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A CRITICAL EXPOSITION OF HISTORICISM AND IMPLICIT ACTIVISM IN
ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA

by

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Submitted to satisfy the requirements of Doctor of Philosophy in Literature in the Department
of African Languages and Literatures, Faculty of Arts, of the University of Cape Town.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis, **A CRITICAL EXPOSITION OF HISTORICISM AND IMPLICIT ACTIVISM IN ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA**, is my own work, both in conception and execution. All the sources used are indicated and acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

It is the gentle but sharp manner of refutation of negative labels that early Europeans, through negative and undermining othering, attached to the Nguni in South Africa, that was investigated and discovered in this novel, that the author of this thesis is putting under the spotlight here.

This thesis seeks to demonstrate that this novel is one radiant example of typical combative, counterhegemonic, and engage works in Xhosa literature, the kind of resistance and indictment literature where the message on national liberation lies embedded in its foundational concept and groundwork; in it we see graphic reflections of the pre-colonial Nguni Indigenes in South Africa, their admirable and glorious civilization which manifested itself in a virile political pattern, orderly social-religious systems, and structured industrial practices. We use these aspects to reinforce our exposition of this novel as a work of art that refutes all negative labels that were attached to the Nguni Indigenes.

The end and purport of Jolobe's novel establishes the essence and stability of the culture and brand of civilization of these Indigenes in pre-colonial South Africa, that is the conclusion and most significant finding of the author of this thesis. The portrayal of the lives of the pillars of the kingdom chosen here points to that. King Dlomo and his diviner, Dlikiza chart dignified courses of lives to the end of this novel; the accounts of their noble lifetimes are positive to the end. Ntsele takes over from Dlomo peacefully and just as naturally as a branch of a tree softly grows out of the stem to continue naturally to give life to the tree - the subjects that Dlomo had been serving so fairly, justly and honestly. The subjects are also orderly and peaceful people.

Ntsele simply becomes a continuum of Dlomo. This peaceful transition and transfer of power signifies a healthy continuity of the traditions of that community and an affirmation of an undying African civilization. This novel gives the impression that the author's philosophy is grounded in the African cosmological belief in the life of an African being a continuum in cycles where death in one cycle of life is merely transition and transformation into another cycle of life - the myth of eternal return. This thesis, among other things, exposes also this profound underlying meaning of this novel regarding the religion of the Nguni.

In short, this novel is one of those fine literary products that are narratives created on African History, that are intended to be literature that gives alternative history to the negative historical accounts that colonial masters had written to undermine the African. Moreover it is written at the time when geologists and archeologists were discovering that in prehistoric times there were great cities in the East, in Egypt, in the Arabic and in the Americas long before Columbus "discovered" America, which through atmospheric changes and volcanoes were submerged, ending one cycle of civilization. This challenges the origin of civilization as being Europe, and this novel presents another alternative on this matter, to remove the amnesia Europe suffered about the early civilizations globally.

This novel is anti-colonial literature that deals with the binarism of Europe and Others, the centre - and - periphery relations that came with colonial distortions. It is drenched with nationalist, revolutionary and anti-imperialist aesthetics meant to cure the psychological mutilation, violence, and injuries inflicted on the consciousness of the Nguni/African Indigenes. It defends the legitimacy of the Nguni/Africans, it seeks to remould national consciousness and to rehabilitate the Nguni/African through resuscitation of Nguni pre-colonial history and the glory, dignity and the sacred in their culture(cultural nationalism) - all in a fight for the liberation of the African from political, economic, and social bondage. A comparison between the condition of the colonizer and the despised colonized will be used to clarify these matters in our interpretation of this novel.

INTRODUCTION

AIMS AND SCOPE OF THIS RESEARCH

The aim of this research is, first and foremost, to establish that Jolobe is mythologising the state of the early South African Nguni Indigenes by exposing their pre-colonial history and culture of the time when they had settled in South Africa into communities, which refutes the misrepresentations made by early European missionaries, traders, colonial agents, and travellers, who claimed that when they came to South Africa the Indigenes were savages and barbarians - without a history, without a refined culture, without traditions, without a religion, nor anything that could be called civilization. With the support of authorities on African literature and history, whom we shall quote directly below, we intend showing that this novel, just like many other works in Xhosa literature, is counterhegemonic discourse, rather than just a superb piece of art; we intend showing that this novel offers a perspective of the Indigenes which is opposite to the hegemonic discourse which had undermined the Indigenes all along.

Secondly, Xhosa literature, and, in fact, literature in the vernaculars, has been generally undermined, under-estimated, and dubbed as literature for schools, and as literature without adult appeal. This thesis also intends to offer a view contrary to this regarding the status of Xhosa literature and to enlighten the uninitiated on the maturity of Xhosa literature which is hidden from the eye of the immature analyst who had given Xhosa literature this low status. In the process it will also be shown how context interacts with the contents of works in Xhosa literature and how vital it is to rely on it to get to the gist of the Xhosa work and to understand the underlying meaning of the literary product that a Xhosa writer, from the beleaguered society that has suffered from political, social, psychological, and economic oppression and censorship, could artistically mould to address the condition of his people under the inhibiting circumstances he/she was operating in. This style of analysis is a deliberate intervention in the controversy on the relationship between art and politics in South African literary criticism, the intention is also to establish that there is a link between the two. The analysis of this seemingly silent novel, *ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA*, will expose these matters and the aims of this research will be realised. These aims, ipso facto, delimit the scope of this research. A study that sets out to expose how mature authors had already re-defined the real status of African Indigenes in South Africa to awaken them could make things easy for the present calls

by the leading party in government for the long-undermined Indigenes to regard this period as a renaissance. Jolobe's contemporaries heeded Citashe's nineteenth century call to a battle of brains for the Indigenes to save their souls and property as the military one was drawing more and more negative results for them during the wars of dispossession at the time when European and missionary onslaught on their culture was making long strides:

Your cattle are gone, my countrymen!
Go rescue them! Go rescue them!
Leave the breechloader alone
And turn to the pen.
Take paper and ink,
For that is your shield.
Your rights are going!
So pick up your pen.
Load it, load it with ink.
Sit on a chair.
Repair not to Hoho.
But fire with your pen.

- I. W. W. Citashe (1882)
(De Kock 1996:29)

This thesis will expose how Jolobe in this novel fared in this "new" terrain of struggle - the battle of brains.

METHODOLOGY

To establish the points raised under the aim of this research some committed Xhosa writers will be referred to in the section dealing with reaction to false representation of the Africans in South Africa to European audiences and to themselves, and in the section dealing with political activism in the political field and in Xhosa literary works. That will demonstrate that Xhosa literature was made of greater and thicker stuff for a school child, an immature analyst, and a man to whom Xhosa was not his mother tongue, to understand; it will also show that this novel and other works by committed Xhosa writers had formed into an oppositional culture to subvert the official version of the Indigenes' culture and history as presented by the early Europeans.

Historical context, as a globally accepted factor in literary analysis (over and above other approaches and theories), will be established as a factor that is almost indispensable to understand Xhosa literary works of commitment. Some positive historical facts on the Nguni

and negative ones on the early Europeans in South Africa will be quoted to support our statements. The author's commitment as an activist and mobiliser will be established in the biographical notes; he will be linked with the other Xhosa literary activists. His novel will be shown to be that of a committed writer - particular trends in it will be pitted against religious and political attacks on the integrity and personhood of the Indigenes of the olden days, particularly the Nguni who are used in the novel under discussion to dramatise the maturity of cultures of the other South African Indigenes. The over-all impression of this comparison would leave the correct status of Xhosa literature, its depths, activism, and its maturity, in the readers' minds; it will also leave the correct portrait of the African Indigene through the alternative definition and history that Jolobe presents in his historical novel. All in all, the analysis of this text benefits more from the historical-biographical, sociological, intertextual and comparative approaches rather than pure textual analysis, though a critical appreciation of particular words in their contexts will be made to elucidate some points. It is political commitment and social responsibility on the part of Jolobe that is at the roots of ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA, so the analytic principles and theorizing on this novel must take that into account. Jolobe is responding to urgent issues of his society, and so it is a historically situated method of analysis and theorizing that is appropriate here even if by some fashionable Western theoretical models and standards that approach is not theoretical enough.

A NOTE ON TRANSLATION

In translating the quotations the principle of equality-of-texts is applied to avoid direct translation which may not give the full meaning of the quotation. That means, words which were not in the Xhosa quotation will be introduced into the translated version. Some of those words or names will be missing in the extract because in the original they are understood and are perhaps only referred to by formatives like concords or by pronouns in the extract chosen for inclusion in this thesis. If, for full sense, they are crucial, they will be added for that reason. Some will not be referred to even by formatives, but will be added for the same reason.

ORGANISATION OF THIS THESIS

In the foregoing introductory part we have made some acknowledgements, the declaration, the abstract, declared the aims of this research and delimited its scope, outlined the methodology, and made a note on the style we shall adopt in translating the Xhosa quotations.

In Chapter 1 a layout of the historical and socio-political conditions which prompted the works similar to Jolobe's is given; selected historical and socio-political biographical data on Jolobe situating him in the literary reactive mode of his time are put forward; and few critics who advocate and follow the contextual approaches are quoted to situate and justify the contextual approaches in the methodology adopted in this thesis.

In Chapter 2 an overview of the network on themes and subjects that form the core of the novel under discussion is offered through a summary of the book, a critical explanation on the author's intrusions into his narrative, and through a critical appreciation of the first few paragraphs of this novel.

In Chapter 3 we look at how this historical novel portrays perfect democracy, communalism/socialism, and discipline in the politics of a pre-colonial Nguni Kingdom as a way of refuting the negative claims made by the early White colonial masters, travellers, officials, missionaries and early settlers about deficiency or total lack in these human natural endowments as far as early South African Indigenes were concerned.

In Chapter 4 we continue to look at how this historical novel portrays other perfect personal attributes like all positive human feelings, high intelligence, perfect skills in arts, technology and medicine, and deep reverence for the Creator, that made the early Nguni person a full, civilized human being equal to any contemporary in the world at that time as against the description of the same people by the early European settlers as mere uncivilized heathen savages and creatures who happily lived to butcher one another knowing nothing beyond the grave. The imperfect and unChristian state of those same early Europeans is brought into the account we make here for the reader to understand why we interpret this novel to be refuting the misrepresentation made by those early European settlers.

In the conclusion we re-affirm the positions we have taken in interpreting the connotations, denotations, and meanings communicated to the readers, particularly the reader of the first audience. We also repeat our statement on the significance of context in the interpretation of Xhosa literature.

Lastly, we provide the bibliography.

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CHAPTER 1

SITUATING JJR JOLOBE IN AN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1.1 Critics on contextualising

We may give a few quotations here which support the contextual approach as indispensable in literary criticism.

(a) One great African critic, Amuta (1989:56) has come up with strong and convincing statements like the following: Politics and issues of a fundamentally political nature have **always** occupied a central position in African literature. He expands on the same page, making his point on

... the centrality of politics and ideology in African literature, the implication of liberation and definition and the use of literature and culture to objectify and illuminate the national and class contradictions within individual African national societies to date. (my emphasis)

(Amuta 1989:56)

Further on (1989:197) he makes an emphatic stand that it is

not possible, even if it appears to be convenient, to practise literary theory and criticism as an abstract, value-free and politically sanitized undertaking in a continent which is the concentration of most of the world's afflictions and disasters. (my emphasis)

(Amuta 1989:197)

(b) Cook had earlier observed:

The socially conscious writer does not set to work in a vacuum, but urges his society from what it is towards what it might be.

(Cook 1977:3)

That means the material used in that work of art will be the society in point and its condition. Jolobe does just that in his novel.

(c) Wellek (1963) had also said:

There will always be a place for a simple comparison between literature and life: for the judging of current novels by standard of probability and accuracy of the social situations reflected in them. (my emphasis)

(Wellek 1963/78:344)

The question of probability has demanded attention even from those critics who condemn contextual approaches. There is a place for it as it lends stability to analysis. It is a major issue in our approach.

(d) Abraham (1982), looking at both African and Black American literature, makes a remark

similar to the ones above:

The view which regards literature as an 'art' of different form and status above the rough-and-tumble of everyday social, economic and political reality is thus today a well recognised fallacy.

(Abraham 1982:18)

(e) Mao Tse-Tung (in Amuta 1989), from the East end of the world, made a similar observation:

Literature and art are subordinate to politics, but in their own turn exert a great influence on politics.

(Amuta 1989:122)

These voices are representative of like minds who had analysed world literature (African, Black and White American, European and Asian - in fact, literature of all continents). In Africa voices who are positive on contextualising in critical analysis of literature include Ngugi, Achebe, Kunene, Martin Trump, Christopher Swanepoel, Chinweizu, Tim Cousens and Rory Ryan. In this thesis we will rely on context and history in our analysis, though the artistic elements of good novels are in abundance; our task does not involve exposition of the writer's skills in writing a novel - we are only exposing activism and historicism.

1.2 Influence of Traditional Literature

The African/Xhosa novel, like the other African/Xhosa narrative genres, is a continuation, in modern times, of the legacy and tradition of indigenous folk narratives (folktales, legends, myths, fables in particular) and their didactic and enlightening purposes. Xhosa idiomatic expressions, riddles and conundrums have been used for the same ends. All the wisdom of giving order to social, economic, political and natural aspects of life is stored and drawn out at will in African proverbs and idiomatic expressions; on human relations, virtues and vices of life we get guidance from African tales and fables, where virtue is instilled through rewards in the stories and vice punished; the sense of belonging which the human mind always puzzles itself on is furnished to the African in his legends, myths, historical narratives and epics which belong to the traditional literature of the African. These things had given sustenance to the African soul and had enabled him to build the African culture which had sustained him until the arrival of western civilization with a thing called novel, which looked new but, on examination, was found to be an old thing when compared with the long Hlakanyana type of folktale.

Though the novel is functioning in a more complex terrain now, it still deals with human relations and justice just like the folk-narrative of old. Our positions here are foregrounded

also in that reality. At the literary level the African novel is born in this context of traditional literature, which, in turn reflect the earlier historical and social context from which they originated. The privileged readers of the first audience cannot fail to see this link.

1.3 Selected biographical data on Jolobe

In the biographical notes and references to literary works we have selected those points and excerpts (from him, journalists, critics and acquaintances) which are relevant and necessary in developing our contention regarding the conscientious nation-building and the political motive behind ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA. Scott (1973) and Gerard (1971) give other and more fascinating details about Jolobe's life. In the pre-criticism and the fore-grounding we are engaged in here inter-textuality within Jolobe's works and Jolobe's own statements are very useful in making our points.

(a) **Biographical notes**

J. J. R. Jolobe was born on 25 July 1902. He spent a number of years in his youth at Matatiele and was once stationed at Estcourt in Natal as a minister of religion. It is in both places where he was strongly influenced by the Hlubi dialect and where he picked up the Hlubi culture, which he displays in ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA. It is significant to note that in his Fort Hare days he won the First Prize in a competition on a topic that was probing political interests of African students in their own race: "The Prospects for a Native of South Africa After Completing a Course of Work and Service Among His Own People." He continued writing his favourite genre, poetry, which he started as a scholar at St Matthews under the auspices of their budding authors' club, the Witenagemot. He graduated in 1932 with English and Ethics as his majors. He did Xhosa, History and Politics as minors, which is important to note for our approach and assertions.

At the time of writing ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA he knew the trends in political and literary developments first-hand; he was

a member of the Lovedale Press Committee, of the editorial committee of the SOUTH AFRICAN OUTLOOK, and of the Xhosa Language and Literature Committee.
(Gerard 1971:77)

Among other things, in his poetry he wrote on higher national issues like the Thuthula war, Nongqawuse cattle-killing, and on injustices of apartheid in poems like Ukwenziwa

komkhonzi and Isililo sikandlebende, in his essays, and in drama. He received many awards for literary merit including the Margaret Wrong prize and medal in 1957

for outstanding services to literature in South Africa. (my emphasis)

(Gerard 1971:77)

He shared ideas with his peers in African Authors' Conferences.

He died in 1976.

(b) **Selected Translations**

Jolobe was selective in his choice of works to translate. Choosing to translate UP FROM SLAVERY by Booker T. Washington (into UKUPHAKAMA UKUSUKA EBUKHOBOKENI) in 1951, must have been deliberate, when we look at the political nature of KING SOLOMON'S MINES, too, which he also translated. He was doing political awakening. Rider Haggard's KING SOLOMON'S MINES, which had wide circulation in South Africa, which had denigrating statements about Africans and their chiefs, formed part of the basis of the negative attitude that the European colonists developed about the Africans. To school his people on the superiority complex the Europeans had, he had to bring their tutor, Rider Haggard, to his people (Xhosa/Nguni) by translating what he (Haggard) was saying into the language of the despised Xhosas/Nguni for them to hear and respond, hopefully, by rejecting all the racist slurs encountered in the book. Hopefully, in the process the Nguni would banish out of their minds the inferiority complex that they suffered from. He had other translations.

(c) **Jolobe - according to acquaintances and critics**

According to Prof Makalima (interviewed on 15 March 1991) Jolobe was a humble and mild gentleman; sincere and very religious; unassuming and displayed great ability of mind. A student of his at Lovedale, Mr Hempe, observed in an interview with him in 1989 that Jolobe would cry in his sermons when talking about the plight of the African which was caused by apartheid laws.

Other acquaintances appear under the sub-heading: **Jolobe in the Newspapers**.

One of his critics, Mahlasela, has this to say: the 1936 visit Jolobe made to India

helped him considerably to widen his field and outlook as national writer.
(*my emphasis*)

(Mahlasela 1973:4)

According to Vilakazi, Jolobe

sees the hand of God in every day happenings.

(Gerard 1971:76)

This stems from his religious background (his father was a minister of religion) and from the fact that he was also a minister of religion. Vilakazi is also quoted in Gebeda (1973) as having said about Jolobe:

(he) has a reverent approach to sacred things.

(Gebeda 1973:1)

According to Gerard, Jolobe

draws inspiration from the tribal past.

(Gerard 1971:76)

This confirms our idea that the essence of this novel is situated in a historical context, hence the contextual approaches were deemed most appropriate. Gerard interprets Jolobe's poem "To the Fallen" in POEMS OF AN AFRICAN (Jolobe, 1946, published by Lovedale) as a combination of

the yearning for political and social recognition with the traditional native notion that spoils are the legitimate material reward of the man who has proved his manhood in fighting.

(Gerard 1971:73)

This statement further legitimises the contextual approaches we adopt here. We can also say that one of the reasons for inclusion of the Mahlaphahlapha war in ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA, a novel on the culture of the Hlubi Indigenes, was a deliberate dramatisation of that "traditional native notion," when we look at the capturing and division of cattle "confiscated" from amaNgwane.

Of great interest is the remark Gerard makes, that DDT Jabavu, in a review in UMYEZO:

noted that Jolobe did not try to imitate European rhyme.

(Gerard 1971:73)

This was obviously the signal of African revolt in literary styles against Europeanism in attempts to decolonise the mind; clearer on the conscious breakaway is Nyembezi in his own comment on Jolobe's poetry:

(Jolobe) first experimented with rhyme in his poetry and when he thought that the result was not altogether satisfactory he did not hesitate to discard it. (*my emphasis*)

(Gerard 1971:73)

Sirayi, in his unpublished MA dissertation (A STUDY OF SOME ASPECTS OF J.J.R. JOLOBE'S POETRY, Fort Hare, s.a.:11) posits about Jolobe's novel - ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA:

This novel elevates him (Jolobe) to the status of an historian who writes, among other things, to preserve the culture and customs of his people, and to express their national sentiments.

(Sirayi, s.a.:11)

Sirayi also highlights one stanza from one poem from UMYEZO (1936:79) - Jolobe's collection of poetry - and remarks on it:

The poet is particularly concerned with his immediate African community whose freedom has been violated by some foreigners who come under the guise of help while their true motive is exploitation as intimated by the phrase "Khotha-bexathula.

(Sirayi, s.a.:192)

Sirayi quotes verbatim the poem, Imbumb' olutsha which Jolobe published in IMVO of 25 March 1930, and says about it:

The entire poem is in praise of African youths that unite for the purpose of attaining the freedom of their land by their own efforts. *(my emphasis)*

(Sirayi's unpublished MA thesis, s.a.:192)

In analysis of one stanza in which Jolobe says that the struggle for freedom may encounter some hitches, but the vision will not be destroyed, Sirayi says:

We therefore infer from this allusion that Jolobe holds the view that the African vision of freedom will one day be realized.

(Sirayi, unpublished MA thesis, s.a.:194-195)

He quotes this stanza which highlights the highest assertion made in the poem:

Okwalanywe lututsha
Akusayi kucima
Ngumlilo ethanjeni
Ophemba intliziyo
Ivuthe ngeAfrika

Sirayi's translation:

That which has been seen by the youths
Will never fade away
It is a fire in the bone
That kindles the heart
So that it burns about Africa.

Then Sirayi comments:

... his (Jolobe's) depth of mind is evident. He urges the African youths to struggle for the liberation of their land.

(Sirayi, unpublished MA thesis, s.a.:195)

Sirayi's observations here support our assertion on ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA which we declare here to be liberation literature.

Patricia Scott notes that Jolobe was once stationed at Estcourt in Natal where he

got to know the Thukela basin very well, an area once occupied by the amaHlubi, amaZizi and the amaNgwe. This first hand knowledge of the Thukela gave him a helpful background for his now famous novel ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA [1959]

(Scott 1973:3)

This remark also justifies the contextual approaches we are using in our analysis. The choice of the Thukela basin as the setting for ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA attracts our attention here. With Scott's remark, above, in mind, and subject to correction, one may link this choice to what ZK Matthews said in an ANC annual conference of December 17-18, 1955, explaining the absence of Lutuli as an ironical advantage bestowed on the "district of Lower Tugela" by a government banning order on Albert Lutuli:

It is apparently not appreciated in some quarters that it is impossible to place geographical limitations upon the indomitable spirit of Chief Lutuli. Not only has this ban not been able to reduce the quality of his leadership, but it has converted what was otherwise an insignificant district - the district of Lower Tugela - into an important centre visited by all those who want to become acquainted with the principles underlying the liberation movement among Africans in the Union. Chief Lutuli has become the most important symbol of the liberation movement, and from his place of confinement he continues to inspire, to guide and direct the African National Congress and all those interested in seeing South Africa become a truly united country.

[ZK Matthews in Karis et al (eds) Vol 3, 1977:215]

It is the same feeling that compels us to say that this Xhosa novel covers not only amaXhosa but the Nguni group in its political scope. The kingdom in the setting for this novel is the Tugela/Thukela area/localities in Natal; the King is Dlomo, who shares the same calibre and sentiments about his area of jurisdiction as Lutuli. There is an aura of divinity around him as was the case with Lutuli. It is also the year, 1955 that attracts our minds to this coincidence; we were unable to ascertain the year Jolobe started writing this novel, from his relatives in our research.

The year, 1959, saw many academics leaving the field of education for political reasons (Extension of Universities Act, more stringent application of 1953/1955 Bantu Education Act, and the rumblings about an act to create Bantustans). Jolobe, in 1959, resigned from Lovedale Training School and went for service in the religious ministry. We could not ascertain his reasons, but because of the high temperature of his political outbursts, some quoted above, we may assume that he was part of the academic protest group against racism and discrimination. Scott (1973:5) also notes that Jolobe was

always ecumenically minded

and joined the Inter-Denominational African Ministers' Association of South Africa and even became its President in 1965. Ecumenism was political protest in South African history of Christianity, against splitting of Africans according to denominations that were European-based-and-dominated. Scott also notes that

In July 1973, during the Lovedale Press celebrations ... (Jolobe) was presented with two leather bound volumes of his own works in appreciation of his valuable contribution to Xhosa literature.

(Scott 1973:5)

We are talking about a man of this calibre - a great man in the history of Xhosa literature, an activist, activator and mobiliser according to his acquaintances, contemporaries and critics.

(d) **Jolobe in Newspapers**

G. B. Molefe, his friend, describes Jolobe as "a thinker" in THE STAR of 17 September 1973; this comes out in the philosophy in his essays and in the brilliant story he wove on early Nguni people in ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA. The report, in the same newspaper, that he spoke on "The Church at a time of Stress," and spoke on "wages, cost of living, education and migratory labour," is significant to note to understand Jolobe and what we are saying about his novel.

In an article in THE WORLD, September 18, 1973:7, he is reported as having said when he heard the news of his appointment as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church: "I consider this as a great honour not only to me, but also to the blacks." This is a declaration of his commitment to the Blacks which we expose below in our analysis of his other works and the novel under discussion.

An article in the BENONI CITY TIMES of September 21, 1973 reports on the induction of Jolobe as Presbyterian Moderator and quotes him:

Black people did not claim equality with anybody ...What they did claim was equality before the law, equality of opportunity in all spheres of life and to be ruled by the same laws as all others in a country common to all. Character and maturity in minds and attitudes should determine the status and acceptability of a person - not colour, he said.

In the same article his awareness about White prejudices about the "seeming ingratitude" of Blacks is also reported - he was concerned with this, actually, as early as when he wrote ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA, where he describes the African as fully civilized right from pre-colonial times. In an article in the EASTERN PROVINCE HERALD, August 18, 1973 on Jolobe's induction as moderator of the Presbyterian Church, Jolobe is quoted:

Can the members of the Church of Christ sleep if their needy fellow Christians do not eat, do not have sufficient clothing for their children, do not have enough money for rent or do not have enough money for school books and fees for their children in school?

(my emphasis)

The underlined points are the key issues he dealt with in AMATHUNZI OBOMI (1957), where he demonstrates again his commitment to the African Indigenes who were undermined and subsequently ill-treated.

An article in ST ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH RECORD, September, 1973:3 reports on Jolobe's same induction as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church. The reporter's language at this point of the report exposes Jolobe's long-time attitude on discrimination and White prejudices/attitude:

How proud we all are of our Mayor John Barrable - his address of welcome was quite the most inspiring part of the event. The Moderator's reply was dignified and scholarly. (No walls were cracked and everything was as clean and tidy as ever. Ask the caretaker Mr Darykson.)

Note the comment in brackets!

An article in E. P. HERALD of May 20, 1976, describes Jolobe on his death as

- One of the fathers of Xhosa literature
- a man "who will forever live in the hearts of the Xhosa speaking people" because of his ability in capturing the spirit and soul of the Xhosa language.

The final comment in this article:

He was regarded by many Xhosa as a man totally dedicated and devoted to serving his people ... who will forever live in the hearts of the Xhosa speaking people.
(my emphasis)

The article in the CHRISTIAN LEADER of September 1976 on Jolobe celebrates "his fine record as writer." It adds:

... with the passing of the Revd Dr JJR Jolobe, spiritual leader ... civic leader, Africa has lost one of her most illustrious sons.

One last comment in the same paper:

One of his former elders paying tribute at JR's funeral, relates that he taught them two significant things: to teach the gospel of reconciliation and not threaten people with hell ...

These newspaper articles concur with statements made by Jolobe's contemporaries and critics quoted above, and they are further illustrations of his devotion to his beleaguered people which is highly visible in his works, a fact which we intend to expose by using contextual approaches.

(e) **Jolobe - Link with Political Figures and Organisations**

Jolobe, in the essay: Incoko (in AMAVO 1940:76-82), had explicitly come out in his political campaign for African rights and development in these words:

Elokuvala nali. ... Nesizwe saziwa zezinye ngokuncokola. Kubalulekile ukuba abo banakho ngenxa yamathuba namalungelo, ukuwuwela umda webala, mabawasebenzisele lawo mathuba ngokuncokola nabezizwe ezingemnyama baziphe ithuba lokumazi umntu oNtsundu ngokungaphezulu.

[Jolobe (AMAVO) 1940:82]

(This is my last word on this matter. ... A nation makes itself understood by other nations through verbal communication and self-affirmative literal and literary statements on itself. It is, therefore, the moral obligation of those Africans who, through chances and privileges open to them, are not shackled by the prohibitions of colour discrimination and are therefore in a position to address the Europeans, to school the Whites on the real nature of the African, his culture and dignity, for the European to understand the humanhood of the African better.)

This is what he does in ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA, which we will show below. Jolobe goes on to say that these Africans who are committed to this responsibility should acquaint themselves deeply with the innermost nature of the African humanhood and with the prejudices and contempt the Europeans have for the African, which are based on false information and ignorance. He concludes this essay by saying that if those Africans/Africanists are blessed with communication talent and commitment they will open up chances for justice and fairness to flourish, for truth to be revealed, and for development to the stars for the African to start in earnest [Jolobe (in AMAVO) 1940:82].

In saying this Jolobe was echoing the aspirations of one Native Labour Association, the Transvaal Native Mine Clerks' Association, which was formed in 1920 and gained recognition of the Mining Industry in the same year, in July. The members of this association were educated "Natives" holding responsible positions in this sector. Its constitution opened membership to any other educated "Native" who could

read and write English.

[Karis (ed) et al Vol 1, 1972/87:320]

Jolobe was addressing himself to such people in this essay; and some of this organisation's main objectives, as expressed in their memorandum to the Mining Industry Board in 1922, are exactly the same as what Jolobe had in mind; members were:

- (a) To improve the position of its members socially, economically and educationally.
.....
- (g) To be the means of communication between the native and all Governing Authorities and Employers of Labour.
- (h) To use endeavour to cause the Association to be represented on any Commission or Board of Reference or Enquiry appointed by the Government or local authority in connection with any matter affecting mine native labourers.
- (i) To agitate for the promotion of the native interests in such a way as is best calculated to bring about contentment and efficiency amongst natives. (*my emphasis*)

[Karis (ed) Vol 1, 1972/87:320-321]

In that memorandum they go on to say that the educated "Natives" in this association

have succeeded (by 1922) in having their influence so felt by the bulk of their native (uneducated) brothers that - the latter have come to recognise them as their only hope of salvation. (*my emphasis*)

[Karis (ed) Vol 1, 1972/87:321]

This is what Jolobe is saying in the quotation above from the essay, Incoko. They then make a recommendation in this memorandum:

2. ... the Abolition of all Colour Restrictions in the Mining Industry
(That) The Manager appoint any one for any job ... be he White or a Native.
(my emphasis)

[Karis (ed) Vol 1, 1972/87:322]

This is the colour discrimination Jolobe refers to in the quotation above, and this recommendation is in line with the sentiments Jolobe expresses in the conclusion of the essay quoted, Incoko, on open development to the highest levels for the Africans.

The concern over the African rights and development echoed by Jolobe in his essays was also shown in the 1920s in the inauguration of a United Non-European Congress which was intended to be a big forum for the promotion and protection of educational, commercial, political and industrial interests - the very aspects covered in Jolobe's essay. This event was announced in THE INTERNATIONAL of 8 April, 1924.

Statements made by Black politicians of the 1920s and the 1930s - Xuma, Mtimkhulu, Pixley ka Isaka Seme, Mahabane, Kadalie and Godlo on segregation territorially and constitutionally as grossly evil and unjust and on the need to educate the Europeans on the real nature of the Africans - are echoed by Jolobe in such essays as Isiko and Incoko in his AMAVO (1940). These are fine literary essays, but, as Citashe had appealed for an alternative terrain of struggle - the battle of the pen - we find essays injected with politics. This is the tendency in most of Jolobe's works and to grasp this, one has to understand the political and the historical contexts he is using in each piece of work. Clements Kadalie, the ICU National Secretary, had declared in 1923 that Africans

have reached a stage when as a race of people ... must forget the past and go forward as new men and women ... (to) win a real emancipation for (themselves) and take (their) rightful place in the ranks of those who do the world's useful work.

[Karis (ed) et al Vol 1, 1972/87:325]

This is what Jolobe is concerned about in the essays quoted above.

Jolobe is extolling a principle of "Native" unity and promoting ideas on beneficial interests to "Natives" exclusively in such essays as Abantwana bendlu enye, Inkokeli, Incoko, Isiko and Ubutyebi. The 1925 ICU revised constitution shows the numerous different tribal groups that were accommodated in its membership for their exclusive betterment and, secondly, goes on to say even though Europeans may be members

under no circumstances shall such member (European) hold office in this Organisation.

[Karis (ed) et al Vol 1, 1972/87:326]

The signals flashing from the essay, Ubutyebi (in AMAVO) indicates that Jolobe in the end would like to see an African nation that was self-reliant because of self-sufficiency - not a perpetuation of their servile position which, as poor and exploited workers, mainly in urban areas, on farms, and on plantations, were forced to retain. This is what many African politicians of the 1920s, like Selby Msimang, were preaching; and just like Msimang, in the same essay he is discouraging the unprofitable cycle the Africans are forced to run in: they go to the mines and get money, they go home and buy cattle; the cattle die of a disease or are lost somehow; the Africans go back to the mines again to start the whole cycle again. Msimang also looked into migrant labour issues and advised Africans to think a bit about them. In THE CAPE TIMES of 23 July, 1921, he discouraged "Natives" from flocking to the cities because they made labour over-abundant and therefore, cheap; he advised them to stay in their areas and

to turn their hands to something useful and ... realise the wealth lying dormant in the lands they occupy. They must be taught independence. (*my emphasis*)
[Karis (ed) et al Vol 1, 1972/87:319]

Jolobe gives the same advice: Even those who work in urban areas must create wealth at home by buying cattle and short live-stock for self-reliance as in the early African system, but more than that it is wiser these days to create that wealth in the banks, so as to develop economic independence for the African in the end [AMAVO (in Essay: Ubutyebi) 1940:112-113].

Livestock graze freely in rural areas and multiply easily - that is the wealth "that lies dormant in the lands" Africans occupy, that Msimang is talking about; and the economic "independence" he is wishing for the Africans could be developed that way. Jolobe was also espousing these political aspirations of the time. Even in the 1958 novel, ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA, he exposes to us that affluence and economic independence which the early Africans enjoyed long before the European set foot in Africa, to mobilise Africans to think along these lines.

Jolobe had advocated the development of that "independence" in his essay, Amanani in AMAVO (1940:30-36) where he explains how the big numbers of Africans can be turned advantageously for the political and economic benefit of Africans:

Mhla le nyambalala yabantu yaba namandla okuzifumana izinto zempucuko abo benza ezo zinto baya kuphila ngokulunge ngaphezulu kwabaMhlophe abaphila bobu buchule bade baqeshe nabantu bethu ukuhlangabeza iintswelo zesiqingatha sesithathu sabantu beli lizwe. Apha sibona ukuba kwala manani ethu njengesizwe asaya kuba yindlela yempumelelo kuthi ngenye imini.

[Jolobe (in Amanani, in AMAVO) 1940:33]

[When the majority of the Africans reach a financial stage which will enable them to buy these "civilized" articles (chairs and tables made by Africans but bought and used mainly by Whites) those Africans who will manufacture and sell these articles to the vast African majority will make far better profit out of this trade than the Europeans who employ them now for their own selfish ends. Those African manufacturers and traders will also be in a position to save their poor brethren who will be forming more than half of the population of this country, by giving them jobs in their own industries. In this formula we see how the vast numbers of Africans in this country can and will give us political and economic freedom.]

Jolobe here is advocating at the end of the day a withdrawal of African labour from European undertakings in a fashion similar to the one in Siyongwana's UBULUMKO BEZINJA; but more than that, African labour is to be put at the disposal of African manufacturers and traders; and that would benefit both the African manufacturer and the African labourer, which means African empowerment!

This idea is repeated in another essay Ukuvuthwa kwegaga lepesika (in AMAVO 1940:113-118) where Jolobe says

... kubalulekile ukuba masiqwebe siphumelele sityebe ukuze sibe nakho ukuzifikelela iinkalo esilangazelela ukuzifikelela, ukuze sifeze neenjongo ezilungileyo esinazo zokwakha nokuphakamisa isizwe sethu. (*my emphasis*)

(Jolobe in AMAVO 1940:118)

(... it is crucial that Africans should build up wealth for themselves, develop themselves earnestly and reach a stage of self-sufficiency and affluence for them to reach the heights they are aiming at, for their noble aspirations towards upliftment of the African nation to political and economic freedom.)

The steps towards this development which are expressed in a nutshell in this quotation are spelt out fully, six years before the publication of this essay, by the then ANC President Pixley kaIsaka Seme in UMTETELI WA BANTU of 10 November, 1934. He encouraged the establishment of African Congress Clubs (ACCs) in every town and district in the whole of South Africa. He went on to say:

... these National Clubs will cater for all economic needs of our people, in the towns as well as in the country (rural areas) ... the "A.C.C." ... will belong to the nation as a whole ... Every African will be able to point to them with pride as the property of the African Nation - an institution which has been established and is maintained by their own efforts ...

The "A.C.C." will encourage all Native business enterprises. It will help the Native shopkeeper, the hawker and the pedlars by giving them supplies through the wholesale departments ... the Native transport service will be much improved owing to the supervision of the motor car mechanics of the "A.C.C." It will pay our motor mechanics to join these local clubs so that they may get their supplies through the general garage of the Congress ...

It (A.C.C.) is a great national insurance against unemployment and it should ensure the steady progress of the African nation ... Our policy shall be to make the "A.C.C." a meeting place for a busy hardworking and anxious people who are doing their best to get into the world markets ... The African must be taught to build himself up ...

The qualified young men and young women who will be drafted into the Congress National Services (C.N.S.) shall not fail to inspire the African audiences in the halls of the "A.C.C." with the new spirit of fellowship and to help to break down this cursed racialism. ...(*my emphasis*)

[Karis (ed) et al Vol 1, 1972/87:316-317]

The quotation spells out the whole programme to be followed in the upliftment of the African which Jolobe advocates; in the last paragraph the programme is said to be aimed also at eradication of racialism - Jolobe is doing the same political education in his essay Abantwana bendlu enye (in AMAVO 1940:23-29) where he scorns tribalism and racialism.

In a pamphlet published in 1932 Pixley ka Isaka Seme spoke in the same language that Jolobe used in AMAVO, which appeared eight years later, in 1940. Pixley said the Africans "should refuse to be divided" because of the

African blood which runs through their brains.
[Karis (ed) Vol 1, 1972/87:313]

This is echoed by Jolobe in the essay Abantwana bendlu enye in AMAVO (1940:23-29):

... singabantwana bendlu enye, kuqukuqela gazinye emithanyeni yethu thina baNtsundu beli lizwe.
[Jolobe (Abantwana bendlu enye, in AMAVO) 1940:29]

(... the Africans in South Africa belong to one nation, the same blood group that we inherited from one forebear is running in our blood vessels.)

Pixley prays hard for the African leaders - elected and traditional - to come together and speak with one voice which would be

the leading daily thought and guidance to all our people in their daily duties and struggles as a nation.
[Karis (ed) Vol 1, 1972/87:313]

Jolobe echoes the same in the same essay quoted above:

Nesizwe ukuze kuqale ukuba kuthiwe sisizwe ngokwenene siya kuba sifikelele kulo mgangatho wokuba umlomo waso ube mnye, wonke umntu ongowaso aphulaphule izwi lalo mlomo mnye alawulwe lilo.
[Jolobe (in Abantwana bendlu enye, in AMAVO) 1940:27]

[For a (our) nation to qualify to be called a nation, indeed, should first reach the stage of being so organised that it had established one mouthpiece (chosen-leadership), the only voice which the whole nation will listen to and be guided by.]

Pixley also refers to the delay towards national unity which was caused by the independence of each Chief over his subjects, and makes a suggestion that all Chiefs in South Africa should unite and form an Upper House inside the African National Congress to help in the then current attempts to unite Africans into a nation [Karis (ed) Vol 1, 1972/87:314]. In the same essay we are comparing with this speech Jolobe makes reference to the existence of the numerous African chiefdoms/kingdoms independently of one another, and makes a suggestion that the heads of these chiefdoms/kingdoms should come together and agree on one Paramount Chief/King who will be their only spokesperson and chosen leader - a step in the direction of uniting their subjects into one

South African nation who will then present the demands of African people to the colonial administration (S.A. Union Government) with one voice, thus avoiding falling into the traps of divide-and-rule tactics practised by the government in the 1930s and before. In developing this point he points to the teachers' union of the 1930s and the African National Congress as good examples of tangible attempts towards uniting the African people nationally - examples which all strata of the African population should emulate and invigorate [Jolobe (in Abantwana bendlu enye, in AMAVO) 1940:27-28]. Regarding ANC, Pixley said the same:

"If we desire unity then we must form the African National Congress into a solid and impregnable fortress for the defense of our Liberty, even on this Continent, which is our birthright."

[Karis (ed) Vol 1, 1972/87:313]

The political sensitiveness of Jolobe comes out here, which also gives us a clue as to why he published in 1958 a novel which extolled African culture exclusively:

Kanene akufuneki na ukuba umntu azingce ngobuhlanga? Akukho mntu ulichasileyo ikhwele elihle ... Ukuba ikhwele lobuhlanga lelisakhayo nelisibumbayo isizwe alichasiwe, ngoko ezo zinto ezisekelezele ukhulumisa nokubumba isizwe esiNtsundu azichasiwe nokuba maxa wambi zibonakala zingathi zixhumisa ubuhlanga.

(Jolobe AMAVO 1940:26)

(By the way, is one wrong when he/she displays pride in his/her race? Nobody would decry pride displayed positively ... Pride which is meant to build and unite the race cannot be decried, therefore, all displays of pride which are meant to encourage development and unity of the African/Indigenous race cannot be decried even if, when viewed from another angle, they seem to promote racialism and tribalism.)

This quotation helps the reader to understand the mind and the motive behind ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA. For his generation that was raised in ignorance of its ancestry such a novel on the indigenous, pre-colonial Nguni culture and history, asserting the distinctive peculiarities of their identity was a political strategy to recuperate them and crucial in resistance politics in which he was engaged.

Pixley takes inspiration from the "Race Pride" displayed by the "Negroes" (Afro-

Americans) in America:

[the] most highly educated and efficient in the leading professions... refuse to be regarded as Whites... they want to remain as Africans...

(Karis (ed) Vol 1, 1972/87:315)

Jolobe also takes courage from the experience of slavery of the same Afro-Americans in encouraging the African race to pick themselves up from slavery in the essay, Ubukhoboka (Jolobe, in AMAVO, 1940:53-54).

The Jolobe who wrote the seemingly politically silent novel, ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA, is this man who is echoing these highly political sentiments on the freedom and rights of the African race in South Africa.

In 1932, in a pamphlet entitled "Native Disabilities in South Africa," Prof DDT Jabavu, under point 34, raised the issue of segregation and exposed its evil intentions which the government presented falsely as development. He said:

The basic policy of our present masters is that the African should be precluded from civilization, forced to develop along his primitive lines, stopped where he presently is, and pushed back to where he was a century ago.

(Karis (ed) Vol 1, 1972/87:288)

Karis (ed) et. al. concur with Jabavu in interpreting the policy in all four "provinces" before 1910:

... white administrators, by strict insistence that Africans adhere to "Native Law," effectively prevented all but a few Africans from obtaining a vote.

(Karis et al (ed) Vol 1, 1972/87:4)

The wording of the following excerpt indicates that Jolobe was responding directly to the nefarious spirit exposed in these quotations from Jabavu and Karis et. al. (above):

... kwaye kubantu abangemnyama siva amazwi athi umntu oNtsundu makaqhube alawulwe ngesiko lakhe.

(Jolobe in Isiko, in AMAVO, 1940:89)

(... Strange enough we hear that non-Indigenes have declared omnisciently what is good for the Indigenes: "development" and administration according to pre-colonial Native traditions.)

Jolobe in this essay refers to the same European deceitful strategies advocated under Native Law and Custom for the Natives and something else for the European. He warned that acquiescence to such nefarious schemes meant acceptance of segregation and its imbalances which leave the Indigenes disadvantaged in every sphere of life. He gives this warning:

Abanye (abeLungu) abaphembelela ukuba masiyekwe sikhale intlalo yethu yemveli ... abayithethi loo nto bejonge kulungelwa kwethu. Bayithetha kuba bona bejonge ukuhlala bengamakhwenkwe

amakhulu ukuze kube soloko kwabakho sifedana sesizwana esisithi, esingahambeli ndawo (e)sihlala intlalo endala yokungazi.

(Jolobe in Isiko, in AMAVO, 1940:94)

[Those Europeans (the government) who prescribe that the Africans should go back to their old traditional style of living ... are not at all interested in our welfare. They are only strategising for them to remain always far ahead of us in technological developments which improve the standard of life, and, for us to remain in darkness about those developments which improve the quality of life globally, thus locking us in "darkness" and stagnation technologically.]

These words echo more closely the last excerpt from Jabavu above. This quotation clears our minds on the motive behind ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA - it is not extollation of early African culture for a blind return to it but only for consciousness on that glorious past, which the Western conspirators denigrated and thereafter denied it ever existed. Jolobe clearly states his stand on this matter:

Eyona nkalo sijonge kuyo nesilangazelela yona (thina baNtsundu) kukuba kude kufike imini esiya kuthi isizwe sibe namandla okuzifeza zonke iinkalo zobomi ngobugcisa obungenasikhwasilima; imini esiya kuthi isininzi sabantu besizwe silambeke sinxanelwe sonwatyiswe kukondliwa engqondweni nasemoyeni ngeendyebo zolwazi olukhanyiselayo nolonwabisayo noluchumisa inkqubela phambili. Ngaleyo mini kuya kutshiwo ukuthi isizwe esiNtsundu siphucukile ...

(Jolobe, in Impucuko, in AMAVO 1940:7)

[The goal and the heights we (Africans) are aiming at and aspiring to is the coming of the day when, in development, we have reached a stage where we will be fully conversant and perfect in all current scientific and technological developments in all spheres of life and in producing high quality articles; the day when the majority of our race will be self-motivated and self-propelled to wish to acquire and enjoy the physical and spiritual latest global riches of knowledge which enlighten and enrich the quality of life and make progress into the future an enjoyable journey. On that day the African race will have caught up technologically and scientifically with the developed nations of the first world ...]

This clarifies Jolobe's mission (activism and mobilization) in life and literature more. To show his commitment to the welfare of his people, Jolobe, tells the African readers in two essays, Amanani and Ukuzingca ngebandla, that the vast numbers the Africans have over the Europeans' numbers will win them majority rule one day (Jolobe's AMAVO, 1940, pages 34 and 62 respectively). From then on their lines of development will be in their hands. This is Jolobe in politics. All the quotations here have demonstrated the link between Jolobe's works and the historical and political contexts he wrote in.

(f) **Inter-textuality in Jolobe's works**

The stand and the principle that underlie the themes and subjects Jolobe deals with are hinted or declared in one book and developed in another or reinforced by repetition. Such an exposition will help us understand the motive behind the seemingly "innocent and innocuous" novel, ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA.

The contention that such a work which looks so "innocent" and "tame," is said to be a vicious and eloquent protest, is based also on the fact that no work of art is innocent and on inter-textuality, which is inter-relatedness among his literary works. The novel, *ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA* is an illustration or an enlargement of utterances or themes made in his essay collection, *AMAVO*. The meticulous details of how and why the medicine man maintains constantly a smouldering fire in the special chamber in which he is found with the king and the army commander, and the details on how he burns "incense" in this hut from which they draw smoke and feel themselves happy - all these details tally with or illustrate in a larger way his contention that people look down on another denomination/religion because they think it does not have certain things which are there in another one; it is only a matter of misunderstanding or perpetuation of "othering." Such detractors do not know that what they say is lacking in another denomination/religion is there but called by another name or they are denying that according to plan - "othering!" See the essay, *Ukuzingca ngebandla* (1940:57-62). If we compare the following quotations from both books we will see the inter-textual link referred to above. In the essay he says:

"Siwabonile amabandla akwaziyo ukungena ngentlonelo nokuzola endlwini engcwele, abantu bahlale bethe zole tu emva kokuthandaza ngokuthe cwaka entliziyweni, bahlale bezindilile phambi kokuba iqalwe inkonzo."

(Jolobe 1940:57)

[We know of the denominations where the congregation enter the church building with great dignity and respect, kneel and pray silently (at their seats) in their hearts, sit in their places in majestic solemnity till the service starts.]

In the first pages of *ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA* he paints a similar picture of majesty and dignity maintained in an African context - the "raw" and undefiled state in which the African was before colonisation. He describes the normal procedure in the special chamber in which Dlomo, the king; Ntlabane, the army commander; and Dlikiza, the royal diviner are found seated; and there, as in the Anglican Church, great respect for the place is shown by those inside the special chamber by observing silence, composure and decorum. Jolobe's account in this novel goes:

(i) Komkhulu apho ke kwindlu ebucala eyayingafumane ingenwe mntu ... kwakuhleli amadoda amathathu anesithozela. Entla phaya phakathi kwesisi esasidale ubunkungwana yabe iyingangalala, isanuse eso sakomkhulu uDlikiza ... Ngeli thuba wayethe zole tu ... Ngasekhohlo ... yayingumphathi-mkhosi. Naye wayethe cwaka ... Ngasekunene phaya kwakuhleli ... inyange ... uDlomo ... Naye ngeli xesha wayehleli ethe zwi ... nzwanga ... *(my emphasis)*

(Jolobe 1958:1-2)

(ii) Emva koku ukhululwe uNtlabane ukuba aye kuchazela ikhankatha eliya ngamalungiselelo lawo waza wasala yena umhlekazi nesanuse sakhe esabe sisathe zole tu lonke eli xesha entla phaya

sizondelele ukugcina lowaa mlilwana unesisi ekwakuphuma kuso ubugholwana obungebankuni koko beengcanjana ezinqabileyo zokubiyela umntwan' enkosi kwimimoya eyenzakalisayo. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:6*)

(i) [At the Great Place in a special hut (of secrecies) where not everybody had free access ... three dignified men were seated. Deep inside (towards the centre of the backwall, as one approached from both right and left), hazily covered in smoke that looked like thin mist, was seated the honourable, the diviner of the royal place, named Dlikiza ... He was sitting in perfect silence at that moment ... On the left-hand side (as you enter the hut) ... was seated the army commander. He, too, was sitting in great silence ... On the right-hand side (as you enter the chamber) ... was seated ... the saint ... (King) Dlomo ... He, too, was sitting with his legs stretched fully ... and, like the others, he was also sitting in dignified silence ...]

(ii) [After the report, Ntlabane was released to go and inform the keeper of the boys of the circumcision lodge about the preparations already made; the king remained behind (in the special chamber) with his diviner who had been silent, all this time (of the report) (in his place) deep inside the chamber tending the small fire which produced smoke which had an aroma, not of the wood, but of special herbs used to protect the king from evil spirits.]

