

**The Life and Literary Works of Peter Tshobiso Mtuze –
A Critical Analysis**

by

Andile Ernest Mafrika

Submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject

African Languages

at

Rhodes University

Supervisor: Professor Russell H. Kaschula

August 2016

Student number: 12m6869

I declare that THE LIFE AND LITERARY WORKS OF PETER TSHOBISO MTUZE – A CRITICAL ANALYSIS, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....

Signature

(Andile E. Mafrika)

.....

Date

Abstract and Summary

This thesis is an exploration of the concept of Mphahlele's African Humanism, against the backdrop of the life and work of Peter Tshobiso Mtuze, well-known author of isiXhosa books, critic, academic and spiritual leader. Mtuze's commitment to the collective rather than the individual is clearly illustrated in the thesis, suggesting that his early life of struggle, his belated development as an acclaimed academic, as well as his spiritual growth are all intertwined and underpinned by African Humanism and an Afrocentric ethos.

The thesis consists of six chapters with each chapter focusing on a particular aspect of the research topic.

Chapter One deals with the introduction to the research topic. Part of the introductory material consists of conventional preliminaries such as a research statement, aim of study, methodology, main assumptions of the study and the significance and benefit of the study.

Chapter Two is the theoretical foundation of the thesis. It covers the origin of African Humanism as consciousness and as a system of society, oral and written literature in Africa and the early Xhosa literary humanism.

Chapter Three is an overview of the biographical background of Peter Tshobiso Mtuze, his Pass Law battles in different towns of South Africa, how he joined the African National Congress (ANC) and his working life and writing life.

Chapter Four analyses two major novels, *UDingezweni* and *Alitshoni lingaphumi*, and a short story book, *Amathol' eendaba*. The analysis aims at revealing African consciousness and African way of life with specific reference to Xhosa people.

Chapter Five deals with Xhosa spirituality, its aspects and symbols, Mtuze's Spirituality and Anglicanism and his writings.

Chapter Six is a general conclusion that highlights the main aspects of the thesis, the African personality and the prospects of African humanism in today's world.

KEY WORDS

African humanism, African spirituality, African consciousness, African way of life, oral literature, Xhosa spirituality.

Acknowledgements

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to many people for the success of this thesis. Uppermost in my mind is my grandmother, Nongaye Elizabeth Mafrika, for bringing me up and moulding me as an African child. I thank my late mother, Wendy Mafrika, my father, my ancestors and my God.

My supervisor, Professor Russell Kaschula, deserves a special mention for the enthusiasm shown from beginning to end, for his unimposing personality when guiding me through this work. His extensive interest in this work and his belief that we will undertake it, can never escape my mind.

I am particularly indebted to Ntombazana Botha for trusting me with her volume of the IsiXhosa Dictionary throughout the period of this research and for her support.

I cannot fail to thank my adopted father, Prof Peter Mtuze, who gave me all his time. I have learnt so much from the lively discussions, the firm and warm hugs and hand shakes, the tears of good taste and the meanings coming from the razor-sharp mind that never retires. Professor Mtuze is a father of African children.

A final word goes to my wife, Coceka, for giving up all her time to me and to our lovely children, Zukisa and Wendy, for standing by me through this difficult period and for her interest in this research.

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the NRF SARChI Chair in the Intellectualisation of African Languages, Multilingualism and Education in the School of Languages and Literatures (African Language Studies) at Rhodes University is gratefully acknowledged. The opinions expressed in this work are those of the author and are not necessarily attributable to the NRF.

Table of Contents

Declaration	(2)
Abstract and Summary	(3)
Acknowledgements	(4)
1. Introduction	8
1.1 Research Statement	8
1.2 Aim of Study	11
1.3 Methodology	12
1.4 Main Assumptions of the Study	13
1.5 The Significance and Benefit of the Study	13
1.6 Summary	17
2. Theoretical Foundation	18
2.1 Introduction	18
2.2 Humanism	18
2.3 African Humanism	20
2.4 African Humanism as Consciousness	24
2.5 African Humanism as System of Society	29
2.5.1 Sacredness of Human Life	29
2.5.2 Goal-orientedness	31
2.5.3 Ancestors	33
2.5.4 UBuntu	34
2.5.5 Orality	37
2.6 Writing in Africa	38
2.6.1 Background	38
2.6.2 The African Writing	39
2.6.3 IsiXhosa Literature	41
2.6.3.1 Early Xhosa Literary Humanism	43
2.6.3.2 Ntsikana	43
2.6.3.3 Tiyo Soga	47
2.6.3.4 SEK Mqhayi	49
2.7 Pan Africanist Sentiment in isiXhosa Writing	57
2.8 Black Consciousness Sentiment	62
2.9 Sobukwe-Biko-Mandela	68
2.10 Summary	74

3. A Biographical Overview of Peter Tshobiso Mtuze	75
3.1 Introduction	75
3.2 The Making of Mtuze	75
3.3 Kusi Mtuze	83
3.4 Rev James Arthur Calata	94
3.4.1 Mtuze meets Rev Calata	96
3.5 The Pass Laws: A challenge Facing Mtuze	101
3.5.1 The Battle of Port Elizabeth	102
3.5.2 The Battle of Middleburg	105
3.5.3 The Battles of Cape Town	108
3.5.4 The Battle of Pretoria	112
3.6 Mtuze: On his Own yet within the African National Congress	115
3.7 Mtuze – The Interpreter	132
3.8 Summary	155
4. Mtuze’s novel and short story: A Representation of Consciousness and Society	156
4.1 Introduction	156
4.2 Alitshoni lingaphumi	156
4.2.1 The Rise of Phangindawo	168
4.3 Amathol’ eendaba	188
4.4 UDingezweni	201
4.5 Summary	214
5. Mtuze’s Spirituality and Anglicanism	215
5.1 Introduction	215
5.2 Xhosa Spirituality	215
5.2.1 Religion	215
5.2.2 Human Life	219
5.2.3 Oosiyazi	221
5.2.4 Land	224
5.2.5 Family and Clan Relationships	225
5.2.5.1 Relationships in Dingezweni	227
5.2.6 Education	230
5.2.7 Animals	232
5.2.8 Plants	235
5.2.9 Evil Spirits	236
5.2.10 Dreams and Visions	238
5.3 Mtuze’s Anglicanism	241
5.3.1 Mtuze’s Church Stories	248
5.4 Summary	255

6. African Humanism – A Future	256
6.1 Introduction	256
6.2 Self-awareness	257
6.3 Intelligence and open-mindedness	258
6.4 Soul Force	259
6.5 Africa-centredness	260
6.6 Conclusion	261
6.7 Bibliography	263

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Statement

The research area to be addressed by this study is one of Literary Humanism in works written by Peter Tshobiso Mtuze. Literary Humanism creates linkages between the life of the author and their work. This concept will be fully defined in Chapter 2. Research in this area pertaining to works of prominent and influential African writers who have lived their lives writing in African languages is not prolific in South Africa. This is confirmed by Dianne Shober who wrote on the life and works of Sindiwe Magona, a South African writer who is a woman, in her literary biography *Climbing Higher – Sindiwe Magona*. In a discussion paper delivered in 2012 Shober cites the *Dictionary of African Biography*, edited by E.K. Akyeampong and Henry Louis Gates as follows:

...the rich history of the African people has been unduly neglected in the scholarly literature, and reliable reference material is in short supply save for the known ... stars of the literary world, Achebe, Thiong'o, Soyinka and Mphahlele.

Shober further notes that if such a text were to be developed, it would “serve as a corrective to the long tradition of inadequate treatment by scholars” (Shober, 2012:1). The literary exploration and the discussion of works in their place and time and their authorship, has not been fully realized with writers who write in their mother tongues in Africa. More and more scholarly attention is needed in this area. In fact, mistakes such as those that happened with early writings in Western literature must be avoided. Gerard (1971:9) writes about “irritation” and “frustration” caused by absence of scholarly literary treatments:

... we know nothing or next to nothing about even the most illustrious writers, their experience of life, their aesthetic and other purposes; very often, even their names are a mystery.

Commenting on African writers, Gerard (1971:10) writes:

Of the early authors, many have remained anonymous, many are dead, and only their names survive on tattered front pages. Nothing is known that might help the historian to understand why they wrote, and why they wrote the way they did. Gerald Moser recently revealed that the first volume of poetry printed in Angola was *Espontaneidades de Minha* (Luanda, 1849), by one Jose da Silva Maia Ferreira. We do not know the author's skin color, not to mention his birthdate, his education, his career, and all the elementary facts that the historian of any modern European literature takes for granted.

Shober and Gerard are agreeing that books are an expression of a society from which the writer emanates. Their primary function is to enable humanity to know itself better. Researchers must assist this process and, where possible, must "clarify the meaning of the works and make them known and understood beyond the borders of their native society" (Gerard, 1993:18). The dearth of full length interrogation of writings of significant African writers who wrote in their languages, works that influenced their communities and countries, is much more glaring when African scholars themselves exclude these from their scrutiny. Sadly, these writers are deprived of the recognition they deserve as worthy contributors in the literatures of Africa. More so, the whole body of literature produced by great African men and women who composed poems, prose, songs, essays, autobiographies, biographies and novels gets to be categorized in ethnic terms and is not afforded the attention it deserves.

Writing twenty-four years after the 1962 Makerere University conference, the Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986:6) wrote;

The title 'A Conference of African Writers of English Expression,' automatically excluded those who wrote in African languages. Now, on looking back from the self-questioning heights of 1986, I can see that this contained absurd anomalies. I, a student, could qualify for the meeting on the basis of only two published short stories, 'The Fig Tree (Mugumo)' in a student journal, Penpoint, and 'The Return' in a new journal, Transition. But neither Shabaan Robert, then the greatest living East African poet with several works of poetry and prose to his credit in Kiswahili, nor Chief Fagunwa, the great Nigerian writer with several published titles in Yoruba, could possibly qualify.

Chief Fagunwa, who “used his own mother-tongue to write ... his nation’s traditional lore” and is “among the first to write in Yoruba language,” was “an extraordinary (person) of exceptional cultural creativity, gifted with a strong sense of ... traditional roots” (Gerard, 1993:16). Indeed, the Makerere conference could not resolve its very first question on its agenda, as wa Thiong’o (1986:6) writes;

If ... if ... if ... this or that ... in any case there was no Fagunwa or Shabaan Robert or any writer in African languages to bring the conference down from the realms of evasive abstractions.

The necessity of studying literature in Western Europe was caused by “two major streams in the development of European culture.” These were “the continuous growth of the scientific spirit ... (and) the growth of the national spirit.” The scientific spirit refers to “the idea that genuine knowledge can only be gained through close observation of facts and rational reasoning on the basis of such observation” and national spirit refers to “nations whose members spoke the same language and could therefore understand each other throughout the territory of the state (who) also saw themselves as part of the same whole and as distinct from other people, who spoke languages foreign to them (Gerard, 1993:11).

Today, Western literature has an established tradition of literary studies. There are literature departments and schools of languages in many universities and colleges around the world, whose function extends beyond works of European origin. There are also literary journals dedicated to this area. There are publishing houses, influential book sellers, radio and TV stations, exclusive sections in prominent newspapers and journals as well as sites on the internet that are solely dedicated to the lives and works of writers. In some cases publications and broadcasters set out year plans to publish and publicise a number of historical records on the lives of selected writers.

In South Africa scholars and publishers alike do not bother much about this field of research and publication, hence the dearth of biographic literary works on the influential writers writing in African languages. South Africans must regard literature “as a common

expression of mankind and also a key to better understanding among different human groups separated by language barriers” (Gerard, 1993:12).

1.2 Aim of the Study

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the essence of Peter Tshobiso Mtuze’s literary humanism as reflected in his writings, that is, his novels, poetry, drama and autobiographies. Its primary focus will, therefore, be on African Humanism in Mtuze’s writings and how Mtuze’s humanism presents itself in his life and works.

Mtuze has strong African cultural roots whereas he is a product of Western education and Christianity who has become a priest of the Anglican Church. The teachings of his family and his community are very central in understanding his resilience. The question is, where does his strength and inspiration come from? What drives his life projects? On becoming an academic, why did he not shun his traditional roots and be ashamed of his past and go on and imitate new symbols in western influence just like many other Africans? Asante (1988:93) who argues for a “commitment to greatness” writes that “the only road to happiness and harmony is excellence in everything. Our path to that road is set out for each of us by the ancestors.”

Throughout his life, a writing life of more than thirty creative and academic works in varying forms - novels, short stories, poetry, dramas, essays, autobiography, literary guides, translations, cultural and religious published academic papers - Mtuze has been a centre of many experiences. Therefore, this study will investigate threads that run through his works in the context of the spaces that opportunities in his life provided.

Books are written in particular historical periods. They are occasioned by particular historical moments. In other words, books are by themselves items of history. There are specific conditions that create the situations of their birth. Therefore, the study aims to provide a critical review of the selected works of Mtuze, believing that, as Mphahlele (2002:380) writes:

An aesthetic begins with the very dust you kick around, the shit you smell, the houses you look at that make your environment and that you live in, the quality of life around you. In other words, with place and all the benevolence and tyranny you get from it. You have to be responsible for its shape, its texture; but while you dissolve in it, it dissolves in you.

It is neither in the interest of this study to eulogise and promote the supposed ‘big man theory’ nor record the untidy habits and slanderous acts of the subject. The most important guiding principle in this study is a quest into the insights of a working and writing mind. Mtuze was a son of a farm labourer just like many other South Africans. He was produced by his conditions and his time. His life and work represent a world that many can identify with, a world of limited choices, complete control and imposed fear. He embodies a living and hidden pain in the collective psychology of a generation that lived in a particular environment. This study explores these aspects of his life and how they are reflected in his work.

1.3 Methodology

The study is based on an analytical study of Mtuze’s life and works as shown in his writings while, at the same time, doing an objective assessment of his role and influence in the socio-political landscape of South Africa. The study of Literature and African Humanism, as pioneered by Es’kia Mphahlele, is a union between native intellect, spirituality, survival and development within the socio-political structures of western thought. Central in this approach is the understanding of the African culture and its active ancestors, the connector between the living and the dead and the belief in the Supreme Being; the resilience of family and social relationships and its collective force; as well as the moral conduct, the sustainance of these relations. Mtuze’s works will be tested against these principles of African existence.

It is true indeed, that it is not easy for Africans to imagine themselves away from Western influences. But, African Humanism as argued by Es’kia Mphahlele offers an attempt to search for the African soul, a search that is underpinned by faith in the native

intelligence. This is a journey that begins by exploring the roots of Western Humanism and at its impact on Africa and her people. There are three principles that are very important in this regard:

- A belief in the existence of the Supreme Being and the interconnectedness of human, animal, plant and the environment. Oral poetry, the African voice, is the testimony of this belief.
- The essence of the African family and her social relationships.
- The moral code of conduct of a society.

The research design that is implemented by the researcher is a systematic literature review. All relevant passages are included in the review. Texts that bear expressions that have a bearing on humanism have been identified. The texts are included and interpreted.

1.4 Main Assumptions of the Study

The first major assumption of the study is that writers are the finest layer of the societies from which they emerged. Writers possess a rare sensitivity that comes through creative articulation. African writers, in particular writers who wrote in the Xhosa language, emerged from a layer of keen listeners who were also, accordingly, great observers and speakers. They were patriotic people who loved not only their country and all its nature, but also its people and the manner Xhosa people conducted themselves. In other words, many Xhosa writers were influenced by the major ideas of their time.

1.5 The Significance and Benefit of the study

This study of Mtshali is timely and essential since it considers his life and his works as an African writer. The study pays special attention on the political and socio-economic environment in which Mtshali wrote and published. A scholarly inquiry on individual African writers and a study of their literary contributions is very essential. Investigated from the Afrocentric standpoint, the exercise helps to engender a sense of connection within the continent and within African people.

In the same manner that the study of the literatures of the West “brought about the spirit of universality and cosmopolitanism ... (to) western Europe in the course of the 18th century” (Gerard, 1993:12), it is time that Africa must make her own contribution to civilization by releasing her gifts for the benefit of the world. There is so much to offer in this regard because, at present, Africa stands on a rich literary heritage.

The study stands to benefit the South African society in many ways. The divisions that were engendered and inflamed along language and racial lines by a failed political ideology, apartheid, need serious literary intervention. This study is intended to be part of a scholarship that would create and expand information and knowledge that is vital for mutual understanding between language groups of the country. While visiting South Africa, Gerard (1993:20) noted that:

This country is not only a practically inexhaustible reservoir of human and natural resources. It is also pregnant with unimagined potentialities for cultural cross-fertilisation. Reciprocal knowledge and esteem are a necessary foundation for successful national integration.

A revelation and highlighting of experiences that are carried by the creative works of Mtuze, will familiarize the non-Xhosa speakers about aspects of their own lives and spaces. This will reverse the divisive mentality that has gripped South Africans for many years. Hope can be laid on a scholarship of this nature, through a considered intellectual approach, to do battle on the artificial strings that hold tribal consciousness, ethnic divisiveness and countrywide underdevelopment. By underdevelopment we refer to absence of the elaborate study on writers who are a critical part of Africa’s development.

Future scholars stand to benefit from this study in their endeavors to assist the cultural development of the continent. It is unforgivable to allow ignorance of the history of writers and the significance of their writings to continue. Africa has a lot of printed imaginative works written by many writers, in various African languages. While it is unforgivable to ignore the history of writers, it is understandable that research with regard to writing in African languages has been dominated by the idea that, the written material

requires linguistic or anthropological analysis only (Gerard, 1971:3). The value of its source, the writer, his life and the history of his writing had escaped the attention of many scholars.

Early Christian missionaries who came to Africa viewed the early Christian hymns written by African writers, as signs of the success of the spread of their faith. The education authorities too received the creative writing in isiXhosa, Sesotho, isiZulu, Setswana and other languages as “just part of the everyday business of providing appropriate reading matter for school boys,” (Gerard, 1971:3). Now, the high regard that is placed on religious and educational importance must extend to scholarship.

Accounts on earlier African writers, particularly those who ventured into writing as a result of contact with Christian missionaries, consist of records that speak exclusively to the strengths of the new faith and its power to influence. In the interface between Christianity and African people, there is a lot of historical detail that is missing in the equation. Take, for example, the case of S.E.K. Mqhayi, a well-known writer of isiXhosa literature. His novel *Ityala lama-wele* (The Law-Suit of the Twins) has been observed as having a “plot (that) was suggested by the story of the birth of Thammar’s twins in Genesis 38:27-29” (Gerard, 1971:54):

The story takes place during the reign of Hintza, chief of the Gcaleka Xhosa, who was killed while attempting to escape from British imprisonment in 1835.

There is no material to uncover the relationship between the major historical events of the time, such as those around the arrest of the king, and the composition of an artist of Mqhayi’s calibre during that period. Perhaps if this ground was covered, Gerard’s account could have been more elaborate or could have taken a different direction. Nonetheless, Gerard (1971:54) noted that:

Mqhayi’s memories of Nzanana’s court enabled him to provide, as Alice Werner pointed out, “a very illuminating picture of native judicial procedure” ... The theme of justice is an important one in all literatures, as justice and law are the very foundation of the social order.

African languages have never ceased to be spoken by their users, and as spoken languages they always carried a shared life. Such a life carries immense value primarily to its people and to humanity at large. So, research on literature including its oral roots needs to be undertaken for the very fact that a large proportion of the world population cannot be locked out of existence. Africa and many other oral oriented societies have a contribution to make to modern civilization. Looked at differently, certain advances particularly of a technological nature, are derived from or rather make maximum use of orality.

Focus must be on African works as compositions, on the areas where these were conceived, when they were conceived as well as their publication. The interest on the source and the conditions of the production of creative writing in African languages, holds the key to understanding the speakers of these languages, their nature as human beings, their history and their view of the world around them and outside them. Peter Mtuze is a case in point. In the Zimbabwean context this is explored more recently by Magosvongwe and Nyamende (2015) where they argue that texts should be situated within the contexts in which they are produced.

It is understood that many writers who wrote in African languages are no longer alive. Others had published under pseudonyms and, therefore, have remained anonymous. Others whose names are known have not published autobiographies, and there is very little or rather nothing to make a researcher to understand “why they wrote, and why they wrote the way they did” (Gerard, 1971:10).

1.6 Summary

In this first chapter a background of the scarcity of scholarly treatment of works written in African languages was provided. The aims and the methodology of the study were explained. The significance, use and value of the study and Mtuze’s place in it, were shown

Chapter Two

Theoretical Foundation

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the origins of European humanism, African humanism and the supremacy of African languages in African Humanism. The study will also discuss consciousness as the major tool in African Humanism. The discussion will also review African Literary Humanism in the selected writers and writings of Xhosa language. The chapter will also discuss contemporary political ideologies and significant individuals that represent African humanism in the South African context.

2.2 Humanism

The Oxford dictionary defines humanism as a “rationalistic outlook or a system of thought attaching prime importance to humankind.” It traces the use of the word humanism to the Renaissance period, a period that came after the medieval times of Europe – the Middle Ages – which was dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. Renaissance brought prominence to the classics of Greece and Rome. Those who studied the classics were known as ‘humanists’. In order to understand the ways of ‘humanists,’ Mphahlele (2002:149) has this enlightening comment about the environment that obtained in Greece and Rome during the Renaissance:

Human reason was to be allowed free reign so that it could become aware of its own strengths and weaknesses. Reason and physical beauty and faculties were amply portrayed in the classic literature and art of Greece and Rome. The study of all this, plus belief – the attitude of mind that affirms the value of man as the centre of life’s concerns – finds its focus in what is called humanism.

The Renaissance period brought closure to what was known as ‘the superstitious fears of medieval man’ (Mphahlele, 2002:150). New scientific discoveries were made in such fields as mathematics, astronomy and physics. Figures who became prominent during this

period included, amongst others, Nicolous Copernicus (1473-1543) of Poland who taught mathematics and astronomy at the University of Rome; Galileo Galileo (1564-1642) the Italian physicist, mathematician and astronomer; and the painters, sculptors and scientists Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) and Michelangelo (1475-1564), both of Italy.

Other historians such as Egbunu Eledjo (2014:2) have been able to dig much deeper in history, hence he writes in his essay entitled *Africans and African Humanism: What Prospects*, that:

The first noticeable humanist is said to be the 5th century BC figure, Protagoras, who asserted that “man is the measure of all things”. Socrates, the ancient Greek philosopher who ‘suggests that ‘man, know thyself’ is yet another.

Lamont (1949:31) must have been the source that Eledjo consulted before writing the above because Lamont expresses this sentiment using similar words but with more authority and emphasis:

The first notable humanist of whom there is reliable record was Protagoras, a Greek teacher and philosopher of the fifth century b.c., to whom Plato devoted an entire dialogue. Protagoras formulated the famous dictum “Man is the measure of all things, of things that are that they are, and of things that are not that they are not.”

This statement of Protagoras was viewed by Lamont (1949:31) as being “too vague and subjective to be taken over without qualification by modern humanism,” yet “at the time (it was) a daring and unorthodox thought.”

The pioneers of European humanism mentioned above were able to make their imprint in humanism through their literature. Italy continued to retain the Latin literary tradition for a longer period than the rest of Europe, and their literature was always available within the Catholic Church as well as outside the confines of the church, in the colleges and universities. Petrarch, who was a poet and writer of the 13th century, is another Italian figure who is also a trendsetter in humanism.

This study is concerned with humanism in Africa and the literature of Africa that carried African Humanism. Mtuze's life and works will be discussed in the context of the above.

2.3 African Humanism

The Indian thinker, Rabindranath Tagore (1961:231) makes an enlightening input when he writes that:

Of all living creatures in the world, man has his vital and mental energy vastly in excess of his need which urges him to work in various lines of creation for its own sake.

And, Lamont (1949:83) refers to this very energy by employing the analogy of the functioning of the human body:

The human body itself is an organism of the most prodigious intricacy, its multitudinous parts adjusted to one another to the last degree of nicety and its billions upon billions of cells normally working together in all but perfect harmony. Specifically it is the relatively greater complexity of the brain in man, and particularly of the cerebral cortex, that has bestowed on him the power of thought and thus raised him immeasurably above all other creatures of the earth.

Now, Tagore (1961:231) concurs but adds an important dimension, personality, "this body is not a mere convenient sac for the purpose of holding stomach, heart, lungs and brains; it is an image – its highest value is in the fact that it communicates its personality. It has color, shape and movement." The 'personality' is the key word here, the inner being that is the vital determinant in every individual. In other words, in addition to the physical body there is the intangible inner existence that comes across consciously and unconsciously whenever the individual makes an interaction. It is this inner being that creates the significance and the uniqueness in an individual and also among common definable people.

Among Africans it is this inner being that is responsible for bringing to life a worldview that explains their existence. This worldview is the humanism of African people and it is the key tool and the basic method that they use in navigating their life endeavours.

The importance of personality, as the study will show when discussing Mtuze, is in expressions (words and actions) that include, amongst others, an identification with other humans who share similar experiences with oneself. The crucial point here lies in the particularity of the personality and in its strength, that is, its ability to change one's position of mind, one's world outlook through "rearranging the meaning of things in different proportions and forms" (Tagore, 1961:266). Understandably, changing or rearranging one's mind position can place one at odds with those who religiously believe in the so-called standard view of life hence Tagore (1961:266) says, "Such mobility of mind plays havoc with things whose foundations lie fixed in convention". But, as this study on Mtuze will show, mind movement where personality is at the centre, does not cause dislocation. The changing and rearranging of the meaning of things creates a spontaneous relationship with personality, the "central creative power" (Tagore, 1961:267). It becomes a one world, a complete distinct personality.

Like any other human race, Africans had always conducted their lives in accordance with some pattern, some manner. There had always been some consistency in their life activities and, always, Africans were aware of themselves and their ways. This can best be seen in the education of their children. There were spaces where this education took place. As discussed earlier that it was universities in Rome and in Athens that acted as the womb of European humanism, in Africa education happened in the homes, neighbourhoods, communities, various social institutions, places of worship and within organs of governance. Writing about his home in Kenya, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986:11) writes:

The home and the field were our pre-primary school ... the language of our evening teach-ins, and the language of our immediate and wider community, and the language of our work in the fields were one... (that) language, through images and symbols, gave us a view of the world ... (and also) a beauty of its own.

The point being made by wa Thiong'o, for the purpose of this study, is that the home is the space where education took place. The central role of a home and family can also be confirmed within Indian communities that speak of God as "the chief guest whom we honor," a God who "belongs to our homes as well as to our temples. We felt his nearness

to us in all human relationships of love and affection, and in our festivities” (Tagore 1961:229).

While discussing humanism in the African context, it is important to make comparisons with humanism in the European context. Mphahlele and Asante have made interesting observations with regard to European humanism. Mphahlele (2002:135) noted that:

At some point in its development, dissociation occurred between the Renaissance intelligence and the moral content of humanity ... The intelligence, often going under the name of ‘reason’, seemed unstoppable. It spawned invasions and conquest of territory. It made it possible for explorers such as Christopher Columbus to savage the natives of the Caribbean and elsewhere, and for the slave trade to flourish. More recently, it resulted in two world wars and Hitler’s perversions, followed shortly by the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

And, Asante (2011, 56) concurs:

The Enlightenment is that period when current European values were enshrined in their literature. It is clear that European writers see that movement as the time when they assaulted authority, asserted individual freedom, and enthroned reason in their societies. Yet as we Africans know... Enlightenment was a selective seeing of the human condition because at the very time the Europeans were confronting and overthrowing their authorities they were enslaving and colonizing Africans and Asians, brutalizing women, and working children to death in labor camps.

These observations are crucial in that they highlight the point of divergence between European and African humanisms. African humanism is tied to African thought and belief. It is also religious. In its centre is human life, then there is thought that represents human intellect, and, more importantly, the spirituality of African people. Let us bring in Xhosa people by way of an example since this is Mtshuze’s ethnic group. Xhosa people had built distinct social and political institutions. They lived in accordance with a particular moral code. When it comes to material acquisition and possession, they assisted each other fairly. They refused to worship material possession.

Material acquisition, for them, was strictly as a result of hard work. The analysis of Mtuze's novels will demonstrate that. There were no short cuts. Those who were wealthy did not constitute themselves into a distinct class in opposition to those who did not have possessions in abundance. There was no corporate language, as we know it presently. The most desired position was to be a proud Xhosa person who lived according to high standards of behavior when relating to others.

Even those who were in higher echelons of power, who would be lavished with gifts, conventionally, they shared those gifts with the very givers. To this day, among Xhosa people it is a common occurrence to share gifts. What this sharing does to Xhosa people is that it engenders self-fulfillment and "a profound sense of being," (Mphahlele, 2002:136).

Literature is the area where the differences between European humanism and African humanism are glaringly exposed. Stephen Howe (1999:23) writes about the racist nature of literature of Europe when it comes to writing about Africa and African people, "A mass of European literature over an extended historical period quite seriously posed the question whether Africans were human at all, and sometimes answered it negatively."

As Europe started to conquer vast territories and continents such as Africa, it became the mission of European literature to create the racial myth and distort Africa and her history, and make it appear that Africa had made no advances in civilization. In this way the European idea of dominating the invaded and conquered peoples for the purpose of exploiting their wealth could be achieved. Distorting the past of the dominated peoples served to lubricate the oppressive machinery. Africa today battles to convince her peoples and the world about her humanism as a result of the psychological damage created, to a large extent, by European writers who were racist.

For Africa, this period of European history is the key to the genesis of racism as Asante (2011:135) contends that:

In my judgement it was this period of European history that sanctioned all manner of perverted importance of the individual white man and caused that person to lay claim to a universalism that was nonexistent.

This revelation pointed out by Asante and Howe above serves to show that while Europe was undergoing human advancement as in Enlightenment, there was a history of destruction that was unfolding in Africa, and it was caused by Europe herself. There is an impressive body of research in favour of this position. This literature affirms that European enslavers and colonialists found thriving societies in Africa, societies that had systems, resources and stable livelihoods. In fact, an investigation of African humanism opens paths into the past of Africa not only to point out the creative potential of her peoples, but also to highlight the European falsifications to the world and to African peoples as well. Let us begin with consciousness in the African mind.

2.4 African Humanism as Consciousness

African Humanism, according to Mphahlele, operates on two levels, one, as a system of mind, a consciousness; and two, as a social order, in other words, a way of life. The choice of the mind, the consciousness, is very interesting and very important. It is in the mind that ideas are developed. They begin from immediate stages such as understanding oneself and one's surrounding. Next comes a deeper level of awareness and grasp, that is, being conscious or having consciousness and that being "the core of clarification of the natural environment" (Asante, 2011:82).

Also, consciousness does not only become a deeper awareness of ideas that are systematically linked together, by itself, it creates a basis for future cultivation of more ideas. For Africa and her peoples, the mind is a land where Africa's civilization is cultivated. An African family as an institution, the African neighbourhood and society and her will and feeling are the seedbed where her humanism is conceived, protected, preserved and promoted. Since humanism has to be transmitted to the next generation, a system to educate the young on what is good and evil, what is just and unjust, rules for relationships and behavior are evolved.

The moulding of one's consciousness is undertaken by one's immediate human environment, the family, the neighbours, the community, the ethnic group, the nation as well as the struggles of the people concerned. It starts with parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, teachers, neighbours, friends, significant men and women of the clan, community, ethnic group and nation. Its life blood is the language, the socio-political and economic conditions and the struggles that are being waged at these mentioned levels. All these influence bodily and intellectual growth. They become part of the physical body, its state of health, the mind and its memory, and the personality and character.

The researcher is reminded, at this stage, of a statement by an African American political activist, Stokley Carmichael, who later in his life and as part of his political convictions, became a citizen of Guinea. Stokley Carmichael assumed an authentic African identity. He named himself Kwame Ture after Kwame Nkrumah and Sekou Ture. On a visit in South Africa in 1997, he told a story of growing up in Trinidad, swimming in the rough seas with other boys, believing in the wisdom expressed locally in the saying, "The rougher the water, the stronger the swimmer," which meant that "difficulties make us strong" and for this, people must "be thankful to difficulties."

In other words, consciousness is the "accumulated intellectual and cultural heritage of the race," because the "mind as we know it is in its very origin a social product" (Lamont, 1949:88). The following chapters will discuss this "intellectual and cultural heritage" of Peter Tshobiso Mtuzze as an African and as a writer.

It must be noted as well that Europeans who came to Africa continued to rely on their imported schools and universities as the major custodians of their civilization. They established these schools and universities in order to (Asante, 2011:61) "educate Europeans who were distant from their mother countries and felt a need to continue to pass down information that had preserved their societies in their original European habitat." In the case of African people, Africans have relied on memory as the store house and a transmitter of knowledge and wisdom from one generation to the next. In order to facilitate this project, a powerful medium of orality was evolved and the young

were able to be intergrated. As Tagore has observed earlier, Africa proved that she too possessed vast mental energies among her humans. She had outlets to express her adventure, her self-realization and her urge to create new things.

So, there is no truth to the Eurocentric suggestions that Africans were a race that was satisfied only with preserving itself, and that Africans practised the “the hand-to-mouth penury” (Tagore, 1961:228). Investing in the mind was very crucial to African people. This study will show that writers such as Mtuze, represent a cultivation and reconnection of this African spirit and consciousness; that African humanism has been the inner resource for African people, a facility with which Africans were and still are able to negotiate their lives wherever they find themselves and under varying conditions.

During the disruptions in their lives such as slavery, colonialism, forced removals, imprisonment and political exile, Africans had managed to preserve and protect key things in their lifestyles and customs. They had managed to keep their good neighborly relations, for instance, and they have continued to revere their ancestors and modified their ways of worship under hostile conditions.

So, consciousness is the main key in their survival. To their advantage, consciousness has proved to be difficult to repress and consciousness can work and grow faster in a variety of situations especially under oppressive systems. Mel King, an African American involved in community development in Boston, USA, was quoted by Mphahlele (2002:51) in an essay entitled *Education as Community Development* as saying, “The system can’t run faster than our minds. You can raise consciousness faster than the system.”

African Humanism does not accept self-hate. When Africans are hated or rejected by others, it is vital to resist the temptation of internalizing hatred for oneself and for others. It is not the suggestion of this study that African people have no capacity of doing wrong things and that Africans cannot be cruel, dishonest, carried by ego, cunning, perverse, cowardly or poor in morality. Mutwa (1964:567) correctly writes that, “If a man ...

should have only good qualities, without any bad qualities for balance, he would have no reason for existing at all.” So, it is the goodness that is represented by humanism that we are concerned with in this study, although the “bad qualities” are well known.

The greatest self-inflicted assault on African humanism that has been and continues to be experienced in areas such as South Africa, xenophobia, derives from a variety of sources. For the sake of this study we will pick up one source, and that is lack of education. The division of Africa into a multiplicity of European possessions, for it to succeed, it had to ensure suspicion and mistrust amongst the peoples of the continent. Efforts to unite Africa such as the establishment of continental institutions such as the Organisation of Africa (OAU), now African Union (AU), have ignored the need for aggressive re-education of African peoples. The fact that various regions in Africa, to this day, continue to view themselves through European eyes in as far as culture is concerned, demonstrates this shortcoming. European languages, in particular, are a glaring indicator in this regard. They create perceived differences that degenerate to feeble conflicts. Colonial boundaries reinforce collisions and violence, and the desired expansion and free movement within the continent is blocked by unnecessary strife and tension among the countries. National leaderships in African governments are content with their European-designed compartments.

There is a lack of educating the consciousness that a true African home is an inviting home, that is hospitable to others and whose occupants are filled with a universal spirit that is as natural as itself. Modern democracy and her institutions can learn so much from African humanism. In the gatherings of imbizos, for instance, Africans are at ease with each other. They get to that gathering naturally and would sit under a tree long before its scheduled time of commencement. Their hearts would open naturally to each other. Suspicion and doubt are foreign in those gatherings. The reason for all this relaxation and harmony is that the convening of the imbizo would have been their initiative, its agenda their brain child, its language their own, its success their success.

Political leaders need to educate themselves in the African spirit. Higher ideals in societal upliftment, cohesion and development can be achieved once the African working ways are understood and deployed. People do not need to grow into democracy. Democracy can grow into the people. It can enhance a life they have rather than reduce them into perpetual pupils. The demand for delivery that abounds South Africa today, can be turned around into a forward mobility by the people themselves, once the creative centre, their humanism, can be tapped. Leadership will be restored back to the people and all the needs will be addressed in their language and location.

Educating the consciousness does not only guarantee the above mentioned benefits, it is in itself, a source and tool of learning and teaching. Literary education in the life and works of Mtuze, has traversed this route, and this study will seek to show that. Tagore (1961:204) has emphasized that “education is the thing which we should first of all take into our own hands.” To this, we should add Mphahlele (2002:128) who writes that one’s conduct must be “a purposeful act of knowing and of behaving in a human context.”

The importance of consciousness is in the deep understanding and the firm grasp of the centeredness of the human being. Here, intelligence and moral content of humanity are tied together. They are two sides of one coin, that is, the intellectual and the practical. This takes us from the mind to society.

2.5 African Humanism - a System of Society

There are areas in society that measure the existence and workings of humanism. These are the position that society gives to human life, whether society is goal-oriented or not and what are those goals, the acknowledgement and understanding of ancestors, societal drive, Ubuntu and society’s language or languages - oral and written.

2.5.1. Sacredness of Human Life

Human life is always the central theme of African humanism. An assault on human life, by any means, be it doing wrong to another human being, killing, violating or causing harm or serious injury on someone else; all that “is to do violence to the best in you” (Mphahlele, 2002:152). Mphahlele explains it more pointedly when he writes further that:

When you commit a wrong against others you are hurting yourself, your own soul. This is more crucial and real than if the person has disobeyed authority or some moral law for which he/she has to be punished. The soul is one’s spiritual life, and it is this that a person violates within himself/herself – the divine in themselves.

Writing an introduction to Equano’s biographical slave narrative, Vincent Carretta (in Equano, 1995:xx) writes that:

Equano ... [was] based on the philosophical premise that the human heart, uncorrupted by bad nurturing, has naturally benevolent feelings for others because it can empathize with their sufferings. Consequently, people of feeling, or sentiment, will share the sufferings of others, and by so doing, demonstrate their shared humanity.

In his paper Eledjo (2014:2), agrees that, “African humanism ... refers to a philosophy which extols not only the good of the human person in general but also the good of the African person as the purpose of all action. It entails an active concern for his/her welfare as the central object of policy.

In addition to the sacredness of human life, there exists the interconnectedness of “the physical, the psychic and the spiritual” (Mphahlele, 2002:314). God (uQamata) or the Supreme Being as Mphahlele maintains, is present in all living things. More specifically, God is in every person. So, the fact of life and the protection of life through such means as living together, being united as people and respecting the environment, is the backbone of the African way of life.

Wherever you find African people, it is not difficult to notice that Africans are a kind of people who, in the words of Mphahlele (2002:127) “love to create a world of people.” In Tabensky’s (2003:24) words African people are a “community of communicators”.

This living together, being united and respecting the environment creates and sustains communal harmony and cohesion. In African societies it is inconceivable that someone can live without knowing and acknowledging one’s neighbors. In a village one would know each and every household, their history, their clan name, key figures of the family. In a township or city where governance differs from the village, an African would always insist on greeting the neighbors even if they were not as dark skinned.

This is necessitated by, amongst other things, an internalized urge to show compassion towards others. Such a compassion is heightened when it is known that someone is sick or there is death in the neighbourhood. Also, there is a compelling eagerness to celebrate with those who have an occasion to do so. In other words, one places one’s life in the hands of one’s neighbors, and the whole settlement becomes a neighborhood of love that is also held tight by the clan system of relation, hence Mtuzze (2006:48) writes that:

Our humanity is not in isolation from other people’s humanity. We are what we are, because the other people are what they are. We cannot fold our arms and close our eyes to the other people’s plight. Some people mistakenly think that the philosophy encourages dependence. To the contrary, it encourages independence, because the one who is helped in this way today is expected and empowered to do the same to another person tomorrow.

Tagore (1961:88) writes about a red rose while explaining this sensibility, looking at materialism and humanism:

It is merely because the rose is round and red that it gives me more satisfaction than the gold which could buy the necessities of life, or any number of slaves? You may deny the claim that a rose gives more delight than a piece of gold, but you must remember that I am not speaking about artificial values. If we had to cross a desert whose sand was made of gold, the glitter of those dead particles would become a terror for us, and the sight of a rose would bring us the music of paradise.

So, in this life representation of a rose and in the “language of love” that brings delight to the heart, there are goals to be achieved.

2.5.2 Goal-orientedness

As argued above as far as the mental health of African people is concerned, African humanism seeks to build a working society of Africans, in other words, it is goal-oriented.

African humanism leads to a making of what Tabensky (2003:24) terms a “good community”. Persons in that “community” are pursuing particular goals as a result of their understanding of their lives and their surroundings; a precise understanding of how their lives relate to the lives of others. Tabensky (2003:148) writes that:

Individual narratives are embedded in, and constituted by, the histories of those who are closest to us, such as friends and relatives, and these histories, in turn, are embedded in, and constituted by, the history of a community ... this net of relationships covers the whole of humanity (past and present) simply because, at present, the whole of humanity forms one complex network of diversely defined relationships that are constituted by the cultural heritage of the entire human race.

Individualism is an alien condition with African people, and Mphahlele (2002:128) agrees that individualism, “has brought into our midst a whole baggage of drives, compulsions, urges, neuroses and ambitions for things that are not enduring. It merely fulfils our acquisitive instincts.”

Since African humanism is based on communal relationships and “focuses on the betterment of human existence” (Mphahlele, 2002:148). Africans need to unite to achieve that goal, to reach that desired peak in their existence. Unity and love needs compassion and inclusivity. The virtue of compassion and inclusivity has benefitted Africans immensely. Mphahlele (2002:148) writes that African humanism:

... has been able to absorb other creeds and systems, often because these were imposed upon it by colonialism. But now that most of Africa is

independent, where the people can now make choices for their cultural directions, the openness of Afrikan Humanism is turning out to be a tremendous and positive virtue.

The complex connectedness that has been created by this African system of society, African humanism, has made it possible for Africans to live as a congregation, a congregation that has a directed existence. Its emphasis is that all society must flourish. When one part of society flourishes and does so to the detriment of the other parts of society, something is extremely wrong in that society. As we shall see in the course of the discussion, African humanism has been able to reproduce itself in literature and in lives. As a result, great works and outstanding individuals who demonstrated the virtues of humanism, were revealed.

There are many African men and women who have synthesized the vitality of African humanism, who were able to see their purpose as “acquiring life” and more life for that matter, and “living strongly”. This we shall see further on in this treatment of Mtuze’s life and works. Howe (1999:56) writes that Fr Placide Tempels, a Christian missionary, was based in the Congo, today’s Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Tempels had come into contact with African people in that area and had noticed the existence of a “basic system of beliefs” all around the area of Southern Africa (Howe, 1999:156):

This basic system of beliefs, according to Tempels, was shared by all the many peoples of the huge and diverse Bantu language family. Moreover, it was shared and understood by all individuals within each of these societies: even those whose Western education or lifestyles might be expected to have made them abandon it.

Because African humanism is a distinct, indigenous and original African discourse that has a thirst for inquiry, western educated Africans had utilized it as a source of modern thought. Political ideologies such as Pan Africanism and Black Consciousness are major African inventions that demonstrate this virtue of inquiry and goal-orientedness. Chapter two will deal with further with this matter.

This sense of “living strongly” does not only exist with the living only, it is also with the living-dead, the ancestors.

2.5.3 Ancestors

Very crucial in understanding African humanism is the acknowledgement of the existence of ancestors and the understanding of their role in the life of African people. This understanding and belief is part of a wider social manifestation, the essential social relations and, the sacredness in their life.

Africans relate to God through their ancestors who are seen as those who once lived in the flesh and knew the “pain and joy of living” (Mphahlele, 2002:137). Ancestors are the people who bring Africans closer to God. All the rituals and other practices of African people are directed to the community of one’s ancestors. Howe (1999:156) writes:

(Tempels) believed that the peoples of the Bantu language group shared a common philosophy centred on a concept of vital force. Everything in the universe possesses this force, including inanimate objects, but it is most powerful and important in human beings: still active in the departed ancestors as well as the living.

This aspect of African humanism, the acknowledgement of the existence and understanding the role of ancestors, is preceded by an equally important virtue, the respect for the elderly. Ancestors are great grandparents who respected their own great grandparents. This discussion on ancestors will be further explored in the chapter that deals with Mtshu’s spirituality. For now, let us look into the Xhosa people and their concept of Ubuntu.

2.5.4 Ubuntu

Ubuntu is an African philosophy. In the isiXhosa language there is Ubuntu. In Sesotho it is Botho. In Malawi it is Umunthu. In Kiswahili language it is Utu. According to oral history of the Xhosa people there was uNtu who may have branched out of some human group. There are no records that have details on the generations before the birth of uNtu. W.B. Rubusana (1906:64) writes that:

Imbangi yokuba siqalele kuNtu, kungokuba kulapho ziphele khona iinkumbulo zamandulo akowethu ... kutshone amagama ezo zizukulwana ngezizukulwana beziphambi koNtu.

(The reason why we begin with Ntu in our research is that, this is the extent where our memories could cover ... generations and generations before Ntu have escaped memory.)

Henderson Soga (1931:59) offers this rationale that, “According to Bantu tradition, u-Ntu was the first created individual or chief of the Bantu race.” But then, Soga (1931:60) further writes that:

Anthropologists date the genesis of the Bantu race from three thousand to four thousand years ago. If we accept this as likely, then u-Ntu is a long way from the creation, moreover, between him and the chief furthest back on any genealogical table thousands of years intervene, a gap which tradition makes no attempt to bridge. It gives us no supplementary information, such as the name of his son and heir, or his immediate descendants. U-Ntu is merely a personification of the term for the human species, e.g., “isi-ntu or ulu-ntu” – “the human race.” From the same root is derived the term “Bantu” – “people,” the plural of “um-ntu” – a person, or human being.

This could be the reason black people call themselves *Abantu abantsundu* (Mutwa, 1964:557). Now, according to Mutwa (1964:558) *Abantu abantsundu* who are “the founders of our culture and our religion” and who were “a solid, uniform nation (that was) at peace for thousands of years” evolved a system of ubuntu:

When eventually this nation broke up into the various tribes the Great Belief (Ubuntu) had taken such a strong hold on the souls and minds of people that they were completely lost without it. The Great Belief had been so ingeniously tailored to fit the mind, the soul and character of the Black Man of Africa that nobody dared to contemplate living his life without it. In fact, every man, woman and child lived it – became part of it.

Ubuntu is mainly explained through a popular expression, “*Umntu ngumntu ngabantu*” (I am because you are, you are because we are), which emphasises as the cornerstone, the position of a human person. This expression represents an important and distinct function of relationships between and among African people. In search of wishing to be seen to be good while in actual fact avoiding to act in a good manner towards others, some people

tend to misuse and commodify “*umntu ngumntu ngabantu*” for selfish ends. In this way they drain the concept of its commitments and responsibilities, its key defining factors. The need for compassion out there is far larger than what casual do-gooders, care to offer.

Notwithstanding the importance of practical action, an immediate indicator of Ubuntu is in the languages and in their orature. This study will highlight how Mtuze’s books put to use isiXhosa language as a spoken language, the ordering and organization of isiXhosa words in speech and in writing, the mannerism of Xhosa speakers in varying situations such as that of sadness, joy, celebration or sorrow. The study will show how Mtuze has captured these aspects in his works. For example, in a poem in *Vingcan’ amazibuko* Mtuze (1982:29) writes:

*Ungazuyenze impazamo
Ngokuthi ungaqapheli,
Aph’ emntwini kukh’ ubuntu,*

(Never make a mistake
Of not noticing that,
In every human being
There is humanism)

Add the abundant regard on the part of the young to allow the old to be served ahead of others, and also the old in their humble acceptance of the gesture. Lamont (1949:87) writes about the body language that explains these actions, “The gait, the carriage, the voice, the eyes, the smile, the faint wrinkling of the brow, however easy or difficult to interpret, do mirror the varying mental and emotional characteristics of a person.”

In African societies the art of story-telling is a device to educate members of society about Ubuntu using society’s talented narrators. It is a mental activity. Those who listen to the stories and others who have heard those stories told again and again by different narrators, are able to evaluate, contemplate and judge the substance of the delivery, how the story is told, its diction and its messaging. Gerard (1971:51) writes:

... imaginative oral art is the undifferentiated medium of all intellectual activity. It contains the whole body of the group's knowledge – philosophical, historical, and scientific. Myths embody man's earliest accounts of the events that are supposed to have given rise to his own existence and to that of the surrounding universe. Narrative poems, carefully preserved through the centuries, contain the records of the high deeds that justify the tribe's sense of dignity and continuity. Praise poems extol the valor of the warriors, in whose prowess and conquests the honor and the power of the society originate. Folktales contain the patrimony of wisdom and skills which has been bequeathed by generations precariously fighting for the inner cohesion of the tribal group and for its subsistence in the hostile world of men and natural forces ... Art and beauty are subordinated to the expression, preservation, and communication of memories and values that are essential to the survival of the society and to its sense of collective identity.

So, Ubuntu serves as that spiritual meeting point of humanness between and among people. Ubuntu is the live-wire inbetween the people. It exists in the very first words when two people meet. Greetings and pleasantries involve an extended dialogue that willingly enters into areas of life, such as why the speaker and the listener are still on their feet, their state of health, the health of their loved ones and of their animals, who has passed since their last conversation and who has arrived, as in birth.

The people who are in dialogue enjoy their exchange because there is so much in common in their lives as Eledjo (2014:3) writes, "The Western individualistic manner of living is quite reprehensible to the typical African person. African style of life is rather collective and universalistic in character. This way of life is traceable to the forebears of the people and is powered by the collective authority or consensus of the elders." Mtuze (2006:48) adds that:

Ubuntu is not only about receiving. It is also about giving. It is not about material gain but it is about sharing one's life and self with the others so as to empower them to enjoy life.

As a way of illustrating the point further, Eledjo (2014:2) writes about Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

Desmond Tutu threw a greater light on (Ubuntu) when he explained that a person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, based on a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater

whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished when others are tortured or oppressed. He further stated that one cannot exist as a human being in isolation.

The example of Archbishop Desmond Tutu is important in that it is his spoken word, a communicated commitment, and his actions as an activist priest that place him on that pedestal. So, the spoken language is the glaring medium of the humanism of African people.

2.5.4 Orality

The spoken word is the base of all literature and Gerard (1993:21) once pointed out that every human group “has its own imaginative tradition in the use of speech”. We now know that European literary humanism may have developed and preserved itself through the written word, initially, it started as a spoken word. In the Middle East, Gerard (1993:22) writes:

... the epic of Gilgamesh and the first books of the Bible were transferred from man’s memory to the more lasting medium of writing. It happened in ancient Greece when the Homeric epics were committed to writing. It began in Western Europe when the Romans brought their language together with their writing skills to the Iberians and the Gauls. Among peoples who had not been integrated into the Roman Empire, it began a few centuries later, when Christianity introduced the same skill to the Celtic people of Ireland and Wales and to the Germanic tribes of northern Europe.

African orality has stubbornly stuck to her humanist base. To this day, it remains a treasure of the African people. The African educated elite insists on the counsel of its so called ‘uneducated’ relatives for guidance on all rituals. It is the knowledge and experience of the ‘uneducated’ that they are after. Their straddling of the two worlds, that is, enjoying the niceties of the petty bourgeoisie life of materials, while having to deal with the fact of being African, demands from time to time harmony which is only available in the kraal, harmony whose medium is in the spoken word. Stress must be laid that the spoken word is the origin of the written word.

So, an investigation into literary humanism of African people must take into account the whole nature and structure of the spoken word, while also treating the written word. In the spoken word resides the whole meaning of African lives, their civilization as well as their ways of transmitting their teachings from one generation to the other.

2.6 Writing in Africa

2.6.1 Background

Reading and writing was introduced to the Xhosa people after the establishment of the Tyhume Mission Station near where the University of Fort Hare is presently situated. Xhosa people were one of the first African groups to make contact with European Christian Missionaries in Southern Africa. What is important to understand is that at the very period when Christian missionaries were pitching up tents, opening mission stations, schools and printing presses in the Eastern Cape, the wars over land dispossession were still raging. So, the introduction of reading and writing to the Xhosa people of the Eastern Cape, the home of Mtuze, took place in the midst of conflict and this impacted on the Christian missionary work. For the success of their project the missionaries had to exercise care in terms of who to approach for their enterprise and Gerard (1971:24) notes that:

... the early missionaries did not go to the hostile tribes along the border, but to the Rarabe Xhosa who were on friendly terms with the boers, and later to the Ngqika Xhosa, who were on friendly terms with the English.

As the mission stations were being established, the Xhosa people were confronted with two realities, that is, the war front and the religious front. On the war front they were experiencing defeats step-by-step, while on the other hand, Christian missionaries were making inroads on the religious front. The loss of land and the capture of cattle was followed by the religious conversion of Xhosa people. This conversion was carried out through systematic under-trampling of the African way of life. Customs, rituals and ways of worship were undermined.

What was so glaring to Xhosa people was that both fronts involved the same stock of people, that is, Europeans. The Christian missionaries and the colonisers, who were both white, obeyed the same authority, the colonial authority that was based in Cape Town. They spoke the same language. They did not fight each other. Instead, they protected each other. It was very clear to Xhosa people that both fronts represented the same face of the same enemy.

The question then was, for Xhosa people, how would they survive the defeats on the battle field, while at the same time, resisting the cultural onslaught on the religious front? Ultimately, they were forced to join the missionary schools and, in that way, they acquired the skills of reading and writing. Although they were already converting to Christianity, Xhosa people were deeply aggrieved by the colonial defeat. Many had been removed from their ancestral lands and were living under restrictions within the so called 'reserves'. So, access to knowledge and training in the mission schools was pursued for the purpose of seeking to return the dignity that the colonialists and the missionaries were stripping from Xhosa people. Gerard (1971:51) writes that "It was necessary (for the educated Xhosa) ... to start with the grass roots and to raise the common man himself, through more education ... hence, the emergence of modern genres on the Xhosa literary scene ... the novel, the short story, and stage drama, were better suited to disseminate new ideas among the ever-growing semiliterate audience."

The battle was taken to a new level, in the world of writing.

2.6.2 African writing

The speed and swiftness with which a spoken word spreads within the circles of Xhosa people, always amazes an outside observer, yet this is a convention that has survived for many years. And, when the spoken word was brought to print, in its original state, its permanence was guaranteed. This study shows that Mtuze's works occupy that central position of keeping the immediacy of orality within the covers of his books while, at the same time, ensuring the posterity of his material. This is what wa Thiong'o (1986:24)

calls “the immortality of our languages in print ... despite the internal and external pressures for their extinction.”

In addition to isiXhosa works, Mtuze has also written in English, in the same way as other African writers who have demonstrated an immense power to taking over languages they came into contact with. Many African writers took to the pen to Africanize European languages such as English, French and Portuguese. They gave these European languages an African complexion. wa Thiong’o (1986:23) writes that:

... when the peasantry and the African working class were compelled by necessity or history to adopt the language of the master, they Africanised it without any of the respect for its ancestry ... so totally as to have created new African languages, like Krio in Sierra Leone or Pidgin in Nigeria, that owed their identities to the syntax and rhythms of African languages. All these languages were kept alive in the daily speech, in the ceremonies, in political struggles, above all in the rich store of orature – proverbs, stories, poems, and riddles.

Consequently, African writers could make a huge mark in “producing acceptable works in a learned language ... from Chinua Achebe to Siphos Sepamla and from Leopold Senghor to Honwana, sub-Saharan Africa has generated scores of poets and playwrights, novelists and short story writers who have deservedly obtained worldwide attention and esteem for their ... writings in English, French and Portuguese.” (Gerard, 1993:59).

Today, Africa boasts many literatures that are related to the continent in their content and context. Among these are the African-American literature, African-British literature, African-Canadian literature, African-Caribbean literature and East-West-Southern African literatures

The African American literature (Killam & Rowe, 2000:6) began “with the oral performances with which African slaves relieved, when possible, the physical and psychological horrors of their lives.” The African British literature that “began in the eighteenth century with autobiographies of freed slaves” (Killam & Rowe, 2000:8), had direct titles such as; *A Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings, and Surprising Deliverance of Britton Hammon, A Negro Man* (1760) by Briton Hammon, *A Narrative*

of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, an African Prince, as Related by Himself (ca. 1770) by Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, *Letters of the Late Ignatious Sancho, an African* (1782) by Ignacioua Sancho, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* (1787) by Cugoano.

African Canadian literature (Killam & Rowe, 2000:8), “bear(s) the resonant influence of Pidgin or Africanized Englishes – that is, the Creole discourses arising from the complex Babel of tongues engendered by the slave trade and the colonial era.” Of course, the African Caribbean literature of George Lamming, the Barbadian writer who, writes Killam & Rowe (2000:13), “could confidently say that the concept of Africa had not yet permeated the West Indian consciousness, by which he meant the intellectual West Indian consciousness. He did see clearly Africa’s centrality in the West Indian literary imagination.”

With isiXhosa language, a language that is spoken by Mtuzze and his community, huge strides were made.

2.6.3 IsiXhosa Literature

From the time that a child is born and makes the elementary sounds, the grunts and cries and the observing eye movement; to the time that it says the first words, sentences and more coherent expressions, the development of its mind will show through speech and language. How the child accumulates her powers of thoughts will come through her mouth.

Within the Xhosa family, neighbourhood, community and ethnic group, isiXhosa language is *the* indicator and connector. During the seasons of hunting, gathering of wild fruit or wood, planting on the fields or working in the mines and factories, that is, in all activities that have to be repeated again and again, language becomes an important means to communicate and co-ordinate activities. And, when communication has been entered

into, experience and knowledge arises. wa Thiong'o (1986:14) writes that with experiences:

There is a gradual accumulation of values which in time become almost self-evident truths governing their conception of what is right and wrong, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, courageous and cowardly, generous and mean in their internal and external relations. Over a time that becomes a way of life distinguishable from other ways of life.

wa Thiong'o has a high regard for writers such as Mtuze, who write in African languages. He (wa Thiong'o, 1986:24) recalls one writer in Kenya, Gakaara wa Wanjau:

who was jailed by the British for the ten years between 1952 and 1962 because of his writing in Gikuyu. His book, *Mwandiki wa Mau Mau Ithaamirioini*, a diary he secretly kept while in political detention, was published by Heinemann Kenya and won the 1984 Noma Award. It is a powerful work, extending the range of Kiguyu language prose, and it is a crowning achievement to the work he started in 1946. He has worked in poverty, in the hardships of prison, in post-independence isolation ... but he never broke his faith in the possibilities of Kenya's national languages ... He is a clearest example of those writers thrown up by the mass political movements of an awakened peasantry and working class.

Mtuze wrote in isiXhosa, an African language spoken by Xhosa people who are based in the South Eastern parts of South Africa. Earlier, Xhosa people were called Abe-Nguni (Soga, 1931:6):

The name was derived from a progenital in the royal line called Mnguni. We know nothing about Mnguni beyond his name, but through the operation of circumstances ... the name, though still in use, has been largely overshadowed by that of a successor, "Xosa," What the tribal name was before Mnguni's day no one can tell.

Mtuze's decision to write in a language of his parents, siblings, neighbours and community, isiXhosa language, is significant as Chinua Achebe (in wa Thiong'o, 1986:7) was once asked, "Is it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else's? It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces a guilty feeling." At the time, Achebe was contemplating whether "how best to make the borrowed tongues carry the weight of our African experience ... making them 'prey' on African proverbs and other peculiarities of African speech and folklore," (wa Thiong'o, 1986:7).

When people's experiences are conveyed in their very language, they do not only enhance the language they are written in, they keep the writer rooted in the experiences. The pioneer of isiXhosa literature is Ntsikana ka Gabha.

