

CHARACTERISATION AND TIME IN DUBE'S PLAY,

UTHEMI

BY

I declare that "Characterisation and Time in Dube's Play, Uthemi" is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

HLALANATHI PIUS MNIKATHI

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of African Languages at Vista University.

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR A STRACHAN

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DECLARATION

I wish to record my indebtedness to my supervisor, Professor A. Strachan for his guidance and professional assistance from the time I started on this subject.

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CHAPTER ONE

AIM AND SCOPE OF STUDY

1 AIM AND SCOPE OF STUDY

This study is not an analysis of drama as such. Its primary focus is to examine and assess characterisation and time as narrative techniques, in Dube's drama, UThemi. The point of departure is narratological. The two levels of narrative text, the 'story level' and the 'text level', are considered in this respect. Characters and methods of character portrayal on these two levels will be assessed. Lastly, the theoretical basis regarding the time aspects of order, duration and frequency, as well as its application in UThemi, will be researched.

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Various sources of literature on narratology will be used to clarify the theory and meaning of certain concepts. The theories of such scholars as Gérard Genette (1980) Mieke Bal (1980) and Rimmon-Kenan (1983) will form the basis of this study. These theories have been successfully applied by Strachan (1990) in his analysis of time in Ntuli's short stories.

3 NARRATOLOGY

Narratology is, according to Bal (1980:3), a literary theory of narrative texts. Its concern is thus those texts which are narrative.

However, it is not always easy to decide whether or not a given text should be considered narrative. Some people argue that a text does not have to be a language text. For example, in comic

strips, a non-linguistic sign system, the picture is employed. However, many theorists, sharing a more restricted interpretation of what constitutes a text, reserve this term for language texts only (Bal. 1980:4).

4 NARRATIVE TEXT

In defining the concept of 'narratology' we used the term 'narrative text'. According to Bal (1980:5), a narrative text is a text in which an agent relates an event.

Rimmon-Kenan (1983:2), defines narrative fiction or text as the narration of a succession of fictional events.

From the foregoing definitions we can deduce that the term 'narration' suggests two main features of the narrative texts, namely:

- (i) A 'communication' process in which the narrative as message is transmitted by addresser to addressee.
- (ii) The 'verbal' nature of the medium used to transmit the message (Rimmon-Kenan 1983:2).

We see, therefore, that it is these features that distinguish narrative texts from narratives in other media. For example, non-fictional verbal narratives such as news reports, history books, personal letters, etc., are not considered as fictional events.

As it has often been stated, three basic aspects or levels of narrative texts can be distinguished. These are the events, their verbal representation and the act of telling or writing. Different theorists, however, use different terminology to name this distinction. Genette refers to these as '*histoire*', '*recit*' and '*narration*' (Gérard Genette, as cited by Rimmon-Kenan 1983:3). Bal (1980:13) uses the terms '*gesckiedenis*',

'verhaal' and 'text' while Rimmon-Kenan (1983:3) prefers to label these levels 'story', 'text' and 'narration'. In this study we will use Rimmon-Kenan's terminology.

Although we distinguish three levels in a narrative, it is very important to keep in mind that these three levels do not exist independently of one another.

4.1 THE STORY LEVEL

Rimmon-Kenan (1983:3) describes the story as follows:

"Story designates the narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in these 'events'."

According to Bal (1980:5), a story is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors.

From the foregoing quotations, the story can be seen as an abstraction, or a construct, and it is not directly available to the reader (as we shall see when the text level is discussed).

There are thus four main elements constituting the story level. These are: the events, the actors, time and place.

4.1.1 EVENTS

Bal (1980:13) defines events as the transmission from one state to another state, caused or experienced by the actors.

According to this definition, an event is seen as something that happens or takes place at a particular place in a particular time. So an event can be seen as action. Events become

meaningful only through the further development of the story. Accordingly, we distinguish between functional and non-functional events. Functional events are those events that determine the course of other events in the development of the story.

4.1.2 ACTORS

Actors are the main elements of the story level. They are agents that perform actions, and they are not necessarily humans. At this level actors are regarded in relation to the sequences of events which they cause or undergo. As such actors are seen in groups and referred to as actants.

4.1.3 TIME

In defining the concept of 'event' we also used the term 'time'. Time at the story level refers to the time the events occupy i.e. the duration an event actually takes and the period in which the events happen. Therefore, it cannot be measured in terms of, for example, number of pages, but can be measured by clocks and calendars. (The concept of time is fully discussed in chapter 3 of this study).

4.1.4 PLACE

'Place' refers to the location where events occur i.e. to the topological position in which the actors are situated and where events take place.

4.2 THE TEXT LEVEL

"Whereas 'story' is a succession of narrated events, text is a spoken or written discourse which undertakes their telling."

Rimmon-Kenan (1983:3)

According to Strachan (1990:98), the text involves the arrangement and organizing of the events as they are presented to the reader while he is reading a piece of narrative fiction.

Literarytext Description, as possible (del 1980:90).

The foregoing definition presupposes that the text is the sequence in which the author arranges these events. It is, therefore, what we read.

The place or location, far as element of the story level, is

Story differs from the text in that events in the text do not necessarily appear in their chronological order. And the story can be reconstructed from the text by placing the events in their natural or chronological succession. This suggests that the story 'exists' before the text. The text, however, is the only level or aspect of the narrative which is directly available to the reader. Furthermore, it is through the text that the reader acquires knowledge of the story.

becomes an 'acting place' rather than the place of action.

The text is presented from a specific perspective and contains aspects which do not appear in the story. That is why, for instance, we get different texts in which the same story is related or told differently by different people.

4.2.2 - events

It is for this reason that the text should be examined separately from the story. The distinction is, however, based upon the difference between the sequence of events and the way in which these events are presented. The difference does not lie in the language used.

Terms of the narrative content are

The main elements of the text level are characters, space, events, time and the focalizer.

4.2.1 CHARACTERS

is linked to the content of the devoted to

At this level 'actors' are transformed or changed into characters. They are no longer seen as groups. They become individuals with distinctive human characteristics. Unlike an

rhythms and frequency.

actor (which is a structural position as stated earlier), a character is a complex semantic unit which resembles a human being. It possesses features which make psychological and ideological descriptions possible (Bal 1980:80).

4.2.2 SPACE

The place or location, as an element of the story level, is transformed into space. According to Bal (1980:94), the space in which the character is situated is regarded as the 'frame'. For example, a character can be situated in a space which it experiences as secure; while earlier on, outside that space, it felt insecure. Space acquires a symbolic value. For example, the outside space can be seen to represent liberation (or feeling of being insecure). The inner space can, instead, be experienced as confinement (or being secure). Thus space becomes an 'acting place' rather than the place of action. Obviously, space can influence the text in one way or another (e.g. influence of physical environment on characters) (Bal 1980:95).

4.2.3 EVENTS

Events on the text level have been arranged and organized in an order which can differ from the chronological order. This is because the organizing instance simply decides on which events to put first. All the terms of the narrative content are filtered through some perspective (Rimmon-Kenan 1983:3).

4.2.4 TIME

Time on this level is linked to the amount of time devoted to the presentation in the text. Accordingly, it can be measured in terms of the number of pages or number of lines or words devoted to the presentation by the author. Text-time, as we shall see later in chapter 4, has three main aspects; order, rhythm and frequency.

4.2.5 THE FOCALIZER

The focalizer is the main element of the text level. At this level his role is established. He is the agent responsible for the production of the narrative and for its communication.

According to Rimmon-Kenan (1983:43), focalization is the angle of vision through which the story is filtered in the text, and it is verbally formulated by the narrator.

Mieke Bal (1980:104), defines focalization as the relationship between the 'vision', the agent that sees and that which is seen.

Narration is the 'third level' of the narrative.

Narrative text was defined as a story that is told in a language. What this means is that there is an agent who relates. This agent cannot be identified with the writer. In fact, the writer withdraws and calls upon a fictitious spokesman, the 'narrator'. Usually the narrator does not relate continually. For example, whenever direct speech occurs in the text, the narrator temporarily transfers this function to one of the characters. The focalizer is the point from which the elements are viewed, i.e. the agent whose perception orients the presentation, whereas the focalized is what the focalizer perceives (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:74).

Focalization can be either external or internal to the story. When focalization lies with one character which participates in the story as an actor, it is referred to as 'internal focalization'. When an anonymous agent (the narrator) situated outside the story, is functioning as focalizer, it is referred to as 'external focalization' (Bal 1980:105).

The reader's interpretation and perception is influenced by the focalizer. Likewise, if the focalizer coincides with the character, the reader will be inclined to accept the vision presented by the character (because the reader sees through he character's eyes).

This point is emphasized by Boulton (1969:30):

4.3 THE NARRATION LEVEL

Rimmon-Kenan (1983:3) sees 'narration' as the actual act or process of production. The author is the agent responsible for the production of the narrative and for its communication.

We can thus conclude that the story is the 'first level' of the narrative text, because the story exists before the text, (before the material has been presented from a specific point of view and before it has been narrated by a narrator). The text, (what we read) forms the 'second level' of the narrative. Narration is the 'third level' of the narrative.

From the above presentation we may also notice that characterisation and time operate within the first and second levels only.

5 DRAMA

Many literary critics believe that drama has its roots in oral traditions, such as story-telling and praise poetry, as well as in traditional ceremonies and festivities of the different nations.

Reaske (1966:5) defines drama as follows:

"A drama is a work of literature or a composition which delineates life and human activity by means of presenting various actions of, and dialogues between, a group of characters."

Drama can, therefore, be seen as a form of literary art and also of representational art. As literary art, drama or a play is a piece of fiction conjured up in words. However, it is a special kind of fiction. This point is emphasised by Boulton (1960:30):

"A true play is three dimensional, it is literature that walks and talks before our eyes. It is not intended that the eye shall perceive marks on paper and the imagination turns them into sights, sounds and actions; the text of the play is meant to be translated into sight, sounds and action, which occur literally and physically on a stage."

Drama is a special kind of fiction acted out rather than narrated. In a play, characters appear and events take place without any comments, unlike in a novel, for instance, where we learn about characters and events through the 'words' of a narrator. In this sense drama is a form of representational art.

Although plays are designed to be presented orally on the stage, there is the inescapable fact that at some point the playwright must write down all of the words. As written literature, plays can be read. This is a secondary nature of drama, because most plays are written to be performed. However, there are a few plays that are written only to be read rather than for theatrical performance. These are referred to as '*closet drama*'.

For most of us the experience of drama is confined to plays on paper rather than in performance. When reading a play one has to imagine it on the stage. In this case one must only attend to the meanings and implications of words.

Moeketsi (1990:25) emphasises the importance of words in drama, when she says:

"The word substitutes for the sense of sight. It communicates facts and ideas. It is the 'story-teller' image-maker, character-delineator. If the word fails, so does the play..."

One has to envision the words in performance in order to experience the understanding and pleasure that the spectators gain when they attend the play. This means that in reading a

In drama there is very little description of characters, events, play, we should continually seek to create its 'action' or performance in the imaginary stage of our minds.

One should always remember that it is not enough to read the text simply as a sequence of statements made by the characters talking to one another or to themselves. We must always read drama as a script for performance, then we can see that the text contains a number of cues from which we can 'construct' the 'performance' in our minds. These clues will show us the various elements that make up the total 'play', like for example, setting, gestures, intonation, etc. By keeping these elements in mind we can imagine what the play looks like and sounds like on the stage.

Of course, some dramatists provide extensive directions for performance in parenthetical remarks preceding the dialogue or interspersed with it. These informative devices in drama help the reader to understand and interpret correctly the actions of a play.

