

THE ROLE  
OF NARRATIONAL STRATEGIES  
IN THE FICTION OF MANDLA LANGA

by

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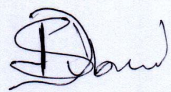
The role of narrational strategies in the fiction of Mandla Langa

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# SUMMARY.

This study deals with Mandla Langa's deployment of narrational strategies in his narrative *oeuvre*. Through a structural narratological analysis of Langa's discourse, the study reveals the role of the narrational strategies in the generation of meaning in his work. It also shows how the strategies are deployed to generate sympathy for specific characters and events in the fiction. The extent to which this draws attention to the fictional characters and their social positions in the Apartheid and post-Apartheid periods in South Africa, in which time periods the narratives are set, determines the interpretation of the meanings encoded in the texts. The study employs the narrative theory developed by Gérard Genette and Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism and concept of polyphony to investigate, describe and analyse the signifying effects of the strategies used in Langa's fiction.

**Title of dissertation:** The role of narrational strategies in the fiction of Mandla Langa.

**Key Terms:** dialogism, effects of narrational strategies, Gérard Genette, Mandla Langa, registration of sympathy, Mikhail Bakhtin, narrational strategies and meaning in fiction, polyphonic narration, tone and attitudes in narrational strategies, narrating voice

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# CHAPTER ONE.

## INTRODUCTION, OUTLINE AND STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY.

### 1.1. Introduction.

This chapter provides a detailed outline of the study. It includes the title and background to the research topic. It details the problem statement, the research questions and the aim of the study. Outlines of the theoretical framework and methodology to be followed are given, along with a review of the literature research done on the topic, and the structure of the study.

### 1.2. Title of the Study.

The role of narrational strategies in the fiction of Mandla Langa.

### 1.3. Background.

Mandla Langa was born in Durban, South Africa, in 1950. He is a distinguished poet and novelist. He was the recipient of the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for the Best Book in Africa (2009) and was awarded South Africa's National Order of Ikhamanga for literary, journalistic and cultural achievements (2007). He also received the Bursary for Creative Writing from the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1991.

Langa's fiction, which this study investigates, was published between 1987 and 2008. It includes *Tenderness of Blood* (1987), *A Rainbow on the Paper Sky* (1989), *The Naked Song and Other Stories* (1996), *The Memory of Stones* (2000) and *The Lost Colours of the Chameleon* (2008). In his fiction, Langa frequently experiments with narrational strategies, and an examination of his work reveals that these strategies changed over time, developing from relative simplicity to increased complexity.

Existing studies on his work focus on the themes of the fiction and the specific social and historical contexts in which they are set, but little research exists on his use of narrational

strategies in his fiction. Hence, this study used the following theories to investigate the role and effects of the narrational strategies in Langa's fiction: Gérard Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (1980) and *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (1988) on narrative theory; Mikhail Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981) on the narrative theory of dialogism.

#### 1.4. Problem Statement.

While narrative voice is indispensable to storytelling, the narrational strategies Langa deploys have received very little attention in critical reviews of his work. This lacuna is striking, given that Langa often uses a variety of narrational strategies in his oeuvre, which is what this study investigates.

The function of the narrational strategies and their effects in the production of meaning and the interpretation of texts are of central importance in this study. It thus focuses on the extent to which Langa's application of these strategies serve to highlight and condemn the oppressive and dire social conditions that the characters in his narratives are subjected to at different times under Apartheid, and later in unspecified allegorical post-colonial conditions.

#### 1.5. Research Questions.

The study's aim is to investigate the problem set out above by means of the following research questions:

##### 1.5.1. What main narrational strategies does Mandla Langa employ in his fiction?

This question is investigated to identify the narrational forms and to explain their functions in Langa's fiction. This will be done by drawing on Genette's work (1980;1988) and Bakhtin's dialogic theory (1981).

##### 1.5.2. What are the aesthetic effects of all the narrational strategies investigated in response to the above question?

The researcher posits that the narrational strategies operating in Mandla Langa's fiction have



the effect of creating sympathy for specific characters who are subjected to injustice in the narratives.

### 1.5.3. How does Langa's use of narrational strategies influence the discourse in his fiction?

It is posited that the narrational strategies produce negative representations that condemn the perpetrators of injustice in the fiction. The study seeks to clarify the complex interplay between the narrational strategies, the narrative events and the characters in the fiction. This results in a discourse that centres on exposing the injustices that the characters must contend with in their efforts to change their circumstances.

### 1.6. Aim of the Study.

The study aims to investigate the narrational strategies and to determine their functions and effects in the fiction of Mandla Langa with reference to *Tenderness of Blood*, *A Rainbow on the Paper Sky*, *The Naked Song and Other Stories*, *The Memory of Stones* and *The Lost Colours of the Chameleon*.

### 1.7. Theoretical Framework.

The main theoretical framework of the study is informed by Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (1980) and *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (1988). This is supplemented by the narrative theory of Mikhail Bakhtin's *Dialogic Imagination* (1981), in which the multi-vocal nature of novelistic discourse that arises from the dialogue characters enter in narratives are emphasised.

In Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (1980), the chapter titled "Voice" deals with narration and focalisation. The discussion on narration covers the narrating instance, types of narrators, the narrator in post-modernist texts, the time of the narration and the different narrative levels. Therefore, this study draws extensively on the relevant sections of the chapter and applies the insight gained to investigate the role of narration in Langa's stories. This investigation was done to establish the nature and effects of the narrating instance in Langa's fiction and to determine the role of the narrational strategies employed and their function in his novels.

Accordingly, this study draws extensively on the work of Genette (1980; 1988), since it provides a detailed and systematic elaboration of narration in fiction. This is supplemented by the work of Bakhtin (1981), which focuses on the multiple voices and the dialogical nature of narrative fiction. The noticeable difference between the two theories is that Genette's concept of "voice" deals with the narration of the story by either first or third-person narrators. Bakhtin's term "voice" pertains to the verbal exchanges that characters in novels enter in narratives and frequently perform the function of narration, as we will see in Langa's novels. The details of these theoretical aspects of "voice" in the sense of "narration" are set out in Chapter Two of this study.

### 1.8. Methodology.

The research methodologies applied in this study were qualitative and interpretative. They were applied to research data gathered from a variety of secondary sources, including books, journals, theses, dissertations and internet sources. The theoretical method followed entailed processing textual data to demonstrate how Langa employs specific narrative strategies to achieve a particular purpose. This was done to determine the roles, effects and meanings generated in specific works, as a way of addressing the research questions that underpin this study.

### 1.9. Literature Review.

Existing research on Langa's fiction consists of reviews and critical essays. They generally overlook his use of narrational strategies and their role in conveying meanings related to the themes of each narrative. These themes are clustered into two historical periods: the first centres on the Apartheid era, while the second deals with post-Apartheid and post-colonial developments and their consequences.

The dearth of research on the narrational aspects of Langa's fiction is possibly because the study of narration in fiction was generally neglected before Genette's work appeared in (1980 and 1988). In the main, critics of Langa's fiction overlook the deployment of the narrational strategies in his work, perhaps owing to their unfamiliarity with Genette's work and that of

other narratologists. This deficiency is evident in the works cited and discussed below.

Jabulani Mkhize (1995) writes about both the subject matter and the themes of the novel *A Rainbow on the Paper Sky*. However, the review overlooks the role of the narrational strategies in presenting Langa's central theme. Mkhize (1995:53) states that the theme of the novel is concerned with a "rationale for the legitimacy of the struggle against racial capitalism." This is one of the novel's sub-themes and it is concerned with the overthrow of the Apartheid government. Mkhize (1995:54) qualifies the theme of the novel and makes it clear that his interest in the novel is "to examine the conditions of production of Langa's novel, *A Rainbow on the Paper Sky* (1989), and to find some of the ways in which his work can be seen, as determined by those conditions." However, Mkhize's critique does not investigate how the narrational strategies deployed in the novel present these conditions.

Ingrid de Kok (1998:674) focuses on Langa's collection of stories titled, *The Naked Song and Other Stories*. The setting of the stories is "the Durban township of Kwa-Mashu, several places in South Africa and abroad." Like Mkhize, De Kok (1998) comments on both the subject matter and the themes of the stories, but avoids discussing the narrational strategies that Langa employs to convey meaning. She concentrates on the *histoire* of the stories that deal with "the unbanning of South Africa's anti-apartheid political movements and the first democratic election." The struggle to overthrow the Apartheid government is one of the stories' sub-themes.

The reviews and critical essays on Langa's third novel, *The Memory of Stones*, discuss the subject matter and the theme, but – again – overlook the narrational strategies deployed in the text. Critics opt for the traditional approach, by discussing the novel's subject matter and the themes that focus on the struggle

to bring down the system of Apartheid. Critics such as Shane Graham (2001:138) criticise this as a stock theme of many black South African writers, which has been thoroughly explored "for half of a century." However, the novel does not deal only with the effects of Apartheid, but also explores South Africa's transition to democracy.

This new development in Langa's fiction was applauded by Shane Graham (2001), Ursula Barnett (2001), Andries Oliphant (2001) and Devi Sarinjeive (2001), who welcomed the novel's focus on current developments, including challenging issues such as land restitution

and the consolidation of democracy.

An anonymous review in *The Cape Times* (3 November 2000) refers briefly to the narrational strategies found in *The Memory of Stones*. However, the review is basically concerned with praising the author and discussing the actual, rather than the fictive, in relation to the inhabitants of Ngoza, a small village in KwaZulu-Natal where the novel is set and neglects to explore the author's use of narrational strategies in the novel in any depth.

Langa's fourth novel, *The Lost Colours of the Chameleon*, deals with life in post-Apartheid South Africa. Like *The Memory of Stones*, it explores the transition to democracy in South Africa. Stephane Serge Ibinga's thesis, *The Representation of Women in the Works of Three South African Novelists of the Transition* (2007) is concerned primarily with the representation of the female characters in *The Lost Colours of the Chameleon* and other South African novels. She investigates how the works represent this sector of South African society through the social setting of each text. Since the focus of the study is characterisation, it does not deal with the narrational aspects of the novel.

#### 1.10 Structure of the Study.

This study report consists of seven interrelated chapters that deal with the theoretical approach and its application to Langa's fiction, as set out below:

Chapter 1 introduces the study and outlines the scope of the research. It provides the title, the background, the problem statement, the research questions and the aim of the study. It also discusses the theoretical framework and the methodology used, and assesses reviews and available research on Mandla Langa's fiction.

Chapter 2 provides a theoretical outline of the study, which is informed by Gérard Genette's narrative theory, as explained in *Narrative Discourse* and *Narrative Discourse Revisited* and Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, as per *The Dialogic Imagination*. These theories are applied to investigate the role of the narrational strategies and their effects in the generation of meaning in Langa's fiction.

Chapter 3 examines Mandla Langa's short story, *The Dead Men who Lost their Bones*, from the collection, *The Naked Song and Other Short Stories*. This collection employs a variety of narrational strategies, ranging from the relatively simple to the increasingly complex. Since the narrational strategies deployed in the short story represent many of the narrating positions Langa employs in his fiction, it provides an appropriate point of departure for this study.

Chapter 4 discusses Mandla Langa's novel *The Lost Colours of the Chameleon*. It investigates the use of multiple narrational strategies, the exchanges between the narrator and the characters, and the way the exchanges are foregrounded to draw attention to themselves by producing a fully dialogical narrative.

Chapter 5 explores *Tenderness of Blood*. It investigates how the narrational strategies function to highlight specific characters and their individual experiences. It establishes that this is done by exceeding the traditional conventions of maintaining a single narrational strategy throughout a given narrative text, by using first-person and third-person narrations throughout the novel.

Chapter 6 discusses *A Rainbow on the Paper Sky*, by addressing how the narrational strategies function to shape the discourse of the novel by using a bleak approach that produces a stark view and tone in the novel. This results in a narrative that emphasises the suffering and cruelty inflicted on certain characters by others. This registers an explicit condemnation of the brutality and injustice that the victimised characters are subjected to in the narrative.

Chapter 7 addresses how *The Memory of Stones* consistently centres on themes and topics that highlight the plight of particular characters. Here, again, Langa eschews applying a single first-person or third-person narrative perspective. Instead, he deploys multiple narrators as direct agents who articulate their own suffering and the plight of others, while exposing and denouncing the characters responsible as agents of injustice and oppression.

Chapter 8 sets out the conclusions. It synthesises the investigation and textual analysis of Langa's fiction and concludes the study. This is done with reference to the research questions that underpin this study.

# CHAPTER TWO.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

### 2.1 Introduction.

This chapter presents an overview of the narrative theories of Genette and Bakhtin and shows how they are applied to Langa's narratives in subsequent chapters.

This study of Langa's fiction was informed by Genette's (1980;1988) theory of narrative discourse, with specific reference to his specification of the different strategies of narration and Mikhail Bakhtin's (1981) theory of dialogism and the phenomenon of polyphony, which deals with the use of multiple voices in narratives. It was undertaken to establish the role and effects of narrational strategies in the generation of meaning in Langa's fiction. It should be noted that the study focuses on Genette's narrative theory on voice, which is narration (1980; 1988). Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic theory provides further insight to the narrating agent's voice, which is a character's speech used in narrating the story, as this is manifested in the dialogues between the characters.

Genette is one of the most important theorists in the narrative field and has made a significant contribution to contemporary narrative theory. His work is therefore, fundamental to this study. His *Narrative Discourse* (1980) gives a systematic exposition of the narrative theory, its codes and its structural relations, while *Narrative Discourse Revisited* (1988) provides a commentary on various other narratologists who reacted in different ways to his previous study. Reference to Genette's work will be supplemented by reference to Mikhail Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), which emphasises that multiple voices participate in narrating stories - not just that of the anonymous narrator.

### 2.2 Genette's Narrative Theory: The Voice.

Genette structured his narrative theory of 1980 on three central concepts: *récit*, which refers to the physical text of the story; *histoire*, which relates to events in the story; and narration, which focuses on the telling and focalisation of the story.

In Genette's *Narrative Discourse* (1980), the chapter titled, 'Voice', deals with narration and focalisation. The discussion on narration covers the narrating instance, types of narrators, the narrator in post-modernist texts, the time of the narration and the different narrative levels.

In the introduction to *Narrative Discourse* (1980:1), Genette outlines what he refers to as "a third meaning of the term narrative." He describes this as, "someone recounting something; the act of the narration itself," which implies that there is an agent who undertakes the role of narrating the story (Genette, 1980:26). According to Genette (1980:213), an agent is not only "the person who carries out or submits to the action but is also the person (the same or another) who reports it, as well as, if need be, all those people who participate, even passively, in this narrating activity." The subject of the narrative act is thus crucial, because s/he generates the narrative discourse.

The importance of the narrative act becomes evident when one grasps that a narrative cannot be a discourse or a text unless there is someone who undertakes its narration. This view thus maintains that the narrating instance produces the narrative text and the reader has only the concrete narrative text in which to search for the narrator. Genette (1980:214) also emphasises that the narrative instance is found with the "traces it has left – it is considered to have left – in the narrative it is considered to have produced [the text]." In this regard, Genette (1980:213) is critical of scholars who fail to point out and specify the narrating instance or "even to respect the autonomy of the narrating instance." Genette (1980:213-14) notes the difficulty caused when critics fail to specify the narrating instance:

Critics restrict questions of narrative enunciating to questions of "point of view"; on the other hand they identify the narrating instance with the instance of "writing", the narrator with the author, and the recipient of the narrative with the reader of the work: a confusion that is perhaps legitimate in the case of a historical narrative.

