

OEDIPAL STRUCTURES IN THE
NOVELS OF SIBUSISO NYEMBEZI

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late parents, Aletta and Alpheus Gumede, who were such lovers of education.

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Mr N.P. Ngubeni's name is worth mentioning. For the assistance rendered in transporting my colleagues and I to the University for guidance, we say to him **'Unwele olude!'** (Live long!).

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I declare that this study represents my original work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

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DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR

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Z.R. MGOBHOZI

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Sibusiso Nyembezi: Life and works (Biographical notes)

Nyembezi was born on December 6, 1919 in Babanago, a village in the then Natal Province of South Africa, now KwaZulu-Natal. He became a teacher, a Zulu novelist, scholar, and editor of anthologies of poetry.

The second of four brothers, Sibusiso Nyembezi attended local primary schools, then went to Amanzimtoti for high school. He received a B.A. from the University of South Africa in 1946, and his second B.A. Honours in 1947, from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. From 1948 to 1953, Nyembezi was a lecturer in the Department of Bantu studies in Witwatersrand University, teaching Zulu and Xhosa. He studied the M.A. at that University in 1954 and the following year he was appointed to teach at the University College of Fort Hare, remaining there until 1959 when he resigned in protest against restrictive new policies being enforced at that University by the government. Others who resigned were Ambrose Phahle, Ethan Mayisele and

Selbourne Ngcobo. Out of work for a period, he took an editorial job with the publishers Shuter and Shooter.

Nyembezi's three novels are **Mntanami! Mntanami!** (My Child! My Child!), published in 1950, **Ubudoda Abukhulelwa** (Age is not the only criterion) 1953; and **Inkinsela Yase-Mgungundlovu**, 1961. His Zulu translation of Alan Paton's Cry the Beloved Country is entitled **Lafa Elihle Kakhulu** (literally, that which is beautiful perishes), was published in 1958.

His "Zulu proverbs" published in 1954 originated a dissertation written in English **Izibongo Zamakhosi** (Praises of the Kings), edited by him was published in 1958. He edited a number of anthologies of poetry, **Imisebe Yelanga** (Sunbeams), issued in 1960 has 4 volumes; **Imikhemezelo** (Drizzle), 1963 and **Amahlungu Aluhlaza** (Green Veld), 1963. With Otty Ezrom Nxumalo he collaborated and edited Zulu folklore called **Inqolobane Yesizwe** (The Treasury of the Nation) in 1966.

He collaborated with D.M. Lupuwana on a series of eight Zulu graded readers, **Ulutya** (Thongs) published in 1963 is an adapta-

tion of **Igoda** (Friendship). His Zulu grammar, **Uhlelo LwesiZulu**, 1956; his manual, **Learn Zulu**, 1958 and his compact **Zulu Dictionary**, date unknown, are a few of his scholarly works.

African Studies published his essay, "The historical background of the Zulu military age", in two parts, June and December, 1948. He also had articles in other journals such as the Bantu Educational Journal and has written an article entitled a "Review of Zulu Literature".

Izimpophoma Zomphefumulo (The Waterfalls of the Soul), issued in 1963, is an anthology of young Zulu poets. It contains the verses of such men as Daniel Nkumbalume Gulube (born 1938), Abner Azaria Sinanka Kunene (born 1917), Criswell Siphon Mkhize (born 1931), Elliot Elphas Nsizwane ka-Timothy Mkhize (born 1931), Michael Deda Myeza (born 1927), Bethuel Zintaba Blose Ndela (born 1927), William Velaphi Ngiba (born 1925), Michael Mpandeni Ngubeni (born 1934), Anthony Madodenzani Nzimande (born 1917) and Abel Bernard Phakathi (born 1931).

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to look into Oedipal structures in the novels of Sibusiso Nyembezi. The notion of an Oedipal structure is derived from Sophocles' play entitled 'Oedipus the King'. In this play, Oedipus, a forsaken child, learns that he is a son of a Theban King. On the way to Thebes, he encounters and assassinates his father. Oedipus earns himself a title of a king after solving the riddle of the sphinx and marries his own mother. The mother-father-son triangles ('trilogies') are structures which are a common feature of literature. Our purpose is to investigate to what extent the author in question has explored family relationships in his works.

1.2 Nyembezi's novels

Nyembezi has written three novels, namely, **Mntanami! Mntanami!** (My Child! My Child!), published in 1950, **Ubudoda Abukhulelwa** (Age is not the only criterion), 1953; and **Inkinsela YaseMngungundlovu** (The 'tycoon' of Pietermaritzburg), 1961.

1.3 Nyembezi's realism

To assert that an author is realistic implies that he deals with physical, social, cultural environments which are real. The Dictionary of Psychology (1985:616) also defines realism as;

... a philosophical point of view
which argues that abstract
concepts have a coherent
real existence and thus are
subject to empirical study.

But Nyembezi's realism is a pre-text through which the inner idea is captured. The study, therefore, concerns itself with the question of how the psychic lives of characters in question are affected by their environments.

1.4 Psychoanalysis as a framework of study

We owe our notion of the Oedipal structure to Sigmund Freud, the founder of Psychoanalysis. Freud was a psychiatrist in Vienna, (1908-1939). In the course of treating patients with emotional problems, he gradually developed an intricate theory of human personality and emotional distress. In his theory, he places emphasis on the unconscious wishes and motives which determine behaviour which may be largely sexual and aggressive in nature. This behaviour originates in impulses repressed during childhood on account of children's conflicts with social norms.

Freud also discovered that many behavioural problems could be traced back to unresolved problems in the relationship between child and parent of the opposite sex. His theory can provide numerous instances from life which can help to clarify the

actions and reactions of created characters in literature. In other words, we can use Freud's theory to identify constitutive features of the Oedipal nature in a novel. These features are linguistic, cultural, social and psychological.

Freud's observations together with those of his contemporaries, Carl Jung and Alfred Adler, in their input to psychoanalysis can help us to draw parallels between literature and lived experiences. For example, the Jungian archetypes and Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, Adler's inferiority complex, together with Freud's psychoanalysis can be used to penetrate Sophocles play, 'Oedipus (Rex) the King'. Sophocles' Oedipus Rex puts into perspective the overwhelming and the overriding by progressing from the unconscious to the conscious. The basis of Freud's psychoanalysis is, in fact, progressing from the unconscious to the conscious.

Nyembezi's novels are an epitome of his pre-occupation with the Oedipal or the socially and the psychically devastating to the human mind. As his novels show, Nyembezi seems to have been very much pre-occupied with human relationships as determined by a

complexity of human experiences. For example, he deals with human characters whose lives have been affected by a variety of factors which have caused lots of conflicts and tensions.

We can draw a lot of parallels between Freud's encounter with the human world and Nyembezi's confrontation with human reality in his novels. Hence, the usefulness of applying Freud's methods to the analysis of Nyembezi's novels.

1.5 The essence of the unconscious

The unconscious relates to our instinctive needs which are shaped by the way in which we articulate or express our needs for satisfaction. The essence of the unconscious is the Oedipal complex, an inferiority complex, which evolves in very early childhood. Already in a 'prelinguistic or mirror phase' (before the child begins to articulate real words other than sounds, at the same time children are fond of observing themselves in mirrors), the child begins to form an ego which can be defined as an 'individual identity' in Freud's language.

The child can now demarcate himself in terms of where he features in the familial, sexual and social worlds. But the child can achieve this identification by shaking off guilty desires. These are such desires as when the young girl feels threatened by her mother in her affections for her father. The young boy may also be envious of his father when he feels that the father is regarded more highly than him, by the mother or even when he thinks that he is unimportant in the family. Such negative feelings may result in drastic effects if they go unchecked. The child has got to repress these vain desires into the unconscious.

The Oedipal process can therefore be seen as a phase where the self or subject is torn between the conscious (what the subject is aware of), and the unconscious, that is, what the subject is not aware of or unwillingly intends to repress. The Oedipal process, therefore, when carefully examined, betrays a split subject.

The way to the unconscious is dreams, which are, for Freud, essentially a symbolic fulfilment of unconscious wishes. The watchful ego is still at work even when a person is dreaming.

Thus the conscious adds to his obscurity by its peculiar modes of functioning.

Sometimes dreams 'displace' the image of one object to another somehow linked to it by the dreamer. In this way a person transfers to his dreams aggressions that he feels towards others. Sometimes experiences are condensed when they are associated with what they may be supposed to mean. Roman Jakobson (1956) identified two primary operations of human language. He distinguished between metaphor which means condensing of meanings together and displacing of one meaning onto another, which is metonymy. The French psychoanalyst, Lacan, following this observation comments that the unconscious is structured like a language.

Dreams provide our main, but not our only outlet to the unconscious. The presence of the unconscious is also revealed in jokes, slips of tongue and in art. A person may also have certain unconscious desires which are blocked off by the ego. This presents an internal conflict in an individual which Freud calls 'neurosis'. Such neurosis may be seen in an individual's

obsessive behaviour, such as greed, hysteric and phobia. Terry Eagleton (1984:158) comments that behind neurosis are unresolved problems.

1.6 The id, the ego and the super-ego

Freud observes that the human mind consists of three psychic zones namely; the id, the ego and the super-ego. The id is said to be the reservoir of sexual energy or libido. It feeds the premodial life principle. Freud sees the id to be in possession of a 'tremendous and amorphous vitality'. It is also a source of our desires and aggressions and so represents our wild feelings and emotions.

The other psychic zones, the ego and the super-ego, according to Freud, are agencies which protect the individual in his reasoning. The super-ego represents the 'reality principle' in that it suppresses various instincts such as those of love, hatred and others. The super-ego operates as a kind of moral principle and helps the individual to develop self-esteem. Alfred Adler, in his concept of 'the inferiority complex and overcompensation'

penetrates into how the super-go rises to suppress feelings of inferiority.

1.7 Significance of the study

Oedipal structures in IsiZulu fiction is a field which needs to be critically explored and evaluated. Not much research has been done in this field.

1.8 Method and scope

The study consists in a close reading of the novels in question and an examination of documented critiques. Attention is also given to the examination of theories in literature and psychology which are relevant to the novels under study.

1.9 Organisation of the study

The study consists of five chapters which cover the following:

Chapter 1

This introductory chapter highlights the nature and approach to the study. A review of literature, developed as part of chapter one, includes perspectives on the work of Sibusiso Nyembezi's novels as given in the critiques of S.D. Ngcongwane, D.P. Kunene, Ntuli and Swanepoel.

Chapter 2

Chapter two develops the framework of the study introduced in chapter one. It traces how some African novelists have consciously or unconsciously shown the validity of the works of Freud, Adler, Jung and Lacan. These are pursued within the Oedipal narrative.

Chapter 3

The third chapter concentrates on the content of Nyembezi's novels in coming to grips with the harsh reality of the psychically disoriented African human world. Conflicts of vision in the contexts of infinitely variable madness are analysed in this chapter.

Chapter 4

In this chapter we analyse Nyembezi's use of verbal art in identifying and delineating characters and their social milieus.

Chapter 5

This chapter is a general conclusion. It consists of the summary of what is observed during the study. This chapter touches a number of issues exposed in the first four chapters of the work, such as the elements of social life which have become internalised in the characters and which plague the well being of the human mind.

1.10 Literature review

There are critiques based on Nyembezi's novels, but they do not concentrate much on the psychological dimensions of the works. Some relevant paragraphs are given below.

Ntuli and Swanepoel (1993) in their critique entitled 'human degeneration in the ghetto slums of Johannesburg', write:

The rural area is personified as a mother who loses sons and daughters into the city.

They also consider that

The novel is a discourse with various devices employed in it. These devices include figures of speech.

In this way they see figurative language such as personification of the rural area to depict human degeneration. They analyse the style of the writer.

Of **Mntanami! Mntanami!**, Ntuli and Swanepoel (1988:30) comments that;

Although the author handles the popular prodigal son - theme, he fills his story with so much power

and life that it sounds true. Suspense is maintained with absolute skill. Jabulani's conflict after he has been forced to commit murder is portrayed graphically. Characterisation is convincing. It is unfortunate though that even here we find one whole chapter devoted to the author's "sermon" on how parents fail to bring up their children.

Ntuli's approach is formalist. He examines the style of the writer by attending to matters of theme, suspense, conflict and characterisation. He also attends to the question of plot or structure of the novel and criticises Nyembezi for devoting a whole chapter to "preach about how parents fail to bring up their children properly".

Ngcongwane (1988:263), moves the assertion that;

Nyembezi, like Jordan for Xhosa, made a considerable contribution to the intellectual life of the Zulu and African people.

Ngcongwane's point of view may aid us in our examining the psychic lives of Nyembezi's depraved characters. It may also help critics in their endeavour to find out what plagues the minds of the characters in question and the possibility of 'decolonising' their minds.

Kunene (1993:57) bases some of his opinions on **Inkinsela YaseMgungu-ndlovu** 1961. He pinpoints that;

Themba and Diliza are behaving in an abnormal way. Their rudeness to an older person breaks all the known rules of propriety in their culture.

Kunene's point highlights the need, for students of literature to investigate what it is that has changed the black African's culture. We are concerned about 'the collective moral consciousness' of our people, as Ngcongwane puts it. Again, Mphahlele's voice, in his 'Down Second Avenue', resonates what is sounded by Kunene and Ngcongwane that literature should not falsify real human experience but should enhance the moral sensibilities of readers. Hence, the need for further research on this aspect.

