

**SIGN AND STRUCTURE: A SEMIO-STRUCTURAL APPROACH
TO THE SHORT STORIES IN D.B.Z. NTULI'S ISIBHAKABHAKA**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that **SIGN AND STRUCTURE: A SEMIO-STRUCTURAL APPROACH TO THE SHORT STORIES IN D.B.Z. NTULI'S ISIBHAKABHAKA** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....C.D.Ntuli.....

SIGNATURE

(MRS C.D. NTULI)

...30/11/1997

DATE

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SUMMARY

Chapter 1 outlines the aim of the study, research methodology, delimitation of scope and the definition of some terms. This is followed by a list of Zulu short stories which Ntuli has already contributed. His other contributions in circles outside the writing of fiction are also acknowledged. Finally, tribute is paid to some contributions made by Ntuli as an endeavour to uplift the standard of Zulu writing.

In **Chapter 2** plot structure is discussed. This is followed by an in-depth semiotic analysis of some short stories.

Chapter 3 deals with the different narration techniques employed by the author in his short stories.

Chapter 4 differentiates between actors and characters. Different methods of character portrayal are investigated.

Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation by summarising the main finding of this study. It also brings forth some conclusions with regard to literary merit of Ntuli's short stories and his contribution to Zulu literature.

Key Words:

Structuralism; Semiotics; Signs; Short story; Plot structure; Constraints; Changes; Characterisation; Narration; Craftsmanship.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to

My dear parents:

September Sondoda and Alvairy Busisiwe Masilela.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PREAMBLE

Story writing is a form of dynamic art. Its dynamism is reflected by the many books which are published yearly. In these books one finds a variety of themes presented in different interesting manners where authors strive to impart their art and craft to the reader.

Theoretical discussions on short stories have rapidly gained momentum since Edgar Allan Poe "baptised" the short story with some fundamental rules such as brevity, the unity of effect, etc. Poe's contribution, together with that of his followers, is commended for giving direction and also paving the way for the writing of short stories. This, however, later proved to have its own disadvantages because it forced authors to adhere and adapt to laid down rules. Gullason (in May, 1976: 20) made the following remarks in his criticism to the long standing parrot-like and somnambulistic approach to the writing of the "modern" short story:

Another single word - **formula** - has been so often attached to the short story that it suggests a robot-like, unimaginative craft ... treated as though it were something rigid and inflexible lost somewhere in a numbers game, somewhere between 500 words and 15 000 words. Too often Poe's "deliberate care," "single effect," "preconceived effect," and his "one pre-established design" have been taken so seriously that today in the 1960's critics and readers expect nothing more than this thin automated oneness from the story.

Unfortunately, authors had to adhere to the canon in order for their stories to be accepted in the market and to be published. According to Reid:

Magazines' publication expanded hugely during the nineteenth century, tending to encourage stereotypes, mannerisms, gimmickry and the like. (1988: 1)

This, in a way, perpetuates rigidity. It robs authors of a free trend of thought expression in short story writing for they have to keep on "measuring" to see if the "jacket" still fits. Reid puts it like this as he concurs with and quotes Bernard Bergonzi:

The modern short-story writer is bound to see the world in a certain way because the form he is using has an insidiously reductive effect: it is disposed "to filter down experience to the prime elements of defeat and alienation". (1988: 1-2)

This however leaves the critic with a problem: if Poe is to be abandoned, how will a good short story be distinguished from a bad short story? This discussion will consequently attempt to examine the above situation as well as the manner in which Ntuli manipulates his techniques in the short stories in Isibhakabhaka.

1.2 AIM OF STUDY

The aim of this study is to make a critical evaluation of the short stories in Isibhakabhaka. The main aspects that will be focused upon will be plot structure, narration, actors and characters. This study will also endeavour to assess the manner in which Ntuli manipulates the above-mentioned features.

There are already a number of studies on Ntuli, for example: A.C.T. Mayekiso, Cultural and religious contrasts and symbiosis in D.B.Z. Ntuli's short stories (unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of Durban-Westville, 1994); C.T. Msimang, "Tracing the signifier and the signified in D.B.Z. Ntuli's short stories" (an unpublished paper read at a conference, 1995); C.D. Ntuli, "Focalising and Narrating in D.B.Z. Ntuli's *Iziqongo zezintaba*", (unpublished Honours Article, Unisa, 1994), A. Strachan, Uthingo Lwenkosazana' van D.B.Z. Ntuli: 'n

narratologie ondersoek, (PhD-thesis, University of Pretoria, 1988) and J.K. Mabuza, The short story in Zulu, (M.A.-thesis, Rands Afrikaanse Universiteit, 1988). However, this study will be the first on the short story collection in Isibhakabhaka, as well as the first to apply the semio-structural approach to Ntuli's short stories.

Interest in this study was triggered by the fact that although Ntuli has already contributed a fairly substantial corpus of short stories to Zulu literature, his approach in Isibhakabhaka seems to be somewhat different from his past writings. This, then, has prompted this investigation in order to find and weigh the merits and the demerits of his contemporary approach. An investigation will also be made to see whether Ntuli has adhered to the expected horizons of the traditional short story according to Poe or whether he has in any manner added any forms of change.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, I shall adopt the semio-structural approach for semioticians and structuralists concentrate on the many codes and conventions that contribute to the readability of the text. This approach will be benefitted by the structuralists' notion that they (the structuralists) do not attribute any meaning to the object but they will expose something that was previously hidden:

...Structuralism seeks its structures not on the surface, at the level of the observed, but below or behind empirical reality. (Michael Lane, 1970: 14)

Semiotics, on the other hand, being the study of the sign, complements structuralism. For whereas structuralism is concerned with exposing the way in which the text becomes constructed, semiotics with its emphasis on communication, exposes the way in which the text becomes intelligible to the reader.

The formalists' approach will also be adopted inherently for both structuralism and semiotics are built on certain formalistic features.

1.4 DELIMITATION OF SCOPE

The analysis of Zulu short stories is mostly based on the characteristics of short stories as given by Allan Edgar Poe. In the definition of the short story, Poe's approach will be used and a probe will be made to examine other theorists' point of view with regard to this. But emphasis will be laid on the investigation of the degree to which Ntuli has adhered to Poe's characteristics and if any forms of deviations are spotted, they will be examined. If the need to illustrate a certain point arises, a comparison with Ntuli's previous short story collections will be carried out.

In order to demonstrate structural plot analysis in comparison to the conventional formalistic and semiotic analysis, the plot structure of a selected narrative will be examined structurally.

The focus of this dissertation will concentrate on the following seven short stories from the book Isibhakabhaka: '*Ivasi KaVusi*', '*Isikweletu*', '*Ngaleli Phasika*', '*Mhleli*', '*Iqanda Yichoboka*', '*Azikhwelwa*' and '*UMjuzo*'. Most of the stories will be used to elucidate certain theoretical aspects but emphasis will fall on the following short stories: '*Ivasi KaVusi*', '*Ngaleli Phasika*' and '*Mhleli*'.

1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

In order to grasp the semio-structural approach, certain background information regarding the terms structuralism and semiotics as well as De Saussure's contribution to language must be supplied.

1.5.1 Structuralism

The formalistic approach of the Russian formalism culminates in and is extended by the Prague school of structuralism which developed since the 1920's. Structuralism views both language and literary texts as a means of communication. In this respect Selden (1985: 55) mentions that "structuralist poetics draws attention to the codes we use to construct meaning", in other words, structuralist theory, as it is applied to literature, regards the text as the object.

A formalistic idea which was adopted by the structuralists is that it is incorrect to argue that form and content are two separate aspects of a text and that if a certain form is utilised, it follows that a certain content will result or vice versa. Form and content are regarded as inseparable in the sense that both convey meaning. The bifurcation of form and content is now replaced by that of structure and material. Wellek and Warren (1976: 31) explain that material regards "all the aesthetically indifferent elements", whilst structure is "the manner in which they acquire aesthetic efficacy". They maintain that structure as such includes both form and content since it regards the artistic arrangement of non-artistic and non-literary material which then obtains literary meaning as well artistic meaning in a "system of signs, or structure of signs, serving a specific aesthetic purpose".

Levitt (1971: 7-12) explains that the term "structure" comes from architecture and "in literature what we mean by structure is simply organisation". He goes on to ask the question, what is organised in a text? and then explains that "any inquiry into the organisation of a play requires at the outset a decision as to what "parts"

constitute that organization. Simply, what are the constituent parts in the dramatic structure?" As the basic or constituent parts of a text will be discussed under a separate heading, it will have to suffice to say that structuralism regards a text as a structure which has been structured in a specific and unique way by organising unorganised and artistically indifferent material in such a way that it becomes meaningful. Structure is the way in which a world is built up in a literary text.

Structuralism is regarded by some academic scholars as unprecedented. Jefferson concurs with Benoit, who wrote the book entitled La révolution structurale, in that he considers structuralism as revolutionary. He states that the

Structuralist theory is not a source of methodological tools capable of generating new interpretation of literary text but an exploration of the conventions that make interpretation possible (1989:95).

Structuralism aims at the scientific studying of a language as a sign from which the idea that a literary work of art should be seen as a system of signs as well finally developed. Structural analysis therefore tries to determine the "mutual relationship between patterns, how they are distributed in the text and how they combine to become meaningful units" (Swanepoel, 1990: 16).

According to Michael Lane (1970: 14):

... the most distinctive feature of the structuralist method is the emphasis it gives to wholes, to totalities... the essential quality of the structuralist method and its fundamental tenet, lies in its attempt to study not the elements of a whole, but the complex network of relationships that link and unite those elements.

To the structuralist, the meaning of a specific text is of secondary importance since they are mainly interested in how literature produces meaning.

In the structural analysis of Ntuli's short stories to be undertaken, the structure of the whole text in terms of its constituent parts will be studied. Only after the

aspects of the selected texts have been studied, it will be possible to reach overall conclusions on those specific texts.

From the above it should be obvious that structuralism suggests that for an understanding of language, and in this case, an analysis of short stories, one has to have knowledge about the sign, one also has to know the langue, competence, grammar, rules, codes and conventions of that sign. The constituent parts, the relations between the constituent parts, as well as the relations between each part and the whole of that sign, should come under consideration. Furthermore, one has to regard the literary texts as structures. When examining those structures, their constituent parts and their organisation should be discussed. This study aims, in light of the above, to give a systematic, verifiable description of the meaning of Ntuli's literary text.

1.5.2 Semiotics

Carusi defines semiotics as:

the science of the use of signs according to specific codes in all forms of communication. In terms of literary semiotics, the literary text is regarded as a message presented in a distinctive code (encoded) by a sender (the author) to receivers (the readers) who decipher or decode the message. A literary code can be defined as any sign system that is used to convey literary information (1992: 35).

From the above definition one can gather that semiotics looks at the relation between the sign and the code. This means that a sign can only be regarded as a sign if it functions within a code. A code is a rule-governed signifying system shared by a community of speakers. It is, therefore, conventional. Semiotics is concerned with the codes which are embedded or woven in the text. These codes govern every aspect of the text and interact with each other to produce the meaning of the text. In relation to semiotics, Pierce (as quoted by Tejera, 1995:

34-35) further explains the sign as follows:

the sign in general ... is the third member of a triad: first a thing as a thing, second a thing as reacting with another thing; and third, a thing as **representing** another to a third ... A sign mediates between the **interpretent** and its object.

In order to shed more light onto other different types of signs (as differentiated by Pierce), Carusi's (1997: 72) explanation must be fully explored when she expounds on the motivated sign, as opposed to the majority of arbitrary signs, as it will be noticed in the discussion of De Saussure's theory.

In fact, it is difficult to accommodate any motivated signs on the basis of De Saussure's theory. This is the advantage that Pierce's theory has over De Saussure's concept. Pierce is not concerned with a theory of language as such, Pierce, in fact, finds the non-linguistic signs of greatest interest. Pierce distinguished between three different signs:

Iconic signs: these signs occur when there is a relation of resemblance between the sign and what it stands for. For example, a photograph of a person is an iconic sign of that person.

Indexical signs: these signs occur when there is a causal relation between the sign and what it stands for. For example, smoke is an indexical sign for fire, because there is a causal relation between the two.

Symbolic signs: These signs occur when there is a conventional relation between the sign and what it stands for. Linguistic signs fall into this category.

1.5.3 De Saussure's contribution to structuralism and semiotics

According to Hawkes, structuralism takes as its basic principle that the world is made up of relationships rather than things. This structuralists' notion claims that

the nature of every element in any situation has no significance by itself, but it is in fact determined by its relationship to all the other elements involved in the situation. This means that the significance of a thing or an experience can only be perceived if it is integrated into the structure of which it forms a part (1977: 17-18).

Structuralists' thinking owes its roots and background to the work of a Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure. According to Hawkes, De Saussure advocated that the language should be studied, not only in terms of its individual parts and not only diachronically, but also in terms of the relationship between those parts and synchronically, that is, in terms of its current adequacy (1977: 20).

Hawkes further mentions that a language should be studied in a *Gestalteinheit*, in other words, a unified field, a self-sufficient system (this information about De Saussure's work is known to have been published posthumously in 1915, after having been compiled by his students). This data encompassed a series of lectures which he delivered at the University of Geneva between 1906 and 1911. These were recorded in his *Course de Linguistique Generale*. In order to understand the way structuralism and semiotics work, it is imperative to give a general layout of the foundation and terminology advocated by De Saussure in his study of language. This terminology lends itself well to the objective of this study and it also enhances the probe into both structuralism and semiotics.

1.5.3.1 Langue and parole

De Saussure took his discussion about the nature of linguistics and its object of study by introducing two important discussions - the distinction between *langue* and *parole* and the distinction between synchronic and diachronic studies. For the purpose of this study we shall concentrate more on the former distinction.

In French, *langue* means "language" and *parole* means "word", "speech" or "utterance". So *langue* is the language which a number of speakers have in

common and through which they communicate; *parole* is the use to which the language is put by actual speakers, in actual utterances, in actual situations. *Langue* is therefore abstract and *parole* is actual or concrete. *Langue* is social; *parole* is individual. When it is said that language is social, what is meant is that it is shared by a community of speakers. The social nature of the language therefore makes it a means of communication. This also means that when people communicate they have to use the language that they share, that is, a communal language.

Besides the fact that language is referred to above as social, cognisance should also be taken of the fact that language is also conventional or arbitrary. Carusi and De Jong (1997: 17) describe convention as follows:

A convention is something that holds, implicitly or explicitly, amongst the members of a community or a society. It is a convention of many Western societies that men do not wear skirts ... A convention in this sense is regular practice, or something which is regularly done. Conventions are social, just as language is, because they rely on agreement between members of the community.

From this we can take a sign as an example and therefore conclude that a sign is a convention because what a sign represents has to be generally understood or accepted by the community. For example, the fact that a white dove represents peace and the fact that amongst the Africans, the use of both hands or the supporting of the right hand by the left one when receiving an object from an elderly person, or from someone who is in a senior position, is regarded as a sign of respect or of being polite.

De Saussure maintains that literature in general does not only make use of language, but like language it also comprises a certain "grammar", certain rules, codes and conventions which manifest themselves in individual ways in individual texts. This implies that an author, like Ntuli, needs a certain competence before he can successfully perform in literature and that critics or readers of literature also

need a certain competence before they can perform with regard to literature, that is, successfully read, analyse and interpret a text.

This implies the following: firstly, that a text being a sign which communicates, also consists of different parts in the same way that language comprises different words; in the second instance, that there is always a certain relation between these constituent parts of the text; and thirdly, that meaning is conveyed not by one item or part in the text only, but by each individual part together with the whole of all the constituent parts.

1.5.3.2 Codes and signs

Code is a term which is often used to indicate the special nature of linguistic conventions. A code can be described as a system of rules which connects words with their meanings. It should, however, be borne in mind that not all codes are linguistic for there are some which are non-linguistic, for example, the traffic system. The basic formula for the type of rule that a code represents, can be illustrated as follows:

X stands for Y
 ↓ ↓

For example:  stands for love.

From the above example it becomes clear that the item that stands for something is called a *sign*. Codes thus regulate our use of signs for the purpose of communication. A basic definition of the sign is:

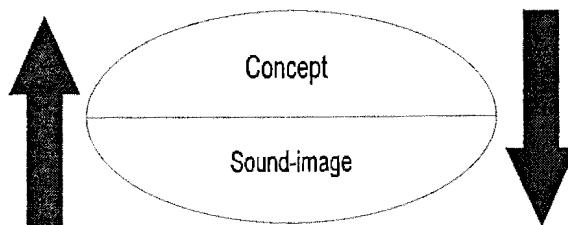
A sign is anything that stands for something.

This then brings us to the understanding that the words of a language can be treated as signs and that a language is a one-sign system amongst others (like the

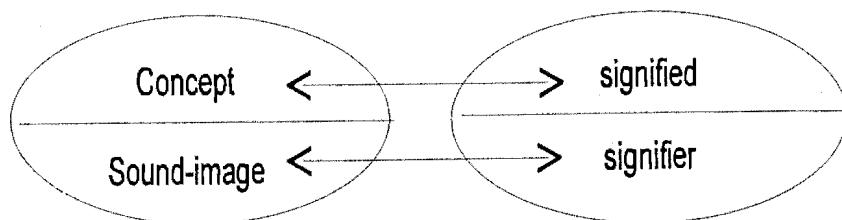
writing system, the alphabet of deaf-mutes, symbolic rites, polite formulas, military signals, etc). This is the innovation for which De Saussure is famous. It is with the treatment of language as a system of signs that semiology (or semiotics) was introduced into the domain of the human sciences.

1.5.3.3 The sign: the signifier and the signified

According to De Saussure (1960: 66), "the linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound image". This is illustrated as follows:



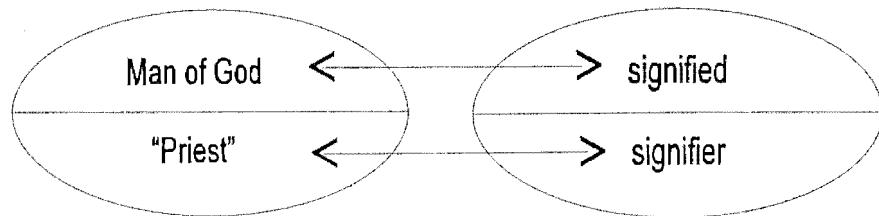
This shows that the sign is made up of two entities, one which is physical and the other which is mental - i.e. that exists in the mind. The term that he uses for these two entities are *signifier* and *signified* respectively. This can be illustrated as follows:



Hawkes (1977: 25) explains this clearly when he says:

The linguistic sign can be characterised in terms of the relationship which pertains between its dual aspects of "concept" and of "sound-image" - or to use the terms which De Saussure's work has made famous - *signified (signifie)* and *signifier (signifiant)*.

In one of the stories which will be discussed, '*Ngaleli Phasika*'; when, for instance, the word "priest" is mentioned, the physical aspect is the sound that is emitted when the word is said; when it is written, the physical aspect is the graphic mark. Therefore what is heard when the word "priest" is vocalised, is the signifier. The same thing happens when this word is written down and one looks at it, it is another signifier. Signifiers have no meaning in and of themselves. The meaningful aspect of the sign is the concept associated with the signifier. In our example the concepts "man of God" or "man of the cloth" are associated with the signifier "priest". This concept is the signified and it can be illustrated as follows:



The signifier and the signified together make up the sign. A mistake which is commonly made is to associate the signifier alone with the sign and the signified with the thing that the signifier stands for. In order to clearly illustrate this let's again return to our formula of the sign:

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 X & \leftrightarrow & Y \\
 \text{Priest} & \text{stands for} & \text{man of God} \\
 & & (\text{sacredness})
 \end{array}$$

With this knowledge in mind, the arbitrariness or the conventional nature of the sign should be remembered. Hawkes (1977: 25) clearly explains this when he says:

The overall characteristic of this relationship is one that we have already encountered: it is arbitrary. There exists no necessary "fitness" in the link between the sound-image, or signifier "tree", the concept, or signified that it involves and the actual physical tree growing in the earth. The word "tree", in short has no "natural" or "tree-like" qualities and there is no appeal open to a "reality" beyond the structure of the language in order to underwrite it.

In the subsequent chapters it will be shown how De Saussure's structural linguistics can be used in a non-linguistic sphere. Before the semio-structural approach can be applied to the selected short stories, the following six points which are mentioned by Carusi and De Jong (1996: 75) must be taken into consideration:

- ① The basic premise of textual analysis is that *all signifiers have multiple signifieds*.
- ② Signs' connotations are always related to *codes* of social values and meanings. (Remember that a code is a set of values and meanings shared by users, the producers and readers of the text.)
- ③ Each text is a syntagmatic combination of signs, with their related connotations. So texts are always linked to *social codes*.
- ④ The *connotations* emphasised by different readers depend on their social positions, that is, the class, gender, race, age and other factors that influence the way they think about and interpret texts.
- ⑤ Socially preferred connotations become *denotations*, the apparently true meanings of the signs and the text for readers.
- ⑥ Denotations represent *cultural myths*, sets of beliefs and attitudes which readers of texts may be invited to accept as true and natural.

1.6 THE CHARACTERISTICS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHORT STORY

A short story is regarded as a short literary prose. It is common knowledge that a story should tell about something happening at a certain place; the events in a story should evolve around a certain character or characters; and that the form should have an introduction, body and a conclusion. In a story there is a subject under discussion, there is action in a short story and events always happen.

The above is a general summary of the short story principles laid down by Edgar Allan Poe who is regarded by many critics as the pioneer of the short story. In his guidelines for short stories he stresses that in the short story there should be unity through concentration on a single character in a single situation at a single moment. The short story should be concise and condensed both in form and content, and that all events should contribute towards the unity of that story. Furthermore, the length of the story should be short so as to allow itself to be read at one sitting. The objective must also be the emphasis of a particular and unique effect. The whole composition should not have words written the tendency of which is not to the pre-established design (De Grandsaigne, 1985:2).

It should be noted that the notion and the existence of the short story is not a new thing amongst the Africans for, in the African culture stories have through the ages been told by parents and grandparents to their young ones by word of mouth. This was so because people were not literate then. Ntuli (in Gérard, 1993: 139) in his article entitled "Zulu Literature", puts things into perspective when he says:

Before contact with western civilisation the Zulu people did not have a sophisticated system of recording their ideas. There was a rudimentary form of communicating feelings which was used by girls who sent messages to their lovers by means of beads of various colours. This method was obviously limited. In spite of many limitations there was dynamic oral literature manifest mainly in prose narratives (*izinganekwane*) and praise poems (*izibongo*) ... The development of Zulu literature owes much to the missionaries. They were the first to reduce the spoken language to writing ...

Credo Mutwa (1997: 16), who is regarded by many South Africans as South Africa's cultural historian, brings the following information to light in his article entitled "Storytelling in traditional society - the role of the myth":

In the few instances where African mythology has been written down, the stories were transcribed by missionaries, who were very discriminating in their selection. They tended only to record those stories that met their individual European expectations of what a folktale should be. They also recorded stories using contemporary European standards of moral decency.

Numerous scholars have discussed the history and the development of writing among the Zulus. This chapter will, therefore, take a cursory look at some facts and observations about the short story, as well as deliberating specifically on the following remarks made by Nguni:

The existence of the short story can be traced back to a time long before people could write, when tales generated by the various folk cultures were cast into verse and collected into huge narrative poems. These were transmitted by word of mouth as recitation, sometimes with musical accompaniment, sung like lyrics or acted like plays ... The modern short story can, as already stated, be traced to primitive tales of ancient societies and cultures. Some of these tales were later recorded in writing, ... In the early cultures of the Hebrews, Hindus, Greeks, Romans, Indians and Egyptians, tales were generally recorded as a means of amusement. (1997: 27)

From the above observations it is noted that which is now termed "short story" is the oldest form of literature from which all the other types of literature seem to have developed in the course of time. In her discussion, Nguni further mentions some of the Hebrew short stories which were recorded as parables. Here she cites the story of the prodigal son as an example. To substantiate her standpoint in this respect, she remarks that "this parable was told long before man developed a definite notion of the short story and is a very old prose text used by Jesus to illustrate a basic truth about life. In other words, these tales reflected moral issues in society rather than serving as amusement" (1997: 23).

With respect to stories from the Bible, Khathi (1991: 15) has the following point of view:

These Biblical stories are classified as prehistoric lores with, of course, unliterary purpose. They do have stylistic economy and psychological interest, yet they are not offered as fiction. They purport to be historically veracious and to justify the way of God to men. They are not conceived as literary inventions nor are they shaped as contributions to the craft of fiction.

However, Nguni (1997: 23-24) goes further to comment about other subsequent periods following the "dark ages":

During the medieval period, before the development of the art of book printing, the development of this genre did not take place as rapidly as would otherwise be expected. During this period, however, an author such as Boccaccio (1313-1375) did make a major contribution to the development of this genre with his "Decameron", a series of historical narratives in Italian ... The modern, more sophisticated short story genre as it is known today originated in America only in the 19th century. Writers, however, initially disagreed about a proper name for the genre. Irving, Poe and Hawthorne, for example, respectively termed it "the tale", "the short prose tale" and "the sketch". They also differed about the aims, purpose and methods of writing the short story, as Irving wanted to entertain, while Poe wanted a "totality of effect" and Hawthorne to open up an intercourse with the world by treating serious themes ... Poe's inductive reasoning led to the constitution of literary criteria and suggested some basic features for a short story such as a single impression, economy of language, lifelike characters, relevancy to them, a fitting setting and compactness. Poe's outline of rules was later refined by Henry James who suggested fewer characters, a single incident and one point of view.

Although Poe's fundamental principles have basked in glory for more than a century, they have been questioned by modern critics, such as Röhrberger (in May, 1976: 80-81):

... there is nothing wrong with a definition that has not been revised or subjected to much examination in better than a hundred years, as

long as the definition is valid. But the definition we have is something of a problem. Its terms are too broad; its diction imprecise. Consider, for example the word "brevity". How brief is brief? ... "closeness of texture", "freedom from excrescence", "unity of effect" - can apply to all forms ... The idea that a short story deals with a single character in a single action is useful but not always applicable - it seems better to define the short story in terms of its overall purpose and structure ...

The word "short" in short story writing may give the impression that in prose, short story writing is easy because the story need not be long. However, short story writing is not as easy as it might appear, for in order for the stories to be accepted and to be seen to meet a required standard, authors are expected to incorporate into their work some of the so-called fundamental principles of story writing.

A question may now be posed: what about those authors who do not know anything about the characteristics of the short story? What about a person who is a natural, the one who has a natural flair, who has the art, the vocabulary, the style and the dexterity of manoeuvring the events such that they end up giving an interesting pleasing whole? Should the work of such authors be spurned because, for instance, the story has too many characters to be accepted as a short story or because the plot has not been successfully handled? I therefore tend to agree with Reid (1988:3) when he makes the following observation:

The tale-telling impulse is too irrepressibly fecund to be confined within a single narrative pattern. Therefore the history of the modern short story embraces diverse tendencies, some of which have stretched, shrunk or otherwise altered previous conceptions of the nature of the genre. Ideas once proposed as definitive about the proper structure and subject material of the short story have needed revising to meet the facts of literary evolution. For example, nineteenth-century critics frequently insisted on the need for a firmly developed design in any "true" short story; this was part of their effort to make the form respectable in terms of current taste, to lift it beyond its lowly origins.

By this it is not meant that standards should be lowered and allow for the

acceptance of everything that is written down and given the name "short story".

With this in mind I support Shadbolt's view (in May, 1994: 269) when he says:

But in the short story everything must be done well, but every element balanced, if the story is to succeed on any terms at all. The short story is a craftsman challenge to the writer and may again - if successful - reward the reader in proportion to the extent of the challenge embraced. For the real challenge is ... to produce, if possible, that hallucinatory point in which time past and time present seem to co-exist with time present, that hallucinatory point which to me defines the good or great short story ... In great part, then the challenge of the short story is also the challenge of pure storytelling - not storytelling to some end, but storytelling primarily for the sake of the story. Anything else is secondary.

A number of African authors and critics have already expressed a disquietude about this trend. Sithebe (in Losambe, 1996: 250) voices her discontentment about both Poe and the critics in her article entitled "Unshackling the tale: perspectives on the nature and development of the short story in siSwati":

... it is the critic who actually steers the writer into this camp of creative bondage by imposing only Poe's mathematical approach when evaluating manuscripts for publication. This myopic rigidity has made the short story seem a mechanical and standardised affair with graphs and curves to show the exact movement of the plot, a required number of the characters, ... This results in the compromising of the *fabula* and the accentuation of the *sjuzet*, as the latter is subjected to hard and fast rules.