In trying to define drama, we have, in fact, said very little that is peculiar to drama. Some of the points mentioned apply almost as well to all kinds of literary work. For example, drama is similar to the novel in that they both present a story. Pretorius and Swart (1982:17) also point out that the story in literature belongs to an imaginary world which is, however, similar to reality. Like a novel, drama is concerned with plot and characters and the only difference is the manner of presentation of the story.

Dialogue is the most distinguishing feature of drama. Boulton (1960:97) emphasizes this point when she says that a play is its dialogue.

In drama there is very little description of characters, events, places, etc. The story is advanced almost entirely by dialogue.

6 SUMMARY OF UThemi

Dube's play, UThemi, is a tragedy. The main character in this story is Themi, after whom the play is named. Themi is married to John Nxumalo. They live in Orlando, Johannesburg. The play begins when Themi, who has visited her parents in Natal, is going back to Orlando.

Themi's train overturns at Shivili (between Escourt and Ladysmith). Many passengers are killed in this accident, but Themi, by a miracle, survives. She sustains however, heavy brain damages and completely loses her memory and speech. She walks from the scene of the accident until she meets Nomasonto Dlangalala, a young girl who has come to fetch water in the morning. Themi follows Nomasonto home. She stays with the Dlangalala family for almost seven years.

Dlangalala regards the arrival of this strange woman, who cannot talk, as a misfortune befalling his kraal. This is so because of his bad experience with the police. One day he had discovered a dead man near his kraal, and, when he reported the matter at the police station, he was put in jail as a suspect for murder, until the post-mortem proved the deceased was not murdered, but had died of natural causes. When Themi arrives at his kraal, Dlangalala is having a party. He has slaughtered two goats to thank his ancestors for his release and to 'wash' his name and that of his kraal. When the guests and neighbours ask about this woman, they are told that she is MaDlamini, their son Vusi's second wife, from Johannesburg.

MaDlamini's speech problem is solved one day when two goods trains collide near where MaDlamini and other two women are collecting 'amalongwe' (i.e. dry cow dung) for making fire. She

screams when she hears the terrifying noise from the accident. From that moment she recovers her speech, but her memory is still lost.

CHARACTERIZATION

When Dlangalala receives a letter from his son, Vusi, that he is sick, MaFakude (Vusi's mother) and MaDlamini are asked to go to see Vusi in Johannesburg. After meeting Vusi they go to Orlando. The following morning MaDlamini catches the early train from Orlando station to the city to get money from Vusi. At Canada Station, her train is involved in a collision, and she is taken to the Johannesburg General Hospital where she is treated for shock. When she wakes up the following day, she identifies herself as Themis Nxumalo, who has been travelling by train from Durban, to Johannesburg, after visiting her parents. When Vusi and his mother arrive, she completely denies them. She recalls everything, from the time she left her parents at Sayidi until her train (as she claims) had a crash, after they passed Pietermaritzburg. She gives the nurse all her particulars and those of her husband.

The hospital officials realize what has happened and privately make arrangements for a family reunion.

2. METHODS OF CHARACTERIZATION

There are many methods and techniques of character portrayal but, in the final analysis, they may all fall into two, namely, direct presentation and indirect presentation.

CHAPTER TWO

CHARACTERISATION

1 INTRODUCTION

Characterisation is the sum total of techniques employed by an artist in presenting characters in a literary work so that such characters are seen by the readers as persons endowed with moral and physical qualities. This point is emphasized by Shaw when stating that

"Characterisation is the creation of images of imaginary persons in a work of literary art."

Shaw (1972:71)

The most important point about characterisation is that, although characters are fictitious creations, the artist must present lifelike characters. In order to be convincing the characters must, first of all, be grounded in reality. They must be true, not so much to our world, but to the world that the artist has created for them. They must always be credible and dynamic in order to produce in our minds an understanding of the characters as people who might really exist (Msimang 1986:99).

2 METHODS OF CHARACTERISATION

There are many methods and techniques of character portrayal but, in the final analysis, they may all fall into two, namely, direct presentation and indirect presentation.

2.1 DIRECT METHOD OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL

Direct presentation of characters is an explicit way of characterisation. Here the narrator himself describes his characters. The narrator tells us what they look like physically and he may even describe how they think and how they feel.

Explicit characterisation can happen in three ways. Firstly through self analysis. This is when the character talks about himself to himself. Secondly it can be done when a character talks about himself to other characters using dialogue. They are likely to respond to what he is saying. They either support or deny what he is saying. And lastly, when the narrator makes explicit statements about characters. For example about their appearance, their behaviour or habits, etc.

2.2 INDIRECT METHOD OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL

In this method the narrator does not tell us about the characters: they must be perceived and clearly recognized by the readers (or spectators). The traits, rather than described, are displayed and exemplified in various ways. This method is generally used in drama, and is therefore known as the dramatic method of characterisation. The reader is more active because he has to infer implied quality. He has to deduce for himself what kind of character is presented. This can be done in a number of ways: by observing the character's actions and behaviour, his speech, his surroundings or environment, and through his or her appearance.

A trait may be implied both by one time action or by habitual actions. We learn a great deal about the characters in a play by closely observing their actions. There are countless questions which can be asked about the characters in action. And by answering as many of them as possible, one attempts to analyze the characters in terms of their actions. One asks why

Characters can also be distinguished by their external characteristics. One time action tends to evoke the dynamic aspect of the character and it often plays a part in a narrative turning point. Although a one time action does not reflect constant qualities, it is not less characteristics of the character. But its dramatic impact suggests that the traits it reveals are qualitatively more crucial than those numerous habits representing the character's routine (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:61).

are also often used as traits characterizing protagonists (Rimmon-Kenan 1983:61).

According to Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 61-63) actions, whether one time or habitual, can belong to one of the three categories:

- (i) Act of commission - when something is being done by the character.
- (ii) Act of omission - when something we expect the character to do he does not do.
- (iii) Contemplated act - this refers to the unrealized plan or intention of the character.

A character can be characterised by his speech. The language of any given character is extremely central to his personality attributes. Not only the kind of words which the character uses, but also the manner of his utterances. What one character says about another is important in that it may characterise not only the one spoken about, but also the one who speaks (Reaske 1966:47).

Characters can also be distinguished by their external appearance. One has to note however, that there are those external features which are beyond the character's control, such as his height, or the colour of his eyes, and those which at least partly depend on the character's own input, like clothing and hair-style (Rimmon-Kenan 1983:65). At times external appearance speaks for itself, and at times its relation to a trait is explained by the narrator.

A character's physical surroundings (e.g. room, house, town, street), as well as his human environment (family, social class) are also often used as traits connoting metonymies (Rimmon-Kenan 1983:66).

Characters, however, are identified not only by their words or actions, but also by their names. Naming goes a long way in delineating character. However, naming is regarded by many critics as the simplest form of characterisation.

In concluding we need to point out that both methods of characterisation are good, depending on the artistic manner in which they are employed. Many critics maintain that the dramatic method is useful in delineating the main characters, especially where they are dramatised in interaction and counteraction with other characters. Again, this method is not without its weak points. If used, for instance, in a novel, it tends to be tedious and boring when the author concentrates on character portrayal at the expense of other aspects of the novel.

Some critics regard the direct method of character portrayal as the lowest form of art. They feel that, by commenting on a character, the artist forces the readers to see the character through his eyes. And this hampers the reader's imaginative involvement and interpretation. Some critics, however, see advantages in this method and maintain that it is most suitable for minor characters as it lends them rapid clarity (Msimang 1986:102).

It goes without saying that drama especially employs the indirect method of character portrayal, as a character comes alive through his speech and actions. The direct method can, however, also be used, especially with other actors describing a particular character, or with the playwright giving detailed didactic informations.

3 PRINCIPLES OF CHARACTERISATION

The image of a character can be constructed and distinguished by following the four basic narratological principles. These are:

- (i) Repetition - this is when relevant characteristics are repeated for a number of times.
- (ii) Accumulation - when many things, which are not the same, are repeated (i.e. doing the same thing which is related).
- (iii) Relationship with other characters - how the character behaves in the company of others, how he relates to others.
- (iv) Transformation - a character may change from what he has been at the beginning of a text (In most cases such a transformation signifies a turning point in the narrative) (Bal 1980:85-86).

These four different principles work together to construct the image of the character.

4 KINDS OF CHARACTERS

Characters are classified according to their function or role in the story. Thus we encounter main characters as well as minor or secondary characters. We also get foils, heroes and villains.

The hero is the most prominent character in any story. Everything in the narrative focuses on him. He exists in order

to promote the interests of the theme. He may win, in which case he is the hero in the true sense of the word, or he may lose, in which case he is the victim. In drama this character is referred to as the protagonist.

The villain is, in prominence, second only to the hero. Both are main characters. The villain or antagonist, as he is called in drama, is usually more bad than good in that he features in the story with the purpose of 'thwarting' the very interests the hero is trying to promote. He puts obstacles in the way of the hero. The presence of the villain helps to intensify conflict and generates suspense and tension.

Like a hero, a villain may be a single character or a group of characters.

A foil is a minor or secondary character. The foil serves as a supporter of the hero or of the villain. It can be a single character or a group of characters (Msimang 1986:104).

5 ACTORS ON THE STORY LEVEL

On the first level (i.e. the story level), as discussed in chapter 1, we do not talk about the characters, but actors and actants. On this level actors are seen in groups and not as individuals.

The word 'actor', according to Bal (1980:25), is a general term which covers a larger area than a more specific term could do. For example, a dog or even a machine could act as an actor. Whereas a character is an actor provided with distinctive human characteristics. In this sense a character resembles a human being and on the other hand an actor need not necessarily do so. An actor is therefore a structural position.

Actors are regarded in their relationship to sequences of events which they cause or undergo. In some stories there are actors

who have no functional part since they do not cause or undergo functional events. This means that if this particular actor does not form part of the functional category, it is not to be taken into consideration in the classification of actors (Bal 1980:25).

6 CLASSES OF ACTORS

Mieke Bal (1980:26), in dividing actors into classes, takes as a basis the presumption that human thinking and action are always directed towards an aim. So actors have an intention, and they aspire towards an aim. That aspiration refers to the achievement of something agreeable or favourable; or it might be the evasion from something disagreeable or unacceptable.

6.1 SUBJECT AND OBJECT

The first distinction is between the actor who follows an aim and the aim itself. The two classes of actors to be distinguished are the subject and the object.

The subject is an actor who is striving for a goal. The goal aspired to becomes the object-actant. Most of the time the object is an abstract and not a person. For example, objects of intention found in many stories are riches, possessions, wisdom, love, happiness, a just society, etc. The subject is usually a person or a personified animal or object (Bal 1980:27).

6.1 POWER AND RECEIVER

In most cases we notice that the intention of the subject is, in itself, not sufficient to reach the desired object. There are always powers which either assist the subject to reach his aim or prevent him from achieving his goal. From this we distinguish another class of actors, consisting of those who support the subject in the realization of his aim and supply him with the object. This actor is called the power, and the person to whom the object is given is then called the receiver.

The power is in many cases not a person, but an abstraction, for example, it can be society, fate, time, cleverness, etc. Power in most cases remains in the background. The receiver in most cases is a person and is often the same person as the subject, (because usually he desires something or somebody for himself). There is, however, a possibility of the coalescence of the two actants into one actor, or the reverse.

6.2 HELPER AND OPPONENT

The third class of actants distinguished regards helpers and opponents. We have identified the subject who wants something which he either gets or does not. At times the aim is difficult to achieve, because the subject meets with resistance on the way and he also receives help. These actants are not in direct relation to the object, but to the functions that connect the subject to the object. They determine the various adventures of the subject who must sometimes overcome great oppositions before he can achieve his goal. Most of the time the subject is helped by the helper to reach his desired goal. There can be more than one helper in a story. This is also true of the opponents.

The opponent can be a person or anything that makes it difficult for the subject to reach his goal. In many cases helpers of one actor are the opponents of the other.