Our focus on attitudes of children towards their parents and vice versa develops from the thesis that the novel synthesises a people's epic lore which, in Nyembezi's novels, is a metamorphosis of an infinitely balanced, disturbing psychical and moral elements. These elements conjure up against the stability of the individual in the novels. There are traces of infinitely present interacting forces of human disintegration. Man's life is faced with elements which disintegrate it. The study should try to unveil if the black African can free himself from the chains of mental bondage.

In pursuit of our task therefore, in chapter three and four, we shall analyse the novels of Nyembezi to try and grasp various voices in the works. These are to be viewed in conjunction with works of other novelists and critics examined in chapter two.

CHAPTER 2**DEVELOPMENT OF FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY**

The theory of psychoanalysis, as developed by Sigmund Freud (1909), Carl Jung (1907) and Alfred Adler (1910), holds much relevance to the reading of novels. In this study, it is used in conjunction with other literary theories. In particular, these are the Formalist approach, deconstruction, reader-centred theories and onomastics or naming theory. It is hoped that the combination of these theories in our investigation of Oedipal relationships, can help us in portraying the development as well as the deterioration of the African human mind.

In our study of Oedipal relationships, within African novels, we observe a limited degree of harmony, within family circles. It is the rife tensions and conflicts in the novels which warrant the application of psychoanalysis in conjunction with other methods of reading literary texts. We think that these theories will be of assistance in unveiling some of the root causes of the symptoms of unbecoming human behaviour.

Psychoanalysis as a method of reading literary texts was strengthened by a debate which developed between Sigmund Freud, on the one hand, and Alfred Adler and Carl Jung on the other. The two scholars bitterly and harshly criticised Freud for what they thought was an overemphasis on sexuality. However, their arguments consolidated into a highly concentrated theory of psychoanalysis. Thus, it is incomplete to employ Freud's views disregarding Jung's theory of the 'collective unconscious' and Adler's 'concept of the inferiority complex'.

The concept of 'the inferiority complex' and 'overcompensation' developed by Adler can be employed in the novel entitled '**Ilanga LaseLangeni**', written by D.B.K. Mhlongo. The findings of Freud become quite appropriate in studying the character of Shaka Zulu within the Oedipal narrative. Shaka's development as a psychologically tragic character is in line with Freud's observation that grown-up individuals betray their plight in their early lives, such as nasty experiences attached to their childhood. It is also noted how Shaka Zulu, consciously or unconsciously works against the collective unconscious of the Zulu clan. Customary, an illegitimate son cannot be the king or his father's successor

in Zulu beliefs. Shaka nullifies this notion, by assuming kingship after the death of his father and of his own accord.

A large part of the novel **'Ilanga LaseLangeni'** is covered by descriptions of how Shaka and Nandi become rolling stones who never know real happiness. They are accursed figures and have a unique attachment to each other, almost reduced to a state of being vagabonds. This is especially the case when Shaka's father, Senzangakhona sends for King Macingwane's palace to be attacked immediately after Nandi and young Shaka take refuge to it, (p.32).

When Shaka's bard, Magolwana, in the novel eulogises,

Umbebe kamama

Beba semuke.

(P.30)

(One who dwells on mother's back

Cling on my back and let us go.)

Audiences moan with the bard for the numerous sufferings of Shaka

in childhood. To count but a few bitter experiences, his rejection by his mother's people at Elangeni till his grandmother, Mtaniya sends for him and his mother to be brought to the King's palace at Siklebheni is marked. There, the eldest of Senzangakhona's wives, Mkabi, displayed much hatred of Shaka, (p.25) since she was envious. She was childless and so like an **'inkabi'** (an ox) which is non-productive. Shaka's vindictiveness arose out of his own mistreatment as a child. The worst of the incidents, adding to his mental disturbance being when her mother got married to an old man Gendenyane Qwabe. Shaka was referred to in a derogatory manner by Qwabe boys who nicknamed him **'igamathandukwana'**, (p.31), (one who holds a stick in the middle).

But Shaka, like Adler's Demosthenes, the stutterer, who turns into a great orator, proves his bravery by killing a lion, unaided. This he does soon after his arrival and acceptance at King Dingiswayo Mthethwa's palace, (p.33).

Shaka makes a real mark in life when he assassinates his father's brother, Mudli, (p.51) who had dared to conspire against him.

The novelist also tells that his mother's counsellings that Shaka would grow up and be a great king one day, (p.33) were resonating in the mind of the latter. It also makes adequate meaning that even the very name 'Shaka' might have haunted its owner because of its negative connotations. Nandi had pretended to be suffering from an 'ishaka', which is a disease that shows itself by the swelling of the stomach, when she was carrying Shaka.

It is thus noted how Shaka's blood was most of the time up in childhood. He had no peace of mind. He therefore overcompensates his feelings of inferiority by making himself king of the Zulus once his father has passed away. However, he overreacts to those that caused him to suffer in childhood. The ones that adored and supported him, like his mother Nandi, are compensated. Shaka secures Nandi a place of a queen in the kingdom. Thus, the author of **Ilanga LaseLangeni** does not subscribe to the myth that Shaka assassinated his own mother, just as we AmaZulu also do not.

It will also help to throw more light on these theories to look at what happens to Chinua Achebe's hero, Okonkwo, one whom the

novelist is in obvious sympathy with. In 'Things Fall Apart', Okonkwo is haunted in his childhood by the feeble nature of his father, Unoka. The latter is associated with all the negative attributes of life. Some of these are laziness and drunkenness. He is always in debt, owing almost everybody money. Unoka is ever broke and when he gets money, he invites all his friends to come and enjoy beer with him. Thus, Okonkwo grew up hating all that was associated with laziness. His feelings of hatred towards his father were worsened when his playmate, in childhood, denounced Okonkwo's father by calling him an 'agbala' which is another name for a woman.

Following all these ill-feelings about his father, Okonkwo turns to be quite stern to his wives and children. It was most hurting to him to think that he had started from scratch in life, unlike other young men of his age whose fathers has been conscientious and they were given barns as starting points. Unoka, to his son Okonkwo, had been a hollow man who had left no title whatsoever when he died. This meant that if Okonkwo did not do everything in his power to make up for his father's weaknesses he would for ever hold his head in shame for his father died in estate.

Thus, besides working hard with his family in the fields, like one 'possessed', Okonkwo tried to get himself several titles, like when he engaged himself in wrestling. There, he earned himself the title of the 'cat'. In becoming 'one of the greatest men of his time', (p.10), Okonkwo 'dissolves' the Oedipus complex inside him and 'develops an ego', in the Freudian conception of human behaviour, (Freud, ed. 1977:138).

But, there is a discrepancy between Okonkwo's good intentions and his actual achievements. By overworking his family, he is conceived by his family to be exercising 'patriachal law' in extremity. This certainly strains the relationship between himself and his wives and children. Thus in trying to develop a positive image of himself, he defeats his own ends through his overreaction to cases of laziness and cowardice that he spots within his family, like Unwoye's behaving more like a woman.

Okonkwo's life becomes quite tragic particularly because in struggling to impress his society, he reaps opposite results. It is not really in him that Ikemefuna, a captive, who has turned to be almost like a son to him, must suffer at his hands. However,

he makes an error of judgement, which leads to his downfall in trying to appear unafraid, and so butchering Ikemefuna.

In making these observations on Oedipal relationships, we concur with Freud's view that criticism which only delves on the surface material (romantic or realist) is inadequate. Freud's view is that critics must penetrate more deeply in their dramatisation of the human situation.

Scott (1972:69) throws light on this subject by emphasizing that the Freudian theory presented an image of man as a victim of environment and/or biology. This is suggestive of man's bondage to his libidinous compulsions or to the repressions forced upon him by society. In other words, the society is prescriptive of yardsticks by which man can perceive himself as triumphant or incapacitated by societal goals. Consequently, Freud, like the naturalists, refuses to "condemn a being who was not responsible, but was a dupe of preterhuman forces", (Scott, 1972:69).

In association of some characters to Freud's views, psycho-analysis turns to bear much validity.

Delsie Moya, the main character, in R.R.R. Dhlomo's **'Indlela Yababi'** elopes with Reverend Gwebu to Johannesburg. The very Christian ideal of attending sermons to uplift one's morals turns to overpower Delsie and Gwebu with such lust that destroys them. Now Gwebu's good preaching simply serves to endear him to Delsie. Delsie knows and understands that her defeat by forces which are beyond her control has made of her a social outcast. She decides to banish or expel herself from her society.

Sibongile Gumede in Ottly Nxumalo's **'Ngisinga Empumalanga'** also exemplifies what Freud is talking about in his perception of forces which are beyond one's control. It is Sibongile's society which holds the formal school as a positive ideal. Yet, the school ceases to be a learning place for Sibongile. It teaches her that it is inferior to marry a tribal chief. Her vanity is seen when she dies on giving birth to an unwanted baby from a father that she has considered 'decent'. Sibongile has distanced herself from her parents and her tribal society's wishes of getting a beautiful girl as her to marry the chief.

African societies have, in one way or another, plunged the characters into abysmal pits from which neither the societies nor the characters can set themselves free. In other words, these environments are a source of abuse of the characters in question and which they now figure to be a disgrace. The image of Achebe's Okonkwo stands in parallel to Nxumalo's and Dhlomo's depraved characters. The Umnofians, in Achebe's Things Fall Apart, are the ones who have emphasised the values of bravery and diligence. On the contrary, and to their dismay, they can by no means distract Okonkwo from his ambition or obsession.

The examples given above indicate to us that there are many other created characters in books by which authors demonstrate that man turns to be a victim of preterhuman forces. Our awareness serves as a foundation or platform from which we draw an assumption that man in our African societies is faced with forces which disintegrate the equilibrium in his mind. But some characters are used to show that adjustment is possible, like Nosimilo Dhlomo, the author's ideal character in **'Indlela Yababi'**.

Since we have chosen Nyembezi as our target author, we confine to our study the task of examining the impact of the environment on Africans. Our attention is focussed on created characters in the novels delineated for the study. We need to observe how the characters react to their predicaments. An endeavour has to be made to ascertain the evolution of culture in our societies in so far as Nyembezi's voice and other voices in the novels written by him enable us to grasp the situation. This speculation is the means by which we can also focus on the future which is by Nyembezi insight and foresight and by our consequent awareness.

CHAPTER 3

NYEMBEZI'S MESSAGE TO SOCIETY

Chinua Achebe (1975:115) states that,

I believe it's impossible to write anything about Africa without some kind of message, some kind of protest ... In fact, I should say all our writers whether they are aware of it or not, are committed writers. The whole pattern of life demands that you should put in a word for our history, your traditions, your religion and so on.

There is ample evidence in the three novels that Nyembezi is a committed writer. That is, he meets the challenge of all African writers that they must have some kind of message which may

crystallize into some kind of protest. Achebe suggests that the writer must be true to life and draw from our history, traditions and so on. What emerges so clearly in Nyembezi's novels is his intention to share with his predominantly African audience the agony or tragedy of being black in a displaced world. His message to society or his audience is whether or not the African can come to grips with the trauma of living in a world which constantly encroaches upon his or her culturally based social or psychological norms. In particular, Nyembezi wants through his novels, to protest against the African's insensitivity to his or her own predicament.

For example, in **Mntanami! Mntanami!** Nyembezi focuses on MaNtuli's and Dlamini's derelict son, Jabulani and the nightmare of being an African in a socially and culturally besieged world. Both Jabulani and his parents are portrayed as bearing the brunt of living in a remorselessly agonizing and traumatizing world. In fact, Jabulani first isolates himself from his parents and his siblings, Nomusa and Mbongeni. This eventually leads to his alienation. As Nyembezi takes us through the whole spectrum of socially and culturally besieged people, especially Jabulani's

parents and their circle of friends, we see how Jabulani's self-hood is brought into alienation with that of his family and eventually with that of the world which rejects him, in spite of a temporary but false reconciliation with it especially when he is in Johannesburg.

To understand Jabulani's eventual but catastrophic alienation, it is necessary to trace briefly the historical background of his socially and culturally besieged world. This world, now so deeply entrenched, was a creation of the neo-colonial apartheid era and the minerals' and industrial revolutions in South Africa. It was a direct outcome of British imperialism in South Africa which led to the liquidation of Africans' independent chiefdoms and kingdoms. Africans lost not only their political autonomy but also their land which was the chief means of their production.

Disempowered and landless, Africans were reduced to poverty and became parasites in their own land. You can imagine how not only Jabulani and his family, but also the African society as a whole became alienated as it was uprooted from its social and cultural

norms. This alienation took all forms of guises as the African people began to wander rootless on the sanddunes of imperial misfortunes.

Through the imperial factor, precious minerals, chiefly gold and diamonds, were uncovered in the interior of South Africa resulting in the springing of industrial cities, the hub of which Johannesburg became by virtue of being the gold mining centre. The minerals discovery also boosted the growth of harbours like Durban in KwaZulu-Natal. To the landless and uprooted Africans, the industrial and harbour cities became an attraction to which they migrated in the hope of finding an alternative to their present state. Shillington (1987:231) writes:

... Zulu men went out regularly to work for cash wages. They soon became one of the major sources of labour on the new gold mines of the Witwatersrand in the Transvaal,

Unfortunately, this migration furthered their penetration into the abyss of alienation. For instance, they became criminals, prostitutes and intemperates. They also lost their identity. Society stopped to be the sanctuary of social and cultural values. The existing stratification took a different turn or form. It became an outcome of one's material fortunes which distinguished basically between the haves and the have-nots.

