

THE CONCEPTION AND EVOLUTION OF CHARACTERIZATION IN THE ZULU NOVEL

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that *THE CONCEPTION AND EVOLUTION OF CHARACTERIZATION IN THE ZULU NOVEL* is my own work both in conception and execution. The sources used have been indicated by means of complete reference. I also declare that I am responsible for the opinions expressed and conclusions reached in this work.

J H NTULI

JANUARY 2000

DEDICATION

TO

My late parents Mr and Mrs George KaGxagxagxa Pakosi Ntuli

My wife Phumzile, MaButhelezi and our children.

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SUMMARY

In this research work an attempt is made to clear certain misconceptions and generalizations which prevail amongst certain literary critics, viz that characterization in the Zulu novel is static and should be modelled on the Eurocentric canon. Investigation into this problem shows the opposite.

Particular attention is devoted to demonstrating that characterization in the Zulu novel is evolutionary. And it is indeed so. Characterization in the Zulu novel has changed over the changing times under changing circumstances. The study shows that factors such as folktale residual material, traditional beliefs, christianization, urbanization, industrialization, etc. all have in one way or another impacted on the art of characterization in the Zulu novel. For this purpose we have divided the Zulu novel into three different developmental periods. These literary periods are: the period of Zulu narrative which is mostly dominated by folktale material and traditional beliefs. The second period is characterized by traditional beliefs and historical material. This manifests itself mostly in the historical novel. The third period is dominated by the social or psychological novel. Characterization during this period is characterized by such factors as christianisation, acculturation, urbanization, apartheid laws, industrialization which forced people to move to big cities like Johannesburg. During this period social adjustment problems manifest themselves in antisocial, criminal behaviour and maladjustment on the part of the characters who find themselves in this strange environment. It is, however, important to note that these periods are not watertight entities. But research has shown that a progression – retrogression tendency is found amongst the Zulu novel writers. A case in point is the impact of ancestral beliefs which transcends the three periods of the novel investigated. This means one cannot divorce entirely a literature from its past, which is why we accept Iyesere's theory that the modern writer is to his indigenous oral tradition

trapped as a snail is to its shell. Even in foreign habitat, a snail never leaves its shell behind, (*The Journal of Modern African Studies* 1975 : 107-119).

The study shows that characterization in the Zulu novel follows a definite pattern of development. Therefore the Zulu novel is a literature in its own right. The research shows that the present Eurocentric tools of criticism have grown alongside western literacy tradition, but definitely outside the African milieu. It is noted that characterization in the Zulu novel has been, to a very large extent, influenced by the cultural and traditional background of the Zulu people.

The study shows that while using general laws of literary criticism scholars must be mindful of the fact that the Zulu novel is a novel in its own right and has peculiar characteristics of its own.

0. MOTIVATION AND MODUS OPERANDI

0.1 AIM OF STUDY

- 1.1.1(a) This study aims at demonstrating that characterization or characters found in the Zulu novel, especially characters found in the early stages of the novel, are unique and peculiar to the Zulu custom and tradition.
- (b) The intention of the author is to show that characterization in the Zulu novel is evolutionary and not static. Characterization has grown and changed with times. Characterization follows a definite pattern.
- (c) The author intends to investigate the following:
- (i) What different types of characters are found in the Zulu novel;
 - (ii) How characters are created i.e. what principles and literary techniques are used by the Zulu novelist in character-creation;
 - (iii) What factors influence the art of characterization in the Zulu novel;
 - (iv) The importance of characters in relation to other component elements of the novel.

- (d) The research also aims at establishing whether or not it is a fault to have flat characters in the Zulu novel.
- (e) To review and give a critical analysis of characterization in the Zulu novel.

02 MOTIVATION

- (a) The author has been prompted to undertake this research because no in depth study of this nature has ever been done in this particular field of the Zulu novel and yet characters form such an important component element of the novel. Only cursory remarks and unscientific generalizations on characterization in the Zulu novel have been made by some critics.
- (b) As no in depth research has been undertaken, a student of the Zulu novel or non-Zulu interested in criticism will have a problem in understanding characterization. He will have no literary theoretical background against which he must evaluate the characters he comes across in the Zulu novel. There are no clearly formulated guidelines for the reader or critic to use in assessing the standard of characterization in the Zulu novel.
- (c) This lack of theoretical background on characterization in the Zulu novel has led to the tendency by some critics to rely entirely on and apply Eurocentric standards in evaluating characters; which is not justified as these two literatures emanate from different societal and cultural backgrounds.

03 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- (a) It is a fact that quite a lot has been written about characterization in the novel in general, especially in respect of the English and the Afrikaans novels. It is, however, equally true that no in depth research has ever been undertaken on characterization in the Zulu novel. Characterization in the Zulu novel cannot just be indiscriminately compared with characterization in other novels without taking into account certain factors peculiar to the people concerned i.e. Zulu people.
- (b) We then ask ourselves whether it is always a fair judgement to evaluate a character given in a Zulu novel against western standards as suggested by some critics. If we say it is not always fair, at what stage or literary period can we start applying western standards in evaluating character portrayal in a Zulu novel?
- (c) It is essential to try and establish certain principles or to formulate theories upon and against which characterization in the Zulu novel can be based, tested and evaluated.
- (d) Certain specific factors peculiar to the Zulu culture and customs have played a definite influence on the art of characterization in the Zulu novel. It is, therefore, of utmost importance to investigate what these factors and influences are.
- (e) No previous research has shown that the Zulu novel shows different phases of development. It is also these phases, among

other factors, which have exerted a great deal of influence on characterization in the Zulu novel.

- (f) It is appropriate in the proposed research study to investigate why the present Zulu novelist has abandoned or reduced the use of non-human characters (as it was the case during the early stages of the Zulu literature).
- (g) There is a general tendency and misconception amongst some critics to regard the Zulu novel as being inferior to other novels because of the fact that, especially during the early stages of this novel, flat characters were predominantly used, as if it were a fault to have a flat character in a given novel.

04 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- (a) A critical examination and comparison of the Zulu novels which were written during the three literary periods, viz. the pre-historical novel, the historical novel and the post-historical novel, will be made with the view to demonstrating the evolution and developmental stages of characterization.
- (b) Data obtained from the research study will be critically examined, analysed and compared with some of the views held by critics on or of characterization in the Zulu novel.

05 DELIMITATION OF STUDY

(a) In order to be able to examine characterization in the Zulu novel closely and critically the research will be limited to the three literary periods viz.

- (i) the early period of the written narratives
- (ii) the historical novel, and
- (iii) the post-historical novel

CHAPTER 1

1. DEFINITION OF TERMS AND GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

It is customary and conventional for the researchers to define some of the terminology they use in their research studies. The reason for this practice is simple and straightforward. Researchers usually attach specific meaning to certain terms they use in their research. It is for this very reason that, in order to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations on the part of the reader or evaluators of the research, certain terms be defined from the outset.

In this study the undermentioned terms need to be defined and explained:

- (i) the novel
- (ii) characterization
- (iii) character

1.1 THE TERM NOVEL

In spite of the many attempts that have been made by the Zulu novelists and literary critics to define a novel, no conclusive consensus has ever been reached as to what exactly is meant by the 'Zulu novel'. In some instances

no clear distinction is drawn between a novel and a novelette:

(a) **NGIDI**

The terms 'novel' and novelettes have all along been used as if they were synonymous. This confusion and inconsistency are also experienced when reference is made to the Zulu novel. In order to illustrate this confusion an example may be cited in Ngidi's "Comments on some Zulu Novels". He writes as follows:-

In this short article we aim at mentioning some novels or novelettes that Bantu authors have produced, (Limi 1966:23).

Thereafter he proceeds on to discussing the historical novel and the social novel without actually defining what he means by the two terms in question. While Ngidi's topic is on the novel he inconsistently interchanges the two terms. In the same article he writes as follows:-

... In his novelettes Dhlomo treats of recorded historical facts ... This is noticeable in his historical novelette UDingane, Limi 1966:23.

The late Dr B W Vilakazi wrote three historical novels, viz. Noma Nini, Nje Nempela, UDingiswayo KaJobe, Limi 1966:23.

Even in his later discussions Ngidi uses the terms, novel and novelette as if they were synonymous. In his article entitled "A few remarks on some of Bengu's and Vilakazi's novels", he says:-

Kenneth Bhengu is a school master in Natal. He has published a number of novelettes ... LIMi 1966 No.2, 44

On examining Ngidi's use of the terms 'novel' and novelette we can safely come to the conclusion that he does not explicitly draw a distinction between these two terms. In other words, Ngidi does not tell us when a piece of work is a novel or a novelette. Although Ngidi does not draw a clear distinction between these terms, he is, however, able to distinguish between a historical novel and a social novel, LIMi Jan 1966, 23-24. All that can be said at this stage is that he uses the terms interchangeably.

(b) **Ntuli (Limi June 1968, No.6)**

In his article in which Ntuli discusses the different genres found in Zulu literature he does not at all refer to the term novelette. He

merely refers to the works he is discussing as novels. All the works that Ngidi refers to as novelettes, Ntuli refers to them as novels. For example, discussing *Insila KaShaka*, Ntuli says,

The year 1930 marked the birth of Zulu literature when the first novel, *Insila KaShaka* written by J L Dube was published. *Insila KaShaka* is a biographical sketch of Jeqe, Shaka's personal servant. After his master's assassination Jeqe feared his life was at stake. He undertook an adventurous flight to the land of the Thonga and ultimately settled in Swaziland. The book has qualities of a historical novel, Limi, June 1968:106.

This is not an isolated incident. Also discussing Vilakazi's books viz *UDingiswayo KaJobe*, Nje Nempela and Bengu's books viz *Umbuso Wezembe*, *UNyambose NoZinitha* etc. respectively Ntuli sticks to the term novel.

On examining Ntuli's approach we are tempted to conclude that, although he too does not define the terms novel and novelette as such, he is more consistent than Ngidi. Whether or not he uses the term novel deliberately or whether it is a matter of preference we do not know. The fact of the matter is that he uses the term 'novel'.

There are a few points of interest that are worth noting in this regard viz:

- (i) Ngidi was one of the first Black African lecturers in the African Languages department at the University of South Africa and accordingly he was a predecessor to Prof Ntuli but they do not use the same term. It would appear that the latter prefers the term novel whilst the former uses the terms novelette and novel interchangeably.
- (ii) The use of the term novelette seems to have since become obsolete as far as Zulu literature is concerned. The reason could be that their department later preferred to use the term novel to using or interchanging the two terms in question.
- (iii) It is also interesting to note that Mokgokong who wrote his article entitled **Popular Themes in Northern Sotho Prose Fiction**, who wrote at the same time as Ngidi in the same department does not make a clear distinction between the terms novel and novelette. He writes as follows:-

Related to the social novel is the novel with makgoweng motif as its theme, which used to be popular with

Northern Sotho writers in the
1940's, Limi 1966:49-50.

In the same article he uses the term 'novelette' as follows:-

Dealing with this theme *Madiba*, on the other hand, offers no solution to the problem. Both his novelettes, *Tsiri* and *Nkotsana*, have no power of conviction ... Limi, No. Jan. 1966, 49-50.

- (iv) From the above observations we are reasonably justified to conclude that the then Department of Bantu Languages at Unisa did not draw a distinction between the terms, novel and novelette.

(c) **Other literary critics**

Other critics have tried to apply certain literary criteria in order to distinguish between a novel and a novelette. They have taken into consideration characteristics such as length, bulkiness, novelty etc.

In his discussion of the novel in *Zulu*, Ngcongwane puts it very aptly when he says that we must accept the fact that in *Zulu*, like in some other languages, there is not clear distinction between a novel and a novelette.

He states it in these terms:-

Mens moet erken dat in Zulu, soos in die ander inheemse tale se letterkunde, daar geen duidelike verskil tussen n' roman en n' novelle bewaar kan word nie, Ngcongwane 1981, 30.

If we take length as a determining factor we are not given any specific number of words or pages which should make a novel or a novelette.

Literary criticism does not therefore indicate to us how long a novel should be nor are we told how short a novelette should be. To illustrate this problem we may cite the inconsistencies in Ngidi's discussion of the novel.

He consciously or unconsciously points out that:

Sibusiso Nyembezi, a very prolific Zulu author, has produced three social novels which are considered to be of a fairly high standard ..., Limi 1966:24.

In the same article he refers to Ngcobo's book, Inkungu MaZulu as the longest published novel in Zulu but all of a sudden he refers to Jordan Ngubane's book Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi as a novelette. He says:

Jordan K Ngubane has contributed a novelette entitled Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi ..., Limi 1966, 24.

On examining the above-mentioned works it would appear that length cannot be used as the only criterion. These books are more or less of the

same length, but some critics call them novels and other call them novelettes. Except for Ngcobo's Inkungu MaZulu and its bulkiness, if we have to compare, for instance Nyembezi's Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu and Ngubane Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi where can one actually draw a line between a novel and novelette? The question is, why does Ngidi refer to Nyembezi's books as novels and refer to Ngubane's books as a novelette? These books are more or less of the same size or length. Ngcongwane, therefore rightly points out that:-

Ons moet erken dat lengte in die betrokke tale nie meer veel saak maak nie maar nuwigheid nog wel. Die verskil tussen die romance en die novel was blykbaar nooit eers by die gewone Zulu romanskrywer bekend nie. Wat die algemene bou betref staan die Zulu roman gelukkig sy plek betreklik vol behalwe vir 'n paar uitsonderings, Ngcongwane 1981, 32.

In the light of this argument it stands to reason that length and bulkiness cannot be regarded as the ultimate criteria in determining whether or not a book is a novel or a novelette. Moreover no critic's views in this regard have been accepted as being authoritative. Instead the current views are regarded as mere suggestions or recommendations. Further, length and bulkiness are relative terms unless one has exactly specified the number of words or pages in a novel or novelette.

Another complex dimension of the novel is novelty. Of importance to Ngcongwane is the aspect of novelty:

Meer belangrik egter is nuwegheid,
Ngcongwane 1981, 31.

While this argument holds true to a great extent, it cannot be accepted without challenge. Burgess argues the question of novelty. He introduces his argument by pointing out that it is not always possible to define a word in terms of its origin. This is of course true when one takes into consideration that the semantic content of a word is sometimes subject to the change of times. Burgess has this to say:

If we want to establish the meaning of a word, we rarely gain much help from probing into its origin or history, Burgess 1971, 13.

The term novelty may be quite misleading if it is taken in a literal sense. The other problem with the term novelty, if it is considered as the only property of the novel, is the question of "newness" viz; when is a literary work new?

According to Burgess the term novelty is generally accepted to mean "new or recently introduced". Here Burgess is thinking on the basis of comparison between the modern novel and traditional forms of literature. In this respect many literary critics, including Burgess, believe that the English novel developed from the epic. Burgess comments as follows:

... just like the drama and in the turning of the epic into a prose we seem to find the beginning of the novel, Burgess 1971, 15.

It is here where we find the relationship or the difference between the epic and the novel coming into being. Stated differently, length together with other characteristics show us that the epic is shorter in terms of length than the novel, on the one hand. The novel is relatively 'newer' longer or bulkier than the epic on the other hand. In simpler terms, the novel is relatively recent than it is the case with the epic which is part of the traditional trilogy, viz the drama, the lyric and the epic.

Coming nearer home, a very important question arises as to whether the Zulu novel developed from the epic. It would appear that the answer is a definite no. *The Zulu novel did not develop directly from the epic.* It rather shows the influence of the English novel on the African writers. Over and above that it shows a strong influence and residue of the Zulu folktale. This is a fundamental difference between the Zulu novel and the English novel. Msimang, in his book **Folktale Influence on the Zulu Novel** deals with this matter in detail, (Msimang 1986,28).

Let us look at what Msimang has to say about novelty. It would appear that he does not quite correctly interpret Ngcongwane's view. Msimang

forwards his argument:-

In Ngcongwane's view, novelty means that each novel must handle a new theme otherwise it does not satisfy the requirements of novelty (Msimang 1986:28).

Msimang quotes Ngcongwane when the latter compares the theme in **Mntanami! Mntanami!** by Nyembezi with the theme in *Cry The Beloved Country* by Alan Paton. The two books deal with the 'prodigal son theme'. the so-called makgoweng motif in Sotho. Msimang goes on to make the following comment on Ngcongwane's view:-

This implies that only the work that was published first satisfies the requirements of novelty (Msimang 1986:28).

On closer examination this is not what Ngcongwane means. Ngcongwane's statement, viewed critically, does not dispute the importance of bulkiness. But he rather rightly argues that of more importance, in a novel, is novelty i.e. new ideas even if the theme appears to be the same in two different novels.

Further we want to make the following observations:-

- (i) Explicitly stated, the characteristics of novelty is more important than the characteristic of bulkiness in a novel.
- (ii) Unless incorrectly interpreted, prima facie Msimang's impression about Ngcongwane's use of the term novelty is that, in order for a fictional work to be qualified as a novel, the writer must handle a new theme. That seems to be an inadequate interpretation. What Ngcongwane means is that each time a novel is written there must be 'that novelty' - that 'newness' in it. Ngcongwane puts this aptly:

Dit is die novelty wat die roman altyd moet
vertoon - nuwigheid en meer nuwigheid,
Ngcongwane 1981:31.

The term novelty as used in this context implies that there should be no repetition or over-repetition of the same ideas in the theme. It does not mean that each time an author writes there must be a new theme as suggested by Msimang's statement (Msimang 1986:28).

If Ngcongwane had meant that, not all Charles Dicken's novels or Nyembezi's novels would satisfy the novelty requirement. That would mean that only those first works of these authors would qualify as novels, nor

would Dhlomo's books be called historical novels as the authors write about more or less the same themes in their respective novels.

Observation:-

From the foregoing argument the undermentioned observations have been made:-

- (i) It would appear that in Zulu no clear distinction is made between a novel and a novelette. It therefore seems as if the term novelette has become defunct as it is seldom heard of today. Further we note that, with the change of times, the emphasis on properties such as bulkiness and length are becoming less important in determining whether a work is a novel or not.
- (ii) As the Zulu novel was modelled on the English novel, writers tended to compare the former with the latter. Accordingly some of the first Zulu novelists merely copied most of the principles obtaining in the English novel. They ignored the fact that the origin of the Zulu novel is not quite the same as the origin of the English novel.
- (iii) Taking all the above factors into consideration, it becomes clear that a single feature cannot be regarded as a determining factor for a novel

but rather a gestalt whole of artistic features.

1.2 WHAT IS ACTUALLY MEANT BY A ZULU NOVEL?

From the outset it must be pointed out that it is not an easy task to give a straightforward definition of a Zulu novel. It shares certain characteristics with the novel in other languages. Over and above the normal requirements of a novel, there are two fundamental differences which put the Zulu novel in its unique position. It would be naive to think that the Zulu novel is only different from other novels because it is written in Zulu. The two distinguishing characteristics of the Zulu novel are:-

- (i) Unlike the English novel which had its origin directly from the epic (Burgess 1971:14), the Zulu novel had its origin partly from the folktale and partly from the influence of the English novel.
- (ii) Another distinguishing feature of the Zulu novel, is the fact that the Zulu novelist writes about the Zulu people in their cultural setting and milieu: and the origin of which can be associated with a certain period of time in the history of the Zulu nation.

For purposes of this research, therefore, the Zulu novel is defined as a fictional prose written in Zulu, excluding the short story, which depicts real

life i.e. the "felt life", (Ngcongwane 1987:2). It must depict life as it occurs in the world of imagination, however it may seem to real life. It is grounded in the Zulu culture and milieu as experienced or imagined at a particular period of time. It does not divorce itself from the Zulu geo-traditional background.

IMPORTANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ZULU NOVEL

The African milieu is of crucial importance in a Zulu novel as traces of the influences of the oral background which help shape the contemporary Zulu writers' specific modes of imagination and articulation are found in the Zulu novel. It is for this reason that it is not always fair to evaluate the Zulu novel according to the English or Afrikaans standards, traditional background or expectations.

The Zulu novel is unique in the sense that it is based on the Zulu cultural milieu. Iyasere rightly points out that:

To isolate the literature wholly from its cultural milieu and to insist on a strictly synchronic analysis of a work, as the formalist 'autonomistic theory' demands would rob the literature of its vitality, (Iyasere 1975:108-109).

This principle applies *mutatis mutandis* to the Zulu novel. It is an obvious fact that African culture differs significantly from a White man's (especially

before the interaction with the whites). Because of this difference in cultures there is bound to be difference between the Zulu novel and the novel in other languages. In other words, we are talking about two different traditional backgrounds. Some critics have failed to realise the crucial differences between the Zulu novel and other novels. Iyasere rightly remarks in this regard:

To assess a work by standards that are alien to it is only to judge one system of values by another, which inevitably leads to a mutilation of the art, (Iyasere 1975:108).

It therefore logically follows that the Zulu novel is bound together with the African in general or Zulu culture in particular. It would be rather too naive to divorce the Zulu novel from the Zulu culture. Iyasere emphasizes this point of culture in literature by saying:-

My point is that a culture - sensitive approach, informed by an intelligent understanding of the traditional background, will prove more responsive to the unique nativism of African writers. Every age and every culture has its particularly characteristic narrative form ... (Iyasere 1975:108).

This means that, should strict general laws be applied to the novel, novelists in different languages would be forced to adhere to certain rules and aim at fulfilling these requirements. Such an attitude would inhibit creativity. In

other words this means that:-

Once strict general laws are established in literary art, creative and imaginative art will be unthinkable. (Wellek and Warren 1973:17-18).

The point the researcher is trying to argue here is that the Zulu novel is a novel in its own right.

To come nearer the problem of investigation, this means that it would be rather unscientific to infer that all the principles which apply to the study of the English or Afrikaans novel will automatically apply to the scientific study of the Zulu novel as such because these two types of novels originate from different traditional backgrounds. In support of this argument, Wellek and Warren have this to say:-

Even in studying a period or movement or one specific national literature, the literary student will be interested in it as an individuality with characteristic features and qualities which set it off from other similar groupings (Wellek and Warren 1973:17-19).

There are certain properties the Zulu novel shares with other novels. These will be mentioned at a later stage. The important point worth noting here is that we should recognize that each work of literature is both general and particular. Wellek and Warren make a clear distinction between individuality

and complete particularity and uniqueness. They put it very aptly as follows:-

Like every human being, each work of literature has its individual characteristics; but also shares common properties with other works of art, just as every man shares traits with humanity, with all members of his sex, nation, class profession, etc. Wellek and Warren 1973:19.

In spite of its uniqueness and individuality the Zulu novel does share certain properties with other novels in other languages. Colmer as quoted by Ngcongwane believes that a novel is:-

- (a) primarily a narrative one: any approach that neglects that simple fact will be inadequate;
- (b) secondly, it is an art that deals very directly with life - the life of man in society and as an isolated individual, "felt life" to use Henry James' magic phrase;
- (c) thirdly, as Bryn Davis reminds us, it is an art that seeks to entertain, whatever else it may do. Most of us read novels for pleasure, Ngcongwane 1987:2.

(d) fourthly, it is common knowledge that the novel instructs. The Zulu novel, especially during the early stages of its development, amongst other aims, it was to give a moral lesson to the reader. This can probably be ascribed to two main reasons viz.:

- (i) The early Zulu novelist like Dube, Dhlomo and others were greatly influenced by the biblical teachings and traditional culture. This influence becomes so conspicuous in the early Zulu novel to the extent that some critics have accused the Zulu novelists of being too didactic; a factor which in their way of thinking mars the narrative.

The fact is, the Zulu novel, like any other novel does give a lesson. It is, however, true that too much of this didacticism does mar the story.

In his discussion of Indlela Yababi Ntuli criticises Dhlomo. He says:-

The writer is successful in portraying his characters objectively as human beings. At times he becomes too didactic and assumes a preaching tone, Limi 1968:29.

Although we are inclined to agree with Ntuli we do not lose sight of the fact that the Zulu novel followed on the footsteps of the folktale and the Bible whose primary aim, it was to instruct or to teach. Dhlomo here and there in *Indlela Yababi* unconsciously or consciously assumes this preaching tone.

At times he devotes the whole page trying to teach his readers. In *Indlela Yababi*, for example, pages 89-93 are devoted to teaching:-

Ngajabula lapho bethi kimi asiye endlini kaJehova ...
Uma lawa makhosikazi ayeze kuye njengonina
abamzalayo afike athi kuye: 'Mntanami, siyathokoza
ukukubona esontweni namhlanje. Ungabe usaphutha
phela. Uze nasezinhlanguweni zamantombazana
nezabesifazana. Usejwayele ungesabi lutho'. Ngithi
uma babekwenzile lokho ngabe le ndaba yaphetheka
ngolunye uhlobo kunalokhu okuxoxwayo lapha, *Indlela
Yababi* pp89-93.

It is no debatable question that when the White missionaries introduced the writing and the reading skills to the Black man their (White missionaries) aim was not necessarily to advance and develop these skills as such but they wanted the Black man to make use of these skills in propagating the Word of God. In other words, the early writings by the Black man including the novel were written in order to instruct or teach - hence this didacticism

As a matter of fact even renowned critics like Kane and Peters do accept the fact that the novel does serve the purpose of 'informing'. The novelist does this informing through the description of types i.e. characters. Kane and Peters when discussing the two purposes of types in a novel point out that,

More often the description of a type intends to instruct the reader in manners or behaviour. If we describe "The Braggart", we are saying in so many words, "Don't be like this", Kane and Peters 1964:236.

- (ii) Another factor which is probably the cause of didacticism, is the influence exerted by the folktale on the modern Zulu writer. It is an undoubted fact that the Zulu folktale does show its traces or influence even on Zulu novels written recently i.e. during the 70's. This influence manifests itself in various ways, like in the creation of characters, in the thematic structure of the novel, etc. It is common knowledge that every society or people has its own scale of virtues and values and people live by it. So are the Zulu people. If one critically examines a story one comes to the conclusion that a story is not a mere literary expression but it rather acts as a mirror of the cultural virtues and values from which it originates. Folktales were told and retold especially to the younger generations, not only for entertainment purposes, but also for the purpose of preserving certain values as well as giving moral lessons to the younger generations. Folktales were not merely told in the vacuum but the telling of the story was sparked off by a point in ordinary conversation which prompted a person to give a moral lesson or advice in order to give guidance to a younger person.

Perhaps the difference between a moral lesson given in the novel and the one found in the folktale is that the lesson given by the latter is not overtly expressed. The lesson found in the early Zulu novel, is

sometimes overtly expressed. In support of this statement Dietrich and Sundell, quoted by Msimang are of the opinion that,

Although overt didacticism was popular in the eighteenth centuries, the practice has gone out of fashion in the present century, Msimang 1989:134.

1.3 CHARACTERIZATION

The dictionary meaning of the term characterization seems to be apt and precise as it covers the essentials of characterization viz. the artistic representation in fiction of human character or motives. It may lack the finer details but in a broad sense this definition does convey more or less the same meaning to different readers. This is because of its simplicity and straightforwardness. Briefly, the **Longman Dictionary of the English Language** defines the term characterization as follows:-

... the artistic representation (e.g. in fiction or drama) of human character or motives.

Because of the lack of space in the dictionary, we assume, this definition does not explain inter alia:-

- (i) why the writer has to represent human characters in his fiction as it will be shown in the next definition that the writer always has got some purpose in mind in his representation of human character in fiction.
- (ii) that in some fiction, in certain languages characterization is not only based on human character but during the early stages of the Zulu novel or written narratives animal characters were also used although this idea was later abandoned. This is briefly because the novelist knows very little about animal psychology. In support of this statement Forster, in his discussion of the term "people" i.e. characters, rightly remarks:-

Since the actors in a story are usually human, it seemed convenient to entitle this aspect people. Other animals have been introduced, but with limited success, for we know too little so far about their psychology, Forster 1974:33.

On further scrutiny of Forster's statement one is struck by the fact that Forster explicitly points out that characters in fiction (and obviously in a novel) are "usually human". This statement suggests that there are other things or non-humans which could or have been used as characters besides human beings. As pointed out by Forster

these other things referred to are animals.

- (iii) The definition given by the dictionary does not, at all, give any indication that characterization especially in the Zulu novel has undergone various stages of development or changes as it will be shown in our subsequent discussion of the different periods of development of characterization.

1.4 DEFINITION BY MARTIN

Let us now examine another definition by Martin in order to compare the two definitions and see whether Martin's definition does give any other additional facets of characterization. In *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Martin defines characterization as,

the way in which a writer creates his characters in a narrative so as to attract or repel our sympathy (Martin 1989).

In order to make his definition clearer Martin points out that,

The varieties of characterization presented in literature are as numerous as those of the real people who surround us in the world; but different kinds of literature have certain conventions of characterization.

Analysis of Martin's definition shows that whenever the novelist creates his characters, he has a specific purpose in mind. Some novelists write to entertain or to instruct on what society approves or to repel what society disapproves of or attract their readers' sympathy. This can only be achieved by the novelist's technique of characterization. Put differently, this means that the novelist does not create his characters in a vacuum, but characters serve a specific purpose in a novel. Furthermore, Martin in his further explanation of characterization draws our attention to a very important aspect of characterization which is not even suggested in the definition given in the Longman Dictionary of the English language. Martin approaches the subject with an open mind. He is already aware of the fact that different kinds of literatures tend to follow different conventions of characterization.

Martin's definition directly suggests that, although in general, characterization should follow certain principles. There are fundamental differences in the mode of characterization in novels of different languages and cultural backgrounds. For example, the Zulu novelists will differ in their mode of characterization because of their socio-economic background which is or was unique to them, especially, during the early stages of the writing of the novel. Characterization has shown development or evolution with the changing times. The pace of development differs from language to language, from nation to nation and from tradition to tradition. There seems to be a long way ahead too. Characterization will always change with the

changing times, societies and technology, for example, with the introduction and the influence of television, with acculturation, urbanization and industrialization etc. This leads us to the fact that characterization in the Zulu novel is not a static phenomenon, but rather a very evolutionary and dynamic phenomenon.

Another point worth noting is the fact that characterization takes cognisance of the fact that traditional background of a people on which the novel is based, plays an important part in the novelist's mode of characterization. This statement supports the argument of this research, viz, that among other things, characterization in the Zulu novel deserves a specific approach. To say it deserves special attention does not suggest that characterization in other languages do not need special approaches. On the contrary, it implies that literary critics must not always simply generalize about characterization. Critics must not simply apply western approaches indiscriminately. In other words, they must be mindful of the fundamental differences which obtain amongst different traditional backgrounds.

1.5 DEFINITION BY SHAW

Shaw quoted by Msimang in his book entitled **Folktale Influence on the Zulu Novel** defines the term characterization as:-

the creation of images of imaginary persons in a work of literary art, Shaw 1972:71.

This definition leaves a lot of questions unanswered. It falls victim of the criticisms levelled against the definition given under paragraph 1.6.2.1 above. It will be therefore not necessary to discuss it.

Amongst the definition of characterization quoted above and others which have not been mentioned here Msimang has given a comprehensive definition of the term characterization. He defines characterization in the following terms:-

Characterization is a sum total of techniques employed by an artist in presenting characters in a literary work of art so that such characters are perceived by the audience/reader as persons endowed with moral and dispositional as well as physical qualities, Msimang 1989:99.

On examining Msimang's definition one is inclined to add a few aspects to it, viz:-

- (i) that this sum total of techniques varies from time to time. Put differently, techniques employed at a particular period of time during which the novel is written may not necessarily be the same as techniques used at other times. Techniques used by the novelists,

that is, including the Zulu novelist, are not static, but they change with times and they vary on the basis of socio-economic and traditional backgrounds. This is why it is the argument of this research study that characterization is evolutionary and therefore it is *an ongoing process*.

One other point Msimang regards as most important in characterization is that the novelist must present lifelike characters. He goes on to say that the characters must be grounded in reality of their own world, i.e. the imaginary and the 'man-created world'; a world of illusion. We have no problem with the latter statement by Msimang. Concerning the element of lifelikeness, although it is generally accepted that characters must be lifelike, certain questions crop up regarding this element. Prima facie there seems to be no problem with lifelikeness of characters. Some of the questions that crop up are - is the standard of lifelikeness adequate criterion for judging a character, in a novel? Does this element of lifelikeness help the critic or reader to understand more about the ways in which a character is presented in a novel? What do we exactly mean when we say a character in a novel should be lifelike? These are some of the questions the exponents of the notion of lifelikeness are confronted with. We cannot measure the degree of lifelikeness in a fictional character. The notion of lifelikeness, if too literally taken, may be downright misleading. That is why Kenney contends that,

"... the standard of lifelikeness is inadequate for judging character in fiction. At best, the notion of lifelikeness is an oversimplification, Kenney 1966:24.

This does not suggest that the notion of lifelikeness must be entirely ignored. On the contrary it is generally accepted that fictional characters must be lifelike to a certain degree, but the reader or critic must take cognisance of the fact that the notion of lifelikeness is a complex one for the relation between a fictional character and a real human being is a complex one and not a simple one as some of the critics would suggest. The critic must take cognisance of the fact that there are similarities as well as differences between fictional characters and real human beings as there are differences and similarities between fictional characters in different novels and even in different languages. If we were to express this in simpler terms we would say a character in a novel transcends the world of reality i.e. the world of real human beings as well as the imaginary world of fictional characters.

On examining the above definitions one finds that basically the authors agree on what is meant by the term characterization save that one author emphasizes one aspect while the other emphasizes another aspects.

1.6 DEFINITION FOR PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

In this study characterization is viewed as:

A sum total of techniques used as a mechanism, or vehicle for 'humanising' the non-human or the non-existent imaginary images or fictitious persons in a Zulu novel. These fictitious persons are endowed with human attributes. The fictitious creations of the Zulu novelist are enshrined and grounded in the socio-economic and traditional life of the Zulu people in a particular geographical area at a particular period of time. Characterization in the Zulu novel is not static but it is evolutionary, an on-going process which has and is still changing with times and circumstances, for example from traditional and rural life to city and christian' life, etc. The Zulu novelist creates these imaginary persons with a view to fulfilling a certain purpose, for example to entertain, to instruct in the Zulu community or nation. Put differently, characterization goes hand-in-hand with factors such as milieu, time, culture, level of development etc.

From the foregoing comments, we have attempted to justify the argument that characterization is an on-going process. This fact will become clearer when we discuss the various periods of development of the Zulu novel.

1.7 THE TERM CHARACTER

Prima facie the term 'character' may well seem quite familiar and non-problematic. Even a non-literary man may claim that he understands what is meant by this term. The fact of the matter is that the subject is not that simple. Secondly, the definitions given to-date are in the majority of cases western-oriented. The latter factor makes the problem even more complex to understand when reference is made to characters in the Zulu novel in particular. This is no wonder because the definitions used presently have been developed and grown alongside the western literary tradition. Stated differently, such an approach toward the term 'character' does not delve into the intricacies and the geo-traditional background of the term character as portrayed by the Zulu novelist, in particular the characters portrayed during the early stages of the Zulu novel. For a literary critic equipped only with the western yardsticks, characters found in the Zulu novel may present a problem. Some such critics have gone to an extent of saying that African fiction "is almost totally devoid of what in the West has been referred to as character growth", (Larson 1971:148).

This criticism may be true to a certain extent. Unfortunately the critic does not advance the reason for this tendency and for his conclusions. Secondly this attitude shows a lack of insight into the modes of characterization in Zulu literature which is often shaped by the cultural traditions and socio-geographical circumstances which prevail at the time of writing the novel.

There are decided differences in these matters in the West, East, or South African fiction, (Larson 1971:148). Therefore the error made by the early critics was that of bluntly comparing the English novel with the Zulu novel as if they were the same. Such erroneous comparison may be ascribed to three main reasons:-

- (i) The first critics to analyze the Zulu novel were either anthropologists or early missionaries, i.e. critics who were not fully equipped with literary techniques to do such a job.
- (ii) Some of these critics were of the opinion that the Zulu novel - therefore the characters found in it, are exactly the same as those found in the English novel. Such an attitude or error ignored the fundamental differences between the two novels. These critics did not take into consideration the traditional and the geographical background on which the early Zulu novels - so was characterization - is based. In such unfair comparison two different traditions and cultures are involved.
- (iii) At the extreme, there are those literary critics who think that African literature is literature of 'primitive' people. This is quite disturbing that as late as 1966 there were still critics who held this sort of attitude; an attitude which is likely to influence their analysis

negatively when dealing with the Zulu novel. In his *'Die literêre Tradisie van die Bantoe ...'* Lombard speaks of primitive folk. He writes as follows:-

"Daar moet in ag geneem word dat ons hier te doene het met die volkstradisie van 'n primitiewe volk," Limi June 1966:17.

Such an attitude seems to ignore the fact that African literature; so is the Zulu novel, so is the manner of characterization, exists in its own right.

In other words, characters in the Zulu novel may not necessarily be evaluated against characters in other languages. These are two different literatures which have existed parallel to one another from the time immemorial. It would therefore be unacademic to suggest that, a literature of a certain people is 'primitive' and the other literature is 'civilized'. The term 'primitive' is emotive as such. Accepting this attitude would imply that some cultures are superior to others. In literature it is not a question of primitivity, but it is rather a question of differences between people of different traditions and different levels in societies.

The term character is often interchangeably used with terms such as people/persons, figures - in the English novel; mense, figure, karakter

in Afrikaans circles. Following are a few definitions to illustrate our statement.

1.8 KARAKTERISERING IN DIE AFRIKAANSE ROMAN

In his *Karakterisering in die Afrikaanse roman*, Smuts is trying to avoid any misunderstanding that might crop up in the use of the terms characters, people etc, defines the term character as follows:-

Drie terme word in Afrikaans gebrink om die mens wat in die epiese werk optree te benoem, nl 'karakter', 'figuur' en 'persoon', Smuts 1975:1.

Smuts attaches one and the same meaning to the three abovequoted terms.

To put it in his own words, Smuts explains:-

"In hierdie studie gebruik ek al drie hierdie terme, o.a. om stilistiese redes en ook om dubbelsinnigheid te vermy wat die volgehoue gebruik van die benaming 'karakter' soms kan meebring waar dit gaan om die karakter, d.w.s. die karaktertrekke of eienskappe, van 'n karakter of persoon", Smuts 1975:1.

In short our interpretation of Smuts' definition is that the three terms mentioned above are assigned the same meaning i.e. character in fiction.

1.9 CHARACTERIZATION BY FORSTER

One of the often-quoted literary theorist, Forster, comes with a very interesting definition of the term 'character'. He calls the characters in a story, the actors. Forster goes on to say that, because these actors are usually human he would have conveniently called them people. He does, however, admit that animals have been used as characters in a story but with limited success. To put it in Forster's own words:-

Since the actors in a story are usually human, it seemed convenient to entitle this aspect people. Other animals have been introduced, but with limited success, for we know too little so far about their psychology, Forster 1974:30.

Forster explains it very aptly that characters or people, as he calls them, in a novel are not people in the real sense of the word people but are word bodies or created images which are imaginary and have been given names, sex, emotions etc. and other human attributes in order that they should act as if they were human beings. In other words, characters are non-physically existent but are rather 'word-masses' which come to the novelist's imaginary world of creation to create certain impressions - which impressions exist in the novelist's mind and the impressions the novelist wants to create in the reader's mind. Forster further defines the term character as follows:-

The novelist, unlike many of his colleagues, makes up a number of word-masses roughly describing himself --- gives them names and sex, assigns them plausible gestures, and causes them to speak by the use of inverted commas, and perhaps to behave consistently. These word-masses are his characters, Forster, 1974:30-31.

Stately differently, these word-masses, endowed with human attributes are actors who pretend to be human beings. The implication being that no matter how lifelike these word-masses or characters in a novel may be, they are not human beings as such. Characters in a novel are people in 'inverted commas'. If we say for instance, characters must be believable, we simply mean believability in their own imaginary world which is the world based on known factual evidence i.e. the world + (plus) or the world - (minus) imaginary fact. The plus (+) sign represents what is added to the known by the novelist; the minus (-) represents what the novelist decides to leave out in his character (i.e. from a human being).

Forster further mentions a very interesting point about the creation of the characters in a novel viz. that these 'word-masses' do not come coldly to the novelist's mind but they come sometimes in some-sort-of excitement. Their nature is often conditioned by what the novelist guesses about the people around him or about himself or personal experience and often modified by what impression he wants to create to his readers and further

by what role the character is playing in a novel.

In support of Forster's argument Kane and Peters contend that,

there are different ways of approaching the description of character and many kinds of characters for the novelist to create, Kane and Peters 1966, 235.

- (ii) In contradistinction with the plot which, according to Kenney, is the imposition of form, an experience that is essentially formless, artificial and which is something made up, Kenney points out that the reader may find it difficult to think of 'character' in these terms. This is because when it comes to life as such there are no plots but there are characters i.e. living people. Kenney says,

For, if there are no plots in life, there certainly are people, Kenney, 1966:24.

1.10 WARNING BY KENNEY

In his definition of the term character Kenney warns against the common error made by many critics and readers, viz. that readers tend to expect the people i.e. characters in fiction to be similar to the people in real life. He points out that a fictional character must comply with certain requirements besides being lifelike. He further argues that the notion of lifelikeness may

be an over-simplification of the whole subject-matter as it is difficult to measure the degree of lifelikeness in a fictional character. If excessively imposed, that fictional characters should be like people we know, we may severely put limitation on the author's creativity.

In summarizing Kenney's argument we may say that,

- (a) When he talks about characters he is referring to "people" in a fictional prose, i.e. people who act like human beings. In other words he is referring to the word-masses (Forster) which have been endowed with human attributes.
- (b) Kenney does recognize the relationship i.e. the similarities as well as the differences which exist between fictional characters and the real human beings. This relationship is not simple but it is a complex one as already pointed out above.

1.11 DISCUSSION BY REAKSE

In his discussion of the term "characters" Reakse defines characters as,

... fictitious creations and thus the dramatist and the novelist may both be judged with regard to their ability in the art of characterization, Reakse, 1984:40.

