THE ART OF K S BONGELA IN NOVEL WRITING

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by

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Submitted to satisfy the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the Department of African Languages, Faculty of Arts, University of Fort Hare.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

My parents, Msebenzi and Notaka.

My children, Nontsha
Nontle
Melisizwe
Zukolwethu

ooMadiba, ooZondwa!

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own work, both in conception and execution.

The sources quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SUMMARY OF THE DISSERTATION

Knobel Sakhiwo Bongela is fast becoming a household name in the circle of Xhosa writers. He has written various genres. Besides the three novels selected for this study, that is, Umzi Omtsha, Alitshoni Lingenandaba, and Kusa Kusihlwa, he has written one in English entiltled The silent People. This study is an attempt to evaluate his narrative technique in novel writing only.

Chapter One, which is a general introduction, mainly discusses the aims and scope of this study, the sources and methods of research, the problems encountered, the life history of Bongela and other books written by him and the definition of the key concepts comprising the title.

Chapter Two discusses and compares the setting as evinced in the four novels; its role in shaping the lives of the main characters; how it affects the plots of the novels and how it reveals the inner feelings and views of Bongela as a man.

Chapter Three deals with the plot structure employed by the writer in his novels. Though on the whole he starts his novels in medias res, the plot construction has been reviewed under the exposition, the middle and the dénouement.

Chapter Four handles in detail the conflict of the novels. The conflict is a social one, that is, human beings against other human beings. The conflict is supposed to produce actions and counter-actions that are resolved in a climax, where one person wins out. Some of Bongela's novels do not attain the climax because the main contending parties are placed too far apart from one another to wage and resolve the conflict in one way or another.

Chapter Five surveys characterization in Bongela's novels. He uses various techniques to depict his characters, the dominant one being the naming of characters in all four novels. The names given are descriptive of the characters' psychological make-up and their peculiar actions. The few characters whose

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names have negative meanings actually take after them, with no ironic twist in the story.

Chapter Six is the general conclusion where evaluation is made to assess the success of Bongela as a Xhosa novel writer.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim and scope of the study

The contribution and function of literary criticism is, in the first instance, as propounded by Schreiber (1969:2) to help the readers

> ... to distinguish between a good book and a bad one, and that done, to help us to recognize for ourselves and to get full value out of literary quality when we meet with it, thus opening up for us the whole world of pleasure and imaginative experience and intellectual stimulus which is waiting to be explored but which, without a qualified critic's help, we would not discover for ourselves.

The above quotation prompted the researcher to study the art of K S Bongela in novel writing only. His skills, for the moment, will not cover the whole spectrum of his genres. Furthermore a general survey of the literary techniques and achievements of Bongela in writing novels will be given from the early seventies, when he started, up to the eighties.

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Much has been written about renowned Xhosa authors belonging to the first half of the twentieth century.[1] The indifference shown by Xhosa critics about Bongela is a shortcoming, since men like Bongela are not only vividly portraying the prevailing problems confronting the present generation, but have also made a tremendous contribution to Xhosa literature. This study is generally designed to address this shortcoming and pay particular attention to Bongela, who is such a dynamic and prolific modern writer aptly portraying the predicaments of the present ordinary people in both rural and urban areas. Peck and Coyle (1993:107) concur with this view:

> Most novels are concerned with ordinary people and their problems in the societies in which they find themselves.[2]

Another reason for embarking on this study is to impart a general appreciation of the attempts made by Bongela and place them on record, in their proper perspective, for posterity in general and the Xhosa speaking student in particular.[3]

1.2 The sources and methods of research

A critical evaluation of any genre relies heavily on the other written works by the same author. It is this universally acknowledged truth that has also led the researcher to read Bongela's genres extensively: novels, novelle, short stories, essays and drama; libraries (Fort Hare University, Unisa and the Department of Education and Training) where conventional literary devices are employed in evaluating Bongela's novel were constantly visited, and in particular Fort Hare Centre for Cultural Studies for, reading and referring to other theses, particularly on other Xhosa writers, and photostatting some of the information from newspapers and magazines.[4]

1.3 Difficulties encountered in the research

Though Bongela is still alive, it was difficult to obtain urgently needed information since he lives far away in Umtata. Little has been written about Bongela. The very scanty information is probably due to the fact that Bongela belongs to the present generation of fiction writers. Nieuwenhuizen (1981:1) when confronted by such a problem expresses his dissatisfaction that:

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> Daar bestaan relatief min biografiese gegewens van die skrywer en dit sal met die oog op evaluering van sy novelle eers versamel moet word.
>
> (There is relatively very little biographic information on the writer and it will be compiled with a view to evaluating his novels.)

Since Bongela is still alive there is a possibility that he will write more novels. This will mean that this research will be outdated, if not falling short of its target, that is, a critical evaluation of his novels. There is an added hope that Bongela's novels will in future be prescribed extensively for study in schools, in which case this research will be an asset and beneficial. If they are not prescribed, then this study will join the ranks of other dissertations in decorating the shelves of libraries, or used by a few individuals who will be studying for degrees.

1.4 Biography of K S Bongela

At this point it is appropriate to furnish the historical background of K S Bongela so as to throw more light on the circumstances that moulded him into the writer he is today. Supporting the above view Schreiber (op. cit.: 15-16) declares:

> ... how easy it is to misunderstand the writers of the past for lack of historical knowledge of the circumstances in which they wrote ... it is now generally accepted that one of the main pre-occupations of the critic of literature must be the scholarly spade-work in contemporary documents and records.

It will be of interest and benefit to the reader to know the forces that goaded Bongela to write and thus emerge as a renowned writer of African literature. Some South African Black writers are still members of the proletariat because of racial laws preventing them from obtaining white-collar employement and certain privileges.

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The researcher gives this brief biography not out of a tendency to digress or a lack of ideas, but because he feels it will serve to illuminate the understanding of the novels of this great writer, worthy of the name "Mdengentonga" (One-great-in-discussion). Wellek and Warren (1982:75) concur with the view expressed above. They comment on the significance of studying and providing the biography of a writer in literature:

> The most obvious cause of a work of art is its creator, the author, and hence an explanation in terms of the personality and the life of the writer has been one of the oldest and best established methods of literary study.

Unlike the situation in English and Afrikaans, there are very few biographies and autobiographies in Xhosa. This shortcoming needs urgent remedy, as biographies are judged in relation to the light they throw on the actual works of the writers. If we are to understand the works of the writers accurately, it would be judicious first to study and understand the biographical background of each writer - hence this presentation of Bongela's - and to enlighten the critics about the significance of biographical criticism. Cox and Lewis (1974:110) assert about the importance of biography:

> (it) is often very helpful in understanding why an author wrote what he did, that knowledge may help the critic to understand the story in more depth.

Bongela is a well-known personage in the Eastern Province owing to his contribution to Xhosa literature and his involvement in Xhosa culture. His reputation as a writer is gaining momentum in the other parts of the Republic of South Africa as some of his novels have been prescribed where Xhosa is studied.

Knobel Sakhiwo Bongela was born at Bawa village in the district of Butterworth in Transkei on 26 November 1936. He is the eldest of the five children of Mr Abram Bongela and Mrs Emma Bongela.

Bongela received his Primary Education at Bawa and later at Tyhinirha village. He passed Standard Six, which was still in Primary Schools then, in 1951. In 1954 he passed the then important Junior Certificate in the first grade at Blythswood High School in Transkei. He proceeded to the famous Lovedale College in Alice, where he studied the teachers' course then current for primary schools known as Primary Higher Teachers' Course - commonly known then as P.H., and passed it in 1956. In 1957 he registered as a matric student, still at Lovedale, and matriculated in 1958. In 1959 Bongela registered as a student at Fort Hare University College, then under the auspices of Rhodes University. He obtained his B.A. degree in 1961, majoring in English and Anthropology. He passed only course two in Xhosa - the language which he later used extensively to write Xhosa fiction: novels, novelle (co-author), short stories, play, essays, folklore and language books (co-author) for various standards.

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He returned to Transkei and taught at his alma mater, Blythswood, from 1962 to 1969, more or less teaching every subject during that period. He was promoted in 1970, no doubt, because of his unblemished track record in the teaching profession, to be the Principal of Zizweni in Butterworth, a school he started from Form 1 (Standard Six), and which he had upgraded to the level of a High School by the time he left it.

In 1977 he was transferred to Msobomvu Location, still in Butterworth, to start another High School known as Vuliveli. He remained there as Principal

until the end of April 1986, when he was promoted to the Department of Education in the Publication and Translating Section as a Planner for standardised Xhosa books. At the same time he successfully completed his Bachelor of Education degree through the University of Transkei. He has recently obtained his Master of Education from the same University.

Bongela has made a great contribution to the uplifting of Xhosa as a language. He taught it as a subject in various High Schools; he was once a sub-examiner of Xhosa at Matric level; he is a member of the Nguni and Sotho Language Board. He has not only written Xhosa novels but one in English, as will be shown in the list of his books.[5] Mahlasela (1973:12), aware of this tendency by the African writers of the present age frequently to use English as a medium of self-expression, questions this stance:

> Do these African writers now feel they must communicate their thoughts to a much wider readership and audience than is possible using a tribal language only?

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Bongela probably decided to join the ranks of many African writers who have chosen to write in English for "... a much wider readership ..." because as a African he is writing from experience about the things affecting Africans in their everyday activities, how the Black Man is subjected every day by oppressive Apartheid Laws to a subservient position in all aspects of his life, from the cradle to the grave, but manages to survive by the skin of his teeth.

In an interview which researcher had with Bongela in 1986 in his office in Umtata, he promised that he is still going to write some more books, Deo Volente.

The following is a list of books written by K S Bongela presented chronologically according to the years of publication:

Title of the book	Genre	Publisher	Year
Imizabalazo	novel	Shuter & Shooter	1969
Umzi omtsha	novel	Lovedale	1970
Alitshoni lingenandaba	novel	Shuter & Shooter	1971
Iphulo	essays	Longman	1977
Kusa kusihlwa	novel	Maskew Miller	1979
Ingalo	play	Longman	1982
Umhlinzeko	Short stories	Shuter & Shooter	1982
The Silent People	novel	Maskew Miller	1983
Inxili	Short stories	De Jager-Haum	1985
Ubuncwane bemvomvo (Sub A - Std IV)	Language series	Maskew Miller	1985
Amagontsi	folklore	Afro Publisher	1991
UThixo uluthando (Std VI: translation)	Bible reader	Varia Books	19?

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He is a co-author of the following books:

Title of the book	Genre	Publisher	Year
Izikrweqe	novelette	Longman	1981
Inkaba	novel	Maskew Miller	1983
Imvomvo (Sub A - Std V)	Language series	Maskew Miller	1983
Amazinga (Stds VI - X)	Language series	Maskew Miller	19?

In a decade Bongela has written more than ten books. Probably by the time this study is completed there will be more books written but not appearing in the list tabulated above, which is an indicator that he is a gifted writer. The African audience is thirsty for more knowledge, and it is hoped that Bongela is aware of this.

Bongela claims that his dormant talent to write was ignited by Miss Darrol, who was an English lecturer at the University of Fort Hare, especially her techniques of critical evaluation of A Tale of two Cities by Charles Dickens.[6] He only started to write seriously his second novel, Umzi Omtsha, while teaching at Blythswood. He felt then that he should break away from the exhausted conventional themes of chieftainship and forced marriages, and concentrated on the problems of the present era.[7]

1.5 Definition of concepts

The following definitions are not an in-depth study by themselves, but more information and defintions of other concepts will be introduced as the study progresses. Here the researcher intends concentrating on the key words of the title of this study. The views of other critics will be presented.

1.5.1 Art

Art is the human skills to create something new that has been imagined. Schoonees and Van Bruggen (1981:1) however say about the word art:

> Onder kuns verstaan ons die skepping van mooi dinge.
> (Under art we understand the creation of beautiful things.)

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The researcher concurs with the above critics in that art involves aptitude to "create beautiful things" be it in carving, music, painting or writing. This ability involves especially man's ingenuity in producing a work of art out of the raw material of life's experiences, attractive to the ear, eye or mind. Ngcongwane (1981:11), reiterating the views of Schoonees and Van Bruggen substantially about the word "skep" (create) and its attributes, comments:

> Skep is die woord. 'n Kunstenaar is 'n skepper en nie 'n na-aper nie. Hy boots die Skepper na. Wat hy skep het egter nog verband met die werklikheid. Hy is nie by magte om, soos God, suiwer oorspronklike struktuur voor te bring. Hy word veral deur innerlike ontroering aangehelp. Die Almagtige se skepping is heeltemal oorspronklik, maar die kunstenaar gebruik die bekende werklikheid om nuwe vorme mee te bring.
>
> (Create is the word. An artist is a creator and not an imitator. He models himself after God. What he creates has connection with the reality. He has no power like God

> to bring forth pure original structure. He is especially helped by inner inspiration. The Almighty's creation is completely original, but the artist uses the known reality to bring about new forms.)

From the above definition it is apparent that art portrays something similar to real life in one way or another, the mind and the "innerlike ontroering" (inner inspiration) being the driving forces of ideas. It is the artist who must bring forth these varying ideas together in a well organized manner. These difinitions are reminiscent of Aristotle's view that art is an imitation of life experience. A writer produces something out of what already exists, the life that surrounds him in his immediate vicinity. He cannot attain, however, the perfection and originality of the Almighty, the Great Creator of things. He merely relies on his ideas and the multiplicity of his experience.

In this study an attempt will be made to show whether Bongela's novels have life in them or not, whether he possesses that inner inspiration that empowers him to write and be recognized as a succesful author.

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1.5.2 Novel

The term "novel" is rather fluidly defined by the various critics, but it is comforting that certain common features appear in all these definitions. Reader and Woods (1987:5) define the word "novel" as a

> Fictitious prose narrative of volume length portraying characters and actions representative of real life in continuous plot.

Hawthorn (1986:1) defines a novel as

> ... a fictitious prose narrative or tale of considerable length in which characters and actions representative of the real life of past or present times are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity.

Msimang (1986:27) asserts that the definition of a novel should include the following requirements:

a) it is a relatively long fictional prose narrative,
b) it has complex characters,
c) there must be a complex plot, and
d) it is about human beings and their actions in real life.[8]

Reader and Woods state nothing about the complexity of the plot. By complex plot the researcher assumes that every novel must have a kind of conflict. It is the conflict that brings about action and counter-action, thus creating a suspense and anxiety that enthrals the reader. The development of conflict gradually rises to a climax and is thereafter followed by dénouement, forming an orderly Freytag pyramid.[9]

By "complex characters" mentioned by Msimang, the researcher presumes that he means that characters should frequently develop or evolve in some way as people we meet in real life. The characteristics of a novel mentioned by the critics above will be used as criteria to determine how successful Bongela is as a novelist.

1.6 Novels to be studied

This study to investigate the art of K S Bongela as a novel-writer will be limited to four of his novels only. The tabulation of the novels according to their years of publication is an attempt to see whether his pen matures with the years or not in writing novels.

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1. Umzi Omtsha, 179 pages, published in 1970.
2. Alitshoni Lingenandaba, 177 pages, published in 1979.*
3. Kusa Kusihlwa, 134 pages, published in 1984.*
4. The Silent People, 95 pages, published in 1983.*

(* For original publication refer to page 6)

1.6.1 Brief review of each book

Umzi Omtsha

The main characters:

1. Nontando Qoloza is a lady teacher and a girlfriend of Mbulelo since their school days at Lovedale College.
2. Mbulelo Cyril Nyasana is David's father and a Professor in the Department of Systermatic Theology at the University of Fort Hare.
3. Zuzekile Mahlathi is a teacher by profession but is expelled because of misconduct. He becomes an insurance salesman in Alice but is expelled again because of drunkenness while on duty. He works in Johannesburg mines, later in Brakpan and join thugs.

4. David Qoloza, an illegitimate son of Nontando, learns thuggery in Benoni, but later reforms.
5. Maria Mabuza, David's girl-friend and a lady teacher at Blythswood Training School, is secretly loved by Rev. Professor Nyasana.

Plot construction:
Zuzekile has fiddled with the Std 6 final year examination question papers before the start of the examination. The inspectors suspect mischief. Zuzekile appeals to Mbulelo to defend him. He refuses. Zuzekile bears him an undying grudge and attempts to "revenge" himself.

Alitshoni Lingenandaba
Main characters:
1. Vuyisile Wellington Mbuya, a Fort Hare graduate, works at an Engcobo bank and later at Orient Beach Fishing Depot.
2. Mthuthuzeli Rubin Mdaka works at Orient Beach Fishing Depot, robs it of R4,000.
3. Nonzwakazi Dora Somlilo is beautiful and intelligent but ruthless.
4. Thamsanqa Sidwell Gebe works in an East London garage and owns a shebeen.
5. Nomathamsanqa Gwebi, a nurse at Frere Hospital.

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Plot Construction:
Rubin steals R4,000 from the Orient Beach Fishing Depot. Vuyisile discovers the theft and demands the money back. He agrees but cannot because the money has been misused by Dora, his girlfriend. They decide to kill Vuyisile and flee to Johannesburg. At Hennenman they are involved in a car accident. Dora dies, Rubin is sent to jail.

Kusa Kusihlwa
Main characters:
1. Mpumelelo Ntsibande who suffers from pyrophobia.
2. Lungile Ntsibande, Mpumelelo's father, is suspected of being a womanizer and ill-treated by his wife.
3. Nomakhwezi Ntsibande, Lungile's wife, who is very jealous and unreasonable.
4. Yolisa Soluthi, a qualified teacher, Nomakhwezi's aunt.

5. Thamsanqa Ntsibande, Mpumelelo's uncle, who looks after the welfare of the latter.
6. Nozililo and Ntongana Makhwetshu, wife and husband, enemies of Ntsibandes.

Plot construction:
Nozililo and Ntongana want the shop bought by Lungile from Mosia. They plot against Lungile and his wife who ultimately die in a car accident. Despite being orphaned and having the Makhwetshus hell-bent on killing him, Mpumelelo succeeds in getting educated and qualifies as a medical doctor specialising in mental diseases.

The Silent People

Main characters:

1. Rufus Mendile, a qualified carpenter, henpecked by his wife.
2. Margaret Mathonti, a teacher by profession, spoilt, proud and stong-headed.
3. Silo, son to Rufus, leaves school early and becomes a thug in Johannesburg.
4. Andile, another son of Rufus, a Fort Hare graduate.
5. Lindile, father to Rufus, is a traditionalist.

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Plot construction:
Rufus marries Margaret against the wishes of the Miya elders. Silo (Luvuyo) is born and later Andile. Silo is pampered by his mother. Margaret flouts the "mbeleko" ritual and disregards the "hlonipha" custom. She quarrels with the in-laws and is sent back to her original home. Silo flees to Johannesburg where he becomes a hardened criminal.

1.7 SUMMARY

The aim and scope of studying Bongela's novels and the reasons thereof are to bring to the correct focus the contribution he made in Xhosa as a language and literature in particular. Despite this vast literary work furnished by him, the critics have ignored his works. There is no more effective way to kill literary work than simply ignoring it. Criticism, be it negative or positive, makes the literary work alive.

The biography of Bongela is given with the view of understanding his ideas and to make an objective assessment of his novels. The sketching of the

biography leads to clarification of some obscure aspects as to what really led the author to write the way he did. There is ample evidence as to why his novels are mainly about the Transkeians and why the setting is in Butterworth in most of the novels under study. He was born there and it is an area he is well conversant with.

Books written by Bongela are tabulated chronologically according to the years of publication to see whether he mellows with the years. Furthermore this arrangement shows his vast contribution to Xhosa literature.

Definitions of "art" and "novel" are given to elucidate their understanding since these are the key words in the title of this study. The brief synopsis of each novel is given so as to dispel any confusion and misconception that might impede the free understanding of this study.

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1.8. NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The following is a list of some of the comprehensive studies done by some Xhosa critics:
   a) Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis: A study of Theme and Technique in the Creative Works of S.E.K.L.N. Mqhayi, 1979, by S.Z. Qangule.
   b) Unpublished D.Lit. et Phil. Thesis: Satire and Humour in G.B. Sinxo's Works: A Critical Perspective, 1988, by B B Mkonto.
   c) Unpublished M.A. Dissertation: A study of Some Aspects of J J R Jolobe's Poetry, 1985, by G T Sirayi.
   d) Unpublished M.A. Dissertation: A Study of Some Theme in A.C. Jordan's novel Ingqumbo Yeminyanya 1974, by Z S Qangule.
   e) Unpublished M.A. Dissertation: Siwisa's Short Stories: A Critical Appraisal, 1986, by P T Mtuze.

2. Peck and Coyle (1993:107) go on to say that novelists frequently focus on the tensions between individuals and the society in which they live, presenting characters who are at odds with that society, because all of us have individual impulses and desires, but all of us have to face up to the fact that we are members of a family and a society.

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3. Furthermore to indicate, as Mathivha (1972:VII) states, the role which the Western strains and uprisings played in developing and shaping the style and thoughts of African writers.

4. The researcher conducted interviews with Professor D N Jafta of the University of Transkei and Professor G T Sirayi, the Director of the Centre for Cultural Studies at the University of Fort Hare, on several occasions.

5. Larson (1971:11) observes that the African writer who writes in a European language probably has chosen to do so out of expediency. Africa is a continent with so many different ethnic groups. If he chooses to write in his native tongue he seriously limits the size of his reading audience, more so as English seems destined to be a major language of communication on the African continent.

6. The introduction of Umzi Omtsha is reminiscent of Dicken's introduction in a Tale of two Cities, by first portraying a peaceful atmosphere preceding a storm.

7. In an interview with Bongela the following are themes he feels are far from exhausted:
   - the conflict between the Western and traditional worship,

- traditional values versus modern values,
- rural life versus urbanization,
- frustrations experienced by present youth,
- political turmoils that are gaining momentum.

8. Roberts (1983:4-5) views the novel as a narrative of a series of events, usually fictional, although sometimes these fictional events may be tied to those that are genuinely historical. The novel, unlike a short story, permits a full development of interactions, and focuses on a small number.

9. Gustav Freytag was a German writer who suggested that the rising and falling actions in a typical five-act play resembles a pyramid. Emotions are brought out by the introduction of the various characters and conflicts and are heightened as complications develop and reach a climax, after which a particular outcome, the falling action, begins, and finally the unravelling.

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CHAPTER TWO

2. SETTING IN BONGELA'S NOVELS

Any work of art, in order to be appreciated, must have a certain structure that is unique, a pattern or form of some kind peculiar to itself only. Souvage (1965:19) proclaims that when a novel is being studied in terms of structure,

> (it) moves on a level which is analytical, technical and functional ... concepts such as setting, plot, character and point of view may then be considered as structural principles.[1]

In other words a novel has an over-all patterning and organisation, in the way in which its different components fit together to produce a totality, a satisfying whole. Components of certain novels could be easily shifted around without any harm or making too great a difference to the works of art in question. Yet shuffling around the parts of some novels would do something rather serious to such works. A novel, therefore, can only be re-assembled if it is structured around a series of relatively self-contained episodes arranged in different orders without making too much difference. In reviewing Bongela's novels the researcher proposes to follow the concepts presented by Souvage above, replacing "point of view" with conflict.

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Setting is conventionally known as milieu. No time will be wasted on trying to unravel the most minute differences between these two terms. The researcher feels that they may be used synonymously. For the sake of fluency and to expedite the work the term setting will be used henceforth.

Setting is one of the most significant aspects of any narrative work. It is often regarded as the locale or the surrounding in which the events narrated by the writer, in his work of art, take place or start actuating.[2] Abrams (1993:192) construes setting thus:

> The overall setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs ...

Abram's definition lays emphasis on three aspects pertaining to setting, namely "the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances." By

"historical time" Abrams means that systematic account or knowledge of events which happened in the past 'time' as part of the setting, and by "social circumstances" means events or accidents that are perculiar to a certain society only. Sadler et al. (1985:7) provide more information about setting:

> Setting provides the background that frames and helps define the plot and the characters. The setting of a genre is the background (place and time) against which the story or action or main idea develops and unfolds.

The researcher concurs with the views expressed above, in that a setting without characters of a particular environment is like a garden without flowers or vegetables. Since settings helps "define the plot" there can be no plot without characters. Deeply involved in the unfolding of the plot are the dynamic characters. Supporting the views of Sadler et al., Msimang (op. cit.:86) comments about the significance of setting:

> Its importance lies ... in its relevance to the other aspects of the narrative, especially style, characterization, theme and plot. Setting is also important in establishing the right atmosphere or mood for the narrative.

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This is an irrefutable fact postulated by Msimang. If the setting of a novel is in the rural areas of Butterworth, in Transkei, it would be incongruous for the characters to behave (think, speak, act or wear) like the urbanites and vice versa. The setting, therefore, reveals and underlies the type of characters the reader would expect to find in Bongela's novels in this instance. It would be expected again that when the characters from different social settings, for instance from rural and urban areas, meet together, there is bound to be a clash of views and values. A character in the rural areas will take more time to ponder over a problem, there is nothing that hastens him, as distinct from those in the urban areas, where an expeditious response to a distressful plight is required, sometimes injudiciously. It is this clash of ideas and action that creates a fertile ground for conflict and consequently the development of the plot.

The locale in the novels, in contrast to the locale of most short stories, may constantly shift from one place to another. This constant shift of locale is significant in that it renders the characters liable to encounter some social,

moral or religious codes or ethics that are either foreign to them or diametrically opposed to theirs. The foreignness provides a suitable arena for the conflict of characters in the novel. Hawthorn (op. cit.:59), however, warns the reader to guard against being limited in his judgement and influenced by the context within which the action of a novel takes place, when he says:

> ... this does not just mean its geographical setting (only); social and historical factors are also important.

By "historical factors" obviously Hawthorn echoes the views expressed by Abrams above (vide, p. 14).[3] The researcher proposes to consider and discuss setting in as far as it affects the main characters of the four novels, and their conflicting situations thereof, and how only these significant settings set the plots of the novels in motion. It is of profound importance that, as Msimang (op. cit.: 88) articulates plainly,

> ... the artist should outline his milieu clearly and convincingly if he wants his work of art to be true to life.

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On the other hand Hawthorn (op. cit.: 60) also warns the writer to choose a suitable setting with which he is well acquainted and which will not lead him to a cul-de-sac, but rather help him

> ... to avoid the need to write about things that he or she is not good at, or interested in ....[4]

It would be of interest to see whether Bongela abides by the views and advices articulated by the critics quoted above, or whether he levels and treads down all their guide-lines to set up his own rules on the use of setting in his novels. Defending the African writers for projecting their own setting, Chimombo (1980: ix) remarks about the birth and development of creative African writing in the following perspective;

> The setting also changes: from the closed communities of rural life in the early novels to the cosmopolitan city life of recent writings. The craftsmanship is discernible across the novels too.

The setting of three of the novels written by Bongela, namely, Umzi Omtsha, (1970), Kusa Kusihlwa, (1984) and The Silent People, (1983) is the

little villages surrounding Butterworth in Transkei, which Peteni (1979: 6) claims:

> ... reveal that the inhabitants live according to surprisingly similar patterns of family life and clan life,

where livelihood depends on farming, running a business and obeying the ancestors.

The settings of Umzi Omtsha, for instance, is in Gcuwa, the town of Butterworth in English; in Kusa Kusihlwa the novel starts in medias res[5], and the events begin to uncoil to the reader in the village of Ngqamakhwe is also the name of a river at the source of Gcuwa, a river that passes through the town of Butterworth, hence the Xhosa name, and forms a tributary of the Great Kei River. The events in The Silent People start to unfold around the place called Mission in Gcuwa. In Alitshoni Lingenandaba, though the setting is not in a rural area of Transkei, the events, however, mainly transpire in a Xhosa speaking township of Ziphunzana, which is about ten kilometres, from kwa-Gompo, the proper Xhosa name for East London. (vide: Kropf, 1915: 500). East London is less than a hundred kilometres away from Butterworth. Most people from and around Butterworth do their shopping in East London or work there. The main events in this novel seldom occur outside East London town.

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Introducing the setting of Umzi Omtsha to the reader Bongela states:

> Nakule dolophana yaseGcuwa ijaji yayiza kuphambukela ... kwaye kukho isintsompothi setyala likaDavide ityendyana lomfana (1970: 3)
>
> (Even in this small town of Gcuwa the judge would sit ... there was a complicated case of David a young man)

In Alitshoni Lingenandaba the novelist informs the reader about the setting of this novel in the first paragraph of the first chapter by saying:

> Umoya owawusisithokothoko sobumnyama wawuvuthuza loo mithi izizigcunyana bumiwewana, ihlise loo ntlambo ivelela eZiphunzana. (1979:1)
>
> (The dark wind was blasting violently the thinly grown and cliff-like groves growing in the valley across to Ziphunzana.)

In the last paragraph of chapter one in Kusa Kusihlwa, the author brings the reader along to the small town of Ngqamakhwe in this vivid description:

> Kumntu onyuka ngendlela leyo esinga kulo dolophana yaseNgqamakhwe, ngasekhohlo mayela naloo ntilana irhangqwe yiloo mingcunube .... (1984: 5)
> (To a person ascending the road leading to that small town of Ngqamakhwe, on the left near that small meadow surrounded by those willow trees ..)

In the first paragraph on page five in The Silent People, Bongela describes graphically the setting in the following manner:

> When Rufus Mendile, a carpenter from Butterworth, was twenty-six, he called together his parents and closest relatives to tell them that he wanted to marry a Mathonti woman call Margaret, a teacher from Mpenduza, near the Mission, (1983: 5).

