

## CHAPTER - IV

### **Analysis of the Racial Conflict in Lewis Nkosi's *Mandela's Ego***

The novel *Mandela's Ego* was published in 2006. The novel revolves around the black character Dumisani Gumede, who suffers from impotency. Dumisani lives in a remote village, Mondi where political affairs are insignificant to the people. He is influenced by the political leader Nelson Mandela, who was struggling against white for the freedom of the black people. He tries to imitate Mandela from his childhood.

The novel opens with the remarks, where Dumisa, a Zulu boy, curses and abuses himself due to his impotency. But at last, Dumisa gets his nerve power back when Mandela released from police custody. Writer co-relates the relation between Dumisa's impotency and Mandela's freedom. For Dumisa, Mandela is not only the black leader, but also his confidence and power. Dumisa has developed respect for the well-known figure of Nelson Mandela. He studies at Mondi Missionary School. Father Ross is his favorite teacher. He tells the stories of local medieval shepherds and damsels, adventures, strict moralities of the Christian church. He openly discusses with students on daily affairs of apartheid system in South Africa. They all discuss about a strike on the Johannesburg gold mines. This discussion helped black children to understand the problem of racial discrimination in their own country. Dumisa is a type character in the novel. He represents for the black children who want to eradicate the social evil which was existing in the society.

Dumisa's uncle, Simon, tells all stories about Mandela to him. Thus, Simon becomes his mentor. Influenced by the childhood stories of Mandela, Dumisa steals chicken so his father, Mziwakhe Gumede scolds him and his mother Mamkhize saves him from his father's beatings. He asked curiously his uncle as: "Uncle Simon, what about that Big Man

you're always telling me about. Did he also steal chickens when he was a boy?" (18). Dumisa wants to imitate Nelson in every sense, without considering the activity done by Mandela.

Nelson Mandela fights for equal rights for all races in South African society. Freedom movement of Nelson Mandela has influenced Dumisa, who starts to worship and becomes follower of Nelson Mandela. Dumisa tries to awake the people against the racial discrimination practiced by the government and white race. Once, Father Ross tells about an incident of a miners' strike in the classroom. In the strike, seven miners were shot dead by police. This is one of the events affects the mind of Dumisa. Therefore, Dumisa decides to struggle against the inhuman treatment given by the whites to the blacks. So, he wants to perform the activities like Nelson Mandela to get equal rights for the blacks.

Therefore, the seed of opposition to apartheid policy is sown by teacher in childhood days of Dumisa. At the age of fourteen, Dumisa is fascinated by the photograph of the great man. He likes to read anything he can get about Mandela. One day, he learns that Mandela is a big lawyer and leading a great fight for the rights of the Black people. Though, he is the Black person he lives like the White man in a rich White suburb with his black servants. Mandela increases Dumisa's self-righteous and self-belief and makes him ready to fight against apartheid system and racism.

Mandela's followers call him as, 'Magic Madiba'. But, the protagonist of the novel is in the procedure of crossing the boundary from childhood to adulthood. Nkosi delineates the picture of satire about the shattering consequences of excessive hero worship. There are some incidents which stimulate Dumisa in the novel.

Dumisa's Uncle Simon Gumede is a clerk in the native commissioner's office and works as interpreter in it. That's why he becomes an important person in Mondi. Simon tells many incidents regarding Mandela and court to Dumisa. Dumisa feels cheerful and energized about it. He makes the fantastical world from stories told to him by his uncle Simon Gumede. Simon is the first who shows Dumisa Johannesburg magazine carrying a photograph of Mandela and his young bride Winnie Madikizela. He tells many stories and rumors about the actions and the abilities of the politician. Articles in the magazines speak about Mandela's underground movement against apartheid government's security forces. He is considered at the same time as one of the revolutionary leaders in Asia and Africa who fight for the freedom of black people and recognized as the most influential leader in South Africa.

The protagonist Dumisa is attracted by the beauty of Nobuhle, a village girl. He persuades her. He has not embarrassed of it as he knows that Mandela also persuades to women. He likes to imitate Mandela, totally. So, he does not feel guilty about it. Later, at the same time the novel combines' satire with skeptical record interweaving the magical time of coming of age by the boys in Zululand with the remarkable moment of Mandela's going underground. Dumisa's overstatement depicts ironically in the novel.

