those of the real human beings. It is within the scope of this study to see if Mbhele has succeeded in creating the characters that are full of life. The majority of his characters bring about the verisimilitude of the story because there is a relationship between the type of life that is led by the characters and the place where those particular characters live. In other words, in most cases in Mbhele's one-act plays, the characters are the products of the environment that they find themselves in. This means that, a lifelike character in a fiction brings about the reality and the plausibility of the story. To support this, Msimang (1986:99) has this to state:

Perhaps the most important point about characterization is that the artist must present lifelike characters. In order to be convincing, his imaginary persons must be grounded in reality. They must be true, not so much to our world, but their world, i.e. the world that the artist has created for them.

The above quotation may sound true in the sense that if the reader does not consider the given social circumstances of the given character in a fiction, the reader might end up with a wrong interpretation of the character's behaviour. Hayman (1977:49) puts this clear:

It is always a mistake to 'psycho-analyse' characters in plays as if they were real people, and it is a mistake we are likelier to make when we are reading than when we are in the theatre, reacting to physical impacts, liking her face and his voice, amused by one actor's timing, repelled by another's way of twisting his mouth sideways.

As one reads some of Mbhele's one-act plays, one learns more about the historical background of the place where Mbhele was born. The play titled **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo**, from **Ishashalazi** is where one learns about the small village found in Estcourt known as the Hlubi clan, which was under the leadership of chief Langalibalele. But it is interesting to note that this play is not some part of the history, but it is a fiction because Mbhele has used the historical information of the Hlubi clan in Estcourt to write his own story. The above mentioned one-act play helps us to understand Mbhele better because in most cases people are the good representation of their environment. One may conclude that Mbhele is a person who is traditional even though he is educated and a Christian.

1.2 Aims of the study

The main aim of this study is to critically analyse Mbhele's one-act plays from the following books, namely, **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, **Ezemihla Nayizolo** and **Ishashalazi**. This study will look at his handling of the themes, whether it is significant or remarkable. It will further ascertain Mbhele's artistry in characterisation and realism in his one-act plays. The realism in literature is the attempt by the writer to present facts that the reader can know to be possible. Realism makes the story more vivid as an experience for the reader. As far as the realism is concerned, Abrams (1971:141) has this to say:

The typical realist sets out to write a fiction which will give the illusion that it reflects life and the social world as it seems to the common reader. To achieve this effect he prefers as the protagonist an ordinary citizen of Middletown, living on Main Street, perhaps and engaged in the real estate business. The realist, in other words, is deliberately selective in material and prefers the average, the commonplace, and the everyday over the rarer aspects of the social scene.

It is also the aim of this study to reveal and observe how Mbhele writes his one-act plays. This study has been chosen because there is little known research that has been conducted on this topic. This particular dramatist is one of the people who have contributed substantially in Zulu literature. His literary works include drama, poetry, short stories and Zulu grammar.

Some of these one-act plays that are investigated in this study deal with the problems that are faced by the people in the contemporary South Africa. Among these, are problems facing the victims of retrenchment. Mbhele has succeeded in showing us the problems faced by the families involved. This is clearly revealed in both parties in the family including the parents and the children. The one-act play titled **Umninimuzi** is the very good example of the above mentioned problem. This is clearly stated in **Ishashalazi**, Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:7 - 8):

1.Ntuli: Ukuxolisa kwakho akusho lutho. Akusho nolunci. Ngikukhuza kulokhu nje uzobe sewuqhamuka nokunye futhi ukungeyisa. Selokhu ngalahlekelwa umsebenzi nje wena unghathisa okwengane ekhasayo. Awungazi nokuthi ngiyini lapha ekhaya. (Athi ukuthula. Ambheke phansi naphezulu ngeso lentukuthelo). Lokhu kungeyisa lwakho sewukufafazele noZokwenzani. Nayo le ngane ayisangazi noma nginguyise noma ngiluhlanya oluhlala kubo. Nguwena okhweza le ngane phezu kwami.

(Your apology means nothing, nothing at all. I stop you from this and you will come up with another contemptuous behaviour. Since I lost my job you treat me like a crawling baby. You disregard my position at home (*He keeps quite for a moment. Looking angrily up and down at his wife*). You have sprinkled your disobedience to Zokwenzani. Even this child does not know if I am her father or the mad man who stays with them. It is because of you that this child does not respect me).

This quotation is the proof that the problems of retrenchment may lead to family violence where there is a misunderstanding between the married couples as far as the upbringing of the children is concerned. In this case, we find the main character of the play, Ntuli, complaining about the behaviour of his wife because he is no longer the breadwinner. On the other hand, we find his wife, MaSibisi, giving the respect and honour she is supposed to give her husband to her daughter, Zokwenzani. This affects the three of them at the same time because this man of the house feels like he is not respected, and the woman of the house has to substitute her husband with her daughter just because the daughter is working. The daughter is mostly affected because she has to accept the new position her mother gives her, and this results to Zokwenzani being unable to respect her father since he cannot support his family.

Some of the problems that are dealt with in Mbhele's one-act plays are the clashes between the traditional life and modern life. An example of this may be found in the play titled *Siyaya* from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** where there is also the misunderstanding between the children, Nomafa and Falakhe, and the father, Bhengu. Bhengu represents the traditional way of living where tertiary education is not that important, and his children believe that they can look after their family business if and only if they finish their tertiary education. To support this point Mbhele (1997:6) in the book titled **Ezemihla Nayizolo** has this to say:

2. **Bhengu:** *Bathi bafundela ukuphatha amabhizinisi. Kwake kwafundelwaphi ukuphatha ibhizinisi lakwaBhengu ekolishi? Nanka mabili amabhizinisi ngiwaphethe. Kodwa ngilenga iziqhaza endlebeni, ngagcina nje ebangeni lesine. O-B.A. laba abakhona abanamabhasi nazitolo. Yithi o- B.A. bezitolo.*

(They say they want to learn to manage businesses. Since when had the people studied to manage Bhengu's business at the college? Here are the two businesses that are under my control, but I am a person with a plug in the lobe of his ear. I left school at Standard Four.

The B. A. graduates that are there do not own buses and shops. We are the graduates of the shops).

It also deals with the way in which he gives personal names to his characters. This includes looking at the relationship between the name of a character and the role that particular character plays in a play. In other words, some of his characters are named according to their social circumstances, and this is the case with the personal name giving pattern in Zulu. For example, in the play titled **Siyaya** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo**, we have two characters by the name of Nomafa (Miss Inheritance) and Falakhe (his inheritance), there is a relationship between these personal names and the social circumstances of these two children since their father is a well known businessman, and they are the only people who have a right over their father's inheritance. This is what Koopman (1976:16) has to say about the sociological reflections of the Zulu personal names:

...the **igama lasekhaya** is not almost invariable a reflection of the child's background, i.e. traditional or modern, rural or urban, pagan or Christian. The values to which the parents subscribe and to which they wish their children subscribe, are also well reflected in names.

The above quotation states that parents subscribe the values in which they want their children to subscribe through the use of their Zulu personal names. In this case, parents want their children to feel that they are rich, they should not bother about acquiring higher education because their parents have worked so hard for them.

1.3 Research methodology

This is a literary analysis, but an interview with Mbhele would be essential because it will provide more information about the author. It will also investigate if his life experiences have motivated him to write. This dramatist has been chosen because he is

a new writer in terms of breaking the new grounds for Zulu literature, and further critical analysis of his works would be essential.

For this research, various methods of data collection would be used. These methods will be divided into two, that is, those for collecting primary data and those for collecting secondary data. The primary data collection will be the interview between the researcher and the author, and the secondary data collection will be through book reviews, journals, and theses.

In case of the critical interpretation or judgment of Mbhele's one-act plays, this study will make use of both author-oriented and text-oriented approaches as the way of interpreting Mbhele's literary works. The author-oriented approach to the study of literature includes the historical-biographical approach, the moral-philosophical, and the impressionist approaches. The latter does not form part of the study. This is what Webster (1990:6-7) has to say about the importance of the critical interpretation of literature:

Generally speaking, we can say literary criticism involves the reading, interpretation and commentary of a specific text or texts which have been designated as literature. This tends to be the predominant activity associated with literary study: it is practiced by professional critics and circulated in published form from books to journals, and it is also practiced by all students of literature in essays, examination answers or dissertations.

This quotation means that literary criticism involves reading literature with an aim of getting the deeper meaning of the text. This is relevant to this study because it will look at the themes, which are revealed through the interpretation of the events that are occurring in the story and the behaviour of the characters in the play.

1.3.1 Author-oriented approaches

This study will make use of historical-biographical and moral-philosophical approach. This historical-biographical approach is about the influence of the author's early life experiences as the other way of the writer's source of inspiration. This literary approach can be the best theory that can be applied to the interpretation of Mbhele's one-act plays because it appears that these one-act plays are about his own life experiences and his ideology. This is what Guerin et al. in Swanepoel (1990: 4), has to say about this approach:

This approach saw the literary work, if not exclusively, then for the greater part as a reflection of the author's life and times; of the life and times of the characters.

This means that there could be a relationship between the characters and the author's life experiences because the characters in Mbhele's one-act plays depict some of the people Mbhele has come across. In other words, the characters should be like the people that can be imagined as the real human beings. What is happening to them could happen to the real people. To support this point, Makhambeni (1988:4) maintains that:

Society and its problems form the basis of the author's inspiration. In his work the writer expresses his view of life, as well as experiences of the society in which he lives.

The moral-philosophical approach to literature study will also be used to interpret Mbhele's one-act plays because it appears that his plays are didactic in nature, meaning, they enforce the desired norms and values of the Zulu society. Swanepoel (1990:7) puts this clear when he says:

To the exponents of this approach, the most important function of literature is to emphasize moralism and utilitarianism. Literature should be didactic, either from a religious or philosophical point of view. Although the critic is not completely unaware of form, the structure or composition of the literary work is only of secondary relevance.

This quotation means that this study will also look at the ways in which Mbhele's one-act plays are didactic in relation to the formal literary elements of the plays. Some of these plays are didactic from the religious, educational and political points of view.

1.3.2 The text-oriented approaches

The text-oriented approach that will be used in this study on the interpretation of Mbhele's one-act plays is the structuralist theory. According to Bressler (1994:62), structuralist theory involves an investigation into the surrounding of how literature conveys meaning. Structuralists emphasise the system whereby texts relate to each other and they also discover how the formal literary terms fit together and function. Bressler (1994:63-64) continues to say:

Structuralism attempts to strip literature of its magical powers or so called hidden meanings that can only be discovered by a small, elite group of highly trained specialists. Meaning can be found, it declares, by analyzing the system of rules that comprise literature itself.

This study will go beyond the surface meaning of some expressions in the plays. It will look at the hidden meaning or the symbolism that is found in Mbhele's one-act plays. For example, the play titled *Umninimuzi* from *Ishashalazi* by Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:1), Mbhele makes use of the symbols that are very important for the development of the story. For example, Mbhele uses the word *xega* (loose or

unsteady) to refer to the condition of the furniture in Ntuli's kitchen. The surface meaning of this term means they are poor since Ntuli is not working. The deeper meaning of the word *xega* means that there is something wrong as far as the maintenance of order in the family is concerned. In addition to that, it can also symbolise weakness in terms of morals in the lives of the characters, as it is the case with Ntuli, MaSibisi and Zokwenzani.

The word *iwisa* (knobkerrie) symbolises the authority that is to be maintained since some of the characters in the story are misbehaving due to the problems they encounter.

Swanepoel (1990:16) claims that the structuralist theory is the method of investigating the different parts that form the unified whole in fiction. This theory is relevant for this study because it aims at looking at the plot, theme, setting, characters and the language used by Mbhele in his one-act plays. This is what Webster (1990:69) has to say about the structuralist theory:

Structuralist theories generally see language or signifying systems as the fundamental matter of human existence, whereas for traditional Marxists it is history and the material conditions of existence which exist outside of language.

Cuddon (1991:23) claims that structuralism challenges the long lasting belief that a work of literature (or any kind of literary text) reflects a given reality; a literary text is, rather, constituted of other conventions and the text.

According to Levitt (1971:19), structuralist theory can be defined as the underlying organisation of the whole. This is how he puts it:

But to understand the whole is to understand the underlying principle of organization that governs the order and arrangement of the parts causing them to unite into an intelligible whole. That is, to understand a play is to understand what unifies the action of it: plot, character, theme, or some combinations of these.

This means that the critical analysis of literature should involve the structural analysis because it will be easy to understand the text if the order and the arrangement of the formal literary elements that form the text are understood.

1.3.3 Reader-oriented approaches

Among the reader-oriented approaches there are two literary criticisms; the reader response and the reception aesthetics. This research project makes use of the reader response criticism in order to interpret Mbhele's one-act plays. In other words, in this theory, the reader makes use of his own point of view and her own background knowledge from her life experiences to analyse the structure of the text. This is relevant when looking at the characters and the themes because the researcher interprets the behaviour of the characters according to her own understanding of the world. This is what Swanepoel (1990:37-38) has to say about the reader response criticism:

It may enable us to determine how African literature is perceived by a variety of individuals or groups and how the reception varies from individual to individual and from group to group, depending on the socio-cultural environment and related factors.

This means that there are different ways of interpreting the same text, and it depends on the background of the reader. It is as if the reader makes use of the formal literary terms to interpret the text according to his or her own understanding of the world.

This is how the reader response and the structuralist theorists can work together, because, according to Bressler (1994:52), structuralist critics argue that a reader brings to the text a predetermined system of ascertaining meaning.

1.4 The chapter outline

This study is composed of six chapters. At the beginning of each chapter there is an introductory paragraph which mentions what will be discussed in that chapter. At the end of each chapter there is a concluding paragraph which sums up everything that has been discussed in each chapter.

Chapter one is the general introduction for the whole research. It deals with the aims of the study, research methodology and Mbhele's biographical notes. This chapter also deals with the definitions of some important terms.

Chapter two deals with the way in which this dramatist portrays his characters: this chapter will see whether the characters resemble normal human beings, the types of characters that are found in his one-act plays and the technique used when naming the characters. It will further observe whether the language used by the characters agree with the setting the characters find themselves in, and if there are any possibilities that his characters may develop and grow. This chapter also deals with the plot. It looks at how does he handle his introduction, body and conclusion. The full discussion of the conflict, complication, climax, suspense and the anti climax would be done.

Chapter three consists of the various themes that are revealed in Mbhele's one-act plays. The following points are considered as far as the study of themes is concerned: the relevance of these themes to the audience or Zulu speaking people, and the role

played by the characters, setting, plot, titles of his one-act plays, and the language used, in revealing the themes.

Chapter four is the explanation of the dialogue and the style of the dramatist. It further looks at the language used and observes if it is difficult or simple, and whether the idioms and proverbs are used appropriately. The figures of speech that Mbhele has used in his one-act plays will also be discussed. Lastly, this chapter deals with the dialogue between the characters and the forms of address that the characters use to address each other.

Chapter five discusses the setting in relation to the themes and the characters. It investigates if there is any relationship between the behaviour of the characters and their given social circumstances, the period of time during which they live and the place where they live. It also looks at the relationship between the social circumstances of the characters and the language they use.

Chapter six is the conclusion for the whole research and the brief discussion of the results of the study.

1.5 Definition of terms

This study is about the analysis of Mbhele's one-act plays. One-act plays are nearly the same as short stories. It is very important to give the definitions of the two in order to distinguish their differences and similarities.

1.5.1 One-act play

One-act plays are closely related to short stories. These two are similar in a way that they both have the length of not more than twenty pages, and they also have a limited number of characters. In other words, the characters should not exceed five. According to Biyela (1997:13), a one-act play is closer to a short story in many aspects, but the most significant one is that they both concentrate on only one event. The only difference between a short story and a one act play is that, Biyela goes on arguing that, a one-act play is told through a dialogue whereas a short story uses narration as the means of telling a story and only interrupt with dialogue where necessary.

This is how some writers define a one-act play: for example, Makhambeni (1990: vii) puts this clear:

Le nhlobo yomdlalo imfushane nje, kungakho siyithola idingida isenzeko esisodwa. Imvamisa yale nhlobo iba nenkundla eyodwa. Kuthi-ke lapho isidlatwa abadlali babe bonke kuleyo nkundla, badlale baze baqede bengahlabanga khedu, bengaphazanyiswa futhi. Njengoba sike sathi shwaphu ngenguqunguqu, nalapha izinto azisona isimbelambela. Sike sithole imidlalo enkundlanye futhi ibuye ibe nezigcawugcawu njengomdlalo omude. Kodwa lapho kokunye kusuke kugqanyiswa ukuguquka kwezikhathi.

(This type of play is short, that is why we find it dealing with one event. Usually, this type has one act, and it should be played in one place and at one time without being disturbed and some break. This is not always the case; sometimes we come across one-act plays with many acts like the long play. But in this case the changes in times is highlighted).

Zulu et al. (1988:335) agree with the above mentioned definition of Zulu one-act plays, but their definition is not exactly the same and also, they are not using the very same words that are used by Makhambeni. This is how they put it:

Ngokujwayelekile lona ngumdlalo omfushane onesigigaba esisodwa. Umdlalo onkundlanye obhaleke kahle ungaba nenkundla eyodwa. Ngamanye amazwi abadlali bavela endaweni eyodwa badlale ngokungaphazamiseki kuze kufike ekugcineni kwendaba. Kukhona imidlalo enkundlanye enezigcawu ezimbili noma ezintathu ezikhombisa okwenzeka ezikhathini ezehlukene.

(Generally, this is a short play dealing with one event. A well written one-act play should have one act. In other words, the actors appear once and play undisturbed till the end of the play. There are other one-act plays with two or three scenes which show the occurrence of the story in different times).

The above mentioned definitions of one-act plays highlight the point that one-act plays are the plays that are short and they occur in one setting and in one place. Generally, one-act plays have one scene, but there are some cases where they have more than one scene, but this is usually the case where the dramatist wants to emphasise the point of the occurring of events in different times.

Among the plays that are analysed in this study, there are three plays that do not take place in one place and at the same time, and as a result, they end up with more than one acts. For example, the play titled **Imfundo Ephakeme** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, takes place in the Principal's office and also in the school hall. The other play with more than one acts is the play titled **Umthetho ngumthetho**, from **Ishashalazi**, where the story starts in the hut and proceeds to the graveyard. The last play that falls under this category is the play titled **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo**,

also from **Ishashalazi**, where the story takes place in Phangandlovu as well as at Nqudlwana's place.

1.6 Mbhele's biographical notes

The life history of Mbhele brings about a clear understanding of his early life experiences and difficulties, which has resulted in him as a prominent writer, poet and a dramatist.

1.6.1 His early life history

Nicholas Funginkosi Mbhele was born on the 18th of March 1946, in the small village known as Bhekuzulu at Mtshezi in Estcourt; he belongs to the Hlubi clan. His mother who was not working brought him up, and it became very hard for Mbhele to acquire education.

1.6.2 His educational background

He started his Primary Schooling at the Mission school known as World's View Primary School from Sub Standard A to Standard Four. It is worth mentioning that the name of this school changed after 1956 to Bhekuzulu Primary School because it was no longer situated in the mission, but in the Hlubi area known as Bhekuzulu. From there he went to Ephangweni which was another Lutheran mission school to do Standard Five and Six. He went to another school, which was known as Estcourt Senior Secondary School where he completed Standard Seven and Eight.

After that his mother could not afford to pay for his education and he had to look for employment which was against his will. He looked for financial assistance to pay for

his education, and he could not get any funding, until the Principal of Estcourt Secondary School, Mr. Kheswa, told him that if Mbhele can get an institution to further his studies, he will give Mbhele the money. He helped Mbhele to send application letters for admission but Mbhele was regretted.

After that Mbhele and the other guy joined those who were going to study at Eshowe Training College. When they arrived there, there were no vacancies, consequently they could not register and were told to go back home. Mbhele did not go home, but instead, he stayed with the other guys from eMtshezi. He used to attend classes with them. At that time he had the money to pay for his studies from Mr. Kheswa who gave him Fifteen Pounds, the problem were classrooms and the hostels which were full. He was only discovered that he was attending classes after the first quarter where he managed to get position one in that term and they were amazed because his name was not on the list of the registered students. It was then that he was registered. He was trained for two years, that is, from 1966 to 1967.

Before that, it is worth mentioning that Mbhele's main aims were to be a male nurse, a priest, or a teacher. He could not enroll as the male nurse because at that time the training for the male nurses have been closed down. In addition to that, he could not enroll as the priest because of his age. His third choice became successful because he managed to be a teacher because at the end of 1967, he completed at Eshowe Training College and went back to Estcourt to look for work. He has been able to fulfill his main wish to become a priest because at present, he is not only the priest but he is the Bishop of the Anglican Church in Pietermaritzburg.

It was not easy to get a post because the schools were very scarce at that time. He had difficulty in following his teaching career and decided to take any other employment that came along his way. A masonite firm employed him. In that firm, he

worked as a labourer. He used a spade to dig up the soil. He tried by all means to hide the fact that he was educated because he did not want people to look down upon education because he was not working according to his profession.

He worked for two months, from February to March, and then he was transferred to the electronics department where he was supposed to work as a clerk. It was there that he earned a better salary. Mbhele believed that someone gave this firm the information that he was a teacher by qualification. The day he was supposed to start working as a clerk, was the day when the people from the school Boards arrived to his working place. They told his boss that they were looking for Mbhele because there was a vacant post for a teacher in one of the schools. He left that promotion and went for the teaching employment.

On that Monday, his first day at school as a Zulu teacher in Estcourt Senior High School, was his birthday, the 18th of March. It is worth mentioning that he was trained to teach at primary school but he first taught at Secondary school. He wanted to register for Matriculation and it was late. He registered two subjects of which he passed one and failed one. In January 1968, while he was still teaching, he received a telegram that somebody has given him the scholarship to go to Eshowe to do Matriculation, he left the pupils just like that and told them that he was going back to school.

He went back to Eshowe. That year was a very hard year for him because immediately, in April, he received letters from home that they have been struggling since his mother was critically ill and nobody provided food for them and there was no school fees for his siblings. This situation disturbed Mbhele's schoolwork because his mind was divided into two, that is, he was supposed to be a breadwinner at home and at the same time to be a Matriculation student.

He spoke to the vice-rector of the college asking him if it can be possible for him to attend both Standard Nine and Ten at the same time because he was running short of money. They told him that it was impossible. The teaching staff gathered to discuss Mbhele's family problems and got the solution to most of his problems because they gave him money to send home and the money to take his mother to the doctor and they even gave him his pocket money. They did everything for his family because even the school fees for his siblings were included. He is still very thankful to those people. He managed to complete Matriculation in one year.

In 1972 he got another bursary from Johannesburg to further his studies at the University. He went to the University of Zululand, KwaDlangezwa and he was not admitted because it was full. He went back to Estcourt Senior High School to teach. He decided to register as a part time student with the University of South Africa. He studied Zulu 1 and 2 and Psychology 1 and 2. He has also studied drama at the University level and while he was studying, he went to Grahamstown during the drama festival and he performed there. During his free time, he played soccer and boxing.

1.6.3 His political ideology

Mbhele mentioned that he struggled like that while his father was working in one of the biggest cities in South Africa, particularly Johannesburg. He agreed that his father was an irresponsible man, but he blamed the past political situation of South Africa. He mentioned the Migrant Labour System where men used to leave their homes for years and go to stay in the hostels very far away from their families and as a result they ended up forgetting about their families and got themselves lovers in the cities. This is what Gerard (1971:199-200) has to say about the effect of Migrant Labour in Black South Africans:

In South Africa, the lure of the gold mines and the cities was responsible for large numbers of people who left the rural areas and flocked to the mining areas on the Rand and to cities all over the country for employment. When they were to these places, they were required by industry and commerce to enter legal contracts and to earn money as individuals rather than as members of families or tribes. This insidious individualism which was being insinuated into their lives, far away from the tribal setting and from the close kinship and family group, began the destruction of the strong sense of solidarity; for here in the mines and in the cities there were few things, if any, which reminded the men of their kinship or family ties and traditions. A man found himself exposed to new ways of life, new associates, new forms of entertainment, a different kind and order of morality and an absolute lack of customary restraints.

The above quotation is the political ideology which is applied by Mbhele to interpret his father's behaviour.

Most of Mbhele's one-act plays are strongly influenced by the past South African political situation. For example, in his plays titled **Amaphekula** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo**, **Udlame**, and **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, and **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi**, clearly depict the past political situation of South Africa. In an interview which was conducted, he even mentioned that he once wrote the stage play that was so popular in such a way that it was to be played in Durban, Estcourt and outside. When it was about to be played it was first to be screened by the Special Branch one week before it was played. It was criticised as being very political.

1.6.4 His religious ideology

He has been the devout Christian since his school going age, because his church members and the reverend that was there at that time wanted him to become a priest because of the role he used to play in his church services. He was doing Standard Six at that time. That priest told him that after finishing his Junior Certificate he had to enroll to be a priest if he wanted to, he agreed. So the priest mentioned Mbhele's name to the Bishop by then, as the one who would like to enroll as a priest. He was not admitted to the college of the priests because of his age, he was advised to wait until he reached the age of 22.

His love for the Christian belief is clearly depicted in his plays titled **Ungenzani Gosa**, **Udlame**, **Zikhethele** all from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** and **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi**, where he uses the priests as the characters in which the themes are revealed. In other words, his religious ideology serves as one of his sources of inspiration to write his one-act plays.

1.6.5 His literary works

He has written a number of literary works. This includes, drama, poetry, short stories and Zulu grammar books, but he loves poetry more than anything else. The only literary work he has not yet written is the novel, but he has three novels in his mind. He prefers to write short stories and one-act plays because these two types of literary works can be written in one seating. Mbhele claims that he feels that if he can write a novel, it will take him time because he has to make sure that there is no break in his novel.

He likes to write poems because he started to write poems when he was still at school doing Standard seven and Eight between 1963 and 1964. He continued to write his poems when he was at Eshowe College of Education. During that time, what he was writing ended with him because he had no one to help him with his material. Things changed when he started to teach at Estcourt Senior High School because somebody was prepared to help him.

One person who helped Mbhele to improve his talent of writing was Mr. Shange, who was teaching him at Eshowe College of Education. His first anthology was finished in 1967 and it got lost along its way to the publishers. One of the teachers who was working with Mbhele decided to take Mbhele's material to Professor Nxumalo. That teacher collected that material and gave it to someone who was going to meet Professor Nxumalo, but that material could not reach Professor Nxumalo's hands. To Mbhele's surprise, he saw some of his thoughts appearing to the other poetry books, and he could not understand what was really happening.

1.6.5.1 Drama

At the moment, he has written three drama books, that is:

- (a) *Ezemihla Nayizolo* (Everyday Stories)
- (b) *Ishashalazi* (The Acting Arena)
- (c) *Izivunguvungu Zempilo* (The Whirlwinds of Life)

1.6.5.2 Poetry

- (a) *Imisinga Yosinga*
- (b) *Izimbongi Zosiba*
- (c) *Iziphepho Zengqondo*

- (d) *Umcebo KaNyambose*
- (e) *Unyazi 3*, co authored with E.S.Q. Zulu.
- (e) Some of Mbhele's poems are recorded in *Unyazi 1* and 2.

1.6.5.3 Short stories

- (a) *Amacwabanswani Osiba*
- (b) *Amayezi Namathunzi*

1.6.5.4 Grammar

- (a) *Intuthuko YesiZulu Soqobo Ibanga A*
- (b) *IsiZulu Soqobo Ibanga 2*
- (c) *IsiZulu Soqobo Incwadi KaThisha Ibanga 2*
- (d) *IsiZulu Soqobo Incwadi KaThisha Ibanga 7*
- (e) *IsiZulu Soqobo Ibanga 5*
- (f) *IsiZulu Soqobo Ibanga 4*
- (g) *IsiZulu Soqobo Ibanga 6*
- (h) *IsiZulu Soqobo Ibanga 3*
- (i) *IsiZulu Soqobo SSA*
- (j) *IsiZulu Soqobo SSB*
- (k) *Izimpendulo IsiZulu Soqobo Ibanga 6 and 7*
- (l) *Izimpendulo IsiZulu Soqobo Ibanga 9 and 10*
- (m) *Izindaba zoqobo Ibanga A and B*
- (n) *Izindaba Zoqobo Ibanga 1*
- (o) *Izindaba Zoqobo Ibanga 2*
- (p) *Izindaba Zoqobo Ibanga 3*
- (q) *Izindaba Zoqobo Ibanga 4*

1.7 Conclusion

In this chapter the general introduction of the study was discussed. It further highlighted the aims of the study, chapter outline, research methodology and the theoretical framework, which is employed in this study. It has also looked at the relationship between Mbhele's life experiences and his one-act plays. It is also in this chapter that the biographical notes of Mbhele have been examined and the relationship between some of his one-act plays and his political and religious ideologies. It further states that there is a deeper meaning or symbolism that is found in some of these plays. It is because Mbhele is also a poet so he knows exactly how to use figurative language. The next chapter will deal with the way in which he chooses his characters and the structure of his one-act plays.

CHAPTER 2

CHARACTERISATION AND PLOT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will highlight the relationship between the plot and the characters in a play. The full discussion on plot and characterisation will be dealt with. First and foremost, this chapter will deal with the definition of characters, the different kinds and types of characters, and how they are portrayed in Mbhele's one-act plays. Secondly, the discussion on how Mbhele's plot is developed will be dealt with, and the role played by the characters in this respect.

2.1.1 Characterisation

It refers to the author's ability to form characters in the fiction. In most cases, if the author writes his or her fiction, he uses the imaginary people, that is people that have not existed. The writer should make sure that the readers believe in everything that the characters do in the story. In order to do this successfully, the author should make use of the setting, that is the place where the characters live and the period of time during which the story takes place and the characters' socio-economic conditions. In other words, the author should provide the link between personal and environmental conditions of the characters involved (Forster 1974: 32).

This is how Ncube (1990:2) defines characterisation:

This is the author's unique manner of the presentation of characters in any narrative work. The characters are formulated to perform some duties or actions necessary for the development of the story.

The above quotation means that the characters should depict some people in the society. They should be unique even though they have the same social position and the same status. For example in the play titled **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi** there are two policemen doing the same job, but it is very interesting to note that their actions, behaviour and attitudes towards Khanda are totally different. The point that Mbhele is trying to make here is that according to his own understanding of the world, people are unique in their own ways.

This chapter deals with both the characterisation and plot because, according to Brooks and Warren (1959:168), the plot and character depend on each other to function appropriately. To support this argument, Shaw (1971:71) maintains that:

Characterization, no mere by-product, is an essential part of plot. Character generates (causes) plot and plot results from and is dependent upon, character.

This means that the development of the plot lies on the role played by the characters in this respect. In this way, the relationship between the characters in Mbhele's one-act plays and the structure of these plays is observed.

This chapter will also be looking at the way in which Mbhele give personal names to his characters. This is an important aspect of characterisation because it is believed that there is a strong relationship between the Zulu personal name of a person and the personality of that particular person. This is what Koopman (1989:45) has to say about the Zulu personal naming pattern:

Zulu names reflect the position of the individual both within the immediate family and the wider family. They show relationships between brothers and sisters, between parents and children. They reflect the importance of the clan and the importance of the male children in a patrilineal society. They refer to the

institution of **ilobolo** as well as to misfortunes such as barrenness and stillbirths. Names may exhort children to appropriate social behaviour. Zulu personal names are without doubt “social documents”.

