SEMIOTICS AS A MEDIUM OF ANALYSIS IN SELECTED POETIC WORKS OF S.E.K. MQHAYI

BY

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SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

AT NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

23 JANUARY 2007

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DECLARATION

I declare that **SEMIOTICS AS A MEDIUM OF ANALYSIS IN SELECTED POETIC WORKS OF S.E.K. MQHAYI** is my own work and that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference and that this sub-dissertation was not previously submitted by me for a degree at another university.

_______________________   ____________________
T.S. MZINZI      DATE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Almighty God for keeping me alive and for granting me the grace to take my study to this level. I would also like to give my appreciation to some persons whose assistance and contribution must be individually acknowledged.

Thank you Prof. B.B. Mkonto for your insight and guidance before and during the period of the preparation of this work. Also for being such an inspiring lecture and supervisor.

My grateful acknowledgement to Apostle Bassey Victor for his much valued contribution towards this work.

I am grateful to Dr. L.L. Kwatsha for her advice and contribution that helped me in doing this work.

Miss. Zoleka Nduvane who is a tutor is hereby acknowledged for her advices.

I am very gratefully to Ms. Vuyokazi Bontsi for typing the manuscripts of this research project.

I would like to thank all my friends who gave me their moral support and encouragement during the period of my study.

My special thanks goes to my wife Asakhe Mzinzi for having been my pillar throughout my years of studying.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated with love to the following people Mr. Zola Tshaka (My Cousin), Zami Mzinzi (My Brother) and his wife Nokhanyiso Mzinzi for all their love and support.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**CONTENTS** | **PAGES**
---|---
DECLARATION | ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | iii
DEDICATION | iv
ABSTRACT | viii

**CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION** | 1

AIMS AND PURPOSE OF RESEARCH | 1

METHOD AND APPROACH OF RESEARCH (RESEARCH METHODOLOGY) | 2

LIMITATIONS AND CRITICAL VIEWS | 3

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH | 4

SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH | 5

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS | 6

LITERATURE REVIEW | 9

SUMMARY | 26
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</th>
<th>27</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEMIOTIC APPROACHES</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 FUNCTIONALIST STRUCTURAL APPROACH</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 HYPOTHETICAL-DEDUCTIVE STRUCTURAL APPROACH</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEMIOTICS AS OSTENSIVE SIGNS IN THE STUDY OF MQHAYI'S POETRY</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF S. E. K. MQHAYI</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 SUMMARY</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER THREE: ICONIC AND CONVENTIONAL SIGNS</th>
<th>53</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 ICONIC SIGNS</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 CONVENTIONAL SIGNS</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 SUMMARY</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FOUR: SYMBOLIC AND MOTIVATIONAL SIGNS</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 PATRIOTISM</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 SYMBOLISM</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 MOTIVATION</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 SUMMARY</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 PROJECT EN-WRAPPING</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 SUMMARY</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX I</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX II</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX III</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

In reference to Moleleki (1988:122), African poetry as a result of contrast rather than individual, is the representation of a community. This representation contains a scale of values based on the community, and it gives symbolic expression to the community: manifesting a community of tradition from the past through the present to the future. Going by the above notion, the poet assumes the responsibility of being the spokesperson of the community in which he/she finds and identifies himself/herself. He/she feels the pain felt by his/her people, and shares the joy shared by them. His/her representation therefore is both genuine and representatively expressive in nature.

In the chosen poems of S. E. K. Mqhayi the above mentioned aspects of poetic writing are well expressed. This representation being a symbolic expression on behalf of the community holds a magnificent semiotic significance. Such semiotic significance, which boarders around the several highs and lows of the community’s lifestyle. The community poet in this context blends the past and the present in his verses attempting to both preserve and express the sorrows, the joys, the pains as well as the fears of his community and its people. These are captured in chapters three and four of this study. The community poet under the worst form of systematized inhuman, racist subjection called apartheid employed careful and skilful means of reciting as well as penning his verses. In the last four chapters one discovers a skilful means of masking in order to avoid being penalised.
S.E.K Mqhayi’s element of symbolic expression is by far the most significant aspect of his poems. A man who lived in the days of abject institutionalised racism and being one of those discriminated against, had no choice but to be loyal to his oppressors and at the same time, expressing himself in the most creatively careful manner. His works are rich with encodings and embellishments. These encodings and embellishments require some careful skills to decode and unveil. This research work will centre mainly on the unravelling of all that was either encoded or embellished within each selected work.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIMS AND PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The poets who lived in the days of slavery, colonialism, apartheid and western undue influence expressed themselves mostly through encoded and embellished writings to disguise their real literal intentions. This work is a classified research to uncover the underlying meaning in the work of an exemplary Nguni poet-S.E.K Mqhayi.

Therefore, the aim of this work is to evaluate the surrounding factors that influenced the style of Nguni poets examplified by S.E.K.Mqhayi who did his work during the core days of apartheid.

Also, the aim of this work is to analyse the encoded expressions in the works of S.E.K.Mqhayi.

And the aim of this work is to bring to light the hidden reasons behind the careful vocabularies and general expression of this poet by means of semiotic principle.

This research work is aimed at assessing and analyzing about five selected poetic works from the poetic reservoir of the legendary S.E.K. Mqhayi. It will be approached from the
angle of semiotic analysis. This is because most of Mqhayi's works were rendered with symbolisms and embellishments, following the adverse political as well as socio-economic conditions he lived under. Semiotic analysis will be employed as the machinery of analysis because it is most suitable in the analysis of symbolism, embellishment and other forms of literary encoding.

1.2 METHOD AND APPROACH OF RESEARCH (RESEARCH METHODOLOGY)

The principle of semiotics will be used primarily as the literary device in analysing the mind frame of the selected Nguni poet that this research will centre on, (S.E.K Mqhayi). The semiotic literary device will unveil the encoded nature of his works and thereby revealing the original mind frame of the poet at the time his encoded poems were written. Discovering the intention of the poet will ensure effective evaluation of the meaning of his encoded poem. Every argument raised in this research will be justified by means of a substantial standard research reference. Therefore, reference sources gathered from the library will form the basis for any substantial hypothesis.

The views of certain significant individuals will be assessed by means of interview with extensive literary review. Conclusions will only be reached after exhaustive research is completed. As part of the research, the life and background of S.E.K. Mqhayi will be investigated. Extensive use of library for reference sources will be made.
The whole project to a great extent is an ethnographic case study which I have approached with ‘phenomenological perspective’ as my strategy of inquiry on one hand and ‘grounded theory studies’ on the other hand. The later being the bases of the literary review.

### 1.3 LIMITATIONS AND CRITICAL VIEWS

Semiotics being an area or field of study that applies across the art and humanities is potentially a very dynamic and versatile field. Unfortunately, being one of the most recent developed areas in the arts and humanities not very much of it has been explored. As a result therefore every research or study employing semiotics inherits a limited research resource background. This applies as well to this project.

With general reference to semiotic analysis of the works of African writers, much has not been done. This is mainly because semiotics as I mentioned above is still a relatively new field. Therefore, there is very little written or researched on the semiotics of the works of African writers. This background limits this research project with specific regards to insufficient reference material.

The poet featured in this research study was born and bred under negative political and social conditions. As a disadvantaged third class citizen under a system of government where a minority of the citizens imposed themselves as first class citizens. The disadvantaged position of this poet affected every single area of his live and being under
a system where force and victimization were used to keep the lower classes of citizenry where they wanted them to be; and where any form of resistance was met with a fiercer form of punishment, he had no option than to succumb.

The real intent of his writings was carefully and deliberately disguised. Being a deliberate action, it poses an uphill task if the author's real intents must be unveiled. The critical views therefore are those concerned with this uphill task of breaking right into the mind content of the poet as it were during the entire period of expressing himself poetically. More so because this is the central goal of this research work.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This research study is intended to clear misconceptions regarding how crude and primitive the works of certain African writers may have been viewed and to establish that these writers exemplified by the one I’ll be centring on, were very creative and that their works were done out of explicit intentions and not from lack of creativity.

This research study is also intended to draw insight into the extent of mental slavery that apartheid inflicted on the people of colour who lived in South Africa during those dark years.
Another significance of this research as intended is to clear misunderstandings and certain controversies (especially racist centred), that has influenced the general appreciation and acceptance of the genuinely intended works of S.E.K Mqhayi.

Finally, this research study is intended to provide the research base for those intending to research further into related areas.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The scope of this work will revolve around the semiotic analysis of five selected poems of S.E.K.Mqhayi namely: AA! Zweliyazuza! UMafukuzela, UTebha, Umfi uMhleka zi uSeeiso Griffith and UMbambushe. The following is a summary of the chapter as is intended for this dissertation.

Chapter one: introduces the research project, brings forward the aims and purpose of the research, the research methodology, limitations and critical views, significance of the research as well as the scope of the research. Definition of concepts and conclusion of the chapter are also given. Summary of interviews and the literary review of selected texts and books are given as well as the chapter summary.

Chapter two: begins with explaining two semiotic approaches: functionalist structural approach and hypothetical-deductive approach; gives elaborate semiotic analysis of AA! Zweliyazuza! and Umbambushe being the first two of the selected poems of S.E.K.
Mqhayi. Given also is the biography and life background of S.E.K. Mqhayi with a focus on presenting the man behind the poems. The chapter rounds off with a summary.

Chapter three: Iconic and conventional signs are deliberated upon extensively and the chapter summary follows.

Chapter four: embodies comprehensive semiotic analysis of UTebha, UMafukuzela and Umfi uMhlekazi Seeiso Griffith being the last three selected poems of S.E.K. Mqhayi. The chapter summary concludes the chapter.

Chapter five: puts forth the general conclusion of the entire research, suggestions for future research within this research field or related fields as well as concluding statements. Full lists of cited and consulted books and works, will form the bibliography and conclude the project. In addition, three appendixes regarding the interviews are also attached.

1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Semiotics: According to Umberto Eco (1979:7):

Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign. A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else. This something else does not necessarily have to exist or
to actually be somewhere at the moment in which a sign stands for it. Thus
semiotics is in principle the discipline studying everything which can be
used in order to lie. If something cannot be used to tell a lie conversely it
cannot be used to tell the truth, it cannot in fact be used ‘to tell’ at all. I
think that the definition of a 'theory of the lie' should be taken as a pretty
comprehensive program for a general semiotics.

**Sign:** A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something
else (Umberto Eco, 1979:7).

A sign is a product of the mediatory interaction between the signifier and the signified
where the signifier is the vehicle and the signified is the inferent.

**Communication:** Gibson et al (1976:573) defines communication as:

> The transmission of information and understanding through the use of
common symbols. The common symbol may be verbal or non-verbal.

An idea or thought develops at point A and this must be carried across to point B, where
point A is the sender and B is the receiver. The way the message is carried across and
how it is conceptualized at the point of destination is essential in communication. The
sender or communicator, who is the poet, in this case, has information which must be
shared with the receiver. At point A, such information is encoded and coiled into a
message that is channelled by means of verbal or non-verbal language and actions or
gestures to the receiving point B. The message is intended to have influence on the
receiver. The receiver decodes it and responds. If the receiver does not respond it is
because the message could not be decoded and as such communication has failed.

**Signification:** The assigning of meaning by the receiver of the message, understanding
and finally responding to it.

**Code:** The shorter Oxford dictionary defines a code as a system of military etc., signals
especially used to ensure secrecy, a cipher, a systematic modification of language,
information, etc. into letter, figure or word groups or symbols for the purposes of brevity,
secrecy or the machine-processing of information.

**To encode:** According to the Shorter Oxford English dictionary to encode means to write
or represent in code or cipher, convert (information) into another form.

**To decode:** The Oxford English dictionary defines to decode as to decipher that which is
encoded.

**To embellish:** To embellish according to the Oxford English dictionary:

Is to render beautiful (in general sense). To beautify with adventitious
adornments, to ornament now often with sense to dress up, heighten a
narration with fictitious additions to brighten (in feeling), cheer.
1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.7.1 REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE AND TEXTS

I have in my numerous literature and text search gone through a number of relevant books, research projects, journals and other relatively relevant publications. One in my numerous searches has been found to be most suitable in concurrent harmony with the final interview inferences as is contained in appendix iii of chapter five. I am therefore presenting the review of an aspect (part of chapter one) of a doctoral thesis entitled ‘A STUDY OF THEME AND TECHNIQUE IN THE CREATIVE WORKS OF S.E.K.L.N. MQHAYI’ by Zitobile Sunshine Qangule, submitted 15th August, 1979 at the Department of African Languages, Faculty of Arts, University of Cape Town. My adaptation is within pages 3 and 14 of the first chapter sub-titled THE MAKING OF A MAN: S.E.K.L.N. MQHAYI 1875 – 1945. It is as follows:

**S. E. K. MQHAYI'S MAKING**

The factors that have converged in shaping up S. E. K. Mqhayi's life from childhood will be deliberated upon in this section. Relevant extracts from W.G. Bennie’s English translation of Mqhayi’s autobiography, _UMqhayi waseNtabozuko_ (A short autobiography of Ssmuel Krune Mqhayi), edited by Patricia E. Scott (1976, pp. 5-34) has been made:
HOME AND RELATED FACTORS

In the very words of “G.H.W.” (1936, p.367), Mqhayi grew into becoming “the unquestioned leader of the Xhosa writers of today”. In regards to the day of his birth Mqhayi writes:

We pray for the young man
And to the ‘I Am’ we give thanks to,

Would He would preserve the lad
From things that come knocking,
That seek to surround him,
And prevent his succeeding.

Therefore we expect him to be preserved;
We ask for all gifts for him;
For those of the earth and heaven
For those of the deep unto deep
[And he be some help to the race]
To be a strength unto the race.

Amen.
Mqhayi learnt responsibility at a very early age because he was the only boy at home. He writes in agreement as follows:

I was the only boy at home, and therefore always busy. My having no play-mates, I attribute to my avoidance of smoking and beer-drinking. Even now I always say to young people, “It is far better not to have play-mates, than to have play-mates from whom you learn bad habits that are for ….. [that do not build up body and character].”

Mqhayi in his book *Imihobe nemibongo* (1927) went further in admonishing young ones to turn from such habits and rather promotes virtues such as honesty; loyalty; diligence; cleanliness; selflessness; generosity etc.