He expatiates further that the Mission was the birth place of Andile Mendile,

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> .... like his father and his father's father before him. No-one had bothered to give a vernacular name to this area, through which Cegcuwana and Gcuwa rivers ran: they simply called it the Mission ... (1983: 1-2)

Bongela seems to take heed and supports views expressed by Boulton (1985: 127) who declares:

> The novelist may write of a background he knows very well, one he knows superfically or one he knows only by hearsay .... novelist has to do something like scholarly research to get his background even approximately right, but every serious novelist has to do research in some sense; he often needs to read, enquire, in every detail.[6]

For purposes of efficiency, neatness and clarity, the setting of each novel, the role and its effect on the development of the plot, will be dealt with separately. The setting of the novels will be dealt with numerically according to their years of publication, to determine further whether Bongela matures with the years in his art of novel writing.

2.1 The Setting of Umzi Omtsha (1970)

Umzi Omtsha is set in the present era. It features objects, values, norms and beliefs which were introduced by Western civilization. The novelist sets the scene in the court-room of Gcuwa. Though not described in detail, this is a court dominated by Western Culture, where individuals are specially trained to perform certain duties inside the court-room. There is a prosecutor who is the only one entitled to interrogate the accused and the accuser. There is the advocate defending the accused not only for the comprehensibility of the case, but for financial gain at the end. There is a judge who is responsible for passing a sentence after assessing the views of the accuser and the accused. Since this is a Western type of court, at once the reader is subtly made aware of the process of deculturation of the principal characters. By deculturation Kunene (1968: 19) comments that this

> (is) the process where, at the meeting of two cultures, one consciously and deliberately dominates the other, denies it the right to exist, by both directly and indirectly ...[7]

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The main characters, though they are Xhosas, have acquired and accepted the Western culture. The accuser, Mbulelo Nyasana, is a lecturer in the Faculty of Systematic Theology at the University of Fort Hare, 46 years old and still a bachelor. A man of Mbulelo's age, according to African culture, is a well-settled family man, unless there is something wrong with him physically or psychologically. He is not fully accepted in a Xhosa social set up, and regarded with suspicion of being abnormal. The writer lambasts this defect:

> Uthi umfana lo akuba mdala kakhulu engekatshati, baxokozele ukubuzisa ngaye ukuba wotshata nini na. Kaloku isiseko into yokuba indoda izifunele umfazi. Kube njalo nakuMbulelo kuba ufike yedwa kweli engenamfazi kwaye kubonakala ukuba umntu lo uye eqina ngokuqina. Bambi abafundi babesebembiza ngokuba nguSokadala. (1970: 140)
>
> (When the young man becomes too old without marrying , people start wagging their tongues asking when is he getting married. It is destined that a man should have a wife. It was the same with Mbulelo because he arrived without a wife here, and it was noticeable that age was catching up with him. Some students called him the Old Bachelor.)

From the Court Room in Butterworth the setting shifts backwards to Alice when Mbulelo and Nontando are still students in Lovedale College, a centre of formal Western culture and education. Education is broad and formal. Students are taught Western music and use Western instruments to broadcast on Radio Bantu in Grahamstown. On sports' day the music band leads the students to the sportsfield. On Saturdays they buy small presents and delicacies from a nearby tuckshop.

It is in Lovedale, a Christian centre, that Mbulelo's Christianity is kindled. Every Friday at five o'clock there is a formal prayer meeting for students. Every Sunday all students are required to attend the ten o'clock morning service dressed in full uniform. Mbulelo takes an active part in these services.

> Wayedla ngokuqhulwa lulutsha ngokuthi "mfundisi" kuye lona luhleka le nto yokushumayela kangaka pha esikolweni .... (1970: 13)
>
> (The youth used to tease him by saying "reverend" to him (Mbulelo) laughing at his preaching skill at school ...)

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After passing matric Mbulelo goes to Fort Hare University to read for a Bachelor of Theology. Nontando starts teaching at Gaga Village, about fifteen kilometres away from Fort Hare University. Their love affair is at its prime. As a young lady teacher Nontando attends youth activieties at Fort Hare University, and, together with Mbulelo, joins the Victoria East Interdenominational Choir, which stages music in King William's Town and Victoria East. They travel by cars to various places. Zuzekile Mahlathi, Mbulelo's home-boy, works in Alice as an insurance agent. When Nontando is stranded at Healdtown after an athletic competition, Zuzekile comes to her rescue, and offers to take her home by car. He discovers that she is in love with Mbulelo.

As educated people they attend social activities in big towns. Zuzekile invites Nontando to a rugby match in Port Elizabeth during the June vacation. Port Elizabeth is famous for its detribalized and decultured Africans, some of whom resort to gangsterism in order to survive. Because of inappropriate upbringing Zuzekile associates easily with thugs. He easily organizes some thugs in Port Elizabeth to stain Nontando's reputation.

Township houses have small yards and are built close to each other. They are demarcated by fences and hedges. While attempting to jump over the fence, the thugs are disturbed by a patrolling police vehicle. Zuzekile's plan fails dismally. When Nontando informs Mbulelo that she is pregnant, the latter refuses to accept responsibility since she has been seen in the company of Zuzekile of late.

Nontando's parents are uneducated and still live according to traditional standards in Cegcuwana village in Gcuwa. The pregnancy and Mbulelo's refusal to accept paternity have a traumatic psychological effect on Nontando, and hence she fails to thing and plan properly for her future. As she thinks about her parents at home her future looks bleak because her father

> .... wayengayifuni into embi, nabantwana bakhe babesebemqonda, bangacingi bafane benze nayiphi na into ebheke ecaleni bengakhange bafikelwe luvalo bakucinga ngaye. Mhlawumbi yiyo nale nto uNontando wakhala kangaka akuhlelwa leli lishwa. (1970:43)

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> (.... he disliked bad things, even his children understood him, they never behave waywardly without anxiety when thinking about him. Perhaps that might be the cause for Nontando's vehement cry when this misfortune befell her.)

From the simple and peaceful town of Alice, Nontando flees to the complicated, violent and big city of Johannesburg. Cohen (1973: 29) observes that:

> ... shifts of setting sometimes reflect the psychological make-up of such characters.

Cohen's observation is aptly fitting to Nontando. She wants to hide herself among the multitudes of the Witwatersrand since she has been degraded by having an illegitimate child. Her fleeing to Johannesburg instead of Transkei subtly suggests her rejection of the norms, values and customs of her culture and her embracing those of Western civilization. If the locale fails to influence and shape her character and action, it will definitely succeed in her son, David.

In order to live a decent life in Johannesburg, money is an important commodity. She has to work in order to support her son and herself. Since she has no proper identity book nor a permit to remain and seek decent employment, she is employed as a cleaner and cook in the White man's house. She sends her son to a school in Wattville township. David learns to gamble in order to supplement his mother's meagre income, playing truant at school, thieving, smoking dagga, drinking liquor and fighting in the streets with knives. Nontando's life and character gradually change. She is no longer that morally upright, honest and uncorrupted lady. She condones her son's thievery by accepting the money he brings without any questions asked. Because of his son's nefarious activities, Nontando is dismissed by her employer and she seeks accommodation in Wattville township.

Zuzekile accidentally meets David and they become members of a group known as the "Big Six". They assume pseudonyms for purposes of disguise and protecting their real identities. They use firearms to rob people and banks. They drive fast cars and wear beautiful clothes. They, however, lead an unhappy life because they must always be on the lookout for police. David is constantly bullied by Zuzekile, but though young he is prepared to fight back. Since the booty is unequally shared, David gradually loses interest in the activities of the "Big Six".

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Fearing the arrest of her son and herself for defeating the ends of justice, Nontando leaves with him for Transkei. They are welcomed by her father, who slaughters a fatted sheep for them. This is an act of propitiation and of introducing David to the Qoloza ancestors, as Peteni (op. cit.: 8) avers:

> ... had to be appeased by those who wished to prosper, and that they could give guidance to those who worshipped them through proper medium.

In the simple and peaceful life in Transkei, David is sent to circumcision school in order to be accepted socially by his peer group. This is a symbolic act of embracing customs and traditions of the rural society and the rejection of the thuggery acquired on the Witwatersrand.

Mbulelo, when informed that Nontando is alive and David is his biological son, confesses his sins to God like a real priest.[8] He further pleads to Nontando to forgive him claiming that:

> Ndandisenziwa bubudenge bobutsha. Ngoku ndiyazohlwaya ngale nto; ndixolele. (1970:165)
>
> (I was under the influence of youthfulness. Now I reprove myself for this; forgive me.)

In a peaceful atmosphere where problems are solved through dialogue instead of guns and knives, Mbulelo makes amends by recognizing David as his heir apparent. He assures his son that:

> ... obe kuyimfihlakalo kuvelisiwe, obe kuyimpazamo kulungisiwe, nobe kuzisa iinyembezi kobuyekezwa ngoxolo (1970: 171)
>
> (... that which was a secret is revealed, that which was rendered an error is corrected, and that which brought tears will be requited with peace.)

David marries Maria Mabuza in an impressive and grandiose white wedding. It should not come as a surprise that the young couple tie the knot in an imposing white ceremony. Their parents in both families are Westernized. They themselves belong to the modern generation. They are educated according to Western standards and work in centres that have accepted Western norms and culture. Maria is a lady teacher at Blythswood High School, while David is a lawyer in Butterworth town. It is fitting, therefore, that Nontando's father, after the whole hullabaloo has subsided, should render gratitude directly to God and not through the ancestors, as is customary with traditional Africans:

> Yehova, Thixo wemikhosi, imisebenzi yakho ingummangaliso. Wena umkhulu Bawo. (1970: 172)
>
> (Jehovah, God of hosts, wonderful are your works. You are the magnificent Father.)

Since setting also refers to artificial scenery in which the character in literature lives and moves, it may reflect the expressions of that character. Mbulelo has built a splendid Western style house for his new family. The house reflects his tastes and values in life. The fence surrounding it suggests the embracing of Western values as depicted by what is inside. In front of the house there is a variety of flowers with different colours and scents. Behind the house there are tall pines and gumtrees that create an atmosphere of solemnity around it. The tall trees grow towards the sun

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which is the source of all life. These trees, therefore, symbolise new life and hope for Mbulelo's family. The description of Mbulelo's house is reminiscent of Wellek and Warren's (op. cit.: 221) accurate observation when they aver:

> Setting is environment, and environments may be viewed as metonymic, or metaphoric expressions of character. A man's house is an extension of himself. Describe it and you have described him ... Setting may be the expression of a human will.

David has also built himself a house in the suburb of Butterworth, where he is also practising as a lawyer. David's entanglement in Western civilization is understandable; since his birth he has been exposed to and has grown up in an environment dominated by Western culture. His experience of traditional life is limited to his "acceptance ritual" by the Qoloza elders and the circumcision ceremony. David, therefore, cannot build his house in the rural areas like his father.

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For Zuzekile, though a qualified teacher, education has failed to cleanse his pride, cruelty and cunning ways. He ends his turbulent life in the sea of which Qangule (1974: 112) postulates:

> River and sea water may be associated with impurity or with the unconscious.

The restless sea water is symbolised by Zuzekile's relentless rage against Mbulelo and anyone closely associated with him. His failure in life might be associated with the disrespect and disobedience he displayed towards the wishes of his father who wanted him to be either a motor mechanic or a policeman, thus breaking the fifth commandment.[9]

2.2 Alitshoni Lingenandaba (1979).

The setting in Alitshoni Lingenandaba is almost entirely in East London and rarely in rural areas. Such places as Ziphunzana, kwaNdokwenza, Tsolo in Duncan Village, Springbok Cinema and Frere Hospital in town are referred to frequently in this novel. Even when the characters have to leave East London, the duration is short and they come back to East London and its immediate townships. It should be noted that the description of the setting

of rural areas is either directly given by the author, indirectly portrayed, or implied as hearsay from a character.

Though the setting of this novel is in East London township, the main participating characters originally come from the remote villages that are well established, rustic and least affected by the advent of White man's culture and its trappings. Dora Nonzwakazi Somlilo's father is from Zeleni village in the King William's town district; Sidwell Thamsanqa Gebe originally comes from Dyamala village near Alice; Rubin Mthuthuzeli Mdaka's home is in Ncambele in Umtata district; Vuyisile Wellington Mbuya comes from Engcobo near Clarkbury Institution; Nomathamsanqa Gwebi is from Tembuland outside Umtata. The fact that these characters have English names preceding the Xhosa ones, except Vuyisile and Nomathamsanqa as indicated in the novel, subtly suggests the close relationship between character and environment and the unquestioning acceptance of Western culture.

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Bongela makes all these characters converge in the East London township; Dora comes to East London and works in a pine factory at Gately Township in West Bank; on arriving in East London Sidwell, commonly known as Mqwathi, works as a petrol attendant and later as a motor mechanic; Rubin initially works as a tea salesman, but later gets a job as a clerk at Orient Beach Fishing Depot in East London; because of the low salary he earns as a teller in Ngcobo bank, Vuyisile applies and gets a better paying job at the Orient Beach Fishing Depot; Nomathamsanqa nurses at Frere Hospital in East London. All these characters move into a new and foreign Western world and either forsake or break ties with their own culture and traditions, and in the process, adapt to and adopt township life in order to survive. From now onwards there is little or no contact at all between these characters and their rural background. Perhaps one way of viewing this almost total assimilation of Western culture in proper perspective is through Chimombo's eyes (op. cit.: 39). He observes:

> Western economy has captured the African imagination to a point where rural life is no longer desirable or sufficient or valid for personal relations.

Apparently like all African traditional values, Xhosa values are gradually being eroded as they rub shoulders with Western values, shedding those that seem to be misfits in the Western world.

Vuyisile holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Fort Hare while Rubin has only passed matric at Healdtown Institution. At the Orient Beach Fishing Depot, Vuyisile occupies a more senior post than Rubin, who no longer enjoys respect and recognition as the most educated African in the whole firm. Rubin's lower educational level earns him less money and consequently he steals the firm's money. As an enlightened man he has some needs he would like to fulfil. Unlike Mqwathi, who runs shebeen as an additional source of income, the salary he earns does not meet his needs. It is this insufficient income that has forced Rubin to establish friendship with the thugs who assist him in selling stolen goods from the Fishing Depot. Since he does not fully trust the thugs, he acquires a firearm illegally to protect himself.

During 1971 when Alitshoni Lingenandaba was first published, apartheid was at its height. There were no formal places of entertainment for Africans in townships. They were allowed to use White facilities in town only under certain conditions, which is why in Alitshoni Lingenandaba Mqwathi's shebeen is a hive of activity especially during evenings. Bongela presents this shebeen as follows:

> Kulaa lokishi yakuTsolo kube kukho enye yezi shibhini ebibaluleke kakhulu. Ube unokuthi xa ufikile, umangaliswe kukubona ubuhle obulapho obenziwa yifenishala yodidi oluphambili kwakunye nomculo ophuma kwingxukuma kanomathotholo. Xa ubukele ukuqhutywa kweshishini eli, ubunokuphawula ukuba kukho, ngaphandle komninilo lo, intokazi ebiyincutshe ekulenzeni likhawuleze lingenise imali. (1979: 10)
>
> (In that Tsolo township there is one very important shebeen. When arriving you will be surprised by the decorative effect of the first class furniture there, and the music produced by a huge radio. When you observe the way the business is run, not only by the owner, you will see that there is a lady skilled in making the business make money more quickly.)

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This passage presents a vivid picture of a modern era setting. The main three aspects constituting setting, viz. locale, historical time and social circumstances, abound in the passage. Townships are found in urban areas. Tsolo was the name of a township outside East London, which was demolished during the early eighties. There is no free drinking of liquor or sorghum beer in the townships as sometimes is the case in rural areas. Township people are business-minded, they sell more or less everything in order to survive. In this particular shebeen liquor is in abundance. The owner, Mqwathi, has enlarged the sitting-room of his house and decorated it with modern expensive furniture. During the day the sitting-room is used for its real purpose but in the evening the furniture is shifted against the walls to open a space for customers to dance in the middle, so that they may remain for longer periods in Mqwathi's house and continue buying liquor. There is also a huge radio to produce music for the customers to dance to. To complete the entertainment and alluring of customers, Mqwathi has employed a very beautiful woman to dance with them. Consequently more and more customers are frequenting Mqwathi's shebeen, named kwaNdokwenza. One of the constant visitors to Mqwathi's shebeen is Rubin, who apparently is not only interested in beer but is visiting his girlfriend, Dora. Naturally, all businessmen become suspicious, bitter and angry when one customer receives more attention than the others. So it is with Mqwathi. Barnett (1985: 113) proclaims clearly about such situations:

> (it) is the tragedy of the black man in a changing society, and not the tragedy of one particular man. The plot of a black man coming to the city and succumbing to its evil ways has been repeated ad nauseam since then ....[10]

Like any moneyed, but half-educated township bully, Mqwathi attempts to discourage Dora from showering special favours on Rubin. Unfortunately he earns the wrath of Dora especially that he disappointed her in marriage. Mqwathi is forced by circumstances onto Nomathamsanqa while he is in love with Dora at the same time. Dora is so outraged that she feels she cannot forgive Mqwathi for the disappointment. She becomes vicious and vindictive. Women in the township are generally so daring and they confront and fight men. Township life has influenced Dora to stand her ground against Mqwathi.

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Bongela also uses setting to delineate his characters. By moving them from rural areas to urban areas he reveals more of their changing personalities. The environment of the township has played a significant role in changing Dora's behaviour as Wellek and Warren (op. cit.: 221) corroborate:

> .... setting may be the massive determinant - environment viewed as physical or social causation, something over which the individual has little individual control.

In the township people do not go about carrying sticks or knobkieries. When fighting they use any object at their disposal. When Dora is fighting against Mqwathi the author comments:

> Ivuke nesihlangu esibukhali, yakhelela ingabuzanga. Uthe eqabuka uMqwathi wabe selebomvu kuba ibimxhofoza ubuso obu. (1979:14)
>
> (She brings up a sharp-heeled shoe and attacks viciously. When Mqwathi comes to his senses, he is red (with blood) because she is stabbing his face.)

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Mqwathi is so embarrassed and furious that he hires thugs to kill Dora. As the thugs break down the door of Dora's room, she throws boiling water on them and repeatedly beats then with an iron rod.[11]

During the time of racist laws Africans were not licensed to own fire-arms and consequently they obtained them illegally. As a businessman Mqwathi possesses a fire-arm and bullets without a licence. Mqwathi has truly acquired the township manners. When quarrelling with his girlfriend, Nomathamsanqa, Mqwathi has no qualms about using it:

> Ngokungabinakunyamezela, uMqwathi ucinge icebo lokuba makarhole umpu esingxotyeni amothuse ngawo .... (1979: 77)
>
> (Unable to endure (pains) Mqwathi thought of bringing out a gun from the pocket to frighten her ....)

A traditional man uses a stick to discipline a woman, a weapon that is always convenient to use. Feeling insecure at the work place Vuyisile acquires an unlicensed gun. Township thugs are afraid more of a gun than a stick. Besides, a gun is easier to carry and hide than a knobkierie. Bongela remarks about Rubin when he sees Vuyisile's gun:

> Wothuke uRubin wangcangcazela edliwa nasisazela ... Uye waqiniseka ukuba ngumpu awunikwe apha kweli ziko kuba ebengekhe eze nawo angawufihli. (1979:107)
>
> (Shocked and trembling Rubin was also pricked by conscience. he was certain that the gun was given to Vuyisile by the firm because he could not bring it along without hiding it.)

Hitherto it is still a criminal offence to possess a fire-arm without a licence, though in the townships nowadays it is not impossible to obtain one illegally. When Vuyisile comes along to fetch the firm's money from Rubin, the latter is armed with a gun and threatens to shoot. The author states:

> Kwangoko uxhume wema ngeenyawo wafaka umpu wakhe esingxotyeni. (1979: 161)
>
> (He jumps up at once and puts the gun in the pocket.)

The gun is a weapon of Western origin. When used it is mostly fatal. Though they are Africans originally coming from rural areas, the characters are using this deadly weapon to protect themselves. The possession of a gun subtly suggests how far they have shifted from using their traditional weapons to Western ones.

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Among the principal characters of Alitshoni Lingenandaba, Thamsanqa Gebe is the only one called by his clan-name, Mqwathi. By this device the author subtly implies that he is incompletely Westernized. He is at the hubble-bubble of cross-roads as far as Western civilization is concerned. This fact is alluded to in his little education, the type of job he holds, the illegal ways of getting money, the two women he is simultaneously in love with especially in the same area and the manner he adopts in disciplining his girlfriends. It is a common practice among the illiterate, traditional men to have more than one girlfriend, hence the word "udlalani" or "irheletya" (a compulsive womanizer or lascivious man). In fact it is an honour to them to be called "udlalani:. The setting here projects the morals and values of Mqwathi since his arrival in East London.

Since all the main characters in Alitshoni Lingenandaba reside in townships adjacent to East London, they use vehicles as a means of transport. Vuyisile drives his car when visiting Rubin at his place. Though there is a thunderstorm and it is very dark in the streets of Duncan Village, he does

not give a lift to any of the people in the streets. He does not trust them especially at this time of the night. The author articulates his driving skills as follows:

> Zona iinqwelo-mafutha azikhange zime ngenxa yesi sichotho. Bekuvakala kuphela isandi sokutyibilika kwamavili endleleni ... Phakathi kweemoto ezibe zihamba kulo mgaqo, kube kukho nomnyobo olubhelu obe uphinyela ngamendu nakubeni izulu libe linje. (1979:1-2)
>
> (The cars did not stop because of the thunderstorm. Only the sound of slipping tyres was audible... Among these cars on this road, was a yellow one that was negotiating the curves with ease despite the weather.)

Rubin visits Simphiwe, his friend, driving a car in the evening. The intention of the visit is to borrow some money from him. The writer presents the visit as follows:

> Ngokuhlwanje, uSimphiwe .... waphazanyiswa kukuvungama kwemoto phambi kwendlu yakhe. (1979: 26)
>
> (That evening, Simphiwe ... was disturbed by the rumbling of a car in front of his house.)

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After shooting Vuyisile, Rubin transport the injured and unconscious Vuyisile to sea in the latter's car. Dora follows in Rubin's. They intend dumping Vuyisile's car along the beach between Fort Glamorgan Prison and the Airport. Along the beach they are disturbed by another and they flee in theirs to the north.

The car, as a mode of transport from the West, plays an important role in this novel. Vuyisile travels by car to Rubin's place; Rubin goes to Umtata by car, Mqwathi also goes to Umtata by car; Dora and Rubin flee from the scene of crime by car; Dora dies in a car accident near Hennenman.

2.3 Kusa Kusihlwa (1984)

In Kusa Kusihlwa the setting depicting Western civilization is dominant. Mpumelelo is a student of Blytshwood Institution, an educational centre that promotes Western values. Boys are engaged in sport such as rugby and boxing among others. Time is strictly observed. Whenever the bell rings all

students must respond to it promptly. All male students sleep in their own rooms and are under the care of the Boarding Master, who is in loco parentis to all.

Cars are used as a means of transport. The injured Mpumelelo is transported in an ambulance from school to Gcuwa Hospital, where he is treated by medical doctors. Since he is critically injured, Mpumelelo is transferred to Groote Schuur by aeroplane.

People in Kusa Kusihlwa no longer depend on ploughing their fields and looking after their livestock. Lungile works at Brian Firm as a clerk. In this firm they are manufacturing clothes. Later he works as an insurance salesman in Durban. Nomakhwezi works as a nurse at King Edward VIII Hospital also in Durban. Thamsanqa works at a garage as a petrol attendant.

Some of the people in the township of Umlazi have no steady employment. They resort to thuggery and stealing in order to survive. Besides robbing other people, they are hired to kill those who are not wanted in the township. Nozililo hires them to burn down Lungile's shop, and later to kill Mpumelelo. Unlike in rural areas, in urban areas such criminals are always available, on hire, to do the dirty work of others.

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Despite the dominant Western culture in this novel, the author relates some events portraying traditionalism. Although Thamsanqa lives and works in Durban he still observes rituals and customs. Showing their reverence to the ancestors, Thamsanqa and the other members of the family are arranging a mini feast as follows:

> Eneneni akukhange kwenziwe ngxikela yatheko, koko kuwiswe ibhokhwe kwangxengxezwa kumawabo kubulelwa nokusindiswa komntwana, ngeentetho eziphuma kumagqala asemaJwarheni. Kubuywe kwathenjiswa ukuba ilizwi nesikhalo sabo asilityalwanga sobuya sisatyelwe lakufika ithuba. (1984: 69)
>
> (In reality they did not hold a big feast, a goat was slaughtered to propitiate the ancestors and thank them for saving the child (Mpumelelo), by speeches from Jwarha elders. They further promised to consider their command and grievance in due course.)

The amaXhosa when propitiating the ancestors, slaughter, in most cases, a white goat. Otherwise without the spilling of blood and the brewing of sorghum beer there is no appeasement and the ancestors are considered to be angry and reject whatever is being offered as token of sacrifice.

2.4 The Silent People (1983)

In The Silent People the author portrays the traditional setting but modernism and Western civilisation are making great strides to dominate traditionalism.

In the prologue the writer introduces his setting as the place called Mission and

> No-one had bothered to give a vernacular name to this area .... (1983: 1)

This is an indication that Western civilisation is creeping through. Around the Mission there are two schools built, Davis and Lamplough, and a church known as Ayliff Church. These two institutions, school and church, are the torch-bearers of modernism and Western civilisation. By sending their children to these institutions, the traditionalists are subtly accepting the norms and values that are being propagated there.

Apparently Lindile has sent his son, Rufus, to acquire knowledge from these centres because he is a qualified carpenter. He could not have learned this skill in the traditional schools and be employed in the town of Butterworth. It seems Lindile himself is gradually neglecting traditionalism at the expense of modernism by naming his son Rufus and no African name. It is improper therefore that the Miya elders should reject Margaret, a teacher by profession, to be married by their son, Rufus.

As people who have acquired Western education, Rufus and Margaret should have been allowed after getting married to live their own life in their own house the way they like, free from the strings of traditionalism.

When they demand the observance of mbeleko ritual for Silo accompanied by the slaughtering of a white goat and brewing of mqombothi (beer), Margaret rebels and leaves with her son for her parents' home.

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The traditionalists feel not only defied but insulted by a mendi. They feel that their ancestors are not pleased and the future of the whole family is bleak.

While Andile is being educated in Lamplough Secondary School and at Fort Hare University, Silo is working in the Rand mines. When dismissed from there, he becomes a thug in the East Rand townships, where he learns to steal in order to survive, to kill or be killed. The author describes him as

> .... a tough and muscular young man, his head and face marked by knife scars. (1983: 63)

In the East Rand township Silo uses either a knife or a gun to kill his victims, who in most cases are professional people and businessmen. Together with other thugs they use fast cars to transport their dagga bags, and to escape arrest by the police.

Andile becomes a qualified teacher. After teaching for some time, he joins a firm of accountants and auditors in Umtata, and progresses in life, adopting Western style of life.

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Rufus, though a qualified carpenter, and thus an educated man, does not divorce Margaret for deserting him. Instead, as though he was uneducated, he marries Eunice by custormary law. As Margret returns she has prior claim to all the property belonging to Rufus because she is still legally his wife. Since the traditionalists do not understand Western culture, many oppose Margaret's return because of her former bad behaviour and for deserting them. Still, they apply traditional custom before forgiving Margaret and accepting her back. She must first apologise in public to her in-laws and pay a young beast to them as sign of reconciliation.

As an educated man Andile marries according to Christian rites in church. The bride is wearing a white silk gown, and is accompanied by six smartly dressed bridesmaids. The cameramen have a busy day taking photos and the press men are fully occupied with interviews.

For Silo to be accepted back by the Miyas he must first be circumcised. Thereafter a goat is slaughtered as an offering to the ancestors on Silo's behalf.

2.5 SUMMARY

The setting in Bongela's novels is dominated by Western culture. The main characters receive their education in schools established by the Missionaries from the West. Christianity is the only form of religion recognised in these educational centres.

Education is structured and formal, offered by people who are specially trained for the job. The education from these centres has gradually replaced the traditional values. The writer, however, preaches the idea of preserving our culture and traditions that are still of value. By projecting the good points of Western education, apparently he advises his fellow Africans to accept with open arms what is good and useful from the West, mix it with what are considered good African norms and values and produce something new and useful and beneficial to people in Africa.

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2.6 NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Roberts (1983: 126) argues convincingly about the structure
   ... as the pattern of emotions in the literary work, and adds that
   .... the word structure is in fact metaphor implying that a work of literature both topically and emotionally, is as connected as a building - a structure.

2. Knott (1977: 79) commenting on the importance of locale, as he prefers to call setting, says it is described whenever it is important to the story that is told ... Descriptions of locale are not just stuck anywhere in the novel or story to impress the reader ... locale performs an important role in giving the background of a place where people find themselves acting out the drama.

3. Reader and Woods (1987: 43) express clearly that it is important to remember that 'time' in a novel can refer to the time of day, year or period in history.

4. Hawthorn (1986: 60) goes on to advise budding authors that a setting in the historical past can often help an author to avoid contemporary issues, for instance culture, about which he or she feels confused or uneasy.

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5. Abrams (1993: 161) states explicitly that the structural beginning ... need not be the initial stage of action that is brought gradually to a climax in the narrative ... it should plunge in medias res, that is at the point of the climax itself, and the writer captures the reader's attention in the opening scene.

6. In an interview with K.S. Bongela during the Xhosa Language Board meeting on 26.03.92 in Grahamstown, he says the reason for choosing Butterworth as the setting for most of his novels is because he is familiar with every nook and cranny of this area. He was born and bred in Bawa village, a few kilometres outside the town of Butterworth. He is also knowledgeable about East London and the then Ziphunzana township, as he used to visit it whilst a student at Lovedale College and later at Fort Hare University.