Regarding the narrating person, Genette (1980:243-244) states that the use of the "first person or third person narrative is 'inadequate' to designate the person of the narrating instance." He also maintains that those locutions of the first person and third person "stress variation in the elements of the narrative situation, that is, in fact, invariant – to wit, the presence (explicit or

implicit) of the ‘person’ of the narrator” (Genette, 1980). After rejecting the locutions of the triadic system of Stanzel (1978), which entails first-person narration, third-person narration and figural narration, Genette (1980:244-245) states that the novelist’s choice is not between two grammatical forms, but between two narrative postures: to have “the story told by one of its ‘characters’, or to have it told by a narrator outside of the story.” Genette (1980:248) thus proposes the following categories for the relationship of the narrator to the narrative events:

Homodiegetic (the narrator is present as a character within the story he or she relates). Heterodiegetic (the narrator is absent from the story he or she tells about.)

In addition, Genette (1980) notes that the relationship of the narrator to the narrative events of homodiegetic and heterodiegetic classification, according to narrative levels, is comparable to the categories designated:

Intradiegetic (the narrator is inside the narrative events and tells a story) and extradiegetic (the narrator is outside the events).

Genette (1980:248) explains: “If in every narrative we define the narrator’s status both by its narrative level (extradiegetic – or intradiegetic) and by its relationship to the story (heterodiegetic – or homodiegetic), we can represent the four basic types of the narrator’s status,” i.e:

Extradiegetic – heterodiegetic where the narrator on the first level tells a story from which he or she is absent; ‘extradiegetic – homodiegetic’ where a character on the first level tells his or her own story; intradiegetic – heterodiegetic’ where a character on the second level inside the central events tells an embedded ‘metadiegetic’ narrative; and ‘intradiegetic – homodiegetic’ where a character on the second level tells his or her own story.

According to Genette (1980:258-259), the narrator of a post-modernist text often exploits the narrative situation in the intradiegetic – homodiegetic narrative, also known as the first-person narrative. To Genette (1980:257), a post-modernist narrator refers to a narrator who performs an extra-narrative function that “addresses to the reader, the organisation of the narrative by means of advance notices and recalls, an indication of source, memory-elicited attestation.” Such a narrator, according to Genette (1980:258-259), seems to be doing this to achieve several effects. He goes on to state that the narrator of post-modernist texts transgresses the limits of narrative discourse in general, because of the freedom s/he has in depicting the world as s/he deems fit. He explains the role of the narrator of the post-modernist text as follows:

The narrator is claiming the privilege of supplying ideological commentary in a proliferation of ‘authorial’ discourse – a term “which indicates both the presence of the author (actual or fictive) and the sovereign *authority* of that presence in his work”. He also observes that the quantitative and qualitative importance of this psychological, historical, aesthetic and metaphysical discourse is such that it amounts to an “invasion of the story by the commentary, of the novel by essay, of the narrative by its own discourse” (Genette 1980:258-259).



For Genette (1980:217-220), the time of the narration is an essential element of narration. He maintains that the narrator can very easily tell a story without specifying where it happens or saying if the place the narrator is telling the story from is at a greater or lesser distance from him or her. He states that it is practically impossible for the narrator not to locate the story in a time prior to his narrating act (Genette, 1980). He asserts that a story must be told in the present, past or future tense, and mentions four types of narrating activity in which the temporal relations between the narrator and the story's events are described (Genette, 1980). The first is "subsequent narrating", which is the classical position of the past-tense narrative that presides over the great majority of the narratives produced to this day. Genette (1980:220) also notes that the use of the past tense is enough to make a narrative subsequent without indicating the interval that "separates the moment of the narrating from the moment of the story." More, in this narrating technique there is isotopy that occurs. According to David Herman *et al.* (2005:263), 'isotopy' is a relationship of balance in the narrative between the story and its narrator. One part of the narration complements the other. The anonymous third-person narrator's narration can fill in the missing parts from the narration of the character-narrator. On the other hand, the character-narrator can fill in the missing parts of the unnamed narrator's narration.

Prior narrating, according to Genette (1980:219-220), is a predictive narrative that is usually written in the future tense. It has a much "smaller literary investment than the other types of time narrative because it is difficult to maintain future tense" (Genette, 1980). He also suggests that if predictive narrating occurs at all, it is "on the second level of narration" (Genette, 1980). In this case, predictive narrating in fiction occurs in the form of prophecy, dreams and time-travelling, amongst other devices.

Genette (1980:217-219) explains that simultaneous narrating is narrative in the "present contemporaneous with the action." According to Genette (1980:218-219), this narrative function emphasises the "story or the narration discourse." This narrative function proves that Genette's model of a narrative is useful, because it specifies categories that distinguish clearly between story and narration.

Genette (1980:217) maintains that interpolated or inserted narrating is the "most complex",

because the “story and the narrating can become entangled in such a way that the latter has an effect on the former.” This happens because of the narration being inserted between the moments of the action. One of the reasons that the story and the narrating become entangled is the close relationship they have with each other. Genette (1980:217-218) says that the extreme closeness of the story to the narrating produces a subtle effect of friction between the “slight temporal displacement of the narrative of events (‘here is what happened to me today’) and the complete simultaneousness in the report of thoughts and feelings (‘here is what I think about it this evening’).”

It is crucial at this point to state that the closeness of the story and its narrating influences the focalisation. Genette (1980:218) says that the reason why the closeness of story events and their narrating influence focalisation is because “the narrator is at one and the same time still the hero and already someone else: the events of the day are already in the past.”

Genette (1980:229) also identifies several narrative levels with a “view to accounting for narratives within narratives where a character from one narrative can be a narrator in a second narrative.” According to Genette (1980), the term ‘diegesis’ denotes a story or narrative according to which it can be shown: if a narrator occupies a position outside the events of the primary narrative (extradiegetic); if s/he is involved in the story events (intradiegetic); or if, as an intradiegetic narrator, s/he reports on the events at a deeper level of embedding (metadiegetic). Here, Genette (1980) is at pains to state that the diegetic level refers to the main story, and that the metadiegetic is the secondary story that is narrated by one of the characters in the narrative. This metadiegetic narrational strategy is a strategy on its own, as explained below.

The term ‘diegesis’ refers to the narrating of the story; however, David Herman *et al.* (2005:107) acknowledges that diegesis has two meanings:

In modern narrative theory, they both originate from ancient Greek. On the one hand, [diegesis], refers to a story. Another usage of diegesis is the manner of narration: it is the telling of the story.

Metadiegetic narrative, Genette (1980:232) maintains, consists of an action done by a character within the primary narrative, who tells a secondary narrative that is embedded in the primary narrative. This method of narrating goes back to the very origins of epic narration. Genette (1980:232) also points out that there is a relationship of connection between the primary and

the metadiegetic narration. He goes on to state the functions of the relationship between the primary and the metadiegetic narratives:

The first type of a relationship is direct causality between the events of the metadiegesis and those of the diegesis, conferring on the second narrative an explanatory function. The second type consists of a purely thematic relationship, thereby implying no spatio-temporal continuity between metadiegesis and diegesis. The third type involves no explicit relationship between the two story levels: it is the act of narrating itself that fulfils a function in the diegesis, independently of the metadiegetic content – a function of distraction, for example, and/or of obstruction (Genette 1980:232).

Genette (1988:88) states that metalepsis occurs when “an author (or his reader) introduces himself into the fictive action of the narrative or when a character in that fiction intrudes into the extradiegetic existences of the author or reader.” This narrative structure suggests that Genette’s theory of systematic narrative categorisation shows that it is indeed flexible enough to provide for a description of typical narrative strategies, because the narrative of metalepsis transgresses the narrative boundaries. Genette (1980:236) maintains that metalepsis occurs and that it is an “unacceptable and insistent hypothesis, that the extradiegetic is perhaps always diegetic, and that the narrator and his narration – you and I – perhaps belong to the same narrative.” It is in this narrative structure that the reader (the actual reader outside the text) is often explicitly drawn into the narrative procedure, for example, when s/he is consulted about the events of the text in the form of thought-provoking questions and question marks or alternative endings for a text.

Genette (1988:88) explains the concept of *mise en abyme* as a story within the primary story, which creates a frame within a story. The main narrator narrates a story and within the narrated story a character narrates another story.

In the chapters that follow, Genette’s discussion of the different elements of narrative voice are deployed to approach, analyse, interpret and determine their functions and effects in Mandla Langa’s fiction.

### 2.3 Mikhail Bakhtin’s Theory of Polyphony and Dialogism.

In *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), Mikhail Bakhtin asserts that novelistic discourse is dialogic, meaning it deploys different speeches of people, including those of the characters, in the form of dialogues, when narrating the story. He devotes a section to what he calls the “speaking person” in the novels (Bakhtin, 1981). To Bakhtin (1981:333), this speaking person

in the novel is, as he warns, “not all that is represented and people themselves need not be represented only as speakers.” By this, he means that the novel also presents other people, such as characters who assume the role of narrator. In this regard, Bakhtin (1981:335) states that the “speaking person in the novel need not necessarily be incarnated in a character.” The speaking person, according to Bakhtin (1981), has a role in generating meaning and in transmitting the speech of others into the discourse in the form of quotations, paraphrasing and referencing, amongst other elements. It is the transmitting of other people’s speech into the discourse that gives tremendous value to the speaking person in novels, and in everyday life. Bakhtin (1981:337) acknowledges this value of the speaking person, by comparing him/her to a real person in life. He states: “In real life, people talk most of all about what others talk about – they transmit, recall, weigh, and pass judgement on other people’s words, opinions, assertions, and information; people are upset by others’ words, or agree with them, contest them, refer to them, and so forth.”

Once the speaking person transmits the other person’s speech, the process of dialogue or dialogising begins. Bakhtin (1981:337) acknowledges that there must be a context that should embrace another person’s speech, which is transmitted first by the speaking person, so that dialogising can take place. To make the dialogic process understandable, Bakhtin (1981) enlists the concept of “polyphony” to account for the multiple speaking voices found in novels. With this, Bakhtin (1981) shows that the narrating voice in the novel need not be a monologic one determined by a single unitary voice that belongs to the authorial discourse, but that it is supplemented by the dialogues that the characters enter into. In some instances, characters can also assume the role of narrating events from their personal perspective, which renders the narrative multi-voiced and dialogical.

These ideas on narration that are expounded by Genette and Bakhtin, are integral to this study of the short story and the four novels by Langa, as detailed in Chapter 1. The stories are guided by the central thesis, which seeks to shed light on Langa’s application of narrative strategies, their roles and effects in the narratives. The theoretical work of Genette and Bakhtin was applied to identify and discuss the functions of the narrating instances in Langa’s fiction. Genette’s theory was employed to specify the different types of narrators, while Bakhtin’s was used to reveal the narrating voices in the novels.

# CHAPTER THREE.

## *THE NAKED SONG AND OTHER STORIES.*

### 3.1 Introduction.

Mandla Langa's *The Naked Song and Other Short Stories* deals with the overthrow of Apartheid in South Africa. Some stories are set in the segregated black townships, which are separated from white urban areas. Other stories are set on white-owned farms where black people work and live. *The Dead Men who Lost their Bones* was selected for discussion in this chapter. It deals with the lives of the Ngozi family, who live an impoverished and oppressed life on Gert Visser's farm. The context of the narrative is life in rural South Africa under Apartheid. Accordingly, this chapter examines the narrational strategies that Langa deploys in the short story selected for discussion, since it employs almost all the narrative modes used in his prose. These vary from the relatively simple to the highly complex. This discussion identifies the narrational strategies deployed and analyses their role in the generation of specific meanings in the text. In addition, the chapter seeks to show how these narrational strategies enable different voices to speak and narrate the story, which results in a polyphonic text that deals with the themes of exploitation, abuse and injustice.

### 3.2 *The Dead Men who Lost their Bones.*

The story is set on Gert Visser's farm during the Apartheid period. It portrays the horrifying experiences of the Ngozi family, which represents the suffering endured by black people employed as labourers on white-owned farms in South Africa. The Ngozi family are employed by Visser, and are subjected to harsh and even brutal treatment by him, his white foreman, other whites and the Apartheid police.

The story follows the thoughts of the main character, Clementine, who is orphaned and confined to a reformatory, along with her sister, as if they are juvenile criminals. Clementine recalls painful memories of incidents that took place on Visser's farm, which led to the deaths

of her parents: her father, Simeon Ngozi died at the hands of the police; and her mother died from grief at his death. It is these incidents that caused Clementine and her twin sister, Benedicta, to become orphans.

Clementine and the other characters in the story recount their individual experiences. The two main narrators are Clementine and her deceased father, Simeon Ngozi. While Clementine is an intradiegetic – homodiegetic character-narrator, Ngozi is embedded inside Clementine’s narrative as intradiegetic – metadiegetic character-narrator in a *mise en abyme* framework. This is presented in Diagram 3.1.

Diagram 3.1: *The Naked Song and Other Stories* (1996).

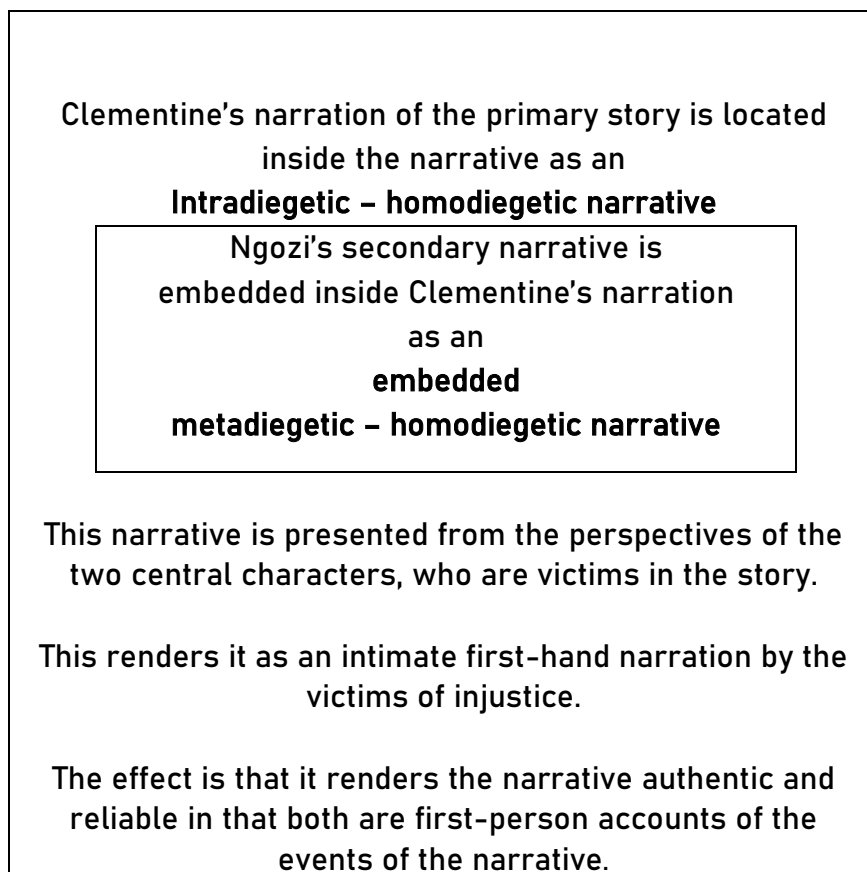


Diagram 3.1 shows Clementine’s primary narration situated inside the story at the intradiegetic level. She narrates her own tale. Ngozi’s metadiegetic narrative is internal to the events narrated by Clementine. His narrative is consequently embedded inside of Clementine’s main story.