He lost his mother while still a child and had a busy father. This forced him to start fending for himself at a early age. In Qangule's (1979 p.4) very words “He tells of what happened on a certain morning when his sister went out to the mealie-fields”:

That morning I saw my sister carrying a pot and Going towards the fields; this was autumn. I decided at once to go also, for I had seen good things, like green mealies, pumpkins, sweet cane,
and water-melon, coming from the direction of the
fields; … My father called me back, and I
reluctantly returned, and sat down. After a moment’s
rest I said to myself, “Father would not see me go;”
and I went. (p. 16)

On how he tended stock, Mqhayi wrote:

I always looked for the greenest pasture…

Again he wrote:

I would inspan oxen to fetch brush-wood for the
gaps in the cattle-kraal; and whenever I saw a
beast sick I dosed it. I knew that if I did
not do these things I should be asked to whom
I looked to do them. (p.21)

Regarding the role of the above experiences in making Mqhayi, Qangule (1979 p.5)
writes: “The incidents cited above might appear on the surfaces to be irrelevant or
insignificant in portraying Mqhayi as a writer and leader. They assume a meaningful
dimension on reflecting that as a writer and leader Mqhayi wanted, metaphorically
speaking, that his people should graze in the same “greenest pasture” as other races, it
was the same man who, in journalistic and creative writings, urged his people to fill in “the gaps” in their lives and development. Mqhayi’s sense of duty and aspirations in childhood were transposed to a sense of both artistic and social responsibility during adulthood”.

Kole Omotoso (1974, pp. 544-55) concerning the responsibility of the writer said:

I think he should act as a conscience that can
Keep on saying “no! no! no!” to any evil that
exist in society. Even if nobody listens he
should be able to keep on saying “no!” as long
as he is alive.

Mqhayi fitted the above status quo during his life time.

In concurring with the above and in complimenting Vilakazi and Mqhayi, Moloi (1973, p.201) says:

Authors are a vital part of any community. they
are the ones to give forth meaning and direction
to the national aspirations of the people. If they
divorce themselves from the live issues of the day
and what affect their people most, then the
authors are dead, and the community they hope to lead is doomed. It is time that the Bantu writer expressed the aspirations and problems of his people genuinely. The works of the late Vilakazi and Mqhayi illustrate this point.

Mqhayi moved with his father to stay with relatives at Kentane district, Transkei when he was just nine. He wrote concerning how he benefitted:

I thank my father for taking me to Centane, for it was the means of my getting an insight into the national life of my people. (pp. 19-20)

Qangule(1979 p.6) has this to say in his response to the above “It was, amongst other factors, the experience gained in Kentane which kindled in his mind, as he matured, the flame of nationalism which, as years progressed, ballooned and aroused in him the sentiment of patriotism. The two constituents (underlined) compounded and a great humanist was produced”.

Ntantala (1971, p.9) in concurring writes:
Mqhaya was a man of his people, who’s social interests were very wide and as a consequence his influence as well. He was a patriot and a lover of the human race.

SCHOOL, CHURCH AND RELATED FACTORS

Mqhaya’s development into who he was received great influence from schooling and going to church as shall be seen below: He had at Centane and Lovedale his primary education and had his secondary education only at Lovedale after which he was qualified as a teacher. Concerning his exceptional intelligence during schooling he writes:

The minister, [the] Rev. J.M. Auld, in the Examination of schools, and at anniversaries, Used to single out my sister, Jane, and me, As being the best scholars in all his schools.

(p.20)

Inspite of great financial lack, Mqhaya did all he had to do so as to finance his education. He writes in this regard:

…to get money I used to work for the
institution at Id. An hour for three hours
every afternoon, and l/6d. on Saturday. (p.23)

and continues:

In the vacation I went to East London and
took any work that came my way first whatever
it was. (p.23)

Again he writes:

On Monday, I was made to put on my first trousers
and jacket. Hitherto my only clothing had been
a calico shirt or sheep-skin kaross, and sometimes
an old jacket given to me by someone. (p.22)

Qangule (1979 p.7) says in his response to the above acknowledgement by Mqhayi “It is
often the hard knocks of life that shape and produce a writer and leader of Mqhayi’s
statue”. Qangule again says “The material suffering he experienced as a student at
Lovedale was rewarded by the education he received and by the spiritual contact he made
with different religious, educational and political leaders whilst he was at Lovedale and
afterwards. These were: Rev. W.B. Rhubusana, Rev. P.J. Mzimba, Rev. E. Makiwane,
Mqhayi in the following lines writes concerning his deep appreciation for educational and the religious training he had:

In my desire to learn, I left no stone unturned;
any book I saw, or even a paper tossed about by
the wind, I would pick up and study carefully,
whether it were in English or Xhosa.

He continues:

I also aimed especially at a good knowledge of
the scriptures. I would pray in the veld until
[ I ]wept, because it seemed that I was losing
the chance of getting education. (p.20)

And again he said:

I kept the school and refused to stay away
For weddings and activities. (p.23)

Shepherd (1955, p. 122) in concurrent compliment of Mqhayi says:
Samuel was a boy of independent mind, lonely, observant, hard-working.

Mqhayi in harmony with the underlined quality in the extract above writes, acknowledging his sisters' worries:

They did not like my spirit of independence, and thought that I got it from the red boys in whose company I was when herding stock in the veld. (p.21)

SOCIAL SERVICES

A number of Mqhayi's great poetic works were penned as his reaction to the love and support he had for humanity. The following substantiate the above:

Services in Support of Immediate Family Members in the Ciskei

Mqhayi being the only male child of his parents, assumed the responsibility of an adult at the age of nine when his mother died. He had this to say in one of the pages of UMqhayi waseNtabozuko:

I am the head of the family, which among the Xhosa [means that every orphan child in your
family will be brought to you, to bring up,
feed, clothe, and educate without any recompense
in the future, and sometimes to find that the
ones you have helped have become your enemies. (p. 32)

In hope of a change for himself, his relatives and people at large, he wrote:

Perhaps the Government may someday be gracious
enough to assist such poverty-stricken people
as we are, as they do the white farmer. (p.33)

With limited or no resources at all, Mqhayi still gave his very best both in did and kind to his people. In support of this point, Qangule (1979 p. 10) says, “Throughout his works Mqhayi shows that he has faith in the positive growth of the human mind and the change of his heart. He also preaches to the black people that they should turn to themselves for their own salvation”.

Services in Support of Xhosa People at Ciskei and at Transkei
Growing up with challenges and handling them as an adult although he was still a young boy growing towards a full grown boy prepared him for this next challenge, extending the frontiers of his services jurisdiction. In support of this fact, Qangule (1979 p. 10) says, “The filial thread with his father’s people in the Centane district in the Transkei
patterned itself into a cord that bound him up with the Xhosa people in the Ciskei”.

Mqhayi in the following lines demonstrate commitment to serve his people:

> When people asked me why I looked forward to
going to a country like Gcalekaland, I would
answer, “I go to the people of my race.” (p.18)

He went on to say:

> Again in this Ntabozuko, I am in a very central
position among the Ndlambe and Gaika tribes,
and I am in close contact with the Gcalekas.
(p.33)

In acknowledgement of Mqhayi’s contribution to his people, Ngcwabe (1974, p.32) says:

> Gxalaba libanzi, mathwalana nesizwe emqolo!
(Broad shoulder, carrier of the nation on his back!)
(p.32)
According to Qangule's (1979 p. 10) “Mqhayi was one of those black leaders like W.B. Rhubusana, John L. Dube and others who worked towards the unification of Black people in South Africa and beyond her boarders. The universal maxim: “United we stand, divided we fall” characterises his writings”. Mqhayi had this to say in his last creative and original work, the autobiography, *(UMqhayi wasaNtabozuko)*:

By our divisions, we still make ourselves easy
Prey to those who are against us. (p.28)

Yako (1954, p.66) declares:

*Okamqhayi yena wayezama ukusibopa,*

*Esihlanganisa njengabantwana abangenanina.*

( He of Mqhayi was trying to bind us together,
Uniting us as children who have no mothers.)

Qangule (1979 p. 12) says “Mqhayi’s contribution by pen and word of mouth reached such admirable heights that he was given the praise name ‘The Gompo poet and poet of the race’ by the editor of *Abantu/Batho*, a Black newspaper which was published in Johannesburg. The praise name was a modification of the original praise name ‘The
Gompo poet given to Mqhayi by the editor of Izwi labantu published in East London. Gompo is the Xhosa name for East London.”

Jolobe (1965, p.123) demonstrates the expansion of Mqhayi's voice from East London to other aspects of South Africa “in captivating idiom” as Qangule (1979 p. 12) puts it:

\[
\text{Uqegu linamandla lathwal’ iinzima zakwaNdlambe,} \\
\text{Usiba lunomdla kwIzwi labantu kwaneMvo.}
\]

(He is the ox that carried the problems of the Ndlambes,
His pen is influential in the columns of The voice of the people and The opinion of the black people.)

A remarkable evidence that Mqhayi’s influence and work went beyond the peripheries of South Africa is contained in the second stanza of a poem written by a man from Rhodesia by the name Lettie G.N. Tayadzerhwa (1951, p.125), it goes as follows:

\[
\text{In Mbembesi we quarrel over you,} \\
\text{We are jealous of you, we claim you,} \\
\text{We are proud of you and your work.}
\]

(Translated by F.S.M. Mncube)
Services in Support of Black and White Races in South Africa

Qangule (1979 p. 10) puts it like this “That, in general, Mqhayi accords praise in his works to some White leaders and that, in particular, he eulogises certain White figures in Inzuzo and Imibengo is sufficient proof that he did not discriminate in his evaluation and judgement against the White people. To Mqhayi the colour of a man was a useless and petty if not a senseless criterion when assessing the worth of a man. He worked relentlessly towards the union of races”.

Mqhayi in UMqhayi wasentabozuko says this in support of the above:

…while I am in close contact with my own race, I am also in touch with the European races, and with all religious denominations who worship the living God. (p.33)

Higher Services

In Qangule's (1979 p. 13) opinion “Mqhayi falls into the category of those writers whom Clark (1971, p.245) describes as being reluctantly compelled to express the thoughts of their people; he is amongst those authors who, according to Fuller (1965, p.82), are always striving to remove from society forces that dehumanise their fellow men; he is one of those literary artists whom Heywood (1971, p.8) interprets as being involved in a struggle to help society “to gain its belief in itself and put away the complexes of the
years of denigration and self-denigration.” The pen of Mqhayi reveals a man who wanted to accomplish the said objectives during his life-time”.

Mqhayi here admonishes his audience to remember his teachings and intimates that he may sooner or later transit:

1. *Ndiya kuhlala ndinani phina ndingumntu nje*
2. *Ndingumntu nj’ int’ ehlal’ ihambele?*
3. *Ndingumntu nj’ int’ ehlal’ ihlal’ ifuduke?*
4. *Ndingumntu nj’ int’ ehlal’ ihlal’ ihlal’ igoduke?*

1. Impossible for me to be always with you, since
   I am only human (and mortal):
2. Since I’m only human, a thing that sooner or later takes a trip?
3. Since I’m only human, a thing that sooner or later shifts residences?
4. Since I’m only human, a thing that sooner or later departs from home?

*(Vide Ityala lamawele 1953, p.98)*
*(translated by Wandile Kuse 1975, p.185)*
Here again, Qangule (1979 p. 14) says “early in life Mqhayi preached the doctrine that service on earth implies ultimate service to God”.

The above adaptation has given comprehensive, vivid, and clear insights into remote, intermediate and immediate factors that constituted the character, as well as the general personality statue of Mqhayi. These constitutes, are inarguably the foundation from where his peculiar creative instincts emanated.

1.7.2 INTERVIEWS

Four individuals were interviewed qualitatively regarding S.E.K. Mqhayi’s life. Two of the four are close family acquaintances; one is a relative, while the other one is a professional who has conducted researches into his life and works. The interview questions were not structured but rather topical, orally historic and life historic in nature. The interviewees had full liberty at expressing themselves as they pleased.

The reason for the interviews is informed by the need to explore extensively the remote, intermediate as well as the immediate factors behind the person and general character of S.E.K. Mqhayi before his passing on. Factors that conditioned and shaped him over the numerous years of his genius preparation and formation which inattentively lent him the numerous achievements he accomplished in his lifetime. The comprehensive review of relevant texts is to encapsulate exploration of the factors that made him who he was. The review is presented in a qualitative format to stay in harmony with the rest of the
research. For interview excerpts, summary and concluding remarks, refer to appendixes I, II and III in chapter five.

1.8 SUMMARY

The above serve as a presentation of the entire outlay of this dissertation with a concise definition of basic concepts which is used throughout the semiotic discourse of this research project. It should be noted that semiotics as a field of study is still very new. Much has not been established yet, although it has been very well established as a concept and as a principle for literary expression as well as representation. This work will employ semiotics both as a concept and as a principle. Each analysis will be put forth in terms of semiotic significance and value. Semiotics as a concept and as a principle therefore is the heart and soul of this research project.
CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the theoretical framework surrounding the bases of the research analysis will be dealt with. Although semiotics is the foundation of this research analysis, I will use a number of relevant and technical approaches as a means to my intended end which is effective semiotic analysis at the end of the road. Two structural approaches will be introduced in this chapter and will form the bases of the analysis of Mqhayi's works selected for this chapter.

2.2 SEMIOTIC APPROACHES

That which is a sign and the relevant meaning of that which the sign signifies in the analysis of two of Mqhayi's poems will in this chapter be based on the following structural semiotic approaches
2.2.1 Functionalist Structural Approach

Functionalist here refers to a practically based approach that treats each semiotic element strictly in regard to its functionality. Structural speaks of the form of each semiotic element. One element could very well have more than one form hence more semiotic functionalities.

A car as an example in this approach, would signify as a semiotic element the sign of an object that takes one or more subjects from one geographical location to another.

2.2.2 Hypothetical-Deductive Structural Approach

Here, possible outcomes and suspected results are regarded over face-value facts. A sign is evaluated in terms of what its long term potentialities are rather than what it conveys as an immediate value. This structural approach looks at the end or the final outcome of that which a sign is signifying. A car in this approach would signify how much distance it is capable of doing rather than the ability to just run from one point to another.

Both structural approaches will be employed coherently in this chapter, as the sign value of each semiotic element is unveiled.
2.3 SEMIOTICS AS THE OSTENSIVE SIGNS IN THE STUDY OF MQHAYI'S POETRY

Ostensible expressions as will be seen in the analysis of the following poems served to conceal the author's outcry, so as to be protect while under the ruler-ship of his collonial masters. The first poem to be analyzed is as follows:

**AA! ZWE LIYAZUZA**

"ITSHAWE LA SEBHRITHANE"

i.  

NguMzimbuyaqhum' elokubuliswa;

NguMzimbuyavuth' elomteketiso;

NguZweliyazuz' elibizwa ngasemva;

NguTshawuzimiban' elibizwa yiMbongi;

    Sinnika!

ii.  

Phumani nonke nize kufanekisa!

Phumani zizwe nonke nize kufanekisa!

Sisilo sini n'esi singaziwayo?

Singajongekiyo singaqhelekiyo?

