

EXPRESSIONS OF EXILE AND HOMECOMING: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE
SELECTED NAMIBIAN POETRY IN ENGLISH

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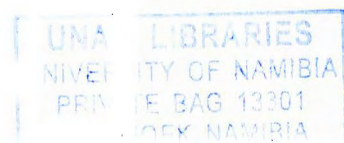
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ABSTRACT

The main focus of this thesis was to analyse the thematic expressions of the exile and homecoming of selecting Namibia poetry in English. The study is guided by new historicism and post colonialism theories. The study adopted a qualitative approach and data was analysed using a thematic analysis. The study found that Namibians gained independence yet they are facing factors such as disillusionment, poverty, high rate of unemployment, alienation, identity crisis, corruption and there is a huge gap between the rich and the poor as portrayed in the selected poems. The study also paints a picture that shows the possibility of a change over that happens when one goes into exile.

At the same time, the poets show that after all, exile is not that dreadful, although other poems might depict it as otherwise. The study contends that the poets portray independence as a total failure economically, culturally and politically. The political complaint portray how government has failed to deliver on most its promises due to corruption and how independent has co-operated the self-respect and identity that comes with being black and being poor. In overall, it appears that post-independence poets are disillusioned by the fruits of independence. The poets echo the high aggression and low receptivity of the lives experienced in the foreign lands. Also, these poems communicate, through the choice of words, insightful and frightening lived realities of exilic life.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Fennie Tangeni Namvula Shitope-Heita, my late dad Fillipus Simaneka Shitope, and Demetria Megameno Pehovelo Johannes to whom I am essentially indebted for their passion to see me succeed.

DECLARATION

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

During Namibia's liberation struggle, scores of people left the country and were exiled in neighbouring countries such as Botswana, Angola, Zambia and some even as far as Europe. While in those countries, some, re-counted through poems their experiences and the types of life they lived as foreigners. Also, they registered what they hungered for and how they desired to be back home. Upon Namibia's independence in March 1990, some of the exiles started returning home and again much was chronicled through poems and other genres of literature regarding their homecoming and what they anticipated in a now autonomous Namibia.

Poems were probably used on the notion that poetry by virtue of its nature and style, is a "powerful vehicle through which writers convey their deepest and most distilled thoughts" (Chiruvo-Mushonga, 2018, p. 1). In light of this backdrop, this study probed the themes of exile and homecoming as they are expressed through selected poems penned by Namibians. Along these lines, this chapter, Chapter One, provides the background and a general overview of the study. It also offers the statement of the problem that highlights the formulation of the research problem and the research objectives that the study endeavoured at fulfilling. To add on, the significance of the study is also discussed as well as the limitations and the delimitations of the study. Also, the way the study is organised is provided. The chapter ends with a chapter summary.

1.2 Background of the study

Before Namibia gained its political independence from South Africa, the country experienced an exodus of people fleeing to neighbouring countries in the region and beyond

,and this was mainly aggravated by the apartheid system that was in place (Khan, 2016). Upon Namibia's independence in March 1990, some of the exiled Namibians started migrating back home. Exile is a "process that is both historically and contextually specific, associated with forced separation, physical banishment, and geographical dislocation compelled by a political regime" (Said, 2000, p. 181). Hence, Namibians found themselves in exile after being forced to leave their country by the presence of the apartheid system. In the context of the study "homecoming is approached not as a return to one's origins, but as a movement that implies dislocation and displacement and puts the home comer in a position that is, in important ways, not essentially dissimilar to that of the stranger" (Biesla, Casellas, & Verger, 2014, p. 64). This way, the whole question of homecoming becomes another critical issue as those returning would be coming to yet another strange place.

This study pursued a critical analysis of poems by Namibian poets that embrace exile and homecoming for both the pre- and post-independence periods. The field of exile and homecoming is not new as scholars such as Biesla et al. (2014) conducted a research to analyse homecoming from the perspective of returning social scientists. Similarly, Shahid's (2016) study in Bangladesh explored the themes of memory, home and homecoming in selected novels. Additionally, Chiruvo-Mushonga (2018) paid attention to the portrayal of socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural issues in poetry authored specifically by Namibians.

It is against this background that this study analysed the themes of exile and homecoming particularly in poetry by Namibians and employed the Postcolonial Theory and the New Historicism as its theoretical framework.

The study was motivated by Biesla et al. (2014) who state that, studies have been extensively done with regards to migration and exile, however, homecoming is much less studied as

researchers have focused more on exile. Thus, this study incorporated both exile and homecoming as its major areas for analysis as represented in poetry penned by Namibian authors.

1.3 Statement of the problem

This study investigated the themes of exile and homecoming and the rationale of writing poems in exile as well as during the return of the exiled Namibians. Exile resulted in, amongst other issues, alienation, mental visualisation, memory loss, loss of identity and pseudo expectation of women. Biesla et al. (2014) did a study on homecoming and displacement from the perspective of returning social scientists, thus, the field of exile and homecoming were done before. It is therefore, against this background that this study explored the themes of exile and homecoming as represented by both pre- and post-independence Namibian poets.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were to:

- 1.4.1 Investigate the representation of exile in the selected Namibian poetry;
- 1.4.2 Examine the representation of the theme of “homecoming” in Namibian poetry; and to
- 1.4.3 Explore the purpose of writing in exile and return (homecoming) as presented in the selected Namibian poems.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study may contribute to the existing knowledge base on exile and homecoming in Namibia. Additionally, it might provide nuanced and novelty in the analyses of the selected exile and homecoming poems.

1.6 Limitations of the study

Since poetry is not always written in such a way that it has uniform interpretation, it therefore becomes a limitation that the researcher's analysis was only in accordance with her subjective comprehension and interpretation of the poems.

1.7 Delimitation of the study

This study was confined to the analysis of the selected nine (9) poems on the exile theme and seven poems on the homecoming theme as presented in the selected poems. Also, the study was framed and circumscribed to the restrictions of the Post-Colonial Theory and New Historicism paradigms.

1.8 Definitions of technical terms

Since this study utilised thematic analysis, there is need to define the figures of speech that are employed throughout this research report as it makes understanding comprehensive.

Alliteration: Alliteration is the repetition of the beginning sounds of neighbouring words.

Anaphora: Anaphora is a technique where several phrases or verses begin with the same word or words.

Assonance: Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds (not just letters) in words that are close together. The sounds do not have to be at the beginning of the word.

Enjambment: (In verse) the continuation of a sentence without a pause beyond the end of a line, couplet, or stanza.

Euphemism: Euphemism is a mild, indirect, or vague term that often substitutes a harsh, blunt, or offensive term.

Hyperbole: Hyperbole uses exaggeration for emphasis or effect.

Irony: Irony occurs when there is a marked contrast between what is said and what is meant, or between appearance and reality.

Metaphor: A metaphor makes a comparison between two unlike things or ideas.

Onomatopoeia: Onomatopoeia is the term for a word that sounds like what it is describing.

Oxymoron: An oxymoron is two contradictory terms used together.

Personification: Personification gives human qualities to non-living things or ideas.

Simile: A simile is a comparison between two unlike things using the words "like" or "as."

Synecdoche: Synecdoche occurs when a part is represented by the whole or, conversely, the whole is represented by the part.

Understatement: An understatement occurs when something is said to make something appear less important or less serious.

1.9 Layout of chapters

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction which orients the study and spells out the gap in existing literature through the statement of the research problem. It furthermore defines the research questions that motivated the study. The chapter also explains the significance of the study as well as the limitations of the research.

Chapter 2 reviews literature on poems about expressions of exile, homecoming and other literary studies set in Namibia and elsewhere. The concepts discussed in Chapter 2 are important as they form a solid foundation on which arguments raised in Chapter Four are rooted. In addition, the chapter explicates the theories that guided and formed the boundaries of this study. The thoughts and praxis as well as the applicability of Post-colonialism and New Historicism to the study are discussed.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology which covers the research design, the population of the study, as well as the sample and the ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 is a critical analysis and interpretation of the selected poems by the poets: Ya Nangolo, Kameeta, Kahengua, Molapong, Ellis and Thaniseb. The analysis of these poets' work is aimed at exploring the themes of identity and alienation as portrayed in Namibian poems.

Chapter 5 gives the conclusion .It highlights the main arguments of the research, and presents summative conclusions on the major findings of the study. The chapter also provides recommendations for future research on Namibian poetry.

1.10 Chapter summary

This chapter, Chapter 1 was an introduction of the 'expressions of exile and homecoming' as illustrated by Namibian poems. The chapter contains the introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, significance and limitation of the study. The next chapter, Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to the expressions of exile and homecoming.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter, Chapter 2, focuses on the literature review and the theoretical framework of this study. The literature review is divided into subheadings which support in reviewing the existing knowledge base and ascertaining the justification of carrying out this research, as well as delivering a basis on which this study was built. The theoretical framework is deliberated in relation to the title and asserting why it best informs this study.

2.2 Literature review

2.2.1 Namibia from 1884 to March 1990

Namibia led a liberation struggle against German colonial occupation from 1884 to 1914 and the South African apartheid regime from 1915 to 1990 (Shiningayamwe, Shalyefu, & Kanyimba, 2014). Pohamba (2010) asserts that during the period before independence, Namibians “experienced genocide and massacres but with unshaken determination, they continued a sacred duty of armed liberation struggle until the dawn of independence on 21 March 1990” (p. 2).

As a result of apartheid, a number of Namibians migrated to different places outside Namibia and they expressed such experiences in fictional and non-fictional works as well as in poetry. Thus, this study endeavoured at exploring exile and homecoming as represented in the selected Namibian poetry. According to Tsaaier (2011), exile could signify absence from one's homeland and hence register an erasure of physical presence from a particular landscape.

Tsaaier (2011) analyses Ojaide's poem 'When it No Longer Matters Where You Live' and observes that it no longer matters where one lives as wherever one finds oneself is home, provided the place is conducive to one's existence and fulfilment in life. The understanding of exile varies from one person to another, because of the different circumstances that people end up in, such that even their experiences of exile are expressed differently. Thus, this study analysed exile life as represented in Namibian poetry.

This study focused on homecoming too as it is presented in the selected works and considered aspects pertaining to adaptation and integration and how they are expressed in the selected poems. Studies on exile and homecoming are not new as pronounced by the existence of the literature reviewed so far. However, it appears that none of these studies have reflected on exile and homecoming as presented in Namibian poems written during pre- and post-independent Namibia, thus leaving a possible gap for this study.

2.2.2 Contextualising and conceptualising 'exile'

There is an assortment of definitions and clarifications on what exile entails. Nonetheless, this section reflects on some of the delineations and elaborations on the word 'exile'. According to Jacobs (2009), the term exile is a noun that was used in Hebrew (*galut*) as early as 597BC to describe the expulsion of the Jewish people from their homeland and the state of mind produced by this. Taking this strand of the expulsion of Jewish people as an illustration of exile, it may therefore be commented that, one involuntarily goes into exile driven by forces that are overpowering and the only available option would be to leave their homeland. Nevertheless, Oripeloye (2015) observes that "exile involves the physical displacement of a

people from their homeland, either forced or voluntary” (p. 155). Thus, Oripeloye (2015) brings in the aspect of voluntariness as another dimension of exile. The exile that this study focuses on is that of Namibians being driven involuntarily into exile as a result of apartheid.

From another perspective, Lombardozzi (2007) views exile “as a multifaceted concept ... [that] requires a radical redefinition, re-interpretation and modification as a term for dislocation, as it has moved away from a strictly political definition to include a wider cultural and economically driven displacement” (p. 5). Exile is not a recent marvel, rather it is “a phenomenon which has concerned all civilizations, ancient and modern” (Camurri (n.d.), p. 1). This echoes the above view by Lombardozzi (2007) that the redefinition, re-interpretation and modification of the term exile has evolved from ancient to contemporary times. Thus, the term ‘exile’ remains the same, but the manner of displacement are mutable. Malkki (1992) states that, “exile and other forms of territorial displacement are not, of course, exclusively “postmodern” phenomena. People have always moved-whether through desire or through violence” (p. 24). The only difference is that times are changing and people tend to exile for varying reasons. Hence this study explored the poetry of those exiled Namibians who were forced into exile by the relentless and rigid apartheid system.

Though the exile phenomenon is universal, scholars such as Lombardozzi (2007) notes that:

Despite exile as a global displacement, every exiled subject, bound to a particular place and time, or a particular memory of place and time, experiences exile as unique and idiosyncratic, exile is never a uniform experience, hence making an equitable definition of exile almost impossible. (p. 5).

In essence, the experiences are not homogeneous as they vary from one individual to another. Additionally, Renato (2014) put forward that, “when we speak of exile, we implicitly refer to really different experiences and phenomena” (p. 2) and further lists the phenomena as social,

political and intellectual exile. Thus, further reinforcing the assortment of the experiences of the people in exile. Moreover, Naficy (1999, p. 4) testifies that, “all displaced people do not experience exile equally or uniformly.” Likewise, Malkki (1992) discerns that, “forced population movements have extraordinarily diverse historical and political causes and involve people who, while all displaced, find themselves in qualitatively different situations and predicaments” (p. 496). Thus, this study analysed the different experiences of the exiled Namibians through their poems.