Clementine and Ngozi are thus examples of Genette's (1980:213) explanation that the person of the narrating instance is not only "the person who carries out or submits to the action, but also the person (the same or another) who reports it, and, if need be, all those people who participate, even though passively, in this narrating activity." Narration here is, therefore, performed by two characters.

As the primary character-narrator, Clementine's intradiegetic – homodiegetic narration becomes evident when she narrates her experiences at the orphanage:

They call me Clementine, here, although that is not my real name ... This is a home that is something between a reform school and an orphanage ... It was Papa who went first; Mama didn't die in the way that people die and are made one with the groaning earth. When she lost her baby – I understood this much, much later – to the shock of Papa's death, all light left her eyes; she would stare at the walls of our homestead. The social workers came and took her to a place for the people who can no longer be responsible for their actions. Her mind had taken the long, returnless journey into the very jaws of oblivion (Langa 1996:1-2).

Clementine suggests that the school she attends is, for her, a jail rather than an orphanage. She narrates the incidents that led to her being taken there after her parents' death. She also describes the trauma caused by the way they died.

Her deceased father, Simeon Ngozi, is the secondary character-narrator. This renders him homodiegetic – metadiegetic, meaning that he is present as a character in the secondary narrative that he narrates at the metadiegetic level. This is evident when he tells his family about his work and the treatment that he and his fellow workers received from Skotnes, a new manager at the farm:

Since Baas Visser got that stupid Skotnes boy to take care of the culling and dipping of cattle, nothing has ever gone right. That boy carries on like a regular slave-driver. I have never liked him, anyway with a face like the underbelly of a crocodile. He calls those men from prison kaffirs (Langa 1996:4).

Ngozi describes Skotnes' racist behaviour and disrespectful attitude towards him and other workers whom he also mistreats, thereby undermining their wellbeing and morale. His narration condemns the abuse of the farm workers and sympathises with them in the fictional world.

In Genette's terms (1980:258), Clementine and Ngozi use the narrative situation to recount their experiences. This allows them the freedom to address the intended reader, organise their narratives, and portray the world and other experiences from their own perspectives.

Ngozi's employment at the metadiegetic level highlights his relationship to the events in the story. As a character in the story, in terms of Genette's (1980:231) explanation, Ngozi occupies the position of a "character within the first narrative to tell a second narrative that is embedded in the actual narrative." Genette (1980:231) observes that there is a relationship between the primary and the metadiegetic narrations brought about by these polyphonic, multiple narrational strategies since they serve to connect the levels of narration in three possible ways as outlined in the theoretical approach.

The first type establishes a direct causality between the events, while the second is a purely thematic relationship. These two dominate in the story. The direct causality occurs when Visser dies on a hunt and Ngozi is wrongly blamed for his death. The police arrive and take him to the exact spot where Visser disappeared so that he too can die. After his death, his wife later also dies. This results in the children, Clementine and her twin sister, being sent to the orphan reformatory - a place where they are treated like juvenile criminals since their father is suspected of killing Visser. The metadiegetic story provided by Ngozi is linked to the primary narrative provided by Clementine. This reveals direct causality between the two through their personal experiences:

I got around the thicket and he went his way. I could not see him, then, the place is dense. After a moment, I heard the loud crack of the raffle, then there was a silence then there was a scream ... Mevrouw Visser came into the house, screaming, 'Waar's my man? Waar's my man?' and the white policemen - who were certainly the only reassuring faces Mevrouw Visser saw ... the policemen handcuffed my father ... steered him out of the house into the waiting Land Rover. (This is not exactly an arrest; we just want him to show us the spot, all right?) ... Mama lost the baby that night; papa lost his life ... (Langa 1996:8).

They took us away instead ... (Langa 1996:9).

This is a home that is something between a reform school and an orphanage (Langa 1996:1).

The above extracts relate multiple events drawn from different parts of the story. They show Ngozi's ill-treatment at the hands of Visser and later by the police. During the hunt, Visser leaves the group and goes his own way, which leads to his death, because he disregards Ngozi's advice as he does not respect Ngozi. The police arrive with Visser's wife and blame Ngozi for Visser's death. Ngozi is taken away to die at the spot where Visser disappeared. This results in Ngozi's wife's death from grief. In the end, the death of Clementine's parents results in her and her twin sister being treated as juvenile criminals when they are sent to the orphan reformatory.

The second type, the thematic relationship, emerges from the treatment of Ngozi's family by



their employers and the police. All the elements in the story, including the narrational strategies, contribute to the central theme, which includes exposing the racist behaviour of the white employers and the brutality of the police towards the Ngozi family. It is also evident in the treatment of Clementine and her sister. They are treated like criminals for a crime that neither they nor their father committed, as shown in the extract above. These two narrative devices contribute directly to the main theme of injustice in the story. Clementine narrates her version of the events, which demonstrates that the Apartheid government mistreated her for crimes that neither she or her twin sister nor their father committed.

The living conditions of the characters that emerge from the narrators' narratives provide direct insight into the hardship and misfortune of the family. This serves to emphasise the injustice to which Africans working on white farms under Apartheid were subjected. The condemnation of this situation is the central element of the story. Clementine presents herself as an unhappy orphaned child with a bleak future. Clementine will not live much longer since she is being targeted by the police, and she is threatened if she makes any mistake. On the other hand, from Clementine's perspective, Ngozi does not appear to be happy. He is akin to a tool or a cog in a machine that can be replaced by someone else. In reality, he lacks happiness, freedom and equality. Ngozi does not live much longer since he is targeted by white employers and the police and threatened if there was any misstep.

The decision to deploy Clementine as an intradiegetic – homodiegetic narrator is manifested in the way she represents her narrative by using the first-person pronoun "I" for both her narrating and experiencing self. Clementine's narrating "I" is the voice that tells us about the past: "They call me Clementine, here, although that is not my real name; but ... I don't own a single thing here" (Langa 1996:1). Her experiencing "I" is also the person performing this narration.

Clementine's narration produces sympathy for her plight. She tells of her personal experiences at Visser's farm and the treatment of her father, presenting these events only from her perspective. This is possible because she has knowledge and experience of the events and situations, not only her own, but also those of her family, including her father, his wife and others. She narrates the present and past experiences of her younger and older narrating "I" to cope with her current realities. It enables her to recall the circumstances of her parents' deaths, and also exposes the indifference of the police to her father's death and condemns their brutality. Instead of investigating Visser's disappearance and death at the mysterious place on

the mountain, the police want Ngozi to pay with his life for a crime he did not commit. They achieve this, regardless of the immoral actions of Gert Visser, i.e. his vicious hunting practices and the exploitative working and living conditions of his employee, Simeon Ngozi. When hunting, Visser does not follow basic hunting rules and practices, and he ignores Ngozi's advice "to approach our quarry from the other end, out of the wind. He goes straight in, keeping to the left. I got around the thicket, and he went his way" (Langa 1996:8). This endangers Ngozi's life and results in Visser's death, for which Ngozi is blamed.

This registers sympathy for Clementine and the other characters in the story, as can be seen in the extract below when she speaks about the orphanage:

This is a home that is something between a reform school and an orphanage. There are some pretty tough kids here: and the sisters are quick to punish for infringements like wetting the bed or using bad language. Benedicta and I are sixteen years old this year, and it is close to Christmas. This place is pleasant, though, despite the unexpected punishments. Everyone (the sisters, that is) seems to be fighting a war to make us forget what happened in the past, the events that brought us here. Many other children here have many tales to tell. We eat a lot, more, in fact, than back home, but Benedicta and I are increasingly – daily getting thinner and thinner. I guess food can never be a substitute for what the spirit hankers after. It is all very simple: we miss our parents. I can't understand why this knowledge escapes the sisters and the Matron especially, since they are holy and knowledgeable and highly cultured people (Langa 1996:1-2).

Clementine also describes the schooling conditions at the reformatory. She longs to live with her parents, who are both dead. She then narrates how she and her sister ended up in the orphanage. This links to the events recounted by Ngozi.

As an intradiegetic – homodiegetic narrator, Clementine is close to the events in the story, making it possible for her to provide direct access to her thoughts and those of other characters. For instance, she reveals Ngozi's thoughts as he reflects on his living and working conditions and his treatment at the hands of his employers and the police. Through her narrative, Clementine reveals Ngozi's feelings about his work, and his concern for his safety and fate as a farmworker. He experiences events and situations as a victim of injustice. Throughout, Clementine maintains an authoritative, trustworthy and reliable narrative, which registers sympathy for Ngozi and other characters, including Clementine herself. At the same time, she describes Ngozi as a dignified, loving father and husband:

My father was perhaps the most handsome man I have ever seen. Whether he was in tattered overalls or his Sunday best, he managed – God knows how, because I knew how harried he must have been – to look as unruffled as ever. He had that detached air of someone perpetually preoccupied, someone wrestling with something deep and unutterably strangling. He must have loved Mama very much. That one evening, for instance, Papa was on the verandah, cleaning his master's guns. To me, they looked like the rifle that was so much part of the guard who strutted arrogantly, on horse-back (Langa 1996:3).

When Ngozi recounts his metadiegetic story, it highlights that Clementine is not the only narrator in the text. This can be seen when Clementine offers Ngozi a chance to speak about his experiences, his living and working conditions, and the way in which he perceives himself and the world around him. The events that Ngozi narrates have a completing and explanatory thematic function that is distinct from but related to Clementine's homodiegetic narration.

Access to Ngozi's thoughts is given when he thinks about his work with Skotnes, and his worries about his safety and fate as an employee living on Visser's farm. This stems from his experiences, which show how he perceives himself and his situation. Ngozi's use of the metadiegetic and *mise en abyme* narrational strategies in his metadiegetic account become evident when Clementine gives him an opportunity to express his thoughts:

I figure someday very soon we're going to have to leave this farm. I'm up to here with the way things are happening around here ... 'since Baas Visser got that stupid Skotnes boy to take care of the culling and dipping of cattle, nothing has ever gone right. That boy carries on like a regular slave-driver. I have never liked him, anyway, with a face like the underbelly of a crocodile. He calls those men from prison kaffirs. Kaffir this, kaffir that! (Langa 1996:4).

Today we drove to the hardware store to get the plough-share sharpened. On the way we saw a big snake crossing the road, leisurely. It must have been a rinkhals, and you know how dangerous those type is. I thought that Skotnes boy would wait until the snake had slithered into the grass, or even to avoid it. You think he'd do the sensible thing? But no. He swerved to run over the snake. I don't know whether he succeeded in hitting it or not, but that doesn't matter, you just don't do a damn fool thing like that with a rinkhals, or with any snake, doesn't this boy have some sense! ... he said get out and push the blerry van ... on our return, he said he'd certainly report me to Baas Visser ... (Langa 1996:5).

I left this morning, ... with Baas Visser to our usual hunting spot in the mountain. It is very rocky, this hunting spot, and full of treacherous precipices. "We have to be careful Baas," I told the Baas ... but, then, he told me he had been hunting on these since he was this high ... And then saw a bush buck darting out of a thicket into a clearing in the woods. I gave him his .303, and he told me that the bush buck would be heading our way, it seems like something startled it, for it soon bolted right back into the woods, some distance away. Baas Visser motioned for me to be stealthy as possible and try to approach our quarry from the other end, out of the wind. He went straight for it, keeping to the left. I got around the thicket, and he went his way. I could not see him, then, the place is dense. After a moment, I heard the loud crack of the rifle, then there was a silence then there was a scream (Langa 1996:7-8).

The passage complements Clementine's statement about her father being a dignified and caring person. The employers do not treat him with respect and have a racist attitude towards him, while he respects them. First, Skotnes endangers Ngozi's life by running over a snake with his car. When Ngozi protests about being mistreated, Skotnes threatens to dismiss him. On the hunt, Ngozi shows that he cares about his employer, Visser. However, Visser does not listen to Ngozi's advice and guidance, and this leads to his death, because he does not adhere to safe hunting practices.

At times during the story, Clementine speaks alone for long periods and her discourse is “artistically represented.” Her voice is that of the speaking person in Bakhtin’s (1981:332-333) terms, and she is what makes the story, “*The Dead Men who Lost their Bones*,” a story. Clementine has a role in articulating the story’s implied meaning, as well as in inserting other characters’ speech into the discourse through dialogue quotations, paraphrasing and referencing. According to Bakhtin (1981), Clementine’s narrating role is comparable to that of a living person. She achieves this because she talks about what others say, which Bakhtin (1981:337) sees as transmitting, recalling, weighing and passing “judgement on other people’s words, opinions, assertions, information; people are upset by others’ words, or agree with them, contest them, refer to them and so forth.” Clementine’s speaking voice is sustained throughout the story, as she narrates events and the lived situations of the characters, including her own.

Clementine’s narration at the deeper level of the story incorporates other voices, which allows her to produce a multi-vocal discourse containing dialogues that characters enter in narrative, and which are emphasised. Some of these characters also assume the role of narrating events from their own perspective, which results in the narrative being multi-voiced and dialogical. Ngozi’s secondary narrative satisfies Bakhtin’s dialogical requirement because his dialogues with Clementine recount stories of his typical working days at Visser’s farm. In this regard, Ngozi’s narrating role enables him to be identified as a secondary character narrator, which delivers a polyphonic narrative of multiple voices. Bakhtin (1981:335) refers to this as a narrative that “presents other ... characters for whom the role of narration is assumed by them.”

In conclusion, it is evident from the above that the narrative strategies in the text produce a story in which narration is performed to express concern, and which generates sympathy for the victims of injustice under Apartheid. Direct first-person narrations are delivered by two-character narrators -Clementine and Ngozi – and are central to the narrative and deliberately deployed to highlight the suffering of the oppressed under Apartheid.

# CHAPTER FOUR.

## *THE LOST COLOURS OF THE CHAMELEON.*

### 4.1 Introduction.

This chapter investigates the narrational strategies deployed by Mandla Langa in his novel, *The Lost Colours of the Chameleon* (2008). The way these strategies are foregrounded in the novel draws attention to their function to highlight injustices that the characters are subjected to. There is an alternation between the narrations by the anonymous third-person narrator and the first-person character narrator to create a specific means to support the specified role of the narrating sides.

### 4.2 *The Lost Colours of the Chameleon.*

Set in turbulent post-colonial Bangula, a fictional country, the novel exposes the abuses of the prevailing government in respect of security, health, poverty, economic exploitation and other social ills. Bangula is experiencing a health crisis, brought on by an epidemic referred to in the narrative as the “blood plague disease”.

The story follows the complex political paths of the Colonel’s two children. The leader and revolutionary reformer of Bangula is Abioseh Gondo. He is an arrogant leader, who was born legitimate and with the proverbial silver spoon in his mouth. In contrast, Zebulon Gondo is born out of wedlock and is a survivor who earns his living by hard work.