To aggravate alienation, the government of the day passed a network of prohibitory laws. The most notorious were the pass and influx control laws. These laws prevented the Africans' freedom of movement and proper incorporation into urban life. It became a crime for them not to carry the right pass or to be found in the proclaimed areas without a permit. The Africans were forced to resort to all sorts of under-hand methods of entering and living in urban areas. **Mntanami! Mntanami!** captures some of these living secret dens or hideouts like Mshini Mazibuko's, from which they operated as criminals predators even on fellow Africans, (p.82).

We may also mention the Christian church and the schools. In spite of their positive value to Africans, they did have an alienating effect on the Africans. The Christian church and the schools ought to civilize the Africans but rejected as savage anything that smacked of African social values and world view.

It is against this background that we should see Jabulani's alienation and all other processes of his psychic life. It is also against this background that we should see the development as well as the deterioration of the relationship with his parents. In short, Nyembezi is able to make his readers see the interdependence and interconnection between the social and cultural bombardment of Africans and the evolution and metamorphosis of Jabulani as a psychically tragic character.

MaNtuli and Dlamini have invested all their lives in Christianity. For every problem they encounter, they pray that God may help them to overcome and also help their children not to be victims of such a problem. For instance, when they become aware that even school children smoke, they pray in God's name that their children should not smoke. According to Christian

teaching, smoking is one of the things that should be condemned. At one moment of her grave concern with their children resorting into bad practices such as smoking, MaNtuli exclaims:

Sengathi abantabami bangangisiza

Nkosi yami bangangenani nazo

zonke lezi zinto.

(Mntanami! Mntanami, p.2)

(I pray Lord that my children may help me and not involve themselves in all these things.)

Seemingly, to MaNtuli and her husband Christianity provides an answer to their problems and concerns. But they forget that it was a Christianity which was not anchored on their African social and cultural values. Consciously or unconsciously Christianity has de-Africanised them, a thing which disadvantages them seriously as African parents. MaNtuli and her husband are relentlessly pre-occupied with their parental duty to bring up their children properly but are painfully unaware of their social status vis-a-vis forces of change which affect their society.

With such forces messing them up, they can hardly be effective as parents. Although they wish to be effective parents, uncertainty assails them as storms of change burst upon their society. Dlamini is quoted, for instance, as saying:

Asazi MntakaNtuli ... ngoba
sengathi sekungezinye izikhathi
manje. Izinto ziguquka phambi
kwamehlo ethu sizibhekile,

(p.2)

(We don't know daughter of Ntuli,
for it is no longer the times we used
to know. Things are changing in
front of us.)

MaNtuli substantiates what her husband is saying by retorting:

Ungasashongo Baba. Sengike ngihlangane
nobala nje lufuqzana nentuthu,
ngithi nje ngenhliziyo, nakho
okukhulu. Ingabe bona othisha

kanti benzani manje. Nabo
sebeyizehluleki nje,

(p.2)

(You are right Father. It has become
a common thing that I encounter a
small boy smoking, pushing a lot
of smoke through his mouth. I simply
say, in my heart, these are wonders.
I wonder what the teachers are
doing. They have become failures
themselves.)

The forces of change are so overwhelming that even attributing them to the teachers' failure to perform their supportive or counselling duties, as MaNtuli does, does not help. According to her husband, they need to be more circumspect in analysing and understanding these problems. They may not be fully appreciated as Dlamini puts it, without taking into account the environment which, like the golf course (p.2), a European import, engenders negative change. Dlamini notes how the golf-course is the

culprit in teaching African youngsters to go astray in other ways.

Uthi kambe ngawothisha? Ngingesheshe
 ngisho njalo ngoba nothisha usuke
 engekho le emagalufini lapho
 labafana befundisana khona
 yonke lemikhuba,

(p.2)

(Do you think it is the teachers?
 I cannot quickly blame them because
 the teacher is not present at the
 golf-course where these boys
 teach one another all these practices.)

Dlamini seems to display a lot of wisdom in shooting where the trouble lies and where it comes from. However, his ego, which is the self proves a great handicap. He fails to see how his own ego and that of his son cross each other at a wrong or tragic junction. In fact, we cannot fully understand Jabulani's alienation from his parents and his society without understanding how

Dlamini's ego and that of his wife cross that of their son at a wrong junction.

Jabulani's life in the village of Mnambithi, is encompassed by a variety of factors. While his parents aspire for Christian values, there are members of the society who still adhere to the old or traditional values such as brewing beer to appease the ancestors. These traditionalists, like the Mthabelas (p.10) see no hustles in sharing beer prepared for a ritual ceremony with youngsters, like Jabulani. Mthabela takes pains to explain to Dlamini that what he has offered to Jabulani was merely fermented porridge which could not cause anyone to get drunk. But even the tasting of isiZulu beer haunts Dlamini. He is worried that Jabulani has tasted the beer which is one of the things the new religion strictly abhors. This problem, coupled with the detrimental forces at the golf-course which have resulted in his son being a smoker and a member of the gangster, drives Dlamini to overreact in dealing with his son. It must be noted that the Mthabela affair comes to pour fuel on already troubled waters.

Mbongeni, the elder brother of Jabulani, triggers off the first spark of fire which sets in motion a chain of events that lead to catastrophe. He has spotted Jabulani standing in close proximity to Mandla, a social deviant in that the latter was smoking a cigarette while the two youngsters were seen together. Mbongeni follows his predictions that Jabulani might turn to be a smoker himself. Demonstrating his resentment of this habit of smoking and that he is a good listener to his parents and teachers, Mbongeni untruthfully tells his parents that he has seen Jabulani actually smoking. Consequently, Jabulani is brutally thrashed by his parents. Since Mnambithi is a male dominated society, where men, like Dlamini, inflict physical punishment on their young ones most of the time, Mbongeni fits neatly into the patriarchal model.

Dlamini is quoted as retorting

Angazi ukuthi ngizomenzenjani
lo mfana. Futhi isigcino ngiyabona
ukuthi nokumbulala ngingahle
ngimbulale,

(p.16)

(I do not know what I am going to do to this boy. It is likely that I may end up killing him.)

The internal and external conflicts in Jabulani's father arise from his concern about the degradation of their name in the society. He and his wife are people of high standing in the new dispensation. Dlamini's problem is accountability. Thus the war that MaNtuli and Dlamini wage against their son, has to do with class consciousness. However, it culminates in drastic results in that it creates a physical and psychological gap between Jabulani on the one hand and his parents and his siblings on the other. Jabulani becomes an isolate in the family. He is so tortured that he even blind to the genuine love his sister Nomusa displays towards him. Of his unceremonious departure, the novelist moans,

Waphuma umfana washiya abazali

bakhe bethule bethe cwaka.

Wayengabazi ubuhlungu

obabusenhliziyweni kayise ngesikhathi

ekhuluma wonke lamazwi. Kuyena
 kwaba sengathi abazali bakhe
 abasamfuni, sebemdikilile,
 sebeyamxosha ...,

(p.45)

(The boy went out leaving his
 parents in complete silence. He was
 not aware of the pain that was
 in his father's heart when
 he spoke all these words. To
 him it was as if his parents
 did not want him anymore, that
 they had abandoned him, and
 so were chasing him away ...)

The paradox embodied in the events is that while MaNtuli and Dlamini are trying to grapple with the situation, to make their son meet their ideals, Jabulani mistakes this for vindictiveness on the part of his parents. In all that they say and do, he figures that he has become an abandoned or derelict child. The author exposes to the readers the enormity of the pressure that

is brought to bear on Jabulani and his parents. It is also a pathetic state of affairs and quite paradoxical in extremity, that in trying to alleviate the agony in his heart, by escaping to Johannesburg, Jabulani plunges himself into an abyss of alienation.

The author is in obvious sympathy with his depraved character, Jabulani. However, the novelist as an artist and intellectual, stands quite elevated in his position to analyse and synthesise the folly of his depraved character. Through the novel, we are able to penetrate Jabulani's vain aims, vain hopes and vain desires. For instance, in the following exposition we mark Jabulani's psychological ruminations,

Wayefuna ukuthi asuke aphele, aye
 kwamanye amazwe lapho engaziwa
 khona, lapho kungeyukuba khona
 muntu ozomhlupha. Kwabe
 kumcasula nokuba alokhu ethethiswa,
 kanti nokushaywa wayengasakuthandi,

(He desires to leave, and go to places where he was unknown, where no one would worry him.

It was irritating him to be scolded all the time, and was also resentful of being thrashed.)

Jabulani becomes a dreamer in imagining that there will be peace for him in an unknown land; plus he has no orientation whatsoever on what he is entering into. He condemns the way his parents and teacher, Mr Ndlela (p.45) punish him. It only irritates him. Being scolded and beaten at school and at home all prove to be in vain. In so far as he is concerned, teachers and parents fail to address his daily problems. When his father threatens to kill him the next time he might err, this must signify the end of his connection with his parents and Mnambithi. He can see his parents as nothing but "dupes of Christian ministers", as he bursts out before his girl-friend, Alice Mabaso, when he is in one of his outrageous moods, in Johannesburg.

The first act of kindness in Jabulani's conception of things is Mwelase's protection of him in the train to Johannesburg.

Jabulani is a disoriented figure with no appropriate ticket, for the one he has possessed could only take him as far as Glencoe. Jabulani feels temporarily secure in Mwelase's hands in a very crucial set up in Johannesburg and is for a short while at peace with himself and with the world.

But, he is soon to encounter the most devastating in Mshini Mazibuko's hideout. Mazibuko is the gentleman who wears the camouflage name, Jimmy Mwelase. He has to emulate Mazibuko by carrying a false name of Joe Nsele and such a pass as to suit it. Mwelase, the gangster chief, stresses the need to possess a pass.

Awusebenzi futhi awukwazi ukuthola
 umsebenzi ngoba awunapasi. Uma uthi
 ufuna amapasi bazokuhlohla
 esitimeleni bakuphindisele kini kanti
 ngokusho kwakho awufuni ukuya
 ekhaya ngoba wabaleka ekhaya

libalele, kakuhle. Awukwazi
ukuhlala lapha eGoli ungasebenzi
ngoba zonke izinto ziyimali. Ukudla
okudlayo yimali; izinkuni namalahle
yimali, amanzi owaphuzayo imali
nezingubo ozigqokayo imali ...
sonke siyasebenza,

(p.85)

(You are unemployed and you cannot
get a job because you have no
pass. If you say you want passes,
they are going to push you into
the train and send you back
home whereas as you say, you
do not want to return home since
you ran away from home in
broad daylight, things being well.
You cannot stay here in Johannesburg
if you do not work because
everything costs money. The food
you eat is money, firewood and

coal are money, the water you
drink is money and the clothing
you wear is money ...
we are all working.)

Nyembezi exposes how Jabulani's lack of a pass makes this character of his an easy prey to Mwelase. But at the same time, the author provides glimpses into Jabulani's wavering in the hands of Mwelase. He either must take the job as a criminal under Mwelase or he may go out to be manhandled by the police, following his lack of a pass. Jabulani, having suffered the consequences of being a criminal back at Mnambithi, denies the good counsel of his conscience and succumbs to Mwelase's threats. This shows that man has a potential evil. It shows that lying in every man is a 'beast' and it is up to the individual concerned to follow the good course.

Robbing Charlie, the Chinese trader, was the beginning of more and more vile digressions. We see man's capacity for evil in Jabulani and Mwelase's gangster as a whole. Jabulani is also insensitive to his crime since he begins to behave as if crime is

not a problem. He neither adheres to the old values of his people, the Africans, nor does he associate himself with any form of religion. He is like someone 'possessed'. Through his deteriorating life style, Johannesburg is portrayed as a metaphor for any corrupting social environment, (Kunene, 1993:157).

Jabulani, whose conception of culture has been challenged and weakened in his home village of Mnambithi becomes totally uncultured in the new world of the city. Back in Mnambithi, Jabulani has struck the readers as being a curious one whose life condition has deteriorated with each new punishment. Nothing much changes his attitude towards life in general. To Alice Mabaso, his girlfriend, Jabulani wears a cloak of being employed somewhere. Alice curses the murderer of the boy, whom Jabulani has silenced, without knowing that he is speaking to the culprit.

However, the very episode of driving a knife into the heart of the boy they have separated from his girlfriend, has a dramatic effect on Jabulani. His conscience tells him that murder is an extremely ugly act. As readers, we ruminate together with the author that Jabulani is forced onto the act by forces exerted from outside himself. But Jabulani represents a double standard

in his insistence that, on his taking an oath to join the gangster, he did not know that he would even have to take a life. By implication, if a murder was not involved, Jabulani would have continued with vile acts.

But in all these things, Jabulani's alienation from culture shows the suffering of many other Africans in the ghetto slums of Johannesburg. Many have been destroyed psychologically and have, in turn, made Johannesburg an unpleasant place for people of different races.