Yaz' ithi kanti yile nabulele;

Isilokaz' esikhulu seziziba;

Yaz' ithi kanti ngulo Makhanda-mahlanu,-
Inyok'enkul' eza ngezivuthevuthe;

Yaz' ithi kanti ngulo Gilikankqo,

Isil' esikhul' esingaziwa mngxuma.

Le nt' umzimb' uyaqhuma ngathi liziko;

Le nt' umzimb' uyavutha ngathi lidangaty;

Le nt' iqhuqhumb' iintlantsi ngathi nguSindiya-ndiya;

Le nt' itshawuz' imibane ngathi sisibhakabhaka;

Sinnika!

iii. Nalo lisiz' iTshawe le Bhilithani!

Inzala yenyathikaz' uVitoliya;

Inkazan' ebuthixorha kwizwe lakwaNtu,

Ebumoyarha, butolarha, buggirharha.

Nants' isiz' ikwekwe kaJoji wesiHlanu;

Yez' emadodeni ikwekw' akomkhulu,

Umdak' oliso litshawuz' imibane;

Lithi lakujezul' ung' ungaphanyaza;

Umdak' osabuphotyo-butyatho;

Unganganabomi wakuwondela;

Kok' ithole lerhamncw' alondeleki-

Nabakhe balinga bajub' isiduli.

iv. Yez' inkwenkw' omquba yomthonyama!
Yez’ ixhom’ izindwe yaxhom’ ugijo;
Yez’ ifak’ umzunga yafak’ iphunga;
Yez’ itsho ngezidanga nezidabane;
Yez’ itsho ngobumbejewu bobuhlalu;
Yez’ inobulawu nobuqholo;
Yez' inetyeleba nezifikane;
Yez’ inomtho nomthobothi;
Yeza ngobungwe nobungwenyama;
Yeza bugcolocho buchoko-chokozo!

Sinnika Lawundini!

v. Tarhu Bhilithan’ eNkulu!

Bhilitan’ eNkul’ engatshonelwa langa;
Siya kumthini na lo mntwan’ okumkani;
Siya kumthini na lo mntwan’ omhlekazi;
Khaniphendule nani zintaba zezwe lethu!

Nani milambo yakowethu khanithethe!

Maz’ aselwandle khanimthule kambe,-
Mthuleni manz’ aselwandle!

Sikhe simbone, simjonge, simlozele;

Ibilapha nenkwenkwez' enomsila;

Angaba yen’ usekhondweni layo.

Ibize kwabakwaPhalo kaTshiwo;
Ibize kumaZulu kubeSuthu;
Ibize kumaSwazi kubaTshwana;
Ibilundwendwe losapho lukaNtu!
Kub' uYehov' uThix' uyalawula,-
Uyathetha ngendalo yakhe.
Uyawakhawulezis' amaxesh' akhe!

vi.  Tarhu Langaliyakhanya!
Uphuthum' inkwenkwezi yakowenu na?
Thina singumz' owab' iinkwenkwezi;
Nalo kamb" ikhwez' inkwenkwez' akowenu.
Sibambana ngesilimela thina,-
Yona nkwenkwezi yokubal' iminyaka,-
Iminyaka yobudoda, yobudoda!

vii. Hay' kodw' iBiritan' eNkulu,-
Yeza nebhotile neBhayibhile;
Yeza nomfundis' exhag' ijoni;
Yeza nerhuluwa nesinadile;
Yeza nenkanunu nemfakadolo.
viii.  *Tarhu bawo, sive yiphi na?*

*Gqithela phambili Thole lesilo!*

*Nyashaz' ekad' inyashaza.*

*Gqitha, uzubuye kakuhle,-*

*Ndlalifa yelakowethu.*

*Makadl' ubom ukumkani!*

*Ndee ntsho-ntshobololo!!*

*Ngokwalaa nkwenkwezi yayinomsila!!!*

**TRANSLATION:**

i.  Body-That-Smokes is the name I greet you by;  
Burning-Body is your pet name;  
Scourge-of-the-Nation you are called in private;  
The praise-singer calls you Flasher-of-Lightning;  
Honour to you!

ii.  Go out, all of you, go out and identify him!  
Go out, all the nations, and identify him!  
What kind of creature is this unknown monster?  
Never before seen, unfamiliar to all?  
Perhaps he may turn out to be Nabulele;  
Monster of the deep pools;
Or makhanda-mahunu,-
The snake with five heads, who comes as a whirlwind.
Or it may be Gilikankqo,-
The monster whose lair no man knows.
Its body burns like a furnace;
Its body burns like a flame;
It spits sparks as if it were a steam-engine;
It flashes lightening like the heavens;
Honour to you!

iii. Here comes the prince of Britain!
Offspring of the female buffalo, Victoria!
Young woman who is a god in the land of blacks,
Spirit-like, priest of war, wizard,
Here comes the boy son of George V;
Of the Royal House, a boy coming to men.-
Dung-coloured one eye flashes lightening;
If it so much as touches you with a glance, it will blind you;
The dung-coloured one, who it is impossible to describe;
Indeed it is difficult to scan him;
There is no-one can gaze at the calf of the wild beast-
And those who once tried collapsed unconscious.-
iv. Here comes the boy of the raw dung, the old dung of royal
descent!
Here he comes in plumes and in feathers;
Here he comes decked in finery, wearing the grass of initiates;
Here he comes beautifully attired,
Resplendent and bejewelled;
Here he comes in scent and fragrance;
Here he comes in mint and grass necklaces;
Here he comes smelling of the sacred tambuti tree;
Here he comes with the virtue of the leopard, the lion;
Here he comes in raiment and fine robes!
Honour to you, Philistine indeed!

v. Hail, Great Britain!
Great Britain on whom the sun never sets;
What shall we do with this princely child?
What shall we do with this child of the king?
Give answer, you mountains of our land!
And you, rivers of our home, speak out!
Bring him down, waves of the sea!
Waves of the sea, bring him down,
So that we may see him and study him intently;
A shooting star once came here;
Could be that he is on its trail?

It came to the people of Phalo, of Tshiwo;

It came to the Zulus and to the Sothos;

It came to the Swazis and to the Tswanas;

It was a pilgrim to the brotherhood of the Blacks!

For Jehovah, the Lord ruleth -

He speaks of his creation.

He hastens on His times!

vi. Hail, Light-that-shines!

Have you come to fetch your star?

We are a nation that divides stars amongst us;

Yonder is the morning star - star of your people.

But we bind ourselves together with the pleiades -

The stars we count our years by, the years of our manhood,

The years of manhood, the years of manhood!

vii. Nay, the mighty Great Britain! -

Here she comes with Bible and bottle;

Here she comes with a missionary escorted by a soldier;

Here she comes with gunpowder and guns;

Here she comes with cannons and breechloader.
viii. Forgive me, O Father, but which of these must we accept?
Pass on, calf of the beast,
Trampler who even now is trampling,
Pass on and return safely, -
Eater of our country's inheritance.
Long live the king!
I disappear, I disappear
Like the shooting star we once saw.

(Inzuzo 1974:70)

Janheinz Jan (1968, p.99) made a classification of the above poem as that of protest. In summary, it swings towards the criticism of British policy in South Africa with general regards to her citizens and particularly the blacks. Ntantala (1971,p13) concerning the ceremony that called for the poetic rendition writes:

When the Prince of Wales -(now the Duke of Windsor) visited
South Africa in 1925, to make the African people feel that
they too belonged ,the white administration asked
Mqhayi as national bard, to sing praises to the visiting prince, as the Africans would have done in the olden days.
Mqhayi used the occasion well, for he drew for
all a picture of British rule in the colonies.
The semiotic analysis of each ostensive stanza goes as follows:

"Body-That-Smokes" which is the opening phrase gives the tone of the whole bard. It is quite sarcastic. In symbolic terms it draws attention to the war weaponry with which the British government subdued and conquered colonies too weak to contend their military strength. The purposeful and skillful use of sensory and pictorial images as well as symbols portray the magnanimity of the prince in a sarcastic manner. Body-That-Smokes, is as well a simile. The poet therefore perceives the prince as dreadful, in a similar way that a smoking body or substance would be perceived. This is however, a perception that is treated with utmost caution as well as respect. A perceived tyrant is not what anyone would want to offend. Mqhayi as a consequence of his dreadful perception, combines praise with concealed lamentation in his skillful approach of documenting poetically the mishaps and misfortunes of his people.

The second stanza is principally characterized by the continuous use of similes and metaphors as was the case with the first. The choice of elements used in characterizing the prince draw instant attention to the perception of the African people regarding the British colonialists." What kind of creature is this unknown monster?" Going by the above line of the stanza, a monster evokes perceptions of fear, dread and presumed destruction. The bard calls the monster unfamiliar, which goes further to thicken the deep sense of resentment locked within the mind of the bard's author. The eventual perceptive
comparison to Nabulele being the monster of the deep pools gains its reason from the fact that the prince hails from an islanded kingdom, a place of the deep pools. The viciousness of the then British pattern of seizing and imposing its ruler-ship over innocent African kingdoms gives more sense to the bard's comparison of the prince to the monster of the deep pools. Other comparison in the stanza follow suit. The five headed snake who comes as a whirlwind; the monster that burns like a furnace and that spits sparks as well as flashing lightning describes the manner of entrance of the prince who came with an executive ship and eventually with a convoy of military escort.

Stanza three refers to the prince of Britain as the offspring of the female buffalo, Victoria, obviously this is the then British monarch Queen Victoria. According to the bard she is worshipped in the land of the blacks. The author introduces juxtaposition by associating priest with war and wizard. He further refers to the prince as a boy coming to men. This stems directly from the Xhosa traditional belief that any man who does not undergo the school of manhood initiation remains a boy since he is unskilled in the matters of real men. The latter part of the stanza in strong simile describes the prince like a weapon of war that would blind and make unconscious at a gaze.

In this stanza, the splendid and glamorous attire of the prince is recounted in metaphors and similes. Here inclination to the similarity of the African people as a friendly disguise is put forth in the description of a portion of the prince's attire. The phrase "Philistine indeed" is indicative of an enemy. The author begins this stanza by pouring praise on Britain. The sun not setting refers to the land of Britain's development where night does
not cast darkness because of sufficient electric lightings. The stanza swings from praise to that of scrutiny and evaluation. With strong metaphor and simile the author calls for evaluation and draws comparison with the western missionaries who came to the black South Africans from one tribe to another. After the symbolic comparison, the bard goes further in this specific stanza to refer to what the prince said by moving along the lines of the pilgrims of Christianity. Talking of the rulership of God and His creation. This is more like a wolf coming in sheep's clothing, a dictator coming as a pilgrim. Calling on and talking about God like he is godly. Godly disguise strongly portrayed.

Stanza six captures a rich sense of symbolism. The Prince is here referred to as light that shines! The second line of the stanza becomes interrogative "Have you come to fetch your star! The star as can be commonly is symbolic certain achievable goals.

"Yonder is the morning star-star of your people"

The above line of the stanza could most meaningfully be interpreted as Yonder (in Britain) is the morning star (timely achievements) - star (achievements) of your people. The achievement in question is not specified. The English, is associated with the morning star as a symbol of diligence, wisdom and timeliness. The bard alerts the Prince that the Xhosa people share their achievements among themselves. The pleiades to the Xhosas is a symbol of steadfastness, maturity, manhood and perseverance. In other words, the bard's author claims by symbolism that the black people have what it takes to keep their star.
Here the coming of missionaries of Africa is perceivably portrayed as a guise in order to take advantage of the black people. The Bible and the bottle do not compartmentalize. Real Christians are not associated with alcohol. Missionaries do not employ military protection. The perception portrayed here is that of the British using planned strategy and guise to conquer land of the Xhosa people. Also portrayed is the double-standards inherent in the then British policy of Africa.

In wrapping it up, the bard echoes the voice of those in followership of the missionaries who are confused as to what to choose- the bible or the bottle. The Prince is eventually seen as a trampler and eater of the inheritance of the African people. The exit of the author is symbolized as a shooting star. The shooting star is very fast. The quick disappearing of the bard author after his rendition is strongly indicative of fear. A fearful exit. Through out the bard, the author maintained a rich use of similes and metaphor. Underneath those symbolic words lay a heartfelt outcry.

The following is the second poem to be analyzed:

**UMBAMBUSHE**

i. *Lala njalo ke, Mbambushe,*

*Ndun' enkulu' akulo Ntushe.*

*Amabhong' uwafezile*
Bonk' ubuntu ubugqibile.

ii. Ubuyinja ngokudalwa,
Ngokuvela, nokuza'llwa;
Ubungumntu ngokondliwa,
Ngokongama, nokoyikwa;

iii. Ubunalo ithamsanqa-
Neziny' izinja zakhamnqa-
Lokunyuswa ngokaMlawu,
Akwenze ube sisigcawu,

iv. Akonanga; wonakele!
Loo nyanis' ibonakele.
Kone iziphathamandla,
Zakutyhefa, zakuphandla.

v. Akonanga nto kaMlawu,
Ngokuwenza loo mzekelo.
Eli qhina linengozi,
Ziwa kulo zonk' iinkosi.

vi. Limbali zibalisiwe,
Iincwadi sifundisiwe,

Le nyaniso iyatyandwa-

Inkosi' ifa ngezithandwa:

vii. Izithandwa zabumini,

Ezinobunginingini;

Ezithetha kom' amathe,

'Ze ngokuhlwa ziyizonde.

viii. Namhla siseBritani,

Kumz' omkhulu woKumkani;

Kant' uMbambush' usahleli,

Usalawula emandleni.

ix. Mhlamnye woza anyalase,

Isifuba ahlasele.

Loo mini ke yoz' iNkosi,

Yenzakele yiloo ngozi.

x. Hinani, mafanankosi!

Hinani, mafanankosi!

Nibuye umva ngaliphi na,

Nenjenje nj' inja? Yini na?
REST IN PEACE MBAMBUSHE:

i. Rest so in peace Mbambushe,
   Honourable dog of the Ntlushe clan.
   All ambitions you have realized
   You have drunk your cup to the full.

ii. A dog you have been by creation,
    You were so by origin and by birth;
    A man you have been by treatment
    By authority and in terms of respect you received.

iii. You were born with a silver spoon in your mouth-
     Even other dogs wondered at your fortunes-
     For you were held in the high esteem by Mlawu,
     He produced in you an arrogant being.

iv. You are not just spoilt but beyond redemption!
    This has been confirmed by numerous instances.
    Those in authority are at fault
    For inflating you with pride and blinding you so!
v. You have committed no wrong son of Mlawu
   By setting such an example.
   The road of life is steep and fraught with pitfalls,
   All chiefs fiddle, faddle and fall by the wayside.

vi. Historical incidents have been recounted,
   Knowledge from books has been disseminated,
   Truth of the matter is always analyzed and verified
   One is betrayed by one’s closest associates.

vii. Newly acquired friends,
    Ought not to be relied upon;
    Although they were very articulate,
    They often betray their own utterances.

viii. Today we are under British rule,
     We are ruled by the great King;
     But still Mbambushe is alive,
     He is in the height of his power.
ix. One day he will stride with arrogance,
    And wrest power from the King.
    The day this happens the King
    Will suffer a fatal blow.

x. Nay, ye bodyguards!
    Nay, ye bodyguards!
    Why did you not keep vigilance?
    Why did you allow the dog such free reign?

