The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

University of Cape Town

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF IDEOLOGY AND AESTHETICS IN THE NOVELS OF SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN ISIXHOSA-LANGUAGE WRITERS AND KENYAN AFRICAN AUTHORS IN ENGLISH.

BY

SIBIZWA SOLOMZI MDAKA

SUBMITTED TO SATISFY THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVESITY OF CAPE TOWN

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR S. C. SATYO

University of Cape Town

DATE HANDED IN: AUGUST 2002

CONTENTS

PAGE

Declaration..... (iii)

Acknowledgements..... (iv)

Abstract..... (v)

CHAPTER I: TOWARDS A COMPARATIVE METHOD FOR AFRICAN LITERATURE..... 1

II: THE REFORMIST REACTION TO COSMOPOLITAN ASSIMILATION..... 57

III: THE LIBERAL/ PROTEST REACTION TO PERSONALIST LEVELLING HOMOGENISATION..... 142

IV: THE REVOLUTIONARY REACTION TO CONQUEST SEGREGATION..... 212

V: CONCLUSION..... 309

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 330

University of Cape Town

CONTENTS

PAGE

Declaration..... (iii)

Acknowledgements..... (iv)

Abstract..... (v)

CHAPTER I: TOWARDS A COMPARATIVE METHOD FOR AFRICAN LITERATURE..... 1

II: THE REFORMIST REACTION TO COSMOPOLITAN ASSIMILATION..... 57

III: THE LIBERAL/ PROTEST REACTION TO PERSONALIST LEVELLING HOMOGENISATION..... 142

IV: THE REVOLUTIONARY REACTION TO CONQUEST SEGREGATION..... 212

V: CONCLUSION..... 309

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 330

University of Cape Town

DECLARATION

I, Sibizwa Solomzi Mdaka do hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is entirely my own work with the exception of such quotations or references which have been attributed to their authors or sources.

Dated at Fort Hare this day of August 2002.

S S Mdaka

University of Cape Town

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to several people and institutions who assisted me through the period when I was researching and writing this dissertation. While it is impossible to name all the individuals who through many acts of kindness, have made this thesis a reality, special thanks and appreciation are offered here to the following:

Professor Satyo my dissertation supervisor for encouragement and advice especially at the most difficult moments when the end seemed so distant and elusive. Professors Izevbaye, Spencer-Walters, Etsiah, Dr. Cornwell and Mr Khayundi my advisers who have truly been of inestimable value in helping to shape this study into its present form, although I take full responsibility for any errors that may have been overlooked.

Dr Lesoetsa the Head of the Department of African languages and my colleagues for their support of my efforts to teach and study simultaneously. Fort Hare Library Staff members, particularly M. L. Mavuso of the inter-library loans section for organizing reading material for me.

All those friends and relatives who offered their blessings, prayers, words of encouragement, and unwavering faith in my ability to complete this study. Foremost among these supporters is my wife Nomafa who has kept my mental and physical selves in working order and maintained the family when my mind was engrossed in the study.

Finally Menzi, the Almighty God who inspired me throughout this research project.

University of Cape Town

ABSTRACT

Although scholars such as Gerard (1981) and Perera (1991) have long been advocating the creation and adoption of a comparative methodology for the study of African literature, little scholarly effort has thus far been exerted to establish such a methodology. This study aims to make a small contribution in this direction by elaborating an appropriate comparative method and demonstrating its efficacy by applying it in the comparative assessment of ideology and aesthetics in South African isiXhosa-language novels and Kenyan African novels in English. The authors chosen for this purpose are Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Meja Mwangi from Kenya, and A.C. Jordan, P.T. Mtuze and R Siyongwana from South Africa.

The methodology is grounded in the materialist ideological analysis of the Marxist theorist Fredric Jameson. It incorporates a strong emphasis on characterisation and rhetoric, drawing on Classical European and African oral tradition. In eschewing altogether the modernist and postmodernist European literary paradigms, it seeks to synthesize a critical approach consonant with certain core principles of African culture, including a respect for the heroic idiom and a firm belief in the ethical and socially instructive value of art.

The analysis proceeds as follows: In Chapter One I provide a theoretical framework for the study. In the next chapter I compare Jordan's *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* and Ngugi's *The River Between* as examples of reformist reaction to the cosmopolitan assimilationist feature of the scientific state. Then in Chapter Three Mtuze's *UDingezweni* and Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick* are compared as representative samples of novels embodying the liberal/protest reaction to the personalist levelling homogenisation feature of the scientific state. In the following chapter, Siyongwana's *Ubulumko Bezinja* and Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* are read comparatively as novels representative of the revolutionary reaction to conquest segregation, another feature of the scientific state. Chapter Five offers a conclusion that summarizes the findings of the study, highlights its limitations, and makes suggestions for further research.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER ONE

TOWARDS A COMPARATIVE METHOD FOR AFRICAN LITERATURE

1.1 THE AIM AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study has two basic trajectories: the first is aimed at distilling a comparative method to facilitate an ideological and aesthetic analysis of African literature. The second is an exercise in comparison, in which ideology and aesthetics in the novels of South African Xhosa-language writers and Kenyan African authors in English will be collated. Although scholars such as Gerard (1981) and Perera (1991) have long been advocating the creation and adoption of a comparative methodology for the study of African literature, not enough scholarly effort has been put into creating a methodology which would facilitate a comparative analysis in this area of study. In his essay "Comparative Literature and African Literature", Gerard (1981, 4-7) argues:

> It has appeared appropriate to begin with this succinct account of comparative literature because of a conviction that the comparative approach is absolutely necessary for the study of African literature in its relation to the other literatures of the world but also on its own as a purely African phenomenon . . .
>
> In this limited yet momentous sense the international, multilingual approach, which belongs to the essence of comparative literature as a branch of learning is the most urgently called for when dealing with African literature.

This is the lacuna, which this study aims to address. It does not, however, set out to create a unique comparative method as a panacea for all analyses. As Tiffin (1984, 29) has pointed out, "there can never be a comparative methodology ... there will need to be many methodologies".

Attempts to create methodologies for comparative literary studies include those of Posnett (1979), Wilkinson (1979) and Perera (1991). Posnett initially created a comparative method to study the history of the institutions of civilised mankind in his first book, *The Historical Method* (1882), but afterwards applied it to literary studies in *Comparative Literature*. His method was thus designed for general rather than specific

University of Cape Town

application. Wilkinson's and Perera's comparative methodologies, on the other hand, were designed for specific application to the study of Commonwealth literature, which of course includes some African literature. The difference between these studies and the present research is that while the former privilege contextual and extra-literary factors over aesthetic considerations, this study attempts to give equal prominence to both, as its title reflects.

This study will present a comparative assessment of ideology and aesthetics in Jordan's *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* and Ngugi's *The River Between* in Chapter Two; Mtuze's *UDingezweni* and Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick* in Chapter Three; Siyongwana's *Ubulumko Bezinja* and Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* in Chapter Four. Comparing all the African novels in English from Kenya with all the isiXhosa novels written would have made the study wide-ranging yet unwieldy and superficial. So the above works were chosen, and although my choice was influenced by an admiration for these novelists, my decision was neither a sentimental nor arbitrary one. The novels were chosen because they are most representative of novels that fall into three ideological divisions – national, liberal/ protest and revolutionary – which are going to be used to categorise literature from these countries. For the delineation of these ideologies, see the section on theoretical framework. Furthermore, certain aesthetic affinities and differences among these novels make them most suitable for comparative scrutiny.

I would have liked further to limit the scope by taking only one author from Kenya and one from South Africa, but unfortunately very few authors have written novels which fall into the three ideological categories described above and have comparable counterparts in the literature of the other country. Ngugi for instance has written novels that can be classified in terms of the three ideological divisions –*The River Between* for nationalism, *Devil on the Cross* for protest and *A Grain of Wheat* for revolutionary ideology – but his *Devil on the Cross* (which as far as I am concerned is a post-colonial protest novel) has no isiXhosa equivalent as yet. The isiXhosa writer Mtuze is another who has written novels that can be assigned to the three categories, but *Alitshoni Lingaphumi*, which belongs in the revolutionary ideological division, has no counterpart in Kenyan African literature. In this novel Mtuze shows how passive resistance leads to tokenism (for an exposition of this view, see Mdaka 1992, 148-150).

University of Cape Town

Mwangi has written many novels that can be categorised under liberal and revolutionary ideologies (such as *Kill Me Quick*, *Going Down River Road* and *Carcass for Hounds*) but I could not find in his writing a novel that can be categorised under nationalism, and which has a counterpart in isiXhosa literature. Jordan and Siyongwana have only published one novel each, *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* and *Ubulumko Bezinja* respectively.

The choice of African novels in English from Kenya and isiXhosa novels from South Africa is motivated in part by the fact that both these countries are former British colonies and thus, whilst their socio-cultural, politico-historical and economic experiences are not identical, there are some parallels. The indigenous cultures of both these countries were debased and undermined by a process of cultural imperialism under colonial capitalism, and both countries were engaged in a bitter and protracted struggle for independence. The parallels are manifested in the literatures of these countries and thus make comparison possible. For further delineation of these parallels and how they are reflected in literature, see Mdaka (1990 and 1992).

University of Cape Town

1.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section reviews the existing literature on comparative studies, particularly of African literature. This is a very wide field because, according to Steiner (1994, 3), "from their inception, literary studies and arts interpretation have been comparative". However, the purpose of the literature survey is to glean information that will assist this study to achieve its aims: codifying a comparative methodology for African literature, and comparing South African isiXhosa-language and Kenyan African novels in English. Thus only those comparative studies that are seen to be contributing to this end will be reviewed. The literature survey is divided into five sections: studies of world literature; trans-continental comparative studies; trans-national comparative studies; comparative studies of literature from individual countries, and comparative studies of works of a single writer. One or two representative studies from each section will be reviewed, from which lessons relevant to the present study will be distilled.

The term *Weltliteratur* ('world-literature') was coined by Goethe. It is found for the first time in a diary entry for 15 January 1827. Goethe was preoccupied with a search

for primordial unities, and believed that interrelationships created hidden harmonies within all matter. It is arguable that notions of primordial or archetypal images found in Jung (1969) may in several respects have been inspired by Goethe's *Facist II* (see Steiner 1995, 5). In fact comparative studies such as Soile's "The Myth of the Archetypal Hero in Two African Novelists: Chinua Achebe and James Ngugi" are steeped in Goethe's notion of *Weltliteratur*. Another pioneer in the field of comparative studies of world literature is Posnett, who published *Comparative Literature in English* in 1882. Posnett's attempts to establish a comparative method were motivated by the view that "the Comparative Method may arrive at Universal principles or generalisations universally applicable" (Shaffer 1980, xiii).

These studies are relevant to the present research insofar as they show that comparative studies of countries that are far apart are feasible. The main reason commonly given for conducting comparative studies – the existence of identical themes, which may of course variously be attributed to archetypal images, influence of one upon the other, diffusion etc. – informed the choice of the two countries (Kenya and South Africa) whose literatures are compared in this study. This research does not aim at creating a comparative method that is universally applicable. Such a method, it has been realised, does not exist.

Trans-continental comparative studies generally premise their comparisons on similarities and differences emanating from the socio-cultural, politico-historical and economic experiences of the people of the countries concerned. The favourite subjects of these comparative studies are Africa, Asia, the Caribbean Islands and the United States of America. Perera's study (1991), which compares the protest fiction of Roja Rao and Khushwart Sing from India, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Meja Mwangi from Kenya, and V. S. Naipaul and George Lamming from the West Indies, and Abraham's study (1982) which explores "Links and Parallels in African and Black American Protest Expression", are good examples of such studies.

Comparisons made in this study are similarly based on analogies and variants emanating from the socio-cultural, politico-historical and economic experiences of the people from Kenya and South Africa. Another lesson learnt from certain trans-continental studies is that comparative analysis precludes an exploration of some

University of Cape Town

concerns that are vital in a more general critical appraisal. Perera (1991, 497) himself confesses that his dissertation "has privileged contextual and thematic preoccupation to such an extent that it pays scant attention to structure". The present study attempts to minimise this problem by comparing both ideology and aesthetics in the novels selected, thus covering the two major concerns of literary criticism (i.e. form and content).

Soile (1972) and Gerard (1971) provide good examples of trans-national comparative studies. Soile's research sets out to compare two novelists: Chinua Achebe from Nigeria and James Ngugi, now known as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, from Kenya. The title of his dissertation, "The Myth of the Archetypal Hero in Two African Novelists, Chinua Achebe and James Ngugi", indicates that his research sets out to trace the recurrence of the myth of the archetypal hero in the novels of these writers. That Soile chooses literature from countries that are both former British colonies assisted the present researcher in demarcating the scope of this thesis. Trans-national comparative studies further serve as a lesson to this study in that they show how to avoid the type of comparison, which attempts simply to locate affinities, which according to Narasmhaiah (1981, 7), "is a very glib thing to do". Soile (1972), for instance, while demonstrating the existence of the monomyth of the archetypal hero in the works of the two novelists, nevertheless explains that the basic archetypal pattern in Achebe's novels is that of the scapegoat hero, and in Ngugi's, that of the hero as messiah. This study too, whilst identifying and accounting for affinities in the novels under review, also appreciates the differences between them. It also seeks to avoid the tendency in these trans-national studies to analyse the works of the writers concerned separately, rather than concurrently. (The table of contents in Soile [1972], which indicates clearly that the author is going to deal with the novels separately, is a case in point.)

Another problem that faces trans-national studies, particularly those that compare literatures in indigenous languages such as Gerard (1971), is that of language. Gerard attempts to analyse comparatively four African literatures, written in isiXhosa, seSotho, isiZulu and Amharic. The first three are from South Africa and the last from Ethiopia. None of these languages is Gerard's first language and very few works from these literatures are translated into any other language. It is moreover unlikely that he is fully competent in all these languages. So it is arguable that comparative studies of literatures

University of Cape Town

in largely untranslated languages (such as indigenous African language literatures) are likely to be superficial, because they will be dependent on the views of other critics and commentators. That is why in this study I have limited the scope to novels in isiXhosa, which is my first language, and English, my second.

Some comparative studies focus on the literatures of individual countries. Jabavu (1973) and Nyamende (1991) offer good examples of such studies. Jabavu's study sets out to trace "The Influence of English on Bantu Literature" and focuses on five principal language literatures: Northern seSotho, Southern seSotho, isiTswana, isiXhosa and isiZulu. Nyamende compares characterisation in Jordan's *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*, Dikobe's *The Marabi Dance* and Sinxo's *uNojayiti Wam*. These are among the very few studies that attempt to break the walls of compartmentalisation that continue to divide the study of South African literature, and are in a sense precursors to the present study, which attempts to integrate the study of literature in indigenous languages with African literature in European languages. Jabavu's attempt to estimate the influence of English on African literature provides one with a possible explanation for the existence of parallels in the literatures of the countries under study. However the present study prefers the term "intertexuality" rather than "influence" in accounting for the sort of parallelism caused by borrowing or transposition (for further discussion of the term intertextuality, see the theoretical framework). Jabavu himself acknowledges the trickiness of the exercise of tracing the influence of one writer on the other when he says, "this procedure is at best a conjecture that may prove right or wrong" (1973, 4).

One other lesson, which the present writer has learnt from these studies is that common ground for comparison should be found because "it is pointless to compare dissimilar things, for the resulting conclusions will not have much value" (Roberts 1991,164). The novels that Nyamende compares are only remotely related as far as content is concerned. Generally, In *Ingqumbo Yemnyanya* Jordan bemoans the tragic consequences of acculturation, Sinxo in *uNojayiti Wam* satirises the distortion of the man's traditional role through Westernisation, while Dikobe's *The Marabi Dance* is a protest against the squalid conditions of Blacks in urban areas. Nyamende himself in Chapter 2 confirms the divergence of these writers' intentions when he gives the story lines of the three novels. A comparison of works that are remotely related in intentions

University of Cape Town

tends to focus on form rather than on content. That is why in the present study only those novels that show ideological affinities and variants will be compared within the same ideological category.

Satyo (1977) and Sirayi (1985) compare diverse aspects within the works of a single writer. Satyo's study "aims to give some perspective to the subject of the influence of oral traditions on Sinxo's three novellas, *uNomsa*, *uMfudisi Wase Mthuqwasi* and *uMzali Wolahleko*" (1977, vii), and focuses on folk traditions and creative writing, the structure of the plot, characterisation, social criticism and didacticism, and language and style. The object of Sirayi's dissertation is to identify and analyse some major themes to be found in Jolobe's poetry. The aspects he focuses on include humour, satire, and religious, political and philosophical thought.

The contribution of Satyo's and Sirayi's studies to the analysis of isiXhosa literature constitutes a watershed. The comparative approach they adopt allows them the latitude "to obtain greater insights into the [authors], their works [and] the societies which nurtured them" (Perera 1991, 497). The generalisations they arrive at served as an object lesson to me and confirmed my view that the use of a comparative method can lead to the identification of artistic principles, which can in turn inform future assessment of similar works. It is unfortunate that these scholars focused on single writers, because the monographic study of an individual writer, no matter how adroitly pursed, imposes an inevitable falsification through its very structure – an optical illusion of totality projected by what is in reality an artificial isolation.

1.3 THEORETICAL OR CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section provides the theoretical underpinnings that inform this study, defining and delineating the key concepts upon which it hinges. Theoretically this study is grounded in Jameson's Marxist paradigm. The choice of Jameson's Marxist theory is motivated by the awareness that although biting and sometimes unfair criticism has been levelled against Marxism by scholars such as Bolarin-Williams (1982) (who maintains that neo-Marxist efforts have a tendency to obscure analysis with "Stalinist vulgarities"), Jameson (1986) has been able adequately to defend it against these attacks.

University of Cape Town

In the preface to his book entitled *The Political Unconscious*, Jameson maintains that

> Marxism is here conceived as that 'untranscendable horizon' that subsumes such apparently antagonistic or incommensurable critical operations, assigning them an undoubted sectorial validity within itself and thus at once cancelling and preserving them.

He then sets out to validate this assertion and in the process dismisses most of the attacks levelled against Marxism (see 17-103). It is, however, Jameson's theoretical insights on ideology and aesthetics (and not his defence of Marxism) that is of particular relevance to this study. It is appropriate to turn now to a consideration of these insights.

1.3.1 Ideology

All three senses of the concept of ideology common in Marxist writing are included in Jameson's theorisation. He develops these senses so as to counter criticisms typically levelled against Marxism. Ideology is variously perceived as:

(i) A system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group;

(ii) a system of illusory beliefs – false ideas or false consciousness – which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge;

(iii) the general process of the production of meanings and ideas (Williams 1985, 55).

Jameson develops the first sense by introducing three terms he borrows from Saussure: "parole", "langue" and "ideologeme", which help clarify the relationship between literature and ideology. He uses the term parole to designate an individual text or individual cultural artefact, and langue to signify that much vaster system of class discourse. He explains that langue is organised around minimal units he terms ideologemes. He defines an ideologeme as "a concept or a belief system, an abstract value, an opinion or prejudice – or as protonarrative, a kind of ultimate class fantasy about the 'collective characters' which are classes in opposition" (1986, 87). Jameson's conceptualisation of ideology begins with the premise that "for Marxism the content of class ideology is relational in the sense that its 'values' are always actively in a situation with respect to the opposing class and defined against the latter" (1986, 84).

University of Cape Town

Jameson's theoretical insights concerning the first sense of the term of ideology are of particular pertinence to this study, in that they allow for the division of the novels (paroles) under study (via the ideologemes they contain) into three ideological divisions (langues): nationalism, liberalism and revolutionary ideology. Situating works on the same ideological terrains makes comparison possible because "it is only by doing so that their differences, similarities and so their unique identities, can be established" (Eagleton 1978, 100). The recognition that the individual text is not able to contain all the units (ideologemes) of the langue helps to avoid the tendency common in what Eagleton (1976, 17) terms "vulgar Marxist criticism", which sees literary works as mere expressions of the ideologies of their time, in which case the task of a critic is to simply match the text with its ideological world view.

Jameson's use of the term ideologeme in literary criticism involves the task of identifying and inventorying ideologies found in individual utterances; it also entails understanding that in literature the raw material of the ideologeme undergoes a complex work of transformation. Macherey (1980, 62) reiterates the importance of this other task of a critic when he says: "The text is not a tissue of illusions which has merely to be unravelled if we wish to understand its power . . . It is an illusion interrupted, realised, completely transformed". He then asserts that a critic should not ignore the labour of elaboration which produces the text from the raw material. That is why this study focuses on both ideology and aesthetics.

Jameson further compounds the task of the critic by arguing that ideology should be analysed as the antagonistic dialogue of class voices. This implies that in this study the novels under review will be analysed in terms of their polemic and subversive strategies against colonial ideology. Jameson's conception of ideologemes as the raw material upon which authors work in producing their texts suggests that:

> Literary works are not mysteriously inspired or explicable simply in terms of their author's psychology. They are forms of perception, particular ways of seeing the world; and as such they have a relation to that dominant way of seeing the world, which is the social mentality or ideology of an age.

The text's necessary relation to "the dominant way of seeing the world" is an aspect of the perception that "all writing is a collage of other writings of language and of tradition"

University of Cape Town

(Charney 1978, xvi). This in turn introduces the concept of "intertexuality" as coined by Julia Kristeva (1984, 60), which denotes the transposition of one (or several) sign-system(s) into another. The term includes borrowing (from literary and non-literary systems) or allusion, but also every conceivable unconscious citation (Selden 1988, 401). Kristeva (1984, 60) warns that the term intertexuality should not be "understood in the banal sense of study of sources", because the transposed signifying systems have been interrupted, realised, shattered and completely transformed in their new environment.

The second sense of ideology (as a system of illusory or false ideas, false consciousness) has occasioned the criticism that ideological analysis common in Marxism is a futile exercise because it does not advance the search for truth, focusing as it does on illusory beliefs or false ideas. The falseness of the ideas that constitute an ideology stems from the perception that ideology is an "instrument, witting or unwitting, of class domination, legitimation and social mystification" (Jameson 1986, 282). Jameson (ibid., 289) neutralises this criticism (and in the process justifies one of the foci of the present study) by arguing that all ideology "in the strongest sense . . . is in its very nature Utopian", explaining as follows:

> All class consciousness of whatever type is Utopian insofar as it expresses the unity of a collective; yet it must be added that this proposition is an allegorical one. The achieved collectivity or organic group of whatever kind – oppressors as much as oppressed – is Utopian not in itself but only insofar as all such collectives are themselves figures for the ultimate concrete collective life of an achieved Utopian or classless society. (Ibid., 291).

In this way Jameson argues that both negative and positive connotations co-exist in the term ideology. In fact, although he concedes that there is a negative Marxist hermeneutic, he argues that this is not, "as widely thought, one of false consciousness but rather one of structural limitation and ideological closure" (ibid., 52).

The third sense of ideology, in terms of which it is perceived as the general process of the production of meanings and ideas, has provoked criticism of Marxism as "economism", "determinism" and "reductionism" (Thompson 1978 and Sahlins 1976). This attack stems from the base and superstructure metaphor that originates from Marx's epistemological position as reflected in a passage from the 1859 preface (see Marx 1973,

University of Cape Town

30). Jameson wards off this criticism by embracing the concept of "mediation", which he defines as "the classical dialectical term for the establishment of relationship between, say, the formal analysis of a work of art and its social ground, or between the internal dynamics of the political state and its economic base" (ibid., 39). This means that there is no need to split hairs trying to argue for the primacy of base or superstructure because in this way the "state power [superstructure] is seen as the mere expression of the economic system [base] that underlies it . . . " (ibid., 39). Works of art are seen as the intertexts of underlying political and economic instances. As Texier (1979, 48) argues, even Gramsci's attempt to break with economistic Marxism – which earned him the reputation of being a major "theoretician of the superstructures" – could not completely annul the dialectical relationship between the infrastructure and superstructure:

> [Gramsci's] theory of superstructures is itself part of a wider complex which aims to take account of the dialectic of history in its totality . . . .The theory of the superstructures is therefore also a theory of the relations between infrastructure and superstructure, the theory of their unity and the "historic bloc" which they comprise.

Jameson's fusing of base and superstructure in a dialectical relationship, and his identification of this unity as the font from which ideas spring, serve to buttress the rationale that has been postulated for comparing Kenyan African literature in English with literature in isiXhosa from South Africa. For if there are parallels between the 'historic blocs' of Kenya and of South Africa, it is arguable that there should be some affinities in the literatures from these countries.

What Gramsci calls historic bloc is termed "History" by Jameson, and – unlike Barthes (1987, 55) who perceives history as just one code among others – Jameson (1986, 100) views it as "an interpretive code that includes and transcends all the others". Citing Marx et al. (1971, 8), he identifies the type of history his theory of the political unconscious focuses on as "the history of class struggles: freeman and slaves, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman – in a word, oppressors and oppressed – stood in constant opposition to one another . . . "

Similarly this study focuses on the history of the struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed, and since history "enters the text, not least the historical text, but enters it precisely as ideology", this thesis hinges on three ideologies (i.e. nationalism,

University of Cape Town

liberalism and revolutionary ideology) which the oppressed masses in Kenya and South Africa spawned in their struggle for liberation. The delineation of these three ideologies becomes pertinent at this stage.

Nationalism

This study adopts Smith's (1972, 171) definition of nationalism as "an ideological movement for the attainment of self-government and independence on behalf of a group, some of whose members conceive it to constitute an actual or potential nation like others". This definition is adopted because the aspirations and the corollaries it entails (i.e. self-rule and independence, integration and unity, cultural individuality, autarchy, prestige and power) are to be found in the strands of nationalism manifested in the literatures of the countries under study. Furthermore Smith's theory (based on this definition) of how nationalism arises as a reaction to what he terms the "scientific state" serves to support the view adopted in this study that ideologies are best construed in terms of the antagonistic dialogue of class voices.

Smith (1972, 231) defines a scientific state as "a polity, which seeks to homogenise the population within its boundaries for administrative purposes by utilising the latest scientific techniques and methods for the sake of efficiency". Consequently the state believes that it has an 'interventionist' role in the affairs of people, "on the grounds that it alone can raise the living standards of the population, educate them, unify them, give them a sense of pride and well-being and administer public affairs in a rational and calculative manner" (ibid., 231-32). Smith argues that the scientific state arose historically from empires and possessive states. From empires it inherited two features: conquest and cosmopolitanism. In empire building, conquest leads to the adoption of a policy of segregation in which the conquerors form a dominant caste and monopolise all the high status positions in the empire. When the policy of conquest segregation proves unfeasible, the empire then adopts a policy of cosmopolitan assimilation, which allowed the conquered people to contribute and be absorbed by the culture and religion of their conquerors. On the other hand, what the possessive state bequeathed to the scientific state are the personalist levelling and homogenising features which reduce the acquired

University of Cape Town

countries into "personal possessions of their rulers, client polities of individuals whose resources and population could be harnessed for personal political ends" (Smith 1972, 233).

The co-existence of conquest segregation, cosmopolitan assimilation and personalist levelling or homogenisation in the scientific state means that, with its imposition, communities which had previously enjoyed political, economic and cultural independence are plunged into disaster. The scientific state ruthlessly touches every sector of these communities' life – war, administration, taxation, communications, trade, education, security, law and morals, even aesthetic taste and fashions. It completely undermines their beliefs, practices, precepts and organisation. Colonisation is without doubt one way in which scientific states were established. From our present point of vantage, the central event of modern African history has been the colonization of the continent by European powers. Whatever regional variations there have been in the nature and intensity of the trauma suffered by indigenous Africans, the discourse of Africans on colonialism and its effects has been remarkably homogeneous, even monolithic. As historic narrative this discourse is a story of conquest, dispossession and plunder; of humiliation and dehumanization; of resistance; of revolt and triumphant repossession; sometimes succeeded by disillusion.

Said (1990, 72) identifies three determinants of colonialism: cultural, economic and political propellants. He writes:

> My own theory... is that culture played a very important, indeed indispensable role. At the heart of European culture during the many decades of imperial expansion lay what could be called an undeterred and unrelenting Eurocentrism... This cultural process has to be seen if not as the origin and cause, then at least as the vital, informing, and invigorating counterpoint to the economic and political machinery that we all concur stands at the center of imperialism.

Following Althusser (1993, 17) these are going to be called ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) in this study and thus there will be the cultural ISA, the economic ISA and the political ISA. For this research cultural ISA includes what Althusser designates as the religious and educational ISAs because his theory allows for reorganization of the realities that appear in his empirical list as reflected in his comment that "I propose an

University of Cape Town

empirical list of these which obviously have to be examined in detail, tested, corrected and reorganized" (Althusser 1993, 17). In my list I have included economic ISA, which does not appear in his for the same reason. In the colonial context the function of these ideological state apparatuses was to establish and sustain relations of colonial domination. These ideological state apparatuses are similar to what Smith (1982) (as quoted above) terms, cosmopolitan assimilation, personalist levelling or homogenization and conquest segregation features of a scientific state.

The cultural ISA served to legitimate the power of the colonisers and made the oppression and exploitation of blacks by whites seem 'natural' (Eagleton 1989, 5). The colonizers were fully cognizant that "it is generally within the culture that we find the seed of opposition, which leads to the structuring and development of liberation movement" (Cabral 1973, 42). That is why they set out to distort, defame and destroy the cultures of the Africans. Part of this task was in the capable hands of the missionaries. Through religion and education they undermined African culture and made European culture appear most admirable. In the words of Fanon " the Christian missionary and his religion functioned as a special ideological DDT to destroy the native parasites (Gugelberger 1985, 51). To missionaries - conversion, education and civilization were synonymous and were to replace traditional values. This cultural ISA constituted a process of depreciating the traditional culture, and its effect was the degrading of the Old in deference to the apparently irreconcilable New. It inflicted greater damage on the African personalities than the colonizer's gun. According to Rodney (1974, 249) like Christianity, "colonial education corrupted the thinking and sensibilities of the African and filled him with abnormal complexes". The complexes developed in the African psyche as a result of this "persuasive" onslaught on indigenous cultures, have proved difficult to remove, even after the gaining of political independence.

Many Africans embraced Christianity not because they were convinced by the message, but only because they hoped to gain some material benefits from it. Being a member of a Christian church opened many doors for an African. The admission of one to a hospital or a mission institution depended on one's acceptance of Christianity. Africans were therefore indirectly coerced into accepting Christianity. If the mere acceptance of Christianity was all that the missionaries wanted, there would have been no

University of Cape Town

problem, but accepting Christianity involved many obligations. For anyone to be a Christian, he or she had to denounce by word and deed his or her traditional religion and culture. Polygamy, which was a common practice in Africa, was condemned and all converts were to refrain from such 'heathen' practices. Christianity and ancestral rituals were considered irreconcilable and all who accepted the Christian faith were to dissociate themselves from their ancient beliefs. The converts were encouraged to desecrate all African shrines, and to do away with traditional customs, whether good or bad. The campaign led by the Church of Scotland Mission for instance in a conference of Allied of Protestant Missions in 1929 required that "all those associated with them to stop condoning or practicing female circumcision (clitoridectomy), performed just before puberty and seen by missionaries as 'wholly evil'..." (Sicherman 1990, 63). African converts were also encouraged to sever all connections with their 'pagan' brothers. An uncompromising attitude, which bordered upon fanaticism, was inculcated in the minds of all converts. These and many other precepts were to be the code of Christian conduct and draconian measurers would be taken against all who dared to neglect these mores.

It was these obligations which created great controversy, confusion and suffering amongst Africans. Little imagination is needed to conceptualize the traumatic experience that a husband suffered when he was forced to choose one wife out of many and expel his children together with their mothers. This discontent was made acute by the discovery that David and many other great figures of the Bible were polygamists. It was also very difficult for Africans to dissociate themselves from ancestral rituals for they were taught from a very tender age that the neglect of ancestors will inevitably lead to their wrath, a situation which any sane African would labour to avoid. The denunciation of the ancestral rituals as a condition of Christian fellowship caused many Africans to resort to hypocrisy. Customs like circumcision and clitoridectomy had a vital psychological effect on Africans and their abolition without replacing them with more viable moral supports created a gap in the development of the personality. Many were haunted by a deep sense of incompleteness and incompetence. A good number of converts (such as S E K Mqhayi see *UMqhayi waseNtabozuko*, 58) could not endure this and therefore went through these rituals even when that meant incurring the anger of the missionaries. Some African creative writers write with the sole intention of portraying in bold negative terms the

University of Cape Town

image of an African convert: his lack of confidence in himself; hypocrisy; credulity; unbridled and unquestioning enthusiasm; loss of identity and independence and hatred of his fellowmen, are often objects of severe ridicule and cynical criticism.

Smith postulates that the whole process of the debasement of African culture acts as a springboard for the development of nationalism. Singling out ethnic nationalistic movements (i.e. those that use culture in staking out their claim of nationhood), he posits that the reaction of communities to scientific state, particular of the intelligentsia, is likely to take one of the following four forms: traditionalist, assimilationist, reformist and revivalist. These reactions are of particular pertinence to this study because they are going to be used in differentiating the strands of nationalism manifested in the literatures under review, and in designating some characters in the novels that transpose ideologemes from nationalism. The traditionalist reaction to the scientific state is to deny its value and portray it as sinful. The traditionalist "is a man who has understood the costs and implications of accepting modernisation, and found them too high for the benefits offered by the new devil – the scientific state"; he rejects modernisation and affirms his culture and traditional cosmic image (ibid., 238). The negritude philosophy, which is a form of ethnic nationalism, can be categorised as a traditionalist reaction to scientific state because it asserted African identity and culture and sought to discredit the West in all its materialist splendour.

The second reaction is the assimilationist. To an assimilationist the scientific state has rendered his gods impotent, so he denounces and rejects his culture and traditional cosmic image in favour of the scientific state, which to him has been made to appear the only effective authority. Novels that revolve around ideologemes from traditionalist and assimilationist reaction will not receive attention in this study, although traditionalist and assimilationist characters will be analysed because they are present in novels of reformist reaction, which is the subject matter of Chapter Two of this thesis. The reformist reaction, which for the purpose of this study is the most important, acknowledges twin sources of authority – the traditional cosmic order and the scientific state – but instead of opting for either, tries to reconcile them in such a way as to avoid the traumatic consequences of the invasion of the traditional order by the scientific state. This reaction gives rise to polycentric nationalism, whose exponents believe that "the other groups do

University of Cape Town

have valuable and genuinely noble ideas and institutions which are worth borrowing or adapting" (Smith 1972, 159). Marronage is a good example of this reformist nationalism. Cesaire coined the term at the time of his resignation from the communist party (because of its adherence to narrow conception of social realism and its distrust of modernism), when he advised Despetre and all black writers to turn to "marronage" (Wylie 1982, 48).

The concept of marronage comes from "marron", a term used for an escaped slave who attempts to combine the elements of African culture with those of European culture to fight his oppressors. Wylie (ibid., 49) explains marronage as a "bridge between the past tradition, primitivism and future modernism, technology and socialism". He maintains "marronage lets me be myself in weaving together the best elements of my ancestral past with facts of my present situation". The basis of marronage is that "no race possesses the monopoly of beauty, intelligence, force, and there is room for all of us at the rendezvous of victory" (Biko 1978, 61). Although the prospects of reformist nationalism seem good, this response to the scientific state has its shortcomings, which have given rise to the revivalist reaction. Firstly, in many instances where marronage has been attempted in both real and literary worlds, the tendency has been for elements of the scientific state to remain dominant, particularly because of its material advantage. Secondly, the reformists have often failed to agree on the criteria for modernising their traditional cosmic order and adapting it to the present needs, while at the same time "conserving and protecting a core of values within the old heritage intact from outside corroding influences" (Smith 1972, 251). Thirdly, the eclectic universalism of this reformist reaction leads to a cosmopolitan and non-nationalist outlook.

The failures of this reformist reaction, which Smith (ibid., 247) terms "rationalist reformism", give rise to what he calls "historic reformism" whose exponents are "revivalists". In contrast with the tendency in rationalist mould of conceding too much of the core values of the old heritage, the revivalists seek to conserve and salvage as much as possible of the communal tradition in order to regenerate the people spiritually. They search for the "essence in the golden age of communal splendour... to hold up to [their] fellow men the purity of the past as a mirror for their glorious future and an indictment of their shameful present". A typical example of this revivalist nationalism is the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa, whose objective was *inter alia* to "rewrite the

University of Cape Town

history of black men and to produce in it the heroes who form the core of the African background and relate the past to the present" (Biko 1978, 29). Again, this study will not focus on literary works in the revivalist mode, but will scrutinise revivalist characters who appear in novels that belong to the reformist mode.

The inclusion of nationalism in this study calls for some justification, since many humanists, modernists and Marxists have denounced the phenomenon as "an essentially nasty ideological formation" (During 1994, 139). My response to this would be Jameson's (1986, 298) position that:

> all nationalism is both healthy and morbid. Both progress and regress are inscribed in its genetic code from the start... [and] that a left which cannot grasp the immense Utopian appeal of nationalism... can scarcely hope to re-appropriate such collective energies and must effectively doom itself to political impotence.

One might also question the wisdom of including in this study novels, which are informed by ethnic nationalistic movements (i.e. movements that use culture in staking out their claims of nationhood) that have been labelled and dismissed as not "progressive". Ngugi (1982, 46) for instance argues that "in a capitalist society the past has a romantic glamour; gazing at it [as these novels tend to do] ... is often a means of escaping the present". He maintains that to elaborate an image of pre-colonial Africa as a kind of prelapsarian paradise is to provide only a symbolic solution to colonialism's legacy, the very real problems which face Africans today. To him a retreat into the past may be a first and necessary step in the reconstruction of a viable cultural identity, but to dwell nostalgically on the past can be a dangerous refusal of history itself; one can never go back in time. Cabral (1973, 63) has pointed out that critique at the level of culture alone is not sufficient: he argues that there is no historical value in the return to the source if it does not advance the independence struggle and identify with the hopes of those who want the removal of foreign domination as a whole, not just foreign culture. According to Ngugi and Cabral the African writer must contest not only a warped view of his own culture but also an entire economic system (capitalism), because the white man "can easily concede to your black pride, give you the freedom to dance while he manipulates you from the position of political and economic strength" (Mphahlele 1974, 93). Furthermore, "cultural imperialism is only an outward superstructural manifestation

University of Cape Town

of economic imperialism. The crucial task of Africa is economic [and political] liberation" (Amuta 1989, 74).

My response to this is that perceived political 'incompetence' should not be sufficient ground for the blanket dismissal of a literary text. Some of these texts should be praised for their realistic and impressive attempts to dramatise and explain aspects of African (historical) experience. In this I have the support of Bolarin-Williams (1981, 76), who maintains that "to prematurely dismiss works [such as these novels]... with such vulgar materialist shibboleths as 'reactionary', 'unprogressive', etc. is to refuse to come to terms with their internal dynamic, the totality of the conditions of their production, and hence to paradoxically check-mate art and artists". A second point is that one should be wary of anachronism and give due attention to historical context. The kind of radical political and ideological analysis on which author and critic can draw today was perhaps not available to these writers at the time of writing. What they wrote responded appropriately to the felt needs and interests of their community at that time.

Liberalism

Webster's *Third New International Dictionary* (1303) defines liberalism as:

> A political philosophy based on the belief in progress, the essential goodness of man and the autonomy of the individual and standing tolerance and freedom for individual from arbitrary authority in all spheres of life [especially] by protection of political and civil liberties and for government under law with the consent of the governed.

These estimable theoretical commitments caused liberalism to exert considerable influence on African politics and literature. At the same time, its practical tenets such as gradualism, qualified franchise, non-violence and laissez-faire benevolence made its name an anathema to Africans. Gradualism expresses the liberal optimism that progress will be steady but piecemeal and gradual; central to gradualism is the principle of qualified franchise, which is based on the liberal credo of "equal rights for all civilised men" (Gerhart 1979, 7). Africans perceived this approach to be a hypocritical trick aimed at perpetuating colonial privilege. Non-violence is another principle preached by liberals.

University of Cape Town

Alan Paton, for instance, continued to propagate the use of non-violence even after the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 when it became clear that non-violent struggle was ineffective against the intransigent white minority regime. In 1964 he still maintained that:

> Any person who while a member of the Liberal party plans to use violence against things or persons is not only guilty of an offence against the law, he is also guilty of grave disloyalty to the Party. He may burn against injustices to others, and burn to set them right. He may be a zealot. He may be dedicated to the cause but he is not a liberal. (1)

Mphahlele (1974, 50) jeers at the ineffectiveness of liberal strategies and asks: "what did they achieve in the quarter-of-a century that they railed and begged and threatened and waved sheets of statistics in the faces of a bunch of fascists in the houses of parliament? What did they achieve more than a mere registration of protests?" The efficacy of violence, which liberals condemned, will be discussed later under the rubric of revolutionary ideology. Here it will suffice to say that Africans saw it as lunacy to continue using a strategy, which for decades brought nothing but more repression.

Another belief central to the doctrine of liberalism is that the market place has the ability to diffuse racial discrimination. Liberals in South Africa for instance believed that certain aspects of the oppression of blacks by whites could be undermined by the power and pull of the market place. They pointed to the urbanisation and the gradual incorporation of Africans into the economy as the result of a powerful economic force capable of breaking down the barriers of segregation. Liberal economists believed in an open market economy where everybody is free to compete against one another. But a laissez-faire economy presupposes that all are able to compete on equal terms and thus wishes away the disparities within class-based society. Furthermore, it is argued that the "interference of the state in the creation and distribution of wealth is likely, for reasons of selfishness and ignorance, to result in misappropriation and inefficiency" (Manning 1976, 19). This view cuts across the demand of the oppressed masses for the redistribution of wealth. The haves are assured of their dominant position and the have-nots are doomed to a position of subordination, as men cannot compete unless they are in a position to do so. No wonder that left wing organisations and intellectuals in South

University of Cape Town

Africa have incessantly upbraided liberals for their habit of condemning the immorality of racism while suppressing the historical complicity of South African capitalism in the entrenchment of apartheid.

The other principle, which is part of the core doctrine of liberalism, is a belief in benevolence – the powerful sentiment of sympathy or social feelings among people. According to this belief man is basically good; to make him desist from evil is simply a matter of education. The liberal strategy of railing at racism, decrying injustices and "wav[ing] sheets of statistics in the faces of a bunch of fascists in the houses of parliament" is based on the belief that the good-naturedness of man is going to prevail over racist bigotry and economic considerations (Mphahlele, 1974, 50). But all these attempts at educating whites proved to be futile, because as long as men are divided into masters and servants, owners and workers, rich and poor, exploiters and the exploited, equity is just a pipe dream.

In spite of tenets such as these, which are repugnant to Africans, liberalism has exerted much influence on African politics and literature. This is partly due to the fact that liberalism has admirable theoretical commitments that can be traced back to the Declaration of the Rights of Man in France. The following are extracted from that document:

1. Men are born free and equal. Social distinctions should not be found except on common usefulness.
2. The aim of every political association is the conservation of the natural and unassailable rights of man. These rights are liberty, security and the right of resisting oppression.
3. All sovereignty resides essentially with the nation. Nobody and no individual may exercise authority, which does not come from the nation.
4. Liberty consists in the power to do everything, which does not interfere with others. The exercise of natural rights by each man had only one boundary – the enjoyment of the same rights by other members of the society. These rights can only be determined by law.
5. The law is the expression of the *volunte generale*. All citizens have the right to assist, personally or by their representatives, in the making of laws. Law should be the same for all whether it protects or whether it punishes. All citizens are equal in its eyes and are equally admissible to all honours, positions and public employment, according to their capacity and without further distinctions than those of character and talents.
6. There shall be no arbitrary arrest.
7. All men are innocent until proven guilty.

University of Cape Town

8. There shall be liberty of conscience.
9. Freedom of speech and press are guaranteed (Sidorsky 1970,163-4).

Liberals worldwide have changed and adopted certain positions within this Declaration to suit their different social and economic circumstances, although the fundamental conception of individual liberty has remained largely unchanged in most liberal programmes. The history of the arrival and stay of the white man in Africa testifies to the outrageous violation of these essential liberties. It is arguable that the worst evil brought to Africa by colonization was the capitalist economic system, and the laws that were passed during the colonial era to impose a capitalist economy provide specific and glaring evidence of this. While the implementation of the new system ruthlessly tore at every fibre of African life, the dispossession of Africans was felt most keenly in the related areas of land and labour.

The development of the colonial labour system can generally speaking be divided into two phases which were equally exploitative. The first phase was characterized by coercion. When colonial rule was firmly entrenched in the colonies, there arose a need for labour to facilitate administration. Roads, railways and administrative buildings were to be built. Since the Europeans "[would] not do manual labour in a country inhabited by black races" (Davidson 1981, 107), it became imperative for the colonizers to secure African labour. Africans were understandably unwilling to work for the Europeans for various reasons. One reason was that the wounds caused by wars of dispossession and the imposition of colonial rule were still fresh in their minds (see below).

Another reason was that the idea of working for another man was foreign to the traditional African economy, which provided every man with basic human needs like food, shelter, warmth, freedom. Intoxicated by victory and impelled by the need for African labour, the colonizers decided on coercion. Characteristically they then tried to camouflage the atrocities which accompanied this type of recruitment by giving it the name of 'contract labour'. In this way and many others what Althusser terms an economic ideological state apparatus (ISA) was developed. In spite of all their attempts to mask the brutality involved in this type of recruitment, the calamities spoke louder. For instance, among the 127 250 'fit adult males' recruited in this way to build the

University of Cape Town

French equatorial stretch of railway known as Congo-Ocean, 10 200 deaths were reported (Davidson 1981, 108).

Nonetheless, with all the evils that this phase of colonial labour system brought about, it turned out to be just a prelude to a more hypocritical, destructive, unjust and oppressive phase. This is the phase in which taxation was used to force Africans to work for the Europeans. This strategy of extracting labour was initiated in South Africa, where the demand for African labour grew day by day because of the discovery of valuable minerals. Thus in 1894, through the Cape Colony Act, a tax in cash was imposed on 'fit adult males'. About the implications of this Act Davidson (1981, 110) says: "to pay cash taxes Africans would have to earn cash; almost invariably in that period this meant leaving their villages for European employment". The example set by South Africa was soon followed by other colonies. In Kenya a hut tax and poll tax were imposed for the same purpose.

This strategy, as intimated above, not only forced Africans to work for wages and contribute to the cost of being governed but also gave birth to the most detestable system of migrant labour. The permanent absence from their homes of most "fit adult males" had detrimental effects on the traditional economy, for the European mines and farms were absorbing the manpower that is the pillar of any economy. This system of extracting labour was by no means the only method used in forcing Africans to leave their villages and seek employment in the farms and cities. The missionaries – in the words of Dr Phillip – "by creation of artificial wants" played a part in this. These artificial wants made many abandon their villages to go and work in the cities. It was, however, the colonial system of land distribution which dealt the most serious blow to the harmony of village life.

Early land expropriation and subsequent land Acts such as the Natives Land Act of 1913 in South Africa and the notorious Labour Acts of 1919 in Kenya were designed to reduce the Africans' land units so that as many Africans as possible would be left without means of support and thus form a reservoir of cheap labour. Possessed by the desire to tame Africa the white man indulge in the reckless and wholesale destruction of forests whose products met numerous household needs in traditional Africa. Some forests were declared government property and Africans who from time immemorial had

University of Cape Town

enjoyed free access to the forests were now expected to pay in order to get wood from them. Fertile lands that Africans used for crop growing were seized by the intruder, who cited as a 'rational justification' for his action the African's supposed inability to govern himself and develop the full potential of the land. These Acts had a disastrous outcome for Africans, whose political, social, religious and economic livelihood depended on land. Through them the whole traditional order was disorganized. The expropriation of fertile land from the Africans achieved by these land Acts, rendered many homeless and landless, reduced them to destitution and forced them to migrate to the cities. Misery was the lot of wives who were left behind in the barren, denuded, congested, overstocked and eroded Native Locations and Reserves.

The colonial governments which legislated Africans out of their villages through Land Acts, Labour Acts and taxation, subsequently regulated them into servitude on the farms owned by white white men through pass laws, Master and Servant's Ordinances, Resident Native Ordinances and other measures. These laws gave the white farmers virtually unlimited power over their servants, and gruesome ill-treatment, humiliation and exploitation abounded. These laws provided for the virtual enslavement, by contract, not only of the men but also of their wives, children and livestock. Through this system their masters and their overseers physically and sexually assaulted labourers' wives and children, as there was "no provision made to protect them against molestation, while at work, by their employer or his overseers" (Gicaru 1958, 58).

In the cities, too, blacks were tortured, starved, arrested, exploited, humiliated and discriminated against. Just like farm labourers, Africans in the cities were expected to always carry their passes. The humiliation that Africans suffered because of these passes defies description. An African had to carry this pass wherever he went. In Kenya this was called "kipande". It was put inside a metal case and every African was expected to tie it around his neck or waist; hence Kenyans called it "mbugi" or "goat's bell" (Gicaru 1958, 60).

Of all the white man's cunning machinations to frustrate Africans in the cities, so-called "slum clearance" is amongst the worst. As might be expected, the white man gave 'good reasons for inflicting such physical and psychological pain on Africans. The living conditions of Africans in the slums were understandable horrible. The white man,

University of Cape Town

who through his economic system had condemned Africans to such a squalid life, then pretended to be concerned about the black man's fate and so enforced "slum clearance". It is arguable that the real reason for slum clearance was "the fear of having plague beds in the immediate vicinity of European population" (Lacey 1981, 250). The fact that the 'townships' built by the government in the new segregated location far away from white settlements were not different from slums is more evidence that slum clearance was actually intended to further disadvantage the black man. Those whose houses in the slum areas were demolished received little or no compensation. They were not allowed to own houses in these new locations as they had in the slum areas.

Protest literature responds to and records the oppression, exploitation, destitution and dehumanization of blacks, which the Acts mentioned above legalized. The themes – the hazards of looking for a job, prison life, farm life, beer brewing and selling, police brutality, etc. – attest to protest writers' preoccupation with the harassment of blacks by whites occasioned by the imposition of colonial capitalism. In this study I submit that the content and form of so-called 'protest literature' owes much to liberalism. Both the primary and secondary aims of protest literature reflect this influence. The primary aim of protest writers is to appeal to the conscience of the white man, to get him to remove the chains of colonial oppression. This aim is premised on a belief in benevolence, the liberal faith in the powerful sentiment of sympathy or social feeling among people. The secondary aim, which is to arouse indignation in Africans and galvanize them into political awareness conducive to their joining the active struggle for political and economic liberation, is based on the assumption that men act in their own interest as far as they know. The duty of the writer in this case is to make the Africans' interests known to them; the rest will happen automatically. As far as the form of protest literature is concerned Ndebele (1986, 144) maintains, "The overwhelming form is the method of displaying the culture of oppression to the utmost in bewilderment". He terms this display of the culture of oppression "spectacular representation"(ibid., 144). In summing up the characteristics of the spectacular, he says:

> The spectacular documents, it indicts implicitly, it is demonstrative, preferring exteriority to interiority; it keeps the larger issues of society in our minds, obliterating the details; it provokes identification through recognition and feeling rather than through observation and analytical thought; it calls for

University of Cape Town

> emotion rather than conviction; it establishes a vast sense of presence without offering intimate knowledge; it confirms without necessarily offering a challenge.

As a result, Ndebele (1986, 150) denounces protest writing as "the literature of the powerless identifying the key factor for their powerlessness. Nothing beyond this can be expected from it". He points out that mere description of the spectacular ugliness of the plight of Africans in South Africa (characteristic of protest marches of liberals and the form of protest literature) is by no means automatically politically productive, for "knowledge of the existence of oppression does not necessarily enable one to fight it . . . People, without being actually organized, will not necessarily go out to fight for their rights" (ibid., 152). Lewis Nkosi (1962, 19) has condemned this literature as "the journalistic fact parading outrageously as imaginative literature", while Mphahlele (1972, 17) has also deprecated the sort of protest writing which he characterises as "sheer exhortation, a facile rejection and therefore... not memorable speech".

My argument is that protest literature can be very effective when the author succeeds in striking a balance between medium and message, form and content, aesthetics and ideology. In fact the above-mentioned critics also point to the possibilities of a literature, which goes beyond the simplifications of spectacle to what Ndebele (1986, 143) terms "the rediscovery of the ordinary", or what Mphahlele (1983, 14) calls "a memorable act of language with transcendental possibilities". They all agree that the success or failure of a protest writer depends on his ability or inability to strike a balance between making the text a mere vehicle for a message and treating the text as an end in itself. When an author adopts either of these extremes his purposes may be defeated. If on the one hand he decides to make the dramatization of his message his major concern then his work may "reduce, over-simplify or trivialize complex issues" (Cornwell 1979, 67). He may indeed succeed in awakening the conscience of his readers, but as Krausnick puts it: "a sleepy conscience is like a sleepy man: if a man is shaken hard enough he will wake up and then after one or two half-waking moments he will quickly go to sleep again" (Frazer 1976, 94). What is needed is to make the readers fully understand the situation, which is under attack for it to have any meaningful and lasting effect on them. According to Frazer (1976, 136-7):

University of Cape Town

> What is under attack must be grasped as firmly and as solidly as possible, which in turn means that it must have been observed precisely and in some real measure understood from the inside. Caricature and grotesquery may serve in a rough fashion in the task of identifying enemies, but their effect is likely to wear off with the passing of time.

On the other hand, if a protest writer chooses to follow the path of sympathy and balance, his readers will be made to so understand what is under the attack that revolutionary action is immobilised: "if the reader's conscience is transformed to the extent that it understands fully the social process that informs the hegemonic practice [it] will [not] retain the political will to destroy the agents of [the system]" (Mackenzie 1990, 18). The sympathetic portrayal of white characters as fully human, fellow victims of an impersonal political or economic system, for instance, might have this result. But a compromise between ideology and aesthetics will result in literature that documents imaginatively; that indicts explicitly; that is demonstrative but does not prefer exteriority to interiority; that keeps both the larger issues and the details in our minds; that provokes identification through recognition, feeling, observation and analytical thought; that calls for emotion and conviction; that establishes a vast presence and offers intimate knowledge; that confirms and offers challenge.

University of Cape Town

Revolutionary Ideology

The meaning of revolutionary ideology can be gleaned from Green's (1984, 15) definition of revolution:

> [It is] an alteration in the personnel, structure, supporting myth, and functions of government by the methods that are not sanctioned by the prevailing constitution. These methods almost invariably involve violence or threat of violence against elites, citizens or both... [It is] a relatively abrupt and significant change in the distribution of wealth and social status.

The supporting myth that Green mentions in this excerpt is what this study designates 'revolutionary ideology'. Revolutionary ideology is a supporting myth of revolution in that it is used to mobilise support for the revolution, to guide the revolution and to

legitimate it. The exposition of revolutionary ideology that follows will be arranged in terms of these three functions.

Revolutionary ideology mobilises people by articulating common grievances, presenting the demands of revolution in reasonable terms and appealing to the national sentiments of people in order to effect cross-cutting alliances between the different strata of the oppressed people. Generally, it is the causes of revolution that are used to mobilize revolutionary support. The causes of revolution are usually divided into two categories: "preconditions" and "accelerators" (Green 1984, 159). Preconditions or dysfunctions are circumstances that necessitate a revolution and precipitants or accelerators are events that spark revolution. For now the focus is going to be on preconditions, with discussion of accelerators following later.

Foreign control and cultural cleavage are examples of major factors that help create a setting for revolution. The very nature of foreign control makes it susceptible to opposition as it lacks legitimacy. It may take the form of a dynasty of kings, such as in Egypt during the time of Hykos, or of foreign rule, direct or indirect, as in the case of colonial Africa. Cultural cleavage is another common factor that contributes towards the creation of a revolutionary atmosphere. The Taiping rebellion in China, the coups d'etat that took place in Sierra Leone in 1967, 1968 and 1971, and the seventy-six race riots in America between 1913 and 1963, are just some examples of revolutionary activity in which cultural, race and ethnic cleavages played a major role. In all the anti-colonial revolutions, cultural and racial cleavages were at some point among the major contributory factors to the struggle for liberation.

In most cases where foreign control and cultural cleavage are among the prevailing conditions, appealing to the national identity of the oppressed is the most powerful symbolic means used by the revolutionary ideology in mobilizing revolutionary support, because nationalism has the potential for cutting across all the society's classes. Green (1984, 100) maintains that nationalism "can unite young and old, male and female, peasant and landowner, industrialist and worker, businessman and intellectual, the religious faithful and non believers, rich and poor, and people in the villages and in the cities".

University of Cape Town

Other factors that can contribute to preparing the ground for revolution are economic and political conditions and the question of land tenure. Unequal land distribution has been one of the underlying causes of revolution in countries such as Philippines in the 1950s, Russia in 1905, Mexico in 1900, South Vietnam after 1954 and Cuba before 1959. The process of expropriating African land was 'legitimized' by laws such as the Natives' Land Act of 1913 in South Africa and the Labour Act of 1919 in Kenya. These measures caused widespread dissatisfaction and distress, which later erupted in revolution. Related to the question of land tenure are prevailing economic conditions. Poverty coupled with economic inequality has been one of the underlying causes of peasant-based revolution in countries such as China, Mexico, Russia, Vietnam, Algeria and Cuba. Finally, political conditions also play a part in raising the revolutionary potential. In countries where the suffrage is extremely limited, industrial strikes are prohibited, trade unions are illegal and the welfare services of the state are almost non-existent, the potential for revolutionary action will be high.

Typically, then, in situations of unequal land distribution, economic inequality and political oppression, revolutionary ideology couches the demands of the oppressed people in liberal and reasonable terms in order to canvas internal and external support. In colonial Africa, for instance, black people generally demanded nothing more than equality with whites so as to show how well-meaning they were in their struggle for freedom. Considering the humiliation, oppression and exploitation that Africans suffered under colonial regime, they could have demanded the domination of whites by blacks out of sheer vengeance, but they rather clamoured for the abolition of all forms of racism. The mental and physical anguish suffered by Africans occasioned by the establishment and conservation of colonial political hegemony defies description.

Generally European colonizers consolidated their politically hegemonic position in Africa through brute force and racism. Said (1990, 72) confirms this view when he says that under colonialism: "All of the subjugated peoples had it in common that they were considered to be naturally subservient to a superior, advanced, developed, and morally mature Europe whose role in the non-European world was to rule, instruct, legislate, develop, and at the proper times to discipline, war against, and occasionally exterminate non-Europeans". Consequently the establishment and conservation of

University of Cape Town

colonial political domination cannot be regarded as having been achieved through any ideological state apparatus so much as through a repressive state apparatus, because Repressive State Apparatus "functions by violence whereas Ideological State Apparatuses function by ideology." (Althusser 1993, 19).

The colonizers started committing acts of violence from the day they set foot on African soil and continued to do so until Africans obtained their independence. Fanon (1968, 36) adverts to this when he says: "The first encounter [between blacks and whites] was marked by violence and their existence together – that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler – was carried on by the dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons". Like all imperialists the colonizers gave 'good' reasons for unleashing such violence against the black people of Africa. In South Africa cattle theft was the most commonly given reason for declaring war against the Xhosas who were described as "naturally insatiable beggars and thieves" by Stockenstroom (Mnguni 1952, 74). On the contrary, Maqoma argues that the Xhosas were acting out of a sense of survival: "after having taken our country from us you shut us up to starvation, you threaten us with destruction for thefts of those to whom you have left no choice but to steal or die by famine" (Majeke 1953, 31).

The system of treaties was also used as pretext for waging 'punitive and protective wars' against those tribes who did not sign treaties with the colonizers. The treaty between Ngqika and Somerset in 1817 was immediately followed by war in 1818 in which Somerset attacked Ndlambe, ostensibly to protect Ngqika. In 1890 Waiyaki wa Hinga signed a treaty with Lugard but when he perceived the actual intention of the British he attacked and burnt the British station at Dagoretti. For this Waiyaki was captured and buried alive at Kibwezi, while a punitive expedition was undertaken against Taita in southeastern Kenya which resulted in a massacre of many Kenyans, with only one casualty in the British force (Sicherman 1990, 45, 46).

Majeke (1953, 1) accurately observes that these treaties "were not treaties but cynical legalising of plunder", for through them large areas of fertile lands were confiscated. The purpose of compelling the Maasai to sign a treaty in 1904, for instance, was to permit "the whole of the Rift Valley... to be used by the Government for... European Settlement" (Sicherman 1990, 52). It is paradoxical that the missionaries who

University of Cape Town

are acclaimed as benefactors to Africans played a significant role in these treaties. In South Africa, for instance, Ngqika was persuaded by the Rev. Mr. Williams to sign the above-mentioned treaty with Somerset. The role played by missionaries in conquest made it very difficult for Africans to make a distinction between Christianity and subjugation; a mission and a fort; the priest and a soldier; the cross and the gun. The recurrence of the theme of the hypocrisy of missionaries in African literature attests to this.

To 'civilize the savage' is however the most hypocritical pretext used by colonisers to justify the invasion of Africa. This 'civilizing mission' was regarded as the sacred duty enjoined upon the Europeans by God. Even when they robbed Africans of their land, cattle and freedom, they felt justified if all this was done so as to civilise them, as one British official commented: "unless we are to abrogate our civilizing mission in Africa, such expeditions with their attended slaughter are necessary". The pillage that accompanied these wars exposes the fallacy of the civilizing mission of the colonizers About 1, 117 Africans were killed, many were wounded and 26, 000 cattle and 36,000 sheep were seized in 1905-6 when the British in Kenya moved against Nandi. In one day, April 23rd 1819, about 3, 000 Xhosa soldiers died in the fight to retain their freedom and land. The denunciation of the civilizing mission of the colonizers therefore became a recurrent theme in African literature. Mara is just one example of authors who attacked it: "Civililization, civilization, the pride of Europeans and the slaughter-house of the innocents... you build your kingdom on corpses. Whatever you do, is steeped in lies...you are not a torch, but a fire. Whatever you touch you devour" (quoted in Cook and Henderson 1969, 23).

The wars of conquest were followed by the imposition of white rule on Africans which was also enforced through brute force and justified as being essential for the well-being of Africans who were believed to be " bucolic people without reason, wit or skill and no experience of anything at all [who] lived like brute beasts without law or order" (Wauthier 1978, 46). Obviously this is not true for in traditional African communities a chief or a council of elders constituted government structures. These governing bodies were vested with power to pass and execute judgment, declare war and act as priests in religious rituals. They thus wielded great power in traditional societies.

University of Cape Town

Although the powers of these bodies were quite wide, law and custom, the power of counsellors, and the obligation to rule by public consent limited them. Thus Vambe (1972, 27) boasts that "as far as good government, peace and individual freedom went, the white man could have learnt many valuable lessons from the tribe".

Nevertheless the coloniser's myth drove him to strip the chiefs and other traditional ruling bodies of all their social and political powers and replace them with magistrates and other representatives of colonial authority. The traditional order therefore disintegrated and all those who clamoured for their traditional powers were labeled agitators who ought to be subdued, deposed and exiled. In their places the colonizers arbitrarily appointed new chiefs or governing bodies. Commenting on this practice, Awoonor (1976, 18) says: "chiefs once elected by the age-old methods of democratic selection from suitable claimants of royal clans, now had to be approved by the governor who also had the right to depose them when they acted contrary to British interest". Even for those who through the system of indirect rule were allowed to exercise their traditional functions, these were defined by the colonial jurisprudence. Since the colonial government also paid them, they inevitably became puppets of the colonizers. Africans in all walks of life were divested of all their human rights and freedom to order their lives in the manner they wished. This induced Kenyatta (1953, 212) to say:

> In the old order of African society, with all the evils that are supposed to be connected with it, a man was a man, and as such had the rights of man and liberty to exercise his will and thought in the direction which suited his purpose as well as those of his fellow-men; but today an African no matter what his station in life, is like a horse which moves only in the direction that the rider pulls

Worse still, colonial rule introduced discrimination and oppressive laws in which the value of a human being was measured by the colour of his skin, and these were enforced through the system of police, courts and military forces stationed in towns and forts. For the purpose of this study the term colonial government includes the apartheid regime in South Africa for "apartheid is one form of division into compartments of the colonial world". This study however acknowledges that there are some differences between apartheid and other forms of racial segregation, as Watts (1989, 10) points out when he says, "but the yawning difference [between apartheid and other forms of segregation] lies

University of Cape Town

in the fact that South Africa is the only country in the world to build up a structure of law and morality upon the admitted supposition that one race is superior and therefore entitled to all the privileges...".

The difference between apartheid and other forms of segregation falls outside the ambit of this research, which focuses on oppositional or competing ideologies such as nationalism, protest ideology and revolutionary ideology, rather than upon dominant ideologies, such colonial ideology and its apartheid variant. Suffice it to say that the laws (typical of Repressive State Apparatus) that were passed during the colonial Kenyan and apartheid South African eras provide specific and glaring evidence of the existence of racial discrimination. To mention a few: in respect of Kenya, Sicherman (1990, 47,48, 69) cites the following: the Registration of Natives Ordinance of 1920, which demanded that an African should carry "kipande" (an equivalent of a pass) to qualify for a job; Native Courts Regulations of 1897, which provided the Protectorate government "with powers of preventive detention and restriction of any person disaffected to the government...about to commit an offence against the regulations or conducting himself so as to be dangerous to peace and order"; the Vagrancy Regulations of 1898, which provided for the detention of Africans "asking for alms or wandering about without any employment or visible means of subsistence"; Collective Punishment Ordinance of 1909, which allowed the magistrate to impose fines on all natives of an area "if any of them [have] colluded with or harboured criminals"; Crown Lands Ordinance, Native Lands Trust Ordinance and two Kenya Orders in Council of 1938-39, which formally established the White Highlands as an exclusively European area.

South Africa of course with its apartheid form of colonial segregation, excelled in conceiving such laws. Marquard (1965, 24-26) mentions the following: the Native Labour Regulation Act of 1911; the Land Act of 1913; the Apprenticeship Act of 1922; the Urban Areas Act of 1923, and subsequent amendments; the Mines and Works Act of 1926 – the so-called "Colour Bar Act"; the Native Administration Act of 1927, and subsequent amendments; the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956; the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1927, and subsequent amendments; the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949; the Extension of University Education Act of 1959; the General Law Amendment Acts of 1962 and 1963; the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950.

University of Cape Town

Generally, the African liberation movements in Kenya and South Africa exploited the estimable theoretical commitments of liberal ideology, combining these with Africanist sentiments in spawning ideologies in opposition to the political Repressive State apparatus of colonialism so as to attract both external and internal support. The South African Native National Congress (arguably the first African nationalist organisation) formed by a group of African chiefs at Bloemfontein in 1912 showed signs of liberal influence (Gehart 1979, 12). The objectives set down in its constitution revealed that the Congressmen like liberals merely sought the extension of political rights to Africans as well as the removal of other forms of racial discrimination. The liberal influence remained even when the Congress was recast as the African National Congress. The 1919 constitution still emphasized that the objective of the organization was to remove racial discrimination through constitutional means (Robertson 1970, 28). Even the influence of the American Negro doctrine of Garveyism – "a separatist ideology based on race pride and black exclusiveness" embraced by Josiah Gumede who was the president of Natal wing of ANC in 1927 – could not deflect the liberal trajectory of ANC ideology (Lodge 1986, 8).

It was the establishment of the African National Youth League within the ANC which threatened to change the complexion of the ideology of the Congress. Members of the Youth League were sick and tired of the ANC's strategies of cap-in-hand deputations and constitutional methods of struggle, and wanted more radical strategies to be adopted. The organization was divided into two camps: the moderates and the militants, conservatives and radicals, or realists and rebels. Radicals such as Anton Lembede, who is arguably the principal architect of the first fully-fledged South African ideology of African nationalism, believed that "Africans are the natives of Africa and they have inhabited Africa their Motherland from times immemorial; Africa belongs to them" (Gehart 1979, 60). It was because of the ideological flexibility of the organization that it was jettisoned in 1947 by Ngubane (a Youth Leaguer), who perceived it as "an ideological omnibus stopping at every station to pick up all sorts of passengers". A compromise was struck and the liberal views of the realists and the radical sentiments of the rebels were accommodated. This ideological dualism manifested itself in the Bill of Rights Published in 1945. Although the bill of Rights included for the first time more

University of Cape Town

radical demands such as the insistence on one man one vote, these were made in a moderate tone and no threats or ultimatums were included (Robertson 1970, 31). Even liberation movements that massively embraced radical African nationalism such as the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) could not completely repudiate the liberal tinge in their ideological content, precisely for the reason mentioned above. However, since documentation of the ideologies of all liberation movements in South African falls outside the ambit of this research the influence of liberalism on these movements is not going to be analysed here. A brief discussion of ANC ideology has been included simply because it has a bearing on the analysis of Siyongwana's (a self confessed ANC Youth Leaguer) *Ubulumko Bezinja.*

In Kenya the liberation movements (as traced by Sicherman 1990, 58-86) also exploited the estimable theoretical commitments of liberal ideology, in framing the demands of the oppressed masses. In 1919 chiefs and Christians founded the Kikuyu Association (KA) "to oppose government alienation of land as well as forced labour, tax increases and proposed wage cuts". The liberal influence in KA became so great because its leaders had benefitted from British patronage that it did not challenge the basic governmental structures, and thus the East African Association (EAA) and Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) soon outstripped it. EAA – briefly known as the Young Kikuyu Association – was founded by Harry Thuku in 1921, and was the first group to use the traditional oathing (using goat's blood and meat instead of the Bible) for political purposes. This movement massively embraced the sentiments of African Nationalism and unlike its rival KA it "reject[ed] the fundamental premise of white rule". Its radical agenda included calls for Europeans to leave Gikuyuland, the refusal to work for Europeans and the rejection of the *kipande* by throwing *kipandes* on the lawn of Government House.

However, in line with liberal ideology (which employed protests and other non-violent methods of struggle) EAA's strategies – protest marches, demonstrations and general strikes – were also non-violent. After the great mass demonstration (with its attendant human slaughter) which demanded the release of Harry Thuku in March 1922, EAA was banned. It went underground and resurfaced two years later as KCA. KCA was also banned for its alleged propagation of a "secret oath describing the British as the

University of Cape Town

enemy". It also went underground and emerged as the Kenya African National Union, KANU, and in 1947 Kenyatta was elected as its president. Throughout this time the liberal influence remained strong in these movements, as seen in the fact that even the mass oathing in 1948 that developed into Mau Mau did not include any commitment to use violence. It was after the banning of the Mau Mau association in 1950 that the Mau Mau oath included the commitment to kill. Even then, although Mau Mau had adopted violent methods such as arson, cattle maiming and slaughtering nonviolent strategies such the civil disobedience, strikes and boycotts were still employed. So even here ideological dualism persisted until Kenya gained internal self-government in 1963.

Novels which can rightly be regarded as revolutionary writing are so preoccupied with these causes of revolution that Walker (1984, 4) could safely conclude that this body of writings:

> Depicts the struggle of Africans to affirm their humanity; it analyses and interprets the effects of the destruction of the indigenous cultural values, beliefs and practices of African people who have been ravaged by capitalism and racism; it seeks to combat the movement of the dispossessed into the pale shadow of alienation . . . It depicts a struggle to change the nature of the social institutions, modes of thought, and cultural practices that impede human societal growth.

In attempting to attain these ideals the writers of revolutionary literature are confronted with a fundamental problem of aesthetics, which is, "how far can commitment and propaganda function in a novel without violating the tenets of art?" (Perera 1991, 8). There is a considerable divergence of opinion on this matter. Some such as Amadi (1983, 37) are of the opinion that politics violates the tenets of art. He argues that "the question confronting us, therefore, is not whether writers ought or ought not to be committed, for that is dictated by circumstances. The question is whether the effect of commitment on literary quality is salutary", and concludes that "commitment is prostitution of literature" (ibid., 37).

Some writers such as Ngugi display an unapologetic affiliation to a certain ethical, moral, or political perspective. He for instance maintains:

> For the Kenyan artist, the most minimal step towards his own freedom is a total immersion in the struggles of Kenyan workers and peasants for the liberation of the products of their labour for the

University of Cape Town

> benefit of Kenyans. Imperialist foreign domination of a people's economy and culture is completely incompatible with freedom of the artist in the Third world. The pen may not always be mightier than the sword, but used in the service of the truth, it can be a mighty force. It is for the writers themselves to choose whether they will use their art in the service of the exploiting, oppressing classes and nations articulating their worldview or in the service of the masses engaged in a fierce struggle against human degradation and oppression. (1983, 69).

This study aligns itself with what might be called a middle position, such as that held by critics such as Glicksberg (1976, 24), Howe (1970, 20-1) and Ndebele (1989,47). These critics believe that there can be a happy marriage between literature and politics. Glicksberg argues that "there is no reason why the novelist or dramatist cannot respond to the challenge of politics and produce a work that is not ephemeral despite its concern with the issues of the day, or one that is not marred by the gratuitous intrusion of didactic or propagandistic impulse". Howe also believes that the writer is free to transpose material from politics, but should make sure that this material is woven into the texture of the novel and does not draw attention exclusively to itself. He maintains:

> For in modern society ideas raise enormous charges of emotion, they involve us in most feverish commitments and lead us to our most fearful betrayals. The political novelist may therefore have to take greater risks than most others, as must any artist who uses large quantities of "impure" matter; but his potential reward is accordingly all the greater. The novel to be sure is inconceivable without an effort to present and penetrate human emotion in its most private, irreducible aspects; but the direction in which the emotion moves, the weight it exerts, the objects to which it attaches itself are all conditioned, if not controlled, by the abstract thought.

Ndebele reiterates this view that whilst the writer is free to use propaganda in his writing he should remain an artist and not become a propagandist, because:

> The propagandist generally aims at immediate action. His intentions are entirely practical. The artist, on the other hand, although desiring action, often with as much passion as the propagandist, can never be entirely free from the rules of irony. Irony is the literary manifestation of the principle of contradiction. Its fundamental law for literary arts in particular, is that everything involving human society is in a constant state of flux; that the dialectic between appearance and reality in the conduct of human affairs is always

University of Cape Town

> operative and constantly problematic, and that consequently, in the representation of human reality, nothing can be taken for granted.

Revolutionary literature is not only influenced by the causes of revolution but also by the second function of revolutionary ideology, which is to guide the revolution. In fulfilling this second function, revolutionary ideology has to determine the type of leadership that is going to assume governance of the movement, the role of the followers, the form of organization it is to follow and the techniques that are to be used. These are what the revolutionary theorists call the characteristics of revolution (see Green 1984). As far as leadership is concerned, ideology has very little influence in determining who is going to lead the movement. According to a isiXhosa adage, *inkunzi ayibekwa iyazibeka*, which means leaders are not made but are born. The roles that leaders are expected to play at different stages of the revolution demand that they be people endowed with special abilities. The three stages of revolution (as identified by Leiden and Schmitt 1968) – the birth of revolution, the period of turmoil and the post revolutionary stage – each require different skills on the part of a leader.

Oratory skills and charisma are of major importance in the first stage of revolution, where mobilisation of the masses is crucial. Eloquence and impassioned rhetoric is needed at this stage to galvanize people into political activity. It is during this phase that slogans are formulated around common grievances to effect crosscutting alliances between the different strata of the oppressed people. To meet the challenge of the second stage of revolution the leader should be a man of courage, vision and iron will. This is the stage where different techniques of struggle with their various concomitants are to be adopted. The leader should therefore have the ability to kindle "the vision of a breathtaking future so as to justify the sacrifices of the present", and exhibit a determination to confront with courage all the hardships that the movement is to encounter in this stage (Hoffer 1958, 105). The third stage of revolution requires that the leader should have administrative acumen. Here, social policies promised during the first two stages should be formulated and implemented.

The role of ideology as far as leadership is concerned is to create an aura of heroism around the leader, to ensure that opposing forces do not hijack governance of the movement. In trying to ensure that the ideals of revolution are not frustrated, ideologies

University of Cape Town

of the Left (Marxism and its variants) make provision for the creation of the revolutionary vanguard. The vanguard facilitates the involvement of many minds in the leadership of the movement so that a variety of talents can be tapped. The vanguard also ensures that in the event of the death of the leader the revolutionary process is not derailed. However, the existence of the vanguard does not fully guarantee that the revolution will not abort, because it usually comprises members of the elite, people with skills necessary for guiding the revolution. The fact is that when power is captured the vanguard in the majority of cases fails to completely fulfil the mission of the struggle. The realisation of the fundamental goals of the revolution demands a firmly implanted grassroots organisation (i.e. the organisation of "the followers").

The followers also play a major role in guiding the revolution. This stems from the fact that they are usually motivated by different goals in joining the revolution from those of the leaders. The revolutionary leader, on the one hand, might be motivated by a quest for freedom and justice for all, whilst the followers, on the other hand, could be inspired by the desire for security and material well-being for themselves (Green 1984, 83). The frequent rupture of revolutionary alliances once power has been won, evidences this difference in motives. Divergence of interests benefits the struggle for liberation in that it contributes to the process of guiding the revolution to deliver what it set out to achieve. In recognition of the contribution of the masses in guiding a revolution some leftist ideologues set out to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Another factor helps to guide the revolution is the revolutionary organisation. Organisation sustains the allegiance of the movement's members and their ideological commitment, through facilitating their participation in decision-making. Participation of all the members is essential to ensure that the movement does not become bureaucratised and de-radicalised, as is the tendency when a revolutionary period is extended. Engrossed with survival leaders tend to put political tactics in the place of revolutionary strategy. To encourage participation the organisation has to be democratic, flexible and innovative. Revolutionary movements have tried to facilitate participation through establishing organisations with sub-organisations for women young people, students and workers.

Writers of revolutionary literature create an aura of heroism around their protagonists by transposing the strategies which revolutionary ideology employs in

University of Cape Town

lionizing the leaders of the struggle. Furthermore, they adopt the same antagonistic dialogical stance against colonial ideology that characterised revolutionary ideology in colonial Africa. Colonial writers typically depict the African struggle for liberation as "an atavistic, anti-white [movement] which is intent upon returning [Africa] to barbarism and primitivism" (Walker 1984, 257-58). They portray the freedom fighters as savages, black sheep, communists, bloodthirsty murders who aim at disrupting law and order, which the honourable and just white man labours to maintain. Thus the killing of a freedom fighter labelled a "terrorist" by the white man is regarded as ridding society of malignant rot. One has only to read newspaper reports on the clashes between freedom fighters and the 'security forces', and books such as Henderson's *The Hunt for Kimathi*, Ruark's *Uhuru* etc., to see how prevalent this view was amongst whites.

African writers who articulate this theme of the struggle for "Uhuru" are committed to giving us a completely different picture of the African struggle for liberation from what whites have left behind in their writings. They portray it as a heroic struggle against foreign domination, oppression and all the forces of evil unleashed by the white man. They lionise and canonise the freedom fighters. By portraying their protagonists in this way they hope to give their readers examples to emulate. In the words of Sobukhwe, saluting their protagonists in this way is a journey

> down the corridor of time... renewing our acquaintance with heroes of Africa's past – those men and women who nourished the tree of African freedom and independence with their blood; those great Sons and Daughters of Africa who died in order that we may be free in the land of our birth. [This is intended to make readers] draw inspiration from the heroes of Thaba Bosiu, Isandlwana, Sandile's Kop, Keiskamma Hoek, Blood River and numerous battlefields where our forefathers fell before the bullets of the foreign invader... to draw inspiration from Sons and Daughters of Africa who gave their all to the cause and were physically broken in the struggle. (Pheko 1984, 6)

It is clear that in doing this most African writers of revolutionary literature are deliberately and consistently didactic (that is, they are intent on driving home certain moral, political and social lessons). In the works of some authors the message is overtly didactic whist in the fiction of others it is subtly engineered. About the former group, Mphahlele (1983, 14) says: "the dramatization of a message is the major concern. The

University of Cape Town

intention to make literature is either ignored or subdued. I mean literature in the sense in which we speak of a process of tradition and refinement, a memorable act of language with transcendental possibilities". These writers portray their protagonists as flat caricatures instead of round characters, and while they may succeed in showing that freedom fighters are heroes and not villains, as colonial writers would have their readers believe, their fiction is unlikely to outlive the political situation, which it addresses and endure as a work of art. For us to be able to identify with these heroes they should be portrayed as "fully human, capable of heroism and self doubt, nobility as well as selfishness, generosity as well as meanness"(Mackenzie 1990, 8). When African writers portray their heroes in this way they not only refute the stereotypes of colonial history books and literature but also provide us with credible examples to emulate.

In guiding the revolution the ideology has also to determine what techniques should be used in achieving its objectives. Generally, these techniques can be divided into two categories, the non-violent and the violent. Protest marches, mass demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience, peaceful picketing and other forms of non-co-operation are all examples of non-violent techniques. Violent techniques include terror, sabotage, coup d'etat and guerrilla warfare. The question of the choice between non-violent and violent techniques for revolution has led to considerable and continuing controversy. This is so because one function of the ideology is to justify the revolution, and defending or extolling the techniques used is one way of fulfilling this function.

In an attempt to justify the technique of their choice revolutionaries exalt its moral standing, extol its efficacy in delivering the desired goals and exonerate it from the weakness and/ or evils of the other option. King (1968, 26) glorifies non-violence as a powerful and just "weapon unique in history [because it] cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it". He extols its efficacy by arguing that in Birmingham (a place notorious for its segregationist policies) thick walls of racial segregation crumbled, and equality and peace prevailed, when non-violence was used in 1963 as a method of struggle. He exonerates it from the weaknesses of violent methods, which he claims achieved nothing in the U.S.A. but tokenism. He further argues that violent techniques are unjust because "to meet hate with retaliatory hate would do nothing but intensify the

University of Cape Town

existence of evil in the universe. Hate begets hate, violence begets violence" (Ansbro 1982, 232). King also condemns violence as immoral as it dehumanises its perpetrator through arousing hate rather than inspiring love. But in spite of all the praises showered upon non-violence by its exponents, its track record shows that it has only succeeded in India and the United States of America. The revolutionaries of the world are prone to opt for violence and even those (such as African revolutionaries) who start with non-violence finally resort to violence. The champions of violence are eager to explain why. Fanon (1968, 94) exalts violence as a cleansing force: "it frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction, it makes him fearless and restores his self respect". Mboya (1963, 51) extols the efficacy of violence by arguing that had it not been for Mau-Mau, the colour bar, racial discrimination and the exploitation of Africans would have continued in Kenya. In order to justify the ANC's decision to resort to violence, Mandela pointed to the ineffectiveness of non-violence: "fifty years of non-violence had brought African people nothing but more and more repressive legislation" (Karis & Carter 1987, 647). Malcom X (1965) even denounced non-violence as criminal because it teaches a man not to defend himself when he is attacked.

Although some champions of violence have condemned non-violence, many have reverted to it in the course of revolution because of the exigencies of the political environment. In South Africa, for instance, non-violence – which was declared ineffective in the 1960s – was employed to prod De Klerk's government to take the final step to democracy. So while it is appropriate to emphasise the strong points of the technique of one's choice in an attempt to justify it, to denounce others is unnecessary. The techniques that deserve denouncing are those of the enemy. African writers of revolutionary literature also contribute to this debate. Generally they seem to be of the view that: when peaceful negotiations fail, people will resort to violence; and, as Ngugi puts it, "violence in order to change an intolerable, unjust social order is not savagery: it purifies man", while "violence to protect and preserve an unjust, oppressive social order is criminal, and it diminishes man".

Further than justifying the techniques used, ideology has to legitimise the revolution. It has to perform this daunting task throughout all the three stages (the birth of the revolution, the period of revolutionary turmoil and the post revolutionary stage).

University of Cape Town

Legitimising the revolution is essential to mobilise internal public support and to marshal external support. The importance of internal support has already been highlighted in this study; it is the key role that external support can play that needs to be mentioned here. External support can play a decisive role in the revolution throughout its formative, intermediate and final stages. During the formative and intermediate stages external support can provide sanctuary, training and weapons for guerrilla fighters. Guerrilla fighters from South Africa and Mozambique, for instance, depended on the sanctuary provided by countries such as Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia. For training and supply of weapons they relied on countries such as China and Soviet Union. External support is necessary during the second and third stages to facilitate the consolidation process and secure financial aid for it. The danger posed by external support, particularly in the final stage, is that it fosters dependency, which militates against the very freedom for which the revolutionaries have fought.