Said (2001, p. 173) attests that “exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience.” Exile may then be ruminated as a maelstrom condition in the sense that it affects the displaced both physically and psychologically. To add on, Oripeloye (2015) augments that exile “is also concerned with the cultural and psychological disorientation of an individual as a result of estrangement and alienation” (p. 155). Thus, exile does not entail only the physical displacement but also touches on aspects pertaining to the immateriality, that is, impacting the cultural and psychological orientation of the affected person. Similarly, Allatson and McCormark (2008) state that, “exile is cast as a disturbed physical and psychic relation to space and home” (p. 9). The issue of being uprooted from home becomes critical as it affects directly aspects pertaining to the relationships between the attachment one has to their place of origin.

Lombardozi (2007) observes that place is an essential experience of being, since being in a place infers presence, interactive participation and closeness, and conversely also loss. So, the moment an individual is forcefully displaced, those attributes associated with being in a place are consequently disturbed. Lombardozi (2007) goes further to state that, “a sense of place, whether personal or social, is vital as it enables one to function within the human community” (p. 17). Moreover, the flight into exile results in a loss of identity, whereby the refugee as the ultimate stateless person comes to be defined by their facelessness, not their

humanity (Arendt, 1978). Tilley (2001) asserts that 'space' constitutes "differential densities of human experiences, attachments and involvement. It is above all contextually constituted, providing particular settings for involvement, and the creation of meaning" (p. 213). Accordingly, the presence of exile renders the disturbed person dysfunctional upon being isolated from their community as creation of meaning and involvement are removed from the person's everyday life. This study focused on how the selected poems deliberate on the poets' life in exile after they had been dislocated from their lands of origins and separated from their families and communities.

Still on the issue of place and space, Said (2003) notes that exiles are cut off from their roots, their land, their past and with that the exiles feel an urgent need to reconstruct their broken lives, usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a prosperous ideology or a restored people. Furthermore, Morgan (2009) states that, "the subjectivity of exile, then, is a result of a scrupulous awareness of one's homelessness that prevents exiles, both literal and metaphorical, from taking advantage of the benefits of home and which gives them a special, plural vision in their experience of separation" (p. 15). As a result, the exiles are literally separated from their original home. Many bear the physical and psychological scars of the traumatic events they experienced prior to being forced to flee (Arroyo & Eth, 1986; Geltman & Stover, 1997; Kinzie, Sack, Angell, Manson, & Rath, 1986). Hence, Adorno (1994) describes exile as essentially "mutilated life" (p. 27). This gives the impression that the life of an exile is exceptionally disfigured.

The displacement of people is figuratively and symbolically aligned to the uprooting of such people from their home of origin. Malkki (1992) rationalises that the metaphorical concept of having roots involves intimate linkages between people and place. The roots signal the link and attachment to the soil on the ground. Anderson (1983) discourses on the metaphors linked to kinship and notes that "more broadly, metaphors of kinship (motherland, fatherland,

Vaterland, patria, isanmaa) and of home (homeland, Heimat, kotimaa) are also territorializing in this same sense; for these metaphors are thought to "denote something which one is naturally tied" (p. 131). Malkki (1992) further comments that:

Motherland and fatherland, aside from their other historical connotations, suggest that each nation is a grand genealogical tree, rooted in the soil that nourishes it. By implication, it is impossible to be a part of more than one tree. Such a tree evokes both temporal continuity of essence and territorial rootedness. (p. 24)

Therefore, once one is uprooted, life becomes disconcerted and disarticulated and it becomes difficult to bond with family, culture and traditions left in the country of origin. Bloch (2000) perceives that dispersal that is, being uprooted and migrating to the diaspora, makes it difficult to tap into traditional social connections of family, friends and support networks. However, as a means of survival, the exiles "have to pick through shattered pasts and uncertain presents in order to construct new realities, and some form of future context for their existence" (Piacentini (2008, p. 1). Besides that, Miller, Worthington, Muzurovic, Tipping and Goldman (2002) succinctly explain what happens in the diaspora as exiles try to acquaint themselves to the new environment and how the issues of adaptability would vary from one person to another. Thus, refugees often find themselves in settings with fundamentally different adaptational demands than those they had previously mastered in their countries of origin. Adaptation to life in exile often involves learning a new language, becoming familiar with a new set of cultural values and practices, perhaps mastering a public transportation system, and learning how to access a range of available resources. Mastering these tasks can be empowering for the sense of efficacy it engenders and the new social, educational or employment related, opportunities it provides. Conversely, failing to master

these tasks can lead to an increased sense of isolation, a lowered sense of efficacy, and in some instances, feelings of despair (Miller et al., 2002, p. 348).

So, in the process of trying to adjust and adapt to life in the diaspora, some exiles resort to writing as a means of expressing their individual experiences. Jefferson (1992) indicates that, exile can also be read as the consequence of cultural dislocation. This dislocation is what some of the exiles would capture in words as they express their feelings towards their lives in exile. Naficy (1999) observes that, the “discourse of exile thrives on detail, specificity, and locality” (p. 4). Thus, exile discourses proliferate mainly on issues pertaining particularly to the diasporic experiences and environment. Olaoluwa (2007) notes that, “exile is characterized by a long history that does not, however, cease to engage with the present” (p. 32). “The meaning of exile in the 20th century essentially indicates the experience of fracture, of displacement from the motherland, of alienation lived as a loss, an injury” (Renato, 2014, p. 6). Moreover, exile is a conception that is inevitably tainted with a sense of sentimental melodrama (Thirwell, 2000), and this is expressed through different forms of writings including poetry. De Saxe (2010) observes that, “the written word can only take this memory [experiences in exile] into the future, to a reader on an unknown journey in time” (p. 12). Consequently, the memories of the exilic experiences live on and find their way into future generations as the experiences are preserved in the written form. Hence, this study focused on analysing the written exilic poems of these once exiled people of Namibia.

Poetry is used as a voice that represent the struggles encountered in exile. De Saxe (2010) observes that:

Exiled South African poets and activists such as Dennis Brutus and Wally Serote used poetry or language per se to reclaim a self and a society, as well as a country, to create a meaning or

a home for the self outside the self in cultural or political action, rather than only in landscape, nation or state. (p. 41)

Thus, the exiled would write poetry for consciousness as well as a means of keeping a sense of self alive. Olaoluwa (2007) states that “for, while the thought of home remains for the most part on the minds of exiles, there is nevertheless the challenge of living through the present moment of displacement” (p. 35).

Numerous poems on exile have been written by different poets across Africa and these poems are what MacLennan (2005) refers to as “sort of autobiography” (p. 40). This could be emanating from the idea that the exiles would write about their life experiences in exile hence the poems are autobiographic. MacLennan (2005) elaborates that, “its [the autobiographic poetry] driving force lies in the Protean masking and unmasking of the self” (p. 40). In an analysis of South African exile poems, De Saxe (2010) discerns that, “many poems contain negative tropes or images of negation: Our Dying Speech by (Zulu), My country is not by (Arthur Nortje), My people no longer sing by (Keorapetse Kgositse)” (p. 3). In these poems, exile is not represented as a place of haven or a sanctuary. In relation to this study, the researcher explored how Namibian poets paint the picture of life in exile through poetry.

For further illustration, Olaoluwa (2007) did a study on Okot p'Bitek's work and concluded that, “the issue assumes a grand dimension of extended metaphors as one finds in *Song of Lawino* and *Song of Ocol*; that is, there is a contextualization of the socio-cultural tensions of exile” (p. 228). Through p'Bitek's work, the theme of exile is also prevalent. Likewise, Senanu and Vincent (2003) analysed Wole Soyinka's poem ‘Telephone Conversation’ that also touches on the theme of exile, this time in the physical sense.

In their study, Senanu and Vincent (2003) identify a number of poets across the African continent who have been in exile and have written about their varying exilic experiences. These poets include: Niyi Osundare, Odia Ofeimun, Tanure Ojaide (Nigeria); Angira Jared (Kenya); Frank Chipasula, Jack Mapanje, Steve Chimombo (Malawi); Syl Cheney-Coker (Sierra Leone); Kofi Anyidoho (Ghana); Oswald Mtshali and Mongane Wally Serote (South Africa), to mention but a few. Regarding these mentioned poets, Senanu and Vincent (2003) comment that, “while it is possible to locate part of their thrust within the project of cultural reclamation, their poetry within the context of exile bears more ‘of the material forces of politics [and] economics’ as they confront in the immediate sense, mementos of the dead-end of post-independence euphoria” (p. 230). Oripeloye (2015) elaborates that, “exilic poetry offers an ideal form for the expression of private or personal communication as it allows the individual to bring out his/her innermost thoughts, aspirations and idiosyncratic visions” (p. 423). Thus, as poets recount their personal experiences of exile, they also by extension represent their nations and races. Oripeloye (2015) concludes by stating that, “the poetry of exile therefore becomes a metaphor for the interrogation of colonialism and power relations in the explorations of historical and socio-political contexts” (p. 426).

2.2.3 Life in exile

According to Tsaaier (2011) exile could signify absence from one’s homeland and hence register an erasure of physical presence from a particular landscape. However, other interpretive grids that negotiate exile refract it as a spiritual and psychological state that does not necessarily translate to physical absence from home. In an analysis of Ojaide’s poem ‘When it No Longer Matters Where You Live’, Tsaaier (2011) observes that it no longer matters where one lives because wherever one finds oneself is home provided the place is

conducive to one's existence and fulfilment in life. Additionally, Naguib (2011) explored the representation of 'home' from the setting of 'exile' in novels by Arab migrant writers. Thus, the understanding of exile varies from one person to the other, the experiences again differ because of the different circumstances that people end up in, such that even their experiences of exile are expressed differently. Thus, this study analysed exile life as represented in Namibian poetry.

Said (2003) notes that, "you cannot continue to victimize someone else just because you yourself were a victim once—there has to be a limit." Said (2003) designates, exile as "being liberated from the usual career, in which 'doing well' and following time-honoured footsteps are the main milestones. Said (2003) further states that exile "means that you are always going to be marginal and that what you do as an intellectual has to be made up because you cannot follow a prescribed path." In Tsaaio's (2011) view, exile could signify absence from one's homeland and hence register an erasure of physical presence from a landscape. Said (2003) also expresses that, no one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are not more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind. Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. However, its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, White, or Black, or Western, or Oriental. Yet just as human beings make their own history, they also make their cultures and ethnic identities.

No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages, and cultural geographies, but there seems to be no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life

was about. Survival in fact is about the connections between things; in Eliot's phrase, reality cannot be deprived of the "other echoes [that] inhabit the garden." It is more rewarding - and more difficult - to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about "us." But this also means not trying to rule others, not trying to classify them or put them in hierarchies, above all, not constantly reiterating how "our" culture or country is number one (or not number one, for that matter) (p. 67). Said (2003) attempts to explain that people should not be tied to the past but should live in the future. Thus, explaining that people cannot be divided by colour, religion and geographical location. The theme of exile is exploited by all the selected poems.

2.2.4 Comprehending the theme of homecoming

With those who would have migrated from their lands of origin, whether voluntarily or involuntarily (Oripeloye, 2015), there comes a time when some of them decide to (or are to) return to their roots, thus birthing return migration. According to Okome (2014), "the simplest definition of return migration construes it as the move back from a place of sojourn to a place of origin by a migrant who then settles down" (p. 1). This question of returning home or return migration is "a situation where migrants return to their country of origin by their own choice, often after a significant period abroad" (Dustmann & Weiss, 2007, p. 23). It is apparent that return migration must largely be a positive experience for the individual returnee (Van Houte & Davids, 2008), and also that return migration, or returning to one's place of 'origin' is often viewed as a 'natural' process of reclaiming one's material and metaphorical place in the world (Henry & Plaza, 2006).

Interestingly, return migration does not always bring the exile home (De Saxe, 2010). This possibly suggests that there are complexities that characterise the returning of migrants.

Thus, Kwaku (2019) notes that, “the presumption that return migration is merely the act of going ‘back home’ often underestimates the complexities of the process including return migrants’ feelings of belonging” (p. 7). What is more, “homecoming is a complex and highly destabilizing process, both for the individuals involved and for their communities” (Biesla et al., 2014, p. 66). These complexities at homecoming are what this study endeavoured to explore by critically analysing the selected poems by Namibian poets.

In their study, Van Meeteren, Engbersen, Snel, and Faber (2014) note that, “recent research finds that it is not just transnational practices that take place before return that are crucial, but that transnational practices after return shape different post-return experiences as well” (p. 349). In another study, De Bree, Davids, and De Haas (2010) ascertain that feelings of belonging have to be renegotiated upon return and that this is done in different ways. Hence, Biesla’s et al. (2014) assertion that, “homecoming is approached not as a return to one’s origins, but as a movement that implies dislocation and displacement and puts the homcomer in a position that is, in important ways, not essentially dissimilar to that of the stranger” (p. 64).

With regards to homecoming, De Sas Kropiwnicki (2014) observes that, “the influence of time should, therefore, be considered in the rupture that may be experienced by returning exiles, and the process of adaptation and integration, into what may have previously existed or have been remembered as home” (p. 80). This study focused on homecoming too as presented in the selected works and considered aspects pertaining to adaptation and integration and how they are expressed in the selected Namibian poems by Namibian poets. Homecoming is when people who went to exile return to their homes or origin. It is against this background that this study uses the theme of homecoming to analyse the expression of the exiled people. Homecoming is one of the themes that poets such as Thaniseb and

Molapong have exhausted in their poems. They remained in Namibia during apartheid, thus they witnessed life during apartheid and homecoming. Their poems address hidden issues affecting Namibia after independence and are written in simple English.