This chapter will investigate whether there is a relationship between the names of the characters that are found in Mbhele’s one-act plays and their given social circumstances. In the play titled **Siyaya** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** Mbhele has named his character Thuleleni (why keeping quiet?) in order to relate to her behaviour of keeping quiet even though she is not happy about the way in which Bhengu wants his children to be. It is like Thuleleni has been wrong not to advice her husband about the issue of their children’s tertiary education. It can happen that Bhengu is asking her why she kept quiet about the whole issue. This becomes clear towards the end of the play where she laughs at the way in which Falakhe has managed to blackmail his father. This is how Mbhele (1997:11) puts it:

3.Bhengu: *(Uthule nje kubonakala ukudangala injabulo ihlangene nentukuthelo.) Okusho ukuthi lo muntu ositatazelisayo nguFalakhe?*

(He is quiet but disappointment, excitement and anger can be noticed.) This means that a person who fools us is Falakhe?)

Thuleleni: *(Kuthi akahleke kodwa azibambe.) Kusho lokho.*

(She nearly laughs but managed to control herself.) It is just that).

Shaw (1972:71) stresses that characterisation is the creation of imaginary persons in literary art, in the following:

The creation of imaginary persons in drama, narrative poetry, the novel and the short story is called

characterization. In effective narrative literature, fictional persons through characterization, become so credible that they exist for the reader as real people.

From the above quotation, Shaw emphasises that the fictional persons created by the author, become the real persons with feelings to the mind of the reader. Unlike Shipley (1970:41) who believes that characterisation is the way or the method of making known the appearance and the nature of a person. Abrams (1991:33) adds yet another dimension to the definition. He writes:

Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the readers as being endowed with particular moral intellectual and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it-the **dialogue**-and from what they do-the **action**.

The point of interest from the above quotation is that, it is an extension of Shaw's definition in a sense that Abrams adds that the created person is endowed with moral intellectual and emotional qualities.

According to Baldick (1990:34), characterisation is defined as the presentation of characters in a narrative and dramatic works. This includes the direct method of character portrayal like the attribution of qualities as described by the author, and dramatic method of character representation like inviting readers to infer qualities from the actions of the characters, the way they speak and how they look like. Shaw argues that a character is revealed by his actions, speech, thoughts, his physical appearance, and what other characters say or think of him. The following are the methods used by Mbhele in his one-act plays:

2.1.2 Methods of character portrayal

There are two methods of character portrayal in literature, that is the dramatic method and the direct method of character representation. The latter is also known as the expository method of character representation. Both these methods have both weak points and strong points. Mbhele has used these methods equally.

2.1.3 Direct method of character portrayal

The author plays an important role when using this method of character representation. The author explains the actions, the appearance and the thoughts of the characters to the readers. According to Ncube (1990:16), direct method of character portrayal can be defined as:

This method does not allow the characters to reveal themselves. It is the author's duty to describe his characters through their behaviour and actions.

The weakness of the direct method of character portrayal could be the fact that the intelligence of the readers is being undermined. They cannot think about the reasons behind the actions of the characters, since they have been told by the author, so there is nothing to think about. This is what Msimang (1986:100) has to say about this method of character portrayal:

Here the artist himself describes his characters. He tells you what they look like physically. If he adopts an omniscient point of view, he may even be more analytical, and tell you what they think and how they feel.

To support this quotation, Shipley (1970:41) argues that:

Direct method of character portrayal has the advantage of instant clarity; though sometimes it is used cumulatively, gradually building up a full portrait. The cumulative method is more frequent, indeed is almost inescapable, in characterization through action.

This means that this method of character portrayal is very important for the development of the story because it becomes the author's responsibility to expose the characters. There is no way in which the discussion of the character portrayed in this way can be biased. This method of character portrayal is normally used to show the emotional feelings of the character.

2.1.4 Indirect or dramatic method of character portrayal

This method of character portrayal focuses on the actions, and the speech of the characters as the readers observe them. The readers should assume that since, the behaviour of this particular character is like that, so is the personality of that character. The following are the dramatic methods that can be used by the authors in order to represent his characters to the readers. This includes personal names, the use of the confidante, the monologue, the actions, what other characters have to say about each other and also what the character has to say about himself.

2.1.4.1 Personal names

It is believed that African personal names are not just mere labels, but people are named according to their social circumstances. Some of these personal names serve as the injunction to the children as the way of enforcing the appropriate behaviour. In other words, there are some cases where a personal name of a particular person can affect the behaviour of the individual. Van Rooyen et al. (1984:120) maintain that:

Certain names which are given to some individuals may have an influence on their behaviour and personalities.

Monning in Koopman (1986:15) has this to say about the Pedi of Transvaal:

The Pedi consider the name of the person to be much more than a mere appendage by which a person is addressed. It is an integrated part of the person, a reflection of his personality and of his whole being, and is coloured with his spirit.

It is observed in the above quotation that a name of a person and a person himself cannot be separated; they are integrated. In other words, the personality of a person is shaped by his or her personal name. Mbhele should be credited for that because he has named his characters according to their way of life.

According to Zulu et al. (1988:350), some of the Zulu writers are influenced by the Zulu personal naming pattern where there should be a reason for giving a person a certain name rather than the other. They name their characters according to what is going to happen in the story. Mbhele has done the same in some of his one-act plays. For example in the play titled **Siyaya** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** Bhengu's wife is named Thuleleni because she does not tell her husband that she is against what Bhengu thinks about the future of their children.

In the play titled **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi**, the name of the main character, Khanda can be interpreted as someone who is very stubborn and also who is the head of the family. In this case, Khanda is very stubborn because he is not prepared to listen to the policemen as well as his mother MaNxumalo. He is also the head of the family who is responsible for all the activities that take place within the family.

This method of character portrayal may be criticised because some readers may lose interest to read a book if they can predict through the meaning of the personal name of the main character what is going to happen in the story. In some of Mbhele's one-act plays, this method of character portrayal is used. But in this case, the personal names of the children have nothing to do with the way in which these children think.

In the play titled *Siyaya* from *Ezemihla Nayizolo*, the parents named their children according to their economic conditions. Since the parents own businesses, the children were named as Nomafa (Miss inheritance) and Falakhe (His inheritance). Even though these children honour their family businesses, they believe that these businesses may not be everlasting, so they rather acquire tertiary education, which can help them to arm for the future. In other words, on the side of the children, as far as the rest of the story is concerned, there is no relationship between the names of these two characters and what is happening in the story. This is what is good about the way in which Mbhele (1997:2) uses this method of character portrayal:

4. **Falakhe:** *Angiphiki. Mina ngithi asithi siqambe singena emabhasini akwethu kodwa sibe sinazo izitifiketi zethu zemisebenzi esiyifundele. Sizogqegqemuka namabhasi iminyaka afe la mabhasi, ziwe nezitolo, njengoba nezisebenzi zintshontsha kangaka nje, bese sibuyela phansi ekuhluphekeni. Siyosheba uphuthu nombhubhudlo. Mina ngithi asifundele umsebenzi kuqala anduba sibuye ebhizinisini.*

(I am not denying that. I suggest that before we commit ourselves to the family business, we should first study for our college certificates. We can roam about for years in the busses, and the busses, and shops deteriorate since the workers are stealing and we will go back to poverty. We will have nothing to eat other than dry porridge and sugared water. I say let us go for education first and the family business later).

The personal name of Zokwenzani (what are you going to do?), in the play titled *Umninimuzi* from *Ishashalazi*, helps the readers to understand this character better. She does not respect her father. She conveys the message that of course she does not care what the father would say about her bad behaviour. This is how, according to Mbhele (1988:15) this personal name relates to the bad behaviour of Zokwenzani:

5. MaSibisi: *Kahle phela Zokwe, sewenzani phela unqihatha noyihlo. Ayenziwa le nto mntanami.*

(Stop that Zokwe, what are you doing now creating tension between me and your father. You are not supposed to do that, my child).

Zokwe: *Awungiyeke mina Mama. Ngikhathele ukuphathiswa okwengane encane.*

(Leave me alone Mama. I am tired of being treated like a small child).

Ntuli: *Ngabe uzama ukwenzani Zokwenzani? Ukuthathelani ukudla kwami?*

(What are you trying to do Zokwenzani? Why are you taking my food away from me?)

Zokwe: *Ngiqoqa imigodlana yami.*

(I am taking my things away).

In this case, Zokwenzani's behaviour is strongly related to her personal name, but it is not clear at the beginning that Zokwenzani is a disobedient child. In fact for Zokwenzani's behaviour, her mother, MaSibisi is to blame. If it has not been through MaSibisi's poor parenting skills, Zokwenzani would have been a good mannered girl. Even though this method of character portrayal is used in Mbhele's one-act plays, readers do not lose interest to read the story, because what is happening in the story is not what the reader thought would happen.

To conclude on the effect of the personal name on the behaviour of the character, it appears that Mbhele rarely uses this kind of character portrayal method. But one may not assume what is going to happen on the story by simply understanding the underlying meaning of that personal name.

2.1.4.2 The use of confidante

Readers learn more about the character if the character reveals his secret to his trusted friend. The literary term that is used for this trusted character in a story is the confidante. This is what Boulton (1960:85-86) has to say about the use of the confidante as the other method of character portrayal:

Another conventional method of conveying information about events or character has been, and still is, the use of the confidant(e). This is a character in whom a more important person of the play can confide, and is almost always a trusted friend of the same sex.

Mbhele has successfully used this method of character portrayal in the play titled **Imfundo Ephakeme** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, Mbhele (1994:65) where if the confidante has not been used in this play, the play would have lost its plausibility. The readers did not know about the educational status of the Principal of the school, Sibisi, and the way in which he talks to his teaching staff is very rude and his word is final:

6. **Sibisi:** *Ngithi akuyi muntu lapho! (Kuthi nya isikhashana.) Phumani-ke!* Get out of my office.

(I say nobody goes there! *(Silence.)* Get out of my office).

The use of confidante in this play is used in a way that is suggested by Boulton's definition of confidante. The principal of the school, Sibisi, reveals his secret to his trusted friend, his deputy and he is of the same sex as the principal. Sibisi mentions that he has made Cele his deputy because he trusts him. Before the secret has been revealed it has been very difficult for the readers to judge the reasons behind Sibisi's behaviour. This is how he reveals his secret, Mbhele (1994:77) states thus:

7. Sibisi: *Anginazo izevatho zemfundo ephakeme.*

(I don't have the academic gowns).

Cele: *Sezaguga yini Thish'omkhulu?*

(Are they torn Principal?)

Sibisi: *Cha anginazo nje kwasampela. Ukuba anginazo anginakho nalokho kwakho kweDiploma.*

(Oh! No, I don't have them at all. I don't even have that one for the Diploma).

Cele: *Hhayi Thish'omkhulu. Mina ngazi ukuthi unazo iziqu zemfundo ephakeme. Nabo futhi othisha nomphakathi wazi ukuthi unazo iziqu ze-B.A.*

(Oh! No, Principal. What I know is that you have got a degree. Even the teachers and the community at large know that you have got BA degree).

Sibisi: *Lutho! Zwana ngami uma ngikutshela.*

(Nothing at all! Listen to what I'm telling you).

The confidante, Cele does not believe what Sibisi is trying to tell him because he once saw him in "his academic attires" on a certain graduation party. Cele finds it very difficult to believe how Sibisi succeeded in getting the position of being the principal without a degree let alone a teacher's diploma. In other words, Cele wants a clear clarification on this issue, and at last he gets it, Mbhele (1994:78):

8.Sibisi: *Lalela Cele ngikukhiphele isifuba sami. (Kuthuleke) mina anginaziqu ze-B.A. Ngiyavuma kona ukuthi yonke le minyaka bengizethusela kubantu ngithi nginayo kanti ayikho. Okwesibili, izingubo lezo owazibona kwakungezomfowethu. Umfowethu -ke usazithatha wawela nazo waya phesheya. Ngakho-ke le nto yakusasa uma ichuma, izongembula izinqe.*

(Listen Cele, let me reveal my secret. *(silence)* I do not have a B.A. degree. I agree that all these years I have been lying to people about this issue. Secondly, the academic attires that you saw me wearing were my brother's. My brother has taken them overseas with him. So should it happen that the tomorrow's function becomes successful, I will be very disappointed).

2.1.4.3 Monologue or soliloquy

Monologue may be defined as a speech where the character, preferable the main character of the play, is thinking aloud in such a way that this character ends up talking to himself. In most cases, monologue in a play takes place if the main character has the problem and he has no idea as to how to come out of that problem. Veltrusky (1977:53) maintains that:

This term, which is often used somewhat loosely, ought to be reserved for an uninterrupted speech of a certain length, pronounced by one character and not directedly addressed to another... The semantic construction of dramatic monologue is not affected by the presence or the absence of other characters, provided there is no addressee properly so called.

Since monologue can be regarded as the way of bringing out the thoughts in the mind of the character, it can therefore be among the best method of character portrayal. Boulton (1960:81) has this to say about the importance of monologue in drama:

An interesting character may explain himself more or less directly to the audience in soliloquy.

Mbhele has used this method of character portrayal in three of his one-act plays. If he has not used this method of character portrayal, it would have been very difficult for the readers to understand as to why Mbhele has made his character Gqayingana stubborn. He is found in a play titled **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo**, from **Ishashalazi**. Taking for granted the situation he finds himself in is the way in which he is portrayed. It is through this monologue that the readers learn to know about Gqayingana's past experiences and what he thinks about the present situation. Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:27) put it this way:

*9.Gqayingana:...Hawu MaHlubi! Inkosana
seyiyangikhokhobela, ngenhloso yokungahlukanisa
nomndeni wami? Abantwana benkosi sebehlongoza
ukungibonga ngejozi yize ngabaphuthela
oyisemkhulu, namuhla bese kumele ngiphuthe
uyise. Impela umbeki....*

(...Oh! The Hlubi's! the prince is walking stealthily with an aim of separating me from my family? The children of the chief are planing to appreciate by killing me. They want me to be the mat in the chief's grave. That is not fair...).

From the quotation above, it is observed that this particular character thought since he has done his best for this Hlubi clan for the past years, and also that he was not killed during the burial of Langalibalele's father, he may not be killed during the burial of Langalibalele. It appears that he has done nothing for the past burials as far as the burial rituals of this clan are concerned. In other words, he believes that it is not his responsibility to arrange for this custom.

It is also through this monologue that the readers learn that Gqayingana is very old since he has been there during the reign of Langalibalele's father. It also appears that Gqayingana loves his family. He has also worked very hard to keep this clan going. He expects them to appreciate what he has done for this clan and not to threaten to kill him. This method of character representation is very good to readers because it enforces empathy where the readers are forced to feel sorry for this old man in trouble. Before this dialogue the readers have been thinking of Gqayingana as someone who is not reliable since the sons of Langalibalele keep on coming to tell him what to do until they lost their temper and threaten to kill him.

Mbhele's use of monologue as the other method of character portrayal is observed in a play titled *Umninimuzi* from *Ishashalazi* where Ntuli is left alone with nothing to keep him going. His wife, MaSibisi and his daughter, Zokwenzani have decided to leave him because he wants to maintain order in his household by not allowing his working daughter to bring the criminals in the house. Ntuli's monologue in this play is poetic. He is influenced by the fact that he is also a poet. This is how Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:18) put it:

10. **Ntuli** : *Impilo yilokho eyangana nakho ocwini lwempilo
Empilweni sicaca ocwini lwempilo olusuka
Emathunjini omuntu luphel' emathunjini omhlaba.
Lolu cu luqondise okothi lomkhonto, alunagumbi
Lupahlwe ngutatalambu wamabhobe amabili*

(Life is what it embraces in the single string of life
In life we climb on the single string of life which moves
From the intestines of the human being to the intestines of earth.
This string of life is straight like the wooden stick of the spear,
It does not have any hollowed-out place).

With this monologue Ntuli believes that life changes all the time. The fact that a person has something to eat does not guarantee that it will be still the same tomorrow. He is shocked by his family's attitude towards his lack of employment and how easy

they forget good things he has done for them while he was still working. MaSibisi and her daughter, Zokwenzani have left him but it might happen that they could come back to him. He argues that no matter how happy a person could be but he or she is going to die. This is Ntuli's own interpretation of life.

The other monologue is observed in a play titled *Siyaya* from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** where what happens to Ntuli in the play titled *Umninimuzi*, from **Ishashalazi** is also observed to be happening to Bhengu. It is as if Nomafa and Falakhe are abducted and his wife, Thuleleni blames him for that. At this moment, Bhengu does not know what to do because his family does not understand that he is doing all these things because he loves them. This is how according to Mbhele (1997:7) goes Bhengu's monologue:

11. **Bhengu:**.....UMaZulu akakhohliwe
ngiyisiphukuphuku esizonda abantabaso. Akazi ukuthi
ngibathanda kanjani. Yifa labo leli, okumele
bakwazi ukuliphatha njengezihlangu zabaNtungwa.
Ngiyabembesa bayazembula. Nonina naye.

(...MaZulu thinks I am an irresponsible man who hates his children. She has no idea as to how I love them. This is their inheritance and they should handle it as the weapons of the Ntungwa's. I am covering them; they remove the blanket. Even their mother).

Bhengu does not know how to make his family believe that he loves them because even his wife thinks that he is very unfair to Nomafa and Falakhe by not allowing them to go to the college.

To conclude from the above mentioned monologues, one may argue that in most cases, monologue is mostly appropriate if the main characters are in troubles and in a situation where they cannot help themselves out.

2.1.4.4 Other characters

Other characters may play an important role in the representation of the characters. But Boulton (1960: 87) claims that this method of character portrayal has its own weak points, that is, the readers or the audience should not believe all that the other people have to say about the character in question. Mbhele has used this method of character portrayal in most of his plays. For example in the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa**, from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, Mfundisi regards his daughter Nozipho, as someone who is totally different from the other girls as far as her behaviour is concerned. This is how Mbhele (1994:14) puts it:

12. **Mfundisi:** *Nansi nje indodakazi yami uNozipho ihleli, ilonde ubuntombi bayo. Uma eziphetha ngale ndlela aziphetha ngayo angingabazi ukuthi suku lumbe bayongena lapha bezokokha umlilo. Kodwa uma ngizomdedela ayokweqa imigwaqo lena edolobheni uyohlangana nayo yonke imihuqa lena enemimoya eyadukisayo. Abantu abafuna ukonela phansi izingane zabantu .*

(Here is my daughter, Nozipho, taking care of her virginity. If she carries on like this, I am quite sure that one day some people will come to pay lobolo for her. But if I let her roam about in the cities, she will encounter bad influences from people who are there to destroy the lives of the innocent children).

What happens in this play, as far as this method of character portrayal is concerned is nearly the same as what goes on in the play titled **Udlame** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**. In this case the mother, Jabu is praising his son Siphso, claiming that he does not go out at night. But in this case the father, Mthethwa knows that his son is involved in the township political violence. According to Mbhele (1994:94), this is how they argue:

13. Mthethwa: *Uyazi ukuthi uSipho simgcina ngenkathi silala ngabo -8 size simbone ngo -6 ekuseni, Asimazi ukuthi ubusuku bonke usuke ekuphi?*

(You know that we only see Sipho when we go to bed at about 8 o'clock in the evening only to see him again at 6 o'clock in the morning. We do not know what does he do the whole night).

Jabu: *Usuke ekhona elele. USipho waba yisipho sangempela soMdali. Uyabuthanda ubuthongo enjalo nje. Ulala umntanami aze asehwe ekuseni.*

(He sleeps the whole night. Sipho has been the real gift from God. He loves his sleep in such a way that he finds it difficult to wake up in the morning).

Mthethwa: *Wazi kanjani?*

(How do you know that?)

Jabu: *Hawu, ngiyazi. USipho akaphumi nje. Ulala lapha ngo 8 ebusuku kuze kuse hluthu ngo -6 ekuseni, kanti umdedela nje ngoba uthi uya entweni ayithandayo? Ukhona umuntu owake wathanda ukufa?*

(Oh, I know. Sipho does not go out in the night. He sleeps from 8 in the evening and wakes up at 6 in the morning. You allow him to go because you think he wants to go out? Is there anyone who wants to die?)

In the play titled *Siyaya* from **Ezemihla Nayizolo**, Bhengu argues that these children, Nomafa and Falakhe do not care about his financial problems. He keeps saying that: *Aningicabangeli*. But this does not sound true because these children are not worried about what are they going to wear or to eat. They only ask for the tuition fee only; even at the end of the play, they are prepared to give the change to the father. So what the father says about them is not true because they know that he can afford to pay for their studies. They even tell him about the bursaries. If that is not the case they would have not bothered themselves about other ways of financing their studies. In fact these

children are honest because before they go to the college they thought the fees amounted to R3 000 each and they told the father of this amount. When the father managed to raise R10.000 they don't say that since they have told him that they will need R3.000 cash for the tuition fee, they do not have to tell the father of the exact amount. They also want to apologize to the father for blackmailing him. This is also what they tell the mother, Thuleleni on the phone, Mbhele (1997:10) remarks:

14. Thuleleni: *UFalakhe noNomafa bayafunda. Sebeseholiji njengamanje nje. Bathi bayitholile indawo yokufunda. Imali yabo bobabili unyaka wonke yizinkulungwane ezinhlanu -R5000. Bathi sebeyobuya noshintshi ngesonto elizayo.*

(Falakhe and Nomafa are studying. They are at the college at the moment. They say that they have been admitted at the college. Both of them have to pay R5000 for the whole year. They say they will be coming next week to bring the change).

In the play titled **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi**, it is not the case that Ntuli has no problem since he is not working. Readers should believe that because he is against his daughter's bad ways of getting money. Ntuli does not care as to how are they going to survive if Zokwenzani should stop working if it means to behave so badly. He goes on telling her that if she cannot stop behaving like that she should rather take things and go away. Readers need not believe MaSibisi if she according to Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:5) argues:

15. MaSibisi: *Awunakile nje, uzithele ngabandayo, ujabulela khona nje ukuba ulokhu ujika nesithangami kuze kushone ilanga.*

(You do not bother about looking for employment; you are happy for basking in the sun the whole day).

MaSibisi: *Ngibona sengathi intokomalo seyinkulu njengoba sewuphenduka nesigcaki nje.*

(Now I can see that you are enjoying yourself while basking in the sun).

There are some cases in Mbhele's one-act plays where the readers should believe some of the things that other characters say about the characters. For example, in the play titled **Siyaya**, from **Ezemihla Nayizolo**, readers should believe in Falakhe's arguments that Bhengu can afford to pay for their tuition fee at the college: This is how Mbhele (1997:1) puts it.

15. Falakhe: *Le nto eshiwo ubaba iyangicasula ngoba imali unayo kodwa ubulawa ubuqonqela.*

(What my father says irritates me because he has got the money, it is just that he is stingy).

Falakhe: *Zwana mina uma ngikutshela. Ubaba akaxakwe yilutho, uzithandela imali nje.*

(Listen to what I'm telling you. My father has no problem at all; he loves the money).

Falakhe stresses that he is aware that his father, Bhengu is not interested in tertiary education, but instead, he is business minded.

2.1.4.5 What the character has to say about himself

This can be the other method of character portrayal because the words spoken by a particular character usually tell the readers about the personality of that person. In other words, it is through the words spoken by the character that the readers learn to understand the character better. This is not the same as the monologue, because in

this case the character could be arguing with each other about something, or trying to explain something to each other. Wilkes et al. (1989: 189) argue that:

Ingxoxo ingaba yisu lokuchaza abalingiswa. Amazwi akhulunywa ngumuntu avame ukusitshela ukuthi lo muntu okhulumayo ungumuntu onjani.

(The speech can be the method of character portrayal. Words spoken by a person usually tell us more about the personality of the character involved).

For example, in the play titled **Udlame** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, the readers learn to understand Jabu better when she tells her husband, Mthethwa, that he should hide some truth about their son Siphoh when writing the statement to the police station. In this part of the play the personality of both Jabu and Mthethwa is revealed through what they say, Mbhele, (1994:102) avers:

16.Jabu: *Hhayi Baba, ubozama ukukhetha kahle amagama uma ubhalisa isitatimende sakho. Useyingane phela uSiphoh. Kusemhlabeni lapha, indaba yeqiniso nokukholwa ibuye ingasebenzi.*

(No Father, please try to choose your words nicely when writing your statement at the police station. For Siphoh is still young. In this world, sometimes the truth and the Christian beliefs do not work).

Mthethwa:*Jabu, iqiniso liyaphilisa- iqiniso liyakhulula. Awungibizele uSiphoh ngikhulume naye.*

(Jabu, the truth gives life - the truth can set one free. Please call Siphoh for me, I want to talk to him).

Character portrayal through the words spoken by the characters can also be observed in the play titled **Imfundo Ephakeme** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, where Sibisi

describes himself to the deputy principal. From these words it can be seen that Sibisi is the hard working, experienced, old teacher and he is not happy about the teachers who like to show off to the pupils about their degrees because this would not help the students to pass. This is how Mbhele (1994:71) puts it:

17. **Sibisi:** *Akukho manyala enginawo mina. Nginguthisha ngilele noma ngihamba, nginguthisha ngoMgqibelo nangeSonto, nginguThisha ngihola noma ngingaholi. Uyangizwa Cele? Ungizwa kahle?*

(I do not have disgusting acts. I am a teacher all the time, I am a teacher on Saturday and Sunday, I am a teacher whether I am getting paid or not. Do you hear me, Cele? Do you understand me clearly?)

It is through these words that the readers learn to understand Sibisi better in a way that he loves his work, and he is also worried about the teachers of the new generation who seem to have no love for their work. He believes that a degree has nothing to do with the child nurturing. He goes on comparing the results of the qualified Mathematics and Science teacher, Zondi, to the one of the former unqualified teacher, Dlodlu, of the same subject and also of the same school. This is how Mbhele (1994:83) puts it:

18. **Sibisi:** *Uma nikhumbula kahle ulandela uqweqwe lukaThisha uDlodlu obeziphasisa ngenkani izingane zonke ngothi lwazo. Isimanga ngaye ukuthi wayengenajazi, wayenencwadi yeshumi nje qha. Kodwa ephike ngokuthi nje zizophasa izingane.*

(If you can remember very well, he succeeded the excellent teacher Dlodlu, who used to make sure that all the pupils pass. But surprisingly, he had no degree, he had Matriculation Certificate only, but he knew what he was doing).

2.1.4.6 The actions of the characters

The actions of the characters may be one of the dramatic methods of character portrayal. The readers learn of the actions of the characters from their spoken words or the narration of the author himself. This can be the case because the characters may behave on their unique ways, this makes it easier for the readers to understand the characters better. For example, it is very easy to remember Sibisi in a play titled **Imfundo Ephakeme** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** because of his unique actions. He is the only character who prefers to cool his armpits through his use of the fan.

It is also the case with Gqayingana in the play titled **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** from **Ishashalazi** where it is observed that Gqayingana is very old, and this can be seen from his actions like to always have his hand on his back. That action alone may mean that may be there is something wrong with his back, it can be due to illness or being old. The actions of the characters work best with the speech. Like in this case, this old man is seen having his hand on his back and the readers are not sure whether he is old or he is sick but when he says this, it becomes clear that he is old. Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:30) claim:

19. **Gqayingana:** *Lokhu mina sengilitakumba nje ngizowufeza ngithini lo....?*

(Since I have gone old, how am I going to perform this...?)

In the play titled **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi**, Mbhele has also used this technique when portraying his main character. Ntuli is observed telling his family members that he is a man of the house and that is it. The way he puts it in the play titled **Umninimuzi**, the readers learn to know more about the main character, Ntuli, through

his speech, when he tries to tell his wife, MaSibisi and his daughter, Zokwenzani about how he wants them to behave themselves. Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:20) remark:

20.Ntuli: *Ukuthi ngiyindoda kulo muzi angikukhiphelanga mali. Kodwa akukho namunye oyokusula ukuthi ngiyindoda kulo muzi. Nanoma ungaze ungibone ngiyisilima ngoba ngingasenamali kodwa ngiseyindoda kuleli khaya. Nginguyise wale ngane.*

(I did not pay for the privilege of being the man of this house. But there is nobody that can remove that. Even if you look at me as a fool because I do not have money any longer, but I am still a man of this house. I am the father of this child).

2.1.5 Types of characters

There are two different types of characters, that is round and flat characters. To differentiate between the two, one needs to analyse the actions, speeches and thoughts of the characters one encounters and one can draw conclusions about their qualities and strengths. In other words, the types of characters have something to do with the experiences faced by the characters in the story, to see if the characters are affected by the experiences they come across.

The background of the characters helps the readers to decide whether the character is right or wrong. Since the characters may be defined as the verbal representation of a human being, readers may feel sorry for the character who experiences difficulties in a story. Characters in a play should come across different difficulties, and it is through their actions that one can observe what type of a character could that be. The characters and plot development are inseparable because the plot development is strongly dependent on the actions of the characters. Msimang (1986:40) puts this clear:

Since actions are performed by characters, any discussion that separates action from actor, tends to be artificial. This has to be so because a work of art is a single unit, a whole. Notwithstanding this caveat, however, an attempt will be made to separate these two for the sake of convenience. It must also be born in mind that plot also conveys the theme of the narrative, yet it would be unscientific to discuss plot character and theme under one heading. On the other hand, separation will not completely prevent overlapping.

This quotation emphasises the importance of characterisation in any work of art since it is through the characters that the theme is revealed and also the plot developed.

The difficulties in the lives of the characters in the fiction mean the development of the plot. Characters in one-act plays should come across difficulties, and it is through their actions that the readers can decide what type of a character is that. Mbhele's one-act plays have both round and flat characters. He is capable of creating lifelike flat characters because they act according to their social circumstances and that is possible to come across them in real life situation.

2.1.5.1 Round characters

Round characters are those characters that are capable of changing or adjusting to the circumstances. Round characters are sometimes happy, sad, emotional, good, bad and short tempered. They are like normal human beings. In most cases, round characters bring about the verisimilitude of the story, which means that it becomes easier for the readers to believe in the actions that take place in the story. Shaw (1972:71) puts this clear:

Round character is one fully developed by four or five of these methods and this takes on such added

dimensions that, as readers, we come to know and to understand him as living, breathing human being.

Wilkes et al. (1989:111) have this to say about the round character:

Umlingiswa oyindilinga siye sithi “ngophilayo”. Yena uyakhula. Uyaguquka uziphatha ngezindlela ezahlukene ezimeni ezahlukene. Uke ajabule, kuthi lapho isimo simphoqa khona, adumale abe nosizi. Abanye abantu bathi lo mlingiswa nguyena osondele kakhulu mpilweni (reality).

(The round character, as we normally put it, is the one who is life-like. There is a development in this type of character. His personality changes under different circumstances. He can be happy, and as soon as the situation changes, he becomes sad and worried. Other people argue that this type of character is very close to the reality).

On the other hand, Msimang (1986:102) has this to say about the round character:

He is more like people in real life, capable of surprising us and not easy to describe with any degree of adequacy. This means a character whose conduct is not readily predictable and who changes under the changing circumstances. This changing character is sometimes described as a dynamic or revolving character.

The above definitions of round characters support each other in a way that all of them refer to the round character as a character that is full of life. Round characters are very close to the reality because it is highly possible for a normal human being to change his or her personality and behaviour if the circumstances around that particular person change. Mbhele has been able to create life like round characters from whom the themes of the plays are revealed.

The roundness of the character can be depicted in the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** where Mfundisi Ndlovu is observed showing the anger towards Zondi for proposing his daughter, Nozipho to be his second wife. This is how Mbhele (1994:20) puts it:

21. **Mfundisi:** *Uyokwenza kuny...kwaZondi lokho, hhayi lapha (Athi vuthu esihlalweni. Awuthi ngcothu ukhololo entanyeni awubeke phezu kwelinye lamaBhayibheli. Aqonde emnyango waselawunji abuye aqikileke ajike.) MaLuthuli! Khiya lo mnyango omkhulu waselawunji.*

(You will do that to your....by the Zondi's, not here. (He quickly rises from the chair. He quickly removes the collar from his neck and put it on one of the Bibles. He moves to the lounge door and he stops quickly and turns back.) MaLuthuli! Lock the lounge's main door).