When one looks at the quotations from both books one is immediately struck by the inter-contextual link, which proves our contention. Secondly, the dignified silence the three men observe most of the time they are in this special chamber is similar to that observed in the Anglican or Roman Catholic Church before the service. Thirdly, this special chamber is a special place like the church hall in the Christian worship. Fourthly, the arrival of Dlanga looks like the beginning of the church service and his report (omitted in these quotations - see below) looks like the church service itself. The King's praises that he sings, marking his arrival, sound like the opening prayer in the Anglican Church. He says:

A! Dlomo, Ncobo, Mthimkhulu, Dlamini, Malunga!
(*Jolobe 1958:4*)

(Hail King Dlomo, of King Ncobo, of King Mthimkhulu, of King Malunga!)

(Note that all Dlomo's subjects sing his praises when they come to the Great Place.)

On page 104 of the English version of the Anglican Prayer Book of 1989 the opening prayer of the morning service has these praises to the Lord: "God in the highest," "Lord God," "heavenly King," "almighty God and Father," "Lord Jesus Christ," "Lamb of God," "the Holy one," "the Most High."

After this glorious salute Dlanga punctuates his report with such majestic titles as

Baba (*Jolobe 1958:5*)

(Our Father)

mhlekazi (*Jolobe 1958:5*)

(Almighty)/(Most Handsome)/(Great One)

mntwan' enkosi (*Jolobe 1958:5*)

(Son of our King/King of Kings)

in reference and deference to King Dlomo. These are repeated right through the report, just like such titles as "Almighty God," "Our Father" "Lord God," "Heavenly King" and other titles used during the morning prayers in the Anglican Church service in reference and in deference to God. The rest of the eucharistic prayers are punctuated by such respectful terms in reference to Jesus and God as "(Jesus) eternally begotten of the Father," "God from God," "Light from Light," "true God from true God," "(whose) kingdom will have no end" (p. 108), "Holy Spirit," "the giver of life" (p. 109), "Yours, Lord is the greatest, the power, the glory, the splendour, and the majesty" (p. 116), "God of all creation" (p. 116), "God Almighty and eternal" (p. 117), "God of power and might" (p. 118), "Holy Father" (p. 119), "Gracious Lord" (p. 119), "Christ our Saviour" (p. 119), "Your great and glorious Name" (p. 120), "(Jesus) the Saviour of the world" (p. 123), "our Saviour and Redeemer" (p.125), "Father of all" (p. 125), "merciful Lord" (p. 127), "one God, now and forever" (p. 129), (1989 ANGLICAN PRAYER BOOK:108-129) (The Psalms are full of these titles.) Even in introductory remarks Dlanga says:

Ndize kumhlekazi ngemicimbi yesizwe.
(*Jolobe 1958:4-5*)

(I am here at the place of my king bringing him news about one great event in the history of the kingdom.)

That is similar to the fact that the priest officiating during the church service will be presenting to God the state of His people to Him for His information and further action. The pulpit in the church is erected right up in the building straight where the aisle ends. In this special chamber the diviner occupies exactly a similar position; his small fire is right there. The aromatic herbs he burns in that fire are meant for the protection of the king, hence while they maintain dignity they are not sombre they are happy in that protected chamber just like the Anglican congregation feel during service. Right at the initial stages of the church service the chief officiant takes a round around the altar swinging the incense smoke vessel onto the altar from all corners. At the time of celebrating Holy Communion he swings the incense smoke onto the altar again on which the bread and the wine are already laid. After that the server swings the incense smoke towards the congregation; he bows when he has finished and the congregation bow in return and in thankfulness (that whatever evil spirit might have been there was now chased away and they will take the bread and the wine in purity and under security). By the time the chief officiant calls the confirmed to come to receive the bread and wine the altar is thick with incense smoke,

because at the time of blessing these, more and more smoke is swung onto the altar. A simple comparison tells us that what Dlikiza is doing, that is, keeping that little fire constantly producing that smoke for the protection of the king from evil, is exactly the equivalent act of the priest described above, and the purpose is the same.

What Jolobe has successfully established here is that the Christian religion did not bring in anything new to the African as our analysis above demonstrates. The whole novel, in fact, brings in other aspects, besides the religious aspect, with the intention to say nothing new, even in those other aspects, was brought by the European colonist to the South African Indigenes. Such a work as this one can never be said to be a silent one but a vicious bulldog standing in defence of the Africans against lies sown about by Europeans about them. This novel refutes the generalization that the Indigenes were notorious for their cancerous rowdiness and incurable misbehaviour - the falsehoods of "othering." Such a generalization rules out the fact that in African life there were such moments of positive retreats to quiet places, moments conducive to holy and deep meditation on higher and nobler affairs of state and humanity (much like the monks and nuns of the olden days did go into seclusion for meditation).

Jolobe relates the celebration of the first-fruits in grand style in ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA. Earlier, in AMAVO (1940:90-91) he had given reasons why the season for gathering fresh vegetables and mealies should be opened formally - economising. In 1958, in this novel he dramatises this and we see and experience the economising exercise practically. This is another matter to raise to prove our point on inter-textuality in Jolobe's works.

Jolobe, in his play, AMATHUNZI OBOMI (1957), exposes his readers to the governments' failure to treat the South African Indigene like a human being - he gives a vivid picture of starvation, overcrowding, violence, deprivation of human rights, degeneration, and the squalor of the urban "Native" locations, lack of recreation facilities, job reservation, police raids on "Natives" who were trying to make ends meet by brewing and selling African beer; the South African governments' callousness and insensitivity to the point of threatening even fresh widows with eviction from municipality houses for rent arrears. Such political unfairness was decried in the essay *Isisulu* (Jolobe in AMAVO 1940:51) where Jolobe challenges the government system of taxation which demands,

equally, amounts of tax from everybody while it had legislated unequal economic opportunities, according to race.

UZAGULA is a thesis on the African belief in witchcraft and on African cosmology and culture in general for self-affirmation mainly. It is an examination and exposition of the belief in witchcraft, not in a derogatory sense, but in a way that proves how strong the belief was, how it permeates and upsets relations among relatives and non-related locals. It is not basically a comparison with Christianity, it is more to say that this aspect of African religion exists side by side with Christianity. Of course, the teacher is made to verify the supposed *thikoloshe* group that supposedly "belongs" to Zagula, which stays in shelters in the cliffs, and the teacher finds that it is just birds and a toad that made the noise at night, which noise was supposedly made by Zagula's *thikoloshes* before attacking Nozipho. All this is meant to say African people believe in witchcraft, strongly, too, as part of their cosmology and is also presented in such a way as to say to the readers of the first audience that this aspect of their culture needs re-examination and more circumspection in these modern times, just as he says in one essay that outdated customs should be discarded. Below in (g) he says an author presents bad things in literature only to discourage them.

Our further comment on UZAGULA is that Jolobe is expatiating on African culture exposing only positive points regarding the highly legalistic and complex African minds; love - no promiscuity whatever; general affairs, brains and power of women; life-sustaining habits (gathering wild green vegetables, herding plenty of stock, self-sufficiency in everything); practising communalism - a neighbour's child coming to sleep at another neighbour's place who needs that support; communicating news; all kinds of hospitality (sweets from those who come from contract work), lobola (not buying but establishing relationship) "a person has no price" (Jolobe 1923:3) - all to prove how mature the African was even by 1923 and earlier - almost celebrating Africa's "golden age." This part is similar to ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA in conception. There is, of course, reference to relations between the Blacks and Whites (Jolobe 1923:121) on discrimination and low wages for Blacks (Jolobe 1923:20 and 23) and police negative habits (Jolobe 1923:29 and 30) on Blacks- things which do not feature in ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA.

A little bit of flesh on the nature of the African as depicted by Jolobe in UZAGULA: The furniture Zagula has includes a shelf made with mud - which was as good as anything else - plank or steel. This is one way of extolling the self-sufficiency Africans had enjoyed in pre-colonial times.

While having such a "primitive" shelf and having no riches, her late husband's property having been confiscated by her son, Zagula is still proud enough to offer tea to visitors and insist that they wait for it even if they were in a hurry. There is one visitor that was particularly anxious but was made to stay to enjoy that hospitality. Conversely, we do not hear anything of the sort being offered by her affluent son and wife, who have taken to Western ways.

While the son is affluent and tries to drag the mother to his place the author makes Zagula refuse and makes her live a simple life supported by the little she earns as a washer-woman. What takes the cake is that Zagula is happy in this sort of life (except when accused of witchcraft) whereas her son's and wife's lives are hell. At this point in their lives Zagula's dictum: "*Kuza kuhluzwa (phambili)*" (Truth will come out) takes a political meaning over the religious meaning; towards the end the communalist Zagula is absolved by the dying, mentally tortured wife of her affluent son. "*Kuza kuhluzwa*" now means, what is better?: Communalism or Capitalism of the West? The answer is obvious. Even in the solution of marriage/lobola issue between the bride who led a simple life and had strong-willed determination, banking on revelation of truth which she follows in all modesty as against the bridegroom-to-be who is money conscious and does all sorts of tricks, banking on his capital - even in their case "*Kuyahluzwa*" (Things go to justice). The foolish bridegroom-to-be is caught in his tracks and made to apologise and gets on with moral life of an African in the end. Writers like Jolobe, who are engaged in a fight against cultural imperialism, portray women in pre-colonial culture positively to demonstrate their dignity in the past to restore self confidence in the targeted readers, as he does in both novels

Much as Jolobe does not condemn the positive aspects of Westernization in his other works (he only ridicules the foolish as in *Impucuko* in AMAVO) he does, as in this novel "prove" the strong fibre of African communalism and African culture here, as well as in ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA.

It is also the discovery of the repetition of the same assertion, same themes and principles in his works that gives us confidence in our stand and contention about ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA. We have to go to these great lengths in digging into Jolobe's background because on the surface the novel under discussion here is politically silent; to enable the reader to hear its political voice we have to "prove" that by exposing the consciousness on things African and the political awakening we see in his other works. Jolobe, in ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA, is remoulding an ideology on the Nguni/African, he does not "mention" Whites, and,

an ideology is made of what it does not mention...

(Macherey, quoted by Terry Goldie in Ashcroft 1995:235)

(g) **Jolobe in his own words**

In ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA Jolobe is doing what he had said should be done in 1940, namely, that the South African Europeans should be schooled on the culture of the African (in the essay, Incoko in AMAVO (Jolobe 1940:82). In the essay, Uggadambekweni in AMAVO (Jolobe 1940:96-97) he illustrates the need for this education for the Europeans by an anecdote: A European teacher who had been serving diligently in one "Native" school was puzzled year after year by the fact that "Native" children avoided looking at an elderly person straight into the eyes. Jolobe explained to him one day that, that is a sign of great respect and discipline in "Native" culture; he reports:

Wakhuza akalibala umfo wasemaNgesini. Wathi kubo olo luphawu lobubi elingade netyala libhukuqeke phezu kwakhe onjalo kuthiwe ubonakalise nangezimbo zakhe ukuba akamsulwa.

(Jolobe 1940:97)

(That English European was shocked to learn that. He explained that in their culture that was slyness; slyness of that nature was a sure sign of evil and guilt feeling and went on to say that in a court case a witness that displayed that habit while giving evidence would lose the case and the verdict would be against him/her on the assumption that the shyness he/she displayed was enough proof that he/she was the guilty party.)

Europeans, like this Englishman, who had even worked among the African Indigenes, were sooner or later declared experts and specialists on "Natives" and given positions in "Native" affairs government departments. Sir George Grey imposed White magistrates over British Kaffaria; Henry Lucas was imposed as magistrate over Bhotomane's and Maqoma's people, and he

like all except one of the magistrates, was a minor young military officer without knowledge of the Xhosa language or anything other than the local received view of them as a people. *(my emphasis)*

(Mostert 1992:1176)

Jolobe allows us to see through this anecdote what expert and specialist meant and to see the necessity and functions of novels like *ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA* in the struggle for justice for the African in that period. On the other hand, Jolobe turns his focus on his disoriented and decultured brethren who throughout the colonial period had been made to look down upon themselves and their culture and persuaded externally and internally to aspire for ascending in the Western culture, in such essays as *Impucuko*, *Izinongo zobomi*, *Iqela likaRoyal* and *Ukuzingca ngebandla*, where he tells them that they had fallen for artificial wants and had been duped into believing in imaginary deficiencies regarding their own culture and themselves. This 1958 novel adds on the self-affirmation he espoused in these essays in *AMAVO* (1940).

When we read all these essays in *AMAVO* our minds are drawn to a fine picture of race relations which is a recipe for a future South Africa. In one essay, *Ivenkile yangaphandle* (Jolobe, *AMAVO* 1940:69-76) we find good relations between European shopkeepers in rural areas and the Indigenes living there. The shopkeeper Jolobe concentrates on shows patience with the customers, the Indigenes he serves, and his customers are also depicted as people who regard the shopkeeper just as another man, not as a god whose feet they should lick, as Europeans expected those days. It is rural Indigenes who display this self-confidence and self-esteem, it is rural Indigenes Jolobe uses in his novel to depict the virility of the personhood and culture of the early African in *ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA*. That seems to say the salvation in the struggle for self-affirmation as a step towards spiritual and political freedom, lies in the rural Indigenes' self-confidence and self-esteem which was not tempered with much (as we also note in *INGQUMBO YEMINYANYA* by AC Jordan, a novel which also boosts self-awareness and esteem among South African Indigenes, using rural communities).

Jolobe confirms this contention in an interview with Harold Scheub when he declared:

The trend of the development (in literature) must be in that line [that is "true to the life of the (African) people" and a "return to the indigenous background more and more"] ... I have attempted that in *Elundini laseThukela*. Of course it's others who would say what appeal it has. I've used something that is historical and reconstructed it in order that it might be a continuous story. (He added in another reproduction of that interview): This still has to be exploited in the urban areas; it has to be exploited even in the country, and in the past history of the (African) people. (my emphasis)

(African Arts, Vol 3, 1970:60)

He went on to say:

... the end of all literature is to enrich the life of the community and of the people. And that enrichment will go right back to the philosophy of the people. It either laughs at something that is undesired or it brings into relief the good elements of the philosophy which is involved in the life of the people. That

is why I say that it goes back to what is common with all people, that they love to enhance what is good and beautiful, and perhaps to try to decrease (even though they describe it) what is bad and what is ridiculous.

(African Arts, Vol 3, 1970:63)

We get here a clue as to what he is doing in this novel. What burst out in 1958 in a novel on African culture and history was a long-held objective with deep political intentions in Jolobe's fertile mind. By 1940 he had said to himself and to his readers:

Onke amasiko ... ntlandlolo phaya abe ziintsuba zobomi ... intsingiselo yabe ikukulondoloza ubomi besizwe eso ukuba bungonakali kwanokusinceda isizwe ukuba siyifeze imisebenzi yaso namatheko aso ngeendlela ezinesidima nezivunyiweyo ukuba zinempumelelo.

(Jolobe in Isiko, in AMAVO, 1940:90)

(Right from early history all traditional practices and principles were repositories for maintenance of life ... their objective was to sustain the life of the particular race and safeguard it from destruction and to be a guide to the race in its functions and celebrations for these to be programmed in dignified and accepted ways which had always guaranteed success and best results.)

After this well-expressed exposition on tradition he warns also against blind adherence to them as they have to be adapted to the times, generations down the line (Jolobe, in Isiko, in AMAVO 1940:90-91). In other words we should not be interpreted in our analysis of this novel to be saying that Jolobe was preaching a blind return to pre-colonial cultures for the African: he was using that pre-colonial quality of dignity to revive dignity in modern times for his people to claim what was rightfully due to them in all spheres of life in modern-day South Africa.

Africans had developed arts, technology, religion and communal culture long before the European came to South Africa. For instance, outside fiction, in a History textbook, FRONTIERS, it is stated that by 1835, the ancestors of the Mfengu who arrived in Gcalekaland in that period "had been ironsmiths and cultivators in Natal for 1,500 years" (Mostert 1992:697). Natal is the physical setting used in ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA. Jolobe, in this novel, is dramatising that historical truth. He had earlier made a statement declaring this fact in his 1940 publication, AMAVO:

Bonke abantu emhlabeni badalwe balingana.

(Jolobe, in the essay: Ubukhoboka, in AMAVO, 1940:53)

(At creation, the Divine Creator created human beings equal in all respects.)

From the interview with Scheub it comes out that Jolobe was conscious of the degrading eye that the Europeans viewed African literature with and was reacting furiously to that.

In his evaluation of what the literature of a community does to its people, he says:

... there is no difference between the aesthetics of the West and the aesthetics of Africa ... You will find that what is appreciated in one group will be appreciated in others. As one writer said, if you prick us we also bleed; tickle us, we laugh - among Africans, it is exactly the same. *(my emphasis)*

(African Arts, Vol 3, 1970:63)

Jolobe was conscious of the hidden meaning of his works and the othering syndrome which had blinded the European: he said about ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA in an interview with Scheub:

Of course, it's others who would say what appeal it has.
(*African Arts, Vol 3, 1970:60*)

At the end of the interview he said:

We are hoping, as Bantu Studies in our universities gets stronger, that the study of our literature will be done by our own people, that they will see the value and the implications of these writings, that they will perhaps discover mines of information, because even a line of poetry will open up new vistas if it's studied properly.
(*my emphasis*)

(*African Arts, Vol 3, 1970:80*)

Just to elucidate this we may quote one distinguished critic, Jubase. About Jolobe's poetry Jubase had declared in UNISA notes (UNISA, XHS203-5/1:37)

... uyimbongi emsebenzi wayo ucetywe ngobugcisa obubodwa obufuna umfundi ofunda evule amehlo ... yimbongi ekwaziyo ukuhlongoza ingqondo ... Ngumfo ... obongela ukungqiniba into ethile apha ebomini (maxa wambi). (*my emphasis*)
(UNISA, XHS203-5/1:37)

[he is the type of poet whose ideas are couched skilfully in deep linguistic expressions which demand, for understanding, the type of reader who scrutinizes poetry with an open eye and a broad, mature mind ... he is that type of poet who evokes a conglomeration of ideas by one expression ... Sometimes he writes (poetry) in order to enlighten the reader on false impressions that had deluded the community, in order to give truth about those issues.]

Among the skills that Jubase enumerates, which Jolobe is reputed to have used with great dexterity, is this one:

ukusebenzisa untsonkotho olungafunyanwa nakuyiphina imbongi - kwizibongo zakhe kaloku kukho intsingiselo engekho kuhleni nangona kulula ukuba ibonakale kwiliso elibukhali... okumithwi ngamazwi kaJolobe akungeze uthi ukucudise kwaphela. (*my emphasis*)
(UNISA XHS 203-5/1:37-38)

[his ability, to rise to difficult, philosophical and abstract level, which we do not find in every poet - in his poems there is almost always a hidden meaning (alongside the superficial meaning) which will be caught only by those who have sharp eyes... one can never say one has squeezed out all the meanings that Jolobe's poem contains.]

Jubase exemplifies on this quality by the poems, Isililo sikandlebende (The lamentations of a donkey) and Mkhulu umntu (Man is an enigma). Talking about emotions and thought in poems of a particular individual Jolobe says:

... you will find that thought has come in behind the imagery. You will find that in the poem, it is possible to trace the philosophy of the poet. The poetry is no longer simply emotional, there's also the thought content which perhaps enlarges the mind of the person, and gives that depth which each person might find for himself in any poem.

(*African Arts, Vol 3, 1970:60*)

We are confident in our contention on Jolobe's intentions behind this novel because of what he himself says here. His idea on love is perhaps more explicitly expressed in the poem on Thuthula, and we see that definition dramatised in the love between Ntsele and Nobusi in the novel under discussion. In both cases we have a triangle: two men focusing on one woman: Ngqika and Ndlambe on Thuthula versus Ntsele and Ngwekazi on Nobusi. The definition goes:

This thing called love is sacred, holy and pure.
It is the better self-man's complement,
It is a thing of worth a royal gift,
More precious than all else we equally prize.
No bar nor gulf should ever rise between
Two hearts, two souls, two twins that yearn in love
For one another's company on earth.
(in Gerard 1971:74)

When Jolobe dramatises in ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA, love between the two young royals, Ntsele and Nobusi, from the Hlubi Great Place and amaNgwe Great Place, respectively, we come to understand that there he is "talking" about love at universal level, asserting that Africans' quality of love is not surpassed anywhere in the world. It is this quotation that invigorates our contention, and the tone adopted right through the relation of the development of that love which blossomed into a lovely marriage.

JJR Jolobe ends a poem, Imbumba Yamanyama in IMVO ZABANTSUNDU March 25, 1930, page 3, in these lines, after describing how he rescued a girl from a beast he describes as "*ndlobongela yenkomo*" (rascal of a beast) with sharp horns:

"Malungw' am ndiyawabonga
Yimbumb' amanyama kwapela
Ati ngokunced' abany' abantu
Ndibe ndiyazipakamisa."
(*Old spelling retained*)

(I am grateful to my limbs
Indeed, they are united in action
Which help to rescue other people
An action which serves to lift me also to noble heights.)

Such words define Jolobe as a soul who had been yearning for opportunities to uplift his people, as his works and other quotations outside his creative writings demonstrate.

By now we have an idea of our author through various sources and also from his own words in philosophical essays and from the interview he had with Harold Scheub. Couzens had observed, as we have also observed in Xhosa literary analysis so far, that:

Much literary criticism ... in South Africa, takes place on a formalistic level, the analysis and assessment of style, reading the book as a self-contained unit and critics manage to ignore the book's genesis and background and to avoid much historical and sociological analysis.

(Couzens in his paper: Literature and Ideology, s.a.: first page)

With this background on Jolobe in mind we hope to go deep into these neglected levels in our analysis of ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA, to do what Couzens says below, which we have also discovered and has become our stand:

... literature is an interesting subjective expression of ideology at a particular moment in time, explaining the world and justifying it, and can therefore be seen as another area for historical and sociological analysis. Because it is "fiction" and therefore "not real" does not mean to say it does not affect attitudes or has no connection with social reality ...

(Couzens in his paper: Literature and Ideology s.a.: first page)

Jolobe's language is deceptively mild on the whole, but the initiated in Xhosa literature, who knows the context in which he is writing and to which he is referring, will not and cannot miss the sting of his pen. We will proceed shortly to an analysis which will explain that sting as it is in ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA, bearing in mind that he himself had said that he hopes that

... as Bantu Studies in our universities gets stronger, that the study of our literature will be done by our own people, that they will see the value and the implications of these writings, that they will perhaps discover mines of information, because even a line poetry will open up new vistas if it's studied properly. *(my emphasis)*

(African Arts, Vol 3, 1970:80)

We venture into analysis in the next chapters armed with these words from the author himself. We will always bear in mind in our analysis that Jolobe had noble political aspirations for the African Indigenes [expressed in paragraph (d) above] that those Europeans in government should grant political equality and "equality of opportunity in all spheres of life" to his people according to "character and maturity in mind and attitudes," and not according to "colour." Hence Jolobe proceeded to re-define the maturity of the character, minds and attitudes of Africans using the Nguni as examples in this novel. Under the same paragraph (d) above, Jolobe is quoted as yearning for exposure of the real nature, culture and dignity of the African to the European for the latter to understand the Africans' humanhood better - which mission he embarks on in this novel.

Furthermore, in our analysis we will remember that Jubase said in paragraph (d) above, that Jolobe writes to give the truth about issues or false impressions and representations that had deluded the community; and he couches the "message" in his writings in deeper levels of meaning than what he says on the surface; hence Jubase concludes that one can never say one understood absolutely all that Jolobe said - implying that Jolobe almost

invariably presented more philosophical ideas at levels that would be understood by the readers of the first audience and that his works are open to a variety of interpretations. This in turn is corroborated by Jolobe himself when he said that behind the imagery the author uses there is a deeper meaning, the "philosophy of the poet" which "enlarges the mind of the person" that is analysing and interpreting that piece of work. These will be in our minds all the time.

This account on Jolobe presents him as a man of deep and "diverse" interests whose studies and activities across fields of knowledge have laid at his disposal the background on British/European colonists' mentality, activities, colonists' and imperial strategies, and character against which he was writing ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA. At the time he was born (1902) all these were fresh in print, in memories and conversations among the elders of his society, particularly the experiences of wars of dispossession from the Western Cape, across the Eastern Frontier and up to Transkei and Natal; he even wrote on Nongqawuse episode and the Thuthula war. By the time that he wrote this novel the negative side, the evils and the brutality of the British among other European colonists, in the nineteenth century in South Africa had been documented - the Europeans who posed as moralists over the Indigenes - it was known

- they killed Black men, women and children in wars that they (Europeans) themselves provoked sometimes;
- they shot and lifted thousands upon thousands of cattle belonging to the Indigenes;
- they burnt crops and homesteads of the Indigenes;
- they emptied and despoiled the corn and sorghum bins in Indigenes' cattle kraals, thus ruthlessly causing famine which would hit the aged and the infant among the Indigenes, they shot the women they found lying helplessly from starvation under the pretext of saving them from further agony;
- they made the Khoikhoi and, later, the Mfengu to take the stings of war more by putting them in the frontlines and to chase the Xhosa right into the bushes where there was sure danger of being waylaid and ambushed;
- they cheated the Indigenes when they bought cattle, hides, skins of wild animals, and gum from them. More on the European colonists of the nineteenth century in South Africa was also at Jolobe disposal, on
- the "wars" among the missionaries themselves and the double standards they applied,

that is, pretending to be concerned about the welfare of the Indigenes yet planning also their destruction physically with colonial forces, and , spiritually;

- the corruption, inefficiency and indiscipline of the British governors, officers (military and civil), soldiers, and colonists in general, particularly on the Eastern Frontier;
- the low intelligence displayed by the British army commanders who exposed their units and wagons of supplies to spears and interception, respectively, by the Indigenes who were dubbed simply as stupid and childish;
- the brutal lashes and public executions of malefactors among themselves (Europeans).
- as against the missionaries' condemnation of smelling of witches (by Indigenes) and their subsequent elimination by torture to death by large ants or hot stones laid on their bodies, the practice of

lynching of witches remained in their own time a sporadic feature of English rural life (which remained so) until late in the nineteenth century
(Mostert 1992:956).

In fact there was a

long history of maleficium, accusations of bewitchment, in Britain and Europe
(Mostert 1992:956)

- much as the missionaries were outraged by and condemned love-making and "sexual experience" between young Xhosa boys and girls, the

sexual codes of the Bantu-speaking peoples ... were as rigidly defined and enforced as any social codes of the Victorians themselves. Loss of virginity was as much of a disgrace as it was in the Victorian world ...

(Mostert 1992:957)

This is the dark side of the early Europeans in South Africa which disqualified them from acting as judges on Nguni/African culture and history, as they were worse than the Indigenes in almost all respects. We take what Jolobe affirms about the history and culture of the Indigenes and hit it against this knowledge and background to produce the sparks which we interpret below to be signals coming from ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA - a discovery which easily leads us to regard this novel as a study in comparative history, comparative religion, comparative anthropology, comparative sociology, and comparative military strategies.

1.4 False representation of the Indigenes and reaction

What Hegel said went a long way in poisoning the European mind in relation to the African in general: The European invader/settler of the Southern Nguni, like Harry Smith, had come with the idea of Africa that had been formulated by the German philosopher, Hegel, who wrote in his Introduction to THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY:

Africa proper, as far as History goes back, has remained - for all purposes of connection with the rest of the world - shut up; it is the Gold-land compressed within itself - the land of childhood, which lying beyond the days of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of Night ...

The negro ... exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality - all that we call feeling - if we would rightly comprehend him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character ...

... Africa ... is no historical part of the world; it has no movement of development to exhibit. Historical movement in it - that is in its northern part - belongs to the Asiatic or European World ...

What we properly understand as Africa, is the Unhistorical, Underdeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature and which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the World's history ...

The History of the World travels from East to West, for Europe is absolutely the end of History, Asia is the beginning [Ashcroft (et al) (eds) 1995:15] (author's emphasis)

This representation of Africa builds on the "idea" of "Mother Europe" which Mercator (quoted by Rabasa in Ashcroft 1995) presented in writing in the 1630's":

Here (in Europe) we have the right of Lawes, the dignity of the Christian Religion, the forces of Armes... Moreover, Europe manageth all Arts and Sciences with such dexterity, that for the invention of manie things shee may be truly called a Mother...shee hath... all manner of learning, whereas other Countries are all of them, overspread with Barbarisme.

(Rabasa in Ashcroft 1995:362)

Harry Smith (and other colonists) came to the Cape with this idea of superior Europe and idea of inferior Africa, hence he, in particular, treated the Southern Nguni on the west and east of the Kei River in the arrogant fashion that he chose, treating them really like children and uncivilized, evil barbarians in spite of evidence of the intellectual and fully-fledged culture the latter exhibited.

1.4.1 **Misrepresentation**

The intorelable injustice that Xhosa authors found themselves faced with stemmed from reality (the sub-text), from the false representation of Africans in South Africa to European audiences, that was perpetrated by the early travellers, missionaries, colonial officers, settlers, and all other agents of colonialism from Europe. Their intention was to create the master-race theory that held high White supremacy as against Black inferiority, and also to turn the mirage that the White coloniser in South Africa was the citizen and the Black

Indigene was the subject, into a concrete and permanent reality. This was meant to sustain the unequal Black-White relations in the colonies and in the Boer republics and later, in the Union of South Africa, the latter period being the time when ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA was written.

The European colonists regarded themselves as the yardstick, the standard, and as the only true humans that rightfully belonged to the family of man; "civilised" was a term that they reserved to describe exclusively European culture; the African Indigenes whom they met at different times in the constantly shifting zones of contact, the frontiers, were simply the "others", the uncivilised, that belonged to a sub-class of creatures that were relegated by various creative cartoons and selective vocabulary into varying levels of inferior beings comparable only to certain animals of the lowest order, not to humans. These Europeans claimed that the lowest among them in intelligence was higher than the highest among the African Indigenes.

Each indigenous group, on first contact, was painted into and declared as an unchanging portrait, or sculptured in literary and in verbal discourse as a fixed statue and then given a cement label and a rank among the wild animals. This habit developed into a syndrome among those early Europeans, and, their stories about the barbaric, uncivilised, and savage Indigenes were heard and read with relish and great interest back in Europe because that gave the Europeans in general elation as the topmost nations in the world. They, as a group, on the other hand, had credited themselves with civilisation, superior brains capable of inventing, and of being scientific and technological creators. The Dutch, first, the Portuguese, the French, the Germans, and the English, that later came in groups of colonists and settlers to South Africa came with these fixed images of Indigenes in their minds, and were only happy to preserve those myths intact if not to augment them in the process of establishing themselves as conquerers, discoverers of unoccupied lands, and rulers over the original inhabitants.

This stereotyping of the Indigenes by the ruling European race involved defining the Indigenes to identify them as "other", "not-self", "native" to delimit their qualities in order to legitimise restrictions, deprivation, or even elimination when some of them were simply regarded as vermin (the San). The Indigenes in general were represented as perverse, below normal human beings in all aspects of civilization, deficient and imperfect in reason

and soul, lacking a system of law and political organisation, and lacking in the institution of marriage and home management, as against the Europeans who were typified as perfect in all these. The Europeans compiled a long list of these missing qualities, deformities, deficiencies, and absences which disqualified the Indigenes from entry into the fold of the civilized. Those early Europeans were so efficient and aggressive in this mission and pursuit of "othering" the Indigenes that by the seventeenth century it was "an established fact" that the Indigenes in South Africa could only be accorded the status of animals (Chidester 1994:14).

As said above, this demarcation of lines between the various peoples in South Africa was not an honest Anthropological study but a political strategy for the European to dispossess the Indigenes and gain the upperhand. In his game of false representation the European stuck diplomatically to a denial that the Indigenes ever had a religion; he, however, intermittently admitted seeing only pagan, irreligious, and idolatrous practices among them, while holding his (European's) religion to be the real and truly authentic religion worth the name. For the Europeans, illiteracy, in their sense of literacy, among the Africans automatically meant ignorance about religion; for the Europeans, religion meant knowledge about the Christian God, the bible, the devil, idols, Middle Eastern shrines, and Middle Eastern temples - such visible external expressions and features of worship; at first their denial was based on this morphological comparison. They used this crafty denial to reinforce their claim that the Indigenes were no different from animals; they then argued that their relations with the Indigenes were to be guided by this parallel. In Europe it was known that beasts had no religion, no rights, no principles, no recognisable way of owning the land they were found on - they could be simply driven off or killed at will, no covenants could be made with them. The Europeans in South Africa argued for the extension of the same attitude towards the Indigenes. Harry Smith on his way to King Hintsa's territory in the 1830s wrote to his wife saying that a Kafir is a "wild beast and (I) try to hunt him as such" (Mostert 1992:713).

The Europeans reinforced their argument with fabrications from their comparativists who coined genealogical myths about the South African aboriginals, which claimed that the

Khoikhoi had migrated from China via Egypt; the Xhosa had been Arabs; the Zulu had been Jews; and the Sotho-Tswana had been ancient Egyptians. ... to suggest that they did not really belong in Southern Africa because their original homelands were in the distant, ancient Near East.

(Chidester 1994:27-28)

This is maximum extension of false representation for political gains regarding land and all rights that accrue from land ownership. Various other strategies were put in place - the school, with emphasis on English, the print media and, later, electronic media, and the church - to colonise the conscience and the soul and to instil in the minds of the Indigenes the same false accounts about themselves. Unsuspecting Indigenes were caught up in this net and got involved in schemes that were presented to them as light, human development, and fullness of life (as in John 1:1-16) as against the darkness, decay, and emptiness of lives of the Indigenes - the *tabula rasa* doctrine. But, in reality, this was all meant to undermine and to compromise the indigenous cultures and to impair the African concepts and images of the Indigenes almost beyond recognition. That was the European's hidden agenda behind "civilising" the Indigenes. Serious damage was done on five areas of the lives of the Indigenes: the psychological, the socio-cultural, the political, the economic, and the religious fields.

Jabavu captures an aspect of the implementation of the imperial strategy vividly at the point when the Europeans had gained political ascendancy and administrative control in South Africa thus:

We (Africans) are constantly exhorted to "develop along our own lines" as apart from, against, and in competition with white civilization, just because we are Africans.

(*Jabavu 1928:10*)

This was a ploy to keep the Indigenes wallowing in mud while the Whites were gaining mileage in technological and scientific development.

The European missionary and the military were used in this imperial onslaught to carry this propaganda forward and to drive away the Indigenes from their lands as if they were simply beasts at the time the Europeans were installing themselves as rulers and citizens over the servants and subjects - the Indigenes (Mostert 1992:699). The Christ-against-culture group of missionaries co-operated in the colonial government policy of "subdue-and-civilise". On the question of land and cultivation they assisted by concretising the idea that land under the Indigenes was either the uncultivated or improperly cultivated wilderness or desert as against land under Europeans which was designated as paradise which was cultivated virtuously and prudently to generate capital to boost the economy of the state. The African converts and literates were urged to follow that example in the mission schools which were regarded as centres of advancement, particularly Lovedale.

In matters of language English was promoted and held very high as against the "Kaffir" dialects, in the minds of the colonized and in practice as a *sine qua non* for existence, survival, and development, hence the converts got their tuition in English and had to strive for perfection in it. The habit of undermining those who had not been to mission schools by both the literate Indigene and the colonist stemmed from this condition. The policy of Anglicization was in line with this promotion of English and Westernisation at the expense of the indigenous languages and cultures.

Accordingly massive amounts of money were spent on mission education under the Grey Plan to give full support to this project of colonising the minds of the Indigenes. de Kock (1994) in his article: Missionaries, Language and Land briefly exposes the implementation of "othering" using the English language as a strategy:

English as discourse ... affected the notions of the self, the body, the land, and the abstract realms of beauty, godliness, philosophy and morality ... (It also tainted with either superiority or inferiority the concepts of) white and black, good and evil, ... civilization and savagery, intelligence and emotion, rationality and sensuality, self and other, subject and object.

(Journal of Theology for Southern Africa, Vol 87, June 1994:63)

The converted Indigenes caught this infection and got co-opted in this foreign and perilous view of life. de Kock (1994) expands in the same article on the dangers of this new way of thinking and frame of reference, to the Indigenes:

... this education involved fundamental discursive dislocation, or ... epistemic violence. It was centrally implicated in consolidating, in representational forms, the modes of "othering" which Africans had to negotiate in order to achieve the social and cultural empowerment of education. In this education, English was both a means of transmission and a state of vaunted cultural ideality, so that missionary education became the place where the coercion of colonisation was transformed, by Protestant teachers, into the cultivation of civilization. Acquiring "civilization" in such a context meant learning on the basis of a "truth" which assumed that the African in his/her pre-Christian state was other and unredeemed, and that cultural conversion in orthodox Protestant bourgeois form was essential for any advancement in the "modern" world of the nineteenth century. *(my emphasis)*

(Journal of Theology for Southern Africa, Vol 87, June 1994:65)

By 1995 English had been established as power to enter the ranks of the dominant and the elite for about two centuries, causing psychological injuries and cultural havoc on the Indigenes.

1.4.2 Reaction

To safeguard the gains the colonists made, numerous, fickle treaties, conventions, and laws from the period of the establishment of colonies up to the time of the Union government were signed and passed. While this was going on the Indigenes never stopped protesting and fighting at the purely political and religious levels, hence the proliferation of

African Independent Churches from the late 1800s onwards. African political reaction was marked by fiery speeches on the great achievements made in Africa long before the settlers came: in architecture (the great pyramids in Egypt and in Ethiopia and other ruins of great buildings), in science, medicine, mathematics, African religion, philosophy in African law and government, in all types of handwork (of ivory, of precious metals, and of wood) in weapon and tool manufacturing, in rock paintings, and, in the art of writing. Political organizations, trade unions, welfare societies were used to take the grievances and the aspirations of the Indigenes to the ruling White race. Deputations, petitions, letters were sent to local authorities and to England to no avail up to the 1950s. The resolution by the Africanists to declare 1958 as STATUS YEAR spells out the major concern in South African race relations and politics.

Alongside pure political protest there developed literary protest and activism; the indigenous authors intellectualized the struggle, trying the other route - the Cistashe route - that of first decolonising the minds of the Indigenes by reminding them of their pre-colonial image and the rich heritage created and bequeathed to them by their forefathers. This breed of writers challenged the false portraits drawn of Africans by the imperialists by re-drawing and defining, by themselves, the true pre-colonial African culture, humanhood, dignity, values, history, oral literature, economy, agriculture, (traditional) religion, cosmology, communalism, and government of their kingdoms. They were decoding and demystifying the fallacies of false representation starting and driving forward a campaign of self-awareness, self-recognition, and self-affirmation. Jolobe was in this vanguard of authors; his contemporaries and predecessors had seen the real behaviour and condition of the early Europeans which left much to be desired for the latter to place themselves on a higher pedestal in civilization, and the former could not take unfairness lying down.

What balanced the condition of the African Indigene (early San, Khoikhoi, Nguni and Sotho-Tswana) with that of the early European in South Africa is the slothful, squalid and the immoral condition of that early colonist, which makes it hypocritical for them to be judges on the condition and culture of anybody else. It was a question of seeing a mote in the brother's eye at best while it was for self-aggrandisement at worst. Both reasons account for the reaction from all the Indigenes. Mostert (1992) gives the picture of the early colonist, with the Cape Colony in his mind, as a

microcosm of the tension between (British/European) high-minded conscience and self-interest which accompanied the nascent industrial age and its expanding commerce.

(my emphasis)

(Mostert 1992:xvii)

It is, in fact, the bleaker picture of those early Dutch settlers and their successors and progeny that is even of greater significance for us to see the seedbeds of reaction (against othering) from the early Indigenes to the Indigenes of Jolobe's time. Mostert (1992) records the squalor the Europeans lived with on the ships they came in here; the fact that they stole cattle from the Khoikhoi and clothes from among themselves; the inhumanly severe physical punishments they inflicted on one another; and the fact that the freed group (nine in 1657) were

daily seen as intoxicated as irrational creatures, with the strong drink they procure(d) from the shipping.

(Mostert 1992:133)

Mostert (1992) goes on to say about these early Europeans:

The whites fought one another in drunken brawls ... cursed and threatened their superiors, mutinied, deserted and plotted; and for this they were lashed, keelhauled, had their tongues bored through, their hands nailed to posts, were put in chains for months or years; and were hanged, shot or drowned at the beach ... (or sentenced to do) horrendous work ... in heat (on Robben Island).

(Mostert 1992:136-137)

In further remarks on their immorality Mostert (1992) records that those early Europeans amused and entertained themselves with

liquor and the charms of the black female slaves, and (by) watching the sex organs of male and female Khoikoi.

(Mostert 1992:136)

Mostert collected this information from records and observations made by these colonists themselves; he quotes Van Riebeeck's successor as having denounced the majority of the free burghers as

depraved from their youth upwards, lazy, drunken fellows (leading) irregular and debauched lives.

(Mostert 1992:137)

This group got involved in theft, cheating and illegal trade with Khoikhoi; they married slaves from West Africa and Asia. We close Mostert's (1992) account on these early Europeans who declared themselves superior in all respects to the Indigenes with another minus; those early colonists or a "greater" part of them were

eating without spoons, with shells, or their hands, from the pots in which rice or other food has been cooked.

(Mostert 1992:136)

Later, in the "frontier wars" the "wise" European settlers were often outwitted in military tactics and killed by the "stupid" Indigenes.

In terms of property, individual and group morality, type of government and punishment of crime, social and psychological condition, there is nothing which gives those early European colonists any credit over their contemporary early Indigenes. Their tongue-lashing on the habits of Khoikhoi and San and later on those of the Nguni and the Sotho-Tswana was mere projection which the San saw through, as they "never saw themselves as inferior to ... white" (Mostert 1992:31). The other indigenous groups saw the same later and reacted as the San did as their sense of the fundamental nature of human beings taught them the common and universal qualities of the human society. The first reaction against Europeanism was spontaneous and instinctive but, as Mostert (1992:43-46) explains, the Indigenes later told themselves that mankind originated from one point, spread in different directions, and developed the way they did without losing equality of their humanity; whether some became sea-voyagers while others became pastoralists all made spectacular inventions in the expansion movement, to survive in their respective environments. It is in the process of building this view that Jolobe wrote this novel and his other works. It is a continuation of the reaction against verbal and concrete political attacks by European settlers on the South African Indigenes that spurred Jolobe from behind to engage in art for self-definition and self-assertion, and Jolobe was in the group of the movement which vehemently pursued this path -

the mid-twentieth century precipitated a questioning of all established convictions and set historical views... The whole basis of the Western world's economic and social history, its origins, principles and dynamic, were tirelessly re-examined... From historical studies were required a new world view and perspective; a new synthesis: of self assertion and revision for those who were now "masters in their own houses", a new colloquy on humanity and global society for those in the West... There was a demand for new conceptual ideas.. All this produced a climate of wholesale challenge to standard history. The spirit of re-examination was rampant...

The new mood in history studies provided exactly the sort of open, iconoclastic atmosphere that a new approach to African historiography required...(in) retrieving the hidden, ignored and unsuspected. ... breaking down the barriers between disciplines and establishing free communication and exchange between them...

...The basic challenge was to establish the very idea of African history.

(Mostert 1992 : 43-44)

1.5 Political Activism and Mobilization in Xhosa Literature

Generally it is not always wise to dub any author as an activist simply because his works smirk of politics or simply because incidents in it have parallels in real politics or history of his country or of another. But it is equally wise not to put a blanket ban against dubbing authors as activists, because, some writers state it clearly in the prefaces of their works, in their autobiographies, and in interviews that they are activists, and even give reasons for writing a particular book as part of their political agenda, particularly writers from disadvantaged communities. Such writers are activists, activism is not imposed upon them by the analyst, it is a choice they have declared. Explicit declarations of this nature have been made in Fransesco Nditsouna's fashion (African author):

I am not a poet, I want to be a fighter.
(Wauthier 1964:145)

We have such choices as cultural and political activism explicitly and implicitly made by Xhosa authors - Mqhayi, Gqoba, Sinxo, Jolobe, Jordan, and Siyongwana - to name a few.

Many Xhosa authors write from a position of full knowledge that the cement pigeonholes and labelled compartments that had been created at some point in history for each national group, had created and sanctioned the impression that human beings are not universally the same; in that satanic process the stereotyped version of the nature of the African human being had given the African a lower rank in the family of the humans; it had given a fixed impression that the African had not been part of the human story or rather had come too late onto the stage of human development and civilization - the reason being that Africans had wasted some generations in the camp of baboons and chimpanzees while the rest of humanity, the Whites in particular, were progressing fast in civilization - which was at best, a misconception or at worst, a mischievous lie. Xhosa writers had written to clear this thick mist which was created deliberately in South Africa by the early missionaries, European travellers and the colonists to create, justify, and perpetuate relations of inequality between the different races in this country in politics, economy and in social relations. In this situation the African was severely disadvantaged and undermined. Xhosa writers who exposed this were involved in activism.

Early Xhosa writers were able to use the print media to protest at the inferior position arbitrarily conferred upon the Africans. It is mainly in poetry and essays that they expressed themselves. A Bantu Men's Club was also formed to do African cultural revival,

a project alongside the literary protests and awareness programmes. An African Academy of Arts, composed of authors, musicians, actors, painters and sculptors, was proposed in the 1940s (Ndebele 1990:145) to engage in the resuscitation of African oral literature with intention to build a new literature of awareness, based on it, for political mobilisation of the African masses. I.W.W. Citashe and "Hlathi Lomtontsi" (a pseudonym) urged their literate colleagues to use their literary works fiercely and radically to fight social and political injustice (ACJ 136 Pa 45:8). This was a concerted and collaborative effort among the committed Xhosa writers, hence, when, ISIGIDIMI failed them either by criticising the protesters or by refusing to publish their articles, they censured this paper severely (ACJ 136 Pa 45:8).

A club of teachers, mine clerks, "and other professionals" in Johannesburg - the Bantu Men's Social Centre - started a Bantu Dramatic Society in 1933. Its aim

was "to encourage Bantu playwrights and to develop African dramatic art" in the awareness that "Bantu life is full of great and glorious incidents and figures that would form the basis of first-class drama." (*my emphasis*)

(Gerard 1970: 77)

The authors in this alliance responded to the call by writing highly politicized fiction. Jordan comments on Mqhayi's UDON JADU (1936) in these words:

No other novelist has dealt so directly with politics. (*my emphasis*)
(ACJ 136 Pa 45:15)

In the same document Jordan makes a statement on his own poems:

In three poems published in IKHWEZI LOMSO (in) 1958, Jordan deals directly with the political situation in South Africa. (*my emphasis*)
(ACJ 136 Pa 45:15)

Jordan himself declares that he wrote one poem entitled You tell me to sit quiet (when robbed of my manhood) in 1957

when the protest against university apartheid was at its highest. (*my emphasis*)
(ACJ 136 Pa 45:15)

Literary analysts concur on the fact that the literature of the 1950s in particular, in the vernaculars and in works written in English by Africans, was very aggressive in its attacks on the South African racism, which was made government policy from 1948. That enforced apartheid was based on White race superiority and exclusivity - a racism which perpetuated the othering syndrome into justification of base territorial segregation which

put the Indigenes and the Indians in serious disadvantage. African writers were challenging and refuting the basis of that White superiority myth. Luthuli, on 11 December 1961, in his Nobel Peace Prize speech in Oslo, Norway, declared that the goal of liberty in South Africa was pursued by Africans

with revolutionary zeal, by means of books. (*my emphasis*)

(*Karis et al, Vol 3, 1977/87:568*)

all along to that day (on which he received that prize).

These statements indicate that activism in Xhosa literature was a fact from the time of early Xhosa writers to the modern period. The intention was promotion of awareness and psychological mobilization of the masses, as

the act of writing a book is linked with an expectation ... of having it read [Ashcroft B (et al) (eds) 1995:16]

In their methods of opening the eyes of their African brethren the Xhosa authors made plain statements in traditional praise poetry about the greatness and wisdom of the Xhosa Kings, chiefs and great dignatories of other South African tribes, digging their history from the distant past (Mqhayi on Zanzolo, Moshoeshoe, Ngungunyana, Sekhukhune in his poetry collection and in ITYALA LAMAWELE). They did so in historical essays (Jordan on Tshaka, Dingane, Matiwane, Madzikane, Faku, Ncaphayi, Diko, Makhawula, Wabane, and the resilient Bhaca as a group, in KWEZO MPINDO ZETSITSA), and in comparative essays where they weighed, in one-to-one correspondence fashion, points from both Western civilization and African culture in the South African context (Gqoba on elements of Western education and culture as against the original pre-colonial state and culture of the African in ZEMK' IINKOMO MAGWALANDINI).

These Xhosa writers have also used as vehicle, for this same purpose novels where they celebrate the richness of and wisdom in African culture and demonstrate, as if in an Anthropological or Sociological textbook, the complexity and the wise management of huge polygynous and polygamous families, the social protection offered by African communalism, the depth and the truth in African religious practices, the prosperity that comes from the fertility of the African soil, and, the truth about discipline and democracy in the governance of the home and in the government of an African Kingdom, respectively (the historical novels of Jolobe - ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA and that of Jordan - INGQUMBO YEMINYANYA). This is activism aiming at promoting awareness among

the disadvantaged about themselves and their nationhood which had been killed in their souls.

It is a historical fact that the feeling of nationhood is divine, and that once the conscience of individuals that belong to a nation that had been oppressed and scattered apart, has been aroused and sensitized, they are propelled to action.

Awareness naturally moves the normally competitive human spirit; the spirit strives to extricate itself from adversity to equality with or to a position higher than that of its counterparts. The hope of these Xhosa activist writers was that they were clearing the mist for their first audience to understand their true position [Mqhayi states such a hope in the preface of *ITYALA LAMAWELE* (1914)], and from that stage and level of understanding the expectation was that this first audience addressed - the undermined and the marginalised indigenous Africans - would make the first move to emancipate themselves psychologically. The collective effect of their politicised works was mobilisation of their brethren. (We learn that *INGQUMBO YEMINYANYA* was so relished by the illiterates because of its message that they organised literates to read it for them to the end several times.) These authors had made genuine attempts even through authorial interventions and intrusions into the story to move the spirits of the readers to positive action about themselves, which would finally take them from the sidelines to the centre to enjoy the full riches of life that this land offers. [Jolobe in *Imbumb' olutsha*, a poem published in *IMVO* of 25 March 1930 and, sarcastically, in the poem: *Ukwenziwa komkhonzi* (The making of a servant), and, Mqhayi in *UDON JADU*, prod the readers in this direction.]. This is activism, which encouraged the production of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist literature which is about human dignity of the suppressed communities as propounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

In saying this we are, however, conscious of the fact that a novel, an essay and poetry are fiction in the first place (though, many praise poems and essays are speeches delivered to grapple with factual reality but couched in literary garments); we are conscious of the fact that we have to delink the real struggle fought with guns on the military terrain from the internalized and later fictionalized struggle (much as we still maintain that there is commonality of purpose between the cadres involved in both). The fact that we may not regard as one-to-one correspondence any parallel or similarity of fact between a point in

fiction and a fact in history does not detract from this. Praise poetry and historical essays referred to above bear us out; historical novels, one of which we are analysing, do so also to some extent.