Reakse points out that the dramatist must invest the character with certain distinguishable attributes in a convincing manner. This, the novelist also does because when he first introduces a character the reader cannot identify him. These distinguishable attributes invoke, in the reader, believability. In this manner the character becomes lifelike and "real" or "convincing" for the duration of the period of reading that particular novel or chapter. How a character is presented, is not our concern at the moment. This will be discussed later in this research. What is important at this stage is that characters, be it in drama or novel, must be perceived by the reader or critic "as people who might really exist" i.e. for the duration of the period of reading that novel or drama (Reakse, 1984:40). This means that the motivation for doing certain actions by the character must be given by the novelist. To put it in Reaske's own words:-

The fact remains that the larger actions which characters, complete in the course of a play (or novel) have identifiable motives behind them and thus we as critics have every right and duty to analyze character motivation, Reakse, 1984:41.

- (a) According to Reakse a character is not a real human being but a fictitious creation.
- (b) This fictitious creation must be endowed with identifiable human attributes.

- (c) The character actions are better understood through motivation of his behaviour.

1.12 EXPLANATION BY HAWTHORN

In trying to explain what the term character means, Hawthorn states that it (character) may well seem to be one of the least problematic terms. Hawthorn states that the proper names we come across in a novel, such as Hluphekile, Simangaliso in *Nigabe Ngani?* seem very much like the proper names we meet in everyday life with which we designate individual human beings but he then hastens to add that,

And yet even if we stop at names we may realize that character in novels are'nt quite like real people, Hawthorn, 1987:47.

Hawthorn rightly points out that in real life one sometimes meets a person with an unusually appropriate name:

the very tall person called Long or the radio engineer called Sparks (Hawthorn, 1987:47).

The above statement also holds true to certain characters we find in the Zulu novel where the proper name assigned to a certain character shows great resemblance or relationship with that particular individual. For

argument's sake, let us take Mpande, in the historical novel; he is regarded the "root" of the Zulu nation; Dingane, in UDingane; it is alleged that he died wondering up and down as his name suggests. Of course in these two cases we must take cognisance of the fact that these are historical novels, and are dealing with historical human beings. Even with other types of the Zulu novels we do find characters who are in line with their names as mentioned above.

Hawthorn mentions one other interesting point about characters, viz, that there are differences between characters. If we were asked to explain these differences "we would have to talk not just about their differences as individuals but also as characters, as literary constructions within very different sorts of novel," (Hawthorn, 1987:47).

In explaining these differences between literary characters Hawthorn makes an important distinction between them viz, that,

- (a) there are writers who are interested in developing a character in order to represent something and,
- (b) there are those who write in order to present a particular individuality.

In simpler terms what Hawthorn means is that novelists use characters and character portrayals for a range of purposes. Nyembezi uses Ndebenkulu in order to present an individual i.e. taking advantage of illiterate and rural people; Bhengu in his historical novels, UKhalalembube, Umbuso Wezembe etc. wants to glorify the bravery of the Zulu people of the past (Limi Jan 1966:24).

To summarize Hawthorn's definition, we can safely say that he argues successfully that literary characters are not real people, but they are 'literary creations'.

Larson, in his discussion of characters and modes of characterization refers to literary characters as,

... the function of a person or creature, Larson,
1971:147.

The current Zulu term for character is umlingiswa (singular), abalingiswa (plural). The morphological structure of this term/noun is as follows:

um(u)- + -lingis- + -wa

aba- -lingis- -wa

preprefix

basic prefix

root

passive extension

Literally translated, the term means the one or the ones who are imitated. The verb stem '-lingisa' means to imitate. Morphologically, deverbative personal nouns may be formed from verb stems by substituting the nominal -i for the categorial or terminative -a. Although there are personal nouns which end with the passive -wa. The term 'umlingiswa' as used in this particular context would appear to be incorrect. The correct term is umlingisi (singular) and abalingisi (plural). Stated differently, the character in a story imitates a human being. The latter is thus invested with human attributes. In all fairness there seems to be no empirical justification for preferring the term 'umlingiswa' to 'umlingisi' and 'abalingiswa' to 'abalingisi' respectively. This is one of the wrongs of the past which must be redressed, hence our suggestion of the term umlingisi/abalingisi.

1.13 SUMMARY OF THE DEFINITIONS GIVEN ABOVE

By way of summary we find that all indicators point to the fact that,

- (i) Characters in a novel are merely literary creations expressed in words and are created to fulfil certain purposes envisaged by the novelist.
- (ii) Characters in a novel are nothing else but 'word-masses' used by the novelist to express inter alia, certain emotions, propagate certain ideas, give certain solutions to problems found in a particular society

and used for entertainment purposes. To illustrate the latter point, let us look at these amusing characters in **Inkundu MaZulu** by Ngcobo (i.e. characters used for entertainment purposes).

"Eceleni kukaMbulawa kwakuhlezi uMtshali. Lo mnumzane wayenomkhaba omkhulu. Abanye abantu babethi uyamgulisa, ugcwele amanzi. Babethi bangambona bembuze bethi: 'Uthweleni na?' Uma bengambuzanga lo mbuzo bambuze ukuthi: 'Yini, leyo oyiqhuba ngaphambili na?' ... yena wayewuthanda, ehlala ewuphulula njalo uma esephakathi kwalabo abayiNhlango yakhe yeZakhamkhaya ... UMazibuko wawedlulisa amehlo akhe kuMtshali sengathi kukhona okungamenelisi esimweni sikaGumede. Wayenezingxavula zamazinyo. Amazinyo amane angaphambili emhlathini ongaphezulu ayexega. Wayehlala ephunga izimpukane. Mhlawumbe kungakho nje athi uMazibuko uma ebuka lesi Sakhamkhaya wanikina ikhanda. Wayebona ukuthi ziyamhlupha uGumede izimpukane. Eceleni kuka Gumede kwakuhlezi into kaChonco. Lo mnumzane wayethi angahlala phansi azunywe ubuthongo ..."

There is no doubt in our minds that Ngcobo uses these characters in his **Inkundu MaZulu** merely for entertainment purposes. In this connection Bryn Davies as quoted by Ngcongwane rightly points out that,

... it is an art that seeks to entertain, whatever else it may do. Most of us read novels for pleasure,

Ngcongwane, 1987:7.

- (iii) Thirdly we must have realised by now that as there are similarities there also are fundamental differences between literary characters in a novel and real human beings. That is why it is a mistake always to talk of characters in a novel as if they are real people.
- (iv) Whatever terminology is used by various critics to designate literary characters in a novel, for instance, terms such as people, 'word-masses', literary 'creations', 'figures', 'creatures', 'abalingiswa' (or abalingisi as they should be called), in simple terms literary characters are the vehicle or the machinery of words through which the novelist *inter alia*
- imitates real people
 - manoeuvres his plot and thematic purposes
 - tells a story
 - and these creations are grounded in the novelists tradition and socio-economic background.

1.14 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHARACTERS FOUND IN THE ZULU NOVEL AND CHARACTERS FOUND IN NOVELS IN OTHER LANGUAGES IN GENERAL

In the abovegiven exposition of the term character the definitions given do not at all times, take care of all aspects of languages. Specific provisions have to be made for specific languages over and above the generalizations of treating the characters as if they were portrayed exactly the same way in all novels of different languages. A question now arises; how does a 'character' as found in a Zulu novel differ from a 'character', for instance, found in an English novel? As every where else there are two sides to everything. It is the argument of this research that, while we agree that the character found in the Zulu novel does have certain similarities it must share with characters found in other novels, we must also accept the fact that there are also fundamental differences as well.

It is therefore the purpose of this research to investigate and reconstruct some aspects of the circumstances from which the Zulu novel emerged and to trace the roots of the mode of characterization.

- (a) The influence of folklore can be easily traced in Bhengu's works. This is shown by the dogmatic belief in Amadlozi; the belief in traditional empowerment etc. An examples of ancestor-belief is given hereunder;

Abantu baseZembeni babekhonza kakhulu amathongo. Kukhona nezilwane ababezihlonipha bethi zingabakhulu abangasekho baseZembeni, amakhosi amadala oNdlebula nawoMadlodlongo njalo. Kokunye ubezwe bethi: Ha! inyoka ethile ningayibulali, uSobani lowo, besho umuntu omdala, mhlawumbe besho iNkosi ekade seyafa (UMbuso Wezembe Nenkinga kaBhekifa, p.7)

To illustrate this point further we take the ever triumphant Nyambose. We meet Nyambose for the first time when he fights and defeats a man - Myeza who is much older than he is. He subsequently wins Miss Mdunge's love. He almost kills a fierce bull single-handed at the 'Umkhosi wokuhleziswa.' Even in Swaziland he unbelievably succeeds in many episodes. Eventually being a commoner, he marries the queen of Thongaland. A critical reader is bound to draw a parallel between him and Chakijane in UChakijana Bogcololo by Mbatha and Mdhladhla. Chakijana never fails. He succeeds in getting whatever he wishes to get and no motivation is given in the story as why he is so successful. Chakijane, among other things, insists that he be born, he demands 'ububende', 'ithunga', axe etc. He cheats people without any valid reason. (Mbatha and Mdhladhla pp. 19-27). This and other many examples clearly show that the mode of creating a character like Nyambose in UNyambose NoZinitha have roots in the influence of the folktale. The fact of the matter is

that this mode of characterization had a considerable impact on the early Zulu novels. This is due to the fact that this was a transitional period viz. from the folktale to creative or imaginative novel.

It is therefore an unique aspect of the mode of characterization in the Zulu novel to make use of residual oral literary materials. That is why it is difficult for a critic who is not culturally and traditionally oriented in the Zulu culture and traditions, to fully understand the mode of characterization in the Zulu novel, especially novels written during the early stages of the emergence of this novel.

- (b) Another point worth noting as far as characters in the Zulu novel are concerned is that, in contradiction with West African fiction where female characters play no significant part and if they are present, they are mere objects, in the Zulu novels, like in the East and South African fiction some women play a very significant role in a work of art. Mkabayi in *UDingane*, though it is a historical novel, is an important character who helps in building up of the plot and the thematic structure of this novel. Without Bajwayele's conviction that she must marry a man of her choice the theme in *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi* would have been otherwise. This shows that women do play a significant role in the Zulu novel. This is a feature of the Zulu novel which distinguishes it from the West African novels where (according

to Larson) female characters play no significant part. If they are at all present in a novel, they are mere objects, performing a function, (Larson, 1971:149).

In the researcher's opinion there are two reasons which may be ascribed to the popularity of women in the Zulu novel, viz that:

- (i) If one delves deep down into the history of the Zulu people there were conspicuous and powerful women like Mkabayi, Mthaniya, etc. who played very significant roles in the history of the Zulu nation.
 - (ii) The writing of the Zulu novel started after the contact of the Zulu culture with the white man's. In the latter's culture women are respected and therefore play a significant role in their respective societies and inevitably in their literature too.
- (c) Besides the above-mentioned features of the characters found in the Zulu novel, there are other unique additional features viz.:
- (i) that the first novelists like Dube in his *Insila KaShaka*, Bhengu in *Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa*, Dhlomo in his historical novels, *UDingane*, *UMpande*, etc in the portrayal of

their characters admire and wanted to portray characters to show the deeds of valour of the Zulu people. We accordingly find critics who either through their lack of the historical or traditional background of the Zulu people or for reasons best known to them, criticize and accuse the above authors of exaggerating their characters. Some of these critics have labelled characters in the above novels as caricatures. Such allegations are apparently made by scholars who were in turn influenced by non-African literary critics who were not well equipped for this purpose. It is therefore clear that in most of these instances Western literary standards were unempirically or bluntly applied in evaluating characters in the Zulu novel.

This argument is supported by Larson who maintains that:-

Expressed in another way, the African writer has been confronted down through the years with Western critic and reviewer whose point of view has been solely Western, Larson, 1971:9.

- (ii) Another classical example of accusation levelled against the Zulu novelist is the one mentioned by Gérard who quotes a certain Zulu critic, the so-called old-time missionaries critic who had been obviously influenced by or applied the western standards without examining the reasons behind the type of characterization of that

specific period. Gérard condemning this type of attitude writes as follows:

Further, as one recent Zulu critic says, 'characterization is not convincing' and the narrative is overburdened with unrelated and irrelevant details of historical accounts. Nevertheless, Noma Nini had the merit of being the first piece of imaginative fiction to handle modern subject matter in Zulu, Gérard, 1971:242.

In order for a non-African critic to fully understand the mode of characterization in the Zulu novel he must be quite conversant and have understood and appreciated the operation of traditional literature, because it is against this background that the early Zulu novel is written. As already pointed out literary critics must take cognisance of the fact that "characters in African fiction and the modes characterization may often be shaped by the traditions within the geographical area for the given writer, for there are decided differences in these matters, in West, East, or South African fiction" (Larson, 1971:148). Although this observation made by Larson was directed at novels written by African in English medium they are *mutatis mutandis* applicable to the Zulu novelist.

As observed above, basically, characters in the Zulu novel share certain similarities with characters in other novels, for instance the

English or Afrikaans novels. Having said that we must hasten to point out that there are fundamental differences between characters of different novels. It is precisely what this research is all about, viz. that the character portrayed in the Zulu novel may, over and above the similarities with other novels, be identified by its unique traits prevalent in the Zulu society and its traditions.

We would therefore define a character, for our purpose, as an imaginary person or a fictitious creation, which is expressed in 'word-masses' in a Zulu novel. This imaginary person is endowed with identifiable human attributes. The character in the Zulu novel is grounded in and shaped by socio-cultural and traditional factors obtaining among the Zulu people at a given time as perceived by the Zulu novelist. A character in a Zulu novel changes with the changing times and circumstances. This fictitious creation in the Zulu novel is shaped and influenced by factors such as urbanisation, christianization, apartheid policies, industrialization, etc. We may therefore safely conclude that a character is a 'lifelike' creation in a Zulu novel.

It is therefore a fallacious generalizations to think of a character in a Zulu novel as if it were exactly the same, at all times, as a character in other languages.

CHAPTER 2

2. CHARACTERIZATION IN GENERAL

- 2.1 A lot of background information has already been given under the definition of terms. However, additional views will be discussed hereunder in order to bring more light to the subject under discussion.

Different critics have approached the subject of characterization in many different ways. As a result thereof quite a number of theoretical principles in this regard has evolved. Because of the divergent nature of the views held by different critics various arguments have been advanced for certain views.

Some novelists will prefer certain approaches to others (approaches). Some of the approaches followed by some critics are the following:

Cassill, quoted by Gemme points out that no matter how lifelike or real the novelist's characters may be, there is a difference between a character in a novel and real human being.

"In real life, character is revealed to us; in fiction, character is created" (Beaucham 1969:13).

Stated differently, there is a difference between what can be actually and really experienced, i.e. a person in real life, and what is created by the

novelist, i.e. a character in a novel. This implies the difference between experience and artifice. It is common knowledge that when a novelist creates his characters he sometimes describes what has actually happened either to him or to another person he knows. What is important, though, to note is that real human beings are mortal whereas characters in a novel are immortal. In other words, a character in a novel transcends the limitations experienced by a real human being in real life. This view indirectly or directly disputes the common views held by earlier Zulu critics that the characters in the early Zulu novels must be like the human beings we meet in our daily life. It is, however, true that, as Gemme puts it,

most fictional characters are composites drawn from the author's experience - but they are however, embellished by his artistry and imagination, Beaucham 1969:13.

Before analysing Gemme's argument let us illustrate the fact that fictional characters transcend the limitations of ordinary human beings i.e. at times they do things which are not plausible. It is not unusual to find flying characters in a novel (for example Sithela in UNyambose noZinitha). That is precisely why you find Khalalembube as young as he is killing a baboon in the dangers of the night. The novelist wants to show how brave this young boy is. By 'miracle divine' the boy had taken along with him his mother's fibre belt - 'isifociya'. Of course it is common knowledge amongst the Zulu people that although the baboon is a dangerous wild animal, it fears a snake.

Naturally it likens the belt to a snake. Although Bengu motivates the possibility of such a young boy killing a baboon, it is very unlikely for this to happen in real life. Bengu tells the story as follows:

"Ucilo wazishaya othini ngempela. Ake uzwe baba:
isifociya sagaxeka entanyeni kanohha. Pho, omdala
uyayithanda yini into ethandelayo, noma esantanjana!
Uvalo olwamfikela unohha, nokwesaba le nto
eyayijikajika entanyeni, kwagcina ngokumqeda amandla,
... Wagcina ngokufa unohha. Phela uvalo luyambulala
umuntu; nazo izilwane ngokunjalo." (UKhalalembube,
p11)

Khalalembube subsequently kills a leopard single-handed. A leopard is known to be a vicious animal. If it were in real life, and if Khalalembube were a real person the chances of him being able to kill such dangerous animals would be very slim or just nil. He is young, inexperienced and too weak to be able to commit such acts.

This shows that Khalalembube is a fictional character. He transcends the need for experience, the need of being a shot, the need of bravery etc. Therefore we can safely conclude that there is a difference between a fictional character in a novel and the real human being.

If critically examined, Gemme's view, coupled with the examples cited above i.e. Bhengu's character, Khalalembube, the following dimensions in characterization come to light:

- (i) the novelist, in this case Bhengu, does not aim at making his characters plausible but characters must form the integral part of the story. After all one of the important aims of writing a novel is to tell a story. Of course, any narrative "that neglects that simple fact will be inadequate", (Ngcongwane 1987:2). Further, it must be pointed out that at times the novelist does not concentrate on characterization as such but aims at entertaining his readers. In this connection Bryn Davies quoted by Ngcongwane says, the novel "is an art that seeks to entertain whatever else it may do. Most of us read novels for pleasure", Ngcongwane 1987:12.
- (ii) Sometimes the novelist may not emphasize the fact that the character really resembles a real person but he may merely display his artistry and aim at stimulating his readers' imagination. So is Bhengu in Khalalembube. He wants his readers to imagine what would happen if a baboon mistakes the female traditional belt (isifociya) with a snake. He further uses his or the reader's imagination when a young brave boy is confronted by a leopard.

- (iii) Thirdly lifelikeness cannot be the only criterion in judging a character but there are other factors like the traditional beliefs of the novelist. This is one of the factors which distinguishes characterization in the Zulu novel from other novels. Traditionally, the Zulu believes that a child is named after a particular incident, reason or wish. So has Bhengu named the boy so that he becomes a brave and a strong man. The Zulu attaches a great significance to naming a child. In other words the Zulu novelist does not only name his characters in order to distinguish them from other characters, but naming a character in a novel, has a specific meaning or carries some significance in that particular family. This means that one could read a message from the name of the child, for example, Ntombizodwa would mean that only girls were born so far in that family, Ntombifuthi (girl-again) would mean the couple has again got another girl. Such names and others like Vusumuzi, Mandlakhe, Falakhe etc we come across in the Zulu novels show a direct influence from the Zulu tradition of naming a child.
- (iv) Although the novel as a narrative art deals very directly with life, it is not life as such i.e. life in the real sense, but the novel deals with the so-called "felt-life". That is why the novelists does not imitate or copy the real people he knows. To put it in Gemme's words,

the writer does not copy his originals; he takes what he wants from them, a few traits that have caught his attention, a turn of mind that has fired his imagination..., (Beaucham 1969:13).

In other words the novelist creates the impression he wants to put forward to his readers. We therefore emphasize characters in a novel are not real human beings. Ngcongwane argues that,

We have to have a knowledge independent of literature in order to know what relation of a specific work to "life" may be, Ngcongwane 1987:11.

Characterization is merely a play with words. Ngcongwane argues aptly that,

Our imagination reconstruct the character precisely according to the signals given to us by the words. But what we see on paper is the language, and not even a semblance of the character himself, Ngcongwane 1987:11.

The language, besides, being a vehicle for carrying the message from the author to the reader, it is a "blinddoek" through which we picture the life of man not the real man.

In every day language readers speak of different types of characters. What does this mean? In essence this is to say:-

— in effect that novelists use characters and character portrayals for a range of different purposes, Hawthorn 1987:49.

Nyembezi in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* uses Ndebenkulu, a flat character, in order to further his plot. Nyembezi designates Ndebenkulu as a rogue in order to explain how rural simple and naive people can be exploited by such unscrupulous persons as Ndebenkulu. That is why Hawthorn explains that,

A novelist may use a character for purposes quite other than characterization, Hawthorn 1987:48.

Hawthorn further points out that,

... a character may be associated with actions or objects for a purpose connected with the theme of the novel; a character may say things just so that the reader can be told something, Hawthorn 1987:40.

The above view takes us a step further viz that some critics sometimes condemn the Zulu novelists' characters as caricatures and flat. The fact of the matter is that there is nothing wrong with a flat character as such in a novel as long as that character fulfils the intended purpose and forms an integral and artistic part of the novel. This argument may be supported by the fact that *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* is generally regarded as one of the best novels. Empirically, flat characters have advantages of their own. For example, they are easily predictable, they are easy to remember etc. It is Ndebenkulu who mostly entertains the reader. Therefore whether a character is flat or round does not guarantee good characterization. What matters is how the character is portrayed and what purpose he serves in a story.

We must, however, warn against completely flat characters as such characterization may be a recipe for confusion. It would be rather difficult to distinguish between a character in a novel and a character in a folktale. That is why Brooks and Warren in their discussion of the different types of characters warn that:

Completely flat characters, mere types, would of course, probably take us out of fiction altogether, Brooks and Warren, 1979:108.

We wish to point out again that the subject of characterization, is not as simple as it would appear from the face value. The more one examines it, the more complex it becomes. This idea is shared by critics like Hawthorn, Kenney and others. Hawthorn points out that,

Character may well seem to be one of the least problematic terms with which you have to deal in studying the novel. ... And yet even if we stop at names we may realize that characters in novels aren't quite like real people, Hawthorn 1987:47.

The view that characters in a novel must be like human beings we meet in our everyday life without any qualification is simplistic and misleading. Some critics maintain that characters must be lifelike i.e. even some untrained readers tend to expect the characters in novel to be exactly like the people in real life. Of course, the reader does expect characters to be "natural" or "lifelike" i.e. We must not adopt an extreme view in this particular instance. Stated differently, characters must be "natural and lifelike" in their own so-called imaginary world. Unless used with caution the two above-mentioned terms in inverted commas may present a serious problem. If the novelist puts only the principle of lifelikeness in the fore, he is immediately faced with the problem of getting the precise measuring yardstick for the degree of the element of lifelikeness. We therefore concur with Kenney who, though not completely disagreeing with the notion of lifelikeness in a character, questions it in this way,

It is the argument of this chapter that the standard of lifelikeness is inadequate for judging in fiction. At best, the notion of lifelikeness is an oversimplification, Kenney 1966:24.

Kenney further rightly points out that a character in a novel must be other things, besides being lifelike. As pointed above a character may be represented as follows:-

X+ or X-.

This means that the standard of lifelikeness must not be taken too literally.

Let us illustrate our argument by saying that in Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu, Ndebenkulu is a person plus certain human qualities as well as minus certain qualities. In addition to that comes the novelist's artistry, and the power of imagination. This argument does not by any means suggest that the novelist should entirely ignore the relation between characters in a novel and real human beings. Kenney emphasizes rather that we should recognize that this relation is a complex one. And after all fiction is about life with its diversity.

One other aspect of characterization which may be looked into is the time when the characters are introduced in a Zulu novel. The choice varies from artist to artist. In some Zulu novels the main character is introduced within the first two or few pages together with other expositional background

information while in other Zulu novels the contrary is true. The fact of the matter is that the earlier the main character is introduced the better it is for the reader because, as Sternberg puts it,

It is the function of the exposition to introduce the reader into an unfamiliar world, the fictive world of the story, by providing him with the general and specific antecedents indispensable to the understanding of what happens in it. He must usually be informed of the time and place of the action ... of the history, appearance, traits and habitual behaviour of the dramatic personae and of the relations between them, Sternberg 1978:1.

It is therefore important that the main character(s) be introduced early in the novel so that the reader gets acquainted with him in order to heighten his preparedness for the rest of the story. The exposition in a Zulu novel makes provision for this. The following are a few examples of the introduction of the main character(s) in Zulu novels.

In *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi Zulumacansi* who is one of the main characters is introduced in the first sentence of chapter one. Manamuza KaNomadinane is introduced on the second page of this novel. Ndebenkulu in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* is introduced as early as in page five of the novel. Whereas in *Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa*, the main character, makes his first appearance on page twenty seven when the novel has long given its expositional background information. It would therefore appear that there is no hard and fast rule as to when exactly the main character

must be first presented.

Of importance also about characterization is the fact that a character forms the integral part of the whole novel. Characterization is the vehicle through which the plot is guided. That is why du Plooy points out that,

Dit is belangrik om daarvan kennis te neem dat Tomasevskij die verskillende aspekte van 'n verhalende teks nie as losstaande onderdele sien nie en dat hy die onderlinge integrasie beklemtoon, du Plooy 1986:112.

It is the character which performs certain acts; it is the character around which the story is built; it is through the character that the theme and the point of view are expressed by the novelist. As a matter of fact the whole plot of a novel will be judged, inter alia, by the behaviour of the characters. In other words, even the motives from which the story is based are brought together through "the creation of a character who is the living embodiment of a given collection of motifs", (du Plooy 1986:112).

Du Plooy for that matter puts great emphasis on the main character of a novel in this manner:

Die hoofkarakter in 'n verhalende teks is die koersbepalende gids wat die leser deur die greet versameling motiewe lei, du Plooy 1986:112.

To say Du Plooy puts emphasis on the main character(s) or characterization does not mean that the other elements of a novel are not important. They all contribute towards a successful novel. Some critics will even make a distinction between novels of character and novels of incident as well as between novel and romance. According to du Plooy it does not matter where the emphasis lie. She argues that:

'n Roman is 'n roman, ongeag van waar die klem in die werk val, maar enige roman kan goed of sleg wees, du Plooy 1986:21.

To her,

Karakter en handeling (of gebeure) is in die roman onlosmaaklik aan mekaar verbonde en is noodwendige komponente van enige roman, du Plooy 1986:21.

This means that the importance of character and the mode of characterization cannot be overemphasized. That is why Dube and others argue that,

Whether fully developed or not, however, every character is important because each performs a role in the process of depicting life and examining what it means to be human, Dube et.al. 1983:47.

Amongst the old and prominent literary critics is Forster who comes with very interesting views on characterization. It is Forster who indicates that animals were at some other stage of the development of the noveldom used as characters. This is a feature which has been prevalent in the Zulu novel especially during the early stages of the Zulu narratives. (We find dogs and chickens, *Insila KaShaka*, p33) We find animals like the baboon and leopard in *UKhalalembube*, p10). The use of the animals in the first Zulu novels is a direct, though seemingly not a conscious effort by the Zulu novelist, influence of the Zulu folktale where animals like the rabbit, the elephant, the baboon etc. were endowed with human attributes. Msimang, in his book **Folktale Influence on the Zulu Novel** discusses this influence at length. This influence of the folktale on characterization is one of the most distinguishing features of the Zulu novel.

Like fashions, theories come and go, thus the use of animals as characters is not maintained any longer as such characters pose problems. Forster puts one of the problems as follows:

Other animals have been introduced, but with limited success, for we know too little so far about their psychology, Forster 1974:30.

One other problem why the Zulu novels could no longer use animals as characters is the fact that the novel is mainly based on the felt human life

and not on the 'animality'. Contributory to this factor, is the fact that the subject-matter of the novel was quickly changing from traditional life and rural milieu to the urbanised and industrialized world.

Forster maintains that there is a close affinity between the novelist and his subject-matter. There is a general belief amongst the Zulu novel readers that Nyembezi in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* uses a number of word-masses roughly "portraying himself". It is generally supposed that the description of Ndebenkulu in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* roughly befits the author-expecting of course the robbing of the rural people of their cattle. Forster asserts that,

The novelist, unlike many of his colleagues, makes up a number of word-masses roughly describing himself ..., gives them names and sex, assigns them plausible gestures ... and perhaps to behave consistently, Forster 1974:30.

By way of summary it may be stated,

- (i) that, as already mentioned above, the novel never deals with character in isolation for what a man is, determines what he does, and it is primarily through what he does that we also observe him, know what he is - i.e. characterization. The plot and characterization are interwoven with one another. Why we separate the plot from the

character is justified by Brooks and Warren as follows:-

Though plot and character interpenetrate each other, there is some justification for stressing one problem at a time..., Brooks and Warren 1979:107.

This means that each of these elements has its own peculiar problems.

- (ii) the domain of the novel requires that the characters be credible and plausible i.e. a character must give reasonable grounds to be believed by the reader at the time of reading.
- (iii) extremes in characterization, for instance, completely flat characters or mere types, would, of course probably take us out of fiction altogether. Such characters would take us back to 'folktaledom'.
- (iv) we must also take cognisance of the fact that no matter how lifelike and developed a character may be, no character can be as pure an abstraction as our common humanity. Therefore, the element of lifelikeness in a character must be applied with caution. As Forster asserts, there is a difference between the nations of fiction i.e. the population of noveldom and those of the real earth.

- (v) it is true that the mode of characterization has so much developed that there are certain rules or laws which govern it, which have been agreed upon. We must, however, be mindful of the fact that these laws are not the kind of laws that are passed by legislative bodies, like the parliament, but they are rather generalizations drawn from the practice of the best writers who have gained sufficient experience which has been accumulated through the ages. That is why Kenney maintains that,

To deviate from these laws is not,
therefore, a crime, Kenney 1966:19.

2.2 FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE THE ART OF CHARACTERIZATION IN THE ZULU NOVEL

2.2.1 Under the subheading Motivation and Modus Operandi of this research it has been pointed out that characterization in the Zulu novel follows a definite pattern of development. We have stated that characterization has grown and also changed with changing times. It is for this reason that we say characterization in the Zulu novel is evolutionary and not static. In the study, among other things, we are faced with the task of highlighting the factors which influence characterization in the Zulu novel. From the outset it must be pointed out that it is generally accepted that literature changes with the changing times. Lerner confirms this argument by pointing out

that,

In a society which does not stand still, one would not expect theories of literature to remain unchanged ..., Lerner 1983:1.

Theories of literature would, of course, include the theories governing the mode of characterization. The novel deals with life, i.e. "felt life". In turn life deals with people and the novel deals with the people too - but the imaginary people. Like people in real life, people in a novel change under the changing circumstances and times. Changes, be it in real life or be it in imaginary life, are brought about by certain factors. We therefore now have to examine some of these factors which have contributed and are still playing a major role in influencing the art of characterization in the Zulu novel. Our primary concern is to identify and discuss such factors in so far as the role they have played in shaping, developing and directing characterization in the Zulu novel

Some of the factors which have influenced characterization in the Zulu novel are the following:

- (i) influence of oral material;
- (ii) cultural values and virtues of traditional life;
- (iii) eagerness of the Zulu novelist to highlight the valour of the Zulu

nation;

- (iv) acculturation;
- (v) christianization;
- (vi) industrialization, and
- (vii) urbanisation.

It must be pointed out that the abovementioned factors are not necessarily arranged in a specific chronological order. For the purpose of this study the sequence will not be of any importance. Of importance is how these factors have influenced the mode of characterization in the Zulu novel. The above factors will now be discussed briefly with the view to showing their influence on the mode of characterization in the Zulu novel.

2.3 THE INFLUENCE OF ORAL MATERIAL

Many a old-time-missionary critics have ignored the fact that any criticism on characterization by the Zulu novelist must be significantly responsive to the unique methods the Zulu novelist uses in order to give form and pattern to his experience. This is apparently caused by the fact that they apply western critical canon or western literary tradition which obviously falls outside the Zulu or even African milieu. Critics equipped with western approaches or evaluation standards have therefore given excessive attention towards tracing western influences on African literature. This includes the

Zulu literature. It is very common to come across unscientific remarks like saying that the Zulu novels lack character delineation and such other remarks. Such remarks were passed by critics who have failed to appreciate that traditional, verbal art has played a very significant role in the writing of the Zulu novel and the portrayal of character in particular. Traditional verbal art has been a very important factor on characterization in the Zulu novel. That is why Iyasere point out that,

to isolate the literature wholly from its cultural milieu and to insist on a strictly synchronic analysis of a work, as the formalist 'autonomistic theory' demands, would rob the literature of its vitality, *Journal of Modern African Studies* 1975:108-109.

In other words, anyone who does the analysis on characterization on the Zulu novel, at a given time will not succeed if he ignores the previous historical background developments of the people. Expressed in another way, in order to understand some of the characters in the Zulu novel one must take into consideration the cultural background of the Zulu novelist himself. Therefore the problem of the non-Zulu critic in understanding characterization in the Zulu novel is not a problem as such but it is realistically a problem of comparative aesthetics.

Let us now look at a concrete example in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu*. The influence of verbal art is so strong that even modern and a prolific novelist

like Nyembezi could not escape it. If one critically examines the portrayal of Ndebenkulu, one is immediately reminded of Chakijane in the Zulu folktale (UChakijane Bogcololo). The title of this novel resembles the title of the folktale where the name of the person who narrates the story is given first. The title *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* resembles *UChakijane Bogcozololo* except that Nyembezi leaves out the name, Ndebenkulu but nevertheless it is implied. It seems as if Nyembezi wanted to say '*UNdebenkulu Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu*'. In other words, like in the folktale, the main actor is introduced at the beginning of the story - so is Ndebenkulu. Researchers of folktale agree that "the law of Closing (*das Gesetz des Einganges*) and the law of Closing (*das Gesetz des Abschlusses*)" Dundes 1965:131-132) governs the plot of the folktale. This law also obtains in some of the Zulu novels. In terms of the so-called Sage law, the story "does not begin with sudden action and does not end abruptly" (Dundes, 1965:131).

In the exposition of the novel the main character is introduced under a state of equilibrium. When Ndebenkulu introduces himself to Mkhwanazi by means of a letter the situation is calm. So is Chakijane when he introduces herself to the 'Impunzi' everything is calm. In terms of the Sage calm is followed by excitement. What is important in the exposition period is that the main character has got a certain prize or goal to attain or to achieve. In both the folktale and the novel the main character(s) is or are introduced in the exposition i.e. in a state of equilibrium. This state of equilibrium is then

disturbed as the main character is confronted by the antagonist(s) when he (the main character) is struggling towards the attainment of his prize or goal.

Then a state of disequilibrium comes into being as the conflict is intensified by the opponents. This pattern obtains in both the novel and the folktale; which means the folktale has had a direct and indirect influence on the Zulu novel.

Another similarity between a character in a folktale and a character in a novel is when both the folktale and the novel reach the climax. The Zulu word for climax is very apt - 'uvuthondaba'. If we look at Chakijane after he has eaten all the children of the 'Impunzi' he gets into a struggle with the 'Impunzi' with the intention of "flight" and "escape". In *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* the story reaches the climax when Ndebenkulu struggles with the police after he has been identified by a certain woman at the station. The woman cries loudly:

"Maye weNkulunkulu!" washo ethwala izandla ekhanda, empongoloza, ngezwi elihlabayo. "Maye! Maye! Maye! Leli sela elinguMlomo eleba izinkomo zabantabami!" (*Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* p.194).

Another aspect of the novel which shows the influence of the folktale on the novel is the theme. By the term theme is meant, among other things, a philosophical statement or a sermon or a meaning the novelist or a folktale narrator intends imparting onto his audience respectively. Dubé et.al. say

"we may mean the main idea, central insight, thesis, premise, statement or judgement, or opinion" (Dubé, et.al. 1979:141). All these come under one critical umbrella term, theme. Dubé et.al. go on to say that it is by means of its particular theme that a story in a novel or a story in a folktale offers a comment about or on a certain aspect of life or further still expresses the truth about human affairs. Stated differently, the theme is the controlling idea of a story. But of paramount importance is the fact that, be it in a novel or folktale, the theme is 'vehicled' or directed through the character. In order to promote a certain idea or discourage or show disapproval of a certain behaviour in a society the narrator does that through the character. It would be boring and dry just to make the so-called a 'naked' comment or give an idea about life without interesting the reader or listener. The message is carried through if it is done in a subtle manner. It would have been very difficult for Nyembezi, for instance, to give a dry sermon to his readers to warn them against rogues like Ndebenkulu and to teach the society that hooliganism is eventually brought to the letter of the law and punishable. But because he uses a character like Ndebenkulu, the main idea or message is easily carried through by his readers. It is so interesting to follow a character like Ndebenkulu as to what eventually happens to him. The conflicts experienced by Ndebenkulu in trying to attain his goal keeps the reader in suspense and interested. Ndebenkulu's behaviour resembles that of Chakijane who thinks, by his cunningness, could fool anybody he comes across.

2.4 CULTURAL VALUES AND VIRTUES

It is a well known fact that cultural values, attached to rituals and institutions like the 'ilobolo' (the so-called bride price) serve as a binding force and as a practical guide toward a normal social order among the Zulu people. Institutions like 'ilobolo' serve as function of maintaining conformity to the accepted pattern of behaviour amongst the Zulu nation. Deviation from this pattern was and is still met with great disapproval, particularly, but not exclusively, in non-literate Zulu communities. The Zulu people are known for their respect of their superiors and other people in general. Respect shown to strangers was regarded in the high esteem amongst the Zulu people. Virtues i.e. moral excellence was always striven at.

It is important to note that traditional values and virtues played a significant role in characterization in the Zulu novel especially during the 1950's. Traditional and cultural values and virtues have been a contributory factor in characterization in the Zulu novel most probably because of the cultural conflict and differences between the Zulu culture and the western culture. This factor was used in 1950's during which time women wanted to liberate themselves from traditional bondages. The Zulu novelist either deliberately or unconsciously took advantage of the situation. Manamuza and Bajwayele's case in *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi* by Ngubane may be cited as a case

in point. According to the Zulu custom every woman must get married to a man, not necessarily of her own choice, but she must get married so that her father may get the "ilobolo". Therefore, if the father of the girl sees a man with quite a lot of cattle he would wish to have those cattle. In order to get same he would directly suggest that his daughter must go and marry that man so that he could get the cattle he desires. There were probably three reasons for enforcing this custom:

- (i) **Social status of cattle** - the more cattle the man possessed the higher was his status elevated. Therefore in order to enhance their status in the community men with daughters would look for well-to-do young, or even old men for their daughters.
- (ii) **Economic value of cattle** - apart from the social status, cattle amongst the Zulus were of great economic value.
- (iii) **Econo-physical** - fathers would look for a 'rich' man (son-in-law) so that their daughters would not 'starve'.

This was the wisdom and philosophy behind this practice. In the example cited above, Manamuza of Buthunge Bukamagayi wants his daughter to marry Zulumacansi, and not Potolozi who is her own choice, just because Zulumacansi has a lot of cattle. In the argument which ensues after

Manamuza and his wife have been discussing the love affair between Zulumacansi and Bajwayele and his wife, Okamemunce, Manamuza directly suggests that their daughter would be better off with Zulumacansi than with Potolozzi. He argues:

Futhi phela unempahla lo mfana. Izinkomo zakhe zigcwele isibaya. Umntanami angeke alambe. Njengoba-ke yena kusobala ukuthi useqala ukubona ukuthi laphaya kuboZulumacansi angaphatheka kahle, wena ufunelani ukumthikazisa? (Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi p.33)

During the argument Manamuza insists on the converted Bajwayele's well being after marriage. He convincingly points out that:

Hhayi-ke uzoke uzibulale ngendlala izingane zakho (Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi p.33).

Manamuza tries to persuade his wife because he firmly believes that the tradition must be maintained. He tells his wife:

Lisiko lethu lemvelo ukulobola. (Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi p.33)

Manamuza's wife vehemently disputes the ilobolo custom:

Ukuba kuya ngami ngabe seliyafa liphele nye nalo leli lobolo. Wonke lo monakalo ophakathi kwezwe

ubangwa yilo. Amadoda asehlala phansi athamele ilanga
liphuma lize lishone uba egabe ngokuthi abantababo
bazolotsholwa. Amanye ahlohlela izingane zawo
ebumnyameni ngoba ehalela izinkomo zabanye abantu.
(Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi p.34)

Manamuza is not prepared to give in for he feels that:

Lisiko lakithi nina kaBongani. (Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi p.34)

The conflicting ideas during the dialogue between Manamuza and his wife represent two opposing forces of traditional values. In reply to Manamuza's statement his wife shows that she is fed up with this custom and she asks her husband:

Silwane sini sona isiko? Nitholani-ke ngesiko lakini?
Ake nicabange yise kaDumezweni ningamadoda. Ake
ubheke nje ukuthi zingaki izingane ezizaleka emakhaya
ngenxa yelobolo. Lihle lelo siko uma libanga lokho?
(Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi p.34)

Eventually Manamuza comes out strongly to compel Bajwayele, his daughter, to marry Zulumacansi:

Usukhulile manje Nomadinane. Ngifuna-ke mntanami
ukuba ungilandele izinkomo kwabozalo
lukaBhekokwakhe. (Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi p.36)

The mother adds to her husband's words in order to encourage Bajwayele that what Manamuza is saying is the truth and tradition. She says:

Kuliqiniso futhi ukuthi kulisiko lakithi elihle ukuba ingane ikhonjiswe umuntu ophilile, ingazilahli ehuzwini elizodlala ngayo. (Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi p.36)

The above quotations demonstrate clearly that the novelist has used cultural tradition and custom in order to dispute the outdated ilobolo custom which has caused a lot of misery in the Zulu family. The book is very interesting. The reader's interest is easily captured because of the use of the characters and the dialogue between the characters concerned by using conflicting traditional values as a mechanism for argument.

Manamuza and okaMemunce are plausible characters because of the subtle manner in which Ngubane has applied the traditional values as a device for characterization. Full of humour as such, the novel has from the outset up to the end used the traditional values as a vehicle for enhancing characterization. Put differently, cultural tradition and values and the mode of characterization have been so glued together that they have become inseparable.

