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B.W. VILAKAZI: A ZULU ROMANTIC POET?

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**B.W. VILAKAZI: A ZULU
ROMANTIC POET?**

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DECLARATION

I, ZWELTHINI LEO SIBISI hereby declare that **B.W. Vilakazi: A Zulu Romantic Poet?** is my own work and has been submitted before to any institutions.



Z.L. Sibisi

INTRODUCTION

B.W. VILAKAZI : A ZULU ROMANTIC POET? Is the topic of this research study. If B.W. Vilakazi is considered to be a Romantic Poet, what is it that is romantic in his poetry? If it is acceptable to say that B.W. Vilakazi was influenced by British Romantic Poets one must ask oneself what is the impact of that influence on Zulu modern poetry as we know it today?

A critical response to these questions will illuminate the Romantic features in Vilakazi's poetry. The more romantic features that are identified in Vilakazi's poetry, the greater the probabilities of concluding that he is a Zulu Romantic Poet.

The basic feature that will form the focal point of this study is "self-consciousness" in the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi since Romanticism is a response to the problem of self-consciousness (Chase, 1993). Romantic Poets focussed themselves on the following issues (among many issues): the self, nature, man, history, knowledge, imagination, social criticism, politics, love, upholding and preserving what is sacred and human experience. Some of the British Romantic Poets were highly political in their writings, embracing the French Revolution and siding with the oppressed. Their poetry was intended to be accessible to the ordinary person, and many of them were strongly left-wing (Wade, 2000 lecture notes).

This study argues that B.W. Vilakazi's use of myths, nature, Biblical allusions, historical events, traditional poetry and abstract concepts in his poetry is due to his reading of British

factor that made his poetry Romantic. Furthermore, Raymond Williams sees Romantic ideas about art originating as defensive constructions in response to social circumstances - that is, as "ideological" in the limited and negative sense of the word. At the same time he gives the Romantic writers generous credit for both the courage and the ultimate pertinence of their social criticism (Williams, 1958, cited in Chase page no. 1993).

B.W. Vilakazi's poetry is pertinent to the social problems of his time and of our time, and these problems were due to colonialism. This resulted in B.W. Vilakazi's aggrandisement of art, which is one of the major features of Romantic literature. This often resulted in the aggrandisement of the Romantic artist. This means that art, through imagination, enabled the Romantic Poet to become "the unacknowledged legislators of mankind" as a defensive reaction against their actual social and political isolation (Williams, 1958).

To Vilakazi, poetry was a means of communicating his feelings about the nature of "knowledge," culture (Zulu and western culture), Christian religion and the impact of colonialism on the South African economic social and political structure. This paper argues that it is these factors that shape the content, form and the language of the poems.

It is hoped that the way in which these arguments are treated will enable the reader to conclude (as many have concluded) that Vilakazi is a Zulu Romantic Poet Ntuli 1984, Kunene 1992, Jolobe 1945, Makhamben 1993, Msimang 1993).

The significance of this study is unquestionable with the advent of the ideology of the African Renaissance, which seeks to advance African art, literature, music, culture and traditions.

It is an indisputable truth that many South African writers were discriminated against by colonial governments. Their writings were often censored since there was no freedom of expression. It will be very unfair to omit mentioning that many aspiring young artists died before being known or noticed for their writing talent. Many of the black writers and artists who happened to become famous died as paupers e.g. Ray "Velaphi" Mvuyiswa Ntlokwana and Simon "Mahlathini" Nkabinde.

If all South African writers were suppressed, black writers were doubly suppressed. Zulu writers were compelled to write books suitable for school use and this limited their readership. The white publishing companies were not keen to publish scripts written by "Bantu" in "Bantu" language. For instance the publishing section called "Bantu Literature" published books written by B.W. Vilakazi. "Bantu" is offensive and signifies a negative stereotype towards black people.

One of the major reasons for the poor readership of African work is that a large number of black people could not write and read, and even today many black people are illiterate. Writers like Vilakazi were not only undermined by their white masters or counterparts but also by their own black people who despised them for not being rich despite their higher education. Vilakazi has registered this in his poem titled "Higher Education."

Those I grew with, those unlettered
When they meet me, they despise me,
Seeing me walk on naked feet while they travel in their cars,
Leaving me to breathe their dust:
These today are chiefs and masters.

(Zulu Horizons, page 116).

This poem depicts B.W. Vilakazi's personal experience and his interaction with his

uneducated contemporaries who mocked him because he did not have enough material possessions to meet their expectations. This poem shows what it is like to live in a world where people are valued in terms of their material possessions. It is a pity that the very people Vilakazi was trying to uplift, despised him.

It must be mentioned once again that British Romantic Poets were highly political and identified strongly with ordinary people. They were bitter at the factors that separated the natural man from the natural way of life. Natural landscapes reminded them of their freedom taken away from them by unnatural factors (in Vilakazi's case, colonialism).

This study argues that, even today, the works of African writers who have written in African languages are not receiving the interest of African readers. Many Africans despise their own languages and prefer western languages. For instance it is viewed as a sign of being uneducated to be seen reading a "Zulu novel" not to mention "ILANGA", a Zulu newspaper.

The focus of this research will be on life experiences rendered in the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi with the intention of showing the therapeutic nature of literature or poetry.

Poetry has much to offer in educating people about life, problems a person can encounter in his journey through life, sharing the beauty of nature and conscientising people about the more subtle realities of life. Romantic Poetry is about a critical engagement with these realities.

This research is meant to be an eye opener, to indicate that the time has come to cross the socio-cultural borders, to break the dividing walls, to strive for unity in diversity and to use art as a means of subverting unnatural limiting factors in our societies. The shifting of the paradigm compels every scholar in every area of study to move with times, thus accommodating current trends that come with the 21st Century. These changes are even more crucial in South Africa simply because South Africa at this juncture is going through the process of globalisation.

This study establishes that it will be impossible to globalise and to make the African Renaissance a success without the cooperation of local writers and artists. The real African Renaissance means the revival of African art, which is a way of communicating knowledge. Language in its different forms, determined by various socio-historical backgrounds, is the crucial factor in communication therefore it should not be undermined. It should be considered appropriate therefore to argue that from language stems many forms of art, and anything that inhibits language usage inhibits an art that originates from that language.

Language can only be inhibited through the inhibition of individuals using that language. Inhibited individuals cannot identify and appreciate natural beauty freely and independently. They see neither their confinement nor the need to exalt their imagination and reasoning power.

Henry Giroux and Bel Hooks have written much on cultural confinement. Paulo Freire has written more about the pedagogy for the oppressed, which came to be known as Critical Pedagogy. Henry Giroux writes about the need to cross the borders in cultural studies, and

B. Hooks on the theory of "teaching to transgress" which is an eye opener to the fact that even professors can be blinded by "cultural ideology" to the extent that they cannot see the "obvious." (Giroux, 1992, Border Crossings, Bel Hook, 1994: Teaching to Transgress).

Macedo's analysis of what he terms "the pedagogy of being is "Literacy for Stupidification." This study provides compelling evidence that the people of the world are subjected to political manipulation, and if this is the case with the first world countries, it will be even worse with the third world countries. This study by Macedo could serve as a good example of how western ideology has been propagated and translated to the third world countries. (Macedo, 1992: 183-205).

B.W. Vilakazi is the hybrid product of the African-Western culture encounter. Like British Romantic Poets he is able to see the social problems, which are obvious to him but not that "obvious" to other people, and his calling is to become the mouthpiece of the ancestors of his nation, the Zulu nation. The ancestors give him crucial information that should be passed on to the Zulu nation.

B.W. Vilakazi is considered a pioneer of modern Zulu literature. He was the first person to write poetry in the Zulu language. His first book entitled Inkondlo kaZulu was published in 1935. It was an anthology of poetry, which contained 21 poems. His second collection was published in 1945 and was titled "Amal'ezulu" and contained 20 poems. Furthermore, B.W. Vilakazi wrote three novels, "Noma Nini" (1935), "uDingiswayo kaJobe" (1939) and Nje Nempela (1943). It was Vilakazi and Dlomo who dominated the years between 1930 to 1940 as African writers.

In 1962, D. Mck Malcom and Florence Louie Friedman translated Vilakazi's poems into English, and Ernest Ullman used his artistic gift to portray and interpret the thought and spirit of Vilakazi's poems. The title of the volume that contains the translation of Vilakazi's poetry is "Zulu Horizons." Friedman also translated Vilakazi's prose into English.

In 1945 J.J.B. Jolobe wrote a review of "Amal'ezulu" - the title of this work was "Amal'ezulu, the South African Outlook."

Kunene also pointed out in his M.A. dissertation that it is the Romantic Poetry of the 19th Century that had the most marked influence on Zulu poetry ... first and foremost, it was Vilakazi, the first great modern Zulu poet, who popularised pieces of poetry from 19th Century Romantic Poetry (Kunene:202, 1992).

Makhambeni also made a valuable statement in her anthology of poetry titled Ihluzo III that she edited. This was that all Zulu poems have one thing in common, they all fall under lyric poetry. This is because these poems register the feelings and the emotions of the poet.

British Romantic Poets explored their growing self in their poetry. B.W. Vilakazi's exploration of "self" is due to his reading of British Romantic poems. This has produced a remarkable impact in the work of all those Zulu poets who come after him.

Romanticism in Zulu poetry can be justifiably attributed to the unjust social system to which Zulu poets were subject. This viewpoint is the central focus of this study.

In 1984 D.B.Z. Ntuli, a respected Zulu scholar, published his thesis titled "The Poetry of B.W. Vilakazi" in which he discusses the poems thoroughly, focusing on formative influences and various themes rendered in Vilakazi's poetry. D.B.Z. Ntuli also hints that Vilakazi was strongly influenced by British Romantic Poets.

In 1993 C.T. Msimang, another well known Zulu scholar, published a book titled "Izimbongi Izolo Nanamuhla" that raises another crucial point. Even though many writers agree that western writers were emulated, there are strong sentiments from some "concerned" Zulu scholars that in Zulu poetry there is no prose poetry and epic poetry. This includes many other poetic conventions that, according to some critics, Vilakazi failed to emulate from British Romantic Poets. These critics reject some forms of poetry as not qualifying to be called sonnets, epics and prose poetry since it is impossible to meet the conventions required by these forms of poetry. The major problematic poetic conventions that are difficult to produce when writing in Zulu are metre, specified rhyming in the case of the sonnet, and the appropriate length in the case of the epic. It is this and other criticisms that raise doubts as to whether B.W. Vilakazi is a Zulu Romantic Poet or not. Ngwenya (1998:132) has made a valuable statement where he argues that the British Romantic Poets influenced B.W. Vilakazi, but in addition to that Ngwenya argues that B.W. Vilakazi was influenced by Christian values and a western education. Vilakazi chose both Christian values and traditional African values as equally valid sources of inspiration. In Ngwenya's article there is a crucial argument about a contradiction in Vilakazi's worldview. How could Vilakazi be a Christian, educated person and also be inspired by the national ancestors?

It is clear that Vilakazi criticised liberal Christian ideology (if Christianity is ideology in the first place) to promote and to sustain the culture of his nation. He explored the underlying myths, beliefs and symbols of his culture while relying on the standard conventions of western poetry to perform this task (Ngwenya, 1993:132).

The focus of this research is to show the extent to which Vilakazi explored his growing "self" or his subjectivity in his pursuit of knowledge. It would be less important to focus on the "form" of Vilakazi's poetry since Ntuli and other literary scholars have done a lot of research in this area. This paper seeks to illuminate interconnections between the historical context and the textual production as exemplified by Vilakazi's poetry.

As Absolum, (cited by Ngwenya, 1998) Vilakazi explains in a review of "Zulu Horizon": "Vilakazi (the poet) would, in all probability, have thought of his poetic talents as having been shaped in various ways by his social environment" (cited by Ngwenya, 1998).

It is interesting to note that Vilakazi did not discuss a social theory of literature but he would have agreed to the proposition, based on the Marxist theory of criticism, that the poet springs from a particular social group and therefore his poetic work reflects the historical social experiences of that group. As Goldmann pointed out (cited by Ngwenya, 1998), this research will argue that the world view or world vision of any social group evolves from that social group's attempts to create a meaningful and coherent value system out of its material and social circumstances. Goldmann defines worldviews as historical and social facts. They are totalities of ways of thinking, feeling and acting which in given conditions are imposed on men or social groups finding themselves in a similar economic and social situation (Goldmann 1980).

On this point, Ngwenya argues that Vilakazi's poetry presents a world vision characterised by both discrepancies and interpenetrations between African "traditionalism" and western "modernity." The poet and the social group(s) defined in terms of ethnicity, race and class, whose outlook he attempts to articulate in his poetry, have to adapt to the demands of a modern existence while simultaneously endeavouring to retain what they see as the essential features of their indigenous cultural identity. Vilakazi's poetry reflects the dilemmas and uncertainties of a poet caught between the hegemonic literary practices and ideologies of western culture and the traditional myths, beliefs and cultural practices of his native culture. This tension is evident in Vilakazi's attempts to combine traditional forms with western ones, as well as in his constant invocation of the protective and inspirational spirits of the ancestors, while showing equal respect for the basic doctrines of the Christian religion (Ngwenya, 1998:132).

It would be appropriate, therefore, to argue that social institutions such as religion, education and tribal traditions as well as belief systems provide a framework or "englobing structure" (Goldmann, 1980:132) within which Vilakazi's poetry may be interpreted. This research in particular focuses on Vilakazi's self-portrayal as a preserver of Zulu culture, as a poet who is an inspired prophet who can foretell that the Zulu culture will soon disappear with the arrival of western culture. It could be argued that to Vilakazi, Zulu culture represented the "natural" way of life. It is this view of "natural" or "nature" being the source of relief for our predicament (this "natural" way of life is linked to the glorious past or sacred past where it is claimed man lived in harmony with nature) that makes B.W. Vilakazi a Romantic Poet because the concept of nature was central in the works of British Romantic Poets.

Ngwenya (1998:132) appropriately concludes that the "world views" of the social groups presented in Vilakazi's poetry are neither consistent nor homogenous, instead they are characterised by contradictions and ambiguities. B.W. Vilakazi could be viewed as a hybrid product of these contradictions. In some of his poems Vilakazi deliberately constructs personae who assume the stance of mission-educated Africans who appreciate the utilitarian value of western education and religion, while in other poems he portrays the collective plight of the urbanised Africans caught in the intricate web of racial oppression and proletarianisation. Ngwenya argues that Vilakazi's poetry raises complex questions regarding issues of nationalism, ethnicity, class and contending ideologies.

Vilakazi's poetry also reveals the various ways in which he consciously resisted the attitudes and values that most commentators have attributed to the class of educated (western and predominantly Christian) blacks during the first part of this century. Chinua Achebe demonstrates this in his novel "Anthills of the Savana" where this class is perceived as the class of the "been to's" because they have been overseas, to mission schools and institutions of higher learning. They were alienated from traditional customs and norms. Instead of seeing western culture as superior to his own native culture Vilakazi saw the two cultures as epistemologically different yet complimentary. Vilakazi may not only be perceived as a pioneer of Zulu modern poetry but also a writer who was able to do the difficult task of combining two culturally and aesthetically different conceptions of poetry. Vilakazi has also redefined the role of the poet as an inspired interpreter of his people's collective experience as well as being the chosen mouthpiece of the ancestors (Ngwenya 1998; Ntuli 1984).

The Xhosa poet and critic, D.D.T. Jabavu, pointed out that B.W. Vilakazi attempted to imitate the "form" of western poetry in his first collection titled Inkondlo kaZulu (Jabavu

1943). B.W. Vilakazi himself made a very valuable statement in that the poetry of the west would influence all Bantu poetry because all new ideas reached the African through European standards. Vilakazi said black writers should be careful not to incorporate the western spirit in their imitation of the form.

Ngwenya has concluded that poetic techniques and the choice of topics in Vilakazi's first volume of poetry, reflect the influence of the British Romantic Poets. Perhaps Vilakazi himself would argue that the poems in Inkondlo kaZulu reflected the influence of European "form" in the poetic presentation of a recognisably African "content." It is the "content" that will be analysed in this research to show the "growing self" in Vilakazi as a person, for it is the content of his poems that is Romantic.

It could be appropriate to argue that in "Ama'lezulu" Vilakazi dispenses with European poetic techniques such as rhyme and metre and begins to imitate the style of the Zulu "Izibongo" (Cope 1984; Ngwenya 1998). Cope puts it clearly that Vilakazi in "Ama'lezulu" fulfils his Romantic temperament under the guidance of his personal muse which he gradually conceives to be a Zulu muse. According to Cope it is in "Ama'lezulu" where Vilakazi speaks from the depths of the Zulu experience (Cope, 1984).

Experience and innocence were major themes of William Blake, while odes to the wind and flowers were also major focuses of the British Romantic Poets, and it is the same with B.W. Vilakazi's poetry. Furthermore, D.B.Z. Ntuli argues that Vilakazi's conception of the muse is foreign to Zulu culture. It is in western poetry where we often find reference being made to the muses, the goddesses to whom inspiration in various arts is attributed (Ntuli 1984).

Unlike those scholars who have used the formalist approach to analyse the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi, this research study uses post-colonial theory in its analysis of Vilakazi's poetry. A Marxist approach is used in the sense that it is necessary to put his poetry into its context if we want to understand it. Critical theory is inherently an emancipatory discourse whose goal is attained by initiating a process of self-reflection in those subjects whose self-formative capacity is radically truncated by the constraints of ideological forms of consciousness.

Ideological consciousness could be defined as the preformed constellation of values and beliefs that inform through the process of socialising the person's understanding of self and others. Through critical theory this study shows how meanings that B.W. Vilakazi received from his society influenced his world view, how he internalised these meanings, how he tried to protect them from being forgotten and from being weakened by the arrival of a western form of thinking.

This study argues that a constrained self-formative process results from ideological consciousness. Perhaps B.W. Vilakazi's intention was to initiate self-reflection in the ideologically constrained Zulu nation. This change could occur in the event of insight and action similar to the therapeutic process.

Basically, Freire (1970) has a perspective of conscientisation which is the source of this research study because B.W. Vilakazi's intention was to conscientise the Zulu nation above its own predicament. The central focus of this study is the nature of self-conscious discourse in the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi. It should be borne in mind that conscientisation could be defined as the stimulation of self-reflected critical awareness in people of their

social reality and of their ability to transform that reality by their conscious collective actions. This is the process by which people try to understand their situation in terms of prevailing social, economic and political relationships.

B.W. Vilakazi wrote about his own alienation and the alienation of his nation (Zulu nation). He experienced a state of powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation and self-estrangement. It seems as if he was conscious of his subjectivity but the problem is that he appeared to be helpless to confront, influence and understand events impacting his life. B.W. Vilakazi used poetry to mediate his conscientised self to the Zulu nation, it is this that makes his poetry Romantic. Meaninglessness means lack of meaning of life, nothing to strive for and complete lack of direction or goal. Self-estrangement means that B.W. was divorced from the self, that is the objectification of self and others, or mind/body split.

The major figures in post-colonial theories have all been strongly influenced by leading post-structuralists - "Pivak" by Derrida, "Homi Bhabha" by Lacan and "Edward Said" by Foucault (Wade 2000). Post-colonial theories are preoccupied with the impact of colonialism on the colonised. Colonialism also involved the construction of the native "other" with designated qualities of irrationality, emotional excess, primitiveness, etc. Colonialism validated the western (white male) subject as rational, emotionally reasonable and advanced, etc. More than anything the anti-colonial struggle has been concerned with challenging these imposed constructions of (for instance) the African as the "negative other" to the western other, who could only abandon his/her otherness by becoming the same as the west ("black Englishman") (Wade 2000).

This research study employs this theoretical perspective because it is relevant to the scholar (B.W. Vilakazi) whose work is being studied. This paper argues that B.W. Vilakazi appropriated English Romantic Poetry into what is now called modern Zulu poetry. If this statement is true, then B.W. Vilakazi is a Zulu Romantic Poet.

This research is based mainly on what B.W. Vilakazi himself has written, his two books Inkondlo kaZulu (1935) and Amal'ezulu (1945) and articles and research works written by other scholars on his work. British Romantic Poets will not be the main focus of this research project although the nature of romantic discourse will be outlined with the intention of contextualizing this research study.

This careful analysis of B.W. Vilakazi's poetry, concludes that he is a Zulu Romantic Poet.

Following this introduction is Chapter One, which will discuss the "Colonial encounter" between the west and Africa. This chapter focuses on how western education promoted western philosophy against African philosophy or African traditionalism. Post-structuralism, post-colonial theories and post-modernist theories have argued against the grand narratives propagated by a modern western education system. Chapter One looks at how a western education system defines western philosophy and a western lifestyle, and how Africans assimilated western ideology through education offered by Colonial powers.

Specific post-colonial theorists form the basis of this study: Paulo Freire, B. Hooks; Henry Giroux; E. Chukwudi Eze; Yewdullah Kazmi, Derrida, Spivak and many others.

Chapter Two will briefly discuss the basic beliefs of Romantic Poets, that is nature and romantic discourse. Chapter Three will constitute the Bibliography of B.W. Vilakazi. Chapter Four will constitute an analysis of some poems from "Intondlo kaZulu." Chapter Five will analyse some poems taken from "Ama'lezulu."

CHAPTER ONE

POST-COLONIAL THEORIES : THE COLONIAL ENCOUNTER BETWEEN THE WEST AND AFRICA

The Colonial period was characterised by European exploration of the new worlds when Europeans crossed the seas and transported goods to these so-called "new worlds." This shaped the development of the modern world. The Colonial and Imperial domination of South Africa formed the basis on which economic, political and cultural expressions of the European countries were propagated. It was not only the goods and agricultural products that were brought into the new worlds/South Africa, but also the European's conception of "God" and "knowledge."

Education, religion and family structure were major tools in perpetuating western ideology of white supremacy. Education portrayed Europe as the model of humanity, culture and history. Those who were not from the west were regarded as less human, rational and coherent. Education was meant to teach South Africans "proper" humanity, and rational reasoning, thus civilising them and raising them from their barbaric pre-colonial way of life.

Religion, especially Christianity (although I believe that true Christianity is not a religion) was at the centre of colonisation because it was the missionaries who travelled alongside the traders, preaching the gospel based on the Bible. The Roman Catholic Church and the American Board of Missionaries had a tremendous effect on the Zulu people in South

Africa. The Zulu people were expected to forsake their religion which was based on a belief in the spirits of the ancestors, and embrace the European religion based on "God" who was portrayed as white, intelligent, and of course the God who created everything, and because of this all people were challenged to believe in Him. B.W. Vilakazi thus grew up in a society where two forms of religion were at loggerheads.

Families were the real focus of the colonial encounter between the west and Africa. Missionaries approached individual families to preach the enlightened gospel, while the traders too worked among individual African families. Many of these African families later became Christians and some became traders themselves. This actually helped in spreading western hegemony and opened the way to colonialism and imperialism, the colonised being viewed as inferior to the coloniser, who was usually white.

African people suffered at the hands of the Europeans from the beginning of the fifteenth century right up to the end of the nineteenth and into the first half of the twentieth century. The slave trade caused a horrific and violent invasion of African land resulting in a forced administration of Africans, which propagated European ethnocentrism and racism (Eze, 1997: Post Colonial African Philosophy:4-5). This lasted through the 1950's, 1960's, 1970's, 1980's and 1990's, known as the years of independence. In the case of South Africa I would argue that April 27, 1994, was the year of real independence.

My argument is that western philosophy had presented European humanity as a representative of real, universal humanity, thus viewing all non-Europeans as subhuman. This functioned as the basis justifying slavery and racial discrimination. Western science

propagated the belief that there was a biological basis to race, the evidence of which has been discredited by current scientific research. I also believe that western philosophy was imposed upon Africans as the African was seen as outside of history, and incapable of thinking in a rational way.

The early European explorers regarded Africa and other third world countries as having no religion, no law and no political order. This is made clear in a book edited by Eze, Post Colonial African Philosophy (1997:8-10). Eze cites Hegel's view of Africa as a wasteland filled with "lawlessness," "fetishism" and cannibalism, waiting for European soldiers and missionaries to conquer it and impose "order" and "morality." For me "order" and "morality" are concepts that can only be understood within a particular context. What is "orderly" and "moral" to me may not be so to somebody from a different culture. Post-colonial studies seek to depict this inhumane colonial imposition of "order" and "morality" which alienated Africans.

Post-colonial studies do this by asking interrogative questions. Who gets defined? By whom? Where? With what language components and why? Whose knowledge is it? Many of these questions form the basic tenets of the post-colonial theory.

I would say that these questions are crucial in trying to deconstruct the western ideology of white supremacy and of the inferior "other." I would argue that western philosophy has fallen into a paradox in which westerners have unconsciously promoted one worldview and neglected those, which are divergent. Hegel as cited in Eze (1997: 8-10), only focuses on what I can call a convergent solution to the African plight. I would argue that convergent

solutions are insufficient for resolving social problems. As for the language issue I will look into this later when I discuss Girouac's view of language and experience as sources of constructing a good curriculum.