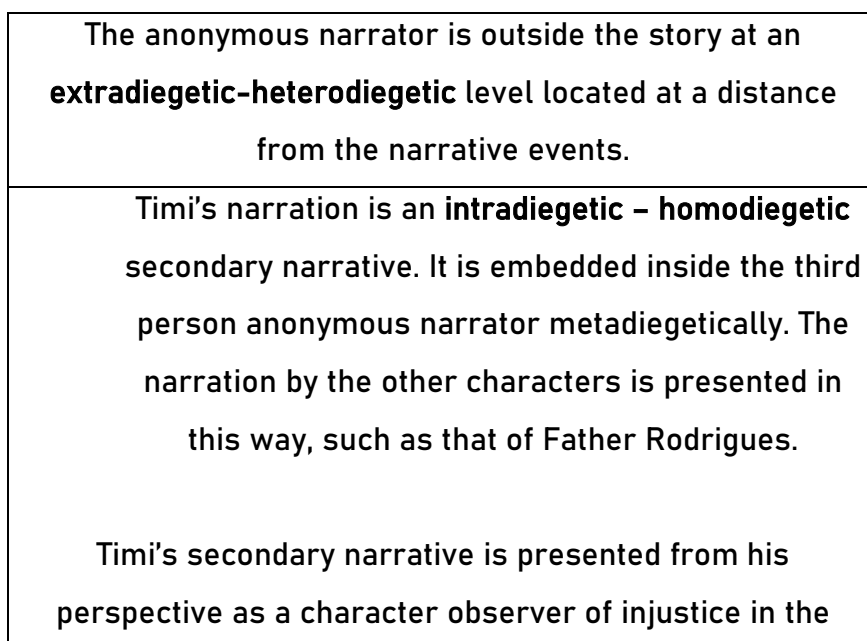
From childhood, Abioseh has watched his father govern the country during post-colonial upheavals. Abioseh becomes president and improves the economy, while neglecting and mismanaging public safety, security, health and the social needs of Bangula and its people. This neglect leads to opposition by the supporters of his humble trade unionist brother,

Zebulon, Wonderman Bhele and others, who see an opportunity to rectify the mistakes. It is Zebulon’s childhood of neglect by his father and later disregard by his brother (Abioseh) that gives him the courage to overcome these challenges, by confronting them as child and later as a trade unionist.

Analysis reveals that narrational strategies in the novel’s discourse are employed to focus on the plight of certain characters in the story at the primary and secondary metadiegetic narrating levels. In this case, the primary level refers to the main story narrated by an anonymous third-person extradiegetic narrator. The secondary narrative is told by, Timi, and is embedded in the primary narrative at the metadiegetic level.

Events in the novel are recounted by two narrating instances: the anonymous third-person narrator and Timi, a first-person character-narrator. The third-person narrator, an anonymous extradiegetic narrator situated outside the events, performs the main narration. Timi supplements this as an intradiegetic character-narrator situated inside the events of the story, and thus functions homodiegetically at the metadiegetic level. This allows the narrators to create an unstable narrative environment that mirrors the chaos in Bangula, as it undergoes post-colonial political upheaval. Given their respective perspectives, the anonymous narrator and Timi relate differently to the events they recount. This is represented in the Diagram 4.1.

Diagram 4.1: *The Lost Colours of the Chameleon* (2008).



story. The effect of his narration is to support the anonymous narrator's account, by providing first-hand accounts of injustice that corroborate what the anonymous narrator relates.

The anonymous primary narrator of the story as depicted in Diagram 4.1 is outside the events while Timi's metadiegetic narration is inside the primary events of the story and participates in his metadiegetic discourse. These strategies allow for narration of the story's events from multiple viewpoints, which emphasise the challenges faced by each character.

The anonymous extradiegetic – heterodiegetic narration is perceptible in the narrative when it provides an account of the unspecified cause of death and funeral of Zebulon's mother, Madu. She is a victim of neglect, because the Colonel abandoned her during her pregnancy, leaving her a single mother. She raises her child alone in poverty, because she does not have a proper job. Her death means a bleak future for young Zebulon, who becomes a street child. But he survives:

Madu never told him anything because she withered away quickly following MaZembe's visit and died and was given a pauper's burial. Then people with papers arrived with a truck at the shack and alleged that Madu owed them money. Claude was among them, this time he wasn't offering any free French lessons. They seized the property, turned the boy out and drove off. He lived on the streets, roughing it with the roughest the city of Jambora could offer, until, after being stabbed in the stomach with a broken bottle and spending two weeks in a trauma ward, he realised that he needed food and shelter, but not at any cost (Langa 2008:55).

The passage depicts the event that highlights the novel's theme of neglect. It marks Zebulon's second encounter with neglect, after the Colonel disowns him, this time by the people he knows, as Madu used to work for them. He is destitute and left alone as a child, and as a result, he becomes a street kid.

Later in the narrative Zebulon recalls Madu's funeral, which is recounted by the third-person narrator:

Zebulon would remember his mother's funeral, the unspeaking sky, the gravediggers embarrassed for the boy because there was no one there to hold him or sing a song that would accompany the body in the pale box on its journey to eternity. The priest conscripted to conduct the service was sullen to the point of rudeness, his face grim as if he, too, were thinking about the certainty of departure. To brace himself against crying and hurling his own body onto the coffin, Zebulon recalled the words that Madu had committed to memory (Langa 2008:62).

Zebulon is depressed and longs for his mother. He reflects sadly on her death and funeral. He

is penniless, since she left no material goods, which could have made his life easier. However, her words of wisdom would guide him towards becoming a better person and encourage him to later speak the truth, such as when he exposes the covered-up pandemic. Zebulon's experiences highlight the novel's central themes of neglect and overcoming these challenges, while also serving to register sympathy for him and for other characters in the story.

Timi is a secondary character-narrator situated at an intradiegetic level, metadiegetically. This is established when he narrates to an assembly in parliament the events relating to the murder of his friend, Gaza and Gaza's mother:

I was a close friend of a boy called Gaza ... (Langa 2008:206).

"There was blood and shouting everywhere," Timi said. "Then the first man, who was now a scarlet scarecrow, signalled that they bring Gaza to him. With a mighty heave, he beheaded him. The head rolled to the side while the body quivered and then became still. What happened stunned us. Gaza's eyes were open and he blinked once while he was looking at me. I noticed that his eyelids and lips were working as if he wanted to say something. Then as his face relaxed and his lids closed on his eyeballs, he was able to whisper a few words" (Langa 2008:209).

Timi witnessed the murder of Gaza, because his friend was infected with the blood plague disease. This event contributes to exposing the neglect by president Abioseh and creates sympathy for the victims.

In the novel, the anonymous narrator's use of the extradiegetic – heterodiegetic strategy proportionately occupies more pages than the number of pages allocated to the secondary character-narrators, including Timi. Roughly speaking, the third-person narration is seventy percent of the narrating portion of the text, while the secondary character-narrators' narration amounts to about thirty percent of narrating portion of the text. This latter narration provides personal information about the characters, which the anonymous narrator does not have access to. It functions to emphasise the plight of the characters and is inserted at specific moments in the fiction to complement the primary narrative.

The anonymous narrator in the novel, in Bakhtin's terms (1981:332-333), produces a discourse by embedding multiple voices in the actual dialogues that characters participate in the narrative and which are foregrounded. These characters also narrate the events from a personal perspective, which delivers a multi-voiced and dialogical work of fiction. This is evident in the dialogue between Timi and members of parliament, that reveals Timi to be a secondary character narrator, since his speech recounts a secondary narrative that relates to the story about



the murder of his friend (Gaza) and Gaza's mother. This is what Bakhtin (1981:335) refers to as a narrative that "presents other ... characters for whom the role of narration is assumed by them." In this regard, the anonymous narrator and Timi transgress the limits of the conventional realist novel by alternating between first-person character narration and third-person authorial narration, which illustrates Genette's point:

by claiming the privilege of supplying ideological commentary in a proliferation of "authorial" discourse – a term "which indicates both the presence of the author (actual or fictive) and the sovereign authority of that presence in his work" (1980:258).

In Genette's terms (1980:231), there is a relationship between the primary and the metadiegetic narration brought about by these polyphonic multiple narrational strategies, as they serve to connect the levels of narration. Since the novel is polyphonic, there is a relationship of connection that occurs between the primary and metadiegetic narrating levels, which connects the story in ways that dominate: direct causality between and purely thematic relationships in the story's events.

Direct causality occurs when Timi exposes Abioseh's neglect. This relates to the deteriorating health and security of people infected and killed by the plague, which leads to Zebulon and his supporters rejecting Abioseh's leadership. As a result, Abioseh has to appear before a commission of inquiry to determine his fate as president. The metadiegetic story supplied by Timi is linked to that of the anonymous narrator and it reveals direct causality between events:

Gaza ... had been killed and their house set on fire because he carried the blood plague and village feared it would spread and kill everyone. Twelve minivans came with men armed with homemade knives and they chopped them into fine little pieces and they put the house on fire and said that the blood plague would end there (Langa 2008:207).

On his birthday on the 22nd of August, on the twentieth floor of the Commodore hotel, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Bangula, Mr Abioseh Gondo, looks down from the window at the spread of Jambora, the capital city, and closes his eyes. Briefly overcoming a rush of emotions, he studies his room, especially the elaborate bed that has allowed him no rest. It is a strange, custom-made affair, adjustable in all respects, like one of those reclining seats in First Class that provide insomniacs with a hammock-like sensation of being in flight while flying. Everything in the hotel room conspires against comfort. The air-conditioning unit has become ever more capricious, sending out a daily blast of hot air redolent of raw sewage. Two days ago a handyman with insolent eyes was assigned to the job. Things are bad, thought Abioseh, when the hired help can hold you in contempt. As the repairman was explaining the complex mechanism of expansion valves and cold coils, there was a sudden blast of a reggae song from the radio along the passage way. The workman interrupted his recital to do a stylised shuffle and sing along with a tune decrying the government's 'betrayal' in the face of the blood plague. Abioseh threw him out, but the song lingered on:

Dem got dollars and pounds for high disease  
Dem blow millions on bushwa with so much ease ... (Langa 2008:9-10).

These extracts recount events drawn from different parts of the novel. They depict Timi narrating the story about the murder of his friend Gaza and Gaza's mother because they are

infected with the plague. The event deepens the president's political crisis and he is shown to be isolated in a hotel room while waiting to appear before the commission of inquiry.

Genette's 'thematic relationship' is manifested in Abioseh's misrule: his unsuccessful and arrogant political leadership style. Abioseh fails to solve the health crisis caused by the plague and this task is left to Zebulon and his supporters. Zebulon exposes the existence, spread and danger of the disease, and brings Timi to the assembly, in parliament, to narrate a story about the plague, which led to the murder of his friend (Gaza) and friend's mother. All the elements in the story contribute to the novel's central themes of neglect, misrule and the blood plague.

The unnamed narrator narrates the novel's thematic relation when following Zebulon's life and gives reasons for his opposition to his half-brother's rule. As a child, Zebulon was a victim of neglect and he does not want this to happen to other people. This is established when he fetches Timi and accompanies him when he goes to the assembly to recount his story, which emphasises the harsh conditions and brutalities he has suffered:

Then we heard that Gaza and his mother – his father had died years ago – had been killed and their house set on fire because it carried the blood plague and village feared it would spread and kill everyone. ... they chopped them into fine little pieces and they put the house on fire and said that the blood plague would end there, in the fire (Langa 2008:207).

Zebulon shows that he cares about people. This is manifested when he informs the president about the neglected blood plague pandemic when Timi recounts the story of his friend being murdered because he had the disease. As a victim of negligence, Zebulon knows that something is being ignored, i.e. the disease. The president keeps quiet about the existence of the plague, instead of exposing the realities of the illness that kills people.

In order to narrate the event, the anonymous narrator and Timi mirror the circumstances of the main characters by performing their respective narrational strategies, so as to expose the arbitrariness of the fictional society. This focuses attention on the plight of the characters because of the way their situations are presented, as they are caught up in the upheavals of a post-colonial society, where there is failure of governance and a struggle for power.

As the narrative unfolds, the narrational strategies ensure that focus is brought to bear on human suffering, thereby registering sympathy for the characters. The anonymous narrator

summarises the mysterious assassination of Zebulon, as the killer is not adequately identified:

The shooting, then, was all the more confusing, because some of the people would swear, when they made depositions at the police station, that it was Stefan who drew a pistol and fired at point-blank range at Zebulon. Others said that the shooter came from within the body of the crowd that had surged forward to witness Stefan's collapse. These recalled that the assassin, for that was how he came to be known, was slightly built, middle-aged man in a grey suit whose facial features were so unremarkable he could have been anyone there ... (Langa 2008:264).

*The gunman looked like Mr President.* The words had hardly escaped her teenaged lips when the microphones broadcast them to the rest of the country. The paramedics zipped the body up in a bag, placed it on a gurney and wheeled it towards an ambulance (Langa 2008:265).

Zebulon's assassination is linked to his growing support and popularity as a trade unionist. He is a threat to the government because he has exposed its neglect. This marks him as a future candidate for the presidency to replace his brother. Zebulon's death leaves people facing a bleak future, as he was the person speaking out about government's failures. This registers sympathy for Zebulon and the victims of neglect because their hero is dead.

Another instance of thematic relationship brought about by anonymous narration is found in the passage that provides the speech and thoughts of Father Rodrigues, when he speaks out at the funeral of David, Abioseh's school friend. Abioseh will later become president and will be responsible for the crisis in Bangula. David contracted the disease, but this was covered up. The anonymous narrator narrates Father Rodrigues' thoughts about the action taken by David's family and the government when they do not disclose that the plague is the actual cause of his death:

I am glad that the president of the republic has graced this occasion ... David is dead ... David took his own life ... we'll never know what depths of despair drove a young man to that decision. What we know – what has been disclosed to us and the family – is that he has contracted the blood plague.” “Yes”,  
Father

Rodrigues said, “the blood plague. The family had sworn me to secrecy that this would never be disclosed.

But I am a man of God; I am a product of my conscience. And my conscience tells me that there'll be many more deaths if we don't name the horror that stalks us all”. Heiro caught Abioseh shooting a sharp glance at the Colonel and then looking straight ahead. The Colonel had an attentive look on his face, like someone looking and listening to a report, perhaps in a Cabinet meeting (Langa 2008:110).

Like Zebulon, Father Rodrigues knows that David's family and the government are maintaining silence about the epidemic, so he speaks about it in public. The government officials involved in ensuring this silence include the Colonel and his later successor. The unnamed narrator, who is present through Father Rodrigues' metadiegetic account, is authoritative, trustworthy and reliable. Therefore, the narrative effectively registers sympathy for the victims of the plague and it suggests that Father Rodrigues is courageous and dependable.

Timi is placed at the metadiegetic level of the story, and he deploys the metadiegetic and intradiegetic narrational positions. He highlights that the anonymous extradiegetic narrator is not the only narrating instance in the text: “I was a close friend of a boy called Gaza,” Timi said, “and we attended school together” (Langa 2008:206-209). This can be seen when the anonymous narrator offers Timi a chance to speak to the assembly at the government building about the murder of his friend Gaza and Gaza’s mother. This further highlights the distance between the anonymous narrator at the primary level and Timi as secondary character-narrator who recounts events relating to other characters. This enables Timi’s narration to serve as completing and explanatory thematic functions that are independent from, but supportive of, the narration provided by the anonymous narrator.