2.2.5 Common themes and issues fostered in exile and homecoming writings

2.2.5.1 Colonialism

Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. Colonialism also involves political and economic control over a dependent territory. Namibians were colonised by Germany and South Africa. During this era, some Namibians were forced to leave the country in search of better living conditions, safety and employment amongst other reasons.

2.2.5.2 Defining independence

Mazuruse (2010), Melber (2005) and Puckrein (1995) claim that independence is a milestone which entails the political freedom, better living conditions, reconciliation, a new dispensation, human rights, democracy and the economic independence of a country's citizens. Macheka (2014) reverberates these thoughts by proclaiming that independence has not been "a fulfilment of expectations but a nightmare, an illusion that generated a false sense of arrival" (p. 15). This means that independence in Africa did not bring about changes to the ordinary people. On the other hand, Fanon (1968) postulates that total independence implies commitment to making the freed man in every sense a free man and citizen. Hence, an autonomous inhabitant is one who is economically, politically and culturally unravelled. Nonetheless, an integer of African literary works appears to disclose that in post-independent Africa, people are still craving for independence as it has failed to convey the aims that incited the mission for it. This appears to be the major challenge in the independent African

society. It is stated in Nyamubaya's (1986) interpretation that independence arose, but freedom was not there. Thus, independence in Africa is regarded as minimal (Tembo, 2012). It is thus by this background that this study uses the theme of independence to analyse the theme of exile and homecoming.

2.2.5.3 Freedom

During colonialism, both the exiled and those who remained home wanted to be liberated from colonialism. They dreamt of an independent Namibia and wanted to be free. Freedom is defined as the state of being free from oppressive restrictions that are imposed by an authority on one's way of life, behaviour, or political views. It is also the state of not being imprisoned or enslaved. The theme of liberty is comprehended in selected poems. In these poems it is evident that ordinary Namibians are still not socially or economically independent, although the country is independent politically. Namibians are separated into two distinct groups, namely, the rich and the poor. Most Namibians thought that after independence, land would be free and they would be liberated and live like a family. This resulted in their disillusionment. Thaniseb and Malopong's poems mostly discuss the themes of disappointment and disenchantment.

2.2.5.4 Identity

Before Namibia gained independence, many Namibians adopted almost everything from the colonisers. This idea brought about the issue of Namibians redefining their view of beauty, religion and political stratification. Weinreich and Saunderson (2003) demarcate identity as a constant reproduction of images of self, experienced and put together by an individual. A person's identity is who she or he is, what makes her different and stand out from the rest. A

person's identity may be shaped amongst others by her or his beliefs, gender, experiences, what she or he is exposed to and the environment he or she lives in.

James (2005) also delineates identity as the qualities, beliefs, personality, looks and or expressions that make a person or a group. In juxtapose, cultural identity embraces the person's self-perception, it is related to language, generation, ethnicity, religion and nationality. Thus, cultural identity is the sensation or individuality of belonging to a particular set of group. Smith (2008) disputes that the process of identification usually produces differentiation, assimilation or hybridisation among ethnic groups. Cultural identity has to do with an individual's roots, and who the person is in relation to his or her ethnic group.

Identity is defined as something that is not given by birth but at the same time it is not independent from biological processes of the human body either (Weinreich & Saunderson, 2003). The theme of identity is pointed out in the poems 'Coming home', 'Birthday for a Refugee' by Kahengua and 'In Search' by Ya Nangolo. The theme of identity is felt all over Africa long after the colonisers have left and is all over in literature. The novel *Coconut* by Kopano Matlwa (2008) discusses the effects of colonialism on the black child and explores the themes of identity and belonging. Identity may be influenced greatly by colonialism. The pressure of submitting to someone else's power may change who you are. An individual may adopt a different language, the way of speaking, the way of thinking, how they view the world, dressing code and personality due to colonialism. The theme of identity helped the researcher to incorporate the reasons of writing poems during exile and homecoming.

Exile may change a person's identity. A new country comes with different experiences and demands. Thus, exiles may be forced to give up the identities they had in their countries of

birth and adopt new identities. The new environment may be totally different from the environment they are accustomed to; hence the new environment shapes an individual into a different person. In most cases people go into exile in search for refuge. They adopt different means of living, interact with people of different cultures and ethnicities, all these external forced ways shape them into new people.

Moreover, when exiles return home from exile, they adopt their exile's identities to survive in the new environment. Goldman, Miller, Muzurovic, and Worthington (2002) observe that, adaptation to life in exile often involves learning a new language, becoming familiar with a new set of cultural values and practices, perhaps mastering a public transportation system, and learning how to access a range of available resources.

Belonging involves “the feeling, belief and expectation that one fits in the group and has a place there, a feeling of acceptance by the group, and a willingness to sacrifice for the group” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 10). The sense of belonging is a component of connectedness and relatedness that was identified by Abraham Maslow as one of the fundamental human needs of survival in a social sense (Kune, 1992). The novel *Nervous Conditions* (1988) by Tsitsi Dangarembga discusses the effects of colonialism on Zimbabweans. Tambu and Nhamo are changed by the education system and no longer want to be associated with the poverty of their parents.

2.2.5.5 Trauma

Mlambo (2014) defines trauma as “a phenomenon that is too shocking to be fully registered upon occurrence. It is only experienced belatedly. It offers specific challenges to traditional

notions of referentiality” (p.72). According to Caruth (1995) “trauma includes symptoms that had previously been called shellshock, combat stress, delayed stress syndrome, and traumatic neurosis, and referred to responses to both human and natural catastrophes” (p. 58).Caruth (1995) further states that these symptoms had previously been classified as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. As analysed by Mlambo (2014), “there is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dream thoughts or behaviours stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the recalling of the event”.

Marder (2006) describes a traumatic event as a strange sort of event that cannot be located within the boundaries of place and time, therefore literature is one of the ways we communicate events about human experiences that cannot be contained by other ordinary modes of expression. Furthermore, according to Hartman (2004), trauma theory dwells on the relationship between words and trauma which helps to read the wound with the aid of literature.

Once a person goes through or witnesses a strange event, it becomes difficult to erase it from one’s mindset. People witnessed awful events during exile such as brutal killings, suffering and discrimination.

2.2.5.6 Resilience

Mileti (1999) defines resilience as the ability to withstand an extreme event without suffering devastating losses, damage, diminished productivity, or quality of life and without a large amount of assistance from outside one’s community. Conversely, Adger, Hughes, Folke, Carpenter, and Rockström (2005) views resilience as the ability to persistor to absorb shocks

and stresses and still maintain the functioning of society and the integrity of ecological systems and as the ability to adapt to change, unforeseen circumstances, and risks.

Mlambo (2014) however defines resilience as a dynamic process where individuals display positive adaptation despite experiences of significant adversity or trauma. Mlambo further states that resilience does not represent a personality trait or an attribute of the individual; rather, it is a two-dimensional construct that implies exposure to adversity and the manifestation of positive adjustment outcomes. According to Mlambo (2014), “resilience, therefore, emphasises the strengths that the people have, rather than their vulnerability, through exploring the coping strategies that they exhibit” (p. 2).

2.2.5.7 Alienation

Alienation may be described as a psychological separation from the protagonist’s accepted modes of thought, usually precipitated by some sudden impetus, whether internal or external (Claassen, 2003). According to Hoopes (1969, p. xii) “the alienated are those people who have been excluded, or have excluded themselves...the deeply maladjusted”. Alienation involves estrangement, even from the self (Koff, as cited in Johnson, 1973). Temporary self-alienation may be the result of an “extraordinary crisis ...death of a beloved ... or exile” (Feuerlicht, 1978, p. 58).

Bernstein (1994) defines exile as “being cut off from the area of your sustenance, your emotional sustenance.” For Manzini, exile brought a certain fulfilment, a trade and companions for whom to labour, but this was not so with many others. During colonialism, Namibians were alienated from their roots and they adapted western culture.

Alienation is a common theme in literature and it can elicit many deep emotions. It can be attached to characters who have acted very drastically or who need to do so. Either way, alienated characters create a sense of intrigue with the personal reliance that they are faced with. The novel *Nervous Conditions* written by Tsitsi Dangarembga deals with the theme of alienation. Nyasha and her brother adopted the western culture leading to them being alienated from their Shona culture. As a result; they cannot speak Shona but English instead. Nhamo joins his uncle to attend school at a missionary school and later becomes alienated and does not want to be associated with his parents' poverty.

2.2.5.8 Death

Death is one of the most feared acts in the African society. As the source of death is unknown, many myths were introduced by the Europeans during the era of apartheid. It is believed that death came because the messengers failed to carry their given tasks. Until now, there is no myth on how death will be removed from the world. Death alludes to a separation of man from God

In Africa, if a person dies the causes of death are usually blamed on:

- Spirits: the body was not properly laid or some taboos were broken and that angered the spirits.
- Sorcery, witchcraft, and evil magic.
- Natural death: It is sometimes acknowledged that God call old people to leave this life, but it's rare. Even in this instance physical causes are attributed to somebody for example sicknesses, disease, old age, accidents, lightning, earthquakes, floods, drowning, animal attacks.
- Curse, breaking taboos or oaths.

During colonialism, most people who went for exile were brutally killed which led to the separation of parents and children. Death is the permanent cessation of all biological functions that sustain a living organism. Phenomena which commonly bring about death include killing, aging, predation, malnutrition, disease, suicide, homicide, starvation, dehydration, and accidents or major trauma resulting in terminal injury. In most cases, bodies of living organisms begin to decompose shortly after death. Most children end up not knowing their parents and have no parental guidance that is needed to direct and teach them their culture and language.

2.2.5.9 Racism

Racism is one of the glitches most people faced in African countries especially during the era of exile and home coming. Mailu (1985) notes P. W. Botha's 1985 speech in which he denotes black people as the —black devil and black bug. Botha furthermore reasoned that the fact that blacks look like human beings and act like human beings does not necessarily make them sensible human beings, hedgehogs are not porcupines and lizards are not crocodiles because they look alike. If God wanted white people to be equal to blacks, He would have created them all with a uniform colour and intellect (Mailu, 1985, p. 2). Racism is an injustice that brings about identity crises, alienation and the increased gap between the rich and the poor.

2.2.5.10 Religion

There are many elucidations of what delineates a religion but not one can be said to be the most accurate. Religion is a strong belief in a supernatural power or powers that control human destiny or an institution that expresses belief in a divine power. In addition, religion is a belief concerning the supernatural, sacred, or divine, and the practices and institutions

associated with such beliefs or the sum of answers given to explain humankind's relationship with the universe. African traditional religion refers to the religious beliefs and practices that originate from Africa and are meant for Africans to adhere to (Onyedinma & Kanayo, 2013).

From the African perspective, religion is perhaps the most important influence in the life of most Africans; yet its essential principles are too often unknown to foreigners who thus make themselves constantly liable to misunderstanding the African worldview and beliefs (Awolalu, 1976). Religion enters into every aspect of the life of Africans and it cannot be studied in isolation (Awolalu, 1976). In addition, when we speak of African Traditional Religion, we mean the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of Africans.

2.2.5.11 Safety

Most people who fled out of the country into exile were not safe in terms of security and accommodation. Their lives were endangered. Safety is defined as a state in which hazards and conditions leading to physical, psychological or material harm are controlled in order to preserve the health and well-being of individuals and the community. This state is not only related to the absence of intentional or unintentional injuries. It must also lead to a perception of being sheltered from danger. The theme of safety is emphasised in Kahengua's poems; hence it helped the researcher to understand the theme of exile and homecoming.

2.2.5.12 Mistreatment

People were abused and brutally killed in exile. In Ya Nangolo's poem 'From Exile' the theme of death is strongly emphasised in the third stanza, line two, "I've been searched by bullets" and in the third stanza, line five, "and lead me to the cemetery." The theme of

mistreatment accentuated in the selected poems including 'Psalm 126' while the theme of exploitation is muscally deliberated.

2.2.5.13 Separation from biological parents

Separation is the act or process of moving apart or forcing something apart. It is the condition of being apart, especially with regards to two people who have lived together or are married but are living in different places. According to Amato (2005); Mooney, Oliver, and Smith (2009); Goisis, Ozcan, and Sigle (2016), separation is a significant life event that carries an increased risk of negative consequences and poorer life chances for both parents and children. People who were separated during exile faced a considerable number of challenges in their daily lives. These people had experienced life in their home country and later ended up in exile.

The causes of separation were exile, gender, exploitation, death, disappearance of parents and family, institutional abuse, extreme poverty, hunger and illness. When they arrive in a different country, they become perplexed and in shock, as they face a strange language, land and culture without the help of family members and friends. They are forced to discover the mores of an alien culture and adapt to an unfamiliar educational system.

The researcher discusses the theme of separation as the selected poems highlight the same theme as well. Social networks are profoundly affected by the loss of relatives killed in war-related violence or when the relatives "disappear" at the hands of officials or paramilitary

forces. As well as by the forced abandonment of relatives, friends, and neighbours unable or unwilling to go into exile (Goldman et al., 2002).

