

The Exploration of Love and Economy Themes in Selected C.T. Msimang's Poetry

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ABSTRACT The intentions of this research work are to define, categorize and highlight the significance of the two key themes, which are love and economy in specific poetry as a social product. They represent life as a social reality. The selected themes depict social relations, conventions, functions, truth, reality and relevance. Themes are the messages about the real and authentic life and human nature that the poet shares with the reader. They remain the essential and dominating ideas, interconnected and unified factors as well as the source of creative power and intelligence. They are detected after reading and visualizing the images in poetry. The words employed in poetry acquire connotative meaning which stimulates and delight the imagination. Imagery is used to clarify, intensify and signify the objects and qualities of evocative and sense perceptions. The thematic and exploratory approaches become real, distinct and functional in poetry if they are applied to representational, emblematic and allegorical expressions.

INTRODUCTION

Poetry as literary genre is differentiated from prose because of the poetic language which comprises imagery, figures of speech and rhetoric devices. It is more effective, compressed and intense. The study of poetic language involves certain type of arrangement and variation of the element of day-to-day language. Some scholars are of the opinion that the study of poetic language is subject to logical and vigorous description, whereas, it is subjected to various degrees of deviations from the linguistic norm. Poetic language is licensed to these deviations. Features such as irregular word-order, unusual collocations, tolerance of deviations and expectation of striking metaphors are some of the characteristics of poetic language. It is also regarded as the most creative of all discourse.

It is essential to explore the two themes, which are love and economy in a functional manner to capture their meanings and impact to real life situation.

Reaske (1966: 42) defined theme as follows:

It is the central concept that is developed in a poem. It is the basic which the poem is trying to convey through imagery. Most of the images, in other words, are designed to present the cen-

tral theme, or main idea of the poem. The theme is, in another light, the poet's reason for writing the poem in the first place. It is usually an abstract concept which becomes concrete through the idiom and imagery.

It is a fundamental fact to note that poetry is a social product which represents life as social representativeness. Theme is a core idea of a poem which may be stated directly and indirectly. The underlying thoughts, sentiments and sensory reactions are embedded in poetic diction, meanings and themes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to an organization of method that is employed to verify the perception, procedures, processes and events at different levels. The choice of a suitable method is determined by a topic and rationale of the study. A cross-validation of thematic and exploratory approaches is expected to distinctly authenticate the objectives of the study. The selected poems are referred to as primary sources, while themes and exploration are secondary viewed for narration, description, discussion and interpretation. This study uses thematic analysis for succinct classification and ascertainment of patterns (Collins and Hussey 2003).

THEORETICAL APPROACH

The thematic analysis is employed when working with descriptions, discussions or focus groups. It is a common practice of looking at data from different viewpoints with an aim of detecting key facts in the text to comprehend and interpret raw data (Creswell 2007).

Love

Love is the obligatory factor between two individuals. It becomes a true, proper and real love when it is coupled with sincerity, respect and faith. Its truthfulness is presupposed by a healthy atmosphere brought about by human nature and responsibility.

Most poems on love are lyrics. A lyric is defined by Cuddon (1984: 372) as follows:

A lyric is usually fairly short, not often longer than fifty or sixty lines..... it usually expresses the feelings and thoughts of a single speaker (not necessarily the poet himself) in a personal and subjective fashion.

The poet manages to turn many things to loveliness through his poetry. He lauds the magnificence of that which is most beautiful and enhances beauty to that which is deformed. Each poem marries jubilation and dismay, sorrow and pleasure, agitation and calmness as well as tragedy and comedy. Msimang (1990: 81) concurred with Cuddon's definition by saying the following about lyrics:

... mandulo ilirikhi kwabe kuyinkondlo emfishanyana esamculo edingida indikimba yothando.

(... ancient times lyric was a short musical poem which is based on the theme of love ...)

Kunene (1970: 17) gave his opinion about love as follows:

Love is not love as an idea, but as the outcome of social actions and considerations by two individuals in direct relation to the requirements of their social groups.

The poems *Langa lami* (My Sun) and *Uthando* (Love) are lyrics. They express love in different dimensions.

True Love

In the poem, *Langa Lami* (My sun) the poet expresses love by revealing his wishes, thoughts and major aims:

*Ungashoni langa lami,
Sihambisane sixhakene
Size sehlukaniswe ...
Ukufa!
(Do not set my sun,
Let's travel while pulling as one
Until we are set apart by ...
Death!)*

(Msimang 1980: 1)

He figuratively calls his dear one the sun. He insists that tenderness, gentleness and happiness will be brought about by deep and true love. Let them join forces that will beat any adverse situation before death.