7. Kunene (1968: 19) continues to expound how one culture dominates another by
   a) questioning its validity as a culture,
   b) denigrating it utterly,
   c) making its carriers objects of ridicule, mockery and scorn and thus
   d) leading finally to the questioning thereof by the very people whom it has nurtured and given an identity and a positive being.

8. It is a revelation to both Mbulelo and David. The Reader's Digest Reverse Dictionary (1989: 723) defines revelation as a disclosure of surprising or important information that might never otherwise have become known.

9. The Good News Bible (1983: 81) states clearly that children should respect their fathers and mothers so that they may live a long time in the land that God has given them.

10. Barnett (1985: 113) observes that "the plot of a black men coming to the city" has been rarely pursued by Black South Africans writing in English because it was no longer a situation which interested them. Later writers were brought up in the city. What the city had to offer was no longer a temptation to a Christian hero, but the amenities of a world of technology and culture which was closed to the black man. Fiction consequently took the form of protest against apartheid, a subject which lends itself to short fiction rather than to sustained writing. Since the situation was always one experienced by the writer himself, the longer works were autobiographical rather than fictitious.

11. Dora's approach to her imminent death is reminiscent of Barclay's (1971: 223-224) view that to approach anything in the spirit of hopelessness is to make it hopeless. To approach anything in the spirit of faith and hope is to make it a possibility.

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CHAPTER THREE

3. PLOT CONSTRUCTION

A close scrutiny of Bongela's four novels under investigation here makes one aware of more or less fixed structural patterns, especially pertaining to his introductory narrative techniques. This sub-section deals with the plot constructions of the four novels under review. Any good novel must have a plot, otherwise it is no novel at all. Lerner (1956: 136) concurs with this notion when he says:

> ... a good novel is good by virtue of more interesting, more valuable things: characterization, plot, culture or atmosphere.

The plot is not the same as a story though usually the two are often mistakenly used synonymously. A story basically comprises a sequence of events happening one after another. The plot is that particular pattern which is adopted for chronological events that are held together by showing the cause(s) that connect them. Hence Forster (1949: 82) says,

> Plot is also a narrative of events (but) the emphasis falling on causuality.

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Forster asserts that in a plot we must always ask the question 'why?', whereas in an ordinary story we ask 'and then?'. The emphasis here is on the time sequence.[1]

Some critics furnish more information when defining plot. Knott (1979: 39) defines it as

> a series of connected incidents - all filled with tension and conflict that describes the parth your lead character takes in his search for a way out of his difficulty.

Knott emphasises the significance of 'connected incidents' that must be 'filled with tension and conflict' so as to make the story interesting and the reader catches his breath. Furthermore the 'leading character' should be shown grappling actively with the problem(s) confronting him, and must not give in until he attains his goal. If he gives in, a super force must be shown that has made him do so. A meek and passive main character debases the importance of the plot and the novel generally. Abrams (1981: 137) adds another concept that:

> The plot in a dramatic or narrative work is the structure of its actions, as these are ordered and rendered towards achieving particular emotional and artistic effect.

From the definition given above apparently plot and structure seem to be synonymously used. Msimang (op. cit.: 39) obviously concurs with the view expressed by Abrams as he declares that:

> Indeed many critics view plot as structure. However it has become conventional to speak of structure of the novel as its plot. For the same reason the structure of the poem is known as its form.[2]

Ngcongwane (op. cit.: 32) citing Schoonees on the other hand says a simple plot is composed of

i) Daar word iets gedoen,
ii) deur iemand,
iii) onder sekere onstandighede,
iv) daar word taal gebruik, en gevolglik
v) is daar vertelling, 'n mededeling, 'n bepaalde boodskap.

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(i) There is something done,
ii) by somebody,
iii) under certain circumstances,
iv) there is use of language, and consequently
v) there is narration, communication, a definite message.)

Like Ngcongwane, Msimang (op. cit. :40) is of the opinion that plot has three main facets. He enumerates them thus:

> .... the beginning, the middle and the ending. Conventionally the beginning and ending are known as exposition and dénouement (or resolution) respectively. The middle is sometimes referred to as the body. This is the main part of the plot and it has its many aspects as well. These include conflict, complication, tension, suspences, crises and climax.[3]

From the quotations of the two critics, Ngcongwane and Msimang, it is deduced that plot furnishes a structure, thereby organizing the novel. It is observed that in a plot there must be

i) lively language and action,
ii) person(s) that bring about action,
iii) problem(s) that will present great difficulty in solving,
iv) arousing of tension when an attempt is made to solve the problem,

v) efforts to resolve the problem must be challenged or thwarted by other person(s) or by some natural element,

vi) action(s) and language of person(s) involved must be carefully chosen and employed in order to lead to suspense.

It should, however, be realized that plot is not an isolated element and cannot be nibbled off and treated separately from the rest of the novel. What happens in a novel or is narrated by the author is composed of events and characters who act and re-act to certain stimuli prevailing in their immediate environment. The best way to think of plot is but as the way of a story, characterization, dialogue and atmosphere put together to form a whole. The success and greatness of any novel is largely due to the interdependence of plot and character. Furthermore the novelist deliberately constructs plots in an unchronological manner so as to draw the attention of the reader to certain aspects which might otherwise elude his observation, with the purpose of deliberately producing a certain effect on the reader. (vide Hawthorn 1989: 53-54; Msimang 1986: 40; Lerner 1956: 143).

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From the outset Bongela engages the reader's sympathetic anxiety and thus captures the reader's attention by setting puzzles, erecting stumbling blocks and creating mysteries that must be solved. He succeeds in presenting the main characters in his novels in problematic situations. The novelist has, however, presented the stories in his novels in an unchronological order. He retains coherence of the strory in his novels by what Forster points out as causality as a significant aspect. He either begins his novels in the middle or in crisis situations and gradually reverts to the original cause of the present predicament. Lerner (op. cit.:113) notes such a style thus,

> .... the audience know everything, the characters nothing. Then he has step by step, reveals the past: producing powerful emotional effects from each new revelation.[4]

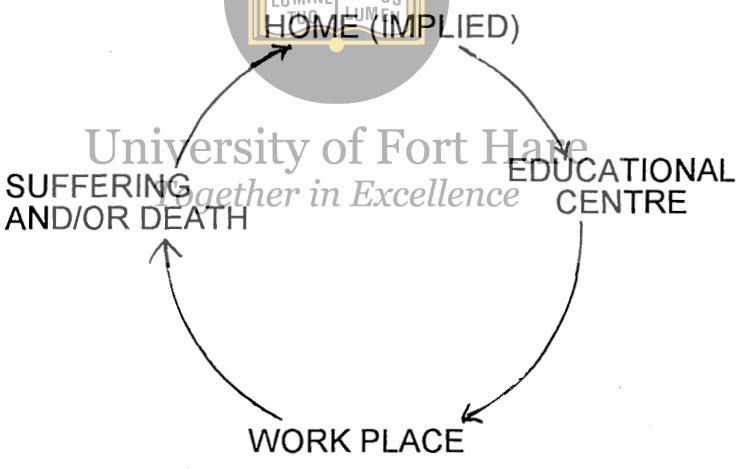
It is noted that Bongela follows a striking technique in the construction of his plot, specifically the cycling nature of the plot in the four novels under discussion. By cyclic nature of the plot is meant in the words of Satyo (1979: viii):

> ... the movement of the key character(s) in the story from a familiar or home environment to a strange (hostile) one and then back again to the original one.

Apparently Bongela has not merely followed the cyclic nature muddle-headedly - there must be a reson for this technique. Satyo, ibid., provides satisfactory answers when he avers that:

> The familiar environment with one's home moulds a person so that he can face the harsh world more easily. The strange environment tests a person's ability to face the world in the light of what he has learnt. The return to one's place of origin often shows whether the person has succeeded in acquitting himself (well) in the world or not. There is commonly a reward for the one who has succeeded and punishment for the one who has failed.

If the stories are followed in chronological order in Bongela's novels, the plots may be presented in a circular sketch as follows:



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According to the sketch above it is assumed that everybody is born with a HOME, be it an amorphous plastic shack or a facebrick mansion. The home is placed at the top because that is where the life of an individual begins, where one is initially 'moulded to face the harsh world'. The word 'implied' placed in brackets is purposefully used because Bongela deliberately starts his novel either in a crisis or in the middle, but his narration completes the circle by ultimately linking with the crisis beginning. Moreover, not all of his novels start at home: for instance, though Umzi Omtsha and The Silent People start at home but unfold in crisis situations, Alitshoni Lingenandaba begins at the work place in Duncan Village and Kusa Kusihlwa starts at school in Blythswood Institute.

The arrow next points to EDUCATIONAL CENTRE. All the key characters in Bongela's novels have passed through centres of learning and acquired sufficient or insufficient education at one stage or another in their lives. Education, be it formal or informal, is an important weapon in a man's life, grooming him to survive in the 'harsh world', hence it immediatley follows HOME.

The third stage in the sketch is the WORK PLACE. After acquiring education or leaving school before sufficient education is gained, the characters seek employment in towns and cities. While they are at work, town life has either a positive or negative influence on the characters. 'The strange' and sometimes hostile 'environment tests the person's ability to face the world in the light of what he has learnt' either at home or at school; hence it follows as the third natural and appropriate stage.

The last stage in the diagram indicated by an arrow is SUFFERING AND/OR DEATH. This stage means that the key characters when facing the 'harsh world' adapt and acquit themselves well and succeed in their struggle to survive, or fail and thus flow with the stream of failures. If they succeed they are rewarded in one way or another; if they fail they are punished by imprisonment or death. In most of Bongela's novels the main characters escape punishment and/or death by going back home or to the familiar environment. This technique will be dealt with extensively later in the discussion under characterization.

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The arrows of the circle are pointing in one direction only, which is indicative of the lifespan that has no turning back as the proverbial wheel of nature. It goes on until it reaches its destination, subtly suggestive of the end of life, a permanent symbolic home either in hell or heaven and thereby the circle is completed.

In the critical evaluation of Bongela's four novels under review here the views of Msimang concerning the three facets of the plot, that is EXPOSITION, MIDDLE and DÉNOUEMENT will be adopted.

3.1 EXPOSITION OF THE PLOT

By exposition is meant the amount of significant background information given by the writer at the beginning of his plot so as to make the story understandable and interesting to the reader. Cuddon (1984: 233) however says about the exposition:

> At the beginning of his play the dramatist is often commited to giving a certain amount of essential information about the plot and the events which are to come. He may also have to give information about what has already happened.

Grace (1965: 239) on the other hand defines exposition as

> ... that part of a play in which characters are identified, and their relationship to one another established, so that the ensuing conflict can be understood.[5]

Though both critics refer to the exposition as being part of a play, it may also be applied to a novel since a novel also has a plot, characters, conflict and events.

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3.1.1 Umzi Omtsha (1970)

Umzi Omtsha is appropriately sub-divided into three sections corresponding to the three main facets of the plot enumerated by Msimang above. The exposition in Umzi Omtsha covers the whole of section one. It starts out in the court where David Qoloza, an illegitimate son of Nontando Qoloza, is accused of grievous bodily harm and the attempted murder of Mbulelo Cyril Nyasana, a Professor in the Department of Systematic Theology at Fort Hare University. As the case unfolds it is in fact divulged that the chickens have come home to roost in that Prof. Nyasana after all is no holy priest though he claims that:

> ... andikhumbuli ndingcungcuthekisa mphefumlo wommangalelwa, ndaye andizange ndibe nobudlelwane naye. (1970: 8)
>
> (... I do no remember tormenting the soul of the accused, neither have I ever had any relationship with him.)

The author has employed dramatic irony here where the audience and the accused know more than the accuser does. While still a student at the Fort

Hare University, Prof Nyasana had made Nontando pregnant and refused to acknowledge the pregnancy because he suspected her of being secretly in love with Zuzekile Mahlathi. The reader's curiosity is whetted, so that he will be keen to read on so as to know what happens next. This is a good technique by Bongela. Heese and Lawton (1988: 142) define dramatic irony as

> a situation in a play or novel in which the audience shares with the author knowledge of which one or more characters are ignorant.

On the other hand they (op. cit.: 123) comment thus about dramatic irony:

> a device whereby ironic incongruity is introduced into the very structure of the plot, by having spectators aware of elements in the situation of which one or more of the characters are ignorant.

Prof. Nyasana perceives the situation in a totally different and limited perspective whereas the accused and the reader see it in a double and less limited way. He is ignorant of the actual truth. Hitherto he is unaware that the accused is the son of the same Nontando whom he made pregnant. He does not realize that indeed he is the tormentor of David's soul whom he desires and strives to have convicted for grievous bodily harm and attempted murder. The truth of the situation is only revealed to Prof. Nyasana when the accused says about him:

> Lo mntu undimangalelayo namhlanje ngubawo ondizalayo. Ndinjenje nje ndilidlavu, ziimeko endazalelwa kuzo. Nomama usengozini yokuphelelwa okanye ukuphuncukana nobomi bakhe ngenxa yaḳhe! (1970: 9)
>
> (This person who is accusing me today is my biological father. Poor as I am, it is because of the conditions under which I was born. Even my mother is on the verge of losing her life because of him!)

In the exposition of Umzi Omtsha Bongela has succeeded in putting an interesting character, Prof. Nyasana, a qualified priest, in a complicated situation. The exposition, though not yet a conflict, generates interest as to why the son has to resort to violence against his father. The leading characters are subtly introduced and their relationship in the story are discernible. A glimpse of their personality make-up is portrayed. The reader

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is more curious to know how Prof. Nyasana will ultimately extricate himself from such a disgraceful predicament.

> You don't have a story unless you have some interesting person in trouble. The interesting the person is, and the more deadly the problem, the greater will be the excitement generated by the story. (vide Knott 1979: 31)

3.1.2 Alitshoni Lingenandaba (1979)

Gardner (1984: 186) comments thus on what is expected of a writer in the exposition of his novel:

> In his exposition the writer presents all that the reader will need to know about the character and situation, the potential to be "actualized".

The exposition in Alitshoni Lingenandaba is limited to the first four chapters of the novel, which supply the background information pertaining to the main characters, conflict and setting. In these chapters the action is fast, dynamic and transient. The basic opening plot takes place in Duncan Village in East London. Bongela at once puts his leading characters in a problematic situation. The problem and the theme are both symbolically hinted at from the outset thus:

> It is a dark evening due to a bad thunderstorm accompanied by lightning. Vuyisile Wellington Mbuya is visiting Rubin Mthuthuzeli Mdaka about R4,000 that is missing. Unfortunately the money belongs to Orient Beach Fishing Depot. Mbuya threatens Rubin that he will report the theft to the firm and the police.

The "dark evening" symbolises the ignorance of one party (Mbuya) about the underhand activities of another (Rubin) to trick and defeat him; "thunderstorm and lightning" foreshadow the severe clash that will follow between Mbuya and Rubin that may even lead to death, as lightning does to anything it strikes. It becomes obvious quite early that there is no love lost between these two men and from their speeches one gathers that they are rapidly heading for bitter confrontation. From the outset, therefore, the conflict is portrayed as existing between them. The reader's curiosity is

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kindled so that he reads on to find out what will happen to them next, the more so because Rubin, though a villain, is portrayed as a dynamic character. On the other hand Mbuya is revealed as a frank, insightful and straightforward character who will not easily give in to an unscrupulous opponent. Among other things he says to Rubin:

> Andikho mva kwakho; koko ndinqanda ukuba ungemki nemali le yabeLungu ... Akwazi ukuba ngenxa yokuba sisezincwadini sobabini siza kubanjwa? Ukuba ufuna ukubanjwa, mna ke andifuni. (1979: 7)
>
> (I am not harrowing you; but I am stopping you from leaving with White man's money ... Don't you know that since we are both bookkeepers we will be arrested? If you want to be arrested I do not want to.)

Rubin is shocked when told by Mbuya that the auditors will be visiting their firm soon. For the moment he appears to co-operate with Mbuya. The latter, however, is not convinced or deceived by Rubin's sudden change of heart to deference as he says:

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> .... ndakuboleka ama-50 amarandi akwawabuyisa kude kube yile yure. Kaloku uthi wakuncedwa usuke umntu umbone ubudenge ngenxa yale ntokazi ikuphange ingqondo, le ikubeke kule ngxaki ukuyo namhlanje. (1979: 8)
>
> (... I lent you R50 which you have never repaid me until this hour. Then when you are helped you think the other person is stupid because of this woman who has robbed you of your mind, that has landed you in the problem you are in today.)

In this passage above Bongela has skilfully made the readers aware that Rubin is unreliable and does not keep a promise, and his conscience does not prick him; he is dominated by a woman and it is due to this woman's influence that he is in a mess. A man ruled by a woman cannot be trusted to keep promises made by men alone. A vigilant reader will be keen to know who this woman is who seems to manipulate Rubin like a puppet on strings. Are they married? If not, why is she controlling Rubin? Bongela has skilfully created a fertile ground for conflict that will ensue between Mbuya and Rubin.

Chapter two focuses more on the woman who henpecks Rubin. She is Dora Nonzwakazi Somlilo, the beauty queen of East London, who easily charms

any man who crosses her path. Below this beautiful appearance, however, lies an iron will-power that is as deadly as a snake. When her mind is set and firmly entrenched on an issue, she tolerates no opposition. She stands her ground and defies Mqwathi, her employer, when ordered not to dance with Rubin, her boyfriend. The manner in which she attacks Mqwathi with her high-heeled shoe surprises the customers in the shebeen and the reader as well.

Later when Rubin tells her that, if he does not reimburse the firm's money, Mbuya will have no alternative but report him (Rubin) either to the manager or to the Police, she bursts out in anger saying:

> Lo Vuyisile ukuba ukhe waphinda wakufundekela, uze ukhanyele; ukuba uyakukhathaza siza kumbonela icebo. (1979:16)
>
> (If this Vuyisile bothers you again, deny any knowledge about the money; if he persists we shall contrive a plan for him). (My emphasis)

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Rubin is placed in a dilemma for he has already agreed to repay the firm's money before the auditors arrive. His mind apparently is very slow to understand Dora's intention about "contriving a plan". Dora says they must first besmirch Mbuya's reputation with the lost money because she has used all the money stolen by Rubin. If Rubin is arrested, Dora will lose the marriage she so desperately yearns for as a form of security in life. She becomes desperate and says as an alternative:

> ... xa kubonakala ukuba lo Vuyisile uluqilima kolu hambo lwethu makabonelwe icebo. Ndixolele nayiphi into ngekhe ndijibilike (1979: 19)
>
> (... if it seems this Vuyisile is a barrier to our journey a plan should be devised for him. I am ready for anything, I am not changing my mind.) (My emphasis)

She takes over the planning of Mbuya's downfall and orders Rubin to listen very carefully as she clearly states that

> Nanjengokuba sesenje nje, akukho ukurhoxa mfo kaMdaka, kufayayo. Njengokuba lo mfo kubonakala ukuba ulinqwanqwa elixabe endleleni yethu, kuyimfuneko ukuba makagawulwe. Inye ke into efunekayo sisibindi. (1979: 19)

> (As we have planned so far there is no turning Mdaka's son, only the brave die. As this man seems to be a restraint barring our path, it is necessary that he should be eliminated. Only one thing is required, that is bravery.)
> (My emphasis)

If Rubin succumbed to pressure and the fear of being arrested as he appears to do, the conflict would automatically fade away and consequently there would be no plot. Bongela has artfully introduced Dora as a strong supporter of Rubin against Mbuya, who hitherto has no supporter except the truth on his side. Besides, unlike Rubin, Mbuya wants to earn money honestly and to live peacefully. Rubin has stolen the firm's money in order to impress and thus win Dora's love; Dora wants comfort and security through marrying Rubin. As a fast thinker she does not groan over the dilemma confronting them. Qangule (op. cit.: 87) concurs with this view above when he says:

> Characters who have no enduring courage, who cannot think fast and act fast are not ideal for the creation of a conflict.

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The underlined phrases are an indication of Dora's progressing wrath culminating in the decision of killing Mbuya without any qualms. Rubin is shocked and mentally numbed by Dora's cool-headedness and ease with which she plots Mbuya's death is horrifying and sickening to any normal being. Like Rubin, the reader is appalled and recoil at her callousness, remorselessness and insensitivity towards another human being - a female who is commonly and traditionally considered to be soft-hearted, motherly and physically weak depicts contradictory behaviour. This scanty projection on Dora's personality is a foreshadowing of her future life. From the outset the readers are made aware that this change of natural role (of man and woman) will definitely lead either to a cul-de-sac or to disaster. The reader's curiosity is aroused to know more about this woman known as Dora and to find out whether she will really execute her plot.

Western civilization, with its culture, norms and tastes, has adversely affected the African and his own culture and he finds himself at the cross-roads, as is depicted in Dora. Condemning the aggressive attempts of females to control money, Mkonto (1988: 111) declares:

> The administration of money forms another delicate issue that threatens the dignity of the head of the family. It is a truism that money is the source of every evil. Women, the victims, are even attempting to seize control of every financial issue.

Rubin, though he tries as much as he can to get money in order to repay the firm, fails dismally. The only alternative still possible is to put Dora's plan into practice, that is to eliminate Mbuya, the only one aware that Rubin has stolen money and capable of reporting him to the authorities. Bongela is commended for his skill of putting his main characters in a predicament where escape will definitely lead to another problem. The stage is set for confrontation between Mbuya and Rubin. This is good art.

By beginning Alitshoni Lingenandaba in the middle of a morass, Bongela has avoided the pitfall of boring the readers by filling in certain facts to drag and introduce the reader into his novel, with all that the reader "will need to know about the character, conflict and situation" as Gardner (1984:186) puts it. A sophisticated reader does not need such spoon-feeding. He rather feels proud when he pieces together parts of the enigma and comes up with the correct answers. What the reader learns in the exposition of Alitshoni Lingenandaba is presented in a rapid and dramatic fashion and with less description. The author has succeeded in raising questions, suspicious and great expectations in the reader's mind. The mind is cast forward to later pages wondering what will come about and how.[6] Gardner (op. cit.: 55) concurs with the above view when he comments:

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> Because he is intellectually and emotionally involved, i.e. interested, the reader is led by successive seemingly inevitable steps, with no false steps, and no necessary steps missing, from an unstable initial situation to a relatively stable outcome.

3.2.3 Kusa Kusihlwa (1984)

Though this novel opens with a picturesque description of nature, one suspects that this preamble might be the lull before a storm because on the second page the exposition leads the reader to "troubled waters". Msimang (op. cit.: 45) quoting Smiley comments on this type of exposition with reference to short melodrama,

> Frequently, short melodramas skip establishing a balanced situation at the opening and begin with a disturbance, usually as an acted crime, upsetting only implied order.

In the exposition, which consists only of the first three chapters, the reader is at once "intellectually and emotionally involved" in the story of the novel. There is something amiss with Mpumelelo Ntsibande, who is a student at Blythswood High School. He exhibits strange behaviour which is noticed by other male students. They are worried because Mpumelelo, an expert at scrumhalf position is missing rugby practices and moreover the rugby coach tells them that they should forget about Mpumelelo. He will not play rugby again. Discussing Mpumelelo's absence from the rugby practice, one student says, among other things.

> ... le nto kaNtsibande andiyiqondi ngathi inento yayo. Angathini umntu lo akuggiba ukuba yindoda isikhalo esi sibe lula apha kuye, nokothuka ibe yinto elula, loo nto idla ngokuthi kanti asiyompilo. (1984: 7)
>
> (... I don't understand the cause of this thing about Ntsibande. How can a person after being a man cry easily, and easily get frightened? That usually indicates poor health).

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The reader's curiosity is sustained and whetted when another student goes on to say about Mpumelelo's abnormal and bizarre behaviour,

> ... kokwam ukubona asimntu uliqharhaqharha lakuthetha kuba usoloko ekhangeleka ngokomntu onesizungu nomvandedwa. Nokuba sewuzama ukumncokolisa wophendula nje loo nto uyibuzayo, athule. Akulula ukumngcambazisa umntu ololo hlobo ngengulo yakhe. Ndingathi mna into ebalaseleyo phaya kuye yonke le mihla kukusoloko wakhala ebusuku xa elele, ngathi ngumntu lo omaphupha mabi. (1984: 7)
>
> (... as far as I notice he is not loquacious because he always appears lonely and apprehensive. Even when you try to converse with him, he will merely answer what you ask and keep quiet. It is not easy to probe such a person about his illness. What I can say is conspicuous about him is that he cries every evening in his sleep, as if he has nightmares.)

This students' conversation enlightens the reader about forthcoming problems. It also captures the reader's interest, creates a suspense which leads to the development of the plot. Besides this information from the

students, the author presents Mpumelelo as a brilliant student but his performance in languages is poor, especially when he has to write an essay or letter on a topic that involves fire. The author also removes all doubts about Mpumelelo's timidity and cowardice as suspected by other students. One student describes how Mpumelelo out-boxed Poni, a troublesome fellow in the campus, thus:

> Maan (sic Man) uyalitshova inqindi loo mfo. Yinto elwa ngobugcisa nangokuhomba ngathi ngumntu oliqeqeshelweyo inqindi. Akaloxelegu oku kukaPoni into esuke iphatyuze ngathi linxila lisilwa ebharini. Kuloo mlo uPoni walahlekelwa lizinyo kanye eli langaphambili lokuncuma. (1984: 9)
>
> (Man, that chap can jab. He fights skilfully and delightfully like somebody well trained in boxing. He is not reckless like Poni who throws ineffectual punches like a drunkard fighting in the bar. In that fight Poni lost the front smiling tooth.)

Through this dramatic exposition the reader is interested and lured to read on. The novelist is commended for his artistic beginning to keep the reader enthralled and active throughout the exposition. To some readers it might appear that Bongela has juxtaposed contraditory portrayals about the protagonist perhaps to show striking differences thus:

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> Mpumelelo is suspected of being timid but is a skilful boxer at the same time; he is a brilliant student but on the other hand performs badly when writing essays about fire.

To a vigilant reader this is a challenge to find out why the exposition opens in a state of disequilibrium. Msimang (op. cit.: 47) in supplying an answer writes,

> The state of equilibrium does not make a story. It is only when this state is upset that the story begins. People take the state of equilibrium for granted. They are never bothered about things that are running their normal course. It is only when the normal course has been disturbed that they begin to be concerned and with that the state of equilibrium be restored.

It would appear therefore that from Bongela's point of view, supported by Msimang above, a state of equilibrium is not suitable for the beginning of a

story. The authorities at Blythswood High School, however, fail to notice that Mpumelelo suffers from pyrophobia despite the fact that:

i) he is frightened easily by the Boarding Master's torch at night,
ii) he does not write essays and letters whose topics are about fire,
iii) he flees when the bioscope shows "The Great Fire of London",
iv) he flees when the veld nearby the school is on fire.

It is only when Mpumelelo is seriously injured and transferred to Groote Schuur that the authorities start to consider his illness seriously.

The novelist has succeeded in stimulating the curiosity of the readers to find out why Mpumelelo suffers from pyrophobia. Up to this point, however, the conflict is portrayed as being a psychological or an internal one. Mpumelelo has a problem within himself, he is wrestling to control or suppress the fear of fire that is ruining his life and nearly led to a fatal accident. At the end of the exposition the reader is left wondering whether Mpumelelo will be completely cured of serious head injuries and pyrophobia or will be a permanent wreck in life.

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3.1.4 The Silent People (1983)

The exposition in The Silent People comprises the first five chapters. Bongela, however, starts this novel by a prologue, an introduction which is part of the novel. As in Umzi Omtsha, in the exposition of The Silent People Bongela has employed a flashback technique, thus skilfully arousing the interest of the reader. According to Cuddon (op. cit.: 217) the term flashback

> ... is now also used to describe any scene or episode in a play, novel, short story or poem which is inserted to show events that happened at an ealier time.

The story of the plot starts in the middle of the events. Andile, the second son of Rufus Mendile, is getting married. If the author uses the phrase 'second son', a vigilant reader will logically be curious to know at once where the first son is. Since nothing has been said about him hitherto, one wonders whether he is dead or alive.

While the priest is solemnising the marriage ceremony, he is disturbed by a hoarse drunken voice hurling insults at the groom and his father. Attention is immediately focused on the approaching man ominously swinging an axe. Rufus confronts the stranger, who attacks him viciously with it. He is saved from certain death by the sudden intervention of the young men, who chase away the attacker. They would have perhaps caught the attacker had it not been that "a peal of thunder, a blinding flash of lightning" and a sudden heavy downpour sent everybody scurrying for shelter. Bongela thus ingeniously keeps the reader in suspense and anxiety with many questions unanswered. A vigilant and curious reader would like to know where the drunken attacker comes from. Why is he insulting Rufus and the marrying couple? Why is he attacking Rufus? Why does he threaten to kill Andile and his bride? He seems to harbour a grudge against all the villagers and is bent on killing their live stock. Why? The reaction of Mendile's immediate relatives to the uncalled for attack is not revealed. The above questions ought to keen cropping up now and again in the mind of a vigilant reader, who will attempt to find answers by probing through the pages of this novel.