2.2.5.14 Poverty

The theme of poverty is important as it provides the study with an informed portrayal of poverty from other fields and countries. It also stipulates a focus for the study. Ogbokor and Ngeendepi (2011) assert that poverty is a major concern of governments all over the world, such that a number of poverty alleviation programmes and campaigns have been developed overtime and subsequently implemented across the region but still, poverty remains.

Mchombu and Mchombu (2014) interpret poverty as a complex phenomenon that can be defined from various perspectives. Aluko (2012) states that poverty is a complex multidimensional problem that casts long shadows over many areas of existence. The researcher found that what Aluko (2012) asserts is important as poverty is indeed a complex problem. Aluko (2012, p. 83) further argues that poverty is a condition that exists when people lack the means to satisfy their needs. Moreover, poverty affects people in numerous depths and levels at different times and phases of existence. Ogbokor and Ngeendepi (2011) state that, poverty is a global issue and it is on the increase amongst most developing countries, including Namibia. Therefore, as claimed by Aluko (2012), poverty is a global marvel which affects continents, nations and people differently.

Okungbowa and Eburajolo (2014) converse that poverty results from a combination of economic, cultural, climatic, ecological and environmental factors. In addition, they cite complex issues which cause poverty. Some of the selected poems by Kahengua explore the theme of poverty.

2.2.5.15 Culture

The concept of cultural capital refers to the endowment that each person inherits as a member of a particular ethnic group or sub-group (Bourdieu, 1986). A person becomes a member of a different ethnic group once she or he goes in exile. As in the case of the Irish dispersion, many exiles were forced from their home cultures by exigencies over which they had no control. Famine, war, and enslavement are three of the major instruments of depopulation at the national level. Those forced to leave under such circumstances often experience a profound sense of personal loss similar to the death of a loved one (Corley & Martin, 2015).

According to Corley and Martin (2015), as exiles interact with people in cultural contexts that are new to them, they often find it necessary to modify their tool bag of cultural preconceptions and skills and their home culture may become irrelevant in the new country. As a result, exiles have to adjust their birth cultures for them to blend and fit in. Corley and Martin (2015) further argue that new environments impose new demands, such as different language skills, different etiquette patterns, different culinary possibilities, and different child-rearing customs. To the extent that exiles do modify their cultural practices and hybrid cultures are likely to arise.

The condition of exile therefore has, amongst others, a dual impact – one on the destination culture and the other on the culture of origin (Devroop, 1999). Additionally, “those who returned attempted to create a modern character by appealing to alien principles, drawn from other cultures...” (Kamen, 2007, p. 21). Culture made the researcher to understand the origin of people thus it made it easier for the researcher to understand why certain people act in certain manners.

2.2.6 Gap in literature review

Studies on exile and homecoming are not new as pronounced by the existence of the literature reviewed so far. However, few studies (Shiningayamwe et al., 2014; Tsaaier 2011; Naguib, 2011; De Sas Kropiwnicki, 2014) have deliberated on exile and homecoming by analysing novels and poetry. Little if any of these studies have reflected on exile and homecoming in particular or have analysed poems written by Namibians during pre or post independent Namibia, thus leaving a possible gap for this study.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The study is framed by the post-colonial theory and new historicism. According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1995) post-colonial theory involves “the totality of practices, in all their rich diversity, which characterise the societies of the post-colonial world from the moment of colonialism to the present day” (p. xv) and is a discourse that utilises fluid concepts, techniques and terminologies (Gandhi, 1998). Thus, the theory was best suited to the study on the merit that it astrides both pre- and post-independence periods providing a clear boundary in analysing both themes of exile and homecoming in the selected poems. Fanon (1968) and Said (1978) are some of the notable classical theoreticians who have laid the foundation for the postcolonial theory. New historicism theory is a form of literary theory whose goal is to understand intellectual history through literature, and literature through its cultural context. It was developed in the 1980s through the work of critic and Harvard English Professor Stephen Greenblatt.

2.3.1 Theoretical stance

This study utilised a two-dimensional approach as a literary tool of analysis. The researcher utilised Post-colonial Theory and New Historicism as they offer the fullest insight towards an understanding of the themes of exile and homecoming portrayed in the selected Namibian works.

2.3.2 New Historicism

New Historicism was pioneered in the 1980s by Stephen Greenblatt (Sharma, 2014). It is an approach to literary criticism and literary theory that is based on the premise that a literary work should be considered a product of the time, place and circumstances of its composition rather than as an isolated creation of genius (Greenblatt, 2006). This approach provides an insight and understanding of a literary work by investigating the themes of exile and homecoming. The context includes the poet's biography and milieu. Thus, digging deeper into the context makes it easier for readers to understand the background of their works. This allows an investigation of the Namibian context, as well as the poets Ya Nangolo, Kahengua, Molapong and Thaniseb's biographies in relation to their poetry on the themes of exile and homecoming.

2.3.3 Post-colonial Theory

According to Ashcroft et al. (1995), post-colonial theory involves "the totality of practices, in all their rich diversity, which characterise the societies of the post-colonial world from the moment of colonialism to the present day" (p. xv). It is furthermore a discourse that utilises fluid concepts, techniques and terminologies (Gandhi, 1998). According to Given (2008, p. 650), "post-colonialism is a broad theoretical approach that examines the past and present impact of colonialism and racism on social, political and economic systems." Ashcroft et al.

(1995) assert that, “the term ‘post-colonial’ addresses all aspects of the colonial process from the beginning of colonial contact” (p. 2). Thus, the theory best suits the study on the merit that it astrides both pre- and post-independence periods. Thus, providing a clear boundary in analysing both themes of exile and homecoming in the selected poems.

Fanon (1968) and Said (1978) are some of the notable classical theoreticians who have laid the foundation for the Post-colonial Theory. The theory examines many issues in societies that have been subjected to colonialism such as the themes of exile and homecoming. As stated by Kandemiri (2018), from another perspective, Ashcroft et al. (1995) dispute that:

Post-colonial critics and theorists should consider the full implications of restricting the meaning of the term to ‘after-colonialism’ or after independence. All post-colonial societies are still subject in one way or another to overt or subtle forms of neo colonialdomination and independence has not solved this problem (p. 2).

2.4 Biographies of selected poets

The current study makes use of the socio-historical approach which helps relate some of the selected literary works to the background of their authors, their childhood, education and even careers, as well as the social and political forces shaping their lives and writing (Wild, 1993). Digging deeper into the biographies of the poets under study, namely Ya Nangolo, Thaniseb, Kameeta, Kahengua and Molapong would make their works understood.

Mvula ya Nangolo was born in northern Namibia, in a village called Oniimwandi in Onayena constituency. He was a print and radio journalist in Europe and Africa. He edited Namibia Today and worked for SWAPO’s Department of Information and Publicity and published two

volumes of poetry. He became known as the “Father of Namibian poetry. He is well known for his poem from exile.

Axaro Werner Thaniseb was born in a small village called Uis in Erongo region. Uis is known for mining and is built on top of a stone, where its name Uis originated. He grew up in the era of the apartheid system. In his poetry” Searching for the Rain”, he describes how his childhood was a miserable childhood. This is because of the apartheid era in which he grew up in where the Bantu education system was forced on the Namibian people.

Kameeta was born on the 07th August 1945 in Otjimbingwe, Namibia. He is a Namibian religious and political leader. He has been the Namibian Minister of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare since 2015. He studied at the Paulinum Seminary at Otjimbingwe from 1968 to 1971. He was ordained as a minister of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCN) in 1972, and taught at the Paulinum Seminary from 1973, serving as its principal from 1976 to 1977. Kameeta served as a parish minister in Luderitz from 1978 to 1981. He was elected Vice-President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1982 and deputy bishop in 1985. Between 2002 and 2013 Kameeta was the bishop of the ELCN. From 2003 to 2010 he also served as the Lutheran World Federation’s Vice-President for the Africa region. He is well known for his poem Psalm 126, a comparison of the original psalm 126 from the bible. His religion and faith made him compare “Psalm 126” to the situation they were in during apartheid. He was envious of other nations because they were independent. He believed that one day Namibia will be independent, like other nations.

Kavevangua Kahengua was born in Masakana and grew up there. Masakana is a ghetto area in the Zowa village in Botswana. He is a descendant of the Ovaherero people who fled

Namibia during the Herero German war in 1904-1907. Some of the Ovaherero people, including Kahengua and some of his family members, including his grandmother managed to escape to Botswana, where they lived in a refugee camp which led him being born there. Due to his family members who live in Namibia, he decided to come to Namibia, to his supposed “motherland,” in 1993. As he has lived through the era of colonialism, he wrote poems on the theme of exile as well as homecoming.

Joseph Keamogetsi Molapong was born in Windhoek in 1959, where he spent his entire life in Katutura which was known as the location or township. Molapong was born during the era of the Windhoek Massacre. During this era, the white government removed black residents from the old location, which is currently known as Pioneerspark to the remote outskirts currently known as Katutura. This was in order to accomplish, segregation between whites and blacks, as well as to ensure a further separation of the different language groups of the black population. This led Katutura to be divided into different language groups such as the Owambo, Herero and Damara. The acronym ‘Wanaheda’ originated from Wambo, Nama, Herero and Damara.

In the preface of his anthology, *Come talk your heart* Molapong (2005) says;

The day I was born
Bullets and tear gas
Welcomed me into this world
Hand grenades and landmines
Were the only toys I knew (p. xii)

Malapong was born before independence in the era of apartheid. He lived part of his life “under vicious occupying South African forces”, then the other part in sovereign Namibia. He thus declares that, apartheid scarred him, hurt him, angered him and sharpened his sense

of what is just and what is not. He also discloses that in the post independent Namibia he is faced with the challenges of reconciliation and neo-colonialism (Molapong, 2005).

2.5 Chapter summary

Chapter 2 deliberated on two theories, postcolonial theory and new historicism and on how the two theories were merged and employed as the theoretical framework for this study. This chapter includes other works that utilised the two theories which provided the foundation through which the themes of exile and home coming were analysed. This chapter noted the identified gap that was derived from the reviewed literature. The next chapter, Chapter 3 presents the methodology that was used for this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 concentrated on the theoretical framework and the literature review. This chapter centres on the methodology and deliberates facets such as the research approach and design, population and sample as well as data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research design

The study employed a qualitative literary research approach in the analyses of the themes of exile and homecoming as represented in Namibian poems. The approach was chosen on the basis that it goes beyond numerical representation of data; thus, it dealt with people's feelings which cannot be reduced to numbers.

3.3 Population

The study's population was comprised of all poems and novels written in English by Namibian authors, on the themes of exile and homecoming.

3.3.1 Sample

The study utilised purposive sampling to select 16 poems as presented in the following table:

Poet	Poems
Kahengua (2002, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Travelling• Coming Home• From Within• Birthday for a Refugee
Ya Nangolo (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From Exile• Cassinga Song• Battle Echo• Nanyemba!• Namibia• I am Africa
Thaniseb (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Black Man's Burden• The Phoenix• The Angry Young Man
Kameeta (1986)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psalms 126
Hugh Ellis (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Africa Day
Molapong (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cry of a Falling Man

3.4 Procedure

The researcher embarked on a process of close and critical reading of the poems and taking down notes while incorporating relevant secondary sources together with the post-colonial

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND AND DISCUSSION OF THE SELECTED POEMS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the selected poems are analysed and discussed based on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 of this study and framed by post-colonialism and new historicism. The poems are: Kahengua (2002, 2012) – ‘Travelling’, ‘Coming Home’, ‘From Within’, and ‘Birthday for a Refuge’; Ya Nangolo (2008) – ‘From Exile’, ‘Cassinga Song’, ‘Battle Echo’, ‘Nanyemba!’, ‘Namibia’, and ‘I am Africa’; Thaniseb (2011) – ‘Black Man’s Burden’, ‘The Phoenix’, and ‘The Angry Young Man’; Kameeta (1986) – ‘Psalms 126’; Hugh Ellis (2013) – ‘Africa Day’; and Molapong (2005) – ‘Cry of a Falling Man’.

The objectives of this study were to:

- Investigate the representation of exile in the selected Namibian poetry;
- Examine the representation of the theme of “homecoming”; in Namibian poetry; and
- Explore the purpose of writing in exile and return (homecoming) as presented in the Namibian poems.

4.2 Representation of exile in the selected poems

Of the 16 selected poems, nine of them contain the experiences of the poets in exile and these poems are: Kahengua (2002, 2012) – ‘Travelling’, and ‘Birthday for a Refuge’; Ya Nangolo (2008) – ‘From Exile’, ‘Cassinga Song’, ‘Battle Echo’, ‘Nanyemba!’, and ‘I am Africa’; Thaniseb (2011) – ‘The Phoenix’; Kameeta (1986) – ‘Psalms 126’. The poems echo the high hostility and low receptivity in the foreign lands. Also, these poems communicate, through their choice of words, insightful lived realities of exilic life.

To begin with, Kahengua's (2002) sonnet 'Travelling' reflects on the typical emotional and physical state that one encounters once they migrate to another place that is totally different from the original home. The first 3 lines of 'Travelling' form a rhetorical question:

Have you ever travelled
A million billion miles
To a strange city?