In the formative stage, ideology justifies revolution through presenting the preconditions and accelerators in a way that enhances the legitimacy of the revolution and undermines that of the existing government. Military defeat is one of the accelerators identified by Green (1984, 1620). The defeat of a government in war obviously conduces to a decline in its legitimacy and an increase in revolutionary potential. The military defeat of colonial governments in some battles during the First and the Second World Wars destroyed the myth of the invincibility of the white man and helped give birth to the clamour for equality in the African revolutionary ideology.

Government violence is another precipitant used by ideology to legitimise revolution. When government exceeds the limits of what people regard as necessary violence to maintain law and order and appears to be using arbitrary and indiscriminate violence, it lowers its legitimacy and may ignite revolution. The killing of 49 Laurenco Marques dockworkers during a strike in 1956; the brutal murder of 50 Bissau dockworkers for striking; the massacre of 67 unarmed Africans at Sharpeville for peacefully protesting against the pass system; the maiming of 200 Angolans for protesting against the arrest and public flogging of Agostinho Neto; the butchering of 600 unarmed demonstrators in Mueda in Northern Mozambique for protesting against agricultural policy: all these incidents evidence the brutality of colonial governments

University of Cape Town

(Mazrui & Tidy 1985, 133). African writers of revolutionary literature have used such incidents to explain why African revolutionaries had to resort to violence in their struggle for liberation.

Legitimising becomes more demanding as the revolution proceeds to the intermediate stage, that is, the period of revolutionary turmoil. In this stage the revolutionaries may destroy property and kill people in their attempts to achieve their political goals. If these acts are not justified they have the potential to tarnish the image of the revolution and to diminish both its internal and external support. During this stage ideology justifies revolution through comparing the violence of the freedom fighters with that of the oppressors. Many methods are used to denigrate the violence of the colonisers and venerate that of the freedom fighters. The violence of the colonisers is depicted as indiscriminate, irrational and immoral, and that of the freedom fighters as honourable, ennobling and emancipating. Another way of exonerating the violence of the freedom fighters from condemnation is by pointing out that all revolutionaries start by pursuing the path of non-violence, and that it was the intransigence of the oppressors that forced them to resort to violence.

African writers of revolutionary novels also borrow the strategies of revolutionary ideology by portraying in boldly negative terms not only the colonisers but also those among the colonised who try to frustrate the people's struggle for liberation. That is why Amuta (1989, 140) maintains that in novels dealing with revolutionary politics, "the presence of saboteurs, backsliders and traitors as well as the reality of hardship and suffering fall into place as necessary aspects of the revolutionary situation". Again there is the danger that writers will be tempted to portray these antagonists as "flat characters stripped of individuality and psychological significance" (Mackenzie 1990, 17).

In novels featuring these characters the didactic tone tends to eclipse or deform all the other features of the narrative because it is too heavy-handed, obvious and blunt. Such characters are usually one-dimensional and therefore easy to describe and manipulate: the writer who has recourse to them need not exert much artistic ingenuity because they offer an easy medium for the blatant propagation of a message. Ntuli's (1984, 34) comment on verse where there is no balance between didacticism and aesthetics is also applicable to novels that suffer from this flaw. He maintains that such

University of Cape Town

verse is likely to rouse the emotions because of its topicality and bluntness, but may not last as a work of art: "when conditions change the verse may become irrelevant".

Since it is only "round people who are fit to perform tragically for any length of time and move us to any feeling except humour and appropriateness", the reader's condemnation of such flat characters will remain automatic and hence superficial. For antagonists to leave an indelible mark on the mind of the reader, the writer should make them understand something about his or her motivations. Ndebele (1989, 49) maintains: "The artist should help the reader condemn the stooge while understanding something of his motivations". In this way the reader learns something about the psychology of the co-opted. It is the portrayal of characters who are fully developed, understandable human beings that enables other features of fiction to receive due attention and achieve due importance. The "message" of the text then becomes a process of revelation. The author who develops multidimensional characters simply arouses awareness in the reader of the situation he is depicting, leaving it to the individual to draw his or her own conclusion.

Of all the stages of revolution, the post-revolution stage has proved the most difficult to legitimise. What justifies a revolution is not so much what is said but what is done. If the goals and programme that were promised during the initial stages are not implemented now, the legitimacy of the revolution declines. Highlighting the enormity of the problems that face revolutionaries during this stage, a film made by the Algerian rebel organizer Gillo Pontecorvo, *The Battle of Algiers*, says: "to begin a revolution is very difficult, to sustain it is even more difficult. To win it is almost impossible. But once you have won, then your troubles really begin". Post-colonial novels generally focus on the problems that arise during this phase, but since there are as yet no isiXhosa equivalents for such novels, they will not be analysed in this study.

University of Cape Town

1.3 Aesthetics

This study adopts a traditional definition of aesthetics as "the Philosophy of Taste, the Theory of Arts, the Science of the beautiful" (Williams 1976, 27-8). The assessment of the texts under study is going to focus on form and content in accordance with Schiller's remark that "as far as I am concerned, I am convinced that beauty is only the form of a

form and that what is ordinarily called its content must necessarily be thought as content already formed" (1946, 124). Consequently the analysis of the aesthetic value of a text is going to hinge on two terms first used by Ruskin (Landow 1971, 86): "typical beauty" and "vital beauty".

Ruskin defines typical beauty as beauty that draws its details, if not its ultimate explanation, from theories of beauty concerned largely with the visual, the external, and the element of form. Vital beauty, on the other hand, is concerned with emotions, with internal reactions and with notions of psychology and morality. In assessing the vital beauty of the texts under consideration (i.e. the value of their content), this study focuses on character portrayal. In my view, characterisation is one of the major novelistic means a writer employs in order to give his readers some insight into life as he sees it and feels it. This insight into life is expressed in the characters the author creates and the socio-historical situation in which he/she places them. In judging the value of the content of the novels under study, it is not only the author's ability to create credible and convincing characters that is going to be assessed, but also the values embodied in them and their behaviour within a social and historical setting.

The inclusion of content in assessing the aesthetic value of artistic works indicates that this study departs from the tendency (particularly prevalent in structuralism) of judging the value of a novel by focusing exclusively on form. The stance adopted here has its basis in Hume's observation that works of art are adjudged beautiful "in proportion to their fitness for the use of man" (Landow 1971, 94). This study therefore prefers a dialectical understanding of the relation between content and form, which means that "depending on the progress of interpretive work and the stage which it has arrived, either term can be translated into the other: thus every layer of content... proves to be the form in disguise... [and] that form is really only the projection of content and of the inner logic of the latter" (Jameson 1974, 403). As a result, in assessing the aesthetic value of the selected novels, this study will have recourse to dialectical criticism. The following tenets of dialectical criticism, as espoused by Jameson (1974), are of particular pertinence to this study.

The first principle entails the view that dialectical criticism "is at the other extreme from all single-shot or univalent aesthetic theories which seek the same structure

University of Cape Town

in all works of art and prescribe for them a single type of interpretive technique or a single mode of explanation" (Jameson 1974, 333). Adherence to this tenet will help this study to avoid the tendency common in orthodox Western aesthetic evaluation of using the aesthetic values distilled from a particular corpus of literature to judge all the literatures of the world. Efforts by African scholars such as Zirimu and Gurr (eds.) (1973) and Chinwezu et al. (1980) also manifest this tendency in that they attempt to formulate African aesthetic standards to be used in evaluating all African literary works irrespective of their content. The dialectical principle begins with the premise that each literary work is the end result of a kind of inner logic or development in its own content, that it evolves its own categories and therefore dictates the specific terms of its own interpretation.

The second tenet of dialectical criticism argues for the priority of content over form and other categories. It postulates that form should be regarded "not as the initial pattern or mold, as that from which we start but that with which we end up, as but the final articulation of the deeper logic of the content itself" (Jameson 1974, 328-29). The primacy of content over form and other categories is perceived in this study to imply that there exist "types of art which in technical and other respects may be wholly complete . . . and yet still seem deficient" because of insufficiency with respect to content (ibid., 330). However, although this thesis accepts the primacy of content over form it also resists "the vulgar Marxist notion that artistic form is merely an artifice, externally imposed on the turbulent content of history" (Eagleton 1976, 23). In fact, dialectical criticism is of the view that "the essential characteristic of literary raw material or latent content is precisely that it never really is initially formless", but already has a significant structure and meaning (Jameson 1974, 402).

The mention of literary raw material leads to the third tenet of dialectical criticism, which maintains that this latent content originates from social and historical experience. As pointed out earlier, this social and historical experience "enters the text not least as historical text but it enters it precisely as ideology" (Eagleton 1992, 72). The whole preceding discussion of ideology, from parole to langue via the ideologemes of nationalism, liberalism and revolutionary ideology, becomes relevant here. While it is not necessary to rehearse the discussion here, what needs to be emphasised is that

University of Cape Town

"dialectical criticism replaces the older absolutes of truth or beauty with a judgement in which the insistence on the prominence of the historical situation underlines the inseparability of strengths and weaknesses within the work of art itself" (Jameson 1974, 338). Put succinctly, the aesthetic judgement of literary works in this study will ultimately be socio-historical in character. This means that the aesthetic effectiveness of techniques employed by the author will be assessed in terms of how much they contribute to the achievement of the intentions of the content. In fact, dialectical criticism postulates that it is the social and historical experience (i.e. content) that selects from "all sorts of stylistic variations or mutants that appear in any period" those that will facilitate its proper expression.

Taking its cue from the view that the categories predicated by a work should dovetail with its content, this research will also assess the "wholeness" of the literary works under review. Indeed the fourth principle of dialectical criticism is that of dialectical unity of the literary work. In dialectical criticism, whilst the literary work itself is perceived as a complete thing, an autonomous whole, it is nevertheless analysed in the context of other similar works. Jameson (1974, 313) captures this dialectical autonomy of the work of art when he says, "and no doubt our first loyalty as critics is the wholeness of the work itself, provided it is realised that, that autonomy is itself a dialectical phenomenon". This means that although the wholeness of the literary work is emphasised, "the comparative or differential mode of such literary perception remains constant" (ibid., 315). The relevance of comparative analysis in this research will be discussed further in the Methodology section. What needs to be emphasised here is that aesthetic judgement is inherently comparative in character, in that every text or work of art is adjudged beautiful or successful in relation "to what we have previously read or heard, to our expectations in respect of executive form" (Steiner 1995, 1).

The fifth and last tenet of dialectical criticism that is pertinent to this study is that aesthetic evaluation does not only involve the identification and analysis of the dominant categories of a literary work, but extends also to meta-commentary on these categories. That is why Jameson (1974, 311, 336) on the one hand emphasises the importance of isolating dominant categories when he says: "the initial choice of such... factors or dominant categories of the work... is a strategic moment in any dialectical criticism",

University of Cape Town

and on the other, highlights the significance of commenting on these categories because "dialectical criticism must always include commentary on its own intellectual instruments as part of its own working structure". In dialectical criticism, therefore, the analysis of symbolism (for example) should transcend a mere interpretation of the symbolic elements in a literary work to include discussion of the phenomenon of symbolism.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

This section identifies the comparative method as the one most suited to realising the intentions of this study, codifies a comparative method appropriate to the research by revisiting certain concepts delineated above, and highlights the advantages of the comparative method. As indicated by its title, this research sets out to compare ideology and aesthetics in South African isiXhosa-language novels and Kenyan African novels in English. The methodological implications of the comparative character of this study demand the use of the comparative method. Steiner (1995, 9) describes the comparative method in literature as

> an exact and exacting art of reading, a style of listening to oral and written acts of language which privileges certain components in these acts... such as persistent engagement with natural languages, an inquiry into the reception and influence of texts and an awareness of thematic analogies and variants.

It is worth noting that these components are not neglected in other modes of literary study, but that in comparative literature they are privileged.

This study vindicates Steiner's assertions about the components that are privileged in comparative study. It "listens and reads after Babel" (ibid., 9), which means that it celebrates the multiplicity of human languages – an attitude implicit in the decision to compare African novels written in isiXhosa with those in English. It acknowledges thematic parallels, but rather than ascribing these parallels to the personal influence of one writer upon another (although the possibility of such an influence cannot be discounted), it explains their existence in terms of the similarities in the historical experience and artistic worlds from which the writers concerned acquired their ideologemes and categories.

University of Cape Town

The comparative method created to achieve the intentions of this study comprises three stages: the inventorying, analysing and comparing of ideologemes; the comparing of the vital beauty of texts under study; and the collation of their typical beauty. In the first stage the selected sets of novels will be scrutinized so as to identify the ideologemes on which they are based. These ideologemes will then be tallied with the tenets of the three ideologies delineated in the theoretical framework, above, to decide which ideological grouping the novel belongs to. As pointed out earlier, classifying the novels according to ideology prepares the ground for comparison "as it is only by doing so that their differences, similarities and their unique identities can be established" (Eagleton 1978, 100).

In the second stage the comparative assessment of vital beauty will centre on character portrayal, which is composed of three aspects of characterisation: a) the type of characters; b) their roles; c) their destiny. This subdivision seeks to avoid the generalisations that result when assessment is conducted in terms of the umbrella term of "character development". Using specific types of characters identified by Goodwin (1985) (such as innocent victims, virtuous victims and flawed victims,) will enable this study to avoid the generalisations found in Qangule (1974), who is generally content to use broader terms such as protagonists and antagonists. Not only will the success of the authors in creating credible characters will be compared, but also their use of these characters in achieving the intentions of their novels. The study will also have recourse to Jameson's three semantic or interpretive horizons (particularly his concept of social contradiction) in assessing the vital beauty of the texts under review. The first of Jameson's successive phases of interpretation is the horizon in which "the individual work is grasped essentially as a symbolic act" (Jameson 1986, 76). Here the function of a literary work is perceived to be to invent imaginary or formal 'solutions' to unresolved social contradictions. In this instance, what will be compared is the contribution of character and characterisation to the novel's fulfilment of this function.

In terms of Jameson's second horizon of interpretation (which has been used extensively in explaining the concept of ideology in this study), the contradiction "appears in the form of the dialogical as the irreconcilable demands and the position of antagonistic classes" (ibid., 85). Here it will be the success of the authors in portraying

University of Cape Town

through their characters the antagonistic dialogue of class voices that will be compared. In terms of the third horizon, the object of study is what Jameson terms the "cultural revolution, [which is] that moment in which the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradiction moving to the very centre of political, social and historical life" (ibid., 95). In this instance, it will be the success of the authors in using their characters to dramatise the contradiction between modes of production or stages of human society (such as primitive communism, hierarchical kinship societies, Asiatic mode of production, the polis, feudalism, capitalism and communism) that will be compared.

In the third stage, comparing the success of the authors in using form and other dominant categories to achieve their intentions will be used to assess the typical beauty of the texts. The comparison of the success of the authors with regard to typical beauty would be based on the dominant categories manifested in their works and the artistry they exhibit in harnessing these categories to realise the intentions of their novels. The first task here will be to choose the dominant categories to be used as the basis for comparison. It will be remembered that "all sorts of stylistic variations or mutants appear in any period", and that it is the content of the literary work that acts as a selective agency upon them (Hook 1933, 160). The dominant categories that are going to be used as the basis for comparison of the novels under review are the stylistics of the novel as propounded by Bakhtin in *The Dialogic Imagination*. He maintains that the novel is "a phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice. In it the investigator is confronted with several heterogeneous stylistic unities, often located on different linguistic levels and subject to different stylistic controls" (1990, 261). He identifies five types of compositional unities, which will serve as the basis for the comparison of the typical beauty of the novels under review. These are:

(1) Direct authorial literary-artistic narration (in all its diverse variants);
(2) Stylisation of the various forms of oral everyday narration (skaz);
(3) Stylisation of the various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration (the letter, the diary, etc.);
(4) Various forms of literary but extra-artistic authorial speech (moral, philosophical or scientific statements, oratory, ethnographic descriptions memoranda and so forth).

University of Cape Town

(5) The stylistically individualised speech of characters.

Another feature of Bakhtin's stylistics of the novel relevant to this study is his insistence on the dialogic aspect of any discourse: "Every extra-artistic prose discourse – in any of its forms, quotidian, rhetorical, scholarly – cannot fail to be oriented toward the already uttered, the already known, the common opinion and so forth. The dialogic orientation of discourse is a phenomenon that is of course, a property of any discourse" (ibid., 279). His conception of discourse as dialogic has three implications for this study. First, it means that the heteroglot language typical of novelistic discourse should be analysed in the context of the socio-historical circumstances with which it is in constant dialogue. Reiterating the importance of the view that language should be perceived as a social phenomenon, Thompson (1984, 7) writes:

> Few attempts have been made to examine just what is involved in regarding language as a social phenomenon, that is, as a phenomenon which is enmeshed in relations of power in situations of conflict and in processes of social change. Few attempts have been made to explore the institutional aspects of the conditions which render speech-acts possible and appropriate, aspects which are related to specific social-historical circumstances and which could not be derived by attending to the utterances alone.

Second, it implies that this study should acknowledge the binary nature of discourse by attending to both the addresser of the message (i.e. the speaker, author, sender, encoder, etc.) and addressee (i.e. the listener, reader, receiver, decoder, etc.). This requires that this study be sensitive to the different positions that the addresser and addressee occupy in the social hierarchy, and how these are reflected in variations in the accent, vocabulary, register and syntax used. It should also be cognisant of the innumerable and subtle strategies employed by addressers and addressees to use words "as instruments of coercion and constraint, as tools of intimidation and abuse, as signs of politeness, condescension and contempt" (Thompson 1984, 42).

Third, recognition of the dialogic nature of discourse requires the study to address the question of content, the dimension of meaning or signification of a dialogue. The analysis of the meaning here will be informed by Thompson's three interrelated theses of what he perceives as a positive account of meaning. The first thesis involves looking at the meaning of an expression as a socially and historically situated construction, which

University of Cape Town

should be understood in relation to the conditions of its production as well as the conditions of its reception. The second thesis perceives the meaning to be mediated by certain structural features of linguistics. This means that in trying to analyse the meaning of the discourse of the novel, attention should be given to "the narrative and the argumentative patterns as well as the various aspects of grammar, syntax and style". The third thesis demands a creative interpretation of what is asserted by an expression and what it is about (Thompson 1984, 65-66). The next task would be to compare the success of the authors in using the "patterns" and "aspects" referred to above ("categories") in achieving the intentions of their novels. A third task would be to comment on the nature and significance of the categories themselves, bearing in mind that both ideologemes and categories are transposed from literary and non-literary systems into the texts through the process of intertexuality.

In all three stages of comparison the interlocking method will be used. The interlocking method means that "you treat the major aspects of your main idea and you constantly refer to both works to support your arguments" (Roberts 1991, 165). The advantages of this method over others such as the "tennis-ball" method are that you do not repeat your points needlessly, for you document them as you raise them [and] by constantly referring to the works you make your points without requiring a reader with a poor memory to reread previous sections. It must also be remembered that this method allows you to take two or more paragraphs to develop a point about one writer or subject before you include comparative reference to another.

This study has been based on the comparative method of literary study because it has the following advantages. First, it contributes to the preservation of languages. Language preservation is very essential because:

> The extinction of a language, however remote, however immune to historical-material success or diffusion, is the death of a unique world-view, of a sense of remembrance, of present being and futurity. A truly dead language is irreplaceable. It closes that which Kierkegaard bade us keep open if our humanity was to evolve: 'the wounds of possibility'. Such closure may, for the late twentieth-century mass-media and mass-market technocracy be triumph. It may facilitate the imperium of the fast-food chain and the news-satellite. For the lessening chances of the human spirit it is destructive. (Steiner 1995, 10)

University of Cape Town

Second, it prevents isolation, which in the life of mind and politics is "the brutal road to ruin" (ibid., 6). In integrating the study of literature in indigenous languages with African literature in English, this study aims to help empower literature in African languages while simultaneously decolonising the literature written in English. Third, it avoids monographic study of an individual writer, which "no matter how adroitly pursued – imposes an inevitable falsification through its very structure, an optical illusion of totality projected by what is in reality an artificial isolation" (Jameson 1974, 315). Glowing accolades have been given to authors who dwindle into dwarfs when compared with others who have written on the same subjects. Through collating isiXhosa and Kenyan African literature in English, this study will be in a position to assess the achievements of both isiXhosa and Kenyan authors in the context of modern African literature.

Fourth, the conception that "the Comparative Method may arrive at the Universal Principles or generalisations universally acceptable" [although this has been disproved] still lives (Shaffer 1980, xiii). To oppose this misconception, this thesis aims to prepare the ground for future research leading to the distillation of specifically African aesthetic standards. Identifying the ideologies from which African literature borrow ideologemes, inventorying and tallying ideologemes with the tenets of these ideologies to situate texts in ideological camps, comparing the process through which authors of texts that fall into the same ideological camp transform the raw material (ideologemes) into artistic texts, and then synthesising the findings – all these activities, it is hoped, will help map out an 'alternative' route towards the establishment of African aesthetic standards.

Lastly, applying the comparative method to literary study affords critics the scope to "obtain greater insights into the novelists, their works and the societies which nurture them" (Perera 1991, 496). Comparing isiXhosa novels with Kenyan African novels has certainly afforded me greater insight into isiXhosa literature. What Goethe says about languages, that "he who does not know foreign languages knows nothing of his own", is to some extent true of literature (Steiner 1995, 5).

However, despite all the advantages enumerated above it cannot be denied that the comparative method in literary study does have certain limitations, which include the following: First, since it analyses more than one work at the same time it generally does

University of Cape Town

not allow for an in-depth analysis of every aspect of literary writing. This study hopes substantially to remedy this shortcoming by comparing both ideology and aesthetics, which means that the two major pillars of literary criticism – content and form – are covered.

Second, the comparative method tends to focus on the comparable and ignore the incomparable elements of the works. Roberts (1991, 178) reiterates this view when he says: "one may readily grant that an extended comparison-contrast theme does not present a full treatment of each of the works [for] indeed the works are unique, and there are many elements that would not yield to the comparison-contrast method". This study attempts to minimise this weakness by focusing on both the analogies or parallels and the variants or heterogeneities in the works under review. Thirdly, because the comparative method organises literary works into pairs or clusters it tends to give rise to the temptation to use these pairs or clusters "for a classifying or typologising operation in which cultural texts are simply dropped into so many separate compartments" (Jameson 1986, 90). To these compartments the critic would then apply a single type of interpretive technique or a single mode of explanation. The use of dialectical criticism (which is against all single-shot or univalent aesthetic theories which seek the same structure in all works) and Jameson's three semantic or interpretive horizons are intended to limit this shortcoming.

Fourth, the sample size of the works that are compared is usually not big enough to allow for valid generalisation, which, as pointed out earlier, seems to be one of the aims of the comparative method. In anticipation of this limitation my original intention was to make a broad comparative survey of isiXhosa literature and African literature in English set in colonial and postcolonial periods. For the first ideological division alone, I proposed to compare three sets of novels – *Things Fall Apart* by Achebe and *Ityala Lamawele* by Mqhayi; *The African* by Conton and *UDon Jadu* by Mqhayi; *Ingqumbo Yemin*yanya by Jordan and *The River Between* by Ngugi – as examples of novels that fall under traditionalist, revivalist and reformist strands of nationalism respectively. This soon proved too ambitious an undertaking, and the decision to limit the size of the sample was made to prevent the study from being too wide-ranging, unwieldy and superficial.

University of Cape Town

Last, the comparative method of literary study demands competence in more than one language from the comparatist or else he/she will have to depend on translation, and this in itself would place other demands upon the comparatist. In enumerating some of the facets of translation that the comparatist would have to master if he/she is going to rely on translation, Steiner (1995, 10-11) includes the following: "its history, its lexical and grammatical means, the differences of approach that extend from the word-by-word interlinear to the freest imitation metamorphic adaptation". So in demarcating the scope of this study I had to make sure that the novels I chose were written in the languages in which I have some competence, or else I would have had to register for a course in translation.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER TWO

THE REFORMIST REACTION TO COSMOPOLITAN ASSIMILATION

In the previous chapter, the four fundamental reactions of communities to the cosmopolitan assimilationist feature of the scientific state were identified: traditionalist, assimilationist, reformist and revivalist. Cosmopolitan assimilationism (more commonly known as cultural imperialism) is a feature that scientific states inherited from empires, which exerted pressure on conquered peoples to assume the culture and religion of their conquerors. In this chapter selected novels that encapsulate ideologemes transposed from reformist reaction will be considered. The study singles out the reformist response for consideration because, among the three reactions to the scientific state prevalent in African literature, it is the one to have received least attention. Negritude and Black Consciousness, for instance, which exemplify traditionalist and revivalist reaction respectively, have received extensive notice from scholars such as Onoge (1974), Mphahlele (1974), Soyinka (1976), Mzamane (1983) and Ndebele (1986). As indicated in Chapter One, the novels to be compared are Jordan's *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*. And, in line with the account of the study's methodology given in Chapter One, the comparison will focus on ideology and aesthetics.

University of Cape Town

2.1 COMPARISON OF THE IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT OF THE NOVELS

Looking at the background of these authors helps one to understand why their reaction to cosmopolitan assimilation is reformist nationalism. A.C. Jordan was the son of Elijah Jordan, a devout Anglican teacher and the head of Mbokothwana Mission School where A.C. Jordan received his primary education. Jordan was thus born and bred in a Christian mission institution, and had first-hand experience of the severity with which Christian dogma is drummed into African converts. Denunciation of African culture and the desecration of traditional symbols of worship are the corollary of what was taught in all Christian institutions.

Ironically, the seeds of race pride were sown in Jordan's mind at St Cuthbert's High School where he received his higher primary education. There, he met Rev. R.A. Scott who infused in him a race consciousness and pride through narrating "a good deal about African heroes... even the 'Reds' whom we were inclined to despise" (Jordan in a letter to Vilakazi dated 10/9/1944). Love and reverence for African ways were further implanted by his involvement in community affairs during his university career. He used to attend community meetings whenever he went home for holidays. He learnt a great deal of African lore from three Hlubi leaders – Zondwa Jama, Tese Fulathela and Sikhephe Nomzanga – and gained a deeper insight into Mpondomise norms and customs when in 1933 he accompanied Mpondomise chiefs to a meeting in Transkei. It was during this journey that he was shown the deep pool in which Majola the Mpondomise chief was buried in Thina River.

Jordan's thorough exposure to both African and European worlds no doubt lay at the heart of his attempt to reconcile the two in his novel *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*. His interest in African literature was generated at Lovedale where he read more literature in the vernacular and met two prominent Xhosa writers, Mqhayi and Sinxo. It was however the Winter School organised by the Fort Hare Department of African Languages in 1938 that finally induced him to pursue further his studies in African languages through the University of South Africa. The fact that Jordan studied extensively in this field, in addition to majoring in English, contributed greatly to the artistry with which his novel is written (Vilakazi 1945, 334-45).

Ngugi wa Thiong'o was born at Limuru, Kenya, in 1938, into a family in which, unlike Jordan's, African tradition was held in high esteem. As was the case almost everywhere in Africa, the community was divided between Christian converts and traditionalists. Ngugi's experience as a young schoolboy – he attended the mission-run Kamaandura School before transferring to Karinga Gikuyu School, which protected certain aspects of African lore – taught him how acceptance or rejection of European culture was used to divide the Gikuyu people. It is no wonder that in the first novel he wrote, *The River Between*, he advocates the reconciliation of African and European cultures in order to foster unity.

University of Cape Town

The dialogue with the Gikuyu gods that his parents nurtured in him was broken by his sojourn at Christian institutions such as Alliance High School, where he received secondary education from 1954 to 1958. For all these years he was under the influence of characters such as Carey Francis, the headmaster with "a Spartan missionary stance and uncompromising western bias" (Cook & Okenimkpe 1983, 1). It was here that Ngugi developed a "complex religious awareness reflected in the integral used of Bible references and Christian mythology in the novels" (ibid., 2). The initial title of *The River Between* was, revealingly, "The Black Messiah". The knowledge of Christian faith and of Biblical leaders Ngugi acquired while in these institutions enabled him to make a mocking criticism of religious characters such as Joshua in his novels, although in his first three novels the use he makes of religious allusion is never simply satirical and is often highly ambivalent. By Ngugi's own account it was the sheer resilience of African humanism that made him "turn his back on the Christian god and resume the broken dialogue with the gods of his people" (Ngugi 1982, 43). *The River Between* was his first literary effort (although published second, after *Weep Not, Child*) in what he has described as the process of "homecoming", and this fact is largely responsible for the artistic lapses in it that are absent in works of Ngugi's mature period.

The comparison of these two novels is going to hinge on the ideologemes transposed by these authors from reformist nationalism. The first task is to identify ideologemes common to both novels in order to establish the basis of comparison. In identifying the ideologemes the point of departure will be the novels rather than the ideology (i.e. reformist nationalism). This is going to be the modus operandi throughout this study, because – as pointed out earlier – dialectical criticism operates on the premise that each literary work is the end result of a kind of logic or development in its own content, that it evolves its own categories and therefore dictates the specific terms of its own interpretation. If one were to work in the opposite direction, identifying the ideologemes from the ideology, one would risk using them "for a classifying or typologising operation in which cultural texts are simply dropped into so many separate compartments" which Jameson (1986, 90) warns against. This classifying or typologising operation would in turn lead to what Eagleton terms "vulgar Marxist criticism" which sees the literary work as no more than an expression of the ideologies of the time – in

University of Cape Town

which case the task of the critic would be simply to match the text with its ideological world view.

In line with the strategy of starting from the novels in identifying the ideologemes, three ideologemes common to both novels have been selected; namely: a) cultural arrogance is the road to brutal ruin; b) no race possesses a monopoly on beauty, intelligence, and force, and there is room for all of us at the rendezvous of victory; c) blending the best values from various cultures is appropriate therapy for psycho-social disunity. In combination, these ideologemes may be regarded as the core doctrine of reformist reaction.

2.1.1 Cultural arrogance is the road to brutal ruin

Generally speaking, this ideologeme is sparked off by what its exponents perceive to be the shortcoming of assimilationist reaction. As pointed out earlier, to an assimilationist the scientific state has rendered the traditional gods impotent, so he/she denounces and rejects his/her culture and traditional cosmic image in favour of the scientific state, which to him/her has been made to appear the only effective authority. One of the intentions of reformist reaction in African fiction is to dramatise the tragic consequences of assimilationist reaction. Joshua and Thembeka typify the assimilationist reaction in Ngugi's and Jordan's novels respectively. I believe that Jordan's novel is the more convincing of the two in dramatising the tragic consequences of the assimilationist reaction, for reasons, which are set out below.

Firstly, Thembeka's cultural arrogance is more genuine than that of Joshua in that her actions stem from cultural arrogance pure and simple, whereas Joshua's can be interpreted as attempts to soothe a violated conscience. Joshua is stupefied into assimilationist reaction by the white man's power and riches. Along with a few others, he betrays his friends, forsakes the hills, renounces his tribe's magic, power and ritual, and goes to the Siriana Mission. There, he and his colleagues are taught to read and write, and are lulled into mental and political slumber through religion. Joshua in particular is so indoctrinated by the new faith that it possesses him wholly. His quest for acceptance by the white man, spurred on by the fear of his betrayed friends' revenge, reduces him to a

University of Cape Town

fanatic who accepts without questioning everything that comes out of the white man's mouth.

This credulity emerges, for instance, in his response to the issue of polygamy. Commenting on Joshua's standpoint on this issue, Ngugi writes: "not that Joshua saw anything intrinsically wrong in having a second bride... But the man at the mission had said this was sin. And so a sin it had to be" (99). It is therefore arguable that Joshua is such a narrow-minded and comic character not so much because of cultural arrogance but because he has betrayed his friends, "renounced his past and cut himself away from the life-giving traditions of the tribe. And because he had nothing to rest upon... he had to cling with his hands to whatever the missionaries taught him promised the future" (141).

Thembeka, on the other hand, is socialised into an assimilationist position. She is brought up by educated parents at Mjika near Ngcolosi Mission station and is educated in missionary institutions from primary to teacher training – primary education at Ngcolosi Mission School, secondary education at St Matthews and teacher training at Lovedale. After training she comes back to serve at Ngcolosi. From early childhood she undergoes what Gakwandi (1977, 13) terms "persuasion", an elaborate apparatus designed to incarcerate the minds of its victims. It rested on two pillars – religion and education – and consisted of a process of depreciating traditional culture, degrading the Old in deference to the apparently irreconcilable New. Exposed in this way to the culturally superior airs of the missionaries, Thembeka herself becomes culturally arrogant. Her actions (as will be shown shortly) stem purely from cultural arrogance, and she therefore serves as a better embodiment than Joshua of the ideologeme that cultural arrogance is the road to brutal ruin.

Secondly, the sacrileges committed by Joshua are not as serious as those committed by Thembeka. Joshua merely denounces the traditional rites, especially the circumcision of women, and marginally opposes Waiyaki, who is portrayed in the novel as a black messiah. At times he bemoans the fact that his wife Miriamu had undergone the circumcision rite before she was converted. During the season of circumcision he often prays to God to bring down fire, thunder and flood from Heaven to destroy those who engage in this sinful practice. In opposing Waiyaki who has started self-help education, Joshua initiates the building of two schools for the children of Christian

University of Cape Town

converts, one in Makuyu and the other near Ngenia. He rudely chases Waiyaki away when he comes to his house to warn him and the other Christians about impending danger from the traditionalists. All these offences are trivial when compared with those committed by Thembeka, who – on becoming the wife of Zwelinzima, the chief of the Mpondomise tribe – trifles with and desecrates all that is regarded as sacred by the Mpondomise.

Thembeka walks bareheaded and barelegged in front of the elders. She pats a sacred ox and makes her infant son ride on it, in arrogant violation of a prohibition made known to her by the elders of the tribe that Mpondomise wives should treat the ox with deference and not even dare go near it. This ox comes from a lineage of oxen that are portrayed in legendary terms in the novel. The first is Dangazele, an ox which urinated until the froth reached his navel when Hleke raiders stole the Mpondomise herd of cattle, thus securing their return. Like all legendary figures of old, Dangazele disappears mysteriously and no one knows what happened to him. The other ox in this lineage is the one that belonged to Mhlontlo the warrior-king, renowned for his magical powers. He used to make it drink water to which had been added the magic medicine he washed himself with. The story about this ox is that when the white men, having stolen the Mpondomise's cattle, slaughtered and ate the meat of this ox, they became mad and jumped about like frogs.

Furthermore, Thembeka kills a brown cobra, a sacred snake, which is believed to be an ancestral spirit of the Mpondomise. Jordan's skilful presentation of the incident condemns Thembeka's action. He makes it clear that it is not out of ignorance but out of sheer arrogance that Thembeka kills Majola. Ngxabane the old Mpondomise sage approaches her on this matter, but soon gives up when he discovers that Thembeka does not understand what he means when he inquires about the "Animal of the House". He then assigns Nozihlwle to explain what he means. Nozihlwele, who is herself shocked by Thembeka's ignorance, fumbles for words: "*wakha-mhn-uyamazi – u-uyayazi le nyoka kuthiwa yinkwakhwa*?" (153). (Have you ever – I mean – do you know the snake called *inkwakhwa*?) (Translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 167). Thembeka arrogantly retorts: "*Ndinani ukuba ndingayazi inkwakhwa ndimdala kangaka*" (153). (Am I a child that I should not know *inkwakhwa*?) (Translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 168).

University of Cape Town

Thembeka's answer shows that she is not altogether ignorant of the Majola cult, but simply attaches no significance to it. This is further confirmed by the irreverent attitude she adopts when talking about this sacred snake. She says: "*Arha! Ngaba uthetha laa ntsomi yakudala kwakusithiwa kwath' inyoka enguMajola ehlonitshwayo ngamaMpondomise*?" (154) (Can it be that you are talking about those idle tales about the Majola snake that the Mpondomise are said to hold in reverence?) (Translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 168).

Although Nozihlwele is visibly irritated by Thembeka's frivolous attitude toward such a crucial matter, she patiently explains the reverence with which Majola should be regarded (154). The awe-inspiring description of the Majola cult makes Thembeka burst out laughing. However, Nozihlwele's elaborate explanation of the cult to Thembeka indicates to the reader that her killing of Majola was inexcusable. Jordan relates how on a hot summer's day Thembeka, some women and elders of Mpondomise are sitting under a big tree. Thembeka's son, Zululiyazongoma, is sleeping peacefully at a respectable distance from them. Two men arrive with a lawsuit. The complainant, in accordance with the custom, is given a chance to lay his charge. In the process of stating his case he suddenly stops and falls on his knees in an attitude of worship, looking in the direction of the sleeping child. All the men, following his example, kneel down and recite praises of the House of Majola. The women, covering their bodies and readjusting their head-cloths in reverence, start moving away. The reverence of all these people highlights by contrast the irreverence of Thembeka, who, on seeing the *inkwakhwa*, becomes frantic. She seizes the snake and throws it away. Jordan uses two idiophones in capturing her reaction: "*wayithi xhakamfu jwi-i* kude" (169) (She clutched it and threw it away).

Qangule (1974, 166) explains the meaning of these idiophones: "The first idiophone illustrate the swoops of a furious assailant (Thembeka) upon a passive object (the snake). The second idiophone has extra length, which indicates the distance to which the snake has been thrown". Thembeka's vicious action is made more heinous by the passivity of the snake. Throwing the snake far away enacts her wish to distance herself from all that is traditional and therefore "backward and evil". The resilience of African humanism is once more hinted at here. Thembeka, a modernist, throws Majola, a symbol of African humanism, far away, with all her might, but later meets it on her way to her

University of Cape Town

room. Frustrated and infuriated by the sight of the snake, she dashes to the house to fetch a stick and, amid the cries and appeals of the terror-stricken people, beats it repeatedly even after it is dead.

Thirdly, the punishment meted out to Thembeka for her actions is more excruciating than the one received by Joshua. From the day she kills Majola, despite the desperate attempts by all who are present to restrain her from committing such an abomination, she is treated as an outcast. The people who are present when she commits this sacrilege shake the dust off their blankets to pronounce a curse upon her. Those who come to find out the cause of the cries are directed to Dingindawo's courtyard, as if there is a leper at the great house. On the advice of Vukuzumbethe, Thembeka and her son Zululiyazongoma are taken back to her home at Mjika. Her husband's failure to fetch her is perceived as rejection, and she loses her prestige, as all wives did who suffered such a fate at that time. The derogatory remarks made by her home-girls and the rumours of Zwelinzima's planned marriage with a Bhaca princess torment her soul to the extent that she suffers a mental and physical breakdown.

In a confused and emaciated state she heads towards her husband's home. Along the way she meets Vukuza, who initially does not recognize the sad-looking woman until he comes abreast of her and is shocked to realize that she is his cousin's wife. When she arrives at the great place, all receive her as some evil omen and no one comes to greet her or offers to shake hands with her. Here, her mental and physical condition continues to deteriorate until she succumbs to a complete mental breakdown on the day that the Mpondomise herd of cattle, the bride tribute, is driven to Bhacaland. To the crowds that stand watching the departure of the cattle she exclaims, "*Tyhini ezi nkomo zezi ziyakulobolela inkosi?*" (So, these are the cattle that are going to lobola for the chief?) (Translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 260). Thenceforth Thembeka is insane, and no one is left in doubt that it is grief that has made her insane. It is in this state of mind that she finally drowns herself and Zululiyazongoma in the Bedlana river.

The consequences of cultural arrogance in Jordan's novel are made more horrific by the death of innocent people such as Thembeka's baby boy Zululiyazongoma. The significance of these deaths has been a hotly debated issue amongst literary scholars (such as Shepherd 1945, 90; Jafta 1971, 15; Oljohn 1940,77; Vilakazi 1945, 340) who

University of Cape Town

have assessed the merits of Jordan's artistry (see Qangule 1974, 59- 65). The recurring view in these studies is that these deaths imply the triumph of the traditionalists, with Qangule's being the only dissenting voice (he points out that people from both camps die, and that "they are removed because they are not in themselves desirable as each wants to destroy the values and therefore the life of the other"). The view adopted in this study is that the characters die because Jordan, like many African writers, believes that any solution to the problems of colonised Africa, whether cultural or political, demands sacrifice. All the people who die in the course of this novel are themselves, or have relatives and friends, involved in trying to resolve the cultural problems of colonised Africa; most of the deaths are presented as martyrdom (Zwelinzima, Ngubengwe, Jongilanga, Vukuz'umbethe), whilst others are portrayed as the price that those who dare to attempt to bring about change must be willing to pay (e.g. Zululiyazongoma and Thembeka).

In Ngugi's novel, on the other hand, the punishment meted out to Joshua takes the form of his failure to proselytise his children into his kind of Christianity. Muthoni and her sister Nyambura are brought up in a Christian home, their father Joshua a rigorous, even fanatical observer of all Christian practices. He vehemently condemns circumcision and believes it to be sinful. It is arguable that this belief stems from the practice of missionaries to encourage converts to desecrate all African shrines, and to do away with traditional customs, whether good or bad. The campaign led by the Church of Scotland Mission, for instance, in a conference of Allied Protestant Missions in 1929, required "all those associated with them to stop condoning or practicing female circumcision (clitoridectomy), performed just before puberty and seen by missionaries as 'wholly evil'..." (Sicherman 1990, 63). Joshua fervently prays that his people should leave their "irreligious" ways and follow the ways of the white man. Like his teachers the missionaries, Joshua threatens, kicks, pushes and drags his daughters 'up' to the Christian god – but to no avail. Muthoni still wants to be circumcised. When her sister Nyambura reminds her of her Christian obligations, she wittily says:

> "Why! Are we fools?" She shook Nyambura. "Father and mother are circumcised. Are they not Christians? Circumcision did not prevent them from being Christians. I too have embraced the white man's faith. However, I know it is beautiful, oh so beautiful to be initiated

University of Cape Town

> into womanhood. You learn the ways of the tribe. Yes, the white man's God does not quite satisfy me. I want, I need something more. My life and your life are here in the hills that you and I know". (26)

Muthoni's reversion to African rites mocks Lothrop Stoddard's prophecy that "the degrading fetishism and demonology which sums up the native pagan cults cannot stand and all Negroes will some day be either Christians or Moslems" (Soyinka 1979, 97). It is a wonder that Muthoni, who for the best part of her life has been spiritually assaulted by her fanatical father, still maintains: "I know it is beautiful, oh so beautiful to be initiated into womanhood". She further rejects "the claims of Christianity as a filler of spiritual holes" by saying "yes the white man's God does not quite satisfy me" (97). She exhibits a religious maturity, which rebukes and ridicules her father's parrot-like and fanatical faith. Although she openly says she has embraced the white man's faith she still maintains that it lacks something, and that is African humanism, the life-blood of any African; hence she says: "My life and your life are here in the hills that you and I know". She seems to be of the opinion that if they abandoned African rites they would not be true to themselves, and "if you are not yourself, if you surrender your personality you have nothing to give the world" (Mphahlele 1974, 40).

Ngugi vividly captures the humiliation and frustration that Joshua suffers when he is told that his daughter Muthoni has gone to Kameno to be circumcised: "He was almost mad and small foams of saliva could be seen at the sides of his mouth... he looked like a beast of prey experiencing defeat and humiliation for the first time" (37). Joshua is further humiliated when Nyambura chooses to go with Waiyaki, a man Joshua associates with traditional culture (which is to him backward and heathenish). To crown it all, this takes place in the presence of the Christian congregation on the day Waiyaki comes to warn them of the traditionalists' planned attack on them. When Nyambura gracefully walks to Waiyaki and publicly declares her love for him, silence reigns in the house and Joshua is thrown into a stupor. Defeated and humiliated, he pronounces a curse upon her, saying: "You will come to an untimely end. Go!" (136).

On both occasions the emotional pain suffered by Joshua, intense as it is, is only momentary. In fact Joshua copes so ably with the heartache caused by the death of Muthoni that Nyambura is convinced that her father is not moved by her death. Even in

University of Cape Town

the case of Nyambura's rebellion, Joshua is momentarily thrown into a stupor but quickly recovers and pronounces a curse upon her. The physical and emotional torment suffered by Muthoni and Nyambura, which could be harnessed to show the tragic consequences of cultural arrogance, are instead used to portray the sacrifice that those who attempt to achieve marronage would have to make. This point will be further discussed in due course.

2.1.2 No race possesses a monopoly on beauty

This ideologeme, which maintains that "other groups do have valuable and genuinely noble ideas and institutions which are worth borrowing or adopting", together with its corollary, that no race or culture is without blemish, is found in both Jordan's and Ngugi's novels (Smith 1872, 159). Jordan's novel excels over that of Ngugi in articulating this ideologeme, in that there is a more consistent balance in acknowledging beauty and blemish across the divide in *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* than in *The River Between.*

In Ngugi's novel it is the traditionalist Chege (Waiyaki's father) who acknowledges that there is beauty in both the African and European traditions. This is evidenced by his exhortation to his son in the sacred grove: "Go to the Mission place, learn all the wisdom and the secrets of the white man. But do not follow his vices. Be true to your people and the ancient rites" (20). It is only after many years that, again on the hills in the sacred grove, Waiyaki comes to appreciate his father's sentiment. Under the sacred tree it dawns on Waiyaki that not all the ways of the white man are bad, and that there are also spots of beauty and truth in the African way of life. The recognition of some good in both traditions is the cornerstone of reformist reaction. It ridicules the rejection of the European tradition by the upholders of African tradition and satirizes the abolition of African tradition by assimilationists, for both these lines of action are tantamount to throwing overboard what ought to be cherished.

Ngugi is also fully cognisant of the weak points in both these traditions. The existence of these weaknesses makes reconciliation a necessity, because it enables each tradition to supplement the other. He further argues that the wholesale abrogation of

University of Cape Town

traditional ways would only maim a man's soul, making him fanatically cling to whatever promised security. Joshua is a typical example of a man whose soul has been maimed in this way. Ngugi not only sees the need to render the white man's religion more flexible and accommodating, but also alludes to the desirability of abolishing certain Africa customs, such as the circumcision of women. He maintains that the "Circumcision of women was not important as a physical operation. It was what it did inside a person. It could not be stopped overnight". This implies that it could be stopped, but care, "patience and, above all education were needed" in doing this. Substitutes should be provided, for "if the white man's religion made you abandon custom and did not give something else of equal value you became lost" (142).

However, in the rest of the book Ngugi does not make enough effort to ascribe goodness to the European tradition; instead, he tends to tilt the balance in favour of African tradition, and thus unwittingly vitiates the thematic intention of his novel by showing that there is no need for marronage. For instance, the way in which he presents the champions of African vis-à-vis those of European tradition serves to glorify African culture and denigrate European culture. For instance, the grandeur of Chege's stature is unequivocal. He is portrayed as a "well known elder" who is "feared and respected by all other elders" because of his unequalled knowledge of the "ways of the land and the hidden things of the tribe". On the other hand, Livingstone, the champion of European culture, is described as a "bald-headed", "double-chinned", "freckled faced", aging man, with a "tired voice" and "shaking knees" (55).

Unlike Ngugi, who generally reserves laudatory language for African culture, Jordan employs it in connection with both African and European traditions. In *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*, for instance, both the Bishop and Ngxabane (exponents of western and African ways of life respectively) are introduced as admirable figures. Ngxabane is reverently referred to as *"ixhego"* (old man) *"ingwevu"*, and *"ixhego elidala lakwaNgxabane"* (the old one of the Ngxabane family) in a single paragraph (6). His old age is emphasised to signify the antiquity and authority of the African tradition that he champions. The white Bishop who is Zwelinzima's warden at Fort Hare is respectfully referred to as *"nelaa xhego leBhishopu"* (that wise old Bishop), *"eli xhego"* (this old man) and as *"inyange"* (the sage) (36, 37). In this case the age of the Bishop is

University of Cape Town

emphasised as a way of acknowledging the wisdom of the European tradition he represents. Recognising that there is goodness in the cultures of both sides of the divide underlines the need for reconciliation.

Jordan also exposes weaknesses in both the African and the European traditions. The manner in which he describes the Bhaca princess, who typifies African tradition, and Thembeka, who epitomises the European tradition, is a case in point. About the Bhaca princess Jordan writes:

> Le ntokazi yayinesiqu, ingende ingemfuphi imnyama ngebala, ingentle kodwa inomkhitha inegazi elinzima lobukhosi (135).
>
> (She was a stout girl of medium height and with a very dark complexion. She was not beautiful but she had an attractive personality and dignity of bearing in keeping with her rank. (Translated by Jordan and Jordan 1980, 146)

It is clear from this excerpt that although the Bhaca princess is not lacking in other admirable attributes such as attractiveness of personality and dignity of bearing, she is not beautiful. Her appearance is made worse by the tribal marks on her face, a feature that makes the Mpondomise counsellors (who are sent to make a comparison between her and Thembeka) shudder. Similarly, Thembeka, who is described as a paragon of beauty, is found wanting when it comes to dignity of bearing. Jongilanga reveals this when he says:

> Noko lo mntwana ngathi unobulungu kakhulu... kutheni le nto angasoyikiyo singoyise suke ancokolo kuvele nelomhlathi ngathi uncokola neentanga zakhe? (136).
>
> (There is too much of the white woman in the manner of this girl... Why is she not overawed by us, who are her fathers? Why does she laugh so freely as if she were chatting with her equals?) (Translated by Jordan and Jordan 148)

University of Cape Town

2.1.3 Blending the best values from the contending cultures is a therapy for psychosocial disunity

This ideologeme is the crux of the reformist reaction, and the novels which it informs should be grasped essentially as symbolic acts whose function is to invent imaginary or formal solutions to unresolved social contradictions (see Jameson 1986, 76). In other words, the schism and confusion created by the confrontation between the modern scientific state and the old cosmic outlook have proved too difficult to resolve in the real world, and so writers such as Ngugi and Jordan attempt to resolve these social contradictions in the realm of the imaginary. These writers espouse marronage of the African and the European traditions as a way whereby the traumatic consequences of the invasion of African minds can be attenuated and psychosocial disunity avoided.

With regard to the representation of marronage, it could be argued that Ngugi is more skilful than Jordan: the attempts made by Ngugi's characters seem motivated by a genuine desire to reconcile the contending traditions, whilst there is a smack of pretence, manipulation and desperation in the attempts made by Jordan's characters. In Ngugi's novel the characters that attempt marronage are Chege, Muthoni, Nyambura and Wayaki. Although they espouse marronage for different reasons they all believe that there are sparks of beauty and spots of blemish in both the European and African traditions. Chege's attempt to reconcile these traditions (not in himself but through his son Waiyaki) stems from this belief. As pointed out earlier, this is evidenced by his exhortation to his son in the sacred grove. His attempt at marronage is motivated by political considerations: like Mugo wa Kibiro, he believes that "you could not cut the butterflies [i.e. the white men] with a panga. You could not spear them until you learnt and knew their ways and movement. Then you could trap, you could fight back" (20).

Although Muthoni and Nyambura's attempt at reconciliation, like Chege's, also stems from a genuine acknowledgement of the twin sources of authority (the African and the European traditions), theirs aims at resolving the ambivalence caused by the black-white encounter in their own lives. Muthoni tries to reconcile these two traditions through circumcision whilst Nyambura attemps to align them through love. Muthoni's allegiance to both the twin sources of authority is reflected in what she says to

University of Cape Town

Nyambura: "I have embraced the white man's faith. However, I know it is beautiful, oh so beautiful to be initiated into womanhood. You learn the ways of the tribe" (26). It is the existence of both good and bad in both traditions that induces in Muthoni this double allegiance. The same double allegiance is manifested in Nyambura, who thinks "if only she could meet Waiyaki [who to her is a symbol of African tradition] more often; if only he could stay near her then Christ would have a bigger meaning for her" (103).

Whilst Muthoni and Nyambura's attempts at marronage are aimed at salvation for themselves, Waiyaki has been predestined to save the Gikuyu people. His father reveals this to him after the ceremony of his second birth. To impress Waiyaki with the sacredness of his calling, Chege takes him in the early hours of the morning to the sacred grove. He tells him that he is the last in the line of the great Gikuyu seer, Mugo wa Kibiro, and so he must rise up and save the people in their hour of need. Although Waiyaki's task differs in magnitude from those of Muthoni and Nyambura, when he finally decides to embark on the path of marronage he like them is genuinely convinced that the existence of sparks of beauty and spots of blemish in both traditions make reconciliation expedient.

Like his father Chege, he now espouses marronage for political reasons. He believes that reconciliation will bring about peace and unity between the two warring ridges, Makuyu the stronghold of Christianity, and Kameno where tribal customs continue to hold sway. Then they could make a concerted effort to liberate themselves from their common enemy – the white man. It is only when they speak with one voice that they can be victorious over him. Waiyaki reinforces this idea by citing the great victories of Gikuyu heroes over Masai and other enemy tribes, and observing: "it is because the hills were united that such great victories were possible. People stood together in the hour of need, giving one another warmth of their contact, the strength of their blood" (148). By removing the petty differences among Africans, which accrue from conflicting traditions, reconciliation prepares the ground for them to stand "together in the hour of need" (142).

In *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* the characters who attempt marronage – such as the chief from Sulenkama, the wise chief of the Thembus, and Zwelinzima – act from expediency and not from principle. The two chiefs confess that they follow traditional

University of Cape Town

African ways and beliefs to inspire their people's confidence in them as leaders, not because they believe that there is truth or beauty in them. The chief from Sulenkama for instance submits (quite against his belief) to being treated by the medicine man, and the Thembu chief speaks out against the termination of goats, arguing that they are required by the diviners, herbalists and novice diviners, simply to get down to the people's level of thinking. Zwelinzima himself, after meeting with these two chiefs, listens attentively when people discuss witchcraft for the same reason. Even Jongilanga, who in his last words and testament sincerely advocates reconciliation, has been manipulated into the reformist mould by Dingindawo who (to further his wicked designs) has advised him to suggest that Zwelinzima should marry both Thembeka and the Bhaca princess.

Both Jordan and Ngugi exhibit commendable artistry in dramatising the view that marronage demands sacrifice. Jordan, for instance, graphically highlights the psychological pain suffered by those who attempt reconciliation. At a meeting called to resolve the case of Thembeka who has killed Majola, Jongilanga, a traditionalist, after meticulously voicing all their grievances, concludes his powerful speech with an appeal for justice and fairness to both traditionalists and assimilationists (200). In his list of grievances, Jongilanga has pointed out that since the day Zwelinzima married an educated wife against their will and his father's dying wish, traditionalists have felt oppressed, ignored, discriminated against, and spitefully treated by the King and the educated people. But although the traditionalists feel that they have been grossly ill-treated by the modernists, they do not seek vengeance upon them, nor do they want to become oppressors in turn. All they ask for are justice, fairness and equality.

After this emotive speech we look forward anxiously to Zwelinzima's response. His open and genuine acknowledgement of having been ignorant of the grievances of the traditionalists inspires hopes for a better future. He confesses that all along he (like his white mentors) thought he knew what was good for Africans, but now appreciates the need to consult with the people in order to negotiate a settlement of the dispute between traditionalists and assimilationists. He solemnly promises to do anything they ask of him to redress their grievances. After unsuccessfully pleading that his wife be forgiven, he then wants to know in what way he might 'feed' them. They respond by requesting that he should marry a second wife, the Bhaca princess, in accordance with the dying wish of

University of Cape Town

his father, king Zanemvula. Zwelinzima is petrified with shock when he thinks about the implications of what the traditionalists perceive as a reasonable compromise and the only viable solution to their problems. Using very picturesque language, Jordan captures Zwelinzima's astonishment: *"UZwelinzima wasuka womela esihlalweni ngokomntu obethwe ngumbane. Akathetha, akashukuma, akahleka, akalila wasuka wandwanye nje..."* (202-3). (He sat in his chair as if struck by lightning. He did not speak nor move. He did not laugh, he did not cry, but stared blankly into space...) (Translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 225).

The writer's repeated use of verbs in the negative form – *"akathetha"*, *"akashukuma"* (he did not speak nor move), *"akahleka"* (he did not laugh), *"akalila"* (he did not cry) – suggest just how repugnant Zwelinzima finds the traditionalists' request. The antithesis created by the juxtaposition of *"akahleka"* with *"akalila"* shows how benumbed Zwelinzima is. He has sought to pacify the agitated traditionalists, only to find out that in order to achieve this he has to engage in the African tradition of polygamy. His Christianised and colonised mind revolts strongly against this. In a subsequent meeting with the upholders of African tradition he stubbornly refuses to marry the Bhaca princess. All the white man's sermons about the sinfulness of polygamy make him recoil in horror from committing such an "abomination".

In *The River Between* Ngugi also gives the readers a graphic description of the sacrifices required for reconciliation through Muthoni. Her solution to the ambivalence caused by the black-white encounter is to attempt to embrace both traditions. She can be interpreted as saying that "there should be no convulsions in the process of aligning your [Christianity] with the culture of your people so that each informs the other" (Mphahlele 1974, 30). In line with her belief she runs away from home at Makuyu to go and stay with her aunt at Kameno, so that she can be initiated. She joins the so-called "pagan" celebrations and dances. Strangely enough she finds herself at home. Waiyaki, the educated hero, is astonished when he sees Muthoni dance. He wonders where and when she learnt this art and it is only when his turn comes that he understands that "you did not have to learn. No, you just gave yourself to the dream in the rhythm" (43). But the Christian guilt complexes, which have been rigorously inculcated in their minds will not

University of Cape Town

easily let them be. Tormented by remorse they both wander away from the dancing group.

On top of this psychological suffering, they are still to suffer severe physical agony. In accordance with her expressed wish " to be a woman made beautiful in the manner of the tribe", Muthoni is circumcised. But unfortunately her wound does not heal. The trauma she sustains is such that at one stage she becomes delirious. After it has become clear that all the herbs that her aunt has given her will not cure her, Waiyaki and some young man take her to Siriana Mission hospital. There she dies, saying to Waiyaki: "Tell Nyambura I see Jesus. And I am a woman beautiful in the tribe..." (53). Waiyaki and Nyambura also die in their attempt to reconcile the two traditions.

In Jordan's *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* the attempt at marronage claims the lives of Zwelinzima and Jongilanga. When Zwelinzima flatly refuses to reconcile the two traditions by marrying the Bhaca princess, the traditionalists resort to violence. They stop their children from going to school and when teachers try to persuade pupils to go back to school they are rudely chased away. The children who attend school because the teachers secretly influence them are intimidated, molested and chased out of their classes by their parents. Violence escalates and in the whole Mpondomise country anarchy reigns. Ngubengwe, the educated Mpondomise statesman, is murdered while trying to save Father Williams. Many people mourn his death, Jongilanga in particular.

Jongilanga is in fact so shocked by Ngubengwe's death that he renounces violence and contemplates urging the children to return to school, all the while maintaining that the reconciliation of the two worlds, which would ensure the abolition of discrimination, is the only viable solution to their problems. On his way home Jongilanga is murdered. He is no doubt assassinated because of his efforts to resolve the conflict. His death throws Zwelinzima and the nation into complete confusion. After the burial of Jongilanga, Dabula asks Zwelinzima how he proposes to intervene. His reply is: "*Hayi Dlangamandla khawuyeke. Wobe uzivele*" (218) (Please don't ask me yet, Dabula Dlangamandla. You will know soon enough.) (Translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 245). Early one morning he goes up the Ntibane ridge and over the Bulembu rising. There he stays alone the whole day. When he comes down he has resolved that he will agree to take a second wife if he is again urged to do so.

University of Cape Town

He subsequently calls a meeting of the traditionalists and once more pledges that he will do anything they demand of him if only they will promise that they will not indulge in any further acts of violence. They reiterate their request that he should marry the Bhaca princess in accordance with the dying wish of Zanemvula. He accedes to their request. It is worth noting that whenever Zwelinzima is baffled and troubled by something he either goes to the river or to the mountain. In Ngugi's novel *The River Between*, we noted that when Waiyaki's life is threatened, he goes up to the hills. Rivers and mountains are believed in many parts of Africa to be the abodes of the ancestors. The vigils at these shrines confirm what Mpahlele says about modern Africans' belief in ancestors: "when we seek moral guidance and inspiration and hope, somewhere in the recesses of our being we grope around for some link with those spirits" (*Down Second Avenue*, 64). The mere fact that when Zwelinzima and Waiyaki return from these shrines, they have at least some vision of what they are to do, is a clear indication that Jordan and Ngugi implicitly endorse the claim that "our ancestors as part of our history can if we allow them help us snap out of the trance into which we were thrown by Western education, so that we can use it to advance the interest of the whole nation" (Mphahlele 1974, 49).

When Zwelinzima agrees to marry the Bhaca princess, one hopes that this at last will bring peace; however, his concession produces only more havoc. On the day a herd of cattle is driven to Bhacaland as *lobola* for the chief, Thembeka becomes mentally deranged and later drowns herself and her child Zululiyazongoma in the river Bedlana. The sorrow that Zwelinzima experiences defies description. Crushed by grief, he later commits suicide. One may ask why characters who attempt to resolve the conflict between tradition and modernisation, Africa and the West, seem destined to die. They die because African writers believe that any solution to the problems of colonised Africa, whether cultural or political, demands sacrifice, even of human life. If people die for a great cause they undergo martyrdom.

University of Cape Town

2.2 COMPARISON OF THE AESTHETIC VALUE OF THE NOVELS

In line with the plan adumbrated in the methodology section, this section is going to be divided into two parts. The first part compares the vital beauty of the novels under review. It entails collating the authors' success in creating credible characters (protagonists and antagonists) and using them to realise their intentions. The second part focuses on typical beauty, which involves a comparative assessment of the authors' success in using the dominant categories to achieve the ostensible goals of their works. As suggested in the commentary on the theoretical framework, above, in comparing both the vital beauty and typical beauty this study will have recourse to dialectical criticism.

2.2.1 Vital beauty

Considering the portrayal of characters in these two novels, it is arguable that as far as vital beauty is concerned Jordan's novel excels over Ngugi's. Both writers depict flawed victims whose flaws contribute substantially to their downfall. This does not mean that these characters are necessarily villainous. They are usually admirable characters who have some defect which helps to bring about their suffering (Goodin 1985, 87). Furthermore the flaw is usually not a natural one but a socially induced one. The exposure of this flaw is therefore an indictment of the culture from which the false values of the characters originate.

The flaw in Zwelinzima and Waiyaki's characters (heroes in *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* and *The River Between* respectively) is the failure to understand the people they are destined to lead. In both cases the flaw is socially induced. Zwelinzima fails to understand that his reforms cut across the social and political expectations of the upholders of African traditions because he has been cut off from his roots – taken away from an African setting and placed in the custody of missionaries and Christian converts at a very tender age. Waiyaki is unable to understand that his people want political action and not education because the missionary Livingstone has taught him to adore education. The attack on Western culture achieved through the exposure of this flaw in Ngugi's novel is very mild. Waiyaki's desire to educate African children is not so deplorable after

University of Cape Town

all. It is just that it does not address fully the problems of the Gikuyu people. In Jordan's book the attack is devastating. It shows how incapacitating and incarcerating Western culture is to an African.

Jordan shows how European culture turns Zwelinzima, an otherwise brilliant and promising young man, into a quisling. One need only recall the reforms he introduces to see that he has been co-opted through acculturation. For instance, he supports the delimitation of stock, a strategy initiated by the white man to impoverish Africans. He also argues in favour of the extermination of goats, a calculated move of the white man to deliver a death-blow to African culture, for goats are used in many African rituals. The damage that Western culture does to Zwelinzima's mind underlines the need for reconciliation to enable African culture to break the trance into which Africans have been cast by European culture. It is arguable that the attack on Western culture that Jordan mounts through exposing this defect in Zwelinzima's personality is accomplished in Ngugi's novel through the depiction of Joshua's character. He is so completely brainwashed by the white man that he disowns his own daughter Muthoni who, against his teachings, decides to be circumcised. Joshua is such a narrow-minded and comic character because "he renounced his past and cut himself off from the those life-giving traditions of the tribe. And because he had nothing to rest upon... he had to cling with his hands to whatever the missionaries taught him promise future" (141). Yes, Ngugi succeeds in aiming a broadside against Western culture, and his strategy in doing so has the added advantage of protecting Waiyaki (the hero) from losing favour with the readers.

However, creating another character who plays a negative role in order to protect the image of the hero has its disadvantages. One obvious result of such a strategy is that both tend to become flat characters. Waiyaki and Joshua are good examples of this. Neither undergoes much character development. On the one hand, Joshua is portrayed as a stooge or a crank, stripped of individuality and psychological significance. On the other hand, Waiyaki is portrayed as a basically virtuous person whose only sin (if it is sin at all) is the sin of omission (i.e. omitting to include political action in his agenda for development). In a sense he is also not portrayed as "fully human, capable of heroism as

University of Cape Town

well as self doubt, nobility as well as selfishness, generosity as well as meanness" (Mackenzie 1990, 8).

Jordan too appears to use this strategy of creating a character to bear the brunt of the reader's condemnation. That character is Thembeka. It is Thembeka and not Zwelinzima who outrageously violates the customs and traditions held in reverence by the Mpondomise. She walks bare-headed and bare-legged in front of the elders. She trifles with all that the Mpondomise regard as sacred, and finally commits the sacrilege of killing Majola. But Jordan does not completely exonerate Zwelinzima from blame: he receives a share of the reader's condemnation because of the reforms he champions, as seen earlier. Thembeka herself is not a stooge like Joshua but a fully developed character whose strengths and weaknesses are delicately depicted. She is portrayed as a woman of virtue, vision and courage who unfortunately is unable to actualise her potential because her personality has been deformed by Western culture.

Another technique common in novels, which depict flawed victims is what (Goodin, 1985) terms the "love triangle". In a love triangle there are ties (usually love ties) that connect the hero/heroine with two characters of the opposite sex. Generally, the love triangle is used to reveal the character of the hero/heroine. Both Jordan and Ngugi make use of this technique, and again Jordan makes a better use of this tool than Ngugi. It is arguable that in Ngugi's novel the love triangle is intended to reveal both positive and negative qualities in Waiyaki's character. This love triangle involves Waiyaki and Joshua's daughters Muthoni and Nyambura. It is not clear whether what is between Muthoni and Waiyaki can be seen as a love relationship, but something seems to connect these two characters from the night preceding the day of the circumcision ritual to the day Muthoni dies. If it is meant to be a love relationship, it is not sufficiently developed and is therefore not convincing. Whatever it is, it is used to expose Waiyaki's contrasting irresolution and indecision.

Whilst Muthoni takes every opportunity to preach her message about the reconciliation of African and European traditions, Waiyaki through irresolution fails to utilise a number of golden opportunities for communicating his vision. Even when he has finally diagnosed accurately what needs to be done, he allows himself to be sidetracked by Kabonyi and fails to explain his vision in full. So, as far as highlighting the

University of Cape Town

shortcomings in Waiyaki's character is concerned, Muthoni' s role in the story appears to realise Ngugi's intention in creating the character. The only reservation I have about Muthoni is that her firm conviction about African values is not sufficiently motivated. No background is given to account for her staunch belief in the importance of African values except that on Sundays she often remains behind chatting with the villagers (33). What they chat about is left entirely to the reader's imagination.

The relationship between Waiyaki and Nyambura is definitely one of love. The positive qualities that it is intended to highlight in Waiyaki's character are faithfulness and genuineness. It can be said that Waiyaki remains faithful to his love for Nyambura, even under threat of death. However, this proof of Waiyaki's faithfulness seems artificially orchestrated. Waiyaki accidentally meets with Nyambura whilst he is going to Makuyu to see Kamau. He had occasionally met with her before, but whenever they met they were like strangers. Strangely, on this particular night he sees the woman in her for the first time. Ngugi gives the impression that this is due to the romantic influence of the moon on him. The manner in which he suddenly sees the woman in her under the moonlight smacks of sensuality.

It can neither be said that this is love at first sight, for they have met before without falling in love, nor can it be said that it is love, which develops through acquaintance. Before the night Waiyaki meets Nyambura at the banks of river Honia, they had met as strangers. On this night they make an appointment to meet at Waiyaki's school. For some reason Nyambura does not honour the appointment. After that he meets her on several occasions but he is unable to muster the courage to declare his feelings for her. Months pass, nothing happens, and then he again accidentally meets her on the banks of the river Honia, where he proposes to her. The fear of her father makes Nyambura reject his love overtures and proposal of marriage. When she finally accepts his love, it is too late and they have only one last night to be together. That night's happiness itself is not convincing.

It is difficult to imagine how Nyambura could enjoy complete happiness when she knows that her parents and friends might be killed that very night. Again it is inconceivable that on the same night that Kabonyi has denounced Waiyaki as a devil and Joshua has called him a traitor they could lie down on the grass and enjoy a love

University of Cape Town

experience that joins their souls in one stillness (137). It is also improbable that a one-night love affair could be so strong that a man would be willing to die for it. It can be argued that Ngugi's use of drama compensates for the shortcomings that have been identified in his development of this love affair. The manner in which Waiyaki proposes love to Nyambura is dramatic and the way in which she accepts his love is also full of drama.

It is on the banks of the river Honia near the spot where Muthoni was circumcised that Waiyaki proposes love to Nyambura. He does this holding her right hand and she returns the gesture. He then embraces her and presses her close to his breast as tears roll down her face on to his shoulder. Similarly, on the night that Nyambura accepts his love, at Joshua's home before the eyes of the whole Christian congregation, she holds his hand and declares her love for him. And again, on the day in which Waiyaki is challenged by Kabonyi to deny Nyambura, he acknowledges his love for her by simply taking her into his arms. These gestures are used to dramatise the intensity of the love they have for each other. Powerful as drama can be, it should not be used as a substitute for building a well-developed and realistic relationship if the writer's intention is to magnify the faithfulness of the lovers to one another. In sum, the love relationship in Ngugi's novel is well dramatised but not fully developed.

Nor does the love affair between Waiyaki and Nyambura attest to the genuineness of his efforts to unite the people of the ridges. It might be argued that in those days no ordinary Gikuyu man would even dream of marrying an uncircumcised girl. But to this it can be said that Waiyaki is not an ordinary Gikuyu man; he is educated and therefore some traditions do not have much sway over him. He experiences little internal stress in proposing marriage to Nyambura. So the relationship is not necessarily proof of the genuineness of his efforts to unite the Christians and upholders of African traditions. In fact it raises suspicions about his genuineness, since he now has an axe to grind in this mission of unity.

Jordan is more successful than Ngugi in the development and use of the love triangle. He succeeds in employing it to reveal Zwelinzima and Thembeka as admirable characters. It is exploited to explain the stress and strain experienced by those who attempt marronage. The manner in which Jordan develops the love relationship between

University of Cape Town

Thembeka and Zwelinzima shows his craftsmanship. He spares us the details of how Zwelinzima proposes to Thembeka but prepares the ground for the germination of this love. Mphuthumi (Thembeka's long-time acquaintance) strikes up a friendship with Zwelinzima when he arrives at Lovedale, a friendship based on similar interests. They are both cricket players. Whenever they go to St. Matthews where Thembeka is studying, they both pay her a visit at Mzana. In this way seeds of love are sown, seeds that germinate and blossom when Thembeka goes to pursue her studies at Lovedale.

Unlike Ngugi, Jordan elaborately utilises competition to make this phase of the love triangle fascinating. Mthunzini, another young man from the same area who has long had designs on Thembeka decides to propose to her. She rejects his offer and chooses Zwelinzima in stead. Again, Jordan spares us the details of how this love develops but provides time for it to mature. Thembeka and Zwelinzima are together at Lovedale for a whole year, and we are therefore not surprised when Nomvuyo, Thembeka's best friend, says: "*Abo bobabini baya kwahlulwa zindudumo. Abathandelani kuphila*" (25) (Nothing short of thunder can separate those two. They love each other too well for this life) (Translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 23).

That they are now deeply in love is observable during the visit that Zwelinzima pays to Thembeka at Lovedale. Their warm embrace and kiss and their loving chitchat confirm Nomvuyo's observation. Another strategy that Jordan employs to make vivid the intensity of the love relationship between these two is that of putting Zwelinzima's life in danger and letting the reader observe Thembeka's reaction. On the night of the day on which Zwelinzima is to undergo the dangerous journey from Sheshegu to Mpondomiseland, Thembeka cannot sleep and prays unceasingly for his safety. In the morning she rides a horse for miles to ask Sister Monica to help her pray for the man she deeply loves. At the mission she collapses and faints, and the agitation, which is written all over her body attests to the intensity of her love for Zwelinzima.

Their mutual faithfulness is reiterated at different points in the narrative. Thembeka's faithfulness is highlighted when Mthunzini again makes advances to her. Neither her parents nor the Bishop or anyone else can make Thembeka betray her love for Zwelinzima. Jordan reveals the steadfastness of Zwelinzima's love for Thembeka by pitting it against his respect for his father's dying wish: his love for Thembeka triumphs.

University of Cape Town

In a public meeting of all the Mpondomise he announces that as long as Thembeka lives he cannot love any other woman. The qualities – such as virtue, steadfastness and courage – which this love relationship reveals in Zwelinzima and Thembeka serve to endear them to the reader. The reader's dismay at the disintegration of Zwelinzima's family is thereby intensified, and the price that all who seek to solve the problems of Africa might be called to pay is stressed.

The third corner of this love triangle develops around the Bhaca princess. The dying wish of Zwelinzima's father Zanemvula was that his son should marry a Bhaca princess. The rationale behind the tradition that princes should marry princesses emanates from an understanding that princesses are familiar with royal etiquette. Although the Bhaca princess herself does nothing to carry the story forward, her existence in the narrative contributes greatly to the development of the plot. Since the wish of a dying man is held in reverence in the traditional African setting, she comes to represent African culture and is used by the upholders of African values in staking their claim for equality with Christian converts. Here, Jordan depends on chance in developing his story. It is sheer chance that at this time there is a princess of a marriageable age. This could be seen as a flaw in his otherwise commendable character portrayal. However, it might be that Jordan's intention is to use this coincidence to elevate Zanemvula's dying wish into the status of a prophecy. This makes Zwelinzima's disregard of his father's dying wish a sacrilege tantamount to a violation of what is divinely willed.

Jordan arranges that a comparison between the Bhaca princess (who represents African values) and Thembeka (who champions European values) be made. To resolve the stalemate at a meeting where the matter of whom should Zwelinzima marry is debated, it is agreed that a group of men (from both the upholders of African traditions and the assimilationists) be sent out to Bhacaland to see if there is a princess of a marriageable age. If there is one, they should assess her and bring back a report. Thereafter they should go and make a similar assessment of Thembeka, the daughter of Khalipha. In Bhacaland they found out that indeed there is a princess and that although she is not beautiful, she has an attractive personality and is dignified. At Khalipha's place they are all impressed by Thembeka's beauty, but Jongilanga observes that there is a frivolity typical of white women in her character. That both women have strengths and

University of Cape Town

shortcomings is here used to underline the necessity of marronage between the African and European cultures, which they represent.

Jordan's superiority over Ngugi in character portrayal in the novels under consideration is clear in the manner in which he represents his antagonists. Whilst he extends authorial sympathy to the characters on both sides of the divide, Ngugi generally shows little sympathy for antagonists. But Jordan extends sympathy to characters 'on the other side' by portraying most of them as admirable people. Jongilanga, for instance, is depicted as a courageous, eloquent and genuine champion of African traditions. Furthermore, he is described as an admirable reform candidate. In the end he recants his belief in violence and advocates reconciliation. Ngxabane, is also portrayed as a brave and uncompromising upholder of African tradition. When the narrative starts he is on Zwelinzima's side. In fact, he initiates the gallant effort to bring Zwelinzima back to his rightful position as the king of the Mpondomises. This precludes the possibility that his opposition to Zwelinzima could be motivated by any other factor besides his unwavering allegiance to African tradition.

Above all, perhaps Jordan's sympathy towards the upholders of tradition (seen as antagonists) is exhibited in the manner in which he portrays the pain they suffer when their objects of worship are desecrated. When Thembeka kills Majola, Ngxabane and the whole clan bemoan the death of their ancestor. In a mournful speech Ngxabane explains the tragic implications of this:

> "Hayi Jola uthetha ngesihelegu wena. Ayisosihelegu esi! Izihelegu siyazazi. Le nto ingaphaya kwesihelegu kungasuka kuthiwe sisiqalekiso; kukufa; *yimbhubho* yesizwe. Ngubani onokuthetha xa isizwe *sibhujisiwe*!... *Sibhujisiwe* mzi kaNgwanya sijongile, kodwa kumhla nisathi masithethe. Siza kuthetha singobani, siphi? Andikwazi mana ukuthetha *ndibhubhile*" (emphasis mine) (172-3)
>
> (No Jola! You talk of calamities! This is no calamity, for calamity we know. This is worse than calamity. Say rather it is the curse of death. For this is doom, aye, the very *annihilation* of people. Who can speak when the entire people has been *destroyed*...? We the people of Ngwanya stood by and looked on our *destruction*. All this has come to pass and you still bid us speak! Who are we? It is not I who can speak) (Translated by Jordan and Jordan 1980,188-9).

The repetition of the verb *"bhujisiwe"* (annihilated) with a heavy sound (bh), which is a partially devoiced bilabial plosive stop, brings to mind the blows which Thembeka rains

University of Cape Town

on the sacred snake. That Thembeka's impulsive and unpremeditated action has widespread tragic repercussions is skilfully implied through the use of collective nouns such as *"umzi"* in "*Sibhujisiwe mzi kaNgwanya*" and *"Isizwe"* in *"ndibhubhe nesizwe sakowethu"*. The killing of Majola is tantamount to the destruction of the whole Mpondomise tribe. In an incisive anlysis of "Silence as a Rhetorical Strategy in A.C. Jordan's novel *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*", Satyo and Smouse (2000, 7) succinctly sum up Ngxabane's august oratory abilities exhibited on this occasion when they say: "In his impressive rhetoric he demonstrates his wit, his linguistic skills, his emotions, his ability to engage his listeners by distracting them in order to effectively keep them on track".

The modicum of sympathy that Ngugi extends to Kabonyi, who spearheads the opposition against Waiyaki, is meant to show that the political action he espouses happens to be what the people need at that point in time. But even so, Ngugi does not bestow upon him a genuineness of purpose, as it is clear that he supports this noble cause for personal aggrandisement. As for being a champion of African values (which he pretends to be), Kabonyi is not worthy of the title as he has earlier forsaken the African way and joined Joshua's band. There is so little goodness in his character that he comes to epitomise wickedness. Using a character such as Kabonyi as the main exponent of African values discredits the cause of the upholders of African tradition as it implies that dishonourable interests motivate their opposition to Westernisation.

It is not only in the depiction of the development of characters that Jordan outshines Ngugi but also in describing their destiny. Novels that use flawed victims are notorious for their pessimism, and Ngugi does little to avoid this shortcoming. Yes, the death of Muthoni is not an utter loss because she dies having fulfilled her desire of being a woman made beautiful in the tribe. Her last words to Waiyaki are: "tell Nyambura I see Jesus; and I am a woman beautiful in the tribe" (53). She has succeeded in reconciling the African and the European traditions in her life. Ngugi also suggests that the blood that falls as she is circumcised is like a seed; and as a seed it will bring forth people of her calibre. Indeed Nyambura and Waiyaki in different ways follow her path of rebellion in order to achieve reconciliation, but these two also die. Unlike Muthoni's, their deaths are devastating to the reader as there seems little hope that others better equipped to finish the work of uniting the ridges will take up their work. The faint glimmer of hope

University of Cape Town

that remains is couched in analogy and thus difficult for an ordinary reader to understand. This point will be discussed further later in this chapter.

Jordan, on other hand, effectively manages the pessimism seemingly inherent in novels of this nature. The reader welcomes the deaths of Zwelinzima and Thembeka because they are portrayed as a relief to their tormented souls. Furthermore their deaths are caused by their failure to compromise timeously and not by the cause for which they stand. In this way Jordan avoids the mistake (which Ngugi commits) of making marronage seem unattainable by condemning those who champion it to die. In *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* there is a clear suggestion that Mphuthumi and Nomvuyo, who are better equipped with understanding and tact, will carry on the good work of reconciliation. This point is further emphasised by their naming of their son Zwelethemba, a "name compounded out of the names of Zwelinzima and Thembeka", with the intention "to carry them gloriously into the future age of promise" (Sirayi, MS89/25/33), (Riodan 1961, 56).

2.2.2 Typical beauty

The first basic type of compositional-stylistic unity identified by Bahktin (1969, 178) is direct authorial narration. He argues that the author's speech must be "handled stylistically as speech aimed at its direct referential denotation; it must be adequate to its object (of whatever nature, poetic or other); it must be expressive, forceful, pithy, elegant and so forth...". Authorial speech in both Jordan's and Ngugi's novels is used to bestow beauty, merit and value upon African culture and European culture. Jordan's authorial speech is more balanced than that of Ngugi in these novels because whilst he reserves truly laudatory language for African culture, he acknowledges that virtue exists on both sides of the divide. Describing the Mugumo tree, Ngugi writes:

> A big Mugomo tree stood near the edge of the hill. It was a huge tree thick and mysterious. Bush grew and bowed reverently around it. And there the ancient tree stood, towering over the hill, watching as it were, the whole country. It looked holy and awesome, dominating Waiyaki's soul so that he felt very small and in the presence of a mighty power. This was a sacred tree. It was the tree of Murungu. (15)

University of Cape Town

This tree is used to represent African culture. The first linguistic device that strikes you when reading this passage is its 'over-wording'. Fairclough (1989, 115) defines over-wording as "an unusual high degree of repetition that often involves many words which are near synonyms". The first set of synonyms (composed of qualificatives, "big", "huge" and "thick") describes the size of the tree. These adjectives give us a picture of something enormous, thus asserting the greatness of African culture. It is so great that other cultures symbolised by the bush "bowed reverently around it". The second set (constituted by "mysterious", "holy" and "awesome") highlights the sacredness of the tree. This set is used to characterise African culture as unfathomable, pure and worthy of respect and fear. The third set (made up by "towering", "dominating" and "mighty") evokes the resilience and indomitable power of African culture.

Fairclough (1989, 115) argues that "over-wording shows preoccupation with some aspect of reality which may indicate that it is a focus of ideological struggle". Here the ideological struggle is over the value of African culture. Ngugi is using over-wording to assert the value of African culture in the face of colonial ideology, which is committed to a programme of devaluing it. The other linguistic devices that Ngugi uses in this passage are short sentences and personification. The last two sentences ("This was a sacred tree" and "It was the tree of Murungu") are short and simple and they serve to ascribe simplicity and naturalness to African culture. This tree is said to be "watching" over the whole country. Attributing human qualities to this tree serves to highlight the humane character of African culture. This glorification of African culture creates a problem in a novel that espouses reconciliation as it unwittingly renders reconciliation unnecessary, no comparable effort being made to emphasise the goodness of the other culture.

Unlike Ngugi, Jordan employs laudatory prose to ascribe the same qualities to both African and European traditions. As observed earlier, this is evidenced in the manner in which he bestows antiquity, authenticity, knowledge and wisdom on both Ngxabane and the white Bishop who is Zwelinzima's warden at Fort Hare. Jordan also uses glowing terms to evoke the harmony and happiness that result from marronage. Mphuthumi, who represents marronage, is described as:

University of Cape Town

> Lo mfana weyenesiqu esimnandi engemde, engemfuphi – esesithubeni. Wayentsundu ngebala eneliso elibukhali nobuso obucwengileyo budiza ukukhawuleza kwengqondo, igazi lakhe libaleka lixela impilo (3-4)
>
> (He was well built and of medium height, his complexion was dark-brown; he had a sharp eye and a keen expression, which suggested a quick intelligence; he appeared to be a healthy young man with good red blood in his veins). (Translated by Jordan and Jordan 1980, 4)

Over-wording is used here to highlight the admirable attributes of Mphuthumi. Jordan describes him as having a proportionate build (*wayenesiqu esimnandi*), neither tall nor short (*engamde engemfuphi*), of medium height (*esesithubeni*). Instead of using one anatomical feature in suggesting intelligence Jordan uses two: the sharp eye *(iliso elibukhali)* and calm face or keen expression (*nobuso obucwengileyo budiza ukukhawuleza kwengqondo*). Another form of over-wording that Jordan uses is to couple the isiXhosa idiomatic expression "*igazi libaleka*" (good red blood in his veins) with its meaning "*lixela impilo*" (signifying good health).

