

The Referential Function of Evocative Images in J.P. Shongwe's Poetry

Jozi Joseph Thwala

M.E.R Mathivha Centre for African Languages, Arts and Culture, School of Human and
Social Sciences, Department of Siswati, University of Venda, Private Bag X 5050,
Thohoyandou, Limpopo Province, South Africa
Telephone: 015-9628298, Cell: 0731875298, E-mail: Jozi.Thwala@univen.ac.za

KEYWORDS Auditory. Gustatory. Imagery. Olfactory. Poetic Diction. Tactile. Visual

ABSTRACT The focus of this paper is to look at how effective evocative images are used in the selected Siswati poetry. Images are central in all works of art because they represent something abstract or concrete and explicit or implicit to convey and illustrate the idea in an appropriate manner. Evocative images appeal to various senses that are selected to convey messages from the sender to the receiver. Various aspects of poems that are considered for analysis in this study are poetic diction, denotative and connotative images. Imagery is manifested in various forms for reflection of meanings, emotions and ideas. Referential function is a research technique of analysing literature whereby the literary analyst carefully reads a literary work of art and thereafter examines it according to his or her own opinions with more focus on the sender and recipient.

INTRODUCTION

Formalist ideologies have long regarded the existence of images in literature as one of the most acknowledged fact and significant poetic device. Poetic image is one of the means of intensifying the impressions and as such the role of imagery is similar to that of other poetic devices. Many scholars and researchers have presented different definitions of imagery, often linking it with figurative language. A few of these scholars will be quoted in this study.

Cox and Dyson (1965:192) contended that:

In poetry, the word 'imagery' has a wide meaning. Basically, it refers to anything descriptive and evocative in poetry; anything which helps to visualize or realize a sense or situation.

Heese and Lawton (1979: 62) gave this opinion about imagery:

The words employed by a poet need not be different in themselves from ordinary words used in straight forward prose or everyday speech, but in the context of a poem, they may acquire that extension of meaning which stimulates and delights the imagination. His use of language here is not straightforward, because it is non-literal. He is creating, with words what we call an 'image.'

Spurgeon (1968: 05) viewed imagery as follows:

... any imaginative picture or other experience, draw in every kind which may have come

to the poet, not only through any of his senses, but through his mind and emotions as well which he uses in their widest sense for the purposes of analogy.

Lewis in Murry (1982: 05) considered a poetic image to be:

... a picture made out of words. The term 'imagery' includes all the objects or qualities which make an impression on any of the five senses.

Cohen (1973: 187) defined imagery as:

A direct sense of appeal, a figure of speech, or both, which lead a reader by a process of association to combine at least two elements inherent in the figure of speech. A consistent pattern of imagery sometimes constitutes symbolism.

Imagery is viewed as a conscious or unconscious use of image that oscillates between the extremes of the ideal and real world.

According to the above definitions, it is concluded that imagery may be literal or figurative. It involves both mental and physical images that are produced by metaphorical language. Imagery makes use of human senses, and is produced by figures of speech. Furthermore, imagery refers to the pictures represented in a human mind. This process will be illustrated in the treatment of imagery in the selected poems of Shongwe.

Evocation Images

According to the Turnbull (1976: 299), evocative images are explained as follows:

... Words that call up memories, emotions, in addition to their ordinary meaning.

The evocative images help the reader to realize a scene or situation. Their importance lies in their sensory qualities. Images represent sensations that present emotional and intellectual qualities.

Poetry

Poetry is an art form which is recital in nature, related to song, drama and prose. It is written with the sound of the human voice in mind.

Wain (1977: 04) defined poetry as:

The sound of human speech which comes closest to the speech of the angels and the speech of the animals.

Bowra (1965: 04) said that:

Poetry comes from the poet's conviction that he speaks for a mass of people who share his outlook and his interests. Poetry has steadily moved from conscious majesty and a cosmic outlook to the careful presentation.

Interestingly, both of the proceedings definitions focus on what is poetry. It should be noted that poetry is more than everyday speech. It comprises all the elements of sensual appeal and emotions that are expressed through words.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Roman Jakobson's model (1960) saw the use of communication ideal between the communicator and receiver to be relevant, apt and authentic. This text Jakobson called the referent. He maintained that the functionality of messages is to establish contact between the communicator and the recipient in a communicative situation.