Hegel, as cited in Eze (1997:8-10), held that Africans were supposed to be enslaved because slavery and colonisation benefited Africans since it brought with it moral "education," "reason," "ethics", "culture" and more, thus giving history. For him, as Eze points out, imperialism and colonial expansion of Europe was necessary for resolving the problem of poverty inherent in capitalism. I would argue that resolving a problem with a strategy that will create more discrepancies is inappropriate and limiting and produces dysfunctional characters and social ills that will affect generations to come. By this I mean that colonialism is no better than capitalism.

Capitalism is based on a "system of wants" of the individual group and as Hegel cited in Eze (1997:8-10), capitalism has generated a class of paupers and deprived certain groups of the population of the right to vote. I have already argued that capitalism is as bad as colonialism. Hegel tried to find a solution to the problem of capitalism and colonialism, and the poverty that strikes the lower classes. Eze (1997:8-10), observes that for Hegel, there are only two options to resolve the problem of poverty. The first one could be welfare. The second could be job creation (Hegel, 1967. *Philosophy of Rights* p.150).

As I would have argued, Eze (1997:8-10) also argues that the results of both options violate the basic tenets of the civil society. Welfare strips the poor of initiative, self-respect and independence. On the other hand, the creation of jobs according to Hegel, would result

in overproduction of goods and services in relation to the available market. I would prefer to quote Hegel's presentation of this case:

"When the masses begin to decline into poverty, (a) the burden of maintaining them at their ordinary standards of living might be directly laid on the wealthier class (higher taxes, for example), or they might receive the means of livelihood directly from other public sources of wealth ... In either case, however, the needy would receive subsistence directly, not by means of their work, and this would violate the principle of civil society and the feeling of individual independence and self respect. (b) As an alternative, they might be given subsistence indirectly through being given work, i.e. opportunity to work. In this event the volume of production would be increased, but the evil consists precisely in an excess of production and in the lack of a proportionate number of consumers ... It hence becomes apparent that, despite an excess of wealth, civil society is not rich enough i.e. its own resources are insufficient to check excessive poverty and the creation of a penurious rabble."

(Hegel, *Philosophy of Rights* 1967:150).

This was the source of colonialism and imperialism because it resulted in the European powers moving away from their countries searching for free markets where they could sell their goods and also discover new raw materials. In this quest they also discovered new working organic tools (human beings) to exploit. What is at stake here is that capitalism produced poverty in Europe, this poverty prompted the capitalists to explore new lands to expand their businesses. It is interesting to note that capitalism produces similar effects wherever it is introduced because in all third world countries there is poverty. Hegel, as

cited by Eze (1997:8-10), recommended the generation of more wealth for Europe from outside of Europe, through the expansion of the market for European goods as well as through colonists and colonial expansion (see Eze, *Post-Colonial African Philosophy*, 1997:9).

I must mention here that Romantic Poets wrote against poverty, and B.W. Vilakazi who wrote poetry from a colonised South Africa, wrote his poetry against poverty generated by capitalism.

Since the capitalists considered themselves better people even in the country of their origin, they could not equate themselves with the Africans. The encounter between the west and Africa therefore was characterised by inequality between the two. The non-Europeans were viewed as "backward" in "culture" and "industry" and as a result they became vulnerable to colonial exploitation. B.W. Vilakazi explores this exploitation quite well in his poem titled "In the Gold Mines" (see Vilakazi, 1945, "Amal'ezulu" p.60). I would argue that this exploitation was based on the notion that Africans were "subhuman" and thus did not deserve better treatment by the Europeans.

There was a huge wall between the Europeans and Africans, or between the coloniser and the colonised, so big a wall that even today (year 2000) South Africa is struggling to tear it down. It is sad to mention that the large proportion of white South Africans, especially Afrikaans speaking South Africans who are farmers, are not willing to see this wall fall. Eze (1997:219), observes that Hegel articulated in his own words in the "Philosophy of Rights" (1967:219), that "The civilised nations (Europe) are conscious that the rights of the

barbarians (Africans, for example) are unequal to its own and treats their autonomy as only a formality."

What is apparent in Hegel's statement is that the Europeans colonised not only the land and its resources but, as pointed out previously, they also colonised "human" raw material. Post-colonial theories have emerged against the images of Africa created by the European philosophy of people like Hegel and others. These images portray Africa as "black," "savage," "backward," "barbaric" and so on. I would say post-colonial theories seek to redefine African identity.

The breakthrough against colonial domination was the appearance of Tempels' book titled "African Philosophy." Eze (1997), points out that Tempels, who was a Belgian missionary, believed that the Beluba (an ethnic group in Zaire) ontology formed and guided the everyday ethical, political and economic existence of the African. He argued that anyone who wants to transform Africans from their barbaric, heathen state to "civilisation" must work from the understanding of African ontology (see Tempels, 1959, Bantu Philosophy 118).

This book helped in bringing together African scholars to fight against political and economic exploitation, and to interrogate and contest identities imposed upon them by the European powers (Eze, 1997:13). Post-colonial studies based on African philosophy seek to explore the claims, counterclaims, justifications, alienation and protests against colonial domination, with the intention of opening up a new language through which true African identities may be achieved and maintained.

Now I will look into what Giroux calls Post-Colonial Reputures/Democratic Possibilities. This seeks to show how language produces meaning and how post-colonial theory struggles to redefine meaning as a historical and social construction. Ngugi Wa Thiongo' pointed out that "The choice of language and the use to which it is put is central to people's definition of themselves in relation to their natural environment, indeed in relation to the entire universe." (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o 1986, "Decolonizing the Mind : The Politics of Language in African Literature" (p.4).

I would agree with Ngugi because language is embedded in people's identity, people are produced by the language they use every day. For instance, language has the power to create heroes, heroines, victims, culprits and criminals in its own right. Language assigns people to different social roles and identities, even if these people are not what they are portrayed to be. It is a pity that observers often fail to see the role played by language in determining social identities. Post-colonial theories, when used effectively, open up avenues through which people can contest meanings in order to empower themselves through new forms of meanings.

Giroux in his book titled "Border Crossings"(1992), has produced a crucial work in paving the way to an interdisciplinary approach to knowledge. The crossing of borders is vital since language works to empower and to disempower people (Henry Giroux, 1992 : "Border Crossings : Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education" : refer to the whole book).

Like many post-colonial theorists, Henry Giroux argues that it is necessary to redefine meaning as a historical and social construction. One should not only concern oneself with

the refusal to take language for granted, but post-colonial theorists and Henry Giroux argue that scholars or cultural intellectuals must seek to understand how language is produced and written within the ideology and hegemony of colonialism (Giroux, 1992:19). I would argue that regarding Giroux's propensity to cross the disciplinary borders, B.W. Vilakazi did that well by producing excellent Romantic Poetry in the Zulu language. This paper is also part of crossing the intellectual borders.

Language is a weapon through which theoretical and political fights begin over the different forms of meaning propagated by social institutions. Social institutions, by their enormous conventional power, legitimise meaning and social practices. The meaning that has been legitimised becomes a major factor in determining the nature of power relations between the "self" and "others." This also means that language is crucial as a constitutive condition for human agency (Giroux, 1992: 19). Language is used by human beings to make sense of their political, ethical, economic and social conditions.

Giroux argues that the crisis in meaning is not a coincidence but results from the attempt of a particular authority to secure its power based on a specific ideological position. Giroux attempts to challenge authorities that derive their power from the legacies of colonialism and imperialism, which he believes has resulted in a crises of meaning. Here there are apparent crises in the politics of difference and struggle. As I pointed out earlier these crises, according to Giroux, can be confronted by asking interrogative questions : For who is there a crisis? And who speaks in the name of such a crisis? How do we construct a discourse, which displaces the effects of the colonising gaze, while we are still under its influence (Giroux 1992:.20).

I mentioned that post-colonial theory derives from post-structuralism which is the ideology of western thinking. Even B.W. Vilakazi wrote from within the western hegemony since western education enabled him to see the crisis in meaning, but he was never outside the western ideology. He was a hybrid born of the encounter between western culture and African culture. As Giroux has pointed out the need to interrogate the crisis in meaning, I would argue that B.W. Vilakazi did a pretty good job in interrogating western knowledge (see the poem titled "What is Wisdom?" in "Amal'ezulu" p.10).

Post-colonial theorists help to expose the ways in which imperial centres of power formulate themselves through grand narratives, totalising forms, and through their claims of universal knowledge. Post-colonial theory opens the arena where resistance to social practices relegates "otherness" to the margins of power. As pointed out earlier, it also questions how centres of power and privilege are implicated in their own politics of location as forms of imperialising appropriation. Of crucial importance, post-colonialism contests the dominant Eurocentric writing of politics, theory and history (see Giroux, 1992:20). It is this powerful nature of post-colonialism that has made me consider it an appropriate tool to be used in the analysis of the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi.

It is the post-colonial discourse that has clarified the fact that the legacies of the political left, centre and right are complex in a way that cannot be defined. Robert Young held that: "Post-colonialism is a dislocating discourse that raises theoretical questions regarding how dominant and radical theories have themselves been implicated in the long history of European colonialism and, above all, the extent to which they continue to determine both the institutional conditions of knowledge as well as the terms of contemporary institutional

practices - practices which extend beyond the limits of the academic institution." (See Robert Young, 1990, "White Mythologies : Writing History and the west" cited in Giroux, 1992:20). This shows that all theories are part of a broader system derived from colonial discourses, and post-colonial thinkers are conscious of this indisputable fact. It is this consciousness of the complex nature of subject positions held by individual subjects in society that calls for new ways of articulating, understanding and constructing new language in accordance with the paradigm shift across different cultural sites in the social institutions.

This will enable cultural workers to transform cultural politics that has long been manipulated by the European colonisers to their benefit. This transformation enables the people to articulate their plight beyond limiting societal boundaries or grand narratives.

B.J. Vilakazi operated within these narratives but in his poetry, managed to move beyond the scope of his society through imagination. From his poetry we learn how to contemplate social problems with the intention of escaping from the harsh realities of life. I am not trying to say he was a post-colonial thinker, but my point is that he managed to cross the intellectual borders by seeking new forms of expression, and he never stopped doing that until his death. Post-colonial theorists reject the notion of a unified subject, thus constituting a dislocating tool.

Post-colonial theory is appropriate for the analysis of B.W. Vilakazi's poetry because he is a product of a colonial missionary education, it being the British liberals, missionaries, who introduced education in South Africa. Knowledge and power was propagated through the

English language. B.W. Vilakazi studied English as part of his junior degree and came across British Romantic Poetry. Being inspired by this form of expression, he began to incorporate it into Zulu poetry. What does this mean to cultural workers? It means that "knowledge" is intrinsically linked to colonial discourse, it doesn't matter whether we live in the years of independence or not, post-colonialism has posed a need to explore the nature of what we call "knowledge" (Carlin 1993 : 11).

Colonialism has not only been associated with land but with the mind as well. I have already pointed out that Europeans colonised the land and its people. Today one may appropriately argue that colonialism and imperialism are things of the past, but on the contrary, I would argue that colonialism is still alive and kicking in our minds. Racism, patriarchy, ableism and sexism are all features of the covert colonialism in our minds. These features are manifested in any "text" that one grabs from a bookshelf and from any articulated and printed discourse.

Perhaps colonialism can take different forms. Kistner (1989:35) points out that the South African Communist Party had proposed a theory of "internal colonialism" or "colonialism of a special type". This theory combines "the worst features of both imperialism and colonialism in a single national frontier" and in which "non-white South Africa" is constructed as a colony of white South Africa. "Colonialism has produced a complex social context and complex characters which post-colonial theory enables us to "critique and redefine." B.W. Vilakazi falls under this category of complex characters.

The condition where colonialism continues to survive even if it has been declared as a thing

of the past, is called neo-colonialism. Colonialism is apparent in different forms of attitudes, knowledge and cultures today. This means that modern South Africa derives from the colonial past its present existence. Leon De Kock (1996 p.196, "Civilising Barbarians") points out that the colonial past established resistant forms of subjectivity, self-apprehension and authoring, and "post-colonial" theories are a tool through which colonial forms of knowledge and aesthetics can be identified and relativised. What is at stake here is the need to study history in order to better understand the present forms of knowledge.

I would argue that social power is produced through a series of abstract discourses that function to obscure the "reality" of subjugation to the common man as well as to the so-called "educated" man, both white and black. This is because the worldview as it stands today is produced from western education. Western education has become the only way in which people can know their world. I would argue that every man to be considered "good," "normal," "rational," or acceptable as "normal" must submit to the western conventions of knowledge.

Those who try and resist the western type of knowledge in order to maintain and propagate their local, original, true forms of knowledge are often rejected as "backward" and more specifically as "unacademic" in their approach. My point here is post-colonialism will enable the "natives," (Bantu) to express their plight in a way comfortable to themselves. I believe that western education has become a watchdog through its various forms of limiting evaluative standards which are justified as the "need for developing and maintaining excellence in any field of study." Through this means the power of the western hegemony is subtly used to transform people into subjects.

The question of power is crucial to any study that seeks to make people conscious of the harsh realities of colonialism in their lives. Through social power, different social positions are produced into which people are assigned without their consent. This is obviously made possible through the process of socialisation, a process that people often take for granted. (See Foucault on "The Subject and Power" 1982:777-790).

Foucault argues that knowledge functions and circulates in relation to power (p.778). Power operates on a daily basis to categorise the individual, giving him/her their identity, imposes upon them a law of truth which they must accept and which other people must also accept and recognise in them. For Foucault, it is the form of power that "makes individuals subjects" (p.781). Like Foucault, I would define the word "subject" as meaning to be under the control of a powerful individual, i.e. a king, white baas or any authority figure. The second meaning of the word is the fact that each individual has an identity of his or her own through self-knowledge. Foucault argues that both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates (p.781).

In the case of B.W. Vilakazi's poetry, a black is portrayed as subjugated to the power of white men in various ways. Vilakazi's education fails him since he is still not a rich man despite his high qualifications (B.W. Vilakazi : "Amal'ezulu" 1945, poem titled "Higher Education" p.4). Vilakazi was aware of this subjugation, see also a poem "In the Goldmines" (p.60) and a poem "Come Monster of Steel!" (p.22). In these poems Vilakazi registers the impact of the imposed identity, power and subject position upon the Africans. These are discussed in detail in the course of this thesis.

The colonial domination therefore was made possible through two main tools. (1)

Education or ideology was where people were persuaded to consent. In this case people had to agree to accept the white God presented to them by the white missionaries through the medium of narratives. (2) If people disagreed, then coercion was applied (armies, police and punishments). (Althusser 1971 on "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" - refer to the whole text).

I would argue that it is post-colonial theory's concern with unequal power relationships that makes it a critical field of study. It enables cultural workers to see the unnaturalness of the social arrangement, as the western hegemony, through its education, seeks to make people believe that things are this way because that is the way they are meant to be. Post-colonial theory is concerned also with the ways in which dominant meanings are maintained, challenged and changed.

Post-colonial theory would regard B.W. Vilakazi as a hybrid of the interaction between western culture and African culture. Vilakazi constitutes the copy of western, missionary education. He worked within it to appropriate its basic tenets to suit his intention for sustaining Zulu nationalism. It is in his poems where we see Vilakazi's criticism of the western way of life, and where we also see Vilakazi's own complex character. In fact I would argue that in his poems, B.W. Vilakazi assumes different voices and characters. Within post-colonial studies this changeable nature of the subject is called alterity (Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, 1998, "Key Concepts" p.11).

It is crucial to understand that the African as the "other" has many faces, which means that the "otherness" can now no longer be perceived as something stable. Africa has been

Europe's "other" (meaning inferior) and must now extricate itself, making Europe the "other" (meaning the hostile oppressor). But one may argue that it is not the goal of liberation to turn Europe into the "other" and to see it merely as the "hostile oppressor." The reality is that the concept of "otherness" does not exist, it is a creation that can be assigned to anybody. There is nothing "purely" European or African.

I would now look at alterity in relation to B.W. Vilakazi's Zulu nationalism against western hegemony. According to Bruce Janz the alterity, dialogue and African philosophy edited in Eze (1997:231-232) and as I have mentioned above, "otherness" has many faces. Zulu nationalism can be seen as something exotic and foreign by European explorers. At the same time it could also be the object of idle curiosity, of collection, of pride. This face is called "fascination". Perhaps to Vilakazi, Zuluness may constitute a collection of pride and identity, something that he wants to maintain forever.

I would also argue that in Vilakazi's time, the Zulu nation and its culture was beginning to lose its basic flavour of norms and values. Vilakazi as a seer was worried about the arrival of western culture, which was becoming more popular among the Zulus. Some may also argue that the Zulu culture of B.W. Vilakazi was not pure as from the times of King Shaka, since the Zulu nation constituted a mixture of different Nguni people forcefully combined by Shaka. I would leave this issue to the literary scholars to draw their own conclusions.

The "other" could be what needs to be avoided as it unsettles me since it reminds me of my own weakness in the sense that I can be corrected. This makes me feel ashamed of myself. Self-pity is also depicted in the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi. Generally, in many of his poems,

he pleads with the ancestral spirits to correct him, to guide him, and to open up his imagination so that he can write to preserve the sacred culture of the Zulu people. This face is called "repulsion", which is a feeling of disgust. In Vilakazi's poetry, I would say repulsion is linked to the self-consciousness of his complex character.

Zulu culture, to B.W. Vilakazi, could be said to be something that should be possessed by the Zulu people because it fills a lack in their existence. Many African people strongly believe that their cultures form part of their lives. The culture is observed by those who are still alive, but is owned and controlled by the spirits of the ancestors. To observe your culture appropriately will please your ancestors and they will bring you the good things in life, but to disregard your culture will annoy your ancestors who will then bring bad luck to your life. This face is called "desire", the willingness to control or to own. Ownership also makes a person feel his existence and dignity

I would argue that in his poetry B.W. Vilakazi now and again depicts his subjectivity as that of a person who desires to own, but instead is owned and controlled by external powers, i.e. the social and political circumstances of his time. The ancestral spirits of his nation also own him, and control him by nature or natural elements that carry him away into imagination, which results in his poetry. At times he desired to control the wind, the train and the Victoria Falls.

One's life depends perhaps on "otherness" of some sort, as the Europeans' existence was made possible by their creation of the non-Europeans as the outside "other". For instance, the existence of religious people depends on their belief in the "otherness" of God. This face

of "otherness" is called "dependence". Vilakazi's existence depended on the otherness of the ancestral spirits and on the otherness of the colonial masters. Here one can think of the reciprocal nature of life. Europeans could only make sense of their own identity provided they defined themselves in relation to the outside "other." But at the end there is no "pure" African or European.

The best known face of "otherness" is the one called "smugness". This other is believed to be primitive in comparison to "us," and is without any culture. This is the "otherness" that was assigned to the Africans by the colonisers, who had a mission to civilise the barbarians. I would argue that this was the most prejudiced approach ever applied in human relationships since these white traders and missionaries did not bother about understanding the way of life of the African. It was white supremacy that prevented them from treating Africans as human beings.

The Africans were expected to be like their colonial masters, perhaps to become copies of their white colonisers. I have pointed out earlier that western education has become the centre of the prevailing worldview. Through it Africans are assimilated into the western way of life. In fact I can appropriately argue that the modern South African can call himself "western" because according to my point of view "west" can no longer be defined only in terms of geographical location. I feel being "western" is a concept, a cultural idea that denotes the assimilated western culture by third world countries like South Africa. This face of "otherness" is called "appropriation" and B.W. Vilakazi has largely appropriated western poetry.

Marginalisation of the Africans by the European people was apparent in all spheres of social life in South Africa. The black people were treated as "subhuman," "backward," "Bantu". Even Vilakazi's books were published by the "Bantu" section of the printing department of Wits University. His, and many other books written by blacks, were said to belong to "Bantu" studies. I believe this was not a coincidence, it had a purpose - to despise and marginalise their work because they were black. "Bantu" to me means that their work made no sense to the white masters since it did not derive from the centre. I would also argue that writers like Vilakazi were undermined especially because they wrote in their mother tongues. I believe this created barriers even for those whites that happened to have an interest in their literary works.

B.W. Vilakazi had a burden to unlock the hidden secrets, to open up new ways of expression and new ways of seeing among the Zulu people. As the "other" he had the ability to understand the "traditions" and the "prejudices" covered by ideologies in his society. His duty as an intellectual was to uncover these social ills and seek to open new horizons. In most of his poems he is generally redefining, questioning, appropriating and creating new ways of seeing, that can liberate his nation.

Black people have long been the servants of the white people because the whites dominated South Africa until April 27, 1994. Blacks were not just servants, they were also slaves. I would argue that even today blacks are still slaves but in more subtle ways. In his poem titled "In the Goldmines" ("Amal'ezulu" p.60) Vilakazi equates the African labourers with machines. They are both the "other". He goes to the extent of saying that machines are treated better than the African labourers are. This poem is analysed in greater detail in the course of this thesis.

Black people could be viewed as the object through which whites measure their ability and power. The white man, now and again compares himself with the black man, the otherness that makes white men's good qualities noticeable. That is, the goodness and the darkness of Europe depend on the presence of Africa as a particular "other." Since the superiority of Europe cannot exist without the inferiority of the African continent and other third world countries, I would argue that the whole issue of European superiority and African inferiority is a myth.

In a poem titled "Mamina" (p.42 in "Amal'ezulu") or as translated by Friedmann "An Ode to the Muse", Vilakazi finds himself reflected in Mamina, he feels renewed or refreshed when he is with Mamina. This face of "otherness" is called a "mirror" and it goes hand in hand with the "body" which constitutes part of "self" which is always subordinate to "thought." All these forms of tropes are depicted in B.W. Vilakazi's poetry and prove the complex nature of his character. This shows that his writings were informed and motivated by the experiences of the African people in colonial Africa/South Africa.

B.W. Vilakazi appropriated English Romantic Poetry into what is known today as modern Zulu poetry. Appropriation refers to the ways through which post-colonial societies take over aspects of the imperial culture: language, forms of writing, film, theatre, even modes of thought and arguments such as rationalism, logic and analysis that may be of use to them in articulating their own social and cultural identities (Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, 1998, "Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies" (p.19).

Appropriation also refers to an instance whereby the imperial powers incorporate as their own, the land and the culture that it has invaded (Spurr, 1993.28). Post-colonial theorists are concerned about the ways in which the dominated or the colonised culture can use the

tools of the dominant culture to resist its political or cultural control. The dominant language and its discursive form are appropriated to express widely differing cultural experiences and to interpolate these experiences into the dominant modes of representation to reach the widest possible audience.

B.W. Vilakazi resorted to borrowing the external decorations of the poetic works of the British Romantic Poets while maintaining the spirit of the ancestors of his nation behind his poetry. Here I am not contradicting my argument made in my introduction to this thesis that Vilakazi was strongly influenced by British Romantic Poets, this is true. My point is, he did not merely rely on British Romantic Poets. Vilakazi was original in his work, and his Romantic nature was due to his life experiences as an educated African poet.

Vilakazi was aware that he was writing for Africans so he wrote in his mother tongue "isiZulu." For his people to accept his poetry he had to have the support of the ancestral spirits, which is totally different from the muses of the British Romantic Poets. Ngugi also renounced the use of colonial language by writing his novels and plays in Gikuyu (Nsusi, 1981, cited in Ashcroft et al 1998:19). Like B.W. Vilakazi, Ngugi appropriated the form of his novels and is regarded as a successful writer, although he was writing in his mother tongue.

Ashcroft (et al, 1998:19-21) argues that many other non-English speaking writers who have chosen to write in English do so not because their mother tongue is regarded by them as inadequate, but because the colonial language has become a useful means of expression. On the other hand, writers such as Ngugi argue that since access to English in post-colonial

societies is often restricted to an educated "elite" this "wider" audience is largely outside the country, or restricted to the comprador class within the society. The debate has been a persistent one (Ashcroft et al, 1998:19-21).

These debates on the political effect of choosing "English as a medium of expression are repeatedly supported by the claim that language is embedded into a particular cultural background that can make that text inaccessible to the speakers of another language" (Ashcroft et al, 1998:20).

Those critics and writers who appropriate ex-colonial languages for their own use or benefit, argue that although language may create powerful emotive contexts through which local identities are formed, and whilst the use of non-indigenous languages may, as a result, appear to such communities to be less authentic than texts in indigenous languages, such languages do not in themselves constitute an irrecoverably alien form. They may be appropriated to render views that are just as powerful in constructing anti-colonial texts (Ashcroft et al, 1998:20). What Ashcroft and his associates point out here directs me to the fact that western hegemony has blinded Africans until they despise their language in favour of foreign languages. How then can they write in their mother tongues?

I am openly aligning myself with these critics cited in Ashcroft because the appropriation constitutes a powerful tool through which colonial discourse can be deconstructed. For now I would say that writers should not be discouraged from writing in their mother tongues since their works can be rendered into another language where necessary through translation. I do not know why Africans are compelled to write their literary works and even their academic papers in a language that is not theirs, while other writers especially

French writers who are famous for their literary theories, originally wrote those theories in their mother tongues. There is a bias in this area that must be redressed because it is a feature of the colonial degradation of African languages. We need to decolonise the mind.