All these positive qualities given to Mphuthumi serve to valorise marronage. Another incident in which Jordan employs laudatory language to evoke the happiness that pertains to marronage is the marriage ceremony of Zwelinzima and Thembeka. The author maintains that there has never been so grand a wedding in Mpondomiseland. One thing that makes it so special is the blending of African and European dances. The jovial and communal sharing that characterises the visit at Ngcolokini also attests to the happiness and harmony that result from marronage. On this occasion both the upholders of European and African traditions drink from the same "*lala*" as Mzamo entertains them. In these ways Jordan presents marronage as not only necessary but also desirable.

With regard to the second compositional-stylistic unity, which entails the stylisation of various forms of oral everyday narration, it is arguable that both novels abound in features of oral everyday narration (such as repetition and epithets) because, although they belong to chirographic culture they are by no means remote from oral culture. The discussion of the authorial literary-artistic narration has alluded to these features. They will also be reflected in the analysis of the individualised speech of characters. Here the discussion is will focus only on features that these authors have

University of Cape Town

transposed from oral African culture and verbal arts, and assess whether or not they contribute to the fulfilment of the author's intentions.

Again it is arguable that Jordan excels over Ngugi in the use of oral material, because the aspects of African culture and verbal arts that he uses are harnessed to vivify his thematic concern with the need for reconciliation. Ngugi's novel also abounds in elements taken over from African tradition and verbal arts, but in most cases these do not serve to illuminate the content of the novel. They are used to venerate African culture. Conspicuous among the elements that Ngugi borrows from the African verbal arts are myths. Generally in this novel Ngugi uses these myths to highlight the similarities between African religion and Christianity. When you read about the myth of the origin of the Gikuyu nation you are struck by the similarities that exist between this myth and the creation story in the Bible. In both cases there is a Creator. In Judeo-Christian tradition, He is God and in Gikuyu he is called Murungu. He created man and woman; and, while Adam and Eve were instructed not to eat the fruit from a particular tree in the garden, Gikuyu and Mumbi were commanded to sacrifice to no God but Murungu.

Another myth that has a parallel in the Bible is the myth of the saviour. In both cases the people violate the covenanted relationship with their Creator. Prophets are sent with admonitions and the promise of a saviour. Their messages are rejected and the prophets are ill-treated. When the saviour arrives they conspire against him and he is finally killed because he preaches a message, which is contrary to their expectations. Indeed Ngugi's use of myths in this way (i.e. highlighting their similarities with those contained in the Bible) elevates African religion to the level of Christianity. It refutes the stereotype once held by Europeans that African religion is nothing but degrading fetishism and demonology. However, it unwittingly vitiates Ngugi's call for reconciliation as it renders European civilization irrelevant and redundant because it brought nothing new to Africa.

In spite of the above-mentioned shortcoming in Ngugi's use of these myths, it is the saviour myth that saves this novel from misfiring completely. The similarities between Christ and Waiyaki ("The Black Messiah", as the original title of the novel suggests) leave the reader with some hope that the devastating death of Waiyaki is not altogether in vain (Nama 1984, 47). The knowledge that although Christ died his work

University of Cape Town

was carried on by his disciples (including Peter who denied him) makes the reader deduce that likewise Kinuthia (Waiyaki's disciple who deserts him in the hour of need) and the teachers he recruited before he died will carry on the good work he started. It also serves to magnify the stature of Waiyaki and make him equal to the mammoth task of reconciling the ridges. Another device that Ngugi uses to magnify the status of Waiyaki is to associate him with Gikuyu legendary figures such as the great witch Kamiri, Wachiori, and the great warrior Demi na Mathathi.

Ngugi also employs legends to create an aura of heroism around his protagonists by naming them after Gikuyu legendary figures. Waiyaki is named after Waiyaki wa Hinga, who was thought to have received from "the great Kikuyu prophet Mugo Kibiru... his powers and responsibilities in the manner prescribed by tradition" (Sicherman 1990, 182). It is arguable that the view that Waiyaki in Ngugi's story would have saved the Gikuyu people against the white intruders had he not been betrayed by Kabonyi emanates from the tradition that the legendary Waiyaki wa Hinga who (it is believed) "successfully fought the British in the 1890's over the right to the property in his area... [but] was betrayed by a paramount chief [Kinyanjui], arrested at Fort Smith and taken to the coast but died on the way, or as another version has it, was buried alive [face downward] at [the CSM mission at] Kibwezi in Eastern Kenya" (ibid., 182-83). That the Waiyaki in the novel attempts marronage can be traced back to the tradition that emphasises the legendary Waiyaki's "welcome of Europeans, as early as 1887-88, and his alert defence of Gikuyu interests... [he was thus considered] a genuine and moderating influence on the Gikuyu warriors" (Muriuki 1974, 147-51). Readers are made to deduce that Waiyaki of the story succeeds in saving Joshua and other Christian converts on the day he comes to warn them of the traditionalists' planned attack, because the legendary Waiyaki's preventive warnings managed to save the cattle of the Gikuyu during the incessant raids of the white man (Sicherman 1990, 184).

Muthoni herself is named after Mary Muthoni Nyanjiru, "the alleged leader of the crowd protesting Harry Thuku's detention in 1922" (ibid., 169). The tradition holds that she is the woman who shouted that they should try to free their leader. In an interview in 1964, a witness named Job Muchuchu describes the legend in more detail:

University of Cape Town

> Mary Muthoni Nyanjiru... leapt to her feet, pulled her dress right up over her shoulders and shouted to the men: "You take my dress and give me your trousers. You men are cowards. What are you waiting for? Our leader is in there, let's get him". The hundreds of women trilled their *ngemi* [ululations that have "an exciting effect upon menfolk"] in approbation.... Mary and others pushed on until the bayonets of the rifles were pricking at their throats, and then the firing started. Mary was one of the first to die. (Sicherman 1990, 170)

Similarly, Muthoni in Ngugi's story challenges Waiyaki to take a stand and be willing to die for his convictions through her example of daring all odds in her attempt to reconcile African values with the Christian religion. Chege of Ngugi's story is himself named after the legendary Gikuyu seer Mugo wa Kibiro, also known as Cege [Chege] wa Kibiro, "who prophesied in the latter part of the nineteenth century that light-skinned strangers whose dress resembled butterfly wings would come bearing fire-producing sticks" (ibid., 163). Like Chege of old, who counselled the Gikuyu not to resist with force, the Chege of this story gives similar advice to his son Waiyaki when he urges him to go to the Mission place to learn all the wisdom and all the secrets of the white man because "...you could not cut the butterflies with panga. You could not spear them until you learnt and knew their ways and movement. Then you could trap, you could fight back" (20).

While Ngugi should be commended for indigenising his novel through the use of Gikuyu legends, my only reservation about his incorporation of legendary figures is that most of them – such as Kamiri the great witch and Wachiori the great warrior – finally succumb to the power of the white man, and are therefore not good models for Africans to follow. One could argue that these figures serve to warn readers of the power and cleverness of the white man. My contention is that Africans have heard enough about the power and cleverness of the white man from other books, and that what they need now are books featuring historical figures who were victorious over the white man.

Unlike Ngugi, who sometimes uses material from African orature merely to affirm African culture, Jordan harnesses elements of African culture and verbal arts to pursue his thematic concern which is vivifying the need for reconciliation. The legend of Mhlontlo is a good example of how Jordan uses oral material to illuminate the content of

University of Cape Town

his novel. Ngxabane, an Mpondomise sage, recounts the legend of Mhlontlo and how he out-manoeuvred the white man. He tells of how Mhlontlo went to a medicine man to be made immune to witchcraft. As a test of his bravery he is locked up in a special hut (*iphempe*), which then burns down completely. As a reward for passing through this terrible ordeal, the medicine man promises him that "*akusayi kuze ubulawe yimbumbulu*" (9) (no bullet will ever have the power to slay you) (translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 10). Ngxabane substantiates the validity of this prophecy by citing an incident during the Honis war, when the white soldiers surrounded Mhlontlo in a cave and fired several shots at him, but failed to kill him because two mysterious dogs caught and swallowed their bullets.

A taped interview with one of his sons, Isaac, conducted at NAHECS at the University of Fort Hare, shows that the daring deeds of Mhlontlo, which Ngxabane ascribes to the power of magic, are of course nothing but the escapades of a wily and wary warrior. Isaac tells us how Mhlontlo became involved in the Honis war. He recounts that there was turmoil in Mpondomiseland. The chiefs of other tribes wanted to club together against Mhlontlo. Knowing that he could not withstand a joint attack from these tribes Mhlontlo went to a white missionary to seek advice. Rev. Mr Davidson advised him to go and ask for a magistrate for his area in Umtata. By so doing he would be making his country a British protectorate. Without fully understanding the implications of such a move, Mhlontlo, having confidence in the man of God, did as he suggested and Open was sent as the first magistrate. For a time things went well for Mhlontlo. But then came Hamilton Hope to replace Shaw, who had succeeded Open. Hope made it clear from the outset that the days of chieftaincy had come to an end. He started by demanding that all criminal cases be brought to him and not to Mhlontlo. He introduced humiliating and oppressive laws such as *umthetho wekatsi*, which empowered him to publicly flog all Africans who dared to break the white man's law.

Observing that the white man had now usurped his power to rule, Mhlontlo started propagating the idea that all the whites in Transkei should be killed. Just at that time another chief revolted against the white man's rule. Hope instructed Mhlontlo to send his regiments to punish the chief. Mhlontlo refused, saying that he was still mourning the passing away of a relative. Beside himself with rage, Hope openly told

University of Cape Town

Mhlontlo that he had no choice in the matter for he was no longer the chief of the Mpondomise but now Hope's dog. He explained to him that he had surrendered his chieftaincy on the day he went to Umtata to ask for a magistrate. Infuriated by this, Mhlontlo retorted: "*Ukuba andiyonkosi thatha nabo abantu bakho uye nabo emfazweni*" (if I am no longer a chief then take your people [the Mpondomise] and lead them to war) (taped interview with Isaac). Hope stubbornly went ahead to arrange another meeting to issue arms to the Mpondomise. Mhlontlo arranged for Hope and other whites to be killed during this meeting. He strategically saved the son of a missionary when the other whites were killed. The Honis war started when white soldiers were sent to punish Mhlontlo. A price was put on his head.

It was during this war that Mhlontlo showed that he was a military genius. He eluded the white soldiers many times, including the occasion on which he was surrounded and trapped in a cave. They could not catch or kill him. He went to Lesotho and stayed there for a while; then, when the colonial authorities had given up hope of ever capturing Mhlontlo, he surrendered himself. A court case was arranged at King Williams Town and even there Mhlontlo outwitted the white man, for the man he saved came forward to testify that Mhlontlo was not a murderer but a saviour. Showing that a black man can dupe the white man is intended to demonstrate that "no race possesses the monopoly of beauty, intelligence, force and there is room for all of us at the rendezvous of victory" (Biko 1978, 61). This highlights the necessity of marronage. Furthermore, the legendary stature of Mhlontlo is not only used to magnify the status of the hero, as is the case in Ngugi's novel, but also serves as an example to follow. That Mhlontlo himself attempted to achieve marronage between African and European administrative styles is further evidence of Jordan's intention to make use of material that develops his thematic concerns. Mhlontlo's intention to reconcile the best values of the two traditions is further symbolised by the mysterious black and white paints that he occasionally smeared his body with when he moved around his house in the middle of the night.

The presentation of the Majola cult, which culminates in the killing of Majola by Thembeka, is another example of how Jordan uses material from African culture to develop his theme. The killing of Majola by Thembeka (a Christian convert) shows that the European religion, advanced as it purports to be, is highly intolerant of other

University of Cape Town

religions. It needs to learn a lesson in tolerance from African religion. The respect that the upholders of African tradition accorded to missionaries, to the extent that even in wartime they refused to kill them, attests to a high degree of religious tolerance worth emulating by the white man (and his converts). On the other hand, the African religion, which has no known ritual for pardoning certain types of offence (such as Thembeka's deliberate killing of Majola), needs to learn a lesson from Christian religion, which maintains that there is no sin that is unpardonable if it is confessed and forsaken. Jordan's exposure of weaknesses and strengths in both African and European religions reinforces the need for reconciliation and perhaps synthesis between them.

There is evidence enough in Ngugi's novel to indicate that he used a folktale pattern in structuring his story. The plot of the novel, for instance, follows the cyclical structure typical of African folktales. Major events in the narrative form a cyclical pattern. The first cycle is about Muthoni's attempt to reconcile the contending worldviews in her, the second is about Nyambura, and the last one is about Kihika's attempts to unite the warring ridges. The story of the Gikuyu saviours also forms a cyclical pattern. Mugo wa Kibiro comes as a saviour, but his prophecies are rejected and he dies a dejected man. The first cycle is completed. Chege comes, his prophecies are rejected and he dies a disappointed man. This is the second cycle. In the third cycle Waiyaki takes the stage, but again his vision (of education, unity and political freedom) is rejected and he dies at the hands of the very people he has tried to save.

Again there are similarities between the stories of these saviours and those of the prophets and Jesus in the Bible. It is therefore arguable that Ngugi's intention is to resuscitate and elevate certain African cultural motifs. As said earlier, Ngugi's tendency to try and elevate the African worldview through equating it with the European tradition unwittingly vitiates his thematic intentions by showing that there is no need for reconciliation.

Whilst Ngugi's strategy is, generally speaking, to retrieve, resuscitate and elevate aspects of African culture by equating them with aspects of the white man's culture, Jordan retrieves, resuscitates and amplifies them through combining them with elements from the orthodox western literary tradition. A good example of this is the plot structure of his novel. Several critics have argued that Jordan has patterned the structure of his

University of Cape Town

novel according to the Shakespearean tragic plot. Qangule (1974, 1), for instance, maintains that "the plot of Jordan's novel is divided into five parts which take the following pattern: part I: the exposition; part II: the rise and development; part III: the crisis; part IV: the decline and part V: the catastrophe". My view is that he has modelled his plot upon the structural pattern of African folktales as identified by Marivate (1973, 188). The following are the six main motifemes that Marivate found in Tsonga folktales:

Lack	: a state where an individual or a community lacks something: it refers to the problem to be overcome
Lack liquidated	: the removal of the lack or the problem
Interdiction	: an authoritative prohibition, i.e. a forbidden action
Violation	: the process of transgressing the interdiction or performing the forbidden action
Consequence	: the result of some unwise action on the part of the victim
Attempted Escape	: an attempt by the individual (or by forces outside the individual) to extricate himself or herself from the circumstances which have resulted from violating an interdiction.

In *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* the lack is caused by the absence of Zwelinzima, the authentic heir to the throne. The dramatic return of Zwelinzima liquidates the lack. Zanemvula's dying wish (that his son should marry a Bhaca princess) constitutes the Interdiction. Zwelinzima's decision to marry Thembeka against the expressed wish of his dying father is the Violation. The deaths of Zwelinzima, Thembeka and their son Zululiyazongoma constitute the Consequence. The motifeme of Attempted Escape is found in the naming of the son of Mphuthumi and Nomvuyo Zwelethemba, a "name compounded out of the names of Zwelinzima and Thembeka", so as "to carry them gloriously into the future age of promise" (Sirayi MS 89/25/33; Riordan 1961, 56). What Jordan has done is to amplify this folktale pattern by borrowing methods of developing the stages of a tragic plot from the orthodox Western literary tradition.

Jordan employs the same strategy in developing Zwelinzima as a hero. It is arguable that Jordan's delineation of Zwelinzima as a hero is largely based on the image of the hero in African folktales. Using the epic literature from the Banyanga Zaire

University of Cape Town

republic, Beibuyck (1971, 118) comes up with the following general schema for how the folktale hero is portrayed:

1. a man – a chief or a commoner – has married several wives
2. He decrees that his wives should bear girls only
3. The wives become pregnant all at once
4. One wife, usually the principal or the beloved wife, gives birth to a son, possibly after a prolonged pregnancy
5. The newborn son has special attributes: he can speak and give orders; or he can remove, by his volition alone, all the objects from his father's village.
6. The newborn son leaves the paternal village:
   - he is chased by his father
   - or he flees with his mother and the midwives' help
   - or he departs on his own initiative.
7. The son settles somewhere in the forest or begins a series of travels
8. Having settled in the forest he removes all the objects from his father's village, causing a famine there; or during his travels he amasses goods by winning in the game of dice.
9. The impoverished father learns about the son's prosperity and decides to live with him; or the travelling hero establishes himself and becomes a chief; or the son's greatness is acknowledged by the father, and the son becomes a chief.

The first point of the schema describes the milieu into which the hero is born. Looking at many examples of folktales one can see that the milieu is usually heroic and/or aristocratic. Zwelinzima is of royal blood: he is a direct descendant of Zanemvula, a popular and progressive Mpondomise king. The second, third and fourth points are about the birth of the hero. Biebuyck (1971, 99) observes: " The conception and birth of the hero come to pass under special circumstances resulting either from the father's unnatural interdiction or from the mother's protracted barrenness". Zwelinzima is born after protracted 'barrenness' on the part of his father Zanemvula (*Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*, 16).

The fifth point of the schema indicates that the hero possesses special attributes. Zwelinzima indeed has special attributes, such as oratorical ability, royal dignity, charisma, bravery and intelligence. The sixth, seventh and eighth points encapsulate what Soile (1972, 49) describes as the "danger-fraught journey of the hero into the bush of unfamiliar ghosts". Zwelinzima is helped to flee from his uncle Dingindawo's sorcery by

University of Cape Town

three of Zanemvula's trusted counsellors, and entrusted to the care of his uncle Gcinizibele. Under the guardianship of this man, Zwelinzima acquires education in accordance with his father's dying instruction. The ninth point is about the return of the hero and his ascendancy to the throne. In the fullness of time Zwelinzima is fetched amidst drama and danger and made king of the Mpondomise.

Again, Jordan amplifies this schema by blending it with the Aristotlean notion of the tragic hero: "a man not pre-eminently virtuous and just should fall from prosperity to misery through a fatal flaw in his character or an error of judgement..." (Dorsch 1965, 48). In this way Jordan achieves unity of content and form, something which sometimes eludes Ngugi, who also uses this general schema in developing the heroism of Waiyaki. Jordan's blending of African cultural forms with Western literary models is in line with his thematic intention of advocating reconciliation between African and European cultures. One other example of this strategy is his use of praise poetry, a genre typical of African orature, in the context of a novel, a genre that some African scholars believe to be of European origin (see *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* 33, 124, 162).

The third compositional stylistic unity, which is the stylisation of various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration (letter, diary etc.), is more noticeable in Jordan's novel than in Ngugi's and thus makes *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* more heteroglot than *The River Between*. The forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration that are common in Jordan's novel are letters and newspaper articles. Generally, Jordan exhibits ingenuity in using these forms of semi-literary everyday narration in that almost all contribute to the development of the story. The first article (96) that appears in the newspaper *Imvo Zabantsundu*, for instance, is used to reveal the secret journey of *Amafela ndawonye* (inseparables-to-the-death) to the rival group of Dingindawo's men. It thus heightens anxiety in the readers, as they now know that Zwelinzima's life is at stake, because his enemies can plan in the knowledge that his return is imminent. Jordan skilfully exploits the *public* nature of this form of semi-literary (written) everyday narration, in that the Felandawonyes also get to know of the leakage and will thus be more cautious in their plans. All this serves to make the story of Zwelinzima's return to Mpondomiseland very intriguing and dramatic.

University of Cape Town

The same form of semi-literary written everyday narration is used by Jordan to inform the public about the passing away of Thembeka (235). This serves to prod Mthunzini into making the vital confession that exposes Dingindawo as the main culprit in Zwelinzima's tragedies. The same article is used to inform Mphuthumi and Nomvuyo about the passing away of their bosom friend, and in this way Mphuthumi is made, in a last gesture of honourable friendship, to visit Zwelinzima who after seeing him dies, having at least the consolation that his friends did not desert him entirely during his hour of need.

Letters are also used artistically to contribute to the development of the story. The serious and respectful tone of the letter written by Mphuthumi to Zwelinzima at the beginning of the narrative, to request an urgent meeting with him (28), for instance, is used to prepare Zwelinzima and minimise the shock he is going to sustain when he discovers that the carefully-guarded secret of his royal origin is now known to his friend. The authorial comment that follows the letter shows that it has succeeded in giving Zwelinzima a hint as to the seriousness of the item on the agenda of the meeting (it reveals what he is thinking about after reading the letter). That is why Mphuthumi cannot be accused of lacking tact (as Vilakazi unjustifiably does) when he makes no introductions but immediately presents the item on the agenda.

Another letter that contributes towards the development of the story is the one written by Zwelinzima during the meeting about his marriage issue. This letter reads as follows:

> Bawokazi
>
> Ndothukile kakhulu ukuva ukuba ubawo wenza umyolelo onje, ndaye ndilusizi kakhulu kuba ndiziva ndingenakho konke ukuwamkela. Nceda, Jolinkomo uxelele ibandla ukuba ndazana nentombi kakhalipha ndiseseLovedale, ndazimisela ukukuyizeka. Ndiyaboingoza ke amawethu ukuba angazikhathazi, nam angandikhathazi, ngale nto kuba isekho intombi kakhalipha andisayi kuze ndibizwe ngantombi yimbi, nokuba seyiyekabanina.
>
> Owakho unyana.
>
> Mna Zwelinzima (131-2).

University of Cape Town

(My dear Uncle,

> It was a shock to me to learn that my late father expressed such a dying wish, and I am grieved to have to state that I find myself unable to abide by it. I therefore beg you, Jolinkomo, to inform the council that I have known and loved Khalipha's daughter since I was a student at Lovedale and I have resolved to marry her. I make an earnest appeal to my people not to cause me or themselves any unpleasantness in this matter. For as long as Khalipha's daughter lives, I will marry no other woman, no matter whose daughter she may be.
>
> Your affectionate nephew,
>
> Zwelinzima) (Translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 142).

Earlier I observed that Jordan reveals Zwelinzima's steadfastness in his love for Thembeka by showing how this love triumphs over his respect for his father's dying wish. It is through this letter that Zwelinzima makes his stand on the matter unequivocally clear. Jordan's choice of written text which, according to Ong (1982, 132), "represent[s] the words of the author in definitive or final form", serves to highlight his unwavering commitment to love no other woman as long as Thembeka lives. The finality of the written text is further evidenced by the reaction of Jongilanga, the spokesperson for the upholders of African tradition, when Dingindawo reports Zwelinzima's stand. When the message is relayed through the word of mouth, Jongilanga wants to know whether the Chief fully realizes that it was his father's dying wish that he should marry a Bhaca princess. But after the letter is read, Zwelinzima's stand is so clear and definite that Jongilanga asks no further questions, and mournfully and sarcastically echoes Zwelinzima's words before the meeting. Through this letter Jordan is able to balance the equation, which seemed to be tilting in favour of the upholders of tradition after Ngxabane so eloquently presented Zamvula's dying wish. Now here is a letter stating the express wish of Zwelinzima (who is himself a Chief) in his own writing and bearing all his credentials. The ground for negotiations is levelled again, and that is why the proposition by Danisa to convene an assessment team to compare the Bhaca princess and Thembeka, is accepted – albeit with some protest – by Jongilanga.

University of Cape Town

Jordan further exploits the definitive nature of written text in other letters in the novel, such as those written to Mphuthumi arranging the return of Zwelinzima to Mpondomiseland, and the one written by Mthunzini to Zwelinzima confessing his guilt and exposing the ignoble role played Dingindawo in the tragedies that had befallen Zwelinzima and his people. In the letters written to Mphuthumi (some of which are written by Zwelinzima himself) that are stolen by Mthunzini and given to Dingindawo, Jordan presents Dingindawo with definite evidence that Zwelinzima is alive. It is this concrete evidence that makes Dingindawo take action to thwart the plans of the Felandawonyes and bring Zwelinzima back to Mpondomiseland, thus contributing to the development of the story. The letter written by Mthunzini provides Zwelinzima with such shocking and undeniable evidence that he commits suicide out of disillusionment and thus brings the story to its catastrophic end. Even those letters that seem to consist of irrelevant chitchat between lovers are not an unnecessary digression because they serve to augment the loving relationship between Zwelinzima and Thembeka, which – as pointed out earlier – serves to endear them to readers, heightening their disillusionment as they witness the disintegration of Zwelinzima's family and highlighting the price that all who seek to solve the problems of Africa might be called upon to pay.

The fourth compositional stylistic unity comprises the various forms of literary extra-artistic authorial speech, which includes things such as moral, philosophical or scientific statements. Conventionally, "extra-artistic authorial speech" denotes moralising or didatic authorial intrusions that tend to be independent of the narrative texture of the text, of the sort common in English novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this study, however, the phrase is interpreted so as to be synonymous with "extra-narrative authorial speech": that is, to refer to authorial judgements or expressions of value which make no direct contribution to the narrative momentum.

It is arguable that both Jordan and Ngugi use what Volosinov terms (1973, 120) "pictorial style [in which the author] devises means for infiltrating reported speech with authorial retort and commentary in deft and subtle ways". Generally, the extra-artistic or extra-narrative authorial speech is in these novels used to valorise or vilify the actions and fates of characters. As in the case of authorial speech (discussed above), Jordan's extra-artistic authorial speech is more balanced than that of Ngugi, in that whilst Ngugi

University of Cape Town

valorises only the actions and fates of protagonists and vilifies exclusively the actions and fates of antagonists, Jordan employs this kind of speech to praise and condemn characters on both sides of the divide.

It is extra-artistic authorial speech that Ngugi uses to capture Joshua's humiliation when he learns that his daughter Muthoni has gone to Kameno to be circumcised: "He was almost mad and small foams of saliva could be seen at the sides of his mouth... he looked like a beast of prey experiencing defeat and humiliation for the first time" (37). The simile of the "beast of prey experiencing defeat and humiliation for the first time" serves not only to vividly depict the ignoble fate of the assimilationists but also to decry through analogy the way they indoctrinate their children, which is here implicitly denounced by being likened to the savagery of the beast of prey that ravages weaker animals.

The same extra-artistic authorial speech is employed in portraying the humiliation suffered by Kambonyi, another antagonist, when he fails in his smear campaign against Waiyaki. In poking fun at how his legs wobble from shame as he is forced to be supported and led home by his son, Ngugi writes:

> And those who were around saw Kabonyi being led home by his son, one of Waiyaki's teachers. And soon, with a smile everybody knew that Kabonyi was ill. Actually he was not ill, but full of fury. To suffer a public defeat! A public humiliation! No. It could not be. It must not be! (97).

Ngugi employs over-wording to emphasise that Kabonyi suffers a public defeat that reduces him to a laughing stock for all those who witness it. This is implied in the first sentence and made explicit in the second: "And soon, with a smile everybody knew that Kabonyi was ill". In the third sentence the narrator uses "correctio [a figure of speech] which retracts what has been said and replaces it with what seems more suitable" when he says: "Actually he was not ill, but full of fury", to forcefully portray Kabonyi's state of mind (Vickers 1988, 314). His feeling of dejection is magnified through hyperbole – "full of fury" – a phrase which also utilises alliteration, formed by repetition of the voiceless labio-dental fricative /f/, to suggest the simmering anger and grudge he harbours against Waiyaki.

University of Cape Town

In the fourth and fifth sentences Ngugi reiterates the impression that Kabonyi has suffered a public humiliation when he exclaims: "To suffer a public defeat! A public humiliation!" The character's anger and grief is captured through the use of "asyndeton [a figure of speech], which creates an effect of dissolution...by the absence of connecting particles", there being no connecting word between these two related sentences (Vickers 1988, 304). The last three negative sentences – "No. It could not be. It must not be" – suggest that he is not going to accept this kind of humiliation without seeking revenge, which reveals that he is a vindictive person. The point that I seek to emphasise here is that, generally speaking, Ngugi employs extra-artistic authorial speech to vilify the antagonists in his novel.

He also uses it to valorise the actions and fates of his protagonists, as evidenced in the fates of Muthoni, Nyambura and Waiyaki. Commenting on the death of Muthoni, Ngugi writes: "She had died clinging to that image, to that obsession which had led her from Makuyu to Kameno. Who knew what it was? The only question which people asked was 'Why did she do it...? Why? Why?' And even for Waiyaki the question remained 'Why'" (53). Ngugi endows Muthoni with the courage to hold on tenaciously to a cherished vision, even in the face of death. He magnifies this courage through the use of over-wording, repeating the same idea using near-synonyms in "that image" and "that obsession". He moreover cloaks this valiant action in an aura of mystery that elevates her courage yet further, to the extent that it becomes the subject of an unanswerable "Why?"

Ngugi also uses extra-artistic authorial speech to valorise the fates of Nyambura and Waiyaki, by portraying their deaths in terms of sacrifice and martyrdom. In mitigating the devastating effect that their death could have on the reader, he comments:

> And the people shouted 'The oath! The oath!' as if they were warning their Teacher. Waiyaki stood up and his eyes met those of Nyambura. And he remembered her on this very ground that time she was praying alone; it was the day he first held her in his arms. And she looked beautiful now. She looked like a lamb on the altar of sacrifice. And Waiyaki knew that he could not deny her now, that he could not go back on his love for her. (150-51)

What is striking in this excerpt is that it adopts an additive oral style through the use of four introductory 'ands': "*And* the people shouted..."; "*And* he remembered her...";

University of Cape Town

"*And* she looked beautiful now"; and "*And* Waiyaki knew". It is arguable that Ngugi employs this additive oral style to make this excerpt "emphathetic", a feature which according to Ong (1982, 45) is typical of oral culture and has the effect of making the listeners "react with 'soul' [which means] to feel oneself identified" with the speaker and the characters he is portraying. In this excerpt it serves to endear Nyambura and Waiyaki to the reader, even when they are faced with what seems to be an ignoble death. Ngugi also uses cumulative structures "where expansions serve to fill in details after the message has been outlined" to ascribe sacredness to Nyambura and Waiyaki's love (Toolan 1992, 70). The first part of the sentence, which constitutes the main message, reveals that Nyambura was praying "alone" (thus bestowing sincerity on her prayer), while the second part, which constitutes the expansion, shows that this is the day their love started. Conjoining these two parts serves to ascribe sincerity also to their love relationship.

The simple sentence, "And she looked beautiful now", suggests the naturalness of her beauty, which is further magnified by the subsequent sentence, "She looked like a lamb on the altar of sacrifice", for it adds the quality of being without blemish (it is the custom to offer as a sacrifice a lamb that has no blemish). The repetition of the voiced lateral /l/ in "looked", "like", "lamb", "altar", which is "sometimes referred to as a 'liquid' and associated with the flowing of, rippling qualities of water" (Carter 1997, 52), serves to give the reader a mental picture of her blood flowing (like that of a sacrificial lamb) to cleanse the bitterness that exists between Makuyu and Kameno. Whilst Nyambura's death is portrayed as a sacrificial death, Waiyaki's is depicted as martydom, in that he dies for his belief that taking "the oath did not say that he should not love" (151). The last sentence of the excerpt – "And Waiyaki knew that he could not deny her now that he could not go back on his love for her" – expresses the steadfastness of his love for her, unaffected even by the threat of death. As pointed out earlier, this serves to endear him to the reader. Ngugi further endears him to the reader by exonerating him from all blame through a series of rhetorical questions: "And now how could he tell them that he had not betrayed them, but this was not what he meant by unity; that he was not in league with Joshua? How could he tell them that he meant to serve the hills..." (151).

University of Cape Town

Ngugi undoubtedly exhibits artistic skill in valorising the protagonists and vilifying the antagonists in his novel. But my contention is that in doing so he tends to make them flat characters. And since it is only "round people who are fit to perform tragically for any length of time and can move us to any feeling except humour and appropriateness", Jordan – who uses extra-artistic authorial speech to valorise and vilify the actions and fates of characters on both sides of the divide, thus creating multidimensional characters – proves superior to Ngugi in this respect. For instance, he ascribes some goodness to Dingindawo, a character through whom he presents the most despicable qualities of a ruthless and hypocritical powermonger. On two occasions traces of virtue are glimpsed in his otherwise contemptible character, and Jordan is quick to use extra-artistic authorial speech to applaud him on these occasions.

The first occurs during the incident in which Thembeka kills Majola. Dingindawo is among the people who make desperate attempts to restrain her from committing such an abomination. Jordan comments, "*Amtsibela onke amadoda – noDingindawo bengasenalo ixesha lokucinga ngokuhlonipha umolokazana...*" (170) (All the men sprang forward and tried to hold her back. Even Dingindawo had no time to remember the customary taboos forbidding him to touch the body of his daughter-in-law). Jordan employs cumulative structure, "where expansions serve to fill in details after the message has been outlined" (Toolan 1992, 70), to commend this genuine effort to do good on the part of a man who is more often busy devising devious schemes. Being an expansion accords some prominence also to the second part of the sentence: "noDingindawo bengasenalo ixesha lokucinga ngokuhlonipha umolokazana..." (Even Dingindawo had no time to remember the customary taboos forbidding him to touch the body of his daughter-in-law), which serves to heighten the author's commendation of Dingindawo's sincere effort to restrain Thembeka from committing the sacrilege of killing Majola. His sincerity is further magnified by reference to his disregard of customary taboos forbidding him to touch the body of his daughter-in-law. This extra-artistic authorial comment reveals that Dingindawo in spite of being a powermonger is not irreligious.

The second incident occurs during Ngubengwe's funeral ceremony where Dingindawo is one of the speakers. In applauding Dingindawo's eloquence on that day, Jordan credits him with an unprecedented achievement: "*UDingindawo wathetha*

University of Cape Town

ngohlobo angazange athethe ngalo okoko kwafika uZwelinzima kuloo mhlaba" (211) (At the meeting Dingindawo spoke as he had never spoken since the coming of Zwelinzima to Mpondomiseland) (Translated by Jordan &Jordan 1980, 237). He also attributes some sincerity to this hypocrite, while stopping short of giving him full credit: "*Kwacaca loo mini ukuba uDingindawo uthetha into esuka entliziyweni. Kodwa isimanga sesokuba le yokufa kukaNgubengwe akazanga ayichukumise nokuyichukumisa*" (212) (Although it was clear that in his reference to the missionaries Dingindawo was speaking from his heart, it was significant that he made no reference whatever to the assassination of Ngubengwe).

Although Jordan ascribes some virtue to this villainous character, he does not fail to satisfy the demands of poetic justice, which lead the reader to expect some form of punishment to be meted out to him. He employs the same extra-artistic authorial speech to reveal the shameful fate of Dingindawo when he says: "...*kuba uDingindawo wathi nya kungekafihlwa nokufihlwa, ebaleka incwadi emnukayo esengxoweni kaMphuthumi... Masimyeke eseso sibhadubhadu ke kuba kambe negama lakhe nguDingindawo*" (242). (For, long before the funeral [of Zwelinzima], Dngindawo had fled out of fear of the accusing letter in Mphuthumi's hands...Whatever the truth, we leave him to wanderings. After all, his name is Dingindawo, "the seatless") (Translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 276).

Jordan also employs extra-artistic authorial speech to condemn the shortcomings in the characters of protagonists and mitigate the impact of their misfortunes. Zwelinzima is a good example of how Jordan maintains a delicate balance between valorising and vilifying the actions and fates of protagonists, portraying them in such a way that even when they blunder in life they remain adorable to the reader. For instance, Jordan uses extra-artistic authorial speech to castigate Zwelinzima's reforms, but when he commits suicide at the end of the narrative he employs it to shower praises upon him for his contribution. When Zwelinzima supports the delimitation of stock, a strategy initiated by the white man to impoverish Africans, and argues in favour of the extermination of goats, which is a calculated move on the part of the white man to deliver a death blow to African culture (for goats are used in many African rituals), the meeting he is addressing runs amok. Jordan condemns the reforms by depicting the commotion they excited:

University of Cape Town

> Wena ke! Yaba sisikhalo macala onke. Waxakwa uZwelinzima, kuba wayengazanga ayibone imbizo enjalo okoko wathi wafika... Waqala loo mini uZwelinzima ukuyiva le nto ikukungaginywa ngabantu waya kulala edubadubekile engqondweni (162).
>
> (Now there was real trouble! Loud protests came from every side. Never since his installation had Zwelinzima experienced such a meeting. For the first time in his life Zwelinzima knew what it was to be distrusted by the people. It was a bitter experience, and he went to bed that night deeply troubled in spirit. (Translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 176)

Jordan uses "exclamatio [a figure of speech in which] in anger human beings will cry out, appeal to some stander-by, to God, or to part of the scenery to bear witness to their suffering" (Vickers 1988, 296) in "*Wena ke!*", a phrase which, for lack of an appropriate English equivalent, is translated by Jordan & Jordan as "Now there was real trouble!" He gives further emphasis to the extent of the commotion by informing us that it was the first of its kind for Zwelinzima: "*Waxakwa uZwelinzima kuba wayengazange ayibone imbizo enjalookoko wathi wafika*" (Never since his installation had Zwelinzima experienced such a meeting), and: "*Waqala loo mimni uZwelinzima ukuyiva le nto ikukungaginywa ngabantu*" (For the first time in his life Zwelinzima knew what it was to be distrusted by the people.) The subsequent shift from the reported speech of the author to the direct speech of the national bard is a powerful rhetorical move, which also serves to condemn Zwelinzima's reforms:

> Yathi nentetho yembongi yathanda ukuba nebatha namhlanje, kuba yaphetha ngamazwi athi:
> "Nithi yimvul' etheni na le yanamhlanje,
> Lemvul' ina ezandleni kuphela?
> Safa yimbalela ke thina zibhanxa,
> Kuba besiba namhla sihlal' ejojweni" (162).
>
> (Even the praise-song of delivered by the national bard on this occasion was indirectly critical of Zwelinzima. The praise song concluded... 'Say!
> What manner of rain is this we have this day –
> This rain that moistens only portion of land
> Alas! We die of drought, we simple fools. Who thought today we live in a rainy land!" (Translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 176)

University of Cape Town

Through the use of an exclamation, *"Nithi" (Say!); a rhetorical question, "yimvul' etheni na le yanamhlanje, / Lemvul' ina ezandleni kuphela?"* (What manner of rain is this we have this day – / This rain that moistens only portion of land), and antithesis, *Safa yimbalela ke thina zibhanxa, / Kuba besiba namhla sihlal' ejojweni"* (Alas! We die of drought, we simple fools / Who thought today we live in a rainy land!"). In this praise song, Jordan has recourse to "praecisio [a figure of speech that gives] suggestion that causes more to be understood than one actually says" (Vickers 1988, 312). This serves to make the condemnation of the reforms in a sense limitless, as the reader's imagination is let loose.

In the end, however, Jordan mitigates the negative impression created here, which might have led to Zwelinzima's death's being seen as a form of due punishment. Rather, using a similar form of extra-artistic authorial speech, he portrays Zwelinzima's death as a form of release from the miseries of his life, and as the lamentable loss of an illustrious man. Commenting on Mphuthumi's reaction when he sees Zwelinzima's body, the author says:

> Wathi akujonga waqonda ukuba le asiyondawo yanyembezi. Endaweni yokulila wanga angabonga anqule, kuba zonke iintsizi neenkxwaleko ezazibonakala ngezolo zazi cimile ebusweni bukaZwelinzima, kwasala ukuzola nobobunzwana nobo bunonophu bungasayi kuze bulityalwe bungasayi kuze bulityalwe nanguwuphi umntu owakhe wambona uZwelinzima esaphila(241).
>
> And, as he looked, he felt this was no place for tears. Instead of tears, let there be a song of praise! For on the face of the Chief all the grief and sorrow that marked it yesterday had vanished, and in their place shone that manliness and calm dignity which would never be forgotten by those who had known Zwelinzima alive. (Translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 275)

Jordan employs a suspensive sentence structure, in terms of which "the reader finds out what something is not before discovering what it is" (Toolan 1992, 71), to highlight the relief that death has brought to Zwelinzima when he starts by revealing that *"Wathi akujonga [uMphuthumi] waqonda ukuba le asiyondawo yanyembezi"* (And, as he looked, he felt this was no place for tears), and continuing: *"Endaweni yokulila wanga*

University of Cape Town

angabonga anqule" (Instead of tears, let there be a song of praise!). This part of the suspensive sentence structure constitutes what Robbins (1996, 21) terms the "thesis"; it is followed by the "rationale": *"kuba zonke iintsizi neenkxwaleko ezazibonakala ngezolo zazi cimile ebusweni bukaZwelinzima"* (For on the face of the Chief all the grief and sorrow that marked it yesterday had vanished). The clause is made more forceful through the over-wording of the near synonyms *"iintsizi"* and *"neenxwaleko"*. The rationale is further emphasised by being couched in an antithetical structure: it is followed by a listing of opposing qualities in *"kwasala ukuzola nobobunzwana nobo bunonophu bungasayi kuze bulityalwe nanguwuphi na umntu owakhe wambona uZwelinzima esaphila"* (and in their place shone that manliness and calm dignity which would never be forgotten by those who had known Zwelinzima alive). This too is made more forceful by the sequence of near synonyms, *"ukuzola"*, *"ubunzwana"* and *"ubunonophu"*, translated as "manliness and calm dignity). All these devices are employed to help the reader accept that Zwelinzima's death is necessary and appropriate.

In the following paragraph Jordan employs magnifying and associative devices such as metaphors to impress upon the reader that, despite his shortcomings, Zwelinzima has made a magnificent contribution towards the welfare of the Mpondomise:

> Wadlula ke uLangaliyakhanya. Ilanga elikhanyise okwemini enye kwelasemaMpondomiseni selibuye laya kusithela. Wayihamba indlela ayivulelwa ngamakroti akowabo – ayivulelwa nguNgubengwe noJongilanga. Wadlula eselula – ngokwenkwenkwezi elukhanyo belukade lungaqondwa, ethe ngobusuku obuzukileyo yacanda isibhakabhaka, yatsho ngobuqaqawuli obugqitha zonke ezinye iinkwenkwezi kanti seyisiya kutshona okokugqibela ukuba ingasayi iphinde ibonwe, ilishiya ihlabathi likhwanqisiwe, linenkumbulo nokulangazelela, okungavumi ukuncama ukuba yoza iphinde ibonakale. (241)
>
> (And so passed Langaliyakhanya, the Shining Sun. The sun that shone over the Mpondomise for a single day had again sunk and gone. Zwelinzima had followed the path laid open for him by the heroes of the land of his fathers, laid open by Ngubengwe and Jongilanga. He died young: like a star, hitherto unnoticed, that on some glorious night when all stars shine in splendour, cleaves the sky, excelling all the other stars in its dazzling brightness, only to vanish never to be seen again, leaving the world wrapt in wonder, full of memories and longings, unwilling to despair of ever seeing such splendour again). (Translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 276)

University of Cape Town

Metaphors of light-giving celestial bodies such as the sun and stars in, "*Wadlula ke uLangaliyakhanya. Ilanga elikhanyise okwemini enye...*" (And so passed Langaliyakhanya, the Shining Sun. The sun that shone over the Mpondomise for a single day) and "*Wadlula eselula – ngokwenkwenkwezi elukhanyo belukade lungaqondwa*" (He died young: like a star, hitherto unnoticed), are utilised to make vivid the hope and enlightenment that Zwelinzima brought to the 'benighted' Mpondomise. Reference to the brief duration and brilliance of the transformation that he initiates in Mpondomiseland accentuates the untimeliness of his death: "*Ilanga elikhanyise okwemini enye kwelasemaMpondomiseni selibuye laya kusithela*" (The sun that shone over the Mpondomise for a single day had again sunk and gone) and "*Wadlula eselula – ngokwenkwenkwezi elukhanyo belukade lungaqondwa, ethe ngobusuku obuzukileyo yacanda isibhakabhaka, yatsho ngobuqaqawuli obugqitha zonke ezinye iinkwenkwezi kanti seyisiya kutshona okokugqibela ukuba ingasayi iphinde ibonwe*" (He died young: like a star, hitherto unnoticed, that on some glorious night when all stars shine in splendour, cleaves the sky, excelling all the other stars in its dazzling brightness, only to vanish never to be seen again.)

In line with Aristotle's (1941, 1368a) view that one way of heightening the effect of praise is by showing that "a man is the only one, or the first, or almost the only one who has done something, or that he has done it better than any one else". Jordan heaps praise upon Zwelinzima by suggesting that his transformation strategies were more brilliant than those of his contemporaries: "*yatsho ngobuqaqawuli obugqitha zonke ezinye iinkwenkwezi*" (excelling all the other stars in its dazzling brightness). His illustriousness is further magnified through association with Ngubengwe, who died saving the missionary Father Williams, and Jongilanga, who arguably died because he advocated reconciliation: "*Wayihamba indlela ayivulelwa ngamakroti akowabo – ayivulelwa nguNgubengwe noJongilanga*" (Zwelinzima had followed the path laid open for him by the heroes of the land of his fathers, laid open by Ngubengwe and Jongilanga). The devices employed by Jordan in this excerpt are reminiscent of those characteristic of elegiac poems. The elegance of style adopted by Jordan in his extra-artistic authorial speech is marred, however, by his occasional interruption of the flow of

University of Cape Town

the narrative with authorial intrusions, such as: *"Kodwa zathi zigwetyelwa ukuhlala entolongweni zide zife kwabe sekuhle izinto ezinkulu ezizezinye – ezizakubaliswa kule ncwadi*", and *"Angasele ezicingela umfundi ukuba olu daba lawungena luhlobo luni na umzi...."* Commenting on the negative impact of these intrusions, Riordan (1961, 60) says:

> The greater fault, which I can detect in this novel is Jordan's habit of intruding himself into the narrative. Again and again we read, "the reader will remember..." when the author wants to repursue some thread of the narrative which he has neglected for a while. It jerks us violently out of the fancy into which he has skilfully led us.

This lapse in artistry is to some extent eliminated in the English translation where, for instance, the above quotations are translated as: "But by the time the case was tried and the murderers sentenced to imprisonment for life, much greater events had taken place in Mpondomiseland (How deeply affected was the whole community by the news of the death of Jongilanga!)", without any reference to phrases such as "the reader will..." or "in this book..." which appear in the isiXhosa version.

The last type of compositional-stylistic unity, which is the stylistically individualised speech of the characters, is called "represented" or "objectified utterance" by Bakhtin (1969, 178), because although it is handled precisely as the words of another addresser, it is treated as "an object of the author's intentions and not at all in terms of its own referential aim". Although both Jordan and Ngugi exhibit artistic brilliance in employing the individualised speech of the characters to achieve their thematic intentions, which include delivering powerful arguments for reconciliation and ascribing eloquence to both the protagonists and antagonists, Jordan again excels over Ngugi. This is so because Jordan is more impartial in attributing grandiloquence to both sides of the divide, whilst in Ngugi's novel the characters endowed with a genuine gift of eloquence are proponents of reconciliation such as Chege, Muthoni and Waiyaki. The speech of Joshua and Kabonyi, on the other hand, is tinged with fanaticism and narcissism, respectively.

University of Cape Town

The eloquence of Chege is eloquently displayed in his speech to his son Waiyaki at the sacred grove. Among the many things he imparts to him there is his bequest of a grave responsibility:

> Now, listen my son. Listen carefully, for this is the ancient prophecy... I could not do more. When the white man came and fixed himself in Siriana, I warned all the people. But they laughed at me. Maybe I was hasty. Perhaps I was not the one. Mugo often said you could not cut butterflies with a panga. You could not spear them until you learnt and knew their ways and movement. Then you could trap, you could fight back. Before he died, he whispered to his son the prophecy, the ancient prophecy: "Salvation shall come from the hills. From the blood that flows in me, I say from the same tree, a son shall rise. And his duty shall be to lead and save the people!" He said no more. Few knew the prophecy. Perhaps Kabonyi, who has betrayed the tribe, knows about it. I am old, my time is gone. Remember you are the last in this line.
>
> Arise. Heed the prophecy. Go to the Mission place. Learn all the wisdom and all the secrets of the white man. But do not follow his vices. Be true to your people and the ancient rites.... You go there, I tell you again, and learn all the wisdom of the white man. And keep remembering, salvation shall come from the hills. A man must rise and save the people in their hour of need. He shall show them the way; he shall lead them... Let them do what they like. A time will come – I can see it coming – when they shall cry for a saviour.... (20)

This part of the exchange of information, whose aim is to persuade Waiyaki to go to Siriana, is prefaced by what Soring (1989, 99) terms "explicit announcements", that is: "Now, listen my son. Listen carefully...." These are "usually followed by assertive statements of varying logical relevancy; [through which] the listener is invited to adjust his perspective to that of the speaker". The forcefulness of these explicit announcements is achieved through the employment of repetition – "Now, *listen* my son, *Listen* carefully"– and collocation, whereby the impact of the imperative 'listen' is mitigated by the adverb "carefully" and made more persuasive by the inclusion of "my son".

In persuading his son to accept his predestined role, even though it may seem a futile exercise, Chege describes his own experience, just as he had earlier described that of Mugo, to serve as an example for his son to follow: "When the white man came and fixed himself in Siriana, I warned all the people. But they laughed at me". He then absolves the people from blame and heaps it upon himself: "Maybe I was hasty. Perhaps

University of Cape Town

I was not the one". This serves to encourage and forewarn Waiyaki, who is "the last in the line". The binding exhortation to his son is presented in a series of "imperative forms of the verbs which unambiguously inform us what to do and what not to do" (Carter 1997, 149): "Arise. Heed the prophecy. Go to the Mission place. Learn all the wisdom and all the secrets of the white man. But do not follow his vices. Be true to your people and the ancient rites". The brevity and simplicity of the sentences serve to convey the message as unambiguously as possible. When Waiyaki protests against this proposition, his father further bombards him with other commanding statements, "You go there I tell you again learn all the wisdom of the white man....", reinforced by Biblical rhetoric: "A time will come – I can see it, when they shall cry for a saviour...."

In the speech made by Muthoni, Ngugi employs the same strategy of inverting the sequence to achieve a dramatic effect. In the course of a heated dialogue with Nyambura, Muthoni retorts:

> 'Why! Are we fools?' She shook Nyambura. 'Father and mother are circumcised. Are they not Christians? Circumcision did not prevent them from being Christians. I know it is beautiful, oh so beautiful to be initiated into womanhood. You learn the ways of the tribe. Yes the white man's God does not quite satisfy me. I want, I need something more. My life and your life are here, in the hills that you and I know'(26).

Here Muthoni begins by providing examples and rationales even before presenting her thesis. She employs "anthypophora", a figure of speech which is formed by rhetorical questions and answers to wake Nyambura up from the stupor into which they have been brainwashed by their father when she says: 'Why! Are we fools? Father and mother are circumcised. Are they not Christians? Circumcision did not prevent them from being Christians'. In highlighting the effect of this figure of speech Vickers (1988, 308) argues:

> Put in straightforward form, his words would have been quite insignificant; as it is, the impassioned rapidity of question and answer and the device of self-objection have made the remark, in virtue of its figurative form, not only more sublime but more credible. For emotion carries us away more easily when it seems to be generated by the occasion rather than deliberately assumed by the speaker. The self-directed question and its answer represent precisely this momentary quality of emotion. Just as people who are unexpectedly plied with questions become annoyed and reply to the point with vigour and exact truth, so the figure of question and

University of Cape Town

> answer arrests the hearer and cheats him into believing that all the points made were raised and are being put into words on the spur of the moment.

The rationales given by Muthoni for desiring more than the white man's religion is able to offer are also given before her thesis, "I want, I need something more", in order to give them some prominence. The thesis itself is expressed more forcefully through the employment of over-wording in the phrase "I want, I need..." Repetition is also utilised to magnify the benefits one enjoys when one is initiated into womanhood, when the pre-modifier 'beautiful' is repeated. Muthoni closes her clarion call to rebellion against her father's enslaving indoctrination with an emphatic acknowledgement of the virtue to be found in African tradition, insisting that "My life and your life are here, in the hills, that you and I know".

Again in Waiyaki's speech Ngugi exploits the strategy of inverting the logical sequence of argumentation, as he once more starts with reasons, opposites and contraries, analogies, examples, and citations of ancient testimony before presenting the core of his argument. In a speech, which seeks to counter Kabonyi's, Waiyaki retorts:

> 'What does Kabonyi want?' he asked. 'Who first followed the white man and embraced the new faith? Who betrayed the tribe when the ridges could have risen in arms against the white man?
>
> He turned to the people and in simple words reminded them of their history. 'It was before Agu and Agu, at the beginning of things, that Murungu, the Creator, gave rise to Gikuyu and Mumbi, father and Mother of the tribe. He made them stand on the holy ground on the top of Kerinyanga and showed them all the land. You remember what he told them; the great Promise that he gave to our ancestors! "This land I give to you, O man and woman. It is yours to till you and your posterity". The land was fertile and in it grew all the fruit, and honey was there in plenty. When he bought them to Kameo, they still saw the land was beautiful. They were happy and with content in their hearts followed Murungu to Mukuruwe wa Gathanga, where he kept them. And now we who are the descendents of the nine daughters of Gikuyu and Mumbi are torn with strife and rivalry.
>
> He spoke of the great heroes of the tribe and mentioned Demi na Mathathi, Wachiori, Mugo wa Kibiro and Kamiri. He told them of the great victories that these heroes had over the Masai and other enemy tribes.

University of Cape Town

'It is because the hills were united that such great victories were possible. People stood together in the hour of need, giving one another the warmth of their contact the strength of their blood.

He told them about Mugo wa Kibiro and his prophecy that there would come a people with clothes like butterflies.

'But people rejected him. And when the white man came jealousy stood between Kameo and Makuyu. You would not come together. And you left the white man alone. Now instead of learning his ways and coming together so that united we may drive him out, Kabonyi and few others cry for vengeance against Joshua and his followers. That is what I have come to tell you today. We are all children of Mumbi and we must fight together in one political movement, or else we perish and the white man will always be on our back. Can a House divided against itself stand?'

'No-o-o' they roared in unison.

'Then we must stand together. We must end the ancient rivalry.

People seemed moved and when he sat down they rose and as if of one voice shouted: 'The Teacher! The Teacher!'(149-9).

As in the previous speech analysed here, Waiyaki starts his speech in a dramatic way with a series of rhetorical questions, to arrest the attention of his audience and effectively turn the tables on Kabonyi from the very outset. He then tempers the tempo of his address, which is signified by a shift from the direct discourse of Waiyaki to authorial comment: "He turned to the people and in simple words reminded them of their history". In this speech Ngugi exhibits a commendable mastery of this strategy of voice shift, a feature, which becomes a hallmark of his later novels, as will be shown in Chapter Four.

Waiyaki then unfolds the history of the tribe in a way that attests to his intimate knowledge of it, as evidenced by his use of the original Gikuyu phrases and names such as "...before Agu and Agu", "Murungu" and "Kerinyanga". He even quotes verbatim the words of the great Promise – "This land I give to you, O man and woman. It is yours to till, you and your posterity" – to parade his knowledge of history. This exhibition of his knowledge of history is bound to make a deep impression on his audience.

In his attempt to persuade his audience to his point of view, Waiyaki adopts the strategy of novels which use innocent victims as their protagonists, in presented worlds where "the problem of hope... centers around the protagonists and three questions: what is the desired world from which they initially fall, what is the source of their resilience, and what, if any, is the desired world to which they escape?" (Goodin 1985, 46). In the

University of Cape Town

paragraph where he presents the history of the tribe it is arguable that his intention is to depict in glorious terms the paradisal bliss of the desired world from which his audience has fallen: "The land was fertile and in it grew all the fruit, and honey was there in plenty. When he bought them to Kameo, they still saw the land was beautiful. They were happy and with contentment in their hearts followed Murungu to Mukuruwe wa Gathanga, where he kept them". In the last sentence of this paragraph Ngugi hints at the cause of their fall, disunity, when he says, "And now we who are the descendents of the nine daughters of Gikuyu and Mumbi are torn with strife and rivalry".

In the following paragraph Ngugi artistically employs authorial speech to sum up the stories of great Gikuyu heroes: "He spoke of the great heroes of the tribe and mentioned Demi na Mathathi, Wachiori, Mugo wa Kibiro and Kamiri. He told them of the great victories that these heroes had over the Masai and other enemy tribes". Summarizing in this way some of the non-essential albeit relevant portions of Waiyaki's speech helps Ngugi avoid boring his readers with a long speech that would disrupt the flow of the story. When highlighting the source of the resilience of these heroes, Ngugi shifts back to the direct discourse of Waiyaki: "It is because the hills were united that such great victories were possible. People stood together in the hour of need, giving one another the warmth of their contact, the strength of their blood". Emphasis is achieved by repeating the same idea in near-synonyms: "It is because the hills were united that such great victories were possible" has almost the same meaning as "People stood together in the hour of need, giving one another the warmth of their contact, the strength of their blood".

In trying to evoke the need for the desired world to which they should escape, Waiyaki presents a situation which is in complete contrast to the one that pertained initially in the desired world, a situation at variance with the strategy that has brought victories to the heroes just mentioned. Again he steeps this situation in the history of the tribe by tracing it to the story of Mugo wa Kibiro; "He told them about Mugo wa Kibiro and his prophecy that there would come a people with clothes like butterflies". He then identifies their failure to heed the prophecy as the cause of the disunity, which has cast them into an undesired world: "But people rejected him". This sentence is linked with the

University of Cape Town

next by the introductory conjunction 'and', which suggests a causal relationship between the two: "And when the white man came, jealousy stood between Kameo and Makuyu".

That disunity is the major culprit responsible for the current undesirable situation is emphasised through repeating the same idea using different words – "You would not come together" – which is also consequentially linked through use of another conjunctive 'and' with what follows:"And you left the white man alone". He then accuses Kamboyi and his clique of presently seeking to perpetuate the undesirable status quo: "Now instead of learning his ways and coming together so that united we may drive him out, Kabonyi and a few others cry vengeance against Joshua and his followers". When he is convinced that he has adequately prepared the ground for the acceptance of his enthymeme, he emphatically introduces it and says, "That is what I have come to tell you today. We are all children of Mumbi and we must fight together in one political movement".

He magnifies the expediency of embracing this enthymeme by highlighting the tragic consequences of taking a contrary route: "or else we perish and the white man will always be on our back", and by using a Biblical maxim: "Can a house divided against itself stand?" When the answer is a resounding "No-o-o" he reiterates his enthymeme "Then *we must* stand together. *We must* end the ancient rivalry", which is made more forceful through repetition of the phrase "we must". Ngugi closes this powerful address by reverting to authorial speech, which is here employed to capture the response of the audience, as evidence of Waiyakis's power to excite pathos, which is one of the three modes of persuasion (the others are ethos and logos) identified by Aristotle (1941, 1356a). He comments, "People seemed moved and when he sat down they rose and as if of one voice shouted: 'The Teacher! The Teacher!'"

Another feature that makes these speeches powerful is that they are directly or indirectly dialogic, in the sense that they respond to a contrary position articulated or espoused by some other character/s in the narrative. Chege's speech is indirectly dialogic in that his speech is a response to the people's rejection of Mugo and his prophecies, a response not presented as direct discourse but as he himself recounts it to Waiyaki. Both Muthoni's and Waiyaki's speeches are directly dialogic in that they respond to the direct discourse of Nyambura and Kambonyi respectively. All of these speeches constitute a

University of Cape Town

powerful argument for the marronage of African and European traditions, the major ideological preoccupation of the novels under discussion. While the arguments themselves are commendable, it seems a pity that Ngugi does not also endow antagonists with similar genuine eloquence.

The rhetoric of Joshua, an assimilationist, and Kabonyi, a 'traditionalist', as exhibited on pages 84-86 and 95-96 respectively, powerful as it is, is nevertheless tinged with fanaticism and narcissism respectively. In subtle ways, Ngugi is quick to expose these quirks by means of authorial comment. The speeches will not be analysed here because analysis of the vices concerned has already been essayed in this study. What needs to be emphasised again, however, is that this strategy of ascribing little or no good to assimilationists and traditionalists alike unwittingly vitiates Ngugi's call for reconciliation, because there it is surely necessary to show that there is something genuinely good about both these sides for reconciliation to be desirable.

One may counter this argument by suggesting that the opposite is equally true, that is, that there needs to be something significantly bad on both sides to motivate the notion of marronage, and that by exposing these vices Ngugi is doing just that. The answer to Joshua's fanaticism and Kabonyi's narcissism is reconciliation of the African and Western traditions, because "our ancestors as part of history can if we allow them help us snap out of the trance into which we were thrown by Western education [and religion] so that we can use it to advance the interest of the whole nation" (Mphahlele 1974, 49). Whilst agreeing with this view, I would contend that when an author fails to maintain a delicate balance between good and evil in his characterisation, as Ngugi is prone to in portraying these two characters, his novel stands the risk of misfiring: the characters might become so undesirable in the eyes of some readers that they will not seem worth saving through reconciliation.

This shortcoming is absent in *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*, as Jordan endows characters from all three sides (traditionalist, assimilationist and reformist) with genuine eloquence. Ngxabane is a good example of how a traditionalist is endowed with the gift of the gab. When the narrative starts he is on Zwelinzima's side. In fact, he initiates the gallant effort of bringing Zwelinzima back to his rightful position as the king of the Mpondomises. This action alone precludes any possibility that his opposition to

University of Cape Town

Zwelinzima could be motivated by anything other than his unwavering allegiance to African tradition. The same applies to Ngxabane's eloquent defence of tradition. In a heated debate about whom the Chief should marry he has this to say:

> Yini na le, bafanandini! Yini na le! Kodwa nithi lo mzi ka Ngwanya woba yini na sakufa, xa aba Dabula besibathembe bona ba za kuyiloza benjenje. Yinto owakha wayibona phi kodwa, Dabula Dlangamandla, le uyithethayo? Owen' umsebenzi sewuyintoni na xa inkosi iza kuzifunel' umfazi nikho nje? Amehlw' esizwe aye phi, inkosi seyiza kuzibonela? Hi awu! Le ntw' isiko ayisaziwa kusini na kulo mzi! Azi soba yini na!
>
> MaMpondomise, xa kunje makuthethe thina boThambo-dala-kade-bemqongqotha, thina boDiza-dala-kade-bemkhwahlaza, thina boNgxabane. Lo mntwana wabelekwa ndim ngobusuku ukuya eMthatha, mhla waya eSheshegu; uyise amehlo wawacinywa ndim lo. Ndisisankonde nje namhlanje, ndilibal' intw' ebithethw, izol' oku, kukho nto inye endingasayikuze ndiyilibale – ngumyolelo woyise walo mntwana. Nithi ndingafi nje iintanga zam kudala zafayo ndilindelo ntoni? Ndilinde le mini ke; ndigcine loo myolelo. Neminyanya yakowethu isandilolondolozile kwinyoka zabafazi kuba loo myolelo andikawuxeli. Ndiyawuxela ke namhlanje. Le mfeketho ithethwa ngooDabula ziinto zale mpucuko yasizela namashwa; kungasekho bukhosi nje zezi zimbo zoku kusithiwa 'Amaxesha ngamanye; amaxesha ngamanye; Ngamanye ntoni? Sith' aba sisidl' a mazimba nje nitheth' ukuthini ukuthi amaxesha ngamanye? NdifungamaMpondomise ndisekho nje ndingekakhatywa nje zimpundulu zabafazi benu, ndiza kunifundis' iskw' eli ningalazi nje. Ndithe uyise walo mntwana wacinywa ndim amehlo. Wathi mhla wafa, unyana wakhe uZwelinzima maze azekelwe intombi yakwaBhaca.
>
> Ndigqibile ke. Nokuba ndiyafa ngoku andisenasikrokro kuba ubomi ndibudlile ndanela, kuba kaloku mna ndathi qho ndahlal' esikwen' apha – eli libalekwa ngooDabula, babe besithela ngasebe lenkawu, besith'amaxesha ngamanye. *Inkosazana yakwaBhaca*. Utsho umyolelo wenkosi. (130-31)

(What's all this? Shame on you young man! What's to become of this House of Ngwanya after our death, if the Dabulas on whom we have pinned our faith are going to blunder in this way? Dabula of the Dlangamandlas, where have you ever heard of the things you have been suggesting? If the Chief is going to his own wife, then what is your work? What has become of the eyes of the people, that the Chief must look for his wife? So, this thing called custom is no longer known in this House. Alas! What is to become of us Mpondomise people ? At such a time as this it is we who must speak – we the old bones whose marrow they're forever sucking, we, the

University of Cape Town

old maize fields from which they're forever gleaning – we the Ngxabanes.

It was on my back that this child was carried to Umtata the day he went to Sheshegu. It was by me that his father's eyes were closed in death. Although I am a withered old man forgetting today what was spoken yesterday, there is one thing I shall never forget, and that is the dying wish of this child's father. What do you think is the reason for my lingering in this life when all my peers are gone? It is because I have been waiting for this day, waiting until I have made known the dying wish. Have not the spirits of my ancestors guarded me from the bites of witches' snakes until I should proclaim that dying wish? And now that day has dawned. The irresponsible talk of the Dabulas I blame on the so-called 'the nature of times we live in' – talk that has brought misfortunes upon us. Today we have no land we can call our own, and the reason lies in that talk, in those glib empty words: 'Times have changed'. 'Times have changed'. How can times have changed when we still feast and live? I swear by the Mpondomise that, as long as I have breath, as long as the lightning birds of your wives have not killed me, so long will I teach you the customs you don't know.

I have told you that it was I who closed the eyes of this child's father when he died. Hear now, Mpondomise people, his dying wish: that his son Zwelinzima should marry the princess royal of the Bhaca!

And now my duty is done. If I were to die, I would die without complaint. For I have lived my life to the full because I have always adhered to the custom, aye, custom from which the Dabulas would escape, truly like monkeys trying to escape detection by hiding behind tree branches and protesting that 'times have changed'. *The princess royal of the Bhaca.* That is the Chief's dying wish!)

The opening paragraph of Ngxabane's speech is full of exclamations and rhetorical questions: "*Yini na le, bafanandini! Yini na le...!* (What's all this? Shame on you young man...!); "*Kodwa nithi lo mzi ka Ngwanya woba yini na sakufa, xa aba Dabula besibathembe bona ba za kuyiloza benjenje. Yinto owakha wayibona phi kodwa, Dabula Dlangamandla, le uyithethayo?*" (What's to become of this House of Ngwanya after our death, if the Dabulas on whom we have pinned our faith are going to blunder in this way? Dabula of the Dlangamandlas, where have you ever heard of the things you have been suggesting?). These contribute towards the dramatic dismissal Dabula's proposition, which is denounced as not just mistaken but outrageous. These rhetorical strategies also arrest the attention of his audience.

University of Cape Town

After such a dramatic opening, Ngxabane – like all skilful orators – tones down the tempo of his address by shifting from the adversarial stance adopted at first to an ameliorating one, a shift signalled by the compassionate term of address, *"Mampondomise"*, which he uses to appeal to his audience's tribal sentiments. He then exploits the cordial atmosphere he has created to maximally enhance the impression he is creating of his own good sense, an attribute which according to Aristotle (1941, 1378a) is one of the three features that make the speaker's character appear trustworthy in the eyes of the audience, and thus disposes it to a favourable reception of him or her. By using compound nouns typical of praise poetry, he ascribes to himself qualities of antiquity and authenticity that render him deserving of credence: for instance, he refers to himself and his ilk as *"thina boThambo-dala-kade-bemqongqotha, thina boDiza-dala-kade-bemkhwahlaza, thina boNgxabane"* (we the old bones whose marrow they're forever sucking, we, the old maize fields from which they're forever gleaning – we the Ngxabanes).

This short piece of poetry is made to appeal to the ear through the employment of alliteration – the repetition of the devoiced and voiced alveolar plosives /th/ and /d/ – which moreover make the language musical. He achieves emphasis through the use of anaphoric repetition, whereby the collective pronoun *"thina"* (we) is placed at the beginning of each the three phrases. The use of this collective pronoun also serves to magnify Ngxabane's credibility by associating him with men of high calibre, dead or alive. The plural form he uses when referring to Dabula is arguably aimed at silencing not only him but also his clique. Furthermore it mitigates what might be seen as self-praise. Emphasis is also achieved through the use of the three-part list, whose effect – according to Carter (1997, 268) – is "to fulfil a sense of completeness" pertaining to the collectivity for which he speaks, alienating Dabula and his clique who, because they do not belong with the "Ngxabanes", have no right to speak on such serious matters:

1. "Thina boThambo-dala-kade-bemqongqotha"
2. "Thina boDiza-dala-kade-bemkhwahlaza"
3. "Thina boNgxabane"

1. we the old bones whose marrow they' re forever sucking,
2. we, the old maize fields from which they' re forever gleaning

University of Cape Town

3. we the Ngxabanes.

Ngxabane continues to present himself in a positive light by portraying himself as the saviour of Zwelinzima, a man who acted as a father and mother towards him, when he reveals that: *"Lo mntwana wabelekwa ndim ngobusuku ukuya eMthatha, mhla waya eSheshegu"* (It was on my back that this child was carried to Umtata the ay he went to Sheshegu). His fatherly role is implied in his referring to Zwelinzima as *"lo mntwana"* (this child) and his motherly one in *"wabelekwa ndim"* (It was on my back...), as it is usually mothers who carry their children on their backs. His position as his saviour is suggested by the mention of "Sheshegu" which the story identifies as Zwelinzima's place of refuge. Ngxabane further enhances his good sense by portraying himself as a trusted counsellor who faithfully served king Zanemvula until his death: *"uyise amehlo wawacinywa ndim lo"* (It was by me that his father's eyes were closed in death). This claim is emphatically made through the use of collocation: the personal pronoun *"ndim"* together with a demonstrative *"lo"*.

The latter revelation also serves to authenticate the dying wish of Zanemvula; Ngxabane's claim to be its custodian is of course pivotal to his speech. His claim is presented with amazing skill. In highlighting the importance of his chief's last wish to him, Ngxabane uses a conjunction of several rhetorical devices in one sentence, which, according to Vickers (1988, 309) "produces a very stirring effect": *"Ndisisankonde nje namhlanje, ndilibal' intw' ebithethw' izol' oku, kukho nto inye endingasayikuze ndiyilibale – ngumyolelo woyise walo mntwana"* (Although I am a withered old man forgetting today what was spoken yesterday, there is one thing I shall never forget, and that is the dying wish of this child's father). In the first part of the phrase he employs a cumulative structure, where a statement is made – *"Ndisisankonde nje namhlanje"* (Although I am a withered old man today) – which is followed by an expansion – *"ndilibal' intw' ebithethw' izol' oku,"* (forgetting today what was spoken yesterday). This build-up serves to emphasise by contrast what comes in the second part of the sentence: *"kukho kukho nto inye endingasayikuze ndiyilibale – ngumyolelo woyise walo mntwana"* (there is one thing I shall never forget, and that is the dying wish of this child's father). The latter clause itself achieves greater prominence through the use of a

University of Cape Town

suspensive structure, in terms of which the reader is told that whatever it is, is unforgettable, before s/he is told what it actually is. The effect is to ensure that the information, when it eventually comes, lingers longer in the mind of the reader.

Ngxabane then engenders suspense by not immediately divulging the dying wish, instead going back to enhancing his audience's appreciation of his trustworthiness. He employs anthypophora, a figure of speech formed by rhetorical questions and answers: "*Nithi ndingafi nje intanga zam kudala zafayo ndilinde ntoni?*" (What do you think is the reason for my lingering in this life when all my peers are gone?), a rhetorical question immediately answered by: "*Ndilinde le mini ke; ndigcine lomyalelo*" (It is because I have been waiting for this day, waiting until I have made known the dying wish).

After claiming divine favour as another factor enhancing his claim to good sense – "*Neminyanya yakowetu isandilondolozile*..." (Have not the spirits of my ancestors guarded me...) – he assertively proclaims that "*Ndiyawuxela ke namhlanje*". But he does not do so immediately, instead delivering a blistering attack on Dabula's proposition so as to engender suspense and raise the tempo of the speech. In his broadside he derisively refers to Dabula's speech as "*Le mfeketho ithethwa ngooDabula...*" (The irresponsible talk of the Dabulas...), and accuses it of bringing misfortune upon the tribe: "*ziinto zale mpucuko yasizisela amashwa*" (talks that have brought misfortunes upon us). He condemns Dabula's argument for having deprived the Mpondomise of their independence: "*kungasekho bukhosi nje zezi zimbo zokuba kusithiwa*..."(Today we have no land we can call our own, and the reason lies in that talk, in those glib empty words...), and ridicules it by derogatively and parodically repeating it: "*Amaxesha ngamanye; amaxesha ngamanye*" ('Times have changed. Times have changed'). He finally dismisses it by trivilising it through the use of anthypophora, answering his own rhetorical question in a way that undermines its validity – "*Ngamanye ntoni? . . . Sith' aba sisidl' a mazimba nje nitheth' ukuthini ukuthi amaxesha ngamanye*?" (How can times have changed when we still feast and live?).

The announcement of the last wish is itself eloquently orchestrated. To signify his shift from his disparaging attack on Dabula's speech to the most important point in his speech, Ngxabane employs exclamatio or aposthrophe, a figure of speech through which "in anger human beings will cry out, appeal to some stander-by, to God, or to part of

University of Cape Town

scenery to bear witness to their suffering" or what they are saying (Vickers 1988, 296). He suddenly pledges a commitment by oath: "*Ndifung' amaMpondomise ndisekho nje ndingekakhatywa nje zimpundulu zabafazi benu, ndiza kunifundis' iskw' eli ningalazi nje*" (I swear by the Mpondomise that, as long as I have breadth, as long as the lightning birds of your wives have not killed me, so long will I teach you the customs you don't know). Analysing the effect of this figure of speech, Vickers (ibid., 308) says: "This figure has a multiple effect: it is an illustrative example, a confirmation, an encomium, and an exhortation". In the context of Ngxabane's speech it is used as a commissive, a speech act in which "the speaker is committed, in varying degrees to a certain course of action, e.g. 'bet', 'guarantee', 'pledge', 'promise', 'swear',". It serves to enhance the speaker's good sense as it asseverates his dedication to the honourable cause of educating his people; it serves also to exhort his people to emulate his worthy example, and to appeal to the tribal sentiments of his audience by deifying the Mpondomise (dead and alive) by whom he makes this oath. Finally, it functions also to give credence to the dying wish of Zanemvula, which is divulged shortly after, by suggesting that it too is being announced under oath.

In announcing the dying wish of Zanemvula Ngxabane uses a technique called "amplificatio [through which] a great impression is made by dwelling on a single point", as he repeats what he has already said: "*Ndithe uyise walo mntwana wacinywa ndim amehlo*" (I have told you that it was I who closed the eyes of this child's father when he died). He then announces the dying wish: "*Wathi mhla wafa, unyana wakhe uZwelinzima maze azekelwe intombi yakwaBhaca*" (Hear now, Mpondomise people, his dying wish: that his son Zwelinzima, should marry the princess royal of the Bhaca!). Ngxabane utilizes stylisation (which means that the writer "borrows another's discourse but "uses it for his [or her] own purposes – with the same general intention as the original") (Lodge 1990, 59), to augment the position he is advocating (i.e. observance of Mpondomise custom), by implying that it is reminiscent of the sacrifice made by Christ for the salvation of sinners. This is suggested by his allusion to Christ's dying words, as recorded in John 19:30, "It is finished!": "*Ndigqibile ke*" (I have finished).

Ngxabane uses the same device of stylisation to elevate himself to the status of that powerful preacher of good news, the apostle Paul, when he says: "*Nokuba ndiyafa*

University of Cape Town

ngoku andinasikrokro kuba ndibudlile ubomi ndanela... " (If I were to die, I would die without complaint. For I have lived my life to the full...) – which is arguably a version of 2 Timothy 4:6-7, where Paul says: "As for me the hour has come for me to be sacrificed; the time is here for me to leave this life. I have done my best in the race...". He again enhances the course he is advocating by ascribing his good fortune in life to his unfaltering observance of custom: *"kuba kaloku mna ndathi qho ndahlal' esikwen' apha"* (because I have always adhered to the custom), by implication contrasting it with the misfortunes brought about by the Dabulas, who have violated custom on the pretext that 'times have changed': " – *eli libalekwa ngooDabula, babe besithela ngasebe lenkawu, besith'amaxesha ngamanye*" (aye, custom from which the Dabulas would escape, truly like monkeys trying to escape detection by hiding behind tree branches and protesting that 'times have changed'). This denunciation is all the more forceful for being couched in the isiXhosa idiomatic expression: "ukusithela ngesebe lenkawu" (trying to escape detection by hiding behind tree branches like a monkey).

Ngxabane dramatically closes his speech by using an imperative which is made more emphatic through direct quotatiom of the last wish of Zanemvula – "*Inkosazana yakwaBhaca*" (*The princess of the royal of the Bhaca)* – (a phrase italicised in both isiXhosa and English versions), and the stylisation of an emphatic Biblical phrase, "Thou saith the Lord", in "*Utsho umyolelo wenkosi*" (That is the Chief's dying-wish!).

After such a devastating onslaught on the assimilationists (and similar such bombardments, such as on page 137), and so elegant an elevation of African tradition, rebuttal seems a mission impossible. However, Ngubengwe takes up the challenge, his eloquence proving equal to daunting task as he retorts:

> Ewe, ndiyakuva Ngxabane; kodwa andikuveli ntweni. Thina bantu sinemposiso esiyenza futhi-futhi. Ndise ndikuyiphawula futhi into yokuba abantu abasiphetheyo siyabalibalela. Sicinga ukuba abeva nto; abathandi nto; bafana namatye. Njengokuba ndiphulaphule nje ndiphawula ukuba isininzi senu zithethi, asiyisiso konke into yokuba inkosi iyazithandela laa ntombi kaKhalipha. Kanti mayinganisitheli loo nto. Nisithi siza kuxakwa yintombi kaKhalipha ngokungazi masiko nje, asizi kuxakwa ngaphezulu ukuba inkosi izeke elaa Bhacakazi yaza ayalikhathalela selilapha endlwini? Khona sekusithiwa 'yinkosazana', 'ngumyolelo kayise', ngumntu onani ongathi ethandana nentombi enje ngaleya kaKhalipha ayincame athathe iqiqisholo litsho ngobuso ngathi bebuphalwa ziimpaka?

University of Cape Town

Beniza kuqala ngale ntombi kaKhalipha yini ukubon' inkos' izalwa ngumntu omnyama? Andithi uCirha wazek' umThwakazi? UKhalipha eyindoda esaziwa nje phakathi kwamadoda beningobani nina, ukuba ningade nicekis' intombi yakhe? Nicing' ukuba loo mThwakazi wanizalayo, nonke nilapha nje, angalinganiswa nale ntombi kakhalipha? UmThwa wakha walibona phi isiko? UmThwa wakha wafanela umzi kabani? UmThwa wakha wanomzi? UmThwa wakha wanengqondo? Ningade nibe nekratshi lokucekis' intombi kaKhalipha, xa ningobani? Thethan' into yengqondo, siphulaphule thina mayilo. Ukuba nithi iBhacakazi malizekwe, kuba kwatsho uZanemvula liphumenui silive. Anizanga nikwazi ukusebenzisa iingqondo kwakudala. Nifuze kulonyoko ebaThweni nangobuyil' obu. (138)

(Yes, Ngxabane I heard what you said... but I heard you to no purpose. There's a mistake we human beings often make. I have noticed many times that we are inclined to lose sight of the fact that those who rule us are also human beings. We seem to think that they have no feeling, but are just stones. As I listened to your speeches, I noticed that the majority of you completely ignore the simple fact that the Chief loves Khalipha's daughter. But I advise not to forget it! You have been arguing that her ignorance of custom is going to embarrass us. But shall we not be embarrassed if the Chief marries the Bhaca princess and subsequently does not care for her, when it is to late to do anything about it? Granted that she is a princess and that it is his father's dying-wish that he should marry her, yet what normal man in love with a woman like Khalipha's daughter would ever give her up for the sake of a clumsy, primitive woman whose face looks as if it had been scratched by the claws of witches's cats?

Would the marriage of Khalipha's daughter to the chief be the first case you have ever heard of, of a commoner being married to a chief? Isn't it a fact that the late chief Cira was born of a mThwakazi ("Bushwoman")? And who are you to despise the daughter of Khalipha, a man of no small distinction amongst us? Doyou think that the mThwakazi, who is the forebear of all of you here, was in any way the equal of this daughter of Khalipha? What mThwakazi could ever have known the meaning of your customs? Could a mThwakazi ever be satisfactory head of of a household? Has a mThwakazi ("Bushwoman") a settled home? Who are you to be so arrogant to look down on Khalipha's daughter? Please let us who are not eloquent speakers, hear some sensible talk. If those of you who insist that the Bhaca princess should be our Chief's do so on the grounds that this was Zanemvula's dying-wish, then say so quite openly, so that we know where we stand and can deal only with this issue. But it seems to me you are unable to use your brains properly,

and even this limited intelligence you inherit from your mThwakazi ancestor. (Translated by Jordan & Jordan 1980, 150-51)

Ngubengwe vehemently declares his disagreement with Ngxabane's position by using words that sound the same as they are derived from the same root word "*ukuva*", but are used to capture a contradicting situation: "*Ewe, ndiyakuva Ngxabane; kodwa andikuveli ntweni*" (Yes, Ngxabane I heard what you said... but I heard you to no purpose). This device serves to create a combative dismissive mood from the very onset of his speech.

Ngubengwe does not oscillate between hard-hitting attack and good sense-enhancing strategies in his speech, as Ngxabane is prone to do in his. He is breathing fire and brimstone from beginning to end. After his deliberately duellist opening he goes straight to the crux of the position he is advocating, which is to respect the individual rights of those who rule. This thesis of his argument is itself combatively presented through "contrarium or reasoning by contraries [which means] denying the contrary of an idea before affirming it"(Vickers 1988, 313). He denies the validity of the opposite view, which is presented as the callous dismissal of the individual preferences of rulers because of some tradition, by calling it "*imposiso*" (a mistake): "*Thina bantu sinemposiso esiyenza futhi-futhi*" (There's a mistake we human beings often make). He utilises "conduplicatio or ploche [which is] the repetition of one or more words for the purpose of Amplification or appeal to pity" (Vickers 1988, 313) in *"esiyenza futhi-futhi"* (we... often make), to signify that the injustice seems unending. He argues that this mistake is tantamount to denying rulers their very humanity: "*Ndise ndikuyiphawula futhi into yokuba abantu abasiphetheyo siyabalibalela*" (I have noticed many times that we are inclined to lose sight of the fact that those who rule us are also human beings). Ngubengwe then uses a three-part list to expose how this robs them of all human attributes and reduces them to inanimate objects:

1. "Sicinga ukuba abeva nto";
2. "abathandi nto";
3. "bafana namatye".

1) We seem to think that they have no feeling,

2. they love nothing

University of Cape Town

3. but are just stones).

From this accusation of general error, he moves to the particular, indicting them for exhibiting a complete disregard of Zwelinzima's feelings with regard to whom he should marry: *"Njengokuba ndiphulaphule nje ndiphawula ukuba isininzi senu zithethi, asiyisiso konke into yokuba inkosi iyazithandela laa ntombi kaKhalipha*". (As I listened to your speeches, I noticed that the majority of you completely ignore the simple fact that the Chief loves Khalipha's daughter). After this he offers some succinct advice: "Kanti mayinganisitheli loo nto" (But I advise you not to forget it!). The rest of the middle of the speech is dedicated to giving reasons as to why they should heed his advice, and these are forcefully presented through devices such as reciprocal representation, parody and rhetorical questions.