However, all is not sombre and unpromising, for Ntuli (in Malan, 1987: 137) offers the following suggestion which could be of help in the evaluation of manuscripts:

Critics, too, should come together to review their approaches. We know that articles and theses have been written on general surveys, specific genres, special authors and other aspects of literature ... It is important for scholars to come together to take a closer look at the critical yardstick they are using for vernacular literature. It has been suggested, for example, that engagement should be adopted as a literary criterion for this literature. How far should we go with this proposition? We have sufficient material to be able to sit down and

determine whether we can make our own contribution towards literary theory using vernacular work as a basis. The coming together of critics need not aim at reaching some kind of consensus, but it **should be an exercise directed at the promotion of African literature.** (My emphasis)

True to the above emphasised words, it will be seen in the next sub-section that Ntuli has dedicated most of his time and talent to the promotion and the upliftment of the standard of African literature.

1.7 A BRIEF SURVEY ON SHORT STORY WRITING IN ZULU

1.7.1 Books published by Ntuli and other Zulu writers

Before the details of plot structure and how structuralism, especially the process of semiosis, is essentially an infinite chain of interpretations, can be embarked upon, an intensive but succinct look at the history of Zulu short story writing must first be given.

The short story is probably the most widely read of all modern genres, especially the English short stories, because they appear in a variety of magazines. However, since the sixties, several writers have felt that the short story genre has not received sufficient serious critical attention, unlike the novel.

This is also true in regard to Zulu short stories. Very little progress was made in Zulu before 1960. But in the late sixties D.B.Z. Ntuli made a triple contribution over a three year period. He published Izikhwili (1969), Imicibisholo (1970) and Uthingo Lwenkosazana (1971). A few years later he published Amawisa (1982), Ngamafuphi (editor) (1985), Izizenze (1986), Ingcamu (editor) (1987), Umtshingo (editor) (1987), Idubukele (co-author) (1987) and Isicamelo (editor) (1990), Induku

(co-author) (1992) and Isibhakabhaka (1994).

Khathi (1991: 21) makes several interesting observations about some of the titles which Ntuli gave to some of his books:

We may also remark about the titles of Ntuli's short story books. Izikhwili, Imicibisholo, Amawisa and Izizenze are all Zulu traditional fighting weapons. We are tempted to say that he is engaged in fighting illiteracy amongst the Zulu readers. Uthingo Lwenkosazana means the rainbow which is usually seen after the rain. It indicates that the rain is over - there is going to be sunshine again.

In order to further clarify the above mentioned titles, the exact explanation of the unexplained titles will be given:

<u>Izikhwili</u>	=	Short, thick, knobless fighting sticks
<u>Imicibisholo</u>	=	Bows and arrows
<u>Amawisa</u>	=	Large-headed knobkerries
<u>Izizenze</u>	=	Battle-axes

The explanation of the title Uthingo Lwenkosazana, given above, includes both the literal and the symbolic meaning, that is "the rainbow" and "the sun is going to shine again". In other words, this implies that things are going to improve.

Judging by the avalanche of Zulu books that have been published recently, it is apparent that the "sun" is indeed shining and the "darkness" is rapidly diminishing. This is further accentuated by the title which Ntuli has given to the book under discussion, that is, Isibhakabhaka which means "the firmament". This symbolically reveals that contributions in Zulu writing are greatly on the increase. It also suggests that the sky should be the limit, for writing cannot be fenced in.

Mphemba's work (Mphemba is Ntuli's praise name or an extension of his surname "isithakazelo" used to show respect) was not only a great contribution to Zulu

literature because of the number of stories written, but also because of the high standard of the works he published in the wake of writers like O.E.H. Nxumalo and S.T.Z. Khwela, who published Emhlabeni (1962) and Amanqampungampu (1966).

Later, authors like M.B. Mkhize followed in Ntuli's footsteps and produced a number of good stories. For instance, Ezomhlaba Kazipheli (1972), Emhlabeni Mntanomuntu (1977), Ngiyeke Ngezomhlaba (1980).

The late eighties and the nineties are characterised by a flood of publications by different young authors, where either an individual produced the whole collection, for example, N.G. Sibiya and L. Molefe in Ikusasa Elighakazile (1988) and Zihlekana Iziphongo (1988) respectively; or where there was a group effort with different authors contributing to a collection of short stories and essays, as in Izihlenga Zempilo (1995) and Umjuzo (1996), which were edited by L. Mathenjwa and K. Linda respectively. Imbokode and Izithukuthuku (1997) are both edited by Nakanjani Sibiya. Imbokode is a contribution by female authors only, under the motivation and guidance of this young and remarkable author.

After a cursory comparison of the short stories written in the sixties and the seventies, it is obvious to the reader of Isibhakabhaka that Ntuli has incorporated some changes to the complexion and character of the Zulu short story.

In many of Ntuli's earlier stories, it may be seen that the stories were tailored to suit the existing canon. Amongst others, stories like '*Ngenxa kaNtombini*' and '*Isifuba*' from the book Izikhwili, as well as '*Umhlalaphansi*' and '*Ukufika kwabakhwenyana*' from Amawisa, can be quoted in this regard. Mayekiso agrees with this viewpoint and states:

The story's real beginning is sparked off at the motorial moment, when something happens or action causing anxiety, suspense and tension, thus motivating the reader to continue until the climax, crisis is reached and then the end. Ntuli's stories have adhered to strict observation of plot and I have noticed that the climax/crisis is quite

often close to the end, ... (1994: 161-162)

Although I tend to agree with Mayekiso, her statement is not always correct. In Imicibisholo, for instance, the story entitled '*'Imoto Eluhlaza'* (The blue car), starts with the events which are supposed to be happening towards the end of the story.

1.8 A TRIBUTE TO NTULI'S OEUVRE

Apart from Ntuli's works mentioned above, his unfailing dedication to the upliftment of the Zulu language and the fighting of ignorance and illiteracy, can be seen in other demanding commitments in which he is engaged.

1.8.1 Academic engagements

Academically, D.B.Z. Ntuli has contributed greatly. For the past 30 years (1967-1997), he has made a tremendous impact, initially as a lecturer and then as a professor and head of the sub-department of Zulu at UNISA. Ntuli is greatly involved in academic circles.

For the purpose of this study, his participation and commitment which is relevant to the promotion of Zulu writing, especially the writing of short stories will be examined. Ntuli is not only a writer of Zulu fiction, he was also instrumental in forming the "Usiba Writers' Guild", which is a non-profit organisation aimed at assisting budding Zulu writers and helping Grade XII students with their prescribed work. It preaches the gospel of reading and writing. Writers whose works are deemed to be of high standard are annually awarded prizes which serve as incentives. Many good writers have been "discovered" and "pruned" by this organisation, most of them under the patient guidance of Ntuli.

His contribution can also be seen in his academic texts published. Those publications relevant to our study follow:

- 1983: "Zulu Literature in the Seventies", chapter in A.S. Gérard's Comparative literature and African literatures, Goodwood, Via Afrika.
- 1983: "Writers in shackles?", chapter in C. Malan's Race and Literature, Pinetown, Owen Burges.
- 1993: Southern African literature in African languages, (co-author) Pretoria, Acacia.

1.8.2 Articles

Ntuli did not confine himself solely to literary and academic books, he also did research and wrote articles based on his research. Some of these articles are:

- 1968: "A Survey of Zulu Literature", Limi No. 6, June, pp 28-36.
- 1971: "Iminyaka Yokuqala Eyishumi Ezincwadini ZesiZulu", Inqolobane Yolimi, No. 3, July, pp 23-31.
- 1974: "Indaba Emfushane", Umcwaningi, Vol. 2:2, Dec., pp 15-23.
- 1978: "Brief remarks on Zulu literature", Limi 6.1 & 6.2 pp 44-52.

1.8.3 School Manuals

Ntuli further showed his keenness and his willingness to help the Zulu nation by starting at the root level and writing books which would benefit students at the primary and secondary school level:

- 1986: IsiZulu Samaciko Std 8, (co-author), Pietermaritzburg, Shuter & Shooter.
- 1987: IsiZulu Samaciko Std 9, (co-author), Pietermaritzburg, Shuter & Shooter.
- 1988: IsiZulu Samaciko Std 10, (co-author), Pietermaritzburg, Shuter & Shooter.
- 1991: Phumelela Ekuholweni isiZulu 10, (co-author) Pietermaritzburg, Reach Out.

1993: Phumelela Ekuhlolweni IsiZulu 10, Paper III, Pietermaritzburg, Reach Out.

1.8.4 Papers read by Ntuli

Once more, in his endeavour to push Zulu literature to greater heights, Ntuli spread his wings further and produced several academic papers, the aim of which seemed to be to put the record straight and to place Zulu literature in perspective. Several of these papers are listed below and some of them will be used to illustrate certain points. It should be noted that at the time of writing this study more than twenty papers were on record, however only those relevant to the short story are listed:

- 1980: Writing short stories and novels, Swati Language Seminar, White River, 8 August.
- 1980: South African vernacular literature, University of the Orange Free State, 16 October
- 1981: A Critique of Zulu literature, Kontak, Pretoria, 2 September.
- 1985: Censorship in African literature, Afrikaans Writers' Guild, Johannesburg, 16 July.
- 1986: The final scene, ALASA Seminar, Cape Town, 5 September.
- 1989: The role of the black writer in South Africa, Tsonga Language Board Literary Prize-giving Ceremony, Giyani, 27 April.
- 1990: The relevance of Zulu literature, University of Pretoria and University of the Witwatersrand, 3rd May and 5th May, respectively.
- 1990: Despite the hurdles, De Jager-HAUM Prize-giving Ceremony, Pietermaritzburg, 18 May.
- 1990: Short stories and novels, Swaziland Writers' Seminar, Mbabane, 25 May.

1.8.5 Contents of some of Ntuli's papers

In this subsection some extracts from a selection of Ntuli's published and unpublished papers will be given. This is done to highlight several points

discussed previously. This will also help to give an indication of the immensity of Ntuli's accomplishments in promoting and setting the African languages free from different constraints which were threatening to downgrade or trivialise them.

1.8.5.1 Censorship and African literature

... With regard to literature, censorship constitutes the imposition of restraints on the publication and distribution of material, which, according to some authority, is dangerous to the moral health of the people, or which may cause rebellion against the state or other institutions ... Writers feel it is their calling to point out the wrongs and to praise the commendable deeds of their fellow men ... As artists they must operate without constraints. (1985: 2)

It is the right of the reader to select what suits him. Censorship of literature, no matter in what guise it comes, is regarded by writers as an offence against the reader's intelligence ... At one stage it was estimated that in South Africa two thirds of the banned material had political content. It is likely that if someone reviews such material we may find great works of art. (1985: 3)

In this discussion Ntuli examines parties who were involved in the censoring of manuscripts. Amongst others he implicates the state and missionaries. Although Ntuli commends the missionaries in the role they played in "condensing these languages", he accuses them of "cramping" the talent of the writer:

In fact education was in the hands of these missionaries. They also controlled the publishing firms ... The latter's main interest was the propagation of the Christian faith. Obviously whatever was not contributing towards this aim would not get immediate attention. (1985: 4-5)

1.8.5.2 South African vernacular literature: critical views and criteria

There are publishers who still insist that they can accept a manuscript for publication only if it has prospects for school prescription ... In fact we have witnessed the withdrawal from school prescription of some fairly mature works which had previously been

accepted. The books were said to have scenes or expressions which might "pollute" the child. (1980: 8)

There are many Black artists and critics who feel that standards based on the tradition of Western literature are irrelevant for African art. These critics maintain that there is a wide gap between the cultures of these two groups of people. This gap exists also in the attitudes concerning the priorities taken into account when assessing a work of art. According to some of these critics the Western critic puts the aesthetic foremost. He insists that artistic beauty is fundamental and other considerations are secondary. Black art must be more functional. (1980:11)

The point raised by Ntuli regarding the concerns of some artists and critics is clarified and illustrated by Ntuli himself in a paper he wrote commenting about the standard of work of a young Zulu author by the name of Nakanjani Sibiya, a writer who had since made a name for himself. The title of the article reads: "A milestone in the development of the Zulu short story: The short stories of Nakanjani Sibiya". In this article Ntuli comments about the story entitled '*Ikusasa eliqhakazile*' (A bright future). In order to facilitate discussion, a summary of this story will be given.

This story is about a character named Majuqa. Majuqa steals money from a safe and goes to bury it where nobody can find it. He is arrested and given a ten-year jail sentence. After he has completed his sentence he is released. He returns to look for his long-hidden treasure. He digs and recovers the money. As he prepares to take his loot home, he is bitten by a mamba. He then attempts to go home with the money bag on his back, but he collapses and dies.

Ntuli makes the following comments about the manner in which this story has been concluded:

Critics are unhappy with the introduction of an accident to wind off a story. Such an ending smacks of contrivance. But we have a different kettle of fish here. In the Zulu culture a mamba is a

manifestation of the ancestral spirit. The spirits are unhappy that Majuqa has not repented and now wants to get away with the crime he committed. (1980: 7)

1.9 AWARDS AND PRAISES CONFERRED ON NTULI

All of Ntuli's hard work and dedication did not go unnoticed because he was rewarded with numerous awards, some of which will be listed below.

1.9.1 Literary Awards

For his inimitable academic and literary performances, Ntuli was awarded many prizes:

Cowley Prize for Literature, UniZul 1992 (Short Story "Who will judge?")

Educum Publishers Novel Writing Competition, 1970, 1st prize ("Ngiyoze Ngimthole")

Republic Festival Short Story Writing Competition, 1970, 1st prize ("Uthingo Lwenkosazana")

Radio Bantu Prize, 1976, (Radio play "Isivumelwano Esisha")

Astera Award (twice), 1984, 1986, (Radio plays)

B.W. Vilakazi Award (twice), 1985, 1988, (Short stories)

N.N. Ndebele-Centaur Award for Drama (twice), 1989, 1993, (One-act plays)

1.9.2 A selection of praises bestowed on Ntuli

Demonstrations of gratitude to individuals for the good deeds that they have done come in diverse ways from various persons. Different institutions like the ones already mentioned previously, showed their respect and indebtedness to Ntuli by showering him with awards, as a way of giving him an extra incentive for his work. Other writers who had no token to show their appreciation to him did this in the traditional Zulu way by lauding him with praises. There are many of these from different writers of different genres but only a few of these will be given as a means

of paying tribute to this noble writer and motivator:

Ngibonga kakhulu uProf. D.B.Z. Ntuli owangisiza kakhulu ngezeluleko mayelana nokubhalela uMsakazo. Ngithi unwele olude Mphemba! (Awuthunyelwa Gundane, Damane, 1983: ii)

(I am most grateful to Prof. D.B.Z. Ntuli who greatly helped me with advice on writing for the Radio. I say long live Mphemba!)

Enganeni yakwethu uProf. D.B.Z. Ntuli ongalali eshabashekela ukuba izinga lemibhalo yesiZulu liqhakaze ngibonga ngiphelelwe yiwona awokubonga ngesineke esingandile anaso sokungikhombisa indlela. Kwanga lungavutha njalo ubhaqa olukhanyisayo wena kaMphemba ngokuphemba kuphembeke! ("Umbele wobubele" Mgadi, 1995: I)

(To the one whom I am related to, Prof. D.B.Z. Ntuli who never sleeps by being always enthusiastic in uplifting the standard of Zulu literature. I find myself in lack of words to express my gratitude about the unusual patience which he had in steering me in the right direction. Let this illuminating lamp forever shine, you son of Mphemba, you who has the ability of starting a fire that finally kindles.)

*Ingqe' engqabashiye ngosiba,
Ingqabangqesh' inqolobane yamabhuku yakhuza phezulu,
Mpondozomndeni kad' ubangenela ngosiba,
Nanamuhla lokh' usiba lusahlokomana!
Sidlukula sidlondlobel' entaben,
IBandla laseNtabeni ligabaze Ngeminyezan' esaLuthingo Iwenkosazana!*
("Kusindwe Ngobethole" Mhlanga, in J.C. Dlamini & E.J. Mhlanga, 1997: 17)

(The spiritual poet who galloped with a pen,
A pile, a tower of books soared high,
Horns of the family you have attacked them a long time with the pen,
Today still, the pen is still clamouring!
Violent charger who towers in the mountain,
The Congregation of the Mountain is adorned with the academic
regalia which looks like the rainbow!)

All of the above words of praise and works done by Ntuli thus far give a clear

indication of his enthusiasm in promoting Zulu literature. The following words used by him in describing Nakanjani's craftsmanship may also be used to describe Ntuli himself as, in my estimation, he has "taken the Zulu short story to new unprecedented heights".

To show that Ntuli is intent in his endeavour to motivate and to assist authors, one must examine his concluding remarks in the article entitled "A milestone in the development of the short story - the short stories of Nakanjani Sibya":

I sometimes wonder if we are fair if such creative people are not given a chance to get marks for their ability when they do a degree course. In disciplines like music and art there is always a paper on composition and painting or sculpture. Students who study literature are given enough theory to enable them to produce new literary works. I look forward to the time when we shall have creative writing as an option at third year or honours level. That is where people of Nakanjani's calibre will get a distinction. (1992: 8)

1.10 RECAPITULATION

In the above discussion it was noted that both structuralism and semiotics stem from De Saussure's theory which presupposes that all meaning-systems are structured like a language. Codes, which can be defined as any system that is used to convey information, were also discussed. The connection between the signifiers and the signifieds, which form a sign that, in turn, is said to be conventional, was also examined. There are however also those connections which are motivated, e.g. the iconic, the indexical and the symbolic. It was further observed that both structuralism and semiotics contribute to the readability of the text. Semiotics is the study of signs and puts emphasis on communication. Structuralism, on the other hand, is also concerned with signs and thus with the exposing of something that was hidden. These two, in a way complement each other for they both strive to decode the message in order to convey literary information. Finally, the contributions made by Ntuli in different genres, especially

in short story writing, were recounted. His battle against ignorance in literature and illiteracy has been a worthwhile struggle. This zealous and energetic writing in different publications seem to stem from some unfair criticism that have been levelled against the African languages. This can be seen in the remarks which Ntuli made in his article entitled "South African vernacular literature: critical views and criteria" where he maintains:

... we get others which indicate that some critics feel that vernacular literature in South Africa does not develop because of certain limitations that "... a disquieting amount of childish stuff" is published in South Africa. (Gérard, 1993: 270)

Ntuli (in Malan, 1987: 136) gives his point of view and response to some of the negative statements:

I do not find support for the statement made in the latest publication by Gérard that vernacular literatures are too submissive when compared with writing by blacks in English. I think each medium has its advantages and drawbacks. At the moment the two groups complement each other ... Blacks who write in English have more scope and are at liberty to enter the political arena more vigorously.

His efforts have also received some attention from different quarters because he has been showered with awards and praises.

CHAPTER 2

PLOT STRUCTURE AND EVENTS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter plot structure is going to be discussed. An investigation will be made into the manner in which Ntuli treats plot. The following short stories will be discussed: '*Ivasi KaVusi*', '*Mhleli*', '*Ngaleli Phasika*' and '*UMjuzo*'. The story '*Mhleli*' will be paraphrased using the structuralists' method, while the other three remaining stories will be analysed under the following sub-headings: beginning, body and ending.

2.2 PLOT STRUCTURE AND EVENTS

According to Abrams (1985: 63), the plot:

... is the structure of its actions, as these are rendered and ordered toward achieving particular emotional and artistic effect ... As a plot progresses it arouses expectations ... about the future course of events and how characters will respond to events.

In order to clarify the confusion that sometimes exists in distinguishing between the plot and the story, Abrams goes on to explain the difference:

Notice also that there is a difference between the plot and the "story" - that is, a mere synopsis of the temporal order of the events incorporated in a work of literature. As we usually summarise a work, we say that first this happens, then that, then that ... It is only when we say how this is related to that and in what ways all these matters are rendered and organized so as to achieve their particular effects. (1985:63)

From the above definition of plot, one notices that the word "event" keeps cropping up. This, therefore, implies that if there are no actions, there will be no events and,

thus, there will be no plot. One can concur with Abrams that the plot is an arrangement or structure of actions and events that are linked to achieve a particular effect.

In an article entitled, "The structure of the modern short story", Bader (in May, 1976: 108) paves the way for his discussion by referring to the traditional plot. He regards the traditional short story as a story which derives its structure from plot based on conflict and issuing in action. In the short story the action is also sequential, it offers something for the reader to watch unfold by means of a series of complications, thus evoking suspense. Furthermore, the action in the short story finally resolves the conflict, thus giving "point" to the story.

Bader (in May, 1976: 108) refers to the traditional plot as follows:

There is a geometrical quality to plot structure of this type; just as a proposition stated at the beginning of a story, developed by a series of scenes and resolved at the end.

Based on Bader's explanation of the traditional plot, it is easy to determine or test unity. This is further simplified by the prerequisite that, firstly, each incident of the action must both bear a direct relation to the conflict and the resolution and, secondly, that it must also carry its share of significance at the particular point in the progression that it occupies.

In other words, the structure of the plot has to do with a complete whole, that is, the organising and shaping of events as found in a work of art as conceived by the writer. It is, therefore, restrictive to expect a writer to follow a certain pattern when writing a short story. This is like arresting talent, craft, imagination, creativity and originality which are characteristic and extremely desirable traits in literature.

Kenny (1966: 22) contributes to the discussion of plot by stating that:

A good plot arouses suspense. By suspense we mean an expectant uncertainty as to the outcome of the story. True suspense is more than a matter of not knowing how the things will turn out. The suspense of which we speak involves some awareness of the possibilities and ideally some concern about them. Suspense develops as we become aware of the insipient in a situation.

According to Kenny, a good plot also has a true beginning, middle and an end that follows the laws of plausibility, surprise and suspense. It must have unity.

With this background information on plot, let us now take a look at the way Ntuli organises his work in order to build a story. It should be borne in mind that there is a difference between a story and a text. When one, for instance, reads a book, that which is written in the book is actually a text which forms the story. This implies that a story is not necessarily a text. Then what is a story?

Bal (1988: 5) describes a story as a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors. From this explanation we can see that the story is not yet organised in any particular fashion; events follow each other chronologically. That is why the Russian formalists refer to the story as "merely raw material" awaiting the organising hand of the writer.

Our attention is now focussed on the word "text". As far as the text is concerned, it means that the material in the text has a certain order or pattern, depending on the style of the author. The manner in which the reader experiences events, belongs to the text level because in the story level they are not yet ordered. Therefore, the story is the original level before the events are viewed and related.

2.3 AN ANALYSIS OF '*IVASI KAVUSI*'

2.3.1 The beginning

Brander Matthews (in May, 1994: 77) advocates the notion of the unshackling and the setting free of the form of the short story from the stale rules that govern and

still haunt it. According to him:

The short story should not be void or without form, but its form should be whatever the author pleases. **He has an absolute liberty of choice.** It may be a personal narrative, ... it may be impersonal ... it may be "A Bundle of Letters ... it may be a medley of letters and telegrams and narrative ... it may be in any one of these forms, or in a combination of them all, or in a wholly new form... Whatever its form, it must be a symmetry of design ... But the chief requisites are compression, originality, ingenuity and now and again a touch of fantasy".

[My emphasis]

In the chosen short stories, we find that Ntuli has incorporated most of the above mentioned factors. In '*Ivasi kaVusi*', we note the deletion and alteration of some of the expected elements of the plot. The exposition takes a different form from the "norm", there is no usual general layout of the setting or a panoramic view of the area, as is frequently used in narratives. In fact, in this story this has been changed by being displaced and located towards the end of the story where it reads:

Namuhla uhlezi nomkakhe ngaphansi komuthi uMvubu. Le phambili nomgwaqo ... Yimoto. Iza ngapha ... Yama egcekeni. (Ntuli, 1994: 8-9)

(Today Mvubu is seated with his wife under the tree. Yonder ahead of the road ... It is a car. It is coming this way ... It stops in the yard.)

The exposition of '*Ivasi kaVusi*' is in direct contrast from one of Ntuli's earlier short stories, entitled '*Iziqongo zezintaba*', from the book Uthingo Lwenkosazana (first published in 1971) where a panoramic view of the area is given:

Lashona ilanga. Umnyama usuqala ukugcwala yonke indawo. Kodwa uma ubheka le ezindaweni eziphakeme ... Naziya izibani ezimbili ezibheke ngakwaManqelete ... zama eduze komuzi ... Nya, nya yahamba imoto. (Ntuli, 1978: 52)

(The sun sets. Darkness starts to spread all over. But when one looks at higher places ... There are two lights heading in Manqelete's

direction ... They stop next to the house ... It is silent for a while, then the car drives away.)

In '*Ivasi KaVusi*' Ntuli immediately immerses the reader into the subject matter. The conversation starts in a direct form, like in a monologue, but an element of a dialogue is missing because we do not hear anyone responding to the "speech" that is made by the main character, Mvubu. He soliloquizes:

Ngangingaqondile ukumxosha ngempela, uQondisa, esamnika nelikaNduduzo. Kwaba ukuhluthuka kwenhliziyo nje. Ngangingazi ukuthi yena usezonyamalala unomphela. (Ntuli, 1994:7)

(I did not really intend to chase away Qondisa, the one whom we also named Nduduzo. It was a case of losing one's temper. I did not know that he would disappear for good.)

But in the subsequent paragraph the narrator resumes the conversation and explains the situation. This is done for a certain purpose, which gradually dawns as the reader continues with the story.

Ntuli has deliberately done this in order to highlight the main character's (Mvubu's) mistake, to bring it into special prominence. Mvubu has made an error of judgement in chasing his adoptive son, Nduduzo, away for breaking the idolised vase which Mvubu had bought for the birthday of his only son, Vusithemba. Vusithemba passed away just before they could celebrate his first birthday.

Mvubu is now bed-ridden and is suffering from an undescribed illness which, one may conclude, is worry and stress-related. Mvubu is first given a platform to speak. One gets the image of someone who is standing before the omniscient and the omnipresent, someone who is standing before God. It is as if it's judgement day and he is given a chance to admit his sins and he is now repenting his greatest sin and only regret. This is a sign that he wants to be relieved of his emotional burden by setting the record straight:

Ngangingaqondile ukumxosha ngempela ... Ngangingazi ukuthi yena usezonyamalala unomphela. (Ntuli, 1994:7)

(I did not really intend to chase him away ... I did not know that he would disappear for good.)

2.3.2 The body

There is a smooth flow or transition from the introductory part to the body. The narrator takes over from the voice of the character. The transition has been ingeniously layered for Mvubu's voice seems to blend with that of the narrator, as in words "*lapha ekhaya*" (here at home). But at the same time, the narrator seems to be distancing himself from Mvubu, as can be observed in the underlined formative:

*Akenqeni ukubachazela ngokuhamba kukaQondisa lapha ekhaya.
Lo mfana ubengenabani ehlala lapha ekhaya njengengane yalapha
ekhaya njengoba bese bengenabantwana nje oMvubu.* (Ntuli, 1994:
7)

(He is not hesitant in explaining to them about Qondisa's departure here at home. This boy had no one, he was staying here at home like a child who belonged in this home, this was so for the Mvubu's had no children.)

This has been dexterously done for it is not glaringly apparent that the narrator seems to have been given qualities of someone who is trying to clarify and justify Mvubu's case, like a lawyer would and clear up the mess he has got himself into.

This scene has been crafted with such rare and subtle ingenuity that one gets the impression that, in a way, the omniscient narrator seems to represent God here. The events here are cinematic. It is as if Mvubu is given a chance to have a glimpse of that particular event in his life before he can be given a final verdict:

*UNduduzo uthandwa ngokuphelele, kodwa kude kuvela ukuthi
ubaba walapha ekhaya akakakhohlwa nguVusithemba. Kuthi*

kuthuliwe indoda ibonakale isithatha lesiya sitsha, isifunda, bese isesula kube sengathi ikhuluma okuthile naso. Unkosikazi wasekhaya waze wasola sengathi le vasi isisadlozana kuMvubu. (Ntuli, 1994: 7)

(Vusi is completely loved, but there are still some indications that the father of the house has not yet forgotten about Vusithembu. One would, out of the blue, notice the man taking that receptacle, reading it, then wiping it as if talking to it. The mother of the house (Mvubu's wife) even suspected that this vase was like a mini idol.)

The narration used in the form of flashbacks by the omniscient narrator, intensifies the continuity found in the introductory statement. The reader feels as if Mvubu is enacting events which transpired in the past as if they are occurring in the present:

Njengoba ebambeke kangaka nje uMvubu ulukhumbula kahle lolo suku. UNduduzo wayethi uzama ukusiza lapha ekhaya. Kanti ivasi icuphele phezu kwekhabethe. Ngqu, phihli. Laduma izulu. Kwaba sengathi nguye uMvubu osakazekayo. Weswela amazwi okuthetha. Wasithela ngaleyha. Wabuya nemvubu. Wayigaxa kuNduduzo. Wazama ukungaphindisi uNduduzo. Yakhala imvubu. Wakhala manje uNduduzo. Weza umama wekhaya ethi uzolamula. Yakhala kuyena. Wathola ithuba lokuphuma ngesamagundane uNduduzo. (Ntuli, 1994: 8)

(Despite the ill condition Mvubu is in, he still remembers that day very well. Nduduzo was trying to help here at home. Unfortunately the vase was at the edge of the table. On a slight tilt it broke to pieces. The lightning thundered. It was as if it was Mvubu himself who was shattered into pieces. He could not utter any words to scold. He disappeared to the other side. He returned with a sjambok. He hit at Nduduzo. Nduduzo tried not to hit back. The sjambok continued to hit. Nduduzo now started to cry. Mvubu's spouse came to try and offer some help, the sjambok was turned on her. Nduduzo had a chance to escape.)

