



Mzobe's Choice of Proverbs to Convey Broken Love in the Poem, Isoka, in Sibusiso Nyembezi's Amahlungu Aluhlaza

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Abstract

The article shall be a critical analysis of selected isiZulu proverbs expressing broken love in Mzobe's poem 'Isoka' found in the anthology; Amahlungu Aluhlaza by S. Nyembezi. The concepts of poetry, proverbs and love shall be defined as part of the introductory section of this discourse. Thereafter, a summary of the poem shall be provided and the dominant proverbs that are identified will be listed, before the actual analysis. The analysis will focus on the proverbs' origin, structure, literal and figurative meanings in general, and the meaning of each proverb within the context of the poem. It will also comprise of the poet's intention by using the proverb. That is, how the proverb expresses the poet's views regarding the subject. The results of this research will empower its reader with knowledge on the significance of the proverbs and how they are used in African literature.

Keywords: *Proverbs; Poetry; Broken Love*

Introduction

Mzobe uses various proverbs that express broken love beautifully in the poem 'Isoka', contained in Nyembezi's *Amahlungu Aluhlaza*. However, up to now, not much has been done to analyse this poem, focusing on this aspect. Antones-Dlamini (2021), on whose doctoral study this article is based, is the only scholar who has, so far, done so. The concepts of poetry, proverb and love are defined below:

Poetry

Varga and Oliver (2013) view poetry as an ancient form of literature since the earliest examples of poetry date as far back as 2600 BC. They state that it was religious in nature and included chants, praises to gods, enchantments, and laments. These scholars elaborate on what poetry does to human

beings. They highlight that it makes people see things in a new way, presents emotions and experiences, describes people and places, changes the reader or audience's attitudes, explores concepts, and presents a social and political commentary.

Simelane *et al.* (2017) define poetry as writing that formulates a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience in a language chosen and arranged to create a specific emotion through meaning, sound and rhythm. Ebewo (1997) elaborates on the discussion and defines poetry as a creative composition involving great depth of imagination, figurative use of language, use of indirection in the treatment of the subject, use of imagery, arousal of emotion, and use of rhythm. All the definitions conclude that poetry is indeed a work of art that is distinct in the way it uses language to create mind pictures, communicate various messages and produce certain sounds. The way poetry is structured also makes it different from all other fictional forms, such as prose and drama, as it uses verses or stanzas. Mtumane, (2000) maintains that it is "rhythm, imagination, and other elements that endow poetry with its beauty" (p. 8)

The proverb

As much as some scholars have found it challenging to define the proverb, Kamera (2001) states that proverbs are "terse and self-contained pithy statements or sayings of folk wisdom which enjoy communal acceptance as truths" (p. 212). According to Mtumane, Makhoba and Mojapelo (2020), "A proverb is viewed as a short popular saying embodying a general truth, sometimes in metaphorical language" (p. 254). Madumulla (1998) comments that long ago, proverbs existed in the heads of the elders but nowadays they are found even in written texts such as children's books which contain folktales and poems. Mtumane and Antones-Dlamini (2022) are of the opinion that "proverbs have developed throughout generations and are still part of every form of communication in African communities up to today. Without proverbs, interactions will lose colour, shape and form" (p. 459).

There is a close relationship between poetry and proverbs in that, as Doyle (2014) highlights, proverbs are also little poems which consist of epi-grammatic and rhymed couplets as well as other poetic devices such as alliteration, assonance, repetition, parallelism, antithesis, metaphor, and other various metrical patterns. This shall be explored in the article.

Love

Hornby (2015) defines romantic love as a strong feeling of deep affection for somebody one is sexually attracted to. Hughes and Camden (2020) highlight the cause of relationship problems by quoting Chapman who states that the main reason for relationship problems is that couples speak different 'love languages' which results in their expectations or needs not being met. Laslocky (2013) observes that when a person goes through heartbreak the emotional and bodily reactions are all over the place due to anger and confusion. This is exactly what happens to the subject in the poem that will be discussed in this article.