Reciprocal representation, a strategy which "places both subjects of comparison before our eyes, displaying them side by side" is employed twice in this speech (Vickers 1988, 322). The first instance is when Ngubengwe is comparing Thembeka with the Bhaca princess. In his comparison he deals first with Ngxabane's strong argument against Thembeka as a choice (i.e. she is a commoner and will therefore flout their custom as she is ignorant of royal etiquette), and dismisses it by means of a counter-argument presented as a rhetorical question. This serves to expose the fact that marrying the Bhaca princess as Ngxabane suggests could also be problematic: *"Nisithi siza kuxakwa yintombi kaKhalipha ngokungazi masiko nje, asizi kuxakwa ngaphezulu ukuba inkosi izeke elaa Bhacakazi yaza ayalikhathalela selilapha endlwini?"* (You have been arguing that her ignorance of custom is going to embarrass us. But shall we not be embarrassed if the Chief marries the Bhaca princess and subsequently does not care for her, when it is to late to do anything about it?).

He then ridicules Ngxabane's insistence that Zanemvula's last wish be complied with by making an outrageous comparison between the young women: *"ngumntu onani ongathi ethandana nentombi enje ngaleya kaKhalipha ayincame athathe iqiqisholo litsho ngobuso ngathi bebuphalwa ziimpaka?"* (yet what normal man in love with a woman like Khalipha's daughter would ever give her up for the sake of a clumsy, primitive woman whose face looks as if it had been scratched by the claws of witches's cats).

University of Cape Town

The second instance where reciprocal representation is employed is in the comparison between Khalipha and the Mpondomise, where through a series of rhetorical questions Ngubengwe reminds his audience that if Zwelinzima marrires Thembeka it would not be the first union of its kind, and cites Cirha's (their great grand father) case as a precedent in, *"Beniza kuqala ngale ntombi kaKhalipha yini ukubon' inkos' izalwa ngumntu omnyama? Andithi uCirha wazek' umThwakazi*?" (Would the marriage of Khalipha's daughter to the chief be the first case you have ever heard of, of a commoner being married to a chief? Isn't it a fact that the late chief Cirha was born of a mThwakazi ["Bushwoman"]?) Asking yet more rhetorical questions, Ngubengwe denounces the arrogance manifested in their looking down on Khalipha and her daughter by showing that as descendants of a "Bushwoman" they have no right to do so: "*UKhalipha eyindoda esaziwa nje phakathi kwamadoda beningobani nina, ukuba ningade nicekis' intombi yakhe? Nicing' ukuba loo mThwakazi wanizalayo, nonke nilapha nje, angalinganiswa nale ntombi kakhalipha? UmThwa wakha walibona phi isiko? UmThwa wakha wafanela umzi kabani? UmThwa wakha wanomzi? UmThwa wakha wanengqondo? Ningade nibe nekratshi lokucekis' intombi kaKhalipha, xa ningobani?* (And who are you to despise the daughter of Khalipha, a man of no small distinction amongst us? Do you think that the mThwakazi, who is the forebear of all of you here, was in any way the equal of this daughter of Khalipha? What mThwakazi could ever have known the meaning of your customs? Could a mThwakazi ever be a satisfactory head of of a household? Has a mThwakazi ["Bushwoman"] a settled home? Who are you to be so arrogant to look down on Khalipha's daughter?)

After this devastating parry, Ngubengwe extends his caustic wit to mockingly challenge his audience to speak sense, ironically protesting a lack of eloquence on behalf of himself and the assimilationists: "*Thethan' into yengqondo, siphulaphule thina mayilo*" (Please let us who are not eloquent speakers, hear some sensible talk). He then dares them to reiterate their position: "*Ukuba nithi iBhacakazi malizekwe, kuba kwatsho uZanemvula liphumenui silive*" (If those of you who insist that the Bhaca princess should be our Chief's do so on the grounds that this was Zanemvula's dying-wish, then say so quite openly, so that we know where we stand and can deal only with this issue). He implies that he would not be surprised if they did so, because they are unable to use their

University of Cape Town

brains properly, a difficiency which he derogatively attributes to heredity – they have taken after their grandmother who was a "Bushwoman": "*Nifuze kulonyoko ebaThweni nangobuyil' obu*" (and even this limited intelligence you inherit from your mThwakazi ancestor).

Jordan acknowledges Ngubengwe's oratorical ability through capturing the anger and commotion that rages after his speech: "the orator's virtue is pre-eminently manifested either in rousing men's hearts to anger, hatred, or indignation, or in recalling them from these same passions to mildness and mercy" (Vickers 1988, 311). Using authorial speech he comments, "*Wathi esithi vu ukuhlala uNgubengwe abe amadoda selegilana ukusuka, ebuza ukuba athukelwani na... Hayi ke ngoku yaba ngumdudo woononkala, akwabikho mvisiswano nakundileka*" (He had hardly resumed his seat when several men sprang up at the same time, falling over one another in their eagerness to demand an explanation why they were being called names...From that moment the meeting became as disorderly as a dance of crabs, with neither dignity nor respect).

There is no doubt, then, that both Ngxabane (a traditionalist) and Ngubengwe (an assimilationist) are endowed with the gift of eloquence. But Jordan is careful not to depict either as so perfect as to render reconciliation redundant. Through their speeches, which are otherwise powerful and commendable display of eloquence, Jordan subtly hints at certain limitations on the part of these honourable statesmen. In the tone of Ngxabane's speech there is some taint of the conservatism typical of traditionalist reaction to the scientific state, and in the temper of Ngubengwe's speech there are some specks of the arrogance frequently characteristic of assimilationists. Allowing these limitations to co-exist with moral excellence and oratorical eloquence is another way through which Jordan argues for reconciliation, as a force capable of symbolically removing such blemishes from these otherwise admirable characters. What is striking is that these limitations are absent in Mphuthumi, who represents the reformist reaction to the scientific state, the reponse that the novels under discussion endorse. Also worth noting is that Mphuthumi is endowed with poetic ability, which is arguably the pinnancle of eloquence. This gift is manifested for the first time when he eloquently persuades Zwelinzima to accept his rightful position as the leader of the Mpondomises. He declaims:

University of Cape Town

Bayethe, Ngwanya kaMajola!
Silo sakulo Vukuz' umbethe, esimpulo
Ingqongqo ngokwengulube
Santywil, eMthatha, savunduz' umhlaba,
Seza kuvumbuluka Phesheya kweXesi
likaRharhabe.
Ntw' ingal' inezothe zizinkcwe zezinja
zika Dingindawo.
Nqanda, Gcinizibele, iingqeqe zingagragrameli
UMhlekazi!
Bhota Mntwan' oMhle! Bhota, Mntwan' eNkosi!!

Yaphel' imihlambi kaZanemvula zizandawana
namaxhwili;
Kaz'uhlel' apha nj' uthi yaluswa yintengu na! (33)

Bayethe, Offspring of the House of Majola!
Mighty monster of the blood of Vukuz' umbethe!
Tough-snouted, even as the wild boar.
It plunged into the Mthatha waters
And tunnelled its way through the earth
To emerge beyond the Xesi of Rharhabe:
You whose arm is nauseating from the spittle of Dingindawo's dogs!
Beware, Gcinizibele, lest mongrels snarl at his excellency!
Hail, worthy prince, Hail, Child of Kings!
See, Zanemvula's flocks and herds ravaged by hyenas and wild dogs!
Why do you tarry here,
Why do you linger,
Fondly trusting they're guarded by the drongo bird?

In line with the reformist reaction he represents, Mphuthumi exploits the strengths of both the modern and traditional outlooks in skilfully broaching the topic of Zwelinzima's birthright to the Mpondomise chieftaincy. As observed earlier, he first exploits the strengths of written text, one of the defining features of modern chirographic culture, when he writes Zwelinzima a letter to prepare him and minimise the shock he is going to experience when he discovers that the carefully guarded secret of his royal origin is now known to his friend. The use of the written text serves to show that Mphuthumi cannot be accused of conservatism, for which Ngxabane has been faulted. But when he comes face to face with Zwelinzima he declaims praise poetry, a feature of traditional oral culture, in a gesture of self-abasement. Humility, as observed earlier, is a quality conspicuously

University of Cape Town

lacking in assimilationists such as Ngubengwe. What Brewer (1993, 189) says about oral narratives in general is also true of the use of praise poetry in the excerpt under scrutiny: "many oral narratives appear to be carrying out a wide variety of functions at the same time. Thus a single oral narrative may be doing what Western literature would do through a novel, a dirty joke, a history text, a scientific journal article, a religious text and a philosophical essay".

In this excerpt oral poetry is employed to show Zwelinzima that there is no place to hide, the secret of his royal origin now being known to his friend, and to exhort him to accept his predestined duty to lead the Mpondomise. It also serves to demonstrate Mphuthumi's linguistic dexterity. Typical of oral praise poetry Mphuthumi opens his declamation by using a salutation, *"Bayethe"*, to pay homage to Zwelinzima, and by so doing convinces him that he now knows that he is of royal origin. To demonstrate that Zwelinzima is indeed of royal blood and therefore worthy of honour he traces his lineage from Majola, the founder-king of the Mpondomise kingdom *("Ngwanya kaMajola")*, up to Vukuz'umbethe, the last direct descendant of his lineage: "Silo sakulo Vukuz' umbethe" (Mighty monster of the blood of Vukuz'umbethe).

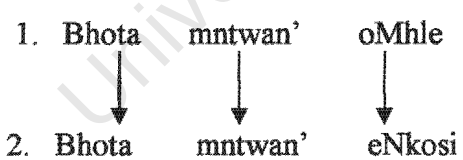
He then presents a succinct biography of Zwelinzima in a characteristically oral poetic form which "generates outsized figures, that is heroic figures not for romantic reasons or reflectively didatic reasons but for much more basic reasons: to organize experience in some sort of permanently memorable form" (Ong 1982, 70). He refers to Zwelinzima as *"Isilo... esimpulo Ingqongqo NgokweNgulube. Santywil, eMthatha, savunduz' umhlaba, Seza kuvumbuluka Phesheya kweXesi likaRharhabe"* (Mighty monster of the blood of Vukuz'umbethe! Tough-snouted, even as the wild boar. It plunged into the Mthatha waters. And tunnelled its way through the earth, to emerge beyond the Xesi of Rharhabe). He employs imagery to describe in heroic terms Zwelinzima's tenacious hold on life as he is carried away by Gcinizibele from Umtata to Sheshegu to escape the evil plots of his uncle Dingindawo: *"Isilo...esimpulo Ingqongqo NgokweNgulube"* (Mighty monster... Tough-snouted, even as the wild boar). He valorises Zwelinzima (then a sickly babe) by endowing him with agentive powers, using active verbs that connote violent physical action such as *"Santywila"*, (It plunged)

University of Cape Town

"*savunduza*" (and tunnelled) and "*Seza kuvumbuluka*" (to emerge) to sensationalise this story and heighten its impact on the reader.

Typical of praise poets, he uses real life incidents to denounce the enemies of the hero: "*ingal' inezothe zizinkcwe zezinja zika Dingindawo. Nqanda, Gcinizibele, iingqeqe zingagragrameli UMhlekazi!*" (You whose arm is nauseating from the spittle of Dingindawo's dogs! Beware, Gcinizibele, lest mongrels snarl at his Excellency!). Dingindawo is here associated with "*ingal' enezothe*" (nauseating arm) to link him to the wicked designs whose failure (thanks to Gcinizibele) has earned him the status of being contemptuously designated, through association, as one of "*iingqeqe ezigragramel' uMhlekazi*" (the mongrels that snarl at his Excellency!). Although this part of the poem is used to denounce the enemies of the king, it is also utilised to magnify the indomitable courage of Zwelinzima, by showing that the wicked designs of his enemies are nothing but "*ukugragrama kwengqeqe*" (the snarl of mongrels).

This eulogising is aimed at convincing Zwelinzima not only that he is the chosen one, but also that he has been endowed with the supreme ability to meet the challenges of his prospective position. The ugly scar on Zwelinzima's arm, the cause of which he has kept a secret even from his beloved girlfriend Thembeka, here becomes irrefutable evidence that Mphuthumi now knows the minutest detail of his past life. Mphuthumi closes this stanza by saluting the king once more in: "*Bhota Mntwan' oMhle! Bhota, Mntwan' eNkosi!!*" – as if to say, all that I have said above makes you deserve deference and honour, an idea emphasised through the use of perfect parallelism in



As with "*ingal' inezothe*" (nauseating arm) and "*esimpulo Ingqongqo*" (tough-snouted), ephithets are employed in, "*mntwan' oMhle*" (Hail, worthy prince!) and *mntwan' eNkosi*" (Hail, Child of Kings) to heap praises upon Zwelinzima.

By shifting from the direct discourse of Mphuthumi to authorial speech, Jordan leaves the rest of the poem to the imagination of the reader, quoting only those lines

University of Cape Town

pertinent to the main objective of the poem, which is to exhort Zwelinzima to accept the responsibility of his preordained role as leader of the Mpondomise: *"Yaphel' imihlambi kaZanemvula zizandawana namaxhwili; Kaz'uhlel' apha nj' uthi yaluswa yintengu na!"* (Why do you tarry here, / Why do you linger, / Fondly trusting they're guarded by the drongo bird?). Here again Mphuthumui employs the imagery of beasts of prey continuously devouring their victims, *"Yaphel' imihlambi kaZanemvula zizandawana namaxhwili"*, to evoke the desperate position of the Mpondomise deprived of their rightful and capable leader, so as to appeal to Zwelinzima's patriotic sentiments. That this process of preying is continuous is suggested through the use of an infinite verb, *"yaphela"*, which thus stresses the necessity of intervention. Using rhetorical questions couched in idiomatic expression – *"Kaz'uhlel' apha nj' uthi yaluswa yintengu na!"* (Why do you tarry here, / Why do you linger, / Fondly trusting they're guarded by the drongo bird?) – he challenges him to face up to his divinely allotted task.

A voice shift is also employed to magnify Mphuthumi's eloquence: the effect of his speech on Zwelinzima is captured both through the use of authorial speech in *"waziqukula phantsi uZwelinzima, wazigquma ngengubo elila"* (At these words Zwelinzima flung himself on the ground and covered his face), and the direct discourse of Zwelinzima himself, when he says: *"Kowu! mfo kaDumakude, uyindoda. Undihle entloko namhlanje"* (Son of Dumakude, you are a man! You have hit me right on the head!). Besides the tribute of authorial speech and Mphuthumi's accurate use of imagery, idiomatic expression and epithets, his linguistic dexiterity is manifested in the manner in which he chooses words that create rhythm through repeating sounds such as: voiced fricative /v/ and /z/ : *"sa<u>v</u>unduza"*, *"sa<u>v</u>umbuluka"* and *"ine<u>z</u>othe <u>z</u>i<u>z</u>inkcwe <u>z</u>e<u>z</u>inja <u>z</u>ika Dingindawo"* respectively; aspirated laterals: *"Undi<u>hl</u>e entloko nam<u>hl</u>anje"*; plosives: *"ka<u>D</u>umaku<u>d</u>e uyin<u>d</u>o<u>d</u>a;* and clicks: *"<u>Nq</u>anda, <u>Gc</u>inizibele, iin<u>gq</u>e<u>q</u>e"*.

His rich vocabulary is further evidenced by his ability to reiterate the same idea, using near synonyms to achieve emphasis: *"Yaphel' imihlambi kaZanemvula zizandawana namaxhwili"* (See Zanemvula's flocks and herds ravaged by hyenas and wild dogs), which has a similar meaning to what Mphuthumi says later during the same incident: *"Umzi kayihlo usebugxwayibeni"* (The house of your father is in a state of desolation) and *"Ndilapha nje namhlanje ndiphuthume uyise wezonkedama"*

University of Cape Town

(Zwelinzima my mission here today is to bring the father of these orphans home to his people). Jordan nevertheless avoids the temptation of making Mphuthumi faultless by ascribing to him some minor shortcomings – such as arriving late at a meeting (84), which he mitigates through use of his poetic gifts, to the delight of everybody, including the president of the association, who is made to forget to reprimand him (as secretary of the association) for delaying the meeting by coming late.

SUMMARY

This chapter has collated *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* by A.C. Jordan and *The River Between* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o as examples of novels that encapsulate ideologemes transposed from reformist reaction to the cosmopolitan assimilation feature of the scientific state. Cosmopolitan assimilationism (commonly known as cultural imperialism) is a feature that the scientific state inherited from empires, which exerted pressure on conquered peoples to assume the culture and religion of their conquerors. The comparison between these novels has focused on ideology and aesthetics.

The juxtaposition of the ideological content of these novels hinged on three ideologems: a) cultural arrogance is the road to brutal ruin; b) no race possesses the monopoly of beauty, intelligence, force and there is room for all at the rendezvous of victory; c) blending the best values from various cultures is a therapy for psycho-social disunity. This chapter has shown that Jordan fares better than Ngugi in articulating the first ideologeme because Jordan's novel is more convincing in dramatising the tragic consequences of cultural arrogance on the following grounds: First, Thembeka's cultural arrogance is more authentic than that of Joshua in that her actions stems from cultural arrogance pure and simple, whereas Joshua's can be interpreted as attempts to assuage a violated conscience. He is stupefied into assimilationist reaction by the white man's power and riches. He and a few others betray their friends, forsake the hills, renounce their tribe's magic, power and ritual, and go to the Siriana Mission. There they are indoctrinated into mental and political docility through religion and education. Joshua in particular is so brainwashed by the new faith that it possesses him wholly. His quest for acceptance by the white man, which is partly attributable to his fear of revenge at the

University of Cape Town

hands of his betrayed friends, reduces him to a fanatic whose gullibility makes him accepts without question everything that comes out of the white man's mouth.

Thembeka, on the other hand, is socialised from early childhood into an assimilationist position. Brought up by educated parents at Mjika near Ngcolosi Mission, she is educated at missionary institutions from primary school to teacher training. After training she comes back to serve at Ngcolosi. Exposed in this way to the culturally superior airs of the missionaries, Thembeka herself becomes culturally arrogant. Her actions stem purely from cultural arrogance, and therefore she is a better example than Joshua to evince the ideologeme that cultural arrogance is the road to brutal ruin.

Second, the abominations committed by Joshua are not as heinious as those committed by Thembeka. Joshua merely denounces the traditional rites, especially the circumcision of women, and marginally opposes Waiyaki, the black messiah in the novel. All these offences are inconsequential when compared with those committed by Thembeka, who on becoming the wife of Zwelinzima the chief of the Mpondomise tribe, trifles with and desecrates all that is regarded as sacred by the Mpondomise. She walks bareheaded and bare-legged in front of the elders. She pats a sacred ox and makes her infant son ride on it in arrogant violation of a prohibition made known to her by the elders of the tribe. Furthermore, Thembeka kills a brown cobra, a sacred snake believed to be an ancestral spirit of the Mpondomise.

Third, the punishment meted out to Thembeka for her actions is more excruciating than that meted out to Joshua. From the day that she kills Majola despite the desperate attempts by all who are present to restrain her from committing such a sacrilege, she is treated as an outcast. The consequences of cultural arrogance in Jordan's novel are made even more frightening by the death of innocent people, such as Thembeka's baby boy Zululiyazongoma. In Ngugi's novel the punishment dealt to Joshua is his own failure to proselytise his children into his kind of Christianity. Muthoni and her sister Nyambura are brought up in a Chrstian home. Joshua threatens, kicks, pushes and drags his daughters 'up' to the Christian God, to no avail, for Muthoni still wants to be circumcised and Nyambura chooses to go with Waiyaki, a man Joshua associates with backward and heathenish traditional culture. On both occasions the emotional pain suffered by Joshua, intense as it is, is only momentary. In fact Joshua

University of Cape Town

copes so well with the heartache caused by the death of Muthoni that Nyambura is convinced that her father is not moved by her death. Even in the case of Nyambura's rebellion, he is only momentarily thrown into a stupor and quickly recovers to pronounce a curse upon her.

Jordan's novel also excels over Ngugi's in articulating the second ideologeme, which argues that no race possesses a monopoly on beauty in that there is more consistent balance in acknowledging beauty and blemish across the divide in *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* than in *The River Between.* With regard to the representation of marronage (the third ideologeme), Ngugi is more skilful than Jordan because the attempts made by Ngugi's characters are motivated by a genuine desire to reconcile the contending traditions, whilst there is a smack of pretence, manipulation and desperation in the attempts made by Jordan's characters. In Ngugi's novel the characters that attempt marronage are Chege, Muthoni, Nyambura and Wayaki. Although they espouse marronage for various reasons, they all believe that there are sparks of beauty and spots of blemish in both the European and African traditions. In *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya,* characters such as the chief from Sulenkama, the wise chief of the Thembus, and Zwelinzima, who attempt marronage, act from opportunism and not from principle. The former two confess that they adopt traditional African ways and beliefs to inspire their people's confidence in them as leaders, and not because they necessarily believe that there is truth or beauty in them.

The comparison of the aesthetic value of these novels focused on vital beauty and typical beauty. The assessment of vital beauty zeroed in on the portrayal of characters and that of typical beauty was grounded in certain dominant categories. Considering the portrayal of characters in these two novels, this chapter argued that as far as vital beauty is concerned Jordan's novel excels over Ngugi's. Both writers depict victims whose own flaws contribute substantially to their downfall. The attack on Western culture achieved through the exposure of this flaw in Ngugi's novel is very mild. Waiyaki's desire to educate African children is not so deplorable after all. It is just that it does not address fully the problems of the Gikuyu people. In Jordan's book the attack is devastating. It shows how crippling and straitjacketing Western culture is to an African. Jordan shows

University of Cape Town

how European culture turns Zwelinzima, an otherwise brilliant and promising young man, into a quisling.

Jordan's ascendancy over Ngugi in character development in these two novels emerges clearly in the manner in which he represents his antagonists. Whilst he extends some authorial sympathy to characters on both sides of the divide, Ngugi generally displays little sympathy for antagonists. Jordan extends sympathy to characters on the opposing side by portraying most of them as admirable people. The measure of sympathy that Ngugi extends to Kabonyi, who spearheads the opposition against Waiyaki, is meant to show that the political action he espouses happened to be what the people needed at that point in time. Even so, Ngugi does not credit him with a genuineness of purpose, as it is clear that he has an axe to grind in supporting this noble cause. As for being a champion of African values (which he pretends to be), Kabonyi is not worthy of that honour as he has earlier forsaken the African way and joined Joshua's band. Using a character such as Kabonyi as the main exponent of African values discredits the cause of the upholders of African tradition as it implies that they have devious motives for opposing Westernisation.

It is not only in the depiction of the development of characters that Jordan outshines Ngugi but also in depicting their destiny. Novels that use flawed victims are notorious for their pessimism, and Ngugi does little to avoid this shortcoming. Jordan manages the bleakness inherent in novels of this nature rather better. Readers welcome the deaths of Zwelinzima and Thembeka because they are portrayed as bringing relief to their tormented souls. Furthermore their deaths are caused by their failure to compromise timeously, and not by the ideology for which they stand. In this way Jordan avoids the mistake (which Ngugi commits) of making marronage seem unattainable by having those who champion it die.

Bakhtin's five compositional unities (tabulated in Chapter One of this study) were used as the basis for the comparison of the typical beauty of the novels under review. This chapter has argued that as far as typical beauty is concerned, Jordan's novel is more comprehensive than that of Ngugi, which is understandable because *The River Between* is Ngugi's first attempt at writing a novel whereas *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* is a novel of Jordan's mature years. The first basic type of compositional-stylistic unity is direct

University of Cape Town

authorial literary narration. The authorial speech in Jordan's and Ngugi's novels is used to bestow beauty, merit and value upon both African culture and European culture. Jordan's authorial speech is more balanced than that of Ngugi, who reserves laudatory language for African culture, while Jordan employs it to acknowledge the virtue present in both cultural traditions.

With regard to the second compositional-stylistic unity, which entails the stylisation of various forms of oral everyday narration, it is arguable that both these novels abound in features of oral everyday narration (such as repetition and epithets) because, although both of them belong to chirographic culture, they are not distant from oral culture. Again it is arguable that Jordan excels over Ngugi in the use of oral material because the features of African culture and verbal arts that he uses are harnessed in the service of his thematic concern, which is highlighting the need for reconciliation. Ngugi's novel also abounds in allusions to African tradition and verbal arts, but in most cases these do not serve to illuminate the content of the novel. They are used to venerate African culture. The third compositional stylistic unity, which is the stylisation of various forms of semiliterary (written) everyday narration (letter, diary etc.) is more noticeable in Jordan's novel than in Ngugi's and thus makes *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* more heteroglot than *The River Between*. The forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration that are common in Jordan's novel are letters and newspaper articles. Generally, Jordan exhibits ingenuity in using these forms of semi-literary everyday narration, in that almost all contribute in the development of the story.

The fourth compositional stylistic unity, adapted for our purposes, comprises various forms of literary extra-artistic or non-narrative authorial speech, which includes things such as moral, philosophical or scientific statements. Generally, the non-narrative authorial speech in these novels is used to valorise or vilify the actions and fates of characters. As in the case of authorial narration (discussed above), Jordan's non-narrative authorial speech is more balanced than that of Ngugi, in that whilst Ngugi valorises only the actions and fates of protagonists and vilifies exclusively the actions and fates of antagonists, Jordan valorises and vilifies the actions and fates of characters on both sides of the divide. Thus although Ngugi exhibits good artistic skills in valorising the protagonists and vilifying the antagonists in his novel, my contention is that in doing this

University of Cape Town

he tends to make them all flat characters. Jordan – who uses non-narrative authorial speech to bestow praise and blame on characters on both sides of the divide and is thus able to create multidimensional characters – makes his novel superior to Ngugi's in terms of artistic excellence.

Although both Jordan and Ngugi exhibit artistic brilliance in employing the individualised speech of the characters (the last type of compositional-stylistic unity) to achieve their thematic intentions, which include delivering powerful arguments for reconciliation and attributing eloquence to both the protagonists and antagonists, Jordan again excels over Ngugi. This is so because Jordan is impartial in bestowing grandiloquence on both sides of the divide, whilst in Ngugi's novel the characters who are endowed with genuine grandiloquence are all exponents of reconciliation such as Chege, Muthoni and Waiyaki. The speech of Joshua and Kabonyi is tinged with fanaticism and narcissism respectively. This shortcoming is absent in *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* as Jordan endows characters from all three factions (traditionalist, assimilationist and reformist) with genuine eloquence.

Many reasons can be given to account for *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*'s aesthetic edge over *The River Between*, but I would like to focus on two: First, whilst *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* is a novel of Jordan's mature years, *The River Between* is Ngugi's first attempt at writing a novel. Evidence that this factor played some role in the comparatively poor aesthetic performance of *The River Between* is that the artistic lapses present in this novel are absent in Ngugi's later writings (as will be shown in the comparative analysis of *A Grain of Wheat* and Siyongwana's *Ubulumko Bezinja*). Secondly, there is the question of linguistic medium. Whilst Jordan writes in isiXhosa (his mother tongue), Ngugi opts for English in writing his novel. Unlike their counterparts who write in English, isiXhosa language writers have had to rely upon a mere handful of publishers specialising in educational and devotional material. These mostly missionary institutions have often rejected literature that they have regarded as antagonistic to the cause of government and church. Pre-publication censorship or "gatekeeping" by South African publishers has been extremely effective in ensuring that, for the most part, only tame, politically neutral or collaborationist works have been published. Government proscription of oppositional literature in South Africa has been so

University of Cape Town

notorious that in 1972 Mphahlele could maintain that "writers who publish inside the country are liable to be forced either into silence or superficiality" by the Publication and Entertainments Act of 1963 and a series of other laws used to muzzle writers (Mphahlele 1972, 203). According to Watts (1989, 16),

> The teeth of this act lay in its Publications Board – the committee which was to investigate all published material. This board was retained as the Directorate of Publications in the Act which replaced it in 1974 – in the application of which 'the constant endeavour of the population of the Republic of South Africa to uphold a Christian view of life shall be recognized'. The new act removed the right to appeal to the courts and simplified the grounds on which publications were to be censored: they merely had to be'undesirable'.

Jordan's *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* provides a good example of the sort of interference which writing in African languages has encountered at the missionary presses. The book was nearly rejected because the missionaries felt that Jordan made evil triumph over good. By this they meant that in the conflict between traditional (African) and modern (European) values, he vindicated the upholders of tradition and thus sanctioned it. Jordan fought bravely to save his book and finally convinced Bennie (an influential white man) of the novel's artistic integrity.

Whilst this study is of the view that Jordan succeeded in producing a good novel in spite of censorship, it is arguable that this very disadvantaged position of African language authors is one of the factors which has conduced to giving *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* an aesthetic edge over *The River Between*. Firstly, the knowledge that the prospective publisher of his novel was a mission press made Jordan stretch his artistic abilities to produce a novel he could successfully defend (on artistic grounds) against the censorship axe of the missionaries. His strategy of bestowing beauty and merit on both sides of the divide was, amongst other things, intended to provide him with armour against the punitive sanction of missionary censorship. This point that whilst cencorship is aimed at forcing writers either into silence or superficiality it sometimes achieves the opposite is confirmed by the famous Polish novelist Jadeusz Konwichi, who maintains that "writing under censorship has positive aspects. It can be like gambling or doing battle. The fact of having to face a censor can mobilise a writer to create ways of

University of Cape Town

bypassing censorship; it forces the writer to employ metaphors which raise the piece of writing to a higher level"(Peterson 1988, 105).

Secondly, the awareness that he was writing for a predominantly isiXhosa audience, for people familiar with isiXhosa oral material who would therefore not be overly impressed by seeing it in his novel, made Jordan more innovative in his use of isiXhosa cultural material. One device he uses with amazing ingenuity is the blending of material from isiXhosa verbal arts with orthodox Western literary writing strategies. To Ngugi, who wrote his novel in English, the demand for innovativeness in dealing with Gikuyu cultural material was not so pressing because his putative audience was primarily European, and to this audience the mere exhibition of the existence of African culture was in itself intriguing. As a result, Ngugi's strategy generally is to extract cultural material from the Gikuyu heritage and to parade the parallelism between it and a comparable aspect of European tradition.

Finally, although Ngugi should be commended for decolonising his novel through the use of African cultural artefacts (such as legends and myths), sprinkling the pages of his novel with words from the Gikuyu language, and sometimes adapting his English into Gikuyu syntactic format, none of these features are seen in their natural environment, which is the mother tongue. Consequently they lose some of their power and beauty. Observing an elephant in its jungle habitat is more satisfying than seeing it in a circus. So, Jordan's novel, which is written in isiXhosa and therefore presents these cultural artefacts in their natural milieu, has an aesthetic edge over Ngugi's novel. It is worth noting that later in his career (following *Decolonising the Mind*) Ngugi himself abandoned English for Gikuyu. A comment by Peteni on the translated version of *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* validates this general point:

> The original story written in what I regard as perfect Xhosa, is one of the most powerful I have read in any language... but a translation, at best can only be a poor imitation. The power and the soul of the original cannot be recaptured in the English version. Xhosa is rich in proverb, flexible in its turn of phrase and wide in vocabulary. In giving literal translations of the Xhosa images, idioms and proverbs, the aim is to transport the reader, as does the Xhosa version, to the Tsolo district, to make him feel he is listening to the memorable speeches of the Mpondomise counsellors. This effort has been made so that the English – speaking reader may be given a peep into the

University of Cape Town

> treasure – house bequeathed to humanity by Jordan in his *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya, The Wrath of the Ancestors*. (Jordan & Jordan 1980, iii)

There are however some exceptions to this rule, Achebe for instance, has used this strategy with tremendous success and produced an African classic in *Things Fall Apart*.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER THREE

THE LIBERAL/ PROTEST REACTION TO PERSONALIST LEVELLING HOMOGENISATION

In Chapter One, personalist levelling homogenisation was described as a feature of the "scientific state" that reduces the acquired countries into "personal possessions of their rulers, client polities of individuals whose resources and population could be harnessed for personal political [and economic] ends" (Smith 1972, 233). The implementation of this policy touched every fibre of life in the communities of acquired countries as it meant the introduction of new modes of production. In Kenya and South Africa, for instance, capitalism was imposed upon communities that were accustomed to pre-capitalist economic formations. The struggle that ensued between these modes of production, which Jameson (1986, 95) terms "cultural revolution" (i.e. that moment in which the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradiction moving to the very centre of political, social, and historical life), gave birth to what has come to be known as protest literature in Kenya and South Africa.

In Chapter One I also submitted that the content and form of protest literature owes much to liberalism. Both the primary and secondary aims of protest literature reflect this influence. As stated, the primary aim of the protest writer is to appeal to the conscience of the white man, to get him to remove the chains of colonial oppression. This aim is premised on benevolence, more precisely, on a liberal belief in the power of the sentiment of sympathy or social feeling among human beings. The secondary aim, which is to arouse indignation in Africans and galvanise them into a political awareness conducive to their joining the active struggle for political and economic liberation, is based on the liberal assumption that men will act in what they believe to be their own interest.

This chapter makes a comparative analysis of two examples of the protest novel: *Kill Me Quick* by Meja Mwangi and *UDingezweni* by Peter Mtuze. The comparison of these novels will focus on ideology and aesthetics.

University of Cape Town

3.1 COMPARISON OF THE IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT OF THE NOVELS

Although these novels are not autobiographies, their ideological content is autobiographical – understandably so, because "every writer's books are autobiographical, that is, you write about your experience, your immediate experience" (Ngugi 1966, ii). Meja Mwangi was born at Nanyiki in Kenya and grew up in urban ghetto conditions: he thus had first-hand experience of the way in which his two fictional characters, Meja and Maina, live out of dustbins. After completing his schooling at Kenyatta College he was employed by French television and later by the British Council as an audio-visual aide in Nairobi. His life in the city has made him preoccupied with the social realities of the city, particularly "the problems of the poor and downtrodden of his own generation"(Nichols 1981, 195). Mwangi expresses this major aspect of his conerns follows:

> You get a feeling walking down the street that everybody's living in his own little hut; [but despite their seeming isolation Kenyans] are very receptive to this kind of thing. They have an idea of what's happening and they don't know what's happening and they're quite ready to read something like that... they didn't know it was so hard. That's the kind of realization I am trying to bring out. (Nichols 1981, 192)

Mwangi's touching compassion for the social underdog in the cities is further evidenced in two other novels: *Going Down River Road* and *The Cockroach Dance*. The former is set in Nairobi's seething brothel, pub, and cheap nightclub area, and the latter "presents the despair and revolt of one Dusman Gonzaga...[who] lives among and identifies himself with the people of the slums against the bureaucracy of the controlling elite" (Zell 1983, 429). Mwangi's experience in visual media (i.e. with French television and the British Council) has influenced his writing style to the extent that Nazareth (1976) observes that "his stories are like thrillers: it is difficult to put them down because we want to know what happens next". This kind of suspense is the hallmark of action films. The influence of television on his writings is also observable in his novels on Mau Mau (which is his other preoccupation): *Taste of Death* and *Carcase for the Hounds*. He

University of Cape Town

himself acknowledges the difference between his style and that of writers such as Ngugi (who also dramatised events in the Mau Mau struggle): "while Ngugi wrote personal tragedies of a number of people who were active in Mau Mau from the social viewpoint, what I wanted to write about was the impersonal mechanism in itself' (Tsuchiya 1978, 570-1). To Burns (1975) the result of this style of writing is little more than a novel of action, with a slight plot and sketchy characterisation. It is not surprising that his novel *Carcase for the Hounds* has been made into a film.

Mtuze's *UDingezweni* is also autobiographical. In fact Mtuze himself reveals that this novel was initially a chapter in his first novel entitled: *UYese Namahla-ndenyuka Obomi*, which was to a large extent based on his life. In his autobiography *Indlela Ebhek' Enkundleni* he writes:

> Umfundi uya kumangaliswa xa ndithi eyona ncwadi ndayilinga kuqala ndisesikolweni yayisithi *UYese Namahla-ndinyuka Obomi* endandibuyisekela phezu kobami ubomi. *UDingezweni* lo wayesisahluko nje kulo ncwadi ingazange ilubone ushicilelo (35).
>
> (The reader will be surprised when I tell him/her that the book that I attempted first when I was still at school was entitled *UYese Namahla-ndenyuka Obomi* which was to a large extent based on my life. *UDingezweni* was only a chapter of that book that was never published).

Unlike Mwangi who grew up in ghetto conditions, Mtuze was raised in a rural environment and at school was teasingly called a "plaas Japie" (*Indlel' Ebhek' Enkundleni*, 22). He was born in 1941 at Leeuhoek farm in Middleburg, Cape (ibid., 1). His knowledge of farm life has no doubt helped to render the contrast between the African pre-capitalist economic formation and colonial capitalism more marked in his novel than in Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick*. Mtuze's career as a court interpreter, which demanded that he should have an expert knowledge of isiXhosa language and culture, influenced his writing style in this novel. He uses rich and idiomatic language and the story is interspersed with material from isiXhosa culture and verbal arts.

Mtuze's artistry will be assessed in comparison with Mwangi's later in this chapter. What needs to be noted initially is that this is Mtuze's first attempt at writing a novel and it is marred by artistic lapses, which are absent from the work of his mature

University of Cape Town

period of writing. On the other hand, *Kill Me Quick* (1973) is not Mwangi's first attempt at artistic writing. His first novel was *Taste Of Death*, though this was not published until 1975. Furthermore, "by the mid-1970s he was managing to live as a writer, submitting short stories to magazines as well as writing books" (Zell 1983,429). So in terms of aesthetic excellence, Mwangi's novel is likely to seem a more accomplished work than Mtuze's.

The following ideologemes, transposed by the authors from liberal ideology through the process of intertextuality, will be used as the basis for comparing the ideological content of the two novels: a) shattered dreams and broken families; b) doomed to drudgery and thuggery; c) heaven for foreigners and hell for locals. These can be reduced to one sentence, which can be regarded as the core doctrine of liberal/protest reaction to the "scientific state": in a "scientific state" the foreigners, through personalist levelling homogenisation, shatter the dreams and break the families of the locals, reduce them to drudgery and thuggery, and drive them into hell whilst they live in heaven.

In a general sense, these ideologemes emanate from violation of the essential liberties as articulated in the Declaration of the Rights of Man. It is arguable that the first ideologeme concerning shattered dreams and broken families protests against violation of the right to security, in that the dreams, which are shattered are essentially about a secure future. The second ideologeme about being doomed to drudgery and thuggery is a reaction to violation of the right to honour, position and public employment, according to the individual's capacity and talents. The third ideologeme, which exposes how foreigners drive locals into hell whilst they live in heaven, protests against violation of the right to equality, which declares that social distinctions should not be allowed except on grounds of common usefulness.

University of Cape Town

3.1.1 Shattered dreams and fragmented families

What is common to these two novels is that, although the dreams are meticulously developed, the root cause of their demolition, which is the colonial capitalist economy, is not fully exposed – and yet, according to Fraser (1976,136-37), in protest literature "what is under attack must be grasped as firmly and solidly as possible, which in turn

means that it must have been observed precisely and in some real measure understood from inside". In Mtuze's novel this shortcoming is more glaring and can be attributed to his tendency to ascribe the pulverization of Dingezweni and Nyubatya's dreams to the latter's slack discipline and Dingezweni's resultant recalcitrance. The reasons for this shortcoming will be dealt with later in the chapter.

Mtuze dedicates a chapter to the development of a strong love relationship between Dingezweni and Nomzamo. The opening words of this chapter are: "*Kwizinto zonke ezazithandwa nguDingezweni kwelo zwe lakowabo yayingekho awayeyithanda ngaphezu koNomzamo*..." (Of all the things that were dear to Dingezweni in his country there was nothing to surpass his love for Nomzamo). Mtuze then explains what endears Nomzamo to Dingezweni, describing her as a paragon of beauty, a woman who is not only neat in person but who also takes good care of her home. He presents her as a well-behaved and decent woman whose loving and restraining hand assists in guiding Dingezweni in the turbulent years of his youth. In times of need Nomzamo would offer a hand of support and comfort to Dingezweni. A case in point is when Dingezweni and his mob of boys in a spate of juvenile delinquency go on the rampage and hold the whole village to ransom.

An army of men is organised to stem the tide of lawlessness, with orders to show no mercy to the perpetrators of this violence. A battle ensues between the boys and the men of Mnandizonka. The boys are vanquished; some flee the place of their birth to seek employment in the cities. Dingezweni runs to the mountain. Nomzamo and Selina risk their lives to go in search of him and take him food. For ten full years there is no blemish in their love relationship. All these factors convince Dingezweni that the resolution he took when he first declared his love to Nomzamo, that he would marry no other woman, is right. One day he musters all his courage and makes his intentions known to her. With a trembling voice Nomzamo accepts his marriage proposal, sealing her commitment with lofty promises of fidelity even unto the grave.

Later Dingezweni clumsily divulges his intentions to marry to his father, at a time when his family is in dire financial crisis. The discourteous manner in which he confronts his father about his practice of lending money to people who do not pay it back infuriates him and he angrily expels his son from home, thus putting his plan to marry Nomzamo in

University of Cape Town

jeopardy. Dingezweni dejectedly and tearfully departs from his home vowing never to come back again. Leaving Mandizonka is a terrible wrench for Dingezweni, but all the pain caused by his final look at the magnificent mountains and forests of his place of birth is nothing when compared with the heart-rending agony inflicted by his separation from Nomzamo. This separation finally leads to the shattering of their dream of ever getting married.

Mtuze artistically orchestrates the final deathblow to their dream. After seven months of wandering, Dingezweni writes a string of letters to Nomzamo reminding her of the solemn promise she made, that she would marry no other man but him. He is driven to the brink of madness by her failure to respond to his letters. Out of exasperation he confides the cause of his torment to some of his friends who scold him for running after a woman who has evidently forsaken him. He consoles himself by arguing that it is because they do not know Nomzamo; but when Jwarha, an elderly man full of wisdom and experience, also condemns her and advises him to forget about her, he is unable simply to dismiss his opinion. Jwarha advises him to go back home, but he flatly refuses saying that if he does and finds out that Nomzamo has indeed forsaken him for another man he would die of a broken heart. So, he would rather not know and continue to cherish the illusion that one day she will write and revive their love relationship. This illusion is shattered when he does receive a lette confirming this from Nomzamo.

In the letter Nomzamo informs Dingezweni that in the first year of his absence she was forced against her wish to marry another man. All her attempts to resist the marriage arrangement were in vain. She is now the mother of two children who were mockingly named – Zimoshile (the one who wasted his chances) and Nomathemba (the one who promises) – in contempt of their aborted love affair. Nomzamo concludes the letter by putting the blame squarely upon Dingezweni, saying: "*ukuba wawugahambanga ngekungenje*" (if you had not left things would not have turned out to be what they are now). Mtuze dramatises Dingezweni's reaction to this devastating letter. He writes:

> Walila umfana eqwalasele le ncwadi. Wayiphindaphinda kaninzi ngokungathi iza kujika ithethe nto yimbi kanti hayi yayingongezi inganciphisi... Wagqiba ekubeni azibulale ukuze iphele imbambano. Wayithatha imela ibengezela ibubazi ubukhali obu. Wacinga ixesha elide eyibambe phambi koqhoqho ecimele. Ambaleka amandla. (142-3).

University of Cape Town

> (The young man cried gazing at the letter. He read it again and again, hoping that it was going to change and say something different but it did not add or subtract anything from what was written by Nomzamo's own hand. He decided to commit suicide and put an end to this controversy. He took a shining razor-sharp knife and thought for a long time, putting it against his throat, his eyes closed. Strength deserted him.)

He throws the knife away and rushes to his room to collect everything that belongs to him. He leaves his place of work running and mumbling many things about Nomzamo, falling and fainting from a broken heart. As he runs through a dense forest ducking under trees he collides with a branch and permanently damages his eye. When he wakes up in hospital, he moans: "*Aphelile amathemba, yalal' inkom' isengwa*" (143). (All hopes have vanished, the cow collapses whilst being milked). This isiXhosa adage *"yalal' inkom' isengwa*" (the cow collapses whilst being milked) succinctly summarises Dingezweni's feeling of utter disillusionment as his dream is shattered.

The minor dream that is shattered in Mtuze's novel is developed around Nyubatya. The misfortunes that befall him make him pin all his hopes upon his first-born son, Dingezweni. Firstly, his father passes away and is buried in his absence. When he eventually comes from Cape Town where he has been working, his elder and younger brothers (Gwebityala and Bhokhwinetyala) have squandered all the inheritance his rich father had left behind. This makes him and his wife vow that if God gives them a child they will give him/her education, an inheritance which no moth or man can destroy or steal. Secondly, his wife's protracted period of barrenness causes them to be derided by his brothers and their wives. Thus when his wife is ultimately pregnant he has great expectations of the coming baby. He excitedly says to his wife: "*Ngathi iintsuku ziyacotha, Nomalanga mfazi wam. Izinto zomzi wasemaNgxongweni ziyonakala, azinabani. Imihlambi yakuthi yaluswa yintengu... Vulan' amasango ingen' inkosana"* (3). (Days seem to be passing by slowly Nomalanga my wife. The belongings of the maNgxongo house are wasting with no one to look after them. The drongo bird guards the flocks of my home).

When Dingezweni is born Nyubatya is overwhelmed with joy and exclaims: "*Makube chosi! Kube hele! Buded' ubunyamakuvel' ukukhanya*!" (6). (Let there be peace! Let there be propitiousness! Let darkness flee and let light shine!). By the time the

University of Cape Town

boy starts to utter his first syllables his father already perceives him as his shelter in the time of need, and as a result spares the rod and spoils the child. Later, when Dingezweni has reached a marriageable age, in the heat of an argument over money he expels him from home. For many years after this incident, Nyubatya is tormented by a guilty conscience, made worse by his other children who blame him for their brother's desertion. Amidst all this he still cherishes hope that his son will return. This hope, and his dream of passing on the baton of authority to his firstborn son, are shattered when a group of men come to convey the sad news that Dingezweni is no more. Nyubatya wails uncontrollably, saying: *"Dingezweni! Dingezweni, nyana wam"(174).* (Dingezweni! Dingezweni, my son).

As pointed out earlier, the dreams are themselves well developed and their disintegration dramatically presented, but the capitalist economy, the main culprit responsible for ruining these dreams, is not fully exposed. In South Africa and in Kenya, it is arguable that it was the expropriation of African land and the taxation system introduced by the colonial capitalists that plunged families into financial crises. Early land expropriation and subsequent land legislation, such as the Natives' Land Act of 1913 in South Africa and the notorious Labour Acts of 1919 in Kenya, were designed to reduce African land tenure so that as many Africans as possible would be left without their customary source of livelihood and thus form a reservoir of cheap labour. These Acts had a disastrous outcome for Africans, whose political, social, religious and economic life depended on land. Through the Acts the whole African traditional order was overturned: the expropriation of fertile land rendered many homeless and landless, reducing them to destitution and forcing them to migrate to the cities.

The system of taxation was also aimed at forcing Africans to work for Europeans. The strategy was introduced in South Africa at a time when the demand for African labour was growing day by day because of the discovery of precious minerals. Thus in the Cape Colony Act of 1894, a tax was imposed on 'fit adult males'. Davidson (1981, 110) sums up the implications of this when he says: "To pay cash taxes Africans would have to earn cash; almost invariably in that period this meant leaving their villages for European employment". The example set by South Africa was soon followed by other colonies: in Kenya, for instance, a hut tax and poll tax were imposed for the same

University of Cape Town

purpose. It was a measure that not only forced Africans to work for wages and contribute to the cost of being governed, but also gave birth to the detestable system of migrant labour. The permanent absence from their homes of most 'fit adult males' had detrimental effects on the traditional economy. It meant that European mines and farms absorbed the manpower which is the pillar of any economy.

After accurately identifying the cause of frequent family disputes at the beginning of the chapter that presents the quarrel between Dingezweni and his father (through use of an excerpt from Jolobe's poem), Mtuze clouds it at the end of the same chapter by making Selina (Dingezweni's sister) put the blame for Dingezweni's departure squarely upon her father. Some critics ascribe Mtuze's tendency to obscure the real cause of the suffering of African families and his didacticism to his lack of experience as a writer. The fact that the latter tendency is absent in later novels such as *Alitshoni Lingaphumi* seems to validate this view. Whilst this study does not exclude this possibility, it submits that the major reason for the didacticism is that the "missionary and publishing houses often rejected literature which they regarded as inimical to the cause of the government and the church" (Sirayi 1989,335). In his later writings Mtuze does not have to muffle the shrillness of his protest on political issues because now there are African-controlled publishers like Skotaville and COSAW, which will readily publish manuscripts with high political content.

Mwangi's novel did not have to pass through the same rigours of pre-publication censorship or gate keeping as Mtuze's because his medium of expression was English and his work could therefore be published outside Kenya. So, although his novel also does not fully expose the capitalist economy as the root cause of the demolition of the dreams of his characters, this is not so as to avoid the punitive sanction of censorship, as is the case with Mtuze's novel. As a result Mwangi's book cannot be accused of displaying the kind of didacticism, which Mtuze uses to disguise "the shrillness of [his] protest on political issues" (Mtuze 1990, 15).

The dreams of Meja and Maina, the main characters in this novel, are presented through use of flashbacks. The story starts in the middle of things by presenting the young boys already in the back streets of Nairobi, and then through flashbacks traces how

University of Cape Town

they came to be there. Maina, the veteran of the back streets, recounts to Meja how his dream of getting a decent job was shattered:

> I thought I would get a job and earn six-seven hundred shilling a month. Then I would get a house, a radio, good clothes and food... Well I tried to get job... "What qualifications" they ask me "Second Division School Cert..." I would start to say but before I had finished the man behind the desk would roar, "Get out we have no jobs". (1)

Maina then reveals that his dream of getting a decent job was not an idle fantasy, for he had studied hard in preparation for it. He tells Meja that he was the "wormiest of book-worms at school" (2). He recalls how he used to be the laughing stock of the whole school because of the funny things he did with books. He carried his books everywhere, even into the dining hall; one day he bit a book instead of bread and the hall roared with laughter. He believes that he deserves something better than being a gutter rat because of the effort he put into his studies and the fees he paid at school. The shattering of his dream when he gets to Nairobi and cannot find any decent employment breaks his heart and makes him disillusioned with education. This disillusionment should be understood against the backdrop of the belief prevalent in those days that education was the key to political and economic liberation. Young people were exhorted to acquire education as a strategy for liberation. Maina and Meja obliged, only to discover that they had been duped. Describing his disillusionment with education Maina says to Meja: "You know what Meja? I would not go back to school even if they paid me to. What for? In the one year that I have been here I have learnt that it does not pay. It has not got me anywhere" (8).

The heartache occasioned by the shattering of his dream at times overwhelms Maina, who is otherwise a jolly character. On these occasions "he would go away into the bush all alone and sit and cry. He would sit there toying with his dreams and his fears and his memories and he would cry softly to himself" (27). When he has attempted everything in the city (which includes living out of dustbins, working on the farm, begging, thuggery and suicide), he finally musters enough courage and goes home, crushed with grief and shame. There the final blows to his wretched life are delivered. First, the people from whom he asks the way home seem to be laughing at him because he has gone to school and yet is dressed in rags. Secondly, when he ultimately gets to his

University of Cape Town

father's house he finds out that his family does not live there anymore. Thirdly, the stories that are circulating in the village put the blame for his family's misfortune upon him. They say that his family squandered all their money on sending him to school, whereupon he went to the city, got himself a job and became spoilt. Finally when he requests shelter and food, the people of his own village try to close him out. In desperation he fights and kills a man and his wife in an attempt to cling to all that is left of him – his very life.

The way in which Meja's dream is destroyed is not recounted but dramatised. He also comes to city with great expectations; his dream is also to get decent employment and fulfil the promises he has made to his family and friends. After receiving lessons from Maina, the veteran of the back streets, as to what he should and should not do when looking for a job, Meja sets out to look for one. He walks for the whole day from office to office until his feet are tired and sore, without any luck. On one occasion his hope of getting a job is so raised that "his voice trembled with ecstasy" (5). The manager, who has asked whether he can read, rouses this hope. Full of excitement he says, "yes... yes" and adds, "I can also write" (5).

A messenger is then called and instructed to go with him. In capturing Meja's excitement the writer says: "Meja's thoughts were unfathomable; as he followed the messenger down the winding stairs his mind raced ahead of him. A job at last". The anti-climax comes when they reached the ground floor: "It took Meja one long minute to grasp the meaning of it all. And then he understood and could not believe. He could not believe that the messenger had gone to all the trouble to show him this. Yet the letters were there staring boldly back at him. They screamed in two tongues. NO VACANCY. *HAKUNA KAZI.* Meja's legs felt wobbly and his lips twitched" (5).

He finally gives up looking for employment when he is thrown out through the back door by two big bullies and the manager, after he has violated one of the major rules for survival given to him by Maina that "if they tell you to get out. Do so fast or they will throw you downstairs" (4). Seething with anger he returns to the back streets, feeling ready to take a rope and end his suffering. The mistake that Meja and Maina make is to display their learning when job-hunting at a time when the colonial governments "set out to ensure that this small vocal group [of educated Africans] would

University of Cape Town

not undermine either the whites' view of their own superior status or cheap labour economy which had no place for educated Africans" (Lacey 1981, 245).

Like Maina, Meja is made to witness the full impact of his failure upon his family when circumstances force him to go home. Firstly he is shocked to see the pathetic little figure of his sister that attests to the extreme poverty and hunger that his family endures because he has been unable to get a job and send them money to buy food. Secondly, he is covered with shame when his sister reminds him of the blue necklace he promised her. Finally, he is crushed by guilt when he is told that his father has gone to his uncle to borrow money. Humiliated by his failure, he runs away from home never to come back again.

The minor dream that is shattered in Mwangi's novel is the protagonists' hope to get married and have children. One day Maina asks Meja: "Meja, do you think we shall ever grow old and have wives and children of our own?" This question leads the young men to recall their childhood romances, since frustrated by their failure to get decent employment. Remembering his girlfriend, Maina laments: "I knew a girl once... we dreamed a great lot too, me and this girl...I was to write to her as soon as I got a job and make her dreams come true. But all that is wasted now. None of these things will ever come true". Tormented by the demolition of his childhood romance Meja orders Maina to go to sleep because "it is no good remembering, it only hurts"(35).

Mwangi like Mtuze does not fully expose the real culprit that destroys the dreams of these young men, as observed earlier on. The closest he comes to doing this is when he explains through Maina that the land allotted to Africans is not enough. Maina tells Meja that his father owns two acres of land, which are not big enough for even one little hut. Mwangi does not tell the reader why Africans have such small land units when white farmers (such as the one who at some stage hires them) own vast lands. He does not tell us why the village people are so poor that their young ones decide to go to the city to seek employment, or why blacks have to pay dearly for their education. It is not made known why there is unemployment in the cities and why educated blacks struggle to get jobs. Mwangi leaves it entirely up to the reader to make connections between these deplorable conditions and the oppressive system responsible for them.

University of Cape Town

Unlike in Mtuze's novel, where the agency of oppression is left unclear to avoid censorship, in Mwangi's novel the obfuscation of agency and causality is largely due to the fact that the book focuses on the results of the black man's poverty and not on its causes. This approach works in the sense that it corrects the distortions perpetrated by the white man, for instance, that blacks sell beer because they are devious, that they rob and murder people because they are savages, that they practise prostitution because they have inherited sexual promiscuity from their parents (see Mibury-Steen 1980).

The shattering of the dreams of these characters (in both novels) is invariably attended by the smashing of their families, as they vow never to go back home. Albert Luthuli condemns the destruction of families by the colonial capitalist economy:

> When I became chief I was confronted as never before by the destitution of the housewife, the smashing of families because of economic pressures, and the inability of the old way of life to meet the contemporary onslaught. The destruction of our families is not the least of the crimes which white avarice has perpetrated against us. It continues, it increases in spite of pleading voices raised against it. The results in promiscuity, neglect and material trouble, are read by whites as just another sign of African incapacity. They ignore our pain. (Luthuli 1982, 56)

The traumatic effect of the smashing of families is felt both by the wanderers themselves and their relatives at home. As noted earlier, Maina would go away into the bush alone, sit down and cry softly to himself when tormented by memories of home. His relatives are so worried when he does not return home that his brothers are sent to go and look for him; when they too do not come back his mother gets sick because of worry. In Mtuze's novel there are times when Dingezweni himself is tormented by homesickness. Mtuze writes: "*wayeyikhumbula iMnandizonka izwe lokuzalwa kwakhe*" (134) (He missed Mnandizonka, the country of his birth). His father misses him so much that he consults traditional doctors and offers sacrifices for his homecoming to no avail. His little sister would even prepare a sleeping place for him in the evenings hoping that he would come back. The shattering of their dreams and the smashing of their families reduce these characters to drudgery and thuggery.

University of Cape Town

3.1.2 Protagonists are doomed to drudgery and thuggery

This ideologeme is generally articulated to depict how degrading and dehumanising colonial capitalism was. Consequently the fate of its victims is usually graphically portrayed. Mwangi's novel is arguably far more persuasive in depicting the degenerative effects of colonial capitalism on the protagonists because in it the drudgery and thuggery to which they are doomed are given a more sustained and comprehensive portrayal than in Mtuze's novel. But both authors show that the conditions of the protagonists are not meaningfully improved by their finding employment. Instead of enjoying the benefits of payment for their labour, they are reduced to semi-slavery by their white masters and foremen.

Before they get employed they are portrayed as wallowing in mire and misery. In Mwangi's novel, Meja and Maina are forced by poverty to leave their village homes to go and look for work in the city. Despite their education, they are unable to find employment there and are forced to live with mongrels in the back streets, competing with them for food from rubbish bins. To show that the food they are forced to eat is unpalatable Mwangi depicts how Meja nearly vomits in trying to eat his share of a rotten piece of bread. He is advised by Maina to try an orange, but when he does he has to hold his breath every time he brings it to his face to reduce the smell.

They have to wait until the refuse truck empties the rubbish bins before they can jump into them and sleep amidst the toxic foul smell of rotten vegetables. The climate itself seems to have conspired with the city people to make their life miserable. During the hot season everything in the back streets is choked by swarms of flies and a "dry dust-carrying wind that sweeps through them. The scorching sun makes their bodies dehydrated and covered in scales"(10). When the rainy season comes "the indifferent skies [pour] their share of misery into the back streets. The ditches [are] now urine and rain-swept and no culvert [is] safe to be lived in. The food from the back of the supermarket [is] soggy and uneatable long before the two [come] round to it"(10).

Dingezweni in Mtuze's novel also has his share of misery, but his is intermittent as it is mainly occasioned by his frequent journeys on foot (from Mnandizonka to Queenstown; Queenstown to Conway; Conway to Johannesburg, and Johannesburg to Natal). It is during his journey from Conway to Johannesburg that Dingezweni is

University of Cape Town

exposed to real misery: "*Wahamba enkinkqa ukutya, encaza icuba" (93).* (He begged for food and asked for tobacco as he travelled). As the journey progresses, houses and other travellers dwindle until Dingezweni is unable to get food from anywhere and resorts to eating wild fruit and roots. He continues to do this until his stomach cannot take this diet anymore. He then goes without food for three days. Hunger pangs gnaw at him unbearably. The fury of the elements and his fear of animals exacerbate his tribulations. His desperation reaches such serious proportions that he is prepared to eat anything, frogs, toads and man included. When he finds leftover food along the road he gobbles it, thanking his ancestors for providing him with such a treat. Although Mtuze skilfully dramatises Dingezweni's tribulations during this journey, they are nothing compared to those suffered by Maina and Meja because they are so short-lived. It might be said that Dingezweni passes through tribulations while Meja and Maina live in them.

When these protagonists finally get employed their suffering is not abated; instead, they are plunged into degrading drudgery. Whilst Mtuze tends to gloss over the exploitation, oppression and discrimination suffered by Dingezweni when he gets employment (because of the conditions under which he writes his novel), Mwangi meticulously details the difficulties that Meja and Maina encounter when they get work. Dingezweni's first employer, for instance, is described as a generous white woman who, noticing that he is ignorant about town life, gives him work out of sympathy. She later gives him food, clothes and a room to sleep in. In this way Mtuze seems to be giving credit to the white people who, whilst creating poverty through their economic system, occasionally dish out charity to their victims. Mtuze nevertheless smuggles in some protest by indicating that this "generous" white woman gives Dingezweni a small room away from the main house, which smacks of the racial discrimination typical of the colonial era. Again the reader is made to deduce that he is paid a pittance, because two months' salary is not enough to pay for train fare from Queenstown to Steynsburg.

There are some instances where Mtuze does not muffle his protest against the drudgery that Africans are exposed to under the colonial capitalist economy, such as when Dingezweni is employed as a road digger. Here the Italian employer overworks and abuses his employees to the extent that they give him the nickname "Nkomiyahlaba" (the goring ox). As road diggers, Dingezweni and others are made to work so hard that

University of Cape Town

when they come back to their shanties they are too tired even to cook for themselves. These harsh working conditions often lead to the eruption of violence, as some men such as Dingezweni refuse to gather wood for the cooking fire and expect others to do that for them. The working conditions are not only harsh but hazardous: many die at the work place, but their next of kin are not informed. Mtuze exposes these dangers thus:

> Kwakusenzeka iingozi ngeengozi, amanye amadoda esiwelwa ngamatye amakhulu wambi ebulawa yidamaneti edubule emva kwezinye kodwa indoda yayifela edingeni. Amanye amadoda... enzakale, afe kwezo ngozi angcwatywe ecaleni kwalo ndlela kungaziwa kumawawo. (92)
>
> (Accident after accident would occur, some men would die because boulders fall on them, others because one dynamite charge explodes later than the others... Some men would be injured, killed and buried next to that road without anyone informing their next of kin.)

Whilst the protest in Mtuze's novel is muffled at times, the shrillness of Mwangi's protest against the horrid living and working conditions that Meja and Maina are exposed to when they are employed is not disguised. After they have given up hope of ever getting work Meja and Maina are recruited by Booi to go and work for his white master on a farm outside the city. Maina rudely rejects this because he has heard that some white masters send their workers into the back streets to bring them boys to satisfy their sexual needs. This rumour, although not confirmed by what happens in the novel, attests to the atrocities inflicted by some masters on their labourers. Meja who out of desperation is prepared to take any job accepts the offer to be a garden boy when Booi assures him that his master has no evil intentions. Although Maina is initially against the idea of becoming an "earthworm" he goes along with it because he does not want to be separated from his friend (15).

On the farm they are given a hut each, but they opt to move into one and leave the other vacant. They experience great difficulty in choosing which one to move into because they are both in a dilapidated condition. Describing the horrible state of the huts, Mwangi writes:

> Both leaned to one side, and the thatch of each was old, mice infected and leaking. Now they came to details that mattered.

University of Cape Town

> Meja's hut was flea-land, and the whole circular wall practically plastered with bed bugs. The floor lay as when it was first created with the rest of the world, rough, corrugated and at least a foot deep in fine dust. Evil black soot hung from the roof like giant stalactites so heavy that the thatching was caving... .
>
> Maina's hut was a little better in a few respects. It was relatively round, less sooty, and, mysterious, absolutely flee-free. Mice and bed bugs there were, but these were less famished and consequently less hostile according to Maina's reasoning. Thus Maina's hut was voted the most habitable (16-7).

The sorry state of the huts is a metonymy for the wretchedness of the conditions of farm labourers. They are dumped into huts that expose them to the fury of the elements. The depredations of blood-sucking insects such as bed bugs and fleas symbolise the gruesome exploitation that they experience when they are fleeced to satisfy their master's avarice. The marauding mice and rats are used to vivify the gruelling harassment they incur at the hands of their supervisors and masters. The presence of the rats is also exploited to suggest the grim poverty and hunger the farm workers endure: like rats they are forced to live on leftovers.

At times even these leftovers are withheld, and when the workers run riot they are baton charged by the riot squad. The rat analogy is evident in one of the humorous conversations between Maina and Meja. Maina inquires from Meja: "have you ever wondered...what it would be like if we clean the utensils after supper one day. What would the rats do? Meja answers and says: "I hate to think about it... Anything could happen. There might be a riot. There might even be a revolution". Maina threatens to clean the plates after supper the following night, saying: "If the mongrels get into a riot I will stand back and watch. If the riot gets out of control and they try eating down my hut I will move in the riot squad, see" (38-39).

Mwangi does not leave his protest against the exploitation, oppression and harassment of farm labourers at the symbolic level; he goes further and gives practical examples in the farm experience of Meja and Maina. On their arrival at the farm, the foreman who does not "hide his contempt for the idle city idiots" harasses them (17). He bombards them with questions insinuating that they are in a predicament either because

University of Cape Town

their parents shirked their duty to educate them or because they foolishly deserted school. At times he cuts their food rations and overworks them just for the sheer enjoyment of it.

Booi who has recruited them to the farm fleeces them for the "help" he has given them. The same Booi, who shivered uncontrollably out of fear when he first met them in the back streets, is now "fatherly, in a bossy way, self-assured and shout[ing] unnecessary orders all the time". He also cuts their food ration and salaries at the slightest provocation, so that they call him the "minister of hunger and financial retardation" (32). Meja and Maina suspect that he eats the other portion of their cut food rations himself. When he accidentally falls and sits on hot ashes in the boys' hut, he puts all the blame for this on them and his hunger for revenge makes him bark orders at them louder than usual and slave-drive them at work. Finally he plots their dismissal by stealing a number of articles from his master (which include clothes and a camera) and plants these in their hut, thus framing them for a crime they have not committed.

The master's methods of making the lives of the protagonists miserable are the harshest. When Booi and the foreman are not shoving the boys around, he is doing it personally and when he is supervising them himself "nobody [is] to stop and rest or worse to sit and rest" (20). He punishes any worker found idling. One day he finds Meja lying asleep by the stream (out of sheer exhaustion). He picks him up, insults him by calling him a juvenile delinquent, kicks him right into the stream and cuts his food ration. He derives a sordid satisfaction from meting out punishment to his employees. He laughs derisively after informing Meja and Maina that they will be on half pay for conspiring to steal his carrots, an offence they have not even thought about. Finally when Booi frames the two men he summarily dismisses them, loads them in his car and dumps them in the back streets without listening to their side of the story.

The blistering broadside that Mwangi aims at the farmers and their foremen is somewhat spoiled by the shortcoming (identified earlier) common to both these novels, that of not adequately exposing the root cause of these deplorable conditions. No reason, for instance, is given for the cruelty of the farmers and their foremen. Both writers leave it entirely up to the reader to make connections between the horrid working and living conditions and the colonial capitalist economy, which (arguably) has occasioned them. As suggested earlier, one reason for this is that the novels are concerned with the results

University of Cape Town

of the poverty of the black man and not its causes. The aim of this approach is to correct the distortions perpetrated by some white commentators who claim that Africans sell and drink beer because they are devious, rob and murder people because they are savages, or practise prostitution because they have inherited sexual promiscuity from their parents (see Mibury-Steen 1980). In these novels it is the question of how poverty leads to thuggery that is granted prominence.

Mwangi dramatises how unemployment and destitution gradually change Meja and Maina from honest and well-meaning young boys into hardened criminals and jailbirds. After being sacked by the farmer, they return to the back streets but are soon chased away by a supermarket attendant and a policeman for taking two rotten apples from the supermarket's rubbish bins. Meja lands in hospital, for in his desperate flight he collides with a car. After trying his luck in different jobs with little success when he is discharged, Meja finally resorts to robbery. Maina dives into the white man's suburb and is later recruited by the Razor to join his gang of robbers.

Mtuze, on the other hand, shows how poverty drives Dingezweni away from home and subsequently reduces him to thuggery and debauchery, far from the restraining and protective hands of friends, family and community. Mtuze prepares for his protagonist's behavioural degeneration from the time he is born. Out of blind love his father does not mould the character of his son but encourages him to grow into a spoilt little brat. It is his mother, Nomalanga, Nomzamo his girl friend and the community at large who counteract the debasing effects of Nyubatya's slack discipline on his son. Describing the restraining influence that the mother has upon her son, Mtuze writes:

> UmaMfene akazange atyhafe ekuzameni ukufaka ezona mfundiso zizizo kuDingezweni. Naxa wayethetha amazwi abuhlungu akazange amthise mandla uNyubatya koko waba ngathi uyamhlupheza. Wayesithi lakutshona ilanga uDingezweni engekho kowabo amgqogqe kuloo lali eze naye emthe chu ngeziniya. (9)
>
> (MaMfene refused to be discouraged from teaching Dingezweni good moral lessons even though Nyubatya tried hard to water down her efforts with discouraging words. When Dingezweni was not at home before sunset, she would go and search for him and bring him home with a rod.)

University of Cape Town

About Nomzamo's contribution to reforming and restraining Dingezweni the author says: *"UNomzamo wayemkhwebula kwizinto ezininzi uDingezweni noDingezweni emthanda ngenxa yokuba engayithandi into embi"* (36) (Nomzamo restrained Dingezweni from committing many unbecoming acts, and as a result Dingezweni loved her for detesting bad behaviour). The rural community itself has developed constructive strategies for dealing with unbecoming behaviour on the part of the youth. Sending them to initiation schools is just one example. Young people themselves know that getting initiated is a way in which they can indicate their intention to reform; hence after the failure of all the attempts made by Dingezweni, Nomzamo and Selina to convince the community that he is sorry for his crimes, he resorts to getting circumcised. As a token of forgiveness the community rallies behind him and assists him in recovering from the operation performed by an inexperienced initiate.

All this information is given to show that when poverty drives Dingezweni away from home his moral support system is destroyed, rendering him vulnerable to the morally debasing influence of the urban environment. Dingezweni's downward spiral into thuggery starts when he becomes a road digger. Here, after a day's backbreaking labour, all the men are thrown into one tin shack. Dog-tired as they are they are expected to go and collect wood and cook for themselves. Trouble starts when Dingezweni refuses to gather wood and expects others to do it for him. When they complain he threatens to beat them and stick fighting erupts. Dingezweni happens to be good at this kind of fighting, and he vows never to collect wood until he is defeated. Away from home and the restraining hand of Nomzamo and the community he becomes hell-bent on resolving his problems through violence. When he moves into Johannesburg (portrayed as a breeding-ground for criminals) he is taught how to use a knife when fighting. He flees the city after incurring the wrath of a group of gangsters called "Amafela-ndawonye", because he has accused them of stealing his money.

His downward slide into thuggery and debauchery reaches rock bottom in Natal, where his violent behaviour continues. He stabs his way up to the top of a group of gangsters who entertain themselves by demanding tax from all the people who visit their mine compound at Ngagane. His viciousness earns him the nickname: "Major Reward Elgin" (Majongwayinjini). On one occasion he is nearly beaten to death during a fight

University of Cape Town

with a group of visitors and lands in hospital. When he is discharged, he continues drowning himself in liquor and wrecks his health. He finally dies a complete wreck in a mine accident far away from home.

The criminality of Africans under colonial regimes has preoccupied many scholars and a great deal of research has been conducted to explain "the African's frequent criminality, the triviality of his motives, the murderous and always very bloody nature of his brawls" (Fanon 1968, 303). For colonial commentators the explanation for this was not too far to seek: as always, for them it was the black man's biological make-up that was to blame for this. On the other hand, Biko (1978, 75) traces African criminality to the colonial economic system and argues that in black townships "we see a situation of absolute want in which black will kill black to be able to survive. This is the basis of the vandalism, murder, rape and plunder that goes on...". Mtuze concurs with the latter view, blaming these bloody brawls on (among other things) the practice common during the colonial era of lumping together numbers of black males in one compound (145).

Although Biko and Mtuze accurately identify the fundamental cause for the fratricidal violence that blacks resort to, this type of violence remains senseless and misdirected. Making his protagonist engage in violence of this sort arguably mars Mtuze's protest, on the ground that, according to Chesterton (1913, 269-70):

> If we are to save the oppressed, we must have two apparently antagonistic emotions in us at the same time. We must think the oppressed man intensely miserable, at the same time intensely attractive and important. We must insist with violence on his degradation; we must insist with the same violence upon his dignity.

When Dingezweni commits this type of violence the balance between degradation and dignity is disturbed (a point that will be pursued further in the discussion about the novel's aesthetics, below). Mwangi is more successful than Mtuze in maintaining the equilibrium between degradation and dignity in the portrayal of his protagonists. When his protagonists are reduced to thuggery they generally do not degenerate to the use of fratricidal violence. After being dumped back in the back streets by their white master, they try many ways of survival (including begging and another desperate search for

University of Cape Town

jobs), but all prove futile. A supermarket attendant and a policeman chase them out of the back streets for taking two rotten apples from the supermarket's rubbish bins. A gang leader named the Razor lures the homeless Maina into joining his gangsters, thus initiating him into thuggery. Meja lands in hospital, for in his desperate flight he collides with a car. When he is discharged from hospital he tries to go home but when he meets his sister, the very personification of misery and poverty, the courage to face his parents and explain his failures deserts him. He goes back to the city and after trying his luck in different jobs with little success he finally resorts to robbery.

Mwangi makes a point of explicitly or implicitly revealing the race of his protagonist's victims. For instance, he discloses that Meja is sent to prison for the first time because he has robbed a white man. Meja himself recounts to his cellmates that he is in for robbing a white man: "We broke into a white man's house while he was away on leave. We practically swept the house of all its belongings" (122-23). Maina, on the other hand, does not explicitly reveal the racial identity of the victims of his robbery but he provides sufficient hints to indicate that they are white. First, he reveals that they live in the suburbs and in colonial Africa only whites lived in the suburbs. Thus when we are told that he steals milk bottles from Eastern Retreat and Western Close to sell to the residents of Cedar Avenue, which is full of ruts, it is implied that he steals from rich whites and sells to comparatively poor whites. Secondly, the fact that Maina flatteringly calls his customers "madam" also confirms the suspicion that they are white.

Robbing white people, who are perceived to be the perpetrators of the oppression and exploitation of black people, is meant to justify the criminal acts of the protagonists as it is made to appear as a form of revenge. The characters are portrayed as rebelling against an unjust and oppressive legal system, with the result that their crimes are made to appear heroic. Their daring deeds against the police who terrorise the blacks further enhance their image as the heroes of the underdogs. In fact even their crimes are presented as so intriguing that the reader tends to admire their intellect rather than denounce their criminality. Maina, for instance, in devising his milk escapade uses what he refers to as "personality and intelligence". The message the author delivers is that intelligence and knowledge, which are not utilised constructively, will inevitably be used destructively. Maina himself brags that in his business of stealing milk he "will use paper

University of Cape Town

and pen like [he] was taught to do" (78). Other strategies that Mwangi employs in balancing dignity and degradation in the portrayal of his protagonists will be explored further in the discussion on aesthetics, below.

3.1.3 Colonial Africa was heaven for foreigners and hell for locals

The aim of articulating this ideologeme is to deliver a broadside at the white intruders "who allow Africans to languish in poverty, squalor and ignorance while they fatten themselves on their country's riches" (Palmer 1972, 135). The disparity that exists between the native town and the settlers' town is dramatised in the story of a tourist who is shown all the beautiful sights of Kenya but nevertheless told that he should not go away with the idea that he has seen Kenya. He is completely perplexed by this, and an African who accompanies him on this journey explains: "Bwana, there is no such country as Kenya. There is hell for Africans and a paradise for the white man. You have been visiting the paradise – the white man's Kenya – out there in the East of Nairobi is hell, the black man's Kenya" (Gicaru 1958, 134).

Generally, whilst Mwangi's evocations of setting deliver a biting attack on colonial capitalism by juxtaposing the native town with the settlers' town, Mtuze tends simply to allude to the horrid conditions under which Africans live in native towns. To Mwangi it does not matter whether it is the back streets, the white man's farm or the slums: the area where Africans live is invariably a "hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light, a town wallowing in mire"; and similarly, everywhere the white man's town is a "a brightly light town …a well fed town" (Fanon 1968, 39).

Mwangi graphically describes this disparity in his novel *Kill Me Quick*. He tells us of two boys who exist in the filth and decay of the back streets where blacks live. They eat from and sleep in rubbish bins and fight with mongrels for that privilege. Whilst they live in the rubbish bins in the back streets the whites live in mansions. In the back street the only music these boys are accustomed to is the buzzing of the flies. Meanwhile, in the white man's suburb there is cha-cha and soul music from radios and gramophones. Meja and Maina's clothes are dirty rags, but whites not only wear decent clothes but have others that are "flaunting proudly, white and clean" on washing lines (46). The boys walk

University of Cape Town

barefooted on broken bottles, stones and thorns in the back streets; whites wear shoes, drive cars on tarred roads. Whilst there is a scarcity of food in the places where blacks live, there is plenty of it in the white man's town.

The squalid conditions in which Meja and Maina live when employed on the white man's farm have already been analysed. What needs to be discussed now is how Mwangi contrasts the hovels in which they live with the farmhouse where the white man lives. Whilst the huts they live in are "crowded together to save land for the more important wheat and maize fields", the farmhouse stands alone at a respectable distance from the farmhands' village. To put more value on material gain than human welfare shows how greed and racism pervert the sensibilities of a man. Tall cedar trees that protect it from the wind surround the farmhouse, but all around the farmhands' village "chicken runs, dog kennels and vegetable gardens fought for space", and from early morning "dust, chicken, mongrels and the children played together" (16). In the farmhands' village the only music they listen to is the squeak of the mice and the sound of the galloping rats, whereas the music playing on the radio in the white man's home is cool and peaceful.

In showing that Africans are living in hell on earth wherever they are, he describes their homes in slum areas as hovels "built of paper, tin, mud and anything that could keep out rain, thrown together in no particular pattern" (51). In fact the "homes" are not sufficiently strong to keep out rain, or any other element, for that matter. Exposure to the elements results in the outbreak of diseases such as tuberculosis, whooping cough, etc. The portrayal of these shacks becomes an eloquent condemnation of colonial capitalism. Worse still these hovels are so closely built that if one catches fire the whole area is set ablaze. Mwangi portrays how shanty land, a slum area, is burnt to ashes because one hovel has caught fire (80). It is not surprising that Fanon (1968, 39) describes a native town as "a world without spaciousness", a place "where men live on top of each other and their houses are built one on top of the other ".

Mwangi also exposes the squalor in which Africans live by "exploiting the potential of a central symbol of filth, putrefaction and excreta" (Palmer 1972, 130). He writes: "the air was heavy with the smell of smoke urine and countless other odours" (51). This central symbol of filth, putrefaction and excreta attests to the scarcity of toilet

University of Cape Town

facilities, caused by the fact that "the main part of [African] taxation is appropriated for other purposes than improving [their] knowledge, conditions of living, housing, health and efficiency" (Lacey 1981, 253). This is a deliberate ploy to downgrade the African's image and expectations so that he is "kept as a degraded, exploitable worker"(ibid., 253).

The glaring disparities within this Manichean world of contrasts between the native town and the settlers' town causes bitter frustration among Africans, for "to live like this, out of work, poor and without a home, while all around you are other people who are busy and happy and comfortable is one of the hardest things in the world to endure" (Ward 1960, 174). The juxtaposition of the native town with the settlers town is a constant reminder to the natives that the "glories of the city and the pleasures of its wealthy inhabitants [whites] are built over layers of poverty, illness and famine" (Metereau 1985, 21).

The harsh and repressive circumstances under which Mtuze writes his novel makes him tend simply to gesture towards the squalid conditions under which Africans live in colonial South Africa. When describing the size and separateness of the room given to Dingezweni by his mistress in Queenstown, for instance, Mtuze is alluding to the cramped conditions into which Africans were herded when new segregated native locations were built for them as far as possible from the cities. In some instances, rather than describing directly the unpleasant conditions under which Africans live Mtuze uses words such as "*ezintenteni*" (shacks) (89) or "*enkomponi*" (mine compound) (103), which denote squalor.

It is only when portraying the living conditions of Africans on the farms that Mtuze couples such words with direct description of their squalid living conditions. He uses words such as "*igxamesi*" (farmhands' village), "*amanxuwa*" (deserted dwellings) and "*amabobosi*" (hovels), which all denote a horrid place. Furthermore, he explains that the hovel in which Dingezweni is forced to stay has a sooty grass roof and an interior as dirty as a rubbish dump. The surroundings are themselves a health hazard, as rampant weeds cover the whole area that used to be a cattle fold, while alongside it are numerous graves, some of which have been so eroded as to lay bare the remains of people buried there. The existence of these shallow graves serves to expose the lack of care with which the employer treated his farm labourers.

University of Cape Town

Although Mtuze is not as candid as Mwangi in contrasting the hell in which Africans lived with the paradise for the whites in colonial Africa, it is implied in his novel that colonial capitalism is a system that elevates one set of people at the expense of another. In the words of Irele (1981, 140) both these writers seem to be saying: "in the same measure that the colonial master extends his human dimension – through economic advantage and the moral satisfaction that he derives from it – in the same measure is the colonised slave impoverished in body and soul, depersonalised, reduced in human stature and nature".

3. 2 COMPARISON OF THE AESTHETIC VALUE OF THE NOVELS

As pointed out in Chapter One, the comparison of the aesthetic value of the novels under review hinges on the concepts of vital beauty and typical beauty. The assessment of vital beauty focuses on the portrayal of characters and that of typical beauty centres on dominant categories.

3.2.1 Vital Beauty

The characters that populate protest novels are generally divided into protagonists drawn from the ranks of the oppressed people, and antagonists who number among the oppressors. About the protagonists, Chesterton (1913, 269-70) maintains that:

> If we are to save the oppressed we must have two apparently antagonistic emotions in us at the same time. We must think the oppressed man intensely miserable and at the same time intensely attractive and important. We must insist with violence on his degradation; we must insist with the same violence upon his dignity.

Concerning the antagonist, Goodin (1985, 11) argues that the protest writers should "place the major flaw motivating the protagonist's suffering in an antagonist who can exert the power of human institutions". Protest writers have to contend with two major problems emanating from the portrayal of protagonist and antagonist, which are "the hope problem" and "the clarity problem" respectively (ibid., 11,13). Mwangi fares better than Mtuze in contending with these problems. In addressing the hope problem Mwangi

University of Cape Town

uses innocent victims as his protagonists whilst Mtuze opts for a flawed victim as his protagonist. In defining innocent and flawed victims Goodin (1985, 23-4; 87) writes:

> Innocent victims need not be innocent people for... their innocence is not absolute but relative to the injuries they sustain. Except for supplying their bodies they do little or nothing to bring their suffering. To describe them is to describe injustice itself: in literary terms, character does not motivate or determine fate; in non-literary terms, they suffer what they do not deserve.
>
> Unlike innocent victims, flawed victims contribute substantially to motivating their own fate... Nevertheless, they need not be entirely flawed. Just as innocent victims need not be innocent people...flawed victims are not victims who happen to be flawed. They are simply characters with some defect, which helps to bring about their suffering. They may be quite admirable otherwise.

Meja and Maina are presented as innocent victims from the very onset. They have done nothing to deserve their miserable existence in the town; indeed, they have done much to deserve something better. Both have gone to school and worked very hard for a better future. It is the personalist levelling homogenisation feature of colonialism, which feeds on racism and reserves jobs for foreigners that brings this suffering upon them. When Maina and Meja are employed as farm labourers, for instance, Mwangi hints that it is racism that reserves jobs for whites and makes it virtually impossible for them to get decent jobs. This comes out when Maina reports to Meja about the discussion he has been engaged in with their white master's son. He relates: "I was trying to convince him that I have been to school... He did not believe that I had done the bloody exam. He said I ought to be working in the city like him. You see he did his examination last year but one, like you, and he has been working ever since" (25).

Dingezweni is portrayed as a flawed victim from the very beginning of the novel. He is depicted as recalcitrant and obstinate from early childhood. As it has been pointed out earlier, the cause of these shortcomings in his behaviour is his father's slack discipline. Mtuze mitigates Nyubatya's failure to raise his son properly by explaining the circumstances that lead to it. He has been a migrant labourer and during one of his sojourns in Cape Town, his father Mpholi dies and his two brothers squander all the inheritance left behind by him. I have already discussed how his brothers taunt him, calling him an old bachelor who melted in Cape Town until their father died, and how his

University of Cape Town

position is made worse by the fact that when he eventually gets married his wife has difficulties in conceiving. What is worth noting here is that Mtuze in a sense traces Dingezweni's flaws back to the colonial capitalist economy, which introduces the migrant labour system that results in the fragmentation of families.