It has also been confirmed by various critics world-wide that the relationship between history and (narrative) literature is that of complementing each other affording the readers of both a deeper insight into a particular culture and society. On the jacket of Mehrez (1994) the unidentified analyst summarises the premise and the objective of Mehrez's EGYPTIAN WRITERS - BETWEEN HISTORY AND FICTION as

... that the two disciplines (history and literature) represent related types of narrative discourse ... and shows that both attempt to transform 'reality' and life into historical structures of meaning ... (and) reveals a context in which literature becomes a kind of 'alternative' history - a discourse that comments not only on the history of a place but also on the creation of a narrative on history. (*my emphasis*)

We confirm activism on the Xhosa authors under discussion here with more confidence as we learn from this quotation that activism and mobilization has been a quality that has characterised the literature of the disadvantaged worldwide. For stronger confirmation of this fact we may add a word from a study of post-colonial societies, and Jolobe was also writing in that environment. In addressing

the wider social and political issues affecting post-colonial societies ... literature and literary study ... have been crucial sites of political struggle with the most far-reaching results for the general history and practices of colonisation and de-colonisation [Ashcroft B (et al) (eds) 1995:4]

"Post-colonial societies" is understood by these editors to mean societies affected by colonialism and imperialism from the beginning of colonialism to the period after independence day for each society. It is also in this sense that we regard ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA as a creative text which is decidedly a site for political and cultural liberation - a text of insurgency.

This is the kind of pre-criticism and foregrounding that is necessary for our analysis of this novel to make sense.

1.6 Resumé

In situating Jolobe in a historical context we registered the fact that Jolobe admits that ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA is a mixture of the literary and straightforward reality; we then expressed our view that analysis of this novel would benefit more from contextual approaches hence we quoted critics on context and linked it also with the nature and purpose of traditional narratives. Jolobe's deep commitment and conscientiousness regarding nation-building of the

South African Indigenes was detailed in the notes on the literary bodies he was a member of; on what his contemporaries, critics and newspapers admitted about him; on his own speeches and interviews; on prizes, accolades and acknowledgements he received; on intertextuality among his works with emphasis on his repetition and expansion on a political issue raised in one work and amplified in another.

The historical and political foundations of his works and this novel in particular, have also been explained to our satisfaction, as demonstrated in parallels drawn between his statements and those of political figures, political organisations (ANC) and Labour associations, as well as by references to the fact that he took inspiration from Afro-Americans (Negroes). We noted, most importantly, Jolobe's precise political intentions (as exposed by him) of writing his works, particularly this novel, with emphasis on that he wishes that African/Xhosa literature offered at universities be analysed and "critiqued" by competent mother-tongue speakers of the African language concerned, who are sensitive and aware of the issues in anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist African/Xhosa literature. We recorded in this chapter Jolobe's own words regarding the political intentions behind this novel; his own words on parallels drawn between Western and African literature; and his own words on equality of humans globally. These support the statements we make in our analysis.

We made notes on misrepresentation of Indigenes and the literal and literary reactions it sparked off; we named Jolobe's predecessors and contemporaries who were involved in the liberation struggle at the literary wing.

CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF THEMES IN THIS NOVEL

2.1 A summary of this novel

ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA gives a picture of amaHlubi at Buzi in Natal at the time of King Dlomo. His right-hand men were Dlikiza, the diviner of the Great Place, and Ntlabane, the Commander of the Armies. Dlomo's son, Mashiyi who would have succeeded him had died; so the major action revolves around the selection of the future king from Dlomo's grandsons: Ngwekazi, Manyaza and Jozi - the most eligible in this order. Ntsele from the junior houses of the Great Place also becomes focus of attention on the matter early in the story and "vies" with Ngwekazi in a number of incidents which finally determined the successor between the two. A queen from another section of the kingdom, amaNgwe is also introduced early in the story - Nobusi.

We watch Ngwekazi fighting, with sticks, against Ntsele, in their boyhood - Ngwekazi is defeated. Both join on a hunting expedition, after the celebration of their coming-out ceremony from the circumcision lodge - Ngwekazi is saved by Ntsele from being mauled by a lion. Both are given a chance to lead battalions in the Mahlaphahlapha war - both excel. All along both had been proposing Nobusi - the latter finally fell for Ntsele.

At some stage Dlomo issued an order for the three most eligible princes to bring him fresh clear spring water for a month but they refused, claiming to be "men." Ntsele came to the rescue of the old man, preferred to miss all pleasures of intonjane celebrations, and brought water daily to Dlomo for all the remaining days of that month.

The big day of the selection and coronation of the new king came. In the preparations the three most eligible princes were involved in the discussion on the programme. One big decision was that he who wins the crown will also get Nobusi as his Great Wife and the nation will collect the bride tribute. The measured crown that was tested on the head of each eligible prince did not fit the three princes, finally it settled well on Ntsele's head. That meant that all the benefits that go with it were his. Ngwekazi was bitter. As he also had his eyes on Nobusi, rather than lose her according to the agreement, he abducted her;

but in the search she was recovered and Ngwekazi got killed in a scuffle that occurred in that search.

The nation collected the bride tribute and Ntsele and Nobusi got married in the traditional fashion soon after the coronation according to the agreement. He also effectively and smoothly took over the running of the affairs of the kingdom from old Dlomo and followed the latter's ways of justice and fairness as he was also gifted with great wisdom. He still had the herbal support from Dlikiza, the wise and pure-bred national diviner. Most of the prominent princes and princesses who had played prominent roles got married to each other.

The story ends on the day Dlikiza repeated to one old man the wise words that had guided Dlomo and Nobusi to success, the words that are at the core of the theme of this novel, the words that give direction in the development of the action: - a wise man that is fit to rule humanity is the one who has cultivated a personality that exhibits the bravery of a lion and the pliability of a reed. He just repeated these words, covered himself under his blanket(s) and took eternal rest.

2.2 Authorial intrusions as leads to the network of themes and assertions in this novel

On words and meaning Ashcroft (1995) observes that words assume meaning in their contexts "within the event of the particular discourse"; that it is the "event" and the "situation" which "tells", which "refers", which "informs", for the reader to get the meaning of words; that "even the most simple words... have a number of meanings, depending on how they are used"; that "the process of reading itself is a continual process of contextualisation and adjustment directly linked to the constitutive relations within the discursive event"; and, that there is a "multiplicity of relationships which operate in (this)system" [Ashcroft in Ashcroft (et al) (eds) 1995:299-301]. We do our analysis with these points in mind.

Words carry loads and shades of meanings and associations. Words in a sentence assume the meaning of that context on top of their normal meaning. The context of words in a sentence in this novel determines those shades of meaning for each word, and the external historical context in which this novel was written expands the nuances and connotations of

a single word. The self-assertive spirit behind Jolobe's works has been established in Chapter 1 above. Our awareness on these matters empowers us to see the explicit and the implicit authorial comments we come across in this novel. These authorial interventions reinforce our stand that this novel is based on "reality"; we base our confidence to make the statements we issue as being the author's intentional assertions on these intrusions and rhetorical strategy. Most of these statements are made outside the flow of the narrative and stand independently; thus the narrative could go on uninterrupted without them. Hence we say he is asserting something in those comments. We also bank on Jolobe's statement that said (above) that he took historical facts and moulded them into a story for a particular effect.

(a) We see Jolobe getting outside the story at the point where he was narrating about the day the four princes (Ngwekazi, Manyaza, Jozi and Ntsele) were sent by LaMaShiyi to a snuff-"box" sculptor in the Ngweni area. The four princes met two beautiful girls at a well on their way; it is here, where he describes the way African youngsters greet each other whether they know each other or not, that Jolobe remarks:

Asinto yenziwayo ke kwelo lasentla ukuthi wakuzibona iintyatyambo ngobunzwakazi ungabonakalisi ukuba uthabathekile zizo. Ngenxa yoko njengokungathi ayecebise, amatshawe la athi jaju phaya ukubuya umva eyenza le nto ngesonti nendili evaziwa kuphela ngabakha bayibona isenziwa. (my emphasis)

(Jolobe 1958:17)

[In the northern parts (Natal) young males never pass young roses (ladies) on the road without staging a long poetic and passionate greeting performance to say to the ladies that they declare them as the most beautiful queens they have ever seen. For that reason, without notifying each other, the four princes stopped and jumped backwards simultaneously, in a dignified manner - a lovely performance whose beauty can be comprehended only by those who had seen it, those who are fully conversant with the tradition and spirit in which it is acted out in that culture.]

In the first sentence the narrator is talking outside the story stating a true verifiable fact of life. In the last part of the second sentence he is saying non-Africans in the pre-colonial period did not know this, meaning that the early European missionaries and settlers condemned African culture only in utter ignorance and empty superiority complex. After the sentences quoted the narrator completes the description of this agile performance up to the point when the princes greet respectfully (Jolobe 1958:18) by hand, exchange pleasantries and, finally, playfully "forcing" the girls to choose the most handsome from the four princes; Ntsele, who is chosen, reciprocates by giving Nobusi plenty of beads - all in the game of greetings! A foreigner to the African culture would surely not be qualified to pronounce an informed view on this matter, especially the Europeans who say, Hallo!

Hallo! to each other and pass on or not greet each other at all. They would not be able to read *indili* (dignity) *isonti* (virtue) and *imbeko* (deep respect) (in the quotation above) in this long traditional greeting performance; reciprocation by lots of beads for being chosen the most handsome would simply confound their minds. That is what Jolobe is saying.

(b) On African communal activities like the one described in the quotation below the narrator puts a stamp of total approval; to a stranger to the culture, working as a group for no money would either be exploitation by the helped or idiotic and witless waste of time (for the helper) in which capital could have been accumulated:

Bekuye kuphume iqela lamadoda liye kubhulisa lowo umeme ukubhuliswa ... Kwakuye kuxhelwe kusilwe ukwenzela ukutyisa abasebenzi abo. Laliye libe lixesha elimnandi elo nalo. Kwakusakusetyenzwa kuvunywa iingoma zokubhula ezazitsho abantu batsho kunye ukubetha baze bazingise kunjalo nje ixesha elide intlaba ivele isisidumba nomququ uzahlule ezinkozweni. (*my emphasis*)

(Jolobe 1958:34)

[A good number of men would go out to help thrash (corn) at the place of the one who called for help ... The caller would slaughter anything and brew beer for the cast. That occasion also counts among the nicest pastimes (of the Hlubi). The cast would work, singing thrashing songs whose rhythm determined the simultaneous strokes that everybody adhered to; the rhythm of the song empowered them (like petrol) to keep on beating the corn without rest until grains heaped up separately from the chaff.]

To the European mind wisdom lies in the saying: One thing at a time; work and then afterwards go for recreation. The African does both at the same time. The example quoted is a place of work for the day; the song does not wait for resting time - they sing while they work; - recreation is built-in into their work ethic; conversation where news is received and given for spreading, does not wait for "news time" - they converse as they work. All these do not delay production but instead speed it up as the words: *intlaba ivele isisidumba* (grains heap up) explain. Among other things the song gives healthy mental rest, and here it is recorded that its rhythm turns men-at-work into automatons who do not get physically tired easily but keep on beating the heap of corn for a long time without an interval. That is the clarification that Jolobe puts forward in this "aside", to depict one complicated quality of the Nguni/African which the early Europeans, who were happy to condemn African habits, would not easily understand. On the other hand, this information builds up the spirit of the modern Nguni as (s)he gets to know her/himself better.

(c) In the following quotation the certainty and assertiveness of authorial intervention is in the use of the word: *kaloku* (indeed) which introduces a factual reminder to the reader:

... bonke ... (ba)bexhobile kunjalo, kuba kaloku amarhamncwa ayeseamaninzi ngaleyo mihla ... (*my emphasis*)

(*Jolobe 1958:37*)

(... all also carried dangerous weapons (to defend themselves), because, it is very true, that dangerous wild animals infested those areas those days ...)

In his description of the physical setting Jolobe gives real facts, about wild animals in ancient times in South Africa. Jolobe here is projecting a true picture of his physical and non-physical environment preparing the reader for explicit and implicit points he raises in this novel in re-defining and asserting the nature of African/Nguni culture in his crusade for nation re-building.

(d) The mothers of all three eligible princes feted King Dlomo at their homes just before the selection of the new King. After details of the third fete Jolobe "digresses" and makes a general statement:

lintliziyo zabazalikazi ngabantwana babo kuyacaca ukuba ziyafana ukubanjwenelela amathamsanqa nokuhle ... (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:50*)

(All hearts of mothers globally think alike regarding the welfare of their children: they always wish blessings and the best for their children - this is universally true.)

Inside this novel this statement refers to the efforts of the mothers of the most eligible princes who were panicking as the selection day was approaching and trying frantically in the modest African way to gain the favour of King Dlomo and his Great Wife by feasts and gifts to both, so that each mother's son might be looked at favourably on the selection day. But this statement goes further than that, it equates the despised African/Nguni womenfolk with all other caring female creatures of the earth called humans. This fictional proactive step is a true reflection of what African women do for their children, who they call children, no matter what age they reach, and treat as children, and care for them as such until the parents die. In European cultures the umbilical cord is broken at birth, but at twenty-one years even its symbolic presence is broken drastically. That really puts the African woman in a higher position as far as caring for "children" is concerned. That is a positive signal about Nguni culture, that Jolobe deliberately projects, (which Europeans under-estimated) in his mission to re-define Nguni culture and re-build confidence in themselves.

(e) The selection of the new king set the minds of Dlomo's subjects rolling expressing divergent opinions on the most eligible prince. While giving these details Jolobe makes a general "aside":

Okukhona unikwa ithuba elide uncimbi ngaphambi kokuba ugqitywe kokukhona usuka uya unqaba ngakumbi ngenxa yale mo vendalo yoluntu ukuthanda ukwahluka kubini.
(*my emphasis*)

(*Jolobe 1958:51*)

[The more time the (selection) issue is given, the more it complicates - all because of the nature of human beings who never think alike.]

We read here that African affairs were not simple matters of uncivilized empty minds of savages but were of great weight and deep concern to them. Jolobe equates Africans at that early stage with all other nations of the world. Division of opinion, which exhibited itself among Africans, is a healthy universal human quality.

(f) At one stage, on the issue of Dlomo's instruction to the three princes to bring him water, Jolobe voices an opinion on the futility of sexism in African societies and globally:

Bathe bona ... baziinkosi ngokwabo baye bangamadoda bona abanakwenza umsebenzi wabafazi namakhwenkwe nabakhonzi bakomkhulu .. ngabula bona. (*my emphasis*)

(*Jolobe 1958:67*)

[They (the princes) declared ... that they were right then princes and circumcised men, therefore they could never again engage in chores naturally allocated to women, boys and palace servants ... what a mistake!]

Globally, habit has attached types of chores as duties to a particular sex, this quotation acknowledges that, but at the same time, through its last two words, declares the futility of that habit. In European societies that habit has crumbled. In this fictional presentation, at this stage we have already heard that Ntsele's mother had trained him in female chores while he was still young; now we learn that the King is instructing the three princes to bring water for him daily for a full month from a far-away well - a "female duty." The very battle on succession hinges on a gender issue - the non-sexist Ntsele wins the crown. All this happens at the highest levels of society - royalty. As has happened in European societies, by now (1958) sexism is in reality dying unnoticed and unannounced in African societies. Jolobe is announcing that and is also encouraging widespread speedy abolition of it. He does the latter by sarcasm here and by elevating the intellectual position of LaMaShiyi, MaMbambo, Nobusi and Ayanda (women) to levels habitually known to be man's monopoly by natural endowment, in the rest of this novel - see below.

Lastly on the quotation above: Water from the well is recognised right now as the healthiest by twentieth century Europeans who are health conscious, and those in high positions who want to control stress. To the early Africans, long, long ago, fresh water

from the mountain wells was identified as most healthy, as Dlomo's demands indicate here.

(g) Ayanda and Nontembiso enjoyed their welcome party so much that they dreamt of the day's activities including love proposals and other verbally and physically nice acts extended to them. Jolobe takes off from this humanly normal and natural event and declares:

Kunjalo kaloku ukuba mtsha. Ubomi buzala ngamaphupha obuthongo nangawebhongo lengomso (*my emphasis*)

(Jolobe 1958:78)

[These are exactly the antics of the youth stage. The mind at this level of growth is rolling with nice but unrealistic dreams and ambitious theoretical plans for a bright future.]

In this the African youth are identical with the youth world-wide. Jolobe creates this fictional condition in these girls and then expresses a universal truth outside the flow of the story to establish a positive fact about the nature of the early African, to encourage national re-awakening.

(h) Attempts to lure Ngwekazi into love with Ayanda fail, and Ayanda is frustrated. In that frustration she wishes Ntsele gets Nobusi who was eyed by Ngwekazi so that Ngwekazi also gets frustrated in return. She did not know at that stage what to do with herself. Then Jolobe comes in with this statement which contains a "digression" which expressed a true fact of life:

Phofu ke ngenxa yokuba ikamva lifihliwe kuthi sonke yayingazazi ke le nkosazana izinto ezaziza kwenzeka ... (*my emphasis*)

(Jolobe 1958:84)

[In reality, because the future is unknown, in exact terms, to all humans, this young lady could not fathom what was coming (for her) ...]

In other words this human "deficiency" is not exclusively African, it bestows no inferiority of intellect on the African, it is a universal human condition. That is the message that Jolobe puts across here for the African to look positively at himself/herself. In fact, on this issue, regarding Africans, the picture changes slightly when we meet African diviners who have mysterious powers of communication with the designers of human destinies - the departed, who pass that secret information onto the diviners. The depiction of the diviner here, Dlikiza, puts the African on a higher range than the one the early Europeans put them.

(i) Jolobe makes another true statement on the same failure of schemes to get Ngwekazi snared in a love-to-mary relationship with Ayanda:

Intombi, kwakucaca ukuba iyaliwa, isuka ingenwe ngumoya wentiyo nempindezelo.
(*Jolobe 1958:85*)

[When a girl's persistent love overtures to an intended man finally fail to bring the desired results, in the end the girl turns to hatred and resorts to vengeful stunts.]

Again this statement is universally true of all girls all over the world. Ayanda's vengeance on Ngwekazi, in this fictitious but story-for-example is a reflection of girls' behaviour globally not a reflection of "barbaric", "evil" hearts of African girls - a correction to the early European detractors who had given this false impression about Africa.

(j) At the stage of coronation Ntsele was led across the courtyard amid ululations and pouring of incessant poetry, and led back to his seat. The author focuses on his mother who was totally mesmerized with joy at her son's prize - the crown, and further makes this comment:

Namhlanje yathi laa nto wayeyibumba yasuka yaqaqamba kuba ubuni abubo umntu bubetha budlule nakwinto ayizuze ngokuzalwa bubetha budlule nakumakhubalo amagqirha. (my emphasis)
(*Jolobe 1958:97*)

[This day the entity that MaMbambo had been moulding Ntsele into, suddenly opened up into a pleasantly bewildering glory (like the opening of the blossom of the most beautiful flower). All stemming from his seasoned prudence cultivated over years, which quality surpasses even what was predestined by status endowed by birth or even what one could achieve by using herbs from diviners.]

This is another proclamation outside the story-line, Jolobe expresses hard true facts of life; this is deliberate "digression" in a fictitious story, for a purpose. In the context Jolobe is saying that, respecting African cultural norms pays, unexpectedly, later. We should note here - in the narration around the event - his emphasis on the significance of praise poetry to the Indigenes.

(k) Ntsele and Menziwa consult Ayanda just before setting out to rescue Nobusi from Ngwekazi's group. After this they set out with their group running, in darkness, for the most part of the distance to their destination. Jolobe's comment on this:

Yaye iyinto eqhelekileyo leyo kwelo lasentla.
(*Jolobe 1958:104*)

[In those northern areas (Natal) youth (on a mission) run.]

This is a declaration on the good health enjoyed by the Africans at the pre-colonial time. Jolobe repeats such a comment as this in recounting other missions hence the reader gets the inclination that Jolobe is establishing a point worth noting. Mostert's (1992) accounts

of first meetings between Dutch, missionaries, British settlers and Governors on the one hand, and amaXhosa on the other, are profusely punctuated with remarks of the former on the elegant and healthy physical appearance of the latter:

The Xhosa were a superbly healthy people and prolific.

(Mostert 1992:858)

(l) Another detail on African culture which went just as "reported," outside the flow of the story:

Kwelo lasentla kwakungangenwa emasimini kufulwe kungakhange kufunyanwe umyalelo enkosini. Ukunikwa kwaloo myalelo kwakuhamba nomgidi omkhulu wokungcanyulwa kolibo olo komkhulu ngamabutho okulwa. Babesithi ukuyibiza le nto kukushwama.

(Jolobe 1958:109)

[In the northern areas (Natal) nobody could go to his/her mealie-lands to gather green mealies and pumpkins before the king had declared the season for this open. Such a declaration would be made at a big ceremony for the tasting of the first-fruits at the Great Place which would be tasted first by the king's regiments. The name of this ceremony was: celebration of the eating of the first-fruits of the year.]

For the reality of these three sentences and for concise details of this ceremony and its purpose one has just to refer to Kropf (1915:387). Here Jolobe is asserting that Africans had orderly lives and great respect for authority as against the appellations like, barbarians, savages, lawless creatures, which they had earned from the lips of early Europeans in South Africa.

(m) In the process of the first-fruits celebration just mentioned a bull would be killed by hands without using a spear. It was skinned and its meat was given to boys and dogs according to tradition just as Kropf also records (1915:387). At this point Jolobe adds, outside the flow of the story:

Akukho mntu uyindoda wayeyitya inyama yenkunzi yethoko lokushwama.

(Jolobe 1958:110)

[All circumcised males were prohibited by custom from eating the meat of the bull killed for the purpose of the celebration of the first-fruits.]

Jolobe is giving here the finest details about the past of the African where, particularly in the performance of this traditional ceremony, Africans observed the rules strictly. His use of the emphatic negative, *Akukho* (no one), right at the beginning of this sentence emphasises the point, and indicates Jolobe's intentions behind these details - nation rebuilding through such reminders.

(n) On the arrival of the beautiful "bride-price" at Nobusi's home women do what in reality happens: they came out carrying ladles and sticks and playfully tried to chase away those cattle. The purpose in reality is what Jolobe says here:

Ayebonisa njalo ukuba akakakruquki yintombi leyo yawo amaNgwe.
(Jolobe 1958:112)

[By so-doing the people of Ngwe sub-group were showing that they were not selling away their princess out of frustration with her - they still loved her dearly and needed her.]

Jolobe here is throwing light on the African's understanding of the bride tribute - to the African it is not a business transaction, otherwise the women would not chase the cattle away, even in play, if it was accepted as a price. The significance and aim behind the bride tribute in African culture was merely the establishment of a bond between two families. The marriage feast and dancing was to be held at the bridegroom's home

... ngokwesiko lesizwe eso.
(Jolobe 1958:112)

[... according to the Hlubi tradition.]

These three additional words are an overt authorial intrusion, used to indicate to the reader that this is more factual than fictitious and the reader should take note. The African had a system of doing things - a custom, as Mbiti (1992:7-8, 11, 20) explains in sections dealing with rituals, ceremonies and festivals celebrated by Africans as part of their religious practices a long way back in history.

(o) When the actual marriage ceremony was about to start King Dlomo and other visiting dignitaries came out of the house and took seats near the kraal. Then Jolobe remarks about the kraal:

... apho onke amatheko esizwe ayeqhutyelwa khona. (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:113)

(... where all national ceremonies and celebrations were staged.)

This remark and other remarks about the kraal re-establishes the kraal as a sacred place in the readers' minds against a misconception that Africans had neither temples nor sacred places. Thorpe (1991:33) notes that the cattle kraal, which Jolobe is referring to here, is a "special (sacred) place" for staging religious performances among the Zulu/Nguni. This is a fact.

(p) The following quotations betray implicit authorial intervention which we read from Jolobe's tone and the assertive approach he had adopted all along. The first one will

explain in clear terms the nature and significance of marriage in traditional African societies:

Umntu wawatyebisa amehlo ebukeye iintombi zezizwe ngezizwe zikhapha enye xa yayingena kubomi obutsha ... alizange litshone lingenandaba kuba uNtsele namhlanje wayelifumene ihotyazana elalinqwenelwa yintliziyo yakhe. Ngoku babengazi kuthetha ngazisongo zancwadi yeentsimbi koko iintliziyo zaziza kubetha njengantliziyonve njengabathandanayo kwanini lwada lwaya kuqabela uthando lwabo lwangqinwa ngamaqabane abo, ngamakhaya abo, nazizizwe zabo ngetheko elizukileyo lomsitho nomdudo wesiko. (my emphasis)

(Jolobe 1958:116)

[It was pleasure to all present to see girls from all corners of the Hlubi kingdom accompanying their colleague, in that splendid way, on the day she was starting a new life ... That day, like each other day, had its major news highlight: Ntsele's life-time heart's desire was fulfilled - from that day that tiny beautiful dove (Nobusi) was his till death. From then onwards they were no longer going to communicate by string-of-beads language (letters) but now they were free and entitled to make any direct male-to-female physical contact (sex for the first time). Their love which had developed at infancy, from flimsy beginnings, had reached that climax (marriage) which their age-mates were witnessing, which their homes were endorsing, and which all tribal groups in the kingdom came to see cemented in the customary fashion of marriage and dance, marking, in glorious style, a sacred occasion.]

We learn in the last five words of this quotation that marriage to the African is a sacred occasion, just as it is regarded as a sacrament in Christian communities; Mbiti (1992:20) lists traditional marriage among the "rituals, ceremonies and festivals" that constitute "African Religion" of the period Jolobe is writing about - the period of pre-colonial traditional Nguni societies. We also learn that intimate sex is engaged on only in marriage not before; all along their love was maintained in purity - no sexual intercourse. At marriage it was a meeting of virgins. The fact that Africans had deep feelings of love in reality - not just rapists who abducted any girl that came their way and made a wife - is tententiously established in two utterances that follow. To describe Nobusi's sincere love to Ntsele, Jolobe describes what Ntsele was to Nobusi in these terms:

... lowo wayethandwa yintliziyo yakhe awayephilela yena yonke loo minyaka phakathi kwamaxhala nezivuthevuthe zobomi awayedlule kuzo.

(Jolobe 1958:115)

[... the one that was in her heart all the time; the one she lived to love all those years which were speckled with fears and storms which she survived.]

Jolobe again describes Nobusi's intense love for Ntsele in stronger epithets on the same page:

isiqalo nesiphelo sebhongo lentliziyo yakhe.

(Jolobe 1958:115)

[the beginning and the end of her heart's desire.]

The Africans practised pure love; and their hearts fed on the pleasures of waiting for a discovery at marriage - what it feels like for a man to penetrate a woman, and what it feels

like for a woman to enjoy the play during penetration up to orgasm. Jolobe had built this story of Ntsele and Nobusi's love-relationship-without-sex to declare the normal African traditional trend regarding love up to marriage. He does not hide the fact that some men do "abduct" women to make them their wives - Ngwekazi does exactly that, but the author tendentiously aborts this attempt and makes Ngwekazi at point of death (dying as punishment for this act of abduction) to say to Ntsele:

Mthabathe uNobusi ngowakho. Mna ndiye ndathwala isiqu sakhe ndijonge ukuza kusifihla emaZizini yathi kanti intliziyo ndiyishiye ngasemva emaHlubini kuba ibikuwe, Ntsele.

(Jolobe 1958:106)

[Take Nobusi, she is indeed yours. In my stupid act of abduction I carried away only her body intending to hide it here in this Zizi area; I, unknowingly, left the heart of the lady behind in the Hlubi area, it was with you, Ntsele.]

The four quotations above establish clearly that the Ntsele-Nobusi pre-marital relationship was spiritually and morally clean, and not based on lust for both. The abortion of the abduction, Ngwekazi's declaration on the empty body he took, and, the value of the heart of the lady (Nobusi) strengthens Jolobe's declaration on the norm (versus exception) in love matters and marriage in pre-colonial African societies. In fact, what is called abduction is not in reality carrying away a woman without any arrangement. In many cases the parents of the girl are informed and they send the girl at the appointed time to the spot agreed upon where the colleagues of the bride-groom will "lift" her to the bride-groom's place. In most cases the girl and the young man are, in fact, lovers, but the latter may not have enough bride-tribute and means at that moment for a proper marriage, and this short cut is resorted to. Anyway, Jolobe is quoted in Chapter 1 as having said a bad thing in the society may be described by the author in a work of art only to discourage it - he may be doing that with this "abduction."

(q) Repetition in a work of art is no indication of bankruptcy in vocabulary but often a calculated literary strategy. In the following quotation the positioning of the question at the second last paragraph of this novel; the seniority of the interrogator; the repetition of the diviner's declaration of power of mysterious communication with the departed who give guidance to the living - all, plus this repetition (leitmotif) which ceases to be repetition at this last instance, constitute a direct word from the author which we perceive to be a didactic proclamation from an authority to be accepted as it is:

Ngaloo mihla yamva (Inkonde yegqirha uDlikiza) yayithetha ngenye imini nenge indoda enkulu. Yayibuzwa yiloo ndoda inkulu ukuba kwenzeka njani na ukuba athi umntu ebengazalwanga eyinkosi asuke abe yinkosi ngokupheleleyo izimbo nembonakalo. Laphendula igqala elo lathi, "Asazi lutho thina kodwa amanvange wona athi indoda venene nenkosi yenene yingonyama. Abuye athi nayo

ibuya ife iqwengwa kuba ingumqwengi ngoko indoda yenene nenkosi yenene kufuneka kwakhona ifane nengcongolo phezu koThukela. Ozelwe enezo mpawu yindoda yenene ufanele ukululawula uluntu."

Latsho lazigquma inyange elo lalala ubuthongo kuba indoda leyo yayise yaluphele kakhulu ilala futhi nasemini. (*my emphasis*)

(*Jolobe 1958:116-117*)

[One day, in his last days, Dlikiza, the old, highly experienced and reliable diviner, was sitting in conversation with another man who was also very much advanced in age. The latter was asking the diviner how does it come about that a man who, by birth, was not entitled to kingship, yet when he is crowned king his non-physical qualities and physical appearance turn easily to those of a proper king. This diviner of exceptional experience answered, "The living diviners do not claim any wisdom of their own regarding this matter, but the departed men of wisdom (ancestors) say that a man fit to be called a man, and a king fit to be called a king, is lion-hearted. However, they add that, because a man and a king is led to death by lion-hearted aggression, a man fit to be a man, and a king fit to be a king must also have the pliability of the reeds you see in the Thukela River. The one born with both qualities is a perfect man; he is the one that can rule mankind with wisdom."

The wise diviner said just that and gave up the ghost; he was at that stage very much advanced in age and would be found in sleep even during daytime.]

We note first, the reed symbolism that marks the beginning of human creation in Southern African Indigenes' mythology; the reed is linked to the sacredness of that divine act. And Jolobe has linked that to the qualities of, first, King Dlomo, and, now, to King-elect Ntsele.

The last sentence in this quotation, is the last in the novel, in it the narrator reports Dlikiza's death; in the second-last paragraph the author says old Dlikiza repeated the words he has been saying all along about the wisdom of things to come that diviners obtain from the departed. This repetition and death of the diviner immediately after making it is the most effective artistic device Jolobe could use to declare the African cosmos alive and virile. The other old man's question on the matter is a rhetorical question posed to allow Dlikiza to affirm once more the existence of and the way the Africans understand the cosmos in their religion. The diviner declared the same to Dlomo when he wanted the right grandson to choose to succeed him as king; the diviner said the same to Nobusi when she wanted to be given direction at the stage when two princes were courting her at the same time. Indeed, direction came from the departed and in both cases the answer was the well-behaved but brave Ntsele. This same diviner has officiated at all the religious ceremonies at the royal palace using the kraal and the King's sacred chamber to talk to the ancestors of the nation; all these ceremonies went extremely well. Now this repetition and declaration just minutes before dying a peaceful death. When we follow the order of the incidents and repetition of the same utterance at crucial points in the story up

to the last two paragraphs of this novel we grasp that Jolobe is making a statement on the culture, religion, and politics of the early African, declaring and arguing that the African had fine systems that were second to none on the globe. African writers of the fifties and sixties engaged in this re-definition of African culture affirming it to Africans to awaken them in the fight against colonialism and imperialism.

(r) As we said above, the African people were attacked by external forces of imperialism and internal forces of apartheid at five levels: physical, economical, political, cultural and psychological. For survival the African must boost his resistance on all five levels as Ngugi (1993:76-80) also suggests. In this image-remaking and image-rebuilding he suggests that

... artists can draw pictures of the universe of our struggle that instil strength, clarity, hope to our struggle to realise visions of a new tomorrow ...
(Ngugi 1993:80)

Then he makes this general statement expressing exactly what is read in Jolobe's novel and other works of his:

African literature ... has grown and developed in response to imperialism.
(Ngugi 1993:83)

(s) Our conviction on the declarations that we say Jolobe is making by implicit and explicit authorial interventions, by repetitions and tendentious use of certain words, against the 1950's status quo in South Africa, is affirmed in statements like the following:

Certainly both African and Afro-European literature cannot be understood outside the framework of consistent anti-imperialism.
(Ngugi 1993:87)

We, also, had sensed this in Jolobe's novel. The last sentence of this novel which says that old Dlikiza died after repeating his all-time wise words, closes and cements everything said about pre-colonial Nguni to be true and unalterable. This last repetition declares the nature of the essence of Africanness - their wisdom, integrity, sensitivity, discretion, democracy - to say they were civilized and disciplined people to refute the lies heaped on them and guide the way forward to freedom from psychological slavery, first, and to political and economic freedoms, in the end. King Dlomo was a socialist democrat and a strong disciplinarian; Ntsele, on assumption of the throne shows that he is blessed with the same qualities.

(t) On the realities in this novel we would remember that both Ntsele's and Dlomo's names occur in the genealogy of the Hlubi royal family. Further, in the account of the Hlubi history in Chapter two a sentence reads:

.. nguDlomo lo (o)belawula ngeli xesha leli bali lethu. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:10*)

[This story is about the time King Dlomo was the ruler.]

This is to say Jolobe is "talking" at a level very close to historical, and cultural reality, as he said about this novel (above in Chapter 1).

These authorial interventions are so many that they convince the reader, even without looking at the intention clearly expressed by Jolobe himself about this novel, that Jolobe meant to re-awaken his people by reminding them of their culture and virility during the pre-colonial days. Hence we see historicism, activism, and mobilization in this novel.

2.3 **The opening paragraphs of this novel as further leads to the network of themes and assertions made in this novel.**

An analysis of the first five paragraphs as the basis for saying Jolobe is re-asserting the nature, presence and virility of the culture of the African in this historical novel will be made here. African in this section, whether qualified or not, refers to the early African/Nguni of the 16th century and before or the so-called pre-literate African or pre-colonial African in South and/or Southern Africa. In the paraphrasing and critical analysis here I will be arguing that Jolobe is introducing further the network of themes and assertions on Nguni/African personhood as fully developed and "civilised" in the very pre-colonial period the African is said to have been only a savage. Some of what will be said here is based on reality that is expressed in the emphasized words in the three quotations that follow:

(a) Natal was one of the first parts of what is modern South Africa to be settled by Early Iron Age Bantu - speaking farmers. It was a region in which to thrive, and they did. The cattle that their descendants eventually acquired flourished. (*my emphasis*)
(*Mostert 1992:495*)

(b) ... the Nothern Nguni as they (Zulus of Natal) are called, initially were scarcely any different in their diffused and scattered societies from the Xhosa - speaking chiefdoms and peoples ... living in the valleys and on the heights between the Drankensberg and the Indian Ocean, well inland from the sea, and concentrated between the Tugela and the Pongolo rivers. (*my emphasis*)
(*Mostert 1992:494*)

(c) Natal clearly was a thickly settled and intensely active region at an early date ... (*my emphasis*)
(*Mostert 1992:496*)

Our analysis will be guided to a large extent by the negativity of the first quotation, the positivity of the second quotation, and the intention of committed African writers declared in the third quotation:

(a) ... their (Kaffir) normal state, before coming into contact with Europeans, was one of war and bloodshed. These wars were chiefly for the acquisition of cattle.

(Brownlee 1916/1977:179)

(b) The African "had great, fine, sensitive civilizations before the white man was out of the caves."

(Malcom X in Ayivor 1993:1-2)

(c) To correct "the distorted colonial portrait of Black Africa ... to give back to Black Africa its lost pride and dignity, to re-assert the values of the African cultures and to re-interpret Africa's historical landmarks and achievements ... to celebrate Black Africa" - is the main purpose of politically-aware Black creative artists to centuries old racist derogatory literature.

(Ayivor 1993:1-2)

We need to remember these facts as this novel is historical: the Black African, some from as far afield as Egypt and Ethiopia, had arrived on South African soil by 500AD [Hammond Historical Atlas of the World (nd.:H-68)]. Secondly, we need to note Ellenberger's exposition of the situation in South Africa during the early settlement of the "Bantu" groups:

The origin and growth of a people is always an interesting study, and more specially so is their social, moral, and intellectual development. Families appear as it were from nowhere, grow into clans and tribes, govern themselves according to the same principles, establish themselves where they please, but tacitly leaving neutral zones of considerable extent between themselves and their neighbours, useful either for pasturage or as a precaution against too close contact. In the early days of South Africa no tribe thought of disputing the right of others to place themselves in its neighbourhood, if at a reasonable distance; for the general belief of primitive peoples was, it would appear, that all possessed an equal right to the soil, the water, and the light of the sun ... For centuries, therefore, land disputes were unknown ...

(Ellenberger 1912/92:14)

Jolobe in his novel, is writing about these people. Alberti gives an account on the "Kaffirs" of the south coast of Africa about 1807:

In their semi-savage state, the Kaffirs are completely satisfied with their peaceful pastoral life ... and everywhere one detects cheerfulness and good humour, the surest evidence of contentment. *(my emphasis)*

(Alberti/Fehr 1807:114)

Jolobe is presenting this picture to turn away the minds of the readers from the din made about how barbaric the early Africans were. We understand Alberti's use of the epithet, "semi-savage," in this quotation, he uses it after confessing that the description of the condition of the early Africans is "mere opinion" of the self-appointed "adjudicators" who could not give a verdict "based upon unimpeachable authority" because no one of them had "adequate knowledge" about the early Africans in South Africa (Alberti/Fehr

1907/1968:112). In this quotation our interest lies in Alberti's sincere description of the "Kaffirs" of the south coast of South Africa as he saw them, which confirms Jolobe's presentation in this historical novel.

As we are trying to prove a point in our treatment, our approach is necessarily argumentative and polemical on the whole.

Our statements and views on this novel are based on a number of aspects which build up the inner logic of the text from which we read and draw our conclusion:- the point of view the author adopted - which is full omniscience; his tone; numerous overt and implicit authorial interventions; countless repetitions of certain actions and descriptions; the choice of specific words (particularly qualificatives and descriptives) and repetitions thereof; the setting the writer had chosen - traditional societies in a rural area in pre-colonial times; and, on the verifiable historical data which is the knitting needle around which the story is woven. He acknowledges the last point in his preface as he had done in an interview quoted in Chapter 1:

Eli libali lengqikelelo elindawana zithile zisekelwe kwibali lesizwe samaHlubi ngokubhala kukaW. W. Gqoba kwiMIBENGO nangokubhala kukaK. K. Ncwana kwincwadi egama lithi: AMANQAKWANA NGEMINOMBO YEZIZWE ZASEMBO.

(Jolobe 1958:iii)

[This novel - fiction as it is - is built to some extent on the real history of the Hlubi tribe as recorded by W. W. Gqoba in IMIBENGO and K. K. Ncwana in his AMANQAKWANA NGEMINOMBO YEZIZWE ZASEMBO.]

This choice of a tendentious historical novel by a sensitive Black creative artist of Jolobe's calibre was among other things, partly necessitated by the harmful gaps in self-knowledge among the Nguni, in particular, on which Bessie Head pronounced thus:

Most black South Africans suffer from a very broken sense of history.

*(Bessie Head in *Plaatje 1916/1982*:xiii)*

The Buzi community in central Natal, as well as all other tribal groups, over which King Dlomo ruled, had developed, over centuries, and maintained morally viable and democratic administrative, judicial, social and religious systems. The whole novel is a depiction of life of plenty, leisurely work, pleasure, and happiness for both male and female, except for the AmaNkwane attack on Mahlaphahlapha and the abduction of Nobusi - which incidents, in reality, were brought in to highlight African brilliant military strategies (in the former) and intelligence of African women (in the latter).

The closeness to reality of the details in this novel on the fact that, contrary to early European pronouncements about Africans being simply bands of marauding rovers and irreclaimable savages, Africans settled into well-organised communities, compels me to provide four accounts which when added up give a full picture of the true state of the pre-colonial African, to substantiate my statement on Jolobe's tendentious account. The first one was made by Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela:

Many years ago, when I was a boy brought up in my village in the Transkei, I listened to the elders of the tribe telling stories about the good old days, before the arrival of the white man. Then, our people lived peacefully under the democratic rule of their kings and moved freely and confidently up and down the country without let or hindrance. Then the country was our own. We occupied the land, the forests, the rivers, we extracted the mineral wealth beneath the soil and all the riches of this beautiful land. We set up and operated our own government, we controlled our own armies and we organised our own trade and commerce. The elders would tell tales of the wars fought by our ancestors in defence of the fatherland, as well as the acts of valour by our generals and soldiers during these epic days.

... The land, then the main means of production, belonged to the whole tribe and there was no individual ownership whatsoever. There were no classes, no rich or poor and no exploitation of man by man. All men were free and equal and this was the foundation of government. Recognition of this general principle found expression in the constitution of the council, variously called *imbizo* or *pitso* or *kgotla* which governs the affairs of the tribe. The council was so completely democratic that all members of the tribe could participate in its deliberations. Chief and subject, warrior and medicine man, all took part and endeavoured to influence its decisions. It was so weighty and influential a body that no step of any importance could ever be taken by the tribe without reference to it. (*my emphasis*)

(Mandela in Meer 1988:10)

Jolobe has described the Buzi Kingdom society as organised exactly like this; and probably wanted that African democracy to inspire his oppressed people to action as it did to Mandela and his colleagues.

The SACP also published a description of the South African early Indigenes, which throws more light:

Prior to the European conquest of Southern Africa, the indigenous peoples had developed their own independent culture and civilization. They mined and smelted iron, copper and other metals and fashioned them into useful implements. They had developed a number of handicrafts. Their system of extensive agriculture and livestock breeding was well-suited to the type of country and the tools at their disposal. It produced a surplus sufficient to maintain full-time specialist workers, smiths, doctors and others. ... Private property in land was unknown, and food and shelter were freely shared, even with strangers. (*my emphasis*)

[SACP 1962 document: "The Road to South African Freedom" in Bunting (ed) 1981:298]

This is the correct picture that Jolobe burningly sought to present for inspiration and mobilisation of his people to acts of self-affirmation, self-assertion and finally to acts towards psychological and political freedom to enjoy that erstwhile freedom and status as described here, of course, with modifications.

Pallo Jordan offers another description which depicts pre-colonial African life and gives rationale behind observation of respect towards particular individuals and institutions in African culture:

A king (in traditional societies of South Africa) combined in his person both political and ritual functions As the descendent of the founding ancestors of the community and the senior kinsmen of the royal clan, he was mediator between ancestral spirits and his people ... He also symbolized the unity and integrity of the community. As such, any injury done to one of his people was considered an injury against his person.

Traditional society held that there was a mutual dependence between the social and physical universe ... One of the major functions of the monarch was to maintain the equilibrium between the social and physical universe ... The king inaugurated each sowing season with rites and performed sacrifices to the ancestral spirits at each harvest. (my emphasis)

(Pallo Jordan in AC Jordan 1973:ix-x)

(This is the cohesion around the King that Harry Smith planned, from 1835, to break first in order to turn Xhosa culture upside down and inside out - Mostert 1992:763.)

Pallo Jordan then says all ceremonies were occasions during which people enjoyed themselves but also had their grievances against their neighbours, rival disputants, the king (and government) redressed. Then he concludes:

In this manner the community was sustained by an interlocking system of ritual and a well-reasoned political philosophy. (my emphasis)

(Pallo Jordan in AC Jordan 1973:x)

Furthermore:

The religious life of the community was centred around cults of household gods or ancestral spirits.

.....
The ethos of traditional society was enshrined in an oral legal, religious, and literary tradition through which the community transmitted from generation to generation its customs, values and norms. The poet and the story teller stood at the centre of this tradition, as the community's chroniclers, entertainers, and collective conscience.

(my emphasis)

(Pallo Jordan in AC Jordan 1973:xi)

Jordan goes on to talk about

... the collectivistic ethic of traditional societies (in SA).

(Pallo Jordan in AC Jordan 1973:xv)

The original full version - of the fourth account - from S. E. K. Mqhayi is a great picture of the Xhosa but here we give an abridged, synthesized version in English. In the historical section of ITYALA LAMAWELE of 1914, Chapter xxv (pp 105-121), entitled Ubukumkani bukaXhosa (Governance in the Kingdom of amaXhosa), Mqhayi, like Mandela, the SACP and Pallo Jordan above, outlines in more detail the various aspects that characterised and maintained an African Kingdom. As he says in his preface to this

work, his intention was to salvage Xhosa culture from disintegration and to give the correct version of the Xhosa history and culture to counter the mischievous negative pronouncements made about amaXhosa by early Europeans (as Jolobe also intends), and to educate the ignorant on the matter - both African and European. Mqhayi's account is expository in the first place in that it gives all the aspects of African settled life - administration, social norms and values, religion, medical "faculty", and the place of song and poetry. Secondly, he tendentiously draws parallels on almost every aspect with what happens in the bible and what is practised in European cultures. About the Xhosa Kingdom he is saying, briefly:

- By 1600, at the time of King Ngconde, all qualities of a Xhosa Kingdom had taken shape and stabilized.
- Its unwritten "laws," enforceable on every individual, including the King, on every home and family, and on every piece of land subordinate to the Kingdom, were in place. Conscience and fear of disgrace persuaded amaXhosa to observe these "laws" strictly.
- The diviners and all ranks of medicine men (six in all) were very handy to the Kingdom. The foremost was the diviner called *itola* or *igogo*, he had powerful and reliable mysterious abilities like accurate foretelling and prognostication - some kind of incredible omniscience. He had ability to cleanse the people of the Kingdom, and his function was to officiate at national religious ceremonies of worship, sacrifices and offerings. The Great Place could do nothing without him, he was like Ahitofele to King David or Samuel to the Israelites. His services are similar to those of the sons of Aaron in the bible or to those of the archbishop these days.
- AmaXhosa were gender-sensitive all the time. The woman wielded a lot of power in society to the extent that as Queen she could rule a Kingdom. There was no divorce, in protection of the woman. Lobola was no price for the woman but security for children should the husband die. Or else lobola was an equivalent of the marriage certificate in European marriages.
- AmaXhosa worshipped the Supreme Being, the Creator, but used their ancestors as intercessors and mediators between the living and *Qamata*. All in the name of respect similar to that of John the Baptist who so revered Christ that he declared himself unfit even to touch Christ's shoe-laces.
- There is something divine, celestial and mysterious about the Xhosa traditional songs that they sing on various occasions - something beyond entertainment. At the performance of such a song the blood rushes, the soul is deeply touched, inexplicable ecstasy of the spirit results. Likewise the Israeli women welcomed Saul with songs of jubilation and dance on his victorious return from war against the Philistines where he killed Goliath. The poet, Asafu, is also mentioned in this parallel. Likewise the English armies will sing "God save the Queen" on the battlefield even if only a few of them remain. In the Kingdom of amaXhosa the presence of poetry and song-performers - both male and female - had long developed into a permanent feature by the sixteenth century.
- AmaXhosa always had, from time immemorial, open hearts that are ready and happy to give rather than to be given even if giving leaves the giver destitute.

(Mqhayi 1914:105-121)

Mqhayi highlights these points as the pillars of an African Kingdom and makes parallels with Europe and the bible for reasons given above. Jolobe had presented the Buzi societal organisation and attributes in the same fashion with Mqhayi's intentions of self-definition and of giving alternative history for inspiration and mobilisation of his people.

These accounts are deliberately placed at the beginning of our analysis to be the foundation and bulwark for further statements read and deduced from our novel. Clearly when the early Europeans met the South Africans it was at best a meeting of equals rather than a "discovery" of an inferior group by a superior group. The systematic, well-orchestrated barrage of denigrating labels generously and maliciously attached to the people of African descent:

"denizens of the wild," "wild sons of nature"

"people entangled ... in a formidabel structure of barbarism," "fabulous beasts" (like roving cannibals, ogres, furies and dragons) -

all amount to such a huge package that a human from another planet would readily believe that Africans (SA) during the pre-colonial period never had fixed abodes and settled life, but led worse lives than those of wild animals (which, at least, do have lairs). Mzamane (1996) in his short-story-like documentary, *THE CHILDREN OF THE DIASPORA AND OTHER STORIES OF EXILE*, captures this false statement, in paraphrase, in what the Portuguese colonists said about Mozambican peoples (just north of Natal - the setting of our novel -) at the time of FRELIMO uprisings:

small but active minorities (in Mozambique), backed by the Afro-Asians, were striving to provide a motherland to peoples who had never had one. (*my emphasis*)
(Mzamane 1996:150)

Right from the beginning of the first chapter of this novel *Jolobe* unbundles and scatters apart the lies from this heap of falsehoods, where he describes settled African life, the riches and the pleasures of the pre-colonial period. The historical critical approach applies here, bearing in mind the historical foundations of this novel, but pure critical appreciation and paraphrasing of the first few introductory paragraphs will serve us best for now to extract the points raised on settled life.