Virtues have played a significant role in the portrayal of characters in the Zulu novel. Virtue is defined in the Longman Dictionary of the English

language as:

Conformity to a standard right; morality - a particular moral excellence.

An apt example of the use of virtue viz respect for husbands amongst the Zulu women is shown by the somersaulting by Manamuza's wife who, because of her daughter's presence, does no longer argue with her husband, but instead she agrees with the former in order to convince Bajwayele to marry Zulumacansi. The reasons being that on the one hand, Zulumacansi owns a lot of cattle, and on the other hand Manamuza's wife, in spite of difference of opinion, must show respect for her husband, especially in the presence of their children.

When Delsie Moya becomes seriously ill after she has indulged herself in all types of corruption, a fibre of morality shows itself in her conversation with her friend Nosimilo. The standard of right or a particular moral excellence inculcated by her father has not entirely died off in her. Even on the verge of death Delsie is able to distinguish between right and wrong. It is very rare to find a person condemning herself. This can only happen if a person accepts her moral shortcomings. Without her standard of moral right one cannot accept blame or distinguish between right and wrong. The following paragraphs further demonstrate the influence of virtues as a factor in characterization:

Ngicela kuNkulunkulu ukuba enze ukuba uBen nawe nize nithandane ngelinye ilanga uBen athole kuwe Nosimilo, umuntu ozoba insika noma eseshade naye, ngoba kimina wathola izibi zodwa. Nawe, Nosimilo, uthole insizwa efana noBen ezihloniphayo. Ngilinge ngawo onke amandla ukuba ngethembeke kuBen kodwa ngehlulekile. Akhale izinyembezi ezishisayo (Indlela Yababi pp.131-132).

Cultural or traditional values and virtues i.e. culture's underlying assessment of what is good or bad acceptable or unacceptable amongst the Zulu have also been a contributory factor toward characterization in the Zulu novel as already shown above.

From the discussion above it has become clear that no matter how sophisticated a novelist may be, he cannot divorce himself entirely from his culture, folklore in general. In Nyembezi's novel, *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* there is a lot in common between Nyembezi's mode of characterization and the characterization as manifested in the folktale of Chakijane Bogcozololo. The obvious possibility is that Nyembezi must have been unconsciously influenced by the abovementioned folktale. Ndebenkulu is no less or more than Chakijane. There is truth in Iyasere's observation. He points out that:

The modern African writer is to his indigenous oral tradition as a snail is to its shell. Even in foreign habitat, a snail never leaves its shell behind. (The Journal of Modern African Studies, 13,1 1975:107-119).

The statement holds true to the influence of traditional life as well as cultural values and virtues on the modern writers. An important fact to note here is that characters in the Zulu novel are not created in a vacuum but are created within the writers tradition and value system, moreover if one takes into consideration that most of the Zulu novels are intended for consumption by the Zulu people. It therefore sounds reasonable to acknowledge that the Zulu novelist gives the 'felt experience' as it would sound plausible to the Zulu reader who is acquainted with the Zulu culture and values. Ngcongwane makes a very apt statement in this regard. He observes that:

Nyembezi writes on the Zulu and keeps throughout his words to the life of the Zulu, Ngcongwane 1987:14.

Ngcongwane's statement directly suggests that Nyembezi writes within the traditional life and value and virtues system of the Zulu people. In other words, he writes within the culture of the Zulu. His mode of characterization is therefore directly influenced by this culture within which he is writing. It is important to note that culture is learned or acquired by people over a long period of time. It therefore becomes part and parcel of every member of a particular society. The Zulu novelist's mode of characterization is therefore influenced by his attitudes, perception, knowledge he has acquired over a long period of time as he cannot easily shed himself off his culture.

4.1 Christianization

It is generally accepted that missionary activity is of crucial importance in the introduction of writing and the introduction of a written literature as observed by Gerard and other scholars. According to this author Zulu was reduced to writing at an early stage of the so-called European contact with the Zulus. It may however, be noted that during this stage no creative writing was produced either by the missionaries or by the Zulus themselves.

Missionaries concentrated on the translation of the biblical material. Even grammars and the dictionaries they compiled were not mainly intended for the uses by the Africans but for the use by the missionaries themselves; Nyembezi observed, so as to enable the missionaries to master as quickly as possible the language of the people among who they were to work. Because of this delay and tendency the influence of christianization could only be traced in creative writing as late as 1946 in one of the first social novels written by Dhlomo, viz. *Indlela Yababi*.

In brief, *Indlela Yababi* tells a story of Delsie Moya's immoral affairs with the Rev. Gwebu and her other lovers. Due to the fact that Delsie's love affair with the Rev. Gwebu is not acceptable in the community, they elope to the slums of Johannesburg. They both morally deteriorate to the extent that they lose even identity with their professions. Their indulgence in antisocial practices eventually cost Gwebu his life. After all the adversities Delsie

repents and decides to go back home. We will remember that Delsie was brought up in a christian home. In other words christianity was well instilled in her at her childhood. In her sincerest Delsie is therefore able to distinguish between right and wrong. Dhlomo has manipulated christianity in portraying the character of Delsie Moya. After everything has been said and done, i.e. when Delsie reaches the cul-de-sac, it dawns in her mind that the life she has led in Johannesburg is immoral. She therefore reverts to the way she has been brought up. Dhlomo makes her express her grief and repentance in the following manner:

Ithe iphela leyo nyanga uDelsie wabesezilungiselela
ukuphindela eSiyamu, (Indlela Yababi p.134).

Her friend Nosimilo finds her busy packing up her belongings immediately after she has been discharged from hospital. Nosimilo asks Delsie:

Yini Delsie? Kuyiwaphi? (Indlela Yababi p.134).

Delsie replies with all determination:

Usabuza? Ngiyakhwela namhlanje ntambama ngisaya
ekhaya, (Indlela Yababi p.134)

And she continues:

Ungadabuki Nosimilo ngizimisele ukubuyela ekhaya, ngiyiqala khona impilo entsha ongifundise yona lapha eGoli ngobuqotho bakho obungishintshayo. Ngithanda ukubuyela ekhaya ngiyotshela ubaba ukuthi udlala ngobuholi besizwe uma ememeza emihlanganweni ethi Mayibuye i-Afrika uma izingane zakhe engazifundisi ubuntu; uma engamphethe kahle umkakhe, uma yena uqobo engesona isibonelo esihle kwabanye, (Indlela Yababi p.134).

The story goes on and on. The crucial point is that, had Delsie not been brought up in a christian home and had she not had met Nosimilo, her friend, who is a staunch christian with strong christian values and morals she would have degenerated to zero degree and would have perhaps lost her life like Rev. Gwebu. Dhlomo successfully makes use of this literary device i.e. the sudden turning point (ingwijikhwebu) in Delsie's life. This is brought about in the portrayal of Delsie. Therefore christianization is a factor that has influenced the art of characterization in the Zulu novel.

Another incident which shows christianization in Dhlomo's characterization is when he subtly draws a parallel between Delsie and the biblical prodigal son in the Bible in the following manner:

Njengendodana yolahleko okwathi lapho seyehlulekile lapho yayithi izothokoza khona, yakhumbula ekhaya lapho kungakhona yabuyela khona yasindiswa (Indlela Yababi p.90).

Dhlomo vividly depicts the Rev gentleman who is preaching on the day when Delsie is attending a church service on a certain Sunday:

Kwakushumayela umuntu omusha kakhulu ngalelo sonto. Insizwa nje, kodwa enobuso obukhanya umlilo wenkolo nothando lukaNkulunkulu; insizwa enezwi elipholile nolimi oluthambileyo. Intshumayelo yakhe wayithatha encwadini kaGenesisi ... (Indlela Yababi p.90)

One other point which is worth-noting is the fact that the use of christianization coincides with the advent of the missionary activity amongst the Zulu people. Though Ntuli praises Dhlomo's mode of characterization, he also slightly criticizes him. He asserts that Dhlomo assumes a didactic and a preaching tone. Ntuli feels that,

The writer (Dhlomo) is successful in portraying his characters objectively as human beings. At times he becomes too didactic and assumes a preaching tone, (Limi 1968:29)

On closer examination of Ntuli's statement it becomes obvious that christianity did not only influence Dhlomo's mode of characterization but also his method of narration.

4.2 Urbanisation and industrialization

Although the terms urbanization and industrialization are not synonymous there is some interrelatedness if used for our purposes. Therefore, for the purpose of this research they are going to be discussed together for they have exerted and shown more or less a similar influence on characterization in the Zulu novel. The influence of urbanization and industrialization is commonly traceable in the Zulu social novels. Most of these novels deal with a person or persons who leave the rural and go to the urban areas or to big cities for various reasons. *Mntanami! Mntanami!* by Nyembezi, *Indlela Yababi* by Dhlomo, *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi* by Ngubane, *Inkanankana* by Matsebula, to name but a few. Most of the characters who leave the rural areas and go to the cities suffer moral degeneration. In the end they either repent or are punished. (as Ntuli observed, Limi 1978 6.1 and 6.2 p.45), for example Delsie repents but Gwebu is punished.

There are a few observations that may be made with this type of novel i.e. the social novel whose mode of characterization has been influenced by urbanization and industrialization.

- (ii) the tendency is that the direction taken is 'one-way' i.e. a character moves from the rural area to the city. Diagrammatically represented it is: Rural area —> City area. The reverse is very seldom.

- (ii) Some authors call this theme the parodical-son-theme or Jim-goes-to Johannesburg theme. Yet other writers call it the makgoweng motif. According to Lenake this theme was popular with Northern Sotho writers in the 1940's. Lenake defines this tendency as follows:

Briefly this means the theme of a youth from the Bantu homelands who decides to try his luck in the cities, Limi Jan 1966 No 1:49.

- (iii) Gérard asserts that the growth of the city novel must be viewed and be understood as the literary aftermath of a number of apartheid legislative measures which began with the Native Land Act of 1913 which deprived the Black African of land ownership. According to Gérard, of the 25 000 square miles, for instance in Natal, the Zulus were apportioned only 4,000 square miles' and the rest was allocated to whites. This is a historical fact not just a literary fact.
- (iv) Gérard further rightly points out that, the taxation policy was also responsible for the city-ward trend of the Africans, many of whom had to find paid work in towns merely to pay their taxes. As a result of these and other causes, Zulu men flocked in large numbers to the towns, especially to Johannesburg. (Gérard 1971:222)

- (v) The other causes for the city-ward novel was the cultural conflict caused by the generation gap and the changing of cultural values in a changing Zulu society.

Let us cite the case of Bajwayele, a girl who has been forbidden by her father Manamuza, to marry a man of her own choice, i.e. Potolozzi Myeza. Bajwayele defies the tradition by rejecting Zulumacansi who is preferred by her father to Potolozzi. In this story Ngubane wants to highlight the outdatedness of the practice whereby a father would instruct his daughter to marry a well-to-do man who would enhance his social and economic status by getting a good 'lobolo'.

Writers of the period were influenced by urbanization and industrialization. Zulu novelists took advantage of the circumstances prevailing at the time and they highlighted the conflict between old customs as represented by Manamuza in our example above on the one hand and the realization of individual's right to choice as represented by Bajwayele on the other hand. When the theme of Jim-goes-to Jo'burg period was handled the Zulu people had already been influenced by factors such as christianization which made women aware of their right to marry men of their own choice. Another good example of this conflict and influence manifests itself in 'Ingcugce' which defies Cetshwayo's word and are even prepared to die rather than to marry Cetshwayo's regiments (Uqomisa Mina Nje Uqomisa Iliba - drama

book).

In the case of *Mntanami! Mntanami!* by Nyembezi and *Indlela Yababi* by Dhlomo, the young character is dissatisfied with and rebels against the strict parent's discipline which is entrenched in the cultural values of the Zulus. The youth moves to cities where he behaves as he pleases. Jabulani in *Mntanami! Mntanami!* leaves his family and goes to Johannesburg and Delsie elopes with the Rev. Gwebu to Johannesburg too. In both these cases the problem of adjustment becomes insurmountable. Most of these characters perish in the cities. Those who are fortunate like Delsie Moya in *Indlela Yababi* repent and are lucky to return home alive.

On closer examination of the social novel, one makes the following observations:

- (i) the portrayal of characters show the difficulty which manifests itself in the behavioural or psychological adjustment problems experienced by a character who leaves the rural areas and moves to the city. In *Mntanami! Mntanami!* Jabulani experiences an internal as well as external conflict as to whether he must kill a young boy or not. Jabulani debates within himself. He says:

Ngingambulala kanjani kodwa umuntu?
Kungcono ngisebenze yonke eminye

imisebenzi ngixolelwe kulokhu, kusho uJabulani (Mntanami! Mntanami! pp 137-138).

The external force Jabulani is faced with is Mwelase's wrath. The latter informs Jabulani in no uncertain terms that if he fails to do the 'job' i.e. killing the boy he, Jabulani himself may lose his own life:

Mfana wami, ngiyabona ukuthi ingqondo yakho imfushane ... Angithandi ukuba ngibe lokhu ngingakisana nawe ngamazwi. Uzowenza lo msebenzi engithi wenze. Kungenjalo ngahle wena uqobo uvelelwe yingozi (Mntanami! Mntanami! p 138)

(ii) In most Zulu novels the character which leaves the rural area and goes to the city is either a young boy or a young girl. It is seldom, if ever, that we come across an old character leaving rural home and settling in town.

(iii) These characters are usually victims of mischief.

The Jim-goes-to-Jo'burg theme in the social or psychological novel which was a direct result of industrialization and urbanization resulted in the constant migration of the rural people to towns and cities. The Zulu novelist took advantage of the circumstance. In Ntuli's words,

Many stories have been written around this theme. In most of the stories a character is corrupted by city life, (Malan 1987:131)

Ntuli makes this observation about the prodigal son theme viz. that some people have suggested that South Africans including the Zulu novelist choose this theme as a result of persuasion by publishers and the government to help in discouraging blacks from going to the already overpopulated towns or cities. Another controversial observation is that,

It is insinuated that, even great works like *Mntanami!* *Mntanami!* by Nyembezi resulted from the manipulation of the author by authorities so that he could write in support of the influx control measures. (Malan 1987:131)

Every coin has two sides. But we would like to differ from the exponents of such ideas. We base our argument on the fact that Nyembezi even sacrificed his job at the University of Fort Hare because of his attitude against the evil policies of apartheid. All that one can say is that characters like Jabulani in *Mntanami!* *Mntanami!*, Delsie Moya and Gwebu in *Indlela Yababi* are a direct result of the transition in the characters' lives. They are direct observations of the writers of that period of urbanisation and industrialization. It would seem unlikely for Nyembezi to give support to the influx control measures by the government of the day. This point will become clearer when we discuss the various period of characterization in

the Zulu novel.

4.3 Acculturation

Acculturation has played a significant role in the portrayal of characters in the Zulu novel. The influence of acculturation has long been noticeable on characterization in the Zulu novel. The influence of acculturation has made itself effect since the advent of the white man i.e. since the contact between the black man and the white man. In order to gain better understanding of the term acculturation one must first define the term culture. Briefly, the term culture,

refers to all the accepted and patterned ways of behaviour of a given people. It is a body of common understandings. It is the sum total and the organising or arrangement of all the groups ways of thinking and acting ... (Unisa Alumnus Dec 1991 Vol. 13:20)

The above definition suggests that culture may be broken down into certain elements, like touching the fundamentals of human interaction, the value system of a people. Values include the culture's underlying assessment of what is good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable. Of importance about culture is that it is not static. Culture changes with the changing times and circumstances, for example, when a people comes into permanent contact with a different nation. That is when the process of acculturation takes

place. Briefly, defined by Kroeber,

Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when two groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups. (Kroeber 1949:425)

Factors like urbanisation, industrialisation, christianization etc, all contributed to the process of acculturation. In *Indlela Yababi* Delsie Moya repents from her corrupt life. Delsie is brought up in a christian home. She assimilates the values of christianity. Before she repents, she goes and look for work in Johannesburg. In Zulu culture women were not expected to leave their homes and go to work in far places like Johannesburg but because of the influence of urbanisation and other factors Delsie assimilates the culture of the white man where women are allowed to fend for themselves.

In *Mntanami!* Mntanami! Dlamini and MaNtuli's attitude, beliefs and religion have completely changed. They have been so much influenced by christianity that they no longer believe that getting children and other blessings are given to them by the ancestors as most Zulu people of the time believed. Instead they realize that all the blessings and children are a gift from God. The influence of the christian culture even shapes the way Nyembezi describes the abovementioned couple. He says:

INkosi yayibabusisile laba bantu, kusengathi zonke izinto zabo ziyaphumelela. Umthandazo wabo wafuthifuthi kwakungukuthi iNkosi ize ibasize abantwana babo bakhule babe ngabantu abaqotho. (Mntanami! Mntanami! p.2)

Another interesting incident is when Jabulani realizes his folly and goes to Rev. Maphela to confess the murder he has committed. Rev. Maphela does not refer Jabulani to the medicine man where he could be 'cleansed' as it was the custom in the Zulu culture, but after confession Rev. Maphela asks Jabulani that they pray together and ask for God's forgiveness:

Ngaphambi kokuba uhambe mntanami ake uguqe kesikhuleke kuNkulunkulu. Nkosi Nkulunkulu, Mdali wezulu nomhlaba, ake ubheke ngomusa wakho le ndodana eyedukelana nezindlela zakho, yagitshwa izife zomubi, yaze yawela ebubini. (Mntanami! Mntanami! p.191)

From these and other examples one may deduce that when two different cultures come into contact the tendency is that the stronger culture is assimilated by the people of a 'less developed' culture. It is very rare that the tendency becomes 50-50.

The Zulu novelists must have observed this tendency and they created characters to express such a tendency where characters portray a dramatic change in their own culture and assimilate the culture of the white man. Acculturation coupled with the sense of time have influenced

characterization in the Zulu novel, especially the novel expressing the contact between the black man and the white man in South Africa.

2.4.4 Summary

By way of summary, it may now be pointed out that,

- (i) there are unique and definite factors which have played a significant role on or have influenced characterization in the Zulu novel.
- (ii) on closer scrutiny one realizes that these factors which have played a role or are still showing an influence on characterization in the Zulu novel show a noticeable or definite pattern. For example, the early Zulu novels had a lot of influence of traditional material. Thereafter there came the influence of factors like historical material and thereafter the factors like christianization, urbanization etc. All these show their influence on characterization in the Zulu novel. As mentioned earlier on characterization in the Zulu novel is not static. Instead it has undergone certain stages of development. Put differently, characterization has been changing with the changing times in the Zulu novel.

2.5 THE TECHNIQUES USED IN CHARACTERIZATION IN THE ZULU NOVEL

Characters constitute one of the most important integral elements of a novel. Elements of the novel such as the plot are so intertwined and interrelated with the characters that the plot can be regarded as successful only if the portrayal of the characters is successful. That is why Bragg asserts that,

A well-constructed plot will give the reader surprises, but these must be legitimate surprises caused by events which can be seen, in reflection, to be logically and emotionally the inevitable outcome of prior events ..., Bragg 1984:22.

Bragg's statement suggests that the plot is carried out to its logical conclusion by the proper portrayal of characters. The 'surprises' are brought about by means of the characters in a narrative of events. The portrayal of characters is so important that "the novel which does not contain convincing, solid, living characters must be counted a failure (Bragg 1984:22). Because of the importance of character portrayal, the novelist, is bound to make use of specific techniques in order to achieve good characterization.

2.5.1 Conventional methods of characterization

It would appear as if there are many methods of character portrayal, i.e. techniques used in characterization. In actual fact this misconception is caused by the fact that different literary critics use different literary jargon whereas in actual fact they mean more or less the same thing. For an example, Bragg refers to *'physical descriptions and dialogue'* while Kenney refers to *'discursive method'* and *'the dramatic method'* and *'contextual method'* of character portrayal. Prominent critics like Brooks and Warren talk of *'direct or indirect presentation of a character'*. Hawthorn believes that there are four important methods of characterization available to the novelist, viz.

- (i) the description or report;
- (ii) characterization by action;
- (iii) characterization through a character's thought or conversation, and
- (iv) characterization by use of symbol or image.

On closer examination of these techniques of characterization we can safely agree with Msimang that in essence all these techniques may be summarized or channelled into two main categories. Msimang avers aptly that,

There are many methods and techniques of character portrayal but in the final analysis they may all be divided into two broad divisions, namely, the direct and indirect methods, Msimang 1986:180.

Briefly stated, what Kenney calls the 'discursive method' and what others call the direct method, etc is now generally called the descriptive method.

What the critics call indirect method, etc is what is generally known as the dramatic method. Therefore the novelist either uses the descriptive method or the dramatic method of characterization. From the outset it may be pointed out that under normal circumstances the novelist does not stick to one method but he can combine the two above methods in one novel or character depending upon the impression he intends creating to his readers.

Before we investigate whether the two methods of character portrayal apply to the Zulu novel we must explain briefly what is meant by each one of them.

2.5.2 The descriptive method

As the term suggests, the novelist who chooses the descriptive method simply tells his readers about his characters. In other words, the novelist himself describes his characters. According to Kenney the novelist 'enumerates their qualities and may even express approval or disapproval of

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them' (Kenney 1966:34). Msimang even goes further and points out that if the novelist 'adopts an omniscient point of view, he may even be more analytical, and tell the reader what his characters think and how they feel. Such description may include, inter alia, physical, emotional and psychological description of a character. This method of character portrayal takes cognisance of the fact that characters in a novel are literary and imaginary creations of the novelist as pointed under the definition of the term 'character'. Therefore it is the novelist's prerogative to create characters which enhance his theme and plot. Of course, it is important to bear in mind that, although 'character' 'plot' and 'theme' have specific problems of their own these elements interpenetrate each other and they are inextricably interwoven. That is why Brooks and Warren rightly maintain that the novel never deals with character in isolation (Brooks and Warren 1979:107). And yet there is some justification for dealing with problems related to each one at a given time.

Advantages and disadvantages of the descriptive method

(i) Advantages

Briefly, the advantages of the descriptive or discursive method is its simplicity and economy. With this, the novelist who is content to tell his readers directly about his characters can quickly finish the job of

characterization and thereafter concentrate on facilitating a particular plot development or on other things.

(ii) **Disadvantages**

The descriptive method, like others, has its shortcomings. Critics generally agree that it may discourage the reader's imaginative participation. Stated differently, the reader is not encouraged to react directly to the characters so that he may make up his own mind about them. That is why some critics tend to regard the descriptive method of characterization as intrinsically inferior to the dramatic method.

2.5.3 The dramatic method

In contradistinction with the direct or discursive method, the dramatic method is grounded in the principle of showing or revealing rather than telling. In other words, if the novelist chooses the dramatic method, he allows his characters to reveal themselves to the reader i.e. through their own words, through dialogue or interaction with other characters or even through their actions. It is precisely how living people reveal themselves in real life. Of course, this does not exclude the possibility of revealing the character's direct description of his environment, the house he lives in, the

clothes he wears, the language he talks and people he associates with.

Like the descriptive method of characterization, the dramatic method is not at all zero-defect. It has its advantages as well as its disadvantages.

"Akukho soka lingenasici."

(i) Advantages

In comparison with the descriptive method, the dramatic method is more lifelike and invites the reader's active participation in the story; as observed by Kenney (p34). As already mentioned under the definition of the term character above, the concept of lifelikeness of a character also poses a problem. The degree of lifelikeness in a character is very difficult to determine. Generally speaking, the dramatic method is said to be a better method of characterization.

(ii) Disadvantages

Briefly stated, some of the weaknesses of the dramatic method, as pointed by Kenney are -

- (a) It is less economical than the discursive, since to show takes longer than to tell;

- (b) and, while it encourages the reader's active participation, it also increases the possibility of misjudging the character.

Our intention is not to go into details with the methods of character portrayal, but it is important to make a few observations on the methods of characterization discussed above, viz:

- (i) That there is no one method that is better than the other. What counts, as Dietrich and Sundell (1978:79) rightly observe, is how effective the novelist creates the kind of character appropriate to the story's purpose.
- (ii) The success of the method depends upon, among other things, the skill with which the novelist handles a particular method.
- (iii) An intelligent novelist, in order to create effective characters will use a combination of the two methods, for in real life one will seldom find any of the two methods in its entirety especially with the modern novels.

It may, however, be mentioned that over and above the two methods of characterization discussed above Kenney gives a third method. He

conveniently calls it the 'contextual method' which he defines as follows:

By the contextual method we mean the device of suggesting character by the verbal context that surrounds the character, Kenney 1966:36.

On examining this method it becomes clear that it overlaps with the discursive or expository or descriptive and the dramatic methods because the critic may deduce the type of character through dialogue or description from the given words, through the context of given words.

2.5.3.1 The relevance of the descriptive and dramatic methods to the Zulu novel

For the purpose of our research study, our main task is to determine the relevance of the descriptive and the dramatic methods to the mode of characterization in the Zulu novel. The question we are faced with is whether or not these methods as found in other literatures do apply to the Zulu novel. If so, to what extent? Is there any specific pattern followed by the Zulu novelist or does he use them indiscriminately? In order to do this characterization is going to be traced in different Zulu novels falling in different periods. In the meantime we accept the hypothesis that characterization in the Zulu novel is not static. It has developed with changing times. We now scrutinize these two methods.

2.5.4 The descriptive method

On examining the early novels like *Insila KaShaka* by Dube, which is generally regarded as the first creative and imaginative work by a Zulu, *UKhalalembube*, *UNyambose noZinitha*, *Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa* by Bengu, we find that these novelists predominantly use the descriptive method of characterization like most novelists of their time.

Dube does not allow Jeqe to reveal himself to the reader. Instead he directly tells his readers what type of person or character Jeqe is. He describes him in the following words:

Wayeyiqhawe uJeqe, lapho kuliwa khona wayejabula kakhulu, kodwa ukubulala umuntu engalwi kwakuyinto elukhuni kuyena. Lelo langa lamenza wafisa sengathi ngayengazanga koMkhulu, (*Insila KaShaka* p.25).

Another example of obvious use of the discursive method, as Kenny calls it, is that found in *UNyambose Nozinitha* where Nyambose describes himself:

Ngale nkathi ngase ngiyibhungu uqobo, nokho ngangilusa ngiyingqwele, *UNyambose NoZinitha* p.4.

Before 'telling' this in the novel there is nothing that shows the reader that Nyambose was in actual fact a hero. The same method is used by Bengu

when he tells his readers about Khalalembube:

UKhalalembube wakhula ebhangazela okungathi wenziwa ngabomu. Umnumzane Dlabazane wayesebona kahle ukuthi uzele insizwa uqobo, insizwa yeNkosi. Khona le ematholeni umfana wayedlangile kowabo. Unyawo lwalungafakwa kuyena; wayengathi nsi. Umfana waba umziqomele onjengesilwane. Izinsizwa zazimthanda, zixoxa naye izindaba zobuqhawe, UKhalalembube p.16.

In his social novel Dhlomo gives a clear description of Moya's wife:

UDora Dutshwa, umkaMoya wabeliXhosa. Umuntu omuhle ngakho konke. Umzimba wakhe umncane, sengathi ngowentombi egcweleyo; kepha ubunjwe kahle. Isidumbu sangenhla sisincane simile kwesangezansi esabe sithe gqi. Izitho lezi zimi kahle kungebona osondonzima. Iminyaka yakhe ingamashumi amane neminyaka emihlanu. Into eyayikuthathat kuqala ebuhleni bakhe amehlo akhe amakhulu, athambileyo, (Indlela Yababi p.13)

In our explanation of the discursive or descriptive method above, it was mentioned that the novelist may sometimes choose to enumerate the qualities of his characters i.e. he simply tells the readers about them. Ngcobo uses this method when he introduces members of "Umhlangano Wezakhamizi" to the reader. Some critics may say Ngcobo in this novel, **Inkungu MaZulu**, spends too much time on the description of his characters but others may say that it is better to introduce and describe the characters once and for all so that the reader will know what kind of characters he will

be meeting in the subsequent chapters. Ngcobo introduces them in the following manner:

Eceleni kukaMbulawa kwakuhlezi uMtshali. Lo mnumzane wayenomkhaba omkhulu. Abanye abantu babethi uyamgulisa, ugcwele amanzi. Babethi bangambona ehamba kude abamzondayo bammemeze bembuza bethi 'uthweleni na? ... Yini leyo oyiqhuba ngaphambili na?'

Wanikina ikhanda kancane uMazibuko sengathi kukhona okungamgculisi esimweni sikaGumede. Wayezingxavula zamazinyo. Amazinyo amane angaphambili emhlathini ongaphezulu ayexega. Wayehlala ephunga izimpukane.

Eceleni kukaGumede kwakuhlezi into kaChonco. Lo mnumzane wayethi angahlala phansi azunywe ubuthongo ... ezibangela umsindo iZakhamkhaya ngokuhona, (Inkungu MaZulu p.16).

2.5.5 The dramatic method

In the definition of the dramatic method it was indicated that economy and directness which are the fundamental principles of the descriptive method are not always the virtues appropriate to all situations in the Zulu novel. Instead of choosing the descriptive method of characterization some so-called advanced and prolific authors let their characters reveal themselves to the readers. Instead of telling directly about their characters, these fictional characters may be convincingly drawn through the ways they behave in the various incidents of the plot. This can be achieved by the use of dialogue. Bragg points out that,

Dialogue can also, of course, tell us a lot about a speaker's class, education or, original origins, and the author's uses of it can provide one criterion for the judgement of a novelist's merit, Bragg 1984:23)

In other words the novelist must realize that it is more effective to allow his reader's imagination to supply him with the details coming forth through the dialogue. Let us look at some of the examples of characterization through the dramatic method:

In the conversation between Delsie Moya and Ben Lutshani, Dhlomo demonstrates that the personalities of the two characters may be revealed through the device of dialogue:

Nkosazana Moya, ziqinise, mntakababa. Uhlale khona lapha endlini; ngisaya emaphoyiseni ngiyowabikela lo mhlolo singaze sibenecala. Kodwa Nkosazana Moya, uthi uma bengiyisigebengu ngabe ngiyazihlupha kangaka ngingakwazi nokukwazi?

Maye! Ngizokwenzenjani? Kububula uDelsie. Amaphoyisa azongibopha uma efika lapha.

Angek' akubophele ize amaphoyisa, Nkosazana. Ngiyawazi kade ngahlala lapha eGoli, (Indlela Yababi p.67).

From the above conversation the reader immediately realizes that Ben is a kind hearted gentleman. Though he has motives of his own he does not

take advantage of the situation and force Delsie to his wishes. We can also deduce that Delsie is ignorant about town life and the use of law. She is just as timid as most of the women when they see blood are. This is revealed without having to explain all the specific details.

Another good example of the use of the dramatic method in the Zulu novel is the one by Nyembezi in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu*, when Themba is sent by his father, Mkhwanazi, to fetch Ndebenkulu from Thisayidi. On page 21 we meet Themba worrying himself and imagining what kind of man Ndebenkulu is. Nyembezi has successfully portrayed Ndebenkulu by allowing him to reveal himself to Themba and later to Themba's parents, Mkhwanazi and MaNtuli. Nyembezi does not tell his readers that Ndebenkulu is a rogue and a thief of the highest order. The reader makes up his own mind about this character. The reader creates his own picture as to how boastful Ndebenkulu is. All this, is revealed in the dialogue between Ndebenkulu, who is the protagonist, and other characters. The conversation goes as follows when Themba arrives at Thisayidi:

Uthe lapho ezwa isiNgisi uThemba wabona ukuthi kuyoba nguye u-C.C. Ndebenkulu. Waqonda kuye wafike wamtshela ukuthi uzobheka uMnu. Ndebenkulu ovela eMgungundlovu. Yena usuka kwaMkhwanazi. 'Yimina lowo omfunayo', kusho lo muntu exhawula uThemba. Yimina lowo omfunayo. 'Kuyinhlanhla lokho kulendawo yakini ngoba angijwayele mina ukuhambela izindawo ezincane. Kuyinhlanhla enkulu. Ngingumuntu ozimele Mkhwanazi, ehhe ozimele. Kulokhu-ke ngasizwa yimfundo yami ephakeme, ehhe ephakeme'

On their journey to Nyanyadu, Ndebenkulu keeps on blowing his own trumpet while Themba is fuming with anger but trying to suppress it:

Ngiyadabuka kakhulu Mnumzane uma unganelisiwe,
kusho uThemba. Sengizibonele nami Mkhwanazi ukuthi
ningabantu abahluphekayo. Awusadinge kungitshela;
sengizibonele. Umnumzane unemoto, kusho uThemba
... anginamoto mfana wami, nginezimoto.
(Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu p.26)

The argument goes on and on until they arrive at the Mkhwanazi's. Ndebenkulu goes on with his arrogance even when he meets MaNtuli, Themba's mother. MaNtuli tries to pacify Ndebenkulu after he has fallen from the cart (ikalishi):

`Xola Mnumzane, yingozi', kusho uMaNtuli ezama ukuxolisa uNdebenkulu. `Mina Nkosikazi ngazana nabelungu abakhulu. Ngiyabhalelana futhi nabo. Bathi uma bengibhalela bangakulibali mpela mpela ukuba babeke ukuthi isikwaya emva kwegama lami', (Inkinsela YaseMgundundlovu p.27).

Even when he meets Mkhwanazi Ndebenkulu's pattern of insolent behaviour does not diminish. Instead he threatens them with a law suit. From the abovequoted conversation it has become clear that it is not always necessary to use the descriptive method. From the above dialogue the reader takes sides and gets angry with Ndebenkulu. Ndebenkulu's

personality has been revealed and imagined by the reader instead of describing it to the reader.

2.5.6 Evaluation of the descriptive and dramatic methods as used by the Zulu novelists

On closer examination of the above-discussed methods of characterization in the Zulu novel we make a few observations:

- (i) Characterization in the Zulu novel is not a static phenomenon. It is a process and it is developmental in nature. If one studies the early novels, viz. like *Insila KaShaka*, *Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa* and other works by Bengu, Indlela Yababi, etc. one can safely say that the Zulu novelists use predominantly the descriptive method. Dialogue and other characterization techniques are seldom used.
- (ii) As the standard of the Zulu novel was striving for literary excellence the techniques of characterization changed phenomenally and the Zulu novelist acquired new techniques of characterization. He changed to the use of the dramatic method. This does not necessarily mean that they abandoned altogether the discursive method. They still used it wherever necessary. In other words, they

moved towards the tendency of using the dramatic method. This is readily shown by Nyembezi in his *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* where we notice a phenomenal shift from the descriptive to the dramatic method. From the extracts cited above, one immediately realizes that prolific authors like Nyembezi have used both methods successfully. No wonder why *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* has become so popular as a school book as well as for use outside the classroom situation.

- (iii) In the Zulu novel we find that the descriptive method is chosen mostly frequently during the exposition stage of the novel when characters are first introduced to the reader.
- (iv) Zulu critics must guard against the temptation of regarding the dramatic method as superior to the descriptive method. Such a view is criticised by Kenney when he compares the two methods. He points out that,

Modern writers and critics have tended to regard the discursive method of characterization as intrinsically inferior to other methods, Kenney 1966:34.

The holders of this view believe that the novelist should not tell the reader about his characters but he must show or reveal them. To hold this critical generalization is to oversimplify the whole phenomenon of characterization

technique. That is why Kenney argues against this view and maintains that:

The discursive (i.e. the descriptive) method can be the best choice under certain circumstances. When economy and directness are desired, the author may well consider the discursive method, Kenney 1966:35.

There is reason to agree with Kenney in his argument. Let us look at the quotation cited above from *Inkungu MaZulu* by Ngcobo where he gives the description of the committee of "Izakhamkaya". Ngcobo uses the descriptive method when he introduces Gumede, Chonco and others. When reading this novel one immediately gets a vivid picture of the personalities of these members. The reader is not surprised when Fanyana takes advantage of them when he eventually exploits the whole community because the members of the committee are of that low calibre. The way a character talks, sits, behaves in a meeting may not only tell but may also reveal a lot about his personality and integrity.

It is of importance to note that although the current tendency in the Zulu novel is to use the dramatic method of characterization this does not necessarily mean that the descriptive and other methods are inferior to it. If used without the necessary caution it may have adverse results. Ngcobo uses it where and when necessary. As a matter of fact this novel won the Mqhayi Prize in the year 1962. *Inkungu MaZulu* gives some of its readers great pleasure and they therefore derive some enjoyment from it. They also

regard it as a good work of art. But there are other readers of the very same *Inkundu MaZulu* who are left indifferent, bored as they feel it has failed in its primary purpose of transmitting enjoyment. As far as they are concerned it is a failure or a bad work of art. On analysing these two different views, it immediately comes to light that this is caused by the attitude of the reader. We therefore agree with Bragg who notes that the judgement of a novel or any work of art as to whether characterization is good or bad,

... is usually buttressed by such hoary axioms as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, one man's meat is another man's poison, or that tattered slogan of the philistine, I might not know much about art but I know what I like, Bragg 1984:21.

It is therefore equally a fallacy to say that characterization in the early Zulu novels, where the Zulu novelist uses the descriptive method of characterization mostly, is inferior. We therefore accept the truth in Dietrich and Sundell's statement that:

In the sense of artistic worth, one method is no better than the other, Dietrich and Sundell 1978:79.

2.5.7 Additional devices of character portrayal used by the Zulu novelist

Besides the two popular methods viz. the descriptive or discursive and the dramatic methods discussed above, the Zulu novelists has used other additional techniques in order to make his art of characterization successful and practical. Amongst the popular ones are the following:

2.5.8 The sense of humour

Sense of humour stimulates the reader's imagination and thus contributes to the vividness of the character and indirectly promotes the delineation of the character. Quite a few cases may be cited in the Zulu novels in this respect:

After Bajwayele has rejected Zulumacansi she runs away to Benoni in order to escape her father's wrath. The manner, Ngubane in **Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi**, portrays or let the circumstances reveal what sort of a character Manamuza is, heightens the reader's imagination about Manamuza and in subsequent occasions the reader cannot help remember Manamuza and relate his subsequent behaviour to the incident when he was hiding himself "esilulwini":

Asukume masinya uManamuza aye athi swace ngale kwendlu. Kuthi ngoba eseseduze kakhulu uZulumacansi, uManamuza angabe esaya endlini ngoba uzombona enqamula ebaleni. Aziphonse esilulwini

khona lapho. Lapha esilulwini-ke kade kukhona izinkukhu, zizicoshela ummbila. Zethuke zigxume ziphonseke phezulu. Umakoti kanti uthe ephuma kwenye indlu walithi shazi ikhehla sekuvele imilenze lilenga esilulwini. Asigingqe uZulumacansi siye sithi mbo ngomlomo emhlabathini. Asigingqe uZulumacansi, abasabone gelekeqe uManamuza esephuma kusona namaqanda enkukhu. (UValo Lwezinhlonzi pp. 45-48)

The whole of the chapter is full of humour. This technique of using the sense of humour, besides showing the reader what kind of person Manamuza is, it makes him easy to remember him. This technique is part and parcel of characterization in the Zulu novel. The technique is so popular that even authors of Nyembezi's calibre do make use of it. Let us take the case of Ndebenkulu when he arrives at the Mkhwanazi's and he falls off from the horses cart. Imagine so boastful and conceited a man like Ndebenkulu covered with dust all over the body and his 'tooth'.

Waphakama noNdebenkulu. Uthe lapho ethi uyehla isithende sesicathulo sagaxeka esinyathelweni sekalishi, nguye lowaya eyofumbeka phansi. Isigqoko saqhasha sagingqika sashona le. Lapha ebusweni usenjani! Nalelo zinyo seligcwele inhlabathi. Wake wathi ukuliphathaphatha uNdebenkulu sengathi ufuna ukulizwa ukuthi kalixegi yini. Uselokhu ephimisa inhlabathi esigcwele umlomo. Izingubo lezi sezimhloshana luthuli. Ibhulukwe ladabuka edolweni, (Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu p.31).

The use of the technique of the sense of humour is so prevalent in the portrayal of characters in the Zulu novel that it would be empirically incorrect to regard it as a mere chance factor. So many Zulu novelists make use of this technique. Among other things, one would safely come to the conclusion that the reason for the use of the sense of humour is that the Zulu novelist must have one important aim in mind when he sets off to write his novel, viz that the novel or the story must entertain. It is therefore written for enjoyment. Ngcongwane points out that any novel which ignores this important aim (i.e. entertainment) is inadequate, (Ngcongwane 1987:2).

2.5.9 Naming

Naming is one of the conventional techniques of identifying a character in the Zulu novel. The Zulu novelist does not only delineate his characters by having them engaged in dialogue or describing them to the reader but he also gives them names. In his discussion of methods of characterization Msimang affirms that:

Naming goes a long way in delineating a character,
(Msimang 1986:100)

Wellek and Warren as quoted by Msimang point out that:

The simplest form of characterization is naming. Each 'appellation' is a kind of vivifying, animating, individuating, Msimang 1986:101.

Msimang believes that the Zulu novelist does not make much use of this technique. He blames the failure of the Zulu novelist to make use of this literary device to the influence of the folktale on the Zulu novel. This may be partly true but we would take the matter further and perhaps find the reason in the fact that when parents name their child they usually either express a wish about the newly born child or 'commemorate' a particular event or a certain occurrence in their own lives. In real life sometimes the parent's wish is fulfilled but at other times it is not. The novel tries to imitate real life. Seeing that the wish does not always come true; that is why the Zulu novelist no longer makes much use of naming as a characterization technique.