It is the presence of helpers and opponents which makes a story suspenseful and readable - as opponents must be overcome one by one.

7 ACTORS IN UTHEMI

In the drama under consideration Themí is the subject. Her first aim is to visit her parents. It must have been a long time since she had visited them. This is shown when she is

boarding the train home, as her parents, together with her sister, accompany her to the station. Themis's sister remarks that Themis is lucky and is favoured because even their father, Somntumane, accompanies her to the station. This is unusual for her father to do. The impression we get is that Themis for a long time has been longing to visit her parents. Eventually she succeeds. Her success has depended on her husband, John. He has made it possible for her to go, first of all, by giving his permission since she is dependent on him. He has given her money for the journey. He has even sent her some more money while she was in Natal. John therefore is a helper. The power is love and remembrance (Themis's remembrance for her parents).

The subject becomes the receiver. When Themis arrives at Sayidi to visit her parents, she becomes the receiver because visiting her parents has been her aim. When this is realized she receives the joy and happiness of being with her parents. They also become receivers in that they are happy to be with their daughter after such a long absence.

After staying with her parents, Themis must return to her family in Johannesburg. This is the main object for her (she wants to return to her family safely). Many helpers assist her to achieve her desired goal.

First of all her husband, John, is the most important helper, because he has given her money to buy the ticket. Other people who can be seen as her helpers are her parents and her sister who help her with her luggage to the station. Her mother makes enough provisions for her journey. When she is in the train she meets Bhani, who helps her when they arrive at Durban station. He carries all the heavy luggage. The porter at the station also comes to her rescue when Bhani fails to arrive on time for the train. Themis, who has relied on him for assistance, is helped by the porter, who carries her luggage to the train. We have said that it is not usually easy for the subject to achieve

his desired goal, because of the opponent(s). The subject meets with resistance on the way. The first opponent of our subject, Themí, is the accident at Shivili. Themí could not achieve or reach her goal, to be at home with her family, because her train meets with an accident at Shivili, and she loses her memory completely. She becomes deaf and dumb as a result of the accident. This makes it difficult for her to achieve her goal. She is physically well, she can walk and almost do everything except to talk, and this prevents her from identifying herself when she gets to Dlangalala's kraal. Because of the accident she fails to reach her destination.

Fortunately she is not rejected by Dlangalala. Although Dlangalala and his family help Themí by allowing her to stay with them, they can be seen as opponents. Firstly, Dlangalala's failure to report Themí at the police station makes it difficult for John to find his wife. After searching for her, almost at all the hospitals where those who survived the accident were taken, and after visiting the mortuary, John concludes that his wife has died in the accident.

Dlangalala's failure to report Themí is caused by his bad experience with the police. He fears that the police might jail him, as they did when he came to report the discovery of the dead man near his kraal. Otherwise, if he had taken Themí to the police station, the police might have helped by getting in contact with her relatives. Dlangalala can therefore be seen as both a helper and an opponent.

Themí's deafness is caused by the train accident (which can be seen as an opponent). While staying with the Dlangalala family, two goods trains collide near where Themí is collecting 'amalongwe'. This accident helps Themí regain her speech. The second train accident can be regarded as Themí's helper. After this accident Themí is able to speak. She can read and write

and even speak both English and Afrikaans. In fact, she is herself, except that she does not remember anything about herself - who she is, where she comes from and how she came to Shivili. Otherwise she looks normal and responds to all that is being said to her.

Themi's illness (loss of memory) can be seen as an opponent because, after the train accident, she is able to speak but she does not remember anything about herself. This makes it difficult for her to identify herself. As a result she goes on living with the Dlangalala family.

Themi has two objects. Firstly to discover herself (although she is not aware of this, we the readers can see that she is struggling to recover from the illness). This illness prevents her from discovering herself and from reaching her goal (to be with her family). This we see when she recovers at the General Hospital: the first thing she asks for is her family: her husband and her two children.

When Vusi writes a letter to his parents that he is sick, Themi is asked to accompany MaFakude to Johannesburg to see Vusi. Vusi's illness helps Themi: first of all it is because of this that Themi goes to Johannesburg (otherwise, had Vusi not been ill, Themi would have remained at Shivili for the rest of her life).

The third train accident at Canada station can also be regarded as a helper for our subject, Themi, although it makes it hard for MaDlamini (as Themi is known) to achieve her goal, that is, reaching the city where she is to get money from Vusi. In this regard it is seen as an opponent for MaDlamini. After this accident MaDlamini becomes Themi. She recovers from, not only the injuries she sustained during the accident at Canada

station, (the second accident) but also recovers from the illness she suffered at Shivili - she recovers and regains her memory.

Again we find nurses, doctors and other hospital officials helping Themis at the General Hospital to recover. If she recovers, she will be able to see her family again (the first object).

As stated earlier there can be more than one subject in a story. The doctors and nurses at the General Hospital can be seen as subject II. Their aim is to help the patients. After the accident at Canada station many people who were injured could not be identified. It became difficult for the hospital staff to get hold of their relatives. We see people visiting the patients helping by identifying the injured patients who could not talk and by even identifying the deceased. Amongst them we find Bhani Mzimela and his wife. (Bhani helped Themis in Durban when she was returning home after visiting her parents, seven years earlier as we the readers know). Bhani sees Themis lying unconscious in the ICU ward, but hesitates to identify her because he knows that Themis died at Shivili. He had come and saw for himself that Themis's coach was in pieces. He had even visited her husband, John, after the accident at Shivili. He leaves the hospital not believing his eyes.

Vusi and his mother, MaFakude, come to see MaDlamini and help the hospital officials by identifying her; because, when she was admitted, she could not talk. When MaDlamini awakes the following day, she identifies herself as Themis Nxumalo. When they return to see her she denies them and says she has never seen them before. This makes things difficult for them and especially for MaFakude who becomes frightened (she remembers what happened to her husband) and asks her son to leave before they are jailed.

8 CHARACTER PORTRAYAL IN UTHEMI

Reference has been made to the fact that there is very little direct description of characters in drama. However, in the prologue or in the stage directions, the playwright often describes the characters' physical details. We learn from these stage directions what the character looks like and probably how he dresses when a character walks onto the stage. It is clear from his appearance whether he or she is attractive or unattractive, old or young, small or large, etc.

The main character in UThemi is Themi: yet the dramatist has not seen it necessary to describe her so that we may know what she looks like - because of the limitations of drama. Some dialogue and description in parenthetical remarks is used in portraying her. The parenthetical remarks used in the following passages do not only describe action, but give us a picture of what Themi looks like:

Insizwa: Ngiyabonga nkosazana. Ngisamukela ngenkulu injabulo isimemo sakho

UThemi: [Ethi ukuqhelisa izihlathi bese ethi laphalazi ngamehlo akhe amhlophe anganyelwe yihlathi elimnyama lamashiya.]

Ngiyabona ukuthi unomqondo okhaliphileyo, ogijimayo futhi. Kufanele ukuba umuntu awaqikelele amagama awakhulumayo kuwe.

Insizwa: [Imoyizela ngendlela yokuzama ukuzenza muhle okuka Themi]. Ha, akunani-ke ngoba nawe usuziphindisele. Sesiyalingana okwamanje. Asazi-ke ukuthi ngubani ozobuye aqale omunye....

Dube (p. 29)

Insizwa: Thank you, lady. I accept your invitation with pleasure....

Themi: [Smiling slightly and throwing her white eyes which are shadowed by a forest of black eye-brows at him.] I can see that you have a bright, sharp mind. One must be very careful of her words to you.

Insizwa: [Smiling in a manner to make himself as beautiful as Themí:] Well, it is okay because you have hit back. We are now even. But we don't know who is going to start provoking the other first.....

In this passage we see Themí meeting Bhani (Insizwa, as we later get to know his name) in the train. No physical features or description of either of them is directly given by the dramatist. The narrator has indirectly, through the parenthetical remarks, presented the picture of Themí. The way Themí is introduced, however, convinces us that she is a very beautiful lady. This is in fact confirmed when Bhani fails to 'hold himself' and starts flirting with her. He is taken with Themí's beauty.

When Themí arrives at Dlangalala's kraal, at Shivili, after the train accident, MaFakude reports the arrival of this unusual stranger to her husband. Dlangalala sends his son, Vusi, to go and call Nomasonto. Here again we see Themí's physical description given, indirectly, in parenthetical remarks.

UDlangalala: Vusi hamba uyobiza uNomasonto. [Uyaphuma uVusi].

Yimihlola ka Galu, Nyamenja! Ngathi mzukwana ngithi ngesula ishwa elingivelele kwaqhamuka isigameko esisha: uthi izinto zingihambela kahle?

Impela bangilandele. [Kungena uVusi elandelwa ngudadewabo. Dukuduku sekungena isihambi sesifazane. Sigqokile sipelele kuyabonakala ukuthi ngumuntu ohloniphekile, ophucuzekile, wasemadolobheni. Yisiphalaphala esikhanyisa okwelanga. Sihlale eduze kukaNomasonto].

Nomasonto, ngubani lona? [Ukhomba isihambi].

UNomasonto: Kangimazi, Baba.

Dlangalala: Vusi, go and call Nomasonto. [Vusi leaves].

It's Galu's misfortune, Nyamenja! On the day when I am in fact 'removing' the misfortune which befell me, a new one happens: are things ever going to go well with me?

Really they are after me (I'm being bewitched). [Unexpectedely, Vusi comes in followed by his sister. Shortly afterwards enters the female stranger. She is smartly dressed, and it shows that she has dignity, is civilized and she is from the city. She is a beautiful lady, as beautiful as the sun. She sits next to Nomasonto].

Nomasonto, who is she? [Pointing at the stranger].

Nomasonto: I don't know her, father.

As readers, we are only able to imagine just how beautiful Themí, (the stranger) is after this description, because the dramatist has used the sun image.

Besides the description in the above passages, Dube also successfully uses the indirect method of character portrayal in presenting the main character, Themí, through dialogue. Besides telling the story, which is of course the main function of dialogue in drama, dialogue is used as a dramatic device to reveal the characters.

Through the conversation between Dlangalala and his wife, MaFakude, about the 'stranger' (Themí), one gets to know that Themí is not very old, she is young. This we get when MaFakude advises her husband not to report the arrival of this stranger at the police station because by so doing he can be jailed, as it happened to him when he reported the dead man he had found near his kraal. MaFakude suggests that if their guests (because they are going to have a party) ask about her, they must be told that the stranger (Themí) is their relative, or alternatively that she is Vusi's second wife. She argues that no one will question or deny it, since she is not even older than MaMzimela, Vusi's wife.

After the party we meet two women, MaXaba and MaLukhele, going home. They are talking about the party. MaXaba (who is a bit drunk) is complaining that MaFakude, even though she gave them food, was not friendly and was not happy. She further says that MaFakude failed to cater for her visitors. MaLukhele quickly dismisses these allegations, and MaXaba seeing that she's got no point in criticising MaFakude, makes negative remarks about Themis (the stranger) in the following dialogue:

UMaXaba: Akunani kodwa nakhu usenze idili, wasiphakela ukudla, sadla sesutha. Wayeyoze asiphe nini ukudla lokho! Ngikubuzile ukuthi ngubani lowamakoti, ingabe yintombi yini, obegqigqizela nezitsha kanye nabaphakayo.

UMaLukhele: Angizwisanga kahle ukuthi uMaFakude utheni ngesikhathi nami ngibuza kuye ngaye. Mhlawumbe umlobokazi wesibili ka Vusi, noma mhlawumbe yisihlobo nje sakwaDlangalala .. angisakhumbuli.

UMaXaba: Pho yize kungumakoti kuyisihlobo, ulunya lolu, ukungakhulumisi abantu yini? Awu suka! uqeda bonke ubuhle lobu bakhe.