Although the use of either type of victim has its disadvantages, the use of innocent victims is more attuned to the purposes of protest novels in that it helps to minimise the clarity problem: because innocent victims "do little or nothing to bring about their suffering...their suffering is [therefore] an outright condemnation of its cause" (Goodin 1985, 24). This is not the case with flawed victims who "contribute substantially to motivating their own fate" and therefore compound the clarity problem.

Besides choosing a more appropriate strategy to achieve the purposes of his novel, Mwangi fares better than Mtuze in minimising the effect of the inherent weaknesses of his strategy of choice on his work of art. One shortcoming common in novels that feature innocent victims is the tendency to reduce them to minor characters. In highlighting this problem Goodin (1985, 25) writes: "the first difficulty we can notice here is that an emphasis on oppression seems to require concentration on oppressors rather than the oppressed, the antagonist rather than the protagonist. Thus innocent victims may get lost in what is ostensibly their own story because the motives of their suffering lies in their victimisers".

Mwangi successfully avoids this pitfall; in fact, his determination to focus on his protagonists has led him to neglect their antagonists, to the extent that (as I argued above) he does not sufficiently expose the root cause of the suffering of his protagonists. Protest writers should maintain a delicate balance between sympathetically foregrounding their protagonists and sufficiently exposing what is under attack so that it is "grasped as firmly and as solidly as possible, which in turn means that it must have been observed precisely and in some real measure understood from the inside" (Frazer 1976, 136-7).

Mtuze does not have to contend with this shortcoming because his choice of a flawed victim forces him to focus on the protagonist: "such characters, at least when used as protagonists, incorporate much of the antagonist function also" (Goodin 1985, 87). He

University of Cape Town

nevertheless has, like Mwangi, to confront the problem of sufficiently exposing what is under attack, and (as pointed out earlier) here he fares worse than the Kenyan writer.

Mwangi also avoids the temptation of making the protagonist so innocent that "at the end he has exactly the same character as at the beginning and he is neither worse nor better off" (ibid., 37). He skilfully avoids this shortcoming by making Meja and Maina undergo drastic change from honest and well-meaning young boys into robbers and jailbirds. He prepares the reader for this change by indicating that the innocence of his protagonists is not absolute but relative. In his novel, for instance, there are subtle insinuation that Maina is a rebel who retaliates when pushed too far. Mwangi shows this rebelliousness manifesting itself in him from early childhood. Maina himself reveals this when he tries to visualise what the members of Razor's gang were before they became crooks. He imagines them to have been so rebellious as children that washing them "caused a riot in the home [and] tooth pulling was a revolution that the whole army of neighbours had to be called in to reinforce the mother..." Mwangi then adds that Maina understands them well because "he had gone through that same line of evolution" (77).

This spirit of rebellion comes up on occasions when he feels that he is pushed further than he can take. A case in point is when Booi, who is hungry for revenge for having fallen onto hot ashes in their hut, barks orders louder than usual and makes them do a piece of work over and over again. Maina threatens: "now he is crossing the boundary... and if he keeps on at this rate he will soon provoke me to anger. I will have to take action...just let him cross further into my territory" (37). Booi continues to cross into Maina's territory and he retaliates. A war of attrition ensues and continues until Booi frames them for stealing, after which they are summarily dismissed.

Meja himself is not portrayed as altogether innocent, although his flaw, which also happens to be rebelliousness, is not as pronounced as Maina's. The first time this trait manifests itself is when he refuses to leave an Arab-owned restaurant after being told that there is no vacancy. Mwangi captures this rebellious spirit thus: "he was determined never to go back to the back streets with the mongrels. He felt he belonged out here and this was where he was going to stay. He put up a resistance... it took two big bullies and the manager to toss him through the back door". Another instance where his rebelliousness exhibits itself is when they are continuously ill-treated by their white

University of Cape Town

master and foreman at the farm. He threatens: "I am getting tired of being thrown about by everybody. One minute, half-ration, the next half-pay. It is getting so that I cannot stand it any longer. If one is working he must also eat. If this goes on, I will..." (26).

Mtuze does not have to contend with the problem of portraying his protagonist as not altogether innocent because of his choice of a flawed victim. He faces a slightly different challenge, which is to show that his protagonist is not entirely flawed, or otherwise the balance between dignity and degradation would be disturbed. At first he does well in maintaining this balance. He prepares the ground for Dingezweni to have both good and the bad sides by pitting his father's slack discipline against his mother's proper child-training skills. When she passes away, the community and Nomzamo continue to neutralise the adverse effects of his father's way of bringing him up.

Even when Dingezweni leaves home, Mtuze for some time succeeds in maintaining the equilibrium between dignity and degradation in the portrayal of his character – perhaps up to when he is working as a road digger. Then there are times when the bad side of him seems to be gaining the upper hand over the good, but Mtuze manages to balance the equation. When, for instance, he refuses to go and gather wood to cook his food he initially uses wit to benefit from the efforts of others. He sings praises to his pot and imperceptibly brings it closer to the fire made of wood collected by others until his food is cooked. Even when he later resorts to violence and fights with anybody who dares to remove his pot from the fire, Mtuze endows his conduct with a measure of honour as it highlights his bravery and skill in stick- fighting. He further endears him to the reader by bestowing upon him a remarkable musical ability. It is Johannesburg that has a decidedly diabolical influence on him. Nomzamo's letter drives him further down the ladder of goodness, so that by the time he dies he is a complete wretch and the balance between dignity and degradation is completely disturbed.

Mwangi also has to find artistic ways of balancing the equilibrium between dignity and degradation in his protagonists. He deals with this by making Maina undergo a greater degree of degradation and endowing Meja with more dignity. It is Maina's process of degradation that is presented in more detail. He is shown learning to drink liquor and smoke bang. He commits so many crimes that they nauseate him and he consequently attempts to commit suicide. To his friends who save him he says:

University of Cape Town

> I have done almost everything in this world. I have committed all the crimes you can think of and been jailed for most of them. I have been in prison more hours than I have been out of it within the last five years. While I was in I dreamed of lots of things I had not done. And then I went I did those things and went behind bars again. I am sick and tired of this. I mean, where does it all lead? I am not being of any help to anyone now am I? (130)

The degradation is made more poignant because the victim himself exposes it. To highlight this self-condemnation Maina uses the personal pronoun "I" fourteen times. The rhetorical questions are used to magnify his state of hopelessness. Again, it is Maina rather than Meja who commits what is generally regarded as the worst crime, murder. Mwangi nevertheless avoids the temptation posed by the use of two protagonists of making one completely bad and the other absolutely good, thus reducing them to "flat characters stripped of individuality and psychological significance" (Mackenzie 1990, 17). He for instance presents Maina as "intensely miserable and at the same time intensely attractive and important" (Goodin 1985, 13).

When portraying how the two boys prepare themselves for a better future, Mwangi focuses on incidents that show that Maina studied hard for his examinations. Maina is the one who comforts and consoles Meja when life seems unbearable. A case in point is when Meja has combed the city in search of employment with no success. Mwangi captures his disillusionment after being thrown out of the Arab restaurant, his last hope. He writes: "he joined Maina in very low spirits that evening. He felt ready to take a rope and end the suffering..." (8). Maina consoles him in such way that by that same evening he "sat and pondered over his friend's words and relaxed" (8). Maina is the one who is endowed with more humour, and humour in the face of adversity is the positive gesture of a man who has not resigned himself to the lot of a helpless victim. He is the one who is portrayed as having more sentimental love than his friend, and as a result he is the one who is more tormented by his childhood romances. In fact he later in the book falls in love again, and it is the shattering of this love that also contributes to his decision to commit suicide. Even when he has become a member of the Razor's gang people see him as "the kinder one ...[the one who] talked to everyone freely and whose eyes [are] not as blank and devoid of love and care as the others" (73).

University of Cape Town

Mwangi insists on Maina's attractiveness and importance even to his death. When it becomes clear to the inmates of Cell Number Nine that he is going to be hanged for killing two people, they mourn him and realise that they are going to miss him, his jokes and his radiant smiling face. Meja obviously mourns him most, and with tears flowing freely from his face he protests his innocence:

> "More than anything else, Maina had always wanted to remain clean... He would rather eat from dustbins than steal. I knew him well. He would not just kill people, it is not like him to hurt anyone. I do not even understand why we came to be among criminals. I honestly don't know. We never even thought of it when we were together (149).

One other problem that both authors have to contend with is the hope problem. The readers of a protest novel expect to see that there is some hope of remedying the injustice presented. Goodin (1985, 10) maintains that it is "only if we see something which injustice has not created or some capacity to struggle against it are we likely to see the limit to its power and thus a reason to hope for effective action". Mwangi's novel inspires more hope for redress than Mtuze's. He endows his protagonists with a spirit of rebellion and a strong will to live, which create in them the capacity to struggle against the injustice unleashed by colonial capitalism. Even when circumstances seem likely to lead to Maina's death, Mwangi ingeniously orchestrates events in such a way that hope for a remedy is not altogether lost. For instance, he does not record his actual death in the novel and thus leaves the reader hoping (like Meja and his cellmates) that "they would not hang Maina" (149). Furthermore, even if Maina is hanged, Mwangi's strategy of using two protagonists serves to keep the reader's hopes alive: Meja remains to carry on the fight, which is why at the end of the book although he is heartbroken because of the imminent death of Maina he still sees the smiling face of his friend, saying: "somehow we have to live" (151).

Mtuze also bestows on his protagonist a rebellious spirit and a strong will to live (although these qualities are presented mostly as villainous rather than heroic) to enable him to struggle against injustice and thus to engender hope for redress in the reader. But this hope is dashed in the end when he reveals that Dingezweni dies in a mining accident: "*uDingezweni wawungekhe umahlule kwezo zidumbu zazonakele kangako.*

University of Cape Town

Wayezizidungulwana ngathi ubecukucezwa ngabom" (164) (It was impossible to distinguish Dingezweni amongst those corpses that were badly damaged. He was reduced into small bundles of flesh as if he was deliberately cut into pieces).

Related to the hope problem is the question of the viability of the solution suggested by the authors to the injustice they represent. Again, here Mwangi fares better than Mtuze, because the creation of employment opportunities that he suggests as a solution to the suffering of his protagonists is surely better than for them to go back home and be confronted with the same problems that caused their departure in the first place, which is what Mtuze seems to be advocating. In his novel Mwangi contrasts these two solutions, and in the case of both Meja and Maina, going back home compounds their problems rather than solving them. When Meja meets his sister who has been reduced to a bag of bones by hunger and poverty on his way home he returns to the city, vowing never to go back home again. Maina's attempt to resolve his problems this way is even more disastrous as he ends up killing two people. So, to Mwangi the only viable solution is for people to be provided with decent employment. Viable as this solution may be, however, it aims at reform rather than radical change. A more radical solution would be to suggest a complete change of the economic system, as writers who embrace revolutionary ideology have proposed.

Although Mtuze's solution is not as viable as Mwangi's there is some sense in it: through it, he is advocating the marronage of African communalism (termed "*ubuntu*" in isiXhosa) with colonial capitalism. The problem that ignites the conflict between Dingezweni and his father is the difference in their attitudes towards money. Whilst his father's practice of lending money to people is influenced by generosity, a major feature of African communalism, Dingezweni's rejection of this practice is motivated by individualism, which is a dominant trait of capitalism. The way in which Mtuze contrasts Mnandizonka, an idyllic rural location, with the violent and corrupting cities such as Johannesburg serves to highlight the need for marronage. Indeed, the heroes in this novel are those who succeed in reconciling African "*ubuntu*" with colonial capitalism.

A good example is Mqokeleli, who as the name suggests collects what is good in the African way of life and combines it with what is good in the European one. Like Dingezweni, he goes to the city to seek employment, but unlike him he returns home

University of Cape Town

from time to time to drink from the calabashes of African wisdom. He is the one who comes home to inform Dingezweni's family about his death. Through the voices of other characters, Mtuze showers praises on this young man. The sage from his village commends him after he has made the introduction. He says: *"ugabule, mfana ukuzala kukuzolula. Liqaqoba ngezi mini amadodana angangawe asazikhathaleleyo izinto zomzi oNtsundu"* (174) (You have made a perfect exposition young man; giving birth to a young man like you makes one proud. There are few young men of your age these days who still care for things that belong to the black nation). The elderly men of Mnandizonka also express their gratitude and bless him. It is arguable that one of the major themes of the novel is that the failure to reconcile African communalism and colonial capitalism leads to destruction: this is an obvious way of making sense of Dingezweni's eventual death.

Another major problem that protest writers have to contend with is the problem of clarity, which centres largely on the antagonists or victimisers. The antagonists in protest novels should be people "who can command the power of institutions", because generally the target of criticism in these novels is social: "the state, society, culture or ruling class..." (Goodin 1985, 11). According to Goodin, "a predominantly personal motive will not do because it would make the protagonist simply a victim of another person and create only a novel of victimage" (ibid., 11). As characters that are used to motivate the suffering of the protagonists, the antagonists must in turn also be carefully motivated. However, "as presentation of antagonists becomes fuller, they almost inevitably turn into victims themselves and start to command sympathy" (ibid., 12). So protest writers are faced with the difficult task of portraying their antagonists in the round, while at the same time taking care not to make their presentation too full because "if the reader's consciousness is transformed to the extent that it understands fully the social process that informs hegemonic practice [it] will [not] retain the political will to destroy the agents of [the system]... (Mackenzie 1990, 18). The portrayal of white characters as fully human, as fellow victims of an impersonal political or economic system, for instance, might have this result.

Mwangi is more successful than Mtuze in presenting his antagonists although his strategies in doing so are not without blemish. I have already argued that both writers are

University of Cape Town

not sufficiently explicit in exposing the target of their protest. This is because both of them give little attention to their antagonists, preferring rather to make "their presence felt by their effects on their victims" (Goodin 1985, 12). Mwangi does give some attention to the antagonists in his novel, but this is not sufficiently sustained to allow a proper exposure of the institutions from which these antagonists derive their power to persecute the protagonists.

The cruelty of the farm master, for instance, is well documented. He crowds the huts of the farm labourers together "to save land for the more important wheat and maize fields" (16). To put more value on material gain than human welfare shows how greed perverts the sensibilities of a man. Mwangi graphically depicts this greed through his description of the man's physical appearance. He portrays him as a giant whose "clothes were bulging with rolls of fat that lay behind them [with] puffy cheeks, ham hands and massive belly" (20). His massive bulk suggests his reliance on brute force even in matters that call for exercise of the mind. For similar reasons, the foreman who starves, harasses and overworks Meja and Maina is also portrayed as huge, sporting a "big belly, massive hands, rounded fat cheeks and mean little eyes" (17).

Booi who recruits them to this job and ill-treats them when they accept it is another antagonist criticised in the novel, but since he is a black man who is also exploited by the white master, he is depicted as a nervous old man with a thin body that trembles under his clothes and a " long drooping moustache [that] gave him the appearance of a famished gutter rat" (13). He is described as suffering from a deadly disease of slave mentality, manifesting itself in an inferiority complex which makes him cringe and shake before the white man but act ruthlessly towards his fellow Africans. The negative image given to the antagonists serves to condemn the exploitation, oppression and the suffering they inflict on the protagonists. Mwangi even deals out some punishment to them to show his disapproval of their role in the novel. Booi for instance accidentally sits on hot ashes and singes his buttocks.

However, since his presentation of the antagonists is only cursory, Mwangi is not able to motivate fully why they behave the way they do. For instance, he does not show that the white master is able to sack the protagonists without a second thought because the colonial government – through the Land Act, taxation and other machinations – has

University of Cape Town

made cheap African labour easily available. Even his splitting of the antagonist function among many characters (i.e. Booi, the foreman and the farm master) and designating others by their station in life rather than names, tactics which suggest that the target of the novel's polemic is social, do not mitigate the problem that arises from Mwangi's inadequate representation of his antagonists.

The clarity problem is even more glaring in Mtuze's novel. Here the target of the writer's protest receives even less attention than in Mwangi's novel. A good example is the chapter that Mtuze dedicates to describing Dingezweni's gruelling experience in the employment of the white man. The chapter itself is entitled: *"Amava abuhlungu kwelasemlungwini"* (76) (Painful experiences he suffers in the white man's world). The reader expects to read about white people tormenting Dingezweni, but in the whole chapter only two white people are mentioned. Of the two, only one can be perceived to be inflicting pain on the protagonist, as indicated in the nickname 'Nkomiyahlaba' (the goring ox) given to him by the road diggers. The other white character in this chapter is the woman who employs him to work in her garden. She is depicted as his benefactor rather than a tormentor. The tendency to ascribe goodness to antagonists is common in Mtuze's novel. For example, the police themselves are portrayed as saviours rather than as agents of an oppressive system: they save Dingezweni from robbers on his way to Johannesburg. This tendency causes the novel to misfire, as the reader is inclined to blame the victims for their suffering.

University of Cape Town

3.2.2 Typical Beauty

Generally, the first basic type of compositional-stylistic unity which is the authorial speech in both Mwangi's and Mtuze's novels is adequate to its object, which is to depict and condemn the manner in which colonial capitalism degrades its victims. Both authors use picturesque language in decrying the degradation of their protagonists. For instance, this is how Mwangi describes the type of food they are forced to live on:

> There were various kinds of fruit in various stages of decay. There were slices of stale, smelly bread and a few pieces of dusty chocolate. Some rock-hard cakes glare stonily back at them. Meja sat looking from one type of food to the other. The

> oranges were no longer orange and beautiful but deathly grey with mould. The cakes were no longer cakes but fragments of rock, and the chocolate looked like discarded shoe polish (1).

Among the rhetorical strategies employed by Mwangi here is over-wording, that is, "an unusually high degree of wording, often involving many words which are near synonyms" to condemn this menu (Fairclough 1989, 115). The third sentence in this excerpt reveals that the cakes are "rock-hard", a notion repeated in the last sentence when the cakes are described as "fragments of rock". Again, the second sentence describes the chocolate as "dusty" and the last sentence portrays it as looking like "discarded shoe polish". Furthermore, Mwangi uses juxtaposition to show that this diet is unpalatable. The usual colour of an orange, which is "orange and beautiful", is contrasted with the colour of these, which is "deathly grey with mould". Through appealing to all the senses he succeeds in conveying a graphic picture of just how unsavoury the food is that his protagonists are forced to live on. Perhaps drawing on his experience with visual media, Mwangi couples this description with a dramatisation of the revulsion that this diet causes in his protagonists: Meja "almost vomited trying" to eat the bread (2).

In describing the unwholesomeness of the food Dingezweni is forced to survive on Mtuze writes:

> Ebesithi akufika kwindawo enezaphephe azifikisele kuzo isisu sibe lugaga. Ngamanye amaxesha ebekhe acebuke endleleni ngokomntu olahlekayo afune imithi engaba inezinto ezityiwayo neengcambu abekhe azibone zityiwa kwelakowabo. Emva kwethuba zesuka nazo zafuna ukubuya. Dyushu! Dyushu! Usokhetye wamkhaba kunjalo nje wamvuyelela. Zazida zibe ntathu iintsuku engatyi (93).
>
> (When he arrived at a place with edible wild plants he would indulge his appetite until his stomach bloated out. At times he would leave the road in search of edible wild fruit and roots which he knew from back home, but after some time his stomach rejected them. The hunger pangs gnawed him mercilessly. He would go without food for three days).

Mtuze's linguistic dexterity manifests itself here. Instead of saying "*walamba*" (he became hungry) he says: "*Dyushu! Dyushu! USokhetye wamkhaba*" (the hunger pangs gnawed him mercilessly). "Dyushu" is an onomatopoeia that imitates the sound produced

University of Cape Town

when someone is kicked. Repeating it is intended to show that Dingezweni is in this state for some time. "Sokhetye" is the name given to a monkey in isiXhosa folktales. *"Ukukhatywa yinkawu"*, which literally means to be kicked by a monkey, is an idiomatic expression that means to be exceedingly hungry. In sum, in one sentence Mtuze uses onomatopoeia, folktale knowledge and an idiomatic expression to vivify Dingezweni's miserable condition. This ability to endow the narrative with elegance through the use of material from isiXhosa verbal arts (such as folktales, myths, proverbs and idioms) is the hallmark of Mtuze's style in this novel.

Another instance in which Mtuze and Mwangi exhibit linguistic ingenuity is when they describe the physical deterioration of the victims of colonial capitalism. In capturing the wretched physical state of Maina towards the end of the novel Mwangi writes:

> Slowly and painfully Maina laboured up the steep footpath that wound its way up the hill to the maize fields and across the stream. Although the evening was cold, sweat stood on his face from the effort of carrying his weak and broken body up the steep path. His heart was beating fast and he was breathless. Every now and then he stopped to rest and during those brief moments thought about his home and family. It had been a long time since he went out to the city to look for a job. Would his family recognize him? In that time he had changed from a boy to a man, from a man to a thief and a robber and on to a jailbird and a wreck (128-9).

Mwangi vividly portrays Maina's struggle to climb the steep hill, highlighting his enfeebled condition through collocation: for example, collocating "laboured" with "slowly" and "painfully". This collocation magnifies the puny efforts of Maina through the device of hyponym, in which "the meaning of one word is, so to speak, included within the meaning of another word" (Fairclough 1989, 116). The word "laboured" implies doing something "painfully" and "slowly". In the second sentence Mwangi employs juxtaposition and over-wording to depict the effort his character has to make to climb the hill due to his frailness: the near synonyms "weak" and "broken" emphasise the wretchedness of his physical condition.

In the third sentence he makes reference to Maina's bodily organs in order to emphasise the poor physical state he is in. Reference is made to his heart that is beating

University of Cape Town

fast and (indirectly) to his lungs that do not supply him with sufficient oxygen. The use of certain parts of the body to describe the physical decrepitude of the victims of colonial capitalism recurs in Mwangi's novel. Reference is made to Maina's "thin limbs" (132); "scrawny hand", "bony head", "thin finger", "long threadlike neck"; the "two pimples of breast" of Meja's sister (93,94). This reference to body parts is often coupled with description of dress. The "scanty muscles" of Maina and Meja, for instance, "showed through the rents of their rags" (12).

In the seventh sentence of the above passage Mwangi uses cohesion to trace Maina's decline from an honest boy into a wreck. He uses the preposition "from" and the conjunction "and" as cohesive instruments so as to succinctly summarise in one sentence the degradation which it has taken the whole novel to narrate.

In capturing Dingezweni's wretched physical condition Mtuze writes:

> Eziya ziva nezivubeko zidibene nokugula zayitsho yamandundu impilo yakhe. Baqala bamxhaphaza abasebenzi baseNgagane. Wabethwa ebethiwe ngokomntu ofikayo kuloo nkomponi. Wayelicham nasemagwaleni ngenxa yokungabi nakho ukuziphindezela. Utywala babumgqibile ulusu lwakhe lwalufe mnyama bada ubuso babanoboya neentshulantshula zamaqhakuva. Ayephelile amandla okulwa ngenxa yokwaphuka kwempilo yakhe evuyelelwa nazintwana ezincinane... Wayesisisulu kumntu wonke ngokomlu wenyama (159).
>
> (Those external scars and internal scars combined with illness made his health degenerate. The workers at Ngagane started tormenting him. He was beaten again and again as if he was a newcomer in the compound. He became easy game even for cowards because of his inability to fight back. Liquor had ruined him, darkened his complexion and made his face hairy and pimply. Enfeebled by ill health he became a plaything even to young boys... what was pitiable was to see that everybody was after him).

The degenerating effects of his life of abandonment to violence are captured by the use of near synonyms, "*iziva*" (external scars) and "*izivubeko*" (internal scars), to give the reader a picture of how utterly bruised and battered his body is. As if fate has conspired against him, his body is further ravaged by virulent disease. All this serves to condemn colonial capitalism, which is accused of not only brewing violence but also breeding virulent diseases that destroy the health and dignity of its victims. That Dingezweni's

University of Cape Town

health and dignity are completely destroyed is portrayed through the use of over-wording, *"bamxhaphaza"*, *"wabethwa ebethiwe"*, *"walicham"*, *"evuyelelwa"*, *"wasisisulu"*, *"ngokomlu wanyama"*, *"balala emva kwakhe"* are all near synonyms which mean that he became an easy target. Mtuze like Mwangi also makes reference to certain parts of the body to describe the physical decrepitude of the victim of colonial capitalism. Dingezweni is for instance described as having a darkened, hairy and pimply face.

The full import of these authors' protest language can be appreciated better when it is realised that it is "essentially dialogical in its nature and that the normal form of the dialogical is essentially an antagonistic one" (Jameson 1986, 84). The vivid pictures of poverty and degradation of the protagonists in these novels attain a fuller significance when they are seen as a denunciation of the colonial ideology that claims that colonial capitalism has brought progress and development to Africa. It is presumably the duty of the writer to provide readers with sufficient cues in the novel to enable them to understand that the text is an antagonistic dialogue between contending ideologies. As observed earlier, Mwangi fares better than Mtuze in cueing his readers as to his intentions and his protest is therefore more strident.

With regard to the second compositional-stylistic unity, which entails the stylisation of various forms of oral everyday narration, it would seem that once again both novels abound in features of oral everyday narration (such as repetition and epithets), because although they belong to the chirographic culture they are not far removed from the oral cultures they depict. Discussion of the authorial literary-artistic narration has alluded to some of these features. They will also be reflected in the analysis of the individualised speech of characters. Here the discussion will focus on excerpts transposed directly from oral culture, analyse the oral features they exhibit and assess whether or not they contribute to the fulfilment of the author's intentions. In Mtuze's novel these excerpts are easy to identify and as a result only examples from this novel will be examined. A case in point is the dialogue between Warhashula a traditional healer and his patients. It goes as follows:

Warhashula: Chosi Camagwini, kamnandi
Ndibetheleni izandla ndithethe,
ndithethe madoda kamnandi.

University of Cape Town

Bethani izandla,madoda,
ndingumhambi wendlela
Abaphulaphuli: Siyavuma
Warhashula: Kuthi ndakukujonga mfondini,
Ndikujonga kakuhle, ndihanjelwe
ngumzimba ngamandla
Abaphulaphuli: Siyavuma
Warhashula: Uhleli nje apho ukho ngenyama,
ngeengcinga,mfondini usemalandalahla
awu vuma!
Abaphulaphuli: Siyavuma.
Warhashula: Kuthi kwakusa unqwenele ukuhlwa,
kuhlwe ulangazelele ukusa kamnandi
vumani, madoda.
Abaphulaphuli: Siyavuma
Warhashula : Zonke izinto nemigudu bububhutyu,
akukho nto ilungayo naxa wena uzama
kakuhle.
Abaphulaphuli: Siyavuma

(Warhashula: Hush! Let there be propitiousness
people delightfully
Clap hands for me so that I can speak,
so that I can speak people delightfully
Clap hands people, I am a sojourner
Audience: We agree
Warhashula: When I look at you man, look at you
properly I tremble vigorously.
Audience: We agree
Warhashula: When the sun rises, you wish it set,
and when it sets, you wish it rose.
Delightfully agree people
Audience: We agree
Warhashula: Everything and all efforts are in vain,
there is nothing that goes well no matter
how hard you try.
Audience: We agree)

One feature of oral everyday narration that is clearly discernible in this excerpt is what Ong (1982, 40) calls "redundancy [which is the] repetition of the just said...". A good example is the repetition of the modifier "*kamnandi*" (delightfully), which is repeated three times within a very short space of time. The verb "*ndithethe*" (so that I can speak) is repeated twice in one sentence and "*ndibetheleni izandla*" is repeated with a slight

University of Cape Town

variation in two consecutive sentences. Ong (1982, 39-40) gives three reasons why redundancy abounds in oral thought and expression. First, he maintains that while it is possible to back loop when you are reading a written text, "there is nothing to back loop into outside the mind, for the oral utterance has vanished as soon as it is uttered. [So] redundancy... keeps both the speaker and the hearer surely on track". Secondly, he argues that "redundancy is favoured by the physical conditions of oral expression before a large audience [because] not everyone in a large audience understands every word a speaker utters, [so] it [is] advantageous for the speaker to say the same thing or equivalently the same thing two to three times". Thirdly, he asserts that oral culture encourages fluency, and so "it is better to repeat something artfully if possible rather than simply to stop speaking while fishing for the next idea".

Another feature of oral thought and expression is that it is participatory. Throughout the dialogue Warhashula solicits the involvement of his audience by saying "*vumani madoda*" (do agree people), and artfully repeats this with some slight variation to avoid monotony. The audience is expected to say "*siyavuma*" (we agree). In this way the performer is able to assess the impact of what he is saying on the audience. The excerpt also exhibits the "additive rather than subordinative" feature of oral expression in phrases such as "*zindlala namaxhala ngamaphupha amabi*" (it is hunger and anxiety and bad dreams), and in "*ngamashwa namashwangusha*" (it is bad luck and misfortunes).

The passage also abounds in "mnemonic patterns" such as "balanced patterns, repetitions, and antitheses, epithetic expressions, alliterations and assonances, rhythmic patterns and proverbs", all of which are intended to enhance retention and recall (ibid., 34). Examples of proverbs are: "*uchan, ucwethe*" (you have divined accurately); "*abik' imbiba abik' ibuzi*" (they fumble around for the causes), and "*inkovu iphum' ethangeni*" (there is nothing that is without its cause). Antitheses are found in: "*kwakusa unqwenela ukuhlwa, kuhlwe ulangazelele ukusa*" (when the sun rises, you wish it set, and when it sets you wish it rose), and in: "*ukho ngenyama, ngeengcinga usemalandalahkla*" (you are here physically but your thoughts are far away). Alliteration and assonance are found in: "*iint' zenzekayo zoshiy' amehlo zimanyumnyezi zibuhlungu azithandeki*" (strange, fearful, painful and unpleasant things are happening). "*Ndikujonga kakuhle*" (I look at

University of Cape Town

you properly) and "*amaphupha amabi*" (bad dreams) are examples of epithetic expressions.

In spite of the beauty and authenticity of Mtuze's oral everyday narration, he does not always succeed in harnessing this compositional stylistic unity to the core intention of his novel. For instance, the above excerpt can easily be interpreted as emphasising that traditional patterns of response were unable to deal adequately with the consequences of colonial capitalism – as shown in the failure of Warhashula's solutions to stem the tide of calamities that befall Nyubatya's family. But Mtuze blurs this interpretation by suggesting (through Makhumalo) that all these calamities are brought about by Nyubatya's slack discipline.

The third compositional stylistic unity, which is the stylisation of various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration (letter, diary etc.), is also more noticeable in Mtuze's novel than in Mwangi's, thus suggesting that *UDingezweni* may be a better heteroglot than *Kill Me Quick*. The letter written by Nomzamo to Dingezweni is a good example:

> Bhuti Dingezweni othandekayo
>
> Ndazifumana zonke ezakho. Ndilusizi ukungaphenduli, kuba ndenziwe ziimeko ezingaphaya kwamandla nolawulo lwam.
>
> Kuthe kunyaka wokuqala ungekho, kanye ezinyaweni zakho, ndacelwa. Ndibe ngala nditshijila lathi ilizwi, "Ntombi siyakwendisa. Siyazi ukuba wenza usinga sithembiso netshijolo elinguDingezweni. Yintoni leyo, into eyashiya abazali bayo yabathi tya ezintsizini kunamhla nje ayithumeli nemdaka isenti?"
>
> Ndincame ndahlala kude kube ngoku sendingumama kaZimoshile noNomathemba nje. La magama zizicabelo. Yho! Ndendile, nangoku ndingasenkathazweni ukuba ndikhe ndabhaqwa ndikubhalela. Lala ngenxeba. Uze uncede ungandibhaleli. Ukuba wawungemkanga ngekungenje.
>
> Owakho wenene,
> Nomzamo. (142)
>
> (Beloved big brother Dingezweni
>
> I received all your letters. I am sorry that I was unable to respond to them, this was due to circumstances beyond my control.

University of Cape Town

> During the first year of your absence, just after you left I was proposed for marriage. Although I obstinately objected to this marriage, it was said: "Woman, we are giving you over for marriage to this suitor. We are aware that you have made a pseudo promise of marriage to that delinquent Dingezweni. What is he, that thing that left his parents in abject poverty and does not send them even a brass cent?"
>
> I finally succumbed and now I am a mother of two Zimoshile (he has wasted his chances) and Nomathemba (the one who promises). These names are used to pour scorn on our aborted love affair. I am married now and could be in trouble if I am caught writing to you. Be comforted. Please do not write me again. If you had not left things would not have turned out to be what they are now.
> Yours sincerely,
>
> Nomzamo)

Mtuze chooses to use a letter to inform Dingezweni that Nomzamo has reneged on her promise to marry no man but him because the written "text is supposed to represent the words of the author in definitive or final form" (Ong 1982, 132). This leaves Dingezweni in no doubt that what he reads is indeed what has happened, whereas if he had heard it from someone else he could have consoled himself by thinking that what he had heard was pure fabrication. Mtuze captures the devastating effect of the finality of what is written in the letter: "*Wayiphindaphinda kaninzi ngokungathi iza kujika ithethe nto yimbi kanti hayi yayingongezi inganciphisi kokubhalwe sisandla sikaNomzamo. Okwesibini okubhaliweyo kuyafana nokudaliweyo*" (he read it over and over again, hoping that it would say something different; but the letter was not adding or subtracting anything from what was written by Nomzamo's own handwriting. For what is written is as unchangeable as what is created).

Besides informing Dingezweni about Nomzamo's reneging on her promises, this letter contributes to vilifying him. In it he is denounced as "*itshijolo*" (a delinquent) and "*into*" (a thing) to show how undesirable he has became. This disturbs the balance between degradation and dignity, which a protest writer should strive to maintain in depicting the protagonists. The letter also obfuscates the agency and causality of the protagonist's predicament. In the last sentence Nomzamo puts the blame for the turn of

University of Cape Town

the events squarely upon Dingezweni: *"Ukuba wawungemkanga ngekungenje"* (If you had not left, things would not have turned out to be what they are now).

The fourth compositional stylistic unity entails the various forms of literary but extra-artistic or non-narrative authorial speech, which includes things such as moral, philosophical and scientific statements. It is arguable that both these writers use what Volosinov terms "pictorial style [in which the author] devises means for infiltrating reported speech with authorial retort and commentary in deft and subtle ways" (1973, 120). Generally, there is extensive use of both Biblical material and aspects of isiXhosa verbal arts in Mtuze's evaluative commentary. His moralistic commentary on Dingezweni's death is a typical example of this:

> Kwaba njalo ke, mlesi ukufa kwaloo nkosi, isifa ingxamele ukuya kukhonza esihogweni kunkukhonza uyise, ingxamele kwilizwe ekudliwa kulo ubomi ngaphandle kwemizamo. Yala kwaphela ukugoduka yakhetha ukuhamba ezayo iindlela nokuthanda isazi ukuba wathi unina mayigoduke, yaba ke ikhetha ukusiwa ematyalni. Ayizanga igoduke kwaphela yada yafa, into ethetha ukuthi yakhetha ukuya kuxelenga esihogweni endaweni yokuba phantsi koyise. (168)
>
> (That is how that chief died, reader. He died looking forward to serving in hell rather than serving his father, desiring a country where life is enjoyed without effort. He refused completely to go back home, choosing his ways and desires even though he knew his mother had advised him to return home, thus choosing to be taken into heavenly courts. He never went home until he died, which means that he chose to go and labour in hell rather than serve under his father.)

Mtuze emphasizes the moral lesson the reader should derive from the character and fate of Dingezweni through the use of the "contrasting pair", a "rhetorical structure where two groups of words are closely related to each other in meaning and form" (Carter 1997,265). In this excerpt there are three of these two-liners. The first one is: *"isifa ingxamele ukuya kukhonza esihogweni kunokuya kukhonza uyise"* (he died looking forward to serving in hell rather than serving his father). The key word that is repeated in this line is *"ukukhonza"* (serving), which gives almost total symmetry to the sentence. The contrast is between hell and home. The second pair is: *"yala kwaphela ukugoduka, yakhetha ukuhamba ezayo iindlela nokuthanda"* (he completely refused to go back home

University of Cape Town

choosing his ways and pleasures instead). The third is: "*yakhetha ukuya kuxelenga esihogweni endaweni yokuba phantsi koyise*" (he chose to go and labour in hell rather than serve under his father). The structuring of these pairs simulates the Biblical rhetoric found in verses such as Hebrews 11:24-5, in which we are told that Moses "chose to be ill-treated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy sin for a short time". This adds to the moral tone of Mtuze's novel. He also hammers home the moral lesson through the use of repetition. The notion of refusing to go back home is repeated three times in the excerpt. As pointed out earlier, this didacticism is used to anchor the protest, which this novel levels against colonial capitalism.

In Mwangi's novel, extra-artistic speech is seldom used, though it does sometimes function to foreground the novel's protest against the tragic consequences of colonial capitalism. A good example, typically filtered through feelings attributed to other characters, occurs when Meja has revealed to the inmates of Cell Number Nine that Maina has committed a murder and is certainly to be hanged for it:

> There was silence. Some of other inmates who were very sad but could not dig up anything helpful to say to Meja in Maina's favour tried to sleep and forget about it. It was not easy. They would always miss Maina and his dirty jokes. They would forever miss his radiant smiling face in Number Nine. It was going to be very cold without him. (149)

Mwangi captures the shock they suffer when they hear the sad news by using a short, dramatic sentence: "There was silence". He also employs a short sentence – "It was not easy" – to show how difficult it was going to be to deal with their shock through denial. The last three sentences of this quotation form what Carter (1997, 268) terms a "three-part list": "the use of three-part lists seems to fulfil a sense of completeness. Two items aren't enough to make a point; four items are too many. Three then seems to be both the minimum and maximum necessary to make a point effective". The three-part list here rhetorically enhances the effects of the loss inflicted by colonial capitalism (which has reduced Maina into a murderer) on the inmates of Cell Number Nine. Highlighting Maina's desirable traits in this way also contributes toward balancing the equilibrium between his degradation and dignity.

University of Cape Town

The last basic type of compositional-stylistic unity is constituted by the stylistically individualised speech of characters. Bakhtin (1969,178) calls this speech a "represented" or "objectified utterance" because although it is handled precisely as the words of another addresser it is treated "as an object of the author's intentions and not at all in terms of its own referential aim". The facet of "objectified utterance" that is of particular interest here is its binary nature, that is, that it involves both addresser and addressee. The focus of the discussion will be on the subtle strategies employed by the addressers and the addressees in using words as instruments of coercion and constraint, as tools of intimidation and abuse, as signs of politeness, condescension and contempt, and as weapons of struggle and resistance. In these novels these strategies are used to achieve two aims: first, on the part of the antagonists, to establish and sustain relations of domination, and secondly, on the part of the protagonists, to challenge, contest and disrupt the status quo. Thompson (1990, 60) distinguishes five general modes through which the dominant group attempts to sustain relations of domination:

General modes	Some strategies of symbolic construction
Legitimation	Rationalisation
	Universalizatin
	Narrativization
Dissimulation	Displacement
	Euphemization
	Trope (e.g.synecdoche, metonymy, metaphor)
Unification	Standardization
	Symbolization of unity
Fragmentation	Differentiation
	Expurgation of the other
Reification	Naturalization
	Eternalization
	Nominalization/ passivization

Thompson does not claim that the list is exhaustive; for instance, he acknowledges that relations of domination may be sustained by the exercise of brute force, by beating, killing and forcefully repressing protest. Janks (1993) offers a different inventory of oppositional discursive strategies, including renaming, the valuing of multilingualism,

University of Cape Town

oppositional reading, satirisation, hypothetical play with reversal of discursive norms, disidentification, searching for and exploiting contradictions and breaks within discourse, de-naturalisation and de-construction. Of course, by no means all these strategies are used by the protagonists and antagonists in the novels under discussion (though some not featured here appear in the novels to be analysed in Chapter Four).

Mwangi allows for more instances in which there is interaction between the antagonists and protagonists than Mtuze, and as a result there are more examples of these strategies in his novel. The first occasions in *Kill Me Quick* on which the reader encounters dialogue between the antagonists and the protagonists occur when Meja is hunting for a job. In all these incidents, the arrogance, rudeness and impatience of the managers is reflected in the abruptness of their manners: the short abrupt sentences they use, and the way they keep interrupting Meja as he speaks. During the first encounter (see 4-5), the manager without any greeting or introduction snaps at him: "Well, what do you want?"; and as Meja starts to explain: "First Division School Certificate..." he interrupts him again: "Well, what about it". Meja stammers: "I... I want a job...vacancy". The hedge "well" in both these questions is used to expose the superior airs of the manager.

In the second interview (see 6-7) another manager asks the same rude question: "What do you want?" Meja answers "Job", and when the manager interrogates him further, saying "What sort of job can you do?", he answers, "Any". The shortness of his answers signifies that he is now pessimistic about his chances of getting employment but when the manager inquires: "And what qualifications do you have?" his hopes are raised and he answers: "First Division, School Certificate, with one point in..." Again the manager rudely interrupts him: "That is not a qualification... everybody has done and passed the examinations. What I am asking for is experience". Here the manager employs displacement (a term designating a process whereby a word that is usually used to refer to one thing is used to refer to another in order to transfer to it either positive or negative values) in using "qualification" when referring to "experience", so as to impart to the latter the academic value associated with the term "qualification".

The meaning here given the term "qualification" startles Meja, but he collects his wits and answers: "I can cook posho and... porridge". To which the manager

University of Cape Town

derogatively says: "What is that?" Meja then resorts to pleading and devaluing his services, saying: "But please any job, thirty... twenty anything you like". When his acceptance of the manager's conception of the term "qualification" and his pleading fail, he reverts to his own understanding of "qualification" and shouts in protest: "Maths...first...chemistry...physics".

It is clear that the manager is speaking from a higher social position than Meja because he interrupts him, completes his sentences for him, issues commands such as "Go with him", employs question sentences to enforce explicitness, as in "Well what about it?", "What do you want?" and "What is that?" He also utilises declaratives such as: "No vacancy" and "I said there is no vacancy". His higher social standing is further evidenced by his power to command the use of violence and at times to inflict pain himself, as in this case, when he instructs two bullies to toss Meja through the back door and gives them a hand in the process.

Putting up some form of resistance to degradation, as Meja does in this instance, serves to enhance his dignity – even though this is not without a price. There are other occasions when the protagonists put up brave resistance against the antagonists who are intent on establishing and sustaining domination over them. The dialogue between the foreman and the two boys on their arrival at the farm is one example (see 17). Here again it is the foreman who has the prerogative to ask questions. He inquires: "You are the new boys?" Meja answers, "Yes". The foreman continues: "From the city?"; and again Meja says, "Yes". The one word answer given by Meja to these questions shows that he is not willing to participate in this interrogation.

But intoxicated by his powerful position, the foreman continues to pry: "What work were you doing there?" Once more Meja gives him a one-word answer and says, "Nothing". This does not discourage the foreman, who continues: "What work did your old man do?" He also resorts to formulation when his probing is not successful in making the youths open up. He ventures: "He ought to have taken you to school. Or maybe he did and you ran from school. Is that what you did?" The formulation to which the foreman resorts, is defined by Fairclough (1989, 136) as "either a rewording of what has been said, by oneself or others... or it is a wording of what may be assumed to follow from what has been said, what is implied by what has been said". Here it is used for the

University of Cape Town

purpose of control "as a way of leading the participants into accepting one's own version of what has transpired, so limiting their options for future contributions" (ibid., 136). Furthermore, it is used as a ploy to justify the ill treatment the foreman is going to dish out to them throughout their stay at the farm, through the argument that if they ran away from school they deserve to be punished. The foreman's attempt misfires as Maina takes control by interrupting him and retorting: "Our old men do not live in the city ... They took us to school and we did not run away".

As is always the case with people in a powerful social position, the foreman makes sure that he has the last word in the dialogue as he silences Maina through sarcasm and threats. He sneeringly snubs him saying: "One of them boys, huh? You city boys are known for your arrogance. Here you had better look out". To distance himself from what he perceives as the arrogance of city dwellers the foreman makes extensive use of personal pronouns that refer to the other, such as "them", "you" and "your". He threatens them by using the deictic "here" to insinuate that because farm life is different from city life they had better be careful. Sarcasm is achieved through the use of the interjection "huh" which feigns surprise.

Other instances of the protagonists resisting the antagonists' attempts to reduce their humanity include the two occasions on which Meja is received into prison. The first occasion (see 114-15) is when Meja hesitates to put on the shorts given to him by the warder because he is still "trying to make up his mind which end to make the front end". The warder derogatively inquires: "Don't you people wear clothes where you come from?" which implies that Meja comes from a backward background. The resort to generalisation in the phrase "you people" is intended to create a distance between the civilised environment from which the warder comes and the backward one from which Meja originates.

Presumably this is meant to make him reject his place of origin and perceive prison as a more civilised place where he will be rehabilitated to normal life. Meja rejects this view by retorting: "We wear clothes where we people come from.... Not sacks like these". That he identifies with his home is captured by the use of the plural personal pronoun "we", and his rejection of prison is expressed by the use of the deictic "these" when referring to the prison clothes. Noticing his non-cooperative attitude the warder

University of Cape Town

tries to manipulate him into cooperation by calling him "son". Meja rejects this paternalistic manipulation by saying: "I am not your son".

As might have been expected the warder then resorts to stereotyping and threats. He barks: "Your type always behave like that the first time they are thrown into the bag.... You don't seem to understand where you are. You cannot afford to talk like that to the people who take care of you". Stereotyping is achieved through use of the phrase "your type" and the adverb "always", which suggest that the warder is quite accustomed to Meja's attitude. He then shows that his behaviour is not acceptable to him through extensive use of personal pronouns that refer to the other such as "you", "your" and "they". The prison is euphemistically referred to as a "bag" to give it the positive image of a handy carrier of criminals from a life of useless law breaking into the good life of law-abiding citizens. Meja ventures to disagree but he is interrupted and silenced by the warder whose social position allows him to have the final word: "Hold it... I am telling you this for your own good. If you are wise you will listen and do as you are told". For daring to answer back to the chief warder Meja is thrown into Cell Number Nine, "the den of the most crooked ruffians in the country" (117).

The last occasion on which Meja enters prison (see 138-40) reveals that he has clawed his way up into a powerful communicating position. In this interview he asks questions and silences people and has the last word. When the warder asks, "Back again?" he simply nods his head and asks his own question: "Can't you believe your eyes?" and when the driver ventures to say something he silences him: "No one asked for your wise saying, undertaker...Your work is to drive that coffin of yours. Keep quite otherwise". In this way the driver who thinks his social standing gives him the right to pass judgement is reduced to the status of a funeral undertaker.

Meja takes control again, asking: "Same regulations as before?", while the warder assumes an inferior position by responding to his question: "Same as before". In an attempt to regain his position of authority the warder tries a new tactic: "Meja ... I know it sounds crazy... but have you ever thought of getting yourself run over by a car?" When Meja demands an explanation he answers: "I don't know why it cross my mind...I just thought it was a good idea. Why don't you try it next time you are in the city?"

University of Cape Town

The insinuation is that Meja should end his wretched life by committing suicide. Meja denounces the absurdity of this suggestion by asking: "Do I look mad?" – and, receiving an answer in the negative, asserts: "I am going to live my life". To the warder's rejoinder: "In Number Nine?", Meja responds with his own question: "Why… Is man not free to live where he likes when he likes?" Intent on making Meja feel ashamed of the position into which colonial capitalism has driven him, the warder mockingly asks: "Free in Cell Number Nine?" To this Meja defiantly answers: "Yes in Cell Number Nine?"

In this answer the reader observes what Janks (1993, 10) terms "renaming", a process by which people change the way they feel about the group they belong to. The intention of the prison warder is to make the inmates of this cell see it as the den of the most crooked ruffians in the country, but they contrive to change this negative image and make it a place that "spelt freedom and security" (141). They even have a code of conduct and a unique style of saluting.

In this exchange, it is Meja who has the final word, as he reveals to the warder that he did get himself run over by a car once, but that did not stop him from coming to Cell Number Nine. As evidence of this he exposes his scarred hand. Mwangi dramatises this type of resistance to show that although his protagonists have been reduced to abject poverty and squalor by the colonial capitalist economy their humanity has not been diminished, and their spirit of indomitable resistance gives the reader hope that somehow their struggle will be triumphant.

In Mtuze's novel this type of resistance on the part of the protagonists is rare, but on the few occasions when it surfaces it is very forceful. The first instance is when Dingezweni quarrels with his first white employer in Queenstown. At sunset on his first day of employment he is given bread, some old clothes and is sent off for the night. He interprets this as a dismissal without proper pay. He protests: "*O-o sendigxothwa ngoku? Iphi ke imali yam? Bendingasebenzeli esi sonka nezi mpahla... Ukuba uyandigxotha galela apha imal' am"* (78) (O-o am I being fired now? If so where is my money? I have not been working for this piece of bread and these clothes… If you dismiss me give me my money). Calling upon a passer-by to come and interpret for him, he beckons: "*He ndoda! Ndincede tata undibuzele imali yam kulo mlungukazi. Yithi elam igazi alityiwa olo hlobo. Ndisebenze imni yonke ngoku undinika oonoxesha neqhekeza lesonka"(78).*

University of Cape Town

(Hey man! Please old man demand for me my money from this white woman. Tell her that my blood is not consumed that way. I have worked for the whole day and now she pays me with old clothes and a piece of bread).

The interjection "O-o" serves to give immediate and direct expression to Dingezweni's disgruntled feelings. His disgust at what he perceives as an unfair labour practice is captured by the extensive use of question sentences such as: "*O-o Sendigxothwa ngoku?"* (O-o am I being fired now?) and *"Iphi ke imali yam*?" (If so where is my money?"). His demand for fair labour practice is expressed through the repetitive use of a command sentence, "*Ukuba uyandigxotha galel' apha imal'am*". (If you dismiss me give me my money). That he is liberated from the morbid fear of the white man typical of most blacks of his time is reflected in the manner in which he addresses his mistress, as *"mlungukazi"* (white woman) instead of "Missis" as the tradition was. His condemnation of exploitation is couched in metaphorical terms: "*Yithi kuye igazi lam alityiwa olo hlobo". (*Tell her that my blood is not consumed that way). Mtuze muffles this vehement protest against exploitation through the paternalistic practices of colonial employers, for instance in giving food rations instead of money to their employees, by suggesting that it is a misguided attack on a person who is in fact Dingezweni's benefactor.

Another instance in which the protagonist's resistance come to the fore is when Dingezweni rebuffs a passionate appeal from a pastor to write his name in the church's records during one of his visits to their compound (see 154-55). This pastor entreats him to write his name, saying: *"Dingezwewni wakha wazibhalisa kusini na enkonzweni? Kutheni uziphethe ubuginwa nje? Bhalisa igama lakho ukuze wakufika loo mhla wokwabiwa kwamafa uxhamle umvuzo wobugorha wambeswe ngesitsaba unxitywe imbasa yoloyiso"* (Dingezweni did you ever given your name to be written in the church roll? Why are you behaving like an infidel? Let your name be written in the church's records so that on the day the rewards are given you can enjoy the rewards of the righteous, receive the crown and insignia of victory).

This appeal is made more poignant through the use of question sentences such as: "*Dingezweni wakha wazibhalisa enkonzweni?* (Dingezweni did you ever give your name to be written in the church roll?) and "*Kutheni uziphethe okomginwa nje?*" (Why do you

University of Cape Town

behave like an infidel?). It is also made more fervent through the use of the imperative in "*Bhalisa igama lakho enkonzweni*" (Let your name be written in the church's records), and by means of over-wording achieved through the use of near synonyms in, *"uxhamle umvuzo wobugorha"* (enjoy the reward of the righteous); "*wambeswe isitsaba*" (honoured with a crown) and *"unxitywe imbasa yoloyiso"* (clothed with an insignia of victory).

Dingezweni interprets this appeal as manipulation with vested interest and he retorts: *"Cha! Khehle ucamanga ukuthi uzokuthola ezikamina izimali? Hayi khona... "Phaya ecaweni nizungulana nemali yethu. Lee kweliya laseMnandizonka, apho kusekho amaqaba abomvu krwe bathi akukho nkwali iphandela enye nampukane inqakulela enye. Hayi khona khehle niqhuba nje ishishini ngathi aba ndithandaza egumbini lam mna"* (No! old man do you think that you are going to get my money? No ways... There in the church you are after our money. At Mnandizonka, where there are still red ochre people they say there is no animal that hunts for the other and there is no fly that catches for the other. No ways, old man you are simply exploiting us for business. I pray in my room).

Dingezweni's rejection of the pastor's appeal is highlighted by his repeated use of the negative interjections *"hayi"* (no) or *"cha"* (no), a Zulu equivalent of the Xhosa *"hayi"*. He also uses a non-finite verb *"nizungulana"* (continuously after), formed by addition of the suffix *"-ana"*, to condemn what he perceives as a never-ending exploitation of the churchgoers by the church. He exposes the unfairness of the system of church offerings and cult dues by resorting to a isiXhosa idiom, "*akukho nkwali iphandela enye*" (there is no animal that hunts for another), and reiterates this view by formulating his own idiomatic expression, *"nampukane inqakulela enye"* (and there is no fly that catches for another). He then reduces what the pastor has painted in glorious terms to nothing more than a moneymaking business: *"niqhuba nje ishishini ngathi aba"* (you are simply exploiting us for business).

Mtuze had to find a way of toning down this blistering attack on the role played by the church in exploiting Africans, otherwise his novel would not have been published. Thus he makes Dingezweni suffer a bout of illness, which induces him to recant his stand against church going. In this way Dingezweni's resistance against domination, which could have augmented his dignity in the eyes of the reader, is weakened. In fact by the

University of Cape Town

end of the book he is portrayed as so submissive that even when intuition tells him that it would be unsafe to go into the mine that day he sheepishly goes because of fear of losing his job. In Mwangi's novel the protagonists resist until the end, which contributes to making his novel a better work of protest.

Another feature that characterises the stylistically individualised speech of the protagonists in these novels is humour. Mwangi makes better use of this device than Mtuze because he harnesses it to the major intention of his novel. He endows his protagonists with a strong sense of humour to insist that although they are "intensely miserable [they are] at the same time intensely attractive and important" (Goodin 1985, 13). Generally, there are two broad categories of humour in Mwangi's novel: acerbic humour and entertaining humour. Acerbic humour serves to deliver a broadside at the antagonists who exploit, harass and oppress the protagonists. A good example is the incident in which an exhausted Meja is found dozing at the riverside by the farm master.

The big man lifts him up and kicks him right into the stream. Meja comes out of the water with his eyes closed to avoid water getting into them, all the while raining insults on the "idiot" who had kicked him into the river. Then he clears the water from his eyes and gets a rude shock to see his giant master, his clothes bulging with rolls of fat, standing at the edge of the stream. What is humorous in this incident is the ironic twist whereby Meja, thinking that he is insulting Maina or Booi, delivers to the master just the insult that he deserves. The manner in which this incident is presented is such that it produces "a self conscious grin rather than a full bodied laugh" (Thuynsma 1989, 95), because of the knowledge that such molestation was rampant in the farm situation and led to many casualties. So, although the incident is humorous, the "context... short-circuits the full potential of laughter, and we are left with little more than a laugh battling our inside" (ibid., 96).

To capture the shock that Meja experiences when he discovers that it is the master he is insulting, Mwangi uses a word taken from another semantic field, "choke", which means to block or clog one's windpipe, usually with food. The verb here suggests how abrupt and painful his sudden realisation is. Mwangi again uses irony by making the master mockingly repeat the insults that Meja has unintentionally aimed at him: "So, I am a stinking idiot, am I?" The effect is to make it seem that he himself is not sure

University of Cape Town

whether he is a stinking idiot or not and therefore in need of assurance from Meja. The latter quickly does as expected, saying: "No... no... sir". The dots after the negative interjections suggests that he stammers out of fear, or that there is something going on in Meja's mind which could well be the exact opposite of what he is verbalising.

In fact later in this incident Mwangi reveals that Meja's answers to his master's question are not his honest views about him. His master announces his verdict thus: "I know what is wrong with you ... they are giving you too much to eat. I will see Booi about it. My farm is not a home for juvenile delinquents". Meja is enraged by this and is tempted to tell the master whom he thinks is having too much to eat; but seeing the bulky stature and the ham hands of his master he decides against it, saying to himself "those hands could cause a lot of damage if let loose on a youngster like himself". Again a phrase taken from another semantic field "let loose" (normally used when referring to vicious dogs) is used to reveal how brutally his master is capable of treating his employees. Incidents like this enhance the attractiveness of these characters by showing that they are not only courageous, as manifested by their gallant resistance to oppression and harassment, but also wise, to the extent that they choose when and when not to resist.

Another example of this acerbic humour is exhibited when Meja and Maina are found discussing something about carrots by the boss, who hastily concludes that they are planning to steal his carrots (see 24). A punishment is meted out to them for an offence they have not committed. Their master mirthfully declares, "As I was saying... the foreman is giving you too much to eat. You are going on half-pay as well". The two boys humorously analyse the implications of this. Meja says: "A twelve-ounce of flour and a few grams of milk is the grand ration. I try to halve that to get the new diet, but I get decimals and you cannot eat decimals". Maina wittily sums up the situation by saying "Half-ration – starvation. Half-pay – misery and insanity and..." Through his use of acute subtlety and stinging humour in his treatment of this otherwise grim situation, Mwangi avoids "cataloguing injustices, physical brutalities and the moral rage of the victims... which so often stultify fictional experiments into mere documentary" (Gakwandi 1977, 21).

Meja amusingly deals with the serious plight of hunger by casting it in arithmetical terms and thus rendering it incongruous: "but I get decimals and you cannot

University of Cape Town

eat decimals". Maina reverses the process by moving from arithmetic terms back to the physical level of their plight (which itself is incongruous) and announces: "the answer is easy ...Starvation is the answer...Half-ration – starvation... Half-pay – misery and insanity and..." It is the correctness of their conclusions (as confirmed by the unfolding of their fate) that reminds the reader that although their plight is humorously presented it is not something one could wholeheartedly laugh at.

At times Meja and Maina turn their acerbic humour against the physical appearance of their adversaries. In this they complement the negative description of these characters given by the author himself. They characterise the features and characters of their antagonists in terms of their resemblance to animals and inanimate objects. What is noticeable is that all the animals that they are likened to have unpleasant traits such as viciousness, voraciousness, deceitfulness and stupidity. Through this device the protagonists deliver a broadside at their adversaries for exhibiting the same bestial traits in dealing with them.

For instance, they argue that there is a striking resemblance between Booi the foreman and the bitch that yells sharply. This is humorously presented through the feigned argument between Meja and Maina. Meja argues that the bitch looks like the foreman and Maina disagrees, arguing that it looks like Booi. Meja then concludes the matter by saying "Nonsense... they look the same. They are dogs". Maina pretends to hold tenaciously to his view, and retorts: "that's where you are wrong. None of them looks like a dog. Just have a closer look at them one of these days. The bitch that looks like Booi has no teeth. The one that looks like the foreman has thirty-two teeth".

Although it is presented as a disagreement, Maina's opinion actually serves to substantiate Meja's view by giving details of the resemblance. That Booi is not only mean but also lean is suggested by the toothlessness of the bitch that looks like him. The foreman's gluttony and unfairness is signified by his resemblance to the bitch that has thirty-two teeth and no sense at all. At times Booi is called "Big Rat" to highlight the harassment he inflicts upon the protagonists, or "Big Toad" to show how ugly he is. The farm master is likened to a pig to magnify his voraciousness.

On other occasions the humour of Meja and Maina intends to amuse in a general sort of way. This is typical of the humour that characterises their personal accounts of

University of Cape Town

their criminal activities. In these accounts there is extensive use of euphemism, irony and witticism. Meja for instance euphemistically refers to criminal life as "rough living", breaking the law as "twisting the law", being vicious and dangerous as being "brave and adventurous", and criminal accomplices as "black market". His stealing of the municipal refuse truck is narrated with a dose of irony (see 144-45).

He describes how excited he was as he opened the truck, thinking that he had "hit something big". In capturing his ecstasy at the prospect of getting rich quick and the disappointment he suffers when he realises what he has stolen, he says: "So, as the birds were beginning to sing I crept out of the cold cab like a big cat, yawned richly and started for the back of the truck. One look at the back of the truck started me hiking for the city, my goods uninspected. It was the municipal refuse truck that I have that I had pinched. Full of rubbish".

Meja's account of the cause of his imprisonment sparkles with wit: his use of figurative language makes his lamentable criminal life sound entertaining and heroic. Narratives such as this help the prisoners cope with the alienation that prison life engenders; Meja can even say of prison: "East or West home is best" (139). The point is that humour in the face of adversity is the positive gesture of a man who has not resigned himself to the lot of helpless victim.

Mtuze's novel also sparkles with a humour, which enables it to rise above the role of simply "cataloguing injustices, physical brutalities and moral rage of victims... which so often stultify fictional experiments into mere documentary" (Gakwandi 1977, 21). However, his humour is directed at generally risible situations and is not harnessed directly to the major intention of his novel, which arguably is to protest against the tragic effects of colonial capitalism. This humour is not a feature of the individualised speech of the characters, as is the case in Mwangi's novel, and therefore, strictly speaking, should not be analysed in this category. But because most incidents in which it is manifested involve the main character (and, to an extent, his individualised speech) it is discussed here. Generally the device used in Mtuze's novel to achieve humour is to make his readers observe the "infirmities of the others and compare them with eminence in [themselves]" – thereby feeling superior to and able to laugh at the object of humour.

University of Cape Town

A case in point is the incident that occurs during Dingezweni's childhood (14-19). He and his friends find an owl nest, take out two owlets and destroy it. The owls follow them hooting. Qudalele remembers vaguely that there is something that connects the owls with fire (stemming from the belief commonly held by the isiXhosa traditional community that an owl hooting at night is an evil omen and should be chased away with burning logs), and warns his companions, saying: *"Bafondini masiyeke amathole esikhova sizakutsha ngokuhlwanje"* (Guys let us leave the owlets alone we are going to burn tonight). Fearfully, the boys let them loose and run home as fast they can.

Some of the boys confess their transgression to their parents and have their fears laid to rest, but Dingezweni does not and at night the offence comes back to haunt him. He decides to pour water into a bath and sleep in it to avoid being burned. His mother finds him in the water, drags him out, dries him and sends him to sleep without relieving him of his fears. Naturally, his sleep is troubled as he dreams about what happened during the day. At some point in the evening he stands up and in a dreamlike state addresses Qudalele: *"Qudalele, Qudalele yeka amathole esikhova. Mna sikhova andikhange ndidlale ngamathole akho"* (Qudalele, Qudalele leave the owlets alone. Owl I have not played with your owlets).

He goes back to sleep but the events of the day continue to haunt him until he calls upon his mother to help him: *"Mama, mama vuka ndiyatsha. Owu mama ndingatsha ukhona? Nguwe lo!"* (Mother, mother, wake up I am burning. Oh mother, are you going to let me burn? It is you who put me in this predicament). His mother lights a lamp and is carrying it as she goes to wake him up. Dingezweni, only half awake, mistakes the lamp for the fire he has been dreaming about. He runs and jumps into a beer container full of beer, which finally wakes him up properly.

It is the boy's misconstruction of the situation (seeing his mother as the vengeful owl coming to burn him) that engenders humour in this incident. Jumping into a beer container is itself ludicrous but logical, because to Dingezweni the beer will quench the fire that threatens to burn him. The final touch of humour in this incident is introduced when the reader is told that a heated debate ensued on whether it was right to drink the beer after what had happened. Mtuze reports that it was unanimously agreed that it

University of Cape Town

should be drunk, despite the fear that the whole episode was an evil omen and that diviners should be consulted.

In this way Mtuze pokes fun at beer drinkers, showing that their love of beer is stronger than their fear of witchcraft and the wrath of the ancestors. He also employs his linguistic dexterity to amplify the humour engendered by the incident. For instance, he concludes the beer debate by saying: "*Okunene ookuphilwa-phi bwutsho waliphanga ngephanyazo loo mphanda, kuba obo tywala babungumhlaba ubumnandi*" (indeed the drunkards emptied the beer container in a twinkling of an eye because that beer was very tasteful). Here, the voiceless plosive sound /p/ is repeated within a short space of time to capture the speed with which the men draw beer from the container and gulp it back: "*Okunene ookuphilwa-phi bawutsho waliphanga ngephanyazo loo mphanda*" (indeed the drunkards emptied the beer container in a twinkling of an eye). Mtuze also uses an idiomatic expression, "*babungumhlaba ubumnandi*", which literally means that the beer was as tasteful as soil. The idiom is skilfully used to associate the tastiness of the beer with the fact that during his ordeal Dingezweni had jumped into it and presumably "soiled" it.

Mtuze employs the same strategy of making Dingezweni the butt of his humour by having him misconstrue the situation and react ignorantly on the occasion when he dreams about a ghost. On his journey to Johannesburg he decides to sleep during the day and travel at night because of his fear of attack by snakes and other animals while he is asleep in the dark. On the first day he sleeps during the day he dreams about many things, but the dream that persists is one about a ghost that lightens the whole area, standing over him with a big knobkerrie. In his dream it seems that the ghost is trying to lift the blanket that covers his head so that it can bash it with the knobkerrie. When he awakes from the dream he covers his head tightly to protect it from attack. A little later he musters the courage to peep through his blanket, and seeing the daylight becomes even more convinced that it is coming from the ghost he was dreaming about. At this point a passer-by gives him a shake: this startles him into action, and he jumps up and runs, yelling *"Naso! Naso ke!"* (95). (There it is! There it is now).

Another incident in which Mtuze invites laughter by placing the reader in a position superior to that of the target of his humour is when Dingezweni arrives in

University of Cape Town

Queenstown. As he is about to cross the railway line he hears an unfamiliar sound, and looking up sees a train coming straight at him. He gallops away and hides himself amongst road-diggers howling: "*Yho-o! nqandani madoda!" (76).* (Yho-o! give rescue men!). When the train has passed by he remarks with a sense of relief: "*O-owu-u! Siphantse sandigqiba"* (Oh! It nearly swallowed me); and when the astonished road-diggers ask what is he referring to, he solemnly says: "*Nditsho laa mgregrevula wesilwanyana endingasaziyo ubugqitha apha"* (I mean that enormous animal that has just passed here). When he is told that it is a train that has just passed and not an animal he becomes mightily embarrassed.

The knowledge that it is the colonial capitalist economy which has uprooted Dingezweni from his familiar environment and plunged him without appropriate preparation into a foreign and hostile setting, makes this humorous incident produce "a self conscious grin rather than a full-bodied indulgent laugh" (Thuynsma 1989, 96). This is confirmed by the reaction of the road-diggers, whose laughter at his ignorance is short-circuited by their knowledge of the context of his ludicrous behaviour. In recording their reaction, Mtuze writes: "*Bathi gquzu ngentsini bonke kodwa babuya babethwa zintloni be xum*" (They all laughed loudly then stopped dead in their tracks as they felt ashamed of themselves).

Ludicrous as these incidents are, however, they do not contribute much to the realisation of the author's major intention in the novel. They are not directly related to his protest against the colonial capitalist economy. Furthermore, that the butt of this humour is in most cases Dingezweni tends to diminish his attractiveness and present him as a somewhat quaint character. Meja and Maina in Mwangi's novel are also objects of humour, but Mwangi mitigates the negative effect of this by having the characters recount the humorous incidents themselves, thus portraying them in a positive light.

SUMMARY

This chapter has compared Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick* and Mtuze's *UDingezweni* as examples of protest reaction to the personalist levelling homogenisation feature of the "scientific state" that reduces annexed territories to "personal possessions of their rulers,

University of Cape Town

client polities of individuals whose resources and population [can] be harnessed for personal political [and economic] ends" (Smith 1972, 233).

The focus of the discussion has been ideology and aesthetics. The following ideologemes, transposed by the authors from liberal ideology through the process of intertextuality, have been used as a framework for comparing the ideological content of the two novels: shattered dreams and broken families; the inevitability of drudgery and thuggery; heaven for foreigners and hell for locals. With regard to the first ideologeme, what is common to these novels is that, although the dreams are meticulously developed, the root cause of their demolition (the colonial capitalist economy) is not fully exposed. In Mtuze's novel the shortcoming is more glaring, and this can be attributed to the author's tendency to ascribe the destruction of Dingezweni and Nyubatya's dreams to the father's slack discipline and the son's resultant recalcitrance.

After accurately identifying the cause of the frequent family disputes at the beginning of the chapter that presents the quarrel between Dingezweni and his father (through his use of an excerpt from Jolobe's poem), Mtuze clouds the issue at the end of the same chapter by having Selina (Dingezweni's sister) put the blame for Dingezweni's departure squarely upon their father. Some critics have attributed Mtuze's tendency to disguise or ignore the real cause of the suffering of African families to the author's lack of experience as a writer. The fact that this tendency is absent in later novels such as *Alitshoni Lingaphumi* seems to validate this view. Yet, while not excluding this possibility, I would submit that the major reason for this tendency is that novels perceived as hostile to the government and the church were often rejected by the missionary presses and other publishing houses of the time. In this regard, Mwangi's choice of English as the medium for his novel meant that it could be published outside Kenya, thus ensuring that it did not have to pass through the same rigours of pre-publication censorship or gate-keeping as Mtuze's. This is presumably why Mwangi's novel does not evince the sort of conservative didacticism that Mtuze uses to muffle his voice of protest on political issues.

As pointed out earlier, Mwangi – like Mtuze – does not fully expose the real culprit that wrecks the dreams of these young men. The closest he comes to doing so is when, through Maina, he points out that the land allotted to Africans is insufficient.

University of Cape Town

Maina tells Meja that his father owns two acres of land, an area not big enough to support even a single individual. But Mwangi does not tell the reader why Africans have such small land units when white farmers (such as the one who later hires Meja and Maina) own vast lands. He does not tell us why the village people are so poor that their young ones decide to go to the city to seek employment, or why blacks have to pay dearly for their education. It is not made known why there is unemployment in the cities and why educated blacks struggle to get jobs. Mwangi leaves it entirely up to the reader to make connections between these deplorable conditions and the oppressive system responsible for them.

This chapter has shown that the second ideologeme (i.e. that protagonists are doomed to drudgery and thuggery) is generally articulated to depict how degrading and dehumanising colonial capitalism was. To achieve this goal, the fate of its victims is usually graphically portrayed. Mwangi's novel is arguably far more persuasive in depicting the demeaning consequences of colonial capitalism for the protagonists because in it the drudgery and thuggery to which they are doomed are presented in a more sustained and comprehensive way than in Mtuze's novel. Both these authors show that the lives of the protagonists are not meaningfully improved by their getting jobs, because instead of enjoying the benefits of being employed, they are reduced to a state of semi-slavery by their white masters and foremen.

Before they get jobs Meja and Maina are portrayed as sunken in misery and wallowing in mire. When they finally get employed their suffering is not abated: instead they are plunged into degrading drudgery. Whilst Mtuze tends to palliate the exploitation, oppression and discrimination suffered by Dingezweni when he gets work, Mwangi punctiliously portrays the difficulties that Meja and Maina encounter when they find employment. Dingezweni's first employer, for instance, is described as a benevolent white woman who when she notices that he is ignorant about town life gives him work out of sympathy. She later gives him food, clothes and a room to sleep in. In this way Mtuze seems to be giving credit to white people who, whilst creating poverty through their economic system, occasionally dispense handouts to their victims. He nevertheless smuggles in some protest by indicating that this "benevolent" white woman gives

University of Cape Town

Dingezweni a small room away from the main house, which smacks of the racial discrimination typical of the colonial era.

There are, however, a few instances when Mtuze does not disguise his protest against the drudgery that Africans are exposed to under the colonial capitalist economy, such as when Dingezweni is employed as a road digger. Here the Italian employer overworks and mistreats his employees to the extent that they give him the nickname "Nkomiyahlaba" (the goring ox). As road diggers, Dingezweni and his colleagues are made to work so hard that when they come back to their shanties they are so tired they can hardly cook for themselves. These harsh working conditions often lead to the eruption of violence, such as when Dingezweni refuses to gather firewood. The working conditions are not only harsh but also hazardous, with the result that many die at the work place, although their next of kin are not informed.

Whilst the protest in Mtuze's novel is muted at times, Mwangi's protest against the sordid living and working conditions that Meja and Maina are exposed to when they are employed is vigorous and outspoken. The horrid state of the huts is used as a metonym for the horrific conditions of farm labourers in general. The men are dumped in huts that expose them to the fury of the elements. The blood-sucking insects (such as bed bugs and fleas) that harass them are both metonymic and metaphorical of the gruesome exploitation that they experience when they are exploited to satisfy their master's greed. The ravaging rats and mice become an objective correlative for the malevolent harassment the labourers suffer at the hands of their supervisors and masters. The rat image is further exploited to magnify the grim poverty and hunger the farm workers endure. Like rats they are forced to live on the leftovers of others.

Whilst Mwangi dramatises how unemployment and destitution gradually change Meja and Maina from honest and well-meaning young boys into hardened criminals and jailbirds, Mtuze, on the other hand, shows how poverty drives Dingezweni away from home and subsequently reduces him to thuggery and debauchery, in part because he is so far removed from the restraining hands of his friends, family and community. Although Mtuze accurately identifies the fundamental cause for the fratricidal violence that blacks resort to, this type of violence remains senseless and misdirected, with little or no gain or lesson to be derived from it. Having his protagonist engage in this type of violence flaws

University of Cape Town

Mtuze's protest, for it disturbs the balance between degradation and dignity that protest writers should strive to maintain. Mwangi is more successful than Mtuze in maintaining this equilibrium. When his protagonists are reduced to thuggery they generally do not degenerate to the use of fratricidal violence. He makes a point of revealing the race of his protagonists' victims. The characters are portrayed as bending or breaking unjust and oppressive laws, with the result that their crimes appear heroic.

The analysis of the third ideologeme (i.e. that colonial Africa was Heaven for foreigners and Hell for locals) revealed that the aim of articulating this ideologeme is to launch a polemic against the white intruders "who allow Africans to languish in poverty, squalor and ignorance while they fatten themselves on their country's riches" (Palmer 1972, 135). Generally, whilst Mwangi's evocations of setting deliver a devastating criticism against colonial capitalism by juxtaposing the native town with the settlers' town, Mtuze tends simply to gesture at the horrid conditions under which Africans live in native towns. The harsh and repressive circumstances under which Mtuze wrote his novel enabled him to do little more than allude to the squalid conditions in which Africans lived in colonial South Africa. Although Mtuze is not as candid as Mwangi in contrasting the hell in which Africans lived with the paradise for whites, it is nevertheless implied in his novel that colonial capitalism is a system that elevates one set of people above another.

The comparison of the aesthetic value of these novels focused on vital beauty and typical beauty. The assessment of vital beauty zeroed in on the portrayal of characters while that of typical beauty was structured in terms of dominant categories. Considering the portrayal of characters in these two novels, it is arguable that as far as vital beauty is concerned Mwangi's novel is superior to Mtuze's. The characters that populate protest novels are generally divided into protagonists (usually the oppressed people) and antagonists (normally the oppressors). Protest writers have to contend with two major problems arising from the portrayal of protagonists and antagonists, "the hope problem" and "the clarity problem" respectively (Goodin 1985, 11,13). Mwangi fares better than Mtuze in contending with these problems. In addressing the hope problem Mwangi uses innocent victims as his protagonists whilst Mtuze opts for a flawed victim as his protagonist. From the outset Meja and Maina are presented as innocent victims who have

University of Cape Town

done nothing to deserve staying in the filth and decay of the back streets; in fact they are shown to deserve something much better.

Dingezweni, on the other hand, is portrayed as a flawed victim from the very beginning of the novel. He is depicted as refractory and obstinate from early childhood. The cause of these shortcomings in his behaviour is his father's flaccid discipline. Although the use of either type of victim has its disadvantages, the innocent victim is more attuned to the purposes of protest novels than the flawed victim. Mwangi also fares better than Mtuze in minimizing the effect of the inherent weaknesses of his strategy of choice on his work of art. One shortcoming that is common in novels that use innocent victims as the vehicle for their protest is the tendency to reduce them to minor characters. Thus innocent victims may get lost in what is ostensibly their own story, as the focus shifts to the antagonists. Mtuze does not have to contend with this problem because his choice of a flawed victim forces him to focus on the protagonist rather than antagonist. He nevertheless has to confront the problem of giving sufficient exposure to what is under attack, just as Mwangi does, and here Mtuze fares worse than the Kenyan.

Mwangi also resists the temptation to make the protagonists so innocent that they do not undergo any character development from beginning to the end. He skilfully avoids this shortcoming by making Meja and Maina undergo drastic change from honest and well-meaning young boys to robbers and jailbirds. Mtuze does not have to contend with the problem of portraying his protagonist as not altogether innocent because of his choice of a flawed victim. He faces a slightly different challenge, which is to show that his protagonist is not entirely flawed, so as to avoid disturbing the balance between dignity and degradation. At first he does well in maintaining this balance but later the scale tilts towards degradation.

One other problem that both authors have to contend with is the hope problem. The readers of a protest novel expect to see that there is hope for remedying the injustice presented. Mwangi's novel inspires more hope for redress than Mtuze's. He endows his protagonists with a spirit of rebelliousness and a strong will to live that enables them to struggle tenaciously against the injustice unleashed by colonial capitalism. Even when circumstances seem to point to Maina's death, Mwangi ingeniously orchestrates the events in such a way that the hope for a remedy is not altogether lost. Mtuze also bestows

University of Cape Town

on his protagonist the spirit of rebelliousness and a strong will to live, to enable him to struggle against injustice and thus engender in the reader some hope of redress. This hope is however dashed in the end when he reveals that Dingezweni dies in a mine collapse.

Related to the hope problem is the question of the viability of the solution suggested by the authors to the injustice they present. Again here Mwangi fares better than Mtuze. He advocates the creation of employment opportunities as a solution to the suffering of his protagonists. To Mwangi the only viable solution is for his characters to get decent employment. Viable as Mwangi's solution may be, it nevertheless aims at reform rather than radical change. A more radical solution would be a complete change in the economic system, which is what writers who embrace revolutionary ideology suggest. Mtuze appears to be recommending going back home as the only alternative to the corrupting influence of Johannesburg. Although Mtuze's solution is not as viable as Mwangi's there is some sense in it. Through it he is advocating marronage of African communalism (termed "*ubuntu*" in isiXhosa) with colonial capitalism. The way in which Mtuze contrasts Mnandizonka, an idyllic rural location, with violent and corrupting cities like Johannesburg, serves to highlight the need for marronage: in fact, the heroes in this novel are those who succeed in reconciling African "*ubuntu*" with colonial capitalism.

Another major problem that protest writers have to contend with is the clarity problem, which centres largely on antagonists or victimisers. As characters used to motivate the suffering of the protagonists, the antagonists must also be carefully delineated. However, "as presentation of antagonists becomes fuller, they almost inevitably turn into victims themselves and start to command sympathy" (Goodin 1985, 12). So protest writers are faced with the difficult task of portraying their antagonists in the round while not making their portrayal too full, because if the reader is to fully understand the social process that warps the mentality of the oppressors he/she might be made so to sympathise with them that he/she loses the political will to fight them and dismantle oppression. Mwangi is more successful than Mtuze in presenting his antagonists, although his strategies in doing so are not without flaw. For example, this chapter has argued that both writers have not sufficiently exposed the target of their protest. This is because they pay too little attention to their antagonists, preferring rather

University of Cape Town

to make "their presence felt by their effects on their victims" (Goodin 1985, 12). Mwangi does give some attention to his antagonists, but this is not sufficiently sustained to allow for a full exposure of the institutions from which these antagonists derive the power to persecute the protagonists. The clarity problem is even more glaring in Mtuze's novel, where the target of the writer's protest receives less attention than in Mwangi's.

Bakhtin's five compositional unities (tabulated in Chapter One of this study) were used as a framework for comparison of the typical beauty of the novels under review. This chapter has argued that as far as typical beauty is concerned, Mwangi's novel is more comprehensive than that of Mtuze, which is understandable because *UDingezweni* is Mtuze's first attempt at writing a novel whereas *Kill Me Quick* is a novel of Mwangi's mature years. The first basic type of compositional-stylistic unity is direct authorial literary narration. Generally the authorial speech in both Mwangi and Mtuze's novels is adequate to its object, which is to dramatise and condemn the manner in which colonial capitalism degrades its victims. They both use scintillating language in denouncing the degradation of their protagonists. One way in which these authors condemn the degrading effects of colonial capitalism on Africans is to describe the type of food they are forced to live on.

With regard to the second compositional-stylistic unity, which entails the stylisation of various forms of oral everyday narration, it is arguable that again both novels abound in features of oral everyday narration (such as repetition and epithets), because although they belong to chirographic culture they are not at all distant from oral culture. The discussion of this compositional-stylistic unity focussed on excerpts transposed directly from oral culture, analysed the oral features they exhibited and assessed whether or not they contributed to the fulfilment of the author's intentions. Only excerpts from Mtuze's novel were analysed. In spite of the beauty and authenticity of Mtuze's oral everyday narration he does not always succeed in harnessing this compositional stylistic unity to the core intention of his novel.

The third compositional stylistic unity, which is the stylisation of various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration (the letter, diary, etc.) is also more noticeable in Mtuze's novel than in Mwangi's, which renders *UDingezweni* a better heteroglot than *Kill Me Quick*. The fourth compositional stylistic unity comprises the

University of Cape Town

various forms of literary but extra-artistic authorial speech, which includes things such as moral, philosophical or scientific statements. Generally, there is extensive use of Biblical material as well as material from the isiXhosa verbal arts in Mtuze's extra-artistic speech. His moralistic commentary on Dingezweni's death is a typical example of this. As pointed out earlier, this didacticism serves to mask the protest that the novel levels against colonial capitalism. In Mwangi's novel, extra-artistic speech is used to foreground the author's protest against the tragic consequences of colonial capitalism, although even here there is not enough connection made between the plight of the protagonists and colonial capitalism. A good example of how Mwangi foregrounds his protest against the tragic consequences of colonial capitalism is his comment after Meja has revealed to the inmates of Cell Number Nine that Maina has committed a murder and is certain to be hanged for it.

The last basic type of compositional-stylistic unity is constituted by the stylistically individualised speech of characters. The analysis of this compositional-stylistic unity focussed on the subtle strategies employed by the protagonists and the antagonists in using words as instruments of coercion and constraint, as tools of intimidation and abuse, as signs of politeness, condescension and contempt, and as weapons of struggle and resistance. In these novels these strategies are used to achieve two aims: by the antagonists, to establish and sustain relations of domination, and by the protagonists, to contest and disrupt the status quo. Mwangi portrays more occasions on which there is interaction between antagonists and protagonists than Mtuze, and as a result there are more examples of these strategies in his novel. In Mtuze's novel resistance on the part of the protagonists is rare, but on the few occasions on which it surfaces it is very forceful. The first instance is when Dingezweni quarrels with his first white employer in Queenstown. Another instance in which the protagonist's resistance comes to the fore is when Dingezweni rebuffs a passionate appeal from a pastor to write his name in the church's records during one of his visits to their compound. In Mwangi's novel the protagonists resist until the end, which helps to make his novel a better work of protest. Another feature that characterises the stylistically individualised speech of the protagonists in these novels is humour. Mwangi makes better use of this device than Mtuze because he harnesses it to the major intention of his novel. He endows his

University of Cape Town

protagonists with a good sense of humour to insist that although they are "intensely miserable [they are] at the same time intensely attractive and important" (Goodin 1985, 13). Generally, there are two broad categories of humour in Mwangi's novel: acerbic humour and entertaining humour. Acerbic humour serves to deliver a broadside at the antagonists who exploit, harass and oppressed the protagonists. A good example is the incident in which an exhausted Meja is found dozing on the riverbank by the farm master. On other occasions the humour of Meja and Maina is more entertaining than sarcastic, such as the amusing aspects of their personal accounts of their criminal activities. In these accounts there is extensive use of euphemism, irony and witticism. Meja for instance euphemistically refers to criminal life as "rough living", to breaking the law as "twisting the law", to being vicious and dangerous as being "brave and adventurous", and to criminal accomplices as the "black market".