The rhetorical question sets the mood of the poem and gets the reader to think deeply and imagine the idea of travelling to an alien land. The hyperbolic expression 'million billion miles' (line2) suggests the vast space between home and the place that the persona is now in. Also, the space insinuates the rift that has resulted from the migration to a foreign land, leaving behind numerous aspects that the persona would identify with when in their land of origin. The rhetoric question prompts for further interrogation into the unknown world of the foreign land.

However, for lines 4, 5 and 6, the persona responds to the question posed in the first three lines. The response shows an instant flux as the persona is now in a strange world entirely dissimilar to the land of origin. This is reflected in lines 4, 5 and 6 from the poem 'Travelling':

You walk the streets
You see strange faces
You hear strange voices

The adjective 'strange' sees the process of 'defamiliarisation' materialising. If something is strange then it is unusual, therefore from the poem 'Travelling', as the persona walks in the streets of the foreign land, unfamiliar faces are encountered, and at the same time the persona hears odd voices that essentially alienate the persona from the surroundings. Thus, the theme of alienation becomes prevalent as the demonstrated occurrences pin to the theme of

alienation. The strange faces are the unfamiliar people and the strange voices relate to the foreign language the persona hears in a foreign land.

In lines 7, 8, 9 and 10, there is a sudden turn in the way the persona perceives the once alien place. The persona begins to appreciate the place and the people in that place. This is noted from the poem in lines 7 to 10 where it reads:

With the passage of time
The strange faces
And voices
Become familiar

Time becomes a critical ingredient that symbolically allows a gradual acceptance and accommodation of the once 'alien' and strange place. The gradual change allows the persona to see the place, the people and their language much appreciated and this steadily becomes part of the persona's life. Exile as presented in line 10, thus suddenly becomes a less harsh environment transforming from 'strange' to 'familiar'. The persona has grown used to the place and as such, now sees things differently, and feels more or less as being at their original home. This is noted in the last 11 to 14 lines of the poem 'Travelling' where it reads:

Like those of your kith
And kin
Then you sigh
Ah, this is home

The whole idea of being alien plainly melts away as the persona ceases to feel estranged; the environment literally becomes normalised to the extent of feeling that sensation of being home. In Kahengua's (2002) sonnet 'Travelling', it may be noted that the idea of exile is realised as a process whereby there is a possibility that for those who go into exile, they may find themselves gradually assimilating to the exile destination. They of course, start off as isolated but with time, they get used to the place and that would feel more or less like home in their mentalities. This confirms the assertion by Miller et al. (2002) that, adaptation to life in exile normally necessitates learning a new language, becoming familiar with a new set of

cultural values and practices, perhaps mastering a public transportation system, and learning how to access a range of available resources (see Section 2.2 of this present study).

Thus, the poem, manages to paint a picture in just fourteen short lines, of the switching that happens when one goes into exile. Again, the poem shows that after all, exile is not that dreadful, although other poems might depict otherwise. The persona in the poem 'Travelling' manages to forge a way of making the exile destination a place like home. This then concurs with what Lombardozzi (2007) states that, a sense of place, either social or personal is imperative since it permits one to function within the human community. Hence, the persona in 'Travelling' converts the exile destination into a place just like home.

In another poem 'Birthday of a Refugee' by Kahengua (2002), the persona laments on the rootlessness of a person born in exile as aspects pertaining to identity and a sense of belonging are all deficient in such a character. The poem has a dozen lines and captures those critical issues affecting and impacting on the persona who was born in far away from their ancestral land. The poem opens with a statement which confirms the persona's presence and existence "I know I was born" (line1), which ratifies that the persona is there and exists. However, the second line talks about the most sensitive issue where aspects of identity are brought forth. The exact date of the persona's birth day is not known hence making the title of the poem satiric.

Following the first line, the second line reads "when I don't know" filling the atmosphere with uncertainty. The persona does not know what the day was which is somehow dehumanising. In a way the exile life is deemed unfavourable for human habitation. This provides a sharp contrast when compared to the previously analysed poem 'Travelling' where the persona finds peace with the exile destination. This then confirms Lombardozzi's (2007)

observation of the non-homogeneousness of exile; as it varies from place to place and impacts differently in individuals. These varied and sundry experiences all make it difficult to pin point a specific definition for what exile is.

Moreover, in lines 3 and 4 in the poem 'Birthday for a Refugee' the poet focuses on the place of birth of the persona. The truth is that there definitely is a place where the persona was born, but the sad part is that the specific place remains a mystery; it is unknown. This is noted from the poem where it reads in lines 3 and 4 "I know I have a birthplace/ where I can't tell." This leaves much to be desired, as the persona is clueless about that pertinent issue concerning his or her roots. As the persona has no knowledge of the place of his or her own birth, aspects relating to rootlessness then become distinguished. Thus, the poem provides what De Saxe (2010) refers to as "negative tropes" which are actually images of exclusion.

In lines 5, 6 and 7 of the poem 'Birthday for a Refugee', the poet is still clueless about his or her birthplace but talks about a conspicuous landmark in the birthplace though the memory of where exactly that signpost is, is vain. This is as illustrated by lines 5, 6 and 7:

i know there's some landmark
linked to the birthday
which one i don't know

Again, the absence of memory entails the brutalities ascribed to exile as it demonstrates the power to erase the right to knowing one's birthplace hence the issue of rootlessness is further underlined. Malkki (1992) rationalises that the metaphorical concept of having roots involves intimate linkages between people and place. However, in this case, the persona cannot name the exact place of his or her birth hence being rootless and unable to identify with the place. One's roots signal the link and attachment one has to the soil on the ground but for this persona, the link is meaningless for the name of the place is unknown and this emanates from

being a refugee. Also, the poem lacks punctuation which could be interpreted as symbolic of the absence of meaning to the refugee born in an unknown place and date.

Line 9 is a repetition of line 1 where the persona acknowledges being born “I know I was born.” This repetition could be interpreted as the instability of the persona’s state of mind. The persona frets at the thought of not knowing his or her exact place of birth hence life appears insignificant. The persona in line 9 relates to “a blustery season” of which this could be symbolic of the turbulence and instability taking place during exile. The season the persona was born was not favourable and this could be in parallel to the times of exile of which it still remains a mystery to the person as the exact season is not identifiable just like his or her place and date of birth.

The poem ends on a despondent note as the persona’s birth is only witnessed by the light of the moon. The moon may be bright in the night but the light would be dull if compared to that of the sun which is radiant and powerful. This is evident in lines 11 and 12 “a budding witnesses only/ by a lambent moon.” The moon may be interpreted to represent coldness and unfriendliness hence the whole idea of the persona being born in a foreign land is juxtaposed to an unrecognised and uncelebrated life.

The poem ‘From Exile’ by Nangolo, the persona was initially home and then forced into exile and views life in exile as not the proper noted in the first stanza:

From exile when I return
I’m going to beg someone to touch me
very, very tenderly
and gradually put me at ease
I wish to feel again how life feels (lines 1 to 5)

The first stanza points at how life is difficult in exile and the persona yearns and hungers for independence and to lead a normal life. With that, the persona intends to plead with someone to gently transform her back into normal life. Lines 6 to 10 further emphasise the long time the persona has been away which intensifies the nostalgic feeling that the persona is drowned in and how that has affected one's natural attachment to home:

I have not been home for many, many years
for many years I've been cut out of sight
for many years I've not been touched
and I have learnt to be homesick here in exile
where life is not so bright (lines 6 to 10)

Life in exile can be described as bleak and despondent when compared to the real life where the persona calls home. The time since the persona left home has been too long hence the connections with home have been disrupted. Moreover, the persona further testifies the differences between life in exile and life at home. For the persona life in exile meant "not being touched so tenderly" (line 11) but instead the persona confesses that;

I've been searched by bullets
going through my camouflage
and leaving my heart so fresh (lines 12 to 14)

The presence of bullets denotes traits associated with war meaning that in exile there is no peace and independence, thus the persona longs to be home as noted in line 15 "I wish to feel again how life feels." Since home is where the persona's heart desires and much time has lapsed while in exile a lot of changes and developments have happened thus;

From exile when I return
I'm going to beg someone
to introduce the newly born babies
help me identify those grown-ups
and lead me to the cemetery
where friends and playmates have long gone (lines 16 to 21)

The persona understands life to have moved whilst in exile and for the purposes of integration to the changed home, the persona feels obliged to be introduced to the new kin as well as familiarise him or herself with those that have grown and not forgetting those that

have died. All this will help the persona retain a sense of belonging and independence when in the company of those that are referred to as family and where life is normal compared to the bleak life in exile.

Thus, 'From Exile' by Nangolo and 'Birthday for a Refugee' by Kahengua share a number of common themes amongst them is the theme of independence. In both poems, independence is absent but longed for. According to *the Law Dictionary* (2018), independence is the state or condition of being free from dependence, subjection, or control. However, both personas are not free as they both are not in their homeland. This is denoted by the terms 'exile' and 'refugee' which are perfect substitutes as they are synonymous to each other. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (2018) defines exile as the state or period of forced or voluntary absence from one's country or home. In these two poems, the exile is involuntary as the poems are written by Namibians who were forced into exile by political instability during the apartheid era.

Ya Nangolo's (2008) poem 'Cassinga Song' bemoans the massacre that occurred at Cassinga camp during the country's liberation struggle against apartheid rule. The killings remain memorable in people who witnessed and survived the events at Cassinga. Of which the experience is viewed as "an open wound oozing pain" (lines 5, 10 and 15). Again, the poem 'Cassinga Song' illustrates the loathsome part of the cruelty of exile life. Meeting and camping at Cassinga meant that people who had been displaced from their homes and ancestral lands in some parts of the country had run away from being harmed, but the Cassinga camp became a death trap as many people regardless of their age or gender were brutally murdered. This is noted where it reads "When a man, woman or child perishes/ then an entire clan cries vengeance" (lines 1 and 2). The word 'perishes' denotes the end of life. Therefore in the event that people's lives are cut short the survivors would seek revenge

hence even after the Cassinga massacre, the soldiers continued with the armed struggle until Namibia attained its independence. This echoes Said's (2001) observation that exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. The experiences at Cassinga were gruesome and intolerable as presented in the poem. The use of words like "slaughters" (line 3); "massacres" (line 6); and "murdered" (line 9) all denote a vile and repulsive experience that is marked by the cruel deaths of masses. The experiences are traumatising hence exile is not painted as a sanctuary for the refugees.

The title 'Cassinga Song' becomes more like a dirge and as one reads through the poem, a sombre atmosphere is created. The poet's choice of words creates imaginable images of the happenings at Cassinga where hundreds were massacred. Hence, with the poem 'Cassinga Song' like with the other poems 'Birthday of a Refugee' by Kahengua and 'From Exile' by Ya Nangolo, exile is presented as not desirable but as repulsive and distasteful.

In the poem 'Battle Echo' by Ya Nangolo (2008), more is revealed regarding the fighting for independence in order for a nation to regain its beloved land. The persona describes how battles are not scheduled to happen at a specific time hence the use of the word "surprise" in the first stanza and particularly in line 1. The first stanza describes a sort of ambush happening in the night but the persona and colleagues were equally prepared for the attack. This is presented in lines 1 to 4 where it reads:

When death surprises us in the night
hand-grenade comfortably in our hand
submachine-gun ready for our land
then a moment of man-made lightning is at hand

The persona is instilling in the reader, the reaction towards a battle that the fighters are always prepared for but never aware of when exactly the attack would be. It is when the fighters and the enemy clash that a "a moment of man-made lightning is at hand" (line 4). The

synthetic lightning figuratively resonates with the sounds produced by the “hand-grenade” (line 2) and “machine gun” (line 3) fighting apparatuses. Hence, the title of the poem ‘Battle Echo’.

Moreover, the end rhymes in lines 2 to 12 depict explosions, booms, smashes and the crashes, that echo the sounds of a battle. In essence, these sounds are not pleasant as they are associated with the maiming and destruction of human life. The battle fighters have no choice but to fight for what is rightfully theirs hence, the phrases “wounding, crippling, killing enemy gang/ for the inevitable return to our beloved land” (lines 11 and 12). Thus, the poems ‘Battle Echo’ and ‘Cassinga Song’, all relate to the gruesome and undesirable representation of exile as the activities that took place in exile were detrimental to human life.

In the poem ‘Nanyemba!’ by Ya Nangolo (2008), the expression of the counting down of time is observed in the process of laying down a path to defeating the enemy. This gives the impression that no matter how much suffering the exiled Namibians endured in exile, it was culminating to a total recovering of their ancestral lands. Nanyemba was a freedom fighter and the exiled Swapo secretary for defence from 1970 until his death in 1983 (Haufiku, 2014). The title of the poem carries the name of this gallant son of the soil who fought for the liberation of the Namibian people. In the poem ‘Nanyemba!’ the persona infuses the aspect of time to express the kind of experiences encountered in exile and in this particular context, the persona shares with Nanyemba the strategy that they should take in trouncing the enemy.

First the persona considers in lines 1 to 4 that:

As the day of reckoning approaches
There will be some scattered clashes
As the guerrilla calculatedly smashes
Enemy installations to ashes.

Although it is a war, the tenets of bravery become eminent. The persona is reassuring Nanyemba that victory is inevitable hence the counting down of time to the exact moment when the fighters get what is rightfully theirs. Thus, lines 3 and 4 refer to the guerrillas destroying their enemy's machineries to ashes. The use of the word 'ashes' give the impression of total demolition of the enemy as ashes are normally the residue of something that would have undergone fire and is completely obliterated.