Summary of the Poem 'Isoka' by S.G.T.L. Mzobe

This narrative poem is about a young, traditional umZulu man by the name of Ngishiye, who has many girlfriends but only one troubles him. Her name is Nothando and he really loves her. Nothando is a good looking and proud girl, who never begs a man for love. She never writes to Ngishiye who is away at work. Ngishiye keeps wondering what is going on at Nsuze, his home village, where he left his girlfriend to look for a job. One day he receives a letter from Nsuze and he thinks it's from Nothando but it is actually from her new boyfriend. Ngishiye is devastated. He issues threats and mourns the loss. The poem portrays an atmosphere of longing, loss, and disappointment. The tone starts off as nostalgic and ends up sad. The proverbs used in the poem are as follows:

- (a) *Akulutho* (It is nothing)
- (b) *Ngcon' ukuthemb' itshe kunomuntu* (It is better to trust a stone than a human being)
- (c) *Ezishisayo zagcwala amehlo* (The burning ones filled the eyes)
- (d) *Kush' ukuthi ngoganwa yinyamazane* (It means that I will date a wild animal)
- (e) *Uyadela wesidumbu* (You rejoice dead body)
- (f) *Uze ulibambe lingashoni* (Make sure you hold it from setting)
- (g) *Onotshwal' umuz' uyowukhomba* (You shall identify the home that has liquor)
- (h) *Noseyishayil' akakayosi* (Even the one who has killed it has not roasted it)

Due to limited space, only six proverbs will be discussed in this article. They are *ngcon' ukuthembitshe kunomuntu* (it is better to trust a stone than a human being), *kush' ukuthi ngoganwa yinyamazane* (it means I will date a wild animal), *uyadela wesidumbu* (you rejoice dead body), *uze ulibambe lingashoni* (make sure you hold it from setting), *onotshwal' umuz' uyowukhomba* (you shall identify the home that has liquor) and *noseyishayil' akakayosi* (even the one who has killed it has not roasted it).

Analysis

- (a) *Ngcon' Ukuthemb' Itshe Kunomuntu* (It is better to trust a stone than a human being)

This proverb originates from observing the behaviour of people. All people are expected to be social beings and have relations with others because, according to African culture, 'no man is an island'. However, it seems that relations are not easy as people hurt each other quite often. The proverb depicts one's disappointment in a relationship. Thus, the words are uttered out of sadness. It is common for one to jump into conclusions when sad or angry because emotions are powerful. That is why the proverb reveals someone's disappointment as he or she concludes that he or she will not trust again.

The vowel elision (o and a) in the proverb (*ngcon' ukuthemb' itshe*) illustrates its poetic aspect. Most commonly, vowel deletion is used as a way to create a rhythmic pattern in a poem. This can also hasten the pace in a poem and, in this case, the increase in pace is in line with the speaker's anger or disappointment. Finnegan (1970) concurs that most isiZulu proverbs have economy of expression where vowel elision or whole words are deleted to give the proverbs a distinct form. Kamera (2001) and Hermanson (2006) also support this idea.

Literally, the proverb compares a stone, which has no emotions, with a human being who has emotions. This conveys the speaker's anger and disappointment towards the person who hurt him. This is emphasised in the use of the relative stem *ngcono* (it is better) which portrays a resolution that the speaker has made. To compare a human being with a stone is surprising because these two are incomparable. However, due to the hurt the speaker feels, he or she then concludes that he or she will not trust a human being again but would rather trust a non-living object. The speaker feels that a stone is better than a human being because it is immovable, has no feelings and is incapable of doing anything unless used by a human being.

Figuratively, anyone who uses the proverb implies that he or she will never trust any human being due to a broken heart. The hyperbole in the proverb serves to highlight the speaker's negativity towards the person who has hurt him or her. Since it is impossible to control any person or expect him or her to be as good as one is to the other, the speaker feels he or she is giving up on human relations.

In the poem, Mzobe uses the proverb to reveal a young man's disappointment towards his lover. The persona quotes the young man's words to depict his emotional state. The young man, Ngishiye, left his village, Nsuze to look for a job in Monti (East London) so that he can afford *lobola* (bride price) for Nothando. Then, all of a sudden, Nothando is not writing to him, and he feels disappointed. He suspects

that Nothando has moved on and forgotten about him. That is why he feels it is difficult to trust a person, as follows:

Mhlawumbe sewathathwa ngabanye;

Ngcon'ukuthemb'itshe kunomuntu.