In South Africa, people who speak English very well are viewed as "clever" and those who are not fluent in English are despised despite their cleverness. It is disappointing to see South African parents taking their children to predominantly white schools to learn English. Many of these black children do not have Isixhosa or Isizulu or any African language as their first language but use English at school and at home because of the fact that their parents are educated. It is true that B.W. Vilakazi was an inspired poet because he predicted the loss of the sacred, rich Zulu language.

Some parents send their children to overseas schools. These children, when they return, are confused since they do not fit into the African culture, cannot speak an African language or read it. They usually occupy top positions in governmental departments and in the media and in turn become role models for the youth in a very negative way, because they are living testimony of the fact that a foreign language (English in this case) is the language of power.

B.W. Vilakazi anticipated this, and it is this that made his poetry Romantic. I have pointed out in the Introduction that some Zulu scholars argue that the inclusion of all poetic requirements is impossible when one is writing in the Zulu language. These scholars argue that any form of writing trying to meet the western poetry requirements will be less authentic. But my question is, is there an authentic culture?

Like Ashcroft *et al* (1998:21), I would argue that the debates about the presence of authentic culture have been for many years, part and parcel of cultural studies. There has been a demand for a rejection of the influence of the colonial period in anti-colonisation programmes which have induced the idea that certain forms are "inauthentic". Some decolonisers are arguing for a return to "authentic" pre-colonial traditions and customs. Like Ashcroft and his associates, I would argue that this claim to cultural authenticity is problematic because it aligns itself with an essentialist cultural position in which fixed practices become iconized as authentically indigenous and others are excluded as hybridised or contaminated (Ashcroft *et al*, 1998:21).

My argument in opposition to cultural authenticity is that cultures are not static but dynamic, and nobody can control their dynamic nature. Post-colonial theories informed by post-structuralism and post-modernism thinking, find this issue much more difficult to resolve, reflecting perhaps the political problem of discovering a firm ground for material practice in an analysis that emphasises the radical instability of signs and fundamental and persistent difficulty of "grounding" systems in an objective, material, extra discursive "space" (Ashcroft *et al*, 1998:21).

It is impossible to ignore the fact that there is no "essence" as such in culture whatsoever but Ashcroft and his associates argue that it can be used as a strategic tool to unsettle the imperial power. I would say that certain practices are peculiar to one culture and not to others. This proves that what is normal, acceptable and valuable to one cultural group is not so with others.

Different racial groups have different speaking norms, dancing norms and mannerisms. These may serve as important identifiers and become the means by which those cultures can resist oppression and oppose homogenisation by global forces (Ashcroft *et al*, 1998:21). It is dangerous to look at certain cultural features in a fixed and stereotypical manner, because this may imply that these cultural signifiers are authentic and that cultures are not subject to change.

I would argue that those who propagate cultural essentialism do so to support their cultural patriarchy. For instance, traditional African men who strongly believe in polygamy may argue that it is in African culture for a man to have more than one wife. What is at stake here is that various people cultivate essentialism deliberately to support their ideological positions. Perhaps even B.W. Vilakazi had to align himself with this position in order to affirm the Zulu culture.

This is also very true of Ashcroft (Ashcroft *et al*, 1998:22) who argues that many subordinated societies may use signifiers of authenticity to justify their continued and valid existence as they inevitably become hybridised and influenced by various social and cultural changes. But Griffiths points out that if this view is too rigid, it can prevent the aim of these subordinated societies being achieved (see Griffiths, 1994:6).

B.W. Vilakazi belonged to an ethnic group called Zulus, his personal experiences stemmed from political and social problems faced by this ethnic group. Ethnicity is one of the key concepts in post-colonial studies. Schermerhorn (1974:2) defines ethnicity as the fusion of many traits that belong to the nature of any ethnic group: a composite of shared values, beliefs, norms, tastes, behaviours and loyalties.

Traditionally ethnicity has been used by the dominant groups to divide people in terms of various cultures, traditions, languages, social patterns and ancestry. For me ethnicity has been used negatively, to regard certain social groups as "backward." I would argue that ethnicity has no biological basis, just like racism which has long been justified on the basis of genetics. Recent scientific research has discredited the biological evidence of race.

Ashcroft and his associates (Ashcroft *et al*, 1998:80) point out that a person's ethnic group is a powerful identifier because while he or she chooses to remain in it, it is an identity that cannot be denied, rejected or taken away by others. Whereas race emerged as a way of establishing a hierarchical division between Europe and "others", identifying people according to fixed genetic criteria, ethnicity is usually deployed as an expression of a positive self-perception that offers certain advantages to its members. Membership of an ethnic group is shared according to certain agreed criteria, even though the nature, the combination and the importance of those criteria may be debated or may change over time.

This paper argues that B.W. Vilakazi attempted to defend his ethnic group and to point to what should be done by the Zulu nation to protect their culture. Within the racial groups in South Africa, ethnicity was linked to self-determination. It is interesting, if not shocking, to know that in past times the English used the word "ethnic" to refer to culturally different "heathen" nations (Ashcroft *et al*, 1998:81).

It is interesting to note that ethnic identities can outlive cultural assimilation, and their persistence does not necessarily depend on the perpetuation of traditional cultures. Very often when people talk about ethnicity they link it with traditional cultures and racism, or

backwardness. Ashcroft observes that very few features of traditional culture need to be selected as "symbolic elements" around which ethnic identity revolves, and individuals need to experience very few of the defining criteria (e.g. common ancestry) to consider themselves members of the group (Ashcroft *et al*, 1998:84).

This enables the post-colonial theorists to argue that no ethnic group is completely unified or in complete agreement about its own ethnicity and there is no essential feature that can be found in ethnic groups, just as there is no essential feature found in traditional cultures. For post-colonial theorists, ethnicity and traditional culture have been hybridised, as is B.W. Vilakazi's social identity (Ashcroft *et al*, 1998:84; Isajaw 1974:118; Schermerhorn, 1970:12).

In conclusion it would be crucial to state that my research will offer a post-colonial reading of B.W. Vilakazi's poetry. In my reading I will pay special attention to the effects of colonisation depicted in his poetry. I will try to limit myself to the contents of the poems, although some critics might consider this form of analysis as nothing less than the retelling of the obvious content of the poems. I believe that the harsh realities are undermined by referring to them as the "obvious." Obvious is nothing less than a cliché. This will also help to show the Romantic nature of the poetry of B.W. Vilakazi because the poetic contents is on the life of ordinary people living in poverty due to the modern capitalist mode of the economy which the radical Romantic Poets wrote critically against.

CHAPTER TWO

NATURE AND ROMANTIC DISCOURSE

Romantic discourse could be seen as the ways in which the writers of the period between 1780-1830 were engaged in a particular occupation. Discourse is a system of meanings and language is the system through which these meanings are communicated (see Selden, 1993:38-39).

This occupation, I would argue, basically involved a constant exploration of man in relation to nature. For conveniences sake I would refer to this discourse as a self-conscious discourse, which I believe became the drive behind Romantic Poetry, even to B.W. Vilakazi, and it brought together nature and man in a quest (Harold Bloom and Lionel Trilling, 1973:6).

The Romantics' way of thinking and writing was a deliberate expression and explanation of their own subjectivity, or their awareness of themselves in relation to the world around them. Romantics were looking for a perfect state of existence, seeking sublimity, and felt that the potential of man was unlimited. They thought man could still exist within nature.

Romantic writers have the following characteristics: Their writings are suggestive of an idealised self; they hold a fantastic view of reality; and their writings are more concerned with feelings and emotions than with form and aesthetic qualities. Romantic Poets are imaginative, visionary and idealistic. They register much of the instinctual notions. Their

thinking could be attributed to their belief that there are innate structures or fixed mental structures that govern man's behaviour (Alan, Cooper and Dehart, 1992:10-11; Potter, 1987:206).

The founder of this idea was Rousseau, then Dawin, Hall, Gesel, Freud, Bowlby and Piaget. The word nature can be defined at two levels. Firstly, nature refers to things, persons, innate or essential qualities or characters. Secondly, nature refers to the physical power causing all the phenomena of the material world. These phenomena include man, plants, animals and landscape, etc. Romantics believe that children are born active, they can actively explore their environment and are responsible in shaping their development through the process of natural unfolding. Since children are natural beings they are capable of developing rational and natural thought. I believe that this is how the notion of the quest (a man on a quest) came to the fore (Alan, Cooper and Dehart, 1992:10-11; Potter, 1987:209-210).

It may have been noted that the term "Romanticism" has not been defined in the first lines of this chapter. This is because Romanticism has no precise definition, resisting its definers who can fix neither its characteristics nor its dates (Bloom and Trillings, 1973:3). Romanticism is a broad movement in the history of European and American consciousness, but whether it represents a genuine change in consciousness we still cannot know or guess (Bloom and Trilling, 1973:3).

European enlightenment which took place in the 17th Century brought a tremendous change in the history of European thinking and also signalled an end to the Renaissance

(Bloom and Trillings, 1973:3). Romanticism had faced many challenges, especially from the modern thinkers and I could argue even from post-modern movements, but it is interesting that Romanticism is still alive as a form of expression today.

Romanticism could be viewed as the late phase of enlightenment against which it helplessly rebelled. Bloom and Trillings argue that spiritual differences between the classic poets, Pope and William Blake, fade away when they are compared with representative current figures like Norman Mailer or Robert Well. When we also take Milton and Wordsworth, Tennyson and Yeats, and compare them with our present poets we see that all these poets are enlightened rationalists because they all believed, as did Pope and Blake, in the power of mind over the universe of sense (Bloom and Trillings, 1973:3).

These poets, according to Bloom and Trillings, all believed that the mind of a poet reflected a coherent order in history or nature or society, or the combination of all these factors. Although they believed in the vision of chaos they also believed that chaos was irrational and needed to be organised into an intellectual order (Bloom and Trillings, 1973:3).

In the Oxford Anthology of English Literature, English Romanticism as a historical phase of literature is taken as extending from Blake's earliest poems printed in 1783, up to Tennyson's first public volume (1830). These dates are arbitrary, and to some extent now traditional (Bloom and Trilling, 1973:3). These scholars also point out that Romantic Poetry in English does not end with the young, unhappy poets of the 1820's (Clare, Beddoes, Darley) but continues its complex course through Victorian and Modern poetry.

Bloom and Trillings argue convincingly that Yeats is no less a Romantic Poet than Blake, or Hardy than Shelley, nor can we say just where English Romantic Poetry, let alone Romantic Poetry, begins. They point out that English Romanticism could be rightly or otherwise attributed to the English Renaissance, which was a return to the English classics like Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton and aimed at producing the literature of enlightened people of England (Bloom and Trillings, 1973:3).

This restoration of English literature, according to Bloom and Trillings, began long before Blake's *Poetical Sketches* of 1783. This Blake volume is said to owe most to the poetry of sensibility, of anguished feelings that sought to return to a pre-Enlightened age some forty years before. Romantics sought to restore social life.

Romantic Poets are very complex because they appear in different forms to their readers. Some readers see them as mere poets, some see them as the quasi-autobiographical heroes of their poems, and I would also add that I see them as creators or gods of some sort. What stands out about them is that they are all engaged through their imagination. We are made to believe that a man might hope to become his own father, or at least his own heroic forerunner (Bloom and Trillings, 1973:4).

Early scholars have long viewed Romanticism as a genre that constitutes emotional naturalism, a return to the feelings, a return to folk traditions, to the stories of the marvellous and supernatural. Romanticism was viewed as a health-restoring revival of instinctual life. However, the century's constraints demanded that the instincts be sublimated in the names of reason and society. Romanticism demanded more natural love and sensuous

beauty. Because of this, High Romanticism attained a crisis in the instinctual life because life could not afford their demands. They resorted to imagination as an escape from internal conflict (see Bloom and Trilling, 1973:4).

Romanticism is evident in love, imaginative poems, prose, music and in art today it produces people and presents them with a dilemma of "self" and the "other." Many scholars argue that Romanticism could not solve this "self" and "other" conflict; on the other hand some scholars see Romanticism as a tool with which the deep hole that exists between the subject and the object can be filled.

Coleridge held that a poem resulted from the same process (organicism) that produced simultaneously a tree, a world, and a work of art. Coleridge and his contemporaries held that this analogy had a pragmatically liberating effect which was felt most strongly in the idea (or complex of ideas) that high Romanticism called imagination (Bloom and Trillings, 1973:5). Romantics were very empirical, because they strongly believed in the power of creative mind against the phenomenal universe and this opened or grounded a split between subject and object.

Wordsworth thought of imagination as a powerful, glorious faculty while the poets of his time only viewed imagination as one faculty among many constituting human enrichment. William Blake openly rejected it as a faculty at all. Major Romantics aligned themselves with William Blake's concept of imagination as what constituted a real man and fallen human potential. Romantic writers held that imagination is an autonomous entity. This has made the modern scholar begin to try and understand the nature of imagination in literature.

What remains apparent is that the major Romantic Poets assumed that the creative mind or imagination had the ability to perceive and to create a reality and truth far more reliable than any mode of understanding. The source of high Romanticism, Romantic consciousness, is the problem of realisation of the sublime. Romanticism can be referred to as a form of internalisation of quest-Romance, with the poet as quester of selfhood (manifested as an excessive self-consciousness) (Bloom and Trilling, 1973:6).

The points discussed above constitute the major features of Romanticism. The Romantic discourse had its source in major social changes. I will now address myself to these social changes that informed the Romantic discourse. The 18th Century was a period of major revolution in Europe. In 1789 there was the French Revolution, in 1776 was the American War of Independence, and at the end of this century there was a war against Napoleon's empire. It was a period of building up ideas. These events troubled the spirit of the whole world (Potter, 1987:202; Davies, 1989:238-239).

The major person in Romanticism is Rousseau. Rousseau attributed a revolt to the way in which society was constructed or structured. He argued that man's plight was a direct consequence of his social order. Marx continued this idea by arguing that artificial social structures based on privilege and financial gain were responsible for the suffering of man. He gave the world the social contract, whereby the head of state is contracted or mandated to serve the people, not to be a ruler or a master. He is essentially their servant (Potter, 1987:209-210).

Europe had emerged from feudalism a few centuries before and there was no democratic government. There were privileged classes, because the system was based or depended on

position and privilege. It was an autocratic form of government with no real representation . There was no vote for every individual. These changes brought about progress in industrial development, but this progress was slow. It took a long time to benefit the labouring classes or peasants and their standard of living was lowered in the initial stages of the introduction of industrialisation. People were dependent on weaving to gain an income (Potter, 1987:203).

There was more poverty and discomfort as political changes made life difficult for the common people. Although changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution were supposed to make life easier, the difficulties increased. The whole fabric of society was in the process of change, from autocracy to democracy. In this period many things happened that could be linked to a specific period since they were the consequences of a particular social order in a particular period (Rodway, 1963:14).

One feature or aspect of the period that had many consequences was technology. The development of navigation enabled traders to sail more accurately and this precise navigation made a big difference. Markets for produce and trade could be predicted and easily reached. The steam engine was used in manufacturing goods such as turning wheels to grind. This led to growth in the production of agricultural goods. There was a need to move these goods around the country, which led to the development of roads, which influenced the geography.

Towns developed rapidly but there was a problem with sanitation as there was no water or sewage, and a shortage of food. These were the contexts in which the Romantic Poets

wrote. They wrote mostly in response to the negative effects of industrialisation. The positive effect was that people were able to be educated. The population at large was uneducated. It was a period of the development of a middle class. Book production developed, newspapers were established. This market for the printed word made a difference to the people who produced and wrote books.

There was a demand for literature, which created opportunities for authors and poets. Individualistic or subjective texts were produced that catered for widely held tastes and authors developed different styles. Romantics thought of themselves as just writers. There was a demand for writers, especially in Germany. Wordsworth in 1748 produced "Lyrical Ballads." Samuel Taylor Coleridge produced a prose work round about 1815 called "Biographia Literaria" or lives of poets which included many statements about poets especially Wordsworth (McCoy and Harlan, 1992:28-29, also see Bloom and Trillings, 1973).

Philosophical works introduced the concept of imagination, which is central to Romantic Poetry. Shelley wrote "In Defence of Poetry." Keats wrote many letters in which he talks about his ideas on poetry. However, Parter's is the first essay in English that focuses on Romanticism as a topic. The Romantic character in art is the addition of strangeness to reality. "Strangeness" means curiosity, the artists curiosity about the world. The artist has a natural interest about the world, an eagerness for new ideas, new things need to be explored (Bloom and Trillings, 1973).

A combination of qualities describing the Romantic character was the need to balance the

desire and curiosity for beauty. Romantics took beauty as a constant in the artist. The balance between curiosity and the desire for beauty was taken as characterising the artist. This meant that too little curiosity distorts and exaggerates the world. The Romantic spirit was a successful balance between beauty and curiosity. This forms the basis of the thread from 1876 to recent times.

Pater points to a similar idea in 1957, and Harding argued that Romantics extended the range of interests in literature. It brought about change in interest and perspectives in literature. Literature was anything written, expanding the range from a narrow to a wider set of interests. The interests of Pope were classical, for instance heroism. They ignored ideas of ordinary people, the poor, the old, working class people and peasants.

Romantics extended the classical world arguing that there are other ideas, for example about children and self, which is the interest of "self." For Pater, the Romantic artists added curiosity to his search for beauty. Blake and Wordsworth were particularly interested in the lives of ordinary people. Critics give emphasis to different aspects of Romanticism. Some argue that there are dominant norms, which give us a balance of opposing ideas: man-nature, consciousness-unconsciousness. Other critics attempted an overview of Romanticism and argued that it changes from spatial projection of reality, involving a shift of emphasis from a sense of an external reality (Potter, 1987:206-207).

Romantics believed that sin and corruption contaminated the earth, the centre of the universe. After Copernicus and Newton, space became empty and threatening, sinister. There was a sense that space was alien. In Romanticism artists came across a sense of

creative force within man. Mythopoetic is a creative figure from imagination, mostly mythical, which can be either good or evil. Imagination is seen as a god-like force because of its creative powers. H.M. Abrams, a prominent critic, argued that Romanticism has a built-in expectation of revolutionary transformation (Potter, 1987:206-207).

William Blake and Wordsworth were essentially political poets with strong social feelings and social awareness. These themes were often presented indirectly via an inspirational prophet or priest. These poets attempted to work on an epic scale because they believed events of their age were very important. Blake is the most outstanding example. Keats, Shelley and Byron are younger Romantic Poets, or later poets.

The basic characteristics of Romantic Poetry, as mentioned earlier, include: subjective exploration of self, organic, unconventional style or presentation, an interest in nature and the fantastic presentation of self-experience. Romantics wrote about shared experiences or experiences previously neglected as unimportant or non-existent or, if not neglected, inadequately expressed (Rodway, 1963:14).

For Romantics "reason" meant something like "judging by principle" rather than by convention. Rodway argues that Romantics' characteristics tended to be, negatively, fanaticism, crankiness, mysticism and egotism; positively, insight, daring, grandeur, exploration and independence (Rodway, 1963:5). Romantics thrived on opposition and neglect. Their work tended to be characterised by emotional intensity and a disregard for formal rules.

This does not necessarily mean that their literary works lacked form, but only that they were not formed by rules. Rodway points out that in England, Germany and France, Romantic work showed common features though not all writers have all of them. There is a tendency to prefer potentiality to actuality. There is the interest in one's emotional self, an interest that can develop into narcissism. There is the tendency to worship man, nature or woman (Rodway, 1963:7).

Poets often retire into their ideal worlds. These could be psychological worlds in the form of fantasies, dreams or visions; they may also take a geographical form in the shape of stories of noble savages in hot countries, or they may appear in the form of hard primitivism, where peasants are invaded and driven into the future by anthropologists and explorers (see Rodway, 1963:6-7).

The Romantics can be divided into two groups in accordance with the principle of linking Romanticism to a time and place. There are Romantic Radicals and Romantic Reactionaries. Rodway points out that all our best poets in their best periods fall under Romantic Radicals. Romantic Radicals and Romantic Reactionaries are both anti-rationalism, they are also outsiders in their own societies. I would argue that feeling like an outsider in your own society naturally leads to extremism, subjectivism and utopianism.

The difference between the two types of Romantics is that the Reactionaries think society is natural and therefore they want to be insiders in the society of the older type. They support feudalism, monarchy and church. The Romantic Radicals held that society is unnatural and therefore do not wish to be insiders. They prefer to relate their lives to the

universe directly, not via a church or any social authority. The cause of this difference is a result of the Romantics rejection of reason or calculation. Romantics propagated "reason of the heart" and this form of reason can produce different beliefs. It could engage personal sentiment in moral decisions, or abandon personal judgement and will in favour of something-higher (Rodway, 1963:8-12).

For Rodway, there are two ways of reacting in an age of common sense. First is the uncompromising rationalism that treats men as entirely guided by selfish calculation. The second way of reacting is that of uncompromising passion. What is remarkable if not problematic, about these forms of reaction to the common-sense age is that people are capable of being tyrannical and conservative on principles of passion, just as one can be rebellious and humanistic.

If one can bring nature or God to justify his rebellion, what can prevent him using them to repress other people? If "reason of the heart" can help to justify revolt on behalf of liberty what can stop it from justifying any repression that is supposed to be needed to preserve the nation? These "reasons of the heart" are now reduced to something similar to superstitions and prejudices in disguise (Rodway, 1963:8-12).

The main argument here is, is it right to force people to accept what you think is worth accepting? How do we draw parallels between what is worth believing and what is not. In South Africa the A.N.C. killed those who belonged to the I.F.P. in the name of freedom, and the I.F.P. did the same with those not belonging to it. Rodway poses critical questions - is it right to force those people who do not want to be free to subscribe to freedom,

equality, neutrality and discipline? In KwaZulu-Natal people who live under the authority of kings see no problem with it, they don't want their kings to be replaced by municipal councils. Should these people be forced to believe in democracy instead of the autocratic form of rule that they are used to? These questions demonstrate that freedom can only be derived from within as well, since man can be enslaved by his own "self." It is in this situation that a Romantic conflict can begin. I would say that Romanticism, through literature or imaginative reality, helps to liberate the individual from this conflict.

Rodway argues that people can be enslaved by their own passions. He believes true freedom is derived when a person submits himself to the "self", to some larger metaphysical entity, to the state, race or to the old church. The conclusion Rodway draws from this view is that Freedom is Slavery (Rodway, 1963:10).

From this we learn that Romanticism has resulted in many things including realism, surrealism, symbolism and decadence. These could represent its shortcomings.

Romanticism has provided more than its share of pitfalls, but it has opened up a space in which artists can explore any issue found in society. The artist can move from one topic to another easily without limiting himself to the classics. Romanticism has enabled the artist to explore the concept of "dislike" or "disapproval" thus according to Rodway, expanding vocabulary and technique to express a side of human nature that has been neglected for a long time. This includes the areas of feeling, sensation and the subconscious (Rodway, 1963:8-12).

The Romantic discourse also led to fanaticism and obscurity, because dislike of the church promoted the idea of morality in the sense that people wanted to do justice to the elements of life that had been long neglected, suppressed or were guilt-ridden. The idea of freedom from selfhood resulted in the Romanticism of pain, asceticism and renunciation. The approval of feeling because it was not reason or dogma paved the way to the approval of feeling that was unreasonable or satanic, which resulted in decadence.

For Rodway, the worship of nature was problematic since it had mixed effects within itself. The traditional Christian God came to be seen as a benevolent despot (personal and authoritative), while for the Augustan deists God is an impersonal and uninterfering, logical postulate being; to them God's existence has no connection with religion whatsoever. The Romantics, on the other hand, held that nature was impersonal but vital. Nature worship gained its popularity only because it satisfied new emotional needs of the spiritual development of Romanticism (Rodway, 1963:11).

Rodway takes a very critical view of Romanticism's worship of nature. He argues that bringing in nature or a deity cannot justify any attitude whatsoever because for him no fact or entity which exists or does not exist can warrant value. He points out that some people may argue that morality derives from fighting against nature. I believe he is right because Christianity held that holiness or pleasing God can only be achieved if people live against their natural feelings and human nature. According to Rodway, even Romantics were fighting against nature or the universe, something which, as I have mentioned, was impossible or had no real supportive background at all (Rodway, 1963:11).

The Romantics were very smart to see this weakness because most of their poetic works appear to be more than a discursive argument. For Rodway, this helped to justify their poetry as something "rhetorical." I have mentioned earlier that Romantic Poetry is seen as the poetry of the shared experience, something which I believe helped to justify the existence of Romantic discourse (Rodway, 1963:12).

Now I will briefly discuss some of the Radical Romantics with the intention of highlighting their beliefs. I must also mention now that for me B.W. Vilakazi was a Reactionary Romantic Poet because he worked from within the church. Romantic Poets put their focus on public themes. A poet would write a poem about men who are not poets but "public men," "kings," "soldiers," "politicians," or about public "conditions" which recounts what these men have done (Edwards, 1971:1).