Ntuli has endeavoured here to steer clear of the hackneyed plot, the plot where there is a logical and gradual unfolding of events, where a problem which occurred in the introduction is consistently solved with the main character being actively involved in trying to find a resolution. In '*Ivasi KaVusi*', Ntuli has actually done that

in three lines, that is, where the main character endeavours to find a solution to his problem and thereafter continues with the telling of the story:

O, umsakazo! O, iphephandaba! Ithunyelwe imilayezo. Yonke ithi abake bambona uNduduzo Mvubu bamtshele ukuthi kuthiwa akaphuthume ekhaya uma ethola lo mlayezo nje. (Ntuli, 1994:8)

(O, the radio! O, the newspaper! Messages were sent. All [messages] said that those who have seen Nduduzo Mvubu should tell him that he should urgently go home as soon as he receives this message.)

Here we note that the painstaking glued concentration on the "mathematical curve" has been avoided and a freer, spontaneous approach has been adopted.

2.3.3 The ending

It was expected of the conventional plot to render the solution to the problem that was found in the introduction. The ending contains most of the times, what is termed "a twist in the tail".

In '*Ivasi KaVusi*' the story draws to a climax where Mvubu and his wife are seated under the shade of the tree. In this paragraph Ntuli describes the same spot where Nduduzo was last seen when he was chased away. As they sat there, they noticed the dust of the oncoming car which was heading in their direction. The oncoming car raises suspense and the hope that it could be Nduduzo who had ultimately decided to come back home. In the above explanation we find an example of an indexical sign, the car representing Nduduzo. Another indexical sign can be seen where it was mentioned that it appeared as if Mvubu regarded the vase as an idol; inferring that when he saw the vase it was like he was seeing his son Vusithemba.

Unfortunately it turned out to be a man from the post office. But hope is not

thwarted for this man, because he is employed at the post office - he could be the bearer of good news about Nduduzo's whereabouts. Sadly, he only brought a box containing a vase very similar to the one that was broken by Nduduzo, with the exception that this one was bigger. Like the one that Nduduzo broke, this one also had the same message inscribed:

Vusi ndodana, ukhule ube yindoda - kusho ubaba. (Ntuli, 1994: 9)

(Vusi, son, you must grow up to be a man - from Dad.)

These words now appear to be ironic for the vase that Mvubu "worshipped" had indeed, true to his wishes "grown", but so had the wedge that it created between Mvubu and Nduduzo. This is so because the attached letter did not have the sender's address on it. In this action of not including an address, we find what some people term "the eloquence of silence". Nduduzo's act of not writing his address can only be interpreted as meaning that he probably came to the conclusion that his presence was only appreciated as long as the vase was present. Judging from the events that surround the breaking of the vase, Mvubu's obsession with it, his blind anger and almost sadistic punishment given to Nduduzo and his wife, as well as Mvubu's act of chasing Nduduzo away, the probable inference reached by Nduduzo was that the only thing that was important to Mvubu was the object, that is, the vase which symbolized Vusithemba and not him. If this was not the case, Mvubu would not have chased him away after he had punished him, not once but twice. One can therefore deduce that Nduduzo was regarded by Mvubu as an extension of the vase.

As the story draws to a conclusion, it gains its flavour by symbolic images used to characterise and to clarify the events still to be disclosed. When the car was seen coming down the road, a cloud of dust is mentioned:

Kubonakala izintudlana. Yimoto. Iza ngapha. Iziphuquza zibe yifu ngemva kwayo izintuli . (Ntuli, 1994: 9)

(A little bit of dust is seen. It's a car. It is heading this way. It raises a cloud of dust behind it.)

After one has finished reading the story, one notices that the dust is a natural symbol signifying the turmoil and regret that was still to be rekindled in Mvubu's soul and mind. In the body, as the story progresses we are told that when Nduduzo was chased away from his home, there was a mist which "devoured" him. Mist is, thus, the signifier. This signified the state of mind of the two: Mvubu's mind was clouded and blinded by fury to such an extent that his "foggy" mind could not think straight. For Nduduzo, on the other hand, it signifies confusion and the venture into the uncertain and unknown world into which he was thrown.

From the unfolding of events that have been illuminated and discussed so far, more light is shed on Buczyńska-Garewicz's assertion when he states:

... Sign-vehicle, the firstness in the sign, is given as a vehicle only on condition that other signs exist too. It must be interpreted by other signs to be a sign-vehicle ... and the object is never self-given in semiosis but is always only represented by a sign representing it "some respect or capacity" but not in all respect ... No sense is given in semiosis as a self-given, simple datum. It is grasped only through another meaning ... subsequently, it may be understood no other way than by its interpretent. We grasp a meaning through another meaning. There are no self-evident meanings in the process of semiosis. Every meaning is mediated by another meaning (1983: 29-30).

Towards the conclusion Ntuli again paints a picture of the same spot where Nduduzo once disappeared engulfed by mist:

Namuhla uhlezi nomkakhe ngaphansi komthunzi uMvubu. Le phambi nomgwaqo lapho kwake kwaba nenkungu eyagwinya uNduduzo kucwebile namhlanje. (Ntuli, 1994: 8-9)

(Today Mvubu is seated under the shade together with his wife. Over there ahead of the road, where there was once the mist that

swallowed Nduduzo, today it is clear.)

This time there is no sign of the mist, all is clear. The mentioning of the cleared mist has again some symbolic meaning. The vanished mist is setting the scene, opening up the stage to resolve the long standing contention between Mvubu and Nduduzo. That is, Nduduzo's returning of the vase as was demanded by Mvubu. Furthermore, they are sitting under the shade of the tree, this is predicative of the shadow that would be cast over their lives by the bad news they were about to receive. The afore-mentioned mist also alludes to Mvubu's state of mind. His fury has dissolved, the dust has settled, he has had a chance to think clearly about that contention. That is why his thoughts are expressed as follows:

Njengoba ebambekile nje usekhalela ukuthi noma kungasafikanga vasi akunamsebenzi. Ukwazi ukuthi uyaphila uNduduzo akumduduzi kuyaphi ngoba abakaze baxoxe umlomo nomlomo. (Ntuli, 1994: 8)

(Ill as he was, the only thing that he wishes for is that it matter no more even if the vase no longer arrives. The knowledge that Vusi is alive does not console him for they have never had any direct conversation.)

Here we note that certain metaphors like the ones related to place, are important vehicles of extended meaning. It could also be said that the act of sitting under the shade could also mean emptiness, longing and loneliness on the part of the Mvubu family. The empty space where Nduduzo disappeared into could allude to certain expectations. All these suggest meaning beyond mere physical fact. They, however, only form a meaningful whole after one has finished reading the entire story.

To round off the analysis of this story, one has to return to the previous discussion regarding the story's captivating commencement. It was mentioned that as the story begins, one anticipated a dialogue but it was not so, for it appeared as if Mvubu was soliloquising. This is perplexing. Towards the end of the story the

reader is more baffled because the narrator concludes:

Namuhla uhlezi nomkakhe ngaphansi komthunzi uMvubu. (Ntuli, 1994: 8)

(Today Mvubu is seated under the tree with his wife.)

What causes a disorientation here is the word: "*namuhla*" (today). It is not clear why Mvubu's wife is mentioned now whereas she was not mentioned at the beginning or why she did not respond to Mvubu's statement at the beginning when Mvubu tried to justify his actions. This omission makes it difficult for the reader to determine the number of days taken by the actual events as opposed to the events related through flashbacks. It is not clear whether Mvubu's introductory soliloquy was made "*namuhla*" (today) or a few days later.

But on closer scrutiny of Mvubu's behaviour after the breaking of the vase and also of his handling of his wife when her maternal instincts rose when she saw Nduduzo being given a hiding, it becomes clear that this has been deliberately done. This has been done to highlight and magnify the underlying confusion in Mrs Mvubu's mind. She does not know how to react where the issue of Nduduzo is concerned. It seems her husband's blind fury has intimidated her to such an extent that she has decided to distance herself from this matter for fear of being "destroyed" by the "thunder and lightning". It is, therefore, not surprising to see her as a passive observer as Mvubu's wishes are "fulfilled".

Because of all of the above drawn conclusions and allusions, I concur with Bader (in May, 1976: 112) when he emphasises that:

The seeming lack of relationship is deliberate; the emphasis is not upon the sequence of the scenes, their progression ... Rather it is upon their meaning. The aim of the story of this kind is a perceived relationship ... the parts of a mosaic, the reader must find the pattern.

Therefore in '*Ivasi KaVusi*' the "key-piece" of the mosaic is the statement: "*Laduma Izulu*", (a thunder storm!). These words have been used by the writer to insinuate the extent of the damage to the relationships in Mvubu's family and the anger suffered by Mvubu. One need only to think of the destruction and damage which is usually caused by floods which are accompanied by lightning and thunder, in order to understand the symbolism loaded in this statement. Mvubu's act of beating his wife when she tries to intervene also serves as an illumination and the "key-piece" of a mosaic in the understanding of this story. In this story, although the twist is not that apparent (in contrast to his customary short stories), Ntuli has been successful in concluding the story by dexterously tying all the loose ends. The reader notices that although Mvubu's problem has seemingly been solved, that is, the vase has been returned, his problem is not over yet for he also has a desire to see Nduduzo whom he came to regard as his son. In fact he only evicted him in the heat of the moment. At that stage he wanted him to replace the broken vase, but the returned vase does not heal his longing for Nduduzo. Ntuli's story moves towards a conclusion in which a complex dilemma is not resolved but frozen in a symbolic final ironic gesture. Mvubu is caught in a situation where he demands sympathy. But the moral configuration of this story does not permit the reader the luxury of an easy moral judgement. This story presents one sufferer who cannot understand the suffering of another. That is why we have the bitter-sweet conclusion.

In this story certain differences are noticed in the progression of events that happen between characters and the story as a whole. This state of events could be termed "binary oppositions", for instance, an adult way of solving problems is contrasted with the way youth view the world, the misuse of power versus lack of power, vocalism against muteness, etc.

2.4 'NGALELI PHASIIKA' AND 'MHLELI': AN INTRODUCTION

In these short stories Ntuli has abandoned some trappings of the conventional

short story to choose new subjects, new themes as in '*Mhleli*', as well as new structures. His work marks a break between old and new in Zulu short story writing. It also highlights Ntuli's craftsmanship in story-telling.

For the first time in Zulu short story writing, short stories presented as letters are found as in '*Ngaleli phasika*' (On this Easter) and in '*Mhleli*' (The Editor). Ntuli demolishes the old, hackneyed practice of short story writing which was prevalent, especially among the Africans. He seems to be a pioneer with the experimentation in this form of story writing. Although certain examples from English literature may be cited, for an example "Letters from School" by John Rae, such an example cannot be cited for African languages, except by quoting Ntuli himself in a short story book entitled Izikhwili, published in 1969, where Ntuli wrote a short story in a form of a letter. In his story entitled '*Umhlengikazi*' (The Nurse), a wife writes a letter to her husband who is working far from home in Johannesburg. She tells him the story about a problem she had experienced when she was visited by a nurse who behaved in a strange manner. It was later discovered that the nurse was indeed once declared mentally ill. Although this letter has a story to tell, it also possesses the true characteristics of a real letter. It has the date, the introduction which is characteristic of letters, where it is usually expected of a formal letter to refer to a previous letter conversation or to refer to matters which were last discussed prior to the writing of the letter. The conclusion also summarises the introduction as is expected of ordinary letters.

An example will help clarify this point; this short story begins as follows:

*Mpumelelo School,
P. O. Sitobo
21. 5. 68.*

Mshengu,

*Ninjani ngapho eGoli baba? Hhiya sikhona thina lapha kwaNtuthu.
Nomkhuhlane lowo engangikubikele ngawo usudambile ...
umashudula kamakoti. (Ntuli, 1994: 76)*

(How are you there in Johannesburg, father? Oh well, we are still alright here in the bundus. That flu which I once told you about is much better ... an active bride).

The ending is as follows:

Ha, nakhu sengiphelelwa ngamaphepha Mshengu. Angisale sengima. Bayaphila noGwinyiqatha ... Kokunye ashibhile!

*Usale kahle-ke baba.
Yimina owakho,
uBellinah.*

(Ntuli, 1994: 81)

(Ha, my papers are getting finished Mshengu. Let me rather stop. Gwinyiqatha and the others are doing well ... Perhaps they are cheap!)

Good-bye.
Sincerely yours,
Bellinah).

In 'Umhlengikazi' Ntuli adhered to the conventional sequences that form a structure in the telling of the story. The nurse first appears to be acting in very strange manner, to the bafflement of Bellinah, who welcomes her to her home. As the story unfolds and draws closer to its conclusion, Bellinah's doubts are confirmed as she learns that the nurse is insane. This story therefore exemplifies the cause and effect pattern. On the other hand, the letters which form the short stories, 'Mhleli' and 'Ngaleli Phasika', are slightly different from 'Umhlengikazi'.

In 'Mhleli', a young lady relates a sad story about her ordeal the night she was gang-raped after accepting a lift from strangers. This story initially strikes the reader as a story about what could be dismissed as depicting nothing unusual, an everyday occurrence, especially in these times of casual violence. But this story deviates from the expected not only because it is told in a form of a letter, but also because the events take an unusual turn when it is heard that the lady in question

had long contracted AIDS prior to being gang-raped. She mentions in the letter that:

Mhleli, namanje ngisezwa nginjengosangene ngenxa yobunzima engedlula kubo ... Ngibhalela ukuba labo bantu bazi ukuthi ngangiqinibile uma ngithi ngangenwa isifo. Ngasithola esibhedlela ngoba ngisebenzise igazi elinaso ngesikhathi singakandi lesi sifo. (Ntuli, 1994: 23)

(Editor, I still feel like someone who has lost her senses because of the difficulty that I have gone through ... I am writing to inform those individuals that I was telling the truth when I told them that I had contracted a disease. I got it from the hospital after I had received contaminated blood, it was before this disease was so widespread.)

Here an instance is found where the hunter becomes the victim but without eliminating from the prey the element of remaining a victim. Ironically, the hunters are not (yet) aware that they are victims. At the same time there is also a faint element of victory on the part of the first victim that her attackers, by attacking her, have received their punishment. The mixed emotions of both empathetic sadness and retributive justice are also felt by the reader.

Like most all letters that are addressed to the Editor, this one too has a comment. In the editor's response, Ntuli uses the usual words that are used by the Editors:

Bafundi: siyifingqile le ncwadi ngenxa yesikhala, kodwa sikholwa ukuthi ... Siyambonga Okhathazekile ngesibindi sakhe esingandile nobuntu ... Sibacela kakhulu labo baSamariya Abalungileyo ukuba babe nobuntu, zingabuzwa kubo izidumbu ezizovela ngenxa yobulwane babo. (Ntuli, 1994: 24)

(Readers: we have shortened this letter because of space, but we trust that ... We are grateful to The Concerned One for her unusual courage and humaneness ... We really plead with those good Samaritans to have humaneness, so that they should not be accountable for corpses that may result from their barbarism.)

This may appear as unnecessary information which does not bring unity to the

story. But it is not unwarranted for coming from the Editor, it endorses and highlights the seriousness of the letter, it also rounds off the story. One also gets the impression that this has been deliberately done in order to stick to the customary trend as observed in such letters. But there is also an unsuppressible feeling that Ntuli has used these words to justify this story which is very short, that is, a mere one and a half pages long. Despite the fact that this is a letter, it does qualify as a short story because the author has something to tell. The story consists of events which are told through flashback via the words of the main character. For the sake of anonymity, this character prefers to call herself *Okhathazekile* (The Concerned). In fact, the readers are already prepared and promised a story because in the introduction the main character directs these words to the Editor:

Uxole nangokuthi kunendatshana engizokwendulela ngayo. (Ntuli, 1994: 23)

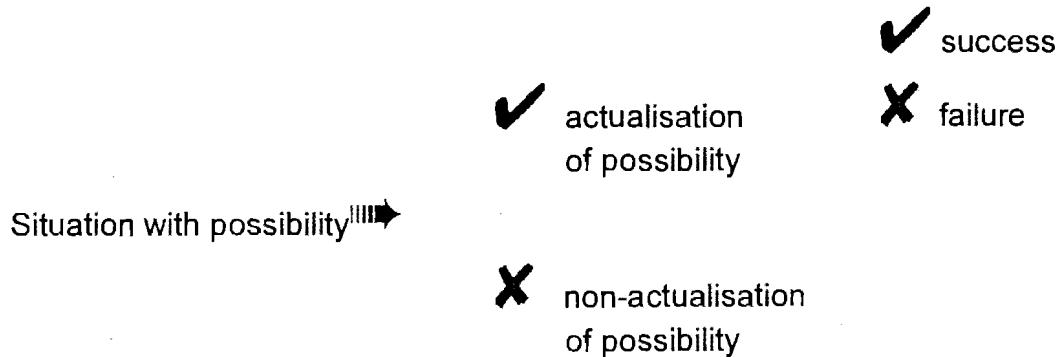
(Please bear with me because there is a story that I am going to start with).

As far as this story is concerned, it has been observed that despite the fact that this is a letter, it cannot be disputed that it has a story to tell. Also, the story is told in an atypical form.

2.4.1 A structural analysis of '*Mhleli'*

In the analysis of short stories so far, the conventional form of using the beginning, the body and the ending was employed when trying to examine Ntuli's deviation from the norm when he wrote some of the stories in Isibhakabhaka. According to Structuralism, however, the plot structure of this narrative would be constructed differently. Structuralistic plot analysis consists of "functions" (based on Propp's notion) as the basic narrative unit. The functions are then related as units of interlaced series. Gräbe (1986: 60) remarks that the basic series involves two

parts: there is a logical possibility, this possibility is realised and the realisation or actualisation of the possibility has certain consequences or results. In each stage of development there is a choice as indicated by the choice between either actualisation or non-actualisation of the possibility in the second step and either success or failure in the third. This can be illustrated as follows:



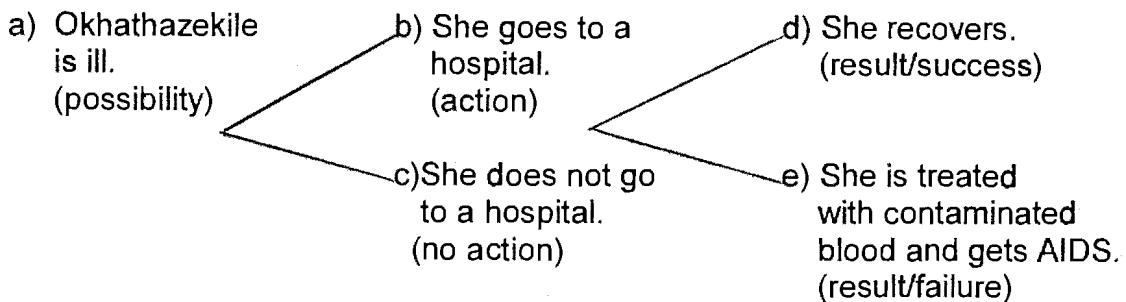
In the short story '*Mhleli*' the plot structure according to Structuralism could be presented as follows:

Key: 1 - 12 : Main story events A - D : Story sequences a - e : Phases
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Main story events (1-12):

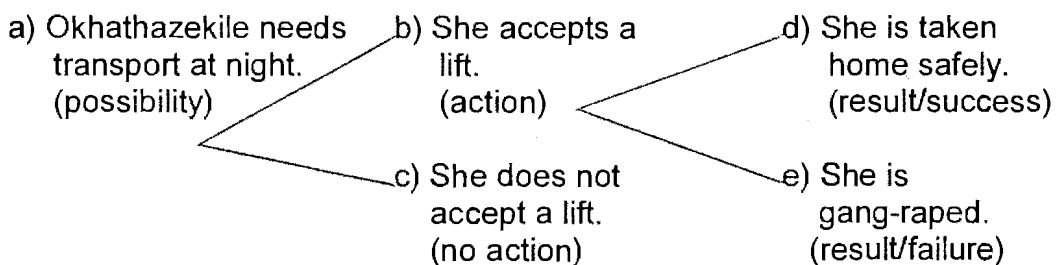
1. Okhathazekile falls ill.
2. She goes to hospital for treatment.
3. She is treated with contaminated blood and becomes HIV positive.

Sequence A: Okhathazekile becomes HIV infected



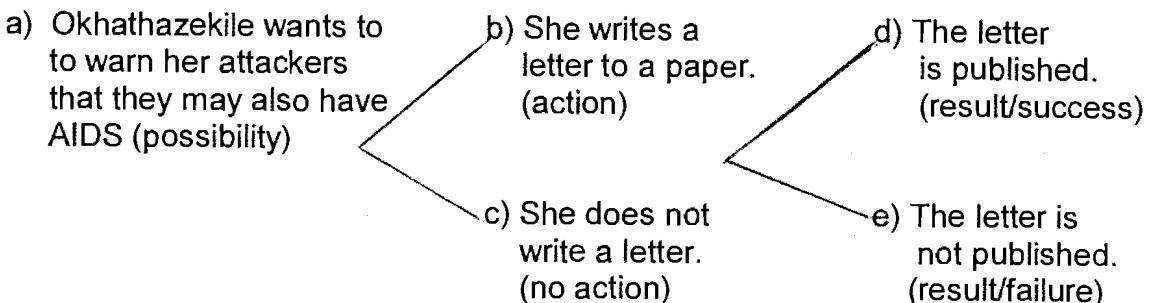
4. One night Okhathazekile needs transport.
5. She accepts a lift.
6. She is gang-raped.

Sequence B: Okhathazekile's rape ordeal



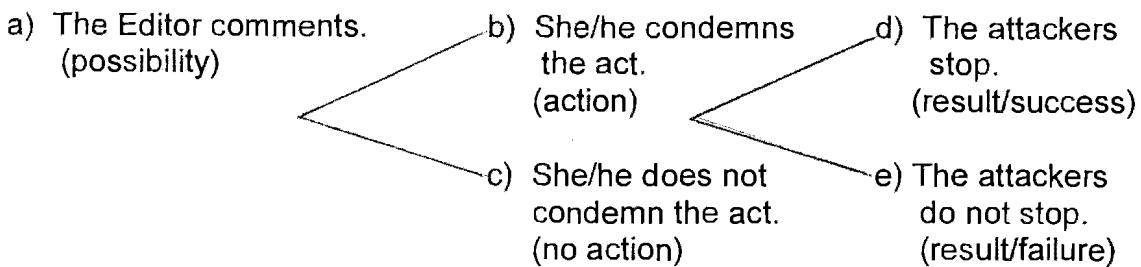
7. Okhathazekile wants to warn her attackers that they may spread AIDS.
8. She writes a letter to the Editor.
9. The Editor publishes it.

Sequence C: Okhathazekile's letter to the Editor



10. The Editor comments on the letter.
11. She/he pleads with the attackers.
12. Okhathazekile has hope that her attackers will read her letter.

Sequence D: The Editor's comment to the letter



2.4.2 An analysis of '*Ngaleli Phasika*'

Although '*Ngaleli Phasika*' is a short story, it also has the characteristics of an informal letter. On the upper right hand side of the page there is a date on which the letter was written: "30 March". The address and the year have been excluded. This is probably so because the letter is written at home by a father (the priest) to his son, Sibusiso. The reason for not including the year becomes clear after one has finished reading the story, for it later dawns that this has been purposely done because the father seems to be forever dubious of his son's whereabouts or of the fact that Sibusiso will ever come home on a regular basis. That is why he constantly refers to Sibusiso's absence:

Uma ngempela kugcina le ncwadi uyifunde ngingasekho, ... (Ntuli, 1994: 20)

(If in fact it ends up that you read this letter when I have passed away, ...)

Kuthangi ebusuku, lapho kuze kube phakathi kwamabili ungabuyanga, ngingazi nalapho ukhona, ngize ngakhuleka umkhuleko obuhlungu. (Ntuli, 1994: 21)

(The day before yesterday, where it was almost midnight and you had not returned, and I, not knowing of your whereabouts, even prayed a painful (touching) prayer.)

The act of not including the year on which the letter was written, has a foregrounding role by omission. So this means that any time Sibusiso arrives and reads the letter, he should know of his father's standpoint as far as his behaviour is concerned and it should serve as a constant reminder of his father's wishes; not for that particular day only, but every time Sibusiso reads the letter:

Uma le ncwadi uyithola ngingasekho, lingasavelanga ithuba lokuba sixoxe ... (Ntuli, 1994: 21)

(If it happens that you receive this letter when I have passed away, with us not having had the opportunity to talk ...)

These words therefore clearly indicate that Ntuli has intentionally left out the year of the letter. It seems that the main concern of Sibusiso's father was to have him read the letter as soon as he (Sibusiso) arrived. The omission could also be indicative of the urgency that the priest was more concerned with relaying the information and in getting his message across than with including the facts that have no direct bearing to his aim. The importunity and concern when writing the letter are reflected in the following words which appear in the first paragraph:

Mhlawumbe yilo ixhala lokuthi ngihlala ngikhathazekile ngokuphepha

kwakho. Kubuye kufike ukuthi kokunye yimina osengozini engingazi ukuthi izovela kanjani. ... Uvalo engiba nalo olokuthi ngingazumeka, mhlawumbe ngokumelwa yinhliziyo. (Ntuli, 1994: 20)

(Maybe the anxiety is caused by the fact that I am always concerned about your safety. At times it crosses my mind that probably I am the one who might be in danger whose nature I do not know. ... The fear that I have is that I might suddenly die, perhaps of a heart attack.)

The omission of the address and the year could also be seen as another form of deviation of expected elements of the plot and it indicates that: "... its form may be whatever the author pleases or ... a distinct and unmistakable flavour of individuality" (May, 1994: 77).

2.4.2.1 The beginning

The letter opens with the usual reference to the person to whom the letter is written:

Ndodana yami Sibusiso (Ntuli, 1994: 20)

(My son Sibusiso)

Sibusiso's father reveals his fears about the imminent danger in which he feels he might soon land. He even senses that he might die suddenly, possibly of a heart attack. Although this is a letter, it qualifies as a short story for the main character, the priest, is revealed in the introduction. His problem, or his internal conflict, as in the conventional plot, is also indicated here.

2.4.2.2 The body

The body is well written with events following each other chronologically. The occurrence of events in the letter is so well planned that the events form a unique

pattern which rises to the climax. In a subtle but intelligent manner, we are told about Sibusiso's life story from the time before he was born, his youth, his adulthood and his symbolic "death" that is, when he was still "buried" in evil and sins.

The priest commences by pouring out his sorrows and regrets about the pain and heartache his only son has brought into his life. He reminisces about those days when they asked God to give them a child, whom they named Sibusiso (blessing) as an answer to their prayers (this can be regarded as the pleading stage).

Sakhuleka kakhulu sicela ukuba sithole okungenani ingane eyodwa nje. (Ntuli, 1994: 20)

(We prayed hard asking that we should at least have one child.)

In the next paragraph Sibusiso's father feels pained for he can hardly advise the youth in church for fear of being ridiculed and the irony of his failure to properly bring up his own son (this can be regarded as the youth stage).

Bengehluleka nokweluleka abasha ngoba ngazi ukuthi bazobuza ukuthi ngibatshelani ngoba kwamina ngehlulekile ukukhulisa eyami ingane. (Ntuli, 1994: 20)

(I was even unable to give advice to the youth because I knew that they would question my doings for I have failed to properly bring up my own child.)

In the next paragraph he returns from the distant past, that is, when Sibusiso was born, and he also turns back from the not so distant past, probably when Sibusiso was still a teenager, he reverts to the present:

*Anginakukubala **manje** ongenze khona ngoba uyakwazi konke.*
(Ntuli, 1994: 20) [my emphasis]

(I am not going to count **now** that which you have done to me for you

know it all).

The sequence of events in this narration constitute a plot whose structure subtly exhibits the traditional structure of conflict, action and resolution. Bader (in May, 1976: 110) points out that the reader also has a role to play when reading a story, for he or she must supply the missing parts of the traditional plot:

The modern story writer is content if, allowing the reader to glance at his characters as through a window, he shows them making a gesture which is typical: that is to say, a gesture which enables the reader's imagination to fill in all that is left unsaid. Instead of giving us a finished action to admire, or pricking up the bubble of some problem, he may give us only the key-piece of a mosaic, round which, if sufficiently perceptive, we can see in shadowy outline the completed pattern.

It is also noted that as the priest writes his letter, he keeps on moving and alternating to the different points in time for as he continues he writes:

*Kodwa kule minyaka khona kube sengathi ubhekene nami ngqo.
Akukho nokuncane okubheke eceleni obukwenza ngingakukhuzi.*
(Ntuli, 1994: 20)

(But in current years it was as if you were directly after me. There is not even one wrong thing you did that I did not condemn.)