Mbhele has been able to create the suitable round characters because it is through their roundness that the play becomes interesting. In the play titled **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi** the readers would not have believed in MaSibisi as the presentation of the normal human being if she has not changed her attitude towards her husband's lack of employment. For the mere fact that, Ntuli is not working now, MaSibisi does not respect and love him as her husband. She respects her daughter because she is working. MaSibisi's roundness is very essential for the development of this play because if that has not been the case, nothing would have happened after that.

In most cases, it is through the round characters that readers get moral lessons because round characters undergo the process of change, which is essential for the normal human being. Sometimes, the change can bring about the negative influence to the readers, meaning that, the readers need not to follow the actions of the characters. It

becomes even worse if that particular character does not change at the end of the play. In the play titled **Udlame** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo Jabu** is a round character who changes only if to change will suit her. She has her brother killed by her son but still wants to protect her son from the law. This would be very dangerous to the readers because the arm of the law is very long.

2.1.5.2 Flat characters

Flat characters are those characters that do not change, no matter what happens in the life of that particular character. There is no dynamism in flat characters. The role of the flat character in the story is to show the development of the round character. Msimang (1986:103) puts this clear when he says:

This means that he is either good or bad throughout the book. Such a character never develops, and it is often said that it is not true to life. The truth of the matter is that it all depends on the proficiency of the artist.

According to Shaw (1972:71), flat characters can be defined as a minor participant in fiction, one who is characterised briefly by only one or two of these basic methods. By the basic methods he is referring to the methods of character portrayal.

Mbhele's one act plays have a number of flat characters, some are not true to life and the others are lifelike. This means that Mbhele is capable of producing lifelike flat characters. An example thereof is, in the play titled **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi Khanda**, the main character of the play is a flat character because of the unchanging personality reflected in his actions. He is not prepared to listen to his own mother. Moreover, this man stands for what he believes in, without worrying about the consequences of his behaviour. Khanda believes that, now it is about time when the

whites have to see that he is not prepared to take their nonsense. This is how Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:58) put it:

22. Khanda: *Impela okungabelungu lokhu kuthokoza ngokubona izinyembezi zomuntu zigeleza mihla namalanga lana. Mama, anginangane ezoqhaqhrwa ibuye ithungwe lapho seyihlohlwe uvolo esiswini. Angaba dlozi lini kodwa umntanami elugobosi?*

(Of course the white people enjoy to see people crying everyday. Mama, I don't have a child that will be dissected and put cotton wool in his stomach. What kind of ancestral spirit would my child be?)

The other example of the lifelike flat character in these plays is found in the play titled **Udlame** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**. Mthethwa is observed as someone who does not change no matter what social circumstances he comes across. He can see that they are in danger but he does not hesitate to open the door for the person who is being attacked by the youth. This is how he tries to convince his wife that they should open the door for that person who is in need of help. Mbhele (1994:96) puts it this way:

23. Mthethwa: *Uyazi ukuthi mhlawumbe sivalele lo muntu nje, noSipho bamvalele lapho ekhona. Kumb naye uzama ukufihla ikhanda emizini yabantu bayamvalela njengalo muntu ophandle. (Amhlabe lawo mazwi uJabu).*

(Do you know that may be we do not open for that person, nobody opens the door for Sipho wherever he is. May be he is trying to find some shelter in other people's houses like that person outside but the people could not let him in. (Jabu is touched by these words).

Ntuli in the play titled **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi** is a flat character because he does not change even if that means he will be left with nothing to eat. His flatness is

the good one because he has to show his family members that it is not good to change the good ways of living just because there are problems. It is also true to life because what he does is typical of men who want to be respected. These types of men are not prepared to change.

2.1.6 Discussion of the portrayal of the characters

It is believed that a character should depict some of the people in a society. Here, this study looks at the personalities of the characters in Mbhele's one-act plays. Some characters may be good or bad and this study does not end there, it looks at the reasons as to why this particular character behaves in the way he or she does. In other words, this will make use of the characters' social circumstances to judge the moral behaviour of the characters. This part of this study will not discuss all the characters that are found in these one-act plays. It will look at those who are very important for the development of the story, that is, one or two in each play.

2.1.6.1 Ungenzani Gosa

The play in short

This play is about Mfundisi Ndlovu's family problems which have led to the condition where he faints when he learns that his daughter is planning to become a second wife of the respectable church member, Zondi. The reason for Mfundisi to faint is that he has put all his trust in Nozipho and also he believed that God is there to help his daughter to get a husband.

Zondi has written a letter to Mfundisi Ndlovu making an appointment to see him because there is something very urgent they need to talk about. It is as if Nozipho had

kept this letter to give it to Mfundisi on the day of the appointment because she is afraid of the consequences of this appointment. Mfundisi solves this problem of the unknown letter and wait for Zondi who has arrived already.

There is a debate between Zondi and Mfundisi about polygamy and why is it prohibited in the church. After that Zondi asks for the second marriage but at the moment he does not mention the name of the woman he wants to marry. Mfundisi disapproves of this woman and compares that woman to his daughter not aware that the woman they talk about is Nozipho as a result he faints as this is disclosed to him.

Mfundisi Ndlovu

The main character in this one-act play is Mfundisi Ndlovu because he is introduced from the beginning of the story to the end. The story ends when he collapses because he could not handle the situation where he finds out that his daughter is planning to get married to Zondi who is a married man.

Mfundisi Ndlovu is portrayed as someone who loves his daughter in such a way that he finds it very hard to think of the problems that may arise in the family. He does not believe that love is a natural thing and it does not have boundaries. This man is disappointed by the fact that his daughter is in love with a married man. It can happen that his daughter, Nozipho, has no boyfriend and Zondi has promised to pay lobolo for her. According to Nozipho, there is nothing wrong with what is happening, since Zondi will be able to provide for both of them because he has already bought the second shop that will be run by Nozipho.

Nozipho

Mfundisi Ndlovu thinks of Nozipho as a girl of good morals when compared to the other girls of her age. But the way she talks to her father means something else. Mbhele (1994:6) says:

24. **Nozipho:** *Mina uZondi bengihlanganaphi naye?*
(Where do you think I have met Zondi?)

She does not refer to Zondi as *Bab'uZondi* (Father Zondi), this may mean that she thinks of herself as a fully-grown up girl who has to make her own decisions about her life. This is what she asks her father in response to her father's question, why are they (Nozipho and her mother) not apologising for forgetting to give him the letter in time.

Nozipho's response is there to prove that she is the one who knows about the letter. Zondi has come to disclose their previously hidden love relationship. To prove that, Nozipho does not deny her love for Zondi, Mbhele (1994: 22) has this to say:

24. **Mfundisi:** *Ngibuza ukuthi yiqiniso yini ukuthi wena ufuna ukuyoba ngumfazi wesibili kaZondi?*

(I'm asking if it is true that you want to be Zondi's second wife?)

Nozipho: *Yebo baba.*

(Yes father).

One can presume that Nozipho can be bored at home because, it appears that she is not allowed to make friends with the girls of her age. Seemingly, Nozipho's parents believe that friends will change the way they want her to be. Nozipho might be very

late in getting her marriage partner since she is always at home, and also for being the daughter of the priest. Consequently, the guys might be afraid to approach her. One other situation may be that Nozipho does not go to school any longer because she is already a fully-grown up girl. Zondi is the only solution to Nozipho's love relationships. It might happen that Zondi is referring to Nozipho when he says in Mbhele (1994:14):

25. **Zondi:** *Kunabantwana abaphilayo nabaziphethe kahle kodwa babeneshwa lokweswela umendo. Abaningi abantwana babantu baze bagugele emavovweni hhayi ngoba bengenasimilo, kodwa nje bengenanhlanhla yokuthola abantu abaqotho njengabo abazobashada.*

(There are good mannered girls out there who find it impossible to get marriage partners. They end up being unmarried not because of their bad behaviour, but because they are not lucky enough to get good mannered partners to marry them).

In other words, Zondi is trying to tell Mfundisi Ndlovu that it might happen that Nozipho is not yet married because there is no one to marry her.

Zondi

He is portrayed as the man who believes in the truth because he has been having an extra-marital affair with Ndlovu's daughter, Nozipho and he finds it very hard to dump Nozipho just because he is married. He does not care of what is going to happen to his high position in the church if he chooses to have Nozipho as his second wife. According to him, polygamy would not be a problem because each wife will have her own business to run and he will not stop working. There would be no financial problems. Hlongwane, et al. (1988:98) aver:

Amasiko akwaZulu ahlonishwa kakhulu. Isithembu sivunyelwe futhi sithathwa njengekhambi lokuxazulula izinkinga zomnotho nezemilanjwana.

(The Zulu customs are highly respected. Polygamy is recommended and it is regarded as the solution to the economic problems and the illegitimate children).

Zondi mentions in the play that he is not against the polygamy since it is the Zulu custom. It is possible that Nozipho can fall pregnant with Zondi's child since they are in love, and there is no other way to solve this problem except to marry her. In addition to that, polygamous family will help Zondi to sustain his economy because the workers can steal and expect to get paid at the end of the month. This is how Zondi argues, Mbhele (1994:8-9):

26. **Zondi:** *Ngivimbekelani ukuba ngibe nesithembu uma ngisithanda ngibe ngiyikholwa?*

(Why am I prohibited to have a polygamous family if I want to, and being a Christian?)

Zondi :*Cha, angisho njalo, ngibuza nje ukuthi konakelephi uma ngizithathela isithembu? Ngikusho lokhu ngikuqondisa kithina maZulu okulisiko ukuganwa isithembu.*

(No, I am not saying that, I am asking what is wrong if I have two wives? I am referring this to us the Zulu people which is our custom to have a polygamous family).

Zondi is worried about Nozipho's future since they have been illegally involved in a relationship. He is not selfish because if he does not marry Nozipho, Nozipho would be without a lover because she loves him. This is how Mbhele (1994:17) puts it:

27. **Zondi:** *Manje ngoba ngiyayithanda nje nayo futhi iyangithanda ngenze njani? Ngiqhube ubushende nengane yabantu? Ingabi mfazi ingabi ntombi?*

(But because I love her and she also loves me what am I supposed to do? Should I continue being the private lover for this girl? Do you understand that this girl is neither a maiden nor a married woman?)

He is against the Christian belief that fights against polygamy. He believes that there should be a reason as to why a person should commit himself in a polygamous family. One of the reasons can be the fact that that married man has taken away the virginity of the girl, and secondly, there should be an agreement between the first wife and the husband involved. In this one-act play, Zondi has talked to his wife, MaMsomi about his relationship with Nozipho. MaMsomi is quite happy about it. This is how Mbhele (1994:16) puts it:

28. **Zondi:** *Sengimtholile Baba. Futhi angingabazi ukuthi impilo yami nomndeni wonke wami izoba ngenhle kakhulu.*

(I have got one already Father. And also I am quite sure that my life and my whole family life will be the wonderful one).

Mfundisi: *Ayikwazi ukuba yinhle ngoba umkakho angeke amemukele lo Sathane ozomfaka phakathi kwakhe nawe.*

(It cannot be wonderful because your wife will not accept that Devil you are planning to put between you and your wife).

Zondi: *Usemvumile lowo Sathane baba. Futhi usithokozele isinqumo sami.*

(She has already accepted that Devil, father. She is also quite happy about my decision).

He is a Christian and he believes that it is good and acceptable to God to disclose everything that people do when they are out of sight, like to disclose what he is doing with Ndlovu's daughter. He wants the testimonial from Mfundisi Ndlovu that he has been serving God under Ndlovu's supervision because he will not be able to be at home every weekends so he will be going to another church in Pinetown since he has opened another shop there. This is what Mbhele (1994:13) has to say:

29. **Zondi** : *Ngakho-ke ngizocela ukuba ungenzele incwadi yokuba angazi umfundisi wangalena ukuthi bengingaphansi kwakho nokuthi ngingumuntu osontayo.*

(So, I would like you to write for me a letter to the priest in Pinetown stating that I have been serving God under your supervision and that I am a person who attends church regularly).

This means that he wants everybody around him to know that he is a Christian and he also wants Mfundisi Ndlovu to understand that he is not against Christianity.

2.1.6.2 Luphelile

The play in short

The play is about Khethiwe's daughter, Thandiwe who is about to get married to Ndumiso, the son of the wealthy and educated family in the area. They are engaged. Khethiwe is very proud of Ndumiso as the future husband of her daughter but Thandiwe has lost interest in Ndumiso.

Khethiwe has paid deposit for the grassmats and she has also deposited Thandiwe's wedding furniture from Kinley's furnitures. When the furniture comes, she fights with those from the furniture shop and refuses to sign the papers. She even breaks one of the chairs with the hammer. Khethiwe does all these things because Thandiwe has

disappointed her by telling her that there has been no need for her to buy the furniture and the mats. Thandiwe argues that Ndumiso has not yet paid lobolo and also Khethiwe should have told her first about the former's plans regarding her wedding preparations.

Khethiwe wants Thandiwe to get married to Ndumiso because this can bring about high social status to their family as it is low since they are poor and not educated. Thandiwe is not interested in that but worried about the fact that if she gets married to Ndumiso they will not have children because he had been injured in such a way that his manhood had been destroyed. She had been not aware of that before their engagement that is why she has changed her mind about getting married to Ndumiso.

While everything is upside down in this family, Ndumiso comes and Thandiwe does not want to talk to him, but to her surprise, she learns that Ndumiso has been joking in a letter he has written to her. The reason for that is that the letter had been written on the first of April and Thandiwe had forgotten about April Fool. After that everything is fine because Thandiwe apologizes to Ndumiso because she nearly dumped him.

Thandiwe

She is portrayed as a person who has the conditional love. She nearly rejects her boyfriend just because she thought he would not be able to give her children. She believed that there is no successful marriage without children.

Khethiwe

She is portrayed as a woman who likes high status, yet she is not educated and also not rich. She is busy preparing for her daughter's wedding without telling her about

those preparations. She is doing all these because she wants Thandiwe to get married to Ndumiso who is from a rich family and educated. She does not listen to her daughter's explanation why she has dumped her future husband. This is how according to Mbhele (1994:30) Khethiwe tries to convince Thandiwe:

30. **Khethiwe:** *Hhayi, ungangibhedeli wena Thandiwe. Angikwazi ukushona kangaka bese ukhuluma lowo mbhedo wakho. Ake ucabangisise kahle mntanami. Umuzi wakwaLuthuli ngumuzi ohlonishwa kakhulu kabi lapha endaweni. Bacebile, bafundile futhi kwaLuthuli. Ukugana kwakho kwaLuthuli kuzoliphakamisa igama lethu njengoba simpofu nje futhi singafundile. Lo mntwana othembise naye futhi nguyena oyindlalifa kaLuthuli. Angazi noma ubukwazi yini lokho.*

(Stop your nonsense Thandiwe. I cannot spend so much only to find out that you talk nonsense. Please think carefully my child. Luthuli's family is the respected family in this area. They are rich and educated. If you get married to that family our family name will be uplifted since we are poor and uneducated. Your future husband is the heir of Mr Luthuli. I do not know if you were aware of that).

She directs her anger to anybody who happens to be around. This is observed during her conversation with the men from the furniture shop. She does not think before taking actions.

2.1.6.3 Umthetho ngumthetho

The play in short

The main character of this play is Khanda who is working, and who is at home because one of his children has passed away after he has been stricken by the lightning. This is

his second child to die without being ill. Khanda's mother is MaNxumalo and his wife is KaMazibuko.

Khanda wants to bury his child very soon and his mother wants him to report the death to the police station. He is not willing to do that because he believes that this is the other way of exploiting black people. While still arguing, the messenger from the police station brought a letter stating that they should not bury the child until further notice. The police are on their way to take the corpse for postmortem. Khanda buries his child in the presence of the local pastor. As the funeral is over, the two policemen come to collect the corpse only to find that Khanda has already buried it. They are very angry because they have noticed him not to bury the child. Khanda is forced to dig the corpse but he denies until the police bring the prisoners to do this job. While they are digging, Khanda, Zingelwayo and the priest are forced at gunpoint to lie down.

Khanda

He is experiencing difficult times where he has his children dying without being critically ill and this is what makes him stubborn to listen to the advice his mother gives him. He is doing all this because he is trying to run away from the problem he has encountered before. He had to bury his child alone on his own because the police took their time to bring back the corpse. The neighbours were so impatient in such a way that they decided to leave the deceased family alone.

There is no development in this character and it is also not clear whether to change his mind would have been of an advantage to him. It is not clear that if Khanda had not buried the child would he have been able to bury him in time because the police were

not sure as to when were they going to come and collect the corpse. It becomes clear then that they would not know when they would bring back the corpse.

In addition to that, Khanda is working and he has to go back to work very soon. He is right by denying to dig the corpse because this would be the waste of his own precious time; since he was still going to bury his child alone as it was the case with the death of the first child.

MaNxumalo

She is an old woman who has experienced a lot in this world. She is a good mother in terms of advising his son about what to do and when. She sees his son, Khanda as someone who does not want to listen and she finds it very hard to advise him. In other words, in this play, she plays a role of highlighting the bad behaviour of Khanda. This is how Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:57) put it:

31. **MaNxumalo:** *Hhayi Khanda; angisukuphungana nawe sonke isikhathi. Kwasengathi sewuyalibala ukuthi kumele uzithobe njengoba usemnyama nje.*

(Oh no, Khanda; I should not try to stop you all the time. It is as if you forget that you should be humble because you are still in bereavement).

She is also capable of predicting what is going to happen like the effect of Khanda's stubbornness to them which is the arrival of the police and their command to Khanda to dig the grave. She is also aware of the reason as to why Khanda does not want to co-operate with her. Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:58) put this further:

32. **MaNxumalo:** *OKhanda laba babulawa yigazi lobushinga bobuZulu kabayazi imithetho yabelungu efohla kuvinjiwe.*

(People like Khanda are strongly influenced by the mischief of being the product of the Zulu nationality, they are not aware of the rules of the whites that should be followed).

She fully understands the political situation of their area which has changed recently. They are no longer ruled by the chiefs, but the white government has taken control of their social and political issues.

2.1.6.4 Umninimuzi

The play in short

This play takes place in the evening when the mother of the house, MaSibisi, who is the housewife, prepares supper. She is in the kitchen with her husband, Ntuli, who is not working due to retrenchment. Ntuli has been fixing his broken knobkerrie and then reads the newspaper. They are not in good terms because MaSibisi believes that Ntuli is not working because he is lazy, he does not look for employment in the newspaper but the political issues are his main interest.

This leads to MaSibisi's lack of respect for her husband. Instead, MaSibisi regards their daughter, Zokwenzani as the person who deserves respect because she is the breadwinner since she is working in the firm. Zokwenzani does not respect her father due to her mother's attitude towards Ntuli. Since she started working, her behaviour has changed drastically because she comes very late home from work. When Ntuli complains about that MaSibisi says that Zokwenzani is old enough to take care of herself.

This particular evening she comes with her boyfriend carrying some packets of groceries with them. They thought that as usually, Ntuli has long gone to bed, but that

has not been the case. Ntuli had been eating his supper when they enter in the kitchen. Ntuli asks Thami what he wants here, and he could not explain and Ntuli becomes very angry and started to chase Thami away. He tells Zokwenzani that if she cannot control herself she should take her things and leave his house. She collects all the things she bought since she started working and asks Thami to organise the transport for them. She even takes her father's plate as he has been eating.

MaSibisi thinks that if she cannot move with Zokwenzani, she is going to starve to death. She asks her daughter if it would be fine if she comes with them. They leave Ntuli alone with nothing to eat and no lamp to give him light. He uses seven short candles to light the kitchen. Thami has taken everything away and they have to come back to Ntuli and request for forgiveness. He forgives and reminds them that he is the man of the house whether he works or not she needs to be respected.

Ntuli

He is a character that depicts what is happening in most African households. He has both his weak and strong points. He is weak because he does nothing to fix everything at home. In addition to that, he did not buy new and strong furniture while still working because it was not very long but everything that he bought has gone very weak.

His strength is observed when he does not agree with the way in which his daughter behaves. He becomes the role model to his family by not changing his moral behaviour due to the fact that he is not working. He tries to maintain order in his family even if he has to do this alone while his wife looks for greener pastures from Zokwenzani's boyfriends.

MaSibisi

This lady is not a good mother because she does not tell her daughter that the daughter is wrong by coming home late in the evening. MaSibisi does not ask Zokwenzani about where the latter gets the money to buy food with. She is also very lazy because she does nothing to help at home. MaSibisi is very weak because if things get hard in her marriage with Ntuli, she starts looking down upon her husband, without showing any respect to him. She is very stubborn against her husband when he tries to tell her to change her parenting skills, by showing their daughter the right way of life. Instead, MaSibisi tells her husband that their daughter is old enough to do whatever that daughter feels is necessary.

MaSibisi is a round character because she is capable of changing. At the end of the story, there is a development or growth in her personality after finding out that Zokwenzani's boyfriend is a criminal; and also that he has taken everything away so much that they have to go back to Ntuli and ask for forgiveness. It is during this time that MaSibisi shouts at Zokwenzani for not speaking clearly to her father. Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:20) put it this way:

33. **MaSibisi:** *Khuluma wena! (Amuthi guklu ngendololwane uZokwenzani.) Ulokhu unyenyeza nje uyihlo ekhuluma nawe. Mamo!*

(Speak up! (She blowed her with an elbow.) You are whispering while you father talks to you).

This means that from now onwards, MaSibisi will listen to her husband because she has begged for forgiveness stating that she is what she is through the support from her husband. There is a hope that they will work co-operatively in bringing up their daughter.

2.1.6.5 Siyaya

The play in short

This play is about an uneducated rich businessman. Bhengu thinks Matriculation is enough for his children Falakhe and Nomafa. His businesses are stores and buses. His wife is Thuleleni and at the beginning of the story her point of view regarding this issue is not known.

After completing Matriculation, Bhengu does not allow them to go to the college due to his financial problems; he tells them about his debts. A day before the college re-opens, Bhengu calls them to his office to tell them for the second time that he cannot afford to pay for their tertiary education. To support his argument, he shows them all the list of the debts he has to pay. Nomafa is told to help her mother at the shop and Falakhe at the buses. They try and fail to convince Bhengu about the importance of tertiary education to them as well as to their family business.

After that they leave Bhengu's office and while they are outside Bhengu hears Falakhe telling Nomafa loudly that they are going to the college. They run away from home and as they are away they write an anonymous letter to the father stating that they have been abducted so Bhengu has to pay R10.000 to free them. Bhengu pays that amount of money because of the love he has for his children, because the letter has stated that if that is not done they are going to die. Late in the night Falakhe phones his mother asking her to ask for forgiveness from his father for what he has done and that they have been admitted at the college. They are planning to come the following weekend to bring the change. Thuleleni tells him to come home and tell Bhengu what he has told her. Bhengu is disappointed, happy and angry to learn that his children have not been abducted they wanted money to pay for their studies.

Nomafa and Falakhe

They like to be highly educated in such a way that according to them nothing could stop them from making their dreams a reality. They are very co-operative, in other words they are friends; they do everything together. Nomafa tries to explain to her brother that, it might happen that their father does not have money to pay for their studies. Falakhe wants to prove to his sister that this is not the case. He does not tell her how they are going to get the money to pay for their studies. The only thing he tells her is that they are undoubtedly going to the college. They respect their parents, but they do not see eye to eye as far as the importance of education is concerned.

Bhengu

He is a responsible father who works very hard for his family. He is doing everything for his children, yet they are not aware of that. He loves his children because when he learns that his children are abducted he takes the money he has put aside for other things and frees them. He does not say that he has not told them to go. At the end of the story he finds out that this is how his children have tricked him, but he is happy about everything. This is how he, in Mbhele (1997:11) puts it:

33. **Bhengu:** *(Uthule nje kubonakala ukudangala injabulo ihlangene nentukuthelo.) Okusho ukuthi lo muntu ositatazelisayo nguFalakhe?*

(He is quiet but yet it can be observed that he is disappointed happy and angry.) Does it mean that the person who makes us hurry up is Falakhe?)

Bhengu : *Oh...abahambe. Bashilo bathi bayaya.*

(Oh yes...let them go. They have said that they are going).

At the end, he is happy to realise that his children know what they want in life, and they can do anything to make sure that they meet their goals. If that has not been the case, he should have told his wife that she should tell Nomafa and Falakhe that he does not need them in his house since they are not prepared to listen to him.

Thuleleni

She is worried about her children. She thinks her husband is too hard on their children. She blames her husband for what has happened to the children. She is very happy to find out that these children have successfully blackmailed their father.

2.1.6.6 Amaphekula

The play in short

It is late in the evening, Xaba and his young son, Ndoda, are talking about the terrorists. It is like Ndoda has learnt something new about the terrorists. He wants to know about his father's point of view on this issue. According to Xaba, the terrorists are the criminals who rape and kill and they are very good at shooting.

Somebody knocks at the door. That person is hungry and he looks like the way Xaba has defined the terrorist. He tells that he is hungry; they gave him food. While still eating, Xaba wants him to stop eating and tell them where he comes from and where he is going to. They are not satisfied with his explanation because he looks like the terrorist. Xaba remembers that they have been informed at the council's meeting that they should report all the people they think are terrorists.

Ndoda is sent to call Shabalala who is Xaba's colleague to see if this man is the terrorist or not. This man tells Xaba that they should stop referring to poor people as the terrorists who are there to kill because that is not true. Shabalala comes fully armed with his traditional weapons. Xaba also takes his own weapons. This man orders them to lift their hands up. They do that because they are afraid of the gun carried by this man. To their surprise, they learn that this man is Xaba's son who is in exile fighting against the apartheid regime. Shabalala's son is also there, they are not dead as they have been thinking, they are on their way home since it appears that the struggle is soon going to be over.

Xaba

He is a man who does not believe in the political changes that are taking place in South Africa. He does not question the orders from the government officials. He does not understand the role played by the freedom fighters; he has been told that these people are very dangerous. Since he is a herdsman he has to make sure that should it happen that the freedom fighters appear, they should notify the police. He does not know that his son is one of these people and his younger son is aware of that.

Ndoda

He is portrayed as a youth that is aware of the changes that are taking place. He is trying to tell his father that there is something that his father is not aware of. He can see that his father has wrong information about the freedom fighters or terrorists.

2.1.6.7 Imfundo Ephakeme

The play in short

This play is about the principal of the school who is not qualified but experienced, and knows exactly how to run the school effectively. His educational status is not disclosed because he might lose fate to the staff members as well as the community at large.

Among the staff members there are two teachers, namely, Zondi and Hadebe who are very proud of themselves because they are highly educated, but they lack enough experience. They are university graduates. It is not clear as to how they have learned that Sibisi is not qualified. They do not respect Sibisi as the principal.

This school is invited to Mdutshwa High School for Prize Giving ceremony. Sibisi is against this because he does not have the academic attire which they are supposed to wear on that day. Hadebe and Zondi encourage the pupils to mobilise against Sibisi's decision of not going to Mdutshwa High. They do not go there, but at least Hadebe and Zondi's wish to show off with their academic attires to the parents and the children at the parents meeting came true. Sibisi borrows the academic attire from the teacher of a nearby school. Before the service is over, that teacher wants his academic attire back. The parents could see that there is something wrong with Sibisi since Zondi and Hadebe laugh at him. Sibisi introduces Zondi and Hadebe as the highly educated teachers who are unable to make sure that the students pass the examination. He even compares them to the other teacher who has been there before them, that teacher had not been qualified but a good teacher who used to know his work.

Mzobe, the chairperson of the school tries to solve the problem between the two teachers and the principal by telling the teachers that they should make their education to work for them. High education is useless if it cannot bear the expected educational outcomes.

Sibisi

He is a character that stands for those school principals who are hard working and have lots of experiences. He is capable of running the school. He finds it very hard to stand for the competition of tertiary education with his colleagues. He finds his teaching staff very abusive. He does not believe in those teachers who concentrate on their own studies instead of helping the pupils to pass. He lies about his tertiary education because these young inexperienced, highly educated teachers will laugh at him. He is the fierce-tempered person because these young teachers do not respect him as the principal of the school.

He has been trying to tell them to do their work instead of telling the pupils about their own university experiences, but he has failed. He is thinking of letting the parents know about these highly educated teachers. This is how he puts it in Mbhele (1994:70):

34. **Sibisi:** *Kukangaki ngibiza uHadebe benoZondi ngibatshela ukuthi abafundise izingane bayeke ukuxoxa izindaba ekilasini ngesikhathi sokufunda. Into nje abayaziyo ukuzinweba bezisho ukuthi bamajazi mangaki, baziq zingaki, babuya phesheya. Yinto leyo engathi shu! Uyangizwa Cele?*

(How many times should I tell Zondi and Hadebe that they should teach the children and stop telling their stories in the classrooms during the school time. The only thing that they know very well is to boast about

their degrees and about the fact that they are from overseas. That means nothing! Do you hear me Cele?)

This means that Sibisi is very tired to cope with these two lazy teachers alone, that is why he is thinking of reporting this issue to the parents and the school committee.

Zondi and Hadebe

They are highly educated, young inexperienced high school teachers. They are very proud of themselves since it is as if they are the only teachers in this school with university degrees. They want everybody in this school, teachers and pupils to know that they are from the university, without worrying about the future of the pupils. Zondi and Hadebe believe that to strike is the only way of solving the problems since they encourage the pupils to take part in opposing the principal's decision of not going to Mdutshwa High school for the Prize Giving ceremony.

They do not know how to run the school, what they know are their experiences as students at the university because even at the staff meetings, they do not forget to refer to their university experiences. They are not aware that high school life and the university life are not the same. That is why it becomes so hard for them to help pupils pass their subjects.

The other thing is that they are very busy with their own university courses since they are doing Masters. They are very proud of their university degrees. They are worried about their unknown academic attires. They cannot wait for the opportunity to wear them and get the other new ones for themselves that would be awarded after finishing their Masters studies. This is how they put it in Mbhele (1994:75):

35. **Hadebe:** *Awukaqedi phela mngani wami. Izingane zalapha azikaze zizibone izevatho zemfundo ephakeme.*

Azazi ukuthi yini i- Hood, i-Gown, i-Cap nabantu nje ukuthi baba bahle kanjani uma sebevushazela ngazo ... (alingise) iqiniso, nami nje azingazi ukuthi nginjani uma sengingene kwezami zemfundo, uThish'omkhulu benoCele azibazi ukuthi banjani uma sebengene kwezabo zemfundo.

(You have not yet finished my friend. The children of this area have never seen the academic attires. They do not know what a Hood is, a Gown and a Cap. Even the people at large do not know how beautiful are the graduates in their academic attires...(he imitates) really, even myself, children have never seen me, the principal and Cele in their academic attires).

These two teachers are only worried about their own future goals and achievements. They pay less or no attention to the students they are teaching. They seem to forget that they are educated to educate other students.

2.1.6.8 Udlame

The play in short

This play takes place at the location that is affected by the political violence where the preacher, Mthethwa and his family live. Mthethwa's eldest son, Siphon, is involved in this violence where some people lose their lives and on the other side he is from the highly religious family. He is among the leaders of these youth. Mthethwa is worried about his son's position in this political violence; he tells him to let his group kill Siphon instead of killing other people. Siphon finds it very hard to leave his group.

Thokozani from Newcastle comes to visit his sister who is Siphon's mother because he is not known in this area, he is heavily injured by Siphon, his nephew. They phone the ambulance to take him to the hospital and he dies on his arrival at the hospital. The

policemen phone to invite Mthethwa to write the statement about how Thokozani was murdered. His wife tells him that he must hide the truth because Siphso is still young, he does not understand what is happening. The story ends as they learn that Thokozani is dead before Mthethwa goes to the police station.