Any person who reads a poem represents "ordinary men" in general. These are the grassroots people who are not famous or rich. A poet, by writing about public themes, identifies himself with the ordinary man or the grassroots group in society. As Edwards points out, often or generally a poet may think of himself or herself as being in some way different from "ordinary men" with their famous incapacity for or indifference to the disciplined reflectiveness of art, but by writing about poor men a poet identifies with them as he articulates their plight.

Through this, the private capacity of mind or the poets imagination may in some way be "socialised" and made aware of its connections with a state of awareness that is much more extensive, if less coherent and subtle, than the imaginative awareness that creates art itself (Edwards, 1971:1).

Writing a public poem can conscientise a poet fully of the role in his society as artist, and of what he has in common with the general condition of men in his society. For Edwards, this means that the socialisation of the imagination, humanises society. He also held that a successful public poem is the one that criticises and chastens, awakening the public awareness of ordinary men by enabling them to see through the habits of rhetoric and feeling that conceal from the people the full complexity of their relationship to politics and power (Edwards, 1971:1). Radical Romantics were very successful in this area and, in my opinion, rhetorical presentation of feeling and social criticism made them Romantic and effective artists.

Now I will look briefly at William Blake's beliefs, since he is considered to be a major Radical Romantic Poet. Blake was born on 28 November 1757, in London. He had no formal education and was not a professional poet as he earned his living as an engraver (Bloom and Trillings, 1973:10). Some of his lyrics were known and admired by Coleridge and other literary men. It was what was not known that was his most important achievement, a series of visionary poems culminating in three brief or condensed epics, works demonstrating probably the greatest conceptual power ever to appear among poets (Bloom and Trilling, 1973:10-14).

Blake believed himself to be a prophet, like Isaiah and Ezekiel were prophetic poets. His poems are astonishingly ambitious even for the Romantic Age, into which he survived. Bloom and Trillings point out that his poems teach people how to live fully as human beings. These poems also explain to the people what makes it so hard for them to live as natural human beings. Blake was a radical Protestant who was versed in the King James'

version of the Holy Bible and in Milton. Bloom and Trillings noted that he was an intellectual revisionist. He thought that the thoughts of the past should be revised and that poetry should go back to Milton's standards. Blake wanted to correct the Enlightenment and not discard it totally. He had no quarrel with reason itself but only with inadequate accounts of reason, and he refused to distinguish between "the intellectual powers" and what he called "the real Man, the Imagination" whose most complete expression was in the arts of poetry and painting (Bloom and Trilling, 1973:11).

Now I will try and look at what characterises Blake's poetry. Many readers regard Blake's poems as difficult to understand because they are very complex in their nature. It may be appropriate to say that this is the case with B.W. Vilakazi's poetry as well. The language William Blake uses is obscure and he uses vocabulary in a very different way in his long and short poems. Vilakazi's language is very difficult too. Harding, seeing the complex nature of William Blake's poetry, said Blake as a poet should be ignored because it was difficult to achieve sufficient control of his readers' response. This suggests that language depends on accepted meanings. A writer communicates through agreed conventions. (Bloom and Trilling 1973: 25).

Blake, I would say, has broken or contravened the expected conventions in his writings. Some scholars criticise him for the phrase "burning bright" in his poem "The Tiger" (Bloom and Trilling, 1973:25) This phrase is ambivalent and the exact meaning is unclear. I would say it has important uncertainties of meaning. Blake's language is ambiguous, and this is also the case with B.W. Vilakazi's language.

In his poems, Blake sought to teach the ordinary people of his day how to live (Bloom and Trilling, 1973:10), as he regarded the English culture in which he lived as corrupt and decadent. I have also mentioned in the introduction that B.W. Vilakazi was concerned about the culture of his nation (Zulu nation) and thought it was getting weak as the Zulus mixed with other nations from the west.

Blake also regarded poetry as decadent. As I have already pointed out, Blake was a painter, who regarded the painting of his time as being poor. Blake in his poetry regarded the philosophy of his day, especially of physics, as partly responsible for the problems of mainly the lower classes. Bloom and Trilling describe Blake as one of the prominent left, who regarded poetry as an expression of anger. They see him as paradoxically conservative (Bloom and Trilling, 1973:10-14). He explored myths and reshaped mythology to suit his purposes. As I have mentioned, Blake was obscure in his terminology. Born into the age of revolution, he was 33 years old when the French Revolution took place. He believed that England needed a total renewal of society.

State, government and church were corrupt institutions. He built up his own system of symbolic figures, which were hidden in various writings. In the Christian story of the Fall he regarded the Garden of Eden as equivalent to Paradise or innocence. In his poetry Blake uses images of childhood to represent the state of innocence. I would say that for him, sensuality meant closeness with nature. He held that the actual state of man was the fallen state. For Blake, that is the state of experience, which meant that a god rules man called Urizen.

This god is a tyrant, intolerant and is represented by various authorities on earth such as priests, kings, teachers and nurses, etc. For Blake, Urizen is responsible for the qualities of fallen man, e.g. hatred. Blake believed that Christ is the saviour and God is man. Creative figures in man e.g. "Los" represents some divine prophet, "the bard." Urizen, in the guise of reason, has suppressed man's natural emotions. Blake's originality does have precedence in the oral tradition (unwritten poetry).

Blake believed in a visionary universe. He had a political vision not only about England but also about the world. In 1789 the French revolution and American revolution registered colonialism and racism. Blake was critical towards these forms of oppression. For Blake historical events were prophetic signs. In a poem "Africa" (Punter, 1992:145-146) Africa is a symbol of slavery.

Blake had a global vision, a destiny for humanity. He moves from Europe to outside. Urizen is a law of patriarchy and comes from the Bible, according to Blake. Urizen gave law to men. In Africa law and religion had been imposed upon men. Urizen appears to enforce laws of oppression on men. Blackness like whiteness is a resort of Urizen. Fallen Angels represent nuns from heaven that are bad, they fall on Africa. Fallen Angels are Eurocentric and biased (Punter, 1992:145-146).

For Blake, the American revolution was where everybody's freedom was to derive from although he held that political revolution alone is not enough since the American revolution did not free the slaves. People need spiritual and social revolutions as well.

Blake refused to accept the inevitability of suffering and poverty. He vilified those Christians who preached that poverty and suffering were good for the people. He believed that poetry was not a retreat from the world but a social practice to change the world. It is economic experience that creates suffering. One question that a person may ask is how does Blake foreground materialist, economic and political issues? How different was the political content of the time from the content of Blake's poetry? The answer I would give is that Blake was more concerned about changing people than passively accepting tyranny.

Social criticism was central to Blake's poetry and his poems are normally viewed as dialectic. The reader has to decide, which leads to meditation. He saw the world descending into internal chaos. One should by now be able to compare B.W. Vilakazi with Blake to draw a conclusion that Vilakazi was a Romantic Poet.

Another Romantic Poet that I will briefly look at is William Wordsworth, but I must say that I will omit his early life and focus on what he has in common with B.W. Vilakazi's poetry. Wordsworth focused on the notion of the poet as a person writing about his own identity (Bloom and Trilling, 1973:125). He encouraged people to explore their own subjectivity. He taught what he knew he could teach, how to become, within severe limitations, a renovated spirit, free of crippling self-consciousness yet still enjoying the varied gifts of an awakened consciousness.

William Wordsworth, Bloom observes, proposed to observe nature with an eye steadily on the object and yet did not lose his freedom to the dictates of the eye (Bloom and Trilling, 1973:126). He believed that man must face his painful past, man must learn of himself, man

must learn to live life and not death in life. I would say Wordsworth's approach to poetry was more therapeutic. His poetry meant to teach man how much he (the natural man) can do for himself through hard discipline and openness to imagination and nature.

For Wordsworth, poetry should be important because of the feelings it expresses. Popularist movements argued that real poetry should not be the poetry of the "elite" but of the ordinary people. Poetry should constitute the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. Wordsworth held that the language of the poem must be an additive language.

His aims were to choose incidents and situations and elaborate on them, describing these themes in the language that is used by the common man. Wordsworth's poetry, I would say, is largely a poetry of statement. He did not write in comparison. He talked about types of people, country people who were close to nature. By playing with the language he believed he could produce a poetic language. He believed that poetry constitutes emotions collected in tranquillity, this view helps to explain why Wordsworth's poetry has long statements.

In conclusion on the beliefs of Wordsworth, I must say that nature provided him with harmony and an ability to understand the world. Wordsworth looked at nature with an ideal appetite response, not accompanied by intellectual response. He was also aware of the possibility that nature contains the sorrow that humanity experiences in this world.

I must make it clear to the reader that this chapter is not intended to be an exhaustive chapter on Romanticism, its aim being to focus on the central features of Romanticism with the intention of showing that B.W. Vlakazi has the same features as a Romantic Poet. Most

Radical Romantics, if not all, wrote against the "empire," "the priest," "poverty," "church," "capitalism" and "reason" etc. All these are issues that Vilakazi explores in his poetry.

These themes are also the focus of the post-colonial writers. This is not to say that Romanticism falls under post-colonial discourse, the truth is Romanticism is a western discourse. But should we distance ourselves from it on the grounds that it is a western genre? Of course not. I believe Africans can also produce Romantic works of art because Romanticism is about life, it is derived from life circumstances, it is about the inner reality and self-consciousness and anybody is subject to "self-conflict" in relation to his or her environment. I would therefore argue that B.W. Vilakazi writing from a third world country explores his subjectivity and his identity through his poetry. He did not simply assimilate the western literary genre, but he wrote about his experiences in a colonised country. He identified with the ordinary people.

Vilakazi wrote about major events like "Inkelenkele YakwaXhosa" and "Impi yaseNdonga kusuka." In some of his poems he uses words coined by him, like "Mamina," "Sonjikazi" - these words and many others are difficult to understand. So like William Blake, Vilakazi's language is ambiguous and at times controversial. It is true that the works of British Romantic Poets that he studied in his junior degree studies influenced him, but their spirit or their "muse" inspired him. Their reading of other writers in one way or the other influenced even the British Romantics. Vilakazi is no exception.

CHAPTER THREE

A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE OF : BENEDICT WALLET VILAKAZI

Benedict Wallet Vilakazi was born on the 6th January, 1906, at Groutville near Stanger in the province that is now called KwaZulu-Natal. This was the year in which the Bhambatha rebellion took place. Bhambatha Zondi was the leader of the rebels who were rebelling against the head tax that was imposed upon the black people by the government. Benedict Vilakazi was named Bhambatha kaMakhwatha after Bhambatha Zondi.

His parents were Mr. Mshini and Leah Vilakazi. They were members of the Zulu tribe and were devout Christians.

B.W. Vilakazi grew up in Groutville and started his primary education in that area. There were seven children, two boys and five girls. He studied at Groutville until he reached grade six when he was moved to Marianhill, the Roman Catholic Monastery near Durban, in order to further his schooling. He remained at Marianhill until grade eight, which was the highest grade of his time. After this achievement he trained to become a teacher, obtaining a qualification called the T4 certificate. While he was studying at Marianhill he served as a secretary to Father Bernard Huss who influenced Vilakazi so much that Vilakazi began to think about studying more to achieve a better and higher education.

He began his teaching career at a Catholic Seminary at Ixopo in KwaZulu-Natal, where he

started to focus on private study. There were very few black teachers at that time that were keen to further their education and improve their qualifications. B.W. Vilakazi was courageous to the extent that he completed his matric. He then enrolled with the University of South Africa and obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1934.

Vilakazi developed a very sensitive nature because he taught and lived with African graduates who despised those who did not have a university degree. This made him begin to collect degrees in order to show these people that he could do it. Even after he obtained his first degree some African graduates mocked him saying that it was a "candlelight" degree, which was commonly said to those students who obtained their degrees through private studies. But this did not discourage the young Vilakazi, instead it inspired him to silence his mockers by studying more and more with the intention of achieving the highest academic degrees.

He majored in Zulu and he obtained a distinction in the final examination. This earned him a bursary from the University of South Africa to study for a Master of Arts degree in African Studies. B.W. Vilakazi was confronted with a problem. At that period, higher education for Africans was offered at the University College of Fort Hare at the Cape, but it did not offer a senior course in African Studies. B.W. Vilakazi had nowhere to go. Fortunately the academic authorities already knew him and the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg was in the process of publishing in Zulu his first book of poems, Inkondlo kaZulu - Zulu Songs. The University was looking for an African assistant in its Department of Bantu Studies. B.W. Vilakazi appeared to be a suitable person for this position.

He obtained the support of Mr. D. Mck. Malcom who was the Chief Inspector of Native Education in Natal, who encouraged him and recommended him for the appointment. Here are some of Mr. D. Mck. Malcom's (cited in Vilakazi's biography written by C.L.S. Nyembezi P.6) recommendations in support of B.W. Vilakazi.

"I consider Vilakazi a very suitable man for your purpose," he wrote. "He is certainly keen on the study of Zulu and has already done quite a lot of writing one way and another. He has distinct ability."

In 1936, Vilakazi was offered a position in the Department of Bantu Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand. This was a breakthrough because he became the first African to lecture at a university for white students in South Africa. He was also fortunate to have a sympathetic colleague in Professor C.M. Doke who was Head of the Department of Bantu Studies. Vilakazi did not stop furthering his own studies and as a result the University of the Witwatersrand awarded him the Master of Arts degree.

B.W. Vilakazi represented a new phase of Zulu achievement. At the beginning of the 19th Century the "Zulu nation" itself hardly existed other than for a few hundred people. It was Shaka who forced the Nguni people later to become Zulus. There was, of course, no writers or literature at the time because the Nguni were illiterate, but there was a rich oral literature.

By the time Vilakazi started writing there was no published book of poetry and no published play by a Zulu. There was only one novel that had been published. Between 1930

and 1940 two prominent Zulu writers were dominating the Zulu literary field. They were B.W. Vilakazi and H.I. Dhlomo.

B.W. Vilakazi had the urge to create and he wrote both poetry and prose including three novels, "Noma Nini," (1935) "Udingiswyo kaJobe" (1939) and "Nje Nempela" (1943), all with an historical background. Many of his poems were published in the "native" newspaper called "Ilanga Lasenatali" and in the "Native" Teachers' Journal. It should be mentioned here that he wrote most of his poems and novels while he was also teaching and studying privately.

B.W. Vilakazi was a teacher who taught, as I have mentioned earlier, at Marianhill when he was 17 years old. He began to love Marianhill. This became clear on the 50th anniversary of the place because B.W. Vilakazi wrote a long poem about Marianhill titled "In Celebration of Fifty Years." From St. Francis he taught at Exobho, from Exobho he moved to a school at Pietermaritzburg which was not a Catholic school, and Father Bernard Huss disapproved of his presence there. At the beginning of 1933 he taught isiZulu, History and Latin at a school founded by Dr. J.L. Dube.

It should be mentioned that by the time he joined the University of the Witwatersrand his poetry was already known because his first book titled Inkondlo kaZulu had already been published by that University.

Vilakazi was preoccupied with verse and as a result he took as the subject of his thesis for a higher degree "The Conception and Development of Poetry in Zulu." He was deeply in

love with the Zulu people and the Zulu way of life with its long and glorious history.

Vilakazi's appointment to the University of the Witwatersrand aroused opposition among a section of the Africans in the Transvaal. Its effect was to make him recoil into his shell so that he appeared to shun the company of Africans of his class.

B.W. Vilakazi became a controversial figure among the African people. The educated Africans respected Vilakazi for his academic achievements and for his contribution to Zulu literature. But they also regarded him as cold, aloof, haughty, a man who was not easily approachable. They thought that he was abrupt in his manner and sometimes he was deliberately rude. On the other hand, those Africans who did not go to school believed he was a pleasant character and easily approachable.

In spite of the attitudes people had about him, he regarded himself as the spokesperson of his people, and in his second book of poems "Amal'ezulu" (Zulu Horizons) he identifies himself with the struggles, fears, aspirations, sacrifices and unconquerable spirit of his people. He was deeply concerned about the Zulu heritage, which he saw as getting lost to the younger generation. In his poems he continually refers to the need for preserving those things which are sacred and precious to the Zulu nation. It is disappointing that while he was investing his love of his people and his faith in their future into his poems, there were those who accused him of being insufficiently conscious of their sufferings and disabilities. This was because he did not take an active part in politics, believing that he could not serve two masters, involving himself in politics and still performing his academic work satisfactorily.

Having obtained his Master's degree he focused himself on his work as a lecturer, on his literary work and in his studies for a doctoral degree.

B.W. Vilakazi worked with Professor C.M. Doke to compile a Zulu-English dictionary. He was keen to know more about western culture to the extent that he enjoyed classical music. His favourites were Handel, Bach, Schubert, Mozart and Strauss. He reflected in his verse on the two opposing currents, which such activities aroused among his compatriots. On the one hand, it was felt that the impact of western culture on African culture produced practices and habits among the Africans which were regarded by some as offensive; on the other hand, it was felt by some Africans that all things belonging to their own culture should be despised as inferior.

On the 16th March 1946 Vilakazi's academic studies were rewarded by a Doctorate of Literature by the University of the Witwatersrand. This once again was a breakthrough because he became the first African to achieve this academic distinction.

Deaths in his family made him become preoccupied with the concept of death. One of his earliest poems was an elegy on his sister Siziwe, and in later works he paid passionate tribute to his father, his wife and his only brother. Some critics have argued that this preoccupation with death was an indication that he would not live long. Death was one of the major themes in his poetry.

In October 1947 B.W. Vilakazi passed away at the age of forty-one. He left his mother with six of her seven children dead. She had the sad and bitter experience of seeing them

die just when they reached the age when much was expected of them. At his death B.W. Vilakazi was regarded as an outstanding figure in Zulu literature. His literary works have influenced many Zulu authors especially in the field of poetry.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOME POEMS FROM 'INKONDLO KAZULU' (ZULU SONGS)

NGEPHASIKA

On EASTER

This moon I watch appearing now,
A broken bow that glows above
The shoulder of the western sky,
Recalls to all, great past events :
For this, O Lord,
We thank You.

And we remember too, how You
Wandered through this very land of Africa,
This land of peoples who are black;
No band of hirelings tended You :
By this, O Lord,
We are amazed.

You could have deprived our race of old

Of silver, gold and precious stones
Which decorate the crowns and gowns
Of Princes of the Church and State;
But to all these You closed Your eyes :

For this, O Lord,

We thank You.

On floors You slept, upon a mat,
You sat on stools of wood with humble men -
Your kin, though foul with plague and sin;
Yet now my brother who is white,
Forsakes me, loathes me and exploits me :

Because of this, O Lord,

Where shall I hide?

The moon is high, the sky is jewelled;
The moon is You, the Milky-Way aglow
With stars - those tears of Yours and mine.
O You, who wandered homeless through the world,
Shine and dispel the darkness of the earth!

Then, even we, O Lord,

May yet rejoice.

I hear, I fear their coming to betray You,

I feel my blood congeal, my body tremble;
I too, am bartered everywhere on earth,
Sold because my skin is black :
I did not choose this colour, Yours the choice;
And, being Yours,
I thank You, Lord.

They crucify You, Lord; I see
The tree, the callous nail, so fiercely
Pierce Your quivering flesh again.,
Transfixing it to wood that feels not pain,,
And blood is oozing from my heart;
For this, O Lord,
Forsake me not.

To me recall, to me who am black,
The model and the manner of Your life,
You who strove to make us heed
The need, the vital need of saying "No"
In thought and deed!
And for this reason, Lord,
I give You thanks.

In this poem B.W. Vilakazi has appropriated a Christian story, the very Christianity that

was brought by the western colonial power, to his advantage. This poem will be treated stanza by stanza with the intention of getting to the core of its content, because it is the content that will show that B.W. Vilakazi is a Romantic Poet.

In the first stanza the person is watching the new moon appearing. We see that the person uses the first person "I" which suggests a special attention given to his subjectivity. The image of the "broken bow" suggests the slavery imposed upon the Africans by the western colonial powers. The new moon also represents new horizons, new reflections, and new perspectives. This could be linked to B.W. Vilakazi's growing self. It is this growing self that enables him to associate with the great events of the past. As a missionary educated intellectual Vilakazi attributes this new sense of understanding to the Lord.

He does not use the first person pronoun in line six but rather uses "we" which represents a group of people. This group could be the Zulu people, so he is the mouthpiece of his people. He was working within the Christian religion to deconstruct the oppressive hegemony of the west. In line six the person, through the voice of the majority, begins to converse with God, although at first in line one he was talking to himself about the natural object that is a reminder of what happened in the past. It has been mentioned in Chapter Two that the Romantics in their writings were influenced by major historical events.

In stanza two B.W. Vilakazi points out that the Lord Jesus once came to Africa which is the land of the black people. Vilakazi here registers a colonial experience in that the Africans were described in terms of their skin colour, which is racism. It is obvious that it was the people who considered themselves white who discriminated against the Africans.

What amazed the black people is that the Lord did not have slaves and poor people to serve him like the white people of the colonial period. It is also noticeable in line eight that God came to Africa as a wanderer. The blacks in Africa accommodated the Lord when the wrath of the king of his country was upon him.

It means that the blacks in Africa were good people, kind and gentle, when compared to western people. B.W. Vilakazi through this presentation of black people subverted the ideology of white supremacy.

In stanza three Vilakazi introduces the question of power. The Lord has all the power to deprive the Africans of "silver, gold and precious stones" but unlike the white people who colonised African countries He did not. Line 17 "But to all these You closed Your eyes:" The colonists took by force gold, silver and other precious stones in order to decorate the crowns of their "princes". Vilakazi suggests that the kings and queens of the world and the church, are to blame for taking away the natural resources from the ordinary people. These noble classes are responsible for the poverty and suffering that the African people are going through. They were unwilling to share the resources with the people at large. But according to B.W. Vilakazi the Lord is different from the white people of the colonial period.

In stanza four the Lord slept on the floor upon a mat, which means that the Lord identified himself with common people - it is the common people not the white or the top class who sit on mats. Vilakazi reminds me of "Woza Albert", Mbongeni Ngema's drama in which Ngema's claim that when Jesus (Morena) comes to South Africa he will side with the poor, the oppressed, and He will only call the names of those people who fought for the rights of

the oppressed. Vilakazi points out that the Lord's humility was the quality that the Africans or the ordinary people had, and it made the Lord sit with them.

The Lord sided with sinners. He did not disown or condemn them. He is disappointed that His brother who is white forsakes him, loathes him and exploits him. Vilakazi here is talking about racism in South Africa. Race is particularly pertinent to the rise of colonialism. Although racism is not specifically an invention of imperialism, it quickly became one of imperialism's most supportive ideas. Imperial exploitation is what Vilakazi and his people experienced, so much so that he asks the Lord to show him a hiding place. Imperial exploitation was a major theme of the Radical Romantics - all of them wanted to see revolution.

In stanza five he is comparing his suffering to that of the Lord. The Lord is the shining moon or light. The stars in the sky remind him of his tears and the tears of the Lord. The Lord did not have a home, as a result he slept in the open. The Africans did not have a place of their own because the colonial powers had taken away the land. The Lord was exiled, and went wandering through the world. The Africans were exiled in South Africa, strangers in their own land. Vilakazi attributes this to the darkness that rules this world, and this reminds one of William Blake's "Urizen" who brings corruption and pain upon the face of the earth. Vilakazi's prayer is that the Lord should shine and remove the darkness of the earth so that the Africans too may rejoice.

In stanza six we see a very deliberate exposition of inner feeling. First, he could hear the people coming to attack the Lord. He is full of fear. He then tells us exactly what is happening in his body. His blood congeals and his body trembles. He is carried away by the

power of imagination. The feeling is fused with words. He is now bartered everywhere on earth. This may remind us of Rousseau's statement that "man is born free but everywhere we see him in chains."

The "I" in line 36 may not only reflect Vilakazi but it can be attributed to "man" or "humanity" because it is humanity that is suppressed by authority figures that are corrupt all over the world. In line 37 Vilakazi goes back to tell us the reason for his oppression, it is because he is black. He points out that he had no choice but to accept what the Lord gave him. This reminds us that the black people had no right to vote, to choose their destiny, to own land, to education, and to shape the future.

Vilakazi remains loyal to the Lord and thanks Him for the colour He gave him, and he also affirms his relationship with the Lord by reminding the Lord that he is His. This helps to redefine his identity against the identity given to him by the colonial masters.

Stanza seven registers the cruelty of the people who crucified the Lord. They were ruthless, arrogant, wicked and corrupt - these are the qualities of the colonial masters who propagated slavery, racism, dislocation and imprisonment both physically and psychologically. They fiercely pierced his quivering flesh. That is how the colonial masters treated the Africans, they objectified them, they forgot that Africans too are human beings. Vilakazi once again deliberately tells us that the blood is oozing from his heart. He is experiencing grief and pain. He asks the Lord to remember him, perhaps in His glory.

In the last stanza he reminds us that those who openly say "no" to the corrupt, wicked and cruel ways of this world will always suffer for that just as the Lord was crucified for

speaking his mind, for doing what is right. The black man, although kind and humble, is being suppressed, exploited and discriminated against.

In this poem we see the flowing of feelings, the emotional pain, physical pain and psychological pain that fills B.W. Vilakazi's imagination as he meditates.