In the subsequent paragraph the priest retreats to three days prior to the writing of his letter:

*Kuthangi ebusuku, lapho kuze kube phakathi kwamabili
ungabuyanga, ngingazi nalapho ukhona, ngize ngakhuleka
umkhuleko obuhlungu.* (Ntuli, 1994: 21)

(The night before yesterday, when it even struck midnight with you nowhere to be seen, with me not knowing of your whereabouts, I ended up praying a painful prayer.)

This story is full of meaning which can be juxtaposed with some events from the Bible and it is also adorned with biblical symbols. The incident where we are told that Sibusiso's parents had to ask for a child from God, is reminiscent of the incident in the Bible where a man called Elkana could not have children with his wife, Hannah. After asking from God, he was blessed with a baby son named Samuel, interpreted as: "I asked the Lord for him" (Samuel 2, verse:20) and later as Samuel grew up he was given as an offering to God. In '*Ngaleli Phasika*', it is ironic that Sibusiso, despite his father's wishes, has decided to "offer" himself to the evildoers. This is pointed out through his father's letter when he writes:

Washo ngelinye ilanga ukuthi sewenze isethembiso. Awushongo ukuthi yisethembiso sani ... NGIKUBHALA NGIYAKUGCIZELELA UKUTHI YEHLUKANA NALABA BANGANI NGOBA UYOZISOLA.
(Ntuli, 1994: 21)

(You once mentioned that you had already made a promise. You did not say what kind of a promise it was ... **I AM WRITING TO EMPHASISE THAT YOU SHOULD KEEP AWAY FROM EVIL FRIENDS BECAUSE YOU ARE GOING TO REGRET IT.**)

As Sibusiso's father writes the letter, an unusual form of digression occurs in the story - he is surprised by Sibusiso who barges through the door. The plot of the story now takes on a different angle as high drama ensues. The narration changes from the first person narrator "I" of the letter writer, Sibusiso's father, to another first person narrator "I", who is Sibusiso. It, therefore, switches from one first person narrator to another first person narrator which is extraordinary in any type of story. In this story we thus find one story embedded in the other. In this paragraph and in the subsequent events, we note that despite the writer's attempt to break away from the traditional plot, the latter part of this narrative conforms to the same structural pattern of traditional plot.

It can, therefore, be said to be a good example of the introduction of the traditional plot; with Sibusiso being a main character whose dilemma is how to elude his pursuing villainous friends. The body of the story can be traced where he is seen

trying to resolve his problem by getting away from his friends and is finally solved in the conclusion where, although he manages to steer clear of the bullets, his father is killed. The death of his father, which causes a catharsis within Sibusiso, could be regarded as the "twist in the tail".

Bader (in May, 1976: 108) describes such sequences as:

There is a geometrical quality to plot structure of this type; just as a proposition is stated, developed by arguments, and finally proved, so a conflict is stated at the beginning of a story, developed by a series of scenes, and resolved at the end.

As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the form of the story changes, the transition is so smooth that it easily blends with the contents of the letter. The letter ends with these words:

Uma le ncwadi uyithola ngingasekho, lingasavelanga ithuba lokuba sixoxe ... (Ntuli, 1994: 21)

(Should you receive this letter when I have passed away, having not have had a chance to talk ...)

Before the priest could continue Sibusiso interrupts:

*Ngangena ngesidumo ubaba wayeka nokubhala ayekubhala ...
Kwaba ngathi uphelelwa ngamandla.*

"Bebengixosa. Angazi noma bazoza ngapha yini," ngisho ngiphelelwa umoya ngoba bengijima. (Ntuli, 1994: 21)

(I rushed in as I entered, father stopped writing ... It was as if he was losing strength.

"They were chasing me. I wonder whether they will come this way," I was out of breath because I had been running.)

The paragraphs that follow are packed with melodramatic graphic events as Sibusiso and his father see the three armed pursuers approaching the house through the window. Sibusiso is so scared that his father motions to him that he should get inside a hiding place situated underneath the floor:

Ubaba abone ukuthi bayeza. Asukume. Athi ukuhlehlala. Awuvule ukhaphethe oholela emgodini ongaphansi kwendlu. Asivule isivalo. Akhombe ngekhanda ukuthi angingene khona. Ngingene isidumo. Avale. Ngibe semnyameni. (Ntuli, 1994: 22)

(Father notices that they are coming. He stands up. Then he slightly moves backwards. He opens the carpet that leads to the hole that is underneath the house. He opens the door. He then indicates with his head that I should get in there. I rush inside. He closes the door. I am in the dark.)

As one continues reading the story one learns that Sibusiso's three friends fatally wound the priest after asking him three times, without success, to reveal his son's whereabouts. In this story, the figure "three" is mentioned three times, first when reference is made to Sibusiso's friends, it is also alluded to when Sibusiso's friends asked the priest three times to reveal his son and lastly when the gun shots were fired three times:

*Ngizwe ukuthi bangena ngolaka olukhulu.
"Asifuni wena baba sifuna uSibusiso."
"A-akekho bantabami. Kwenzenjani kodwa?"
"Kasinasikhathi sokuxoxa. Mkhiphe."
"Ngithe ake ..."
"Ngolaka olukhulu: "Ukhona. Umfihlile."
"Ngizwe ukuthi ukhona ombambilile ... kuyapeketulwa.
"Mkhiphe ingaze sidubule kuwe! Mkhiphe!"
"Ngimkhiphe ekuphi?"
Bha! Kukhala isibhamu. Bha! Siphinde. Bha! Siphinde futhi.*
(Ntuli, 1994: 22)

(I could hear that they are furious as they enter.
"We do not want you father, we want Sibusiso."
"He-he is not present my children. What is wrong?"
"We do not have time to talk. Take him out."
"I say he is not ..."
With great anger: "He is present. You have hidden him."
I could hear that there was someone holding him ... things are being turned topsy-turvy.
"Take him out before we shoot you! Take him out!"
"Where should I take him out?"
Bang! The shot sounded. Bang! It repeated. Bang it repeated again.)

The number "three" has some significance in the story and some Biblical undertones. It can be linked with the incident where Simon Peter denied knowing Jesus three times before Jesus was crucified. The priest also refused to divulge Sibusiso's whereabouts three times before his life was taken. This incident tallies perfectly with the words used by the priest when he wrote the letter:

Abangani bakho ababahle mntanami. Sengathi bakufake kunoxhaka engingazi ukuthi uzophuma kanjani kuwo. (Ntuli, 1994: 21)

(Your friends are not good, my child. It looks like they have put you in a trap which to me is difficult to comprehend how you will escape.)

The word *unoxhaka*, "trap" is reminiscent of the trap which Judas Iscariot set, that is, that of embracing Jesus so that his enemies could recognise Him. In this story, the above-mentioned words are ironic for, in actual fact, it is the priest who found himself entangled and thus entrapped by his son's foul activities. Just as Jesus knew that one of his disciples was going to betray him.

The Bible also tells us that Jesus Christ was crucified and died during Easter in order that Man's sins could be cleansed. In '*Ngaleli Phasika*', all the events take place during Easter time. The priest in '*Ngaleli Phasika*', acquires an extended meaning and symbolises the son of God. The priest's death did not occur in vain for later on in the story it is learned that Sibusiso has repented and has taken up his father's career:

Sezedlule izinyakanyaka zamacala.

SekuyiPhasika futhi. Baba, ngaleli Phasika ngibonga isimanga sokuba mina lo ngize ngizithathe izikhali zikababa, ngize ngifake izevatho zakhe. (Ntuli, 1994: 22)

(The ups and downs of court cases have passed.
It is Easter again. Father, on this Easter I would like to give thanks for the miracle that I have finally taken father's weapons (spiritual weapons) and I am finally clad in his garments.)

Although Jesus Christ died and rose from the dead, Sibusiso's father, being of ordinary flesh and blood, not of the holy trinity, could not be resurrected. But the image of being "resurrected" and thus being born again, can be seen in Sibusiso's repentance and his desire to serve God. Therefore, the dark hole in the basement where Sibusiso was hidden, also signifies the grave in which Jesus was buried and rose after three days. In other words, when Sibusiso was underground, it was a time of reckoning for him. It was the time for his acts of darkness to be highlighted or magnified so that he could see the magnitude of his wayward lifestyle and follies through the death of his father who died for him in order that he could be saved.

It, therefore, becomes clear after one has finished reading the story that the figure "three", has more meaning in the story for it emphasises the fact that only the holy trinity: God the Son, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, is the true redeemer of people's sins. He is the one who can save people from the dark evil lives so that they emerge cleansed and purified and adorned in the Holy Spirit (just like Sibusiso who is now dressed in his father's "garments"), if they "worship no god but Me" as is stated in Exodus 20, referring to the third commandment. This third commandment is also functional in this story for it also sends the reader back to the priest's letter. It now becomes clear why the priest highlighted these words in his letter:

... I AM WRITING TO EMPHASISE TO KEEP AWAY FROM EVIL FRIENDS (which could also be interpreted as meaning: "worship no other god but Me") **BECAUSE YOU ARE GOING TO REGRET IT.**

2.4.2.3 The ending

The conclusion is also skilfully structured. Although this story is short, only three pages long, Ntuli has striven to answer all the questions and nothing is left hanging. Here we note where brevity marks and forms the short story without exhausting the subject. This marks prosaic quality more than that quantity. Ntuli's brilliance is seen where he gives what could be termed a "response" by Sibusiso to the priest's letter of complaints and dissatisfactions about his son's behaviour. Due to the fact that Sibusiso's father is dead, Ntuli made the "reply" to be in a form of a prayer to God who has performed a "miracle" by allowing a person like him, "*mina lo*" to take over his father's "weapons" and to be dressed in his father's regalia.

In this story also, as in the preceding one, binary oppositions can also be detected: the priest, as opposed to his son's devilish friends can be seen as representing or symbolising Christ whereas the so-called friends seem to be representing the unchristian or evil. It is also detected that darkness is contrasted with light, death with "resurrection", etc.

2.5 AN ANALYSIS OF 'UMJUZO'

In '*UMjuzo*' Ntuli is both the author and the narrator, he does not conceal himself but presents the narrative from his own point of view. In this story Ntuli gives a brief but almost complete history of his mother, who was known among family members by the pet name: "*Mjuzo*".

In this story it is observed that the structure of the story is less obvious but the emphasis is in the expression of emotions and feelings. This can be seen through the constant use of poetry and song to convey the feeling and meaning. Ntuli uses the following lyrics to reveal the love he has for his mother who was suffering from sugar diabetes:

*Ngisawuthanda lo mfunzana.
 Ngiyawudinga lo mfunzana.
 Noma bangabona izibi,
 Ngizokubophela emahlombe ami,
 Nqaba, nqabakazi yami.* (Ntuli, 1994: 50)

(I still love this bundle.
 I need this bundle.
 Even if they can see dirt,
 I will tie you in my shoulders,
 My fortress, my huge fortress.)

2.5.1 The beginning

In the introduction Ntuli does not waste time but he immediately goes directly into the narrating of the story about his mother. He introduces his mother by telling us her names, that is Mellina and Zondekile and explains why she is called "Mjuzo". As Ntuli continues this story, he tells of Mjuzo's illness. Through flashbacks he recalls his mother as an energetic person who was kind and full of respect. But the emphasis and the aim of this story seem to be to highlight the religious nature of uMjuzo and to indicate the peaceful nature of her death.

2.5.2 The body

The manner in which Ntuli describes and depicts his mother is as if, to him, she belongs to an ideal. When he recollects the way they were brought up, he describes his mother as the best disciplinarian, despite the fact that she was almost illiterate. A picture is delineated of a hard-working, religious and happy individual:

... Ngimbona esika utshani bokufulela. Ngimbona ephethe igeja eyolima ... Nangu evuthela umililo epheka. Kodwa kukho konke akwenzayo ude umuzwa esho ingoma yesonto ... esho ingoma ethi:

*Kumnandi ukuhamba naye,
 Emini, ebusuku, ngezikathhi zobunzima,*

Kumnandi ukuhamba naye ... (Ntuli, 1994: 51)

(... I see her cutting grass for thatching. I see her carrying a hoe to till ... here she is making the fire and cooks. But in all the things that she does, she is usually heard singing a church song ... constantly singing a song that says:

It is nice to walk with Him,
In the afternoon, at night, in tough times,
It is nice to walk with Him ...)

Her versatility is also shown when the readers are indirectly told about her creative ability as she could compose her own play-song (*isidlaliso*) which were used to entertain children. It was explained that the play-song was referring to those individuals who used to spread gossip about Mjuzo's husband, whenever they were enjoying their beer. Therefore, Mjuzo is voicing her annoyance and at the same time trying to defend her husband against people who used him when they needed his assistance but when drunk, start spreading rumours about him. The *isidlaliso* goes:

Anozidephulela nibuye niyeke.
Zitikeni!
Ingabe uMphemba uneziqa ezingakanani.
Zitikeni!
KwaCuphulaka ngafica bephuza ngaye.
Zitikeni!
Ingabe uNtuli uneziqa ezingakanani ... (Ntuli, 1994: 51)

(Tear them off for yourselves and stop.
Please yourselves!
How many pieces does Mphemba have?
Please yourselves!
At Cuphulaka I found them drinking and misusing his name.
Please yourselves!
How many pieces does Ntuli have ...)

Mjuzo's respect is shown where the reader is told that she took the "*hloniphala*" language (used when showing respect) so seriously that she would not even dare to take advantage of the church environment and mention in song words which

were the same as those of her great father-in-law's:

Wayekwazi ukuhlonipha. Njengoba sinengcangca nje ngoba sihlonipha ukhokho uTheninja, sinoMgandelo ngoba sihlonipha ubabamkhulu uMgqibelo, wayengaphazami uMjuzo. Ngisho ecula amaculo esonto wayengakhohlwa ukuhlonipha. Yikho le ndawana ethi: "Wozani ntaba nigqibe" wayeyiguqula kahle nje uMjuzo athi: Wozani ntaba nigande. Kwakungeke kuthi ngoba kusendlini yesonto yena ebesebiza uMgqibelo. (Ntuli, 1994: 53)

(She knew how to respect. That is the reason why we have "*ingcanga*" (referring to the dog) because we are respecting our forefather Theninja (a compound name made out of the words *thena* "castrate" + *inja* "dog"), we have Mgandelo (Saturday) because we respect our great grandfather Mgqibelo, Mjuzo never made a mistake. Even when she sang church songs she never forgot to show respect. This is the reason why the place which says: "Come mountains and cover" Mjuzo used to change it quite well and say: come mountains and conceal. She would not take advantage of the fact that it is in church and she should therefore have the latitude of calling Mgqibelo's name.)

From the examples that have been mentioned, it becomes clear that Ntuli regards his mother as the best mother in the world. He seems to elevates her and he regards Mjuzo as a symbol of an ideal mother, a paragon. It is as if he is relaying a moral lesson to the reader that the world could be a better place if more women were like his mother. Because of the fact that this is not directly shoved down the reader's throat, but told in an artful connotative manner, it becomes easy for the reader to digest the facts presented and appreciate the story about this apparently marvellous and noble woman.

This style is exemplified by Shaw (1986: 141) when he gives the example of D.H. Lawrence's style of character portrayal (Ntuli also seem to be successful in applying the same technique of character portrayal, as will be seen in Chapter 4):

By making his characters serve the interests of truths that we are meant to see as larger and more permanent than the individual who embodies them, Lawrence seems to be forging a modern alternative

to replace the authority of sacred texts ... Lawrence helped to perpetuate a continuously changing tradition in which sermonising techniques were adapted to fictional use.

This is more acceptable because we are living in the turbulent world where people are governed by hate, revenge, gluttony, self-praise and distancing from God. It is refreshing to read for a change about ordinary people who, in their small ways, have had a positive contribution to life. That is why when Ntuli summarises Mjuzo's life he remarks:

Nomakhelwane baseGcotsheni babemhlonipha ngoba ebahlonipha.

Phela thina sakhulela;

Kubantu abaphila ngesithukuthuku;

Kubantu bezikhumba neziqhaza;

Abazidlel' imbuya ngothi;

Bad'l'amasi nesangcobe.

Noma bekunjalo angikhumbuli ngizwa elokubabukela phansi livela emlonyeni kaMjuzo ... Angikhumbuli ngizwa eluqanduqandu ethetha evimbanisa njengabanye omama ... Kodwa ngalubona uswazi ludla udadewethu uBaningile ngoba wayethunywe esitolo eNdulinde walibala kakhulu. (Ntuli, 1994: 52-53)

(Even the neighbours from Gcotsheni respected her for she also showed respect to them. By the way, we grew up:

Amongst people who survive with sweat;

People of loin skins and pierced ears

Those who eat spinach with a stick (very poor)

Who ate sour milk and porridge

Poor as they were, I do not remember any derogatory utterance coming from Mjuzo's mouth.

I do not remember her even once making a lot of noise, as other mothers do ... But I once saw my sister, Baningile, being beaten by a stick for delaying after she had been sent to a shop at Ndulinde.)

This incident about Baningile also indicates that Mjuzo like any other person, was not an angel but fallible and capable of strong emotions, for she took the necessary steps to discipline her children when they had gone astray.

2.5.3 The ending

The conclusion has been well planned for the end correlates with the beginning. In the beginning the reader is informed about Mjuzo's illness. At the end of this biography, Mjuzo's peaceful death which occurred immediately after the priest was called to give to her the Holy Communion is narrated. One gets a picture of someone who is at peace with herself and with the Almighty. This is clearly indicated by the following closing paragraph:

... *Ngingene ekamelweni. Umama ulele ubheke ngasodongeni.*
Ubuso bakhe buthule. Bunesizotha. Buzomamatheka.
Noma ezihlanganisile izindebe zakhe, ngizwa izwi lakhe:

*Uma ngimethemb, uJesu
 Ngingahlulwa yini na?
 Qha nakufa nakuhamba
 Naw' amandla omubi.
 Ngisho nayo iNgilosi
 Nay' omubi uqobo,
 Ngizohamba nay' iNkosi
 Ngingowayo impela.* (Ntuli, 1994: 55)

(... I enter into the bedroom. Mother is asleep, she is facing the wall. Her face is quiet. It is serene. It will smile. Although she has put her lips together, I can hear her voice:

If I trust in Jesus
 What is it that I cannot defeat?
 Not even death that walks
 with the power of the evil one.
 Even the angel itself
 Even the evil one himself,
 I will walk with the Lord
 I am truly His.)

To sum up, it may be mentioned that the structure of this story has its own pattern which becomes discernable at the end. At the beginning Mjuzo (née Shezi), who married into the Ntuli family, is introduced and a brief background information is

given about her family. In the first paragraph her death is foreshadowed when the reader is informed about the untimely death of Mjuzo's sisters. In the body, all the things that Mjuzo used to do are related. Her illness is also related to the reader. The story closes with Mjuzo's death. When viewed against the background in which this story has been structured, one tends to agree with May (1976: 4-5) when he says that with some stories the plot is inside the story. It should be noted that this story is beautiful without being characterised by the usual adaptations visible in what is termed "proper short stories". With this story, Ntuli has, once more managed to set a pace in Zulu short story writing. In '*UMjuzo*' we find a practice which is most prevalent and common in the novels, that is, the writing of a biography.

2.6 RECAPITULATION

In this chapter it was observed that Ntuli did not work painstakingly within the constraints of the established canon. Formal convention is disrupted to provide the structure for an avant-garde presentation of content, e.g. the writing of a short story in a letter form. This is in line with that which the Russian formalists' call defamiliarisation (making strange) that is making use of devices that will make the ordinary or the everyday look like new.

Although some elements of the conventional plot could be traced in stories like '*Ivasi KaVusi*' and in '*Ngaleli Phasika*', it was noted that the emphasis was not upon the pre-established sequence of the scenes or their progression, that is, "the arithmetic curve". The accentuation was on their meaning, whose missing parts (also of the traditional plot) are left to the reader to supply or fill in. This, therefore, implies that Ntuli has taken Edgar Allan Poe's rules as mere guidelines to the writing of short stories but not as something that should be used to dictate and govern short story writing.

It has also been noted that, true to the structuralists' notion, the various parts join

to form a meaningful whole. This can be noticed in the binary oppositions reflected in some of the analysed stories, for example in '*Ivasi KaVusi*' old is contrasted with youth, strong versus weak, active versus passive, vocalism against muteness, etc. In '*Ngaleli Phasika*' the following oppositions were noted: Christlike versus unchristian, darkness against light, evil opposed to good, young versus old and lastly, death opposed to "resurrection". Finally, it was observed that the text becomes meaningful through symbols which illuminate actions and events.

CHAPTER 3

NARRATION IN ISIBHAKABHAKA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the technique used by Ntuli to narrate some of his stories will be examined. The stories already dealt with in the previous chapter will first be discussed and then the study will be further expanded by the addition of two new stories namely: '*Iqanda Yichoboka*' and '*Isikweletu*'. To facilitate a better understanding of the narration of these two stories, a short synopsis of each will be given. However, a summary of '*Isikweletu*' will take on a different form for it will be paraphrased by means of using narrative propositions. This will be done in order to give a general view and a general background on the structuralists' way of paraphrasing a short story. Before the aspects mentioned above can be embarked upon, an explanation of what narration entails must first be furnished.

3.2 NARRATION

In narration one person narrates something to another person either by word of mouth or in writing. Rimmon-Kenan calls it the act or process of production (1983: 3). It can be considered as both real and fictional. The participants in the narrative communication situation can be presented as follows according to Booth's semiotic model of communication (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 86):



In the above diagram, the real author and the real reader are left outside the narrative transaction. In the text they are substituted by agents called the implied author and the implied reader:

The implied author is the governing consciousness embodied in the work, implied authors are often far superior in intelligence and moral standards to the actual men and women who are real authors. (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 86-87).

The implied and real author need not often be the same. An author may embody in a work ideas, beliefs, emotions other than, or even quite opposed to, those he has in real life. He may also embody different ideas, beliefs, and emotions in different works. While the real author is subject to the changes of real life, the implied author of a particular work is conceived as stable and consistent with itself within the work.

Distinct from the real author, the implied author also differs from the narrator, while the narrator can be defined as the "voice" or "speaker" of a text, the implied author is voiceless and silent. Like the implied author, the implied reader is also a construct and just as the former differs from both real author and narrator, so the latter is distinct from both real reader and narratee (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 87).

According to Chatman (1978: 150), every text has an implied author and an implied reader, but a narrator and a narratee are optional. When the latter is present, the communication proceeds from implied author to narrator to narratee and finally to the implied reader. When a narrator and a narratee are absent, communication is confined to the implied author and the implied reader.

However, Rimmon-Kenan has some objections to Chatman's scheme. She argues that if the implied author is a construct and has no voice, no direct means of communication, it is a contradiction to cast it in the role of the addresser in a communication situation for it cannot literally be a participant in the narrative communication situation. She also objects to Chatman's treatment of the narrator and the narratee. In her view, there is always a teller in a tale, at least in the sense that any utterance presupposes someone who has uttered it. According to her, the implied author and the implied reader should be excluded from a description of the

communication situation (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 88).

Certain relations can be determined between narration and story, these are temporal relations and narrative levels:

3.2.1 Temporal relations

Genette (1972: 215-217) classifies temporal relations under four headings:

- Posterior events may be narrated only after they happen. This implies the temporal distance from narrated events. The distance between the narration and the events varies from text to text, e.g. ten years, one week, one day, etc.
- Anterior narration is a type of narration which precedes the events. This is a kind of predictive narration. These narratives tend to be prophecies, curses or dreams of fictional characters.
- Simultaneous narration is simultaneous with the action, e.g. reporting or diary entries.
- Interpolated narration occurs when telling and acting are not simultaneous, but follow each other in alternation.

3.2.2 Narrative levels

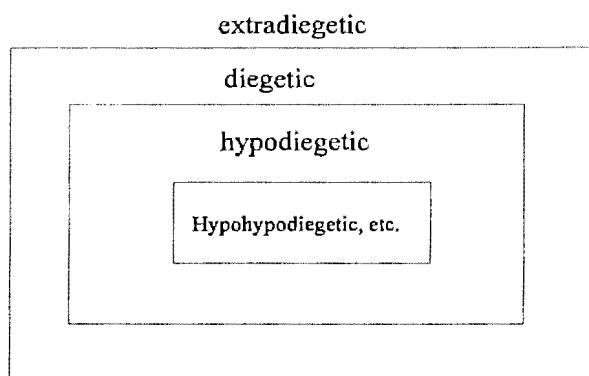
In the above mentioned discussion, the primary consideration concerns the narration of the story, but there may also be a narration in the story:

A character whose actions are the object of narration can himself in turn engage in narrating a story. Within his story, there may of course be yet another character who narrates another story, etc.

(Rimmon-Kenan, 1983 : 91).

According to Genette a narrator can also be defined with respect to its relation to the various narrative levels existing in a text. The level of the entire text is "extradiegetic" and is considered as the primary level. The narrator outside the fictive world tells about the events and actors of the story. However, it is also possible for the primary voice, the narrator who reports on the story, sometimes to leave the narration to secondary voices who act within the fictive world. In this case, the words of a secondary speaker can be regarded as embedded in those of the primary speaker.

Genette (1972) in his scheme indicates different levels by the terms; extradiegetic, diegetic and metadiegetic (hypodiegetic) - a term which is also used by both Bal (1985) and Rimmon-Kenan (1983). A narrator in the fictive world can either be outside the story (extradiegetic) or on a deeper level inside it (meta/hypodiegetic). This hierarchical differentiation in terms of levels can be represented as follows:



Because narration is always on a higher level than the story being told, the diegetic (story) level is related by an extradiegetic narrator outside the fictive world and the hypodiegetic level by an intradiegetic narrator inside the fictive world.

3.3 TYPOLOGY OF NARRATORS

In order for the reader to fully understand the story, he or she should come into grips with the following important factors: the narrative level to which the narrator belongs, the extent of his participation in the story, the degree of perceptibility of his role and his reliability.

3.3.1 The narrative level to which the narrator belongs

According to Genette, a narrator who is above or superior to the story he narrates is extradiegetic like the level of which he is a part. But if the narrator is also a diegetic character in the first narrative told by the extradiegetic narrator, then he is a second degree or intradiegetic narrator. There can also be narrators of a third degree (i.e. hypodiegetic) degree (hypo-hypodiegetic) etc.

3.3.2 The extent of the narrator's participation in the story

Both extradiegetic and intradiegetic narrators can either be absent from or present in the story they narrate. A narrator who does not participate in the story is called heterodiegetic whereas the one who takes part in it is homodiegetic. A narrator can be both extradiegetic and heterodiegetic (omniscient), like extradiegetic narrator, intradiegetic ones can also be either heterodiegetic or homodiegetic. The degree of participation of homodiegetic narrators varies from case to case.

3.3.3 The degree of perceptibility of the narrator's role

The degree of perceptibility of the narrator's role ranges from the maximum of covertness to the maximum of overtness, i.e. invisibility and visibility respectively. There are many signs of overtness which Chatman lists in mounting order of perceptibility (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 96).

3.3.3.1 Description of setting

The narrator's presence can be detected where he describes a place.

3.3.3.2 Identification of characters

Describing a character shows prior knowledge of the character on the part of the narrator who can, therefore, identify the former to the reader at the very beginning of the text.

3.3.3.3 Temporal summary

Summary presupposes a desire to account for time passage, to satisfy questions in a narratee's mind about what has happened in the interval (Chatman, 1978: 223)

3.3.3.4 Definition of character

Definition suggests generalisation or summing up on the part of the narrator, also a desire to present such labelling as authoritative characterisation.

3.3.3.5 Reports of what characters did not think or say

If a narrator tells things of which characters are either unconscious of or which purposely concerns them, he is felt as an independent source of information. Commentary can either be on the story or on the narration. Commentary can appear in the following forms: interpretation, judgement and generalisation.

3.3.3.6 The narrator's reliability

According to Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 100), a reliable narrator is one whose rendering of the story and commentary on it the reader is supposed to take as an

authoritative account of the fictional truth. An unreliable narrator, on the other hand, is one whose rendering of the story and/or commentary on it the reader has reason to suspect.

3.4 SPEECH REPRESENTATION

As already mentioned, thoughts and words of the actors in a fictive world are as if they were reported to the reader by a mediating narrator. Actors' spoken words and unspoken thoughts or feelings are usually represented in one of the two following ways:

- The narrator reports in his own words and does not attempt to pretend that someone else is doing the reporting.
- The narrator withdraws and tries to create the impression that the actor himself is speaking.

According to Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 106), Socrates made a distinction between two ways of rendering speech. He called the former diegesis and the latter mimesis. Dialogue, monologue, direct speech are mimetic and indirect speech diegetic:

The polarisation of diegesis and mimesis reappears under the names of 'telling' and 'showing' or 'summary' and 'scene' in Anglo-American criticism at the end of the last century and the beginning of this. 'Showing' is the supposedly direct presentation of events and conversations, the narrator seeming to disappear (as in drama) and the reader being left to draw his own conclusions from what he 'sees' and 'hears'. 'Telling' on the other hand, is a presentation mediated by the narrator who, instead of directly and dramatically exhibiting events and conversations, talks about them, sums them up, etc. (Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 107)

Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 109-110) gives an explanation of the seven types of speech

representation in her work, but only one will be discussed in this study namely, free indirect discourse.