The first paragraph of this novel reads:

Kwakuziziyunguma eBuzi, ibhotwe lenkosi enkulu yamaHlubi, uDlomo ... AmaHlubikazi ayesila edidiyela, iintombi zihlohla iintsimbi, amadoda ebhunga ngokubuyiswa kwempahla yokuxhelwa emathanga, kuba kaloku kwamhlamnene kwizizwe eziNtsundu kwabe kungekho theko lifezekayo kungaphalazwanga gazi. Iintsuku zokuba amakhwenkwe abuye esuthwini zasezibalwa ngeminwe yesandla esinye, eza kubuya kaloku selengamadoda, into leyo eyayithetha ukwanda komkhosi kwinkosi yohlanga, ukundileka emzini nokubakho kwamandla angaphezulu nesavamo kubazali emakhayeni, namasoka agqityiweyo kwiintombi ezijonge ukwenda. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe* 1958:1)

[King Dlomo's Hlubi Kingdom (Buzi) was in high festive spirits ... The elderly women were preparing African traditional beer, the girls were threading beads into strings, the elderly men were deliberating on numbers of stock to be fetched for slaughter from the large numbers they kept on the mountains; it is known from time immemorial that Africans never celebrated a big occasion without shedding blood of a beast. The occasion was the return of "boys" from the circumcision school in a matter of a very few days, "boys" who would be coming back as men. That meant additional soldiers for the King's

armies, added dignity to the whole nation, intensification of reliable defence for homes and parents of the newly-circumcised young men, and, finally that meant availability of eligible bride-grooms for girls who had reached marriageable age.]

When we read this paragraph with the following quotation in mind we, immediately, see what "answering back" to colonialist literature and mentality means.

... what all these missionaries (among Southern Nguni) had in common was deep repugnance for certain Xhosa customs and practices. Apart from unclothed bodies, what they most disliked were the Xhosa rain-makers and diviners; `witchcraft'; ceremonies of circumcision; polygamy and their own view of Xhosa marriage, the idea that brides were `sold' for a price in cattle ... it was upon (these) things that the missionaries sought immediate change, and assistance from Harry Smith and his Kaffarian officials in achieving it (in 1848).

(Mostert 1992:956)

This first paragraph of this novel describes settled life, with regular practices performed on the same spot for generations. Africans in the early days were not roving perpetually. The very opening word, *Kwakuziziyunguma*, is loaded with positive implications defying all European "specialists" who had declared Africans simply and exclusively roving warlike people. They enjoyed morally good life to the full; though, in context, this word refers to one occasion that was being prepared for, the plural form in which it is used is meant to say that life of peace and happiness, not war, characterised the Africans' history wherever they settled as organised communities or monarchic nation-states which evolved either by the divine theory or the charismatic theory or the natural theory or the sportive theory or by the social contract theory (Coulter 1991:27-34). In fact, there are no less than seven ceremonies in this novel, which this word also connotes. New (in Ashcroft 1995:306) emphasizes that a word communicates a multiplicity of meanings, and skilfull authors, knowing their linguistic environments, "exploit" this advantage to "say" perfectly what they "intend" saying, and that it is crucial that the reader "must hear the sounds of the words he/she reads."

Jolobe upheld very high Christian principles in his life-time to the extent that he was regarded as an honourable "spiritual leader" - see Chapter 1 above - but he did not mix acceptance of Christianity with Westernization. The early Christian missionaries that were bent on Christianizing and Westernizing their African converts nefariously condemned "Kaffir" beer, African traditional body decorations, African mode of sacrifices involving blood of animals, readiness for enemy attack, circumcision, African procedures followed in marriage arrangements, African riches kept in the form of livestock rather than money in banks; they also condemned the sacred time taken to observe a particular occasion like the sacred rite of passage in point in this excerpt (circumcision) as time wasted in habitual

laziness. We may illustrate this condemnation by a reference just to one historical figure called Sir Harry Smith, who went all out

blueprinting new roles, rules and existence

for the Xhosa (Mostert 1992:762); who blindly condemned Xhosa values and customs, smelling out of witches, nakedness "as a grievous sin" (Mostert 1992:766); who wanted to do away with bartering, clanship, and to break down chiefdoms (Mostert 1992:763); who, in doing all this, claimed that he was

reclaim(ing) these savages unless the Devil has so established himself (in them) ... he cannot be cast out.

(Mostert 1992:766)

One time (7 January 1836) he addressed a gathering of amaXhosa in King William's Town in these terms, as if speaking to children:

Do you wish to be real Englishmen, or to be naked and almost wild men? Speak, I say ...!

(Mostert 1992:769)

In the same speech he continued to say to the assembly:

Do you suppose we (the English) have these (civilized) things by lying sleeping all day long under a bush (as you Xhosa do)? ... Rouse yourselves, remember ... that the English were once as you now are, and that you may become what they are at present (1836) ... Leave off this trash of brass, beads, wire, clay, etc, replace them by soap, linen and clothes ... English law will make honest men of you - you shall not steal ... it is the duty of men to work in the field - not of women ... (my emphasis)

(Mostert 1992:770)

(Meanwhile those early White Colonists were stealing (Mostert 1992:839).

He went on to tell the gathering that amaXhosa were his "children" and he was their "father" (Mostert 1992:770), and prescribed further in the blueprint for them: money economy, mission education and Christianity. (Meanwhile Harry Smith was an alcoholic (Mostert 1992:790)

Truly Christian as he was, Jolobe did not accept these condemnations from his fellow White Christians, - in this very passage and in the whole novel he upholds all eight matters raised here as pillars of the African culture which must be maintained. He does this by giving one strong reason for slaughtering a beast -for blood- on every significant occasion celebrated by Africans; he gives one reason for circumcision and five benefits and advantages that flow from this practice (see the translation above). Circumcision does not mean barbaric mutilation of the penis and cruel unhealthy treatment of the wound thereafter; the meaning of the word: *selengamadoda* (having been transformed into men) becomes clearer on page 5 of the text where the type of tuition in the circumcision lodge is explained, and on page 23 of the text where the syllabus of that education is demonstrated - the African Culture, History, Geography and Poetry. The significance of this practice

also becomes clearer in Chapter 4 where the involvement and manner of participation of the whole nation is fully described, in the coming-home ceremony for circumcised "boys".

The deliberately long point-by-point justification of circumcision, the tuition at the lodge, and other details given, up to page 4 of the text, are illustrations to those who blindly condemned this rite of passage - for them to see what it actually was. We would remember that a number of Xhosa converts rejected circumcision because of these blind critics.

The sacred and religious significance of blood which Jolobe insists on as essential in African traditional ceremonies becomes also clearer on page 21 of the text where the activities of the day of return of the "boys" from circumcision are given: Two young oxen were brought to the king's kraal gate; one of them looked straight into the kraal and started bellowing repeatedly; the diviner officiating said the one that was bellowing is the one that must be slaughtered (for his medicine) - it was driven into the kraal, brought down, and a spear was driven into its neck to produce blood in the traditional way. It bellowed once more, and at that point the diviner turned his face to the east and spoke to the ancestors. After that he collected the blood from the ox into a clay container. He sprayed a little bit of the blood on the kraal gate posts; he mixed the remainder with herbs and shook that mixture. He dosed each of those two hundred circumcised "boys" with that mixture to strengthen and sharpen their wits (Jolobe 1958:21).

Furthermore, after these "boys" had gone to the river to wash once more, they smeared their bodies with the stomach pouch fat (inside fat) of the ox whose blood they had drunk. After this the diviner treated each "boy" with mysterious special herbs and made incisions on particular parts of the body of each "boy" (Jolobe 1958:21). From the river the "boys" rushed to the Great Place where each received a spear and a shield - they all sat in a squatting position in rows facing eastward watching the sun to appear. At the appearance of the first rays of the sun they all exclaimed, "*Saligwaz' ilanga.*" (There, we stab the sun) (Jolobe 1958:22), and made as if they were stabbing the sun with the spears in their right hands. After all these details then one learns that circumcision is transformation not just a barbaric habit.

These are fine details of a systematic programme of the day of a coming-out of circumcised "boys," which clearly spells the ways of a long settled community and its

customs. How could aimless rovers have a fixed Great Place and a custom rooted around it! Jolobe is challenging the condemnation of all the eight issues raised in the first paragraph, and has convincingly done so on circumcision by subsequently supplying the rationale behind it. For the reader to believe him that he is realistic on these matters he uses authorial intervention in the very first paragraph, signified by these words: *kuba kaloku ... kaloku* (because truly ... truly) (Jolobe 1958:1). His adoption of authorial commentary style sets the tone that says the author is to be "speaking" realistically and as an authority on the matter at hand. Secondly, by so doing this in a paragraph where he challenges the early missionaries on eight points he is declaring himself a better authority than those early Europeans on African cultural matters. And right here the desired writer-reader relationship is established, he breathes confidence into the reader, and, as a skilled essayist, he takes the reader under his armpit and leads him/her to fountains of knowledge on each issue raised here. After establishing this relationship the author takes off together with the readers to greater heights and depths of Nguni culture to fulfil the purposes of this novel.

On this issue of circumcision and initiation Jolobe brings to the fore the concrete facts whose value and meaning were eroded and fading; his facts are born out by Mbiti (1992) where he factually makes an exposition on the matter. Just as Jolobe had "declared," Mbiti says that during initiation (of boys and girls), at a particular time of year, the initiates go

through physical, emotional and psychological changes
(Mbiti 1992:96)

in that traditional school where they learn

to overcome difficulties and pain, and to cultivate courage, endurance, perseverance and obedience (and about) the life of their people, its history, its traditions, its beliefs, and above all how to raise a family...initiation(being) a gateway to marriage.
(Mbiti 1992:99)

Though Jolobe does not specifically refer to the blood shed during initiation the significance of that blood is ably expressed through Ntsele; Mbiti corresponds with Jolobe on this matter:

The blood which is shed during the physical operation binds the person to the land and consequently to the departed members of his society ... This circumcision blood is like making a covenant, or as solemn agreement, between the individual and his people (Mbiti 1992:98), (and) the cutting of (the) flesh is a symbol of getting rid of the period of childhood, and getting ready for the period of adulthood.
(Mbiti 1992:99)

Ntsele said the same in his poem on the coming-out day and on the day he was challenged by Nobusi for not coming to her *intonjane* celebration. On the deeper levels of significance of initiation, Mbiti corresponds more and more with Jolobe:

Initiation is a central bridge in life ... It brings together one's youth with adulthood ... It ... joins the living with the departed, the visible with the invisible ... This is a deeply religious step. For that reason, during the initiation ceremonies and after, the leaders in charge offer sacrifices and prayers to God and ask for his blessings upon the young people ... the spirits are believed or invited to be present to witness the occasion.

(my emphasis)

(Mbiti 1992:99-101)

Jolobe dramatises these facts through Dlikiza, the chief officiant, on the day of coming-out ceremony of the two hundred "boys," where after the young ox had bellowed, as it was slaughtered, the diviner, Dlikiza faced east and "spoke" to the ancestors. Further points from Mbiti (1992) are fully dramatised by Jolobe; the initiates

go home as new people, full people, responsible people (after undergoing) radical change. They ... wear new clothes, and receive presents from relatives and neighbours ... A new rhythm of life begins for them, and they start to play a new role.

(Mbiti 1992:102)

Mbiti ably calls this a "new birth" (Mbiti 1992:102). Jolobe had dramatised this verbally and by describing actions of the diviner, the initiates, relatives and the Hlubi community.

Mbiti (1992) makes yet another nobler principle behind circumcision and initiation:

The spirit of the community is renewed through this periodic initiation with all the feasting that goes with it. The entire people are brought together: the departed, the living and those yet to be born ...

(Mbiti 1992:102)

This is clearly demonstrated in this novel; Jolobe equally dramatises also the following points:

... those who are initiated in the same batch form age sets or societies (as in Kenya, Tanzania, Sierra Leone) ... These initiation ties are life-long, and they are regarded as very binding.

(Mbiti 1992:103)

This parallel that we have drawn between reality from Mbiti (1992) and fictionalised reality in our novel demonstrates the intention behind this novel - self-definition and self-affirmation against the negative stereotypes heaped on the Africans/Nguni and condemnation of this practice of circumcision by the early Europeans in South Africa. Both accounts say there was more of the spiritual content of the practice that put the African among the civilised nations all the time.

On the beadwork included in this paragraph Jolobe, later, dramatises one of its key functions in Nguni tradition. That one function alone establishes working with beads as a necessary traditional element among Nguni people rather than just being one of those

activities on which the Nguni waste time in laziness, as the early Europeans including Sir Harry Smith would say. Beadwork was a "secret African sign language" containing both "encoded messages" and "symbolism," holding within it "the history of the African nation - the beliefs, the philosophies and the knowledge, both of themselves and everything around them" (Mtwā in DAILY DISPATCH of 1 July 1997:5). In the DAILY DISPATCH (of 2 July 1997:2) Mtwā is quoted as having described beadwork as an art, a skill and a medium through which meaning was communicated by "each shape and design of a piece of beadwork." "There is an alphabet of signs and symbols that the elderly knew and used, depending on why the piece was being made and for whom," he declared in the same paper. Jolobe is re-establishing these great truths. Ntsele and Nobusi use beads to communicate in this novel.

There are four more words in this paragraph which compel comments as they are also intentionally used to correct the distorted picture of the early days of the Nguni/African and to present the correct position: - *emathanga* (on the mountain pasturage/grasslands/cattle station). The Africans/Nguni had large numbers of livestock, as a result a man kept some at home for immediate family needs like milk, and would drive the rest to the mountain grasslands with "herdboys" and construct large kraals for them there. He would occasionally go and inspect those flocks and herds of cattle. Mostert (1992) repeatedly refers to "thousands" of cattle that the British confiscated from the Xhosa in the 1800s wars of dispossession. He records further that the Cape Nguni living in the Amatolas (Kwamathole) in the 1830s

kept tens of thousands of cattle in ordinary times. In 1831 Henry Somerset complained that ... along the Keiskamma and around the Amatolas ... (the) cattle (belonging to the Xhosa there were) so numerous that he found it impossible to track any stolen beasts when patrols were sent out. (*my emphasis*)

(Mostert 1992:858)

Surely such stock-farmers (who were also settled cultivators of edible grain crops and vegetables as we shall see below) like European farmers and SA Boers, or better, enjoyed the respect of their communities - those were men of dignity! By digging this fact out of the concealed box of African/Nguni history and putting it before the eyes of African/Nguni (and European) readers, Jolobe is effectively saying: Who then has the audacity to declare the early Africans as *a doomed race designed only to serve and never to rise, thieves,*

children of a larger growth, inferior grade of humanity, inherently inferior to the white?

Jolobe is declaring the wealth of the Nguni against these appellations, and also in full knowledge that it was the European that stole from the Indigenes, as their military strategy was to take away cattle, destroy crops, and kill men, women and children in their campaigns against the Indigenes, during colonisation.

The second word : ukundileka (dignity) . One benefit flowing from circumcising a son and transforming him into a man is additional injection of more dignity to the already dignified status that the home had. The author is wittingly using this word here to register to the reader that the early Africans were people of dignity, respect, and were fully human. Jolobe here is dramatising, what had been popularly held and declared in open political circles that aboriginal Africans are full members of human race, and no amount of othering could divorce the Indigenes from the family of mankind. Mostert (1992) does, in fact, quote missionaries and 19th century governors acknowledging Hintsa, Ngqika, Maqoma and Ndlambe as figures that carried themselves with dignity; though ,the general impression that Nguni/Africans were crude and uncultured in their manners was kept alive. Remarking about how Maqoma and other Chiefs on the frontier cleverly reacted to politics there to their favour against British officers like Harry Smith whom they often outwitted, Mostert (1992:765) remarks that

the Xhosa were usually sharp and astute judges of human nature. White men were constantly confounded by their swift, and embarrassing and invariably accurate assessment of personality. They themselves were masters of the expressionless responses (which deluded Whites).

(Mostert 1992:765)

Mostert goes on to quote positive statements made by Sir Harry Smith himself about the Nguni on the eastern frontier:

He was entranced by the beauty of the Xhosa: 'their figures and eyes are beautiful beyond conception, and they have the gait of princes.' He admired their intellect, the fact that they 'were all by nature subtle and acute lawyers,' and their legalistic memories, which offered more 'retrospect' than the 'records of the Court of Chancery' ... he found that these (the Xhosa laws) 'closely resembled the law of Moses given in Levitecus and ... were excellent. But ... ironically he believed that Xhosa law meant 'might was right' ... his lack of understanding of the dynamics of Xhosa society was fundamental (hence, in spite of observing such good things he continued calling the Nguni savages as we see above).

(Mostert 1992:770-771)

It is clear that Jolobe is doing self-definition and self-affirmation for self-awareness, for his people to rise, and, to counter the negative propaganda flying all over about the condition of the African/Nguni. The third word: *ukwenda* (establishment of family-to-family

relations through the institution of marriage). Because of the volume of negative labels smeared on the early African one would think they never had the time to conduct proper marriages. This word in this excerpt is used next to the word: *namasoka agqityiweyo* (eligible, fine bride-grooms-to-be). These words allow us to look far and wide into the novel down to the last chapter where the actual marriage day comes for the two major characters: Ntsele and Nobusi. As we allow our imaginations to recall the development of these two characters - we see them in childhood days innocently helping each other; we see the development of their clean love (without sex) through exchange of messages and visits; we recall that Ntsele had been transformed into a proper man by undergoing circumcision, getting physical and psychological strength from the diviner's potions and incisions and viable education at the lodge; we recall that he had gone on a hard hunting expedition and got first-hand experience with big, wild animals and snakes; we recall that he had gone to a war and led, brilliantly, his own contingent - we are convinced that he (and all members of his group) had had enough physical and psychological grooming. (In Ntsele's case he had extra History lessons, further incisions to strengthen him at the sacred chamber of the King, and had also been "crowned King-elect".) We are convinced that Ntsele and his group, on whom Jolobe puts more significant emphasis, are indeed *amasoka agqityiweyo* (well-groomed husbands-to-be.)

On the other hand, we recall that Nobusi was growing into a well-behaved big girl - the author repeats several times comments on her increasing beauty and her development into an accomplished group leader in traditional songs; we recall that she had undergone *intonjane* and was declared ready for marriage; we recall marriage negotiations, the *lobola* and *ukwambesa* (exchange of properties) and the brilliance of the marriage day - particularly the programme for that day. We get convinced that the early African/Nguni led a settled orderly life and had perfect procedures in performing their customs and traditions - they can never be said to have been

"entirely savage," "races ... far behind the Whites ... in civilization and development"

That word, *ukwenda* and *amasoka agqityiweyo* right here revive in the reader's mind this Ntsele-Nobusi relationship up to their marriage. The way Jolobe handles this issue of marriage emphasizes the order, the preparation of both the male and the female, and the right age for marriage. He emphasizes these points on this aspect by going over to marriages of other members of the same group: Ayanda got married to Menziwa, Luyanda

got married to the prince of the Bhele tribal group, Nontembiso got married to Jozi, Nokhwezi got married to Manyaza. All males had undergone the same rites; all females had undergone the same rites, and were "preserved" pure, particularly the royal girls, for the marriage day. This is the statement that Jolobe is making about African/Nguni culture for the undermined African/Nguni to be aware and pick himself up psychologically and recognise his proper self and strive for it. We have referred above to Mbiti (1992) declaring that marriage was one of sacred rituals in African religion. This is now clearer.

The fourth word: *kwamhlamnene* (from time immemorial). This word occurs in the sentence that says Africans/Nguni always slaughtered a beast on traditional occasions. It has broader implications for the whole novel and its purpose. It invigorates the authoritative authorial intervention tone, and thereby increases the reader's confidence in the writer. The historical component of its implications also adds to the fact that the details will be more factual than fictional though that does not detract from the quality of this work as a novel; instead such a word makes us, the readers, more alert and ready to receive the correct anthropological, sociological and historical data about the Africans/Nguni of today, the progeny of the despised early Africans. Jolobe, the strategist, makes the readers ready listeners by arousing our historical sensibilities by the use of this word. Naturally every human is inquisitive about his/her past which is used positively or negatively to justify his/her present state. Jolobe was keenly aware of that and kept on using more and more authorial commentaries as we will continue to see below.

The second paragraph is equally significant as the first paragraph in setting the tone and in establishing the writer-reader relationship firmly. Jolobe continues to speak with authority on the castle-like Great Places which the early Africans/Nguni built - like that of King Ngqika - "a spread of forty to fifty thatched huts in the form of beehives"(Mostert 1992 : xxvii).

Isixeko eso sakomkhulu sasibanzi ... kufumane kwasisithabazi nje sengqilikazi yomzi owawungalahlekayo lula kuwo ... nomzi ngamnye wabe unesawo isibiyelo seengcongolo ezomileyo njengoko kwakunjalo nakwindlu nganye. ... kungenwa ngamasango macala ... Owakomkhulu umzi wawusesazulwini sesixeko eso upahlwe macala ngowomphathi-mkhosi, uNtlabane, ngasekunene nangowesanuse sakomkhulu, uDlikiza, ngasekhohlo.

(my emphasis)

(Jolobe 1958:1)

[The city-like Great Place occupied a large space ... it was a vast well-planned and compact establishment in which a stranger could doubtlessly get lost ... and each homestead had its own fencing of dry reeds, and within the homestead each hut had its own fencing of dry reeds. ... entry on all-sides

was only through the gates ... The King's residence was at the centre of that castle, flanked on the right by the Army Commander's (Ntlabane's) and by the Great Place diviner's (Dlikiza's) on the left.]

The materials used to fence this city-castle were aloes, and to fence off each family residence reeds were used - inexpensive, natural, raw materials which did the job 100% effectively. And entry was only through structured approved gates. Such a colossal dwelling-place means settled life of centuries. In this bold and defiant assertion I hear Jolobe's concurrence with the revolutionary voice of E. W. Blyden:

I would rather be a member of this [African] race ... than a Greek in the time of Alexander, a Roman in the Augustan period, or an Anglo-Saxon in the nineteenth century.

(Blyden in Cook 1969:5)

The emphasis on reeds takes the readers' minds to the reed symbolism which both Nguni and Sotho groups associate with their origins. This symbolism or creation mythology is widespread in Africa; in the mythology about abodes of demi-gods among the Buganda there are temples made of reeds (Parrinder 1967/96:86). The reed dance among the Swazi is an old annual traditional celebration. The Thonga of Mozambique would "put a reed in the ground outside the house in which a baby was born" (Parrinder 1967/98:84). Jolobe here is deliberately taking his readers back to the significance of reed symbolism in Nguni traditions at the time when they were still enjoying free and full lives of dignity.

The repetition of the word: *isixeko* (which in Jolobe's time means:- city as against town) and the use of the words: *sasibanzi* (vast), *kwasisithabazi* (vast structure), *sengqilikazi* (strong structure), *owawungalahlekayo* (where a stranger could surely get lost) - all are meant to give a parallel status of that African/Nguni complex structure with the European complex city structures, which in the latter case needed a highly qualified land surveyor and civil engineer, whereas the early African/Nguni put these up without university degrees but only with natural talent.

The simple remark: *kungenwa ngamasango macala* (people would use the entrances provided on all sides) signifies absolute discipline and, furthermore, deep respect for unwritten codes of conduct generally, as further details on the behaviour of the King's subjects prove. The very natural instinct and strategic reasons that compel a cathedral, parliament and municipality buildings to be situated at a central position, at or near the city centre right round the world, are the same natural attributes that compelled the African/Nguni to do the same from time immemorial; it is the same among the Nguni: *owakomkhulu umzi wawusesazulwini sesixeko eso* (the King's residence was at the city

centre). As it served as the cathedral, parliament-cum-high court of justice, it was only natural that it should be there in conscious or unconscious conformity with the universal. Here Jolobe clarifies that the Nguni, in step with traditional societies globally and simultaneously, observed the symbolism of the centre that found expression in building sacred places at the centre of dwelling structures and areas of settlement, a tradition followed in the construction of Great Zimbabwe and other African shrines and palace-fortresses, a tradition followed in construction and recognition of temples, shrines, certain mountains, particularly stones and trees in Asia, Middle East, Europe and America at the time of pre-modern societies globally (Eliade 1965:6-18). In the African/Nguni arrangement, the Great Place diviner's residence is adjacent to the King's, on the left-hand side; the bishop/dean/the priest who supervises over others in a demarcated area stays on the cathedral premises. Is it not the same procedure that the Africans follow! In the African/Nguni arrangement the cherry on top is the Army Commander's residence which is adjacent to the King's, on the right-hand side. The King's two most important right-hand men are permanently at hand. This is a perfect arrangement characteristic of centuries of settled life. The words we singled out were skilfully chosen to communicate the meanings we are exposing here; the political environment and the historical period they 'refer' to bear us out.

The third paragraph reads:

Komkhulu apho kwindlu ebucala eyayingafumane ingenwe mntu ngaphandle kweendwalutho ezimbalwa nomhlekezi, indlu eyayisoloko inabalindi ngexesha langokuhlwa, iinto zontandathu, amadoda okulwa axhobe ngokupheleleyo ngezikhali namakhaka. Ngabusukwazana buthiile ke kuzo zona ezo ntsuku ezazisandulela ukuphuma kwamakhwenkwe, kwakuhleli amadoda amathathu anesithozela. Entla phaya phakathi kwesisi esasidale ubunkungwana yabe iyingangalala, isanuse eso sakomkhulu uDlikiza, indoda eyayinesithunzi wakuyijonga, umfo wamazwi ambalwa abuntsompothi kunjalo nje. Ngeli thuba wayethe zole tu. Loo nzolo yayiphazanyiswa kuphela kukuzanyazanyiswa ngumhlola owabusakumenza ngaloo maxesha umfikeleyo afumane ahlasimle phofu abuye azithibe kwakamsinyane. (*my emphasis*)

(Jolobe 1958:1)

[At that Great Place there was a special hut for consultation and sacred purposes where only special dignitaries and the King met. Six strong men, fully armed with offensive weapons and shields, stood guard over this chamber every night. One night, just a few days before the home-coming of the circumcised "boys", three men - highest in government - had a meeting in that chamber. The mighty diviner of the Great Place, Dlikiza - a man with an awesome face, a man of few philosophical words - was seated deep inside the hut covered in mist-like smoke. At this juncture he was sitting in dead composure. That posture was disturbed only when an uncontrollable urge to wriggle his body overcame him, but, in the twinkling of an eye, he would return to that dead silent composure.]

We remarked above on the central position in which the Great Place was situated; we note in this passage the sacred chamber on the premises of the Great Place, the security around it, and the few special people it was reserved for - the three most vital figures in the life of

the whole nation. These three are individually and severally referred to in the terms reserved for the most respected people: *iindwalutho* (highly respected men) *amadoda amathathu anesithozela* (three majestic gentlemen) *iyingangalala* (man of great esteem), *indoda eyayinesithunzi* (a man of awesome dignity), *umfo wamazwi ambalwa abuntsompothi* (a man of few philosophical words). Then the diviner alone is shown to the reader to be a person of higher mysterious qualities in the very first act this character performs. We are shown him overcome by a mysterious power which forces his body to wriggle involuntarily. The ancestors or a power beyond them communicates with the diviner at that moment; this profession or call is bequeathed to the diviners by ancestral spirits according to Nguni mythology. Thorpe (1991) writing about Zulu diviners explains it this way:

This call comes in the form of an illness characterised by ... uncontrollable, nervous twitching and periods of dissociation or trance. ... Throughout the isangoma's life and practice she/(he) is believed to be in direct communication with the ancestors, and hence with the entire spirit realm as conceived by the Zulu. (*my emphasis*)

(Thorpe 1991:42-43)

This "amadlozi/izangoma complex (represents) the core of Zulu religious beliefs" (Thorpe 1991:44). Jolobe is dramatising that reality here and further on in this novel.

The place where the diviner is seated which, as we learn later, is always his place in this sacred chamber, is right deep inside, at the back of the chamber - umsamo in Zulu. This coincides with Thorpe's (1991) explanation on umsamo:

An area to the back of the hut, the umsamo, is reserved for offerings to the ancestors (among the Zulu).

(Thorpe 1991:33)

Thorpe (1991) repeats further on:

Three places in the hut have ancestral associations ... umsamo right at the back of the hut, the hearth and the doorway. (*my emphasis*)

(Thorpe 1991:40)

The fact that Jolobe and Thorpe correspond on the same function of umsamo explains that Jolobe was on a mission of re-education and self-definition.

The remark that the diviner was seated in mist-like smoke takes some significance when we learn that it is a habit read in African mythological traditions that the living, when communicating with the mysterious spirits for guidance on a matter, they would smoke tobacco until the sacred spirit releases the message to the solicitor (Parrinder 1967/96). We learn, subsequent to this remark, that Dlikiza, the Great Place diviner, communicates

in the same fashion with amanyange (ancestors). Jolobe is definitely doing a self-affirmation and self-definition, by including these meticulous cultural and religious details.

The essence of this passage - the third paragraph of the text quoted above - further lies in these terms of dignity referred to above - in a novel that revives dignity in the African/Nguni. Africans up North and West-Africa had long had a "house of life" - their place of worship and healing. This sacred hut is the house of life in Africa. Africa, had produced the earliest physicians - the best anatomists and surgeons - and they practised their medicine in those houses of life (treating burns, fractures and abscess). What, then, was lacking on this aspect of African/Nguni life for Africans/Nguni to be called names! Jolobe is asking. The European detractors had said that *churches, shrines and images are not part of the Red Blanketed Indigenes' culture*.

With what Jolobe had revealed or reminded Africans/Nguni about - the sacred chamber - Africans/Nguni should simply laugh away the lie quoted above and recoup themselves for a life of dignity that has been denied them for so long. More on the sacred chamber activities, vital to the nation, will make this clear: the succession, a vital political event, is discussed here by these three most important national figures; the hunting expedition called in order to procure skins of respective wild animals for decoration of the new king and the Great Place on the day of coronation is discussed here (Jolobe 1958:34), the report on the condition of the circumcised "boys" who will be a boon in manhood state to their families and the nation is brought and discussed at length here; the King-elect is first groomed for weeks in this sacred chamber - and is lectured all that period on the history and nature of the Kingdom in this venue; the three eligible (for kingship) princes were ordered to bring pure fountain water, after sunset, to this sacred chamber; it is in this sacred chamber that Dlikiza often kindles a smoky fire with his special herbs in which they (King and Dlikiza) then smoke their pipes in peace and serenity. Later in the story, when Ntsele entered this sacred chamber, for the first time in his life, bringing water to his grandfather, Dlomo, the sacredness of that chamber is then fully defined in Dlikiza's and Dlomo's words respectively, which sacredness the author had hinted on on page 1, in the passage we are analysing:

Mzukulwana wenkos' am ungene kwigumbi elingafumane lingenwe kaloku. Uze uwathobe amehlo ude uphume. Wakuphuma apha oya kukwazi koba kuphela kukuba ube uzise amanzi kababa-mkhulu. Okuvayo uze ukugcine etyeyeni yentliziyo, okubonayo ukusithe ngesikhuselo sokulibala. Makhe sikuqaphule kaloku uze ube nokukhuseleka.

... laya kuye lamenza iintlanga ezimbini ezintlafunweni apha laya kuhlala phantsi. Kwasuka ngoku umhleleki ebusindana waya kuye, umfana eqondele phantsi lonke elo xesha, wafika wamthandela ngocingwana entloko wamana ukulungisa lwada lwahlala ngokuveneyo esithi uza kuthetha ngezinto ezinqabileyo uza kuphatha namagama amanyange angasekhoyo ngoko ke kuya kufuneka amkhusele ngolo hlobo hleze umntwan' omntwan' akhe aphambane. Akuba eyenzile le ntshayelelo umhleleki wathi; "Ukholisile mzukulwana, umzisele uyihlo-mkhulu amanzi. Amathongo aze abe nawe. Uyasazi na isizwe esi sakowenu apho sivele khona?"

... wathi kuye "Abaziyo bathi sasuka embindini weAfrika singumntu omnye."
(*Jolobe 1958:71*)

[Grandson of my most honourable King, because you gain entrance to this sacred chamber of the "elected" for the first time, we have to give you protective medicine through small incisions on your body (vaccinate). Do not lift your eyes until you are out of this chamber. All you tell outside is that you only brought water here for your grandfather. You do not divulge what you heard and saw here to anybody, keep that information in the sacred chambers of your heart.

... Dlikiza then stood up and approached Ntsele, he made two incisions on both of his temples and then resumed his seat. Thereafter the King also slowly approached Ntsele and put a wire-like ring on his head, set and re-set that ring until it fitted properly - in the process he was saying to Ntsele that he was also doing that to protect him from possible mental disturbance which may come upon him when he hears the secrets of the nation and the names of the saintly forefathers of the nation, which he was about to divulge to him (in a series of lectures). All this time Ntsele kept his eyes down (as advised by Dlikiza). After the King had made these few remarks he said, "It is fit of you, my dear grandson to bring the water I needed. May our ancestral spirits always be with you. Do you know the origin and history of our nation?"

... Dlomo said to Ntsele, "We are told that we originate from Central Africa as one group (which then split into various sub-groups)".

Without going into a critical appreciation, we note here Jolobe's prudent choice of appropriate epithets (*uwathobe amehlo, ukugcine etyeyeni yentliziyo, ngesikhuselo sokulipala, umfana eqondele phantsi lonke elo ixesha, ngezinto ezinqabileyo, amanyange angasekhoyo, ukholisile, amathongo aze abe nawe, singumntu omnye* - all already translated) to declare once more the dignity of the two officiants here (Dlomo and Dlikiza). These epithets also depict the solemn atmosphere that always dominates in this sacred chamber. Lastly, this incident is a more graphic revelation of the gravity of matters of state that are attended to in this sacred chamber; this account gives more flesh to the first remark on page 1 of the text on the sacredness of this chamber. Unlike vagabonding savage barbarians, the Africans/Nguni had sacred places, like the temples in Christian European countries and mosques in the Moslem world - that is the message that Jolobe communicates through the special words we singled out in this paragraph.

More remarks on this sacred chamber: the copper crown was moulded by the King here, and the narrator says, while doing this copper handwork he did not want anybody there, except Dlikiza, for several months (Jolobe 1958:76). After the coronation of Ntsele the narrator remarks:

Nakweliya gumbi lomhlelezi uDlomo wayesel' engowesithathu ngoku osisigxina (uNtsele) njengokuba lalihalwa ikakhulu ngumhlelezi uDlomo negqirha lakomkhulu uDlikiza.

(Jolobe 1958:109)

[As we know that the sacred chamber was mostly exclusively used by Dlomo and Dlikiza, King Ntsele now became the third permanent member.]

The author here remarks that Ntsele, as he took the reigns from Dlomo after coronation, was ruling the kingdom with amazing wisdom (Jolobe 1958:109) implying that he was getting more wisdom from that sacred chamber - "the house of life". The trio that now use this sacred place are all men of wisdom: the status that they approximate is that of the Holy Trinity: God the Father is paralleled by King Dlomo; God the Son is paralleled by King Ntsele; God the Holy Ghost is paralleled by the Diviner, Dlikiza. The sacred chamber parallels the Holy Trinity's abode (heaven), while the Kingdom (heaven and earth) the Trinity rules over, is paralleled by the Buzi Kingdom which this trio are ruling with wisdom.

At this point we pause and point out that on religious matters and partly on political and administrative matters the author has successfully drawn a parallel declaring convincingly undeniable equivalence between European Christian philosophy and African/Nguni religious system(s), driving home effectively the point that Europeans had no grounds for undermining the African/Nguni religion except through ignorance or simply blind arrogance.

For a more reliable voice on this matter - that Jolobe was doing in this novel of the 1950s a literary-cum-political activity, we quote Ngugi (1993)- one great specialist on African literature and life:

The African writer of the 1950s we are talking about was born on the crest of this anti-colonial upheaval and world-wide revolutionary ferment. The anti-imperialist energy and optimism of the masses found its way into the writing of this period. The very fact of his birth (writing revolutionary material) was itself evidence of this new assertive Africa. The writing itself, whether in drama, poetry or fiction, even where it was explanatory in intention, was assertive in tone. It was Africa explaining itself, speaking for itself and interpreting its past. It was an Africa rejecting the images of its past as drawn by the artists of imperialism. ...

.....
The writer (of 1950s) and his work (of 1950s) were products of the African revolution even as the writer and the literature tried to understand, reflect, and interpret that revolution. The promptings of his imagination sprang from the fountain of the African anti-imperialist anti-colonial movement of the forties and fifties. (my emphasis)

(Ngugi 1993:61-62)

We go back to the fourth paragraph from the beginning of this novel (we are taking the first five as they come for their significance on the statement this novel makes):

Ngasekhohlo, njengokuba ungena emnyango, yabe ilugxiba olude omfo onezoso, omehlo atsolo, indoda ngokwenene isibili. Lo ke yayingumphathi-mkhosi nephakathi elikhulu lomhlekezi uDlomo kaNcobo kaMtimkhulu wanqangi ... Yindoda le eyayilwe amadabi amaninzi yaza yafikelela kwibanga eyayikulo, lodumo nembeko, ngenxa yezanga zobukroti nobulumko bokukwazi ukulawula abantu ngamaxesha eemfazwe. Naye wayethe cwaka exhibilikise umxakatho kucacile ukuba akachophile. (*my emphasis*)

(*Jolobe 1958:2*)

[As you enter the door, on your left, there sat a hefty, tall and tough gentleman, a man with big muscles and sharp eyes. This huge gentleman was the Commander of the Armies and one of the chief Councillors of King Dlomo, of King Ncobo, of King Mtimkhulu the First. This gentleman is a war veteran who was promoted to this rank of glory and honour through excellence in war, and because of his bravery and wisdom as commander in a number of wars. He, too, (like Dlikiza) sat quietly and composed, an indication that he came there for business.]

Five major points from the paragraph, which re-emphasize those mentioned and implied in the first three paragraphs, re-emerge forcefully: Africans/Nguni were healthy men of dignity; promotion to ranks came through excellence; order was the rule, not exception, in African/Nguni life; sharpness of mind was a quality Africans/Nguni had; and, Africans/Nguni had a history - there can be no Mtimkhulu the First if that was not the case.

All these are denied by early Europeans who came to South Africa during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries onwards.

Missionary after missionary, settler after settler kept on saying that Africa had no history except that of the European in Africa; Africa is no historical part of the world, they emphasized. The author, refuting such misconceptions if not deliberate lies, makes this remark on the history of the Hlubi group in this paragraph, and then devotes the whole of Chapter 2 (pp 9-13) of the text, to the real history of the Hlubi, a Nguni sub-group, thus saying the Hlubi have a history to start with. (For other groups see also pages 71-72 of the text.) In the introductory paragraph of Chapter 2 he is declaring that all other South African indigenous groups also have a clearly traceable history; he boldly opens the chapter with these words:

Isizwe esabizwa ngokuba ngamaHlubi kwimihla yamva, njengezizwe zonke eziNtsundu ezikweli sehla sivela ngentla embindini weAfrika kummandla wamachibi amakhulu mayela nempumalanga. Sasiyinxenye yezizwe ezingabeNguni. (*my emphasis*)

(*Jolobe 1958:9*)

[The Nguni sub-group that came to be called amaHlubi later, came down from the north, like all other tribal groups in South Africa; it traces its origin in the vicinity of the eastern side of the great lakes of Central Africa. The Hlubi sub-group is a branch of the large Nguni group.] (*my emphasis*)

The parenthesis that is underlined and emphasized reinforces the assertion we make that Jolobe is saying that all South African indigenous tribal groups have their traceable histories of origin, great leaders, ups and downs, and final place of settlement by the time

of the arrival of early European missionaries and settlers in South Africa. (See also pages 71-72 of the text). His statement on the origin of South African Indigenes as Central Africa refutes the early Europeans mischievous accounts which gave the Middle East and China as the far-off places of origin of all South African Indigenes. Finally, on the fourth paragraph, the significance of that paragraph, placed right at the beginning of this novel, read together with real history in Chapter 2 and on pages 71-72 of the text, lies in the assertive statement Jolobe makes as to whether Africans/Nguni had a history at the time of European arrival here or whether history of humans here starts with the arrival of European settlers.

The fifth paragraph, the last of the block we want to critically analyse as foundation and base for further assertions on themes and "reasons" behind the composition of this novel of the 1950s:

Ngasekunene phaya kwakuhleli inyange umfo owawungase uphawula ngeminweba yezingwe nemixhaka nenquma entloko ukuba elo lithole lesilo ngokwalo, umhlekazi ukumkani wesizwe samaHlubi. Naye wayelufafa lwendoda esiqu silingenevo. Naxa umhlekazi uDlomo lo wayeseleyindoda eseyikhulile kakhulu, kuba wayekwiminyaka emashumi asibhozo, wayesenayo indili yobukhosi, isithozela esambethe ngokwengubo, iliso lihlabana akuthi ntsho ukukukhangela. Naye ngeli xesha wayehleli ethe zwi. Phofu emva kwethutyana lokuthi nzwanga uvule iqhaga legwada wacaphula ngentshengula watshaya. Wenjenjalo nomphathimkhosi. Bathe emva kokuthimla kabini nakathathu umhlekazi wavakala esithi kumphakathi lowo, "Kanene izilimela zingaphi na waswelekayo umhlekazi uMashiya?"

"Ndibona ukuthi, mhlekazi, iminyaka seyifikile kwiminwe emihlanu," uphendule watsho uNtlabane.

"Akutsho na ukuthi ixesha selifikile ukuba kukhethwe phakathi koonyana bomfo wam lowo inkosi eya kuphatha abantu bakaMtimkhulu?"

"Isizwe, baba mhlekazi, silindele oko njengokuba amatshawe ephuma nje esuthwini."

(my emphasis)

(Jolobe 1958:2)

[On your right (as you enter the chamber) there sat the greatest of the greatest, the most honourable, the King of the Hlubi Kingdom. One could readily see that that was indeed the King himself from the kaross that he wore, from the stringed bone/herb "ornament" around his neck, and from the head-ornament (a knot of mole skin tied on the hair in front). He, too, was tall, with a well-proportioned body. He was about eighty years, but in spite of being so much advanced in age, his regal dignity never waned, he wore the aura of majesty around him like a blanket, a gaze from his eyes was still too sharp for a commoner to bear - the commoner would look down if their eyes met. At the time, he, too, (like Ntlabane and Dlikiza in that chamber) was sitting quietly with his legs stretched out. At some point, while all three were still observing that dignified silence, Dlomo opened his snuff container and took a little of it (through his nose, with a snuff-spoon). The Commander of the Armies did the same. Both sneezed a few times, and then, the King asked Ntlabane, "How many times (years) have the Pleiades passed ever since Prince Mashiya passed away?"

"Your Royal Highness, I think the years equal five of my fingers," Ntlabane replied.

"Don't you think the time has now come for us to select from my grandsons (Mashiya's sons) a successor to take over and lead the people of Mtimkhulu?"

"My lord, Your Majesty, as of now, immediately the princes return from the circumcision school, the nation expects that we tackle the issue of succession."

As in the four paragraphs already analysed, the same issues are emphasized, with few additions. Once more the author has selected special terms denoting and indicating the

dignity of the King, Dlomo (in this context): *inyange, ithole lesilo, umhlehazi* (three times), *indili yobukhosi, isithozela, iliso lihlaba, baba, zwi*, and *nzwanga* (all translated already). All three figures (Dlikiza, Ntlabane and Dlomo), in the opening first four paragraphs are described as men of dignity. Jolobe is exorcising the spurious idea of African/Nguni-equals-barbarian. Secondly, in spite of age, Dlomo is still very healthy and is still physically attractive. Health and physical fitness were emphasized regarding Dlikiza and Ntlabane above. Jolobe is exorcising the spurious idea that Africans were ever "physically repulsive," "dog-faced creatures," and ogre-like to the point of resembling Satan with his horns, tail and fork in appearance and behaviour. Even worse detractors like Sir Harry Smith were quoted above as having grudgingly admitted these positive qualities at least - fair physical appearance, dignity of posture and good health.

Thirdly, the King's apparel and decorations are presented as distinguishing features and established paraphernalia for a King (as in the case of European kings). As "High rank (in British plays and in reality) was marked by magnificence of dress, a trade or calling by functional clothes" - the same happens here (Walter (ed) 1960:215). In the first paragraph girls' bead-work decorations were also included in the details - bead-work which identify them as girls. Nothing barbaric in both cases, nothing to be decried as the missionaries misguidedly did - that is what Jolobe is saying. According to the missionaries and early Europeans all African styles had to be dropped (as barbaric) and Western style adopted and embraced (as civilized).

Fourthly, the King's state of composure and dignity is captured and emphasized in two ideophones: *zwi* and *nzwanga*. The same is emphasized about Dlikiza and Ntlabane above. Though all occupy the top echelons in government they are no Hitlerite monsters of Europe but cool governing heads, representative of the norm in African/Nguni societies - Jolobe is saying that.

Fifthly, snuff-taking by both the King and Ntlabane precedes discussion on the most important issue at hand - succession; and , all goes well right to the end. Nothing is wrong with snuff-taking by people of the correct age - that is Jolobe's message. The early missionaries imposed a blanket condemnation on the habit. Though twitching of the body in this instance is induced by taking snuff, the tobacco smoke, the herb smoke and getting

into a short trance are established by Jolobe as objects and processes of great significance in Nguni culture in execution of duties of national magnitude.

Sixthly, this sacred chamber is for high state matters; this is where they are initiated, discussed, and blessed - the succession, the home-coming of the circumcised "boys," the grooming of Ntsele for kingship - all done here. There is an established sacred place where the religious and political life of a kingdom are nurtured, guarded and executed - some kind of executive of cabinet chamber-cum-temple - the centre. This account gives credibility to the African claim to being early masters of political science and claim to having been worshippers of one Supreme Being through a king, - the political-cum-religious leader of the nation - a stage African/Nguni reached while Europeans were still worshipping gods. Jolobe is saying just that.

Seventhly, the question on the number of years that had passed after the death of Mashiyi is asked in terms of Pleiades (*izilimela*). The answer comes in terms of the number of fingers on which those years may be counted - Mathematical counting - an attribute that Africans developed before Europeans settled in Africa, demonstrating that counting did not come to Africans/Nguni with Europeans, just as communication which was similar to letter writing. Africans could send messages through different styles of folding strings of beads (as Ntsele and Nobusi did more than once). Likewise Africans kept their history, which Dlomo took days lecturing to Ntsele:

Wambalisela iziganeko ezininzi ngenkosi nganye nangokuphuma kwezindlu nokudaleka kamathanga obukhosi. Ngomhla ngamnye wayethathela apho ashiye khona ngephezolo.

(Jolobe 1958:72)

(Dlomo gave Ntsele a number of historical accounts about each chief, the splitting of royal houses, and the expansion of the kingdom through emergence of new royal sub-houses. Each time Dlomo would start off where he stopped the previous night.)

This History, counting and communication we are talking about are the basic elements of the three Rs (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) that European education in South Africa first concentrated on. That being the case, what was totally unknown to the African which the Europeans brought! Where does the *tabula rasa* story come from! Jolobe is asking.

The last sentence of the fifth paragraph we are analyzing, indicates that the Hlubi, as a "nation," were politically alert, and were proactive in thinking. That is a reflection of reality, of the African/Nguni condition before Europeans came to South Africa.

Finally, on this paragraph, and on the first four: one is struck by a lot of repetition of some words or repetition through synonyms. The uninitiated would decry this as unnecessary tautology and bad style; yet, this is the most powerful style for emphasis. Jolobe, though writing fiction, is asserting some real points on the nature of the African/Nguni person, his life-style, his history, his knowledge systems - all of which had been undermined and removed from the sight and mind of the African. To bring these back to place he needs to repeat in the way he does here for the attention of the reader and effective internalization of the "new" facts, knowing how particular words in his language communicate the encoded messages he intended passing to the readers.

Soon after these paragraphs Dlomo asks Dlikiza to describe to him the ideal man. In the political context in which Jolobe was writing this novel both the question and the answer are political responses to the negative fixed notions about the African Indigenes. The Europeans had claimed to be ideal and had relegated the Indigenes to half-humans and worse creatures. To ask a question on the ideal man is to challenge the European idea of the ideal which they had arrogated to themselves; to say, in answer, that the ideal man had nothing to do with being White or European but that it simply has to do with qualities like bravery and modesty, and then pursue a story where an Indigene of black complexion proves to have those qualities, and therefore to be the ideal man, is to challenge the European negative stereotype regarding the Indigenes. Moreover, that answer assures the Indigenes that they have the full range of natural human capacities found anywhere in the world in humans. This point is strengthened by the use of historical figures like Ntsele and Dlomo, mythologised as they are, and also by what Jolobe himself had said about this novel.

The fact that this novel is counterhegemonic comes out also in the manner Jolobe handles the question of indigenous religion. In the othering exercise the Europeans had made several denials and claimed to see several missing human qualities, creating bad fixed images about the Indigenes. Jolobe's presentation in this novel portrays the whole life of an individual in the early African/Nguni society as an expression of religion. From the beginning to the end, his novel is an expression of the fact that the daily activities of an African/Nguni are expressions and experiences of religious worship of the Supreme Being

through individual service and respect extended to the living individuals, to the living-dead, and to the Creator.

Right at the beginning we meet the King, the diviner, and the army commander in the King's special chamber - all covered in smoke of special herbs burnt for the protection of the King from evil spirits. Right through we see how divinely Dlomo runs the Kingdom mainly through the accounts of the various ceremonies where the Power Above is always approached through the diviner. Even before going to war the diviner led a performance of a religious rite, and, even after the war those who participated were cleansed in the fashion of African religion. The novel winds up with the repetition of the wise words that were communicated to the diviner in the first religious performance when he appealed to the ancestors for advice in order to answer the King's question on the ideal man.

This is our overview of the network of themes in this novel; we will now single out various aspects and show how counterhegemonic they sound. The messages from the three quotations from critics we opened this overview with were at the back of Jolobe's mind at the time he was writing this novel. This will become clearer and clearer as we go on. The background on African/Nguni culture and history we took from the four sources: Mandela, Pallo Jordan, SACP 1960 document and Mqhayi is the rich heritage and anchors of African/Nguni life that Jolobe wanted to revive for the Nguni for them to lean on and stand up from inferior positions to declare themselves equals to the usurpers of superiority - the Europeans.

