The paper examines style and communication in Brutus’ *A Simple Lust*, using seven poems selected at random for the explication of the linguistic idiosyncrasies of the poet through which communication is achieved. The findings are that the poems are brief, articulate protests, and evocative striving of the oppressed for freedom in the atmosphere of apartheid. They communicate the aspirations and needs of the people in tones of love, understanding and futuristic hope of liberation. The materialisation of the South African independence has made Brutus’ poems historical poetry, recommended for contrastive examination with post-apartheid poetry to determine the achievement of the freedoms completely or partially.

**Style, Communication and the Poems**

Brutus’ ‘linguistic idiosyncrasies mark out his poems’ iconicity – the correspondence between form and meaning. (Crystal and Davy, 9). He exposes the oppression of the black man in the language of love, understanding and hope.

Each poem in *A Simple Lust* - "Sirens Knuckles Boots and Early poems ", does not exceed a page. It is represented in course of the analysis, so as to give the reader a visual perception of its structure. "Nightsong: City" is a poem of nine lines:

> sleep well, my love, sleep well:
> the harbour lights glaze over restless docks
> police cars cockroach through the tunnel streets;
> from the shanties creaking iron-sheets
> violence like a bug-infested rag is tossed
> and fear is immanent as sound in the wind -swung
> bell;
> the long day's anger pants from sand and rocks; but for this
> breathing night at least, my land, my love, sleep well.
> *(A Simple Lust, 18)*

As a simple lyric poem, it expresses a single theme: the love of the poet for one beautiful town in South Africa, which is possibly Cape Town. The poem is true to its characteristic of music. Senanu and Vincent remark that the music of the poem is created through turning "the blurred sights and sounds into a lullaby for the city" (124-125).

Although the poem is not meant to lure a child to sleep, it is chant-like, a sophisticated lullaby that simultaneously alludes to a restless city that needs peace, a troublesome white community that is like a troublesome child that must go to sleep and let its mother rest - restlessness is conveyed through human and insect sounds -cars, creaking iron sheets and a bell.

The poem is structured into three stanzas of three lines each, almost of equal
length; when read aloud, they produce rhythmic movements: the beginning and the last lines are made up of equal lexical items of six words each, the last is a varied repetition of the first, giving the poem a unified structure. This example demonstrates the interrelationship between content and form; Killan avows this unity is a characteristic of the entire collection of *A Simple Lust* (86-98).

The tone of the poem manifests endearment of a mother for a child. It is a wonderful expression of love by the poet for the harbour, the skyscrapers and even slum dwellings of a South African town during the height of the apartheid regime.

The images in the poem show the constraints of the lover for the land or the possessor over his property. The "docks" are restless, as depicted, in a harsh environment, not merely as a busy commercial city; violence is personified against the backdrop of police cars driven on the streets and, slum dwellers hurrying and closing their doors. So brute force is subtly compared with a pest, a bug, which sucks human blood but the intensity in the poem is greater for violence has taken over the whole country like "a bug-infested rag" and, fear is evoked through the image of a bell sounding audibly. The anger of the oppressed is personified as sand and rocks panting after the day's activities.

The style of the poem is achieved by the repetition of certain words like "well", and "my"; the varied repetition of the first line at the end of the poem, the three lines that make up each stanza, the unequal but rhythmic lines of the poem and the imagery. These elements of style reinforce the theme of colonialism.

Povey's analysis of "Desolate" is on theme, he compares the poem to a type originated by John Donne, in which the poet pleads guilty, ironically, for loving his own wife and simultaneously his beloved country, which he serves devotedly (47 - 48). This explanation helps the reader to understand the poem. "Desolate" contrasts sharply with "Nightsong: City",

Desolate
Your face gleams up
beneath me in the dusk
abandoned:

a wounded dove helpless
beneath the knife of love. (*A Simple Lust*, 32)

This lyric poem expresses the single emotion of loneliness of a lover for a loved one from whom he has separated. The sad music of this lyric is created by not merely the choice of the words "desolate", "abandoned" and "helpless", but the strategic location of each word, where the reader is forced to pause in reading the poem. The poem offers delight through its music and physical shape on paper.

Unlike "Nightsong: City", a poem of three lines in each stanza of three stanzas, "Desolate" is a poem of three short lines in stanza one, one line in stanza two and three lines in stanza three. Why does the word "abandoned" stand alone as a stanza? It conveys forcefully the separation of a lover from his loved one.