2.6.3.1 Early Xhosa Literary Humanism

2.6.3.2 UNtsikana

Ntsikana ka Gabha was born in 1760. He is the pioneer of isiXhosa written literature who brought the energy of orality to the Christian faith by composing hymns that were rooted in African rhythm and beat. His hymns are still favoured by African people in many Christian churches, Protestant, Catholic and African founded churches. They carry the very vibrancy that they had since Ntsikana's time. The power in Ntsikana's verses always reveals itself whenever his hymns are sung during church services, funerals, prayer meetings or during devotions to some occasion. Many people would rise to the elevating power and imaginative fire of the hymns. One such famous hymn is *Ulo Thixo Omkhulu* (Praise to the Great God), a "Highly doxological and declamatory, it is a watershed in Xhosa poetry," (Killam & Rowe, 2000:308):

*UloThixo oMkhulu, ngoseZulwini;
Unguwena-wena, Khaka lenyaniso.
Unguwena-wena, Nqaba yenyano.
Unguwena-wena, Hlathi lenyaniso.
Unguwena-wen' uhlel' enyangwaneni.
UloDal' ubomi, wadala phezulu. (Imibengo, Bennie 2011:1)*

(You are God! The Highest, in the Heaven;
You are the real Shield of the Truth.
You are the real Fort of the Truth.
You are the real Protector of the Truth.
You are the one who occupies the Throne.
Creator of Life and the sky.)

When looking at the artistic strengths of the work mentioned above, what is surprising is what gets to be written about Ntsikana by other scholars, for example that Ntsikana only

began to compose poetry and songs when he met the Christian faith. Ntsikana here demonstrates an identity that Xhosa people found with the Christian faith, particularly the stories of the Old Testament in the Christian Bible that Lamont (1949:50) cites as he writes that:

Throughout the Old Testament there runs a strong sense of the values attainable in earthly living ... Moreover, Old Testament prophets such as Amos and Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, denounced in no uncertain language the selfishness, corruption, and oppression of their day. They fought on behalf of the people against their exploiters.

Such humanism was repeated in the New Testament by Jesus (Lamont, 1949:51):

Jesus raised his voice again, and again on behalf of broad humanist ideals such as social equality, the development of altruism, the brotherhood of man, and peace on earth. According to the gospel story, he was much aware of the material needs of men and himself fed the hungry and healed the sick ... the Jesus portrayed by the gospel represents one of the supreme personalities of all time. He was a most effective fighter against the hide-bound Pharisses of his day, the greatest free speech victim in the history of religion and a radiant martyr for the cause of humanist.

Ntsikana's humanism was equally provoked. A.C. Jordan (in Gerard, 1971:27) states that Ntsikana "was a great composer, singer and dancer, as well as a polygamist." He "was schooled and circumcised according to custom." When one looks at the characteristics mentioned about Ntsikana, the experiences he had undergone in particular, circumcision (which is discussed later) and his life practices including the fact that he was a proud polygamist with two wives, Nontsonta and Nomkhini, all these attributes make Ntsikana a complete man in the Xhosa sense. What the Christian church gained was an African personality nurtured over years in the precincts of Xhosa royalty.

Ntsikana brought the humanism of Africa to the service of the Christian church, through his compositions. The huge numbers of African people who followed Ntsikana into the church, and many others who continue to increase and strengthen the Christian faith to

this day, do so, at the main, because of the African identity engendered by the African songs and hymns.

Christianity did not encounter an empty shell in Ntsikana. As you shall note when we discuss circumcision, Ntsikana was a full African man who had something to offer. He was loved by his people. They would salute him with a poetic salutation “uNokhonongo, imaz’ egush’ ibele,” (Bennie, 2011:8) because they viewed him as their teacher. He too, was interested in his people, their culture and their land.

He wanted unity among Xhosa people, “*Maze nibe yimbumba enjengeyamanyama niye esikolweni saseGwali*,” (Bennie, 2011:8) (Xhosa People must unite and attend the school at Gwali). When Ngqika and Ndlambe were fighting, Ntsikana spoke to Ngqika about the need to reconcile their differences, because the invading British stood to gain from their conflict (William Kobe Ntsikana in Bennie, 2011:9):

Mna lento indingenileyo ithi, ‘Lento ngeniyiphelisa, niyithethe phakathi kwenu.’
Le nto indingenileyo mna ithi, “Ukuba amaNgesi uwabizile, ndiwubona lomhlaba ulixhoba!” Oko kukuthi, amaNgesi aya kuwuthabatha.

(Something in me says, “This must come to an end. You must negotiate a truce.”
This thing in me says, “If you invite the English, our land could be a target!” this means that the English will take over our land.)

Such a standing takes time to build. It is not possible that Ntsikana had never composed or had never been a poet before his contact with Christian missionaries. To add more, Ntsikana refused to be baptized by the missionaries, and have his name changed to the so called Christian name. Zaze Soga (in Bennie, 2011:5) writes that:

Bathe bakufika abafundisi bokuqala abaMhlophe, banqwenela ukuba bamphehlele uNtsikana; kodwa yena akavumanga. Ubaphendule ngelithi, “Hayi, oku ndukuko kundanele,” bamncama. Kodwa ke amagqobhoka amaninzi athe aphehlelelwa ngabafundisi, ukuze nje uNoyi, uyise kaMakhaphela, athabathe igama elingu “Balfour.”

(When the first group of white priests arrived, they expressed their wish to baptize Ntsikana; he refused. He responded by saying, “No, that which I had become is enough.” They could not go any further, they gave up. But, a lot of other converts

were baptized by the priests, so that Noyi, Makhaphela's father, took up the new name "Balfour".)

If, as Gerard (1971:24) writes, "... the British missionaries in Madagascar managed to record oral works by individual traditional, whose names were thus preserved ... [that] those Malagasy poems were of pre-Christian inspiration," the fact of artistic or, at best, poetic existence does not need to begin with the British in the case of Ntsikana.

One is not a singer only when one has been discovered by a recording company in some chance talent search. One could have been singing all along to his people, who had no recording devices and who felt no pressure to prove in some future that such and such a talent once existed. In all probabilities Ntsikana could have been a practising artist long before the arrival of the Christian faith. Ntsikana was no doubt a genius who became an expert in what he did.

Ntsikana's imaginative statements about the coming of Europeans were well known, "*Luyeza uhlanga oluMhlophe ...*" (Bennie 2011:5) (There is a white race coming ...). Ntsikana, though he could neither read nor write, was ahead of his time. He knew the importance of education. One day, according to one of his followers William Kobe Ntsikana, Ntsikana called his sons and said to them (Bennie, 2011:10):

... wathi enci wayibeka ngaphambili, wathi enkulu wayibeka ngasemva. Wathi kwenci, "Wena ungumsimelelo wam": wathi kwenkulu, "wena ulufundo lwam."

(He pulled his younger son to the fore and said, "You are my pillar." To the older one he said, "You are my education.")

According to Zaze Soga, on his deathbed Ntsikana gave an instruction to Tiyo Soga (Bennie, 2011:6):

Wathi uNtsikana ukuyolela kwakhe, phambi kokuba abhubhe eseThwathwa apho, wabiza umhlobo wakhe, uSoga, umfo kaJotelo, wathetha kuye esithi, "Ndikubizela lento: fudusa olu sapho lwam lunoKobe noDukwana nabafazi bam bobabini, uye nalo eGwali phaya esikolweni, uye kulugcina luhlale kuwe.

(In his last words before he died in Thwathwa, Ntsikana sent for his friend Soga, the son of Jotela, and he said to him, "I've called you for one thing: please take

my family, my two wives and my two sons, Kobe and Dukwana, to the mission school at Gwali and keep them there with you.)

Ntsikana died in 1821. His creations still grow to this day.

According to Zaze Soga, Tiyo Soga was one of the first disciples of Ntsikana. Others were Noyi, Matshaya, Mbi, Tamo, Xuba, Koti, Matshikwe, Kobe, Dukwana, Suthu to name but a few. Zaze Soga (Bennie, 2011:4) could confirm that, “*Nala mabandla siwabonayo namhlanje, kungatshiwo kufanele nokuthi, yinzala yerhamente kaNtsikana,*” (It can be said that all the congregations we see today have originated from Ntsikana). According to Zaze (in Bennie, 2011:3) Ntsikana and Soga were neighbours and friends as well.

2.6.3.3 Tiyo Soga

Tiyo Soga was a Christian composer and an isiXhosa writer who came after Ntsikana. He came from a family of councillors. His great grandfather was close to Chief Sandile and so was his grandfather, Jotelo to Ngqika (Gerard, 1971:31). He attended school at Gwali and later at Lovedale. During the War of the Axe (Imfazwe yeZembe) in 1846-7, Christian missionaries had been chased out of Tyhume Valley. They had fled with other new believers who included Tiyo Soga and his mother, Nobesuthu, who had separated with her husband by then. They sought refuge at a fort called Armstrong. Soga met Rev William Govan at this fort, who had run away from Lovedale.

Rev Govan took Soga to Scotland. In 1846 Soga attended the Glasgow Free Church Seminary Mission in Scotland. He was at the Seminary until 1848. In 1850 he enrolled at the University of Glasgow and was ordained in 1856. He came back and settled at Mgwali. Soga's hymns *Lizalis' idinga lakho* (Fulfill Thy Promise), *Khangelani nizibone izibele ezingaka* (Open your eyes and behold how great the blessings are), *Sinesipho esikhulu esisiphiweyo thina* (We have a great gift which was given us); are cries from bondage. They represent the socio-political reality of the historical period in which they were composed. Although his hymns were meant for the Presbyterian Church, they were and are still sung across the churches in the African communities.

Lizalis' idinga lakho

*Lizalis' idinga lakho,
Thixo, Nkosi yenyano,
Zonk' intlanga zalo mhlaba
Mazizuze usindiso.*

*Amadolo kweli lizwe
Makagobe phambi kwakhu.
Zide zithi zonk' iilwimi,
Zihuxel' udumo hwakho.*

(Incwadi Yamaculo AmaXhosa, Lovedale Press, 1929)

(Fulfill your promise
God, Lord of the truth
All the nations of this earth
Must be saved.

All knees in this world
Must bend before you
So that all languages
Should tell your might.)

Even when he had married a Scottish girl and had lived in Scotland for a considerable period, Soga took deep interest in his people, the Xhosa. His eye was on the future of the people and their language. Gerard (1971:34) writes that, “he published (in *Indaba*) recordings of oral art, fables, legends, proverbs, praise songs and genealogies, of which he was an eager collector.” Soga’s pen name while writing for *Indaba* was *UNonjiba Waseluhlangeni* (The Dove of the Nation). He was a renowned translator too.

It must be noted, however, that the work of the early Xhosa composers had to go through the hands of their Christian principals, the missionaries, for the publication and printing of the material. In this regard, Gerard (1971:34) remarks that, “the total mass of the early writings, those that dealt with devotional and educational topics got into print more readily than the recordings of folk traditions.” It was not smooth sailing for the early Xhosa writers. From time to time they had to fight their way ahead within and without the faith. Soga is reported to have rebuked the colonialists saying, “they do not like the

elevation of the natives, whom they would fain keep down as men and maid-servants” (Gerard, 1971:35)

Soga died on 12 August 1871 in Thuthura near Butterworth, Eastern Cape.

2.6.3.4 S.E.K. Mqhayi

S.E.K. Mqhayi was born on 1 December 1875 kwaGqumahashe near Alice, Eastern Cape. He was the grandson of a councillor of Chief Ngqika. On the maternal side, Mqhayi was also the grandson of Chief Nzanzana who lived in the coastal area of Centane. Mqhayi was a product of the Tyhume Valley, its Christianity, evangelism and education. Although he started to attend school in Centane, his remarkable education took place outside the school premises, in the homestead of Chief Nzanzana. AC Jordan writes (in Gerard, 1971:53) that:

It was there ... that he first listened to *izibongo* (praise-poems), and himself began to ‘list in numbers,’ praising favourite oxen, other boys or himself. It was there that he began to appreciate the beauty, dignity and subtleties of Xhosa, and to acquire the amazingly wide vocabulary that even Tiyo Soga would have envied. He used to listen to the stories of the wars that the old men of the village told in the evenings. He learned how to extemporize praise songs in honor of his cows, his dogs, and his friends. And he also watched with fascination the judicial proceedings at the court of Chief Nzanzana.

Mqhayi who “watched with fascination the judicial proceedings at the court of Chief Nzanzana” could remark during the hearing of an important matter involving twins that, “Kwesi sithuba kuthiwe mabakhe bakhwelele abaninityala bobabini – undimangele nommangalelwa. Bakhwelela okunene, baya mgama” (At this stage the complainant and the accused were asked to excuse the court. Indeed they did as instructed and waited at a distance.) (in Bennie, 2011:147)

An expert witness was invited to stand and advise the court in its effort to resolve the matter as to who was the rightful heir between the twins, Wele and Babini (Bennie, 2011:147):

Ithe ngoku inkundla yasingisa kwingwevu yaseNqabarha, uKhulile, isithi, “Kambe ke mfo kaMajeke, nasi esi sishiqi siye kukuthumelela sona eNqabarha.

Sewukho nawe; uyabona, uyeva akuseva ngakuxelelwa sithi. Ayifumananga le nkundla yacinga ngawe. Laye eli ilityala lokuqala elinje kwesi sizukulwana; ke kaloku asibanga nandawo yakubambelela, nakumisa iinyawo, kuba into iba nto ngokuzekelwa kwenye, njengoko waziyo nawe. Nantso ke!”

(The court referred to the old man, Khulile, saying, “You the son of Majeke, here is this case that made us to send for you all the way from Nqabarha. You are now here, you can see and hear it for yourself without hearing from us. No wonder that this court wanted you. And this case is the first of its kind in a generation. We could not even have a grip to hold on or a place to put down a foot because things are better understood when compared to others that happened before, as you know it too. The stage is yours!)

Note the representation of the African mind in the address of Khulile, entitled by Mqhayi as *Intetho yenyange* (The Address of a Genius). Everyone was quiet when Khulile stood up and said, “Zinkosi, nani nonke sizwe,” (My Lord, and the nation at large). Suddenly all were silent and the smoking pipes were released from the mouths (Bennie, 2011:147):

“Andazi ukuba bekuthe, ukuze kucingwe ngam, kwabe kungathuba lini na. Ewe, ubawo uMajeke walihlangulela ikokwabo eli ngoPhalo; oko ke izinto zazisalungile, imihlaba ingekonakali. Ndazi ntoni na mna? Ndingubani na? Le nto yalamakhwenkwe omntwan’ am uVuyisile, andiyi kuyisombulula kwathini nam, nangani ndilinyange. Le nt’ ingamawele ngabantu abazelwe ngamininye. Apha kulo mzi kaXhosa, kuthi ukusonjululwa kwaba bantu, kujongwe lowo uzelwe tanci. Loo nto ise ide yamiseleka, ingamiswe bani, yanga ngumthetho, ukuba ozelwe tanci abe yinkulu lowo. Kodwa ke, njengokuba ndikhe ndabona ezi ntsukwana mbini ndisaphanyazayo, loo nto iyaphikiswa, iphikiseke kwamanye amawele.

(“I do not know why and at what stage did you think of me. Yes, Mr Majeke did save the nation at the time of Phalo. Things could be solved way back then, before these troubled times. What do I know? In fact, who am I? This matter of the boys of my child Vuyisile, I will not be able to resolve even if I am of age. Twins are people who were born on the same day. In the house of Xhosa, in resolving such a matter consideration should be given to a twin who was born first. That became a standard, a rule that the one who was first becomes the older one. But, since I have observed during the last two days of the proceedings, that matter is disputable in other cases.)

As an expert in the subject, Khulile went straight to the state of the minds of the twins. He knew that knowledge about the mentality of the twins would assist the court in its work to resolve the matter:

Olu hlobo lungamawele, ebantwini apha, luhlobo oluvela luqondile kwasekuveleni. Inggondo yalo itsolo kuneyoluntu olu, kwanjengokuba iwele loza lixele into engekabikho, isuke loo nto ibekho kunene. Kuthe ke ngenxa yobunje baba bantu, akwaze kubekho ntetho ngabo, njengale ndibona kuyo namhla.

Enye into edla ngokubakho kwaba bantu kukuvisisana okugqithileyo; into kanjalo leyo edla ngokutsho kungangeni noyise, nomthetho, phakathi kwawo. Yaza loo nto kanjalo yenze ukuba kungabikho mntu ukhathalele ukungena phakathi kwento yamawele, kuba angumntu omnye.

Nina ke namhla nindibizele ukuza kunamulula into yabantu abalolo hlobo; nithi, ingaba amanyange anolwazi wona olugqithileyo kolwenu ngobuwele. UNkosiyamntu liwele kuyise, liwele elincinane; ubukhulu bafunyanwa nguye, wabuthatha ehleli umkhuluwa wakhe, uLiwana, kuba wabanana ngecongwane. Athi wona amanyange makabuthabathe, ubananise kade; aye ke nawo ezekela kwezingaphambili iindawo.

(This type of twins are brilliant people from the time they were born. They are sharp-minded than any other average children. In fact, it does happen that a twin can tell about an event that is yet to happen and, indeed, such a thing would happen. Since twins were known, there had never been a conclusive pronouncement about a dispute involving them, just like in this matter.

The other most common thing with twins is a close relationship and intense co-operation such that even a father or law cannot intervene. And, that has caused a general disinterest in meddling with their affairs because they are basically one, they speak in one voice.

Now, you have invited me to help solve a matter of that kind of twins. You are asking if the elderly have any related experience. Nkosiyamntu was a twin, a younger twin. He became the heir although his elder twin brother, Liwani, was still alive. The elderly were agreed that he could take over as he had shown wisdom. In deciding that way they referred to earlier cases.)

After laying his background, Khulile released his opinion:

Ndibeka eli ke, zinkosi zam, ndipheze. Inkulu le inikelwa ukuba iphathe umzi nje, kungenxa yokuba yona inamava okuvela tanci kunolunye usapho lwakowayo. Inabantu bakowayo ebaziyo kunabo; ineengcombolo ezivileyo, ezingaviwanga ngabanye. Obewele ubukhulu bufika bubephi na kunelinye, bevele ngamininye

nje? Asizizenzo na into eyenza ubudala, kwanjengokuba nenkulu, ethe qelele kwabanye, iyahlukana nobukhulu bayo xa ifike yangumntwana ngezenzo? Ndishiya mfungu mfungu njalo ke, zinkosi zam, ukuze nizifunele ngokwenu apho, eyona nto nifuna yona.

(This is my word, my Lords, to round up. A first born becomes an heir because it is believed that he has more experiences since he is older. He knows family members better than other younger siblings; there are family affairs he knows about that are unknown to others. At what stage can we determine a deserving heir in the case of twins since they were born on the same day? Is it not deeds that maketh a man since even a first born, who is distant from others by age, can lose his position if he behaves like an immature kid? I leave it to you, my Lords that you may search for yourselves the final resolution.)

Khulile had listened to the case for two days. He had been invited because he was a carrier of records, as it was believed that a similar case may have occurred before. Most importantly for this study on humanism is the humility in Khulile's language even when he knew that the whole court relied solely on him. In the end, after citing why this was not a common case, that it was very rare that twins got to fight over inheritance, he recalled a similar matter of a son of another Chief. But, without imposing himself, he left the matter to the court to conclude.

Mqhayi presents the quality of the African mind, how it conducts itself when asked to adjudicate. Experts as we know them believe they know much more than anyone else on questions of their specialist fields. Yet, as Khulile offered what he knew, there was no tinge of monopoly over knowledge. He spoke with an open mind and a calm voice.

Mqhayi was well-rooted in his culture and ways of his people as Gerard (1971:53) writes, "Although he (Mqhayi) belonged to a family of Christian standing, he entered the circumcision school, contrary to the prescriptions of the missionaries." Circumcision is a custom that is central in the life of Xhosa people. The attempt by Christian missionaries to uproot circumcision was doomed to fail. And, the ignorance by the western historians towards its sanctity within African families, especially Xhosa people, as well as their attempt to suggest that *ulwaluko* (circumcision) could have been questioned by African Christian families, still does not hold water.

From the beginning, in African communities boys of the same age who grow together, play together, swim, hunt and do all sorts of things together, when they reach the stage of being circumcised, they undergo the custom together. Others who are younger become their assistants (*amanqalathi*) who help with all chores around the lodge, receive and send messages between *abakhwetha* (initiates) and the families and community, fetch food and gifts from family and friends in the community. In the process the younger boys learn the ways they will go through when they reach that stage.

Among the parents it is common knowledge that at a given stage, a particular boy would be ready to go to circumcision school. More often an ox would be reserved early in its growth for the ceremony. It will be fed and be exempted from hard labour such as pulling a plough during planting season or pulling *inqwelo* (wagon) for transportation. Two or three years before *ulwaluko* (season for circumcision), the whole community would gear itself for the generational event. Beyond the circumcision school, into manhood, men would hold positions in terms of their age, and that age would be calculated and categorized in terms of their year of circumcision.

There was a time when it was common to undergo initiation at the same time as the son of the royal house. Soga (1931:249) writes that he, “was circumcised at the same time as Chief Gwebinkumbi”:

Usually a number of boys varying in age from about seventeen to twenty-one or so, have a day appointed for them by their relatives when they must undergo the rite of circumcision. If possible the time chosen must coincide with that in which the young heir to a chieftainship is to be circumcised. All who undergo the rite with him are regarded as of an age with him, irrespective of the fact that there may be the difference of a few years in their actual ages.

But, Mtuze was alone in his lodge on that farm of Kossie Opperman (Mtuze, 2007:42)

Initiation into manhood is a must for every black boy. You cannot escape it. When the time came, I had to undergo the custom myself. Unlike the current practice in town and in the rural villages, I was alone in my lodge for the duration of the initiation. My older brothers acted as my guardians, and my younger brothers brought me food and other necessities from home.

In his autobiography Mtuze (2007:42) does not only relate his history during this period of his circumcision, he speaks out to readers on things that made circumcision safe in his time:

In those days, the great fear of amputation or death that accompanies circumcision was not even dreamed of. You went to the circumcision school as a matter of routine without thinking for a moment about death or amputation... my surgeon, Mr Puwani, was quite aged, having circumcised two of my three older brothers, John and Phumelele, long before me, he did the task very well.

Writing an introduction in his drama book dedicated to circumcision, *Umdlanga* (The Circumcision Spear), Mtuze (2011:iii) wrote:

... umdlanga, isikhali esixatyisiweyo nesihlonitshwe kunene kwaXhosa kuba kungolo dini ukuzalwa kobudoda. Nize niwuphathe ngobunono, xa ungasebenzi uhlale kwikhohlombe lawo ukuze ungabinomhlwa ... Ndisisicaka somzi kaNtu. P.T.M.

(...circumcision spear is an honoured and respected instrument by Xhosa people, because it gives birth to men. Preserve this instrument with care. When not in use, store it in its place to avoid rust ... I am the nation's servant. P.T.M)

On the completion of the term of initiation, writes Soga (1931:248) “their relationship to the spirits of their ancestors is emphasized to them in a valedictory address, by one appointed for this duty.” But, with Mtuze (2007:43) there were more people addressing him but an impression was made by his brother, David:

David stood up and, with tears in his eyes, he said, cryptically, “I hope that circumcision will not make you a boy now, because you proved in Port Elizabeth and throughout your earlier life, that you were a man.”

As men grow the number of years since circumcision (*izilimela*) are very important in their affairs, including the fact of being married. So, the position of circumcision in the life of Xhosa people is unquestionable. Mqhayi writes further on this (in Gerard, 1971:53) that, “I knew ... that the missionaries were violently opposed to circumcision, but I did not hesitate for a minute: I would rather be expelled from school than give up the prospect of becoming a man.” Mqhayi took this strong position knowing its consequences, but he was not punished. He was allowed to return to Lovedale. Like

Mtuze later, Mqhayi wrote *Ulwaluko*, a discussion paper on circumcision which “was considered inappropriate (for publishing) although it dealt with one of the fundamentals of Xhosa culture ... Xhosa literature was hardly free of missionary constraints,” (Killam & Rowe, 2000:308).

What Mqhayi may have had in his mind when he wrote *Ulwaluko* could have been what John Henderson wrote in the preface of his book *The South Eastern Bantu* (1930):

The primary objective of this book was to place in the hands of the rising generation of the Bantu something of the history of their people, in the hope that it might help them to a clearer perspection of who and what they are.

“Circumcision is one of the conflict areas,” writes Mtuze (2008:118), between Africans and European Christian missionaries:

... the church used to regard this practice as pagan and unacceptable for people who regard themselves as Christians. The missionaries and the Anglican Church in particular failed to realize the legal function of circumcision which Ngxamngxa (1967:193) defines as follows:

“The legal significance of circumcision is pronounced. Through it the individual concerned abandons his status as child and with it the obligations and rights in the family of orientation associated with childhood. He assumes the status of an adult with a cluster of new rights and duties. These put him into widening social relationships as exemplified in his duties towards and claims from the tribal authorities and in the power he now has of setting up his own family of procreation. By such definition of the individual’s rights and duties initiation fulfils the fourth of the functions of law as defined by Hoebel, viz.: ‘to redefine relations between individuals and groups as the conditions of life change.’

Ngxamngxa’s definition of circumcision encapsulates the total significance of the custom in amaXhosa society. It bestows rights, privileges and obligations on the one concerned. Because amaXhosa society is patriarchal in nature, there are set functions that only circumcised men can, and must, perform. Uncircumcised males cannot deliberate over community matters, family disputes and other community affairs. They cannot marry or raise a family as no woman would marry an uncircumcised male among the amaXhosa.

Mtuze (2008:121) further cites Calata, “tackling of some of the most sensitive issues about African culture was remarkable. One of these was circumcision. He (in Wallis

ibid.: 38) decries the fact that the early missionaries regarded this practice as a hindrance to Christianity as it was pagan.”

Writing about his autobiography, *UMqhayi waseNtab’ozuko*, Shepherd (1964:111) observes that Mqhayi traces his history from his famed ancestors, his intellectual and spiritual growth portraying clear images of the life of African people). Mqhayi writes (in Shepherd 2011:112):

“Ndiyambulela ubawo ngokundithumela kuCentane, kuba kuko okwandivula amehlo ngobomi bobuzwe bakowethu.”

(“I am grateful to my father for sending me to Centane, because that was where my eyes were opened about the life of my nation.”)

Shepherd (1964:111) admits that, “Bambalwa abantu abakhe baboniswa intlonipho engaka kuma-Afrika njengoko enjiwe njalo uS.E.K. Mqhayi, owayesakubizwa ngabentetho yesiXhosa ngokuba “yiMbongi yeSizwe Jikelele” (There are very few people among Africans who were honoured in the way it was done to Mqhayi, who was known among Xhosa speakers as “The Poet of the Nation.”)

Initially, Mqhayi was acknowledged as “*iMbongi yakwa Gomo*” (The Poet of Gomo) when he was contributing articles for *Izwi laBantu*. When he was honoured with this title, “*iMbongi yeSizwe Jikelele*,” (Poet of the Nation) all the Africans who speak isiXhosa, whose lives were reflected in the works of the man, and who believed that the man represented the African personality in totality, they stood behind the decision and upheld the recognition for many years of his life and beyond due to his venturing into writing. All other appointments such as becoming a member of the Xhosa Bible Revision Board in 1905, are confirming what his people had long acknowledged; a recognition that came from the very source of life and work of the man.

Mqhayi died on 29 July 1945. Before his death, he had built his home on the Hill of Tilana, between King William’s Town and East London. He named his home *Ntab’ozuko* (Mountain of Grace).

Whereas literature has always been the carrier of the humanism of African people, modern African political thought has proved to be a critical area of African humanist manifestation. Pan Africanism and Black Consciousness are the main African-orientated political outlooks that have emerged, at their respective periods, and brought forward the most modernized humanism ever to come from the African world. These philosophical and ideological strands - while they overlap so much in their ideological emphasis - have all combined and produced an impressive literary output in many languages.

Since Pan Africanism is rooted in the African experience, it is African humanist in character. Pan Africanism accepts the African past and, therefore, derives from the culture and humanism of African people.

2.7 Pan Africanist Sentiment in isiXhosa Writing

Pan Africanism is a political orientation and an expression of a connection with Africa. Its space is in the African intellectual arena where political questions confronting African people are tackled. Pan Africanism galvanizes for an Africanist worldview and solution to African problems. It makes emphasis on how Africans see themselves and their destiny. Invariably, Pan Africanism is bound to invoke African humanism in the reflection of African experiences.

Two major changes that were brought on the condition of Africa and her peoples were slavery and colonialism. From the time that Africans were captured as slaves and dispossessed of their lands, eminent African thinkers, writers, poets and artists had always sought to look into the destiny of the slave community and the captured continent. What came under their examination was the question of the African human condition as well as the future of Africa.

The first signs of Pan Africanist sentiment in isiXhosa writing came through, amongst others, a Xhosa writer William Gqoba. Gqoba was born in 1840 at Gaga village near Alice, in the Eastern Cape and had attended the first Christian school that was built in the

first Christian mission station in the Eastern Cape, Tyhume Mission Station. In 1853 he entered Lovedale at 13 years of age.

Gqoba's writing represents a turning point in isiXhosa writing. The first encounter between Xhosa people and Europeans was one important historical event that Gqoba wrote (in Bennie, 2011:74):

Athi amaxhego awavela eMbo, kuthe kusemiwe, esabusa amakhosi ngamakhosi, kwafika abantu ababini abasimanga, ababala limhlophe, banwele zinde, bambethe kwa-iingubo ezinde, behamba nenjana eyingqe. Aba bantu babethetha ngentetho engaziwayo, engaviwa mntu, bemana bethetha bekhangela entweni enamabala amnyama ntwana bathi xa bakhove ukuthetha nayo, bayisonge ibe ngumqulu, bayifake engxoweni. Le nto yile namhlanje kuthiwa yincwadi. Kuthiwa babemana bethetha besalatha phezulu, kwaqondeka ukuba bathetha ngoDalubomi uMvelinqangi, owayesaziwa Kunene zizizwe kwangaloo maxesha.

(According to the old men who came from eMbo, when the fighting had paused, there emerged two people who were mysterious, whose colour was white, whose hair was long and curly, who wore long robes and were in company of a small dog. These people spoke an unknown language, which no one understood. They would speak while looking at something coloured in black. And when they were done in talking to this black thing, they would fold it and place it in a bag. This black thing is now called a bible. It is said they would preach and point in the sky, making clear that they were referring to the Creator whom all nations were very much aware of by then.)

Gqoba wrote the *Great Discussion between the Christian and the Pagan*, and the *Discussion on Education* that prompted Gerard (1971:37) to comment that Gqoba's poems were, "the first imaginative treatment of two themes which were to remain central in African thought: Christianity and education. Their ... tone indicates that the growing impact of European power was being felt, criticized, and resisted, not only in terms of material interests and physical fighting for survival but also in terms of its ethical relevance." Much of Gqoba's work is now captured in Opland and Maseko (2015).

The next writer was J.J.R. Jolobe with his *Poems of an African* (Lovedale, 1946) and a Pan Africanist piece entitled "*To The Fallen*" in honor of the African soldiers who died in the World War 1:

*We look for spoil, for true reward from home,
 From those defended with such cost of life;
 The smooth fat cow - Impartiality,
 The ox – Full-opportunity-for-growth.
 From tree of life we long for leaf to chew
 That we may live like races of the world.
 When once a lad is asked to arm for war,
 That hour he wins the standing of a man.
 Consideration, honour, all are his
 In days of peace when men assess the past.*

Jolobe was demanding “true reward” for a life martyred in foreign lands. He was a son of a church minister and he had attended the St Matthews mission school. Jolobe’s poem falls in the same category as Mqhayi’s *Ukutshona kukaMendi*, also an African cry (Bennie, 2011:155):

*Mhla nashiy’ ikhaya sithethile nani,
 Mhla nashiy’ iintsapho salathile kuni,
 Mhla sabamb’ izandla, mhla kwaman’amehlo,
 Mhla balil’ oonyoko, bangqukrulek’ ooyihlo;
 Mhla nazishiy’ ezi ntaba zakowenu,
 Asitshongo na kuni, midak’ akowethu,
 Ukuthi, “Kwelo zwe nilidini lethu!”?
 Ngesibinge ngantoni na kade?
 Idini lomzi liyintoni nakade?
 Asingomathol’ amaduna omzi na?
 Asizizithandwa zesizwe kade na?*

(The day you left home, we had spoken to you,
 The day you left your families, we had pointed on you,
 The day we held hands, our eyes met,
 The day your mothers cried, you Fathers groveled
 The day you left the mountains of your home,
 We did not mention to you, fellow blacks,
 That, “In that country you are our sacrifice”,
 What is a national sacrifice?
 Is it not the males of the household?
 Is it not the lovers of the nation?)

Another Pan Africanist, Tshaka, who writes *IAfrika* (in Mona, 2015:164) is quoted below:

*Maye Bawo, singathini na ngayo!
Afrika, lizwe lokuzalwa kwethu.
Masithini nokuvelana nawe?
Afrika! Awu, Afrika, Afrika!!*

*Ikamva lakho sisithokothoko senkungu,
Ngathi ludano, ziinyembezi, ngamagazi.
Inqatha kaloku yimbambano nombuzo;
Afrika! Awu Afrika, Afrika!!
Nants' indlu yentak' itsityelwa
Iyavungam' ikati phezu kwayo.
Nazo k' ezo ntwana zayo zothukile.
Afrika, Awu, Afrika, Afrika!!*

(Oh Father, what can we say about her!
Africa, land of our birth
How can we express sympathy with you?
Africa, Oh, Africa, Africa!!

Your future is a very dark mist,
It looks like disappointment, tears and blood,
Wealth means contention and quarrelling
Africa, Oh, Africa, Africa!!
Here is the nest being attacked,
The cat snarls above it
There sit the chickens startled,
Africa, Oh, Africa, Africa!!)

Mona (2015:164) remarks that Tshaka's poem "is a clear attempt to disseminate the Africanist philosophy". Of course, *Ndingumntwana waseAfrika* (I am a Child of Africa) a poem written by Goodwell Mama, expresses similar sentiment (Mona, 2015:153):

*Ndingumntwana waseAfrika,
Andilulo undwendwe;
Ndizalelwe eAfrika
Ndiya zidla ngayo
Kuba lilizwe loobawo.*

(I am an African child
I am not a sojourner,
I was born in Africa
And am proud of Africa
For it is the land of my forbears.)

A Xhosa literary critic, Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, was the most prominent Pan Africanist and leader of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and, in fact, its founder. Sobukwe's interest and views in literature are not widely known. At the time when he was at Witswatersrand University, he published book reviews. In an extract from a review on *Umvuzo wesono* (Lovedale Press, 1954) (*The Wages of Sin*) by E.S.M. Dlova (in Gerard, 1971:96) Sobukwe wrote:

There is next to no interplay of character. The hero is thoroughly noble and even his short-temperdness is presented as "righteous indignation," while the villain is thoroughly bad, with a shady past and a gloomy future ... the theme of good versus evil, with good reserved for the christenised and evil for the heathen, is not realistic ... However, the book abounds in true Xhosa humour and wit with the Christians hard put to explain the queer ways of their God.

The writer correctly exposes the tribal antagonisms between "Fingo" and Xhosa, and Hlubi and Xhosa ... But his treatment of this subject lacks balance. In the first place, he makes a sweeping condemnation of both the Hlubi and the so-called Fingoes, who, evidently, are in his bad books. The Xhosa, on the other hand, are not once censured.

On *Buzani kubawo* (Cape Town, 1958) (*Ask My Father*) by Witness.K. Tamsanqa, Sobukwe wrote the following (in Gerard, 1971:97):

In the preface, the playwright ... pleads that since drama is still a comparatively unexplored field in Xhosa literature, his readers should adopt a tolerant attitude towards his play. And indeed such a plea is necessary, for in spite of the dramatic potentialities of the plot, which gives scope for the creation of a great play based on the age-old conflict between the old and the new, between domineering parent and rebellious child, the writer's ignorance of stage-technique makes of the work a dramatic novel rather than a play ... The chief character, Gugulethu, is very poorly drawn. He is extremely unpredictable, not because of his character as such, but because the writer makes him so. The result is that his "madness," for instance, is unconvincing, because we do not see the reason why he should go mad.

There is no element of greatness in him and, therefore, there is no element of tragedy in his fall ... The influence of the Elizabethan dramatists, notably Shakespeare, with his battle scenes and wedding scenes, armies and horses, as well as soliloquies and asides, is apparent. So also is the influence of the cinema screen, where scenes change rapidly. What the writer has over-looked, however, is that Shakespeare's techniques and dramatic devices were always designed to

meet theatre and stage conditions and the limitations imposed thereby. Further, the writer seems to be unaware that the cinemascreen is a different medium from the stage.

When Sobukwe was banned and was not allowed to practice politically, a new breed of activists came to the fore. Amongst these were writers and poets who were inspired by Black Consciousness.

2.8 Black Consciousness Sentiment

Black Consciousness, in a profound manner, can be regarded as the cultivator of African humanism. Black Consciousness retrieved African humanism from the rear of the African mind, the deep end of her subconscious. It built and situated its primacy in the very area where African humanism resided, the African mind. Its founders and adherents knew and understood the womb nature of an African mind that it can protect, preserve and create development.

Although their major concern was the tyranny in the political environment of the time, it should be noted that entering and occupying mind space derives from African humanism. The young black students of the 1960s and 1970s in the few universities that admitted Africans in South Africa of the time, founded this political and cultural movement. They built a network of student, youth, adult and inter-generational institutions as a machinery to drive that movement of African renewal.

They launched dialogues, debates and publications that created an atmosphere of learning about the human condition of African people. This was a way of engaging and connecting with the heart and soul of African people, their human nature. When those students began asserting themselves as BLACK before being student, they were breathing life to the link with their communities, and thus beginning a process of cultivating their own humanism.

Mtuze was fairly senior to this group. He had not yet entered university when the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) was at its prime. He came to university later. The link with Black Consciousness was more situational than organizational. What the Black Consciousness people articulated was what Mtuze had to deal with in practical life. The Movement's famed slogan, "Black Man, You Are On Your Own" was felt by Mtuze too in his individual situation as Tagore (1961: 220) explains that, "Poverty brings us into complete touch with life and the world."

Before venturing out in the open political terrain, pioneers of Black Consciousness understood the violence that silenced the African voice in the banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in the early 1960s. They had discussed much deeper the intimidating mentality of the powers that be at the time, the mass arrests of the political leaders in the 1960s and the forced exiling of many African leaders and activists. Black Consciousness reasoned that the African mind, when accessed to its inherent resources such as its humanism, is capable of surviving violence and control.

Therefore, the mind space was considered as a very crucial site by the Black Consciousness proponents. In order to effectively prosecute the ideals of liberation struggle, it was necessary to re-build the psyche of the African people. In that way it would be very difficult for the suppressive system of apartheid to be able to take over and control the liberation project if it was invested in the African mind. Whereas it is possible to intimidate the minds of those you rule, it is not possible to erase their memories. On behalf of Africa, Black Consciousness reclaimed the African mind. For many Africans it became easy and natural to associate with the movement.

Bokwe Mafuna was not a university student in the 1960s when he joined the South African Students Organisation (Saso). He was working for a Johannesburg based newspaper, the Rand Daily Mail. In Saso, Mafuna (in Mafrika, 2010:72) saw and heard what he had known all his life:

Black Consciousness came with a concept of the liberation of the mind. People like us then easily moved in. It was a natural way of developing. I joined Saso on the advice of Harry Nengwekhulu. He said I must register with the University of South Africa (Unisa). I registered for a law degree which I had no intention of studying or doing anything about.

Steve Biko, the leader and founder of Black Consciousness, through his writings and actions created the most prominent presence of African Humanism within the ideology of Black Consciousness. Biko (1978:101), citing the basic document *Saso Policy Manifesto*, he wrote that “Black Consciousness is an attitude of mind and a way of life.” Biko (1978:102) understood that an approach that made its mark in the mind would survive any foreseeable assault just as African humanism has proved.

If one is free at heart, no man made chains can bind one to servitude, but if one’s mind is so manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is a liability to the white man, then there will be nothing the oppressed can do to scare his powerful masters.

Biko’s strong African humanism came out when he defined the society he knew and sought to revive, the African society. He (in Biko, 1978:45) wrote in the Black Consciousness language of his time, that, “One of the most fundamental aspects of our culture is the importance we attach to Man.” In Biko’s (1978:106) words the African society:

...is a true man-centred society whose sacred tradition is that of sharing. We must reject, as we have been doing, the individualistic cold approach to life that is a cornerstone of the Anglo-Boer culture. We must seek to restore to the black man the great importance we used to give to human relations, the high regard for people and their property and for life in general.

Biko’s (1978:31) major priority can be seen in the attention that he gave to the African personality when he writes that:

The black man has become a shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing a yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity.

The first step, as Biko (1978:32) suggested, was to “make the black man to come to himself”:

Black Consciousness has to be directed to the *African* [my emphasis] past, to seek to rewrite the history of the black man and to produce in it the heroes who form the core of the African background.

Biko was once a child, an African child, who understood the importance of respect for the elderly. He (in Biko 1978:104) writes that, “In African society it is a cardinal sin for a child to lose respect for his parent.”

Stressing the importance of cohesion in society, Biko (1978:32) writes that:

The oneness of community ... is at the heart of our culture. The easiness with which Africans communicate with each other is not forced by authority but is inherent in the make-up of African people.

Further on, Biko (1978:49) makes a point about ancestors, revealing in the process the depth of his roots in African humanism:

We had our own community of saints. We believed ... that all people who died had a special place next to God. We felt that a communication with God, could only be through these people We thanked God through our ancestors before we drank beer, married, worked etc ... we believed that God was always in communication with us and therefore merited attention everywhere and anywhere *and anytime* [my emphasis].

Drawing from the wisdom of African religion, Biko (1978:103) writes that:

There was no hell in our religion. We believed in the inherent goodness of man – hence we took it for granted that all people at death joined the community of saints and therefore merited our respect.

On two occasions Biko had stressed that our troubled world needs a dose of African humanism. He (in Biko 1978:51) pointed out that:

The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the great gift still has to be from Africa – giving the world a more human face.

On another occasion Biko (1978:108) writes to his comrades, urging them to march forward and humanize the world:

We have set out on a quest for true humanity, and somewhere on the distant horizon we can see the glittering prize. Let us march forth with courage and determination, drawing strength from our common plight and our brotherhood. In time we shall be in a position to bestow upon South Africa the greatest gift possible – a more human face.

What Tagore (1961:82) once observed applies to Biko as well that, “All great movements are related to some great idea?” Biko believed that Black Consciousness did not begin with him and his political movement. Black Consciousness was already in existence in the 1950s. Biko (1978:72) writes:

... there was emerging in South Africa a group of angry young black men who were beginning to ‘grasp the notion of peculiar uniqueness’ and who were eager to define who they were and what ... These young men were questioning a number of things, among which was the ‘go slow’ attitude adopted by the leadership, and the ease with which the leadership accepted coalitions with organizations other than those run by blacks. The ‘Peoples Charter’ adopted in Kliptown in 1955 was evidence of this. In a sense one can say that these were the first real signs that the blacks in South Africa were beginning to realize the need to go it alone and to evolve a philosophy based on, and directed by, blacks. In other words Black Consciousness was slowly manifesting itself.

In the passage above Biko refers to the Pan Africanist sentiment within the ANC Youth League of the 1950s, a sentiment that led to the formation of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in 1959. If Black Consciousness was visible within the growing Pan Africanist sentiment in South Africa, then it is fair to conclude that Pan Africanism and Black Consciousness are the modern cultivators of African humanism. In the first place, they assumed their form of operation as attitudes of the mind, as consciousnesses in the same manner as African humanism. The emphasis was that one must embrace the idea of Africanness so that one can fully understand and comprehend the insight and be capable of putting into practice the African ideals.

It must also be stated that, on a much more practical level, Biko led the design and implementation of community projects that were based in the villages of the Eastern Cape. He built from the ground, a state of the art health facility with expertly trained personnel in Zinyoka village outside King William's Town. The Zanempilo clinic, as the centre was called, was the place to go to. No sooner after opening its doors was the attention of urban Africans turned to their roots, in the villages. Women who were professional teachers and nurses chose Zanempilo clinic for their anti-natal needs and for the delivery of babies.

In addition to Zanempilo clinic there was also a shoe-making factory that was opened in another village, Njwaxa near Alice, also in the Eastern Cape. So, what Zanempilo and Njwaxa did was to create an urban to rural movement of people because people in the urban areas started to take interest in the people in villages. Also, many urbanites started to learn from the rural people. This was a huge practical step of reconnecting African people with themselves and their roots.

When Africans such as du Bois and Biko engaged other Africans in serious study of their situation and experience, to reflect on their past and rely on African accounts and records and on experiences and memory, that was the revival process. In some way through their activities they positioned the voice of the African elderly as, once again, the vital source.

So, at the centre of du Bois' Pan Africanism and Biko's Black Consciousness, is the emphasis on the re-making of the African. All the efforts of these men and many more women who may have not been prominently mentioned in history; were stressing the need for a serious re-look at Africa's surrounding, at a self-education process and at an understanding of the African community, its nature, needs and its life direction.

This prerequisite should lead each and every African to be able to determine one's particular role in the collective struggles for the re-emergence of Africa and her peoples. In this whole exercise humankind is the subject as well as the object of the entire scheme. In other words, humanism is at the centre, it holds the key to the liberation of the creative

energies. In this way it is possible to realize what Lamont (1949:11) termed as “a vision of the magnificent possibilities of humanity as a whole.”

Biko’s Black Consciousness idea brought forth great literary talent in writers such as Wally Mongane Serote, Miriam Tlali, Njabulo Ndebele, Mafika Gwala, Sipho Sepamla and many others. Before this generation, Jordan had written a very Black Consciousness poem *Ubumnyama buhle* (Black is Beautiful) as contained in Mona (2015:224):

*Ndimnyama, ndimnyama ndinje ndaya ndimhle ngaphezulu,
Ubuhle yinyaniso, undileko lokuziphatha, wokuhloniph’ abantu.
Andicatshulwanga mntwini, ngoko ndineemfanelo zikawonke-wonke.*

Andinakhaya limbi lakubalekela ngaphandle kweli lam lemvelo.

(I am black and black as I am, exceptionally beautiful
Beauty is truth, self-respect and respect for other people
I am not a limb dismembered from somebody else
I therefore deserve to enjoy like everybody else all human rights

I have no other home to escape to except my natural habitat)

Three outstanding men had represented African humanism in the most phenomenal way in the recent history of South Africa. They are Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, Steve Bantu Biko and Nelson Rholihlahla Mandela.

2.9 Sobukwe-Biko-Mandela

People must create out of themselves symbols of their inspiration. Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, Steve Bantu Biko and Nelson Rholihlahla Mandela are best examples for South Africa. They have lived among their people. They have committed all their adult lives to their people.

There are strong connections among these three men. Sobukwe and Biko had had several meetings and fruitful discussions together. Biko would visit Sobukwe when he was banned in Kimberly, and Sobukwe would visit Biko secretly. In these interactions Sobukwe appreciated Biko.

Sobukwe and Mandela had emerged around the same period in the history of the South African struggle for liberation. Both were students at the University of Fort Hare with Sobukwe being a President of the Students Representative Council (SRC). Both were members of the African National Congress Youth League until Sobukwe led a breakaway in 1959. Both were incarcerated on Robben Island Prison for varying periods and in varying sections of the prison.

Mandela was not able to meet Biko. He managed to meet colleagues of Biko who had founded the Black Consciousness Movement with Biko. Through contact with these colleagues of Biko, since they shared the same prison block with Mandela and the rest of the Rivonia Trialists, an impression was made about the Black Consciousness Movement, its political positions, and about its leader, Biko. By the time Mandela was released and inaugurated as the first President of the democratic South Africa, Mandela agreed to commit the country to officially recognize Biko's contribution to the country's freedom. He did so after he was approached by Donald Woods who raised the matter.

An official ceremony to mark the 20th anniversary of the death in detention was led by Mandela as the President of the country on the 12th September 1997. During the ceremony a graveyard where Biko's remains rest, was declared a national monument. It was named the Steve Biko Garden of Remembrance. Also, Biko's home where he operated when he was banned and restricted was declared a national monument. It is now called the Biko House.

It stands to reason, therefore, that these three political figure-heads of Sobukwe-Biko-Mandela, are an important trio in the recent history preceeding the democratic dispensation. Their combined effort and influence is monumental in the South African political narrative. All three of them, in their time on earth, had represented heightened social consciousness and political awareness that South Africa had never seen before. All three of them had energized the South African population with their imagination and action. Through them South Africans could recover themselves and could view their

world anew. All three of them managed to set, for South Africa, Africa and the world, a humanistic standard.

The choice of Sobukwe-Biko-Mandela is relevant for this study because of their African nationalism. All three had risen from the humble beginnings of homes where isiXhosa was the language, and Xhosa was the culture and the law. Added to this cultural connection of these three eminent men, is the ability to transcend the ethnic limitations and the fact that, all three had placed their total committed lives to the service of the affairs of African people and the restoration of their dignity. Defining a true nationalist Mphahlele (2004:50) writes:

A true nationalist has faith in the traditional spiritual values of his people without adopting an air of superiority about these values; he has faith in the cultural and political destiny of his people, but he insists on his people's self-determination and will to direct and control that destiny; he believes that nationalism can only be realized when all the people who share a culture (not tribal custom but the spiritual values of the culture) and share political ideals and aspirations can evolve into a national unit. Ethnic conflicts are thus resolved within an existing nationalism.

Some would like to heighten the different points of political emphasis that the three men made in their political lives. What is very clear about these individual figures is their common goal, the liberation of the African people. Their connection at this point far outweighs the respective political strategies and tactics that they employed in their approaches. More pointedly, it is the African Personality, pushed to the fore by intelligence and boldness on their part that has lifted them as figure-heads of the South African liberation struggle and African Humanism.

It is their genius and their outstanding humility, despite the powerful positions they held in their organizations and in government that made them to stand out. The deep respect for people, a deep yearning for harmony and a strong attachment to righteousness within an African rhythm, have provided African people with the spiritual satisfaction that was always desired. All three combined, have set the bar for many future African leaders, artists and scholars. Indeed, it is not only the fulfillment that Sobukwe-Biko-Mandela

may have felt within themselves with all that they have managed to achieve, it is the fulfillment that Africa feels in them.

The elements that are necessary for effective human living and collective group consciousness had existed before any of the three gentlemen were born. But, because of the significant contributions these men made, their names, the period and the places where they acted their lives, are the important markers of the story of African people. Asante (1988:3) puts it excellently when he writes, “the statement of the position must begin somewhere, in some place with someone.”

The second reason for including the Sobukwe-Biko-Mandela connection is that, consciously or unconsciously, all writers write within political systems and are, therefore, bound to be political in one way or the other. Ngugi wa Thiong’o (2006:195) was asked in an interview in 1983 about writers who claim to be apolitical. His reply was, “There is no writer who is apolitical. The point is: Whose politics is a writer espousing in his works?”

People who are ordinarily judged as having been political in South Africa, are mainly those who had addressed crowds of people, who have made public statements, or were involved in high profile political trials, or may have died in detention or may have served long terms in prison or exile. Their actions could be seen as consciousness raising actions. Mtuzi, on the contrary, can never be found in that line of reasoning. Mtuzi is not famous for making some public political statement, or addressing some rally or any of the actions mentioned above. Mtuzi is a writer who writes in isiXhosa, his mother tongue, an African language that, like Setswana or Sesotho or isiZulu, cannot be compared to English as a political consciousness-raising medium in South Africa. It is not by accident that he has not been in headlines of South African political commentary.

The point that must be made here is that, the real wealth of African people is in their humanism. It is open and freely available. Perhaps that is the reason why it gets exploited by self-centred opportunists. Yet, it is this openness and this freedom that grants it the power to embrace others. The humanism of African people reaches far and wide, and this

is proven by the lives of such individuals as Sobukwe, Biko and Mandela. Mtuze enters the equation fittingly since he too, relies solely on this resource and freely releases its energy through his writings and his Christian missionary work.

His political influence is not as direct as that of Sobukwe, Biko and Mandela. It is humbly captured in the title of his autobiography *An Alternative Struggle*, and rightfully suggests that each and every South African holds some part, crafted in some style, in the national narrative of the South African freedom struggle. Humanism in that case, has also a historical dimension, it is a reflection of history of African people. It is a testimony of the social and spiritual life of Africa. People like Sobukwe, Biko, Mandela and Mtuze and many others that are not mentioned in this study, are critical in the telling of the African tale. They may not constitute the total sum of the humanistic story of South Africa, but they are a desirable element in the re-building of the country and the continent.

Seizing a moment at a graduation ceremony at Rhodes University when former President Mandela was awarded an honorary doctorate, Mtuze (2007:163) rose to praise his brother in the clan of Madiba:

*Kungawe kaloku gxogx' olumadolo lwasebaThenjini kokwethu,
Kungawe kaloku mth' ovelel' iQunu wakrobel' iSiqithi seKapa,
Kungawe Madiba, Dlomo, Sophitsho, Vela behungis' ukuhlala.
Kungawe nyana kaGadla, kaHenry kaMphakanyiswa
waseMvezo.*

*Kungawe mThemb' omkhulu owaziwa zizizwe zonke zehlabathi,
Unyathele eAfrika wayihamba-hamba waxel' ugqoloma efun' isitena.*

(Now is your chance, tall man of my Thembu tribe,
Now is your chance, tall tree that towers above Qunu and Robben Island
Now is your chance Madiba, Dlomo, Sophitsho, Vela as they sit awkwardly,
Now is your chance, son of Gadla Henry Mphakanyiswa of Mvezo,

Now is your chance, you great Thembu who is known internationally,
You who sets foot in Africa and crisscrosses it like a big fairy snake)

Even as it is a praise song for a brother within his clan family, the Thembus, Mtuze does not shy away to mention to Mandela that his government has corrupt elements, elements who have taken hold of the state:

*Oohl' esakhe bade babuy' umv' esithebeni kwangen' oosampuntshuntshu,
Hayi ke bona baxake neejaji abarhwiphilizi babuya ngokusenga.*

(Those who refused to share have finally given way to some figures in society
Who have stunned even judges with their propensity for corruption?)

This alertness of Mtuze (1982:45) when things are not going right, comes more forcefully in his *Isikhalo seAfrika* (Cry for Africa) addressing the loss of respect:

*Zijikile izinti bantwana benkos' entle,
Zijikile izinto bantwana beAfrika.*

*Ingqele ehlotyeni ayizange ithandwe,
Iqabaka nekhephu zizimanga ehlotyeni.*

*Umthetho kamthetho owanikwa amanyange
Yimbeko komnci kude kuy' engwewini.*

(Things have changed children of the beautiful Lord
Things have changed children of Africa.

A cold weather during summer was never favoured
Frost and snow are a miracle in summer.

The original law that was given to veterans
It is respect to the young until the oldest.

Demonstrating his Pan Africanist and Black Consciousness sentiment, Mtuze (1982:22) penned *Izandla zama-Afrika* (The Hands of Africans):

*Ama-Afrik' akoweth' azandla zihle,
Ama-Afrik' akoweth' azandla zinomkhitha.
Ama-Afrik' okwenene azandla zimnyama
Ezitsho eli lizwe langumyezo we-Eden.*

*Zimnyama ngebala zimhlophe qhwa ngezenzo.
Bezisakuba njalo izandla zoobawo noomakhulu
Phambi kokuba zidyoywe zibe ngongo
Ezoonyana babo ligazi lamawabo engenatyala.*

(Our Africans whose hands are beautiful
Our Africans whose hands are ...
That made this country into a Garden of Eden

They are black in colour, pure in their doing
Those were the hands of our grandmothers and grandfathers
Before they were made dirty
Those of their sons are bleeding...)

2.10 Summary

The chapter has traced the origins of humanism in the Renaissance period, the contribution of the key figures of this period who were situated in the universities of Rome and Greece. The chapter also discussed Ubuntu and the fundamental pillars of African humanism and its stubborn presence in the modern African political thought systems of Pan Africanism and Black Consciousness.

The following chapter delves deeper into the biography of Mtuze, into a life that created a writer of reputation as well as the essence of humanism in Mtuze's life story.

Chapter Three

A Biographical Overview of Peter Tshobiso Mtuze

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we discussed the humanism of African people. We discussed the two levels wherein humanism operates, that is, as consciousness and as a system of society. It is essential at this stage to explore the life of Mtuze in search of the influences of his society on his consciousness. The chapter will deal with Mtuze's childhood, influential figures in Mtuze's life such as his family, members of his community and, more specially, Rev James Calata. The chapter will delve into his historical background, its impact as well as the struggles that Mtuze had to wage in his life of writing. A discussion of his political involvement, the connections that were built as a result and how these have evolved over the years will follow.

From an early age, Mtuze experienced the urge to write. He was not motivated by an excess to reading material, or by a parent who understood the importance of reading as could be expected of many who became writers. Mtuze saw and felt the bite of poverty. Life was too hard for his family and there was no relief in sight. At the same time, his parents worked very hard to maintain a large family. This relentless fight against poverty, provided Mtuze with a determination that the situation would change and could be lost from memory. So its existence had to be captured in a story and be presented as lessons of life as Nadine Gordimer (in Mphahlele, 2002:37) explains that a true artist does not go out to look for a theme, the theme finds them. This chapter presents that biographical material in the context of the life of a writer.

3.2 The Making of Mtuze

As a child, Mtuze was born "in the middle of nowhere," (Mtuze, 2007:1). Whenever he stepped out of the family hut and directed his eyes and thoughts over the dry flat lands of

Leeuhoek (Lion's Corner) farm; what came into his eye and mind were neither the images of the kings of the jungle nor their respective queens, princes and princesses. What he saw was hopelessness staring at him unblinkingly, compelling him to vow that one day he would write his life story. Indeed, he wrote his life story in many of his books.

Mtuze grew up after the cut-off year of 1930 when the then South African government had legislated that African families who lived on white farms were, henceforth, classified as labour tenants. This meant that, amongst other things, Africans were not allowed to grow their own food. A white farmer would supply his African labourers with a monthly ration of mealie meal, salt and occasionally some meat in return for the work they did. In Mtuze's situation his mother had to wash, cook and clean for the Wolfaardt family while his father and the older sons worked on the plantation fields of the white family, in order to keep the Mtuze family alive.

In addition to this lot, the Mtuze family had to make do with the ill treatment that was meted out on them by Mr Wolfaardt, his wife and his children. This was not unique with the Mtuze family. It was the case with all other African families living as labour tenants on white farms. Referring to this period, Mtuze (2007:2) writes that at the time of World War II between 1939 and 1945, "... the blacks (were) caught in between, because the losing Boers or Afrikaners as they called themselves, vented their anger on the black labourers," and unleashed all kinds of violence on them. Mtuze (2007:2) remembers that, "Every time the labourers asked for their normal rations, they were angrily told to go and talk to their king, General Smuts."

The white farmer's violence was a first hand experience for Mtuze (2007:7). It happened all round his childhood life:

(One day) my (eldest) brother had probably said something to the farmer, because that evening all hell broke loose on the farm. The farmer and his brother came ... looking for him. They were very angry. They found him in the house and tried as hard as they could to drag him out of the house so that they could deal with him and his silly remarks. He resisted with all his might. I could not help admiring his courage for standing up to those vicious-looking men. I also found it baffling that they were trying to force him out of the house, and not beat him up inside the

house, as I had expected they would. My brother ultimately broke loose and ran for his life; I had never seen him run so fast before. Even now, in his seventies, he still wonders what those two men were going to do to him if he had allowed them to take him.