2.4 Resumé

Jolobe is presenting this picture of orderly Nguni society under a "triumvirate" of noble characters - Dlomo, the political head (and later Ntsele); Ntlabane, the military leader; and Dlikiza, the religious leader, against a background of White colonial communities that were not at peace with themselves, though they were quick to see and censure Nguni social disorders. The Cape colonial frontier community of the 1840s (of John Hare's time) is described as a

nightmare landscape of corruption, malice, mistrust, military inefficiency, favouritism and scandal, deceit and lies. Grahamstown, the frontier headquarters ... emerges as a place of perpetual conniving, gun-running and other illicit deals, backbiting, meanness and spite.

(Mostert 1992:839-840)

The statement we read from the undercurrents of this novel is the comparison we see here, which leaves the reader with positive traits among the Nguni society and extremely negative traits among the White settler communities (on the frontier, in Grahamstown, Graaff-Reinet and Cape Town) at the very time that the latter were ignorantly and strongly pouring scorn on the South African Indigenes.

The keenness of this comparison becomes even sharper when one learns that the early missionaries (in 1800s), who were also in the vanguard of the onslaught on Nguni "bad" behaviour, claiming a moral high ground and maintaining a "holier-than-thou" attitude against the former, were themselves in serious spiritual malady, a "dishonest set, the whole brotherhood" (Mostert 1992:839).

Mostert (1992) is saying there was a

poisonous infection gnawing at brotherly love among the missionaries
(Mostert 1992:840),

and goes on to say:

... One of them (an opponent of the Reads ...) firmly advised the directors in London to avoid recruiting new missionaries from among colonial clergy because what was lacking was 'that expansive, pure, disinterested benevolence ... which rides superior to all prejudice' ...
(Mostert 1992:840)

He adds that that missionary also recommended that

the sons of missionaries born in South Africa should be sent for education in England, 'where they breathe for a while a different atmosphere'
(Mostert 1992:840)

Worse, Read was an adulterer, and , other missionaries were sleeping with Balck women (Mostert 1992:856).

Jolobe was writing against this background, hence our conclusions, and these conclusions will be made more clear when we deal with African/Nguni democracy, communalism, discipline and respect under paragraphs 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 respectively.

After going through this novel one cannot help saying that this is a documentation of complexities of pre-colonial Nguni civilization which is described by Mostert 1992 in these real and historical terms:

What was important, as in all other aspects of the Xhosa social code, was that the wholeness of the family, the chiefdom and the society be preserved, and there was(nothing)... that was larger than the overwhelming instinct for maintaining the balances in their long-established social harmonies... They

also had a distinct concept of a hereafter. The blessings of the living were derived from the spirits of the dead and their prosperity was seen as owing to vigilance over them by the spirits. Those living were considered the children of the dead..

(Mostert 1992:958)

This is a positive picture on the Nguni from a history book; this is identical to what Jolobe dramatised - hence we say this novel is a novel to refute the lies heaped on the African Indigenes generally.

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CHAPTER 3

JOLOBE'S POLITICS

3.1 The politics of privileging and unprivileging

As explained above (1.4), the early European missionaries, travellers, settlers and other colonial agents were all bent on dis-membering, destroying and blemishing the African/Nguni image as something far below normal by human standards. On the other hand, they extolled all that was European. However, our quotations, mainly from Mostert (1992), indicated that those Europeans were doing so standing on one leg, as they themselves were as savage, brutal, uncivilized towards their own brethren first and towards the Indigenes; on the other hand, African/Nguni civilization has also been exposed as something that had developed and concretized into a reality which some early Europeans, in fact, did acknowledge.

3.2 African/Nguni democracy in pre-colonial times

This is one of the sub-themes that Jolobe consciously deliberates on through the actions of those in power in the novel and by implicit authorial intrusions. The repetition technique will again make sense to those who understand that the African literature of the 1950s was declaring war against the forces and techniques of imperialism in that the writers were moving the centre from the West and Europeanism to Africa and her regions. Jolobe consciously does this in reaction to detractors of African culture and history.

African monarchs and leaders from the time of the first meeting between early Europeans and Africans on the African soil were collectively and severally declared to be heathen, wild, ignorant, barbaric, common slave-traffickers, lawless morons and tyrants to quote a few of those terms. Yet the contrary was the truth, as Jolobe sets out in this historical novel to "prove" by describing how democratically an African/Nguni Kingdom ran even before the age of both the callous and "benevolent" despots in Europe. In our introduction we have quoted Mandela, Mqhayi, Jordan and the 1962 SACP document in Bunting who describe the democratic African/Nguni government in the early days that were declared days of barbarism and lawlessness by early Europeans in Africa. All concur on the democracy that characterized them - an African/Nguni democracy where in the Great

Place deliberations everybody was listened to before the King would announce the consensus reached, not his decision but the people's decision. This was not the European democracy of parties which was, in fact, a dictatorship of the majority party.

Right through this novel there is consultation with the people in a meeting (*imbizo*) whenever there is a major issue to be considered for a decision. That culture of consultation was, in fact, practised at lower levels - among the people at their homes. The first instance is on the first page of this novel:

... *amadoda (ay)ebhunga ngokubuyiswa kwempahla yokuxhelwa ... (my emphasis)*

(*Jolobe 1958:1*)

(*The men were discussing the matter of fetching from the mountains those beasts that they were agreeing to slaughter ...*)

The second instance, at personal level, is on the second page of this novel, where King Dlomo addresses the matter of succession and seeks the opinion of his Chief Commander of the Armies, Ntlabane:

Akutsho na ukuthi ixesha selifikile ukuba kukhethwe phakathi koonyana bomfo wam lowo inkosi eya kuphatha abantu bakaMthimkhulu?

(*Jolobe 1958:2*)

(Don't you think the time has come for us to select a successor from the sons of my son - the king to rule King Mthimkhulu's people?)

Call it a rhetorical question - all the same it is consultation.

The third instance, at personal level, is on the sixth page of this novel where King Dlomo wants guidance from his diviner, Dlikiza, on the ideal person to be chosen as the next King:

Khawutsho ke xa ufuna ukwazi indoda yenene ungayazi njani, Dlikiza?

(*Jolobe 1958:6*)

(Tell me, Dlikiza, how would one identify a man that is destined by superior qualities to be above all other men, that is, a man fit to be a king?)

This is certainly not a rhetorical question but one which seeks a good answer. Proof of that is on page 8 of the text:

... *wazibeka phantsi wacinga ... Ngobu busuku yamhlala ke le ndawo umhlekezi uDlomo ezama ukuyiguquguqula engqondweni efuna ukuba uya kukhokelwa yintoni na ekukhetheni ... Amazwi esanuse sakhe ayemana ukunkenteza ezindlebeni njengokuba wayecamngca ngale ndawo yokunyulwa kvenkosi ... Kwathi ekuphindeneni kweenkukhu ukulila wawakala enesingqala esifana nesomntu ophunyuzwe kumthwalo onzima waza wathi, "Ndivifumene indlela." Emva koko wawavala amehlo, kwakamsinyane wazifumana selekwilizwe lamaphupha*

(*my emphasis*)

(*Jolobe 1958:8*)

[... he lay down to sleep but only started meditating ... That night the hunt for guiding principles in the choice (of the successor) cracked King Dlomo's skull more than ever before ... His diviner's words (on the ideal man) kept on coming and going in his mind as he lay meditating on the matter of the selection of the new king (to succeed him) ... At the second cock-crow (in the early morning) he made a low bellowing sound like the one made by a person after putting down a heavy object which he/she had carried for a long time; he said, "Now I have found the procedure to follow." Thereafter he closed his eyes and in a moment he was in dreamland ...]

[The diviner's words were that the man the king was looking for (to be his successor) must have qualities of both a reed and a lion. We note, again, the reed symbolism.]

King Dlomo needed to consult on this serious matter for the good of his conscience and smooth-running of the kingdom, and he did; he did not say I am the King, I know what to do; he was no lawless moron nor a despot. Eliade (1965), explaining the symbolism of the Centre globally to people of traditional civilizations, declares that the king was conscious of the fact that he was residing in a royal city that was "built after the mythical model of the celestial city" and attempted "to revive the age of gold, to make a perfect reign a present reality" (Eliade 1965:8-9). The life and reign of King Dlomo is a dramatisation of this observation.

In the account of the history of the Hlubi we learn that at some point a popular decision had to be made. Ncobo could not beget children and to keep his line safe from extinction Radebe from the Right-Hand House, helped him after the nation had been consulted:

Umyeni wayo akabanga nanzala kwaza ngemvume yesizwe nomveni wayo lowo, umhlekezazi uNcobo, yangenwa (inkosazana uLamaHlubi) ngumzalwane wakhe uRadebe ukudala inzala kwindlu enkulu. *(my emphasis)*
(Jolobe 1958:9)

[LamaHlubi's husband was sexually impotent, then after the consent of the nation (amaMpembe) and her husband's, King Ncobo, had been obtained, she had children by Radebe, King Ncobo's half-brother, to keep the progeny for succession in the Great House available.]

The emphasis is on consultation here once more.

The following quotation explains the democracy that characterised Dlomo's rule and administrative capacity, a democracy that was characterised by African/Nguni religious principles:

Umhlekazi uDlomo wasiphatha isizwe samaHlubi ngobulumko obukhulu kwasekuqaleni kwakhe ukulawula. Wathi naxa azilwileyo iimfazwe nabamhlaselayo waba soloko ejonge ukuyila intlalo yoxolo nemvisiswano nezizwe ezingabamelwane xa zikhetha ukuhlala ngoxolo. Ngenxa yale ndawo isizwe sakhe sathanda ukwanda ngamanani kwaza kwavela impumelelo eyazibonakalisa ngokwanda kwemfuyo nokunonelela ulimo into leyo eyaba luncedo ekondleni eso sizwe esaya sikhula ngokukhula.

Wathi ngokumana ehlaselwa engalindele waqonda ukuba makangawatyesheli amabutho okulwa njengazo zonke izizwe zelo lasentla. Ukwenziwa kwezikhali kwafundiswa esizweni kwasikwa amakhaka axhotyiswa amadodana kwahlalwa phezu kweentonga imihla le ukulindela imini engaziwayo yokungenelwa ziintshaba. Amadodana aneziphiwo zobunkokheli emfazweni

azibonakalisa ngamaxesha ocweyo kumadatyana athe abakho. Ngaloo ndlela kwada kwavela neenkokeli ezidumileyo njengoNtlabane lo owayengumphathi-mkhosi ngelo thuba.

Umhlekazi uDlomo wasiphembelela isithethe wasenza into yokuhlonelwa. Okuhle okwakuthe kwaba luncedo kwimihla engaphambili wathanda ukukubethelela kwada kwaba lisiko lesizwe. Unqulwana olwalukho lokuhlonela izinyanya zesizwe nokungxengeza kuzo ngamadini kwakubakho intlekele walunika indawo ephambili esitsho nokutsho ukuthi umntu ongahloneli nto ehlabathini apha akanakwakheka. Wayekholwa kukuthi intlonelo ihamba nokuthobela okuzibonakalisa entlalweni ngokuthi abantwana baphulaphule oonina, abafazi babeke amadoda, amadoda ahlonela iinkosi, kwanjengokuba neenkosi, kwanje ngoluntu luphela, zifanelwe kukuthobela amathongo.

(my emphasis) (Jolobe 1958:10)

[King Dlomo ruled the Hlubi people with great wisdom right from the beginning of his rule. Although he fought defensive skirmishes against those tribes that attacked him, he always tried to arrange for peaceful coexistence with his neighbouring tribes if and when they would listen to his overtures on reconciliation after the war. Because of his diplomatic moves population numbers in his kingdom kept on rising, and there was development which was also demonstrated in the rise in stock numbers and in progressive agricultural production; both points of success uplifted the standard of living of the nation which, in turn, kept on growing in numbers.

Because of surprise military attacks which he suffered he decided to develop militiamen as his neighbouring tribes were doing. The whole nation engaged in the manufacture of military weapons, shields were cut out (from hides), able-bodied men were all armed, and were ready, on a daily basis, for any military offensive from any neighbouring tribe which would declare hostility to the nation. Gifted military leaders surfaced in the small skirmishes that occurred at that time. It was in those small skirmishes that the famous military leaders of the calibre of the Great Commander of the Armed Forces of the Hlubi Kingdom, Ntlabane, at the time we are writing about, surfaced.

King Dlomo developed in his nation a culture of respect for traditional customs. He did this by laying emphasis on and retaining all positive cultural traits that proved useful in the past until those were accepted as established customs that had to be observed by the whole nation. He promoted with great vigour the prevalent but-not-yet-systematically-practised type of African religion that gave respect to the departed great national figures (that is the ancestors of lower and higher ranks so to speak) through whom prayers to the Supreme Being were made in times of tribulations; his main thesis in advocating this was that if on earth one has nothing of a religious faith to observe, one's personality cannot be fully developed. He contended that respect goes together with humility both of which are exhibited when children obey their mothers (which should be the case), and women obey their husbands (as expected), and men give full respect to their chiefs/kings, who, in turn, together with their communities, should at all time hold (lower and higher rank) national ancestors in great veneration.]

A number of positive points are raised here about Dlomo which take him out of the status of "heathen monarchs," "barbaric tyrants" and "morons." Jolobe tendentiously describes Dlomo as a "very wise monarch" where he says Dlomo "ruled his people with great wisdom right from the beginning of his rule" (see quotation above). Jolobe's like-minded contemporaries and colleagues in the struggles to revive the dignity of the African were describing their traditional leaders in these terms: "military strategists," "political visionaries," "moralists," "military geniuses," "men of dignity and complexity," "chiefs of royal blood," "gentlemen of our race." All these terms fit the King, Dlomo, portrayed in this long quotation, in this historical fictional work, very well to convince the reader that Africans/Nguni traditional leaders were, in reality, like this, not barbarians. We note also the implications in the tendentious application of the phrase that is profusely used in

Christian circles that Jolobe is using in reference to an "illiterate" African monarch who lives by traditional rules and regulation:

intlalo yoxolo nemvisisiwano
(translated above)

These words occur profusely in this order in the Xhosa Anglican Prayer Book (INCWADI YEMITHANDAZO) particularly in Eucharist prayers (pp 211-233) and in Marriage prayers (pp 411-421) saying to Christians that Godly life is that of peace and love among mankind. In this context the fact that Dlomo advocated the same between his people and his neighbouring tribes as far as possible confers on him and other contemporary African/Nguni Kings the power to create and promote Godly life among mankind. And Jolobe's question is: What is the difference between what high Christian Clergy and what African/Nguni monarchs in general were saying and doing? By the same phrase Jolobe brings to the fore the political and religious functions of the African/Nguni monarchs which they had been performing long before European settlers set foot on the African soil.

Furthermore, this whole quotation also indicates that Dlomo (and other African monarchs in general) were not in the habit of routinely engaging in war for pleasure as the European detractors conspired to stress; secondly, the skirmishes he fought successfully were not for self-aggrandisement (land-grabbing, stock confiscation from the vanquished, as Brownlee, quoted earlier on, maintains); thirdly, Dlomo's self-defence was a well-organised, disciplined army of different ranks (as we shall also see below) - not for aggression. All these statements are based on the second sentence of this quotation:

Wathi ngoxolo.
(translated above)

The Early African monarchs, generally, who were readily tarred by one dirty brush as barbarians shared Dlomo's qualities - they were men of peace who would defend themselves when attacked, of course. Mqhayi, quoted above, had indicated how painful it was for the African King to declare a death sentence on his subject, which would be decided by the nation at a meeting called for the case. Jolobe's Dlomo in an example pointing at the rest of early African monarchs.

Development in human resources and natural resources came through the progressive government of an African/Nguni monarch, Dlomo in this case. This statement is based on the third sentence of the quotation above:

Ngenxa ngokukhula.
(already translated)

The quotation, against such labels on Africans as "three-fifths of a man," "stupid," indicates that there were military geniuses and strategists among early Africans. That record of talent in military services is noticeable in the quotation above in these words in two consecutive sentences:

Amadodana aneziphiwo zobunkokeli emfazweni ... neenkokeli ezidumileyo ... ngeli thuba.
(translated above)

On our contention that Jolobe insists that the early Africans/Nguni had a culture, order, civilization and religion which indicates their awareness about life beyond the grave rather than just being loose vagabonding barbarians as the European pseudo-authorities on the African maintained, one needs to look critically with a discerning eye at the following paragraph(quoted above) particularly at the underlined words:

Umhlekezazi ... isithethe ... into yokuhlonelwa. Okuhle ... kwimihla engaphambili ... ukukubethelela ... lisiko lesizwe ... Unqulwana lokuhlonela izinyanya zesizwe... ephambili ... ongahlonieli nto ... akanakwakheka ... intlonelo ihamba nokuthobeka ... intlonelo ... nokuthobela ... baphulaphule ... babeke ... ahlonelwe ... kukuthobela amathongo.
(translated above)

This quotation is on page 10 of the text; on page 11 Jolobe furnishes the reader with an anecdote where King Dlomo suspended from the Great Place one of his wives for failing several times to mind her little son from going to the kraal where he got fresh milk straight from the cow's udders, which gave the child stomach troubles. This anecdote is furnished to solidify the fact that Dlomo was a socialist democrat and a strong disciplinarian and a moralist as well, rather than a moron. The wife was later called back. The anecdote of the general who won a skirmish against a hostile Qwabe neighbour but, who, against Dlomo's instruction, killed the general who led the Qwabe forces they defeated, and was surprisingly demoted by Dlomo for that, serves the same purpose (Jolobe 1958:11-12). Enough on this long quotation on democratic order in a Nguni Kingdom.

Many more instances can be selected for purposes of illustration, where the council, called for a purpose, or a national meeting made a decision which Dlomo or other national leader would then follow, with the announcement of the decision. One year in winter when the thrashing hands had finished helping each other in collecting the harvest and thrashing the corn the King called his council to discuss the issue of succession. Earlier he had broached the matter with the palace diviner, Dlikiza:

Kwakungeli xesha ke awathi umhlekezazi uDlomo walumana ngalo iindlebe namaphakathi akhe aphambili ngomcimbi wokukhethwa kwenkosi yesizwe. Kwelo bhunga kwagqitywa kwindawo yokuba loo msebenzi mawungabi salityaziswa kakhulu. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:34*)

[It was on a day in the (winter) season when King Dlomo convened a meeting of his Chief Councillors to discuss the issue of selection of the new king (to rule the kingdom after him). In that Council meeting it was resolved that the matter should not be delayed for too long.]

That resolution was made democratically by the King's Council, that is what is emphasized here.

Ndulamba, the man in charge at LamaNgwekazi's house after Mashiyi's death, is tasked privately by LamaNgwekazi to take her son, Prince Ngwekazi to a great medicine man, and is fully briefed. (LamaNgwekazi was the Great Wife of the late Prince Mashiyi.) But, still, he took the matter to a meeting of all elders that were officially tasked to keep an eye on LamaNgwekazi's house:

Wawubeka umcimbi lo waxoxwa ngokundilekileyo wamkelwa. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:37*)

(Ndulamba put the matter before this meeting of elders, it was discussed, in solemn tones, and all gave consent to the mission.)

As if this was not enough, the matter was put to Ngwekazi as well for his consent (Jolobe 1958:37). Three stages of consultation are gone through on a matter that looks very simple, in African/Nguni tradition. That is what Jolobe is out to say to refute labels like "entirely savage," "raw kaffirs," "a doomed race," in reference to Africans/Nguni who had such polished manners.

After the hunting expedition the issue of succession again came before the King's Councillors:

Okunene ibhunga elo lagqiba ekubeni umsebenzi lowo uze uqhutywe uqatyeliswe kwakuqina ihlobo ... Olo daba ke lasasazwa kuzo zonke iziphaluka zobukumkani obo basemaHlubini kwada kwaya kutsho ekunene nakwizizwe ezingabamelwane. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:46*)

[Indeed the King's Council decided that the initial stages of the process could start but the big day should be in mid-summer (December) ... The resolution was publicised to reach all the tribes under the Hlubi Kingdom right up to the Right Hand houses and other neighbouring tribes.]

The Council decides just as in reality was the case - Mqhayi, Jordan, SACP (in Bunting) and Mandela had "testified" above. Jolobe is presenting that reality in a historical novel to remind the African and to affirm that African/Nguni tradition, which kept the self-image of all affirmed and which promoted democracy and happiness in the free, democratic African political affairs in pre-colonial times. By the way, the sentence that follows this quotation

reports that the news, as it was spreading, sparked untold jubilation among all age groups right through the Kingdom. This was the norm, not the exception.

When King Dlomo was pressed by his Great Wife tactfully to hint to her the one prince that he had decided to select from the three that were first and foremost eligible for kingship, he said in clear terms:

Amaphakathi asayihlafuna loo ndawo LamaShiyi. Andinakwenza lutho mna ngaphandle kwawo. (my emphasis)
(Jolobe 1958:51)

(LamaShiyi, the councillors are still deliberating on this matter. It is their decision that counts, I cannot make a decision alone.)

Dlomo is the father of the nation; he makes this declaration of humility which all fathers of African nations observe. Jolobe is speaking through Dlomo here to display the type of democracy that Africans followed to refute the tags like, "lawless creatures" in reference to Africans/Nguni. This is the most important quotation on democracy in African societies. We are aware of those Nguni Kings, like Tshaka, who were presented in colonial discourse as genocidal monsters; in anti-colonial discourse we learn that kings like Tshaka and Moshoeshe were nation-builders.

When Mahlaphahlapha's messengers came to Dlomo for military assistance, and alliance, as in Europe, they asked to see the King and his Council (Jolobe 1958:53). In addressing the King and the Council they started off by saying they were sent by Mahlaphahlapha after his Council meeting (Jolobe 1958:53). Dlomo's Council meeting, after hearing the request, decided that a reply on such a serious issue - involvement in a war - could only be made by the nation itself; the Council and King could not decide on their own, and messengers were sent out to the whole kingdom to announce the meeting. At that national meeting Ntlabane, the King and Gubunga, one old man, spoke first in this order, in support of giving military assistance to Mahlaphahlapha. Then to show how democratically matters were handled in African societies, Jolobe "records" as follows, what happened in the meeting after these two principals and a senior citizen had spoken:

Emva koku aphakama ngokuphakama amadoda kwacaca ngeentetho zawo ukuba uluvo luphokele ekusamkeleni isimemo soncedo. Amaphakathi amakhulu akabanga saxhamleka. Asuka ngokushwankathela umlomo wesizwe okhutshwe ngabameli baso. Indawo ekwangenwa kuyo emva kokuba kuviwene yaba yeyenani lamabutho aya kukhutshwa. (my emphasis)
(Jolobe 1958:54)

(After the first three speakers several men stood up to speak on the matter; from their speeches it became evident that almost all were in favour of accepting the request. This made things easy for the

Chief Councillors who, in summary, simply reiterated the voice of consent that the national representatives assembled there had given. After this resolution had been formally announced the assembly took the next issue on the matter - the number of regiments to be sent out.)

On the number of regiments to be sent out the Chief Commander of the Armies made a suggestion which all present consented to (Jolobe 1958:55).

This quotation confirms almost in similar wording and terms what Mandela, Mqhayi, Jordan and the SACP (in Bunting) had said about matters being invariably discussed and resolved in a democratic way, orderly, in popular assemblies of the nature described here where everybody's voice counted and was listened to. This historical novel, in affirmation of that tradition, is meant to say Africans/Nguni had established traditions in line with other civilized nations of the time of the pre-colonial Africans/Nguni. Even the repetition of this report is to reinforce the reality of this democratic practice:

Izigidimi zasekunene zabizwa endlwini ezazabelwe yona zeza enkundleni ngoku zaza zaxcelwa isigqibo sembizo yakomkhulu. (my emphasis)
(Jolobe 1958:55)

(The messengers from the Right-Hand part of the Kingdom were called out from their hut to the courtyard and given the decision made by the assembly that met there at the Great Place.)

We note on this matter also that the ad hoc Council of War meets only after the final decision on participation had been made in an assembly of the whole nation. Its composition is also of interest: the King, Ntlabane (Chief Commander of the Armies), Dlikiza (the Palace diviner) and the two Commanders of the two regiments that were to be released to go and rescue Mahlaphahlapha. The two army commanders were not going out wildly to reek barbaric havoc on Mahlaphahlapha's attackers: They were given all possible brilliant strategies to follow, in that meeting (Jolobe 1958:56).

It is worth noting that in this war the princes of the Great Place ((Ngwekazi, Manyaza, Jozi, Ntsele) and those from other smaller houses took leading roles, which means there were no tasks that were reserved for particular sections of the society (for convenience), as would have been the case in European societies up to the 1789 French Revolution. Equity and egalitarianism are not new practices in African/Nguni societies. The war itself was characterised also by consultative meetings before action was taken (Jolobe 1958:58-59).

After the battle against the Ngwane people the King reminded the nation about the coronation day (Jolobe 1958:66). Again a week before the day, the King did the same (Jolobe 1958:85). Such details on practising democracy are not to be passed over lightly -

no barbaric despot would care to do that - that is what Jolobe is saying in dramatising these procedures.

Three days before the selection the King convened a meeting of his Councillors and the three most eligible princes. He told the meeting about all the preparations for the coronation day and then asked the princes to add anything which was missing to make the selection day the most memorable in history. Ngwekazi proposed that the one chosen should be led round the courtyard four times by one of the three princes, who would be hollering, "Hail! The new King" (Jolobe 1958:86)! Though this hit the Council ears as strange Ngwekazi was given a fair hearing and the matter was even resolved in his favour. On the same matter, Manyaza dismissed the idea as unnecessary, he was also given a fair hearing until he, too, accepted the resolution. It is important to note here that dissenting voices were also given a full chance - democracy.

The Councillors also resolved that a marriage with Nobusi, a princess from amaNgwe, would be arranged for the one who will win the crown and that the bride tribute would be collected from the nation. Lastly, the Council also resolved that the winner would be given a start as King in the form of stock - one hundred cows and one hundred oxen - to be collected from the nation. They decided on behalf of the nation on some issues, as we see here - these, in fact, are known to the nation, it was standard practice, it was not imposition. All it meant was that another round for collection had come but it was officially declared by the Councillors in assembly with the King.

This democratic openness is emphasized in various ways as it was practised at all adult levels consciously. When Ngwekazi's group handed over Nobusi, during the abduction episode, to Ayanda's aunt, the latter asked Nobusi before taking her in, loudly for all to hear (Jolobe 1958:101), whether Nobusi was feeling well and whether she was not violated sexually and otherwise by Ngwekazi and company. As that would have constituted a serious case, as Nobusi was a princess, it was vital that she responds in their presence so that they answer for themselves there and then.

Nobusi's brother and his group, who came to rescue her, found the place where the abductors (Ngwekazi's group) were hiding. Before attacking that house that night they had a short meeting to decide to punish the abductors and to decide on the strategy. And the

ambush plans worked well (Jolobe 1958:105-106). This democratic consultation is practised in this instance at a level of young men.

Jolobe devotes a whole paragraph describing, tendentiously, succinctly, Ntsele's administrative capacity. Soon after he mounted the throne:

Enkundleni amatyala ayethethwa nguye ngobuchule obumangalisayo nezigwebo zisenziwa nguye egameni lomhlekezi uDlomo phofu ... engayifulatheli imicimbi enqabileyo ... Wayejongana nayo emehlweni afune amacebo okuyicombulula ... Wayedlana iindlebe futhi nomhlekezi uDlomo ewafuna futhi amacebo kumaphakathi akowabo nakwabanamava kwindima nganye yomcimbi wakunqaba. Yasuka loo nto yenza ukuba ahlonelwe ngakumbi athandwe oyikwe kananjalo. (my emphasis)
(Jolobe 1958:109)

(He led discussions in court cases with marvellous brilliance, the verdicts were pronounced by him now, but in the name of King Dlomo ... He was not in the habit of shelving difficult cases ... he would tackle them head-on and get advice on resolving them ... He had frequent consultations with King Dlomo, the Councillors and other specialists on difficult cases on aspects he could not handle because of less experience. That spirit of consultation drew greater respect, love and reverence for him from his people.)

This paragraph simultaneously gives the reader the picture of democracy in Africa/among the Nguni, not just the capabilities of this young King. The emphasis is on consultation, Dlomo was described in the same brilliant terms (Jolobe 1958:10) and as having held on to the tradition of consultation with the Councillors and the whole kingdom if and when necessary. The young King is following the same tradition and the results are the same - a happy democracy drawing reverence for the young King from all his people who appreciated the dignity, liberty and equality that they enjoyed under that type of African/Nguni government. Ntsele's upbringing contributed to this success, but also the African/Nguni royalty policy of consciously making princes take lessons from observing royalty ways for a time long enough for them to be graduates in royalty traditions, also contributed to his success (Jolobe 1958:50).

Once more the Councillors identify an issue whose time has come, they discuss the matter in their meeting and communicate the matter to the nation because it is of national concern in its ramifications: the nation has to take the Great Wife for the new King. The national assembly that was called gladly accepted both the idea and the contribution that each household had to make. The marriage negotiations, done in great African/Nguni spirit, were a harmonious happy process (Jolobe 1958:112). This is the last incident where democratic principles, as a way of government between the authorities and the subjects,

and, as a way of conducting business between individuals of all age groups in African/Nguni society, are demonstrated.

The matter of succession had been presented through European accounts as a difficult hurdle to jump in African royal houses: the sons had been said to be in a hurry to take over from their fathers, the regents had been said to be unwilling to vacate the thrones until matters lead to shedding of blood. We witness here a smooth transition where the successor is selected and starts functioning as King while the elderly King was still alive. It is the elderly King himself who initiates selection in preparation for handing power over; the one selected was too far from being in a hurry to take over - even when he had taken over he consults the elderly King he is succeeding. The eligible ones are even cut out of the race in favour of a more competent one. This picture denies that European representation of African royalty by dramatising the norm.

All in all, in line with observations made by Eliade (1965) regarding the Kings of early civilizations and early traditional societies, and in line with accounts by Mostert (1992) of simultaneous development of cultures, with each cultural group devising means of survival in its environment with equal skills and potentials, in his globalisation of conscience, Jolobe presents the Nguni culture as an equal, among equals, with its peculiarities. On the aspect of administration he presents a Nguni king, in omniscient style, who was intent on peace and/or reconciliation with neighbouring tribes, whose rule was marked by rising human and stock numbers, by rising agricultural production, by a fine defence system under brilliant military generals, by a concretized system of customs and traditions, by a "vigorously" concretized religious system binding the living, the living-dead and the Supreme Being for round development of each subject, by a concretized social system (governing behaviour between child and parent, between sexes, between subject and traditional leader, between traditional leader as religious leaders and the living-dead), by consultation with the nation through Councillors and in national meetings, by offers of protection to beleaguered tribes around him. Dlomo was in charge in all these developments and systems as they took clear shape during his reign (Jolobe 1958:10). His successor, Ntsele simply promoted these systems, and is also omnisciently described as dexterous in handling court cases, as always subservient to the "retiring" King, as humble to consult those who know on a matter where he had no answer, and, as somebody who, like Dlomo, won the hearts of his subjects (Jolobe 1958:109). Eliade (1965:128-129)

found that in world early civilizations nations experienced cycles of normality, adversity, destruction, recovery and prosperity, in this order, which later repeats itself; the period of prosperity is labelled as "paradisaal stage." The conditions in the Buzi kingdom under Dlomo and later under Ntsele, described above, correspond and coincide with that "paradisaal stage" which early societies all enjoyed. In the "othering" exercise early Europeans in their discourse had dubbed settlements of Indigenes as wasteland and jungles, and called areas under European settlement, paradise. Jolobe is challenging and correcting that impression here. Mqhayi also declared Nguni equals to all nations in **Ukuzika kukaMendi** - one of his poems .

On this aspect, democracy, Jolobe has used enough material to refute the tags that we kept on revisiting in the deliberation. And we are convinced when we look at all the incidents we selected that Jolobe is not only glorifying a "golden age" that African/Nguni societies in the region (Southern Africa and beyond) once had but is also doing self-definition, self-affirmation to promote self-awareness among the despised Africans/Nguni in the spirit and with the aim of the African writers of the 1950s. We always keep in mind also what he, Jolobe said about this novel (above), and, the fact that he is giving alternative history here, as revealed in the selection on biographical notes on him above.

3.3 Communalism/African Socialism

Democracy in African societies rolled on the wheels of socialism and communalism which Africans evolved into an unwritten social contract that ruled their lives. At the time Jolobe was writing, it had clearly crystallized and solidified into a system of individual-to-individual and group-to-group relations. Ubuntu is the word. This word sits nailed at the back of the mind of every African/Nguni, whence they evolved their proverb:

Umntu ngumntu ngabantu.

(A human being enjoys full humanity in liaison with other human beings.)

Tutu, expressing the Old Testament principles encased in the same saying and in the term, Ubuntu, quotes:

...man belongs to the bundle of life, ... he is not a solitary individual.
(Tutu in Kretzschmar 1986:37)

Kretzschmar also expresses the gist of African communalism when she says:

The individual is indivisibly related to the community and sees himself or herself as part of the whole.
(Kretzschmar 1986:37)

Because Africans operate under this mental frame, the Communists' slogan: "People shall share" , has been the practice since time immemorial until capitalism reached this African continent.

Right on the first page Jolobe "reports" on a task that was handled jointly by parents of two hundred of the boys that were sent to the circumcision lodge. A large space is given to the details of how this tradition was performed in great co-operation by the parents, and how the nation finally got involved as they attended the coming-out ceremony at the Great Place in their thousands, and how they even made donations to those "boys" to whom they were related (Jolobe 1958:25).

We see an act of communalism in the reason given by Dlomo for giving military assistance to Mahlaphahlapha (Jolobe 1958:54) where he said, metaphorically, that when the left arm is broken the right one is equally injured, and therefore his men should go to the rescue of Mahlaphahlapha in that frame of mind. The hospitality extended to Mahlaphahlapha's envoys (Jolobe 1958:54) proves the same. The repetition in the report the envoys made to Mahlaphahlapha of the fact that at Dlomo's place they were treated with great respect and sympathy (Jolobe 1958:58) is meant to emphasize the same. It is in the final details of this war that we see clearly that it was really an act of communalism. Dlomo's two regiments stayed for a whole month among Mahlaphahlapha's people flushing out amaNgwane completely; they helped also in rebuilding Mahlaphahlapha's Great Place (which was burnt down by AmaNgwane at the beginning of their attacks) and all other homes that were destroyed (Jolobe 1958:64); from the cattle "confiscated" in the process of war they left eight hundred with Mahlaphahlapha. What takes the cake is that Dlomo's two regiments in that month also set out on a punitive expedition to punish Mahlaphahlapha's neighbours, amaBhele, who chased away a group of Mahlaphahlapha's people who wanted to take refuge among amaBhele (Jolobe 1958:64). They were being punished for their anti-communal behaviour - ill-treating would-be refugees of their blood. This incident says all about communalism in an African/Nguni those days.

It is also in the verbal reciprocity of this exchange that we see this as an act of communalism more and more. For concrete military assistance and further assistance in rebuilding the throne and other houses Mahlaphahlapha gives Dlomo only words in return:

Umhlelezi uMahlaphahlapha namaphakathi akhe waba nombulelo onzulu ngenxa voncedo awaluzuziswa ngamabutho endlu enkulu yasemaHlubini. (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:64)

(Mahlaphahlapha and his Councillors expressed deep verbal gratitude for the help he received from the regiments sent by the Great House of the Hlubi Kingdom.)

The historical details of the birth of Dlomo and the merging of the Radebe and Hlubi royal lines into a Hlubi Kingdom is an exposition of an act of communalism in the final analysis at the highest level. To save Ncobo's line (Hlubi) from extinction Radebe was requested to have children by Ncobo's wife (Jolobe 1958:9-10). This real historical event which saved a royal line from extinction is brought in here to portray the truth regarding the tradition of ukungena, to expose the positive side which the detractors do not bring up when condemning this tradition as just one of the African habits of oppressing women and treating them more as property rather than human beings with feelings, all concerned were consulted for their consent.

At certain times the three daughters-in-law of Dlomo would throw feasts for him as act of generosity, as all three did just before the selection. This involved feasting a big group each time, but they kept on doing it in a big way. On each occasion each of the daughters-in-law handed over a special gift to Dlomo's Great Wife (Jolobe 1958:49-50). All three belonged to Dlomo's late son, Mashiya - a practice (polygamy) which the missionaries condemned, yet there were adulterers like James Read among them (Mostert 1992:835). Polygamy among the Nguni in this novel is treated so positively to show it was part of Nguni culture, and, as we know, it was the best open way of distributing and sharing female responsibilities, which tradition was not only exclusively practised in Africa but also in many other cultures outside Africa.

The collection of cattle for the bride tribute for the new King's First Wife from the whole nation is also an act of communalism at the highest level. The donation from the nation to the new King, of one hundred cows and one hundred oxen is also an act of communalism.

The whole nation congregates at the Great Place for celebration on the occasion of the coming-out of the "boys" from circumcision, on the coronation day ,and , lastly , on the marriage day of Ntsele and Nobusi. As we see, especially in the case of the first occasion the people prepare food and drink for themselves at their homes (Jolobe 1958:19); they do not come to the celebration at the Great Place for the purpose of filling their stomachs. They come for a higher purpose - they follow the tradition of coming to a gathering of that nature to breathe the same air on one spot, in front of their unseen ancestors and to commit to them, in one voice, in one sacred act, whatever national incident and occasion has to be staged and executed that way for the blessings of the departed. (Achebe , in THINGS FALL APART, gives same reasons for African national gatherings.). It is like going to church; the performance of the ceremony itself is like reading of the many prayers in which the communion of saints are remembered together with the Supreme Being and their abode. The food and drink is like Holy Communion, in such ceremonies as the three under discussion in this paragraph. All are acts of communalism at the highest level - travelling long distances to the Great Place only to be fulfilled by the great gathering one would find there. Afterwards there is no tangible reward - only a spiritual reward that is gained from the symbolism of centre - the Great Place.

Jolobe captures the act of communalism in Ngwekazi's case in fine tendentious language, he was on a visit to his mother's home:

Lwaba luhambo olumnandi kuhanjwa kulalwa emizini yezidwangube zasemaHlubini luze undwendwe olo lwakomkhulu luxhelelwe. Ukuya komkhulu amaZizini yayihambo lwemini enye kufikwe ngomhla olandelayo kodwa ngenxa yezi mbeko la madoda azidubula zane iintsuku esendleneni ...

Apho amaZizini afikela ebubeleni kuba kaloku kwakufike umtshana ... Kwamenezwa imigidi emikhulu kwaziziyunguma komkhulu apho kubukwa unyana wenkosazana, umzukulwana kaDlomo umhlekazi. Kwaba mnandi kakhulu kwangakumbi kulutsha umlisela nomthinjana. Zakha zaqingqitha ke iintsuku zolo lwamkelo luzukileyo ...

.....
Lemka itshawe elo liqhuba amashumi amabini eenkomo ezintle kunene elalisokwe ngazo apho kulonina ... Kwaba mnandi komkhulu amaHlubini ukuyiva ingxelo yoyelelo lwetshawe kulonina.
(my emphasis)

(Jolobe 1958:37-39)

[That was an extremely pleasant journey; Ngwekazi's entourage had stops and slept over at places of wealthy men in that land of the Hlubi; the host would slaughter a beast for these visitors from the Great Place. The distance to the Great Place of amaZizi is normally covered in one and a half days but, because of the entertainment stops, involving sleeping over for a night at the host's place, the entourage took four full days on the road ...

They enjoyed great hospitality in the hands of amaZizi because Ngwekazi was a nephew to the Great Place of amaZizi ... Big feasts for entertainment were organised at the Great Place in honour of the son of their princess and a grandson of King Dlomo. The chance they got to see and entertain their nephew

made the elderly people's hearts overflow with joy; it was even more pleasant for the youth to see their cousin. That entertainment, sanctioned by sacred hearts, continued for days ...

On return home Ngwekazi was driving a herd of very beautiful cattle (twenty in all) which were a gift from his mother's place ... The hearts of the Hlubi Great Place warmed up when they heard the report of Ngwekazi's visit to his mother's place.)

The underlined words tell all - this was an act of communalism at its best. If one's eye catches the qualificatives and the descriptives and the repetitions thereof one would not miss the tendentious tone in which Jolobe describes this act: olumnandi ... ebubeleni ... emikhulu ... mnandi ... luzukileyo ... ezintle kunene ... mnandi (all translated above).

Another act of this nature occurs when Ayanda, a princess from amaZizi was on visit to the Hlubi Great Place, staying with LamaThubelo, one of King Dlomo's wives, who organised a similar form of entertainment drawing crowds to her place to keep the visiting princess and her entourage company. In the account (Jolobe 1958:76-77) Jolobe indicates that the entourage brought happiness and were also kept happy in the same terminology he uses in the account of Ngwekazi's visit to amaZizi. Of interest in this account is the repetition again of the qualificative, mnandi (nice/enjoyable) and its synonyms: lonwabile (happy), sivuyile (are happy), incumile (smiled), entle (beautiful), enendili (beautiful and dignified), ebukelekayo (beautiful), zazizicobala (very beautiful), ukubukeka (to be beautiful), kumnandi (nice), yamnandi (was nice), mhle (beautiful), uyafanelwa (looks beautiful in), liliphiwe (ilizwi) (beautiful) (voice), ndiphuma (has most beautiful voice), zibungezelelwa (admired) (Jolobe 1958:76-78). All words are translated in context - all being terms that are suitable in describing happiness under communalist type of life which seeks to make life to be good life for all at all times. We feel more and more that words in a text - this being an anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist text - are made to exude far more implications than their normal meanings; the ones singled out here and the repetition of some are meant to portray the true life of happiness the Africans/Nguni enjoyed against the false information that they were simply barbarians.

The spirit of communalism is expressed also in the accounts of numerous celebrations of a woman rite of passage, *intonjane*, by many girls (Jolobe 1958:65). Those were further occasions of pleasure. Even though attendance was voluntary Ntsele found himself under strong censure from Nobusi for not coming to enjoy himself when she was celebrating the same (Jolobe 1958:74-75). That is how strong communalism was; Nobusi, by that time, had not yet accepted Ntsele's proposal, and had no "right" to chastise him. On the other

hand, it was during this confrontation that Nobusi accepted Ntsele as her lover when she heard that Ntsele's absence at her *intonjane* celebration was caused by his performance of a higher communalistic duty - taking water every evening to his grandfather, Dlomo.

At middle level, so to speak, where groups are involved in practical demonstration of communalism, we may quote the bands that would be invited to thrash corn (Jolobe 1958:34). This was the practice right through the kingdom during harvest time. As said above, these bands were not on contract for payment, if they got anything to take home it would be a small "basin" of the corn or mealies or wheat that they were thrashing. That was not payment which could be claimed if not given, but a token of gratitude. What is emphasized here is that the bands enjoyed themselves while thrashing the corn, singing, dancing, eating and drinking whatever the host provided. That made life for them a pleasure of being of assistance to others. This saved mainly widows from worries - these bands were always ready to help. Communalism at its best.

At lower level, so to speak, the fact that communalism was a way of life that was in-born in the African, comes out even in "insignificant" remarks like Ntsele helping Nobusi get cattle dung from the kraal when she was scared of the oxen to get it herself or when Ntsele helped put the bucketful of water on Nobusi's head at the well when she could not (Jolobe 1958:13-14). There are many more: Ntsele challenges Ngwekazi to a fight for pulling the leg of Nobusi rather too far (Jolobe 1958:14-16); Dlanga gets supper at the Great Place after giving his report to King Dlomo on the "boys" in the circumcision lodge (Jolobe 1958:5); Ndulamba brings a message from LamaNgwekazi to King Dlomo and Dlomo calls him to drink from the beer (container) he had in front of him, after taking three to four gulps he bursts out in poetry in his thanks to the King:

Ncobo, Mthimkhulu! Phila kade mntwan' enkosi.
(Jolobe 1958:48)

(Son of King Ncobo, grandson of King Mthimkhulu! Long live, grandson of Kings.)

These acts of communalism and socialist behaviour go together with a corollary called respect and discipline which we will go into also.

All these prove beyond doubt that the early African/Nguni had a clear system of orderly life far from what could be called barbarism. If there was madness in their behaviour there was a "system" in it. Jolobe had exposed this clearly enough in his crusade at nation re-

building, reconstruction and development in this account on alternative history of the Nguni as against the hegemonic version. The details have borne out Alberti/Fehr's (1807) observation about the contentment, humour and pleasure that the early Indigenes enjoyed.

There will be references to big ceremonies and emphasis on dancing in big groups below as shown already in the few examples we have just quoted. Such an emphasis is deliberately making a statement on African dance and on dance globally. It is saying the African dance was an African dance with its own peculiarities - no barbarism should be attached to it as the early Europeans in South Africa did in condemning it in their ignorance. Culture, particularly early cultures, had its own type of dance, and

"All dances were originally sacred ... Every dance was created ... in the mythical period, by an ancestor, a totemic animal, a god, or a hero ...

(Eliade 1965:28)

No judgemental statement may be made on "other" peoples' dances, as they are sacred to that particular culture. Jolobe is making this assertion by his emphasis (below) on the orderliness of the performance of the dances in this novel. Such dances were performed at great communalistic occasions as we have seen above and were actually physical and concrete expressions of fellow feeling and *ubuntu*.

3.4 **Discipline and Respect**

The social stratification of the African society determines who must respect whom: The Supreme Being, the long departed Kings, Councillors, diviners and great/wealthy dignitaries; family ancestors; the living Kings, chiefs, Councillors, and medicine-men; the aged males and females, middle-aged males and females; young males and females, newly graduated from boyhood to manhood and from girlhood to senior girls who had undergone *intonjane* respectively; and children, give and show respect in this order. When spelt out the African social hierarchy given by Mandela, Jordan, Mqhayi, the SACP document (in Bunting) and in the text (page 10) - stands like this from top to bottom. As an African grows he/she gets to know this hierarchy and its demands bit by bit until it is imprinted indelibly on his/her mind.

Good behaviour in an African society exhibits itself in loud, wild outbursts of salute - too rough for a foreign ear - whenever a man approaches the precincts of the courtyard of a King or chief, in daylight or in darkness, whether the man sees the King/chief or not. This

is show of respect to the King/chief and his courtyard as entities that stand for both the highly political and the highly sacred in African societies. In fact, the King/chief will be saluted wherever he is met. Saluting is prostrating oneself before that royal figure in recognition of him as link with the unfathomable source of all life - the departed and the Supreme Being, as Jolobe says, through Ntsele (Jolobe 1958:23).

Though the issue of African/Nguni disciplined reverence and respect for the sacred is dealt with under another subsection it is important to note it here. Eliade (1965) remarks that to the early traditional mind

Every temple or palace - and ... every sacred city or royal residence - is a Sacred Mountain, thus becoming a Center.
(Eliade 1965:12)

To the Hlubi, Dlomo's royal residence was their centre of the world, and they respectfully flocked in large numbers whenever called to the Great Place. Jolobe dramatises this aspect also to remind the Nguni that they were people of respect and discipline, which quality had built them into a strong tribal group.

The first dramatic instance of display of respect is on page 4 of the text, on arrival of Dlanga, in darkness, from the circumcision lodge:

A! Dlomo, Ncobo, Mthimkhulu, Dlamini, Malunga!
(Jolobe 1958:4)

(Hail! King Dlomo, son of King Ncobo, grandson of King Mthimkhulu, Great-grandson of King Dlamini, Great-great-grandson of King Malunga!)

When he is allowed into the sacred chamber to give his report every utterance he makes is punctuated by either, *Baba* (Great Father), *mhlekazi* (the Great One), *mntwan' enkosi* (grandson of Great Kings), (Jolobe 1958:5). Their dialogue fills the whole of page 5 of the text and these addresses to the King would seem monotonous or even depraved to a foreigner to the culture, yet the gist of African/Nguni discipline lies just there. Even when Mahlaphahlapha was a powerless, fleeing refugee, his Councillors always saluted him. Examples of a variety of figures that salute each other and one another regularly are given below: We have seen and heard Dlanga, the keeper of the circumcision lodge saluting Dlomo, the King (Jolobe 1958:34); Ndulamba (a man) salutes LamaNgwekazi (Jolobe 1958:35); LamaNgwekazi salutes Ndlunkulu (woman to woman) (Jolobe 1958:48-49); Mahlaphahlapha's envoys salute the assembly at Dlomo's Palace (Jolobe 1958:56); the

surveillers during the war salute Mahlaphahlapha (Jolobe 1958:59); Mahlaphahlapha's army before attacking salute him (Jolobe 1958:61); Ntlabane (Chief Commander of the Armies) salutes Dlomo (Jolobe 1958:70); Ntsele (Grandson) salutes Dlomo (Jolobe 1958:71); Ngwekazi and abduction troops salute head of a homestead where they hid Nobusi (Jolobe 1958:101); Prince Ngwekazi on the point of death salutes Prince Ntsele (Jolobe 1958:107); the assembly gathered for the tasting of the first-fruits salute Ntsele, the new King (Jolobe 1958:111). These are just samples, the people salute directly or a report is tendentioulsy made that they did salute and sometimes even the volume of the salute is recorded as on page 61 (of the text) when the army was saluting Mahlaphahlapha:

... amaHlubi akhahlela onke ... atsho ngesandi esanga seseendudumo. (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:61)

(... His Hlubi troops all saluted ... it was like the rumbling of thunder.)

To indicate that saluting was a way of life and was done repeatedly Jolobe says about Ndulamba when he visited Dlomo's Great Place:

wafika wenza izibuliso zesiqhelo wakhahlela kumhlelezi ... (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:47)

(On arrival he uttered the regularly used words in saluting the King ...)

Secondly, whenever there is a national celebration at the Hlubi Great Place or at the amaZizi Great Place (entertainment of Ngwekazi, for example) the subjects come in droves and take their time at the Great Place (Jolobe 1958:109, 113). That is respect, the African/Nguni way. Three occasions at Dlomo's palace were mentioned above.

Though the situation is ironical Ngwekazi is expressing the gist of the matter when he says:

... angaba ngubani na ongade acinge ukungawuthobeli umvalelo wengonyama umhlelezi inkosi yamaHlubi ... angaba amabutho akomkhulu ngawokwenzani na. Aya kuba enani na angaceli imvume kumhlelezi amsike onjalo angabikho emhlabeni. (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:86)

(... who can ever dare to disobey the orders of the Lion, The Honourable, The King of amaHlubi ...! What would be the duty of the regiments of the Kingdom! Why would they not ask the King for permission to cut to pieces whoever disobeys his orders!)