(Quoted from The Stewart Xhosa Readers: StandardV

Firstly, the dog symbol is used generally by Xhosa writers to portray or demonstrate betrayal and faith, or crisis and honesty. In a sense the dog symbol comes in to help portray injustice where and when justice was expected. Mqhayi in the above poem “Umbambushe’ employs the dog symbol in an amazing manner.

The entire poem is more of a satirical rendition on the union of South Africa Act of 1910, which deprived South African blacks of political rights in the land of their birth.
The following are the semiotic analyses of each ostensive stanza.

2 Ntlushe clan is indicative of the then northern colonies. The resting in peace of the honorable dog of this clan is symbolic of achievement relief, after realizing all ambitions. Drinking of the cup to full means realizing of intentions in full.

3 A dog by creation, origin and birth, symbolizes a pet by both origin and inclination and one prone towards injustice. A man by treatment, authority and respect received is representative of a normal status of rulership.

4 Silver Spoon illustrates an uncommon or rare privilege. Other dogs or pets wondered at the fortunes because it was uncommon.

5 Stanza four in summary symbolizes over blown attention given to Mbambushe the dog by those in authority.

6 The Son of Mlawu refers to Mbambushe who has fault or is not responsible for being over-pampered.

7 Historical knowledge and books prove that one is betrayed by a close associate.

8 This stanza is very straight and simple. New friends, though articulate should not be relied upon, they often betray their own utterances.
9 The author goes a bit straight in this stanza. British rule and that of the great king is mentioned. Although non of these affect Mbambushe’s level off power.

10 The poet in this very stanza foretells the likelihood of power over-throw of the King by Mbambushe one day.

11 The King’s bodyguards, the poet continues to foretell will be blamed for allowing the dog too much freedom.

In summary, Mbambushe symbolizes the mineral rich northern colonies, Mlawu is symbolic of the Kings of the northern colonies who had then been whipped under British rule. The over-pampering of Mbambushe represents the inflated esteem and unnecessary Attachment that the authority had on the then privileged northern colonies. The realization of genuine reality as opposed to inflated reality is the suffering of fatal blow by the King.

2.4 BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF S.E.K. MQHAYI

Samuel Edward Krune Loliwe Mqhayi was born on 1 December 1875 at Gqumashe on the banks Tyhume. He was the son of Ziwani, scholar of all the Bantu languages of South Africa and teacher, and the great grandson of Mqhayi the chief of the AMACIRHA clan of the Xhosa people. Born near the town of Alice in the Victoria East District of the Cape Province, Samuel was named after the Old Testament prophet, and given several Xhosa
names, one of them Loliwe (Railway or a train), for the fact that the first trains began to run in the valley in the year of his birth and one other, his nickname ‘Ngxeke-ngxeke’. Samuweli, as he was often called, began school; in Evergreen, six miles from his home in Allan dale, staying there from 1882 to 1885. There he met Rev. Mpambani Jeremiah Mzimba, Rev. E. Makhiwane and Mr. John Tengo Jabavu who were to become leading Xhosa personalities and writers (who also played great roles in influencing his life). At the age of nine, the family moved to Centane in Transkei because of famine and the young Samuel listened closely to the old warriors’ tales and to the arguments of the “Great Place”, the meeting area where his great-uncle Chief u-Nzanzana held court. He ended up spending six years in Centane, during which he learnt a great deal about the history and culture of his people. Proof of the acquired knowledge later appeared in his great novel, *Ityala lamawele* (The Case of the Twins) published in 1914 but possibly written during the earliest years of the 20th century.

He studied at Lovedale off and on from 1891 to 1895, was confirmed in the Presbyterian Church, and took a teachers’ training course. In 1897 Mqhayi taught at the West Bank Location in East London. His literary career began there after receiving encouragement from Dr. W. Rubusana, N. C. Mhala, A. K. Soga as well as G. Tyhamzashe, who were all distinguished leaders of the time. His first small groups of collected “praise-songs” were published in the *Izwi labaNtu* (The Voice of the people). He worked as a sub-editor for that journal from 1897 to 1900 and then moved on to teach at Centane from 1900 to 1906. His first publication in book form, *USamson*, told the biblical story of Samson in Xhosa. In this period he lost his first wife and, after Izwilabantu, leaving at the demise of
that journal, for Mcentsho to teach among the Mdlambe clan, a part of the Xhosa nation. After one year he went to Mpongo to teach, remaining until 1920 to 1922, and was invited to work as a proofreader of Bantu Bantu and English language scripts at Lovedale Press in 1922. Instead, he began standardizing Xhosa orthography and establishing grammatical and syntactical practices with William Govan Bennie, the inspector of Native Education. His novel, *Ityala lamawele*, later translated as The Case of the Twins, published in 1914 in Xhosa, quickly found a wide popular reception and he became famous, the work going through eight editions by 1930. An enlarged edition in 1931 also contains a play, Xhosa tales and praise poems, a few of Mqhayi’s own original and modern poems in Xhosa, and several sections on various Xhosa authors, including Jabavu, Rubusana, W.W.Gqoba, and Bokwe. In 1929 Mqhayi published *U-Don Jadu*, a Bantu utopian work looking toward an ideal world of social justice and the elimination of racism. Part III of this novel won the May Esther Bedford Prize in 1935. His works of biography are: *U-bomi bom-Fundisi u J.K. Bokwe* (The life the Reverend J.K. Bokwe), 1925; *u-Sogqumashe*, on Chief Cyril Mhalla (ca. 1850-1920); *Isikhumbuzo sikaNtsikana*, a short study of the prophet Ntsikana. His autobiography, *U-Mqhayi wase-Ntab’ozuko* (Mqhayi from the Mountain of Glory), was composed in the early 1930’s but not published until 1939.

His considerable words in poetry were: *I-Bandla Labantu* (The Church of the people), 1923; *Imihobe nemiBongo* (Songs of Exaltation), 1927, which also contained works by other poets; Yokufundwa ezikolweni (Lullabies to be Studied in School. Other volumes were: *U-Mhlekazi u-Hintsa*: umbongo owashiya izibongo zamadoda ngomnyaka we
1937, a long epic work in eight cantos on Chief Hintsa; *I-nzuzo* (Reward), 1942, which contains some of Mqhayi’s best work, including praise poems on Simon Petrus Sihlali, William Govan Bennie, Charlotte Maxeke, John Tengo Jabavu and John Knox Bokwe.

An early work, about 1920, was *Ama-gora e-Mendi* (The heroes of the Mendi) which he had set to the music of A.M. Jonas.


Settling down in Ntab’ozuko, his house on Tilana’s Hill in the Berlin district near King Williamstown in 1925, he began a series of trips through the country of the Xhosa speaking peoples. Davidson John Tengo Jabavu in 1920 had called him “Imbongi yesizwe jikelel” (The praise-poet of the entire Xhosa nation) and in effect he was accepted as the poet laureate of his people. Dressed in traditional garb he recited praise poems for important African and European guests at celebrations of various sorts. Benedict Vilakazi called him “The father of Xhosa poetry”. He died on July 29, 1945 in his home on the mountain. Mqhayi was remembered in songs and poems by the writers of the entire Xhosa nation. Herbert Isaac Ernest Dhlomo, the famous Zulu poet, eulogized Mqhayi as the last link between the old tribal bards who extemporized their verses and the modern Westernized African who writes. Mqhayi left miscellaneous manuscripts.
unpublished though a few historical essays and several poems appeared in the anthologies, Imibengo (Titbits), edited by William Govan Bennie, and Walter B. Rubusana’s *Zemk’iinkomo magwala ndini* (Away go the cattle, you cowards).

### 2.5 SUMMARY:

These two works of the legendary S.E.K. Mqhayi prove each a depositary of rich semiotic value, which in turn prove that he was a very skillful semiotic poet. Semiotic poet here, referring to the poet’s rich ability to express with numerous signs; a skill that afforded him (the poet) the risk of being a strong sheep-voice, in the midst of ferocious wolves. He survived as a strong voice because he knew how to keep his real intention hidden behind symbols, signs and embellishments. Prominent preys do have a way of surviving under a dreadful environment where predators are hunting them.
CHAPTER THREE

ICONIC AND CONVENTIONAL SIGNS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter, I dealt with the semiotic analysis of two poems. Explorations were made into apparent representations hidden behind symbolic words and expressions as the word ostensibility explained.

In this chapter I will deal chiefly with iconic and conventional signs. An understanding of both concept is absolutely necessary for a deeper comprehension of the semiotic dynamism surrounding the works of my research subject, S. E. K. Mqhayi, as is evident in the previous chapter and as will be seen in the next chapter where three more selected works of his will be analysed.

3.2 ICONIC SIGNS

Eco (1984, p.136) defines an icon as:

“a sign, which refers to the object that it, denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own.”
The above definition simply says that an icon signifies or shows the object it represents by means of what its own good characteristics portrays. The phrase 'by virtue of characters of its own' is indicative of an intended positive or morally upright characteristics contained within what the icon is meant to signify. It must be noted here that the virtuous characters intently contained within an icon may not be readily observed by an ordinary unlooker. This point is demonstrated through the definition of icon by Fiske (1979 p.15), stressing that an icon:

“is a physical resemblance between the two, usually visual”.

A physical visual resemblance indicates that which is seen or perceived through sight. To observe merely through the sense of sight does not convey adequate perception, as such, there could certainly exist inadequate or distorted comprehension of that which is perceived. Cognitive knowledge is incomplete where and when perception is one-sided, although cognition itself may not necessarily be applauded as being logical. An icon in the above discuss can be subjectively perceived, although objectively intended. The bread and cup of the communion for instance is an iconic sign that has received diversified perceptive reactions from within the Christendom, with regards to the relationship existing between the body and blood of Jesus Christ and the bread as well as the content of the communion cup. Some assert that the bread and the cup's content thereof are actual assumption of Christ's body and blood respectively, in other words that both substantially become his body and blood in reality. This is so perceived because Jesus himself said:
“Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal
life, and I will raise him up on the last day”{Jn.6:54, English
Standard Version of the Holy Bible}.

Although, there is every possibility that Jesus' statement was not literally intended, many
have adhered thereto in every literary sense. Others are more logical, perceiving the
relationship as being purely representational.

The possible ambiguity existing in the certain perception of iconic signs is the advantage
Mqhayi had in his numerous use of ostensible iconic signs. The following lines from one
of his prominent poems:

“Nalo lisiz' iTshawe laseBhilithani!
Inzala yenyathikaz' uVitoliya;”

Translation:

“Here comes the prince of Britain!
Offspring of the female buffalo, Victoria;”

With the above iconic phrase, 'female buffalo, Victoria', one is left with an enormous task
of determining the relationship between female buffalo and Queen Victoria. The author
will be able to evade indictment owing to ambiguity of meaning, should a negative
interpretation be apportioned to his iconic sign. Mqhayi enjoyed the use of several iconic signs in his works because of the advantage of ambiguity in perceptive meaning that he had. The author therefore remains the custodian of the true relationship existing between his sign and that which the sign signifies. Understanding the mind frame of the author at the time of penning his work is the best way to unveil his intent.

S. E. K. Mqhayi's explorations with several use of iconic signs was obviously informed by the racial discrimination himself and his people suffered at the time. Freedom of expression was prohibited as far as his racial group was concern. The use of signs as I mentioned earlier was his only safe way of public expression.

Haley(1995, p.605) maintains that an icon:

“signifies its object mainly because it is similar to it in some way as for example, a photograph is an icon of the object depicted in the picture.”

Haley's point here is simple. An icon to him is an image that represents by evoking resemblance of the object it portrays. The weighing balance represents justice mainly because it evokes the resemblance of justice, in other words, the gravity of a crime must be in balance with the gravity of the punishment thereof or better still, the equilibrium of the weighing balance must be maintained when a crime is measured against it's punishment. The weighing balance therefore has successfully evoked resemblance of
justice as an icon of justice. Haley's definition can be adapted into spheres of psychological as well as philosophical iconic significations. The following stanza in the poem, ITSHAWE LASEBHHRITHANE by Mqhayi is a demonstration of psychological and philosophical dimensions of iconic signification:

“NguMzimbuyaqhum' elokubuliswa;
NguMzimbuyavuth' elomteketiso;
NguZweliyazuz' elibizwa ngasemva;
NguTshawuzimiban' elibizwa yiMbongi;
Sinnika!”

Translation:

“Body-That-Smokes is the name I greet you by;
Burning-Body is your pet name;
Scourge-of-the-Nation you are called in private;
The praise-singer calls you Flasher-of-Lightning;
Honour to you!”

In symbolic terms like I mentioned in the previous chapter, the above poetic stanza draws attention to the war weaponry with which the British government subdued and conquered colonies too week to contend their military strength. The purposeful and skillful use of sensory and pictorial images as well as symbols portray the magnanimity of the prince in
a sarcastic, yet an iconic manner. Body-That-Smokes, is a simile. The poet therefore perceives the prince as dreadful, in a similar way that a smoking body or substance would be perceived. This is however, a perception that is treated with utmost caution as well as respect. A perceived tyrant is not what anyone would want to offend. Mqhayi as a consequence of his dreadful perception, combines praise with concealed lamentation in his skillful approach of documenting poetically the mishaps and misfortunes of his people. However, concealing his actual intentions might have been, his skillful use of iconic imageries to spark psychological and philosophical reactions is truly amazing.

3.3 CONVENTIONAL SIGNS

The Oxford dictionary defines convention as:

“a general agreement on social behaviour etc. by implicit majority consent; a custom or customary practice; conference of people with a common interest.”

The above definition of convention is quite useful in laying the foundation for a better understanding of the word conventional. The same dictionary defines conventional as follows:
“depending on or according with convention; (of a person)
bound by social conventions;...”