(Mzobe, 1981, p. 82)

Maybe she has now been snatched by other men;

It is better to trust a stone than a human being.

Ironically, Ngishiye has other girlfriends but feels this one is more special. Maybe the lady has realized that he is a player and decided to move on. In isiZulu culture, having many girlfriends is acceptable but it is taboo for a girl or a woman to have more than one partner.

(b) *Kush' ukuthi ngoganwa yinyamazane* (It means I will date a wild animal)

This proverb originates from observing the behaviour of young people. It portrays their actions when they are courting and dating. Culturally, amaZulu boys and men have their own personal slogans they recite when they come across girls. This is a way of drawing attention so as to display their charm and manhood. They would say “*Gege la gege ntombi!*” (I like you girl!), “*Ngadla mina kababa!*” (Oh, this one is mine!), “*Qhizi!*” (Look at me girl!), “*Zal' abantu ziyebantwini!*” (Oh, what a beautiful girl!), “*Akukho ntomb' emb' eqominyamazane!*” (All girls have to date boys at some point!). The girls would ignore these advances, smile and move on or say anything in disapproval if uninterested and, if interested (though culturally self-control is key), they would just blush and listen to the suitor's words. All these actions are allowed by culture since they are harmless and done with respect.

Nyembezi and Nxumalo (1966) state that long ago, respect in isiZulu culture was practised accordingly and, as such boys and girls, whether they knew each other or not, would respect one another. Dlamini *et al.* (2006) as well as Masuku *et al.* (2008) elaborate on the upbringing of emaSwati girls and boys; of which the key concept then was respecting oneself, one's parents and others, through proper and acceptable behaviour. Thus, respect in African cultures was and is still very important. Moreover, amaZulu men believe ‘*intombi ayendlulwa*’ (you always notice or appreciate a girl), so even if one has a girlfriend, one will still show appreciation (*kukhuzela*) if he sees another girl. Culturally, the more girlfriends a man has, the more proud, charming and irresistible it shows he is.

Thus, the proverb depicts words uttered by a young man who is disappointed as he feels that girls are not attracted to him. The phrase *kusho ukuthi* (it means) is in the present tense whilst the other phrase *ngoganwa yinyamazane* (I will date a wild animal) is in the future tense. The speaker is predicting his future and actually prophesies doom with regard to his relationships because he is disappointed. The proverb actually contrasts with another common one which says: ‘*akukho ntomb' eqominyamazane*’ (no girl dates a wild animal) which means that all girls would date men at some point, not wild animals. So, if she breaks up with one man then she will eventually date another one soon and there will be no stress about it because it is just how life is.

The poet has modified the original proverb above (*akukho ntomb' eqominyamazane*) to *ngoganwa yinyamazane* to suit her “informative intention” (Sperber and Wilson, 2002, p. 260). Hermanson (2006) Nkosi (2016, p. 101) and Finnegan (1970) also highlight that new proverbs are still being created in most African societies and this shows that people continue to be creative and observant as culture also evolves.

The proverb depicts a disappointed young man who feels he will not date again because of disappointment. Figuratively, the proverb is an overstatement. The young man who says it feels sad, so he thinks there is no more chance for him to date in the future because of just one girl who has broken his heart. He is now jumping to conclusions as he says *kush'ukuthi* (it means) out of frustration. The phrase *ngoganwa yinyamazane* is hyperbolic as well as metaphoric. No woman can date an animal but, since the animal is a metaphor, it means that Ngishiye feels no person with real feelings can date him but only an animal that does not care or think like a human being. He feels unworthy of love again because of heartbreak. The use of the animal to substitute a human being is also called animalization. The proverb is used as follows:

Kush'ukuthi ngoganwa yinyamazane

Nxa sengilahlekelwe nguNothando;

Yek' ukuba benginamaphiko,

(Mzobe, 1981, p. 82)