Mthethwa

He is a highly religious person who is a preacher in a certain church. He is generous because he is prepared to help the strangers. He tries to maintain order within his family, but he fails because of the social circumstances which his wife, Jabu and his son, Siphso, find very hard to cope with. These two are very weak when compared to Mthethwa. He does not forget to pray even if things turn up to be very tough for them. He prays for Siphso before Siphso leaves home in the evening to join the gangsters. It is not that he wants him to go but he has no choice. This is what he tells him in Mbhele (1994:92):

36. **Mthethwa:** *Ungubani wena ukusindisa
imiphefumulo yethu? NguNkulu...*

Who are you to save our soul? It is God...).

Later on he says:

Kulungile, hamba Siphso. Isandla Somusa sibe nawe.

(All right, go Siphso. May the Merciful hand be with you).

There is no other way that Mthethwa could solve this problem of his son joining the youth because he knows that Siphso is among the leaders of this group.

Sipho

He has no choice, if he does not involve himself in the political struggle he is going to be killed. The youth threaten him to burn down their house if he does not join them. This is what they told him in Mbhele (1994:93):

37. **Amazwi:** *Sipho Sipho phuma! Ufuna ukubonani? Ungacabangi ukuthi indlu yomshumayeli ayishi.*

(Sipho Sipho Come out! What do you want to see? Do not think that the preacher's house cannot be burnt down).

This means that if Sipho does not join them they are going to burn down their house. They even mention that his father is a preacher, which makes them vulnerable to be the victims of violence if Sipho thinks of his father's position in this community.

2.1.6.9 Zikhethele

The play in short

The story takes place in the church on Nsizwana and Thobekile's wedding day. Mfundisi is confronted by two gentlemen as Thobekile's bridegroom. Both of them argue that they are getting married today, but Mfundisi is aware of only one wedding ceremony that is going to take place. Thobekile is asked to tell Mfundisi about his future husband between the two guys. She is very disappointed and tells Mfundisi that Sigozolo was her boyfriend before and as far as she knows, he is a prisoner for committing murder. Sigozolo is here to spoil Thobekile's special day. The play ends when Sigozolo is being arrested by the policemen in the church.

Mfundisi

He has conflict resolution skills and there are Nsizwana and Sigozolo who are after one lady. In fact both of them want to tie the knot with her. Mfundisi has to make sure that he does not aggravate this tense situation. He is experienced because he is old, since, he has been doing this work for a number of years. He is relaxed and that is why Sigozolo has not noticed that the policemen are coming. Mfundisi pretends as if this situation is not that bad because he does not need any help from the church members especially the father of the bride.

Nsizwana

He is a good mannered guy because he greets Sigozolo who is the criminal and who is also there to bring trouble to Nsizwana and Thobekile. He is not short tempered because he tries to control himself during their conversation with Sigozolo. To control this situation, he simply apologises or just keeps quiet.

Sigozolo

He has come with an aim of ruining his ex-girlfriend's wedding day. In fact, he does not want to see her getting married because he is very jealous. He is a prisoner who has served a twelve-year sentence for killing a white person, and has just escaped from prison. The police are looking for him everywhere since he has killed another prisoner. He is very dangerous. He has no conscience; he has no respect for the church and the priest.

2.1.6.10 Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo

The play in short

The play takes place in Phangandlovu where the chief of this clan, Langalibalele has passed away. The problem lies with the senior induna of this clan, Gqayingana, who has to make the arrangements of the funeral which includes looking for the people who are going to be killed and buried in the same grave as the chief. Among these people there should be one from his own clan. He finds it very hard to do that, as a result Gobandwane tells him that if he cannot get one from his clan, they are going to kill him.

He remembers Nqudlwana, some warriors are sent to go and fetch him. Before he is killed, Mabuhle comes and tell the people that the chief before he dies said that the custom of killing other people just because the chief is dead should come to an end. Nqudlwana is very happy in such a way that he recites Langalibalele's praises for saving his life. The herald joins him.

Gqayingana

He is the senior induna of the Hlubi clan and has worked very hard for this clan. He is an old man because he has been there during the reign of Langalibalele's father. He does not believe that it is his duty to be responsible for looking for someone to serve as the mat in the grave of the dead chief Langalibalele. This is not the first funeral in this clan and he has not been responsible for this duty.

Malambule and Madikane

They are the opposite of each other, Malambule is very sweet and humble even though he has lost his father, but Madikane is very rude. They are both brothers, Madikane is younger than Malambule. Malambule is very respectful because he tries to advise Madikane to leave everything to their eldest brother to sort them out. Since Madikane has lost his father he wants other people to die as well. This is how Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:41) put it:

38. Madikane: *Namanje mina angikayiboni inkinga. Bulalani zombili lezi zinto. Sifelwe ubaba mnewethu nawe nduma. Kuzosala onjani? Asaleleni? Asimusani ukusinisa amahleza sibanjezelwe lubala. Thungani lezi zinto ngejozi. Uma kungenjalo nizobona sekusa ningenze lutho...*

(Even now I do not see any problem. Kill both these things. We have lost our father. Who is not supposed to die? Why? We are not supposed to waste our time for nothing. Stab these things with a spear, if you do not do that, the morning will come before you do anything).

Madikane is referring to the senior induna and the respected soldier as the things. This is to show how rude he is. If this is the way they were told to speak to the people since they are the chief's children, Malambule would have been doing the same thing.

2.2 Plot

A plot may be defined as the chronological arrangement of the events in a story. It can be a way in which the story is organised. What is taking place in a story, is the action performed by the characters to the other characters because of the internal or the external forces the characters come across. So the plot is a very important formal literary element because it is as if there would be no story without the plot. Boulton

(1975: 64) argues that a good plot should suit the characters, tone and the background of the story. Plot deals with the way in which the author arranges the events to build up to the climax. It also deals with the relationship between the aspects of plot, that is, conflict, suspense, crisis, complication, and climax.

According to Cohen (1973:193), a plot is always related to characterisation, for the thoughts, words, and actions of the characters contribute to the nature of the plot, and the relationship between events. This means that the characters should act according to the conflicts or the problems that should be solved in the story. For a good plot development, while the main character tries to solve one problem, the other serious problem prevails and the story becomes complicated. In this way it will gradually leads to climax.

This is how Shaw (1972: 142) defines the plot:

A plan or scheme to accomplish a purpose. In literature, plot refers to the arrangement of events to achieve an intended effect. A plot is a series of carefully devised and interrelated actions that progresses through a struggle of opposing forces (conflict) to a climax and a denouement. A plot is different from a story or story line (the order of events as they occur).

According to Brooks and Warren (1959:78), the plot may be defined as follows:

Plot, we may say, is the structure of an action as presented in a piece of fiction. It is not, we shall note, the structure of an action as we happen to find it out in the world, but the structure within the story. It is, in other words, what the teller of the story has done to the action in order to present it to us.

Brooks and Warren go on arguing that a plot is a series of connected events moving through three logical stages. These stages consists of, the beginning, the middle and the end. To support this argument, Msimang (1986:40) argues that the structure of a fiction is broader than the plot. There are five aspects of plot in fiction, that is, the exposition, the body, suspense, complication, climax and anti-climax or denouement. This is what Boulton (1960:42) has to say about the plot:

Any good plot is closely constructed; that is, no time is wasted and the events follow one another in credible sequence. The credibility of plot is closely related to the type of work; farce need not to be as credible as the drawing-room comedy; a 'thriller' is not expected to be as true to life as the psychological novel; but all the writers must show at least some regard for the usual reactions to events of human beings and the likely results of their actions.

Zulu et al. (1988:343) defines plot thus:

Isakhiwo sisithatha njengendlela izigameko ezihleleke ngayo. Kodwa sibhekisisa imbangela yokwenzeka kwezinto kanye nomphumela wokwenzeka kwazo. Ngamanye amazwi, asibheki kuphela izigameko, kodwa sibhekisisa ukuthi yini edala ukuba isigameko leso senzeke nokuthi yini umphumela waleso sigameko.

(We regard plot as the manner in which the events are arranged. But we look closely at the causes for that events and the effect of the occurrence of the events. In other words, we are not looking at the events only, but we look at the reason as to why the events take place and what is the result of that event).

Mbhele (1994) in his introductory notes on his book titled **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** has this to say about the plot of one-act plays and fiction in general terms:

Uma sikhuluma ngesakhiwo somdlalo noma sendaba sisuke siqondise ekuhlelekeni okunobunyoninco bezigigaba ngezigigaba ezitholakala endabeni yonke kumbe emdlalweni wonke. Ukuze indaba noma umdlalo ube mnandi futhi ulandeleke, kumele ube nesingeniso noma isethulo, ingxenye emaphakathi noma umzimba kanye nesiphetho.

(If we talk about the plot of the play or fiction we normally refer to the chronological arrangement of all the actions in fiction. For the story or the play to be interesting and understandable, there should be an introduction or exposition, the body or the middle and the conclusion).

To support the above definitions, Abrams (1971:129) states thus:

A plot has unity of action; (that is, it is “an artistic whole”) if it is a single, complete, and ordered structure of actions, all directed towards the intended effect, in which none of the component parts are so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of anyone of them will disjoint and dislocate the whole.

From the given definitions above, it can be observed that plot has something to do with the chronological order of events in a play, and the cause and effect of those events. That is why plot has the logical stages that should be observed in a well written one-act play. For a good plot development, there should be an introduction, the body or the middle, and the conclusion. This means that there is no story without a plot. In other words, the plot is the summary of the actions in the story. To organise the plot, one should look at the background or the exposition of the characters.

2.2.1 The aspects of the plot

A well-written play should have an introduction, body, and the ending. According to Msimang (1986:40), the introduction is also known as the exposition and the ending as the denouncement. The body consists of the conflict, complication, crisis, suspense and climax, but suspense should be there from the beginning of the story to the end. This helps readers not to lose interest in reading the play. Other plays do not have the ending, meaning, there is no falling action, the story ends in climax. Some of Mbhele's one-act plays end before the problem is resolved, it then becomes the duty of the reader to predict as to what happens thereafter.

2.2.1.1 Exposition

This can be the form of introduction where the dramatist introduces the characters and the place where the story is going to take place. Some important points about the background of the characters and the place are discussed briefly in this aspect of the plot. What has happened before or what is about to happen in a play also form part of the exposition. Exposition can be found throughout the play because it involves the introduction of the new information that has been previously unknown to the readers. This gives rise to the suspense where the reader's eyes are hooked on the book. In other words, the exposition and plot development are interrelated.

The disturbance of the equilibrium forms the story, this is what Mbhele has done in most of his plays. For example in the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, everything have been normal in Ndlovu's family and if Zondi has not come to propose marriage to Mfundisi Ndlovu's daughter there would have no story. This is what Dietrich and Sundell (1978: 129) have to say about exposition:

Such stories usually begin in a state of equilibrium, a relatively quiet moment in which the author uses exposition to fill us in on the characters' background and explain their situations.

The previous state of equilibrium helps the readers to understand the actions of the characters better, the characters act according to the situation they find themselves in. The following are the few examples of expositions from some of Mbhele's one-act plays.

2.2.2 The discussion of exposition in Mbhele's one-act plays

Umninimuzi

The play begins with the prologue where the dramatist introduces his characters and their situation. There is no harmony or stability. The main character Ntuli is about to solve the problem he finds himself in. There is more symbolism in this prologue: The furniture in the kitchen is not in good condition, this means that this is a poor family. In this kitchen, there is a sofa and this symbolises that there will be an interference of some kind in this family from outside since the sofa is supposed to be in the living room.

The broken knobkerrie which Ntuli tries to fix symbolises the conflict that is taking place in this household. Ntuli should be responsible for bringing this state to its normal situation. The conflict is also observed in this prologue because these characters do not talk to each other because MaSibisi is busy cooking and Ntuli is also busy fixing his knobkerrie, this means that they have different household chores. It is also interesting to note that this prologue is the summary of the whole play because at the end Ntuli is satisfied since he has managed to bring about and to maintain order and stability in his household and he is happy and proud about this.

The conflict in this play is the effect of retrenchment in Ntuli's life. Zokwenzani takes advantage of the fact that she is a breadwinner and as a result she does not respect her father. She is getting more and more corrupt since her mother is on her side because she is capable of providing their basic needs.

The climax in this play is when MaSibisi and Zokwenzani find out that Ntuli is the head of the house. He knows what he talks about. In other words, the social circumstances in which Zokwenzani and MaSibisi find themselves in make them to change their minds and think differently.

The play ends when the state of equilibrium is restored because it appears as if from now onwards, Zokwenzani and MaSibisi will respect Ntuli because they have lost most of their things due to their stubbornness.

Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo

The dramatist introduces the readers to the kraal of Langalibalele in Phangandlovu and the situation of this kraal. The problem is the death of the chief and the characters that are closely related to the deceased. Gobandwane and Gqayingana are observed discussing softly about what is going to happen and how. This prologue is not the summary of the whole play because it is not easy to predict what is going to happen in a play.

The conflict is when Gqayingana is expected to get someone who is going to be killed and if he cannot get one, he will be killed himself since they want someone of his clan name.

The climax is when Mabuhle comes and tell them that he has been told by Langalibalele before he died that this custom of killing someone just because the chief is dead should come to an end. So they must not kill Nqudlwana. The play ends when Nqudlwana praises himself and his ancestors because they have saved him from death. Gqayingana is also satisfied because he did not want Nqudlwana to be killed.

Siyaya

There is a state of equilibrium in the beginning of this play. Nomafa and Falakhe are relaxed and satisfied. They are playing cards in the living room and also taking some drinks. They are talking with each other. It is not clear as to what is going to happen in this play.

The conflict in this play is the external one because Bhengu tells his family that Nomafa and Falakhe are not going to the college, due to his financial problems. Nomafa and Falakhe should try and convince their father that it is necessary for them to go to the college. The conflict gets worse as Falakhe suggests that his father should sell one of his buses. The father gets annoyed about this, and as a result, he advises them to leave him and go away if they are not prepared to listen to him. It is then that Falakhe decides to blackmail his father.

The climax is when Bhengu and Thuleleni get a phone call from their son, Falakhe, telling them that they are coming home next week to bring the change, since they have used the money from his father to register. In this play the climax is a moment of a sober or joyous recognition of a truth previously unknown to the character. For example, Bhengu and his wife, Thuleleni have not been aware of a person who took their money away. It is also a moment of joyous recognition because they have been very happy to learn that their children are safe.

The story ends in a state of equilibrium, because it appears that Bhengu has changed his mind towards allowing his children to go and study at the college. It also sounds as if he is forgiving them for blackmailing him.

Amaphekula

Unlike the above-mentioned plays, this one has an introduction of one sentence only. But the characters and the place where they are and their actions are introduced.

The conflict is when Ndoda shows his father Xaba that he knows something about the terrorists and his knowledge is totally different from his father's. Ndoda thinks of the terrorists as some people who kill the whites only. Things become worse as a person who looks like a terrorist comes. They call Shabalala who is in control in the area to see to it as to what could be done about this person.

The climax is when they learn that this person is Xaba's son who has been in exile fighting against the apartheid regime. They also learn that the terrorists are their own children who are fighting for freedom.

Ungenzani Gosa

Everything is fine because Mfundisi Ndlovu is busy in his office doing some preparations for the forthcoming funeral service. He reads from the bible and writes something on the small book. Mfundisi Ndlovu is in a happy mood because he is humming one song. His daughter, Nozipho brings him a letter. One can assume that the letter could disturb this state of equilibrium.

The letter from Zondi serves as the conflict for this play because after this letter has been received, things changed in this play. The harmony that has been there at the beginning of the story has been disturbed. The first problem about this letter is its whereabouts because it appears that this letter is very late. Neither Nozipho nor her mother MaLuthuli is prepared to take the blame for delaying this letter. Making urgent arrangements to accommodate Zondi, who is on his way to Mfundisi Ndlovu's office, solves the first problem.

The second problem is Zondi himself because what he wants is not what Mfundisi Ndlovu wants to hear from him as a Christian.

The climax is when Mfundisi Ndlovu finds out that all along they have been referring to his own daughter. It becomes worse when Nozipho affirms that he wants to be Zondi's second wife. The story ends there, there is no falling action where the loose ends are tied.

Luphelile

In this one-act play, Mbhele introduces the two characters and their situations and he also describes the living room in which the story takes place. The story starts in the state of stability because the two characters, who are, Thandiwe and Khethiwe, are revising the events of Thandiwe's engagement ceremony. Everything is in good condition in this living room including the mood of the characters. But for the story to go further there should be something to disturb this initial stability and the characters should try by all means to maintain harmony among themselves.

The conflict is external and it is between Khethiwe and Thandiwe regarding the issue of the wedding preparations that are done by Khethiwe alone without informing her

daughter about them. The problem becomes serious when Thandiwe tells her mother that he does not love Ndumiso anymore and at that moment the people from Kinley's Furniture come to deliver the furniture for Thandiwe's wedding ceremony.

The climax is when Thandiwe finds out that Ndumiso has been joking in the letter he wrote her on the first of April. The play ends in the previous state of equilibrium because it is Thandiwe who tells her mother to sign the papers from the Furniture shop.

Zikhethele

This play is introduced by using three paragraphs. The first paragraph fully describes the church. Everything is beautiful and neatly arranged. There is no doubt that a wedding ceremony is going to take place. But since everything is wonderful, there is suspense in the minds of the readers as to what is going to happen on this day.

The second paragraph deals with the main character Sigozolo who has come to tie the knot with his girlfriend. He sounds very impatient because he keeps on looking on the watch and nods his head. He moves up and down, his appearance is suitable for a bridegroom. But one can sense that there is something wrong with a certain guy who is having his hat and sunglasses on inside the church. And in addition to that, he chews the bubble gum in the church.

The third paragraph introduces the reader to the second character Nsizwana who is neatly dressed up. He had no hat on his head and no sunglasses on his face. On his arrival he gets himself a seat and gets seated. The suspense is created with these two characters because the readers may want to know who is going to be the real bridegroom between both of them. It is the only two of them in the church who are

not talking to each other. Their behaviour is not the same. There is no sense of stability in this exposition because they do not know each other. They have to introduce themselves to each other.

The exposition of this play is an external conflict because Nsizwana and Sigozolo are arguing and Sigozolo is not prepared to co-operate with Nsizwana as he tries to be nice to him. Mfundisi joins in to solve this problem, but still Sigozolo is also not prepared to be polite.

The climax in this play is when Thobekile explains what kind of a person Sigozolo is, that is, he is a prisoner who is serving his sentence for murder.

The play ends in an anti-climax because the author states that Sigozolo is arrested in the church and it becomes obvious that Thobekile and Nsizwana had to continue with their wedding.

Imfundo Ephakeme

The readers are introduced to the main character Sibisi and his office is also described. There is something very important to note in this introductory paragraph. This office has the cupboard that is always locked and nobody, except the principal of the school, Sibisi, has the knowledge of what is inside there.

This locked cupboard represents the issue that there is a secret that should not be revealed to anybody in this school. The two teachers enter the office and get seated. They want to ask something from the principal. This is when the external conflict starts.

The conflict is when there is a serious argument between the protagonist, Sibisi, and the two teachers, who are, Hadebe and Zondi. He is very rude to them because he wants to keep his secret closed. When he becomes rude, these two teachers motivate the pupils to strike. He lends the academic gown from the other teacher from Mdutshwa High School. While the service is still on, that teacher wants his academic attire back since their own Prize Giving Service is about to start.

It is then that this play reaches climax, because the truth that has been unknown to the teachers and parents is disclosed. This play ends in a state of stability because the Chairman of the school is impressed about what they have seen on this day. He, on behalf of all the parents thanks all the teachers equally but he also first state that, for one to have academic gown, one must work hard for it. It is as if these words are directed to Sibisi who has used other person's academic attires as his own. Secondly, he blames Zondi and Hadebe for being unable to use their higher education to help the pupils they are teaching. He goes on arguing that, the fact that one has a degree, does not guarantee that the work would be automatically done. This means that all the teachers of this school should work very hard to make sure that the pupils pass at the end of the year.

Udlame

The play starts in the state of disequilibrium where there is a political violence in the streets late in the night. People are screaming and crying because they fear that they may lose their lives. The dramatist introduces the readers to the one of the citizens of this violence stricken area. Mthethwa is a devout Christian, married with five children. At this moment, he is praying silently and he is disturbed by the gunshot that goes off. He does not know what to do. He opens his Bible and he could not read it. Some people outside are calling his biggest son.

The conflict becomes worse as Mthethwa and Jabu learn that their son is among the people that are actively involved in their township political violence. The story goes up at the arrival of Thokozani who is Siphos maternal uncle who is seriously wounded.

The climax in this play is when Mthethwa and Jabu find out that it is Siphos who has unintentionally murdered Thokozani. The play ends in climax because there is no falling action as it is not clear what will happen to Siphos or whether Mthethwa will be able to hide an important information to the police.

Umthetho Ngumthetho

Something bad has happened because it is dark in this hut. Darkness, in this play symbolises death. To prove that it might happen that somebody has passed away, there is a man sitting with his hands on his chin. This is how this play is introduced.

There is a problem already in this story because the main character has to make preparations to bury his child. The mother, MaNxumalo wants him to first report this issue to the police. While he tries to convince his mother about not reporting this issue to the police, the messenger from the police came to tell him that he must not bury the child until further notice. He buries his child and after that the police came and ordered him to dig the corpse because he knew that he was not supposed to do that.

The climax is when the police learn that Khanda is not prepared to listen to them by digging the corpse. They try by all means to force him but to their surprise he denies. It becomes the duty of the police to find the other means of solving this problem

because they can see that Khanda will not change his mind. The prisoners are the ones who dig the grave.

Below are the discussions of the terms that have been used above when investigating the plot development in Mbhele's one-act plays.

2.2.1.2 The conflict

This is the most important aspect of plot because it is what the story is about, which is why there is that story. The conflict plays an important role in the development of the characters. Readers learn to know more about the characters, as the characters try to solve the problems they encounter. To support this point Dietrich and Sundell (1973:128) aver:

At the core of conventional plot is **conflict**, the most significant kind of action. Conflict may be **external or internal**. A conflict may variously be a physical, moral, psychological, intellectual, or spiritual contest between antagonistic forces-internal conflict between aspects of the personality, or external between a person and an external force (another person, society, environment, nature, the universe, God). An external conflict may be a projection of the internal conflict.

In other words, this means that the internal conflict is about the clash between a character and his own inner self. In this part, the character is arguing among himself whether to do this or that, and there is no other character involved in this case. But in most cases, the internal conflict leads to the external conflict where the character has involved the other characters in his problem. This is where the story is developed. For example, in the play titled **Umninimuzi**, from **Ishashalazi**, the main character, has the internal conflict when he fixes his knobkerrie because he can see that there is

something wrong that is taking place in his house. The external conflict is observed when he starts talking to his wife about his inability to find employment and the result of that to his family.

The external conflict is clearly observed in the play titled **Imfundo Ephakeme**, from **Lzivunguvungu Zempilo**, where at the very beginning of the story the main character is having the conflict with Zondi and Hadebe. When he tries to solve this problem there comes the problem of the pupils wanting to go to Mdutshwa High School. This becomes a problem to him because he does not have a degree and this information will be revealed. He gets the academic attire from the other teacher from the nearby school and while the service is still on that teacher wants his academic attire back. His secret is revealed in this way.

In the body of the play it can be observed that there are other problems that arise as the story continues, the problems that have not been introduced at the beginning of the story. This happens as the main character tries to solve his problem, and eventually, the other serious problems come into being. It is worth mentioning that the actions and the events of the main character as he tries to solve the problems should be settled at the end or the state of equilibrium should be maintained. This is what Brooks and Warren (1959:78) have to say about the development of the plot:

The beginning of an action always presents us with a situation in which there is some element of instability, some conflict; in the middle of an action there is a period of readjustment of forces in the process of seeking a new kind of stability; in the end of an action, some point of stability is reached, the forces that have been brought into play have been resolved.

This is not always the case because some plays end in climax before the author can explain and unravel the events. For example, the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** from

Izivunguvungu Zempilo, ends in climax because readers are not sure as to what has happened to Mfundisi Ndlovu after he learns that his daughter is prepared to get married to Zondi. The dramatist has not told the readers if Mfundisi Ndlovu died or not. In addition to that, at the beginning of this play there is a state of equilibrium; everything is normal, because the main character is satisfied about the behaviour of his daughter. This is one of the reasons as to why he has to thank God. This state of equilibrium is disturbed by the arrival of the letter from Zondi, which is the starting point of the events and actions that are very important for the development of the play. To support this argument Dietrich and Sundell (1973:129) aver:

Such stories usually begin in a state of equilibrium, a relatively quiet moment in which the author uses exposition to fill us in on the characters' backgrounds and explain their situations. This initial stability (if not skipped) is then disturbed by some events that incites conflict. Following the inciting event the conflict is intensified through a phase of rising action and complication until a crisis, particularly stressful event, brings on the climax.

This means that if the state of equilibrium is nowhere to be found in a play it has been skipped. In the play titled **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi** one can assume that the state of equilibrium has been there when Ntuli was still working. It is his retrenchment that has caused instability and brings about the conflict in the family.

2.2.1.3 Climax

All the events in a story should lead to climax. Climax can be defined as the point at which the events or the actions of the main character become worse. It is at this phase that the characters could be capable of changing their minds. According to Cohen (1973:69), a climax in a story may be a moment of disaster, of joyous discovery or sober recognition of a truth previously unknown to the character.

This is how Hlongwane et al. (1988:159) define climax:

*Lapha kuvuthondaba sithola kuhlanguke isiqongo
sesixakaxaka, kube futhi sekukhona nezimpawana
ukuthi ingase iyophela kanjani indaba.*

(In this phase of climax we find the crisis coming together and then the signs as to how can the story come to the end is also predicted).

Climax is very important for the development of the story because it serves as the point at which all the events have been leading to. It is also in this phase that the effect of the events in the lives of the characters can be observed. This is what Cohen (1973:69) has to say about climax:

Climax is defined as the highest and most important point toward which the chain of events in the rising action has been moving. It can be the point at which issues and conflicts in the plot are fully and clearly resolved, or it can establish the final action which leads the author to explain or unravel what has happened up to the climax.

From the above mentioned definitions of climax one can deduce that climax is very important for the development of the story, because it is where the story has been moving to. This can be the point where it can be easier to predict the ending of the story.

2.3 Conclusion

The discussion of the plot and characterisation has been done in this chapter. This chapter has looked at the role played by the characters as far as the development of the plot is concerned. The methods of character representation, the kind and types of

characters have been done. The construction and the way in which Mbhele handles plot have also been examined. The exposition of Mbhele's one-act plays has been discussed. It has further looked at the summary of all the plays that are investigated in this study. The aspects of plot have also been studied and defined.

CHAPTER 3

THEME

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with various themes that are found in Mbhele's one-act plays. Firstly, the definitions of the term theme, will be given and the ways in which the themes can be revealed will also be explained. The role played by the characters, setting, and titles of Mbhele's one-act plays in the revelation of themes will also be dealt with. The chapter will also be based on the didacticism that is carried by these themes. In other words, it will look at the moral lessons that can be found in these one-act plays.

3.2 Definition of theme

A theme is regarded as a message that an author of a fiction wants to send to readers or the society. According to Cohen (1963:198), a theme is the essential meaning or the main concept in a literary work. Some writers write about what they observe in the world they find themselves in. They write with an aim of giving a warning to the society, since literature can warn. Fiction reflects difficulties encountered by other people. It is sometimes easier to realise this through fiction than with tiresome people beside us (Boulton 1975:75). According to Brooks and Warren (1959:273), a theme can be defined as follows:

The theme is what a piece of fiction stacks up to. It is the idea, the significance, the interpretation of persons and events, the pervasive and unifying view of life which is embodied in the total narrative. It is, as we have said in our general remarks on plot (Brooks and Warren 1959:71-84), what we are to make of the human

experience rendered in the story. And what we make of such human experience always involves, directly or indirectly, some comments on values in human nature and human conduct, on good or bad, on true and the false, some conception of what the human place is in the world.

This means that a theme can be regarded as the interpretation of the actions of characters to create meaning. It is what the author wants to pass to the society to share with him or her. A theme is revealed through the use of characters and subject matter. Titles can also play an important role in the revelation of a theme.

Geslin (1981:120) has this to say about the theme as its links with all the formal literary elements that unite to form a fiction:

The theme is the name we give to the forms of unity which we can discern in the narrative text, the way various codes and structures within the text come together and cohere. But producing unity out of a variety of codes implies extrapolation, going beyond a given element to give it a general function in the narrative.

Geslin sums up that a theme is very functional to literature because it links together various codes and structures found in the play. In other words, there is a strong relationship between a theme, characters, setting and plot development.

Subject matter is what is used by an author to construct a story. For example, Mbhele generally uses the family as his subject matter because most of the events that are occurring in his one-act plays take place at home. Different family problems are observed in his one-act plays. For example, in the play titled **Umninimuzi**, from the book titled **Ishashalazi**, the mother of the house, MaSibisi, and her daughter, Zokwenzani, are together fighting against the father, Ntuli, whereby the father wins at

last. On the other hand, in the other one titled **Siyaya**, from the book titled **Ezemihla Nayizolo**, the father, **Bhengu**, is fighting against the mother, **Thuleleni**, the son, **Falakhe**, and the daughter, **Nomafa**. But in this case the latter wins the battle at the end.

According to **Biyela (1997:22)**, a theme can be defined as:

A theme is a central idea in the story. The story has certain elements which are employed, that is plot, setting, characters and their actions to convey the theme.

One may argue that subject matters in most of **Mbhele's** one-act plays are families and their related financial, political, emotional and behavioural problems, because he makes use of these social aspects to reveal themes. In other words, this is how the setting plays a significant role in revealing the theme since it can be defined as the place, time and social circumstances around which characters are found.

3.3 Tools used by Mbhele in handling and revealing the themes

Mbhele mostly makes use of the characters to reveal themes in his one-act plays. This means that the characters play an important role as far as the revelation of themes is concerned. The reason behind that is that the characters are those that perform the actions in a story. In some plays **Mbhele** makes use of the setting and the title to reveal the theme. It is very important for a reader to understand the meaning behind the title, more especially if the title is idiomatic. Otherwise, it will be impossible to get an idea of what the story is all about.

Later in this chapter, examples of these tools will be dealt with under the discussion of themes within each and every play investigated in this study.

3.4 The discussion of themes in Mbhele' one-act plays

This part is the discussion of themes in each of Mbhele's one-act plays. Some of these themes are related to each other. For example, the play titled **Umthetho ngumthetho**, **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** both from **Ishashalazi**, and **Amaphekula** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** have the political themes but they are treated differently.

There is a strong relationship between Mbhele's personality, his past and present experiences, and the themes that are carried by his plays. He has been among the victims of apartheid. This is portrayed in the play titled **Amaphekula** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo**. He has mentioned during an interview that the way he suffered under the apartheid regime was so bad that he nearly left the country, just like Bhekumuzi in the above mentioned play. The only thing that stopped him was his mother who said that he should not leave her alone. Mbhele eventually listened to her.

Mbhele had been a teacher, that is why some of his plays are about education. The play titled **Imfundo Ephakeme** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** reminds him of his school days where the teacher who had only passed Standard Four taught him. The way he credited that teacher is nearly the same as the way he has portrayed Sibisi, the principal, who should supervise the teachers with University education. Sibisi is capable of running the school; the only stumbling block along his way to success is the lack of co-operation with some of the teachers who think they are better.

Siyaya from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** is about the reasons why some of the youth find it difficult to acquire tertiary education. Sometimes it is the parents who believe that Matriculation is enough for their children, so they stop them from further studying. The lack of funds can also be the cause of their discontinuity with their studies. The

way Nomafa and Falakhe tried against all odds to make it to the college is closely related to Mbhele's own college education. With his case, money was not the problem, but the college was full. He made sure that he attended classes even though he was not registered. Bhengu could afford to pay for the college fees, but he has told his children that he could not, so they have to think deeply like how Mbhele thought about the problem of entering the college which was full. Both these cases emphasise the point of determination and to have a dream that should come true one day.