What they “were going to do to him” is well known in African circles. In his travels around Klerksdorp while documenting the impact of the 1913 Land Act, Sol Plaatje (in Willan, 1996:335) states:

I met a man conveying his son to the doctor and he would not tell how the son came by his wounds. I discovered later that the son had been severely punished (I wonder whether ‘punishment’ is a correct description, seeing that his face was badly mauled) by his master. The parents decided to screen the offender for fear of being turned off his property, in which case they had nowhere to go under the Native Land Act.

Credo Mutwa (1964:xxi) writes that his half brother Emmanuel “died after being whipped by the farmer, my father’s employer” on a farm near Potchefstroom in 1932. Just like all other white farmers in that area, the Wolfaardts owned everything that Mtuze’s eyes could see. They owned the modern brick house that they lived in, the truck, vans, tractors, ploughs; all the milk in the dairy, the vegetables, the fruit in the trees; the cows, goats, sheep and horses. They owned everything yet Mtuze’s family, just like all other African families, owned nothing, and, like all other African families, they lived in the far obscure corner of the farm.

As a child, Mtuze knew very well that the white farmer, in the same manner as all others, controlled everything that happened on the farm. They could hire and fire whoever and whenever. They instructed and Africans had to obey. They were an all-powerful people.

“In the middle of nowhere” and growing onto a journey with no destiny in sight, Mtuze knew one thing without doubt, that he was a child of Africa. He had loving parents and compassionate people around him. These values, these worthy desirables, brought sanity and permeated his young mind and sharpened its observing edges. His poem *Ubuntwana* (Childhood) (Mtuze, 1982:42) speaks to an observing mind:

*Buqal' ebumnyameni
Enzulwini endaweni
Kumfameke namehlo.
Buntshula njengembewu
Isitholan' esingephi
Ubuntwana.*

*Buqala kabuhlungu
Kwindima yobusana,
Bubhek' emadolweni,
Atyhileke amehlo
Bubonakal'ubuze,
Ubuntwana.*

(It starts in the dark
Deep down
Where eyes cannot see.
Germinating like a seed
A seedling
Childhood.

It starts with pain
At the stage of being a baby
To the knees
And the eyes open
And nakedness reveals itself
Childhood.)

Mtuzi could have been the same child defined by Mutwa (1964:xv) who had “an eager expectant face ... as yet oblivious to the pain of life’s bitter scourges ... unmarked by furrows of bitterness, ill-health and anger ... fresh, pure, open face,” because his observation about a white doctor who saved his life are just as pure (Mtuzi, 2007:3):

Once I fell ill as a baby, forcing my mother to knock on the door of her employer, urging him to call the doctor from a town many kilometers away.

“Impossible, no doctor can come so far for a ... child. Take him to town,” was the unsympathetic response.

Colour was the factor. It did not even need to be mentioned. The doctors were all white and the sick or dying child was black. The parents were black.

“No ... can come so far for a ...,” was the hard response. Because my mother knew it, in fact had expected it, she was prepared to demand, “Call the doctor,

because this child will die before I reach town on foot or by any other means of transport; for that matter, the child will die unless you stop talking and take the child and me to town, now.”

The farmer relented and called in the doctor. Dr Harrison, a very kind and popular doctor among the blacks in Middleburg, arrived before sunset and realized as soon as he saw me that I was seriously ill. He did his best, and left saying to my parents that they must look after me. He said that if I survived the attack and grew up to be of school-going age, they should educate me to become a doctor as their expression of gratitude for my survival.

This purity, thought and feeling the pain of others became part of Mtuze’s (2007:4) life from a very early age and was to show itself in various ways:

One day we hunted birds and looted their nests, leaving *umama wentaka* (the mother bird, as we called the female) crying for her children who we had killed on sight, for fun. This used to worry me tremendously, but the other boys just laughed at me, saying I was a weakling because soon after we took the eggs or killed the young birds, their parents forgot them (they said).

It was a compassion that Mtuze was learning from his parents who were not only loving and truthful to themselves and to their children, but they were also a principled pair of people. The incident of Mtuze’s eldest brother and the farmer found a “father (who) would also have nothing to do with people who stormed his hut and attacked his son without having reported the matter to him first.” (Mtuze, 2007:8). His father left that farm there and then.

Social inequalities, unprovoked violence, the sense of being “born in the middle of nowhere,” all this fuelled the yet-to-be cleared discomfort in the young man’s mind. What was clear in all that confusion was a line that cut through the mist, showing that white people were on one side of the equation and black people were on the other side. Whites owned. Blacks did not own. Whites violated blacks. Blacks had to be subservient to whites.

Mtuze was to grow with a clear sense of knowing who was wrong in his immediate world. Even if it may have not yet been clear in a composite way to Mtuze as to what was wrong with society at the time, his young mind knew who was wrong at least. That socio-

political condition granted Mtuze his first definite ideas. This is the genesis of the being in a man who had many more things to learn. Mtuze (2007:1) writes:

I have no idea when I was born; neither do I think my illiterate mother had. That also applies to my father, who was equally unschooled in the art of recording dates.

In the opening paragraphs of his autobiographies *Indlel' Ebhek' Enkundleni* and *An Alternative Struggle* Mtuze demonstrates a great sense of confidence as he declares openly something very crucial about his birth, the state of not knowing a date of birth. Since most of African parents were “unschooled in the art of recording dates,” the daily pressures of having to find and memorise a date for the sake of negotiating a demanding life style, coupled with the stigma that it creates is enormous for young minds, the children of African parents. And, Mtuze makes the statement in direct reference to himself, yet in the process assisting many other Africans who are facing a similar situation. Mtuze (2007:1) writes that:

Many educated colleagues ridicule me for not having an exact date of birth. At first, I took them quite seriously and became really annoyed at their insensitivity. It was no choice of mine that I had no precise date of birth. It was all due to circumstances beyond my parents' and my control. How could I blame them? Instead of blaming my parents, I am in fact very happy that they brought me into this world, with or without a date of birth. I am certainly not the only farm child, or black child for that matter, who has no knowledge of his or her correct date of birth; our number is legion.

In a rather brave manner Mtuze puts to rest a fear that many Africans experience daily in their lives; especially, the insensitivity of other Africans who by sheer luck had parents who understood the western calendar. Perhaps their grandparents or the parents of their grandparents may have been as “unschooled” as the rest of other Africans.

This unapologetic stance on the side of his parents makes Mtuze a mirror of his people, an interpreter of Africa's deep feeling, a representative of her truth. He fights on behalf of Africa. Mtuze (1976:1) takes the fight further:

Uthi wena umntu ongazanga walubeka esikolweni wayenokuyigcina ngentloko njani imihla yokuzalwa ...? Nolu bhaliso lukhoyo kwezi mini lwalungento isiwe so kuyaphi ezifama ngezo mini. Yasitsho soshumi loontombi yakwa Yanta kwaGando eLady Frere, ingazanga yaya kuzintama kubeLungu. Kambe yinkuku yodwa elilisela kuhlokome ilizwe yakubeka.

(For somebody who has never set her foot in a school yard, how do you expect her to keep dates of birth in her head ...? Even the registration of births was not an essential thing in the life of farm workers. She gave birth to the ten of us that girl of Yanta of Gando at Lady Frere, without reporting herself to whites. In fact, it is only a chicken that makes its own sound after birthing.

Mtuze could not start to attend school because his father had to move from one farm to the other in search of jobs. Mutwa's family (1964:xxi) lived on different farms for more than twenty years in the Transvaal. At some stage, as he was growing, Mtuze (2007:8) asked his mother a question:

I can remember our *trek* slowly passing by a building one day where children were playing and enjoying themselves. I asked my mother what they were all doing there, and she said they were at school. I did not know what "school" meant, but I envied the children for their lovely clothes and the happiness they displayed as they played on the school grounds.

Mtuze (2007:9), at age nine, started school on a farm, Katkop, which was owned by Mr Collet:

The school, which I had longed for so much, was there, and to add to my pleasure, there was an additional bonus: there was a church at the school ... The first sign that I had entered a new era in my life was that the teacher, Mr JKN Mbayise, gave me a new name. From that day, my so-called Christian name was Peter.

Later while doing Sub-Standard B, Mtuze and his sister Nokoko went to live in the house of Mr E.B. Notshulwana who was also a teacher. Their family had had to leave Katkop on the shores of *Nxuba* (Fish River). They had moved to Grass Ridge where his father had found a job in the construction of a huge dam.

Mr Notshulwana treated them as his children to an extent that he was prepared to pay for Mtuze's further education on condition that Mtuze paid him back later. Unfortunately,

Mtuze's father would not accept that condition although he appreciated the generosity of Notshulwana.

After their stay at Notshulwana, Mtuze and Nokoko were taken up by Mrs B. Tabata who was their teacher, who brought them to her home in Cradock since they had passed all classes on the farm schools. When Mtuze passed Standard 6 (Grade 8) he was the top student in the whole of the Grahamstown district, a district that had more than four hundred students who sat for exams in 1957. Unfortunately, he was not given the prizes that were due to a top performer. A flimsy reasoning was used to discriminate against Mtuze (2007:19):

First of all, although I came out tops in the circuit, the government bursary, which used to be awarded to students who excelled in the Standard 6 examinations, had been stopped the previous year with the introduction of Bantu Education. Secondly, the Cradock Municipal Council Bursary could not be awarded to both the student who came second, my dear old friend, Wilson Soci, and myself, because we both came from outside the municipal area of Cradock. It was awarded to Nontombi Majola who came third in the circuit.

This was a clear demonstration of discrimination against African children because of where they were born, that is, on white farms. A school in an African township in Cradock had received a government recognition that it had produced top students in the whole of the Grahamstown District. They received the honour and walked about with pride for what they had achieved. Yet, the real achievers, Mtuze and Soci, could not be given what was due to them in terms of educational assistance. Their reason was that these young achievers who had brought recognition to the school, were not born in the township, that is, around or next to the school.

If there was any sense of fairness, the school could have refused the honour of producing top students. They could have stated that these top achievers were not born next to that particular school or, as they put it, in the municipal area of Cradock. Therefore, an achievement caused by them belonged to where they were born. But, the school took the honour, and turned around to say they would not give the students the deserved prizes.

The fault with Mtuze and Soci, one may reason, was that they were African children who had come from the most rural and backward area, on white farms. Later, the study will discuss the systematic rejection practiced by whites on blacks and by blacks on blacks.

Fortunately, the Principal Mr Zambodla was not blind to the need. He took all the books Mtuze would need for the next class, Form 1, on loan. But, in October 1958 things changed. Mr Hlekani who had taken over as the new head of the school demanded the payment of fees. Reverend Calata offered to speak to the members of his choir, the Modernairs, of which Mtuze was a member too. The choir members collected monies amongst themselves and paid for Mtuze's education.

Next, it was Miss M. Joubert who had been approached by Mtuze's teachers and Reverend Calata. She supported Mtuze from the very day she was approached. She supplied him with uniform and food. All that Mtuze could do was to pass his grades. He did so with excellence.

As Mtuze was struggling with education, there was a forceful influence behind his success. It was his family.

3.3 Kusi Mtuze

Mtuze's father, Kusi, was a landless man. He had no fixed place that he could call home. His large family consisted of his widowed mother, his wife and his ten children. Mtuze was the fifth child. At the time when Mtuze was born, being landless and homeless had been upon Kusi's family for a very long time and it was not about to change for a much longer time. Mtuze (2007:2) writes about "... the older four mouths and five others after me to care for," for a father who "had very little choice but to work all day and almost all night long to earn ... to keep us alive."

Kusi was the last child of Ndleleni Mtuze. He was born in Zingquthu village in Lady Frere, in the Transkei area, Eastern Cape. When Ndleleni died he continued to live with

his mother. He married Esther Yanta, the daughter of Gando, also of Zingquthu. His children were Siphetho, Phumelele, Tshaka, Thembeke, Peter, Mcimbi, Mbodamo, Nowhiwhi, Nomsa and Vuyelwa.

Kusi's struggles and heart-felt wishes are reflected in the names that he gave to his children, who were expected to grow and live up to the meanings of their names. The names are a prayer of a parent whose aim was to finally escape the state of poverty and homelessness. Siphetho the first born and Phumelele, the second, when combined would read *isiphetho sokuphumelela* meaning "finally we will succeed." Tshaka the third child is a clear reference to the symbolic heroism as seen in African kings. Mcimbi, the sixth, and Mbodamo, the seventh, reflected the hard times in the history of the family.

In a conversation the researcher had with an elderly neighbour who knew the Biko family, their father, Mr Mzingaye Biko, is said to have been fond of singing praises about the names of his children Bukelwa, Khaya, Bantu and Nobandile, in that order, "*Bukelani iKhaya laBantu aBandileyo* (See a home whose people have expanded).

In *Alitshoni lingaphumi* (Mtuze, 1997:20), the children of Phangindawo are Ndiyafulunga, Lungile, Nontleki, Magqibelo, Qinisekile, Nontandabuzo, Siphelo, Nokamva, Yoli and Qaqambile. His wife would combine all these names into a statement that says, "Ndiyafulunga kuLungile ukuHleka ekuGqibeleni seluQinisekile ungasenamaThandabuzo ngeSiphelo neKamva eliYolileyo neliQaqambileyo" (I vow that it is fine to laugh last when you are certain and have no doubt about the end and the future that is fine and bright).

Writing about the conditions in the make-shift homes built next to the public road where farm labourers who discarded when they were thrown off the white farms, he notes that they had to live (*esikhululweni*). The names of children who were born in those conditions and during those times were (Mtuze, 1997:21) "ooNondlela (born of the road), ooDingani (desperation), ooNontleki (traveler), nooNomashwa (bad luck). And there were nooTyekezwa (left by the wayside) and nooLahliwe (thrown off) too.

Mtuze (2003:24) writes that:

Among the amaXhosa, people are sometimes named after certain events, eg. Nomvula and Mvuleni, female and male respectively, were born on a day or time when there was abundant rainfall. Nomfazwe's birth coincided with war while Nonkwenkwezi was born in 1910 when the historical Haley's Comet was spotted.

At a time when it was impossible for African labourers to save their lean wages, so that they could be able to establish themselves on their own, Kusi took a risky path and established himself as a farm worker who worked on contract. This meant that as a result of his many experiences with working on the farms and with the treatment of white farmers, he took a decision to no longer be tied to one employer. He reinvented himself as a specialist artisan who would avail his skill of fencing and building dams, to any farmer as and when he needed to do so.

As expected, there were always fights over the costing of his labour as white farmers bullied Kusi and decided the rates themselves. But, his situation of being independent was far better than to be chained to one white man. As a result of this move, Kusi would live with his family on the side of the road, sleep under his wagon in bitterly cold weather conditions for many months before finding a contract. He would pray to his God every night and his children would be observing him.

Mtuze was the one child who looked very closely to his father, in other words, who took what he saw and observed into his reflecting mind, and into his writing and shared it with the wider reading public. This was in appreciation of what his father was doing. The shift by his father from the semi-slave conditions to contract labour as it was called piece-jobs, came as a result of a serious assessment of Kusi's state of being and his possible future. It was "the first truth, bitter as it may seem" (Biko 1978:31). Mtuze's father, refused to be "a shadow of man". He opened his eyes and saw the truth in his life.

The act of separating was undertaken once and for all. It was an act that taught Mtuze, in particular, the importance of commitment that informs your actions. Kusi had

contemplated his situation and had agreed to rely on his will to survive. He had overcome the fear of the future. On a three-day trip that he took with his son to sell wood in Middelburg, the young Mtuze (2007:13) was able to pick up some lessons:

The (three) nights we spent under the wagon on the three-day journey to Middelburg taught me many things. I learnt about nature, how to look after the draught animals and about my father himself as he prayed early in the morning under the wagon for our safety, the family at home, people in jail and in hospitals and for peace in the world.

On looking “after the draught animals”, his father’s donkeys, Mtuze wrote an impassioned poem *Isikhalo soondlebens* (The Cry of the Donkeys). Mtuze (1982:30) writes as follows:

*Yini na ilishwa lethu!
Siyini na isono sethu?
Siyabuza siphenduleni!*

Eli lishwa silibhaqile,

*Uphi uThixo woondlebens?
Lo mnqamlez’ usemagxeni
Ngab’ uthetha ntoni na?*

(Why this bad luck!
What have we done,
What is our sin
Please answer us.

We have noted this bad luck,

Where is the God of the donkeys?
This cross over our shoulders
What does it stand for?)

Kusi’s donkeys and their role in the life of his family have entered Mtuze’s consciousness and have created an imagination that had to be expressed in a poem. To Mtuze, the donkeys have “produced a vision, a special harmony of lines, colors and life and movement, and became intimately his own” (Tagore, 1961:261). The donkeys have been specialized. In fact, they belong to a man who is special, whose life and that of his family

depends on the animals. Therefore, the well being of the donkeys is the well being of his family, the poet's family, hence they must be cared for, fed, be given water and be protected from possible harm.

The imagination of the poet detaches the donkeys from all other donkeys. Kusi's donkeys are distinct. The poet has raised the reader's dullness in its association of the sight of donkeys with docility, lowly-judgement and animals that are not-so-clever. A new knowledge and recognition has been portrayed. A rare feeling has been provoked. This whole exercise makes life and the immediate world to have meaning. Behind all this change of what should have been an ordinary sight, is a personality in a poet who imposes a human experience that becomes memorable. In the end, there is a memory of donkeys that occupied an essential position in the lives of a people. Mtuze, as a poet, has employed his poetic acumen in the service of humanizing the world.

Mtuze's father had committed to put to prayers all humanity since his own siblings were dispersed in the country. He did not know where his blood brothers and sisters were. His own mother too, did not know where her other children were. The labour migrant system had scattered them. The dispersion may have separated the family, but the Mtuze identity was still intact. People remained being of Mtuze in all the places where they found themselves. As a result, the following Mtuze family tree could be compiled (Mtuze, 2007:203):

Some descendants of Tyhusha

Tyhusha m. unknown

I. Ngashe m. unknown

A. Matyobeni m. unknown

I. Mtuze m. unknown

a. Njajula (Sneyile) Mtuze m. (1) unknown, m
(1) Melithafa Mtuze

(a) Mbangi Mtuze
(2) Mzolisa Mtuze

(a) Zwelibanzi (Lucas) Mtuze
(b) Mathwasa (Sam) Mtuze
(c) Bangani (Tommy) Mtuze

- (3) Gweva Mtuze
- (4) Mphoselwa Mtuze
- (5) Phephetha Mtuze
- (6) Tshawula Mtuze
 - (a) Thubeni Mtuze

- (7) Mayeza Mtuze
- (8) Mabala Mtuze
 - (a) Mgwebi (Steam) Mtuze
- (9) Makhaleni Mtuze
- (10) Mpumlo Mtuze

b. Ndleleni Mtuze

- (1) Kusi Mtuze b. abt 1904, Lady Frere, Transkei, m abt 1950
Esther Yanta, b abt 1910, Lady Frere, Transkei, d – 2000,
King William's Town
Kusi died – 1978, King William's Town
 - (a) Siphetho Mtuze b. abt 1930
 - (b) Phumelele Mtuze b. abt 1933, Middelburg, Cape
 - (c) Tshaka Mtuze b. abt 1935, Middelburg, Cape
 - (d) Peter Tshobiso Mtuze b. 2 Nov 1941, Middelburg, Cape
 - (e) Mcimbi Mtuze b. – 1943, Middelburg, Cape
 - (f) Mbodamo Mtuze b. – 1947, Middelburg, Cape

- (2) Zonisele Mtuze
 - (a) Noli Mtuze
 - [1] Thembekile Mtuze
- (3) Folman Mtuze
- (4) Mzandisi Mtuze
- (5) Zuzani Mtuze

c. Xhwitheka Mtuze

d. Sebenzi Mtuze

e. Mbi Mtuze

- (1) Mafu Mtuze

2. Mbalo

3. Jezile

a. Mangali

- (1) Ziwele

- (a) Manana

- (b) Tetete

- © Mthandeko

4. Mpukula

a. Mnyatheli

5. Ntlakani

- a. Makhwelo
 - (1) Mzayifani
 - (a) Madalambana

- B. Sihloyi
 - 1. Kewana Mbalo
 - a. Foyo Mbalo
 - b. Fikile Mbalo

The clan geneology of the Mtuze (1976:1) family is as follows, Mntuze, Cube, Qithi, Qiya, Ntande, Dlomo, Madiba, Thembu, Maya, Ngxongo, Tshatshu and Ndungwana. For the Mtuze family, these are not ordinary names of people. These names represent generations and whenever they are recited, it is in recognition of the might of each key figure in the ladder of the family collective, what these did during their life time, what they believed in. The poetry injects a natural energy and positivity on the part of the members of the clan. The humiliation and indignity that comes with being treated as a sub-human race, which results in depressed spirits, is viciously reversed by the revival of the greatness of the family. During the performance of rituals and during celebrations and even mere introduction, the recitation creates a positive strength and a presence in the wider community. Mtuze has benefitted tremendously from this life-giving phenomenon.

Mtuze (1982:2) looked at his father with learning and appreciating eyes as he writes in this poem *Umgawuli weenkuni*, “*Kukho indoda ethe cwaka, Incum’ oluhle ilibukele, Inoxolo ebusweni, inovuy’ emphefumleni, Inezembe, inesarha nomphakwana wesonka, Ulele phantsi umthi*. (There’s a silent man, smiling appreciatingly, with peace on his face, and love in his spirit, with an axe, a saw and a small provision consisting of bread, the tree has fallen.)

While doing his business of selling wood, Mtuze’s father came across an advertisement in the *Imvo Zabantsundu*, a Xhosa newspaper. A certain Mr Ntantiso was selling a truck. At the time Kusi’s business was growing and he needed to upgrade from his donkey-drawn cart to a better means of transport. He responded to the advertisement. He contacted Mr Ntantiso and an arrangement was reached that he would pay for the truck in

instalments while it was still with Ntantiso. On completing the instalments on the agreed price, Ntantiso would deliver the truck. Kusi paid the money and Ntantiso never honoured his side of the bargain. Mtuze (1977:24) wrote a short story based on this experience, *Injobe*, in *Amathol' eendaba*.

All the descriptions of Fuzile's father in the story and his conditions were depicted from those of Mtuze's father, that is, the man who worked hard and who had high ambitions, whose family was starving, who parted with hard earned cash with the hope of improving his wood selling business and still had forgiveness; these were all things that happened with Mtuze's father. Fuzile, the character in the story, was Mtuze himself who saw all this misery that his family had to endure, who was also a son who passed his studies with flying colours, who had no shoes but finally succeeding academically, having a plan about his parent's plight.

In *Ndiyabulela Ngqolomsila* (Thank you Ngqolomsila) Mtuze (1982:5) refers to his father who has, by then, passed away. He sings all the praises *Mthemb' omkhulu, Ngqolomsila, Yem-Yem, Sophitsho, Zondwa-zintshaba*. He looks back to a man who shaped his life:

*Ixabiso legolide uliqonda mhla yalahleka,
Ixabiso lokukhanya liqondwa mhla kwamnyama.
Iyadubula intyatyambo kodw' ibuy' ibune,
Aqaqamb' amagqabi abuy'avuthuluke,
Isithatha senkanyezi silonziza sisithela.*

(The value of gold is seen when it is lost,
The value of light is seen when it is dark.
The flower germinates and later dies,
Leaves brighten up but later fall,
The neon light makes her light while disappearing.)

Mtuze demonstrates a full appreciation for a father who was without formal education. He has a deep appreciation of his father's efforts to educate all his ten children. He is aware that this was beyond his means. This memory that lives with Mtuze is artistically

expressed as “the real longings of your heart, the pain of your ecstasy, the ecstasy of your pain” (Mphahlele, 2002:292). Mtuze (1982:5) asks further in *Ndiyabulela Ngqolomsila*:

*Usakhumbula na Ngqolomsila?
Xa sicanda loo mathafa sibhexesh' oondlebende,
Kumahlwantsi obusika kwingqantsini yelanga,
Sigigithek' okwamanzi esihl' engxangxasini,
Ndithembi' isandla sakho ndixhaml' ukhuseleko.*

*Ndisakubona kolo khuko amehl' ejong' ekhaya.
Mandiyek' ukulanda ezemihl' eyadhlulayo.
Mandithi, bawo, namhla, ndiyabulela.
Andizukuncoma, andizukubonga Yemyem,
Koko ndiyabulela, ndiyabulela, ndiyabulela.*

(Are you able to remember, Ngqolomsila?
When we were crossing those valleys
Driving the donkeys,
In the cold of winter
In the heat of the sun,
As we galloped like water falls,
In the trust of your hand
In the joy your protection.

I can still see you on that mat,
Your eyes fixed at our home.
Let me leave the past.
Let me say, father, today, I am grateful.
I will not praise you,
I will not thank you, Yemyem,
But, I am grateful, grateful, grateful.)

What is most noble in the memories of Mtuze is the knowledge that whatever comfort his father could have chosen, he opted to forgo its temptation. He looked at his children as his own extension and he wanted them to venture into a world that he himself could not reach. He knew that although education was beyond his own reach, he would support his children because he was hopeful that one of them would lift him from poverty. Kusi was a source of education for Mtuze:

*Ngomzekel' obunguwo wendod' enobulali,
Wendod' ezel' uthando, ihlwemp' elizithandayo,
Inkedam' ezondlayo yondle nosapho lwayo;*

(The example of a wise man that you were,
A man full of love, poor but proud,
An orphan who relied on himself, and cared for his family.)

Mtuze once saw his father being angered by his elder brother, Siphetho. He had never seen his father that angry before. Siphetho was given marching orders out of the home. Mtuze was affected by this quarrel. This then led him to write his first book *UYese namahla-ndinyuka obomi*.

In *UYese namahla-ndinyuka obomi*, Mtuze tells a story of a stubborn hunter who climbed Ntab' exhalanga mountain with his party of dogs "kwathi kanti kumhla wagqityelwa" (that was the last day he was seen). On the fourth day, according to the story, the dogs returned to Mmandizonka without their ears and tails; leaving a lot of speculation as to what might have happened to their owner, the hunter. That would be how Mtuze would imagine the plight of his brother, a man he loved so much.

Mtuze saw his father's commitment and love for his mother. As a young man he pulled up his socks, raised his head and achieved all A's in his grades. What was clear in Mtuze's mind and what comes out from the poem above, is the existence of the possibility that his parents could have died in the very years when he was studying. He knew that and his parents too knew that as well, because their work was too dangerous and too heavy. This is important to note because the presence of Mtuze's parents and how they carried themselves in front of their children, did what many other African children could envy. Ending this piece of appreciating his father, Mtuze (1982:5) wrote:

*Ngathi sowuvile ngoko mandipheze.
Vela, ndiyabulela ngokumk' usandithembile.
Uz' undihlangabeze mhla ndinyuka loo mimango,
Sincokole kamnandi ngezo mini zoondlebende.
Undinikile ikrele, ndiyabulela Ngqolomsila.*

(This is enough
You have heard me.
Make your presence,

I am grateful for your trust in me till your last day
Please meet me the day I climb those hills,
That we may converse again about our days of the donkeys.
You gave me the weapon,
I am grateful Ngqolomsila.)

In a reply, Mazulwandile's father says his last words before he takes the journey in *Umyolelo* (A Death Wish). According to the poem Kusi would have thanked his son and notified him about an impending death, "*Sendisiv' isandi, loo loliw' ubhek' ekhaya*" (I have heard the sound of that train that's headed home). Kusi would have made his wish about what he was leaving behind for his children, "*Kuqala mandabe ilifa, yamkela nabo ubuhlwempu, buyingubo erhwexayo*" (First, let me share the inheritance, receive here poverty, it is your rough blanket). He would have emphasized love for the people, "*Umthande umntu mfana wam, kub' uthandwa njal' uThixo* (Love another man son, for that's the way to love God).

He would have warned him about education, "*Uyigcin' imfundo yakho, sisibane phambi kwakho* (Keep your education, it is your light). He would have alerted his son about a forthcoming dangerous situation, "*Ze nixhobe nilwe mfana wam, Kukh' irhamncw' elimpondo-ntlanu, Bubuhlang' igama lalo, Kukwahlul' injongo yalo.* (Arm and fight my son, there is a beast with five horns, its name is racism, its aim is to divide). He would have departed peacefully, "*Khawukrobe mfana wam, ngathi seyiyiyo nje loo nqwelo, uz' uncede Dlangamandla, undiyeke ndithi ngqwa.* (Look out, son, the train is coming, please Dlangamandla, allow me to take my rest.) (Mtuze, 1982:28).

Like Kusi, Mtuze's siblings played critical parts in his growth, "David was always the wisest of all my brothers ... My mentor was John, my oldest brother. He was always a perfect example of a gentleman ... Phumelele, was the meekest member of the family, a king of man who would not kill a fly... On my sisters' side Ethel was always the epitome of love and support. She and I went to school together" (Mtuze, 2007:43-44).

Writing about his mother's speech on a celebration for attaining a doctoral degree, Mtuze (2007:157) wrote:

My mother was lucky (than my father) because she saw me pass my doctoral degree. She stood up to address the audience with her characteristic smile and her dignity. I wondered what she was going to say on such an elite occasion. My mother never ran short of words. Secondly, she never lost the context of any situation. In typical Xhosa style she ... referred to how people used to be honoured in Xhosa society when they did notable acts, some excelling in war, others even in dancing. The audience was very touched by this short but moving address.

From a father at home, to a father who came from the outside, we now turn to the father of many more children and people, Rev Canon James Arthur Calata.

3.4 Rev James Arthur Calata

Rev Calata was a huge influence on Mtuze's life. It is important to provide a brief background of Calata in order to understand in context, his impact on Mtuze. According to Duka's *Canon James Arthur Calata, A Biography of One of the Greatest Sons of Africa* (2011), Calata was born on 22 June 1895 at Emnyeni village near Debe Nek, in the district of King William's Town in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. At the age of five Calata's family moved to Rabhula village, also in the Debe Nek area, where he attended the Ngudle Primary School.

Calata later entered St. Matthew's College and in 1912 enrolled at St Matthew's College Training School for a teacher's course. After qualifying as a teacher, he found a job at his alma-mater, St Matthew's College. Later on, he was transferred to St Cyprian Mission School in Korsten near Port Elizabeth.

In 1926 Calata was ordained as a priest and was transferred to St Aninias Mission Station at Somerset East, also in the Eastern Cape. While at Somerset East he participated in a number of community development programmes. In 1928 he was transferred to Cradock to the St Peter's Mission Station. Rev Calata was married to Mitha Mary Koboka who was also at St Matthew's College with him. Duka (2011:34) describes Mary as "a beautiful, tall lady ... (with) fine skin texture and bright eyes." They were blessed with three daughters Nontsikelelo, Noluthando and Vuyiseka.

In 1931 Rev Calata took charge of the St James Anglican Mission Church in the township of Cradock. St James, like many mission schools in African settlements, operated as a church, a venue for community meetings as well as a school. Rev Calata was the priest-in-charge as well as a School Manager of the St James Mission School. Calata was passionate about education. In an interview Karis and Carter (1964) cited by Duka (2011:55) Rev Calata said:

... when I came here [Cradock] and saw the affairs, the poverty of the people, the low wages and the lack of education, there was only one school in the district, started by a man called Underhill, a Methodist, at Mortimer, that was the school in the whole district for Africans and this worried me.

In 1928 Rev Calata met Rev Elijah Mdolomba who was the Cape Province President of the African National Congress (ANC); and who later (between 1930 and 1936) became its Secretary General. This meeting resulted in Rev Calata joining the ANC and becoming its Chief Organizer in the area of Cradock. In 1930 Rev Calata was elected as the Cape President of the ANC. He opened the Provincial office of the ANC at Lwana Street in Magqubeni Township outside Cradock. Currently, the Eastern Cape Provincial office of the ANC is situated at Alexandra Road in King William's Town. Its building was named after Rev Calata, and it is known as Calata House.

Rev Calata was involved in a number of recreational programmes in Cradock. He helped establish a Church Choir, the Ikhwezi Choir, a community choir, the Modenaires; and most prominently the ANC Choir. Duka (2011:62) writes that Calata was "the father of the people," and the people's ANC man. He founded boys and girls Scouts. He was a composer and a poet too.

Rev Calata was a delegate at the historic Freedom Charter conference in Kliptown. As a result of his participation at this meeting, he was detained along with the President of ANC, Chief Albert Luthuli together with about hundred and fifty-six political activists. Calata was held in the Johannesburg Fort Prison and was charged with High Treason.

Duka (2011:171) writes that “while Calata was in detention, his daughter Nontsikelelo ... [gave birth to] a son, who was named Fort.” Fort was later martyred alongside Matthew Goniwe, Sicelo Mhlawuli and Sparrow Mkhonto in a political assassination famously known in the history of the 1980s political struggles as The Cradock 4. Rev Calata was later acquitted in the Treason Trial.

3.4.1 Mtuze meets Rev Calata

In the line of his duties as a priest-in-charge of the Anglican Church and the Chief Organizer of the ANC, Calata would visit African communities on the white farms to service the out-stations of the church and to organize for the ANC. The family of Mtuze were members of the Anglican Church by then. One afternoon Calata visited the Mtuzes to conduct baptism for the whole family. He advised Mtuze’s parents that, since Mtuze’s date of birth was not known and also those of other children, Mtuze could be estimated as having been born in 1941. So, Mtuze was granted the 2 November 1941 as his official date of birth. This was necessary because Calata would issue baptismal certificates so that Mtuze’s birth could be registered and he be issued with an official birth certificate.

Mtuze (2007:14) witnessed Calata marrying his parents in accordance with Christian rites:

My mother and my father were in their best church clothes on that day, as their wedding was solemnized by Rev Calata. He was instrumental in getting them to marry according to the Christian rites, many years after they stayed together as man and wife, married according to Xhosa custom.

Before Calata, Mr Mbayise who was Mtuze’s teacher, gave Mtuze a so-called Christian name, which was to become a name he would be known with: Peter. In 1956 having passed all the classes that were available in the farm schools that he attended, Mtuze was picked up, as stated above, by one of the teachers, Mrs Tabata, and was registered at St James Anglican Mission School at Cradock. He lived with the Tabata family. Rev Calata was the School Manager and the Priest-in-Charge at St James Anglican Mission School

and, “It was not difficult to be admitted to St James Primary School because Rev Calata and the Tabatas recommended me very strongly at the school” (Mtuze, 2007:16).

Mtuze would travel with Rev Calata on his visits to the farms in the Conway area of Middelburg and the other out-stations along the Fish River in the Baroda area. He loved these excursions because “... Fish River had a special place in my heart” and Conway was the farming area where he grew up. In the same year, 1956, Mtuze (2007:17) made his first contact with the ANC through its Congress Choir:

When I arrived in Cradock in 1956, the African National Congress was still operating openly and freely. I remember being woken up in the early hours of the morning by their singing and shouting, *Mayibuye iAfrika* (Let Africa Come Back).

Mtuze took an interest in the singing and the compositions of Rev Calata who was also the founder and conductor of the ANC Choir. The songs that were sung by the Congress Choir, as it was called, provided the first political lessons to Mtuze (2007:18) because they were educational. The song on John Nangoza Jebe was about an ANC volunteer known as a cadre who was shot by the police at New Brighton, Port Elizabeth. C.R. Swart was the Minister of Justice then. What made the incident even more lamentable was that he was not engaged in any political activity at the time. It was on Good Friday 1956 and Mr Jebe was one of many people who came from a revival service when he was shot.

There was an inspiring composition of Calata that spoke directly on the incident, “*Kwenzek’ intw’ emb’eBhayi, hay’ iinto zikaMnyamana, zapheli’ iinkokeli, waf’umntu engenzanga nto, sililela uJohn Nangoza Jebe*” (Something terrible has happened in Port Elizabeth, oh the things that Swart does to people, our leaders are being eliminated, an innocent person has died, we lament the death of John Nangoza Jebe). The hymn gave a detailed account of the event, “*Babevela emvuselelweni, baza bathintelwa ngumkhosi kaMnyamana, wababuza’ amapasi neento ngento, wadutyulwa besekhaya eNew Brighton*” (They were returning from a church revival service, when they were stopped by Swart’s army, they demanded to see their passes and such things, and he was shot at his home township in New Brighton). It was a direct appeal to God, “*Nkosi phulaphula*

imithandazo yethu, masifikelele kuwe isikhalo sethu” (Lord hear our prayers, may our cry reach you).

Another political song, also a composition of Calata, was a piece about Snini Mxokozeli, a female ANC member who was discharged from Fort Glamorgan prison in East London. She was forced to walk all the way from East London to Peddie, her home. She could not reach home. She died on the way. On 14 March 1954, when a memorial service was to be held for her, the Peddie white resident Magistrate forbade ANC members from attending the memorial service. Police were deployed all over, with specific instructions to arrest anyone who broke the order.

It was a song that recorded the ANC’s efforts at giving Snini a dignified send-off, *“Yamemez’ iCongress kumavolontiya, yathi makusingw’ eNgqushwa nge14th March ka1954”* (The Congress sent out a call to all Volunteers, saying they should all go to Peddie on 14 March 1954). The song ridiculed the police action and embarrassed the Magistrate, *“Azula amapolisa efun’ amavolontiya, adana akungafiki kub’ ethintelwe kwasemakhaya, anetha amapolisa angamatixi, amkhalazela uFinikisi owabizel’ inikisi”* (The police searched all over looking for Volunteers, but they were disappointed when none turned up, as they have been prevented from leaving their homes, the police were soaking wet from the rain, and complained to Mr Finnicks for calling them out for nothing.)

There was also a song composed in support of those who were in the Treason Trial in Pretoria; including Luthuli, Calata, Gawe and many others. It was entitled *Ukuphela kweTreason Trial* (The end of the Treason Trial). It had strong lyrics, *“Treason, tshabalala, bantu, godukani, liphelil’ ityala”* (Treason, be destroyed, people go home, the case has ended.) (Mtuzze, 2007:218).

There were many other songs that spoke directly to events and personalities that were known to Mtuzze and other choir members. Here was an organic way of political education and sensitizing the young to the political concerns of the only authentic

political representative of African people at the time, the ANC. Mtuze (2007:18) remembers that:

(The choir) picked local events such as the death of Mr Sikaka in the Cradock police cells. The case was reported prominently in the local press, with serious questions asked about the death of this farm worker under very suspicious circumstances. Coincidentally, Mr Sikaka whom I had never met, was my mother's cousin, whose other sister was married to a well-known family in Cradock, the Nqikashes; their daughter married my best friend Wilson Soci.

Mtuze (2007:19) was a student when he joined the ANC and since they were young, they were prevented from direct political participation, "We were being groomed and oriented while we were at school, preparing us for fuller participation when we left school." As student members they received their political education lessons in secret places on the banks of the Great Fish River which, ironically, was used as a buffer between the Xhosa forces and invading colonial forces during the frontier wars of land dispossession. One of Mtuze's (2007:23) interests in the Congress Choir were the poems and the poetry performances of its members and its legendary conductor, Rev Calata:

My interest in *ukubonga* (singing praises as an oral poet) started in Port Elizabeth, where we had gone to perform with Rev Calata's choir. Mr Eric Vara, a well known volunteer and member of the ANC Youth League, was a member of the Congress Choir and doubled as an excellent praise poet. When his turn came to perform, he was nowhere to be found. The people were becoming agitated because they were looking forward to his praises. I had listened the previous day to one of the most powerful praise poets of the time and for years thereafter, Mr Yali-Manisi from Lady Frere. So when the time came for Eric to perform, I took the centre stage and rattled out a few lines I had learnt from my grandmother, to the surprise of the audience and the choir. From then I never stopped singing praises when the occasion arose. Needless to say, my praise singing had its roots in the styles of these two mentors, Eric Vara and Phakamile Yali-Manisi. It owed its political overtones to Vara's political stance, and its traditional style and prowess to the art of Yali-Manisi.

The arrest of the Congress Choir, sometimes referred to as the Calata Choir, on one evening in Somerset East was an event that brought Mtuze closer to Calata. The choir had been performing for about two hours when the hall was stormed by uniformed policemen

“striding in majestically with their boots striking the wooden floor as if they were marching,” Mtuze (2007:26) writes that:

The whole of Calata’s Choir and band were under arrest for entering the proclaimed area of Somerset East without due permission from the local authorities. We were allowed to continue with the concert, but were ordered to stop everything at midnight to enable the police to take us to jail ... At midnight the police entered in even greater numbers. They ordered all the locals out and made us sit on one side of the hall. Something very strange followed. They looked us all in the face and started ordering those whom they regarded as school children to sit on one side.

Mtuze and a few school going children were lucky to be weeded out of the group. They were freed. Nevertheless, they visited the detainees on the next day. Mtuze (2007:27) remembers that visit:

It was once again a cold morning. Tears rolled down my cheeks when I looked inside the first cell to which the police escorted us. There we saw Rev Calata come out of a makeshift bed where he was covered by the jackets of some of the choir men to protect him from the cold.

Mtuze was deeply affected by that detention and the immobilization of Rev Calata. He was also mesmerized by the behavior of Calata as he reminded him during that visitation, about an arrangement of taking a marriage register to Conway (Mtuze, 2007:27) “where Rev Mfenyana was going to solemnize Sipho and Nothisa’s marriage. Not wanting to let him down, I offered to take the next available goods train as soon as we arrived in Cradock and rush the registers to Conway, which I then did.”

The ANC Choir provided Mtuze with a social life that he had not experienced on the farm lands. It brought an intellectual stimulation that he could not resist. From being an observer, Mtuze ushered himself to action. He moved from the rear and assumed a position in the front to do battle with a notorious piece of legislation whose enforcement was such a provocation to African people, the Pass Laws.

3.5 The Pass Laws: A Challenge facing Mtuze

Colonialization of Africa did not provide Africans with a pleasure of choosing a political response that would suit them and their situation; or in the event of an individual, a chance of making a political declaration as a result of a choice made freely. Colonialism was harsh and rough in manner. It was abrasive. It pursued and found Africans. In the case of Mtuze, colonialism found an observing and a perceptive mind. As a result, what emerged was an original strategist who had learnt hard. Let us examine Mtuze's energy and resilience as well as the weapons that he devised in search of justice.

The most organized attack on the Pass Laws by African people happened with the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) led marches in Sharpeville, Langa in Cape Town and other centres of South Africa. Very prominent in the organization of these events was a man called Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, a former student political leader and a Xhosa literary critic who was also the President of the PAC at the time. The campaign was called the Anti-Pass Campaign.

Sobukwe, in preparation for the campaign, travelled across South Africa with a strong delegation of the PAC leadership; assessing the readiness of African people in making a public demonstration of rejecting the *dompas* (lit. stupid pass). Pogrund (1990:111) writes that:

Sobukwe discussed the plan with members of his executive at a meeting over the weekend of 5 to 7 September 1959. They endorsed it and agreed that the details would be finalized at the first conference scheduled for December. The starting date was to be kept secret for as long as possible, to reduce the danger from government counter-preparations.

At the inaugural conference of the PAC in December 1959, Pogrund (1990:112) writes that, "the plan was taken forward in a formal resolution by the 271 delegates from 153 branches, said to represent about 32000 members." At that stage Sobukwe had already addressed the conference and messages from other notable Pan Africanists such as Kwame Nkrumah, President of Ghana, and Sekou Toure, President of Guinea, had been

read at the conference. It was a gathering that was to change the course of history in South Africa.

The year was 1959, the year of the PAC conference, when Mtuze was issued with his *dompas* or reference book. During the following year, 1960, when the whole world was watching South Africa as a result of the killing of the demonstrators in what came to be known as the Sharpeville Massacre, Mtuze was on the battle ground in a different town using a different means of engagement.

This was a battle that was not to end the system of Pass Laws, because it could not afford the kind of preparations and organization seen in the PAC of Sobukwe. But, it was a battle, nonetheless, intense enough yet led by a lonely young man.

It all started with an arrest and an imminent conviction in a strange town whose conditions demanded a fighter who was diplomatic enough to win the game. In those years Africans were being driven like sheep; caught on the streets, hauled into trucks, pushed into cells, brought before courts, channeled further into prisons, thumb-printed, prison-garbed and made a number for the period of sentence.

Mtuze, as we shall see in the next passage, tested the limits of his possibilities using his only weapon, the will to survive. He was a farm boy who was prepared to fight in a foreign town, in the centre of a city and in the inside of its court room. This resulted in the Port Elizabeth battle of Mtuze against the Pass Laws.

3.5.1 The Battle of Port Elizabeth

On an “ill-fated trip to Port Elizabeth with my two elder brothers, David and John,” (2007:37) to trade-in their father’s old truck; the three brothers were arrested in a random raid for passes at Swartkops. Mtuze (2007:37) remembers the day:

We had walked only a few meters on Grahamstown Road, when the notorious Sotewu, a white policeman, and his team of police men pounced on us. They

demanded to see our reference books (identity documents for blacks only), which we duly produced. The reference books were good at exposing their carriers to the full wrath of the law. They revealed where you came from, whether you had any permission to be in that proclaimed area, whether you were employed or not, and whether you had paid any taxes. All those were vital issues for the fate of the carrier.

The next minute saw all three of us locked up in the big police truck. All three of us had failed to pay our taxes; the notorious Poll Tax that only Africans had to pay as from 1926. It was the same notorious Poll Tax that was used to drive our forefathers from the reserves to the mines as cheap labour.

The police truck was driven around Port Elizabeth collecting more defaulters on the way. People would scatter and run “like wild animals” on seeing the truck; and the police would “be hot on their heels.” Mtuze (2007:38) writes:

I had never seen such a sight before. It was almost nine at night when we arrived at the Baakens Bridge Police Station, almost six hours since we had set foot in the police van.

They were all locked up in the police cells and were brought to the New Law Court the following morning. Mtuze (2007:38) remembers very well:

We made an unexpected stop at the local Rooi Hel (Afrikaans for “red-devil” or “hell”) Prison, where more accused were forced into the already full truck. Bear in mind that these were not just tax defaulters like us. They were people who had been arrested for serious crimes. No sooner did they get into the truck than they started fighting among themselves for space and comfort.

I overheard two people talking inside the truck. They were obviously tax defaulters because one was warning the other that in Port Elizabeth you never pleaded not guilty to tax-defaulting charges, as your case would be postponed for several weeks while you were languishing in jail. This baffled me, as I was definitely going to plead not guilty to all the charges.

Inside the court room the proceedings were going on as normal until it was Mtuze’s (2007:39) turn to stand in the accused box:

A young white Magistrate entered the court at the appointed time, and the proceedings started in earnest, with everyone pleading guilty and getting his due sentence without delay or fuss. The trouble started when they got to me and I created a scene right from the beginning by asking the policeman who was interpreting not to worry about trying to interpret for me as I could speak English

quite well. Of course, I used to be a master debater at school and took all the honours in isiXhosa, English and Afrikaans orals.

The arresting officer was called in. After the taking of the oath followed by all the rituals of the court, Mtuze (2007:39) was given a chance to ask the policeman:

He gave all his evidence with confidence as if to say I was just wasting my time trying to dispute the charges against me. At the end of his evidence, I was asked whether I had any questions to ask him. I replied that I had only one question. I asked him what I had said when he arrested me, and he replied promptly that I had said I was a student for all the years I have been charged with.

My rights were explained and I chose to give evidence under oath. Before the Magistrate lifted his head up after writing down my name, I took the standard oath without guidance from him, in English, to everybody's surprise; "I swear that the evidence I am about to give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God."

My plan of attack was to tire the court by challenging the charges ... I challenged the charges, saying they were incorrect. The Magistrate butted in by saying I must show how they were incorrect. I referred them to my reference book where there was an inscription EB1959. To my surprise, they asked me what that meant. I replied that it was Afrikaans for *Eerste Betaler* 1959, adding that the equivalent English rendition would have been FP 1959, which means First Payer 1959. Therefore, any charge prior to that year was definitely incorrect.

Before this arrest, Mtuze had been training as an interpreter in Middleburg. This was in preparation for an interpreter's job that was at the Hofmeyr Magistrate's court. Although Mtuze had not started to practice as an interpreter at that stage, the minimum experience that he had, was merged with the unwavering humanist who was not prepared to go down without a fight.

That interaction between a young African man who came from the dark end of the white farms of Middleburg area and a white Magistrate who presided in a court of his race; running it with the laws of his race that are meant to punish every African appearing before it; proved to be such an attraction to the African audience in that court.

The crowds were applauding and were delighted "as the battle continued between the Magistrate and me. They were obviously enjoying what was happening," (Mtuze,

2007:40). Someone in the crowd ran out of the court to call a homeboy of Mtuze's who was working as a policeman in another court room. Constable Mfupi came and "listen[ed] to how well a boy from his hometown spoke English," (Mtuze, 2007:41).

Mfupi could not hold back his pride. He did not care what other police men felt about him as he embraced his homeboy who was now acquitted. He offered help so that Mtuze could contact home and arrange the release of his convicted brothers. On their way home the brothers were very proud of Mtuze (2007:41):

... my brothers told me how proud they were of me and about how they were rescued just before John had a fight with a prisoner who wanted him to wear a pair of short pants, which was not just damp but wet. As far as the court case was concerned, I was the undoubted hero of the day because if I had not managed to talk myself out of trouble, we would all have ended up in Rooi Hel, officially known as the North End Prison.

Young as he was, defiant in spirit, Mtuze delivered his own blows on the apartheid system, on a turf whose rules he was beginning to learn. His strength was in the knowledge that justice, whatever its definition, had to stand on his side. The African audience in that court was very intelligent in that they appreciated the good legal points that Mtuze made; and they were extremely impressed that an African was in charge.

In some measure, Mtuze touched a nerve with the court audience. Africans have, for a long time, endured forced silence such that they tend to grab with both hands what they see as a demonstration of bravery to power. What was supposed to be a docile, quiet and fearing court audience suddenly turned itself into a politically charged gathering.

For Mtuze, this was a beginning of a war because back home there was another Pass Law mountain to climb.

3.5.2 The Battle of Middleburg

Mtuze was doing the Junior Certificate (today's Grade 10) at Cradock Secondary School when Miss Joubert who had been assisting his education; paying his school fees, clothing

and food, changed her mind. Mtuze used to come over to the residence of Miss Joubert and help with manual jobs. One day he was given car keys by Miss Joubert so that he could wash her car. Mtuze writes that, “Instead of washing it in the garage where it was parked, I decided to drive it out.” He scratched the front fender because he could not drive at the time. Miss Joubert was upset. She stopped her support at the end of that year.

Without a school and without a job, Mtuze could not continue to stay in Cradock. He had to move back to the farms with his JC first class pass “dejected and frustrated.” Writing in his autobiography *Indlela Ebhek’ Enkundleni* about this cross-road in his life, Mtuze (1976:30) writes:

Ndingathini ukuya kuhlala ndisebenze efama ndakugqiba ukufunda kangako?
Kum loo mfundwana yayiyinto enkulu kuba ndandiyizuze ebinzimeni
nakumabona-ndenzile amabi. Kwakungekho ndlela yakuba ndifumane
engaphezulu kunayo ke ngoko kwakunyanzelekile ukuba indisebenzele nokuba
sekumnyam’ entla. Yayinokundinceda ngani ke efama?

(How could I go back to the farms when I had acquired such an education? To me that education [Junior Certificate] was a big thing because I gained it through hard means. There was no way to gain further education, therefore, it had to work for me, raining or not. How would the farms help me, then?)

In January 1961 Mtuze, on the way from Cradock, branched off to look for work in Middleburg. He got a job in a local cosmetic factory called Karoo Creams. He worked in its mixing department. Mtuze (2007:45) remembers:

... my job was tough, and made even tougher by the attitude of the Afrikaner supervisor under whom I worked ... After we had poured the various ingredients into the big containers, I had to stir the boiling mixture until the product was suitably mixed.

I could never be sure how fast or how slow to stir, as each time he walked past me he had a different crude instruction, “*Roer die b... ding, man!*” (Stir the damn thing, man!), and on his return walk he would say, “*Nie so b... vinnig nie*” (Not so b... fast). As if that was not enough, he would make another turn to get me back to the original stirring pace.

I used to get very annoyed, but the two black men who were much older than myself had worked there for a very long time. They used to calm me down, pointing out that the worst had not happened yet.

At the end of the first month Mtuze (2007:46) was told to register at the local Superintendent's office as a worker:

They (Superintendent's office) knew every man, woman and child in the locations. They knew who had given birth and who had died in the little locations. They knew immediately they saw me that I was Kusi's son, that Kusi was the man who had been selling firewood to the residents and that he came from the surrounding farms. The implication of all that intelligence was that I had no legal right to stay or work in the proclaimed area of Middleburg.

For Mtuze, this meant that the matter was not going to be easy to overcome. The Superintendent, Mr Prinsloo, "took my reference book and endorsed me out of Middleburg." Prinsloo stamped the reference book with an endorsement that read: "Not permitted to remain in the proclaimed area of Middleburg, Cape." It was *uphum' aphele* (be gone for good). At that moment Mtuze (2007:46) objected:

A full-scale verbal battle ensued. From that minute and over the next five days, Prinsloo and I exchanged furious words for hours on end ... He withstood my bombardments until we were both tired each day ... I tried to deceive him by saying I was John's son because my brother John had managed somehow to find employment in town, but he told me in no uncertain terms that he knew my father was not John.

Exacerbating the situation were the black constables who would intervene to stop Mtuze "from talking like that to their boss." Mtuze then approached an attorney, Mr Danie Roux, who "said his hands were tied because the Superintendent was applying the law. He could not go against the law." Mtuze (2007:47) continued his fight, "I had learnt from Rev Calata to stand up for my rights," he approached Roux again:

I went straight to Mr Danie Roux and posed this question to him, "Mr Roux, I have got a little homework for you. Could you ask the following question of your government: What provision has the government made for farm children who happen to leave school with a half completed BA degree and without a full professional qualification that could allow them to find work in some urban

areas?” As he sat there pondering this question, I told him to note that I would stay in jail until that question was satisfactory answered.

After consulting some law book Roux phoned Prinsloo, the Superintendent, had an extended discussion explaining some section in some ordinance. Finally, Prinsloo relented and Mtuze (2007:48) was allowed to stay and work in Middleburg:

When I arrived in his office, a completely different Prinsloo, shivering and completely apologetic, welcomed me. What had happened, I could not tell, but he was very eager to help me and went to the extent of crossing out the notorious Section 10 endorsement he had made in my reference book.

The Middleburg battle was just a second round of a longer and bigger fight. Cape Town was awaiting Mtuze.

3.5.3 The Battles of Cape Town

There are two major Pass Law related battles that Mtuze had to wage in Cape Town. The first battle relates to Mtuze’s application for the necessary endorsement on his Pass Book or Reference Book allowing him to work and be a legal resident of Cape Town. The second battle involved his late wife, Nomathemba, who had come to join him. In the first place, Mtuze came to the Western Cape as a result of a transfer from the Hofmeyr Magistrate’s office to the Somerset West Magistrate’s office.

While in Somerset West Mtuze began preparing for his marriage. In those years, it was a given fact that “Somerset West was, as the local officers termed it, closed to Bantu females,” Mtuze (2007:57) writes. This meant that Mtuze would have to push for a further transfer to the Bellville Magistrate’s office which came through after the visit of the traveling Inspector of Interpreters, Mr Wrogeman. Mtuze (2007:57) remembers:

The first ritual, as usual, on my arrival at Bellville was to register myself at the local Location’s Superintendent’s office and apply for accommodation at the same time.

At the Superintendent's office the fight came when the accommodation had to be sorted out. Mtuze was offered to live in a men's only hostel known then as the Bantu Men's Hostel. The hostel was divided into long "carriage-like" halls, lined with cement bunks on either side, and these were used as beds by the residents. All the residents were African men who did not have the Section 10(1) (A) stamp in their *dompasses* that approved them to live in the two or three roomed municipal houses of the location or township.

Now, for a man who was preparing to get married, who wanted to study and be a Professor, write and publish books; the Bantu Men's Hostel was not suitable. Mtuze (2007:58) took the matter up with the Bellville Superintendent, Mr Erasmus:

Mr Erasmus came out of an adjacent office and yelled at his men, "Chuck him out, he talks too b... much!" We were then locked in a terrible war of words, to put it mildly, but I immediately outplayed him at his game, and he went back into his office as fast as he had come out of it. I told him in no uncertain terms that he had no right to chuck me out of that office unless he wanted to be chucked out too.

In almost the same manner as the African crowds in the New Law Court in Port Elizabeth, the crowds who had made long queues outside the Superintendent's office, picked up the fight and started "ululating with excitement because someone was prepared to stand up to the daily abuse that happened in those offices" (Mtuze, 2007:58). Erasmus's "running away did not mean the end of the struggle." Mtuze took the matter to the Chief Magistrate, Mr S.G.I Hill, who wrote to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner.

The Commissioner intervened and brought a resolution to the matter. After such a fight, Mtuze was no longer restricted to live in a single men's hostel. He could go ahead and arrange for his marriage which was later concluded in the Somerset West Magistrate's office, and blessed by Rev Nyovane of the Anglican Church. The married couple, Mr and Mrs Mtuze, found a rented accommodation in Mr Sam Malange's house in Gugulethu. There was no honeymoon. Instead, there was a new Pass Law battle to fight, this time to have his new wife, Nomathemba, legally living with him.

Before discussing the Pass Law struggle of Nomathemba, let it be understood that Mtuze's refusal to live in the single man's hostel was not motivated by malice. The men in the single man's hostel were not what Mtuze rejected. Certainly, those were his brothers and probably relatives. Later, when *UDingezweni* is reviewed it will be revealed that the living conditions of African workers is a special subject to Mtuze. He is passionate about it. The man's manner of living which offers many lessons for humanism is explored and the horrible conditions of living are exposed. In fact, the whole migrant labour system that has ravaged the lives of African people, makes a dominant presence in Mtuze's works.

By law Nomathemba was required to approach the Superintendent's office, and to bring her new marriage certificate and other relevant documents in order to be registered. That she did after standing in the long queue for three days before she was attended to. This was another Superintendent's office. It was Mr Murray-Rawbone's office. Cape Town had more of these offices since it was a big city.

Nomathemba needed the legal endorsement so that the police truck would not pick her up wherever and whenever. Equally, she was not prepared to ridicule herself and file such statements filed by other desperate African women, who find themselves declaring publicly "that they had come to their husbands so that they could fall pregnant and then go back home" (Mtuze, 2007:62). Nomathemba was a descent young "schooldays sweetheart" who came from parents who were very proud at the new relations with ooMadiba, ooSophitsho, the Mtuzes.

On the third day in the queue Murray-Rawbone's office instructed Nomathemba to bring along her husband. "The inevitable happened," writes Mtuze (2007:62):

Mr Murray-Rawbone wrote out Nomathemba's permit and handed it over to another boss, a Mr Scheepers this time, for his signature ... to my shock and dismay ... Nomathemba was endorsed out of the proclaimed area of the Cape Peninsula. This meant that she could be arrested on sight anywhere in the whole of the Western Cape, as the Peninsula stretched far wider than Cape Town.

I immediately jumped to her defence and asked Mr Scheepers if he was not making a mistake, as I was a civil servant and therefore my wife should enjoy the same rights as I? He burst out saying that I could appeal to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner if I felt aggrieved. After trying to reckon with him in vain, I asked my wife to go home while I took a bus back to Bellville to report the matter to Mr Hill.

The Chief Magistrate, Mr Hill, was on leave and Mtuze would not wait. He sat down that very evening and wrote a petition for the Department of Justice “to transfer me away from the Western Cape, to a place where I could live in peace with my wife” (Mtuze, 2007:63):

I was still writing at about 12 a.m. when my wife pleaded with me to stop writing and come to bed because she feared I would end up saying things that would send me straight to jail. The jails were full of people who challenged the system, she thought.

Mr Bestbier who was acting for Mr Hill, took the matter up with the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner. Their response was that Nomathemba would have to go back to Cradock “and apply there for the permission to come to Cape Town.” Mtuze saw the matter differently. His legal mind reasoned that “Cradock had no jurisdiction over Cape Town. Cradock could only give her a visiting permit” (Mtuze, 2007:63).