Peters (1977: 48) observed that:

The referential function then dominates the text. The whole "text" in such a case seems to do no more than to refer to the object or matter in question.

The referential function plays an important role to bring the communicator in close contact with the receiver by means of referring to evocative images in this study. The literary critic will, in addition to explaining what is written in the literary work of art, referentially analyses the text in order to give a personal opinion of what is said by the poet in order to display the skill of literary evaluation.

The selected poetry anthologies and literary theories are the secondary sources in this study. There will be a reading of each selected poem, using the mnemonic technique: SIFTSEI, which is sense, intention, feeling, tone, sensory, emotion and intellectual meaning, as a point of departure for analysis.

Theoretical Framework

Visual Imagery

Wellek and Warren (1968: 188) viewed visual imagery as:

... A sensational or perception, but it also refers to something invisible, something inner.

The visual imagery is an appeal to sight. In the poem, *Vuka Ngwane!* (Ngwane, wake up), the poet appears to stand before the whole nation. He instructs it to wake up. The following stanza serves as an appropriate example:

Vuka Ngwane!

Kadze walala.

Sikhombe lilundza lakho;

Sikhombe kucija kwetimphondvo.

(Ngwane, wake up

You have been asleep for too long

Show us your hump;

Show us your sharpened horns)

(Shongwe 1982: 1)

The words, *lilundza* (hump) and *timphondvo* (horns) represent strength and ferocity respectively. The poet refers to the strength of the nation. The poet issues that challenge to the nation as an allusion to formal education. He compares his nation to other nations and feels that although it is lagging behind, it has the power to aspire. He thus instructs the nation to advance itself. He insists on diligence and complete involvement in the pursuit of success. He is interested in the achievements that the nation can acquire through hard work. The poet likens the nation to long-horned Afrikaner bull which has a hump. He is concerned about the greatness of the nation. The hump can also stand for pride. The sharpened horn also refers to ferocity and energy of the Afrikaner.

He further appealed to visual imagery in the following lines:

... kukhafulwe imidlalo yemoya –

Konkhe kutelule tintsamo nemalundza.

(... *The radio plays broadcast –
All straighten the **necks and humps***).

(Shongwe 1982: 2)

The flexibility of the nation in reaching towards greater achievements is likened to that of a neck. The neck connects the head to the shoulders. Therefore, the literary achievements serve as connecting factors in the nation. Formal education is put forth as a distinct phase of human activity that brings direct satisfaction. The poet visualizes different nations that are competing for excellence in literature. The result in this competition is the production of praise-poems, novels and the broadcasting of radio plays. The words *tintsamo nemalundza* (necks and humps) express the idea that formal education projects and strengthens the life of the nation. They provide a large spectrum of experience.

In the poem, *Wota Kulomcebo* (Come to this Wealth), the poet's visual imagery is depicted:

*Wota sicebe ngeyamanje **ingcebo**,
Wota sibe **tingcumba tengcondvo**.
Ngivile ngembongi yeludvumo
Ayintjontjwa **leyongcebo**.
(Come to the contemporary **wealth**,
Come to be the **clever wealth people**.
I heard a well-known poet;
That **wealth** cannot be stolen).*
(Shongwe 1982: 38)

The words *ingcebo* (wealth) and *tingcumba tengcondvo* (clever wealth people) refer to knowledge and educated people, respectively. He likens wealth to knowledge and thus a "wealthy brain" to an educated person. He speaks of education as contemporary wealth. He expresses the ideas, hopes and strivings that a person can acquire through this 'wealth'. He feels that formal education brings a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. Through the acquired knowledge, the nation can find wider and deeper experiences for creative expression. The image of wealth and a wealthy person formulate the idea of the poem. In his use of the image, the poet appears to explicitly command all the operations and modalities of formal education.