Respect for the King is absolutely obligatory to everybody in the Kingdom, but is not enforced in a tyrannical way, it is mechanically automatic.

Discipline and respect in African/Nguni societies are also reflected here in refined, almost poetic language. To put a simple request like: come and enjoy a lunch at our place, this is couched in figurative language in our example because the request is addressed to a senior person and because on such visits it is not the food that was important but the presence of such a visitor on the premises of the host - Ndulamba expresses this invitation this way:

Ndithunywa yinkosikazi uLamaNgwekazi. Ucela umhlekazi ukuba akhe amenzele imbeko yokusitha ngesithunzi sakhe umgubasi wendlu yakhe ngoms' omnye. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:48*)

(I am a messenger from Her Royal Highness, LamaNgwekazi. She is requesting the King to grace her place on the third day from now by entering her premises and throwing his shadow on the door frames of her house.)

In actual fact this request for the King's shadow was an invitation to an entourage to a big feast. But it is couched in very reverential terms. That is African/Nguni discipline and respect. Thorpe (1991:40) in his research on Zulu/Nguni culture had found that the "doorway" is one of the "Three places in the hut (that) have ancestral associations." Jolobe in this euphemism about the door frames is making another affirmative point on Nguni culture as a reality.

Yes the three eligible princes refused to bring water to the King himself - disrespect. Where is African/Nguni respect? The detractors would hasten to ask. This matter and war in this novel are brought in for other purposes: the former to indicate that there was room for normal individualism, Africans/Nguni were not brainwashed robots even at the early stage much as the principle of respect stood for everyone to observe. The latter is for display of military strategies as we will show below. The novel would also have been not true to life without those exceptions to the norm. We will make a larger comment based on Eliade's (1965) research, on adversity, afflictions and wars among early societies; wars were not simple barbaric acts but were coming in larger predetermined processes of natural cycles. Jolobe had also said that an author does bring into his work of art bad things only to discourage them.

About the water incident. It is by the reactions to disrespect that the author wants to demonstrate African/Nguni respect. Ntlabane is reported to have been very disappointed and empathised for the King and also got angry about this (Jolobe 1958:68). After the third day Ntlabane started having fears about the health of the King which could be

adversely affected by the disrespect shown by the three princes (Jolobe 1958:69), and , the author goes on to say:

Kodwa nangaphezu kwale ndawo waba lusizi ukuthi koonyana bakomkhulu kungabikho namnye unakho ukwenza umyalelo kayisemkhulu nangenxa yothando nentlonelo nje kuphela ... (my emphasis)

(Jolobe 1958:69)

(Even above that he felt deeply hurt to learn that not a single one from the three princes of their Great Place could humble himself and obey their grandfather's instruction just out of love and respect ...)

The sad news spread to the Councillors that were keeping MaMbambo's place (Ntsele's mother). They approached her on the matter in deep sadness (Jolobe 1958:69). That very night the always humble MaMbambo (Jolobe 1958:69) implored her son to forget about the circumcision he had undergone and do what would be termed a female job just to fill his grandfather's heart with happiness in his last days (Jolobe 1958:69). The response: Ntsele agreed and said that he would take the clay pot with his own hands and bring spring water to his grandfather (Jolobe 1958:69), and he did exactly that for days amid laughter which he did not bother himself about. Even later when he was challenged by Nobusi for missing her celebration (*intonjane*) and preferring to draw water, he stood up to her and said:

Ndazikhethela ngokwam ukuyenza le nto ngenxa yokuhlonela umhlekezi nokuthobela abakhulu kum nokoyika ihlazo lokuba kuthiwe amatshawe asemaHlubini akazange awunanze umyalelo wenkosi yawo. (my emphasis)

(Jolobe 1958:74)

(I made my own decision to do this because of the respect I have for the King and out of humility to elderly people and out of fear of disgrace we would suffer when people hear that the princes of the Great Place of amaHlubi disobeyed their King by refusing to execute a duty they were instructed to do.)

Mqhayi listed fear for disgrace as one principle that governed respect among Africans/Nguni. This chain reaction on the matter ends with Nobusi, who , when accepting the reasons why Ntsele took a job that was rejected by other princes, said:

Akusayi kuze undibone mna ndihleka umntu ngenxa yokubeka umzali wakhe, Ntsele. Singaba isizukulwana sethu siya kuphelela eshweni ukuba singahamba loo ndlela sonke. (my emphasis)

(Jolobe 1958:75)

(I will never laugh at anybody who humbles himself in order to serve his/her parent, Ntsele. If we all laugh at such people our generation will end up shamefully in a disgraceful pit.)

Both Ntsele and Nobusi say it all in these quotations about discipline and respect in African/Nguni societies, and in fact, their progress from childhood to their marriage and

afterwards rolls on the wheels of humility; Ntsele wins the crown through his humility on this water matter when all is said and done, yes his whole background is also marked by humility, there is no question about that.

In the marriage negotiations we see how groups display their respect for each other: the cattle for the bride tribute were chosen by the Hlubi Great Place with great care, and are described as

ikhulu lonke leenkomo ezintle ezikhethiweyo. (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:112)

(One hundred herd of the most beautiful and well-selected cattle.)

In return, the daughter-in-law's group, amaNgwe brought a lot of clothing and household articles for their in-laws (Jolobe 1958:113) on the marriage day; we catch the reason later in these tendentious sentences:

... kwangenwa ekwambeseni. yaba nde naleyo kuba kaloku ikhulu leenkomo nalo lifuna ukubuyekwezwa ngezambeso eziliqela.
(Jolobe 1958:115)

(... the next item on the programme was the distribution of clothing and household articles brought by the bride. That item took a long time because in reciprocation for the hundred herd of cattle they had to bring items approximating equivalent value.)

Surely the bride-tribute to the African/Nguni is not a rip-off as Europeans, who do this differently, liked to think.

In reality, in African/Nguni societies, discipline consists in observing the manners as exemplified here; we have selected samples of individuals (male and female), contemporaries, people of age groups of different levels, people in authority, and groups which have true replicas in reality, in our deliberation on discipline and respect explaining who gives, and, who is given respect in Africa/Nguni societies, as given by Jolobe. There are many more examples. Jolobe once more has injected this aspect into his historical novel tendentiously to refute marks of barbarism smeared on early Africans/Nguni and to re-awaken Africans/Nguni to their erstwhile true African/Nguni qualities in order for them to buck up psychologically, and to move forward in confidence in themselves to full humanhood from the 1950s onwards. After reading this book an African/Nguni would hold his head high, as Jolobe intended, and not even listen to one-eyed qualificatives the Africans/Nguni "earned" from the European detractors:

raw kaffirs, semi-civilized, barbaric infidels, pagan, entirely savage, wild sons of nature, lawless creatures, creatures without heads, people living in a moral desert, a doomed race, a sub-species, creatures devoid of human kindness, 3/5 of a man.

Jolobe has packed all these instances of respect and discipline to refute these and "prove" that the early Africans/Nguni were people of dignity and complexity, which showed itself in discipline and respect, in human feelings like gratitude both of which will be treated as separate topics.

3.5 Resumé

In our exposition of how Jolobe had demonstrated African/Nguni democracy as shown in the consultative meetings of either the councillors or the whole nation, African/Nguni communalism and socialism, and African/Nguni discipline and respect, we have shown how the politics of unprivileging the African/Nguni is countered in the contents and spirit of this novel. This was in line with the spirit of African writers of the 1950s who were bent on self-definition and self-affirmation of the African as full and civilized human beings in their own right against colonial attacks on their culture.

CHAPTER 4

JOLOBE - FURTHER ON (MIS)REPRESENTATION

We continue with the exposition of aspects of Nguni culture on which this text is used to "answer back" to colonialist discourse which had denied existence of such aspects. As JanMohamed [in Ashcroft (et al) (eds) 1995] states, the colonialist, in the process of military conquest and subsequently in his/her literature

destroys ... the effectiveness of indigenous economic, social, political, legal and moral systems and imposes his own versions of these structures on the Other. (But) Even though the native is negated by the projection of the inverted image (in colonialist discourse), his presence as an absence can never be cancelled

[JanMohamed in Ashcroft B. (eds) 1995:20]

This novel of the 1950s, by Jolobe, is responding to this situation by affirming that presence and its observable qualities as we demonstrate below. Further, colonialist literature and "philosophy" presented

the differences between the Europeans and the natives (as) so vast (to justify) the process of civilizing the natives (to) continue indefinitely. The ideological function of this mechanism, in addition to prolonging colonialism, is to dehistoricize and desocialize the conquered world ...

[JanMohamed in Ashcroft (et al) (eds) 1995:22].

Jolobe's text is demonstrating the historical and social aspects of the culture of pre-colonial Nguni to "disprove" these fallacies and goes on to display identical characteristics between the pre-colonial African/Nguni culture and the European culture, which the 'symbolic' writers, among the Europeans who wrote on colonial 'subjects' (as against the 'imaginary' writers who were bound by styles of the manichean allegory), acknowledged in a wishy-washy manner sometimes [JanMohamed in Ashcroft (et al) (eds) 1995:22-23]. JanMohamed also notes, in line with our observations here, that there has developed a dialogue between the colonialist fiction and ideology, on the one hand, and "Third World" literature, on the other, and goes on to say

The Third World's literary dialogue with Western cultures is marked by ... its attempt to negate the prior European negation of colonized cultures. (my emphasis)

[JanMohamed in Ashcroft (et al) (eds) 1995:23]

Our statements on the selected aspects treated below are premised and grounded on the facts.

4.1 Human Feelings

Human feelings like love, natural anger, and empathy could also be analysed as presented by Jolobe in demonstration of these as qualities that Africans possessed, qualities which were denied by the early European colonists and imperialists in their efforts to demoralize and unprivilege the African/Nguni and keep him/her mentally paralysed while they were helping themselves on the best that Africa produced.

A statistics approach would help us to establish this point. We have pointed out above that Jolobe intrudes to say that all mothers always want the best for their children (Jolobe 1958:50). The example of LamaNgwekazi about her son, Ngwekazi, is a classic case. Her heart was always in anxiety wishing that Ngwekazi, her son wins the throne at all costs. This was a feeling for her son, not for herself. She took him to a medicine-man for the same reason. She had a dream about the coronation day - that demonstrates her anxiety for her son. When her son lost the crown she ran mad first and attacked the medicine-man, and later, when Ngwekazi was brought back dead after his abduction of Nobusi she barricaded herself inside her house and burnt herself to ashes - all for her son. [Eliade (1965) however, has a larger explanation for removal from living society of people tainted with evil qualities, like Ngwekazi and LamaNgwekazi, an explanation which a philosopher like Jolobe had also incorporated in the same drama of the lives of these two characters to show over and above the point discussed here, that Africans never lagged behind in the natural processes of spiritual development which nations globally were undergoing simultaneously.]

Through love the mothers of Manyaza and Jozi also took their sons to medicine-men and were as anxious as LamaNgwekazi. They, like LamaNgwekazi, had tried to dig information from Ndlunkulu about the King's preference for the throne before the coronation day. Their anxiety is dramatised on pages 88-89 of the text.

At the departure of the Hlubi army from the Great Place to assist Mahlaphahlapha the elderly women cried openly, the elderly men suffered lumps of sadness in their throats, the elderly girls hid their eyes and looked the other way in sadness (Jolobe 1958:57). The seriousness of their compassion is stressed in the fact that they were in that state of sadness from the afternoon till sunset. This was love mixed with empathy. We have many cases of empathy. When the young girl, who was with Nobusi at the beginning of the abduction,

cried at her home, all who heard her came out rushing to find the cause (Jolobe 1958:102). Ntsele, in sadness and empathy, could imagine the pains suffered by Nobusi during the abduction (Jolobe 1958:103). At the same time Ntsele also feared for the safety of Ngwekazi who might be attacked, without help, by amaNgwe who were looking for Nobusi (Jolobe 1958:103). Ntsele was leading, in great anxiety, when the identities of the fallen were checked, after the skirmish at emaZizini (Jolobe 1958:106), the foremost in his mind was his half-brother, Ngwekazi, the very culprit.

Strange, as if Ngwekazi was not in an act to rob Ntsele of his wife-to-be, Ntsele was shattered when he found Ngwekazi bleeding to death among the fallen and started singing praises in honour of Ngwekazi, his half-brother:

Liwile ikroti. Liwile itshawe nozwane. Athi ke mna! mfo-wethu bendikuthanda ...
(Jolobe 1958:107)

(The very brave one has fallen. A prince to the core has fallen. O dear me! How I loved you, my brother ...)

The whole nation, in empathy, fell into sadness for the death of Ngwekazi and his mother (Jolobe 1958:108). What a brilliant dramatisation, in fiction, of the tender nature of the Nguni who had all along been only known as unfeeling, ruthless barbarians! This goes back to what Jolobe said about what is dramatised in literature - the true emotions, feelings, and reactions to pain and humour, which Africans also display.

When Ntsele and Menziwa found Nobusi at the home where she was hidden by Ngwekazi they felt happy for her (Jolobe 1958:104-105). Ayanda felt sorry that Ngwekazi died, as, in tricking him about the safe place to hide Nobusi, she did not intend that Ngwekazi should get killed (Jolobe 1958:108).

A feeling of remorse was known in Africa/among the Nguni a long time ago. The last words from Ngwekazi's lips prove that. He expressed disgust at himself for doing the abduction; he was scared that his ancestors would not even look at him for his act; he implored Ntsele not to organise a revenge attack on amaNgwe for killing him, admitting that he deserved that kind of death; and finally he declared himself a fool, and died (Jolobe 1958:107). A feeling of remorse is also implicitly expressed by LamaNgwekazi when she declared on her death that Ngwekazi

... weyela emhadini kudala.
(*Jolobe 1958:107*)

(Ngwekazi had fallen into a bottomless pit long before he died.)

That is self-pity on the fact that she did not teach him discipline right from the start. We know that Ngwekazi while herding stock as a very young boy imposed himself on the other herdboys as a "headman" (*Jolobe 1958:3*), and became haughtier and haughtier as he grew up without LamaNgwekazi intervening. When both she and Ngwekazi die for unsocial behaviour we cannot help recalling, Eliade's (1965) exposition on the purgation of evil that comes at the end of a cycle where early traditional societies would take a "scapegoat" and kill it at a place away from settled areas to execute the act of exorcising of evil so that that society starts a new life of spiritual cleanliness in the new cycle.

An anger that develops naturally from frustration is a feeling that Africans/Nguni also experience in this manner. Ngwekazi abducts Nobusi in anger resulting from frustration that stems from the fact that losing the crown meant losing Nobusi as well. The arrangement was that whoever wins the crown will get Nobusi as his wife. A second case: Ayanda was brought to the Hlubi Great Place before the coronation in order to make a love-match-for-marriage with Ngwekazi. Ngwekazi's eyes were still on Nobusi, and when Ayanda finally realised that her mission was failing she turned against Ngwekazi in frustration and anger as we explained under authorial interventions above, in Chapter 1.

A feeling of happiness that draws tears is not a foreign feeling to Africa/among the Nguni. Nobusi shed such tears when Ntsele and Menziwa came to the hut where Ngwekazi had hidden her (*Jolobe 1958:105*). A feeling of happiness that draws applause as in a rugby match these days was experienced as in the three major celebrations at the Hlubi Great Place where people were entertained by a cattle race where everybody became happily wild and noisy, at the climax of each race, about the number one ox. At that point praise singers would burst out in poetry and women would "cacophonously" -ululate, all in enjoyment of sport.

True love which leads to marriage is that which we witness between Ntsele and Nobusi growing naturally, without sex, to the marriage day. We explained the development of their feelings of love for each other above.

A feeling of thankfulness is as natural to the African/Nguni as his/her feeling of an urge to give. Whoever receives a tangible and concrete or abstract "object" is always thankful. Mahlaphahlapha thanked Dlomo's army which helped him (Jolobe 1958:64). Ntsele and Menziwa thanked Ayanda's uncle who got involved in keeping Nobusi safe during her abduction (Jolobe 1958:105). Nobusi orders Menziwa to go and thank Ayanda personally for the safe arrangements she made to save Nobusi (Jolobe 1958:108).

The blessing of ability to forgive was also showered over Africa/the Nguni at creation. When the Hlubi sent emissaries to the Great Place of amaNgwe to start the marriage negotiations they were afraid lest amaNgwe were still grudging them for the abduction of Nobusi. But to their pleasant surprise, they found amaNgwe had buried that incident for good, and engaged in the negotiations in good faith.

Again we have just given samples. People with such a variety of feelings can never be accused of having "dry hearts" and "small souls." Jolobe has injected these Nguni qualities consciously to refute such statements.

4.2 Love for peace

Under discipline and respect we have exposed how Jolobe has re-enacted in his account inter-personal, inter-group, and, personal-to-group relations within mainly a section of the Hlubi Kingdom. Here we intend to expose the emphasis Jolobe puts on the fact that though there is an account of war in this historical novel, on the whole, the early African/Nguni people were not a war-like people, but people of peace. This section will therefore concentrate on external relations rather than internal relations, relations with groups outside the Hlubi Kingdom.

The state of the early Nguni in the setting used here indicates that they were people of peace:

... kwathi kusahleliwe konwatywe kwelo cala (lendlu enkulu), kusinwa ingodwane, kungaxhalelwe nto kuba kwakungacingwa ukuba kukho nasinye kwizizwe ezabe zithanda imfazwe, amaNdwandwe nempi yaseLangeni, amaNgwane namaZulu, esicinga ububi ngamaHlubi ... kwafika umntu komkhulu kwamhlelelazi uMahlaphahlapha ... exhwalekile kakhulu. (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:51-52)

(The Hlubi kingdom was at complete peace with itself, the subjects were entertaining themselves in tribal dances, with their minds closed to anything sinister that might occur, when a very miserable envoy one day arrived at Mahlaphahlapha's Great Place. Everybody thought that there was not a single

group, even from those that had a habit of upsetting the others - the Ndwandwe, Langeni, Ngwane and Zulu groups - that was thinking of unsettling any in the Hlubi kingdoms.)

The envoy came to report that the Zulu and the Ngwane groups-in-alliance were disturbing peace in his area. This was verified and found true. Then the long details of the skirmishes and more alliances and confiscation of cattle, are given (Jolobe 1958:52-64). The detractors would be happy about Jolobe's inclusion of chapters on a war as admission that Brownlee was correct when he said:

... their (Kaffir) normal state, before coming into contact with Europeans was one of war and bloodshed. These wars were chiefly for the acquisition of cattle.
(Brownlee 1916/1977:179)

The term, *imfazwe* (war) should not mislead us to think in terms of world war. What these belligerent groups, all in all, wanted, was to put Mahlaphahlapha under Matiwane's (of amaNgwane) control:

Kuphume umfo kumaNgwane wamezeza ngezwi elikhulu esithi amaNgwane akajonge kuncinitha into ayifunayo yinkosi uMahlaphahlapha ukuba aye kuncokola nomhlelezi uMatiwane. (*my emphasis*)

(Jolobe 1958:61)

(A man from amaNgwane shouted a message in a very loud voice to Mahlaphahlapha's group saying they, amaNgwane, do not mean to destroy Mahlaphahlapha's group, all they want is that Mahlaphahlapha should become Matiwane's vassal.)

The light language in which the reason for the war is expressed by this envoy suggests that the war could have stopped anytime after the target was achieved - it was not a war of destruction and a perpetual war as Brownlee suggests. This was more of a play like stick-playing where Africans play by hitting each other hard to the extent that blood is shed - all in the game of stick-playing and "strengthening" each other. This also served to demarcate one age-group from another and the young group, normally, who know that they were not powerful enough to play sticks with the older groups; they knew that they had to show respect to that older group until they were powerful enough to "fight" their way into that upper group through stick-playing. This "war" is something of a bloodier stick-playing, in principle, as we hear the wording in the last quotation above, and, as we see the account of the battle itself. It does not say the armies mutilated, disembowelled or drank the blood of the fallen, like cannibals and savages, but the concentration is more on the military strategies that each group played on each other to trick it into a difficult position.

It is for exposition of African military strategies that the war incident is included, not to concur with minds like Brownlee on war-mongering. The normal state in African/Nguni societies is that of peace described in the first quotation in this section. Before and after

the war things are normal for a long time and 95% of this novel is on normal activities performed in peace and dignity, and on development. The main film that Jolobe is playing here is of the peaceful conditions. Even the cattle that the Ngwane had confiscated were taken away from them by Ntlabane, part of that "booty" was given to Mahlaphahlapha in an attempt to re-establish his palace and help his people to find their feet once more; the rest were driven home to Dlomo's Great Place where they were used to compensate those families that had lost sons in the war - they were not kept by King Dlomo for himself. Now, is Brownlee's statement not reflected as one-eyed judgement on the matter!

When we assess statements made on the side of the attacked and their allies we detect clearly the emphasis on the fact that early Africans/Nguni were peaceful people. King Dlomo says to the assembly called to consider involvement in the war:

Thina sisisizwe soxolo kodwa ihlahla eliwa phezu kwenye ingalo ulisusa ngenye ingalo. Maxa wambi uxolo lulondolozwa ngokuvuma ukuba zinqoze iintonga. Andinithumi ukuba yilwani. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:54*)

(We are a peace-loving people, but a tree that falls on one arm is pushed off by using the other arm. Sometimes it is wise to go to war in order to create peaceful conditions. I am not sending you into a war of destruction.)

The underlined words say all regarding to peace in African/Nguni societies, even when Dlomo finally sees the necessity of going to war he admonishes "ironically" that his regiments should be gentle in going about it. What kind of barbaric monarch could tell his people to go into a war gently!

Gubungu, a senior citizen, also speaks in moderate terms on this war; he accepts that the fray which has started poses a danger to peace to every group in the region but he is still philosophical about it in supporting the King on involvement in the war:

Amandla ezo (zizwe) zithanda uxolo alele ekuncedisaneni. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:54*)

(The power for the peace-loving groups to restore and maintain peace and order lies in them forming an alliance.)

Even Ntlabane, the Commander of the Armies, speaks in sober terms rather than saying, thanks God, there is war, for me to deploy every regiment under me to destroy the enemy! Instead, he makes an assessment based on the stage of the war and only makes a suggestion for the control of the situation:

Ukuba ibe iluhlaselo olusayilwayo ngendisithi mhlawumbi ngekukhutshwa mabini-mathathu ... ndiqinisekile notshaba olo beluse lukholwe yevokosa ngenxa yoko ke alusenamandla ... ke kule meko makusukele ibutho libe linye. (*my emphasis*)

(Jolobe 1958:54-55)

(If we were hearing rumours of war I would suggest two or three regiments ... but by now I am sure the enemy has had enough and is tired ... That being the case I suggest that we send only one regiment now ...)

For the Army Commander who had plenty of regiments under his command to suggest one and, for the people to accept the suggestion (Jolobe 1958:55) demonstrate that these were peace-loving people rather than savages. If they were not, they would have been happy to deploy all the regiments on the tired Ndwane and Zulu groups and cut them to pieces.

Further remarks indicating that war was not the normal state of life among the early Africans/Nguni:

Kwakuse kulithutyana imfazwe yagqityelwayo ngamaHlubi. Isininzi solutsha sasikhule siyiva ngamayo ... (AmaHlosi) ayevuyela ithuba lokuzibalula azenzele amagama azuze namava apathekayo kuphele ukuva ngotyelo ngento yemfazwe. (*my emphasis*)

(Jolobe 1958:55)

(The Hlubi Kingdom had experienced no war for quite a long time. The majority among the youth heard about war only from stories ... The Hlosi regiment were keen to go to this war mainly to prove their manhood, make their names popular by displaying skills in the war, and, to gain concrete military experience and put an end to the fact that they had always relied on stories about war.)

The narrator gives in paraphrase here the intention of one newly-formed regiment for going to war as mainly for experience rather than for barbaric intentions of destroying the attackers. If war is taken on these terms by the early Africans/Nguni then the label of barbarism and savagery attached to them is disputed as inappropriate by Jolobe. The underlying reasons were unknown to the European labellers. In the quotation below Jolobe tentatively repeats and expands what Dlomo had earlier said to blot out the Brownlee idea that the early Africans/Nguni lived for and by war spoils all their lives, and to say the law of the jungle (survival of the fittest) was no longer the order of the day by the time the European missionaries, voyagers and settlers came to South Africa. Dlomo adds:

Andinithumeli ngantimbo valuchuku kuba besizihlalele ngoxolo thina. Kusuke kwahlatywa isandla sasekunene. Niya kubangula loo meva ke nina. Asitsho ukuthi zeningezi nayo intimbo kodwa sithi zenithi nithimba ezinkonazana nisukele kuqala ukuthimba uxolo ngokumohlwaya umhlasele aphinde umkhondo. Hambani ke bafo bam nisizele nozuko. (*my emphasis*)

(Jolobe 1958:56-57)

(We are not sending you to this war in the manner of an aggressor who intends to acquire cattle from the enemy, mark that. You know that we are, and, have been at peace with ourselves and all our neighbouring tribes. What has happened is that our right hand has been pierced by thorns. You are

only going there to pull out those thorns. We are not saying you should not bring home what you had to capture in the process, but what we are saying is that while you may capture cattle of different colours, try first to capture peace by punishing and chasing away the attackers (amaNdwane and amaZulu). Go well, my grandsons, and come back in victory and glory.)

The wording used by Jolobe here indicates that he was aware of the statements made by Brownlee and his company in stereotyping and othering the Indigenes, and the very first sentence (see translation for more clarity) is a retort to the quotation we took from Brownlee. The rest of the quotation is an elaboration on how and why early African/Nguni would go to war - it was for the protection of the weak more like a father would protect a weaker or younger son from the stronger or older ones in the family. In the underlined words Jolobe declares, against the European false interpretation of early African/Nguni skirmishes, that the main intention was to punish the aggressor, and that the "booty" that would be taken was unavoidable action (taken to decrease the enemy's power), but was of secondary importance to the peace that the helpers went to war to re-establish. We have already said that even those cattle that were captured were used as compensation to families that lost sons in the war, and some were given to Mahlaphahlapha. The other thing which we read from this quotation, which is of secondary importance, too, is the glory that the victory in war brings. As said above, this quotation is a broader reiteration of what Dlomo had said, and, repetition in a work of art like this one, is for emphasis for the readers to note, as Jolobe is on a mission here to correct misrepresentations.

What Dlomo had said is repeated by another powerful and significant figure in African politics and culture - the Praise-Singer of the Great Place, who, as Pallo Jordan, above, has said, is/was a "chronicler" and "collective conscience" of the community. He said:

Zenohlwaye ningancinithi.

.....
Nithimbe uxolo ngokugxotha (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:57)

(Punish the aggressors but do not annihilate them.

.....
Chase them away and re-establish peace.)

It is very significant that Jolobe plans a repetition of these words once more by such a figure; such repetition takes now more than a fictional tinge and comes closer to reality.

Soon after the war the regiments that had joined the war were cleansed of the passion to kill that is contracted in war. Dlikiza performed the cleansing. After that each soldier that

went to war was given a beast; families which lost sons were given five beasts each. Then there was feasting and dancing. The reason for all these is given in this sentence which emphasizes that early Africans/Nguni were keen to keep peace at all times.

Waba njalo umkhosi lowo ubuyiselwe kwintlalo yesiqhelo yoxolo. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:65*)

(The intention behind these ceremonies was to bring back the minds of the regiments from military operations recently experienced to normal life of peace and calm which, as ordinary civilians, they had long been enjoying before the war.)

The narrator, in the sentence that follows this quotation, says that the mature girls also organised a number of gatherings for socialising, soon after the war, which also served as additional acts of cleansing and purification of the soul (Jolobe 1958:65). Some of those gatherings were *intonjane* celebrations which turned the minds of the regiments from the war to marriage thoughts. These are various ways of saying early Africans/Nguni were not happy spear-wielding beasts but people of peace.

Jolobe includes the "war" between tribes to philosophize about it as something that a King would get into only to keep peace, which is one of European sayings, the European detractors know it. To say omnisciently that the Hlubi last heard of a war long ago to the extent that the newly circumcised group heard about war only from stories (Jolobe 1958:55), which means a period of over twenty years, "prove" the Brownlees to be liars who say that war and bloodshed was the "normal state" of the "Kaffirs." Moreover, as quoted in the biographical notes, he could also have included a negative action like war among "brothers" - amaZulu, amaNgwane and amaHlubi - to ridicule it so that it is discouraged that way in the minds of the first audience, the Nguni, mainly.

We may interpret the inclusion of war here at another level, too, which justifies wars among early traditional societies, as described by Eliade (1965), as normal cosmic episodes-in-a-cycle, and interpret Jolobe to be saying the early Nguni wars were no exception. Eliade (1965) says:

Struggles, conflicts, and wars for the most part have a ritual cause and function ... (Struggle) commemorates an episode of the divine and cosmic drama ... Each time the conflict is repeated, there is imitation of an archetypal model
(*Eliade 1965:29*).

Eliade (1965) later adds that humanity in the early traditional civilizations held that:

Every hero repeated the archetypal gesture, every war rehearsed the struggle between good and evil ... each new massacre repeated the glorious end of the martyrs

(Eliade 1965:151-152)

According to him, this belief enabled ancient humanity

to endure great historical pressures without despairing, without committing suicide or falling into that spiritual aridity that always brings with it a relativistic or nihilistic view of history ... (A) very considerable fraction of the population of Europe, to say nothing of the other continents, still lives today by the light of the traditional, anti-"historicist" viewpoint.

(Eliade 1965:152)

Eliade is making these statements in his explication of the "cycle of eternal return" as it manifested itself in the history and cultures of ancient civilizations globally. There is much in Jolobe's account of the war and its context that coincides and corresponds with Eliade's account on ancient civilizations. Jolobe's context is the culture and the early history of the Nguni. Eliade's account cites the cycle of the moon (appearance, growth, full moon, dwindling into smaller half-circles until disappearance; then re-appearance and continuation of the same cycle over and over again) as firm ground on which they based their philosophy and traditions. Without labelling Jolobe as Platonic, he could be depicting these cycles in Nguni culture only to say what was noticeable in world cultures was simultaneously happening among the Nguni, there was no lagging behind in any sense. The Nguni in the novel observe natural phenomena, and time their ceremonies accordingly, Jolobe has named the seasons in which major events were planned to be celebrated. Moreover, in the quotations we used in this section we note that Jolobe emphasizes that before the war there was a long state of calmness and development; then preparations for war were made when the decision was taken to help Mahlaphahlapha. The war followed; after the war a cleansing ceremony was held. Jolobe then states in clear language that after the cleansing there was feasting and dancing plus *iintonjane* celebrations which put the warriors and the nation back to their former state of calmness and equilibrium, thus at the beginning of another cycle which starts with conditions of peacefulness, normality and progress. To sum up, there was peace at first (Jolobe 1958:51-52); then war (Jolobe 1958:52-64); then peace again (Jolobe 1958:65). This is a cycle that presupposes another.

A lot more on ancient traditional societies coincides and corresponds between Jolobe's and Eliade's accounts. On suffering in general they "agree." This is related to the war we discussed under this sub-heading. Eliade lists examples of suffering which "corresponded ... to a prototype ... (or) to an order whose value was not contested" (Eliade 1965:96); he lists illness, mishaps, invasion, incendiarism, slavery, humiliation, drought, flood, storm,

cattle disease, or suffering brought by social injustice. A lot of these occur in this novel with a calm and sober response from those affected. When the invasion occurred Dlomo and Ntlabane took it calmly and talked about their involvement in it as merely going there to remove a tree that has fallen on their brother, Mahlaphahlapha. When finally Ngwekazi and LamaNgwekazi come to realise their humiliation and the social injustice they had engaged in with negative results for them and the community they show and express remorse before both die.

We could, therefore, say that Jolobe's treatment of human feelings, with African/Nguni characters used as "living" examples, allows us to interpret this aspect of Nguni life at this level which identifies Africans/Nguni with all nations of the world at the early traditional stage. Jolobe is globalising the conscience of his first audience readers for them to see themselves as full members, not as a sub-species, of humanity at any stage, just as Mqhayi (1926) said with historical exactness:

Isizwe senu sisemqulwini wezizwe.
(Mqhayi 1926:33)

(You (Nguni) are equals with nations of the world.)

When we look around the globe for parallels we see a saying in English history: If you want peace, prepare for war. We see that wisdom in the account of the war in this historical novel. We also see a parallel in strategies which Mao Tse Tung instilled as a song into the heads of the Red Army:

The enemy advances : we retreat
The enemy halts : we harass
The enemy tires : we attack
The enemy retreats : we pursue
(Mao Tse Tung's song in Kennett, 1973:85)

These global similarities speak for themselves about the early Nguni/Africans.

All in all, the inclusion of the war in this novel does not detract from the fact that Jolobe had "proved" the Africans/Nguni to be people of peace - the aspect we are discussing here.

4.3 Intelligence/Brains

We are aware of quite a number of negative labels at global, continental and local spheres regarding the brains and intelligence level of early Africans: *three-fifths of a man; a sub-species of humans; inferior to Whites in reason; narrow and dull in imagination;*

thoughtless; creatures without heads; underdeveloped spirit; lacked completely the use of Reason; of little wit; depraved natives; ignorant victims of their own passions; blinded and deluded people; fanatics; children in knowledge who must be put under White tutors and governors with superior knowledge of parents; and baboons (a metaphor for stupidity.)

The worst of these labels is the one that says: *the lowest in mentality among Whites is higher in mentality than the highest among Africans.*

The reaction from the Blacks to this is captured by Ayivor in these terms:

All sensitive Blacks ... are plagued by an uncontrollable inner urge to prove to the world that they are neither intellectually nor culturally barren and primitive as colonial myths make them out to be. *(my emphasis)*

(Ayivor 1993:12-13)

Here we will concentrate on Jolobe's contribution, through this novel, in the battle to refute intellectual barrenness.

We may start with the display of brains by early Africans against animals to which they were equated. At the hunting expedition early in this novel the characters that formed the hunting group under Nkebeza would kill swift animals easily by forming a large ring around a hill where they were found; they would narrow the ring bit by bit as they approached the top of the hill. All that time the animals they had roused from their lairs would be running inside that ring until, as the human ring got narrower they had no more ground to run on and simply try to push through the ring at which stage the humans let their dogs loose on them and stabbed to death with spears those that tried to push their way out. They did this without chasing them, the ring strategy did the trick (Jolobe 1958:41).

The ferocious one, like the tiger, was attacked by a group in "close combat" with a "hail of spears" (Jolobe 1958:42). They did the same to the first lion (Jolobe 1958:44-45) they killed; in the narrator's comment on Ngwekazi's show of quick-wittedness we see once more Jolobe's retorts on intellectual ability of early Africans/Nguni. As the lion did not die immediately from the "hail of spears" and kept on trying violently to get at its killers Ngwekazi broke loose from his colleagues and drove another spear deeper into the body of the lion and it is that spear that was fatal to the lion. In the circumstances, that was daring and clever hence the narrator says:

UNgwekazi wabonisa inggondo ecinga msinyane ... *(my emphasis)*
(Jolobe 1958:45)

(Ngwekazi displayed his intelligence and quick-wittedness here ...)

This is a tendentious comment directed at the negative labels that equated early Africans/Nguni with animals. In fact, it was clever of the eight hunters to stand between the lion's cave and the fire first when they were dealing with the male lion.

The encounter with the mamba was quite a task that needed tact. In the case of swift animals the hunters formed a ring around them and killed them easily; in this case the mamba chased the hunters around until they were tired and it hemmed them in by making a ring around them with its body when they had formed into a group, and was ready to strike when Nkebeza, the group leader, hit it hard at its most vulnerable spot, the back of its head, and broke its power. The rest then stabbed it all over its body and killed it (Jolobe 1958:42-43).

When we reflect on these rings we see the point established. The humans kill the swift animals without much effort, by not giving them a chance to race with the dogs, but by throwing a ring around them; when the mamba throws a ring around the hunters it does not succeed, they kill it. In both instances the hunters take the upper hand in the end. The author is therefore saying the early African/Nguni was far superior in intelligence than the animals he was equated with - even the lions and the tigers were killed at close quarters by use of brains, bravery and prudence - not killed at a distance with a gun. The hunters displayed prudence when they ran from the mamba at first to gauge its strengths, and then to attack it when the chance availed itself. In such a tactic we also see what is spelt out these days of wars of liberation as successful guerilla army tactics:

Shamelessly attack the weak; but shamelessly flee from the strong.

The early Africans/Nguni applied that strategy long ago.

What comes out clearly is that the hunters could recognise snakes by their sounds and be ready for action. Those hunters could understand whether they were in an area where lions and tigers were available by looking at their spoor where they water themselves and be on the lookout for them (Jolobe 1958:42, 43). That is intelligence.

The author, in omniscient fashion describes LaMaShiyi in these terms:

Umfazi onengqondo yemvelo (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:50)

(A woman who is intelligent by nature)

This is at the stage of selection of the new King, the author praises this woman for her understanding of the difficulty of selecting and the effect of that on her husband. The wording is deliberate as it is in the process of the author's fight against derogatory remarks on African mentality. The account regarding the mental powers of LaMaShiyi extends to page 51 of the text.

There is wisdom which is expressed in English proverbs: Experience is the best teacher, and Experience is better than precept. Such wisdom is also a principle that Africans/Nguni applied in pre-colonial times. When Dlomo is pushed gently by LaMaShiyi to make untimely revelations on the selection of the new king, he replies:

... bekufuneka khebafunde ubudoda kuqala, yiyo le nto sizekeleleyo ngale ndawo ... njengamatshawe bahleli befundiswa ngokubukela.

(Jolobe 1958:50)

(... the three princes should get enough experience of manhood first, that is why we are delaying the selection ... as princes on the Great Place they gain more and more experience on palace matters by sitting and listening to deliberations and witnessing how we go about all Great Place businesses.)

The extension of the debate between the King and his first wife reveals how clever LaMaShiyi was and indicates that African/Nguni women were clever, intelligent beings who made intelligent observations on human behaviour, and were treated as such by their men rather than as trash and drums to beat as early missionaries and European settlers liked to say. Her cleverness is reflected in her argument with Dlomo that if the prince to be chosen knew his position in the matter beforehand he would take a keener interest in learning the Great Place businesses and responsibilities (Jolobe 1958:53). This argument also reflects on the fact that both sexes, men and women, displayed the capacity of intelligence equally well.

Mahlaphahlapha's daughter stages a successful rescue operation during the "seige" of her father's Great Place. As he was far advanced in age she put him on her back and followed no road but went through the fields under the cover of corn stalks and darkness. That is how he was saved from being captured that first night of the Ngwane attack (Jolobe 1958:53) - a rescue operation similar to the one staged by Chief Nqeno's daughter when Major Williams Cox attacked Nqeno's kraal. Chief Nqeno's daughter quickly put her father's leopard cloak and drew the attention of Cox's army to her, while her father escaped wearing her clothes, thus saving him (Mostert 1992:681).

There is wisdom in the slogan: Injury to one is injury to all. The narrator reveals that the pre-colonial African/Nguni kept his liberty and peace by observing the same principle. Dlomo, addressing the nation on the need to send help to Mahlaphahlapha wisely reminds his subjects of the principle lying in the slogan above:

Kwakwenzakala ingalo yasekhohlo eyokunene sukuba yenzakele nayo kuba usizo lwayo sukuba lwaphukile.

(Jolobe 1958:54)

(When the left arm is harmed the right one is in danger of harm because its support is broken.)

The wisdom of African communalism lies in its provisions for this risk factor. The wisdom in African folktales which emphasize the greater significance of the despised than the normally respected is seen in the King's reference to the crucial support gained from the normally weaker left arm by the normally stronger right arm. This is an intelligent observation by the King - a point tendentiously made by Jolobe to affirm intelligence in the early African/Nguni.

A statement on the war reflects that pre-colonial Africans were philosophical about war and took it in sober terms through experience:

Yayilindelwe kanaanjalo into yokuba kufa omnye kakade ukuze baphile abanye.

(Jolobe 1958:65)

(It was expected that in war some would die so that those that remain may enjoy the fruits of victory and freedom.)

This, in fact, has crystallized into a proverb among these people, which is synonymous with this one:

Ukulunga kwenye kukonakala kwenye

(While good is coming out of an incident normally there is an ill-effect somewhere and vice versa.)

These wise sayings come out of long experience and equally long period of intelligent observation. This links up with observations on war among early traditional societies which Eliade (1965), above, gave a spiritual content and cosmic justification.

From experience, a woman, MaMbambo expresses wise fears that it would be impossible for the King's subjects to maintain unquestionable respect for the Great Place if the three princes refuse to bring water for the King and if nobody else is willing to do that. Woman, as she was, she expressed the truth and took it upon herself to persuade her son to do the job to avert that calamity. That is foresight and indeed, wisdom in diplomacy in a woman (Jolobe 1958:69).

The author, once more, in omniscient fashion, describes Ntsele's intelligence:

Ezi zinto ke zonke zathethwa kumfana owayenengqondo egcinayo. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:72*)

[All these things (Hlubi history) were poured into brains that stored accurately.]

This is also a deliberate remark.

Through a girl, Ayanda, the author displays once more the intelligence of pre-colonial Africans/Nguni. In an episode that works precisely according to plan we see fine brains at work: She was brought to the Hlubi Great Place for a love-match-for-marriage with Ngwekazi but things did not work well; Ngwekazi gave her little attention and ignored her for the rest of her stay. The author tendentiously makes a remark at this stage just before Ayanda applies her mind to "retaliation" against Ngwekazi:

Yayifunda ivaliwe into yokuba umfo lowo (uNgwekazi) usabekwe ekuthandabuzeni nasemaxhaleni yinzwakazi leyo yasemaNgweni. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:78*)

[Ayanda instinctively read that Ngwekazi was still being kicked around by the lady of the Ngwe Hlubi sub-group (Nobusi) and he was in great doubt and anxiety.]

Ayanda could also read by instinct from the dejected faces of the girls around the Hlubi Great Place when their "lovers" had gone to the Ngwe Hlubi sub-group (*Jolobe 1958:78*). That is intelligence because she was only a few days at the Hlubi Great Place and a stranger. Her greater intelligence is displayed when in retaliation against Ngwekazi she planned to encourage Ntsele to tackle Nobusi harder so that Nobusi would stop thinking about Ngwekazi, so that Ngwekazi would fall into her (Ayanda's) hands. Without divulging the reasons to Ntsele she co-opts him in the execution of this plan; she even offered to be his sister (as sisters normally propose girls for their brothers) and break the ground for Ntsele to walk easily when he himself finally proposes love to Nobusi (*Jolobe 1958:79&82*). She starts there and then to ask if Nobusi was going to come to the next ceremony at the Hlubi Great Place and how she looked like.

Ayanda displayed even greater intelligence in this episode when she planned ways of making sure that Ngwekazi would not get Nobusi even if he abducted her. She gave him a place where he could hide her, but then secretly sent her keeper to the owner of that place to make sure that Nobusi is taken away from Ngwekazi. She also divulged the whole secret between her and Ngwekazi to Ntsele, which made it easy for Ntsele and Menziwa's group to recover Nobusi on the same night she was abducted (*Jolobe 1958:99-100*). This

is powerful intelligence in a young African/Nguni woman in pre-colonial times! Jolobe is "using" such female characters to make his point strongly on African/Nguni intelligence in pre-colonial times.

When Ntsele was describing the appearance of Nobusi to Ayanda as requested by the latter he could read from her eyes something suspicious (Jolobe 1958:80). Indeed Ayanda was playing a clever trick. She herself later describes Ntsele as umfana onengqondo (Jolobe 1958:81) (an intelligent man). Ayanda's aunt, LamaThubelo, repeats the same words in her description of the character of Ntsele:

Ngumfana onengqondo lowo nonobuntu ... (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:82)

(That is a very intelligent and kind young man ...)

These are tendentious repetitions meant for emphasis on the true nature of pre-colonial African/Nguni young men who had been disciplined and "trained" in communalism, to counter claims on barbarism and intellectual bankruptcy.

The Chief Commander of the Armies, Ntlabane, was patrolling the Great Place one night, like Chief Security Officer, and his intuition told him that there was something afoot:

Kwabakho amanakani kuNtlabane ukuba kukho into eyilekayo ngenxa yamagqugula awayemana ukuwabhaqa ... (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:98)

(Ntlabane learnt instinctively that something was brewing because of conversations he came upon in secret places ...)

His instinct was correct, those groups were planning the abduction of Nobusi. That is intelligence.

Menziwa, like Ntlabane, could sense the source and direction of trouble and plan accordingly when his sister was abducted. He did sense correctly that it was not Ntsele but Ngwekazi who "kidnapped" Nobusi. He, therefore looked for Ngwekazi first (Jolobe 1958:102-103), and was correct.

When Menziwa's group were giving chase to Ngwekazi's group during the "kidnap" episode they had to stop somewhere and send only a few for surveillance of the place where Nobusi was hidden. The "spies" took a long time, but when the dogs started

barking the remaining group knew that the "spies" were at the place they were sent to. That is intelligence - to read signs in darkness (Jolobe 1958:104).

Young men, young women and elderly women display intelligence and brains; this spread across sexes and age-groups could not have been incidental but deliberate with intention to give the correct picture regarding this matter in reaction to slanderous terms early Africans/Nguni had earned from early European colonists and missionaries, some of which we gave in the first paragraph in this sub-section.

4.4 Security Consciousness and military capacity

From intelligence displayed at individual level we may move to military intelligence and clever military strategies - intelligence among pre-colonial Africans/Nguni on a wider scale and level. We may, in fact start with Dlikiza's wise words regarding the matter, which came as an answer to King Dlomo's question as to the best thing to do for "one" to defend oneself in the event of an undeclared war:

... asazi lutho thina kodwa amanyange athi lwakuxhoba utshaba phethela kwa oko uluhlangabeze luseza. Ukuba lunamandla goba ude ube namandla.
(Jolobe 1958:7)

(... we do not claim personal wisdom on the matter but our ancestral spirits say that when the enemy shows signs of aggression against you get ready militarily immediately and go out to meet it. If the enemy is more powerful than your armies play delaying tactics while gathering some support and then attack when you are strong enough.)

There is nothing wiser than this. This answer is philosophically, strategically, diplomatically, and militarily correct. This is a celebration and reminder on how Nguni Kings like Sandile outwitted the colonial authorities they were confronted with. Mostert (1992) records that in a conference of chiefs with Henry Calderwood on the 23 April 1847, Sandile expressed his displeasure on Calderwood for not passing his message of peace to Governor Pottinger. Calderwood ordered Sandile to withdraw that accusation. With persuasion from his councillors he did so

to Calderwood's clear satisfaction. On such occasions the Xhosa often preferred to mask their feelings, for they had long before recognised the importance of petty satisfaction of the white men such as Calderwood, and placating them was a small price to pay for time to enable them later to evaluate and consider at leisure. (*my emphasis*)
(Mostert 1992:921)

This is how many Nguni kings behaved in real history when they felt at a disadvantage, only to play for time to gather strength. Dlikiza's words are a follow-up to Dlomo's question to Dlikiza on the activities of the neighbouring tribes:

Dlikiza, wena ulihamba lonke eli lasentla. Khawutsho iziwe zenza ntoni? ... Ndiyazi ukuba uhamba unyanga uvule amehlo. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:7*)

[Dlikiza, you travel all over the northern side (of Natal). Tell me, what are our neighbouring tribes doing? ... I know you go around healing people with your eyes open for information of this nature.]

Like an observant intelligence officer, journalist and political analyst, Dlikiza's reply that those tribes are quiet but are cutting out shields in readiness for defence in case of surprise attack, indicates the (military) intelligence that the early Europeans refused to acknowledge in the early African/Nguni. Dlomo's question itself shows that gathering military intelligence was known to be an inevitable activity for the political heads long before the arrival of Europeans in South Africa. Dlomo was doing military intelligence collection for the same purpose of survival. Indeed, in the 1820s there were commotions (contained in Dlomo's question)

sweeping across southern Africa from Zululand to the edge of the Kalahari and northwards into central Africa... Shaka (the Zulus) was reported to be marching against the Pondo and planning to continue through the trans-Kei... Meanwhile, a migration of the Ngwane, ...began moving south - westwards towards the colony under their leader Matiwane towards the Tembu and the Gcaleka.
(Mostert 1992:602)

The commotions described in this novel tally with these historical facts as recorded by Mostert (1992:602-605) with displays of military skills, such similarity celebrates that moment in Nguni history deliberately. The Hammond Historical Atlas of the World (n.d.) shows European and Asian kingdoms and empires of 1559 (page H-24), 1648 (page H-25), 1713 (page H-26) and 1763 (page H-27) which emerged, survived and engaged in wars as it happened in Africa. The European missionaries and settlers who pretended to see and hear about these wars for the first time in Africa and condemned them as an African barbarous habit, as if exclusively, came from those European kingdoms and empires. War is a universal human folly, not a specifically, exclusively an African defect, if it is. Moreover, the early missionaries themselves had brutal battles among themselves (Mostert 1992:834-837), and were therefore not fit even to utter a word on conflicts. Jolobe was aware of in-fighting among the missionaries, and was writing against that background.

The gathering of information regarding the favourite for the throne is also expressed in military terms as if it was for military purposes because of the weight of the matter. It is said each of the three groups that supported each of the three eligible princes were on a wide secret operation of finding out what was said about each respective prince (Jolobe 1958:39). This is for emphasis on the ability of early Africans in militarism, sharpness of mind and general alertness.

Mahlaphahlapha's Great Place, and all other Great Places (Jolobe 1958:1), were always under guard, in similar fashion of Europeans guarding highly official state buildings and seats of government (Jolobe 1958:52). It occurred naturally even to Africans/Nguni that that should be the case for security.

The first attack on Mahlaphahlapha's Great Place was planned by the Ngwane for the night; secondly, the Ngwane attacked the place from all directions, in the manner of the efficient ring thrown around the swift animals in the hunting expedition (Jolobe 1958:52). That was brilliant. In throwing in these two military strategies into this novel (attack by night, and, the ring battle formation) Jolobe is celebrating and reminding the Nguni of their brilliant pre-colonial strategies which they used in the colonial wars against the European invaders (the "horns" and the "chest" formation used by the Zulu armies) (Mostert 1992:499): numerous occasions when the Xhosa also threw a ring around their enemy (Mostert 1992:458, 655, 676, 685-686, 881, 883, 884, 1060); and, attack by night (Mostert 1992:676). More brains are shown when the Ngwane retreated while their reinforcements were coming which enabled them to stop retreating and to charge at the Hlubi in the very manner which Dlikiza had outlined: delay attack when weak; when stronger than the enemy, attack. The result was that the Ngwane won that day, and Mahlaphahlapha's smaller army retreated in defeat (Jolobe 1958:52).