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In the first five chapters of The Silent People, which constitute the exposition, the author attempts to answer the above questions. Prior to the attack, Lindile's relatives, the Miyas, have gathered at his place to consider the issue of their son, Rufus, marrying a Mathonti girl. All the Miyas, except Lindile, disapprove of the marriage. The reasons they advance are that:

i) the said woman's parents are separated, her parents failed to set an example;
ii) this would-be daughter-in-law is utterly spoiled by her mother;
iii) she is proud and ill-mannered;
iv) her mother is a witch. (vide 1983: 5-6)

Despite these reasons Lindile steamrolls the Miyas into allowing Rufus to marry Margaret Mathonti. A misunderstanding thus exists between Lindile and his relatives, the other Miyas refuse to be involved further in the marriage issue, and consequently the meeting breaks up unceremoniously. Pertaining to the involvement of the close relatives in the marriage of their son, Soga (1979: 62) comments thus,

> ... ibingabazali ababenyula iintombi zokuzekwa ngoonyana zibe ngoomolokazana kubo ... uyise ubecebisana nonyana wakhe; kanti noko kuya kuma ngelikayise kuzekwa nje.
>
> (... the parents chose daughters to be married by the sons and the daughters become daughters-in-law ... the father consults with the son; yet the father's word will be final as the marriage issue goes on.)

Lobola custom is not the selling of the daughter, the buying of a wife, perpetuation of slavery or the oppression of the weaker sex as it is misconstrued by some Westerners. It is one of the customs most revered by the Africans; it is a unifying bond amongst the educated and uneducated and enhances that pride of Africanism in them. The Xhosas in particular strongly believe that during the deliberations of lobola (dowry), the ancestors are present and involved in guiding the minds of the communes. Therefore during such deliberations peace, understanding, tolerance, and unanimity should prevail at all times failing which the marriage of the couple will lead to disaster.[7] Bongela creates supense by making the Miyas disapprove of the Mathonti woman and by the fact that the meeting breaks up "unceremoniously". Hinting at future events and subtly suggesting that this marriage will be a failure in the long run is a good technique.

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At first the marriage of Rufus and Margaret seems successful, but it is just the lull before a storm as Margaret starts ignoring the cultural demands of the Miyas in general and disobeys the instructions of her in-laws in particular. On a higher plane, the author creates a conflict between Margaret Mathonti and the Miyas. Her husband, Rufus, cannot be regarded as an opponent to her as a product of modern Western culture since now and then he yields to the demands of his wife. The different social settings from which the main contending parties come make it easy for the reader to understand that they will never toe the same line. The Miyas, who are conservative in outlook, will never tolerate a defiant daughter-in-law, a product of Western culture. Qangule (op. cit.:49) concurs with the above view when he says:

> The sharper the differences we are shown in the social backgrounds from which the characters emerge, the more fully we shall understand the differences in their personalities.[8]

Margaret argues vehemently with her in-laws,

> "because she has not been taught that it is taboo to do so in a traditional set-up" (Qangule, ibid.)

Gradually she defies the Miyas and erodes their culture and customs as follows:

a) She names their first born Silo, even though the naming of the child is the prerogative of the old, because the in-laws "behave like animals" she claims (1983: 7);

b) She refuses to help in the preparation of the mbeleko ritual for Silo, leaving with him to Mpenduza instead. Consequently the ceremony is a failure (1983: 10);

c) She demands her own house though the "custom demands that the eldest son stay at his father's home" (1983: 13);

d) She cuts her dress "so short that it no longer reaches the ankles," and "wears a wig instead of a traditional doek" (1983: 14);

e) She no longer observes the hlonipha vocabulary, "a custom meant to revere the ancestors and important people in the family" (1983: 15);

f) She spoils and pampers Silo to such and extent that he becomes talkative, bragging, naughty, lazy and temperamental (1983: 19).

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Rufus's family starts to crumble and disintegrate the day Silo bullies Andile to such an extent that they fight because the latter refuses to dig the portion allotted to Silo. On hearing that Silo has been beaten by his younger brother for laziness, Rufus wants to give him more punishment. As usual Margaret confronts her husband while Silo escapes and contracts himself to the gold mines in Johannesburg. The attitude of Margaret and her son, Silo, sustains the interest of the reader of The Silent People. With such uncooperative, uncompromising and unconscionable behaviour one wonders what the future holds for them. From here onwards the contending parties are clearly drawn, their stations in life, their desires and their supporters henceforth: Margaret and her son, Silo on one side versus the rest of Miyas on the other.

Bongela has succeeded in kindling the reader's curiosity from the outset by presenting the main characters in his novels at once, their status in life and their relationship to one another. Needless to say, for the reader to know these characters thoroughly, the seeds of conflict should also be shown

directly or indirectly, and the way in which they will develop. The characters themselves are influenced by their different social backgrounds to behave differently and the setting should be known as well. Indeed it would be a monotonous and an abnormal type of life if all the characters behave and acted in a similar fashion.

Bongela has expertly employed the setting of various characters that are suggestive of conflict from the outset,[9]

> since no conflict should exist without a foreshadowing of it.
> (Qangule, op. cit.: 10)

He arms his characters and makes them behave with above average skills acquired to enable them to confront one another. The exposition shows causes and the avenues in which the various conflicts of the novels will run and sets the ball rolling for other events to follow. In the exposition the author has skilfully allowed his reader a momentary look into the varied make-up of the personalities of diverse characters presented in their respective social backgrounds. (Qangule, op. cit.: 9)

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3.2 THE MIDDLE OF THE PLOT

The middle of the plot may fittingly be referred to as the body or the climax of the novel. The chain of events from the exposition have passed through proper stages, the rise and development, to the highest and the most significant point of the story. In the middle of the plot the conflicts "reach their moment of greatest concentration and tension" as Mphahlele (1989: 65) puts it.

3.2.1 Umzi Omtsha (1970)

The middle of the plot in Umzi Omtsha is correctly contained in Section 2 of this novel. In the body of the plot Bongela employs a montage or flashback technique. Cuddon (op. cit.: 127) explains flashback as

> A term which properly derives from cinema, and which is now also used to describe any scene or episode in a play, novel, short story or poem which is inserted to show events that happened at an earlier time. It is frequently used in mordern fiction.

Booth (1965: 191) concurs with the view forwarded by Cuddon above. In repudiating the traditional notions of the plot, that the events should happen chronologically in the story of a novel, he avers:

> To get a vivid impression of any strong character in fiction, you must not begin at the beginning and work his life chronologically to the end. You mus first get him in with a strong impression, and then work backwards and forwards over his past.

Because of the flashback technique employed by Bongela in Umzi Omtsha, the reader becomes more curious and interested to unravel the intricate mystery surrounding the life of Nontando and Mbulelo. Though Professor Nyasana refuses to acknowledge having made Nontando pregnant, there is no conflict existing between them, yet a conflict is part and parcel of a plot. Knott (op. cit.: 35) declares:

> ... without conflict the story or novel will simply not have the excitement in needs to produce continuing interest in the reader. The most elaborate plot in the world is useless without tension and excitement that conflict imparts to it.

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In defining conflict Blacker (1986: 4) says it is

> That which takes place when two or more forces come into opposition physically, mentally or emotionally.

There is no 'physical, mental or emotional' opposition existing between Nontando and Mbulelo. They are lovers and happy to be so. Rather there is a misunderstanding existing between them brought about by Zuzekile Mahlathi, who bears a grudge against Mbulelo. A conflict should emanate from a tangible reason and unbearable situation in order that a character might wish for a justifiable revenge that will be acceptable to the readers. The real conflict exists between Zuzekile and Mbulelo therefore. It appears, however, that the conflict, in Umzi Omtsha, is one-sided, weak, unfounded and irrational. The conflict must be an outgrowth of the character's problems. The charater's efforts to extricate himself from the problems or solve them should be forestalled by his opponent.

Zuzekile has landed himself in trouble by tampering with the Std 6 examination question papers before they are written by his pupils. When

Mbulelo refuses to be his witness in this case, Zuzekile develops an intense hatred against him and asserts that,

> "Uyabona, Mbulelo, ulunge unjalo mfan' akuthi; inkungu ilala kwiintaba ngeentaba. Sakuze sihlangane nokuba sekunini na," watsho efiphele. (1970: 64)
>
> ('You see, Mbulelo, you are right as you are my fellow; troubles visit anybody. We will meet no matter when', he said, so pale with anger.)

Zuzekile's anger and grudge against Mbulelo are unfounded, absurd and inappropriate. Mbulelo has merely refused to be implicated in a case he has no knowledge of. The intrigue employed here is arresting and is subtly aimed at not "physically, mentally and emotionally" opposing each other. Mbulelo is not shown actively engaged in opposing Zuzekile. Besides, it is doubtful whether he is aware that the latter continues plotting his downfall. Henceforth Zuzekile is shown by the author vigorously attempting to fulfil his avowed revenge whenever time is opportune yet Mbulelo is nowhere in the scene of battle.

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Zuzekile's hatred for Mbulelo is further strengthened when Nontando, Mbulelo's girlfriend, rejects outright his advances. Zuzekile decides to use Nontando in order to get to Mbulelo. Bongela therefore saves the conflict from flagging by making Nontando the battlefield of these two men, and this is reminiscent of the Nigerian proverb which says

> When two elephants fight it is the grass that suffers. (Sowetan 1992: 10, March 23

Some conflicts that exist in the world are caused inter alia by people who convince themselves first of all, whether right or wrong, and their supporters that what they are opposing or fighting is a wrong issue that cannot be tolerated and should thus be completely obliterated. Because of Zuzekile's machinations Nontando has to abandon teaching, her vocation, and flee to Johannesburg. Her life is made more miserable when Zuzekile discovers in Benoni that David is actually Mbulelo's son, and forces him to join a gang of thugs and learn thuggery. Zuzekile's psychopathic cruelty is further revealed when he says, on being sure that David is Mbulelo's son,

> Ukuba andiphazami ngumntwana kaMbulelo lo. Ke ukuba kuthe kanti nguye nyani, ndiza kumfumana lo mfo nenzala yakhe, akandazi, ma dadethu. (1970: 87)
>
> (If I am not mistaken this is Mbulelo's child. If it is indeed, I will get this fellow and his progeny, he does not know me, indeed.)

Bongela's conflict in Umzi Omtsha does not reach the climax because the main contending parties are not directly brought into confrontation and do not attack and counter-attack each other, yet a conflict lies at the bottom of the plot of any novel. Roberts (1983: 43) concurs with the view above when he says:

> The essence of plot is the existence of a conflict between opposing forces - human beings against themselves, against other human beings ... The conflict produces those actions and inter-actions that are resolved in a climax, in which one person, force, or idea wins out.

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In Umzi Omtsha David has done nothing wrong to deserve the wrath, abuse and ill-treatment meted out to him by Zuzekile, for the "sins" of the father whom he does not even know. Zuzekile always forces David to commit the most dangerous and serious crimes in the Vaal-triangle.

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Though Nontando is aware of Zuzekile's malicious intention towards her, she cannot and does not retaliate. She suffers silently as she notices how her son gradually becomes a hardened criminal through Zuzekile's bad influence. Mbulelo, the man on whom Zuzekile wants to take revenge, is indirectly affected; he has not seen David and is not staying with him, who is Zuzekile's victim. Evil plots concocted by Zuzekile against Mbulelo have long-term and various effects on the latter as follows:

a) Mbulelo suspects that Nontando is having a sectret love affair with Zuzekile. When she falls pregnant Mbulelo refuses to acknowledge the pregnancy. Nontando suffers.

b) Nontando, when pregnant, cannot face her parents and the community at home and remain in her post as an unmarried mother. She resigns her teaching post in Alice and flees to Johannesburg where she suffers various misfortunes.

c) Mbulelo, after graduating Bachelor of Theology, cannot be ordained as a qualified priest because of the pregnancy scandal and cannot marry Nontando since she has disappeared without trace. Mbulelo suffers.

d) David, as an illegitimate son brought up by his struggling mother, cannot get any education except thuggery. David suffers.

Nowhere in the novel is Mbulelo shown devising means to counter-attack or retaliate against Zuzekile to the extent of a physical clash yet Blacker (op. cit.: 14) avers

> The conflict must bring the antagonist and the protagonist together. These are the persons in conflict and they must resolve it in one way or another.

Bongela fails to bring the contending characters face to face in the climax of this novel. Besides, Mbulelo is not made aware that Zuzekile is keeping his word, be it indirectly, that

> Sakuze sihlangane nokuba sekunini na. (1970: 64)
> (We will meet no matter when),

and Zuzekile's effort to attain his goal that

> .... ndiza kumfumana lo mfo nenzala yakhe .... (1970: 87)
> (... I will get this fellow and his progeny ...)

are not challenged or thwarted by Mbulelo as expected. The opposing characters who physically come into contact are unevely matched, and there is no utilization of all the resources in them to create tension and interest, besides picturesque episode. Umzi Omtsha does not reach the climax.

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3.2.2 Alitshoni Lingenandaba (1979)

In the middle of the plot of Alitshoni Lingenandaba, Bongela provides more backrground information about Duncan Village township, other characters and their relationship in life, the conspicuous one being Thamsanqa Gebe, popularly known as Mqwathi, and his girlfriend, Dora Nonzwakazi Somlilo. The latter is a famous beauty queen of East London.

Hoping to be married by Mqwathi and thus to improve their standard of living, Dora advises him to establish and run an illegal shebeen in the location. Dora, unfortunately, is unaware that Mqwathi is secretly in love with a nurse named Nomathamsanqa Gwebi whom he makes pregnant and

is forced to marry. The plot becomes complicated when Dora discovers the secret marriage and the fact that she can no longer win Mqwathi as her husband. Angry and disappointed, Dora feels compelled to act and effect some change. Hence she falls in love with Rubin Mdaka, and is determined that she will make him marry her.

Bongela portrays Dora here as a stong-willed character buttressed by an excessive fear of failure experienced whilst still a scholar at Ncemerha. She had the ability to succeed in life then but external forces worked against her aspirations. It is clever of Bongela to put Dora in such a predicament, where the only exit is to make sure she marries Rubin. This time Dora is not prepared to lose Rubin as her husband, and in a way she will be revenging her deflated feminine pride on Mqwathi. Bongela describes her action thus,

> Bathe besaqala (ukuthandana), uDora wathanda ukuzitsala iintambo. Naxa yayingelonyanzelo ukuba uRubin athi ukuphuma kwakhe emsebenzini akhe aye kugqitha kuDora, wafana nokungathi unyanzelekile kuba wayesithi ukuba ikhe yaphela iveki engayenzanga loo nto ubone noko ukuba umoya wentokazi le awumhle. (1979: 129)
>
> (From the start [of their love affair] Dora tended to be strict. Though it was not a must that Rubin should visit Dora after work, it looked as if he had to because should a week pass by without his visiting her, it was noticeable that the woman was in a bad mood).

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Later Bongela goes on to say,

> Intombi kaSomlilo yona ibingathethi kakhulu, koko ibigcisile kuba icinga esezolo. (1979: 129)
>
> (Somlilo's daughter was not saying much, she was acting skilfully since she was thinking of the past.)

As a dynamic character, Dora looks back at her yesterday to determine the future and in order to avoid living the way she did in the past. The conflict thickens as she becomes at odds with conventional social values. The more she attempts to entangle Rubin the more the situation becomes problematic.

Rubin, on the other hand, in order to win Dora's love makes the mistake of pretending to be moneyed. In order to accomplish this trick he has to steal the money belonging to Orient Beach Fishing Depot. Dora misuses the money Rubin gives her, believing that Rubin is wealthy. When Rubin is confronted by Mbuya and told to return the firm's money, Dora is shocked to learn that the money is stolen. The revelation of the truth is staring her in the face that Rubin will be arrested and imprisoned for a long time; she will lose the marriage and security for the second time; unfortunately she cannot go back to Mqwathi even if she really wants to because, besides attacking him physically with the sharp-pointed heel of her shoe, she has reported him to the police as running an illegal shebeen and possessing a firearm without a licence.

Bongela succeeds in complicating the plot of his novel. Hawthorn (op. cit.: 53) comments thus about complicating the plots:

> A novelist constructs a plot in a particular manner so as to draw attention to certain things which might otherwise escape notice, to produce a different effect upon the reader.

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Bongela's intention, obviously, is to create a mounting tension and thus keep the reader in suspense and interested. If Dora cannot go back to Mqwathi as his wife or at least his lover, then she must attempt by all the means at her disposal to save Rubin from being imprisoned. It is therefore expected that she will be a formidable ally and a strong supporter of Rubin through thick and thin and will verhemently oppose Mbuya, especially when she says,

> Phula-phula, uzole ngaphezulu. Nanjengokuba sesenje nje, akukho ukurhoxa mfo kaMdaka, kufayayo... Inye ke into efunekayo sisibindi. Uyandiva? (1979: 19)

> (Listen attentively, and keep calm. As we have gone so far, there is no retreating, Mdaka's son, only the brave die ...One thing that is necessary is bravery. Do you hear?) (My emphasis)

If Rubin cannot face Mbuya's threats then Dora is prepared to make him do so. The novelist has effectively utilized Dora's intolerance of opposition to

the best advantage of his plot, thus laying a solid foundation for a bitter conflict. Qangule (op.cit.: 14) comments thus about this literary device,

> a conflict arises out of an issue that is intolerable or unacceptable to the mind; it is characterised by values that are at variance with each other ... a conflict does not spring from one single source but from a complexity of factors which together give rise to one solitary conflict.

In Alitshoni Lingenandaba Dora, though brilliant and keen to become educated, is stifled by social problems that hinder her opportunity for education; although she is the beauty queen of East London, she is disappointed in marriage by the man she loves most. The reader is aware of the kind of opposition awaiting Mbuya. The reader is therefore held in suspense and the tension reaches fever pitch as Mbuya on the one hand and Rubin and Dora on the other are rapidly heading for collision.

Mbuya has confronted Rubin and forced him to sign a binding and damning confession that renders him liable to arrest if he fails to refund R4,000 stolen from the firm. Later, as Rubin meets and tells Dora about the written confession, she accuses him of being stupid, a coward and unmanly. In a long and emotion-charged speech reminiscent of Lady Macbeth's to her husband, Macbeth, before the assassination of King Duncan (Macbeth Act 1 Scene vii), Dora harps on the manliness and daring of Rubin as opposed to the implied heinous, sadistic and spying behaviour of Mbuya. Inter alia she says,

> UThixo wakudala wayindoda ekhaliphileyo nenesibindi. Ubugwala ; kuwe bukhangeleka buyinqambi: ukanti nosizi lutyhalelwa ngaphandle kweminyango yengqiqo ejongene nesenzo sobudoda, isenzo esihlamba indlela ebheka ebuqaqawulini bohambo lwethu. Ukuba ubungeyondoda ngeba la mazwi andiwathethi kuwe. Asizi kuba satshatela eQonce ngenxa yokungabikho kwexesha.
>
> Yintoni ebangela loo nto ngulo Vuyisile. Ngani ke ukuba uvumele into yokuba ubanjwe uhlale entolongweni bonke ubomi bakho eli xa lo Vuyisile usemva kwakho atsamza amanqatha obomi begazi lakho. Ngani ke ukuba uyeke eli thuba lifana nobukhazikhazi begolide kuwe? Uyaqonda nje ukuba uhambo

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> Iwethu luthe bane ngobuqaqawuli phesheya phaya? Isikhubekiso sinye kuphela, sesi usaziyo. Ingaba ikho enye indlela esingahamba ngayo ngaphandle kwale? (1979: 160)
> (God created you a brave and courageous man. Cowardice to you is an unclean thing: even sympathy is cast outside the doors of perception that confronts the act of manhood, an act that clears the road to our glorious bright trip. If you were not a man I would not be saying these words to you. We will no longer get married in King Williamstown due to lack of time.
>
> What causes that is this Vuyisile. Why do you allow yourself to be arrested and remain in jail for the rest of your life while this Vuyisile who is persecuting you wallows in the wealth of your life-blood. Why do you allow this golden opportunity to escape you? Are you aware that our trip is shining yonder? There is only one stumbling block, the one you know. Is there another plan we can follow besides this one?)

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In this speech by Dora there are certain words that recur more than twice. They have obviously been used for emphasis or for emotional effect and subtly give solidity to the most significant requirements in her life. These words are repeated in the same morphological form or in a slightly differing form, but have an implied similar meaning. Such words are indoda (man) and ubudoda (manhood) in the same paragraph. Dora is obsessed with success and pictures a brave and daring man who can surmount all obstacles and achieve success no matter what. Since she wants to be married to Rubin, then he must display such qualities. Vuyisile, mentioned twice, and isikhubekiso (stumbling block) are one and the same thing, that is a hindrance to her freedom and happiness. Buqaqawuli (brightness), also mentioned twice, and bukhazikhazi (shining) basically mean the same thing. Dora pictures herself, as beauty queen, living in a bright and glorious world, like the proverbial folktale heroine "who lives happily thereafter".

Rubin is so emotionally inflamed that he indeed throws away reasoning for a bright and successful trip. The plot reaches the pinnacle as Rubin shoots Mbuya instead of giving him the firm's money. Assisted by Dora he dumps Mbuya's body along the seashore of East London so that it may appear that he has drowned.

The climax has presented a watershed for both Mbuya and Rubin. Events have gone so far that "returning were as tedious as go o'er" (Macbeth Act III, Scene iv line 137). If Mbuya does not bring back the stolen money, as a suspect he will be arrested, there is no alternative. If Rubin does not refund the missing money to Mbuya, the latter will report him to the police and he will be arrested. The only alternative is to kill Mbuya and cast suspicion on him as a thief.

Bongela is to be commended for showing both contending parties as possessing bulldog tenacity. As Qangule (op. cit.: 26) puts it

> There is no thrill if a weak person is put against a strong one.

If Rubin had managed to raise the required amount, or if there was no backing from unyielding Dora, there would be no climax, or there would be a static conflict if Mbuya had no driving force to demand the firm's stolen money from Rubin.

LUMINE BIMUS TUO LUMEN

3.2.3 Kusa Kusihlwa (1984)

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In the middle of the plot the conflict between the main active characters intensifies. The intersification changes the circumstances of the characters consequently leading to the complication of the plot. Still in the middle of the plot the complicated change of events leads to the most significant point in the novel. This point is the climax where the conflict and the consequent tension are brought out to the fullest extent.[10] The forces in conflict reach a moment of no return, a point of greatest intensity, where one party either is killed or gives in as defeated.

In Kusa Kusihlwa Bongela makes extensive use of a flashback technique[11] through Yolisa Soluthi, Mpumelelo's guardian, who narrates the background history of Mpumelelo to the authorities of Blythswood Institute. According to Yolisa, Lungile Ntsibande marries Nomakhwezi Soluthi and Mpumelelo is born. The author hints quite early that Nomakhwezi is very jealous and mistrustful of any friendship displayed by Lungile towards any female. The author puts it thus,

> Nanto wayeyithiye egazini, yayikukubona uJwarha encokolisa omnye umntu obhinqileyo nokuba ngubani na apha esibhedlele.

> Ithuba lokuba acinge ukuba incoko yabantu ababini isenokubangelwa kukwazana, ubuhlobo nje, ukuqhelana, okanye ukuzalana, ebengaziniki xa ubukhwele sebumfikele. (1984: 19)
>
> (What she detested most was to see Jwarha chatting to another woman here in the hospital. The chance of thinking that the conversation between two people might be because they knew each other, mere friendship, or were acquainted or related to each other she never gave herself when jealousy overcome her.)

The conflict, however, initially emanates and develops between the Lungile family and the Makhwetshu family, Nozililo in particular. The cause of the conflict is the shop owned by Lungile which the Makhwetshu family believes rightfully belongs to them by right of inheritence. The author portrays Nozililo as a crafty cheat and trickster of the first degree, who easily hoodwinks and manipulates Nomakhwezi despite the fact that the latter is a qualified nurse. The author says about Nomakhwezi's gullibility to Nozililo's machinations:

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> Oku kuhlobana kwabo .... ngoku kuhambe kwanonyawo lwemfene ngakumbi emva kwesi sithwakumbe sale venkile. Into eyayimbi ke kukuba uNomakhwezi yena wayengamqodi uNozililo ukuba yingcuka eyambethe ufele lwegusha. (1984: 21)
>
> (This befriending one another ... now it develops an insidiousness especially after this issue of the shop. What is bad is that Nomakhwezi does not understand that Nozililo is a hyena in a sheep's skin)
> (My emphasis)

Unable to win and own Lungile's shop for her family, despite numerous diabolical machinations and court cases, Nozililo pretends to be Nomakhwezi's bosom friend, adviser and confidante. Nozililo discovers that Nomakhwezi's weakness is jealousy and decides to exploit it to her advantage. She warns Nomakhwezi about Lungile's "escapades and philandering" and thus succeeds in creating suspicion, misunderstanding and mistrust between Nomakhwezi and her husband, especially when she says,

> Eyona nto indicaphukisileyo mna ndakuyiva yile yokuba bethetha kakubi ngomyeni wakho ... Qha abantu mabayeke ukuthi amadoda ethu akuya kutshona ngapha kube sekukho abantu abasoloko bewajongile babuye besithi enza oku noku ahamba apha nalapha. Umntu woba ngaya kwaMashu esiya ezihlotyeni zakhe babe omaqalazive sebesithi kwathi kwathi ngoLungile. (1984: 22-23)
>
> (What annoys me most when I hear it is the fact that they speak ill about your husband .. People must just stop watching our husbands disappearing yonder and coming to report that they did this and that, wandering here and there. Whenever one visits friends in Mashu the gossips start wagging their tongues about Lungile.)
> (My emphasis)

IN LUMINE TUO VIDE BIMUS LUMEN

Nozililo is a skilful and unprincipled manipulator of other people's emotions. She first whets Nomakhwezi's curiosity by mentioning Lungile in her gossip. As the former becomes more curious to know what is being said about her husband, Nozililo cleverly includes her own husbands, thereby succeeding in creating a false impression of having the same problem as she says "amadoda ethu" (our husbands). Later Nozililo refers specifically to Lungile as the main culprit, and thus succeeds in arousing Nomakhwezi's jealousy and skilfully excluding her husband.

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Bongela artistically shifts the focus of conflict away from the Ntsibande and Makhwetshu families and develops it between husband (Lungile) and wife (Nomakhwezi). Nomakhwezi's weakness is jealousy and she is easily duped by Nozililo's lies. Once the conflict lessens between the two families, the tension and fear that Nozililo might achieve her goal increases. Her evil strategy gains momentum in tearing the Ntsibande family asunder, especially when Nomakhwezi confronts her husband about his "escapades" and issues an ultimatum that

> Ukususela ngoku, akusobe uphinde ulubeke olwakho unyawo kwaMashu. Ukuba uyaya siza kuhamba kunye. (1984: 24)
>
> (From this moment, you will never put your foot in Mashu. If you go we will travel together.)

The plot of the novel becomes more interesting and lively as the contending parties continue struggling to overcome stumbling-blocks and traps laid by the enemy. In Kusa Kusihlwa Bongela has not utilized this technique fully, hence he resorts to creating misunderstanding and distrust between a husband (Lungile) and his wife (Nomakhwezi) Yet Mkonto (1984: 126) quoting Bierman et al says that

> Conflict is the essence of drama for it produces those tensions and actions which command and sustain our interest throughout the unfolding of the story.[12]

The quotation above though it refers to drama, is equally applicable to novels; it involves the characters, their actions, and their reactions to certain stimuli affecting them.

The Ntsibande family does not retaliate against the evil plotting of the Makhwetshu family, though Lungile is confronted, rebuked and given ultimatums by his wife, he does not discipline her as expected, especially as he is innocent of all the accusations labelled against him. The reader's interest is sustained only by the curiosity to find out when and how Nozililo is going to succeed with her evil machinations. The power of conflict rests on the fact that both contending parties should strive actively to attain their objectives, and only something beyond their physical power should stop them. They should have equal or more or less equal strength and resilience to persevere, thereby making the plot more interesting. Passive characters hardly create a conflict.

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The tension between Lungile and Nomakhwezi reaches a climax and consequently their marriage is shattered beyond repair when Nozilili tells Nomakhwezi that

> Umyeni wakho njengokuba engabuyi nje uphaphile. Ndimbone kakuhle namhlanje ehleli etafileni nenzwakazi endingayazanga, ekucaca ukuba kulalwa kule hotele. (1984: 41)

> (Your husband, since he is not coming back home, is having an affair. I have seen him well today sitting at table next to a beautiful woman I did not know, it is obvious they are sleeping in that hotel.)

This information is the last straw and Nomakhwezi cannot bear it. Her jealousy and anger are uncontrollable to such an extent that she prepares to go to the hotel there and then, but is stopped and scolded by Yolisa for believing all the township gossips. She, however, remains snorting and fuming, waiting impatiently for the arrival of her husband. The author captures vividly Nomakhwezi's mood thus,

> Yaba ngathi impelaveki ayifiki. Ingqumbo, umsindo, uxakaxa, ugwebu, zazimphethe zonke ezo nto selebona intshabalalo yodwa phambi kwakhe. Umphembi yena wathi akubona ukuba yokhelekile, wazichitha iintente. (1984: 41)
>
> (It seems as if the weekend will not come. The wrath, anger, phlegm, foam, are all subjugating her and already she is visualizing destruction only in front of her. When the talebearer notices that wrath has been kindled, she disappears.)

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The first four nouns in the second sentence of the quotation above refer to the same thing. By writing the synonyms "ingqumbo" (wrath) and "umsindo" (anger) adjacent to each other the author is depicting the extreme anger of Nomakhwezi. There is a general belief that too much phlegm in a person makes him highly irritable. It is noticeable that an exremely angry person is choked and thus rendered speechless to the extent that froth appears from the mouth. By writing these words in the same sentence, following one another, the author has succeeded in creating a vivid picture of Nomakhwezi's state of anger.

As the weekend draws nearer one would expect Nomakhwezi's anger to subside but the author depicts a contrary situation. No woman who respected her husband would refer to him as "inja" (dog), worse still say

> "Sis! Ndigezelwe yinja!" (1984: 42)
> (Pooh! A dog acts madly to me!)