INKELENKELE YAKWAXHOSA

THE XHOSA CALAMITY

In this poem B.W. Vilakazi reminds us of the calamity that happened in 1856, which destroyed the power of one of the major tribes in South Africa. This is an historical event which was considered to be orchestrated by the colonial masters with the intention of disempowering the Xhosa people, economically and politically. It is part of Xhosa folklore (there is no written evidence) that the white people used Mhlakaza who coached his daughter Nongqawuze to spread the story that she had seen the ancestors who had given her instructions that the Xhosa people must destroy all their livestock and burn their granaries. On a certain day the sun would rise in the west, the old people would become young again, the dead would rise from their graves, cattle would come out of the kloofs in their thousands, the Xhosa would be able to drive all the white people into the sea, and peace and plenty would prevail.

This poem demonstrates the power of cultural ideology. Xhosa people were very superstitious regarding their culture as something essential. It is their strong belief in the ancestors, diviners, and in the essence of their culture which blinded them from seeing that Nongqawuze was deceiving them.

In this poem we learn that man is not safe in this world, there is no "space" where one can stand and claim it to be his fortress. Man's freedom cannot be defined by the fact that he exists within his culture or he/she does things according to the "norms" of his culture.

The diviner Mhlakaza used this weakness of the Xhosa people to influence them towards their own destruction. Vilakazi could be said to have written this poem to commemorate the people who died in this calamity, but more importantly to show the dangers of taking life for granted. Vilakazi in this epic is confronting Nongqawuze who could not respond to Vilakazi's questions.

The tone is very interrogative, but it is disappointing to see that even though she is a prophetess, Nongqawuze is unable to provide answers. Perhaps Nongqawuze is not wise enough to understand the message given to her by the ancestral spirits. This is true because in stanza one, line three, we read "Who seemed so wise" Perhaps I should also look at the instance of sounding the alarm in stanza one, line one. This can tell us more. B.W. Vilakazi, as a Romantic Poet, is sounding an alarm to the Zulu nation to warn them about the calamity that comes with colonisation. He is using the Xhosa calamity as an analogy, if people fail to discern the truth from the lies the whole nation will disappear.

In stanza one Vilakazi points out that the ancestral spirits are invisible, people could not see the spirits with their naked eyes. It is only Nongqawuze who was fortunate enough to see the ancestral spirits. What comes out of this, is that although the spirits were hidden from the eyes of the Xhosa people, the spirits possessed the enormous power to direct and control the Xhosa people. This is in line with the panopticon system of surveillance and control that Foucault argued is used to control people.

Nongqawuze has the power to process and understand that which she has seen and she sees (the people). This surveillance interpolates the Xhosa people in a way that fixes their identity in relation to the ancestral spirits. This results in the Xhosa people taking over Nongqawuze's view of their future or of them. They acted according to Nongqawuze's instructions, they kept the order even in her absence and they became the perfect subjects. I can argue that Nongqawuze's views became the official view, this is the process called conversion (Goffman, 1961). The process of conversion in colonisation is far more subtle but just as potent (Ashcroft, 1998). Whereas imperial power over the colonised subject may not necessarily be as direct and physical as it is in the "total" institution, power over the subject may be exerted in myriad ways, enforced by threat of subtle kinds of cultural and moral disapproval and exclusion. The colonised subject may accept the imperial view, including the array of values, assumptions and cultural expectations on which this is based, and order his or her behaviour accordingly.

From stanza two up to stanza five the persona tells of the preparations made by the Xhosas for the day of their deliverance. Vilakazi does this in a very dramatic way, but the content of these stanzas is more of a myth than the real story. Like the Radical Romantics Vilakazi uses a myth to his advantage. In stanza four we are told that the homes and cattle folds are empty because the loud-mouthed prophetess deceived the people. Their dreams were dreams of ruin and of doom. That is what the colonial voice can produce for the colonised - destruction.

Stanza five reminds us of the birds that King Shaka spoke about that would rule over the Zulu nation. Just like the panopticon arrangement, the birds of prey could see from higher

places in the sky. From there they could easily control the colonised people. The colonisers were celebrating when the Xhosa people were dying of starvation. It is because of their cruel nature that the persona refers to them as jackals, dogs, and wildcats.

The persona in stanza eight points out that the spirit of Nongqawuza is still prevalent today and she must suffer for her cruel deception. Nongqawuza is also being called an impostor. What was it that was deceitful? The colonizers were playing on the superstitious beliefs of the Xhosa people.

There is something in the heart and mind of this person, which enables the emperor to easily control his subject. B.W. Vilakazi shows us that myths are very powerful and taken for granted.

Discourse constitutes the nature of a person's life, it assigns people to their subject positions within a social setting, and it produces subjects. Furthermore it assigns certain powers to certain people or subjects. It does this through cultural norms and values. When an idea is justified in terms of cultural norms and values, people in that culture will feel comfortable in accepting that idea.

The Xhosa people did not oppose Nongqawuze's view simply because she was regarded as the mouthpiece of the spirit of the ancestors. The ancestors cannot mislead for they are all powerful. B.W. Vilakazi in this poem suggests the need to be loyal to your nation, not deceitful like Nongqawuze. For a person to become a true diviner or prophet he or she must be loyal to the call of the ancestors.

INQOMFI

THE LARK

We all have heard these clear sweet notes,
But those we wait for still, must seem
Like dew on fields. Bird of the burnt black veld,
Sing on unseen, while, silent as a thief,
I pause to hear that sorrowful melody
Sounding the torment of your suffering spirit.

Bird of the thick tall grasses, flaunt yourself!
Undaunted cleave the air, to you as water;
King's messenger, weave and climb your invisible rope,
Sing on from there, your song shall not be drowned,
All the alert shall hear you, messenger
Who roams afar but dwells where grasses flourish.

Oh, you who lay those eggs of dappled colours,
Hiding them well within the grassy tufts
Where neither iguana comes nor mamba glides,
Sing clear above them songs inspiring courage
And drive away the hawks that would consume them
During your flights in search of tasty locusts.

What meaning has that rich and fadeless colour,
That splash of glowing crimson on your throat;
Who pierced you with those sharp and fatal arrows,
Known to Bushmen in their rocky caves?
Your symbol this, a flag of flame
To scorch the deaf who spurn your counselling!

If you should fly before a traveller,
The elders say that his affairs will prosper;
But woe to him when you behind
Shall soar across his path, and, like the buzzard,
Sing when the clouds conceal the sun. Ill omen!
You are an oracle, bird, you prophesy!

And yet I do not envy you. We plan!
Like hares we sleep, one eye unshut; we labour,
And, for the morrow, scheme and save, in case,
Like sleep, death suddenly should come
And find us destitute. Our human struggle
Is ceaseless conflict in the human soul.

Ah, fly beyond my sight and vanish!
I fear the wish to fly with you,
To end this longing you inspire,

For though I am apart from you,
Always there lingers in my heart
An echo of your spirit.

I think this spirit it must be
That vexes constantly the workers on the roads,
Those who so often stop and stare,
Aware of nothing but their thoughts,
Musing on what is due to them, and why
You cannot help them or reply.

Ah, see the sun! it disappears!
You too must go as ghosts depart
And vanish when the hunters come
Who have no thought of danger,
And do not sleep nor even nod;
I mean Diana's valiant train.

Silence your guitar-like strains!
Listen and hear the hunter's horn,
Its sounding is for such as you.
Do not forget the men who hunt,
Not ever led astray by you,
Not weak like those who gasp in fear.

No river winds which does not sing,
No road which does not lead to home,
So let me learn from you the song
In praise of homeward-going:
Then I may know what you must know
And never cease my singing.

I listen and now the world is listening too :
The sounding seas, the waves, the winds,
Are still and silent suddenly,
Astonished by your strange sad singing.
And even when the moonbeams gild the earth,
You are not silenced nor are you forgotten.

No one can tell what manner of bird you are,
And what exists to be compared with you?
I think of Schubert and of Chopin,
I think of Cele and Caluza
And vow they cannot rival you :
Their art is studied, yours spontaneous.

You seem to me a maid whom, lying alone,
Moans in her sleep and seeks to calm herself,
Who loverless dreams her sad and lonely thoughts;

But no bravado brings her consolation.

Can you then share her reveries,

You who are free of rivalries?

Your song outvies songs to the brimming bowl,

That draught desired by rich and poor alike.

Who knows the source of this melodious flow?

Is it an echo of the rushing rivers

Or does the sea with surge and swell inspire it?

Are fallow lands and mountain-peaks its source?

Your love is generous, it envelops all things,

From stunted rock plants to exotic growths.

Grief does not spoil your love; no sorrow

In sleep or waking brings you mournful thoughts,

The morrow haunts you not, nor time's escaping;

Its flight, and day and night to you mean nothing.

This poem is an ode to the lark, a bird that is believed by the Zulu people to be a bird which has the special ability to foresee the future. It can foretell good or bad things that will soon take place. In this poem the lark is being praised for its beautiful voice and skill through which it presents the crucial messages to the nation. In this poem the lark's function is to sound the alarm in order to warn the nation, otherwise the calamity may happen.

In stanza one, we hear the voice of the people "we". The persona assumes the voice of the

Zulu nation. The persona seems to have heard beautiful music, so beautiful that he expects to hear nothing more. He argues that those who wait for something else will not get it because what they are waiting for will disappear like dew on the fields. This means that those who fail to take the warning will bear the consequences of their stubbornness. He calls the lark a bird of the "burnt black veld" which allocates the lark to the black continent of Africa. The imagery of fire suggests the painful experience of those who live in Africa because of the way their colonial masters beat them. He encourages the lark to sing about things unseen. He is standing silently, not willing to disturb the lark from singing its sorrowful melody.

Vilakazi appears to be talking about a prophet bird. It should be remembered that the Romantics were visionary poets and this could be the case with B.W. Vilakazi in this poem. He seems to be praising himself in the guise of a lark. The lark is singing about the torment of its spirit like Vilakazi who wrote poems about the torment of the suffering of his spirit.

In stanza two the lark belongs to the "tall grasses" which symbolise the bush veld. It can move by flying to see the kings and will bring a special message to those who are willing to listen. What the lark produces it keeps safe within the grassy tufts where no harmful intruder can come and destroy it.

The imagery of eggs in stanza three could symbolise what Vilakazi always referred to as "sacred treasures" of the Zulu nation. Having kept the eggs safe the lark sings above them songs that inspire them to have courage. This song will drive away all the enemies who intend to feed on the eggs. Imagination is so powerful that it can remove hurtful thoughts and open up the new horizons that give hope.

In stanza three the persona interrogates the meaning of the colour of the lark. In the South African context "colour" signifies discrimination, racism, prejudice and many other forms of treatment, which the Africans suffered during the colonial period. The next question is who has attacked you with the poisonous arrows - of course the colonial master is to blame. It was believed that when a person came across the lark, he or she is in good luck when it goes before him or her. But the person who is followed by a lark was believed to be in for bad luck. The lark, just like the poet, is an oracle and a prophet. The lark is a diviner and a very good one so that even the persona is somehow jealous of its ability to foretell the future.

In stanza six, seeing that he is getting jealous of the lark the poet denies it. In this stanza Vilakazi registers the insecurity of man - man cannot sleep peacefully because of the dangers of this world. Man must work very hard to earn a living, he must work until the day he dies. Man cannot escape death because death comes when he is not expecting it. Vilakazi points out the human predicament, humanity is fighting a battle that will never be won no matter how much energy is invested in this warfare.

In stanza seven Vilakazi chases away the "lark" which now appears to represent "imagination," he does not want to be carried away by imagination. He feels inspired even if he tries to distance himself from any source of inspiration. This inspirational power has also attacked those people who lead the way in the world. Here Vilakazi may be referring to the Radical Romantics. These political leaders become conscious of their subjectivity and start to claim their human rights, but imagination per se could not offer them what was due to them. The persona anticipates the disappearance of the light, or of what is good for the

Africans, if the lark does not play its part by singing loudly. This loud voice will move powerful men who do not fear anything dangerous and who do not get weary or sleep. He is referring to the warriors.

Vilakazi's reference to the hunters also suggests the arrival of the imperial powers in Africa that were ready to attack and kill anything that stood in their way. The white people seemed to be too clever and too powerful to defeat, they hardly ran away. The persona is swearing against these warriors and hunters, saying one day the Africans will resume or regain their strength. In some way they will take revenge for their exploitation.

For now he is eager to learn the song from the lark, so he will sing away his pain, and he will sing all the way as he moves towards his home. The lark is now the source of knowledge, it has information about the direction the persona needs to follow. Vilakazi as an inspired poet, has the information that could guide the Zulu nation back to the natural way of life. He is listening, the world is listening, the water, the sea and even the wind is listening as well. The natural forces are said to be amazed at the music of this bird.

The African landscape, especially the tropical areas, were reported to be resistant to the white man's invasion. Somehow the lark appears to represent the poet himself since no one fully understands the thoughts of the poet. A poet cannot be compared even with the classical songwriters. A poet can perhaps be compared to a maid who is very lonely. This loneliness makes her moan in her sleep and try to calm herself. The persona/poet is no exception to this. Just like the Radical Romantics he had the feeling of expressing his loneliness, his separateness from his people. He felt the need to resolve his inner

IMPOPHOMA YEVICTORIA

THE VICTORIA FALLS

Flow on forever, mighty torrent,
Marvellous surge, magnificent
And terrible! Flow unrestrained,
Huge flood, rush ever on unreined!
God, with the rainbow's every hue,
Formed a glistening crown for you
And skirts of fadeless mist to flow
About your feet, far, far below.
He gave your voice the thunder's tone,
Thus to commune with Him alone,
While human voices hushed by shock
You drown upon Sibungu's rock.

O, who would venture in that din,
With cricket-chirrupings, faint and thin -
From earth where worm-like creatures stir -
To vie, with you, O Thunderer?
What strange ambition, huge, inane,
Would make men try a feat so vain?
Even the sea, whose waves advance,
Recedes, like Zulus when they dance.
No ocean knows your clamorous will,
Seas can be calm and waves be still
As weary labourers who succumb

To heat - and slumber, overcome.

Yes, thus the sea itself behaves,
Controlling all its turbulent waves
Like wandering sheep that must not stray;
So they, unruly throughout the day,
May, on the next, quite placid lie
To form a mirror for the sky.

But you are different from the sea;
O smoke that thunders ceaselessly!
How keen, Victoria, your zest,
Never to have a day of rest,
Never to curb your turbulence;
O, mighty flood, what diligence!

How often has the morning star
Opened its eye to hear afar
Your howl with its hyena sound,
While all the stars that cluster round
Await, within those heights enshrined,
The angel who shall tell mankind
When earth - cleft by the holy rod -
Will melt and be revealed to God
Whose eyes are piercing as a spear.

Surely the stars your voice must hear,
And urge you, Thunderer, thus : On! On!
You who are going but never are gone.

The trembling branches, green and cool,
 Leaning over your every pool,
 Drinking of your ceaseless rains,
With fresh green sap enrich their veins
 And draw from you their vital blood -
From you, the North wind stirs, great flood!
 And see how birds, unchecked by fear,
 Dare, unperturbed, to venture near
And let their wings be drenched and kissed
 By scarf-like waves of floating mist
Whose vapour shrouds them as they wander,
 All undaunted by your thunder.

I, who lack your powerful voice,
Its deep eternal roar, what choice
 Is mine? O how inadequate
Am I, a fool who would dilate -
 With pen and ink deluding me -
 Upon your grace and majesty,
Who would evoke for those afar,
 Visions of you and all you are!
You calm each weary desperate heart,

Each homeless being, alone, apart.
These, resting near you, feel their care
Soothed by your voice, the while they stare.

You fill their eyes with happiness,
They smoke, forgetting their distress;
At ease, they tap their tins of snuff,
At peace, they gaze at you and puff,
Until your voice, so sweet and deep,
Lulls them tranquilly to sleep,
As though a nurse, with gentle care,
Should stroke their brows and smooth their hair
Till pain and desolation cease.
These lost ones are at home, at peace,
Close to your waters, wildly sprayed :
The great white wings of your cascade.
Crash downward! Let your thunders warn
Africa's sons as yet unborn!

This flow reminds us of the flowing of the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."
These feelings are derived from social pain, fear and, of course, his imprisonment. These
are mighty feelings, they are uncontrollable, and a poet cannot suppress them. If he does,
that will result in the "romantic conflict" where even nature will keep on reminding him of
his restricted freedom. He is restrained but the Victoria Falls are not. God gave both
Vilakazi and the Victoria Falls the beauty that no one can define. God gave man a free will
to decide on his destiny and on his future. An individual does not need a king or a queen

with their imperial ideologies to help him develop into a fully functioning human being. Just as the Victoria Falls, man can be exalted into the sublime. It is the western hegemony that clouds the freedom of the African man. Just as the Victoria Falls has the ability to talk directly with God, so Man too can send his prayer directly to God, not through an autocratic priest or any other authority figure.

No one can compare himself with the Victoria Falls since its voice is very powerful, the one who tries will become a fool with his small voice. The Victoria Falls' voice is thunderous and mighty and perhaps only a natural man who can live life to its fullest potential might compare. However if somebody tries to compare himself with the Falls, it will be human pain and curiosity that drives him. This is the case with B.W. Vilakazi. As a poet he finds pleasure in looking, appreciating, praising and interacting with the Victoria Falls. Because the world has become dull and predictable, only the natural vegetation and objects can remind the poet of all the good old days of the past. The love of nature drives him to praise and appreciate the power of the Falls, which is compared, to the power of imagination. Even the sea, which often claims to be powerful by controlling all its turbulent waves, cannot be compared to the power of the Victoria Falls.

Authority figures control the bodies of their subjects but they are unable to control the powerful thoughts that keep the poet singing the songs of hope, the songs of love. Nobody can restrict their imagination.

At times the sea gets weary and stops moving its waves backward and forward but the Victoria Falls flow day and night without ceasing. The sleeping sea is compared to a

drunken man who is weak and tired because of the hard work that he has been doing. B.W. Vilakazi's reference to a drunken man suggests that the world is corrupt and drunken. Leaders of this world like pleasures, as a result they exploit other people specifically those who are weak. This is justified by Vilakazi's reference to the labourer who is tired. In a capitalistic society those who are uneducated in the educational sense of the western world, have nothing in their hands but their manpower.

Vilakazi managed to capture the experiences of the black man. The Victoria Falls on the other hand are unaffected by imperial domination and this is apparent from the way in which it flows freely and unceasingly just as the flow of thoughts from the poets mind onto paper or onto his lips.

Curiosity drives the persona to ask the Victoria Falls what keeps it falling, since many other natural objects get weary at times, especially the sea. The Romantics were driven by curiosity. Not even for a single day does the Victoria Falls take a rest. This amazes even a passer-by. Surely there should be a reason why the Victoria Falls does not stop. The poet is pursuing a quest - being on a quest is the major feature of the Romantic Poets. Not getting the answer, the persona resorts to praising the Victoria Falls, encouraging it to keep on falling day and night. The persona is astonished at the diligence of the Falls.

The Romantic Poets often found themselves exposing their self-consciousness in their writings and Vilakazi is no exception. He was known for his courage and strength. He was a diligent academic, in fact he kept on studying until he achieved the top qualification. He

became a pioneer of Zulu literature and did many things simultaneously - he taught, studied privately and wrote books. Vilakazi is reflected in the Victoria Falls. He is the Victoria Falls himself. His imagination never stopped flowing, in fact it will flow forever. This is true because writers never die, but live forever in their books.

This poem discusses Vilakazi's subjectivity. The poet moves on to comment about the constant nature of the Victoria Falls. The Victoria Falls has been there for many years before the morning star. The morning star started to groan as it saw the Victoria Falls, perhaps the morning star envied the Victoria Falls for its beauty. The Victoria Falls are even older than the stars in the sky. The stars wait for the evening to bring light upon the face of the earth but the Victoria Falls keeps on working unceasingly. The stars also obey the voice of the angels for the day in which the earth will be "melted." It seems as if the Victoria Falls will never be melted since the stars will obey the voice of the Victoria Falls. The stars will praise the Victoria Falls since they keep on going, remain and never disappear from the eyes of the stars.

Vilakazi regarded himself as an inspired prophet operating from the will of God and the ancestors. It is not the body of the poet that counts since it will one day perish, it is his spirit that will live forever. Romantics were spiritual poets; they rejected institutional religions and invented their own forms of spiritual perfection. They saw this perfection in natural objects.

The poet begins to tell us about the green branches that are "cool" all around the Victoria Falls' vicinity. The reason the branches are green is because they are supplied with water

from the pools of the Falls. This reminds us of Psalms, Chapter One, verses 1-3. "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of the mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers." (Holy Bible, New International Version, 1995). The green branches symbolise the young people who will learn from the poets of great imagination and extract knowledge that will prevent the Zulu nation from perishing.

Poetic imagination generates hope that is free from the hindrances of this world. Vilakazi as a patriot was concerned about the culture, customs and traditions of the Zulu people. He sensed the birds of the heavens approaching to weaken that which is sacred to the Zulu nation. The youth will be drawing inspiration from the works of the poets if they read the poems, because just as the Victoria Falls are a source of life to the branches, so the poetry/imagination will be the source of life to younger generations. This was Vilakazi's concern and for Wordsworth a good poem must teach the people how to live a good life. A good poem must preserve that which is treasured by the ordinary people.

Once again the persona envies the Falls because they have the voice that he does not have, the voice that is deep and eternal. This is the contrast between the persona and the Falls. This reminds us that the poets too can be exalted into a supernatural, godlike entity by imagination. The poems are eternal, everlasting, just like the Victoria Falls.

The poet compares himself to the Victoria Falls. Of course the poet as a mere human being

cannot be equated with the magnificent Victoria Falls. The power of the Falls reminds the poet of his weaknesses and of all the things that have been removed from him by the imperial powers.

The persona points out that his attempts to explain the beauty of the Falls through poetry makes him look like a fool. A poet is a person who is insane in the sense that he sees beauty where there is none and he sees darkness where many people see the light. The aim of defining and describing the majestic grace and beauty of the Falls is to make those who are not fortunate enough to see the Victoria Falls, see it through the imagination. We learn that the power of imagination can make people reach the unreachable, make people see what they had never seen before. It can make people describe natural landscapes they have never seen. Vilakazi's skill, driven by the power of imagination, enables him to see the Victoria Falls with all its features.

Vilakazi sees the Victoria Falls as a human being. This could be an anointed servant of God for his feet are worthy of respect. But further reading of this poem suggests that the Falls are far greater than a mere human being. The poet seeks to mediate his viewpoint, his experience of his interaction with nature, to the reader.

B.W. Vilakazi points out clearly that he wants other people to see the Falls with their minds' eyes. It is because the beauty of the Falls will bring relief to the pain that these people are going through. The spirits of these people are in distress because of their dislocation. The aboriginal people were removed from their land in which they were born and bred. The European colonisers are to blame for the suffering of these people. They are wanderers,

having no homes of their own, no land of their own. Dislocation results from the imperial occupation and the experiences associated with imperialism.

Ashcroft points out that dislocation may be a result of transportation from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion and settlement, a consequence of willing or unwilling movement from a known to an unknown location. The term is used to describe the experience of those who have willingly moved from the imperial "Home" to the colonial margin, but it affects all those who, as a result of colonialism, have been placed in a location that, because of colonial hegemonic practices, needs, in a sense, to be "reinvented" in language, in narrative and in myth.

Heidegger (1971) refers to dislocation as "unhousedness" or "not-at-home-ness." Vilakazi registers this unhousedness in this poem because it is what he sees in his surroundings. The Radical Romantics were concerned about the painful experiences of the ordinary people. For Vilakazi the Zulu people have no place to lay their hands. They are divided.

Vilakazi believed that the voice of the Falls will soothe these people and give them the care they need. Vilakazi, although a poet, is part of the unhoused people who are very lonely. They all live in a solitary environment.

Vilakazi comes to grips with the fact of self-alienation. The imagination becomes the source of relief. Through imagination the realities of the harshness of life are escaped. The wound of self is healed, however, by "unconscious intercourse with a nature as old as creation itself." Nature makes the "quiet stream" flow on. This evokes a type of consciousness more

integrated than ordinary consciousness, though deeply dependent on its early and continuing life in rural surroundings. Vilakazi as a Romantic Poet derived his inspiration from nature, just as we see in this poem.

The ever-flowing Victoria Falls are analogous to the poet's ever-flowing thoughts. The painful experience of his people moves him to take up pen and paper and write a poem about their hardships.

Nature and its beauty bring happiness to the ordinary people just as the imagination brings joy to the poet. Here natural life is associated with happiness since the Victoria Falls live a natural life. The African people are no longer living a natural life because they are colonised. The colonial hegemony prevents them from seeing the obvious beauty depicted in nature.

B.W. Vilakazi's identification with his poor people proves that he was a Zulu Romantic Poet. To conclude his poem, Vilakazi points out that the people, having satisfied themselves with beauty and having finished smoking, will begin to enter a state of tranquillity. The state of tranquillity is the source of the flow of imagination to the Romantic Poets. Nature is being compared to a nurse. The ideas that come out of imagination are like honey, they heal the broken hearted, inspire the homeless, heartbroken people to take action against their oppression. Imagination becomes the breeding place of the Romantics and the ordinary people. It removes their pain and desolation.