Mahlaphahlapha's son's energy was burnt out at the time they retreated. He displayed military intelligence and discipline when he said his tired army should leave him there, at the mercy of the Ngwane army, and flee rather than keeping on trying to defend him in which case they will all be killed. To him that was unwise, fleeing at that stage would have saved many lives to carry on the war later (Jolobe 1958:52). That was brilliant, though, his men did not accept that, they carried him while fleeing. Making a comment on

the way the Southern Nguni conducted themselves in battle Mostert (1992) makes remarks that are echoed in this particular incident:

The Xhosa were far more pragmatic than the British (in a war situation). They recognized when enough was enough and were ever conscious of the greater importance of preserving life and existence ... and to this they turned instinctively. (*my emphasis*)
(Mostert 1992:934)

When the Ngwane armies caught up with the fleeing small army of Mahlaphahlapha's son they threw a ring around them once more to check whether the royal figure they were carrying was not Mahlaphahlapha himself. Strange, when they discovered that it was not, they did not molest that group any more, but from there, went out in different directions in search for Mahlaphahlapha himself. This indicates that the Ngwane were not bloodthirsty barbarians but were fighting for one principle they had set out under (Jolobe 1958:53).

Speeches made in support of giving help to Mahlaphahlapha by Dlomo and Gubungu show that giving help was not only a moral brotherly responsibility but also a strategy to re-establish and maintain peace. Ntlabane's words to the meeting on the matter equally show his military ingenuity: He makes an accurate assessment of the battle that has been fought already between the Ngwane and the regiment under Mahlaphahlapha's son as if he had watched it on a TV. On the basis of his observations, which predicted that the Ngwane had had enough for that day because the Hlubi normally fight valiantly (which they did till beaten in numbers), he recommended one regiment for immediate dispatching and another one to follow later, which indeed, proved sufficient and effective in breaking the Ngwane power, and to bring the battle to an end. Right at this early stage the fact that Ntlabane, the Chief Commander of the Hlubi Armies, was a military genius and a brilliant strategist, good in calculating and assessing, is proved. The timing of the attack he recommends in the following quotation reinforces the attributes we shower on him:

... eli lixsha lokulohlwaya (utshaba) engekapholi amanxeba lungekade lufumane amandla amatsha.
(*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:55)

[This is the right time to fall (on the Ngwane) before their wounds get time to heal and before they get stronger through reinforcements.]

It is also important to note that Dlomo, the King, argued for an alliance; Ntlabane, the Chief Commander of the Armies argued for the same; and a commoner, Gubungu also argued in favour of an alliance as the best thing for the peace-loving groups (Jolobe 1958:54). This cross-section is tendentiously meant to say how much and how far the pre-colonial African/Nguni was alert on security, adversity and war. The discussion on the

alliance naturally touches the question of possible booty which would be shared. In the sentence expressing this agreement there is an "if" (*ukuba*) (Jolobe 1958:55) which means their participation was not for spoils, but for moral reasons given above. The military ingenuity of these pre-colonial Africans/Nguni was backed up by morality - that is what the author is expressing against the Brownlees who missed this fact, all to re-instruct and to re-inspire the African of the 1950s for him to know himself, to re-claim his military heritage, and, to take his destiny into his own hands and be himself - a full human being equal to his detractors and to all humans on the globe if not better than most.

In the preparations for engagement in this war the basic things which a human mind needs are provided for the army before leaving: for surveillance, the intelligence agents were there; for physical needs ground roasted mealies and cold meat were provided in galore; for psychological preparedness, military parades (like for European armies) were organised, they sang warsongs, the bards sang praises to them, an African religious ceremony was performed in the cattle kraal of the Great Place and at the river, and, as the last thing they all assembled in lines before the King, and Dlomo gave them his last words which had miraculous effect on his armies. Mostert (1992) records that Nguni armies had disciplined military parades as shown on the day about 6000 of Maqoma's soldiers came to Burnshill to meet Captain James Alexander; the remarks go:

They moved ... with a precision ... passing to what obviously were previously assigned positions ... with quickness and order. It was an intentional message, to disabuse all notions of military disarray among them ... (*my emphasis*)
(Mostert 1992:745)

Such a reminder from Jolobe is intentional celebration of this quality achieved in pre-colonial times to awaken the Nguni to what they had been before. This is alternative history to challenge the hegemonic version. We may add that the style of attack on Fort Hare and Alice by Sandile in January 1851 "in three disciplined columns... deployed around the town and the fort" forced a comment from one White military man who witnessed this engagement:

It is wonderful (ever) since the last war (1847) the advance the Kaffirs have made in warfare tactics.
(Mostert 1992:1090)

The ululations of African women which they performed as the regiment was leaving the Great Place also strengthens psychologically. This catalogue of all the preparations displays the level of sophistication and military capacity reached already by the pre-colonial African/Nguni at the stage when he was randomly condemned as a brute living by

plunder and spoils. The last bard to sing praises as the regiment was leaving also repeats the moral responsibility the regiment had to observe - fighting only to re-establish peace:

Nithimbe uxolo ngokugxotha.

(Jolobe 1958:57)

(Re-establish peaceful conditions by chasing away the enemy.)

Life was known to be sacred to the pre-colonial African/Nguni hence Dlomo's and his bard's words are emphatic on just chasing away the enemy not spilling blood, let alone the fact that in practice blood is spilt to be able to vanquish the enemy effectively in a war situation. Jolobe puts emphasis on preparations here the Nguni made before engaging in war to register the level of military capacity they had reached in pre-colonial times, as against the numerous military blunders, like the one we quote here, the European colonial officers and armies made. Mostert (1992) records the War of the Axe (1946) as an "inglorious" episode:

Blunder and disaster, timidity, muddle and stupidity, quarrel and disagreement and dismal ineptitude marked every stage of this dismally ill-considered initiative ... Hare had decided on war without having at his forward posts any stockpiled supplies of rations and ammunition for his men or assurance of fodder for the hundreds of horses and oxen that mobility required.

(Mostert 1992:875)

The parallel drawn here between the preparedness on the Nguni side, and lack of it on the European side, brings out clearly the assertion Jolobe is making, as he was writing with this background in his mind.

In the field of operations alternative plans, similar to Plan A and Plan B in modern guerilla wars, are made (Jolobe 1958:57): Mahlaphahlapha's envoys to Dlomo were given two spots where they would find Mahlaphahlapha on their return to report, which was a mark of brilliance. Mahlaphahlapha's warriors, in fleeing on the first attack, did not just scatter for each to find a safe place for himself but tried to find each other so that when they had formed into a bigger group they could retaliate in self-defence against amaNgwane (Jolobe 1958:57-58) - that is retreating in strategic military order.

The military strategy of torture of the enemy captured in order to extract information is applied in this war. AmaNgwane met two hungry tired Hlubi warriors and tortured them to get the whereabouts of Mahlaphahlapha, their main target; and that is how they got information about the latter. AmaNgwane at that stage were tracing their target in smaller

groups intending to send signals to one another only when the target's hiding place has been discovered (Jolobe 1958:58). When the hiding place was discovered they sent signals to other groups and they approached it from all directions - from the southern side, from the northern side, from the eastern side, and, from the western side (Jolobe 1958:59) - throwing the brilliant circle around the target once more.

In the skirmish that followed the intelligence agents on Mahlaphahlapha's side were used to great effect. They reported that the smallest of the Ngwane group that were encircling them was the one that was coming from the southern side; the commander and the special *ad hoc* war council decided on attacking that small one to increase the gap between the bigger ones and them for the time being - applying the guerilla tactic: shamelessly attack the weak and shamelessly flee from the strong. They started moving, with intelligence agents always in front. (During the 1850-1853 war Harry Smith had this to say on information circulation in war with amaXhosa:

They (amaNgqika) possess the most perfect information; nothing occurs, far or near, of which they are not at once apprised by their emissaries.

(Mostert 1992:1078)

By bringing in this fact Jolobe is celebrating this point in Nguni military warfare.) In the afternoon the latter came with a report that amaNgwane had put down their arms, and were busy skinning an ox in preparation for a meal. The commander felt that that is the right time to attack and they did exactly that - a surprise attack. We see here the application of one of Mao Tse Tung's strategies: The enemy halts : we harass (Mao Tse Tung in Kennett 1973:85). The commander divided his small army into two: the first division was to go down the valley and appear just opposite the relaxing Ngwane regiment making a big noise to scare them and attack with fury; the second division was to come down the mountain in full view later shouting to cause more panic and confusion on amaNgwane (Jolobe 1958:59-60). The strategy was effective, amaNgwane were beaten and chased away in disarray. The emphasis in this account is on planning and fast action rather on butchering the fleeing Ngwane regiment. This novel is celebrating once more another great skill which the Nguni had acquired and used during colonial wars with great effect; in Natal Dingane used it against Piet Retief and his entourage with devastating effect; the Xhosa had also used it with success on a number of occasions as recorded in Mostert 1992:688, 732-733, and 882).

The last sentence of this account on ambushing amaNgwane says that the Hlubi knew that their victory would not last long (Jolobe 1958:60); their minds were not fooled by that fresh victory. That is military vigilance.

We may not over-state the use of intelligence agents whenever action was to be taken or contemplated (Jolobe 1958:60). This is celebration of one more quality in real Nguni military history which Mostert (1992:885) records: during the colonial wars on the eastern frontier amaXhosa kept constant surveillance on movements of the British forces and used voice signals to pass messages to the main body of the army at far distances.

That group that had just won victory over amaNgwane found and merged with another Hlubi group of men that very night and they totalled six hundred. As they were aware of the fact that amaNgwane were still hunting Mahlaphahlapha they strategised and divided themselves into three groups which could engage in battle at the same time (Jolobe 1958:60). That was military vigilance, intelligence and pro-activeness.

The account of the ambush is related by the Ngwane men that lay injured to their fellows when they came upon that spot where it occurred. That repetition is for emphasis on military intelligence on the battlefield displayed by the early Africans/Nguni who are denied this quality by the early European missionaries and settlers.

The Bhele group, though not involved in war, formed themselves into regiments ready for anything on the day and at the time amaNgwane and amaHlubi were about to engage in battle nearer their area (Jolobe 1958:61). This is a demonstration of military vigilance which earlier Dlikiza had explained to Dlomo as the best thing to do to defend oneself when neighbouring groups start hostilities.

Each of the two groups that were about to fight was perched on a hill which afforded each comfortably long distance to see and some safety physically and spiritually for a moment (Jolobe 1958:61). That was a natural choice for each group. After an exchange of strong words between the two armies (Hlubi and Ngwane) they (Hlubi) saluted Mahlaphahlapha, their chief, which put them in high spirits for the battle. The Ngwane on their side sang a war-song to strengthen their spirits and advanced for a fight (Jolobe 1958:61). The Hlubi waited until the Ngwane were in the valley below them before coming down upon them singing praises to themselves and making a terrible noise to make up for their small

numbers. The praises and noise also strengthened them psychologically and would, hopefully, scare the opponent. This is the case even in stickplaying and in a man-to-man fight. That strategy worked at first because the Ngwane got scared (Jolobe 1958:62) but only got fresh courage from their bigger numbers and fought on (Jolobe 1958:62).

The account of this battle is a relation of brilliant application of fast action and all sorts of military strategies ever a so-called "primitive" nation applied. At a strategic point in the battle the Hlubi commander threw in the second division of two hundred men. The Ngwane also poured in reinforcements on their side which caused the battle to drag on from late morning (Jolobe 1958:61) to late afternoon (Jolobe 1958:62). All along the Ngwane relied on their bigger numbers. This is a fact that is emphasised twice, and, by the way, in his essay, Amanani (AMAVO 1940:30-36) Jolobe didactically advises the readers on the weight of numbers, particularly in politics.

It was in that late afternoon when Ntlabane with amaHlosi regiment came onto the battlefield to help Mahlaphahlapha (the chief of a Hlubi lower house) singing war-songs. He made a quick study of the battlefield and divided that regiment into five divisions. He ordered Ngwekazi's division to join battle immediately (on the side of the Hlubi of Mahlaphahlapha). Orders to the remaining four divisions: Manyaza's division was to attack from the southern side; Ntsele's division was to attack from the northern side; Jozi's division was to attack from the right-hand side; Ntlabane's division was to attack from the left-hand side. This is the circle strategy once more. The latter two divisions did not join battle immediately but moved round to their positions; even then Ntlabane at first sent a few men to confiscate the cattle that the Ngwane had confiscated all along. Then after ascertaining that the Ngwane had no more reinforcements coming Ntlabane's and Jozi's divisions fell upon the Ngwane regiments from behind (Jolobe 1958:63). That was brilliant.

While advancing Ntlabane sang praises to himself calling the ancestral spirits of the higher order of amaHlubi; this serves to strengthen one like a prayer in the religion that Europeans brought to South Africa. He went straight for the commander of the Ngwane regiments and challenged him in a "duel". The narrator gives us in reported speech Ntlabane's skill in making blows with his spears and in parrying blows with his shield and his endurance. He gave that Ngwane commander a fatal blow to the flank, and that caused

amaNgwane to take to their heels. In chasing them the Hlubi made it a point that they were not able to form up into a group but only flee in disarray (Jolobe 1958:63). That was strategic.

The pro-active step of bringing along medicine men saved the lives of those who could be saved after the battle. The medicine men came with Ntlabane's regiments, which was an act of wisdom for people going into a war situation.

Now we have pointed out the intelligence displayed in this novel in military matters, which is a picture of what happened in reality in the early days in pre-colonial South Africa as parallels we drew from real history demonstrate. We have said that the inclusion of the war was not concurrence with the derogatory Brownlees but more for depiction of African brilliance and brains in this field of national experience which all nations have gone through at the early stages. We deduce the intention behind the inclusion of war in the mainly cultural account that this novel brings to the Africans/Nguni, in the manner of the author's outlines of brilliant military strategies and battle-formations, in the repetitions, in reported speech, of these military strategies by the soldiers that were involved twice:

(AmaHlosi) ancoma nobuchule bakhe (uNtlabane) bokwazi ukuyila indlela yokuluhlasela utshaba.
(my emphasis)
(Jolobe 1958:63)

(In their review of the battle amaHlosi regiment expressed great appreciation of the strategies and skills Ntlabane had applied in attacking the opponents.)

We are reminded here of the early comments on Ntlabane where he was said to have risen to his rank, among other things, through his ability and skills in commanding his regiments in times of war (Jolobe 1958:2). Still in their critical appreciation of the manner in which amaHlosi were commanded to engage in the battle they revisit the formation of the circle around the opponents:

"Kodwa ke ukuba ebengekho la mabutho avele ngasemva kwakhona, nokuwadudula (amaNgwane) awele umlambo ngekungancedanga lutho," utshilo yena uNtsele.

Omnye uthe, "Yithi ukuba ebengekho nalawa avele emacaleni mntwan' enkosi.

"Hayi ndiyavuma kunjalo," utshilo uNgwekazi ...
(Jolobe 1958:64)

["To drive amaNgwane across the river/valley would not have been sufficient to vanquish them, were it not for the division that fell on them from behind," said Ntsele.

The other said, "My honoured prince, you should also add: were it not for those divisions that attacked (amaNgwane) from the side."

"Oh, Yes, well, I agree it was the attack from all directions that was most effective (in overpowering the Ngwane)," Ngwekazi concurred (with the first two speakers).]

Their reviews and repetition of accounts of incidents in the war support our contention that the author only brought in the war for exposition of African/Nguni military strategies for the African/Nguni to think afresh about himself and reject the degradation he is subjected to and rebuild his inner self for positive action and outlook on himself. The way Ntlabane here is commended for dividing his army into five divisions and for his plans to hem in the enemy from all sides is a celebration and reminder on Nguni military strategies they applied in early "frontier wars" like the division of armed forces by Nxele into four units in his attack on Grahamstown (Mostert 1992:476); yelling at the enemy is also recorded (Mostert 1992:477). Later, in another Xhosa attack on the colony, with Grahamstown as main target, during Maqoma's and Tyali's time, they divided themselves into separate units, and their success is recorded in these terms:

... they ... fell upon the white settlement, killing males, burning the homesteads and destroying all they could.

(Mostert 1992:676)

The success Ntlabane achieves in this novel by dividing his army into units is a celebration and reminder on Nguni historical military successes like these.

Under this treatment of early African/Nguni military strategies as signs of their maturity in that direction, we may add other measures of security they had developed in pre-colonial times and other incidents packed in the story which are related to their military strategies - packed in here to refute the immaturity they were dubbed with. There was "tight" security around the king, in the European fashion of protecting high state officials, as demonstrated by the armed guards the night Ntsele brought water for King Dlomo (Jolobe 1958:70). When Ntlabane sensed that on the night of the coronation there were suspicious conspiratorial actions on the Great Place premises he ordered two most experienced regiments to stay behind at the Great Place for a full week (Jolobe 1958:99). During the abduction of Nobusi Ngwekazi's collobarators bound the mouth and the arms of Nobusi and the young girl; the young girl was also blindfolded. This group took a direction which would mislead anyone who was watching until they were far enough from amaNgwe area. Then they took the correct direction, but only after the young girl had been taken back home. This is a "sophisticated" way of kidnapping which we see in films these days. Two regiments set out in the hunt for Nobusi [as in the case of the help given to

Mahlaphahlapha - there is a principle behind this; intelligence agents, to sense out the condition and gather information, are used once more (Jolobe 1958:104 and 105).]

To poke the owner of the place that the first regiment, hunting for Nobusi, wanted to attack, they opened the cattle kraal, knowing that dogs would bark and the owner would invariably jump out to check. When he sees his cattle being driven away he would wake up Ngwekazi's group that he accommodated that night, for help. Then they would get Ngwekazi and his group for punishment, which is what they desperately wanted to do in the process of hunting for Nobusi. The plan worked and they actually killed Ngwekazi, the main culprit. In the process of the fight some of Ngwe "warriors" made fast peeps inside the hut to check if Nobusi was really not there. The 1818 war of Amalinde was provoked in the same way; to tease and lure Ngqika into a war Nxele "sent a raiding party to seize cattle from one of Ngqika's subordinate chiefs" (Mostert 1992:465) and, indeed, that "bait" worked; Ngqika responded as expected - the planned war started. In the 1830s Maqoma planned with Khoikhoi soldiers that the latter would set fire to a shop outside the gates at Fort Willshire, then when the British soldiers came out to put out the fire, Maqoma's men would attack the unsuspecting British soldiers (Mostert 1992:676). Jolobe is celebrating and reminding the Nguni on the military brilliance they once displayed as a strong quality that they had, to awaken them.

These are all displays of security consciousness and brilliance in military warfare, when declared, which refute the claims that the pre-colonial Nguni brutally and barbarously applied the law of the jungle everyday of his/her life. At a purely literal and historical level Mostert describes the Nguni/Zulu in Natal of the 1830s, before and after the Blood River battle as

*the most disciplined and military-minded black nation of the African continent.
(Mostert 1992:821)*

This statement seals with "validity" and "veracity" what we say in this section as a reminder to the Nguni for re-awakening, self-appraisal, and confidence in themselves.

To see the inclusion of this skirmish and its details on consultation, on military discipline and smooth procedures, on extra help given to Mahlaphahlapha (rebuilding of his palace by Dlomo's armies as explained under paragraph 3.3), and on the sharing of the booty from the war between Mahlaphahlapha and Dlomo's people - in the latter case the cattle being used to compensate those families who lost sons in the skirmish, as a statement on the

norm among the Nguni as against the negative statements made by the Brownlees and early European colonists on the Nguni as being perpetual warmongers for gain, one has to realize that Jolobe was writing against background of early colonists themselves bracing themselves eagerly for war to get more cattle from the Nguni on the eastern frontier when the commando system was still in force, which allowed them to confiscate from the Nguni/Xhosa as many on the slightest pretext of loss which in many cases were lies or loss through their own negligence (Mostert 1992:845). To see the comparison regarding the behaviour of the military between the two we have to remember the mutinous behaviour of the colonists and their commandos in Cape Town , Graaff Reineit, and on the eastern frontier (Grahamstown and present Ciskei) in the 1800s and earlier (Mostert 1992:845). We have to remember, for instance, particular examples of indiscipline and inefficiency among the White colonial military officers of the 1840s as against the military discipline displayed by Dlomo and Ntlabane in this historical novel: The self-enriching Henry Somerset is reputed to have been

cunning, obstructing and ever-evasive
(Mostert 1992:840)

to a senior colonial officer, Lieutenant-Governor John Hare. This Somerset (and his army) is also notorious for having been

running a regiment (the Cape Mounted Rifles) in which the comfort, convenience and enrichment of his officers came first, military tasks a poor second. Somerset continued to regard the frontier as his personal zone of influence and ignored so far as possible the rules, regulations and orders that others promulgated or sought to institute; he interfered and undermined where he saw fit. In the corrupt atmosphere which he generated, his officers, ... had become a rough, slovenly and inefficient lot; the younger ones had the brutal prejudices of the rougher frontiersmen, their seniors were old and derelict. The rank-and-file Khoikhoi (in the White army) had become a truculent, rebellious core of resentful, disaffected soldiers. A serious mutiny, omniously plotted ... had been suppressed after one of the white officers had been murdered. (*my emphasis*)
(Mostert 1992:840)

In the 1830s, before this, we have another case of insolence by a White senior military officer, Harry Smith, to a White senior administrative officer, Governor Benjamin D'Urban, which Smith displayed on their way to Gcalekaland, with the Governor - an expedition that ended with the assassination and mutilation of King Hintsa by White military officers.

The next Cape Governor from 1844, Peregrine Maitland was also unfortunately blessed with "indolence and incompetence" (Mostert 1992:842). Jolobe drew his honest, efficient, brilliant, disciplined Nguni military officer, Ntlabane and his armies, and Dlomo,

the Nguni King against this filthy, vile, inefficient picture of ill-disciplined White governors, senior and junior military officers, army and White colonists in general, hence our conclusions, which are based on what Jolobe himself said about the nature of this novel and what he also said in his other works above in section 2.3. Of course, the old version of Eurocentrist Nguni history will not reflect the dirty side of early White colonists [that we see in Mostert 1992 and Karis 1972 (eds)] but the new version does, and Jolobe was very much aware of the latter version as we see in Chapter 2. We read the following from this comparison: as the Nguni government and armies were in reality so well-organised and disciplined as against the White armies and governorships, what the White colonists were doing in condemning the Nguni was a case of seeing a mote in the brother's eye while covering up a bigger blemish in the accuser. They were, moreover, hiding such truths as were admitted by the likes of Henry Calderwood about the successes of the Ngqika warriors in the War of the Axe (1846) when he said:

...the barbarians of the mountain completely outgeneraled the English officer.

(Mostert 1992:877)

Mostert (1992) also makes a similar remark on the bravery, brilliance and victories of amaNgqika in the 1850-1853 war in Amatola forest (KwaMathole) and the surroundings which makes one think that the war in this novel is a celebration of such victories achieved against White colonists who continued to despise the Nguni yet they could not always outshine them as they wished; he says

Harry Smith and George Mackinnon had been outmatched, outwitted and outgeneraled by the strategies of Maqoma and the nationalist defiance of a lame young Xhosa chief (Sandile) whom no one had considered would be willing to show himself on the battlefield.

(Mostert 1992:1040)

What we read, further from this juxtaposition of Nguni versus early White colonists, with the three opening quotations in section 3.3 in mind, is a total refutation of what Brownlee said in the first quotation (in fact it is Whites who lived by plunder on the Cape Nguni, taking, in all, thousands of cattle, using their military and the commandos); it is confirmation of what Malcom X said in the second quotation on the African being highly civilized "long before the Europeans were out of the caves;" it is the execution of the intention of the African creative artist to redefine and uplift themselves through literature, as Ayivor said in the third quotation. All the parallels we drew from real history prove these points.

4.5 African Belief System and Traditional Medicine

The African religious system is linked up with divination, health and herbs. Health entails both the spiritual and the physical aspects and the keeping of the body and soul balanced, whole and happy. The African religious system is just one area in African culture that eluded the intelligence of the early missionaries and European settlers. Strange enough, while they knew European soothsayers, they did not link that with African diviners; while they knew European witches, African "witchcraft" did not carry similar elements for them to understand; while they recite about Holy Mysteries (the body and blood of Jesus Christ) in their daily celebrations of Holy Communion, they could not understand positively the mysterious and the mystical in African religion; while they venerated in their religion the authors of biblical texts of the Old and the New Testament and the saints who departed from this world long ago, they would not understand African veneration of their ancestors and the mediation role they play between the living and the Giver of Life, God.

The following terms and statements were some of the labels that were attached to the early Africans by the early missionaries and European settlers collectively on the religious aspects: *infidels, malevolent heathens, (Africans) had corrupt passions, (Africans) knew nothing beyond the grave, (Africans were living) in a moral desert, (Africans were) leading Godless lives, (they) had imperfect heathen education, (they had) no souls, and (they had) a pagan religion, and, a vague idea of a Supreme Being.*

As said above, the majority of missionaries expected the Africans to abandon their cosmology including belief in witchcraft, and to abandon their rituals and herbs. From ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA we read and sense Jolobe's reaction to these attacks, where he outlines the African cosmology, their beliefs, rituals, divination and physical and spiritual healing.

In the narrator's paraphrase of Ntsele's poem at their coming-home (from circumcision) ceremony Jolobe outlines the African cosmology regarding the Supreme Being, creation, and, life, and their belief in the unbroken chain of life between the unborn, the living and the departed. The narrator "reports" (Jolobe 1958:23) Ntsele to have said that he is a branch of the big tree (his family) whose roots go so deep into the earth that no human brain is capable of even estimating how far they go and for how long has the tree existed. That big tree is a metaphorical reference to the Creator and the rest of the details refer to

the fact that the Supreme Being was there all the time - the time which cannot be measured. His (Ntsele's) ancestors originated from that tree of life (Jolobe 1958:23); the chain of life of those ancestors (unknown to Ntsele) is expressed in the lives of the living of which he, Ntsele, is one. Ntsele believes strongly in the certainty of unknown spirits that once lived and in the unfathomable Supreme Being that has been present all the time and started the creation at His own time. In the bible we have the Letter to the Hebrews Chapter 11 to quote, on faith, similar to Ntsele's. Jolobe deliberately engineers and allows this confession of faith by one character to make a statement on the existence of a religious faith in Nguni Indigenes' cosmology who were declared to be without one. In their traditional literature the Nguni had all along had their theory on creation, it is a matter that they understood in their own way like all other cultures right round the world; it is not something they were totally ignorant of; that is what Jolobe is asserting here.

The second point established in this novel on African religion is that in this chain of life the greatest link between the living and the Supreme Being are the national and the family ancestors. Whenever Dlikiza performs an act of divination he always acknowledges that he got the answer from the unknowable power through the ancestors (Jolobe 1958:6&31) just as is said in Proverbs 3:6: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths." When Ntlabane engages in battle he swears first by the Hlubi "national" ancestors (Jolobe 1958:63). The whole "population" on this novel believe in ancestors and a power higher than the ancestors.

The highest political leader, the King, is also established as the greatest religious leader; he has a sacred chamber on the palace ground which is exclusively for his use, the Chief Army Commander and the palace diviner, and, later Ntsele on graduation as King. The cattle kraal at the King's palace is used mainly for religious purposes (Jolobe 1958:21&113). Mbiti (1992:12), describing the real situation in African traditional religion, lists the kings, as well as diviners and medicine men, among religious officials. Jolobe presents the same dramatically.

The diviners and medicine-men are given prominence in this account, particularly Dlikiza, the palace diviner and co-spiritual guardian of the kingdom together with the King. When he is in the King's sacred chamber he is depicted keeping a fire of herbs whose smoke protects the King from invisible evil forces (Jolobe 1958:6&71). The belief in the need

for protection against invisible evil forces is implicitly explained in the narrator's paraphrase of Ngwekazi's thoughts:

... netshawe uNgwekazi ... laliyazi into yokuba kufanelekile ukuba libiyelwe ngabaziyo kuba ngokwenkolo yelo zwe nabalawulayo babesaphathaphathwa baqiniswe ngamagqirha.
(*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:37*)

[... and Prince Ngwekazi ... knew that it is a must that he should be cocooned from evil spirits by herbs of medicine-men, because in the religious traditions of their land even those who had reached the highest administrative levels (Kingship) were still constantly strengthened by traditional medicine-men.]

If we follow one diviner first, Dlikiza, we see how positively he is treated. In his presence at the King's chamber there is dignified awesomeness; his "few words" are philosophical; when he was consulted by Nobusi there was the same awesomeness around him (*Jolobe 1958:30*) which is described in these terms:

... kwakukho nokuthuthumela, kwasuka kwangathi kwelo gunjana labo bakwilizwe elikude elifihlakeleyo lezithinzi. Kwasuka kwangathi kuza kuthi gqi elinye lamanyange asemaNgweni elafa kudala lize libashwabulele ... baze bathi besangcangcazela njalo bafumana bathi busebeza, "Hambisa."
(*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:30-31*)

[... they (Nobusi and Nokhwezi) were trembling with fear, they felt as if in that room they were transported into a distant strange land of spirits. In that state of mind it seemed as if one of the long departed ancestors of amaNgwe could appear suddenly and curse them ... they were still shivering with fear when they managed to respond in low voices, "Carry on."]

Dlikiza reads from his bones the problem that Nobusi had and gave her an answer which she understood after some exercise in analysis. The answer to Nobusi is sanctioned as divine in that it would be known to Nobusi that it is a voice from a level higher than the human where only righteousness and truth reigns (*Jolobe 1958:31*), the zone of the sacred. It proved correct, and, indeed, that answer guided her to a marriage with Ntsele. On the ideal man Dlikiza gave the same answer to three people: King Dlomo, Nobusi and the old man in the last chapter. All went according to his word. Dlikiza officiated at all religious ceremonies which were followed by success (home-coming, war preparation and first-fruits). Early Africans in reality had been served by diviners of Dlikiza's calibre. By this one example *Jolobe* is saying there was nothing irreligious and Godless about African religion - theirs was a proper and fully-fledged religion and form of worship that had "grown out of the African soil" (*Mbiti 1992:10*).

Other diviners and medicine-men are thrown in as characters. Ngximbazwe (of Swaziland), who is consulted by Ngwekazi, is found in his chamber which is described as
(*igumbi*) elalinesithunzi ngokumangalisayo.

(Jolobe 1958:37)

(a chamber that filled one with awe in an incredible manner.)

It was furnished with skins of ferocious animals and snakes, horns of rare animals, and herbs. Like Dlikiza, he works up a smoke of herbs in his chamber and sits right in the thick of it. He uses bones in divining and correctly finds that selection to the kingship was the issue (Jolobe 1958:37-38). Manyaza's diviner also pronounced correctly the selection to kingship as the problem when consulted (Jolobe 1958:39). Jozi's diviner, too, declared correctly the selection to kingship as the problem (Jolobe 1958:39-40). All were not told beforehand what the problem was but could read it with their mystical powers of communication with the spirits from the bones they threw on the floor. The early Africans were served by such diviners who gave comfort to their bodies and souls after consultation and subsequent performance like taking the herbs or slaughtering a goat, a sheep or an ox as the diviner advised. The fact that they all worked for their clients, (like lawyers of two litigants who may not both win a case) but failed to win for each of them the one throne they were vying for, is another matter, which does not detract from the fact that they divined correctly and that divination was not play by fakes but a concrete reality among the Africans.

The three diviners of the three most eligible princes are not brought in to show how they lie and exploit clients to concur with criticism against them that lie in abusive terms like "absurdity of witchdoctors' pretensions", a term randomly thrown at them by the early missionaries. On the contrary, they are brought in to "demonstrate" the reality of the mysterious and the mystical in African religious system and African deep belief in divination. The diviners and medicine-men are part and parcel of African belief system; hopes, when in doubt and in a spiritual guagmire are pinned seriously on diviners hence even in a clear case, where one only must win the throne, all three mothers of the princes go to diviners; and, the diviners accept the cases separately and charge the clients. To show us that the author deliberately brought in all three in the "farce" they were involved in, the narrator makes the reader aware on the day before the selection that all three diviners knew that each contesting candidate had consulted a diviner, and adds:

Phofu ayeyazi yona into yokuba umntu oya kukhethwa mnye qwaba.
(Jolobe 1958:88)

(Truly all three diviners knew that only one candidate could ascend the throne.)

To show that this drama of consultations serves only to show the diviners as part and parcel of African religious system, not one of the three princes was selected but somebody else who was outside the drama of consultation. Ntsele won the crown on a different plain - good behaviour versus bad behaviour of the three eligible princes. A relation of this latter contest falls outside our sub-topic but is touched elsewhere.

As in the bible stories, the question of dreams and their interpretation in the African religious system is given great significance. Some dreams are taken to be visits from ancestors and a diviner's assistance is often sought for that reason. This might start off preparations for the performance of a particular custom, which might have been neglected by that particular dreamer. Jolobe brings in this matter deliberately. The night before the selection, all three mothers of the eligible princes could not sleep. When at last, at the cockcrow, LamaNgwekazi fell asleep, she had dreadful dreams (Jolobe 1958:89). One of them was particularly nasty: She saw her son, Ngwekazi falling down a big, slippery, bottomless hole which tapers far down, where the eye could not see properly, into a narrow dark tunnel, where there was a waterfall. She saw her son struggling to get out but instead he went further and further down the hole, and watched him until he disappeared with the water of the waterfall far down the tunnel. At the same time she saw a prince she could not recognise, ascending a mountain that was beautified with flowers; when he reached the top of the mountain the morning star left its place in the sky and flew towards that prince and perched on his head. At that point a large crowd from all tribes, languages, and nations of the world converged at that spot and saluted the prince with one big voice. Her son, too, joined the chorus just at the point of being swallowed by the waters of the waterfall. It is very significant that in a dream nations of the world came to salute an African prince, for the contentions we make regarding the intention of the author - inspiration and re-awakening of the African Indigenes to see themselves as equals to anybody in the world.

LamaNgwekazi cried in her sleep. The women she slept with woke her up and demanded to know why she was crying; she narrated the dream. Though they tried to console her, like good psychologists, by saying it will be Ngwekazi who will win the throne, she never got sleep again. The narrator adds:

Kwada kwasa ekhangele amaxhala edlala ngaye wona.
(Jolobe 1958:90)

(She could not sleep till the morning, anxiety was tearing her mind apart.)

This quotation and the dream demonstrate the significance of dreams in the African religious system, more so because this dream came true. Ngwekazi lost the throne and soon after tried an abortive abduction attempt which led to his untimely death. All this is paralleled in the dream. All this is confirmed at the point when Ngwekazi, on the point of dying revisits his mother's dream, which he confirms to be a vision rather than an empty exercise:

Besiba intloko yakhe yonakele kanti kuxa asenyanisweni kuba wawubona tanci lo mhadi endeyela kuwo ngoku ...

(Jolobe 1958:107)

(We thought she was becoming a raving lunatic yet she was in her best minds, because she saw the hole I am falling into now, long before ...)

Further confirmation of the same point is LamaNgwekazi's repetition of the message of her dream after she had touched Ngwekazi's forehead when he was brought back dead at the end of the abduction attempt. She said that she had seen Ngwekazi falling into the hole long before his death; she cried terribly while repeating more objects she saw in her dream: the slippery hole and the steep mountain (Jolobe 1958:107). Outside fiction, Thorpe (1991) explains the phenomenon of dreams to African societies in these words:

"Most commonly, ancestors reveal themselves through dreams ... (a dream is a) channel of communication between the departed and those still living in the visible community"

(Thorpe 1991:40)

Mbiti (1991:126) confirms the significance of dreams in African religion in the same way as Thorpe.

To Jolobe, in a novel that seeks to re-assert the genuineness of Nguni culture, it was crucial to dramatise this aspect of Nguni religion through LamaNgwekazi's dream.

The East was a symbol of beginning of things to the early Nguni. A young ox was slaughtered in the morning of coming -home of the circumcised "boys;" when it started bellowing, Dlikiza, the palace diviner and officiant at the ceremony turned his head east and while facing east he "spoke" to the ancestors (Jolobe 1958:21). On that same morning of the coming back of the "boys" from circumcision they were arranged in rows facing east, before sunrise, waiting for the first rays of the sun, whereupon they all made a stabbing gesture at it with the spears they had in their hands when it appeared (Jolobe 1958:22). Ngwekazi was instructed by his medicine-man, Ngximbazwe to apply the medication on his body at dawn facing the east looking at the red spot which appears

before sunrise (Jolobe 1958:38). The ox race on the day of *ukushwama* ritual takes an easterly direction (Jolobe 1958:110).

The performance of *ukushwama* ritual was a religious occasion. The sweet-corn stalks, which were brought by night from fields other than those of the immediate subjects of the King, were kept by the diviner in his secret place (Jolobe 1958:109). The occasion ends with the breaking of a calabash in front of the new King, which symbolically marks finally the granting of permission, to all, to use the green and fresh vegetables from their fields, from the religious leader who links them with their ancestors (Jolobe 1958:111). Outside fiction, Thorpe (1991:48) explains the annual first-fruits (and harvest) festival as "the cardinal communal ritual" among the Zulu. In its performance he mentions the King taking the first mouthful of the cooked meal and spitting it on the ground "in a ritual act of thanksgiving"; he mentions the strengthening of the army "with strong medicines in a series of ritual actions" and the "killing of a bull by unarmed warriors" - all on that day of celebration. In this novel Jolobe captures all these details to demonstrate the seriousness of this aspect in Nguni traditional religion - another point he uses to re-affirm that the Africans had a strong religion long before Christianity was introduced by the missionaries in Southern Africa.

Regarding the knowledge of illness it is surprising to find one "reputed" to be "brawn without brain," talking in philosophical terms like the ones King Dlomo uses:

Intlungu evakala eluzwaneni iphathela kuwo onke amalungu omzimba.
(Jolobe 1958:54)

(A pain that starts in one toe disturbs the peaceful physical order of all the limbs of the body.)

History reveals that Africa had produced the earliest physicians, the best anatomists and surgeons Before Christ. Such a pronouncement, as the one above, by a "barbaric" King declares fine ability in diagnosis and good knowledge of infection by the early African/Nguni communities. The fact that this medical knowledge is used as a metaphor in its context is a demonstration that it was simply common knowledge to everybody in those early African communities.

That knowledge of the theory of medicine extended into the knowledge of effective application of the correct medicines as is "reported" on several occasions: Dlikiza, Ngximbazwe and other two diviners and medicine-men are "reported" to be using protective smoke from herbs against evil spirits in the first place. On the hunting

expedition one unnamed young man sustained deep cuts on his shoulders from a tiger and is "reported" to have been cured by a medicine-man that accompanied the hunters:

Indodana leyo yabotshwa ngezibhebhe zamahlamvu aphilisayo, nemichiza enamandla yayifumana, yabuya yaphila kuba kwiqela elo kwakukho negqirha lolugxa. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:42*)

(The medicine-man that accompanied the hunters bandaged the wounds of that injured young man with broad medicinal leaves, gave him other strong medicines, and the wounds soon healed.)

Ntlabane's regiments to the battle-field were also accompanied by medicine-men who successfully took care of the injured (Jolobe 1958:63). In the story African first-aid methods failed only once when Ngwekazi sustained a wound below the end of the breastbone; the bandages applied could not stop the bleeding (Jolobe 1958:106), which could have been internal as well. The army, after the war, had to be cured from the passion to go on killing people which is contracted in war; Dlikiza performed that purification ceremony successfully (Jolobe 1958:65).

We have declared that early Africans had "houses of life" and their doctors did surgical treatment of burns, fractures and abscess. Jolobe, in this account is pointing at that reality which had faded with the coming of medicine in the fashion of European cultures which the colonists arbitrarily conferred the highest position at the expense of African theory and practice of medicine. Outside fiction, Parrinder (1967) describing African mythology, declares that in Africa "there are many kinds of oracles by which people try to discover the future or the unknown past, or the will of God and the ancestors ..." (Parrinder 1967:84). He exemplifies with the Yoruba who say that the oracle "was sent by God to put the world right: give help in sickness and childbearing, teach the use of medicine and give guidance on secret or unknown matters" (Parrinder 1967:84). Jolobe dramatises all this, in fiction, giving the right status of African diviners as oracles rather than witchhunters - a term that was maliciously popularized by the early missionaries and colonists in South Africa. Eliade (1965) gives a stamp of positiveness on dependance on herbs by demonstrating that in ancient times it was a global practice. To those ancient societies that believed in herbs

the magical and pharmaceutical value of (those) herbs ... (was) due to a celestial prototype of the plant ... herbs owed their curative virtues to the fact that they were first discovered by gods.
(*Eliade 1965:30-31*)

The England of the sixteenth century held the same belief (Eliade 1965:30-31). The demonstration of dependents on herbs and medicinal plants among the Nguni in this novel is a dramatisation of their participation in the sacred mysteries and the mystical which

saved humanity from physical and psychological ills in "pre-scientific" times; there was nothing barbaric or superstitious or uncivilised in that practice. This is the declaration we deduce from Jolobe's novel.

In the African belief system we may not leave out their attitude towards the owl which they see as a symbol of a bad experience that is coming, as is the case emaZizini. The owner of the homestead where the owl was heard hooting performed the normal ritual of chasing it away together with the evil that it was bringing (Jolobe 1958:105). Indeed nothing happened on his homestead but in minutes afterwards they saw another homestead in the locality burning. This is part of religion which identifies the Nguni with the rest of traditional societies, globally, who observed nature and its rhythms closely, and acted accordingly.

The river and water also feature as purification symbols in the early African/Nguni system. This is highlighted by the author on two very important occasions: The "boys", coming back from circumcision, go to the river to wash twice - from their circumcision lodge they run straight to the river to wash first before they are led to the Great Place. They go into the kraal where they are strengthened by a mixture of herbs and the blood of the ox slaughtered for them; from there they are led to the river again to wash thoroughly (Jolobe 1958:20-21). This is more than washing, it is total cleansing from all the past activities and attitudes of boyhood and it is transformation into a new being - body and spirit. Outside fiction, Mbiti (1992:102) likens this process to a "new birth ... being born afresh into a new life." Eliade (1965:80) describes initiation in traditional societies as a "ritual death and resurrection." Jolobe is demonstrating it as such among the traditional Nguni, in its religious perspective. This is much like confirmation in the Anglican Church where the candidate to full membership of the church is anointed with holy oil by the bishop. Yes, water is used at baptism but initiation is paralleled by confirmation in Christian progression to full membership. The last occasion is in the LamaNgwekazi dream where the character who has not been behaving according to the norms of the society is seen in his last incident in life being swept by water down a waterfall, probably for purification before entering the world of ancestors (Jolobe 1958:89).

There are several "reports" of salutes by big and small crowds and by individuals to the members of the royal family. Towards the end one gets the impression, from the wording

and the repetition that the salutes assume a religious performance similar to kneeling (if women) and bowing heads (if men) when they mention the name of Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit or when they pass in front of the Cross in church. We will move from two quotations: When it was announced that the crown fitted Ntsele, King Dlomo confirmed Ntsele as King-elect, the crowds bellowed in ecstasy:

Laduma ibandla ngokomntu omnye lakhahlela. Asuka aguya amaHlubi beyeyezela abafazi zakhonya iimbongi.

(Jolobe 1958:95)

(The crowds bellowed in one voice, saluting King Dlomo. AmaHlubi started dancing, the women made shrill cries, ululating, and the traditional praises poets roared their praises in big voices.)

At the end of the religious performance of *ukushwama* ritual, after the breaking of the calabash, the King-elect announced that from that moment the people were free to collect fresh vegetables and green mealies from their fields for consumption. In response the "report" says:

Laduma ibandla lakhahlela batshayeleva abafazi.

(Jolobe 1958:111)

(The crowds bellowed, saluting King-elect Ntsele and the women made shrill cries, ululating.)

The ritual performed at the celebration of first-fruits among traditional societies marked a New Year, and its regular periodic return "guarantee(d) the continuity of the life of the community in its entirety .. (and created) the system of periodic purifications ... and of the periodic regeneration of life" (Eliade 1965:51-52). The initiation of young men was an act of religious purification which marked an end and a new start at another level for an individual and ultimately for the community; and almost everywhere initiation of young men coincided with the festival of the New Year when rituals for expelling of "demons, diseases and sins" were also performed (Eliade 1965:54). The King, as "son and vicar of the divinity on earth" featured prominently in both rituals in early communities, as in this novel. Moreover the act of installing a King was also an initiation ritual to traditional societies, and they believed that "creation (of the world afresh) takes place at each enthronement of a new chief ... Almost everywhere a new reign has been regarded as a regeneration of the history of the people or even of universal history" (Eliade 1965:80). It is in the dramatisation of all these facts that *Jolobe* emphasizes and establishes, through these repeated salutes to the Kings and Princes in this novel, the position of equality the Africans shared with the rest of mankind, to refute tags of barbarism attached to Africans of early civilizations.

Earlier, the small regiment Mahlaphahlapha had at one stage of the war around him, are reported to have saluted him in these terms:

... atsho ngesandi esanga seseendudumo.
(*Jolobe 1958:61*)

(... they saluted in one big voice which sounded like the deep rumbling of thunder.)

The other royal figure who is saluted is Prince Menziwa of amaNgwe (*Jolobe 1958:106*). These salutes together with Ngwekazi's confession to Ntsele:

... ufanelwe bubukhosi
(*Jolobe 1958:107*)

(... you are indeed the one who must ascend the throne as fate has shown us)

take a religious character similar to declarations made about Christ in some Christian performances and celebrations like the eucharist. In similar words, Dlikiza in the last words he utters in this story confirms the same:

Ozelwe enezo mpawu yindoda yenene ufanele ukululawula uluntu.
(*Jolobe 1958:117*)

[Such a man (like Ntsele) born with a well-balanced personality is a man of integrity, he is the one who will rule the nations with wisdom.]

This is the same type of glorification to God that the British and Anglicans, in particular, and all Christians in general, sing in His praise:

Blessing and honour and glory and power be yours for ever and ever. Amen.
(*An Anglican Prayer Book 1989:121*)

Further parallel praises echoed by these salutes and accompanying actions, from the Anglican praises:

Holy, holy, holy Lord
God of power and might
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

(*An Anglican Prayer Book 1989:122*)

Jolobe has handled this aspect of African religion, beliefs and rituals in such a convincing way that we can even draw parallels with the Christian religion whose carriers had denied the existence of religion in African. That existence is proved beyond doubt in this account. He has brought into dialogue the African form of faith and the Christian faith.

At one level we can draw a parallel which says both the Bible and ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA are myth-legends without detracting from the dignity Christians give the Bible. The myth-legendary nature of the Bible lies in the gaps in its chronology of things in it (as in accounts about Christ) and the superhuman feats that He performed (the way He was conceived, walking on water, healing people just with word or mud, extraordinary brains - to mention a few). The myth-legendary nature or even allegorical nature of ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA lies in the trinity of Dlomo, Ntsele and Dlikiza. Ntsele's mother who nurtured him with great wisdom and psychological foresightedness, Ntsele's mother who asked Ntsele to bring water from a well in the mountains for Dlomo when the other princes refused is a parallel of Mary the mother of Christ who asked Jesus one day to make wine for a multitude that ran out of wine, wine which He made with pure water.

There is a very close parallel between the way Ntsele won the crown and the way David was chosen and anointed as king (Samuel 1, 16:1-13). In both cases "elder brothers" were brought first before the officiant and lost, and then these two who were not even contestants were later called and won. There are many more biblical parallels to this novel. On circumcision extolled in this novel we have a parallel in Romans 15:8; on the encircling of amaNgwane by amaHlubi under Ntlabane we have a parallel in Exodus 14:1-31; on the significance of LamaNgwekazi's dream we have a parallel in Matthew 1:18-25; on the diviners of the three princes eligible for succession we have a parallel in Deuteronomy 18:9-22; on the mysterious healing powers of Dlikiza and other medicine-men in the novel we have parallels in Christ's mysterious powers of healing as recorded in Mark 1:21-45, Mark 2:1-12 and in Mark 3:1-12. Hence we say these two are brought to dialogue in a sophisticated manner, in a myth-legendary and allegorical dish at the level we are talking at. This novel is historical.

From this novel we read a very basic and fundamental issue about God and His revelation to various communities, that revelation determining the practice each group will follow in acknowledging the reality of God. Each group will call that practice its religion, its theology or its faith. The world-view of a particular culture largely determines what is accepted standard practice to be followed in the expression and celebration of the faith of that group.

The seven sacraments celebrated by Anglicans, as outlined in IMMISA (1964:24) find parallels in the religious, social and cultural practices outlined in this novel.

This would not have been necessary to defend in the case of Africans had the early missionaries and settlers been sensible enough to give recognition to African/Nguni religious practices. With the examples on divination, circumcision and initiation, first rays of the sun, the east, Kings, dreams, water, first-fruits, cattle, particular times of day and night, preservation and restoration of health with herbs, the explanation on the king's sacred hut, the parallels between biblical incidents and realities with some features in this book, we are saying Jolobe has "proved" that Africans/Nguni had a religion. Mqhayi and Pallo Jordan in our background have also given their firm words on this; A. C. Jordan in *INGQUMBO YEMINYANYA* and in *KWEZO MPINDO ZETSITSA* is an additional voice on the reality of the African cosmology and religion which the early Africans practised and strongly believed in.

Outside fiction, Mbiti (1992) describes African Traditional Religion whose aspects Jolobe dramatised in this novel. Mbiti, like Jolobe, was also moved by false statements made by early European colonists undermining African religion, to write a textbook on it. He moves by saying African Religion has been "wrongly called" ancestor worship, superstition, animism or paganism, magic or fetishism (Mbiti 1992:18-19); he closes off by saying, against these tags, that, without a bible or Qur'an, without reformers, preachers or missionaries:

African Religion is a major religious system in its own right.
(Mbiti 1992:19)

In its belief system it recognises God, nature spirits and human spirits, and human life from before birth to after death, as sacred. In practising it there are ritual and customary ceremonies, prayers, sacrifices, offerings; and, festivals marking or celebrating harvest time, first-fruits, rainy season, victory after a battle, birth of a child. Particular objects and places are regarded as sacred by a family or the whole community: shrines, mountains, rivers. African Religion has been promoting morality and values regarding:

truth, justice, love, right and wrong, good and evil, beauty, decency, respect for people and property, the keeping of promises and agreements, praise and blame, crime and punishment, the rights and responsibilities of both the individual and his community, character, integrity ... (settling of) differences ... peace and harmony
(Mbiti 1992:12)

Mbiti (1992:15) then states that "African Religion ... gives its followers a sense of security in life." It is all these aspects and this sense of security that we see dramatised in *ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA* by Jolobe to re-awaken his first audience.