Given this situation, Timi discloses his thoughts when he speaks to the assembly at parliament, which registers sympathy for the victims of the plague. President Abioseh’s misrule includes neglecting to deal with the epidemic and Zebulon wants to expose this neglect, but is killed. This contributes directly to the coherence of the story, as Timi’s narrative demonstrates:

“I was a close friend of a boy called Gaza”, Timi said, “and we attended school together. There are many other boys my age, but everyone liked Gaza because he was the smallest boy in the class. He was smart and could do things that put other boys to shame because he had the spirit of a lion. Sometimes when we wouldn’t play with him, he would stand there with his eyes brimming with tears but he wouldn’t let them fall. He wouldn’t let them fall” ... (Langa 2008:206).

“And then, one day, he didn’t come to school. We didn’t know why he wasn’t at school and we thought it was because of the flood, *so much water*, and we feared that perhaps he had drowned because he liked school so much he would walk for miles to attend classes. It was the only place where he could get two square meals a day and had friends, even if we sometimes treated him like shit. So when he didn’t come for the second day and the third day we started asking questions, like you’re asking questions now. At first, the people merely looked at us and looked away as if the question shouldn’t be asked. We asked again.” He paused to take a sip of water. “Then we heard that Gaza and his mother – his father had died years ago – had been killed and their house set on fire because it carried the blood plague and the village feared it would spread and kill everyone. Twelve minivans came with men armed with homemade knives and they chopped them into fine little pieces and they put the house on fire and said that the blood plague would end there, in the fire. So,” Timi said, ending his tale, “he hadn’t drowned after all” (Langa 2008:206-207).

Timi’s narration exposes Abioseh’s misrule. The president neglects the priorities of the country and its people and allows the disease to kill people. Timi challenges the government to either find a cure for the disease or to quarantine infected people.

The narration provided by the anonymous third-person narrator and Timi recounts the president’s neglect of his duties, which leaves the country in a crisis and results in the president appearing before a commission of inquiry. His opponents have many facts with which to indict

and topple him, which creates the expectation that once the opponents assume power, they will be able to resolve the crisis, stabilise Bangula and restore trust in the government's ability to attend to the needs of the country and its people. It is clear that the narrators' deployed narrational strategies serve to highlight the novel's central theme of the injustices that the characters have to deal with.

## CHAPTER FIVE.

### *TENDERNESS OF BLOOD.*

#### 5.1 Introduction.

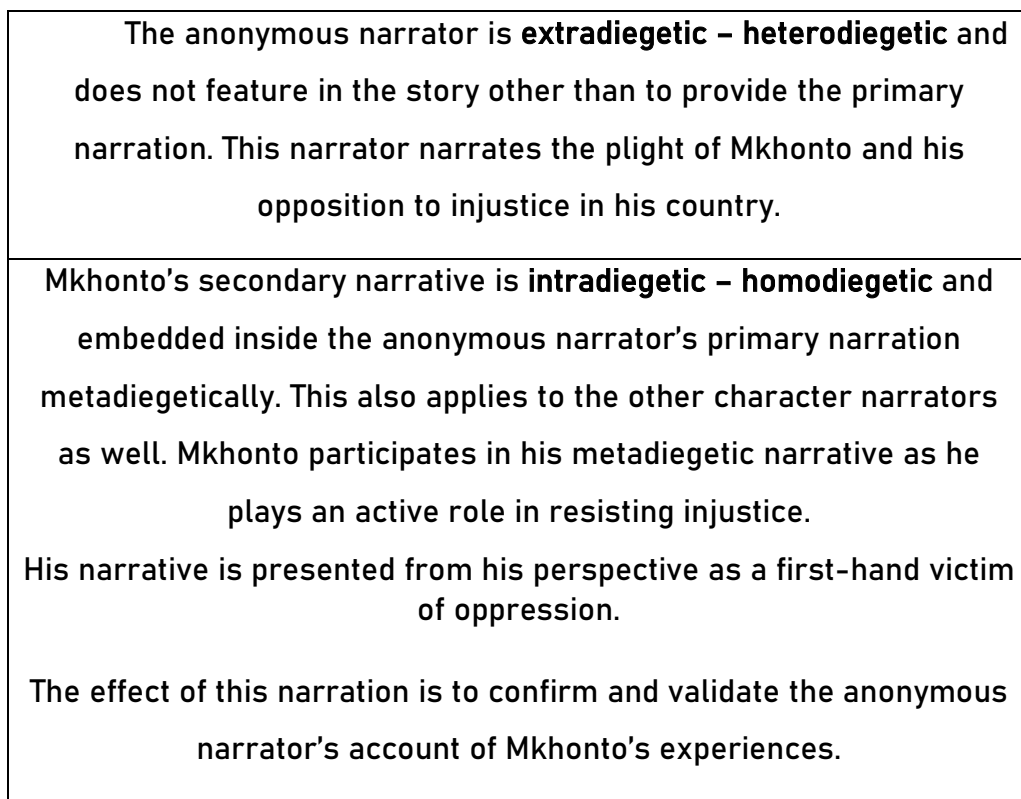
This chapter identifies and examines the narrative strategies deployed in *Tenderness of Blood*, and investigates how they focus on specific issues, themes and topics, which highlight the plight of and the challenges encountered by the characters in the story. It is argued that, by exceeding the conventional limits of traditional narrative strategies and establishing a distance between the extradiegetic narrator and the characters, Langa's narrative is constituted to register sympathy for the characters and their experiences by regulating the meanings embedded in the text.

#### 5.2 *Tenderness of Blood.*

The novel is set in South Africa in the 1980s, during the time of political crisis. The narrative retrospectively follows the movement and action of Mkhonto Ngozi. It explores his past experiences at school, while working as a photographer, and later when he becomes a combatant in *Umkhonto weSizwe* - the military wing of the African National Congress, from which his first name is derived.

The story is told by two narrators - an anonymous third-person narrator and Mkhonto as a first-person character-narrator. The former performs the main narration function, as an extradiegetic narrator situated outside the events; the latter supplements the former narration as an intradiegetic character-narrator located inside them. These narrators relate differently to the events they recount, as shown in Diagram 5.1.

Diagram 5.1: *Tenderness of Blood* (1987).



In diagram 5.1, the anonymous narrator is extradiegetic, i.e. outside the narrative events and provides primary narration. However, Mkhonto's intradiegetic narrative is inside the primary events at a metadiegetic level.

The external location of the extradiegetic – heterodiegetic narration is evident in the opening section of the novel, where the anonymous narrator presents a narrative that introduces Mkhonto as a political idealist who has recently been released from jail:

Mkhonto, the newly-freed prisoner, now an honorary member of the human race, knows that what he is feeling, this unnameable joy, is something that dreams are made of. He thinks of a line from a poem, *It is only those who dream/ who know nightmares*. He knows, he has been told so many times, that he is a dreamer. But this world, he knows, is still kind to the dreamers although it has this very forbidding frame of mind (Langa 1987:2).

Mkhonto was detained because of his political activities as a combatant in Umkhonto weSizwe and he is, therefore, identified as a threat to the Apartheid government.

Mkhonto is a secondary character-narrator inside the anonymous narrative at an intradiegetic level, who narrates metadiegetically. This is established when he narrates his story in the

courtroom when awaiting sentencing:

I don't see faces I can recognise in the court-room. At the same time all the faces I see are faces I know. It is so strange to be part of people after all these months from everything. I have lived in a world of blue eyes, cruelly twisted mouths, the touch of hard fists. I have twitched and convulsed at the end of the copper wire ... (Langa 1987:418).

“– five years.”

A man in a gown speaks these words (Langa 1987:419).

In the above passages, Mkhonto discloses his personal experiences and his mistreatment after his arrest, which includes torture and humiliation. The effect of Mkhonto's narration is to highlight his plight in his struggle to oppose the injustices of Apartheid. As a result of the prevailing laws, he is found guilty of treason, due to his activities as a combatant in Umkhonto weSizwe, which is fighting the ruling government.

In the novel, the anonymous narrator's extradiegetic – heterodiegetic narration occupies fewer pages which is approximately forty percent of the narrating time in text compared to the secondary character-narrators' narration that takes sixty percent, which include Mkhonto. Unlike the third-person narration, Mkhonto's narration provides personal information that the anonymous narrator does not have access to, and which functions to register sympathy for the victimised characters. This is achieved when this kind of narration is inserted at a specific moment to supplement the primary narration.

In addition to the strategies employed as outlined above, the narrative techniques relating to temporality in the story - simultaneous, subsequent and interpolated narration - enable the narrators to situate their narratives in time. These are carefully investigated to determine their functions and effects.

According to Genette (1980:217-219), the deployment of simultaneous narration emphasises the central concern of the story or the narration. This can be seen in the passage below:

They get out of the car, locking it carefully and walk to the news-stand. Max takes out some coins and buys the *Rand Daily Mail*, *The Star* and the *Weekend World*. The two men scan the headlines and the newspapers tell them of the troubles the country has seen in the last twenty-four hours. There are rapes, murders and armed robberies; people are getting born, others are getting married, celebrities divorced. On the second pages, the third column of the *Weekend World*, Mkhonto finds his picture staring at him above which a headline reads, *Photographer Released*. It is an old picture and Mkhonto is unsure when it was taken; his head is still covered by a bush of hair and he is wearing a dark polo neck sweater and a light windbreaker, clothes he hadn't worn for the past decade or so. There is an accompanying story about his long trial up to his being convicted (Langa 1987:18).

The anonymous third-person narrative above is given in the present tense, while the past tense

narration coincides with the action when Mkhonto is picked by his comrade, Maxwell Goba, after being released from detention.

Another instance of simultaneous narration takes place where Mkhonto provides critical information about his mission as a combatant:

I don't go to my mother's place, our house, when I reach Durban. I have all this money in my pockets. I take a taxi from Thembalihle Station to F Section to the stall of the Old Man. He is still there. He has grown older but his eyes are sharp as ever. He pretends not to recognise me ... (Langa 1987:425). 'You mustn't think that things are going to be easy.' He was once a fighter. 'Some debate going on now about the terrain to train people in firearms. I don't know of a right spot where people can shoot without being discovered. You know that the guns they make nowadays make a loud bang.' 'I think we have solved that problem,' I tell him. 'In those days when we could plan, someone came up with what we all regarded as a most brilliant solution.' 'Where can our people train?' 'Inside the enemy lines,' I say. 'Near an army base.' When I see his eyes bulging out in shock, I add: 'You see, near an army base, there's always a lot of shooting going on, and one company or platoon usually doesn't know what the others are doing. They'll never think that the People's Army is doing its own shooting there. Those places are so camouflaged that it would take a tip-off from our own people for *them* to discover what's really taking place' (Langa 1987:426-427).

After being released from prison, he returns to Durban, where he was born. He is about to embark on his military mission of training recruits in armed combat.

The subsequent narration is marked using the past tense, as it narrates an event that occurred in the past, without indicating the interval that "separates the moment of the narrating from the moment of the story" (Genette, 1980:220-221). This results in a "temporal isotopy" which establishes a relation of equivalence between the story and its narrator (Genette, 1980). This isotopy is produced through the deployment of the intradiegetic narrational strategy employed by Mkhonto's older "I", who relates his previous experiences in such a way that the narration catches up with the presence of his narrating "I" at the training camp:

I am an engineering instructor. The six months I had in mind was just a dream. I am in my ninth month in this place. I have gone through all the camps. We are the first batch of instructors of the People's Army. I have even done three months' specialisation. If I wanted to I could fashion a toothpick that'd completely transform your bridgework. The first days were very, very hard and on more than a dozen times I thought of dropping everything and going home. But which home is better than here? I have asked myself that question a hundred times. The community. The young brothers and sisters – yes, a lot of young women are part of the PA – look at you handling the detonators and the plastic TNT as if you were born with a copper wire in your mouth (Langa 1987:391).

Mkhonto uses the narrating "I" to present his metadiegetic story within the extradiegetic narrative. He narrates his personal experiences as an instructor at the Umkhonto weSizwe training camps where he has found a home away from the oppression and injustice of Apartheid.

The third narrational strategy related to time is identified by Genette (1980:217) as



“interpolated.” It refers to narrative information inserted between the moments of action in the story. In the narration of the unnamed narrator and Mkhonto, the narrating process and the story are entangled in such a way that the latter has an effect on the former. This can be seen in the passage below, in which the anonymous narrator tells the story about Mkhonto’s arrest during his school days:

He stood wordlessly and picked up his camera. It was then that he saw another policeman in the darkness. The two men were white, both as huge as houses. He realised that he was in trouble here. His defence instincts told him that he would be in worse trouble once these two juggernauts started working him over. He decided that the best thing to do was to co-operate with them as far as possible. Fewer broken bones that way ... The other policeman, a pale hue in the pale light, said ‘*Klim in Kaffer – get into the van!*’ There was something barely held in check about him and Mkhonto knew that he was the more dangerous of the two. The Land Rover was cream. It made Mkhonto think about so many cream Land Rovers that stood at the approach to KwaMashu station, the police arresting people for passes. It was with fear and belief in the mad wrath of men in temporary possession of power that he climbed into the back of the van. It was totally dark inside. Before the policeman locked the door, he gave Mkhonto a hefty valedictory shove that sent him sprawling to the floor, breaking the fall with his hands. The van roared into life and he heard the doors banging shut. Well, he thought, here we are (Langa 1987:154-155).

The narration of the passage is in the past tense and in contemporaneous mode with the action. Caught sleeping in a park by the police, Mkhonto is arrested and assaulted. To survive, he co-operates with the police and avoids their brutality.

Another instance of interpolated narration between the main story and the action can be observed when Mkhonto provides critical background information about his experiences as a political prisoner:

I had smelled the odour of wretchedness in the nightmares. You dealt with a routine that corroded the soul: up at five in the morning, breakfast, lining up to be counted like so many sheep, getting to the quarry to break rock, break rock, break more rock. At the beginning of it all the hands got blistered and it was hard to heft the fourteen pound hammer. But then hands got used to everything. For those of us who were members of the People’s Army, hard labour meant nothing. In all those days we had to deal with the unpredictable nature of the guards and warders. There was nakedness for the body searchers, the order of the day. I don’t know what used to happen to those people who had to deal with all those genitals every day. What stories did they tell their wives when they went to sleep? You were searched with your hands against the wall, face averted because if your eyes met the searcher’s, he was empowered to strike you down. In most cases you found yourself rolling on the ground for the simple reason that the warder thought you were cheeky, one of the *geleerde kaffir*, an educated wiseguy. You listened to the insults, the warders cursing you. *Ja, vokken honde, julle sal die liberation songs van julle met julle poephol vluit* – you’re going to whistle those liberation songs through your arses! Or they told you in detail how you had been brought into this world: Your mother is a whore, her hole which is open twenty-four hours around the clock is so big that the bus can go through without any problem. That cracked up the warders (Langa 1987:420-421).

The narration is in subsequent form and in contemporaneous mode with the action, when Mkhonto is held in the prison on Robben Island. He recalls his experiences and his treatment by the prison warders, who torture and humiliate him.