The school and the church have proved to be inadequate in moulding the lives of black Africans and so helping various families black and white to live together harmoniously. We respond with reservations to the novelist's optimism that Jabulani might come out of the reformatory a changed man. Nothing, in our opinion warrants this optimism. Jabulani's strength has been tested on being exposed to sterner crimes than the ones he has got used to committing.

The dark or sombre note of the novel is marked, although it does have flickers of light glowing in the characters of Alice Mabaso and Reverend Maphelu. The two characters represent an alternative reality. **Mntanami! Mntanami!** can be regarded as a tragedy of one man Jabulani, who "worked his personal conflicts, his `neurosis', in Freud's language, (Eagleton, 1984:218)". This the character did with the hope of freeing himself from mental frustration, only to experience a dismal defeat. For tragedy implies "the working out of man's lives a rigorous fatality that transcends the individual's ability to comprehend or to arrest its pre-ordained course of events. This is the Aristotelian view of a tragic character. Jabulani is a great thinker who makes an error of judgement that we all could have made. In this way, he becomes a sacrificial victim in that readers can engage their thoughts in such problems which affect all countries infested by racial prejudice.

In the novel, **Ubudoda Abukhulelwa**, (Age is not the only criterion), the novelist focuses on Vusi, the son of MaMbatha and Gumede. Vusi Gumede suffers in his childhood, not so much because his parents are struck by lightning at his young age, but

his real misery arises from the changes in the society. These changes affect the way of life of Africans in the rural areas of Newcastle.

The author elaborates on his main theme of suffering brought about through alienation. Vusi's suffering as a child follows his desertion by his uncle, Mbatha who has adopted him, after the death of his parents. When Mbatha disappears into the city, MaMdletshe, his wife mistreats Vusi. This is in revenge for what Vusi's late mother did. She had tried to secure a hand of another woman for her brother, prior to his marriage to MaMdletshe.

The author enables us to observe a deterioration of African values in a society like the one in which Vusi suffers as a child. The theme of alienation receives specific colouration in the Vusi Gumede, MaMdletshe and Mbatha Oedipal structure. First and foremost, Vusi is alienated in the household of his foster parents in that he is a starved child. His aunt MaMdletshe practises injustice by making sure that Vusi eats only the left-overs from his cousin, Mthanyana and the other children.

Secondly, Vusi is punished in extremity until blood oozes from his skin. The reason for the infliction of such pain on Vusi is not sound. Mthanyana has spied on Vusi and has seen him accepting an offer of food from the Ntuli neighbours.

The punishment given to Vusi for eating at the neighbours cannot be accepted as justifiable. Sharing is a practice most welcome in the AmaZulu thought patterns. Traditional AmaZulu people customarily got together to share meat, they also enjoyed isiZulu beer from a common calabash. Singing and dancing also involved a joint participation. The author invites his audience to share with Vusi the agony of being an isolate and a vagabond in a society where people have become 'animalised'. Thrashing a child by means of sjambok, cannot help him to realise whatever wrong he might have done. It is just an act of vindictiveness, whose perpetrators suffer from an internal weakness, some disease that needs to be cured.

As Egudu (1978:17) puts it;

African writers have employed images
of brutality.

Nyembezi describes and employs the image of brutality by ejaculating,

Wamshaya ngesitilobho
sekugxiza nje igazi,

(p.40)

(She beat him with a skin rod
and blood was oozing out of him,)

to show that Vusi's mishandling by his aunt is an act of injustice. MaMdletshe's abominable acts are totally at odds with the African culture.

The dialogue between Nkosi and MaNtuli helps as readers to resolve whether or not MaMdletshe's actions are justifiable,

Kodwa wena Nkosi wake wambona
umuntu ophatha ingane ngolunya
olungaka? Yamenzani nje nempela
lengane angaze ayenze nje?
Akukho lutho enganeni Bhele.
Ngiyabona ukuthi usalwa endala
ngoba okaMbatha, unina walo

mfana babengafuni uMbatha lo
 amthathe uMaMdletshe. Uyakwazi-ke
 lokho. Manje lelo gqubu
 uselikhphela enganeni.

(p.46)

(Have you, Nkosi, ever seen someone

treat a child with so much

cruelty? What has this child done

to her to warrant such mishandling?

There is nothing wrong with the

child, Bhele. I think she is paying

revenge for an old feud in which

the daughter of Mbatha, this boy's

mother, did not want MaMdletshe to

marry their brother. Now vengeance

is passed on to the child who never

offended her in any way.)

In what transpires in the dialogue above, Vusi's innocence is confirmed as against MaMdletshe's vengeance. A loss of African culture in the abominable and outrageous outbursts of MaMdletshe,

is observed. It is worth pointing out that among black Africans it is customary that when a woman gets married, she vows to take care of all the members of the household, including relatives. The concept of extended families, where orphans and children of relatives are catered for, is what gives black Africans a dignity by which they are reckoned.

It is also customary among Africans that sons inherit property and livestock from their parents. However, in the new dispensation, women, like Vusi's aunt, feel free to deprive orphans of their heritage by selling cattle that should be rightfully transferred from the parents' possession to son. They devour the money from the sales themselves. Hence, Vusi's world is one which makes him a victim of the negative change.

The author further exposes that Vusi also has his clothes taken away by his aunt. These are given to Mthanyana and the other children of MaMdletshe. In his suffering through being deprived of his clothing, Vusi becomes a Christ figure. Christ at the time of his crucifixion had his clothes taken and shared by others. Vusi grows up a ragged child. His torn clothes are

symbolic of the destruction of the beautiful past, a past that has become a history to Africans. By giving us these details, Nyembezi is creating a conduct for his own voice that loss of culture is horrific.

The novelist, however, raises this character and we observe that Vusi rejects total defeat. He converts the bitter experiences of his childhood into great achievements. He forms high notions of himself. His aim in escaping to the city is to get a job in order to save for his education. In this way he overcompensates for his feelings of inferiority. Thus Vusi is "a good guy" (Kunene, 1993:156) who brings himself up by his own boot strings.

In the city of Newcastle, Vusi is further alienated in that the Indian and Europeans that he comes into contact with lack a fatherly and motherly attitude towards him. This is very much at odds with what is regarded as proper among black societies.

Blacks believe and actually raise their youth to pay due respect to older people, irrespective of colour or creed and to regard them as their real parents. However, the kind of mistreatment

Vusi receives from Mpisi's 'boss', who chases him away from his premises at night and testifies a lie against him exposes something on the contrary. His Indian employers who crook him reveal that blacks have come to live with people whose attitudes towards others leave much to be desired. The concept of motherliness and fatherliness in the grown ups that Vusi encounter in the city is very much questionable.

Life has become contaminated even on the farms since the liquidation of chiefdoms and kingdoms. MaMdletshe can exercise vengeance on Vusi at will without anyone intervening even when she shouts on top of her voice, the passers-by turn deaf ears. This is because their sense of identity as blacks has crumbled. In the end what causes MaMdletshe to desire repentance to Vusi is her illness. We are not convinced that it is a desire to change for the better. Vusi who has upgraded himself secures a chance to display his triumph to MaMdletshe and the neighbours. The evolution and metamorphosis of Vusi is in alignment with Adler's conception of the inferiority complex and overcompensation. That is to say that some people overcompensate for their feelings of

inferiority. The novel also attains the status of a comedy although it does have a sombre or gloomy note.

Ironically, it is MaMdletshe's attitude towards her foster child, Vusi, which drives the latter to aspire for great heights.

Through suffering and endurance, Vusi is able to transform his painful childhood experiences to a source of positive remote goals. He ends up a teacher, thereafter a successful businessman.

Vusi's suffering in childhood cannot only be levelled against the evil perpetrated by MaMdletshe. His uncle, Mbatha, although he does not inflict physical punishment to Vusi in the same way his wife does, is doomed to be an irresponsible foster father. He defeats his own ends by adopting Vusi of his own accord, and is then swallowed by the city life. The author leads us to witness Mbatha's introspection and retrospection as this man looks back and blames himself of his failures. Mbatha also promises to make up for his past mistakes by paying bride prize when Vusi gets married to redress what his wife did in depriving Vusi of his heritage.

Whilst this is so, we are struck and disappointed by the way the author obscures to us what it is that shatters Mbatha's good intentions about Vusi in the city. Mbatha seems to have forgotten everything about his home, back on the farm. We wish that the author's voice could have been louder and firmer in denouncing the evils of the city.

However, Nyembezi's message rests on the folly of blacks in sacrificing what is theirs, especially the customs that consolidated all activities in the homestead. While the customs have been partially or even totally abandoned, nothing has been done to make for the losses. If people cease to share, as such values are trampled by people like MaMdletshe, their identity is tempered with and even crushed.

The actions and reactions of our people cannot go unchecked. The author is sounding a communal voice that many Africans have, like sheep, gone astray in abandoning what was good in the accumulated traditions of Africans. An African, in partially denouncing what is his, is now dangling between eastern and western values. He

has become like a bat, which looks something like a bird or rat but has no proper identification.

It is vital to seriously consider what the Nigerian writer, Chinua Achebe is implying when he moans that we should try and find out

where the rain began to beat us.

(Achebe, 1987:11)

The metaphor of the rain refers to our suffering as a doomed nation. There are forces which are encircling us which have caused us to abandon even what we should have preserved as vital. The novelist is implicitly questioning the African's abandonment of his belief in the power of the supernatural in the way in which it was perceived in Zulu beliefs. If MaMdletshe and perhaps many others like her, were not dangling between different cultures, she would not have developed such habits as denouncing the good customs. If only one person thinks and acts in a certain way, that thought or action represents an individual habit, not a pattern of culture'. Bad habits are marked in MaMdletshe, the antagonist.

Basing our argument on this scale of values, we find the chief protagonist in **'Ubudoda Abukhulelwa'**, Vusi Gumede, triumphing over the uncultured aunt. Though he does not communicate his plight in words, his actions speak quite loudly. Onomastic critics would appreciate the appropriateness of Vusi's name. To **'vusa'** means to wake or to help someone to rise up. Vusi's deeds suit his name in that he rises up from his being belittled by Mamdletshe to keep his head above the water in the midst of all difficult circumstances.

The Oedipal structures or relationships, that is, father, mother and child trilogies, (Scott, 1972:69) in the third and last one of Nyembezi's novels are penetrated into through the character of Mr C.C. Ndebenkulu. As in the first two novels, the theme of alienation from culture is the controlling organisation. The audience is presented with men and women in action and shown how these characters react to their predicament. In this way, the author unveils his imaginative world to his readers or audience in a realistic manner which is relevant to their life situations. It is this quality of the novelist's work that gives it a fair amount of credibility and authenticity.

When the novel **'Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu'** commences, readers are introduced to the rural area of Nyanyadu, which lies about fifty kilometres from Dundee in Northern Natal. Mr C.C. Ndebenkulu, the principal character, springs from nowhere, just like Sophocles' Oedipus, the King of Thebes. Ndebenkulu manages to convince the masses of Nyanyadu that he is a man of high standing in the city of Pietermaritzburg.

The audience is led to witness waves of change shake the society of Nyanyadu with the arrival of Ndebenkulu. From the onset, the relationship between Ndebenkulu and Themba Mkhwanazi, the youngster who meets him at Tayside station, gets quite strained. This is because most of the things Ndebenkulu says and does do not match Themba's expectations. They are also at odds with the description of Ndebenkulu as a humble, learned and decent man of the city. His age again, as a man who could have fathered Themba does not coincide with the language he speaks. For instance, he is quoted as enunciating,

Angithi uyezwa kahle, Fana?

(p.29)

(Isn't you hear well, Boy?)

When Ndebenkulu uses the word 'Fana' in addressing Themba (p.29), we sense some air of pity in his speech. Embodied in this pity is mockery of Themba by Ndebenkulu. The latter seems to see Themba to be an ignorant one of the farm. Ndebenkulu capitalises on the fact that Themba is surprised at his riches. Instead of trying to uplift the youngster's conception of things, Ndebenkulu's merely serves to display his superiority to the youngster. This becomes even more vivid when he downgrades all the Nyanyaduans in his vehement speech on his arrival at Mkhwanazi's place later on.

Readers are also not impressed by Ndebenkulu when he displays his nature in statements such as

Anginamoto mfana wami
nginezimoto.

(p.27)

(I don't have a car my boy,
I have cars.),

and the question Ndebenkulu asks

Sizofika sinjani lapho
siya khona uma amahhashi

ezobe elokhu esiphakamisela

imisila?

(p.31)

(How shall we be by the time
we get to our destination if these
horses are going to keep on
raising their tails at us?)

While Themba is upset by Ndebenkulu's tone in boasting about his riches, he is even baffled by the question that Ndebenkulu asks. It makes him wonder about the nature of the stranger. The audience is estranged by what appears to be ungratefulness in Ndebenkulu, for ironically the horses that he so resents are the only means of taking him to his desired destination, inferior as they may seem to be to him.

Ndebenkulu's overreaction to MaNtuli and Themba, after he has fallen from the carriage, strikes another mark in Themba's mind. Themba couples it with the down grading word '**fana**' in his shock about the visitor who shows disrespect even of a grown up like

his mother, MaNtuli. The novelist focuses on Themba's ill-
feelings on being provoked by Ndebenkulu and writes;

Leli lokumbiza ngofana nale nkulumo
kaNdebenkulu ekhombisa ukuthi akamazi
nokuthi uyini yacishe yamenza
wazilibala uThemba. Wayengasathukuthele
wayeseqala ukuveva. Wabona ukuthi
akusikho nje kuphela ukuthi
lomuntu uzithwele, uhlushwa
nawukudelela,

(p.29)

(This thing of calling him **'fana'** (boy)
and this talk which showed him
that Ndebenkulu regarded him very
lowly, almost caused Themba to
forget himself. He was so furious
that he was now shivering. He also
realised that it was not only that
this person was proud, he was also
rude.)