In lines 5 to 9 the persona recounts the destruction of the enemy now in terms of hours unlike in the previous lines 1 to 4 Where the emphasis is on the inevitability of conquering the enemy and setting themselves free. The enemy is viewed to be at a disadvantage as the guerrillas would be fighting back aggressively. This is captured in lines 5 to 9:

Nanyemba!
As the hour of reckoning approaches
There will be some actions in the bushes
Panic-stricken as the enemy rushes
His wounded soldiers on crutches.

The persona uses powerful diction in order to create the mental pictures of the action that would be taking place in the bushes when the guerrillas are in battle with the enemy. The guerrillas are actually at a vantage point as the persona is describing the way the enemy is 'panic-stricken' and the enemy's wounded soldiers on 'crutches'. A picture of this nature suggest defeat on the part of the enemy.

The persona goes to indicate that in the shortest space of time, the guerrillas would have total victory by encircling and entrapping the enemy allowing them to thwart the enemy to rise no more. This is illustrated in lines 10 to 14:

Nanyemba!
As the minute of reckoning approaches
The guerrilla then swiftly encroaches
Enemy troops assembled like cockroaches

The people's guerrilla then bashes.

The persona lays down to Nanyemba the last part of the plan to oust the enemy and this part of the plan would see the Namibians regaining their robbed independence and this would only need a second, which is just a diminutive measure of time as illustrated in lines 15 to 19:

Nanyemba!

As the second of reckoning approaches

There will be no more clashes

As the enemy licks his wounds on crutches

The land would have then gone back to the masses.

This poem 'Nanyemba!' shows that in exile and in the battles, the commanders had to sit down and strategise how to counter the enemy. Hence, the persona is laying out the strategy on how to get back their incapacitated autonomy as well as their land. Planning was a critical task as it would yield positive results such as the eventual attainment of Namibia's independence. This idea of planning and strategising echoes Nacify's (1999) observation that "all displaced people do not experience equally or uniformly" (p. 4). Thus, the poem 'Nanyemba!' is different from the previous poems about exile such as the 'Battle Echo', 'Cassinga Song', 'From Exile', 'Birthday of a Refugee' and 'Travelling'. While all the poems talk about exile they paint it using different colours of expression.

The poem 'I am Africa' by YaNangolo (2008) equally narrates the fractured impunities of African people agitated by colonialism. The poem points out how Africans are exiled as a result of political instabilities in their motherlands. Instead of growing and propelling life forward in their ancestral lands, forces beyond their control push them into exile. In line 2, the persona mentions the issue of spending time in a place that cannot possibly be referred to as home where roots are but 'a political incubator'. The idea that the persona could possibly be bringing out is that of how Africa has been exposed to colonialism for quite some time to the extent that its inhabitants have had their lives exploited and abused at the same time. Africa is likened to a mother, hence the phrase Mother Africa in line 1. While it's present

native dwellers are referred to as the last born who are born in unstable environments which are dehumanising. This is illustrated in lines 1 to 3:

Last born of an ageing Mother Africa
Spent much time in political incubator
some hundred years says a calculator

The time Africa has been under political instability due to the presence and existence of colonialism and its subsidiaries is designated as being excessively long. This is evident through the use of the phrase “some hundred years says a calculator” in line 3. The following lines further explain the issue of manipulation of the African people through colonialism, as the people are exposed to and are controlled by colonial systems. Such that as long as one is African, one cannot possibly be exempted from exploitation as indicated in lines 4 to 6:

People’s exploited existence quite a factor
went through nursery school as a young orator
noticed as political leaders went through the grill

Thus, the exploitation starts when one is still very young and into adulthood. However, there comes a turn in the lives of the Africans as colonialism encounters resistance from the Africans as indicated in lines 7 that “leaders refused to take the bitter colonial pill.” This refusal resulted in the migration of Africans within the African continent and some into other foreign countries beyond the African continent as illustrated in line 8 that says, “some existence in exile they reluctantly chose.” The issue of going into exile is a form of challenging the colonial protocols as they were cruel to the African people. Huge numbers agreed and subscribed to the notion that colonialism was and is a cruel act as in line 9 that “as thousands say colonial rule they bravely oppose.” With that resistance Africa became free of colonialism through the collaboration of Africans who decided to defy the conventions of colonialism as illustrated in lines 10 and 11 “total independence they unanimously propose/ I am Africa’s last born child in unison they announce.”

The poem 'I am Africa' talks about exile but in a manner that is different from the way the poems that the researcher has analysed so far have expressed the same exile. This therefore, reinforces Said's (2001) view on the heterogeneous nature of exile as well as Nacify's (1999) reflection on the absence of uniformity and conformity of exiled people's experiences. Thus, Ya Nangolo's (2008) poem 'I am Africa' provides a different exile description compared to the poems 'Nanyemba!', 'Battle Echo', 'Cassinga Song', 'From Exile', 'Birthday of a Refugee' and 'Travelling'.

Thaniseb's (2011) poem 'The Phoenix' also deliberates on the theme of exile. With the first stanza, the persona brings in the impression of migration as the young man crosses the border from Namibia into South Africa. Lines 1 to 3 however draw in the feeling of escaping and urgency as if something terrible is happening in his mother land hence escaping into the neighbouring country:

Across the barren land of the sun and wind,
A young lad travels with the fire in his heart,
A sprint in his legs

The idea of carrying 'the fire in his heart' could signify the hope and determination within the young man, and it could also relate to bravery and courage to escape from the cruelties occurring in his land of origin. Relating to the ancient Greek mythology the young man and the fire in his heart may be a replica of the majestic Phoenix bird, which is most often connected with the sun, dies and is reborn across cultures and throughout time (Leafloor, 2019), hence the title of the poem as well. Reading through the poem, the young man escapes into South Africa where again he finds the dehumanising laws also in place since Namibia and South Africa had apartheid in common as illustrated in lines 4 to 6:

The eyes fixed to the distant horizon
Stealing across the *red line* like a thief at night,
For the laws which made of grown men boys.

The persona had to illegally cross the boundary into South Africa as indicated by the word “stealing” which simply refer to sneaking “like a thief in the night” (line 5). The sad thing is that because of apartheid being a common trait in the bordering countries, the laws were dehumanising as they incarcerated men by reducing them into mere boys as indicated in line 6 “For the laws which made of grown men boys.” Thus, the persona could in a way be pointing to the continual suffering that this young man in the poem encounters unceasingly both in his home country and land of exile.

In the foreign country, the persona indicates that the young man in the poem laboriously toils for a long time “He slaves for many moons in the heat like an ant” line 7. The simile “like an ant” is symbolic of the industriousness that is associated with way ants work when they are constructing their anthills. It is at this point in time that in as much as he is enslaved he also loses his identity in that foreign land as stated in line 16, “the place where he begotten a name of not his making.” This issue of exiled people losing their identity concurs with what Arendt (1978) observes that the flight into exile results in a loss of identity, whereby the refugee as the ultimate stateless person comes to be defined by their facelessness, not their humanity. This is just like the young man who acquires a new identity which is something that he did not choose but was rather imposed. In the second stanza of the poem “The Phoenix” the persona illustrates how the exiled young man changes from one job to another. For instance, in line 10, when he works in the mine and in line 13 where he “travels to foreign seas like the fishermen of old.”

From the third stanza of the poem ‘The Phoenix’ the persona again illustrates how the young man moves back to Namibia where again he is exploited in constructing the railway line that promoted and perpetuated colonialism. This is indicated in lines 17 to 20:

He lays the snaking iron road through the windswept plains
Of the Land of the Great Maherero, And
The mountain-infested expanse of mighty /Hai-hab;
Across the barren and breath-taking landscapes of !Antseb

The young man is said to be exploited even in his own country as he performs the tedious job of constructing the railway line across the vast lands of Namibia as noted by the use of the words “it’s a menial job but the pay seems fair. Ten shillings a month” (line 21). In as much as the job is fairly paying, the working conditions are not that favourable as illustrated by the persona in lines 22 to 24:

And, many rains, at intervals, before that,
He toils in the bowels of mother earth
For the rise of the enchanting Egoli

The young man’s life does not end by just working at laying the railway line. From there, the persona indicates how again the young man appears as a stranger to settle among the people as illustrated in lines 28 to 31:

A young man arrives at the land of the great Daureb
And the people of open face;
He is a stranger with the dust of the open plains to his skin
And the mud of the Oshonas to his feet

The young man feels alienated as he arrives in the land of the great Daureb as he is different in the place of “people of open face” (line 29) and is “a stranger with the dust of the open plains on his skin” (line 30). Nonetheless, the young man learns to be part of the Daureb people. This concurs with what Piacentini (2008) observes that the exiles “have to pick through shattered pasts and uncertain presents in order to construct new realities, and some form of future context for their existence” (p. 1). As such, the young man “takes a young maiden and settles amongst strangers” (line 32) and settles there where “the hostile wilderness becomes his home” (line 37) as well as his final destination as “he lays his grey head to the ground- rest the eternal sleep” (line 41).

If looking back and tracing all the places that the persona highlights regarding the young man, it is discernible that migration was taking place and the young man had to adjust and adapt every time he moved. Hence, he is attributed with the characteristics of a phoenix which is believed to reincarnate every time. Just like the young man, every place he moved to he had to change life and conform to the life existing at that time. Goldman et al. (2002) succinctly explain what happens in the diaspora as exiles try to acquaint themselves to the new environment and how the issues of adaptability would vary from one person to another. The ability of the phoenix to restore its life is also what the young man did as a means of survival in exile. Just like the other poems analysed so far, 'Travelling', 'Birthday of a Refugee', 'From Exile', 'Cassinga Song', 'Battle Echo', 'Nanyemba!' and 'I am Africa', the poem 'The Phoenix' deliberates on the major theme of exile but using a different representation from the rest of the poems.

The poem 'Psalm 126' by Kameeta (1986) is written before independence and is taken from the original Psalm 126 in the bible. The poem 'Psalm 126' is a historical account of the Israelites' return to Zion from their captivity in exile. Similarly, the two poems have the biblical version and Kameeta's (1986) version. However, the idea of exile is common, although this must be implied in Kameeta's (1986) poem with reference to "those who go out as instruments of your love." The poet envies what was done in the bible and believes it will be done for them as well.

The first stanza anticipates the day when independence shall be achieved. The stanza goes further to talk about the liberation struggle and how the persona and the whole nation are eager to be independent like other countries. This is evident in lines 1 to 4:

When the day comes on which our victory
will shine like a torch in the night,
it will be like a dream.
We will laugh and sing for joy.

The poet believes that one day, they will be independent just like other countries (see Section 2.9 on the discussion of independence of this study). The persona uses imagery to portray how independence will be like on that day. It is anticipated that they will be happy and victorious when they are liberated from the struggle. In the first two lines, the poet uses a simile, “shine like a torch” whereby the poet describes how happy they will be when independence day finally shines on them after such a long struggle. It then continues and says, “It will be like a dream” (line 3). It is as if their dream had come true. In line 3, the poet further uses simile “like a dream” and goes ahead and says that they will be happy and will sing praises to the lord.

In the second stanza, the persona refers to how other nations will say about them when they finally get liberated (see Section 2.2.2 on the discussion of freedom and liberation of this study) It appeared that the country is liberated yet most people still feel left out. “The lord did great things for them” (line 6) the persona feels like that day is approaching, and it will soon arrive for them. The persona takes pain to preserve the tone of the original Psalm, which is joy and excitement. However, Kameeta’s (1986) poem was written prior to the achievement of victory.

The tone is of assertive expectation and there is a pledge that victory will happen because it is a cause supported by God and this sustains hope in the reader. The poem’s mood of hopeful expectation intensifies in stanza two, as the poet elaborates upon the purpose, which is to achieve freedom and justice. The poem displays stronger emotions than the original Psalm,

which deals more prosaically with the need for a good harvest. In addition, a more intimate level of communication with God is established, in the form of prayer.

The metaphor, or symbol of breaking chains is a common expression that denotes attaining freedom from slavery or imprisonment. The poet uses the metaphor, the enslavement, which is caused by the lack of dignity resulting from oppression and death as illustrated in line 9 that “Lord, break the chains of humiliation and death.” The poet asks God to deliver the Namibians. Thus, captivity is another theme which made the biblical Psalm suitable for adaptation to this poem.

It seems like other nations are covetous toward the independence of Namibia. Then the poet talks or answers back directly “indeed he is doing great things for us.” The poet further emphasises that they are happy in their suffering. Thus, the poet directly talks to the lord asking him to free the Namibians from the war and ignominy they are suffering from. “Just as the glorious morning/ when you were raised” (lines 10 and 11) refers to when the lord (Jesus) suffered for our sins, was crucified and then resurrected from death and ascended into heaven.

The persona thus changes his line referring to the freedom fighters who fought for justice. Here the poet asks for the lord to grant them the opportunity to fight for justice and live in peace and reconcile with each other. The persona also refers to refugees who fled the country due to war, to return and enjoy the freedom which is about to arrive. The poet uses the idea of sowing seeds metaphorically. The persona visualises that survival of the Namibian people will be ensured by the efforts to establish justice and freedom. The Israelites pray for the restoration of their fortunes in the form of a successful harvest.