UMaLukhele: Udlala ngomntanabantu. Ingani ubenomusa emoyizela ngaso sonke isikhathi lesi. Kanti ulunya yini MaXaba?

Dube (p 63)

MaXaba: Anyway it doesn't matter since he has thrown a party, he gave us food and we ate and satisfied ourselves... when was he going to give us that food! I asked you who is that bride or a lady, who was busy with the food in the kitchen together with those who were dishing food.

MaLukhele: I did not understand clearly what MaFakude said when I asked her about her. Maybe she is Vusi's second wife or maybe a relative of Dlangalala's ... I don't remember....

MaXaba: And so, even if she is a bride or a relative, not to talk with other people is to be unfriendly or insincere, why? Oh no! her bad behaviour finishes (removes) all her beauty.

MaLukhele: No, you are not being fair to her. She was friendly and smiling all the time. Tell me, what is to be unfriendly MaXaba?

In their conversation we further see Themis picture. MaXaba says that Themis (the stranger) is beautiful but she is unfriendly. (Of course they are not aware that this woman (Themis) is deaf and dumb, her smiling makes MaLukhele believe that she is a friendly person). However, we agree with MaLukhele that Themis is friendly and kind. This we see when she meets Bhani in her coach. Although she is suspicious at first, she quickly gets along with him and shows her kindness and thankfulness to him by inviting him for lunch.

Besides 'seeing' Themis from what the two women are saying about her, we are in fact getting pictures of the two women as well, because characters are often depicted by their speech. For example, from the above conversation, MaXabas personality and identity emerge. She is unsympathetic. We know that Dlangalala has slaughtered those two goats firstly to thank his ancestors after his release from prison, and that he wanted to 'wash' his kraal and remove all evils following the discovery of the dead man near his kraal. But the way MaXaba speaks, shows that she is not sensitive to the whole idea behind the party. She does not sympathize with Dlangalala about what happened to him. This we see when she exaggerates the story of the discovery of the dead man by Dlangalala. She says that Dlangalala killed the man and the police 'detected' him from the eyes of the deceased when they took photos of him. She jokes about it and further tries to undermine Dlangalalas party.

UMaXaba: Liyasola ibandla! Singazi ngani ukuthi umuntu lowo wafa kanjani? Umuntu angafela ngenhla komuzi wakho uthule unghlabi umkhosi! Kodwa khona lapho lesosidumbu sigcine sitholwe nguwe, ngovivi ngakusasa!

Nabelungu bamane bamededela nje...

UMaLukhele: Wakhululwa ngudokotela, okunguyena owafika waveza ubufakazi bokuthi umuntu wazifela engagetshengiwe.

UMaXaba: Akunani kodwa nakhu usenze idili, wasiphakela ukudla sadla sesutha. Wayeyoze asiphe nini ukudla lokho....!

Dube (pp 62 - 63)

MaXaba: The men-folk are suspicious! How would we know how the man died? A person is killed near your kraal, but you decide to keep quiet and not to shout to alert other people....! But at the same time it is you who end up discovering the corpse very early the following day! Even the whites (the police) just released him but....

MaLukhele: He was released by the doctor who came and gave evidence that that man had died naturally and was not murdered.

MaXaba: Well it does not matter because anyway he has now given the party, and he has given us food, we ate and satisfied ourselves. Otherwise when would he ever give us this food.

So we can see that MaXaba is 'crying through one eye, like a crocodile'. Inwardly she is saying 'yes it was good of Dlangalala being arrested and put in jail'. But MaLukhele is honest and she does not support her when she speaks negatively or badly of Dlangalala and his wife, MaFakude.

Of course MaXaba is drunk (after the party), and therefore her estimation and description is, perhaps, not very perceptive. It can be that Dube has deliberately presented a drunken MaXaba, for us to see other characters through her eyes, but by reversing the meaning of what she says, for example about MaFakude, especially because we, the readers, know that MaFakude is in fact a kind and sympathetic woman. This is one of the devices of characterisation frequently employed by a dramatist. Here the playwright establishes in our mind that a certain

character is either foolish or wise, before allowing that character to describe other characters. If he/she is a fool we only arrive at the truth of what he/she is saying by reversing it (Reaske 1966:47).

When Themí arrives at Dlangalala's kraal, it is MaFakude who influences Dlangalala to allow the stranger (Themí) to stay, not only because she fears that if Dlangalala reports the matter to the police, he might end up in jail, as it happened when he reported about the dead man. MaFakude shows 'ubuntu' (humanity) and kindness, probably because this stranger is disabled, mentally and physically, as she is deaf and dumb. She regards the arrival of this strange woman as a blessing. She says in a sympathetic voice:

*"...Ngokwami ukubona kuhle lomuntu kaNkulunkulu azihlalele
lapha emzini kaGalú aze azihambe njengalokhu ezifikele.
Singambizanga singeze samxosha. Uma simxosha bese evelwa
yingozi icala liphezu kwakho"*

Dube (p 60)

"... As far as I'm concerned, it is better that we let this person sent by God stay here at Galu's kraal for as long as she wants to, until she decides to leave just as she decided to come here. Since we did not invite or call her, we dare not chase her away. What if we chase her away and something bad or dangerous happens to her? You would be accountable".

MaXaba, instead, is not concerned and does not show any sympathy, as she looks at life superficially. In this way she can be seen to be playing the role of a fool. When a woman (inkosikazi) joins her and MaLukhele on the way, MaXaba does even bother to listen to the story of the horrible tragedy that has just taken place, which the woman is reporting. Although this woman is also drunk, she is 'touched' by what has happened, namely the death of so many people at Shivili. Her tone and the way she phrases her sentences send a specific message of sympathy. This is why at the end MaLukhele cannot stop weeping. But MaXaba is annoyed and impatient, and she does not

stop to listen because of the manner in which the woman is talking (the woman is full of grief and is weeping, and therefore she cannot talk properly).

UMaXaba: [Uphelelwa yisineke, nefumuka abencame ngalo kwaDlangalala kungathi seliyambalekela] Asihambe, MaLukhele! Azixoxele yedwa indaba yakhe... ayilalele yena futhi. Asebehambile, bahambile, olwabo uhambo, singeze sabavimbela, kanti futhi singeze sababuyisa...

UMaLukhele: [Uchilizela uMaXaba eceleni] Kahle bo, MaXaba [KuMaXaba nganhlanye] Bengisalalele njalo, Nkosikazi ukuthi isililo lesi osikhihlayo singesani.

Dube (p 66)

MaXaba: [Becoming very impatient, showing signs of drunkenness, after drinking that traditional beer at Dlangalala's kraal]. Let us go, MaLukhele! Let her tell her story to herself... and let her listen to it for herself.

Those who have died, have died; they have finished their journey; we cannot stop them, and, further more, we cannot bring them back...

MaLukhele: [Pushing MaXaba aside] Wait a bit, MaXaba [to MaXaba, aside] I was still listening, dear woman, to the tragedy you are crying about.

After hearing the whole story about the train accident at Shivili, MaLukhele is 'touched'; while she joins the mourning woman, MaXaba keeps on going and talking to herself showing very little concern. She says:

"Iziphiwo ngeziphiwo... onomhobholo makafise ezabanye hleze afise imfakabili, hleze afise iziphiwo zabanye - amashwa, izindimbane zawo. Mina - qha! Ezami zinganele, ezinhle nezimbi, ezinzima nezilula ... zingezami zonke ngokuba uMdali ungabele zona. Ukufa ngesitimela yisabelo sabo. Bayakhala abangaziyo nabangakholwayo..... oMaLukhele...."

Dube (p 68)

Gifts are gifts ... if you are jealous, you may wish for other people's gifts, and can even wish and can even long for other people's talents or even their misfortunes, the lot of them. But not me! Mine are enough for me - bad or good, simple or complicated ... they are all mine, for my Creator has shared them with me. To die by train was their calling. Those who do not understand are weeping and those who do not believe people like MaLukhele..."

Although MaXaba is a 'fool' there is some sense in what she says. She is able to capture the truth of the situation. This is typical of the 'fool' in many drama, as it happens that there is always sense in what they are saying - although their behaviour is somehow peculiar. In this instance the author shows MaXaba as being out of her mind because she is intoxicated. But the Romans used to say: "In vino veritas" (Truth appears in the wine), i.e when one is under the influence, one may say much more than when one is sober and in full control of his/her faculties.

MaXaba is telling a profound truth about death. We know how we view death and how people normally react to it. At the end she says:

"... *Bebengeze benze okunye... yintando, yisabelo sabo. Ubungeze wabephuca noma usuthanda, nabo sebethanda. Nezinkubela lezo azifanga hayi ngobungcweti bazo, kodwa ngoba kuyisabelo sazo... Mina engikholwayo nje ngithi, Amen. [Uthi ukuyenzela lapho eqholosha]"*
Dube (p 69)

"...There was nothing they could have done... it is God's will, it is their fate. You could not take it from them even if you wanted to, or even if they wanted to. Those who were injured, who are now crippled and did not die, not because of their cleaverness, but because it was their fate. For me who believes, all I can say is, Amen. [Moving from side to side as she is boasting]

Another interesting character we meet in this play is 'Indoda Yokuqala' (the first man), as he is referred to in the play. Like MaXaba, he does not appear to be concerned or worried about what is happening, when the situation is tense and everyone else is upset. The presence of these characters, I think is worth mentioning, because it reflects real life: such cynical characters often appear at critical moments when the atmosphere is tense, and they seem not to be overcome by worrisome circumstances. At the beginning of the play we find Dlangalala worried and frightened after he has discovered a dead man near his kraal. He invites his neighbours to come and witness the 'evil' that has befallen his kraal. Among the many men who come, we see 'indoda yokuqala' (the first man). He represents one of those faceless and nameless characters, which are simply referred to according to their sex, and are not given any name. After hearing Dlangalala speaking and following him to the dead man, the atmosphere is tense: one can feel this because no one is talking, and even Dlangalala just talks to himself (as if there were no other people around).

But 'indoda yokuqala' becomes annoyed and shows impatience. He says:

"Yebo, siyezwa futhi siyabona ukuthi kukhona okukuphetha kabi, kodwa yini ungasilandisi sisheshe sizwe yikhona sizokuthungisa injobo, khathisimbe sikuphekele ngokulila....?"

Dube (p 5)

"Yes, we hear very well, and we can see that there is something worrying you, but why are you not relating it to us quickly so that we can assist you where necessary" Perhaps we should join you by weeping with you?..."

The 'first man' is not sympathetic with Dlangalala and does not take the situation seriously.

After they have been shown the dead man, 'indoda yokuqala' still asks if the man is really dead, and he wants to touch him to satisfy himself that he is really dead. Another man from the group shouts at him not to touch the corpse. He suggests that

they must report the matter to the police, otherwise, if they don't, they will be committing a crime. 'Indoda yokuqala', however, simply chips in lightly and says:

*"Sekuvele kulicala. Ingani okhokho babona ukuthi icala lembula ingubo lingene!
Cha, wena wako Dlangalala, mina ngiyabona ukuthi wehlelwe yicala uqobo lwalo".*

Dube (p 7)

*"It is already a crime. Didn't even our forefathers say that a crime may sneak in unexpectedly?
Oh no, Dlangalala, I can see that you are really facing a perfect crime."*

The manner in which he speaks does not reflect the fact that Dlangalala is worried and has called the men to give him help and advice. The man takes the situation lightly and jokes about it. It is part of human behaviour to seek some release from a very serious situation through a macabre sense of humour that tries to hide the deep worrying feelings. This becomes clear when another man says that they must satisfy themselves that the man is dead before they report his finding to the police. His comments show the light-hearted way he is trying to react, as he makes a joke of it.