Mtuze's novel also sparkles with humour, which helps his work avoid simply "cataloguing [the] injustices, physical brutalities and moral rage of victims... which so often stultif[ies] fictional experiments into mere documentary" (Gakwandi 1977, 21). But Mtuze's humour is intended mainly to amuse rather than to make a direct contribution to realising the major intention of his novel, which is after all to protest against the tragic effects of colonial capitalism. Generally the device used in Mtuze's novel to achieve humour is to make readers observe the infirmities of others and compare them with eminence in ourselves, thus enabling us to feel superior and laugh at the characters. Ludicrous as these incidents are, they do not contribute much to the realisation of the author's major intention in the novel. They are not directly related to his protest against the colonial capitalist economy. Furthermore, that the butt of this humour is in most cases Dingezweni tends to diminish his attractiveness and make him appear quaint or eccentric. Meja and Maina in Mwangi's novel are also objects of humour, but Mwangi mitigates the negative effect of this by having them recount themselves the funny things that have happened to them, thereby enabling them to give the events a positive spin.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER FOUR

THE REVOLUTIONARY REACTION TO CONQUEST SEGREGATION

Chapters Two and Three discussed the reformist and the liberal/protest reactions to cosmopolitan assimilation and the personalist levelling homogenisation features of the scientific state. This chapter sets out to analyse the revolutionary reaction to conquest segregation, another feature of the scientific state.

Cosmopolitan assimilation (commonly known as cultural imperialism) is the feature that the scientific state inherited from empires. It allowed the conquered people to contribute to and be absorbed by the culture and religion of their conquerors. The reformist reaction to this feature (reflected in the novels discussed in Chapter Two) acknowledges the twin sources of authority – the traditional cosmic order and the scientific state – but instead of opting for either, tries to reconcile them in a way in which it hopes will palliate the traumatic consequences of the invasion of the traditional order by the scientific state.

Personalist levelling homogenisation is the feature of the scientific state that reduces acquired countries to "personal possessions of their rulers, client polities of individuals whose resources and population could be harnessed for personal political [and economic] ends" (Smith 1972, 233). The imposition of capitalism on communities that were accustomed to a pre-capitalist economic formation resulted in a struggle, which Jameson (1986, 95) terms "cultural revolution" (i.e. that moment in which the coexistence of various modes of production becomes visibly antagonistic, their contradiction moving to the centre of political, social and historical life). It was this revolution that gave birth to what has come to be known in Kenya and South Africa as protest literature, examples of which were assessed in Chapter Three.

In general, the conquest segregation feature of the scientific state, which allows the conquerors to form a dominant caste and monopolise high status, gave rise to revolutionary reaction, which is the focus of this chapter. Dominant groups established through conquest segregation attempt to maintain their dominant position through hegemonic control, which – according to Gramsci (1972, 12) – is a process through

University of Cape Town

which the power of a leading social group is maintained by a combination of consent and coercion. In his words, hegemony involves:

> 1. The 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.
> 2. The apparatus of state coercive power, which legally enforces discipline on those groups who do not 'consent' either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed.

Revolutionary reaction is constituted by instances where groups contesting power openly revolt against domination through strikes, mass protests and counter-hegemonic actions. The novels depicting revolutionary reaction that will be compared in this chapter are R. Siyongwana's *Ubulumko Bezinja* and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's. I have used the original version of Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat*, because it offers a more balanced, less propagandistic portrait of the Kenyan liberation struggle than the later version released in 1986. For instance some of the elements of the text, which are crucial to my analysis (such as General R's guilty conscience or Koinandu's rape of Dr Lynd) are simply excised from the later edition. As in previous chapters, the comparison of the novels will focus on ideology and aesthetics.

University of Cape Town

4.1 COMPARISON OF THE IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT OF THE NOVELS

Looking at the background of these authors helps one to understand why their novels are based on revolutionary moments. Ngugi's novel is a dramatisation of events associated with the Mau Mau uprising. The time span of the novel's action is primarily the last five days before Kenyan independence (which was on the 1st of June 1963), although through a series of flashbacks Ngugi gives us information about the turmoil of the Emergency. Ngugi's family had its share in the suffering that accompanied the Mau Mau revolt and this is reflected in this novel. For instance, his deaf-and-dumb stepbrother was shot dead in circumstances similar to those of Gitogo (Cook & Okenimkpe 1983, 2), while his elder

brother Wallace Mwangi, a carpenter like Gikonyo in the novel, joined the Mau Mau, as a result of which his mother experienced three months of torture at the Kamiriithu home-guard post (Sicherman 1990, 4). His family house and village were razed as a result of an anti-Mau Mau campaign, just as the old Thabai village is burnt down as a form of retaliation for the fall of Mahee Police Post to Kihika and his band of forest fighters (ibid., 4).

Siyongwana's *Ubulumko Bezinja* begins in about 1944, the year when the Youth League was founded. This is implied by the fact that the dogs that agitate for change belong to a militant young generation. The novel's fictional time span encompasses Sharpeville 21st March 1960, the period of armed struggle 1961-1991, the era of the return of the exiles and negotiations 1990 -1993. He started writing the novel in August 1958 and published it in 1962. To write a book about the struggle on its way to victory at that time must have demanded a great deal of imagination. What seems to have helped Siyongwana to look beyond political setbacks to final victory was his own involvement in the people's struggle for liberation.

In a taped interview held in the NAHECS at Fort Hare he reveals that when he wrote this novel he was a militant young man of about thirty. He was an active member of the ANC and had participated in a number of defiance campaigns. This means that he knew why blacks had to resort to armed struggle and was aware that its aim was to force the white minority government to a negotiation table.

The ideologemes transposed by the authors from revolutionary ideology through the process of intertextuality that will be used as the basis for comparing the ideological content of the two novels are: a) intransigence to change leads to violence; b) "violence in order to change an intolerable, unjust social order is not savagery: it purifies man"; c) "violence to protect and preserve an unjust, oppressive social order is criminal and diminishes man" (Ngugi 1982, 28). These can be reduced to one sentence, which can be regarded as the core doctrine of revolutionary reaction to colonialist conquest segregation: when peaceful negotiations fail, people have no option but to resort to violence; violence in order to change an intolerable, unjust social order is not savagery: it purifies man, but violence to protect and preserve an unjust, oppressive social order is criminal, and it diminishes man.

University of Cape Town

4.1.1 Intransigence to change leads to violence

Generally this ideologeme is a reaction to an attempt by dominant groups to sustain the relations of domination through what (Thompson 1990, 65) terms "expurgation of the other". This strategy, which is aimed at fragmenting the groups contesting power, involves "construction of an enemy, either within or without, which is portrayed as evil, harmful or threatening and which individuals are called upon collectively to resist or expurgate" (ibid., 65). Through this strategy colonialist writers have for a long time depicted the African struggle for liberation as "an atavistic, anti-white [movement] which is intent upon returning [Africa] to barbarism and primitivism" (Walker 1984, 157-58). They have portrayed the freedom fighters as savages, criminals, communists, bloodthirsty murderers, whose aim is to disrupt the law and order which the honourable and just white man labours to maintain. Thus the killing of a freedom fighter, labelled a "terrorist" by the white man, is regarded as ridding society of a malignant rot. One has only to read newspaper reports on the clashes between freedom fighters and "security forces", and books such as Henderson's *The Hunt for Kimathi* and Ruark's *Uhuru*, to see how prevalent this view was amongst whites.

African writers such as Siyongwana and Ngugi who articulate the theme of the struggle for Uhuru are committed to giving us a completely different picture of the African struggle for liberation. They portray it as a heroic struggle against foreign domination, oppression and all the forces of evil unleashed by the white man. While they lionise and canonise the freedom fighters, they decry as savages and denounce as brutes all those who try to frustrate the people's struggle for liberation. In trying to put the record straight they argue that it was the intransigence of the colonialists to non-violent negotiations that made African freedom fighters to resort to violence.

Siyongwana and Ngugi expose the obstinacy of the oppressors by highlighting the reasonableness of the demands of the oppressed and showing that they are initially intent on achieving their political goals through non-violent means. Siyongwana fares better than Ngugi in articulating this ideologeme because he dramatises meetings between the dominators and the dominated rather than just narrating them as Ngugi is

University of Cape Town

inclined to do. In his allegorical novel *Ubulumko Bezinja (The Wisdom of Dogs)*, Siyongwana sets out to demonstrate the reasonableness of the demands of Africans. The dogs in this novel represent blacks, and the humans who exploit and oppress them represent whites. After observing the unfair and cruel manner in which dogs are treated by human beings, Tawuse and Mthendevu (Sibi's puppies), decide to air their grievances to their master, Kholisile. They approach him and enquire why it is that dogs do not have their fair share in the place they call home. Kholisile wants to know what they mean by fair share. They explain that when a sheep is slaughtered, they should be given meat instead of bones, and when food is dished out; they should be given food and not leftovers. Kholisile enquires further: "*Oko kukuthi ke Tawuse nifuna oku kutyiwa ngabantu?"* (19) (All in all, Tawuse, what you mean is that you should be given the same food as that given to human beings?). Tawuse quickly replies: "*Kanye ke nkosi*" (Exactly master).

Kholisile informs them that their request is impracticable, for no dog has ever received the same treatment as human beings. His response is an example of reification, a favourite discursive strategy of hegemony through which "relations of domination may be established and sustained by representing a transitory, historical state of affairs as if it were permanent, natural, outside of time" (Thompson 1990, 65). When the puppies insist that they deserve better treatment because they are the ones who work and protect the home at night, Kholisile threateningly chases them away.

In another meeting the dogs again try to argue with their master, saying: "*Khawusixelele ke nkosi naku ukutya ninako kuninzi, nenyama nibanayo, nifuyile. Ningahleleleka na xa ninokusinika izinto esizicelayo?"* (34) (Tell us, master, you have plenty of food and more than enough meat, for you are farmers. Would you be impoverished if you granted us our request?). Kholisile tells them that they would not be impoverished but if dogs were granted their wishes they would think that they were human beings and forget that they were dogs. Having recourse to "eternalisation" (which means that "social-historical phenomena are deprived of their historical character by being portrayed as permanent, unchanging and ever recurring"[Thompson 1990, 66]), he informs them that the superiority of human beings to dogs is normal, natural; dates back

University of Cape Town

to the time of their forefathers and cannot be changed by puppies. Thus their request is tantamount to asking that he should reverse what has been divinely ordained.

Ngugi's strategy of beginning his story in the middle of things and then supplying background information through the use of flashbacks inclines him toward using a narrative mode in presenting certain parts of his story, which tends to reduce the sense of immediacy. The negotiations between Harry Thuku and the white man, for instance (which obviously took some considerable time), are reported in a single paragraph. The people's discontent about taxation, forced labour on the white man's land, and the expropriation of African land around Tigoni and other places, which Thuku "set out in clear terms" in his letters to the white man, is summarised in one sentence (13).

However, what emerges clearly in Ngugi's novel is that the demands of the Africans are reasonable. They demand tax alleviation because their white masters pay them a pittance; they agitate for their fair share of the land and riches of Kenya because it is their land; and they clamour for their freedom because it is their inalienable right. The reasonableness of their demands comes out clearly in a dialogue between Kihika and his girl friend Wambuku. He argues:

> Is he a man who lets another take away his land and freedom? Has a slave a life?... Kenya belongs to black people... In any case, whether the land was stolen form Gikuyu, Ubabi or Nandi, it does not belong to white man. And even if it did, shouldn't everybody have a share in the common shamba, our Kenya? Take your white man, anywhere, in the settled area. He owns hundreds and hundreds of acres of land. What about the black men who squat there who sweat dry on the farms to grow coffee, tea, sisal, wheat and yet only get ten shillings a month? (85).

The reasonableness of the demands of Africans condemns the intransigence and insensitivity of the whites in dealing with their grievances. Considering the humiliation, oppression and exploitation that Africans suffered at the hands of whites, for them to demand nothing more than equality shows how well meaning they are in their struggle for freedom. They could demand the domination of whites by blacks out of sheer vengeance, but rather they clamour for the abolition of all forms of racism. They could try to drive the white man back to the sea as their forebears attempted to do, because Africa is indeed a black man's country, but they agitate instead for the peaceful co-

University of Cape Town

existence of all races. The doctrine of multiracialism in the initial ideology of the ANC in South Afrca is a good of this phenomenon.

Ngugi and Siyongwana also show that the freedom fighters were initially intent on achieving their political goals through non-violent means. Describing the spirit of love that reigned in the hearts of the marchers who in 1923 walked to Nairobi to demand the release of their leader Harry Thuku, Warui in *A Grain of Wheat* recalls: "others did not bring food. We shared whatever we had brought. Great love I saw there. A bean fell to the ground and it was quickly split among children. For three days we gathered in Nairobi, with our blood we wrote vows to free Harry" (13-14). The spirit of love and sharing that reigns in their hearts, magnifies the peacefulness of the demonstration, for where there is love, there is peace. The peacefulness of this march is further confirmed by Warui's retrospective assessment of the event, which reveals that the marchers were unarmed. He maintains that "something went wrong at the last moment... Perhaps if we had the spears..." (14).

All the methods of struggle initially employed by the dogs in *Ubulumko Bezinja* are non-violent. When negotiations between them and their master Kholisile fail, they embark on a strike, and when this also fails they think of going into exile. Siyongwana dramatises some of the problems freedom fighters encounter in exile: Tawuse, Mthendevu and Bhaku would like to leave the homes of human beings where exploitation and oppression is rife, to go and live underwater like otters. They solicit the help of one otter, who, although suspicious of them, tries to assist. He demonstrates how they should dive deep into the water. They try to imitate him, but because they are not made to live under water, all their attempts prove futile. The implication is that life in exile is as difficult as trying to live under water when you are made to live on land. Again, Kholisile responds to this peaceful method of struggle with violence, although this time the violence is not physical but verbal.

To all the non-violent strategies employed by freedom fighters in these novels the response of the dominators is invariably violence. One example in *Ubulumko Bezinja* is when the dogs refuse to respond to their call to duty, which they hope will persuade Kholisile to value their contribution and consider their grievances. Instead, Kholisile

University of Cape Town

duplicitously plots their capture. He pretends to be acceding to one of their demands by giving them food instead of leftovers. He divides the food into portions positioned from outside the house right into the centre of its compound. Although the dogs are suspicious of the manner in which the food is being dished out, greed gets the better of them. When they are all inside Kholisile closes the door, interrogates them and punishes them.

In Ngugi's novel the trigger-happy and bloodthirsty police open fire on the unarmed marchers, who are demanding nothing more than the release of their leader Harry. The raising of hands by those who are shot by the police signifies their peaceful intentions, while the clutching of soil as they die symbolises their sacrifice for the recovery of their lost land and heritage. Ngugi makes reference to the spurting of the blood of those who are shot dead. Blood is a universal symbol of suffering and sacrifice. Reference to it is intended to show that the victims of police brutality suffer or die for freedom. In the words of Ngugi, their blood "rain[s] on and waters the tree of freedom" (17).

But although the blood of demonstrators flows freely, Harry Thuku is not released for seven years, and even then, only after he has promised to co-operate with his oppressors (19). Nothing could soften the impenitence of the oppressors, not even the sight of the blood of their non-violent victims. Similarly, looking at the history of non-violent resistance in South Africa, Mandela could say: "fifty years of non-violence had brought the African people nothing but more and more repressive legislation" (Karis & Carter 1987, 647).

The failure of non-violent resistance therefore leaves Africans with only two choices: to submit or fight. For people who have endured humiliation and oppression for so many years, submission is unthinkable: to submit is to perish and to fight is to survive. Thus Africans turn to violence as a last resort. The delineation of the failure of non-violent tactics in African fiction is intended to justify the use of violence in seeking to bring about political change.

University of Cape Town

4.1.2 Violence in order to change an intolerable, unjust social order is not savagery: it purifies man

Siyongwana and Ngugi delineate this form of violence with the aim of showing that it is not savagery but an effective political strategy that unifies and purifies its protagonists. The articulation of this ideologeme is more comprehensive in Ngugi's novel than in Siyongwana's because Siyongwana's use of dogs as his protagonists makes it easier for him to justify this form of violence than it is for Ngugi, who portrays human beings. One of the reasons why this is the case is that the weapons that dogs can realistically use are less deadly than those that human beings are capable of using. More will be said about the merits and demerits of Siyongwana's use of dogs as his protagonists later in this chapter.

Both authors maintain that this form of violence is not savagery because, in the first instance, it aims at changing an intolerable, unjust social order. General R., one of the freedom fighters in *A Grain of Wheat*, argues that Africans resorted to violence as a reaction to injustice:

> You ask why we fought, why we lived in the forest with wild beasts. You ask why we killed and spilt blood. The white man went in cars. He lived in a big house. His children went to school. But who tilled the soil on which grew coffee, tea, pyrethrum and sisal? Who dug roads and paid taxes? The white man lived on our land. He ate what we grew and cooked. And even crumbs from the table he threw to his dogs. That is why we went into the forest. (191-92)

The view that it was against injustice that the Gikuyu freedom fighters revolted is succinctly expressed by JanMohamed (1983, 216), who maintains that: "it was against this disruption of community, which encompassed everything from the negation of the material base of society (land alienation and the disruption of the mode of production) to the suppression of its symbolic and religious form (capital punishment for those who administered the Mau Mau oath), that the Gikuyu rebelled".

In *Ubulumko Bezinja*, when all non-violent means fail to bring about change, the dogs resort to violence. They start by snatching meat from men's dishes. Kholisile accuses them of being riotous. They counter by saying they are demanding their rightful

University of Cape Town

share. He then asks: *yiyona ndlela ningasifumana ngayo leyo yokusifuna ngenkani*?" (Is demanding your share by force the only way in which you can get it?). The dogs retort: "*Ngesisithini? Kudala sithetha nani ningasihoyi* (45) (What else can we do? We tried to negotiate with you for a long time but you simply disregarded us).

Secondly, this form of violence is not indiscriminate but directed at the enemies of the black man's freedom. Mugo, a civilian in *A Grain of Wheat*, fears for his life when Kihika, a freedom fighter, enters his hut at night; but Kihika calms him down by saying: "we don't kill just anybody... we are not murderers. We are not hangmen like Robson [a white man] killing men and women without cause or purpose. *We only hit back*" (166) (emphasis mine). Kihika kills Robson himself because he has persecuted and killed many Africans. In fact of the four violent strategies that Mandela mentions – sabotage, guerrilla warfare, terrorism and open revolution (Karis & Carter 1987, 647) – the freedom fighters in Ngugi's novel opt for guerrilla warfare and try to avoid terrorism, insofar as "the aim of the terrorist is to strike fear into the people by killing indiscriminately" (Kaunda 1982, 157).

In *Ubulumko Bezinja* too, the violence is not indiscriminate but a way of hitting back. The dogs bite Kholisile because he keeps on beating and taunting them. They bite people from Njica because they have killed a puppy there. They steal from people because they have exploited them. Justifying the dogs' decision to go and steal sheep that belong to human beings, Xhonti (an old dog) says: "*uKholisile lowa wandisebenzisa gqitha engekabikho uSibi. Ndifuna ukuba kukhe kubekho into endiyifumana sisulu kuye*" (101) (Kholisile used me greatly before the birth of Sibi. I want to get something gratis from him in return).

Of the four strategies of violence cited by Mandela, the dogs favour sabotage. They adopt this strategy in the hope that by sabotaging the economy they will succeed in forcing people to redress their grievances without any loss of life. Considering the fact that Siyongwana is a self-confessed member of the ANC (Siyongwana 1988), it is understandable that these dogs who represent ANC freedom fighters should opt for sabotage. The novel itself was first published in 1962, approximately a year after the leaders of the ANC had decided to abandon the policy of non-violence and embark on

University of Cape Town

sabotage, hoping that "whites could still be persuaded to change their policies by means short of revolutionary overthrow" (Karis & Carter 1987,647).

Initially the dogs take only one sheep at a time, so that the loss incurred by human beings is not great. Kholisile confirms this when he reveals to Bambisela that after many years of stealing the dogs have taken only twenty sheep in Ntakana. It is only when men set fire to their forest that they decide to escalate the violence. In a heated meeting after this Tawuse proposes that they should steal sheep in large numbers as a form of retaliation. He says: *"Masibulale yonke into efuyiweyo esidibene nayo... Abantu baza kulihlawula igazi lezinja abaliphalazileyo"* (137) (Let us kill everything reared by people we come across... Men are going to pay for spilling the blood of dogs).

Belekentloko modifies this proposal by saying that they should no longer spare the lives of human beings, but even then kill only those who block their way. Although the dogs unanimously adopt this proposal, no mention is made of any person being killed by them, right through to the end of the book. In fact when negotiations for peace start, the dogs enumerate all the dogs that have been killed by human beings, but Bhaku's former master cannot name a single person who has been killed by dogs. He only recalls people who have been bitten by dogs. Mthendevu dismisses this by saying that biting and killing are not the same thing, and even if death resulted from biting it would be accidental rather than intentional.

Thirdly, even the fact that some blacks also become victims of this violence (a fact brandished by the white man as yet another proof that the violence of the freedom fighters is savagery) is presented as justifiable by Ngugi. In explaining why freedom fighters kill other blacks, General R. says: "he who was not on our side, was against us. That is why we killed our black brothers. Because, inside, they were white men" (192). A good example is Rev Jackson, a black preacher who is hacked to death with pangas because he collaborates with Robson in tarnishing the image of the struggle for Uhuru (191).

Lastly, Ngugi provides further evidence that this form of violence is not savagery by revealing that although freedom fighters are prepared to kill enemies of the black man's freedom, this does not blunt their sense of right and wrong. They still know that killing and raping etc. are wrong. There are tears in Kihika's voice when he whispers to

University of Cape Town

Mugo that he has killed Robson (165). The ghost of Dr. Lynd, the woman he raped, forever haunts Koinandu (185). The ghost of Jackson, killed by General R. and his men, accuses the General of murder when he is about to make a speech at the Uhuru celebrations (191).

Those who oppose the use of violence to achieve political ends argue that "nothing can be achieved by violence that cannot be achieved as effectively by non-violent disobedience" (Lively 1984, 408). Amongst the people who propagate this view are colonialists, whose statues "perched on colonial soil do not cease form proclaiming one and the same thing. We are here by the force of bayonets" (Fanon 1968, 84). Paradoxically these colonialists espouse this argument after closing all the other channels through which Africans might bring about genuine political change. Miller disagrees with this notion in maintaining that "violence changes the state in a way that civil disobedience... does not" (Lively 1984, 408). That Siyongwana and Ngugi concur with this point of view is demonstrated in their novels, where they show violence succeeding where non-violence has failed.

In *Ubulumko Bezinja*, when all non-violent means fail to bring about change the dogs resort to violence. It is after they have embarked on violence that for the first time in their lives they get enough meat. It dawns on them that if they do not use violence, they will get nothing from men. Hence Tawuse exhorts others: "*ukuba asithanga sisebenzise amandla ethu asisayi kuzuza nto*" (66) (If we do not use our strength, we will never get anything). Their dealings with men have taught them a lesson that Africans in many colonies were forced to learn, that "the colonialist understands nothing but force" (Fanon 1968, 84). It is only after the dogs have destroyed men's crops and emptied their kraals that their grievances are redressed. Men who initially refused to negotiate with dogs now initiate negotiations with them. Kholisile, who introduced the process of outlawing dogs, now regrets he took such a step.

Ngugi also shows that violence works wonders. Kihika initially preaches that Africans in Kenya will get their independence through civil disobedience. He cites the case of India as an example to follow. He argues that in India "men and women and children threw themselves in front of moving trains and were run over. Blood flowed like water in that country. The bomb could not kill blood, the red blood of people, crying to

University of Cape Town

be free". Whilst he is saying this, a question keeps nagging his mind: "God! How many times must fatherless children howl, widowed women cry on this earth before this tyrant shall learn?" (77). When Jomo Kenyatta and other leaders are arrested, he becomes convinced that "colonialism only loosens its hold when the knife is at its throat" (Fanon 1968, 61). He and a group of young men flee to the forest to engage in armed struggle against the white man. He now argues: "not words, not even miracles could make Pharoah let the children of Israel go. But at midnight the Lord smote all first born in the land of Egypt... And the following day he let them go... That is our aim. Strike terror in the heart of the oppressor" (166). It is after they have done this that they get their independence.

Besides striking terror in the heart of the oppressor, violence has the unique power of drawing the attention of the world to the suffering of the oppressed people. Baboons in *Ubulumko Bezinja* come to the assistance of dogs only when they see that dogs and men are locked together in a fierce struggle. One may argue that civil disobedience also has the power to draw the world's attention to the suffering of the oppressed people. This is true, but in the case of civil disobedience, the casualties are on the side of the oppressed (blacks in this case); moreover, it is easy for ruthless tyrannies to hide this from the world, and "what the world does not know, it does not get worked up about" (Kaunda 1982, 25). But in the case of armed struggle, casualties occur on both sides and are therefore difficult to hide.

Siyongwana also shows that violence unifies. On the first day of the ceremony at Njica, a fierce fight occurs between dogs from Ntakana and from Njica. The fight starts when Belekentloko, a dog from Ntakana, attacks a dog from Njica in the hope of getting the bone it is gnawing. The dogs from Njica and Ntakana join the battle without knowing its cause. Those from Njica are defeated, but Belekentloko is so tired at the end of it that he is no longer interested in the bone for which he has so fiercely fought. The dogs have nearly killed each other for a dry bone, and the irony of it all is that the victor does not even get the bone at the end.

When, however, violence erupts between Kholisile and the dogs from Ntakana, they set aside their petty quarrels and attack the common enemy. Those from Njica do not even know why Kholisile is being bitten, but they also bite him. Violence unifies

University of Cape Town

them by galvanising passive sympathisers like Sibi into activity. In the heat of the fight she also sinks her fangs into Kholisile's shoulder, holding on for a long time. When the battle is over, the dogs are so united that they jointly embark on a strategy for snatching meat from women. Their plan is as follows: two dogs will go and create chaos near the fireplace by pretending to be fighting. Others will bite any person who is near the pots. In the resulting confusion Tawuse and Bhaku will carry away one pot of meat, while two dogs from Njica will run away with another. The plan is accurately executed, although other dogs decide to push over the remaining pots to satisfy a private grudge. At a good distance from the place of ceremony the dogs share the spoils and all are satisfied. Now that there is plenty of meat, the dogs peacefully share it amongst themselves, whereas on the previous day the same dogs had nearly killed each other over a single dry bone.

Both these writers show that violence purifies man. They reveal that in the place of fear it breeds courage. In the words of Ngugi, it brings forth men "who shall not tremble or run away before the sword" (166). In Ngugi's novel involvement in the violent struggle makes Kihika (who as a boy ran away from school because he was afraid of being beaten by a teacher for exposing his ignorance of the very Bible he taught) fearless before the sword. He is arrested and "the neck of a bottle was wedged into his body through the anus as the white people... tried to wrest the secrets of the forest from him... But he would not speak".

In *Ubulumko Bezinja*, Belekentloko is timorous before he joins the armed struggle. Kholisile easily intimidates him into silence when he dares to ask: *"niyitya nedwa nje inyama kungokuba ibanjwe nini na le mpungutye*" (42) (you eat the meat alone, are you the one who caught this jackal?). After he has joined the armed struggle he is the one who threatens Kholisile into silence during the incident in which one puppy is killed by human beings. When Kholisile tries to intimidate him by putting the whole blame for what has happened upon him, he growls: "*Uthi kutheni na apha kum*?" (79). (What are you saying to me?).

Violence makes the militants men of faith. The knowledge that they can die at any time drives them closer to their God and ancestors. Koinandu in Ngugi's novel explains to Wambui that in the forest they sacrificed pigs and ate the meat afterwards. He tells her that they prayed twice a day and an extra time before any expedition to wrest

University of Cape Town

arms from European farms. Whenever they prayed, they used to stand facing Mount Kenya and say:

> Mwenanyanga we pray that you may protect our hideouts. Mwenanyanga we pray that you may hold a soft cloud over us. Mwenanyanga we pray that you may defend us behind and front from our enemies. Mwenanyanga we pray that you may give us courage in our hearts. Thai thathaiya Ngai Thaai.

After praying they would sing:

> We shall never rest
> Without land
> Without freedom true
> Kenya is a country of black people. (20)

It is worth noting that the reconciliation of traditional religion and Christianity, which was difficult to achieve in peacetime (as observed in Chapter Two), is now in time of war realised without any fuss. In the forest the freedom fighters offer sacrifices and pray facing Mount Kenya in a traditional fashion, while Kihika also reads and derives inspiration from his Bible, without experiencing any conflict.

If violence brings forth a new breed of men, it also brings forth a new breed of women. It frees them from the timidity that has come to be associated with femininity. Transformed in this way by violence, they become reliable warriors of the struggle. They carry out important missions such as carrying guns, grenades etc. for their male counterparts. Wambui in Ngugi's novel carries secrets from the villages to the forest and back. Ngugi recounts how she outwits a Gikuyu policeman and narrowly escapes arrest in one of her daring missions. She is taking a pistol to Nawasha and has tied it to her thigh near her groin. Her turn to be searched comes and the Gikuyu policeman starts searching from her breasts and under her armpits. When he is about to touch the place where the pistol is hidden she screams and pretends to be indignant that he dares to touch her private parts. Whilst rebuking him for touching his mother's private parts just because the white man says he should do so, she acts as if she is lifting her dress so that he should see her nakedness. The policeman looks away in embarrassment and orders her to pass.

University of Cape Town

For women the impact of their involvement in the armed struggle is double-edged. It rids them of the weakness traditionally attributed to their sex and also sets them free from the age-old "prejudice and taboos imposed on them by feudal society" (Fanon 1975, 125). In fact some men, in recognition of the role of women in the struggle, are quick to disregard feudal customs and grant women equal status. In *A Grain of Wheat* Wambui is made a judge at Mugo's trial, in recognition of the role she has played in the struggle.

Indeed "the 'thing', which has been colonised, becomes man during the process by which it frees itself" (Fanon 1968, 37). Whilst running the race during Uhuru celebrations, Koinandu in Ngugi's novel recalls: "The fight for freedom had given him a purpose. It had made him a man" (185). The oppressors themselves are finally forced to agree that Africans are fully human; hence they give them their human rights. When dogs have successfully crippled the economy of men in *Ubulumko Bezinja*, a meeting is organised to discuss what can be done to resolve the crisis. Jongaphi proposes that a delegation should be sent to the dogs to ask for forgiveness. Kholisile wants to know whether the dogs would not take advantage of them if they went and humbled themselves before them. Jongaphi replies that when one goes to a man and asks for forgiveness, healthy relations are restored. Kholisile retorts: *"Asithethi ngabantu apha mfondini sithetha ngezinja"* (148) (We are not talking about men here, man! We are talking about dogs). Jongaphi argues that the mere fact that these dogs have agitated for human rights means that they think like men and are therefore not different from them.

Ultimately the meeting unanimously agrees that the dogs should henceforth be treated as human beings. A delegation is sent to persuade them to come back. For the first time dogs and men meet and talk as equals. When the dogs have satisfied themselves that all their demands will be met they agree to go back. Some dogs, however, like Belekentloko, are very reluctant to do so as they cannot believe that cruel and bigoted people like Kholisile can ever treat dogs (blacks) as equals. They are finally won over, and after Mthendevu, their leader, has strongly warned them never again to bow down to man's domination, all the dogs jubilantly go back to their former homes. Kholisile welcomes them with a false smile for he still harbours a grudge against them. Some people can never be redeemed from their racial bigotry.

University of Cape Town

4.1.3 Violence to protect and preserve an unjust, oppressive social order is criminal, and diminishes man

The form of violence perpetrated by colonial governments has been euphemistically referred to as "force" by colonial commentators, so as to distinguish it from what they call "violence", which is committed by "terrorists". Using the same strategy of euphemisation, which means that "actions, institutions or social relations are described or redescribed in terms which elicit a positive valuation" (Thompson 1990, 62), they also describe the colonial forces as "security forces", to give the impression that they defend the security of the society. On the contrary, African writers such as Siyongwana and Ngugi portray them as "licensed killers in uniform who torture and murder harmless African villagers" (Kaunda 1982, 92), and describe what they called force as "violence to protect and preserve an unjust, oppressive social order" (Ngugi 1982, 28). To them anything "which hurts a human being is violence" (Kaunda 1982, 41).

They decry this form of violence by showing that those who are involved in it arrest, torture and kill innocent people. For instance, humans in *Ubulumko Bezinja* kill an innocent puppy. The narrator tells us that amongst the rebellious dogs are two puppies that do not understand what is taking place between dogs and humans. They have observed the struggle between the two sides but think it is a kind of game. They join in the race intended to taunt humans without fully comprehending the dangers involved. Merciless humans kill one of them during this race.

Ngugi employs a similar strategy in suggesting the innocence of some of the victims of this form of violence. One such victim is Gitogo, a deaf mute whose only preoccupation in life is to provide for his old and widowed mother. He is butchered whilst he hastens panic-stricken to the protection of his mother in a moment of crisis during the Emergency. The soldier who is responsible for his death feels no remorse, for to him "another Mau Mau terrorist has been shot dead" (6). The pain suffered by the relatives of these innocent victims is vividly conveyed by the derangement of Gitogo's mother when she hears about the death of her son, her sole supporter in her widowhood.

University of Cape Town

Both Ngugi and Siyongwana portray those involved in this form of violence as sociopaths, fascists and sadists, to show that this form of violence is criminal and diminishes man. In Ngugi's novel the people of Thabai are whipped and worked to death as a warning to other villages never to give food or any other help to those fighting in the forest. They are forced to dig a trench around their village. They work from sunrise to sunset with virtually no time to rest. Wambuku, Kihika's girl friend, who had refused to sleep with one of the home guards, is beaten to death. Thereafter indiscriminate and incessant beating ensues. Old men, children and invalids who cannot work are made to sit around the trench to watch their wives, sons, daughters or mothers work and bear the whip. At the end of it all twenty-one men and women die of hunger, beating and sheer exhaustion. This punishment is meted out to them because Kihika, who has been arrested and hanged, happens to be from their village and they are therefore suspected of having given him food. The killing of twenty-one people merely because they are suspected of having given food to a person who is now dead vividly conveys the cruelty and vindictiveness of the colonial forces.

In *Ubulumko Bezinja* Siyongwana shows that the very demand that the village people should not give food and help to their own sons and daughters who have gone to the forest for the freedom of all, is outrageous. The master they have faithfully served kills Sibi and Bambisela, who remain behind when other dogs flee to the forest after being outlawed. The reason for their death is that they have harboured "thieves" and "terrorists". It should be noted that the "thieves" and "terrorists" in question are their own flesh and blood. When Kholisile confronts them with their offence, Sibi asks: "*Nithetha ukuba oMthendevu abasenakuza na kuthi ngenxa yokuba bexabene nani...?* (133) (Do you mean to say that Mthendevu and the others cannot pay us a visit because they have quarrelled with you...?). Sensing that his answer to the question might expose his unfairness and deter the boys from executing his unjust and cruel judgement, Kholisile does not respond but simply urges the boys to go on with the killing.

Although he avoids the question, it is clear that he would like Sibi and Bambisela not only to shun these dogs but also to spy on them. Earlier on he has tried to flatter Bambisela into spying on Mthendevu and others. He says: "*Ndiyazi uthembekile ngaphezu koSibi, kwaye uyeyona nja ndiyithanda gqitha... Mhla uya kuze ubabone ke*

University of Cape Town

ubokuze ubaleke uze kundixelela" (121) (I know you are more trustworthy than Sibi, moreover you are my most beloved dog... The day you see these dogs, you should quickly come and inform me). He sets Bambisela against these dogs, knowing fully well that he might be killed in the process.

In some instances the colonial forces are described as maiming and killing Africans simply because of misplaced aggression. In *Ubulumko Bezinja*, for instance, Kholisile and the other men suffer injury and defeat in a skirmish with the dogs. They have gone to the forest where the dogs live and attacked them for stealing their livestock. With the help of baboons, the dogs are able to drive them out of the forest and back to their territory, bleeding, limping and defeated. The men are so infuriated by this that they decide to kill every dog they come across in the village. Many of the dogs that have faithfully served their masters are maimed or killed. Some flee to the forest with three legs, one eye, one ear, etc. Worse still, when all this happens, there is not a single person who tries to protect his dogs. Instead they all express their gratitude to Kholisile and his group. This implies that colonial civilians tend to condone the barbarity of colonial forces.

Furthermore, these writers show that the perpetrators of this form of violence are devoid of all noble human attributes by exposing the atrocities they commit in prisons and detention camps. In these places all sorts of methods are used to extort confessions from prisoners and detainees. Mandela has enumerated some of the methods used by the white man and his collaborators on the Gikuyu people in Kenya: "children are being burnt alive, women are raped, tortured, whipped and having boiling water poured on their breasts to force confessions from them that Jomo Kenyatta had administered the Mau Mau oath to them. Men are being castrated and shot dead" (Karis & Carter 1987, 114). Instances of these atrocities in the novels under discussion have already been cited and it is not necessary to repeat them here.

Let me conclude this section on ideologemes by recalling the words of John Bright, who in 1866 declared:

> I have never said a word in favour of force. All I have said has been against it but I am at liberty to warn those in the authority that justice long delayed, or long continued injustice provokes the employment of force to obtain redress. It is in the order of nature and therefore

University of Cape Town

> Supreme that this is so and all preaching to the contrary is no avail....
>
> I may say too that Force, to prevent freedom and to deny rights, is not more moral than force to gain freedom and secure rights. (Mboya 1963, 52)

4.2 COMPARISON OF THE AESTHETIC VALUE OF THE NOVELS

As has been the case with the other sets of novels compared in this study, the comparison of the aesthetic value of *Ubulumko Bezinja* and *A Grain of Wheat* hinges on the notions of vital beauty and typical beauty. Once again, the assessment of vital beauty focuses on the portrayal of characters, and that of typical beauty is conducted in terms of dominant categories.

4.2.1 Vital beauty

Both authors have chosen virtuous victims as their protagonists. Virtuous victims, like innocent victims, are made to suffer by antagonists, but unlike innocent victims who "do little or nothing to motivate the fate which befalls them", they contribute substantially to their suffering not through some flaw but through some excellence (Goodin 1985, 51). The antagonists persecute them because their virtue threatens the legal system to which they belong. Ngugi fares better than Siyongwana in presenting both the protagonists and antagonists. This is understandable since *Ubulumko Bezinja* is Siyongwana's first attempt at writing a novel, while *A Grain of Wheat* is Ngugi's third novel and his second informed by revolutionary ideology (*Weep Not Child* was his first). Furthermore, the conditions of production were very different. Siyongwana wrote in Xhosa, which obliged him to rely upon a mere handful of publishers who "often rejected literature which they regarded as inimical to the cause of the government and the church" (Sirayi 1989, 335). He therefore couches his political message in allegorical terms, a strategy that has merits and demerits already mentioned.

Ngugi is more convincing than Siyongwana in establishing the virtue of the protagonist and indicating its origin. Goodin (1985, 55) maintains that in a novel where

University of Cape Town

virtuous victims are used, "the beginning, whatever else it may do should establish the protagonist's virtue and indicate its origin". Although Ngugi starts his novel in the middle of things he goes back in narrative time through a series of flashbacks to provide information about the origin of Kihika's virtue. He reveals that Kihika is the son of Mbugua, a well-known elder in Thabai who "had earned his standing in the village through his own achievements as a warrior and a farmer" (66). His mother is described as a small woman whose "voice was vibrant with warmth and kindness" (66). When Kihika exhibits qualities of courage and self-abnegation, the reader understands that he has taken after his father and mother. In fact Ngugi tells us that Mbugua himself "secretly admired Kihika as the one most likely to take after him in courage and a well-regulated arrogance" (66). The selflessness (which Goodin 1985, 55, regards as "not only a virtue, but the basis of all virtues") that typifies his character can be traced back to his mother whose voice was vibrant with warmth and kindness. It is the virtue of self-abnegation that threatens the colonial legal system because it has the potential for engendering a community that constitutes a rival power, and according to Goodin (1985, 54) "a legal system can be threatened by one thing only: rival power".

Ngugi also makes his readers understand the character of Kihika better by tracing his conversion to politics. Conversion contributes to making characters appear credible because it explains how they came to hold the beliefs they do. In novels that employ virtuous victims, the hero tends through his actions to engender community feeling. Hence writers usually make his conversion community-engendered or inspired, in that "helper characters" facilitate it (Goodin 1985, 59).

In *A Grain of Wheat* Ngugi reveals that "Kihika's interest in politics began when he was a small boy and sat under the feet of Warui listening to the stories of how the land was taken from black people" (72). His conversion was community inspired in that it was fostered not only by Warui's stories about the heroes of the struggle but also by soldiers from the Second World War who told him stories about men such as Mahatma Gandhi "the saint, [who led] the Indian people against British rule" (73).

In *Ubulumko Bezinja* Siyongwana does not trace the origin of his protagonists' courage. The readers see the main protagonists Tawuse, Mthendevu and Bhaku bravely challenging the oppression of dogs by humans without being told how they, of all dogs,

University of Cape Town

have become so valiant. Of course, Kholisile is obviously a cruel tyrant, and obviously at times he is guilty of using arbitrary and indiscriminate violence. In Chapter One excessive use of violence by those in power was cited as one of the precipitants of revolution, so it is arguable that the tenacity with which his dogs agitate for change is a logical response to the cruel treatment meted out to them at home. Nevertheless, Siyongwana does not explain why the cruelty ignites a revolutionary response in Tawuse and Mthendevu and not in Bambisela and Sibi. Even if the reader were to accept that the tyranny of their master has helped to embolden Tawuse and Mthendevu, there would still be the question of why Bhaku, whose master is benevolent, exhibits the same qualities.

Again Siyongwana is not as convincing as Ngugi in presenting the conversion of his protagonists. He dramatically exposes the source of the dogs' dissatisfaction through his account of the hunting expedition, but he does not explain why it is only Tawuse, Mthendevu and Bhaku who agonise and try to come up with an alternative to the prevailing outlook. The radicalism usually associated with youth is not sufficient to explain what Kuhn (1966, 151) terms "a leap of faith", from being victims of oppression to being freedom fighters. Goodin (1985, 59) maintains that "[t]he leap with which conversion ends is its mysterious component but we must remember what good reasons the protagonists have for repudiating their old outlooks, whatever the alternatives". Hence many writers (including Ngugi) who use virtuous victims employ helper characters to motivate the conversion of their protagonists.

The virtue that has been established at the beginning of the novel should be developed in the middle of the narrative. Ngugi and Siyongwana achieve this by pitting their protagonists against antagonists who view their virtue as vice. Siyongwana provides more incidents of confrontation between his protagonists and antagonists during the non-violent phase of the struggle than Ngugi, and consequently the heroic qualities of his protagonists are more pronounced than those of Ngugi's characters at this stage.

The reader is impressed by the eloquence, diplomacy and persistence of the protagonists in articulating their grievances in *Ubulumko Bezinja*. After they have observed the callous ill-treatment of dogs by humans during the hunting expedition, Tawuse and Mthendevu decide to air their grievances to their master Kholisile. When they arrive at his house they lie down on the opposite side of the fireplace in a most

University of Cape Town

unthreatening manner so as not to jeopardise their case. They then present their demands as questions so as not to antagonise their master. When Kholisile rudely asks: "*Yintoni izinja endlwini?*" (What do dogs want in the house?), Tawuse humbly answers: *"Kukho into esingathanda ukukhe siyive nkosi*"(18) (There is something we would like to know, master). When Kolisile interrogates him further he answers pleadingly: "*Sifuna ukukhe sazi ukuba kutheni na singenasabelo esisiso nje apha ekhaya"* (18) (We would like to know why we are not given our share here at home). The dogs' persistence is manifested in the fact that although they are threatened and chased away they do not give up but resort to other non-violent strategies, such as a strike, self-imposed exile and civil disobedience – all, ultimately, to no avail.

The reportage style of narrating that Ngugi tends to adopt when dealing with events that take place during the non-violent phase of the struggle, as pointed out earlier, denies him the opportunity of convincingly portraying the heroic traits of his protagonists at this stage. Instead of using confrontations between the protagonists and antagonists, he exploits political rallies and dialogue between the protagonists and the oppressed masses to highlight the heroism of his main protagonist Kihika. In this way he is able to reveal the oratorical abilities of his heroes, even though eloquence at a political rally is not as persuasive in convincing the reader of a person's heroism as eloquence in the presence of the enemy. Ngugi however compensates for this by having Kihika preach self-sacrifice at the political rallies, and telling us that he "lived the words of sacrifice he had spoken to the multitudes" (150).

The self-abnegation exemplified by Kihika, which according to Goodin (1995, 55) is "not only a virtue, but the basis for all virtues", and capable of helping to engender a significant sense of community, is almost absent in Siyongwana's novel. The leaders of the dogs' struggle Tawuse, Mthendevu and Bhaku have to be reminded of it by dogs who have just joined the struggle. These leaders, banished by their masters at an earlier stage, have secured a cave for themselves. When the new recruits join them they continue sleeping in the cave whilst the others are exposed to cold and rain. Eventually one dog complains: "*Noko ayifanelanga ukuba nini abahlala kwindawo efudumeleyo ukuze thina sibe phandle*" (82) (It is not fair for you to sleep in a warm place whilst we sleep outside). Mthendevu tries to dismiss this criticism by saying that the cold should not be a

University of Cape Town

problem because they should be accustomed to it, having previously been made to sleep outside by men. The dog retorts: "*Nithi masize kwenzani ke apha kanti nje nani niza kuqhuba kwangale ndlela bebeqhuba ngayo abantu kuth' apha?*" (82) (For what have you called us here if you are going to treat us as men did?). It is no wonder that the leaders struggle to get other dogs to join the fight for freedom, even resorting to devious strategies to gain supporters such as manipulating them into participating in rebellious activities so as to incur the wrath of their masters (68).

During the stage of revolutionary turmoil the struggle between protagonists and antagonists is for a variety of reasons more intense in Ngugi's novel than in Siyongwana's. First, as pointed out earlier, the use of dogs as characters in *Ubulumko Bezinja* (although it has its merits) tends to trivialise what was a life and death struggle. Siyongwana's strategy undoubtedly helps him avoid simply "cataloguing injustices, physical brutalities and the moral rage of victims... which so often stultify fictional experiments into mere documentary", not least because it affords him the opportunity to be humorous at times (Gakwandi 1977, 21). It would seem no easy matter to introduce humour into a confrontation between the oppressed and the oppressor, but because the oppressed in this case are dogs the very fact that they are able so eloquently to articulate their grievances is humorous. However the trivialising effect of this strategy cannot be overlooked, because the impact that the death of a dog has on the reader (even when one knows that the dog represents a person) is not likely to be the same as that made by the death of a human being.

Second, once the dogs have been banished incidents of confrontation diminish, and even when they come to steal sheep they normally have to contend with the dogs that have remained behind. There is only one skirmish between dogs and humans, when Kholisile and other men go to the forest where the dogs live and attack them for stealing their livestock. This means that the opportunities that the dogs have to show their courage are limited, and Siyongwana has to rely on the few instances when they fight with other dogs to convince the reader of their bravery.

Thirdly, of all the dogs who join the struggle only one puppy dies, and the majority of the casualties (such as Sibi and Bambisela) are dogs who have not joined the fight for freedom. Whilst Siyongwana's intention is understandable (arguably, to show

University of Cape Town

that collaborating with the oppressors leads to destruction), suggesting that only one freedom fighter dies throughout the armed struggle is to oversimplify social reality. It makes his novel "so hopeful as to dissolve the very social problems it treats into nonproblems, because its heroes have the romance hero's invulnerability" (Goodin 1985, 80). The optimism typical of novels featuring virtuous victims will be discussed further below.

In Ngugi's novel, incidents such as the destruction of Mahee police station and the killings of Jackson, Muniu and Robson are more convincing in evincing the heroism of his protagonists than the skirmishes where dogs steal sheep in Siyongwana's. Furthermore, by having some of the freedom fighters arrested Ngugi makes sure that there is constant confrontation between them and their antagonists. The obduracy of the detainees at Rira Camp in the face of the different methods for extorting confession used by Thompson and other prison directors attests to the resoluteness of their characters.

Ngugi also fares better than Siyongwana in minimising the optimism that characterises novels in which virtuous victims are used by disclosing many casualties on the side of freedom fighters. Njeri, a woman whose love for Kihika induces her to go to the forest to join the struggle for freedom, is killed in one of the encounters with colonial forces; eleven detainees are beaten to death for refusing to confess the oath, and Kihika himself is captured, tortured and hanged. In the words of Goodin (1985, 85) "their deaths or defeat balances the aura of invulnerability which has come to attend them".

Another weakness of novels that employ virtuous victims is that they tend to be melodramatic, which means that their moral or ideological lessons are conveyed through the sharp (even simplistic) contrast between outright heroism and utter villainy. Both these authors dilute the Manicheanism of melodrama "by assigning limitations to the hero's goodness and/or the antagonist's evil" (Goodin 1985, 81). In Ngugi's novel Kihika is portrayed as both courageous and weak. His girlfriend Wambuku who has intimate knowledge of his character says about him: "He was a man, Njeri, strong, sure, but also weak, weak like a little child" (89). Kihika himself reveals to Mugo that there are times when he is as afraid as anybody else. He says: "you think we don't fear death? We do. My legs almost refused to move when Robson called out to me. Each minute, I waited for a bullet to enter my heart" (166-67).

University of Cape Town

In *Ubulumko Bezinja*, Tawuse is endowed with eloquence but is lacking in endurance, and this comes out on several occasions in the novel. One instance is when the dogs are building their homes in the forest. Tawuse refuses to go to work on the second day, complaining that his whole body is aching because of the stones they carried the previous day. It is only after Mthendevu (assisted by Bhaku) uses force that he goes to work that day. He also deserts the other dogs and goes to stay in the homes of humans when life in the forest proves too difficult to endure. Mthendevu, who is chosen as the leader of dogs, is himself not a paragon of virtue as he is portrayed as very greedy and the first dog to run into Kholisile's food trap.

However, both authors ensure that the weaknesses in their protagonists are not so outrageous that their image as virtuous victims is tarnished. One way of achieving this is by multiplying the protagonists so that the weaknesses are spread among many characters. Kihika, although described as "weak", is strong enough to resist selling out when the going becomes tough in the detention camps. Gikonyo, on the other hand, does succumb to pressure, but in his case this is after six years of being separated from his beautiful wife Mumbi. Ngugi further mitigates his weakness by giving the full context in which Gikonyo decides to confess the oath. It is after he and Gatu (one of the stalwarts of the struggle) have broken the "unspoken agreement, [that] family and home were forbidden subjects among [the detainees]" and after Gatu, their pillar of strength and hope, commits suicide, that Gikonyo confesses the oath (96). And even when he confesses the oath he still refuses "to name anybody involved in oath administration" (98).

Koinandu and General R. also have their share of the weaknesses that Ngugi bestows upon his protagonists. They are both prone to vengefulness. Koinandu rapes a white woman who "never harmed anybody...and gave him presents, clothes, built him a little brick house at the back and never worked him hard", just because she is white. In capturing Koinandu's feelings as he violates the woman, Ngugi writes: "He vibrated with fear and intense hatred. He hated the white man – every one. He was being avenged on them now; he felt their frightened cry in the woman's wild breathing. White man nothing. White man nothing. Doing to you what you did to us – to black people..." (185). The same spirit of vengeance has led General R. and his followers to hack Jackson

University of Cape Town

to pieces because he has "consistently preached against Mau Mau in churches and in public meetings convened by Tom Robson" (191). General R. "called on his followers to dip their pangas in the man's body..."(191).

Again, Siyongwana does not provide the reader with the personal psychological history of his characters, and consequently his character development is not as convincing as Ngugi's. The selfishness of Belekentloko, the greediness of Mthendevu and Tawuse's lack of endurance remain unmotivated. Unlike Siyongwana, Ngugi gives his readers the characters'private histories so that they can fully understand the origin of their weaknesses. For instance, he traces the spirit of vengeance in General R. to his upbringing. Muhoya's (for that is his original name) father was an abusive drunkard whose favourite sport when drunk was to beat his wife. This sowed seeds of vengeance in his heart as he swore to himself that "he would kill the tyrant" (184).

It was after he was circumcised that the day of reckoning came. He confronted his father and a struggle ensued. To his surprise his mother helped his father, saying "He is your father, and my husband" (184). He was subsequently driven away from home for raising his hand to his father.

Gikonyo also grew up in a broken family as his mother had been driven away by his father. This made him develop an intensely protective love for his mother, an attachment, which is transferred to Mumbi when he gets married. This explains why he finds separation from the woman he loves so unbearable that he confesses the oath. Koinandu harbours hatred against white people because he feels that he deserves better treatment from them as a reward for the role he played during the Second World War. His vengeful feelings towards white people thus emanate from frustrated expectations.

As suggested earlier, this spreading of shortcomings among many protagonists is intended to minimise the negative impact they would have if they were concentrated in one person. The strategy is not without blemish in that it tarnishes the image of the struggle, an image whose negative distortion the authors have expressly set out to correct. Apparently sensing the negative effect of the strategy, however, both authors seem to have set out to limit its impact. One way in which they do this is by portraying their protagonists as haunted by their misdemeanours. Koinandu and General R. are good examples of this: the torment they endure as a result of their actions serves to expiate

University of Cape Town

their guilt. Gikonyo is also made to suffer emotional torture for betraying the struggle: the wife for whose sake he confesses the oath commits adultery and gives birth to another man's child.

Tawuse in Siyongwana's novel is also made to suffer by failing to win the race for the leadership. When he complains to Bhaku about not being chosen as the dogs' leader, seeing that he was the one who first mooted the idea that they should go and live on their own, Bhaku tells him point blank that he cannot be their leader because he is untrustworthy. He accuses Tawuse of deserting them, of using the pretext that he had gone to assess how the dogs who had remained behind were being treated by humans, when in reality he had run away because of hunger.

Another strategy is to show that the involvement of such characters in the struggle serves to rid them of their faults, thereby validating the ideologeme that violence in order to change an unjust and intolerable social order serves to purify man. Belekentloko is a typical example of this process of purification, as has already been argued.

Besides allowing for the spreading of weaknesses among many characters, the use of multiple protagonists makes provision for the creation of the revolutionary vanguard. In Chapter One it was noted that the vanguard facilitates the involvement of many minds in the leadership of the movement and as a result a variety of talents can be tapped. In addition to enabling the utilisation of a range of skills, the vanguard also ensures that in the event of the death of the leader the revolution is not derailed. Ngugi makes better use of his multiple protagonists than Siyongwana because he not only assigns different roles to the characters as Siyongwana does, but also allows his main protagonist to die in the struggle, and this "death or defeat balances the aura of invulnerability which has come to attend [virtuous victims]". (Goodin 1985, 85).

Kihika is multi-skilled and thus able to lead the struggle during both the non-violent stage, when oratorical skills and charisma are of major importance in galvanising people into political activity, and the violent stage, in which the leader should be a man of courage, vision and iron will. Ngugi also creates other protagonists, including General R., Warui and Koinandu, to portray a community of people with similar interests, a rival power in-the-making capable of threatening the legal system. These characters are

University of Cape Town

endowed with a range of skills that contribute to sustaining the struggle. For example, General R. complements Kihika in that Kihika is described as a strategist while he is portrayed as an activist. In contrasting them Ngugi says: "Kihika would pray and agonize over a problem, General R. acted. Kihika talked of oppression and injustice, and freedom; General R. saw oppressed persons, or a cruel or a good man" (135).

In equipping him to fill the leadership role when Kihika is murdered the author describes him as a man who "never forgot a friend or an enemy" (136). This means that he will not let the name of Kihika die, nor will he rest until his death is avenged. In fact when Kihika is betrayed he prays to God for the first time in his entire life. He reports:

> Let me first of all tell you that I never prayed to God. I never believed in Him. I believe in Gikuyu and Mumbi and in the black people of this our country. But one day I did pray. One day in the forest alone, I knelt down and cried with my heart. God, if you are there above, spare me and I'll find Kihika's real murder. (134)

It is this resolve that makes him "one of the most fierce of Kihika's band of Forest Fighters, feared in the village and even among his followers"(136). Through characters such as General R., Ngugi suggests the invulnerability of the community of freedom fighters, even after Kihika's death. It is in balancing defeat and victory in this way that Ngugi's work of art excels over Siyongwana's. There is no trivialising of suffering in the portrayal of Kihika's death, while at the same time the victory of the community makes sure that defeat is de-emphasised. In the words of Goodin (1985, 85): "the defeat is a correction factor. As to the victorious element in the ending, it corrects this correction. It ensures that defeat will not eclipse the victory seen throughout the novel".

The manner in which Ngugi organises his community of freedom fighters allows for recognition of the role played by women in the struggle. In his novel sub-organisations such as the one for women emerge as Wambui, who "believed in the power of women to influence events, especially where men had failed to act, or seemed indecisive", organises women to take action to persuade Mugo to deliver the main address at the Uhuru celebrations (157). Grassroots organisations such as this encourage the emergence of divergent interests, which – as pointed out in Chapter One – benefits the revolution in assisting it to deliver what it set out to achieve.

University of Cape Town

Siyongwana also uses multiple protagonists, but he is not as successful as Ngugi in employing them to make his novel convincing, both artistically and politically. He avoids ascribing every virtue to a single character and thus minimises the tendency to present freedom fighters as super-human. Tawuse is endowed with the impassioned eloquence needed during the non-violent stage of the struggle to galvanise people into political activity. It is during this phase that slogans are formulated around common grievances to effect alliances among the different strata of the oppressed people, and individuals with charisma and oratorical gifts are very useful. Mthendevu is endowed with the qualities of courage, vision and iron will to meet the challenges of the phase of revolutionary turmoil (hence he is elected leader during this phase), Belekentloko is given military prowess, and Bhaku is allotted supportive skills.

But Siyongwana fails to use the multiplicity of protagonists to restrain the excessive optimism that can arise from the portrayal of outright triumph. The protagonists who start the struggle are all unharmed and victorious at the end. As was pointed out earlier, such excessive optimism runs the risk of falsifying reality and trivialising suffering. Furthermore, Siyongwana's community of freedom fighters has no gender differentiation: all the dogs that join the struggle are simply designated as dogs. This prevents the novel from explicitly recognising the role played by women in the struggle for liberation.

Ngugi is also more convincing than Siyongwana in depicting his antagonists, because he provides them with a personal and psychological history; moreover, he portrays them as belonging to a legal system. In tracing the personal and psychological history of Thompson, his main antagonist, Ngugi tells us that he first came to Africa during the Second World War as an officer, seconded to the King's African Rifles. After the war he returned to England to continue his interrupted studies at Oxford University. One of the courses for which he registered was History, and it was whilst pursuing this course that he found himself interested in the development of the British Empire. What starts as an interest develops into a conviction, a dream, and finally an obsession. Possessed by a vision of what he calls the "British Mission to the World", he sails for East Africa to convert Africa to the British way of life by changing the social and cultural environment.

University of Cape Town

One of the pillars of this Mission is the assumption that everything that is European is superior and anything that is African is inferior. That Thompson also believes that Africans are inferior is confirmed by remarks such as the following: "Dr Albert Schwitzer says 'the Negro is a child and with children nothing can be done without the use of authority'. I've now worked in Nyeri, Githima, Kisumu, Ngong. I agree" (49). Knowing this background, the reader is not surprised by the manner in which he treats Africans such as Karanja and the detainees, both in Yala and in Rira.

Ngugi also gives the personal and psychological histories of Karanja and Mugo, both of whom can be regarded as antagonists because they collaborate with the white man. Nwankwo (1982, 158) terms characters such as these as the "errand boys" of the white man. Generally speaking, the characteristics shared by such people are an unquestioning acceptance of all the white man says, a willingness to grovel at his feet for the few crumbs that might fall from his table, and a morbid fear of the white man. Ngugi is highly resourceful in unfolding the personal history of Karanja before the reader's eyes, making extensive use of flashbacks. Through this and other devices he supplies a number of reasons for Karanja's decision to collaborate with the white man.

First, he thinks that the white man is supreme and sees no point in opposing that which seems divinely willed (vide an interview with Ngugi dated 19 November 1966 at Leeds University). It is after he has observed the vindictiveness of those who kill Kihika that Karanja becomes convinced of the invincibility of the white man's power. Ngugi tells us that he "had gone to see Kihika hang from a tree... the body was hideous; the lips, over which a few flies played, were ugly" (199). This picture paralyses him with fear, to the extent that throughout the novel we see him cringing and shaking in the presence of white men. Secondly, he decides to align himself with the white man because he hopes to win Mumbi: as Wright (1973, 114) puts it, "Driven by his rejected love for Mumbi he compromises too much... in fact he compromises his manhood and self respect because of the love for a woman". A third factor is the vision of universal selfishness that comes to him one day at the railway station, which prompts him to join the home guard to save his own life. As Palmer (1979, 29) says: "it is not only Karanja's disillusionment with love but also this vision of universal selfishness, callousness,

University of Cape Town

preoccupation with self-preservation that shapes his determination to adapt himself for the struggle for life".

The reader is not surprised when one sees him cringing and shaking before Thompson, who uses him as his personal messenger. Some of the errands are trivial and humiliating, but Karanja would rather endure humiliation than offend the "omnipotent" white man. One day Thompson sends him to deliver a note to his wife, Margery. With a vague intention of seducing him, Margery invites him to come inside the house. His fear of the white man makes him sit on the edge of his seat, staring at the ceiling and walls to avoid looking at Margery's breasts. When he is asked whether he takes sugar in his coffee he automatically says "no" when in actual fact he "loathed coffee or tea without lots of sugar" (35). This shows that these "errand boys" are sometimes put in good bargaining positions, but are too scared of offending the white master to make the best of them. This fear is vividly expressed in Karanja's holding "his cup in both hands afraid of spilling a drop on the carpet"(35).

This fear makes him suffer from a "deadly disease of slave mentality, manifesting itself in an inferiority complex" (Fanon 1975, 24). Whilst this inferiority complex causes him to cringe and shake before the white man it makes him ruthless towards his fellow Africans. The more he despises himself, the sterner and crueller he becomes towards his fellow Africans. The shooting and killing of blacks thrills Karanja and makes him feel a new man, a part of that "invincible might whose symbol was the white man" (199).

In tracing the personal and psychological history of Mugo, Ngugi portrays him as coming from a poor background. His father and mother have died poor, leaving him in the custody of a distant aunt, Waitherero, an alcoholic with "a pitiful persecution complex. [She] incessantly tortures Mugo with the sad fact that he is an orphan unable to accomplish much in life" (Nwankwo 1982,147). When his aunt dies he decides to turn to the soil with a vow to "labour and sweat and through success and wealth force society to recognise him" (9). This quest for recognition becomes an obsession. He will not allow anything or anybody to deter him from achieving this goal. This is the reason why he does not involve himself in the struggle for Uhuru. Anybody who threatens this ambition is an enemy, which is why he betrays Kihika. As he explains to Mumbi: "I wanted to live

University of Cape Town

my life. I never wanted to be involved in anything. Then he came into my life... and pulled me into the stream. So I killed him" (161).

All the antagonists in Siyongwana's novel are examples of the type of characters that Ndebele (1984, 44) describes as "symbols [that] appear in most of our writings as finished products often without personal history". The author does not tell us what has made Kholisile so cruel to his dogs and so intransigent to change. The reader is left to deduce that he behaves this way because he firmly believes that men are superior to dogs. How this belief becomes so ingrained in his mind is not revealed. The same applies to the behaviour of other antagonists such as Jongani, whose benevolence towards his dogs is not motivated. No reasons are given for why Bambisela and Sibi decide to collaborate with their oppressors. It seems that Siyongwana's aim in depicting these characters is simply "to identify the symbol of oppression, mobilise the mob and kill off the symbol identified" (Mackenzie 1990, 18). This is contrary to Ndebele's (1989, 49) advice that "the artist should help the reader condemn the stooge while understanding something of his motivations. That way the reader learns something about the psychology of the co-opted".

Another shortcoming in Siyongwana's representation of antagonists is that they are portrayed not as part of a legal system but simply as a group. This means that their exposure and condemnation amounts to an attack on a group rather than an institution. The problem is that as members of a group the antagonists retain their individuality and the author seems to be targeting individuals and not a political system or institution. Kholisile's cruelty tends to be perceived as a personal vendetta against dogs and not as representative of the group; at times, for instance, other humans such as Jongani reprimand him for his ill-treatment of dogs. Thus the evils of the colonial/apartheid system he is supposed to be representing are not sufficiently exposed and condemned.

Ngugi's antagonists are a part of a legal system and "their inflictions upon protagonists represent the operation of that system" (Goodin 1985, 54). Thompson has worked for the British colonial government as a District Officer and an Administrative Secretary, Thomas Robson (known as Tom the Terror) has been a District Officer and Karanja himself is a leader in the Home Guards and later a Chief. Their actions against the protagonists can be summed up as repression, which according to Goodin (1985, 55)

University of Cape Town

is "suffering inflicted in order to protect an unjust system". Making these antagonists part of the colonial system Ngugi "brings into question the very legitimacy or sovereignty of the system, its right to exercise power. It shows that system opposing the common good and attacking the ties among human beings, which bring society into being. In short it shows the system to be antisocial" (ibid., 55).

Most of the instances that expose the antisocial actions of the antagonists have been analysed in the section on ideologemes. Here I am going to focus on those activities that directly attack the ties among human beings. There are fewer instances of this in Siyongwana's novel than in Ngugi's and once again it is his choice of the dog allegory that imposes limitations in this regard. Siyongwana would be stretching the reader's imagination too far if he were to show dogs falling in love and marrying, in order to expose how the antagonists attack these love ties. The love tie he is able to represent realistically is the one between mother and children (i.e. between Sibi and her puppies).

The incident through which Siyongwana exposes and condemns how the human antagonists attack community ties among the dogs occurs when the dogs have embarked on the path of civil disobedience and have begun to snatch meat from men's dishes. For this they are called to a meeting that resembles a court case. When they are accused of being riotous, they reply that they are demanding their rightful share. Kholisile then asks: *"yiyona ndlela ningasifumana ngayo le yokusifuna ngenkani?"* (Is demanding your share by force the only way through which you can get it*?). Belekentloko retorts: "Ngesisithini? Kudala sithetha nani ningasihoyi*" (45) (what else can we do? We tried to negotiate with you for a long time but you simply disregarded us). Kholisile singles out Belekentloko to interrogate but the dog acquits himself beautifully.

Although it is clear that humans have no justifiable case against the dogs Kholisile banishes Bhaku, Tawuse and Mthendevu. Sibi is so devastated by this that she pleads with her master to pardon them, and pledges to teach them how dogs should behave in the dominion of men – but all to no avail. Their departure protests the callousness of antagonists who shatter family ties by driving young people away from the protective care of their parents. As they leave, Sibi touchingly performs her last parental duty by warning them against dangerous beasts.

University of Cape Town

In Ngugi's novel there are many such touching incidents. Besides the shattering of family ties we witness the demolition of love and marriage relations. Ngugi portrays how heart-rending to the family members is Kihika's decision to go into the forest and join the freedom fighters. His brother Kariuki, who is sent by his father to deliver the sad news to his brother-in-law, is so crushed by the burden that he is not able to hide his grief from his sister Mumbi. He tearfully divulges the message to her and "fell into Mumbi's arms" (88). She is so shaken by the news that the ground seems to be going round and round beneath her feet. His father is so shocked that he prays: "Let God do with him as he sees fit" (88). Later when Kihika is caught and hanged his warrior father is so heartbroken that he urinates on his legs and weeps through the night like a child. Mumbi is so distressed that for two full days she vomits whatever she eats or drinks.

Ngugi employs a love triangle to suggest how the system destroys love relationships. He delicately develops a love affair between Kihika and Wambuku, and has Kihika impetuously vow never to leave her, thinking that "he alone among the other men would have a woman he loved fighting on his side"(86). Wambuku mistakenly hears this as a pledge that he will never leave her for politics, her perceived rival. She then feels betrayed when, after the arrest of Kenyatta, Kihika informs her that he is going to join the forest fighters. Although she is heartily disappointed by Kihika's decision she nevertheless remains faithful to him in the hope that he will return, a hope that is dashed when he is captured and executed. She then abandons herself to promiscuity and is later beaten to death by a home guard for rejecting his sexual overtures. Ngugi, sensing that Wambuku's behaviour is an indictment of women, develops another love relationship between Kihika and Njeri. Nobody suspects that this tigress has fallen in love with Kihika, not even Kihika himself. When he goes to the forest she follows, to fight side by side with him. This love relationship also ends tragically, as the antagonists kill both Kihika and Njeri.

The near desolation of Gikonyo and Mumbi's happy marriage is a good example of how the antagonistic system can wreck the most tender of ties. The love relationship that leads to this marriage is intricately initiated. Mumbi, the village beauty, is the dream bride of every suitor, and Gikonyo, a carpenter, is surprisingly the one who wins her

University of Cape Town

heart in the face of strong competition from Karanja. Gikonyo tells of the unspeakable happiness he enjoyed when he married Mumbi:

> It was like being born again. I felt whole, renewed…I had made love to many a woman, but I never had felt like that before. Before I was nothing. Now I was a man. During our short period of married life, Mumbi made me feel it was all important… suddenly I discovered… no, it was as if I had made a covenant with God to be happy. How shall I say it? I took the woman in my arms – do you know a banana stem? I peeled off layer after layer, and put out my hand, my trembling hand, to reach the Kiana coiled inside.
>
> Every day I found a new Mumbi. Together we plunged into the forest. And I was not afraid of the darkness…(86).

This quotation will be analysed fully in the section on typical beauty, below, but here it will suffice to observe that the author portrays an intense loving relationship so as to underline the malevolence of antagonists who destroy such tender ties and to illuminate the pain suffered by the victims of this callousness. Mumbi tries to arm herself to stage a gallant fight when her husband is arrested, but when the day comes "she found herself powerless to save her man" and able only to shriek piteously "Come back to me, Gikonyo" (90).

It is Gikonyo's friend Karanja who nearly annihilates their marriage. In his "exalted" position as a home guard and later a Chief he sexually exploits black women who come to him for help: "women offered their naked bodies to him" (182). He even goes as far as taking sexual advantage of Mumbi, the wife of his friend who has been detained. After six years in detention Gikonyo confesses the oath so as to go back to his loving wife, but he finds her carrying Karanja's child. When he is told that the child is Karanja's he exclaims in utter disbelief "Karanja my friend?"; and when the answer from his mother is "Yes. These things happen", he is struck dumb with disappointment:

> Gikonyo did not move. He only sat, leaning backwards against a post behind him, his eyes now immobile now rolling, without registering anything. Even the thought that Mumbi had been to other men's bed every night for the last six years seemed not to disturb him. As if drugged, Gikonyo did not feel the wound; and could not tell what caused this terrible exhaustion(100).

University of Cape Town

The emotional torment and its repercussions are so severe that Mumbi has to go back to her parents. Ironically it is Mugo's confession that saves the marriage from total ruin. Stunned by his courage in admitting his guilt and weakness, Gikonyo braces himself to brave the tide and initiate a dialogue with his wife. In fact he intends to carve a stool for Mumbi bearing the figure of a pregnant woman whose child symbolise the future Kenya.

Punishment is meted out to all the antagonists as a form of retribution. The common fate of such characters is failure, disappointment or (sometimes violent) death. Thompson in Ngugi's novel is infuriated and frustrated by his failure to impose his will on Africans. This is an affront to the whole process of colonisation, which from its inception was intended to intimidate Africans into submission. Thompson's success at Yala has earned him a transfer to Rira. Detainees taken to Rira Camp are men who refuse to answer questions and have "sworn never to co-operate with the government" (115). His method of extorting confession differs from those of other prison-directors. While others would beat and bury a man naked in the hot sand for lengthy periods, he lectures the detainees in groups about the joys of home. He tells them that they can go home to their wives and children if only they confess the oath – a method that brought him success in other camps.

He tries the same method at Rira but the detainees there will not talk. The only detainee who agrees to answer questions is Mugo. The author recounts: "Thompson like a tick stuck to Mugo. He questioned him daily... He picked him up for punishment. Sometimes he would have the warder whip Mugo before other detainees. Sometimes in naked fury he would snatch the whip from the warders and apply it himself" (117). All this is to no avail, for Mugo neither cries for mercy nor confesses anything. Thompson is beside himself with anger: "eliminate the vermin, he would grind his teeth at night" (117). The obduracy of the detainees drives him to the edge of madness: he abandons his method and orders the white officers and warders to beat them. The beating continues for days and eleven detainees die, but still no one confesses the oath. News of this leaks out and Thompson is removed from office in the public administration he loves. This inflicts a wound on his pride so painful that, even years later, recollection of the incident brings back "all the humiliation he had felt at that time" (42).

University of Cape Town

But this humiliation is nothing compared to the disappointment he suffers on receiving the news that Kenya is to be granted independence. The granting of independence to Kenya demolishes the very foundation of his philosophy of life and shatters his dream of the creation of one global British nation. His stereotype of the African leads him to visualise a state of chaos in his office when an African takes over from him. Ngugi reveals that when his wife suggests that he will be replaced by an African, "he became stiff as if a pin had pricked his buttocks... His earlier vision in the day came back now even more vividly: broken jars and test tubes on laboratory floors" (43).

It is as if failure is not enough, because Ngugi further punishes Thompson by having his wife commit adultery with the drunken South African Dr. Van Dyke. While the infidelity of his wife humiliates him, it also serves to liberate Africans from an inferiority complex "which is frequently expressed through an almost compulsive desire to marry a white European" (Potholm 1976, 44), by showing that whites are "not only godly missionaries or sober and ascetic wise men locked in the responsibility to civilize the savage. There are drunkards and profligates, dissolute women and unfaithful housewives" (Nwankwo 1982, 163). Broken-hearted, Thompson resigns his job, drowns his sorrow in drink and returns to Britain vanquished.

Karanja and Mugo have their share of humiliation. A woman for whom he has sold his manhood humiliates Karanja. He himself tells Mumbi that he has confessed the oath and joined the home guards because of his love for her. Mumbi tauntingly calls him 'Judas' and berates him saying: "why don't you wear your mother's skirt and Mwengu? When others went to fight you remained behind to lick the feet of your white husbands" (130). Karanja's humiliation is coupled with disappointment. He has so believed in the invincibility of the white man that he has entrusted his whole life to him. A few days before the Uhuru celebrations he will still not believe that Thompson, who for him symbolises white power, is leaving. When he finally gathers the courage to ask Thompson he is so dismayed by the white man's confirmation of the rumour that "his gait to an observer, conjured up a picture of a dog that has been unexpectedly snubbed by the master its trusts" (140).

University of Cape Town

For all the humiliation and disappointment Karanja suffers he only has himself to blame because he ignores his mother's warning: "don't go against the people. A man who ignores the voice of his own people comes to no good end" (196). Indeed he comes to no good end. Towards the end of the book it is intimated that in despair he intends to commit suicide by throwing himself in front of a train, but instead of running over him the train "swished past him... so close that the wind threw him back". He has sold his soul to the Devil in the form of the white man, as it were, and for this reason he is denied even the right to take his own life. He will be haunted forever by his guilty conscience and his failures.

His newfound friend, the white man, also humiliates Mugo. As he blurts out to Thompson the story of how Kihika came to his hut, "he felt deep gratitude to the white man, a patient listener...". But to his surprise, when he finishes his story Thompson spits in his face and slaps him hard. This same Thompson tortures him day and night at Rira detention camp, even after he has looked at the file to see who he is. This shows that the traitors are despised by the very whites to whom they betray their friends and sell their souls. They are mere pawns in the white man's game. On top of this humiliation Mugo is further tormented by his guilty conscience, and in a trance-like state of mind tells Mumbi of his hellish experience: "imagine all your life you cannot sleep – so many fingers touching your flesh, eyes always watching you – in dark places sleeping, waking no rest – ah!"(161).

Bambisela and Sibi in *Ubulumko Bezinja* suffer the same fate as Mugo in being spitefully treated by the master they have faithfully served. Bambisela betrays his kith and kin for the little crumbs that fall from his master's table. The "controlling impulse in [his] existence is profit and comfort and it does not matter how [he] came about it" (Nwankwo 1982, 158). When Tawuse appeals to them to have confidence in themselves and trust that they can live independently of man, his convincing reasoning makes Sibi give serious consideration to his words, but Bambisela is not at all moved because what is uppermost in his mind is food and comfort. Siyongwana exposes this blemish in his character: "*Yena umthetho wakhe wayengakwazi ukuzikisa ukucinga njengezinye izinja awayezalwe nazo. Izinto ezaziphambili kuye kukukhonkotha nokutya*" (90) (Unlike his

University of Cape Town

other siblings he was unable to think seriously about anything. What was uppermost in his mind was barking and food).

In the end they are mercilessly butchered by the very people they have faithfully served. This happens in spite of Sibi's pleading: "*Singathini ukukugcina ithuba elide kangaka, nkosi, sikusebenzela uze ngoku usibulale ngaphandle kwesizathu? (*133) (How can it be that after guarding you for such a long time and serving you, now you reward us by killing us for no reason?). The fatally wounded Sibi groans: "*Kodwa niya kuhamba nzima nokuba sesingekho thina"* (133) (Nevertheless, you will encounter tribulations even if we will not be there to witness them). Kholisile suffers the same humiliation that Thompson endures when the dogs attain their freedom. He is forced grudgingly to acknowledge that dogs are equal to men and to agree to treat them accordingly, even though he had vowed not to accede to their demands as long as he lived.

Some of the punishments meted out to the antagonists are so severe that the authors may perhaps be accused of being "vindictive rather than redemptive" (Qangule 1979, 227). But they mitigate the force of this accusation by minimising the impact of such punishments on the reader. For instance, although Mugo is killed for betraying Kihika, the way in which Ngugi presents the incident is such that Mugo's fate seems redemptive rather than vindictive. All the attempts that Mugo makes to expiate his crime fail to remove his fears and hallucinations. He bravely saves a pregnant woman who is molested by one of the home guards and unflinchingly endures torture in detention, but his fears and hallucinations continue to torment him. He then decides to confess his crime. In capturing the relief he experiences when he does this, Ngugi says: "As soon as the first words were out, Mugo felt light. A load of many years was lifted from his shoulders. He was free, sure, confident" (204).

After this confession Gitogo's mother mistakes him for her deaf and dumb son who was butchered by the white man during the Emergency, and "if the old woman mistakes him for Gitogo, it is because Mugo, having been cleansed, is a symbolic substitute for the virile image of the dead Gitogo who despite being deaf and dumb was the national embodiment of fitness and energy which all the people identified with" (Nwankwo 1982, 155). Mugo's death becomes a sacrifice through which many are saved: Karanja, the traitor who deserves death, is saved by Mugo's confession, Mumbi

University of Cape Town

and Gikonyo's marriage is rescued, and the guilt of the people as a whole is symbolically purged. Mugo dies a hero and his heroism "is the opposite of the heroism of the battlefield: it is the heroism of admitting our guilt and weakness" (Cook 1977, 105).

Sibi and Bambisela in Siyongwana's novel die, but this is presented by the writer in such a way that it is not perceived as a punishment for their role in the narrative so much as a strategy to condemn the callousness of Kholisile. This is so because they are killed after they have reconsidered their decision to collaborate with man. As pointed out earlier, Sibi seriously considers joining the struggle after Tawuse's passionate appeal to them to have confidence in themselves during one of the rebel dogs' visits to their former homes. In another visit, which is to be the cause of their execution, Bambisela pledges to join the other dogs in the struggle after Mthendevu has assured him that he will be accepted even at that late stage. Even Kholisile's humiliation is minimised, because the dogs agree to make certain concessions, including allowing government to remain in the hands of the humans.

Another stroke of ingenuity that both authors exhibit in their portrayal of the antagonists is to avoid making them downright degenerate and evil characters. One way of achieving this is by "multiplying antagonists... and drawing multiple distinctions between and among them...[and thus] make their novels extremely convincing, both artistically and politically" (Goodin 1985, 82). Through multiplying their antagonists, both these authors acknowledge that no race is altogether evil: there are good and evil men and women in all races. Whilst there are white men like Thompson and Robson who torture and terrorise black people; the are still among them women such as Dr Lynd who "had never harmed anybody. True, she often scolded her houseboy but she also gave him presents, clothes, built him a little brick house at the back, and never worked him hard" (41). This kindness may be paternalistic and typical of liberal ideology, but it is still kindness.

Thompson himself, although portrayed as a racist, is endowed with resilience – a trait usually reserved for freedom fighters. His wife commits adultery and there is a suggestion that he is aware of this, as reflected in the chitchat of Karanja's tribesmen: "He must have known. That is why he is always sad"(137). His dream of a united British nation is shattered, but on the very spot where his wife committed adultery he is still able

University of Cape Town

to say: "Perhaps this is not the journey's end" (144). Even Robson, who is portrayed as a brute who sometimes "broke the prayers with a bren-gun [would] occasionally pardon a man even though he were kneeling at the edge of the grave" (162).

In *Ubulumko Bezinja* the bigotry of Kholisile is counter-poised with the benevolence of Jongani. Besides making his novel convincing politically, it also enables the realisation of one of its intentions, which is to vindicate the efficacy of violence. Without characters such as Jongani a negotiated settlement between dogs and humans would have been impossible to achieve even after recourse to violence. Although Kholisile is depicted as an intolerant tyrant he is protective of his dogs. A case in point is the incident in which he confronts and threatens another man who beats Bambisela at a time when the other dogs are engaged in the struggle for their freedom. He also instructs his family to keep the dogs well fed all the time. He takes good care of Sibi when she is still a puppy and saves her from certain death during a serious drought by giving her a lot of milk. Amongst other things, it is gratitude for this kindness that has blinded Sibi to the cruel side of Kholisile and reduced her to perpetual docility.

These authors achieve a similar balance in their portrayal of collaborators through the same strategy of multiplying the characters that play this role. There is Karanja, through whom Ngugi "presents the most despicable qualities of a ruthless exploitative individual who uses all instruments at his disposal to master his environment. Opportunism, brutality, insensitivity and total disregard of the unpredictable aspects of human existence are not beyond him" (Nwankwo 1982, 160). He is counterpoised with Mugo who (unlike Karanja who preys upon his fellows) decides to be neutral in the struggle for liberation, for reasons of personal expediency. Through this character Ngugi shows the dangers of fence sitting. He maintains that it is not possible to remain uncommitted during a social crisis, because the contending parties will bump against your fence and you may fall on the wrong side. Kihika bumps against Mugo's fence and Mugo falls on the wrong side.

Karanja himself is not devoid of good traits. Like a hero in African folktales, he is born under special circumstances associated with the problems experienced by his mother in giving birth. He appears to be a special child and the reader, like his mother, is led to have high expectations of him. His specialness is augmented by the fact that, again

University of Cape Town

like the hero in African folktales, he is endowed with a gift for playing the guitar. Although he is continually humiliated by Mumbi he still helps her and her family to survive the period of the Emergency by giving them food and ensuring that her brother is able to get a bursary to continue with his education. Mumbi herself acknowledges her family's indebtedness to Karanja when she says to Mugo: "It's when Kariuki went to Siriana that life came back to my parents. Mbugua started talking about the future, while Wanjiku wept because she was happy. I was also happy..." (130). Furthermore Ngugi avoids presenting him as a complete degenerate by having Mugo and not him to betray Kihika.

In Siyongwana's novel Bambisela and Sibi shared the role of being collaborators. He draws multiple distinctions between them. Whilst Bamisela betrays his kith and kin for food and comfort, it is gratitude for the kindness that Kholisile showed to Sibi as a puppy that has blinded Sibi to the cruel side of Kholisile and reduced her to perpetual docility. In all her collaboration with Kholisile Sibi does not betray the freedom fighters as Bambisela does, and her role is presumably to represent people who get so used to being oppressed that they cannot imagine an alternative. The writer mitigates this negative role by showing that in the end she is so liberated from her morbid fear and submissiveness that she is able to confront her oppressors with questions that they are not able to answer. Even Bambisela is redeemed, because in the end he regrets remaining behind when the other dogs went away and pledges to join them soon. Unfortunately this decision is taken too late because Kholisile kills them the following day. The unflinching way in which Bambisela confronts his death is also intended to augment his new image.