In the poem, *Ngesheya* (Yonder across), the poet focuses on the sense of sight in the following stanza:

*Phons' emehlo mshiya loya,
Bon' **emadlelo**
Aluhlata klaba...*

(*Look yonder across
Look at the **evergreen pastures** ...*)

(Shongwe 1982: 3)

The evergreen pastures symbolize life, repletion and satisfaction. The poet insists that one can only arrive at evergreen pastures through thorough planning and preparation. The poet enters into the general, emotional, thought and experiences of the people. Despite this empathy he tends to have a didactic approach to passionately and energetically inform the nation about the significance of education as fruits of life. He contended that it is essential to face any difficult with perseverance, persistence and enthusiasm. He further underlined this attitude in his use of visual imagery:

*Ungetfuswa **emagagasi**,
Ungetfuswa **umsinga** –
(You must not be startled by **waves**,
You must not be startled by **currents** -)*
(Shongwe 1982: 3)

The words, *emagagasi* (waves) and *umsinga* (current) represent the difficulties one must overcome in order to enjoy the fruits of life. The raging river impedes easy passage. Through the poet encourages people to persist in the face of the storm and fury of waves as well as currents of life?

Auditory Imagery

Wellek and Warren (1956:187) pointed out that:

The distinction, useful for the reader of poetry, between 'tied' and 'free' imagery: the former, auditory ... the latter, visual ...

The auditory image is an appeal to the sense of hearing. In the poem, the poet appeals to the readers sensations as with a touch of nostalgia. He enthusiastically poses a chain of rhetorical questions:

*Iphi **imitsi yayitolo**, Somiso?
Luphi **luhlata lwemahinikati**?
Iphi **imitfombo yakitsi**?
Somiso, aphi **emangeleti**?
(Where are **yesterday's trees**, Somiso?
Where is the **green grass of the cows**?
Where are our own **springs**?
Somiso, where are the **waters**?)*
(Shongwe 1982: 27)

He personifies drought: *Somiso*. The poet addresses human behaviour about the natural hazard, drought. He appears to be meditating aloud on drought. The idea of the union of man

and a natural phenomenon is expressed. The expression, *imitsi yayitolo* (yesterday's trees) refers to the green trees that are swaying in the breeze. It refers to life and growth which are disturbed by this hazard. *Luhlata lwemahinikati* (the green grass of the milking cows), *imitfombo* (fountains) and *emangeleti* (water) all symbolize the ease and comfort of life the primary products that serve as the basis of human life. The poet laments the lack of flowing water, eruption of springs and growing grass. He condemns the occurrence of drought and even goes so far as calling it as a bad omen. The word, *lihinikati* (the milking cow) represents repletion or an abundance of food to support a family.

The poet broadly outlines the imagery in his poem as he considers man's relationship with nature. Drought symbolizes famine and catastrophe. Because of the drought, trees have died, the green grass wilted and the springs have dried up. Drought functions as a physical reality that hinders the growth of vegetation and the survival of humans.

The expression of the poet's attitude and relationship with his subject is revealed in the tone of voice he adopts. In the poem, *Umkhiwa* (fig tree), the poet depicts a social life. He uses a natural phenomenon; namely, the fig tree, to portray his ideas. Shongwe's polite tone of voice and exquisite tact appeal directly to the sense of hearing:

Ngiyakutsandza mkhiwa
Ngekudzilita minyaka yonkhe...
(I like you, fig tree
You bear fruits yearly...)
 (Shongwe 1982: 40)

The poet personifies the fig tree. He orders people to be fig trees. He calls for cooperation unity and harmony. He likens the yearly bearing of fruits to the diligence and persistence towards success throughout the year. He alludes that a person is disposed to the fig tree when they are ripe and emphasises the significance of bearing fruit. Above all he is saying that people too must 'bear fruit'. They must share their ideas and use them for the amelioration of society. It serves no purpose to have something constructive and creative in mind which one does not share with one's community. The poet's didactic influence is clearly depicted by his tone:

Mkhiwa, fundzis' iNdlu yaketfu
Itsele nayo ikufute ...