The novelist brings forward a point that in Themba's conception of this 'drama', he concluded that Ndebenkulu was, in fact, insane, (p.35). Ndebenkulu behaves in ways which are quite unusual to the rural folk. What makes meaning to farm people is to regard him as a mad man. Themba is, to his dismay, alienated in his own society at Nyanyadu when Ndebenkulu's strangeness affects his whole family.

We learn that for the first time, Themba was forced to answer an adult rudely, (p.33). This follows what many critics agree upon that if children grow up with hatred, they learn to hate, if they grow up with aggression, they learn to be aggressive. It stands to reason therefore that if a child is treated with warmth and affection, he grows up a loving child himself.

Ndebenkulu's hostile demonstration in the premises of Mkhwanazi makes him an antagonist in the novel and Themba a protagonist. His abusive language unites Themba and MaNtuli in their being humiliated. We identify ourselves with these two characters and distance ourselves from Ndebenkulu.

However, Ndebenkulu certainly has a way to exercise his calculating hypocrisy on those he has targetted to exploit, like Mkhwanazi. He manipulates Mkhwanazi into believing that wrong has been done to him and that he can use the law to revenge himself on Mkhwanazi for the faults of his wife and son. He quickly assesses Mkhwanazi's experience in matters pertaining to law by making him expose his low school standard. Ndebenkulu's tricks are so forceful in winning over his object of manipulation and conditioning his mentality that he changes Mkhwanazi's attitude towards the family. For the first time Mkhwanazi is a different person altogether quarrelling with his wife and son.

Wayeqala ukubona uyise
wabantabakhe enje,

(p.55)

(It was the first time for her
to see the father of her children
like this.)

Mkhwanazi betrays his conscience about MaNtuli. He has always known her to be a good and reliable wife but with Ndebenkulu's counselling, he is now bold enough to ejaculate,

UNdebenkulu ungivezele iqiniso
 ekade kwasa ngilisola ukuthi abafazi
 basemakhaya umqondo wabo uphenduka
 kancane okwesondo lenqola,

(p.49)

(Ndebenkulu has revealed to me
 the truth which I have always been
 suspecting that women of the farm
 have got brains which are like the
 wheels of a carriage that turn
 slowly.)

Like Ndebenkulu, Mkhwanazi now has a negative attitude towards carriages. They are objects of criticism by Ndebenkulu and so Mkhwanazi now aligns himself with the simile of the wheels formulated by the stranger. Mkhwanazi also thinks that because Ndebenkulu is a man of the city, his outlook at things is swift

and sound. We doubt if Mkhwanazi is speaking the truth when he says that Ndebenkulu's talk is echoing what he has long been suspecting. He has never voiced any ill-feelings about MaNtuli prior to Ndebenkulu's coming. He seems to be a man overcome by the fear that his cattle might be confiscated.

When someone is treated with disrespect, they naturally retaliate. So MaNtuli will deny MaShezi's help to prepare a decent meal for the visitor, (p.58). She will also not accept that her husband slaughters a sheep for the stranger whose behaviour she finds so absurd. Considering these reactions of MaNtuli, we find them not at all customary to African culture. Visitors and strangers are treated with much respect, following isiZulu expression

Unyawo alunampumulo.

(The foot travels untiringly.)

which means that you may find yourself treading at a village of people you once mistreated.

However, it is observed how Ndebenkulu's presence and manner of expression comes to violate order in the Mkhwanazi family. Not

only does Ndebenkulu's friction with Themba and MaNtuli come to upset them but it soon impacts strangely on the whole society. First Ndebenkulu breaks the known norms of the society that there should be mutual respect ('kuhlonishwana kabili'). For instance, to get someone to respect you, you need to humble yourself.

Diliza, a peer of Themba, however comes in to display his experience in city life. He plays a major role in analysing and synthesizing the nature of Ndebenkulu. The author shows that somehow, sons become older than their fathers in that Diliza comes to match Themba's conception of Ndebenkulu. He senses that there is something not quite right. Diliza's warnings to the men that by giving their cattle to the stranger they would be blundering, falls on deaf ears since he is perceived as bringing down their hopes and so his name is appropriate as the novelist puts it;

Athula amadoda aphefumula,

kubonakala ukuthi umfana

'udiliza' amathemba amakhulu

abeseqalile ukumila,

(p.104)

(The man kept quiet and breathed,
it being clear that the boy
was bringing down the great
hopes that had started to thrive.)

Diliza and Sergeant Mpungose also play a significant role in showing that Themba and his father should have united against the common enemy, in the first place. They prove Themba to be right and his father to have been mistaken about Ndebenkulu. The three youngsters Themba, Diliza and Mpungose confirm to us the well known notion among westerners not to trust a stranger and not to discuss 'anything' with him.

This is because strangers can never be really trusted before much is known about them. Perhaps we all need to learn this from our European neighbours. Ndebenkulu, on the contrary, comes to rule the Mkhwanazi family within moments of his arrival at Nyanyadu. He disregards everybody in the household just as he sees no importance of the chief of Nyanyadu. But we can conclude that

behind Ndebenkulu's odd behaviour such as causing division in the family and the society, manipulating his fellow men, there is some undesirable foreign influence. Standing somewhere, as a shadowy figure in the novel is a Mr Southey, whom Themba is sent to phone, (p.143), and inform of the postponement of Ndebenkulu's arrival back in Pietermaritzburg.

What Ndebenkulu signifies in terms of an Oedipal structure can be examined in what we learn in the extract that follows:

Uthe lapho ephuma endlini
 uMaNtuli wahlala phansi
 ekhishini ethule ethe cwaka,
 kubonakala ukuthi umoya
 wakhe awukhululekile,
 ukhathazekile kakhulu.
 Nabantwana bathula bathi
 du besaba ukumphazamisa
 nemicabango yakhe ...

(p.156)

(On returning from the house, MaNtuli sat down in the kitchen, it being clear that she was very much disturbed at heart. Even the children remained in complete silence for they were scared of disturbing her in her thoughts ...)

The gist of the matter here lies in the way Ndebenkulu has been able to distance MaNtuli from her husband. MaNtuli has tried in vain to convince her husband not to trust the stranger. Her insistence that Ndebenkulu might be given two or three heads of cattle indicates MaNtuli's ability to judge practical situations acutely. However, there is an element of fear in the novel. Mkhwanazi's naivety of the white man's law, by which all his cattle might be confiscated, keeps him in fear. He becomes a toy that Ndebenkulu can twist around the bend. It is also observed how the fear of their mother, whose furious outbursts were known to the children, kept Themba and Thoko from discussing with her. They were aware that she was in one of her worst moods, (p.156). By exposing these details, the novelist is warning us that we

need to ease family relationships. Mkhwanazi has been so conditioned by Ndebenkulu who has injected him with such obsessive greed for money that he is almost delirious in his being deaf to his wife's pleas.

Ndebenkulu, on the other hand, relies on nothing more than his words. This is evidenced by the names that he has twice given to himself. To the widow that he has tricked, he has called himself Mr E.E. Mlomo (Mr Mouth). The name by which he introduces himself to the Nyanyaduans is Ndebenkulu (Mr Big Lips). However, it is quite ironical that his victims have been insensitive to the fact that eloquence is not necessarily a mark of trustworthiness.

It is also Ndebenkulu's mouth that exposes to the readers the degree of his alienation from culture. He has become quite an uncultured one to direct abusive words to grown ups like Shandu and Mkhwanazi, especially in the presence of boys, Themba and Diliza Kheswa. His truly alarming nature is betrayed by the last words that he utters;

Niyohambe nisinda ziphukuphuku
ndini!

(p.203)

(You were lucky to escape,
you fools.)

This statement, ejaculated by Ndebenkulu, betrays the culture that has nurtured him. City life has instilled in Ndebenkulu a sense of injustice.

The author focuses on how the loss of cultural norms interact with the subjectivity of his depraved characters in the three novels. In **Mntanami! Mntanami!** Jabulani has ended up in a reformatory, but his predicament is not an individual ailment. There are many others like him inside and outside the reformatory whose personalities have been destroyed and they are now characterised by negativity. Jabulani's case is indicative of a general problem among Africans who find themselves in a world which threatens their moral and psychological norms.

Ndebenkulu is a man who has been tested in city life and has failed the test. He has accumulated such greed that makes him neither a traditionalist, with the respect of other fellow men, nor a modern man of any values. Audiences are prone to blaming the environment which has made Ndebenkulu. But to the author, this is no excuse. Hence; he sets Ndebenkulu to be denounced publicly. This shows that it is up to the individual concerned to follow the good counsel of his conscience, which can be regarded as a potential seed in man.

This observation may elevate our meditations about the future. None need to hate the cultures that are said to have brought suffering to Africans. It is of vital importance to design better living conditions for all. Much can be learned from Nyembezi's protagonist Vusi Gumede. It is observed how, in his, what Kunene (1993:157) terms a 'symbolic journey'. Vusi combats all sorts of absurdities. His victory is evidenced by the presence of the white man who comes to speak kind words and label the late Vusi as an achiever on his funeral. This illustrates that white people in South Africa have demonstrated their sense of wrong and right. Our opinions concur with those of Kunene

(1993) that there is a lot which is positive that we can 'emulate' in them. Yet, dimension can be added that blacks are not mindless and they also have much to share with their Indian and European neighbours in South Africa. Blacks generally regard whites highly as it is marked in the way Ndebenkulu interests his speech with English. He knows that by so doing, he will secure support because being learned and Europeans are almost 'synonymous' in South Africa.

Nevertheless, to boost our family relationships, we should avoid all that the past generations have gone into. A degree of mutual respect is required in the home, more especially as the novelist takes pains to highlight that women and children also have ideas to offer. Women and children thus require something more than mere superfluity in dealing with them.

Mntanami! Mntanami! (My Child! My Child!) the most famous of the novels of Nyembezi, bears much resonance in our society of South Africa. This is because it is common knowledge that we, like MaNtuli and Dlamini, live today in one of the most turbulent periods of human history. Rapid socio-political changes and

technological innovations undermine the traditions of our society. The relevance of parents as models of identification and respect for adults in general are questioned.

These socio-political changes involve a psychological distancing of the past, a sense of uncertainty of the future and a new emphasis on the present. Yesterday's solutions are often irrelevant to today's problems. Dlamini in **Mntanami! Mntanami** for instance, is acutely aware that disciplining Jabulani, his son, by countless beatings proves to be a futile exercise. No one can know what part of today's solutions will still be valid tomorrow. "The truths of yesterday are falsities of tomorrow", as the aphorism goes.

It remains painful altruism that we are rapidly approaching the new millennium. Yet, as we speed closer, evidence mounts that one of our sub-systems, education is dangerously malfunctioning. What passes for education today in many of our schools, is a hopeless anachronism. Parents and educators, in many cases, still uphold primitive ways and means of disciplining the youth such as severe corporal punishment and hard manual labour.

On the whole, parents look to educators, to fit their children for life in the future. Children are a centre of attraction. They are valued. Children are priceless. But they are also masters of their own destinies. Parents and teachers know that children have a right to learn. They have a right to be guided socially, educationally and vocationally. Youngsters have a right to be helped with effective methods of study. They have to be treated with consideration and respect. Thus, parents and teachers have to play an active role in the process of the development of the child. Young ones have a right to be developed in all modalities to assume adult roles. They have to be developed physically, emotionally and spiritually, in fact, in all spheres, to become true adults.

To this end, parents and educators are entrusted with the responsibility to be and to become of the learners. But we need to remember that you can take a horse to a river. However, you cannot force it to drink. It is up to the child to strive to make it, especially when given a scope to discover himself.

Nyembezi's Jabulani refuses to remain at school. His father, Dlamini, painfully grapples with the situation and he utters,

Akufuni ukuya esikoleni, isiphukuphuku
somfana. Ukumcindezela ngingakwenza,
kodwa kuzosizani ngoba uyofike
ahlale nje angezi lutho, bese
kubonakala ukuthi ngidlala ngesikhathi
nangemali yami,

(p.43)

(He does not want to go to school,
the fool of a boy. I can pin him
down to it, but how is it going
to help because he will go there to
sit and do nothing. Then it will
be clear that I'm wasting my
time and money.)

Dlamini is vexed that he cannot deal with his son's obstinacy by whatever means. He is fully aware that his physical actions can change nothing. The novelist, however, has exposed that if teachers 'live in the past', they cannot be successful in helping parents by moulding their children. Ndlela, in **Mntanami!**

Mntanami! for instance, is an out-of-date teacher who disregards the feelings of the children. Jabulani's school is not an exception. That is why the novelist is focussing on how black Africans grapple with the situation during the crucial period of their children's social and academic pilgrimage. The author highlights the gravity of the matter as he narrates,

Inkulumo yabo yayihamba ihambe
 iphele ... Iphele ngomthandazo
 wokuthi sengathi abantwana
 bangaphepha kuleziziphepho ezibhenguzayo
 eziphikelele ukukhalakathisela
 abantwana emaweni,

(p.2-3)

(Their conversation would go on and
 on but end ... End up with a prayer

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 bangaphepha kuleziziphepho ezibhenguzayo
 eziphikelele ukukhalakathisela
 abantwana emaweni,

(p.2-3)

(Their conversation would go on and
 on but end ... End up with a prayer

that their children survive the storms which were persistently shaking their society and so were likely to send the youth down the cliffs.)