The apartheid laws are responsible for raising voice of black's against white's supremacy. Therefore, thousands of Dumisa are created by Mandela to fight against South African government. People are badly punished by the government of South Africa. The novelist depicts one incident of Mandela when he was working as a lawyer. He is considered as a *kaffir* by other White lawyers while he was a servant of the magistrate court. On one occasion, Mandela asked a question to white

constable, who being white became irritated and refused to answer. The judge replied “I am afraid you have to, constable. Mandela may be a kaffir but according to our law, when he appears before me, Mandela is a servant of the court” (20). This is the horrible example of racism in South Africa.

Dumisa’s cousin Siphon scolds him for hiding cattle in the white man’s farm. As a result of apartheid policy, it may be considered as a crime. Blacks do not have permission to act against apartheid laws. Siphon says furiously to Dumisa as:

In Bass Willard’s farm! *Sibunu!* Anus of a dog! What are you telling us? That you took cattle into a white man’s farm! What kind of mischief is that? How could have guessed you would be hiding in a white man’s farm? Who has ever heard of such a thing? Ask anyone! Who has ever done something like that? We could’ve looked for you all day, and here you’re telling us you were hiding in a white man’s farm! You call that fair? This is indeed a changed world. The shades will never forgive you for fooling them like that. (53)

The above comments give the intensity of the racial discrimination in South Africa. Even the black considers that they should not go against the white people. Inferior complexity is developed in psychology of the black people which is the result of above comments. Regarding the inferiority complex, following comments are given in Wikipedia:

An inferiority complex is a lack of self-worth, a doubt and uncertainty, and feelings of not measuring up to standards. An inferiority complex occurs when the feelings of inferiority are intensified in the individual through discouragement or failure. Those who are at risk for developing a complex include people who: show signs of

low self-esteem or self-worth, are of ethnic minority, have low socioeconomic status, or have a history of depression symptoms.

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inferiority\\_complex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inferiority_complex),

Retrieved on 21/05/2013>

Due to the constant exploitation by the white people and dark colour of skin, the Blacks have developed inferiority complex.

Dumisa experiences racism from his childhood days. Therefore, he gets aware about it and so he attracts towards Mandela and his movement. Throughout Dumisa's schooldays, his friends and teacher father Ross discuss on racial issues. Once father Ross told that in the year 1948 the Boers came into the power. From that year, apartheid laws were imposed over all South Africa. In Election some people voted with the Boers to keep Black people down. Many wanted the Boers to be succeeded and to do dirty work for them. It shows that the white people are responsible to grow inequality between such races. Dumisa's school is founded by Scottish Missionaries. It describes as:

Many church schools threatened to close down altogether, rather than teach a doctrine based on the principle of fundamental and ineradicable differences between the races as, "Black and white are like the tracks of a railway line," a Government spokesperson explained over national radio.

"They run side by side, but the twain will never meet. (72)

Though there is not any difference between the black and the white, they cannot walk, run and even work together during apartheid policy.

In the beginning period of ruling apartheid policy, it was compulsory to carry identity cards by the Black people. The same rule was not applicable to the white people, which developed inferior

complexity among the blacks. This compulsion is one of the major causes behind racial conflict in South Africa. Dumisa's teacher Father Ross worries about the critical condition in the society. He feels that the things may get more difficult and warns students as:

Things had already become worse. Hitherto, black males had been required to carry on their bodies at all times identity documents, derisively called "*Dom passes*". A joke going the rounds was that in South Africa, a black man could not be born, get work, marry, die or be buried without the hated document. At Mondi, no one bothered to carry their *dopass*, except when travelling to the big cities of Escort, Ladysmith or Durban. (73)

As apartheid laws and racism strongly work in South Africa, things become more problematic. It means that, Black cannot be born, get work, marry, die or buried without the hated document. During this time, around a hundred marchers have marched against the passing laws, out of them sixty nine marchers are killed in the gunfire at a place outside Johannesburg called Sharpville. This law extends not only to men, but also women. Women of all races march to Pretoria in protest. They all protest outside the police station. On same occasion, Dumisa's hero, Mandela burns his document. Consequently, South African police follows him to catch. Even so, he becomes successful in escaping from police.