(Teach our people, fig tree
To bear the same like you ...)
 (Shongwe 1982: 40)

The phrase, *Indlu yaketfu* (our house), stands for the people or nation. He seems to be instructing the fig tree, which is listening attentively, to teach the whole nation that which is of significance. He reveals his advice subjectively. He feels that prosperity can be truly attained when the life of a person resembles that of a fig tree. The didactic influence is encompassed in the opportunity for truthfulness, honesty and kindness. The nation refers to the people who share the culture and geographical area. Therefore, the resemblance between the fig tree and the nation should be to bear the countless fruits to the benefit of all.

Wain (1977:342) viewed moralistic poetry as:

That form of verse that aims of which is less to excite the hearer by passion or move him by pathos than to instruct his mind and improve his morals.

Most didactic, instructive and informative poems are not confined to specific themes. They cover a variety of themes such as nature, education, politics and love.

Tactile Imagery

The tactile imagery is an appeal to touch sensations. In the poem, *Imphandzamatala* (The rubbish-heap digger), the touch sensations are clearly evident:

Timphiko nginato:
Tami tiyasindza, takho tilula,
Asibambisane.
(I have wings:
Mine are heavy, yours are light,
Let's help each other).
 (Shongwe 1982: 7)

It is a poem of protest which surprisingly, also communicates pleasure. The words, *timphiko* (wings), *tiyasindza* (they are heavy) and *tilula* (they are light) convey the striking images. The wings symbolize the power and strength of a particular person. The reference to touch sensations such as heaviness and lightness allude to their particular degree of flying. The second line is composed of antonyms: mine – yours and heavy – light. The poet seems to compare two nations, the deprived and privileged. The poem exemplifies the quality of poetry. It is not merely a statement of a private point of view. It starts

like a private meditation in a particular state of mind *Timphiko nginato* (I have wings) then expand to encompass all humanity. The poet approaches the problem of dissatisfaction via the path of possible reconciliation and compromise, *Asibambisane* (Let us co-operate/ work together).

The tactile imagery is apparent in these lines:

Kwami kuphandza;

Kwenu kuphapha.

(Mine is to scratch

Yours is to fly).

(Shongwe 1982: 7)

The extract encompasses the tolerance and sarcasm tones. The balance and proportion of those tones are maintained. The words *kuphandza* (to scratch) and *kuphapha* (to fly) refer to misfortunes and fortunes respectively. They refer to the underprivileged and the privileged. The poet reveals that the nation has enough power to develop despite some drawbacks. Deprivation, however, causes an ambition to be thwarted. Self-confidence appears to be sapped and unused talents wasted. The tone of the poet reveals that he is a quiet and peaceful man who is longing for harmony. On the other hand the divisions that plague human relationships make him experience hatred.

In the poem, *Lamuhla sitintile* (Today we are settled), the touch sensations are clearly evident in the images he chooses:

Niwabutse ematje netimbokodvo

Nakhe tindlu leticinile,

Bambani tinhlanti tayo lemifula...

(You must collect the stones and pebbles

To build a strong house,

Catch the fish in that river...)

(Shongwe 1982: 32)

The three verbs, *niwabutse* (to collect), *nakhe* (to build) and *bambani* (catch) depict the poet's orders that must be carried out. He is calling for teamwork and a good team spirit. The implied word 'hand' adds to the diversity of the images. It is indirectly used in the stanza to put forth the idea. We collect the stones and pebbles with our hands. We build houses with our hands. We catch fish with our hands. As the poet describes the hands working together with technological implements, he appeals directly to our sense of touch. The poet uses this tactile sense to promote co-operation, hard work and originality.

He further appealed to other sensations in the following stanza:

Sekunelitiko ngasemfuleni iNkhomazi,

Sekubasiwe naseMgwenya,

Kwavusw' ematiko naseMlumati,

Naw' uMgwenyane uyavutsa.

(There is a hearth near Komati River,

Even at Mgwenya the fire is made,

The hearths at Mlumati are raised,

Even the Mgwenyane is burning).