Mr Bestbier had to take the matter further. He called Mr C.J. Greef, the Secretary of Justice in the national parliament of the Republic of South Africa. It turned out that Mr Greef was in full agreement with Mtuze’s viewpoint, “Cradock did not figure in the equation, as they had no right to tell the offices in Cape Town to accept (people),” (Mtuze 2007:64). He was advised by Greef to petition the parliament and find all the necessary support to ensure the success of his petition. Mtuze (2007:64) writes:

It was then that Mr Bestbier decided to call Mr Hill back from his leave to come and handle the case himself. Having read the petition, Mr Hill decided to support it very strongly, and sent it by hand to Mr Greef in parliament ... At the end of the saga ... (the Superintendent office) was ordered to give her (Nomathemba) permission on the same terms as myself, and also to give us suitable accommodation in the township within 14 days. He was also ordered to report what he had done on both matters before the day was up.

The two-roomed ceiling-less house No. NDO 449 in Mau Mau Street, Nyanga East, Cape Town, became the first home of the married couple that had not been able to have a honeymoon because of the legal fight. The life of an African in the white ruled South Africa was a fight all the time. Let us turn to the next Pass Law battle for Mtuze, the battle of Pretoria.

3.5.4 The Battle of Pretoria

In 1985 Mtuze applied for a lecturer's position at the University of South Africa (Unisa) in Pretoria. He had "just completed an honours degree in African Languages" at Unisa. Even for such a position, Mtuze (2007:136) needed to go by the rules, "No sooner had I arrived in Pretoria than I had to register as a work seeker, or lecturer, at the local Home Affairs offices." Mtuze was denied the right to stay or work in the "proclaimed area of Pretoria ... this was a direct affront on (me)."

He and Dr Marivate who had accompanied him and had tried but failed to plead on his behalf, "drove back to the university (Unisa) overwhelmed by shock and frustration. Neither of us had expected that this could still happen in 1985" (Mtuze, 2007:137). Prof Louw, the Head of the African Languages Department, took the matter up. They went back to the Home Affairs offices. They met a Mr du Toit "a strongly built Afrikaner, who displayed officialdom from head to foot." Mtuze (2007:137) paints the scene in that office:

He welcomed us warmly, although with a slightly overbearing manner, and asked Prof Louw what he could do for us. One could sense that he had been properly briefed on the matter, even though he pretended to know nothing about it. I cannot forget how he started the discussion. He looked at us and sized us up before he asked, in Afrikaans. "Before we go on, could you tell me, who is a Professor and who is not?" When he was told that Professors Louw and Marivate were Professors and that the rest of us were lecturers, his reply was, "*Hier is ek professor*" ("I am the professor here").

He listened to our story and the pleas from Prof Louw, who told him how good I was and how the University would lose out if I were not allowed to work there.

Mr du Toit offered apologies on behalf of his “younger, inexperienced officers lower down the rank,” who were “not aware that we are beginning to approach these things differently,” (Mtuze, 2007:137). The correct endorsement was made on Mtuze’s reference book, and Mtuze came through that “whole matter (that had become) comical.” Although du Toit apologized, Mtuze (2007:137) writes that du Toit insisted that:

“...let me hasten to defend them by saying that they are not altogether wrong, because the law has not been changed. The law still precludes blacks from entering certain areas for the purpose of employment.” Having said that he called out someone he called Skinner. Mr Skinner appeared at the door and quietly awaited instructions from his boss. “Skinner,” said the boss in Afrikaans, “*Vat hierdie man se bewysboek en gee hom toestemming onder die toepalike artikel van die Wet, om by Unisa te doseer, dan kan ek en jy later daaroor baklei, indien nodig*”. This means, “Take this man’s reference book and grant him permission to lecture at Unisa under the appropriate section of the Act, and then you and I can fight later if we have to.”

When looking over all these Pass Law struggles that Mtuze had to do deal with, one can easily assume that these were administration hurdles that Mtuze could navigate since he was educated enough. That would be a mistake because all those who challenged the law were being jailed. They were seen as poisonous minds that must be weeded out of society and be locked on Robben Island. Mandela who was a well known brave attorney, who selected his words, and who even sought counsel with greater legal minds such as Adv George Bizos before speaking his mind, could not survive the system.

In Kenya, Ngugi wa Thiong’o wrote a musical play *Maitu Njugira* which was banned before its performance at the Kenya National Theatre in Nairobi. The musical was set in the 1920s and 1930s, and it dealt, among other things, with a labour legislation that worked just like the Pass Laws. Wa Thiong’o (2006:173) explains that:

In order to obtain efficient control of the Kenyan labour force the colonial government passed several labor laws, for example the native registration ordinances, which made it compulsory for adult male African workers in Kenya to wear a chain and a metal container around their necks. Inside the container was an identification paper with information useful to the employer. Together with the paper the container was called *kipande*. Not carrying a *kipande* was considered a criminal act and carried severe punishment.

The play was banned by an African government, not the colonial government as could be expected. That government panicked at the truth of the play. During the rehearsals at the University of Nairobi's theatre it was reported, however, that more than fifteen thousand people had managed to see the play. These people identified with the play because it was an experience they knew, but the government, a post-independence government, did not like the truth.

It must be appreciated that there was a lot more preparatory work that Mtuze had to do, on himself and on others, before he could hope to overcome his hurdles. He had to interest and educate his feeling toward learning and equipping himself with the instruments that will help him in resolving his problems. It may have not appeared in his mind quite early enough that his people would take pride in his actions, but he understood in a deep and profound manner that he had a right to exist.

The audience in the New Law Court building and the Africans in the queues outside the Home Affairs offices in Cape Town, are aware of the difficulties that were caused by being African. They may, however, not have been conscious enough to know what to do in the face of those difficulties. What Mtuze unconsciously offered to them, was an opportunity of seeing themselves, their hidden personality being played out in front of them. They readily identified with that demonstration, and hence their reaction.

The sad reality is that it will take much more than mere knowledge of difficulties, in order to change their plight. Mtuze relied on his resources, on his belief in justice and the possibilities thereof and, on his major weapon, his African Personality. He did notice the interest in his act, hence he wrote about it. But, for him it was a moment of battle. It was not an act on stage. On the pages of *Vingcan' amazibuko* (1982:20), Mtuze's poetry anthology, he wrote a poem *Hamba kahle Nodompasi* (Go Dompas).

Mtuze realized the importance of writing down these experiences. He writes for readers and future scholars. He knows that his potential and the potential of his people, their

Africa-determined value system, are a weapon. Since his existence had become a representation of his own people that means, therefore, he is them and they are him.

It was within the ANC that Mtuze could make himself.

3.6 Mtuze: On his own yet within the African National Congress

The independence of thought and action of Mtuze can be seen in his refusal to leave South Africa, when his comrades were doing so. When the political parties were banned in the 1960s and when the Campaign against the Pass Laws was cruelly crushed, many were being arrested and others were leaving the country. The decision to leave or not to leave the country, has a history of its own. That history involves Steve Biko and, before him, Antonio Gramsci. Kaya Biko (Mafrika, 2010:176), Biko's elder brother, had picked up information that the security police who were always trailing Biko wherever he moved, were intent on assassinating him:

I approached my brother (Biko) together with my brother in law, to ask him to leave the country. The man said to us, "What kind of a captain will I be if I leave the ship I'm steering, while I see there are faults and its going to sink. I'm not leaving the country." There was nothing we could do. That was Steve.

Antonio Gramsci was faced with a similar situation in a different context and time. Mona (2015:23) writes:

In 1911 Gramsci won a scholarship for students from poor backgrounds in Sardinia which took him to University of Turin. From 1915-1926 Gramsci worked as a journalist and political activist of the Communist Party in Italy. In 1924 he assumed leadership of his Social Movement in Italy. Unfortunately, as he was rising to leadership, Benito Mussolini was also rising to become the Head of Government. He became Prime Minister in 1922, changed the electoral law in 1923 and banned all political parties in 1926. In 1926 Gramsci's political party made plans for Gramsci to escape to Switzerland and flee from the wrath of the fascist leader, Mussolini, who was consolidating his political power. Gramsci refused to go to exile. He was arrested by the fascist regime and spent the period 1927-1928 awaiting trial, and the 4th June 1928 he was sentenced to twenty years in prison. The prosecutor of the case, to indicate the lack of fairness and justice during the fascist regime, is reported to have

said, “For twenty years we must stop his brain from functioning”. This reference was made of Gramsci. In an autobiography he later wrote in prison he says, “the rule has been made that a captain must be last to abandon his vessel in a shipwreck, that he must leave when everybody else on board is safe.” (Hoare and Smith, 1971:XXXVII)

In an interview in 1967 wa Thiong’o (2006:32) insisted that:

I sincerely believe that everybody’s struggle, except in very special circumstances, lies in his own country where that struggle is taking place. I don’t believe in exile, although there are situations where this is unavoidable.

Indeed, Ngugi wa Thiong’o remains exiled to this day. He cannot work and struggle along with his people in Kenya, as a result of ‘unavoidable’ situations. Returning to Mtuze, the banning of the ANC and PAC in 1960 meant that all those who were associated with the banned groups were expected to cut those ties; to dissociate with the programmes of the banned organizations and not to be seen promoting or representing in whatever manner the affected organizations. The Congress Choir where Mtuze sang was forced to change its name and its strategies. The choristers could no longer sing songs such as “*Basopha nants’ indod’ emnyama, Strydom*” (Beware, here comes the black man, Strydom). The literature and the speeches of the banned organizations such as the Freedom Charter of the ANC and the Ten Point Programme of the PAC, could not be quoted. Mtuze (2007:32) remembers that, “no longer could we openly read the New Age and see Robert Resha with outstretched arms calling Africa back with both hands”.

There was a group of fellow students and activists who were preparing to leave South Africa. Mtuze was torn between leaving the country, meaning, going along with the comrades he knew and trusted in order to rise and be a full-time member of the ANC in exile, or stay behind and fight without the company and guide of a trusted cadreship and political party, the ANC. The choice to go was not difficult to make as the conditions at the time were compelling. There had been the Sharpeville Massacre, the violent silencing of the organizations and the closing down of choirs and dance clubs. Also, there were the security police, oppressing Mtuze’s, as well as the voices of well-meaning Africans who were fearful and who wanted to protect Mtuze (2007:33):

The impact of this situation was soon felt at school, where the principal stopped the debating societies because we were engaging in political discussions. On several occasions I was called to the principal's office, where he pleaded with me to cool down and change my political stance. Things had changed for the worse and he feared for my safety, as well as those of other "hotheads" at the school.

Farm boys are always said to overdo things. I had become addicted to politics. I had gone too far to change anything. After all, it was the system that had to change, not I. That was my conviction, as I continued with my tough political talk and agitation.

Add to these attributes mentioned in the passage above, an imagination that all South African youth fantasized with, that going to exile meant jumping the fence on the borders, picking the up the AK47 rifle, returning again, and killing the tormentors of the people. So, this option of going was obvious and compelling for many young people. But, Mtuze did not take that route. The rationale to stay behind when others were going is written in his autobiography *An Alternative Struggle* (2007:33) as follows:

I refused to skip the country and was prepared to face the consequences. My rationale for not wanting to skip was based on two grounds: the first was a firm conviction that I had done nothing wrong, and if the state could prove anything to the contrary, then so be it. I was prepared to face the consequences. I had joined the struggle knowing very well what could happen to me.

More crucial in that decision were the elements it demanded. If Mtuze was not going into exile with the rest, what instruments did he need to exist and advance as a political activist? Mtuze needed his freedom in thinking and expressing his thoughts, coupled with the requisite diplomacy, of course. He needed his originality and versatility armed with alertness against distortion and manipulation. In other words, he needed a sophistication of operating himself as if he was an organization whereas he was on his own. Let us look at Mtuze's (2007:33) second reason:

My second reason for not wanting to skip the country with my comrades at the time was that I came from the farms where my parents were still staying. I knew the conditions under which they stayed on the farm. I could not dare leave them in those conditions. Worse still, how would they take my skipping the country, never to return.

The second reason made the most compelling case. There were people who looked up to Mtuze, his parents, who would never understand why he left. The family ship was already sinking (due to poverty) and Mtuze was the only saviour to rescue it. Also, it was a proven fact that in order to be an effective element of the whole, you needed to be clear and to have trained for your individual role. Organizations that received weak individuals become, by themselves, weak organizations. South African liberation organisations are rich in those experiences.

The strength of Mtuze can be seen in his efforts of building an impressive body of literary work that contributes in opening the eyes of the public of South Africa, a benefit that will continue even beyond his grave. Although he did not join his classmates such as Thami John, Ben Ngalo, Zenzile Ngalo, Jakes Goniwe, Gandhi Hlekani, Mazwi Reshane, Zoni Silwana, he could feed South Africa with his writings and, in that way, contribute to its enlightenment. To illustrate this fact, Mtuze wrote a short story *Ungakhe uxelele mntu* (Do not Tell Anybody) in a book of the same title. The story is dedicated to the plight of those who left the country and, most importantly, the plight of their families.

Ungakhe uxelele mntu begins with the feelings of a mother whose son had skipped the country (Mtuze, 1990:1):

“Lento ingumntu ayifi kukukhathazeka,” utshilo uNkosikazi Kelembe endijonge ntsho emehlweni. Obo buso bakhe bunombizane babubonakala busangene ukuhambisa kwakhe athi, “Ndandiba ndiza kufa yiworry, ilanga lasuka latshona emini mhla uJongilizwe walinikela umva iwabo eselolubomvu lona usana. Uthi wena umntu oneshumi elinesibhozo leminyaka ubudala angakwazi njani ukumka ekhaya aye kuphila njengomsabi kumazwe angawaziyo?”

(“A person does not die only through being worried,” said Mrs Kelembe looking directly into my eye. Her face was cringed when she said, “I thought I was going to die because of being worried. That day, the sun suddenly set down on me when Jongilizwe turned his back on his home, being a baby at the time. Imagine someone with only eighteen years of age going to be exiled in countries he had never known.”)

Mrs Kelembe still holds her memory of the presence of her son in her household (Mtuze, 1990:1):

“Ngathi ndiyambona mhla wayesimka ekhaya esithi uya kufunda eQhayiya, onwabile, emhle, engulaa Jongi kanina obesisonwabiso somntu wonke kweli khaya ... ekuseni besivuswa nguye ngaloo ntswahla yengxolo yakhe, equkeza esenza umphungo wakusasa, ecoca endlwini kwangojevane. Loo ntsholo nengxolo yakhe ibisaya kuba yinto yokugqibela nangokuhlwa emva komthandazo wesikhungo,” itshilo le ntokazi kucacile ukuba iingcinga neenkumbulo ziyayikrekretha emxhelweni.

(“I can imagine that day when he left home saying he was going to study at Qhayiya. He was happy, beautiful, being that Jongi of his mother who made everyone happy in this house ... Every morning he would wake us up with melodic sounds while making the morning tea and cleaning the house early in the morning. That melody and music would be the last thing of the day after the evening prayer,” said this lady clearly teared in the spirit by thoughts and memories.)

Mrs Kelembe remembers the last words spoken by Jongilizwe when he left, at least, for school as far as she knew (Mtuze, 1990:2):

“Amazwi okugqibela kaJongi phambi kokuba aye esikolweni eDikeni ukuvulwa kwazo athi, ‘Mama, andizukubuya ke ukuvalwa kwezikolo ukuphela konyaka. Ndiza kuya kumalume eKapa. UXolani uthe uza kundisa kwamalume.’

(“The last words that Jongi uttered before he went to school in Alice when they opened, staeted, ‘Mama, I will not come back home when schools close down at the end of the year. I will visit uncle in Cape Town. Xolani had said he will take me to uncle.’)

In *Ungakhe uxelele mntu*, Mtuze lends a voice to a woman who represents many women across South Africa, mothers whose children were either exiled or imprisoned. It is a silent voice, unlamented and perhaps uncared for, a voice that will not be heard. In one small township outside King William’s Town, five women and their families were in the same predicament as Mrs Kelembe. Mrs Mafrika had two sons who left, one in the late 1970s the other in the early 1980s, Mrs Marai also had two sons, Mrs Haya’s Xolani had left too, Mrs Msumza’s Luyanda and Mrs Zihlangu’s Crosby. All these young men in their late teens and early twenties, had fled to Lesotho and had joined the exiled liberation movements, the ANC and PAC.

Twice every week the security police would visit the homes of these women. They would search the houses and demand to know if the exiled were making any contact. They would interrogate each and everyone in an intimidating manner. Families would be left in fright and this would be repeated again and again, at least three to four times every month.

Mtuze's story offers as background a commemoration march in Langa, Uitenhage, in memory of those who were killed in Sharpeville. This commemoration march also resulted in mass killing of demonstrators. Mrs Kelembe's husband was among those who were killed in the Langa Massacre of 1985. Her son Jongilizwe (a name that means the one who looks after the nation), was leaving the country when this death was still very fresh in his mother's mind. It was a double blow for Mrs Kelembe.

The marchers who were mowed down had been singing. Their hopes were on the day of freedom, *mhla zibuyayo*, and in their minds that day was coming. That day *mhla zibuyayo*, was caught in its language and put to pen and a paper, hence *Ungakhe uxelele mntu*. In the story Mtuze poses a direct question. Where are African women's experiences in the liberation struggle narrative? Where is the sensitivity of mothers, the pain and the loneliness that these providers of life had to endure? (Mtuze, 1990:6):

“Enye into eyayindigqiba kukuvakala kweziganeko ngeziganeko zokudutyulwa kwabantu kwiindawo ngendawo kusithiwa bebezama ukubuyela kweli lizwe. Kuthe khona kwakudutyulwa uMaqhawe noPeacemaker, iintwana zalapha ezaziphambili kulo mzabalazo, ndamana ndimphupha edutyulwa uJongilizwe.”

(“One thing that always devastated me was to hear how people were being shot in different places while attempting to come back to the country. When I heard that Maqhawe and Peacemaker were killed, youths who were leading the struggles in this place, I started to have dreams as if Jongilizwe had been shot too.”)

Mtuze (1990:7) writes about a typical visit of the security police to Mrs Kelembe:

... ndabona kufika amapolisa okhuseleko lwelizwe esithi ndiyafunwa ngumphathi wawo. Kuthe merhe uvalo, ndabuza ukuba kuhle ntoni na, yathi impendulo abazi, ndiya kuva ngaphambili. Kuthe qatha kwaoko unyana kaSinandile owathi kanti kuhleliwe nje kudala wabhubhela eLesotho, wangcwatyelwa khona ... Umaqhuzu wabo becuphi uthethe nam ngembeko enqabileyo kubantu abasemagunyeni nebendingayilindele xa ndisiva iimbali zabantu abakhe baya kuncinwa apho.

(... the security police arrived at my house, saying their senior needed to see me. I caught fright immediately. On inquiring what had happened, they said they did not know, I would hear from their senior. I thought of Sinandile's son who, as it turned out later, had long died in Lesotho and had been buried there ... Their senior spoke with me in a respectful tone that is very unfamiliar with people of authority. I had not expected it knowing the stories of those who had been interrogated by these people.)

At the security offices Mrs Kelembe was shown photos of activists. She was asked to identify the people in the photos. She did not know all of them until her son's picture was shown to her (Mtuze, 1990:7):

“Iye yandibuza lenqeberhu ukuba uphi na, ndaphendula ndathi andimazi, ndamgqibela ukuphela ko-1985 esithi uya eKapa. Kumbuzo othi akazange abhale okanye afowune na kulo lonke eli xesha, ithe impendulo yam akazange, nam ndizazi ukuba ndithetha olwasetywaleni.”

(“This man asked me where my son was. I told him I do not know his whereabouts. I last saw him in 1985 when he said he was going to Cape Town. To a question that asked whether he never wrote a letter or called all this time, my answer was no, knowing that I was not being truthful.”)

It became clear to Mrs Kelembe, in the course of the interrogation, that the police were aware of a letter she did not know anything about. But, she stuck to her version (Mtuze, 1990:8):

“Makube iseza loo leta, mna andikayifumani, mhlekazi,” ndiye ndazophula ngelitshoyo kuloo mehlo ayekhangeleka ngathi athi ukusihushu-hushisa kwasimosha sonke thina maXhosa kuba soze okunene sikhanye into esiyaziyo. Yona ingqondo yayindixelela ukuba bakho abangcothoza bathutha iindaba, nokuba sekusithiwa izinto ziyafana. Noku phola kangaka kwalo mLungu kwakuthetha ukuba wazi konke ngalo nyana wam, nangam ngaphaya koko.”

(“Maybe that letter is still coming, I have not received it yet, Sir.” I responded that way from that look that seemed to suspect that all of us Xhosa people are avowed to lie all the time. My mind was telling me that there are people who are selling us out, I am sure. The way this white man was so cool and calm indicated that he knew a lot about my son, and about myself for that matter.”)

The interrogator, Major du Plessis, gave Mrs Kelembe shocking news about her son (Mtuze, 1990:9):

“Ndilusizi ukukwazisa ukuba unyana wakho lo uswelekele kwindlu ethile eAngola apho kubekho ugqabhuko-dubulo khona. Wonke umntu ebekuloo ndlu utshe waluthuthu. Mthatheni nimgoduse.’ Iphethe ngalawo le ndedeba ibona ukuba ndiyoyisakala.”

(“I regret to inform you that your son died in a certain house in Angola where there was a bomb blast. Everyone who was in that house was burnt to ashes. Take her away.’ He closed with those words that man, seeing that I was devastated with what he had said.”)

Still reeling from the shock and confusion that was caused by what du Plessis had said, Mrs Kelembe recieved a letter (Mtuze, 1990:9):

“... ndibone kufika unoposi ephethe ileta endiyibone kwangoko ukuba ivela kuJongi. Ngamafuphi wayendixelela ukuba uwelela ePeking kungentsuku zatywala kodwa zendincede ndingakhe ndixelele mntu apho akhoyo... Ndimi apho ixesha elide ndinkonye loo leta ingenadilesi namhla ibhalwe ngawo, iingqondo zibetha-bethana. uMeyija du Plessis uthi wafela eAngola, yena uthi usendleleni eya ePeking! Ndiya kusa yiphi kwasibonda, Thixo wamazulu?”

(“... the postman came carrying a letter which I noticed immediately that it was from Jongi. Briefly, Jongi was saying in the letter he was crossing into Peking in a few days’ time. I should never tell anyone about his whereabouts. I stood there for a long time, holding this letter with no address or date on which it was written. I was confused. Major du Plessis had said he died in a bomb blast in a house in Angola. Jongi writes that he was on his way to Peking. Which one holds, God of heaven!”)

Those were the words of Mrs Kelembe, who was a victim of state lies just like the five other women in that small township outside King William’s Town. On discussing with Mtuze, it was revealed to the researcher that this story was inspired by a true experience of Mrs Nokhele who lived in Grahamstown. This is the strength of Mtuze, sourcing

material from his people and with his words empowering his very people in the ways they know best, *ungakhe uxelele mntu* (do not tell anyone).

Contact among political activists is very crucial for activism. When Mtuze's comrades left, there was no contact with them whatsoever. With contact a number of things get to happen. It can be reasonably argued that with contact Mtuze could have had the benefit of a flow of energy from the centre of the national liberation movement that he had joined, the ANC, which was now based in Lusaka, Zambia. From this, he could have had the direct sense of a continuing fight against injustice in South Africa. He stood to gain more from an exchange of thoughts and new insights. The exiled too would have been filled with relevant updates and information about the complexities inside the country.

The lack of contact has, on many occasions, found activists wanting in terms of the need to co-ordinate and plan liberation programmes. The period of the outbreak of June 16, 1976 Uprisings is a case in point. Here, the exiled section was out of touch with the internal front. Without exploring that matter further, it is my opinion in this study that, despite the absence of contact with his exiled comrades, Mtuze stuck to the ideals that he understood and believed.

For him it remained a continuous journey that was started in the secretive parts and under the dark trees of the banks of *Inxuba* (Fish River). Its source was the people and its life-blood was their life. Freedom to think and the power to express thoughts, your originality and being versatile at the same time, wide-eyed to distortion and manipulation; these are attributes that ensured Mtuze's expansion and growth as well as a development of an independent personality. The positive aspects of an independent personality are able to come to life when one confronts life with its difficulties.

Despite the reaching of cross-roads between Mtuze and his comrades in 1960, it became clear that the ANC had not abandoned him. While working in Somerset West, Mtuze lived in "an old, very dilapidated house" on the outskirts of town (Mtuze, 2007:53):

It was very secluded. A major problem with this house was that it was reputed to be haunted by a ghost. The nocturnal noises that I used to hear attested to some extraordinary presence in the house. While I used to curse having to stay in such a derelict house, it was the ideal place of safety for a fugitive one day.

An old acquaintance, a member of the Congress Choir and an educator of politics on the secret banks of Nxuba (Fish River), Mr John Melane, knocked and entered Mtuze's house one day. He was on the run. He needed shelter. He was tired too. He trusted Mtuze for his safety and security. After supper Melane "slept quietly." While Melane was asleep, there was another knock on the door. Mtuze (2007:54) writes:

A black detective sergeant entered when I answered it. I tried to remain calm, although I realized that we were both in serious trouble. My worst fears were confirmed when the detective's eye kept on surveying my visitor as he lay covered up in bed, fast asleep. Because he (the detective) was a stranger in my house, although I knew him from the police station and the court where we both worked, I asked him if there was anything I could help him with. His answer came as a complete surprise.

He asked if I knew the whereabouts of a certain young woman I was seen talking to at the bus stop on my way from work. I answered, with great relief, that I had no idea where she went to as I proceeded back home after chatting to her for a brief moment because I had this visitor waiting for me at home. To convince him, I pointed at John Melane's big shoes next to the bed. He thanked me and left quietly as he came in, and I thanked my lucky stars that he was looking for his girlfriend and not my visitor.

The next day Melane and Mtuze "joked about the unwanted visitor." They shook hands and separated. They never met again and Melane never returned from exile. Charles Nqakula, another old acquaintance of Mtuze, did return from exile.

The Mtuze-Nqakula association goes much deeper in history and much wider in scope. Both Mtuze and Nqakula lived in Cradock, this being Nqakula's birthplace and Mtuze's home when he was a student there. Both attended the same school, St James Primary School "albeit at different times, and coming out top of the then Grahamstown Circuit. In 1957 I topped the Circuit, and in 1958 he broke that record" (Mtuze, 2007:112).

Both were forced by similar conditions to leave school after JC (Grade 10) and find employment. They both worked for the apartheid government, Mtuze in the department of Justice, Nqakula in the Department of Education. At some stage they settled in the same town, King William's Town, and worked for publishing companies; Mtuze for Via Afrika Publishers, Nqakula for *Imvo Zabantsundu*, a Xhosa newspaper.

Both are published writers, "I wrote the preface in his collection of poetry, *Ukhanyo*". Both are members of the Anglican Church. Both had had keen interest in music, "at one stage he managed the church choir that I had managed earlier in Zwelitsha." Both passed Standard 10 through private study, "we ended up staying together in my house in Zwelitsha during his most difficult days, when the government either banished him ... for political activities" (Mtuze, 2007:112).

Nqakula is a serious "Congress Connection." He left the country in the late 1970s. He came back from exile and was appointed as Minister of Defence in the first democratic government under the late President Nelson Mandela. Before going to exile, Nqakula was being detained from time to time by the security police. Mtuze (2007:112) writes about those times:

I remember visiting his family in Mount Coke to give moral support to his wife and to cheer up his children. One of the most memorable occurrences during one of these visits was when his youngest son wanted me to take him to the jail in East London where his father was detained so that he could release him by force. We all wished we could be as bold.

At other times Nqakula's movements would be restricted through a legal order issued by the Minister of Justice and enforced by the security police. In such circumstances an activist would rely on other trusted comrades for undertaking certain activist duties. Nqakula relied heavily on Mtuze (2007:113):

When Charles was confined by law to the area of the then Ciskei and prevented from entering the Republic of South Africa, as he was *persona non grata* there, I was called upon to act as a secret courier to help him cross the boundaries of King William's Town ... I did this more than once, risking arrest for the sake of my friend and homeboy, who never showed animosity towards me, even when I used

to interpret for LL Sebe, who insulted him in public. Charles Nqakula knew that the insults came from Sebe and not the interpreter.

What is most important in this association and collaboration was how Nqakula entrusted his life in the hands of Mtuze. “He trusted me enough to transport him to safe ground ... every time he wanted,” writes Mtuze (2007:113).

There are many in Nqakula’s generation of activists who were fortunate to survive the harsh system of apartheid; some came through and received the honour to serve the new dispensation. However, Mr Liwani of the PAC was not able to come through.

Mr Liwani was arrested in the early 1960s at Langa Township in Cape Town. He was involved in one of the armed skirmishes of the military wing of PAC called Poqo. When he was caught, he may have been tortured or intimidated because he “cracked”. He made a confession to the security police. In the confession he implicated a commander of Poqo, Pokolo, saying that he participated in some act of murdering one white man because he feared Pokolo.

Liwani was brought to the Bellville Magistrate’s office so that the confession could be heard and be recorded by Mr Van Graan, the Magistrate there. Mtuze (2007:78) was the interpreter of the case:

I saw it happen right from the beginning. The notorious State Security Police brought Liwani, the accused in a murder case, to Mr Van Graan’s office. They said he wanted to make a confession before a Magistrate. I was called in to interpret. The man looked tired but quite relaxed given the seriousness of the charge against him. Mr Van Graan and I had done many confessions before. We knew all the standard rules and procedures off by heart. On many previous occasions, people had turned back without making any confession after we had given them all the statutory warnings. In this case, however, Mr Liwani insisted that he wanted to make the confession, voluntarily and without compulsion.

As per procedure Van Graan and Mtuze (2007:78) gave Liwani all the statutory warnings:

We told him that he did not have to make a confession if he did not wish to do so. He insisted that he wanted to. We asked if he had been pressured to make a confession and he replied in the negative. We asked if he was influenced by anyone to make a confession. He answered in the negative. We asked him if he hoped to gain any benefit from making the confession. His answer was no. He said that he only wanted to speak the truth. We warned him that anything he said would be written down and used as evidence against him should the case go to court, and he acknowledged that he understood that but he still wanted to speak the truth.

The case was a grave and cruel murder of a white man who, it can be said, 'was at a wrong place at a wrong time'. He was hacked with pangas by African men in a township, Langa, in Cape Town. Before Liwani was brought to the Bellville Magistrate's office, Mtuze did not know him.

Mtuze knew Melane from long ago. He knew and protected Nqakula as a younger man who was also a homeboy and Liwani was supposed to be a stranger but he was an African man who was an activist in the struggle. Africans are not estranged from each other and those who were involved in the liberation struggle had always viewed each other as members of one political family.

When Van Graan and Mtuze explained the rights of Liwani with regard to making a confession, it was clear that the man was not himself. In a room where the security police were absent as required by law, Liwani could not realize the importance of using those rights to protect himself from the obvious consequences of a confession. Perhaps he had been tortured and intimidated terribly to a point that he could not take it any longer or, perhaps he knew that Bokolo, the commander of the Poqo unit, had been tortured by the same team to death and, therefore, he would be next. The truth is still unknown.

Mtuze (2007:80) and Van Graan were summoned to appear in the High Court in Cape Town as witnesses:

When we entered the awesome court building ... Liwani was brought in, tired and completely run down. I had never seen such a sight before.

Mr Van Graan was called to testify on the confession of Liwani. He did so. Mtuze was not called to stand because the defence did not dispute his interpretation (Mtuze, 2007:78):

In all the courts (where I had worked), the cases ended with a fine or sometimes a heavy sentence, but certainly not the death penalty ... It was in Bellville where I interpreted in a case that ended with the death sentence.

In Chapter 2 it was argued that consciousness involves conscience, that part of one's being that reminds one about one's complicity in the act. If you are well and alive you will listen to the inner voice, the conscience. Mtuze (2007:81) listened to his conscience, "This sad experience followed me like an albatross wherever I went". The connection here reveals the political convictions and humanistic foundations of Mtuze. Granted, it was a short-circuited case in that Liwani appeared in a room before Van Graan with Mtuze interpreting, and was parachuted into the "awesome" High Court before a judge. There was no time and space to exhaust the possibilities of defending the accused. In the next section we will look at the heart of an African interpreter who worked in white courts where the accused were always black and African.

It must be emphasized here, however, that Mtuze did not invite Melane to his house. Mtuze did not pursue Nqakula in search of political companionship or, as they say, rub shoulders with those in the forefront. Liwani too, was brought to Mtuze "looking tired ... and run down," leaving a heavy conscience behind. What conclusion does this lead us to? Melane and Nqakula could have been encouraged to keep Mtuze within the fold of the ANC political network as a trusted contact and resource person. All liberation groups maintained and where necessary created contacts that helped in the furthering of their programmes.

Liwani, on the other hand, is a representation of a section of African people who suffered silently because they never had the courage to fight back the torment of the security police. The state and its security apparatus had succeeded to overwhelm them. Their story and what they stood for runs the risk of disappearing from memory unless and until there are activists who are like Mtuze, who are sensitive enough and who use their pens to

bring to light the arrested voice. Coming out of those experiences Mtuze wrote a story depicting the circumstances of Liwani.

Intambo, is a short story in *Ungakhe uxelele mntu*, about a young political activist, Vuyo, who is sentenced to be hanged after a murder trial in the Supreme Court of Grahamstown. His attorneys launch an appeal while he waits on death row in a prison in Pretoria. Mtuze (1990:49) writes from the inside of the prison, in the cells of the condemned prisoners:

“Ndandibona nje kusisa kusihlwa, ndingazazi ncam nalapho ndikhona, athi akubuza nogqirha ukuba ndiva ndawoni na ebuhlungu ndithi andibikwa hlaba kuba ndiqonda ukuba kubhetele ukufa sisigulo nanguloo mothuko kunokuba ndibone xa ndibulawa.”

(“I used to see as it was getting to day and into night, not knowing exactly where I was. And when the doctors asked if I felt any pain I would answer that I was well. Somehow I was preferring to die by some disease than see myself being killed.”)

Mtuze (1990:50) goes into the inside of the prison by revealing the thoughts of his character Vuyo:

“Kwakuthe cwaka isizungu kuloo ntolongo ngaphandle nje kokusuka kuvakale isingqala somntu ekucaca ukuba woyiswa kukuvalwa yena nokufa ngakumbi xa selede weva ukuba amahlathi aphelile ngakuye, into ayilindileyo yimini kwaneyure kuphela.

“Wawuthandaza uncame, ulile uncame. Ndayifunda iBhayibhile ukusuka kwiGenesis ukuya kwiZityhilelo zikaYohane kodwa ndiqonda ukuba andiyiva yonke loo nto ndiyifundayo. Iyodwa imini yokucinga ngomama nezihlobo zam ezinokuba zintyumpa-ntyumpeka kwembi yona intlungu emva ekhaya. Andisathethi ndakucinga ngaloo ntwazana ndandithandana nayo uLinda ndizibone ziphalala iinyembezi kube umama wayemana ukuthi kum mandingazibhakaxi kangaka kwezi politiki kuba ndiyabona ukuba zimsa phi na umntu.”

(“It was quiet in that prison except only when a prisoner would cry hysterically, obviously unable to stand the situation of being jailed, knowing that his end is near, all he was waiting for is the day and the hour.

“I would pray and pray and pray. I would also cry and cry and cry. I read the Bible from Genesis to Revelations of John and still I could not understand what I was reading. Some days I would think about my mother and my friends who would be obviously in pain with my situation, back at home. It would be worse

when I think of my lover, Linda, my tears would pour down my face. I would remember when my mother would warn me that I must not get this deep into politics because I was seeing the consequences.”)

What comes out more from the thoughts of Vuyo is that he is a religious person who respects life and who draws passages from the Bible (Mtuze, 1990:51):

“Ndandisithi khona ndakufika endaweni ethetha ngokujikwa kwemithetho engqongqo kaMosisi kukufika kweNkosi yethu apho ithi khona thina masibaxolele abo basonayo singaphindezeli okubi ngokubi ndinge mandimbuyise emazulwini uBawo wethu azokumisela loo mthetho phambi kokuba ndife ndingenatyala.”

(“When I think of the changing of the strict laws of Moses through the arrival of the Lord, where He says that, let us forgive those who sin against us. We should not have revenge. I would wish to take the Lord back into heaven so that He can set out this law again before I be killed having no guilt.”)

When you are cut away from all the life you knew and all the things and people you were used to, imagination takes you to unfamiliar territories (Mtuze, 1990:52):

“Ngezinye iimini ndandiye ndiphuphe ndibona umngcwabo wam, ngathi ulapho nomama notata ongasekhoyo, nabo bonke abantu basekhaya. Bonke bayalila logama kuculwa iculo elibuhlungu elithi ‘Zuhlale nam ngoku litshona nje’. Esona simanga sasikukuba ndandizibona ndingcwatywa kunye noLinda, naye elele apha ecaleni kwam kweyakhe ibhokisi. Ndandiye ndimangaliswe kukuphawula ukuba iinyembezi zakhe ziyaqukuqela naxa kusithiwa uswelekile nje. Ndandiye ndithuke ndikhala.”

(“During some other days I would dream of my funeral. My mother and my late father would be at my funeral and all my relatives. All would be crying while a very sad song was sung saying, ‘Stay with me as the sun sets’. The worse thing of all I would see myself being buried with Linda. She would be in her coffin next to mine. I would be surprised to notice tears rolling down from her eyes although she was supposed to be dead. I would wake up from the dream crying.”)

There are two important aspects about the passage above. The imaginative scene where a character witnesses his or her funeral is profound. It is usually used by novelists and film makers of note. In a drama and romance movie *Ghosts of Girlfriends Past*, featuring the Oscar winning actor Matthew McConaughey and Jennifer Garner, the director Mark Waters has for example used this device effectively.

Linda, the girlfriend, re-appears in a poem in *Vingcan' amazibuko* (1982:44), again in a piece written from inside the prison. The poem is *Hlal' ethembeni*:

*Silibonil' ihlobo sithandwa sam,
Neentyatyambo namagqab' amahle
Siwabonil' entlakohlaza sana.
Sivunile naseKwindla njengabanye.*

*Siwabonil' evuthuluk' amagqabi
Xa kusondel' ubusika Linda wam.
Kufundwa ngamava abaxonxi bethu
Kodwa ndithi hlal' ethembeni.*

(We have seen Summer my love
The flowers and the beautiful leaves
We have seen the Spring, love,
We have reaped in Autumn like others.

We have seen when leaves fell off
When Winter was approaching, my Linda,
We learn through experiences of our educators
I say stay in hope.

The Appeal Court ruled that Vuyo was not guilty. Vuyo was called by prison authorities and when told the decision of the court, he could not believe (Mtuze, 1990:52):

“Ndaphantsa ndaxhuma ndaya kuphuma entungo kangangemincili endandinayo. Kwathi kusithiwa mandilinde isidlo sangokuhlwa ndabhebhetha ndanje ndisithi andisafuni noko kutya kuloo mfula wethunzi lokufa. Lona inqindi ndizokuliphakamisa xa ndikhwela kwisithuthi esasiza kundithatha sindise esitishini, ndatsho kwahlokoma ndisithi “Amandla!”.”

(“I nearly jumped through the ceiling as a result of the excitement I felt. When they said I should wait for the supper, I refused saying I don't want the food of that valley of death. I could only raise my fist when I got into a vehicle that was to take me to the train station. I shouted at the top of my voice, “Amandla!”.”)

Mtuze's first formal job was that of a court interpreter, hence his interest in legal matters that also influence his writing.

3.7 Mtuze – The Interpreter

On the 8th May 1961 Mtuze started in his new job as a Messenger Interpreter at the Hofmeyr Magistrate's Court. Like Sol Plaatje (in Willan, 1996:8) who was encouraged to be an interpreter by Isaiah Bud-M'belle, a "very talented ... clerk and interpreter to the Griqualand West High Court in Kimberly" (in Willan, 1996:6), Mtuze too, was tutored by Mr Maseti, a local interpreter in Cradock. As the title suggest, his duties included running around Hofmeyr delivering and fetching this and that; doing some office work, completing application forms for social services, registering deaths and the like; and interpreting in the court. It was a job that placed him in the centre of the life of the town, both black and white lives.

In no time he knew that Cerebos Africa, a salt producing factory, was the major employer in Hofmeyr. The white farmers were the life and blood of the town too. Most Africans would be forced to que outside his office for old-age pension and disability grants. He knew that Africans mainly died from TB and other poverty-related diseases; that Africans died as a result of malnutrition. That Africans were being caught by police for petty theft and theft of stock.

In other words, Mtuze came to Hofmeyr with experiences of oppression. He had heard about the 1950s Defiance Campaign from people who were pleading with his father to move his family from the roadside, *esikhululweni*. People thought that it was dangerous to be on the roadside during those times. But, the Mtuze family had nowhere to go except to live under their wagon that was walled with rush mats. Mtuze, at the time, had eyes to see and ears to hear. In other words, he lived and witnessed these experiences.

Mtuze had tasted the urban stew of oppression at Karoo Creams where he saw, felt and endured the Afrikaner supervisor who breathed hot air down his neck every minute of every day he was there. He had seen the two elderly African men who had been working at the factory for a much longer time. He saw a defeated people who had given themselves up to white exploitation.

With these experiences Mtuze (2007:51) started with his job in Hofmeyr:

The white lady who was our Clerk of the Court was a very friendly person. It was a great pleasure to work with her. I remember one day I wanted to type something on her typewriter since there was only one typewriter besides the one used by the Magistrate himself. I sat on her seat directly opposite the window.

She politely asked me not to sit there, as “people” might see me and complain. I knew immediately that the people she referred to were white people, as my people would not take offence or exception at seeing me sitting in her chair. I obliged, especially as she was so polite. I was hurt, but instead of wanting to fight over the issue I felt sorry for her, as she was a good person completely caught up in a system that she had grown up in or which she had grown up supporting, thus believing every facet of its dehumanizing nature.

Mtuze (2007:52) was forced to develop a ways of surviving within the system of oppression, without succumbing to its dictates and compromising his dignity:

One day a white farmer approached me and asked me whether the court had started. I replied in the negative, as it was just after eight in the morning and the court normally started at nine. When the court started, I called him saying the court had started, and I forgot the matter thereafter, until I was rudely brought to my senses when the Public Prosecutor, Constable Mike Pretorius, approached me. He told me that the farmer had lodged a complaint that he was humiliated at being called into court by a black man. He wanted to know from me what had happened, as the farmer threatened to report the Magistrate to the Minister of Justice.

My statement was very brief ... “I had just finished preparing my office for the day’s work when the farmer approached me and asked me if the court had started, as he did not have his watch with him. I replied that it had not and told him that the court only started at nine in the morning. He then walked away. When the clock struck nine, I instinctively went up to him and told him the time. I did not say he should go into court, as this was his own prerogative. Mine was just to tell the time so that he could decide whether to go into court or not. After all, I did not know whether he was an accused or a witness.” That was the end of the case, much to the delight of Constable Pretorius and the court staff.

It appeared as if it was an attack on Mtuze and his blackness. At the core of it, it was a demonstration of an abnormal obsession on whites that they alone are people. Anything

else was inferior or non-existent. Mtuze wrote a story on this experience in combat with this conceived sense of superiority in white people.

In a story, *Indlel' eya kuMadam* (A Road to Madam), a trusted farm labourer, Jackson, is asked by his employer Rooi Willem, the son of Poggenpoel, who is known by labourers as Madangatye (Flames of Fire), to make any request he wished to make. In a scene before Jackson could make up his mind what to ask from his boss, he thought of asking for a vehicle but he remembered that he cannot drive.

The arrogance of a white farmer who thought that he was being humiliated when called by a black person when, in fact, he had seen it fit to enquire from the black person in the first place, was a matter that Mtuze needed to address. Then, he had another idea (Mtuze, 1990:40):

Kuthe qatha eyona nto ayifuna kunene – umfazi, namfazi umLungukazi onokuthi ancedisane naye ukufumana eyakhe ifama. Uye wabobotheka ngakumbi wandula ukubuza ukuba angacela na, kwathiwa makahambise.

(Then came into his mind something he really wanted in his life – a wife. In fact, a wife who is white who can help him to find his own farm. To this idea, he smiled at himself and came forward to find out if he can make his request. He was told to go ahead.)

This is what followed (Mtuze, 1990:40):

“Thetha, Jackson, unga ndingakwenzela ntoni?” Ujoke watsho umLungu engxamele ukukruquka koku kujikeleza kukaJackson ngathi uzakubulala umkhuluwa.

“Masta, andazi nokuba le nto ndiza kuyicela iza kulunga na kodwa ndicela ukuba undinike uKlein Miesies Emmarentia abe yinkosikazi yam,” utshilo uJackson esothuswa kukujala komLungu wakhe ngoko nangoko.

“Akalgqibanga elo. Ibuye ngathi ziindudumo impendulo ipheleke owekati wona umtsi wathi eqabuka wabe selecinezwe ngedolo phantsi seso sigantsontso.”

(Speak out Jackson, what do you want me to do for you? Asked his boss obviously getting irritated with Jackson who was going around and around as if he was planning to kill a bigger brother for an inheritance.

“Master, I do not know whether my request is alright with you. I ask that you give me Little Miss Emmarentia your daughter to be my wife,” said Jackson shocked at how his boss immediately changed as he looked at him.

“He could not finish those words. The answer came like thunder as the boss sprang on him, held him down under his heavy weight.)

Jackson was saved by the cry of Madangatye’s wife. Madangatye had already instructed other labourers to take Jackson and push him into the furnace. He was ready with his rifle in case Jackson ran out of the fire. When his wife saw what was about to happen, she screamed and caused such a commotion that Jackson could escape. A dog was thrown into the fire in his place, instead, by the labourers. Years later, when Madangatye was living alone on the farm, without his wife and daughter, Jackson paid him a visit (Mtuzi, 1990:42):

“Jackson, andibi kanene wabhubha? Uvela phi?” Labuza ixhego likhwankqisiwe.

“Ndivel’ ezulwini, nkosi yam. Sihleli kamnandi phaya noMadam noKlein Miss Emmarentia wonwabile. Ndithunywe nguMadam ukuba ndizokuthi nceda umenzele idinala emnandi eyenziwe nguwe ngokwakho ...” utsho ngembeko yesiqhelo uJackson.

“Jackson ubuye njani ndiba wafa nje?” umi ngelitshoyo umqeshi.

“Masta, libala ngaleyo, ayisenamsebenzi.”

(“Jackson, were you not dead? Where do you come from now?” asked the old man surprised at seeing Jackson.

“I am from heaven, my Lord. We are enjoying ourselves there with Madam and Little Miss Emmerentia is happy too. I have been sent by Madam to tell you to prepare a delicious dinner on her honour. You must prepare it yourself,” said Jackson with the usual respect.

“But Jackson, how did you come back whereas you had died? The employer insisted.

“Master, forget about that, it is not important now.”)

Surprised at this re-appearance of Jackson whom he believed had died long time ago, Madangatye was angry to hear that his daughter *wonwabile* (is very happy) in the company of Jackson. At the same time, he was longing for his wife. True to the meaning of his name, given to him because of his ways, Madangatye was still stubborn (Mtuze, 1990:42):

“Jackson, andinakho tu ukuthumela ukutya emfazini wam ngelokonya elinjengawe elingcingane ziphuthileyo. Ndixelele nje wena ukuba ndingaya njani na, ithini na indlela eya kuMadam, ndiziyele, kunjalonje nokuba andibanga sabuya akukho nto kuba akusekho nto ndiyihlaleleyo apha,” utsho ngelibuhlungu umqeshi.

(“Jackson, I cannot send food to my wife through a wicked thing like you, who has backward ideas too. Just tell me how can I go to see my wife? What is the direction, I will go by myself. In fact, I may not come back because I have no reason to be here,” said the employer.)

In closing the story, Mtuze’s (1990:43) final paragraph reads:

Umthe ntsho ngamehlo anovelwano, wvakala esithi, “hayi phofu, mLungu wam, indlela eya kuMadam ilula kakhulu ukuba ufuna ukuya ngenene nangenyaniso – idlul’ eontini!”

(Jackson stared at him worryingly. He said, “No, my Lord, the way to Madam is very easy if you really and honestly want to go to her – it goes through the oven!”)

Life as an African among other Africans is not always a sweet affair. Hard lessons were learnt by Mtuze. In the same way that there were many Africans who sold out their people during slavery, there had always been people who would do most immoral deeds concerning other people. There was a time when Mtuze was working as an interpreter in Cape Town. He was a boarder in Mr Kashe’s house. Before Mr Kashe, Mtuze had stayed with maMkhuma, Ntombizodwa, in Hofmeyr where another interpreter had stayed before. This is how Mtuze (2007:50) defines Ntombizodwa:

Ntombizodwa Memani was a very kind person who treated me as her own child. What made her even more remarkable was that she did not have any children of

her own. She strongly believed in the Xhosa saying that a woman bears a child for another woman, which means that every woman must look after another woman's child.

Yet, when Mtuze met Mr Kashe he was forced to buy meat everyday for the evening meals. This was a tall order for a lowly paid Mtuze (1976:38), “Ndibe ngazibika ndisithi inyama ndiyayithanda kodwa undigubile umfo ka Kashe ndacela ukufudukela komnye umzi, lathi elaseofisini, “Nakanye” (Even when I reported this to the office asking for an alternative accommodation, the office refused flatly.)

The matter had to be brought before the Chief Magistrate, Mr S.G.L. Hill. Mtuze was still not allowed to find a place of his choice. The obsessive apartheid state that bullied even the domestic lives of African people, reared its own head against Mtuze (1976:38) as he explains:

... kwathiwa mandikhethe mzi wumbi ingabi ngulowo wodade bomhlobo wam uWilson Soci, kuba kusithiwa andinakuhlala nentombi, usisi nokutsho, esingazalaniyo. Bayazazi iziduko zamaXhosa abeLungu baseKapa. Yandimangalisa le nto kuba ndiyazalana namaMfene. Umama uzalwa nguMaMfene.

(... the office instructed me to find a different place and not that of my friend's sister, Wilson Soci. They reasoned that I cannot be allowed to live with a girl who is not related to me. Imagine, she was *sisi* to me because she was far older than me. These whites of Cape Town, they know Xhosa clans, hey? This was surprising to me, worse I am related with amaMfene. My grandmother is MaMfene.)

The humane manner in which Mtuze related with people wherever he worked is also remarkable. In Hofmeyr in his first formal employment as an interpreter, the magistrate who was also the senior official of the department of justice in that office, Mr Vermeulen, was not happy when he had to separate with Mtuze. At the time Mtuze was being promoted and transferred to Somerset West, in the Western Cape. Vermeulen took his car and drove Mtuze to the next town, Steynsberg, where he was to catch a train. Mtuze (1976:35) remembers:

Andifuni kuthetha ngemantyi yam into ka Vermeulen kuba wathetha amazwi abuhlungu xa sisahlukana kuloo mathafa aseSteynsberg apho waya kundikhwelisa

khona ngokwakhe. “Bayakukudelela xa ufika, kuba weyekile kodwa ndiyazi ukuba inyanga yokuqala iya kuphela ubasule ukubila, bekuhlonipha,” yatsho lendedeba indikhuphela elizweni kuba yayindixonxile, indilungiselela loo msebenzi wokukhonza uluntu ngokuguqula iilwimi kwiinkundla zamatyala.

(I do not wish to talk about my magistrate, the son of Vermeulen. The reason is that he uttered very painful words when we separated in Steynsburg where he was to drop me. “They will look down on you when you arrive, but I know that before the end of the very first month you would have made them to sweat. By then they would be respecting you.” This man said these words while handing me over to the world having trained me, prepared me to serve the people through the work of interpreting in the courts of law.)

Later, when Mtuze was applying for a transfer from Cape Town, his magistrate Mr Hill never wanted to entertain the transfer. At last Mr Hill had to give up. He signed the necessary documents and passed them over to the head office in Pretoria. This is what Mr Hill said the day Mtuze (1976:46) was to leave Cape Town:

“Ndiqinisekile ukuba ucinga ukuba ayinani lento yokumka kwakho kuba siza kubuya sithunyelwe enye itoliki. Thina ke asilahlekelwanga toliki koko silahlekelwe nguwe kuba asisayi kuze sibuye simfumane uPeter Mtuze onguwe. Namhlanje leofisi iphela iyalila.”

(I am very sure that you think that this transfer does not matter much to us because they will send us another interpreter. We have not lost an interpreter here. We have lost you. We will never have a Peter Mtuze again. The staff of this office is in tears, today.)

Mr Vermeulen and Mr Hill represent that layer of committed and astute judicial officials, who see their duty as purely upholding the law. Sol Plaatje had expressed admiration for people like Vermeulen and Hill (in Willan, 1996:337):

... I remember a sentence delivered by Mr Justice (now Sir William) Solomon upon five white men charged with killing two Natives. Passing the death sentence, his lordship said: ‘Perhaps when you were chasing these unfortunate Natives and shooting them down like springbok, you were not aware that you were committing as serious an offence as if you were shooting white men. But I would like you and other men who hold views like yours on this subject, to understand that the law makes no distinction between a man with a white skin and one with a black skin. The Natives you shot were just as much entitled to the protection of the law as yourselves.’ Two of the prisoners were hanged, and three sentences were commuted to various terms of imprisonment.

Plaatje further writes (in Willan, 1996:337) that white judges who applied law equally across the colour bar, endured political indignation:

The late Lord de Villiers once, referring to the case of Chief Sigcau of Pondoland, said: ‘When I ordered the release of the chief, imprisoned on the orders of the Prime Minister, it was stated that I had lowered the dignity of the white government in the eyes of the Native population. But I find the Natives more favourably impressed with the idea that they have the right to appeal against the actions of the white government.

Mtuze was learning much in his job of interpreting. An interpreter must understand clearly the evidence in a case that is underway and must have a good grasp of all the languages that are used in the respective court. He or she will be required to translate, retranslate and cross-translate two or three languages at a time; for the benefit of the accused, witness, the prosecutor, the magistrate or judge and the audience. The interpreter is also required to be audible enough when interpreting, be on the go though not very fast, intelligent enough not to keep others guessing or waiting. He or she must always address the presiding officer, the occupant of the bench, who has to take notes and observe at the same time and carry him or herself with the required attitude for the dignity of the court.

Mtuze took to, first and foremost, understanding “what the accused was saying or ... trying to say, and then transmitting it to the best of my ability in the language of the court, not the language of the accused.” But, it was not an easy job (Mtuze, 2007:83):

I remember almost colliding head-on with Mr Erasmus who was a wonderful Magistrate and a good person in every respect. In the middle of a case, he suddenly said to me, “Say it like he said it.” As usual I immediately reacted with astonishment and said, “I beg your pardon, Your Worship, I cannot follow what you mean. I am telling you what the accused said.” Mr Erasmus in his characteristically kind style, apologized profusely, and we carried on with the case. Even after the court had adjourned, he came to me to apologize, saying that he did not know what he had said.

I knew what he had said and what he meant. My interpretation was probably too smart to have come from the accused, but it did not come from the accused. Only the idea came from the accused. The meaning of the statement came from me, from what I made out of the sense of what the accused or witness said to me. Mr Erasmus was too much of a gentleman to get involved in arguments of that nature.

He would rather withdraw his query, but I knew that he had his doubts about the matter.

There were some white magistrates and judges who were also gentlemen when it comes to matters of law. Mr C.G.H. Bell who was a magistrate in Mafeking in a court where Sol Plaatje (in Willan, 1996:56) was an interpreter is reported to have given lessons to Plaatje:

Mr Bell informed me, when I first came to his office, that interpreting in court and interpreting at a sale of a cow were two different things entirely, and that it was as necessary to cultivate the art as to acquire a knowledge of the respective languages.

Mtuzé's strong point was the importance of explaining the rights of the accused with regard to giving evidence. Mtuzé (2007:84) knew these rights "off by heart":

"You have heard the evidence in this case. You are now given a chance to tell the court what you know about the case before it. You can choose between two things: to give your evidence under oath in the witness box, where the Prosecutor could ask you questions to test your evidence, or you could choose not to give evidence under oath, but to speak from where you are. But, bear in mind, evidence given under oath bears more weight than a statement made from where you are as it cannot be tested by cross-examination. What do you choose to do?"

This was very crucial because many other African interpreters would short-change the accused and simply say: "You have heard the evidence. Is there anything else you wish to say?" These short-cutting interpreters were not helpful to Africans who were unfamiliar with court proceedings. In the days of Plaatje there was a legal phrase that would be used by a magistrate that said, "You are committed for trial." Few words that many uncaring interpreters would, as Plaatje puts it, "consider tiresome to explain its meaning in too many words." Plaatje (in Willan, 1996:58) makes an example of an interpreter who, while translating the phrase, simply would "cut it short at the expense of the prisoner's information":

The interpreter said: "The magistrate says that you will wait for the judge."
(Instead of saying) Your case as recorded will be sent to crown prosecutor ...
After reading it he will say if you are to be tried by the magistrate, by the next circuit judge, if you are not to be prosecuted at all.

African interpreters stood a chance to be trusted by Africans who were brought before white magistrates. The reason for this feeling is the experience Africans had with white interpreters. Plaatje (in Willan, 1996:53) writes that:

The greatest offenders ... are the white men who interpret in Native cases ... They carry into the courtroom an exhibition of extreme superiority of their race over that of the unfortunate wretches for whom they have to interpret, and their translations are then just a matter of form regardless of the interests of justice or the consequences of their callousness.

Plaatje would insist that the job of assisting Africans in white courts needed other Africans, that is, African interpreters. In his words, Plaatje (in Willan, 1996:53) states:

The law guarantees protection to the man with a black skin as much as it does to the man with a white skin, and until you get black interpreters to translate for black prisoners, that guarantee exists in theory only and not in practice.

Errors in interpreting are costly, hence Plaatje (in Willan, 1996:54) would emphasize that each:

... court should have not only a human tool who can reproduce a Kafir or Sechuana sentence in English but one whose conscience will never permit of any augmentation or gambling in his rendition.

The short-cutting interpreters have a reputation of justifying themselves by saying that they are saving the court's time and money, yet, as Plaatje (in Willan, 1996:54) puts it, "the economy of time and public money is no concern of the interpreter. He is only to translate what is going on to moderate length, repetition and impertinence of speech being the duty of the magistrate."

What is most important is that people must be made to know in order to be able to make informed decisions. Also, people must be well understood, that is, the interpreter has to be sensitive to the mannerisms of African speech. When entering a plea, an African in a show of respect for the court may employ a longer sentence which a short-cutting interpreter will guillotine into one word "guilty." In that event an honest man could be sent to jail because of an irresponsible interpreter.

In Mtuze's case the white staff in the courts of the time would be irritated when the court session was dragging longer, demanding more time and work from the officials. Mtuze was seen as someone who was on the side of the accused, but who was difficult to pin down since he followed the law to the letter.

In order to teach the public, especially African people, about the procedures of the court system, Mtuze wrote poems and stories about cases that came to the courts. Mtuze's (1982:8) one poem was *Enkundleni*:

*Sasihleli enkundleni simamele amatyala.
Angene awokuqala bagwetyw' abaphephi-rhafu.
Kulandele amaxila iwagweb' ibhabhalaza,
Angumqod' aya kutshona amanye edumb' amehlo.*

*Kulandele intwazana ezibanjwe ziyabula
Ekuthe emveni koko kwangen' abamapasi,
Engaxoxi umf' oyimantyi ebathombisa bonke,
Ebilile umtshutshisi ewatshintsha amangqina.*

(We were seated in court, listening to the cases
When the first cases started, all tax defaulters were sentenced
Then came those who were caught, still held by hang-over
They were sentenced too, with swollen eyes.

Then came the prostitutes
Followed thereafter by pass law offenders
The presiding officer was hard at work
The prosecutor was sweating, calling one witness after another.)