The author depicts Nomakhwezi's anger in the following manner,

> Njengokuba iveki iye icutheka, nokhofukhofu lukaNomakhwezi luye lukhula ngokhula ngokokude ngamanye amaxesha amane ukuhlasimla nokuba uyedwa. (1984: 43)

> (As the week draws to a close, Nomakhwezi's hard breathing increases so much that at times she shudders.)

On his arrival Lungile is attacked by his wife, who also stones the firm's car. For the first time Lungile wants to discipline his wife but is stopped by the neighbours and Yolisa before he can touch her.

The focus of the conflict is directed to Lungile and his wife as a result of Nozililo's machinations. Bongela gets rid of the two by involving them in a car accident since they are drawing the limelight away from Mpumelelo, who is the main character of the novel. Nozililo would have succeeded in her plans of owning the shop if it were not for the presence of Yolisa Soluthi and Thamsanqa Ntsibande, who act as guardians and protectors of Mpumelelo, the heir - apparent to Lungile's property. The plot resumes its original position, that is, the Ntsibande family versus Nozililo. As guardians of Mpumelelo, Yolisa and Thamsanqa serve as bastions against any plots by Nozililo to eliminate Mpumelelo. At this juncture the intensity and suspense of the plot in Kusa Kusihlwa flags since the direct opponents of Nozililo are dead, but she still fails to own the shop because Mpumelelo, the inheritor, is still alive. The next obvious and logical necessity for Nozililo now is to eliminate Mpumelelo, the inheritor of the shop. This line of action would not only be a piece of poor literary craftsmanship of the writer by directly pitting Nozililo, a crafty adult, against Mpumelelo, an inexperienced minor,[13] there would be no action that builds up, but would also be contrary to the norms and traditions of amaXhosa[14]

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> ... thereby creating in the reader a feeling of excitement, suspense, curiosity or some other emotions. (Sadler et al op. cit.: 111).

Nozililo, however, has no alternative but to direct her evil schemes against Mpumelelo. Bongela erects some obstacles for Nozililo to obviate before reaching Mpumelelo. One of the problems is that most of the time Mpumelelo is away in centres of education where he is being groomed to be a worthy and formidable opponent to Nozililo and her accomplices. Secondly, the shop is run by Yolisa and Thamsanqa on behalf of Mpumelelo. They are therefore a hindrance to Nozililo's wish to own the shop.

The author has initially portrayed Nozililo as opportunistic. She, however, fails to exploit an opportuninity to get rid of Mpumelelo when he is in his weakest state, mourning the death of his parents. Her accomplices advise her to eliminate him immediately after the funeral of his parents but she hesitates and instead says to them,

> Noko ndithi ngesi sizathu nje sokuba kusandula ukufa abazali bakhe, masingakhawulezi simbonele macebo okumdlulisa ngaphaya kwamafu kwangoku. Mna bendinengcamango yokuba aphambane, abe yinto nje efana nesithunzela, athi kuloo mpambano yakhe abhangazele angaziwa nalapho aya kufela khona. (1984: 58)
>
> (Due to the fact that his parents have recently passed away, let us not arrange his immediate death. My idea is that he should be insane, be like a zombie, so that in his insanity he should wander far and wide and his corpse should never be found.)

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Any individual who desires to attain something worthwhile has to initiate forcefull action towards that goal. Nozililo's statment does not display her former villainous attitude as expected by the reader, who is baffled and incredulous at hearing her say:

> Noko ndithi ngesi sizathu nje sokuba kusandula ukufa abazali bakhe, (1984: 58)
>
> (At least due to the fact that his parents have recently passed away,)

It is surprising that Nozililo, all of a sudden, should become soft-hearted whereas she had contributed to their death even if indirectly.

Her supposed failure to give plausible account of this sudden change of heart to humaneness, apart from a flimsy reasoning and unconvincing excuse, is rather a technical ploy to launch further attacks and pursue the ownership of the shop. There is an undoubted thrill when there is an attack and counter-attack by the characters and as a consequence the plot is kept dynamic.

After the funeral of Lungile and his wife, Mpumelelo becomes an alarmist and restless as though he is becoming crack-brained. Nozililo is convinced that her wish is becoming a reality though she has not taken any action. On the other hand Mpumelelo does not retaliate neither do his guardians. One might get the impression that there is a laxity regarding the conflict existing between the Ntsibande family and Nozililo in Kusa Kusihlwa, yet Nondo (1980: 3) says:

> Conflict involves a clash, a confrontation, a contentious struggle or a collision course between two or more, or a set of two or more antagonistic characters or forces.

3.2.4 The Silent People (1983)

The middle of the plot is when the events reach a climax. Roberts and Jacobs (op. cit.: 92) define climax as

> ... the highest point in the action, in which the conflict and the consequent tension are brought out to the fullest extent.

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The middle of the plot in The Silent People is appropriately contained in chapters six to eighteen. Silo has moved away from "a familiar or home environment to a strange (hostile) one". The setting shifts, therefore, from the rural areas of Butterworth in Transkei to the mines and urban areas of Caltonville in Transvaal. (See diagram p.41 above.) The novelist here has deliberately employed the setting to achieve a certain goal. Roberts (op. cit.: 73) corroborates the above view when he says:

> In other stories, the setting may be used as an active participant in the action ... Nature herself is seen as a force that shapes character and action...

Silo's fleeing from "a home environment to a strange and hostile one" typifies and depicts his rebellious spirit and the rejection of paternal control indirectly nurtured and fostered by his mother by her over-protecting of him. Margaret's rejection of traditionalism and its appendages has permeated to Silo, as when she does not

> let the boys grow up naturally. (1983: 18)

She would hug Silo and accuse her husband of being insensitive to Silo's health and would say to her husband in the presence of Silo:

Now I know how cruel you are. (1983: 18)

When Silo has been beaten up in a stick-fight by his younger brother, Andile, Margaret, instead of finding out the cause of the fight as any parent would under normal circumstances, showers Andile with stones and yells insults at him:

It's not your strength that won, it's your evil power!
You'll be purnished, you little devil! (1983: 21)

Furthermore the distance between Silo and his parents will make him a deviant and a stranger to his father's customs and traditions. Roberts (ibid.) concurs once more with the above view thus:

> Long distances may keep characters apart and make them different; when they meet, they may have problems that were made by their separation.

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Margaret's defiant attitude towards her in-laws and their customs and her arrogance and aggression to Rufus, her husband, have negative repercussion on her sons in various ways. In Blythswood Institute Andile wets his bed at night and is tormented by other scholars, Derrick in particular. The torment leads to a stick-fight, in which Derrick sustains serious injuries, and the ultimate suspension of Andile; a specialist in East London diagnoses nothing wrong with Andile's urinary system. He is miraculously cured of the defect only when the "ngxola" ceremony has been performed on him. Thereafter Andile does not encounter any problems in acquiring education until he graduates with Bachelor of Commerce at the University of Fort Hare.

Silo's misfortunes pile up while he is on the Witwatersrand until he returns home to Transkei. In Blyvooruitsig mine Silo is chosen to work underground, in difficult and dangerous situations; all the other men with whom he had originally arrived have been shuffled around to less dangerous departments; he quarrels with the Boss Boy underground and is given a strict warning by the shift boss; he quarrels with Mabhozo and consequently a division and discord develop among the mine workers; he suffers from an incurable and excruciating pain in the stomach; when the miners demand better salary and working conditions, Silo being amongst them, they are

sacked at once without any reason given; instead of going home Silo goes to Alberton with his friend, Shoelace, where he learns thuggery; he seems to be unable to amass money; is constantly haunted by bad dreams accompanied by agonizing stomach pains; is arrested for being in possession of dagga but escapes from a police van and flees back to Transkei.

Silo leaves his home because he is spoilt and always sides with his mother against his father and younger brother. He bears a grudge against Andile and rationalizes his hatred as follows:

> He drove me away and deprived me of my education. Now my only profession is crime. If I don't practice, I starve. I am still nothing in life .. (1983: 65)

In reality Silo is supposed to be blaming his mother for pampering him, resulting in his inability to lead a normal and independent life as an adult. There is no conflict beween him (Silo) and his younger brother, Andile, yet in a well constructed plot

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> ... a conflict is the opposition of two people or groups. They may fight, argue, enlist help against each other, and otherwise carry on their opposition. Conflicts may also exist between larger groups of people, ... (Roberts and Jacobs 1987: 87-88).

Since Silo is working in Transvaal it is impossible for a conflict to exist and develop physically between him and Andile; there is also no way by which he can wage one whilst far away, yet for a conflict to be more effective the contending parties must be brought together to wage it until it reaches the climax and is resolved in one way or another.

A confrontation between the protagonist and the antagonist is obligatory to boost the importance of the plot of a novel. Bongela apparently has ignored this technique by making his characters live far apart from one another. Silo lives in Transvaal, his mother, Margaret, whom he supports in views and behaviour, works in East London, yet the people they oppose, Rufus, Andile and other Miyas, are in Butterworth in Transkei. Besides, in those far apart places the main characters are not depicted as utilizing the last ounce of energy and plotting against each other; instead, in the absence of Margaret and her elder son, Rufus and his younger son are progressing well. An alert

reader will already have assumed that it will be difficult for a suffering and struggling Margaret and Silo, with undesirable behaviour, to defeat the progressive Rufus and Andile, who typify the good. Roberts and Jacobs (op. cit.: 88) concur with the view above when they comment,

> The reason that conflict is the major ingredient in the plot is that once two forces are in opposition, there may be doubt about the outcome. The doubt, if the reader becomes interested and engaged with the characters, produces curiosity and tension ... Unless there is doubt, there is no tension, and unless there is tension, there is no interest.

In this novel there is no doubt who is going to win and consequently no tension.

In the chapters consitituting the middle of the plot in The Silent People, the plot flags because there is no conflict existing between the main contending parties. In Silo's case the 'curiosity and tension" produced are merely generated by his hazardous escapades in Transvaal. In order to make the plot more interesting the main characters should be confronted

> ... with problems they will have great difficulty in solving. As you take them through their struggle, you will generate conflict. (Knott op. cit.: 35)

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The element of a strong conflict in Bongela's The Silent People might be seen to be missing, especially that the story seems not to have the excitement it needs to generate continuing interest and suspense in the reader. In order to rectify this misguidance about his plot which is the hallmark of his novel, the writer has created a series of minor conflicts between Silo and various people in Transvaal as well as between Margaret and different people in East London, which can collectively be referred to as a conflict between a large force or society and Silo, for instance,

i) being persecuted by the Boss boy in the mine leading to his sacking;

ii) nobody is prepared to employ him since he is neither qualified nor skilled in any job, hence he resorts to stealing and inevitably lands in prison;

iii) he joins a gang of thugs called Blue Kings. They sell dagga but once more Silo is arrested, escapes from the police van and flees back to Transkei.

A true conflict must be built into the main character and various stations in his life from the beginning of the story, it must be a genuine product of this character. The main character must be shown making active efforts to resolve his problems. His efforts must however be challenged, frustrated or forestalled by his opponent, thereby demanding more effort to be exerted on the main character in order to succeed, thereby leading to the climax of the plot. In Silo's case no reader will align himself with him or wish him success in his endeavours to prosper because he has disobeyed his father's instructions, yet Exodus 20:12 warns:

> Obey your father and your mother so that you can live longer in the world that God has given you.

Silo prefers to lead the life of a thug than to obey his father and superiors. Nature teaches him the hard way to obey the superior and the powerful. In order to escape punishment or death Silo flees back home to the familiar environment. (See stage four in the diagram p.41 above)

In the middle of the plot the conflict between Margaret and her in-laws reaches the climax or the high point of action as the author states that

> Relations between Margaret and her in-laws were still strained and Lindile and the other Miya men still fretted to see Rufus dominated by his wife. (1983: 47)

Indeed, Margaret dominates and treats her husband with contempt, like a small boy. When Rufus tells her about the dream of his grandfather, hoping she might agree to the traditional ceremonies, she demoralizes him by saying:

> Rufus, you bore me with these outdated ideas. I sat through the ngxola custom: that was enough for me. You want to slaughter a whole ox just to appease your illiterate people. But we have a child in school. Soon he'll be going to university. Where are we going to get money for that if we waste it on rubbish? Why kill an ox and dish it out free to people instead of selling it? Does that make sense? (1983: 47)

The quotation above implies that Margaret does not recognize or respect the Miya clan with their customs. She is no longer prepared to practise them as they are "waste" of "money", on "outdated" and "rubbish" ideas. By implication again Margaret does not recognize Rufus as the head of the

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family, contrary to the teachings of the Bible as well, Ephesians 5: 22-23, which directs:

> Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church .....

Mkonto (op. cit.:120) appropriately describes this aggressive female attitude towards the male in this manner:

> The reduction of the traditional head of the family is crudely generated by the aggression of the female.

Margaret's defiance towards her father-in-law, Lindile, reaches a climax as she displays a rude, arrogant and aggressive attitude and clashes with him. When the other Miya elders rebuke her in an attempt to mediate the crisis situation, Margaret defends herself pompously and assertively in this way,

> ... she had not intended to live a traditional life and nobody had told her in advance that she would have to.

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Unimpressed by her argument the elders send her to her parents' home and advise her to be taught manners befitting a married woman and if she is still interested in being a daughter-in-law of the Miyas, she can come back. There is no likelihood that Margaret will go back to her in-laws and the novelist substantiates this view through Rufus thus,

> Because Margaret was educated and her in-laws were not, she assumed she was always right and we were always wrong. She despised Miya customs and traditions ... she refused to observe a single one. (1983: 53)

The middle of the plot as the crisis of events should presents the crucial problems for both contending parties as well as their supporters. Silo, the only one who supports the views and actions of his mother, rejects and spurns those of his brother and father. Though morally wrong and indefensible, it is artistically a good technique in that on the whole "it is evil minds that cause conflict". (vide Qangule 1974:85). An obedient Margaret and Silo would not display any opposition that would bring about tension and conflict in Lindile's family, though on a minor scale. Characters who

easily succumb to the whims and wishes of others do not create a conflict. After fifteen years in Transvaal, Silo is still unrepentant and bears a grudge against his younger brother and father. The novelist captures his mood as follows,

> His memories of his family were still bitter. He could not forgive his younger brother for humiliating him, nor his father for his anger. What would be the point of going home? Yes, his mother had loved him. She had protected him. Sometimes he missed her. (1983: 64)

Silo's grudge, however, against his brother and father is groundless and feeble like his mother's. Margaret's haughtiness and conceit lead to the breakdown of her marriage. She looks down upon the Miyas and their customs in general and her in-laws in particular. The Miya elders cannot accede to a defiant and disrespectful woman as a daughter-in-law, whilst Margaret does not accept being dictated to by "illiterate and backward" Miya elders.

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Like her son after leaving her in-laws, Margaret is dogged by misfortunes as she seeks employment in East London. She completely breaks contact with her in-laws and her family, and consequently there is no longer any conflict between her and the Miya family. She is free to do what she likes. In an attempt to salvage the reader's interest in the novel Bongela presents a variety of minor conflicts between Margaret and different people in the hostile environment of East London:

i) she cannot get her own accommodation in Duncan Village, she stays with friends,
ii) she cannot be employed in any decent job because she lacks a work permit as a Transkeian,
iii) she starts an illegal hawking business in the township, which collapses soon because the customers do not pay and she has to avoid the police,
iv) friendship with Veronica turns sour and she is forced to leave,
v) she is employed by Mrs Badenhorst as a washer woman earning R10 a week. She is sacked when she refuses to work in the garden,

vi) she is employed as the princinpal of a farm school near Komga. The farm owner sends for children whenever there is reaping and spraying to be done. The Department of Education and Training is dissatisfied with children's lack of prograss. She is dismissed. Margaret has no alternative but to return to Transkei.

The reader after reaching the climax becomes aware that Margaret cannot succeed in life, because by defying the Miya clan generally and her in-laws in particular she has also defied their ancestors. There is a general belief amongst the amaXhosa that the ancestors constantly communicate with the living. They are venerated because they are in the realm of the Omnipotent and are therefore incapable of making errors.[15] In other words Bongela has pitted an 'umedi' (married woman) against the whole range of the Miya clan and their ancestors: she cannot oppose the ancestors and succeed in life. The Silent People, therefore, fails to reach a real climax, a stage about which Mkonto (op. cit.: 60) when citing Bierman (et al) observes carefully that,

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> ... the actions and counteractions of the contending parties are so heightened that they clash with such a bang that something cracks.

There is no "highest emotional intensity" in this novel and consequently no "bang".

3.2.5 SUMMARY

The exposition in Bongela's novels is captivating because all four novels begin in crisis situations. He has therefore succeeded in raising the curiosity and suspense in the reader's mind, and is forced by curiosity to read to find the answers.

Conflict should emanate from tangible reasons and unbearable situations in order for the character(s) to fight on and oppose one another to the bitter end. This art is lacking in three of Bongela's novels except in Alitshoni Lingenandaba, consequently the three novels fail to reach a climax. The reader's curiosity to read on is merely kept alive by the various escapades of some of the main characters in big town/cities. The main contending characters cannot wage a lively conflict whilst far apart from on another. Attack and counter-attack is essential in order for the plot to reach the climax.

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3.2.6 NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Lerner, LD, (1956: 142) says, a good plot will select only those happenings which turn out later to be significant, so that in the last chapter of the book we shall feel "Oh yes, now I understand why he acted like this in Chapter Six". A well constructed plot gives the reader a deep sense of satisfaction as he sees it fitting together at the end.

2. Msimang, CJ, (1986:39-40) goes on to say

   > As regards drama, however, we retain the term structure although plot is sometimes used. On the other hand, structure is somewhtat broader than plot. Structure in broad sense takes into account the total sum of all the component parts of a whole.

3. (op. cit.: 40) once more it is stated that,

   > From the exposition to the climax the chain of events should form a rising action and from the climax to the dénouement there should be falling again. The rising action can only be experienced where there is a lot of conflict and tension which will keep the audience in suspense. Consequently, the falling action implies that the conflict is resolved.

4. Lerner, (op. cit.: 14) quotes as the most perfect plot ever constructed that of the ancient Greek play witten by Sophocles entitled Oedipus Rex.

5. Shaw, A, (1978:150) says,

   > In writing, exposition is that form of discourse that explains, defines, and interprets. It embraces all composition, both oral and written, that does not primarily describe an object, tell a story. Exposition is also applied to the beginning portion of a plot in which the background information is set forth ... provides details about characters and situations at the beginning of each play ....

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6. Garder, J, (1984:56) comments thus,

> It is this casting forward that draws us from paragraph to paragraph and chapter to chapter ... the moment we stop caring where the story will go next, the writer has failed, and we stop reading ... any narrative is doomed to failure if it does not set up and satisfy plot expectations.

7. Sityana, A.S.M, (1978:11-12) and Soga, T.B., (1979:72-73)

> Both complain bitterly about misconstruction and misinformation about "lobola" custom by Westerners, who regard it as the buying of a wife.

8. Qangule, Z.S., (1974:14) says,

> Conflict arises out of an issue that is intolerable or unacceptable to the mind, it is characterised by values that are at variance with each other .. Conflict does not spring from one single source, but from a complexity of factors which together give rise to one solitary conflict.

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9. Grace, W.J., (1965:241) says,

> It is a statement or act which later possesses much more serious or tragic meaning.

10. Roberts, E.V. & Jacobs, H.E., (1987:80) elaborates thus,

> Another way to think of climax is to define it as that point in a story in which all the rest of the action becomes inevitable. This inevitability does not, of course, occur in an instant but happens as a result of the fact that once the high point is reached, there must be an action or development that brings the climax to a conclusion.

11. Shaw (op. cit.: 161) remarks that,

> A flashback is a narrative device that flashes back to the presentation of an incident that occured prior to the opening scene of literary work. Such a flashback may be developed through a reverie, a recollection by a character, a dream sequence, or dialogue.

12. See also Heese, M, and Lawton, R, (1985:88) about the essence of conflict in literature.

13. Qangule (op. cit.:26) expounds that,

> There is no thrill if a weak person is put against a strong one ... Tension mounts because neither group yields, each wants to triumph over the other.

14. Sityana, (op.cit.:22) and Soga, (op.cit.:36-37) say

> In African setting the child respects all the old people whether they are strangers or not.

15. Soga, (op.cit.: 120-121) about the belief of amaXhosa pertaining to the ancestors who are in the realm with Qamata (God).

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3.3 DÉNOUEMENT

Msimang (op. cit.:40) also refers to dénouement as an 'ending or resolution'. Pretorius and Swart (1982:13) on the other hand say about dénouement,

> After the climax or turning point has been reached, the story draws to a subtle end which should leave the reader pondering on the theme. This is known as dénouement.

From the explanation of the dénouement given by Pretorius and Swart above, it is clear that dénouement follows the climax or the highest point of the novel's story. The word is more specifically applied to the final outcome of the main complication in a novel or other work of literature.[1]

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3.3.1 Umzi Omtsha (1970)

In Umzi Omtsha the dénouement appropriately covers the whole of Section Three of the contents of the novel. In this Section, which is almost the counterpart of the exposition, the author skilfully brings all the main characters of the novel to one locale, that is Butterworth. This is artisitic of Bongela since no conflict can ever take place or be resolved whilst the main contending parties are dispersed far apart from one another. The writer depicts this convergence on Butterworth thus:

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> UNontando noDavide baza kugaleleka eGcuwa kwilali yaseCegcuwana apho ikhaya likaNontando lalikhona. Yaba yimivuyo kakhulu ukufika kwabo. (1970:132)
>
> (Nontando and David arrived in Butterworth at Cegcuwana village where Nontando's home was. There was great happiness when they arrived.)

About Mbulelo the writer comments:

> Phakathi kwezinto awayethanda ukuzenza ngeli xesha wayeseKholejini ukugoduka yayiyenye yazo. Namhla wafika eTholeni kwelaseGcuwa kwabuya zonke izizalwane nezihlobo zamhlamnene zize kumbona ... Waphantsa wafika umzi sewuphelile uMbulelo (1970:143)

(Amongst the things he liked to do during the time he was at the College, going home was one. The day he arrived at Tholeni in Butterworth all the relatives and friends of yore came to see him ... Mbulelo arrived when there was almost no home.)

After serving a prison sentence in Johannesburg Zuzekile is deported to Transkei. The author says about him:

Waba ke uza kwaseGcuwa apho wafumana umsebenzi kwenye yeevenkile zaseGcuwa. Ufike kanye ngeli xa uDavide sekukhalwa ngaye ngomdala nomncinci ngenxa yengoma athe wayivusa ... (1970:147)

(He then came to Butterworth where he got a job in one of the shops of Butterworth. He arrived at the time when David was famous amongst the old and young for his music band ....)

About Maria, Bongela expounds as follows:

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UMariya ngexesha awayeseNxukhwebe wagqibela isebe lokufundisa abantwana. Kwakhona wagxoga incwadi yokucela ingqesho kwaBlayi. Ngokwenene ke uthe akuphumelela wafumana lo msebenzi kwesi sinala. (1970:153)

(Whilst in Healdtown Maria completed a course for teaching children. Again she sent an application for employment to Blythswood. Indeed after completing she got the employement in this institute.)

Blythswood is an educational institution situated in the Butterworth district, about 25 kilometres away from Butterworth town.[2]

The last time the first four characters met there was no love lost between them. Infact, there was an intense misconception that verged on an exchange of physical blows, or threatened to erupt into open physical conflict. Mbulelo once refused to shield Zuzekile when the latter was involved in a Standard Six examination scandal. Zuzekile harbours fierce thoughts of revenge against Mbulelo. When Zuzekile discovers that

Nontando is Mbulelo's lover, he organizes thugs to deflower her so that Mbulelo will be expelled from the ministry.

When Nontando discovers that she is pregnant and informs Mbulelo accordingly, the latter is unconvinced and refuses to acknowledge the pregnancy. On the other hand, though Nontando is aware that Zuzekile is responsible for the collapse of her love affair, she does not retaliate in any manner. Zuzekile gets another opportunity to revenge himself, though indirectly, on David, who is Mbulelo's son. He forces David to commit the most risky criminal acts of robbery, hoping that he might thus be killed, permanently crippled or arrested. Neither Nontando nor Mbulelo seem to confront or attempt to find a solution to their problems caused by Zuzekile yet Knott (op. cit.:37) says,

> Only in this way willl the solution be logical, the result of his (hero's) actions, not some transparent gimmick tacked on to wrap things up nicely ....

One-sided conflict does not generate suspense that enthrals the reader. Perhaps Bongela deliberately makes Mbulelo and Nontando, as Christians, to abstain from retaliation. It is the right of God to retaliate.

Mbulelo discovers that he is responsible for Nontando's disappearance by neglecting her during a critical period of her life. Abrams (op.cit.:139) concurs:

> In many plots dénouement involves reversal, or, in Aristotle's term, peripety, in the hero's fortune whether to his failure or destruction, as in tragedy, or to his success, as in comic plots. The reversal frequently depends on a discovery. This is the recognition by the protagonist of something hitherto unknown to him.[3]

Since all the main characters involved in the plot are skilfully made to converge on Butterworth, the reader will naturally expect the conflict to intensify especially between Mbulelo and Zuzekile, since they are bound in one way or another to "come into opposition physically, mentally or emotionally" as Blacker (op. cit.:4) puts it. Instead of giving the reader the outcome of the conflict and the solution to the problems thereof, Bongela sustains the suspense. He thus succeeds in stimulating the reader's

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interest, even in this closing section, in finding out what happens next, as Hall (1987:27) comments that it

> keeps us turning the pages to find out who killed whom, or who marries whom, or why a character behaves in a bizarre fashion.

Hitherto Nontando has not revealed the man who made her pregnant, either to her parents or to her son, despite the resemblance noted by the public when David attended the graduation ceremony of Mbulelo. David is highly impressed by Mbulelo and tells Nontando what he discovered at Mbulelo's graduation ceremony thus,

> Mama ifundile laa ndoda. Kuthe kwakubalwa le misila yayo neendawo eyifumene kuzo ndahle ndaqonda ukuba le yakhe imfundo uyizulele. Nam ndingasuke ndizibone sendikulaa mgangatho. (1970:144)
>
> (Mother, that man is well educated. When they enumarated his degrees and the places where he obtained them it become clear to me that he struggled for it.)

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Bongela uses dramatic irony to prick the conscience of Nontando.[4]

The statement uttered by David involves the real identity of his position, or the probable outcome of action. The reader and Nontando are aware that if David had not been neglected by the very man he would like to emulate, he would have been a graduate by now. It is obvious from this statement that Nontando is a stong-willed woman who has complete control over her emotions. If it was another woman of ordinary stature she would have been overcome by a guilty conscience, burst into tears and divulged the truth about her past life. The novel, however, would have ended on a different note. Bongela has thus succeeded in keeping the reader's interest alive by guessing about the final outcome of the plot.

Zuzekile on the other hand is still bent on revenging himself on Mbulelo. In Butterworth he plans to create a quarrel between Mbulelo and David. The author says about his attempt,

> Uhambe edumisa into yokungabi nandlela kwakhe, ebathele nqa naba kubonakala ukuba bazimisele kwezi ntambule zakhe. Uhambe edumisa nento yokuba ungunyana kaMbulelo watsho eyichaza nento yokubaleka kukaNontando ukuya eRhawutini. (1970:153)
>
> (He goes about divulging that he (David) is useless, he (Zuzekile) is surprised that people are taken up by his (David) band. He further reveals that he (David) is Mbulelo's son and the reason why Nontando fled to Johannesburg.)

In order to regain peace and stability that has been upset, it is proper that the conflict should be unravelled. The author has skilfully employed Zuzekile to reveal the unknown past life of Nontando to the people of Butterworth. Though Zuzekile has an evil motive behind divulging the secret of who actually made her pregnant in Alice and why she fled to Johannesburg, the author has indirectly clarified what caused misunderstanding and conflict in the past. As long as Nontando's past remains shrouded in mystery, Zuzekile is well-armed to the extent of blackmailing both Nontando and her son. In order to remove the poisonous sting from Zuzekile's armoury and render him harmless, this secret like the proverbial sword of Damocles must be removed. About unravelling Mphahlele (op. cit.:70) remartks:

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> This is the phase in which the author makes everything clear. He explains what has happened up to the climax and in so doing, conflicts are resolved and order and stability are restored. The plot thus unravelled in this phase of its development.

The author, however, instead of bringing Mbulelo and Zuzekile to confront each other and resolve the conflict as logically expected, sends the reader on a false trail. Mbulelo courts and is eager to marry Maria, Davids' girlfriend. He is unaware that she is David's, his biological son's girlfriend. Bongela, once more, has skilfully created a fertile ground and conflict between father and son. David will be justified in vehemently opposing Mbulelo. The issue of marrying Maria is intolerable and totally unacceptable to David. Besides, Mbulelo had refused to lend R100 to David when the latter was in financial trouble and facing arrest. The issue of marrying Maria is an outer necessity that drives David to react. The impulse of thuggery

that has been lying dormant like a deadly volcano is about to erupt as he says:

> Ayinyamzeleki le. Ukuba le ndiyivayo yinyani ngoMariya, ndifung' uma asizi kumva sobabini. Kukho oza kufa phakathi kwethu. (1970:157)
>
> (This is intolerable. If what I hear about Maria is true, I swear by my mother neither of us will win her. One of us will die.)

When David finds Mbulelo and Maria sitting in a separate hut, to him that is a confirmation of what has been hearsay. He is mad with anger and attacks Mbulelo with a knife. As Maria screams and the neighbours rush to her hut, David escapes and flees home. On hearing that her son has attempted to murder Mbulelo, Nontando is so appalled that she suffers from a severe attack of hypertension and is hospitalised. While in hospital she divulges that,

> Lo mntu ubufuna ukumbulala nguyihlo okuzalayo mntwanam ... nguyihlo (1970:163)
>
> (This person you intended killing is your biological father, my child ... it is your father.)