People like Jolobe were re-exposing the truth about the undermined African/Nguni religion also in reaction to the fact that those European detractors who poured scorn and discredit over African/Nguni religion, claiming for themselves purity of Christianity, were behaving in total opposition to Christian principles, and were totally incapable of practising Christian brotherhood, even within their own community.

Charles Lennox Stretch, the government's diplomatic agent among the Nguni, wrote to John Philip just before the War of the Axe:

The chiefs are highly displeased with the missionaries and say they are guilty before God for mixing government things with divine things.

(Mostert 1992:873)

Such people, double agents, who were spying for the government and keen to disrupt the life of the whole community of Cape Nguni cannot be compared with Dlikiza, the religious leader who sought to protect and keep the life of King Dlomo, the armies, and the whole community he served, whole. Mostert (1992:873) goes on to say

The missionaries as a whole had lost all credence. They were despised by the Xhosa and hated by the colonists.

(Mostert 1992:873)

Jolobe was writing against this background and portrayed Dlikiza on the very first page of this novel as a man of dignity and few philosophical words, and is kept as such to the end. On this aspect this is where we sense the comparison and the political statement he is making against the negative accusations and labels by the early Europeans in South Africa, which sought to establish barbarism and some serious deficiencies in the religion of the Cape Nguni.

John Mitford Bowker, a colonist in Grahamstown, also said about the missionaries in the 1840s

missionary intrusion is one of the chief causes of the present deplorable position (War of Axe) on the frontier ... the amount of good done by them in Kaffirland is imperceptible.

(Mostert 1992:873)

Nothing like this could be said of Dlikiza who did the community a lot of good and nothing bad.

The worst regarding the frontier missionaries in the background against which Jolobe was writing, was their "fierce" internecine squables they had among themselves. In the "character assassination" upon one another they went so low as to concoct "malicious" and venomous charges against one another and got involved in "acrimonious correspondence" on one another to their superiors; the main characters in the 1800s were Robert Moffat and John Philip, Henry Calderwood and James Read, and the rest joined mainly on the side of the attacker (Mostert 1992:834-837). A quotation from James Read on the attack on him, by his own brethren, paints a fine picture of this matter:

I am over head and ears in trouble. I have fallen into the hands of the Philistines ... the Caffreland missionaries ... It is no small matter to have 12 missionaries against me. They will use all their might to injure me.

(Mostert 1992:835)

It was creatures of this kind that were brave enough to see and condemn the Nguni and Africans in general on a number of human "defects," and the literate Jolobe and his generation were living at a time of a re-awakening on human nature and national histories that was brought about, particularly at the end of the Second World War (1945), by a revulsion on

the emotional scars left by the military, social and political upheals (of the past which) precipitated a questioning of all established convictions and set historical viewpoints.

This global spirit of self-assertion and self-interested dynamic bore new conceptual ideas about individual races and nations that were suppressed as they retrieved and brought to the fore their true histories which had been submerged, challenging the "standard histories." This was particularly noticeable in African historiography because the standard history there was highly challengable.

The basic challenge was to establish the very idea of African history.

(Mostert 1992:44)

Jolobe in the 1950s was directly engaged in this together with his contemporaries who were determined to present

Africa's human story, the oldest in the world

(Mostert 1992:44)

which the early Europeans in South Africa denied existence. The spirit of that time is captured well in what Louis Leaky said:

When we talk so glibly of the 'superiority' of the white races at the time when the Europeans arrived to introduce western civilization to the people of Africa, we should do well to reflect that in many ways the Africans already had reached a position which we, the so-called civilized races, are only just to comprehend.

(Mostert 1992:45)

Mostert comments that by this

He (Louis Leakey) was referring to the Bantu speakers in particular and their carefully balanced social codes.

(Mostert 1992:45)

Jolobe was writing in this historical period, against this background, motivated by the same principles enunciated here and their higher purposes, to write on the religious aspect of Nguni culture in the fashion he chose, for comparative purposes, with ulterior motives to be fulfilled beyond the simple literary culture of the Nguni, to be fulfilled in the higher political realms of the then Union of South Africa. Jolobe was re-asserting the fact that the Nguni had an established religion which Mqhayi, quoted above, also established as a concrete fact.

4.6 **Robustness and Healthiness**

A healthy mind in a healthy body, so goes the English dictum. Dictum or no dictum the pre-colonial African/Nguni thrived on that principle as the author indicates directly or implicitly that they kept themselves robust and healthy so that even in old age, eighty years as in the case of King Dlomo, they were not wearing dilapidated bodies but strong ones (Jolobe 1958:1-2). In historical reality Nguni Kings like Ndlambe lived to reach ninety in good health (Mostert 1992:569). Our intention here is to deal with the fact that Africans here are depicted as robust, healthy proud people with normal-to-beautiful and handsome facial appearance which made them people of dignity as this is the final imprint the author leaves with the reader. Appearance of face often affects self-evaluation, hence we treat both together. The pictures we glean from the description of the physical appearances of Dlikiza, Dlomo and Ntlabane at the opening of the novel give the general physical fitness picture of males of middle and old age in the Buzi Kingdom (Jolobe 1958:1-2). Not far from these descriptions the two hundred "boys" at the circumcision lodge are said to be as fit and fat as rock rabbits (Jolobe 1958:5). It is virile men from all sides that join the Mahlaphahlapha war, we read this from the description of the physical encounters (Jolobe 1958:52-63), the long distances they had to walk, and the endurances they displayed (fighting for a better part of the day.) The Ndwandwe, the Ngwane and the Zulu are so conscious of their strength and health that they went about shaking other groups in rough play that amounts to "war" only to test who is stronger. The Hlubi that were ruffled in this manner, few as they were at some point, when told by the Ngwane that if they surrender their chief, Mahlaphahlapha, the rough game would stop, all exclaimed that they were

never made servants to any other tribe; that would be below their dignity. And they (Hlubi) fought valiantly to protect their pride (Jolobe 1958:61). Even the girl that was involved displays that fitness and endurance: Mahlaphahlapha's daughter carried him on her back for a better part of a night. At the abduction of Nobusi the rescuing regiments did most of the distance running, and even when sent on errands over long distances, as the princes when sent to the maker of snuffboxes, they do most of the distance running, and their pride lies in successful and speedy execution of a task or duty or operation.

The handsomeness and physical fitness of Ntsele is repeatedly described and alluded from page 4 of the text, to the coming-out ceremony, up to the coronation day. In the coming-out ceremony he is described thus:

Wayesukile umfana egadeni ubuso bucombulukile eyimpuluswa yenzwana ezwi limnandi.
(Jolobe 1958:23)

(This young man was tall with a fairly wide but pointed face, a shining well-structured fine-looking dandy, with a beautiful voice.)

On the other hand Nobusi's beauty is traced from childhood days, in stages, to the marriage day. At childhood this is the description:

... le ntombi kwasebuncinaneni yayithandeka iyinzwakazi ubhelukazi olumanz' andonga.
(my emphasis)
(Jolobe 1958:13)

[... Right from (early) childhood this girl was beautiful, a fine lady and a beauty queen.]

The description of the beauty of quite a number of other girls is tendentiously engaged on as if to give deliberately an abundant answer to negative accusations by early Europeans about the very appearance of face of Africans generally: Ayanda (Jolobe 1958:76), Luyanda, Ngwekazi's sister (Jolobe 1958:77) are described as beautiful, and traditional ornaments and beautifiers (Jolobe 1958:1&73) are all given fair attention in this novel.

We have given samples which are enough to the critic to see how Jolobe moved consciously to counter accusations that Africans were "dog-faced creatures," "inferior grade of humanity" to stand together with the nationalist Lembedes and declare pride in their black skin which is "like soil of Mother Africa." This was all done in spirit of the post-Second World War dynamics where the false perception about Africa in particular were vigorously re-examined by Africans in order to present a new colloquy on the nature of the African.

4.7 Bravery

We sense that bravery in this novel is treated in a manner that dramatises positive bravery in reaction to the European detractors who implied cruelty in saying that bravery was prized high in Africa.

It is true that bravery was prized high in Africa. The bravery we see here is the spirit to stand for what is right even in adversity, and an attitude of positively looking at oneself with confidence in one's worth and exorcising of inferiority complex. Bravery is a quality that is also consciously asserted as a characteristic that early Africans had.

This quality is amongst the ones Ntlabane, one of the first three characters to be omnisciently described at the opening of this novel, is said to have had: he reached his rank

ngenxa yezanga zobukroti (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:2*)

(because of his valiant displays of bravery.)

Two pages away (page 4 of the text) MaMbambo, who is described as a prudent woman, is said to have trained her son, Ntsele, one of the protagonists in this novel, in three most important virtues for a man, one of those was bravery:

... ilulama lentokazi (uMaMbambo) (eyathi eselula lo nyana wayo yabethelela kuye ukubaluleka kobukhalipha ... (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:4*)

[the well-behaved lady (MaMbambo) instilled in her son at his very early age the importance of bravery...]

The antagonist, Ngwekazi is depicted as a brave man in the hunting expedition when he refused to camp away from the den of lions and during the war when he led his own contingent. But even earlier he was described as a brave young boy:

... wayizuzulu lula loo mbeko ngenxa yokukhalipha emadabini obukhwenkwe ... (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:3*)

[... he got that respect easily (from his peers) because of the bravery he displayed in their mini-boy-battles ...]

Both Ntsele and Ngwekazi, after the hunting expedition are happy that Nobusi, the girl they both had their eyes on, heard about their bravery in the expedition:

Yaba luvuyo loo ndawo kumatshawe kuba ahla aqonda ukuba ngenxenywe luvakalisio olo lokuba nokukhalipha kwawo kufikelele ezindlebeni zenzwakazi leyo. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:47*)

[Both princes were happy to hear the report from the lady (Nobusi) that she has heard the hunting expedition news, which meant that she was also saying she has heard about their acts of bravery in the expedition.]

The author-narrator, talking outside the story, also addresses the issue directly:

Namatshawe ayekho kolo phumo lwephulo kuba kaloku ayengathandi ukuba semva kwizinto ezifuna ukhalipho. Ubukhosi endalweni phaya basekelwa phezu kobukroti. Yahlala isisithethe into yokuba phakathi kwazo zonke ezinye iziphiwo enazo inkosi ukukhalipha mabubekho. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:40*)

(The princes were all there in the hunting expedition because they did not want to lose any chance of proving their bravery where and when an incident would offer that chance. Right at the origin of things royal houses were established through bravery. From then on it remained an expectation that among other qualities a traditional leader of royal blood must have, is bravery.)

That says much regarding the issue, but we may still adduce more examples. During the war one remark goes:

AmaHlubi alwa ngokhalipho ada ayigxotha impi leyo yamaNgwane ... (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:52*)

(The Hlubi regiment fought bravely and drove the Ngwane back ...)

The Hlosi grouping were very happy when they were selected to join the Mahlaphahlapha war:

Amabali odaba loloyiso ... ayesuka adale ukuba igazi lihlobe kumlisela unqwenele ukunga ungalizuzisa ithuba lokwenza indawo ekwanjalo ukubonisa ubukroti ... amadodana ebutho lamaHlosi avuya axhuma akuva ukuba kugqitywe ukuba umkhosi mawuphume nokuba kucishwe wona ukuba asukele ukuya kunqanda intlekele ehlileyo ekunene. (*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:55*)

(Stories of past victories ... filled the youth with high spirits making them yearn for a war where they can also show their bravery ... hence the Hlosi group sprang in joy when they heard that the assembly had decided that an army must be sent out to help the right-hand house out of its calamity, and that the choice fell on their group to go out.)

Bravery, not in the sense of cruelty, was indeed prized high in Africa.

At the end of the battle Ntlabane challenged the Ngwane general to a duel, as it were, and he just devastated him; afterwards, for this display, all the soldiers expressed happiness at the sight of their army commander making such a good example and were thankful to themselves that in their first war they had gone out with a war leader of Ntlabane's calibre.

There are more accounts of the brave deeds of war (Jolobe 1958:64&65) which indicate that bravery was prized high and victory was celebrated.

The last act of display of bravery was at the celebration of the first-fruits when amaHlosi were given a wild and ferocious bull to kill with bare hands (Jolobe 1958:110) which they did. The proliferation of so many incidents which were specifically for display of bravery,

the repetition of the word ukukhalipha (bravery) and its synonym ubukroti (bravery) and the authorial interventions explaining the matter directly indicate that these were tendentiously injected into the story to dramatise this quality in the early Africans/Nguni for the detractors and those they had indoctrinated to see the truth through this historical novel.

4.8 Secrecy and Privacy

While this aspect may be linked with the mysterious, the mystical and discipline, it deserves treatment separately because secrecy to be maintained needs a strong will and character both of which were qualities that were denied, by European early settlers and missionaries to be existing in the African "barbarian" and creatures of a lower order, the Indigenes of South Africa.

We may take a few examples: On the first day Ntsele entered the King's secret chamber, he was strongly advised not to say anything to anybody about what he saw and heard there. The chamber itself is a secret place as is explained on page 1 of the text.

After Ntsele had sung praises on Nobusi to Ayanda he requests her:

Uze ungazixeleli mntu ezi zinto ndizithethayo. Andizange ... ndizithethe mntwini. Nawe ndifane ndakuthemba nje; andazi ukuba ndenziwe yintoni na.
(*Jolobe 1958:80*)

[Please do not tell anybody what I have said (about Nobusi). I have never said these things to anybody. I trusted you on no firm grounds, to say these things to you, I do not know what went wrong with me.]

Thirdly, nobody knew how Dlomo would conduct the selection on the coronation day:

Kwacaca ukuba umcimbi lo unqatyisiwe ukuba kungabikho namnye umntu onawo namanakani ukuba inkosi iya kukhetha bani na okanye iya kunyula njani na.
(*my emphasis*)
(*Jolobe 1958:89*)

[Ultimately they realized that this matter (of selection) was a top secret which was so tightly closed that nobody could even manage to guess even wildly as to who will be selected and how.]

The language used in the quotation, as illustration for our contention, proves beyond doubt that Jolobe meant to make a clear exposition on this aspect of the early African's life and qualities, who had been undermined so grossly.

The secrecy on the selection unbundles itself in a suspenseful orderly programme on the day of the selection. As we watch (in our minds) one prince after another kneeling before

the officiating chief, we learn more about the reality and quality of privacy Africans had while we learn that Africans had procedure in doing things, unlike real barbarians. The secrecy observed for that long unveils this quality and establishes that the King, Dlomo had a strong personality.

These examples are enough on this matter. Communalist people do not hide much from the society but they have private individual lives, this is what is dramatised here so clearly, to capture this level of sophistication in human development among the Nguni, and, to counter the perception that the Nguni/Africans were defective, inhuman and disorganised creatures that were not growing intellectually.

4.9 African Procedures

We learn a particular quality of early Africans in the accounts of meticulous preparations for big occasions: the coming-out ceremony of the "boys"; the welcome arranged for Ayanda - a princess by her host; the feasts prepared for the King by LamaNgwekazi, Manyaza's mother and Jozi's mother and the order which they served their dishes and beer; the first-fruits celebration; the coronation; the bride-tribute; the welcome of the bride's group; the marriage ceremony; and , the orderly dancing after the feasts plus the ox-race that forms part of most of those occasions - all prove that the early Africans had settled life and standard procedures and programmes of doing things long before the European missionary and settler set foot on African soil. We have hinted on some of these procedures above.

4.10 Tendency to Repeat

Repetition, as an artistic device, serves to emphasize mainly, this is used in this book for that purpose on several occasions, but in those examples we are also reminded of the tendency of the African/Nguni to repeat or ask someone to repeat. This is not a sign of dullness of ears and mind but a strong and basic cultural quality in the African/Nguni. Jordan (1940:73-74) also depicts this quality extensively, one fine example is the step by step conversation between the "meatman" (Qhinebe) and Mthunzini. The narrator repeats himself on the beauty and handsomeness of Nobusi and Ntsele, respectively. The coronation notice is repeated as the day nears (Jolobe 1958:85) - to mention a few.

This quality is given with an explanation in the following quotation:

Yaba nguNgwekazi owathi kunganjani na ukuba athi oyena uzalwa kakhulu kumatshawe kwakuba kuphethwe onke amatitile ahambe phambili kwenkosana leyo ikhethiweyo ilandele yona emva kwakhe kucandwe inkundla kane ahambe ememeza endulula isibuliso esithi, "Bayethe mhle!" ukuze ibandla elingqongileyo liphinda-phinde nalo ukutsho emva kwakhe. Ngaio ndlela iindimbane ziva kuqonda ukuba inkosi leyo xa ihlonelwe ngabegazi ifanelwe nangakumbi kukuhlonelwa luluntu. (*my emphasis*)

(*Jolobe 1958:86*)

(It was Ngwekazi who suggested that the next highest ranking prince to the one selected for the crown, after the selection, should lead the one selected in a procession which should go round the court four times. In that process that leading prince, who is directly followed by the one selected, should be howling repeatedly the salute to the king-elect, "Hail, the King!" and each time he must wait for the crowds to repeat the salute. If that is done this way the crowds would see for themselves that they must respect the king-elect when all the royal figures themselves show respect in this manner to him.)

The manner in which Nobusi was kidnapped is replayed in telegraphic style on page 102 of the text. This African attribute, repetition, which outsiders regard as time wasting, is deliberately illustrated once more on page 104 of the text: Ntsele (and Menziwa) consult Ayanda again for her to repeat all the details of the plans she made to save and rescue Nobusi, before they set out on the trail to emaZizini. She willingly repeats every detail which assures both men that Nobusi will be secure where she is. In the process Ayanda also repeats, for assurance, to Ntsele what she had promised him before - to be his eyes, ears and mouth; in response Ntsele remarks that that gives him strength (*Jolobe 1958:104*).

That is one of the literal effects of African repetition. On page 105 of the text the details of Ayanda's strategy in the rescue operation are repeated once more. The effect now, because it is men who are thankful to a clever woman, a mastermind, takes another dimension - the elevation of women for all to see that they had positions of respect in early African/Nguni societies rather than just being objects of oppression, as the early European settlers and missionaries were pleased to report.

Even the account of repetition of action, not words, is meant to instill in the reader the principle and wisdom that lie in this tendency. In searching for Nobusi the first group of amaNgwe young men that set out on the chase came to the household where Ngwekazi and his group had taken refuge; they sent a few to verify whether the latter and Nobusi were there. They found that indeed the group was there except Nobusi; they decided to attack that "refuge camp." In the process of the attack a few of the amaNgwe young men went again into the huts to see if Nobusi was really not there - a double check-up. This is what alert minds do even today; and this is not idleness nor dullness of mind.

The exposition and dramatisation of this quality in the African/Nguni character is meant to establish a new colloquy on the African/Nguni who had been made a subject of ridicule under colonial rule, as against the "standard" historical perception.

4.11 Attributes in Education, Arts, Culture and Sport, and Technology

A number of didactic activities that early Africans are "reported" to have engaged on are indications that all the elements of even the present Department of Education and its branches were there in smaller forms, without this complex name. We can even call it Outcomes Based Education; it was not just academic but technical, practical, goal-oriented in the sense of job-relatedness, in the present terminology.

Early in this novel, in Chapter 1, we encounter a question on the "comprehensive" education that is offered at the traditional circumcision lodge, where King Dlomo asks the keeper of the lodge, Dlanga:

bakufundile na ukuthetha abafana...? (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:5)

(Have these young men gone through effectively and practically all the aspects of the syllabus of the traditional lodge ...?)

Dlanga also said:

Afundisiwe (amatshawe) ngomnombo wesizwe nangesiko nesithethe samaHlubi.
(*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:5)

(The princes have had lectures on the early history of amaHlubi, their customs and traditions.)

Later, King Dlomo lectures Ntsele for close to a month on the full history of amaHlubi, and in doing so touches the history of other African groups, from their origin in Central Africa up to their settlement in Natal (Jolobe 1958:71-72). He touched the Hlubi legal system as well (Jolobe 1958:72).

The words, bakufundile and afundisiwe are deliberately used here to declare that the months spent there are for education, as the young man undergoes transformation into manhood and its responsibilities. This is demonstrated on the day of the coming-out ceremony at the stage when the princes from the junior and greater houses of Hlubi royalty performed in front of the King and the crowds. From the "report" on Ntsele's performance we learn that at the circumcision lodge the "boys" are taught Poetry, African Religion and Mythology, History, Geography and Public Administration. The value of this school is

explained on the first page of the text, and, we have paraphrased it already. On top of that, later, when Ntlabane claims to Dlomo that the three most eligible princes were not bringing water, "demanded" by the King, because they were "young" in mental development, we learn more, from Dlomo's reply, about the value of this school and what type of graduate it is supposed to produce:

Hayi, Ntlabane, izol' oku besiwakhupha ebuntwaneni siwangenisa ebudodeni. Sel' evela emfazweni. Akusekho nto angayaziyo. (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:68)

(No, Ntlabane, recently we took these princes out of childhood stage and put them into manhood stage. They have been to a war already. There is nothing now they do not know.)

Outside fiction, Mbiti (1992) expresses the same on the significance of initiation:

It shuts the door to childhood, and opens another to adulthood.
(Mbiti 1992:102)

Incidentally, in the quotation above the last one, we also learn that war itself is another school. In fact, we remember that the amaHlosi regiment which was formed out of the newly circumcised "boys" were very eager to join the Mahlaphahlapha war mainly to gain "practical experience" (Jolobe 1958:55), hence they jumped up with joy when it was announced that they were the ones who would go first into the war. This also "answers" those who think war among Africans/Nguni was merely and only an act of barbarism; it was an act of education.

The fact that the battle is included in the action in this novel as one of the practical schools to stand for a Military Academy where training in technical and military skills is offered, is implicitly explained in the following quotation:

Yabukhupha apho ubuchule bokubinza nokuhlanganisa indun' enkulu uNtlabane yanga yenza umboniso kumlisela lowo owawuqala ukuphuma iduli ... Onke amadodana atsho ngazwinye ukuthi abone into entle ukulwa komphathi-mkhosi wawo umphakathi uNtlabane - ayenombulelo ukuba abe ebephume naye kwidabi lawo lokuqala. Ancoma nobuchule bakhe bokukwazi ukuyila indlela yokuluhlasela utshaba. (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe 1958:63)

(When the mighty Ntlabane came face to face with the Ngwane Army Commander he demonstrated his technical skills in stabbing and warding off blows; the action looked like a demonstration to those young men who were going to war for the first time ... All those young men unanimously agreed that they had seen in the Honourable Ntlabane's action the most excellent demonstration of military skills. They felt very lucky to have gone out in their first battle with such a brilliant Army Commander. They also expressed admiration at Ntlabane's intelligent strategies of attacking the enemy.)

In the tone of this account we do not sense a mere narration about a barbaric war, but we are taken to military grounds of a Military Academy, shown its syllabus (theory and practice), shown the lecturer (Ntlabane) and the cadres engaged in military education.

The hunting expedition under Nkebeza, "an experienced and skilful hunter" (Jolobe 1958:43), like the battle engagement under an intelligent Army Commander, Ntlabane, also assumes the nature of a school where life-skills are taught to one and the same group, amaHlosi regiment. Both events look like Career Guidance centres in action, both managed by experienced and tested personalities.

We have hints at existence of vocational schools among the early Africans/Nguni, which throw out signals at the existence of a Department of Economics (which aspect we will deal with separately). Dlomo's great wife commends LamaNgwekazi on the beauty of the sleeping mats that she spotted among the latter's clay and grass handwork products, upon which the latter replied that she "learnt" (Jolobe 1958:49) the art of making them from one woman expert in Swaziland on her recent visit home. The former then "instructed" LamaNgwekazi "to teach" (Jolobe 1958:49) that art to the girls of the Kingdom, upon which LamaNgwekazi replied by saying she has "started those classes already" (Jolobe 1958:49). Here, in fact, Dlomo's wife poses as an inspector and patron of handwork in the Kingdom (Jolobe 1958:48-49).

The Kingdom even had keen "expatriate" teachers from Mozambique (Jolobe 1958:27) who taught Dlomo's subjects production of iron and copper articles. The narrator then adds on the matter:

... uDlomo wangena kweso sikolo wafunda ukukhanda ubhedu ...
(my emphasis)
(Jolobe 1958:27)

(... Dlomo attended that school and learnt the techniques of producing copper products ...)

The author had tendentiously used the words, wangena ... (i)sikolo ... wafunda, to indicate that he is asserting the effective existence of fine schools among the early Africans/Nguni refuting statements on "imperfect education" used in reference to the education of the early period by those early Europeans, when they had preferred to acknowledge that there was some kind of education.

A girl undergoing the *intonjane* (passing-out ceremony for girls into seniors ready for marriage) went through a syllabus on home management and courses in Nursing Science. To indicate the seriousness of the education, while the girl is confined in the lodge for this purpose, the author describes this in these words:

imfundiso enzulu
(*Jolobe 1958:65*)

(Very serious matters regarding aspects of womanhood, marriage, and ,child production and care.)

The didactic principle that is applied in most of the didactic situations is that declared by King Dlomo on the princes:

...bahleli bafundiswa ngokubukela..
(*Jolobe 1958:50*)

(they are taught by examples over a long period)

This is important for the author to declare in his mission to assert the existence, types and principles of education among the early Africans/Nguni, because that allows him to say what was positive in that education. For example, education mainly by example is better than education by precept which came with the missionaries.

We have remarked above on the sporting activities on each event celebrated. Further, on culture we have noticed the use of cultural weapons, cultural body decorations, African/Nguni cosmetics, beadwork, and dress.

In the incident where some women consoled LamaNgwekazi on her bad dreams we see application of Psychology.

Production of iron and copper products involved technology which was learnt from the "expatriate" teachers from Mozambique - expatriate only in the present-day terminology.

This picture is convincing on the existence and practice, among the early Africans/Nguni, of proper education and various departments and types of schools and principles of education. All this is done by authors of Jolobe's calibre to change the negative perception that early Europeans created about Africans to start off a new dialogue on the matter for inspiration of the African/Nguni to higher purposes about himself/herself.

4.12 Attributes in Agriculture, Economy, Industries and Commerce

This novel is an account also of agricultural, economic, industrial and commercial activities of the early Africans/Nguni, a description of their stocks and properties, a depiction of self-sufficiency and self-reliance, a portrayal of commercial exchanges among themselves based on justice and fairplay which we never see in capitalist societies.

We learn in the first paragraph of this novel that the early Africans/Nguni had so much stock that they kept some, on the mountains (*emathanga*) (Jolobe 1958:1). Furthermore, on the numbers of cattle, we get an idea from the hundreds that are reported to have been confiscated by Ntlabane's regiments from amaNgwane and amaBhele during the Mahlaphahlapha war. We also get the idea from the big numbers of the cattle that belong to the Great Place (Jolobe 1958:13&111) and those that were sent to Nobusi's home as the bride-tribute (Jolobe 1958:112). The condition of these cattle is described at various points in the story as "beautiful" (Jolobe 1958:111), "fat" (Jolobe 1958:64), "shining" with beauty (Jolobe 1958:65). Earlier, we had taken a historical reference to support the cattle wealth that the Nguni had, the southern Nguni had thousands and thousands of cattle, according to Mostert (1992). In the account on preparations for the coming-out ceremony for the "boys" we learn that the early Africans also owned goats, from which they slaughtered (Jolobe 1958:19).

A lot of male and female agricultural and industrial activities are given on one page in telegraphic style (Jolobe 1958:27). The males had herded cattle and goats; hoarded crops products (mealies and corn); hunted wild animals for meat to save their stock; engaged in woodwork (producing snuff-boxes and milk-pails); produced horn products (neck ornaments, pipe mouthpieces and trumpets); made iron products (weapons and decorations); manufactured copper products (which the King made it his monopoly - he made the crown for Ntsele and other decorations of honour for distinguished achievers); they also made skin and hide products. Most of these were for "sale" in the African commercial style of exchange. Outside fiction, Willet (1993) records that "African sculpture (was) a highly developed and extremely sophisticated art form" in the early days (Willet 1993:27), and that "gifted carvers" were patronised by the "governing class(es)" to encourage the growth of that art (Willet 1993:22-26). King Dlomo's Great Wife "buys"

snuff-boxes from a gifted carver among AmaNḡwe with lots of beads - that is patronising that Jolobe is reminding the Nguni about.

The author makes a statement on the early African work ethic and on their engagement in these agricultural and industrial activities on a life-long basis, which the early European settlers and missionaries misunderstood:

Emva kweli theko likhulu ke ibandla laba soloko libuthile kuphethwe lo msebenzi wezandla xa kungekho mcimbi utyhulu enkundleni.

(Jolobe 1958:28)

(After the "boys" coming-out big celebration, the men around the Great Place would converge daily at the courtyard of the palace and engage themselves on this handwork when there was no other urgent business to attend to.)

This is further a statement on the fact that, to the early Africans/Nguni, recreation time was also used as work time on the whole, which an eye that was foreign to that culture, like the early Europeans' eye, would misinterpret, as they did, as idleness and indolence.

The females' agricultural and industrial activities included tilling the soil, planting, cultivating and reaping; cleaning and repairing households; handwork (manufacturing grass, clay and bead products). Jolobe makes a statement that these were produced on a larger scale than just for immediate consumption in the Kingdom; when the girls in the amaNḡwe area were emulating Ntsele's performance at the coming-out ceremony they pulled down a reed-mat

kwezazixhonyiwe apho ... zingumsebenzi wezandla ogqityiweyo ongekasetyenziswa ...

(Jolobe 1958:28)

(from those reed-mats that were hanged up ..., being finished products, made by hand, which were still unused ...)

The author gives us a picture of the normal quantity of harvests in this Kingdom in the description of one reaping season. Mealies was taken home on pack-oxen, in hides prepared for this, and poured into big grain storages which were water-tight; each grain storage took up to eight bags of unthrashed cobs. The mealies was stored in this manner for economic reasons: it could be easily wasted by the children when kept as grains ready for use; since they had to thrash their cobs first before using, they would be deterred from waste (Jolobe 1958:34). There is psychology as well in this rationalising, something denied as a quality of early Africans/Nguni by the European settlers and missionaries. The corn, which they got in large quantities, too, (Jolobe 1958:34) was thrashed and stored also in grain storages. The plurals, the augmentative suffix - *kazi*, and qualificatives used

in the text (Jolobe 19958:33-34) indicate the large quantities of mealies and corn that these people produced yearly. Reference to pack-oxen indicates that in these activities there was no lack of transport - a crucial element in agriculture and economy.

In conducting business among themselves they would exchange goods by bartering in the most just way. We have two examples: Dlomo's Great Wife at the Hlubi Great Place sent the young princes with a large quantity of beads to get for her snuff-boxes from an expert living among amaNgwe, a long distance from the Hlubi Great Place (Jolobe 1958:17). Secondly, whenever a commoner had an excellent race-ox it would be negotiated for the Great Place and he, in return, would be allowed two good ones of his own choice from the best palace oxen that were kept on the mountains (Jolobe 1958:111). This kind of transaction between a seller and a buyer is unheard of in capitalist communities and is, in fact, an indictment against the European capitalism that the settlers and missionaries brought here. When a European capitalist buys from an African have-not the former always made it a point that he gives the latter less value for his goods. In this transaction among the early Africans/Nguni, the have-not (the commoner) got more than the value of his goods (two oxen for one ox). No exploitation of the poor! In our first example the impression we get from the qualificative *eninzi* (plenty) (Jolobe 1958:17) is that the buyer offered more for the value of the snuff-boxes or the values of the articles exchanged were equal. To the early African/Nguni the importance of the transaction lay more in the practice and execution of justice rather than in acquisition of articles fraudulently and selfishly. In fact, on this matter of exchanging plenty of beads for a wooden snuff-box - Jolobe's text is registering that there are

many different counting systems ... in the world ... (and there are) many different written systems of numerals.

[Alan J. Bishop in Ashcroft B (et al) (eds) 1995]

So this disproves the accusation by colonials that the Indigenes lacked all sense of value of things - they had their own systems which gave them different logics to those of colonials.

Bishop maintains that

all cultures have generated mathematical ideas ... the internationalised subject (Mathematics) ... is a product of a cultural history".

(Bishop in Ashcroft 1995: 72-73)

These examples are sufficient to support our contention that Jolobe treats this aspect of self-reliance and self-sufficiency of the early Africans/Nguni, to refute lies that said they

were roaming barbarians of no fixed abode, living by plunder and theft, as generalizations that were devoid of truth.

It is exciting to notice that Jolobe wrote on African/Nguni self-sufficiency in an essay, Ubutyebi, (in AMAVO pages 106-113) which he published in 1940, and that he did this with intention to draw a parallel between White and African/Nguni culture to make an affirmative statement on the efficiency of the African/Nguni system and the self-sufficiency that the early African/Nguni enjoyed, which he is dramatising in 1958 in ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA. In that 1940 essay he said:

Phofu ke ntlandlolo esi sizwe samaXhosa besingesizwe sisebenzela emlonyeni. Ibisizwe esitya sibeka. Umntu ebesebenza alondoloze okuthile ngokuthenga ithodlana. Ibhanki yamaXhosa ibibubuhlanti ... izandekela zesizwe bezisaziwa ngeentlanti ezinkulu nezibaya ezizele yimfuyo kuze ... kubekho uvimba omkhulu wokulondoloza ukudla ... isisele. Ngomhla wokuxakeka umXhosa ubebhenela ebhankini yakhe ... (kukhethwe) ithole liye kuthengiswa kuhlantatyezwe ingxaki leyo. Yinto leyo efana neyenziwa kwibhanki zabaMhlophe ngokuthi umntu akuxakeka asuke aye kukhupha iminwe elishumi yeerandi xa enemfihlo yakhe ebekade eyifaka ebhankini apho. (*my emphasis*)
(Jolobe in AMAVO 1940:113)

(Right from early history the Xhosas were not wasteful. They made provision for the rainy day. From their produce and salaries they put aside something by perhaps buying a cow. The Xhosa bank was the kraal for livestock ... The dignitaries amongst them had big cattle kraals and goat-and-sheep folds filled with livestock ... and an underground grain storage in the kraal. On a rainy day a Xhosa would go to his kraal, select one beast to sell or exchange to solve a "financial" problem that may have cropped up. This is the same thing that Europeans do with the money they keep in their banks, when they have financial problems they also simply withdraw from their banks something like ten rands from their savings accounts.)

In this essay the parallel between Black and European systems on hoarding and using riches is pronounced on explicitly; in our novel, ELUNDINI LOTHUKELA, it is not pronounced, we read it between the lines. But we are convinced that in the novel he is just dramatising the same point, using the same early African/Nguni who had been despised by the early European. This quotation gives us the confidence that our interpretation is correct. We have established here the early African's style of agriculture, economy, industries and commerce that Jolobe had set out to expose. These are some of the aspects of early Nguni civilization which early European discourse submerged, hid from print, ignored or misunderstood - which effectively gave the impression that, indeed, the Nguni never engaged in these things until they were taught by the European Christians and settlers only on their arrival in this country. Jolobe writes so as to expose the fallacy and machinations behind this false perception in a sophisticated manner that can be felt by the critic who knows the background; he is using a style where one side is presented with devastating effect on the other that is merely implied. We have quoted Ngugi above who said even those African authors of the 1950s who merely used the expository methods

were fiercely involved in a fight against colonialism and imperialism. This novel falls in that category of the exposition of the expository-cum-political group.

4.13 Positive Sexism in Nguni Culture

Jolobe also gives attention in this novel to the question of sexism. The impression that African/Nguni women were objects of the most cruel treatment from their male companions - bashed at will and starved - was created as a true story by the European detractors of African/Nguni culture. Yes, Ngwekazi in the early stages made silly remarks about Nobusi which embarrassed and made the colour of her face change from radiant beauty to ash. That happened. But the immediate reaction from Ntsele, who beat Ngwekazi thoroughly for this serves to say the types of cruelty like Ngwekazi's action was not tolerated and had counter-moves within the society, which protected the integrity of women. Otherwise, all the boys should have just laughed at Nobusi and delighted themselves in this, but Jolobe provides immediate counter-action to make a statement on the false accusations levelled at the early African/Nguni culture. On a negative quality like this Jolobe had said (above) a writer treats the matter only to ridicule it to discourage the author's community from pursuing that line of behaviour. From this incident onwards women characters are shown to be equals with men or even more powerful and resourceful than male characters.

Ntsele's mother taught Ntsele female chores and it is mainly on a "woman duty" - carrying water from a well - that he won the throne. Even in the decision to do this he was persuaded by his mother and he agreed. When he was challenged by Nobusi for missing her celebration of coming to full girlhood at the period he was still carrying water daily for his grandfather, he defends his decision and action as duty to a grandfather and King, - not a female chore. At that point Nobusi brightens up from her sullenness and welcomes Ntsele's action as being a very prudent decision. And it is at this point and moment and for this reason that his proposal for love to Nobusi is accepted (Jolobe 1958:75). They kissed and hugged each other on the spot for the first time after several proposals. On this issue of female chores we hear the authorial voice in the last part of the following sentences:

Kwahlekiswa (NgoNtsele okha amanzi eyindoda netshawe) naxa phofu bebekho bona ababengayiboni into ehlekisayo kuloo nto.

(my emphasis)

(Jolobe 1958:73)

[To many youths gathered at the celebration of Nobusi's coming into mature girlhood, the fact that Ntsele (a circumcised man and a prince) carried water for days, was a matter for hearty laughter, but to part of the group this was no matter to laugh at, and they did not laugh.]

Jolobe puts before us a great psychologist, Ntsele's mother, MaMbambo (Jolobe 1958:4) who taught her son in the major principles of balanced life (bravery, prudence, gentility, wisdom); Nobusi who confronts Ntsele and speaks out her mind (Jolobe 1958:74-75); Nobusi who confronts and stands firm in argument against Ngwekazi at the beginning of the abduction (Jolobe 1958:100-101); and an Ayanda who fools Ngwekazi into a trap while providing to Ntsele the only clue to find where Nobusi would be hidden (Jolobe 1958:103-104).

Right enough it is men in the story who grapple with wild snakes and beasts in the hunting expedition; it is men who collide heavily and hard with one another in the Mahlaphahlapha war - but even there it is the daughter of Mahlaphahlapha who saves the main object of the whole war, - her father - she carries him, successfully, on her back, to safety. That balances up the images of both sexes into a level of equality.

On this matter we can draw the final impression from the implication of the picture of relations between the highest figures in the Kingdom, King Dlomo and his Great Wife, LamaShiyi. Early in the story the latter feels compassionately that her husband should not retire to sleep too late:

Hawu! Baba, usowulibele ukuba waluphele. Uthi lixesha eli lokulala kumntu wexabiso lakho?
(Jolobe 1958:7)

(Dear me! Hussy, you forget that you are an old man. Don't you know that a man of your age should have long been asleep now?)

The first part of the King's retort is equally compassionate:

Hayi, mntwanam ...
(Jolobe 1958:7)

(Oh well, my dear ...)

Later the author omnisciently describes LamaShiyi as an intelligent woman who could read the depths of royal matters, like the difficulty around the succession issue. But having said that when she tried to probe and prod the selection to come faster her husband says that that matter is in the hands of the councillors - men! But, more than saying that this is a territory reserved for men, as it was, the stress is on the democratic process that the matter has to go through rather than on sexist exclusion of women (Jolobe 1958:80-81).

Earlier LamaShiyi had declared positively, without feeling the exclusion as sexist injustice:

Kaloku, LamaNgwekazi, imicimbi yamadoda inqabile ukwaziwa ngamakhosikazi ngakumbi lo kuba uxhomekeke nakwisiphakathi.
(*Jolobe 1958:49*)

(Remember, LamaNgwekazi, the culturally male exclusive zone is difficult for women to penetrate, particularly on this matter which also involves primarily the views of the councillors.)

LamaShiyi is treated as an equal but she accepts exclusion which does not affect her dignity and integrity. That was the position of women in early African culture where everyone had his/her slot; what could be decided as negative sexism these days was accepted as positive demarcation of roles for the two sexes, for them to carry equal loads in life. This did not affect dignity and integrity; in most areas there was overlapping and positive interference when both equally displayed brains instead of one sex doing this, and when the arts of one sex were learnt by the other sex. This is the balanced and positive picture that Jolobe draws against the barbarity drawn by early Europeans about early Africans on this matter.

4.14 Resumé

All this was done by Jolobe, and, all other aspects of Nguni life are brought into the account and meticulously described and exposed for the first audience, first, and the detractors, as well, to know the truth about the early Nguni and Africans in general; he did this to challenge the long-established false perceptions and malicious historical viewpoints about the Nguni, to put back the character and quality of Nguni life on the map and terrain of the highly civilized through this dynamic and oppositional perspective.

In my analysis I brought in historical data, the biographical data of the author, the cultural data of the Nguni, to substantiate my points. This is in line with the thinking of literary great scholars on African literature, like Iyasere, who "prescribe" pre-criticism before a literary critic analyses a work of art, because

that helps the literary critic in tracing the geneses of a particular work, in placing a particular work within its appropriate historical setting, and in locating what cultural influences have shaped the writer's imaginative vision ... To isolate a work wholly from its cultural roots would be an act not of liberation, but castration.

(Iyasere in *THE CONCH*, Vol. 5, Numbers 1 & 2, 1973:7-9)

In the thirteen sub-headings above and in earlier chapters I have done just what Iyasere recommends, because I, indeed, also believe in it.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, generally, we have exposed the central position that ideology and politics in Xhosa literature occupy, and also the fact that in this novel there is fusion of both the artistic and the political purposes, proving it to be a novel for transformation of conscience and one of the fierce in Xhosa indictment literature.

The terrain in which Jolobe is operating is located in the predicament experienced by the Africans/Nguni whose culture and lives had been disrupted, demonised and even criminalised - a predicament that Mamdani (1996:3) in *CITIZEN AND SUBJECT...* describes as the clear tendencies of the present: modernism and communitarianism that face the Eurocentrists and the Africanists - both groups being located within the African societies. Wiredu (1996) had defined this state as

a cultural flux characterised by a confused interplay between an indigenous cultural heritage and a foreign cultural legacy of a colonial origin.

(Wiredu 1996:61)

Jolobe interrogates Europeanism, Westernization and the misrepresenters of the Africans by giving a positive picture of the pre-colonial African/Nguni panorama. In the course of the presentation the misrepresenters are the implicit passive listeners and readers while the misrepresented are the explicit readers and listeners. This novel is a challenge, a debate, and a dialogue favouring the misrepresented and decriminalising adherence to African/Nguni culture, so that at the end of the day the "othered" group is recognised as an equal among the human species of bipeds by the "we" group. We will remember that the "others" have even been called criminals-still-out-of-jail.

Jolobe, as a committed African intellectual and fiery revolutionary, has acted as a guide, a torch-bearer, a mediator, and a sensitive interpreter for his society in making it understand itself: its superb communal values, its practical wisdom, the solidity of its culture and structures, its democracy, and its indigenous spirituality in order for it to make informed responses to imperialist stereotypes, to disintegrative effects of colonialism, and to cultural dislocation. The likes of Jolobe directed attention mainly at the deculturated, reformed Africans, the men of two worlds who were aspiring to European middle class values, who

were trained and co-opted by the European coloniser in denigrating, pauperising, and vandalising the African/Nguni selfhood and culture, and those who were made to believe that they were living in a cultural vacuum or cultural wasteland.

Jolobe, as an astute mind, realized that cultural nationalism is a source of solidarity and that psychological and political freedom lay in the revival of traditions of the people under seige; in reviving these in this novel he is turning the centre away from Europeanism to Africanism by exposing the wisdom in African culture and traditions as against the practice of othering that had arbitrarily arrogated wisdom to European culture and traditions. In putting together the central features of the broken indigenous cultural heritage and history, mythologising these into a wholesome and resourceful past reality, the author is giving back to the African/Nguni his/her essential dignity as a human being and is awakening the minds of the Indigenes that had been emptied and deprived of their selves. We have shown how the author has done this in the way he handled African communalism, democracy, military intelligence and capacity, security consciousness, traditional religion, discipline, human feelings, natural intelligence, peacefulness, robustness, procedures in celebrations of their cultural activities (marriages, polygamy, home-coming of "boys" from the circumcision school, and tasting of first-fruits), song and poetry, tendency to repeat oneself, positive sexism, and attributes in "pre-literate" education, arts, sport, technology, economics, commerce, agriculture, and medicine. The present cries by the Mandela/Thabo Mbeki government for a revival of "indigenous technology" and "African Renaissance" to free the Africans psychologically and to develop them easier and faster is based on the wisdom that Jolobe and the 1950's authors had used to awaken the African.

The action in this novel is given direction by the philosophical words of the diviner who provides the religious dimension to this mythology by bringing in the ancestors as a major factor in whatever he says and does for the Kingdom. This is central to the doctrine of African religion. The major area of attack from the imperialists has been the religion of the Indigenes in South Africa which was either denied to be existing or simply dismissed as paganism; Jolobe dealt with that issue adequately, showing that Africans had a genuine and authentic religion equal to the Europeanised Christianity through the montage of Nguni cultural events, history, and the war he had selected. Jolobe had dramatised here the teachings of African religion:

(1) The spirit world has a social organisation complete with chiefs and subjects ... the spirits of African ancestors are always within call, and can be summoned at will through ritual invocation ...

(Abraham 1962:62-63)

(2) (Ancestors are) persons who continue to be members of their pre-mortem families ... persons who have tasted death and transcended it ... (and) not ... constrained by all the physical laws which circumscribe the activities of persons with fully physical bodies ... (are) more powerful than mortals ... (are) more irreversibly moral than any living mortal ... libations poured to them on ceremonial and other important occasions are simply invitations to come and participate in family events.

(Wiredu 1996:47-48)

In the process of the "drama" he has shown the symbolism and sacredness of blood, water, the courtyard, the kraal, and a particular chamber that is identified and reserved at a homestead for communication with the ancestors and the Creator.

The essential part of African religion that says that the human being is a living spirit who, on death of the body, joins the living spirits as an ancestor to whom Africans talk directly, is captured very well in this novel through, mainly, the communication by the diviner (Dlikiza) with the ancestors. This mythology is enticing to the man who has been told that he has no religion, it builds his soul afresh, and motivates the individual to higher optimism about himself/herself, it kindles an emotion of hope for the so-called children of Ham who had been dubbed as worshippers of demons. In this novel Jolobe has mythologised, from the African perspective, on metaphysics - the theory of knowledge and truth; on an epistemology that acknowledges the limits of human knowledge using the great but humble diviner (Dlikiza) who always declares that he derives his prognosis from the Source of all Knowledge via the medium of the ancestors; and on an ontologism that establishes that the Africans had a knowledge of the Source of all Life long before the Europeans set foot on African soil. Jolobe arrived at this declaration through an exercise in comparative religion. Comparative religionists, by and large, claim universality of the phenomenon of religion in every group of *homo sapiens*, and their point of departure is that universal philosophy of religions

begins from the point that all religions, as cultural and historical (phenomena), do not differ essentially from one another and so cannot be placed one above the other.

(Crafford in Joubert 1996:230)

The overall message is that there is only one human race; Jolobe dramatises all these cultural aspects and history to internationalise and universalize the social position of the pre-colonial African/Nguni Indigenes, that is the globalisation of their conscience that Mostert (1992) and Eliade (1965) had done for the Africans to re-set their minds for the noble position they occupy as equals in the fold of mankind globally.

On the other major area of attack, Economics and Commerce, Jolobe had given enough attention and cases as an answer to European attacks on the Indigenes. As examples from these fields Jolobe had given the reader the exchange of plenty of beadwork for snuff-boxes; two good oxen from the Great Place for one good race-ox from a commoner; and gifts of equal value to the bride tribute from the bride's side for the good-looking beasts of the bride tribute from the bride-groom. This serves to refute and to silence the voices like those of Henry Lichtenstein who claimed that

the Beetjuana (Betswana) had absolutely no idea of how to conduct trade.
(Chidester 1996:180)

He (Lichtenstein) is also reported to have observed among other South African tribes that he visited

ignorance of the value of trade goods in economic exchange ... (and) inability to value objects (in general).
(Chidester 1996:180)

In the exchanges we see in this novel there is neither inability nor ignorance but only fairness as practised under African communalism as against the exploitation of the customer under colonial capitalism.

As said in our aims and methodology at the beginning, this thesis demonstrates that this novel is counterhegemonic in conception, influence, and in effect; it subverts the long-standing hegemonic version. To prove this its contents have been evaluated in the historical context of the practices and tendencies of the African authors of the 1950s; references have been made to the writer's other works which are also shown to be aimed at subverting what the state had mischievously allowed to grow as the normal; we have quoted Jolobe himself and other critics on this novel (who declared its political objectives) and on other works by Jolobe (which were shown to be equally political); we have referred to other counterhegemonic Xhosa writers who had built up (together with Jolobe) an oppositional literary culture from the nineteenth century up to the more vicious 1950s. This aspect of this thesis was dealing with the status of this novel in particular and that of the other works referred to, demonstrating that such works were incorrectly categorized as literature for school children, which was not the case. To demythologize and to decode this novel one needs the intelligence of an adult, the experience and wisdom of a widely-read analyst and critic, somebody who can sense the intertextual connections among Jolobe's works in the first place and the link with other literary works of awareness, somebody who is able to feel the tide of the revolution as the challenge against the status

quo was taking off the ground and developing - the link between fiction and the historical context.

The analysis of this novel where Jolobe provided the African Indigenes with an alternative definition of the Indigenes, allowing the readers to see the distance between his version and that presented by the imperialist discourse, has established him as an activist, a mobiliser, a politiciser, and a revolutionary. This tradition is not dying in Xhosa literature, we continue seeing writers who are sensitive to historical developments who then mythologize the Soweto Uprising, the fires it kindled around the country, exile period and its politics, and the period of the returnee with a baggage that has both positive and negative aspects.

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