The novelist focuses on the horrible laws and its effects on the blacks in South Africa. Dumisa likes to imitate Mandela hence; he follows him and assumes himself as Mandela. He wants to appear like Mandela and he tried to change his personality entirely. During these days, Mandela arranges confidential meeting of the Black people to protest against racism. On the whole, he wants to overthrow apartheid system from South Africa. Therefore he sends some messengers to all

parts of the country for the awareness of the black people. One day, a messenger comes at Mondi Missionary School. He looks like a soldier in the uniform with a dark beret with a pin bearing the letters and colors of freedom movement stuck on it. He tries to convince black natives as:

No, "Pick up your load," meant taking your responsibility to resist oppression and fighting on until you reached the beautiful land of freedom, the end to all struggles.... "I'm not the one. There is a greater one, who will speak to you from the platform at Pietermaritzburg, at Umgugundlovu! His name is Nelson Mandela! I am not fit to tie his shoelaces. You'll hear him. He will speak and he will tell us what is to be done! This will be scene of the greatest convention ever seen in South Africa. We will call all freedom-lovers to a final struggle with the enemy. (74)

The messenger of Mandela appeals to all students in the school. Dumisa listen this very intentionally. It was an appeal to all black people to unite and struggle against the oppression of white people. So, the messenger advises pupils to form a Football Club. Foundation of football club will gather the blacks of the particular region. This will help to unite and prepare psychology of black youngsters to fight against the apartheid system. Actually the messenger is a follower of Mandela so he tried to aware the blacks about their work through such kind clubs. Dumisa becomes the first volunteer. We know, Dumisa is a follower of Mandela and at the present he gets a chance to work for Mandela. His great aspiration is to fight against racism. Dumisa wants to contribute his life for freedom movement. He becomes founder member of Mandela Football Club. The messenger visits frequently to school and addresses to all the students. Sayitsheni Masinye and Sayitsheni Ntongela are police

who come to school. They scold the messenger, who has arranged the meeting outside the school without permission. They scold him as:

This gathering is illegal!” Sayitsheni Masinye declared, and then turned to the stranger. “And you? Have you got a permit to hold a meeting at this school?”... “That is why, when you see aircraft flying into South African airspace, they must have a permit. They cannot plead that they are using the open air’, as you call it. That is the law of all nations. The airspace belongs to the Government. You must come with us to answer some questions. (75)

South African police becomes more vigilant in those days because they suspected on the messenger. But, the stranger is confident and courageous freedom fighter. The lands, rivers, mountains everything belongs to the government. Even aircraft do not fly without permission of South African government. Police try to threaten black people always. The Blacks became insecure. Police come Dumisa’s house and informed it to his father.

Though Dumisa’s father Maziwakhe is a Black, he is a distinguished and rich person in his area. But, some kind of inferiority complex is in his mind. He is attentive and cautious about it. Still he cannot do anything in opposition to racism. Dumisa opposes inequity openly. It is just beginning to do work. The policemen complain about Dumisa to his father. He enquires about latest law of the government to check out citizen of all country. The law is assigned with the Black only. At beginning some people tries to oppose, law, but it is not any easy for the black one. As his father Maziwakhe asks the policeman about carrying Dom passes to them. They become speechless. He questioning to the police as: “Do I want what to happen at Mondli? Do I not carry a passbook like anyone else when I take my timber to Estcourt? Is that not



enough? Must MaMkhize and my daughters Ntombazi and Fikile also carry a pass to satisfy the white man?" (77).

Policemen do not give any satisfied answers of Mziwakhe's questions. As the messenger tells about Mandela's a meeting at Pietermaritzburg, Dumisa initiates to prepare for that. He dreams merely about it. Thus he starts to do work to oppose an apartheid system in his village. Accordingly, he holds a meeting and addresses to the Black people. He declares himself to be one of the persons, who organized Umazabalazo. He knows that Mandela is a person who buried his identity pass and hides himself from the police. After that his father asks some questions to Dumisa. He observes the changes in his son's behavior that he always speaks about Mandela only. He answers to all the questions of his father. His mind fully engrosses with the thoughts of Mandela and his freedom movement. Whereas, he raises some questions to his father about giving the name of Mandela to football club as, "The Boers and the English can give anyone's name to their clubs-Miller, Paul Kruger, Gordon, but we can't?" (79).