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The reason for this late disclosure, according to Nontando, was that the time was not yet ripe for David to know him. Probably David's action was necessary to rudely jolt Nontando's conscience back to reality. How long was she going to keep this secret a secret?

As soon as the secret of Nontando's illegitimate son is divulged, Zuzekile is rendered powerless. There is no more scandal he can threaten to reveal. Mbulelo, Nontando and David are bound to strike a compromise and reach mutual agreement. Zuzekile cannot face and oppose three united characters. It was easy whilst they were divided. The course of events now changes for the better. Jafta (1978:104) agrees with this view:

> The overpowering force triumphs so that the course of events changes. The actions of characters change and the conflict approaches an end.

Towards the end of Umzi Omtsha the action seems to be moving rapidly and unalterably towards David's ultimate arrest and imprisonment. As a result of the discovery that Mbulelo is actually David's father circumstances move towards reverse action, that is towards a state of equanimity and fortune. Kumar and Mckean (1986:50) agree with this views:

> ... as a result of certain discoveries, the line of action reverses itself completely and moves quickly to the highest state of fortune ... the reader can imagine. The discoveries appropriate to such reversals of fortune consist of such things as the discovery of identity, of character, or of past everts.

In Umzi Omtsha the discovery that Nontando has in the past concealed the evidence of David's parentage, leads to David's discovery of his identity. This in turn leads to the recognition of the virtuous character of Mbulelo and a complete contrast of Zuzekile's evil character portrayed throughout the novel. The sequence of discoveries initiates the complete reversal of the action leading to David's final good fortune when Mbulelo officially acknowledges him as his legal biological son. The court case is withdrawn. Mbulelo makes amends with Nontando and pleads:

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> .... Nontando ndicela uxolo ngesiphoso sam ... nangako konke endikwenzilego phambi kwakho. UThixo esezulwini uyazi ukuba konke endikuthethayo kuwe namhlanje ndikuthetha ngomoya wam xa uwonke. Ndincede ndixolele Nontando. Yini kodwa ukuba uthule le minyaka ingaka naxa sele ufikile? Kodwa lityala endiya kulithini eli phambi koThixo? Nontando ndixolele sihlobo sam. Ndandenziwa bubudenge bobutsha. (1970:165)

> (Nontando, I implore peace for my fault .. and for all I have done to you. God in heaven knows that what I say to you today is from the bottom of my heart. Why did you keep quiet all these years and even though you are back (home)? How am I going to rectify this sin in front of God? Nontando, forgive me, my dear friend. I was affected by the ignorance of youth.)

3.3.2 Alitshoni Lingenandaba (1979)

The dénouement in this novel is contained in the last three chapters. In the exposition of Alitshoni Lingenandaba it is only Vuyisile Mbuya who is aware that the firm's missing R4,000 has been stolen by Rubin Mdaka. Since Vuyisile has been employed in the post formerly occupied by Rubin, the firm's management suspects him as the thief, especially as he is a new employee. He must have enough evidence to prove his innocence and prove that Rubin is the guilty man. Furthermore, as a newly employed man, Vuyisile has no intimate acquaintances who can advocate for him and thus prove his innocence. Vuyisile has to rely on his own natural skill, intelligence and confidence to prove himself innocent. At the appointed time Vuyisile arrives at Rubin's house to fetch the R4,000 as per agreement. Suspecting foul play from Rubin, Vuyisile is carrying a small tape-recorder and switches it on before entering Rubin's house. As he demands the firm's money Rubin threatens to shoot him and says among other things:

> Ukuba ndiyakubulala kuza kucingwa ukuba uzibulele emva kokuba kufunyenwe umkhondo wokulahlwa elwandle. Mandikuxelele le nto phambi kokuba ndikuqabelise, le mali ndayidla torho, kwaye andiyibi loo nto. Ufike kule Monti ndikho ndiziphangelela. Nokuba ndayidla andayidla, asiyondawo yakho leyo Vuyisile kaMbuya. Obo butsolo bakho bone izinto ezininzi. Kule veki bendimelwe kukuba nditshatile kodwa andibanga nakho ngenxa yakho wakugqiba ukutshata wena. (1979:163)
>
> (If I kill you it will be perceived after your corpse is found in the sea that you committed suicide. Let me tell you this before I eliminate you, I used the money, and I am not hiding that. When you arrived in this East London you found me working comfortably. I will not be instructed by you on how to enjoy myself. Whether I misused the money or not, that is none of your business, Vuyisile Mbuya. That inquistiveness of yours has spoiled many things. This week I should have been married but I could not because of you, yet you are married.)

After shooting Vuyisile, Rubin and Dora carry his body in his (Vuyisile's) car to the sea with the intention of plunging it into the sea, according to Rubin's plan. Along the beach they are disturbed by a White couple, and they flee

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to Lorenco Marques. On discovering the injured an profusely bleeding Vuyisile the couple rush him to Frere Hospital. The police discover the tape recorder which, when played, reveals the "killer" of Vuyisile.

Since the 'murder' of Vuyisile the previous night, Rubin has not slept. The stress and exhaustion consequently deplete his resources of concetration. As the stage of exhaustion become severe whilst he is driving, he becomes psychologically disorganized and suffers from hallucinations. The author describes this 'break with reality' involving delusions in this manner:

> Endleleni phaya phambili ubone into ethe thantalala bukhazimla ngoku ... Ngalo lonke ixesha esondela kuyo le nto ibisuke iduke ingabonakali ... Ithe rhoqo le nto yahlala apha endleleni. Uthe ngokusoloko eyijongile, yajika yabomvu oku kwegazi. (1979:171)
>
> (On the road in front he sees something covering an extensive surface sparkling now ... All the time as he comes nearer this thing simply vanishes ... This thing constantly remains on the road. As he keeps looking at it, it turns blood-red.) (My emphasis)

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Bongela has skillfully employed the words **'into, le nto, le nto'** (something, this thing, this thing) to good effect. These words indicate how Rubin's loss of alertness is gradually gaining momentum and becomes severe; to show that the character does not know what he sees on the road; how Rubin's mind is losing concentration and proper reasoning; that probably only the subconscious mind is operating actively in replaying Vuyisile's 'murder'. The use of the first position demonstrative prounoun, **'le'** (this) twice, either suggests that what Rubin 'sees' is physically nearer to him, or something inside him that is associated with the immediate past. The word **'nto'** (thing) suggests that what he sees on the road is indescribable and unknown to him. The climax of the disorientation of Rubin's mind is actually to picture 'blood' on the road. The 'picture of blood' is clear indication that the guilty conscience is racking his mind and that he is gradually becoming demented.

Rubin has not achieved his goal yet he begins to lose control of himself. For the first time he admits to being hoodwinked by Dora's charm. He is fed up and disgusted by her rage as he bursts out, inter alia,

> Hayi man nawe unenkathazo gqitha. Ingcwangu onayo indikruqule (1979:170)
>
> (No, man, you are too vexatious. I am disgusted by your viciousness.)

From now on their co-operation and enterprise are divided. Any undertaking they attempt to accomplish individually fails. They ignore the universally acknowledged maxim that 'united we stand, divided we fall'. They are suspicious of each other. Bongela depicts this suspicion as follows:

> "O Rubin kutheni uqhuba ngolu hlobo nje? Yintoni ebangela ukuba imoto ijika-jike endleleni?" Lo mbuzo ubewubuza uDora ematshekile. (1979:170)
>
> (O Rubin, why are you driving like this? What is causing the car to meander on the road?" Dora asks this question despondently.)

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Rubin, now being aware that he is in a mess because of Dora's manipulation, responds to her questions in an uncompromising manner:

> Hi wethu, bendithe qhuba wathi udiniwe, ndiyeke ke. Andazi nokuba uthi ukubanjwa oku ngamafutha na. (1979:70)
>
> (No my dear, I told you to drive but you said you were tired, leave me alone then. I do not know whether you think being arrested is a welcome issue.)

In this mini quarrel between these two characters the author ingeniously shows that their former unity against Vuyisile is dissipating. The latter, whether dead or alive, will conquer them. Consequently they will never attain their ultimate intended goal. Rubin furthermore discovers that his conscience is pricking him ceaselessly. He admits that 'killing' of Vuyisile is

an unpardonable sin in the eyes of God. Disunity widens as he openly accuses Dora by mild to harsh comments:

> Oh hayi ukulukuhlwa! UDora wandenza. (1979:173)
>
> (O how I was misled. Dora beguiled me.)

When Dora chastises Rubin and accuses him of behaving like a baby, weak-kneed and weak-minded, Rubin replies in a sympathetic tone:

> O! Wenziwa kukungaqondi. Phofu kuthiwa bayekeni abanenkani kuba bozibonela. (1979:173)
>
> (O! It is because you are ignorant. Anyway it is said leave the contentious to discover for themselves.)

Rubin refuses to drive the car any further. He actually pleads with Dora that they should hand themselves over to the police. She refuses and decides to drive herself as she derides him vigorously:

> Ndiyarhana ngathi ubulewe. Indawo yokuqala nalo mntu ukubuleleyo udla amazimba. Andiyazi into ekungeneyo Rubin ngalo mzuzu. Usuke wangubafazini ondixakileyo. Kanti unje? Nosana lubhetele kunawe. Into ongasoze uyifumane yile yokuba siye emapoliseni. Eyona nto yintoni xa siza kuzisa? Hayi vul' ingqondo le uyeke le mbudede undithethela yona. (1979:173)
>
> (I suspect you might be bewitched. In the first place the person who has bewitched you is alive. I do not know what is afflicting you at this moment. You have become effeminate, that baffles me. Are you like this? Even an infant is better than you. What you will not get is handing ourselves over to the police. Why must we do that? No, be wide awake and leave this babbling you are uttering to me.)

Yes, indeed, Rubin has been bewitched and the person responsible is alive. This is none other than herself. Whether she is ignorant or is pretending not to know the one bewitching Rubin, her comment is however true. By ignorantly destroying Rubin, Dora has ignorantly yet successfully wiped out her chances of ever getting married and attaining her second most important objective in life. Bongela has therefore employed a dramatic irony by

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putting true words in Dora's mouth that have a different meaning to the reader. (vide Shaw 1972:124)

For the first time Dora discovers that she is in love with a lily-livered man. An infant is a harmless and helpless young human being. No man would accept being compared with an infant especially when it is said that he is 'better than you'. This is the most unacceptable insult a man can tolerate, it is like being emasculated. A person labelled an infant is a person looked down upon, despised, as having altogether insufficient experience, knowledge, skill and wisdom to participate actively and constructively in any undertaking in life. This discovery must be traumatic to Dora and henceforth she must rely on her own strength and resources. She, however, also suffers from hallucinations and once more appeals to Rubin to render some assistance. The latter chides her unceremoniously thus:

> Ndiyeke? Ndiyeke ubuthe ndiyaxoka. Yahlukana nam gqwirhandini. Kungenxa yakho. Nguwe lo, nguwe lo, ngu...we...! Ndiyeke mhlukuhlindini. (1979:174)

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> (Leave me alone! Leave me alone, you said I am lying. Part from me, you witch! It is because of you. It is you, it is you, it is you! Leave me alone you deceiver) (My emphasis)

The underlined nouns both have the suffix '-ndini' to make them more emphatic and to focus more attention on their role in depicting Dora's personality. They are used here in a negative sense and with reproachful meaning. The author, through Rubin, denigrates and castigates Dora's action of wilfully leading Rubin astray. What a pity that Rubin discovers too late that the beauty queen of East London is a witch when there is no turning back.[5] She has deceived him in the past by constantly drumming into him the idea that he is a fully grown normal man, who is entitled to get what he wants. Now, however, she chastises him for being more useless than an infant. Rubin's discovery of Dora's machinations and entanglement is reminiscent of Macbeth's discovery of the witches' deceit and his rueful lament:

> And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd, That patter with us in a double sense; That keep the word of promise to our ear and break it to our hope! (vide Macbeth Act V Scene VIII.[6]

Bongela has skilfully kept the whereabouts of Dora and Rubin known to the police despite their attempt to erase their trail. The tape recorder found in the possession of the critically injured Vuyisile reveals the plot to murder him by Dora and Rubin and the admission of stealing R4,000. The car they used to escape to Lourenco Marques has East London registration number plates. Hennenman police are able to trace their place of origin despite the missing identity documents.

By implication Bongela shows that crime does not pay and the wages of sin is death especially when a policement reports that,

> ... kufunyenwe le moto inale nombolo beniyisasazile, iwile. Kuyo kufunyenwe isidumbu somntu obhinqileyo kwakunye nomfo ongxwelerhekileyo oNtsundu. (1979:175)
>
> (... the car with the registration number you have radioed has been found capsized. Inside it the corpse of a woman was found and a critically injured black man.)

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The good plot also involves a change in the life of characters for either the better or the worse, hence also a change in their views and life-styles if they survive misfortunes. Steinberg (editor, 1973:435) remarks:

> The plot-maker sees life in its dynamic aspect. His hero undergoes changing fortunes that leave him altered, or in altered circumstances, or both. The emphasis on inner or outer change varies from case to case.

If the law is unable to catch up with the hard-hearted Dora, the author makes sure that she dies in a car accident. This is made more poignant and pronounced by the fact that she refuses to make amends and surrender herself to the police. On the other hand the newly converted and confessing Rubin, though critically injured, does not die. After convalescing in hospital he is sent to prison where the author says about him:

> URubin usadontsa iminyaka entolongweni. Akukazeki ukuba uya kuphuma nini na. (1979:177)
>
> (Rubin is serving many years in jail. Nobody knows when will he be released.)

Since he has shown an element of humanity by admitting his crime and a readiness to accept punishment, there is a prospect that his soul might be saved. Unlike Rubin, Dora's soul is damned. Hence her life terminates with the story of the novel. She is unrepentant to the last hour of her life.

After recuperating completely Vuyisile becomes a successful businessman. About him Bongela concludes:

> Ubona nje ngeziva ukuba noko umfo lo wasinda emlonyeni wengonyama, ukufa. (1979:176)
>
> (You can only see the scars that truly this fellow escaped from the mouth of a lion, death.)

Once more Bongela proves that the power of darkness's reign over light is short-lived. Truth cannot be permanently suppressed, it triumphs in the end.

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3.3.3 Kusa Kusihlwa (1984)

The dénouement in Kusa Kusihlwa extends over the last fifteen chapters out of twenty-eight, and out of a hundred and thirty-four pages it stretches over the last seventy-three. This proves, therefore, that more than half of this novel is composed of dénouement, yet Hall (op. cit.:27) contends that,

> dénouement is almost the counterpart of exposition ... it is that which elucidates and concludes the story ... it is backing us out of the story as the exposition edges us in.

The exposition does not cover many chapters as Hall (loc. cit) asserts that it 'edges us in', otherwise the reader will lose interest by tedious exposition. As Hall (loc. cit.) once more argues that dénouement is almost the counterpart of exposition; long-winded unravelling becomes jaded. The dénouement should resolve the conflict, to tidy up and get everthing in order, as it were to account for all the loose ends, and, like a builder, put in some finishing touches in few chapters as in exposition.

Mphahlele (op. cit.:70) corroborates Hall's argument above when he defines the dénouement as

> the phase in which tha author makes everything clear. He explains what has happened up to the climax and in so doing,

> conflicts are resolved and stability restored. The plot is thus unravelled in this phase of its development.

The researcher feels that the climax of Kusa Kusihlwa is attained when as a result of Makhwetshu's machinations, Lungile and Nomakhwezi (Mpumelelo's parents), are involved in and die in a car accident. Thereafter the plot should have been unravelled in six chapters at most. The author has lost a golden opportunity of stabilising things that have been upset, leaving the reader groping for the theme of the novel. He has further lost some points with his long prolixity in the dénouement, full of involutions and elaborateness which unnecessarily drag out the plot. Thanks to Mpumelelo's 'mental illness', recovery and strong desire to fulfil his father's dying wish that he should become educated and be somebody in the world (see Kusa Kusihlwa 1984:46), he persisted and eventually became a successful neurosurgeon.

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It is very interesting, however, to note that Lungile does not specify the standard to be passed by his son in order for him to be satisfied. After the death and burial of Mpumelelo's parents the plot in Kusa Kusihlwa flags, interest and suspense peter out, especially as Mpumelelo, the supposed hero, is unaware of Nozililo Makhwetshu's intrigues. Besides, Mpumelelo is still too young to qualify as a worthy opponent to Nozililo. There is also no thrill in pitting a weaker and inexperienced character against a mature and crafty one. Soluthi and Thamsanqa, as guardians of Mpumelelo, directly bear the brunt of Nozililo's cunning manipulations against him until he is an adult and able to face her directly. Nozililo seems to be aware that the two will replace the deceased and render strong opposition against her as she remarks:

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> Esekho nje uThamsanqa nalaa jingxa wentombi enamajingxeba ithengela phaya akukabikho nto iza kulunga. (1984:57)
>
> (As long as Thamsanqa and that waddler of a spinster, who is experienced, are serving the customers there, nothing will come right.)

In preparing Mpumelelo to be a worthy and competent opponent of Nozililo, at this late stage, the author moulds and sculptures him to pass quickly through some training institutions. The novelist elevates the status and social standard of Mpumelelo by first making him attend the circumcision ritual.[7] The author comments thus about this process,

> ... kubuywe kwadityanwa ngamaJwarha kwaqulunqwa indaba yokuba inkwenkwe isiwe esikweni ... Yaluke ngale Krisimesi inkwenkwe, yakube yenziwe yonke imithananango edibene nesiko lokwaluka. (1984:69)

> (... the Jwarhas met once more to put the finishing touches pertaining to the circumcision of the boy ... The boy was circumcised during that Christmas after all the detailed procedures were obseverd concerning this custom.)

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Like the novelist, the researcher feels it is quite fitting to start with the circumcision ritual in elevating Mpumelelo's status. This is not intended as a digression but to demonstrate that there are similarities in training between it and formal schooling. Both these education centres

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> ... admonish growing children against vices as indolence; dishonesty; jealousy; uncleanliness; selfishness; gossiping; and extol such virtues as diligence; honesty; loyalt; cleanliness; selflessness; generosity. (vide Qangule, 1979:4, quoting Mqhayi).

To prove how strong and revered the circumcision custom is amongst the Xhosa race, Qangule (op. cit.:117) substantiates thus:

> ... the circumcision custom ... should be carried out as by the Jews as a holy ritual rather than be stamped out as a pagan custom as was the view of the early missionaries.

The same critic (op. cit.:118) goes on to say about the significance of this custom amongst the Xhosas in general:

> ... there is a firm belief amongst the Xhosa people that full maturity and responsible leadership can be achieved only after one has undergone this rite.[8]

After undergoing the circumcision custom Mpumelelo goes back to Blythswood, where he matriculates with distinctions in mathematics and physics. Thereafter he proceeds for Fort Hare University, where he obtains a Bachelor of Science degree and proceeds to Wentworth Medical University. After five years he passes M.B.Ch.B. Since he specialised in neurosurgery, his Professor has organized a scholarship for him to further his study in this field and qualify to become a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons at Edinburgh University in Scotland. While in Scotland he embarks on intensive research on the illegal use of drugs, such as marijuana, heroin and LSD and their repercussions on the youth of the world. After working for four years as a Medical doctor in Lusikisiki, Mpumelelo obtains another scholarship to broaden his knowledge of hospital administration in Liverpool and specializes in brain and spinal cord surgery.

By elevating the status and social standard of Mpumelelo to the above mentioned level, the author has equipped him more than is necessary to be Nozililo's opponent. Obviously the scale is heavily loaded now against her. It becomes apparent, to a vigilant leader, that she will not win the conflict against Mpumelelo. It is now reminiscent of Aesop's celebrated folktale about a monkey that was a judge in the case of two cats who had stolen a thick slab of cheese. Besides, most of the time Mpumelelo is away from Mlazi township, and Nozililo can therefore derive some solace from targeting her anger and conspiring at Thamsanqa. The latter is always available in Mlazi township managing the shop which is the bone of contention. Moreover Nozililo is more or less on a par with Thamsanqa intellectually, educationally and socially. The author has also skilfully removed Yoliswa from Durban. As a qualified teacher she has resumed teaching at Lusikisiki. She might otherwise have offered commendable and excellent advice to Thamsanqa and thus presented formidable opposition to Nozililo as the latter admits that,

> Esekho nje uThamsanqa nalaa jingxa wentombi enamajingxeba ithengela phaya akukabikho nto iza kulunga. (1984: 57)
>
> (As long as Thamsanqa and that waddling spinster who is experienced are serving customers (in the shop) nothing will come right.)

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It is artistic of Bongela to remove Yolisa and Mpumelelo from Durban so as to level the battlefield between Nozililo and Thamsanqa. By doing this, however, the novelist subtly reveals that Nozililo is no longer a worthy opponent to Mpumelelo whether by fair or foul means. As an evil character every endeavour she puts into operation to oust Thamsanqa (and Mpumelelo) from the shop is a step forward to her downfall and death. Peck and Coyle (op. cit.:107) concur with the view of the ordinariness of people when they say:

> ... the novel reflects a move away from an essentially religious view of life towards a new interest in the complexities of everyday experience. Most novels are concerned with ordinary people and their problems in the society in which they find themselves.

Nozililo forces her husband to demand, in a tricky way, the licence of the shop from Thamsanqa. As the latter refuses to produce the shop's licence, Nozililo suspects that there was never any licence given to Lungile by Mosia, the former owner and their uncle. The shop was given to Lungile Ntsibande through chicanery. They have a right to claim it back, according to Nozililo. The shop issues should be resolved by their lawyer in a court of law. Their failure to reclaim the shop is described by the novelist:

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> ... amagqwetha kaNozililo aminxwa kukulahleka kobungqina neencwadi zemvumelwano phakathi kukaSondlo noMosia. Kwaba nzima ngakumbi akungafumaneki uMosia. Zaba ezo mali zikaNozililo nomyeni wakhe ziyatshona. (1984: 111)

> (... Nozililo's lawyers were smothered by the unavailability of books showing evidence of agreement between Sondlo and Mosia. It was most difficult when Mosia could not be traced. Money paid by Nozililo and her husband went down the drain.)

Apparently if Nozililo cannot win the case by fair means, she is prepared to play foul as she resorts to black magic. One day, when Thamsanqa and a friend are going to Camperdown by car, a black cat crosses the road twice. On the second occasion Thamsanqa loses control of the car and it crashes on the embarkement but they survive. After this there is no peace at Thamsanqa's home.

> Emveni koko yasuka intlalo endlwini ayabi ntle. Bathanda ukuxabana futhi futhi nomkakhe. Yayisithi nokuba into incinci kangakanani na bathathane begrwangxulana de bafune nokubethana. (1984: 83)
>
> (Therafter the living conditions at their home became bad. He constantly quarreled with his wife. Even though the cause of dispute was insignificant they would be embroiled in heated bickering to the extent of exchanging blows.)

Nozililo's next plan is to hire thugs to burn down the shop. Fortunately Thamsanqa is about to leave for Lusikisiki for the weekend, a friend informs him that plans are afoot to burn down the shop. Thamsanqa informs the police timeously and pretends to leave for Lusikisiki. In the evening four men break into the shop, three are arrested, and the fourth one is shot dead on the spot. The author says about them:

> ... ekuncinweni kwazo iitsotsi ziyixelile into yokuba beziqeshiwe ukuba zize kwenza lo msebenzi. Emva kolo phando kwabanjwa usapho lwakwaMakhwetshu, uNozililo noNtongana, lwavalelwa kwalindwa umhla wetyala. (1984: 85)
>
> (... in the process of their interrogation the thugs revealed that they were hired to do this job. After that investigation Makhwetshu family was arrested, including Nozililo and Ntongana, and detained pending the trial.)

As Mpumelelo returns from England and before starting to work in his surgery in Lusikisiki, Thamsanqa and Mpumelelo's colleagues organise a reception for him in Mlazi. Once more, while in prison, Nozililo hires thugs to murder Mpumelelo during the dance in the evening. Unfortunately, a relative of Nozililo is seriously stabbed, though accidentally. The repercussions of this incident are described by the novelist thus:

> Iindaba zokuhlatywa komntu emdanisweni ziye zaza kufika kuNozililo obeseluvalelweni. Uye wachulumanca kuba wayecinga ukuba nguMpumelelo, kodwa kuthe kwakufika unyana wakhe wamxelela ukuba ngubani na lo uhlatyiweyo,

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> wasitsho isikhalo kuba kufumaniseke ukuba ngumtshana wakhe owayekhulele kowabo waza kusebenza eThekwini. (1984: 99)
>
> (News about a person stabbed at the dance reached Nozililo in detention. She was cheerfull because she thought that it was Mpumelelo, but when her son arrived and told her who the real victim was, she screamed because that was her nephew who had grown up at her home and had come to work in Durban.)

Nozililo and her husband hire a lawyer once more, to defend them against the allegation that they hired thugs to burn down Mpumelelo's shop, resulting in one of the thugs being shot dead by the police. Owing to the thugs' disreputable and diabolic track record, the court throws their evidence out of the window. Nozililo and her husband are therefore set free. Since the author has no further use for Nozililo and her husband, he gets rid of them:

> Ngabusuku buthile ezinzulwini, kwabonwa ngomzi kaNtongana usitsha ... Ngenxa yamadangatye awayelapho kwaba nzima ukusindisa nempunde le. Athi akuthotha amalahle namadangatye abantu bakhangela iingxwelerha. Bothuswa kukubona izidumbu zabantu ababini, indoda nomfazi sebatshayo. (1984: 112)
>
> (On a certain mid-night Ntongana's house was seen going up in flames ... Owing to the engulfing flames it was difficult to save any relic. As the ashes and flames died down people searched for the wounded. They were shocked to see the corpses of two people, a man and a woman, burnt out.)

As a villain or evil character, Nozililo has disrupted the generally accepted social order by her malignant and heinous underhand activities. If she cannot change for harmony she must be punished in one way or another, which will restore the former tranquility in society. Peck and Coyle (op. cit.: 81) concur about re-establishing fractured order:

> In the resolution stage at the end of the play social order is, indeed, usually re-established, but the neatness of this ending is

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> often satisfying simply because it is neat and ties up the problem.

Though the view of the two critics immediately above refers to drama, it is here equally applicable to the novel. After the death of Nozililo and her husband Mpumelelo does not encounter any opposition in his search for perfection in life. The last five chapters of the novel contain nothing concerning the Makhwetshu family, which was an enemy of the Ntsibande family. The last twenty-two pages are about Dr Ntsibande's glope-trotting trips, especially to Europe.

At the beginning of the novel Mpumelelo suffers from pyrophobia that is wreaking havoc on his career. He is a circumcised man, initiated into tribal life and responsibility, and the novelist reinforces his argument by describing Mpumelelo's action of remaining calm throughout the ordeal of being inside a burning Boeing 707 as follows:

> Ndithe ndakuqonda mhlophe into eyenzekayo kwakho nto nje ethi 'fota, fota, khawulezisa'. Ndiye ndaqubula ubuxhakaxhaka bam ndapekisela kanye kulaa ndawo inedangatye. (1984: 132)
>
> (As I clearly notice what is happening something just says 'take a photograph, be quick'. I snatched up my equipment and started to photograph the place where there is a flame.

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Instead of panicking and running away Mpumelelo watches carefully and continues taking photographs at intervals as the flames engulf the whole wing of the Boeing 707. He, however, thinks about his parents and questions the justice of fate:

> Baya kuthini oobawo nomama ukufa ngomlilo nam zendife ngawo? Yintoni kanye? Ukuba amawethu ayayibona le nto makayihlangule. (1984: 124)
>
> (How can my father and mother die by fire and I too? What is it really? If my ancestors are watching this let them save it.)

In this burning plane episode the author is subtly revealing to the readers that Mpumelelo is completely cured of pyrophobia. This is the ultimate test

to prove his manhood and proper qualification to face any kind of opposition that he may encounter in life.

It is worth noting that Mpumelelo, though enlightened, still believes in the power of the ancestors despite the vast knowledge he has acquired in medicine and technology. Schapera, (editor, 1953: 425) concurs that westernized Africans

> ... when ill-health or other misfortune descend upon the family... either turn to amadlozi (ancestors in Zulu) themselves for help or else through the intervention of an inyanga (witch-doctor) whom they have summoned in their need ...

3.3.4 The Silent People (1983)

Dénouement in The Silent People is contained in the last four chapters of the novel, including the Epilogue. As Margaret, the estranged wife of Rufus, returns to Transkei, the first person she contacts is her son, Andile. She last saw him when he was sixteen years old, still a student at Healdtown Institute. As a mother who suffered labour pains, it was irresponsible of her to leave her son under the guardianship to her husband only.

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Margaret, However, is a changed person. She confesses to her son that she cannot blame Rufus, but herself for what her husband has done during her long absence and that

> The hard knocks I've taken since I left your father have made me realize a lot of things. (1983: 72)

In the absence of Margaret, Rufus has married Eunice by customary union. The latter has been kind and supportive to both Rufus and Andile. Maxhalanzima, an elder Miya, makes Rufus aware, however, that the latter has unwittingly placed himself in a dilemma as

> Both marriages are legally binding, but Margaret has prior claim to you and to your children and your property. If your wife wants to come back, there is no way of stopping her. (1983:73)

Rufus discovers himself in an awkward situation but has to resolve it without delay. The alternative action for him is to divorce Margaret, but

unfortunately Andile wants his mother back, especially now that he (Andile) is about to marry. The Miyas are called to arbitrate the disputes as in the past. The majority support Rufus and oppose Margaret's return

> because of her former behaviour and desertion. (1983: 73)

The few, led by the wise and experienced Maxhalanzima, however,

> felt that Margaret's rights should be honoured in the interest of peace and harmony, (1983: 73)

especially since from the outset

> ... the whole Miya clan was against our son getting married to this woman. The clan's misgivings proved valid. (1983: 74)

Maxhalanzima's comments immediately above here subtly suggest that 'the voice of the elders does not fall on deaf ears', or, as the Xhosas wisely maintain, that

> Ilizwi lomzali alidliwa nja.
> (The wise words of the parent should not be ignored.)