The above quotation shows the dialogue of Mkhonto when thinking about past experiences and confirm the polyphonic nature, multi-voiced discourse, of *The Tenderness of Blood* (1987). While thinking about his past, Mkhonto assumes the role of the narrator as a secondary character narrator. This emerges when the narration by the anonymous narrator incorporates the dialogues of Mkhonto and other characters enter in the narrative and foregrounded, and this gives characters like Mkhonto a chance to assume the role of narrating events from a personal perspective to make the narrative multi-voiced and dialogical. Bakhtin (1981:335) refers to this as a narrative that “presents other ... characters for whom the role of narration is assumed by them.” This allows the anonymous narrator and Mkhonto to transgress the monological limits of the conventional realist novel, by alternating between first-person character narration and third-person authorial narration. Coupled with Mkhonto’s close proximity to the events and what happens to the characters, this then creates the impression that there is direct access to the characters’ thoughts and experiences.

The interchange between the narration of the events at the primary and metadiegetic levels highlights the polyphony of the novel and reveal the relationship that links them. This includes direct causality between the events and the thematic relationships that predominate in the novel. Direct causality occurs when Mkhonto recounts his personal experience of growing up under the Apartheid system and his subsequent life as a photographer and a combatant, which results in his arrest. This metadiegetic narration by Mkhonto is linked to that of the anonymous narrator to reveal direct causality between events, as shown in the following extract:

The students decided to boycott lectures and go on a demonstration ... It was a clear Wednesday when they all saw dust coming from the direction of the university. It was an armed contingent of policemen in their *Khwela-Khwelas* ... (Langa 1987:273).

Mkhonto had already loaded the camera. He raised it and focussed on Van Niekerk ... Van Niekerk went on, “this is an illegal gathering, and I’m giving you exactly one minute to disperse” (Langa 1987:278).

So when Van Niekerk gave the police the long-awaited order to charge ... The police waded into the students with an atavistic joy. Mkhonto watched – click - as Rebecca ... was struck by a baton on the head (Langa 1987:282).

Then the instructors came and training started. By this time we were all a little fed up with the view of the mountains that surrounded the camp. We all cheered and said *AMANDLA!* when the Commander informed us that we'd start our training on June 1 ... The commissar came and addressed us. He told us of our historic mission. The people of South Africa have faith in you, he told us. You’re not here to learn about warfare so that you can go home and subvert the Revolution. You are part of a long historic path that was charted by our forebears when they first picked up the weapon against the invaders (Langa 1987:400).

After handing his travel document to the border guard, he had been politely ordered to get out of the car (Langa 1987:406).

Mkhonto had persisted and said that his document was still valid, okay? It doesn't need forging, so let me get on with what I'm supposed to do. Well, he thought now behind bars (Langa 1987:407).

The pain my brothers, is large. It has the shape of a large over-ripe watermelon, it is there in my eyes. At one time I thought I'd been blinded but it was the swollen skin above and below my eyes. I can't see anything beyond the light, so weak, that filters into the cell. Cell D. One of the anonymous interrogators, or maybe it was Andre, the bastard, laughingly referred to the D as standing for death. Somehow I know that death would be welcome (Langa 1987:417).

“– five years.”

A man in a gown speaks these words. The people hear these words, the reporters hear these words and write them down in their little notebooks (Langa 1987:419).

These excerpts show a number of Mkhonto's experiences that take place in different parts of the story. The students are protesting when the police arrive and break up the gathering. This is when Mkhonto establishes himself as a photographer. He takes pictures of the unrest and the brutal repression by the police. His photographs expose the police brutality, as he publishes them in newspapers. Mkhonto leaves the country and joins the ANC in exile. He later returns to the country as a combatant for Umkhonto weSizwe and is arrested and tortured.

The thematic relationship emerges from Mkhonto's political activities that are aimed at resisting and overthrowing the unjust Apartheid government. All the elements of the story, including the narrational strategies, contribute to this central theme. The unnamed narrator provides this thematic relationship by following Mkhonto's movements and supplying the reason why he is fighting to overthrow the Apartheid government. This emerges from Mkhonto's experiences, which are reconstructed chronologically. Mkhonto grew up under Apartheid. He experienced ill treatment and witnessed the abuse of other people. He goes to university, where he improves his political knowledge and becomes aware of and critical of the injustices in his society. This culminates in his becoming a political activist, when he participates in a theatrical performance that exposes the exploitation and oppression of black people by white state institutions and agents, such as the police. It is this exploitation and oppression of blacks that gives Mkhonto the courage to resist and fight the injustice:

Mkhonto made them realise that they had been on the stage all their lives. The black person's life in this country, he told them as he listened to the audience singing the National Anthem, was one long drama and no black man could have reached the age of eighteen without having played a part for the masters of the land (Langa 1987:36).

Behind the scenes, he motivates the actors to participate in a dramatic performance with real-life examples of their daily experiences of exploitation and injustices, which correlate with the central theme of the drama to be performed.

In Mkhonto's subsequent life as a photographer, he takes photographs that depict the exploitation of black people and exposes these using media platforms such as newspapers and magazines:

On Thursday he embarked on another project of taking pictures of funeral processions and services. Children were buried on Thursdays. Their coffins were small and white. It amazed him how many children and babies who hadn't even learned the meaning of existence were interred on this day (Langa 1987:324).

He photographs the burial of black children killed by the police. Growing up under Apartheid, they are deprived of access to resources that would help them lead successful lives and build careers. When they raise their grievances through protests at schools and other institutions, the police repress them.

Mkhonto eventually joins Umkhonto weSizwe, the military wing of the African National Congress, and received training to become a combatant. This results in his decision to resist and fight the oppression of black people living under the unjust laws of Apartheid:

You learn shooting. There is always that bewilderment when you are handling a carbine. For the first time you put cartridges into a chamber. Count one, two, hold your breath, the butt in hollow of your shoulder, pull the trigger slowly, your eyes on the target – are both sights aligned? – and there is this terrific kick and a loud report. Result? Target destroyed (Langa 1987:396).

He is trained in the use of firearms. It gives him emotional satisfaction when he improves his skills. This shows progress and a sense of relief that he will soon be able to fight (physically) against the unjust dispensation of his country.

The narrational strategies employed by the anonymous narrator and Mkhonto complement each other and serve to justify the struggle for freedom by the oppressed in the narrative. It articulates their aim to overthrow the oppressive order and replace it with a free and just society. The narrational strategies deployed in the narrative are thus harnessed to emphasise this struggle and the challenges faced by Mkhonto and his people.

# CHAPTER SIX.

## *A RAINBOW ON THE PAPER SKY.*

### 6.1 Introduction.

This chapter considers the narratological strategies deployed in *A Rainbow on the Paper Sky* to investigate how they are employed to represent characters. It is argued that the narrators perform the narrative functions in a manner that engenders sympathy for the plight of the characters.

### 6.2 *A Rainbow on the Paper Sky.*

The novel is set in various places in South Africa and abroad during the Apartheid era. The story follows the Ndungane family in their resistance to Apartheid. It unfolds around the events of a plan by Ndungane and his trusted lieutenant, Mbongwa, to set up a training camp for Umkhonto weSizwe, the military wing of the African National Congress. Ndungane's children support their father in various ways in his struggle: Thokozani becomes a trade union leader; Mbongeni is a musician, whose music distracts him from effective resistance; and Khethiwe becomes a political activist and armed combatant.

As in the novel *Tenderness of Blood*, the story is told by an anonymous third-person narrator and Mark, a first-person character-narrator. The anonymous narrator provides the primary narration as an extradiegetic narrator situated outside the events. Mark supplements this as an intradiegetic character-narrator situated inside the events. These narrators play different roles when they recount the events of the story. This is visually represented in Diagram 6.1.

Diagram 6.1: *A Rainbow on the Paper Sky* (1989).

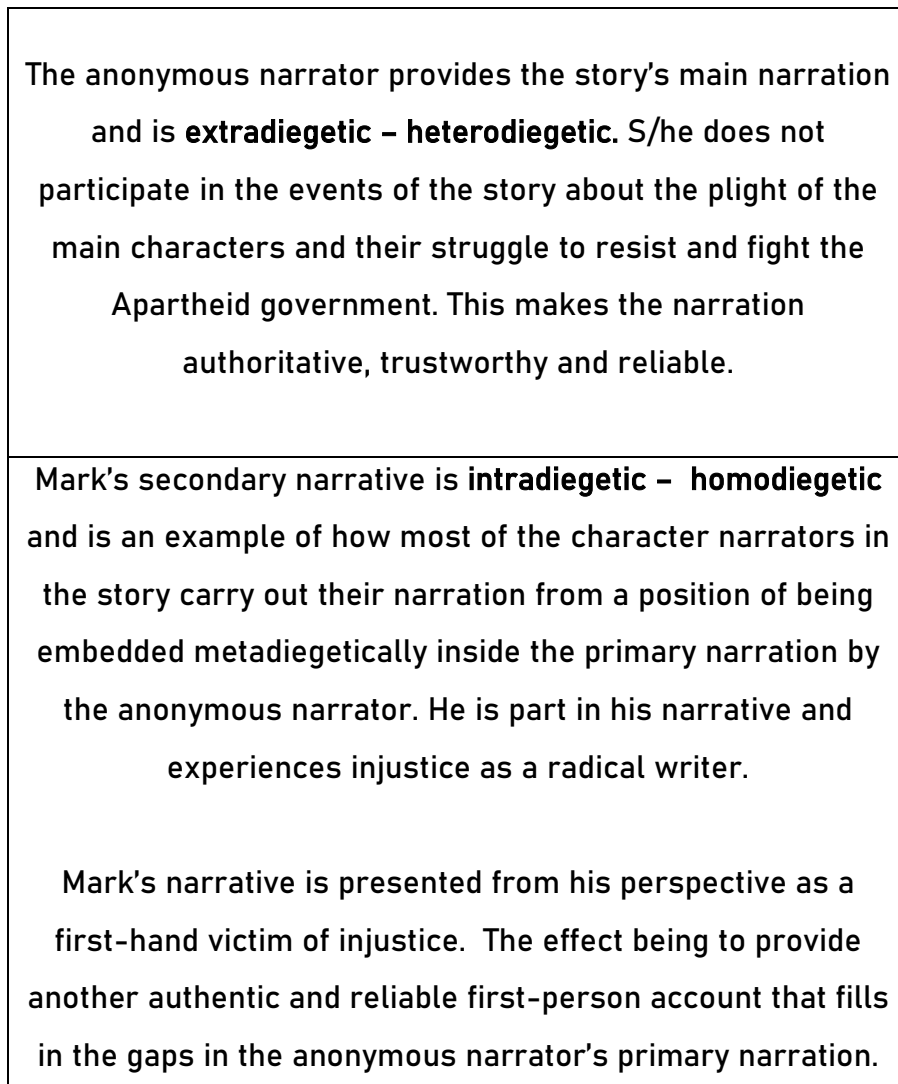


Diagram 6.1 depicts the anonymous narrator outside the events when providing primary narration; Mark's metadiegetic narration is provided from inside the main story and he participates in his narrative.

The extradiegetic – heterodiegetic narration is the more substantial part of the narrative, and the anonymous narrator introduces Ndungane and presents his background at the outset of the story:

Before being stripped of his chieftaincy, Ndungane had many a cause to worry. The dissolution of his family was nothing compared to what he already endured. There had been the time in 1954 when the people of Ingwavuma were told that they would be South Africans no longer as their land was contiguous with Swaziland, so they were to be Swazi citizens instead. Pretoria had hatched this plan with the collusion of the Territorial Authority leaders; these would graduate in time to become bantustan leaders.

These leaders saw that Ingwavuma had a long history of resistance and rebelliousness. Ceding the region to Swaziland would rid them of a headache since most of the surrounding regions in Northern Natal seemed in agreement with becoming part of the Territorial Authority. Ndungane led the people in resisting this plan (Langa 1989:1-2).

As a result of Ndungane's opposition, he loses his chieftainship and is supplanted by a Bantustan leader appointed by the Apartheid government, and he must look on as his land is taken away by force.

Mark is a secondary character-narrator situated at an intradiegetic level, metadiegetically. This is established when he tells Khethiwe about his past experiences:

I'm afraid of being locked up. Not of the beatings, torture, humiliation and abuse. I think I can handle that. I just can't deal with the loneliness of solitary confinement (Langa 1989:100).

Mark tells her about his poetry, which led to his detention and then being mistreated, tortured and placed in solitary confinement.

The narration provided by the anonymous narrator accounts for approximately eighty percent of the narrational time. This is higher than that of the secondary character-narrators, including Mark. Like the narration of other characters, Mark's narration provides an account of his personal experiences to which the unnamed narrator does not have access. The way Mark's narration is inserted in the story highlights the experiences of those victimised in the narrative at a specific moment.

The narrators situate their narratives in time through the narrative techniques relating to temporality in the story - simultaneous, subsequent and interpolated narration - in addition to their employed strategies. This is addressed in the second chapter of this study and also in the fifth chapter, for illustration purpose.

The deployment of simultaneous narration in the narrative can be observed in the passage below:

It was the rain of Mbongwa's childhood ... He felt the water flowing between his cut toes, then he saw that it was Khethiwe, there was no way anyone would mistake that stillness that brought to mind a great river of silence. He was about to call out to her when he saw her, as if in a dream, taking something out of her pocket, something that was black and shiny with raindrops, and he thought, *no! no! no!* And he heard behind him Duma bellowing, "Khethiwe Ndungane, put down that gun and raise your hands above your head!" Mbongwa laughed again because he realised that Duma must have been trained in counter-guerrilla warfare, but nothing had prepared him for a black woman with a weapon. As he laughed, something whizzed past his head and he heard a loud *pop!* before the deafening report of the gun. He felt something hot and sticky hit him on the side of the face and as he fell down, saw with horror

that he was covered with shards of skull, brains and gore. He rose to kneel and something lifted him; the rope was loose, everything in him was loose. He fell backwards and landed on Duma's chest. In that one long moment before he died (Langa 1989:190).

This past tense narration is contemporaneous with Khethiwe's action of shooting police officer Duma, after he tells her to surrender her weapon. The way the unjust system oppresses Khethiwe reveals that she will die resisting, rather than be a victim of abuse.

It is evident in the story that subsequent narration marked by the use of past tense does manifest when Mark speaks with Khethiwe at the bus station:

I started to write when I felt that there were too many things roiling in my head, things that needed screaming out. I guess its writing which brought me to the notice of the law, whatever people mean by that. Perhaps *they* have relaxed somewhat now, but for most of the time, my house has been under surveillance you'd think I have stolen the secrets of the Koeberg nuclear station. I have been twice in detention (Langa 1989:99).

Mark uses the narrating "I" to present his metadiegetic story to his interlocutor. He narrates his personal experiences of detention because of his radical writings, which are considered to be a weapon that influences his readers to resist the unjust Apartheid laws.

The anonymous narrator's interpolated narration transpires when describing Thokozani's typical working day:

It started with one of the men getting burnt almost to death by the hot slag. There was a need for men to get protective clothing. Thokozani took the demands to the bosses. After a delay of some two weeks, the workers sent him to tell the management that there would be some industrial action taken if this one demand was not met. The bosses relented, grudgingly. The men were issued with rubber aprons, gloves and goggles. They laughed at each other as the plastic lenses misted, knowing that whatever happened, they wouldn't lose their sight (Langa 1989:62).