(Shongwe 1982: 31)

Shongwe depicts the 'burning hearths' that are found near the rivers. The word, *ematiko* (hearths) refers to the institutions of learning. The words, *kubasiwe* (the fire is made) and *ku-vutsa* (burning) refer to the caring out of formal instructions. They refer to the presentation of planned lessons. The flexible use of words demonstrates how the hearths are burning. The making of fire and the burning of the hearth appeal to a blending of touch, visual, kinetic and auditory sensations. The first line of the extract refers to the first prestigious high school in the eastern part of Mpumalanga province, which was named after, and found near the Inkhomati River. The second line points specifically to the then college of education, Mgwenya near the Mgwenya River. He then alludes more generally to and encompasses many institutions when he says: *Kwavusw' ematiko naseMlumati* (The hearths at Mlumati are raised) he refers to Sidlamafa, Shongwe High and Mlumati Technical Institutions. The metaphor fuses the institutions and hearths into one idea. Therefore, imagery is necessarily an intellectual exercise in which the reader is challenged to discover the subtle implications of the poet's presentation of life.

Gustatory Imagery

An image may be gustatory, that is, pertaining to taste. Imagery represents objects, actions, thoughts and ideas. A gustatory imagery serves as a mental reproduction of sensational or perceptual experience. In the poem entitled, *Kugezwa khona* (Where cleaning takes place) the poet uses a highly ordered artistic expression to highlight different kinds of imagery. There is a series of ideas that evoke a specific response. In the following expression of elevated thoughts, the poet appeals to the taste sensation:

...Losajulile ufisa bonkhe bangajula

Bakhe, banatse, baphile

Ekujuleni.

(One who is **deeper**, wishes all to go **deeper**
Draw, drink, life

Deeper)

(Shongwe 1982: 6)

The word, *kujula* (deeper) conveys two or more meanings in the poem. It refers to the way the poet starts off on a simple subject-matter but simultaneously alludes on a serious more complex note. It can either be a vivid description of how people should acquire formal education or how they should involve themselves in a religion. If we look at it from an educational point of view, it could be that the poet is tracing the life of a child from the time he starts formal education until he reaches the highest levels of education. On the other hand, the poet is also tracing the life of a person who enters Christianity as a universal faith. Both formal education and Christianity are the general processes that take many years to achieve the highest levels. The poet sees *sitiba* (pool) as a power source that has the deepest level. He metaphorically sees formal education or Christianity as a pool. Both concepts generate loyalty, co-operation and freedom. He exquisitely communicates this vision using vivid imagery. In this way the poet's solemn, prayerful and reverent tones create the sense of universality.

Water appeals effectively to our sense of taste. The poem, *Emfuleni waseNazaretha* (At the river of Nazareth) develops from the ideas found in the Bible inspired him to compose this religious poem. The gustatory images are illustrated in the following example:

Kukhon' umfula wemanti –
Amnandzi, aphilile, acwebile.

(There is **river water**
It is tasty, cool and clean).

(Shongwe 1982: 4)

The river water functions not only as a physical reality that is described and alludes to, but also as a symbolic image through which the deeper implications of the poem are worked. We are aware that it is not just the river water which is important in the poet's scheme, but the gustatory imagery which the river has, leading to some kind of emotional, spiritual and intellectual liberation. He feels that the river water of Nazareth is different from those in other rivers. Every person who drinks this water will never be thirsty

again. The river water is an illusion because it has an implicit reference.

The poem, *Umfula iNkomazi* (Komati River) is based on life. The river is likened to a healthy human being, specifically a female as it is: ...*nkhosikati lemabelekati* (a big-bosom woman). It is the river that flows from the *highveld* to the *lowveld* in Mpumalanga Province. The poet likens the river with a woman who is breast-feeding all children without discrimination:

Shakutela njalo Nkomazi

Umunyise ngelubisi lwakho lolungapheli.

Nguwe lomunyis' eMabhunu,

Umunyis' eMaswati nebakaSoshangane...

(Go energetically Nkomazi

Feed all with your ceaseless milk.

It's you, who feeds the Afrikaners,

Who feeds the Swazis and Shangaans...)