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By implication, therefore, Rufus must swallow his self-made bitter pill, and suffer the consequences of his stubbornness. What cannot be cured must be endured.

In order to break the deadlock and to create an everlasting peace and mutual co-existence in the Miya clan in general, and Rufus's family in particular, Maxhalanzima suggests that

> ... she (Margaret) stays with Andile and that Rufus establish a separate household for his second wife and her childern. (1983: 74)

A further compromise is made when a unanimous decision is arrived at that

> Margaret would be taken back on condition that she apologise in public to her in-laws, paying a young beast to them as a sign of reconciliation. A separate house would be built for Eunice. (1983: 74)

With peace thus secured in Rufus's house, all attention is now directed to preparations for Andile's wedding and plans go according to schedule. Lindile, Andile's grandfather, has a bad dream at night, seeing the entire

Miya clan being swept away by flood.[9] The following day, as the ox is being killed by Nofotyo, another elder Miya, it does not bellow as expected. These are bad omens to the Miyas. Suddenly Lindile is taken ill, and a doctor is urgently called.

On his arrival at Butterworth Silo is told that his mother left the place ten years ago, and Andile, who has been educated, is now a successful business man. His mind `a swamp of frustration, hatred and despair' rationalizes:

> And what am I? A nonentity! A wreck! Driven away like my mother! And who was given the opportunity that I should have had? Andile! Father drove me away so that he could give Andile, his favourate, everything. (1983: 81)

He goes on to say about his father's `guilt',

> It is my father's fault that I was never educated. He let Andile humiliate me. He never cared for me, he assaulted me. After I'd left he didn't even bother to trace me. (1983: 81)

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He arrives at the conclusion that

> Everyone must know who I am. Andile cannot get married before I do. (1983: 81)

In the discussion that takes place between Silo and Sam, his friend, the novelist skilfully shows that the former is the one who was wrong: "You ran away and didn't tell them where you were". The author further reveals that Silo's reasoning is clouded:

> Pouring himself another glass of brandy, Silo took a dagga zol from his pocket. As he smoked and drank, his eyes became more and more bloodshot. (1983:82) (My emphasis.)

The underlined phrase conveys a clear impression that Silo has been imbibing intoxicating liquor for some time that day. The fumes of dagga, especially when inhaled, and the intermittent sipping of brandy, have a severely detrimental effect on the brain cells of the smoker. The ratiocination or logical reasoning of a constant smoker, as Silo is portrayed, deteriorates greatly. With his eyes bloodshot, Silo is in an inhuman mental state, and incarnated devil, itching to spill blood any moment to satiate his

emotions and calm them like a wild beast after killing its prey.[11] The author subtly suggests beforehand that Silo will not be dissuaded from his preconceived and impulsive decision as he says:

> No, Sam, there'll be no wedding ... (1983: 82)

The author is commended for his skill in creating tension and suspense even at this late stage, and impelling the reader to read on to find out the results of the impending disaster.

On the day of the wedding Silo attempts to acquire a fire-arm from a taxi owner, but to no avail. As he returns to the wedding place he 'pictures the commotion he would cause'. As he nears his home he recalls seeing 'an axe lying inside the cattle kraal that morning'. In a trancelike state then he moves swiftly towards Rufus's homestead. A person who is in a trance is half-conscious, hypnotic or in a cataleptic state. The reasoning power dwindles rapidly and like a mad-man he can commit any indescribable crime.

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Amidst all the commotion and excitement the author in one line tactfully deviates from human activities by including celestial commotion in the following manner:

> ... the tribal boys ... would every now and again pause to look up at the sky that was gradually darkening with thunder clouds. (1983: 86)

This climatic action brought about by the darkening sky 'with thunder clouds' is an effective symbol used by the author here. It depicts the doom about to befall the house of Rufus. About 'the darkness symbol' Qangule (op. cit.: 109) comments:

> It contributes considerably towards creating an atmosphere of sombre dreariness, of looming trouble and foreboding doom.

Qangule (op. cit.: 111) goes on to say about 'the cloud and storm symbol':

> The termination of periods of trouble, prosperity, fertility and the like may be indicated by means of storm in Xhosa literature ... clouds may imply both the possibility of evil as well as a state of ignorance and helplessness on the part of those marked for failure or destruction.

The researcher concurs with Qangule's comments above. Silo has come to 'seek and destroy' the happiness at Andile's wedding. He is in a state of 'helplessness' and frustration as he fiercely declares:

> My father has a beautiful house at the Mission, you tell me. Where is mine? Andile is a graduate, an executive. What am I? A standard Five dagga smuggler, a shop-lifter, a swindler, a killer. (1983: 82)

He is ignorant, however, that what he plans to do will be partially executed though the rural people are not as vigilant as in the urban areas. The 'state of ignorance' mentioned by Qangule is not restricted to Silo only. It permeates to the wedding attendants and the Miyas as they gasp in horror at the sight of the stranger attacking Rufus with an axe. As the crowd frantically scatters in fright, the people keep on asking,

> Who is this man? Why is he doing this? (1983: 4)

This incident is a direct change of events. It reveals to the crowd the real identity of the assailant and his intention. The life of thuggery Silo has led in Transvaal has forced him to return home to Butterworth, Transkei. It has further forced him to commit a deed which lands him in prison and changes his life style completely. Ryan (1968: 47) concurs with this view:

> ... to have significance, an action must represent a deliberate choice by the character and must result either from reflection or from habit.

Silo is unable to appreciate the realities of life. Even at this late stage he pursues his goal that 'no there will be no wedding' and that 'they must know who I am'. Indeed the Mission community establishes the identity of Rufus's assailant. In Transvaal Silo tolerated no opposition. He settled all dispute and confrontation through a knife or gun. He still thinks he will succeed through violence even at this stage. He learns the hard way that brute force is not the answer for settling all wrangles.

In the epilogue the author reconnects with the prologue in narration and thus makes the novel a whole and complete unit. In the prologue of The Silent People Bongela provides the background and setting of what is to follow, as well as detailed sketches of the characters who are to lay significant roles. About endings Reader and Woods (op. cit.: 19) comment:

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> If openings are important, then so are endings. It used to be the accepted form to complete a novel by telling the reader what happened to all the major characters after the novel had finished. The modern novel finishes with the end of the story. We no longer expect a novel to tell us every detail...

In this novel, Bongela opted to employ the discarded 'form to complete a novel by telling the reader what happened to all the major characters' in epilogue. He, however, cleverly uses various characters, in their discussion, to reveal how Silo, in particular, is ultimately arrested after attacking Rufus with an axe.

The Miyas, however, find it hard to believe and accept the attack on Rufus by his son as mere thuggery. One rural man aptly explains:

> I thought of kwaMiya and all of us here striving to live in harmony, beset on all sides by the confusion that modern life imposes on us. And I realised that Silo was the symbol of our confusion, the boy who has been brought up in contempt of the ancestors and who returns to us as the messenger of their wrath. (1983: 89)

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The rustic Miyas believe that:

> Without the ancestors nothing will turn out well ... when we go against them they punish us severely, even to the point of death. (1983: 16)

They consult an iggirha (diviner) who confirms that 'the ancestors are angry and have been angry for a long time'. He blames the Miyas for failing to introduce their 'molokazana (daughter-in-law) properly to them. Realising their error the Miyas meet to propitiate the ancestors. They further advise Andile to reconcile with his brother. In order to be accepted back into the Miya clan, Silo must first undergo the circumcision ritual. Schapera (op. cit.: 100) comments:

> Circumcision ... is regarded as an essential step in the life of every man. The uncircumcised is considered a boy all his life, may take no part in the councils and deliberations of men, is looked down upon by women and may not marry ...

After leaving his initiation hut Silo is introduced to the people in a grand ceremony, where he is also given some gifts. 'Silo, reformed, beams with

pride and pleasure'. Obeying the ancestors' commands eventually leads to peace and prosperity once more in Rufus Mendile's home.

3.3.5 SUMMARY

Bongela concludes his four novels 'by telling the reader what happens to all the major character's at the end of the story. Reader and Woods (loc. cit.) disagree with this technique. Their view is that the modern reader does not need such spoonfeeding. Notwithstanding this, the researcher is of the opinion that, in some cases one needs to accept that the revelation of the characters' ending, in some instances, is necessary to avoid guessing and confusion in the mind of the reader. It seems as if Bongela's belief is that the power of darkness over light is transitory. Evil characters epitomizing darkness, destruction and lack of progress are punished either by long imprisonment or death, for instance Zuzekile in Umzi Omtsha, Rubin and Dora in Alitshoni Lingenandaba, Nozililo and her husband in Kusa Kusihlwa, and Silo in The Silent People. Characters representing light and progress, though they initially struggle, suffer and are on the verge of death, through perseverance and the acquisition of education succeed later in life, for example Nontando, David and Mbulelo in Umzi Omtsha, Vuyisile in Alitshoni Lingenandaba, Mpumelelo in Kusa Kusihlwa, and Rufus, and Andile in The Silent People.

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3.3.6 NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Shaw (op. cit.: 109) also says dénouement is an ingenious untying of the knot of an intrigue that involves some explanation of the secrets and misunderstandings connected with the plot.

2. This information was obtained when the reseacher interviewd K.S. Bongela on 22.09.1993, during the Xhosa Language Board meeting in Port Elizabeth. Mr Bongela started teaching at Blythswood institute. (vide Chapter One of this dissertation).

3. Grace, W.J., (1968: 232) says dénouement is the section ... in which a final disentanglement of the plot takes place.

4. Roberts (op. cit.: 145) says dramatic irony is when a character perceives a situation in a limited way while the audience sees it in greater perspective. The audience sees double meaning whereas the character sees only one.

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5. The Greater Dictionary for Xhosa (1989: 262) describes a witch as one who practises whichcraft; this is done by employing medicines of plant origin, charms or any bewitching matter such as parts of bodies of people or animals, to harm the lives or property of others, agents such as the lightning bird, the river-sprite, the man's snake, the woman's snake and the baboon are used.

6. Macbeth was deceived by the witches and discovered too late that

   I am blood
   Stept in so far that, should I wade no more,
   Returning were as tedious as go o'ver.
   (Macbeth Act III, Scene IV)

7. For further information concerning endurance of circumcision consult Mkonto, B.B., Amakhikhizela, 1990, pp. 125-127
   Satyo, S.C. (editor), Sasinocwadi kwatanci, 1990, p. 89.

Soga, T.B. Intlalo kaXhosa, 1979, pp. 88-89.

8. Refer also to UMqhayi wase Ntabozuko, 1939: 59, by Mqhayi, SEK.

9. Elliot, A (1981:127) maintains that the spirit transmits the message that he is not 'staying nicely', where he is because proper sacrifices have not been made to him ....

10. Schapera (1953: 255) claims that the slaughtered animal should groan or bellow loudly to prove acceptability to the ancestors...

11. The word 'beast' figuratively used means a cruel or rough man whose behaviour is beastly or bestial. More popularly it refers to four-footed animals especially the mammals.

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CHAPTER FOUR

4. THE CREATION OF CONFLICT

Conflict is the quintessence of the plot. For a conflict to be effective there must be at least two parties that are in antagonistic opposition or in disagreement. In literature a conflict may exist between a protagonist and antagonist. Nondo (op. cit.: 3) comments:

> (it) involves a clash, a confrotation, a contentious struggle or a collision course between two or more, or a set of two or more, antagonistic characters or forces.

Since fiction reflects the life of people in general, conflicts are everywhere a part of living beings. Normal human beings attempt to achieve certain goals in life. In the process of attaining those goals they may collide with the wishes or feelings of other people, resulting in a state of variance. Blacker (op. cit.: 4) defines conflict as,

> ... that which takes place when two or more forces come into opposition physically, mentally or emotionally.

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It can be surmised from Blacker's definition that the main characters should be presented with problems they will have great difficulty in solving, otherwise there is no conflict. (vide Knott 1977: 35). No conflict can be successfully generated if the main contending parties are far apart from each other. They must be seen plotting, and attacking and counter-attacking each other. It is further deduced from the above definitions that the forces opposing each other should have more or less, if not, equal strenghth and resilience. There is no thrill if a weak character is matched against a strong one (vide Qangule 1974: 26).

Pretorius and Swart (op. cit.: 9) further distinguish two types of conflict, namely,

a) an external conflict in that a battle can take place externally, in the sense that two characters or parties may bodily assault each other -a sword fight, a fight with knives or knobkieries, and a fist-fight are examples of physical battle.

b) an internal or inner conflict that may arise from thoughts, loyalty, moral codes, etc. It can be of a personal nature, in the sense that a character does not stand up against any person(s) or power(s) outside

himself, but is involved in a battle within himself ... He has a duel within himself ... A person can, therefore, gain a victory over himself or he can be destroyed by his own weaknesses.

The reader's interest in a novel is activated and held by the character or characters who engender a realistic conflict. Bongela's art in utilizing the above view will be closely examined hereunder.

4.1 UMZI OMTSHA (1970)

The conflict in Umzi Omtsha is supposed to be a social one, that is a struggle between one man and another, Mbulelo Nxasana against Zuzekile Mahlathi. The researcher uses the phrase 'supposed to be' because the conflict between Mbulelo and Zuzekile is one-sided. Zuzekile has an old score to settle with Mbulelo, though it is very feeble, impertinent and irrational, yet the latter has no ill-feelings against Zuzekile and consequently no retaliation is effected. Conflict refers to the opposed relationship or interests of different characters resulting in strains and tensions between the contending parties. These strains and tensions further result in actions, counter-actions and intrigues.' Mphahlele (op. cit.: 53) comments:

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> These conflicts between and within characters change as the plot develops; they intensify with changing circumstances in which the characters find themselves. This leads to the complication of the plot.

When Zuzekile is involved in the examination scandal of his Std 6 pupils, he requests Mbulelo to defend him as his witness. Aware of the dangers that might arise from such action, Mbulelo refuses, and rightly so. From that time Zuzekile harbours an intense and undying hatred towards Mbulelo as he grudgingly remarks:

> Uyabona, Mbulelo, ulunge unjalo mfan' akuthi; inkungu ilala kwiintaba ngeentaba. Sakuze sihlangane nokuba sekunini na. (1970: 64)

> (You see, Mbulelo, you are right as you are my fellow man; every mountain has its share of mist. We will meet one day.)

Zuzekile's hatred of Mbulelo is misdirected and unjustifiable in that the latter has done no wrong to him. He is merely saving his own skin and avoiding landing in an inescapable situation as he remarks:

> ... andiyiboni indlela endingakunceda ngayo kule nto kuba ndandingekho ukwenzeka kwayo. Ndiza kuxakwa kukuxoxela into endingenalo nonakani lwayo, ndikude nayo ngaphezulu. (1970: 63)
>
> (... I do not see how I can help you in this matter since I was not there when it happened. I will be perplexed in defending something I do not have an inkling about, furthermore I have nothing to do with it.)

It is of interest to note that by this time Zuzekile is a qualified teacher and the principal of Dlephu Primary School. Mbulelo is a bartender at a Butterworth hotel, having passed only the Junior Certificate. Besides, even if he is keen to help Zuzekile he has observed that

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> ... umhlobo lo wakhe noko uyalithanda igqabi likaLontshi, kwaye nalapha esiqwini wayesethande ukuziyekelela. (1970: 50)
>
> (... this friend of his likes the leaf of Lontshi (brandy), besides, he has neglected his physical appearance.)

Since Zuzekile is unable to revenge himself directly on Mbulelo, the opportunity comes along when he discovers that Nontando Qoloza is Mbulelo's girlfriend. The author comments about this discovery:

> Wathi ukuba aqiniseke ukuba uNontando uthandana noMbulelo waziva umfo kaMahlathi enemihlali ngaphakathi. Ngoku kwakufikelelwe kwisithuba sokuba kulunge into ekwakudala eyizungula, impindezelo apha kuMbulelo. (1970: 21)
>
> (As he ascertains that Nontando is in love with Mbulelo, Mahlathi's son feels thrilled. The time has now come to

> implement what he has been yearning for, to get even with Mbulelo.)

Mbulelo is by now doing third year Bachelor of Theology at the University of Fort Hare. Zuzekile's strategy is to make sure he is rejected as a priest. He gloatingly remarks:

> ... ndiza kwenza ukuba angabufumani nobo bufundisi, aze angatshati nkqu naloo ntombi yakhe inebhongo ngaye. (1970: 21)
>
> (... I will make sure he does not get that priesthood, nor marry his girlfriend who is proud of him)

Zuzekile is not only an opponent to Mbulelo but a villain in this novel. Qangule (op. cit.: 17) defines a villain as

> ... a character who acts against another character with an evil purpose... He may be a major or a minor character.

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When the time is opportune, especially when he is seen in public with Nontando, he pretends to be her lover. He thus succeeds in creating such suspicion in the eyes of the public, Mbulelo included, to an extent that Mbulelo's friend says:

> Awu, mfondini, ubuzani usazi nje? Uwalibele na amantombazana ngoku? Ndiqinisekile uMahlathi uya nayo eBhayi kuba ebekhe watsho kum ngoLwesine ... (1970: 25-26)
>
> (Hey, fellow, why do you ask since you know? Have you forgotten the girls now? I am sure Mahlathi is going to Port Elizabeth with her since he said so to me on Thursday ...)

When Nontando informs Mbulelo that she is pregnant with his child, the latter remembers the day he saw her in Mahlathi's car and the fact that she spent the June holidays in Port Elizabeth without telling him. Instead of confronting Zuzekile, Mbulelo refuses outright to admit making her pregnant. Misunderstanding between them prevails and they part on a sour note.

Zuzekile's strategy seems to be successful as Nontando flees to Johannesburg, where her son is born and brought up under harsh circumstances. On the other side Mbulelo cannot be ordained as a priest since he has a stigma in the eyes of the church emanating from the pregnancy court case. The option offered by the church is for Mbulelo to marry Nontando. Mbulelo is willing to marry her but she is nowhere to be found. Though a graduate, Mbulelo finds himself working as an ordinary clerk in the Bantu Affairs Department in Cradock and later in the office of a firm of attorneys in Cape Town. He does not take any retaliatory steps against Zuzekile though he is aware that Zuzekile is the cause of his failure to attain his goal. Zuzekile has also left Alice for Johannesburg.

Bongela has placed the main contending characters far apart from each other, and consequently the conflict as the backbone of the story does not assume intense and nerve-racking dimensions in the plot.[2] In contrast to this approach Blacker (op. cit.: 14) argues:

> The conflict must bring the antagonist and the protagonist together. These are the people in conflict and they must resolve it in one way or another. A confrontation between antagonist and protagonist is considered to be an 'obligatory scene'.

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The researcher concurs with Blacker's view expressed above. The conflict is a struggle that grows out of the interplay of the two major opposing forces in a plot. It is a nesessity that cannot be pushed aside and ignored. Conflict thus provides interest, suspense and tension, hence the reader's interest is aroused and kept alive to the end of the novel. (vide Holman and Harmon, 1986: 107).

In Johannesburg, Zuzekile accidentally meets David, Nontando's son. On ascertaining that he is actually Mbulelo's son the old hatred is reactivated as he meditates:

> Ukuba andiphazami ngumntwana kaMbulelo lo. Ke ukuba kuthe kanti nguye nyani, ndiza kumfumana lo mfo nenzala yakhe, akandazi, ma dadethu. (1970: 87)

(If I am not mistaken this is Mbulelo's child. If indeed it is so, I will get this fellow together with his progeny, he does not know me, I swear by my sister.)

Since Zuzekile cannot directly revenge himself on Mbulelo, he is prepared to make anyone related to the latter suffer untold miseries and pains if possible. This is misdirected anger reminiscent of the Biblical proverb:

The parents ate sour grapes,
But the children got the sour taste. (vide Ezekiel 18:2)

David suffers for the 'wrong committed' by his father. Mbulelo does not hit back for what Zuzekile has done to him and Nontando. It is doubtful that he will engage in any contentious action since he knows nothing hitherto about David and the miseries he suffers in the hands of Zuzekile. Though Nontando is aware of Zuzekile's machinations against her and her son, she does not retaliate. David is still too young to be a force for Zuzekile to reckon with. This is poor craftsmanship.

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The researcher is of the opinion, therefore, that Zuzekile also suffers from internal tension or conflict. He has not forgotten and forgiven Mbulelo for refusing to bail him out of examination scandal. This is a petty excuse as he remarks:

"Sakuze sihlangane nokuba sekunini na", watsho efiphele. (1970: 64)
("We will meet no matter when", he said angrily)

His cruelty to Nontando, later extended to her son, is an externalization of the conflict raging inside him, a conflict exacerbated by the fact that Mbulelo, his arch enemy, is progressing well educationally, and the fact that he is unable to inflict any further harm on Mbulelo. Though Zuzekile is a teacher by profession he is a failure and frustrated in life and only survives by associating with thugs. His conflict thus turns into a complex one. He callously forces David to perform the most dangerous part in a mission of thuggery. His cruelty to David is in conflict with the Xhosa tradition that demands hospitality towards growing children especially of friends and relatives. (vide Nondo, 1980: 36-37)

As Bongela skilfully brings all the contending characters to Transkei, one would expect the conflict to intesify between Zuzekile and Mbulelo. Instead the novelist deliberately sends the reader on a wild-goose chase, a false trail of speculation. He contrives a conflict between David and Mbulelo, who are accidentally unaware that they are blood relatives. The cause of the conflict is Maria, who is David's girlfriend but is loved by Mbulelo, who wants to marry her. Nontando, who knows the whole truth, is rendered ineffective in stopping father and son becoming engaged in physical conflict. The suspense sustains the reader's interest and the question "What happens next?" is ringing in the mind, especially when David bursts out in anger:

> Ukuba le ndiyivayo yinyani ngoMaria, ndifung' uma asizi kumva sobabini. Kukho oza kufa phakathi kwethu. (1970: 157)
> (If what I hear about Maria is true, I swear by my mother neither of us will get her. One of us will die.)

Considering David's past repugnant track record in the East Rand in particular, one can easily see him committing patricide and facing the death sentence.[3] Such an action will, no doubt, result in a chain reaction: Nontando will die of shock and probably Maria as well; Zuzekile will gloatingly have the last laugh perhaps saying: "There you are! I told you so!" This would mean that the evil character has been revenged at last, though he has not lifted a finger in causing the fight.

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Furthermore, David is more justified than he knows in harbouring resentment agains Mbulelo: Mbulelo made David's mother pregnant and refused to acknowledge the child; David grew up as a thug because his father, Mbulelo, never supported him; when David is desperately in need of R100 to settle the court case, Mbulelo discourteously refuses to help him. David is ultimately saved by Maria from imprisonement. Bongela is commended for this artistic skill of creating a fertile ground for the development of conflict between father and son. Qangule (op. cit.: 70) has this to say about Bongela's skill:

> Products of different social backgounds must have distinctive traits and must inevitably conflict with one another.

David will not tolerate seeing Mbulelo courting his girlfriend. He grew up in a place where there is less respect for adults, where the fittest survives. He

will react naturally and instinctively the way he knows best when furious and confronted by an enemy. Because of his rural upbringing and his training Mbulelo is not vigilant and inquisitive enough to find out more about David.

When David finds Mbulelo with Maria in the house together, he bursts out in anger:

> Wena, namhlanje ndiza kukugqithisa amafu kuba wena uphezu kokutshabalalisa umphefumlo wam ngokuwungcungcuthekisa. Ufuna ntoni apha? (1970: 159)
>
> (You, today I am going to kill you because you are hell-bent on destroying my soul by tormenting it. What do you want here?

Before Mbulelo can answer David attacks him with a dagger. Had Maria not been there, one of them would surely have died. Though David's action enthrals and activates emotional response from the reader, it is also a turning point that leads to the revelation of the true state of affairs. Revelation is the same as dénouement. Gardner (op. cit.: 188) comments about dénouement:

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> The conflict is now resolved, or in the process of resolving, either because the will of the central character has been overwhelmed or because he has won and his situation is once more stabilizing.

The novel's emotional development or the reader's feeling of suspense, fascination or anxiety as he turns the pages, is then reaching Fichte's curve. The conflict between father and son cannot develop any further. David's attack on Mbulelo leads to the rapid revelation of his true identity and resolution results. On hearing about her son's attempted bodily harm on Mbulelo, Nontando has no choice but to reveal David's true identity. Peace prevails once more between Nontando and Mbulelo and David. As a united family they are a cement wall against Zuzekile's further machinations. Bongela's last word about Zuzekile, the evil character, is that

> ... kwathi kusadadwa kwabonwa ngoZuzekile sele engasabonakali akuba ebengene nabanye edada ... Umzimba wakhe wafunyanwa emva kweeyure ezintathu isithuba seemayile ezintathu ukususela kule ndawo ebetshone kuyo. (1970: 175)

> (... whilst people were swimming it was noted that Zuzekile had disappeared, yet he had entered with other people in the sea ... His corpse was found after three hours about three miles from where he had originally drowned).

Zuzekile reaps what he has been sowing. Blacker (op. cit.: 15) rightfully asserts;

> An unsolved conflict leaves the viewer unsatisfied. The viewer has been watching to see how the conflict will be resolved. He may not like an unhappy resolution, but he will like it considerably more than no resolution.

Bongela has satisfactorily resolved the conflict of Umzi Omtsha by tucking away all the loose trends to the satisfaction of the reader. The good characters have won in the end though they have not lifted a finger against Zuzekile in the form of retaliation. Virtue has won over evil in the end.

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4.2 ALITSHONI LINGENANDABA (1979)

The dominant conflict in Alitshoni Lingenandaba is a social one, that is a struggle between one man and another, Vuyisile Mbuya against Rubin Mdaka. Another minor conflict, which, however, is a contributory factor to the major conflict, is between Dora Somlilo and fate or destiny. About different conflicts that may complement one another Holman and Harmon (op. cit.: 108) declare:

> Seldom do we find a simple, single conflict in a plot, but rather a complex one partaking of two or even all the preceding elements.[4]

In Alitshoni Lingenandaba the cause of conflict between Vuyisile and Rubin is the disappearance of R4,000 belonging to the Orient Beach Fishing Depot firm in East London. On investigating, Vuyisile, Rubin's successor, discovers that the money disappeared during Rubin's time as a financial bookkeeper of the firm. Vuyisile warns him to refund it before the auditors visit the firm. Rubin is unable to refund the whole amount at short notice since he has given it to Dora Somlilo, who in turn has misused it. About such a difficult dilemma Gardner (op. cit.: 187) comments:

> Certain forces within and outside the character, must press him toward a certain course of action, while other forces, both within and outside, must exert strong pressure against that course of action.

Rubin is anxious to reimburse the firm's money but is unable to do so. He intends selling his old car and asks Dora to augment it with the money he had given to her. Dora responds dishearteningly:

> Andiqondi ukuba ukuthengisa le moto kwakusiza lutho kuba seyindala... Futhi laa mali wawundinike yona ... ndayisebenzisa ndingazi ukuba uza kuyifuna. (1979: 17)
>
> (I do not think by selling this car you will gain anything because it is old. Besides that money you gave me ... I spent it not knowing that you will need it.)

The alternative plan propounded by Dora at this juncture is that

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> Njengokuba lo mfo kubonakala ukuba ulinqwanqwa elixabe endleleni yethu, kuyimfuneko ukuba makagawulwe. Inye ke into efunekayo sisibindi. (1979: 19)
>
> (Since this fellow appears to be a stumbling-block in our path, it is imperative that he should be disposed off. The only thing necessary is bravery.)

One may wonder why Dora, a female who is supposed to be of the weaker sex, polite, submissive, and humane, who is supposed to offer her advice in a subtle manner when necessary, should be so brave, raving and daring in her approach in solving the problem confronting them, especially as she says:

> Ndixolele nayiphi into ngekhe ndijibilike. (1979: 19)
> (I am prepared for anything I cannot renege.)[5]

Dora is beautiful and intelligent. While still a scholar near Ginsberg she excels not only on the sports field but in the classroom as well. She does Form I and II in one year. She wants to be a professional woman but

unfortunately her father passes away. She has to seek employment in East London. She falls in love with Thamsanqa Gebe and later becomes the beauty queen of East London. She hopes to be married to him, but unfortunately he is forced to marry Nomathamsanqa Gwebi.[6] Fate interferes in the affairs of Dora again and prevents her from being comfortably settled in life.

Rubin is her last ray of hope to attain her goal. She rages as Rubin remarks:

> Uyalibala ukuba ukubanjwa kwam uza kuphoswa nanguloo mtshato. (1979: 18)
>
> (You forget that if I am arrested you will be deprived of that marriage.)

Obviously Rubin has promised to marry Dora. If he is arrested her dream in life will be crushed beyond repair. Dora seems to be harrowed by the fear of failure in life, failure to settle down comfortably like any married woman. It is therefore understandable when she is prepared to tolerate no opposition from any mortal between her and her last hope - marriage to Rubin Mdaka. A furious and frustrated woman is as dangerous as a serpent in the grass.