*Indoda yokuqala: Uthini lo? Ingani mina nithe angingamthinti ngezandla! Futhi kanti singodokotela yini thina, lapho singakopola ukuthi umuntu ubulewe yini?
Akamkopole ke owazi lokho!
Mina bengithi*

Indoda enye: Chabo bo mnumzane wami, akusiyo indlela yokuphendula leyo.....

Dube (p 7)

*Indoda Yokuqala: What is this one saying? Didn't you say I shouldn't touch him with my hands? And, are we doctors, that we should examine him to find out the cause of this man's death?
Let anyone who knows how to examine it do it!
I was going to say.....*

Indoda enye: No, no my fellow man, this is not the right way to talk.....'

At the end, it is agreed that they must go to the police station and report the matter, but 'indoda yokuqala' again distances himself from this when he remarks:

*"Kuzobika thina? Kanti akuzukubika uDlangalala?"
Dube (p 7)*

"Are we to report? Is it not Dlangalala who must make a report?"

Even other men become annoyed about indoda yokuqala's behaviour. He is in fact 'putting his finger into the already bleeding wound', causing more 'pain' to Dlangalala, who is shaken by this incident. 'Indoda yesibili' (second man) seems to be aware of this and tries to come to Dlangalala's support and says:

"Ukulalela wena kuzosibangela amakhanda abuhlungu, noDlangalala kumone umphefumulo wakhe, kumdide, nengqondo, uma wenza nje. Ungamlaleli, Dlangalala. Size lapha ukuzokubonisa umhlolo lona, sikubambise lapho singakubambisa khona..."

Dube (p 7)

"Listening to you will make our heads sick and hurt Dlangalala 's soul, and confuse his mind, if you behave in this fashion. Do not listen to him, Dlangalala. We have come here to be your witness about this bad thing, and to help you where we can...."

Besides the content (what one character says about another), the form or nature of speech and its form and tone play a very important role in depicting the character, especially his thoughts and feelings (the private side of the character). This usually we cannot see, except in the actions that follow. The narrator cannot tell us about the innermost thoughts and feelings of the character. A dramatist must therefore turn to

the convention of the 'poem' by means of a soliloquy. This point is explained by Boulton:

"... An interesting character may explain himself more or less directly to the evidence in a soliloquy. The soliloquy in a play is intended to be a direct and sincere expression of the speaker's real thoughts".

Boulton (1969:81)

The use of soliloquies and asides is one of the most expert devices of characterisation.

Dube has succeeded in creating a poetic soliloquy which is best suitable for revealing and expressing the thoughts and feelings of the characters. For instance 'inkosikazi' (on p 67), when she finds MaXaba and MaLukhele talking about the dead man (the one who was discovered by Dlangalala), feels that she can't just tell them about the many people who have died in the train accident. She becomes emotional because of the death scenes and uses poetic language to reveal her feelings. She talks as if she were alone. In fact she even starts crying when she relates the accident.

Other characters who are distinguished by the language they use are MaMngadi and Somntumane, Themis's parents. When they hear about the train accident they become worried as they think of their daughter, Themis, who has also left by train to go to Johannesburg. Their thoughts and feelings are reflected by the language they use. When Somntumane tries to comfort and convince his wife that may be by chance Themis was not on that train, she accepts it, but one can feel that her words are full of sorrow. She talks as if she were alone, in a sorrowful soliloquy.

UMaMngadi: Ngiyawezwa, Baba, amazwi akho enduduzo.
Ezindlebeni zami lawamazwi mahle,
Enhliziweni yami kanaze athole indawo
Ngokuba ngingumfazi othwele usizi,
Usizi nethemba yimpuku nekati.
Lapho kungena ukukhanya kuphuma ubumnyama,
Ndawonye ithemba nosizi kakusoze kuhlale.
Ngiyothini lapho nguThemi ngilahlekelwa
Ithemba lami lamathemba, umongo wempilo yami.
[Sekuyathula cwaka endlini, akekho okhulumisa omunye - Yilowo
nalowo ukhuluma nelingaphakathi kwakhe...]
Dube (p 75)

MaMngadi: I understand, Father, your comforting words. To my
ears your words sound nice. In my heart they will not find
any place, because I'am a miserable wife,
Misery and hope are enemies,
When light comes, it is the end of darkness,
Hope and misery will never stay together.
What shall I say if I lose Themi,
My hope of hopes, the root of my life.
[There is silence in the house, no one is talking to anyone.
Everyone is talking to himself...]

MaMngadi has lost hope. Her words are 'touching' and are full of grief. If she had used ordinary everyday language she would have failed to reveal her deepest feelings about the death of her daughter.

When Jabulile reads a telegram from John - (Themi's husband), confirming the news that Themi died in the train accident, Somntumane cannot hold himself, he cries. He shows his grief and talks as if he were alone, in a long poetic soliloquy. Again at the end of the story or play, when he and other family members are called to meet Themi at the General Hospital after the accident at Canada Station, he is so excited that he runs out of words, and uses a poetic soliloquy to reveal his feelings. He says:

'Amehlo ami akubonile ukusindiswa kwendlu yami.
Uyisimanga wena Simakade.
Umusa wakho wedlula ukwenza...'

Dube (p 129)

*'My eyes have seen how my house (family) was saved.
You are great, you Almighty.
Your kindness is above everything...."*

After this he starts a song and others join him. The song he chooses sort of summarises everything - it shows how grateful and thankful he is.

Another method employed by Dube in portraying his main character is transformation, when a character changes from what he has appeared at the beginning. In most cases such a change signifies a turning point in the narrative. However in UThemi we have partial transformation. At the beginning of the story we meet Themi who has visited her parents in Natal. After the train accident at Shivili, Themi sustains brain injuries, and she loses her speech and hearing, becoming deaf and dumb. She arrives at Dlangalala's kraal where she is given a new name, MaDlamini, because she cannot introduce herself and she does not know herself. So it appears as if there are two different characters in one. At Shivili Themi is not known - she is a new character all together as seen by the people there. Naturally, neither John nor her parents know about this other side of Themi, who is now MaDlamini. It is only we, the audience, who know.

Here we witness a partial transformation, because there are no major changes undergone by our character, Themi, except that MaDlamini is deaf and dumb. This, however, does not influence her behaviour and personality as such. What we see and hear about MaDlamini applies also to Themi. The only distinguishing feature of MaDlamini is that she smiles most of the time. This is a characteristic of deaf and dumb people, especially when they are in the company of others. This is remarked by MaXaba and MaLukhele. MaLukhele points out that when MaDlamini's suitors speak to her they get no answer except a smile. This does not mean that by smiling she is accepting what they are saying. Maybe it's because she doesn't understand what is being

said, or she wants to say something, but she cannot. However, when MaDlamini becomes Themis again, after the accident at Canada station, there is transformation again if we are to see through the eyes of MaFakude and Vusi. To them MaDlamini is a 'crook', unreliable - when she denies knowing them and identifies herself as Themis Nxumalo, from Orlando. MaFakude cannot believe her ears. She says:

UMaFakude: Ma-Dla-mi-ni! UnguThemis wakwaNxumalo
wakuphi manini?
Uyangibona ukuthi ngingubani mina?

Isiguli: [Ngomusa omkhulu nomoya opholile, ukhombisa
isihle kulaba abenza iphutha] Angikwazi mama.
Ungixolele impela, angisiyena lona othi nginguye. Mina
nginguThemis, onguMaXolo wase Orlando.
Dube (p 121)

MaFakude: Ma-Dla-mi-ni! You are Themis Nxumalo from
where as from when?
Do you see who am I?

Isiguli: [With kindness, showing sympathy to these
people who are making a mistake] I don't know you,
mother. Please forgive me, I am not the one whom you are
saying I am. I am Themis, born Xolo, from Orlando.

Vusi, too, is shocked and amazed at what he is hearing. He shouts;

"Hawu, MaDlamini! ... MaDlamini! MaDlamini! Usho
ukuthini? Ingani kuthangi lokhu...."
Dube (p 121)

Hawu MaDlamini! ...MaDlamini! MaDlamini!
What do you mean? But only yesterday that..."

Surely, after this, MaFakude and her son see themselves like crooks or fools. They quickly leave the hospital in fear, with MaFakude pleading with the nurse not to arrest them.

We sympathize with MaDlamini after this transformation. Firstly, she is not what MaFakude and Vusi think she is. She is not a crook, nor is she trying to deceive them or to act like a fool, as they think. It is possible that as they are leaving the hospital they are saying a lot of bad things about her. Especially Vusi. On Themis arrival at Shivili we saw that Vusi was very suspicious of her. He even tried to be harsh towards her to make sure that she (the stranger) was indeed deaf and dumb. He even said that he was used to such people in Johannesburg, people who pretended to be disabled, for the sake of robbing others.

As stated earlier we learn a great deal about the characters in a play by closely observing their actions or how they behave in different situations, or how do they differ from others in their behaviour when confronted by the same situation. The answers we get when we try to answer these questions help us to analyse the characters in terms of their actions (Reaske 1966:40).

When Themis arrives at Dlangalala's kraal, we expect Dlangalala to report her arrival to the police, especially because she is deaf and dumb. But he decides not to (this is an act of omission), partly because of his previous experience with the police or because his wife regards the arrival of this strange woman as a blessing. This we see again when MaFakude and Vusi visit MaDlamini at the General Hospital. When they hear MaDlamini identifying herself as Themis Nxumalo from Orlando, we expect them to confirm it by telling the hospital officials what they know about MaDlamini, i.e her arrival at Shivili. Instead they decide to leave the hospital fearing to be arrested and put in jail.

However, we can not see them as bad people, for failing to report what they know about MaDlamini because of Dlangalala's experience with the police.

In conclusion I must refer, once again, to the observation made earlier that since in drama the story is advanced by dialogue

and action, the narrator is not in a position to describe his characters for us, because characters are there to be seen and heard performing on the stage. Therefore to us, the readers, the dialogue must not only tell the story, but also create the setting and present the characters in action. Action in drama includes what is actually happening at any given time in the play. Like dialogue, action is the play itself. This point is emphasised by Altenberd and Lewis when they say:

"Dialogue itself is in a sense a form of action and the talking and the accompanying action are so integrated or fused that they seem one."

Altenberd and Lewis (1960: p 25)

It is through the dialogue that we are able to perceive the characters in drama. Although in UThemi there is not much physical action, we are able to 'see' what is happening through dialogue and to discern the feelings of various characters through the language they use. From the beginning of the play we see the characters engaged in some kind of mental action. This is revealed by the use of poetic language which is best suited for situations of mental stress as we have seen in most of the quoted passages. Psychological action mainly finds its form in poetry when there is, for instance, the shifting of moods and conflict between the attitudes of the characters. We witness strong mental action through the monologue used by a character, which not only tells us what he is thinking, but also what type of a person he is.

In drama every single fact or idea has to be conveyed to the audience by someone expressing it in dialogue. Therefore, dialogue in drama is more than an exchange of speeches, for what is being said must be understood either in conjunction with, or against the background of how it is being said, and in the context of style, speech and tone. In this way we are able to see not only the character talking, but also the character spoken to, as well as the character under discussion. Even if we do not witness the actual performance of the play, we are able to 'see' the action in the theatre of our minds through the dramatic dialogue.

CHAPTER THREE

STORY-TIME

1 INTRODUCTION ON TIME

Time, as mentioned in chapter one, is a constituent factor at both the story level and the text level.

According to Rimmon-Kenan (1983:44), time in narrative fiction can be defined as the relation of chronology between story and text.

This definition presupposes that time in narrative fiction is realized in relation to events. Events are defined and seen as processes, and a process is a change or development, and therefore presupposes a succession in time or chronology.