The persona is considering the current situation in which freedom fighters are working on God's behalf but "weep" (line 15) because they are still suffering. The cause of their joy, according to the poet, will be the disappearance of hatred and the appearance of independence which is resembled by "the manifestation of your love in your world" (line 19). The poem Psalms 126 is written in the future tense as the persona in exile anticipates for independence that is still to be achieved, just like 'Nanyemba!' by Ya Nangolo (2008) which also makes use of the future tense in laying out a strategy for Namibia's future independence.

4.3 Homecoming as a theme in the selected poems

The aim of this study was to analyse the expressions of exile and homecoming as presented in the selected Namibian poems. The above section (Section 4.2) deliberated on the theme of exile and this section's (Section 4.3) focus is on the representation of the theme of homecoming in the other set of the sample poems. These are; 'Coming Home' and 'From Within' by Kahengua (2008, 2012); 'Namibia' by Ya Nangolo (2008); 'Black Man's Burden' and 'The Angry Young Man' by Thaniseb (2011); 'Africa Day' by Hugh Ellis (2013); and 'Cry of a falling Man' by Molapong (2005). These seven poems contain and discuss the theme of homecoming. Returning home or return migration is "a situation where migrants return to their country of origin by their own choice, often after a significant period abroad" (Dustmann & Weiss, 2007, p. 23).

The poem 'Coming Home' by Kahengua (2002) as the title of the poem is suggesting, is conferring the theme of homecoming of a Namibian child who returns to his place of origin from exile. The first stanza relates to how one from the 'diaspora' returns home where he is

quite certain that he would not fit in instantly, considering the time spent away in exile. The persona kindly asks to be welcomed and accepted by his people as illustrated in lines 1 to 5:

A Namibian child in 'diaspora'
I am coming home
Call me not a returnee
For I am not Omukwendata
Who has returned from the graves

The persona is aware that the people in his homeland would consider him as a ghost from the grave as the persona would be different from the rest. This then confirms Oripeloye's (2015) view that exile "is also concerned with the cultural and psychological disorientation of an individual as a result of estrangement and alienation" (p. 155). As a result of the exposure to the culture and languages in the foreign land, the Namibian child is estranged and alienated when he returns home because of the differences in the cultures in exile versus those at home. The persona is aware of his predicament and therefore kindly invites the people in the motherland not to call him a "Omukwendata" (line 4) but would prefer to be referred to as "...he who comes home" (line 6) just like the biblical prodigal son who returns home. The persona goes further to explain the reasons why he returns hinting on the complexities encountered in the diaspora as illustrated in where it reads "I have come to be nourished/ On the breast of my culture" (lines 7 and 8). In other words, in exile the environment was not favourable hence he returns home "...to be nourished..." According to Chiruvo-Mushonga (2018, p. 87), "the reclamation of his [the persona's] true culture is a tool that can empower him towards the construction and articulation of new forms of identity."

The persona is pleading with the people of his home to be tolerant for his dislocations that have resulted from being absent from home for a long time. This is illustrated in lines 9 and 10, "Bear with me, when I speak/ The Namibian languages." The persona is bound to have a

hybridised mother tongue after it got into contact with other foreign languages hence it got diluted. This concurs with Kwaku's (2019) observation that, "the presumption that return migration is merely the act of going 'back home' often underestimates the complexities of the process including return migrants' feelings of belonging" (p. 7). The persona is willing to be helped to improve wherever he does anything incorrectly so that he becomes again a true native just like his people. This is illustrated in lines 11 to 15:

For I wish to straighten my stammer,
Nurture me into a song bird, for I aspire
To sing the melodies of the holy fire,
Across the deserts, over the mountains
And along the shores

The persona is convinced that returning home is the best option he has made as home is where everything good happens as compared to the diaspora. The issue of belonging is thus highlighted in lines 16 to 18:

I have come home for a sense of origin
When time has come to rest,
I want to rest in your arms, mother Namibia

The poet is suggesting that, he would love to die in the land of origin and not in a foreign country where he had sought refuge as indicated in lines 17 and 18 and that a sense of belonging is restored once he is in his place of origin since that is where his roots are.

In the poem 'From Within' by Kahengua (2012) there are four stanzas. The poem describes how the capital city of Namibia (Windhoek) has divided the rich from the poor and what is happening in each sector. The persona feels like Namibia is not yet liberated as the gap between the rich and the poor is too wide. Just because of being poor, one easily becomes alienated even in their motherland as indicated in lines 10 to 14:

From behind the fortress of walls,
Dogs bark at the sound of feet

Of the presumed poor intruder
The clack of the electrified fence
Makes me an outright alien.

The persona says that the affluent are privileged, meaning that the rich will forever be rich and will always have good things. This might be so since, they can afford almost anything and live in luxurious places. The wealthy people can afford to buy land anywhere in Windhoek and are honoured in such a way that they can live in big compounds, quiet streets and shielded houses. The persona further indicates that the opulent have their own privacy where rocks and hills represented human beings. This scenario happens in post independent Namibia but there is a black elite group that is self-centred and prefer to live in isolation. This again perpetuates the previous apartheid segregation that was based on racial grounds. Contrariwise in independent Namibia the segregation is based on wealth as the poor live in places like Katutura and the elite in places like Klein Windhoek.

The persona also compares the streets of Klein Windhoek with highways that are wide and stretching and the narrow streets of Katutura to an elephant trail. The persona says, although they in Klein Windhoek live in big and spacious houses, there is no happiness and wonders what they have done to possess such lushness. Despite poverty being prevalent in Katutura and the absence of security the people are happy as indicated in lines 34 to 39:

Down Bethlehem Avenue, significant
In Katutura Ke tu- Our beloved Katutura
In the midst of poverty
Adults chat animatedly
Children play cheerfully
Though days and nights are insecure

Although people are divided on the lines of wealth, those poor people in Katutura have solidarity as a common characteristic as illustrated in lines 41 to 44:

In Katutura Ke tu,

People like ants are huddled
In small places
Here, shelter is a basic need.

The whole poem 'From Within' interrogates the question of independence in the Namibian context. People have returned from exile and the ordinary ones would find themselves amongst the ordinary masses suffering in the ghettos like Katutura. So, the question becomes clear on what really entails independence when people of the same motherland are differentiated by wealth. Even more, the poem is to a greater extent illustrating that the poor will always be poor and the rich will thus remain rich and the gap in-between them will never be narrowed.

Ya Nangolo's (2008) poem 'Namibia' is about a returnee who meditates on his cherished and treasured motherland. The reflection is deliberated in three stanzas each with five lines. A sense of attachment is instantly established in the first stanza as the persona justifies the reason behind returning to his home country as illustrated in lines 1 to 5:

I've returned here for many a reason
I'll certainly live here for many a reason
Like thousand others I hear its heartbeat
My heart opens up when I am in the mountains
Where I can be alone with my thoughts

Lines 1 to 5 above indicate the need to reintegrate to what was lost during the time the persona had migrated into exile. Now that he has returned home, feelings of belonging have to be renegotiated and that is done in different ways (De Bree et al., 2010). The sense of attachment and belonging is further reinforced in lines 6 to 10 where the persona expresses his deeper and inner feelings of being in a place that he can relate to, a place that is not strange but that understands him and which he calls home:

I've returned here to be in the deserts
I love to hear the sound made by sand dunes
I am one of those who perceive the rhythm
Of a landscape as recorded in many paintings

I am one of thousands who know I am finally home

The persona also expresses the need to be where his roots are and for him, it is in Namibia, the land he knows as a gift from the Creator. That idea of being in a place called home further reinforces the issue pertaining to rootedness. Thus, in the last stanza the persona provides other reasons as to why he had to return home from exile. This is illustrated in lines 11 to 15:

I've indeed returned here for many a reason
This is my God-given beautiful country
That very mountain over there and across
The deserts sandwiching my African land
Even though I don't own anything, it's my land too.

In the poem 'Namibia', the theme of homecoming is prevalent but presented differently from the poems 'Coming Home' and 'From Within' as these also express the theme of homecoming but at the same time attend to other issues.

In Thaniseb's (2011) poem 'Black Man's Burden', the persona informs the reader of a returnee who in lines 4 to 6 happens to have gotten a chance to improve himself education wise while in exile:

He returned in 1992, with little more
Schooling than his Comrades (from the frontline)
To develop his people, He said.

Upon his return home after independence and equipped with the schooling he acquired, the persona finds himself living amongst the rich and affluent, including the 'white people' he so much loathed and yet he admires the life they live up the hills as neighbours. Despite their differences the returnee appears to be friendly to his white neighbour though cynicism is detectable in their dialogue. However, the returnee would go to the extent of:

Lifting his glass into the boerewors and klipdrift polluted air
(His teeth flashing in the afternoon sun, the monstrous,
Belly rolling with each burst of laughter)

To the salute of *gesundheit* to his neighbour

The struggle is over, He beams. (lines 10 to 14)

As an educated black person, it becomes a liability on his part that he should be able to relate to current affairs and all trending issues. He thus utters the following as a small talk to the white man, his neighbour in lines 15 to 20:

Shooting the breeze about shares, quotas,
Property investment and land expropriation
For hobby farming;
And of late-
Black elite empowerment

It becomes a black man's burden as the title of the poem suggests that this black character, we are introduced to by the persona has to keep up appearances considering that he lives among the elite and is 'educated' when compared to the majority of masses.

People with money usually have diseases of affluence that are usually ignored or do not even exist among the poor masses. Thus, it becomes a burden that our returnee must also be associated with such diseases and conditions as he now forms part of the rich and the elite in society, hence as expressed in lines 21 to 26:

And at intervals,
Complains of all ills of a *modern black man*,
Ulcers...
Stress...
Hypertension...
Gout and

These diseases of affluent are not common among the poor, however, this returnee now relates to them as he is rich and can afford the medication to treat such conditions. A poor person would not under normal circumstances complain about such diseases as their minds are usually preoccupied on figuring what to eat or what to do next to get money for their survival.

The returnee still has the burden to “pay homage – [to] the place he once/ Called home” (lines 35 and 36) now that he lives up the hill together with the elite but originally he is from the ghetto where his roots are situated. And it is his burden that he reminds people of “The long and bitter struggle and the evil white man on top of the hill” (line 38). Ironically, the returnee is exploiting his fellow black people by erecting a shebeen in the ghetto and making sure that he pockets the masses’ meagre wages as illustrated in lines 39 to 44. The poet is thus very cynical as he lives and is associated with the evil white man up the hill. At the same time, he is found amongst the poor masses that he exploits to his advantage.

The poem ‘The Black Man’s Burden’ ends by parodying the returnee as one of the leaders who would be treated as VIPs at public gatherings but who often fail to execute their duties responsibly. Hence, the country that is run by these leaders is described by the persona as “a country gone to the dogs” (line 56). The poem highlights the way the black elite create their own alienation both in the presence of the so-called elite as well as when they try to come down to the poor people where again they no longer fit. In ‘The Black Man’s Burden’ like in the other three poems ‘Coming Home’, ‘From Within’ and ‘Namibia’, the theme of homecoming is highlighted but is expressed differently.

Thaniseb’s (2008) poem ‘The Angry Man’ addresses the social challenges encountered by the masses on a daily basis as they try to make ends meet in an independent country. Issues such as employment, education and health services are expected to improve when a government changes from the oppressive government to an independent one. However, it appears, that some of these challenges are actually carried forward and inherited by the new government.

The poem 'The Angry Young Man' pays attention to four different but all 'angry young men'. Lines 1 to 18 focus on a young man embarking on a job-hunting mission but with the number one obstruction being the ungraded "*school leaving certificate*" (line 3). He stops by a notice board with hopes of getting a job that suits his ungraded qualification but nobody is offering a job to such a calibre. The young man resigns immediately from the notice board and "slowly turns and trudges away" (line 15). This youth represents the majority of youths whose education is poor or does not exist at all. As such, they are unqualified and unemployable. The poem thus interrogates the government on the efforts it is making and the measures it is putting in place to improve the education system in independent Namibia.

In lines 21 to 34 the persona identifies another prevalent problem in independent Namibia where none can really establish what is driving people insane whether it is the abuse of drugs nobody knows. This is illustrated in lines 22 to 24:

at the statue of 'an unknown soldier'
sits a young man with an idiotic grin and eyes wide shut,
conversing with the spirits invisible to a naked eye;

The insane young man alluded to by the persona may as such need urgent medical attention or admission into a rehabilitation centre of some sort. The presence of people living with mental illnesses on Namibia's streets signify instability and the one mentioned here by the persona is not the only one as there are many of them, if one cares to go round the city looking for them. Some are even at home and its only that they do not sit in town. Again, this questions where the government stands as an independent state when its youth are walking and sitting aimlessly in the streets.

Lines 35 to 42 focus on an angry young man who decides to protest against the government through writing poetry that highlights the problems that people are facing in an independent state as illustrated in lines 35 to 38:

The angry young man declared 'the Cadre' yesterday
and the *enemy of the people* today walks past the library –
the anthology of 'freshly-ground',
angry verse clutched under his arm

The sad reality is that this young man cannot have his poems published as "the revolution is over" (line 39) and publishers are not willing to read his work, they are not interested. Without even checking, the publishers would say; "whoever reads that trash with no rhyme, / reason nor rhythm" (lines 41 and 42). Again, the dreams and hopes of the writer are shattered as the local publishers would not accept locally produced writings.