There are many questions about the superiority of Whites in the mind of Dumisa. He wants to raise voice against the entire position. He argues with his father about the authority of whites to give names of their choices. Then, why Blacks have not such authority? He becomes very furious. Whatever may be, but Mziwakhe becomes very happy and satisfied ultimately. Then he adds and says confidently to his father as: "Mandela is coming to Umgungundlovu, where he will give the biggest speech ever heard in this country." Dumisa had confidence about his hero, he spoke with pride as, "Mandela will ask for a new parliament that will be full of black people" (80).

However, Mziwakhe warns him that it is not an easy to fight with the Boers. They have guns. Dumisa becomes aware about the problems

BARR. B. LASHAB KHARDEKAR LIBRARY  
SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY, COLHAFUR.

but he thinks united blacks will overcome all the difficulties. He determines to fight against racism like his hero, Nelson Mandela. Except it Dumisa loves Nobuhle. He wants to marry her. Hence, he persuades her often. But she does not give any response to him. After schooling days, Dumisa joins the Durban Tourist Company with his friend Sofa Sonke.

The Black Mkaba is one of the fascinating characters who works as a servant for the White couple Mr. and Mrs. Lombard. He feels proud of it. So, he says that though they are very rich, they give him very good treatment. Mkaba discusses about the strike incident with Dumisa that took place in Durban before some days. He explains further that some workers fought with police at the docks. They went on fast until their demands were fulfilled. Mandela supports and says people, "Listen, you got to eat in order to fight another day. No army moves on an empty stomach" is what he said. "You must eat. In fact I *command* you to eat," he said. "No, I *order* you to eat." That's what the Big Man said" (104).

Dumisa is stunned and stimulated by Mandela's supports to the peoples involved in the strike. But, Mkaba didn't involve in a strike but he is truly worshipper of Mr. and Mrs. Lombard. In the meantime, a horrible incident takes place in Mkaba's life. Mrs. Lombard tells him to take off his dress, because she wants to see and sketch a naked picture with a chains round his ankles and a steel collar around his neck. She says:

I want you completely naked and all to myself,' she said. She was smiling as she said it....I'll put chains round your ankles and a steel collar around your neck and you'll be completely naked. Then I'll paint a picture of you looking like one of the old Nubian slaves ready to be bought or sold. How would you like that, Mkaba?' She said. 'I'm going to

make you famous, and you're going to make me famous.  
You'll see. (106)

Mkaba considers his masters very good human beings but they are also the same as other white people in South Africa. The character Mkaba explores and represents the inferior complex of the black. Unfortunately, the picture and a painter become very famous. It is advertised in the newspapers. Even in the parliament some questions are asked about showing nude black man in a popular calendar. The shopkeeper Bob Kaplan hangs the picture in his shop. It is describes as:

In Parliament, questions were asked about the propriety of showing the body of a naked *muntu* in popular calendar. A Government minister from upcountry issued a statement condemning the degradation of public morals, and asking how it was that a decent white woman couldn't turn a page of the month without first looking at a naked black man. In letters to newspapers, some white people wanted to know how it was possible that a decent white woman was able to paint such a picture at all, how a respectable white woman was able to bring herself to look at a naked black man day in and day out while painting his body, drooping genitals and all! (107)

The discussion in the parliament and the description of picture given by writer focus on the superiority complex of White people in South Africa who feel that watching a naked picture of Black slave is against their dignity. Regarding the Superiority complex Fredrick Hung in his article *Racial Superiority and Inferiority Complex* comments:

The racial superiority complex is an absurd and stupid thing which converts useful human energy into collective hatred and suspicion. Many wars and wasteful destruction of life

can be traced back to the origin of the false conception of racial superiority. (35)

<<http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/030/features/pdf/Racial%20Superiority%20and%20Inferiority%20Complex.pdf>.