WE MOYA!

HAIL WIND

In this poem Vilakazi's curiosity is demonstrated. He is longing to know what constitutes the wind. Like other Romantic Poets he is on the quest for knowledge of the nature of the wonderful invisible element. Romantics focused even on things that would appear trivial in the eyes of an average man.

What is the nature of wind? This is the question Vilakazi wanted to answer. He appreciates its nature since to him it exemplifies the perfect existence. He is a Romantic Poet who wants to rise to the point where he can compare himself to the beauty of the wind. He wants other people to learn to see the beauty that is hidden in the nature of the wind and he feels as if he is the only person who is conscious of this beauty.

I want to listen and to hear
The whispering of the wind
Whose passing stirs earth's covering of grass
And strays here as it will.

I wish to see
That being who breathes
Upon the forest trees, whose breath
Ruffles the glossy leaves.

I sigh, I want to capture you,
To seize you, clasp you

And confuse you;
I want to trip you and to hold you.

I go indoors and then I hear you
Touching all the stems you pass
And breathing on the trembling grasses.

Come, dear wind, from where you spring;
I do not know your source,
But I would build my home there
And watch you when I will.

Come soon, the sun has risen
And pleasant is the hill
Where you in strength can rival
The houses of the Ngangas.

Come, let us both be merry
And feel that strong desire
That's born of restlessness
Whose enemy is sloth.

Now I can hear your murmur,
Your whispered song of drowsiness
That brings to me your gladness.

Sometimes my heart is lonely,
Without companionship -
Friends vanishing like rushes -
Then I, who feel alone,

Go out into the open
And feel your presence near me
While, in my ears, there echo
Sounds that are eternal.

Always the sound enthral me,
As drifting down the ridges,
Its song has no beginning.

And you foretell the rain,
(Wafting the scent of melons
That ripen with the pumpkins)
For mealie plants and berries.

Come, wind! O come and lighten
My heart that feels so heavy
And let me die when you die.

The persona's use of "I" suggests that he has a very deep romantic feeling about the nature of the wind. He likes to listen and hear the wind as it moves over a fur coat. He wants to listen to it as it whispers. This suggests a sense of expectancy that the wind can bring him

the secret of the hidden nature of things. When the wind blows every object on earth can feel it.

Vilakazi also registers the falling of the African culture as it is blown by the wind. The wind has come to destroy the African way of life, which is natural, and replace it with nothing of any value. The power of the wind makes the fur begin to fall on its own, just as the indigenous people began to be influenced and accept western culture on their own without making any effort to resist it.

In stanza two the persona sees this "man" called wind that when it breathes, the trees in the forest begin to tremble and move their glossy leaves. The wind causes the black people to live the culture, inculturation weakens the "glossy" culture of the Zulu people. In the poem Vilakazi has an ambivalent response to the wind; he both envies and admires it. The persona is longing for the right time in which he will capture this wind, he wants to confuse and trap it.

What could be the possible reason for seizing the wind? It is because he is envious of the wind's freedom. Since he is a captive in his environment, he is a confused subject, he was seized by the imperial powers, and just as they imposed their power on him, he also wants to overpower the wind.

The amazing thing about the wind is its influence on people and objects. The persona can hear the wind even if he is inside his house. The wind can touch things even if people cannot touch them. The wind can be heard breathing on the trembling grasses but it is invisible. Vilakazi wanted to get to the truth of this creative invisible entity.

The major troubling factor is that the wind can do things that the poet cannot do. This unsettles the writer since as a Romantic Poet he has the urge to create and to master whatever he does.

Realising that his attempts to trip, seize, capture and confuse the wind are useless the persona tries to befriend it. He wants to feel the restlessness of the wind. He hates being inactive. As a poet he should be restless and eager to move around and touch people's lives by his poetry. He realises that hating the wind is foolish. It is better to associate himself with it and be inspired by it in a positive way. To hate the wind is to make yourself an enemy of imagination, since to him the wind is the source of inspiration. The poet cannot write a poem about life when he is not conscious of his own abilities and disabilities.

The Romantic Poets in their writings were informed by their self-consciousness. Having invited the wind in he can now hear the wind murmuring and whispering a poem of drowsiness. The Romantics were believed to have the ability to converse with nature. Their works of art depicted what nature had disclosed to them. They possessed some special prophetic gifts to interact with the natural muses and spirits.

Here B.W. Vilakazi is listening to the song whispered to him by the wind. This song brings the persona to a state of tranquillity, which is crucial for a Romantic Poet in order for him to generate imaginative thoughts. This state of tranquillity is characterised by an indescribable gladness, which shows that imagination brings escape and relief to the poet. If the poet can experience this relief it follows that the readers too can experience this relief in their reading of the Romantic poems.

The persona confesses that at times he becomes very lonely, lonely in his heart without

companionship. Loneliness is a feature of Romantic Poets, most of them were misunderstood by their contemporaries and rejected as not being poets. William Blake is regarded as a major Romantic Poet but he did not enjoy that status from some of his contemporaries who considered him an outsider. They found his poetic work complex in its nature. Some of the Romantic Poets died lonely men.

I have mentioned in Chapter Three that some African graduates chose to become B.W. Vilakazi's enemies by criticising him for studying privately. They called his degree qualifications, "candlelight" qualifications and isolated him. This inspired Vilakazi to study and accumulate more academic qualifications with the intention of silencing his detractors. From this we learn that a problem can be turned into a challenge. Perhaps challenges are necessary to trigger an imaginative process through which a magnificent work of art may be produced

Some people criticised Vilakazi for being haughty and unapproachable and began to isolate him. But some, especially those who were uneducated in the western sense, found Vilakazi to be a gentleman, a kind person who was helpful and understanding. I also previously mentioned that most criticism stemmed from those who thought B.W. Vilakazi did not understand the pain they were suffering and if he did, he was selfish and insensitive to that pain. They wanted him to enter the political struggle, but B.W. Vilakazi believed he was unable to be a full time politician and also do his academic work successfully.

It should be remembered as well that when the political struggle was at its peak in South Africa, there were some political extremists who criticised black consciousness poets for

being cowards by writing poems instead of going into the battlefield. A thorough analysis of B.W. Vilakazi proves his consciousness of the pain his nation was suffering. He had the interests of the people at heart.

The persona adds that friends vanish like rushes and he is left alone. He invites the wind to come into the open where both can enjoy life and he will never be inactive any more. The echoes of the wind are eternal and inspirational. Its song brings him joy and happiness that he cannot express in writing.

The wind has the ability to "foretell the rain." The wind goes hand in hand with the rain, which enables communities to plant crops like watermelons and pumpkins, mielies and berries. Communities rely on the wind to tell them whether the rain is coming or not. The persona is once again reminded of the importance of the wind. He also emphasises that the wind is his faithful friend since his relatives and friends are not always close to him. In fact the wind is what constitutes his spirit/soul. He breathes the wind, the wind is a crucial part of his life. He is nothing but the wind, reflected in the wind.

WOZA NONJINSIKAZ

COME, MONSTER OF STEEL!

Come, you monster made of steel,
You prancing dancer of the road,
You, whose tracks are double-stemmed
And clamped with braces made of iron!
You curve and climb, descend and wind
Across the uplands and the plains.
O you who took our fathers' fathers,
Enticing them to leave their homes!
We ask for news of them, but you,
Not hearing, still increase your speed :
Acting like one whose ears are blocked
You disappear around a bend.

You brought the moles who travelled far
To burrow deep within our soil,
So that today we see the mine-dumps
White as sand and snowy dunes
That fringe the estuaries and seas.

Now I am sitting here within
This station waiting room whence come

Those you swallowed up alive.
Now as I look toward the East,
I see the wavering columns there,
Formed of smoke and chalky dust,
Ascending slowly to the skies.

This place is pleasant, it is good
To be here, looking at the sun
Falling as though a blazing ball
Of bright red flame
Lighting up the new young day.

I watch this sun
Among the clouds,
Glowing like a ring of ~~iron~~,
Ruddy, among the burning coals,
Surrounded by a gleaming halo
No less bright than was the gold
Our forebears owned in Africa.

Go down, you daily-rising sun,
You, who would not show to us -
Yes, us who are a dark-hued nation -
The secret stores of gold
Which now we see are bringing wealth

To peoples everywhere on earth
While we, the Bantu, must look on,
Our thickened lips agape.
Come quickly, day the black men wait for!
Listen, already I hear the flutes
Sounding like the water-kelpies
Immersed in the Tugela's waters.

I hear the Vendas and the Tshopis
Singing out their chants
Of mockery to lovers,
Lowling like the milch-cows do :
The black and white and white of face,
Upon the hills of Africa.
I listen as the earth resounds
To stamping feet that kick the air,
Reminding me of Mameyiguda,
Upon the open ground of Durban.
I hear the many different songs
Of foreigners at Umfolozi.

Ah, go away, you iron monster!
Do not approach so rapidly,
I am busy at the moment

And wish that I were hidden well
Among the mealie-fields at home,
Now full of mealie-cobs and pumpkins,
Where I could never be disturbed
By all these people
Passing, chattering ...
I see them early,
See them late :
At dawn and dusk they pass me by.

In this poem B.W. Vilakazi is talking to the railway train. He refers to it as a monster of steel because one cannot understand the scientific nature of the train. The word "monster" is used in literature to refer to a dangerous creature, especially one created by man, whose presence threatens the very existence of its creator. The train is a monster to many black people even today. It is known for transporting black labourers from different parts of Africa to Johannesburg, a place of exploitation. The railway train is a symbol of colonialism and of global capitalism.

European expansion was accompanied by the development of a modern capitalist system of economic exchange which meant that the colonies were established with the intention of providing raw materials for the burgeoning economies of the colonial powers. The relationship between the coloniser and the colonised was locked into a rigid hierarchy of difference deeply resistant to fair and equitable exchanges whether economic, cultural or social (Ashcroft, 1998). In this poem V.W. Vilakazi has captured this through his critical interaction with the railway train.

The train reminds him of the fact that his country is no longer his, it was colonised by Europeans long before he came into this world. The presence of railway tracks and roads in his land is a constant reminder of this harsh reality. The colonial powers did not only colonise the country or the continent but its people as well, meaning they exploit the land by extracting mineral resources without the consent of the rightful owners of the land. They also forced the "natives" to dig these mineral resources from the ground without their consent.

B.W. Vilakazi blames the railway train, its inventors, and the whole ideology of imperialism and colonialism. This instance of distancing himself from a capitalistic form of economy aligns Vilakazi with the greater Romantics who disapproved of all forms of human exploitation. B.W. Vilakazi's standpoint regarding economic exploitation and manpower exploitation identifies him with the labourers, he feels what they feel and he cries with them since they are his own people.

Vilakazi's dialogue with the railway train is meant to reveal to us the nature of the "monster" which he says is made of steel. The imagery of iron and steel reminds us of industrialisation. It reminds us of hard human labour where men work in iron factories and are paid peanuts. The railway tracks symbolise the invasion of African land by the colonial powers. It serves as a constant reminder of colonialism and capitalism. To Vilakazi, who derived his inspiration from nature, the presence of the railway train and its tracks reminded him of his imprisonment under the colonial capitalist system. The railway train enables the colonist to move easily across the uplands and the plains recruiting labourers. He blames the train for taking his forefathers away, separating them from their families forever. This

means that family ties were broken by industrialisation. It must always be remembered that the voice of the poet or the persona represents the African people.

The train brought the big machines to dig in their land. The poet reclaims the land from the colonialist: "our land" not their land. As a result of these diggings there are mine-dumps which are very white and are unnatural, because of this they are not charming to the poet.

The persona is one of the labourers since he is sitting in the station waiting room. As he looks to the East he sees the smoke from the nearby factories and also the deadly dust from a nearby mining company rising into the sky. These are signs of capitalism and industrialisation, which Romantics view with horror as "unnatural." People were subject to exploitation. They had little chance of escape since their colonial masters were powerful. This smoke and dust is also endangering their health, even today many communities are the victims of air pollution. The big companies who pollute the air thus affecting the health of the people in the nearby locations resist taking precautions or paying compensation.

As focusing on the polluted air disturbs his spirit, the persona turns to the sun which is a natural object. He appreciates the beautiful scenery. The sun is falling into its place behind the mountains. This scenery reminds him of gunfire and also of the gold that is being set on fire to be melted and processed. The gold once belonged to their forefathers in Africa but now belongs to the colonisers. The image of the gunfire reminds us of the fact that the colonisers used machine guns and other forms of deadly weapons to fight and defeat our forefathers. The persona tells the sun to go down since it will rise again on the following day. The persona is placing blame on the sun because even though it brings light it refuses

to show the black people the hidden treasures of gold. The poet is bitter because only the colonial masters are getting rich out of our own gold. The black people are dejected at this unjust exploitation of their gold.

The only thing that the black man is longing for is the time of darkness or the night so they can rest because they are tired. It seems that the black men were working hard, long hours. They did not have time to spend with their families and to think about the nature of their suffering. The little time that the black man had, he spent trying to amuse himself by playing the flute and dancing the African dance. It is remarkable that the music from these flutes does not amuse the persona because they produce a sound similar to that of the Zombies when immersed in the Tugela River pools.

The poet does not derive pleasure from the setting of the sun, instead it reminds him of his subjectivity. Even though the night comes it brings him no amusement because the night is dark and black which reminds him of his skin colour, the cause of his suppression and exploitation, so he hates the night. To him this means that he must sleep because he is tired, otherwise he won't be able to wake up in the morning and go to his duty. The persona lives to work, the reason being so that his masters can accumulate more wealth. He has no family of his own, no house of his own, as he stays in a hostel.

The persona is objectified since he is treated like the machinery which is hired for a specific purpose, it has no family, no feelings, no needs, and it is housed in the huge shelter only to protect it from the heat of the sun and heavy rains. That is how the black person was/is treated in the capitalist cities.

The persona once again listens and hears the Vendas and Tshopis singing songs of "mockery" to their lovers. This is typical behaviour of labourers, they like to sing and shout about their lovers. This could be attributed to their solitary lives since they are separated from their loved ones. The persona compares them to milk cows which are black and white in the hills of Africa. These people perhaps wore masks of some sort on their faces, or white handkerchiefs.

The poet hears the earth resounding as the men dance, "stamping" their feet on the ground, kicking the air. They remind him of the well-known group of dancers that he saw in Durban. This suggests that it was the habit of the black men to sing and dance as their way of chasing away hunger, sorrow and pain. The singing reminded them of the good old days in Africa before the arrival of the European colonisers.

The persona notices that their songs are different from those sung by the nations from Umfolozi. This is typical of a person who is used to the African dances, he can easily identify different dancing styles according to regions. B.W. Vilakazi was a common man despite his education: he knew the habits of his people and he identified with them. He loved the culture of the Zulu nation so much that he wrote poems to demonstrate the treasures hidden in the Zulu language. He believed that there was so much that young writers can discover when studying the Zulu language and its culture.

In the last stanza he chases away the "iron monster" because it disturbs him from enjoying the African dance that he is watching. This is not just the mere rejection of the railway train, but the rejection of the capitalist system. He is being absorbed into the way these African

sons are dancing. The approach of the "iron monster" annoys him. He wishes to return to his homeland where no "iron monsters" will interfere. This wish to return to his homeland suggests a need to return to a natural way of life, where the people live harmoniously with their environment. It seems as if the persona finds it difficult to relate to an "iron monster." He wishes to escape from its presence.

His homeland is characterised by mealie-fields which are full of mealie cobs and also pumpkins and other crops. Nobody will come and interfere with the persona there in KwaZulu. The persona finds life difficult in the urban areas, especially the big cities like Johannesburg and Durban. He prefers a natural way of life in the rural areas. This reminds us that the Romantics wrote poems which depicted the big cities of the world as the symbols of capitalism, human suffering and pain.

UMCABANGA WASEKUSENI

MEDITATION FOR THE MORNING

In this poem the persona is taken over by the imagination. The title suggests that the poet is carried away by powerful thoughts about the nature of mankind. The word "morning" in the title gives us the connotation of new horizons, new beginnings, or newly discovered thoughts about the nature of humanity. It must be remembered that in Chapter Two it was mentioned that the Romantics were imaginative, visionary, idealistic and more importantly, their poems at times were very meditative.

Alas, you children of sorrow,
Uprooted, downtrodden, wasted
By fate and the chances of living!
See, though the shadows surround you,
They - mingled with flowers -
Prove that the earth
Pursues its own course.
All things must pass :
Nights end,
Suns will rise,
And even a coconut-tree
So huge and triumphant,
The Father of all
Can pack in a seed,
Spherical, small;
And plants that are weeds
And plants having thorns
Grow large with astonishing swiftness.

Be always prepared
For all that may come:
For shade to refresh you,
For rising the moment
That God has selected -

He promised it saying:
"You will arise, you will conquer!"
The yielding of years,
The storming of seas,
The matters of men,
Through life till its end,
Are governed by God; for He has ordained
The motions of men.
From birth we were destined
For struggle and purpose
Which cannot be altered.
Each one in his turn,
Cuts capers, then yields
To those who advance
By ways yet unknown,
In lands that are fearful and strange.

I often have witnessed the fall
Of kings who were worshipped,
Of prosperous men who were happy,
Of men who rejoiced in their fortunes secure:
They fell and they rose not again.
Often I gaze from the church
At graves in the graveyard beyond,

And think how the earth covers all:
The men and the women,
The youths and the maidens,
It makes no distinction;
And over them all blows the wind,
And over them all there is silence,
Unbroken except in the daytime
By birds, and at night by the owls.
It seems that they speak and remind us
Of Christ and of that which He taught.
The darkness around us
Is hiding the evil
That lurks in our thoughts
When these are unrighteous;
And they are the harvest of weeds
And monkey-ropes, ugly and thorny,
That flourish so quickly.
The heat has no mercy,
But here are great trees
That offer their shade
And filter the light of the sun.

This poem explores the human predicament and fate. Right from the first line the persona refers to humankind as the children of sorrow who are uprooted, downtrodden and wasted by fate and chances of living.

The persona attributes this human predicament to social policies that are unjust. People are living in poverty and they are badly or poorly dressed. When the poet thinks about his people he sees no bright future, their future is clouded since they are always surrounded by shadows. The earth is acting against the people, as a result people are suffering. There is to face the doom that is bound to come, whether they like it or not. These people were born to suffer.

Man is imprisoned by social circumstances. The Radical Romantics believed that these social factors are unnatural or are man-made, so they are not inevitable. Vilakazi's poem is discussing the nature of these circumstances which seem to be inevitable.

The Romantics held that all begins with self-consciousness. If people are conscious of the nature of their imprisonment they will begin to discover the agency to act and redress what is wrong. This means that their fate lies in their knowledge about the nature of their pain. The Radical Romantics believed that man is born with the ability to actively explore his environment, man is responsible for shaping development through the process of natural unfolding. This means that man has initiated his pain by shaping the environment in a way that limits him from reaching the perfect existence.

In the case of the colonised countries, it is the Europeans that have shaped the landscape to suit themselves at the expense of the black people. In Chapter Two I pointed out that the Romantics argued that man shapes the landscape, and that the landscape shapes man. This poem by B.W. Vilakazi reflects this reciprocity between man and nature.

Vilakazi as a Romantic Poet sees it as his burden to inform his people of the fact that as

they pursue their course the earth too pursues its own course against man. The persona has become conscious of the fact that all things, whether good or bad, beautiful or ugly, must pass away, and man has no power to stop this since it is the natural law. It is the law of nature that the night must end so that the sun can get its chance to rise.

The persona argues that our lives are wasted by the chances of living. We live within the limited chances offered to us by the laws of nature. God derived the coconut tree, despite its huge and triumphant nature, out of a small seed. All plants in their different forms grow very fast and become large in an astonishing way.

Radical Romantics held that all things or people have innate or essential qualities, this is the natural physical power causing all phenomena of the material world to grow in an unlimited way. This includes plants, animals and landscape. In this poem, these major romantic features are depicted. Vilakazi is amazed and disappointed at how things are happening in this world which to him has become dull and predictable. He gives a warning to the ordinary man that he must always be prepared to face some trouble, because there are bound to be problems in their life whether they like it or not. He also suggests that people must always be ready to grab the opportunities that present themselves.

The persona believes that the shadows can also be a source of inspiration. They can function to refresh the minds of the people. There is a popular belief among the African people that problems make a person strong and creative. To many Africans the process of growing up should be accompanied by some challenges, since these challenges enable a person to face life with its unpredictable circumstances. It benefits a man to stand and not to run away, since running away is a disgrace in Zulu culture. A man must learn to rise and

take all the responsibilities that come with life. The persona believes that one day the children of sorrow will be given strength to stand up and defend themselves. It is God who will give them this strength since God has said this himself.

The persona believes that God has seen a day in which He will deliver His people. God has promised His people that one-day they will arise and conquer; the "yielding of years, the storming of seas", the matters of man since human life is in the hands of God. He is in control, the persona shows his great faith in the power of God.

Here Vilakazi has registered the colonial issues, that black people are suffering because they were conquered by the colonial powers, but through God's intervention they will one day fight back and conquer their oppressors. Vilakazi argues that man will no longer be the subject of time. The storms of life will also become a thing of the past. Vilakazi is talking about absolute redemption, a state where there will be no sickness and death. It is clear that here Vilakazi as a Romantic Poet believed in the new heaven and the new earth. If this is true, Vilakazi then rejected the world systems and all the unjust policies that have been institutionalised.

The persona could see that man was born to suffer and to him it seems as if a man is destined for struggle, the purpose of which cannot be altered. This world is not our home, we are just passing through and let new generations take over. When people die they go to an unknown land and never come back to inform those who are left about life in that strange and fearful land. This could be a reference to heaven, to the land of the ancestors.

It should be remembered that Vilakazi was a hybrid, as many Africans are, of the encounter

between western culture and African culture. It is crucial to understand that Vilakazi's conversion to Catholicism did not distance him from his culture. He tried to embrace both Christian Catholicism and the Zulu culture, so for him God refers to Cisimakade or Umvelinqanqi who was the God of his ancestors. So when people die they either go to the lands of the ancestors or to heaven. At times the Zulus used the terms interchangeably. Hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonisation.

The persona points out that he has seen many terrible things in this world. He has witnessed the fall of kings who were worshipped, of prosperous men who were happy, of men who rejoiced in their riches and of sons secure in their fortunes. The persona has observed that despite the strength, riches and respect these men had they still died, and their social status did not save them. All men are subject to the same fate, only God has the power to redeem man from his eternal destruction, but for now man is bound to die and this is inevitable.

The persona, as a church man, moves on to tell us that in the churchyard all graves are covered by the earth, regardless of whether they are the graves of men or of women, youths or maidens. This leads to the fact that earth is the great equaliser. The poet could feel the wind blowing over the graves. To him only natural elements have the gift of living an eternal life. He feels the silence over the graves, the men who were once capable of making noise can no longer do so. There are only birds singing.

These people were the ones who once preached faith but they use the name of God to hide their evil work. In their mind they had evil thoughts, their hearts were merciless.

CULA NGIZWE
SING THAT I MAY HEAR

Sing that I may hear, O Spirit!
And nod my head, and nodding, sleep,
The while I watch the quivering
Of trees still green.
Define for me the mysteries
Of beauty, make the secrets clear
Of love that's new,
Of love that's old without an inner core,
Of peace that is akin to sleep
Which overtakes me on the floor.
My heart needs comforting!
Unceasing throbs of fear
Make dark my mind.
Bring me that peace when twilight falls
Which only termites interrupt,
Gnawing the walls.

Sing that I may hear, O Paraclete!
Sing from the shadow of the branches
And let my soul be comforted,
Resting upon your message.
Let me lie as though bewitched,

Outstretched, my head upon my arms

And overcome by sleep.

I want to forget the misery

Of illness, life and loneliness,

Of being so apart.

Sing to me your wordless song,

The song you sing when moons are young;

Always you whisper it

And no one knows its meaning,

Unless it be the sprite who tells us

Of the Queen of Heaven.

Sing that I may hear, O Flower!

Songs in praise of love and honey;

Sing of waters and the drops

That fall upon the earth.

Open my eyes to see the lips

Of petals whispering

Secrets of the love that's new,

Of love that's like the stars,

Guarding all night the morning star

Which tells that day is coming.

Consoled and pleased, the others then

Fade away and leave the beads

Of their creation on the grass.

And see, the sun is brightening

The dew, it sucks it up

And now the flowers waken.

Chant your wordless song, O Spirit!

And you, O Paraclete,

Surrounded by the varied hues

Of nameless flowers.

To some critics, this is a poet's benediction to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the teacher, the eye-opener, the comforter and the messenger from God to man. The persona is speaking from his heart, pleading with the Holy Spirit to sing to him of all the secrets about life. It is appropriate for the persona to appeal to the spirit of God because the spirit of God is believed to be all knowing. The spirit of God can explain and define all the mysteries of life. What makes this poem a Romantic poem is the curiosity of the poet, who is on a quest for knowledge that can lead him to a perfect existence. His interaction with the supernatural being is also a romantic feature. The poet explores his subjectivity because the singing of the spirit will elevate the poet's inner self. The singing will comfort him and give him peace.