There were times when Mtuze (2007:73) would cross the line and defend African people who appeared in the court where he worked:

One of the golden rules of an interpreter is that you do not get emotionally involved in a case. Second, you do not have the right to defend an accused in any way, as this would conflict with your responsibility of being an impartial conduit for all the parties in court: the accused, the witnesses and the officers of the court. I knew those rules very well and I respected them, but one day I found myself breaking all of them for the sake of justice.

In a case involving a coloured woman called Kattie, who was charged with abandoning her four young children, “leaving them in the care of her husband, an aged black man, who turned out to be a Malawian national” (Mtuze, 2007:73). The case was continually being postponed because Kattie was nowhere to be found, but one day she suddenly appeared and was standing in the witness box “ready to give evidence against him.” There and then, knowing the awkward position of the Malawian national, Mtuze (2007:74) addressed the court:

Your Worship, thank you for allowing me to draw your attention to something about the case before you. Sir, I have decided to speak on behalf of the accused because he is a foreign black who cannot speak isiXhosa or English for that matter. He does not even realize that as he is standing here today he is the accused and not Kattie.” Then I went on to tell him about the case against Kattie and the fact that she had failed to appear in A Court when the case came on. To the Magistrate’s surprise, I asked for further permission to confirm these points with Kattie, and he agreed once more.

Mtuze led a cross-examination after which he thanked the Magistrate and “left the matter for him to decide.” This illegal act was well executed to an extent that Mr Erasmus was impressed with the “illegal interpreter-*cum*-lawyer” who exposed “the trick that the lady was trying to play on the innocent man,” (Mtuze, 2007:75).

Mtuze teaches society about the ways of the justice system, what is a court of law required to do in society, what are the key elements in making a judgement. At a time when there was no public education about the court system of South Africa for the benefit of African people, Mtuze was doing this through his stories.

In *Umjojo* a short story in *Amathol’ eendaba*, Mtuze writes about a court case that involves a teacher who was alleged to have stolen a chicken. On the day of the case the court building was full. People wanted to hear for themselves how Miss Sogwazile came to possess the chicken of Nogesi Magasi. In a discussion above it was pointed out that one of the fundamental areas that Mtuze emphasised in the justice system were the rights of the accused. What an accused person could do and could not do when arrested and when appearing before a court.

In a scene where police arrive at a school where Miss Sogwazile works as a teacher, rights of an accused are read (Mtuze, 1977:60):

“Phambi kokuba uvule umlomo ke mandikuxelele ukuba nayiphi na into oyithethayo ndiyakuyibhala ukuze isetyenziswe njengobungqina ngomhla wetyala,” utshilo usajini Zibula efeza ummiselo weJaji eyathi eso siyalo masenziwe phambi kokuba umntu azityande igila.

(“Before you open your mouth, let me tell you that anything you will say I will write it down, so that it can be used as evidence of the court case,” said Sergeant Zibula fulfilling what the Judge once stipulated, that every suspect or witness must be warned before saying anything.)

At the school, in the glare of school children, Miss Sogwazile was allowed to sit in the front of the van as a passenger. It was not so much *umjojo* (an embarrassment) at this stage. But, at her place when the chicken was recovered in her bedroom Miss Sogwazile was put behind as a suspect. The worse embarrassment was when the van was driven to the complainant’s place so that she can confirm whether the recovered chicken was the right one or not (Mtuze, 1977:61):

Litshone emini laxela mhla ngomnyama ilanga kwintombi kaSogwazile usajini akuvula ucango lwangasemva kuloo nqwelo amyalele ukuba angene. Unge uhlekwa naziintaka ukuya kwaNogesi owathi besehla nje wabe ehlahla mba esithi, “Benditshilo, yiyo le kweli selakazi inkuku yam.” Utsho esalatha iimpawu ayinakana ngazo loo nkuku, ebhala etyibela usajini Zibula.

(The sun set in broad day light for the daughter of Sogwazile when the Sergeant opened the rear door and asked her to enter at the back of the van. It was as if birds were laughing at her as the van drove to the house of Nogesi who, on seeing them sprang and screamed and said, “I had said so, my chicken is with this thief.” She pointed all her signs on the chicken that indicate that it belongs to her. Sergeant Zibula was taking notes all along.)

The whole manner of arrest impacted on how the case was to be dealt with. Miss Sogwazile raised an important question at that stage, which had to be recorded by the arresting officer. The complainant had visited Sogwazile that morning. In their conversation she did not mention that she was looking for her lost chicken (Mtuze, 1977:61):

Ubuze umbuzo wamnye utitshalakazi esithi kutheni na engakhange atsho nje ngaloo ntsasa xa ebephaya kwakhe loo mfazi ukuthi ufunisa ngenkuku yakhe. Ithe impendulo kaNogesi, “Andixoxi nesela.”

(The teacher asked one question, saying why this woman had not said that she was looking for her chicken when she had visited that morning. Nogesi simply answered, “I do not argue with a thief.”)

Mtuze’s (1977:62) stories have people at heart:

Zazikho iimazi ezazihamba zibetha intsimbi zisithi makuve nosisithulu ukuba ititshalakazi isenyuleni kanti kwelinye icala babekho abathi yehaa abantu baselokishini ngokukhawulela iinkawu zisiya kusela. Eli qela lalizama ukumthethelela lalinanto yayisuka ibe yinkinge ukuyicacisa – ukuba ke utitshalakazi ebengayibi loonkuku, kutheni ukuze iye kukhutshwa ngamapolisa eyitshixele kwigumbi lokulala? Yayiqina xa kulapho inqawa.

(There were women who were ringing bells saying even those who were deaf must hear that a lady teacher was in trouble. On the other hand, others were saying ‘look at township gossipers who find people guilty before the cases are dealt with’. This group that was trying to be on the side of the lady teacher could ill understand one thing – if the teacher was not stealing the chicken how could it be that the police found it in her locked bedroom? That was where they were puzzled.)

How the accused behaved herself in the court room speaks more. Miss Sogwazile was confident when she entered the accused box. When asked if she was guilty or not she answered that she was not guilty. The first witness, the police officer, was called to the witness box. He gave his evidence. The accused did not have many questions for the witness. The next witness, the complainant, was called. This witness discredited herself by using a language that was not acceptable in court. She was warned accordingly. This is the evidence of the accused and it was given from the witness stand (Mtuze, 1977:63):

Akuba enikwe ithuba ubethe koozelekazi utitshalakazi esithi uthe ehleli endlwini yakhe ngale mini kwangena elo thokazi lenkuku lityhobeka, ngolwamagqaza urhatya. Uqale ngokuligxotha kodwa lithe lakutyhudisa lifuna ukungena endlwini wagqiba kwelokuba aliyeke, aligcine ukuze lingabi sisisulu samasela okanye sezinja zelokishi. Uligcine kwigumbi elingaphambili ukuze umninilo alibone, alikhombe engaxelelwanga nguyi kuba wayesoyika ukuhamba ebuzisa ngalo kuba wosuka nawuphi na umntu athi lelakhe aze athi akubanjwa athi ulithenge kuye. Isizathu sokuba alitshixele kwigumbi lokulala ukuphangela kwakhe kukoyikisela ukuba abantwana bosuke badlale ngalo nowakhe

umqhagana owawuhlala endlwini lo gama engekayenzi indlwana yazo. Uphethe ngelithi yena ebengenazo iinjongo zokuyiba loonkuku.

(When she was given a chance to explain herself, the teacher was brief when saying that, she was resting in her house this particular day. A chicken came running into the house in the early evening. She tried to chase it away but when it pushed itself inside the house, she decided to leave it. She would protect it from thieves and dogs of the township. She kept it in her lounge so that if its owner came in, he or she could identify it easily, and would recognize it without her asking. She was afraid of asking everyone about this chicken because people would want to claim it and when caught would then change statements to say she sold it to them. The reason why she locked the chicken in her bedroom when she went to work, she was afraid her children would play with the chicken and with her *umqhagana* (hen) that she kept inside her house since she had not yet built a place to keep it. She closed her evidence by saying that she had no intentions of stealing that chicken.)

The prosecutor could not find holes in the evidence of Miss Sogwazile. She answered all his question confidently and in line with her evidence. It was time for the magistrate to make his verdict (Mtuze, 1977:63):

“Andaneliseki,” iqale ngelitshoyo imantyi, “kukuba iinjongo zakho bezikukuyiba lenkuku. Kukho amathandabuzo kule nkundla malunga nezona njongo zakho. Lukho lona urhano koko lenkundla ayinakugweba ngorhano lodwa. Umthetho unyanzelisa ukuba kwityala elinje kufuneka bucace ubungqina obudandalisa injongo yokuba. Akubanga njalo kweli tyala. Ngezo zizathu inkundla ikufumanisa ungenatyala.”

(“I am not satisfied,” the magistrate started by saying, “that your intentions were to steal this chicken. The court has doubts about your real intentions. There is a suspicion, however. But, the court cannot convict on the basis of suspicion. The law stipulates that in a case like this one, the evidence on the intention of theft must be very clear. It has not been so in this matter. With those reasons, the court finds you not guilty.”)

An interest in law that Mtuze had when he was younger, in defending African people against the monster of oppression was put into full swing. But, that interest was entrenched when he joined South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).

In 1969 Mtuze started with SABC Radio’s Xhosa language station called Radio Bantu, today’s *Umhlobo Wenene*, as an announcer. At the time he was under the impression that

it was “the best job under the sun” (Mtuze 2007:97). The idea that his voice would enter many African homes throughout the country including those falling huts in the rear far corners of the white farms “was overwhelming ... The honeymoon did not last for long. I realized right from the day I walked in that I had made the wrong choice,” writes Mtuze (2007:97).

The government of the day viewed state institutions such as the SABC as very vital organs of its propaganda machinery. They made sure that while the work of broadcasting, that is, announcements on air, reading of news, radio drama and so forth, would be in the hands of the speakers of the respective African languages, the monitoring of the staff and the management of the institution would remain in white hands. This situation presented a dilemma for new entrants such as Mtuze (2007:97):

We were aware that the station had to follow the government propaganda line, but we expected to be able to do so on terms that would be acceptable to us, terms that would at least give us more credibility in the communities we were serving. We wanted to have a say in what was happening, but we had little say. The whole institution was directed and run from Johannesburg and policed locally. The policing was harsh and unsympathetic.

So, in the same way that people were being employed, they were leaving the institution in droves as Mtuze (2007:98) put it:

Those on the outside, like me, were dying to come inside and those inside were scrambling to get away. Those in charge were capitalizing on the popularity of the medium, even going as far as saying that if people wanted to go, the road was wide open.

There was a serious mental control by whites over blacks within the SABC. “They were there primarily to control the announcers and check on what they said over the air ... They sat behind their glass panels, completely estranged from the announcer” (Mtuze, 2007:98).

There were regular Wednesday meetings at Radio Bantu. These meetings were “tribunals where we were castigated for our wrongs. Nothing was too petty to be discussed there,”

writes Mtuze (2007:98). The procedure that was followed in the Wednesday trials irked Mtuze (2007:98) who had by then some experience in legal matters:

The trial officer would raise an issue, confirm its wrongness with the senior guys, who would invariably side with him, and then use the consensus to bash the young offenders.

It was at this stage that Mtuze became “*igqwetha lomzi*” (the people’s lawyer or the lawyer-in-residence). He represented a colleague, Mr Gqomfa, who was being tried “for using incorrect isiXhosa over the air.” He won the case. He represented Mr Oxley Maya charged “for use of a four letter word over the air ... a dismissible offence.” He won. He represented Mr Gabela for using “an unusual coinage over the air, “*ingongoza*” when he presented his very popular programme, *Ntab’ ezikude ngamasithela*. The term was onomatopoeic as it reflected the rhythmic throbbing sounds of the African jazz songs he liked to play,” (Mtuze, 2007:100). He won the case.

Then it was Mtuze’s turn to be tried. This is how he remembers it: “every dog has its day.” Mtuze (2007:101) was charged for “hit(ting) the gong too hard in between spots.” Interestingly, his case took “several days to prepare”:

After several hours of argument, I succeeded in getting a “no ruling” verdict, much like the notorious “no one to blame” verdicts on deaths in detention in the old South Africa. The manager threw his hands in the air and said, “I am not God, and I do not know what happened in that studio on the night in question. Go and try to work together more harmoniously but bear in mind, Mr Mtuze, that you cannot challenge the programme controller on how he does his work, not even with thirty years of experience. I thanked him but added, “Sir, you are perfectly correct. If I could not challenge his thirty years of experience, it means that my version stands as I did not even try to challenge him with my less than one year of experience. I only said “Sorry, I did not mean to hit the gong hard, if I did.”

Living and working in various cities of South Africa, being a witness to the unending ill-treatment of African people, Mtuze could have decided to pursue personal advancement in exclusion of humanistic concerns, or he could have chosen to slow down in the sight of an unending struggle that was surely draining his energy, and causing more pain than gain. Instead, Mtuze sat down and committed himself to writing and publishing

autobiographies, novels, poetry and short stories that were set in the life of African people.

Mtuze has published three autobiographies. These are *UYese namahla-ndinyuka obomi* (Jesse and his Ups and Downs), *Indlela Ebhek' Enkundleni* (The Road to the Court) and *An Alternative Struggle*. *UYese namahla-ndinyuka obomi* was written when Mtuze was still in his teens. He struggled to find a publisher for the book and could only publish in 1995. *Indlela Ebhek' Enkundleni* was published in 1976. *An Alternative Struggle* was published in 2007, a year into his retirement. *Ungakhe uxelele mntu* (1990), and many of his creative works, is a book of short stories that are, by themselves, somewhat autobiographical.

These autobiographies are a succession of works that collectively make up a history of ideas and are a thrust of Mtuze's imagination. They are "a process in the contemplator's mind that seems to overwhelm him with awe and a sense of mystery; a state of mind that in turn creates a comforting illusion of infinity" (Mphahlele 2002:413). Mtuze wrote *UYese namahla-ndinyuka obomi* after seeing himself in print, having published an article in a school quarterly magazine called *Umhlobo wabantwana* (The Children's Companion). This is how Mtuze (2007:175) remembers that moment:

To see my name in print was a great sensation, not only for myself but also for the whole school. The article was entitled *Ithemba Alidanisi* (Hope does not disappoint). It clearly revealed my own aspirations and the hope I had that all would be well in the future.

Mtuze received a prize of fifteen shillings from the editor, Mr G.G. Mjali. Seeing for the first time, something written by a farm boy had gone across the limited boundaries of the farming area and had found print, Mtuze declared in front of his family that he will write a story of his life. There and then, his elder sister, Ethel or Nokoko as she was known, jumped and wagged a finger at him and said, "ungakh' ulinge ubhale ngathi apha" (never write about our family). His father simply smiled approvingly.

For Mtuze this moment was the beginning of a rendering of a mind that was “overwhelmed with awe and a sense of mystery” as Mphahlele puts it. The process of sorting life details, thinking over and over again, deciding which ones to pick and which ones to leave created this “comforting illusion of infinity” that resulted in three publications.

Let us explore Mtuze in “search for meaning, revelation or affirmation of a work and its intellectual thrust (Mphahlele, 2002:410). Mtuze was 35 years of age when he published *Indlel’ Ebhek’ Enkundleni*. His maturing writing is reflected in the introduction of the book when he writes as a Xhosa man who is new in the court where affairs are deliberated, a young man who awaits the approval and acceptance of venerated men. For Mtuze, the house of Xhosa is a representation of agency, an African agency. It is an anchor that has been built over time, approved and passed after an examination of experiences by senior counsel. This agency is etched within the African society by means of a live assessment and reassessment of an individual.

Indlel’ Ebhek’ Enkundleni was intended to interest other writers in the writing of autobiographies. Clearly, Mtuze was impressed with earlier biographers such as Tiyo Soga, Mqhayi, John Knox Bokwe to name but few. He was composing himself in line with these great writers and also as a witness of history and, for the purpose of this study, a witness of the life of his people. Already, he was familiar with selecting particular events that reflected on shared experiences and ways and means of overcoming life hurdles.

In this book Mtuze uses expressions such as Black Nation (*isizwe esiMnyama*) showing the seriousness he placed on writing. His stature was rising and was even noticed by a senior African educationist, Mr K.B. Tabata who made this comment in the preface of *Indlela Ebhek’ Enkundleni*, that the book must be read by youth because “kuyo lozuza ukukhuthazwa ukuba lube neenjongo eziphakamileyo ebomini. Kule ncwadi baya kubona ukuba iimeko neenzima azinakho ukumdakumbisa nokumdodobalisa umntu ozimiseleyo” (they will be encouraged to have higher ambitions in life. Through this book the youth

will realize that trials and tribulations of life cannot cow down one who is committed to succeed.) Tabata makes a rare open challenge through his remarks on Mtuze when he writes:

Ukwenza amagqabantshintshi ngale ncwadi kulula kum kuba uMadiba ndimazi kakhulu kangangokuba ndicela umngeni kubo bonke abo bacinga ukuba bamazi ngaphezu kwam. Kaloku umbhali ndikhe ndahlala naye ekhaya, kuloo lokishi yaseKaladokhwe, eMagqubeni.

(It is not difficult for me to introduce this book. The author Madiba is very well known to me. I challenge all who think they know him better than I do to come forward. I lived with the author in my home in the township of Cradock called Emagqubeni.)

The statement “UMadiba ndimazi kakhulu” (Madiba is very well known to me) can be proven by a letter that Tabata wrote on the ordination of Mtuze (2007:158) as a priest:

Dear Peter

Perhaps this letter is premature; however, the pressure on my shoulders is so great that I might forget to put down my sentiments and feelings about your success and achievements.

When you obtained the PhD degree, I thought you had reached the zenith of your academic career, but this was not to be so. I must say that you have reached these milestones without being pompous and without losing the common touch. You have been modest all the way.

I have never doubted your religious nature and inclinations, but I did not expect you to enter the field of ministry fully. In a materialistic world, spirituality invariably plays the second fiddle, but this has not been the case with you. A selfish person, after a PhD degree, would have followed a more rewarding career financially but you decided on a career, which aims at saving the souls of humanity from destruction and perdition. I believe this is the correct course, as

society can never change until and unless humanity changes. You have taken a bold and unselfish decision.

Your latest achievement has prompted me to recall 1955 when I first met you. I have actually traced the trend of events and your achievements since those days. The upward mobility in your career is due to your dedication and determination. An outstanding example of a man who overcame the artificial barriers and obstacles imposed by society. Oh! Our children could emulate the virtues you have displayed in your life.

I am touched and at the same time thrilled to the extent that if I were to continue this letter I might obscure the main objective, namely, that of congratulating you on your latest achievement. I have always admired JS Mill, the utilitarian, who said years ago that if religion improves the lives of man then it is true.

Share these thoughts with MaMpinga and your son.

Yours sincerely

KB Tabata

Mtuzi presents his large family and its extended relations as a representation of an African family. His identity, as is the case with many African people, consists of a full appreciation of his lineage. In one of his duties looking after his father's donkeys, Mtuzi (1976:9) writes about his meeting with "ubaw' Granini Kazi."

Kwathi ndisanyawuza loo ntenga yam ndathana nqwakaqha negwangqa elixhonti lomfo ontshebe intle intama ukuba ulilungu leBandla likaKrestu. Ndazibona sendimisa ndithetha nalo mfo unesithozela kuba wandikhawulela ngoncumo olwanditsala okweminatha. Lo mfo wayesebenza kuloo mqaqo kaloliwe logama mna ndandisebenza kumendo weemoto apho zazisitya khona iimbongolo zikabawo. Kwaba msinya ukuqhogana kwethu, njengamaphuthi ahlathi nye, mna nobawo uGranini Kazi lowo.

(As I was riding my bicycle I saw this handsome bearded man who appeared like a member of a church of Christ. I found myself having stopped and engaged in a conversation with this dignified gentleman since he had attracted me with his infectious smile. This man was a worker on the railways and I was working next to a national road where my father's donkeys were grazing. We clicked immediately, me and this older man Granini Kazi.)

As shown earlier Africans, are never estranged from each other. Wherever they come across each other there is a natural connection and, they would relate with ease and can enter into serious exchanges much faster. In this case Kazi immediately offered to share his day's provisions with this new friend, Mtuze, because they had immediately become real brothers.

It was not only the taste of white bread that overwhelmed Mtuze during that first meeting with Kazi, a kind of bread he had never known in his farm life; there was a much higher purpose that was intergrated in his rather uninspiring job of shepding the family donkeys. He could now look up to a warm interaction that was respectful and also enlightening.

In another life learning event on the farms involving yet another older man, Mbamba the son of Mbulawa. Mbamba sends a young boy to Jibilikile to fetch keys for the dairy. Jibilikile passed the bunch of keys to the boy with a comment saying Mbamba must only take the item he needed to take and never touch the other items of the farmer, implying that he must not steal. The boy said it like it was to Mbamba (Mtuze, 1976:11):

Lubuye kancinane ngathi aluzukwenza nto ufafa lwakaThangana. Luye ngqo kuJibilikile owaseley' eyilibele naloo nto ebeyithethile lwambamba ngengalo lunguMbamba nje; lwamrhuqela phandle. Lwalubonakala ngokujala ukuba luzalel' endle. Luqale ngombuzo okrakra othi wakha walubona lusiba ntoni na athe akungawuphenduli uJibilikile lwakha lwamthi hlwa hlwa ngempama lusamrhuqa njalo ukuya ngakwamLungu apho laliza kugwetyelwa khona elo tyalakazi.

(He came forward slowly that huge man of Thangana. He went straight to Jibilikile who had obviously forgotten all that he had said earlier. He caught him by his arm, putting meaning to his clan name Mbamba. He dragged him outside. It was clear he was angry.

He started with a stinging question that asked, at what stage did Jibilikile see him stealing and what was the item? When Jibilikile could not answer he clapped him with an open hand and pulled him towards the farmer's house where this matter was to be resolved.)

It is reasonable to note that Mbamba would never have taken lightly a suggestion from a child like Jibilikile that he could be a thief. This was a blatant show of disrespect. Mbamba instructed Jibilikile to follow him to where the matter was to be resolved (*apho lalizakugwetyelwa khona elotyalakazi*). As they were walking across the yard Jibilikile decided to run for his life but he could not escape. Mbamba was as fit as a fiddle. He caught up with him immediately. He emerged holding him in his arm as he was patting with a tongue hanging from his mouth.

What Mtuze seeks to emphasise with this incident is in how Mbamba finally behaved himself. At first, Mbamba had been angered by the comments of the young man. Then, he became furious when the young man thought he could escape retribution. When everyone was expecting to hear screams, Mbamba decided to free the young man. Jibilikile could not believe it himself because. He was so shocked that he fell on his buttocks and immediately stood up and ran away. He could never forget how he escaped the old man.

At this stage in the narrative, Mtuze (1976:12), through the narrator, explains the actions of Mbamba:

Wancuma ubawo waphendula ngelo zwi lakhe lipholileyo wathi, "Bubungangamsha bendoda ukungawuvumeli umsindo uyilawule kanti liphawu lobukhwenkwe ukuligweba ngomsindo ityala."

(He smiled and replied with his soft voice and said, "It is the might of a man not to allow anger to reign and it is also a sign of immaturity to follow anger when resolving a matter.)

This representation speaks for itself, a life of learning from the elderly and the wise. This is the African way. The next chapter will explore writings and works of Mtuze that represent African humanism, in particular, the humanism of Xhosa people.

3.8 Summary

This chapter dealt with the biography of Mtuze, starting with his childhood on the white farms. The chapter discussed Mtuze's family, in particular his father. The discussion went on to deal with Calata who was Mtuze's mentor. There was a discussion of the Pass Law struggles that Mtuze fought in his life time, in the areas of Port Elizabeth, Middleburg, Cape Town and Pretoria. A discussion of Mtuze working as an interpreter in different courts of law and at the Xhosa radio station of SABC. The discussion was interspaced with Mtuze's writing. In the next chapter, a discussion on selected works that represent what was discussed in Chapter 2, African humanism, will follow.

Chapter Four

Mtuze's novel and short story: A Representation of Consciousness and Society

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter Two we discussed African humanism and its definition in terms of two critical areas of its existence and operation, consciousness and society. We argued that consciousness represents the mind, ideas, capacity to develop, depth of awareness, the ability to grasp and survive even in the most unfamiliar or hostile conditions. Society refers to a social order, a way of life, how society makes sense of itself and with nature around it. We discussed the dialectic relationship between consciousness and society; that consciousness is shaped by society, one's immediate human environment. These are one's parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and teachers in the community and in the schools, the whole neighbourhood, and one's clan. The struggles of the community make up the content and the context of one's consciousness. Chapter Three sought to deal with these aspects in as far as the life of Mtuze is concerned.

We discussed language, the medium of life, wherein everything about a society exists and is encapsulated. We also discussed African humanism in comparison with European humanism. The study will now focus on Mtuze's novel, *Alitshoni lingaphumi*, *Amathol'eendaba* and *UDingezweni*.

4.2 Alitshoni Lingaphumi

Mtuze, through his novel *Alitshoni lingaphumi*, gets to do what Biko (1978:105) later proposed when he wrote:

Thus a lot of our attention has to be paid to our history if we as blacks want to aid each other in our coming into consciousness. We have to rewrite our history and produce in it the heroes that formed the core of our resistance to the white invaders. More has to be revealed, and stress has to be laid on the successful nation building attempts of men such as Shaka, Moshoeshoe and Hintsa. These

areas call for intense research to provide some sorely-needed missing links. We would be too naïve to expect our conquerers to write unbiased histories about us.

Mtuze, goes into the history of Africans who lived on white farms, who were thrown off of the farms to live on the side of the road, later in shanty towns, and being forcibly removed again to what the white government called black reserves, living in destitution. Parallel to these events is a history of a protracted struggle on the farms, on the side of the road, in the shanty townships, on the lands where African people were dumped. As consciousness, African humanism is portrayed in *Alitshoni lingaphumi* as an inner resource through the main character in the novel, Phangindawo, the son of Melitafa. Mtuze's composition comes out as if informed by Biko (1978:106) who emphasized that "... culture must be defined in concrete terms. We must relate the past to the present and demonstrate a historical evolution of the modern black man."

As Mtuze treats the African life on the white farms, he engages in a consciousness-raising processes. *Alitshoni lingaphumi* is a portrayal of a society in struggle, the emergence of leadership from within the very society, the contradictions, doubts and the confidences of society. Mtuze encourages the minds of the readers to think in an elaborate way about problems that Africans had had to confront under those circumstances.

Alitshoni lingaphumi is about life on white farms, about the experiences of African farm labourers, men and women and their children. It is a story of joy and pain written from the inside by a writer of the same experiences, an excellent portrayal of life in a semi-slave-like situation. It is a story of struggle with its heroes and heroines.

On writing about African farm labourers Mtuze (1997:3) writes about being ruled through sounding of a bell, from the time they woke up early in the morning till late in the afternoon:

Ibethe njengesiqhelo intsimbi kaNkomiyahlaba ibizela amadoda emsebenzini ngenja ixukuxa. Kwangoko ibe yimiqodi ukugxalathelana amadoda ekrwabaza kuloo qabaka yasebusika ukuya emsebenzini.

(The bell of Nkomiyahlaba rang as usual at dawn, calling all men to work. Immediately there were rows and rows of men, crushing the winter frost, going to their work places.)

The next time that bell rang, Nkomiyahlaba, a name workers gave to Van Der Walt, had already demonstrated his absolute power over workers (Mtuze, 1997:3):

Eyesibini intsimbi ibethe selegxothe amadoda amabini waqesha amanye amathathu kwangaloo mini endaweni yawo kunjalonje elikhupha phandle elithi into ayifunayo yimfuyo, asingobantu.

(When the second bell rang he had fired two men and had hired three more in their place, and he was out with his word that all he kept on his farm was stock, not people.)

The bell is the ruler. It dictates the movement of every farm worker Mtuze (1997:4):

... amaxesha entsimbi (nga)kaMaqhajana, kaNkomiyahlaba, kaBhetyangophondo, kaVan Vuuren, kaVan Straaten, ndibala ntoni na? Lonke ixesha lelabo ngaphandle kokuba ibethile intsimbi.

(... the times between the bells belong to Maqhajana, Nkomiyahlaba, Bhetyangophondo, Van Vuuren, Van Straaten, why do I count. When the bell has rung it is their time.)

Nkomiyahlaba, since he was white, could afford to do as he pleased with black people. A blanket system that involved laws and their enforcement ensured this white privilege. African farm labourers had to fear the white farmers (Mtuze, 1997:4):

... kukuthi “Baas” kuVan Vuuren, kuVan der Berg nokuthi “Klein Baas” koonyana babaqeshi babo, kungenjalo, indoda ithathe ibhatyi yayo.

(... it is to say “Baas” or “Master” to Van Vuuren, Van der Berg and to say “Klein Baas” or “Young Master” to the sons of their employers, or else, a man should pick up his jacket and go.)

Mtuze (1997:4) writes about the adaptive capabilities of farm labourers. They knew their plight and they knew what was required of them. They had to offer their employers the respect they demanded:

Ngethamsanqa, yonke loo nto ayiyongxaki kumntu wasefama. Wayede enze nangaphezulu kunomnqweno womqeshi wakhe athi “My Baas” okanye “Mlungu wam”. Nento yokuba umLungu wakhe athi “Boy” yena xa ambizayo yayingabahluphi.

(Fortunately, all that was no problem to farm labourers. A farm labourer would do even far better than the employer’s expectation. He would say “My Master” or “My White Man.” And, even when the white farmer called him “Boy” he was never bothered.)

The pressure was on the powerless to always prove their subservience to the all-powerful white farmers whose power showed itself even in their clothing (Mtuze, 1997:3):

Ngelo xesha uNkomiyahlaba ubetha ngehemphe, uthi enyola le abe enyola leya. Uthi esezilimeni abe esemfuyweni yakhe yeenkomo zohlobo ezimngenisela ikhipha lemali ngobisi lwazo kanti nakwimiboniso yolimo.

(At that time Nkomiyahlaba would be wearing only a shirt. He would be pointing to this and that. One minute he would be at the plants and the next minute at his stock of cows which earned him so much money through the sale of milk and the agricultural shows where they were exhibited.)

All the time the farm workers were aware and, therefore, knew how to behave towards their employers (Mtuze, 1997:4):

“Xa ungumqeshwa kufuneka unyamezele, wenze intando yomqeshi wakho,” yayisitsho inkolo yabasebenzi abadala, inkolo ababezalelwa kuyo, bakhulele kuyo, babhubhele kuyo.

(“When you were a labourer you had to obey and do what pleased your employer,” so was the belief of old farm labourers, a belief they were born into, grew up with and would die knowing.)

Mtuze (1997:4) writes that farm labourers who received very low wages in addition to a staple monthly ration consisting of calculated litres of milk, a portion of meat, some sugar, tobacco and wood.

Mtuze depicts racism in his works. He is not pressured by a feeling of seeking to be seen as treating black characters and white characters equally in *Alitshoni Lingaphumi*. His treatment for both black and white is based on experience. Mr Albertus Lategan, for

example, a white farmer who was known to be generous and who treated his labourers humanely, comes from a family of the same values. When he was a child living on the same farm, his father and his grandfather treated African labourers as people. That is why Maqhajana, a name Lategan earned from his workers, was always looked up to as “umntu”, a human being, as compared to other farmers (Mtuze, 1997:3):

UMaqhajana wayenobuntu nemfobe kubaqeshwa bakhe, exatyisiwe nangabasebenzi bakhe. NoNongqwaza inkosikazi yakhe wayengaba bantu bathetha gqitha phofu engenalubi.

(Maqhajana was friendly towards his labourers, and they respected him too. His wife Nongqwaza was a talkative type but was not nasty.)

Mtuze (1997:4) writes about the wisdom of farm workers in dealing with the all-powerful white farmers, their unbecoming behaviours and conventions that the labourers had become familiar with and knew that they could not change. Theirs was to work and not to hope to change the behaviour of their employers.

The life of an African farm labourer provided for Mtuze a whole world that he observed with great interest, the concerts, the dancing and the rituals and drinking that took place there. He notes that it was a life lived outside the demands of the toll of the bell. Mtuze’s voice represents the face of many silent Africans who had endured humiliation on white farms, but who would never wish to be associated with farm life. In his literature Mtuze raises gruesome details of life under those conditions in the way that wa Thiong’o (2006:68) walked “... in the footsteps of William Blake, the English poet, who once said that we must try and see the world in a grain of sand.”

Explaining how they spent their leisure time, Mtuze (1997:5) writes:

NguMgqibelo evekini. Abasebenzi batshayise emisebenzini ngentsimbi yokuqala. Bonke basemakhaya, bazityela izinto zabo. Abaneebhayisekili bayazilungisa kuba kuza kuphunywa zizinto ezinkulu kuhanjelwe abahlobo kwezo fama zingabamelwane.

(During Saturdays, when labourers had knocked off from work at one o’clock, they are all at their homes, enjoying their time. Those with bicycles are mending them because they will go out and visit friends’ on the neighbouring farms.)

He describes what the sons of farm labourers do in their own leisure time (Mtuze, 1997:5):

Itshilo impempe kaNdokwenza unyana kaMphethuka icela umngeni, uphondo ngabula bona, kuyo nayiphina inkwenkwe ezivayo. Wayethe qabavu phaya ngasebuhlanti. Loo mzabalazo wokuvana amandla wenzeka ekuseni kusuku lwangeCawe. Kaloku ubusuku baphezolo bebuchithwe kumgcobo wolutsha kwalapha kwaNkomiyahlaba.

(Ndokwenza, the son of Mphethuka, blew his whistle, in a challenge for any boy who wishes to fight. He was dancing out there next to the kraal. That struggle of weighing each other's strength was taking place on a Sunday morning. The previous night had been spent in some youth concert on Nkomiyahlaba's farm.)

Most certainly, Mtuze observed very closely the ways of African boys on the farms. His comments about their physique, their muscles and what they represent, whistles and the dance while challenging a volunteer, present the intricacies of a life of his people, his own people. Mtuze retains onto paper that ounce of life that showed itself in the sons of farm labourers. This was his life too. He was made by it (Mtuze, 1997:5):

Itshilo enye inkwenkwana ithelela ngokuntyontya ikhwelo ithaphuka kumzana ongezantsi. Iziculela ingonyana engade iyicule iphimisele. Mhlawumbi izithembile okanye igxotha intaka ngale ngonyana kuba ingatsho impempe ziyatyhwatyuwa iingwatyu zamagwala.

(Said one younger boy emerging from a house on the bottom side, singing his own song with a whistle. Maybe he was very sure of himself or was trying to arrest his fears because when the whistle has been blown, cowards become dead scared.)

Umdlalo wentonga (the traditional game of sticks) was a hard combatative game, played by boys in their prime. It was a way of growing, a way of testing one's strength against others. Just like a game of rugby where every player has to commit to his part in co-ordination with others, one entered *umdlalo weentonga* in defence of one's territory.

The objective was to represent the boys of one's area. A win in the game was not only a win for the player. It raised the integrity of one's area of residence. It was a gain for all in

the vicinity. Conquering boys of other areas was viewed as an expansion of a domain. It was a tale that would be told in the future.

Mtuze takes the reader to a side conversation between mQoma and Qhinebe. Both are watching this build-up to the stick-festival. MQoma is concerned that the festival should remain a game and not escalate into a fight. Further, mQoma wishes that the boys be reminded that “sonke ubona nje siyazalana” (all of us are a family) (Mtuze, 1997:6). It is a word of caution from a man who came through the game too. In his time “umdlalo weentonga yayikukutya kwam ngeentsuku zam. Inene kunyanisiwe xa kuthiwa akukho nkanga idubula ingethi,” (stick playing was my game in my day. The saying that every man has his day still rings true.)

Somewhere in the conversation mQoma remembers that greetings, the most important opener for all interactions, were not exchanged (Mtuze, 1997:6), “Yho, molo Gqugqugqu, Haha, Dukanamahlathi, ingqondo yam ikula makhwenkwe” (Oh! Hellow Gqugqugqu, Haha, Dukanamahlathi, pardon me, my mind was still with those boys.)

It is in the nature of African people to draw lessons of life from the ways of nature. They enrich their languages and enhance their lives from the things they observe with birds:

Usuka ubone selungakwazi ukuzifumana iintaka ebekulula nje ukuzifumana,
ndithi mna selushiywa nalgwede eli.

(You would find yourself unable to catch the birds you used to catch easily
before, even the fledgling one would out-run you)

Acoording to (Mtuze, 1997:6), animals “ayegagene neembila zithutha,” (they had met their match).

It must be emphasised that the game of sticks serves also as a social indicator of the stage of growth for the boys. The son of Mphethuka, Ndokwenza, who started the stick festival

that particular Sunday morning, emerged victorious over his contenders. His victory demonstrated the fact that as he was about to enter the school of circumcision, he was leaving behind an impeccable record on his name, hence Mtuze (1997:7) writes that:

Awathobile amaqulo amakhwenkwe akwaNkobiylalaba nto leyo ebonakalisa ukuba ayayivuma inkwenkwe kaMphethuka ukuba yinjinga, ingaya kwaluka ingenaxhala lakudelwa.

(The boys of Nkomiyahlaba farm had given up, showing that the son of Mphethuka is a champion, he could go to circumcision unperturbed.)

The analysis of the games and comparisons with earlier significant ones, offered entry for the son of Mphethuka into the hall of fame. This was a game played in good spirit and the son of Mphethuka walked majestically to a special place where he was going to be entertained by those he had outplayed (Mtuze, 1997:7).

The best time for all sections of the farm labourer population was Christmas Day when they were all gathered together for gifts such as trousers, boots, and khaki shirts for men, head scarfs for women, berets for girls and sweets for children, (Mtuze, 1997:9). The gifts would be followed by an end-of-the-year speech by the farmer himself. Like his father (Ndyikityela) and his grandfather (Magwaxaza) before him, Nkwancube would emerge from the farm house with his wife and children. They would sit themselves in some higher position and their labourers would sing the favourite hymn (Mtuze, 1997:8):

AbaNtsundu nabaMhlophe
Mababulele kunye
Mabavakalise bonke
Baculele iNkosi
Tarhu! Bawo,
Yiba nofefe kuthi.

(Blacks and Whites
Must pray together
And must be heard together
Singing for the Lord
Mercy! Oh Father
Bless us!)

The African voice in the narrative, the deliberate centring of the African perspective in the narration, is reflected in a number of instances. Firstly, Mtuze discusses the bell and what it meant to the lives of the farm labourers. Secondly, the exaggerated respect in the language is outlined, and thirdly, the rationed supplies are mentioned. The discussion moves to a game of sticks and its conversations on the sidelines, the festivities of Christmas period and the Xhosa names that African labourers gave to the white farmers. Mtuze's intention is very clear. The actions of the farmers are viewed in context. White farmers are well-known to the African labourers. The names that were used for them were composed out of experiences in relation to their ways of relating with the labourers. All the time their behaviour was closely monitored by African labourers.

The African genius and turn of phrase is well portrayed during the making of the speech of Nkwancube. He stood up majestically to address his subjects, "Happy Christmas!" the labourers and their families all replied, "Same to you!" (Mtuze, 1997:9):

Lawo yayikuphela kwamazwi esiNgesi owawunokuweva kwezo fama kunjalonje wonke umntu wayewazi kakuhle.

(Those were the only English words you would hear on those farms, and everyone knew them very well.)

Nkwancube gives the following speech to the farm labourers (Mtuze, 1997:9):

"Sibuye safikelela ekupheleni komnye unyaka obe nempumelelo engathethekiyo. Ndinibulela ngongazenzisiyo ngenkxaso yenu enyanisekileyo. Ukuba beningekho bekuya kuba nzima kum ukuzifeza iinjongo ezinkulu endinazo kulo mzi. Ndineendaba ezimnandi endiniphathele zona kulo nyaka – bonke abasebenzi bam baza kufumana uchatha emivuzweni yabo. Injongo yaloo nto kukubakhuthaza ukuba bathi chatha ngaphezulu kulo nyaka ekunyuseni imveliso. UBaas Charles uphindela eyunivesiti apho aya kufundela ubugqirha bemfuyo ke ngoko laa mzi wakhe useNgxondorheni uza konganyelwa nguPhangindawo njengesona sicaka sam sinyanisekileyo nesona sidala. Ndiyathemba ukuba niyakumxhasa ngamandla enu onke. Nize niyitye kamnandi iKrismesi, nikhe niyeke ukunxila, Phangalele," uphethe ngaloo nkqulo kuhleka wonke umntu, abanye besithi yindlamanzi umntwana kaNowebhile waziwa nangabeLungu.

(We have come to the end of yet another most successful year. I am very grateful for your sincere support. If you were not here it would have been very difficult for me to fulfill my aims on this farm. I have very good news for you this year. All

my labourers will receive an increase in their wages. The reason for that is to motivate them to add more in increasing the yield. Master Charles is going back to university where he will study for a doctorate in animal husbandry. His house down there in the valley will be occupied by Phangindawo, my old trusted servant. I believe you will support him with all your strength. Enjoy your Christmas, stop drinking Phangalele,” he ended with that joke causing everyone to laugh, with others saying that this child of Nowebhile was a famous drunkard, even whites knew him.)

Words and the power they possess for the speaker and those who are spoken to, come from this speech. The reinforcement of the master’s race mentality, and the humour that boasts control over those who are dependant are the key points in the message. Mtuze had infiltrated the mentality of the white farmer who is also a “king” on his farm. This meeting is not only used to demonstrate power relations, but also the minute details of skin contact between black and white. Mtuze (1997:9) writes, “Eneneni uninzi lwabo lwaluqala ngeKrismesi ukusondela kangako kubeLungu” (Truly, Christmas time would be the first time many of them would come that close to whites.)

Nkwancube would be dishing out gifts to men: “ziphelekwe ligwada lamadoda elinqabe kunene kwezo fama (together with brandy that was so scarce on those farms). His wife would be with the women and children and their baby-sitter, Liziwe, would receive more than others since (Mtuze, 1997:9) she was “impelesi eyayimpelesa uBaas Dick, yeza ngoBaas Frik yagqibela ngoBaas Charles lo uya eyunivesiti namhlanje” (she carried on her back Baas Dick, and then Baas Frik and later Baas Charles who is now going to university).

This narrative ends with a reflection of the days’ event after Nkwancube’s had mentioned the promotion of Phangindawo who would become the farm’s foreman and would live in the Baas Charles’s house at Ngxondorheni. Nosamani, the wife of Njinoyi and Nowini, the wife of Bhedi, are Mtuze’s women characters who support mQoma and Qhinebe, whereas Phangindawo remains the favourite (Mtuze, 1997:10):

Ndimncamile uPhangindawo, linamandla ikhubalo lakhe lendawo endingayaziyo. Kwaswa kwanyuselwa yena yedwa, kwaswa wanconywa ngulo mLungu. Amadod’ ethu asebenza aphants’ ukubhubha mhla ngeziya nkumbi kodwa intoni na, uNkwancube waphuma noPhangindawo ngathi ibinguye yedwa obehamba

erhaxwa yityhefu yeenkumbi kule mimango. Akukho nto ibuhlungu njengokusebenza ubusuku nemini kuze kusuke kunconywe lowo ungaphaya kwakho okanye kunyuselwe intandane.

(I have given up on Phangindawo, his charm is very strong wherever he got it. Every now and then he gets promoted, he alone gets praised by this white man. Our men work themselves to death but Nkwancube mentioned only Phangindawo as if he was working alone. There is nothing more painful like working day and night, and suddenly another gets the praises or a favourite gets promoted.)

The response of Nowini is very intelligent and incisive (Mtuze, 1997:10):

“Thul’ ufe, sisi. Loo mkhethe soze uwuncede. Kaloku into ethandwayo apha ngala ma-athalala oonomgogwana abangoovumazonke. Awethu amadoda kaloku akashwabanisi minqwazi xa athetha nomLungu yaye umLungu amjonga ezinkopheni zamehlo xa ethetha naye. Yinto endithi mna ukuba ubumbonile ukugogoshela ucwethe ezibon’ ubukhulu, ngathi laa fama iphiwe yena,” utshilo uNowini evuthulula iilokhwe zakhe ebuyela emzini wakhe emva kokugwadla ezomhla weKrismesi nesihlobo sakhe esisenyongweni.

(“Be dead silent my sister. You can never stop this discrimination. The most loved things here are these yes-men. Remember our men do not fold hats when talking to whites, and they look at them in the eye. Did you see how inflated was he, seeing himself so big as if that farm has become his own,” said Nowini dusting her dresses going back to her house after discussing the events of the Christmas day with her best friend.)

These social comments about Phangindawo are very important when the future role of this character is considered. Further elaboration on this matter will follow later as the rise of leadership gets discussed. In the meantime, social relations will be discussed in relation to a scene of stock theft on the farm. Mtuze’s characters, as can be noted, consist of wives, sons, and a farmer who was a son and a grandson of so and so. There is a persistent connection with others, suggesting compactness and continuity in families. Phukaneka and Sabile, the sons of Qekelana, had stolen a sheep (Mtuze, 1997:10):

Baphume nemazinyo asibhozo yona igusha kuloo nkampu, kwangoko bacinga icebo lokuzikhusela kwabo bathanda ukuyabula apha esithubeni ngemiGqibelo. Bayifake engxoweni, bayinxibisa idyasi, bayithwalisa nesankwane. Eneneni bathe bakuyiphakamisa ngale mikhono yangaphambili, bayixhaga, yagqiba yangumntu.

Badidizelisene nayo njalo bengangxamanga bade bakude kufuphi nezindlu, bezinxilisa.

(They stole a full grown sheep in the camp and, immediately, thought of a plan to protect themselves from the prying eyes of those who like to be out on Saturday evenings. They placed the sheep in the bag, fitted it with a coat and a hat. They lifted it with its front limbs and held it on both sides as if it was a human being. They staggered with it and when they were near houses, they pretended to be drunk.)

Fearing to be noticed by younger boys who had come out of a house to relieve themselves, Phakaneka and Sabile quickly struck up a dialogue to deceive those possible onlookers (Mtuze, 1997:11), “Shoti, uza kusiwisa unxila kakubi kangaka nje ... obu tywala nibuthanda kangaka buza kunenzakalisa nibuthanda kangangokuba nibeke nobomi benu esichengeni nje. Imela iyanazi. Ziza kujuba phaya ezo zankwanana. Ndiyawazi mna amakhwenkwe ale fama ngentloni yawo akudibana neqhilika yeenyosi,” (“Shoti, you’ll make us to fall for drinking this much,” ... This alcohol you love so much such that you put your lives at risk, will land you in trouble. Knives will know you. That hat of yours will fall away. I know the boys of this farm when they have drunk their home-made brew).

The two thieves, after slaughtering and cooking the meat, shared the spoils with others. This generosity is carefully choreographed (Mtuze, 1997:11), “Mayine imvula,” (let it rain). Immediately, Sabile picked up a bucket of water and sprinkled it on the sleeping children, waking them saying it was raining. While half awake and half asleep, they were fed with meat. The children ate and enjoyed the meat.)

In a police raid a few days after the theft, traces are hard to come by. On a door to door search, police come to Qekelana’s house and asked the children if “bayigqibela nini na inyama yathi impendulo ngokuya kwakusina,” (when did they last eat meat, the answer was the day when it rained). The dominant view that emerges in the drama of the theft of sheep, is that of Mawethu, the father of the house. He was concerned with the image that was cast on his household as a result of the police raid. In the first place he was completely unaware of the crime committed by his sons.

He managed to gather information from his children, who talked about a short man called Shoti, who was always being helped to walk since he drank heavily. The walk past the

house by a drunken Shoti, supported on both sides by Phukaneka and Sabile, was always followed by police who were looking for a stolen sheep. Although the police could not crack the case ultimately, Mawethu spoke sternly that (Mtuze, 1997:13):

“Ubusela lihlazo yaye abunakuyekwa. Sidume kakubi kule fama ngenxa yamasela ambalwa,” utsho ngamandla uGatyeni omkhulu.

(“Theft is unacceptable. People know us in a bad light on this farm as a result of a few stock thieves,” Gatyeni emphatically made his point.)

His wife retorts (Mtuze, 1997:13):

“Sakuthini ukungebi xa inyama inqabe kangaka kwezi fama?” kubuza uMamQocwa.

“Uya kuba wedwa, ubhantinte wedwa, MamQocwa, ndisale mna ndisitya lo mkhono siwufumana ngekota,” utshilo uMawethu.

(“How shall we not steal when meat is so scarce on these farms,” asked MamQocwa.

“You’ll steal alone and be convicted on your own, MamQocwa. I will remain here eating this little meat that I receive every three months,” said Mawethu.)

4.2.1 The rise of Phangindawo

Mtuze (1997:14) writes about the education and training of farm labourers by other labourers who had learnt from the farmers. When Phangindawo, the son of Melitafa, assumed his duties at Engxondorheni, he improved the operations there. This was seen in the output of the farm as Nkwancube became the envy of other farmers. These farmers started to send their labourers to Ngxondorheni to receive the training that would improve their skills. The whole exercise was formalized by the opening of a training centre and Phangindawo became the head of the new training institution.

From a man who was seen by the wives of other labourers as the lackey of the boss, Mtuze turned Phangindawo into a campaigner for worker’s rights. Once he had acquired that rare skill of being a trainer and an important resource to the entire farming

community, Phangindawo began to bargain for the rights of the labourers. He was now in a powerful position.

Nkwancube boasted that it was because of his good treatment of his labourers that had brought success to his farming. The son of Melitafa, Phangindawo started to canvass for certain changes in the life of the labourers (Mtuze, 1997:14). He started by asking for the establishment of a school. He was not happy seeing children not attending school and others who were working on the farms, whereas they were of school going age. He had sent his own children to his sister in Graaf Reinet, but he knew that not all farm labourers could send their children to towns for education.

He believed in the education of children (Mtuze, 1997:14):

“Imfundo engenabuThixo ifile, ivelisa iindlavini neenjubaqa kuphela,” utshilo uPhangindawo ecela isiza secawe athe akusifumana waba ngumntu wokuqala ukuthutha amanzi ukuba kwakhiwe, wangowokuqala nokubhaptizwa.

(“Education without God is dead. It produces thugs, instead,” said Phangindawo as he was pleading for a site to build a church. When he succeeded to get the site, Phangindawo was the first man to fetch water for the construction of the church building. He was also the first one to be baptized.)

This representation of education within the ambit of Christianity is a true historical fact. It reflects how western education was introduced to Xhosa people of the Eastern Cape. Both in the rural and urban areas, education for African children took place in church buildings. Once a site was successfully negotiated, a church building would be erected and it would serve as a school and a place of worship. African priests who were also trained teachers would come in and work with the people, building an African future.

In addition to education and Christianity, Phangindawo championed the cause of the rights of women. He was concerned that widows were being thrown off of the farms. He spoke to his boss, Nkwancube, (Mtuze, 1976:15):

“Angathini umntu ukufela emsebenzini emva kwemininzi yona iminyaka yengqesho enyanisekileyo kanti usapho lwakhe luza kugxothelwa esikhululweni?

Kuthiwa maluqeshwe ngubani esikhululweni?” kubuza uPhangindawo kuNkwancube ngenye imini.

“Apho ngekusithiwani? Kubuza uNkwancube

“Ngekuvulwa amashishini anokuthi aqeshe aba bafazi babhujelwe ngamadoda, kubekho ifama karulumente apho banokusebenza khona bafumane nendawo yokuhlala.”

(“How can it be that when a farm labourer has worked all his life diligently, and dies working on the farm, yet his family would be thrown off of the farm?” Phangindawo was asking Nkwancube one day.

“What should happen, instead?” asked Nkwancube.

“Businesses could be established to absorb these widows into employment. A farm could be opened by government where they can work and also be accommodated.)

Phangindawo also fought for the right of receiving pensions upon retirement as well as a centre for the aged. He would insist that (in Mtuze, 1997:15) “Into yokugqibela, mLungu wam, yimbuyekezo kubasebenzi okanye kwiintsapho zabasebenzi abathe benzakalela okanye bafela emsebenzini,” (The most important thing, Master, is compensation to the labourers and to their families who were injured or had died on duty).

“Ngathi kufuneka sikwenze iNkulumbuso yeli lizwe,” wayeya aqhule atsho uNkwancube.

(“I think we should make you the President of this country,” Nkwancube would joke.)

Phangindawo was a man who emerged from the ranks of farm labourers who were born and raised there; who never received any formal education. His statement, “Ekugqibeleni ude wabonwa nandim ndingomncinane,” speaks to a new beginning. Because of their humanism, African people are intelligent and bold enough to reinvent themselves in the circumstances they find themselves in. Even in the arena of the struggle for rights in the workplace, Africans would make their voice to be heard.

Writing about a rebellion led by *amakhwenkwe* (uncircumcised boys) when they refused to work since normal food rations had not been provided and workers had been working on empty stomachs for two days, a stand-off between the boss, Nkomiyahlaba, and the boys ensued (Mtuzze, 1997:17). Police were called in to arrest the boys who were seen as “*abanasimilo, baza kubona abasebenzi bakhe*,” (disrespecting and inciting other labourers).

Mpumlo, the head of the police, after hearing the case, ruled in favour of the striking boys. He reasoned that no one can work on an empty stomach. Nonetheless, Nkomiyahlaba dismissed all the strikers, saying “*mabaphume baphele ke emzini wakhe*,” (they must get out of his house) (Mtuzze, 1997:19).

One of the cruel experiences on the farms was when families were being thrown off of the farm. They would be forced to live on the side of the road, in what was known as *esikhululweni* (temporary place to stay just like a waiting room in a train station) (Mtuzze, 1997:20) writes:

Kwezo ndlela zicanda-canda eso sithili saseMetele abantu bayimiqodi ezikhululweni. Yimfuduko phezu kwemfuduko kwindlela evela ngaseRhafu, yimfuduko phezu kwemfuduko kwindlela evela ngaseKaladokhwe, yimfuduko phezu kwenye imfuduko kwindlela evela ngaseNopoliti, yimfuduko phezu kwenye imfuduko kwindlela evela ngaseRichmond.

(On the roads cutting through the district of Middleburg, people had made make-shift homes on the side of the road. It was a forced removal over another forced removal on the road that came from Graaf-Reinet, a forced removal over another forced removal on the road from Cradock, a forced removal over another forced removal on the road from Noupoot, a forced removal over another forced removal on the road from Richmond.)

It would happen during seasons of drought when farmers were not making any gain and were retrenching labourers. Later, when new farming methods were being introduced, labourers had to be laid off in favour of new machines, when milking, cultivating, planting and digging of furrows were mechanised. What it meant for Africans was that their families would no longer be allowed on the farmlands. The only places where they could build their make-shift homes in those areas of Middelburg, Graaf-Reinet, Cradock

and Noupoot was next to the national road. In cold weather conditions, they lived in the open air with their young ones without food.

Here is an example of a labourer whose account was recorded by Sol Plaatje in 1913, at the time of the Land Act (as cited in Shober, 2013:20):

The baas has exacted from him the services of himself, his wife and his oxen, for wages of 30 shilling a month, whereas Kgobadi had been making 100 pounds a year, besides retaining the services of his wife and of his cattle for himself. When he refused the extortionate terms, the baas retaliated with a Dutch note, dated the 30th day of June 1913, which ordered him to ‘betake himself from the farm’ of the undersigned, by sunset of the same day, failing which his stock would be seized and impounded, and himself handed over to the authorities for trespassing on the farm.

Children and those who could not stand the heat and the harsh conditions on the road, simply died. There were no cemeteries to bury them. They had to be buried next to the road. “Akukho manzi, akukho zindlu zangasese, kuyingxaki nje ecaleni kwaloo ndlela,” (there would be no water, no toilets, it was very problematic on the road) (Mtuze, 1997:21):

Abayekanga ukubhubha ababhubhayo kanti abemanga abazalwayo kwelinye icala. Liyanda inani loo Nondlela, ooDingani, ooNonteleki nooNomashwa kanti bakho nooTyekwezwa nooLahliwe.

(While others were dying like flies, there were others who were being born. More and more names derived from the situation of living next to the road were there, such as Nondlela [Road], Dingani [Suffer], Nonteleki [Removed], Nomashwa [Bad Luck]. There were also Tyekwezwa [Spilt Out] and Lahliwe [Thrown Out].)

Phangindawo, the new champion of human rights, reappears in the narrative and leads a delegation to meet the government authorities on the plight of the people (Mtuze, 1997:21):

“Kungathi ukuba kunokuqhawuka isifo apha ungalubona usizi, inyanisile lendoda,” ungqine watsho uMnumzana Bestbier umhloli wempilo omkhulu.

“Kufuneka amancedo esikhawu apha,” uvakele esitsho nomnye umaqhuzu kucacile kuba unovelwano yile mbandezelo.

(“If there could be an outbreak of a disease it could be pathetic, this man is correct,” agreed Mr Bestbier, the chief health inspector.

“We need emergency intervention here,” another observer said, clearly feeling pity on seeing the desperate situation.)

This is non-fiction in fiction, a faction narrative. Mtuze through *Alitshoni lingaphumi* highlights the history of the establishment of a shanty town called Blikkiesdorp in Middelburg. The families of farm labourers who were more than 200, had to build shacks in Blikkiesdorp Township. Conditions had not changed much. There was still no water and no sanitation. Residents were forced to overburden the few amenities of the already over-crowded township nearby. *Indlala nokufa* (poverty and death) were still stuck with the people.

Mtuze writes about the day authorities came into Blikkiesdorp and, hastily set up water taps and toilets and opened up streets. There was a visiting government official from Pretoria, known to Xhosa people as Magqabakadliwa (the one whose leaves cannot be eaten). Magqabakadliwa came with an entourage (Mtuze, 1997:22):

Eneneni, ngemini eyaziwa ngabo ubonakele umtyino weemoto ujikeleza eso sixeko, eso sinunzela singqendevu kwisihlalo sembeko kucacile ukuba iliso lidla ukudla kwalo. Zihambe zimisa, kuphunywe, kwezinye iindawo kubonwe sisalatha, siqwalala, maxa wambi silinganisa nangezandla. Ngalo lonke elo xesha silandelwa libubu lamagosa akwarhulumente. Kuye kwacaca nje mhlophe ukuba lowo umLungu ungaphaya kooVan Blerk nooMichau, izingqwindi zaseMetele. Kanti nabeLungu aba banazo iinkosi ezigqithe ooMuller nooSeligman izikhakhamela ezinemizi ngamihlanu nenyambalala yezicaka?

(Indeed, on a day known to them a convoy of vehicles was seen driving around that settlement. There was a dignitary of some sort, sat at the back seat and looking through the window. They would drive and stop and would step out of their vehicles. In some other places the dignitary would be seen pointing, bowing his head and sometimes using his hands. All along there was a huge delegation of government officials following the dignitary. It was clear that the dignitary was more important than Van Blerk and Michau, the rich men of Middleburg. Even whites have chiefs amongst themselves who are bigger than Muller or Seligman who own five houses each and a crowd of servants.)

The voice in the narrative emerges from the ranks of the people. The attention on the important guest and on his body movement, comparing the dignitary with known local prominent white figures, is an expression of feeling and a projection of oneself onto the surrounding world. The outside world is being explained in terms of the internal feelings and thoughts of the narrator. This idea of retaining the voice within the suffering people speaks to their power. It is their story and it is told in their terms.

The white authorities had come to people whose authentic authoritative governance structures, consisting of *iinkosi* (kings), *izibonda* (headmen), *iinkonde* (elders), *amanyange* (veterans), *amaphakathi* (councilors), had been changed by the unending quest for land since theirs had long been seized (Mtuze, 1997:22):

Babekho abathetha ngoNgangelizwe ebaThenjini, ngoNqwiliso emaMpondweni, uGonya eChwarhu noGushiphela eThamarha, ngokutsho kooyise nooyisemkhulu.