It means that I will date a wild animal

Since I have lost Nothando;

If only I had wings,

Mzobe uses the proverb in the poem to portray the young, dejected lover (Ngishiye) as he expresses his sadness due to the loss of a girl (Nothando) whom he loves very much. The girl has moved on to date an unknown man and Ngishiye feels defeated. His ego, as an umZulu man, is wounded because Nothando has been stolen in his absence since he is working far from home. He wishes he had wings to fly back to his village where Nothando is. Perhaps, he needs closure and an explanation as to what went wrong, or he wants to confront Nothando's lover and challenge 'him man to man.' No one knows what is going on in the mind of this young man because he is sad and sad people are unpredictable. Mzobe portrays what goes on in the mind of a young person who has undergone heartbreak so well that it makes the poem interesting and believable. Thus, the proverb fits the context perfectly as it matches the subject of love, heartbreak, and isiZulu culture.

(c) *Uyadela wesidumbu* (You rejoice dead body)

This proverb is sourced from observing human behaviour and lifestyles. *Isidumbu* (a corpse) is the body of a dead person, which is always given respect just like or even more than when the person is still alive. In African cultures, dead people are given dignified funerals as a form of honour and showing appreciation for their good deeds. However, even if the dead person was a lousy drunkard or a criminal, he is still given a proper burial because he is human. The proverb is a lament uttered by a disappointed person who feels that a dead body is better than him or her because it has a place of rest, and it no longer must worry about anything. This is because a dead body no longer feels any pain.

The proverb is in the active voice, as if the speaker is talking to the dead body directly. This is indicated by the subject concord /u-/ and the present tense morpheme /-ya-/ attached to the verb stem /-dela/. The interjection /we-/ attached to the noun, also makes it more personal. All these morphemes show that, indeed, the speaker is talking to the dead body and is envying it for being in a better position than him. Unfortunately, a dead body is silent and cannot speak for itself. Speaking to a dead body is a lament uttered by someone who is emotionally unstable due to confusion, anger, sadness, or frustration. Figuratively, the troubled individual is lamenting whatever has befallen him or her, as a way of venting out his or her feelings to oneself since there is no visible body around. The visual image of the dead body is a metaphor for the tough situation the speaker is in, which evokes feelings of hopelessness.

Structurally, what is noted, again, is the equal number of syllables in each word that is common in proverbs due to the rhythm that is created so that they can easily be memorised. Thus, *u-ya-de-la* (you rejoice) has four syllables as well as *we-si-du-mbu* (dead body).

Moreover, in the poem, the young man, Ngishiye, utters the proverb in his confused state of mind as he wonders what he will do because he has just lost the love of his life. He is devastated as he has just read a mysterious letter which informs him about Nothando's new lover. It is unclear who the writer of the letter is. Thus, he is lamenting his loss and uses the proverb to comfort himself as follows:

Awu, uyadela wesidumbu,

Wen' osunayo phela indawo,

Mina ngowenza njani uma kunjje?

(Mzobe, 1981, p. 82)

Oh, you rejoice dead body,

Since you now have a place of rest,

What will I do in this situation?

Ngishiye elaborates after using the proverb and says the dead body is better than him because it has its rightful place, unlike him who is not sure what to do. He even asks himself some questions as he wonders what he is going to do and what he would make of the situation. All this portrays his inner conflict due to heartbreak.

The metaphor for the place of rest of the dead body is significant in that, in his disappointment, Ngishiye feels like he is worse than the corpse because he has no rest in his mind. Another idea is that, since Nothando and he come from the same village, it will be difficult for him to live with the fact that she is dating another man when he finally sees her. The poem portrays the nature of amaZulu men in general. It is difficult for some of them to accept defeat and move on. Surprisingly, this young man has other girlfriends, but he does not want to lose just one of them. Such behaviour is backed up by culture as it allows amaZulu men to be polygamous, proud, and territorial. Nyembezi (1966) agrees that back in the day, even the home of a man was expected to be big to accommodate his wives and children. Dlamini *et al.* (2006) and Masuku *et al.* (2008) also report the same regarding the siSwati homestead and lifestyle.