(Shongwe 1985: 19)

The poet effectively attributes animate characteristics to the Nkomazi River. The words, *umunyise ngelubisi* (to feed him with milk), are images that draw our attention. Shongwe likens the Nkomazi River water to milk. He further likens the river to a cow. A cow that has ceaseless flow of milk feeds the nation indiscriminately. He insists that the river should flow continuously to help the different nations. On the whole, the poet views Nkomazi River as a source of life, health and prosperity. The diction that is used in the poem depicts life and growth. Imagery is an appeal to the senses through words.

Olfactory Imagery

Olfactory imagery implies the use of language to represent sensory experience and specifically a sense of smell. Olfactory imagery connects poetry with figuration or tropology. It can compare the real and ideal words and précis their themes. It is an appeal to the sense of smell. Shongwe uses few pictures to appeal to the sense of smell. In the poem, *eSimunye* (At Simunye), we find an image:

Ngisinga kuyo iNingizimu,

Lapho ngiva liphunga lelimnandzi

Ngobe livela kuwe Simunye...

(I gaze at West,

Where I smell a sweet fragrance

That hails from Simunye...)

(Shongwe 1985: 17)

The poet personifies Simunye. The word, *liphunga* (smell) refers to the behaviour, morals

and values of the people who reside at Simunye. The poet admires the place Simunye, where there are people of different racial groups. His ecstasy is revealed when he comments on the people of diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The poet emphasizes the “sweet fragrance” of the nations – that are shaped by unity, fairness, positive values, moral obligations and the instinctive love of their country.

In most of Shongwe’s poems, an appeal to the sense of smell is implied. In the poem, *Inkhosi yebulima* (The foolish chief) an implied sense of smell is depicted:

Ngiyikhandz’ embiteni...
(I find him in a beer-pot...)
(Shongwe 1982: 40)

The olfactory and gustatory imagery are mingled. He metaphorically calls liquor the foolish chief and attributes animate qualities to it. The poet appears to hate smell of liquor. Many weak-willed people are irresistibly drawn to the intoxicating influence of liquor. Liquor is kinglike in its power to influence people. The poet’s approach is sarcastic because it is contrary to the chief’s obvious surroundings-the palace. The poet derogatorily alludes that the chief is in the beer-pot, suggesting that the contents of the beer pot are a vortex of corruption, destruction, time-consumption and anti-progression.

RESULTS

Images assist the poet to succinctly describe situations in a poem with poetic language. It becomes easier for the researcher to single out rhetoric devices when imagery as an appeal to various senses has been explicitly looked at.

Cuddon (1976: 323) viewed imagery as an appeal to senses:

An image may be visual (pertaining to the eye), olfactory (smell), tactile (touch), auditory (hearing), gustatory (taste), abstract (in which case it may appeal to what may be described as the intellect) and kinaesthetic (pertaining to the sense of movement and bodily effort).

Gordon and De Villiers (1977: 2) upheld the same notion about imagery when they stated as follows:

Imagery in poetry is an appeal to the intellect, the emotion, or the five senses through words. Images can often be classified according to the sense to which they relate: visual

imagery appeals to the sense of sight; sound imagery to the sense of hearing; tactile imagery to the sense of touch; smell imagery to the sense of smell; taste imagery to the sense of taste. The sixth image, the kinetic image, is used to suggest movement.

Imagery is the fundamental element of descriptive and narrative writings since it enables the communication of what one hears, sees, smells, feels and tastes. Poetry becomes authentic when recited. The recipients are lively captured during the delivery of recited poetry and they are involved in a face-to-face relationship which is administered and presided over by socio cultural norms.

The involvement and participation of the recipients is characterized by the clapping of hands and the ululation of women as audience to encourage the poet by their verbal support. The recipients of poetry derive entertainment from the use of imagery to communicate the genuine communal experiences in a poetic manner.

It is apparent that this act of communication is characterized by the presence of reciter and audience and that are actively involved in an activity governed by environmental and cultural limits. The absence of communication; namely, the communicator or recipient hampers the delivery of poetry. The mood and personal perceptions of the participants immensely contribute towards the success of communication process.