(There were those who talked about Ngangelizwe of the abaThembu, about Nqwiliso of the amaMpondo, Gonya at Cwarhu and Gushiphela at Tamarha [names of kings and their places], as sourced from their fathers and grandfathers.)

The apartheid government policy of Separate Development is also being addressed in *Alitshoni lingaphumi*. Coloured people were weeded out of the townships where they had lived alongside with African people. They were being resettled in separate townships and billboards were being put up outside labour agencies with inscriptions such as, KUQALWA NGABANTU BEBALA (FIRST PREFERENCE ARE COLOURED PEOPLE) (Mtuze, 1997:28):

Bekusithi kwakuphuma umntu oMnyama esithubeni kulindwe uNdevuzibomvu athumele umntu weBala. Kothi ukuba abekho, nto leyo eyayingafane yenzeke, kwandule kuqeshwe umntu oMnyama. Loo nto ke yayiye yenzeke ukuba abeBala abalufuni olo hlobo lomsebenzi. Kwada kwanda intetho ethi, “Ndisaya kuzihlelela umhlelwa womsebenzi kwaNdevuzibomvu.”

(Whenever a black person was fired from employment, they would allow Ndevuzibomvu to bring in a Coloured person. But, when there were no Coloured people who were interested in that particular job, something that was rare at the time, another black person would be hired. An expression was coined as a result of all this, and people would say, “I am going to pick up a job that is not needed by Ndevuzibomvu.”)

The idea was Divide and Rule. But, Coloured people were refusing to be removed from their traditional homes in the townships, so a special police force was established to deal with them. Soon, that police force became permanent and carried on terrorizing the entire township (Mtuze, 1997:23):

Ungene xa kulapho uNdevuzibomvu nezibonda zakhe ooNgenabhatyi, ooMatrasi, ooTikemnyama nooSikhotshi, babamba nawuphina umphinzinyana weBala okhe wabonwa edakasa kuloo lokishi yabaMnyama.

(In came Ndevuzibomvu [Red Beard] and his councillors Ngenabhatyi [No Jacket], Matrasi [Mattress], Tikemnyama [Black Tik] and Sikhotshi [Cart]. They arrested every coloured person they saw in the township.)

Alitshoni lingaphumi is a work of history. This character, Phangindawo, is confronted by a policeman of the same special force, who identified as the headman, (Mtuze, 1997:23):

“Molo, sibonda,” utshilo uPhangindawo, “iyawa yintoni na izinto zakwaChwama nizenza ni na kwangentseni?”

Ugeqezise intloko kabini kathathu uSikhotshi wandula ukuthi, “Uyabona, bawo, ezo politika zikaCalata azizi kuninceda nto ngaphandle nje kokunifaka enkathazweni ‘gou-gou’.”

“Yintoni efakisa enkathazweni kuloo nto?” kubuza uPhangindawo ethe nyaka.

“UmLungu mdala, tata, uyifaka intlanzi enkonkxeni ayivalele ungaze ulibone necala ayifake kulo. Iliso lakhe libona nzulu kunjalonje,” utsho edlula uSikhotshi.

(“Hellow, headman,” greeted Phangindawo, “what are you doing to the children of Chwama [Coloured people] early in the morning?”

Sikhotshi shook his head twice and for the third time. Looking at Phangindawo, he said, “You see, old man, those Calata politics of yours will never help you at all except to put you in big trouble.”

“What puts one in trouble with this?” asked Phangindawo.

“The white man is indomitable, old man. He is able to put a fish in a tin and close it such that you will never see how it got there, in the first place. His eye can see everywhere,” said Sikhotshi passing.)

The introduction of a real life character such as Rev James Calata, who was a known political activist in that area, is very critical in determining how true historical events place into context Mtuze's narrative. Phangindawo was not aware of Calata. He was old enough to know what the right thing to do was. And, the apartheid government, through its security system, believing that it could fool itself into thinking that in African communities there were a few 'bad apples,' the Calatas of this world, is well reflected in the dialogue between the policeman and Phangindawo. To demonstrate that ineffectiveness of the demonization of political activists, Phangindawo answered his wife who enquired about uSikhotshi, as follows (Mtuze, 1997:24) "Suka wethu, ungaphika nezi zibonda zigeziswa yintlutha? Akandixeleli ngoCalata endingamaziyo nangezisele neepolitika?" (oh my dear, it is these Councillors who are well fed by government. He is telling me about a Calata I do not know and about prison cells and politics).

Mtuze's (1997:24) use of humour is ever-present:

Uphendule watsho umf' omkhulu emana erhabula ikofu yakhe iliso lakhe
limilile kwimazi yakhe ecikizwe kunene.

"Uguga nobuhle bakhe," ucinge watsho ethe cwaka umnene.

(That was how Phangindawo responded while drinking his coffee, his eye stuck on the figure of her beautiful wife.

"She ages with her beauty," thought Phangindawo silently.)

Alitshoni lingaphumi is a journey; from the white farms of the Middelburg area, to the side of the road, into the zinc houses of a shanty town, to being loaded onto a train and sent to the dry land of Msobomvu. It is a depiction of the plight of the people of Middelburg, of many families who include the Mtuzes. Msobomvu is a direct reference to Dimbaza near King William's Town in the Eastern Cape. The forced removal was a cruel violation of human rights, (Mtuze, 1997:27):

"Pakishani impahla zenu, nizidibanise kakuhle, elowo ayipeyinte igama lakhe yonke impahla yakhe," utshilo wona umyalezo ophuma kwizibonda.

Ibe yiloo nquleqhu abasemagunyeni behambisa ipeyinti simahla, abantu bemi bume bepeyinta iimpahla zabo.

“Peyinta nenja yam, mama,” itshilo inkwenkwana xa isiva ukuba zonke izinto ezihambayo ziyabhalwa, phofu ingazi ukuba ooGcinumzi nooDanger abahambi.

“Indlu yomntu ophumayo iyakudilizwa, ngoko ke akukho mntu uya kusala apha emva kokuba kufudukiwe,” ubuye watsho umyalelo wokuvala amakroba watsho aphela amaphupha kwabo babencwase indawo kuloo matyotyombe abantu abafudusiweyo.

(Pack your belongings and bind them together. Paint your names on your luggage,” that was the warning coming from councillors.

Those who are in authority were distributing paint for free. And, people had to mark their belongings.

“Please paint my dog, mama,” said a young boy who had heard that belongings were being painted, unaware that the Gcinumzis and Dangers [names of dogs] are not being removed.

“Every vacated house will be demolished, therefore, there will be nobody left here after the removal,” so was the warning of the councillors filling in any doubt there may be. Even those who thought they would move into the vacated houses, lost hope.)

The apartheid government employed every trick to persuade the people to agree to be removed. In order to deal with any possible doubt or resistance, they supplied the people with tinned fish, cans of jam, butter and loaves of bread, (Mtuze, 1997:31) “Khumbula ke ukuba yonke loo ntlutha ifika kubantu ekukudala belambile” (Remember that all that food was given to people who had been living in poverty.)

Many belongings were not allowed onto the trucks and the train. People had to leave behind things they valued, even materials that would help them build their lives in the unknown destination, had to be left behind. Children were separated from their pets, (Mtuze, 1997:31):

Lalikhutshwe latsola elithi izinja, imfuyo, iinkuni namacangci zonke ezo zinto azingeni ndawo emfudukweni. Kwaba buhlungu kwayiloo nto kubantwana ukwahlukana nezinja neekati zabo abazithandayo.

(It was announced that dogs, animal stock, wood and zincs were not being removed. It was so hurting for children who had to separate with their dogs and cats, pets that they loved so much.)

As a child who witnessed suffering, Mtuze uses the voice of a child to add humour, but more to amplify the impact of the suffering. The pain of being removed from your land, leaving grudgingly sites of all life and worship, graves, hills and mountains of ancestors was unbearable (Mtuze, 1997:31):

Uloliwe wokuqala ukunduluka eRosmead utsho ngesikhalo esibuhlungu ngathi uyahlola, waxhuzula, iyure elandelayo yaphela enqanqaza ephinya-phinyela kuloo magophe eng'ong'ozele elwandle emi ngeembambo ngabafuduki ababeneentliziyo ezinezingqala ngenxa yokuwanikela umva amangcwaba ooyise nooyisemkhulu.

Kambe kube buhlungu ngakumbi yakuthi imbongi uNyokonyibhoxo phambi kokuba anduluke loo loliwe:

(The first train to leave the station of Rosmead pulled and rang a bell that sounded in a hurting way. The next hour the train was moving through turns going towards the sea, full to capacity with the removed people whose hearts were bleeding because they were leaving the graves of their fathers and grandfathers behind.

It was more hurting when the poet, Nyokonyibhongo [Provoker of Pride], recited his poem.)

In an act of resilience, Nyokonyibhongo, in a poem that he recited when the first train left the Rosmead railway station, speaks directly to Phangindawo (Mtuze, 1997:32):

*Hambani sinijongile magorhandini!
Barhole ngwevu kaMelitafa barhole!
Barhole Phangindawo id' ibe yeyakho barhole,
Barhole thole lomCube, Zondwa, barhole.*

(Go! You heroes, our eyes are on you
Lead them, son of Melitafa, lead them
Lead them Phangindawo till it be yours
Lead them, son of Cube, Zondwa, lead.)

He makes interesting comparisons with Piet Retief who represent the rulers of the day.

Nibhetele kunoRetief nakunoPotgieter

*Bona bahamba ngeenyawo bawel' imilambo.
Nina nikhwel uloliwe ninejem nebhotolo,*

(You are better than Retief and Potgietier
Who walked on foot across the rivers.
You are on the train
You have jam and butter.)

The importance of this poem is in its power to educate. The poet was a deep thinker. He spoke out to encourage others to think along with him. He wanted his people to question the supposed invincibility of their situation, that the position of subservience was not a God-sanctioned condition. It had to be changed. The poet was aware that the ruling race; the white authority, the 'baas', 'miesies', 'klein baas', 'klein miesies', they all believed that it was good and natural to handle African people as sub-human. They were fulfilled by doing all the kinds of things they did to African people. That was what they had come to know and had seen all their lives. The poet rose and spoke to the mind of the African and expressed that wherever they were dumped, that was their land. He used his poetic muscle to thwart a psychological control.

*Kuba lonke kakade lelemu ngemveli.
Nokuba niy' eNtshonalanga lelemu,
Nokuba niy' emaNtla nisaya kwelemu.
Lelemu emaZantsi magorhandini,
Lelemu naseMpuma, nazalwa kulo.
Andib' uXhosa wavel' eNtl' esiy' eZantsi
Ukuze lonke elo libalelw' eAfrika?
Bathi bayachitha kanti benz' imbumba.
Baba bayasasaza kanti bayafumba.
Hambani, lo mhla wohlal' uhleli,
Sisithi ngumhla wokubuyelana kwamathambo.*

(In fact, the whole country belongs to you
Even if they take you to the West
The West belongs to you
Even if they take you to the North
The North belongs to you
Even the South belongs to you, heroes
The East belongs to you
You were born there
Isn't it that Xhosa came from North to South?
So that all that territory becomes Africa

They think they are dividing yet they're unifying us
They think they're separating us yet they're putting us together
Go, this day will remain in memory
This is the day of the gathering of human bones.)

The removal was swift. In three months' time Blikkiesdorp was no more. Rebellion was even with the pets that were left behind. They escaped from their new owners. They would stand where Blikkiesdorp once stood, and would cry to the heavens for a life lost. The action was tough on employers too. If they were found to have employed people who were supposed to have been removed, they were charged and fined by courts.

Phangindawo, the fighter of people's rights, lived with his people. When they were removed, he was with them. When they were dumped at Msobomvu (Dimbaza in real life), Phangindawo was there. When they ran out of their provisions, jam, bread and butter, Phangindawo stood up on their behalf and confronted the authorities of the new town (Mtuze, 1997:38):

Uzigqibile iiofisi uPhangindawo, ukusuka kwekaMnumzana Vermeulen, uMantyi oyiNtloko, ukuya kwekaMnumzana Van Rensburg ojongene necala lemisebenzi. La manene ayesuka amangaliswe kukusithetha kwakhe kakuhle kangako isiBhulu, nto leyo eyayizithambisa lula iintliziyo zawo, nomfo wasefama selemana ukuthi Meneer qho.

(Phangindawo had visited all offices in the new town, from that of Mr Vermeulen, the Chief Magistrate, to that of Mr Van Rensburg who was responsible for public works. These gentlemen were always shocked at hearing pure Afrikaans language being spoken by Phangindawo, and that would soften their hearts. The man from the farms would also keep repeating 'Sir' every now and then.)

Just like Rev James Calata, Phangindawo persisted in campaigning for education, knocking on all doors in order to build a school for Msobomvu (Mtuze, 1997:39):

Uqale phantsi umfo kaMelitafa ukubongoza abasemagunyeni ukuba bakhe isikolo kwalapho eMsobomvu. Lo gama leyo isahamba indlela yayo wayengayekanga ukukhuthaza abazali ukuba babathumele esikolweni abantwana ukuze iziphathamandla zibone ukuba imfundo ixatyisiwe eMsobomvu.

(The son of Melitafa started afresh in pleading with the authorities for the building of a school in Msobomvu. While that was going its way, Phangindawo would be encouraging parents to send their children to other schools. The reason

being that those in authority had to see that the people of Msobomvu valued education.)

On the side of the road, there was no water. In the shanty town of Blikkiesdorp, there was still no water until the arrival of the government official from Pretoria. In Msobomvu water was unhygienic and it caused diseases in the population. This was a burden Phangindawo, the son of Melitafa, was prepared to shoulder. As if that was not enough, during heavy rains, Phangindawo was there to help the aged in their soaked houses, at all hours of the night, (Mtuze, 1997:40):

Kubonakele isithathana sethotshi kanye ngelo thuba, simana singena siphuma kwezo zindlu zinamaxhego namaxhegokazi axakene namanzi. Bambalwa abantu abasibonayo kuba imvula ayiyekanga ukuna. Likho eli qaqobana labantu ligcamfuza kuloo manzi lihamba linceda amaxhegokazi namaxhego. Phaya ngaphambili ibinokuba ngubani omnye ingenguye unyana kaMelitafa, uPhangindawo ngegama? Kaloku lo mfo wayengakwazi ukungabonakali kwindawo enentlungu okanye enonxunguphalo lwalo naluphina uhlobo. Kude kwasa besenza into enye.

(At about that time a light from the torch could be seen coming in and out of those houses where old men and women lived and could not deal with the invading water. Few can see this light because it has not stopped raining. There was also a small group of concerned people who were helping old women and men. Who would it have been if it was not the son of Melitafa, Phangindawo by name? It was impossible not to see this man in situations of destitution. He was always there all the time. They worked all that night.)

The test of leadership is when the worst happens with the leader himself. Phangindawo lost his two daughters, one after the other. These deaths were shocking because Nokamva and Qaqambile had only been ill for a short period. The community came out to support Phangindawo (Mtuze, 1997:41):

“Asazi ke mfo kaMelitafa ukuba siza kuthini na ukukuthuthuzela kuba nguwe umthuthuzeli wethu. Namhlanje inxeba likuwe kunjalonje libi kakhulu asifuni kukukhohlisa,” kutsho uValimpi ekhokele iqela elaliye kukhuza kwakhe.

(“We do not know, son of Melitafa, what we shall do to comfort you because you are our comforter. Today the wound is on you and it is sceptic too, believe us,” said Valimpi who was leading a delegation that had come to comfort Phangindawo’s family.)

In his reply Phangindawo was humble, he understood the demands of the moment (Mtuze, 1997:41):

“Ukufa akunantsimi yankosi, Gasela. Abantwana aba bona baphumle, abasenantlungu, ndlala, ndibala ntoni na? Akatsho na amakholwa? Ngaphaya koko bobabini basweleke beseziimveku ezingenatyala mntwini ngaphandle kwelemvelo yesono. Yona imbandezelo ibhokile. Ndifung’ uNozici udadethu noNdevuzibomvu akazange ayiphuphe nokuyiphupha le nzima sikuyo. Okwesibini, naye andimsoli nganto kuba yena wayesisicaka efeza iinjongo nemiyalelo yeenkosi zakhe. Besiya kuthi sakha sabona ntoni kobu bomi ukuba ezi zinto bezingehli?”

(“Death knows no boundaries, Gasela. Your children have come to rest. They are no longer in pain, poverty or what you have, you. Do Christians not say so? Above all, these children died when they were still too young to have sins except for the ones we are born into. Yes, we are destitute. Even Ndevuzibomvu had never dreamed the struggle he was sending us into, in the name of my sister, I vow. Secondly, I do not blame Ndevuzibomvu. He was just a servant sent to fulfill intentions and instructions of his bosses. What would have been our story in this life if we had not witnessed this?”)

In another tragic death, a grandmother who lived with her grandchildren in the neighbourhood died, and Phangindawo was called to the situation (Mtuze, 1997:43):

Ufike okunene iqungquluze ngasemnyango intombi yakwaLimakhwe kunjalonje kucacile ukuba sekukudala imnabele uqaqaqa. Abazukulwana bayo ababini babebetha ithatha macala omabini akhe, ekucaca ukuba bamvuse bancama, bathatha iingutyana zabo baya kulala kuye. Ngalo lonke elo xesha oyena mzukulwana uthe dlundlu, uPhakamile, usavatshuza elokishini njengesiqhelo.

(When he arrived he found the body of the daughter of Limakhwe lying next to the door. It was clear that she had died some time ago. Both her grandchildren were fast asleep on both sides of her body. Clearly, they may have tried to recucitate her and were unsuccessful, and so they covered themselves next to her. The older grandchild, Phakamile, was not in the house. He was up and about in the township as usual.)

All the children of Mrs Vangile had left Msobomvu to look for work in cities. Like many other unemployed people, they were in the cities such as Cape Town, Johannesburg and others. They had not returned home since. Others had stopped writing letters or sending

money (Mtuze, 1997:43) “Kube yingxaki nenkohla ukufumana umkhondo wabantwana bakhe ababethesaa kulo lonke” (It was hard and difficult to trace Mrs Vangile’s children who were scattered all over the country.)

Despite the situation in Mrs Vangile’s house, the community put resources together and gave her a dignified farewell (Mtuze, 1997:43):

Njengesiko elidala lakwaNtu, loo ntokazi iyokubekwa kooyise ngenkonzo ezukileyo, yangcwatywa kakuhle kakhulu. Balapha oomasingcwabane nemibutho yamaNdungwana, lwafundwa uludwe lwemikhonto kwadinwa abafana.

(In terms of the old tradition of Ntu, the lady was brought to the world of her ancestors in a solemn service. She was buried in a dignified funeral. All the burial societies of the Ndungwana clan had come forward. A long list of donations was read.)

The death of Phangindawo’s children demanded fortitude on the part of the leader who is also the main protagonist. The death of Mrs Vangile had a different emphasis. What came through at this stage was a community that acted as one to overcome a family tragedy, tragedy in the sense of a loss of a mother and a head of a family in the absence of other members, a tragedy also as the expense demanded by a funeral service could not be afforded. The community, and in particular the members of Mrs Vangile’s clan, rescued the situation. This is how Africans live and this is how they should react when tragedy has befallen one of their own.

Mtuze is not blind to the inhumanity emanating from communities. Phangindawo, who had always fought on the side of his people was, at some stage, seen by some section of the youth as unpatriotic. The new struggles of students and youth, whose intricacies were unknown to the elderly, were led by impatient, intolerant and uninformed youth. These youths often took hasty decisions when dealing with difficult questions.

A school that Phangindawo had fought so much to have built, was about to be officially opened. The youth of Msobomvu felt that the date for the opening ceremony was not suitable for them. This was, according to the youth, a date of mourning the death of other

students who had been killed in student riots, a typical spirit of the 1980s student uprisings in South Africa. The students had distributed pamphlets demanding that members of the community boycott the ceremony. Furthermore, the riotous youth manhandled some members of the community who were preparing for the event.

In that chaos Phangindawo was confronted by a singing mob (Mtuze, 1997:46):

Kusenjalo kuthe gqi ihlokondiba lamakhwenkwe lihamba licula igwijo elivakala nasesidengeni ukuba lemfazwe. Athe akuthana mandla noPhangindawo aliyeka igwijo ahlanganisa ootshalilanga. Ngephanyazo babe abo babini bengqingiwe (uPhangindawo nomkakhe uNongcucalazo), ngamakhwenkwe nakukufa. Utsho ngesikrakra isikhalo uNongcucalazo selengcucalaza ngokwenene phakathi kwawo. Akudanga kubekho litye liphumayo macala onke esangqa.

(At about that time a group of young men emerged, singing a song that was clear to everyone that it was a song of war. When the group saw Phangindawo, they stopped singing and quickly gathered ... They surrounded him and his wife, Nongcucalazo. Death was imminent. Nongcucalazo cried out hysterically. Luckily, they were not stoned.)

The new school building was burnt down by the rioting youth. Houses of prominent members of the community, including that of Phangindawo, were stoned and windows were shattered. For Phangindawo it was difficult to understand the chaos that took over Msobomvu (Mtuze 1997:46),

“Bathini abantu abazilileyo ukwenjenje?” kubuza uPhangindawo ejonge ezo festile zakhe zihuluza umoya.

(“How can people who are in mourning act like this? Asked Phangindawo looking at the shattered windows of his house.)

He was convinced in his belief in education, “Andinakho ukuthi makungafundwa ... Ukuba nditsho ndiya kuba ndilixoki eliphinda-phindeneyo” (I cannot support a view that there must be no education ... If I change my mind I would be a liar.)

Mtuze is urging for a re-think on methods of waging social struggles. Through the narrative, Mtuze makes important pointers. One cannot hope to have the support of the people if one does not respect their way of doing things. If, in the way one did things, one undermined the key human values of the people, the results would be chaotic. In order to

drive this point to its logical conclusion, the youth came in huge numbers to the house of Phangindawo (Mtuze, 1997:47), “Ulutsha lwaluphume ngendlu yalo kunjalonje kuphume nothathatha. Amagwijo ayesitsho ngathi kuza kukrazuka isibhakabhaka kunjalonje elinye liphekwa ngomhluzi welinye (The youth had all come out. Freedom songs were breaking the sky with their sound. In fact, one song followed another.)

On being invited by the crowd to come out of his house, Phangindawo was not certain what step to take in the situation. His wife was apprehensive. She did not want him to go out of the house. She saw death at the hands of the rioting youth (Mtuze, 1997:48):

Namhlanje usuke wabalekwa seso sibindana wayesoloko engumntu othi unaso uPhangindawo. Iingqondo zakhe ziyebetha-bethana kuba akazi ukuba iza kuzala nkomo ni na le nto. Angathini ukubulawa ngezandla ngabantwana bakhe? Ucinge watsho ukubila kuthontelana ebunzini lakhe.

(This day, Phangindawo lost that little bravery he thought he had had all along. His mind was conflicted. How will it be that he be killed by his own children? He was thinking and was sweating at the same time.)

From the narrative it comes out very clearly that the idea of a scenario of chaos led by the youth had been created for the express purpose of allowing an oration that came from Phangindawo. The youth demonstrators had come to apologise for the shattering of the windows of Phangindawo’s house. They insisted that it was not part of their demonstrations. They respected the old man. When the youth leader had completed conveying the apology of the youth, he sat down and waited for the response of the old man. It is crucial to record his speech to demonstrate that Phangindawo was produced by his people. The writer uses him as a mirror of the people (Mtuze, 1997:49):

“Amandla!” liqale njalo ixhego phambi kokuba lihambise lithi, “Okokuqala mandinixelele phandle ndithi imbabala iziphambile izinja namhlanje. Bendiba kumhla ndafa namhlanje. Andilazi ityala kodwa xa uyile ntanga yam uyazi ukuba kulula ukubekwa ityala likufanele kunjalonje.

“Esi senzo senu sikhulu, sikhulu kunam, sikhulu kunani, sikhulu kunoMsobomvu uphela. Niyakhula kengoko bafo bam. ‘Nethi’ nje ukuba niqale ukuhluzana nenjenje, niyakhula ke ngoku. Apha emkhosini akho amabhaku okulwa kodwa loo mabhaku azizisulu ukuba azikho iingcali zokucinga, zokuhluzana nokuhlazulula imicimbi.

“Xa nenjenje ke nindinika ithemba lokuba nokuba sinokufa thina niya kushiyeke niyimele inyaniso kuba niyaqiqa, anityhamzi nje ngathi niziimpumputhela. Lilonke ke asindim oya kunixolela, sisizwe esiya kunixolela.

“Ukuba izenzo zenu zibe yinzuzo esizweni, isizwe siyakunixolela kodwa ukuba zibe sisiqalekiso, isizwe siyakunibetha ngolukaBhanya. Mna ngokwam andininqalanga nganto kuba le ndlu niyixulubileyo, mandithi ixulutyiweyo, asiyoyam yeyesizwe, nam andingowam ndingowesizwe, ngoko ke siso esiya kugweba. Thina sizizicaka zesizwe. Mandingawagxobhi, bantwana bam, ndiyabulela.”

(“Power!” that was how the old man started before he continued to say, “In the first place, let me say it here and now, the bushbuck has ducked the hunting dogs. I had thought this was the day I died. I still do not know where I did wrong, but I know that at my age you can be accused and the charge can be made to fit you.

“Your action is honourable. Its honour is bigger than me. It is also bigger than yourselves. It is bigger than Msobomvu as a whole. This is a sign of growth on your part my sons. Immediately, that you are able to sift between right and wrong, then you are definitely growing. In war there are foot soldiers that fight, but if there are no strategists your fighters will be targets of the enemy.

When you act like this you give me hope that even if we old people can die, you will stand for the truth because you do reason, you do not walk blindly. All in all, it is not me who will forgive you. You will be pardoned by the nation.

If your actions were beneficial to the nation, the nation will pardon you. But, if your actions were a curse to the nation, the nation will punish you. I have nothing against you for shattering the windows of this house. Let me say, for the shattered house. This is not my house. This house belongs to the nation. Me too, I do not belong to myself, I belong to the nation. So, the nation will decide this matter. We are servants of the nation. That is all, thank you.)

Following this speech, the communities that once lived on the farms of Maqhajana, Nkomiyahlaba, Bhetyangophondo, Nkwancube, Van Vuuren, Van Straaten; and had to be on the side of the road, and later Blikkiesdorp and Msobomvu finally; saw a rise of a new sun. The journey the community had to undertake was memorialized in a ceremony that honoured Phangindawo. Speeches were made and honours were conferred in respect of the intelligence and the bravery of Phangindawo, the son of Melitafa (Mtuze, 1997:53):

“Enye into ekufuneka sifunde ukuyenza kukuzikhuthaza iinkokheli zethu emsebenzini wazo onzima wokusiphathela imicimbi yethu. Yiyo lo nto ndivuyayo

namhlanje xa kuthiwa mandivakalise isigqibo sekomiti yomzi esithe saphehlelelwa nangabasemagunyeni sokuba kuthiywe eliya ziko labadala ngobawo uPhangindawo kuthiwe yiPHANGINDAWO MELITAFI CENTRE FOR THE AGED.

(“One thing we need to learn to do is to encourage our leaders in their work of handling people’s matters. That is why I am glad to announce the decision of the committee that has been blessed by the authorities, that this old age home be named after Mr Phangindawo, and that it be known as PHANGINDAWO MELITAFI CENTRE FOR THE AGED.”)

What held the community of Msobomvu together throughout its unending ordeals, was its humanism. Events such as the naming of the old age centre were ways and means to affirm their humanism, strengthen self-belief and trust and a courage to showcase their leadership in the person of Phangindawo. This was a statement of hope, hope to a future. Replying with humility, Phangindawo, rose to speak (Mtuzi, 1997:53):

“Ukuba umntu ebekwazi ukubujika ubomi bakhe buyokuqala ekuqaleni ngendibujika ngoku. Ndiyayibulela le mbeko kodwa ndinqwenela ukucebisa ukuba la mathuba nezi nkuthazo mazinikwe abantu abasenamandla kuba thina sizamkelela nje ukuya kufa nazo kanti ke bona bebesenokusebenza ngazo. Umcimbi wona ubanzi yaye ufuna amadoda. Kuyo yonke lo nto ndithe ndakuva ukuba lo mzi uza kukhe ujonge emva ukhangele imvelaphi yawo ndathi uyakhula ke ngoku umzi. Kuba sesiyilentelekisa nje kwezinye izizwe, salibala imvelaphi yethu. Loo nto ke isitsho sangamalulwane athi engabeLungu abe engabantu abaMnyama. Lilonke ndithi kuhle ukuba sibe senjenje ukuze abantwana bethu basibone ukuba sisizwe esineqhayiya ngezinto zaso nangobuzwe baso. Yonke into iza kulunga ukuba nje indoda nganye ingaqinisa umqolo. AmaXhosa anentetho emnandi ethi alitshoni lingaphumi.”

(“If a man could start a life all over again, I would do just that. I am grateful for this honour. I wish to advise that these blessings must be conferred on those who are younger and still have strength and who can do more, because we are too old for blessings. The issue is huge and it demands real men. When I heard that this community will look back on its history, I realized that people are developing. Today, we are an embarrassment among nations precisely because we have looked away from our background. And that has made us not to know whether we are black or white. In other words, what is happening today is important. Our children must see that we are a nation that has pride in itself. All should be well if each of us can be strong. The Xhosa people have a lovely expression that says, it never sets and never rises.”)

This section is concluded with a summary of important structural and narrative points that are highlighted in *Alitshoni lingaphumi*:

1. The bell on the farms, the inadequate rations and low wages, as well as all the horrid conditions that farm labourers had to endure;
2. The power relations between farm labourers and their bosses, their Christmas speeches and gifts and what these meant to the labourers, and how the labourers overcame hurdles coined in a statement: “Ngethamsanqa, yonke loo nto ayiyongxaki kumntu wasezifama” (Fortunately, all this was no problem to the farm labourer);
3. The game of stick fighting, wise conversations of mQoma and Qhinebe, nature in their language and in the general life of the people;
4. Humour from the child’s perspective to adults who viewed life in real and humorous ways;
5. History and the centering of marginalized sections of society into their history;
6. Education, its history and its crucial position in the development of society;
7. The struggle for social rights and rights in the workplace;
8. The purpose of art in society, in particular, poetry and orality;
9. Nation building;
10. History of forced removals;
11. Care for the bereaved, the dead, the young and the old;
12. African genius, reason and ways to reason.

4.3. Amathol’ eendaba

Amathol’ eendaba was published in 1977. It is a book of short stories. The stories are set in the towns, townships and villages of Hofmeyr, Mdantsane, Ginsberg, Zwelitsha, Dimbaza, Dutywa, Dikeni (Alice), Mlakalaka, eMadakeni, eMthombe, Cradock, Garahamstown, Mthatha, Cumakala (Stutterheim), Qonce (King William’s Town), Tsomo, Debe and Zihlahleni. These towns are in what was once known as the Border region of the Eastern Cape.

In his autobiography *An Alternative Struggle* Mtuze writes about life in Hofmeyr in the urban areas; events in the magistrate's office and in the office for the registration of births and deaths, in the queues at the town's Post Office and other places where messengers were sent. In *Amathol' eendaba* Mtuze's narrative reaches into the mud houses of the townships and villages, into the African churches and in every space where African people are found.

The stories in *Amathol' eendaba* deal with relationships in families, among neighbours, in the church and between social classes. They address respect, social issues, family disputes, unscrupulous dealings, suicide, humour, traveler's tales, abuse of alcohol, love relations and so on. Underpinning these stories is the notion of African Humanism as explained in Chapter 2.

UShoti, a story in *Alitshoni lingaphumi* (1997:11) and discussed above, reappears as a continued story under a different title *Izilo zilunguzene*, where Mtuze (1977:7) puts into words the state of affairs at a police station in Rosmead in the district of Middelburg, his home town:

Yimini ebetha umoyana osika okwentshengece ezindlathini. Kwiziko lamapolisa ase Rosmead kwisithili saseMetele kuzole ngaphezu kwesiqhelo ngale mini. Ngaphandle kwamanyangaza abanjwe ngephezolo epheleke uShoti eqhuba amatakane kwesinkone isitrato, akukho bani nakwizisele zalo mzi.

(It was a cool day at the Rosmead police station in the district of Middleburg. It was quiet in an unusual way, except for two thieves who were arrested the previous night, driving Shoti who was said to be drunk in a dark street, the cells of the police station were empty.)

Mtuze's (1977:7) stories are always about people. He describes the police who were at the police station:

Ngale njikalanga mabini kuphela amapolisa asemsebenzini. Lufaf' olumadolo lwesajini emhlophe abathi xa beyibiza nguNkomiyahlaba, isinunzela esifanelwe kunene yiloo mixhaka sasiyigaxele isalatha amanqwanqwa ewahambileyo phantsi kwebutho lamapolisa oMzantsi-Afrika nasemfazweni. Eneneni umhlekazi lo wayelijoni ngaphezu kokuba wayelipolisa, ekholwa lucwangco nomgaqo, enganyamezeli mangcukwane kunjalonje. Ipolisa lesibini ngumdak' omnyam'

ongeva sepha, umakad' enetha engenabhatyi, into kaSiyongwana esinqe siseXesi kwaMathole.

(There were only two policemen who were on duty that afternoon. It was a tall white sergeant who was called Nkomiyahlaba, a man who was well decorated, reflecting his achievements under the police force and during the war. Indeed, this man was more of a soldier than a policeman. He believed in order and discipline, and did not tolerate freaks or whims. The second policeman was a black man, blacker than soap, an experienced policeman, the son of Siyongwana. He was from Xesi district at Mathole village.)

Nkomiyahlaba in *Alitshoni lingaphumi* is the boisterous white farmer. In *Amathol' eendaba* he is the white police sergeant as described above. There is tension between the two colleagues as the title suggests *Izilo zilunguzene* (Animals in confrontation). Mtuze portrays a character who is white, senior and violent, and another who is black, proud, experienced and brilliant but also alcoholic. In explaining the tension Mtuze (1977:7) writes:

Zazilunguzene ke izilo kuba aba babini babengokhelani mlilo ncam kodwa kuhlangene iinkcuba-buchopho zombini, izinto ezingathi azihoyananga kanti zizungula elona thuba liya kuthi lifaneleke mhla zothi ngalo zinqoze kungasali nampunde kunjalonje.

(These were two bulls that were ready to fight but were both cleverly careful of each other. They behaved as if they disregarded each other yet they were watching each other and would pounce once provoked.)

In the midst of the tension between the two policemen, Mtuze introduces another character to bolster his descriptions through a friendly visit to the black policeman. The visiting friend, Bhanqo, and Siyongwana communicate in full view of Nkomiyahlaba in a way that the white officer would have difficulty to understand (Mtuze 1977:7), "Nanjengokuba imini ibanda, yena Bhanqo esekhaya ekhefini, uye wakhumbula umhlobo wakhe osenyongweni kuloo mahlwantsi engqeke, wathi maka menzele into nokuba ayiphelelanga, ngabula bona" (It was a cold day. Bhanqo was on leave, resting at his home. He thought of his best friend who was out in the cold. He decided to bring his friend something that would warm him up.)

Indeed, the two friends followed each other to the other side of the toilets. Siyongwana felt the craving since he knew that his friend, Bhanqo, had certainly brought him something to drink. It was this love of alcohol that was responsible for the tension between him and his colleague, Nkomiyahlaba. Bhanqo took a sip as per tradition and then gave over to Siyongwana to finish the nip. He took two and a third gulp and, suddenly Nkomiyahlaba appeared coming and walking like a galloping horse with his eyes fixed on Siyongwana.

Mtuze (1977:8) takes the reader into the thoughts of Siyongwana who was in serious trouble, thinking about his habit, his future and his family, “Kwabila ibunzi kuloo mfo wakwaTutuse, loo ntlokwan’ ibanzana ithath’ ibeka, eqonda ukuba inene kunyembelekile, kumhla walifumana ithuba lakhe uNkomiyahlaba njengoko wayetshilo ukuthi woza ambophe izandla neenyawo amphose elwagcibeni ebuthanda kangaka nje utywala. Nantsi ke imini yalonto (Sweat ran on the forehead of the son of Tutuse. His broad head was here and there in thought. He knew he was in trouble this was the opportunity Nkomiyahlaba had waited for, to bind his hands and feet and throw him deep in the cells because of this alcohol he loved. That day had come.)

He was thinking of his children. Who will feed them now that he would be out of work without any savings? He had spent all his money on alcohol. When Nkomiyahlaba was a few feet from him, Siyongwana thought on his feet and took control of the situation (Mtuze, 1977:8):

“Bhanqo,” uvakele esitsho ngamandla, “egameni lomthetho, ndiyakubamba. Luqobo lwayo kanye ijini olu, ndilungcamle ndaluva!”

(“Bhanqo,” he called out powerfully, “in the name of the law, I am arresting you. This is a real gin this one. I have tasted it and I am sure!”)

Nkomiyahlaba was perplexed as Bhanqo went down on his knees pleading and admitting his guilt. The act defeated Nkomiyahlaba. He could go no further. Siyongwana had not said a word to him. He had just acted by warning Bhanqo that he was under arrest. Dissatisfied as could be expected of Nkomiyahlaba, he sought to recoup his higher standing (Mtuze, 1977:9):

“Umbone esenzani loo mntu?” ubuze ejalile.

“Ndifike kanye xa emhomha imbodlela yejini, sajini,” itshilo impendulo, “wathi kum ngamanzi kanonkala, ndayingcamla ndeva ukuba luqobo lwayo kanye ijini.”

“Umbambela ntoni ke?” ubuze loo mbuzo uyingxaki.

“Ndimbambela ukuba notywala besiLungu engavumelekanga ukuba abe nabo,” ulibophe watsho urheme.

“Suka! Yeka umntu lo ahambe. Libe layintoni ithanyana ... isikretyana sejini kumntu obonakala elinene njengalo? Uswele umsebenzi? Hamba uye kubasa laa mlilo bendithe wubase. Wena, yenza ungabikho apha, uyandiva?” Utsho ethabatha eso sizekevu esiphalaza.

(“What did you see him doing?” asked Nkomiyahlaba sternly.

“I found him when he was drinking this bottle of gin, sergeant,” said his response,

“He said to me it was pure water, I tasted it and found out that it’s a real gin.”

“Why are you arresting him then?” He asked that difficult question.

“I am arresting him for being in possession of alcohol without permission,” he said.

“No, leave this man to go. What is a drop ... a nip to a gentleman like this one? Go and make that fire I instructed you to make. You, disappear from here, do you hear me?” He took the left over and poured it out.)

In the end friendship and love won the day. The violent police-soldier who was senior and white was outsmarted by Africans who were friends. At the same time, it was shown that Siyongwana could have lost his job. He had seen how disastrous his ways were. Following this theme of alcohol abuse, Mtuze brings to the fore the year when Africans in South Africa were allowed to openly enter the liquor stores and purchase their liquor.

Before this provision was introduced, only Coloured people were allowed to buy and they were known for running away with the alcohol when sent by Africans. The police were also very strict on Africans. They would stop, search and seize whatever items Africans were not legalized to purchase. On this particular day, the liquor stores were full with black people (Mtuze, 1977:19):

Yayizele imi ngembambo ngamaAfrika afumene inkululeko inkanti kodwa wazimisela kwinto enye uPhindile – akazi kube ephahlwe liphahlothi lamahlakani aza kumenzela “umjojo”. Uza kuzikrwitshela esakhe “isikhwebu” ayibambe ibe ncinane ibhasi eya kowabo kwaMlakalaka kude kufutshane neQonce. Uya kuzithi mpo phambi kokuba akhwele ibhasi ukususa nje iintloni azinike nesibindana sokuya kungena nayo kowabo loo mbodlela.

(The liquor store was full with African customers who had gained the new freedom to buy alcohol. But, Phindile was sure that he would not surround himself with friends who would make him to be seen and noticed. He would buy his own bottle and board the bus to his home at Mlakalaka, outside King William's Town. He would first take a sip before boarding the bus just to be brave enough to walk into his home with his bottle.)

Phindile would have gone straight to his home but he thought of his fiancé, Nontsizi. It would be in order to celebrate this day of the liquor store freedom with his fiancé, he thought. More importantly, Nontsizi would see that Phindile was a man too among men. After taking a few shots, he proceeded (Mtuze, 1977:20):

“Bahlangene noPhindile ophilayo namhlanje. Ndidiniwe yiyo yonke into – ukuhamba ngamathunzi xa ndiya kuloNontsizi kodwa ndiyafilisha. Ndiya kukhululelwa nini ndingene nembodlela yam yotywala ekhaya ndiyitye nezihlobo zam? Xa kukhululelwe nabantwana abaneshumi elinesibhozo leminyaka enkanti ngabeLungu kutheni mna ndingakhululelwa ekhaya ndinamashumi amabini anesinje eminyaka,” utsho emisa isibhozo ngeminwe emnyameni kuba ngoku sekubambe kuba mnyama.

(“They will see the real Phindile today. I am sick and tired of walking in the dark when going to see Nontsizi my fiancé. When will I be allowed to come with my bottle of alcohol and enjoy it with my friends? If whites can allow children who are eighteen years of age to enter and buy at bottle stores, why am I not being allowed at home whereas I am twenty this year,” he said showing eight fingers in the dark since it was already late.)

Phindile could not forget the day when he was caught by Nontsizi's father. Even under the influence of alcohol he knows very well that he learnt hard that day from the strong man. As he was contemplating his next move, standing in the yard of Nontsizi's home, writes Mtuze (1977:21):

Kuthe esazula exel' igqwirha apho wabona into emkhwebayo phaya ebuhlanti. Uqonde kwangoko ukuba akukho mntu wumbi unokumbizela apho ngaphandle koNontsizi ithemba lakhe lokugqibela emhlabeni. Uye apho egxanya egxadazela njengomntwana ofunda ukuhamba, wathi tywalakaba eluthangweni waya kuwa ngaphakathi. Uvuke apho ingqondo yakhe imxelela ukuba le mini yimini yolonwabo ke ngoko makakhe amdlalise uNontsizi, amothuse. Uvotyoze egxadazela njalo wada wasondela kuye, watsho owekati umtsi, wamanga.

Kuvakele ubhom bham waya kuthi thekence phaya ngathi ubethwe ngumbane, yabe inkabi yehashe ingqunga ilindele ukuba aphinde aziphose ukuba usenomkro.

(As he was roaming in the yard, he saw somebody in the kraal signalling that he must come. Immediately, he knew that no one else will call him except Nontsizi, his last hope on earth. He rushed to the kraal, staggering like a child who was learning to walk. He jumped over the fence and fell inside the kraal. He stood up thinking to himself that this day was a day of love so he should play with Nontsizi, and give her a pleasant surprise. He walked towards her and sprang to hug her.

What was heard was a sound of a kick and he fell as if he was struck by lightening. By that time the horse was ready to kick him again should he try to jump on it again.)

Phindile could not reach his home. He wished he could go home but he had other places and other people to see before going home. The next day Phindile ended up in a police station. He had gone there to announce to the police that he was drunk (Mtuze, 1977:22):

... uxambulisene kwanzima nepolisa elalimbebezelela limxelela phandle ukuba leyo asindawo yokunxilela. Lalisitsho phandle ukuthi ukuba baza kuqhuba ngolohlobo bakuvulelwa enkanti baza kuyona lento, ewe bazakungena ngegqudu emdudweni. Uthe akwala ukukhwelela lathembisa ngokumvalela libonakala ukuba aliqhuli kunjalonje.

(... he argued with a policeman who was telling him that the police station is not a place for the drunkard. The policeman was saying it openly that if they behaved like the way he did when bottle stores were opened for them, this will not be right. It will put them in trouble. When he was not listening, the policeman said he would arrest him and he was clearly not joking.)

In another short story *Izidungulwana*, Mtuze (1977:32) writes about Andrew Nganga who booked into a village hotel with heavy luggage. He pretended to be studying geomorphology. In the end it turned out that Nganga had killed his wife and had cut her body parts into pieces. His night expeditions that appeared like he was collecting stones with rare features, were trips to bury these body pieces. Nganga was finally arrested.

Iqolomba, is a story about a traveler who was walking from town to town where he worked. Ncibane was longing to see his children. On the road he would be heard saying, “*Ndikhumbula abantwana bam*,” (I am missing my children). He held within his heart

the longing for his wife and would not broadcast his feelings in that regard (Mtuze, 1977:39):

Xa uyiva isitsho ibeke phambili abantwana bayo wawunokude uphazame uthi imele ukuba ayimkhumbuli unina wabo bantwana kanti akunjalo, ziinkumbulo ekungathethwa tu ngazo ezo kwaXhosa.

(When he spoke about his children, one may be inclined to think that he did not think about their mother. Yet, it was not like that. Such thoughts were not advertised by Xhosa people.)

A traveler would meet other travelers on the road. There were those who pretended to be travelling, yet they were criminals who were out to mug others. There were other characters too who were wandering aimlessly. Mtuze (1977:39) writes about an outspoken man that Ncibane met, a parasitic smoker who asked for his tobacco all the time they were together, and who boasted about his three wives.

Ncibane found a place to rest, in a cave (Mtuze, 1977:40):

Lithe xa lithi ndithenge ilanga wabhaqa iqolomba elihle kisiwana esasikude kufuphi nendlela. Uye kulo eyirhuqa imilenze, walihlola-hlola ekhangela amarhamncwa anengozi. Uqhumise ngeengcanjana zakhe egxotha imishologu; wathi akuba oje umvundla awubethe ngaloo njikalanga wavala kakuhle ngezinti emnyango, sebe sebe ubuthongwana bokudinwa, yoyi kobentlombe.

(When the sun was setting, he discovered a beautiful cave not far from the road. He was already tired when he walked into the cave. He inspected it to check if there were no dangerous animals. He burnt his herbs chasing away evil spirits. He made fire and braaied a hare he had caught in that afternoon. He closed the opening with sticks and he fell deep in the sleep.)

The story is about selfishness. Ncibane had rested comfortably in the cave. He would not wish that other travellers should enjoy this creation of nature that he enjoyed (Mtuze, 1977:41):

Kuthe qatha eliya lokonya lomfo engqondweni yakhe. Ucinge ukuba angenza ntoni na ukuze elo lopholopho lingazi kuphumla kwelo qolomba, wakhumbula ukuba kanene unawo umbheso kuloo ngxowa yakhe. Kwangoko ubonakele ewuthula loo mhohoma wakhe wawubotshwe kakuhle, wakhupha loo mbheso ezivalile iimpumlo, wabuyela eqolombeni, wawugalela umfo umbheso walishiya libambene lelo vumba iqolomba.

(He thought of that man he had met. He was worried what to do so that the man would not rest in that cave. He remembered that he had *umbheso* in his bag. He put down his bounded luggage, and took out *umbheso* having closed his nostrils, went back to the cave and poured it and left the cave with such a smell.)

Ncibane was on the road again. Not long on the road, he was confronted by a leopard. He managed to overpower and kill it with his spear, although he was badly injured. Immediately, there was a storm coming. He needed a place to hide. The only place he knew was the cave. He rushed back to the cave (Mtuze, 1977:41):

Lixubaye le ngokukhawuleza esazamazama nelonxeba, savakala isiphango ngomoyakazi nolwandile olwatsho wankwatya uNcibane. Uzitsalile wada waya kufika kwelo qolomba selemanzi tixi. Wayeligalele umbheso nje wathimla esasondela, akuthimla lisuke limpompoze igazi kwelo nxeba.

(The weather changed very quickly as he was taking care of his wound. There was a storm and a strong wind and it scared Ncibane such that he ran back to the cave. He was wet when he arrived there. Because he had poured *umbheso* he sneezed as he was approaching. And, the more he sneezed the more blood spilled out of the wound.)

This narrative is carefully constructed. Yes, Ncibane had left the cave having sprayed *umbheso*, and because of the approaching storm he was forced back into the cave. That would have been enough and would have sent the message effectively. But, Mtuze adds more effect by introducing an awkward situation. Ncibane fought with a leopard and sustained a serious wound. The more he sneezed as a result of *umbheso*, the more he bled. The message is loud and clear: do not set traps for others, it could be you who gets trapped. Be humane to others is the message.

There is a presence of women in these stories. Ncibane and his wife at Dutywa, a fellow traveler with three wives at Mzimkhulu, Sonamzi and his wife, MaNgxabane, Andrew Nganga and the wife he murdered, Phindile and his fiancé Nontsizi, a woman who was expecting a visit from the Lord such that she and her husband made exquisite preparations (in a story entitled *Ingongolothela* [1977:16]).

In *Isingqala sikaZilindile* (The Cry of Zilindile) another couple Zilindile and his wife Novanya, are the main characters. Mtuze (1977:42) defines their relationship this way:

Iminyaka engamashumi amahlanu behlala kunye ubawo uZilindile nowakwakhe uNovanya, babengamahlwempu, imipha echutywe yalahlwa. Babephila yindodla eyayisafumaneka kube kanye kwinyanga yesithathu, ifike yanele nje ukuthenga umgubo wombona neswekilana kube kuphelile. Iphume phi irente yendlu, impahla yokunxiba, amatikiti ecawe nemali yokufundisa abazukulwana abahlanu, beentombi owawungafika zibanyengeza nje zizibophe zibe zincinane ukuya koomaKapa nakoomaBhayi, zibashiya bebheshwa ngumtshetsha, bentywizisa yichapoti.

(Zilindile and his wife have been together for more than five years. They were poor. They lived on a government grant that was paid out once in three months, and with it they could only afford mealie-meal and a small packet of sugar. Where will they get money to pay rent, clothes to wear, church dues and money to send their five grandchildren to school? Children of daughters who had dumped them and left to places like Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, leaving them in poverty.)

Mtuze (1977:42) delves deeper into the feelings of Zilindile. In his days, Zilindile was overjoyed when he looking at his daughters, very sure that when they marry his kraal would be full. It was never to be because only one daughter could manage to marry out of the six girls. Even that one was married to a man who kept making promises about *lobola*. Although Zilindile and his wife were poor, Mtuze (1977:42) writes about their spiritual richness:

Wawungaba nosizi xa uwabona loo maququlurha mabini ethe mpa ezingalweni, mba emqolo, abo bazukulwana kusiyiwa ecaweni. Hayi ke kwicala laselukholweni yayizizityebi ezo kungqina wonke ubani.

(You would have pity when looking at the two holding their grandchildren in their arms and on their backs, going to church. Well, on the side of believing in God, they were very rich and everyone agreed with that.)

In another short story *Isivamna*, a couple in Ginsberg Township was well-known for its quarrels and domestic drama (Mtuze, 1977:44):

... akuthethwa le kaDuma noNolimithi. Babebukulana ngathi abayondoda nomfazi. Watsho wancama nomantyi wakwaNdabazabantu ebundukunya loo

ndlu yodaka kwakucacile ukuba isiphetho sayo kukudilika kungasali nesiseko yayakhelwe entlabathini nje.

(... not this thing of Duma and Nolimithi was the worse case. They would expose each other as if they were not a married couple. The magistrate of home affairs tried and failed to put together their house of mud. It was clear that it would fall because its foundation was not strong enough.)

The feud between Duma and his wife Nolimithi was known by everyone in Ginsberg Township. One could hear that any man who was fighting with his wife, it would be said: It is Nolimithi and Duma. Their marriage was talked about in drinking places, and even Church goers were talking about it when drinking their coffee. The children of the township would say that they were going to watch a movie of Duma and Nolimithi. An elderly lady, MaGatyeni, came over to Nolimithi to put an end to the fight (Mtuze, 1977:45):

“Ndinezimvi nje ndimdala, asiyomfuza le. Nina ningabatshakazi abakrancu-krancu. Kunyanisiwe xa kuthiwa inyathi ibuzwa kwabaphambili. Yiza kuthi nale mhoka-mhoka yakho sikucebise. Emzini akuhlalwa krwada kule mihla. Kaloku aninxitywa nobulunga kulemihla, zifike ke zona iinkqithelo zinibethe nihilitheke. Ndiyazi ukuba nangoku ucinga ukuba ndibhibhidla amazinyo kuba kaloku ilizwe eli nilithwele ngesifuba. Uyandiva Nolimithi?” ubuze emthe ntsho ngabukhali.

(“I have not just greyed, I am old and experienced. You are new wives. You should ask us, the experienced. Come with this matter of yours to us, the old and tested. We will help you. You will not survive in marriage without a plan these days. You see, when you marry they don’t tell you that you must overlook faults in marriage. So, when troubles come they swing you to no shape. I know that even now, you think I am fooling because most of you are difficult to advise. Do you hear me Nolimithi?” she asked looking her straight in the eye.)

After these words MaGatyeni passed over *iqwili* (Alepidea amatymbica). She instructed Nolimithi to keep the herb under her tongue whenever she saw her husband coming. She should not open her mouth (Mtuze, 1977:45):

Yinkqu yaso isivamna eso. Uthi sigugele emizini nje satya ntoni? Ukuba wenze njengokuba ndikuxelela, uphumile ekubulalekeni kwakho kodwa uze ugcine nto inye – lingaze liphume phantsi kolwimi elo khubalo xa asekhaya umyeni wakho. Uyabona ke, ungayilibali intakobusi.” Imthwese yamenjenjalo le mazi umfazana, yatshikila yagoduka imshiya emhoka-mhokana nelo qwili.

(This is a real herb. What do you think keeps us in our marriages? If you follow my instructions, you will be out of suffering. But, you must keep one thing in your mind, keep the herb under your tongue all the time your husband is around home. And, never forget the hand that saved you.” MaGatyeni left Nolimithi with those instructions.)

Nolimithi had doubts over this advice but she decided to try the trick (Mtuze, 1977:45), “Andincede angandibulaleli umyeni uMaGatyeni. Aze athi kanti uyayazi le nto ayenzayo. Kona ukulisebenzisa ndiza kulisebenzisa kuba kudala ndisisigculelo sakhe, esenza ngam intlekisa kule lokishi” (MaGatyeni should never kill my husband. I hope she knows very well what she is talking about. Yes, I will use the herb because this man has been beating me like a drum, making me a laughing stock in this community). The trick worked (Mtuze, 1977:46):

Izitsalile yabulisa, wavuma nje kakuhle umfazi. Ngoko kuhlwa kwada kwalalwa ingade ingene ibhanya-bhanya, bavuka ngenja ixukuxa abamelwane ngosuku olulandelayo babeka iindlebe kodwa lada laphuma ilanga yaphangela indoda engakhanga athethe nelimdaka uNolimithi ezitshayeleda ibala etyala nezithole zakhe.

(Duma greeted and the wife greeted back. That night they went to sleep without a movie starting. The following day the neighbours were the first to wake up and hear the fight. But, the sun rose and the man went to work and Nolimithi had not said a word that morning. She was sweeping her grounds and planting her seeds.)

After a few months, impressed with her herbal expertise, Nolimithi visited MaGatyeni, asking for a fresh *qwili* (Mtuze, 1977:46):

Uthe uMaGatyeni, “Yingcanjana nje leyo. Esona sivamna emfazini kukuqhobosha ulwimi ayeke ukube eyichukusha indoda ukuze ahlale enesidima kuyo.”

(MaGatyeni said, “That was just an ordinary root. The main thing a woman should do is to shut her mouth, and not provoke a man so that she can be a dignified wife.)

In another story *Uyavuth’umlilo* a teacher, Mr Mangcoba, and his wife, had lost a dog and were very hurt as a result. This dog was a gift to their son. Mr Mangcoba composed a poem (Mtuze, 1977:57). Mangcoba asked a friend to read his poem aloud. All three were

touched. When supper was served the couple expressed happiness now that they had shared their pain with a trusted friend. The next morning the dog was found in the cupboard. It had been sleeping there all the time (Mtuze, 1977:58).

Stories in *Amathol'eendaba* make up Mtuze's social commentary which is embedded in the notion of African Humanism as espoused in Chapter 2. They are set in familiar towns where he lived and worked. As noted before, marriage is one of the themes. Women in particular, have a huge presence in the stories. They appear as advisors on ways to be a dignified wife and mother. In some cases, women are victims of domestic abuse and Mtuze provides a social commentary in this regard.

While conveying messages against alcohol abuse, Mtuze employs indirectness that is reflective of African society. There are also those of self-centred people alongside stories that reflect spiritual strength and, of course, humour.

Mtuze provides a commentary on communities and their social relationships. His obsession with the sense of community and morality places a high premium on human life, the life of people in their relationships, within the paradigm of African Humanism. The life of every individual is then a people's affair. When there is happiness in a family, people are involved. When there is sadness, there are people who come to ease the pain. When there are fights, others intervene to make peace. The idea of a secluded life, 'my business is not your business' type of life, has no place among Africans. The feeling of being alienated or rather selfishness and individualism are not compatible with a true African community as indicated in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Mphahlele (2002:152) notes again that:

Egoism has not produced wellbeing ... To be an egoist is to want and hoard everything for oneself: to possess and refuse to share.

The question in Mtuze's short stories is: what should Africans be? It is about being morally upright. Mtuze's contribution in the area of communal morality may not be realized in his life time. The choice of writing, however, grants his mission eternal life.

4.4 UDingezweni

UDingezweni was a chapter in Mtuze's first unpublished novel *UYese Namahla-ndinyuka obomi* (Jesse's Ups and Downs). As Mtuze struggled to find a publisher for *UYese Namahla-ndinyuka obomi*, he developed its second chapter into a complete novel that was published by Via Afrika in 1966. He was working at his first formal job at the Hofmeyr magistrate's court, as an interpreter at that time.

The 2nd November 1941, a date of birth that "my mother and Canon Calata ... conspired to give me" (2007:1), would put Mtuze at 25 years of age when he published *UDingezweni*. He had arrived at Hofmeyr in 1961, fresh with experiences from his home and community. Two years later, in 1963 he was transferred to the Somerset West magistrate's office in the Western Cape as indicated in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

In the dedication page of *UDingezweni*, Mtuze makes an assertive statement that is directed to his mother tongue, isiXhosa, the language he used in the novel:

SiXhosa, akunguye nakanye omncinane kwiilwimi ezithethwa kule Afrika, kuba ngenxa yakho ezincwadini zethu, ziseza kuba yimbumba yamanyama izizwe zama Afrika.

(Xhosa, you are not inferior among the languages spoken in Africa; because of you in our books, nations of Africa will unite).

The lines are important in understanding the function that Mtuze deploys on isiXhosa as a language. IsiXhosa has to realize that "*ngenxa yakho*," because of its existence and use, Africa stands a chance to unite. In other words, the peoples of the continent will unite. This Pan Africanist thrust early in his writing is very interesting. It is in the interest of this study to explore Pan Africanist sentiments in Mtuze's life and works. Although Mtuze writes for a section of Africans in the Southern region of the continent, it is worth noting that, to him, the promotion of isiXhosa into the medium of writing should be viewed as a step towards the self-determination. The use of isiXhosa is the beginning of an era and a realization of self, hence the idea of unity. Once peoples of Africa make use of their languages, they are on the path to true identity.

The first paragraph in the introduction section of the novel, opens with words that affirm Mtuze's position as an artist, writer and activist of his people. Mtuze emphatically states that the work of writing, writing in an African language, is monumental. He uses an expression from Dr Rubusana, an early isiXhosa writer, "Zemk' iinkomo, magwalandini!" Yet, he remains rooted in his humility as he asks, "Bendiyintoni kakade mna esiXhoseni?" (Who was I in the writing of isiXhosa?) Although he sees himself as of less significance in the field of isiXhosa writing, he was right because that was his first published work at the time, he wishes to be understood as a promoter of the African mind in its original state, that is, through its own medium of conception and expression. He writes here as a young man who is "(o)vuselela umlisela nomthinjana oNtsundu" (reviving African youth).