The poet manages to express his positive thoughts with a convincing and captivating interest to depict that true love is not easily thwarted when he says: *Nami wangithwebula ngandilileka* (Even myself I was hypnotized and felt dizzy). Love is depicted as a binding force that cannot easily be resisted. The poem looks at love in relation to life and death. If love attains the support of life, warmth, pleasure and admiration it will overcome any dull moments, as he politely says:

*Lapho ungikhanyisela
Umphefumulo uqhakaza injabulo,
Inhliziyo yembathe imfudumalo.
(If you light on for me,
My soul blossom happiness,
My heart wears warmth)*

(Msimang 1980: 1)

If love is not shielded by life, death will intervene and apply its strength and fortitude with the aim of winning the battle:

*Siphethu sempilo yami nentokozo
Ngiyini ngaphandle kwakho?
Nxa bekusitha kimi
Ngiyogqokwa yithunzi lobumnyama ...
(Fountain of my life and happiness,
What am I without you?
If they hide you from me,
I shall be worn by the dark shadow ...)*

(Msimang 1980: 1)

Life and death stand at opposite sides of both secure and insecure love which are in the middle. Life furnishes happiness, somberness and healthy atmosphere for love to survive while death destroys everything.

False Love

Love is dynamic like other emotions. It becomes false, improper and unreal when it does not conform to a specific form of behaviour.

The poet highlights love in the poem, *Uthando* (Love) as it makes people cope with extreme possibilities because of fantasy:

*Abantu bona bazethuke sebakhe emkhathini.
(People eventually see themselves well built in
the space.)
(Msimang 1980: 8)*

The extract tells us that love makes people create their own fantasy world which differs from reality. Love makes people withdraw from frustrating situations to cope with it in a fantasy world. The intensity of the emotions of pleasure, delight and happiness dominate when the interaction of love is uninterrupted. People feel they are going to achieve any goal they set themselves.

Love becomes deceitful and cursed when it entails unfulfilled promises. It is prevalent when a person's actions and moves are thwarted. Deceitful love results in unreasonableness and disorderliness. That is what makes people curse it as follows:

*... luthando unuka njengeqaqa,
Umuncu njengomhlonyane,
Ubaba kunesibhaha,
Uqanda kuneqhwa.
(... you stink like a polecat, love,
You are bitter like an African wormwood,
You are more bitter than the fever-tree,
You are colder than the snow.)
(Msimang 1980: 8)*

The polecat, African wormwood, fever-tree and snow are used to indicate anything which is not worth praising. The smell of the polecat causes disharmony and compels people to emotional outbursts. No positive social interaction is ever experienced after such a smell. The wormwood and fever-tree are so bitter that they are not edible under normal conditions. The snow or frost indicates unfavourable conditions. If something is likened to the cold of snow it is inevitably said to be lifeless. It is a rootless love which does not emanate from the real philosophy of life. It lacks honesty and the real aims which make it withstand any compliance to unrealistic actions.

The poet highlights the fact that love is not only made for people. Animals also enjoy love:

*Ngikubonile ulumba inkomo edlelweni,
Yakhotha enye bathi ngeyikhothayo.
(I saw you hypnotizing cattle in the pasture,
It licks the one that it licks it.)
(Msimang 1980: 8)*

Love is seen as a living creature which is endowed with the human powers of changing things easily. Its strength is portrayed when the poet says:

*... Ngisho nezinambuzane uzihungile ...
(... Even the small insects you have hypnotized them ...)
(Msimang 1980: 8)*

What is noteworthy is that love is seen in both big and small animals. Its deceptive quality makes life easier and viable for all living creatures. Love is given qualities to enhance poetic value. The poet has displayed the outcomes of false love by describing that it stinks, is bitter and extremely cold. Therefore, in the lovers themselves, tolerance and respect are destroyed. Life becomes worse because it fails to sustain reality because of socio-cultural situations.

Economy

Economic activities are not new to Zulu people. They have been involved in pottery, weaving, basketry, woodwork, ironwork and ivory work. They have farmed and kept livestock for centuries. Msimang uses the traditional and cultural institution to portray contemporary economic value in his poem, *Isibaya Esikhulu* (The great African Bank). In the poem, *Hhawu! Ngo-Maganedlula* (What an ill-mannered woman), he uses the personal name as a device to express events. It is a deverbative eulogie which reflects performed actions.

Traditional Economic Establishment

The poem, *Isibaya Esikhulu Se-Afrika* (The great African bank) is the first prestigious capital institution which is established and managed by African staff. It employs a combination of African and Western thoughts. It was founded and set up in 1975 as a business enterprise. This institution allows Africans to make a profit; to compete against other institutions involved in business and to use knowledge and skills to their own benefit. The poet recites the poem to mark the bank's tenth anniversary:

*Halala African Bank!
Halala sibay'esikhulu se-Afrika ...
Kuleli shumi leminyaka uzelwe ...
(Hurrah African bank!
Hurrah great African byre ...
In this tenth year of birth ...)
(Msimang 1990: 37)*

The African nation feels proud of its attempts to have its own capital institution. It represents the beauty and wealth of the country. African Bank came as a breakthrough to African people. Its presence reflects a sign of independence, growth and full empowerment. The indigenous people learned many skills from foreign experts before they established this institution.