In any narrative text, events themselves happen during a certain period of time and they occur in a specific order. But one finds that it is not always possible to represent the exact duration of time when telling a story. A long history, for instance, which covered even more than a century in real life can be told in a few words in a short paragraph which can take only a few minutes to relate. It is often noticed that the time of the real incidents or events appear to be often crossing each other with the one being always much longer than the other. Accordingly we distinguish between 'story-time' and 'text-time'.

2 STORY-TIME

Time in the story is not associated with the amount of time devoted to the presentation in the text. Therefore one cannot measure it in terms of the number of pages or number of words.

The story-time, according to Strachan (1990:98), can only be linked to the time the events occupy. On the story-level, time has to do with how long the event lasted, and also the period in which the event happened. Hence we distinguish between two categories of story time, namely, narrative-time and historical-time (Strachan 1990:98).

2.1 NARRATIVE TIME

In order to obtain an accurate story-time one must first reconstruct the story from the text which is available to the reader, by placing all the events in their chronological order. However, strict succession of events can only be found in stories with a single line or even with a single character. Once there is more than one character, events may become simultaneous, and the story is often multilinear rather than unilinear. Therefore a strict linear chronology is neither neutral nor an actual characteristic of most stories (Rimmon-Kenan 1983:17).

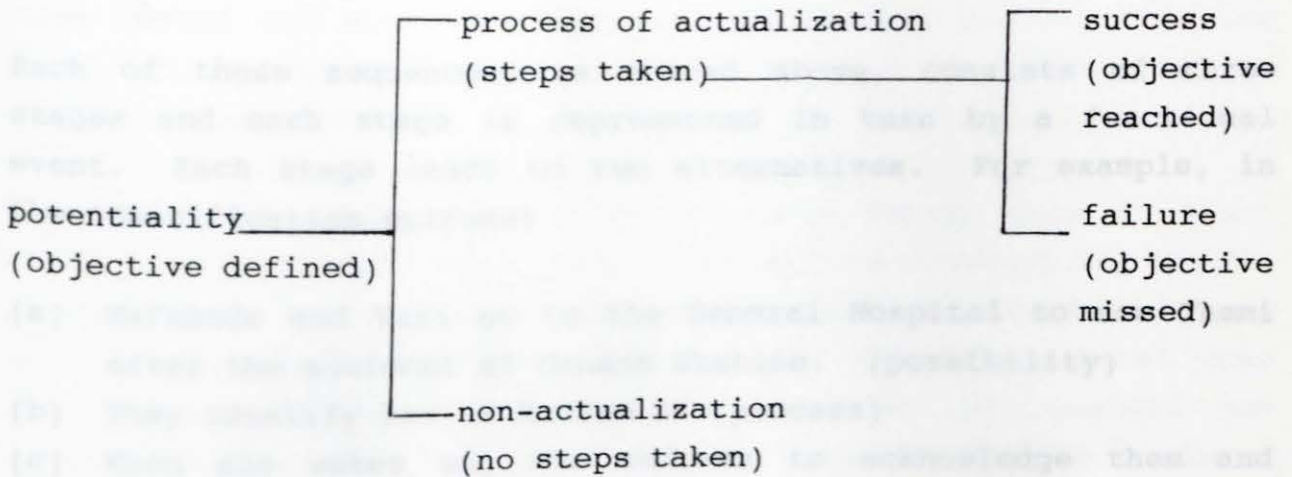
Reconstructing the story helps one to uncover discrepancies between the order of events in the story and the order in which the author has rearranged them in the text. At this stage one may even refer to specific historical data and other information in the text, in deciding whether to place one event before or after another. Otherwise one has to rely, to a far greater extent, on logic and discretion in placing one event or a series of events before or after another.

The first step in the reconstruction process is that of distinguishing between 'functional events' and 'non-functional events'. (Different terminology is used by different theorists to name this distinction. For example, Roland Barthes in Strachan (1990:98), prefers the terms '*cardinal functions*' and '*catalyses*' respectively). In this paper we will use Bal's terminology of '*functional*' and '*non functional events*'.

Once the distinction has been made, the functional events are rearranged in their logical sequential or chronological order. Again one must be aware of events taken to have occurred simultaneously. (These must be marked by the same number, since they occupy the same chronological position.)

Functional events are easily distinguishable by the fact that they open a choice between two possibilities and have a decisive influence on the outcome of the story. Non functional events on the other hand help to provide links between the prominent functions or functional events.

After the functional events have been identified and arranged chronologically, they can be organized into sequences. Rimmon-Kenan (1983:22) states that each sequence consists of three stages, each stage represented by a functional event. Each stage opens two alternatives, and thus a story can subsequently take two directions. Rimmon-Kenan schematically represents these stages as follows:



Rimmon-Kenan (1983:22)

These different stages are simply distinguished as 'possibility', 'process' and 'outcome' (Strachan 1990:99).

2.1.1 NARRATIVE-TIME IN UTHEMI

The story in UThemi takes place over a very long time. The narrative stretches over a period of seven years. All events which happen during this period centre around the crisis that occurs after Themi is injured in the train accident at Shivili. There are thirty four functional events that can be identified in 'UThemi' which can be arranged into ten sequences. These can be represented chronologically as follows:

- (a) Train journey
- (b) Accident at Shivili
- (c) Themi's arrival at Dlangalala's kraal
- (d) Goods trains accident at Shivili
- (e) Themi regains speech
- (f) Vusi's illness
- (g) Visit to Orlando
- (h) Accident at Canada Station
- (i) Identification episode
- (j) Family reunion episode

Each of these sequences, as stated above, consists of three stages and each stage is represented in turn by a functional event. Each stage leads to two alternatives. For example, in the identification episode:

- (a) MaFakude and Vusi go to the General Hospital to see Themi after the accident at Canada Station. (possibility)
- (b) They identify her as MaDlamini (process)
- (c) When she wakes up, she refuses to acknowledge them and identifies herself as Themi Nxumalo from Orlando (outcome)

After the identification of the sequences, an attempt should be made to establish the duration of each sequence.

The journey from Sayidi could have lasted four hours if we consider the distance from Sayidi (in the South Coast) to Shivili; the train journey cannot take more than five hours.

Themí's stay at Dlangalala's kraal is the longest, as it lasts for seven years. After the 'death' of Themí, her husband gets married to another wife, Norah, and they have a child, Thami. The duration of this sequence is explicitly given by the narrator when Themí regains her speech. After the second train accident MaFakude makes a comment about it to MaLukhele, saying that the children will wonder why MaDlamini has not spoken for seven years.

The train accident at Shivili in which Themí was mentally injured is much shorter. We allocate four minutes to this sequence, taking that the train was travelling fast and so everything happened unexpectedly.

MaDlamini and MaFakude's visit to Orlando probably lasted for a number of hours. They arrived at Vusi's place of work during the day and in the afternoon they left to spend the night at Orlando, at Vusi's uncle's home. It is likely that they arrived late in the afternoon, and MaDlamini had to take the first morning train to the city. The accident at Canada station must have lasted for about four hours, taking into account the time when the injured were taken to hospital and the damage to the railway lines was fixed.

The visit to the hospital does not take longer than an hour. Themí is in the intensive care unit and is treated for shock, therefore in this sequence the greater part is absorbed by the interviews between the nurse and the two visitors. Later when the patient, Themí, wakes up, she asks for her husband and denies knowing the two visitors. The nurse asks them to leave her patient so that she may rest.

The reunion episode does not last longer than an hour because it takes place at the hospital. There is a short briefing to the family members by the hospital staff before they are allowed to see Themí. They are warned not to ask her about anything that happened during the seven years period following the accident at Shivili. I should think this episode did not last very long,

because firstly they are meeting at the hospital and so there are other patients to be attended to by the doctors, who could not spend much time on this one.

It is possible therefore to identify four periods in the story of UThemi. Firstly, the period which ends before the train accident at Shivili. Secondly the period after this accident. This is the longest period, because all the events in the primary story are based and take place during this period. This period in fact can be divided into two - the period when Themi is deaf and dumb and the period when she regains her speech after the accident of the goods train at Shivili. The 3rd period ends when MaDlamini (Themi) is injured during the accident at Canada station. The fourth period can be linked to the first one, when Themi recovers at the General Hospital after the last accident.

The duration of these sequences can be identified as follows:

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| (a) the train journey: | few hours |
| (b) accident at Shivili: | few minutes |
| (c) stay at Dlangalala's kraal: | seven years |
| (d) accident of goods trains at Shivili: | few minutes |
| (e) Themi regains her speech: | few minutes |
| (f) Vusi's illness: | several months |
| (g) visit to Orlando: | several hours |
| (h) accident at Canada station: | few hours |
| (i) family reunion: | one hour |

Because there are no exact dates and no specific time given in the story, all our conclusions are speculative.

2.2 HISTORICAL TIME

Historical time, as mentioned earlier, refers to the period in which the events in a story happen. To determine the historical time one may refer to specific historical dates and other information. In the absence of events which can be linked to historical dates one can make use of certain cues in the text which make a historical placing possible. Social setting, technology and other traces of the western civilization or the absence of the latter can be used to infer the time of the story (Strachan 1990:100).

2.2.1 HISTORICAL-TIME IN UTHEMI

In UThemi no specific dates are mentioned, but the play centres around two known historical incidents: the train accidents at Shivili and at Canada station in Johannesburg. The author does mention these incidents in his preface but the story is not the true account of these two incidents, and therefore it is not a historical play as such.

However, there are clear clues which indicate a very recent or modern time. For example, Themí travels by train. Also reference is made to the radio and telephone which are modern innovations, and therefore indicate a very recent time in which traces of Western Civilization are present. Even Themí is educated, she can read and write both official languages, and thus she is to accompany MaFakude to Johannesburg when they get a report that Vusi is sick. Before boarding the train at Sayidi, for instance, Themí sends her sister, Jabulile, to buy her insurance, in case something happens to her on her journey.

In this play we are presented with two backgrounds against which the events take place, the urban and the rural setting. The first and the last period of the story are set in urban

surroundings. Themí lives in Orlando, which is a township in Johannesburg. Even the fact that she buys toys for her children shows that it is modern time. The second period of the story is set in a rural area, at Shivili, where the traces of western civilization are present, but the people are still traditional. For example, after Dlangalala is released from prison, he slaughters two goats to thank his ancestors. And when Vusi writes to report that he is sick, his parents decide that his wife will not visit him in the city (this is a traditional belief that the woman must never visit her husband in the city unless she is invited by him). When Dlangalala is worried about their visitor (Themí), MaFakude suggests that they tell their guests that she is Vusi's second wife. This is evidence of a traditional setting, where a man can still have more than one wife. But this is not a very remote social setting, for reference is made to teachers in this area. There is even a post office.

From these traces we may conclude that the time of UThemí is modern.

CHAPTER FOUR

TEXT-TIME

1 INTRODUCTION

Text has been defined as the ordering of the story elements by an organizing instance. On the story level, the story can be seen as a product of imagination and the text is seen as a product of arrangements by an organizing element. At this level the material is seen in a specific manner. Strachan (1990:101) points out that, as far as time is concerned, the two following transformations are relevant in the transition from story to text:

- (i) the events are arranged in an order which can differ from the chronological order, and
- (ii) the duration (i.e. text-space) allocated to the different elements is determined in respect of their duration in the story.

Genette (1980:35) states that time may be viewed according to the following time aspects: *order*, *rhythm* and *frequency*. These time aspects are considered to differentiate between story-time and text-time.

2 ASPECTS OF TEXT-TIME

2.1 ORDER

Order generally refers to the chronological sequence of events. In narrative texts, events are not observed simultaneously, but in a specific order. Therefore it is possible that the order of the events in a text can differ from the order in which they occur in the story. In the narrative the order can be purposely displaced. If there are two events happening at the same time the writer has to decide what to put first and what to put second. In this way order can be spoiled. In fact this is a

narrative technique referred to as deviation. Genette uses the term '*anachrony*' for this technique.