3.4.1 Free indirect discourse (FID)

Free indirect discourse is a combination of direct and indirect speech. In direct speech the actual words of the actors are quoted, whereas in indirect speech the actors' words are reported by the narrator. Free indirect discourse is used in cases where it is not explicitly mentioned that the words in the text are those of an actor.

3.5 NARRATION IN 'IVASI KAVUSI'

In narrative literary texts, a series of fictitious events are recounted by a main spokesperson who may give other, secondary spokesmen an opportunity to contribute to the narrative function (Gräbe, in Bierman, 1991: 101).

'*Ivasi kaVusi*' is narrated on the extradiegetic level for the principal narrator is a narrator who stands outside the story. In Genette's terms this narrator can be characterised as an extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator, a narrator on the first level, who is not a character in the situation and events he represents. This narrator is furthermore unlimited for he is omniscient. He sees and hears everything in the story - he even knows what the actors think. He knows, for instance, when Mvubu's wife suspects that her husband was beginning to treat the vase as an idol. His presence is everywhere because he narrates almost all the events that occur in the story. He even narrates events which happened a long time ago.

Narration is, however, not only left to the primary narrator for at the very onset of the story it is the secondary narrator who is given the platform first - this is done in a form of a soliloquy:

"Ngangingaqondile ukumxosha ngempela, uQondisa, ...ngangingazi ukuthi yena usezonyamalala unomphela". (Ntuli, 1994: 7)

(I did not really intend to chase Qondisa away, ... I did not know that he would disappear for good.)

These words are uttered by Mvubu who is the main character in the story, that is a character in the midst of the situation recounting the events. He is thus a narrator on the second level, an intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator.

From this soliloquy, it becomes noticeable that the external narrator's voice is the one that echoes throughout the whole story. The story is told through flashbacks, but as if events are occurring in the present. It seems to be divided into different paragraphs of present narration in relation to the past:

Njengoba ebambeke kangaka lokuphuma ngesamagundane uNduduzo. (Ntuli, 1994: 7)

(Ill as he was Nduduzo could escape.)

'*Ivasi KaVusi*' can be described as an authorial text. Gräbe in Bierman (1991:115) gives the following information regarding an authorial text:

The term authorial, which obviously derives from author, is used in reference to an external narrator who is invested with a control over the narrated course of events that virtually equals the author's control over the narrative text. However, the authorial narrator is nevertheless an integral part of the conventions that apply within fictional texts and therefore must not be confused with the real-life author who originates the narrative text. An authorial narrator has an overall perspective on the related events which give him a so-called panoramic view of the entire fictitious world ... an authorial text is a narrative text that incorporates an omniscient narrator who constantly comments on his narration of the events and on his representation of the actors in the fictitious world. The customary grammatical form for such an authorial narrator is the third person singular (s/he).

In '*Ivasi KaVusi*', the narrator knows how events in the present were caused and what their outcome will be. This narrator has an unlimited perspective which renders him omniscient with regard to the future, the past and the present. The narrator also has personal knowledge of the innermost thoughts and feelings of all the actors:

Eginisweni wayetholakele umfana, uVusithemba, waphoqoka kusele usuku olulodwa aqede unyaka ... UQondisa-ke ulethwa lapha nje ngoba sekubonakele ukuthi alisekho ithemba lokuthi uzobe esafika omunye uVusi noma uNduduzo. Yikho-ke le nsizwa seyinikwa elinye igama likaNduduzo nje. (Ntuli, 1994: 7)

(In fact they once had a boy, Vusithemba, but he died a day before his first birthday ... Qondisa is therefore brought here because it has become apparent that there is no more hope that another Vusi or Nduduzo will ever come. That is why this lad was also given the name of Nduduzo.)

It is also observed that the omniscient authorial narrator actually also has a tendency of constantly commenting on everything in the text, the fictitious world. He or she is consistently interpreting and explaining the actors' behaviour to the reader, for example in the remarks made about the manner in which Mvubu idolised the vase, the narrator elaborates:

Phela noma kade ehambile, ngeke kuthathe sikhathi engabonakalanga eseyithinta le vasi. Noma kulungiswa nje endlini, kwesulwa izinto, uma ekhona uzoyisusa le vasi ayibeke lapho ingezukulimala kalula khona. (Ntuli, 1994: 7)

(Even if he had gone away, it would not take him long before he would be seen touching this vase. Even if preparations were done in the house, like wiping items, if he is around, he will remove this vase and put it in a place of safety.)

Mvubu's condition is furthermore related to the reader, and also, by means of flashback, Mvubu's recalling of the day of Nduduzo's departure when he chased him away is reported:

Ubambeke nje manje uyawukhumbula umfanekiso kaNduduzo ehamba ngomgwaqo eqhela, eqhela. Wayengaphethe lutho ngaphandle kwalokho ayekugqokile. (Ntuli, 1994: 8)

(In his ill condition, he remembers Nduduzo's image as he went down the road gradually disappearing. He had nothing except what he was clad in.)

From Gräbe's description of an authorial text and the examples given above, the observation previously made that '*Ivasi KaVusi*' is an authorial text, is substantiated. The narrator in '*Ivasi KaVusi*' is basically situated outside the events because of the fact that Mvubu and other characters are represented as "he or she" and from statements such as:

Yikho engasafuni nokuba abe lokhu eyohlala esibhedlela nje. Sinye isifiso sakhe, ukuba ake ambone uQondisa. (Ntuli, 1994: 7)

(That is why he no longer wants to be constantly staying in hospital. His wish is only one, to at least see Qondisa.)

Besides Mvubu whose narration is briefly left to him, another secondary narrator is also found on the third level, a narrator who is also a character, that is, the man from the post office. If the two ways of telling, that is, *showing* (mimesis) and *telling* (diegesis) is considered as two extreme poles, a transition from one pole to the another is detected. Mvubu's thoughts are mostly represented in terms of a diegetic summary - through flashback. In contrast, the speech of the gentleman from the post office is represented in direct speech:

Baba, kufike le mpahla eposini ngase ngithi ngcono ngivele ngize nayo ngoba ngiyanzani. (Ntuli, 1994: 9)

(Father, this parcel was sent to the post office and I thought that it would be better if I brought it with me for I am acquainted with you.)

The change in presentation, that is, from indirect to direct discourse, especially towards the end of the story, reflects some changes to what is happening in the

story. Firstly, it exhibits the intensity of the suspense as it unfolds; the young gentleman from the post office arrives in a car, he has a parcel for Mvubu. All these elements build up suspense which leads to a climax because appeal messages for Nduduzo's return had been sent via the media, so the suspense accumulates for the man could be bearing the long awaited news about Nduduzo. Secondly, the discourse reveals the intensity of what is happening in the story. The man from the post office is like a messenger or a mediator in a war, a courier who is sent to rush in with an important message of peace. This is symbolic of his entrance to the Mvubu family in a brand new car. The significance of the new automobile is that it has a smaller chance of a breakdown than an old car, which again may delay the portentous news. The message that the postman brings reminds one of a Zulu saying:

Isithunywa asibulawa.

(The messenger is never killed).

The man rushes in to possibly put an end to the feud between Mvubu and his son. It is for this reason that he is given the platform to relate the message in direct speech. This is in sharp contrast to the manner of telling in the rest of this story. This direct speech also highlights the "speechlessness" or "muteness" on behalf of the Mvubu family. In the whole story no form of conversation between Mvubu and his wife is heard, not even via the voice of the external narrator. So the reader's interest is aroused when, for the first time, what appears to be a dialogue in the story is encountered. But unfortunately Mvubu and his wife do not respond to the gentleman. This silence, which is rendered by the authorial text, highlights the fact that Nduduzo's disappearance left them dumbfounded and it accentuates the continuing communication breakdown within the family. This is ironic, for Mvubu employs all types of media in order to contact Nduduzo, however, his own taciturnity is the true obstacle.

Besides the points discussed in the paragraphs above, it is also easy to detect the

narrator's presence or overtness. He is the one who describes the characters' state of mind or feelings, he also describes the setting. Mvubu's feelings are described in terms of a diegetic summary:

Usho ngelosizi uMvubu. Sezimbambile izinhlungu. Kungenzeka noma yini noma nini. (Ntuli, 1994: 7)

(Mvubu remarks in a sorrowful voice. Pains have now have clutched him. Anything can happen at any time.)

In the text, Mvubu's illness is mentioned and alluded to about five times. Repetitive delineations made by the external narrator focus the reader's attention on the importance or seriousness of the action, for example:

Njengoba ebambeke kangaka nje uMvubu ulukhumbula kahle lolo suku. UNduduzo wayethi uzama ukusiza lapha ekhaya. (Ntuli, 1994: 8)

(Ill as he is, Mvubu remembers that day very well. Nduduzo was trying to help here at home.)

It should also be noted that instances of Mvubu's illness are always juxtaposed with Nduduzo's disappearance:

Njengoba ebambekile nje manje uMvubu uwakhumbula kahle amazwi akhe okugcina awasho kuNduduzo. (Ntuli, 1994: 8)

(Ill as he is, Mvubu remembers well his last words which he mentioned to Nduduzo.)

The repetition is also observed where it is stated:

Ubambeke manje nje uyawukhumbula umfanekiso kaNduduzo ehamba ngomgwaqo ...(Ntuli, 1994: 8)

(Ill as he is, he remembers Nduduzo's image as he was walking down the road ...)

Two more such repetitions are observed where Mvubu wishes that Nduduzo should return, despite the broken vase:

Njengoba ebambekile nje usekhalela ukuthi noma kungasafikanga vasi akunamsebenzi . (Ntuli, 1994: 8)

(The condition that he is in, he is now praying that it no longer matters even if the vase is no longer returned.)

Ironically, the more Mvubu thinks about Nduduzo the more matters get worse. Salt is rubbed into his wounds when Nduduzo writes him a letter with no return address. Nduduzo was apologizing for breaking the vase and furthermore, he was also informing him that he was employed and hoped that he would eventually get money to replace it. Instead of lessening Mvubu's worries and illness, Nduduzo's letter seemed to have caused his state of health to deteriorate for the narrator states that:

Saqhubeka le sifo. (Ntuli, 1994: 8)

(This illness worsened.)

All these reiterations build tension and intensify suspense in the story. They also reveal that Mvubu's illness was not an ailment that could be cured by hospitals and doctors. That is why the narrator does not describe Mvubu's illness. His illness was of his own doing and could be cured if he would be given a chance to correct his wrongdoings. The one thing that could cure him was Nduduzo's return and a possible reconciliation between the two.

By comparing story time (i.e. the supposed time it must have taken for an event to happen) to text time (i.e. the amount of time devoted to that event in the text), the reader can determine that some events are given more importance or less importance than others. The events of this story seem to have taken many years

to happen - events since Vusithemba died, the adoption of Nduduzo, his growing up to be a teenager - this the reader assumes for in the letter it is stated that he was currently employed.

It is also detected that the events surrounding the arrival of Nduduzo and his disappearance after he was chased away, like Mvubu's illness, are given more consideration. The opening paragraph mentions Nduduzo's departure and Mvubu's remorse. The second paragraph mentions the circumstances evolving around Nduduzo's adoption, the third paragraph explains the final reasons for Nduduzo to be adopted and in the fourth paragraph it is mentioned that Nduduzo is completely loved by the Mvubu family. Seen against this background, Mvubu's blind fury and his chasing away of Nduduzo is uncalled for and is incongruous when one is aware that the vase is something that can be replaced. This therefore indicates and accentuates that Mvubu never really accepted the death of his only son, Vusithemba. The detailed mentioning of Nduduzo's arrival and stay in the Mvubu family tends to highlight Mvubu's error of judgement , for a child's mistake committed in less than a few minutes should not evoke such anger and subsequent turbulence.

An ensuing event following those mentioned above is recounted in an iterative manner:

... *Phela noma kade ehambile, ngeke kuthathe isikhathi engabonakalanga eyithinta le vasi ... uma ekhona uzoyisusa le vasi ayibeke lapho ingezukulimala kalula khona.* (Ntuli, 1994: 7)

(Even if he had gone somewhere, it would not take long before he is seen touching that vase, ... if he is around, he will remove this vase and put it in a safer place.)

This event and the one before this, where it is mentioned that Mvubu was idolising or personifying the vase by talking to it, stresses Mvubu's fascination with the vase. All these minute details of Mvubu's unusual, habitual actions are told as

representations of actions which always occur and which are always repeated.

Accounts of events which later follow seem to be given less weight for they are told in a summary form, for instance where Mvubu tries to trace Nduduzo through the media:

O, umsakazo! O, iphephandaba! Ithunyelwe imiyalezo ... bamtshele ukuthi kuthiwa akaphuthume ekhaya uma ethola lo myalezo nje. Do. (Ntuli, 1994: 8)

(O, the radio! O, the newspaper! Messages were sent ... they should tell him that it is said that let him rush home on receiving this message. Nothing.)

The statements, "O, the radio! O, the newspaper!" and the one that says "nothing" are symbolic of the futility of the act and the "nothingness" which will be the end result of it all. This symbolic emptiness echoes ingeniously in the following lines where Ntuli uses poetic and musical language which rises to a climax with the indication of the progression of time as the weeks, months and finally the whole year pass by:

*Lashona. Laphuma.
Nduduzo uzobuya, Nduduzo uzobuya do.
Laphela isonto. Do.
Inyanga. Do.
Kubikwe emaphoyiseni. Do.
Unyaka. Do.* (Ntuli, 1994: 8)

(The sun set and rose.
Nduduzo you will come back, Nduduzo you will
come back, nothing.
A week passed. Nothing.
A month. Nothing.
Police were alerted. Nothing.
A year. Nothing.)

This in a way, predicts the futility of Mvubu's desire to see Nduduzo, who does not

arrive. It is also symbolic for it is correlative to the "empty" life of the Mvubu family, to the "nothingness" or nihilism of their lives which are symbolised by their childlessness and the wife's "muteness". In short, the lines of communication are not only closed between Mvubu and his wife but between the three parties for "akunakheli" (there is no address), as Ntuli aptly concludes this story.

Two voices seldom fall together in *'Ivasi kaVusi'*, that is, that of the extradiegetic narrator and that of the intradiegetic narrator (Mvubu). This is noticed in a few examples:

O, umsakazo! O, iphephandaba! A, kukhona incwadi ngaphakathi. (Ntuli, 1994: 8)

(Oh, the radio! Oh, the newspaper! Ah, there is a letter inside.)

This is an example of free indirect speech. There is no declarative verb, no conjunction nor inverted commas to indicate that both narrators are speaking. The scarcity of this form of speech representation may be ascribed to the fact that it seems that the extradiegetic narrator gradually distances himself from Mvubu, unlike in the initial paragraphs where it appeared like the narrator was trying to come to his rescue. That is why there is less merging of voices. This could be ascribed to the realisation that Mvubu's sorrows are of his own doing and therefore no one is expected to empathise or to side with him.

3.6 NARRATING IN 'NGALELI PHASIIKA'

In this story, two internal narrators who are both characters in the fictive world, are present. The first narration is rendered by the "I" who is the priest. The narration is in the form of a letter which is directed to Sibusiso. Gräbe (in Bierman, 1991: 116-117) relays the following with respect to a figural text:

A figural narrator, usually referred to as s/he in the grammatical third

person, is also positioned within the fictitious world like the experiencing "I" of a first-person narrative. He is usually the chief actor, and because he himself experiences the events in the fictitious world, he has a limited perspective that is confined to the present. He could at best discern connections between the past and present without being able to say what the future outcome of the related events will be. He also knows only his own thoughts and feelings and can only relate the expressed words and actions of other actors: he obviously has no access to their private thoughts and motives, which he would have to guess at. This type of narrative situation is of course much more realistic than that involving an omniscient narrator - after all, in real life no one has direct access to the hidden thoughts and feelings of other people .

The first experiencing "I" in this story is the priest whom can be regarded as the chief actor. The story starts with the priest voicing his dissatisfaction about his son's behaviour. The events are narrated in a chronological order. He starts by envisaging an imminent death that might befall him. He then continues by means of flashback about Sibusiso's birth, his youth and his adulthood. All these incidents are told through a glance back into the past and he finally moves into the present moment, that is, to the time when Sibusiso became troublesome:

Anginakukubala manje ongenzehkona ngoba uyakwazi konke.
(Ntuli, 1994: 20)

(I am not going to enumerate now all that you have done to me for you know it all.)

As the priest continues with the writing of the missive, he is abruptly stopped by the sudden arrival of his son:

... Ngangena ngesidumo ubaba wayeka nokubhala ayekubhala.
(Ntuli, 1994: 21)

(I entered in a rush, father stopped writing whatever he was writing.)

From the word "*ngangena*" (I entered) we note that the narration is taken over by the second "I" narrator. The narration by the second narrator is embedded in the

first narration. So far, there is a smooth relationship and continuation of events to the ones that were being mentioned in the letter. The events which now occur, as told by Sibusiso, seem to be confirming the priest's worst fears regarding the fact that he had a premonition when he first started to write the letter. The tempo of the story now quickens as the story draws to a climax. This is indicated by the use of direct speech where Sibusiso's friends are seen taking the priest from room to room in search of Sibusiso.

*"Asifuni wena baba sifuna uSibusiso."
 "A-akekho bantabami. Kwenzenjani kodwa?"
 "Kasinaskhathi sokuxoxa. Mkhipe."
 "Ngithe ake ..."
 Ngolaka olukhulu: "Ukhona. Umfihlile."
 "Ngizwe ukuthi ukhona ombambilile ... kuyapeketulwa.
 "Mkhipe ingaze sidubule kuwe! Mkhipe!"
 "Ngimkhipe ekuphi?"
 Bha ! Kukhala isibhamu. Bha! Siphinde. Bha!
 Siphinde futhi. (Ntuli, 1994: 22)*

("We do not want you father, we want Sibusiso."
 "He-he is not present my children. What is wrong?"
 "We do not have time to talk. Take him out."
 "I say he is not ..."
 With great anger: "He is present. You have hidden him."
 I could hear that there was someone holding him ... things are
 being turned topsy-turvy.
 "Take him out before we shoot you! Take him out!"
 "Where should I take him out?"
 Bang! The shot sounded. Bang! It repeated. Bang!
 It repeated again.)

At the end of the narrative the whole story is told in the form of a flashback. Sibusiso is reading a letter which was written by his father shortly before he was killed, he is also recalling all the events that led to his father's death and all those which subsequently followed. This is, therefore, posterior narration, when events are narrated after they have happened.

The conclusion is in a summary form. The conclusion in this story specifically

indicates that the events here are told after they have occurred:

Sezedlule izinyakanyaka zamacala. Sekuyiphasika futhi. (Ntuli, 1994: 22)

(The ups and downs of the cases have passed. It is Easter again.)

The words "It is Easter again" are a clear indication that Sibusiso was recalling things that happened in a not so distant past. There is also an ellipsis in this story for the reader is not told about the court proceedings and the type of sentence given to the priest's killers. But despite this, one feels that the conclusion is adequate for all matters pertaining to the story have been satisfactorily rounded off. It would in fact have been an impossible task to get an indication of the type of a jail sentence given to the killers for the way of narration of this story is from the point of view of the characters who have a limited point of view, who cannot know of or report happenings beyond the scope of their environment in the story. In fact, such a task would have necessitated another story or a sequel to this one.

It is therefore difficult to categorically conclude that it is Sibusiso who utters the following words which appear toward the conclusion:

Sezedlule izinyakanyaka zamacala. Sekuyiphasika futhi. (Ntuli, 1994: 22)

(The ups and downs of the cases have passed. It is Easter again.)

There is a strong indication that this is an example of a free indirect speech where the voice of the external, extra-diegetic narrator blends with that of the internal narrator (Sibusiso). It is also very unusual for the external narrator to only appear at the end of the story. It appears as if Ntuli has wilfully done this to give credibility to and justify Sibusiso's act of repentance. His contrition was triggered by his father's death and it is evaluated for some time, probably a year or more, to see whether he would endure and be true to his new conformation. Sibusiso saw that

he had taken the wrong path and therefore followed his father's wishes.

3.7 NARRATING IN 'UMJUZO'

When in the previous paragraphs narration in '*Ivasi KaVusi*' and '*Ngaleli Phasika*' were discussed, it was noted that the first short story had an omniscient narrator, whose presence was overt in the whole story, whereas in the second two internal narrators, who alternated in narrating their respective side of the tale, were presented.

In '*Umjuzo*' a totally different form of narration is encountered. This story is told hypodiegetically by the author about an internal character who is focalised through flashback. This characteristic that the views in the text are those of the actual author outside the narrative text, has been a cause of confusion in classifying this narrative. The intricate task of classifying this story has also been allegorically displayed by the author, who placed the story in the middle of his book. In other words, this story forms a borderline or transition point between the short stories and the essays in *Isibhakabhaka*. '*Umjuzo*' has aspects of a biography where, through flashback, the narrator tells the story about his mother. One could however, also regard it as an essay, for in an essay the essayist chooses a topic for discussion, he or she explains it in the introduction, elaborates in the body and rounds it off in the conclusion - the same pattern as in '*Umjuzo*'. This story does, however, contain all the aspects of a short story. The whole story is told posteriorly. This can be seen through the constant use of the past tense. It is also told posthumously for at the time of the telling of this story, the narrator's mother had passed away:

*Kodwa-ke uMjuzo ozala thina ubengapha eMamelodi kwelasePitoli
njengoba ubesebeleselwe yisifo sikashukela ... Ulapha nje ude
eliphinda elika- "Thumbu lami" ake alisebenzise uma ebhekise kimi.*
(Ntuli, 1994: 50)

(But Mjuzo, the one that gave birth to us was at Mamelodi in Pretoria

because she was suffering from sugar diabetes ... Even here, she constantly repeats the word - "my last born" a word she at times uses when she is referring to me.)

The narration in this story frequently alternates with pauses, the narrator uses poetry or song to shed light or to emphasise the love he had for his mother, as Gräbe (in Bierman, 1992: 28) aptly puts it:

The pause is intended to allow the reader time to reflect and absorb this whole attention.

This can, for instance, be seen after the narrator reflects about his mother's condition after the diabetes had got the better of her, he gives a stanza from his poem in which he tells about the way he still loves and needs "this bundle". A similar circumstance is again observed when he describes his mother's improvement after she was taken to doctors. Mjuzo's cheeks remind him of his mother's younger days:

Noma umbheka izihlathi sezithi azigcwale. Nokho phela ngeke zisafana ngempela naleziya engabheka ngizibona kule ntokazi.

Ngibheka ngakubona uyisiphalaphala. Uyisimomondiya sesiqqishaqqaqisha.

Nakuphi uphelekezelwa ngumtshingo. (Ntuli, 1994: 50-51)

(Even if you look at her cheeks, they appear almost full. But they will no longer look exactly the same like the ones that I saw of this lady when I grew up.

As I grew, I saw you as a lovely woman with big eyes.
You were beautiful and strong.

... Everywhere you were accompanied by music.)

The poem and song extracts which appear in this narrative, seem to foreground

the most special and touching moments and occurrences which are Ntuli's memories of his mother.

Although the whole story is told through flashback, one notices that in narrating, the narrator tends to switch from the immediate past, that is, in his adulthood, to the time when his mother was ill to a distant past, when he was a small boy and his mother was still a young woman. This is depicted in the alternation of the following paragraphs. The second paragraph starts with these words:

Kodwa uMjuzo ozala thina ubengapha eMamelodi ...(Ntuli, 1994: 50)

(But Mjuzo, the one that gave birth to us was here at Mamelodi ...)

The third paragraph:

Kulezi zinsuku uMjuzo akuseyiwo ngempela umfunzana. (Ntuli, 1994: 51)

(These days Mjuzo is no longer really a small bundle.)

In the following two paragraphs Ntuli returns to the remote past when his mother was young:

Isithombe esiggama kakhulu ngesokukhuthala kwakhe. (Ntuli, 1994: 51)

(The picture that becomes most conspicuous is that of her diligence.)

In the next two paragraphs we again see a return to the immediate past:

Njengoba kuthe sekuya kuKhisimuzi sambona esebuieka nje, ...BekunguKhisimuzi ke izolo. Njengoba kuyiholidi nje namuhla uzoke ashaywe umoya ayobona abangani bethu balapha. (Ntuli, 1994: 51)

(As it was approaching Christmas time we saw her in this condition ... It was Christmas yesterday. Because today is a holiday, she will take a break and go visit our local friends.)

In the next paragraph there is again a retreat to the remote past. In this paragraph the narrating "I" reflects on himself as the experiencing "I":

Phela sakhula kuwunyawo kuphela. Indlela engiyikhumbula kakhulu ngeyokuya enkonzweni le eKuphileni. Yibanga khona (Ntuli, 1994: 52)

(By the way, we grew up where only the foot was used [as a means of travel]. The road that I remember most is the one that led to church far away at Kuphileni, it is a distance, ...)

With regard to this, Gräbe (in Bierman, 1991: 115) comments as follows about what she calls "first person texts":

... in some narrative texts the authorial narrator refers to himself in the first person singular and often not only relates the events in the fictitious world, but volunteers a whole range of information about himself. Here the first person narrator is internal in respect of his personal experience while remaining external in respect to the events in the fictitious world, which is the real content of the narrative text.

But with regard to '*Umjuzo*', as this story is probably biographical, the narrator internalises some of the events for he is observed describing some of the occurrences that happened to his mother while he was present and actively involved:

Yithi labaya siwelela empumalanga nelokishi. Hhayi, kukhala ibhungane kwaMaaga. Asiye kwaNkabinde-ke. Uma sesibheke khona, sizwe sengathi uMjuzo unobunzima ekuphefumuleni ... siyabhakuza isifuba sikaMjuzo. (Ntuli, 1994: 54)

(We drove heading to the eastern side of the location. Oops, there is no one at the Maaga's. Let's rather go to the Nkabinde's. As we

were heading there we could hear that Mjuzo was having breathing difficulties ... Mjuzo's chest is palpitating.)

Gräbe (in Bierman, 1991: 116) furthermore reflects about the first person narrator:

... a special problem arises when the first-person narrator recounts events that befell him in his youth. Whereas the narrator and the actor in the fictitious world are the same person on the one hand, the narrating "I" is much older and wiser than the experiencing "I" (the actor) on the other hand. His position or point of view is therefore at a certain distance from his youthful experiences, so that with the benefit of hindsight he can elucidate the course of certain events from his past for the reader.

From what has been clarified above, it can therefore be stated that the following extract reflects on the events which happened to the experiencing "I" while he was much younger, but they are narrated by the "much older and wiser" narrating "I":

Kodwa ngalubona uswazi ludla udadewethu uBaningile ngoba wayethunywe esitolo eNdulinde walibala kakhulu. Weza wazongikhombisa imivimbo ezinqeni ngiyakhumbula nami lungidla ngokuganga kwezingane. (Ntuli, 1994: 53-54)

(But I saw my sister Baningile getting a hiding for delaying after she was sent to the shops at Ndulinde. She came to show me the weals on the buttocks. I also remember getting the stick due to children's mischief.)

Mjuzo finally dies peacefully. In the above example an instance of hypodiegetic embedding, that is, a story within a story, is observed. Bierman (1992: 43) supplies the following information about embedding:

Stories within stories or narratives within narratives may have various functions among them - that of stimulating the action, explaining certain events or establishing thematic links.

Therefore, the above extract is functional because besides explaining certain

events it also helps to establish thematic links by indicating how times have changed, from walking long distance by foot to using cars. This also indicates the time span.

By virtue of the fact that this narration has the characteristics of a biography, there is no variety in the other form of narration but towards the end we do get a form of direct speech:

*Usecela ukuba sikhulekhe. "Sekuyikhona ukuphuma komphefumulo bantabami". Kwaduma ikhanda. Sathandaza.
"Singakubizela umfundisi mama?" Umakoti wakhe.
"Ngingabonga kakhulu bantabami". (Ntuli, 1994: 54)*

(She now asks that we should pray "It is the departing of the soul my children". Our heads reeled. We prayed.
"Can we call a priest for you mother?" Her daughter-in-law asks.
"I would be most grateful my children".)

This dialogue is functional here for it marks the climax of the story and it accentuates the intensity of the events.

Observing from several issues which have been discussed in this story, it can be concluded that '*Urnjuzo*' qualifies as a short story for it explores a certain character at a specific point in time. The story also contains suspense which draws to a climax. There is also a form of dialogue which is characteristic of short story writing.

3.8 AN ANALYSIS OF 'IQANDA YICHOBOKA'

So far narration was examined by paying specific attention to the stories already analysed in Chapter Two. But before a general conclusion on the manner in which narration has been treated in Isibhakabhaka can be drawn, a further concise assessment on the narration of some of the other short stories must be conducted.