Retrieved on 17/03/14>

The incident deeply affects the mind of Dumisa. Consequently, such incidents enforce Dumisa towards opposition of racism.

Meanwhile, thousands of people go to Pietermaritzburg for Mandela's speech. During this time, apartheid laws are forcibly activated in Pietermaritzburg. Many people are arrested without any reason. Dumisa's mother scolds him and is not ready to give him permission to visit Pietermaritzburg. She doubts that he will be arrested. Except it, his father persuades her and gives permission to go to Pietermaritzburg, because he is aware of Dumisa's passion for Mandela. He considers himself as Mandela and he cannot live without him. Therefore he starts to do work like his hero in his village, Mondi. He builds up a platform openly to fight and work against racism in his village.

After reaching Pietermaritzburg, Dumisa meets one of the delegates and convinces him for permission to meet Mandela. Dumisa is not in mood to listen anything except of Mandela's voice. He requests delegate as:

Dumisa was nearly in tears. "I'm not from the Special Branch!" he shouted miserably. "I've come to meet Mr. Mandela himself!" "Have you got business with Comrade Mandela?" asked one delegate. "We are members of the Mandela Football Club! We are from Mondi in the Ukhahlamba Mountains. There are twelve of us waiting to greet the Big Man. (118)

It shows Dumisa's eagerness to meet his hero. He gets mad for him. He listens consciously Mandela's motivating speech. He says that the country is being pushed into declaring itself a republic. The government must call national convention to discuss a new constitution, which abolish all injustice and discriminatory laws. As Dumisa sees his own photograph of him with Mandela he feels proud for himself and for his Mandela Football Club. He pleased and grown up his hair long and parted in the middle like Mandela. It shows his devotion to Mandela. He says to his father as, "Mandela will form an underground army, and when he does I will be the first to join" (125).

Whenever Dumisa talks about his hero he becomes very thrilled and yells very loudly. He tells his feelings to his good friend, Nozizwe as:

Mandela, *e-he-ee-e!*"Dumisa shouted. "I met him, Nozi. I shook the great man's hand. Oh, what a man! I shall never forget the firm grasp of his hand, warm, hard, and full of trust. He congratulated the members of the Mandela Football Club for the work is doing in Mondli. 'One day,' he said, 'I hope to visit you.' And bidding us a safe journey home, he raised his fist and shouted, 'Freedom in our lifetime!' I tell you, Nozi, you can't know how it feels to shake the hand of that great man. And when he puts his arm around your shoulder, it's as if a great warrior has seized and shaken not your hand but your very soul. (140)

After some days, SofaSonke shows the news about Mandela's arrest, on front page of the Zulu newspaper. SofaSonke is a bus driver in Durban Tourist Company who hates Mandela and pretends as a great leader. Mandela is captured when returning from a secret visit and meeting of freedom fighters of the Durban underground. Accordingly, Mandela and his chauffeur are taken by special branch of policemen like

Captain Katzenberger, Captain Monstert, and Captain Vanzyl. They become very happy because they want to take him alive with his followers. Sergeant J.F.K. Malan comes there and ties Mandela with rope. Captain Katzenberg explains his deliberation about Mandela to Sergeant Malan as:

When we get him, Colonel,” Sergeant Malan said, breathing heavily within the confined space and straining for a clear view of Katzenberger’s brick-red face, “We’ll tie him nice and proper and then drag him behind one of the motor cars, like the big black pig that he is, for the world to see. These tins will make a noise like Genghis Khan! (153)

They all spent almost three years trying to obtain conviction against Mandela and his 156 followers. Thus, they think that instead of putting him and his criminal gang into prison, they wish to ask their science boys to develop a toxin that slowly cripples his brain. It shows the racial conflict and hate towards the black people. It is horrible inhuman behavior with blacks. After hearing it, Dumisa is entirely destroyed. It affects not on his mind but on the body. As a consequence he becomes impotent and at the same moment, Nobuhle agrees to have sex with him. His mind rejects her and she gets anxious. He thinks himself as , “He, a Zulu *isoka* of great renown, a lover of countless women, known across the length and breadth of the land for his exploits in the name of the black Pimpernel, the great Mandela, was the Black Pimpernel, the great Mandela, was failing”(157).