When combined with convention, conventional would be 'depending on or according with a general agreement on social behaviour etc. by implicit majority consent or customary practice.' Conventional sign could therefore in my own words be seen as: *those signs conveying what has been socially agreed upon by implicit majority consent or customary practice.*

Mqhayi's works are generally coloured with his racial & cultural background, beliefs, norms, values and so forth, which is reflected in most of his works. His certain use of imageries are a direct portrayal of this fact. The following stanza from the poem UMAFUKUZELA (UDR.J.L.DUBE) by Mqhayi demonstrates this:

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“Phindel’edabini nto kaDube!
Ukusalwa wedwa ngumluwanyama;
IAfrika ayizalang’izalee phantsi;
Nempundan’ekhoy’ibulew’ intliziyo,-
Yaf’ ihamba yaxel’umkholonjane.
Sibe kuy’ egqirheni lahlab’ ishwangusha,
Ichanti, nohili,nomgubo kaphezulu;
Sakunyuka nengalo lihla noNondyola.”
```
Translation:

“Go back to war son of Dube!
To be born alone is hard;
Africa did not give birth to children;
Even those wanderers have lost faith;
Dead, alive like uMkholonjane.
Even Sangomas could only point to bad omen;
Thokoloshe’s and Muthis point to bad omen;
When pursuing this, the problem is still with us.”

The above stanza which is in consonance with what I said in the previous chapter, shows how Dube in death is instructed to go back to war (‘Go back to war son of Dube!’). His believed departure to the ancestral land is not for rest but for a continuous fight for liberation of his people. The course for which he undertook until the day of his departure to the great beyond. ‘Africa did not give birth to children’, is a further symbolism representing strength and maturity in one who is truly an African son. This is in reference to Dube who is expected to exercise maturity in fighting for his people in the ancestral land. ‘Dead, alive like uMkholonjane’ refers here to live and strength whether alive or dead. Dube is expected to be as strong in deearth as uMkholonjane. The last three lines of the stanza give uncertainty to the nature of the war awaiting Dube in the unknown ancestral land. The Sangomas, Thokoloshe and Muthi give a similar level of bad expectation. That which Dube must face, over at the other side is here considered as bad.
The entire stanza explanation as I have given above is based on several conventional signs stemming from African traditional religious beliefs which the author upheld.

3.4 SUMMARY

My intention in this chapter has been to show how this research project's subject, Mqhayi blends iconic and conventional semiotic signification in his works with other forms of semiotic signs. Also it has been to identify clearly what iconic as well as conventional signs are. An intention I believe is achieved.

I want to say here that the instances elaborated upon with regards to the two afore-mentioned signs do not set boundaries for what the signs could semiotically signify. However, my main point of focus in the deliberations has been the works of S. E. K. Mqhayi.
4.1 INTRODUCTION:

I will in this chapter, analyse semiotically; three poems from the rich poetic reservoirs of the legendary S.E.K. Mqhayi. The three poems will centre on patriotism, symbolism and motivation respectively. Each of the three poems in this chapter is diversely and uniquely peculiar as shall be seen in the analysis. My analytical approach will however, remain basically the same. This is because the machinery of semiotics, ploughs in same basic pattern when unveiling what lies beneath a word, term or expression.

4.2 PATRIOTISM:

The third poem in my semiotic analysis of S.E.K Mqhayi’s selected works proceeds as follows and boarders around patriotism:
i. Phindela phesheya nto kaDube!
Phindela phesheya Mafukuzela!
Nkamel’ethwal’iinzingo zeAfrika;
Ithwal’ iingxakeko neembandezelo zayo,
Ikhe yathwal’ezinye yaziphumeza,-
Yathwal’ezinye,ezinye, kwanezinye;
Thole lenkunzi yaseMpumalanga,-
Bath’ukuyibiza nguMafukuzela.

ii. Phindela kwakhona nyath’emathyhobozo!
Thole lesilo,thole lerhamncwa.
Nkunz’ekhonyel’iinkunz’ezikude.
Phesha’kwemilambo, naphesha kweelwandle;
Nkunz’eth’ akukhonya yenz’umpongampo
Ithath’ izisind’iziphose ngasemva;
Ikhuph’ umnqambula kwezinye iinkunzi,
Ibeth’ elundeni kwizaphuselana.

iii. Ndathanda thole lohlala ndathanda,-
Lagquba ngothuli lijonge ngasentla.
Labeth’Ohlange kwaphuma neLanga,
Lagqish’eRhawutini kwavel’ igolide,
Babukel’ ooGumede nabooRhadebe,-
Wafunz’okaThema nokaMakgotho,
Yalal’enkonxen’ iKolon’ endala,
Ishwatyaniswe nakukwaluphala.

iv. Phindel’edabini nto kaDube!
Ukuzalwa wedwa ngumluwanyama;
IAfrika ayizalang’izalele phantsi;
Nempundan’ekhoy’ibulew’ intliziyo,-
Yaf’ ihamba yaxel’umkholonjane.
Sibe kuy’ egqirheni lahlab’ ishwangusha,
Ichanti, nohili, nomgubo kaphezulu;
Sakunyuka nengalo lihla noNondyola.

v. Phindela phesheya mfo wakwaSenzangakhona!
Ndibev’ apha isimbonono;
Bathi, “Kwathi kwathi Afrika mayibuye,”
‘De ndabuz’ukuthi:” Ningoobani na nina?”
Unanamhl’ andikeva mpendulo.
Bholish’ ikrikithi Langalibalele!
Le nt’ asinguwo mdlalo ngumtyabulo
Bholishani nzima nikhuph’ iBhritani!
vi.  
Awu! Laqumb’ ithole lesilo sakwaZulu!
KwaSithole, kwaNtombela, kwaMalandela.
Namhla lifunzele kooDyubhoyise;
Kumadod’ antliziyo zingaziwayo,
Okhe walikhathaz’ uya kutshiswa ngemililo;
Kuya kuvuk’ iimini zikaTshaka;
Kuya kuvuk’ iziphendu nezivondoviya;
Kuya kuvuk’ ingxoviya lezulu.

vii.  
Awu! Laqumb’ ithole lakwaJama!
Lalahl’ isonka lalahl’ iinwele,-
Lemka ngendlela lemka ngenkqayi;
Lalahl’ impilo kwanomphefumlo-
Ngenxa yesizwe sasebantwini,
Ngenxa yenkonzo yesizukulu.
Uya kuwufumana won’ umphefumlo,
Ziyabuya nezonka, iyabuya nempiolo.

Viii.  
Hamba ’ubuye kakuhle Langalibalele!
Wenz’ iindaba zokubuya kweAfrika;
La mathambo mhlawumb’ angarhashaza,
Lith’ ithambo liye kwithambo lalo.
Buya kakuhle neso sitya saseinzini;
Buya kakuhle naloo mntan’ uphembayo;

Ithini n’ imidondosholo yeAfrika,-

Amadod’ antliziyo zingaziwayo?

*Ncincilili!!!*

**TRANSLATION:**

i. Go back overseas son of Dube!

Go back diligent one!

Camel that carries the burdens of Africa;

It carries its responsibilities and hardships;

It has carried some of its burdens successfully;

And again carried some and others and many more;

Calf of the bull of the east,

They called him Mafukuzela.

ii. Go back again Bulldozing buffalo!

Calf of the beast, calf of the monster.

The voice of the voiceless and less involved.

Across the river and over the oceans,

Bull that echoes its sound from afar
Pushing aback the dust of the soil as it moves ahead,
Cast away fear from other fighters;
He defeats the senseless thinking of the idiots.

iii. I like your actions calf of the nation I like them;
He became prominent as he faced north.
He brought light to Ohlange and there was Ilanga newspaper;
He made his influence felt in Gauteng and there was Gold;
The Gumede’s and the Radebes embrace your options;
And Thema and Makgatho applauded your courage;
And Cape colony was squeezed to the corner;
For it was old and outdated.

iv. Go back to war son of Dube!
To be born alone is hard;
Africa did not give birth to children;
Even those wanderers have lost faith;
Dead, alive like uMkholonjane.
Even Sangomas could only point to bad omen;
Thokoloshe’s and Muthis point to bad omen;
When pursuing this, the problem is still with us.

v. Go back overseas son of Senzangakhona!
I hear them still crying;

They said let Africa come back to us

Until I asked who are you?

I did not get an answer till today.

Play the cricket game Langalibalele!

This is not only a game but hardship

Play hard and outplay Britain!

vi. Witness! Angry is the calf of the beast of Zululand!

Of the Sitholes, Ntombelas, Malandelas.

Today everything points to Dyubhoyise;

To men who are not known;

One who troubles him will be burnt alive;

This will remind us of the days of Tshaka;

There will be arguments and misunderstanding;

There will be a great turmoil.

vii. Witness! Angry is the calf of Jama clan!

That threw away skin and hairs;

He grew old;

And lost his health till he died

Because he loved his Nation;

And of the service of generation
Your soul, you will retain;
Your life and your health.

viii. Go and come back well the-shining-one! (Langalibalele!)
And bring the news of our restored Africa;
Bones might be shaken.
And one bone has returned to its original position.
Come back with what you got from foreign land;
Come back with what you have aimed for and planned.
What do heroes of Africa say;
Men who’s heart are not known?
Disappear!!!

(Inzuzo 1974:61)

This poem as a typical Mqhayi’s poetic work is a depositary of semiotic elements woven into most of the lines of every stanza. ‘Go back overseas son of Dube’- this first line of the poem is both literally contextual and vitally significant in the sense of a representative sign. First and foremost, Dube, the central object of the poem is dead. A dead man is literally unable to carry out an instruction or appeal such as go back overseas! What then could Mqhayi be referring to? The tone of this poetic piece is that of an affirmed mindset. It is not suggestive in anyway. The poet declares matter-of-factly his affirmed verses. One would expect a poem that is more of a citation rather than that which is full of mandative instructions requiring the dead to effectively carry them out.
The ironical approach to the subject of the poem can be seen as the foundation that established semiotics in this piece of poetry. Locked within each line is an underlying meaning that derived its roots from the very bowels of the author’s cradle as will be seen further on in this chapter.

It should be understood that Mqhayi during his poetic days was culturally multi-faceted. Entrenched in the very culture and traditions of his decent, he embraced Christianity although not entirely as was presented by the early missionaries of his time. In proof of the above statement, Mqhayi during his time as the imbongi (bard) of the nation got invited by the then governor of the Cape to do a praise poem in commemoration of the arrival of the Prince of Wales in 1925. In his poetic performance, he criticized the manner of entry of the missionaries. Extracted to illustrate this point are the following from the written version of the poem he performed in praise of the Prince of Wales who visited South Africa in 1925:

*Hay' kodw' iBiritan' eNkulu,*

*Yeza nebothile neBhayibhile;*

*Yeza nomfundis' exhag' ijon;*

Nay, the mighty Great Britain! -

Here she comes with Bible and bottle;

Here she comes with a missionary escorted by a soldier;
Although Mqhayi was an ardent believer in the traditions and culture of his decent, he personally attest to his believe in Christianity and western values. In his autobiography, UMqhayi waseNtabozuko as adapted in Qangule (1979: 121), he attests to this fact as follows:

1. Engqondweni yam ndedwa, ndandiqonda
2. ukuba ndiya kuba
3. ngumsebenzi kweli lizwe lakowethu...
4. umsebenzi kwizinto zelizwi;
5. kwezentlalo yasemakhaya;
6. kwezombuso;
7. nakwezemfundo.

1. In my opinion I felt that
2. I was going to be
3. a worker for my own people in my country,
4. a worker for the gospel;
5. for social services;
6. in politics;
7. and in educational matters.
As is indicated above, Mqhayi character was a blend of both traditional and Christian values as well as certain western values deemed appropriate in his judgement. In the above poem, this blend of values and believe is skilfully exhibited. The poem is based on a bible scripture taken from the book of Matthew: 10:39 – “Lowo uwufumeneyo umphefumlo wakhe wolahlekelwa nguwo, nalo uwulahlileyo umphefumlo wakhe ngenxa yam, uya kuwufumana.” “He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for my sake will find it”, (New American Standard Bible). The scripture is used in combination with traditional beliefs in the bard rendeion.

The semiotic analysis of each stanza goes as follows:

The title of the poem, UMafukuzela refers to a person heavily laden with loads in both hands and on the back. The entire first stanza; allegorically portrays Dube as UMafukuzela. The ironic portrayal proceeds on purpose with very symbolic imageries. "Go back overseas son of Dube" being the opening phrase gives character to the whole bard. It is quite ironic. Symbolically it draws apparent attention; to the traditional religious believe of the Xhosa. The believe that the dead goes on a divine journey to the great beyond and comes back home in spirit to protect its family. The skilful use of the term overseas is indicative of a far destination that is not only unreachable, but greatly unidentifiable. Dube’s comparison to a camel is reflective first of the title of the poem and secondly of his disposition as a leader in what was one of the most difficult eras of apartheid. Like a camel, he had forged on inspite of all the odds stacked against him during his life time, as he is expected to do in his inevitable journey to the great beyond.
Carrying the burden of Africa, its responsibilities and hardships and carrying some of its responsibilities successfully literally speaks of his role while alive; as the maiden president of the African National Congress. A role discharged sacrificially. ‘And again carried some and others and many more’, speaks of other responsibilities undertaken as the first president of the ANC. ‘Calf of the bull of the east’ the east here is symbolic of the great beyond, the bull being his immediate ancestor. The calf in Xhosa tradition is indicative of a prince or one with a royal lineage. It is however used in this context to depict prominence. The use of similes; play a strong signification role in this stanza. It deepens semiotic perception and value.

The second stanza is characteristically marked with the continuous use of similes. The imageries portrayed are quite depictive of elements used in Xhosa tradition on one hand, and which can be seen in literal grammatical sense on the other hand. ‘Go back again Bulldozing buffalo!’ Dube is here instructed to go back again. The expression ‘go back again’ indicates return to where he has been before. He had been to Britain as the A.N.C. President to negotiate with the British government on issues regarding freedom. The expression ‘Go back again’ therefore, is an affirmative remark to Dube, to go back and continue negotiating for the freedom of his people. Bulldozing buffalo here refers to his strength and vehemence in overcoming obstacles, as well as his resilience in the very face of what seems impossible. The second line of the stanza (Calf of the beast, calf of the monster) is deeply symbolic. The calf as I mentioned earlier is used to depict prominence. Beast and monster is indicative of that which is dreaded and feared. The ancestral is here portrayed as that which must be dreaded. Dube is still considered a voice of the voiceless
and a symbol of encouragement to the discouraged. The concluding line of the stanza (He defeats the senseless thinking of the idiots) is quite mysterious. The idiots here are those who might have in derision the traditional beliefs of Dube’s decent, as well as those who might think his death has brought his liberation struggle to an end.

Stanza three began by referring to Dube as a calf of the nation. Here again prominence is emphasized (prominence in a national sense). ‘He brought light to Ohlanga and there was Ilanga newspaper’, this second line of the poem is a symbolic representation of the development he brought to a small town called Ohlanga. He founded Ilanga newspaper there. The third line ‘he made his influence felt at Gauteng and there was gold’, is very deeply symbolic. The inception of the African National congress, coincided with the discovery of gold in Gauteng and at the time of the discovery, Dube was the ANC national president, and of course the first national president. His influence, being the national president was really felt in Gauteng where the ANC headquarters is situated. The Gumede’s, the Radebes, Thema and Makgatho are all A.N.C.leaders. These leaders are portrayed with giving praises to departed Dube. He got the praises because of his courage. The last two lines of the stanza (‘And Cape colony was squeezed to the corner’ ‘For it was old and outdated’) are clearly indicative of the white minority rule that Dube in his liberation struggle relegated. White minority rule in a predominantly black nation is here seen as old and outdated. This stanza employed simile too in its symbolic representation.