Another view from which we can look at naming as a device in characterization is the fact that characterization in the Zulu novel has developed and changed with the changing times. As pointed in the proceeding paragraphs it is important to note that characterization is developmental in nature. It is like fashions which come and go. One can actually divide the stages of characterization in the Zulu novel into certain periods. Naming as a technique in characterization was once, at a certain period of the Zulu novel, very prevalent. That is the period of the historical

novel. This technique is used mostly by Dhlomo in his works, viz **uDingane**, **uMpande**, **uCetshwayo**, etc. Bengu has also used naming in some of his works such as **Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa**, **uKhalalembube** etc. After this period the Zulu novelist uses naming as a device to the minimum. The main characteristic of using naming is that the novelist has a tendency of emphasizing a particular trait in a character. Take Bhekifa in **Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa**. Bengu wants to highlight Bhekifa's problem in securing his chieftainship and the problems he experiences, caused by the conflict between traditional and western cultures. Dingane in **uDingane** died wondering about like his name. Mpande in **uMpande** is the 'root' of the Zulu nation. As already pointed out these are mainly historical characters found in the Zulu historical novel.

2.5.10 Folktale influence

The influence of the folktale has already been discussed under the factors which influence characterization in the Zulu novel. All that can be illustrated at this point in time, is how it is used in revealing a character's personality in the 'Zulu novel'. The common denominator in a folktale story-telling is 'repetition'. This repetition is sometimes found in modern works which are regarded as of a high literary standard. Here we have in mind a novel like **Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu**. We have already pointed out that whenever the novelist creates a character; be it a round or flat character his aim is to

create a certain impression. It is this impression which guides the writer's selection of details as Kane and Peters aver. The novelist may want the readers to see his character as mysterious, a bundle of contradictions or the readers may see a pattern that reveals some truth about human behaviour or human values (Kane and Peters p.236). In order to achieve this aim the novelist may use details of physical appearance clothing and the manner of talking. Kane and Peters confirm that such details suggest both the writers impression and the character's personality. These critics rightly argue that:

Whether it be sound psychology or not, the reader responds in one way to a tall, thin-lipped ... In prose, a character's appearance, clothing, and possessions are, by convention clues to his personality, Kane and Peters 1966:236.

We would like to add to Kane and Peter's list, the manner of talking, such as the repetition of words. In our example given herebelow Ndebenkulu's manner of talking i.e. the repetition of certain words and the emphasis made on certain words in his speech during his conversation with other characters confirm Kane and Peter's assertion, viz that the reader without any difficult, gets a clue about Nyembezi's impression and Ndebenkulu's personality.

Uyabona-ke Nkosikazi, ngishilo lapha kule ndodana yakho, angithi yindodana yakho kambe lena Nkosikazi? Angisiye mina umfokazana wokuba ngingakhwezwa ezingoleni lezi enithi ngamakalishi; angisiye neze. Bakhona abantu abangakhwezwa ezingoleni, hhayi mina; cha hhayi mina. Ungizwe kahle Nkosikazi, ungizwe

kahle. Uyabona Nkosikazi yakwaMkhwanazi, ingqondo yakho yobudala njengoba ngibona sengathi usumdala nje, ngiyabona ukuthi ingqondo yakho yobudala ayisakuvumeli ukuba izinto uzilandele kalula; Ayisatholi kahle. (Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu pp.31-33)

The above reveals what kind of character Ndebenkulu is. The reader is led to understand him by his unusual repetition of words and also the unusual emphasis he puts on certain words in his conversation with MaNtuli. On reading these words it becomes immediately clear in the reader's mind that Ndebenkulu is a boastful, conceited character. He takes advantage of the rural and uneducated people. He holds very low esteem of other people.

Besides Nyembezi there are other Zulu novelists who have used this additional technique in the portrayal of their characters. But amongst them, Nyembezi has used this device most successfully in delineating Ndebenkulu as a character. This repetition is a direct influence of the folktale on the modern novel.

2.5.11 Highlighting of the deeds of valour of the old Zulu

The Zulu novelist does not only predominantly make use of the descriptive method during the early novel. He combines this method with other techniques. Zulu novelists of the early stages, especially novelists who wrote the historical novel, like Vilakazi and Bengu, base their characters on

the Zulu traditional background. As a matter of fact even authors like Nyembezi still write their novels based on the Zulu people and they also write their novels mainly based on the 'Zulu milieu'. Ngcongwane upholds this view. He writes:

Nyembezi writes on the Zulu and keeps throughout his work to the life of the Zulu, Ngcongwane 1987:2.

It is an historic fact that the Zulus are a brave nation. Bravery is part and parcel of their lives. If one reads Bengu's works and Dhlomo's works, i.e. their historical novels, and examines their characters, one realizes that in order to achieve their desires they have used bravery as an additional technique in their character portrayal. Ntuli in his discussion of Bengu's works, confirms this:

Bengu seems to have been motivated to write by his eagerness to glorify the valour of the Zulus of old, (Limi Jun. 1968:29).

Bengu portrays Mlonyeni as a great warrior. He also portrays King Shaka as a person who does not like cowards. From the following passage we immediately realize that cowardice was looked down upon in the Zulu tradition. Bengu and others took advantage of this unique trait of the Zulu of the old and created their characters accordingly:

Ngezwa sekuxoxwa kuthiwa kwamemeza uMlonyeni iqhawwe elidala laseNtonteleni (ibutho). Kanti wayememeza nje iNkosi yayisinengiwe isenzo soDlambedu sokuba lungibukele nginkunyankunyana nesilwane; yayisifuna ukufaka ibutho esibayeni lisikhobole ngezimpiselo thina luDlambedu ngoba sasingamavaka - amagamanxandukwana uqobo. Phela iNkosi uDlungwane kaNdaba wayengawathandi amagwala, (UNyambose NoZinitha p.19).

Through this valour, Bengu's heroes as Ntuli suggests, spear their way triumphantly to kinship. We assume he has in mind Nyambose who rises from rags to riches because of their unusual bravery.

Another interesting demonstration of the use of valour successfully is when King Dingane reprimands Ndlela, his great general, after the latter has allowed his regiments to be defeated by Mpande's warriors at Maqongqo. Vilakazi uses this technique in showing how brave Maqhoboza is. When one reads Maqhoboza's praises with understanding, Maqhoboza's victorious deeds of valour become very clear. Dingane, before 'singing' Maqhoboza's praises he first furiously asks Ndlela:

Ndlela mfo kaSompisi wena oyinduna yami, ngiyabuza
ngithi baphi oMaqhoboza.

Vilakazi gives Nozishada's praises as follows:

UGebhuz' izulu
UNgogo zabantu nezinkomo;
UMaliwendima kant' uyazalela;

Dingane feels very furious about the loss in the death of Nozishada. We may therefore safely point out that Vilakazi and others, like Bengu have been able to portray their characters successfully by using the technique of *velour*. The method is an indirect and subtle method used by the Zulu novelist instead of the direct description method. It is economical but gives a vivid picture of the character in question.

2.5.12 Sarcasm as a technique in characterization

The Zulu novelist, among other techniques of characterization, uses sarcasm. No wonder why Nyembezi is regarded as a prolific writer; he uses a combination of methods of characterization. Amongst these is the use of sarcasm. Except for Ntuli who uses this technique mostly in his short stories, Nyembezi is one of the few novelists who use sarcasm in his novels successfully. The Longman Dictionary of the English Language p1318 defines the term *sarcasm* as an *ironic remark designed to taunt or inflict pain*. Nyembezi uses this technique when MaNtuli tones down the boastful Ndebenkulu who adopts a very arrogant and contemptuous attitude towards the rural people. In this particular instance the reader realizes that although she is a rural unsophisticated woman, her personality is strong and can make herself heard and even inflict some pain in characters like Ndebenkulu

so that they be brought to their sober senses for a moment. On his arrival at the Mkhwanazi's there is a war of words between MaNtuli and Ndebenkulu who, in his conversation, emphasizes that he is called "esquire".

In the heat of anger MaNtuli decides to inflict some pain into Ndebenkulu. In their heated conversation MaNtuli reminds Ndebenkulu that by the way he is an "esquire":

Siyabakhweza nje abantu abavela emadolobheni kodwa bangawi. Mhlawumbe kwenza khona ukuthi njengesikwaya awuzejwayele lezi zinto. Angithi kambe uthe abelungu bakubiza kanjalo?

Ndebenkulu replies in anger:

Ungizwe kahle Nkosikazi, ungizwe kahle.

In her reply MaNtuli is again sarcastic:

Wo, kanti ngizwe kahle. Bengithi mhlawumbe ngiyaphambanisa. Ingabe isikwaya yinto enjani-ke ntombi kaMphemba - esho uMaNtuli sengathi usezikhulumela yedwa, (Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu p.33).

The heated argument between Ndebenkulu and MaNtuli goes on and on in spite of the latter's attempt to discipline the former. MaNtuli speaks to Ndebenkulu as she were addressing Themba:

Uthukulula leyo mthwalo ngoba ucabanga ukuthi lo mfokazi angabuye angene lapha kowami umuzi. Ngingavuka ngifile! Hhayi kulona owami. Mthuthe ngalo lelo bhokisi ngoba phela kuye ikalishi yibhokisi; mthuthe ngalo-ke ibhokisi lelo umphindise lapho evela khona eThisayidi, (Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu p.34).

This technique makes MaNtuli more lifelike and plausible because the reader immediately understands what motivates MaNtuli to be so angry with Ndebenkulu.

By way of summarizing this subheading it must be pointed out that by choosing sarcasm as a technique in character portrayal, the novelist like Nyembezi in Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu, is able to kill two birds with one stone at one time. On the one hand he shows the personality of the character from whom such sarcasm comes and on the other hand, it also shows what type of personality, the person to whom the sarcasm is directed. In our example above, Nyembezi is able to show MaNtuli as a character who becomes angry if circumstances demand and that she behaves in that fashion at a given time. At the same time by being called "isikwaya", Ndebenkulu's personality is shown as a person who is full of pomp and who does not care what is said about him as long as he gets what he wants. In real life sarcasm, amongst the Zulu people, is used as a technique mostly by women to thwart their attackers. It is therefore quite befitting for Nyembezi to use sarcasm as a technique in character portrayal.

5.13 The stream of consciousness technique

The stream of consciousness technique is a somewhat complex method of character portrayal. In this study no in-depth effort has been put into the investigation of this technique. But on a cursory look at the Zulu novel it would appear that only a few Zulu novelists use this technique. It is partly because it is relatively a new technique and partly because it is a complex technique to apply. Nyembezi in *Mntanami! Mntanami!* is one of a few Zulu novelists studied, who has ventured into the stream of consciousness technique.

Before citing examples from the above-mentioned novel we should briefly explain what is meant and how this technique is applied. Daiches defines it, "as an extension of the more traditional memory digression" (Daiches 1970:17). What actually happens is that the mind of a character expresses its independence from the chronological sequence of events taking place at a particular place and time. The novelist, if using the stream of consciousness technique, utilizes the ever present contacts with the past which constitutes the very stuff of consciousness, as Daiches avers. This author explains this technique as follows:

Looked at from one point of view, the stream of consciousness technique is a means of escape from the tyranny of the time dimension, Daiches 1970:16.

Stated differently, the past experienced impinge on the present. The character's mind floats off down some channel superficially irrelevant but really having a definite starting-off place from the previous situation, Daiches argues. In other words, the novelist shows the state of mind of his character being modified by associations and recollections emanating from the current situation, but referring to a constantly shifting series of events in the past. Daiches maintains that the stream of consciousness has at least two advantages, viz. that:

- (i) The author indicates the precise nature of the present experience.
- (ii) He gives, incidentally, facts about the character's life previous to the moment of such mental engagement.

A good example of the use of the stream of consciousness technique is when Nyembezi shows what goes on in Jabulani's mind after he has been compelled by his boss, Mwelase, to kill a young innocent boy in order for Mwelase to supply the "umuthi" which has been asked for by a shebeen queen for the sum of two hundred rands. Jabulani, while speaking to his girlfriend for the first time after the killing incident, i.e. after Alice, Jabulani's girlfriend has greeted him, a series of the past experiences and events impinge on Jabulani's present state of mind while the girlfriend is so excited

after a long time since they last met, so much that Jabulani completely forgets that Alice is talking to him. In spite of all Jabulani's love for Alice his mind is pre-occupied by the killing of the boy. He feels that he cannot even hug her because he imagines his hands being full of blood. He plunges his hands in his pockets because he thinks Alice might see the blood in his hands. He is worried as to what will happen the day Alice gets to know that it is he (Jabulani) who killed the boy as the story about the death of the boy is spread all over the township. At the same time Jabulani is pleased to realize that Alice has not rejected him:

Nakhu namuhla, yena esecabanga ukuthi u-Alice usezitholele abanye, nangu ethi 'Jebh' njengakuqala ebona nasemehlweni ukuthi intombazane ayizenzisi. Kwathi akayiwole ngezingalo akhale kakhulu ngento ayeseziyo ayengayazi u-Alice. Izandla uzifake ezikhwameni zebhulukwe ngoba sengathi zibomvu igazi emehlweni akhe; sengathi uzothi lapho ezikhipha u-Alice alibone igazi lelo. Nokho wajabula kwaba sengathi kuncibilika iqhwa elase lisibekele inhliziyu lifuna ukumbulala. Wazibuza kaninginingi ukuthi kazi uyokwenzenjani u-Alice mhla walazi iqiniso lokuthi nguye owabulala umfana. Usekhohliwe nokuthi u-Alice umkhulumisile, yena akaze aphenhula. Waze wezwa u-Alice esethi futhi: Jebh, kanti awusezwa nasezindlebeni yini? Ngakhuluma wazithulela nje? (Mntanami! Mntanami! pp.164-165).

Another example of the use of the stream of consciousness technique is when Nyembezi makes Jabulani regret the deed he has committed - the killing of the boy. The teachings of his parents and the manner he has been brought up impinge on the current and future activities in his mind:

Futhi abulale umuntu esemncane kangaka, ukuba-ke manje useyoze abempunga elandelwa ngumcabango wokuthi wabulala umuntu. Nokudla akunikwa akakudlanga ngoba wayesaba ukukuthinta ngezandla zakhe, abone ukuthi uzodla igazi lomuntu ambulele. Wabona umfana ukuthi kungcono naye afe kunokuba ahlale kukhona itshe elinzima kangaka phezu komphfumulo wakhe. Ingabe abazali bakhe bayothini mhla bezwa ukuthi naye usephenduke umbulali. Akunani ukukhuthuza, akunani ukweba; ukubulala pho! (Mntanami! Mntanami! p.152).

These are but a few examples of the use of the stream of consciousness where the character escapes from the tyranny of the place and time dimension. Jabulani is also mentally and psychologically pre-occupied with the reaction of his parents when they get to know about the killing of the boy. He mentally escapes from the present situation. He even reflects on his future.

2.6 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHARACTER IN A GIVEN NOVEL AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTERIZATION AS AN ART OR SKILL IN THE ZULU NOVEL

2.6.1 It is important at this point in time to draw a clear distinction between the development of a character in a given novel and the development of the mode characterization as an art in the Zulu novel. In a broad sense the latter refers to the development of characterization as an art through the different periods of the Zulu novel. As already pointed out, it is the argument of this

research that characterization in the Zulu novel shows development. It is not static. It is rather a dynamic process. Stated differently, characterization as an art differs from period to period of the development of the Zulu novel. For example, characterization during the predominantly historical novel period differs phenomenally from the mode of characterization during the period of the social novel. It is a generally accepted fact that the Zulu novel can be divided into different periods or stages. It is also an established fact that characterization in the Zulu novel has changed with the changing times. The subject of the different periods will be dealt with in detail in the next coming sub-heading. At the moment let us pay our attention to the development of a character in a specific novel.

It must be pointed out from the outset that no matter how "lifelike" a character in a novel may be, it differs fundamentally from a living human being. Characters in a novel are fictional creations of the novelists' own making while human beings are God-created, to put it bluntly. Therefore when we speak of the development of a character in a novel we are referring to imaginary and artificial development. We are referring to the development of a character in the so-called literary world. It is an imaginary development which lasts for the duration of reading that particular novel. The development of a character under normal circumstances, may follow one or two dimensions of both. The development of a character may either

be physical or intellectual, emotional and psychological.

2.6.2 Depending on the type of character physical development is manifest when the novelist shows the character, say in the exposition, as a young boy, as a grown up man until he, perhaps dies without any significant change in his emotional or intellectual life on the one hand, while on the other hand the novelist may reveal a character's physical changes coupled with emotional or psychological changes. The latter development is usually found with round characters while the former description is that of a flat character. To substantiate our argument let us cite one example of physical development coupled with psychological development. In *Mntanami! Mntanami!* by Nyembezi, the reader meets Jabulani as a schoolboy, brought up in christian home but recalcitrant and stubborn, to use Ngidi's description as a result of the bad influence of his friend, Mandla. Jabulani is arrested for theft. While in custody Jabulani regrets the shame he has brought on to his parents.

He thinks:

Wacabanga ngoyise, wacabanga ngonina. Abuye aziduduze ngokuthi akuqali ngaye, baningi abantu bengena emajele kungabi ndaba zalutho. Into eyake yamhlupha ukuthi bazocabangani ngaye abazali bakhe uma bezwa ukuthi usejele. Ngesikhathi esenza ukuthanda kwakungeze kungamhlupha kakhulu ukucabanga ngabazali bakhe. Kuphela nje wayezenzela ngokungabi nandaba, (*Mntanami! Mntanami!* p.34).

From the abovequoted paragraph the reader realizes the development in Jabulani's life. This growth is not only physical but mainly psychological. The term psychological is used here as defined by Dube et.al. They point out that a character has a dimension that is called "psychology". They explain that,

the term refers to the traits, emotions, and behavioural patterns that characterize individual. Impressions and influences from the past make the characters what they are and determine their actions, Dube et.al. 1979:48.

2.6.3 Jabulani is brought up in a christian environment but because of the environmental influences, in particular by his corrupt friend Mandla, he falls victim of the undesirable influences. He smokes and drinks; things which were not done at his home. At first he is recalcitrant but when we meet him in jail we find him regretting his behaviour. We notice some degree of introspection. Here the reader perceives the emotional and psychological development in Jabulani. Briefly, motivation refers to the reasons that make a character plausible. In other words, the character's behaviour accords with the character's nature as it has been established by the circumstances to which the character is brought about by the fact that characters are the vehicles through which things happen in fiction. For example, a protagonist will want to attain a certain prize. Usually the prize is so important to the protagonist that he may find himself contending strong opposition in order to achieve it. Usually the protagonist experiences conflict by the opposing

forces. He then becomes engaged in a dialogue in pursuance of his objective. The character is therefore compelled to develop intellectually or emotionally. If he does not, he is likely to be crashed by the opposing force(s). A case in point is Ndebenkulu in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu*. Ndebenkulu could not attain his objective as he was crashed by Themba, Diliza and by the woman who identified him as Mlomo, the thief and rogue. On closer scrutiny the critic may safely conclude that Ndebenkulu has no foresight, otherwise he would have been deterred by the article appearing in the newspaper brought by Themba to his father, Mkhwanazi while they were discussing the issue of selling the cattle at the auction sale. Ndebenkulu's short-sightedness ends him up in jail. Differently stated, Ndebenkulu's intellectual development as a character is minimal or non-existent.

As pointed out above, development of a character may be physical. We first meet Jeqe as a young man when he accompanies his father Sikhunyana to one of Shaka's endless wars. There he distinguishes himself and he is awarded honours by King Shaka. Because of his bravery Jeqe is promoted to the rank of Shaka's personal bodyguard. By this time Jeqe is a grown up man. Eventually we meet Jeqe in Swaziland where he has become a great (inyanga) traditional healer and is married to Zakhi, a beautiful Thonga woman. In *Indlela Yababi* by Dhlomo the reader meets Delsie Moya while she is still a school-going girl. She develops in age and eventually qualifies

as a school teacher. She elopes with Reverend Gwebu to Johannesburg where she is corrupted and degenerates to the lowest degree.

In contradistinction with physical attributes as Dube et.al. aver, where the development of a character is physical growth from childhood to adulthood you find in the Zulu novel characters like Manamuza of Buthunge bukaMagayi in *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi* by Ngubane, characters like Ndebenkulu in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* where the character is the same physically, psychologically and intellectually from the beginning up to the end of the story. The character undergoes little or no change. In other words, he does not undergo any physical or psychological development or growth.

2.6.4 In the light of the above discussion characters in the Zulu novels may be classified as static or developing or dynamic i.e. when we refer to the degree of change in their personalities. In other words, it must be emphasized, that characters in the Zulu novel do not develop merely by emerging from a chronological account of a group of events and their (characters) reactions to those events. What is important about a character in the Zulu novel; for that matter in any other fictional work, is the contribution of a particular character or the impression that the character creates in the whole artistic work. Second, the relationship of the character to other characters in a given novel is of great importance. Therefore it is a fallacious assumption that static characters are inferior to developing or

dynamic characters. Let us take Ndebenkulu. No sugar-coating can obliterate the fact that Nyembezi succeeds in creating the impression he intended by sounding a warning to "innocent" rural people that they must guard against rogues like Ndebenkulu who would like to take advantage of their plight. Developing or dynamic characters are therefore not necessarily better than static characters. The reader will of course spontaneously identify with certain characters in a novel. Usually dynamic characters are preferred to static characters.

Also of importance in the creation of a character is the milieu. Whatever dimension the development of a character takes, the critic must accept the fact that development of a character is grounded in the milieu as pointed out under the sub-heading dealing with the factors which influence characterization in the Zulu novel. When we trace Jeje's development we realize that from his 'youthhood - manhood', he is carrying his "izihlangu", the so-called traditional weapons. The term "traditional weapons" is not used here in the same connotation as it is used in the controversial sense used in some political circles. In other words the milieu determines to a large extent the character's behaviour.

2.7 THE THREE DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES/PERIODS OF THE ZULU NOVEL

A word of warning may be sounded from the outset, viz. that the sub-heading under discussion does not by any means suggest that there are only three developmental periods into which the Zulu novel can be categorised. The three developmental periods referred to in this discussion are only intended, specifically, for purpose of this research viz. to try and demonstrate that characterization in the Zulu novel has been influenced by the shifting and development or passing of the Zulu novel through certain periods of time. Different critics have tried to classify the Zulu novel into different periods. We have in mind authors like Gérard in his *Four African Literatures*, and the publications like *Limi*; a publication by the Department of African Languages at the University of South Africa, e.g. the classification by Ntuli, *Limi* Jun, 1968, No.6, etc. Gérard, for instance, classifies the Zulu novel as follows:

2.7.1 The period of Fuze with his book *Abantu Abamnyama - Lapha Bavela Ngakhona*. This is a humble beginning by a Zulu author. Unfortunately, as Gérard rightly points out, this work cannot be considered creative literature. Commenting on the book Nyembezi points out that,

Magema Fuze's desire was to tell the story of his people and to trace their origin, (Gérard 1971:201).

2.7.2 The thirties: Development and diversification period

Under this period we get authors like Dube, Dhlomo, Vilakazi, etc. This period is characterized by political awareness as manifest in Dube's work, *Isitha Somuntu Nguye Uqobo*. Dhlomo's works, to name but a few, include *UDingane*, *UMpande*, *Indlela Yababi*, while Vilakazi's works include *Nje Nempela*, *Noma Nini*. This period is also characterized by the historical material in the novel and the true historical characters. Gérard points out that the period is characterized by acculturation literature "where the western concept of romantic love and the christian ideal of premarital constancy are oddly fused with the much more matter-of-fact African view of marriage" (Gérard 1971:242). Vilakazi's *Noma Nini* is a typical example of acculturation novel. Of more relevance to our research are two points mentioned by Gérard on *Noma Nini*. The points are:

- (a) the remark made by a certain Zulu critic who says "characterization is not convincing",
- (b) *Noma Nini* has the merit of being the first novel of imaginative fiction to handle modern subject matter in Zulu.

Our comment regarding the point under (a) above is that such criticism might have been valid at a certain time for what it was worth but the fact of

the matter is that the critic does not look into the reason of such characterization. The critic was not aware at that time of the fact that characterization in the Zulu novel is a process and has developed over a certain period of time. At this time western canon was used to compare two different incomparable variables. It would be rather desirable to look into characterization of the Zulu novel in its own right. Concerning point (b) above, our comment would be that it emphasizes the fact that the mode of characterization in the Zulu novel is dynamic i.e. it changes with the changing times under the changing circumstances and influences.

2.7.3 The modern generation

Amongst the prominent novelists of this period i.e. according to Gérard are Nyembezi with his *Mntanami!*, *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu*, made with his *Indlalifa YaseHarrisdate*, etc. During this period the historical novel which was introduced by Dhlomo, who is regarded as the Father thereof. In some circles, the historical novel was also taken up by Kenneth Bengu who wrote *Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa*, etc. Other novelists of this period are Ngcobo with his *Inkungu MaZulu*, Ngubane with his *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi*. In broad, this period of the Zulu novel can be characterized by two patterns or tendencies, viz.:

- (i) the prodigal son theme or as some call it, the Jom-goes-to-Jo'burg theme. Mokgokong, discussing the popular themes in Northern Sotho prose fiction, refers to the 'makgoweng motif' as a popular theme of the 1940's. He writes; "Briefly this means the theme of a youth from Bantu homelands who decides to try his luck in the cities" (Limi Jan 1966, No.1:49). Gérard rightly points out that the novels with this theme were written in order to warn the readers of the time against the evils of city life, permissiveness, immorality and all the atrocities associated with it and the difficult transitional adjustment attached thereto. There are also some critics who believe that the social novel with the prodigal-son theme came into being as a result of the manipulation of some authors by the exponent of the apartheid system so that they would write in support of the influx control measures. Ntuli points out that there is some insinuation that even great works like *Mntanami! Mntanami!* by Nyembezi resulted from this manipulation (Ntuli 1987:131). Knowing Nyembezi's attitude toward the apartheid system, viz, that in 1959 he sacrificed and resigned his headship post at the University of Fort Hare "with other several English-speaking white members of staff who were dismissed because they were, in the words of the Minister of Bantu Education, destroying the government's policy of apartheid" (Gérard 1971:262). One would be tempted to summarily dismiss such suggestions as they do not seem to have any substance or befitting Nyembezi's

personality.

- (ii) The indecisiveness of the writers like Nyembezi to whom the dawn of the city life novel was the challenge of the future or of that particular period. During the same period we find some regression to the historical novel. An author like Bengu with his novel, **Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa** regresses to the historical novel and follows their predecessors viz. Dhlomo and others.

2.7.4 Ntuli's Classification

In his article on the comments on some Zulu novels, Ntuli classifies the Zulu novel into two main categories, viz. the historical novel and the social novel.

Under the historical novel, authors like Dhlomo, Vilakazi and Bengu are singled out. Amongst the important points Ntuli makes, i.e. points which are of importance to us; he rightly points out that,

In most of his historical novelettes Dhlomo, by means of psychological analysis, dialogue and depiction in general succeeds in making his characters realistic, (Limi Jan 1966 No.1:23).

The social novels cited are **Indlela Yababi** by Dhlomo, **Mntanami!** **Mntanami!** by Nyembezi, **Inkungu MaZulu** by Ngcobo, **Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi** by Ngubane etc. Commenting on Nyembezi's three novels Ntuli remarks that,

In the three novels Nyembezi displays a gift in the delineation of his characters. The conversations are realistic and true to life, (Limi Jan 1966 No.1:24).

If we examine the shift of characterization as manifest in the historical towards the social novels, it immediately becomes clear that there is a shift from portraying historical characters most of which are real human beings, towards more imaginary people.

One other observation we make from Gérard and Ntuli's classification is that such classification does not only reflect the difference between the types of novels but also indicates the different periods and the type of novel predominantly written at a particular period of time. Further it indicates the mode of characterization adopted at different periods of the novel.

Taking into consideration the classifications discussed above and others, for purposes of this study, the novel will be divided into three periods. It is the argument of this study that there are different developmental periods of the Zulu novel. The purpose of this research is to show that the mode of characterization in the Zulu novel has evolved over the changing times.

Another point of interest is the motivation or reasons behind this evolution. In other words, we want to answer the question why the skill or art of characterization has changed with times in the Zulu novel. Having stated

that, we must also point out that we are mindful of the fact that the phenomenon of change in characterization is not disjointed, but it is rather a process. Stated differently, the periods of the development of the Zulu novel must not be perceived as separate, watertight entities.

2.8 THE THREE DEVELOPMENTAL PERIODS

The three developmental stages or periods of the Zulu novel to be discussed are:-

- (i) the period of the written narratives or the non-creative or non-imaginative period,
- (ii) the historical novel, and
- (iii) the post-historical novel or the social novel.

There is truth in the statement by Lerner that in a society which does not stand still, one would not expect theories of literature to remain unchanged (Lerner 1983:p1). Changes in the novel and even in criticism are inevitable. So are the methods of characterization. As pointed out above characterization in the Zulu novel has changed with the changing times. As there is an interaction between the novel and the competence of the reader

there is an interaction between the novel and the critic. It is a fact that critics vary in their competence, in their social or historical background. That is why critics with western training background have found it extremely difficult to comprehend the mode of characterization in the Zulu novel, especially character portrayal in the early Zulu novel. Equally true is Iyasere's argument that,

the Eurocentric critical canon has obviously grown alongside western literary tradition, but outside the African milieu. Understandably, this approach does not respond to those idiosyncrasies of African literature, those subtle tonalities that are often the truly crucial elements in a casual chain, particularly the influences of the oral background which help shape the contemporary African writer's specific modes of imagination and articulation, Iyasere 1975:109.

In pursuance of the above argument it may be pointed out that no sugar-coating can obliterate the fact that a lot of criticism has been levelled against the mode of characterization in the Zulu novel simply because unqualified or excessive attention was directed towards tracing western influences on African literature. We are referring to criticism such as "characterization is not convincing". The important point which was overlooked by some critics is that the Zulu novel is a novel in its own right and must therefore, be seen in that perspective and against the Zulu traditional background. Viewed against this background one could safely conclude that the concept of wrongness or rightness has little or no place in determining the standard of

characterization as there are so many factors which must be taken into consideration in an exercise of that nature.

It is generally assumed that the average reader has found it more natural to locate the novel on the side of true-to-life experience, and in the absence of any conspicuous formality, to read it for its reference to the world. That is why James, quoted by Tobin, is convinced that the novel simulates the "felt sense of life", (Tobin 1978:3). Therefore it must be accepted that "time" plays a significant role in influencing characterization. The side "true-to-life experience" of the novel is subject to the pressure of time in the Zulu novel. We are therefore inclined to agree with Tobin that "time" does exert pressure on the novel. Tobin argues that,

Time exerts a double pressure on the realistic novel; as form, it is largely silent and unobstructive, but as process, it is noisy and ubiquitous. We are all ready to concede temporal process, whereby time is the local index to the daily happenings of "life in time", Tobin 1978:4.

It is for this reason that, on conducting criticism on the Zulu novel, the critic must take into account the role played by time and the period during which the Zulu novel is written. As we have seen, time or the period of a particular novel has a direct influence on the material which constitute a novel. Of equal importance is the fact that the mode of characterization is also directly affected by the impact of time. Critics must therefore

understand the simple fact that the Zulu novelist writes his novel and creates his characters to fit a particular period of time for a specific purpose, under a specific background. It could be geographical or traditional or social background. All this depends on the time or period during which the novel is written.

Before we discuss the different periods of the Zulu novel it is interesting to note that authors like Burgess seem to experience some problems in delimiting the "past" in the novel i.e. presumably in the English novel. Burgess goes as far as doubting the time when the novel commenced. He avers that 'no history book has a record of such a time' (Burgess 1970:14).

In contradistinction with Burgess we are in a fortunate position because we are able to identify the time when the Zulu novel commenced as will be shown in the following paragraphs.

2.8.1 The period of the written narratives

Some critics usually refer to the literature written during this periods as a non-creative literature and yet others refer to it as the pre-historical period. Narratives like **Abantu Abamnyama**, **Isabelo SikaZulu**, **Insila KaShaka**, to name but a few, were written during this period. Characterization in the above-named narratives is unique to this period and has to be analyzed and understood against that background. Commenting on the works like **Abantu**

Abamnyama, Gérard points out that,

The work cannot be considered creative literature in the accepted sense of the phrase, Gérard 1971:201.

Rightly so, as Nyembezi points out, Fuze's desire was to tell the story of the Black people and to trace their origin. Fuze is not interested in the creative literature as such. Nevertheless, he has his own characters. Most of these are not imaginary characters. Fuze's characters are historical characters and they are vaguely presented. It is therefore true that this work is devoid of the delineation of characters. Although this may seem to fall out of the scope of this research, Fuze's work has made a significant contribution towards the development of the Zulu novel, viz. as Gérard rightly points out, that,

- (i) it is perceived as has set the tone for the modern Zulu novel.
- (ii) another point of interest is that Fuze's work contains and preserves much of traditional poetry, and
- (iii) it illustrates the peculiar sense of historical greatness which characterizes the Zulu mind. (Gérard p.202)

These characteristics which were first brought to the fore by Fuze play a significant role in characterization in the later Zulu novel, especially in Bhengu's and Vilakazi's works. This statement is supported by Ntuli. Commenting on the Zulu literature in general, Ntuli points out that,

Kenneth Bhengu has written many books i.e. novels with a typically Zulu traditional background. Incidents are linked with historical figures ... Bhengu seems to have been motivated to write by his eagerness to glorify the valour of the Zulus of old, (Limi Jun 1968 No 6:29).

Bhengu is younger than Fuze. We can therefore assume that he must have read and have been influenced by Fuze's **Abantu Abamnyama**.

Another prominent Zulu author of this period is Dube. It is believed that as a response to his bitterness and disillusionment in the political arena he turned to the past of his nation. He then wrote the first novel in Zulu, viz. **Insila KaShaka**. Critics like Gérard regard the book as an ordinary narrative. Gérard writes,

It (referring to **Insila KaShaka**) is the straight forward narrative of a man whose youthful bravery earned him the doubtful privilege of becoming Shaka's personal bodyguard and factotum, Gérard 1971:212.

Looking at characterization in this narrative from the western point of view, a critic may argue that characters like Jeje are simplistic and they are not lifelike and as a result they lack plausibility. They are just pegs on which actions hang. The fact of the matter is that a critic cannot isolate the literature, i.e. including characterization, wholly from its traditional background and its cultural milieu. To demand that a literature such as the

Zulu novel conform wholly to the western canon would be to rob the Zulu novel of its vitality. It may seem quite strange to a non-African why Jeqe does not accede to the suggestion made by Dingane and his accomplice to help eliminate Shaka as he (Jeqe) is also sick and tired of Shaka's atrocities. Here it is a question of virtues and values of the Zulu people. Jeqe made certain vows to Shaka. Therefore he cannot collaborate with Shaka's enemies and murderers. This is evidenced in Jeqe's words:

Ngangingazi ukuthi ukuzinikela eNkosini yami
kuyongenza ngize ngenze izinto ezinengeka kanje,
(Insila KaShaka p.35).

Even Dingane's messenger confirms Jeqe's unchanging mind and trustworthiness to Shaka when he says:

Ngimlinge ngamaqhinga amaningi uJeqe ngithi
asihlangane naye adlise uShaka. Naye kuyamkhanyela
ukuthi izwe uliphethe kabi, kodwa wethembekile
eNkosini yakhe akanakuze ayilimaze, (Insila KaShaka
p.36).

Examination of the characters of this period of the novel shows that characters are used as vehicles of the traditional values and virtues. Also of importance about characterization during this period is the fact that the novelist uses a lot of traditional and cultural material in his character portrayal. If we examine characterization, for instance, in *Ukhalalembube*;

Khalalembube as a character is not different from UChakijane Bogcozololo.

The reason for this is quite simple. It is because of the influence of the folktale on the Zulu novel which the Zulu novelist cannot simply shed off.

Time, as mentioned above, is of paramount importance. The critic must take cognisance of cultural diversity in order to assess a particular literature in its own right.

That is why Iyasere is of opinion that,

To assess a work by standards that are alien to it is only to judge one system of values by another, which inevitably leads to a mutilation of the art, Iyasere 1975:109.

Iyasere's argument supports our contention made earlier in this respect viz. that methods of criticism used by western critics cannot simply be applied on the African novel without some adaptation and consideration of certain factors. Pursuing his argument Iyasere comes out strongly against such an attitude:

My point is that a culture-sensitive approach, informed by an intelligent understanding of the traditional background, will prove more responsive to the unique navitism of African writers. Every age and every culture has its particularly characteristic narrative form, Iyasere 1975:109.

The observations made by Iyasere simply mean that, in order for the critic to fully appreciate the works of the early Zulu works, he must recognise their "pastiness". Some critics equipped with western techniques and using certain acquired models of literary excellence as generally accepted landmarks have been tempted to label characters found in the early period of the Zulu novel as caricatures or as exaggerated and superhuman. Such statements are *prima facie* correct but as critics we must look beyond the face value of such characters. We must look into the circumstances prevalent during that particular time. That is why Ainsley in his discussion of the problems in Literary Criticism asserts that,

The student of western literature who embarks upon a study of non-western written literature may find himself confronted by several fairly fundamental problems which he must resolve before attempting a meaningful assessment of the material before him, Limi 1970, Jun;1.

It is therefore important for any critic to examine characterization against the background of the prevailing standards of the time in which a given novel first saw light.

2.8.2 The period of the historical novel

We want to agree with Gérard in his *Four African Literatures*, that Dhlomo may have been awakened by Dube's *Insila KaShaka* to the potentialities of

the mother tongue for written literature 'as well as to the suitability of native history as a topic for modern writing' (Gérard 1971 p.223). This assumption is made on the grounds that Dhlomo wrote only one book viz. *An African Tragedy* in English and thereafter changed completely to his mother tongue. He must have read Dube's *Insila KaShaka* before. Dhlomo is, according to Ntuli, undoubtedly the pioneer in the writing of the historical novel in Zulu. The first of the series of his historical novels (narratives) as Gérard avers is *UDingane KaSenzangakhona* (1936). Of importance to this study is the fact that most of the characters in Dhlomo's historical novels are historical characters. They are historical in the sense that they do not only resemble ordinary human beings but they are actually living people. Dingane, Mkabayi are known characters in the history of the Zulu nation. Dhlomo, in *UDingane* treats of recorded historical facts. Commenting on Dhlomo's mode of characterization in his historical novels, Ntuli rightly points out that,

... but makes his characters speak in order to sustain the interest of the reader ... In most of his historical novelettes Dhlomo, by means of psychological analysis, dialogue, and depiction in general succeeds in making his characters realistic, (Limi 1966:23).

In simple terms Ntuli means that Dhlomo's characters in his historical novels are "lifelike". In other words Dhlomo is able to motivate the actions and behaviour of his characters. They are plausible and credible.

Another prominent writer during this period is Vilakazi. He wrote **Noma Nini, Nje Nempela, UDingiswayo KaJobe**. Nje Nempela deals with the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906. In this work Vilakazi reflects on the attitude and resistance of the Zulu nation against the imposition of the taxation policy i.e. Poll Tax Act 1905 by the White government of the day. Commenting on one of Vilakazi's novels one critic, quoted by Gérard, believes that "characterization is not convincing" (Gérard p.242)

Quite understandably so, however, the term "convincing" is relative. The fact of the matter is that although Dhlomo's historical novels and Vilakazi's historical novels are classified under one umbrella body, viz. the historical novel era, they differ fundamentally in that Dhlomo's works classified as historical deal directly with the historical characters and historical facts. The element of 'imaginativeness' in these works is minimal. Dhlomo's aim is to give the real history of the Zulu whereas Vilakazi does not entirely concentrate on the historical characters and historical facts as such. In Vilakazi's historical novels we perceive a shift from the concreteness toward abstractness in the portrayal of characters. That is why we find some truth in Ntuli's statement that (referring to Vilakazi's historical novels) in order to break the monotony of historical facts and narrations Vilakazi intersperses these with a romance of Nomcebo

and Malambule (Nje Nempela). In *Noma Nini* he discusses the romance of Nomkhosi and Nsikane, (*Limí* No.1 Jan 1966:24).

This shift referred to above is not only noticeable from the narrative but also in the mode of characterization. This shift or development is from real persons to imaginary persons. For example, Dingane, Shaka, Mkabayi found in Dhlomo's historical novels represent real persons whereas Nomkhosi, Malambule etc found in Vilakazi's works are imaginary persons. This argument confirms Gérard's remarks that,

... Noma Nini had the merit of being the first piece of imaginative fiction to handle modern subject matter in Zulu, Gérard 1971:242.

The above argument applies *mutatis mutandis* to Bengu's historical novels viz., that Dhlomo uses characters which represent real persons and they behave as they are known in recorded history. Vilakazi mixes real persons with imagined characters and the emphasis on his novels falls on acculturation. One could therefore also classify Vilakazi's books under acculturation literature. In comparison with the above two authors, Bhengu reverts to the historical novels with the purpose of glorifying the valour of the Zulu nation. But Bengu's historical facts differ in essence from the known recorded history. Bengu's 'historical facts' are rather literary and fictitious. His characters are not plausible or lifelike. We therefore agree

with Ntuli who observes that,

While the daring adventures of his heroes are fascinating, the heroes' abilities are sometimes exaggerated and superhuman ..., (Limi 1968 No.6:29).

These shifts in the mode of characterization once again emphasize the phenomenon of evolution in character portrayal in the Zulu novel.

Concerning Bengu's historical novels one is reminded of western type of the historical novel, especially the so-called novels of the seventeenth century which are historical only as regards their purely external choice of theme and costume. In Bengu's historical novels, not only the psychology of the characters, but the manners depicted are entirely those of the writer's own day. Bhekifa, for an example, is not an historical person in the true sense of the word (Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa). What is lacking in Bengu's historical novel is precisely the specially historical, i.e. derivation of the individuality of characters from the historical peculiarity of their age; a factor which causes a tendency in some of Bengu's novels to exaggerate the heroes' ability like in the case of Khalalembube in UKhalalembube. He kills a baboon and the leopard all by himself. At his age this is not probable. Such characters,

"make a critical reader query the probability of the story. This once again emphasizes the importance of characterization in the writing of the novel", (Malan 1978:45).

In summarizing the period of the historical novel it is worth-noting that the historical novelist uses mostly the discursive method of characterization. As explained earlier on. The author simply tells his readers about his characters. The dramatic method is seldom used.