Two vital elements exist in African consciousness, humility and being forthright, are revealed in this introduction. A new activist in the world of African literature has shown clarity in as far as his task is concerned. Mtuze lists the African writers who wrote in isiXhosa and who had passed by the time of publishing *UDingezweni*. The humility in his voice is the major effect as he sweeps off leaves in his yard, to borrow Mphahlele's expression. In his words, "*Ndiza kubasa iindiza ingengawo amadaka*," (I will set at once, there and then). Humility is a vital device in African poetry and prose since it ensures the penetrating effect on the listeners and readers.

Mtuze opens his novel with a dialogue that invites readers to deep and serious matters concerning the life of Nyhubatyha who is in conversation with a compassionate Mqoma. In a sensitive way Mtuze portrays through this dialogue a sense of embrace and an open sharing of burden and an exchange of ideas. The sharing of ideas is undertaken with deep respect and dignity from both sides of the dialogue. There is an exchange of feelings. The two men are discussing infertility. Nyhubatyha needs a child desperately and Mqoma assures him that this will happen, he must not give up. For Mqoma, Nyhubatyha's problem is his concern too, although he warns against high expectations as children can be problematic themselves.

Following this dialogue is another between two men who are *abanakwe*, men who are married to sisters. They are discussing about the state of anarchy in their village, Mnandizonka, a place that was once *ikhaya lobumnandi* (a home of happiness). Lawlessness in Mnandizonka is orchestrated by uncircumcised boys who are led by Dingezweni, the main character in the novel. There is trust between Mdeyide and Mdengentamo. Their wives were twin daughters of Zini in the house of maNuneni. During the discussion Mdengentamo suggests the need to convene *imbizo*, a community meeting, in order to address the loss of respect, lack of morals and the violence that the uncircumcised boys brought onto their peaceful Mnandizonka. Explaining himself further to Mdeyide, Mdengentamo stresses the importance of consensus and the need to engage the community when dealing with matters of social importance (Mtuze, 2011:43):

... (i)ntlanganiso yesizwe esilapha eMnandizonka siphela, ingabi ndim nawe kuphela abenza isigqibo, kuba hleze sigqwidize ngomsindo, senze izinto ezingekho sikweni. Into eyenziwa sisizwe siphela isemthethweni nokuba ijongeka imbi, kuba isisimiselo sesizwe, iyafana nomthetho.

(... a meeting of the whole community of Mnandizonka, it should not be me and you who arrive at a decision, maybe we will be emotional and do unacceptable deeds. Any action taken by the people is understandable, because it is a joint decision, it is like a rule.)

The discussion speaks to the governance system of African people, the importance that Africans (Xhosa people in this case) placed on resolving matters, arriving at decisions by means of consensus and democracy. When the two gentlemen approached the chief who was empowered to call the *imbizo*, Mdeyide was extra carefull with his words, conscious of the care demanded when handling matters of such gravity (Mtuze, 2011:45):

Hayi mhlekazi ... akukho nto ibitheni ibingathangani, kuba athi amaXhosa akudala akukho nto itheni ngenxa yokuba akukho nto intsha phantsi kwelanga, ekhoyo yeyakha yakho. Sisuswe emakhaya yinto esithande ukukhe siyikhululelwe ngumhlekazi okanye asicebise eyona nto simelwe kukuyenza. Amakhwenkwe awumise bume umzi phandle apha, ubundlobongela buxhomise amehlo. Eyona nto sifuna ukuyazi licebo elinokwenziwa ukuze bupheliswe obu bundlobongela. Nantso kuphela into esize kukukhathaza ngayo, nkosi. Thina singamatshantliziyo, yiyo lonto kungonakalayo ukuba iintambo zikhe zaphoswa kuthi. Ndibeka ingca apho ndod' enkulu.

(No, my lord Our ancestors would say there is nothing new under the sun. What took us from our homes is a matter that my lord can help us resolve or advise us what we should do. Uncircumcised boys are the cause of the eye-raising thuggery in this community. What we want to know is the advice that we can follow in order to put an end to this violence. That is the matter we have come to bother you about, my lord. As fire-eaters, we do not want to take onto our hands the control of the situation because we may mess things up. That is all, my lord.)

Mdeyide's voice was meant to reflect a collective sense. It was delivered with requisite etiquette. Mdeyide made it clear to the chief, that anarchy was a resolvable social ill but, the respect for procedures was paramount, hence his words "...kungonakala ukuba iintambo zikhe zaphoswa kuthi." (Chaos would ensue if the reigns were passed to us.)

The other principle involved in this approach has to do with history. Mdeyide says, "...athi amaXhosa akudala akukho nto ... intsha phantsi kwelanga, ekhoyo yeyakha yakho," (Our ancestors say there is nothing new under the sun). This understanding, that since there is nothing new under the sun, means that such a matter may have once been encountered before and the manner of its resolution is vital at this stage. The approach mooted by Mtuze was used by Mqhayi in *Ityala lamawele* through a character called Khulile.

Khulile was invited to the courtyard of the chief, to help advise the court on a difficult matter involving twins. The living records had to speak and Khulile was the library of the community, *inyange*. He listened to the case for two days. When called to take the stand, Khulile (in Bennie, 2011:148) remembered an earlier case also involving twins. He then stood up and said:

Nina namhla nindibizele ... nithi, ingaba amanyange anolwazi wona olugqithileyo kolwenu ngobuwele. UNkosiyamntu liwele kuyise, liwele elincinane; ubukhulu bafunyanwa nguye, wabuthatha ehleli umkhuluwa wakhe, uLiwana, kuba wabanana ngecongwane. Athi wona amanyange makabuthabathe.

(You have invited me here ... you are asking if veterans have more experiences than yourselves about twins. Nkosiyamntu is a twin, a younger twin. He gained the heir while his elder brother, Liwana, was around. The veterans were agreed that he be named the heir.)

Not only did Khulile assist the court with source material of a similar case under similar circumstances, he brought to the discussion a critical question of morality. Based in his experiences, Khulile posed a question (in Bennie, 2011:148):

Asizizenzo na into eyenza ubudala, kwanjengokuba nenkulu, ethe qelele kwabanye, iyahlukana nobukhulu bayo xa ifike yangumntwana ngezenzo?

(Is it not actions that grow a man, since even a first born loses the respect of his age when he behaves like a child.)

Returning to Mtuze's novel, Chief Soldati, the chief of Mmandizonka, had absented himself from the streets of Mmandizonka. He was keeping himself in his house as he felt that he was not in control; "*wayengabonakali nangetshengele apha elalini kucacile ukuba umfo omkhulu uzivalele endlwini.*" (he was not seen in the village it was clear he kept himself indoors) (Mtuze, 2011:44).

This is how Chief Soldati responded (Mtuze, 2011:45):

"Madoda, lo mcimbi nize ngawo unzima. Asikuko nokuba ndiyanibulela ngokuthi kanti nizigqalile ezi zinto zenzekayo. Mna ngokwam ndisuke ndayindindi ... Ndicinga ukuba eyona nto ingcono kukuba sibize imbizo sive uluvo lwamanye amadoda ngalo mbandela."

(Gentlemen, this matter you have brought forward is very important. I am very thankful that you have been observing things that are happening. On my side, I am speechless ... I think the best thing we can do is to convene imbizo and hear the opinion of other men on this matter.)

It needed brave men who were wise yet humble; men who understood and could use their language effectively, the impact of its words and the consequences thereof. When the *imbizo* was ultimately called, before Chief Soldati opened the meeting, Mtuze (2011:46) painting the scene of the courtyard as "(kwakuthe) cwaka ... kwazola kangangokuba wawunokuyiva inaliti xa iwa phantsi" (It was quiet, you could hear a pin falling).

The decorum and the seriousness of an open air gathering is projected in words by an artist who belongs to its culture. It is a way that African people carry out of their affairs, using institutions that are founded in their dignity. Mqhayi's (in Bennie, 2011:149)

description of the scene in the courtyard in the matter of the twins, *Ityala lamawele* is as follows:

Kwakukho nabafazi kanobom apha koMkhulu, bethe nqadalala ngasesibayeni phaya, bengaphakamisi ukuthetha. Kwakungekho moya, kuzolile kuthe cwaka. Kunqanqaza oonogqaz' emathafeni. Kukhenkchez' inyenzane equleni.

(There were many women present at the Great Place that day. They were seated in their place and had not raised their voices. There was no wind blowing. The weather was fine. Grass warblers could be heard. And crickets were making their sounds.)

Mdengentamo (2011:46) rose to address the meeting. Mdengentamo spoke as if in dialogue with himself. His speech was directed to the masses of men and women who were gathered there, yet it was a dramatized dialogue. This style of speech was designed to catch the attention and curiosity of the audience (Mtuzze, 2011:46):

Owu! Kudala ke undisukela ndisaba, mfondini. Ndinxaphile ngoku, kunjalo nje ndiyabona ukuba sendiza kudinwa, ndizincame ndilwe. Mna uqobo olu lwam, ndingumntu woxolo kodwa ndithi ndakuthetha ngalo mlomo wam nibe ngabesaqunge nina. Isizwe saphukile, izinto ezenzekayo, zisenziwa ngabethu abantwana, aziginyisi mathe.

(Oh! You have chased me for too long. I am breathless, and in fact I am getting tired, and I will turn and fight you. Me myself, I am a person of peace but when I open my mouth there will be a riot. The nation is devastated, things that are done by our children to us cannot be condoned anymore.)

Most central in Mtuzze's mind was a representation through Mdengentamo's speech, of the manner in which African people carried themselves while attending to official business. The intention was clear. It was the demonstration of the resourcefulness of African people and the dispersal of their wisdom through the concept of African Humanism. Words were direct and incisive (Mtuzze, 2011:46):

Masingadleli ezintini, madoda, masingaphili obentshontsho ngenxa yabantwana abazelwe sithi. Hayi bo! Lihlazo eli.

(Let us not live in fear as a result of our children. No! This is a disgrace!)

Mtuze composed expressions that spoke from the heart. While writing, he understood, as Mphahlele (2002:409) puts it, that:

... literature ... is an act of knowledge, an act of language, and a compulsive act of culture. This happens in context and thus gains perspective ... As an act of language it heightens experience, with vigorous words expressing vigorous thoughts and feelings.

There is a peculiar power in this orality (Mtuze, 2011:47):

Le ngwevu yayiwathunukile amadoda. Zawa ngokuwa iintetho kusunjululwa amaqhina. Kwakubonakala ukuba kuyacingwa, akupucwa. Amagqala ayegalela uhalala kunzima ebafaneni bemana bengqina kuphela. Lahamba ixesha amadoda ebile engamanqugwala exoxa, ezama ukulungisa ikamva lesizwe sawo. Ilizwi elintsokothileyo laliphendulwa kwangelintsokothileyo. Akukho nto inokulunga esizweni ingathanga ichotshelwe kwasiso ngokwaso. Apho kukho ukuzimisela ikho indlela. Amadoda ayebeke izabakala, ethetha ngobuciko obukhulu.

(The old man's words were touching. More and more speakers rose to speak, seeking to arrive at a resolution. It was clear that all were thinking deeply, there was no child's play. Experienced men were making substantive contributions and younger men were nodding their heads approvingly. Time went by as men were sweating, engaged with the destiny of their nation. A wise expression was followed by another wise one. Matters of a nation needed to be resolved by the nation itself. Where there was commitment there was a way. Men were making wise proposals.)

The novel *UDingezweni*, is a testimony of Africa's marriage between age and wisdom and Mtuze (2011:87) demonstrates this abundantly throughout the narrative. Here is another example where the main protagonist, Dingezweni, approached the elder, Mfeketho, to seek counsel:

He, bawo uMfeketho, khawundixelele le nto – umntu lo ezulwini xa emi phambi kwentlanganiso yamatyala, kunyanzelekile afunyanwe enentyala?

(Mr Mfeketho, can you tell me – what happens when you stand before the courts of heaven, are you supposed to be found guilty?)

This question comes through in the same way as with the young character in Ndawo's *Ingxoxo yenyange*, which is discussed in Chapter 2. On Dingezweni's second approach to

Mfeketho, and true to the fact that wisdom does not come cheap, the interaction was not a smooth process as this dialogue attests (Mtuze, 2011:90):

“Baw’ uMfeketho,” wafika watsho, “ubuyizekaphi yonke laa nto ubuyithetha kum ngalaa mini?”
“Ngokuba?”
“Hayi, ndiyabuza.”
“Ubuza xa bekutheni?”
“Njani, bawo?”
“Ndithi, ekubeni?”
“Andiqondi ngoku, bawo.”
“Umbuzo wam ulula. Utsho xa bekutheni?”
“Hayi, bawo, ndibuza nje.”
“Nam ke, bendithetha nje.”
“Njani nje?”
“Ubuza njani nje wena?”

(“Mr Mfeketho,” he asked, “where did you get all that you said to me that day?”
“Why?”
“No, I’m just asking.”
“Why are you asking?”
“What do you mean, sir?”
“I say, why are you asking?”
“I don’t understand now, sir.”
“My question is clear, why are you asking?”
“No, sir, I was just talking.”
“Well, I was just talking too.”
“Just like that?”
“Were you asking just like that?”)

Dingezweni gave up in the end. He started to know that wise counsel does not come cheap. The words of Mfeketho were very serious and they nearly sent him packing.

Dingezweni was stubborn, *wayengeva*. At this point Mtuze reveals the role of the elderly in protecting the young, invoking the mantra that every child was every parent’s child. At a different work station in Stanger in KwaZulu-Natal, Dingezweni was reigned in by another elder, “ikhehle lasemaJwareni,” (an older man of the Jwara clan). Jwara asked (Mtuze, 2011:124):

He, mfo wam! Noko ikho into onayo. Ingathi kanti unento ekulandelayo. Kutheni waya uxweba mihla le?

(Hey, son! There is something with you. I hope you are not burdened. Why are you always pensive?)

Dingezweni attempted to duck the observing eyes of the old man but was ultimately cornered. He had to open up and tell what was in his heart:

Ndidliwa zintwala zengubo yam kwaye ... ukuba ndingakuchazela amasuka-ndihlale namabona-ndenzile endihamba phantsi kwawo, mhlawumbi nawe ungazinyelisa izicamango zam njengabaninzi.

(It is the lice of my blankets that are biting me ... if I can explain the total situation of my life, maybe you too, will humiliate my opinions just like others.)

The tone of reluctance in Dingezweni's voice was meant to enable the old man to employ his wisdom in making the younger man to develop trust and faith in his own people. Dingezweni had to see Jwara as a parent, somebody he could rely on. "Umntu yinkosi ukuzazi," (a man knows himself better than anyone else) are the few words that Jwara used and Dingezweni was immediately persuaded. He began to tell it all. After a long confession, full of hardened statements, Jwara sat silently and contemplated. When he had thought through he said (Mtuze, 2011:128):

Awu! Mfana, uyagalela. Kumhla ndibona umfana othetha phandle oko ndazalwayo kude kube ngoku sendizama imibimbi. Ndiyakuva mna kodwa ngelishwa andikuveli ntweni.

(Young man, you can speak. It is for the first time in my life to hear a young man speaking openly like you do. I am now aging and wrinkling. I do hear you but I do not understand you.)

This representation by Mtuze is echoed by Rafapa (2010:220) when he states that a "lived life in direct reflection of its surface plainness ... does not hesitate in a discursive manner from being, or propose in a visualizing manner what it is not – it simply is." The fluttering language of Jwara was employed to capture the attention of Dingezweni. At the end of the conversation Dingezweni was different. There was a change as a result of the interaction with Jwara. Mtuze (2011:130) depicts this change by placing Dingezweni in a deeper mode of reflection:

Zahamba iintsuku ejikajikana nale ntetho kaJwara. Wayengasokuze axole de afumane iziphene nalapha kuyo kodwa yaya ingena, icaca ubunyani bayo endaweni yokuba afumane izikhwasilima.

(Days went by as he was tossing and turning the words of Jwara. He wanted to find fault but the words instead were sinking in his mind. They were becoming clearer and clearer.)

The grasp of language is very important in African Humanism. A speaker must liven up his/her speech with proverbs and idioms while, at the same time, maintaining a high regard for listeners or readers. Proverbs and idioms are the bedrock and cornerstone of the belief system of African people. Their role in the mind-set, in the value system, attitudes and behavior and actions of Africans is huge. Mtuze demonstrates the use of an appropriate language during specific events and/or situations. For instance, the wives who are married to a particular house will not use words that are similar to the names of their husbands, fathers-in-law, mothers-in-law, aunts, uncles and other elders of the in-laws.

In a conversation between Nomphambaniso and Nomqaqadeko, both being wives of Nyatyhoba's brothers, the issue was the death of Nomqaqadeko's child. Mandlakapheli died in a hail storm while helping Dingezweni to collect wood. Note the language of respect, *ulwimi lokuhlonipha*, that Nomphambaniso deployed since she was a *makoti*, a married woman, in the house of Mpholi (Mtuze, 2011:33):

Yinzo yangabom, Nomqaqadeko, le. Lingathini ityubuka lakho ukunoboka ngentyathuk' enje? Kudala ndilozele ukuba uNyubatyha lo utyothile empethe kwethu. Yhu! Ungathini ukutyotha unetyubuka namhlanje ngobaluko utyhithike sele usonge izamkelo? Wakha walozelaphi umju omkhulu ekhwelisa amatyubuka ekolohiyeni ukuba bayokutheza iintyodi kuthekela isiphango esingaka?

(This is a deliberate thing, Nomqaqadeko. How can you lose your child in this manner? For a long time, I have been seeing that Nyhubatyha is after us. No, you cannot lie down and fold arms when your child has passed. Where have you ever seen an adult who puts a child on a cart so that they could go and collect wood when such a storm is coming?)

In another instance, Dingezweni was living in the mountains having escaped the wrath of the community after leading a reign of anarchy and violent crime against the people of

Mnandizonka village. He had sought refuge with *abakhwetha* (initiates). He needed a hut to live in, so he offered himself to be circumcised. When men of Mnandizonka found out that the fugitive had finally come forward to be a man, a good sign of repentance, they came to the mountain to see for themselves. One of them, Hambile, asked Dingezweni why he had decided to go through circumcision in such an unsatisfactory way, that is, without the consent of his parents and the involvement of his community. Dingezweni answered respectfully (Mtuze, 2011:60):

Kwakuphele amahlathi, ncentsa, ndaba ngafuna ukuxhola ndakuncama. Ndakha ndeza apha koondoqa ndifuna amagcaza neentsedeba kodwa ndabonelelwa. Ndancedwe yilekhanka kabawo ooxam bendicothela kwezintaba. Ndandingqungela izifombo phaya esiXhoseni, ndabhaqwa sesinye isigqathi, sawuhlaba umkhosi, ndasisisulu sekrali.

(There were no places to hide, sir, and I could not find food to eat. I decided to approach the initiates to ask for grains of maize and water. They helped me. I was protected on this mountain by this dog of my father against *Varanus niloticus* that were trying to reach me. When I went to steal chickens in the settlement, a certain lady noticed me. She raised alarm. Immediately I was a victim of sticks.)

The manner of speech of the *makotis* (brides) of the house towards their in-laws and the *abakhwetha* (initiates) towards *amadoda* (men) served to signify the supreme premium that Africa placed on social relationships, what Mphahlele (2002:127) sees as a “social manifestation of the organic view” of African Humanism.

With Dingezweni having entered manhood and having been spoken to by selected men of his community on the occasion of *umgidi* (circumcision ceremony), Ndondo added his voice (Mtuze, 2011:60):

Ndakuthi ke ndiqonde ukuba uyindoda, uziphathe njengendoda ke, kwedini. Ubudoda obu asikokwaluka njengoko uninzi lucinga. Ubudoda kukuziphatha nezenzo zomntu. Ukuba iingcinga nezenzo zakho zibi ukwaluka oku kwakho kuthetha ilize.

(I will only satisfy myself that you are a man when I see you behaving like a real man, my boy. To be a man is not the cutting of the foreskin as many believe. To be a man should be reflected in your behaviour and in the things you choose to do. If your thoughts as well as your deeds are immoral, your being circumcised was a useless exercise.)

The whole community handled the affair of the passage into manhood of Dingezweni including the celebration of coming back home, *umgidi*. This aspect of the social life of African people “celebrates the spiritual forces that keep us together, and preserve the communal order and harmony” (Mphahlele, 2002:408).

In the same way as African languages are the life blood of African Humanism, songs are an important form of cultural preservation. They educate, entertain but also preserve Africa’s way of life. When Dingezweni walked away from his home after his father Nyubatyha had given up on him, it was late at night and he had no idea where he was going. He sang an old song (Mtuze, 2011:66):

*Ngwamza ndibeleke ngwamza,
Ngwamza andinandawo ngwamza.*

(Ciconia ciconia carry me, ciconia ciconia,
Ciconia ciconia I have no home, ciconia ciconia.)

Dingezweni had heard this song from the girls of Mnandizonka on many occasions. In that darkness of the night of his escape from home, he found its meaning. For so long that girls sang the song he had never cared. That evening he wished a Ciconia could carry him on its back and lift off his troubles. The song became his own prayer (Mtuze, 2011:66).

Another important pillar of African Humanism, the sense of sharing, makes a prominent presence in this novel, *UDingezweni*. Before the occasion at MaMjwara’s house, invitations for her event were sent out in the African style through organic means of African communication. Mtuze (2011:68) depicts a scene that explains the workings of the system:

NguMgqibelo evekini ... Kuxa kanye amadoda ephunguzayo encwase iindawo ekuphilwa kuzo ... Akubanga thuba lide yalanywa indawo enga ingazuzisa. Kwangoko kwamana kugqitha indoda iyokutshona emazantsi elali ithe cwaka.

(It was a Saturday ... men were trying to find out where they could find places with festivities ... it was not long when the host was found. In no time, men could be seen passing silently one by one towards the south end of the village.)

In African societies it is an established convention that notices of death or invitations to the *imbizo*, a wedding, *umgidi* or a ritual would spread swiftly and with ease through word of mouth and would reach all intended recipients as well as far flung areas since there were people who were always travelling. Back to MaMjwara, the occasion was well planned. MaMjwara had brewed enough beer and there was also “unomhlotshazana” (gin). Those who were expected at this party could be detected through the names given to the provisions of brew that were prepared and stored (Mtuze, 2011:68):

Wawukho umsindleko womhambi obehlise loo ntlambo ngezolo elinye elingaphaya, wathi imbuyo yoba namhlanje kengoko uMaMjwara aze amtshukuzele intwana. Lalikho ilima elijongene neliya bhoxo beligqibezela indlu kanti igongqo lona eliya lingaphandle lalidliwe uMfanta ngokuthi kwiveki eyandulela leyo afince zintunu, agqogqe iimfihlo neengxotha phaya kwaJoyini zingekho iinqebethu zomzi. Phezu kobotywala bonke, babukho utywala obabukhutshwe yimizi ngemizi bekhapha uMaMjwara ukuze kuphile novela phiphphi angafiki sekungekho namaqwelo.

(There was a beer brewed for a visitor who had passed down the valley the day before yesterday, and had said he would return today and MaMjwara should leave some little bit. There was a work party consisting of friends and neighbours who were expected to come since they had been doing finishing touches on a house. There was also some beer that Fanta was charged to bring since he had drunk the last portion of beer that was reserved for elders at Joyini’s place. In addition to all that beer, there was a lot of booze that was donated to MaMjwara by various people so that even travellers could be catered for.)

This booze, the warmth of the people, the order marshalled by the “injoli” (a man appointed to dish out drinks to all those who were present), the songs and the clapping hands and ululating voices of women, filled MaMjwara’s homestead, “ihlombe lalibiza umhambi egqitha ngendlela,” (the excitement was so high, it was inviting travellers).

The song and dance raised the spirits of those who were present. They were jovial and, as it was not unusual, men and women would stand up and dance, stop the song and make public commitments of gifts to those they love. At MaMjwara’s house a man rose with a whistle and interrupted the song:

Vi-i-tyo! Bamba, mfazi omdala, sivile. Uyabona, nto kaMpayipheli, ndikuvava ngelaa thokazi lam lenkomo lintusikazi.

(Vi-i-tyo! Hold there, my sister. You see, you the son of Mpayipheli, I honour you with that heifer of mine.)

UDingezweni is rich in African orature. Mtuze's exploration reveals the power of the humanism of African people. This novel is a kind of work that throws back on the Xhosa people their true selves. Mtuze has used his pen in a manner that paints a life that is understood by its people. The novel is about the social life as well as the history of Xhosa people and we shall return to it when we discuss the social and political themes of Mtuze. What is evidently clear and certain is that *UDingezweni* is a mirror of African Humanism and, therefore, makes her composer a humanist of the African soil.

4. 5 Summary

This chapter dealt with Mtuze's novels and the representations of African humanism in those works. Leadership as represented by Phangindawo in *Alitshoni lingaphumi* was extensively discussed. The living conditions of farm labourers, forced removals and conditions in a new township settlement was explored. The discussion of the short stories in *Amathol' eendaba* brought forward social issues such as alcohol abuse, theft and jealousy. The next chapter deals with Mtuze's spirituality and his Anglicanism.

Chapter Five

Mtuze's Spirituality and Anglicanism

5.1 Introduction

African spirituality refers to that divine part in human beings that connects with all experiences at all stages of their lives. This divine part in a human make-up is the seat of creativity. Creativity has a primary responsibility of enhancing and revitalizing the lives of people. So, a study of spirituality needs to view spirituality as a key aspect and as an indispensable part of human existence. The importance of attention on spirituality, especially African spirituality, is well captured by Mphahlele (2004:277) when he writes:

The White crashed into our lives, bringing Christianity, money, soldiers with guns, explorers, traders, new form of government, legal systems, new ways of dress, new foods, new architecture, forestry, new agricultural methods, trade unions, a new science of animal care in farming, new medicine, schooling as we know it today, new methods of child care, hospitals and clinics, and so on.

In this chapter we will explore the basic symbols of the spirituality of Xhosa people. The discussion will engage with Mtuze in respect of these. In the second section the chapter will deal with Mtuze's Anglicanism. It should be clear at the end of this chapter that, African humanism is an open-minded way of life that creates spaces for other creeds while making its presence unapologetically.

5.2 Xhosa Spirituality

5.2.1 Religion

Like all Africans, the religiousness of Xhosa people emanates from their supreme respect for life. To them "life is held sacred" and this makes Xhosa people to be religious people (Mphahlele, 2002:151). This protection over life is basically a protection over the soul because "the soul is one's spiritual life," (Mphahlele, 2002:151). Spiritual life is part of

general life. It is not secluded or practiced in a special place. “The spiritual is experienced everywhere,” (TEE College 1989:114 in Mtuze, 2003:7) and Mtuze further states “in traditional African religion there is no ... demarcation between the spiritual and the secular.”

The TEE College (1989:115) document, cited by Mtuze states that:

Religion in African society is ... the way in which people find satisfaction for their daily needs. It has to do with basic human relationships through which allegiance to God finds expression.

Exploring further this point and making comparisons with Israel, Mtuze (2008:97) writes:

The (African) religion, like that of Israel, is lived out in the people’s daily activities and in their culture. In this way, there is no separation between religion and culture. It becomes very problematic, therefore, when either the church or the state seeks to divorce culture from religion or religion from culture.

The idea of religiousness of Xhosa people was strongly refuted by the early Christian missionaries. This prompted scholars such as Soga, Dwane, Mphahlele and Mtuze to argue the African case. Soga (1931:7) wrote:

... (amaXhosa) have a conception of a Supreme Being. Clearly defined, a God who is the Creator of all things, who controls and governs all, and as such is the rewarder of good and the punisher of evil.

Dwane (cited in Mtuze, 2008:113) writes:

The Xhosa people and other Xhosa speaking groups have for a long time maintained that it is untrue to suggest that they had no notion of God before the arrival of the missionaries.

And, Mphahlele (2002:143) writes that:

Most, if not all, African peoples believe in the Supreme Being, the creator of all things, and have done so long before Christians and Muslims brought their religions to the continent. The names of the Supreme Being vary widely: Mulungu (East Africa), Modimo, Tixo, Nkulunkulu (South Africa) and variations of Nyambe from Botswana to Zaire; West Africa has Ngewo, Mawu, Amma, Olorun (Yoruba) and Chukwu (Igbo).

The worshipping of God by Xhosa people of the Eastern Cape “was one of the bones of contention between the missionaries and the Xhosa converts for a long time,” writes Mtuze (2008:112):

The reason for the dissonance emanated from the fact that the Xhosa knew about God long before the arrival of the missionaries. When the missionaries came, the Xhosa people told them about their God, Qamata. As could be expected, the missionaries refused to accept Qamata as referring to God as known in western religion. To them Qamata was one of the many pagan Gods, hence their refusal to include Qamata in the Xhosa Christian Bible. Until today, Qamata does not appear in the Xhosa Bible. Instead the translators came up with Thixo and later Ndikhoyo.

As discussed earlier ancestors are very pivotal to understanding the spirituality of Africans and Xhosa people, in particular. The ancestors, also known as the living-dead, are the main institution of African spirituality. African people have a strong belief in the afterlife. Part of this belief emanates from the closeness of family and clan, as we shall argue later, and closeness of the living Africans to their ancestors as Mphahlele (2002:137) puts it:

...because we are closest to our ancestors, we have reverence for them. They are our intercessors. They know the pain and joy of living, so they are our main point of reference in our relation to the immediate world around us.

Soga (1931:7) takes the point further:

... the spirit-world wherein dwell the spirits of their ancestral chiefs, and of each family's departed relatives. These spirits are active, concerning themselves with the things which pertain to their unseen world, and, at the same time, keeping in touch with the living, and requiring the living to keep in touch with them through ritual acts and ceremonial rites.

Mtuze (2003:25) concurs too:

... the living-dead ... are benevolent beings ... whose main function is to ensure good life and well-being except when someone has gone against social and ritual norms in which case they exercise their prerogative to punish the offender.

Laying emphasis on the role of ancestors, Mtuze (2003:26) states that:

The African God is immanent but cannot be approached directly. Like the Chief, access to him is via councillors, in this case, the living-dead conjured up as invisible beings and not really as “spirits”.

The road to the world of ancestors starts at the point of death. The rituals that are performed for the head-of-household, the father, and those that are performed for the wife, mother or aunt are an indication of the signing of a contract between the living and the living-dead. Writing on this rite of passage for Xhosa male heads-of-household, Mtuze (2003:25) states:

The amaXhosa also used to bury the male heads-of-household in the same way. The man would be buried with his pipe, tobacco and sometimes with some maize seed or millet so that he could sow and cultivate crops when he reaches his destination. It was also not uncommon to see him buried with his weapons – a stick, a spear and a shield.

In *Ingxoxo yenyange* a literary piece in *Imibengo* (Bennie, 2011:214) Ndawo holds a conversation with his great grandfather near the kraal:

“Niyenzelani into yokuthi, mhla ningcwaba ofileyo, nifake iintanga zamaphuzi, namazimba, nithi aze aniseze amanzi nakuba nilundwendwe kwelo aya kulo?”

“Sikholelwe okokuba abafayo bayaphila kwelo zwe baya kulo. Bayalima; kungako oko esibanika imbewu nje, sibayaleza nokuba baze basinike amanzi, sakufika sinxaniwe kwelo.”

“Ewe, ndiyeva, khokho, kuba soloko ndabakho apha eMhlangeni, kuqhutywa ngale ndlela, uyithethayo.”

(“Why, when you bury the dead, do you place seeds, and say these are provisions for the world that he will enter?”)

“We believe that those who left the earth, live on in another world. They are planting hence we give them seeds, and we asked them to welcome us when our turn comes.”

“Yes, I hear you, great-grandfather, because ever since I have been around here at Mhlangeni, the procedure has been what you have just explained.”)

The idea is that the departed will enter the land of the ancestral spirit, *kweleminyanya* as Soga (1931:319) explains that:

... there is ... the belief in the union after death of the spirits of those who have just passed away, with those already in the land of the spirits ... the Xosa heaven (*Kwele-Minyanya*) was one in which the spirits of the dead lived a life on earth spiritualised, but death did not enter into the spirit life. The need of sustenance

was felt as in the earthly life. Herds of cattle and all live-stock were there to meet that need.

It is this existence and communication that is the key issue here (Soga, 1931:318):

Death to the Xosas does not, indeed, mean extinction. The soul lives on, continuity of the family is preserved, the spirits of the departed have direct communication with the living: the living minister to the wants of those who “have gone before,” and the latter punish the shortcomings of their friends in the flesh, sending sickness or death upon them. These, in their turn, offer sacrifices to appease the offended spirits.

As pointed out above by Soga, the living-dead among Xhosa people “do not just disappear into thin air ... They are perceived to go to a world beyond from where they are later invited back to their respective homes,” writes Mtuze (2008:120). Hence Mphahlele (2002:138) writes that “every family has its own ancestors, but there are also communal ancestors.” This refers to people such as Ntsikana, Mqhayi, Mandela, Sobukwe and Biko whose works are a representation that goes beyond their biological, ethnical or geographic limitations.

Again, as could be expected, the area of ancestors became “a second area of discord between the Xhosa congregants and their white counterparts,” writes Mtuze (2008:113):

It leads to numerous questions from those who are battling to locate the ancestors in Christian spirituality where Jesus is the only mediator between Christians and God. The waters become even murkier when one introduces the rituals and other such practices into the equation.

It cannot be denied that “belief in the ancestors,” writes Mtuze (2008:115), “goes hand in glove with the performance of a host of rituals that the church is loath to endorse.” These rituals would require the services of *oosiyazi* or sangomas.

5.2.2 Human life

Mtuze’s descriptions of the landscape of Mnandizonka in *UDingezweni* have, in their centre, human life. Mnandizonka’s social setting is portrayed by Mtuze as a home with human presence and feeling. Its landmarks are derived from the names of people who are

known to the community. *Umntu*, the person, and the person's human condition is the bedrock of Mtuze's (2011:1) descriptions:

... likhaya lobumnandi; likhaya lenyembezi; likhaya leembacu; likhaya lezihandiba. Xa ufuna zonke iziyolo zakwaNtu, tyelela eMnandizonka, phakathi kweNtabexhalanga noGolokoqo, phezu komlambo iLitheko, ezantsi lee kwesikaNgubengcuka neNtabelanga.

(... it is a home of happiness, a home of tears; a home of refugees; a home of eminent people. When in search of pleasures of Ntu, visit Mnandizonka, between Ntabexhalanga and Golokoqo mountains, north of Litheko River, and south of the great place of Ngubengcuka and Ntabelanga.)

Mtuze presents all attributes related to a life of people, *ubumnandi* (happiness), *iinyembezi* (tears), *iimbacu* (exiled), *izihandiba* (eminent people); social and situational categories whose collective sanctuary is Mnandizonka. His focus on human beings is further demonstrated in his descriptions of the houses where emphasis on life is made prominent (Mtuze, 2011:1):

Izindlu apho ngoongquphantsi abenziwe ngodaka. Abemi belo basadla ngendebe endala nakwizithethe, basahamba ngabaziphathelwa yintulo, kuba elolovane ilizwi abazange balamkele.

(Their houses are thatched roof huts with mud walls. Citizens are still primitive in terms of customs.)

Mtuze's (2011:1) exclusive attention to poverty as a condition that warrants detailed description is worth noting. He leads his readers into the poorest home in Mnandizonka, into a house whose situation is well-known in its neighborhood:

Kukho apho umzi ozele ziintsizi namaxhala; aphoinja ide yakhuthuka amacala kukulala eziko ... Bathetha ngalo mzi ukususela kusasa, ngoqhiza, kude kube ngongcwalazi kanti bakho abathetha ngawo ukususela ngongcwalazi kude kube ngongcwalazi.

(There is a house filled with destitution and fear; where a dog lost hair on its sides because it had never been fed, it's sleeping all along at the unused fireplace. This home is the talk of the town from morning, noon and night. Others talk about it from one evening to the next.)

The state of poverty in the house of Nyubatyha comes after a rich father, Mpholi, who worked hard alongside an equally hard working wife, Noveki. Here Mpholi is described as “...umfo oneento zakhe, eyingqanga eyaziwayo eMnandizonka” (a man with material possessions, known for his dignity in Mnandizonka) (Mtuze, 2011:1):

Umfo (o)wayekhuthela ngokufanayo nenkosikazi yakhe, beziindlezane ububele bobabini, bengathumani manzi.

(A man who worked hard just like his wife, both being a generous couple.)

This qualification, possessions earned through hard work, is very important in that it introduces the reader to a special quality in Mpholi and his wife. Hard work that comes through collaborating with a life partner requires commitment which, in turn, demands a mental strength. Mtuze, through the descriptions of Mpholi, his status and his dignity, mirrors a life lived through principles. This principled way of living is surely a result of an embrace of some consciousness that holds commitment dearly (Mtuze, 2011:1):

Wayephila kukuziphandela; wazisebenzisa izandla zakhe, wayindoda phakathi kwaloo madoda aloo lali.

(He relied on himself; used his hands, became a man among men in that village.)

What is most interesting in the descriptions of Mpholi around the material possessions, hard working, family collaboration; is the overarching willingness to share with others who are in need, “*beziindlezane bobabini, bengathumani manzi*”, (a generous couple). This sense of sharing is not an uninformed act of charity. It is anathema to the grabbing culture of consumerist societies. Its function is to teach others the value of self-reliance. Mtuze’s descriptions of the landscape of Mnandizonka in *UDingezweni* have, in their centre, human life. Mnandizonka’s social setting is portrayed by Mtuze as a home with human presence and feeling.

5.2.3 Oosiyazi

Oosiyazi (sangomas) are an important sector in the belief system of African people and, in this case, Xhosa people. When they conduct their services, songs and dance are very

vital since they connect with the spirits. In addition to the serious conveyance of messages between the living and the living-dead through songs, there is also communication among the living themselves. This is usually spiced up with humour and entertainment through the singing of African songs. Mtuze (2011:69) in *UDingezweni* writes about the social get-together at MaMjwara's house when "iyolisa lomfo wakwaJola" (a comedian who was a son of Jola) is present.

It is important to give a brief background on Jola in order to understand how he produces connecting songs. Having been welcomed and having exchanged pleasantries Jola was no stranger to the patrons. He was known as "umntwana wokugula" (a traditional doctor). His professional name was Warhashula "into kaRhorhotyi eMbhedhe phaya. URhorhotyi yinto kaQubudile oyinto kaNokhangela osinqe sasikuZingquthu ngoko," (Mtuze, 1966:70). These were names of forefathers and ancestors of Jola and, as Mtuze demonstrates, the prominence of ancestors in the identity of African people is very paramount. It is a literature of Africa, spoken, acted and sung with spontaneity as Jola would show (Mtuze, 2011:70):

Ubonakale ehlasimla esithi mabamculele ingoma yakhe agoduke, kuba usajongwe
zizitywakadi neentshinyela zamahlathi.

"Dadobawo ndohamba ngaw' ezizweni."

Lalithambekile esibhakabhakeni ilanga ukuhlatyelwa kwale ngoma.

(He shuddered and asked for his song that will take him home, because he still had to pass dense forests ahead.

"Auntie, I will travel through nations with you."

It was dusk when this song was sung.)

The spontaneous doctor of the people, Warhashula, went straight for Nyubatyha. He gave Nyubatyha a free and direct unsolicited reading of his life and troubles. With everyone listening Warhashula revealed the sad state of Nyhubatyha's household and all those who were present were shocked to hear truths coming out of Warhashula's mouth. They knew so much about Nyubatyha's hardships. They knew about the riches of Mpholi,

Nyhubatyha's father, and that these were consumed by his brothers and their wives. They knew about the difficulty of MaMfene, Nyhubatyha's wife. They also knew about a son who was later born; who grew and created problems for their community, left his parents and never returned. These people knew about the death of MaMfene and how Nyubatyha suffered and still never came through; his bad dreams and the poverty that caused his restlessness. Warashula was speaking on these matters (Mtuze, 2011:73):

“Lo mfo ligqolo, ligogotya noko, bafondini,” watsho xa wayehlaba amadlala ekungalingisweni kwabantwana, kusetyenziswe ichitywa ingenguye ucumse. Uphethe ngelithi yiyo le nto abantwana bade babe ziingqandasi iingqondo zona zingazinzile, bathande ukuphala apha esithubeni. Utsho esenza umzekelo ngoDingezweni. Hayi khona apho watsho zaphalala exhegweni.

(This man is a miser, and is stubborn too, gentlemen,” he said referring to the neglect of children. He finally said that was the reason Nyubatyha's children were not stable and focused. He made an example about Dingezweni. At that stage tears ran down the face of the old man.)

A song has brought all this reading. Mtuze, through his character Warhashula, puts into play what Mphahlele (2002:409) explains as the uttering of “truths” which were “discovered and established as possessions of the community” which are rendered “in vivid language [as] a combination of revelations inherited and learned over centuries of communal experience.”

Looking closely at this scene in the novel, it is clear that Mtuze's understanding of the role of *oosiyazi* or *bo-riyatseba* (as in Sesotho) is one and the same as that of Mphahlele (2002:139) in that Warhashula “invokes the presence of his ancestors and (those) of the patient,” who is Nyubatyha in this case. Sangomas have to undergo training. The profession of African medicine has various branches of specialization. Credo Mutwa was trained by his grandfather Ziko Shezi who was also “an Induna and veteran of the battle of Ulundi, which ended the Zulu War” (Mutwa, 1964:xx).

As part of his training, Mutwa (1964:xxi) underwent the ‘Ceremony of Purification’ as he was to take up the “post of Custodian of our sacred Tribal Relics, in the event of my grandfather's death.” Also, Mtuze's exposition about *oosiyazi* is with caution. He

understands that there are pseudo-doctors who are untruthful and fraudulent, and who rob people. To indicate this openness of mind, Mtuze (2011:74) brings a dialogue between MaKhumalo, who is Christian, and Nosentyi a non-believer:

“Uthethe wophela ngoDingezweni, MaKhumalo umhlekezi. Andimlibali nanamhlanje umntu onenyani kangaka,” kutsho uNosentyi emva kweentsuku ezininzi kuthethwa ngoWarhashula.

“Kudala ndiyiva apha elalini inkcazelo yakhe ngeso sanabe sale Mmandizonka kodwa kwezam iingcinga anditsho ukuba unyanisile. Latyibela lenje nje elinye igqirha lithetha kwangale nto, namhlanje eli liyayijika yonke loo nto. Sakuva yiphi sibambe yiphi ke?

(“That man spoke through and through on Dingezweni, MaKhumalo. To this day I cannot forget somebody who was as truthful,” said Nosentyi after many days since the talk about Warhashula.

“I have been hearing a lot about his explanations about that thug of this Mmandizonka, but I do not think he is correct. One traditional doctor also spoke much on this matter, today this one has brought his own version. Who should we believe?)

The ancestors and their connection to the living, and the role of *oosiyazi* is all intended at protecting and enhancing human life. At the centre of this system of belief is human life.

5.2.4 Land

The attack on the religious symbols of African people was sealed through the take-over of the land, partitioned at the Berlin Conference of 1885 where, as Mphahlele (2002:296) writes, “Africa lay there on the gigantic international dinner table, ready for the carving, by European powers.” The take-over did not go without a fight across the continent of Africa, and much more with Xhosa people of the Eastern Cape. Hodgson (in Elphick and Davenport, 1997:68) as cited by Mtuze (2003:8) writes:

...after one hundred years of war, the Xhosa speaking peoples ... had been incorporated under British sovereignty, suffering dispossession of their ancestral land, ... Every aspect of their daily lives, their customs and their beliefs had come under sustained attack from missionaries.

Mtuze (2003:9) further emphasizes that:

The expulsion and displacement of the amaXhosa from their original ancestral land was a wound that went deeper than (any other) struggle ... as land was associated with the burial places of revered ancestors, and kraals served as temples for sacrifices and other rituals.

The land question has never ceased to affect Africans in a direct way. In 1975 the present researcher was a *nqalathi*, a boy who helped his two uncles during their circumcision period. He collected wood, made fire and would fetch food from home and act as a carrier of messages. Unknown to the uncles and the members of the family, the hut that was the make-shift home for the period was built on land owned by a white farmer. This was in the area of Seymour in the Eastern Cape. Without warning, the white farmer reported to the police that two young African men had trespassed on his land and had built a lodge. The uncles were immediately arrested by the police. They were brought to the Seymour Magistrates office. The Magistrate banned them from the farmer's land. The sentenced required the payment of a fine. The farmer had humiliated the family such that members of the community had to build a new lodge on other land.

5.2.5 Family and clan relations

Africans and Xhosa people, in particular, are very familial. They place a huge importance on relationships. In addition to the roles and responsibilities of the members of the nuclear family, there are roles within the clan and within the community. The clan is the crucial tier in African and, in particular, Xhosa relationships. Its main function is with cohesion and continuity of the tradition of the clan. When an African experiences serious health problems that warrant ancestral intervention, he or she approaches his or her clan relations who, in turn, decide over the matter. This is one aspect of African way of life that is still very intact.

In the urban areas of South Africa Xhosa people, like all Africans, would always re-group as a clan and get to do their rituals in the small municipal yards of the townships, because what they believe in is that “whatever happens, human life must survive as a collective or

communal force,” (Mphahlele, 2002:138). In fact, there is this kinship that runs in and among African clans. It is a kinship that engenders unity and closeness that keeps members of a clan near each other even when they are geographically apart or had never known each before. On seeing each other for the first time and exchanging identities, closeness and unity is immediately aroused.

Clan systems function as a memory bank of the families and of the clan. Traces of the genealogy of the families are well kept since their origin is usually one source. Soga (1931:37) shares light on this issue by looking at the genealogy of chiefs and the recitation of its succession, which functions in the same manner as in other African families:

This becomes very evident when we listen to a tribal recorder as he traces the genealogy of the tribal chiefs from generation to generation. Some of these men can recite the direct line of succession back to thirty generations, including excursions into the indirect or branch lines, together with historical incidents connected with the actions and names of particular chiefs ... it is truly wonderful what a large measure of accuracy is maintained by these tribal recorders even under the search light of test and criticism.

When the recitations of successions are made there is an injection of energy in as far as the greatness of the particular clan. The poetry that sings the glorifications of generations who gave birth to other generations, as well as the drama of the rituals that are performed repeatedly, express the heroism of key figures of the clan and project their deeds and aspirations. This, in turn, lifts off their shoulders the day to day suffering that is inflicted by oppressive systems on African people. The humiliation and indignity of being a semi-slave race with very little hope for freedom, that is supposed to result in depressed spirits, is reversed by verse and song. All clan members suddenly take pride in their being and are fulfilled in the knowledge of their true greatness. Mtuze has benefitted tremendously from this life-giving phenomenon. As a Madiba, Zondwa, Mthembu, Mntande, he is able to develop his strength and can assume a standing in the wider community of Xhosa people and African people.

5.2.5.1 Relationships in *UDingezweni*

In *UDingezweni* the main character, Dingezweni, is a name that carries a curious meaning. It means one who is wandering aimlessly in the world. Mtuze decided on this name for his character because his actions were going to take a particular course. And, it is not uncommon when well-meaning and loving parents give their children names whose meanings tend to define them. In the novel Mtuze addresses the issue of sons and daughters who leave their homes in search of work but never return back to their parents again. Mtuze condemns this behaviour.

He knows that many who leave their parents and who move to far flung urban areas with the intention of finding means to improve the life of the family, are very much aware that they have to return at some stage. It is expected of them, and rightly so, that when they find work in the towns and cities, they would save for the families back home. In addition, they would purchase items that they knew were needed by the family. When the time to return home arrived at the end of a work contract, the family would re-unite and be happy to see their child again.

Dingezweni, did not follow this obvious convention. These kinds of conventions were brought about by the migrant labour system. And, since this system has been with African people for a very long time, it has become a life experience that necessitated ways to survive. These new ways of surviving the system were meant to retain the closeness of family and clans.

In the novel, Dingezweni did not follow this devised pattern of the African people. From the point of composition, what Dingezweni did was not unknown. Therefore, Mtuze was addressing a problem that was also a true life experience. He knew that there were many people who did not look back to their homes. They left knowing fully well the extent of need at their homes, but they chose to be swallowed by cities and never came back. And, such people were referred to as ooDingezweni or ooPhelelelizweni (lost in the world).

The choice of abandoning your home has a direct bearing on the family, the immediate and the wider clan collective. In a number of cases a man leaves behind a wife and children and decides not to come back. In other cases, a young man leaves behind parents who were hopeful that, now that he was old enough, he would contribute to the wellbeing of the family. There are also cases where a woman would leave behind her own children with her parents or grandparents, never to return again.

It is this decision to disregard family that Mtuze addresses in *UDingezweni*. Mtuze writes about the destitute parents who spent their time on earth praying and crying over their son who had abandoned them. He recreates situations where Dingezweni could change his ways at the intervention of the wisdom of older African men who were in places where he worked.

Mtuze writes about the mentality of a *dingezweni*, a wanderer of the world, how he or she could seal his or her decision never to return back home again and getting into the act of discouraging others who still think about their families, in a manner of defending their own habits. The self-styled wanderer would talk in glowing terms about living freely in the world, unburdened by family, thus assuming a position of becoming an agent of immorality. He or she would be out to disturb and destroy morality that Mphahlele (2004:253) defined as follows:

Morality everywhere in the world is like a river into which tributaries pour their waters. The sources include the culture of the home and the community. Into morality also flow formal and non-formal life-long education, which includes the arts, their creations and what people do with these.

In *UDingezweni* Nyhubatyha, the son of Mpholi and Noveki, had spent many years in Cape Town in search of work. When he finally came back from Cape Town after hearing that his parents had passed, his brothers Gwebityala, the eldest, and Bhokwinetyala, the youngest, had divided the inheritance between themselves and there was nothing left for Nyhubatyha (Mtuze, 2011:2). By the time he arrived at Mnandizonka his father's house was empty, “*(k)ulila ibhungane*” (Mtuze, 2011:5).

Abantu babeyingqina into yokuba kungafa intaka endala amaqanda ayabola, kuba umzi kaMpholi wawusele ulinxuwa lebobosi, iintlanti zize.

(People were confirmed in their belief that when the provider has perished, poverty sets in, because Mpholi's house was a deserted homestead with empty kraals.)

Mtuze uses expressions such as “*kulila ibhungane*,” “*intaka endala*” and “*iintlanti zize*”; reflecting the nature-enriched outlook to life as reflected in the language. He maintains this interactive relationship between people and nature, as well as how people derived life lessons from nature and factored these into their language as ideas. This link between humans and nature is also reflected in the naming of clans as will be discussed later. The two brothers, Gwebityala and Bhokwinetyala, who had shared their father's possessions between themselves only, decided to use the idea of being a *dingezweni*, to thwart and reject their brother, Nyubatyha (Mtuze, 2011:2):

... (ba)bemjongela phantsi kwendlu yenkuku bethetha ngetshipha likasokadala awada wafa uMpholi linyibilike eKapa, ngoku lakubona ukuba uthe goxe lifuna ilifa.

(They humiliated him, saying he was a wife-less man who deserted his family and lived in Cape Town until the death of Mpholi, now on coming back empty-handed, he was making demands on the inheritance.)

At this stage, although without a deep consideration the charge of the two brothers could be viewed as valid, Mtuze chooses to sympathise with Nyhubatyha by standing against rejection, especially a rejection by one's siblings. Nyubatyha's brothers and their wives were humiliating a man who had tried to be on his own, to find his feet in the same way as their father did before. And, since they stayed behind, lived and enriched themselves with their father's possessions, even paying their bride families *ilobola* using their father's cows; the fact that they looked down on a man who made endeavors on his life impacts on the reader. Rejection is a defeating assault on one's sense of self-worth. The ideal situation would have been to stick together as a family, suffer together and lift each other however you can.

People who do take care for each other are able to overcome the obstacles in their way. Unity and compassion are keys to survival and these are important pillars of African Humanism. Mtuze demonstrates this fact in a conversation between Nyubatyha and Mqoma. Nyubatyha sees a smiling Mqoma who was watching and appreciating his huge bull (Mtuze, 2011:5):

Ngabula nina madoda! Inene ndakuhlamba ngezantsi kwenu ... Endlwini indoda ibukela iziganyonyo zamakhwenkwe ayo neentombi zokwendisa kanti nalapha edlelweni ikratsha ngenkunzi yayo empondo ziphecileyo sibe thina maququlurha sisenga ikati.

(I wish I could share your luck. A man has strong sons at his home, and daughters who will marry soon; and in the veld he boasts with a bull that has long horns, whereas some of us have nothing to show.)

Mqoma who feels the hurt in Nyubatyha's heart, reacts as if this was his own pain (Mtuze, 2011:5):

Lentetho yakho iyandihlaba kuba nam ngokwam ndilixhwitha- ntamo kodwa ndifuna ukuthi yomelela; nawe sowuza kuzimbela isihogo, kuba kunjalo ukuzala ngezimini. Mhla wazala uMaMfene kumhla walicula elandincamisayo, ndalahl' ubomi bam.

(Your words are hurting because, I am a pauper too. I want to say be strong; soon you will dig your own grave, because that is how it is with children these days. The day uMaMfene gives birth is the day when troubles will begin.)

Within the family and within the same clan, there is education that is taking place for the young ones.

5.2.6 Education

African children are able to learn about their community from the safety of their own homes. An African home is a school of its community. In *UDingezweni*, MaMfene addressed her husband, Nyhubatyha about ways of teaching their son, Dingezweni. MaMfene retold a story that she heard from her grandmother about the importance of the role of parents in instilling respect and discipline in their young ones. She respectfully said (Mtuze, 2011:10):

Ngenxa yokungamqeqeshi esaphila umntwana, wathi umfikazi umakhulu omnye umntwana kwala xa efakwa engcwabeni wabonwa ephakamisa ingalo. Baba ngawa ngapha nangapha abantu bezama ukuyikruna loo ngalo kodwa abakha batsho ukuba nakho ukuyikruna. Wada wathetha umntwana esithi mabambethe, kuba ngexesha lokudla kwakhe ubomi abazange bamqeqeshe. Benza into ebuhlungu abo bazali - ukubetha isidumbu. Ityala lalingekho kuloo mntwana. Kunzima ukuba umntwana aziqeqeshe ngakumbi xa asenabazali kuba ujonge kubo ukuba bakhalime xa esenza okulihlazo. Xa kungekho bani othethayo uba yena wenza ubulumko xa esenza izinto ezingekho sikweni.

(Because of not disciplining a child while alive, my late grandmother once said, one child raised an arm from her grave in the middle of a funeral ceremony. People tried to wrestle with the arm, trying to bend it into the coffin. They could not succeed. The dead child spoke and said “Please beat me” because the parents had never disciplined her when she was alive. They did a horrific thing those parents – beating a corpse. The child was not at fault. A child cannot discipline herself when parents are there to do so. When no one raises a finger she always thinks she is on the right track.)

Mtuzi like Mphahlele (2002:33) understands that, “One of the ways of salvaging the imagination ... is through the very method of recapturing with the written word the power of mythmaking.”

Mythmaking and context lend resonance to our creations. The myth is that never ending story of life ... and we must keep trying to negotiate the meeting point between art and history: an effort that is itself the enduring purpose of life.

Emphasizing her point and deploying her genius, MaMfene warned (Mtuzi, 2011:11):

... indyebo yobulumko bakwaNtu ithi – wugobe uselula umthi wakho. Kubhetele ukusithintela isono kunokuthembela ekusinyangeni.

(... the wealth of wisdom of Ntu says – bend your tree to your desired shape early in its growth. Prevention is better than cure.)

This education in the African home takes place like a spiral of generations. The older generation finds itself having to teach children of their children, because they too were taught by parents of their parents. And, grandparents may have all the time at their disposal, to become the full-time guardians of their grandchildren with the parents doing their part too. Because these grandparents were once grandchildren too, and had lived

with their own grandparents they are, therefore, fit and qualified to teach old and new wisdoms to the new generation.

Mtuze's initial education came from his grandmother. An example of how he learnt poetry from his grandmother has already been discussed in Chapter 3. This teaching through poetry and stories is oral literature as Mphahlele (2002:143) states:

Although we associate 'literature' with what is written, today we speak of 'oral literature', which is spoken. When we speak or write language in a *special* way, so that it expresses deep-felt emotions in well-chosen beautiful words loaded with meaning; when we use language in this fashion to express what a lively imagination is creating – then we say we are producing literature, written or oral."

Education within the family must extend to the bigger family, that is, the clan.

5.2.7 Animals

Every clan identifies itself with a particular animal totem. Such an animal is held sacred and is part of the identity of the clan. For example, among amaXhosa, amaZulu, and amaNdebele there are clan names such as ooNdlovu (Elephants). With AmaNtande, Mtuze's clan, there is a salutation in their clan recitation *Ngub'eNgcuka* (a reference to a hyena). AmaGqwashu revere a bird *iGxiya* (crowned plover, *Vanellus coronatus*). AmaMpondomise have a snake "*uMajola*" which forms the crux of Jordan's story in *Ingqumbo yeminyanya (The Wrath of the Ancestors)*. With AbaKoena in Lesotho it is a crocodile and with Monnakgotla of abeTswana it is *Kubung* (Hippopotamus). Recalling a myth that was told to him by his Spiritual Mother, at the time of his initiation as a 'Chosen One' Mutwa (1964:566) writes:

The crocodile that nearly ate you while you were crossing the river may have been carrying the soul of one of your ancestors.

In addition to animals that are revered, there are those that are domesticated and are slaughtered as and when necessary to do so. Among many Africans of the southern parts of the continent, including Xhosa people, the goat is the most sacred animal. It is used in many rituals such as *imbeleko* ceremony where "a member of the family ... comes up to

the doorway holding a goat by its horns (and facing it at the child who is seated on a mat with the mother) before it is slaughtered as a ritual to introduce the new member of the family to the living and the living-dead,” (Mtuze, 2003:26). This process, according to Mtuze (2003:26) is in itself a ritual that converts

... ordinary reproductive actions into sacred creation exercises ... act of re-creation [that] resonates with the invocation of the ancestors as the plenipotentiaries of *Qamata* during the *imbeleko* ceremony which is also aimed at enhancing creation and linking the hidden presences with the visible presences.

This “enhancing creation” that Mtuze talks about would also take place when we “bury the woman’s afterbirth in the yard so that the wheel of regeneration is kept spinning,” (Mphahlele, 2002:138).

The ox, and sometimes a cow, is another domestic animal that has a vital role too. It is slaughtered during *ukukhapha*, a ritual performed “after the death of a head-of-household ... to send him off to his ancestors,” (Mtuze, 2003:25). *Inkomo yokubuyisa*, is used in a ritual “that has to be performed after a few years to bring him (the head-of-household) back home ... so that he can be with his family albeit in an invisible form,” (Mtuze, 2003:25). Before both these ceremonies, *ukukhapha* and *ukubuyisa*, there should be *ingxoxo* (a family consultative meeting). The meeting is vital since it has to iron out important matters.

Here is an example of *ingxoxo* at Mtuze’s home. Mtuze (2007:142) writes that it was a time when he was “face-to-face with my ancestors” while working in Pretoria as a lecturer at Unisa:

I was in Pretoria when I suddenly fell ill and no doctor or specialist could diagnose my illness. After visiting several doctors to no avail, I was ultimately told that there was nothing physically wrong with me. I was declared one hundred percent fit. When pressed to explain the pains I felt and the extreme insomnia I experienced, they answered that I was feigning it all or just imagining myself to be ill. This was not only shocking to me, it was also insulting and untrue. I could never, all of a sudden, imagine myself to be ill and go through that kind of pain just for fun or madness. I was going through hell. I could not sleep at night at all.

My whole body was aching and burning hot, yet Western medical men thought I was feigning it all.

As can be noticed in the Mtuze family tree in chapter three, the family had moved and dispersed from its original home in Zingquthu, Lady Frère. Mtuze (2007:141) writes:

My tribal affiliations and loyalties were adversely affected when my father and his mother moved from Zingquthu in Lady Frere after the death of my grandfather, Ndleleni. My father was a very young boy at that time, and all his brothers – Folman, Mzandisi, Zonisele and Zuzani – had left Zingquthu without further trace.