Since these stories have not been treated in the previous chapters, a short summary of each story will be given where necessary.

3.8.1 Summary of '*Iqanda Yichoboka*'

This story entitled '*Iqanda Yichoboka*' (An egg is a fragile thing) commences with Reverend Ngema in a despondent mood, he can hardly eat. This surprises his wife, MaMzimela, who ascribes this to the fact that she was not successful in her cooking that day. MaMzimela tries her utmost best to get to the root of her husband's misery but fails. Matters take a turn for the worse when Ngema starts to sob. After she advises him to take a nap, she goes to seek help from Zwane, who is a member of the church. She returns with Zwane. After a long discussion between Ngema and Zwane, Ngema reveals that he has impregnated one of the teenagers who is a member of the church choir. One of the girls whom Ngema used to ferry home after evening choir practices. After a long deliberation, the story reaches a climax when it becomes apparent that Reverend Ngema will have to report the matter to the Bishop and also explain the state of affairs to his wife.

3.8.2 Narration in '*Iqanda Yichoboka*'

As in '*Ivasi kaVusi*', '*Iqanda Yichoboka*' is also told by an extradiegetic heterodiegetic narrator. This narrator's overtess can be detected where he indicates some knowledge about a character. This is seen where he describes MaMzimela's cooking:

Akungeni ngempela ukudla kwasekuseni khona ukuphekile uMaMzimela. Vele alufakwa uma sekuyiwa ezimbizeni. (Ntuli, 1994: 25)

(He does not have an appetite for the morning meal. MaMzimela has done her best in cooking this. In fact, she is the best when it comes to cooking.)

The story is told in a chronological order, according to the unfolding of the events. After the first paragraph the story is rendered in a dialogue form:

"Akumnandi yini ukudla kwami namuhla Madlokovu?" Ubuza uthi ukumamatheka uMaMzimela ngendlela aye enze ngayo uma efuna ukuba incibilike indoda yakhe.

"Kumnandi kakhulu Daisy kumnandi impela." Beso ethi ukuqinisa ukudla.

"Pho ngoba ngiyabona nje ukuthi aweneme nanamuhla? Ngibone ufika izolo ukuphekezelu abekhwaya ukuthi sengathi ukhathazekile,...ngasola ukuthi awulele." (Ntuli, 1994: 25)

("MaDlokovu is my food not delicious today?" MaMzimela smiles as she asks the question, she does this in her usual manner when she wants to evoke a warm response from her husband.

"It is very delicious, Daisy. Very delicious". Thereafter he made a serious effort in trying to eat.

"But I can see that you are not happy again today. I have noticed yesterday on your arrival from driving the choir members home that you appeared worried ... I suspected that you were not asleep.")

In this passage the crucial events are prognosticated by means of dramatisation. This paragraph reveals a disturbance and a turbulence in the happy harmonious life of the couple which is characterised by "delicious food" and "smiles". However, the narrator's presence is also strongly felt where he accompanies the character's dialogue by constantly commenting about their behaviour. This can be perceived when he mentions that MaMzimela smiled in her customary manner. These are used in the form of didascalies, save for the fact that brackets and italics have not been used here because this is not a drama.

The whole narrative is narrated in dialogue. This is done so in order to foreground and indicate the significance and the difficulty of the topic under discussion. The narrator's voice is therefore occasionally heard when he makes brief comments, which are mostly in the form of what we have called didascalies, as indicated above. Some examples of these can be seen in the following extracts:

"*Angizukuyibaza phela into efanayo..*" **Asho esukuma.**
"Ungakhulumi kanjalo," esho esukuma ebamba uZwane ngengalo emhlalisa phansi. (Ntuli, 1994: 27)

("I'm not going to keep on asking the same thing..." **he says this while standing up.**

"Do not talk like that," **he says while grabbing Zwane by the arm in order to sit him down.)** [my emphasis]

It is however mostly the voices of the characters that dominate throughout the narrative. The difficulty and seriousness of the theme can also be heard where Ngema confides in Zwane:

(Agobodise uNgema.)

(Athule uZwane.) Namanje akakezwa ukuthi le nkulomo iya kuphi

(Kuthule futhi).

(Banele bahlale phansi kube nguZwane othathayo)

"Uma bese weswele ngaley ndlela

ubungabiki ngani uze untshontshe nje?

Akukhona lokho kuntshontsha Mangethe...

...Ngiyazi ukuthi emva kokuxoxa uzodumala, kokunye ulahle ithemba

... **(Aqale ukukhala.)** (Ntuli, 1994: 27-28)

([Ngema lowers his face].

(Zwane keeps quiet). Even at this juncture he does not understand the direction in which the dialogue is steering.

[It is silent again].

[As soon as they sit down Zwane starts to talk.]

("If you were that stranded why did you not voice it out instead of resorting to stealing?

It is not that form of stealing Mangethe...

I know that you will feel disappointed after the discussion

... **[he then starts to cry]).** [my emphasis]

The diction in the word "steal" must be brought into special prominence. It is

common knowledge that a dog will steal eggs. Reverend Ngema's actions are therefore metaphorically compared to those of a dog. The delicacy and the seriousness of the subject under discussion is further accentuated by the fact that some words prove to be too difficult to utter and they are left unsaid as indicated in the third line of the above extract. Sarah Orne Jewett (in Shaw, 1986: 264) makes the following observations when she remarks about silence:

You bring something to the reading of a story that the story would go lame without; but it is these unwritable (sic) things that the story holds in its heart, if it has any, that make the true soul of it, and these must be understood.

Shaw (1986: 264) concurs with the above and takes it further when he mentions that the success of the short story lies in conveying a sense of unwritten, or even unwriteable things. Shaw (1986: 265) finally concludes her discussion by emphasising that:

No more would we want to do without the performances given by the diverse short-story writers whose many and various works form an essential part of our culture.

In the following dialogue where Reverend Ngema ends up stammering, a similar point can be recognised:

"Angidingi yena umfundisi. Ngidinga umuntu ... umuntu onjengawe".
(Ntuli, 1994: 27)

("I do not need a priest. I need a person ... a person like you".)

The use of dots is also observed where it is used to indicate incomplete speech. It is further discerned that a summary or even something less than a summary is used when Ngema confesses after realising that there was no option but to inform Zwane about the entire dismal affair:

Qaphu qaphu, qaphu qaphu. (Ntuli, 1994: 28)

(A word here, a word there.)

This statement marks the delicacy of the theme, that is, the reason why Reverend Ngema cannot verbalise his story for it is very sensitive and "fragile". In fact it seems that it is not one hundred percent correct to call this a summary, for nothing is said of the events that led to the actual pregnancy. It might therefore be termed an ellipsis because, according to Bierman (1992: 39), an ellipsis may express something that is otherwise unsayable - an event too painful to talk about, or too difficult to put into words or deliberately withheld by the narrator for some or other reason. In this instance the former reason stated by Bierman holds more true for this tale as compared to the latter.

On the other hand, it is also difficult to totally accept that "*qaphu qaphu*" is an example of an ellipsis because there is something that has been mentioned which had enabled Zwane to understand the state of affairs and also the readers to fill in the missing gaps after the mentioning of this. Also, Zwane as the receiver of the message was also able to comment further about what he has heard.

This again reflects on the cultural background of respect among the Zulus, that there are some things which are difficult to utter, or to write about. That is why the Zulus have a term "*ukuhlonipha*" which is a part of their culture. "*Ukuhlonipha*" means "to respect", among other things it means deference given by juveniles to anyone that is older than them, it also entails abstaining or refraining from the use of words that are taboo or from those words that are regarded as insults. Naturally, it becomes very difficult for a Nguni author to explicitly write about things that involve sex and sexual acts, as these are customarily frowned upon. In this story, the matter is worsened by the fact that the character who has transgressed is a priest.

Therefore the above words: "*qaphu, qaphu*" can be regarded as form of an ellipsis,

which due to a lack of an appropriate term it will be called "hlonipha ellipsis".

It is observed that the words "*Qaphu qaphu, Qaphu qaphu*", are articulated in free indirect speech, the external narrator "accompanies" Ngema when he tells his story fleetingly. One then is tempted to ask the question as to why this "hlonipha ellipsis" has been rendered in this manner. In order for this question to be answered, Bieman's definition of ellipsis has to be pondered again. The narrator has done this for a specific reason which is found in Ngema's words when he is hesitant to tell about the cause of his troubled state:

Ithi ingabankulu ingazekeki. (Ntuli, 1994: 27)

(It is difficult to speak about a mammoth incident.)

The narrator is therefore seen to be sympathetic.

3.9 AN ANALYSIS OF 'ISIKWELETU'

3.9.1 Summary of 'Isikweletu'

Unlike in the above summary of '*Iqanda Yichoboka*', the paraphrase here is going to be in the form of brief sentences summarising the main events of the story. These sentences are paraphrased in a sequence of events and are called narrative propositions, according to the structuralists' terminology. Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 13-14) adopts two approaches to the paraphrasing of the story, one has already been mentioned above and the second is that of using labels. In the example to be utilized here, propositions will be employed. In her deliberation on labels and narrative propositions, Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 13) illustrates them as follows:

But what does a story-paraphrase consist of? One approach, stressing the similarity of paraphrase ..., sees the former as a series of event labels.

On subsequent pages, Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 14) continues to say:

... the second approach suggests that instead of merely naming an event (giving it a label) it would be better to paraphrase it as a simple sentence ... these simple sentences, called narrative propositions, are different from the sentences of the text ... a story-paraphrase arranges events according to a chronological principle. If the content-paraphrase abstracted from a text is organised according to principles other than chronological then it is not a story-phrase.

Proposed propositions:

1. Dumakude is employed by Madolo.
2. Dumakude steals money from Madolo's shop.
3. He builds his own business.
4. Faith is employed by Dumakude as a shop assistant.
5. She steals money from Dumakude.
6. She opens her own business.
7. Dumakude dies.
8. Dumakude's business deteriorates.
9. Faith's business prospers.
10. Faith has a guilty conscience about the money she stole.
11. She decides to return the money to Dumakude's wife, MaSokhulu.
12. MaSokhulu accepts the money.
13. MaSokhulu confides to Faith that they also started their business with stolen money.
14. MaSokhulu urges Faith to accompany her to Madolo so that they can return the money stolen long ago.

In this story there is a deviation in the order of events, for '*Isikweletu*' starts from

event 10 and all events prior to that are told in flashback by both MaSokhulu and Faith as they tell each other how they acquired their wealth.

3.9.2 Narration in '*Isikweletu*'

In this story too, it is deduced that some events are given more weight than others. The following table will assist in demonstrating the comparison between story-time and text time in '*Isikweletu*' in order to establish their duration:

Story-time	Text-time
Faith's pricking conscience about her theft.	1 paragraph
Faith's arrival at Shange family and general discussion with MaSokhulu about the business.	1½ pages
Faith's apology and the revelation that she is the one who stole the money.	3 paragraphs
MaSokhulu's initial reaction.	no text time
MaSokhulu's response on seeing the money.	2 words
MaSokhulu's reaction to Faith's confession.	2 paragraphs
Faith's reaction to the disclosure that their business was also started from stolen money.	1 word
MaSokhulu's confession that they stole Madolo's money.	1 paragraph
Faith's reaction to the revelation.	1 word
MaSokhulu's full confession and the reason that led to her husband's theft.	1 paragraph
Faith's reaction to the confession.	2 words
MaSokhulu's immediate decision to return Madolo's stolen money with Faith accompanying her.	1 paragraph
Faith's reaction to MaSokhulu's act of reconciliation	2 words

'Isikweletu', like 'Ivasi kaVusi' and 'Iqanda Yichoboka', is also narrated by an extradiegetic heterodiegetic narrator. However, the narrator's voice is not dominant in the text, for most of this narrative is rendered through dialogue by the characters. This can be noticed from the first four paragraphs of the story. In the third paragraph, the heterodiegetic narrator's comprehensive remark about Faith's car and house is observed:

Nanso isiphuma imotshwana yakhe. Yinhle yona noma kuyisekeni. Nomuzi yindlu nje. Akukho kubabazeka. (Ntuli, 1994: 16)

(That is her car moving out. It is beautiful despite that it is a second-hand. Even the house is just ordinary. There is nothing breathtaking.)

The dialogue starts from the fourth paragraph of the first page and continues to the end of the story with the sporadic comments of the narrator here and there. These references are in fact quite minimal and where they are expanded upon, they are utilised to shed more light onto the characters' actions. In the second page of the story the narrator makes only one remark towards the end of the page:

Ahleke noFaith. Athi nje: "Ngiyezwa mama". (Ntuli, 1994: 17)

(Faith also laughs. She says: "I understand mother".)

In the next page, four such comments are found of which the second and the third bring a symbolic meaning into the story. After Faith has revealed that she stole the money from the Shange family, MaSokhulu's astonishment is described by the narrator-focaliser:

Yavele yaphunyuka ingilazi abeyiphethe UMaSokhulu. Phihli! Wakhamisa nje. (Ntuli, 1994: 18)

(The glass that MaSokhulu was holding, just slipped out of her grasp. Smash! Pieces shattered! MaSokhulu just gaped.)

The astonishment in MaSokhulu's face and the use of the ideophone "*phihli*" which indicates the smashing and breaking of the glasses, indicates her disbelief. It is symbolic of the extent the information just received destroyed the trust that MaSokhulu had in Faith. But this disappointment, disbelief and hurt (as indicated by the broken glass) is short lived for soon thereafter, Faith apologises and repays by multiplying ten times the amount she had stolen a few years back:

"Ngiyaxolisa ... Khona ngayithatha imali ngoba ngangisengxakini, ngisehlazweni elikhulu. Ngangazi futhi ikuthi ngeke ningisole. Ngicela uxolo".

"Angazi ukuthi ngizokuphendula ngithini. Angikakholwa"

"Ngeke ngiqambe amanga ... Nokho lokhu engakuthatha ngithe angikubuyise sekuphindwe kashumi". (Ntuli, 1994: 18)

("I am sorry ... Indeed I took the money because I was in trouble, I was in a disgraceful state. I knew that you would not suspect me. I am asking for forgiveness."

"I do not know how to answer you. I still do not believe."

"I won't tell lies ... However, I have now decided to return what I took, multiplied ten times.")

After this MaSokhulu is so astonished that the only thing she could do was to exclaim, "*Hawu mntanami!*" (Oh my child!). Hereafter the dialogue is alternated with the voice of the narrator who symbolically reveals the reconciliation between the two:

Asukume kancane uMaSokhulu, ayosithela ekhishini. Abuye nephepha nendwangu. Acoshele izingcezwana zengilazi ephepheni. Esule ngendwangu. Aqonde ekhishini. Abuye ahlale phansi. (Ntuli, 1994: 18)

(MaSokhulu slowly stands up and disappears into the kitchen. She returns with paper and cloth. She picks up glass splinters and puts them on to the paper. She wipes with the cloth. She goes to the kitchen. She returns and sits down.)

The above extract is symbolic and foreshadows the forgiveness that will follow. It

indicates that they will pick up the pieces, forget about the past, "wipe clean the slate with a new cloth". That is why MaSokhulu later also confesses her theft to Faith and asks her to accompany her to Madolo's house in order to return the money which was stolen by her husband.

In '*Isikweletu*' an example of a pause is located where MaSokhulu had gone to answer a phone call:

Kukhale ucingo. Ayoluphendula. Ngenkathi esocingweni uMaSokhulu, UFaith kube yima ezwa sengathi kusuka umthwalo emahlombe akhe. (Ntuli, 1994: 19)

(The phone rings. She goes to answer it. While MaSokhulu was still on the phone, Faith starts to feel as if a big load was getting off her shoulders.)

In the same paragraph an instance of free direct speech is found for immediately here after, the following words follow:

Noma ethukile uMaSokhulu akaqulekanga, futhi akahlusukanga inhliziyo. Okukhathazayo nje ukuthi akakaphumeli obala. (Ntuli, 1994: 19)

(Even if MaSokhulu had a shock at least she did not collapse and she did not lose her temper. The only problem is that she has not yet come out into the open.)

Rimmon-Kenan elaborates on five distinctive functions of free indirect discourse. The above mentioned example seem to fall within the fifth function as Rimmon-Kenan (1983 : 113-114) asserts:

...the FID hypothesis can assist the reader in reconstructing the implied author's attitude toward the character(s) involved. On the other hand, the presence of the narrator's speech with the character's language or mode of experience may promote an emphatic identification on the part of the reader.

In addition to the above statement that the FID may promote an empathetic identification on the part of the reader, it is also observed that the external narrator also does not distance himself from the character's thoughts but associates himself with their utterances. The reader on the other hand indeed, empathises with Faith because she has had the courage to confess and to correct her transgression.

This story indeed manifests a "truth and reconciliation" process for nothing is omitted as MaSokhulu subsequently tells the truth about her husband's theft. The story has an open-ended conclusion for the reader is inclined to think that old Madolo, after hearing the confession will also be touched, forgive those who sinned against him and possibly reveal some hidden truth before he dies.

However, there is some incongruity between the progression and the conclusion of the story at the introduction of the story. Right at the beginning of the narrative Faith is seen carrying a gun as she intends to visit MaSokhulu. This raises suspense within the reader for it first appears as if Faith, who is counting a lot of money, is a crook who may be intending to kill someone. In the second paragraph the narrator sketches the following scene:

Yisonto. Useyivale yonke iminyango uFaith. Avule isikhwama sesikhumba. Ahoshe esinye. Ahoshe amaphepha abomvu emali! Aqale ukuyibala. Ude eyibeka amaqogisa ezinkulungwane ... Akhwathaze komunye umgodlana kulesi sikhwama. Ahoshe ... isibhamu. Athi ukusihlolahlola, asibuyisele esikhwameni. Ame isikhashana. Anqekuze ikhanda. Ayovula umnyango. (Ntuli, 1994: 16)

(It is Sunday. Faith has closed all the doors. She opens a leather bag. She takes out another one. She takes out red money notes! She starts counting, she arranges them in bundles of thousands ... She searches inside another leather holder. She takes out ... a gun. She examines it for a while, she puts it back in the bag. She waits for a while. She nods her head. She goes to open the door.)

The discordancy of the events that occur here is brought about by the fact that no

further mention of the gun is made and there is no act of violence in the whole story. In fact when MaSokhulu opens the door and sees Faith, the reader is informed by the narrator that they embraced and kissed each other:

Uma engena ahlangabezane nomama osekhulile. NguMaSokhulu. Bawolane ngokuthakaselana, baze bangane. (Ntuli, 1994: 16)

(As she enters she meets an old lady. It is MaSokhulu. They embrace each other in pleasure, they even kiss each other.)

Although one may agree that Ntuli was trying to create suspense, he has however been unsuccessful in sustaining it with this particular story line. Even though further on in the story Faith is depicted as worried that MaSokhulu has not, as far as her feelings are concerned, come out in the open yet, the situation is not convincing enough to believe that she might be tempted to use the gun. Even if there had been a disagreement, it is simply unbelievable that Faith would have used the gun against an old friend.

On closer scrutiny, however, the conclusion can be reached that Ntuli embarked upon his story by bringing in the gun in order to probably accentuate this paragraph and to bring to the attention of the reader that in this era, violence appears to be the answer to all problems. It could also be an indication that Faith carried the gun as a protective measure against thugs. But at the same time Ntuli has been successful in bringing in the theme that the only thing that can set people free is the truth and forgiveness. This is apparent in his opening lines where the narrator divulges that Faith has been experiencing this inner conflict for some time:

Sekuyisikhathi eziba. Kuke kuzibeke, kodwa enganakile nje kubuye futhi ukuthi kusekhona okumele akwenze ... Lafika lalinye: Manje! (Ntuli, 1994: 16)

(She has ignored this for a long time. At times it was possible to ignore, but out of the blue she would remember that there was something that she was supposed to do ... One word came: now!)

Therefore, by juxtaposing the gun and the gesture of peace, it can be said that Ntuli has, to a certain degree, succeeded in sending the message home - forgive and forget and the truth shall set one free.

3.10 RECAPITULATION

In this chapter the process of narration was discussed, the levels and the typology of narrators were also looked at. From what has been said so far, it has become apparent that the instance that tells a story is not necessarily always the author or an external narrator but speech can also be relegated to the characters who are participants in the story. The narration in Isibhakabhaka interchanges from purely diegetic to purely mimetic, that is, different types of narration have been used, e.g. direct, indirect as well as free indirect discourse - all types contributing to the author's unique style of writing. It is also possible to get a story within a story, that is, narrative embedding.

CHAPTER 4

ACTORS AND CHARACTERS IN ISIBHAKABHAKA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In fiction, characters are of paramount importance because they are not only the representation of reality but they are also the mirror through which a reflection of the reader is seen - although at first in broken sections but when combined or pieced together - after a reflection, introspection and inspection - a holistic view of the self can be discovered. In this respect, the author has therefore a mammoth task of dramatically creating, shaping and presenting characters as living humans to the reader in a clever but credible and convincing way.

In this chapter actors and characters and their relation to the sequence of events and actions occurring in the story will be placed under the spotlight. The difference between actors and characters will also be scrutinized.

4.2 ACTORS

Actors are participants in the story. These actors are not characters and they need not necessarily be human. The term actor is going to be specifically used for the abstract story level in order to indicate that the participants in the events are seen in certain roles or functions to which their individualising characteristics are irrelevant. Ina Bierman (1992: 18) summarises the reason for doing that when she mentions that:

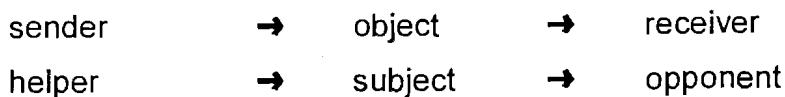
The reason for this is that the roles or functions concerned represent certain general principles under which numerous individual characteristics are subsumed.

Mieke Bal (1985 : 26) divides actors into classes. According to her they constitute

an important aspect of understanding the story (Bal uses the term *fabula* for the story). She bases her classification of actors on the presupposition that human thinking and action is directed towards an aim, that is, human thought and action is purposeful.

Bal calls classes of actors actants as "a class of actors that shares a certain characteristic quality" (1985: 26). The subdivision of actors into classes is based on the assumption that human beings have an aspiration to achieve a certain aim which might be favourable or the evasion of something unfavourable. To account for this, either the verbs wish or fear are used. If, for instance, it is considered how an intended action with a specific aim would be expressed by someone, the following sentence might be arrived at: "the priest wants (wishes) Sibusiso to repent" or "Okhathazekile wants (wishes) to notify her rapists that she had contracted AIDS" or "Nduduzo does not want (i.e. he fears) to return to his home" (these stories were discussed in the previous chapters).

The term function is used to denote this kind of relation between actors and their joint pursuit of a particular goal. Individual characters are subordinated to the common role or function they fulfill as a class or actant in the story. The selection of actors on the grounds of their function in the sequence of events in a story is consistent with the semio-structuralist conception that character is subordinate to action in a narrative text. Whereas actors may be numerous in a narrative text, the number of actants in the actantial model¹ is confined to six as follows:



(Taken from Rimmon-Kenan, 1983 : 35)

¹

The account of the actantial model is derived from the work of Greimas (1966) as described by Rimmon-Kenan (1983 : 29-42) and Bal (1985 : 325-37)

It should be noted and understood that one, or more than one, actor can form one actant and that the same actor can represent more than one actant, as will be clarified in the subsequent discussion. It should also be borne in mind that an actant object may not be a person but may be a prospective situation, e.g. the vase that is idolised by Mvubu. This shows why, at the abstract story level in semio-structuralist approach the term "actor" is used instead of character or personage: the terms "actor" and "actant" denote abstraction and not necessarily person. However, because of the purposeful nature of the actantial model, the actant-subject will in practice be a person or a personified animal or object.

4.2.1 Classification of actants

4.2.1.1 Subject and Object

The relation between an actor and the goal he or she pursues is considered in comparison to the relation between subject and object in a sentence. This can be expressed in terms of a formula such as the following:



4.2.1.2 Sender/benefactor and receiver/beneficiary

The efforts of the subject are not always in themselves enough to attain the object, because his or her cause is usually helped or hindered by circumstantial forces. It is therefore possible to conceive of an actant as benefiting the subject either positively or negatively. Either the object is given to the subject or the subject is prevented from realising the objective.

4.2.1.3 Helper and opponent

The actantial roles discussed above are directly aligned to the goal which the subject wishes to reach, and are, therefore, essential for the development of the story. However, whether or not the subject will get what he or she wants, frequently depends on the obstacles in his or her way and the help he or she receives in overcoming any form of opposition. It is, therefore, necessary to distinguish a third set of actantial roles which determines the circumstances in which the undertaking can be brought to a conclusion.

This is the relation of helper and opponent. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between benefactor and helper, because both actants help the subject in the pursuit of his goal. But Bal (1985: 31) distinguishes important points of difference between the functions of these two actantians:

Benefactor/Sender:	Helper:
-has power over the whole enterprise	-can give only incidental aid
-is often abstract	-is mostly concrete
-often remains in the background	-often comes to the fore
-usually only one	-usually multiple

On the same page, Bal also points out that the same points of difference can be shown between a negative benefactor or sender (i.e. a power that hinders the subject's goal attainment) and an opponent.

4.3 ACTANTS IN 'AZIKHWELWA'

Before we can embark on an explanation about the way actants enact in the story level, a brief summary of the above mentioned story should be given, for it was not dealt with in the previous chapters.

4.3.1 A summary of 'Azikhwelewa' (Work boycott)

Ndoda is Shandu's nephew. It is three months since Ndoda left his home in search of a job in the city. Shandu's wife, MaZungu, and their son, Thabani, also live with Shandu.

One day Ndoda returns with the good news that he has secured a job. Unfortunately there is going to be a strike on the day that he is supposed to start work. His cousin Thabani warns him not to go on that day. After a long debate with the whole family, Ndoda decides that he will force the issue and report for work. His decision is reinforced by the thought of the poverty back home and his hungry children. He vows vehemently to fight anyone who might come in his way. His knobkerrie and help from his ancestors are his main hope.

The following morning at dawn he sets off for his destination. He takes a shortcut through the forest and, as he is approaching the factory, he is attacked by people who have covered their faces. He wakes up in hospital badly injured. When Shandu and his wife pay him a visit he tells them what happened and it is explained to him that one of his assailants was his cousin, Thabani. At the end of the story it dawns on him that he has killed his cousin. This becomes obvious when Shandu cannot answer him when he asks about Thabani's whereabouts:

*"Awubabonanga laba bantu?"
 "Bebefake iziggoko ezemboza ubuso."
 Ngelosizi: "Omunye wabo bekunguThabani."
 Ethuke kakhulu: "Uthini malume!"
 Amaphoyisa anithole nisaqulekile nibathathu.
 "UThabani?"
 "Nguye e ... obelimele kakhulu."
 "Uphi manje?"
 Nya.
 Ababheke uNdoda. Ababheke. Ababheke uNdoda.
 Kumkhanye (Ntuli, 1994:49).*

("Didn't you see these people?"
 "They were wearing hats that cover the face."
 In a pitiful voice: "One of them was Thabani."
 He becomes very scared: "Uncle, what are you saying!"
 "The police found the three of you still unconscious."
 "Thabani?"
 "He is the one e ... who was seriously injured."
 "Where is he now?"
 No response.
 Ndoda looks at them. He looks at them. Ndoda looks at them once more.
 Then it dawns on him.)

4.3.2 Subject and Object in 'Azikhwelwa'

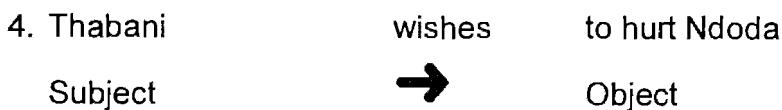
The two actants; subject and object, can be explained as follows with reference to 'Azikhwelwa'.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------|---|
| 1. Ndoda
Subject (X) | wishes → | to find a job
Object (Y) |
|
 | | |
| 2. Thabani
Subject (X) | wishes → | Ndoda should stay home
Object (Y) |
|
 | | |
| 3. Ndoda
Subject (X) | wishes → | to escape from his assailants
Object (Y) |

Ndoda, the main character in the story, and Thabani have opposing goals and these aspirations are at the core of the story. This becomes evident once the roles of the subject and object have been distinguished. However, Thabani's aim is not that evident, it only becomes clear after one has finished reading the story. The only objective that is successfully achieved in the story is goal number three,

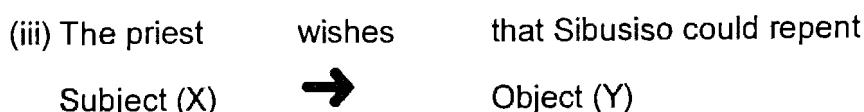
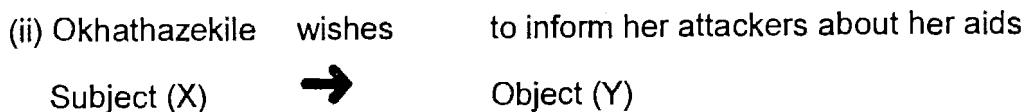
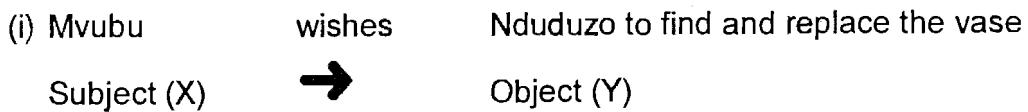
although not without fatal consequences. Thabani dies and the author leaves it to the reader to find an answer whether Ndoda will, after recuperating, go and explain to his new employer the reason for his failure to turn up at work.