The poet metaphorically calls this financial institution, *isibaya esikhulu* (a great cattle byre). A cattle byre is the wealth of African people. It is a spatial setting wherein man communicates with his ancestors whenever things are good or bad, right or wrong. The importance of the cattle byre in the establishment of the African kingdom is not only of economic value but also gives a setting for social, cultural and political dimensions.

The poet lists the places where there are branches of the African Bank and reveals the ethnic groups which benefitted directly from it because of locality and proximity:

*Siyagiya thina KwaZulu
Ngesibay' esikhul' eMlazi
Siyagiya thin' eSoweto,
Ngesibay' esikhul' eDibhaklufu,
Ayagiya amaXhos' eMtata,
Bayagiy' abeTswana kwaRankuwa ...
(We are dancing in KwaZulu,
Because of African Bank in Umlazi,
We are dancing in Soweto,
Because of African Bank in Diepkloof,
Xhosa nation is dancing in uMtata,
Tswana nation is dancing in Ga-Rankuwa ...)
(Msimang 1990: 38)*

The poet informs us that African Bank branches are found in Umlazi, Diepkloof, Umtata and Ga-Rankuwa. The opening of this economic institution offers a way of distributing wealth and services equally amongst the population. One of its major objectives is to look forward to a society where economic power among the people will be a reality. A call is made to support the establishment of branches and further development.

The poem itself is a melodious, musical composition. The diction of the poem is so remarkable that the word, *isibaya* (cattle byre) meaning "the place where cattle are kept" is used for a bank, where money is kept. Traditionally, the cattle byre was the most important place for social, economic and cultural events. It was a place where the wealth of the nation was kept. Trans-

formation from a traditional era to a modern one has brought about change in personalities and behaviour. Changes occur through a period of time. The words 'cattle byre and cattle' and 'bank and money' illustrate a drastic change, with exchangeability in wealth. Wealth is reflected from the traditional era to the modern era.

This poem is a lyrical ballad. The word "ballad" derives from the Latin *ballare*, to dance. It is a short piece of sentiments and emotions. The poet applauds the African Bank in a melodious and authentic manner.

Economic Commodity

The poem, *Hhawu! NgoMaganedlula* (What an ill-mannered woman!) is about money as an economic commodity which changes hands. Money rotates from person to person and from institution to institution. The title itself is so figurative because money is endowed with all the qualities of an ill-mannered woman.

Money is also endowed with human qualities in the poem and is noted that when money is in coin form it rolls and circulates:

*Kant' uyindilingana nje
Uyagingqika,
Kant' uyindilingana nje
Uyajikeleza ...
(You are a round object
You are rolling,
You are a round object
You are circulating ...)
(Msimang 1990: 25)*

No one is able to stop money from either rolling or circulating. A person who has money is held in prestige by society and experiences the satisfaction of occupying a high social status. A person of high status commands authority and power. A person who has no money suffers the indignity of being relegated to a position which commands little respect.

Money is likened to a beautiful lady who cannot be locked in a room because of her unbecoming behaviour. There is no room, safe, cage or permanent accommodation for this 'lady'. All men are attracted to her. The character of the lady is evident in these lines:

*Ntokoz' ethand' amadod' onke,
Wen' othandwa ngamadod' onke ...
(The lady who loves all men,
You who is loved by all men ...)
(Msimang 1990: 25)*

It shows that this is a 'lady' with a unique personality. No normal 'lady' can love all men except perhaps the one mentioned who has questionable characteristics. The character of this love-crazy 'lady' makes both young and old ashamed. A 'lady' who leads a nomadic life is found all over the world. She is found *ezigodlweni zamakhosi* (in the royal palaces) and *ezibayeni zezimpofana* (in the byres of the poverty-stricken individuals). The whereabouts of the lady is not predetermined because she moves all over within a short space of time. It is fruitless labour to try and bring stability to her life. Her historical background is known, therefore, trying to change her life is going to be a hopeless and uncalled for undertaking.

The poet sadly questions the behaviour of the lady:

... yini ukuzibiza ngamagamagama,
Wukuphelelwa yisimilo Nomali?
(... why are you calling yourself with many names,
Is it losing good behaviour Nomali?)
(Msimang 1990: 26)

Money has many names because it is a major socio-economic entity. It builds and destroys, adorns and deforms, detains and releases. It is a source of all good and bad things. It is both life and death itself. It has both positive and negative perceptions.