The image of a wounded dove in the poem is symbolically representative of the loved one since a dove is a kind of pigeon and a symbol of peace; the brutality felt by the
loved one is adequately conveyed in its highest intensity, through the heartless wounds inflicted on the dove with a knife.

"Desolate' is an irregular but rhythmic and musical poem of three short stanzas; it conveys loneliness and separation of two loved ones. This is achieved through making a simple lyric poem an imagist poem: terse, conveying a single emotion of love, with a sharp brutal image of a wounded dove.

Courtly love is still the theme of "I might be a better lover"; it is used as the vehicle of articulation of the desired freedom from oppression.

I might be a better lover I believe
My own, if you could truly be my own:
trafficked and raddled as you are by gross
undiscerning, occupying feet,
how can I, the dispossessed, achieve
the absolute possession that we seek?
How can we speak infidelity
whom, forced apart, we guess each other's woe?
My land, my love, be generous to forgive
my nomad roving down the vagrant streets:
return to me, sometime be wholly my own
so you secure me entire, entirely your own. (A Simple Lust, 40)

Paul Theroux declares: "amorousness is something that is dear to Brutus, but something that is out of reach" (121). Ironically, the poem lends itself to the interpretation of an inconsiderate lover inflicting wounds on the land and its black South African dwellers.

The poem is a one-stanza poem of twelve lines. The entire poem is made up of only three full stops; the sense units are carefully marked off with commas, creating temporary pauses that make the poem sound rhythmic on reading it aloud.

The fleeting or rather the attainment of permanent love of the lover is conveyed through rhetorical questions. The first unanswered question does not leave the reader in doubt of the dispossession of the lover, while the second is the explanation of the separation occasioned by brutality and injustice and, not of unfaithfulness. Although the poems analysed earlier contrast sharply with the one in question, the image of the "nomad" poet wandering unhappily against the background of oppression and the vulgar white man hunting him from behind convey the state of apartheid South Africa.

"I am out of love with you" makes a sharp visual contrast with "I might be a Better lover", although they are poems of twelve lines each. Ken Godwin remarks that Brutus states his subject at the beginning so as to evoke a musical analogy "particularly the exposition development, and the recapitulation of the sonata form" (8). This is the secret of Brutus' lyricism.

The poem in question is divided into three stanzas of four short lines in each stanza. The words "again" and "vain" in the second stanza and, "cling" and "spring" in the third and last stanzas rhyme respectively; the entire poem is structured into three stanzas.
I am out of love with you for now; cold-sodden
in my mystery
your contours and allurements cannot move me:

I murmur old endearments to revive
our old familiar glow again
- like sapless autumn leaves they rasp in vain.
You have asked too much of me: fond-fool,
bereft I cling unloving, to remembered love
and the spring. (A Simple Lust, 4)

The tone is controlled, but there is a ring of sadness in it as validated by the words "out of love", "they rasp in vain" and "bereft I cling unloving"; these demonstrate the frustration of the poet and his momentary disassociation with his loved one, for he is only out of love "for now". "Cold-sodden" and "Fond-fool" are the Poet's coinages. The first is an amplification of wetness that reflects the state of the heart - aloofness of the poet from the loved one and land; the second is his zest for the loved one that has made him to be regarded as a fool, and the only option is to remember the good times in his mind so as not to abandon his course.

The image of leaves in "autumn" and "spring" is used to show momentary separation, as leaves wither in autumn and are revived in spring. The poet is in a personal romance with his landscape and his people despite his and their own sufferings; transcending theme, the poem is structured into four lines in each stanza. Coincidentally, it may be argued, each stanza represents a quarter of the year, and three stanzas form the complete cycle of the year and, since death and life are mentioned in the poem in association with the seasons of autumn and spring, death or oppression is conveyed through the poem, while life or liberty is anticipated in the future.

"The sounds begin Again" is structurally similar with the poem just examined. It is a poem written in three stanzas of four lines each, exhibiting a dreadful music which is produced with human and non-human agents - Siren, thunder, voice and boots. The poem is structured on three to six words a line, constraining its rhythm to be fast moving - an indication of the horrors in the society; police brutality is sudden and unexpected like thunder, the dreadful "Sirens" pierce the nerves and "boots" are used in kicking blacks at sensitive joints ("Knuckles"); these evoke an atmosphere of unrest, stampede of people, violence and sorrowful laments. Violence is vividly depicted with appropriate diction such as "wordless", "endless", "spilt" and "thunder". Roscoe remarks that the poem is "necessarily" built out of words, which conjure a situation that is wordless and sounds that convey desperation (162). The structure of the poem stands out:

The sounds begin again;
the siren in the night the
thunder at the door
the shriek of nerves in pain.
Then the keening crescendo of faces split
by pain
the wordless, endless wail only the
unfree know.