2.8.2 The period of the post-historical novel in general

The historical novel was followed by amongst others, the acculturation or psychological, social novel etc. in Zulu 'literaturedom'. We have chosen the social novel as our focal point. Some experts like Gérard and others ascribe a number of reasons for the rise of the social novel in Zulu, such as:

- (i) the aftermath of a number of segregational legislative measures introduced with the Native Land Act 1913 which usurped land ownership from the Zulus,
- (ii) the imposition of the taxation policy is said to be responsible for the cityward trend of the Zulu people, especially the males,
- (iii) the evil effects of a too-permissive education or society,
- (iv) the disruption of family stability and solidarity as a result of industrialization and urbanization whereby men had to leave their

families in rural areas and temporarily settle in townships as migratory labourers,

- (v) the dissatisfaction of the youth caused by the conflict between traditional values and western ways of life.

There might be more many other causes for the rise of the social or city novel. We have just mentioned, but a few.

The Zulu novelist, like others, is an interpreter of human experience at a particular time. Put differently, the reader locates the novel on the side of true-to-life experience. Explained in a simpler way, the novel is therefore written for its reference to the world. The Zulu novelist was therefore prompted by the daily happenings of life in time to turn to the social novel. This period marks the beginning of the real creative and imaginative prose in the domain of the Zulu novel. In Zulu literature Dhlomo is the Zulu novelist who brought up the two main trends, viz. the historical and the social novel, i.e. the reassessment of the past and the analysis of the present. In the latter stream he wrote *Indlela Yababí*. In this novel Dhlomo tells of a story of Delsie Moya who behaves in an immoral manner contrary to the expectations of her parents, especially her father, who tries to instil christian values in her daughter. Delsie falls in love with Rev. Gwebu. Before their mischievous behaviour comes to light they elope to Johannesburg.

Amongst authors of this type of novel, there comes Nyembezi with his **Mntanami! Mntanami!** In this novel Nyembezi deals with Jabulani's life who leaves his rural home and settles in Johannesburg where his corruption becomes worse. Because of the problem of adjustment the young boy is recruited by veteran thugs. His rebellious behaviour almost cost his life when he has to choose between killing an innocent boy and his life when Mwelase instructs him to commit murder.

On closer examination of the Zulu novels of this period, i.e. the two novels mentioned above and a number of others which have not been mentioned here, we can make the following observations:

- (i) In most of these novels we find a young person like Delsie Moya in **Indlela Yababi**, Bajwayele in **Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi** or a young man like Jabulani in **Mntanami! Mntanami!** leaving the rural areas because of the conflict between the youth and his or her parents moving to town. This trend is seldom the reverse.
- (ii) Family life is disrupted. There is a conflict between the traditional values and the township way of life. This results in psychological maladjustment in a character concerned. Conflict may either be interpersonal or intrapersonal. In these novels traditional and christian values are represented by the older folk, while the new western ways

of life are represented by the younger generation, for instance, Dlamini and Moya in *Mntanami! Mntanami!* and Indlela Yababi respectively represent the old conservative generation while Jabulani and Delsie Moya represent the rebellious younger generation.

- (iii) In most of the Zulu social novels we find the youth leaving the rural areas and going to the cities, especially Johannesburg, hence the term city-novel. That is why some critics speak of the Jim-goes-to-Jo'burg theme. Even if the novel does not deal directly with this theme but here and there in the novel the reader does find this Jim-goes-to-Jo'burg motif or motifs. Novels with this theme were so popular during this period that some critics call it the prodical-son-theme. Characters like Delsie Moya in *Indlela Yababi* and Jabulani Dlamini in *Mntanami! Mntanami!* are typical examples of the parodical-son-theme. In this type of novel a young man or woman tries to shed himself or herself off the traditional bonds with the hope of finding some luck in town. Usually the characters experience all sorts of problems, get corrupted and they fail to adapt to township life. The transitional period becomes so difficult that they decide to go back home having repented in some cases.

2.8.4 Characterization in the social novel

The social novel in Zulu literature marks the era of real imaginative fiction. Under the previous sub-heading which deals with the historical novel it has been pointed out that the portrayal of characters is simplistic as the historical novelist gives the physical and the real personality of the character. The historical novelist chooses to use the descriptive method to a very large extent. But with the social novel the novelist prefers the dramatic method of characterization whereby the character's personality is revealed through his actions, dialogue with other characters, motivation of the characters behaviour etc.

The characters have become more credible or plausible and lifelike rather than being caricatures. There is therefore a shift or development in the art of characterization. As pointed out earlier on, characterization in the Zulu novel is not static but it is rather evolutionary. In our earlier discussion it was pointed out that some critics even feel that characterization in the novels like *Insila KaShaka*, *UKhalalembube* is not "convincing", characters are "exaggerated and superhuman" (Limi, Jun 1968, No.6:29). This shift or evolution in characterization is not just a mere abstract conception but it is rather real. We therefore find support in Ntuli's statement, when discussing the social novel. Ntuli first points out that Nyembezi is a very prolific Zulu novelist. He regards Nyembezi's three social novels viz. *Mntanami!*

Mntanami!, Ubudoda Abukhulelwa, Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu as being of a fairly high standard. Ntuli is of the opinions that,

In the three novels Nyembezi displays a gift in the delineation of characters. The conversations are realistic and true to life, (Limi, Jan 1966 No.1:23).

Put in simpler terms, the above statement means that Jabulani's character, for example, is individualized. His actions are consistent with his behaviour. In other words, Nyembezi' characters are lifelike and complex. They are not simplistic. There is nothing wrong with the simplicity in a character as long as the novelist recognises the fact that if it is used to portray a certain impression such a character can perform many important functions in a work. But the novelist must bear in mind that lack of complexity completely in a character can violate the reader's sense of the human personality (Kenny 1966:p.32) for we accept that human character is normally complex, and the novel is based on the "felt sense of life". From Ntuli's abovequoted statement it is now clear that characterization has entered another era. We notice that there is a shift from the period of the historical novel. With the introduction of the social novel the Zulu novelist was forced to move away from traditional material i.e. characters based on folktale, traditional and historical characters. Now the tendency was to go for more individualized sort of characters. During this period characterization is influenced by factors like industrialization, christianization, urbanization, education, etc.

Characters were now to look more like human beings we know and not be endowed with supernatural powers and be unnecessarily exaggerated. In other words, characters are to reveal themselves through dialogue with other characters. Characters have become 'lifelike' because of the motivation of their actions. We thus find characters which are plausible.

Plausibility in a character is one of the important contributory and key elements in characterization in fiction. We also find characters who are dynamic or developing i.e. not only developing physically but also mentally and psychologically. Also of importance about characterization at this stage is the fact that the social novelist has moved away from the exclusive use of the descriptive method. The tendency is the shifting towards the dramatic method or combination of the two methods applied appropriately. Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu is a good example of a combination of the two or more methods of characterization. The reader is not told directly what type of a person Ndebenkulu is, but he is rather revealed through his interaction and dialogue with other characters.

Nyembezi displays a high degree of handling intra-conflict i.e. internal conflict when Jabulani is caught between two opposing forces - his upbringing through christian values and the scandalous teachings by ruthless thugs like Mwelase. He has to choose between life and death i.e. killing the innocent boy or he himself be killed. In most social novels a character is

corrupted by city life like in the case of Delsie Moya in *Indlela Yababi*. In some cases, it may be argued, that a character is not only corrupted by city life but the maladjustment is caused by the conflicting situations which result from the clashing of African values and western customs. We therefore find support in Ntuli's statement although he is making reference to the novel in general. Ntuli's statement also holds true as far as the art of characterization is concerned. He rightly points that,

We notice interesting developments in the way the messages are conveyed. In earlier works writers used to step to the fore to explain to the reader the moral purport of the work. In more recent books writers give their readers an opportunity to make their own deductions, Malan 1987:132.

Of relevance here is the fact that the character is used as a vehicle for conveying the messages to his readers and the community at large. But of more importance is the technique used in conveying such messages. The method used by earlier writers sort of underrate the reader's intelligence by telling him how the character is, instead of the reader himself discovering how the character is.

2.8.5 In concluding the sub-headings dealing with the three periods of the Zulu novel the following observations may be made:

- (i) Characterization is evolutionary. It is not static, but it is developmental and dynamic.
- (ii) The three periods of the Zulu novel discussed above have shown that characterization is subject to the dictates of the changing times and changing circumstances on the life of both the novelist himself and the Zulu people.
- (iii) It is important to note that the three developmental periods or stages are not watertight entities but instead they tend to overlap. For example some writers during the historical period have regressed to the folktale and ordinary narratives. They make use of traditional and folktale material. That is why their characters are perceived as caricatures and superhuman.
- (iv) Zulu novelists have tended to choose the descriptive method of characterization during the early period of the Zulu novel. While in later works the dramatic method or the combination of the two methods have been used.
- (v) Characters found during the pre-historical period tend, predominantly, to be vehicles of entertainment, are exaggerated and superhuman. They are simplistic in nature apparently because they portray the

simple life the Zulu were leading before their way of life was corrupted and influenced by such factors as urbanization, apartheid policies, etc. The characters are simplistic also because of the direct and proximity to folktale influence and the traditional nature of the material used in the Zulu novel of this period.

- (vi) Characters found during the period of the historical novel are predominantly historical in the true sense of the word. They are like the people we know in history viz. characters like those found in Dhlomo's historical novels except of course, Bengu's historical characters who are mostly fictions.
- (vii) It is during the post-historical period or to be specific, during the social novel that we notice a dramatic change in the mode of characterization in the Zulu novel where characters are more "lifelike" and are well motivated. In other words, characters are 'like the persons' we know but, of course, in their own world of fiction. Characters during this period both entertain and purport to inculcate high moral values of honesty, perseverance, diligence and warn the youth against corruption. Characters of this period are, in the majority of cases, well motivated and their behaviour and actions are consistent with their personalities - which makes them more plausible than characters found during the pre-historical period of the Zulu

novel.

CHAPTER 3

3. CHARACTERIZATION IN THE WRITTEN NARRATIVE OF THE EARLY PERIOD

Under this chapter we are going to:-

- (i) discuss characterization in each of the undermentioned written narratives of the early period of the Zulu novel. Works chosen at random are, *Uchakijane Bogcololo - Umphephethi Wezinduku Zabafo* by Mbatha and Mdhladhla, *Abantu Abamnyama - Lapha bavela ngakhona* by Fuze and *Insila KaShaka* by Dube.
- (ii) do an analysis of characterization in the abovementioned works.

3.1 UCHAKIJANE BOGCOLOLO

Before we look at Chakijane and other characters found in **UChakijane Bogcololo** it is important to mention what Malcolm, the then Chief Inspector of Native Education had to say when he was asked to write a preamble to the little book **UChakijane**. He mentions two pertinent points which can help a critic who wants to understand Zulu literature

in the right perspective and in its own right. He explains as follows:

... I do so very readily because it is the first effort of its kind that has come from a Zulu, and also because it will fill a niche in Zulu literature that has been too long empty. It is natural that the literature of a people should first find expression in its history and its folklore, (UChakijana Bogcololo - Introduction).

Of significance in Malcolm's statement is the fact that we cannot appreciate the Zulu novel without first delving into the historical and traditional background of the Zulu people. It is obvious that literature revolves around the people or character of that particular period. This entails the behaviour and the perception of the people in a particular milieu. Therefore there is truth in Malcolm's words that folklore which in most cases, enshrine the traditional values and virtues of a people at a particular time, plays a significant role in shaping up the literature of a people. As we have already mentioned, time does exert pressure on the way or behaviour of a people. This in turn reflects on the people's expression in the form of literature. Characterization forms part of literature. We are therefore going to discuss character portrayal in UChakijana Bogcololo in the light of the abovegiven exposition or background. We first meet Chakijane when he is still conceived by his mother. At this time he asks that he be

born. That happens. Thereafter he commits a string of actions. Although he behaves consistently he only shows one side of himself. He does not experience any opposition from the people from whom he demands of anything he wants. Ordinarily we know Chakijana as a small and cunning animal but in this narrative we meet him as if he were a 'human being'/ character. In the folktales we know Chakijane is portrayed as an animal. Be it as it may, Chakijane plays the role of entertainment especially to children. Excessive engagement in fantasie stories does however detract an intelligent reader's suspense. Chakijana's stories do not focus on Chakijana's character as such but on the significance of fantastic events. If we were to consider Chakijana according to his individual nature we would be inclined to call him a flat or a two dimensional character (Dietrich and Sundell p77).

Chakijana is also portrayed as a superhuman character. All his behaviour is exaggerated. For example, in one of his encounters or wonderings, without any predetermined destination, he meets the chief's headman. He convinces the latter that he is an expert in looking after cattle. The headman subsequently introduces him to the chief who, without asking Chakijana of his credentials and specific incidents of his experiences in herding cattle, he entrusts his wealth i.e. cattle onto a stranger i.e. Chakijana. He eventually slaughters the

chief's beast without permission and he easily gets away with it. He also manages to eat the whole beast only by himself, (Chakijana pp 25-28).

In **UChakijana Bogcololo** we meet quite a number of nameless characters. We meet Chakijana when he talks to his mother. Thereafter he deceives and manages to cook an old woman. Of interest about these characters is the fact that they are all nameless. Secondly these characters are shadowy. One would be reasonably correct to call them dupes. The function they play in the narrative is that of highlighting Chakijana's character and personality viz, that he can be ruthless whenever he wants in order to attain his goal.

As a narrative, unlike **Uhlabanengalwi** and **Uthathezakho**; i.e. other works written by Mbatha and Mdhladhla which were primarily designed for school reading, Chakijana is "more than class-room material". Vilakazi observes that with Mbatha and Mdhladhla the oral literature of the people - the Zulu literature begins to live in written form. (Gerald p204). Of importance to us in this traditional narrative, is the marking of the beginning of character portrayal in a written narrative written by a Zulu writer.

According to Gérald and other writers the earliest work by a Zulu writer is **Abantu Abamnyama Lapha Bavela Ngakhona** which was issued by the City Printing Works in Pietermaritzburg in 1922. This book is written by Magera kaMagwaza Fuze. It is believed that Fuze was encouraged by Bishop Colenso's daughter to put down his recollections in writing; obviously for future generations to read and to consult. We therefore agree with those who maintain that this work cannot be considered creative literature in the accepted sense of the phrase. There is also some truth in Nyembezi's statement that,

Magera Fuze's desire was to tell the story of his people and trace their origin, Gerald 1971:201.

On closer examination of the book one is struck by the fact that it is a curiously mixed production but with valuable first hand accounts of Zulu customs and isolated incidents which had come within the writer's own knowledge including some events which took place in 1888 in the Zulu nation.

When we turn to our main subject viz. characterization, we must take cognisance of the fact that Fuze's book is not imaginative literature in the true sense of the word. It is rather a book aimed at factual evidence and at highlighting the peculiar sense of historical greatness which characterizes the Zulu mind more than that of any other ethnic group in Southern Africa. (Gérald p202). *Abantu Abamnyama* is therefore not a book of character as such. Its characters are historical people who once actually lived.

Amongst the characters mentioned in Fuze's work are Shaka, Mzilikazi, Queen Victoria, Masuku etc. These characters are not developed. They are people known in the history of the Zulu nation but they are merely mentioned in disunited historical incidents. Shaka, as he is generally known, to be intelligent, is not revealed to the reader as such. He is portrayed in a very shadowy and sketchy manner. So is Mzilikazi and others. The reader is unable to form his own picture about these characters when reading *Abantu Abamnyama*.

Sometimes Fuze does not make a distinction between human characters and animal characters. He speaks of the animal called Isiququmadevu. He gives the impression that this Isiququmadevu is a type of animal which entices children to come into it, swallows

them and goes away with them. At the same he refers to this Siququmadevu as a iSikebhe' (boat/ship). In one of his tales he says:

Inye kuphela indaba abasizekela yonke, lapha bethi kwakukhona imifula emikhulu ezweni lakubo lapho babakhe khona, eyabe ingawelwa ngezinyawo ukuphela ngezikebhe zodwa, lapho zazithi inxa ziyokungena emfuleni izikhundlwane kuqhamuke isilwane esikhulu ababesibiza ngokuthi Isiququmadevu. Leso silwane kuthiwa sasisibi impela, ngoba kwakuthi kungafika sona emfuleni lapho begeza khona abantwana sibawole bonkana bengazelele - hhayi ngokubadumela ngolunya, kodwa sibawole ngomusa - ngokubancenga nangokubapha ukudlana okumnanjana, silapha njalo sibahlekisa, (Abantu Abamnyama p9).

On examining the above passage one gets the impression that this Isiququmadevu is an animal but endowed with human attributes because it can talk and does other things as a human being does. Fuze refers also to Isichwe as if were an animal like the Siququmadevu. However, on closer examination this 'Sichwe' turns out to be a Bushman.

Interestingly we find one incident where we hear of some sort of dialogue and the confrontation between 'Isichwe' and one of

Mpande's regiments. The former shows the feelings of anger against the regiment because the latter has made a nasty remark about the 'sichwe's' physical structure i.e. his unusual shortness. In response to the remark by the Mpande's regiment the 'Sichwe' swears and curses the regiment. The argument goes on as follows:

Ngesinye isikhathi kwekaMpande impi, omunye wamabutho wathi ekhuluma naso (isichwe) wasidelela wathi 'Ngumuntu wanike yena lona ongakanyana ongangengane'. Sasesithukuthela, samsongela sathi, nawe wothi ukuba ufike ekhaya uzale ongangami ngaka'. Nembala lowo uthe ukuba afike ekhaya umkakhe wamitha wazala umuntu ongangengane, uMagwaqa ibizo lakhe elinye uMlambo ..., (Abantu Abamnyama p5).

By way of summary the following observations may be made in as far as characterization is concerned in Fuze's book:

- (i) Characters are used as pegs on which the story hangs. They are thus shadowy and sketchy.
- (ii) There is no definite pattern of characterization that is followed by Fuze.

- (iii) There is no conventional method of characterization, for instance, direct or discursive method or dramatic method used by Fuze.
- (iv) In some cases he uses animals as his characters. Thus his characters are influenced by folktale and traditional material and milieu.
- (v) Fuze's characters may be distinguished by lack of motivation in their behaviour and they are thus not lifelike and they are therefore not credible.

However, it is important to take into account that Fuze is the first Zulu writer who set the tone for the writing of the historical novel and with its historical characters as he was concerned, mainly, among other things, with the historical greatness which characterizes the Zulu nation. (Gérard 1971:202) We have no doubt in our mind that later writers such as Dhlomo, were directly or indirectly influenced by **Abantu Abamnyama Lapha Bavela Ngakhona**. It will be therefore a fallacy to view Fuze's **Abantu Abamnyama** as a cul-de-sac as some critics suggest. One other fact, already mentioned, is that Fuze was not writing a novel as such but his aim was to try and establish the origin of the Black people and to make such information available at

schools for future generations.

3.1.2 **Insila KaShaka by Dube**

Prominent literary critics like Ntuli, Gérald and others all agree that Dube is undoubtedly the father of Zulu fiction, (Limi 1968 and Gérald 1971 p 225). As a matter of fact he is regarded as the first Zulu writer to venture on imaginative literature. Commenting on the role played by Dube in Zulu literature, Gérald makes a very pertinent statement:

Although this first Zulu novel was Dube's only venture in the field of creative fiction, it set the direction for much Zulu writing, which is mainly concerned with recording and reassessing the major events and figures of the nation's past, Gérald 1971:217.

This statement is correct because later historical novelists like Vilakazi, Bengu concentrated on the historical novel and the Zulu nation's traditional occurrences. Fuze was the first to lay ground for the Zulu historical novel as explained above in spite of the fact that Fuze's **Abantu Abamnyama** is overburdened with unrelated historical and traditional accounts.

In spite of Dube's disillusionment with the 'Colour Bar Bill' proposed by the government of the day, he managed to write the first creative fiction in Zulu. It is in the creative fiction that the writer is able to create imaginary or fictitious character i.e. characters who emerge from the writer's own imagination. In *Insila KaShaka* some of the characters are historical characters while others are purely imaginary characters. Characters like Shaka and Dingane are historical characters, while characters like Jeqe, Sitela seem to be imaginary characters. In this limited space it will not be possible to deal with all the characters found in *Insila KaShaka*. We will therefore take only a few characters for consideration. We are going to look at character portrayal of Jeqe as the main character of the book; Shaka, Sitela and others but to a lesser degree.

Jeqe may be regarded as the protagonist i.e. the main character of the story. The main character, in a normal plot, will always want to achieve a certain goal. The goal usually becomes so important to the protagonist that he may find himself contending against strong opposition or even kill to achieve it (Dube's Franson, Parins and Murphy 1976 p7). Jeqe wishes to be near the King. That is why he fights so fiercely in the war against the people of Tayi. Opposition and jealousy arise against Jeqe when he is invited by Shaka to become his body guard. Conflict ensues between Sikhunya's

'houses'. Jeqe's house supports him on the one hand while Mapheyana is supported by his brothers on the other hand. However, Sikhunyana succeeds in resolving the conflict. The conflict goes as follows:

Lokhu uMapheyana inkosana kaSikhunyana kanti usengenzwe umona ngoJeqe. Inhliziyo yakhe isibalisa ukuthi yini ukuba athi alwa kangaka okhalweni lwabantabakaTayi, angenzelwa udumo lwenzelwe umfana. Mina angiyi laphe. Kwasuka isidumo phakathi komuzi kaSikhunyana wehlukana phakathi yaze yahlomelana izinduku...., *Insila KaShaka p.*

Jeqe, all of a sudden, rises to this important position. We are not told in the book what happens to the previous incumbent of the position. In another incident he is made to kill, very much against his will, an intruder in cold blood. He regrets his becoming Shaka's body guard. This is evidenced by the following extract:

Wayeyiqhawwe uJeqe, laphe kuliwa khona wayejabula, kakhulu kodwa ukubulala umuntu engalwi kwakuyinto elukhuni kuyena pho, izwi lenkosi lalingumthetho wakhe ..., (*Insila KaShaka p25*).

This means that Jeqe must fight and kill even against his conscience in order to maintain his position.

Jege is made by Shaka to commit all sorts of atrocities. He eventually becomes a traditional healer and permanently settles in Swaziland, after marrying Zakhi.

Characterization - Jege

Insika KaShaka is a typical example of the early Zulu narrative. We are not told in the narrative where Jege has been trained. But he unexpectedly fights and help ward off the enemy. He is immediately appointed Shaka's bodyguard. Right through his way he succeeds against all odds. This immediately reminds one of Chakijana Bogcololo. One wonders how Shaka, intelligent as he was, could have appointed Jege to such a high and delicate position while Jege is so young and having seen him only once. Describing this hart-to-believe a story Gérald comments as follows:

It is the straight forward narrative of a man whose youthful bravery earned him the doubtful privilege of becoming Shaka's personal body guard and factotum, Gérald 1971:212.

In other words, Jege's luck is exaggerated, which makes characterization not very much different from folktale characters. It is not always credible.

Another point of interest in Jeqe's character is the predicament he always finds himself in. Each time he is made to commit Shaka's atrocities he finds himself torn between loyalty and human decency. After having been made to kill one of Shaka's attendants he regrets:

Lelo langa lamenza wafisa sengathi
ngayengezanga koMkhulu. Pho, izwi
lenkosi lalingumthetho wakhe, nokulukhuni
kangakanani wayemelwe ukuba akwenze,
(Insila KaShaka p25).

Another incident which shows Jeqe's predicament is when Shaka instructs him and others to go to Nonoti to kill Mbali and his family for alleged witchcraft. Dube says:

UJeqe akekho lapho umi ngenhla komuzi; akumjabulisi ukugwazela
umuntu ocansini Bathe bethi bayeqa, gagaga kuJeqe, bathi: Awu
muntu weNkosi. Wathi uJeqe: "Dlulani ngamandla nibaleke," (Insila
KaShaka p33).

Jeqe's loyalty to Shaka seems to outweigh this human decency as he seems to have lost his human decency and integrity. Even if he realizes what he is instructed to do is wrong, he would still yield because of the obsession to loyalty.

Shaka, in spite of all his evils and corruption, when Dingane and his party try to enlist Jeqe's help to 'eliminate' Shaka he does admit that what Shaka is doing to the nation is wrong, but because of his loyalty to him and the vows he made to Shaka he would not help kill Shaka.

UJeqe athi: Nami ngiyabona ukuthi iNkosi le inomhawu sengathi ingabusa lonke izwe kungabikho enye iNkosi. Sithi isithunywa senhlangano yawoDingane: Pho, kungenziwa njani ukunqamula le nkathazo? Athi uJeqe: Angazi, noma kubuhlungu kangaka ukubona abantu imihla namalanga becekelwa phansi ... ngenxa kaShaka mina ngethembekile kuye ngesivumelwano engasenza naye ..., (Insila KaShaka pp 34-35).

If one approaches Dube's characterization of Jeqe from the western point of view it becomes difficult for one to understand a character like Jeqe. But the fact of the matter is that Jeqe's character viewed from the Zulu cultural and traditional background point of view does not at all seem strange. According to Zulu custom, no matter what, the subjects must obey or even suffer for their king. Therefore to a critic who understands the Zulu custom Jeqe behaves like an ordinary human being would do. Amongst the Zulu of the old honest and loyalty were values and virtues held at a high esteem. Such values and virtues were grounded in their culture. In our discussion under the factors which influence characterization in the Zulu novel mention is made of the fact that cultural and traditional values play a

significant role in characterization. Dube therefore makes use of this device in creating his characters. There is therefore truth in Gérald's observations that,

- (i) As an African, Dube is immensely concerned with both the past of his people and their traditional culture.
- (ii) It has been observed that among the Zulu there is a fanatical allegiance to loyalty, and this makes it most difficult for the Zulu to accept foreign leadership, Gérald 1971:215.

For that matter even if it is not foreign leadership human beings including the Zulu do not easily accept change. Viewed from this angle, one would sympathize with Jeqe. He does not know what would really happen to him after they have killed Shaka.

Although Gérald seems to have had a better understanding of characterization in the Zulu novel than most literary critics, he misses one important point in Jeqe's behaviour. As a white brought up under a different culture, Gérald finds it difficult to understand why Jeqe still longs for the old days after his father has told him about the killings of people committed by Dingane. Dube expresses Jeqe's feelings and thoughts about his place of birth in the following manner (There is not place like home in Zulu custom):

Uthi lapho eyixoxa eyokuhambela ekhaya
emva kokunyamalala iminyaka ethile
kwakumnandi sengathi angebe esahamba.
Wathi lapho esedundubele egqumeni...
wahlala phansi, wabuka izihlahla nezinkalo
lapho ayelusela khona. Wakhumbula
abafana ayeqhathwa nabo, bedlala
ngenduku..., umqondo wakhe wabuyela
ezinsukwini zobufana begibela izigude...,
(Insila KaShaka p93).

Commenting on Jeqe's behaviour on this occasion the critic wonders:

At times, his motivation is hardly coherent.
During his brief stay at Dingane's kraal, as
he listens to his father, and as he surveys
the wooded hills of Zululand where he had
spent his happy childhood days: Dube tells
us that he felt he could never leave his
home again, Gérald 1971:215.

The fact of the matter here is that there is nothing unusual in Jeqe's behaviour. Jeqe's behaviours is coherent and consistent with a traditional Zulu's behaviour. A person of the Zulu extract, no matter how terrible his home may be or no matter what privileges he may be enjoying in a foreign country, home is home. A Zulu is so culturally attached to the environment of his birth place that even at the time of death he likes to be buried at his home even if he were staying overseas.

Furthermore, we notice some graded inner growth in Jeqe. After having gained experience in warfare under Shaka he becomes a traditional healer and eventually gets married to Zakhi. He eventually settles in Swaziland where he rises to power and recognition as a prominent traditional doctor. Although Jeqe is overwhelmed and re-occupied by Shaka's prowess he is at one stage captured by imagination of a certain beautiful Thonga girl whom he eventually marries. The whole affair starts when Jeqe is listening to someone who extols this beautiful woman to Shaka (Insila KaShaka p19).

Characterization - Shaka

At the beginning of the story Shaka is portrayed in a shadowy and sketchy manner. He is not even mentioned by name. Dube only gives us a picture of an ordinary 'Nkosi'. He is only introduced and revealed to the readers as Shaka when he contemplates his usual attacks against other neighbouring tribes. Shaka is ambitious. He wants to subordinate all the neighbouring tribes to his kingdom. He wants to collect as many cattle as he can. He wants to keep his military forces physically fit and strong. One day while he is discussing warfare, Shaka says,

Sizoz e sithambe amadolo, ake sihlasele
ngalapha, siyekodla khona, (Insila KaShaka

p12).

When one of his sergeants points out that they were still tired Shaka insists that they have had enough time to rest. The conversation proceeds as follows:

Enye induna ithi: Awu, Nkonyane yeSilo,
sisanda kufika nje singakaphumuli.

Athi uShaka: Qha, siphumule kwanele,
(Insila KaShaka p12).

The above statements show what kind of a character Shaka is. He is not an autocrat but consults with his sergeants. A closer analysis of Shaka's character shows that in all his attacks he has a certain aim in mind to accomplish. Dube does not tell us what type of character Shaka is but Shaka is revealed to the reader through his ambitions, actions, words, dialogue with other people. Dube shows Shaka as a person with a keen sense of appreciation for bravery. After Jeqe has helped ward off the enemy he asks that he be sent to him:

Inkosi yafika yathi kuye: 'Ubani ibizo
lomfana wakho na? Waphendula wathi:
'Ndaba, ibizo lakhe uJeqe'. Yathi inkosi:
'Naziya izithole eziyisihlanu nenkunzi yazo,
ngizixoshisa uJeqe, (Insika KaShaka p14).

Dube uses mostly the descriptive method of characterization. When presenting his characters he does it so vividly. When presenting

Shaka one immediately creates in one's mind a clear picture about Shaka:

Laghamuka 'Ilembe elidle amanye' enhla
nesibaya liqhamuka selihlome seliphelele,
selifake namashoba alo.

Lapho sekubengezela inswani phakathi kwezinqawe, munye nje ogingqikayo, munye abamthuthela ngeklwa bamphose odongeni. Ilembe eladla amanye, amashoba alo ehla enyuka phakathi kwempi, lizihlabanela - kukhala inkumba lapho kuthi thu - thu - thu! (Insika KaShaka pp 12-13)

Another incident of making excellent use of the discursive method of characterization by Dube is when the man from Thongaland describes one of the Thonga beauties. Dube describes the beauty of this woman in such a manner that it emotionally grips and captures Jeqe's imagination. Jeqe, for the first time, regrets that he is the King's personal body guard. This directness helps the reader, without any waste of time, or speculation to form a picture of this Thonga woman. Coupled with a sense of humour Dube let the man describe this woman's character as follows (i.e. one character describes another character):

UShaka athi: 'Suka lapha likhona iThonga elingedlula izintombi zakuleli lakithi?' Athi: 'Ay! Ndabezitha, lowa muntu sengathi wayelolongwe ngembokodwe. Uketshezi lufike luzengame, ngisho seziphelele, ilamba lidlile! Idanda libanzi...', (Insila KaShaka p19).

ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERIZATION IN DUBE'S INSILA KASHAKA

On closer examination of characterization in *Insila Kashaka* by Dube the following features have come to light:

- (i) Character portrayal is influenced by the cultural and traditional values of the Zulu people (vide Jege's loyalty to 'autocratic' Shaka).
- (ii) Character cannot be dealt with in isolation but the position and actions of a character in a story contribute a great deal towards a specific character. It is through Shaka's position and actions that the reader gets to know him better. This view gets support in Brooks and Warren who maintain that,

But, as we have had occasion to observe several times before this, fiction never deals with character in isolation, for what a man is determines what he does, and it is primary through what he does

that we who observe him
know what he is, Brooks and
Warren 1971:107.

- (iii) Dube's mode of characterization reveals a very prominent feature prevalent in the domain of the Zulu novel, viz the 'progression-regression tendency'. We have observed some development from folktale material characters as they are found in *UChakijana Bogcololo* and *Abantu Abamnyama* to more credible characters as found in *Insila KaShaka*. Characters like Shaka show a tendency towards psychologically credible characters. But he also regresses to legendary tendencies in creating some of his characters. Characters like Sithela are rather too far fetched and removed from the real world and the world of fiction. Dube describes the Princess in a very legendary manner:

Kuthe ngelinye ilanga
esengene kowesibili unyaka
esiqhingini wavuka ekuseni
kakhulu kungakasi eya kogeza
emfuleni, kanti yisikhathi
sokuba iNkosazana
isekuphungulweni. Waqale
wabona sengathi kubaswe
umlilo eduze nesihlahla,
wabhekisisa wabona zonke
izilwane ezinkulu nezincane
zikake umuntu wesifazane
efinyela abuye asukume
engabhince lutho. Izilwane

lezi zimbake phakathi ubukeka
ingathi uyageza kanti
umjuluko, (Insila Kashaka
p77).

- (iv) Dube also makes use of nameless characters. This is another feature where we find some common ground of the relationship between folktale-oriented characters and believable characters. In Chakijana, for example, we have an example of a certain old woman who was cheated by Chakijane. No mention is made of her name:

UChakijana wahamba
wahamba wafika emzini
kukhona isalukazi. Wathi
kuso: Gogo gogo,
akesiphekane, (Chakijana
p19).

Likewise the medicine man from Thongaland who helps Shaka's doctor and who tells a story of a beautiful young women in Thongaland is not mentioned by name. Dube introduces this nameless character in a manner which is not at all unusual among the Africans:

Phakathi kwalaba kwakukhona umfo
wasebuThonga owayeyisikhonzi kuShaka
ngoba waxoshwa kubo kuthiwa

uyathakatha, (Insila KaShaka p19).

The purpose for which Dube makes use of these nameless characters is to:

- (a) limit the number of names which become a burden to the reader if they are too many. It becomes difficult to remember all the names in a story if they are too many. Too many names can detract the reader's interest and curiosity.
- (b) introduce an important point or aspect for a specific purpose which will enable the story to develop.

In this particular incident the medicine man from Thongaland extols Zakhi's beauty which captures Jege's imagination. When Jege runs away after Shaka's death he longs to see this beautiful woman by the name of Zakhi. He therefore runs away towards Thongaland so that he could find Zakhi. Dube succeeds in fully making use of this device. Dube's story would have not easily developed were it not for his intelligent manner in using the device.

ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERIZATION IN WRITTEN NARRATIVES OF THE EARLY PERIOD OF THE ZULU NOVEL

As a detailed analysis of characterization on the individual written narratives has already been given in the preceding paragraphs, only a summary will be given hereunder. But before giving such a summary it is important to point out that for a critic who embarks on evaluating characterization during this period, to take cognisance of nature and the time during which the material is produced. It is imperative that the critic understands the shifting canons of taste. The art of characterization in the Zulu novel has been humbly changing with the changing times and the changing modes of living of the Zulu nation.

3.1.4 Summary

3.2 Folktale or so to speak mythological material has played a very significant role in the mode of characterization. Chakijana in UChakijana Bogcololo is a typical example of such characters i.e. characters which are not like characters or human beings we know. He behaves in such an unrealistic manner that a critic of the Western literature will have difficulty in understanding and accepting him as a credible character.

- 3.2.1 Traditional and cultural values and the so-called African milieu are used by the authors of the early period of the Zulu narrative in creating their characters.
- 3.2.2 Some characters of this period are measured by lack of physical and psychological development. With the exception of Jeqe, most of the characters in the written narratives lack these features. In the case of Jeqe, we meet him as a young man when he accompanies his father Sikhunyana to the battle between the Tayi's and Shaka. We see him grow up and falling in love and eventually marrying Zakhi, having a family, and becoming renowned traditional healer. Otherwise other characters like Shaka, Chakijana do not show these features. If one's criticism is not influenced by subjectivism a character like Shaka committing such atrocities would be not plausible.
- 3.2.3 Most characters of this period lack motivation for their behaviour and actions. Briefly, by motivation is meant the point at which character and plot come together. That is why Kenny emphasizes that plot for the most part, consists of what the characters do. In other words motivation is why they do certain things or why they behave in a certain manner (Kenney 1966 p36). In *Insila KaShaka* Dube does not show the reader why Shaka commits certain unpalatable acts. Mbatha and Mdhladhla do not give any reason why Chakijana decides

to cook and eat the old woman. It can be argued that Chakijana does not eat the old woman because of hunger. He leaves his home when his father has slaughtereded a beast. If he wanted, he would have had his feast at home. This shows that, generally speaking motivation covers such basic human drives as love, hunger, greed etc. Lack of motivation in a character renders him 'unlifelike'. In this respect, of course, we must admit that we see some developmental differences between Dube's characters and those of Fuze's and Mbatha and Mdhladhla's. For example, the reader will understand and believe why Jeqe runs towards the Thongaland instead of other directions. The reason is clear. Jeqe is captured by his imagination of the beautiful Thonga young woman who is extolled by the man from Thongaland.

- 3.2.4 Characters of the early period of the Zulu narratives are rather superficial. They are portrayed as superhuman and exaggerated. Eating of the whole big beast by Chakijana alone is a typical example of exaggeration. Chakijana in *UChakijana Bogcololo* is triumphant, so is Jeqe in *Insila KaShaka*. They are always triumphant against all the oddities. We can therefore agree that 'characterization is not convincing' as other literary critics content. These characters are therefore not lifelike and not credible or plausible in terms of western standards.

3.2.5 Lack of dialogue as a technique in characterization during this period has made writers of the narratives resort too much to the descriptive method at the expense of the dramatic method. Of course, we are mindful of the fact that both methods used in characterization have their advantages as well as disadvantages. (These have been explained in the proceeding chapters). Devices such dialogue and interaction between the characters help reveal (rather than tell) the character's personality.

3.2.6 Dube's mode of characterization is characterized by the progression-regression tendencies.

3.2.7 Use of animals as characters are a feature of characterization of this period. Unfortunately this mode of characterization has been discontinued, obviously because of the lack of sufficient knowledge of animal psychology on the part of the novelist.

3.2.8 Nameless characters are also a common feature of characterization of this period.

CHAPTER 4

4. CHARACTERIZATION IN THE ZULU HISTORICAL NOVEL

From the outset it is important to point out clearly, as Ainsley observes, that whenever the critic deals with the Zulu novel he must take into account that any piece of work in the Zulu novel is to a great extent a product of its time and cultural setting. (Limi 1970: 2). The portrayal of characters in the historical novel is characterized by the time and the cultural setting of the Zulu people at a particular period of their history. The characters found during this period are thus grounded in the historical - cultural background of the Zulu people. The Zulu novelist is no exception to other novelists in the sense that almost all novelists (of different languages) have a common tendency viz. of responding either to the prevailing circumstances or responding to their past. So are the Zulu novelists who have set themselves the task of writing the historical novel. They wrote about the past history of the Zulu people. It is very seldom, if ever, of the novelists to write on their projection of the future.

The historical novels chosen, from which character portrayal is going to be investigated, are *UDingane* by R.R.R Dhlomo, *Nje Nempela* by B W Vilakazi and *Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa* by Kenneth Bengu. The modus operandi followed above under the discussion of the characterization as

manifest in the written narratives will be *mutatis mutandis* followed.

Another important factor in literary criticism is the fact that it (literary criticism) is highly coloured by subjective responses to the material as well as by prevalent doctrines derived from a particular climate. Subjectivity does not only influence the literary critic but it also influences the novelists mode of characterization. Stated differently, in most Zulu historical novels the novelist writes about the real characters which actually existed at some other time as he perceives them. As the old adage says, *beauty is in the eyes of the beholder*, the novelist portrays the character of a certain person as he sees him and as what the dictates of the time prescribe. In other words, Dhlomo portrays the characters of Mkabayi, Dingane and others as he thinks they were and what his sources of information tell him about these characters.

One other aspect which has been mentioned before is the fact that, unlike the so-called English historical novel, which is historical only as regards their purely external choice of theme and costume, where not only the psychology of the characters, but the manners depicted are entirely those of the writer's own day, the Zulu historical novel portrays the real milieu and the artistically faithful image of a concrete historical epoch of the Zulu nation. In other words, what is peculiar about the Zulu historical novel is that it is specifically historical, i.e. derivation of the individuality of

characters from the historical peculiarity of their age. Here characters are portrayed as belonging to specific period of time. Abstractness in the portrayed characters in the historical novel comes in when the historical concreteness is interspersed with other basic human needs such as love. For example, in *Nje Nempela*, history is interspersed with the love between Malambule and Nomcebo.

The question of subjectivity in characterization as manifest in the historical novel goes a long way. Amongst other causal factors of this subjectivity is the fact that as Ntuli rightly points out.

Some of the earlier authors write on historical events. These writers utilized the information handed down to them by word of mouth. They also depended on the information recorded by white historians. These early works used to deal with the whole life history of the person in question (Malan 1987: 130).

The fact of the matter is that the life history of a person e.g. Dingane or Mkabayi was given by people who either had their own ulterior motives or who were not qualified to do so, such as anthropologists and not literary critics. This in turn influences characterization of these persons by the historical novelists who had read the books written by unqualified authors.

The following is a discussion of characterization as manifest in the historical novels chosen:

4.1 U Dingane KaSenzangakhona by R R R Dhlomo

As the title of this historical novel indicates, the main character is Dingane, the King of the Zulus. Other important characters are Mkabayi, Ndlela etc. Dhlomo, in this novel, uses a combination of methods of characterization viz, the descriptive method, the dramatic method and omniscient method. We must, however, hasten to point out that the latter methods are not used in an advanced manner; the reason being that U Dingane is one of the early works in Zulu literature when the method of characterization was still rudimentary mostly coloured by folktale and cultural influences. As generally known, like other early novelists, Dhlomo uses mostly and successfully the descriptive method of characterization. Although characterization is interwoven with other elements which must be artistically used to form a whole of the novel, in this research we are not so much concerned with the merits and demerits of the novel as such. But our emphasis falls on characterization.