The narration is in subsequent form and inserted in contemporaneous mode with Thokozani's action, when he assumes the shop steward role and becomes a trade union leader. He represents his injured colleagues to the employers, revealing the unsafe working conditions of an unjust society, where employees' rights and safety are disregarded.

Mark's subsequent narration, when he relates his experiences of detention as a radical writer and political activist, is also interpolated, because the narration of the story is in the past and in contemporaneous mode with the action of the events leading to his arrest. These two narrative devices contribute directly to the logic of the story. Mark belongs to the group that resists the unjust laws of Apartheid, while the state agents, such as the police, ensure that the rebels fail by detaining or killing them.



As more than one narrator narrates the events of *A Rainbow on the Paper Sky*, the novel is polyphonic. It becomes a multi-voiced discourse because the extradiegetic anonymous narrator gives a scenic event that depicts the dialogues that characters enter in the narrative, which attention is given. These characters also assume the role of narrating events from their personal perspectives to render the narrative multi-voiced and dialogical. Mark is one of the characters who assume the narrating role. He is marked as a secondary character narrator because his dialogue with Khethiwe recounts his painful experiences in detention because of his part in fighting against Apartheid. This act, the dialogue with Khethiwe and telling a story, by Mark qualifies as what Bakhtin (1981:335) is at pains to say refers to a narrative that “presents other ... characters for whom the role of narration is assumed by them.”

The narrators thus transgress the monologic limits of the conventional realist novel by alternating between the narrations by the first-person character narration and third-person authorial. This also results from Mark’s closeness to the events and situations of the characters, which create the impression of direct access to their thoughts. This illustrates Genette’s (1980:231) observation that the relationship between the primary and the metadiegetic narration brought about by these polyphonic multiple narrational strategies serves to connect the levels of narration in three possible ways, which dominate in the novel. The direct causality occurs when Mark is detained because of his radical writings, which results in resistance and a call to people to overthrow the Apartheid government. This metadiegetic narration by Mark is linked to that of the anonymous narrator, so as to reveal direct causality between events involving other characters in the story, who are being killed because of their resistance:

I have been twice in detention and, with people dying like this, I think - I feel it in my bones - the third time won’t be cruising. I’m afraid of being locked up. Not of the beatings, torture, humiliation and abuse. I think I can handle that. I just can’t deal with the loneliness of solitary confinement (Langa 1989:99-100).

The events associated with Mark and his experiences are linked to those of other characters in various parts of the story. They tell, amongst other things, of detention and torture in jail of Mark and his friends. This is also linked to the death of other people on account of their resistance to the Apartheid government. The thematic relationships emerge from the resistance to the injustice of the oppressive Apartheid laws. All the elements in the story, including the narrational strategies, contribute to this central theme. The unnamed narrator emphasises this thematic relationship when he introduces Ndungane and indicates the main reason why he is

fighting to overthrow the Apartheid government. On the other hand, Mark relates this thematic relationship when he tells Khethiwe why he resisted the unjust laws of Apartheid:

I started to write when I felt that there were too many things roiling in my head, things that needed screaming out. I guess its writing which brought me to the notice of the law, whatever people mean by that (Langa 1987:99).

As a poet and political activist, Mark is a keen observer of society and draws inspiration for his writings from incidents of police brutality and the general unrest.

The implicit relationship between the two-story levels that predominate in the narrative manifests when the anonymous narrator narrates the primary story, without linking it to the metadiegetic stories at the second level. The anonymous narration is focused on elaborating on the main character's actions and by making comments that provide further information. This serves to obstruct the metadiegetic stories:

Ndungane led the people in resisting this plan. In the year Khethiwe was born, 1956, armed members of the Patriotic Brotherhood, together with the soldiers from Jozin garrison, tried to force the people of Ingwavuma, of the village called Ndaweni, to start respecting the edicts from the president of the Brotherhood. The people fought back using home-made firearms, petrol bombs, stones, knives and pitchforks. Although the villagers were defeated, it was clear even to the roosters that Pretoria had merely won the first round in a war that looked set to last forever. Two weeks later, with more than twenty-five people dead, the troops were called back and there was no sign of the furtherance of the hated plan (Langa 1989:2).

The anonymous narration is focused more on Ndungane and his supporters, and their plans to resist and overthrow Apartheid, rather than on Mark's experiences, which are recounted at metadiegetic level. It describes an incident of resistance, led by Ndungane, against the Patriotic Brotherhood, which had been installed by the Apartheid government. The Brotherhood was supposed to lead the people, instead of their rightful leader, Ndungane.

Given the novel's themes, the narrators present the circumstances of the main characters to portray the unpredictability of the fictional society. This enhances the story's meanings, as it clarifies the way the events and situations of the characters are presented. They all view themselves as heroes and heroines of the struggle because they are resisting the unjust social laws.

Considering the whole story, the narrational strategies and their effects, it is evident that the narrative stresses the plight of the victims of injustice and their struggle for freedom:

The captain realised that they'd need more luck to capture the terrorist now; with the element of surprise now dashed to bits - and, moreover, with the reluctant guide lying dead here - the quarry was long gone ... He gave the coordinates. Within minutes, the people of Ndaweni watched the most concentrated,

merciless shelling of their forest. They watched more than two hundred army vehicles of all shapes, sizes and strengths arrayed at the border of the forest and the village, all the way to the sea. Hundreds of men in battle-dress were rushing in and out to the forest with their formidable weapons at the ready. The rain stopped abruptly. When the sky cleared, one helicopter hovered over the village. The body of Ndungane's daughter, Khethiwe, dangled crazily at the end of Mbongwa's rope as the whirlybird flew above the people. They read the sign: this is how the Republic of South Africa deals with the terrorists and their sympathisers. The villagers looked on, at the sky stamped with the message of death. The people knew that their shrines had stretched to embrace the skies (Langa 1989:191).

The anonymous narrator relates these events concerning the defeated combatants, including Mbongwa and Khethiwe. The police have successfully closed the combatants' training camps by raiding their base in the forested mountains of Ndaweni, and the captain of the police is instructing his men to take up positions to surround and secure the enemy territory. They search the area for the remainder of the combatants. Later, they treat the combatants' dead bodies as if they were not human beings. By dangling their bodies from the helicopter, the police demonstrate that the combatants deserve no respect. In this way, they send a message to anybody who is a military combatant resisting Apartheid: s/he will be hunted down and killed, like those whose bodies are dangled from the helicopter.

Another relevant passage relates Mbongwa's thoughts after his arrest:

Ndungane, he knew, would not have to worry about how he would act. Ndungane would not have been captured and tethered like a goat in the first instance. He would have fought them and taken some of the enemy with him. In all my life, Mbongwa realised, I've been trying to be like Ndungane, which was a mistake - because I am myself, Mbongwa. I have roamed many lands, even Angola, where I learnt to defend our people like a man. I have tried to be a man. I have tried to be a man all my life and, if I have failed, so be it (Langa 1989:198).

These thoughts are the result of Mbongwa's weakness in resolving his personal and family issues. Mbongwa's wife interferes with his plans for combat with Ndungane. Mbongwa thinks about what his leader Ndungane would have done if he, Ndungane, had been in his position, being captured and treated like a slave, with his naked body tied up with rope.

As in Langa's other novels with similar narrative arrangements, at the metadiegetic level, Mark deploys the intradiegetic narrational position to highlight that the anonymous narrator is not the only narrator in the text. By speaking of his personal experiences, the distance between him as secondary character-narrator and the anonymous narrator becomes evident. When he recounts his experiences and those of other characters, his narrative has a completing and explanatory thematic function. It is independent, but linked to the anonymous narrator's narration. This fills in the gaps in the main extradiegetic narrative provided by the anonymous narrator. Access to Mark's thoughts is given when he thinks about his work resisting Apartheid,

including his worries concerning his safety and fate as a poet in society, stemming from his experiences of arrest and torture:

The question, slightly paraphrased, is 'where do you fit in all these things?' Mark translated, embracing the street with a sweep of his arm. "I don't know how to begin this, Khethiwe, because, to speak the truth, I feel responsible for people 'I' interact with - afraid." "Now you're scaring me." "Without meaning to." They walked further up the street until they were in the maw of the gloom again. "I started to write when I felt that there were too many things roiling in my head, things that needed screaming out. I guess its writing which brought me to the notice of the law, whatever people mean by that. Perhaps *they* have relaxed somewhat now, but for most of the time my house has been under surveillance you'd think I have stolen the secrets of the Koeberg nuclear station. I have been twice in detention and, with people dying like this, I think - I feel it in my bones - the third time won't be cruising. I'm afraid of being locked up. Not of the beatings, torture, humiliation and abuse. I think I can handle that. I just can't deal with the loneliness of solitary confinement. All those endless minutes that crawl into hours which stretch into days - ah! That is terrible!" (Langa 1989: 99-100).

He expresses his frustration at the challenges he encounters as an artist who is silenced and sent to jail.

The objective of the narrative in presenting the events in the story is to show that there are sides to be taken, particularly when it comes to victims of injustice in their struggle for freedom. In the process, the narrative is constructed in such a manner that the struggles of the main characters are foregrounded and their struggle against a violent and oppressive political system are presented in a way that leaves no doubt as to the narrative's bias.

# CHAPTER SEVEN.

## *THE MEMORY OF STONES.*

### 7.1 Introduction.

This chapter analyses the narratological strategies deployed in *The Memory of Stones*, in terms of their role in narrating the events of the novel and the representation of the main characters. It is argued that the narrators perform their narrative functions in such a way that the plight and struggles of the characters are accentuated.

### 7.2 *The Memory of Stones.*

The novel is set in the 1990s, in South Africa and abroad during the transition from Apartheid to democracy. It explores issues relating to land restitution and the new challenges presented by both freedom and the threat of escalating crime and creeping corruption. The story follows Joshua, his family and his supporters. They lost their land in Ngoza during the Apartheid era and now return to it, only to be confronted with crime and corruption fuelled by the warlord, Johnny M, who tries to take their land.

Two narrators narrate the events in the novel: an anonymous narrator and Mpanza, a first-person character-narrator. The former performs the primary narration as an extradiegetic narrator and the latter supplements this as an intradiegetic character-narrator. The strategies used in the story are presented in Diagram 7.1.

Diagram 7.1: *The Memory of Stones* (2000).

The narration is authoritative, trustworthy and reliable because the anonymous narrator is **extradiegetic – heterodiegetic**, i.e. outside the narrated story events. S/he relates the characters' efforts to lead people through the upheavals of the emerging democratic society.

Mpanza's secondary narrative is **intradiegetic – homodiegetic** and situated inside the anonymous narrator's main account of the story's events metadiegetically. He takes part in his narrative as an experiencing and witnessing character narrator, whose role is to correct the mistakes he made as a combatant when trying to install rightful leadership.

The effect of Mpanza's narration is that it is authentic and reliable as a first-person account that completes and explains the missing events supplied in the primary narration provided by the anonymous narrator.

In the story, the narration by the other characters is also presented like that of Mpanza's.

The anonymous primary narration of the story is located outside the events compared to Mpanza's intradiegetic – metadiegetic narrative, which is inside the story's main events. Mpanza participates in his story.

The extradiegetic – heterodiegetic narration is perceptible when the anonymous narrator introduces Joshua by providing information on his background and the challenges he faces when he meets the people of Ngoza. Joshua recalls a dream, the meaning of which he wrestles with:

Joshua responded to the greetings of the believers without putting his mind to them. He wrestled with the meanings of the dream, in which the ancient dead came to life and, with eyes blazing condemnation,

cautioned him against taking rash decisions. What decisions? He asked himself. Hadn't it been they, the ancestors, who had charged him with the responsibility of developing the settlement? Of delivering all these lost sheep from mire on to the steady rock? Now they were bothered with rashness: he wanted to howl at the injustice of it all. How could he tell them that the water pump had broken down? That the drought would kill them all? Ancestors were notoriously impatient with detail. Still anxious, he concluded that something was wrong here and someone was responsible. A piece of machinery couldn't just break of its own accord. The believers were a motley lot, consisting in the main of people beyond reproach, but there was no ruling out a bad apple in their midst, someone probably in league with Johnny M and his henchmen (Langa 2000:20).

In the above passage, Joshua is depicted as a leader who is facing daunting challenges. He identifies Johnny M as a problem and a threat, as Johnny M aims to take Ngoza's land from him and his followers forcefully. Joshua consequently brings this to the attention of his followers to prepare them for dangers they are facing.

Mpanza's narration, as a secondary character-narrator, is situated inside the story at the intradiegetic – metadiegetic level. This is established when he recounts his past experiences to Zodwa:

I watched our world deluding itself that it knows the battlefield, Mpanza said 'I see leaders composing words that might be articulating factual events but are as far from the truth as is light from the darkness and night from day. We left our homes and went into these kingdoms where we tasted what it meant to be despised. Coming out of a country where to look like us was akin to be cursed, we found a home in the political struggle, where are made aware of our humanity (Langa 2000:360).

Mpanza is telling Zodwa about his personal experiences as a combatant in exile. This also highlights the past events that led him to join Umkhonto weSizwe, the military wing of the African National Congress.

The narrators' narrating time in the text is about ninety and ten percent. Respectively, the anonymous narrator's narration occupies more pages than that provided by the secondary character-narrators, including Mpanza. Mpanza's narration and its insertion in the primary story serves to stress the plight of the victimised people at specific moments in the story, by giving direct voice to one of their members. This is achieved when he provides personal information to which the anonymous narrator does not have access.

Adding to the employed strategies set out above, the narrative techniques relating to temporality in the story - simultaneous, subsequent and interpolated narration - enable the anonymous narrator and Mpanza to situate their narratives in time with their functions and effects.

Simultaneous narration in the text of *The Memory of Stones* can be observed in the passage below:

Joshua visualised the beginning of this movement back to ancestral lands. Three years ago, the government that has ruled without mercy for five decades finally crumbles, leaving behind chaos, scepticism and rage. The black people, who moaned under the heel of oppression and cried for emancipation, are now masters of their own destiny. They now carry the onerous weight which freedom brings (Langa 2000:24).

The narration is in subsequent form inserted in contemporaneous mode with the action of Joshua and his followers on returning to Ngoza after many years away, following Ngoza's forceful seizure by the Apartheid government for military purposes.

Another instance of simultaneous narration is when the anonymous narrator tells how Mpanza killed Johan, Joshua's only son:

As he takes in what is going on, Johan tries to close the door. That is when Mpanza draws his pistol and shoots him in the neck, sees the target stepping back under the blast, the face ruined, to fall against the stereo system and stretch out, all light of his eyes (Langa 2000:128).

Mpanza is on an Umkhonto weSizwe mission after taking false instructions from a spy, Rossie, to assassinate Johan. Johan's death leaves Joshua with a daughter, Zodwa, as his heiress. Traditionalists oppose this, aiming to take over the leadership role from Joshua, which serves to emphasise the extreme nature of the conflict. Mpanza provides additional narration when he addresses Zodwa:

Mpanza said "I see leaders composing words that might be articulating factual events but are as far from the truth as is light from the darkness and night from day. We left our homes and went into these kingdoms where we tasted what it meant to be despised. Coming out of a country where to look like us was akin to be cursed, we found home in the political struggle, where are made aware of our humanity. We then learnt how to confront all those who had denied us this quality and in looking at the enemy, we were sometimes shocked to see how much he looked like us" (Langa 2000:360).