The two common deviations between story-order and text-order are known as *retrospections* and *anticipations*. These are also referred to as *analepsis* and *prolepsis* by Genette. The employment of these deviations is used to bring about certain effects (Strachan 1990:101).

2.1.1 RETROSPECTIONS

Retrospection refers to a time when a narrative turns back temporarily to a fact which was omitted. (Other theorists refer to this technique as the 'flashback'.) There are three types of retrospections, namely, external, internal and mixed retrospections.

External retrospection lies outside the space of time of the primary story. It provides information about what has happened before, for example, in the past of the characters.

Internal retrospection, which lies inside the space of time of the primary story, serves to supplement incompleteness in the text (Strachan 1990:101).

Mixed retrospection, on the other hand, begins outside the space of time of the primary story and ends within it.

2.1.2 ANTICIPATIONS

Anticipation makes reference, in the story line, to an event that lies in the future (Strachan 1990:102).

Here, the narrative privileges certain facts and brings them out before their actual turn. (This is what is also referred to as *prospection* or *foreshadowing*.) We note, however, that there are anticipations of which the realization is certain and

anticipations of which the realization is not the case. Generally, anticipations serve to create tension.

There are three kinds of anticipations that can be identified, namely, external, internal and mixed anticipations.

External anticipation lies outside the space of time of the primary story. Therefore it has an informative function at times in that it highlights the future following the primary story. Internal anticipation falls within the space of time of the primary story. Whilst mixed anticipations are uttered within the space of time of the primary story and refer to a period after the closing of the primary story. In most of the time the realization of such an anticipation is uncertain (Strachan 1990:102.)

2.1.3 ORDER IN UTHEMI

In Uthemi the order of events in the text does not differ that much from the order in which they appear in the story. However there are retrospections and anticipations.

The first event in the text is the one in which Dlangalala discovers the dead man near his kraal. This discovery leads to his being arrested and jailed after reporting the matter at the police station. This is not part of the primary story. It is outside the space of time of the primary story as it begins before the commencement of the primary story, but it influences the primary story. It can be seen as an external retrospection. This is also true of Themis's visit to her parents. Nothing is said about it except that she is returning home after this visit. It is possible that the two events happen simultaneously, but only the former event is mentioned in both the text and in the story.

From the beginning of the text we find reference to the future and very little is said of the past until the train accident at Shivili. There is a mention of 'death' which creates tension. For example, when Somntumane accompanies his daughter, Themí, to the station he makes a comment after Jabulile has said that she is surprised to see him accompanying someone to the station, something he has never done before. Somntumane's reply can be seen as an anticipation of what is to happen. He says:

"Udlala ngomntanami wena, Jabulile. Kawuboni ngani ukuthi yena uhlala ezweni elikude kakhulu. Simbona namhlanje nje asazi ukuthi siyophinda simbene nini... uma ngabe siyophinda..."

Dube (p 17)

"You are playing with or teasing my child, Jabulile. You don't realize that she lives in a far away country. We are seeing her today and we don't know when we shall see her again... if ever we will see her again..."

This premonition is realized after the accident at Shivili. Themí's body is not found, and she is thought to have died in the crush. But after seven years she is discovered. The anticipation realizes within the primary story, and serves as an example of the internal anticipation.

Themí herself keeps on talking about something which is going to happen in the future. When she is talking to her sister just before the train departs, she is so distracted that her sister, Jabulile, has to remind her that this is her train, and she must get in. Her remark is an anticipation of what happens during the accident, as she loses her memory. Themí's mind seems to 'leave' her in many cases. For example, when Jabulile tells her to jump

in because the train is about to depart, she says:

"Ngisazi yini, mntakababa, lokhu kade ngagcina lapha eSayidi. Futhi njengamanje nje ingqondo yami seyemukile.... ilena kubantabami eOrlando..."

Dube (p 18)

"I don't remember anything, my father's child, since it's been a long time since I came here at Sayidi. And right now my mind has gone... it is with my children at Orlando".

When she gets in the train, she prefers to take the seat facing the opposite direction to which the train is travelling. And when her sister asks her why she chooses to sit and face the opposite direction, she says that when the train meets an accident those facing the opposite direction are usually not injured. The thought of the accident makes her buy an insurance ticket. Before she goes to sleep, she decides not to take off her clothes because she believes that, should the train be involved in an accident, she could be thrown out through the window and be saved.

Throughout the journey we see Thembi thinking and even talking about accidents and 'death'. She is lonely and is disappointed when she realizes that the person who is booked in with her in her coach does not turn up at Maritzburg station. She talks as if she knows what is going to happen, and keeps on talking about it, and it becomes a serious issue.

"Wo, he! Ngibona sengathi ngizohamba uhambo olunye-ke namhlanje. Ngizohambisa okwentandane, ngigunquza ngedwa kulendlu indlela ende kangaka, njengesidumbu sigunquza ebhokisini laso kodwa sibe sizungezwe yizindimbane zabantu esingenakukhuluma nabo....."

Dube (p 48)

"Oh, me! I can sense that I am starting off on a different journey today. I'll travel like an orphan, seated alone in this coach all this long journey, like a corpse moving in the coffin while surrounded by hundreds of people with whom he (it) cannot talk to.."

The anticipation realizes within the primary story when the train overturns at Shivili and Themí is thrown out through the window. She sustains brain injuries and loses her speech, hearing and memory. She is in fact an 'orphan' and a 'corpse', as she cannot hear and cannot even talk for almost seven years.

When she arrives at Dlangalala's kraal, the man is afraid to report her to the police because he fears that he might end up in jail as it has happened in the past. This is an external retrospection. This past event or past experience leads to the crisis situation in which Themí finds herself - she is living the life of an orphan and is in fact living like a 'corpse', unable to talk to other people. Up to here the chronological order of the story is still maintained in the text, except that the author leaves us at Shivili and turns to Sayidi and Orlando respectively. The arrival of the news of Themí's death at Sayidi overlaps with the arrival of such news and the following activity at Orlando. In the presentation the emphasis does not fall much on what is happening at Orlando and at Sayidi.

Gcina, Themí's son, dreams of his mother saying that he must tell his father to come and fetch her. This dream becomes an anticipation of what is still going to happen. The dream puzzles John and his new wife and they agree that perhaps 'Themí' (who is supposed to be dead), believed in the traditional customs and therefore asks that they perform the traditional ceremony whereby a dead person is brought home through the slaughter of an animal, either a goat or an ox ('ukulanda'). After the goat or ox has been slaughtered, the 'dead' is visited at his/her grave and 'told' to come home and stay with his or her children. Few days after Gcina's dream John receives a phone call from the General Hospital saying that he must come to fetch his wife, Themí, who has recovered from the train accident at Shivili. This anticipation is realized within the primary story.

Before Themí falls asleep in the train, she is engaged in a fierce dialogue with herself, about whether she should take off her clothes. Finally she decides not to. She finally says:

"Awu, hiya, ake ngithi ukucambalala, ngizobuye ngikhumule..."

Dube (p 53)

"Oh, no, let me sleep for a while. I'll take off my clothes later on...."

Together with the dream this dialogue can be regarded as an anticipation that Themí will not die, for she becomes mentally 'asleep' until after the accident at Canada Station, when she regains her memory and herself. However the realization of this anticipation is delayed until the end of the text. This is in fact the climax of the text, and it is also an internal anticipation because it realizes within the space of time of the primary story.

2.2 RHYTHM

Bal (1980:76), uses the term rhythm to refer to the relationship between the length of time occupied by the events in the story, and the amount of time devoted to the actual presentation of the events in the text. As mentioned earlier, the story-time is measured in terms of the clock or the calendar, whereas the text-time is measured and determined in terms of the number of pages, lines or words. Therefore, the amount of text devoted to an event is an indication of the view point of the organizing instance.

Accordingly the speed of the text-time can be faster or slower than the story-time, or it can be equal to it. Basically there are five possibilities, as identified by theorists such as Genette (1980), Bal (1980) and Strachan (1990:104), which may influence the relationship between story-time and text-time. These are *ellipsis*, *summary*, *scene*, *retardation* and *pause*.

2.2.1 ELLIPSIS

Ellipsis occurs when a portion of the story, i.e. something that has happened, is omitted or is deleted in the text. It is important to note that, what is omitted does not always have to be unimportant. What is deleted is not mentioned in the text because it might be too painful to talk about or might be too difficult to express in words. Such an omission makes the text-time smaller than the story-time (Strachan 1990:104).

In UThemi, we find that John is married to Themi and they have two children, Lungisa and Gcina. When John receives the news of the train accident at Shivili and the confirmation of the death of his wife, after visiting the scene of the accident, the incident is not discussed with his children in the text. These seven years over which the children are orphans are not reported in the text, because they are painful to talk about.

2.2.2 SUMMARY

In the summary the text-time is smaller than the story-time because some events are not seen but are given by the narrator as summaries in one sentence or in a few sentences. Here events stretching over say hundreds of years in real life, can be read in a few hours.

2.2.3 SCENE

In a narration the time of real happenings and that of the narration are not of the same duration. In the scene, the story-time and the text-time are more or less equal. The instances where these turn to run equally are mostly in drama, because drama consists mainly of dialogue. Therefore most of the events are reported through the conversation without the

narrator's commentary. So it is accepted that in the story the events last the same length of time it takes to narrate in the text.

2.2.4 PAUSE

The pause consists of a portion of the text in which no course of time is implied. Here, more attention is given to a certain element while the story stands still. When the story is later resumed, there has been no passage of time. During the pause one often finds descriptive parts and therefore the text-time becomes longer than the story-time (Strachan 1990:105).

In drama we find such a pause when there is a description of the setting for example, at the beginning of each scene, or in the middle of the story when the action of a character is discussed in parenthetical remarks.

2.2.5 THE RETARDATION

Retardation can be seen as the opposite of summary. Usually it is used as a delaying technique, and, as a result thereof, the text-time is larger than the story-time (Strachan 1990:104).

2.2.6 RHYTHM IN UTHEMI

In drama retardation is realized by monologue and asides, when the character is seen talking to himself before responding to what has been said by another character. In UThemi, for example, when Themi meets Bhani in the train, before responding to what he has said, she expresses her thoughts about this stranger:

Uthemi: Cha, mfowethu, kangiqondile lokho. Ngingedwa kulendlu ngakho-ke indawo yiningi ungazihlalela.

[Usekhulumela phansi, yedwana, nganxanye] Mhlawumbe nemicabango yendlela neyabantwana bami ingake ingiyeke sekukhona omunye umuntu endlini. Pho yona lensizwa engena esitimeleni ingaphethe namithwalo ngehamba uhambo olunjani?... Kodwa ayifanele ukuba ngutsotsi... [uyathula umzuzwana]

Ngimane ngiyasho, ingani eGoli basitsotsa beswenkile, behloniphekile... Hawu kodwa kusemakhaya lapha. [Usebhekisa kuyo insizwa]

Pho wena, mfowethu, ulibangisa kuphi, sengathi uya eduze nje?

Insizwa: Ngiya eGoli...

Dube (p 20)

Themi: No, brother, I don't mean that. I am alone in this coach therefore there is plenty of space, you can sit. [She begins to talk softly to herself, aside] Maybe the thoughts about the journey and about my children will leave me when there is another person here. But why this man who comes into the train without any luggage, is travelling in this fashion?... But he doesn't look like a thug... [She becomes silent for a short time]

I'm just saying this, because in Johannesburg they rob us even when they are smartly dressed and look respectable... Well, but, we are in the rural areas here. [She turns to this man]

And you, brother, how far are you going, as it looks as if you are not going very far?