Dingane

In the exposition Dhlomo introduces Dingane by subtly describing him, making use of his traditional praises. Though using idiomatic and deep language, to a Zulu speaking reader, Dingane's personality is vividly

portrayed. Dhlomo introduces him as:

UVEzi uNonyanda uMbabadeli!
Owagabadela inkundla yakwaBulawayo.

.....

UMBomboshe omnyama
UVemvane lukaPhunga noMageba
UVemvane olumabala azimbadu,
Ngabe ngiyaluthinta lwahwaqabala,

.....

Isiziba esiseMavivane, Dingane,
Isiziba esinzonzo, sizonzobele,
Siminzisa umuntu, ethi uyageza
Waze washona nangesicoco,
(UDingane pp (iv) - (v))

In these praises Dhlomo portrays Dingane as a murderous person who killed Shaka. Bulawayo was one of Shaka's kraals but here it is figuratively used and it literally means that Dingane killed Shaka (first two lines). In the next four lines the physical appearance of Dingane is described. He was dark. He is likened to a butterfly which, when touched, becomes angry. In other words Dingane reacted seriously at the slightest provocation.

In the last four lines Dhlomo portrays Dingane; literally, as still waters which is a sign of danger, deepness in person's personality and is further shown as the one who killed his half brother Mhlangana.

Dhlomo does not show any physical development in the portrayal of

Dingane. Dingane is introduced to the reader when he is already a grown up person who is negatively influenced by his aunt Mkabayi to take up the Zulu kingship and solve his problems by killing his rivalries. Dingane is portrayed as a flat character. He does not show any psychological development. From the day he takes up the throne he commits all sorts of cruel and unnecessary murders. On one occasion he orders that Nhlanganiso and Mphezulu's eyes be taken out and thereafter uses sarcastic words:

Amehlo enu lawa anjani
uma ebona okungabonwayo
ngabanye abantu? Nithi
ninamehlo kahle nje?
Ake siwakhiphe mhlawumbe
ningase nibone kahle
engasekho lana, (Dingane p24).

There are quite a series of cruelties and senseless deeds committed by Dingane. Dhlomo, however, succeeds in showing well motivated actions by Dingane in some instances. When Dingane and his accomplices kill Shaka, the latter curses them:

Ningibulala nje ngoba nithi nizolibusa leli
zwe ngingasekho! Kanisoze nalibusa.
Ngibone izinyoni zezulu ziza. Yizona
ezizolibusa lelizwe (Dingane p 41).

These are the words and the thoughts which haunt Dingane and

eventually prompt him to kill the Boers. The Boers pose a threat to his kingdom. What aggravates Dingane's suspicion about the Boers bona fides is that the latter are seen at night spying on the King's kraal. This is an historical fact. Such motivation of behaviour makes the character plausible. Therefore the aspect of lifelikeness in this character is not so much the issue for Dingane is actually an historical character. He is portrayed as it is thought he behaved. His character portrayal is a living attempt at reconstruction of his life history.

Dhlomo must be commendable for making use of the complex characterization technique viz the stream of consciousness. In this type of technique the character, when confronted by a problem at a certain time he looks back at what has happened and that will now determine the method of action to take in order to solve the problem at hand. The speech comes in the form of a dialogue and the bearer is assumed or it may take a form of monologue. Describing the stream consciousness technique Smuts points out that,

Spraak kom veral in dialoog voor wanneer daar 'n hoorder of hooorders veronderstel word, maar soms ook in monoloë (Smuts 1975: 27.)

Now we find Dingane after having sent Piet Retief and other Boers to regain his stolen cattle from Sigonyela chasing everybody away from

the house and even Nzobo remaining all by himself with torturing thoughts about what Shaka said when they killed him. It is the arrival of the Boers that serve as a springboard for Dingane to think back and cause him to kill all the Boers. Dhlomo says,

Bathe ukuba basuke oPiet Retief nabanye
sebeyolanda izinkomo kuSigonyela wasala
uDingane ephenduka isilwane uqobo.
Wathi bonke ababelapho endlini, ngisho
uNzobo uqobo lwakhe, mabaphume.
Wasala yedwa endlini. Ngiyaphosisa uma
ngithi wasala yedwa, ngoba wayehleli
nemicabango yakhe emibi yodwa....
(UDingane p. 40).

Shaka's words were:

Ningibulala nje ngoba nithi nizolibusa leli
zwe ngingasekho! Kanisoze nalibusa.
Ngibona izinyoni zezulu ziza. Yizona
ezizolibusa leli zwe. Kwafika kuye ukuthi
yibo laba bantu ayekhuluma ngabo uShaka
amaBhunu, (UDingane p 41).

It is this motivation which leads to the massacre of the Boers by Dingane. The defect in Dhlomo's use of the stream of consciousness technique is that he uses too much of the descriptive method of characterization instead of a dialogue or the dramatic method.

Mkabayi

Mkabayi is Dingane's aunt who helps him get onto the Zulu throne by all evil means. Although economy and directness in the use of the discursive method in Dhlomo's method of characterization are always the virtues, he (Dhlomo) succeeds in some parts in making use of the dramatic method whereby he shows or reveals the character rather than telling the reader about the character. The conversation and dialogue between Mkabayi and Dingane reveals to the reader what kind of personality Mkabayi is. At least there are two observations one can make from this conversation viz that, Mkabayi is 'inhuman' and would achieve her goals even if it means killing. She is revealed as a bloody-thirsty person on the one hand. On the other hand a reader who is not conversant with the Zulu tradition would not understand Mkabayi's behaviour. One would think that such ordering of murders is unrealistic and would think that Dingane borders to a folktale. But to a reader who is Zulu such characterization or behaviour is typical of the killings in royal families of the old. However, the conversation keeps the reader in suspense and thus longs to see the end. The interest of the reader is also highly captured. The characters become realistic and 'lifelike'. We therefore whole heartedly agree with Ntuli when he states that,

In his novelettes Dhlomo treats of recorded historical facts but makes his characters speak in order to sustain the interest of the reader particularly when he depicts situations full of suspense., especially the first two chapters which are dominated by the indefatigable Mkabayi... In most of his historical novelettes Dhlomo, by means of psychological analysis, dialogue and depiction in general succeeds in making his characters realistic, (Limi 1966, No. 1: 23).

No matter how commendable Dhlomo's art of characterization may be, sometimes Mkabayi's portrayal appears very mysterious because of the high degree of the lack of motivation. As explained before, motivation simply means the reasons that make a character's action plausible. In other words, motivation answers why a character engages in certain actions (Dube'et al, 1983:49) and Kenney, 1966:36). Dhlomo does not give the expected motivation as to why Mkabayi, out of all his brother's sons decides to choose Dingane as her favourite. She helps Dingane murder his two half brothers, Shaka and Mhlangana. She even goes all out to arrange for the elimination of Mbhophha on her own. But in the reader's mind the question as to why Mkabayi commits all these atrocious acts remains unanswered. As it is an historical fact that Mkabayi actually did help Dingane rise to the Zulu throne, the literary critic cannot question Mkabayi's actions further.

4.2 Nje Nempela

Nje Nempela is an unique historical novel in the sense that in this novel, while Vilakazi writes about the real history of the Zulus, he intersperses the historical facts with the imaginary romantic love between Nomcebo and Malambule. In this novel Vilakazi has chosen both historical characters i.e. persons who actually lived at a certain period of time as well as fictitious constructions. Some critics have even been tempted to deny that **Nje Nempela** is an historical novel. Such theory is incorrect because **Nje Nempela** deals with the historical facts. Other critics such as Ngidi accept the fact that **Nje Nempela** is an historical novel. Ngidi states that,

Nje Nempela gives us a fine exposition of the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906. Here Vilakazi mentions Zululand's attitude toward the passing of the Poll Tax Act 1905, the conference by Bhambatha, Siganda and Chakijane as to the best ways of carrying out a mighty revolution. In order to break the monotony of historical facts and narrations Vilakazi intersperses these with a romance of Nomcebo and Malambule, (Limi Jan 1966, No.1:24).

The historical nature of **Nje Nempela** does not end with the above quoted historical facts but it goes on to record the arrest and the court trial of Dinuzulu at Mgungundlovana which is also a historical fact. Even Vilakazi in his own words (in his *Ibika*) points out very clearly that although he writes about the love between a young man and a young woman he intersperses it

with an important war fought and organised by Bhambatha. He emphasizes that,

Kule ncwadi ngibhala indaba yothando lwensizwa nentombi. Ukuyibhala kwami ngiyilumbanisa nodaba olukhulu lwempi kaBhambatha kaMancinza, (Nje Nempela - Ibika.

In the light of the explanation given above we accept the fact that **Nje Nempela** is in all fairness an historical novel. Gérard acknowledges, this when he aptly states that,

The book has been described as one of the finest exposition of the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906 and has also been singled out by Zulu anthropologist Absalom Vilakazi as an outstanding depiction of traditional life., (Gérard 1971 and 256).

In the light of the above explanation Vilakazi's characters in this book are grounded in both historical and traditional background of the Zulu people, moreover Vilakazi is to a large extent interested in and is inclined toward Zulu particularism. For purposes of our research we are going to select a few of the important characters in order to demonstrate the mode of characterization in **Nje Nempela**.

(1) Malambule

Malambule, the main character in *Nje Nempela* is an imaginary person. Malambule's behaviour is well motivated. The reasons given by Vilakazi make his actions plausible. Malambule's behaviour accords with his nature and with the circumstances to which he is responding. The plausibility enhanced by the fact that even as he psychologically develops and placed under changing circumstances his behaviour is consistent. To illustrate this point we may point out that in whatever Malambule does, he is motivated by the love for Nomcebo. When Malambule is transporting Bhambatha's wife, Siyekiwe, he never forgets Nomcebo. Difficult the situation as it is, under which Malambule operates, he reminds one of Siyekiwe's guards:

Uma abafowabo babuya nayo intombi
yakhe kuhle bayilethe kuye ayithathe. Uma
bengakafiki noma bafela ekuhambeni baze
bamtshale. Kodwa uma befika nayo baze
bayilethe kuye eMgungundlovana
emaphoyiseni, (*Nje Nempela* p 188).

This shows how deeply committed Malambule is to his lover. Another instance of consistency in Malambule's behaviour is the fear of the White man because of his past experiences in Barberton. Nowhere in *Nje Nempela* is Malambule shown as a coward but he cannot dare and kill a White man. When he is sent to Mpanza store by the Chief to kill the storekeeper and confiscate the fire arms he

disappears on the way and he flees from other young men who are very adventurous and who are prepared to carry out the instruction of the Chief (i.e. Chief Sigananda) no matter what happens. What happened to some people at Barberton i.e. if they had killed a White man, the police would hunt and eventually track them down. Again and again he is haunted by such thoughts and he would refrain from killing a White man. As he and other young men are sent by Chief Sigananda to kill a White man at Mpanza store he is again haunted by what Somtsewu once said, viz that,

Kuthe ukuba baphume lapha
kwaSigananda oMalambule nezinye
izinsizwa baqonda khona eMpanza.
Endleleni behamba, uMalambule wezwa
kuncencetha ezindlebeni zakhe inkulumo
yamadoda ekhuluma noSiganda ngamazwi
ashiwo uSomtsewu ukuthi obulala imbila
emhlophe usuke okhe olunenkume, nokuthi
ezinye izimbila ziyophuma kuwo wonke
amacala zizofuna ithambo lembila
ebuleweyo, (Nje Nempela pp 166-167).

The above extract testifies to the consistency in Malambule's behaviour.

Vilakazi also uses the characterization technique viz. the stream of consciousness in the above quoted incident. What now determines Malambule's future action as to whether he goes on to carry out the instruction by the Chief to kill the White man and take away his guns

is what goes on in his mind about how the detective tracked down the killers of White man in Barberton. He eventually comes out strongly against the idea of going to Mpanza. He tells other young men:

Madoda, mina le ndaba yokubulala
umLungu nokuba sithate izibhamu zakhe
mina angiyingeni.

Hawu uthini Malumbule na? Kubuza laba
abanye. Qha ngiqinisile angiyenzi.
Amazwi okuthi abelungu bayofuna ithambo
lembila yakubo liyangisebenza, (Nje
Nempela p168).

Vilakazi has also succeeded in revealing Malambule's personality through the dialogue between Malambule and the other young men who accompanied him to Mpanza store, i.e. the conversation with Siyekiwe, Bhambatha's wife. This is a well motivated character, which makes it plausible.

The influence of folklore, historical elements, feature in Vilakazi's portrayal of Malambule. At one stage he describes Malambule in not so many words. He gives Malambule's praises in order to highlight what kind of a person he is when he is before young beautiful ladies of different ethnic groups. He applauds Malambule as follows:

Pho, engubani umfo kaMalambule
KaGodide kaNdimundwane.
Unomagwaphugwaphu.
Ukugwaza ngukuphanga
We Mbuyana?

Iqhawe elalwa eNdondakusuka.....,
(Nje Nempela p41).

(ii) **Maphulana**

Maphulana as a character is grounded in the traditional background of the Zulu people. It used to be very common amongst the Zulu kraals to find an old man who is so much taken for granted, even as a dupe.

This man would not be a blood relative, but who for some or other reason, finds himself living in a well-to-do family. Usually such persons disguise their true identity. They are usually deeper than they appear on the surface; so is Maphulana. Maphulana has secrets of his own which he eventually divulges to Malambule. Even the kraal head, Nkominophondo does not really know who Maphulana is.

But it is the latter who helps Malambule win Nomcebo's love. He is well informed about the history of Dinuzulu. He is the one who trained Dinuzulu in stick fighting. His knowledge of the traditional praises of the Zulu warriors is revealed when he confirms Nozaza weZulu's praises to Malambule. He says,

Uqinisile lona ukuthi unguNozaza weZulu, uma ezibonga ethi:

UXhakalaz'umuntu ngomkhonto kaSifo,
Useqa laph'umkhany'ukhona
Weqa ntangwana zakoMkhasa.....,
(Nje Nempela p 59).

We also come across Maphulana singing praises for his hemp pipe:

Kunesiwombe we mlingani,
Okukhulu okuzayo,
Sithi silibhema nje
Sesilibhema noMgwazikaqhaqhi
Uqhaqhelwa abezizwe.....,
(Nje Nempela p57).

When the reader observes Maphulana's behaviour, smoking dagga, taking things steadily, revealing his true identity, his inspiration which arises when he sees Nozaza and other Zulu warriors, he immediately creates a vivid picture which depicts a typical Zulu traditional old man. Maphulana's behaviour is well motivated. We find him insisting to leave Nkominophondo's kraal together with Malambule and Nozaza's company. When he sees these Zulu warriors he is reminded of his good old days in Zululand.

(iii) **Siyekiwe**

Siyekiwe is one of Bhambatha's wives. She is taken by the government of the day during the so-called Bhambatha's fierce rebellion against the payment of Poll Tax by the Zulu nation during the reign of Dinuzulu. The government wants to gain all the information as to who is responsible for the rebellion. The white government wants to ascertain whether her husband is responsible for the rebellion. Siyekiwe is taken to Mgungundlovu (Pietermaritzburg). When she arrives at Mgungundlovu, to her disappointment, she does not meet the 'Hulumeni' instead she is interviewed by some other men. She is then sent to Mgungundlovana (Greytown) where she is sent back home accompanied by Malambule and other young men in a wagon.

Aristotle, quoted by Shipalana, maintains that in characterization there should be four things to aim at. (Limi, June 1970, 10: 32). Amongst these is that characters or the portrayal should be appropriate and be lifelike. In simple terms this means that characters should be credible. The conversation between Siyekiwe and Malambule clearly shows how an old traditional woman behaves. Her behaviour and illiteracy befit the time and milieu of the day. She behaves according to her way of thinking and limited knowledge. To Siyekiwe the 'Hulumeni'

(government) is a certain big man. Her conversation with Malambule betrays her ignorance. Siyekiwe says to Malambule:

Angazi mntanami, ngoba eMgungundlovu
bengithi leyo ndoda enguHulumeni
ngiyokhonjiswa yona, kodwa angizange
ngiyibone, (Nje Nempela p.187).

This shows that the concept of government was non-existent during Siyekiwe's time. In speculation one would imagine that Siyekiwe equated the concept 'Hulumeni' to the king. In some other instance mention is made that the value system of the people do influence characterization. Let us examine the way she addresses Malambule in spite of the fact that she (Siyekiwe) and Malambule are more or less of the same age:

Yebo, sakubona mntanami, kusho
uSiyekiwe.

Vilakazi explains the reason why Siyekiwe addresses Malambule as 'mntanami'. He says:

Noma uSiyekiwe wayengemdala
kangangoba athi kuMalambule 'mntanami',
kodwa umthetho wakithi kwaZulu uthi, nxa
umuntu wesifazane esegcagcile, ngalo lelo
langa uthatha isinyathelo sobudala azibize
athi: 'mame'. Kwelempucuko ungabe

usumthukile owesifazane ngisho eseqala
imixhiliba uma uthe kuye 'mame'.
Sakubona sakubeletha kwelempucuko!
(Nje Nempela p 186).

As already mentioned above, Siyeke's portrayal is credible. In other words, her character does make sense and it is able to command the reader's belief, provided of course, the reader is well conversant with the value system of the Zulu people.

(iv) **Dinuzulu**

In the foregoing paragraphs fictitious characters, besides Siyeke, have been discussed. Attention will now be paid to historical characters as manifest in *Nje Nempela*. Some of the important historical characters are Dinuzulu, Bhambatha, Sigamanda and Chakijane. Unlike in *Dingane KaSenzangakhona* where historical characters such as Mkhabayi, Dingane etc, enjoy a high prominence of characterization, here characters like Dinuzulu are portrayed in a shadowy manner. Dinuzulu is portrayed as a person in despair. He, however, comes out strongly against the government's rumours viz. that the latter intends arresting him as they believe that he is the instigator of the rebellion against the paying of Poll Tax:

Uma uHulumeni ecabanga ukuthi ngonile
yini pho ngingathethiswa icala ngijeziswe
uma icala lingilahla ngihlawule na?

But the underquoted words do give the impression that he dissociates himself from Bhambatha, Siganda and Chakijane. In other words, he sheds off the responsibility as the King. He says:

Ngokwami ukwazi akukho into eyonakele
kulesi sifunda. Lapho konakele khona
kusesifundeni saseNkandla, noma kunjalo
anginandaba nokwehlakala lapho..., (Nje
Nempela p 192).

Viewed differently, the reader may not interpret the above statement as shedding off the responsibility but rather as diplomacy to give the impression that he is not behind the rebellion. We can therefore safely say that Vilakazi succeeds in making Dinuzulu credible and appropriate (Limi, 1970: 32).

It is appropriate for Dinuzulu under the circumstances, to avoid being arrested, to play this diplomacy by shedding off the responsibility for the rise of the rebellion against the introduction of the Poll Tax. Otherwise Dinuzulu is a real historical character whose actions and behaviour are purely historical. An historical novel in Zulu is not simply a reconstruction of history, but a true history of the people.

(v) **Bhambatha, Chakijane and Sigamanda**

Although Bhambatha, Chakijane and Sigamanda played a very significant role in fighting against the Poll Tax Act 1905, as they are generally known in the history of the Zulus, they are portrayed in a very shadowy manner by Vilakazi.

4.3 Summary of Vilakazi's mode of characterization

Briefly our observations are that:

- (i) There is a noticeable shift from Dhlomo's mode of characterization to Vilakazi's. In Dhlomo's historical novels the characters chosen are almost all historical characters whereas Vilakazi's characters are of two categories. We find imaginary characters like Malambule, Nomcebo on the one hand and historical characters like Dinuzulu, Bhambatha, Sigamanda on the other hand etc.
- (ii) In *Nje Nempela* Vilakazi has moved a step forward from Dhlomo. In *Nje Nempela* we find a very important characteristic element of characterization, viz the coherence of thoughts and actions in the presentation of the characters; a factor which makes Vilakazi's

characters more credible even those which are fictions. Coherence of thoughts and action of characters make them credible and such characters command the reader's belief. We can cite the fear of the White man by Malambule as explained above as an example of this coherence and consistency.

- (iii) Use is also made of nameless characters in *Nje Nempela*. This characterization technique helps not to overburden the reader with too many names to remember. It also minimizes the chances of confusing characters. Vilakazi has a number of these nameless characters. There is a certain 'Nongqayi' whose name is not mentioned who suspects Malambule's bona fides or intentions when he arrives at Mgungundlovana.

UNongqayi wambuka phansi wambuka phezulu wathula, kwaba khona ukumsola lo muntu unongqayi ngoba abantu bakwaZulu wayebazi, mhlawumbe uMalambule lona ufuna ukumholela oPhathe kubuye kuphinde esikaBhongoza, (*Nje Nempela* p 173).

Therefore nameless characters help to pilot the plot without overburdening the reader's imagination.

- (iv) Vilakazi advances his characterization technique by making use of traditional beliefs and value systems. He makes a good combination of different devices viz. the use of nameless characters and the traditional beliefs. The following conversation between Malambule and the (khehla) old man is an example of this combination:

Pho icala limi kanjani lapha eNkosini? Lathi
ikhehla: Angazi. Lapha esilungwini
amacala athethwa ngamanga. Uthi
abameli laba bafika ezinkantolo
bazokwenzani? (Nje Nempela p200).

Vilakazi really gives a true impression of an ignorant traditional old man from rural areas who believes that in the *White man's court* one has to use lies in order to convince the court and win the case. In actual fact a lawyer's function is to assist the court arrive at a legally fair judgment; not to mislead the court by telling lies as some illiterate persons believe.

- (v) In Vilakazi's mode of characterization a shift from folktale influence has been prominent. The emphasis is rather placed on the traditional influences. This tendency shows a step forward from the mode of characterization as experienced in the early narratives.

4.4 Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa - By Kenneth Bengu

Bengu is one of those writers who tries to reconstruct the past of the Blacks before they had contact with the Western culture. Bengu writes on the traditional life led by Amazembe. The main character, Bhekifa, is created by Bengu to depict the conflict between Western culture and traditional culture. Remarking on such works Ntuli (Ntuli, 1987:130) rightly characterizes this pre-colonial era by "the role played by the diviners and medicine men". There is a difference between Bengu's historical novels and those of Dhlomo's. Bengu tries to recapture and reconstruct the spirit of traditional life which is fast disappearing (Ntuli, 1987:131). Dhlomo's characters are mostly characters who actually lived at a particular time while Bhengu's characters are just fictitious constructions.

(i) Bhekifa

Under normal circumstances, when the reader meets the character for the first time the latter's personality is masked. The novelist begins to unmask him through various devices. Bhekifa, who is the main character, is revealed through his attire. As a learned and westernized character, Bhekifa puts on clothes. Not only can the character be revealed or unmasked through his clothes but through his milieu or surroundings or even through his name like Bhekifa;

which name is appropriate and is indicative of the character's future position. Bhekifa reveals his intellectual abilities when he departs from Gubulundu, Mampondo and Nozaza. Realising that the clothes and the unfamiliar way of western attire may betray him and perhaps be killed in the process, he dresses himself in green leaves and roots. He is not satisfied with this trick. He acquires traditional attire from an old man and he pretends to be a traditional diviner (isangoma). Eventually he manages to reach Ngwadalazibomvu's place, but he refuses to disclose his identity and purpose until his demand is met, viz. to meet Matokwana. The time and the milieu add to the credibility of the character, Bhekifa. Unlike today where identification documents are used, during Bhekifa's time there were no such identification documents, otherwise Bhekifa would have been easily caught. Besides his attire which he uses to disguise himself, Bhekifa takes advantage of the circumstances viz. that he knows that Amazembe are slaves of traditional beliefs. Therefore they will not hurt the 'isangoma' as the latter is held in high esteem amongst traditional people. Bengu's mode of characterization tallies with Du Plooy's view on characterization, viz that,

Klere, omgewing, voorkoms of selfs die naam van die karakter kan as deel van die masker iets van die karakter openbaar, Du Plooy 1986: 112.

Bengu has used all the above devices in the creation of his main character, Bhekifa.

Besides clothes, milieu and the name of a character, Bengu uses the device of the conflict between cultures in order to reveal his main character. Although the Amazembe tribe are quite aware of the fact that Bhekifa is educated and would naturally like to marry a woman of his social class, they insist that he marries a young lady from eMashobeni in order to fulfil Bhekifa's father's wish, Hlunguhlungu who died long ago when Bhekifa was still a young boy. This is the tribe's expectation viz. that Bhekifa is expected to uphold the tradition. In the olden days marriage was not a matter between the two lovers concerned but rather a matter between two families concerned. It was worse in the case of the iNkosi because the whole tribe used to have a say in such matters. Very much against their expectations, Bhekifa marries Nogcansi's daughter, Nombhulelo. He advances three strong reasons for wanting to marry a woman of his own choice (Bhekifa pp 85-86).

(ii) Gubulundu, Phuzudaka and Matokwana

Sense of humour is one the factors which influence characterization in quite a number our Zulu novels. Bengu makes successful use of

this element as a characterization technique. The way jokes are made goes a long way in revealing a character's personality. In the conversation between Gubulundu and Phuzudaka the reader may deduce what kind of personalities the two have. Further, the reader gets the impression that, although it is a long time since Gubulundu and Phuzudaka last met, they still understand one another. Gubulundu's remarks are suggestive of the fact that Phuzudaka is a stubborn man. He jokes as follows:

Usenjalo wena Phuzudaka ukuba nenkani!
Kusho uGubulundu ehleka.

Inkani ngiyithathaphi wethu,
sengiwxhopho odlela amakati nje?
Kuthi ngqokotho, kuhlekwa ihlaya
likaPhuzudaka.

Washesha-ke wethu ukudlela amakati
Sekubuyisa uGubulundu. Phela mina
ngiyahlupheka, futhi ngingumfokazana,
ngabuye ngazikholisa ngathatha inqwaba
yamakhosikazi..., (Bhekifa p 18).

Bhengu uses the same technique i.e. the sense of humour but now combined with sarcasm in showing Matokwana's personality. When he is confronted by the crowds/warriors to give proof to them that this man he installs as the king of Amazembe is the real Bhekifa, the son of the late King Hlunguhlungu, he asks the warriors:

Nifuna ukubona inxeba lani? Ingani
niyambona nje ukuthi uyena umntwana
lona? Umatokwana wathi inxeba lelo
abafuna ukulibona, sebobuye balikhonjiswe
ngelinye ilanga, mhlawumbe neNkosi iyobe
isiphapheme esiwombeni sokuquleka,
(Bhekifa pp 78-79).

Despite its shortcomings the descriptive method has its advantages as stated before. If used artistically, and not used excessively, it is economical and direct. Bengu displays a skilful way of handling of the descriptive method of characterization. He uses it to its maximal efficiency. The reader, when reading Bengu's novel uBhekifa where the descriptive method is used, he immediately creates a vivid picture of the character that is being described. Let us look at how Bengu describes King Hlunguhlungu:

Lesi sangoma enisibonayo, umntwana
weNkosi uHlunguhlungu olubabayo,
oluhangule abafazi namadoda...,
(Bhekifa p78).

Not in so many words the reader realizes that King Hlunguhlungu was a fierce person.

Another good example of the choice of the direct method is where Bengu depicts Nombhulelo, Nogcansi's beautiful daughter. When a person reads the following passage he cannot miss Nombhulelo's

beauty:

Intokazi kaNogcansi isho ngebala layo elimpofu, imazinyo amhlophe, imehlo ayizibhakela, ithi lapho iwajikijela kuwena ikubuka, uzwe ufikelwa ukuzenyeza. Yayiyinhle intokazi kaNogcansi, isukile ingumqangabhodwe phumela ekwenini, izitho zesabeka, idanda libanzi, intamonde, izinwele zingamagoda ekhanda, (Umbuso Wezembe pp 88-89).

When Bengu presents this character the reader does not have to wonder about in his mind trying to build Nombhulelo's picture or guessing as to how the latter looks like physically.

Like the recent fiction, *Bhekifa*, in spite of being an early novel, focuses on changing human relations and individual growth or development of certain characters. In this connection Dietrick and Sundell believe that,

More often than not a major character undergoes a change of heart or mind that occurs during an experience of crisis or conflict, Dietrick and Sundell 1978:77.

To illustrate this point, we find *Bhekifa* confronted by a crisis as to how he is going to dodge Ngwadlazibomvu's informers on one occasion. On the other occasion he is confronted by the problem as

to how he is going to enter Ngwadlazibomvu's palace and who is going to introduce him to the nation because Matokwana and other sympathizers are not there. In the first instance he acquires traditional attire so that he would not look strange to the Amazembe.

In the second instance he enters Ngwadlazibomvu's palace under the pretext that he is a traditional diviner. He refuses to talk until Matokwana has been called.

We can therefore safely say that Bhekifa is a dynamic character. He changes and adapts himself to the changing circumstances. Bhekifa displays his ability to change when, after a long resistance against marrying a woman from Mashobeni, he decides to marry the woman chosen by the nation and his late father, Hlunguhlungu. The nation does not want him to marry a woman of his choice viz. Nombhulelo. Because he realises that there is no way out, he eventually succumbs to the nation's demand in order to resolve the conflict of interests.

Bengu uses traditional virtues as a contributory factor in characterization. Honesty and keeping of national secrecy are very important amongst the Zulu people. Bengu uses the two abovementioned factors to enhance Matokwana's character and personality. Matokwana is entrusted with the responsibility and the royal secret by King Nqabayembube before his death. The

responsibility is that Matokwana and other 'iNdunas' (to Nqabayembube) will have to see to it that the Amazembe kingdom thrives for ever and if disputes arise they must give fair and unbiased judgment. In other words, they must be honest. Honesty was held in high esteem amongst the Africans of the old. Therefore, Matokwana must fulfil this virtue. In that conversation at Gubulundi's palace, in order fulfil Nqabayembube's last wish Matokwana tells his audience that:

Mzukwana sibizwa yiNkosi
uNqabayembube, sinabangasekho oMoyeni
benoNkominopondo, ngoba kwakuyithina
izinduna ezinkulu, nabaluleki beNkosi,
yathi: Moyeni, Nkominophondo nawe
Matokwana, nize nibumise ubukhosi
bamaZembe, nilamule ngeqiniso, nalapho
sekuvela ubuxakaxaka: Nangu
uMabalengwe, nize nimkhulise madoda,
mina sengiyafa. Yasho lawa mazwi
yaphangalala iNkosi. Amehlo ami,
nezindlebe zami zazi lukhulu maZembe,
(Bhekifa p28).

All this time Matokwana has kept the "word" of the "dead". Thereafter Hlunguhlungu dies and his brother, the regent wants to usurp the kingship which, in terms of the traditional custom, belongs to Bhekifa, Hlunguhlungu's son and heir to the throne. In this incident Matokwana keeps the secret and the "word of the dead" that Bhekifa is still alive and is in Xhosaland. He is now old enough i.e.

twenty years of age to come back and rule the AmaZembe nation. In their conversation he finally discloses the secret:

UMabalengwe wafa engakabusi isikhathi eside; naye-ke wakhulumisa okukayise lapho esefa. Wangibopha engixuba nabo oMoyeni noNkominophondo ngokuthi, size simbhekele uHlunguhlungu lo, ofe ngomnyama omubi,... UNgwadlazibomvu lona, osecabanga ukuthi lesi sikhundla akusona, sekungesakhe, akunjalo. Ukhona umniniso. Nina-ke esenginivezele le mfihlo seniyokwenza amasu okumbuyisela umntwana azothatha isihlalo sakhe. Niyabona maZembe sengigugile; kusasa mhlawumbe lingathi lishona libe lishona nami. Lokhu enginixoxela khona bekungihlupha enhliziyweni ngoba ngabe ngazi ukuthi iNkosi yamaZembe yeqiniso ikhona...., (Bhekifa pp 28-29).

Matokwana's words, show clearly that honesty coupled with good consciousness play a very important part in portraying a character with a good personality.

4.5 TOO MANY CHARACTERS IN BHEKIFA

In contrast with Vilakazi in *Nje Nempela* where he gives names only to the essential characters and where quite a number of his characters are nameless, Bengu, in his *Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa*, introduces a new character with a name almost in every second or third page. Many

characters with new names tend to mar the story. Introduction of characters and their names, now and again, has a lot to bear on the reader's interest and imagination. It overtaxes the reader's memory and it is also confusing. It could therefore be safely pointed out that Bengu regresses to the Chakijane-folktale-era where right through the story a new character is introduced (Chakijane Bogcololo by Mbatha and Mdhladhla). Such characterization technique, no doubt, puts the novel to a great disadvantage as compared to a novel with a few and only essential names or characters.

4.6 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERIZATION IN AN HISTORICAL NOVEL

Characterization as manifest in the Zulu historical novel may be summarized as follows:

- (i) During the historical era it is observed that characterization in the Zulu historical novel manifest itself in twofold viz that in quite a number of these novels the novelist chooses historical characters i.e. human beings who lived at a particular period of time in the history of mankind whereas in others fictitious constructions are chosen. On the one hand we find, for instance, that Dhlomo in UDingane KaSenzangakhona chooses to tell his story through the real historical characters, like Dingane, Mkabayi, Ndlela and others as we know them in history. On the other hand we get writers like Vilakazi who

chooses to use historical as well as fictitious characters. We find historical characters like Bhambatha, Sigamanda, Dinuzulu, etc as well as fictitious characters such as Malambule, Nomcebo etc. But complementary to the above we find some Zulu historical novels such as **Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa** where Bengu decides to choose fictional characters but grounded in the Zulu traditional milieu which is characterized by traditional value systems and beliefs. Of importance in these characters is the fact that in all of them the common denominator is the fact that they are grounded in the Zulu traditional-historical milieu.

- (ii) In the majority of cases the writer does not have to strive to attain lifelikeness in his characters because the characters are portrayed as they are known by the readers. Plausibility in historical characters is therefore not difficult to achieve. In these novels characters behave according to the expectations of the reader and characterization is also influenced by the novelist's subjectivity. Such characters' behaviour is usually consistent with the Zulu culture, for examples, the senseless murders committed by Dingane and Mkabayi, the unconditional submissiveness, subordination and loyalty to the authorities e.g. to the king are not uncommon in the Zulu culture.

- (iii) We have also noted the development of characterization as a technique from the folktale characters to credible characters. We also get the shift from simple to complex characters. Writers, such as Kenney regard the ability to create round or complex characters as a higher kind of achievement than simple characters. It is generally accepted that complex characters are more lifelike than simple characters and the quality of lifelikeness is one form of relevance in characterization (Kenney, 1966:30). In the light of this development we can safely say that this was a step forward in characterization in the Zulu novel.
- (iv) The Zulu novelist has succeeded in creating characters which are artistically faithful images of a certain concrete historical epoch e.g. Dingane befits the time he lived in, i.e. the derivation of the individuality of characters from the historical peculiarity of their age.
- (v) What was also improved the art of characterization during the historical novel period is the creation of characters taking the advantage of the clash between traditional beliefs and western civilization or culture. The case of Bhekifa in *Umbuso Wezembe* is one typical example. Bhekifa is educated in Xhosaland and he would therefore have nothing to do with traditional beliefs of 'uncivilized people' and he wants to marry a woman of his own choice; not of the nation's choice. He is almost

rejected by his nation but the continuous mishaps which befall him make him change his mind and eventually worship his ancestors. In *Nje Nempela*, Vilakazi uses Siyekiwe to show the traditional and western understanding of the concept "uHulumeni". This technique helps the novelist to improve his mode of characterization.

(vi) Novelists of this period have used attire to distinguish certain characters from others i.e. traditional or western attire help to fulfil a certain purpose and identification.

(vii) Sense of humor is one of the common characterization features of this period.

(viii) In some of the novels, e.g. *Umbuso Wezembe* the writer makes use of rather too many names while in others only the essential names are chosen to create the desired impression. But it would appear that it is the historical novels with folktale residual material which manifest this feature, obviously because of the folktale influence. This 'overcharacterization' tend to mar the story in the novel.

(ix) Nameless characters are also used in quite a number of historical novels. The advantage thereof is to spare the reader's memory and energy.

CHAPTER 5

5. CHARACTERIZATION DURING THE POST-HISTORICAL NOVEL PERIOD

It is generally agreed that Dhlomo is regarded as the pioneer or father of the social novel in Zulu literature. His first and the last attempt in this type of novel is Indlela Yababi. He took the lead and others followed. As already mentioned before, factors such as industrialization resulted in constant migration of people from rural areas to town and cities; not only mainly to seek employment but also to free themselves from, and as a means of escaping from the tyrannic outdated traditional bonds and customs which usurped and restricted their individuals freedom. Industrialization of the Blacks was not always a free and spontaneous phenomenon but rather a manifestation of apartheid laws which aimed at impoverishing the Blacks by dispossessing them of their fertile land (Gérard 1971:222-223). Urbanization in turn resulted in conflict and clashes between long established traditional beliefs and the way of life and western style of life. This conflict in turn created social and psychological adjustment problems on the part of the victims of such a process.

It is during this period in the Zulu novel that the Zulu novelist turned and focussed his attention to this type of social imbalance. As Ntuli points out, the writers, including the Zulu novelist, recorded this tendency of migrating

from rural areas to towns and cities, in order to warn the youth (as it was mostly them who migrated to cities) against the corrupt city life. In order to achieve the desired results, the novelist uses a character as his mouthpiece.

It is for this reason that we find the Zulu novelist using the so-called prodigal son theme. Some call it Jim-goes-to-Jo'burg theme because the city of Johannesburg is where most of the people moved to in order to seek employment as the mines and industries are concentrated around there.

Above all "writers regard themselves as the voice of the community" (Ntuli 1987:129). They therefore take it upon themselves to point out the wrongs perpetuated by members of the community (Ntuli 1987:129-130).

One other factor which prompted and promoted the concentration and development from the traditional and historical beliefs and customs towards the social and modern themes is the fact that the Zulu novelist wanted to interpret the problems of the time and he could disclose these problems through his characters. In other words, the novelist was responding to the demands of the time through his use of the mode of characterization. He was responding to the life as experienced in the unplanned urbanization.

Explaining this switch from rural life to urban life Gérard points out that,

If it is true that the past should form the background of African art, equally true is it that African art must deal with the things that are vital and near to the African to-day-the school, the church, the slums ..., Gérard 1971:229.

This then leads us to characterization in the social novel to which the Zulu novelist turned his attention after the historical novel era. For purposes of identification and this study the period is also called post-historical novel during which the attention of the Zulu novelist was mainly focussed on the social or psychological and acculturation novel. Some of the works written during this era of the novel, to name but a few, are **Mntanami! Mntanami!** **Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu** by Sibusiso Nyembezi; **Inkundu MaZulu** by Moses Ngcobo, **Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi** by Jordan Ngubane etc. For the purpose of our research **Indlela Yababi**, **Inkundu MaZulu** and **Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu** will be discussed in more detail. These works have been chosen in a random manner. The only criterion used is that they are classified as social novels and were written after the historical novel.

5.1 CHARACTERIZATION IN INDELELA YABABI

In the social novel, **Indlela Yababi** Dhlomo deals mainly with the life of "Delsie Moya's immoral love affair with Rev. Gwebu" (Ntuli - Limi 1968 p.29). Before their unexpected relationship is known to the community which they are serving, Delsie as a school teacher and Gwebu as a preacher and thus getting into trouble, the couple elopes to Johannesburg where they would be free from traditional and christian restrictions. They want to start a new life and enjoy their individual freedom. In Johannesburg they experience a new environment which demands of them a high degree of

social adjustment. Two characters from rural areas of Amanzimtoti and Siyamu are dumped in the slums of Johannesburg. They meet new people with different personalities and some with corrupt influences. Christian values and virtues come into loggerhead with corrupt and malicious practices. Rev. Gwebu eventually loses his life and Delsie is in the brink of death. She fortunately returns home repentant but having a grudge against her parents.

(i) **Delsie Moya**

Delsie Zenzele Moya grows up at Siyamu, a rural area near Pietermaritzburg. After completing her teacher's diploma she gets a teaching post at Amanzimtoti. Christian ideals have already been instilled in her.

At Amanzimtoti she falls in love with Rev. Gwebu. Their love affair results in some unfortunate mishap. As the place where they are staying is not permissive to such behaviour they decide to elope to Johannesburg where they would be free because the slum environment is permissive to all sorts of behaviour. Because of these two conflicting situations Delsie becomes so confused that she degenerates to a level of ordinary working or domestic class. Delsie eventually experiences the impact of two conflicting forces. On the one hand there is a conflict between rural life and urban life while on the other hand the conflict is between christian ideals and corrupt slum life.

After painful experiences she decides to give in to christian ideals which have been instilled in her by her parents and backed up by her friend, Nosimilo.

On closer examination of Delsie as a character the reader is immediately impressed by the fact that Dhlomo has succeeded in creating a lifelike and well motivated character.

First, the reader understands why Delsie, although she is brought up in a christian home, becomes so spoilt and is unable to handle her love affairs. Dhlomo points out clearly that whenever Delsie's mother, MaDutshwa attends church gatherings she leaves Delsie alone at home and thus exposed to mischief. She protects her if her father Moya scolds her for misbehaviour. Like teenagers in real life, Delsie becomes so mad with love for Rev. Gwebu that pleasure principles take precedence over reality principles. This is not uncommon with women in real life. It is also a fact of life that the influence of the mother on a girl has serious implications or impact on the girl's later life. So is MaDutshwa's influence on her daughter, Delsie. Dhlomo describes MaDutshwa in the following manner:-

UMoya lo mfazi wamthatha ngoba emthanda
kazazihlupha ngokuthi ungumhlobo muni nokuthi
yikholwa yini. Emthandela ubuhle nje bakhe eqonde
ukuba lapho evakashelwa izihlobo zibabaze lobu buhle,
(Indlela Yababi p.13).