In this fourth stanza, Dube is instructed to go back to war (‘Go back to war son of Dube!’). His believed departure to the ancestral land is not for rest but for a continuous fight for liberation of his people. The course for which he undertook until the day of his departure to the great beyond. ‘Africa did not give birth to children’, is a further symbolism representing strength and maturity in one who is truly an African son. This is in reference to Dube who is expected to exercise maturity in fighting for his people in the ancestral land. ‘Dead, alive like uMkholonjane’ refers here to live and strength whether alive or dead. Dube is expected to be as strong in death as uMkholonjane. The following last three lines of this stanza give uncertainty to the nature of the war awaiting Dube in the unknown ancestral land:

Even Sangomas could only point to bad omen;
Thokoloshe’s and Muthis point to bad omen;
When pursuing this, the problem is still with us.

The Sangomas, Thokoloshe and Muthi give a similar level of bad expectation. That which Dube must face, over at the other side is here considered as bad.

‘Son of Senzangakhona’ is a direct attribution to Dube’s tribal name-Senzangakhona as can be seen in the first line. The second line expresses audible cries from the tribe. A cry that is very assertive, as line three puts it, ‘They say let Africa come back to us’. Dube in the audible cry of his Senzangakona people is viewed as Africa. In their very cry, the Xhosa belief in bringing the spirit of the dead back home is echoed. The
echoes of lamenting of the Senzangakona tribe are those of an inevitable ritual of
bringing home the spirit of the departed. The last three lines bring an unusual
conclusion to the stanza:

Play the cricket game Langalibalele!
This is not only a game but hardship
Play hard and outplay Britain

The simile, cricket game is used here to depict the struggle for political rule
between the white minority and the black majority African National Congress
headed by Dube. Hardship is associated with the game and Dube is instructed
to outplay his opponent even in dearth. The opponent is named as Britain. This is
because the British ruled South Africa during Dube’s tenure.

The sixth stanza seems an extension of the fifth one with emphasis on Dube’s annoyance.
‘Angry is the calf of the beast of Zululand’, this opening line finally throws proper light
on Dube’s ethnic ancestral decent. ‘Beast of Zululand’ is indicative of the dreadful
ancestry of Zulus as is the case with the other Xhosa ethnic groups. ‘A noble of the
dreadful Zulu ancestry is angry’ would be another way of saying the same thing. The poet
grew on with specifications regarding Dube’s ancestral line in the huge Zulu ancestry.
Line two (‘Of the Sitholes, Ntombelas, Malandelas’) speaks of Dube’s tribal ties, while
line three (‘Today everything points to Dyubhoyise’) zeros into an activist who worked
closely with Dube by the name Dyubhoyise. Line four makes assertive that the people of
this extensive family are unpopular. This is certainly a portrayal of Dube’s accomplished rise from obscurity into prominence. Prominence that dearth itself is unable to disrupt or unravel. The next line (‘one who troubles him will be burnt alive’) is a pronouncement of curse upon whoever will decide to trouble a man who had gone through great suffering to get from a place of obscurity to that of prominence and who though dead, is poised for further struggles in the land of the great beyond. He is eventually likened to Tshaka in the prediction of what will happen if he is troubled in death. Turmoil and misunderstanding is the author’s predictions, should Dube be troubled in death. It should be noted that the troubling denoted here is in a spiritual sense, with regards to doing properly all that must be done ritually and traditionally.

Stanza seven again seems a continuation of stanzas five and six, beginning with associating Dube with his ancestral clan. ‘He threw away skin and hairs’, here refer to the gradual and eventual deterioration of his health. The bard continues with laying emphasis on Dube’s dropping health and eventual death. The author puts the blame on national struggle for the slow, gradual and eventual demise of the legendary Dube. ‘Your soul, you will retain’ is such a deep statement in the context of this poem. The Bible teaches that the soul is retained in dearth and that dearth is simply a separation of the soul from the body. Although the African traditional religion shares a similar view, it is not exactly in line with the Bible’s stand-point. The retaining of the soul is the bases of the journey to the great beyond.
The last stanza enwraps the allegorical poem. ‘Go and come back’ is an expression based on the traditional belief that the spirit of the dead returns home with a welcoming ritualistic ceremony. The day of the ceremony marks the return of the spirit of the dead back home. The-shining-one (Langalibalele!) is used by the poet to depict the way the dead appears in spirit. The perception portrayed here is that of a shining spirit or a good spirit as opposed to that laden with evil. At this point Dube is considered a departed spirit. The next line, ‘And bring the news of our restored Africa’ is coined to reflect Dube’s ability as a spirit who is able to see into the future to bring good tidings of the restoration of Africa (inspite of how futuristic it might be). It is believed that, that which comes from the ancestral is accurate, more so if it comes from a spirit who’s purpose had been to accomplish that which it now reveals. The last three lines of this stanza as outlined below, brings conclusion to the entire poem:

What do heroes of Africa say;
Men who’s heart are not known
Disappear!!!
4.3 SYMBOLISM:

The fourth poem (from S.E.K Mqhayi’s selected works) proceeds symbolically as follows:

**UMFI UMHLEKAZI SEEISO GRIFFITH-1941**

i. *Othukil’amaRharhabe!*

*Ngumphang’ovel’eLusuthu;*

*Uphangaphangwe yini na,-*

*Umntan’enkosi kamsinya?*

*Khe zathatyathwa n’iintonga?*

*Oosiyazi bathini na?*

*Esithini n’ amathambo?*

*Kub’umona yint’ ekhoyo;*

*Wothukil’umzi kaphalo!*

ii. *Silila nani beSuthu,*

*Ningumzalwana kwanathi:*

*Ayalil’ amaBhritani;*

*Ngumhlobo ngexesh’elibi;*

*Kulil’ onk’ ama-Afrika,*

*Lo mtwana ubelithemba,*
iii. Besilapho nje ngezolo,
    Kwizwe lakwaMokhatshana,
    Size kuzimas’umntwana
    Ngendumasilaz’enkulu,
    Oku kwenzeke ngani na?
    Ukuf’oku bubuthongo;
    Ngokwenenekaz’enkulu,-
    Wothukil’umzi kaPhalo!

iv. Kok’uThixo yint’ekhoyo,
    Ngeba sithi siphalele;
    Besiza kuzuz’iinkomo,
    Namalizo ngamalizo;

v. Sezikhe zafika zona,-
    intokazi zakwaNgqika,
    Waziliza wazambesa,-
    Wothukil’umzi kaPhalo!
vi.  
Tarhuni baseLusuthu!
Umhlekazi l’ akafanga
Uye kulungis’indlela,
Nesimo selizwe lenu;
Uye kunilwel’iintshaba,
Anikhangel’enyangweni
EnoThix’ophilileyo,
Ongengowabafileyo.

vii.  
Hamba ke mfo kaLutholi!
Shiya njalo gxavalala!
Xa ubizwayo komkhulu,
Ubingena kumangala!
Shiy’usapho, shiy’ isizwe;
Shiy’umbuso wakwaMshweshwe!
Hamba nalo neli lizwe,-
Wothukil’umzi kaPhalo!!!

**TRANSLATION:**

i.  
The maRharhabes are shocked!
By the pronouncement of death from Lesotho;
But what has snatched away,-
The child of the chief so soon?
Did they go to find out?
What do the sangomas say?
What do their bones, say;
For jealousy is wide spread;
The house of Phalo is shocked!

ii. We mourn with you Sotho people,
You are related to us:
The Britons lament with you,
About a friend during this, your hour of need,
All Africans are bereaved,
This child was the hope of the people,
Be comforted people of Mshweshwe,-
The house of Phalo is shocked.

iii. We were there yesterday,
At the Makhatshane land,
We came to honour the child
With the highest of praises,
How did this happen?
Death that is so sudden,
Death that is eternal sleep,
Like enormous reality,-

The house of Phalo is shocked!

iv. In this, God is a reality,

We could almost say we are ruined,

We were going to get cattle,

And rewards upon rewards,

v. Previously they did come,-

The esteemed ladies from Ngqika,

He blessed and clothed them,-

The house of Phalo is shocked!

vi. Be appeased you from Lesotho!

This gentleman is not dead

He has gone toprepare the path,

And circumstance of your land,

He has gone to fight your enemies

And look over far from above

With a living God,

Not worshipped by the dead
vii. Farewell son of Luthuli!

Leave the mess as is!

When called at the Great place,

You could not refuse!

Leave your family, leave the nation,

Leave the Mshweshwe chieftaincy!

Take this word with you also,-

The house of Phalo is shocked!!!

(Inzuzo 1974:41)

The above poem, also as a typical Mqhayi’s poetic work is rich in semiotic elements. Sharing nature with the previous poem (UMAFUKUZELA), the poet’s approach here is uniquely different from that of the previous, although the central idea conveyed is that of death in both poetic pieces. The author was moved by the death of King Seeiso Griffith of the Basotho ethnic group to create this very rich verses. Metaphor, simile and irony are skilfully used in knitting the thread of each stanza which is woven in semiotics. The theme of unity pre-dominates the poet’s expression as he weaves each line into every stanza in his bard.
The following are the semiotic analysis of each stanza:

1. The opening line of the poem ‘The maRharhabes are shocked!’ is quite a thick expression. A common assessment would simply view it for what it seems. MaRharhabe is one of the leading tribal kingdoms within the Xhosa ethnic group. A nomenclature derived from the name of a very prominent Xhosa king who once lived. In literal sense, one African kingdom shares affinity with another, especially if both are situated within the same nation and involved collaboratively in a common course and more so if the course is about the life and welfare of it’s people. In this case, a course geared towards liberation from the worst kind of socio-political marginalisation named apartheid. This affinity is deepened by the pains and agony both kingdoms have been accustomed to in struggling for liberation. One would expect a poem like this to begin with expressions of sympathy for and about the Basotho people who are the most affected by this death incident. The poet has rather plotted his order of priority in symbolism. In symbolic terms therefore, the most affected are the other royal families within the Bantu nation as is represented in the bard’s opening line by ‘The maRharhabes’, which is first and symbolically a royal family as is intended by the author in this case and secondly a Xhosa tribe as is seen in literal terms. Shocked like the maRharhabes are the house of Phalo (as indicated in the last line of this stanza) and all other royal families within the Xhosa nation as is symbolically indicated. This is because the liberation of the enslaved Xhosa nation is chiefly their collective responsibility as the people of their respective kingdom look up to them
- their leaders for answers and the way out. The third to the sixth lines of this first stanza:

        But what has snatched away,—

        The child of the chief so soon?

        Did they go to find out?

        What do the sangomas say?

Is indicative of what constitutes a chocked state of mind in the very context of the author’s symbolic intent. The cause of death becomes the next crucial issue as each shocked royal family member fears for his or her life. Locked within each shocked mind is the strong desire to know what killed their colleague. Could he have been killed for the sake of the struggle or did he die of a natural cause? Fear and a great sense of loss describes the feelings across the Bantu tribal groupings. The eighth line ‘For jealousy is wide spread’, is used by the poet to thicken the depth of the sense of loss collectively shared by all the Bantu tribal kingdoms.

2 In the second stanza, the author began by verbalising one important aspect of what he concealed in the first stanza. The expressions, ‘We mourn with you’ and ‘You are related to us’ are echoes of an intent concealed in symbolism. ‘The Britons lament with you, - About a friend during this, your hour of need’, being
the poet draws the scope of affinity shared with the deceased. An all African affinity, shared in the struggle for freedom and a sense of loss shared because the death of a freedom fighter marks a setback in the struggle for the liberation of Africa. Africa is here portrayed as united in the course of liberation struggle. ‘The child was the hope of the people’ is in symbolic essence referring to the hope of
the African people. The tribal name of the deceased Basotho tribal decent is here
mentioned as the bard pleads with the Mshweshwe people to be comforted.

3 Stanza three goes back in time in an attempt to re-encapsulate an interesting and a
remarkable time in the life of the deceased. A time when he was born. ‘We were
there yesterday at the Makhatshane land’ is very symbolic. ‘We’ to start with, is
here used by the author to indicate the generality of all the parties portrayed as
sympathising with the deceased. ‘Yesterday’ is literally indicative of the time in
the past when the king was born. Although it could not have been physically
possible for all the parties to have been present at the time the king was born, the
author is figuratively insinuating their presence as a symbol of unity and
homogeneity in the struggle for liberation. Lines three and four go further in
confirming this fact. The rest of the stanza stays a further exploration of the shock
and fear held by the sympathising parties.

4 In this fourth stanza, the poet declares the reality of God. A reality perceived by
means of the fortitude displayed by the parties sympathising the deceased. The
awesome level of unity portrayed in the bard as weaved by the poet is symbolic of
the reality of God who is the obvious source of the fortitude displayed in bearing
the loss of the departed king. Line two to line four confirms the God-inspired
grace to bear the loss as certain losses are enumerated as follows:
We could almost say we are ruined,

We were going to get cattle,

And rewards upon rewards,

5 The poet in further back up of stanza four, goes back in time as he draws an instance of what has been missed and what will be missed as well with the departure of the deceased king. Line three ‘He blessed and clothed them,–’ summarises the drawn instance.

6 The sixth stanza opens with an appeasing message to the Lesotho people, as the author brings to bear the Xhosa traditional belief regarding the dead. The second line ‘This gentleman is not dead’, is an ironic expression with the intent of trashing the literal ramifications of dearth while making eligible its traditional African implications. A departed king to the land of the ancestors has only gone there to continue his good services for his people, which in this case is that of helping his people effectively in the struggle for liberation. Lines three to five confirm this. In the last three lines:

And look over far from above

With a living God,
The poet is implying that the dead spirit watches on from the great beyond alongside with God, the supreme deity of the African people, who is ‘Not worshipped by the dead’ with regards to the dead in literal connotation. In other words, the appeasing plea to the Lesotho people is to indicate that the deceased is more effective in dearth than how he would have been alive.

Stanza seven commences with a farewell to the deceased and the author instructs that what seems a mess should be left as it is. The mess of dearth is here implied as a call to the great beyond that the deceased could not refuse. In line five and line six, the deceased is instructed to leave the nation as well as the Mshweshwe chieftaincy. This is a very significant expression. The spirit of the dead in an effective transition, is expected to depart and not to linger. The poet is in symbolic implication asking the deceased to depart to the ancestral land without being delayed or held back by his previous attachments to the nation and the Mshweshwe chieftaincy. He is however to go with the knowledge that his Xhosa kinsmen represented by the house of Phalo are all shocked. A knowledge that will drive the deceased in spirit to intensify his exploits.
4.4 MOTIVATION:

The fifth and last poem in the list of S. E. K. Mqhayi's selected works proceeds motivationally as follows:

**UTEBHA (HARRY TABERER)**

i. *Zibekelen’iintlanjana!*

   *Iintlanjana zibikel’izizwana,*
   
   *Izizwana zibikel’imilambo,*
   
   *Imilambo’ ibik’elwandle;*

ii. *Iintlanga zonke mazive,*

   *Kungabikh’usatya nobubi,*
   
   *Umfo kaTebh’uwelile:*
   
   *Khuzani kumk’ umnt’omkhulu!*
   
   *Senivile ke bomaTshangana!*
   
   *Zikhulu zakwaGungunyana;*
   
   *Senivile ke nani maZulu;*
   
   *Zikhulu zakwaSenzangakhona;*
Nani mNdebele nisekelwe,
Zikhulu zakwaMatshobana;
Umfo kaTebh’usishiyile:
Khuzani kumk’umnt’omkhulu!

iii. Nanko ke mzi waseLusuthu!
Mabandl’akomkhulu kwaMshweshwe,
Bapedi nani lilani;
Mzi KaMhlekaz’ usikhukhuni;
Nivisiwe mzi kaMoroka!