Malcom points out that it is said that Vilakazi composed the poem at the time of his conversion to Roman Catholicism. This view of the address to the Holy Spirit could not be discarded since the poet was indeed a Catholic convert, as a hybrid of the two forms of religion : African religion and Roman Catholicism. It is therefore possible that Vilakazi was addressing the Holy Spirit as he was excited about his newly found religion. The second possibility is that Vilakazi was addressing the muse of singing. The Romantics had their

muses which inspired them to excel in their works of art, therefore Vilakazi too might have had the muse of singing. He wanted to hear this muse so that he could imitate it or develop his singing style. Another position is that Vilakazi is addressing nature: flowers, birds and wind.

This is the position I am going to take in my analysis of this poem. This will show that B.W. Vilakazi is a Zulu Romantic Poet.

In addressing the wind, he says that when the wind sings he will hear it moving around his head and he will begin to nod and start to sleep. This suggests that the wind will sing him a lullaby. If this is acceptable it follows that the poet is produced by nature. Nature is the mother and the poet is the child, and this is a major feature of Romanticism. Around him the person sees green trees "quivering" and wonders what makes them move, there must be a secret behind their movement. The poet is also attracted to the colour of the trees, there is something charming about them.

The great Romantics were very interested in beauty, and here the persona appeals to the wind to define the secrets, the mysteries of beauty. He is challenging the wind to make clear the secrets of the love that is new and of the old love which is characterised by freedom. The persona has fallen in love with nature because his love for it is free from all the restrictions that are common in human relationships. His love for nature is characterised by peace and harmony. He is reminded of the fact that, as a human being, he lacks this peace and harmony in his heart and he begins to feel the pain, the fear, and his mind is confused. He appeals to the wind to comfort him and to bring that which is everlasting, that which only the "termites can interrupt".

In the next stanza the persona moves from addressing the wind to addressing the bird that he hears singing from the shadow of the branches. The poet can be compared to this bird that sings from the shadows. Its singing can comfort the broken-hearted. The lyrics of a poem should be therapeutic, which was the view of Wordsworth. The lyrics of the song sung by the bird makes the poet lie down as he is overpowered by a deep desire to sleep. The poet is being hypnotised by the message of song and all he wants is to forget his misery of illness and loneliness.

The Romantic Poets argued that poems must carry a message that deals with the real experiences of the natural people and should comfort them. A true poet must be able to capture the life experience of the oppressed into his writing. B.W. Vilakazi, as a Romantic Poet, has managed to depict human pain in this poem. He says that he is "so apart" he feels the separateness, the brokenness, in his life. It is the "wordless song" of the bird that comforts him so he keeps encouraging it to sing on. The persona is familiar with this song as he says the bird used to sing it "when moons are young". It always "whispers" it but nobody has ever been able to interpret the meaning of the song.

There is also a reference to the goddess "Nomkhubulwane", the princess of heaven. This could be attributed to the hybridity of the culture in which Vilakazi was writing his poems. Zulu culture today cannot be viewed as a "pure Zulu" culture because it has been and is influenced by western culture and other cultures from numerous nations existing in South Africa today.

In the next stanza the poet addresses a flower asking it to sing songs "in praise of love and

honey" and of all the beautiful things under the sun. The Romantics were concerned about natural beauty, wrote about it, even shaped the language of their poems in a way that can depict natural beauty. The persona asks the flower to sing him a romantic song because he is curious to hear it. The poet wants to hear a prophetic song about the good things to come on earth. Water symbolises life. He urges the flower to sing a song that will open his eyes so that he can see the love that guides the morning star which foretells the new day, the love that "consoled and pleased" the people. B.W. Vilakazi seems to compare himself to the morning star because he too loved his people and wrote poems which consoled and pleased them.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOME POEMS TAKEN FROM

"AMAL'EZULU"

YINI LIKWAZI?

WHAT IS WISDOM?

In this poem, B.W. Vilakazi is questioning the nature of knowledge and the nature of reality - how do we know what we know? Basically he is asking three philosophical questions: The epistemological question, the ontological question and the methodological question. In this short poem we will learn that what we call knowledge is nothing more than the hegemony of the western powers. The last line of the poem raises the need for action.

Tell me, comrade,

What is wisdom?

Dressing smartly,

Carrying a cane,

Tapping the road,

Wearing shoes?

Tell me, colleague,

What is wisdom?

Attending school,

Studying books,
Turning the leaves
Till baldness comes?

Tell me, Mother,
What is wisdom?
Making speeches
To stir the nation;
Interpreting laws
That puzzle me?

Tell me, Father,
What is wisdom? ...
Come, my son
And listen well:
Let words be few,
Let actions speak?

The main feature of Romanticism in this poem is "curiosity" of the persona to know what constitutes knowledge.

The persona, who sounds very confused, reminds us of the hybridity of the poet. The persona's interrogative nature is that of the post-colonial theorists who keep questioning western discourse. The basic questions they ask are: What subject position are you

assuming? Who is saying what, about whom and why? For what purpose? What is the motive of the speaker? The persona asks his friend what knowledge is. Does knowledge mean dressing smartly, carrying a cane? This is a rhetorical question. The persona undermines or subverts this perception of knowledge. If you are educated you are expected to wear respectable clothes and to put on fancy shoes. The educated African becomes a copy of his colonial master. Western education functions to propagate colonial discourse which tends to exclude statements about the exploitation of resources of the colonised, the political status accruing to colonising powers, the importance to domestic politics of the development of an empire. All this may be compelling reasons for maintaining colonial ties.

Vilakazi could see that some educated Africans were not consciously aware of the duplicity of their position, for colonial discourse constructs the colonial subjects as much as the colonised. Statements that contradict the discourse cannot be made without incurring punishment, or without making the individuals who made those statements appear eccentric and abnormal (Ashcroft, 1998).

In this poem Vilakazi mocks western education which functions to train Africans as colonial administrators. He asks his colleague, who might be a black person like him, does wisdom mean attending school? Studying books? Of course Vilakazi's question suggests that there must be more to education, not just the wisdom based on knowledge found in western books. It seems as if people who only depend on western education keep on studying until they get very old without accumulating wisdom.

Here the persona suggests the need for action. He turns to his mother, asking her whether

wisdom means "making speeches to stir the nation." This reminds us of the politicians of our day who enjoy making long speeches about freedom and making promises which they don't keep. The purpose is to accumulate followers to strengthen their support base. Even the law was meant to justify the injustices committed by the western powers.

Vilakazi, as a Romantic Poet, sees it as his duty to conscientise the African about the nature of what we call "wisdom" because we can only deconstruct colonial discourse if we are aware of how it works to entrap us. The western law that alienates, disempowers, separates and divides puzzles the persona.

The poet turns to his father, since his curiosity keeps him on the quest for truth. His father, an old man, becomes the only person who answers the poet. Instead of chasing his son away the father calls the son as if he wants to whisper into his ear something that is crucial. "Let words be few, let action speak." The father reminds his son of the sense of urgency, which is the ability to act or perform an action. This urgency in post-colonial studies is the ability of the colonial subjects to initiate action in engaging or resisting imperial power.

"WHO! NGITSHELE MTANOMLUNGU"

TELL ME

Tell, O tell me, white-man's son,
The reason you have brought me here!
I come, but O my knees are heavy
And, as I think, my head is swimming;

Darkness descends for me at noon
And each day's sun becomes a moon.

Tell, O tell me, white-man's son,
Where shall I enter through these walls?
Our fathers' fathers, in their dying,
Said I should sleep beneath the grasses
Where soot and smoke make black the houses
And maize and whey are each day eaten.

Tell, O tell me white-man's son,
What am I now, what have I been?
The colour of my skin betrays me!
The tongue I speak is beautiful
Though men proclaim that it demeans me:
For this I grieve and lack a cure.

Tell, O tell me, white-man's son,
Where I was going, to be so lost!
The walls surrounding me are high,
They go down deeply in the earth
And high they rise toward the clouds:
The amaMboza fighters at Nodwengu
Never saw the like of these.

Tell, O tell me, white-man's son,

What is this I look upon?

Columns taller than our houses!

And, as I look at them, I hear

The harsh refrain of nesting doves

Sounding hoarse as bulls in anger.

Thus, as I gaze and see all this,

I know, I know beyond all doubt,

That I am lost! I, like a bride,

Must wed the Almighty's Zulu nation,

And bound forever, I hear them say:

"Take up your pack and be our voice!"

This poem illustrates the experiences of the black person entrapped in the colonial capitalist system. He comes from the rural areas and he finds himself standing in a large city like Johannesburg. Malcom points out that this poem describes the feelings of the poet when he first came to Johannesburg to the University of the Witwatersrand (in Vilakazi, 1973: 19). He finds himself in a very strange world and begins to question the "white man" who brought him to this place. The fact that he does not know the reason why he is in Johannesburg reminds me of dislocation . The black man has been transported from the rural areas to an unknown location against his will. He is dislocated psychologically and personally because his mind is disturbed, and his body is now possessed by the "white man's

son." He relies on the knowledge that the white man's son can give to him, he feels the heaviness of his knees as he has been walking a long distance trying to find himself a place, he is lost. It seems as if darkness goes before him and clouds his way.

When he looks around he sees "walls." These walls symbolise the capitalist system. It is these walls that prevent the black man from entering the business world. The walls have imprisoned the black man everywhere in this world. For Romantic Poets, every man in this world is a prisoner, they wrote with the intention of initiating and maintaining a sense of consciousness in the minds of the common people. They saw revolution as a product of the restrictions placed on the workers by unnatural social institutions.

The persona recalls the message given to him by his forefathers who instructed him to live in a mud hut roofed with grass where he will feel the smoke from the fireplace. This kind of house is believed to be conducive to accommodating the spirit of the ancestors. The poet is thinking how the spirit of his ancestors will cope with these strange conditions. It should be remembered that according to African culture the spirits of the ancestors are with their sons and daughters wherever they go. So his ancestors accompany the poet. He is also contemplating the foodstuff he eats while he is in Johannesburg. Of course he will be dissatisfied with it, since he is only used to mielies and sour milk.

The persona is totally estranged and dislocated, completely helpless, all his hope now is on the explanation that the white man's son can offer him, since he cannot define himself. The persona has been objectified. His skin exposes him and betrays him. It is because of his skin colour that he is treated in this way. Although he can speak the language fluently some

people criticise him saying his language reduces his status. Vilakazi is referring to those people who despised him, perhaps for his love of the Zulu language.

He moves on to interrogate the white man asking why he was brought to this place where he is lost. Walls that are very high surround him. He points out that even men in his age group at Nodwengu have never seen this strange place. B.W. Vilakazi as a Romantic Poet wanted to mediate his view of the buildings and whole environment of the city life. The persona sees tall pillars with at their peak some nesting doves which are singing in very unrefined voices like bulls in anger. This suggests that there is nothing good in Johannesburg. The persona used to enjoy the music of the birds but the birds of Johannesburg are different.

The whole environment is artificial. The great Romantics were against conventional settings and were only inspired by natural settings, so B.W. Vilakazi as a Romantic Poet finds himself dislocated in an urban environment. The surrounding objects make it clear that he is lost. He compares himself with a bride who has been forsaken by her parents and sent to another family where she will be bound to obey her husband forever. Vilakazi in this poem depicts human entrapment in a harsh environment where there is little chance of escape.

"IMFUNDO EPHAKEME"

HIGHER EDUCATION

When my thinking was but folly,

Then I dreamed of satisfaction

If I read my books and studied,
Pondered learning, mused on wisdom,
Striving for some understanding:
Now, to day, my mind is weary.

I have spent so many years
Turning over leaves of books
Whose authors' skins were white;
And every night I sat alone
Until the new day's sun arose:
But now, to day, my eyes are throbbing.

And poets who were black I called on,
Those who sang of kings' ambitions,
Those who praised our brimming bowls,
And their wisdom too, I thought on,
Mixing it with white men's teachings:
Now my mind's a battlefield.

He who does not know these things
And sleeps untroubled through the night,
Never reading till the dawn,
Not knowing Cicero or Caesar,
Shaka, Ngqika or Moshoeshoe:

He, to day, is light of heart.
Those I grew with, those unlettered,
When they meet me, they despise me,
Seeing me walk on naked feet
While they travel in their cars,
Leaving me to breathe their dust:
These to day are chiefs and masters.

Should I try to change my ways
And pick up crumbs such men may drop -
These, my fellows who have prospered?

But I know that I am fettered,
Prisoned by my love of learning:
What I am and love, enslaves me.

But now I think about the time
When age and weakness must defeat me;
Now I search my bags and pockets,
But I find there, only books;
These, no matter where, pursue me:
Let me then resolve their message.

I see the names of all the nations,
I see ancestral eyes regard me

The while ancestral shields are hidden
As, from their tombs, the spirits listen
And tell me I should come and share
Their bowl, for I am not forgotten.

So I absorb and add and store

Wisdom for the Zulus' children.

The day may come to seek that treasure,

The day may come to have discussions

And learn from all my nightly writings,

Never written from ambition:

For you, ancestral spirits, urged me

Inspiring me through hours of darkness!

But then I shall be here no longer.

B.W. Vilakazi's perspective on education in this poem is a negative one, especially in the first stanzas. But towards the end of the poem the perspective changes and the persona begins to justify his work of poetry by saying he was instructed by the ancestors to write poetry in order to preserve the Zulu culture. In this poem we also see Vilakazi's critique of western education and knowledge being viewed as a universal "truth," "holy" and superior. This view is propagated in the classroom when children are very young. Now that Vilakazi has grown old and accumulated many educational qualifications he becomes introspective, evaluating the benefits of being educated. The fact that he views higher education from the

point of view of a highly educated adult makes us believe his value judgement is accurate. Western education, whether higher or at primary level, produces knowledge and social relations that serve to legitimise specific aspects of power. Vilakazi in this poem gives us another view of education which redefines his role as a Zulu poet who debates with other people who misunderstand him, as well as with other poets who oppose his poetry.

The persona represents the "other", the "black Englishman" who is despised by his own people despite his constant attempts to associate himself with them. Western education has created and maintained the non-western other.

This poem shows us how western education was used as a powerful instrument of colonisation. The persona represents a group of students from a colonial society who were fortunate to be educated in western schools, colleges and universities. This group has become a copy of western discourse. They are the hybrid result of the encounter between African and western cultures.

B.W. Vilakazi is reflecting on his position in his society and there is a deliberate disclosure of his inner feeling of hating himself since he poses a threat to people around him. He sees himself as a person who has become an object of disgrace among his contemporaries. The nature of this conflict lies in the fact that at first he was excited about education, so much so that he spent his life reading books while other men of his age were busy accumulating wealth. At first he may have thoughts of education in terms of its material benefit (in Vilakazi, 1973:115), but as Malcom points out, the persona in this poem has come to the realisation that education cannot make a person rich. As he behaves as an educated African

he feels within himself that he is becoming distanced from his people which results in his development of cognitive dissonance.

Within post-colonial studies this is referred to as "ambivalence" which means a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. It also refers to a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from an object, person or action (Young, 1995:161). Adapted into colonial discourse theory by Homi Bhabha, it describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterises the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. The relationship is ambivalent because the colonised subject is never simply and completely opposed to the coloniser. Rather than assuming that some colonised subjects are "complicit" and some "resistant" ambivalence suggests that complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relationship within the colonial subject. Ambivalence also characterises the way in which colonial discourse relates to the colonised subject for it may be both exploitative and nurturing, or present itself only as nurturing.

B.W. Vilakazi's ambivalence functions in both ways, as exploitative and nurturing because his presence is as a representative against colonial domination, and also as a copy of his colonial masters, although he was unaware of this at first. Nurturing because Vilakazi has been educated in western schools and universities. These institutions feed him with colonial discourse which enables him to understand himself as a hybrid of the encounter between western education and African culture. What is at stake here is that western education helped him to understand his subjectivity as a colonised person, thus enabling him to initiate action to subvert colonial domination.

This takes us to Bhabha's argument that ambivalence disrupts the clear-cut nature of colonial domination because it disturbs the simple relationship between coloniser and colonised. Ambivalence is therefore an unwelcome aspect of colonial discourse for the coloniser. The problem with colonial discourse is that it wants to produce compliant subjects who reproduce its assumptions, habits and values, that is "mimics" the coloniser, but instead it produces ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never very far from mockery. Ambivalence describes this fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery, an ambivalence that is fundamentally unsettling to colonial dominance. This suggests that colonialism, through its education, inevitably caused its own downfall.

Vilakazi realises that he was a fool for thinking of deriving "satisfaction" from reading books, trying to understand the hidden treasure of knowledge that is too difficult to grasp. He was excited with wisdom, so much so that he attempted to become an expert in interpreting written words. As a result of his efforts to derive knowledge from books his mind is tired.

The persona in this poem is deliberately discussing himself in relation to his academic work. We also see that this poem is in plain language. The use of colloquial language suggests that the poet has contravened the conventional method of writing poems in more formal language.

The Romantic Poets were against poetic conventions since conventions were "unnatural" and can interrupt the flow of the imagination. This does not necessarily mean the total rejection of rhetorical language in poetry, but the point is that the convention must not be

used if its use will restrict the flow of imagination. Poets like Blake and Wordsworth were very aligned to this view. They argued that for a poem to have life, it must be presented through language understandable to the common man.

The persona's eagerness to read books, to get more wisdom, suggests the curious nature of the persona. Curiosity is a major feature of Romanticism, the persona is engaged in a quest for knowledge. This quest can be appropriately linked to his need to derive the satisfaction experienced when a person lives a perfect life. Exaltation and the sublime are further major features of Romanticism. Vilakazi's quest was aimed at the exaltation of "self" and he was disappointed by his failure to achieve this exaltation.

In stanza two the persona regrets the fact that he has spent most of his time turning over leaves of books "whose authors' skins were white." This reveals the persona's consciousness about the nature of knowledge that he was busy imbibing. The knowledge was not written by Africans since the authors of the books he was reading were white, and suggests that the persona was getting tired of reading books written by the colonial masters. The persona implies the need for books that are written by black people.

It should be remembered that in B.W. Vilakazi's time there were no books written in isiZulu. He and Dhlomo became the pioneers of Zulu literature in the years between 1930 and 1940. Perhaps this is what drove him to spend the evenings writing poems and studying alone.

In stanza three he tells of his visits to black poets and his discovery that these poets were

singing poems about the kings. Poems about the king and wealthy people are not "Romantic" because Romanticism involves depicting the experience of ordinary people in art. The persona observes that the black poets were not aware of the need to sing poems about the real life of the poor people. He decided to incorporate the Zulu traditional style of praises into the western form of poetry. This resulted in some black writers criticising him for being too western in his poetry and because of this he points out that his mind is a "battle-field."

Zondi points out that one of the major critics of B.W. Vilakazi was Herbert Isaac Dhlomo who had developed himself into a prolific writer of English drama (Zondi 1996, p 259). Dhlomo held that it was not right for black writers to imitate the writing style of the western writers because western culture is totally different from Zulu or African culture. It is this view that stirred a debate between himself and B.W. Vilakazi.

This battle was made worse when "Bantu Studies" published a book written by B.W. Vilakazi in which he expressed his view about the ways in which Zulu poetry could be developed. The title of that book is "The Conception and Development of Poetry in Zulu." Dhlomo disapproved of Vilakazi's incorporation or assimilation of western literary convention into the writing of Zulu poetry. These literary conventions included rhyme. For Dhlomo, rhyme is not that important in Zulu poetry, but what is crucial is rhythm, because African people like to dance. Dhlomo fought furiously against black writers who were copying western methods of writing.

Dhlomo's basic argument was that the way Africans speak and live is not similar to that of

the Europeans. Dhlomo was opposing those African graduates who were discarding African culture in favour of the west (in Zondi, 1996).

In stanza four Vilakazi fails to hide his emotions as he says he would prefer to be like those who do not know all these things (the debates about the nature of knowledge) because they can sleep peacefully throughout the night, unlike the persona who spends the nights reading and writing books. These uneducated people know neither Cicero nor Caesar, they do not know Shaka, Nqiko or Moshoeshoe, and it is their lack of knowledge that keeps them as a stable "self" or sustains stability between their minds and their bodies.

Western thought has for a long time assumed the necessity of a unified "subject." To know anything presupposes a unified consciousness which does the knowing. Such a consciousness is rather like a focused lens without which everything is seen as a distinct object (Selden and Widdowson, 1993). The persona experiences the split "self" or inner conflict because he is now conscious of the oppressive nature of life. Life to him is not what it appears to be in the eyes of an ordinary man. Too much knowledge has opened his eyes to the harsh realities of life. His longing to assume the subject position of a person who does not know these things signifies that he no longer wants to be "himself" because this "self" experiences the pain that any ordinary man is not aware of and never will be if he does not read books.

To say that people "who don't know these things" are better because they enjoy life does not necessarily mean that they are free from interpellation. These people are subject to their ideological consciousness, which refers to the preformed constellation of values and beliefs

that inform, through the process of socialisation, that person's understanding of self and others. Vilakazi's poetry was aimed at initiating self-reflection in ideologically constrained people. This is to say if you are unconscious of the fact that you are ideologically constrained or interpellated you will have no reason to worry yourself about it.

In stanza five the persona tells of those people he grew up with who did not go to school and who "despise" him when he meets them because he is walking on foot while they travel in their cars. Here we see that the ideologically interpellated people despise the poet who is conscious of the interpellation which constrains them. The unlettered people driven by their ignorance judge the persona in terms of material possessions. They think the good life is determined by wealth but, on the contrary, the feeling that there is more to life than just accumulating wealth drives Vilakazi into being a Romantic Poet. Material possessions and top positions in society for him does not constitute a perfect existence, so he was dissatisfied with his status in the period.

Vilakazi experiences the life of the poor people as the "unlettered" people leave him to breathe their dust. He points out that these "unlettered" people today are "masters and chiefs." This makes us see a large distance between B.W. Vilakazi and uneducated people. They are living with privileges while Vilakazi lives a poor life

It should be clear to us by now that Vilakazi lived his life in solitude. This means that he suffered for his love of knowledge, education and, more importantly, of poor people. The sad part of his life is the fact that he tried to educate his own people but they rejected him.

In stanza five he is troubled by ambivalence as he does not know whether to change his way of life or not. There are two possibilities here: if he changes his way of life and accumulates wealth for himself, he can be (partially) free from this conflict. The second possibility is to endure the pain of being lonely, criticised, despised and mocked for the sake of the nation on the understanding that his critics are driven by their ignorance. The persona is in a state of cognitive dissonance, which is the conflict that arises when a person simultaneously holds two points of view.

To post-colonial students this condition is referred to as ambivalence which, as defined earlier, refers to a simultaneous attraction toward and repulsion from the object, a person or action. Vilakazi seems to be attracted to both lives, a life of being a Romantic Poet and a life of being a wealthy man. He imagines his life depends on the leftovers donated to him by his fellows who have prospered. He feels his imprisonment, it seems as if his higher education constrains him from prospering.

The persona contemplates his inevitable ageing, which is accompanied by a weakness that, he knows, will defeat him. He is definitely sure of his forthcoming fate because he uses "must" to foreground it. He begins to look around, stretching his hand towards his "bags and pockets". He feels that these are full of books which does not amaze him because he has lived his life for books. To his amazement he sees "the names" of all the nations. The ancestors are looking at him, the "ancestral" spirits are listening to him as he sings his poems.

The persona in this stanza justifies himself as a poet who is not writing from his mind but

who is inspired by the ancestors of all the nations. In his book he writes about these ancestors, he keeps their names known to the nations, as a result when he dies they will welcome him by asking him to share in "their bowl." That will be his reward for his hard work of protecting the beautiful culture of the Zulu nation. Here we also see Vilakazi's ambivalence - as a Christian he is supposed to go to heaven when he dies to meet with Jesus but also to go to be with his ancestors like the non-Christians. Perhaps he valued both Christianity and the traditional religion equally (Ngwenya, 1998).

In the last stanza the poet's decision is to keep on studying, reading and writing more books, accumulating "wisdom" for the Zulu people. Now his cognitive dissonance is resolved. He is sure that, even if at present his people seem to undermine his poetic work, the day will come when they seek his poetry. On that day they will consider his literary work as a Zulu treasure. They will begin to analyse his work that he wrote under the guidance of the ancestors.

"EZINKOMPONI"

IN THE GOLD MINES

Roar, without rest, machines of the mines,

Roar from dawn till darkness falls;

I shall wake, oh, let me be!

Roar, machines, continue deaf

To black men groaning as they labour -

Tortured by their aching muscles,

Gasping in the foetid air,
Reeking from the dirt and sweat -
Shaking themselves without effect.

Shout, old boy! Its far away,
So far away where you were smelted,
Where the furnace made you strong:
Coals remained and you were sent.
We watched you cross the mighty seas;
Then puffing engines, hot with fire,
Brought you here to us, to Goli;
And when you saw us - coneys swarming -
Loud was your cry of sheer amazement.