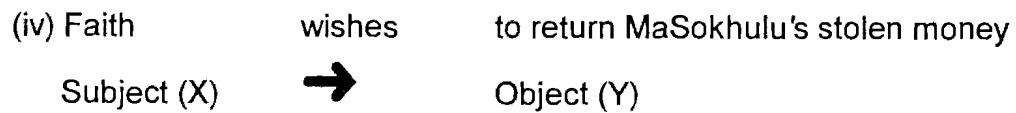
In '*Azikhwelwa*', a fourth goal may be distinguished:



This introduces a separate goal into the story, which is on a different plane and may be interpreted as a latent hatred for or disapproval of that Thabani felt towards his cousin, Ndoda. This implies that there is a bigger power (power is the term used by Bal, 1985: 28) probably at a supernatural level, which controls the events (which could be termed the sender). This power could be seen to be Ndoda's ancestral spirits. This may also be interpreted as the moral of the story, that is, good always triumphs over evil. Therefore, Ndoda's ancestors are not senders as such, but rather helpers.

With regard to the other short stories discussed, that is '*Ivasi KaVusi*', '*Mhleli*', '*Ngaleli Phasika*' and '*Isikweletu*', the relation between the subject and object can briefly be summarised as follows respectively:





The two sets of actantal roles, that of sender and receiver and of helper and opponent will consequently be investigated.

4.3.3 Sender/benefactor and receiver/beneficiary in 'Azikhwelwa'

The above types of actants can be demonstrated as follows with reference to 'Azikhwelwa':

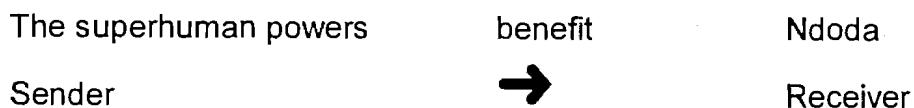


As Ndoda was to leave to start on his new job he is seen illustrating his faith and belief in his ancestors for he mentions that he has hope that they will not forsake him:

Kodwa angiboni ukuthi bangangilahla oSibankwa. Aphakamisele amehlo phezulu: "Ngithi hambani nami-ke Mageja. Ngiphuma kuziliwe nje ngenxa yenkengane kubazukulu benu. Phumanu nami-ke Sidindi kaSibankwa". (Ntuli, 1994:47)

(But I do not think that the Sibankwas can forsake me. Then he casts his eyes above. "I say go with me then the Magejas. I am leaving during the period of mourning because of the hunger that has engulfed your grandchildren. Therefore go out with me Sidindi KaSibankwa.")

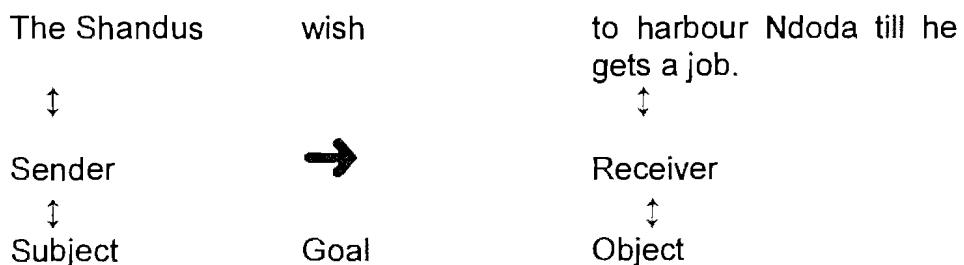
As seen in the story, Ndoda has a very narrow escape and survives the attack. Ndoda's ancestors seem to embody and to signify the superhuman powers that control the world of this story. It is then possible to distinguish to following actantal roles:



The example above demonstrates that the sender is usually not a person, but an abstraction. According to Bierman and Gräbe (1997: 25):

...in the case of other stories, where the action is more confined to the human plane, the roles of sender/benefactor and receiver/beneficiary may coincide with those of subject and receiver.

The story 'Azikhwe/wa' in itself also allows for the definition of a relationship of benefactor and beneficiary, but which also allows for the qualification of that relationship as ironic and reversible. The following actants may also be identified:



In this respect, Thabani who sets out to attack Ndoda, is an opponent who jeopardises a good future family relationship. On the other hand, in the eyes of Thabani and the staunch supporters of the strike, Ndoda is seen as an opponent who hinders the strike's success:



This conflict, which is clearly reflected in the oppositional sets of actants and in the

fact that the role of opponent is occupied both by Ndoda and Thabani and his friends, leads to the serious injury of Ndoda and to the death (which readers have to deduce) of Thabani. The roles of helper and opponent will now be examined in more detail.

4.3.4. Helper and opponent in '*Azikhwela*'

In the above story, Ndoda's ancestors can be regarded as a negative benefactor to both Thabani and his friends (as subjects), who were set to hinder Ndoda's aim. In this instance, Ndoda's knobkerrie could be regarded as his helper and also as an opponent to Thabani. With regards to Ndoda, the knobkerrie could also be taken as symbolising power, something which connects him to his ancestors (by virtue of it being a traditional weapon) and also, something through which his ancestors transfer their help to him.

Another example which can be drawn from the short story '*UMhleli*' is the role of the opponent occupied by the rapists who rape Okhathazekile. The raped woman becomes a helper when she writes and informs the editor to assist her to notify her rapists that when they raped her she had already contracted AIDS and they should therefore not spread the disease by raping other people.

The discussion shows that there is not always a one to one relationship between actantial role and actor. One actor can occupy different roles at different phases in the story or when viewed from different perspectives, that is, one actantial role can also be occupied by one or more actors.

It should also be noted that actantial roles can be ambiguous. In the short story '*/vasi KaVusi*' for example, an interesting aspect of the actantial roles is noted: the two important roles of benefactor and beneficiary remain essentially aspirated roles. Given the importance of the notion of the non-actualisation of a possibility, that is, the non-reconciliation between Mvubu and Nduduzo in this story, the

actantial roles may be indicated as follows:

Nduduzo (the one who has been wronged by being chased away, i.e. negative receiver, and the one who can grant forgiveness, i.e. potential sender/benefactor)

Mvubu (the one who has wronged, i.e. negative sender/benefactor and the one who seeks forgiveness, i.e. the potential receiver)

In the seeking of forgiveness and reconciliation, Mvubu is the subject and the desired forgiveness and reconciliation is the object of his endeavour in which this is extended by the media, that is, the newspaper and the radio which may be classed as helper/opponent. In this story a non-occupation of designated actantial roles is encountered because Nduduzo never fully assumes the role of sender and Mvubu never fully assumes the role of receiver. Each thus remain a potential giver and a potential receiver which is ironic in view of their past relationship of father and son and which leads to a condition of total alienation for Nduduzo.

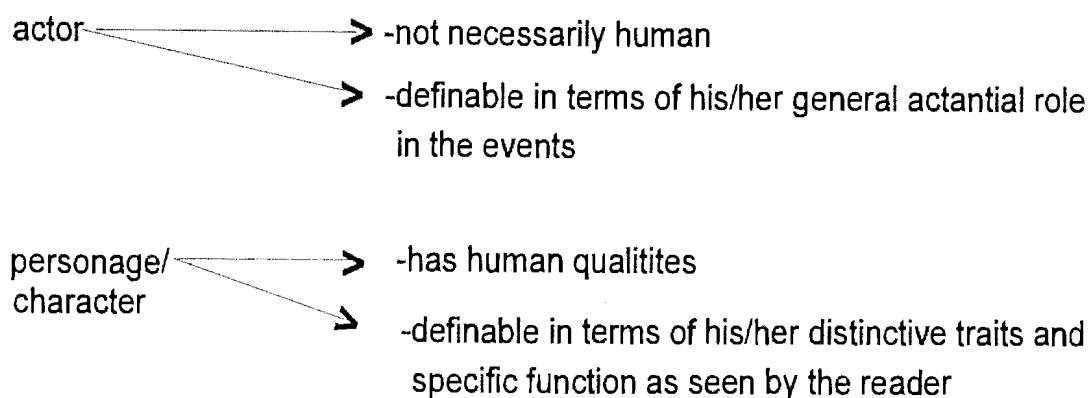
With the above abstraction of actors from the story level, characters from the underlying narrative text will now be analysed.

4.4 CHARACTERS

So far the term "actors" was used to refer to those participants who experience logical and chronological events in the story. In this section, the relationship between the story and the narrative text with regard to the aspect of characterisation will be considered. Characterisation is the process by which actors in the story become characters in the text.

Bierman and Gräbe (1997: 43-44) stipulate various ways in which characters differ

from actors. According to them, a character has human qualities whereas an actor need not be human but could be an animal or even a machine. They say that as soon as the actor at the story level in the narrative text is given distinctive human qualities he or she becomes a character or a personage. With characters described in the concrete narrative text, their distinctive or individualising traits are relevant. Gräbe (1997: 43) here also summarises the differences between actors and characters as follows:



The importance of a character in a story is emphasised by Notestein (1974: 129, 131) when he maintains that:

In a powerful story with excellence of form there will be found blended excellence of characterisation. It is nevertheless, the restricted form of the short-story which makes the task of characterisation especially difficult ... Yet the character must be definite, true and lifelike ... By what is said, much that is left unsaid may be suggested ... A character represents a whole man. It consists of the sum of man's habits, physical, mental and spiritual.

From the above it becomes apparent that the author of a short story has a difficult task of presenting life-like characters in a genre that is characterised by some constraints and restrictions which among others, include a limited number of pages and also that of characters. Therefore, it seems that although a short story may

not represent the development of a complete character, but it may show the development of character in one respect fully.

Abrams (1985: 22) describes characters as:

... the persons presented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with moral, dispositional and emotional qualities that are expressed in what they say - the **dialogue** and what they do - the **action**. ... A character may remain stable or unchanged in outlook and dispositions, from beginning to end ... or may undergo a radical change, either through a gradual development ... or as the result of a crisis whether a character remains stable or changes, the reader ... expects consistency - the character should not suddenly break off and act in a way not plausibly grounded in his or her temperament as we have already come to know it.

It, therefore, becomes clear that character and characterisation have to do with the presentation of life-like characters who have to appear convincing to the reader.

4.4.1 Methods of character portrayal

Character portrayal can be divided into two basic types: direct definition and indirect presentation.

4.4.1.1 Direct definition

Notestein (1974: 142) regards the direct method of revealing a character as

... much easier and generally much the less effective. It tells facts and informs the reader once and for all what he is expected to believe about a character ... such characterisation fails because it is

too detailed ... he succeeds in boring the reader by a mass of meaningless detail. Imagination is given little or no chance.

Since this type of character portrayal has to do with informing the reader what he or she is to expect, this then means that via the explicit revealing of a particular character trait or quality possessed by a character, for instance, one can describe a character as good, bad, generous, etc.

Bierman and Gräbe (1997: 44) expand on this type of characterisation by mentioning that a more objective method of self-characterisation occurs when a character talks of himself to others. They say that the accuracy of pronouncements of the character in question can be verified since the others usually answer him or her. They further mention a third possibility of direct definition, that is, when the explicit qualification comes from the extradiegetic narrator, who by virtue of his status has thus an "authoritative voice". They however stress that proclamations may lose credibility when they are made by other lesser characters.

4.4.1.2 Indirect presentation

Notestein (1974: 147) comments as follows regarding the indirect method of character portrayal:

... The indirect is thus the illustrative method, it is the expression of fact by concrete examples. Its manner is narrative. Instead of benumbing his imagination, it encourages the reader to form his own estimate of a character.

From the above cited statement, one can infer that the indirect method entails demonstrating characteristics to the reader so that he or she can deduce for himself or herself whatever characteristics are suggested by the presented details. In order to depict a character through indirect presentation, an author can use the

following techniques:

(i) *Action*

An action here refers to acts and events done by characters in a story. These may involve habitual action or one-time actions - as Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 61) aptly puts it : "act of omission (something which a character should, but does not do)".

(ii) *Speech*

According to Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 63), a character's speech, whether in conversation or as a silent activity of the mind, can be indicative of a trait or traits both through its content and through its form.

(iii) *External appearance*

Description of a character's face, physique and clothing has always been used by authors. This is done in order to indicate certain traits or portraying something of his or her background and circumstance. Unfortunately many scholars like Boshego (1993: 63) and Nguni (1997: 117) have confused and associated this type of character portrayal with the direct method. According to Boshego:

... the narrator himself is directly involved in exposing or, providing us with information or comments on the character's appearance or personality traits.

Boshego tries to clarify his argument by giving the following extract from a short story:

Legadima ebe e le monna wa go ema ka maoto, tsitsiripa yasenatla, ntsho ya mahlo aka meleteng, wa leleme le hubedu lagotlala legano.

(1993: 63-64)

(Legadima was a tall and strong man, a real giant, pitch black with deep-set eyes, with a big red tongue.)

The above descriptions of Legadima are explicit descriptions merely of his external appearance but they do not tell us anything about his characteristics. Bierman and Gräbe (1996: 44) are aware of this tendency and give the following explanation:

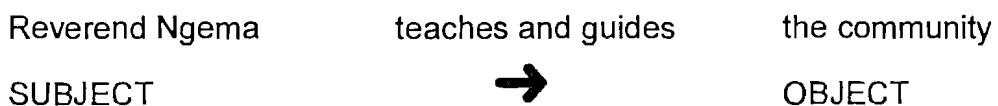
Direct definition should not be confused with indirect portrayal through the external appearance of a character ... If a character is described as, say, good looking or big, these qualifications may seem explicit, but they are merely descriptions of the external appearance of the character and do not represent characteristics that have been defined. It is only when the *narrator* or *another character* qualifies the character as friendly or honest, for instance, that there is a definition.

Bierman (1997: 45-46) agrees that a description of a character's face, physique and clothing has always been a narrative technique for suggesting certain traits for portraying something of the character's background and circumstances. She goes on to give an example that slovenly clothing, for instance, may be used to imply different things, e.g. financial problems, depression or an indifference about a way of dress. But she recommends that the reader should determine from the context of the story what traits slovenliness suggests. She cites as an example that if a character is unemployed, this may reflect his or her lack of money or if he or she is a creative artist, his or her absorption in the creative work may probably make him or her totally oblivious of his or her external appearance and/or general circumstances.

4.5 CHARACTERISATION ANALYSIS IN 'IQANDA YICHOBOKA'

4.5.1 Reverend Ngema

On the story level, Reverend Ngema has the role of a helper, sender or benefactor and an opponent. He can therefore be singled out as a character with a central purpose in the story, that of serving the community by giving the spiritual needs and guidance. He also enriches the youth, not only by preaching but also by helping them in the choir. Reverend Ngema is therefore the signifier who signifies "a pillar of strength", support and a symbol of hope:



With respect to this goal, the other senior members of the church like Zwane and MaMzimela all form one actant, that of helper. As the head and the minister of the church, Ngema is singled out as the best and most dedicated. In the story he is described as one of the most dedicated the church has ever had.

At the level of the narrative text, Reverend Ngema exemplifies this role. His title, Reverend, emphasises and highlights his profession as a shepherd and a helper of people - this makes his role as a helper concrete. This can be seen in a form of direct presentation, that is, self-characterisation by Rev Ngema as he speaks to Zwane:

Lo msebenzi ngawukhetha ngoba ngibizelwe wona ... Nalapha iNkosi ibingibusise ngokuba esikhathini esifushane nje sifikile, ngibone livuka ibandla, likhula zonke izinhlangano zisukuma ngendlela eyisimanga. (Ntuli, 1994: 28)

(I chose this job because it was a calling ... Even here the Lord had blessed me in a small space of time, by enabling me to uplift the congregation and to witness all organisations growing in a

miraculous way.)

The accuracy in the way Ngema sees himself is verified by "other characters" for example where Zwane responds to these observations:

Awunakungitshela lutho ngendlela obubusiseke ngayo, yimi ongabatshela abantu ukuthi ulifice selifa kanjani leli bandla, wenzani nje ngezinyanga ezintathu nje ufikile. (Ntuli, 1994: 28)

(I'm one person you need not tell about the manner in which you were blessed. I'm the one who can announce to people the deteriorating state in which you found this congregation, I can tell them about all that you did in just a period of three months.)

One can thus deduce that Ngema was a diligent, zealous person who had an innovative mind and bright ideas until he was tempted to commit adultery. This act changes him from a helper to an opponent of the female choir members whom he was supposed to help. He is now also as an actant, a negative sender and the girl he has impregnated becomes a receiver. This then leads to the indirect presentation. When the story opens with a short description, he is described as young:

Use musha nje umfundisi uNgema, kodwa namuhla uhlalise okwekhehla lapha etafuleni. (Ntuli, 1994 : 25)

(Reverend Ngema is still young, but today he is seated at table like an old man.)

This indicates that it is probably his youth that has led him into temptation and, thus, to his downfall. His actions reveal that he is full of regret and is seriously perturbed by the turn of events of his clandestine nocturnal activities. That is why he now looks like an aged man. He can hardly eat and neither is he brave enough to reveal this scandalous behaviour to his wife MaMzimela. Instead, he weeps. His speech also shows some short-sightedness and a lack of planning on his part:

Kukhona konke okwenzekayo angikalufezi uhlelo lweminyaka emihlanu engalwenza nani ngqala ukusebenza kule ndawo. Okungibulala du ukuthi uma kungathiwa angiwuyeke umsebenzi azoshabalala onke amaphupho okwakhela iNkosi ibandla elithile. (Ntuli, 1994: 29)

(Again, amidst all that which has happened, I have not completed the five year plan which I have drawn with you when I first started working here. What destroys me most is that should it be decided that I should step down, all dreams of building another denomination for the Lord will be shattered.)

The above speech or confession regarding Reverend Ngema's failure to complete his projected plans, can also be linked to the title of this story, '*Iqanda Yichoboka*', "an egg is a fragile thing". In order for an egg or eggs to produce chicks, they need to be well taken care of and to be hatched by the mother-hen for a certain period of time. We therefore get multiple symbolic meanings here: the egg is the signifier symbolic of youth and vulnerability, which is represented by the pregnant girl, especially the girls who were under Ngema's guidance can be regarded as the signified, that is, a fragile egg that should be handled with care for a certain period of time till it is ready to hatch chicks.

It was expected of Rev. Ngema to spiritually lead the youth by way of example so that they could be respectable adults but instead, he imposed himself on their innocence and vulnerability thereby tarnishing their image. He can, therefore, be seen as having failed in the five year-plan that he was supposed to carry out and, because of his actions, all the plans have literally been "shattered". Unfortunately these dreams are not only his dreams but also those of the youth and those of their parents as well as the community as a whole. All these people's trust and dreams were destroyed.

It was also noted that the word "*iqanda*" (an egg) has been well chosen for it also symbolises, and therefore signifies, the womb. An egg, like a womb, bears offspring. An egg, like a womb, is protected by the shell which helps it from being

damaged. The womb is protected by the hard skin in the mouth of the womb which prevents penetration. The "uninviting" nature and the impermeability of the egg is seen in its being totally shut or closed all over, in an egg there is no area which can be "opened". Once an egg is broken, irreparable damage is caused, this also halts any chances of producing any offspring (symbolic of Ngema's action which will result in his permanent dismissal from his work). The yellow colour of the egg yolk can be described as functioning like the amber colour found in the traffic lights. It therefore signifies a warning or caution but this warning is, unfortunately, unheeded or observed too late when irreparable damage has been done. This therefore can be seen as functioning like an indexical sign, that is, when one sees an amber colour in the traffic light one may expect the traffic light to turn green as an indication for one to go or to proceed. But one also expects a red light which signals that one has to stop. So in our story Reverend Ngema seems to have failed to heed the warning signs and is now facing the danger of losing his valued profession.

The white, watery substance surrounding the yolk, the egg-white or albumin, additionally envelops and protects the embryo. When the egg breaks, the egg-white flows out. This can be associated with Ngema's tears, for both are watery and almost colourless. Here it can be concluded that Ngema failed to heed the fact that the youth, like a pregnant mother, is highly vulnerable and therefore need to be treated with utmost care. He faltered in recalling that an egg need to be cared for, not to be neglected or "ill-treated" because it will rot. A rotten egg has a very bad smell just like the end results of Reverend Ngema's secretive actions. Through his actions it can also be determined that he is easily tempted and therefore he cannot be fully trusted for he is, in actual fact, not what he appears to be. He thus does not practise what he preaches. As Zwane aptly puts it:

Bayosho ebebengakhululekile ngokuzwana kwakho nabasha ukuthi ubuyimpisi eyembethe isikhumba semvu. (Ntuli, 1994: 31)

(Those who were uneasy about your relationship with the youth, are going to say that you were a wolf in a sheep's skin.)

Ngema can also be described as short-sighted for, as an adult, he is fully aware of the consequences of sleeping around - especially from a man of his calibre and profession. This component focuses on the theme and the title of this story that an egg should be handled with care as it is brittle, "*iqanda yichoboka*". These words were uttered by Zwane when Ngema argued that he was tempted for only a few seconds, Zwane reminded him that:

Umunwe usha noma ungene kanye emlilweni. Iqanda yichoboka, liwa kanye life. (Ntuli, 1994: 28)

(A finger burns even if it got only once into the fire. An egg is fragile, it falls once and breaks.)

"*Umunwe*", (finger) is juxtaposed with "*umlilo*" (fire) and "*iqanda*" (egg). This has been skilfully and intelligently done for a finger is a phallic symbol representing a male sexual organ and the fire is warm, therefore inviting (like the beauty and the freshness of youth) but it is dangerous because of the harm it may cause. The fire here could also be interpreted as representing a female phallic symbol. The word "egg" has also been well placed here for the colour of the egg yolk, like that of the fire, symbolises the warning signs, as explained previously.

4.5.2 MaMzimela

At the story level MaMzimela occupies the role of helper, this can be seen in the supportive role that she gives to her husband. She is indirectly portrayed as a loving, caring woman who has respect for her husband. This is seen when she is characterised through her actions. She tries her utmost to get her husband to tell her the reason for his uneasiness and unhappiness. She even calls Zwane, one of the church elders to help her husband. She is further portrayed by direct

definition by Zwane when he tries to allay Ngema's fear that MaMzimela might leave him should she hear the mess he had put them in:

Ubengakushiya omunye uma sekunje, kodwa sengiyamazi UMaMzimela. Ngumfazi wokuxhasa njengoba ebekuxhasile kulo msebenzi. (Ntuli, 1994:31)

(Under such circumstances someone else would leave you. But I now know MaMzimela. She is a real woman. She will give you support as she has always done in this job.)

In this story the Reverend and his wife are at opposite poles. It was expected of Ngema, as a Reverend, to be exemplary and show reliance and trustworthiness in his calling. However, he had failed God, the congregation, the community and his wife. On the other hand, MaMzimela, his wife, has shown true dedication and reliability in their marriage by remaining at her husband's side through hard times. This is also indicated by the latter part of her maiden surname *-mela*, which means "stand for" or "support".

4.6 CHARACTERISATION IN 'AZIKHWELWA'

4.6.1 Ndoda

Ndoda, the main character in the story, is a young man who risks his life by trying to report to his new-found job on the day of a strike. He had to work in order to help his poverty-stricken family back home. His determination and internal struggle is exemplified in the following passages:

Hho, basho kwabanye, mina ngiyaya. Kungethi sengihlupheke kangaka ngifuna umsebenzi, kuthi sengiwutholile kube khona abazothi angiyi bese ungilahlekela, futhi ... NguThabani lo osengena. uShandu amchathazele ezimnandi ...

"*Nawe mzala uma ubazi labo baholi, ngicela ungiyise kubo manje ngiyozikhulumela. Okwami kuseceleni. Ngizofelwa yizingane ekhaya. Nanti ithuba manje. Bese nithi ... Phinde. Impela malume, phinde*". (Ntuli, 1994: 42)

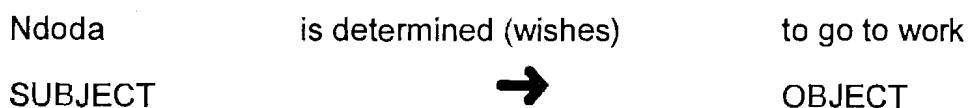
(Ho, they are referring to others. I am going. I have suffered enough searching for a job, now that I have found it, I will not listen to those who want to stop me from going and face the consequences of losing it, and ... Then Thabani enters. Shandu tells him the good news. ...

...
Okay cousin I plead with you to take me to those leaders if you know them, I want to go and speak for myself. My case is a different one, my children will die at home. This is now the chance. And you people say ... Never. No my uncle, never.)

Kulelwe nje uNdoda uyaphenduphenduka. Yini nje le emvelelayo? Khona esehlupheke kangaka kodwa! Kunini afika ahiale eyaluza? Kunini egaqa ngamadolo eyindoda encenga abaphathi bemisebenzi nezinduna ukuba bamzwele? Uma izinto sezilungle sekuthiwa akangayi emsebenzini! Kube sengathi uyazibona manje izingane zakhe. Zondile. Ziyakhala: "Baba, silambile, sisize!". (Ntuli, 1994: 44-45)

(While others were asleep Ndoda was turning and tossing. What kind of fate is befalling him. After he had suffered so much! After all the ups and downs. How many times did he literally bow on his knees begging job managers and supervisors to feel pity for him? But now when things are right he is told not to go to work! It was as if he sees his children. They are emaciated. They are crying: "Father, we are hungry, help us!")

In terms of the story as a whole, Ndoda can be regarded as the helper to his suffering family because:



With regard to this goal, Thabani and the others who heed the boycott all form one actant, that of opponent (to Ndoda's aspirations and wishes). Through indirect presentation, Ndoda is characterised by being given a name. Ndoda means "man". Through his external and internal actions he lives up to his name and acts in a "manly" and responsible way. This emphasises and justifies his determination for standing his ground about his decision to work so that he can provide for his

children. This emerges in these lines:

Izingane zakhe zethembele kuye. Zimazi eyindoda enamandla, engazonyla. Ngeke zikholtwe ukuthi angathi esethole umsebenzi awuyeke ngoba esatshisiwe nje. (Ntuli, 1994: 45)

(His children depend on him. They know him as a strong man who can fend for them. They will not believe that he had found a job but left it after he was threatened.)

Like a typical traditional Zulu man (*indoda*), he embodies through his deeds and speech that he is brave, determined, has backbone and is strong because he could fight his enemies and also managed to kill one, although it unfortunately turned out to be his cousin, Thabani.

His power and warrior-like charge and strength is seen through his praises:

*Usibankwa esadl'iqhimiili,
Oxamu bangenwa yintola emadolweni:
Isibankwa esadl' uxamu,
Izingwenya zangenwa yintola emadolweni:
Isibankwa esadl' ingwenya,
Kwaklewula ingwe emthini,
Ingonyama yakhwic' umsila ...* (Ntuli, 1994: 47)

(The house lizard that ate a gecko,
The monitor lizards got scared:
The house lizard that ate a monitor lizard,
The crocodiles got scared:
The house lizard that ate a crocodile,
The leopard shrieked on top of the tree,
The lion tucked in its tail ...)

According to Zulu culture, a person is usually given praises as a recognition of valour by members of the community after observing and noting his heroic deeds or any act which might be regarded as noble and, therefore, deserving of praise. A person may also give himself praises after fighting bravely or on distinguishing

himself as heroic. It can therefore be deduced from Ndoda's praises that he stems from an ancestry of courageous warriors who have fought and conquered in several battles. He is depicted as a timid house lizard, a small, harmless animal that is able to attack and destroy bigger and stronger looking animals. This metaphor insinuates that looks can be deceiving. An insignificant, peaceful individual can under certain circumstances transform into a ferocious fighter, as illustrated in the story itself. This symbolism could also be alluding to his rural upbringing and his rural appearance. This could therefore lead to his being discounted as someone not worthy of recognition or someone to be belittled or someone not be taken seriously. These praises therefore foreshadow that Ndoda is going to be able to fight anything or anyone who might try to hinder his plans. Ndoda also does not care for political games for basic survival is his main concern. For him, politics is a luxury - not a necessity.

Thabani mentions that Ndoda comes from the rural areas and ascribes to this fact, his short-sightedness for not understanding the complicated intricacies of the urban areas. This implies that he has the unsophisticated qualities usually associated with rural upbringing. This direct definition by Thabani, highlights and portends the fact that it is this very background which inspires Ndoda to stand firm in his decision and to stick to his guns. This is so for Ndoda comes from an environment where older people's lives are not dictated by children, an environment where no man can prescribe to another the way in which he should run the matters of his family. This direct definition by Thabani also discloses more about Thabani's character. He seems to be thinking that he is smarter and more sophisticated than his rural cousin. For him, political involvement equals intelligence.