Without a fixed home in the Karoo region of the Eastern Cape, Mtuze's father remembered very little about his family rituals. It was impossible now that he had grown up, with a wife and a large family, to remember the rituals of his home. Worse, Mtuze's father did not have a fixed place of residence. Mtuze (2007:142) writes:

During my childhood days, I remember seeing my father perform some family rituals. I remember having to hold white beads in my hand saying "*camagu*" (may you be appeased), and eating sacrificial meat. That was all I ever saw my father do.

Since his illness was getting worse, Mtuze (2007:142) consulted with a healer, Mr Fihla, who revealed certain truths:

His diagnoses revealed that my ancestors were demanding that ... I had to perform a number of family rituals that my father had failed to perform. He also discovered that one of my forefathers was a sangoma in whose footsteps I ought to have followed, were it not for the fact that I chose Christianity. I knew Njajula; my great grandfather was a renowned diviner in his days.

The Mtuze family was gathered and a broad consultation, *ingxoxo*, was held, and the rituals were performed, (Mtuze, 2007:143):

By the time we got to the last of those rituals, my health had been restored, and I have remained healthy ever since. I had proved that I did not feign illness, as my erstwhile Western doctors suggested earlier on ... there are many things that Westerners cannot understand about us.

When Africans act together, they share in the aura of goodness caused by the ancestral presences in their relationships. The ancestors, the living-dead, exist as a community of

saints. Any expression where the living exhibits a togetherness, it radiates with the energy of the living-dead.

Women are very essential too. A ritual called *ukupha iinkobe* (*iinkobe* are grains of maize that have been boiled, without being stamped, part of staple food for Xhosa people). *Ukupha iinkobe* is a dinner in honour of a wife, mother or aunt who has passed. It is emphasized that all the children must be present and must participate in the ceremony. Whereas the meat is cooked in the kraal during *ukubuyisa*, the meat for *iinkobe* is cooked outside the kraal, *egoqweni* (the place where the firewood is stacked). *Egoqweni* was where the deceased did her cooking.

Mtuze (1997:142) also performed ancestral or spiritual rituals:

I had to perform a number of rituals, starting from making my whereabouts known to my ancestors (*ukuzazisa*). I had left the common home many years ago to study and when I completed my studies I went to work in different places, all far away from home. The ancestors were obviously left in the dark as to where I had gone.

Most of the rituals require the use of special plants.

5.2.8 Plants

As part of background it is essential to state that flora and fauna plays an important role in the spirituality of African people. Across Africa there are plants that have strong medicinal powers and that are chosen by the people to mitigate their lives and Mtuze (2003:31) concurs that “Africans ... believe in the potency of certain medicinal plants. These plants are said to cure a variety of ailments.”

Every clan among Xhosa people has its own *ubulawu*. *Ubulawu* operates as an intermediary between the living and the living-dead. The stem and the leaves of this plant are crushed under stone, and poured into a beaker that is filled with water. *Ixhayi* (swizzle-stick for churning and frothing medicine) is used to stir the medicine using both

hands, and communicating all messages and wishes to the ancestors. Every member of the clan, including nieces and nephews, are welcome to stir the beaker and air their wishes.

Some of these plants are used to repel evil spirits.

5.2.9 Evil Spirits

Mtuze (2003:27) writes about the existence of malevolent spirits among Xhosa people. In a comparative study of Xhosa people and the Celts of Ireland, Mtuze pointed at the existence of good and evil forces as a commonality between the two groups. Mtuze (2003:28) cited De Waal (1991:111) who writes that:

The Celtic world was one in which men and women feared the reality of evil. They were willing to admit the power of the forces of darkness. They did not attempt to deny sin, pain and suffering. There was no running away here.

In addition to the existence of evil forces and the significant admission by the communities that Mtuze's study focused on, the "human agency in the manipulation of evil forces" came up as a common denominator. Mtuze (2003:29) cited O'Donoghue (1993:65) who writes that:

It would be naïve to rule out the possibility of connivance and collusion on the part of men and women with destructive forces.

What must be emphasized is that African people are part of universal humanity and, as Mtuze's study has shown, and do not deserve low judgement from Europeans for their spirituality and their views about evil spirits. Mtuze (2008:116) clears this matter further when he writes:

Having believed these things themselves in the olden days, Westerns shudder to imagine any decent and civilized people going back to such dark ages. This attitude is interesting especially if one considers that Westerners are not averse to the idea that there is evil. They accept the existence of demons. The whole Bible is full of references to evil, demons and forces of evil culminating in the Book of Job where we see evil at its worst ... African belief in evil spirits stems from the

same root – evil. They may not express this sentiment in Western theological terms but the notion is the same.

Concluding the study on Celtic and African people, Mtuze (2003:29) writes that:

Because Celtic spirituality recognized the presence of antagonistic or malevolent spirits, the Celts also believed that salvation was possible through Christ and his many powers in the same way that Africans believed that *Qamata* had the power to protect them from all kinds of evils.

Mtuze (2003:x) explains the motivation behind the study:

This study is an attempt to reopen the debate on the whole question of inculturation in Southern Africa, especially in light of the fact that we are now in a multi-lingual and multi-religious state. It is an effort to re-highlight the plight of the spirituality of the amaXhosa people over the last century when missionary and imperial onslaught relegated it to the doldrums. This plunged the amaXhosa into a crisis that has left them directionless, to put it mildly. The total onslaught destroyed their self-respect and their identity and raises the question as to whether their acceptability to God was contingent on renouncing their culture, especially the hidden presences – Qamata, the living-dead and the notion of evil spirits.

This urgency in Mtuze resembles the same urgency that gripped Mphahlele, before he prepared himself to come back home after twenty years of exile, exile that he refers to in his writings as “the tyranny of place,” a place where he could write but could not be read by his people (Mphahlele, 2002:277). At the time Mphahlele had received a “heart-warming letter” from a friend who is also a poet, Sonia Sanchez. In the letter there is this line that Mphahlele shares with his readers: “Your history demands your heartbeat.” (Mphahlele, 2002:157). His exile ended there and then. Mphahlele understood that his writing needed its location. He had this “irrepressible attachment to (his) ancestral place” (Mphahlele, 2002:277).

Now, Mtuze places history where it belongs with the urgency similar to that of Mphahlele, ending his twenty-year old exile. At the sight of a “total onslaught that destroyed their self-respect and their self-identity” and “plunged the amaXhosa into a crisis that has left them directionless,” Mtuze “re-highlight(s) the plight of the spirituality of the amaXhosa people.” For Mtuze, this is not a mere philosophical contemplation. He is part of Xhosa people. This happened to him and, therefore, he is well placed to correct

it. In other words, he lends his ‘heartbeat’ to his history, his people, the Xhosa, the African people.

While being alert on the existence of evil spirits in their midst, African people are dreamers as well.

5.2.10 Dreams and Visions

Special dreams and visions are important sites of African spirituality. Mtuze (2003:31) explains this importance:

Among the amaXhosa dreams are a means of communication between the living and the dead. It is through dreams that one would get a message from the ancestors telling one to slaughter a beast for a particular ritual.

In a special dream of Dingezweni involving his late mother, Mtuze (2011:84) writes:

... (u)phupha behleli bonwabile bebaninzi. Kwathi besahleli kwavela ngephanyazo itwina lenja, londa ngaye. YayinguSivengayeinja kayise. Waba ngazama ukubaleka, kuba wesuka woyika akumbona, wesuka watyhafa. Wayengathi ubanjwe yimitha engabonakaliyo. Le nja yema isidala phambi kwakhe igragrama, ivelise amazinyo amhlophe. Waba ngayibiza edlala nayo yasuka yamqwenga, yamtsho walijacu kwangoko, yanyamalala ngohlobo ebivele ngalo.

(... he dreamed relaxed happily with many others. Immediately, a dog appeared and attacked him. It was Sivengaye, his father’s dog. He tried to run away fearing the dog. He could not have the strength to escape the dog. It was as if he was held captive by an invisible trap. The dog was standing on him, exposing its bright teeth. He tried to call it by its name, it simply attacked him, tore his flesh and disappeared suddenly the same way it had appeared.)

It was a special dream when ancestors, “the spirits of our relations” (Mphahlele, 2002:127), reached out to a son to reveal some matter of importance. Dingezweni’s late mother revealed herself as a home pet that was known to the dreamer, a dog he knew so well, that had protected him when he was a fugitive living in the mountains. It is known to many and to Mfeketho as well, that a dog is a symbol of those who have passed, the ancestors. Mfeketho, who was sleeping in the same room as Dingezweni and who heard

him screaming in his sleep, cautioned Dingezweni (Mtuzi, 2011:86) that, “Hayi, mfana, ngamawenu lawo. Inja ayilawulwa” (No young man, those are your ancestors. That is a special dream).

In the dream Dingezweni (Mtuzi, 2011:85):

... Wazibona emi emangcwabeni elila, ehlahlamba. Phambi kwakhe yayilifihlo likanina, lisemboniselweni naxa ayemaninzi amanye. Wema isidala elicokisa ukulijonga oku. Wabona usahlukana umhlaba, kwathi gqi unina kwelo ngcwaba ebonakala ukuba ukhathazekile. “Nguye, ngumama kanye,” kutsho uDingezweni emathongweni ebona unina. Wayenxibe izivatho ezimnyama khaca.... Lanyikima ingcwaba, elijongile umfana, ngenxa yezingqanga zalomfazi ephupheni. Wabonakala esula iinyembezi ephakamisa iingalo ngokomntu ocela uxolo, wabuya wazithoba.

(... found himself standing in a graveyard, crying hysterically. In front of him was his mother’s grave, standing distinctly amongst other graves. He stood there looking at it carefully. He saw the soil separating, and his mother emerged from the grave looking pensive. “Yes, it is my mother indeed,” Dingezweni said seeing his mother in the dream. His mother was dressed in black. The grave was shaking as the young man was watching. He wiped his tears and raised his arms as if requesting to be pardoned. He later dropped his arms.)

In addition to a symbolism of a dog, the same dog that belonged to his father and that protected him when he lived in the mountains as a fugitive, his mother’s image appeared, “nguye, ngumama kanye” (yes, it is my mother). This is the same mother and wife of Nyhubatyha, MaMfene, who had earlier told a story that she first heard from a grandmother about parents who did not discipline their children. She was now speaking “amazwi abuhlungu” (pained words) to her son in a dream, saying (Mtuzi, 2011:85):

Dingezweni, nyana wam, ukuba le nto ingumntu ibivuka emangcwabeni iyokoluleka abantwana bayo ngekukudala ndavuka. Uyihlo usendleleni eza apho ndikhona ngenxa yakho. Iinyembezi zakhe zizalise intsuba enkulu nengqayi ezimbini ... Intliziyo yomzali ayinakuncama umntwana esaphila, ingancama, ubuhlungu bayo bujike bangamashwa kuye. Azinakho ukuphalalela ilize okanye ziphalazwe ngumntu komnye iinyembezi, kuba azizamntu, zezikaThixo ... buyela kowenu uyokungcwaba uyihlo kodwa ukuba akufuni kwenje njalo, zihambe iindlela zakho, uhambe ngentando yentliziyo yakho nokubona kwamehlo akho kodwa, uze wazu ukuba, ngenxa yazo zonke ezo zinto, uYehova uya kukusa ematyaleni.

(Dingezweni, my son, if someone could rise from the grave and go and discipline one's children, I would have done so long ago. Your father is on his way to where I am because of you. His tears have filled two vessels. A parent's heart cannot give up on a child while he is alive. If a parent gives up, the sting of the heart would have become bad luck on the child. Tears cannot fall for no reason caused by the other, because they are no-one's creation, they are God's creation ... go home and bury your father. But, if you refuse to do so, go your way, go to where your heart leads you to and where your own eyes see. Please know this, because of all these things, God will make you to account.)

Dingezweni selected some parts of his dream and consulted Mfeketho on these. He was inquiring now whether an individual was taken as already guilty when appearing in the courts of heaven. When asked to explain himself, he said (Mtuze, 2011:88):

“Nditsho kuba ukuba bekunyanzelekile ukuba umntu lo afunyanwe enetyala ngekungachithwa xesha ngokuxoxa ityala lakhe, ngesuka agwetywe kwasentloko,” watsho ezimisele kule nkcazelo.

(“I say so because if some one was forced to be found guilty, there should be no waste of time going through a trial. One should be sentenced immediately,” he said confidently.)

In a typical way of how the wise conducted themselves on these matters, Mfeketho, sat back and thought through the process. He reasoned that Dingezweni was confused. It was important for him to show Dingezweni the difference between justice as practiced in the courts of the land and justice in biblical terms. Mfeketho said (Mtuze, 2011:88):

Ukuba kanti kungathi kuhleliwe nje kukho izono umntu arhanelwa ngazo ezulwini, umhlaba ungadibana nezulu. Nditsho ngenxa yokuba ezulwini akubekwa sityholo nto nje ubekwa ityala lakho. Kaloku ematyaleni apha emhlabeni zonke izinto obanjelwe zona ubuzenza emnyameni yiloo nto kuqalwa ngokuphanda ezo zinto, kungenxa yokuba ubungabonwangwa ngumgwebi ngokwakhe. Akunakho ukubizwa ngokuba ungumbanjwa ungekagwetywa ngenxa yokuba kungaziwa nokuba uzakufunyanwa unetyala na ngumgwebi. Inkosi, ngokungafani nomgwebi wase mhlabeni, ihamba nawe, zonke izenzo zakho isoloko izijongile.

(If in heaven there may be sins that one is suspected of having committed, that would be difficult to believe. I say so because in heaven no one is alleged to have committed a sin, instead, one is charged for what one has done. In terms of the courts of the lands, for all the crimes you are charged with, you may have committed these in the dark, which is the reason why there are investigations that must be conducted first. The judge did not witness your alleged deeds. You

cannot be classified as a convict before you are found guilty. The Lord, unlike the judge of the court of the land, is always next to you. He sees all your sins.)

Mfeketho may have not been deeply religious but he understood his charge as an older person advising the young. Moreover, he understood the importance of the manner of speaking. At the end of that conversation Dingezweni was wiser and grateful to Mfeketho's counsel, he said, "Undigqibile nto ka Gxakayi" (I am satisfied, son of Gxakayi) (Mtuze, 2011:89).

But, a complete representation of Mtuze's spirituality must include his Anglicanism. It becomes clear that Mtuze's spirituality is an amalgamation of the traditional and Christian worlds – an amalgamation which represents itself both within his creative works as well as his biographies.

5.3 Mtuze's Anglicanism

The genesis of Mtuze's Anglicanism is on the farms where he was born. On an afternoon when Mtuze was supposed to return to the "dam-building job on Mr Cumming's farm in the vicinity of Conway" (Mtuze, 2007:6) as a child labourer, he staged a quiet protest (Mtuze, 2007:9):

When Sunday afternoon came, and it was time for us to go back to work to try and finish the dam we were making before we could come home to join the rest of the family, I did not show any sign that I was unwilling to return to Conway. It was only when my brothers were checking their bicycles, getting ready to pack up their scanty belongings for us to go, that I quietly disappeared into the lush and wide mealie fields in front of the house.

They screamed and searched the mealie fields for most of the afternoon, bent on taking me back to lead the spans of donkeys to finish the job that we were engaged in at Conway. Eventually, they reluctantly left without me.

Avoiding hard labour led to Mtuze being taken to school, which was held at the Anglican Church. This was on a farm, Katkop, owned by Godfrey Collet. On attending the church, receiving his first lessons from Mr Mafilika on the Lord's Prayer and the Creed so that "we knew them by heart" (Mtuze, 2007:10). Mtuze was baptized by Rev Calata when he

was baptizing all his family. This was the beginning of more things to come in the religious sphere (Mtuze, 2007:160):

Calata's religious influence permeated our whole family until the end. My father died a lay preacher in the Anglican Church, my mother was a member of the Mother's Union in the same church until she died in 2000, my wife was also a full member of the Mother's Union in the same church and my brother David was an evangelist in the same church in Cradock and various other centres. My two elder brothers were also staunch members of their own denominations. John is a devout Jehovah's Witness, while Pumelele died an elder of his denomination. We have certainly come a long way from the days that Mr Mafilika had to teach us the Creed and the Lord's Prayer.

Soon, Mtuze would be preaching alongside experienced preachers (Mtuze, 2007:159):

The call to serve God ... had always been with me. I had always been a staunch believer although, as a young boy, I preferred only to sing in the choir. I even refused to be a server at St James in Cradock much to the annoyance of my priest, Canon Calata. Later I became a lay preacher at Hofmeyr by default, there was no one else to look after the little chapel. In 1977 I was admitted as a lay minister at St John and St Chad's in Zwelitsha, where I was later ordained deacon in 1993.

By then, Bishop Kenneth Oram had advised me to take theological studies under the Theological Education by Extension College in Johannesburg, but because of my other academic studies in that period, I could hardly make headway with my TEEC studies. His successor, Bishop David Russell, then suggested that I study for the Bachelor of Theology degree by correspondence, through Unisa, which I attained in 1996. Strangely enough, contrary to my earlier difficulties with correspondence courses at both Unisa and the TEEC, I sailed through my studies with Unisa this time.

Mtuze was ordained as a priest in 1994. In 1995 he was the priest-in-charge at St Philip's in Grahamstown. In 1998 he was the priest-in-charge at Holy Trinity in Dimbaza. In 2008 he was the priest-in-charge at St Andrew's in Ginsberg and an Archdeacon for King William's Town West.

Practising in the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, the Anglican Church, as a Priest and Canon while writing, had offered Mtuze an institutional platform to advance

the validity of the African Personality. The contributions that Mtuze made to the Christian faith, reveals the visionary that he is. Mtuze (2007:144) entered the Anglican Church, finding challenges in the church:

The thesis for my master's degree in theology, obtained from Rhodes University in 1999, now published under the title *The Essence of Xhosa Spirituality and the Nuisance of Cultural Imperialism*, aims to stress the hostility of the missionaries towards African culture compared with the accommodative attitude of the church elsewhere in the world, for instance, in Ireland where the Catholic Church consciously adopted many traditional and pre-Christian practices. This enabled the Celts to worship God in familiar terms instead of being uprooted and transplanted in a completely foreign religious context.

In addition to *The Essence of Xhosa Spirituality and the Nuisance of Cultural Imperialism* (2003), Mtuze wrote *Isikhokelo sabeFundisi abangooLeyminista* (2003) and *Umhlahla-ndlela wabashumayeli namahungu emibutho yenkonzo* (2006) co-authored with L.L. Ngewu. Mtuze's theological exposition reflects a commitment to principles that uphold, in equal measure, the Christian faith and the African Personality.

On the pulpit Mtuze is able to demonstrate the complete mind of an African theologian, a mind that is liberated from ignorance, yet steeped in African roots. Whenever he preaches, it is a conscious deliverance from someone who is involved in the conscientisation of a congregation. Mtuze can afford to behave this way because the church, according to Pityana (2014), offers a platform and a window of possibility, an opportunity that must be seized. This is what Asante (1988:49) sees as being in a spiritual sense:

... aware of the collective conscious will. An imperative of will, powerful, incessant, alive, and vital, moves to eradicate every trace of powerlessness.

Churches in African communities are not theological institutions. St Andrew's, an Anglican station in Ginsberg Township where Mtuze presides, is more a social institution. As a presiding officer, Mtuze has to grapple with matters that affect the members of his congregation. When Xolile Mbena died, a congregant and a son of the old church elder, Mr Barnabas Mbena, it was revealed by church officials that he was

behind with his church dues. This meant that his grieving wife had to settle the account if she hoped for an Anglican Church burial.

When this situation reached Mtuze, he took an extra-ordinary step. Mtuze vetoed the position of the Church. He insisted that he will bury Xolile because, at St Andrew's he was received by his father, elder Barnabas Mbeni. It was a demonstration of compassion to a family that was in need, and a statement of allegiance to an elder who was committed in terms of service to the Church. The Dean of Grahamstown, Rev Andrew Hunter, speaking at a thanks giving ceremony for Mtuze and his wife Dr Kutala Mtuze in 2014, said:

Peter – our Venerable Archdeacon Professor Peter Mtuze – we salute you and we thank you for your twenty years in the ordained ministry as an Anglican priest. You are our praise singer, our imbongi, our elder statesman, our wise counsellor, our encourager, our example. Our father figure – or our grandfather figure. You keep us laughing, you brighten our meetings with your comments, you guide us with your wisdom; you are a quite wonderful parish priest and archdeacon. The parish of St Andrew's Ginsberg and the Archdeaconry of King William's Town West are happy communities, superbly cared for and well led; meetings are run with humour and efficiency and clarity; services are full of energy and life – and dancing. You are an icon, a picture of what many of us aspire to be. You are “like a tree planted beside streams of water: that yields its fruit in due season. Its leaves also shall not wither: and look whatever he does it shall prosper.” (Ps 1:3-4).

It is Mtuze's job to keep guard of the systemic undermining of Africanness in the Anglican Church. Mtuze was invited by Bishop Burnett to serve on a select committee to check possible instances of discrimination within the Anglican Church. The committee was large enough and was made up of a fairly good mix of black and white prominent members. Amongst others, there were Fr James Gawe, Mrs Nancy Charton, Fr Ezra Tisani, Mr Mdana, Fr Ron Fielding, Fr Peter Campbell, Fr Mabija and Mrs Mabija, Fr David Pointon, Fr Kenneth Oram who was then the Dean of the Cathedral of Grahamstown, Fr Godfrey Ashby and Fr Graeme Deas. Mtuze (2007:116) writes:

We checked all the church structures with a fine toothcomb to see how they were operating and how they contributed to the maintenance of discriminatory practices within the church. Some of the discussions were equally painful to those who thought that there was nothing radically wrong with what was happening in

the church and to those who felt that the church was not doing enough to rid itself of discriminatory practices.

As far as I am aware, no formal report came out of those meetings, which was a pity because they had done much to uncover some of the issues that people regarded as harmful discriminatory practices within the church.

The differences of opinion between the white members of the committee and their black counterparts, on issues of discrimination against blacks, could be the reason why they ended without a report. According to Mtuze (2007:116):

It was not easy for all of us to be unanimous on the practicalities of the investigation, let alone on the issues discussed.

What was clear was that the black block within the committee was more affected by the issues, and they wanted to put an end to discrimination. In their evaluation of the Christian message, the black members of the committee were looking for African reality in it. Human dignity is the centre of the Christian message, therefore, it must be interpreted with equal regard to all humanity and its higher purpose be revealed. On the other hand, the white members were not as spirited as the blacks. They did not act with the same urgency. Mtuze (2007:117) writes:

... the kind of issues that this committee was trying to look at, obviously without much success as there were bound to be serious differences in the outlook of the members who composed it since they came from radically different backgrounds. It was also obvious that their vision for the future was far from being consonant.

Reflecting further on the work of the committee as well as on “joint multiracial church” events, Mtuze (2007:118) goes straight to the crux of the matter when he explains that:

What threatens to bedevil relations within the church – in so far as black and white congregations are concerned – is not old style discrimination, but disregard of our different cultures and lifestyles. It is high time white fellow Christians take African culture seriously and stop belittling it, equating some of its institutions with Satanism and Paganism. Every race has its own culture and its own set of values.

We can either place Christ inside culture, where it would be demanded that everything should be done according to the dictates of the Christian Bible (which

is largely based on the Jewish culture), or we can place Him outside culture where we suddenly become a cultureless, amorphous society. Better still, we could place Him above culture, where He does not have to be held in tension with human culture of any kind, but draws us all to Him in the context of our cultures.

It is a direct appeal from an African clergy man who knows where he belongs, to his people and to his God. Mtuze (2007:131) belongs to the homes of his parishners like Mrs Nohle Mohapi, whose husband Mr Mapetla Mohapi was killed in detention:

When I arrived at Mapetla's house, I found the place full of young people. They were very angry at what had happened. Such a thing had never been experienced in the area before, hence the consternation, the shock and the anger. Mohapi was such an innocent young man who would not hurt a fly. For him to die under such circumstances was unthinkable!

Mtuze (2007:132) belongs to African leaders:

I was there when they buried my mentor and icon, Canon JA Calata at Cradock on 26 June 1983. Speaker after speaker spoke about how he had fought relentlessly for the liberation of the black people, and that his passing away merely signaled the changing of the guard from the old stalwarts to the younger activists, who now had to fight harder to rid the country of oppression.

Holding high a man he knew as a priest, teacher, political activist, poet and singer, Mtuze (in Mona, 2015:247) recited a poem at the funeral of Calata, praising him as ikhwezi lezwe (star of the nation):

*Yingc' enentswane yeenkomo zakwaXhosa,
Yigolid' elubhelu yokwananis' ezizweni,
Yindod' emnyama yokumel' iAfrika,
Ukuze omhlophe nomnyama beme kunye,
Ukuz' iinjoli zilicekis' ixanasi,
Ingahlinzwa calanye, liphoswe kud' idolo.*

(He's nutritious grass for the Xhosa cattle,
He's the yellow gold or trade with other countries,
He's a black man for representing Africa,
So that white and black can stand together,
So that the rulers may refrain from being jealous
So that partiality and favouritism can be rejected.

At a prayer meeting in honour of Steve Biko conducted by Bishop David Russell, Mtuze (2007:133) was there, again speaking to his community commitment and humanism:

I was there, when a large battalion of policemen armed with rifles and pistols converged on the church at the start of the service. They moved inside and stood in the pews, filling almost one whole side of the church. Some of them stood on alert outside, while one constantly communicated with another on a handheld walkie-talkie ... At the end of the address, the Bishop called upon anyone who felt so moved by the Spirit to say an impromptu prayer. That is a common practice among black congregations ...

To our greatest surprise, all the police, fully armed as they were, fell on their knees as if an order to do so had been given. To our further surprise, the leader, Vukile Blom, an avowed Congregationalist, started praying along these lines:

“The head of the church should not be concerned. We are not here to do anyone any harm. We are here by order of those above us. We are also Christians and respect the church, but we have to obey those who are placed above us.”

At this event, Mtuze (2007:135) recognizes the ancestral presence of Biko as he writes:

The excitement within the church was infectious. Biko won the day as his spirit bound us together at a moment when it seemed we were going to experience a bloodbath.

Later in this section we will discuss a short story that Mtuze wrote as a result of this event, which again speaks to African Humanism and forgiveness.

The African Personality is at the centre of Mtuze's existence. In many events of the church, he is regarded as the natural closing speaker. In a letter from the Anglican Church on the occasion of Mtuze's 70th birthday, Rev Andrew Hunter, the Dean of Grahamstown, wrote:

I write on behalf of the Bishop and Chapter, following our meeting of the Cathedral Chapter held on Tuesday 8th November 2011. At the meeting, those present expressed their very warm appreciation for you, and wished you well on the occasion of your 70th birthday. I was asked to write to you, on behalf of the Bishop and Chapter, to convey our congratulations and best wishes.

You bring the energy of a young man to all that you do, combined with the wisdom and experience of age. You are indeed one of our elder statesmen. You

give gravitas and authority to our deliberations. We value your wonderful sense of humour, your insight into people and situations, your life experience, your deep faith that has been forged by the fire of adversity and struggle. Thank you for all that you do and are. God bless you, now and always.

Mtuze has brought “the fire of adversity and struggle” to the Anglican Church, his working space. He had had to fight to get things that way. It is Asante’s (1988:51) view that consciousness must be elevated to victory for it to stimulate a sense of progression. It is this sensitivity and responsiveness that is common between Mtuze and his people.

5.3.1 Mtuze’s church stories

In *Amathol’ eendaba* Mtuze wrote brilliant and humorous stories that can be enjoyed by any ordinary reader. While travelling, taking short cuts, a preacher came across a security guard. The guard, after greeting respectfully, warned him that he was trespassing. No one was allowed to walk in that area where he was. The self-assured preacher would not listen (Mtuze, 1977:14):

Akawagqibanga lawo. Idubulekile impendulo ephuma kumvangeli. “Ungubani wena ukundinqanda ukuba ndingahambi apha? Akwazi ukuba ndinephepha lokuba ndivakalise iLizwi leNkosi kulo lonke ihlabathi?” Uba ndinguwe lo uhamba ezingela izagwityi nezakhwatsha ngomhla weNkosi? Uyabona ... uza kundicaphukisa ... bazi abantu omawubathintele apha!”

(He could not finish those words. The evangelist shot back with his answer, “Who are you to block me from walking here? Do you know that I have a paper permitting me to preach the word of God all over the world? Do I look like you who loiters around on the day of the Lord. Look ... you are going to make me angry ... you should know who to stop!”)

The preacher was in the middle of the camp when he saw *iinciniba*, an ostrich. In no time it chased him (Mtuze, 1977:15):

Yeka ke ukuphethuka kuka mvangeli. Kuqale ngokuwa phantsi khiqa ityesana owayephethe ngayo amaculo nezinye izinto zakhe, kwalandela ikhola nomsimelelo womsimbithi. Usimbele isinqe ibhatyi ithe naa emva kwakhe, iinyawo zirheca emqolo. Yeka ke ukusana kwabo kula mantshingilane uye wabona ngokusiphuka kwezicithi nothuli olumboxo ukuba ihlile inkawu

emthini. Ukhwaze ebonisa nangezandla esithi, “Mvangeli, zinik’ iphepha! Zinik’ iphepha kaloku!”

(The evangelist immediately turned around and ran. The first thing that fell as he was running was his purse that carried his hymn book and other stuff, then followed his collar and his worshipping stick. As he was running his jacket was flying behind being blown by the wind, and his feet were touching his back. He was running towards the security man who saw from a distance the dust that was caused by the chase and realized that the evangelist was off his high horse. The security man shouted signaling with his hands, saying, “Evangelist, show them your paper! Show them your paper!”)

It was a lucky escape for the evangelist (Mtuze, 1977:15):

Uphumele phulukutshu ngokotolo elucingweni umvangeli xa kanye inciniba ephambili igileka elucingweni ngesifuba, yaya kuwa ngomqolo yakhabalaza ngathi inesathuthwane lo gama athe tywa ngaphaya kocingo umvangeli ethiwe minxi liphika naziintloni.

(The evangelist came through the fence like an arrow as the front running ostrich was about to catch him, but it knocked itself on the fence and fell on its back. At that time the evangelist was lying down on the other side of the fence, breathing heavily and embarrassed.)

A further lesson for preachers is contained in a poem in *Vingcan’ amazibuko* (Mtuze, 1982:29). It speaks to how one must relate to others:

*Umthande umntu mfana wam,
Kub’ uthandwa njal’ uThixo.*

(Love all people, my son
Because that is the way to love God.)

The preacher should know that all people are the direct representation of God. If you treat people with care, God will take care of you. This is also the essence of African Humanism, in other words placing others before the self.

In another story Reverend Zwane faces challenges in the Church. He was to appear before the head of the Mission, Rev Liso. Zwane was to answer to charges that were laid by Archdeacon Mayisele against him. The head of the Mission was giving Zwane an opportunity to repent over his sin of undermining isiXhosa language while promoting his

mother tongue, siSwati. Zwane had no answer but he cleared his throat and said, (Mtuze, 1977:76):

“Ithi iNkosi mandikhwelele apha kuba yemka kudala.”

(“The Lord says, I must leave this place because He left a long time ago.”)

In the spirit of African Humanism and truthfulness, Zwane continues and takes the high ground by saying (Mtuze, 1977:76):

“Sondela Mayisele, sithandaze iNkosi ibuye,”

(Come Mayisele, let us pray so that the Lord can come back”.)

Mtuze is a lover of wisdom, wisdom that comes through in simple ways, the wisdom of his people, and this is reflected in his writing.

A final story written with the church at the centre is based on a true event that took place in 1987. In this story Mtuze (1990:20) paid tribute to Steve Biko on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of his death in detention. He had attended and participated in a commemorative service that was held in the Anglican Church in Zwelitsha Township, outside King William’s Town. The service was conducted by Bishop David Russell. In a short story in *Ungakhe uxelele mntu* an old man, Mr Lamla Mdali (Mr Rule O’ Creator), relates the event of the 12th of September (Mtuze, 1990:20):

“Yayingumhla we-12 kuSeptemba, umhla ohamba nentlungu noloyiso, umhla oxuxuzelisa izisu ngeendlela zonke, umhla awalishiya ngawo eli phakade uSteve Biko ngendlela ehambisa umzimba, kutsho kubande umchachazo wakuzikisa ukucinga,” utshilo ubaw’ uLamla Mdali, ixhego lasemaNgwevini liphulula loo mpandla yalo ichengezelayo.

(“It was the 12th of September, a day of pain and victory, a day that shakes stomachs in many ways, the day when Steve Biko tragically left this world, always sending a chill up the spine whenever it is remembered,” said Mr Lamla Mdali, the veteran of the Ngwevu clan, brushing his bald shining head.)

According to the story Mr Lamla Mdali was one of the old preachers of the Anglican Church. He was made a preacher in the same year as Rev Calata. He fought in the 1st

World War, and is a survivor of the SS Mendi. Mtuze (1990:20) intergrates the SS Mendi experiences very skillfully in the narrative:

“Ndingumshumayeli omdala wale nkonzo yaseTshetshi. Mna nengwevu yakwaCalata kweliya lase Kaladokhwe sabekwa kunye ebushumayelini kodwa into enjengale ndiza kukubalisela yona ndandiyizibula apha ebomini bam. Yandikhumbuza oko kufa kwakunyalasa phambi kwethu kwezo nzulu zobumnyama kolo lwandle lwaseFransi. Umahluko wawumnye phakathi kwezi ziganeko zibini, ukukuba kwesi ndiza kusibalisa ndalubona ngamehlo ufele lukaThixo lusebenza phakathi kwabantu baKhe.”

(“I am a veteran preacher of this congregation of the Anglican Church. I was made a preacher at the same time as that other veteran, Calata, of Cradock. But, a thing of this nature which I will tell you, I had never experienced before. When it happened it reminded me of death that danced in front of us in the middle of the night on the seas of France. There is only one difference between these two events, it is that in the one I am about to tell you I saw the grace of God at work amongst His people.”)

The SS Mendi is important to Mtuze in that it also appears in a poem entitled *Indumiso*, Mtuze (1982:19). In a matter of nonfiction within fiction, Rev Ezra Tisani who was once in a committee with Mtuze, a committee that was tasked to deal with practices of discrimination within the Anglican Church, reappears in the story as the main speaker of the service, based on a true event. Mtuze (1990:21) describes Tisani as “(i)ngqungqumbane yeTshawe eselivela kuthomba kweso siqithi saseRobben ... kanti iya kuphetha seyiqule nangezangaphesheya izidanga zemfundo” (a short stout former Robben Island prisoner, Tshawe, who earned degrees from overseas universities).

Through his character, Lamla Mdali, Mtuze portrays the feelings inside the church building (Mtuze, 1990:22):

“Makuthi xa kuqalwayo kanye, kubonwe sekusithi wayi-wayi umkhosi omkhulu woonqaw’ ayiphuzwa, uxhobe ufe amacala kunjalonje. Ungene ngaphakathi ecaweni, watsho koyikeka ngeso sinxibo sawo sinesithinzi kakade. Andithi ke loomipu iphethwe ngamadoda abuso bujalileyo, othi wakubujonga kunge mawunyebelezele uyokuphuma ngomnyango?”

(“Just as the service was about to begin, there came a fully armed police force. They came into the church and gave a fright to all with their uniform and guns. The rifles were in the hands of men whose faces were not friendly

at all. If you looked at them, you would wish you could crawl to the door and disappear.”)

Turning to the Bishop and the head of the police who were in a stand-off inside the church, before the start of the event, Mtuze (1990:23) offers descriptions of these men:

“Kusuke uBhishophu wathi cwishi waya kuthetha noMphathi waloo mkhosi. Ndivakele ndimeya namhlanje lo mfo wakwaThixo kuba umfo lo luzwathi olungenasiqu, weyekile, uthambile yaye nobuso bakhe buntama ububele nothando ibe imeko ifuna isiqololwane esibuso bungwanyalala ... uMphathi into kaNyibiba wayengabonakalisi noluncinane uncumo kuloo ndawo eme kuyo. Ndithi mna umfo ke mde, unesithozela, uxhobile, mnyama okokhozo lomya. Kwakungathi kuza kuthaka amalangatye kuloo mehlo akhe naxa wayethule ethe cwaka nje.”

(“The Bishop stood up and approached the man in charge of the army. I felt pity for the Bishop today, because this man of God seemed much slender today. He looked weak, even his looks reflected love and good-naturedness whereas the situation demanded a strength of character whose face is muscular and strong. The head of the army, Mr Nyibiba, did not show a bit of a smile from where he was standing. The man was tall and he had a sense of dignity and he was armed. He was very dark... It was like balls of fire would fly out of his eyes as he stood there, quiet.”)

Describing the silence and the tension inside the church, Mtuze (1990:24) writes:

“Into yesibini eyayivakala ngamandla ngathi ziimvalo zabantu yimizuzu yokuncinciza kwaloo wotshi inkulu iseludongeni lwecawa. Ukuba kwakukho imbongi apho, okanye ukuba iimbongi ezikhoyo zazingatyhwatyhwi ngezatsho kwayiyizela abafazi ngaloo mini, mhlawumbi ngelakrazukayo ibhayi.”

(“The second thing that one could notice was the beating of the wall clock of the church, beating like heart beats of the people who were there. If there was a poet that day or if poets were not as scared as they are, a poem would have raised the spirits and provoked the ululation of African women or it could have caused chaos in the circumstance.”)

What is very revealing is that, whereas, Mtuze was present in this event, the character that he had created to tell the story is an old man of experience. Not only will experience show itself in the way Mr Lamla Mdali relates the details of the story, what came out is that even an experienced man has something to learn. Rev Tisani’s speech broke the silence (Mtuze, 1990:25):

“... laphakama iTshawe laya kuma ngesithozela kwisilili sokushumayela liphelekwe lufafa lwakwaCube olwaluza kutolika. Kuthe cwaka, lihambisile iTshawe lichaza ukuba uBantu lo wayengubani na, emele ntoni na kanye kanye. Latsho kwavokotheka libabaza ukuba lo mfo wafa kabuhlungu kangankokuba kuhlahlambe ihlabathi liphela, iGinsberg yakowabo yaziwe nangaphesheya, wayengumntu woxolo, emele isidima sokuzazi komntu oMnyama ukuba naye ungumntu phakathi kwabanye abantu yaye akamele ukuba manyonywana libala lakhe. Utsho ngodlwabevu umTshawe echaza izinto esasingazazi thina ngalo mfana kunjalonje kucacile ukuba lo Steve simana ukulilisela ngaye asimazi nakancinane ubunzulu bakhe. Yaphela kum loo mini into yokubala izilimela nokudela umqulu iiyadi ndingazibalanga.”

(“...Tshawe rose and assumed the podium. Mr Cube followed Tshawe as he was going to interpret. It was quiet. Tshawe started to explain to the audience who Steve Biko was, what was his stand point. Tshawe went deep into Biko’s life. He said the manner in which the man was killed shook the whole world. His home, Ginsberg Township, became famous overseas. Biko was a man of peace. He stood for black dignity, that black people must regard themselves as people and must undo inferiority complexes. They should be proud of their colour, Black. Tshawe made such an enlightening speech and said things we never knew about this young man, and it became clear that this Steve that we keep talking about, we did not know his depth. It dawned on me that day that my age does not count. I should never underestimate people.”)

Nowhere is the power of isiXhosa language well demonstrated as in the depiction of the moment when Bishop Russell asked for a closing prayer (Mtuze, 1990:26):

“Uthe akuthi uBhishophi makuthandazwe amehlo am awa kuMphathi-mkhosi ndambona esiwa ngamadolo phantsi kweTshawe lamaTshawe, walandela wonke loo mkhosi ngathi ubethelwe ucingo. Ndiva ndicinga ingoma yododana ethi ‘amadolo kweli lizwe makagobe phambi kwakho.’

“Uwuthathile umthandazo umfo kaNyibiba wathi zisuka, ‘Umntu ophethe inkonzo makangakhathazeki’. Loo mazwi ahlabe okotolo kwiintliziyo ezininzi ezazingalindele tu ukuba lo mfo angawa ngamadolo athandaze. Ndithi imbabala yayiziphambile izinja kuba endaweni yokugragramisa loo mbaxa wayewuphethe lo mfo, usuke watsho ngosikayo wona umthandazo ovakalayo kunjalonje ukuba usuka emazantsi entliziyweni yekholwa. Kwachukumiseka wonke ubani batsho oomama baziphokoza eziya bezisezitsalelwe ezinkopheni liTshawe nakukukhumbula imivandedwa nezabo iindwayingana ezikweli likanoqhankqa ngenxa yeemeko ngeemko.”

(When the Bishop said let us pray my eyes went straight to the head of the army. I saw him going down on his knees in front of Tshawe and all his army followed suit as if it had received an order to do so. Immediately, I thought of a hymn that sang, ‘knees of this world must bend before you, Lord.’

The head of the army, Mr Nyibiba, prayed and said, ‘The person in charge of this service must not worry at all’. These first words went out like an arrow into the hearts of many who were there who had not expected that a head of an army would even kneel down and pray. You see, the bushbuck had lost the dogs. Instead of shooting with the rifle that he had in his hand, he made a heart rendering prayer that came from the heart of a believer. All were touched by the prayer. Mothers started to shed the very tears that Tshawe had evoked when he spoke, also remembering their own sufferings on this earth caused by their condition.”)

From the high point of tension and apprehension to an embrace between the militarized police and the people of God. Lamla Mdali’s words set the cordial mood (Mtuze, 1990:27):

“Umzuzu olandelayo uphele sigudlana ngamacala naloo mapolisa sisamkela kunye umthendeleko, uBhishophu neTshawe bebila besoma bedlisa ezo zimvu zaloo Mthetheleli woxolo wabingelwa ukuze kubekho uzuko kuThixo enyangweni, uxolo emhlabeni, inkolelo ebantwini ...”

(“The next minute we were hugging each other and the police were hugging too. We all received the Holy Communion. The Bishop and Tshawe were busy feeding the flock of the Saviour of peace, so that there be grace in God, peace on earth and belief in people ...”)

Mtuze (1990) is able to place himself outside the things he had experienced, yet place the reader inside those experiences. His role in the Anglican Church and the life experiences he has gained form the focus of much of his church stories and writing. These stories essentially depict a spirituality of forgiveness and African Humanism, where the focus is not on the individual but the collective.

wa Thiong’o, (1986:67) sums up this approach as follows in relation to the novel:

...with its careful analysis of the motive in character and action, and its general assumption that the world in which we live can be understood or at least analysed through observations of patterns of behaviour of individuals or of the changing patterns of human relationships between groups and individuals.

This synthesized approach can also be seen in the way Mtuze frames and punctuates his presentations whenever he preaches to his congregation at St Andrew's. The above discussion seeks to show that Mtuze, who is a descendant of the Africans, stands on the shoulders of many Africans who, in their words and deeds, held high the banner of African civilization and African Humanism.

5.4 Summary

This chapter discussed Mtuze's spirituality. The discussion began with the symbols of African spirituality such as religion as understood by African people, family and social relationships, land, animals and plants that are used in African customs, education and the importance of special dreams. The chapter also discussed the position of human life in an African community. The second part of discussion dealt with Mtuze's church, the Anglican Church. Mtuze's activities within the church and short stories that he wrote were discussed. The next chapter is the final conclusion of the thesis.

Chapter Six

African Humanism: A Future

6.1 Introduction

This study has sought to discuss African Humanism in isiXhosa literature. It has also, through an assessment of selected novels and poetry of Mtuze, sought to bring forward his contribution in this regard. The study has shown how African life, past and present, is able to shape and contextualize the literary output of writers who have lived through similar experiences. This chapter will sum up the search on Mtuze by looking at the relevance of African Humanism in life generally. The chapter will seek to answer whether humanism of African people, in life and in literature, can still contribute to the improvement of African people and humanity in general. Tagore (1961:209) writes:

The great human societies are the creation not of profiteers, but of dreamers.

The previous chapters have been dedicated to exploring the inner drive of African people, their humanism, through a life of writing. It is now clear that Africans had, over time, developed systems that would advance their lives in various areas, intellectually, socially, politically, judicially and literary. Africans were a unified people in these efforts. They could be united because, at the time, they were in full control of their resources. In other words, they administered their affairs. So, developing a philosophy of life and a code of living was what they did with requisite precision.

As part of this process of developing their lives and retaining the aspects of importance, it was necessary for African people to develop a human and creative dimension, an African Personality. In other words, this study is the study of the development of human personality, the human being as the embodiment and the source of life, material and spiritual.

The treatment of a life of writing of Mtuze is meant to enthuse members of society to be more conscious of themselves, and more alert to the possibilities of self-advancement. This would require, amongst others:

1. A full and clear awareness of self;
2. Introspection and intelligence;
3. Open-mindedness;
4. Soul Force;
5. An Africa-centred way of looking at oneself and at the world.

6.2 Self-awareness

Mtuze's works are based on the reality of himself. This directness is provided, first and foremost, by the use of isiXhosa language. IsiXhosa is the language of the very experiences that Mtuze writes about. Mtuze thinks and feels through the medium of isiXhosa. His characters are Xhosa people. The location of his stories are settlements where Xhosa people live or lived. The events had either once happened with Xhosa people or are creations that are compatible with lives of Xhosa people. Imported characters such as white farmers are indigenized in the novels of Mtuze in that they are given Xhosa names and are explained from an African perspective. Events that are visited on Xhosa people such as forced removals are viewed, explained and interpreted from an African perspective. The entire deliverance is in isiXhosa. It is an African creation from start to end.

It is this directness that opened the eyes of wa Thiong'o (1986:35) when he was involved in theatre in the villages of Kenya through the Kamiruthu Community Education Center. The villagers themselves directed the plays:

The committee running the centre was made up of peasants, workers, a school teacher and a businessman. Those of us from the University included Kimani, Gecau, Kabiru Kinyanjui and Ngugi wa Mirii who later became the co-ordinating director of all activities. But the peasants and

the workers, including the unemployed, were the real backbone of the centre which started functioning in 1976.

Likewise, the first thing that Mtuze took possession of, before he ventured into the writing world, was his life. It was important for him to know the meaning of his life, in its finest detail. It was that life, his own feelings and thoughts that would influence his writing. When he read other Xhosa writers and discovered that they were not writing about farm experiences of African people, he stuck to the subject. He was not ashamed that farm life was his primary experience. These experiences would live with him in his adult life, hence they became material in his books. Also, it is these experiences that fired his imagination wherever he was and whatever he was seeing in his life, hence the life of writing. Mtuze's position is similar to that of Mphahlele (2002:29) who had to spend his first seven years in Maupaneng village with his grandmother, and as a result, his "recurring dreams ... revolved around my early rural childhood experiences: the cruel and the benign."

6.3 Intelligence and open-mindedness

Intelligence speaks to education. The education that Mtuze received from early levels was designed to impose Western ways of life of looking at the world. Mtuze, with his young unsuspecting mind, was supposed to conform. But, it was not to be because education can have different outcomes on its recipient. It can consciously or unconsciously set the recipient in conflict with many forces around him or her. Education "...may chain the mind, yet it equips the mind to redeem itself at some other time if the person desires it" (Mphahlele, 2004:251).

So, Africans have to live by re-educating themselves and by observing their world with an open mind. Mtuze maintained an open mind for many people that he encountered in his life. He watched with a curious mind the magistrate in Hofmeyr, Mr Vermeulen, who held his hand and that of the white clerk saying, "The triamverate government is about to separate now" (Interview with Mtuze). The magistrate was leaving the town and Mtuze

was taking up a promotion post in the Western Cape and the clerk was to remain in Hofmeyr. The year was 1962, at the height of repression.

For a white magistrate to acknowledge an African man as an equal and as playing an important role in the dispensation of justice in his office, was not to be expected at the time. African Humanism is infectious and real for Mtuze and those around him. It tends to touch the humane spaces of those it is directed to. As a result, conscience plays its role. The carrier of the conscience, the person concerned or the magistrate in that case, has to finally decide on his or her actions. Although Mtuze was surprised at the way the magistrate showed his respect towards him, he treated that event as a lesson he needed to learn. This is a way of growing up. One can only come nearer to Mtuze's humanism when life is treated as education in process.

6.4 Soul Force

Soul Force is a term that was brought forward by the African-American thinker, Leonard Barrett. *Soul Force* refers to the individual and collective resilience that carried African Americans throughout the two hundred years of slavery (Mphahlele, 2002:139). *Soul Force* has parallels in Africa. In Nigeria it is called *chi*. Defining *chi* Mphahlele (2002:140) writes:

I feel compelled to interpret the *chi* principle as a pillar of Igbo humanism, which has equivalents and parallels in several other parts of Africa. The *chi* tells me that as long as there is a balance of power between me and myself, life is wholesome. It is like the Hindu *dharma*, which is no more nor less than one's character, and is equal to one's personality. It is also akin to the Buddhist idea of the wholeness of every individual's being, and the human search for one's own true nature.

The *chi* exists within the individual. It is the "fact of infinitude" (Mphahlele, 2002:139) within that particular individual. Yet, the *chi* is not the sole invention of the individual. The *chi* derives from the collective resilience of African people, hence Mphahlele writes that, "whatever the African may endure as victim of slavery or colonialism or white racism, it was but a moment in the interminable revolutions of human relationships – the

fact of infinitude.” Literature is, therefore, the most visual area where African Humanism is glaring. As argued earlier Biko’s *I Write What I Like* is a demonstration of Biko’s *Soul Force*. Biko’s narrative is not a conversation with himself. What Biko writes resonates with what Africans feel and think. In itself, it has Africa’s past, present and future. This is true too of Mtuze’s writing and life experiences as depicted in this thesis.

6.5 Africa-centredness

W.E.B Du Bois made a profound observation about the mentality of African-Americans which resembles that of black South Africans. Du Bois (in Mphahlele, 2002:267) said:

...in black people there is always a two-ness in the personality. One ever feels this two-ness, like the American and the black. Two souls; two thoughts; a seemingly irreconcilable striving. It is a continuous process. There is convergence and divergence at different points.

In clarifying what Du Bois said, Mphahlele (2002:267) cites two poets, Claude Mackay and Langstone Hughes and their poems (Mckay in Mphahlele, 2002:267):

*But the great western world holds me in fee,
And I may never hope for full release
While to its alien gods I bend my knee.
Something in me is lost, forever lost,
Some vital thing has gone out of my heart,
And I must walk the way of life a ghost
Among the sons of earth, a thing apart.
For I was born, far from my native clime,
Under the white man’s menace, out of time.*

And, Hughes (in Mphahlele, 2002: 267-268):

*I, too sing America
I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh, and eat well, and grow strong.*

This issue about the African-American two-ness has to do with a psychological struggle of being of the continent, while existing off the continent. The dilemma is whether to

merge with the dominant white American culture or to continue with a culture now cut-off. And, when African-Americans thought that they were part of the white culture of America, the racist America rejected them. It forced them to look back onto Africa and start the process of self-recovery, hence Mphahlele (2002:268) writes that, “The alienation in the Caribbean and the Afro-American is, to me, so real. So real and so agonizing.”

Now, the observation of Du Bois applies directly to the mental condition of Africans on the continent, particularly Africans in South Africa. However, Africans on the continent have all had the chance and the time to deal with their two-ness. The physical advantage of being based on African soil is a positive. Yet, in many cases Africans choose not to take this advantage seriously. It is the view of this study that Mtuze’s life and work reflects a statement of resolving this tension between an African self and an imposed self. At the centre remains African Humanism which is to be carried into the future.

His African-centred way of looking at others refers to a mental state of mind where the experiences of African people are in the centre of his outlook. Mtuze has committed to the regeneration of humanity by placing a humanist purpose and a sense of destiny in his works. His self-awareness, intelligence and open-mindedness, *Soul Force* or *chi* has resulted in the African bias, not for selfish ends, but for the purposes of enhancing humanity.

6.6 Conclusion

What may be required in terms of the future of Humanism and its ethos, from a literary point of view, is a rolling-out of conferences and literary critique to analyse literature and how it has retained the humanism of African people. Furthermore, humanism should be assessed in relation to the extent that it can be used as a resource, which can be utilized to advance society. The debate should not only be restricted to the past and to today’s immediate benefit, it must question Africa’s contribution to world humanism. Mtuze’s life and literary corpus bears testament to this sentiment as analysed in this thesis.

Humanism as seen and practiced by African people can further advance Global Humanism.

Bibliography

- Abrahams, P. 1954. *Tell Freedom*. New York: Peter Abrahams.
- Appiah, K. 1996. *Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Asante, M. 1988. *Afrocentricity*. Trenton: Africa World Press Inc.
- Asante, M. 2003. *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change*. New York: African American Images.
- Asante, M. 2007. *The History of Africa – The Quest for Eternal Harmony*. New York & London: Routledge - Taylor and Francis Group.
- Awoonor, K. 1975. *The Breast of the Earth: A Survey of the History, Culture and Literature of Africa South of the Sahara*. New York: Anchor Press.
- Barret, L. 1974. *Soul Force: African Heritage in Afro-American Religion*. New York: Doubleday.
- Bennie, G. 2011. *Imibengo*. Lovedale: Lovedale Press (Pty) Ltd.
- Biko, S. 1978. *I Write What I Like*. Johannesburg: Picador Africa an imprint of Pan Macmillan, South Africa.
- Carmichael, S. 1997. A Speech given at the 20th Anniversary of the death of Steve Biko, King William's Town.
- Chakravarty, A. (ed.) 1961. *A Tagore Reader*. London: The Macmillan Company.
- Daily Dispatch. 2015. 21 September 2015,
- Duka, M. 2011. *Canon James Arthur Calata: A Biography*. Johannesburg: Khol Publishers.
- Eledjo, E. 2014. Africans and African Humanism: What Prospects. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*. 4(1): 3-25.
- Equano, O. 1995. *The Interesting Narrative*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Gates, H. 1991. *Bearing Witness, Selections from African-American Autobiography in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Pantheon Books, a division of Random House Inc.

- Gerard, A. 1971. *Four African Literatures: Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, Amharic*. California: University of California Press.
- Gerard, A. 1993. *Comparative Literature and African Literatures*. Cape Town: Via Afrika Publishers.
- Howe, S. 1999. *Afrocentrism: Mythical Pasts and Imagined Homes*. New York: Vergo.
- Hunter, A. 2011. The Venerable Professor Peter Mtuze, Grahamstown. Speech at the Celebration and Thanksgiving Ceremony for the Ven Prof Peter Mtuze and Dr Kutala Mtuze, Grahamstown.
- Incwadi Yamaculo AmaXhosa*. 1929. Lovedale: Lovedale Press.
- Jackson, R. 1988. *Black Literature and Humanism in Latin America*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Kalu, A. (ed.) 2007. *Anthology of African Literature*. New York: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc.
- Killam, M. & Rowe, R. 2000. *The Companion to African Literatures*. London: James Currey; Bloomington & Indianapolis: Ltd Oxford and Indiana University Press.
- Kirschstein, B. (ed.) 2001. Life Writing/Writing Lives, Malabar, FL: Krieger. *Literary Biographies*. New York: New York Times.
- Lamont, C. 1949. *The Philosophy of Humanism*. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company.
- Mafrika, A. 2010. *The Eyes That Lit Our Lives: A Tribute to Steve Biko*. Johannesburg: Eyeball Publishers.
- Magona, S. 1990. *To My Children's Children*. Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers an imprint of New Africa Books (Pty) Ltd.
- Magosvongwe, R., & Nyamende, A. 2015. *This is our land: Land and identity in selected Zimbabwean black- and white-authored fictional narratives in English published between 2000 and 2010*. *South African Journal of African Languages*. 35(2): 237-248.
- Mattera, D. 2009. *Memory is the Weapon*. Johannesburg: African Perspective Publishing.
- Meyers, J. 1985. *The Craft of Literary Biography*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

- Mona, G. 2015. 100 Years of IsiXhosa Poetry. Unpublished PhD thesis. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.
- Mphahlele, E. 2002. *Es'kia*. Johannesburg: Kwela Books in association with Stainbank & Associates.
- Mphahlele, E. 2004. *Es'kia Continued*. Johannesburg: Kwela Books in association with Stainbank & Associates.
- Mtuze, P. 1976. *UDingezweni*. CapeTown: Via Afrika Limited.
- Mtuze, P. 1977. *Amathol' eendaba*. Johannesburg: Educum Publishers.
- Mtuze, P. 1982. *Vingcan' amazibuko*. Johannesburg: Maskew Miller Longman (Pty) Ltd.
- Mtuze, P. 1995. *Uyese namahlandinyuka obomi*. Johannesburg: Vivlia Publishers and Booksellers.
- Mtuze, P. 1977. *Alitshoni lingaphumi*. Cape Town: Kagiso Education.
- Mtuze, P. 1990. *Ungakhe uxelele mntu*. Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers.
- Mtuze, P. 2003. *The Essence of Xhosa Spirituality and the Nuisance of Cultural Imperialism*. Johannesburg: Vivlia Publishers and Booksellers.
- Mtuze, P. 2004. *Introduction to Xhosa Culture*. Alice: Lovedale Press (Pty) Ltd.
- Mtuze, P. 2006. *Indlela ebeka enkundleni*. Johannesburg: Van Schaik.
- Mtuze, P. 2007. *An Alternative Struggle*. Johannesburg: Vivlia Publishers and Booksellers.
- Mtuze, P. 2007. Bishop Dr S. Dwane and the Rise of Xhosa Spirituality in the Ethiopian Episcopal Church (formerly The Order of Ethiopia). Unpublished PhD thesis. Tshwane: University of South Africa.
- Mutwa, C. 1964. Blue Crane Books, South Africa.
- Opland, J. (ed.) 2009. *Abantu Besizwe Historical and Biographical Writings of SEK Mqhayi*. Johannesburg: Witswatersrand University Press.
- Opland, J., Kuse, W., & Maseko, P. 2015. *William Wellington Gqoba. Isizwe Esinembali. Xhosa Histories and Poetry (1873-1888)*. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

- Pogrand, B. 2006. *How Can Man Die Better – The Life of Robert Sobukwe*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers.
- Rafapa, L. 2010. *Es'kia Mphahlele's Afrikan Humanism*. Johannesburg: Stainbank & Associates (Pty) Ltd.
- Rubusana, W. 1906. *Zemk' iinkomo magwalandini*. Lovedale: Lovedale Press (Pty) Ltd.
- Sander, R. & Lindfors, B. 2006. *Ngugi wa Thiong'o Speaks*. Trenton: Africa World Press; London: James Currey.
- Shepherd, R. 1964. *Abazibahuleyo nokubhaliweyo ngesintu*. Lovedale: Lovedale Press (Pty) Ltd.
- Shober, D. 2013. *Climbing Higher: Sindiwe Magona*. Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers.
- Soga, H. 1931. *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs*. Lovedale: Lovedale Press (Pty) Ltd.
- Tabensky, P. 2003. *Happiness – Personhood, Community, Purpose*. New York: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- Tagore, R. 1931. *The Religion of Man*. London: The MacMillan Company.
- Wa Thiong'o, N. 1986. *Decolonising the Mind*. London: James Currey; Oxford & Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers (EAEP).
- Willan, B. (ed.) 1996. *Sol Plaatje Selected Writings*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press; Ohio: Ohio University Press.
- Wilson, A. 1993. *The Falsification of Afrikan Consciousness*. New York: Afrikan World InfoSystems.

Interviews

- Baleni, N. 20 May, 2015 - Nobantu Baleni, King William's Town.
- Foslara, D. 07 February, 2015 - Diliza Foslara, King William's Town.
- Mcako, N. 25 July, 2015 - Nomazotsho Mcako, King William's Town.
- Mtuze, P. 2014/15/16 - Peter Mtuze, King William's Town.
- Nciya, M. 18 June, 2015 - Mthetheleli Nciya, King William's Town.
- Tabata, M. 03 Aug, 2015 - Mendi Tabata, Cradock.