Importunate as rain
the wraiths exhale their woe
over sirens, knuckles, boots;
my sounds begin again (A Simple Lust, 19)

The poet's descriptions evoke horror but the poem is controlled under his organizing skill. He suffered in various ways in apartheid South Africa, including forced labour and a bullet shot through his back, but he protests in this poem with discipline and control, lifting it above mere propaganda rather, he has developed a form that is aesthetically satisfactory even while handling the theme of apartheid that can easily become propaganda in the hands of learners.

"Let not this plunder be misconstrued" is almost identical with the last two poems analysed, in the number of stanzas and lines, but different in the arrangement of the middle or second stanza, which is indented from the margin unlike the first and the last stanzas.

Let not this plunder be misconstrued:
"This is the body's expression of need -
Poor wordless body in its fumbling way

Exposing heart's - hunger by raiding and hurt;

Secret recesses of lonely desire
Gnaw at the vitals of spirit and mind
ft-
When shards of existence display eager blades
to menace and savage the pilgriming self:

Bruised though your flesh and all - aching my arms
Believe me, my lovely, I too reel from our pain –
Plucking from you these your agonized gifts
<5"
Bares only my tenderness - hungering need.
(A Simple Lust, 28)

Two things are expressed in this poem: the nationalist concern of the poet and his personal love for a woman. Ambiguity is the language of this poem, which as Miller and Currie attest, it is a quality that enables critics to study several levels of meaning, in that while the poet is writing about something another thing is suggested (66). The poem is memorable - it is short and the diction suggests brutality. The latter is deduced from the phrases "bruised flesh", "all-aching arms", "the body's expression of need" and "gnaw at the vitals". These evoke the image of a sexually brutalised woman and a vandalized natural environment, with its rich mineral resources reserved for an exclusive class of people; ironically, the land is simultaneously a woman and South Africa. Although the plea may be conceded
by the dehumanised, the tone is ironically tender and defiant

Hill-Lubin avows that women are "violated" and men are "castrated", ironically, love is the spring from which the poems flow in their purity without being tainted with bitterness or hatred, making the poet a greater fighter for his people, even when he is one of those who has suffered from apartheid, as shown in his imprisonment and the wounds inflicted on his body in trying to escape from the horrors of apartheid (123-134).

"Somehow We Survive" is the seventh and last poem for study. It is an eight-stanza poem of sixteen lines:

Somehow we survive
and tenderness, frustrated, does not wither

Investigating searchlights rake
our naked unprotected contours;

Over our heads the monolithic decalogue
of facist prohibition glowers
and teeters for catastrophic fall;

Boots club the peeling door But somehow
we survive severance, deprivation, loss.
Patrols uncoil along the asphalt dark hissing their
menace to our lives,
Most cruel, all our land is scarred with terror,
rendering unlovely and unlovable;
sundered are we and all our passionate surrender
But somehow tenderness survives. (A Simple Lust, 4)

The poem is structured on a three-tier survivor technique: the declaration of a brutalised survivor at the beginning, his separation from his loved one in the fifth stanza and, the survival of tenderness in his heart in the last stanza. The poem progresses along this trend of thought.

The poem is rich in imagery; tenderness is juxtaposed with a flower that is capable of withering, however, it survives. This gives way to the personification of land as a naked human being deprived of the right to privacy by "the investigating searchlights" put on her in stanza two. In stanza three, we confront the personified land frightened by cruelty, heading for a "catastrophic fall". In stanza six, the metaphor of a dangerous serpent is evoked through the words "uncoil" and "hissing their menace" on the lives of black South Africans while "tenderness" is personified as a triumphant person who stands tall over frustrations and injustices of the apartheid regime. Roscoe states that the poems demonstrate masterly control of tone about the tension in apartheid South Africa (159). The form correlates with the theme to offer aesthetic delight.

The poems of Brutus vary in lines and stanzas; there are various rhythms created by repetition, punctuation, stress and diction. These features, tone and apt images of pain and, love as a modulating factor, constitute style. Form reinforces the theme of suffering, giving the reader a vivid picture of the apartheid world. The ambiguity
created between land and woman enriches the poems; love is the thread of human kindness that knits the themes of suffering and liberation together, making both words and symbols interchangeable. The poems have historical relevance; they remain to caution whites not to design other inhuman forms against their fellow men. The striving of the people is aptly communicated and conveyed through linguistic choices that show maturity.

Works Cited