Dhlomo goes on to say,

Sesibonile-ke ukuthi lapha ekhaya ubephathiswe
okweqanda ngunina. Etotoswa. Engakhuzwa.
Okukhulu kunalokho, engafundiswa nolunci ngunina
ngokugcina isimilo sakhe, (Indlela Yababi p.24).

In these excerpts Dhlomo motivates the reason for Delsie's immoral behaviour in her later life.

Critics make a distinction between developing a character so as to represent something or an impression and developing a character in order to present a particular individuality (Hawthorn 1985 p.48). In *Indlela Yababi* Dhlomo develops Delsie in order to represent something viz. that if children are poorly brought up they collapse or perish when they are faced with the challenges of adulthood and if their christian background is weak they easily succumb to corrupt and immoral influences.

Dhlomo has succeeded in enhancing his character, Delsie by making her part and parcel of her milieu, time and place. Delsie appears to be taken up during the sermon delivered by Rev. Gwebu. She befits the environment and the place where she is at the time. This is in fact an outside appearance; prima facie the impression given by Delsie's facial expression whereas in actual fact Delsie is taken up by love for Rev. Gwebu. Dhlomo

explains Delsie's behaviour as follows:

UDelsie Moya esekhamisile umlomo ebheke ngqo khona epulupiti lapho. Amehlo akhe kusengathi awomuntu owethukile osamangele. Bakubona lokho abantu, kodwa bacabanga ukuthi "izwi" limngene kakhulu ezibilini, (Indlela Yababi p.33).

Even when she comes to the slums of Johannesburg, Delsie behaves typically as a woman born and bred in slums. She fails to make up her mind i.e. which man she really loves. She falls in love with a number of men at one time. Delsie's immoral behaviour costs Gwebu his life. It is quite true that in certain novels some writers use some characters who seem far more independent of their history and surroundings than is normally the case in real life (Hawthorn 1985 p.48). But Dhlomo seems to have avoided and overcome this problem. He is able to make Delsie part of her environment in which she is at a particular time. Delsie, as in real life, is not strange to her time and surroundings.

Dhlomo has ably portrayed Delsie as a normal person. It is very normal for a woman to change a man's life. Dhlomo makes Delsie change Rev. Gwebu's life. Eventually his love for Delsie overpowers the christian ethics. He talks to himself:

Sekufika elinye icebo elisekela leli, elizomkhaphezela isibili phambili. Leli cebo lithi kuye: Hamba uyocela kuNkosikazi Thwala uthi umcela ukuba azokusiza namhlanje kusihlwa. Uthi kuNkosikazi Thwala umcela

ukuze nilungise futhi ngodaba lwamathikithi ezingane zesikole. Lo mcabango wamngoba uGwebu. Kanti sekuwukufa kwakhe lokho, (Indlela Yababi p.35).

Dhlomo uses the commonly called prodigal-son theme to instruct the public to guard against evil temptations and problems attached to the transition from rural to urban life with its complexities through the choice of a character, viz. Delsie. Of course, writers use different characters for different purposes. Delsie may not be exactly the same as the persons we know. The fact of the matter is that she need not necessarily be like one of us. As long as the character creates the impression for which it is intended, it does serve the purpose. That is why Hawthorn rightly points out that,

To say that there are different types of character is to say in effect that novelists use characters and character portrayals for a range of different purposes. This is why it is a mistake always to talk about characters in a novel as if they were real people ..., Hawthorn 1985:49.

One other important point about Dhlomo's characterization of Delsie Moya is that she is neither a whole flat character i.e. a simple character nor a totally round or complex character. The fact however, is that in Delsie's behaviour there is an element of surprise though it is revealed very late in her life i.e. towards the end of the story. Therefore Delsie may be classified as a complex character because in terms of Forster, Kenney and other critics it is not stated as to what stage this element of surprise should manifest itself.

The advantage about complex characters is that they are more lifelike (Kenny 1966 p.30). Lifelikeness in a created character shows a certain degree of relevance of the character to a story in fiction and a degree of higher achievement on the part of the novelist. That is why Kenney commends lifelikeness. He points out that,

We may conclude, then, that complexity of a character tends to produce lifelikeness in the work of fiction, Kenney 1966:30.

Delsie surprises the reader on two occasions. The first occasion of surprise is when Ben tries to propose love to her. In consistency with her behaviour we would have expected Delsie to easily fall for Ben at the first time he makes his advances. Contrary to that, Delsie bluntly tells Ben that men exploit women by praising them for their beauty and 'sing' the same song to all other women they meet. The conversation goes as follows:

Musa musa bo! Musa ukungikhohlisa, ukwenza kwenu lokho nina bantu besilisa lapho nibona umuntu wesifazana emuhle. Niye nicabange ukuthi niyamthanda ningephile ngaphandle kwakhe. Kanti uzonele asithele nje bebona omunye senisho njalo nakuye. Nidlala ngathi nisenza iziphukuphuku zenu, kanti nifuna ukusicekela phansi nje, (Indlela Yababi p.86).

These words surprise Ben:

Amethuse la mazwi uBen akade engawabhekile,

(Indlela Yababi p.86).

Towards the end of the story Delsie manifests the last straw of her surprise to the reader. Even her friend Nosimilo Dhlomo is surprised to learn that, all of a sudden, Delsie, immediately after her discharge from hospital, decides to go back home, at Siyamu and has decided to start a new life there. Nosimilo finds Delsie busy packing her belongings preparing for returning home. The conversation between the two women goes as follows:

Yini, Delsie? Kuyiwaphi? Usabuza? Ngiyakhwela namhlanje ntambama ngisaya ekhaya, kuphendula uDelsie.

Ungadabuki, Nosimilo, ngizimisele ukubuyela ekhaya ngiyiqala impilo entsha ongifundise yona lapha eGoli ngobuqotho bakho obungashintshiyo, (Indlela Yababi p.134).

The determination with which Delsie speaks to her friend, Nosimilo, is more than enough evidence to show that she is a round character. After such mishaps any intelligent human being would change her life style and return home like the biblical prodigal son. But this one is a 'prodigal daughter'. The way Dhlomo has portrayed Delsie is plausible as the actions which have led to her decision to go back home are well motivated and moreover her behaviour is consistent with her actions. Dhlomo has in Delsie been able to achieve a unified character and there is coherence in Delsie's actions right through the story. This is important as Kenney warns against complexity

achieved at the price of coherence. Equally important is the fact that even surprise must not arise from a violation of plausibility, (Kenney 1966:29).

Dhlomo has succeeded in Delsie to portray a complex and unified character. In the novel critics usually have, amongst other things, two important expectations in their minds, i.e. the demand for complexity and the demand for unity (Kenney 1996 p.31). Considering the time when *Indlela Yababi* was written Dhlomo can be commended on the portrayal of Delsie Moya as discussed above. Though it is not implied that Delsie is a perfect character she does form part of the artistic gestalt or the whole of the story. As a matter of fact we cannot expect Delsie to be exactly like an ordinary human being because even human beings are not exactly the same. What is important in character creation is the fact that a character is used for a specific purpose in a novel. Fictional characters are therefore not human beings. That is why Hawthorn warns that,

This is why it is a mistake always to talk about characters in a novel as if they were real people ..., Hawthorn 1987:49.

(ii) **Rev. Gwebu**

In comparison with Delsie's portrayal which seems to be of higher achievement, Rev. Gwebu's portrayal seems to be of lower achievement.

Dhlomo does not tell the reader about Gwebu's home background. Perhaps he relies on the assumption that by virtue of his occupation the reader will be satisfied that he has had training in his job. We meet him when he is twenty years of age. It is not indicated as to why and how he has decided to become a priest. For a fact Gwebu must have met other beautiful women in the church besides Delsie Moya. We are surprised when gwebu, all of a sudden, becomes crazy when he meets Delsie. It is this type of surprise that Kenney criticizes i.e. surprise which arises from a violation of plausibility. All along Rev. Gwebu has been known as a person who does not care so much about women. Instead of fearing God Gwebu fears what people are going to say if he falls in love with Delsie (Indlela Yababi pp.34-35). Dhlomo portrays Rev. Gwebu as a morally and intellectually weak person.

The lack of background information in respect of a character does affect characterization. If Gwebu is confronted by spiritual problems i.e. the conflict between christian ideals and worldly temptations he does not behave as a character with a strong moral background. He easily yields to immoral temptations. He behaves like a dupe. He fails to understand Delsie's behaviour viz. that Delsie, because of her poor upbringing, is not a type of woman who could be expected to marry a priest. Even in Johannesburg he never attend any church service as Delsie does. The lack of good moral background manifests itself when he easily succumbs to

corrupt life led in slum areas of Johannesburg. This eventually costs him his life. In other words, he becomes the victim of the circumstances. There is no consistency in Gwebu's behaviour. If there was any, he would one day have gone to attend a church service or speak about the word of God. From priesthood he simply lapses into corruption of the slum influences.

On closer examination, Gwebu's behaviour seems very inconsistent with his theological training and the picture he has always been portraying to his congregation. But of course, some critics object to the too-much demand of consistency in a fictional character. They argue that even human beings often act inconsistently. Therefore there is no reason to always demand unity of fictional characters. Kenney arguing this point, points out that,

The apparent inconsistencies of human behaviour may simply indicate the limits of our knowledge of ourselves and others, Kenney 1966:31.

In other words, some readers would accept the inconsistency shown by Gwebu's behaviour. But viewed from another angle, Gwebu's behaviour is not believable - this all - of - sudden change - which is why some critics argue that change or roundness of a character must not be achieved at the expense of and must not be allowed to violate the principle of plausibility.

Critical analysis of the mode of characterization in Indlela Yababi shows that

Dhlomo moves a step forward from historical to real fictional characters. It is also important to note that Dhlomo's characters have been influenced by such factors as christianization and urbanization. Their behaviour and personalities are mostly characterized by direct conflict between christian ideals and worldly needs and also by the clash between orderly rural life style and chaotic urban life. Further more, it would appear that Dhlomo's mode of characterization aims at warning parents as to how they should bring up their children. At the same time he is warning the youth against corrupt urban life. By way of summary we can do no more than agreeing with Ntuli who rightly points out that Dhlomo,

The writer is successful in portraying his characters objectively as human beings, (Limi, June 1968:29).

5.2 CONVENTIONAL CHARACTERIZATION METHODS USED BY DHLOMO

Descriptive method

In *Indlela Yababi* Dhlomo also uses the conventional methods of characterization but differs from the other novelists already discussed above in the sense that he has shown a higher achievement of complexity, motivation and plausibility in some of his characters like Delsie Moya, than, for instance, novels which belong to the historical era of his time. But he seems to excel in using the descriptive technique. Dhlomo introduces his

main character in the exposition. Before he engages his main character in action or dialogue he prepares the reader by giving description of that character. This technique reduces speculation about the character as to how he looks like. It also forewarns the reader as to what kind of person he is reading about. At the same time this technique increases the reader's imagination about the character. It is also economical and time saving as the writer does not have to take a roundabout manner in revealing the character through the action or dialogue as the story develops. The reader spares his time and concentrates on other important elements of the story rather than trying to make an image of the character he is reading about. The argument of using the descriptive method of character portrayal may be supported by Shiack's contention that,

In this way, the reader's understanding of the character's role in the events of a story is developed from what the author has already revealed about the person in this character description, Shiack 1984:51.

In *Indlela Yababi Dhlomo*, from the outset, gears up the reader's expectations for the understanding of Delsie Moya's behaviour by giving the reader the latter's physical description. Physical traits of a person have some psychological relationship with the individual's behaviour. Once the reader has read about Delsie's physical features he knows, more or less, what to expect of her later behaviour. Dhlomo portrays Delsie as a very beautiful young woman. And given the environmental circumstances

surrounding Delsie, especially her mother's influence, the reader already formulates her picture about Delsie. Beauty and corrupt environment usually do not produce a well behaved woman.

Dhlomo describes Delsie as follows:

Ngale nkathi wayesentangeni yeminyaka eyishumi neminyaka eyisishiyagalolunye ubudala, engemude futhi engemfushane. Ephakathi nje. Isigqigqi sentombi enomzimba ogcweleyo ofana nokanina. Nakuye futhi uDelsie njengakunina into eyayifike idonse amehlo, amehlo akhe. Awakhe ayedlulisile kwakanina, emakhulu ethe bha. Kuhleke wona kuqala amehlo ubuso busathule. Amehlo amangalisayo akhe kwakungamehlo akhomba phakathi enhliziyweni yakhe. Amehlo akhulumayo, amehlo abizayo lapho esethandile; akhuze, asole, ancenge lapho kusafanele, (Indlela Yababi p.16).

It must, however, be pointed out that Dhlomo almost spoils such good description when he starts preaching or sermonizing and telling the reader instead of allowing the reader to make up his own opinion about the character. This is dangerous because the novelist may end up telling the reader how he should understand and interpret the character. By so doing the novelist underrates the aesthetic and intellectual ability of the reader. To illustrate the above statement Dhlomo says:

Abantu abanamehlo anjalo bavamile ukuba abantu abanezimilo ezijulileyo. Okuthi lapho benezimilo ezinhle babe abantu abathembekile nabaqotho. Kodwa uma engenaso isimilo esihle aphelele ebubini, abemubi

ngokwempela.

Fundisa umntwana esemncane indlela okufanele ahambe ngayo; kuyothi lapho esekhulile angaphambuki kuyo, kwasho uSolomon kaDavid, (Indlela Yababi p.16).

Such sermonizing blurs the good intentions of the novelist, for the reader does not just read but he is constantly evaluating and comparing. He longs to see what will become of the character in the end. Therefore by telling him, the novelist reduces the reader's interest and curiosity, which are essential for the reader. Otherwise Dhlomo succeeds in using the descriptive method; the advantages of which were discussed earlier on in this study.

5.3 CHARACTERIZATION IN INKUNGU MAZULU

In *Inkundu MaZulu* Ngcobo tells a story of the rise and fall of the Clermont community leader, Fanyana Mthimkhulu. He grows up as an orphan. He inherits his father's wealth, a butchery and a shop. Because of his too much involvement in the community affairs and its development he neglects his own businesses. As a result thereof he takes advantage of the semi-literate community. He eventually becomes a rogue of the highest order. He resorts to stealing other businessmen's properties and sells same to the owners. He also takes advantage of the climatic conditions - the rainy days accompanied by fog. He warns the community not to be outdoors when

there is fog as it is dangerous. In short he abuses his position of trust. Eventually he is caught red-handed breaking into Mrs Dube's shop by a group of men led by Messrs Gumede and Mdunge. Fanyana and his gang end up in gallows, (Inkundu MaZulu pp.319-324).

Before going into details with the discussion of individual characters it may be mentioned from the outset that Ngcobo's mode of characterization has been, amongst other things, influenced by factors such as traditional and superstitious beliefs, and westernization. In contradistinction with Indlela Yababi, where christianization and urbanization have played a significant role in characterization, in *Inkundu MaZulu* westernization has played a major role in characterization. Over and above these, Ngcobo displays a sense of humour and general observation of human behaviour. In his discussion of this social novel Ntuli has noted that,

Ngcobo combines a strong sense of humour with a very keen sense of observation, (Limi, Jan 1966:26).

Ntuli, however, warns that,

... Ngcobo's chief weakness is in making his characters to be caricatures rather than human beings, (Limi, Jan 1966:25).

Be it as it may, the characters must serve to create a certain impression on

the mind of the reader. Moreover, the critic must take cognisance of the fact that the character; simple or flat; or complex or round must form part of the artistic whole. In other words, different types of characters must fulfil certain roles in a novel. We may therefore argue that the simplicity of character cannot always be viewed as a sign of weakness on the part of the novelist. Moreover, if we consider the fact that a novel must, amongst other things, fulfil the functions of entertaining, instructing etc. Therefore caricatures like characters such as Chonco, Mtshali (Inkungu MaZulu p.16) are chosen by Ngcobo in order to highlight Fanyana's position as it will be shown under the discussion of individual characters.

5.4 DISCUSSION OF INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERS

Fanyana Mthimkhulu and members of Izakhamkhaya

In his exposition Ngcobo gives a detailed description of the members of the committee of "iZakhamkhaya". This is a committee or association of businessmen at Clermont. Amongst the prominent members are Mr Mazibuko (Chairman) who is later succeeded by Fanyana who eventually turns out to be a scoundrelous rogue Messrs Mtshali, Gumede, Chonco, Mbulawa etc. are simple characters. At their first meeting Ngcobo portrays them as follows:

Eceleni kukaMbulawa kwakuhlezi uMtshali. Lo mnumzane wayenomkhaba omkhulu. Abanye abantu babethi uyamgulisa, ugcwele amanzi. Babethi bangambona ehamba kude abantu abamzondayo bammemeze bembuza bethi: Uthweleni na? ... Yini leyo oyiqhuba ngaphambili na? (Inkungu MaZulu p16).

Describing Gumede Ngcobo says,

UMazibuko wawedlulisa amehlo akhe kuMtshali wabuka uGumede. Wanikina ikhanda kancane uMazibuko sengathi kukhona okungamenelisi esimweni sikaGumede. Wayenezingxavula zamazinyo. Amazinyo amane angaphambili emhlathini ongaphezulu ayexega. Wayehlala ephunga izimpukane. Eceleni kukaGumede kwakuhlezi into kaChonco. Lo mnumzane wayethi angahlala phansi azunywe ubuthongo. Nalapha wayeseshisa okudala ezibangela umsindo izakhamkhaya ngokuhona, (Inkungu MaZulu p16).

In comparison with modern meetings, the meeting comprising the abovementioned characters Ntuli is quite correct in labelling Mtshali and others as caricatures for it is important that characters be credible and that the dialogue they engage in be true to life (Limi, June 1970:4). This meeting of iZakhamkhaya sounds like a circus and the characters do not behave in the manner befitting human beings, especially businessmen. It becomes very difficult for the reader to identify himself with these characters. Having said that, we must, however, view these characters from another angle. Ngcobo here displays a high degree of skill in using the descriptive method. After all one of the important functions of a story in a

novel is to entertain i.e. to read for pleasure. Entertainment is brought about by the use of characters. Of course we are mindful of the fact that the impact of entertainment will vary from reader to reader and moreover as much as they are not credible and true to life, they do serve a specific purpose in the novel viz. to illuminate Fanyana's position who takes advantage of 'these caricatures'.

(a) **Sense of humour**

In spite of the fact that Ngcobo's characters appear to be caricatures sometimes Ngcobo makes them very interesting to the reader by making use of a strong sense of humour which he combines with a keen sense of observation. This device helps to reveal the type of person the character is, without having to describe him; a factor which may make the reader bored. A good example of this sense of humour is displayed when Malinga talks to his son after the destruction of his house and loss of his cattle:-

Idilikile indlu mntanami, kuchaza uMalinga. Ngunyoko lona othe masibethele amasaka okunokuba siyolala kwaBiyela. Ziphi izinkomo Khehla?

Kangiziboni baba, kuphendula uZakhele. Ufanele ukungaziboni Khehla, kusho uMalinga. Kukhona izinkomo yini lapha? Uma ungazitholanga izinkomo ithi kawuzitholanga. Ungasho kuthi kawuziboni sengathi mina bengikubuze ukuthi uyazibona yini izinkomo, (Inkundu MaZulu p.71).

Prima facie Malinga appears to be a dupe but there is a deeper meaning which is manifest by his behaviour. Sounding like a joke as it is, Malinga shows a great sense of pride like most Zulu men when he prefers to sleep in a shack to going to sleep at his in-laws. Malinga's words even after his cattle have been stolen, show that he is an emotionally strong man who can contain problems which are adverse to the extreme. A person with a weak psychological make-up would have been emotionally destroyed after all these problems had happened to him.

Another illustration of a keen sense of observation is witnessed at the meeting of iZakhamkhaya where Cele looks at his white suit which has a lot of patches on it as if he were saying his suit would be very nice if it were not for these patches:

Eceleni kwakhe kwakuhlezi uCele; egqoke lona isudi lakhe elimhlophe. Wayede ebuka izichibi zalo sengathi uthi ngenhliziyo: Lalilihle isudi lami loniwa yilokhu nalokhu, esho izichibi zalo, (Inkungu MaZulu p.22).

(b) The western concept of a meeting

Ngcobo has revealed some of his characters by making use of the western concept of conducting a meeting. Unlike in the historical era where there is no elected chairperson or secretary, and where the

chief or king was the only chairperson, in Inkungu MaZulu Ngcobo reveals some of his characters, viz. Mazibuko as the chairperson; a factor which shows that he is westernized. He opens the meeting of the committee of "iZakhamkhaya" with a prayer. The minutes of the previous meeting are read, etc. This shows some development in the mode of characterization in the Zulu novel.

(c) The use of ancestor belief and superstition - Fanyana

Fanyana who is the main character in the story takes advantage of the ignorance of the community. He is eventually appointed the chairperson of iZakhamkhaya. He succeeds Mazibuko in this capacity. He becomes so involved in the community activities that he neglects his own business. He thinks of survival techniques. He resorts to using ancestor beliefs and superstitions. Fanyana asks his two shop assistants, Qanjana and Muziwakhe, to accompany him to commit theft acts under the guise of the fog. He promises them shares in his businesses. He instils fear in them by exploiting them through ancestor belief. He warns them that his late grandfather sees everything where he is. Therefore they must keep everything they do as a secret. He informs the two boys that if one of them 'lies' he will suffer serious misfortunes while he is still alive in this world and these misfortunes will follow him even after his death. He will grope in

darkness of the 'dead' and will not succeed to see the world of the ancestors. In the grave he will be bitten by wild animals until he wishes to die for the second time. After a lengthy conversation with the two boys Fanyana intimidates them as follows:-

Uma kwenzekile kwaba khona okhuluma amanga phakathi kwabo uyolandelwa ngamashwa eselapha emhlabeni ahlezi kuwo aze amlandele esafa. Uyoduka ebumnyameni bethuna angaphumeleli ukuza kwelethu labaphansi. Ethuneni uyolunywa yizo zonke izilwane ezilumayo ... aze afise ukufa okwesibili kodwa lutho angafi, ..., (Inkungu MaZulu pp.31-32).

Through this conversation Ngcobo reveals what type of a person Fanyana is. The reader need not be told that Fanyana is a rogue who is merciless and a cheater. The use of the ancestor belief as a characterization device shows us that no matter how advanced a writer may be, he sometimes reverts or regresses to his traditional background in portraying his characters. This argument is supported by Iyasere's observation who rightly points out that,

The modern African writer is to his indigenous oral tradition as a snail is to its shell. Even in a foreign habitat, a snail never leaves its shell behind. (The Journal of Modern African Studies, 13, 1 (1975), pp.107).

Also noticeable in Ngcobo's mode of characterization is the fact that some of his characters' behaviour is well motivated. As already mentioned, well motivated characters become credible and true to life, and to the reader. A case in point is that of Fanyana. Ngcobo does give reasons as to why Fanyana, a community leader has to resort to stealing and murdering innocent people. Ngcobo says:-

Kule minyaka emine akekho owake wathi
makasuswe uFanyana esihlalweni kubekwe
omunye. Wayengasayinakile imisebenzi
yakhe; selike lishone ilanga engazange
angene esitolo noma esilaheni sakhe. Imali
ayithole ngokuthengisa wayeyibala mhla
ekhona; mhlazane engekho yayilala khona
emisebenzini yakhe, (Inkungu MaZulu p).

This is the reason why Fanyana has to resort to malpractices especially because of the fear of losing respect from his fellow businessmen. If the committee of "iZakhamkhaya" would realize that his businesses were already doomed to failure they would have replaced him as chairman of "iZakhamkhaya". Broadly speaking, Ngcobo portrays Fanyana as a product of the time and the changing economic circumstances.

Ngcobo further portrays Fanyana's behaviour as crooks we meet in our daily life. Once a person indulges in corruption in his community he tries to be in all leadership positions in order to hide his atrocities

so that he is kept informed of any developments which may disclose such atrocities. So it is the case with Fanyana. He occupies quite a number of leadership positions in Clermont. Ngcobo describes Fanyana's behaviour in these words:

Wayengakaze acabange ukuthi likhona
ilanga eliyoba isilima kubona babanjwe.
Wayesezengamele zonke izinhlango
zase-Clermont, eseneqiniso lokuthi
kawukho umhlango oyohlangana yena
engekho, (Inkungu MaZulu p.320).

(d) **Physical and mental development**

Unlike in some historical era novels where the novelist does not tell the reader about the physical development of the main character, viz. in *UDingane*, Ngcobo, in *Inkungu MaZulu* first introduces Fanyana as a young man who is well-to-do because of the inheritance from his late father. His father dies before his grandfather, "iNduna" dies. Fanyana works very hard and owns a shop and a butchery. Eventually he becomes a mature man and he marries Gumede's daughter. Besides this physical development the reader notices intellectual development in Fanyana as a character. Assisted by education, he rises to the position of chairperson of "iZakhamkhaya". He is eventually entrusted with other many leadership positions in the community viz. chairman of the school committee etc. Fanyana

changes with the chaining circumstances. Unfortunately he does not only change for the better but for the worse viz. he becomes a killer and a thief.

On closer examination, Fanyana seems to be a very interesting character as he appears to be a many-faceted character. He shows different dimensions of his personality. Sometimes he is a kind hearted character and at other times a murderer. The spectrum between kind heartedness and a murderer makes him quite a complex character. While we say that he is an interesting character we are mindful of that fact that some critics maintain that to say that a character is interesting is too general to define. However, there is a divergence of opinion in this regard because some critics believe that there are characters which are said to be interesting. Grappling with this problem Shiach has this to say:-

Another common criterion by which readers judge a book is whether it has interesting characters. What exactly makes for interesting characters in a novel is hard to define. Undoubtedly, in order to be entertained by a book or aroused emotionally it is usually necessary to find the characters convincing and, to an extent, to identify with them, (Shiach 1984:51) .

(e) Naming as a characterization technique

As already pointed out in this study, naming is a common and simple mode of characterization. It is either used as a method of identification or to indicate some sort of relationship between the name and the character i.e. his physical stature or behaviour. The latter approach is usually used by writers of the historical novels where, for example, we find names such as Bhekifa, Dingane, Cetshwayo, etc. In the social novel i.e. post-historical era names are usually used for identification of certain individuals. Ngcobo falls under this era. He uses names for identification purposes only. There is no relationship, for instance between the name Fanyana and his behaviour or some indication of his parents' future expectancies.

Another aspect to be pointed out regarding naming as characterization device is the fact that in comparison with the historical novel, such as *Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa*, where the writer uses rather too many characters or names; a factor which mars the story, during the era of the social novel the writers have decreased the number of characters to only essential number for the development of the plot or story.

5.5 SUMMARY

By way of summary it may be pointed out that although most of the characters in *Inkungu MaZulu* may appear to be puppets or caricatures:

- (i) they do serve a specific purpose or create the desired impression in the development of the story. If Messrs Mtshali, Gumede, Chonco and others were as intelligent as Fanyana is, the latter would not have become what he is. He would have not taken advantage of their naivety and illiteracy. The true personality and behaviour of Fanyana would have not come to the fore. Therefore it must be accepted that some characters are there for the sake of the development of the plot and the protagonist.
- (ii) One other factor that must be taken into account when analysing characters is the fact that fictional characters are not exactly the same as real human beings we meet in our everyday life. That is why Hawthorn points out that,

... we may realize that characters in novels aren't quite like real people, Hawthorn 1987:47.

- (iii) Characters must be viewed as a part of the whole novel. Some

characters like Chonco, Mtshali and others are there to entertain the reader. Besides school children who read for examination purposes, people also read for pleasure.

(iv) In *Inkundu MaZulu* quite a number of characters are seen to be simple. Some writers create simple characters in order to easily attain consistency which is also important in the art of characterization. Some readers, of course, object to simple characters because they believe that the lack of complexity in a character violates their sense of human personality, (Kenney 1966 p.32).

(v) In *Inkundu MaZulu* Ngcobo has been successful in showing physical as well as intellectual development of his main character, viz. Fanyana.

(vi) In some instances Ngcobo has regressed to the traditional and ancestor beliefs era in creating his characters. He makes a success of this technique.

5.6 CHARACTERIZATION IN INKINSELA YASEMGUNGUNDLOVU BY SIBUSISO NYEMBEZI

In our introductory remarks under the social novel or post-historical literary

era mention is made of the fact that the social novel arose as a result of such factors as urbanization, industrialization, apartheid policies of the government of the day etc. In simple terms this means that Blacks had to leave rural areas and seek a better living in urban areas. In other words, socio-economic needs compelled Blacks to abandon rural and traditional ways of life. They were now exposed to new or western ways of life. The new ways of life compelled them to change their behaviour and respond to the new demands of such life.

In the light of the above exposition *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu*, and even *Inkungu MaZulu* may, *prima facie*, seem inappropriate to classify under the category discussed above. But on closer examination and looking right deep in Ndebenkulu and Fanyana's behaviour one will understand the reasons behind Fanyana's behaviour in *Inkungu MaZulu* and Ndebenkulu's behaviour.

In these two instances the main character does not leave the rural areas and go to seek work in the cities. Instead we see the reversal of the usual "Jim-goes-to-Jo'burg" theme which is popular in the Zulu social novel like *Indlela Yababi* by Dhlomo *Mntanami!* *Mntanami!* by Nyembezi. But the fact of the matter is that Ndebenkulu finds himself in an urbanized situation. How and when he comes there, is not important. Of importance is the fact that Ndebenkulu lands in Pietermaritzburg, an urbanized area where western life prevails; western life with its complexities and its atrocities and where the elements of hooliganism prevail. As a Black man he cannot adjust to the

demands of city life. He therefore resorts to unscrupulous methods of earning a living. So is Fanyana in *Inkungu MaZulu*. This failure to adjust to the demands of urban life on the part of Ndebenkulu is a direct legacy of unplanned urbanization and westernization, i.e. when a man finds himself in a strange situation but compelled to earn a living by whatever odds means at his disposal. A situation for which a person is not equipped usually results in a conflict of cultures and the victims are disillusioned. Persons in such situations usually either exploit their own people in that particular place e.g. Fanyana or they direct their dissolution onto their fellowmen by exploiting them so that they might elevate themselves to tycoons - Ndebenkulu. We must therefore understand Ndebenkulu in this light.

In *INKinsela YaseMgungundlovu* Nyembezi portrays Ndebenkulu, the main character, as a rogue of the highest order. Ndebenkulu in the letter he writes to Mkhwanazi, gives the impression that he lives in Pietermaritzburg and he expresses a wish to visit Nyanyadu, a rural area of Dundee. On his arrival at the Mkhwanazi's it transpires that Ndebenkulu wants to "help" the poor people of Nyanyadu by getting high prices for their "redundant" cattle at auction sales. When Ndebenkulu falls from the horse cart he complains bitterly about his torn expensive clothes. He boasts of his hat which cost him ten pounds and his status by which he is addressed by the "white men" - and not the "ordinary white men". After he has quarrelled with MaNtuli he threatens Mkhwanazi with a law suit. He is eventually arrested by police

after being identified by a woman whose son was also Ndebenkulu's victim.

(i) **Ndebenkulu**

(a) Factors such as industrialization, urbanization and westernization did not only result in Blacks migrating to towns and cities but also in acquiring the so-called western civilization.

(b) This in turn resulted in sharp conflict with traditional habits. Nyembezi makes use of this device in the portrayal of Ndebenkulu's character. Ndebenkulu who is 'westernized' and very conscious of the time factor complains to Mkhwanazi as only a few people turn up at 10h00 scheduled for the meeting, on the one hand. On the other hand rural people are not worried. They are coming in dribs and drabs - leisurely. Time is not their concern. In their conversation with Mkhwanazi, Ndebenkulu complains:-

Kusobala Mkhwanazi ukuthi
nisengabantu basemakhaya
impela. Isikhathi lesi
anikasazi kahle, (Inkinsela
YaseMgungundlovu p.75).

Mkhwanazi replies Ndebenkulu in an apologetic and humble manner accompanied with his keen sense of humour:

Lokho phela kwenza ngoba
abanye abantu abanawo
namawashi ... Babheka
ilanga. Abanye njalo banawo
kodwa azihambela ukuthanda.
Kuye kuthi lapho limile
umuntu alisuse nje
ngekhanda, kungamkhathazi
neze lokho, (Inkinsela
YaseMgungundlovu p.75).

Ndebenkulu emphasizes his dissatisfaction about the people not turning up in time for the meeting:

Kanti kulezi zinsuku
zanamuhla isikhathi yinto
ebaluleke kakhulu.
Akaphucukile Mkhwanazi
umuntu ongasazi isikhathi;
cha akaphucukile, (Inkinsela
YaseMgungundlovu p.76).

While Mkhwanazi is discussing the problem of not keeping time with Ndebenkulu a nameless old man overhears them but wants to confirm Ndebenkulu's complaint with a young man seated next to him:

Uthi abantu abangagcini

isikhathi abaphucukile?
Kusho ikhehla liphinda
amagama sengathi lifuna
ukuqiniseka ukuthi lizwe
kahle, (Inkinsela
YaseMgungundlovu p.76).

The young man replies impatiently:

Yebo, usho njalo.

The old man replies with a great surprise:

Abantu laba sebaphenduka
abelungu, ngiyifung' iNkosi
iseNkandla.

The situation gets worse when the nameless old man spits on the floor and rubs off the saliva with his foot. Ndebenkulu does not understand this type of behaviour. He contemptuously remarks at this old man's behaviour:

Kusekude phambili.

The nameless old man does not see anything wrong with what he has done. He questioningly asks the young man:

Konje akwenziwa lokho
ezifundisweni? Lokhu phela
ngiwahlikihla ngonyawo
amathe lawa, angwayeki nje,
(Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu
p.77).

Nyembezi, with these two conflicting cultures is successful in portraying Ndebenkulu as a "westernized" and "civilized" person. Ndebenkulu is a symbol of western culture while this nameless old man is a symbol of the "uneducated". According to Ndebenkulu in western culture time is of essence so much that its exponents have even created an instrument to measure it. Spitting on the floor, according to western culture, is looked down upon and regarded as unhygienic and barbaric. In traditional circles there seems to be nothing wrong with the above behaviour (this is no longer the case). That is why the old man does not see anything wrong with spitting on the floor nor is the time factor of any essence or consequence to him. This argument therefore emphasizes the factor of conflicting cultures as an important device of characterization during the social novel era. Stated differently, the conflict between cultures is:

- (a) the underlying factor in this instance.

Konje akwenziwa lokho
ezifundisweni? Lokhu phela
ngiwahlikihla ngonyawo
amathe lawa, angiwayeki nje,
(Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu
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- (a) the underlying factor in this instance.

- (b) the principle of virtues and values plays a very important role in the social novel. In his contribution entitled "Race and Literature" Ntuli explicitly points out that,

Although we have books written for mere entertainment, most of them aim at inculcating high moral values. The writers emphasize the importance of the virtues of honesty, perseverance, diligence and fidelity. The quality of life of any community depends to a large extent on the moral integrity of individuals, Ntuli 1987:132.

Nyembezi has used Ndebenkulu to highlight the importance of the Zulu traditional values and virtues. Nyembezi has a clever way of exploiting this device. He tries to show that the non-existent of virtues of honesty and trustworthiness is punishable. For example Ndebenkulu, in spite of all his efforts, he is eventually arrested for dishonesty and cheating innocent, rural people. With Ndebenkulu, Nyembezi shows how urban and westernized life can corrupt a man. In trying to adjust and equate himself with the white, he uses corrupt means of enriching himself at the expense of unwesternized innocent

people. Ndebenkulu is portrayed as a crook and a dishonest rogue who has no traditional scruples.

- (c) Besides the above two methods of characterization which show a remarkable development from previous works viz. the pre-historical and historical novel, Nyembezi employs the two conventional methods but in an advanced manner. The two methods of characterization referred hereto are the dramatic. As mentioned before these "two basic types of textual indicators of character" differ in the purpose for which they are used by the novelist but they can both present a character. Shlomith, differentiates between the two methods in very simple terms. He states that in direct presentation of the textual indicators of a character the novelist may simply name the character's traits by an adjective e.g. like saying a character was good-hearted, (Shlomith 1983 p.59).

In spite of the advantages of direct characterization the latter writer warns against excessive use of this method viz. direct definition:

Definition is akin to generalization and conceptualization. It is also both explicit and supra-temporal. Consequently, its dominance in a given text is liable to produce a rational, authoritative and static impression, Shlomith 1983:60.

It is, however, important to point out that dogmatic use of one method does not any longer produce good results of characterization.

The problem of generalization and production of static impressions may be alleviated by combining it together with other methods of characterization. This is precisely what Nyembezi has done in creating his characters. He has employed quite a number of techniques and factors which influence characterization today. He uses dramatic as well as discursive and other factors which enhance his standard of characterization. In comparison with the pre-historical and/or even the historical literary era in Zulu it is found that works written during post-historical era combine a variety of methods of characterization. Of course, during the former era writers show a dogmatic obsession to the use of the direct method of characterization. There is therefore some truth in Shlomith's contention that,

In the early period of the novel, roughly until the end of the last century, when the human personality was grasped as a combination of qualities shared by many people, the generalizing, classificatory nature of definition was considered an asset, Shlomith 1983:60.

This tendency is also found in the Zulu novel. Nyembezi and others

have now moved a step forward. We may therefore safely say that the economical feature of definition and its capacity to guide the reader's response recommended it to traditional novelists.

Let us now consider Nyembezi's use of both methods i.e. direct presentation as well as indirect presentation of his characters.

Nyembezi makes use of a good combination of sarcasm, boastfulness and arrogance in revealing Ndebenkulu's personality. He does not tell his readers that Ndebenkulu is a boastful person nor does he tell them that the latter is a hooligan. All this is revealed as the plot develops and unfolds. When Ndebenkulu and Themba, Mkhwanazi's son meet for the first time on Ndebenkulu's arrival at Tayside they discuss a number of issues on their way to Nyanyadu. In their conversation Ndebenkulu reveals to Themba how important he is and that the latter are fortunate to be visited by him as he (Ndebenkulu) usually visits important places; not places like Nyanyadu. The way he talks i.e. unusual style, mannerism, boastfulness all reveal Ndebenkulu's personality. Ndebenkulu's behaviour is also prompted by Themba's lot of sarcasm. Ndebenkulu's arrogance and style are also shown by his deliberate repetition of words. Their conversation goes as follows:

Nami ngiyathokoza Mkhwanazi ukuba
kengifike kule ndawo yakini ebengilokhu

ngiyizwa ngendaba. Impela ngiyathokoza.
Kuyinhlanhla lokho kule ndawo yakini
ngoba angikwejwayele mina ukuhambela
izindawo ezincane. Kuyinhlanhla enkulu,
(Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu p.23).

As the conversation goes on, Themba continues to taunt Ndebenkulu with his sarcasm:

Yikho lokho engikushoyo nami Mnumzane
ukuthi siyajabula ukuba kesihanjelwe
ngumuntu omkhulu onjengawe, uke
uzosibona kuwo amaphandle lana akithi.
Konje uMnumzane umsebenzi wakhe yini?
(Inkinsela p.24).

On hearing these words Ndebenkulu smiles at the "ignorance" of this young man and rolls his moustaches - this young man who does not know anything about his reputation:

Kusobala ukuthi aniwatholi lapha
amaphephandaba aphambili ngoba ukuba
niyawathola ngabe awungibuzi.
Angisiyena mina umuntu ongathi
uyasebenza ngoba angisebenzi mlungu....
ehhe ozimele. Kulokho-ke ngasizwa
yimfundo yami ephakeme, ehhe ephakeme,
(Inkinsela p.24).

From this conversation the reader is not tempted to use generalization nor does he become authoritative as it would have been the case with the direct presentation of character, but it is through utterances,

the way he talks i.e. stressing and his repetition of certain words in his speech that Ndebenkulu shows the reader what kind of character he is. As mentioned earlier on, the dramatic method representation instead of mentioning a trait or traits, it displays and exemplifies it or them in various ways. Some of these methods, *inter alia*, are revelation of traits or behaviour by means of action, external appearance and speech (Shlomith pp.61-65). Nyembezi does not tell or qualify Ndebenkulu in certain adjectives but it is the reader himself who forms his own opinion about Ndebenkulu as an arrogant, boastful, having contemptuous attitude upon rural people. He boasts of his 'high education' and that he does not work for anybody. Luckily Themba seems to doubt all these attributes. In other words, a character's utterances i.e. his speech can reveal what type of a character he is. That is why Shlomith contends that,

A character's speech, whether in conversation or as a silent activity of the mind can be indicative of a trait or traits both through its content and through its form, Shlomith 1983:63.

The content of Ndebenkulu's speech and boastfulness go a long way in the reader's mind. Ndebenkulu intentionally or unintentionally exposes himself to the intelligent reader. Nyembezi uses Ndebenkulu's "external appearance" (Shlomith, 1983:65) as a factor

in character drawing of the latter. External appearance includes, among other things, clothes that the character wears, what he carries with him like a suitcase etc. Some critics even include physical features such as facial structure etc. The theory of external appearance popularly used by Lavater, a Swiss philosopher and theologian and his theory called physiognomy was believed to have a connection with a pseudo-scientific status. Lavater believed that there was a necessary and direct connection between facial features and personality traits. Although this theory was applauded in the nineteenth-century, it was later discredited. But one is inclined to argue that even in this century our Zulu novelists and novelists in other languages still use this theory in their character drawing. For example, Nyembezi still makes use of this theory to enhance his mode of characterization. We find Ndebenkulu boasting of his expensive hat, his expensive suitcase for which he paid ten pounds. Describing his suitcase Ndebenkulu says:

Uyabona Mkhwanazi, njengoba sengishilo
ngabe ngize ngemoto yami. Le potimende
lena uyibona nje ngayikhokhela ishumi
lopondo phansi ... Ngakhipha amaphepha
amabili aluhlaza cwe akwaze kwabuya
shintshi. Ngisho nabeLungu abamhlophe
imbala, ababaningi abanayo lena enje;
ababaningi, (Inkinsela p.27).