RESULTS

The selected two themes: love and economy are looked at from various personal, social and philosophic aspects. Crane (1967: 273) defined theme as follows:

The central and dominating idea in a literary work; the message or moral implicit in any work of art.

Wellek and Warren (1971: 272) aptly expressed their viewpoints as follows:

The theme is what is made of the topic. It is the comment on the topic that is implied in the process of story emphasis.

The two definitions emphasized 'the central or dominating idea,' 'message or moral implicit' and 'implied topic.' Most poems that are selected for this research study are lyrics because they have the following qualities: they are intensely personal and express the individual's thoughts and sentiments. The exploration of themes is ascertained by the wide use of stylistic and rhetorical devices.

Imagery and word choice are identified and highlighted in the poems. Nkuna (2015: 10) asserted the following about imagery:

Tinongo tenkhulumo tiyinkhulumo legcamisa bugabazi nenhlonipho. Kungako emibhalweni sesibentisa tinongo tenkhulumo ngenhloso yekuveta lulwimi lolumnandzi futsi loluhlobile.

(Figures of speech are a discourse that manifests oratory and respect. It is because of them that they are used in the text with an aim of demonstrating a pure and flowing language)

Love and economy are expressed through imagery. Love is viewed in the selected poems as a variety of feelings, attitudes and affection. It refers to personal attachment. It is a virtue that represents human kindness, affection and compassion. Greeks identified four forms of love: friendship (*philia*), kinship (*storge*) divine love (*agape*) and romantic desire (*eros*). Economy is looked at from traditional to contemporary viewpoints. The economic factors are merged at various situations to suit the current modes of operations. Diction played a vital role to highlight the two themes. Scheffler (2015: 166) expressed the following views about diction:

A writer's selection and use of words. Its use is adapted to suit the intention of the poet and may range from descriptive or narrative text to dramatic or evocative, from humorous to lyrical.

It is worth mentioning that a well-written poem comprises the theme and sub-themes, intellectual meaning, structural construction and stylistic variations.

DISCUSSION

The fresh, liveliness and originality of language as well as imagery are prominent in poetry. Poetry stands for life, freshness of language, vitality and sources of experience. In poetry, the poet accords one word to more than one meaning, that is, 'the meaning of a word does not stop at the dictionary's definition'. The poet may intend his audience to understand his poem either from the level of simple meaning or literal meaning, 'denotation' of art, or the level of profound meaning, 'connotation'. The two themes are uniquely handled on polarities of true and deceitful love, traditional economic establishment and modern commodity. The two themes are looked at in relation to the society.

Economic growth is strengthened by technological advancement. The central idea of the

poem is to elicit improved public and social services as well as national income and wealth. Association plays a major role in the poem, as it is evident with the use of cattle byre which is associated with cattle and bank with money. These are metonymically stated in the poem to mark the period of time between transformation and cultural change. The cattle byre implies the cattle while the bank infers money and both depict wealth.

What is evident in this poem is that African people have genuinely tried to blend Western culture and technology with their own collective and cultural experiences. The effective adoption of foreign business and management practices and technology are merged with indigenous and cultural renaissance for the benefit of the continent. This is applauded in the poem, *Yagiya yonkan' i-Afrika* (The whole Africa danced).

CONCLUSION

The poem on love such as *Langa Lami* (My sun) and *Uthando* (Love) are compared through polarities of true and false. The poet's approach to this theme is so diverse and inexhaustible that it brings about high quality and more challenges to his readers, listeners and reviewers. Emotions play a vital role in these poems because a true love poem is characterized by cheerfulness, joy and satisfaction, while a poem of false love is depicted with sadness, anger and dissatisfaction. The poems, *Isibaya Esikhulu* (The great African bank) and *Hhawu! NgoMaganedlula* (What an ill-mannered woman) are based on economic activities. The poet has managed to merge two cultural diversities. These are African and Western cultures for technological advancements and the African cultural renaissance. Poetic diction has elevated the standard of this selected poem when a cultural setup, *isibaya* (cattle byre) refers to modern economic institutions such as banks. The social systems of the country which divided people into various socio economic classes are the source of inspiration in the poems, *Ifu Elimnya-*

ma (The dark cloud) and *Afrika Ngingowakho* (I am yours Africa). In both poems social systems reflect diversity, conflict and chaos which nearly ravaged the continent. After describing racial and colonial incidents the poet calls for reconstruction of the continent and negotiation for new reality and vision. The poetic truth is emphasized more than the nature of politics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that various themes such as education, history, nature, politics and religion need to be explored to enhance the poetic meanings. The well-crafted poems do not only concentrate on thematic exploration, but on entire poetic devices of sounds, lexical, syntactic and semantic organizations. The internal and external structures of the poems complement each other during the exploration, interpretive and analysis discourse.

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