The person presents yet another challenge through a 'street kid' or a 'beggar'. The irony of it is that, the scene is happening on Independence Day, when the country celebrates its autonomy yet in front of a restaurant:

stands a young lad with empty eyes
and the smell of all the failed promises griot
clinging to his scarecrow body
reaching out a weathered, practised hand (lines 48 to 51).

The irony in this independent state is that it is made up of beggars who are in their prime youth and who ideally are supposed to be building and contributing to the economy of the country. However, the youth have become mere beggars waiting for the generosity of those who care. Sadly, the beggar is sneered at as most people seem to be annoyed by beggars as illustrated in lines 54 and 55 of the poem; "Nee Man, *Voetsek*, Namibia is free. Get a job. Where are your parents? / Grunt the immaculately dressed couple coldly." This is an unfortunate scenario in independent Namibia where hopes of freedom have been shattered for different groups of people. Only the elite, the educated and those in power enjoy the fruits of independence, otherwise for the majority of the masses, independence is something still being dreamt of and is out of reach.

'Africa Day' is a poem by Ellis (2013) where the reader learns about social issues affecting a nation at the time it is declared an independent state. The issues are crafted through a dialogue between the persona and the 'Shabby-faced dustbin man' (line 1). Poverty remains the number one problem even under a new administration that took over from the previous apartheid regime. Mchombu and Mchombu (2014) state that poverty is interpreted as a complex phenomenon that can be defined from various perspectives. Similarly, Aluko (2012) asserts that poverty is a complex multidimensional problem that casts long shadows over many areas of existence. The first stanza ends with an interrogative questioning the existence of peace particularly after independence; "we won the war/ But have we won peace" (lines 4 and 5). Already, this question signals instability and inconsistencies in the way the affairs of the independent state are being run.

The poem illustrates irregularities as ordinary people are having their houses taken away from them and yet shelter is a basic human right. The Shabby-faced dustbin man says in lines 6 to 8:

'sir I'm hungry and kinda cold
They've taken my house away from me
And my children don't go to school'

If people's houses are being taken and their children are also not going to school and the government is doing nothing about it then there is a grim drawback. As these children are deprived of school they may end up becoming the youth that loiter in streets as illustrated in Thaniseb's (2008) poem 'The Angry Man'. With this situation at hand, the persona could not help the Shabby-faced dustbin man as his last money was used in trying to quell domestic violence, "I spent my final cent helping a friend/ Get away from her abusive spouse" (lines 12 and 13). Domestic violence remains a challenge in most independent states and it is difficult to control and it appears as if it was inherited from the culture of violence that was

established during the apartheid era. The poem 'Africa Day' points at the different problems that are difficult to eliminate in independent states when left unattended. Just like the previous other poems 'Coming Home', 'From Within', 'Namibia', 'The Black Man's Burden' and 'The Angry Young Man', Hugh Ellis' (2013) poem 'Africa Day' also contributes to the theme of homecoming by highlighting some of the sensitive issues that face the independent government.

Molapong's (2005) poem 'Cry of a Falling Man' is about vote buying in exchange of rewards, which later will affect the process of democratic renaissance in the persona's beloved nation. The poem exposes the tactics that politicians employ in order to get the masses to vote them into power. Politicians would go out of their way in order to win people's votes and hence they use persuasive language.

In the first stanza, the persona illustrates that whenever a politician asks "give your hand to me/ to hold on to dearly" (lines 1 and 2), the politician would be genuinely asking for a hand to hold on to dearly as that would allow him into power. However, what this entails is usually not conferred but implied in the first 2 lines. That is to say that the politician would use the masses for his support cushion when he falls "your shapeless flesh/ to nail my fall against" (lines 3 and 4). This is post independent Namibia and still some people in authority would manipulate the ordinary people for their personal gain.

The persona who in this case is a politician, would ask for the ordinary person to give up even his eyes so that the person may not see "give your eyes to me/ To cover them with catara" (lines 5 and 6). Once eyes have a cataract the vision becomes blurred and that would stop the ordinary person from questioning or seeing what the politician would be doing hence "your spite-dimmed light/ to ignore my anxiety" (lines 7 and 8). In essence, the politician

would make sure that the ordinary person is blind so that he or she does not see anything bad that the politician is doing. During the liberation struggle, people in exile and elsewhere would be talking about equality and democracy upon attainment of independence. However, this action by the politician creates inequality and disadvantages the ordinary citizen.

The politician would even ask “give your heart to me/ to slice it to pieces” (lines 9 and 10) as well as “give your soul to me/ to drench it with hate” (lines 13 and 14). These are all clear symbols of the cruel intentions of politicians as they would be planning for their personal gain. Yet in an independent state, the issue of respect and loving one another culminates in peace and stability. In cases where the politicians are self-centred, it results in the same scenario that Ellis (2013) illustrates in the poem ‘Africa Day’ where the persona acknowledges the winning of the war but questions the winning of peace.

In the last stanza of the poem ‘Cry of a Falling Man’, the persona exposes the power that a vote has in elevating the politician and at the same time diminishing one’s own kinfolks and friends as illustrated in lines 17 to 20:

Give your votes to me
to trade it for gold
Your democratic right
to impoverish your kind

Resultantly, the politician’s deceits exposed and the moral is on the part of the reader to be able to make the right choices whenever politicians approach them for votes. It is now up to the reader whether to give their hand, eyes, heart, soul and votes to a cunning and deceiving person like a politician. Again, with people like the politician, it becomes difficult to realise and achieve all the goals, visions and ambitions that were set at the time before independence. This then links again to Ellis’ poem as it questions whether we won the peace even though we won the war.

4.4 Chapter summary

To sum up, the discussion in this chapter has been mainly on the themes of exile and homecoming as presented in the selected poems. From the selected 16 poems, nine explored the exile theme and the other seven the theme on homecoming. The next chapter, Chapter 5, provides the study's conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study was framed by the New Historicism and the Postcolonial Theory and it explored issues pertaining to the themes of exile and homecoming. The aim of the research was to investigate the writings of Namibian poets on the themes of exile and homecoming and their purpose of writing. Therefore, this chapter, Chapter 5, provides a summative conclusion regarding the main findings of the thesis as presented in Chapter 4 of this study. The study also offers recommendations that could be relevant to the Namibian literature and poetry by showing possible opportunities for further studies.

5.2 Summary of themes

This study has hypothesized that writers who wrote after independence or homecoming are advocating for fairness and that people should be treated fairly. In other words, the government system needs to change in order to benefit everyone. It seems as if only certain

people fought for Namibia's independence as they are the only ones benefiting from the country. Thus, the gap between the rich and the poor remains a huge problem.

5.2.1 Unemployment

This research has shown how the government has failed to deliver on the promises made before independence such as, poverty eradication, job creation, affordable land as well as the general improvement in the standard of living of ordinary Namibians. Thus, independence has failed to transform people's lives due to the corrupt government system of Namibia. The issue of unemployment was well presented in the poems by Thaniseb 'Black Man's Burden' and 'The Angry Young Man' (see section 4.3 **Homecoming as a theme in the selected poems of this study**).

5.2.2 Freedom, hope and justice

The research shows that, people are only free theoretically and not practically as colonialism is still in place. People's mindsets are colonised and they still follow what the western cultures have installed in the mindset of our fellow Namibians. Namibians hoped everything would change after independence but they were disappointed. There is no justice as only the rich are benefiting especially on issues regarding land. The rich own mansions with big plots in good suburbs such as Klein Windhoek while the poor live in Katutura in poverty. Kahengua's poem highlighted the issue of the gaps between the poor and the affluent in the poem 'From Within' (see section 4.3 **Homecoming as a theme in the selected poems of this study**). Their houses are quite small, and they are forced to accommodate family members as they cannot afford to own land. The study also found out that the opulent are not happy and they do not have many friends. For them, house pets carry more value as compared to people and they accommodate house pets rather than people.

5.2.3 Independence

This research found out that political independence came with the appearance of pyramids or hierarchies of power categorised by money in which several black elites occupying positions of influence in the government as presented in Thaniseb's poem 'Black Man's Burden'. Independence and leadership have arisen to become some of the major themes that the selected poetry has addressed. The poets under study bawl that the Namibian condition, which limits on trick, suffering and hunger can be explained in terms of the lack of sound leadership that is committed to creating a more comfortable environment.

The study has revealed that the poets regard greed as a condition that outlines Namibian leadership to the extent that true independence will remain a fable if the headship does not change its acts. For instance, how the politician would deceive ordinary people into voting him or her into power as illustrated in Molapong's (2005) poem 'Cry of a Falling Man'. The study has claimed that instead of distributing the country's wealth among the people, Namibian leadership tends to distribute poverty equally among the majority and that instead of the government giving the tenders to the government employees, the tenders are given to one particular person. Thus, leading one person to benefit what the whole citizens were supposed to benefit from.

5.3 Findings in relation to the research objectives

The objectives of this study are still the same as presented in Chapter 1 of this study. This section is therefore presenting whether the objectives were fulfilled or not. The objectives were to:

1.3.1 Investigate the representation of exile in the selected Namibian poetry;

1.3.2 Examine the representation of the theme of ‘homecoming’ in Namibian poetry; and

1.3.3 Explore the purpose of writing in exile and return (homecoming) as presented in the Namibian poems.

5.3.1 First Objective

The first objective was set to investigate the representation of exile in the selected Namibian poetry. It appears that all the nine poems that were consulted the theme of exile prevalent and the only difference was on how the exile was illustrated. For instance, the poem ‘Travelling’ by Kahengua (2002) manages, in just fourteen short lines, to paint a picture that shows the possibility of a change over that happens when one goes into exile. Again, the poem shows that after all, exile is not that dreadful, although other poems might depict it as otherwise. The persona in the poem ‘Travelling’ manages to forge a way of making the exile destination a place like home.

Unlike in the other eight poems, Kahengua’s ‘Birthday for a Refuge’; Ya Nangolo (2008) – ‘From Exile’, ‘Cassinga Song’, ‘Battle Echo’, ‘Nanyemba!’, and ‘I am Africa’; Thaniseb (2011) – ‘The Phoenix’; Kameeta (1986) – ‘Psalms 126’ echo the high hostility and low receptivity of the lives experienced in the foreign lands. Also, these poems communicate, through the choice of words, insightful and frightening lived realities of exilic life. It may therefore be commented that the first objective was successfully fulfilled as the nine poems managed to represent the two different facets of exile, as both positive and negative.

5.3.2 Second objective

The second objective of the study was to examine the representation of the theme of ‘homecoming’ in Namibian poetry. This objective just like the first one was successfully

fulfilled all seven selected poems. These poems illuminated on the theme of homecoming but differed on what was being highlighted in each of the poems. The poems are: 'Coming Home' and 'From Within' by Kahengua (2008, 2012); 'Namibia' by Ya Nangolo (2008); 'Black Man's Burden' and 'The Angry Young Man' by Thaniseb (2011); 'Africa Day' by Hugh Ellis (2013); and 'Cry of a falling Man' by Molapong (2005). These seven poems discourse the theme of homecoming. This question of returning home or return migration is "a situation where migrants return to their country of origin by their own choice, often after a significant period abroad" (Dustmann & Weiss, 2007, p. 23).

For illustration sake, Ya Nangolo's (2008) poem 'Namibia' is about a returnee who meditates on his cherished and treasured motherland. The reflection is deliberated in three stanzas each with five lines. A sense of attachment is instantly established in the first stanza as the persona justifies the reason behind returning to his home country. Moreover, the sense of attachment and belonging is further reinforced as the poem progresses where the persona expresses his deeper and inner feelings of being in a place that he can relate to, a place that is not strange but one that understands him and which he calls home.

On the other hand, Thaniseb's (2008) poem 'The Angry Man' addresses social challenges encountered by masses on a daily basis as they try to make ends meet in an independent country. In an independent state, issues such as employment, education and health services are expected to improve when a government changes from the oppressive one to an independent one. However, it appears, some of these challenges in oppressive governments are actually carried forward and inherited by the new government taking over.

Therefore, for this second objective it may be remarked that, it was successfully fulfilled as the poems represented the theme of homecoming of which each poem approached the theme from a different angle.

5.3.3 Third research objective

The third research objective was to explore the purpose of writing in exile and return (homecoming) as presented in the Namibian poems. This objective was also successfully executed as the poets wrote for the purpose of expressing their feelings as well as sharing with other people their personal and collective experiences both in exile and at homecoming.

5.4 Recommendations

The researcher has focused on the themes of exile and homecoming in poetry by Namibian poets and framing the study with New Historicism and Post-colonial theory. As such, the researcher proposes the following recommendations for future studies:

- The researcher recommends further studies on the reliability of the theme of exile and homecoming to be carried on in other genres such as prose and drama since this study focused on poetry only.
- Further research should consider how complaint literature is both remedial and inspiring in the way it opinions to potentials outside life's problems.
- Future studies may also consider experimenting with other literary theories other than the merged New Historicism and Post-colonialism selected for this study.
- As the focus of this study was on Namibian poets, the study recommends that future studies consider poets in other countries such as Zambia or Zimbabwe that also went through exile and homecoming episodes in their histories as African countries.

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