(d) *Uze ulibambe lingashoni* (Make sure you hold it from setting)

The proverb is sourced from observing nature. It is usually directed to naughty children who always run away when adults want to beat them. Adults know that once the sun sets and darkness comes, children will come back home because they are afraid of darkness. That is when it will be easy to catch them for punishment. The setting of the sun comes with many worries to both children and adults. Children are always afraid of the dark, so they run home for safety and comfort. Adults, on the other hand, worry about their children's safety as there are thieves and, as some believe, witches who roam around at night. AmaZulu, as well as other African societies, believe that darkness comes with all kinds of evil.

Another version of the proverb is, *ubolibamba lingashoni* (make sure you hold it from setting). The proverb is in the imperative mood as it sounds like a command, or a threat being issued to someone. This is indicated by the subject concord /u-/ which agrees with the second person and Class 1 proper nouns. Attached to the subject concord is the auxiliary verb /-ze/ (make sure). Hence, *uze* (you make sure) begins the threat that instils fear to the person it is directed to. *Ulibambe* (you catch or hold it) is a verb in the imperative mood which depicts the command and the action that will happen in the future. The verb

has the subject concord /u-/, the object concord /-li-/ which agrees with *ilanga* (sun), the verb root /-bamb-/ and the verbal suffix /-e/.

The verb suggests that the guilty person is ordered to hold the sun, which seems like an impeccable task because the sun is a natural object which cannot be controlled by anyone. *Lingashoni* (that it does not set) is a verb used in the negative sense as indicated by the negation morpheme /-nga-/ whilst the subject concord /li-/ agrees with the noun *ilanga* (sun). Therefore, the guilty person or child is instructed to make sure he or she holds the sun and prevent it from setting because, once it sets, it brings darkness which is terrifying, and which will make him or her to come back home to be beaten up.

Culturally, the proverb depicts a situation where a child, or any adult, displays unacceptable behaviour, so, to scare them or call them to order, the proverb is used. The act of preventing the sun from setting sounds challenging and humorous at the same time because it is an impossible task. Figuratively, the proverb is a word of caution or threat that can be directed at anyone displaying bad behaviour. It is used as social control mechanism. The guilty person is being warned to stop his or her bad behaviour before he or she faces the consequences of his or her actions, which can be deadly.

Thus, the act of *ukubamba ilanga* (catching the sun) is a hyperbolic metaphor for the threat that is issued to the person being called to order. Catching the sun is also a hyperbolic statement that implies that the person should stop the bad behaviour, lest he or she learns the hard way. Both these tasks are challenging. For a bad person to change his or her ways, it requires a complete turnaround which will mean a lot of decision making. The setting of the sun symbolizes the consequences of the bad actions of the concerned individual. Since when the sun sets, darkness comes with a lot of evil, so will be the results of the person's bad actions.

The proverb is used in the poem by Ngishiye who is angry at Nothando for dumping him. He is threatening her because he is angry and disappointed after the loss. He wants Nothando to pay for what she did to him. He warns both Nothando and her new lover that he will come home one day and all hell will break loose. As an umZulu man, he does not want to go down without a fight because he feels defeated and cheated upon. He is issuing out threats out of anger, shock and disappointment, which the poem portrays vividly. These threats will instil fear to his enemies and unsettle them. The poet portrays how a young umZulu man reacts after being jilted by his lover. The cultural and proud Ngishiye, who has many girlfriends, is furious.

The poet conveys the complicated nature of love in that quantity does not really matter (since Ngishiye has many girlfriends) and the fact that heartbreak is just the same. Also, the common notion that a wife is chosen amongst many girlfriends is depicted in the poem because, in the first few stanzas, the persona reveals that Ngishiye has many girlfriends, but Nothando was, "*intandokazi enkulu*" (the most favoured girlfriend) (Mzobe, 1981, p. 81). This concludes that culture always favours men to have many girlfriends and be polygamous, yet girls are not permitted to do that.