Mbhele's priesthood experience is observed where he makes use of the priests to reveal the themes. This is evident in the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, which is about the social and family problems that the priests may encounter in their daily lives.

Umthetho Ngumthetho from **Ishashalazi**, deals with the way in which the priests try to give moral support to help the members of the communities in which those priests work. This play deals with the problems faced by the priests when they sympathise with the members of their congregation when the latter come across the misfortunes like death. Christianity is challenged by apartheid regime in a way that the priest's word is not heard. Mfundisi becomes a victim of this situation because he is also forced, at gunpoint, to lie down with Khanda.

Zikhethele from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** highlights the importance of prayers in solving problems. In real life situation, there are talented priests who have a tendency of solving problems successfully, no matter how old they could be. Mfundisi strongly believes in prayer because he prayed and believed that God is going to answer his prayer very soon. This shows the power of prayer to those that truly believe in Him. Mfundisi seems to be relaxed as if he is not aware that Sigozolo is a criminal. This is how his prayer goes in Mbhele (1994:14):

40. **Mfundisi:** *Baba.... uyazazi izinhliziyi zabo nobuqili obusezinhliziyweni zabo. Uyakwazi okuzolandela ngemva kwalokhu, angikwazi mina ngakho-ke ngandulele Silo samaZulu. Xosha uSathane ocathamayo.*

(Father... you know their hearts and the cunning in their hearts. You know what will happen after this; I do not know so walk in front of me the lion of the Zulus. Cast away the Devil who is walking on his toes).

This means that Mfundisi is aware that something wrong is going to take place. He does not believe that he might have been forgotten that both Sigozolo and Nsizwana had come to make an appointment for their wedding ceremonies. That is why he prays and asks God to come to his rescue because he does not know what to do.

Udlame from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** is about the challenges that are encountered by the Christian leaders from the freedom fighters. The priests usually have their children involved in the political struggles. The fact that the youth tells Siphso that he should not think that the preacher's house could not be burned down means that Mthethwa should also involve himself in their political struggle by allowing his son to join them. It appears as if they tell Mthethwa that he is not protected, no matter how much he prays.

3.5 Theme distribution in Mbhele's one-act plays

3.5.1 Challenges faced by the Christian beliefs

Mbhele's themes highlight the challenges that are faced by the Christians. These challenges are from all directions, that is, political influences, social influences which

includes clashes between traditional life and the modern life. In order to reveal these themes, he makes use of the priests as main characters.

3.5.1.1 Criminals in the church

The play titled **Zikhethele** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** is about the young guy, Sigozolo who has escaped from jail and thinks that the church people will not be able to handle his position in the community. He is taking advantage of the priest because of his age. If he had respect for the church, he would have waited until the church service was over, or should have gone to Thobekile's place and claim to be her lover.

This theme is linked to the one that discourages crime because Sigozolo does not succeed in his actions since policemen come to arrest him while he is unaware of their presence. This serves as the warning to the youth who think that the church people know nothing about handling of criminals.

3.5.1.2 Political violence and the Christians

The play titled **Udlame** in **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** is about a township violence where the highly religious Mthethwa and his family lives. Mthethwa finds himself in a position where he does not know what to do because his son, Siphoh, is being threatened by the youth in this location. The youth say that if he does not join them, they are going to burn Mthethwa's house. Even his wife, Jabu thinks that at such times, truth and Christian beliefs do not work.

This group wants to see what is important between the political issues and the Christian beliefs. That is why they target the preacher's house. Siphoh is chosen as

one of the leaders of this political group. This is clearly observed when they shout that Siphos should come out, Mbhele (1994: 93) says:

*41. Amazwi: Siphos! Siphos phuma! Ufuna ukubonani?
Ungacabangi ukuthi indlu yomshumayeli ayishi.
Sizonosela lapho endlini nonke uma nehlobwa ukwenza
okuncane. Sikunika imizuzu emihlanu mfowethu.*

(Siphos! Siphos come out! What do you want to see? Do not think that a preacher's house does not get burned down. We are going to roast you inside the house if you find it difficult to do a small favour. My brother we are giving you five minutes).

This quotation emphasises the fact that Siphos has no choice but to join the youth. They make sure that he is given the task of injuring people just as the way he killed his own uncle.

3.5.1.3 Christianity and apartheid laws

This theme is depicted in the play titled **Umntetho Ngumntetho** from **Ishashalazi** where there is a priest who has come to help Khanda to bury his child. Mfundisi represents a Christian religion, only to find out that the policemen, who represent apartheid laws, force Khanda to exhume the dead child.

Khanda tells the policemen that they are doing all this because they want to please the whites. Khanda and the priest are forced to lie down while the prisoners exhume the corpse. This means that, in this case, there is nothing that Christianity can do to calm down the humiliating apartheid laws.

3.5.1.4 Christianity and traditional life

In the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, Zondi, who represents traditional life, wants to know why men are not allowed to have polygamous families if they so wish despite being Christians. There are clashes between Christianity and traditional life, because polygamy has been among the customs that have been practiced by the Zulu-speaking people.

Mfundisi Ndlovu is a good representative of Christian beliefs, because he finds it very difficult to believe that even his own daughter is planning to marry a married man who is also a Christian.

3.6 Educational factors

3.6.1 Pride

The theme that **pride is not good**, is depicted in the play titled **Imfundo Ephakeme** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** where there are two teachers who have university education. They are Zondi and Hadebe. They are very proud of themselves in such a way that they find it very hard to focus on educating the pupils they should teach. They think that the students would like to know about these teacher's past university experiences and that they have been abroad. This does not encourage the students to perform well in their studies because the majority of the students end up failing their Matriculation examination.

It is the chairperson of the school who tells all the teachers that there should be a strong relationship between the level of education of a teacher and the product of that particular teacher's work. Hadebe and Zondi are disappointed about this.

3.6.2 Education and traditional life

The play titled **Siyaya** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** is a good representation of this theme because Bhengu wants his children to stop going to the college. He has an opinion that he had already worked very hard in accumulating some wealth that will be sufficient to keep his family going even after his death. While on the other hand, his children, Falakhe and Nomafa, believe in higher education in a sense, that education will always be there with them. They go on arguing that their family business might fail, leaving them with nothing to rely on.

3.7 Love relationships

This section deals with the relationship between lovers, parental love and love between siblings. There is only one play that deals with the theme of love between lovers. In the play titled **Zikhethele** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** there is a wedding ceremony between Thobekile and Nsizwana. It is worth mentioning that Mbhele's main focus on this play is not on love relationship, because the couple does not play an important role in solving their problem.

This theme is depicted on the play titled **Luphelile** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** where Thandiwe decides to dump her future husband just because she thinks they might not have children in their marriage. It is a love relationship because at the beginning of the play the engagement of Ndumiso and Thandiwe is discussed. Khethiwe is making the preparations for the wedding day. At the end of the play, Thandiwe asks for forgiveness from Ndumiso for behaving as if she has been looking for a reason to dump him.

The other type of love depicted in some of these one-act plays is parental love. This is found in the play titled **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi**. Ntuli loves his daughter, Zokwenzani because he makes her aware that the guy she is going out with is not a good guy. He tries by all means to advise her on how to behave herself. At the end of the play he feels sorry for her and welcomes both Zokwenzani and her mother back home.

In the play **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi** parental love is also observed between Khanda and his mother, MaNxumalo. She keeps on advising her son even if Khanda seems to be very stubborn.

Bhengu, from the play **Siyaya** in **Ezemihla Nayizolo** shows his parental love to his children by forgiving them after they have blackmailed him in order to get the money to pay for their studies. In this play both parents show endless love for their children. It is not like in the play titled **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi** where only the father is concerned about the well-being of the child. While the mother is very greedy, and does not care about the dangers her child encounters when trying to make ends meet.

The love between siblings is observed in the plays **Siyaya** and **Amaphekula** both from **Ezemihla Nayizolo**. In the former, the kids, Falakhe and Nomafa are seen doing things together, and they do not end there. They even plan to be together in the college. The latter is about the happiness that has been felt by Ndoda to realise that the strange man in their house is his own brother.

3.8 Women self empowerment

This theme is revealed as one which compares the woman, MaSibisi from the play titled **Umninimuzi** in **Ishashalazi** with Khethiwe from **Luphelile** in **Izivunguvungu**

Zempilo. Both of them are from poor families. It can also happen that they are also not educated. Their husbands are not working, or maybe Ndumo is underpaid because Mbhele has not stated whether Ndumo is working or not. Khethiwe regards her family as the poor one. That is why she wants her daughter to marry Ndumiso who is educated and comes from a wealthy family. They have fully grown up girls.

It is presumed that Mbhele wants to highlight the importance of women self empowerment in these plays, because MaSibisi who does nothing to solve her problem, regrets at the end of the play. In fact, on the one hand, it is through her laziness and ignorance that they have lost everything they had. While on the other hand, Khethiwe is very proud to see that she has managed to deposit the furniture and the mats for Thandiwe's wedding day. This is what she tells her husband, Mbhele (1994:40):

42. Khethiwe: *Cha baba, abedukile. Impahla yonke eyalapha ekhaya. Nokho-ke ngizobuye ngikuchazele kabanzi sesisodwa. Kafushane nje ngingathi ngumphumela womkrosho wami lo owubonayo. (Esho ekhomba ifenisha egcwele indlu).*

(No Father, they are not lost. All this furniture belongs in this house. But I am going to explain further for you later when we are alone. In short I can say that, what you see is the result of my crotchet. (Saying this pointing at the furniture which is full in the house).

Ndumo: *Awu, usebenzile mkami. Ngiyabona lapho uqonde khona.*

(Oh, you have worked my wife. I can see where you are heading to).

Mbhele has used the setting to reveal this theme because he has made use of the poor financial circumstances of these families to construct his play. His characters are unique, even though they face the same problems.

3.9 Traditional life and Western influences

The theme of a traditional life is depicted in the play titled **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** from **Ishashalazi** where the custom of killing people to be buried with the chief is observed. This has been happening before the Western influence came into being.

It is worth mentioning that if the Western influences have never intervened within the Hlubi people, the story would not have been there. In actual fact, the accurate theme of this play is the clash between traditional life and changing political situation. The white government is involved in the running of Hlubi clan. This is observed as some of the characters speak. This is how they put it, in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:30):

43. **Madikane:**...*Uma ngabe ucabanga ukuthi uzofenyisa amasiko esizwe ngoba nakhu sinqotshwe ngabaMhlophe, ushaye phansi.*

(...If you think that you will depreciate the customs of the nation because we have been conquered by the whites, you have missed out).

This means that some characters are not happy about the involvement of whites to the running of their clan. In other words, they are resisting yet they are aware that times have changed, they are no longer on their own. It is clear that they could not overlook the presence of the whites in their surroundings because this is what haunts them every time. This is how they put it in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:29):

44. **Malambule:** *AmaNgisi asihlakaze isizwe sikababa nakithi kwahlakazeka izingqondo. Yingakho-ke ngithi masincwadisaneni.*

(The English people have scattered my father's nation in a way that our minds become broken down. That is why I say we should work co-operatively).

In other words, Malambule thinks that they could overcome their problems if they work together. He believes that whites could find it very hard to further destroy them if they are united in whatever they do.

The theme of clashes between traditional life and Western life is depicted in the play titled **Umthetho Ngumthetho in Ishashalazi**. The most important point in this case is the changes from traditional life to Western way of life. This is more political than social because it involves clashes between Khanda's family and the whites. This theme is revealed through the words spoken by MaNxumalo when she says, in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:55):

45. **MaNxumalo:** *Ngithanda wazi ukuthi amandla amakhosi asephelile lapha emakhaya. AbaMhlophe bayazichachazela. Asisaphethwe ngamakhosi kodwa sesiphethwe nguHulumende.*

(I would like you to know that the power of the chiefs has deteriorated in the rural areas. The Whites act in a domineering way. We are no longer ruled by the chiefs, but the Government has taken charge of our social life).

This means the change in traditional way of life where they used to report the death to the chiefs and end there has ended. There has been no postmortem that used to be done on the deceased.

Umninimuzi

In this one-act play the main theme could be the clashes between the Western and Eastern cultures. This is not clearly stated in the play but since a theme can be revealed through actions of characters, one can observe that MaSibisi's behaviour is more Western. Her husband, Ntuli is too traditional. She exercises her freedom of speech to her husband because she talks to him in anyway, and she always has the answers ready. Her word is final. This leads to her calling her husband with insulting names like *uqhwayilahle* (a man who is not working). This is typical of a Western woman. African women are very much reserved in such a way that they sometimes find it very hard to complain if their husbands do something they dislike. Ntuli finds it very hard to cope with her wife's behaviour though he is not prepared to change his attitude so as to comply with the proper African morals. This is what this play is about because if there has been no misunderstanding between MaSibisi and Ntuli this story would not have been as it is.

This main theme has its sub-themes that are connected to it. One of these sub-themes is authority in a family. This links to clashes between Western and Eastern influences because it is as if there is no clarity as to whose responsibility it is to maintain order in the family as well as who should make decisions on what is going to take place. According to the Western culture, a husband should not make decisions without taking an advice from his wife. To support this point Ntuli (1986:26) avers:

*Indoda eganwe yileti ayinalo izwi elingunqamulajuqu.
Nixoxa nixoxe nayo ebese ithi ake lume udaba,
isayokuzwa ukuthi lizoyivuma yini le ndaba
ehlongozwayo ileti lasendlini. Uma lingayivumi
ayizukwenzeka leyo nto.*

(A man with a lady as his wife does not have a right to take decisions on his own. He discusses with his friends

and then asks his friends to stop there because he has to first go home to ask his wife's point of view. If his wife is against that, they cannot go further).

This means that a wife has an authoritative power over everybody in her family inclusive of her husband, because even the children respect their mothers more than they respect their fathers. This can be resulting from European influence because what is happening in this play is undoubtedly the bad effects of European influences on Ntuli's family. Mbhele, in his prologue, mentions that there is a sofa in the kitchen. This means that there is an intervention of some sort in this play. Like the intervention of Western culture to the African culture. One can observe that something that is not acceptable in this family is going to happen since the sofa belongs to the living room not in the kitchen. That is the reason why the effect of the influence of Western culture to the Africans can be regarded as the main theme of this play.

The theme of authority is closely related to the main theme because the distribution of power in a household depends on the influences that are found in the household in discussion. Western influence is dominating because women can go to work outside home which has not been the case before. It seems as if only money talks; if the man of the house does nothing to maintain his family, he will not be respected. Before Western influence came into being, men were respected for being men and everything that was within the household belonged to the man of the house. Ntuli is aware of that; therefore, he thinks of how he would gain his status back and make sure that his family members are behaving themselves. This is the interpretation of the use of the knobkerrie which is being repaired by Ntuli in the play, because at the end of the play Ntuli managed to show his wife and his daughter the correct way to behave themselves.

One can regard the effect that retrenchment has on husbands in the face of their families as the main theme of this play. This is because Ntuli is no longer respected

because he has lost his job through retrenchment. In fact if there has been no competition of power due to the wrong interpretation of the Western influence by MaSibisi, there would have been no story. This conflict would have continued even if Ntuli has not lost his job, but if and only if either Zokwenzani or MaSibisi earns higher wages when compared to Ntuli. It is so, because there can be some of the things that Ntuli could not afford due to his low wages. It may happen that he will not have an access to those things since the policy of individualism is dominant as opposed to solidarity. To conclude on this issue, retrenchment can be regarded as one of the sub-themes.

Western influences brought about individualism which means that Zokwenzani and her mother regard everything that Zokwenzani brings into that family as her personal property. It is also mentioned in this play that Ntuli is not allowed to use these things freely. This is what the actors in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:10) have to say about this:

46. **MaSibisi:** *Ngizama ukonga.*

(I am trying to save).

Ntuli: *Wongani?*

(What are you saving?)

MaSibisi: *Uphalafini.*

(The paraffin).

MaSibisi: *Awu baba, uyamosa phela manje. Uzongixabanisa noZ... no....*

(Oh father you are wasting now. You are creating tension between me and Z... and...).

Ntuli: *Ngimosani?*

(What am I wasting?)

MaSibisi: *Uphalafini uyamoseka njengoba uyiphakamisa kangaka intambo.*

(The paraffin gets wasted if you raise the rope of the lamb).

The bad effect of Western influence in Ntuli's family is vividly observed when MaSibisi becomes the adviser of her daughter in terms of her relationships with her boyfriends. She refers to Thami as Zokwenzani's husband without any *lobolo* that is paid thereof. According to the Zulu culture, parents are not allowed to intervene in youth's sexual relationships. The fully grown up girls (*amaqhikiza*) are responsible for this and not their parents. To support this point Vilakazi (1972:161) remarks:

...wahamba wadishizela ephethe iqhabanga lakhe ayeliphiwe uyise ethi ngalo makehuse umhlambi wezintombi zasekhaya.

(...She walked with heavy, rolling gait, holding her walking stick with small head which she got from her father indicating that she should herd the herd of the girls from her house).

What is depicted from this quotation is that Ntuli strongly believes in the traditional ways of living where the mother of the child does not talk to her daughter about her relationships. This quotation is another way of revealing clashes between the white and African cultures. Ntuli does not believe in the changes that are taking place in the societies, whereby children spend most of their times with their mothers. Children's elder sisters are working away from their homes. On the other hand, his wife is aware of the social changes, but she does not know how to handle this situation since her mother had not told her anything about her love relationship during her teenage years. That is why she finds herself making wrong decisions.

Ntuli finds it very hard to believe her wife when she advises Zokwenzani about her future husband. This is how he puts it in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:9):

47. Ntuli: *Wonakaliswa yini kodwa MaSibisi? Uyazi le nto oyishoyo ayikufanele njengomzali. Kusobala ukuthi le ngqondo yakho uyaqhubeka nayo.*

(Why are you so corrupt MaSibisi? Do you know that as a parent, you are not supposed to say that. It is clear that you are not prepared to change your mind).

Ntuli: *Le ngqondo yakho yokuba ube yinkehli yendodakazi yakho.*

(The idea of being the adviser of your daughter).

These themes lead to the point where everybody should know his or her position in that particular family. This can be regarded as the other sub-theme. It is as if Zokwenzani forgets that she is only the child in this family. She has to respect her parents especially her father who has provided her with shelter and food from the time she was young until she was capable of looking for employment. In this case, the mother is to blame because she does not encourage her daughter to behave well. Her mother has never been employed before. This means that she has done nothing to generate income for this family. But it can happen that she is forced by social circumstances that are very unfavourable to her. For instance, the fear of being hungry if Zokwenzani does not provide her with basic needs haunts her. At the end of this problem MaSibisi decides to go away together with Zokwenzani when she decides to leave home. This is how it is put in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:16):

48. MaSibisi: *Zokwenzani mntanami, angikaze ngikwenzele phansi. Ngakho-ke ungalokothi ungishiye ngibulawa yindlala lapha. Ngihamba nani nje qobo.*

(Zokwenzani my child, I have never let you down. So please do not leave me to suffer here. I am definitely coming with you).

This leads to the theme of conditional love, the impatience and the ingratitude of married women and unconditional love as it can be observed in males, which is evident in the case of Ntuli in this play. MaSibisi is planning to leave her loving husband behind just because he is unable to provide for her basic needs. She has no hope for the future because it might happen that one day everything will go back to normal. She decides to go with the people she does not understand. Her husband has been there for her because she has never been to work and she is unable to appreciate the previous situation. When their plan fails Ntuli forgives them even if they have nothing to give him since Thami has taken everything away.

The moral lesson that can be found in this play is that a man should be respected just because he is a man; he has chosen that particular woman as his wife and left all others. In addition to that, a woman should learn to appreciate things as they come because she would not know how lucky she could be until she is not lucky anymore. It is not only a husband's responsibility to support a family since Zokwenzani has taken over from where her father, Ntuli, has left. Her mother, MaSibisi, was supposed to do the same, since the father has done the very same thing by supporting his family.

Imfundo Ephakeme

The theme of this play is **pride and higher education** with its higher social positions in some of the educational institution. Hadebe and Zondi are proud of themselves because they are the most highly educated teachers in their school. They always want to show-off with their academic attires. They even think that they can make good

principals of this school should it happen that they are given a chance, since they are highly educated.

Hadebe and Zondi encourage the students to mobilise against the principal's directive that, the students and the teachers cannot go to Mdutshwa High School for the Prize giving ceremony. They are behind this, because they want the pupils and other teachers to see that they have university degrees.

Mbhele is totally against their showing off. That is why he has made Mzobe, the chairperson of the school, that the latter should tell Zondi and Hadebe that they should not think their degrees will work for them. They are told to work very hard so as to make their high education work for them. Sibisi even compares them with the previous inexperienced and unqualified teacher.

Umthetho ngumthetho

The theme of this play is the clashes between the **traditional lifestyle** and the previous South African political situation. Khanda wants to bury his child very soon because he has been killed by the lightning.

The resistance to apartheid regime can be the theme of this play because Khanda is trying by all means to oppose what is expected of him. He even mentions that he is not prepared to listen to the police. Instead, he challenges the police by asking them about who is going to benefit from this postmortem. The policemen make a big mistake by telling him that they are doing all these because there has been death of the white children that have been reported, and still under investigation. This is what he tells them in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:69):

49. **Khanda:** *Okungicanulayo du kule nkuthalo yenu yokumba isidumbu yikuthi senimatasatasa manje ngoba sekufe ithambo elimhlophe. Ingani ngonyaka ophelile kufe izingane zakwaZungu ezimbili zatholwa zicuyiwe anaze nenza lutho.*

(What mostly annoys me to your dedication in digging the corpse is that you are only working hard now just because the death includes a white person. Last year, two children from the Zungu clan, were killed and mutilated, but you did nothing about it).

The theme is resistance because Khanda managed to stand for what he believes in without giving any consideration to the apartheid laws. The title is the contradiction of the theme, because the meaning of the apartheid laws as depicted in the title **Umthetho Ngumthetho** is reversed. This is how Khanda responds to the police orders, in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:69) where he has this to say:

50. **IPhoyisa:** *(Ngokunengwa) Wendoda, ukuthi uyathanda noma kawuthandi kakunamsebenzi, akusivimbi ndawo thina. Asikuceli, siyakutshela. Umthetho ngumthetho kawuvinjwa ngaphambili. Yimbanini lo mntwana njengamanje.*

(He gets irritated) You man, whether you like it or not, is of no interest to us, it does not stop us. We are not begging you; we are telling you. Law is law and it should not be disturbed. Exhume this child right now).

UKhanda: *Ngeke nikubone lokho. Ilanga lingawa licoshwe zinkukhu.*

(You will never see that happening. The sun could fall and be picked up by the fowls).

This shows the way in which Khanda resists the orders imposed on him by the policemen. He swears that he is not prepared to listen to them.

Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo

This play reveals the **bad custom** as the main theme of this play because it is about that custom of killing other innocent people only for the reason that the chief is dead. This custom is very humiliating because it causes unnecessary sufferings within the families involved. This is observed in the scene where Nqudlwana and his wife, MaMdakane, argue about Nqudlwana's departure to Phangandlovu. It is at this point that the children and women who have been victimised by this custom can be depicted. This is what is said in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:35):

51. MaMdakane: Yazi kodwa ukuthi angithandi Mbuyisa omuhle. (Akhale aphumisele manje kuzwakale) Manje baba sewu...fu..na ukunge...nza um..felo...kazi ngimncane ka...ngaka! (Akhale)

(But you should know that I do not like that, handsome Mbuyisa. (She cries out loud) Now you wa..nt to ma..ke me a wi..do..wer at this you..ng age! (She cries).

This quotation proves that the theme of bad custom is revealed through MaMdakane, because, it is through this custom that she would have her husband killed. The same applies to Gqayingana where he complains that he might be separated from his family if this custom could still be practised or performed.

The sub-theme of this play is the process of social change from the traditional life style to the Western way of living. The traditional life can be depicted through the practise of bad custom of killing. In this play, killing people is something which is very easy to do and to talk about. This is revealed through the words spoken by Madikane when he says, in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:41):

52. **Madikane:** *Namanje mina angikayiboni inkinga. Bulalani zombili lezi zinto.*

(Even now I do not see any problem. You should kill these two things).

According to Madikane, Nqudlwana should be pleased if he was killed because that death would remain as a symbol of closeness, loyalty and love the latter would have shown to his own chief. This is how he puts it in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:43):

53. **Madikane:** *Yibuphi ubumnandi obedlula ukufa nenkosi yakho? Nhi? Khuluma!*

(Which other happiness that is more than to die together with your own chief? Ee? Speak out!)

This theme of the process of change is linked to the theme of bad customs because it is the movement from the traditional life style to the Western life style. It is revealed through the words spoken by Mabuhle from Langalibalele when he says in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:45):

54. **Mabuhle:** *Uthe uyazi ukuthi mhlazane ethule isizwe sakhe siyothanda ukuba simkhaphe namabutho, njengale nsizwa engiyibona imiswe lapha. Uthe ucela siliyeke lelo siko njengoba sekugxambukele enye inkunzi esibayeni samaHlubi. Uthe nibokwenza konke kodwa kungaphumi mphefumulo wamuntu.*

(He has said that the day he passed away, his nation would like him to be accompanied by the warriors, just like this guy that has been made to stand here. He has said that we should stop practising this custom since there is the interference of the Western influence in this Hlubi tribe. He has said that in what ever you do, make sure that there is no loss of life that could happen).

The title of this play plays an important role in the revelation of the themes. The character that makes use of the title to reveal the theme is Mabuhle when he uses the very same words in the title in his speech. The meaning that is carried by this title is that Zulu customs which have bad effect on the families should be investigated and then revised if there is anything that could be done to eliminate them. This is how Mabuhle puts it in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:45):

55. Mabuhle: Ngaphambi kokuba akhothame oweSilo uthe size sisazise isizwe sakhe ukuthi izindengezi zokuncinda amakhosi osetwa kanye nezinkamba zobulawu besithoza konke kumuke nemisinga yabaMhlophe. Wathi masazi futhi ukuthi iziswebhu ezifaka izinkabi emseleni kaHlubi zinqanyuliwe zabekwa ethala. Uthe yazini ukuthi inkunzi yamaHlubi ithenwe bume, yanqindwa nezimpondo. Ngaleso sizathu ayisayuphinde ikhonye kodwa seiyokhalima nezinkomazi.

(Before the chief dies, he has said that we should inform his nation that the pots/herds that have been used by the kings for taking sips of hot medicine, and the open mouthed pots for medicinal charms, have been washed away by whites' sudden uncontrollable impulse. He has said that we should also know that the wagon whips which put the bulls in Hlubi's furrows, have been cut and placed in a raised platform in the hut. He has also said that you should know that Hlubi's bull has been castrated while on the standing position, and has his horn tips cut. With that reason it will never bellow, but low together with the cows).

This means that the Hlubi's old ways of living have been changed due to the influences from the whites. He has said that we should also know that the norms and values that have been followed by the Hlubi's are no longer appropriate now. And they will never be used again.

Both the theme of bad custom and the transition period are depicted in this title because what the Hlubi clan has been doing, particularly, the ritual of killing other people so that they are buried together with the chief, should be abolished. If that will not be the case they will be arrested for committing murder.

Siyaya

This play reveals the role played by the children in acquiring higher or tertiary education. In other words, the theme of this play is that people should be sure of every step they take in life, because Nomafa and Falakhe made sure that they go to the college no matter what.

The clashes between traditional lifestyle and the importance of education as far as the economy of this country is concerned, could be regarded as the main theme of this play. Bhengu represents the traditional lifestyle because he believes in working for his children while on the other hand, his children want to work hard for their own economy- which is relevant to education as part of Western life style.

Luphelile

The theme of this play is the point at which love should be conditional or its opposite. This refers to the period of time before marriage. In other words, it is supposedly good or wise enough for a pair of lovers to commit themselves to marriage even if they know very well that one of them is not physically normal.

In this case, it is assumed that Thandiwe has presumably learnt that her future husband, Ndumiso, will not be capable to father any children due to the fact that he is physically disabled. In other words, it seems as if, if Thandiwe gets married to

Ndumiso, she will not have any children, but if she gets herself another husband she will be comparatively a happy wife with children.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has covered the themes that are depicted by Mbhele's one-act plays. It has been observed in this chapter that Mbhele's themes are an interpretation of his personality and his own life experiences. This chapter has also dealt with the tools that are used by Mbhele to convey the themes. This includes characters, setting and titles. These themes are also fully discussed with the examples from the plays studied in this study. Among the themes that have been identified throughout in these plays are the bad custom, pride, love relationship which includes the relationship between lovers and love relationship between parents and their children. The theme on political violence in relation to the Christian beliefs has also been dealt with. The moral lessons that can be found in these one-act plays have been investigated too.

CHAPTER 4

DIALOGUE AND STYLE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the dialogue and style that is used by Mbhele in his one-act plays. It will further observe whether the language used is difficult or simple, and whether the idioms and proverbs are used appropriately. The figures of speech that Mbhele has used in his one-act plays will also be discussed. Lastly, this chapter will be dealing with the dialogue between the characters and the forms of address that the characters use to address each other.

4.2 Dialogue and style defined

This refers to the way in which the author chooses the words for his or her work, the language used also falls under this heading. The other aspects of the dialogue and style of the writer is the aspect of sentence construction, to see if the author has used short or long sentences. The relationship between the personality of the characters and their spoken words under different situations is regarded as one of the aspects of the style. This means that as the personality of the character changes, his or her speech automatically changes. Abrams (1999:303) has this to say about the style of the writer:

Style has traditional been defined as the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse- as how speakers or writers say whatever it is that they say. The style specific to a particular work or writer, or else distinctive of a type of writings, has been analysed in such terms as the rhetorical situation and aim; characteristic *diction*, or choice of words; type of sentence structure and *syntax*; and the density and the kind of *figurative language*.

This is what Cohen (1973:50) has to say about the importance of style:

Style pertains to an author's choice of words and their arrangement in patterns of syntax, imagery and rhythm. Those arrangements of words constitute the author's imaginative rendering of whatever thoughts, emotions, situations, or characters he chooses to create and communicate. Thus style is related to and, in fact shapes all the technical exploration of literature.

The point that Abrams makes here is that the words that are chosen by the author could indicate the author's attitudes towards life through his use of characters in a play. According to Dietrich and Sundell (1978:221) the most important components of style are diction, image and symbol. This is how they further remark:

The reader should be alert to the distinctive diction and syntax that characterize the individual story, observing the overall decorum, the patterns of diction within that decorum and its minutes details. For example, one might ask such questions as these: What kind of sentences characterize a story or particular character? Are sentences long or short, simple or complex, uniform or varied? Do they change and thereby signal important shifts in character? Does the author use verbal repetition to create patterns and emphasize meaning? What levels of diction occur- slang, for instance ethnic idiom; elevated, standard, or colloquial usage; technical language from law, business, politics or science? Is the diction concrete as opposed to abstract, literal as opposed to figurative, and with what effect?

The above mentioned definitions of style agree that it is the choice of the author to choose the words that relate closely to the story he is writing. The language used by the author should be closely related to the setting of the story.

4.2.1 Aspects of style

There are three aspects of style that are to be discussed in this study. They are diction, image or figure of speech and symbol.

4.2.1.1 Diction

The diction refers to the author's vocabulary or choice of words. It includes the language that is used by the dramatist whether he or she chooses to use simple or figurative language. This is how Dietrich and Sundell (1978:222) aver:

So much for diction in general. More specifically, one of the principal functions of diction is to form imagery. An **image** is a verbal expression of a sense experience, a word or phrase which creates a picture in the reader's mind or stimulates a sensory response.