Mpanza employs the narrating "I" to present his metadiegetic story. He narrates his personal experiences at the Umkhonto and weSizwe training camp, far away from the oppression and injustice of Apartheid.

The anonymous narrator's interpolated narrations occur in the following:

Johnny M's pace quickened when he saw, some twenty yards away, the pinpoints of lights, which indicated that the believers in the new Jerusalem were also up, and would perhaps put up a fight. Feeling all juiced up, he commanded his army, a latter-day Macbeth or Richard the Third, out to restore order through wreaking havoc. That's how it was done in the past, he thought, and that's how it will be done now. He felt stones through the soles of his brogues, but this temporary discomfort was a necessary sacrifice. His pale trousers having come into contact with the invincible dust of Ngoza. Come next February, he dreamed, all this will be gone, the same way the dinosaurs perished under the megaton detonation from a giant meteorite. From the crater, he would build a new empire of concrete, glass, steel



and chrome. He could already see in his mind's eye the winking neon, the name *Johnny's* illuminated in such a way you would see it from outer space, like the great wall of China (Langa 2000:336 - 337).

The believers, he realised, were all dressed in robes, their leader a tall woman ... *fuck's sake, it's Zodwa!* She had a nerve venturing out here when she had to know that she was in trouble. With him. He waved his own followers to stop, *let's hear what she's got to say.* Zodwa put up a hand and the believers stopped. She looked past Johnny M, cancelling him out, and addressed herself to the mainly unseen faces behind him, in the dark (Langa 2000:338).

The narration in the excerpts above are in subsequent form in the present contemporaneous mode with the action. The unnamed narrator presents the upheaval in Ngoza as caused by Johnny M's violence, which is used in a last resort attempt to take Ngoza from its inhabitants for his own gain. He forcefully leads people on a march against their leader, Joshua, and his heir, Zodwa. He compels the people to act violently to create the impression that they are rebelling against their own leaders.

Mpanza's earlier subsequent narration, cited above, in which he recounts the assassination of Johan, is also interpolated narration: it is set in the past and in contemporaneous mode with the action of killing Johan. These narrative devices contribute directly to the logic of the story, as it emerges in the main events: Joshua and his followers claim back the land of Ngoza, while there are forces acting against them. These include Johnny M and his men.

As is evident in Langa's other novels with similar polyphonic narrative structures, the dialogical nature of *The Memory of Stones* emerges when the anonymous narrator incorporates the dialogue that the characters enter into in the narrative and assume the role of narrating events from a personal perspective. This includes Mpanza who is already identified as a secondary character narrator, as well as that of other characters as this enables the narrative to be multi-voiced and dialogical. This is perceptible when Mpanza relates his experience of exile to his audience, Zodwa, asking for an apology, and when he feels regret at taking false instructions to kill Johan. In this way, the anonymous narrator and Mpanza transgress the monologic limits of the conventional realist novel through their alternating deployed strategies.

The alternation between the deployed narrational strategies also highlight the narrational link between the primary and metadiegetic levels that connect the story in a direct causality of the events and by their thematic relationships. Direct causality is established when Mpanza kills Johan, Joshua's heir. Joshua's heir is Zodwa, but she is rejected on traditional patriarchal grounds by Johnny M and his cohorts, such as Mbongwa, her uncle. This is done to remove the

leadership role from Joshua's family and take the land of Ngoza. Zodwa agrees to challenge Johnny M in a traditional ritual using witchcraft, to prove that she is also a leader, and can stand against powerful men and can lead them. The metadiegetic narration by Mpanza is linked to that of the anonymous narrator and reveals direct causality between events involving other characters in the story regarding their leadership roles:

There was a gasp, which rippled like waves, settling atop a head and wandering off to another member of the audience. "What did she say?" someone asked. "She's challenging Johnny M to the Humiliation Tree!" "Oh, God," someone cries. "Does she understand what she's up against ...?" "Shush." No one was more surprised by Zodwa's challenge than Nozizwe. She stood stock-still, hearing the words envelop her like a blanket that alternated between hot and cold, a harbinger of a debilitating fever. She had given Zodwa charms and amulets to ward off evil, but never once thought of preparing her for a journey to the mysterious enfolding arms of the Humiliation Tree. She knew of its dangers, which were flavoured with the sweet seductiveness of nectar, since they drove on the vanity of those who entered the domain of the tree, which had proven fatal to almost all the people who had engaged with it. She knew that Johnny M had been strengthened by a sorcerer who had learnt the art of midnight death at the feet of Khotso Sethuntsa, the legendary inyanga who had administered even leaders such as the late Hendrik Verwoerd, the architect of Apartheid. The challenge itself was therefore judged by Nozizwe to be foolhardy and motivated by a stubborn pride, which might yet prove fatal to the young woman. But traditional protocol precluded any gesture from her, not now. Zodwa was on her own ... (Langa 2000:342-343).

During the roaring interplay of darkness and light, Johnny M's spiritual guides administered the necessary *intelezi*, having stripped the man naked; the rubber elastic bands holding the *muthi* around his biceps seemed ready to snap from the pressurising bulging of muscles. When Nozizwe approached Zodwa, preparatory to taking something out of her satchel, Zodwa made an imperceptible movement with her head, demurring yet acknowledging the older woman's intentions. Zodwa, however, succumbed to the treatment, where naked, she was daubed with ochre, from brow to the toes, the silent women working furiously quickly under Nozizwe's watchful eye (Langa 2000:343-344).

They took Johnny M and walked him to the corpse he had shot. Joachim took off the hood. Mpanza studied Johnny M's reaction. There was a silence which conveyed itself all the way to the last person in the New Jerusalem settlement. It touched the chickens in their runs, where they stopped clucking. It was felt by the dogs which had already lost contact with their compatriots. The dray animals felt it and stopped lowing. Even the night sounded as if it wished to hunker down and rest. The silence was broken by a hoarse, inhuman wailing, so lost in its wretchedness that, for a moment, Mpanza felt it possible to pity him. Police Chief Grey's dead eyes stared out at Johnny M as if looking for an answer which would provide one last piece in a perplexing jigsaw puzzle. But before Johnny allowed himself to be escorted by the warriors, curiosity had the better of him. "How did you do it?" he asked. Perhaps it was a knowledge he would use to spice prison conversations. "There was nothing to it," Mpanza told him (Langa 2000:356-357).

These events relate to Mpanza and his experiences and are linked to those of other people in different parts of the story. They tell, amongst other things, of Mpanza's victory against Johnny M and of Zodwa assuming the leadership role under pressure and despite opposition from traditionalists. This is evident when Johnny M leads a march against her, only to be defeated. To show that she can lead, Zodwa, challenges Johnny M, in the traditional manner, to the ritual of the Humiliation Tree. This is to test the power of the person using potent witchcraft charms. The outcome of this test will enhance Zodwa's chances of leading the people of Ngoza and defeating her enemy.

The narrators' thematic relationship emerges from the struggle for the leadership role in the narrative. All the elements in the story, including the narrational strategies, contribute to this central theme of struggle. The unnamed narrator narrates this thematic relationship in the story when introducing Joshua, by stating the most important reason why he is a leader of his people:

After great celebration lasting weeks, where firecrackers light the skies, letting loose a shower of fiery of benediction down on the people, the workers return to the factories and the children to school. The hurricanes and drought come to him in a dream, and he sees multitudes wandering without aim, looking for a leader to decipher for them the meaning of liberation ... In this narcotised state Joshua sees a seraph with diaphanous wings emerge from the clouds. With a voice of a timbre of God's trombone, the angel appoints Joshua the chosen one. He has to lead the people from the hands of strife to the unclaimed ancestral plains of Natal. The followers would have to eschew all connections with the Other World and build the Temple of the New Jerusalem, whose sole purpose would be the glorification of the living God (Langa 2000:24).

Joshua sees that the transition period has negative consequences for his people, who are caught up in the upheavals of the birth of a new democratic society. Joshua is a believer in God and this gives him the motivation to guide the people from a religious perspective. He understands that his people do not have the capacity to take responsibility for their freedom in democracy. This enables the agents of the past, perpetrators, to prey on people's failure to account for their actions.

The anonymous narrator and Mpanza narrate the circumstances faced by the main characters, so as to portray the unpredictability of the fictional society. This contributes to the achievement of the story's objectives, by presenting the events, situations and characters in a way that centres on mobilising victims of injustice to fight and work for a just cause during the upheaval of the transition from Apartheid to democracy.

## CONCLUSION.

This study examines the role of the narrative strategies employed in Mandla Langa's fiction. Guided by the central hypothesis that these strategies are deployed to expose the injustices to which the main characters, and the communities to which they belong, are subjected and against which they struggle. Characteristic of all the texts is the application of multiple narrators. The most common approach is a combination of external third person or anonymous narrator external to the narrative, and internal narrator who is also a character in the story. These are characterised, respectively, as extradiegetic and intradiegetic narrations, by Genette, in his seminal work, *Narrative Discourse* (1980). In Bakhtin's (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination*, it is referred to as novelistic multi-voiced dialogism.

The examination of Langa's first novel, *Tenderness of Blood*, revealed that the anonymous third-person narrator and Mkhonto employ the narrational strategies of extradiegetic and intradiegetic, respectively. The main narration is performed by the third-person narrator, while Mkhonto supplements this as a secondary character-narrator inside the main events. The deployed strategies are used to relate different stages of Mkhonto's life, i.e. his experiences while growing up, at school, while working as a photographer and later when he becomes an Umkhonto weSizwe combatant, which leads to his arrest. The narrative is constructed to highlight the plight of Mkhonto in his opposition to the injustices in his country from two different, but complementary, narrative perspectives. This is possible because of the dialogical nature of the novel, with the anonymous narrator presenting the actual dialogue speeches of other characters, including of Mkhonto, and relates their metadiegetics.

The textual analysis of *A Rainbow on the Paper Sky* reveals that two narrational strategies present the plight of the main characters in their struggle to resist and fight the Apartheid government. These strategies are extradiegetic and intradiegetic. The anonymous third-person narrator and Mark employs these strategies, respectively. While the primary narration is performed by the third-person narrator, Mark supplements this as the secondary character-narrator inside the main events. The way Mark's narration emerges shows how polyphony manifests and functions in the novel. This is exemplified when the anonymous narrator's

narration incorporates the characters' speeches encapsulated in dialogue that allows a multi-voiced discourse.

The third-person anonymous narrator presents the individual experiences of the characters. This includes Ndungane's earlier history of resistance, as well as the plan to set up a training camp for Umkhonto weSizwe, which is foiled by Ndungane and his trusted lieutenant, Mbongwa. Contrarily, Ndungane's children support their father in various ways in his struggle against Apartheid. Mark relates his experiences of arrest and torture because of his radical writings as a poet, which he regards as a form of resistance. The employed strategies effectively emphasise the experiences and plight of specific characters that are subjected to injustice in the novel.

The analysis of *The Dead Men who Lost their Bones* reveals that two narrational strategies depict the harsh treatment of the Ngozi's family at Visser's farm. These are the intradiegetic – homodiegetic and intradiegetic – metadiegetic narrational strategies deployed by the two narrators, respectively: Clementine, and her deceased father, Simeon Ngozi. While Clementine is an intradiegetic – homodiegetic character-narrator, Ngozi is embedded inside her narrative as an intradiegetic – metadiegetic character-narrator.

The narrators of this multi-voiced text relate their intersecting individual experiences. Clementine recalls painful memories of incidents on Visser's farm, which led to the death of her parents: her father Simeon Ngozi at the hands of the police; and her mother from grief of her husband's death. Simeon Ngozi relates his treatment at the hands of his employers when on duty and also from the police for a crime he did not commit: Visser's death on the hunt. It is evident from the narrator's accounts that their narrational strategies function not only to highlight the injustices that specific characters subjected to in the narrative, but also to condemn the perpetrators of these injustices.

The investigation of *The Memory of Stones* shows that two narrational strategies - extradiegetic and intradiegetic – are used to present the plight of the main characters in their efforts to lead people through the upheavals that beset the emerging democratic society. These strategies are performed by the anonymous third-person narrator and Mpanza, respectively, in order to provide the main narration, and to supplement this as a secondary character-narrator located

inside the main events. The story is therefore dialogic, because the anonymous narrator presents the character's dialogue speeches and the role of narration is assumed by them. The main narration presents the individual experiences of the principal characters. They include: Joshua's family and his supporters, who lost their land in Ngoza during the Apartheid era; and Johnny M, who uses his men to try to rob them of their land through corrupt and violent means. Mpanza expresses his experiences and regrets at being misled to assassinate Johan, an heir to Joshua. To correct the mistake of killing Johan, and to ensure that the people are given their rightful leader, Mpanza supports Zodwa's leadership bid by fighting the warlord, Johnny M and his men. This makes it evident that the purpose of these narrational strategies in the story aim to build sympathy for the representation focus on specific characters by highlighting their plight and their struggle for justice.

In *The Lost Colours of the Chameleon*, two narrational strategies – extradiegetic and intradiegetic - are performed by a third-person anonymous narrator, who delivers the main narration. The Timi character functions as a character-narrator metadiegetically, and relates the secondary narrative. These strategies alternate when the events are narrated, due to the polyphonic nature of the novel: the anonymous narrator incorporates other characters' dialogue speeches. This allows the narrator to produce a multi-vocal discourse and the characters assume other parts of narration. This provides two different perspectives and voices that supplement each other in providing the novel's central themes of abuse and exploitation of the people, who are neglected by the government in terms of the blood plague disease, security, poverty, and economic and social problems. The abuses and exploitation are first experienced by Zebulon and his mother, Madu, at the hands of the dictatorial Colonel. Later, Zebulon experiences this at the hands of his half-brother, Abioseh Gondo. In course of the narrative, Abioseh becomes president and neglects public safety, security, health and the social needs of the country and its people. This leads to opposition to his leadership by the supporters of his humble trade unionist brother, Zebulon, Wonderman Bhele, and others, who see an opportunity to rectify the mistakes caused by Abioseh's arrogant leadership style. The effect of the deployed strategies is to register sympathy for the neglected victims, by highlighting the injustices that the characters suffer.

To summarise, the study has shown that the use of multiple narrational strategies in Langa's fiction is characteristic of his fiction. Evidence from the short story and the four novels examined in this study reveals that all the stories deploy a combination of extradiegetic and

intradiegetic narrational strategies. The third-person anonymous narrators use extradiegetic – heterodiegetic narrative strategies, while the first-person character-narrators use intradiegetic – homodiegetic and intradiegetic – metadiegetic strategies. This makes the narrative strategy in Langa's *oeuvre* heterodiegetic, because more than one narrator narrates in the narrative. The way the narrators relate the events, situations and living conditions of the characters effectively focus on the struggle of the characters against oppression, exploitation, injustice and abuse. The historical reference is discernibly South Africa under Apartheid and during its transition to democracy.

The use of alternating narrators demonstrates the polyphonic nature of Langa's fiction. Presenting narratives from different perspectives provides a variety of views of the events, situations and living conditions of the characters, in the context of contestation and the struggle for justice and freedom. This polyphonic quality of these narratives conforms to Bakhtin's multi-voiced dialogical conception of the novel and Genette's complex detailed anatomy of the narrational strategies in fictional narratives.

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