Zinzwana zakuBarolweni;
Umfo kaTebha bath’ufile:
Khuzani kumk’ umnt’ omkhulu!

iv. Khuzani mabandla kaPhalo!
Zindwaluthondini zomthetho;
Zijorhandini zomkhonkotho,
Mabandla kaNyawuza!
Mabandla kaDosini!
Mabandla kaNtsele!
Umfo kaTebha senimvile:
Khuzani kumk’ umnt’ omkhulu!

Kumk’ inkunz ezek’ eziny’ iinkunzi!
Inkunz’ emathol’ aziincoyinco.

Int’ emb’ iinkomo phantsi komhlaba;
Inkunz’ emathol’ phantsi komhlaba;
Izidimbaz’ ing’ idimbaz’ihasa.

v. Kumk’isixhaso somhlaba nezizwe;
Kumk’ intsika yobom nokuphila.
Ngumfo kaTebha ke lowo mawaba:
Khuzani kumk’ umnt’ omkhulu!
Lisik’ elinenqayi laseShowe!
USikhalima njalo kwaMzilikazi;
UBijel’ izizwe ngokweChanti;
Uyise weentlanga zeAfrika.
Isikhulu sakwaNyhithi-nyhithi;
KwaQoboqobo naseNqolonqolo.
Ngumfo kaTebha ke lowo zidwesha:
Khuzani kumk’ umnt’ omkhulu!

vi. Rholan’iqhinga lokuphila!
Madoda rholan’ amacebo;
Ziza kwambathiswa ngubani na
Namhl’ iintombi zeAfrika?
Aza kwambeswa ngubani na,
Namhla la makhosikazi

Emkile nje lo mfo kaTebha?

Khuzani kumk’ umnt omkhulu!

vii. Walalis’ iintaba zaseTransvali

Wadib’ iiinduli zelo zwe,

Aphel’ amagqagala nemiwonyo,

Zathi tse zonk’ iindaw’ ezigoso;

Waguqul’ intlango yalikhaya

De kwaguquka noMgulugulu,-

Ngunyan’omfundisi ke lowo:

Khuzani kumk’ umnt’ omkhulu!

viii. Ubesigcinel’umsebenzi,

Ethunywe kwaziinkosi zethu,

Kwatheth’ uSandile noGreyi,

ix. Kwathiw’ udodana malumke,

Lumke luwashiy’amakhaya,-

Lo mfo k’ abekweso sitethe:

Khuzani kumk’ umnt’ omkhulu!

x. Thina ke maXhosa siyazi,-
Ubaw'akafile uhleli;
Kux'asasinge emandleni,
Kux' ayekuthatha kwasemva,
Thin' asinamnt' ufayo,-
Ofayo ngoye kwabadala.
Ephuthum' amany' amacebo,
Kub' amadal' esonakala!

xi. Ihleli k’inkomo kaTebha!
Yongamele yonk’ imigodi;
Ngamndl’amatsh’ asenyangweni.
Kunye nabadala bezizwe;
Namhl’elethu linye kuphela,-
Silenza ngethemb’ elikhulu;
Sithi kuwe ke ndod’enkulu-
“Uz’ usikhangel’enyangweni!”

Ncincilili!!
TRANSLATION:

i. Announce to the streams!
   The streams will announce to smaller nations,
   The smaller nations announce to the rivers,
   Rivers announce to the sea,

ii. All tribes must hear,
    None should be resentful,
    The son of Taberer has crossed:
    Exclaim, for a senior undividual has departed!
    You the Tshangaan’s! have heard!
    Senior citizens of Gungunyana!
    You Zulu’s have also heard,
    Seniors of Senzangakhona,
    The news have been shared with you Ndebele’s,
    Seniors of MaTshobana;
    The son of Taberer has departed:
    Exclaim for a great one has left!

iii. There he is man of Lesotho!
    The household of great Mshweshwe,
    Pedis, you cry as well,
House of Sir sikhukhuni,

The news has been shared with the house of Moroka!

Princes of Barolweni,

They say that the Son of Taberer is dead:

Exclaim for a great person has departed!

iv. Exclaim Phalo denominations!

You the experts of law,

You the learned in law,

Nyawuza Denominations!

Dosini Denominations!

Ntsele Denominations!

You have heard the news about the son of Taberer:

Exclaim for a great person has departed!

A bull that received instructions has departed!

A bull whose off spring are varied.

A thing that excavates cows from underground,

Burrying them as though they were bygones.

v. Gone is the anchor of the earth and nations,

Removed is the pillar of life and living.

It is as you see the son of Taberer my people:

Exclaim for a great person has departed!
He is the bald bacher from Showe!

Exonorate always, Mzilikazi,

You bind nations together as a snake,

A father to African nations.

The big gun of Nyhithi-nyhithi,

Of Qoboqobo and Nqolonqolo.

That is the son of Taberer men gentlemen

Exclaim for a great person has departed!

vi. Devise a trick of living!

Men who devise plans,

Who is going to clothe

African daughters today?

Who is going to clothe

These women today

Now that the son of Taberer has departed?

Exclaim for a great person has died!

vii. He lulled mountain of the Transvaal

Flattened the hills of that land,

Planes and Falls;

Crooked planes got Straightened,

He Transformed a desert into a home
And even changed Mgulugulu,
That is the son of a reverend:
Exclaim for a great person has departed!

viii. He saved work for us,
On instructions from our chiefs,
Sandile and Sir Grey Spoke;

ix. It was said that young men must leave,
Leave their homes,
This man has followed the traditional Course;
Exclaim for a great person has departed!

x. We the Xhosa men know,-
Father is not dead but alive,
He's gone back to his creator
He's gone back to gather wisdom

We do not believe in death,-
The dead actually join the elders.
Tackling new plans
As the old ones that are not applicable
xi. Taberer’s cow then awaits!

Presiding overall mines,

With refuelled strength/power from above.

Among elders of nations.

Today we only have one thing to say,-

We say that with high hope,

We say then to you great man

Look over us from above

Disappear!!

(Inzuzo 1974:47)

The following are the semiotic analysis of each stanza:

I. The metaphoric opening lines of the first stanza sets a tone for the entire poem. Announcement to the streams and from the streams to the ocean successively signify the author's wide-publicity thirsty intent. An intent that seeks to appeal in a positive way. The tone evoked here is that of positivity to motivate although a prominent person had been lost.

II. In the second stanza, the author began by motivating against resentment as he stresses about an all tribe publicity. He announces the passing of Taberer in quite a gallant manner, as though the deceased had won some sort of price. His motivational approach to the theme of death is informed mainly by his traditional
belief that views death as a journey to the great beyond. The rest of the stanza is devoted to a reassured tribe to tribe publicity of tidings of departure.

III. Stanza three stays mainly the continuation of the reassured tribe to tribe publicity of the positive tidings of Taberer's departure. The stanza rounds off with a call for an appraising exclamation for the departed great person.

IV. The fourth stanza remains basically a continuation of yet again, the reassured tribe to tribe publicity of the positive tidings of Taberer's departure. Another call for an appraising exclamation for the departed great person, a symbolically motivating accolades as is contained in the following lines of the stanza:

“A bull that received instructions has departed!
A bull whose offspring are varied.
A thing that excavates cows from underground,
Burrying them as though they were bygones.”

Ensures the motivating nature of the poem. The bull in Bantu tradition is indicative of a king or one with a royal lineage. It is used however in this context to depict prominence. A prominent man who interacted with other prominent people and who has varied prominent offspring with a valuable excavation. Herry Taberer was a prominent diamond miner and the expression to 'excavate cows from underground' is figuratively employed by the author to represent the
excavation of diamonds, where cows is symbolising treasures. This symbol of
cow as treasure is tracable to the Xhosa ancient culture where wealth and
Treasure was measured in terms of how much cows one owned.

V. 'The anchor of the earth and nations' being part of the opening line of the fifth
chapter is indicative of Taberer's diamond connections with several nations
across the earth; which is why he is referred also to as the pillar of life and living.
A pillar of life and living in the world of diamonds. In the stanza is symbolic
acknowledgement is made of his bald appearance, as the bard ties together the
African descent of the deceased.

VI. The sixth stanza is basically a set of rhetorical questions rendered in a style that
depicts the role Taberer played in decorating women.

VII. Stanza seven is an appraisal of his overwhelming contributions to the
transformational development of the Transvaal, better described by the line:

“He Transformed a desert into a home”

The stanza rounds off with a call for an appraising exclamation for the departed
great person.
VIII. Stanza eight is also an appraising acknowledgement of employments provided for African people through the understanding reached with Taberer by chief Sandile and sir Grey.

IX. The ninth stanza takes on from the eighth. Again an appraising acknowledgement if employments provided for African people, especially the young men who had to leave their homes.

X. As is believed by men in accordance with the Xhosa traditional belief that death is merely a transition, the departed Taberer is here believed to have departed to the land of the ancestors to continue his good services for his people, which in this case is that of acquiring more wisdom for continued development of his nation and the world at large. the poet is implying again that the dead spirit watches on from the great beyond alongside with God, the supreme deity of the African people. It is held here again that the deceased is more effective in dearth than how he would have been alive.

XI. The last stanza announces the readiness for the welcoming ritualistic ceremony for the deceased. Taberer's cow is simply the cow to be slaughtered in commemoration of his return from the ancestral land. According to the author, he is returning to preside over the mines with strength and power refuelled from the ancestral land. The bard is concluded with remarks of high hopes and great expectations.
4.5 **SUMMARY:**

It follows therefore, given the afore-enumerated factors and conditionalities which are diverse but coherent, that signs and symbols was a way of escape for Mqhayi who knew no other way of breaking free from the very institutionalised adverse economic, social and political realities that circumvented him and the vast majority of his kinsmen daily for the entire duration of his lifetime except by means of ‘the pen’, which is said to be ‘mightier than the sword’, except for Mqhayi. The pen in Mqhayi’s case was in my phrase ‘the feeble pen’. There was so much to express in his creative bowels and yet the pen could not be used freely. Signs and symbols became the only narrow way with which he freed himself creatively. A creative freedom well achieved in-spite of the narrowness of the means.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This study venture has been an interesting one thus far, with awesome as well as intriguing discoveries and finds. The previous chapter laid off a comprehensive account of significant events, issues, phenomena, and specific circumstances that in progressive combination coloured the life and character of our poetic legend during his lifetime.

In keeping with the aims of the research as outlined in chapter one of a classified research to uncover the underlying meaning in the work of an exemplary Nguni poet-S.E.K Mqhayi; I have evaluated the surrounding factors that influenced the style of Nguni poets as exemplified in this research by S.E.K.Mqhayi who did his work during the core days of apartheid. Encoded expressions in five poetic works of S.E.K.Mqhayi has been extensively analysed

By means of semiotic principle, the research has brought to light the hidden reasons behind the careful vocabularies and general expression of the poet, approached from the angle of semiotic analysis - being an ideological machinery for social analyzing. My choice of this method of analysis was informed by the fact that most of Mqhayi's works
were rendered with symbolisms and embellishments, following as it were, the adverse political as well as socio-economic conditions he lived under and because it proved most suitable in the analysis of symbolism, embellishment and other forms of literary encoding. My approach in the semiotic analysis of the five poems analysed has basically been the same. This is because the machinery of semiotics as I said earlier ploughs in the same basic pattern when unveiling what lies beneath a word, term or expression.

Each chapter has been rendered in careful keeping with what I proposed in this project's research proposal, and is to a great extent an ethnographic case study which have been approached with ‘phenomenological perspective’ as my strategy of inquiry on one hand and ‘grounded theory studies’ on the other hand. The scope as well as the object of the proposal has been followed consistently.

5.2. PROJECT EN-WRAPPING

Chapter one successfully introduced the research project, brought forward elegantly the aims and purpose of the research, and elaborated on the research methodology. Precise limitations and critical issues viewed during project prospecting were transparently expounded upon in this chapter. Also expounded on were the significance of the research as well as it's scope. Clarity, simplicity and professionalism guided my every presentation in this chapter as is the case for the other three chapters as well as this last chapter. Clear and simple definition of concepts used and directly reflected throughout the work has been given in this chapter. Literature review comes next and as I mentioned earlier, this
aspect of the chapter as is to a great extent an ethnographic case study approached with ‘phenomenological perspective’ and ‘grounded theory studies’. The later remains the bases of the literary review rendered extensively. Presented are the summary of four interviews conducted person-to-person with each of the four selected interviewees. Neutrality was maintained throughout the four interview sessions, as such each interviewee responded without any suggested or implied bias. The interviews were recorded with the aid of a mini tape recorder and what was written down came directly from the recorder. The table used to enhance interviews summary and corresponding inferences is my personal improvisation. All inferences drawn has been in strict keeping with the response of each interviewee and the special table was formulated to enhance transparency in this regard as can also be readily seen. Transparency is the back bone of objective interview reporting and this has both been achieved and maintained in this aspect of the chapter. The following elaborately reviewed sub headings is a prove of the literary review's extensiveness:

The making of the man (The home and related milieu, The school, the church and related milieu); The man and his social services (Service to immediate family in the Ciskei, Services to the Xhosa people both in the Ciskei and in the Transkei, Services to all Black races in South Africa and beyond her boarders, Services to both Black and White races in South Africa, Higher services). This section rounds off with the conclusion of the reviews. The chapter summary en-wraps this first chapter.

Chapter two has presented the elaborate biography and life background of S.E.K. Mqhayi. The presentation although brief gave an elaborate picture of what Mqhayi’s life was from birth to death. My focus here has been that of presenting a summary of the life
account of the legendary man behind the poems. A comprehensive semiotic analysis of
the poem **AA! Zweliyazuza!** and **UMbambushe** was also presented as the first two of
the selected poems of S.E.K. Mqhayi. Each of the two poems in this chapter is diversely
and uniquely peculiar as can be seen in each analysis. Detailed attention has been given
to each symbolic representation. Elaborate rendition in careful semiotic analysis of each
piece of poem has been given in an easy to understand style. A summary of that which
has been expressed in the light of the analysis followed as well as the summary of the
chapter.

Chapter three is dedicated to the elaborate exploration of iconic and conventional signs.
Instances relating to Mqhayi's works are cited within the work. The chapter concludes
with it's summary.

Chapter four is an embodiment of a comprehensive semiotic analysis of **UTEbha,**
**UMafukuzela** and **Umfi uMhlekazi Seeiso Griffith** which are the last three of the
selected poems of S.E.K. Mqhayi featured in this project. Each of the three poems were
carefully selected. The task of selecting which poem would be suitable for this nature of
research was quit challenging, as Mqhayi's poetic works are numerous and filled with
rich symbolisms. Again, detailed attention has been given to each symbolic
representation as found within each poem. Each of the three poems in this chapter is
diversely and uniquely peculiar as can be seen in each analysis. Elaborate rendition in
careful semiotic analysis of each piece of poem has been given in an easy to understand
style. As is the case with chapter two, a summary of that which has been duly expressed in the light of the analysis followed as well as the chapter's summary.