This means that the language used by the author should be able to create clear pictures in readers' minds. The figure of speech like simile plays a very important role in the creation of images to the readers. Some expressions could easily form imagination to the readers without using many words. For example, in the play titled **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi**, Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:49) one is able to figure out how MaNxumalo looks like through her words:

56. **MaNxumalo:** *Ye-baba! e-e-shu! Maye ukuguga
akumemezi! Maye kunamandla!*

(Alas, my father! Oh dear me! Aging does not shout!
Oh dear me! It is very powerful!)

This quotation states that MaNxumalo is experiencing some pain in her legs in such a way that she finds it very difficult to sit down. The other thing is that the painful legs could be due to her age; she is an old woman.

4.2.1.2 Language

The language used by the dramatist should be strongly related to the place and the lifestyle of the characters. Mbhele has successfully done that. For example, the language or the diction used in the plays **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** and **Umthetho Ngumthetho** is totally different from the one used in **Ungenzani Gosa**, **Luphelile**, **Udlame**, **Zikhethele**, all from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, **Siyaya**, **Amaphekula** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** and **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi**. Mbhele's vocabulary changes from the words used by the traditional and uneducated people to those used by people who are leading modern life.

His language is both straightforward and figurative; it depends on the setting of the play. In some cases, Mbhele relies on unusual words; some of them are coined from other parts of speech. The example of the unusual word is mostly found in the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** where he uses the words like '*unoyile*', (He is referring to a lady that is prepared to get married to a married man). One can work out that Mbhele is totally against polygamy since his religious ideology is totally against it. The other word that proves what has just been said above is *ukuzithwaxeka* (forcing oneself where one does not belong). Here, he is referring at the action of getting married to a married man.

The word *sithwithwe* (Drinking something hot, like tea), means that he is positive about drinking tea. This expression itself is like inviting those who do not drink tea to change their minds. These words bring about Mbhele's attitudes towards what they

talk about. It is through these words that readers become aware of the tone and the point of view of the writer.

4.2.1.3 Ideophones

The Zulu language is different from the other European languages because it has a part of speech known as ideophone that is not found in European languages. Ideophones play an important role in bringing about the way in which something has taken place using very few words. Its use is the other way of ensuring that the economy of words have been practiced since one-act plays are not supposed to be very long. To support this argument Taljaard and Bosch (1988:162) remark:

The ideophone is a part of speech which has no corresponding form in English. The closest one can get in a translation is to make use of onomatopoeic words like “splash”. It is a word which describes another verb in respect of manner, colour, sound or action.

The example of the ideophones that describe a verb in respect of manner that is found in Mbhele’s one-act plays will be examined. It is found in the play **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** in **Ishashalazi**, where Mbhele explains the manner in which Gqayingana walks in the presence of Gobandwane, who is there to accuse him for not doing his work properly. This is how it is put in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988: 24):

57. **Gqayingana:** *Asukume athi condo condo aqonde emsamo.*

(He stands up and tips toeing while moving to the upper side of the hut).

The ideophone '*gudlu*' in the play titled *Umninimuzi* in *Ishashalazi* describes the way in which the action has taken place. This ideophone has played a very important role in creating the imagination in the minds of the readers.

The following ideophones are the examples of ideophones that describe the sound that has come out as something takes place. They are taken from some of Mbhele's one-act plays.

In the play *Siyaya* from *Ezemihla Nayizolo*, the ideophone '*bhakla*' (1997:7) explains the sound that results from Thuleleni's banging of the door. This has been used appropriately because it shows that she is angry with her husband for not showing any interest in looking for their lost children.

'*Thansu*' (1988:49) describes the sound that results as the man tries to hit the fly that bothers him. This is from *Umthetho Ngumthetho* in *Ishashalazi*.

They are also divided according to the number of syllables they have. Some of them are monosyllabic, disyllabic, and polysyllabic and others are duplicating stems. Mbhele has made use of all four categories that are found in Zulu language in some of his one-act plays. Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:9, 10, 29, and 70) reflect this:

58. Ntuli: *Uma esefika futhi ungathi vu.*

(When she comes you keep quiet).

Ntuli: *Nakuba amehlo ewahlome elanjini, ude ethi jemu umkakhe ngeso.*

(Even though his eyes are stuck to the lamp, he keeps on looking quietly to his wife).

Nqudlwana: *Athi voshosho phansi, noMadikane naye alandele.*

(He quickly sits down, and Madikane also does the same).

Nqudlwana: *Athi khimilili, abheke umkakhe.*

(He stops suddenly, looking at his wife).

Zingelwayo: *Athi tshigo, tshigo, ngezinduku zakhe asondele kubo.*

(He walks getting nearer to them with the aid of his sticks).

The following ideophones are from the book titled **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** in the play **Imfundo Ephakeme**. They are written in Mbhele (1994:69) as follows:

59.Sibisi: *Alivule. Pheqe-pheqe pheqe akhombe okuthile ngomunwe kulo ibhuku leli.*

(He opens it. He points at something with his finger in this book).

These examples describe the ways in which these occurrences have taken place. They play an important role in the development of the image and the economy of words.

4.3 Language usage

This part will deal with the language used in different social contexts. Mbhele has been able to use the appropriate language or diction in the relevant situations to the relevant people at the relevant social circumstances. It will examine the forms of address as different characters in different social situations use them.

Mbhele has been able to use the sweet language. His command of his language is straightforward and it does not have any mistakes. The observation of his dexterity in language use is evident where Mbhele (1997:3) says: *Kwaba ngukuzinika ithuba lokudla amathambo ekhanda*. (It was a matter of having enough time to eat the bones of the head), when he talks about how Bhengu managed to start his businesses without any formal education. The point that Bhengu raises here is that he gave himself enough time to think about how he was going to start his businesses. This shows his ability to use proverbs.

When he talks about the way in which the terrorists aim when they shoot something, Mbhele (1997:15) says: *Bashaya nebhokisi likamentshisi ulithwele ekhanda*. (They shoot the matchbox on one's head without injuring that person.)

4.3.1 Language used within the royal family

It does not cause any problem if the members of the royal family, regardless of their age, use insulting language if they are not happy about what an ordinary person does or says to them. Mbhele's literary merit reflects the depth, sincerity and honesty in depicting life within the royal family. This is observed in a play titled **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** from **Ishashalazi**, in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:29) where Gqayingana utters the following words:

60. **Gqayingana:** *(Izwi liyadlekezela. Ukhuluma nje ude ephakamisa izandla sakukhuleka abuye azinqande).
Awu, bantwana benkosi, Xolelaniinja yemu.*

(His voice trembles. While speaking, he keeps on lifting his hands up as if he is saluting and then stops). Oh my, children of my lord, forgive your dog).

It can be observed in this quotation that Gqayingana is referring to himself as the dog of Malambule and Madikane who are as young as his own children. This is because he is an ordinary human being and they are cross with him. Since they are from the royal family, they may call him with whatever they feel like calling him.

In the play titled **Luphelile** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** Khethiwe uses the insulting language to her daughter, Thandiwe. Mbhele should be given a credit for that because this normally happens when people are angry and disappointed by their children. This is what she tells her daughter, in Mbhele (1994: 28-9):

61. **Khethiwe:** *Uyahlanya! Uyangizwa ukuthi ngithini?*

(You are mad! Do you here what I tell you?)

Khethiwe: *Usho kunyoko lokho sidwaba senja!*

(Are you telling that to your mother the skin skirt of the dog!)

To support this argument, the quotation from MaLuthuli's words towards her daughter, Nozipho, in the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, can be used. The insulting words that are used in this case are appropriate because MaLuthuli is very angry with Nozipho. This is how Mbhele (1994:5) puts it:

62. **MaLuthuli:** *Habo! Ungangihlanyeli wena. Bengihlanganaphi mina noZondi? Ukhohlwe ukuxolisa wena kuyihlo? Uyazi awungiboni wena Nozipho.*

(Alas! You must not be mad upon me. Where have I met Zondi? You forget to ask for forgiveness from your father? Do you know that you do not see me you Nozipho).

Khethiwe sounds very rude when she insults the men from the furniture shop while they address her in a very respectable manner. This is what she tells them, in Mbhele (1994:37):

63. Indoda 1: *We Mama ake usisize lapha (esho emkhombisa amaphepha).*

(Mother, could you please help us here **(he says this while showing her the documents)**).

Khethiwe: *Angisiye unyoko mina, unyoko umshiyi kwenu.*

(I am not your mother; you have left your mother by your house).

The dialogue between Khethiwe and the men from the furniture shop shows that Khethiwe has a tendency of directing her anger to anybody who happens to be around. There are people like this in real life situations, this means that Mbhele's characters depict some of the people in the society. It is interesting to note the way in which the form of address changes from being very rude to very polite. This means that she could be nice if things suit her. Mbhele (1994:40) puts it in this way:

64. Khethiwe: *Sengisayinile ndodana. Uyongixolela ngokukubambezela muntu wabantu.*

(I have already signed my son. You could forgive me for delaying you, person of the people).

What could be observed in her former words is that this guy addressed her by *mama* (mother), and she denied that and disappointed him. At this stage of the play, things have changed; she is happy now since the conflict between the two lovers has been resolved.

4.3.2 Forms of address

Forms of address are ways in which a person is addressed in different social situations by different people. The discussion of the forms of address is relevant in this study because what is happening in real life situations should be depicted in literature. In literature, the forms of address bring about the good relationship between characters. It is the other way of character portrayal. It will be observed if Mbhele has been able to make his character to represent real people. Forms of address can indicate the social distance and the age distance of the people talking. The form of address that is used by the strangers is different from the one used by those who are closely related. This is what Koopman (1987:140) has to say about the forms of address:

The other names and terms used are all considered to be 'titles' or 'labels' impersonal and useful tags for social communication. The personal name, on the other hand, is considered to be deeply personal and is part of one's identity, rather than being 'useful label'.

From the above quotation it becomes clear that the other forms of address other than the personal names, are impersonal and they can refer to any other person under the same social situation. For example, the form of address *baba* (my father) has been used in most of Mbhele's one-act plays to refer to those who are the heads of the families as well as for the priests. The personal name, Nozipho in **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, refers to Mfundisi Ndlovu's daughter only or it can be given to any baby girl.

There are four different forms of address that are going to be discussed in this study. They are personal names, clan names, kinship terms, and kinship names together with clan names.

4.3.2.1 Personal names

This is the form of address that is normally used by people of the same age, or by elders to the young ones. Sometimes characters can address each other by their personal names. In Zulu society, the children should not address their parents by their personal names. Mbhele has considered this point when writing his one-act plays to bring about the plausibility to the play. To support this argument Koopman (1988:141) remarks:

A person will normally only be addressed by his personal name by his parents and their kinsmen (aunts, grandparents, etc.), and by his elder brothers and sisters. Even the terms like '*mfana*', '*mntanami*', '*mfowethu*' are normally used.

For example, in the play titled **Udlame** in **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, Jabu addresses her brother by his personal name. But on the other hand, Thokozani does not freely address Jabu by her personal name because he uses it only once throughout their conversation. Mbhele (1994:98) remarks:

65. Jabu: (*Ababaze aze asukume.*) *Hawu! Thokozani mntakamama ngabe nguwe lona osewunje? Hawu wema!*

(She expresses astonishment till she stands up.) *Alas! Thokozani the child of my mother, is it you who are like this? Alas my mother?*)

Thokozani: *Awu Jabu mntakababa, ngabe nguwe yini?*
(Oh Jabu the child of my father, is it really you?)

Thokozani: *Awu kunjalo mntakababa.*
(Oh it is like that the child of my father).

Thokozani: *Awu angibazi Sisi.*

(Oh I do not know them my sister).

From the above quotation it can be observed that Jabu is Thokozani's elder sister through the way they address each other. Thokozani is young because he avoids his sister's personal name, instead he uses *mntakababa* (child of my father) and *sisi* (my sister).

The example where a parent uses the personal name for the child is observed in the play titled **Umthetho Ngumthetho** and **Umninimuzi** both from **Ishashalazi**. The reason behind that is the fact that these two plays take place within the family setting where there are parents and children. Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:16 and 20) put this clear:

66. **Ntuli:** *Ungizwa kahle Zokwenzani?*

(Do you clearly understand me Zokwenzani?)

MaSibisi: *Zokwenzani mntanami, sengathi akukuhle lokhu osukwenza manje.*

(Zokwenzani my child, it seems as if what you are doing now is not good).

It is clear that both parents can address their children by their personal names regardless of being a girl or a boy. The following example indicates the parent's use of personal name to their son. It is from the play titled **Udlame** in **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** Mbhele (1994:92-3):

67. **Mthethwa:** *Ngikhuluma nawe Sipho.*

(I am talking to you Sipho).

Jabu: *Uyisiphukuphuku impela Sipho. Ubulawa ngubuntwana. Uma uthi uyaphuma lapha phandle bekubulala uzothini? Kodwa yini ngawe Sipho?*

(You are really a foolish person Sipho. You are destroyed by your being childish. What are you going to say if you go out and they kill you? But what is wrong with you Sipho?)

What is worth mentioning here is that Jabu addresses her son with his personal name because she is angry with him. This is exactly what usually happens in a real life situation. Mbhele has been able to depict life as it is in most households under the same situation.

4.3.2.2 Kinship Terms

These terms refer to the relationship between the members of the family. They are the terms with which the members of the family address each other. They depict the closeness among the people in real life situations. For the play to be plausible the use of kinship terms should be done in the dialogue between the members of the family. Among the kinship terms that are used in a Zulu society, there are *mntanami* (my child), *mama* (my mother), *baba* (my father), *mfowethu* (my brother), *dadewethu* (my sister), *malume* (my uncle), etc. The examples of the kinship terms that have been used by Mbhele in some of his one-act plays are as follows:

In **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, since the play takes place within the family setting, the kinship terms are used. Mbhele (1994:5) intensifies:

68. Nozipho: *Ngiyaxolisa Baba. Kodwa nami angiyazi ukuthi ifike nobani. Nini.*

(I am sorry my father. But I also do not know who has brought it. When).

Nozipho: *Hawu, mama. Le ncwadi mina ngiyithole phezu kweCoffee Table evasini ngalena elawunji.*

(Alas my mother. I have found this letter on the Coffee Table in the vase in the lounge).

Sometimes Mbhele uses the kinship terms coupled with names where he talks about *baba kaZokwenzani* (the father of Zokwenzani) being directed to Ntuli by his wife, MaSibisi, in *Umninimuzi* from *Ishashalazi*. The other one is found in the play titled **Luphelile** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** where Khethiwe addresses Ndumo as *baba kaThandi* (the father of Thandi). MaLuthuli in the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** uses the other variation of the kinship term *baba* (my father) when she says, Mbhele (1994:23):

69. **MaLuthuli:** *Yise kaNozipho!*

(The father of Nozipho!)

The kinship term *baba* is used in different social situations. It is used by the children to address their partenal fathers, for example, in the play titled **Udlame** in **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** (1994:93) Mbhele puts this clear:

70. **Sipho:** *Baba, basuke besho kimi uma bethi Spirit.*

(My father, they are referring to me if they say Spirit).

Sipho: *(Akhale.) Baba ngiyaxolisa. Uyazi nawe Baba ukuthi angithandi ukwenza le nto. Nami futhi ngiyazi ukuthi awuyithandi le nto.*

(He cries.) My father I am sorry. You even know my father that I do not like to do what I am doing. I also know that you do not like this thing).

In actual fact, this is observed in all the plays where there is a conversation between the fathers and the children namely, **Amaphekula** and **Siyaya** both from **Ezemihla Nayizolo**, **Ungenzani Gosa** and **Luphelile** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** and **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi**.

The wives referring to their husbands to show that they respect them can also use it. For example, in **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi**, Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:19), MaSibisi uses this kinship term when requesting for forgiveness from her husband:

71. **MaSibisi:** *Baba, ngicela ungiphe indlebe kancane. Ngicela ukuvuma iphutha lami. Sengiyabona lapho ngiphaphalaze khona.*

(Father, could you please listen to me. I would like to confess my fault. Now I can see where I went wrong).

In **Ungenzani Gosa** and **Zikhethele**, both from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, and **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi** this kinship term has been used to refer to the priests regardless of the age difference between characters involved. For example, Mfundisi Ndlovu and Zondi could be of the same age group but throughout the play, Zondi refers to Mfundisi Ndlovu as *Baba* meaning father. This shows Mbhele's skills to portray what is happening in the Zulu societies in his one-act plays.

4.3.2.3 Clan names

Clan names are what could be known as the surnames in most African societies. They are normally used to indicate that a person addressed is highly respected. It can be used to address a male person where the use of personal name could not be

appropriate. In most cases the children make use of the clan name together with the kinship term. It sounds rude to hear a child referring to a man as old as his or her father by his clan name only. Nozipho, when referring to Zondi, she uses the kinship term before the clan name.

72. Nozipho : *Ubaba uZondi. (Athule)*

(The father Zondi. (She keeps quiet).

There is an instance in this play where Nozipho has referred to Zondi by his clan name only. Mbhele has not mistaken but he wants to make it clear that Nozipho has done something that is not accepted to her parents and their Christian beliefs. In other words, Nozipho wants to emphasise the point that she is not prepared to be what they want her to be. Mbhele (1994:6) maintains:

73. Nozipho: *Mina uZondi bengihlanganaphi naye?*

(Where do you think I have met Zondi?)

Mbhele has appropriately made use of the clan name in the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** throughout the play where Mfundisi Ndlovu addresses Zondi by his clan name or his clan praise name which is Nondaba. These are the few examples in Mbhele (1994:6 and 9):

74. Mfundisi: *Nanso-ke indab'enkulu! (Esho esukuma umfundisi emoyizela.) Nangu uNondaba ezocela umshado wesibili! Senizishaye zonke ngothi lwazo Zondi?*

(Here are great news! (Saying this, he rises and smiles.) Here is Nondaba requesting for the second marriage. Have you finished paying lobolo Zondi?)

Mfundisi: *Sewuthi yinkolo yethu Zondi? Wena awuselona yini ikhobwa?*

(Now you are saying it is our religion Zondi? Are you no longer a Christian?)

In the play titled **Imfundo Ephakeme** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, neither the personal names nor the kinship terms are used. It is because the play takes place in the formal setting which is the educational institution. All characters are addressed by their clan names, except for the Principal of the School, Sibisi, to whom they (Zondi, Cele and Hadebe) refer as Thish'omkhulu (The Principal). This is also what is happening in real life situations. It is because if the teachers use personal names to address each other, the pupils might be tempted to use them as well.

Some of the women in these one-act plays are addressed by their maiden clan names with *Ma-* (the daughter of) prefixed before the clan name. This is mostly common with the women from the rural areas. In some cases the husbands prefer to address their wives by their personal name. Mbhele has made use of these two forms of address in his one-act plays. In the play titled **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** from **Ishashalazi**, Nqudlwana refers to his wife as MaMdakane. In this case, it can happen that Mdakane is the personal name of MaMdakane's father.

Ntuli, in **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi**, addresses his wife by MaSibisi, and Mfundisi Ndlovu in **Ungenzani Gosa**, from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, calls his wife by MaLuthuli. Bhengu in **Siyaya** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** uses MaZulu to address his wife.

The use of personal names to the wives by the husbands is observed in the play titled **Luphelile** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** where Mbhele (1994:33) puts it clear:

75. **Ndumo:** ...*Ngikhuluma nawe Khethiwe. Kwenzenjani?*

(...I am talking to you Khethiwe. What is wrong?)

Ndumo: ...*Khethiwe! Yini? Kwenzenjani? Kukhona yini eniphambana ngakho?*

(...Khethiwe! What? What is wrong? Is there any thing that you do not agree on it?)

This is related to the way of life that they are leading. They are not educated, but the high status is what they are looking for in life. Khethiwe likes to throw English words during her speech, for example, when she shouts at Thandiwe, her daughter, Khethiwe normally uses the words 'Shut up'. She utters the following words to mean that the preparations for her daughter's wedding day are of a high standard:

76. **Khethiwe:** ...*Uthi uyazi nje ukuthi siyashuna sinomlingani wami uMaMkhize? Sesilungise izinto eziningi kabi sinaye sizamela nina ukuba umshado wemu ube high kakhulu.*

(...Are you aware that I and your boyfriend's mother, MaMkhize are busy planning some thing of a high standard. We have arranged many things together trying to make sure that your wedding day could be a wonderful one).

The point that Mbhele raises here is that this family leads a Western life no wonder Khethiwe uses English expressions in her talks. This happens most of the time, whether she is happy or angry.

4.3.2.4 Forms of address that indicate strangers

It is very easy to notice that the relationship between the characters is not a close one, or the characters do not know each other through the use of the appropriate forms of address. For example, in a play titled **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi**, a man from the court is addressed as *we mnumzane* (Mister) and *mfowethu* (my brother) by Khanda. This is appropriate because he does not know the name or the clan name of this man. It is plausible to hear this stranger addressing Khanda by his clan name because, the former has been informed that he should sent this letter to Sithole's family.

In the play titled **Amaphekula** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo**, Mbhele (1997:17) has used the terms *mfokazi*, *mfokazi ndini*, (both meaning fellow man) *ndodamphini* (the stranger) to refer to the unknown man that has just entered the house.

77. **Xaba:** *Ngithe ngena wemfokazi ndini.*

(I have said that you should come in you fellow man).

Xaba: *We mfokazi! (eqondise kulesi sihambi.) Ake uyeke phansi ukudla lokho uphume uhambe.*

(Hey you fellow man! (He directs to this stranger.) You should stop eating the food and leave).

Xaba: *Ungowakwabani-ke we mnumzane?*

(To which clan do you belong Mister?)

Xaba: *We ndodamphini! Umeleni endlini?*

(You unknown man! Why are you standing in the house?)

It is worth mentioning that these forms of address can play an important role in the development of the story. What could be noticed in the quotations below is that the forms of address are directed to the same person as the above mentioned one. The one below is full of respect. It is because Xaba and Shabalala are aware that this stranger is going to kill them. They are aware that they are both useless, protecting themselves from this stranger could be impossible.

78. Xaba: *(Uyagedezela manje luvalo.) Chabo, akunjalo nsizwenye.*

(He is now shaking with fear.) Oh no! it is not like that my colleague).

Induna: *NgingowakwaShabalala sikhulu sami.*

(I am from the Shabalala clan my nobleman).

Induna : *Angiqondi muntu wenkosi.*

(I have no idea the person of the lord).

The way they talk to this stranger shows that they are afraid that something bad might happen to them. They regret the way they have treated him before.

4.4 Figures of speech

It is the way in which the readers interpret the text. It is regarded as the way of seeking for the deeper meaning of the text. This is what Fowler (1995:111) remarks about the figures of speech, which he refers to as the figuration:

Figuration is one of the several actions performed by readers upon literature. The reader looks for a certain repeated pattern or overall structure, beneath the surface

of the text, in relation to which all the various elements that make up that text can be understood.

Figure of speech is very important for a critical analysis of any literature because it is about looking at the hidden meaning of the text. Mbhele has made use of the following elements of the figure of speech, that is, euphemism, metaphor, irony, simile, understatement and symbol.

4.4.1 Euphemism

Mbhele has made use of this figure of speech to enrich some of his one-act plays. Euphemism is regarded as the use of the polite form of the word instead of the harsh one. Thembela (1990:39) has this to say about the euphemism:

*Ngukusebenzisa amagama athambile, atshengisa
inhlonipho esikhundleni salawo aqondile nje ongase
uwasebenzise kontangayemu.*

(The use of polite words that show respect instead of the ones you use to the people of your age).

According to Cuddon, (1991:313), euphemism is the substitution of a mild and pleasant expression for a harsh and blunt one, such as 'to pass away' for to die. This means that euphemism can be used to indicate respect for the person older than one does. It can also be used instead of the harsh words like saying: *Ubaba umnandi*. (My father is nice) instead of saying *Ubaba udakiwe*. Meaning, my father is drunk.

Zulu et al. (1989:104) bring about another dimension of euphemism where they highlight the Zulu polite word for witchcraft and the lightning. This is how they put it:

*Lesi sifenqo sisho ukusetshenziswa kwegama
elithambile nelikhombisa inhlonipho esikhundleni*

segama elingahle lilumele kwabaningi ngenxa yokugagula kwalo. Sike sizwe kuhlonishwa ukuthakatha ngokuthi “ukuhambahamba”, umbane kuthiwe “umphezulu” nokunye okunjalo.

(This figure of speech means the use of a mild expression, which shows respect instead of the harsh one, which sounds impolite when used directly. We sometimes hear people avoiding the word witchcraft for “walking around” and the lightning “something from above” and so forth).

For example, in the play titled **Amaphekula** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo**, Mbhele (1997:22) puts it this way:

79. Bhekumuzi: *Ulaka lolu lulokhu twabanjalo lapha kuwe baba Shabalala. Uthukuthela uze ujuluke ibhulukwe.*

(The anger is still the same with you father Shabalala. You get angry till your trousers become very wet from sweat).

Induna: *Lutho. Kukhona yini ukujuluka? Ngishaywe uvalo lwesibhamu mntanami kwaxega isinye.*

(Nothing. Is there any sweating? I have been frightened by the gun in such a way that my bladder became loose).

The expression *kwaxega isinye* (urinary bladder becomes loose) is the figurative meaning of the word *chama* (urinate).

The other example of the euphemism is observed in the play titled **Luphelile** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**. Thandiwe uses the word *ubuhlungu* suggesting that Ndumiso is ugly (*mubi*). This is how Mbhele (1994:27) puts it:

80. **Thandiwe:** *Ububi bona ubushiyaphi Mama? Wanamathela ekulungeni nasemahlonini awusasho ukuthi ibuhlungu insizwa yakwabo le.*

(Where do you leave his ugliness, Mother? You stick to his righteousness and shyness; you do not say that this guy is ugly).

The following are the examples of the euphemisms that are used to refer to death and burial. They are from the book titled *Ishashalazi* Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:28 and 29):

81. **Gqayingana:** *Inkosi yami ingishiye ngingazelele.*

(My lord has left me unexpectedly).

Madikane: *Angithi kusasa isilo esikhotheme siyabuyiswa sizotshalwa ekhaya.*

(Is it that tomorrow the chief that has died will be brought back to be buried at home).

The kind of euphemism that is found in *Amaphekula* from *Ezemihla Nayizolo* is totally different from the one in *Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo*. The latter helps the readers to understand the euphemism that has been used by the Zulu people before the arrival of Western influences such as Education and Christian religion. They used to refer to the cattle as *izimanta* instead of *izinkomo* and *abenzo* for people instead of *abantu*.

4.4.2 Irony

It is a figure of speech in which the intended meaning is the opposite of that expressed by the word used. It usually takes the form of sarcasm or reticulates. Mbhele (1988:15) has used an irony in his play titled *Umninimuzi* from *Ishashalazi*:

82. **MaSibisi:** *Anginamuzi mina, nguwena umninimuzi.
Khuza-ke.*

(I do not have a house; you are the owner of the house.
Tell her to stop that).

She is being sarcastically because she does not respect her husband as the head of the family. The other example of irony is found in the play titled **Siyaya** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo**, where Thuleleni in Mbhele (1997:7) utters the following words to her husband:

83. **Thuleleni:** *Uzobona umniniso. Angithi
uhlakaniphile wedlula o-B.A.*

(The owner of the shop will see to it. Is it not that he is
clever than those who have B.A degrees).

There are four different kinds of irony that are to be examined in this study. They are the irony of situation, dramatic irony, irony of character and the verbal irony.

4.4.2.1 Irony of situation

This is about the way in which a character is portrayed by other characters in a play. What these characters have to say is the opposite of the actual behaviour or the personality of that character. For example, in the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, Mfundisi Ndlovu believes that his daughter, Nozipho is a well behaving girl who will never have an affair with a married man. He blames the parents for the bad behaviour of their children, unaware that, he is the father of a girl who plans to be Mr. Zondi's second wife.

4.4.2.2 Dramatic irony

This occurs if a character utters words that are understood by the audience or the readers but not the other characters in the play. According to Fowler (1995:161), the dramatic irony is defined as follows:

Dramatic irony refers generally to a theatrical situation in which a gap is opened up between a character's own understanding of his or her actions and what the audience knows about them or what the play eventually reveals about them.

Abrams (1971:93) stresses that a dramatic irony is a figure of speech which shows the consequences of the character's actions which that particular character is not aware of.

Abrams (1971:93) further states thus:

It involves a situation in a play or a narrative in which the audience or reader shares with the author knowledge of present or future circumstances of which a character is ignorant: the character acts in a way grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances, or expects the opposite of what we know that fate holds in store.

The following words uttered by Sibisi are a good example of dramatic irony because the readers know very well that he does not have a teacher's diploma. This is how it is remarked in Mbhele (1994:71):

84. **Sibisi:** *Ngakho anginamanyala engiwesabayo ngoba ngenza lokho engakufundela, nomsebenzi engawukhetha phakathi kweminingi ngathi ngiyawuthanda. Wona lona wobuthishela.*

(So, I do not have any disgusting acts that I am afraid of because I am doing what I have been trained for, this is the job I chose among many other jobs because I love it. This one of being a teacher).

The readers are aware that Sibisi does not have a teacher's diploma that is why he feels insecure when the other teachers talk about their academic gowns.

It can also be another kind of dramatic irony if the words uttered by the character are known by the other character to be the opposite of the actual facts. For example, in the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Ishashalazi**, Mfundisi Ndlovu keeps on telling Zondi that Nozipho is very good as far as the love relationship is concerned, while on the other hand, Zondi knows that the girl they are talking about is Mfundisi Ndlovu's daughter.

4.4.2.3 Irony of character

It presents a condition of affairs or events of a character opposite to what was or might be expected, a contradictory outcome of the events as if in mockery of the promised. The example of the irony of character is found in the play titled **Udlame in Izivunguvungu Zempilo**. Jabu is very disappointed to find out that her son, Siphon, whom she trusts a great deal, is among the leaders of the political groups in their township. She has been telling her husband, Mthethwa that Siphon is always at home every night.

In the play **Amaphekula** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** the irony of character is observed. Xaba and Shabalala are not aware that the strange man whom they refer to as the terrorist and the rapist, is Bhekumuzi.

4.4.2.4 Verbal irony

According to Fowler (1995:161) a verbal irony is where the ironic effect is concentrated in specific statements. It includes verbal ironies of understatement and

hyperbole. Abrams (1971:93) agrees with Fowler that the verbal irony has to do with the way in which the statements are interpreted. He further argues that a verbal irony is a statement in which the speakers' implicit meaning differs sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed. The feasible and clear definition of verbal irony is depicted in Fowler's (1987:129) definition, which is as follows:

Verbal irony usually operates by exploiting deviations from syntactic or semantic norms, and the ability to recognise such irony depends upon an appreciation of the particular linguistic, or sometimes more general social or moral, context. In speech it is possible to indicate by the tone of voice, that the word 'clever' in the sentence 'He is a clever chap.' Is to be understood to mean 'stupid', but as this cannot be said to be any of the meanings of the word 'clever' the writer has to convey his sense obliquely.

The point that Fowler wants to make here is that verbal irony sometimes means the opposite of what is actually said. Sometimes what is said is exaggerated or depreciated. The latter is also known as understatement and the former, the hyperbole. Mbhele has not included hyperbole in his one-act plays.

The following examples are some of the examples of the **understatement** that is found in Mbhele's one-act plays. They are from the play titled **Imfundo Ephakeme** in **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**. This is evident in Mbhele (1994:66-7):

85. **Sibisi:** *Ngiyasola ukuthi bafuna ukuyobukisa ngala majazana emfunjwana yabo yasenyonivesi.*

(I presume that they want to show off with their small academic attires from university).

Sibisi: *Lo mnqini wakho wejazana owawuthola eKolishi sewungazimazisa ngawo? (Ahleke).*

(Your short and small academic gown which you got from the College could be of some help to you?) (He laughs).

The point of an irony in this quotation is that Sibisi is depreciating the academic gowns of these teachers. It is interesting to note that he does not have any academic gown. He needs it in such a way that he borrowed it from the other teacher from the nearby school.