Insizwa: I'm going to Johannesburg...

The reporting of Themi's thoughts is a retarding technique which delays the actual conversation.

The comparison between the story-time and text-time in UThemi is given in the following summary. However, as stated earlier, the duration allocated to the story-time is speculative and the text-time is measured in terms of the number of pages.

	Story-time	Text-time
(a) the train journey	hours	9 pages
(b) the accident at Shivili	minutes	2 pages
(c) stay at Dlangalala's kraal	seven years	17 pages
(d) collision of two goods-trains	minutes	6 pages
(e) Themis recovery of speech	minutes	4 pages
(f) Vusi's illness	months	13 pages
(g) Visit to Orlando	hours	2 pages
(h) accident at Canada Station	minutes	2 pages
(i) identification episode	hours	12 pages
(j) family reunion	one hour	4 pages

From the above table it appears that the text-time is unequally divided. This is so because some events are not very important, therefore they do not receive much attention. For example, how the accidents takes place is not that important for the primary story. Thus we get the summary here, through the commentator. What counts are the results of the accidents because they will determine the course of the primary story. For example, the accident at Shivili lasts few minutes in the story and is reported over two pages in the text. This is the same with the accident at Canada Station. The only two sequences that last longer in the story-time, and are reported over a considerable number of pages in the text, are the stay at Dlangalala's kraal which takes seven years on the story-time and seventeen pages on the text. Here we see an example of ellipsis - the story-time is longer than the text-time; probably because there is a lot that is omitted which possibly happened in the story-time, but is omitted in the text-time. Themis stay at Dlangalala also serves to reveal the pre-history to the primary story. The identification episode also gets most time in the text, twelve pages, but is relatively short in the story, lasting about an hour.

2.3 FREQUENCY

According to Genette (1980:113), 'frequency' refers to the relationship between the number of times an event occurs in the story, and the number of times the same event is presented in the text. An event may happen, say, ten times in the story, but might be shown only once in the text. Or an event might have happened only once in the story but it might be referred to several times in the text (this may happen just because the writer thinks it is important or not important).

Frequency can be shown in two different ways, namely *repetition* and *iterative presentation* (Strachan 1990:106).

2.3.1 REPETITION

Strictly speaking no two events are exactly the same and as such no event is repeatable in all respects. Repetition of events can be taken to mean events which are more or less the same. For example, Genette, as cited by Strachan (1990:106), emphasises this point when he argues that even the sun that rises every morning is not the same every day. Only if we take it in terms of broad resemblance, can we accept that it is a repetition of the same event.

We only find true repetition when an event occurs once in the story and is repeated several times in the text. Dube utilizes this technique in his play. The train accident at Shivili happens once in the story, but is mentioned several times in the text.

Repetition can take the two following forms, namely, *singulative* and *repetitive*. *Singulative* is the most common narrative form. Here an event that happened once is presented once. *Repetitive* refers to when the event that happened several times is presented once in the text (Rommon-Kenan 1983:57-58).

Strachan (1990:106) summarizes the possible ways in which repetition may occur as follows:

- An event that happened once, is presented once
IS/IT
- An event that happens often, is presented several times
(often)
nS/nT
- An event that happens often, is presented often but not
equally often
nS/nT
- An event that happened once, is presented several times
(true repetition)
iS/nT

2.3.2 ITERATIVE PRESENTATION

Iterative presentation may be seen as the opposite of repetition. Here a series of similar events in the story is told or presented once in the text and represented as follows:

A series of events are presented once
nS/iT

2.3.3 FREQUENCY IN UThemi

The first sequence in the story, the train journey, occurs three times in the story and three times in the text (IS/nT). Firstly when Themi takes the train from Sayidi to Johannesburg. But at Shivili the train runs off its track and Themi suffers brain injuries in the accident. Secondly, after staying at Dlangalala's kraal, Themi accompanies MaFakude to Johannesburg, (i.e. from Shivili) to see Vusi who has written that he is sick. And lastly, or thirdly Themi takes the train from Orlando to the city to collect money from Vusi, and the train is again involved in a collision at Canada station. Also train accidents happen three times in the story and are presented as such in the text. The first one occurs at Shivili when Themi's train capsizes. In the second accident, Themi is not directly involved because she is not a passenger, but the collision of the two goods trains near where Themi is picking 'amalongwe'

results in her recovering her speech. In the third accident Themí is a passenger and again she is not hurt but becomes unconscious as a result thereof. Although these are not exactly the same trains in all three incidents, the results are somehow related. In the first accident Themí loses her speech and hearing. In the second accident she recovers her speech (after the collision of two goods trains), and after the third accident she regains her memory and 'herself'. So in all the cases repetition occurs. (nS/nT)

Vusi's illness occurs once in the story and in the text it is also recounted once (IS/IT). This is true of most other events, for example, the visit to Orlando, the family reunion and the identification episode, all occur once in the story, but in the text these events are also recounted only once (IS/IT).

The discovery of the dead man near Dlangalala's kraal happens once but is reported several times in the text (iS/nT). For example, at the beginning of the play, we do not see Dlangalala discovering or coming across the dead man. But after he had seen him he calls his neighbours who come and see him and talk about it (the discovery.) After this the same matter is discussed several times with the men and with the police. At home Dlangalala refers to it, he 'makes' a party as a result thereof. Even the two women, MaXaba and MaLukhele, talk about it as they leave Dlangalala's kraal after the party. This is true of Dlangalala's imprisonment (iS/nT). It happened once but is presented several times in the text. For example, when Themí arrives at Dlangalala's kraal the family decides not to report her arrival to the police because they remember how Dlangalala was imprisoned, they even talk about it. When MaFakude and Vusi visit MaDlamini at the General Hospital after the accident, they find MaDlamini but they are shocked to hear her identifying herself as Themí Nxumalo. MaFakude keeps on referring to her husband's arrest as she pleads with the nurse not to call the police (iS/nT).

This is also true of John, Themí's husband.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND GENERAL EVALUATION

The aim of this study was twofold: firstly, to survey narratology as a theory of literary text analysis; secondly, to assess characterisation and time as narrative techniques in UThemi following the narratological approach. We saw that both characterisation and time operate on both the story-level and the text-level.

The concept of narrative text was reviewed and the three levels of the narrative text distinguished, namely the story level, the text level and the narration level. The difference between story and text was highlighted. Story refers to the narrated events abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order. Text is the arrangement and organization of the events as they are presented to the reader in a work of narrative fiction.

On characterisation, the concept and the methods of characterisation were assessed. We have seen how Dube has employed both the direct and indirect methods of character portrayal in the presentation of the characters in his play. Because drama, unlike the novel, is a performing art, we saw that characters are not described but are revealed through action and dialogue. Dube succeeds, for example, in creating a dialogue that fulfills this function. Through the use of poetic language, for instance, we are able to 'feel' the feelings and thoughts of the characters about death. For example, it is common among the Blacks to see and hear people reciting 'poems' at the funeral of their beloved ones, in which they express their feelings and grief at their loss. Dube has in fact succeeded in presenting this part in his play. When Themis is reported dead, her father mourns her death in a long poetic soliloquy. This is also true of John, Themis's husband.

This extract from John's speech, when he is talking to his father-in-law, Somntumane, serves as an illustration:

*"... Incwadi ngezami izandla eyalotshwa,
Imali ngezithukuthuku zami engayithumela,
Nethikithi lenshuwarense kungangabazeki,
Konke lokhu kulila kungathuli,
Isililo esishewulayo sikashewu iShivili,
Isililo sikaThemi sezililo..."*

Dube (p 77)

*"... The letter by my own hand was written,
The money for which I sweated, I sent,
Even the insurance ticket, without questioning,
All this mourns without stopping,
The mourning which bites like poison, Shivili,
The mourning for Themi and for the mournings..."*

Even 'ibika' (the commentator), who reports about train accidents in which people are killed, uses a poetic language which is suitable for arousing the emotions. Otherwise if such a report were given in ordinary speech, it would surely fail to 'reach' the people the way it does as we see for instance on p. 54. This is 'echoed' by the woman who saw the incident. When she reports it to MaLukhele and MaXaba, for instance, she uses the poetic language, and, as a result, MaLukhele cannot stop weeping, as she is 'touched' not only by the message, but also by the way in which the message is put across.

Characters are portrayed by action. This we see in Dube's play when two characters are presented. After the 'death' of Themi we hear Jabulile complaining to her father that John, (Themi's husband) is married to another wife who will not look after her sister's children very well. She even complains that John is going to spend all of Themi's money (from the insurance) with his new wife and neglect Themi's children. But Jabulile's father, Somntumane, is honest and reliable man. He does not support his daughter who is rather jealous, but instead tells her the truth that his daughter was married to John and therefore he, Somntumane, and his family have got nothing to do with Themi any more. She is John's wife, and John is entitled

to what he is doing. He even tells his daughter that John came to ask for permission from him before he married his second wife. He also wanted to give the Xolo family half of the money paid by the insurance, but Somntumane refused it, saying that Themis was married to John.

In fact, Dube employs a variety of methods or ways to portray his characters: his speech, action, appearance and social environment. It is before it actually takes place. The use of anticipations as a narrative technique keeps the story moving. It is clear from this study that what makes a good drama is language. Action, dialogue and even plot are all determined by the language employed by the dramatist. At the end of the play Somntumane sings a song. A song in drama is a technique which can be used in character portrayal, in the development of the plot and in conveying the theme.

Characterisation on the first level, the story level, was investigated and different classes of actors, as identified by Bal (1980:31) were found in Dube's play, namely the subject and object; the power and receiver, and the helper and opponent.

The analysis of how order, rhythm and frequency of the events in the story-level differ from those in the text-level was made.

The concept of order has been well handled in UThemis and we noted how Dube deliberately displaces the normal chronological order of events in his narrative text, especially at the beginning of the play, through retrospections. The play begins with the discovery of the dead man by Dlangalala. This leads to Dlangalala being jailed as a suspect for murder (external retrospection). Otherwise the order of events in the text does not differ that much from the order in which they appear in the

The study has attempted to show how narrative techniques identified by Western theorists, such as Flaxman-Kenan, Mike Bal, Gerard Genette and others, have been found occurring and

story. Maybe it is for this reason that we are unable to identify some of the aspects of time which are normally identified in novels and short stories. This is due to the fact that there is very little description of events in drama, as everything that happens must be actually observed in performance.

Anticipation has been successfully applied by Dube. In fact everything that happens is first 'seen' when the characters think about it before it actually takes place. The use of anticipations as a narrative technique keeps the story moving, as we want to find out whether what the character, especially our main character, 'sees' will happen. For example, Themí's thought about her being an orphan and a 'corpse' during the journey.

We saw how statements about the future are used to create tension, and how this technique was accompanied by analepses which are used to provide information about the past, and thus to supplement incompleteness in the text.

As regards rhythm, we noted that some aspects of rhythm, such as pause, is not found in UThemí. Otherwise the way in which UThemí is presented gives rise to a rapid text-tempo because of the occurrence of ellipses and summaries, the latter appearing mainly in the form of 'ibika' (the commentator). We also note that many events have been omitted but without interfering or causing distortion to the primary story, even though it makes the text-time shorter than the story-time.

Lastly, we noted that frequency has been well handled in UThemí, with repetition occurring in its two forms, while iterative presentation is absent. If repetition occurs, its importance is that it emphasises a particular event.

The study has attempted to show how narrative techniques identified by Western theorists, such as Rimmon-Kenan, Mike Bal, Gerard Genette and others, have been found occurring and

successfully employed by Zulu writers, as we see in Strachan's analysis of time as a narrative technique in D.B.Z. Ntuli's short stories. In this study an attempt was made to show that such narrative techniques as characterisation and time are also found successfully employed in Dube's drama.

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