The parents of the present day rely on nothing more than on praying that their children survive the hard times of negative change. They also trust that the teachers will also see to it that the worst does not happen. It is still the feeling of the African society today, as Nyembezi suggests, that teachers should try to cope with the demands of the child which is highly challenging. With knowledge explosion, we see that children know a lot to make them dissatisfied with the way in which things are done. Prayer cannot be denounced as an ineffective reality but it should be accompanied by practical endeavours as the Latin saying goes, *ora et labora*.

If a teacher does not do well in his task, that is equal to betrayal. It is betrayal to the parents who have utmost trust in him. Nyembezi voices this discrepancy of the teachers' ineffi-

ciency to perform their duties through the voice of MaNtuli, (p.2). Children discuss the teachers' actions, especially when left alone, as Jabulani discloses his feelings about Mr Ndlela, (p.45). The challenge is directed mostly at the teachers. This observation resounds the voice of the Nigerian writer, Wole Soyinka in his "Ogun Abibimang". The poet asserts that it is an educated hero who will come to liberate our minds in Africa.

We, as researchers do not know the answers but are engaged in an exercise to try to find out solutions to parents' and childrens' ailments. Our suggestion is that parents should be an integral part of a larger structure formed by educational experts, learner representatives, chiefs, religious ministers and various community councils. The family unit cannot afford to exist as a separate entity. Moreover, statistics availed by Captain Mdewuka in his address presented at the seminar on 'Colts and quality assurance in education', held on 16 November 1999 in Newcastle, expose a deterioration of the young ones' life condition.

Fathers, uncles and neighbours abuse young ones, especially the female children sexually. Six to twelve children, under the age

of thirteen are said to be victimised per week in the Madadeni area only.

The Captain's report ended on a bright note that educators have joined up hands with law officers to fight against this abominable crime.

The high number of children victim's reflect a general lack of safety in these times. It is important to accept that there is a problem as the parents do in Nyembezi's **Mntanami! Mntanami!**.

Being aware of the nature of the problem as Nyembezi's Dlamini is, is also necessary. However, something must be done. Our society, like those of Mnambithi and Johannesburg in **Mntanami! Mntanami!**, Pietermaritzburg, which has nurtured Ndebenkulu and even the rural area of Newcastle where MaMdletshe was brought up, are problematic.

Modern slums, in our society, are places where all the evil is manufactured. A good example of this disorder is what happens in Mwelase's hideout. The presence of slums impacts negatively on the school and, we need to do something about them. The future

is in our hands. We need to build it ourselves. Nyembezi suggests that no hooligan or rascal sprang from a rock. They have their mothers and fathers. Ndebenkulu in **Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu** is so much of a rogue. But he tells that his father is a preacher. Many have not done what they are supposed to do, that is, monitoring learning.

A syndrome of talks contaminates the whole continent of Africa. A lot has been said but not practised. This indicates that the syndrome of lip-service is catching up with the southern part of the continent. If we look at Ndebenkulu in **Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu** (The "tycoon" of Pietermaritzburg), he appears to be giving sound ideas to his audiences. However, these good ideas are never taken into practice by him. It is important that the talking syndrome should end and let there be action. Nyembezi takes Jabulani from the street and sends him back to school, though a reformatory this time, for moulding. As long as communities do not form structures necessary to redress current issues, many young lives are still going to be ruined. At present, many do not practice what they are supposed to do, that is, monitoring learning.

Even worse than the talking syndrome, a vicious cycle is prevailing. Parents blame the educators who are said to be not performing counselling duties, as MaNtuli suggests, (p.2). Paradoxically, the teachers think that the parents are not playing their disciplinary role. Children are condemned by both parents and teachers in extremity. They are regarded as the worst in history. Again, the solution lies in that parents and teachers should join up hands and work towards finding solutions other than pointing fingers at one another. Children must also voice their suggestions, and these should be looked into as suggestions rather than grievances.

It is also worthwhile to mention that there are socio-economic problems which beset our country such as the one of unemployment. Nyembezi also hints upon this problem in **Mntanami! Mntanami!**. We can draw a contrast between Jabulani in **Mntanami! Mntanami!** and Vusi Gumede in **Ubu-doda Abukhulelwa**. Jabulani denounces everything pertaining to conditioning by parents and teachers, while Vusi knows that without an adequate education, one has no real place in life. He knows that those that have not prepared themselves to fit in decent jobs cannot survive the

demands of the new society. Vusi remains the voice of the author throughout. He attains self-reliance by grappling with many hardships and by not giving up.

Through Vusi Gumede, the novelist voices that the technology of tomorrow requires not men and women who take orders in the unblinking fashion. It requires not men and women who mechanically submit to authority so as to earn a living. But it requires people who are able to weave their way through novel environments. Those are individuals who are quick to spot new relationships in the rapidly changing reality. Thus, our society, cannot afford to produce more Jabulani's who act abruptly, that is, before they fully resolve the situation only to find themselves caught up in abysmal pits.

One might also add that the author is implicitly sounding that in the modern society people are no longer judged by their skin colours. They are also not judged by the number of people they know in high positions, but by their own achievements. It is clear that the author abhors laziness especially of the kind that is displayed by Ndebenkulu in avoiding doing a decent job but

choosing to be a trickster. We are likely to condone Diliza's mockery of Ndebenkulu in **Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu**. Ndebenkulu has become an "**umlungu-mnyama**" (a black European) as MaNtuli puts it, (p.56). Perhaps there is nothing wrong in that, but Ndebenkulu's westernization should help him to achieve self-reliance.

Through the character of Vusi Gumede in **Ubudoda Abukhulelwa**, the author is conveying a key note in his message to the society. Nyembezi's observation is that the technology of tomorrow requires not millions of highly lettered men and women, able to work in unison at endlessly repetitious jobs. But it requires people who will be ready to exploit their talents. Vusi Gumede does not only become a teacher but a successful businessman. He gains a status of a true hero in the novels.

The novelist's message is that only the better qualified people will be able to advertise themselves well. They will, according to their abilities, be the only ones who will afford to lead a better life. They are the people whose lives will be liberated.

CHAPTER 4

**THE STYLE OF NYEMBEZI IN DELINEATING THE CHARACTERS AND THEIR
SOCIAL MILIEUS**

Enkvist (1964) in Mokoko (1995:22) asserts that:

The style of a text is a function of
the aggregate of ratios between
"Frequencies" of its phonological,
grammatical and lexical items in
contextually related norms.

A frequent or common thread running through the novels of Nyembezi is his concern with psychological factors which influence thinking and behaviour in a destabilised human society. In other words, Nyembezi evokes in the reader Freud's perception of reality as influenced by overriding psychological factors.

The characters in the novels become so self-aware and self-critical that one finds it difficult to conceive that they would have landed in their predicament in the first place. This implies that they are responsible for their plight and could do something to alter it. This is because identity is socially determined in the context of Nyembezi's novels. The novelist is aware that the basic facts of man's existence are unchanging. Man still has to face death. He still has to confront a range of changes. Man has the problem of relating to other beings. Nyembezi highlights these existentialist notions in which the ingredients of man's conditions are unchanging.

There is disharmony in the world where Ndebenkulu crosses, expressed in the amusing, the ridiculous, presenting us with some dramatic irony in the novel. This is to say that the audience is aware of what the characters in the novel are not aware of. The characters tend to be one dimensional. Flat characterization is utilized, so that characters are figures rather than people. Ndebenkulu's villainy for instance, is exhibited throughout the novel. Typical of an absurd novel rather than pure comedy or tragedy, characters are not psychologically rounded.

For a political novelist there is the belief that social conditions can render existence more tolerable. But in Nyembezi's fiction, the absurd behaviour of the characters imply that man's relationship with his environment will always be problematic. Such assumptions like that which state that Nyembezi is a social realist, that he is essentially a political writer, that his work is narrowly meant for the South African audience, indicate a profound misunderstanding of his works. Although his characters may not recognise it as such, their plight is metaphysical. The only means they have for accommodating it, is through their "consciousness" which is internal and self reflective at first but which also manifests itself in each character's speech.

Eloquence, in the midst of depravity, Oscar Wilbur warns, conflicts with a misunderstanding of depravity as a state of all man. The author's depraved characters, Jabulani Dlamini, Jimmy Mwelase in **Mntanami! Mntanami!** and Ndebenkulu in **Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu**, at the level which fascinates us, neither social nor political but metaphysical, are a metaphor of the

human condition which neither law nor religion can substantially change.

The novels in question are not naturalistic though some may attribute to them an accuracy which most people mistake for pure realism. Characters cannot be analysed through social biology. They are mechanistic problems of their social environments. Thus Nyembezi is not a pure realist. For realism can suggest meaning that is self evident, and that therefore, the artist needs merely to present or describe people and events instead of interpreting them. Nyembezi's realism is only pre-text, the outer style, through which he captures or fathoms the inner idea. To master the idiom, thought and speech pattern of a character in Nyembezi is not what Jabulani or Vusi thinks but how they think it.

Nyembezi uses the family not as a locus of moral activity, but as a cauldron of intense human experiences. The experiences are constant and overwhelming as the ontological struggle in which the characters are engaged. The depraved characters in the worlds of the novels exist outside hierarchies, negatively disposed to some environment, which also reject them, as un-

accommodated people. Vusi Gumede, in the outskirts of Newcastle and Jimmy Mwelase in the ghettos of Johannesburg, are unaccommodated people. They are, at the metaphorical level, naked men.

The general view of **Mntanami! Mntanami!** is that since Jabulani does not author his fate, he appears to be innocent. However, distinctions between the innocent victim and the culpable perpetrator are obviously arbitrary when life itself is reason enough for suffering. It creates a state of absurdity that there is no definite flaw causing disharmony in the relationships between individuals. So there are no simple means for paying the penalties for wrongdoings or specific solutions by which order can be accurately restored.

Vusi in **Ubudoda Abukhulelwa** is thrashed severely, although he did not offend MaMdletshe but his late mother did. Jabulani is imprisoned although it is Mwelase who designed the murder. On the whole, the works are at odds with the Aristotelian view of "plausible heroes". Even **Ubudoda Abukhulelwa** becomes a tragicomedy since there is a sombre note running through it.

Worth noting also, is that Nyembezi's world is not one of the predestinations of the Carnivalists where hierarchies are destined to be thrown upside down. In Carnivalisation, kings become beggars and beggars become kings, (Selden, 1985:20). It also does not coincide with the social determinism of the Naturalists, whose view is "that we should not condemn someone who was not responsible but was a victim of preterhuman forces", (Scott, 1972:69). But great actions are still beyond the grasp of human experience in the worlds of the novels.

MaNtuli and Dlamini have the ability to act freely, but they know innately from past experience that actions can change nothing. Hence, Dlamini in **Mntanami! Mntanami!** communicates his plight in his soliloquy (p.16) that they do not know what to do, (**Angazi ukuthi sizokwenzenjani**), under the circumstances.

Effective action being non-existent, passivity pervades and culminates in statements articulated by Dlamini. For instance, he tells his son, Jabulani, either to comply or quit, (p.17). And, Mkhwanazi exhibition of his ignorance of the law to Ndebenkulu in **Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu** displays a kind of passivity.

Mkhwanazi apologetically retorts,

Wo asifundanga thina Ndebenkulu. Saqhukuluza
khona lapha emakhaya saphelwa ngamandla
lapha sifika ko-4,

(p.46)

(Oh, we Ndebenkulu, did not learn much. We
struggled here on the farm and left school on
reaching std. 4.)

Instead of growing powerful through his life, man in the novels of Nyembezi is enervated. That is, he is deprived of vigour or vitality.

The objective state of characters in such a world can be individuated not by physical actions, but through psychological independence as is exemplified by Vusi in the only "comedy" of the author, **Ubudoda Abukhulelwa**. The qualities appear to be totally different from those of the Aristotelian protagonist, in the kind of passivity that Vusi is portrayed to be embodying. But Vusi is truly heroic. Instead of possessing great attributes

because of great physical strength, like Chinua Achebe's hero Okonkwo, he earns them because of the consciousness he manifests through the course of his struggle.

Vusi's search to understand himself and his world is pursued in solitude. Mpisi, the guy whom he follows to the city, can be of no assistance. This is not because Mpisi cannot provide food and shelter for Vusi, but because the struggle, by definition, is solitary. Unable to comprehend or analyse his isolation and torture, Vusi can still consciously experience it. Though he cannot connect his experience to any larger meaning or construct, he can still know his pain, suffering, frustration and despair in a particular place and time.

Mwelase and Ndebenkulu, on the other hand, have been influenced by the social and political environments of the city that have nourished and starved them, simultaneously, in each case. Hence, the pleasure that Mwelase derives from using Jabulani as a puppet and a nonentity, and Ndebenkulu, on the other hand, from manipulating Mkhwanazi, is not simply sadistic. Mwelase, for instance, has learned to take the brutality directed at him,

augment it and send it to Jabulani. In his hideout Mwelase must be feared just as he himself is scared of the police outside his bungalow.