(e) *Onotshwal' umuz' uyowukhomba* (You shall identify the home that has liquor)

This proverb is also sourced from observing people's way of life and habits. Liquor is part of most African lifestyles, just like the society of amaZulu. Illegal 'spots', or taverns, where liquor is brewed and sold, have been in existence since olden days. That is why the proverb refers to pointing or identifying the homestead where liquor is plentiful. Such homesteads are easily identified by the white cloth or scarf that would be hung on a pole. All gatherings in isiZulu culture are graced by a lot of meat and traditional brew. People would then eat, drink and be merry. Thereafter, song and dance would follow to conclude the occasion. The proverb sounds like a warning or threat directed at someone. The person issuing the threat is angry and is swearing at the person who has wronged him or her. The proverb means 'woe unto you!'

The proverb's form is distinct in that the words are clustered together, so it is as though it is just one word that is punctuated. This portrays the speaker's haste as he or she utters the proverb in anger. The vowel elision is also noted and, as usual, is done to restrict vowels following each other closely because in isiZulu vowels are not allowed to follow each other. Vowel deletion is also common in colloquial language, and it is also done for the purpose of rhythm in a poem.

The verb *uyowukhomba* (you shall identify) is in the future tense, to suggest that the person sworn at is still going to pay for his or her sins. This is indicated by the remote future morpheme /-yo-/. The act of pointing at the homestead that has liquor seems to suggest that the person pointing will be tortured by the angry one. It is like they will both be in search of the homestead, and they will be going around together. Figuratively, the homestead is a metaphor for the punishment that one will receive, after careful consideration by the angry person. Since there are usually few homesteads that sell liquor in a community, the search that will be embarked on by the victim, compares to the revenge that will be sought by the wronged individual. Both shall wait for the fateful day to come as they both shall reap the fruits of their labour.

Mzobe, in the poem, uses the proverb through the voice of Ngishiye who has just been disappointed by his lover, Nothando. He is angry at her and swears he will come back home and deal with her. The young man left home in search of a new job in a different town and the lady could not wait for him, so she dated another gentleman. The jilted lover swears as follows:

Uze ulibambe lingashoni,

Ngoze ngifike laph' ekhaya,

Onotshwal'umuz' uyowukhomba;

Noseyishayil' akakayosi.

(Mzobe, 1981, p. 82)

(Make sure you prevent it from setting,

Until I come back home,

You will identify the home with liquor;

Even the one who killed it has not yet roasted it.)

The other two proverbs used in the same stanza which are, *Onotshwal' umuz' uyowukhomba* (Woe unto you) and *Noseyishayil' akakayosi* (This is not over!) are also part of the threats issued by the angry young man. His threats portray an atmosphere of anger, disappointment, grief, and hopelessness. He is still shocked and, maybe, even depressed. He cannot believe that his lover has moved on and it is normal for one to grieve after a loss. The threats may come true, depending on his character, but they could just be a sign of a bruised ego as he is a young man who is used to be the centre of attention in his village.

The persona reports that Ngishiye is used to having a lot of girlfriends who he can control but Nothando seems different, that is why he feels defeated. He feels less of a man because men generally do not take kindly to being defeated by women. Such men have ego and self-esteem issues because, culturally, a girl or a boy has a right to move on and date other people, if he or she is not happy in the relationship. Nyembezi (1966), Dlamini *et al.* (2006) and Masuku *et al.* (2008) all report that back in the day, it was common practice for girls to ditch boys and move on, as long as they did not make it a habit because that would paint a bad picture of them.

Boys, however, were and are still allowed by isiZulu culture to date many girls concurrently since they believe that one chooses a wife amongst many. Violence, on the other hand, is not encouraged, so Ngishiye's swearing is cause for concern. He can fight with Nothando's new lover in a way to 'test' his strength as young men commonly do but the fight must be non-violent. Long ago young men would use sticks, not dangerous and deadly weapons, to fight, like some do nowadays.

(f) *Noseyishayil' akakayosi* (Even the one who has killed it has not roasted it yet)

The proverb is sourced from observing the lifestyle of amaZulu, regarding nature (bird). It reflects on bird hunting. AmaZulu men and boys are also hunters of wild animals and birds. Hunting can be done during the day or at night, using trained dogs and rifles. However, bird hunting requires one to have a sling or a special gun. Long ago, after the hunting was done, the men would roast their meat at their designated place called *esangweni*, where they would also have their private chats. The proverb conveys a visual image of prey that will then be roasted. However, it is in the negative sense, as it says that the person who has killed the prey has not yet roasted it, which means that he will not enjoy his kill.