Coupled with his "expensive possessions" Ndebenkulu is a tall dark

and rough-faced man:

UMnumzane Ndebenkulu lona ngumuntu
olishiyile igade. Ibala lakhe liluhlaza.
Ubuso lobu bumaholo, abulolongekile.
Umlomo wakhe ungathi ucijile.
Wayegqoke impahla ebukeka kuyimpahla
yemali, kusukela esigqokweni ekhanda
kuyosho phansi onyaweni, (Inkinsela p.24).

Even without training in psycho-analysis, it is common knowledge that human beings with such physical features like Ndebenkulu's are usually hooligans. To add on this, persons wearing unnecessarily expensive clothes usually hide something in their personalities. It is usually something negative. Through his keen sense of observation Nyembezi has been successful in portraying Ndebenkulu as a suspicious and untrustworthy character. We are therefore inclined to agree with the view that,

... even in our century, when the scientific validity of Lavater's theory has been completely discredited the metonymic relation between external appearance and character-traits has remained a powerful resource in the hand of many writers, (Shlomith 1983:65).

Shlomith's theory validates Nyembezi's approach towards his mode of characterization.

Another aspect of indirect presentation which Nyembezi uses in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* is action. Whenever Ndebenkulu is talking to anyone he plunges his hands into his pockets and when he boasts of his knowledge of law and wealth etc, he rolls his moustaches. These habitual actions make Ndebenkulu a distinct character. Action is not only manifest in physical actions, but it may also include actions evoked by a character's utterances. Nyembezi describes Ndebenkulu's actions as follows:

Ukhuluma nje uNdebenkulu izandla zakhe
zithe mbe ejazini lakhe. Ziphuma kuphela
uma efuna ukuphotha amadevu akhe,
(*Inkinsela* p.25).

These actions come up now and again i.e. from the beginning of the story up to almost the end. Nyembezi maintains a high degree of consistency in Ndebenkulu's behaviour. Even if he is expected to change his attitude and arrogance, Ndebenkulu does not. Even on the day when Mkhwanazi's son, Themba shows a newspaper article to his father in the presence of Ndebenkulu, the latter does not show any remorse or fear. The article warns people against crooks and has an implication on Ndebenkulu's mission. Instead he becomes arrogant and he makes Mkhwanazi think that Themba, by drawing his father's attention to the article, implies that the article refers specifically to him (Ndebenkulu). The latter becomes aggressive in

order to divert Mkhwanazi's attention from the implication of the article in the newspaper.

If one examines Ndebenkulu's behaviour and his actions right through the story in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu*, one realizes that his actions are not 'one time actions' but rather habitual actions. In Shlomith's terms one time actions tend to evoke the dynamic aspect of the character often playing a part in a turning point in the narrative. In contradistinction with the latter type of behaviour, habitual actions tend to reveal the unchanging or static aspect, often having a comic or ironic effect, as when a character clings to old habits in a situation which renders them inadequate.

If one applies Shlomith's theory on Nyembezi's Ndebenkulu one finds the truth in it. A character like Ndebenkulu manifests these habitual actions and they in turn reveal his (Ndebenkulu's) unchanging or static behaviour patterns right through the story. In view of this behaviour we can therefore say that Ndebenkulu is unchanging and he may be regarded as a flat character i.e. in terms of his unchanging behaviour even if there is a need. It can therefore be said that Ndebenkulu's habitual actions belong to the category of the so-called 'act of mission' i.e. this character does not do something that is expected of him. The reader, for example, would have expected

Ndebenkulu to change his behaviour when Themba shows the newspaper article which implicates him, to his father.

Nyembezi does not only use the indirect presentation in the creation of his characters but he also displays an advanced skill in using the 'direct definition'. In order to alleviate or modify the authoritative and static impression in his art of characterization, Nyembezi combines this direct definition with quite a number of factors; a factor which shows a higher achievement with regard to his mode of characterization. When describing Ndebenkulu Nyembezi portrays him as:

Umnumzane Ndebenkulu lona ngumuntu
olishiyile igade. Kuyabonakala ukuthi
wancela ngempela. Ubuso lobu bumaholo,
abulolongekile. Unamadevu athanda ukuba
abe elokhu ewaphotha uma izandla
zisaphumile ezikhwameni. Umlomo wakhe
ungathi ucijile, kukhona nezinyo elilodwa
elingenhla elisuke laba lide kunamanye,
bese lilokhu lilele ngaphandle komlomo
phezu kodebe lwangezansi,
(Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu p.24).

Nyembezi's physical description of Ndebenkulu given above and in some other instances in the narrative can do nothing other than leading the reader to some suggestion and generalization. After having read the above quoted paragraph the reader immediately forms

a picture of this man. He (the reader) knows what type of person he is expecting and more or less what sort of behaviour Ndebenkulu is likely to show as the plot unfolds. Under normal circumstances or in real life living human beings with such characteristics or physical traits as Ndebenkulu's, are usually hooligans and cheaters. These traits make Ndebenkulu an interesting character. This is because Ndebenkulu's behaviour in the later stages of the narrative emerge gradually from these concrete physical details. Shlomith, in this respect points out that,

In the early period of the novel, roughly until the end of the last century, when the human personality was grasped as a combination of qualities shared by many people, the generalizing, classificatory nature of definition was considered an asset, (Shlomith 1983:60).

This was probably because of its explicitness, its economic character and its capacity to guide the reader's response. It is for this reason that the traditional novelist considered it as an asset.

It must, however, be pointed out that some critics consider the method of direct definition a drawback rather than advantage and Shlomith believes that,

... definition is less frequently used in twentieth-century fiction and indirect presentation tends to predominate Rimmon-Kenan 1983:61.

It is our argument in this study that the approach and attitude by Ewen (1980:51-51) as quoted by Rimmon-Kenan in his work 'Narrative Fiction' is inadequate and one-sided. The fact of the matter is that if the method of direct definition in characterization is used appropriately it does have some advantages and it can be used effectively. Nyembezi, for example, in describing Ndebenkulu portrays him in such a manner that the reader immediately forms almost correct deductions about this rogue. He does not have to guess about how this Ndebenkulu looks like; and his behaviour befits a person of his physical make, as described by the author. The success and failure of a particular method of characterization depends squarely on the manner in which the novelist handles the method in question. Therefore it could be safely said that direct definition can be the best choice under certain circumstances. Referring to the direct definition Kenney rightly points out that,

When economy and directness are desired, the author may well consider the discursive method, Kenney 1966:35.

Therefore some writers always regard economy of words and

directness as virtues if they are appropriate to the situation. That is precisely what Nyembezi does in the portrayal of his characters like Ndebenkulu and others.

(ii) **Mkhwanazi**

Mkhwanazi is a victim of the circumstances. Ndebenkulu meets Mkhwanazi after the incident of falling from the cart. The former is still fuming with anger about what has happened to him. Mkhwanazi arrives at that 'ugly moment'. Nyembezi shows a common, untraditional behaviour displayed by Ndebenkulu when Mkhwanazi greets him. Instead of the latter asking the former whether he is Ndebenkulu who is expected at the Mkhwanazi's, it is Ndebenkulu who asks Mkhwanazi whether he is the head of this kraal. Their greetings go as follows:

Siyabonana Mnumzane, kusho
uMkhwanazi ebingelela.

Yebo sawubona Mnumzane. Ngibingelela
yena kambe uMkhwanazi, umnumzane
walapha ekhaya kubuza uNdebenkulu elula
isandla exhawula, (Inkinsela
YaseMgungundlovu p.40).

This is a direct conflict of cultures. Nyembezi obviously wants to show that once people live in urban areas they tend to adopt western

customs. It is quite untraditional and unusual in the Zulu custom for a stranger to ask a man at his kraal whether he is so-and-so. Nyembezi uses this device to show how pompous and arrogant Ndebenkulu is. It would appear Ndebenkulu has been corrupted by western culture and takes advantage of the rural people.

Nyembezi also enhances his art of characterization by bringing to the fore the conflict of certain values and virtues. This conflict is revealed during the conversation between Ndebenkulu and Mkhwanazi. The latter shows signs of modesty which is characteristic of the Zulu people. Contrary to this, Ndebenkulu boasts of his knowledge of law. The conversation goes as follows:

Thina-ke lapha emapulazini sizihambela
ngawo amakalishi lana. "Yizona zimoto
zethu", kusho uMkhwanazi ehleka,
(Inkinsela p.42).

Obviously these are words from a humble and modest person. Mkhwanazi is a well-to-do and respected man in his community but he does not boast of his possessions. There we find Ndebenkulu on the other end of the spectrum:

Uyabona Mkhwanazi, kuqhuba
uNdebenkulu. Umuntu ofana nami nje
akalazi ikalishi. Angikaze ngikhwele mina

ekalishini selokhu ngazalwa; cha, angikaze ngikhwele. Manje ngiyakuvakashela, wena usungikhweza ekalishini lakho. Uma ngilinyazwa yikalishi lakho, lishayelwa nguwe, ngizoya emthethweni, (Inkinsela p.42).

Ndebenkulu's attitude is typical of ill-educated, semi-civilized urban person who poses as a much better person than rural people. He intimidates them. Further we note that in spite of Mkhwanazi's humbleness Ndebenkulu keeps on exploiting the former's ignorance.

They continue their conversation as follows:

Nginezincwadi ezinkulu ezingaka zomthetho, imiqingo ngempela. Konje Mkhwanazi wafunda wagcinaphi? Wahleka uMkhwanazi wathi, wo, asifundanga thina Ndebenkulu. Saqhukuluzwa khona lapha emakhaya saphelelwa ngamandla lapha sifika ko-4, (Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu p.45).

Nyembezi has made use of these contrasting types of behaviour to make his characters lifelike and credible. We therefore agree with Kane and Peters who point out that telling or direct definition or presenting detail or vividness do count but,

It is more effective to make the reader see a character's modesty in action, for example, than to say merely he is modest, (Kane and Peters 1964:237).

Nyembezi's skill of presenting his characters in his social novels, in particular *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* represents a serious advance with regard to characterization. He does not only contrast factors like pomp, boastfulness as revealed by Ndebenkulu's personality and modesty, humbleness etc. as represented by Mkhwanazi but he also makes use of other factors such as the African milieu and time; which factors are contributory to the skilfulness in characterization if handled with artistic care. Nyembezi has again enhanced his art of characterization by contrasting the social life as led by Mkhwanazi in the rural area against the social life by Ndebenkulu. Nyembezi presents Mkhwanazi as a typical rural man with little education but is able to sustain himself. The clothes he wears i.e. kaki shorts remind the reader of farmers in rural communities on the one hand. On the other hand Ndebenkulu is presented as an urbanised well-educated person who claims to know all - a Jack-of-all-trades and a master of none. Here Nyembezi inter-relates two different social environments i.e. the rural environment with its people and their related problems and the urban environment with its people and their corruption. Out of this combination Nyembezi has been able to create two interesting and credible characters, viz. Mkhwanazi and Ndebenkulu. The underlying and common factor in the creation of these two contrasting characters is the time during which these two characters

are created. The appropriate use of the milieu as a contributory factor in character portrayal adds an important dimension in advanced characterization as it adds to the degree of lifelikeness and plausibility of characters. In *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* we have noted that Nyembezi has taken advantage of these factors and hence his advancement of his art of characterization in his social novels.

Although it cannot be said with certainty that it is a characteristic feature of the Zulu novel written during the post-historical period i.e. the era of the social novel, to show a high degree of consistency it can be said with certainty that Nyembezi has attained a relatively high degree of consistency in portraying his characters. In a broad sense, this means that Nyembezi's Mkhwanazi, Ndebenkulu and MaNtuli all obey the laws of their own being and behave according to the dictates of their natures as the story and plot develop (Dubé et.al. p.49). It must, however, be pointed out that Kenney objects to unnecessary demand for consistency on fictional characters. Understandably because even living human beings do act inconsistently. Kenney emphasizes his point by saying that:

We need only remind ourselves once again that the fictional character, however complex, is not a human being. He is himself an artistic creation, part of an artistic whole, Kenney 1966:31.

In other words critics must not, as it has been traditionally the case, demand of art a sense of form which is not found even in real life. Nyembezi's characters in *Inkinsela* change if the situation demands of them of such. For example, MaNtuli changes her attitude about Ndebenkulu when she feels that her husband, Mkhwanazi is going to get a lot of money by selling the cattle through Ndebenkulu's help. So is Mkhwanazi and Ndebenkulu. They obey the laws of their dictates right through the story. MaNtuli, however, seems to behave quite differently from Mkhwanazi and Ndebenkulu as her behaviour changes now and again. That change makes her consistent. That is why Aristotle in his *Poetic* quoted by Kenney advises that,

... if a character is to be inconsistent, let him be consistently inconsistent, Kenney 1966:31)

This is exactly what Nyembezi has done with the creation of MaNtuli. It must be pointed out that consistency adds to the development of a complex character. It is this complexity which in turn makes a character more lifelike and credible. For example, at the beginning of the story MaNtuli does not like Ndebenkulu because of his contemptuous attitude towards rural people. MaNtuli agrees with Thoko and Themba, her children, that Ndebenkulu is a crook. Hatred

for Ndebenkulu is intensified by the newspaper article which is warning people against crooks like Ndebenkulu. Her inconsistencies are consistent until in the end when she turns against Themba with whom they have been fighting against the idea of robbing Mkhwanazi of his cattle by Ndebenkulu. Nyembezi says:

Selokho behlukene noThemba, indaba yezinkomo nentengo yazo iyagijima engqondweni kaMaNtuli. Ubuka ubuwula bukaThemba. Useyibona kahle manje uMaNtuli into eyenza uMkhwanazi azisondeze kangaka kulo muntu, (Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu p.123).

MaNtuli behaves like some people we meet in real life. She changes with the changing circumstances if there be need to do so. She becomes a credible character because her actions and responses to the different circumstances are well motivated by the writer. There is a time when she does not like Ndebenkulu. This is not without reason. There is also a time when she understands and agrees with her husband, Mkhwanazi that Ndebenkulu is going to bring them a fortune as shown in the abovequoted paragraph.

One other important factor employed by Nyembezi in the portrayal of his character is the use of Zulu cultural beliefs. It cannot be said with accuracy whether or not Nyembezi and other Zulu novelists

consciously use this device. But of interest is that even modern writers like Nyembezi who is regarded as one of the prolific writers does make use of the traditional beliefs, apparently in order to enhance the credibility of his characters as it has been observed that a Black man's life philosophy is ground and enshrined in his ancestor belief. Apart from this, sober-minded critics accept the fact that a literature cannot be wholly isolated from its cultural milieu. We may therefore say that ancestor belief contributes, to the uniqueness and richness of the African literature as a whole (Iyasere p.108). More important so is the fact that although the Zulu social novelist writes in this social era when there is a lot of intercultural development he, at the back of his mind, is aware of the fact that he is writing mainly for the African reader. He must therefore make use of those subtle and truly crucial elements, particularly the influences of cultural background in the creation of his characters in order that the latter can appeal to the mode of imagination of his readers. This gives the Zulu social novel its vitality. The obvious fact is that the Zulu novelist uses a culture - sensitive approach. There is therefore, truth in Iyasere's contention that,

The modern African writer is to his indigenous oral tradition as a snail is to its shell. Even in a foreign habitat, a snail never leaves its shell behind, Iyasere 1975:107.

Almost a similar observation has been made by Gérard in discussing Zulu literature. He points out that,

It is indeed a constant feature of South African Bantu writing that it is as reluctant to abandon the old as it is eager to grasp the new, Gérard 1971:203.

So has Nyembezi exploited this device, i.e. the ancestor belief in order to enhance his character, MaNtuli. Even in real life whenever a human being fails to reason rationally, he resorts to the 'world of the unknown' and the past which includes his ancestors. In our case MaNtuli's indecisiveness is solved by her resorting to the ancestor belief. All along she has been on her children's side who both feel that Ndebenkulu has come to rob Mkhwanazi of his cattle. But after she has realized that the selling of the cattle will bring them a fortune she regrets her previous behaviour towards Ndebenkulu. She begins to think that the fortune which Ndebenkulu is about to bring them is from their ancestors. She blames the hatred towards Ndebenkulu to Satan. This is shown by MaNtuli's behaviour and Nyembezi's expression of the former's behaviour:

Njengomuntu onomqondo okhaliphile,
uMkhwanazi yena kusheshe
kwamkhanyela ukuthi lo muntu ulethwe

ngamadlozi, yisithunywa samadlozi ukuba
sibalethele inhlanhla.

Waqala manje nokuzisola uMaNtuli
ngendlela abonakalise ngayo ukuthi
akamkhathalele lo mfokazi. Lokhu
wayesekubona ukuthi bekuyiqhinga
likaSathane ukuba inhlanhla yabo
ibaphunyuke, (Inkinsela
YaseMgungundlovu p.123).

(iii) Themba

Nyembezi shows a sizeable degree of development in his portrayal of his characters. Unlike the writers who belong to the previous literary periods, Nyembezi makes use of the intricacies of human behaviour as observed in our daily life. He makes use of sarcasm. Nyembezi also succeeds in showing that the corruption of the so-called urbanized African cannot be forced into the throat of the rural communities. Nyembezi gives a very typical example of the conflict and resistance by the rural younger generation against the exploitation by the people who have been corrupted by urban life.

The first time the reader meets Themba is when he collects Ndebenkulu at Thisayidi. He is a refined, respecting and humble young man. Ndebenkulu is full of pomp and disrespect for other people. He boasts of his richness and his knowledge of law. At first Themba perseveres and pretends not to be aware of Ndebenkulu's

malicious motives, gradually coming to the fore and Themba still shows respect for him. Eventually although Themba is a rural young man and having been taught to be humble and respectful, he challenges and confronts Ndebenkulu. He and Diliza eventually drop him off the wagon and leave him stranded on his way to the station. Nyembezi tries to demonstrate that being humble does not necessarily mean stupidity. Corrupt urbanized people cannot just force their will onto rural people. The latter, if the situation demands, will show that enough is enough and they must not be taken advantage of. Themba's test for humbleness and respect by Ndebenkulu's behaviour goes as follows:

Kuyafana nje Mkhwanazi, kuyafana. Yini umahluko? Washo sengathi uyanengwa ukuba lo mfana wasemaphandleni azame ukuphikisa yena C.C. Ndebenkulu Esq. Thina basemadolobheni amakhulu asiwuboni umahluko phakathi kwalokhu nenqola, washo uNdebenkulu ekhomba ikalishi ngonyawo, elikhomba ngokuleya.

Themba responds to Ndebenkulu by saying:

Thina singabantu abahluphekayo. Yiyona ndlela-ke esihamba ngayo lena, esisheshisayo.

Ndebenkulu continues with his insulting remarks:

Sengizibonele nami Mkhwanazi ukuthi
ningabantu abahluphekayo. Awusadinge
kungitshela; sengizibonele.

In the end Ndebenkulu is made to swallow his words when Themba and Diliza demonstrate to him that humbleness and respect for the old should not be abused. The dialogue goes as follows:

Awuhlale kahle phela Ndebenkulu sihambe.
Ufuna umuntu akhulume kanjani nawe?
Uyayazi uyihlo le nto oyenzayo?
Ungabosho kimi ukuthi uyihlo. Angilifuni
neze lelo gama. Futhi uma ulibele
ukukhuluma isitimela sizokushiya,
(Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu p.177).

Eventually the two boys demand of Ndebenkulu to get off the wagon and he is made to walk under the scorching sun.

With this dialogue between Themba and Ndebenkulu, Nyembezi is able to reveal more efficiently Ndebenkulu's and Themba's personalities. In achieving this he is assisted, among other things, by employing the intricacies of human nature and exploiting the system of values and virtues of the Zulu people. This is brought about by causing conflict between the rural and urban system of values. Such a technique and others discussed under the social novel show a way

forward and development in characterization in respect of the Zulu novel.

5.7 SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERIZATION IN THE POST-HISTORICAL NOVEL (I.E. THE ERA OF THE SOCIAL NOVEL)

As already been demonstrated above in the discussion of the three social novels, characterization during the post-historical literary era has been characterized, *inter alia*, by:

- (i) a sharp clash or conflict between the value systems as represented by traditional and rural characters on the one hand, and by the so-called corrupt urbanized people on the other hand. The conflict is caused mainly by fundamentally different levels of "civilization", different traditional backgrounds etc. Another contributory factor is the problem of adjustment usually experienced by a character from rural background to the new urbanized environment. For example, a character leaves a permissive, tolerant, steady life in rural areas and goes to cities where people have been so individualized that have no time for slow 'coaches'.
- (ii) Nyembezi has made a dramatic innovation with the creation of his main character, Ndebenkulu in *Inkinsele YaseMgungundlovu*. In most

social novels we encounter the Jim-Jim-to-Jo'burg themes. In other words, characters move from rural 'uncorrupted' background to fast-moving and corrupt life. In the novels dealing with such themes the character becomes a victim of the new circumstances mainly because of the problem of adjustment to the new environment. But the portrayal of Ndebenkulu is a reversal of the normal trend. Instead of him going to urban areas he goes back to a rural area with the aim of exploiting innocent people because of his corrupt life and new ways of life which he has acquired in towns.

(iii) We have noticed the reduction of the nameless characters in the post-historical Zulu novel. This may be ascribed to two main reasons, viz.

(a) the fact that modern writers have and are still trying to move away from the legacy of the influence of the folktale such as "kwakukhona indoda ..." there was a man.

(b) the constraint of space and time economy.

(iv) In comparison with the historical novel, the social novel represents a serious advance in characterization. There is a conscious effort to move away from the use of historical characters i.e. human beings who actually lived at a particular time to real fictions characters. This means that we have noticed a steady move from concreteness to

abstractness which is the essence of fiction - characters in a novel are not real persons. But they are word-masses or imaginary persons.

Viewed from another angle, if characterization in the social novel is compared with the mode of characterization as manifest in the pre-historical era novel one experiences a different type of dimension.

Characterization in the social novel as explained above uses intricate and modern material whereas characterization in the pre-historical era is dominated by traditional material. Such a move directly demonstrates that, and supports the argument of this study, viz. that characterization in the Zulu novel is evolutionary and dynamic. It is not at all static.

- (v) Characters in a social novel have attained a higher degree of lifelikeness than characters mostly found in the pre-historical novel. The reason for this is the fact that, amongst others, characters are well motivated. By this it is meant that the character's behaviour accords with the character's nature as it has been established with and by the circumstances to which the character is responding. For example, the reader understands why MaNtuli in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* hates Ndebenkulu at first. The latter displays rude behaviour and pomp. At a later stage of the story MaNtuli's hatred for Ndebenkulu subsides. The reason being that she imagines herself and her husband being rich after Ndebenkulu has promised

Mkhwanazi a lot of money if the latter sold their cattle at an auction sale. Lifelikeness in a character enhances its plausibility and credibility. This in turn makes the reader identify himself with the characters in a given novel notwithstanding the fact that characters in a novel are not real human beings, not even if they are in an historical novel (Scholes p.17). That is why Scholes contends that,

the greatest mistake we can make in dealing with characters in fiction is to insist on their "reality", Scholes 1968:17.

We are, however, mindful of the fact that some characters in a novel are like people while others are unlike them (people). The problem with the concept of lifelikeness in the characters is the measurement of the degree or the size of this lifelikeness that is required to make a character lifelike.

- (vii) What is further observed in the post-historical novel, in particular the social novel, is the fact that the Zulu author, with the passage of time, with the acquiring of innovations, sophistication, acculturation, exposure to different traditions, has adapted his mode of characterization in order to respond to the new circumstances. As a matter of fact, not only do fictional characters change but even real human beings are changing for the better under new circumstances.

CHAPTER 6

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERIZATION IN THE ZULU NOVEL

In this study the researcher has tried to demonstrate and prove the correctness of the hypothesis and dynamics in the portrayal of characters in the Zulu novel - as stated under the sub-heading, **aims of study and motivation**. The following facts and factors have been brought to the fore:

- (i) It has been shown that characterization in the Zulu narratives and in the early Zulu novel has been to a very great extent influenced by the Zulu traditional and geographical background. Characters like Jeqe in *Insila KaShaka* bear testimony to this statement. Jeqe is grounded on the Zulu custom of the old and the geo-traditional background of the old.
- (ii) Characterization in the Zulu novel is evolutionary. Various stages or periods of development in characterization have been identified. It has also been pointed out that these stages are not watertight literary entities. They do overlap at times. These literary stages in the mode of character presentation change with times. Modes of

characterization are like fashions which come and go and adjusted where and when necessary.

In the research it has been demonstrated that characterization in the Zulu novel has gone through the pre-historical novel era, the historical era and through to the post-historical or the social novel era. We may therefore safely conclude that characterization in the Zulu novel is not at all static.

(iii) It has been shown that characterization in the Zulu novel is, *inter alia*, influenced by a variety of factors through the different stages of its development. Factors such as tradition and customs geographical setting, folktale material residue, industrialization, apartheid policies of the country, urbanization christianization, acculturation etc. are some of the factors which have in one way or another played a significant role in character portrayal in the Zulu novel.

(iv) As Malcolm rightly points out that "it is natural that the literature of people should first find expression in its history and its folklore", our research has shown that characters during the pre-historical period is largely dominated by folktale material and cultural factors. (UChakijana Bogcololo - Introduction 1927). That is why Jeje, Chakijana, as characters in the early Zulu narratives, are grounded in traditional values and virtues of the Zulu people including folktale

material.

- (v) One of the conclusions arrived at, is the fact that one cannot separate a character entirely from its milieu and time. Shaka in *Insila KaShaka* becomes credible and plausible because of his behaviour and traditional regalia. Dube describes Shaka as follows:

Ithi iqhamuka nje ezwakale uBayede ovimba izindlebe. Yona-ke kayisabonakali sekuyikazela nje. Umuntu ubona isihlangu nemokhonto kuphela. Ifaka iminyakanya nemiklezo kukhona izimpaphe zezinyoni ezinhle, (*Insila KaShaka* p.23).

This African milieu therefore does give an indication of what kind of character the reader must expect in a work of art. It is therefore important for a non-African critic to discard the models and points of reference, as far as possible, taught him by the experience of western literature in order to appreciate characters as portrayed in the Zulu novel, especially those found in pre-historical era. In other words a character is to a large extent culturally determined, especially when no inter-culturation has been experience by the character. That is why Iyasere contends that,

To isolate the literature wholly from its cultural milieu and insist on a strictly synchronic analysis

of a work ... would rob the literature of its vitality,
Iyasere 1975:109.

We must therefore guard against any temptation to prescribe 'universal' literary standards of evaluating characterization. This may be done but open-mindedly. In comparing the manner of characterization in the Zulu novel the critic must take into account the period when the novel was written. This in turn emphasizes the fact that characterization has passed from one developmental stage to another.

- (vi) Through this research study it has been observed that although there is no hard and fast rule determining the number of names which represent characters, it has been established that there has been a tendency to decrease the number of characters used in the novels of the post-historical period as compared to the early narratives, apparently because of the burden exerted on the reader by too many characters. This tendency has also been observed in the decrease in anonymous characters. Anonymous characters are a direct influence on the Zulu novel of folktale material residue which is diminishing day by day in the modern novel.

Secondly, space in the novel cost money. Therefore the Zulu novelist has consciously become cost-effective. And of course, if the novelist

had a lot space at his disposal, he would be tempted to use all kinds of dramatic situations to create his characters over hundreds of pages. But unfortunately space alone and elaborate details do not insure good characterization.

- (vii) The Zulu historical novel, unlike the so-called English historical novel, which is historical as regards their purely external choice of theme and costume, where not only the psychology of the characters, but the manners depicted are entirely those of the writer's own day, portrays the real milieu and the artistically faithful image of a concrete epoch of the Zulu people. There is a derivation of the individuality of characters from the historical peculiarity of their age. Abstractness in the portrayal of characters in the historical novel comes in when the historical concreteness of the characters is interposed with other basic human needs such as love, food, etc.
- (viii) Characters in the Zulu historical novel are of two types. There are historical characters which are portrayed on the real human beings who did live at a particular period of time. There are also purely imaginary creations, especially characters found in Bengu's *Umbuso Wezembe Nenkinga KaBhekifa*. The latter type resemble the English historical characters (as explained under sub-paragraph 6.7 above), and they are, besides the traditional customs, made up mostly of

folktale material and psychology.

- (ix) Another interesting difference found in the characters of the historical era of the novel is that here too (as in paragraph 6.8 above), there are two types of characters. There are those characters which do not show any physical development on the one hand. There are also those characters which show physical as well as psychological development on the other hand. A character such as Bhekifa is introduced to the reader when he is still a young boy and when he is grown up and goes back home from Nogcansi to take up his throne. We can therefore safely conclude that the Zulu historical novel shows static as well developing characters.
- (x) Some of the characters in the historical novel are so intertwined with traditional culture and custom that for a non-Zulu speaker they appear to be dupes and for that reason it becomes very difficult to identify oneself with them.
- (xi) In general it may be stated that historical characters show a remarkable development from characters which are folktale-material-laden to credible and plausible characters. This credibility of characters is brought about by the fact they are well motivated.

(xii) Literary evidence seems to suggest that the use of the sense of humour in characterization which is predominantly found in the social novel must have had its beginning with the historical novel. For example Vilakazi in *Nje Nempela* gives an interesting account of Siyekiwe, Mancinza's wife who travels all the way from Nkandla to see 'Hulumeni' in Pietermaritzburg. To her disappointment she does not meet this 'big man Hulumeni'. This suggests the lack of knowledge of white tradition on the part of Siyekiwe. Sense of humour as a contributory factor was later widely used in the Zulu social novels such as in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu*.

(xiii) Characterization in the post-historical era novel has been influenced by a variety of factors. By this time the Zulu novelist especially the writers of the social novel had acquired sophisticated skills for the portrayal of their characters.

The exploitation of the value system of the Zulu people has proved very useful in creating characters of the day. Values such as modesty, honesty, respect for the older people, hospitality, to name but a few, have been used successfully.

(xiv) As the art of characterization develops with the Zulu novelist, characters have become more and more lifelike, credible and

plausible. We have in mind characters like MaNtuli in Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu who changes with the changing circumstances and adapts where necessary. Dynamic characters such as this one named above and others have been brought about by the development of the skills of characterization. A dynamic or developing character i.e. the so-called the three-dimensional character, as opposed to a static character is a character which is not the same person at the end of the story as he was at the beginning of the story. Credibility of a character is brought about by the fact that most of the modern Zulu novel writers have succeeded in creating well motivated characters. It must also be pointed out that well motivated characters are part and parcel of a well formulated plot as all the principles of a conventional plot structure directly or indirectly imply a well motivated character. In other words there is a relationship between a well constructed plot and well motivated characters. The two are in the majority of cases, interdependent. This relationship or interdependence commences in exposition, point of attack, complication or conflict up to the resolution of the problem.

- (xv) Factors such as industrialization, christianization, the so-called civilization, urbanization etc. all have brought about a new dimension in the post-historical era in the development of the art of characterization in the Zulu novel. The term civilization is used for the

lack of an appropriate term as it is emotionally laden. The term acculturation is preferred to the word civilization because what many writers refer to as civilization means the level of development of a people at a particular period of time.

- (xvi) With the modern generation of the Zulu novel characterization has seen a good combination of the two conventional methods of characterization viz. the dramatic and the descriptive methods. Both methods are important provided they are used to bring about the desired impression in the development of the story.

Like in other languages, for example in English and Afrikaans, in Zulu naming still remains the corner stone in characterization. In the majority of cases characters are given names by the author but at times the characters give names amongst themselves, usually nicknames. The truth of this statement is confirmed by Smuts who rightly points out that,

Karakterisering deur benaming word gewoonlik deur die verteller gedoen, alhoewel die moontlikheid nie uitgesluit is dat ander karakters 'n karakter kan karakteriseer deur 'n bynaam of hy homself kan benoem nie, Smuts 1975:24.

In conclusion it must be emphasized that although it has been argued and demonstrated in this research that the art of characterization has gone through various stages of development, no matter how advanced a writer may be in portraying his characters, the fact remains unchanged, that a fictional character is a mere literary creation and is not a real human being. The novel itself is an imaginary or fictitious creation and has a world of its own. So are the characters. They, together with their actions, are representative of the real life of past or present times. The novel depicts imaginary characters and situations. It is for this reason that literary critics must not make undue comparison between a fictional character and a living human being. That is why it is maintained that the degree of lifelikeness of a fictitious character is rather cumbersome and complex to determine.

6.2 CULTURAL CONTENT

One of the important points of departure in this research is the argument that culture and tradition play a very significant role in the portrayal of characters in the Zulu novel. There is no better truth than what Iyasere and Gérard have to say in this regard viz. that,

The modern African writer is to his indigenous oral tradition as a snail is to its shell. Even in a foreign habitat, a snail never leaves its shell behind, Iyasere 1975:107-119.

Observing this tendency in Zulu literature, Gérard also contends that,

It is indeed a constant feature of South African Bantu writing that it is as reluctant to abandon the old as it is eager to grasp the new, Gérard 1971:203.

In our research it has been shown that characterization in the Zulu novel is based particularly on the traditional life of the Zulu people. This statement does not imply that there are no other factors which influence characterization. As shown in the research there are other factors. But of importance is the fact that the dominant or the fundamental factor is Zulu culture and tradition. This common denominator is traceable right through from the early narratives up to the social novel. This statement is supported by Ngcongwane's contention. He says that Nyembezi is writing for the Zulu-oriented readers (Ngcongwane 1987:2). This statement holds true even with other Zulu novelists.

It has been shown that the traditional influence on characterization manifests itself in a variety of ways, viz. through the traditional attire, for example the description of Shaka's regalia by Dube in *Insila KaShaka*:

Ithi iqhamuka nje ... Yona-ke kayisabonakali sekuyikazela nje. Umuntu ubona isihlangu nemikhonto kuphela. Ifake iminyakanya nemiklezo kukhona izimpaphe zezinyoni ezinhle ezilenga ebusweni, zivale bonke ubuso ..., (*Insila KaShaka* p.23).

Even in our daily observation different ethnic groups or different nationalities can be distinguished by their traditional attire.

Not only does cultural content manifest itself in traditional attire but also, *inter alia*, through cultural/traditional values and virtues. It is an historical fact that the Zulu people are known for their hospitality, sense of humour, respect, sarcasm and ancestor belief. This value and virtue system has been consistent right through from the early days to the present day of the Zulu novel. This does not mean that the cultural content has not changed through the changing stages, but it has been influenced by multiculturalism which is a feature of the South African life. Factors such as urbanization, industrialization, christianization have all contributed in one way or another towards multiculturalism which, in turn, has influenced characterization in the Zulu novel. But of fundamental importance is the unshaken ancestor belief. In spite of diverse influences on the life of the Zulu people, and as late as the time of writing of the recent novel such as *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* the belief in ancestors is very strong. All having been said and done, MaNtuli in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* resorts to ancestor belief in order to come out of her dilemma and indecisiveness about the 'fortune' brought to her family by Ndebenkulu. She regrets her previous reasoning. She says:

"Selokhu behlukene noThemba, indaba yezinkomo nentengo yazo iyagijima engqondweni kaMaNtuli. Njengomuntu onomqondo okhaliphile, uMkhwanazi yena kusheshe kwamkhanyela ukuthi lo muntu ulethwe ngamadlozi, yisithunywa samadlozi ukuba sibalethele inhlanhla, (Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu pp.122-123).

We can therefore safely uphold Iyasere and Gérard's contention that no matter how advanced or prolific a Zulu writer may be, no matter during which literary period he writes his novel, the oral, socio-historical, cultural traditional and beliefs follow him and his origin is traceable by these characteristic features. In a similar manner these are transferred and transmitted and translated through his manner of characterization. It can therefore be stated that characterization in the Zulu novel does not or has not developed in mysterious circumstances. But it has followed a definite pattern of development.

6.3 TOOLS OF CRITICISM - ARE THEY UNIVERSAL?

Even after having listened to the arguments put forward in this research study some readers hereof may still ask themselves whether or not tools for literary criticism can be applied universally to novels of different languages. The response to this question is not a simplistic one. Arguably the answer is yes or no. There are two crucial points to be considered in this respect.

First, it has been argued that a literature cannot be isolated wholly from its cultural milieu, traditional and socio-geographical background. It would, for instance, be unthinkable to compare the portrayal of Dingane with the of King George I. It is precisely because of these differences, among other things, tradition and milieu, etc. In other words a character is not portrayed in a vacuum but rather portrayed within a specific traditional or social background at a give period of time. Virtues and values of a people play a significant role in the portrayal of characters of a particular literature. Characters of different cultures behave differently under different circumstances i.e. they behave according to their cultures. That is why Iyasere contends that,

... A culture - sensitive approach, informed by an intelligent understanding of the traditional background, will prove more responsive to the unique nativism of African writers, Iyasere 1975;109.

Iyasere further clarifies this point by pointing out that every age and every culture has its particularly characteristic narrative form. This applies also to character portrayal in a particular literature. It therefore stands to reason that literary critics must not insist on a strictly synchronic analysis of a work as this approach would rob a literature of its vitality. Critics must therefore refrain from judging one system of values by another, which inevitably leads to the mutilation of the art. This applies also in comparing the so-called different standards and backgrounds in characterization as if they were the

same. For that matter one may even go further as to point out that even the novelists' modes of imagination and articulation differ in writers of different literatures, precisely because of the factors given above.

Besides the fact that in the Zulu novel the characters are grounded in the African milieu it has been demonstrated that characterization is a dynamic phenomenon. It is not static. For the purpose of our study we have shown that there are different stages or literary periods that the Zulu novel has gone through so far. Through all these stages we have shown that characterization has developed from one mode to another. We have shown, for example that,

- (i) During the so-called narrative period or the pre-historical novel period characterization is to a great extent influenced by elements traceable particularly to the influences of oral tradition and folktale material. This, the early critics do not fully appreciate simply because they direct their attention towards tracing western influences on African literature. We therefore accept the argument that,

The Eurocentric critical canon has obviously grown alongside western literary tradition, but outside the African milieu, Iyasere 1975:108.

This argument shows beyond any reasonable doubt that tools of criticism cannot be applied universally without taking into account the necessary precautions and making adaptations where necessary.

Eurocentric canon does not always respond favourably to the idiosyncrasies of African literature. This argument does not only hold true to the African literature in general but it also specifically applies to the art of characterization in the Zulu novel. It is for this reason that the Zulu novelist creates his characters in his own traditional belief and imagination.

The above discussed literary period in the Zulu novel was followed by the historical novel. As explained in this research characters in the Zulu historical novel differ from the literary creations which obtain in the English novel. In the Zulu historical novel characters represent real human beings who once lived at a particular period of historical era. The obvious difference between, for example, the English novel, and the Zulu novel as Lukács puts it, is that,

The so-called historical novels of the seventeenth century are historical only as regards their purely external choice of theme and costume. Not only the psychology of the characters, but the manners depicted are entirely those of the writer's own day, Lukács 1976:15.

The above explanation by Lukács makes the English historical novel quite different from the Zulu historical novel. In the latter novel, not only the novel curiosities and oddities of the milieu do matter but also the portrayal of artistically faithful image of a concrete historical epoch. Again in the Zulu novel the derivation of the individuality of characters from the historical peculiarity of their age plays a significant role in the art of characterization.

In the light of the foregoing argument it will therefore be unthinkable to apply the tools of literary criticism indiscriminately to novels of different languages as if they were the identical.

- (iii) No one would deny the fact that Zulu writers have been influenced to a significant degree by the so-called European novel. Not only have the former been influenced by latter but also various factors which came with the advent of the White man contribute to a very large extent towards the development of the art of characterization in the Zulu novel. In the research it has been shown that factors such as urbanization, christianization, industrialization, acculturation have all played a role in the development of the art of characterization on the Zulu novel. This was explained in detail in our discussion of the post-historical period. It is perhaps during the social novel where a literary

critic can start applying the literary methods universally, for example to the English novel as well as the Zulu novel. But it is important to take note of the fact that, no matter how advanced a novelist may be, he will still, even in a foreign habitat, resort to his traditional background in enabling his characters to resolve certain problems. For example, ancestral belief is deep-rooted in the art of characterization in the Zulu novelist. Even a modern and prolific writer such as Nyembezi still uses this literary device in the creation of some of his important characters such as Mantuli in *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu*.

Also of importance is the fact that the novel, with its characters, is an art that deals very directly with life. The novel depicts a man in society and as an isolated individual i.e. the so-called "felt life" to use Henry James's magic phrase as quoted by Ngcongwane in *The Novel and Life* (1987). The life of the Zulu novelist is embedded in his traditional culture which in turn serves the function of maintaining conformity to the accepted patterns of behaviour amongst the Zulu people. The Zulu novelist therefore validates his culture by having traces or elements of his traditional background in the creation of his characters.

It is therefore expected of the critic to understand and accept the fact

that the Zulu novel has a unique Africa traditional background against which the characters are portrayed. Although this background has been affected by modern influences it remains the core of characterization. In other words the Zulu novelist is influenced by his 'pastiness'. Of course the past of a novelist is where he is rooted.

The art of characterization changes as the Zulu novels undergoes the various stages of literary and technological development.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion it may be pointed out that,

- (i) Characterization in the Zulu novel has been influenced to a very great extent by cultural and traditional background of the Zulu people, especially characterization as manifest in the early Zulu novel or Zulu narratives. During this period traces or elements of folklore material are found in characterization.
- (ii) Characterization in the Zulu novel has gone through different states of development - the pre-historical novel or narratives, the historical novel and the post-historical novel or the social novel.
- (iii) Characterization in the Zulu novel is a dynamic or developing process.

It is not static as some critics would imagine. This development in the art of characterization has been achieved by the use of various literary techniques, by the passage of time, and the socio-economic conditions in the life of the Zulu people.

- (iv) No sugar-coating will ever obliterate the uniqueness of the art of characterization in the Zulu novel.

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