University of Cape Town

4.2.2 Typical Beauty

Generally speaking, with regards to the first basic type of compositional-stylistic unity which is direct authorial literary narration, authorial speech in both these novels serves to contest and undermine colonial ideology, which – as pointed out earlier – seeks to perpetuate the power position of the colonialists through portraying the freedom fighters as savages and communists bent on disrupting the law and order that the honourable and just white man labours to maintain. Authorial speech in these novels is used both to

lionise the freedom fighters and to denounce as brutes all those who try to frustrate the people's struggle for liberation. In an interview on the 18th November 1966 at Leeds University, Ngugi identified the various characters he commends or condemns through his authorial speech:

> In *A Grain of Wheat* I look at the people who fought for independence. I see them falling into various groups. There were those who thought the white man was supreme... They saw no point in opposing, that which was divinely willed... There were others who supported the independence movement and who took the oath. Of these some fought to the last. But others when it came to the test did not live up to their faith and ideals. They gave in. Finally there were those who we might call the neutrals, you know, the uncommitted. But these soon find out that in a given social crisis they can never be uncommitted.

Ngugi's authorial speech is more comprehensive than that of Siyongwana, which is understandable because this is his second novel informed by revolutionary ideology (the first is *Weep Not Child*), while *Ubulumko Bezinja* is Siyongwana's first and only novel to date. Furthermore, unlike Siyongwana who had to rely heavily upon his imagination in writing his novel because the armed struggle was at the time only in its infancy, Ngugi had the benefit of hindsight when he wrote his book. He thus had ready access to a language of revolution from which he could transpose material to authenticate his authorial speech.

Ngugi employs authorial speech to create an aura of heroism about the vanguard of revolution. Paying tribute to Kihika's gallantry he writes:

> People came to know Kihika to be the terror of the white man. They said he could move mountains and compel thunder from heaven...The man who compels trees and mountains to move, the man who could go for ten miles crawling on his stomach through sand and thorny bush, was surely beyond the arm of the white man (17).

He endows Kihika with the supernatural power of being able to "move mountains and compel thunder from heaven", to "[compel] trees and mountains to move, and thus casts him in the mould of mythical heroes. Ngugi also uses emphatic repetition "which takes the form of anaphora where repetition comes at the beginning of the clause" (Snead 1984,70) in the following clauses: "*The man who* compelled trees and mountains to

University of Cape Town

move, *the man who* could go for ten miles crawling on his stomach..."(emphasis mine). Besides magnifying Kihika's courage, the use of repetition, which is recurrent in the novel, illustrates Snead's (1984, 69) assertion that there is greater "insistence on the pure beauty and value of repetition" in black cultures. The employment of repetition therefore also functions as a strategy of indigenising the novel, of making it distinctly African, despite the fact that it is written in English.

The adulation of Kihika in this excerpt is couched in symbolic terms. The "mountains" and "trees" he is endowed with the power to move signify the obstacles and enemies in the way of the black man's freedom, such as the Mahee Police station and people like Robson whom he eliminates in the course of the story. The "thunder" he is able to compel from heaven symbolises the weapons such as guns which are used by the freedom fighters in their fight for freedom. To "go for ten miles crawling on his stomach through sand and thorny bush" is a hyperbolic rendering of the form of training freedom fighters receives as guerrilla soldiers.

Another example of Ngugi's use of authorial speech to lionise the freedom fighters is the following, in which he contrasts the characters of Kihika and General R.:

> General R. was a man of few words, except when he was excited. 'I can't use my tongue' he used to say with a streak of pride 'but I can use my hands'. Kihika would pray and agonize over a problem; General R. acted. Kihika talked of oppression and injustice and freedom; General R. saw oppressed persons, or cruel or a good man. He was something of an adventurer...
>
> Otherwise he was quiet, rarely talked about himself or about his political beliefs, and noticeably avoided wild scenes and brawls that so often flared up in eating-houses. Yet this man, who clearly shunned quarrels and violence and mostly kept alone, became one of the most fierce of Kihika's band of Forest Fighters, feared in the village and even among his followers. General R. never forgot a friend or an enemy. R. stood for Russia (135-36).

This excerpt abounds in balanced antithesis, which is at times achieved through the use of adversative conjunctions such as "except", "but", "otherwise" and "yet". This rhetorical strategy is employed to highlight certain admirable traits in the character of General R. The first contrasting pair: "General R. was a man of few words, except when he was excited", is intended to endow him with the wisdom of knowing when and when not to speak. To magnify this quality of quietness Ngugi uses over-wording in the first,

University of Cape Town

second and fifth sentences: "a man of few words"; "I can't use my tongue" and "he was quiet". The repetition of this idea in three sentences forms a three-part list, which according to Carter (1997, 268) "seems to be both the minimum and maximum necessary to make a point effective".

The second part of the list – "I can't use my tongue... but I can use my hands" – serves to describe him as a man of action, a quality that makes him an ideal man during the phase of armed struggle and a perfect lieutenant to Kihika, the powerful speaker. This idea is couched in metaphorical language as his quiet disposition and ability to act is evoked by reference to parts of the body: "tongue" and "hands", which play prominent roles in speech and action respectively. Ngugi interrupts the repetitive unfolding of the notion of the General's quiet disposition by introducing another set of contrasting pairs that juxtapose the General with Kihika. This interruption serves as a "cut" which according to Snead (1984, 67) is "an abrupt, seemingly unmotivated break (an accidental *da capo*) with a series already in progress and a willed return to a prior series". In highlighting the significance of the rhetorical strategy of cut in black culture Snead (1984, 67) maintains:

> A culture based on the idea of the cut will always suffer in a society whose dominant idea is material progress – but 'cuts' possess their charm! In European culture the goal is always clear: that which always is being worked towards. The role is thus that which is reached only when culture 'plays out' its history. Such a culture is never 'immediate' but 'mediated' and separated from the present tense by its own future-orientation. Moreover, European culture does not allow 'a succession of accidents and surprises' but maintains the illusion of progress and control at all costs. Black culture in the 'cut', builds 'accidents' into its coverage, almost as if to control their unpredictability. Itself a kind of cultural coverage, this magic of the 'cut' attempts to confront accidents and rupture not by covering them over but by making room for them inside the system itself.

The cut is achieved through the introduction of another set of contrasting pairs of qualities that juxtapose General R. with Kihika: "Kihika would pray and agonize over a problem; General R. acted", and "Kihika talked of oppression... General R. saw oppressed persons...". This serves to hint that the rupture that is to be caused by the death of Kihika will be minimised by the existence of General R., whose character complements that of his leader and makes him ideally equipped to put into practice the

University of Cape Town

lofty ideals promulgated by Kihika. After the interruption caused by the cut Ngugi returns to the notion of the General's taciturn disposition: "Otherwise he was quiet…".

Ngugi again uses balanced antithesis in endowing General R. with courage when he writes: "Yet this man, who clearly shunned quarrels and violence … became one of the most fierce of Kihika's band of Forest Fighters, feared in the village and even among his followers". His valour is counterpoised with his avoidance of wild scenes and brawls to refute the stereotype perpetrated by the colonialists that freedom fighters were bloodthirsty savages who enjoyed torturing their enemies. The idea that the bravery of General R. does not cause him to degenerate into a brute is emphasised when he is described as a man who "never forgot a friend or an enemy": the possible vindictiveness in "never forgot…an enemy" is balanced by the quality of loyalty evoked in "never forgot a friend.

Sustained authorial speech is also used to eulogise the courage, beauty, knowledge, diligence and resilience in other members of the vanguard such as Koinandu, Mumbi, Wambui, Gikonyo and Warui. It is not necessary to analyse all the excerpts in which Ngugi lionises the freedom fighters, as the strategies he uses in other excerpts are similar to those already identified and analysed above. What needs to be emphasised here is that Ngugi employs authorial speech to endow his protagonists with a variety of attributes, to make sure that there is a range of expertise available to meet the demands of the struggle through all its developmental stages, and to ensure that the fight for freedom is not derailed when one of them dies.

Ngugi also devotes sustained authorial speech to exposing and condemning the villainous characters of his antagonists. In describing the ferociousness of Tom Robson's character he writes:

> Those of you who have visited Thabai or any of the eight ridges around Rung'ei (that is from Kerarapon to Kihingo) will have heard about Thomas Robson or as he was generally known Tom the Terror. He was an epitome of those dark days in our history that witnessed his birth as a District Officer in Rung'ei – that is when the Emergency raged in unabated fury. People said he was mad. They spoke of him with awe, called him Tom or simply 'he' as if the mention of his full name would conjure him up in their presence. Driving in a jeep, one Askari or two at the back, a bren-gun at the knees, and a revolver in his khaki trousers partially concealed by his

University of Cape Town

> bush jacket, he would suddenly appear at the most unexpected times and places to catch unsuspecting victims. He called the Mau Mau. He put them in his jeep, drove them into the edge of the forest, and asked them to dig their graves. He asked them to kneel down. Sometimes he broke the prayers with a bren-gun. More often with a revolver. But occasionally he would pardon a man even though he were kneeling at the edge of the grave. So that until the last moment the victim would not know what to do; whether to run away and risk a bullet, or wait and see if Tom would change his mind. They said he was everywhere. Rumours spread. One man had seen Tom here; another had seen him there. Some village men saw him in their dreams and screamed. He was a man-eater, walking in the night and day. He was death. He was especially brutal to squatters who were repatriated from the rift Valley back to Gikuyu-Ini.
>
> That was in 1954. (162)

In evoking Tom's notoriety Ngugi employs the personal pronoun "you" to suggest that anybody who had visited Thabai should have heard about him. The pronoun ensures that the reader also finds him- or herself included in this imagined community. That Robson's disreputable character is known far and wide is further evinced by reference to a geographical area – "any of the eight ridges around Rung'ei (that is, from Kerarapon to Kihingo)" – where his name recurs in people's conversation. The mention of the names of real places and the year in which these incidents occurred is intended to convince the reader that Thomas Robson is not a fictitious character but really lived. His ignoble character is reflected in the very name "Tom the Terror" by which he is commonly called.

The author recriminates him through intimately associating him with the Emergency when he claims: "he was the epitome of those dark days of our history". Ngugi deplores the wanton destruction of property and life during the Emergency by describing it metaphorically in terms of a fire that "raged in unabated fury". He again involves the reader in condemning both Tom and the Emergency when he uses the inclusive personal pronoun "our" in the phrase "our history". Ngugi avoids giving the impression that his disapprobation of Robson is only a personal vendetta by seeming merely to record the popular verdict on him: "People said he was mad". In some instances he uses the anaphoric (i.e. referring back to something) pronoun "they" when referring to the people as in: "They spoke of him..." and "They said he was

University of Cape Town

everywhere"; in others, he uses noun phrases such as "Some village men" and "One man... another" when referring to these people.

What is common to all these accounts is that Robson is agreed to be so horrific that he is referred to as "Tom or simply 'he' as if the mention of his full name would conjure him up in their presence". In reporting the people's awe of Thomas Robson the author himself mentions his full name only once at the beginning of the paragraph, and thereafter he too uses only the pronoun "he", thus sympathetically enacting the popular superstition. The very depiction of his outward appearance "Driving in a jeep, one Askari or two at the back, a bren-gun at the knees and the revolver in his khaki trousers partially concealed by his bush jacket" is in itself very intimidating. This is made worse by reference to his sudden appearance "at the most unexpected times and places to catch unsuspecting victims". The non-finite verb "Driving" suggests how regularly yet unexpectedly he appeared. Reference to the Askaris indicates that he unscrupulously used blacks to catch other blacks with no qualms of conscience.

To condemn his cruel actions Ngugi uses active sentences in which "the subject is placed first and it is immediately clear who is responsible for the action", with transitive verbs which "transfer their actions to an object which is affected or changed as a result of the action"(Carter 1998, 158, 162). Examples of this sentence structure are found in: "He called them Mau Mau", "He put them in his jeep", and "He asked them to kneel down". Calling the freedom fighters Mau Mau changes them from law-abiding citizens into criminals, putting them into his jeep alters their fate from freeman to prisoners, and asking them to kneel signifies their imminent translation from life to death.

These sentences serve to highlight the limitlessness of his power over the people in his position as District Officer. He is described as a demigod with the power to break prayers "with a bren-gun. More often with a revolver". The boundlessness of his power is made more sinister by its arbitrariness: witness his practise of pardoning a man "even though he were kneeling at the edge of his grave". The fear incited by his unlimited power is made worse by his ability to be omnipresent, as suggested by the use of spatial deictics such as "everywhere" and "here... [and] there": "They said he was everywhere" and "One man had seen Tom here; another had seen him there". The timelessness of his

University of Cape Town

tormenting activities is captured by the use of the temporal deictic phrase "night and day": "He was a man-eater, walking in the night and day".

Ngugi also berates Robson's cruelty by having recourse to the emotionally loaded word "brutal" and the compound noun "man-eater" to reduce him to an ogre that haunts his victims all the time. Similar stratagems are employed to expose the villainy of other antagonists such as Thompson, Dr Van Dyke, Margery, Dr Lynd and Karanja. Through this armoury of devices Ngugi succeeds in showing who the real villains are in this war.

In *Ubulumko Bezinja* the authorial speech used to highlight the heroism of the protagonists is generally not sustained. The two main protagonists Tawuse and Mthendevu receive little adulation from the author, as the authorial speech dedicated to evoking their indomitable spirit is seldom elaborated. Tawuse's quick wit, which has made a major contribution in the struggle for the liberation of dogs, is insubstantially described in one sentence: "*UTawuse lo wayengafuni kungaphindisi xa kukho into engathi iza ngakuye nokuba injani na*" (69) (Tawuse was quick to retort to whatever seemed to be coming his way no matter what it was). Mthendevu's prowess in battle is also cursorarily dealt with in one sentence: "*Yena wayengacingi ukubaleka xa kuliwayo nokuba wonile*" (104) (He would never retreat when fighting even when he was at fault). Besides sketchily describing the heroism of the main protagonists, Siyongwana further diminishes their heroic stature by indicating that they are indiscriminate in exhibiting their otherwise good qualities. To describe Tawuse as retaliating against anything that comes his way is to portray him as pugnacious, and to describe Mthendevu as tenacious even when he is at fault suggests stubbornness and even malevolence.

It is only in eulogising the minor protagonists Belekentloko and Bhaku that Siyongwana's authorial speech is sufficiently elaborate, but even here he neutralises the positive image he tries to create for his characters by contradicting himself. In describing Belekentloko he writes:

> UBelekentloko lo wayelixhwangusha eloyikekayo kwezinye izinja. Wayekwanjalo nasebantwini phofu. Babeye bakhwaze xa baya kokwabo bathi makunqandwe inja, besitsho ke bengamboni. Ibala lakhe lalimnyama khaca enechaphaza elimhlophe engqosheni. Ilizwi lakhe lalilikhulu, lisaziwa ngabantu nazizinja kwilali yakhe. Wayenamabamba amade awayede angathi aza kuphumela ngaphandle emlonyeni. Izinyo wayelisebenzisa kwakucaca ukuba

University of Cape Town

> ezinye izinja zingxamele ukumdela. Inkosi yakhe yayinebhongo ngaye. Yinja awayekhulela phantsi kwayo le uBhaku. Yayimphangela kwakudityaniswa ukutya kwabo. (64)
>
> (Belekentloko was hefty and fearsome to other dogs as well as to people. They used to shout for help when they visited his home requesting protection against him even when he was out of sight. He was pitch black in colour with a white spot on his breast. He had a booming voice, which was well known to people and other dogs in his village. He had long canines, which threatened to protrude from the mouth. He used his tooth when it became clear that other dogs were undermining him. His master was very proud of him. This is the dog under which Bhaku grew. It used to gulp a larger share of their food when it was combined.)

Through authorial speech Belekentloko is endowed with the perfect physique to play a leading role in the stage of armed struggle. He is described as "*ixhwangusha*" (hefty), a term which pays tribute to his size and commanding presence. To show that his stature is awe-inspiring Siyongwana collocates the term "*ixhwangusha*" (hefty) with "*eloyikekayo*" (fearsome). Siyongwana also uses cumulative structures – "where expansions serve to fill in details after the message has been outlined" – to augment Belekentloko's frightening appearance (Toolan 1992, 70). After he has indicated that he was the terror of humans and other dogs he goes on to validate this by adding that people use to shout for help when they visited his home even when he was out of sight. Siyongwana employs the same strategy in presenting his other attributes: "*wayenelizwi elikhulu*" (he had a booming voice) is followed by "*lisaziwa ngabantu nazizinja kwilali yakhe*" (which was well known to people and other dogs in his village), which highlights how popular this trait made him. His other feature, "*Wayenamabamba amade*" (He had long canines), is followed by "*awayede angathi aza kuphumela ngaphandle emlonyeni*" (which threatened to protrude from the mouth"), to show how perfectly equipped he was for armed struggle.

The gigantic stature and enormous canines of Belekentloko make him seem a vicious dog, but Siyongwana mitigates this image by revealing that he only used his physical endowments when he felt he was being undermined: "*Izinyo wayelisebenzisa kwacaca ukuba ezinye izinja zingxamele ukumdela*" (He used his tooth when it became clear that other dogs were undermining him). The author uses euphemism ("a word

University of Cape Town

which is substituted for a more conventional or familiar one as a way of avoiding negative values") in painting Belekentloko's use of violence in a positive manner (Fairclough 1989, 117). Instead of saying '*wayeziluma ezinye izinja*' (he used to bite other dogs) he says: "*Izinyo wayelisebenzisa*" (He used his tooth), which makes his use of violence appear to be a form of discipline, similar to the use of the rod when a child undermines an adult's authority. But Siyongwana vitiates this positive image by showing that Belekentloko exhibited selfish tendencies: "*Yayimphangela kwakudityaniswa ukutya kwabo*" (It used to gulp a large share of their food when it was combined).

In eulogising Bhaku, Siyongwana writes:

> UBhaku lo wayebathobele oMthendevu noTawuse kangangokuba enye inja yayingade icinge ukuba bayamoyisa. Kanti kwakungenjalo. Ukudalwa kwakhe wayenentliziyo ethambileyo, elungile ngamazwi acacileyo. Umsindo wakhe wawusiza kade. NoMthendevu ke babengamboneleli bemntlokothisa. (130)
>
> (Bhaku was loyal to Mthendevu and Tawuse to the extent that another dog would think that this was because he was not their match in fighting. However that was not the case. He was softhearted by nature, kind in other words. He was slow to anger. Mthendevu and Tawuse took advantage of this and bullied him.)

Siyongwana magnifies Bhaku's ability to act as a right hand man to the main protagonists by using a suspensive structure in which "the reader finds out what something is not before discovering what it is" (Toolan 1992, 71). He starts by telling the reader that, "*enye inja yayinokude icinge ukuba bayamoyisa*" (another dog would even think that he was their subordinate), but negates this by saying: "*Kanti kwakungenjalo*" (However that was not the case). The shortness of the latter sentence serves to make the negation which naturally "seems to have a dramatic and persuasive function" even more dramatic (Toolan 1992, 71). After emphasising that Bhaku's allegiance to Mthendevu and Tawuse does not emanate from fear, Siyongwana shows rather that it stems from his kind and humble nature. The negation within the suspensive structure serves to highlight Bhaku's kind nature "because saying what is not usually helps to define what is" (ibid., 71). This admirable trait is further magnified through the use of over-wording in the collocation of near synonyms: "*Wayenentliziyo ethambileyo*" (He was soft hearted);

University of Cape Town

"elungile" (kind) and *"umsindo wakhe usiza kade"* (he was slow to anger) mean more or less the same thing.

Again the author vitiates the positive image of Bhaku he has so painstakingly created by showing that Tawuse and Mthendevu took advantage of his compliant disposition and bullied him. This makes his loyalty border on docility. It is arguable that Siyongwana reveals the negative side of his protagonists so as to avoid the shortcoming common in revolutionary literature of portraying the heroes of the struggle as flat caricatures instead of round characters. However, my view is that when the authorial speech that is employed to eulogise the heroes is not sufficiently sustained, revealing their undesirable side diminishes their stature in the eyes of the reader, which in turn could reduce the writer's success in refuting the stereotype that freedom fighters are the villains of war. However, Siyongwana's ingenuity in creating dialogue vindicates the heroism of his protagonists and saves his novel from misfiring in this respect. This point will be further discussed in due course.

Siyongwana's authorial speech becomes more terse in presenting the villainy of the antagonists. Kholisile's cruelty is described in two sentences: *"Yayikhohlakele, gqitha, isoyikeka. Inja yona okokwayo yayiye iyibethele ukuba ife ukuba iyafa"* (66) (He was extremely cruel and menacing. He was ruthless when beating a dog and did not care whether he beat it to the point of death). While these sentences are loaded with negative epithets, two sentences are not enough to evoke the full viciousness of Kholisile, who has for so long inflicted such excruciating pain and misery on dogs.

Bambisela's despicable character, which leads him to betray his kith and kin for the little crumbs that fall from his master's table, is cursorarily dealt with in two sentences: *"Yena umthetho wakhe wayengakwazi ukuzikisa ukucinga njengezinye izinja awayezelwe nazo. Izinto ezaziphambili kuye yayikukukhonkotha nokutya"*(89-90) (Unlike his other siblings he was unable to think seriously about anything. What was uppermost in his mind was barking and food). Siyongwana vivifies his condemnation of this behaviour by using a suspensive structure in terms of which the reader finds out what is not the case before discovering what is. The author further magnifies Bambisela's contemptible character by contrasting it with the admirable attribute of being able to think, which is manifested by his other siblings. But once again, Siyongwana's skill in

University of Cape Town

exposing and condemning the cruelty of his antagonists through exploiting their individualised speech and actions mitigates this weakness (as will be shown below).

Like the previous sets of novels, these two also abound in various forms of oral everyday narration (which constitutes the second compositional-stylistic unity), because although their authors belong to the chirographic culture they are not distant from the oral culture. The discussion of this compositional-stylistic unity will focus on excerpts transposed directly from oral culture (such as myths, poetry, songs and prayers), analyse the oral features they exhibit and assess whether or not they contribute to the fulfilment of the author's intentions. To avoid repetition, the oral everyday narration that is manifested in the authorial literary-artistic narration and in the individualised speech of characters will not be dealt with here.

Both authors successfully harness oral everyday narration to achieve their thematic intentions. Ngugi for instance exploits the myth that explains the origin of the subordinate position of women, and the prayers and songs of freedom fighters to create inspiring images of heroism and fighting grit. The myth is presented in the story schema of oral tradition with a conventionalised opening and closing. It begins: "It was many, many years ago" (11), and closes with the summatory "Wangu Makeri, the last of the great Gikuyu women, was removed from the throne" (12). The function of the conventionalised opening and closing is to "distinguish narratives told for entertainment from the teller's everyday discourse" (Olson 1993, 189).

The features of oral everyday narration manifested in this myth include the use of idea units, epithets, repetition and additive oral style. According to Chafe (1993, 106), "Spontaneous, unplanned spoken language is produced in a series of spurts, for which the term idea units seems appropriate". These idea units are usually short because "an idea unit expresses what is held in short-term memory at a particular time, that short-term memory contains approximately the amount of information that can comfortably be expressed with about seven words of English" (ibid., 106). The sentences, which comprise the telling of the Wangu Makeri myth, are noticeably short and compatible with the concept of idea units. The first sentence, "It was many, many years ago", is composed of six words, the second of eight words, and most subsequent ones are approximately of this length. Even those that seem longer are broken down into idea

University of Cape Town

units by punctuation: "Fate did the rest; women were pregnant; the take over met with little resistance".

As in most oral expression this myth "carries a load of epithets and other formulary baggage which high literature rejects as cumbersome and tiresomely redundant because of its aggregative weight" (Ong 1982, 38). Examples of such epithets are: "hard years", "young warriors", "round hips", "milk-white teeth", "shameless longing", "naked body" and "great Gikuyu women". Repetition becomes a structural feature through the deployment of an expansible motif: women as rulers and their dethronement. In what can be regarded as the first story or episode, women are dethroned through a stratagem devised by men fed up with their oppressive rule. In the second one Wangu Makeri is dethroned because she goes too far in her game of seducing men. The cohesive feature connecting the two episodes is the sentence: "But that was not the end of a woman's power in the land". A third situation, which is merely implied, is that of the English queen Elizabeth's "overreaching" or excessive regime in Kenya. A final feature of oral expression in this myth is the additive oral style, manifested for instance in the prominent use of the conjunction "and" which appears nine times in two paragraphs.

The myth is introduced when the author is tracing the history of the Party and it functions to enhance the Party's image. It casts the revolt of the Party in the mould of those legendary revolts of men against the oppressive regime of women. It also offers a lesson to the Party whose efforts have up till now failed to deliver the desired political goal of freedom (as reflected in the abortive revolutionary attempts of Waiyaki and Harry Thuku). This lesson is the need for decisive popular action against intolerable rule, such as that performed by the men in the myth, coupled with the strategy of surprising the enemy by attacking them when they least expect it and when they are at their weakest. It is no wonder that the new wave of the struggle under the leadership of Kihika involves a commitment to secrecy through oath taking, and the adoption of guerrilla warfare.

The second episode of the myth serves as a warning to the oppressors that there comes a point when they overreach themselves, as was the case when Wangu Makeri danced naked in public. It is at such times that revolution is inevitable. Similarly, it was after the arrest of Jomo Kenyatta and other leaders and the declaration of the State of Emergency in Kenya in October 1952 that Kihika and the others disappeared into the

University of Cape Town

forest to initiate the armed struggle that dethroned the white man. The Wangu Makeri myth is later invoked to describe the beauty of Mumbi (14); moreover, as an African myth, its very presence also helps to indigenise the novel.

Repetition, a major feature of oral expression, is apparent in the prayers and the songs of the freedom fighters. Koinandu recounts:

> We prayed twice a day and an extra one before any expedition to wrest arms from European farms. We stood up facing Mount Kenya.
>
> > 'Mwenanyanga we pray that you may protect our hideoutouts.
> > Mwenanyanga we pray that you may hold a soft cloud over us.
> > Mwenanyanga we pray that you may defend us behind and infront from our enemies. Mwenanyanga we pray that you may give us courage in our hearts.
> > Thai thathaiya Ngai Thaai'.
>
> We also sang:
>
> > 'We shall never rest
> > Without land
> > Without Freedom true Kenya is a country of black people'.

In the prayer there is "emphatic repetition [which] most often takes the form of anaphora, where the repetition comes at the beginning of the clause" (Snead 1984, 71). This emphatic repetition is achieved through repeating the formula "Mwenanyanga we pray that you may" at the beginning of all four subsequent sentences. This device enhances fluency in oral expression as it allows the speaker "to keep going while he is running over in his mind what to say next" (Ong 1982, 40). The last sentence that constitutes the 'cut' employs alliteration, achieved through repeating the dental fricative /th/ in "Thai thathaiya Ngai Thaai", to create rhythm and to facilitate retention and ready recall. As pointed out earlier, this prayer also serves as a reminder that the freedom fighters were not bloodthirsty savages (as colonial commentators have portrayed them) but men of faith.

Emphatic repetition is also achieved through anaphoric use of the negative preposition "without". It serves as the signal word for a rhetorical structure that Horowitz (1987, 117) terms "attribution", "a list structure, including attributes and examples".

University of Cape Town

Here it is employed to enumerate those things (i.e. land and freedom) without which the freedom fighters "shall never rest". Thus this song serves succinctly both to summarise the causes of revolution and to instil courage and the resolve never to give up the struggle until their political grievances are addressed. Other songs are similarly harnessed to achieve the author's thematic intentions. The one on page 155 reiterates the claim that Kenya belongs to black people by asserting that in its opening sentence that God gave it to them: "Ngai has given Gikuyu a beautiful country". The other two songs on page 126 depict the suffering inflicted by the cruel oppressors and their collaborators upon the black masses during the State of Emergency by comparing it with that experienced by the captive Israelites in Egypt.

Siyongwana makes use of everyday oral narration in the song his protagonists perform to celebrate their first success in using economic sabotage to force their oppressors to the negotiation table. After their first sabotage mission Mthendevu their leader celebrates their victory by leading them in singing a song: "*Ingwe sayibamba sayiyeka, nantso ibaleka, yileqeni!*" (106) (We have caught and let loose a tiger, there it runs, chase it!). The other dogs form a circle, dance and join in singing the chorus *"Yileqeni!!"* (Chase it!!). The aspects of spoken discourse manifested in this song include antithesis, paralinguistic features, involvement-focus strategies and interjection.

The song foreshadows the inconsistency of the dogs in their use of sabotage as a strategy in the struggle for liberation. This inconsistency is highlighted by the use of antithesis in *"Ingwe sayibamba sayiyeka*" (We caught and let loose a tiger). Catching the tiger is used to signify the political pressure that the dogs exert upon humans through economic sabotage in stealing their flocks and ravaging their crops. Letting it loose symbolises their failure to sustain this pressure, as later confirmed by Tawuse: "*Sathi oko sayeka imizi esasikade sisiba kuyo asaba safuna kukhangela eminye*" (137) (Ever since we stopped stealing from homesteads we used to steal from we failed to look for others). The chorus of the song (which is an involvement-focus strategy), "Yileqeni!!" (Chase it!!) exhorts them to resuscitate this strategy, as later confirmed by Tawuse who urges: "*Masibulale yonke into efuyiweyo esidibene nayo…*" (Let us kill everything reared by people that we come across…). This exhortation is made more urgent by the use of interjection marker after "*Yileqeni!!*".

University of Cape Town

Dancing in which all the dogs participate is a paralinguistic feature which helps to express their jubilation at their success in their first mission; at the same time it differentiates the dogs from their enemy, as Bhaku claims: *"UKholisile yena oku kwakhe ndingamgqitha ngokuxhentsa*" (Kholisile is no match for me as far as dancing is concerned).

The celebratory spirit of this occasion is further enhanced by the poem composed and recited by Xhonti the sage:

> Vi-i-i-i-tyi ! V-i-i-i-i-i-tyi ! Nivela kude zinjandini. Nashiya imizi yabantu kuba ningekabuyeli kuwo kunanamhla. Nifanelwe kukuba nikhululeke kuloo ndawo nikuyo kuba likhaya lenu. Sizwe esikhutheleyo kuba sithanda intlutha. Ningabambi ingwe yodwa Khon' ukuze nilungelwe! Ningafa mhla naya eNtakana naseMjica. (107)
>
> (V-i-i-i-i-tyi! V-i-i-i-i-i-tyi! From afar have you come you dogs. You have left the homesteads of humans and you have not returned to them up to now. You have the right to be free in the place where you are because it is your home. Diligent nation that delights in prosperity. You will do well if you do not only catch a tiger. You will die the day you dare to go to Ntakana and Njica).

Among the features of the spoken word manifested in this poem are interjections, formulae for opening and closing, and idea units. As pointed out earlier, everyday oral narration is employed here to inspire heroism and excite fighting grit. Xhonti uses interjections (*"Vi-i-i-i-tyi! Vi-i-i-i-i-tyi!"*) that simulate the whistle usually used to encourage a cow to give more milk, or hunting dogs to track vigilantly, or fighting bulls to fight bravely. The sounds function to arrest the attention of the dogs and at the same time to spur them on to yet greater victories than the one that they have just achieved. In line with Tedlock's (1993,43) advice that "interjections in a serious context should not be translated [because] they are difficult to translate" I have not translated these interjections. The closest that one could come to translating them would be "Lend me your ears! Lend me your ears!", but this fails to capture all the meanings they express.

Xhonti then briefly traces the history of their struggle from the time it started. This account of their fight for freedom is introduced by a very short sentence "*Nivela kude zinjandini*" (From afar have you come you dogs) which is a typical idea unit or

University of Cape Town

intonation unit characteristic of oral expression. He then alludes to the major victories they have already achieved in "*Nashiya imizi yabantu kuba ningekabuyeli kuyo kunanamhla*" (You left the homesteads of humans and have not returned to them up to now), to show that the present one has not been gained through some stroke of luck but because being victorious is typical of them.

This sage also justifies their decision to leave the homes of humans by claiming that it is their inalienable right to be free in the place they call their home: "*nifanelwe kukuba nikhululeke kuloo ndawo nikuyo kuba likhaya lenu*" (you have the right to be free where you are because it is your home). Implicit in this assertion is the view that when this right is violated, revolutionary activity such as the economic sabotage on which they have embarked is inevitable. The assertion also implies that they have the right to be free in South Africa because it is their home. The poem functions to demolish the myth perpetrated by some colonial writers that the African struggle for liberation is "an atavistic, anti-white [movement] which is intent upon returning [Africa] to barbarism and primitivism", by supplying the real reason for the struggle – the desire for freedom and prosperity: "*Sizwe esikhutheleyo kuba sithanda intlutha*" (Diligent nation that delights in prosperity). All in all, this is one occasion on which Siyongwana allows himself a generous measure of authorial speech to augment the positive image of his protagonists.

The poem also functions to encourage the dogs to employ other strategies beside sabotage if they are to achieve their political goals. This is implied in: "*Ningabambi ingwe yodwa Khon' ukuze nilungelwe*" (You will do well if you do not only catch a tiger). It is only after they have intensified the struggle through the use of other strategies suggested by Tawuse and Belekentloko (which include taking by force not one sheep but flocks of them, and including men in their range of targets for violence), that humans are forced to initiate negotiations. Xhonti closes his oration by challenging them to greater exploits: "*Ningafa mhla naya eNtakana naseNjica*" (You will die the day you dare go to Ntakana and Njica). These two villages are home to the majority of the rebellious dogs, places where they have suffered gross injustice and excruciating oppression and exploitation. Their mention here is a reminder that the violence employed by freedom fighters is not indiscriminate but targets the perpetrators of their domination. The analysis of the elements of oral everyday narration in Siyongwana's text has validated

University of Cape Town

Brewer's (1993, 189) assertion that "many oral narratives appear to be carrying out a wide variety of functions at the same time. Thus a single oral narrative may be doing what Western literature would do through a novel, a dirty joke, a history text, a scientific journal article, a religious text and a philosophical essay". It is arguable that this is one reason why spoken discourse continues to be exploited in written African texts such as novels.

The third compositional stylistic unity, which is the stylisation of various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration (letter, diary etc.) is more noticeable in Ngugi's novel than in Siyongwana's and thus makes *A Grain of Wheat* a better heteroglot than *Ubulumko Bezinja*. The notes in Thompson's diary on page (49-50) are a case in point:

> *Nyeri is full of mountains, hills and deep valleys covered with impenentrable forests. These primordial trees have always awed primitive minds. The darkness and mystery of the forest, have led him (the primitive man) to magic and ritual.*
>
> *What's this thing called Mau Mau?*
>
> *Dr Albert Schweitzer says 'the Negro is a child and with children, nothing can be done without the use of authority.' I've now worked in Nyeri Githima, Kisumu, Ngong, I agree.*
>
> *I am back in Nyeri. People are moving into the villages to cut the connection between them and the terrorists. Burning houses in the old village, suddenly I felt my life was coming to a cul de sac.*
>
> *Colonel Robson, a Senior District Oifficer in Rung'ei, Kiambu was savagely murdered. I am replacing him at Rung'ei. One must use a stick. No government can tolerate anarchy, no civilization can be built on this violence and savagery. Mau Mau is evil: a movement if not checked will mean complete destruction of all the values on which our civilization has thriven.*
>
> *Every white man is contuinually in danger of gradual moral ruin in this daily and hourly contest with the African. Dr Albert Schweitzer.*
>
> *In dealing with the African you are often compelled to do the unexpected. A man came into my office yesterday. He told me about a wanted terrorist leader. From the beginning, I was convinced the man was lying, was really acting, perhaps to trap me or hide his own part in the movement. He seemed to be laughing at me.*

University of Cape Town

Remember the African is a born actor, that's why he finds it so easy to lie. I spat into his face. I don't know why but I did it.

Exploiting features typical of written language such as permanency, succinctness, objectivity and introspectivity, Ngugi uses these diary notes to expose and condemn Thompson's racist bigotry. The text registers a set of standard racist representations of Africans as primitive people without any religion besides degrading superstition, as childish or foolish, as blood-thirsty savages who enjoy torturing their enemy, and as devoid of morals, inherently dishonest. These views are here succinctly and permanently recorded in written text, which according to Ong (1982, 79) is inherently "contumacious", meaning "there is no way directly to refute a text. After absolute total and devastating refutation, it says the same thing as before".

Ngugi condemns these racist stereotypes by alluding to their tragic consequences. The first entry in Thompson's diary, for instance, brings to mind the pain and suffering Africans endured when the missionaries desecrated their shrines and dismissed their religion because they believed that it was nothing but degrading demonology and fetishism, brought about by the impact of "the darkness and mystery of the forest" upon their primitive minds. The second, fourth and fifth entries expose the tenacity and brutality with which the Mau Mau revolution was resisted because it was believed to be evil and "a movement which if not checked will mean complete destruction of all the values on which [the white man's] civilization has thriven". The elimination of Tom the Terror because he has persecuted and killed many Africans is perceived as an act of savagery typical of Africans, who are believed to be blood- thirsty savages who enjoy torturing their enemies.

The third, sixth and seventh entries castigates the racism that made whites batter, torture and at times mortally injure Africans because they believed them to be inherently dishonest, childish and foolish, for "with children, nothing can be done without the use of authority". The blatant brutalisation of blacks is euphemistically referred to as the "use of authority". In the sixth entry the racist foundation of segregationist policy (i.e."every white man is continually in danger of gradual moral ruin in his daily and hourly contest with the [immoral] African") with its evil concomitants is exposed and condemned.

University of Cape Town

The exposure of Thompson's racism is the more striking because it is achieved simply by relying his own writing; and writing "makes possible increasingly articulate introspectivity, opening of the psyche as never before not only to the external objective world quite distinct from self but to the interior self against whom the objective world is set" (Ong 1982, 105). Thompson reveals how widespread racism was among the colonialists by citing the assertion that "the Negro is a child and with children nothing can be done without the use of authority". Significantly, this comes from a 'credible' colonial commentator, Dr Albert Schweitzer, who like many "racist theorists...[ostensibly] applied methods of empirical observation and logical deduction to their work to prove their points scientifically" (Milbury-Steen 1980, 3). Thompson does not bother to give the particulars (except for the name) of the source from which he quotes, suggesting that the sentiment is common knowledge to colonialists. By making Thompson expose his racism himself through semi-literary everyday narration, Ngugi both strikes a note of authenticity and avoids relying solely on his own authorial speech in portraying his fictional antagonists.

Other examples of semi-literary everyday narration include the name of the eating-house for Africans, "Your Friend Unto Death"; its motto "COME UNTO ME ALL YE THAT ARE HUNGRY AND THIRSTY AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST" (36) and the carefully framed poem that hung on its wall. These humorously evoke the squalor in which Africans lived and its degrading effects on them. The name of the eating-house is a pun. On a surface level it means that the house will continue being friendly to you unto death, but when it is interpreted in the context of the squalid condition of the place, whose "stony walls are covered with grease, a fertile ground for flies [that] jumped on top of the cups and plates and at times made love on food brought on the tables", it means that the eating-house is a friend whose filth will kill you.

The motto too is a pun: it can be interrupted to mean that the eating-house will relieve you from hunger and thirst, or that those who are hungry and thirsty will be given food that will kill them, since the word "rest" is commonly associated with death (e.g. the tombstone inscription "Rest in peace"). The poem is also humorous, appearing to grant credit but simultaneously deferring it: "So for credit, my friend, come tomorrow". The humour here subversively celebrates the resilient culture of the poor, or alternatively

University of Cape Town

pokes fun at the "blundering settler" (if the owner is white) or the "new wildly hypocritical black Kenyan elite" (if the owner is black), who will use anything, including the Bible, in preying on the black masses (Berger 1989, 4). This is one example of Ngugi's use of "grotesque and folk laughter", which is typical of his later novels where "the comic – the truly comic, not the often degraded forms of the comic that we see nowadays – operates as a political strategy for demystifying hierarchy..." (ibid., 7). In this instance Ngugi strikes a grotesque note by adapting verses from the Bible (Matt. 5:6 & 11:28) for the purposes of satirical word play.

With regard to extra-artistic authorial speech, the fourth compositional stylistic unity, which includes things such as moral, philosophical and scientific statements, it is arguable that both authors use the pictorial style, in which they devise and utilise "means for infiltrating reported speech with authorial retort and commentary in deft and subtle ways" (Volosinov 1973, 120). Again it is Ngugi who is more successful in striking a balance between 'telling' and 'showing' than Siyongwana, where the balance tends to be in favour of showing. Although tilting the scale towards what is represented rather than what is related makes Siyongwana's novel more dramatic (particularly with regard to presenting the conflict between protagonists and antagonists), this is achieved at the expense of a sustained authorial commentary capable of directly conveying the author's feelings.

The artistry with which Ngugi balances what is represented and what is related is manifested in the manner in which he reports the proceedings of one of the meetings of the Party on pages 14-15. He uses authorial speech as he begins his account of the meeting, emphasising the non-tribal composition of the Party by identifying the different tribal origins of the speakers: "There were, however, plenty of speakers from Marunga and Nairobi. There was also a Luo speaker from Nyanza showing that the Party had broken barriers between tribes...". He then quotes from Kihika's speech: "This is not 1920. What we want now is action, a blow which will tell", which is interrupted by authorial commentary that captures the reaction of the audience to the speech: "... as women from Thabai pulled their clothes and hair, and screamed with delight". Ngugi continues with this strategy of voice shifts in decribing the remainder of the meeting.

University of Cape Town

Shifting from the individualised speech of the characters to direct authorial comment allows Ngugi to exploit the strengths of both compositional stylistic unities in augmenting the oratory abilities of Kihika. This point will be discussed further when the last compositional stylistic unit is analysed. What is worth noting at this stage is that this voice shift allows for a more direct involvement of the author in his writings, something that Ngugi was agitating for as early as 1969:

> It is not enough for the African artist, standing aloof, to view the society and highlight its weaknesses. He must try to go beyond this to seek out the sources, the causes and the trends. Today the revolutionary struggle which has already destroyed the traditional power-map drawn up by the colonialist nations, is sweeping through Africa... The artist in his writing is not exempted from the struggle. By diving into the sources, he can give moral direction and vision to the struggle, which, though suffering temporary reaction, is continuous and is changing the face of the twentieth century. (1969, 69)

In line with this assertion, authorial intrusion becomes a hallmark of Ngugi's narrative method in the rest of this novel, its function being to give moral direction and vision to the struggle. For example, after the murder of Gitogo the narrator comments: "Perhaps they did not know that it was fitting that such an important campaign should open with blood on Thabai's own soil". Sensing that the butchering of an innocent, deaf and dumb, only son of a widow could seem senseless and depressing, he hastens to present the death as a necessary sacrifice that serves to launch the struggle for the liberation of Thabai.

At times Ngugi employs extra-artistic authorial speech to challenge commonly held opinions and show how wrong people can be in judging others. In introducing chapter six, for instance, he writes: "God helps those who help themselves. It is said with fingers pointing at a self-made man who has attained wealth and position, forgetting that thousands of others labour and starve day in day out without ever improving their material lot. This moral so readily administered, seemed true for Gikonyo. People said: detention camps have taught him to rule himself" (51). Ngugi employs balanced antithesis to counterpoint the common assumption that self-made men are successful because they are diligent. On page 53 he mentions collaboration with the white man as another factor (downplayed by moralists) that has contributed to the prosperity of certain

University of Cape Town

people. In exposing the real source of the success of the owner of a bus called "A DILIGENT CHILD", Ngugi says: "those were men who through active co-operation with the colonial government had acquired trade licences and even loans to develop their business". In fact Gikonyo himself, for whom this moral "seemed true", later gets the opportunity to continue building his personal wealth by confessing the oath in order to secure his release from detention.

Ngugi's use of direct authorial comment has provoked adverse criticism. Robson (1977, 4-5) commenting on its use in *Petals of Blood*, argues: "Conveying information is a legitimate part of a novelist' role but in *Petals of Blood* Ngugi goes beyond what is acceptable in fiction; he is giving us polemic". In *A Grain of Wheat* Ngugi makes use of a variety of narrative voices, ranging from a first-person plural "communal" voice to third person authorial narration mediated through the consciousness of several characters, of whom the most important is Mugo. In this way narrative authority is shared and the polemical thrust of the text is attenuated. In highlighting the artistic advantages of using this strategy Stratton (1983, 125) says: "Ngugi also often creates a first person framework with these recollections by opening and concluding them in the first person and employing the third person in the central portion, thus gaining the advantages of both points of view while creating a first person effect throughout. Gikonyo's narration of his experiences to Mugo illustrates this (64-106)".

Ngugi also makes use of excerpts from the Bible to cloak authorial opinion giving moral direction and vision to the struggle with the authority of Holy Scripture. The very title of the novel is transposed from 1 Corinthians 15:36, and Ngugi quotes the whole verse as an epigraph to the novel. It reads as follows: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain". When Kihika and other freedom fighters die in the story the reader remembers this verse and is consoled, because through this verse the author explains that some have to die so that the grain of struggle may grow into the plant of freedom. A similar strategy enables Ngugi to portray the protagonists as the saints rather than the villains of the struggle. Verses such as Exodus 8:1, which reads: "And the Lord spoke unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, say

University of Cape Town

unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go" underlined in Kihika's Bible, serve to cast him in the mould of a saviour reminiscent of Moses.

Although Siyongwana's extra-artistic speech is comparatively scanty (due to the conditions under which he wrote his novel, which included the Government's proscription of oppositional literature), he generally employs it to allude to the debasing effect of domination on its victims and expose the suffering they endure as they seek to liberate themselves. It is arguable that most of the behavioural defects exhibited by the protagonists can be traced back to the excruciating exploitation they are made to endure under the regime of men. The dire hunger they are made to suffer warps their characters and makes them over-value food, which is attested by the fact that even when they steal large numbers of sheep, their flock never increases because they slaughter an animal every day (146).

This character trait makes them vulnerable to their treacherous oppressors, who use food as bait to trap them. A case in point is when the dogs embark on a work stoppage to force Kholisile to accede to their demands. After rudely chasing the dogs away from their first non-violent meeting to negotiate a fair deal for themselves, Kholisile calls them to duty, but Tawuse urges them to ignore his call, saying: *"Ebengatshongo ukuthi asikwazi ukukhonkotha? Engayi nje kule nto ayibonayo kutheni?* (21) (Didn't he say we are not able to bark? Why does he not chase whatever he sees himself?). The scheming Kholisile then lures them with food and they swallow the bait. Siyongwana wittingly observes: *"Ukusebenza akufani nokutya"* (Working is not the same as eating). Although this authorial retort is made to appear as a humorous rebuke to the dogs who place more value on food than work, it also subtly reproves a system that condemns dogs to deprivation and, by not rewarding work well done, offers them no incentive to work hard.

That deprivation is a handy weapon in the hands of the oppressor is further evidenced by what happens when the rebellious dogs suffer extreme starvation in the course of the struggle. Tawuse deserts the struggle and goes back to stay with humans. In capturing his disillusionment with the struggle Siyongwana writes: *"Wazisola ngamanyathelo awathabathayo...Ingqondo yakhe yayingasekho hlathini. Iphango liyayijika ingqondo"* (124) (He regretted the steps he had taken...His mind was no longer

University of Cape Town

in the forest. Hunger changes a man's mind). It becomes clear that depriving them of food, shelter and proper payment is a deliberate ploy on the part of the oppressors to divide and conquer the oppressed. Siyongwana confirms this by depicting the petty quarrels that erupt when the dogs are starving.

Another example in which Siyongwana employs extra-artistic authorial speech to expose the way in which domination retards the development of the oppressed is the response of some dogs when they are informed about the men's request that they should return home. In capturing their excitement he comments: "*Zazingafani noTawuse ngokucinga. Imizi le yabantu zaziyithandela nje ukonwaba zingakhathali nokuba zihleli ngokwendala indlela. Endingaziyo ukuba kuphi na ukonwaba kungekho lungelo. Phofu iyenzeka into yokuba ithi indawo le nokuba injani na isuke inja iyiqhele ingabi safuna yimbi" (155).* (The thinking of these was different from that of Tawuse. These loved men's homes for sheer enjoyment and did not care whether the status quo was maintained. What I do not understand is whether there is any enjoyment where rights are denied. However, it does happen that a dog can get so used to a situation no matter how it is, that it does not aspire toward any other). This shows that the stunting effects of domination can be so indelible in the minds of the oppressed that even their involvement in the struggle is unable to liberate them.

Besides evoking the tragic consequences of domination for its victims Siyongwana also employs extra-artistic speech to highlight the suffering the protagonists endure in attempting to liberate themselves. In describing the pain the dogs suffer because of their banishment he comments: "*Inja sisilwanyana esithandayo ukuphindela kwindawo esasivela kuyo*". (116) (A dog is an animal that is fond of going back to where it came from). This strong attachment to the place of their birth induces them one day to brave the weather to just have a look at their former homes. To capture how heart wrenching this expedition is Siyongwana writes: *"Besakuba kude ngasemva benyuka induli baya kufika ngaphezulu baya kuthi khebevu ngaphezulu bajonga imizi ebabefudula bekuwo. Zawa inyembezi besakufikelwa ziinkumbulo zeemini ezadlulayo"*(116) (At a distance behind the village they climbed a hill, rested at the top and gazed at the homes and the slopes where they used to live. Tears flowed freely when they remembered days gone by).

University of Cape Town

Siyongwana also magnifies the pain the dogs suffered when they embarked on the struggle for liberation by portraying the tender love relationship that exists between puppies and their mother. He writes: *"Kuthiwa inja ayinakuze ilahlekwe yinjana nokuba sekusemnyameni. Ibakhona indawana ethi iyiqaphele ngayo nokuba incinane na"* (130) (It is said that a dog can never fail to recognise its puppies even in the dark. There is something with which it will identify it no matter how small it might be). This information is given to make the reader imagine the pain these dogs suffer when their puppies are exiled or killed.

The last type of compositional-stylistic unity, which is the stylistically individualised speech of the characters, is called a "represented" or "objectified utterance" by Bakhtin (1969, 178) because although it is handled precisely as the words of another addresser, it is treated as "an object of the author's intentions and not at all in terms of its own referential aim". Both Siyongwana and Ngugi exhibit artistic brilliance in employing the individualised speech of the characters to achieve their thematic intentions, which include lionising the freedom fighters and denouncing as brutes all those who try to frustrate the people's struggle for liberation. As in previous chapters, the focus will be on the strategies employed by addressers and addressees in using words as instruments of coercion and constraint, as tools of intimidation and abuse, as signs of politeness, condescension and contempt, and as weapons of struggle and resistance.

Generally, whilst Ngugi uses monologue more effectively than Siyongwana in revealing the natures of his characters, Siyongwana employs dialogue between antagonists and protagonists more judiciously than Ngugi to achieve the same goal. It is no wonder that in *A Grain of Wheat* almost all the protagonists are endowed with eloquence, a quality that – generally speaking – can be revealed through monologue, whereas the majority of the protagonists in *Ubulumko Bezinja* are quick-witted, an ability best manifested in dialogue. In Ngugi's novel it is Kihika who exhibits the most notable oratorical skills because he is the one tasked with the role of leadership during the first stage of revolution, when mass mobilisation is crucial. Eloquence and impassioned rhetoric are needed at this stage to galvanise people into political activity. It is during this phase that slogans are formulated around common grievances to effect alliances among the different strata of the oppressed people.

University of Cape Town

Ngugi gives the reader some glimpses of Kihika's impassioned rhetoric by recounting the proceedings of a meeting of the Party at which Kenyatta was due to speak (he was in fact unable to attend):

> Kihika from Thabai was one of the speakers who receive a big ovation from the crowd. He talked no longer in terms of sending letters to the white man as used to be done in the days of Harry.
>
> 'This is not 1920. What we now want is action, a blow which will tell,' he said as women from Thabai pulled at their clothes and hair, and screamed with delight... Kihika unrolled the history of the tribe, the coming of the white man and the birth of the Party. Mugo glanced at Gikonyo and Mumbi. Their eyes were fixed on Kihika; their lives seemed to be dependent to his falling words.
>
> 'We went to the church. Mubia in white robes, opened the Bible. He said: let us kneel down to pray. We knelt down. Mubia said: Let us shut our eyes. We did. You know his remained open so that he could read the word. When we open our eyes, our land was gone and the sword of flames stood on guard. As for Mumbia, he went on reading the word, beseeching us to lay our treasures in heaven where no moth would corrupt them. But he laid his on the earth our earth'.
>
> People laughed. Kihika did not join them. He was a small man with a strong voice. Speaking slowly with emphasis on important words, he once or twice pointed at the earth and heaven as if calling them to witness that what he spoke was truth. He talked of great sacrifice.
>
> 'A day comes when brother shall give up brother, mother her son, when you and I have heard the call of a nation in turmoil'... 'Watch ye and pray' Kihika said, calling on his audience to remember the Swahili proverb: *Kikulacho Kiko nguoni mwako*. (14-15).

As observed earlier, Ngugi utilises voice shifts as a strategy to help convey Kihika's eloquence. The manner in which he oscillates from authorial speech to the individualised speech of the characters has previously been analysed, and what needs to be emphasised here is how this voice shift is employed to magnify Kihika's oratory abilities. Through the use of authorial speech Ngugi is able to summarise some of the non-essential albeit relevant portions of Kihika's speech and thus avoid boring his readers with a long speech that would disrupt the flow of the story.

Authorial speech is also employed to capture the response of the audience, as evidence of Kihika's power to excite pathos (i.e. the ability to "put his hearers, who are to decide, into the right frame of mind"), which is one of the three modes of persuasion

University of Cape Town

(ethos, pathos, and logos) identified by Aristotle (1941, 1356a): "Kihika from Thabai was one of the speakers who received a big ovation from the crowd... women from Thabai pulled their clothes and hair, and screamed in delight... their eyes were fixed on Kihika.... Their lives seemed dependent on his falling words.... People laughed". Authorial speech is further employed to give the reader a mental picture of the powerful manner in which Kihika delivers his speech, with reference being made to his voice, the tempo of his delivery and his gestures: "He was a small man with a strong voice. Speaking slowly with emphasis on the important words, he once or twice pointed at earth and heaven as if he calling them to witness that what he spoke was truth".

Kihika's direct discourse is also used to augment his oratorical abilities. Of the three types of rhetorical speech (i.e. political or deliberative, forensic or legal and epideictic or ceremonial) identified by Aristotle (1941, 1358b), Kihika's speech falls into the political category, which "urges [people] to do or not to do something" (ibid., 1358b). Kihika employs a suspensive sentence structure to emphasise his point, telling his listeners what should not be done – "This is not 1920", etc. – before telling them what should be done: "What we want now is action, a blow which will tell". His proposition is made more forceful through recourse to a problematic structure in which the word that carries the main message (i.e. "action") comes at the end of the sentence. Emphasis is further achieved through the use of over-wording: the word "action" is spoken side-by-side with the more-or-less synonymous "blow which will tell". What is also worth noting is that in both these instances Kihika avoids using the term violence, preferring the euphemistic "action" or "a blow which will tell".

Parody, stylisation and enthymemes are other persuasive strategies employed by Kihika in this speech. He uses parody (which means borrowing somebody else's discourse but turning it "to a purpose opposite to or incongruous with the intention of the original") to decry the hypocrisy of the white man who used the Bible as a kind of spiritual opium to lull Africans into political slumber whilst he looted their land (Lodge 1990, 59). Kihika adopts a parodic tone by imitating and repeating the words ("Let us kneel down to pray" and "Let us shut our eyes") used by the white man of God to create a reverent atmosphere. The words are rendered risible through the contrast between the reverence that the words invoke in Africans (whose credulity is stressed in short

University of Cape Town

sentences such as "We knelt down" and "We did") and the improbity of the white man's action in stealing their land. The whites' lack of remorse is implied in: "When we opened our eyes, our land was gone...As for the Mubia, he went on reading the word...". There is also a suggestion that the dishonesty involved here was premeditated: "You know, his [eyes] remained open so that he could read the word".

The double-dealing of the white man is condemned through juxtaposing what he says in "beseeching us to lay our treasures in heaven where moth would not corrupt them", with what he does in "But he laid his on earth, our earth". Kihika does the unexpected, which is to make the people laugh, though he does not join in himself: "People laughed. Kihika did not join them". This is contrary to the view of the rhetoricians who claim that "the very quality of diction, employed to stir the feelings of others, stirs the speaker even more deeply than any of his hearers" (Vickers 1988, 79). Ngugi through Kihika employs humour to avoid simply "cataloguing injustices...which so often stultify fictional experiments into mere documentary" (Gakwandi 1977, 21).

Kihika utilises stylisation (which means that the writer borrows another's discourse but "uses it for his [or her] own purposes – with the same general intention as the original") (Lodge 1990, 59) to explain the type of sacrifice he is advocating by implying that it is reminiscent of the one demanded by Christ from his followers. He achieves this by simulating the Biblical rhetoric found in Matthew 10:21 (which reads: "Men will hand over their own brothers to be put to death, and fathers will do the same to their children; children will turn against their parents and have them put to death") when he says, "A day comes when a brother shall give up brother, a mother her son". He crowns his elevation of this sacrifice by describing joining the struggle as hearing the "call of a nation in turmoil", so as to mobilise support for the struggle by appealing to the nationalistic feelings of the listeners.

Kihika also employs stylisation to magnify his role as a saviour when he repeats the words of Christ, "Watch and pray", which He used as an exhortation to His disciples just before He was crucified. In this way "he is cast in the mould of the saviour reminiscent of Christ" (Nama 1984, 57). Kihika closes his speech with a Swahili proverb, "Kikulacho Kiko nguoni mwako", which acts as an enthymeme ("an inferential argument which states some conviction regarding human affairs and the reason why this conviction

University of Cape Town

should be accepted") to validate his speech (Ryan 1984, 95). Kihika's choice of a Swahili proverb also serves to bring together the different language groups as it was regarded as a national language. Thus through this speech Kihika is able to attain the three aims of an orator, which are: "the winning of men's favour, secondly their enlightenment, thirdly their excitement" (Vickers 1988, 81).

Kihika's enhancing of the status of freedom fighters through associating them with Christ is more direct later in the story. In answer to a question asked by Karanja, he says: "In Kenya we want a death which will change things... I die for you, you die for me, we become a sacrifice for one another. So I can say that you Karanja, are Christ. I am Christ. Everybody who takes the Oath of Unity to change Kenya is a Christ"(83). The rhetorical device he employs in these instances is called 'example', which according to Duke (1990, 82) "is a form of argument where a parallel is drawn between things of the same class". Another figure who features prominently in Kihika's examples is Gandhi of India (77-78). Again as he presents this example, Kihika uses rhetorical devices such as stylisation, rhetorical questions, problematic clauses, emphatic repetition, attribution, metaphors and suspensive structures which have been identified and analysed in his first speech, and it is therefore not necessary to analyse them here. The use of stylisation – for instance in "Take up my cross..." and in "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself..." – is almost identical with manner in which the device is used in the first speech quoted above. Furthermore, Kihika employs these strategies here for the same purposes as in his first speech: to canonise the freedom fighters, mobilise support for the struggle and condemn the colonisers.

Of the other occasions on which Kihika displays his oratorical gifts, the one that most deserves analysis is his speech in defence of the use of violence in the struggle for liberation, because it is arguable that it falls into the category of forensic speech (which "either attacks or defends somebody") rather than political speech (Aristotle 1941, 1358b). In response to Mugo's question: "Do you want to kill me?" Kihika says:

> We don't kill just anybody... we are not hangmen – like Robson – killing men and women without cause or purpose...
>
> We only hit back. You are struck on the left cheek. You turn the right cheek. One, two three – sixty years. Then suddenly, it is always sudden you say: I am not turning the other cheek any more. Your back against the wall, you strike back. You trust your manhood and

University of Cape Town

> hope it will keep you at it. Do you think that we like scuffling for food with hyenas and monkeys in the forest? I too have known the comfort of a warm fire and a woman's love by the fireside. See? We must kill. Put to sleep the enemies of the black man's freedom. They say we are weak. They say we cannot win against the bomb. If we are weak we cannot win. I despise the weak. Let be trampled to death I spit on the weakness of our fathers. Their memory gives me no pride. And even today, tomorrow, the weak and those with feeble hearts shall be wiped from the earth. The strong shall rule. Our fathers had no reason to be weak. The weak need not remain weak. Why? Because a people united in faith are stronger than bomb. They shall not tremble or run away before the sword. Then instead the enemy shall flee. These are not words of a mad man. Not words, not even miracles could make Pharaoh let the children of Israel go. But at midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born Pharaoh that sat on the throne to the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon. And all the first-born of the cattle. And the following day, he let them go. That is our aim. Strike terror in their midst. Get them in their homes night and day. They shall feel the poisoned arrow in their veins. They shall not know where the next will come from. Strike terror in the hearts of the oppressors.
>
> You think we do not fear death? We do. My legs almost refused to move when Robson called out to me. Each minute, I waited for the bullet to enter my heart. I've seen men piss on themselves and other laugh with madness at the prospect of a fight. And the animal groan of dying man is a terrible sound to hear. But few shall die that many shall live. That's what crucifixion means today. Else we deserve to be slaves, cursed to carry water and hew wood for the white man forever and ever. Choose between freedom and slavery and it is fitting that man should grab at freedom and die. (166-67).

Kihika forcefully opens his speech with a suspensive structure, indicating first the negation of what is to be affirmed – "We don't kill just any body". This assertion is emphasised by being repeated with variation three times (through the use of words with similar meanings – "kill", "murderers" and "hangmen" – which are arranged in ascending order of seriousness to achieve a climactic effect), and all three sentences are presented in negative form. "We are not murderers" and "We are not hangmen" serve to dismiss outright the view held by colonialists that freedom fighters are blood-thirsty savages who enjoy killing people. He then identifies the true hangmen – "like Robson" – and validates his accusation: "killing men and women". That this indiscriminate violence

University of Cape Town

is continuous is captured through the use of the non-finite verb "killing". In this way Kihika skilfully turns the tables so as to make the accuser the accused.

The second paragraph is dedicated to revealing the type of violence that freedom fighters are involved in, and serves to exonerate them. "We only hit back" indicates that their violence is nothing but self defence, and the emphasis on "only" shows how minimal their use of force is when compared to the ongoing and indiscriminate slaughtering of people by the white man. As if this is not sufficient to justify their use of violence, Kihika further mitigates it by showing that they embarked on it after satisfying Christ's instruction to turn the other cheek: "You are struck on the left cheek. You turn the right one".

That another divine requirement of forgiving your brother seventy times seven is also satisfied is implied when he suggests the number of times they have turned the other cheek by enumerating the years over which this battering has occurred: "One, two, three – sixty years". Kihika suggests that even then they embarked on the path of violence only as a last resort – "Your back against the wall you strike back" – and palliates this further by showing that it was not a premeditated action: "Then suddenly, it is always sudden, you say: I am not turning the other cheek any more".

Kihika's defence then moves from justifying the action to acquitting the actors, a shift signalled by a rhetorical question: "Do you think that we like scuffling for food with hyenas and monkeys in the forest". The question serves to refute the view that the freedom fighters are barbarians who are "intent upon returning Africa to barbarism and primitivism" (Walker 1984, 157-8).

Kihika uses the collocation of "warm fire" and "woman's love" to show that fighting for freedom has obliged them to forgo whatever was enjoyable and rewarding in their lives. After contrasting what they are forced to endure with what they used to enjoy, he uses a one-word question – "See?" – which is intended to interpellate the listener into accepting whatever is going to follow (i.e. "We must kill"), for the reasons already given. Repetition of this view in different words ("Put to sleep the enemies of the black man's freedom") serves to highlight the inevitability of the course of action.

Kihika then changes the focus of his defence from the freedom fighters to the response of the colonialists. Instead of redressing the causes of the retaliatory violence of

University of Cape Town

the freedom fighters, the white man (adding insult to injury) demeans them by telling them that they "are weak. They say we cannot win against the bomb". The modifier "weak" is repeated six times in consecutive sentences to show that their pride is repeatedly wounded by this taunt. Kihika also employs over-wording to capture how intensely he hates to be associated with weakness, repeating sentences of similar meaning: "I despise the weak. Let them be trampled to death. I spit on the weakness of our fathers. Their memory gives me no pride". After revealing the fate of the weak (which is death) and the destiny of the strong (which is to rule), he offers the consolatory hope that the people need not remain weak "Because a people united in faith are stronger than a bomb". The example of how the children of Israel were liberated from Egypt serves to suggest that the unity that makes people stronger than a bomb can only be achieved through recourse to violence. It also serves to justify the freedom fighters' use of violence by showing that even God (long suffering as He is), working through Moses, had to resort to violence as an efficacious solution to the intransigence of the oppressors.

After his justification of violence, his passionate call to his audience to embark on the path of violence is made more emphatic by anaphoric repetition: "Strike terror in their midst...Strike terror in the heart of the oppressor". Kihika then tempers this seemingly inhumane proposition by stressing their vulnerable humanity: "You think that we don't fear death? We do". This point is made more poignant by being couched in the form of a rhetorical question – "You think that we don't fear death?" – which is answered simply and honestly: "We do". Kihika then cites instances when this fear (through which he stakes their claim to humanity) is manifested in the actions of the freedom fighters, speaking from his own personal experience: "My legs almost refused to move when Robson...". In this way he insists that they do not enjoy confronting danger and killing people, but do it as a sacrifice for their nation because of their belief that "a few shall die that many shall live".

Kihika proceeds to point out why they should be willing to make such a sacrifice by indicating the inevitable result if they were to shun this responsibility: "Else we deserve to be slaves cursed to carry water and hew wood for the white man for ever and ever". He closes this section of his defence by suggesting how unimaginable it would be for them to choose slavery by using an imperative: "Choose between freedom and

University of Cape Town

slavery and it is fitting that man should grab at freedom and die". This is a stylisation of the choice that Moses proposed to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 30:19: "I am now giving you the choice between life and death, between God's blessing and God's curse, and I call unto heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Choose life". All this serves to justify the freedom fighters' decision to embark on the path of violence by showing it to be inevitable in such circumstances.

Ngugi has endowed most of his protagonists with oratorical or rhetorical ability, although their endowments vary in degree and Kihika (for the reasons discussed above) is the most gifted of all. There is no need to analyse in great depth the speeches of other protagonists here, because reference to them is made elsewhere in the study and some of the devices employed in them have been explored in the analysis of Kihika's speech, above. The General, despite being described as a man of action, can be very eloquent, particularly when he is exited. His speech during the Uhuru celebrations is also a powerful defence of the use of violence in the struggle for liberation. The recurring device of question and answer makes this speech appear dialogic. For instance, he begins his speech: "You ask why we fought, why we lived in the forest with wild beasts. You ask why we killed and spilt blood". He then gives the answers: "The white man went in a car. He lived in a big house..." (191-92). Nine more self-answered questions follow in the same speech.

Gikonyo the carpenter is also endowed with eloquence. His grandiloquence is manifested in the manner in which he describes the unspeakable joy he experienced when he fell in love with Mumbi. This speech abounds in Biblical rhetoric: "It was like being born again"; "I felt whole, renewed..."; "Before I was nothing. Now, I was a man"; and "It was as if I had made a covenant with God to be happy". This device serves to sanctify their love relationship and condemns the oppressors who wreck what God has ordained. Another device that recurs in this speech is "correctio" or "epanorthosis", which is a figure of speech that "retracts what has just been said and replaces it with what seems more suitable" (Vickers 1988, 314). Examples of this device are found in: "Mumbi made me feel it was all important... suddenly I discovered... no, it was as if I had made covenant with God" and in, "how shall I say it? I took the woman in my arms – do you know a banana stem? I peeled off layer after layer, and I put out my trembling

University of Cape Town

hand to reach the Kiana coiled inside". He vividly suggests the specialness of his love by insisting that it was something he had never felt before: "I had made love to many a woman, but I had never felt like that before", and by describing it as something extraordinary: "Together we plunged into the forest. And I was not afraid of the darkness...". Ordinarily, plunging into the forest would be a frightening experience, but Mumbi's love inspires him with courage and quells his fear of the darkness. This is in line with Aristotle's (1941, 1368a) view that one way of heightening the effect of praise is by showing that "a man is the only one, or the first, or almost the only one who has done something, or that he has done it better than any one else".

Mumbi's and Mugo's speeches are examples of the epideictic or ceremonial type, which "aims at establishing that someone is either worthy of honour or the reverse" (Duke 1990, 46). Mumbi eloquently denounces Karanja for betraying his friends and joining the home guards to get food and comfort. She tauntingly calls him "Judas" (127) and berates him, saying "why don't you wear your mother's skirt and Mwengu? When others went to fight, you remained to lick the feet of your white husbands" (130). In countries where Christianity is a dominant religion Judas has become a symbol of betrayal and avarice, so calling Karanja Judas at one stroke labels and condemns his perfidy. Mumbi also condemns his cowardice, implying that he is a woman and attributing to him traditional feminine traits of faint heartedness and weakness. For an African man to be called a woman is an insult, worse still when it comes from the woman he loves. There is a subtle suggestion that Karanja is a white man's dog, because the action of licking a man's feet is generally associated with a dog's demonstration of loyalty to its master. The traitorous relationship between him and the white man is further denounced by being indirectly associated with a kind of passive homosexuality: "you remained behind to lick the feet of your white husbands" (emphasis mine).

Mugo's eloquence is employed to condemn the white men's cruelty by exposing the atrocities they have committed. His speech on page 58 deplores the intense deprivation inflicted upon the detainees. They are deprived of rest, health care, food, warmth, and fellowship with their families: "Day and night they made us dig"; "We were stricken ill"; "we often slept on empty stomachs"; "and our clothes were just rags"; "we longed for the day when we would see our women laugh, or even see our children fight

University of Cape Town

and cry". Blame is heaped upon the white man through the use of active sentence constructions in which the agent, the process and the goal or victim are clearly identified: "They (agent) took (process) us (goal/victims) to the roads..."; "They (agent) called (process) us (goal/victims) criminals"; "They (agent) made (process) us (goal/victims) dig". In all these clauses the oppressor "is shown acting intentionally upon the victim and the responsibility for the [oppression]... is seen to be his" (Clark 1992, 212).

Mugo achieves emphasis by using a three-part list:

1. "In those days we did not stay alive because we thought our cause was strong"
2. "It was not even because we loved our country".
3. "If that had been all, who would not have perished?"

The argument that these considerations were not responsible for maintaining their will to live is made more emphatic by the use of negations (achieved through employment of the negative marker 'not' in all three sentences), which have a dramatic and persuasive function. This three-part list also functions as a suspensive structure because the reader is made to find out what were the reasons were not before he finds out what the reasons actually were. These are supplied in another three-part list:

1. "We only thought of home".
2. "We longed for the day when we would see our women laugh or even our children fight and cry".
3. "We became strong even in days when the cause for which blood was spilt seemed – seemed –".

Anaphoric repetition achieved through repeating the personal pronoun 'we' serves to make this claim more emphatic. The citing of these reasons functions as a powerful repudiation of the white man, who has presumed to shatter such tender ties. This claim, so powerfully presented, is in a sense manipulative, because Mugo did not himself leave behind a mother, or wife, or child. Ngugi nevertheless contrives to save his credibility by making him break off in mid-sentence (a device known as "aposiopesis"), presumably out of a sense of guilt (Vickers 1988, 295).

Endowing his protagonists with oratorical ability is one of the ways in which Ngugi endears them to the reader. In *Ubulumko Bezinja*, on the other hand, while the

University of Cape Town

protagonists do make speeches from time to time, these are too lacking in artistic elegance to be appealing to the reader and therefore will not be analysed here. Siyongwana's protagonists are nevertheless endearing because of their quick-wittedness. It is Tawuse who excels at repartee, which makes sense because he is the one tasked with the role of leadership during the first stage of revolution when mass mobilisation is crucial. To capture Tawuse's witty exchanges with Kholisile in a manner that will facilitate analysis I am going to use a dialogue format similar to a play script. Tawuse's first interlocution with Kholisile is thus transcribed as follows:

Tawuse : Kwashushu apha [wachaza uTawuse, phofu ephoxa. Mbangi yokuba aphoxe kukuba bona babesoloko belala phandle nokuba kuyabanda].
Kholisile : Yintoni izinja endlwini?
Tawuse : Kukho into esingathanda ukukhe siyive, nkosi.
Kholisile : Yinto eluhlobo luni leyo?
Tawuse : Sifuna ukukhe sazi ukuba kutheni na singenasabelo sisiso nje apha ekhaya?
Kholisile : Isabelo esisiso sesinjani ?
Tawuse : Nditsho ukunikwa ukutya okulungileyo, nkosi.
Kholisile : Okulungileyo kokunjani?
Tawuse : Kuthi kwakuxhelwa igusha, mhlawumbi inkomo sifumane amathambo inyama singayiphiwa. Kanti naxa kuphekwe ukutya sinikwa izikhoko.
Kholisile : Oko kukuthi ke, Tawuse , nifuna oku kutyiwa ngabantu?
Tawuse : Kanye ke nkosi. [wavuma ngokukhawuleza]
Kholisile : Wawuzibona phi izinja zisitya ukutya kwabantu?
Tawuse : Asizange sizibone kodwa sinayo ingqondo ethi zifanelwe kukukufumana.
Kholisile : Njengokuba unyoko ade abe ngaka nje engazange akhalazele kutya niqonde ntoni nina nizalwa izolo oku nje?
Tawuse : Siyaphawula ukuba zizinja ezisebenza nzima. Umzi Ugcinwa sithi ebusuku.
Kholisile : Senikwazi kona ukukhonkotha phofu?
Tawuse : Sazalwa sikhonkotha nje, ubuza ntoni, nkosi yam?
Kholisile : Heke-e! Utyaphile utsho. Oku kukuthi nithi xa ezinkulu zikhonkotha umntu okanye inkomo suke nina nikhonkothe zona, nibangwa yini, kanti nazalwa nikhonkotha nje?
Tawuse : Sukube sintyontyela xa sisenjenjalo.
Kholisile : Ubisi olu niluxhaphayo ananeli lulo?
Tawuse : Ubisi lufana namanzi alunantswane.

University of Cape Town

Kholisile : Indixakile le nto yenu kuba uSibi yena uthule.
Tawuse : Mhlawumbi wenziwa kukungaqondi intlalo le. Thina ayisikholisi konke intlalo.
Kholisile : Mandenjenje kuni; andinakho ukunika izinja ukutya okutyiwa ngabantu. Andizange ndigezelwe zizinja mna njengokuba ndenzile nje. Phumani niye phandle.
Tawuse : Kubanda nje, singenayo nandlu siya kulala phi?
Kholisile : O! Nifuna ukutya nokulala nabantu ezindlwini?
Tawuse : Ewe nje!
Kholisile : Ningatsho nje ukuba anisezozinja seningabantu, kutheni?
Tawuse : Ewe khona sizizo, kodwa imbandezelo iyavakala nakuzo.
Kholisile : Inja phandle![Uzingxothile uKholisile esonda ngazo. Zaphuma zibaleka] (18-9).

(Tawuse : It is warm in here. [Tawuse commented derisively. He is derisive because the dogs are made to To sleep outside even when it is cold]
Kholisile : What do dogs want in the house?
Tawuse : There is something we would like to know, master.
Kholisile : What kind of thing is that?
Tawuse : We would like to know why we do not have our rightful share here at home.
Kholisile : What do you mean by a rightful share?
Tawuse : I mean wholesome food.
Kholisile : What is wholesome food?
Tawuse : When a sheep or a beast is slaughtered we are given bones instead of meat. Even when food is cooked we are given left-overs.
Kholisile : That means Tawuse you want to be given the food given to people?
Tawuse : Exactly master.
Kholisile : Where have you ever seen dogs eating food allotted to people?
Tawuse : We have never seen it, but we have a belief that they ought to have it.
Kholisile : What about your mother who up to her present age has never complained about food, what have you observed, you who were born only yesterday?
Tawuse : We have noticed that it is dogs who work hard. They guard the homestead day and night.
Kholisile : By the way, have you learnt how to bark?
Tawuse : We were born barking, what are you asking master?
Kholisile : What about the milk you are lapping, are you not

University of Cape Town

satisfied with it?
Tawuse : Milk is like water, it does not lead to satiety.
Kholisile : What puzzles me about your complaint is that Sibi is silent.
Tawuse : Maybe it is because she is not cognisant of the condition in which we are living. To us it is completely unacceptable.
Kholisile : Let me put it this way; I cannot give to dogs food that is eaten by humans. I have never been so impertinantly treated by dogs in my life. Get out of here.
Tawuse : It is cold out there and we do not have any room. Where will we stay?
Kholisile : So! You want to eat and stay with people in houses?
Tawuse : Of course yes!
Kholisile : Why don't you say you are no longer dogs but humans?
Tawuse : Indeed we are dogs, but we also feel the pain.
Kholisile : Out you go dog! (Kholisile chases them away and threateningly charges at them).

The general purpose of such exchanges between the oppressors and the oppressed in this novel is to commend the freedom fighters and condemn the oppressors. One way in which Siyongwana attempts to attain this objective is by depicting the protagonists as polite and quick-witted and the antagonists as rude and brutish. For example, Tawuse opens this dialogue with what has come to be known as "phatic communication" (utterances that occur at the margins of interaction, such as formulae for greeting and parting and trivial remarks about aspects of the speaker's immediate setting) – "*Kwashushu apha*" (It is warm in here) – in an attempt to broach a non-threatening conversational topic (Simpson 1997, 163). To this polite overture, Kholisile rudely responds "*Yintoni izinja endlwini?*" (What do dogs want in the house?)

Whilst Siyongwana is endeavouring to portray the protagonists as polite so as to expose the rude intransigence of the antagonists, he has to guard against allowing this politeness to border on docility. That is why even this phatic utterance is tinged with derision, as authorial comment reveals: "*wachaza uTawuse, phofu ephoxa*" (Tawuse commented derisively). Thus the dogs' politeness is a diplomatic strategy that does not stem from fear of the oppressors: when they are pushed for a direct answer, they are not too timid to give one.

University of Cape Town

In making the "opening move" (i.e. with "essential topic-carrying items which are recognisably 'new' in terms of the immediately preceding talk") Tawuse employs "off-record indirectness" ("avoiding any explicit mention of the goods or services requested") – "*Kukho into esingathanda ukukhe siyive, nkosi*" (There is something we would like to know, master) – to hint at the purpose of their visit to Kholisile (Simpson 1997, 145, 157). This device is used to minimise the potential offensiveness of the message content of the requests that are to follow. Tawuse's politeness is further enhanced by the use of the term of the address '*nkosi*' (master), which suggests decorousness and accords social status to Kholisile. Brown and Levinson's (1978; 1987), theory of politeness phenomena built around the concept of "face", is pertinent to an appreciation of what Tawuse hopes to achieve by using this strategy. According to Brown and Levinson's theory, face is a fundamental aspect of the human psyche, which has two interrelated dimensions. These are:

> *Positive face*
> This is your wish to be liked by others; your desire to have your interests approved of; your desire to have what you like and want shared by others. In short your positive self image.
>
> *Negative face*
> This is your wish not to be coerced, ordered or forced into things; your desire not to be encroached upon or have your actions impeded by others. In short this is your basic desire to be free from imposition. (Simpson 1997, 156)

Tawuse understands clearly that what he is going to ask Kholisile is a face-threatening act as far as their master is concerned, and that is why he uses off-record indirectness as a "negative politeness" strategy which is "specifically designed to preserve or to protect the negative face of the interlocutor" (ibid., 156, 158). Instead of responding with a "supportive move" (i.e. an item that concurs with the initiatory move it is supporting), which in this case would be an answer such as "*Qhuba ndimamele*" (continue, I am listening), Kholisile reacts with a "challenging move" (which serves "to hold the progress of the topic or the introduction of a topic in some way"), "*Yinto eluhlobo luni leyo?*" (What kind of thing is that?). Fairclough (1989, 135) has identified questions (like this one) which enforce explicitness as devices employed by powerful participants to

University of Cape Town

constrain the contributions of the less powerful participants, and it is arguable that here this question is intended to intimidate Tawuse.

Tawuse's answer, *"Sifuna ukukhe sazi ukuba kutheni na singenasabelo sisiso nje apha ekhaya"* (We would like to know why we do not have our rightful share here at home), shows that he has not been ruffled by the question. He maintains his politeness through indirection, but this time employs on-record indirectness in "Isabelo esisiso" (our rightful share), a phrase with clear lexical links to the demands they have come to make. To this answer Kholisile responds with another intimidating question, *"Isabelo esisiso sesinjani?* (What do you mean by a rightful share?). This question and answer dialogue sets the pattern for the remainder of the exchange. On a couple of occasions Kholisile shifts from threatening questions to a different constraining strategy such as reformulation (a rewording of what has been said by oneself or others), for example: *"Oko kukuthi ke, Tawuse, nifuna oku kutyiwa ngabantu?"* (That means Tawuse you want to be given the same food as that given to people?). Tawuse responds with a simple affirmation of Kholisile's formulation – *"Kanye ke nkosi"* (Exactly master) – that is softened only by the use of the term of address '*nkosi*' (master) to indicate deference.

When reformulation does not achieve its desired effect, Kholisile reverts to his interrogating strategy: *"Wawuzibone phi izinja zisitya ukutya kwabantu?"* (Where have you ever seen dogs eating food allotted to people?). However, this time the aim is not to intimidate so much as to make the demands of the protagonists appear absurd and thus to question their credibility. Again Tawuse has a ready answer for this: *"Asizange sizibone kodwa sinayo ingqondo ethi zifanelwe kukufumana"* (We have never seen it, but we have a belief that they ought to have it). Even when Kholisile continues to discredit their complaints by contrasting their 'immature' action with their mother's 'mature' complacency about the status quo – *"Njengokuba unyoko ade abe ngaka nje angazange akhalazele kutya, niqonde ntoni nina nizalwa izolo oku nje?"* (What about your mother who up to her present age has never complained about food, what have you observed, you who were born only yesterday?) – Tawuse is able to legitimise their demands by saying: *"Siyaphawula ukuba zizinja ezisebenza nzima. Umzi ugcinwa sithi ubusuku nemini"* (We have noticed that it is dogs who work hard. They guard the homestead day and night).

University of Cape Town

When all these subtle manipulative and intimidating strategies fail to silence the protagonists, Kholisile resorts to what Hastert and Weber (1992, 168) term "the direct or manifest use of power, which consists in turning the the two-way transitivity into one-way transivity... an attempt to have total control over the other, a denial of mutuality". He tries to achieve this through a combination of argumentation and threats of violence. According to Sorning (1989, 99), argumentative steps are introduced through explicit appeals such as "look here ...", or "You (really) must admit...", which are "usually followed by assertive statements of varying relevancy; the listener is invited to adjust his perspective to that of the speaker".

In this dialogue Kholisile introduces an argumentative step by saying: "*Mandenjenje kuni...*" (Let me put it this way...), which is followed by the assertive statements "*andinakho ukunika izinja ukutya okutyiwa ngabantu*" (I cannot give to dogs food that is eaten by humans) and *"andizange ndigezelwe zizinja mna njengokuba ndenzile"* ("I have never been impertinently treated by dogs in my life). These statements accumulate negatives – such as "*Andinakho...*" (I cannot...) and "*Andizange..*" (I have never...) – which are aimed at inhibiting any further response. As if these assertive statements are not emphatic enough to silence any further response, Kholisile concludes with an outright imperative: "*Phumani niye phandle*" (Get out of here).