Mbhele has had the title **Imfundo Ephakeme** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** which is ironic in a sense that there is a contrast between the title and what is happening in the play. The matriculation pass rate in this school is very low, and in addition to that, the teachers with university degrees are useless as far as the teaching of the students is concerned. They are the ones that encourage the students to rebel against the Principal's rules.

The title **Umthetho Ngumthetho** is also ironic because Khanda does not pay attention to that law that is directed to him. The policemen fail to force him to exhume the body, which he had not supposed to bury.

4.4.3 Simile

This is a figure of speech that is used to compare something with the other. Carey (1999:142) defines a simile as a comparison using like, as or than. In Zulu language the simile can be seen by the use of the formatives *okwe-*, *kuhle kwe-*, *njenga-*. They all have the underlying meaning of like something. The following examples of similes have been used by Mbhele to create a strong imagination to the readers as to how that thing happens. This is observed in the play titled **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi** where in Ntuli and Mbhele (1988:6, 27, 29) they utter the following words:

86. **Ntuli:** *Selokhu ngalahlekehwa ngumsebenzi nje wena ungiphathisa okwengane ekhasayo.*

(Since I lost my job, you treat me like a crawling baby).

Gqayingana: *USiyephu ungikhonze njengoyise.*

(Siyephu adores me like his own father).

Madikane: *Asifuni thina siphunyelwe yilanga singenze lutho sibe siyilokhu sibamba siyeka kuhle kwamanina.*

(We do not want to see the sun rising before we have done something rather than being busy doing this and that like women).

It is worth mentioning that for the above mentioned quotations Mbhele has made use of the family members to create his comparisons. He has used the father, mother and the crawling baby. These are different from those mentioned below because for the latter he has used the domestic animals. The following are the similes that have been used in the book titled **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** in **Imfundo Ephakeme** Mbhele (1994:68):

87. **Sibisi:** *Baphume sebedoxozela belandelana kuhle kwamatshwele ephuma emdokweni.*

(They left the room very disappointed following each other like the chickens from the porridge).

The following are the examples of the similes as they are found in the play titled **Siyaya** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo**. This is how Mbhele (1997:2 and 7) puts it:

88. *Ngibhungukise okwembodla.*

(I would become wild as the wild cat).

Ngifele ezinkalweni nasemaqeleni njengenhlabusi.

(I should die in the veld like the edible flying termite).

Nihamba mgudu munye kuhle kwamagundwane.

(You follow the same route like the rats).

He has made use of the wild animals to describe his characters. This means that he is an observant person who watches the behaviour of these animals and looks at the actions of his characters looking for the similarities.

4.4.4 Metaphor

Metaphor means calling something by the other thing that is totally different from it. The readers should try and analyse why the writer has used that particular word to refer to that thing discussed. To support this point, Fowler (1995:185) states thus:

A metaphor characterizes an action, concept, or object in terms usually used to denote something else, often quite different.

Fowler's definition of a metaphor confirms that a metaphor can be a word that can stand for an action that is referred as being done by something that is different from the original actor. For example, in the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa in Izivunguvungu Zempilo** where Mbhele (1994:12) has the following to say:

89. **Zondi:** *Hhawu, yindoda uMaMsomi.*

(Oh, MaMsomi is a man indeed).

This means that MaMsomi is compared to a man because of her manhood deeds, she acts like a man. She has the qualities which people think a man should have.

Mbhele is very good in choosing good comparative words that are strongly related to the word that is discussed. For example he refers to death, as a sleep because one does not know when he is going to fall asleep meaning that one does not know when he is going to die. The example of the metaphor is observed in a play titled **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** from **Ishashalazi**. This is how it is put in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:26):

90. **Gqayingana:** *Ukufa impela ngubuthongo.*
 (Death is indeed a sleep).

This metaphor has been appropriately used because Gqayingana is very shocked to find out that even though he has worked so hard for this Hlubi clan, they are going to kill him. He refers to the way in which one sometimes becomes vulnerable to death, like Gqayingana who should be killed just because he is from the Mbongwa clan and he is also the president of the Hlubi clan.

The other example of the metaphor is found in the play titled **Umthetho Ngumthetho** in **Ishashalazi** where it is said in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:26):

91. **Khanda :** *Yini ezami izingane ziphaqake ziseliklume?*
 (Why are my children dying at such a young age?)

He uses this metaphor to refer to Khanda's dead children as young trees because these children die before they are married and have their own children. This is a good comparison because a young tree is also expected to bear fruits one day.

4.4.5 Symbol

A symbol can be a word or something that can happen in a play that can stand or suggest something else. This is how Brooks and Warren (1973:688) define a symbol:

An object, character or an incident which stands for something else or suggests something else, is a symbol of that thing.

Mbhele has made use of the characters to create symbolism. For example, in the play titled **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi**, Ntuli suggests or stands for the Eastern civilisation and his wife MaSibisi stands for Western civilisation. To support this point Dietrich and Sundell (1978:227) intensify that characters themselves may be symbolic, suggesting extraliteral meanings as they act out literal events.

An example of an object that has been used symbolically can be observed in the play titled **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi**. Mbhele makes use of the knobkierrie (iwisa) to symbolise authority that should be maintained in an African household. According to this symbolism, it appears as if it is a man's responsibility to maintain order within the household since only men carry knobkierries.

This is how Dietrich and Sundell (1978:226) define a symbol:

In literature, the most familiar kind of **symbol** is an image that serves not only as an important part of a description but also as a sign or a suggestion of something larger. A symbol does not involve comparison, as metaphor and simile do; rather a symbol is a literal part of what it symbolizes.

Mbhele has made use of the symbols in some of his one-act plays. He has made use of the symbolic title. For example, the play titled **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** from **Ishashalazi**, (The bull has had its horn tips cut.) is symbolic. The bull stands for the Zulu kingdom, the horn-tips stand for the power to succeed and to cut means the removal of the Zulu power by the Western influences.

The gun in **Amaphekula** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo**, symbolises that the new era has come where the traditional weapons are no longer worth to be used. The times have changed, before, traditional weapons used to mean something. But it was before the arrival of the whites. This is what Johanson (1967:75) has to say about the guns and the traditional weapons:

*Mandulo umuntu wayenamandla uma ehlome
ngomkhonto obukhali, kodwa uma sekufika isibhamu
aphela lawo mandlana ayenawo.*

(Long time ago, a person had power if he was armed with the sharp spear, but when the gun arrived that power it used to have got finished).

In actual fact, the traditional weapons represent the stereotype behaviour of the old people who do not believe in the changes that take place in this country. This becomes clear when Bhekumuzi points his gun towards them and commands them to lift their hands up leaving their traditional weapons on the floor. Without their weapons in their hands, they have their attitudes changed and they try to listen to what ever Bhekumuzi tells them.

The lamp in **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi** symbolises life when compared to darkness that symbolises death. Ntuli organises candles for himself as his wife and his daughter take the lamp from his house. The other symbolism for these candles could be that a person could survive through the Holy Spirit. Seven candles refer to the fact

that God in three people, namely, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, is in the Eastern, Western, Southern and Northern parts of the world. Seven, as the number, in the Biblical point of view, is the Holy number that indicates the presence of God all over the world. This means that He is also with Ntuli in his days of sorrow. It is through this symbolism that one can see that Mbhele is a religious person.

It could also stand for co-operation among the family members. When Ntuli tries to brighten the light in the kitchen, MaSibisi decreases the amount of light. This means that there is a lack of co-operation between the husband and wife as far as good parenting skills are concerned. For the good development of the family all three, that is mother, father and the children should work together to bring about peace and order within the family. This is what is said in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:20):

92. **MaSibisi:** (*Basondele beze kuNtuli. UMaSibisi uphethe ilambu abaphume nalo ngenkathi behamba. UZokwenzani yena uphethe ingilazi yelambu. Athathe ikhandlela uNtuli athungele isibani. UZokwenzani aphuthume ashutheke ingilazi yelambu. Kukhanye kuthi bha. Babhekane, bamomotheke*).

(They come towards Ntuli. MaSibisi is holding the lamp they have taken away with them. Zokwenzani carries the glass of the lamp. Ntuli lights the lamp using the candle. Zokwenzani hurriedly fits the glass to the lamp. The light shines brightly. They stare at each other and smile).

This quotation shows that everybody in the family has an important role that one should play for the smooth running of the family. MaSibisi who has been the one responsible for the misbehaviour of their daughter admits that it has been all her fault. She has been the one who has taken the lamp away. She brings it back, and in so doing, MaSibisi wants to restore the order that has been disturbed.

At this part of the play, Ntuli and Zokwenzani are not blaming her about her past behaviour, but they simply work co-operatively with her. This leads to the light as the symbol of progress and family development, where the characters do not concentrate on the past, but become aware that what has been happening before has been not good and it should not happen again.

It also symbolises the way forward, without the light, it would be impossible for one to see what she does. Hence when Zokwenzani tells her mother that she cannot see the way, MaSibisi says that she does not have to worry because she is there, she is the way and the light. This means that mothers should play an important role in the social development of their daughters.

It can also symbolise the enlightenment or disillusionment where it becomes clear that MaSibisi has been wrong for not working co-operatively with her husband in disciplining their daughter. They should also try and work hard for their family, not only Ntuli, but MaSibisi as well.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the style that has been used by the dramatist in his one-act plays. It has looked at the language and the vocabulary, concentrating on the relationship between the language used by the characters and their social circumstances. The figures of speech that are found in these one-act plays have been examined and discussed.

It has also dealt with the different forms of address that are found in Zulu societies and investigate if Mbhele has used them in an appropriate manner. Different forms of

address as they are found in Mbhele's one-act plays and the role they play in the development of the play have been addressed.

Mbhele's ability to use insulting language in an appropriate situation by the right people, is highly credited and appreciated. For example, it became clear that people from the royal family could use this language if they are angry. In addition to that, the parents, more especially mothers tend to use insulting words to their children when they are cross with them.

CHAPTER 5

SETTING

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will be looking at the setting in relation to the themes and characters. It will further investigate whether there is any relationship between the behaviour of the characters and their given social circumstances, the period of time and the place in which they live. It will also look at the relationship between the social circumstances of the characters and the language they use.

5.2 Setting

The setting can be defined as the locality or the place at which the story takes place, in terms of time and prevailing conditions. The actions of the characters are shaped by the socio-economic conditions and the period of time in which they live. The importance of the setting in fiction is to give the story its unity, this means that, it unifies the story. This is what Msimang (1986:87) has to say about the setting:

Setting is one of the most important aspects of narrative. Its importance lies not only in the fact that it gives us locale, time and social circumstances of the narrative, but also because of its relevance to the other aspects of the narrative, especially style, characterization, theme and plot. Setting is also important in establishing the right atmosphere or mood for the narrative.

Msimang's definition of setting goes beyond the mentioning of locale, time and social circumstances. It also highlights the relevance of the setting to the style,

characterisation, theme and plot. On the other hand, Myers and Simms (1989:276) define setting as the environment inhabited by the characters in a literary work. Myers and Simms (1989:276) further explain that:

The environment (including physical place, historical period, AMBIENCE, and cultural class) of a literary work.

From the above definition of setting the emphasis is on the characters and the atmosphere of the place. The author should decide whether the place where the story takes place is the place that is found somewhere or just an imaginary place. The only thing that the author should bare in mind is that, the characters in a fiction should adapt to the world that the author has created for them. This is what Prince (1987:86) has to remark about the setting in a literary work:

The spatiotemporal circumstances in which the events of a narrative occur. Setting may be textually prominent or negligible, consistent (when its features are not contradictory) or inconsistent, vague or precise, presented objectively or subjectively, presented in an orderly fashion (the facade of a house is described from left to right, a door is depicted from top to bottom, a castle is shown from the inside to the outside, or vice versa) or in a disorderly one, and so on. Furthermore, it can be utilitarian, every part of it has a function in action), symbolic (of a conflict to come, of a character's feelings), "irrelevant" ("realistic": it is presented simply because it is there, as it were), and so forth.

The point that Prince makes here is that it becomes the choice of the writer to choose whether the setting will be explained in a precise manner or implicit in a way that it is not expressed directly. This also involves the setting being symbolical. It can also have something to do with the feelings of the characters.

The setting is composed of three aspects, that is, the social circumstances, time and place. There should be a strong relationship between what is happening in a particular place and the time during which that occurrence takes place. The people in a play or the characters should be good representatives of their environment. This is what Msimang (1986:88) has to say about the setting:

It may even suggest their social position or status and this in turn may indicate their mode of dress and manner of speech.

From the above quotation it is clear that setting has further to do with the way the characters are accepted in the society, their dress code as well as how they speak.

It is within the scope of the study to see if Mbhele has succeeded in creating the unified and plausible one-act plays through the appropriate use of setting. This is how Abrams (1971:157) defines setting and its aspects:

The setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, and the historical time and social circumstances in which it occurs.

Abrams' definition supports the definitions of the various scholars which emphasise the aspects of setting which are place, time and social circumstances.

Canonici's (1996:170) definition of setting concurs with Abrams' but the former's is more detailed when compared to Abrams' and Msimang's. His definition is as follows:

Setting is at times referred to as the milieu or the environment of a story. As the name implies, setting has to do with the **place** in which the story is set, with the **time** or historical period in which the events described

are supposed to have happened, and also with the **social circumstances** which give rise to the action or against which the events must be interpreted.

Shaw (1972:340) expresses another dimension of setting which is different from the above definitions in a way that it explains setting as the surroundings of anything. He further argues as follows:

The environment or surroundings of anything. The term is usually applied in literature to the locale or period in which the action of a play, novel, motion picture, etc., takes place.

These definitions of setting stress the point that a setting is a place where the story takes place. It should also involve the type of life that is led by the characters living at that particular place on that particular period of time. Their way of thinking which relates to their social status and social position. Even the way they speak should resemble the world, which the artist has created for them.

5.2.1 Social circumstances

This aspect of setting is very important for the construction of the play because although the play is a fiction, it should be about the things that can happen in a real world situation. Msimang (1988:88) observes that the social circumstances involve the society's way of life at the time and the place in which the story takes place. He goes further explaining that it includes the society's customs and traditions as well as their beliefs. Mbhele has taken note of this aspect when writing his one-act plays because they are convincing and plausible.

The social circumstances of the play titled **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** from **Ishashalazi** is feasible in a way that it shows the kind of life that is led by the Hlubi people. In this play Mbhele presents the custom that was followed long time ago when the death of the king or chief come into being. This is what Ntuli and Makhambeni (1998:214) have to say about the setting of this play:

Usethulela isiko elalilandelwa kudala, lapho kwakuthi uma kukhotheme inkosi, kukhethwe iqhawe elithile elizoyiphelekezela ngokuba lingcwatshwe nayo. Njengoba kukhotheme inkosi yamaHlubi, sekubonakala ukuthi mayiphelekelwe yiqhawe, uNqudlwana. Uma selizofezwa leli siko, sekumemezela indunankulu, uMabuhle ukuthi inkosi yayiyalezile ukuthi uma ihamba lingenziwa isiko lokubulala umuntu.

(He informs us about the custom that was practised long time ago should it happen that a king dies a certain hero would be chosen to accompany the latter by means of being buried together with the king. As the chief of the Hlubi's has died, it becomes clear that Nqudlwana, the hero, should accompany him. When that custom was about to be practised, the president, Mabuhle announces that the chief had told them that should it happen that he dies, that custom of killing people should not be employed).

This quotation gives a clear understanding of the three aspects of setting. The period of time in which the play takes place, the place and the social circumstances around the lives of the characters are all mentioned here. In addition to that, the Hlubi people are confused by the arrival of the Western influence, which is there to overpower their own traditions and beliefs. They have their chief arrested because of his resistance to the orders of the white government. The Hlubi people do not know whether to stick to their own customs and tradition or to let the will of the whites happen to them.

Gqayingana who is the senior induna of the Hlubi clan, believes that since the whites have interfered with their own ways of living, some of the customs that have been previously practiced by this clan should no longer be done. That is why he pays less attention in looking for the one who could be killed and accompany the dead chief in his grave. Madikane who is able to read his thoughts opposes him by uttering the following words in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:30):

93. **Madikane:** *Uma ngabe ucabanga ukuthi
uzofenyisa amasiko esizwe ngoba nakhu sinqotshwe
ngabamhlophe ushaye phansi.*

(If you think that you will look down upon the customs of the nation just because we have been defeated by the whites; you have missed out).

This means that Gqayingana is in danger because if Madikana, Gobandwane and Malambule do nothing as far as this custom is concerned, it would be as if they are surrendering to the white government. This could mean that they are betraying the dead Langalibalele who had been arrested just because he did not want the whites to govern them.

In the play titled **Imfundo Ephakeme** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** the social circumstances that surround the characters in this play are the teachers's tendency of competing with their qualifications. The two young highly educated teachers with university education, and inexperienced teachers compete with the old experienced and unqualified school principal. These two teachers believe that they could make the best principal because they are highly educated. To protect his position, the principal, Sibisi, has to lie and tell the teachers and the parents that he has a teacher's diploma and a university degree. Hadebe and Zondi could see that he is lying. This is how they used to mock the Principal and the Vice-Principal Cele, as it is said in Mbhele (1994:70):

94. **Sibisi:** *Okwesibili bathi yibo abafanele ukuphatha isikhundla sami sobuPrinsiphali ngoba mina angifundile.*

(Secondly, they say they are suitable for my Principal position because I am not educated).

Cele: *Bethi mina nawe simele sigudluke ngoba sidliwa ngamakhaza, sigodole.*

(They have said me and you should move away because we are suffering from colds; we are feeling cold).

Cele: *Basho ukuthi sihlubule asinamajazi.*

(They say that we are naked we do not have academic gowns).

Cele: *Basho amajazi eziqo zase-University.*

(They mean the academic gowns from University).

To their advantage, they are invited to Mdutshwa High School for the Prize Giving Ceremony. They would be expected to wear their academic attires. Sibisi has no choice only to disclose his secret to Cele hoping that he might come up with a solution to his forthcoming problem. This is how Cele attempts to advice him in Mbhele (1994:78):

95. **Sibisi:** *Ngiyakutshela nje nawe ngoba ngikwethemba.*

(I even tell you because I trust you).

Cele: *Uma kunjalo kungcono ungagqoki lutho, uzifakele isudi yakho nje enhle ngoba unawo maningi.*

(If it is like that it is better for you to wear nothing, you should put on your beautiful suit because you have plenty of them).

Sibisi: *Hhayi-bo! Isudi lena ijika ingabe isabonakala nokuthi yisudi uma sekuvumulwe ezemfundo ephakeme. Kumele ngizame okuthile, ngihambe impela namuhla kusihlwa ngiyokweboleka. Ngeke ngilunge phela. Namalungu ekomidi ngawatshela ukuthi ngingeziqu ze-B.A. Bangamangala kabi uma bengangibona ngishwayizela ngesudi kusasa. Angisaphathi-ke lezi zinhlekabayeni ezimbili ezihleka ngisho impukane izidlulela nje.*

(Oh no! the suit becomes unnoticed that it is a suit when on academic attires. I should try something; I should definitely go tonight to borrow. I will not be alright. Even the members of the committee were told that I have a B.A. degree. They could be very surprised to see me in a suit tomorrow. Let alone these two laughs- at- nothing that laugh even at the passing by fly).

This quotation shows a detailed description of the social circumstances in which the main character of this play is found. This agrees with what Soni (1990:64) has to say about the social circumstances:

Social circumstances will also reveal the social position of the characters, to represent the influence they may have in society. This can be externalised by the mode of dress, manner of speech, and the activities they engage in.

Soni confirms that social circumstances play an important role in the revelation of characters and their influence on their society that the writer has placed themselves in. This dimension of the social circumstances is observed in this play because it mentions the social position of the characters, which is the case here. The main character is

worried about what the people around him would say if they find out about his social status.

5.2.1.1 Clashes in cultural beliefs

The clashes in cultural beliefs are among the social circumstances that characters in some of Mbhele's one-act plays come across. The cultural beliefs can play an important role in the development of the story and the representation of characters. The way people think and behave form part of the cultural beliefs. Some people find it very difficult to change their way of thinking. Sometimes a person can pretend as if she or he has changed only to find out that this is not the case. It is believed that some Western influences such as Christianity and education are among the factors that cause the changes in the way people think and behave.

In the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, Zondi wanted to be christened so much in such a way that he did not ask Mfundisi Ndlovu if it is not good for the Christians to practice some of the traditional rituals. These rituals include drinking beer and having polygamous families. He was aware that if he could tell Mfundisi Ndlovu that he is still worried about his traditional activities, he would not be christened.

On the other hand Mfundisi is very proud of Zondi in such a way that he make him one of the church elders. It can happen that he has done that because Zondi is a businessman so the church could benefit from his offerings. Zondi needs Nozipho to run his business and to be his second wife. Zondi believes that, since she is the daughter of a priest she could not use witchcraft against his family as it is the case with most polygamous families.

Zondi questions the Christian doctrine only to find out that Mfundisi fails to explain to him why is polygamy not accepted among the Christians. Zondi wants to be a Christian who still practices some of the things that are done by those who are not Christians. Mfundisi Ndlovu thinks that Zondi is possessed by the Devil and he should change.

The social circumstances these two characters find themselves in are very important for the story as a whole because if both of them have similar cultural beliefs as far as their religion is concerned, the story would not have been there. The clash in cultural beliefs is observed where Mfundisi Ndlovu stands for the Western belief and Zondi for the traditional beliefs. This is observed in the following quotation, where they had to say in Mbhele (1994:11):

96.Mfundisi: *Awume kancane-ke Zondi ngicele basiphe itiye. Konje angithi uyaliphuza? Noma sewaphuza ujwejwe? (Esho ehleka).*

(Please wait a moment Zondi I want to ask them to give us tea. Are you still drinking tea? Or you have started to drink African beer? **(He laughs as he says this).**

Zondi: *Hhayi ngiyaliphuza impela Mfundisi (emoyizela) nakuba singaqondi nje ukuthi ujwejwe lona loneni?*

(Oh! Yes My Priest, I drink tea **(He smiles).** Even though we do not understand what is wrong with the African beer?)

Mfundisi: *Hha! Nakho-ke futhi! (Bahleke). Sewufuna ukwazi ngojwejwe manje ukuthi loneni? (Bahleke futhi).*

(Alas! There you are again! **(They laugh).** Now you want to know what is wrong with the African beer? **(They laugh again).**

This means that both of them have different cultural beliefs. Mfundisi Ndlovu is aware that Zondi might not be concerned with polygamy only, but with the other traditional practices like drinking African beer. To his surprise, Zondi asks him if there is something wrong with it and still, Mfundisi does not have an answer to this.

The other example of clashes in cultural beliefs as the social circumstances of Mbhele's one-act plays are found in the play titled *Siyaya* from **Ezemihla Nayizolo**. Bhengu believes that he has the absolute power over his family due to the traditional patriarchal system that is observed in most African households. His children, Nomafa and Falakhe are educated. They oppose and challenge Bhengu's point of view as far as their tertiary education is concerned. Bhengu believes that a matriculation certificate is enough for his children and he regards tertiary education as the waste of money. On the other hand, Falakhe and Nomafa can do anything in order to be allowed to go to the college.

5.2.1.2 Poor economical conditions

This is clearly shown in the play titled *Umninimuzi* from **Ishashalazi** where Ntuli and his family are the victims of retrenchment because Ntuli has been retrenched two years ago. Their poor economic conditions have made them to depend on their daughter, Zokwenzani's wages. These social circumstances bring about the negative impact on the behaviour of the two women that are found in this play. It is this aspect of setting that plays a significant role in the revelation of the theme. For the mere fact that Ntuli cannot provide for his family due to his lack of employment, his wife and his daughter do not respect him. They do not recognise him as the head of the family. This social circumstance is clearly detected from Ntuli's speech when he says in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:16) that:

97.Ntuli: *(Ngezwi lokuncenga nosizi). Kahleni bantabami kakwenziwa lokhu. Uma sewuthatha nempuphu mntanami uthi sizosala sidlani nonyoko? Ngineminyaka emibili ngadilizwa emsebenzini, anginamali. Sidla ngawe lapha ekhaya. Uma sewuqoqa yonke impahla uthi sizosala siphila ngandlelani? Sizodlani mntanami?*

(With the pleading and sorrowful voice). Stop that my children, this should not be done. If you take even the mealie meal my child you think what are we going to eat with your mother? I have been retrenched two years ago, I do not have money. We survive in this house because of you. If you collect all your things how do you think we will survive? What are we going to eat my child?)

This condition affects both parents in different ways. Ntuli is poor, but he is against Zokwenzani's way of getting money from the boyfriends, but contrarily, MaSibisi wants Zokwenzani to move in with her boyfriend. She is afraid that if Zokwenzani goes away, they will be left with nothing to eat. Ntuli is aware that his wife could see that her daughter is wrong, but she is forced by their poverty stricken house. This is how it is put in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:17):

98.Ntuli: *Wena ngeminyaka emibili nje ngiswele umsebenzi uzibona uyinkosi, awufuni ukukhuzwa. Nonyoko naye uyakuvuna ngoba uncengela ithumbu.*

(You, within these two years of my lack of employment look at yourself as the king, you do not want to be adviced. Your mother as well is siding with you because she is coaxing for the intestine).

This means that Ntuli is left to suffer alone because this poor social condition does not have the negative impact on his behaviour and his way of thinking.

These social circumstances of poor social conditions affect Zokwenzani in two different ways. Firstly, it brings about the change in Zokwenzani's behaviour where she thinks that since she is a breadwinner, she should do whatever she feels like doing. Lastly, the condition of her home is not in a good one, everything is loose and old. It is presumed that she is underpaid because of her gender and the lack of education since she works in the firm. Her wages are not enough for the development of her home, that is why she ends up getting herself a number of boyfriends.

The effect of poor economic situation is also depicted in the play titled **Luphelile** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, where Khethiwe who is poor, but coping, wants her daughter to get married to a rich family. She believes that this will uplift their social standard. She does not listen to her daughter's lack of love for Ndumiso instead she concentrates on the wedding arrangements she has already made without her daughter's concern.

5.2.1.3 Socio-political situation

The problematic political situations that affected the Black South Africans before the birth of the so-called democratic government have been used by Mbhele to create an accurate setting for his characters. For example, the play titled **Udlame** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, Siphon and his mother, Jabu act according to the situation that surrounds them. They fear for their lives in such a way that it becomes difficult for them to think that God is there to protect them. The man of the house, Mthethwa is a devout Christian and this is highlighted by his social circumstances. The following quotation emphasises that Mthethwa and his wife, Jabu have different opinions and beliefs. This is how it is put in Mbhele (1994:96):

99. **Mthethwa:** *Uyazi ukuthi uma singamvuleli aze abulawe siyoba babi emehlweni ezihlobo zakhe.*

(Do you know that if we do not open for him till they kill him we will be bad in the eyes of his relatives).

Jabu: *Hhawu, Kulungile.*

(Oh, it is fine).

Mthethwa: *Nasemehtweni oMdali.*

(Even in the eyes of the Creator).

Jabu: *Ngicela ungangishumayezi.*

(Please do not preach to me).

Mbhele in this quotation wants to emphasise the point that Jabu does not want her husband to convince her. She believes that she has a right to think and behave the way she does because her life is very important to her. Opening the door for politically victimised strangers in the night would be very problematic on her side.

Poor political conditions are observed in the play titled **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi** where Khanda's own interpretation of his own social circumstances emphasises the apartheid regime towards black people.

In this case the tools that have been used by the white government to humiliate black people have been the police. These policemen are not concerned about the social life of the black people. This can be observed in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:69):

100. **Iphoyisa 1:** *Yebo; kuzovela nobufakazi bokuthi ngempela lezi zingane zabelungu zabalawa nguye lo mfokazi.*

(Yes, the evidence that these white children were really killed by this man will come out).

Khanda: *Kodwa namuhla ngoba kufe izingane zabantu bezimali, bekuduma amabhaloni kufunwa, kumenyezelwa nasemsakazweni, naku manje nilapha. Sekumele kutatazele wonke umuntu, kugujwe amathuna.*

(But today because the children of the wealthy people, the aeroplanes have been roaring searching, broadcasting in radio stations, here you are now. Now everybody should be restless and the graves be exhumed).

Khanda is very stubborn because he has seen the white government being unfair to the black people including himself. He mentions his previous experience where he waited for two days for the police to bring his dead child home for burial. He was alone when the corpse arrived and it was destroyed. He does not want that to happen again. Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:55) aver:

101. **Khanda:** *Kwagujwa ithuna isidumbu singekho sisayohlinzwa. Ithuna lahlala likhamisile izinsuku ezimbili. Ukhumbula kahle Mama ukuthi ngaze ngabalekelwa ngabantu, ngiqambe ngiyafihla sengingedwa qhwaba. Nesidumbu lesa ses.....(Yehluleke ukuzibamba indoda, yachiphiza).*

(The grave was dug while the corpse was away for postmortem. The grave was left wide open for two days. You remember very well my mother that the people ran away from me, when it was the time to bury I was on my own. Even that body was rot.... **(The man could not control himself, he cried).**

This aspect of social circumstances is also detected in the play titled **Amaphekula in Ezemihla Nayizolo** where Xaba and his son, Ndoda argue about the terrorists. It is very important for this play because this is how the characters are revealed. Their

speeches show that these characters have different sources of their political information. Ndoda appreciates the terrorists because he thinks they only kill the whites only. He regards that as the cleverness, which should be used for the benefit of the whole country. Mbhele (1997:15) intensifies:

102.Ndoda: *Pho ababasondezi ngani abelungu laba bantu ngoba bahlakaniphile nje?*

(So why the Whites do not bring these people because they are clever?)

Xaba: *Bahlakanipheni? Ukuhlakanipha ukubhuqa abantu abangenacala nje?*

(For what are they clever? Is it cleverness to destroy innocent people?)

Ndoda: *Kepha angikaze ngizwe kuthiwa kufe umuntu omnyama?*

(But I have never heard that a black person has been killed?)

Xaba : *(Ngolaka). Ufuna kuze kufe umuntu omnyama anduba ukholwe ukuthi iphekula ngumuntu-sitwane oyingozi emphakathini?*

(With anger). Do you want a black person to be killed before you believe that the terrorist is an animated-person who is dangerous to the community?)

This quotation emphasises that Ndoda has been told something about the terrorists. He believes that the terrorists should work together with the white government because they are capable of doing something good. He wants them to be involved in everything that is happening in this country. It can happen that he thinks that, if the terrorist could be given a chance to voice their grievances, the killings of the whites would come to an end.

Xaba is used by the white government to exploit black people. He knows very well that it is not the black people who rape and kill black people. Xaba does not question the orders from the Magistrate because he wants to be loyal to the government. This is strongly related to the setting of this play because Xaba is an old man who believes that a white man is always right. To the black people, he is regarded as a sell-out. His son, Bhekumuzi, has to disguise when he comes home because he fears that his father might inform the government about his presence and he will be arrested.

He has been strongly influenced by the whites in a way that when he sees an unknown black man he thinks of him as a criminal who should be arrested. He does not want to listen to his story, but to chase him away. Since Xaba fails to chase him away, he sends his son for the headman to sort this stubborn stranger out. Mbhele (1997:18) maintains:

103. **Xaba:** *Ngaphandle kwalokho ngiyobikela induna khona manje qede uboshwe ugilimithi.*

(If that is not the case, I am going to inform the headman now and you will be arrested for life).

Umuntu: *Mina baba.....*

(I father...).

Xaba: *Cha angivumi. Ngithi phuma njengamanje uhambe. Ngokusho njalo ngikwenzela umusa omkhulu kabi. Angifuni ukuthi uboshwe. Phela wena uyinto yejele nje ngikubuka.*

(No I do not agree. I say get out right now. By saying that I am being very merciful to you. I do not want you to get arrested. When I look at you I see a prison).