Dumisa thinks that the freedom movement will stop due to the arrest of Nelson Mandela. He has realised to get justice freedom movement needs leader and without Mandela it is not possible to get freedom to the black people. He always thinks about Mandela and apartheid system. He feels alone without him and becomes lame without

his representative. It makes him lame mentally and physically. He loses his confidence and turn into passive. It explores his affinity towards Mandela and the black people. He gets seriously ill. He dreams only about Mandela with tall, bearded, and eyes luminous with desire for freedom.

Race, racism, racial conflict and his misfortune are responsible for Dumisa's psychosexual illness. Lewis Nkosi describes his condition as:

Dumisa was ill, following Mandela's capture; Dumisa was seriously ill, unable to eat, unable to sleep. He suffered terrible nightmares, he complained of splitting headaches, his eyes yellowed, began slowly to dim. For hours on end he was mute, unable to utter more than half a dozen words at a time. Then his hearing became impaired, he hallucinated. Sometimes he dreamed of Mandela, his hero, tall, bearded, eyes luminous with desire for freedom. (162)

It means that at one stroke he loses his hero, Mandela and his love, Nobuhle Gabela perhaps, forever. His mind is unable to accept it. Impotency is symbolically used by the author in the novel. It is the symbol of lack of fertilization and unhappiness. If Mandela will be killed, there is no possibility of getting justice to the black in South Africa in coming future years. After Mandela's arrest, the police first took him to Pietermaritzburg and then Johannesburg. Mandela in front of Magistrate says, "I was the symbol of justice in the court of the oppressor, the representative of the great ideals of freedom, fairness and democracy in a society that dishonored those virtues" (163).

Mandela's arresting not only affects Dumisa but to the whole country. This is the beginning of a dark and terrible time. Dumisa becomes homeless in his own house. He consults many doctors for getting his sex power back. Nearly 27 years, he lives in the awful

condition. The Black protagonist suffers a lot like his hero. His skin begins to tighten and turns towards middle age. He has equal sympathy with his leader. As a result, Mandela is in prison against his will, but Dumisa's body becomes his own prison. During these days, he does various jobs. He becomes directionless and wanders aimlessly from one place to another..

Later the novelist skillfully describes the incident when Mandela comes out of jail after twenty seven years. He writes as:

It is said that over a billion people around the world watched the momentous event on television. Among those who had waited for twenty-seven years to witness this great occasion was a man from the District of Mondli, whose hair was beginning to go gray, and whose name was scarcely remembered, even among those who had last heard Mandela speak in public three decades earlier, at the All-In Conference in Pietermaritzburg. In his youth Dumisani Gumede had been chairman of the Mandela Football Club, and had come close to meeting his hero at the Conference. Now, miraculously, triumphantly, still Mandela's most devout follower, he was in Cape Town, about to hear the same man speak on the Grand Parade .(177)

It's really very romantic occurrence in the life of Blacks in South Africa. Thus, everyone eagerly waits for the real hero who was in prison for getting freedom from racism. Finally, he wins the first racial conflict. It explains as, "It is said that after almost three decades in Prison he was grey-haired and thin, and when he reached the prison gate his first gesture was to raise a clenched fist and shout *Amndala!* There were hundreds of black and white people waiting in the hot sun to greet him" (180-81).



At last, once again Mandela becomes ready to fight against racism until getting complete freedom from apartheid policy of the government. Similarly once again Dumisa reunites with his beloved, Nobuhle. He gets his nerve power back and he becomes able to fulfill his sexual relation with his beloved Nobuhle. Lewis Nkosi presents Mandela as not only a freedom fighter and a leader but 'everything' for Dumisa and Black people also. Like Bakha, the central character of Mulkraj Anand's *Untouchable*, Dumisa represents the consciousness of his own race against the racial conflict in South Africa. As a mouthpiece of the novelist, Dumisa supports the freedom fight for Blacks against the contemporary government who represents White consciousness, which tries to dominate the people according to their race. Lewis Nkosi has deliberately used the story of life and works of Nelson Mandela. Nkosi creates the world of realism through his literature. The novel is a representation of real and truthful life of South Africa.