All these strategies fail to frighten Tawuse into silence, and he now ventures to say: *"Kubanda nje singenayo nandlu siya kuhlala phi?"* (It is cold out there and we do not have any room; where will we stay?). In response Kholisile reverts to his earlier strategy of intimidating his interlocutor through reformulation, *"O! Nifuna ukutya nokulala nabantu ezindlwini?"* (So! You want to eat and stay with people in houses?). Once again, Tawuse is not intimidated and employs the same bald non-redressive tactic of affirming Kholisile's formulation: *"Ewe nje!"* (Of course yes!) But this time the rejoinder is more forceful because it is formulated as an exclamation and it is not mitigated by any term of address. Kholisile tries once more to make their demands appear absurd: *"ningatsho nje ukuba anisezozinja seningabantu kutheni?"* (Why don't you say you are no longer dogs but humans?). And again, Tawuse calmly clarifies the issue: *"Ewe kona sizizo, kodwa imbandezelo iyavakala nakuzo"* (Indeed we are dogs, but we also feel pain). Finally infuriated by Tawuse's patient resilience, Kholisile resorts to

University of Cape Town

threats of violence as he couples the imperative "*Inja phandle!*" (Out you go dog!) with appropriate action: "*Uzigxothile uKholisile esonda ngazo*" (Kholisile chases them away and threateningly charges at them).

Siyongwana ingeniously engineers this dialogue to present the dogs' grievances, to expose and condemn Kholisile's intransigency, and to portray Tawuse's resilience so as to endear him to the reader. The dialogic manner in which the grievances of the dogs are presented has a dramatic effect and serves to avoid the monotony that is an inherent shortcoming of monologue, with which Ngugi who opts for this latter device has to contend. The turn-taking in this exchange allows Tawuse to mention only one grievance at a time before he is interrupted by Kholisile. In this way, the mere "cataloguing [of] injustices, ...which so often stultify fictional experiments into mere documentary", is avoided (Gakwandi 1977, 21).

Showing Kholisile thus exercising power via direct and indirect strategies serves to expose his intransigence, born of his bigotry against dogs. This bigotry stems from the frame of inferiority that he assigns to dogs. According to Hastert and Weber (1992, 164), frames are clusters or families of background assumptions on which we draw in order to infer meaning as we interact with others. Using Hastert and Weber's words (ibid., 165), Kholisile's background assumptions about the world of humans and the world of dogs as reflected in this dialogue can be summed up as follows:

- The world of humans is an epistemic world of knowledge, which is kept inaccessible to the world of dogs.
- The inaccessibility of humans' knowledge puts the world of humans in a position of power vis-à-vis the world of dogs.
- The world of humans uses its power to establish or consolidate a deontic world of duty and principles, which it coercively imposes upon the world of dogs.
- The world of humans thus denies the essential subjectivity of dogs by reducing it to an objective image or frame, which is projected by the world of humans and to which the world of dogs is expected to conform.

The more Kholisile tries to force the dogs into the predetermined mould or frame, the more his intransigence is disclosed and condemned. The more intransigent he becomes

University of Cape Town

the more clearly is Tawuse's resilience revealed. Tawuse's use of both on-record and off-record strategies of politeness further endears him to the reader, because it enhances the portrait of the freedom fighters as the saints of the struggle who have done all they can to attain their political goals through non-violent means.

Other protagonists in Siyongwana's novel are also gifted in the art of repartee, but their tactics tend to be similar to those employed by Tawuse in the extract just discussed and need no further analysis here. One exception that deserves to be quoted and analysed in full is the dialogue between Mthendevu and the representatives of the people, because besides being a powerful defence of the type of violence the freedom fighters have opted for, it also shows how the dogs have clawed their way into a powerful communicating position. Adapting it to the dialogue format of the play script, it can be transcribed as follows:

Mthendevu : Nibekwa yintoni apha bantundini?
Inkosi kaBhaku: Sihambele kuni Mthendevu.
Mthendevu : Nizokuthini kuthi?
Inkosi kaBhaku: Soloko sinesikhalazo ngento
embi enisenza yona yokutya impahla yethu.
Khanenze kuhle mzi wakwanja.
Mthendevu : Ngobani abaphethe kakubi abanye kukho nina
kukho thina?
Inkosi kaBhaku: Nini.
Mthendevu : Hi? Asizukuva kakuhle yile nja ikhonkothayo.
Yima! Bhaku! (wamnqanda uMthendevu.
UBhaku uyokurhiwula inkosi yakhe endala,
phofu akade ayibambe. Wamngxolisa
uMthendevu) Uthi ke ngobani abaphethe
kakubi abanye?
Inkosi kaBhaku: Nini. Thina ngokwethu akukho nto yenu sakha
Sayibulala. Nani asizange sinibulale.
Mthendevu : Baphi oSibi, ziphi zona izinja ebenikade
nizibulala?
Inkosi kaBhaku: Ewe, khona zikhe zabulawa izinja, kodwa
ngezizathu ezibonakalayo, kanti ke nani
beningabayekanga abantu nibatya. Baninzi
abantu abazele amanxeba emizimbeni yabo.
Mthendevu : Kanene ukuluma umntu kudibene
nokumbulala? Khawundiphe kuloo ndawo.
Inkosi kaBhaku: Kudibene. Uthi umntu akulunywa yinja
nokuba yintoni na enobuhlungu afe.
Mthendevu : Kukufa ngengozi oko iinjongo zenja zingekho

University of Cape Town

apho.

Inkosi kaBhaku: Ukufa kunye kuyafana. Asizazi thina ukuba ziphi na iinjongo zenja xa iluma umntu.

Mthendevu : Xela umntu abemnye owakha wafa linxeba lenja?

Inkosi kaBhaku: Akakho endimaziyo, kodwa kuthiwa bakhe babekho.

Mthendevu : Uthetha ngento ongayaziyo nawe. Kunjalo nje nenze into embi bantu le yokurhintyela inja ngentambo emqaleni niyirhuqe ixhathisa, ikhala niye kuyibulala. Kube kodwa ukukhe nithi xa inja izele iinjana ezininzi nithume amakhwenkwe ukuba aye kuzibulala eningazithandiyo nezingabekwanga mntu. Azithabathe ke azinkale ematyeni. Zibuhlungu ezo nto kuthi. Andazi nokuba aninamasikizi na nibadala nje. Ubulungisa obu nijonge ukubenza ebantwini bodwa?
(Amadoda aziva enosizi).

Inkosi kaBhaku: Ningabisakhathazeka, Mthendevu, (yangxengxeza inkosi kaBhaku endala) Into esiyithunyiweyo apha kuni kukuba size kunicela ukuba niphindele emakhaya. Intlalo ayisayi kufana neyangaphambili.

Mthendevu : Oko kukuthi niyaluqonda uhlobo ebenisiphethe ngalo ukuba belungalunganga?

Inkosi kaBhaku: Ewe siyaluqonda.Asobe siphinde senze izinto ezingangqinelaniyo nemiphefumlo yenu.

Mthendevu : Niqinisekile ukuba aniyi kusipha amathambo kukho inyama?

Inkosi kaBhaku: Siya kuninika yonke into etyiwayo ngumntu.

Mthendevu : Niya kuthini mhla inayo? Aniyi kusibeka emakhaleni ?

Inkosi kaBhaku: Niza kuhlala nathi ezindlwini
(Wancuma uMthendevu kwakutshiwo eqonda ukuba baza kuzifumana zonke izinto ababekade bezifuna) (150-2).

(Mthendevu : What do you want here you people?

Bhaku's Master: We have come to pay you a visit Mthendevu.

Mthendevu : What have you come to say to us?

Bhaku's Master: We have always been having a complaint against you because of the ill-treatment you inflict upon us by stealing our live-stock. Let justice prevail, house of dogs.

Mthendevu : Who is ill-treating whom, between you and

us?

Bhaku's Master: It is you.

Mthendevu : What? (we are not going to be able to hear one another because of this barking dog. Bhaku! Hang on! [Bhaku charges at his old master but does not bite him. Mthendevu reprimands him.] You were still saying who ill-treats whom?

Bhaku's Master: It is you. We on our part have never killed anything that belongs to you and we also never killed you.

Mthendevu : Where is Sibi, where are the other dogs you have been killing?

Bhaku's Master: Yes, of course dogs were sometimes killed, but they were killed for good reasons. Similarly, you have been persistently biting people. There are many people who have wounds all over their bodies.

Mthendevu : Is biting the same thing as killing? Do answer me here.

Bhaku's Master: It is one and the same thing. When a dog or anything poisonous bites a person, he dies

Mthendevu : That is accidental death. It is not premeditated murder.

Bhaku's master: Death is the same. Nobody knows the intentions of dogs when they bite a person.

Mthendevu : Mention just one person who died because he/she was bitten by a dog.

Bhaku's Master: There is no one I know of but it is said that there are some.

Mthendevu : You are talking about something you have no knowledge of. In fact you humans are guilty of the monstrous practice of tying a rope around the neck of a dog, forcefully dragging it whilst it recoils and howls to go and kill it. At times when a bitch has given birth to many puppies you instruct boys to go and kill all those you do not want by hitting them against the rocks. All these atrocities grieve us. We do not know whether you do not have compunction, old as you are. Do you intend to do justice to humans only?
[The men were touched with remorse.]

Bhaku's Master: You need no longer be perturbed Mthendevu. [Bhaku's master tries to conciliate them.] What we have been commissioned to ask from from you is to return home. Conditions of

University of the Free State

living will not be the same as before.

Mthendevu : That means that you acknowledge that the way you treated us was unjust.

Bhaku's Master: Yes we do. Now we will never again do those things that disturb your spirits.

Mthendevu : Are you sure that you will not give us bones when there is meat?

Bhaku's Master: We will give you everything that is eaten by humans.

Mthendevu : What will you do when it is raining? Won't you assign us to live under aloes?

Bhaku's Master: You will live with us in our houses.

[Mthendevu smiles when that is said as he is now convinced that they are going to get everything they have been agitating for.]

That the dogs have clawed their way up into a powerful communicating position is manifest in the aggressive way in which Mthendevu intiates this dialogue with a direct question: *"Nibekwa yintoni apha bantundini"* (What do you want here, you people?). This strategy is made extremely blunt by the use of the derogatory suffix *"ndini"* in *"bantundini"*. The rude welcome which humans receive from the dogs is similar to that which the dogs receive from Kholisile in their first round of non-violent negotiations. This indicates the extent to which the dogs have turned the tables through the use of violence, and further evidence of the efficacy of violence in changing an unjust and oppressive social order.

This time around it is the humans who are forced to resort to ambiguity, a device typically used by less powerful participants, as Bhaku's former master answers vaguely, "*Sihambele kuni Mthendevu*" (We have come to pay you a visit, Mthendevu). Typical of powerful participants, Mthendevu enforces explicitness by asking, "*Nize kuthini kuthi*" (What have you come to say to us?). In an attempt to mitigate the threat to the negative face of his interlocutor, Bhaku's master employs an on record indirectness in "*Soloko sinesikhalazo esinaso ngento embi enisenza yona yokutya impahla yethu Khanenze kuhle, mzi wakwanja"* (We have always been having a complaint against you because of the ill-treatment you inflict upon us by eating our livestock. Let justice prevail, house of dogs).

The strategy employed by Bhaku's master is indirect in that oblique terms are used, such as *"into embi enisenza yona"* (the ill-treatment you inflict upon us) instead of

University of Cape Town

"ubugewu benu" (your criminal acts), and *"yokutya impahla yethu"* (of eating our livestock) rather than *"yokuba impahla yethu"* (of stealing our livestock). The attempt to protect or preserve the negative face of the interlocutors is further enhanced through an exhortation: *"Khanenze kuhle mzi wakwanja"* (Let justice prevail house of dogs), which is made more appealing by the use of an overtly polite term of address, *"mzi wakwanja"*, rather than a demand.

However, the relations between dogs and humans have so deteriorated that this conciliatory request is interpreted as an attempt to apportion blame, and consequently Mthendevu retorts: *"Ngobani abaphethe kakubi abanye, kukho nina kukho thina"* (Who is ill-treating the other between you and us?). Mthendevu's use of what Menz (1989, 234) terms a "strategy of black and white depiction" achieved through the use of antithetic pronouns *"nina/thina"* (you/us) forces Bhaku's master to abandon his polite off-record and indirect on-record strategies and resort to the direct strategy, which is performed baldly and without redress as he answers, *"Nini"* (It is you). That this answer nearly bungles their diplomatic mission is suggested by what happens immediately afterwards. Bhaku threatens the man with violence but is restrained by Mthendevu: *"UBhaku uyokurhiwula inkosi yakhe endala, phofu akade ayibambe. Wamngxolisa uMthendevu"* (Bhaku charges at his old master but does not bite him. Mthendevu reprimands him). This is yet more evidence that dogs are now operating from a powerful position, because generally it is the powerful participants who readily resort to threats and violence to sustain the relations of domination.

Sensing that Bhaku's violent reaction to his master's accusation is going to tarnish the positive image of the freedom fighters by presenting them as the oppressed turned oppressors, Siyongwana makes Mthendevu reprimand Bhaku. He then invites his master to repeat his allegations: *"Uthi ke ngobani abaphethe kakubi abanye?"* (You were still saying who ill-treats whom?). The aim is to silence him through argument rather than violence, as was Kholisile's habit. Encouraged by Mthendevu's tolerant attitude Bhaku's master boldly continues with his accusation, *"Nini"* (It is you), this time exonerating humans from any responsibility for the state of things: *"Thina ngokwethu akukho nto yenu sakha sayibulala. Nani ngokwenu asizange sinibulale"*(We on our part have never killed anything that belongs to you and we also never killed you). His denial

University of Cape Town

of any responsibility is made more forceful through the accumulation of negatives in *"akukho nto yenu esakha sayibbulala"* (We have never killed anything that belongs to you) and "*Nani ngokwenu asizange sinibulale*" (we also never killed you). This forceful denial is dismissed with a pointed question, *"Baphi oSibi, ziphi zona ezinye izinja ebenikade nizibulala?"* (Where is Sibi, where are the other dogs you have been killing?).

Phrasing this counter-accusation in the form of questions obliges Bhaku's master to answer, and since the evidence of humans' guilt brought out in these questions is undeniable, he is forced to concede contrary to his earlier denial that they have indeed killed dogs. He grudgingly agrees: "*Ewe khona zikhe zabulawa izinja*" (Yes, of course dogs were sometimes killed). He tries to avoid incriminating himself through the use of what Eldman (1977, 30) calls "*reference to mythical groups*", where no names of guilty people are mentioned, resorting instead to an agent-less passive construction. However, the mere confirmation that humans have killed dogs is sufficient to expose the lie that he told earlier.

This dishonesty discredits the case of humans against the dogs and strengthens the dogs' defence of their use of violence. His justification that "*kodwa ngezizathu ezibonakalayo"* (but they were killed for good reasons) does very little to mitigate this impression. Even his attempt to rationalise their actions by accusing the dogs of similar crimes saying, "*kanti ke nani beningabayekanga abantu nibatya*" (Similarly, you have been persistently biting people) – which he exaggerates through the use of hyperbole, *"Baninzi abantu abazele amanxeba emizimbeni yabo*" (There are many people who have wounds all over their bodies) – is neutralised by Mthendevu's question, "*Kanene ukuluma umntu kudibene nokumbulala?* (Is biting the same thing as killing?). Mthendevu makes the answer to this question more obligatory by following it with the injunction: "*Khawundiphendule kuloo ndawo*" (Do answer me here).

Bhaku's master further discredits the case of humans against the dogs by making another highly improbable assertion: "*Kudibene. Uthi, umntu akulunywa yinja nokuba yintoni na enobuhlungu afe"* (It is one and the same thing. When a dog or anything poisonous bites a person, he dies). To this Mthendevu retorts, "*Kukufa ngengozi oko, iinjongo zenja zingekho apho*" (That is accidental death. It is not a premeditated murder). This answer seeks to exonerate freedom fighters from blame for the deaths of people that

University of Cape Town

occur when they use violent strategies such as sabotage by claiming that they are not intentional but accidental. When the man insists that it amounts to one and the same thing – *"Ukufa kunye kuyafana. Asazi thina ukuba zibe ziphi na iinjongo zenja xa iluma umntu"* (Death is the same. Nobody knows the intentions of dogs when they bite a person) – Mthendevu challenges him by saying *"Xela umntu abe mnye owakha wafa linxeba lenja?"* (Mention just one person who died because he/she has been bitten by a dog). He is again forced to confess that he knows of no one, *"Akakho endimaziyo"* (There is no one I know of), before hastening to add unconvincingly: *"kodwa kuthiwa bakhe babeko"* (but it is said that there are some).

When reason fails to convince the humans of the enormity of their crimes against dogs, Mthendevu resorts to a strategy that Menz (1989, 237) terms "emotionalization of facts" to force humans to admit their guilt. The fact that dogs now assume the position of powerful participants allows Mthendevu to speak for a long time without being interrupted. He appeals to his interlocutors' emotions by vividly depicting some of the atrocities committed by humans against dogs. In exposing and condemning these crimes he says: *"kunjalo nje nenze into embi bantu, le yokurhintyela inja ngentambo emqaleni niyirhuqe ixhathisa, ikhala, niye kuyibulala"* (In fact you humans are guilty of the monstrous practice of tying a rope around the neck of a dog, forcefully dragging it whilst it recoils and howls to go and kill it). He vivifies and emotionalises this crime through appealing to the senses of sight and hearing in, *"ixhathisa"* (recoils) and *"ikhala"* (howls). Mthendevu goes on to cite another crime, *"Kube, kodwa ukukhe nithi xa inja izele iinjana ezininzi nithume amakhwenkwe ukuba aye kuzibulala enimgazithandiyo nezingabekwanga mntu"* (At times when a bitch has given birth to many puppies you instruct boys to go and kill all those you do not want).

This time he creates emotion by describing the barbaric method of their execution: *"Azithabathe ke azinkale ematyeni"* (Taking them and hitting them against the rocks). He maximises his appeal to his listeners' emotions by adding, *"Zibuhlungu kakhulu ezo nto kuthi"* (All these atrocities grieve us greatly). He then reverts to his questioning mode to ascertain whether humans are still not ready to confess their crimes, enquiring: *"Andazi ukuba aninamasikizi na nibadala nje. Ubulungisa obu nijonge ukubenza ebantwini bodwa*? (We do not know whether you do not have compunction,

University of Cape Town

old as you are. Do you intend to do justice to humans only?). The strategy of emotionalising the facts achieves the desired goal of creating emotion and feeling: "*Amadoda azive enosizi*" (The men were touched with remorse). In an attempt to patch things up, Bhaku's master says: "*Ningabisakhathazeka Mthendevu... Into esiyithunyiweyo apha kuni kukuba size kunicela ukuba niphindele emakhaya. Intlalo ayisayi kufana neyangaphambili*" (What we have been commissioned to ask from you is to return home. Conditions of living will not be the same as before).

The on-record indirect strategy that Bhaku's master reverts to in, "*Intlalo ayisayi kufana neyangaphambili*" (Conditions of living will not be the same as before) does not satisfy Mthendevu, who demands nothing less than an open admission of guilt from humans: "*Oko kukuthi niyaluqonda uhlobo ebenisiphethe ngalo ukuba belungalunganga?* (That means that you acknowledge that the way you treated us was unjust?). Bhaku's master finally confesses their guilt and expresses their commitment to a process of redress: "*Ewe siyaluqonda. Asobe siphinde sense izinto ezingangqinelaniyo nemiphefumlo yenu*" (Yes we do. Now we will never again do those things that disturb your spirits).

As a powerful participant Mthendevu again insists on explicitness, demanding direct commitment to making amends for specific grievances: "*Niqinisekile ukuba aniyi kusipha amathambo odwa xa kukho inyama*" (Are you sure that you will not give us bones when there is meat?). When he is convinced that all their demands will be met, he smiles a smile of contentment: "*Wancuma uMthendevu kwakutshiwo eqonda ukuba baza kuzifumana izinto ababekade bezifuna*" (Mthendevu smiles when that is said as he is now convinced that they are going to get everything they have been agitating for).

Siyongwana skilfully uses this dialogue to portray Mthendevu as an admirable advocate for the cause of dogs' liberation, and a shrewd negotiator who both acquits the freedom fighters from blame and maximises the gains of the struggle. As pointed out earlier, it is this lively dialogue that compensates for Siyongwana's failure to use sufficient authorial speech to eulogise his protagonists.

University of Cape Town

SUMMARY

This chapter has compared *Ubulumko Bezinja* and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* as examples of novels that depict groups contesting power openly, as the colonised revolt through strikes, mass protests and counter-hegemonic actions against the conquest segregation feature of the scientific state (that allows the conquerors to form a dominant caste and monopolise high status). The comparison of these selected novels focused on ideology and aesthetics.

The collation of the ideological content of these novels hinged on three ideologems: a) intransigence to change leads to violence; b) "violence in order to change an intolerable, unjust social order is not savagery: it purifies man"; c) violence to protect and preserve an unjust, oppressive social order is criminal and diminishes man" (Ngugi 1982, 28). This chapter showed that Siyongwana fares better than Ngugi in articulating the first ideologeme because he dramatises the meetings between the dominators and the dominated (which expose the latter's intransigence), rather than merely narrating them as Ngugi is inclined to do. The articulation of the second ideologeme is more comprehensive in Ngugi's novel than in Siyongwana's, because Siyongwana's use of dogs as his protagonists makes his task of justifying the use of violence easier than Ngugi's. One of the reasons why this is the case is that the weapons that dogs can realistically use are less deadly than those that human beings are capable of using. Siyongwana's use of dogs as characters (which was a matter of artistic expediency at that time because of censorship laws) also has a trivialising effect on his articulation of the third ideologeme, because the impact on the reader of the death of a dog (resulting from the use of violence to protect and preserve an unjust, oppressive social order), even when one knows that the represents a human being, is simply not as great.

The comparison of the aesthetic value of these novels focused on vital beauty and typical beauty. The assessment of vital beauty zeroed in on the portrayal of characters and that of typical beauty was structured in terms of certain dominant categories. This chapter has showed that Ngugi fares better than Siyongwana in presenting both protagonists and antagonists. This is understandable since *Ubulumko Bezinja* is Siyongwana's first attempt at writing a novel and *A Grain of Wheat* is Ngugi's third

University of Cape Town

novel, moreover, his second to be informed by revolutionary ideology (*Weep not Child* being his first). The conditions of the two texts' production are very different from each other. Siyongwana uses Xhosa as his medium, which forces him to rely upon a mere handful of publishers who often rejected literature, which they regarded, as malevolent to the cause of the government and the church. Hence he couches his political message in allegorical terms – a strategy which has its merits and demerits.

Ngugi is more convincing than Siyongwana in establishing the virtue of his protagonists and indicating its origin. Ngugi also fares better than Siyongwana in minimising the optimism that characterises novels in which virtuous victims are used, by portraying many casualties on the side of freedom fighters. Ngugi is again more convincing than Siyongwana in depicting his antagonists, because he provides them with some personal and psychological history and portrays them as participating in a legal system. All the antagonists in Siyongwana's novel are the type of characters that Ndebele (1984, 44) describes as "symbols [that] appear in most of our writings as finished products often without personal history". Another shortcoming in Siyongwana's portrayal of his antagonists is that they are not depicted as being a part of a legal system, so that their exposure and condemnation is not an attack on an institution so much as an attack on a mere social group. The problem with using antagonists that are part of such a group is that in the group they still maintain their individuality; thus the attack tends to be mounted against an individual rather than against an institution.

As in the previous two chapters, Bakhtin's five compositional unities (tabulated in Chapter One of this study) were used as a framework for the comparison of the typical beauty of the novels under review. This chapter has argued that as far as typical beauty is concerned, Ngugi's novel is more comprehensive than that of Siyongwana. Unlike Siyongwana, who had to rely heavily upon his imagination in writing his novel because the armed struggle was only in its infancy at the time, Ngugi had the benefit of hindsight when he wrote his book, with ready access to the language of revolution from which he was free to transpose material.

The comparison of the first compositional unity, authorial speech, for instance, showed that whilst Ngugi's authorial speech in eulogising the courage, beauty, knowledge, diligence and resilience of his protagonists is sustained, Siyongwana's is

University of Cape Town

generally not sustained. Ngugi also devotes sufficiently sustained authorial speech to exposing and condemning the villainous characters of his antagonists, whilst Siyongwana's authorial speech is again less substantial in this regard. It is Siyongwana's ingenuity in creating dialogue that vindicates the heroism of his protagonists and exposes the villainy of his antagonists, and thus saves his novel from misfiring in this respect.

Both authors successfully harness oral everyday narration (which constitutes the second compositional-stylistic unity) to achieve their thematic intentions. Ngugi for instance exploits the myth that explains the origin of the subordinate position of women, and the prayers and songs of freedom fighters to create inspiring images of heroism and fighting grit. The examples in which Siyongwana exploits everyday oral narration to inspire heroism and fighting grit in his protagonists are the song and poetry they performed to celebrate their first success in using economic sabotage against their oppressors. Ngugi's artistic edge as far as typical beauty is concerned is also attested to by his performance in terms of the third compositional stylistic unity, which is the stylisation of various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration (letter, diary etc.), which renders *A Grain of Wheat* a better heteroglot than *Ubulumko Bezinja*.

With regard to extra-artistic authorial speech, the fourth compositional stylistic unity, which includes things such as moral, philosophical or scientific statements, again it is Ngugi who is more successful in striking a balance between 'telling' and 'showing' than Siyongwana, in whose novel the balance tends to be in favour of showing. Although tilting the scale towards what is represented rather than what is related makes Siyongwana's novel more dramatic (particularly in respect of presenting the conflict between protagonists and antagonists), this is achieved at the expense of sustained authorial and extra-artistic authorial speech which would have served to convey the author's views more directly.

Although Siyongwana's extra-artistic speech is exiguous (due to the conditions under which he wrote his novel, which include the Government's proscription of oppositional literature), he generally employs it to expose the debasing effect of domination on its victims and the suffering they endure as they seek to liberate themselves. It is arguable that the source of most of the behavioural defects exhibited by the protagonists can be traced back to the excruciating exploitation they are made to

University of Cape Town

endure under the regime of men. The dire need for sustenance they are made to suffer warps their characters and makes them esteem food (and perhaps other material things) too highly.

With regard to the last type of compositional-stylistic unity, which is the stylistically individualised speech of the characters, both Siyongwana and Ngugi exhibit artistic brilliance in employing individualised speech to achieve their thematic intentions, which include lionising the freedom fighters and denouncing as brutes all those who try to frustrate the people's struggle for liberation. Generally speaking, whilst Ngugi uses monologue more effectively than Siyongwana in revealing his characters, Siyongwana is more effective in employing dialogue between antagonists and protagonists to achieve the same goal. It is no wonder that in *A Grain of Wheat* almost all the protagonists are endowed with eloquence, a quality best revealed through monologue, whereas the majority of protagonists in *Ubulumko Bezinja* are quick-witted, an ability that is best manifested through dialogue.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This study has been actuated by two basic aims: to create a comparative methodology for the study of African literature; and to make a comparative assessment of ideology and aesthetics in the novels of selected South African and Kenyan authors. This chapter sets out to provide a summary of the outcomes of this research, to acknowledge its limitations, and to make suggestions for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE OUTCOMES

The first outcome relates to the study's first aim, which is to create a comparative methodology for the assessment of African literature. In line with the study's title, its methodology is supported by the two principal concepts of ideology and aesthetics, which correspond to the two major areas of literary-critical enquiry, content and form (the concepts of ideology and aesthetics are preferred to those of content and form because they are broader). This mixed premise has allowed this study to assess the novels under review as both literary and social phenomena.

The study is concerned with three broad ideologies that recur in the literatures of the countries under study: nationalism, liberalism and revolutionary ideology. These ideological divisions have allowed the study to compare novels that explore the same ideological terrain, and thus to avoid the application of the same African aesthetic standards to all African writings, irrespective of their content, as Chinweizu (1980) has done. The second principal concept of aesthetics has been subdivided into the categories of vital beauty and typical beauty, to give due attention to the assessment of both character development and language style in the novels under investigation.

The three ideological categories each comprise three ideologemes. The ideologemes of nationalistic ideology are: a) cultural arrogance is the road to brutal ruin; b) no race possesses a monopoly on beauty, intelligence and strength, and there is room for all at the rendezvous of victory; c) blending the best values from various cultures is a

University of Cape Town

therapy for psycho-social disunity. The ideologemes of liberal ideology are: a) shattered dreams and broken families; b) doomed to drudgery and thuggery; c) heaven for foreigners and hell for locals. Finally, the ideologemes of the revolutionary ideology are: a) intransigence to change leads to violence; b) "violence in order to change an intolerable, unjust social order is not savagery: it purifies man; c) violence to protect and preserve an unjust, oppressive social order is criminal and diminishes man" (Ngugi 1982, 28). In elaborating its comparative methodology, this study found it necessary to subdivide the ideologies into ideologemes because no individual text is able to contain all the units (ideologemes) of the langue (ideology). This perspective helps the critic to avoid the tendency common in what Eagleton (1976, 17) terms "vulgar Marxist criticism", which sees literary works as mere expressions of the ideologies of their time, and the task of a critic simply to match the text with its ideological world view.

The first component of the second major comparative concept of aesthetics is vital beauty, which is composed of three aspects of characterisation: a) the type of characters; b) their roles; c) their destiny. This subdivision seeks to avoid the generalisations that result when assessment is conducted in terms of the umbrella term of "character development". Using specific types of characters such as innocent victims, virtuous victims and flawed victims, as this study has done, has enabled it to avoid the generalisations found in Qangule (1974), who is generally content to use broader terms such as protagonists and antagonists. The second aesthetic component, typical beauty, subsumes five Bhakhtinian compositional stylistic unities:

1) Direct authorial literary-artistic narration (in all its diverse variants);
2) Stylisation of the various forms of oral everyday narration (skaz);
3) Stylisation of the various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration (the letter, the diary, etc.);
4) Various forms of literary but extra-artistic authorial speech (moral, philosophical or scientific statements, oratory, ethnographic descriptions, memoranda and so forth);
5) The stylistically individualized speech of characters.

By focusing on these five compositional stylistic unities this comparative method has enabled the study to avoid the shortcomings of the five narrow approaches to novelistic discourse identified by Bhakhtin (1981, 42), which are:

University of Cape Town

(1) the author's portions alone in the novel are analysed, that is, only direct words of the author more or less correctly isolated – an analysis constructed in terms of the usual direct poetic methods of representation and expression (metaphors, comparisons, lexical register, etc.);
(2) instead of a stylistic analysis of the novel as an artistic whole, there is a neutral linguistic description of the novelist's language;
(3) in a given novelist's language, elements characteristic of his particular literary tendency are isolated (be it Romanticism, Naturalism, Impressionism, etc.);
(4) what is sought in the language of the novel is examined as an expression of the individual personality, that is, language is analysed as the individual style of a given novelist
(5) the novel is viewed as a rhetorical genre, and its devices are analysed from the point of view of their effectiveness as rhetoric.

Tracing, comparing and assessing the five compositional stylistic unities in the novels under review has enabled this study to engage in what Bakhtin (1981, 50) terms the basic tasks for a stylistics in the novel: "the study of specific images of languages and styles; the organisation of these images; their typology (for they are extremely diverse); the combination of images of languages within the novelistic whole; the transfers and switchings of languages and voices; their dialogical interrelationships".

The actual comparison of the selected novels followed three stages: the inventorying, analysing and comparing of ideologemes; the comparison of the vital beauty of the novels; and their comparison in terms of the categories of typical beauty. In the first stage the selected sets of novels were scrutinised to identify the ideologemes on which they are based. These ideologemes were then tallied with the tenets of the three ideologies delineated in the theoretical framework so as to locate the novels in the appropriate ideological camp. Positioning the novels in terms of ideological orientation prepared the ground for comparison "as it is only by doing so that their differences, similarities and their unique identities can be established" (Eagleton 1978, 100).

In the second stage the comparative assessment of vital beauty centred on character portrayal. It was not only the success of the authors in creating credible characters that was compared, but also their use of these characters in realising the intentions of their novels. In the third stage, comparing the success of the authors in

University of Cape Town

using form and other dominant categories to realise their intentions assessed the typical beauty of the texts. The dominant categories that formed the basis for comparing the novels are those proposed by Bakhtin in *The Dialogic Imagination*.

In all three stages of comparison the interlocking method was used. The interlocking method has been described as follows: "you treat the major aspects of your main idea and you constantly refer to both works to support your arguments" (Roberts 1991, 165). The advantages of this method over others such as the "tennis-ball" method are that you do not repeat your points needlessly for you document them as you raise them, and by constantly referring to the works you make your points without requiring a reader with a poor memory to reread previous sections. This method allowed the present researcher to take two or more paragraphs to develop a point about one writer or subject before including comparative reference to another.

The comparison of the ideological content of Jordan's *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *The River Between* in Chapter Two showed that Jordan fares better than Ngugi in articulating the first ideologeme ("cultural arrogance is the road to brutal ruin") because Jordan's novel is more convincing in dramatising the tragic consequences of cultural arrogance. Jordan's novel also excels over that of Ngugi in articulating the second ideologeme ("other groups do have valuable and genuinely noble ideas and institutions which are worth borrowing or adopting"), in that there is a more consistent balance in the recognition of both beauty and blemish across the divide in *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* than in *The River Between* (Smith 1872, 159). With regard to the representation of marronage (i.e. the third ideologeme), Ngugi is more skilful than Jordan because the attempts made by Ngugi's characters are motivated by a genuine desire to reconcile the contending traditions, whilst there is a flavour of pretence, manipulation and desperation in the attempts made by Jordan's characters.

The comparison of the aesthetic value of these novels showed that as far as vital beauty is concerned Jordan's novel is superior to Ngugi's. Both novels feature flawed victims whose character flaws contribute substantially to their downfall. The attack on Western culture achieved through the exposure of this flaw in Ngugi's novel is very mild. In Jordan's book the attack is devastating. Jordan's dominance over Ngugi in character portrayal in these two novels emerges most clearly in the manner in which he

University of Cape Town

represents his antagonists. Whilst he extends authorial sympathy to the characters on both sides of the divide, Ngugi generally shows little sympathy for the antagonists. Jordan extends sympathy to characters on the side of the opposition by portraying most of them as admirable people. It is not only in the depiction of the development of the characters that Jordan outshines Ngugi but also in describing their destiny. Novels that use flawed victims are notorious for their pessimism, and Ngugi does little to avoid this shortcoming. Jordan, on other hand, does well to counteract this tendency in his novel. Using Bakhtin's five compositional unities, it was also argued that as far as typical beauty is concerned Jordan's novel is more comprehensive than Ngugi's.

With regard to the first basic type of compositional-stylistic unity, direct authorial literary narration, Jordan's authorial speech is more balanced than that of Ngugi because whilst the latter tends to reserve laudatory language for bestowing beauty, merit and value upon African culture, Jordan employs it to acknowledge that these virtues are present on both sides of the divide. In terms of the second compositional-stylistic unity, which entails the stylisation of various forms of oral everyday narration, again it is arguable that Jordan excels over Ngugi because the elements of African culture and verbal arts that he uses are harnessed to dramatise his thematic concern with the need for reconciliation. Ngugi's novel also incorporates elements of African oral tradition and custom, but these serve solely to venerate African culture. The third compositional stylistic unity, which is the stylisation of various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration (letter, diary etc.) is more noticeable in Jordan's novel than in Ngugi's and thus makes *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* a better heteroglot than *The River Between*. The forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration that feature in Jordan's novel are letters and newspaper articles, and almost all contribute to the development of the story.

The fourth compositional stylistic unity comprises the various forms of literary extra-artistic authorial speech, which includes things such as moral, philosophical or scientific statements and other pronouncements of an essentially non-narrative nature. As in the case of authorial speech (discussed above), Jordan's extra-artistic authorial speech is more balanced than that of Ngugi, in that while Ngugi valorises only the actions and fates of the protagonists and vilifies exclusively the actions and fates of the antagonists,

University of Cape Town

Jordan employs this kind of speech to valorise and vilify the actions and fates of characters on both sides of the divide.

While Ngugi exhibits considerable artistic skill in valorising the protagonists and vilifying the antagonists in his novel, my contention is that he tends to make them flat characters and thus does not encourage his readers to take their fates too much to heart. Since it is only "round people who are fit to perform tragically for any length of time and can move us to any feeling except humour and appropriateness", Jordan –who uses extra-artistic or non-narrative authorial speech to create multidimensional characters – produces a more artistically satisfying novel than Ngugi.

While both Jordan and Ngugi exhibit artistic brilliance in employing the individualised speech of the characters (the last type of compositional-stylistic unity) to achieve their thematic intentions, which include delivering powerful arguments for reconciliation, Jordan again excels over Ngugi. This is because Jordan is more impartial in endowing all the factions and their representatives with eloquence, while Ngugi's novel only allows genuine grandiloquence to the exponents of reconciliation such as Chege, Muthoni and Waiyaki: the discourse of Joshua and Kabonyi, on the other hand, is tinged with fanaticism and narcissism respectively.

Of all the evaluative standards (ideological and aesthetic) that were used in comparing these novels Ngugi's is superior to Jordan's in only one respect, the representation of marronage (the third ideologeme). This suggests that in most respects *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* is a more accomplished novel than *The River Between*. This may be at least in part because *The River Between* is Ngugi's first attempt at writing a novel, whereas *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* is a novel of Jordan's mature years. Certainly, the artistic lapses that mar this novel are absent in Ngugi's later writings, as is shown in the comparative analysis of his *A Grain of Wheat* and Siyongwana's *Ubulumko Bezinja*.

A possible second reason for the aesthetic edge that *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* has over *The River Between* stems from the authors' choice of linguistic medium: Jordan writes in isiXhosa (his mother tongue) and Ngugi in English. African language authors find themselves in a notoriously precarious position, in that (unlike their counterparts who write in English) they have to rely upon a mere handful of publishers who tend to specialise in educational and devotional material. These mostly missionary institutions

University of Cape Town

have often rejected literature that they have regarded as inimical to the cause of government and the church. Whilst this study is of the view that Jordan succeeded in producing a good novel in spite of censorship, It is arguable, paradoxically, that this very situation may have contributed to making *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* such an artistic success. The knowledge that the prospective publishers of his novel were missionaries led Jordan to stretch his artistic abilities to produce a novel that he could successfully defend (on artistic grounds) against the censorship axe of the missionaries. His strategy of bestowing beauty and merit on both sides of the divide both armoured his work against the punitive sanction of missionary censorship and rendered it a more humanly satisfying book.

Secondly, the awareness that he was writing for a predominantly isiXhosa audience, readers familiar with isiXhosa oral material who were not likely to be particularly impressed by seeing it in his novel, made Jordan more innovative in his adaptation of isiXhosa material. One device he uses with amazing ingenuity is the blending of isiXhosa verbal arts with orthodox Western writing strategies. To Ngugi writing in English the demand for innovation in dealing with Gikuyu cultural material was not so stringent because he was to a large degree writing for an outside or non-African readership, and consequently to some extent felt obliged to explain (and oversimplify?) Gikuyu culture as he went along, chiefly by parading parallels with European tradition.

Finally, although Ngugi should be commended for decolonising his novel through the use of African cultural material (such as legends and myths), sprinkling the pages of his novel with words from the Gikuyu language, and sometimes adapting the English into a Gikuyu syntactic format, none of these appear in their natural environment, which is the mother tongue. Consequently they lose some of their power and beauty. Observing an elephant in its jungle habitat is more satisfying than seeing it in a circus. So in a certain sense, Jordan's novel, which is written in isiXhosa and therefore presents isiXhosa culture in its natural milieu, has a kind of automatic aesthetic advantage over Ngugi's novel. There are however some exceptions to this rule, Achebe for instance, has used this strategy with tremendous success and produced an African classic in *Things Fall Apart*.

University of Cape Town

The collation of the ideological content of Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick* and Mtuze's *UDingezweni* in Chapter Two revealed that, with regard to the first ideologeme (shattered dreams and broken families), what is common to the novels is that although the dreams are meticulously developed the root cause of their demolition – which is the colonial capitalist economy – is not fully exposed. In Mtuze's novel this shortcoming is more glaring, and seems to stem from his tendency to ascribe the destruction of Dingezweni and Nyubatya's dreams to the latter's slack discipline and Dingezweni's resultant recalcitrance. Like Mtuze, Mwangi does not fully expose the real destroyer of the dreams of these young men.

With regard to the second ideologeme (that protagonists are doomed to drudgery and thuggery), Mwangi's novel is arguably far more persuasive in depicting the demoralising effects of colonial capitalism on the protagonists because the condition of drudgery and thuggery to which they are doomed is given a more sustained and comprehensive portrayal than in Mtuze's novel. Both authors show that the circumstances of the protagonists are not meaningfully improved by their getting employed. Instead of enjoying the benefits of being employed, they are reduced to semi-slavery by their white masters and foremen. Whilst Mtuze tends to gloss over the exploitation, oppression and discrimination suffered by Dingezweni when he gets employment (because of the conditions under which he writes his novel), Mwangi meticulously details the difficulties that Meja and Maina encounter when they get work. There are however, a few instances when Mtuze does not muffle his protest against the drudgery that Africans are exposed to under the colonial capitalist economy, such as when Dingezweni is employed as a road digger.

Mwangi is more successful than Mtuze in maintaining equilibrium between degradation and dignity in the portrayal of his protagonists. When his protagonists are reduced to thuggery they generally do not degenerate to the use of fratricidal violence. He makes a point of explicitly or implicitly revealing the race of his protagonists' victims. Mtuze, on the other hand, accurately identifies the fundamental cause for the fratricidal violence that blacks resort to, but this type of violence remains senseless and misdirected, with little or no gain to be derived from it. Depicting his protagonist as reduced to this type of violence therefore flaws his protest. The analysis of the third

University of Cape Town

ideologeme (i.e. colonial Africa was Heaven for foreigners and Hell for locals) revealed that Mwangi's evocations of setting deliver a scathing attack on colonial capitalism by juxtaposing the native town with the settlers' town. Mtuze, on the other hand, tends simply to allude to the horrid conditions under which Africans live in native towns.

The comparison of the aesthetic value of these novels showed that as far as vital beauty is concerned Mwangi's novel is superior to Mtuze's. The characters that populate protest novels are generally divided into protagonists (usually the oppressed people) and antagonists (normally the oppressors). Mwangi fares better than Mtuze in contending with these two major problems associated with the portrayal of protagonist and antagonist, "the hope problem" and "the clarity problem. One reason why this is the case is that in addressing the hope problem Mwangi uses innocent victims as his protagonists whilst Mtuze opts for a flawed victim as his protagonist. Meja and Maina are presented as innocent victims from the outset. By contrast, Dingezweni is portrayed as a flawed victim from the very beginning of Mtuze's novel. He is depicted as recalcitrant and obstinate from early childhood, apparently as a result of his father's slack discipline. Although the use of either type of victims has its disadvantages, the use of innocent victims is more attuned to the purposes of protest novels than flawed victims. This is not the case with flawed victims who contribute substantially to motivating their own fate and therefore compound the clarity problem.

Besides choosing a more appropriate strategy to achieve the purpose of his novel Mwangi fares better than Mtuze in minimising the effect of the inherent weaknesses of the strategy of his choice on his work of art. One shortcoming that is common in novels that use innocent victims as the vehicle of their protest is the tendency to reduce them to minor characters. Thus innocent victims may get lost in what is ostensibly their own story because the motives of their suffering lie in their victimisers. Mtuze does not have to contend with this shortcoming because his choice of a flawed victim forces him to focus on the protagonist rather than antagonist. Mwangi also avoids the temptation of making the protagonist so innocent that at the end he has exactly the same character as at the beginning and he is neither worse nor better off. He allows his protagonists (Meja and Maina) to undergo drastic change, from honest and well-meaning young boys into robbers and jailbirds. Mtuze faces a rather different challenge, which is to show that his

University of Cape Town

protagonist is not entirely flawed; otherwise the balance between dignity and degradation would be disturbed.

One other problem that both authors have to contend with is the hope problem. The readers of protest novels expect to see that there is hope for remedying the injustice presented. Mwangi's novel inspires more hope for redress than Mtuze's. He endows his protagonists with a spirit of rebelliousness and a strong will to live, which create in them the capacity to struggle against the injustice unleashed by colonial capitalism. Mtuze also grants his protagonist a spirit of rebelliousness and a strong will to live (although these qualities are presented as more villainous than heroic), to enable him to struggle against injustice and engender hope for redress in the reader. But this hope is dashed in the end when Dingezweni dies in a mine collapse.

Related to the hope problem is the question of the viability of the solution suggested by the authors to the injustice they present. Again here Mwangi fares better than Mtuze, because the creation of employment opportunities that he suggests as a solution to the suffering of his protagonists is better than recommending that they return home, only to be confronted by the same problems that caused their departure in the first place – which is what Mtuze seems to be advocating. Although Mtuze's solution is not as viable as Mwangi's there is nevertheless some sense in it. Through it he appears to be advocating the marronage of African communalism (termed "ubuntu" in isiXhosa) with colonial capitalism. The way in which Mtuze contrasts Mnandizonka, an idyllic rural location, with the violent and corrupting cities such as Johannesburg, serves to highlight the need for marronage. In fact the heroes in this novel are those who succeed in reconciling African "ubuntu" with colonial capitalism.

Another major problem that protest writers have to contend with is the clarity problem, which centres largely on the antagonists or victimisers. Mwangi is more successful than Mtuze in presenting his antagonists, although his strategies are not without blemish. The attention that Mwangi gives his antagonists is not sufficiently sustained to allow for fuller exposure of the institutions from which these antagonists derive their power to persecute the protagonists. The clarity problem is even more glaring in Mtuze's novel. Here the target of the writer's protest receives even less attention than in Mwangi's book.

University of Cape Town

The comparison of the typical beauty of the novels under review in terms of Bakhtin's five compositional unities revealed that Mwangi's novel is more comprehensive than Ngugi's. Collation of the first basic type of compositional-stylistic unity, which is direct authorial literary narration, revealed that generally the authorial speech in both Mwangi and Mtuze's novels is adequate to its objective, which is to represent and condemn the manner in which colonial capitalism degrades its victims. Both writers use picturesque language in deploring the degradation of their protagonists. With regard to the second compositional-stylistic unity, which entails the stylisation of various forms of oral everyday narration, it is arguable that again both novels abound in features of oral everyday narration (such as repetition and epithets) because, although both of them belong to chirographic culture they are not remote from oral culture

In spite of the beauty and authenticity of Mtuze's oral everyday narration he does not always succeed in harnessing this compositional stylistic unity to the core intention of his novel. The third compositional stylistic unity, which is the stylisation of various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration (letter, diary etc.), is also more noticeable in Mtuze's novel than in Mwangi's and thus makes *UDingezweni* a better heteroglot than *Kill Me Quick*. The fourth compositional stylistic unity comprises the various forms of extra-artistic authorial speech, which includes things such as moral, philosophical or scientific statements. Generally, there is extensive use of Biblical material and elements of isiXhosa verbal arts in Mtuze's extra-artistic speech. His moralistic commentary on Dingezweni's death is a typical example of this. As pointed out earlier, this didacticism serves to tone down or disguise the protest, which this novel levels against colonial capitalism. In Mwangi's novel, extra-artistic speech is used to foreground his protest against the tragic consequences of colonial capitalism, although even here the link between the plight of the protagonists and colonial capitalism is somewhat tenuously presented

The last basic type of compositional-stylistic unity is constituted by the stylistically individualised speech of characters. The analysis here focussed on the subtle strategies employed by the protagonists and the antagonists in using words as instruments of coercion and constraint, as tools of intimidation and abuse, as signs of politeness, condescension and contempt, and as weapons of struggle and resistance. In

University of Cape Town

these novels such strategies are used to achieve two aims: first, by the antagonists, to establish and sustain relations of domination; and secondly, by the protagonists, to challenge, contest and disrupt the status quo.

Mwangi allows for more instances of interaction between antagonists and protagonists than Mtuze, and as a result there are more examples of these strategies in his novel. In Mtuze's novel resistance on the part of the protagonists is rare, but on the few occasions on which it surfaces it is very forceful. In Mwangi's novel the protagonists resist strenuously until the very end, which helps to make his novel a better work of protest. Another feature that characterises the stylistically individualised speech of the protagonists in these novels is humour. Mwangi makes better use of this device than Mtuze because he harnesses it to serve the major intention of his novel. Generally speaking, there are two broad categories of humour in Mwangi's novel: acerbic humour and entertaining humour. Mtuze's novel also sparkles with humour, but his humour intends merely to amuse, however, and is not harnessed to the major intention of his novel, which arguably is to protest against the tragic effects of colonial capitalism. Furthermore, that the butt of this humour is in most cases Dingezweni tends to diminish his attractiveness and make him appear a rather odd character. Meja and Maina in Mwangi's novel are themselves objects of humour, but Mwangi mitigates the negative effect of this by having them recount these humorous incidents themselves and present them in positive terms.

In terms of the comparative assessment standards (ideological and aesthetical) adopted in this study, Mwangi's novel proved to be a more accomplished work of art than Mtuze's. This may be partly because *UDingezweni* is Mtuze's first attempt at a novel, whereas *Kill Me Quick* is a novel of Mwangi's mature years. Proof that this factor played some role in the comparatively inferior quality of *UDingezweni* is that the artistic lapses present in this novel are absent in Mtuze's later novels such as *Alitshoni Lingaphumi*. A second and perhaps more influential reason is that the missionary and publishing houses through which *UDingezweni* was to be published often rejected literature which they regarded as hostile to the cause of the government and the church. In his later writings Mtuze has not had to muffle the shrillness of his protest on political issues, because of the existence of African-controlled publishers like Skotaville and

University of Cape Town

COSAW, which readily publish manuscripts with high political content. Mwangi's novel did not have to pass through the same rigour of pre-publication censorship or gate keeping as Mtuze's because his medium of writing was English and therefore his book could be published outside Kenya. Unlike in Mtuze's novel, where the agency of oppression is made unclear to avoid censorship, in Mwangi's novel the obfuscation of agency and causality is largely due to the fact that the novel focuses on the results of the black man's poverty and not on its causes. This approach works in so far as it corrects the distortions perpetrated by the white man that blacks sell beer because they are devious, rob and murder people because they are savages, and practise prostitution because they have inherited sexual promiscuity from their parents.

The comparison of the ideological content of Siyongwana's *Ubulumko Bezinja* and in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* has revealed that Siyongwana fares better than Ngugi in articulating the first ideologeme (i.e. intransigence to change leads to violence) because he dramatises meetings between the dominators and the dominated (that serve to expose the former's intransigence), rather than merely informing the reader about them, as Ngugi is inclined to do. Ngugi's strategy of beginning his story in the middle of things and then supplying background information by means of flashbacks results necessarily in the adoption of a summary narrative mode for certain parts of his story, and this reduces the sense of its immediacy.

With regard to the collation of the second ideologeme (i.e. violence in order to change an intolerable, unjust social order is not savagery: it purifies man), this study has revealed that the articulation of the second ideologeme is more comprehensive in Ngugi's novel than in Siyongwana's, because Siyongwana's use of dogs as his protagonists makes his task of justifying the use of this form of violence easier than Ngugi's, who uses human beings. One of the reasons why this is the case is that the weapons that dogs can realistically make use of are less deadly than those that human beings are capable of using. Siyongwana's use of dogs as characters also has a trivialising effect on his articulation of the third ideologeme (i.e. violence to protect and preserve an unjust, oppressive social order is criminal and diminishes man), because the impact on the reader of the death of a dog (resulting from the use of violence to protect

University of Cape Town

and preserve an unjust, oppressive social order) is not the same as that caused by the death of a human being.

Comparison of vital beauty in these novels showed that Ngugi fares better than Siyongwana in presenting both the protagonists and the antagonists. Ngugi is for example more convincing than Siyongwana in establishing the virtue of the protagonist and indicating its origin. Ngugi also fares better than Siyongwana in minimising the optimism that characterises novels in which virtuous victims are used, by depicting many casualties on the side of freedom fighters. Ngugi is also more convincing than Siyongwana in depicting his antagonists, because he provides them with a personal and psychological history, and makes it clear that they are part of a legal system. All the antagonists in Siyongwana's novel are the sort of characters that Ndebele (1984, 44) describes as "symbols [that] appear in most of our writings as finished products often without personal history". Another shortcoming in Siyongwana's portrayal of the antagonists is that they are not depicted as part of a legal system but as just belonging to a group, so that their exposure and condemnation is not an attack against an institution but against a group. The problem with using antagonists that are a part of a group is that in the group they still maintain their individuality, and thus the attack tends to be against an individual and not against an institution.

The comparison of typical beauty in these novels indicted that as far as the first compositional unity (i.e. authorial speech) is concerned, Ngugi excels over Siyongwana. Whilst the authorial speech that Ngugi uses in eulogising the courage, beauty, knowledge, diligence and resilience of his protagonists is sustained, Siyongwana's is generally not sustained. Ngugi also devotes sufficiently sustained authorial speech to exposing and condemning the villainous characters of his antagonists, while Siyongwana's authorial speech becomes more sketchy in presenting the villainy of his antagonists. Siyongwana's ingenuity in creating dialogue vindicates the heroism of his protagonists and the villainy of his antagonists, which saves his novel from misfiring in this respect.

With reference to the second compositional stylistic unity (which entails the stylisation of various forms of oral everyday narration), both authors successfully harness oral everyday narration to their thematic intentions. Ngugi for instances exploits the myth

University of Cape Town

that explains the origin of the subordinate position of women, and the prayers and songs of the freedom fighters to excite images of heroism and fighting grit in them. The examples in which Siyongwana exploits everyday oral narration to inspire heroism and fighting grit in his protagonists are the song and poetry they perform to celebrate their first success in using economic sabotage against their oppressors. The third compositional stylistic unity, which is the stylisation of various forms of semi-literary (written) everyday narration (letter, diary etc.) is more noticeable in Ngugi's novel than in Siyongwana's, and thus makes *A Grain of Wheat* a better heteroglot than *Ubulumko Bezinja*.

Comparing the novels in respect of extra-artistic authorial speech, the fourth compositional stylistic revealed that Ngugi is more successful in striking a balance between 'telling' and 'showing' than Siyongwana, whose novel decidedly favours showing. Although tilting the scale towards what is represented rather than what is related makes Siyongwana's novel more dramatic (particularly with regard to presenting the conflict between protagonists and antagonists), this is achieved at the expense of sustained authorial and extra-artistic authorial speech, which would have helped in conveying directly the author's feelings. Although Siyongwana's extra-artistic speech is exiguous he generally employs it to allude to the debasing effect of domination on its victims and to expose the suffering they endure as they seek to liberate themselves. It is arguable that the source of most of the behavioural defects exhibited by the protagonists can be traced back to the excruciating exploitation they are made to endure under the regime of men. The dire need for sustenance they are made to suffer warps their characters and makes them over-value food, which is attested to by the fact that even when they steal large numbers of sheep, their flock never increases because they are slaughtering every day (146).

The comparison of the last type of compositional-stylistic unity, which is the stylistically individualised speech of the characters revealed that both Siyongwana and Ngugi exhibit artistic brilliance in employing the individualised speech of their characters to achieve their thematic intentions, which include lionising the freedom fighters and denouncing as brutes all those who try to frustrate the people's struggle for liberation. Ngugi uses monologue more effectively than Siyongwana in revealing his

University of Cape Town

characters, while Siyongwana makes better use of dialogue between his antagonists and protagonists. It is no wonder that in *A Grain of Wheat* almost all the protagonists are endowed with eloquence, a quality that is usually adequately revealed through monologue, whereas the majority of protagonists in *Ubulumko Bezinja* are quick-witted, an ability best manifested in dialogue.

Looking at the performance of both novels against the comparative assessment standards that have been adopted in this study, one has to conclude that Ngugi's novel is to be a more accomplished work of art than Siyongwana's. Three reasons are given for the comparatively mediocre performance of Siyongwana's novel. First, *Ubulumko Bezinja* is Siyongwana's first attempt at writing a novel while *A Grain of Wheat* is Ngugi's third novel, and his second after *Weep Not, Child* to be informed by revolutionary ideology. Second, unlike Siyongwana who had to rely heavily upon his imagination in writing his novel because the armed struggle was at that time in its infancy, Ngugi had the benefit of hindsight when he wrote his book, with ready access to an established language of revolution from which he was free to transpose material. Third, the conditions of production were very different: Siyongwana writes in isiXhosa, which forces him to rely upon a mere handful of publishers who often rejected literature, which they regarded as belligerent to cause of the government and the church. He is therefore obliged to couch his political message in allegorical terms, a tactic that has its merits and demerits.

There are also outcomes from this study that were not part of the aims that it set out to achieve. First is the overwhelming evidence of a considerable unanimity in the literary responses of African writers, whatever their country of origin or whether they have written in their own or the coloniser's language. This of course attests to the enormous impact of colonialism on the history and culture of countries like South Africa and Kenya. A proof of this is that all the ideologemes of each ideology (nationalism, liberalism and revolutionary ideology) are articulated in the selected novels, regardless of country of origin. Second, of the five determinants of artistic competence that were considered in this study (i.e. artistic modes of production available to the authors, home background, education, political awareness and professionalisation), three (artistic modes of production available to these authors, political awareness and professionalisation)

University of Cape Town

were held to account for the artistic edge that some writers have over others. Artistic modes of production available to these authors and professionalisation were seen to be responsible for the difference in artistic performance in all three sets of novels that were discussed, with different stages of political awareness being perceived as playing a noticeable role only in the third set of novels that deal with revolutionary ideology.

One other observation that this study made is that the manner in which these determinants of artistic competence influence these authors is not preordained. The same determinant can have a positive influence on one author and a negative one on another. A repressive artistic climate in South Africa for isiXhosa language writers during the apartheid era, for instance, helped to make Jordan's novel superior to Ngugi's, which was written under more favourable publishing conditions (although this appears to be a roundabout way of justifying censorship which is not the intention of this research), whilst the same repressive context for literary production seemed partly responsible for the mediocre artistic performance of Mtuze and Siyongwana in relation to that of their Kenyan counterparts. Last, this study vindicated the view that applying the comparative method to literary study offers critics the latitude to "obtain greater insights into the novelists, their works and societies which nurture them" (Perera 1991, 496). Comparing isiXhosa novels with Kenyan African novels has enabled me to gain greater insight into isiXhosa literature. What Goethe says about languages, that "he who does not know foreign languages knows nothing of his own", is to some extent true of literature too (Steiner1995, 5).

5. 2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Notwithstanding the commendable outcomes outlined above, it cannot be denied that this study does have certain limitations. First, no thesis can claim to be absolutely original: the comparative method adopted in this study is eclectic in that it draws freely on classical (i.e. Aristotelian), formalist, dialogic (Bakhtin) and rhetorical approaches, and grounds all of these in Jameson's Marxist paradigm. There is no necessary contradiction here, because for Jameson, "Marxism is... that 'untranscendable horizon' that subsumes such apparently antagonistic or incommensurable critical operations, assigning them an

University of Cape Town

undoubted sectorial validity within itself and thus at once cancelling and preserving them". However, this study can claim some originality in its application of certain Western critical approaches to explicate African texts, for "indeed the 'application' of a mode of reading to explicate a black text changes both the theory and received ideas about the text. When this occurs, the results are original"(Gates 1984, 9). In adopting Jameson's mode of Marxism, for instance, I am vindicated by African scholars like Amuta and Ngara, who maintain that "Marxism, like the products of modern technology, (Eastern or Western) is a universal tool which can be put to the service of freedom. Above all, historical materialism, which constitutes the core of the Marxist theory, recognizes the specificity and relativity of historical conditions of divergent societies" (Amuta 1989, 60); and "there is no necessary contradiction between Marxism and Afrocentricism in literary criticism. While Marxism originated in Europe historically, it is a truly revolutionary theory, which is well suited to the task of liberating African literature" (Ngara 1990, 7).

Secondly, and related to the question of originality, is another criticism that can be levelled against this study: that it is deficient in the idea of "blackness as a transcendent signified" because it adopts and adapts Western literary traditions. This study has mitigated this criticism by attempting to refer "to two contexts, two traditions – the Western and the black" (ibid., 8). The assessment of the second compositional-stylistic unity, which comprises the stylisation of various forms of oral everyday narration, focused on the African oral heritage which according to Gates (1984, 12) "is of such import because in it is to be located what I have called the signifyin(g) black difference". In this way this study has avoided what Jean Price-Mars terms "bovarysme collectif", which according to de Gaultier is the phenomenon of "being fated to obey the suggestion of an external milieu for lack of an auto-suggestion from within", and also what Gates designates as "enclosure of negation" which an exclusive focus on blackness as a transcendent signified tends to create (ibid., 7, 8,). It thus tries to meet what Gates (1984, 8) perceives as the challenge to black literary criticism, which is "to derive principles of literary criticism from the black tradition itself, as defined in the idiom of critical theory but also in the idiom which constitutes the 'language of blackness', the signifyin(g) difference which makes the black tradition our very own. [For] to borrow

University of Cape Town

mindlessly or to vulgarize a critical theory from another tradition is to satisfy de Gaultier's definition of bovarysm". What is especially distinctive about this study is that it eschews European Modernist formalism in favour of a more venerable tradition which takes it for granted that literature has a serious social and ethical purpose; a tradition which is receptive to the heroic idiom of human endeavour and judges mimetic works of art for their potential to enlighten and instruct. Nevertheless, the successful negotiation of the precipice of slavish imitation described by Gates demands further studies that will focus on how the oral black indigenous language literatures continue to be the most significant source of influence on written African literature, regardless of whether it is written in indigenous African or European languages.

Third, since this study analyses more than one work at a time it generally does not allow for in-depth analysis of all aspects of literary writing. This inherent weakness of comparative methodology is one reason why Perera (1991, 517), after conducting a comparative study himself, argues that "a comparative study can never replace a close reading of individual texts". He goes on to suggest that "in fact a comparative perspective should be attempted only after more traditional approaches have been completed".

Fourth, the comparative method tends to focus on the comparable and ignore the incomparable elements of the works. Roberts (1991, 178) reiterates this view when he says: "one may readily grant that an extended comparison-contrast theme does not present a full treatment of each of the works, [for] indeed the works are unique, and there are many elements that would not yield to a comparison-contrast method". This study attempts to minimise this weakness by focusing on both analogues and variants in the works under review, though it cannot claim to have been systematic and exhaustive in dealing with the uniqueness of the novels covered.

Fifth, because the comparative method organises literary works into pairs or clusters it tends to give rise to the temptation to use these pairs or clusters "for a classifying or typologising operation in which cultural texts are simply dropped into so many separate compartments" (Jameson 1986, 90). To these compartments the critic would then prescribe a single type of interpretive technique or a single mode of explanation. The use of dialectical criticism (which is against all single-shot or univalent

University of Cape Town

aesthetic theories which seek the same structure in all works) was intended to limit this shortcoming. That is why in identifying the ideologemes (in all three sets of novels: *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* and *The River Between*; *UDingezweni* and *Kill Me Quick*; *Ubulumko Bezinja* and *A Grain of Wheat*), the point of departure was the novels and not the ideology, because dialectical criticism operates on the premise that each literary work is the end result of a kind of logic or development in its own content; that it evolves its own categories and therefore dictates the specific terms of its own interpretation. This study would perhaps have been enhanced if this strategy had been doggedly followed even when assessing the aesthetic value of the texts under research.

Sixth, the sample size of works being compared is hardly large enough to allow for valid generalisation, which (as pointed out earlier) seems to be one of the aims of the comparative method. In anticipation of this limitation my original intention was to make a broad comparative survey of isiXhosa literature and African literature in English set in colonial and postcolonial periods. For the first ideological division alone, I proposed to compare three sets of novels – *Things Fall Apart* by Achebe and *Ityala Lamawele* by Mqhayi; *The African* by Conton and *UDon Jadu* by Mqhayi; *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* by Jordan and *The River Between* by Ngugi – as examples of novels that fall under traditionalist, revivalist and reformist strands of nationalism respectively. This soon proved too ambitious for the present project and the decision to limit the size of the sample to prevent the study from becoming too unwieldy and superficial. However, a bigger sample of novels in each ideological category would have allowed for more valid generalisation.

Lastly, the comparative method of literary study demands competence in more than one language from the comparatist or else he/she will have to depend on translation. In enumerating some of the facets of translation that the comparatist would have to master if he/she is going to rely on translation Steiner (1995, 10-11) includes the following: "its history, its lexical and grammatical means, the differences of approach that extend from the word-by-word interlinear to the freest imitation metamorphic adaptation". So in demarcating the scope I had to make sure that the novels I choose were written in languages in which I had some competence, or else I would have had to register for a course in translation!

University of Cape Town

5.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The idea that "the Comparative Method may arrive at Universal Principles or generalisations universally acceptable", although disproved, still lives on (Shaffer 1980, xiii). To oppose this misconception, this thesis has aimed at preparing the ground for future research that might attempt to distil a set of specifically African aesthetic standards. Identifying the ideologies from which African literature borrows ideologemes, inventorying and tallying ideologemes with the tenets of these ideologies to situate texts in ideological camps, comparing the process through which authors of texts that fall into the same ideological division transform the raw material (ideologemes) into artistic texts, and then synthesising the findings might be one pathway leading to the establishment of African aesthetic standards which differs from most of the previous attempts at codifying African aesthetics efforts such as the one by Zirimu and Gurr (eds.) (1973) and Chinwezu et al. (1980), termed "traditionalist aesthetics" by Amuta who dismisses them as:

1. a psuedo-universalist idealism which takes a pan-Africanist view of African literature and seeks to see that literature in terms of a universal world culture.
2. a narrow ethnocentric particularism which distils the aesthetic values of a particular ethnic culture and uses knowledge derived therefrom to pontificate on African literature and art;
3. a crusading neonegritudist polemic that correctly identifies the need for decolonisation of African literature but conceives of that process in romatic idealist terms to the exclusion of the vital determinats of culture.

University of Cape Town

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. SELECTED WORKS BY AFRICAN WRITERS

Achebe, Chinua. 1958. Things Fall Apart. London: Heinemann, 1985.

Conton, William. 1960. The African. London: Heinemann, 1978.

Dikobe, Modikwe.1973. The Marabi Dance. London: Heinemann.

Jordan, Archibald C. 1940. Ingqumbo Yeminyanya. Alice: Lovedale Press, 1980.

Jordan, Archibald C. and Priscilla P. Jordan, trans. 1980. The Wrath of the Ancestors. Alice: Lovedale Press.

Mphahlele, Eskia. 1959. Down Second Avenue. London Faber and Faber, 1984.

Mqhayi, Samuel E. K. 1914. Ityala Lamawele. Alice: Lovedale Press,1931.

---. 1929. UDon Jadu. Alice: Lovedale Press, 1974.

Mtuze, Peter T. 1976. Indlela Ebhek' Enkundleni. Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik.

---. 1986. Alitshoni Lingaphumi. Pretoria: De Jager-Haum.

---. n.d. Uyese Namahla-ndenyuka Obomi N.p.: n.p.

---. n.d. UDingezweni. Goodwood: Via Africa Limited.

Mwangi, Meja. 1973. Kill Me Quick. London: Heinemann, 1985.

---. 1974. Carcase for Hounds. London: Heinemann.

---. 1975. Taste of Death. Nairobi: East Africa Publishing House.

---. 1976. Going Down River Road. London: Heinemann.

---. 1979. The Cockroach Dance. Nairobi: Longman.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. 1964. The River Between. London: Heinemann, 1975.

---.1967. A Grain of Wheat. London: Heinemann, 1982.

---. 1982. Devil on the Cross. Trans. by Ngugi wa Thiong'o. London: Heinemann.

Sinxo, Guybon B. 1922. Unomsa. Alice: Lovedale Press.

---. 1973. UMzali Wolahleko. Alice: Lovedale Press.

---. 1986. UNojayiti Wam. Alice: Lovedale Press.

---. b1965. UMfundisi Wase Mthuqwasi. Alice: Lovedale Press.

Siyongwana, Rustum. 1962. Ubulumko Bezinja. Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1986.

University of Cape Town

B. STUDIES AND SURVEYS

Abraham, Kinfe. 1982. From Race to Class: Links and Parallels in African and Black American Protest Expression. London: Grassroots.

Althusser, Louis. 1993. Essays on Ideology. London: Verso.

Amadi, Elechi. 1983. Ethics in African Culture. Ibadan: Heinemann.

Amuta, Chidi. 1989. The Theory of African Literature. London: Zed Books.

Ansbro, John J. 1982. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Making of a Mind. Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books.

Aristotle. 1941.The basic Works of Aristotle. Ed. By R McKeon. . New York: Random House; Rhetorica trans. W. Rhys Roberts.

Awoonor, K. 1976. The Breast of the Earth: Asurvey of the Histoyr, Culture and Literature of Africa South of the Sahara. London Anchor Press

Bhaktin, Mikhail. 1929. Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1973.

---. 1940. Rabelais and his World. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969.

---. 1990. The Dialogic of Imagination. Trans. By M. Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Barthes, Roland. 1987. S/Z. Trans. by Jurgen Hoch. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Biebuyck, Daniel & Kahombo Mateen C.eds and trans. 1971. The Mwindo Epic from the Banyanga. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Biko, Steve. 1978. I Write What I Like. London: Heinemann.

Burns, Adelaide. ed. 1975. Primera Memoria. Trans. by Ana M. Matute. London: Harrap.

Cabral, Amilcar. 1973. Return to the Source: Selected Speeches. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Carter, Ronald, Angela Goddard, Danuta Reah, Keith Sanger and Maggie Bowring eds. 1997. Working with Text: A Core Book for Language Analysis. New York: Routledge.

Charney, Hanna & Jeanine P. Plottel, eds. 1978. Intertextuality: The New Perspectives in criticism. New York: New York Literary Forum.

Chesterton, G. K. 1913. Charles Dickens. London: Methuen.

Chinwezu et al. ed. 1980. Toward the Decolonization of African Literature. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.

Cook, David. 1977. African Literature: A Critical View. London: Longman.

University of Cape Town

Cook, David & Michael Okenimkpe.1983. Ngugi wa Thiong'o: An Exploration of his Writings. London: Heinemann.

Cornwell, Gareth. 1979. "Protest in Fiction: An Approach to Alex La Guma". Diss. Rhodes University.

Davidson, Basil. 1978. Africa in Modern History. Bungay: Chaucer Press, 1981.

Dorsch, T. S. 1965. Classical Literary Criticism. Baltimore: Penguin Books.

Duke, Rodney K. 1990. The persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler: A Rhetorical Analysis. Sheffield: Almond Press.

Eagleton, Terry. 1976. Criticism and Ideology: A Study of Marxist Literary Theory. London: Verso, 1978.

---. 1976. Marxism and Literary Criticism. London: Routledge, 1989.

Eagleton, Terry, Frederic Jameson & Edward W. Said. 1990. Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

Eldman, Murray. 1977. Political Language: Words that Succeed and Policies that Fail. New York: Academic Press.

Fairclough, Norman. 1989. Language and Power. London: Longman.

Fanon, Frantz. 1961. The Wretched of the Earth. New York: Groove Press, 1968.

---. 1975. Frantz Fanon. London: Panaf Books.

Frazer, John. 1976. Violence and Arts. London: Cambridge University.

Gakwandi, Shatto A. 1977. The Novel and Contemporary Experience in Africa. London: Heinemann.

Gates, Henry L. Jr. 1984. Black Literature and Literary Theory. New York: Methuen.

Gerard, Albert S. 1971. Four African Literatures: Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, Amharic. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Gerhart, Gail M. 1979. Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology. Los Angeles: University Press.

Gicaru, Muga. 1958. Land of Sunshine: Scenes of Life in Kenya before the Mau-Mau. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Glicksberg, Charles I. 1976. The Literature of Commitment. Lewisburg [P. A.]: Bucknell University Press.

Goethe, Johann W. 1985. Faust. Trans. by John Anster. London: Harrap.

Goodin, George. 1985. The Poetics of Protest: Literary Form and Political Implicationin the Victim-of-Society Novel. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. Selections from Prison Notebooks ed. and trans.by Hoare, Q. and Smith, G. N. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

University of Cape Town

---. 1972. The Unknown Dimension of European Marxisim since Lenin, ed. by Dick Howard and Karl E. Klare. NewYork: Basic Books.

Green, Thomas H. 1974. Comparative Revolutionary Movements: Search for Theory and Justice. London: Prentice-Hall, 1984.

Gugelberger, George M. ed.1985. Marxism and African Literature. London: James Currey.

Henderson, Ian. 1958. The Hunt for Kimathi. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Hoffer, Peter C. 1988. Indians and Europeans: Selected Articles on Indian-White Relations in Colonial North America. New York: Garland Publishers.

Hook, Sydney. 1933. Towards an Understanding of Karl Marx. New York: John Day.

Horowitz, Rosalind & S. Jay Samuels eds. 1987. Comprehending Oral and Written Language. New York: Academic Press, Inc.

Howe, Irvin. 1970. Politics and the Novel. Freeport. New York: Books for Libraries Press.

Hughes, Elaine &Jay Silverman, Diana R.Wienbroer. 1996. Rules of Thumb: A Guide for Writers. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Irele, Abiola. 1981. The African Experience in Literature and Ideology. London: Heinemann.

Jabavu, Don D T. 1973. The Influence of English on Bantu Literature. Alice: Lovedale Press.

Jafta, D. N., H. W. Pahl and J. J. R. Jolobe. 1971. Xhosa Literature: Its Past and Future. [S. I.]: Lovedale Press.

Jameson, Federic. 1971. Marxism and Form: Twentieth-century Dialectical Theories of Literature. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974.

---. 1981. The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act, 1986.

Janks, Hilary.1993. Language and Position. Johannesburg: Hodder & Stoughton in association with Witwitersrand University Press.

JanMohamed, Abdul R. 1983. Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa. Amherst: the University of Massachusetts Press.

Jung, Carl G. 1968. The Archetype and the Collective Unconsciousness. Trans. by R. F. C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Karis, Thomas & Gwendolen M. Carter, eds. 1987. Protest and Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.

Kaunda, Kenneth D. 1982. Kaunda on Violence. London: Sphere Books.

Kenyatta, Jomo. 1956. Facing Mount Kenya. London: Seckor and Warburg.

King, Martin L. Jr. 1968. The Trumpet of Conscience. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

University of Cape Town

Kriesteva, Julia.1980. A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art. New York: Colombia University Press, 1984.

Kuhn, Alfred. 1966. The study of Society: Multidisciplinary Approach. London: Tavistock.

Lacey, Marian. 1981. Working for Boroko: The origins of Coercive Labour System in South Africa. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Landow, George P. 1971. The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Leiden, Carl. And Karl M. Schmitt. 1968. The Politics of Violence: Revolution in the Modern World. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Lively, Jack. 1984. Political Studies. Vol. XXXII n.p.: Butterworth.

Lodge, D. 1990. After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism. London: Routledge.

Lodge, Tom. 1986. Black Politics in South Africa since 1945. London: Longman Group Ltd.

Luthuli, Albert. 1982. Let My People Go. Collins clear type Press.

Macherey, Pierre. 1980. A Theory of Literary Production. Trans. Geoffrey Wall. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Majeke, Nosipho. 1953. The Role of Missionaries in Conquest. Johannesburg: Society of Young Africa.

Malcolm, X. 1965. The Autobiography Of Malcolm X. New York: Groove Press.

Manning, D. J. 1976. Liberalism. London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd.

Marivate, Cornelius T. D. 1973. "Tsonga Folktales: Form, Content and Delivery". Diss. University of South Africa.

Marquard, Leo. 1965. Liberalism in South Africa: Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.

Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. 1973. On literature and Art. New York: Chesterton 1913.

Marx, Karl & Maurice H. Dobb. 1971. A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. Trans. by S.W. Ryazanskaya. London: Lawrence &Wishart.

Mazrui, Ali A. &Michael Tidy. 1984. Nationalism and New States in Africa. [S. I.]: Heinemann.

Mboya, Tom. 1963. Freedom and After. London: Andre Deutsch.

Mdaka, Sibizwa S. 1992. "Images of Africa: A Selective Comparison and Contrast of Themes and Preoccupations between Xhosa and other African Writers". Diss. University of Fort Hare.

University of Cape Town

Metereau, Jean-Pierre. 1985. "Urbanization in the West African Novel". Diss. Indiana University Press.

Milbury-Steen, Sarah L. 1980. European and Africa Stereotypes in the Twentieth Century Fiction. London: Macmillan.

Mnguni, (pseud). 1952. The Hundred Years. Cumberwood. APDUSA.

Mphahlele, Es'kia. 1962. The African Image. Faber and Faber, 1974.

---. 1967. Voices in the Whirlwind and other Essays. New York, 1972.

Muriuki, Godfrey. 1974. A History of the Kiguyu, 1500-1900. Nairobi: Oxford UP.

Mzamane,Mbulelo V. 1983. "Black Consciousness Poets of South Africa, 1967-1980, with Special Reference to Mongane Serote and Sipho Sepamla". Diss. University of Sheffield.

Nama, Charles A. 1984. "Aesthetics and Ideology in African and Afro-American Fiction: Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Ayi Kwei Armah, Toni Morrison and Richard Wright". Diss. University of NewYork.

Nazareth, Peter. 1976. The third World Writer: His Social Responsibility. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.

Ndebele, Njabulo S. & Bernth Lindfors eds. c1989. Kulankula: Interviews with Writers from Malawi and Lesotho. Bayreuth: E Breitinger.

Ngara, Emanuel. 1990. Ideology & Form in African Poetry. London: James Currey.

Ngugi, wa Thiong'o. 1972. Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature Culture and Politics. London: Heinemann, 1982.

---. 1983. Barrel of a Pen. Trenton: African World Press.

---. 1987. Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature. London: Heinemann.

Nichols, Lee. 1981. Conversations with African Writers: Interviews with Twenty-six African Authors. Washington D. C.: Voice of America.

Ntuli, Deuteronomy B. Z. 1984. The Poetry of Vilakazi. Pretoria: J. L. van Schalk.

Nyamende, Mzayivane A.1991. "A Comparative Study of the Portrayal of The portrayal of Characters in A.C. Jordan's *The Wrath of the Ancestors*, Modikwe's *The Marabi Dance* and Sinxo's *Unojayiti Wam*". Diss. University of Cape Town.

Nwankwo, Chimalm. 1982. "Women, Violence and Quest for Social Justice in the Works of of Ngugi wa Thiong'o". Diss. University of Texas.

Ong, Walter J. 1982. Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of Word. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd.

University of Cape Town

Olson, David R. Nancy Torrance, and Angela Hildyard eds. 1993. Literacy, Language and Learning: The Nature and Consequences of Reading and Writing. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Palmer, Eustace. 1972. An Introduction to the African Novel. London: Heinemann, 1981.

---. 1979. The Growth of the African Novel. London: Heinemann, 1981.

Paton, Alan. 1964. The Land and People of South Africa. Philadelphia, P.A.: J. B. Lippincott.

Perera, Senath W. 1991. "If Severed they be Good, the Conjunction cannot be Hurtful: A Comparative Approach to Protest Fiction in India, Kenya, and the West Indies". Diss. University of New Brunswick.

Peterson, H. K. ed. Criticism and Ideology. Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.

Pheko, Motsoko. 1972. Apartheid: The Story of a Dispossessed People. 1984. London: Mirram Books.

Posnett, Hutcheson M. 1882. The Historical Method. [S. I.]: Paul.

---. 1886. Comparative Literature. [S. I.]: Jonson.

Potholm, Christian P. 1976. The Theory and Practice of African Politics. London: Prentice-hall International.

Qangule, Zithobile S. 1974. "A Study of Conflict in Ac Jordan's Novel *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*". Diss. University of South Africa.

---. 1979. "A Study of Theme and Technique in the Creative Works of S. E. K. Mqhayi". Diss. University of Cape Town.

Roberts, Edgar V. 1991. Writing about Literature. London: Prentice-Hall International (UK) Limited.

Robertson, Janet.1970. Liberalism in South Africa 1948-1963. London: Claredon Press.

Robbins, Vernon K.1996. Exploring the Texture of Texts:A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation. Valley Forge: Trinity Press International.

Robson, C. B. 1977. Ngugi wa Thiong'o. London: Macmllan, 1979.

Rodney, W. 1974. How Europe Underdeveloped Africa. Washington DC. : Howard University Press.

Ruark, Robert C. c1962. Uhuru. New York. McGrow-Hill.

Ryan, E. E. 1984. Aristotle's Theory of Rhetorical Argumentation. Montreal: Bellarmin.

Sahlins, Marshall. 1976. Culture and Practical Reason. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

University of Cape Town

Satyo, Sizwe C. 1977. "Traditional Concepts and Literary Conventions in Sinxo's Works". Diss. University of South Africa.

Saussure, Ferdinand de. 1974. Course in General Linguistics. London. Fontona, 1978.

Schiller, Friederich. 1946. Philosophische Schriften. Basel: Birkhauser.

Selden, Raman. 1988. The Theory of Criticism: From Plato to the Present Reader. New York: Longman.

Shaffer, Elinor. ed. 1980. Comparative Criticism: A Yearbook. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sicherman, Carol. 1990. Ngugi wa Thiong'o: The Making of a Rebel, A Source Book in Kenyan Literature of Resistance. London: Hans Zell Publishers.

Sidorsky, David. 1970. The Liberal Tradition in European Thought. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Simpson, Paul. 1997. Language Through Literature: An Introduction. London: Routledge.

Sirayi, Gibson T. 1985. "A Study of Some Aspects of J. J. R. Jolobe's Poetry". Diss. University of Fort Hare.

---. 1989. "The Xhosa Novel". Diss. University of South Africa.

Smith, Anthony. 1972. Theories of Nationalism. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.

Soile, Sola. 1972. "The Myth of the Archetypal Hero in two African Novelists: Chinua Achebe and James Ngugi". Diss. Duke University.

Soyinka, Wole. 1976. Myth, Literature and African World. London: Cambridge University Press.

---. 1979. Critical Perspective on Nigerian Literatuers. Ed. by Bernth Lindfors. London: Heinemann.

Tedlock, Dennis. 1993. The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Thompson, John B. 1984. Studies in the Theory of Ideology. Los Angeles: Univeresity of California Press.

---. 1990. Ideology and Culture: Critical Social Theory in the Era of Mass Communication. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Thompson, E.P. 1978. Poverty and Other Essays. London: New Left Books.

Thuynsma, Peter N. ed. 1989. Footprints along the Way: A Tribute to Es'kia Mphahlele. Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers.

Toolan, Michael ed. 1992. Language Text and Context: Essays in Stylistics. London: Routledge.

University of Cape Town

Tsuchiya, Iwao. 1978. Climate of Africa. Tokyo: Maruzen.

Vambe, L. 1972. An Ill-fated People: Zimbabwe before an after Rhodes. London Heinemann.

Vilakazi, Benedict W. 1945. "The Oral and Written Literature in Nguni". Diss. University of Witwatersrand.

Vickers, Brian. 1988. In Defence of Rhetoric. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Volosinov, Valentin N. Trans by Ladislaw Matejka & I. R. Titunik. 1973. Marxism and the Philosophy of Language. New York: Seminar Press.

Walker, Sidney J. 1984. " The African Writer and Social Change: A Case Study of Ngugi wa Thiong'o". Diss. Howard University.

Ward, William E.F. 1960. A History of Africa. Book 2. London: Aurora.

Watts, Jane. Black Writers from South Africa: Towards a Discourse of Liberation. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Wauthier, Claude. 1978. The Literature & Thought of Modern Africa. London: Heinemann.

Webster, Noah. 1940. Webster's Third New international Dictionary. New York: The World Publishing.

Williams, Raymond. 1976. Keywords: A vocabulary of Culture and Society. New York: Oxford University Press.

---.1977. Marxism and Literature. New York: Oxford University, 1985.

Wright, Edgar. 1973. The Critical Evaluation of African Literature. Washington D.C.: Inscape Publishers.

Zell, Hans M., & Virginia Coulon, eds. 1983. A New Reader's Guide to African Literature. London: Heinemann.

Zirimu and Gurr eds. 1973. Black Aesthetics. Nairobi: East African Publishing House.

C. OTHER SOURCES

Berger, Roger. 1989. Ngugi' s Comic Vision" in Research in Africa Literature. 20: 1-20.

Bolarin-williams, Adebayo. 1981. "Towards an African Critical practice: The Crisis in Confidence in the Criticism of African Literature". UFAHAMU. 11,12. (Fall 1981- Winter 1982): 60-69.

University of Cape Town

University of Cape Town

University of Cape Town

University of Cape Town