He also plays bossy to Jabulani. This is in line with the relationships between the haves and the have-nots. Ndebenkulu also regards himself to be superior to Mkhwanazi, who is a man of the farm. He claims to be quite knowledgeable in matters pertaining to law and to be a much learned man in comparison with Mkhwanazi. He boasts, "**Phela umthetho wukudla kwethu lena emadolobheni amakhulu**" (p.46) (By the way the law is our food in the big cities, yes, it is our food.)

In each one of Nyembezi's novels, intimate relationships between family, friends or lovers inevitably lead to the exposure of a character's innermost needs, pain and weaknesses. His outcasts are detached from society. Jabulani becomes an isolate in Mnam-bithi as gossipers like MaNkala label him a social degenerate.

Mwelase's hideout bears testimony to our observation. It is also marked that Vusi is thrown apart from others and his intimacy with Mpisi is short-lived.

Alone in their environments, these outcasts cling to one another. Instead of being mawkish or sentimental, their bonding relationships are an instance of the most fundamental human needs and aspirations. They are the emotional complement to basic physical needs such as shelter, food, drink and clothing that also play a major role in the novels.

Mwelase stresses the need to possess a pass and other life's essentials to Jabulani. To the Nyanyaduans, Ndebenkulu ironically claims that he has wealth which is sufficient for his needs, but this is not likely to be true. He is needy, hence his attempt to deprive them off their cattle. His eloquence makes it possible for him to trick those who are insensitive to the cunning ways of the city, like Shandu and Mkhwanazi.

Well aware of the need for existence in the city, Mwelase warns Jabulani who is fresh from the farm, that even the water he

drinks costs money. Jabulani's relationships with Mwelase is such that he must realise his helplessness and total dependence on the latter. Mwelase also needs Jabulani's services. It therefore has to be reciprocal relationship. We also mark that the esquire Ndebenkulu plays the friends with Mkhwanazi from whom he seeks accommodation. This is because shelter is essential if he is to hold his desired meetings.

Man's need for existence has plunged him into some kind of "paralysis" from which he cannot free himself. On the whole, the novels depict the African in a stuck environment. For instance, Jabulani's life is completely disorganised and disorientated. He uses the right time on the wrong track. He denounces the school and substitutes the train for it. In abandoning his parents, he chooses what appears to him to be the right way. Things get worse instead of improving.

Ndebenkulu too, is trapped and arrested at a place where he has hoped to find things easy for him to carry on his vile acts. So life in Nyembezi's novels is not designed to be plain sailing, but is so unpredictable and hard. The abusive language which

Ndebenkulu speaks against Shandu and Mkhwanazi betrays the inner feelings of a man overcome by the discovery of his own guilt. It does not bother Ndebenkulu's conscience to lower Mkhwanazi's dignity in front of his son, Themba and his peer, Diliza. Though the two boys have also offended him, Mkhwanazi has done nothing to humiliate Ndebenkulu and to warrant the degradatory language used against him. This has an effect of making the audience to distance itself from Ndebenkulu who seems to be evil personified and does not change.

As we observe in Ndebenkulu's use of a disgusting language when he calls Shandu and Mkhwanazi fools, speech in the novels exhibits the emotions and feelings of the characters. It is used to distinguish one character from another. Speech also reveals the relationships of the characters with one another. It denotes man's freedom of will. Consequently, man in the world of the novels in question can live in bad faith, to put it in Christian language. He may thus choose to justify his validity by his vain eloquence as in Mr C.C. Ndebenkulu's case. In this way he lives according to stale and meaningless social choice and so he lives meanly.

The novelist sees the individual's liberty in a positive light; an individual has an authentic choice, as Dlamini and Mwelase open such avenues to Jabulani at different times in his life. While in Nyembezi, people have freedom of speech, it is bad faith if their speech betrays that they does not really grow. It is truly unbecoming and hollowness of them if it reveals that their convictions are suicidal. The notion of hollowness is derived from Conrad's Heart of Darkness who says that if man betrays his won conscience, it is equal to being empty.

Through his speech, it is possible to examine and ascertain if Jabulani really grows into a self-identifying character. To Mandla, a friend from childhood, he ejaculates:

Cha, angifuni ukuba bazi. Kulungile uma
 ngizihlalele lapha, ngingaziwa muntu,
 nginghlushwa muntu, ngizihlalele
 ngenkululeko, ngizibusa. Bayothi bangezwa
 ukuthi ngilapha bese bezongifundekela
 bengishumayeza bayeke ukuyoshumayeza

iziqhaza emaphandleni,

(p.115)

(No, I don't want them to know. It is alright as I am staying here where no one is worrying me, and I am living freely, ruling myself. Because once they know that I am here, they will come to nag me instead of preaching to the illiterates on the farms.)

While his vehemence exhibits his hatred of his parents who humiliated him in childhood, Jabulani's conception of freedom leaves a lot to be desired. His speech serves to reveal that he still holds grudges against his parents. It shows us that there is something dangerous, lurking and suppressed deep down in Jabulani. If it comes out, like in Mwelase, it may be a sense of injustice. Jabulani at the moment of his deepest anguish turns to be highly figurative in the articulation of his joy in agony. On page 165, he is quoted as saying:

Alice! Uke uyibone intathakusa, lapho
 ukukhanya kuza njengenjomane iphalala
 umkhosi? Uke ubone lapho sekubheje
 ezansi, imisebe isichusha phezu kwezintaba
 iyogwaza esibhakabhakeni? Uthi lapho
 uyibuka kube sengathi iminwe?
 Uke ubone ilanga lapho lithi chaphasha
 lilihle sengathi likhanya ingqakala?
 Mntakwethu angithule ngoba ngingezwa
 ngithule ngoba namhla sengathi ubuhle
 bakho Alice ngiyabuqabuka,

(Alice, have you ever seen dawn when
 brightness comes as a horse that
 introduces an important ceremony? Have
 you ever witnessed the early morning
 when the sun rays approach from the
 horizon penetrating the mountains to
 reflect themselves on the sky? And
 when you focus your eyes on them they
 begin to resemble the fingers? Have

you ever seen the sun when it rises, it being beautiful like a foot that has been specially cleaned? My love, I'm not silent because I cannot hear what you are saying. I am silent because today it is as if I am seeing your beauty for the first time, Alice.

Jabulani is associating Alice with an early morning or dawn which comes running introducing a ceremony. The simile of the horse whose appearance denotes an important occasion, foreshadows the meeting of Jabulani and his parents in the jail cell. The sun rays that are penetrating the mountains are indicative of the new phase that is approaching Jabulani's life. His crime is to be unveiled and the stress in his mind will be eased. It is as if he is noticing Alice's beauty for the first time. This is caused by the stress deep down in his heart because he knows that he may be seeing Alice for the last time.

Nyembezi's characters rely on nothing as confidently as they do to their words. Their recourse to such heightened language

suggests the primary means they have for accommodating their plight. It is through their words that they establish relationships. It is their words which help them assimilate and understand their experience, and it is their words that temporarily allow them to transcend that experience.

By placing a character with a heightened consciousness of language in each novel, the author is creating a conduct for his own voice. In **Inkinsela YaseMngungundlovu**, it is Ndebenkulu who is especially sensitive to the sounds and meanings of words, although Diliza also has this characteristic ability. Ndebenkulu's awareness of the significance of eloquence enables him to call himself "Mr Mouth and Mr Big Lips" respectively. Diliza is one who senses that there is something not quite right in the very eloquence of Ndebenkulu. In addition, Jabulani not only resists Mandla's interrogations in Johannesburg because they demand his attention and patience, but also because they remind him of his suffering in childhood.

The spoken word, being given such a prominent place in the novels, we have to find out the implications of the power of

language. Ndebenkulu, for instance, uses the language to divide Mkhwanazi's family. He can proceed to manipulate Mkhwanazi easily when his wife MaNtuli and son, Themba are distanced from their father. This ability of Ndebenkulu tells us that something has been mutilated in him. We have to find out what is mutilated and why? The key motive in people like Ndebenkulu is to dramatise selfishness and even hatred focussed on others. For instance, MaMdletshe hates herself in her vengeance against Vusi. There is a sense of injustice in the depraved characters of the author, implying a value of self. This sense of injustice is exhibited when characters devalue others.

However, there is a shallow, and pointless reduction of Mwelase to an oppressor. Mwelase and Jabulani, because of what they have in common have their lives bound together. They are each other's fate. Jabulani has his "freedom" in that he is seen strolling the streets of Johannesburg with Alice. There are no physical chains of his bondage to Mwelase. It is mental bondage. One gets the impression that if Jabulani was not haunted by visions and dreams about the murder, he and Mwelase were not likely to part. This is not being harsh on Jabulani. His very insistence

that when he joined Mwelase's gangster, he was not aware that he would even have to kill, bears testimony. Other crimes do not worry him, except that of murder (as quoted in Chapter 3 above). Jabulani's relationship with his parents, however, cannot be perceived to have all along been a violent, bitter discord. The novelist reminds us that MaNtuli and Dlamini had their hearts tenaciously stuck on their children.

"Izinhliziyi zabo zasisebantwaneni babo",

(p.2)

(Their hearts were tenacious towards
their children.)

The problem here seems to lie in what permeates the relationship of Jabulani and his parents, causing imbalances. While Dlamini has an insight into the problem, there are no simple means by which it can be addressed.

It is observed how the characters are tested in city as well as rural life by controlled paradoxes. Nyembezi places the need to thrive and overcome life's challenges on the individual

concerned. This observation was made by Kunene (1993). External damnation or "perdition" is no excuse in Nyembezi's view.

Ndebenkulu in **Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu** and Jabulani in **Mntanami! Mntanami!** have their lives deteriorate seemingly as a result of the environments that have nurtured them. These environments have, at the same time, rejected them. While the author is in obvious sympathy with his depraved characters, he partly distances himself from them.

The reason is that in man there is an "inherent" vile which can be conceived as a "beast" lying deep down, suppressed. One has to follow the good counsel of his conscience. The conscience is a potential "seed" in man. In the end Jabulani develops a nerve to disband with Mwelase, after the murder. This accounts for the emanations of Jabulani's mind. Vusi exemplifies the conscience by demonstrating positivity. He is not swallowed by negative forces of the city.

Nyembezi's symbolic and allusive use of the city of Johannesburg for example, as a structural device which reflects as it unifies,

is only one of the many similar examples in **Mntanami! Mntanami!**. The metaphor of the city, symbolising any morally corrupting force, highlights the need for retaining the best qualities of both the old and the new ways in the new dispensation. It is also a pointer that we need the same strength in the new millennium.

Nyembezi's stand or control of his materials and of his techniques indicate his willingness to take moral and ethical stands on the relative merits of the old and the young. His capacity for commitment and understanding lies in helping his audiences by giving them evidence of a clash of cultures in South Africa. He ends his first and most accomplished novel **Mntanami!** placing Jabulani at a reformatory. This experience, symbolically denotes that we all need to research the nature of our being, and our strengths against various life's challenges.

CHAPTER 5

GENERAL CONCLUSION

A novel can be relevant if it arises out of a people's life situation. In other words, it can make meaning to its readers if it involves people and events that are credible to the audience. The novels of Nyembezi produce the desired effects for the audience and this makes them so interesting to read and analyse.

Evident in the novels is that the names, especially of the characters are of the author's own creation. The novelist attaches much irony to the names of characters. For example, instead of getting Jabulani to bring joy, as his name literally means, this character does absurd things. This indicates that individuals do not necessarily behave according to the straightforward meanings of their names.

Ndebenkulu's name is also ironic. Though it would, in simple speech, mean big lips, the author is questioning the very notion

of eloquence. By his way of speaking, Ndebenkulu stands elevated among the people of Nyanyadu. It is through his eloquence that he earns himself a high degree of respect and trust from Mkhwanazi and others in the meeting. Mkhwanazi can be very much shocked when Ndebenkulu's true nature is exposed at the railway station. The former can now tell that eloquence is not a mark of trustworthiness. Ndebenkulu proves to be a wolf in a sheep's skin.

The novelist is exposing false heroes like Ndebenkulu in more or less the same way as Sophocles 'lays bare' Oedipus Rex as villainous. The woman who exposes Ndebenkulu turns to be important in terms of an Oedipal structure. In her bitter and loud cry that Ndebenkulu has handicapped her children, in robbing her of the cattle, she turns to be heroic.

Ndebenkulu's exposure as a destroyer of the nation has far reaching implications. Hence, the widow's voice, referred to above, resonates in our minds. To this widow he has called himself Mr E.E. Mlomo, (Mr Mouth) and has been most convincing.

The widow's voice serves as a pointer that good words, well pronounced, may reveal cunningness extreme.

Nyembezi sees things from a liberal's perspective and is unable to change that. His voice is loud and harsh to those whites who are behind Ndebenkulu's scheme. Those are people like Mr Southey of Pietermaritzburg. Mr Southey is the man whom Themba is sent by Ndebenkulu to phone. The author's experience is about black people. He directs this experience, in the first place, to black African audiences, although his voice has been heard world-wide.