Chapter five here contains the general conclusion of the entire research project presented chapter by chapter and entitled – Project En-wrapping. Following this as will be seen below is Suggestions for Future Research highlighting on research suggestions within this research field as well as for other related fields. Concluding statements, the chapter summary and a full lists of cited as well as consulted books and works, are the other aspects of this chapter, as well as three attached appendixes regarding the interviews.

5.3. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Within the confines of African literature, a common background is mutually shared. A background that cuts across all facets of literature, whether it be poetry, prose or drama. A background of pain-guided protest literature. Unfortunately, a peoples' historical reality entrenches itself in the very mind-frame of the people. A mind-held reality of a legacy bad enough to discard of but too real to be treated as such. A legacy that one relives mentally as one identifies with dead ancestors who bore grim realities of in-human adversity. An experience relived in mental reality as the affinity shared with gone ancestral heroes replays virtually in the very minds of the African people, hence African writers.
Researches bordering around the explorative analysis of the works of African writers who's theme are centred on the ills of the past, especially those written during the period of the ills need be approached with a lot of skills. Certain expressions are often subjected to disguised symbolisms with an intention of concealing their real and intended meanings in fear and a-times in dread of those who were and somehow continue to be in imperial dominance often referred to as colonial masters. The prevailing mind frame of the writer at the time of writing should be discovered in order to understand the real intentions of his or her writings. This is where a lot of skill is required. A number of standardised and technical strategies of enquiry are available, besides the principles of semiotics which I recommend would aid any researcher along these lines of research. It is not my place to enumerate these strategies of enquiry, yet any researcher researching into any aspect of African literature should first be conversant with the chosen area and with the nature of result intended to accomplish. Strategies of enquiry are result multi-faceted, therefore utmost care should be excercised when choosing any.

The works of most African writers revolve around the historical and present day struggles of the African people and as such 'protest' dominates the basic expressions of an average written work in this regard. A lot of skills were invested in producing these works, and commensurately a lot of skills would be required to unravel what lies beneath the implied surface. The following are a few books that would help in this regard: *Soweto Poetry* by S. Chapman, *Blame Me on History* by B. Modisane, *Uprooting Ignorance* by S. Mseleku, *Themes and Styles of African Literature* by L. Nkosi. There are several other books out
there that would help. A researcher needs to do thorough findings into books and other texts that would enhance his or her research within a given African theme.

5.4. **SUMMARY**

While proposing for this project, my reason for the research was given as follows: Most Xhosa poets did their work under some form of deprivation, undue political control and abuse. This is true because the greatest poems from these Xhosa poets were written during the days of slavery, colonialism, apartheid and western influence. As a result their expressions were mostly encoded and embellished to disguise their real intention. This work is intended to decode through semiotic principles the hidden reason behind the poet's careful vocabularies and general expression. As can be evidently seen in consequence with what has been laid down so far in this research, South African poets especially those of the core apartheid era had rich sense of symbolism. Symbolism being seemingly the most convenient vehicle to transport their expression without obvious direct implications as would be expected of any one who would have been in their shoes. The representative role played here by S.E.K. Mqhayi in typifying the then plight of a black South African writer is truly a representation of what all black writers faced.

The semiotic analysis of five poems from S.E.K. Mqhayi’s poetry was promised as the main feature of this work and that has been done in a precise manner. It must be mentioned at this point that Mqhayi has been and continues to be the most prolific as well
as influential of all Xhosa writers. His versatility and rare giftedness has not been equaled yet.

It is at this point therefore, my sincere intention that this research work would serve a variety of positive purposes for an audience of diversified people.


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<th>Author</th>
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Question: What is your first impression of S.E.K. Mqhayi as an individual first and then as a poet (imbongi)?

Answer: As an individual, he was a very interesting person with strong respect for values. Very reliable, kind and always warm. He was a born imbongi who always delivered his poetic performances with grace, elegance, skill and boldness.

Question: What in your opinion are the factors that influenced his life both as an individual and as a poet?

Answer: His early acquaintance with the history and languages of the Bantu people gave him a strong foundation for what he later became (the imbongi of the nation). His talent was clearly evident early. We know he showed proves of his talent as early as an infant. A combination of his background, talent and hard work are in my opinion the factors that made him who he was.
**Question:** What do you think are the reasons behind his prominence and influence that still looms although he has been dead for quite a while?

**Answer:** Without any sentiments, S.E.K. Mqhayi was in his lifetime the most prominent praise poet (imbongi) in the entire country. One who has achieved such a feat in national prominence should naturally continue to grow in popularity in spite of death. Besides, he touched on almost every aspect of national pressing issue by means of his poem, through his works therefore, the country as a whole is affected with an indispensable effect. This is of course in my opinion.

**INTERVIEW EXCERPTS FOR THE INTERVIEW WITH MRS. NOMONDE NTANTISO (A LONG STANDING FAMILY ACQUINTANCE OF S.E.K. MQHAYI – RESIDING IN EAST LONDON)**

**Question:** What is your first impression of S.E.K. Mqhayi as an individual first and then as a poet (imbongi)?

**Answer:** Right from his childhood, I learnt he was a special person who had taken upon himself family responsibilities that other children his age would not even think of doing. He was much more mentally matured for his age category as a child as I was told, he is therefore such a unique and reliable individual, and that would be my first impression of him as an individual. On the other hand, he was such a gracefully talented poet who
evolved unique styles that are peculiar to only himself in all his creative writings and performances as imbongi. He was intensely brilliant as a poet (imbongi).

**Question:** What in your opinion are the factors that influenced his life both as an individual and as a poet?

**Answer:** His family background and a lineage full of prominent as well as noble ancestors leant him his uniquely creative heritage. Hard work and several life experiences, traditional as well as Christian values all combined with his heritage are the influencing factors that made him the S.E.K. Mqhayi that we now remember.

**Question:** What do you think are the reasons behind his prominence and influence that still looms although he has been dead for quite a while?

**Answer:** He was such an icon during his life time with great poetic accomplishments, such accomplishments that can not be ignored. His general contribution to the nation had set him apart as a true national hero and his death only made him a historic legend.
INTERVIEW EXCERPTS FOR THE INTERVIEW WITH MR. PHAKAMILE HELA  
(A LONG STANDING FAMILY ACQUINTANCE OF S.E.K. MQHAYI, RESIDING IN ALICE)

**Question:** What is your first impression of S.E.K. Mqhayi as an individual first and then as a poet (imbongi)?

**Answer:** Whenever S.E.K. Mqhayi’s name is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind is ‘outstanding prominence’. I tried a few times to think of somebody else who can match him shoulder to shoulder in the very same field of profession and earnestly could not find one.

**Question:** What in your opinion are the factors that influenced his life both as an individual and as a poet?

**Answer:** He was born of a royal and a noble linage, learnt and practiced social and traditional responsibility handling early in life. His in-born poetic and oratory talent was a significantly unique one coupled with a deep passion for expressing his impressions and convictions he became a hard working gem. The result of combining royal heritage, unique talent, deep passion and hard work made him who he was.

**Question:** What do you think are the reasons behind his prominence and influence that still looms although he has been dead for quite a while?
**Answer:** A man who defied racial discrimination and became a national imbongi – so appointed and acknowledged by a predominantly white government whose system of governance was institutionalised racism with the man’s (Mqhayi’s) racial group being the most discriminated against. This defiance was only as a result of his extraordinary talent and gallant personality. Nothing else would have impressed a white racist government to such a propensity as to appoint a black man as the nation’s praise singer who performed at very prestigious national ceremonies, such as the reception held in honour of the king of Britain who visited the country while Mqhayi was the national praise singer (imbongi). A man who pulled such a feat in national achievement during his life time, can not but remain a growing legend in spite of his death.

**INTERVIEW EXCERPTS FOR THE INTERVIEW WITH DR. PIET LIEBENBERG (RESIDING IN CAPE TOWN WHO HAS DONE AN EXTENSIVE RESEARCH INTO THE LIFE AND WORKS OF SOUTH AFRICAN POETS, S.E.K. MQHAYI BEING PROMINENT IN THE LIST )**

**Question:** How does S.E.K. Mqhayi strike you, both from an individual perspective and from a professional point of view?

**Answer:** First of all I would love to infuse my individual perspective with my professional point of view. In other words my individual as well as professional view stays the same. S.E.K. Mqhayi strikes me as a poetic legend in his own right. A legend
whose achievements professionally set him apart as a very special talent whose works can not go unacknowledged, even within the very core of academic parameters.

**Question:** What in your opinion would you say influenced his style of poetry, in terms of factors and elements reflected in most of his works?

**Answer:** Prominent in most of his works is the highly skilful ability to repressively represent what would otherwise have been controversial in a non-controversial manner. His use of symbolisms and other figures of expression exhibit a skilful ability to manipulate what would be perceived by the audience as his intent. His enormous writing, oratory and poetic talent therefore, would in my humble opinion be among others the main factor behind his main style - poetically speaking.

**Question:** What would you say are the reasons behind his poetic prominence and influence that looms on in-spite of his death?

**Answer:** He left behind a legacy that can not be ignored, a style in poetry that remains an academic reference and research resource, and a wide range of creative content so diversified that almost every aspect of relevant national identity is represented. With such a legacy, a steadily growing influence is but a natural result in a country that is as growth oriented as ours.
## APPENDIX II

### TABULATED SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERVIEWEE</th>
<th>ANSWER TO QUESTION 1</th>
<th>ANSWER TO QUESTION 2</th>
<th>ANSWER TO QUESTION 3</th>
<th>SUMMARY</th>
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<tr>
<td>MR. SIMON MZODUMO MQHAYI</td>
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pressing issue by means of his poem, through his works therefore, the country as a whole is affected with an indispensable effect. This is of course in my opinion.

| OUTLINE SUMMARY | FOR MR. SIMON MZODUMO MQHAYI | a very interesting person, reliable, kind, warm, a born imbongi | talent evident early, background, talent and hard work made him | most prominent praise poet, touched on almost every aspect of national pressing issue |
| MRS. NOMONDE | Right from his childhood, I learnt | His family background | He was such an icon during his life time | A special person, a |
NTANTISO was a special person who had taken upon himself family responsibilities that other children his age would not even think of doing. He was much more mentally matured for his age category as a child as I was told, he is therefore such a unique and reliable individual, and that would be my first impression of him as an individual.

On the other hand, he was such a gracefully talented and a lineage full of prominent as well as noble ancestors leant him his uniquely creative heritage. Hard work and several life experiences, traditional as well as Christian values all combined with his heritage are the influencing factors that made him the with great poetic accomplishments, such accomplishments that can not be ignored. His general contribution to the nation had set him apart as a true national hero and his death only made him a historic legend.

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<tr>
<th>OUTLINE SUMMARY FOR MR. PHAKAMILE</th>
<th>‘outstanding prominence’, royal heritage, unique talent, deep passion hard work</th>
<th>extraordinary talent and gallant personality</th>
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| DR. PIET LIEBENBERG | First of all I would love to infuse my individual perspective with my professional point of view. In other words my individual as well as professional view stays the same. S.E.K. Mqhayi strikes me Prominent in most of his works is the highly skilful ability to repressively represent what would otherwise have been controversial in a non- | He left behind a legacy that can not be ignored, a style in poetry that remains an academic reference and research resource, and a wide range of creative content so diversified that almost every aspect of relevant national identity is | A poetic legend with enormous writing, oratory and poetic talent who left behind a legacy, style, and a wide range of creative |
as a poetic legend in his own right. A legend whose achievements professionally set him apart as a very special talent whose works can not go unacknowledged, even within the very core of academic parameters. controversial manner. His use of symbolisms and other figures of expression exhibit a skilful ability to manipulate what would be perceived by the audience as his intent. His enormous writing, oratory and poetic talent therefore, would in my humble opinion be among others represented. With such a legacy, a steadily growing influence is but a natural result in a country that is as growth oriented as ours.
the main factor behind his main style - poetically speaking.

| OUTLINE SUMMARY FOR DR. PIET LIEBENBERG | a poetic legend | enormous writing, oratory and poetic talent | Legacy, style, wide range of creative content |

(The above table is my improvisation to help simplify the interview analysis)
APPENDIX III

FINAL INFERENCES

S.E.K. Mqhayi is seen by MR. SIMON MZODUMO MQHAYI as a very interesting person, reliable, kind, warm, a born imbongi with talent clearly evident early in life. His background, talent and hard work made him who he was. Was in his lifetime the most prominent praise poet, touched on almost every aspect of national pressing issue by means of his poem.

Seen by MRS. NOMONDE NTANTISO as a special person, a gracefully talented poet, intensely brilliant, with a lineage… of prominent… noble ancestors, hard working, an icon, a true national hero and death only made him a historic legend.

Seen by MR. PHAKAMILE HELA as a person of outstanding prominence, with a royal heritage, uniquely talented with deep passion hard work, extraordinary talent and gallant personality.
And seen by DR. PIET LIEBENBERG as a poetic legend with enormous writing, oratory and poetic talents who left behind a legacy, style, and a wide range of creative content.

The above inferences are all drawn from the views of the interviewees who I interviewed face to face, recording their responses by means of a mini-tape recorder.