What can be seen in these three plays that is **Amaphekula** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo**, **Udlame** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** and **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi**, is that there is a misunderstanding between the parents and children as far as their political situation is concerned. The parents believe that the time has come for the whites to be in power. They just accept everything without questioning its justice. The children can see that this government is not good for them instead it is there to oppress and humiliate them.

5.3 Setting as the place where the story takes place

It can either be in rural or urban area, specific like the name of the place where the story takes place. Where the place name is not mentioned, the author had taken for granted that the readers know about it. This could be the case where the main character of the play is a historical hero that is well known and famous. For example, the play titled **Ukufa KukaShaka** written by Elliot Zondi is the example of the play where the place where the story takes place is not mentioned. He took for granted that Zulu people know more about Shaka as the King of the Zulu kingdom.

Mbhele has taken an advantage that some of the townships had been well known due to the political violence that had taken place before and after 1994 democratic elections. He has not given the name of the place where the play titled **Udlame** in **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** and **Amaphekula** in **Ezemihla Nayizolo** take place.

In most cases writers do not mention that the story takes place in urban or rural area. It becomes a scholar's duty to engage him or herself with the text by looking at the events of the play and see if they could happen in rural or urban areas.

5.3.1 Rural area

It is not easy to work out that a particular place is rural or urban. This is because some rural areas are developing; they have their own electricity and running water supply installed. Their life style has changed to resemble the one in urban areas. Some of them are highly educated. It can happen that people in urban areas lead life that is similar to the one led by those in rural areas. This is the case with Ntuli's family in the play titled **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi** where most of the occurrences show that they live in an urban area. But the fact that they do not have electricity does not guarantee that they are in a rural area. It is because they are poor, Zokwenzani cannot afford to pay for electricity.

The play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** in **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** takes place in a rural area because Nozipho fetches water in the fountain and it is also where the main character lives.

This is also observed where the issue of polygamy comes into being because people in urban areas rarely worry themselves with polygamy. Zondi's decision to marry Nozipho just because he has taken away her virginity proves that he is from rural areas where virginity is very valuable.

Rural areas are also characterised by the fact that there is no natural death according to the people who live in rural areas. Mbhele has confirmed that in the play titled **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi** where Khanda accuses Mzwempi of being the cause of his son's death. He is told that his son has died due to the lightning that has occurred. This is how it is said in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:51):

104. **Khanda:** *Mama, kukhona engingakutholi kahle. Kwenzeke kanjani ukuthi umntanami ayothobwa nguMzwempi?*

(Mother, there is something I do not understand clearly. How did it happen that my child was found by Mzwempi?)

Khanda: *Lase likhetha umntanami, wasala yena.*

(It chose my child and left him unharmed).

Khanda: *UMzwempi usebenzaphi? Uphila ngani amanye amadoda esebenza yena engasebenzi? Futhi uMzwempi uyathakatha unokumbulala umntanami. Ninasiqiniseko sini Mama sokuthi umntwana ubulewe ngumphezulu?*

(Where is Mzwempi working? What does he do for the living while other men are working and he is not working? And Mzwempi is a witch he could have killed my child. How sure are you mother that my child has been killed by the lightning?)

The rural area in the play **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, plays an important role in revelation of the theme because it brings about the fertile ground for the conflict and the development of the story. Mfundisi Ndlovu believes that the fact that Nozipho is not allowed to go to the cities guarantees that she cannot get spoiled. In this way the comparison between the rural and urban areas is made. He is not aware that both rural and urban lives have both advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages of the rural life is the humanity that Zondi shows to Nozipho by marrying her and if he has been highly influenced by urban life he should have thought of divorcing his wife MaMsomi.

The rural area as the place where the story takes place is seen in most of Mbhele's one-act plays because in most of them there is no electricity. The majority of the characters are not educated which is very rare in urban areas. The example of

uneducated characters is found in the play titled **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi** where Khanda and his mother, MaNxumalo ask the messenger to read the court interdict for them.

Some of these places are still ruled by the chiefs. For example, the play titled **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi**, Khanda wants to inform the chief and the induna about the death of his child. This is what Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:53) emphasise:

105. **Khanda:** *Angithi nibikile enkosini?*

(Have you informed the chief?)

Khanda: *Iphoyisa lenkosi nenduna angithi kubikelwe?*

(Have you informed the chief's police officer and the induna?)

One more example of the play that takes place in a rural area is **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** from **Ishashalazi** where there is chief Langalibalele's funeral. They are preparing for the traditional rituals that are employed when the chief is dead. It is also the case with **Umthetho Ngumthetho** in **Ishashalazi** where the people have to dig their graves and they do not have graveyard, instead they use their yards for the burial of their deceased.

The kind of life that is led by the people in rural areas is nearly the same as the one that has been led by the people who lived long time ago. They focused on their traditional norms and values.

5.3.1.1 Historical place

Mbhele has made use of the historical place to write about the historical background of the place where he grew up. He knows very well what is happening in this play because it is where he was born. Among the place names that are found in this play are Phangandlovu which has been used in the play titled **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** from **Ishashalazi**, where the majority of the people that live there are the Hlubi people. This play takes place in the place known as Phangandlovu and eMgungundlovu. These are not imaginary places; they are historical places. Mbhele has made a good use of these places because he used to live there and he knows and understands the kind of life that the people of these places live.

In the play **Luphelile** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** he makes use of the place by the name Bhekuzulu as the place where the story takes place. This is what Mbhele (1994:28) has to say:

106. **Khethiwe:** *Angangihleka kabi phela amakhosikazi alapha kwaBhekuzulu.*

(The women of Bhekuzulu would laugh at me).

This means that the play takes place at Bhekuzulu in Escourt. Mbhele has chosen the place where he was born. This is very advantageous to him because he understands the life that is led by people living in this area. The play **Siyaya** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** takes place in Estcourt as well.

5.3.2 Urban Areas

There are only two one-act plays that take place in an urban area. That is **Udlame** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, and **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi**. This place could be one of the locations that are found in KwaZulu Natal where there have been political violence before 1994 democratic elections.

This aspect of setting is differentiated from the others because the people in this aspect look down upon their own traditions and customs. They are more modernised. Their personal naming pattern and the form of address is different from the one used in traditional societies. For example, the use of the personal names of the married women is accepted. Even Mbhele when he names his urban characters he uses the personal names like, Khethiwe in **Luphelile** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, is the woman of the house, Jabu in **Udlame** is Mthethwa's wife. Sarayi in **Zikhethele** all from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, is an old woman who is the pastor's wife.

In **Siyaya** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** Thuleleni is the name of Bhengu's wife. It is worth mentioning that even though some of these plays take place in rural areas, the characters lead the urban life. In this play, Bhengu does not address his wife with her personal name. The reason behind that could be that he is too traditional. He avoids using his wife's personal name.

5.4 Time

It can refer to the period of time during which the author chooses to construct the story upon. This is a very important aspect in fiction because it should relate to the way in which the characters talk and behave. Among the times that the author could choose could be in the night, during the day or use both day and night in one play.

Mbhele has done that in the play **Siyaya** in **Ezemihla Nayizolo** where it starts during the day and proceeds towards the night. What is important about the way in which the author chooses the time is that, the events that take place at that particular time should be plausible and understandable. This means that time alone can make a good story if considered accordingly.

The night as the time in which the story takes place could mean that there might be something bad that is going to take place. Bhengu, in **Siyaya**, is blackmailed in the night because this is against the law so it is appropriate for it to happen in the night. But it is the different case with the play **Amaphekula** in **Ezemihla Nayizolo**. There has been no other time that has been suitable for the terrorists to visit their families except in the night because they fear that they might be arrested. This is because the parents did not understand their political struggle.

5.4.1 Particular time of the day

The particular time of the day that Mbhele chooses for most of his one-act plays is in the evening. For example, the play titled **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** from **Ishashalazi** takes place in the night. The following expression in Mbhele (1988:23) proves that:

107. *Isibani sikhanya kancane*
(The lamp shines dimly).

The other example of the play that takes place during the night is **Udlame** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**. This is the suitable time for this play to take place because it involves nothing, but killings and the violation of human rights. The night is the suitable time when most of the evil deeds are performed. In **Inkunzi Inqindwe**

Izimpondo from **Ishashalazi**, the point that Mbhele makes here is that when there is death in the family, especially when the chief dies that particular nation is in the darkness because they do not have a leader. They have no way forward. The night in this play represents something bad and confusion. The people of Hlubi clan are confused due to the death that has hit them.

5.4.2 Olden times

This can be observed by the use of the terms that are very difficult for the young Zulu speaking generations to use and understand. Mbhele writes about the period in which the Hlubi people led a traditional kind of life. This is depicted in the play titled **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** from **Ishashalazi** where some of the words are not used by the Zulu speaking people of the present generation. This is clear in Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:24) when he says:

108. **Gqayingana:** *Bhungane, izinkabi zokwendulelisa ziyogonyozwa kusasa ngovivi. Nokho-ke Hlubi seyibulewe eyesembatho sokhakhayi.*

(Bhungane, the bulls for the initiation of the funeral service will be killed early tomorrow morning. Never the less Hlubi the one for the cloth of the crown of the head has already been killed).

This quotation could only be understood by some old people who live in rural areas. This kind of expression has been used many years ago. This kind of language usage plays an important role in the maintenance of the standard Zulu language.

The naming of the characters shows that these are historical characters that have been there in the past. The type of personal names that are found in this play is totally different from all the other plays. Additionally, they are rarely used if not used by the

young generations. The example of personal names that are found in the plays that represent the olden times are Khanda, Nqudlwana, Mabuhle, Gobandwane, Gqayingana, Madikane, Malambule and Zokwenzani.

It is very interesting to note that naming of married women characters in these plays is different from the one that is found in young people. They are not addressed by their personal names. Instead, the clan name and the prefix *Ma-* is used. For example, MaNxumalo in **Umthetho Ngumthetho**, MaMdikane in **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo**, MaSibisi in **Umninimuzi** all three from **Ishashalazi** and MaLuthuli in **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**.

MaSibisi from **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi** behaves as the modern women, but her husband does not address her with her personal name as it is the case with other married women that are found in the plays that are said to indicate the present days. Additionally, there is no relationship between Zokwenzani's behaviour and her personal name. This shows that Ntuli is very traditional, he does not believe in the changes that are taking place around him. What can be seen here are the clashes of different beliefs, that is Eastern and Western.

MaLuthuli from **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** is named like this because Mbhele wants to emphasise the point of the clashes in traditional cultures. Mfundisi Ndlovu is a Christian and modernised but the social circumstances he finds himself in, are that his daughter and Zondi are there to disturb him in his own beliefs. MaLuthuli stands for the traditional part of culture even though she is a Christian.

5.4.3 Time of transition

This refers to the changes that are used by the writer to construct the story. These changes could be politically and socially. This aspect is strongly related to the environment in which the characters find themselves in. The changes in real life situations have sometimes the negative or positive effects on the lives of the people. This aspect of setting should bring about the verisimilitude of the play by discussing the events that could take place in a real world and to the real people. The following social changes are found in Mbhele's one-act plays.

5.4.3.1 Political changes

These changes serve as the cornerstone for most of Mbhele's one-act play. Mbhele has put his characters in the environment that is in the process of the political change. The effect of these political changes should have some impact on the lives of the characters. For example, the play titled **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo in Ishashalazi** takes place during the time when there are political changes which involve the arrival of the whites and their attitudes towards black people. This brings about the negative impact to the Hlubi people because they do not want to change their traditional way of living. This is what Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:29) have to say about political changes in this play:

109. **Malambule:** *AmaNgisi asihlakaze isizwe sikababa nakithi kwahlakazeka izingqondo.*

(The English people have scattered my father's nation in a way that our minds got scattered).

The other political changes that are experienced by the characters in a play is portrayed in a play titled **Umthetho Ngumthetho in Ishashalazi**. The changes in

political powers where the rural areas are no longer ruled by the chiefs but the white government. When two different cultures come together there is a confusion to the characters because they have to stop doing what they grew up doing and change to the actions that are new to them. What makes matters worse is that they were forced to do it otherwise they were arrested. That was when the policemen were used. Mbhele and Ntuli (1988:55) confirms the involvement of the white government to the black people:

110. **MaNxumalo:** *Ngithanda wazi ukuthi amandla amakhosi asephelile lapha emakhaya. Abamhlophe bayazigcagcazela. Asisaphethwe ngamakhosi kodwa sesiphethwe nguHulumende.*

(I want you to know that the power of the chiefs has finished in the homelands. The whites are moving around freely. We are no longer ruled by the chiefs, but we are controlled by the white government).

In the play titled **Amaphekula** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** the political change is confirmed where Bhekumuzi believed that the time has come for the white government to move aside and give rise to the democratic government. Bhekumuzi warns his father that they are not safe if they support the white government. Mbhele (1997:19) puts it clear:

111. **Umuntu:** *Nawe futhi uma uzoba yisicabucabu samaBhunu, kukhona okuzokwethusa.*

(Even you also if you would be the spy of the Boers, something would frighten you).

The political changes are depicted in the course of the play where Bhekumuzi tells Xaba and Shabalala that they would be soon on their way back home. Mbhele has made use of his own political ideology to construct this play. In fact, he has used the

historical information from the past. His knowledge of the South African past political situation is confirmed by Anderson and Sloan (1995:362) when he says:

Since 1983, the program of MK has been to terrorize white farmers, to sabotage the industrial base of South Africa to terrorize black policemen and politicians as collaborators of the apartheid regime and to conduct urban terrorism in the white-inhabited urban areas.

The above quotation confirms that Mbhele has made Bhekumuzi one of the MK members who have been there to terrorize white farmers. Mbhele (1997:22) intensifies:

112. **Bhekumuzi:** *Baba nawe baba uShabalala, yehlukanani nomqondo ofile wokuthi kukhona amaphekula aqotha abantu bakini. Amaphekula ngabantwana benu abawela ukubuyiswa kwezwe lawokhokho.*

(My Father and Father Shabalala, do away with the dead idea that there are terrorists that kill your people. The terrorists are your children who are in the political struggle longing for the return of their ancestors' land).

Bhekumuzi: *Akusekude sibuye ekhaya. Sesiyakubona ukukhanya kwelanga ngalena komgede.*

(It is not far from the day we will come home. We can see the sun rays beyond the cave).

For this play Mbhele has also made use of the previous historical situation when South Africa was not a democratic country. For the quotation above, it is clear that Mbhele is referring to the period where there were negotiations between the white government and the political parties that were banned. This means that the time is about to come where the black people' voices are to be heard and listened to by the South African government.

5.4.3.2 Social changes

This refers to the changes that take place in the way in which people think and behave due to the changes that take place in the world around them. Mbhele has used the social changes as the period of time in which the play takes place. What is happening in the environment around a particular character is contributing to the growing of a child.

For example, in the play titled **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi**, the story takes place during the time where there is a change in the status of Ntuli's family. This shapes all the actions that occur in this play. Zokwenzani is put in the environment where there is a misunderstanding between the parents because of their financial problems. This could be another impact of the environment, which contributes to the corruption of a growing child.

Zokwenzani changes her behaviour because of her poor social position. But it is worth mentioning that her mother plays an important role in the changes of Zokwenzani's behaviour.

This is also observed in the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** where Nozipho finds herself opting for a polygamous marriage as her future family because she is not exposed to guys. This is because of the strickness of her home. It becomes very hard for her to get a christian and single marriage partner because of her status of being a pastor's daughter. This is a drastic social change because it is the transition from the religious point of view to traditional beliefs.

5.4.4 Present days

The present days as the time when the story takes place is identified by the use of the language that is used by the majority of people. Mbhele has been able to depict what is happening in this community in the play titled **Luphelile** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**. This play is written in a simplified language where some of the words that are used are adopted from the English language. Mbhele (1994:28-9) puts it clear:

113. *Imali yediphozi*

(The deposit money).

Ngidiphoza ifenisha

(I deposit the furniture).

*Uyazi wangikhuphulela i-BP Thandiwe nelanga
lishisa.*

(You know Thandiwe you increases my BP while the sun is hot).

Sometimes in this play there is a code-switching where the English word or phrase is used as it is in the Zulu speech. Mbhele has made use of code-switching to reveal the social position and the mood of the characters. For example, in **Imfundo Ephakeme** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** Sibisi switches to English when he is angry and wants to sound serious. He, in Mbhele (1994:65) utters the following words:

114. *Phumani-ke!* Get out of my office!

This is what Koopman (1999:67) has to say about code-switching:

Code-switching at phrase or word level, i.e. within the sentence, is normally a feature of informal discourse such as conversation.

On the other hand, Maphumulo (1993:73) is of this opinion about code-switching:

Code-switching refers to the behaviour of an individual choosing to speak slang instead of standard Zulu.

From the definition above, it is clear that code-switching has also something to do with the slang. The above mentioned kind of expression is found in the play titled **Siyaya** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** where Mbhele (1997:5) has this to say:

115. *Sezihlakani phe too skelm lapha emakhanda azo.*

(They are too clever in their heads).

This is exactly what is happening in some of the communities. Mbhele (1994:33-35) has the following examples of code switching:

116. *Shut up! Ngangizotshela wena?*

(Shut up! Was I supposed to tell you?)

Sivela kwaKinley's Furnitures mama.

(We are from the Kinley's Furnitures my mother).

Angenise ikist.

(He brings the kist inside).

According to Maphumulo (2001:251), code-switching and adoption can be both referred to as the interlarding. This is how he defines interlarding:

Language is bound up with the culture it serves. With the spread of European civilization people started to mix speech or writing of Zulu with foreign phrases.

The point that Maphumulo makes here is that code-switching and adoption or interlarding is normally used by those who are exposed to the Western civilization. They can be used simultaneously in an informal conversation. For example, in the play titled **Ungenzani Gosa** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, Mbhele (1994:5) has the following expression as the example of interlarding:

117. **Nozipho:** *Le ncwadi mina ngiyithole phezu kwe Coffee Table evasini ngalena elawunji.*

(I have found this letter on the Coffee Table in the vase in the lounge).

From the above quotation the word Coffee Table is an English word. The word *evasini* is the locative form of the adopted word *ivasi* (vase). The same applies to the word *elawunji* which is from the English word lounge. It is the locative form of the word *ilawunji*.

The other dimension in which the code-switching is observed in Mbhele's one-act plays is the one that indicates the social status of the characters. This confirms Maphumulo's point of code-switching which is the result of the characters being exposed in the European civilisation. For example, in the play titled **Imfundo Ephakame** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** is about the educated characters that is why one come across the expressions like Prize Giving Day, Diploma, Hood, Cap and Gown. The fact that Zondi and Hadebe had studied at the university is rectified and confirmed by their constant use of the English phrases like, 'according to my university experience'.

The other thing that shows that this play is the representation of what is happening in these days is that: Thandiwe is educated; she does not know how to weave the mats because she spent most of her time at school. Mbhele (1994:28) avers:

118. **Khethiwe:** *Ukuba kusekuqala ngabe sewuzelukele umthango wakho wamacansi. Pho-ke, angithi senahlala ezikoleni kuqambe kufika isikhathi sokuba ngabe umuntu uyashada, kutholakale ukuthi akanalo ngisho elokubika icansi leli.*

(If it is still long time ago you could have weaved your own pile of the mats. Well then it is not so, as you spend most of you time at school. When the time for the person to get married, it becomes clear that she does not have even a single grass mat).

In the play titled *Siyaya* from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** is also a good depiction of life as it is at this present moment. Bhengu's attitude towards his children's education and the access to resources is a positive one. He treats his children equally. This brings about the issue of gender equality which has not been the case before. The girls had no access to education because they were supposed to get married and their education would be of no benefit to their family. This is what Dangarembga (1988:15) has to say about the reason why the girls were not supposed to be educated:

My father thought I should not mind. 'Is that anything to worry about? Ha-a-a, it's nothing,' he reassured me, with his usual ability to jump whichever way was easiest. Can you cook books and feed them to your husband? Stay at home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean. Grow vegetables'.

The point that Dangarembga makes here is that fathers used to think that if they want their daughters to have successful marriages, they should deprive them of education. This will give them enough time to practise how to take care of the house and the family, since they would be at home most of the time.

This can also represent the changes in time. There has been a time when education was believed to be for the boys only. The boys used to enjoy that privilege because it made them better than girls. According to Dangarembga (1988:21), the boy boasted to his sister that no matter how much she longed to be at school, she will not go because she is a girl and it is the same everywhere. This is not the case with Falakhe and Nomafa in *Siyaya* from *Ezemihla Nayizolo*. Bhengu is against the point that both his children could attend the college, but Falakhe makes sure that he could not leave his sister behind. It was not easy because Bhengu threatens to chase them if they carry on asking him for the money to pay for their tertiary education.

Equality within the family as a whole is also observed in this play. MaZulu's place is not in the kitchen. She contributes in generating the economy of the family. After the children finish their matriculation, they are supposed to work in their family businesses. MaZulu could work together with her daughter, Nomafa, in the shop and the father should run their transport business with his son, Falakhe. Mbhele (1997:3) states thus:

119. **Bhengu:** *Wena Falakhe nanka amabhasi adinga wena. Nami ngizokulekelela. Wena Nomafa, nasi isitolo phandle sidinga wena nemfundo yakho. Ukhona unyoko uzokwelekelela.*

(You Falakhe, here are the busses; they need you. I am also going to assist you. You Nomafa, here is the shop outside; it needs you and your education. Your mother will be there to help you).

The play titled *Umninimuzi* from *Ishashalazi* is the good example of what is happening in the world around us these days. Before, the women's place has been at home but in this play, Zokwenzani is working outside home. She is a breadwinner.

It is normal for today's women to depreciate or compete with the men that are not working. The other thing is that the children spend most of their times outside home but there are no fully grown up girls to advise young girls as far as their relationships are concerned. That is why in this case MaSibisi is advising her daughter in all the aspects of life. She does not respect her husband and her daughter follows the same pattern.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has laid focus on the relationship between the place where the play takes place and the social circumstances that the characters find themselves in. It has also examined the different social environments that shape the behaviour of the characters. The investigation of different aspects of time, that has been used by Mbhele when constructing his one-act plays, has been done in details. The background of the author has been examined if it matches the one that Mbhele has created for his characters. This has been done to see if Mbhele has written about something that he has experienced during his lifetime.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introductory remarks

This chapter will focus on key issues raised in this study. Each issue will be discussed briefly under a sub heading of summary and observations. This study has dealt with both the historical biographical approach and the structural approach to the analysis of Mbhele's one-act plays. Additionally, it will work on the implications for the future research on this literary study.

6.2 Summary and observations

The relationship between these one-act plays and Mbhele's social, educational, political and religious life experiences has been examined. It has been proved that this dramatist writes about what he has seen during his life time. This makes his work to be plausible, because what he went through can also be anybody else's experiences. To support this point, Makhambeni (1988:4) has this to say:

Society and its problems form the basis of the author's inspiration. In his work the writer expresses his view of life, as well as the experiences of the society in which he lives.

The above quotation means that, whatever the author writes about is his own view of life, which might not make sense to the other people who had different life experiences. But this can make readers to understand the dramatist and his life experiences better. Understanding the dramatist or the author better could help in the process of interpreting the text. The personal information of the dramatist, in this

case, was obtained during the interview which he had with the researcher. According to Assink (1999:64), the purpose of the interview is to develop some kind of understanding about the author's own ideas, and his sensing of the situations he describes. For this study, an information from the interview has been very useful. This is also evident in Ngidi (2001:21) where she states thus:

For an artist to produce a piece of work he/she might be influenced by a number of things. These influences could be his/her own personal experiences or models of expression found in his /her cultural background or artistic knowledge.

This approach has been employed successfully in these plays, in such a way that Mbhele has made use of his tone to show his attitudes towards the issues discussed. This helps the readers to have a good interpretation of the text. This is what Makhambeni (1988:4) intensifies:

Since literature is a work of art, whatever message is carried in it, should be presented in a subtle manner. This will give the reader an opportunity to formulate his own conclusions about the lesson intended by the story.

The point that Makhambeni stresses here is that, the message carried in the text should not be explicit to the readers. The readers should work hard in order to find out the themes and the messages that are conveyed in these one-act plays. Among the moral lessons that are found in Mbhele's one-act plays are those that are educational in a way which they bring about for the enrichment of the historical background of the readers. In the plays **Inkunzi Inqindwe Izimpondo** and **Umthetho Ngumthetho** from **Ishashalazi**, Mbhele has brought about the life of the Zulu people before the arrival of the European civilization. He has made use of the language that was used at

that particular time, the language which was difficult for the new generations to understand.

The moral lesson, from the religious point of view, can be interpreted as Mbhele's ideas pertaining clashes between Christianity and African traditional cultural norms and values. The point that Mbhele emphasises here is that if a person is a Christian, he or she should lead a Christian life.

Mbhele's moral lesson from the political point of view is that he wants his readers to understand the previous South African political situation. He wants them to know about the previous relationship between the whites and the blacks. This information is valuable to the readers, because they will be able to understand the future through what happened in the past.

From the educational point of view, Mbhele wants to highlight the importance of education to those who want to be educated. He made sure that Falakhe and Nomafa acquire education even though Bhengu was against it. He is against people who are very proud of themselves because of their higher education status. That is why he does not make Hadebe and Zondi successful teachers. It is not that he believes that teachers with university education cannot make good teachers; but, he is doing all these with the aim of discouraging pride.

As far as the structural approach to literature is concerned, the study has investigated the formal literary elements that have been used for the development of these one-act plays. This study has spent more time on the plot and characterisation, because these two literary elements are about the way in which the characters act in relation to the development of the story. Readers come to know that, now the story is in the climax due to the actions of the characters. It also becomes easier for the readers to

understand the way in which the characters are portrayed, if the author has successfully handled and developed the plot.

For this part of the formal literary element, Mbhele has been able to create conflict for his main characters. Some of his plays start in the state of equilibrium where everything is in good condition. This is when the conflict is useful, because it disturbs this normal state. The characters try to solve their problems in the way a real human being could have done when confronted with similar social circumstances. When the character tries to solve the problem, the other more serious problems emerge. It is when the story becomes complicated because of the adverse situations in the lives of the characters. After this, the play reaches the climax where the new information that has been unknown to the readers is recognised. Some of his plays end in this phase.

Mbhele has been very good in handling the plot of his one-act plays. The events are arranged in their chronological order, starting from the minor problem to the most serious problems until the play reaches its ending.

Mbhele should be credited for his ability to form life-like flat and round characters. They are people that can be met on the daily basis. His characters act according to the social circumstances which the playwright has created for them. He should be credited for that. But, among the findings of this study there has been the one whereby readers become alarmed by the actions of the main character; a vivid example is in **Umninimuzi** from **Ishashalazi**, which are more of non-human nature.

Ntuli has suffered under the contemptuous behaviour and the rude talk of his wife, and his own daughter. He has been called by insulting names by his wife, in front of his daughter; in other words, he has lost his dignity. That is why his daughter has a gut to remove his food from him while he is still eating. At the end of the play, the way

Ntuli handles this issue is not satisfactory because it does not relate to the previous experiences he had undergone from them.

It could be better if Ntuli let them sleep outside, because he had not chased them away at the first place. His character is very hard to find in a real life situation, because even a priest can show his anger as it is the case with Mfundisi Ndlovu in **Ungenzani Gosa** in **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**. Contrarily, his family has been respecting him; what annoys him is that his daughter is planning to marry a married man.

Mbhele's themes circulate around the problems that are experienced by people in the contemporary South Africa. Among these problems, there are those which the victims of retrenchment are facing; as well as the clashes between traditional life and the modern life, which is characterized by the availability of Christianity and education. The problems of young people and people in general, denigrating Christian beliefs due to confrontation with social and political problems, is also the focal point of Mbhele's one-act plays. These are evident in the plays **Zikhethele** and **Udlame** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** where for example in **Udlame**, Sipho and Jabu do not lead a Christian life that is led by Mthethwa, the head of the family due to the political unrest in their location. It seems as if they are not sure of the presence of God or He is failing to come to their rescue; as a result, they do not trust in Him.

In **Zikhethele**, Sigozolo is a social problem himself, because he is a criminal who has escaped from jail. He chooses to go to the church and disturb the wedding ceremony, because he does not fear God.

The theme of the problems caused by the involvement of the parents when youths choose their own marriage partners, is observed in the play titled **Luphelile** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**. It is where Khethiwe seems to force Thandiwe into getting

married to Ndumiso, whom she has lost interest in. Khethiwe is worried about their low social status, due to the fact that they are not educated and rich. She believes that Thandiwe will bring about some improvement, if she marries Ndumiso as he comes from a wealthy and educated family. However, Thandiwe believes that a marriage is dead without children, which she thinks is relevant to Ndumiso.

The theme on the past political situation of South Africa is depicted in the play titled **Udlame** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, where there is a political violence in one of the South African townships. This political violence leads to the death of innocent people. This is evidenced by the death of Thokozani, who has come from Newcastle to visit his sister's house, without prior knowledge of what is happening in this area. This is an example of black to black violence.

The play titled **Amaphekula** from **Ezemihla Nayizolo** represents the political relationship between blacks and whites, where the blacks organise themselves into the organisation that aims at destroying whites' possessions.

The language used by the author plays an important role in the development of the story, in a way that, it unifies the story. The language used by the characters matches with the environment around them. This should be observed in the way in which his characters address each other. One can differentiate the social distance and the status of the characters, in the context of being at high or low level. It is also through this topic that, Mbhele clearly enjoys being the poet, because he uses figurative language when writing his one-act plays. Above all, his language is very enriched with idioms, ideophones, interjectives. He is also capable of coining new words.

He is also capable of choosing accurate words, for the appropriate moods of the characters, and the place as well as the social circumstances in which those particular

characters live. One can visualise from the words used by the character that the character is happy, sad or worried about something.

On the one hand, these one-act plays are about the things that are happening in real life situation, because they are about what is happening within the different kinds of families: rich and poor, families that are highly religious or not, highly involved in politics or not. They further look at what is happening in educational and religious institutions. It looks like all the aspects of life have been dealt with, and eventually, the moral lesson can be found by most if not all the readers.

But on the other hand, the play titled **Zikhethele** from **Izivunguvungu Zempilo** is very hard to believe because in most cases a person who has escaped from jail does not mix with other people, fearing that he might be reported to the police. The reason why he has come to Thobekile's wedding is also not clearly stated. One is puzzled about where he got all the information about Thobekile's wedding from, because he has been in jail. He knows very well that Thobekile would be able to explain her situation, because she is not guilty. The way he creates problems for himself signals that he is not a real or normal human being.

6.3 Some implications for further research

There is more research that could be conducted on Mbhele's one-act plays. Since his plays cover a wide variety of themes from different aspects, connected with the political, religious, educational and social point of view, themes would need further investigation. There is very little study having been done on themes, since the focus of this study has been on all the formal literary elements.

The other dimension that needs to be examined by the interested scholars could be the plot. In this study, some aspects of plot are not explained in details, and some are not touched at all.

There is a need for further research on these works, where the historical biographical approach will not be used. It is so because this becomes biased, due to the fact that the researcher is caused to think about what the dramatist had said during the interview. In this way, the researcher is not free to air his or her own ideas or views. For example, the dramatist's discussion of the main character, Sibisi as portrayed in **Imfundo Ephakeme** within the **Izivunguvungu Zempilo**, is different from what the researcher had in mind. This is because the dramatist and the researcher have different life experiences. The researcher thought that this play is about wrong types of people occupying wrong positions in certain jobs.

On the one hand, the issue of the importance of work experience, which has been the main focus of this play, is something that the researcher had not thought of. But on the other hand, this has been very useful to the researcher because she has learned to look at this play in a wider perspective. This has been very educational to the researcher, valuable knowledge of the world and literary analytical strategies have been gained. Additionally, this has served as the starting point when the researcher has been stuck or running short of ideas.

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