The verb *noseyishayile* (even the one who has already killed it) is in the present perfect tense and it has various morphemes. The first morpheme is the conjunctive */no-/*, which acts as the subject concord. The exclusive aspect morpheme */-se-/* is a time indicator depicting that the action has already been completed and */-yi-/* is a glided object concord that agrees with the noun *inyoni* (bird) or *inyamazane* (wild animal). The verb root */-shay-/* (kill) depicts the action of killing the prey whilst */-ile/* is a perfect suffix which illustrates that the action has just been done.

Akakayosi (he has not roasted it) is another verb in the negative sense (as indicated by the negation morphemes */aka-/* and */-i/*), which carry the main idea of the proverb. The second */ka-/* is a pleonastic element which acts as a subject concord for class 1 nouns in negative verbs. The glide */-y-/* has been inserted to prevent vowels from following each other which is unacceptable in isiZulu whilst */-os-/* is the verb root. One wonders why the hunter has not roasted his prey and this creates suspense in the proverb.

The complete version of the proverb can be uttered as: '*Noseyibonile akakayishayi, noseyishayile akakayosi, noseyosile akakayidli, noseyidlile udle icala.*' (The one who has seen it has not killed it and the one who has killed it has not roasted it, yet the one who has roasted it has not eaten it, whilst the one who has eaten it has eaten crime.) The base meaning of the proverb is that the man who has won the girl's heart has not yet secured his place in her heart whilst the man who has secured his place in her heart has not yet slept with her and the one who has slept with her has to pay for the damage he has caused.

Literally, the proverb depicts a hunter's fateful day whereby, for some reason, he finds himself not enjoying the meat he has worked hard for. He has hunted and killed his prey, but he has not yet roasted it for whatever reason. Figuratively, the action of *ukushaya* (beating) implies that one will go out of the way to look for something, work hard for it, get it, but just when he is about to enjoy it, as suggested by *akakayosi* (he has not roasted it yet), something catastrophic happens. Thus, *ukushaya* (to beat/kill) symbolizes hard work whilst *ukosa* (to roast) is a metaphor for the fruits of the hard labour. In this case, the person who has been working hard has not enjoyed the fruits of his labour, so he feels cheated. Therefore, the whole proverb is a metaphor for losing something in life but, seemingly, the person who has suffered the loss is still in denial as if he will get back the lost treasure.

The proverb is used in the last line of the poem to conclude the feelings of the young man who has just lost his girlfriend. Ngishiye feels cheated because Nothando has moved on and dated a new man, leaving him defeated and heartbroken. Since he still loves Nothando and has gone out of his way to court her, he feels the new lover has reaped the fruits of his labour because he has snatched her from him. As he has left his village to look for a job, the other man has made use of that opportunity to steal his girlfriend. He loved Nothando so much and was planning to marry her. Hence, he feels his love for her was deeper

than the new love Nothando has just found, and he thinks he still stands a chance with her. That is why he swears that once he comes back home, things will change. His denial makes him proud enough not to give up too soon because, culturally, a girl is owned by no one until one man decides to pay *lobola* (bride price) and marry her. In the meantime, any man can still try his luck with her, especially if she is still a virgin because that is her pride. The poet portrays what happens in the dating game. One can never be too sure about a lover because anything can happen. At the same time, Nothando is portrayed as a clever girl who quickly sees that there is no future with Ngishiye because he has many girlfriends. Wise girls are appreciated in isiZulu culture.

Conclusion

The article has analysed Mzobe's six proverbs that express the theme of broken love amongst young amaZulu. Mzobe portrays the complicated nature of young love, pride, jealousy, possession, and cultural influence through Ngishiye and his girlfriend. Mzobe, indeed, proves that heart break comes with a lot of negative feelings and behaviour through the proverbs he uses in his poem.

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