The novelist's experience is personal in that what matters to him is individual experience. His experience is expressed as a living moment in the novels and has, in practice, meant going beyond past experiences of his own. For instance, Jabulani is critically affected by the living conditions in Johannesburg. This experience follows the South African government's repressive laws which affected every aspect of the black man's life. The author himself resigned from the University College of Fort Hare

in 1959. This was on account of the restrictive laws made by the government which affected his own career.

Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu was published after this bitter experience. The author's voice in this novel, published in 1961, is expressed through the ill-feelings of Themba Mkhwanazi. The latter is a figure in agony. He is the first person in Nyanyadu who has to absorb Ndebenkulu's crude words and boasts. He also has to cope with the most rhetorical questions directed at him by Ndebenkulu. At the same time, he is the first to sense that there is something awful beneath Ndebenkulu's magnificent eloquence, something not quite right. The author is well aware of the discrepancy between Ndebenkulu's speech and his actual intention as a world-wide phenomenon. Disrespect for children is characteristic phenomenon.

The novel **Mntanami! Mntanami!** takes us to the past. Its mood of 'paralysis' or helplessness is a pointer to an inability to come to grips with the present or to predict the future. However, there is some optimism in the author's voice. He asserts that Jabulani might come out of prison a changed person, (p.223).

This reflects the author's westernization whose characteristic tendency is not to accept defeat. That is why Nyembezi's submerged characters reflect their author's westernization. We see how these characters rebel and how they reach out for what they want.

Vusi in **Ubudoda Abukhulelwa** will, in the midst of difficult circumstances, fight his case. This he will do until he achieves victory. Ndebenkulu's ejaculation towards the end of the novel,

Niyohambe nisinda ziphukuphuku

ndini!,

(p.203)

(You were lucky to escape,

you fools!),

shows his resistance to defeat. As for Mwelase, if he did not knock a donkey, and if it's European owner did not become stumbling block, he could have escaped police arrest. This is at odds with African culture where the inevitability of history is welcomed. Africans fought bravely, but when the situation got dismal, they took the things as they came, boldly, without cowardice. The war cry of the AmaZulu, "**Uyadela wen'osulapho!**"

(You are great you who are there), was meant to salute those who had fallen bravely in their serious fight against death.

Ubudoda Abukhulelwa reflects a lot of depth about suffering within family circles. The novelist has employed the imagery of vandalism. This makes a mark in the minds of the audience since brutality is so rife in South Africa. For instance, the imagery of red permeates the novels. Blood oozes from Vusi's skin on being beaten by MaMdletshe, (p.47), Jabulani's hands appear to be red after several washings, (p.152) and the youngsters Themba and Diliza box Ndebenkulu till he bleeds, (p.200).

A variety of absurdities is brought forward. Helplessness, anxiety, loneliness and even a blankness of the mind are contemplated by the author. Sometimes characters plunge themselves into abysmal pits. They may also face the incomprehensible.

Mkhwanazi in his soliloque talks of his inability to grapple with his son's obstinacy. He really does not know what to do, (p.16).

There is loneliness in the worlds of the novels, painful loneliness. The mood of loneliness prevails especially when characters are to face unknown life, in solitude. Vusi in **Ubudoda Abukhulelwa** and Jabulani in **Mnatanami! Mntanami!** resolve to go to 'unknown lands', where they believe no one will be obnoxious to them.

Loneliness is a condition which many people, young and old still suffer from in our country. Countless people still have to combat their problems in isolation. Quite painfully, they have to grapple with their ailments in the absence of proper avenues for counselling as the characters in the novels do. Loneliness can be so devastating. It comes about also when people feel unwanted. Such loneliness is noted in Jabulani Dlamini in **Mntanami! Mntanami!** and Vusi Gumede **Ubudoda Abukhulelwa**. Vusi and Jabulani's feelings of inadequacy are shown when they begin to look out into unknown horizons. It thus becomes a matter of chance or fate that they adjust or fail to adjust themselves when dealing with even more challenging issues.

Allusion exhibits itself as a method of Nyembezi. He alludes to the prodigal son motif in his three novels. Jabulani in **Mntanami! Mntanami!** gets close to going back home. We observe something near a reunion with his parents in the jail cell meeting. "The return of the gone away", is a feature of African novels as Nadine Gordimer rightly observes. Vusi in **Ubudoda Abukhulelwa** temporarily returns home to reconcile with his aunt, MaMdletshe.

Allusion charges the novels with meaning that is not fully stated. Thus there is a personal element submerged in the novels. Themba and Diliza in **Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu** seem to reflect an artistic debate going on within the author himself. They hint at another aspect of self identification. Their adopting a firm stand against Ndebenkulu, whose calculating hypocrisy they detest, reflects this. There is divided opinion in the readers concerning the retaliatory response of these youngsters to Ndebenkulu's cunningness. Kunene (1993:161) comments that

Themba and Diliza are behaving in an abnormal way. Their rudeness to an older person breaks all the known rules of propriety in their culture.

At a figurative level, the youngsters are not fighting Ndebenkulu as a person but the vile in him. It is quite unbecoming for children to revenge on adults by facing them physically.

An SABC research has proved that such a retaliation of children against adults is a malpractice. Audiences have bitterly attacked **Yizo! Yizo!** (Here we are! Here we are!), a play in which school children beat even their headmasters. It is perceived as that which might even worsen the gloomy situation in which relations between the young and the old are strained. The play is marked as presenting the audiences with an ugly, unpleasant scene. Parents and educators feel that this is likely to encourage adult beating by youngsters.

The parents are an integral part of this scenario, and so their input is most desirable. However, in a more or less similar

episode of Ndebenkulu's manhandling near Tayside we observe Nyembezi's attitude. The author's mind lights up with cruel clarity at the rogues that are roaming the country. He also looks at implications for the physical lives of the poor people who are exploited by lazy fellows like Ndebenkulu. The author is not impressed by the clever statements of his antagonist.

Two significant lines in **Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu** reveal Nyembezi's impatience with weakening morals. When Shandu notices that the tooth that has all along been protruding Ndebenkulu's mouth has vanished, he comments

Yisigebengu ngempela lesi, umgulukudu
omdala. Usigebenga aze asikhohlise
nangamazinyo!

(p.202)

(This is a true rogue, an old
criminal. He tricks us even with
his teeth!)

Although the scene of the beating of Ndebenkulu sounds 'hyperbolic', it serves to reveal the feelings of the author who stands aloof to his character Ndebenkulu. However, the loophole in trying to correct a wrong by another wrong remains a serious drawback. Themba and Diliza's actions are not a solution to the problem.

Nevertheless, in the recurrent motif of the hatred of an older man by a younger one; Themba and Diliza versus Ndebenkulu, Jabulani against Dlamini, his father, literature seems to have prefigured life. Sons prove to be generally negatively disposed to their fathers and vice versa. On the other hand, mothers love and protect their sons. Vusi's biological mother in **Ubudoda Abukhulelwa** displays this in her short stay with her son.

Although Mbatha and Vusi cannot be regarded as real rivals, their relationship has all along not been sound. This is because all the suffering of Vusi is brought about by Mbatha's being an irresponsible uncle.

Contradictions are another significant feature occurring within the Oedipal narrative. Those between Mwelase and Reverend

Maphelu are particularly discernable in the way they influence or impact on Jabulani's life in **Mntanami! Mntanami!**. The street-wise Mwelase who is a victim of negative influences himself, impact badly on Jabulani's life thus making Johannesburg an unpleasant place to live in. Reverend Maphelu represents an alternative reality since he tries to uplift Jabulani's morals. He helps him to face the truth in reporting himself to the police. By giving us these details, the author is at pains to make his audience aware that whatever Jabulani turns to be, he has a choice in life. If a man represses his conscience, he is bound to waver in response to the many voices in his life. Maphelu and Alice, who practice restraint, highlight the way that Jabulani should have chosen.

However, negative characters are accommodated in positive sympathy, laughter emerges through tears and the triviality of everyday existence is transcended by external truth. If we look into Jabulani's life, we observe that it is characterised by self-pity. This being so, he is embraced in Reverend Maphelu's and Alice's love. These two individuals do everything they can possibly do to help Jabulani. However, attainment of real

happiness lies quite remote to their abilities. It is only a psychiatrist who can solve the mystery by diagnosing the extent of the damage in Jabulani's mind. Nevertheless his ruminations (p.207), indicate some positivity. This is because Alice, whose love has started to doubt, has come to see him and this proves him to the negative.

But there are characters who are a personification of evil in that they do not change to the positive. Those people, as Kunene (1993:157) observes, were not born villains. It is the cons and means used to bring the youth up that leaves a lot to be desired. Nyembezi, however, places 'perdition' or 'salvation' upon the individual concerned. Jabulani appears to be the mouthpiece of the author. This is when he voices that there is nothing that can prevent him from disbanding with Mwelase, (p.149).

The author creates moments of joy in suffering. To the Dlamini family, it is tormenting joy to meet Jabulani about whom they have formulated all sorts of imaginations. Jabulani has now to conclude that he is not a derelict son. Tears in joy present us with a phenomenology of emotions which is so difficult to

understand. It is one of the paradoxes of life unveiled to us by the author. It seems fair deal for the novelist to create hope out of the gloomy or the absurd. The author does this to retain a sense of family, at least.

For MaMdletshe too, it is a glorious moment, yet in tears, when she finally recognises her nephew, Vusi. But the absurd things that she has done to him are now quite tormenting to her. They backfire on her. MaMdletshe's case is debatable. We may turn round and say that if her illness was not prolonged, she wouldn't have changed. Vusi accepts her repentance as a changed person and we are most likely to follow the former in his positivity.

The range of symbolic and allusive devices is more conducive to reflection rather than pure realism. Thus mood encroaches on the function of the narrative. Conversation stands for action.

Direct statement is replaced by indirect commentary. For example, the faults of submerged characters are traceable in others posing behind them or surrounding them as shadowy figures. Behind Ndebenkulu is the white man Mr Southey in Pietermaritzburg. Mwelase must get a human part because the shebeen queen

needs it. Vusi's uncle is an unseen cause of his nephew's predicament. The novelist is suggesting that it is our responsibility to shake off undesirable elements in our lives. Jabulani's speech against Mwelase's domination (p.149) reveals that he intends to shake off his fear and act against the gangster.

Behind the story telling, is the novelist's preoccupation with the factors which influence thinking and behaviour. He deals with the Oedipal or the psychically overriding to the human mind. Thus the mood of the novels, beneath the narrative, remains grave. That is, it is serious or it requires careful consideration.

Jabulani has a certain degree of freedom in Johannesburg. We all have our freedom. But we need to know how to handle freedom because it may turn to be dangerous. While people would all like to behave as they please, it is essential to keep at bay negative influences. Nyembezi has portrayed something negative about blacks. This tends to reflect a western attitude towards Africa.

But in the last two novels he reports to his audience a completely new paradigm.

Through the strength of his mind, Vusi secures help from a white man. It is this man, who, in the end comes to his funeral to talk about the former's achievements. This shows us that not all whites are portrayed as bad as we have seen in the case of blacks. We should then avoid to nationalise an individual action. The European friend of Vusi has acted like a father to him in his life time, by offering assistance to him.

By these observations we are led to see the necessity for critics of literature to endeavour to concentrate on what can be seen as flickers of light in the author's work. The author's method, by which he conveys the truth in an entertaining way in his hilarious novel **Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu** is appreciated.

In **Mntanami! Mntanami!** Jabulani's good times with Alice help to capture moments of happiness in the novels. We appreciate that there is love and affection in the world of the novels. Jabulani's strength has been weighed upon a scale and has been found

to be light. But he cannot be regarded as a social degenerate because of defiance he exercises against Mwelase in the course of his struggle. Jabulani is a human being, capable of love, introspection and retrospection although this is not fully accomplished. Truly, the implicit question is whether or not he can come to grips with the trauma of living in a challenging world like Johannesburg. Some people are prone to learning hard and Jabulani might as well be one of them.

It may also be wrong of us to contend that change is from bad to worse in the world of the novels and in our society. Of course, we cannot condone corruption. If we turn a deaf ear to the author's positive suggestions, we shall not be forging reconciliation for which we should all be striving to secure. If people are told that they are corrupt and that at the end of the day they will not make it, it sends them to their doom. That is why the author finds it essential to bring to his closing scene Jabulani so that he can see that he is not an abandoned son. However, in South Africa, plans are thwarted by those who see black and corruption as synonymous. We need to regulate our

responses to perceptions or voices in the novels. We are all in the process of building a new society and to discover what we are capable of. Positive human aspirations are displayed in the novels. There are the Mthethwas in Mnambithi who are supportive and forgiving to Jabulani's family as good neighbours. They avoid crippling Jabulani even when he has stolen their money from the post. MaMdunge too, who listens to alarming stories about Jabulani, told by MaNkala, is not a bad person. She truly forms part of the community of parents in Mnambithi. Nyembezi is making a deliberate attempt to say good things about Africa.

In *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* dignified men of the society treat Ndebenkulu as a respectable person. Mkhwanazi refers to him as 'Mnumzane' which means honourable one or family man. This is not because Mkhwanazi is necessarily naive or fears Ndebenkulu in extremity but because the AmaZulu treat strangers with due respect, as a cultural norm.

A novel has a role to transform its society. Thus the novelist in the calibre of Nyembezi is not an extremist. We are not suggesting that it is right for any novelist to downplay crime, but some positive issues, a lot of them, have to be raised.

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