DISCUSSION

Shongwe’s poetry elicits a wide range of responses due to their natural richness, authenticity and appeal to all senses, except the olfactory, which is less used. On the whole, most evocative images are balanced. It is a common practice in didactic poetry for the poets to give a mere instructive narration. However, Shongwe remains within the artistic limits. The poet is true to his own vision and sensibility because he handles his imagery in his own way, from his own angle with his own insight. He maintains that mere instruction and guidance as to wrong and right need not be poetry. As a prolific poet, Shongwe will be much acclaimed as his poetry is fully exposed to wide readership.

The simplicity of his language is beautiful yet rich and metaphorical. This makes the poetry appealing and accessible to both young and old people. Shongwe does not attempt to be

intricate and complicated, yet this does not make his poetry simplistic and ordinary. He has a human way of seeing life and expresses this common feeling in a very touching and personal manner. Most evocative images are integrated to convey meaning from the word or lexis, phrases, clauses, stanzas and the whole poem.

CONCLUSION

The investigation how effectively Shongwe uses his imagery and the extent that he appeals to the senses indicate the following findings:

Shongwe's poems are concise and rich in poetic dictions and imagery. He conveys much information using the implied meaning, economy of words and a wide range of imagery. He is noted for his different approaches to the exhausted themes. He uses imagery to diversify the common themes in some of his poems. He employs the natural phenomena in the poems, *Esicongweni seTable Mountain* (At the peak of Table Mountain), *ISahara* (Sahara desert) and *Umfula Inkhomazi* (Komati River), to drive home his information. The researcher assume that the recurring natural element in his poetry expresses his love for the environment. Education and its worth are reflected in the poems, *Wota kulomcebo* (Come to this wealth), *Ngesheya* (Yonder across) and *Vuka Ngwane!* (Ngwane wake up!). Imagery serves as a measurement intellectual cognition that presents facts in a successful way.

The religious element is elegantly portrayed in the poems, *Emfuleni waseNazareth* (At the river of Nazareth), *Khaya, khaya lami* (Home, my home) and *Kugezwa khona* (Where cleaning takes place). Most of his poems are didactic, yet religious. He compares and contrasts the idea of peace and aggression, firmness and inconsistency, sincerity and hypocrisy. He depicts the social life in the poems, *Inkhosi yebulima* (A

foolish chief), *Lamuhla sitintile* (Today we are settled), *Umkhiwa* (Fig tree) and death in the poem, *Ensimini e-Avalon*. He comments about the aged and youth, respect and despises virtue and wickedness. The poet has a good command of the Siswati language. He explicitly uses the abstract phenomena in the poems, *Emaphupho* (Dreams) and *Somiso* (Drought). The fundamental attitude of his poetry and their meanings are largely conveyed in imagery. If Shongwe's poetry anthologies: *Kugeleta Imicabango* (Thoughts are flowing) and *Sihlengi Setinkondlo* (An Island of poems) are compared it is discovered that his standard of his poems is elevated in the latter volume.

REFERENCES

- Bowra CM 1965. *Poetry and Politics*. London: Cambridge University Press.
 Cohen BB 1973. *Writing about Literature*. Glensview: Scott Foresman and Co.
 Cox CB, Dyson AE 1965. *The Practical Criticism of Poetry*. London: Longman Group Limited.
 Cuddon JA 1976. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
 Gordon S, De Villies GE 1977. *Poetry: Now and Then*. Johannesburg: MacMillan SA.
 Heese M, Lawton R 1979. *The Owl Critic*. Cape Town: Nassau Ltd.
 Murry P 1953. *Literary Criticism*. London: Longman Publishers.
 Peters JM 1977. *Pictorial Communication*. Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers.
 Shongwe JP 1982. *Kugeleta Imicabango*. Paron: Via Africa (Pty) Ltd.
 Shongwe JP 1985. *Sihlengi Setinkondlo*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter.
 Spurgeon CFE 1968. *Shakespeare's Imagery*. London: Cambridge University Press.
 Turnbull J 1976. *Oxford Advanced Dictionary*. London: Oxford Press.
 Wain J 1977. *Professing Poetry*. London: Macmillan Limited.
 Wellek R, Warren A 1956. *Theory of Literature*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Paper received for publication on September 2015
 Paper accepted for publication on November 2016