These coneys, each and all, were black,
They had no tails; you caught them all!
Down in the pit you drained their strength.
Turn round and round, you iron wheels,
For us you're meant, for us, you're here,
You had no choice, you had to come;
And now you roar, revolve and toil,
Till, thrown away, worn out, you rot
On some neglected rubbish-plot.

Quite often, passing on the road,
I turn to look at you and wonder
If you, as well, will propagate -
Increase and multiply: No! No!
Yet we, your older brothers are like you,
We too, grow old and rusty in the mines;
Our strength soon goes, our lungs soon rot,
We cough, we cannot rest - we die!
But you are spared that coughing - why?

I heard it said that in the pit
Are very many black men's tribes;
Its they who raise the great white dumps
That so amaze their ancestors.
They said: one day a siren screeched
And then a black rock rabbit came,
A poor dazed thing with clouded mind;
They caught it, changed it to a mole:
It burrowed, and I saw the gold.

Then swarms of moles went burrowing deep
And soon there rose the great white dumps;
The holes were deep, the hills were high,
Sandhiwana hill's not higher now.

Sweating, I climb and reach the top
And watch the dust: like smoke it drifts,
That wind-blown dust of fine white sand:
I see it swirling there beneath me
And all the earth is covered with it.

Roar without rest, machines of the mines,
Louder still and louder roar!
Drown our voices with your uproar,
Drown our cries and groans of pain
As you eat away our joints.
Jeer machines, yes, jeer and mock us,
Let our sufferings cause you laughter,
Well we know your terrible powers;
We, your slaves, and you our masters!

We agreed to leave our kraals:
In herds we came - castrated cattle!
We left our mealies, milk and beer
To eat this lumpy porridge here.
Now we are "boys", no longer men,
And all our world is upside down.
At dawn we're roused to stand in lines:
Have YOU seen buried men survive,
Walking and seeing and staying alive?

Roar without rest, machines of the mines!

I am awake, I do not dawdle,

I am going underground;

Here's my jumper to strike the rock,

And you, above, though hearing nothing,

Will know I'm toiling for the white man -

Sweating at the white man's work -

Because the trolleys are in sight,

Heaped with stones, some blue, some white.

My brother is with me, carrying

His pick and shovel on his shoulder,

And, on his feet, are heavy boots:

He follows me toward the shaft:

The earth will swallow us who burrow,

And, if I die there, underground,

What does it matter? Who am I?

Dear Lord! All round me, every day,

I see men stumble, fall and die.

When first I travelled to the mines,

No great white hills of sand were there

Whose tops I'd stretch my neck to see.

Then, with my bundle, I journeyed home:

What did I find? Dry mealie-stalks

And empty huts. I scratched my head,

Asked for my wife and her relations:
"Oh," they said, "Go ask the white man ..."
I sealed my lips. I went away.

Roar without rest, machines of the mines!
As far away as Germiston
The noise you make must vex my soul
And echo in my ears
Like distant bells of booming brass.
They speak to me of splendid homes,
Of men made rich because of me,
Made richer through my poverty;
A bloodless used-up ox am I!

Growl more softly, you machines!
Because the white men are as stone,
Can you, of iron, not be gentler?
Hush your roaring in the mines
And hear what we would say to you
Or else we may not care for you
When that far day, now hidden, dawns,
And we, at last, will cry: "Machines!
You are ours, the black men's, now!"

Take care! Though now our arms are weak,
Once their power made dark the skies,

And earth was torn and nations reeled,
The Great White Queen lost many sons,
Paul Kruger's children too we slaughtered.
Then we, the conquerors, were defeated.
And now I dream, Oh thing of Iron!
Dream that this land - my fathers' land -
Shall be my fathers' sons' again.

But now I have no place to rest
Though wealth is everywhere around me;
Land that my fathers owned is bare
And spreads untilled before my eyes;
And even if I had some wealth,
This land my father's fathers owned,
I may not purchase or possess.
Father above! Fathers below!
Can you not end my wretchedness?

There, in my fathers' resting place,
Where our ancestral spirits dwell,
They say your powers are unrivalled
When you talk with the Almighty
Who judges no man by his colour.
Soon my blood will drain away,
Dried by the son, lost in the earth ...
Toiling, I pray to you, Oh Spirits!

But never have my prayers been answered.

Every day this land of yours
Is seized and spoiled by those who rob us:
These foreign breeds enrich themselves,
But all my people and myself
Are black, and, being black, have nothing.
Above the pit the grass is green,
As bright and fresh as clear blue skies;
We gaze, and cry out "Woe!" But cries
Of "Woe!" and "Woe!" remain unanswered.

Roar without rest, machines of the mines!
Our hands are aching, always aching,
Our swollen feet are aching too;
I have no ointment that might heal them -
White men's medicines cost much money.
Roar machines, but don't disturb me!
Well have I served the rich white masters,
But Oh, my soul is heavy in me!
Roar less loudly, let me slumber,
Close my eyes and sleep and sleep
And stop all thinking of tomorrow.
Let me sleep and wake afar,
At peace where all my forebears are
And where, no more, is earthly waking!

Let me sleep in arms long vanished,
Safe beneath the world's green pastures!

In this poem B.W. Vilakazi explores the effect of capitalism on black people who worked in the gold mines of the biggest city in South Africa, Johannesburg. In the poem he finds himself a victim of the global capitalist economy because he was colonised and disempowered by the colonial masters, even their machines have become his masters. To him, these machines are a constant reminder that he is a colonised worker. So His body, his time, his mind and his manpower are extensions of these machines. The persona's subjectivity is reflected in the machines. The noise made by the machines signifies that he must wake up, he cannot ignore their voice. It seems as if they command him to wake up, not giving him enough time to prepare himself for the work of the day because he says "I will wake, stop pestering me to wake." The persona's refrain "Roar ..." does not suggest that he loves these machines but rather he mocks the machines, he subverts their power. The machines are inhuman and insensitive because they keep on roaring, ignoring the black men who groan because of the hard labour they are subjected to against their will. The persona points out that the black men groan as they feel their aching muscles, they are dirty and their bodies smell unpleasant due to their sweat.

In stanza two the machines are personified as the "old boys" who came from far away places. These machines were not made in South Africa but were transported here by the colonial masters. Having been made strong through fire the machines were brought to Johannesburg to be used in gold mining. What is remarkable here is that the machines were brought to their new location in the same way as the labourers. Labourers and slaves were transported by train across the land and by ship across the sea to various colonies. The machines alone could not be used to extract gold, as a result the recruitment of labour was

necessary. The machines worked hand in hand with the black men, in fact the labourers were objectified.

The colonial masters were even more cruel, to the extent that the persona finds it possible to address the machines instead of communicating with the masters, perhaps because they had no time to talk with the black men.

The imagery of the animals in stanza two helps to emphasise the marginalisation of the black men who were seen as "coney" which live in the pit.

The persona observes that the machines do not "multiply" in their neglected spot just as the black people could not multiply in the compounds or hostels. The global capitalist system has resulted in the breakdown of family ties because men are separated from their wives. The persona describes the labourers as "brothers" to the machines, this is appropriate because the labourers had no families in this strange part of the world, the only things that are close to them are these roaring machines. The health of the labourers is affected by the nature of the work they are forced to do. They "grow old and rusty" like the machines, their lungs degenerate because of the toxic fumes from the machines and the dust generated by the mines.

The persona feels that the machines are treated better than the labourers because the machines do not cough as the black men cough.

The persona recalls that people used to say that very many black tribes work in the mines. They were the ones who raised the "great white dumps" that amazed their "ancestors." The ancestors held that the machines roared to call the black men who came to work in the

mines because their minds were "clouded." This suggests that people who work in the pit were uneducated, so they were not aware of their exploitation. They were forced to become the moles, burrowing to extract gold from under the ground. It follows that the labourers did not know the value of the gold because they were ignorant and uneducated.

Vilakazi, as an educated African, felt sorry for these labourers. In this poem he describes their experience as if he were one of them. It is Vilakazi's self-consciousness that makes him identify with the labourers. He could not restrain his feelings, when he saw the black people being exploited. The Romantics were very interested in their subjectivity in relation to their environment. So far, what I have discussed in this poem is the dialogue or conversation between the persona and the machines.

Perhaps we need to ask ourselves what made the persona choose to converse with the machines since the machines are unnatural. The Romantics are known for their interaction with natural objects, this is true, but one should remember that the persona is dislocated. He looks around and only sees unnatural objects. These objects unsettle him, as we have seen that he is in disharmony with the machines. The machines are not singing but roaring; this means that they terrify him. Their noise is so disturbing, and so persistent, that he cannot ignore them, and it is this that drives him to begin to praise them in a very sarcastic manner.

Vilakazi's interaction with the machines could be seen as an attack on the global capitalist system which has created imbalances in South African society. This poem exposes class distinctions, alienation and dehumanisation. The persona finds himself identifying with the working class which means he was objectively placed within a particular social class, defined by his relationship to the forces of production, which also placed him in a particular

relationship to other human beings. It is possibly hard, therefore, for me to ignore the notion of class in my analysis of this poem. The concept of class intersects in important ways with the cultural implications of colonial domination.

It is clear that economic control was of significant, if not primary importance in imperialism, and that economic control involved a reconstruction of the economic and social resources of colonised societies. As a result class was an important factor in colonialism, firstly in constructing the attitudes of the colonisers towards different groups and categories of the colonised ("natives") and increasingly amongst the colonised peoples themselves as they began to employ colonial cultural discourse to describe the changing nature of their own societies.

B.W. Vilakazi, as an educated African, employed Romanticism to describe the changing nature of his society. This is not to say that he copied or merely assimilated western culture. To say that would mean that Vilakazi's concerns for his black society could be discredited since he would be a hypocrite. This view would be unjust to the man who was driven by his social awareness of the exploitative nature of the capitalist mode of production, which disguised itself with the name of "civilisation".

Vilakazi's poetry proves that he was not writing only to amuse his readers, he was driven by the spirit of the ancestors to make the black people aware of the oppressive nature of their lives under the global capitalist mode of production. The persona keeps mocking the machines since there is nothing he can do to remove them and free the black men. He notices that the loud noise made by the machines gets louder every day of his life. The noise drowns their voices and groans of pain as the machines eat away their joints.

The machines as I have pointed out depended on manpower and black men were part and parcel of the machines. The white masters treated them both equally, but I did also point out that the machines were given better treatment since they did not cough as the black men did. The machines also mock the black men. There is a reciprocity between the black men and the machines. The black men are mocking the machines by being sarcastic about their roar, and in return the machines' roaring signifies that they are mocking and rejoicing at their fate.

We have seen the persona mocking the white hills, saying that even though he sweats if he climbs them, these hills can never be compared to iSandlwana Hill. iSandlwana Hill is natural, it has no toxic dust like the white hills of Johannesburg. We can also note that the reference to iSandlwana is a reminder of the battle between the Zulus and Queen Victoria's troops, and that the colonised were once so powerful that they tried to resist colonisation. Now the persona is giving in. The machines may keep on laughing at their suffering.

Vilakazi uses colloquial language here to refer to the labourers as slaves and the machines as masters. The persona confesses their mistakes, they "agreed to leave" their kraals and huts. Now they are being followed like herds of livestock. The persona recalls that in their homelands they had enough to eat, they had "mealies, milk and beer" but here they are fed with "lumpy porridge."

In these comments the persona registers a nostalgic outcry, and also suggests, that for him, there was no intrinsic reason to be brought to Johannesburg because he had all he needed. In those years men had dignity, but now that dignity has been taken from them, they are referred to as "boys" which was demeaning to black men. It is because the whites considered themselves superior to black people.

The persona could see that their world was changing thus impacting on their lives. They were "buried alive". This reminds us of the African myths about people being buried alive. The persona's emphasis on being alive, "seeing and staying alive" suggests his consciousness of the nature of their exploitation. The persona submits himself to the will of the machines by going underground with his tools. The machines are above the shaft and those working above the shaft cannot hear the persona as he works underground, toiling for the white men. When the trolleys and wheelbarrows are driven out of the pit full of stones he comments that this is not his work but white men's work, the white men should go underground since they are the beneficiaries. For the black men to work for the whites was unjustifiable since the black men did not need the stones in the first place.

It is sad that when a person dies in the pit nobody cares since he was not important to the masters. Working on the mines was characterised by the loss of innocent lives of the labourers. All black men were forced to remain in the gold mines for a specified period of time during which they were not permitted to return to their homelands. When the persona gets home he finds that his fields are "dry" and there is nobody in his huts. When he asks the neighbours the whereabouts of his wife and relatives they tell him to "Go and ask the white man."

The capitalist mode of production has resulted in family breakdowns as the heads of families were confined to the mine and nobody looked after these families. The white masters did not worry themselves about the effects of recruiting men to become their labourers. The white men's greed and selfishness is exposed in this poem.

The persona returns to the mocking refrain telling the machines to keep on "roaring" and notices that the voice of the machines is very powerful since they can be heard as far away

as Germiston. He complains that this loud noise is very disturbing. This emphasises the dominance of the gold mines' machines upon the disempowered helpless labourers. To the persona, the machines speak of the beautiful homes of "the man made rich" because of his exploitation. We can compare them to the homes of the labourers. We see that they are made of mud and grass and their families are separated and upset. On the other hand the homes of the white men are "splendid" and they live in harmony with their families. The white men have unjustly made themselves rich at the expense of the black men.

The persona for the first time commands the gold mines machine to "Growl more softly." The white man has no mercy and kindness so he appeals to the machine to be gentle and kind toward him. He pleads that he has been listening to its roaring, now it is time for it to listen to what he has to say. He warns that if the machines ignore their plea, they will not spare them when they take their revenge. One day the black people will repossess the land and these machines will be under the black men's control. He also warns the machines that even though they are now weak, there once was a time when these very arms fought against the white man's invasion. As a result the Queen lost many soldiers. The persona is referring to the war between the British soldiers and the Zulu army. In fact many black tribes fought great wars to resist colonisation. Although he is disarmed now, he is positive that one day the blacks will be in power.

Ngwenya points out in his article that B.W. Vilakazi was an inspired prophet. This is true, because today the black people are in power in South Africa.

In the poem, the persona has no place of his own because of dislocation and land dispossession which favoured the white people. Although he knew that the land of his fathers was full of wealth, he cannot cultivate it since he is forced to work for the white

man. Even if he has enough money to buy the land that belonged to his father he could not, since he has no rights to possess land. He appeals to the ancestors who are in heaven and who are in the graves to rescue him.

Once again we see Vilakazi's uncertainty about the place to which a dead person's spirit goes when he dies. His traditional religion teaches that when a man dies his spirit goes to his ancestors. Christianity teaches that a dead person's spirit goes to heaven if he/she was a believer. B.W. Vilakazi as a hybrid product of both religions and tried to give the same value to both, which I think is impossible because one cannot serve two masters. He also believes that his forefathers are in the resting-place where his ancestral spirits dwell. He seems to have little faith in the powers of his ancestors because he says "They say ..." which means that he, as an individual, does not fully believe in their power. This reveals B.W. Vilakazi's hybridity.

The ancestors are also believed to be the intermediaries between God and the living Zulu people. The persona heard that the ancestors are not racist, so they must defend him. The imagery of blood foregrounds the seriousness of his exploitation. He has seen people stumbling, falling and dying in the gold mines. He notices that the ancestral spirit does not answer his prayers. We see that B.W. Vilakazi appears to be sceptical about the power of the ancestors. It is also clear in the following stanza that he cannot distance himself totally because they are part of his identity.

He responds to them that their land is seized and spoiled by those who rob them. The persona refers to the white people as the "foreign breeds" who "enrich themselves" at the expense of black people. Vilakazi is very critical towards rich people, but we must warn that he does not hate them as human beings; it is their greed and selfishness that has

produced hatred in the hearts of the black people. The whites have made the black people hate, to mock and to mobilise against them.

The persona is aware of the reason for their discrimination, it is because they are black and their blackness means they are not human enough to own land and accumulate wealth for themselves.

In the last stanza the persona returns his special focus to the pains felt by his people every day. As a result he feels the heaviness of his "soul." The reference to the "soul" that is "heavy" suggests that the persona is dying and he does not want the machines to disturb him as he dies. He wants to die peacefully. He will be with his forefathers and "safe beneath the world's green pastures." The last stanza has a similar theme to the poem "If Death Should Steal Upon Me" by Vilakazi.

"MAMINA"
AN ODE TO THE MUSE

Short extract provided.

Come, Mamina,
Let us go away
Into the wilderness
Where springs of water rise
That trickle upon the moss-green rocks,
Slippery with slime.

Say not "no" to me Mamia,
Go as though to draw some water,
Carry the calabash, go down stream
And you will find me by the myrtles
Whose branches, heavy with their fruit,
Are darkened by the oozing nectar.

Come, Mamina,
When alone, you redly glow,
And all your ways are beautiful;
Flowers adorn them everywhere,
That bow their heads when you appear
And bend in homage to the earth.

This poem is believed by many Zulu literary scholars to be the most romantic poem ever written by B.W. Vilakazi, but some scholars regard it as one of the most controversial, since this poem has a very complex nature. Starting by looking at the title one may want to know the meaning of the word "Mamina." This word seems to be Vilakazi's own invention. One will also notice that the poem is written in a narrative conversational style as if the poet did not care about the poetic conventions, all he wanted to do was to explore his inner self and this "Mamina." It is therefore clear that this conversation between the poet and "Mamina" was meant to be confidential.

To me, the romantic nature of the poem does not necessarily lie in the fact that it is a poem about passionate lovers since that would be a very simplistic view of the poem. For me, B.W. Vilakazi has been able to use allegory successfully with the intention of disclosing his

personal feelings about the nature of selfhood and the nature of imagination, which results in the inspiration that produces poetry. But I strongly believe that selfhood alone can hardly become a drive towards imagination unless it is accompanied by self-consciousness. To be self-conscious means to be uncomfortably or unnaturally aware of yourself and your actions.

Self-consciousness unsettles the concept of "self" or "selfhoodness" because it reminds it of its imperfect nature, that is the "self" is unstable in its nature. Self-consciousness enabled the Romantics to see that man and his/her actions have shaped "nature" in a very imperfect way. And in response to human actions, "nature" has produced a kind of "man" who is very unstable in "self." Furthermore "nature" has become a "mirror" that reflects man's imperfect existence. This was what drove the Radical Romantics into a quest for the sublime, exaltation and a perfect existence. I believe that anyone who regards himself as self-righteous or to be even more specific, who regards himself to be "self" right or "stable" will see no need to search for a perfect existence. If they do their search will be based within the notion of the "stable self", especially those questors who operate within the enlightenment ideology.

I must briefly point out the power of allegory in post-colonial studies. Ashcroft points out that the simplest definition of allegory is a "symbolic narrative" in which the major features of the movement of the narrative are all held to refer symbolically to some action or situation. In this poem, Vilakazi deliberately discloses his secret encounter with the inspirational sense of self-consciousness, which drives him to understand himself and his environment. Through it he begins to appreciate the beauty of nature, because of this he

does not want to lose its presence in his heart, so he keeps on pursuing it so that it must come to him.

Mamina is the persona's companion, she carries him to the wilderness where he sees the springs of water. The water that trickles upon the moss-green rocks reminds us that "nature" is the storehouse of inspiration. It provides the poet with flowing ideas, the rising of the water reminds us of the poets thirst for sublimation and perfect existence. The imagery of rocks suggests that this life is full of heavy stone, of barriers and restrictions that limit man's innate energy to shape his world perfectly.

The persona in stanza two registers his readiness to be used by the poetic spirits because it is fruitful and beneficial to the black people. The poet's dependence on Mamina is emphasised in the whole poem. A poet cannot write a poem without "consciousness" or realisation of some sort. Vilakazi's consciousness of the nature of his "selfhoodness" enables him to realise the oppression that comes with life, it also helps him to see beauty in natural objects. "Selfhoodness" is the drive behind his poetry, and is a persistent, constant drive that he cannot ignore. I can also add that he needs this selfhoodness or "self-consciousness" because without it he feels very insecure or naked, that is why he urges it to come to him.

In stanza three the persona tells of Mamina's nature, that although from a distance she could appear to be a single person, in reality Mamina is not a unified person or body. Mamina can lead people in different ways because she is a creative person. The persona registers the instability of "self." Mamina constitutes the poet's self-portrait, and this portrait depicts the persona's unstable self-image as a colonised subject or the "other."

In post-colonial studies this condition is called alterity. Alterity refers to the state of being other, or different; diversity, otherness. This term was adopted by philosophers as an alternative to "otherness" to register a change in western perceptions of the relationship between consciousness and the world. Vilakazi constructs the "other" and calls it Mamina, this "other" enables him to understand his "self-consciousness" or "selfhoodness."

Vilakazi's understanding of the "self" depends on his understanding of the "other." Alterity could be seen as a multifaceted concept and contradictory in its nature because understanding the Self through understanding the Other lies behind the tension between coherence and complexity. The Other both disrupts understanding and makes understanding possible. It is tempting to cast the Other in only one manner. Africa has been Europe's "Other" (meaning inferior), and must now extricate itself, making Europe the Other.

This Otherness has many faces. Mamina as the Other is exotic and foreign. She is the object of idle curiosity, of collection and of pride. This face is called Fascination. Mamina reminds the persona of his corrigibility, that is the reason why the flowers bow their heads when she appears. Just as with the flowers, the persona is overpowered by Mamina's power. It could be appropriate to suggest that at times the poet feels the need to avoid Mamina. This face is called Repulsion. The poet also sees Mamina as something to be owned or controlled. He believes that Mamina will fulfil a lack in his existence, and this face is called Desire.

The whole poem is based on the poet's desire to own and control Mamina. Mamina makes the poet's existence possible. It is the otherness of Mamina that has become the ground of the poet's being. Mamina in the poem appears to be what the poet is not, but she is what

makes the poets existence possible. Mamina has become the transcendence of the poets being. This face is called Dependence. Mamina is presented as the poets beloved wife, she represents the Other which is the poets servant, that which relieves the poet from the drudgery of his own existence by taking that drudgery on herself. This face is called Domination.

The relationship between Mamina and the poet seems to represent the foil, the instance where the Other could be that against which the poet/persona tests or measures himself. Mamina, to the poet, represents the Other in which the poet finds himself again and again and meets himself anew, and this condition is called a mirror condition or interaction. Mamina is that part of the persona that is always subordinate and this face is called the Body. Mamina serves the function of making the "self" of the persona coherent. This unstable or shifting "self" is apparent in this poem and in all Vilakazi's poems.

Mamina constitutes the interaction that takes place between the poets mind and his spirit. These two are trying to reconcile which is why the persona, now and again, persuades Mamina. Mamina leads the persona to new horizons, which he seeks to mediate to his people. In this poem, Vilakazi deliberately explores his "self-consciousness" which is a major feature of Romantic Poetry.

CONCLUSION

In this analysis of B.W. Vilakazi's poetry I have tried to distance myself from the formalised approach to the study of poetry in order to avoid unnecessary redundancy since some Zulu

literary scholars have largely made use of this approach in their study of B.W. Vilakazi. Instead I have operated from a post-colonial approach. Post-colonial theorists have focused on the experience of the colonised under the ruthless authority of the colonial powers. Romanticism is a response to, and also an attempt to transcend social ills. All the major Romantic poets like William Blake, Wordsworth and others, identified themselves with the life and experience of poor/ordinary people.

Post-colonial theories have been used side by side with Romantic theory. I must also say that some literary critics of B.W. Vilakazi's poetry have spoken of Vilakazi borrowing from other poets' work, especially from the western poets, and some critics have gone to the extent of drawing similarities between some poems of Vilakazi and poems written by British Romantic Poets. Perhaps this paved the way for new scholars studying South African literature, but my analysis of B.W. Vilakazi's poetry has been aimed at showing that there is much in his poetry that makes him a Romantic Poet. This could not be solely attributed to assimilation but rather to Vilakazi's reading of his predecessors and this was typical of all Romantic Poets of the 19th Century.

This could be referred to as intertextuality rather than mere assimilation because, for me, Romanticism is not something that can be merely copied from other cultures. Romantic Poets are driven by the need to conscientise people about the oppressive nature of conventional institutions.

This has caused B.W. Vilakazi's poetry to be regarded as Romantic in its own right, since it would have been difficult for Vilakazi to copy from western poetry just for the sake of

producing Zulu Romantic Poetry. Vilakazi was inspired by the ancestral spirits to do the work that caused him to suffer at the hands of his critics. B.W. Vilakazi's poetry is Romantic because it is health restoring, it is about a man on a quest for sublimity and perfect existence, it is a return to feelings and folk traditions. In B.W. Vilakazi we see the autonomous creative power of imagination at work.

B.W. Vilakazi wrote against the empire, the privileged classes and an autocratic form of government. Like Blake, Vilakazi was very critical of industrialisation and its civilisation. "B.W. VILAKAZI : A ZULU ROMANTIC POET?" has attempted to analyse B.W. Vilakazi's poetry from a very subjective approach in order to show how Vilakazi deliberately explored his self-consciousness in his attempt to express the pain his people were subject to during the colonial period. It is hoped that this work will increase curiosity and stimulate constructive debates among literary scholars.

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