Despite appearing as stubborn and bullheaded, Ndoda is seen as a likeable, jolly character with a pleasant disposition because at the Shandu family gathering his presence is always felt or announced by a song that he sings. But he is also human because he is also depicted as affected by stress when he could not sleep and kept on thinking about his dilemma:

... Mhlawumbe lokho kwesatshiswa kungabi namiphumela etheni abantu abanangi bavuke baye emsebenzini ... Bese kubuya umfanekiso omunye wamadoda aphethe iziqwayi ahamba ethi: "Azikhwelwa! Azikhwelwa!". Uma esehamba ngenkani sebemhlasela elimala! (Ntuli, 1994: 44-45)

(... Maybe these threats will be of no consequence, and many people will go to work ... Then he gets a picture of one of these men carrying knobkerries walking about saying: "No going to work! No going to work!" What if he forcefully goes and he is attacked and gets injured!)

Ndoda also firmly believes in his culture because he trusts his ancestors to help him in times of trouble.

4.6.2 Thabani

In the story level Thabani is a real chameleon because he assumes various roles, such as that of a benefactor, when he and his family gave moral support to Ndoda in his plight when he hunted for a job. But he ends up being a negative sender

and an opponent to his cousin, as can be seen both in his speech and in his actions.

From the onset when he hears about Ndoda's good news, he does not clearly state his feelings, his wording is open to various interpretations:

Naye uThabani engeze: "Ewu, e-mzala, siyakubongela. Besikuzwela, kodwa uma sekushiwo ukuthi akusetshenzwa kusasa ..." "Lokho, mzala kushiwo kubantu ebebesebenza, hhayi labo okumele bawuqale kusasa umsebenzi." "Mzala, akulula njengoba ukubeka nje. Phela nina enejwayele impilo yasemakhaya kungenzeka ningakuqondisisi uma kuthiwa akuyiwa njalo emsebenzini. Kushiwo ngoba abaholi labo sebezicubungule

izinto, babona sifanele leso singumo." (Ntuli, 1994 : 42)

(Thabani too also adds to the news: "Ewu, e-my cousin, congratulations. We were pitying you, but word has come out that no one should go to work tomorrow."

"My cousin, those words refer to people who are employed, not to those who are supposed to start working tomorrow."

"Cousin, it is not as easy as you make it to be. For people like you who are accustomed to rural life, it is easy not to comprehend if it is said that people should not go to work. This decision was taken after the leaders have scrutinised everything and finally decided that this was the right decision.")

In the above extract when Thabani seems to be giving advice, his words seem to be loaded with subtle scorn and irony, this becomes clear at the end of the story when it is revealed that he was amongst those who attacked Ndoda on his route to work. The ridicule can be seen when he tells Ndoda that in the struggle people do not use sticks and knobkerries. His words later turn out to be ironic when he tells Ndoda that it is better to lose something that can be later regained than to lose one's life which is lost forever. Notestein (1974: 140) declares the following concerning the information that can be inferred from a character's actions:

A character, whether stationary or progressive, is best portrayed by what he says and does in the main story incident. No amount of exposition or description will make us realise a character as does the main incident in which he is involved.

From all that has been said and done by Thabani, one can deduce that he either had a deep-rooted hatred for his cousin or that he had a score to settle or that he was a staunch supporter of the struggle and that his love for the struggle had blinded his judgement and family loyalties. This gives an indication that when faced with a tough decision he could not think straight because he seemed to ignore the truism that blood is thicker than water.

This sad and unfortunate turn of events brings to the fore the moral lesson that individual needs are more important than political needs. The sad ending of this

story is further accentuated by the ironic use of Thabani's name. Thabani means "be happy". It is ironically employed in this story for Thabani was not content and used his name as a cover, a mask behind which his actual nature was concealed. This is literally applied when the reader is told that he and his fellow attackers were wearing balaclavas to hide their faces. When these were removed, their true identities came to light. Unfortunately, when his obscure acts surfaced they spread a dark, ominous cloud over the Shange family. The reader, somehow, tends to sympathise with Thabani for he was, in a sense, a victim of circumstances. As an advocate for his political instance, he was forced to act for the cause, even against his own cousin. He was caught in a tug-of-war, and inauspiciously, as it is always the case in political arenas, it is always the people at the grass-roots who suffer the bitterest consequences. More pity is felt for the Shange family who have lost their dear son who has been "unknowingly" killed by their equally loved nephew.

4.7 WOMEN CHARACTERS IN SOME OF NTULI'S SHORT STORIES

Finally, a brief inquiry into some of the women characters in the stories analysed thus far will be undertaken. This decision has been prompted by Msimang's comments in his article entitled, "Tracing the signifier and the signified in D.B.Z. Ntuli's short stories", where he compared the way Ntuli had dealt with his characters in the stories, '*Uthingo Iwenkosazana*', '*Bafanele ukugcotshwa*' and '*Iphasika*'. In his discussion Msimang (1995: 16) says that:

...the author became more harsh in inflicting punishment on Kholiwe is regrettable. Compared with the main characters in the other two stories her sins were less heinous. Mpiyakhe had treacherously put his father on the throne and nearly caused the execution of an innocent man. Sikhumbuzo had seduced a witless girl and disgraced the church ministry. Kholiwe had only told a little lie that she was going to church when in fact she was visiting a boy-friend. Yet for that white lie she was killed. Is this male chauvinism? Is this because she is a woman and the other two characters are men?

By examining female characters separately I shall endeavour to see whether the

above assertion holds water in this collection of short stories.

4.7.1 Okhathazekile from '*Mhleli*'

Okhathazekile, the woman who was gang-raped, appears to be a negative receiver as an actant but she is also a helper because of the letter she wrote to the Editor to warn her rapists and the community that she had contracted AIDS. Her actions on the story level expose her as a strong, bold, kind-hearted and forgiving woman because she had the courage and strength to reveal to the public her state of health in order to warn others. Her name, "The Concerned", also helps reveal her state of mind about everything that transpired and also about the turn of events.

4.7.2 The priest's wife in '*Ngaleli phasika*'

As far as this story is concerned this character does not feature anywhere in the story - she is non-existent. The question may be asked why has Ntuli muted this character? Why was the reader not given a glimpse of a role played by the priest's wife in perpetuating or condemning Sibusiso's behaviour?

In '*Ngaleli Phasika*' she is only mentioned in passing as "we". In fact the reader only infers that the "we" includes both the priest and his wife because "we" here could also mean other close members of the extended family:

...*Sakuqamba igama sathi unguSibusiso. Sasethemba ukuthi uzoba yisibusiso ngempela kithina ... Sakhuleka kakhulu sicela ukuba sithole okungenani ingane eyodwa nje, nathi sifane nabanye abantu* ... (Ntuli, 1994: 20)

(We gave you the name Sibusiso because we believed that you would be a real blessing to us ... We prayed hard asking to be given at least one child, so that we too can be like other people ...)

The author's act of pushing into the background a character who could have added

more illumination on Sibusiso's behaviour is unfortunate. Is it possible that Ntuli was actually trying to show up the Zulu culture, which is renowned for not giving a woman any stand in society - despite of the noble role she plays in keeping the fires burning at home and also that of oiling the wheel of the social engine to keep the social fabric intact? This is reminiscent of the role which is played by the housekeepers in the homes of the whites, but whose presence and support is never acknowledged when rewards are gained. With regard to this, Bal (1985: 24) mentions the following about these type of actors who are sidelined or who are simply "forgotten":

In some fabulas there are actors who have no functional part in the structures of that fabula because they do not cause or undergo functional events. Actors of this type may be left out of consideration ... the initial disregard of an actor does not mean that this actor is without significance. It only means that this particular actor does not form part of the functional category, therefore need not be taken into consideration. Well-known examples are the porters and maids who opened the front doors in many nineteenth-century-novels ... This is not to say that they may not be meaningful as an indication of a certain social stratification; and in that case they contribute to the representation of bourgeois society given in such a novel.

In this story Ntuli appears to have taken into consideration the initial part of this quotation, that is, the priest's wife has no functional role in his theme.

4.7.3 Mrs Mvubu in '*Ivasi KaVusi*'

This story bears a resemblance to 'Ngaleli Phasika' as far as female characterisation is concerned. Mvubu's wife is also given no name in this story. She is only referred to as "*umama wekhaya*" (mother of the house) and "*umkakhe*" (his wife). She is also muted because although the reader does see her get involved in some form of action when she tries to help Nduduzo but she never voices a single statement. In fact, her assistance is ruthlessly terminated when she is sjambokked by her husband Mvubu. Thereafter, she is given no apology

even though she had done no wrong. She is voiceless - one wonders whether she is indeed literally dumb because even when she is supposed to talk, the narrator interprets her thoughts and speaks on her behalf:

Unkosikazi wasekhaya waze wasola sengathi le vasi isisadlozana kuMvubu. (Ntuli, 1994: 7)

(The woman of the house even suspected that this vase was regarded by Mvubu as a mini idol.)

Even towards the end of the story where she had a chance of indicating her discontentment about the manner in which Mvubu has treated Nduduzo's fumble to her autocratic husband, she does not utter a word. It seems Ntuli has consciously done this to convey the cultural behaviour of a typical traditional Zulu man. Mrs Mvubu's voicelessness therefore helps to accentuate and foreground Mvubu's austere personality which is also explicitly reflected in his name - that he is a man of few words who rules by the sword (the sjambok). Unfortunately it is the "sword" that destroyed him. Mvubu has to learn a valuable life lesson - that the pen is mightier than the sword. Communicating opinions in an orderly manner resolves more difficulties than violent behaviour.

This supports Notestein's (1974: 149) observations that one of the methods of characterisation is to show the effect one character has upon another. One person may inspire fear, or admiration, or confidence or suspicion or disgust in another person. In Mvubu's case the reader can conclude that his wife's silence to his stern and hostile behaviour was caused by fear and perhaps even out of cultural respect she had for him.

Except for the fear that Mvubu's wife had for him, one also finds symbolic meaning to all that transpires in this family. This symbolic meaning is also an extension of the title of this story. It seems that Mvubu regarded his wife as a vase too. She was a "receptacle" in which he could pour in all his frustrations, even physically,

without expecting any retaliation or response from her. That is why he is at times seen "talking" to the vase, which was now thought that he was regarding it as an "idol". The shape of a vase is that of a phallic symbol, so the vase has been skilfully chosen to represent a feminist symbol in which a male can use to "pour" in his frustrations in order to relieve himself from the tension.

4.7.4 Faith and MaSokhulu in '*Isikweletu*'

In this story it seems like a window has been opened to let in a breath of fresh air because this story consists of only two female characters, who are quite different from those discussed above. These characters are portrayed by both their actions and their speech.

4.7.4.1 Faith

Faith is depicted as a modern, independent and innovative business woman. This is indirectly portrayed to the reader as she is seen through the eyes of the narrator focaliser, when she opens her bag and counts stacks of notes separated into bundles of a thousand rand each. She is also a single woman because no mention of a husband or boyfriend is made. This is also suggested by the gun which she was carrying in order to protect herself:

Ahoshe ... Isibhamu. Athi ukusihlolahlola, asibuyisele esikhwameni. Ame isikhashana. Anqekuze ikhanda. Ayovula umnyango. (Ntuli, 1994: 16)

(She takes out ... a gun. She examines it for a while, she returns it in the bag. She waits for a while. She nods her head. She goes to open the door.)

As a form of indirect characterisation, the environment has been used to give the reader more insight into Faith's circumstances. She is self-sufficient for she owns a house and a car:

Nanso isiphuma imotshwana yakhe. Yinhle yona noma kuyisekeni Nomuzi yindlu nje, akukho kubabazeka. (Ntuli, 1994: 16)

(Here comes her car moving out. It is beautiful although it is a second hand. Even the house is just ordinary, there is nothing breathtaking about it.)

From the description of Faith's possessions, it can be presumed that Faith is neither rich nor poor, she is fairly comfortable. This has been used to indicate her courage and unselfishness in returning what she had previously stolen. Someone else could have used this money to improve the house or to buy a better car. This act of returning the stolen money multiplied ten times indicates that she has a pricking conscience and desires to repent and redress the wrongs she has done. One can therefore not summarily call her a thief but she can rather be described as human, as someone who is prone to temptations, but fortunately she realises her iniquities and rectifies them accordingly. One can also conclude that money has been used to symbolise the guilt that was felt by Faith every time she thought of the theft she had perpetrated. It is also a sign of forgiveness because it has enabled her to confess and to set her heart at ease. The same applies to MaSokhulu.

4.7.4.2 MaSokhulu

MaSokhulu can be regarded as an old lady who is human and fallible. This is seen by her gluttony and a desire to get rich quickly. This is shown when she allowed her husband to steal Madolo's money to start their own business and also kept it secret. She is also kind and forgiving because she absolved Faith's misconduct. She also has a desire to change her ways because she also asked Faith to accompany her to return what her husband stole from Madolo. She needs to be forgiven, just as she has forgiven Faith:

Ngithi ngiyabonga-ke ngoba usungifundisile. Usekhona uMadolo noma esekhulile. Ngiyazi kahle imali ayithatha kuMadolo ubaba. Noma ngingemile kahle ngcono ngithathe konke lokhu ofika nakho,

ngiyoxolisa kuMadolo. (Ntuli, 1994: 19)

(Thank you for showing me the way. Madolo is still alive although he is now very old. I know the exact amount of money baba took from Madolo. Even though I am financially unstable, I think it is apt to take the whole lot that you have brought to me in order to go and ask for forgiveness from Madolo.)

4.8 RECAPITULATION

In this chapter a distinction was made between actors who are participants in the story level and characters or personages in the text level. Actors are, as noted, not necessarily human and they are called "classes of actors" by Bal. These actors aspire towards an aim or the achievement of something agreeable or the evasion of something disagreeable. Actors were therefore classified into subject and object, power and receiver, etc. Through characterisation, it was observed that characters obtain individual human traits. This was done by illustrating the manner in which the general categories of actors and actants at the story level are related to information or indicators which are in the text. Faith in '*Isikweletu*', for instance, possesses qualities such as having a pricking conscience, independent and repentant, etc., while Thabani in '*Azikhwelwa*' is seen as slightly sly, confused, and a staunch supporter of his organisation.

Furthermore, it was observed that some of Ntuli's female characters have been given a peripheral role which renders them inactive and "mute". On closer scrutiny, it was remarked that these "mute" or inactive characters have been so portrayed in order to magnify the patriarchal domination of the so-called "stronger sex" over the "weaker sex". This then is more of a revelation of the Zulu social system than a depiction of Ntuli as a chauvinist as questioned by Msimang. This is why in a story like '*Isikweletu*', where there is no male character, female characters are depicted as innovative, bold, independent and forgiving. Also, in '*Yqanda Yichoboka*' where the male character, Ngema, is portrayed as a villain, while his wife, MaMzimela, demonstrates the stronger qualities of a heroine. All these traits in characters were used by using both the direct definition and the indirect ways of character portrayal.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter recapitulations are going to be made by taking stock of the findings and observations which were arrived at in the earlier discussion. This chapter will be divided into two sub-sections: summary and observations. These will highlight and give a succinct paraphrasing of the different chapters together with observations arrived at in the discussion of this study. It will ultimately take a look at the final evaluation which will deliberate the extent of Ntuli's success in short story writing.

5.2 SUMMARY AND OBSERVATIONS

A broad general investigation of the complexion of the short story was looked at. Various opinions by different scholars were forwarded to substantiate some points. Criticism was levelled at manuscript reviewers, publishers and critics for their restrictiveness in greatly adhering to Poe's prescriptions in evaluating written short stories. These were regarded as cramping talent and also as giving little room for any imagination to develop further. Opinions of scholars like May and others were brought to the fore. These writers suggested the discarding of some of the trappings which were still keeping the short story in bondage.

De Saussure was introduced as the founder of modern linguistics and whose ideas were found relevant to literature and subsequently adopted to structuralist and semiotic theories of literature. It was also observed that both these above mentioned theories have a certain relationship which causes them to facilitate and supplement each other when used as vehicles of examining the text. The signifiers and the signifieds were discussed as pointing to signs which need to be decoded in the text.

A brief survey on Ntuli's contribution in the writing, promotion and analysis of Zulu literature was given. Ntuli was seen as not only prolific in short story writing but also as equally zealous and energetic in other different genres. His contribution in the upliftment and the empowerment of the Zulu nation through books can be recognised in the titles which he has given to some of his books. Titles like Izikwili (short, thick, knobless fighting sticks) reveal his struggle and battle to fight ignorance and illiteracy. His unfailing dedication could also be seen in the role he had played in the establishment of the "Usiba Writers' Guild" by pricking the consciences of and motivating both budding writers and veterans alike to keep on watering the blossoming flower.

Ntuli's contribution is widespread for it is not only confined to the writing of fiction but he also reads papers in functions and also in seminars and conferences and publishes scholarly researches in journals. Deservedly, his energy, diligence, service, benevolence and supportive nature did not go unnoticed. This is heralded by many of those he has helped. He has also been showered with awards from different quarters.

In the second chapter plot structure was discussed. Amongst other things, plot was defined as arousing expectations about the future course of events. The traditional plot was also seen as something that has a "geometrical quality". Certain scholars like Bader reckon that it is easy to determine unity in this type of plot for, amongst other things, each incident of the action has to bear a direct relation to conflict and its resolution.

Some stories from Isibhakabhaka were analysed to investigate the manner in which Ntuli organises and manipulates his work to build a story. From the analysis it became apparent that Ntuli's exceptional craftsmanship is highly impressive. This was noticed where Ntuli wrote stories in letter form, both formal and informal. This is quite refreshing because it marks a breakthrough, a deviation from the "normal" way of story writing because some expected or normal ways of letter

writing were not adhered to. In the story '*Ngaleli Phasika*', for instance, the address and the year in which the letter was written were omitted and only the day and month were indicated. Ntuli's artistic ability is also seen in his capability to manoeuvre the occurrence of the events to form one pleasing whole. This is seen when in '*Ngaleli Phasika*' where one character's story was embedded in that of another. Both characters are the main protagonists in their respective stories, which they narrate in their own unique ways. Ntuli's boundless imaginative power of technique could be seen in the awesome manner in which he uses symbols to illustrate and to foreground some important points. Relevant biblical expressions, with deep, hidden meanings, are subtly and ingeniously used and left for the reader to unveil.

In the discussion on plot it was noticed that in some stories like '*Mhleli*' and '*Ngaleli Phasika*', Ntuli has made a considerable effort to steer off the hackneyed plot. In the story entitled '*Ivasi KaVusi*', Ntuli has rendered the final scene to end minus the "usual" ending which characterises most short stories. The conclusion in this story does not totally resolve to the problem or conflict presenting this story. However it seems as if Mvubu's problem was partially solved when he received the vase, but his wish of seeing and, therefore, of reconciling with Nduduzo was not achieved. Despite this the story is not left hanging, Ntuli leaves it to the reader to use his or her imagination to supply or to complete the pattern of the "mosaic". The story entitled '*Mhleli*' has been structurally paraphrased, this was done to indicate the manner in which the story can be chronologically summarised at an abstract level. This also assists the reader to grasp the difference that exists between the order of events in the story and in the text.

With regard to narration, Ntuli has succeeded in incorporating in his work different types of narrators. This elevates the standard of his work. The voice of the external narrator in different stories does not dominate or echo throughout the whole story, but the platform is at times temporarily relegated to characters who then become internal narrators. An example of this nature could be seen in the

story entitled '*Ngaleli Phasika*'. Different ways of telling a story are also employed, that is, by means of telling and showing. Other techniques like flashback, summary and ellipses are also successfully used. Ntuli shows an unusual skill in his ability to combine narrative elements with both dramatic and poetic aspects. The dramatic elements can be observed where he used direct speech in order to dramatise some events and also where he used certain forms of didascalies as in '*Iqanda Yichoboka*'.

Poetic forms have been used in '*Ivasi KaVusi*'. This style gives rhythm and adds a musical touch to the story. Ntuli's artistry is further noticed where he successfully writes a story within a story. This can be seen in a biography about his mother in '*UMjuzo*'. In this story where he is the narrator, as the younger experiencing "I" and also as the mature "I" who tells the story. This story is a marvellous combination of narration blended together with poetry in order to paint and accentuate the mood and tone of narration. All this is facilitated by Ntuli's simple and flowing style which is not hampered by an overabundance of difficult words. His competent use of the Zulu language is apparent in his economic and accurate vocabulary. This may make his stories seem very short, but as mentioned in the first chapter, it places "narrative quality" to the fore instead of "narrative quantity". Ntuli does not use explicit language, rather, it is indirect and suggestive, which contributes to the understanding of his somewhat ambiguous views. This is done through the use of simile, metaphor, repetition, irony, humour, symbolism, ideophones and idiomatic expressions.

The delineation of characters in this collection elevates Ntuli to the level of the best of Zulu writers. This has been so dexterously done that it leaves one with nothing but awe for this noble writer. His chief technique is being indirect. Characters "open" themselves up to the reader without constant intrusion from the author. Character portrayal is drawn to lofty heights by the intelligent use of the names of some characters, their environment, cultural indoctrination and the subtle juxtaposition of a character's characteristics with some symbolic elements, some

of which were drawn from the titles given to a selection of the stories as in '*Iqanda Yichoboka*'. The effectiveness of character portrayal has been effectively explained by giving initially a broad explanation of "actors" and the manner in which they can be used to explain "characters". Actors were defined and it was explained that they are not characters but participants which are specifically used for the abstract story level. Mieke Bal's theory of dividing actors into actants was adopted.

Ntuli is commended for bringing in some of his stories the cultural elements and some modes of behaviour of the Zulus. This could be seen where ancestors were used as actors which helped Ndoda to fight his attackers in the story entitled '*Azikhwelwa*'. Ndoda's *iwisa* was also used as an actor in the story level. Ntuli's characters are depicted as a true representation of human life. Like human beings, they have the same fears, aspirations, ambitions, cruelties, weaknesses and strengths. Men like Mvubu (in '*Ivasi KaVusi*') have a desire to dominate and control, whereas his wife is subservient and almost treated as a minor by her husband. Some women characters like those in '*Isikweletu*' are portrayed as bold, independent, secure, etc. Masuku (1997: 152) bears testimony to this when she remarks that "Ntuli's and some of Dube's characters are proof enough that some male writers regard women as beings who are strong and true to life".

The different themes dealt with in *Isibhakabhaka* are important for they depict life as it is. Ntuli's themes focus on religion, human relations, forgiveness and social norms and values. Ntuli's moral commitment is seen in his probing into issues where focus is centred on the man of the cloak, whose clandestine activities are laid bare so that others could learn from such mistakes and refrain from being involved in such predicaments. A message of forgiveness and reconciliation is relayed without making the reader feel that he or she is given a sermon. Nguna (1997: 263-264), in her text, compliments Mtuze for his valuable contribution to Xhosa literature. This same quotation is also an apt description of Ntuli's work:

His commitment as a writer has caused him to adhere to what has been diagnosed as the primary function of an African writer. He has therefore not only described that which threatens the existence of his nation, but also offers a remedy or a suggestion for this.

In '*UMjuzo*' Ntuli has been successful in uplifting the image of a very important person in his life, that is, his mother. This has been done by epitomising '*Mjuzo*'.

5.3. FINAL EVALUATION

The combination of semiotics and structuralism lends itself well to the analysis of literature, especially in the case of short stories, as was seen from the foregoing investigation. The semio-structural approach gives a holistic view of not only the structure or form of the short story genre, but also an in-depth exploration at the content, the multi-layered meanings of each story. After one has finished reading the stories from Isibhakabhaka, one is left with a total feeling of satisfaction. With this collection, Ntuli has indeed taken Zulu short story writing to greater heights. This is symbolically indicated in the title of the book, that is, Isibhakabhaka, which may be translated as the "sky" or the "firmament". This title can be better illuminated with the words spoken by Opland (1997: 14) when quoting Hardy:

When Thomas Hardy felt constrained in the face of adverse criticism to terminate his career as a writer of novels, he depicted himself in a poem standing alone on the heights of Wessex, isolated from insensitive public down in the lowlands because "mind chains do not clank where one's neighbour is the sky".

It seems that "mind chains" did not clank when Ntuli wrote Isibhakabhaka. Therefore the title Isibhakabhaka seems to be echoing that in short story writing the sky should indeed be the limit.

Ntuli's success as one of the distinguished and prolific writers amongst the modern Zulu literature writers can also be seen in the variety of genres in which he has

involved himself. His masterful pen has aptly demonstrated that the short story is a genre which has unique features but which has ample room for development if it is manned by a skilful writer who can bring its versatile nature to the fore.

The standard of writing in African languages can be elevated if authors are given as much media attention as musicians get. One way of doing it would be to make some poems with melodic lyrics available to singers. The community could highly benefit in this because most of the themes in these poems are geared in motivating and enlightening the youth. As these poems are often prescribed for schools, these would be apt, more especially when one takes into consideration the fact that some of the lyrics used in some contemporary songs leave much to be desired and are constantly frowned upon by many older people. This will also instill in the youth a love of their mother tongue and they will realise that one can make a living out of writing books written in the language they are most at ease with.

It should be remembered that one of the most valuable treasures one can give a person is a love of good literature, for literature opens one's mind, increases general knowledge and makes one inquisitive. Literature increases the vocabulary, makes one articulate and it is an assured way of being better informed.

Finally, this investigation has brought to light Ntuli's remarkable and adept ability to handle this "rule congested" genre with much ease. It is befitting to close this chapter by showering this dedicated and unselfish writer in an appropriate way, that is, by "shouting" praises:

Ngivumeleni Zulu ngike ngithi ukubhula umbethe, ngigiye kule nkundla okusinwa kudedelwana kuyo, nami ngidlulise awokubonga ensizweni yakwaMphemba engikhomba ukuthi yazalelwa ukuzosifundisa ukuthintitha uthuli nokucikica amehlo sesule izintuli ezisixhophayo, nathi sigcine sikhwazi ukubona kangcono.

Ngeswele amazwi okubonga le nsizwa enenhliziyo evulekile, uMphemba ophemba kuphembeke:

*Mphemba Khozi olumaphikophiko,
 Nkonjan' endizele phezulu yaqhwake! emafini,
 Wen' oqhwakele maqede wangaqhetha wabheka
 Phansi, wazulisa amehlo wabona oNokuzama benoCathula,
 Ngokubabona belubalubele ulwazi, wangalugodla
 Wabaqhweba, abawayo wabafundisa ukucathula,
 Wabancomulela kwawakh' amaphiko wathi:
 Ndizani nasi **isibhakabhaka**.
 Ungumphulofethi futh' unodlebe,
 Ubazwile abanjengo Goodman
 Lapho bekubon' unabany' esicongweni,
 Umzwile uGoodman lapho ethi:*

*"Niyihlahlile inyathuko yobuqhawe,
 Nami ngifuna ukunilandela.
 Ngithwasiseni zingwazi zami
 'Ze ivuso lami lifezeke."*

*Sibong' ukungabi nomhobholo,
 Sibong' ukujatshuliswa ukubon' ongamqondi
 u - a - ebhe - ngci, esehlukanisa amabal' amnyama kwelimhlophe
 Phemba njalo Sibani sezwe,
 Wen' onguBhek' ekhaya nasezizweni.
 Mana njalo ungadikibali
 Wen' osifundis' ukuthi:
 Inkokhelo ephelele ukubon' uNokukhasa
 EsenguZimele.
 Unwele olu ... de! (Ntuli, 1997: i)*

(Zulu, allow me to kick off by dancing a traditional dance on this stage where people exchange in dancing. I also want to say a few words of gratitude to this Mphemba lad, whom I believe was born to come and teach us to brush off the dust and to wipe off the dust which is in our eyes so that we too end up seeing better.

I am in lack of words to express my gratitude to this gentleman who has an open heart, Mphemba who makes the fire that glows:

Mphemba the hawk that has multiple wings,
 Swallow that flew high and sat elevated in the sky,
 You sat high but did not sit in comfort, you looked
 down, your eyes searched and you saw Miss Effort
 together with Toddle,
 Seeing that they were craving for knowledge,
 you did not turn a blind eye,
 you beckoned them, those who fell

You taught them to waddle,
You extracted wings for them from yours and said:
"Fly, here is the **sky**."

You are a prophet and you are not hard of hearing,
You have heard the likes of Goodman
when they saw you together with the others up in the pinnacle,
You heard Goodman when he pleaded:

**"You have paved the way for heroes
I also like to follow in your footsteps,
My heroes, train and give me the skill
So that my dreams will be realised."**

We are grateful for your not being gluttonous,
We are grateful at your happiness caused by seeing someone who
does not understand
a, b, c, ultimately being literate,
Forever make fire, Light of the nation,
You who is the Observer of those at home and even outside home.
Stand fast and do not be discouraged
You who teach us that:
True fulfilment stems from seeing Miss Craw!
turning to be Independent.
Long li ... ve!)

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