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With such a strong-willed woman backing Rubin the reader does not expect to see him backing down before Vuyisile's threats, but that the conflict will escalate in intensity. Bongela is to be commended for portraying characters that display bulldog tenacity. There would be no interest in depicting a cowardly Vuyisile, who flees from the evil traps set by the villainous Rubin at the work place, and, assisted by Dora, in the township. Though Rubin is keen to refund the firm's money, the author has created insurmountable obstacles to his doing so, and consequently the conflict is alive and grips the reader. It is intensified by the intervention of Dora as she remarks:

> UThixo wakudala wayindoda ekhaliphileyo nenesibindi. Ubugwala kuwe bukhangeleka buyinqambi: ukanti nosizi lutyhalelwe ngaphandle kweminyango yengqiqo ejongene nesenzo sobudoda, isenzo esihlamba indlela ebheka ebuqaqawulini bohambo lwethu. Ukuba ubungeyondoda ngabe la mazwi andiwathethi kuwe. (1979: 160)

> (God created you a brave and daring man. Cowardice to you looks impure: yet sympathy is pushed outside the doors of comprehension that are staring at a man's deed, a deed that clears the way leading to our bright journey. If you were not a man I would not be saying these words to you.)[7]

Strong pressures from all angles force Rubin to follow the only option left open for him, that is 'murdering' Vuyisile and fleeing to Lorenco (sic) Marques. Gardner (op. cit.: 187) concurs:

> Both pressures must come not only from outside the character but also from within him, because otherwise the conflict involves no doubt, no moral choice, and as a result can have no profound meaning.

Like an ox led to the slaughterhouse the conflict exists between Rubin and Vuyisile, the only man who is able to read him like a book. In order to untangle himself from the difficult situation Rubin has thoughtlessly landed himself in, he must kill Vuyisile, who, according to Dora is an obstacle to their love, freedom and a happy marriage. One thing Rubin fails to contemplate is that though Vuyisile might be successfully eliminated, the long arm of the law cannot be dodged for ever. Shortly after 'murdering' Vuyisile he finds himself fretting behind bars for the rest of his life.

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4.3 KUSA KUSIHLWA (1984)

The conflict in Kusa Kusihlwa is a social one, existing between the Ntsibande and Makhwetshu families. This social conflict lying at the heart of the novel, produces serious emotions that affect characters emotionally. Cox and Lewis (op. cit.: 83) aver:

> ... if the treatment of a conflict is serious and the resolution of the conflict affects the characters emotionally - a major character dies, or is killed, or is destroyed in some way or another - his destruction affects the emotional lives of the other characters.

Social conflicts are very popular in fiction since they typify the problems grappled with by the majority of people in life. In writing a novel the author creates his own world with its own setting and people. Peck and Coyle (op. cit.: 12) assert:

> a novel tells us about life, ... it tells us about characters and it tells us about society, although, of course, it is mainly concerned with the way the two interrelate ...

The real cause of conflict between the Makhwetshu and Ntsibande families is the buying of the shop formerly owned by Mr Mosia from Lesotho. Ntongana Makhwetshu does not have enough money to buy the shop; instead he rationalizes that since it was built by his uncle, Sondlo, he is the rightful heir to it. On the other hand Lungile Ntsibande does not hesitate to buy it when it is offered by Mosia. From the outset the author subtly suggests that Lungile is superior to Ntongana. Besides, Bongela states that Lungile has passed Std 10 and consequently has a secure job, yet nothing is said about Ntongana in this regard. As soon as Lungile starts running the shop people become jealous of him. The author captures this jealousy in the following manner:

> Babakhona ubuhumhum obuthethekayo bokuba uLungile ngokwakhe wayengamelwe kukuyifumana le venkile kuba akangomZulu. (1984: 20)

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> (There were some rumours going around that Lungile was not qualified to own this shop, either, since he was not a Zulu.)

From the start, Makhwetshu is among the leading vociferous opponents of Lungile. The writer reveals him thus:

> Omnye wabantu ababezintshatsheli ekuthetheni nabantu kakubi mayela nalo mcimbi yayingumfo wakwaMakhwetshu owayehleli kwelaseThekwini isithuba seminyaka engamashumi amabini. (1984: 20)

> (One of the people who were champions in speaking ill about this matter to the people was a Makhwetshu fellow who had lived in Durban for a period of twenty years.)

In preparing a fertile ground for conflict to germinate, Bongela presents quite early an antagonist who will inevitably enter into conflict with Lungile. He is, however, insufficiently endowed educationally to be a worthy opponent

to Lungile. He will have to resort to underhand activities in order to remove him from ownership of the shop. This is a good literary device by the author. Social conflict always exists between people of some stature in life so as to arouse interest and suspense in the reader. A conflict that exists between hoboes is not exciting. They are not the polished top brass of society, nor are they exemplary models one can emulate in society. Average or above average personalities make good and thrilling conflict in literature. Qangule (op. cit.: 13) concurs that:

> A conflict is usually between men of high status or of some distinction (in life). If they are not of a high rank, they are generally above average in some particular attribute or in general endowment.

Makhwetshu, however, fails dismally to live up to the standard required to make him worthy to be Lungile's antagonist, who will thwart and frustrate him in every forward step he takes. Bongela comments:

> ... uLungile uyiqalile ivenkile engazihluphi nakancinci ngezi ntetha nangala masuka-ndihlale alo mfo kaMakhwetshu ekwakubonakala ukuba ngumagoloda owalusa iimpuku. (1984: 21)
>
> (... Lungile started with the shop, not in the least perturbed by these speeches and struggles of this Makhwetshu fellow who was apparently a hawk herding the mice.)

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In order to reinforce and energize Makhwetshu's feeble punches of the hidden agenda, his wife, Nozililo, joins the fray. Unlike her husband, Nozililo is sly, foxy intimate friend of his wife, Nomakhwezi. She wants to be close to Ntsibande's family, know their weakness and mortally wound them when they least expect it. Nozililo supplies Nomakhwezi with the township gossip including Lungile's 'philandering behaviour'.

It seems as if Nozililo is more intelligent than her husband. Apparently she is aware that as long as there is peace and harmony in the Ntsibande family, her own family will never succed in owning the shop. The binding family link should be broken down. She seems to be aware of the truth contained in the universally acknowledged maxim: unite we stand, divided we fall. Bongela says about Nozililo's sharp mind:

> Kaloku le mazi yayineliso elibukhali lokubona apho intunja yobuthathaka bengqondo kaNomakhwezi bungakhona. (1984: 31)
>
> (By the way this lady had a mind sharp enough to detect any flair or crack in Nomakhwezi's mind.)

She discovers that Nomakhwezi's weakness is jealousy and she exploits it to her own advantage and to the detriment of Nomakhwezi.

Nozililo's scheming intrigues succeed as Nomakhwezi barks out some ultimatums to her husband:

> Ukususela ngoku, akusobe uphinde ulubeke olwakho unyawo kwaMashu. Ukuba uyaya siza kuhamba kunye. (1984: 24)
>
> (From now, you will never set foot in Mashu. If you go we will go together.)

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In censuring the aggressive attitude of women towards men in African society Mkonto (op. cit.: 48-49) reminds them that:

> The operation of the rule of law in Xhosa traditional society is grounded in a hierarchy of authority ... descending from the councillors and elders to a man, as head of the family, his wife, boys and girls.

In this novel, both Nomakhwezi and Nozililo disregard completely this hierarchical order of authority. The setting in Durban does not provide respect for traditional values. They have accepted Western civilization without questioning its values, Mkonto (op. cit.: 88) asserts once more:

> ... women are the ones who have benefited most in these social changes. Christianity has freed them from their subordinate and subservient roles to men.

The focus of the conflict temporarily shifts away from the Makhwetshu and Ntsibande families. The intensity of the conflict, for a moment, is concentrated in the Ntsibande family, between the husband, Lungile, and his wife, Nomakhwezi. Meanwhile the Makhwetshus get a breathing period to recover and formulate new strategies against their disarrayed enemy.

In order to intensify the conflict between Lungile and Nomakhwezi, Nozililo tells the latter:

> Umyeni wakho njengokuba engabuyi nje uphaphile. Ndimbone kakuhle namhlanje ehleli etafileni nenzwakazi endingayazanga, ekucaca ukuba kulalwa kule hotele. (1984: 41)
>
> (Since your husband does not return he is involved (with women). I saw him properly today sitting at table with a beauty I did not recognize. Obviously they are sleeping in that hotel.)

This information is more than Nomakhwezi can bear, and the problems of Ntsibande's family become more complicated. It is the concern of the critic with imaginative skill to unravel this complicatoin. Peck and Coyle (op. cit.: 116) assert that

> The novelist complicates the neat pattern of the story either by offering us a full and complex impression of life or ... by the way in which he or she handles the narration.[8]

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As soon as Lungile returns home on Friday, Nomakhwezi's anger bursts out as the former greets and banters her unsuspectingly. In an aggressive attitude she explodes in torrents of rhetorical questions:

> Uyakwazi wena ukubuza impilo kum? Uyikhathalele impilo yam nokuba uzicingela ukuba uhlikihlile phantsi kweenwele? Urhaqaza urhaqaze iveki yonke nezi rhabishi ulala nazo ezihotele ubuye uze kunyuza inyilo kum? (1984: 43)
>
> (Do you know how to inquire about my health? Do you bother about my health or think you are brilliant? You engage in frequent promiscuity the whole week with these rubbish you sleep with in the hotel and you return to inquire about my health?)

It is the tradition among the amaXhosa, when one has been away from the family for some days, to inquire about their health on arriving home. If, however, this inquiry is coldly received or completely ignored, the one who

inquires knows that he or she is not welcomed or is regarded as an enemy. The word 'impilo' (health) has been mentioned three times by Nomakhwezi, the third time with a deliberate defect like the lisping of a child. This subtle suggests that Nomakhwezi is no longer interested in responding positively to her husband like a respected being. She is looking down upon him as though he were a child. A child's inquiry about one's health cannot be taken seriously. The words 'kunyuza' and 'inyilo' when written properly are 'kubuza' (to ask) 'impilo' (health) respectively. Their root consonants, however, have been deliberately replaced by 'ny', which is reminiscent of words that have negative and insulting connotations. The presence of Lungile is nauseating to Nomakhwezi. If married couples have reached such a stage in their marriage relationship, worse things can be expected to happen. This is good literary device by Bongela to depict the nadir of their love. Qangule (op. cit.: 14) makes an interesting observation:

> ... a conflict arises out of an issue that is intolerable or unacceptable to the mind.

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Bongela has succeeded in creating an interesting conflict between Lungile and Nomakhwezi, full of suspense, so that when they die the conflict dies as well. Nozililo has partially achieved her goal, the remaining obstacle being how to own the shop legally. The Makhwetshus have miscalculated in their strategy to own the shop. After the death of his parents Mpumelelo inherits Lungile's property. As a minor, Mpumelelo's property is taken care of by Thamsanqa, his uncle, and Yolisa, his grandmother. It would be inartistic of Bongela to pit Mpumelelo, a minor, against the matured and scheming Makhwetshu family. There is no thrill in matching a weak and inexperienced character against a strong and shrewd one. It comes as no surprise then that the conflict exists now between the Makhwetshu family and the protectors of Mpumelelo. They are confronted by another insurmountable stumbling-block. If they kill Mpumelelo the shop will automatically become the property of Thamsanqa and Yolisa. The solution is to kill them all or devise another watertight stratagem.[9] Nozililo seems to be aware of this uphill task as she remarks to her friends:

> Esekho nje uThamsanqa nalaa jingxa wentombi enamajingxeba ithengela phaya akukabikho nto iza kulunga. (1984: 57)

(As Thamsanqa is still there and as he and that old spinster are managing the shop nothing will succeed.)

It can be safely said that the conflict now resumes its original stance, that is, a collision course between the Makhwetshus and the Ntsibandes. Yolisa Soluthi is Mpumelelo's grandmother through his mother and Thamsanqa is Mpumelelo's uncle through his father. Both characters are therefore close relatives of Mpumelelo and whatever happens to the latter, they are duty bound to protect him.

The Makhwetshus mobilize once more in an attempt to regain the ownership of the shop. Since the grievous dispute between Lungile and Nomakhwezi terminated in their death, the conflict has been off-focus for some time. Bongela refocuses it by making Ntongana Makhwetshu demand the licence of the shop directly from Thamsanqa. Blacker (op. cit.: 14) concurs with this view when he says:

> The conflict must bring the antagonist and the protagonist together. These are the persons in conflict and they must resolve it in one way or another.[10]

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As Thamsanqa refuses to comply with this demand and displays a belligerent attitude, Ntongana utters threats of action that will be instituted against him:

> Uyabona Thamsanqa, la maqhinga nidibene ngawo aza kudula kwaye siza kwazana. (1984: 82)

> (You see Thamsanqa, these tricks you are concocting will be divulged and we will know each other.)

The next move the Makhwetshus initiate is legal action against Thamsanqa, who also appeals to Lungile's lawyer. After a protracted case, the lawyers unanimously agree to wait until the real shop owner returns, who is by now studying for medicine in Edinburgh, Scotland. The Makhwetshus are frustrated, and decide to hire thugs to burn down the shop, if they cannot own it through fair means. Luckily Thamsanqa is informed timeously by a friend about the impending plot. In turn he informs the police, who waylay the thugs inside the shop. As they break into the shop, three are arrested, one is shot dead and one escapes. During the investigation,

> ... iitsontsi ziyixelile into yokuba beziqeshiwe ukuba zize kwenza lo msebenzi. Emva kolo phando kwabanjwa usapho lwakwaMakhwetshu, uNozililo noNtongana ... (1984: 85)
>
> (... the thugs stated that they were hired to do this job. After that investigation the Makhwetshu family was arrested, Nozililo and Ntongana ...)

As an evil character, Nozililo is the driving force in the persistent endeavours to own the shop.[11] She is prepared to use any means, fair or foul, to reach her goal. At this juncture there is something at stake for her losing not only the shop but her reputation of being the big brain and daring woman among her numerous friends at Mlazi. She acts out of necessity now to defend this reputation. Some semi-literate people accord status to a jailbird, and regard such a person with awe for surviving the brutal prison life. It seems as if Nozililo is such a person.

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Every stratagem used by Nozililo and Ntongana to eliminate the Ntsibandes and own the shop gradually leads to their own downfall. The evil behaviour of Nozililo has convinced her that she is acting in a justifiable manner and makes her think not she but the Ntsibande family is the cause of conflict. Her actions bring suffering not only upon her opponents but also upon herself and her family.

It should be noted, however, that one of the causes of the flagging conflict in Kusa Kusihlwa is the fact that Mpumelelo, the main character, is not shown meditating and planning any counter-attack on the Makhwetshus. He merely parries their blows, and fails as a consequence to

> ... generate titanic atomic energy whose explosion creates a chain reaction. (vide: Qangule, loc. cit.)

Since Bongela has no further use for the Makhwetshus, he resolves the conflict by involving them in an act of arson thus:

> Ngabusuku buthile ezinzulwini, kwabonwa ngomzi kaNtongana usitsha ... Ngenxa yamadangatye awayelapho kwaba nzima ukusindisa nempunde le ... Athi akuthotha amalahle

> namadangatye abantu bothuswa kukubona izidumbu zabantu ababini, indoda nomfazi, sebatshayo. (1984: 112)
>
> (In the middle of a certain night, Ntongana's homestead was seen burning .. Because of the flames that were blazing, it was difficult to save any relic ... As the flames and ashes abated people ... were shocked to see two corpses, a man and a woman burnt to ashes.)

With such an ending an ordinary reader may respond with no more than a sort of sadistic pleasure (vide Ryan 1985: 47), because the Makhwetshus get exactly what they deserve, a tooth for a tooth.

4.4 THE SILENT PEOPLE (1983)

The conflict in The Silent People, as in the other novels, is also a social one. The main character wants to attain a certain goal in life but is prevented and frustrated by another person or persons from reaching that goal. Ryan (op. cit.: 49) declares:

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> The plot of a novel is based on conflict, centered in the protagonist and concerned with something he wishes to gain but the attainment of which is uncertain ... other persons, environmental factors aid or hinder him in the pursuit of his goal.

The conflict in The Silent People starts when Rufus Mendile informs his parents and close relatives, the Miya clan, that he wants to marry Margaret Mathonti. The Miya elders put forward, at once, various reasons for opposing this marriage. They state, inter alia:

- her parents are separated. What will this woman know about marriage when her parents failed to set an example?
- this would-be daughter-in-law has been spoiled by her mother, she does not know how to work.
- she is proud and ill-mannered despite being educated.
- the serious aspect is that her mother is a witch, therefore her daughter must have been taught this art.

The amaXhosa may condone or tolerate other weaknesses of a woman but not witchcraft. It is such a serious act that the perpetrator is ostracised if not killed by the public. In showing the utter disgust of African people in general for witchcraft Schapera (op. cit.: 211) asserts:

> Sorcery or witchcraft, the malicious use of magic to inflict harm upon other people or their property, is one of the things most dreaded by the Bantu; and it is usually drastically punished.

If the perpetrator of this malicious art is detected by legitimate magicians or witch-doctors, Schapera (loc. cit.) explains that,

> If his guilt is established in this way, he is brought before the chief and immediately, often cruelly, punished ... More generally he is killed, often by torture and his property confiscated. (vide also Ngani's Umkhonto kaTshiwo)

This proves how serious and unacceptable witchcraft is among the amaXhosa as well. No matter what, Maragaret will not be accepted by the Miya clan as she carries that stigma. On the other hand, no matter how strongly the Miyas may condemn Margaret and argue against the marriage, Rufus is not prepared to marry another woman. The Miyas are defeated and Rufus marries the woman he loves. In disgust the clan retaliates by ostracising them.

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The period of peace and prosperity is short lived. At first the marriage is successful, especially when the couple flouts the traditional values. When he returns home from work Rufus helps his wife 'smearing the floor with cowdung or washing the linen'. Whenever he visits his friends he takes his wife, too, and walks hand in hand in public. They further trample on Xhosa tradition in that Rufus will 'carry a bundle of wood on his head' and 'fetch water from the stream with a bucket'. His father, Lindile, rebukes him, saying that these are duties to be performed by a married woman.

When Margaret gives birth to a baby boy, her father-in-law is on cloud nine.[12] According to Miya custom it is the prerogative of the in-laws to name the child, especially if the first-born is a boy. Lindile names him Luvuyo, which means joy. Margaret, however, opposes this exclusive right and calls her son Silo, which means a beast. She claims that she is not happy with the attitude of her in-laws, it is not the child she wants to call

beast but them. Rufus, shocked by this frank and daring insult to his elders, demands an explanation. In a candid manner Margaret blurts out:

> To me they are dogs, vipers, jackals, foxes .. They make me sick. (1983: 7)[13]

These torrents of insults to her in-laws vindicate Maxhalanzima's (one of the Miya elders) prior assertion about their would-be daughter-in-law. Since Margaret was brought up by a single parent she has not been taught the duties of a married woman and how to respect the in-laws. Qangule (op. cit.: 70) comments:

> Character and environment are so closely inter-related that we have to consider them as inseparable. If one is faulty it affects the other...

Margaret's background is 'faulty' as Maxhalanzima stated earlier. It therefore effects her behaviour at her in-laws' home, a place where a molokazana (daughter-in-law) should always be vigilant when it comes to respecting more or less everything. Margaret argues vehemently anyhow with Rufus because she has not been taught that it is wrong to do so. One must mind what one says.[14]

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According to Xhosa tradition, Rufus is either expected to take some disciplinary measure against his wife or at least report the matter to his elders at once. Instead he does neither but only mutters something inaudible. His parents notice that the child is persistently called Silo instead of Luvuyo. For the sake of peace and harmony, they dare not confront Margaret because of her arrogance. The researcher is of the opinion that the fault lies with Rufus and his parents in gradually retreating from their right to discipline Margaret. There is a saying among the amaXhosa that, 'Isiqhelo siyayoyisa inggondo' (The habit defeats reasoning, or habit is the second nature.) By always having her way Margaret gradually gains dominance over her husband and in-laws. When the Mendiles prepare a mbeleko ritual for the child, Margaret refuses to participate. Instead, after openly defying them, she grabs her child and leaves for her home at Mpenduza. The mbeleko ritual becomes a failure. Since it is

> the custom to introduce the child to his ancestors and to ask for their blessing (1983: 9),

as the child grows up, all the family members and close relatives assemble together as witnesses joyfully join the gathering. Margaret has defied not only the living elders but also the ancestors thereby. Demonstrating his objection to Margaret's flouting of mbeleko ritual, and at the same time castigating Lindile for ignoring their pleas against Margaret, Maxhalanzima remarks:

> That a ceremony should be postponed because of a woman, a mendi, perturbs our hearts. We Miyas will continue to blame Lindile, our brother. We warned him against this marriage. I have a feeling that our ancestors are not pleased and I wonder what future any child of this household will have. (1983: 11)

This is the extent of the conflict between the Miya elders and Margaret Mathonti. Apparently Rufus does not lift a finger to reproach her. As a qualified carpenter he is liberated from the traditional strings. He does not see anything done by Margaret bad enough to qualify her as a witch, as he remarks to his sister:

> Nonsense! Margaret's given me no potion ... (1983: 11).

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He is prepared to fetch his wife and child back from Mpenduza. Margaret and Rufus, armed with education, are matched against uneducated Miya elders profoundly enmeshed in traditionalism. Each group will have to utilize all the resources at their disposal in defending themselves and attacking their opponents. Qangule (op. cit.: 26) expresses the same opinion:

> Attack and counter-attack keep the conflict from flagging. The counter-attack in each instance is carried to the opponent and is stronger than the previous attack.

Margaret makes demands as a condition for her return to Rufus. Since she no longer regards Rufus's home as her home, the latter must build a house for her at once. The custom, however, demands that the eldest son should stay at his father's house when the latter dies. Rufus is therefore in an unwanted impasse since his wife wants to lead her own life with no family strings attached. His mind is torn between satisfying his wife's demands and obeying the demands of his custom. Margaret forges ahead in that Lindile is forced to 'persuade the Miya elders that a break with the custom was necessary' for the sake of peace between their son and Margaret.

Within a short time, Margaret's houses is built. Nosayinethe, Margaret's mother-in-law, as she visits her observes that

- Margaret wears a dress that has been cut short and no longer reaches the knee,
- she wears a wig instead of the traditional head-doek,
- she is no longer observing the hlonipha custom meant to revere the ancestors and important people in the family.[15]

When questioned by her mother-in-law about this change of style, she maintains that at her house she is free from the traditional shackles to do as she pleases. Lindile observing also that his son is gradually shifting away from tradition, castigates him:

> You seem to think that you can ignore all our customs, even the ancestors. Without the ancestors nothing will turn out well ... They guard us against dangers, protect us from enemies. But when we go against them they punish us severely, even to the point of death. We must show them gratitude by holding the ceremonial rituals and feasts. Whatever you do, you won't escape the wrath of the ancestors ... Ancestors do not forget ... (1983: 16-17)

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Since the living elders have been completely defied and ignored by Rufus and his wife, Lindile warns him that he cannot defy the ancestors and get away with it. The first sign of the ancestors' wrath is the development of wrangles between Rufus and his wife over disciplining the boys. These squabbles permeate to Silo and Andile, their sons. Instead of abating, these differing opinions proliferate, thus breaking down the family as a unit. Margaret is spoiling the boys, Silo in particular. Rufus attempts to point out to his wife Silo!s foibles, such as being too 'talkative, bragging, naughty, lazy and temperamental'. Margaret retaliates by verbal attacks on Andile as 'that nuisance, that long-tongue, that pet of yours'. While Rufus is busy building his family according to socially accepted norms, Margaret is busy dividing and breaking down the house. Building up is a strenuous and long process whereas disuniting and demolishing is easier and faster. Obviously what Margaret is doing will have quicker and far-reaching repercussions. Margaret succeeds in usurping the authority to discipline the boys, which is traditionally vested in the man as head of the family. Usurping the authority to discipline children is aptly explained by Mkonto (op. cit.: 102) when he writes:

> The supreme authority to discipline the children and especially boys is vested traditionally in the head of the family. The flouting of this authority by women is taken in a very serious light because it is regarded by men as one of the major reductive objects of their manhood.

What Mkonto says is true of Rufus. His wife has gradually reduced his status as the head of the family, has stripped him of the traditional responsibility of maintaining order in his own house. In the eyes of Silo, Margaret's status has been elevated as one to be emulated and respected.

In the stick-fight that ensues between Silo and Andile because of the former's bullying attitude, Silo comes off second best. Rufus wants to give him more punishment but Silo escapes with the aid of his mother, and flees to Johannesburg. Bongela skilfully weakens the dominance of the educated couple over the illiterate Miya elders by making them quarrel between themselves. Futhermore Margaret's arrogance and aggressive attitude lead to a clash with her father-in-law, an action unacceptable not only to the Miya clan but to Rufus as well. When asked to account for her wayward behaviour, she puts up a feeble defence:

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> She had not intended to live a traditional life and nobody had told her in advance that she would have to. (1983: 50).

This is the climax of her defiant attitude to the Miya elders. Obviously she has not been taught how to behave, talk to and respect her in-laws. The elders have no alternative but to instruct her:

> ... go to the home of your birth and start afresh ... you must be taught everything by your own people, if you still want to continue being a mendi here. (1983: 53).

Schapera (op. cit.: 73-74) writes about the respect expected of the daughters-in-law:

> In the Nguni tribes, the behaviour especially of wives to their elder relatives-in-law is so strictly regulated that there is a special term, hlonipha, for this behaviour. Hlonipha affects all aspects of a married woman's life ... even her vocabulary for everyday things.

The conflict between Miya clan and Rufus ends here. With Margaret away, Rufus progresses well in life since he obeys the Miya elders and their customs. Bongela, however, resumes a thinly veiled conflict that exists between Margaret and Silo on the one hand and the ancestors on the other. Lindile's warning: "But whatever you do, you won't escape the wrath of the ancestors ... The ancestors do not forget us ..." seems to be coming alive. Whatever Margaret and Silo are doing in various places of employment is dogged by misfortunes and expulsions, until they return to the Miya elders and ask for forgiveness. Maxhalanzima, welcoming them back after a special offering to the ancestors on Silo's behalf, says to the latter:

> You are now a man, my son ... Now we must talk the language of peace not war. (1983: 94).

As for Margaret

> she has also returned home, finding a way to reconcile her modern values with tradition. (1983: 94).

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Some months later the Mendile family hold a huge feast to 'celebrate the benevolence of the silent people'.

4.5 SUMMARY

With regard to conflict, Bongela prefers external conflict, that is, a conflict existing between characters. In the four novels under investigation, the good characters desire either to accomplish certain goals without any hindrance, or to maintain an acceptable status quo. The realization of this is forestalled by evil characters. It becomes easy for the reader to find the parties that are at fault since the perpetrators are villainous characters, though they are convinced that they are on the right track. The novelist portrays tough-minded antagonists who temporarily succeed. The predominant view in this novels, to quote Qangule (op. cit.: 67),

> is usually between good and evil and that in the end good triumphs over evil.

The evil characters who repent are forgiven and welcomed back into the fold. Those who refuse to regret their wrongs are either killed in one way or another, or languish in prison for the rest of their lives.

One aspect that causes the conflict in these novel to flag is the distance between contending parties. Conflict cannot be kept alive and enthralling if the main characters involved in it are far apart. Another ingredient for a captivating conflict is attack and counter-attack, thus pushing the plot to the climax. The consoling view is that Bongela skilfully brings them together again to resolve the conflict, as Nondo (op. cit.: 4) points out:

> Resolution of conflict consists in taking appropriate corrective measures aimed at averting disaster, at the restoration of peace and order that have been shattered, or at repairing the harm done.

There is a general opinion gaining popularity that the novelist should abstain from telling the reader every detail about the end of the characters. The reader should rather imagine for himself/herself what the next events would be. Bongela, however, prefers to tell the reader what happens to all the major characters at the end of the novel. The researcher is of the opinion that he should not be criticized for this style. Perhaps Bongela is avoiding all the confusion and the wrong imaginations that may be formulated especially by fledgling critics.

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4.6 NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Ngcongwane, S.D. (1981: 70) comments thus about intrigue in the work of art, "Die intrige moet egter gesien word as die sisteem waarin alle handeling en gebeure in 'n kunswerk georganiseer word."

2. Ngcongwane (op. cit.: 71) says about conflict:
   Daar is 'n konflik van een of ander aard wat spanning skep en wat uiteindelik tot n' sekere oplossing lei... die meeste goeie romans vertoon die spanning.

3. Qangule, Z.S. (1974: 70) declares about the role of environment plays on the character: Character and environment are so closely inter-related that we have to consider them as inseparable. If one is faulty, it affects the other...

4. Qangule (op. cit.: 14) clearly states:
   We can infer that a conflict does not spring from one single source, but from a complexity of factors which together give rise to a solitary conflict.

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5. Mkonto, B.B. (1988: 68-69) shows that Western civilization has a bad influence on African women. Christianity has depicted traditionalism as an undersirable aspect.

6. Jane Austen (1974: 26) in her novel Pride and Prejudice says:
   A lady's imagination is very rapid indeed, it jumps from admiration to love, from love to matrimony in a moment. Perhaps Thamsanqa had no real intention of marrying Dora.

7. Dora's speech in encouraging Rubin to kill Vuyisile is reminiscent of lady Macbeth's to her husband before the assassination of King Duncan.
   (vide: Macbeth, Act 1 Scene 7)

8. Peck (1993: 3) accentuating the vital significance of a conflict in a novel declares that there must always be some sort of conflict going on in a work of literature or there would be no story.

9. Qangule (op. cit.: 17) quoting Beckson and Ganz:
   a villain is an evil character who acts in opposition to the hero.

10. Blacker, I.R. (1986: 14) goes on to say:
    A confrontation between antagonist and protagonist is considered to be a necessary element. A real conflict exists between the main characters in a work of literature.

11. Mkonto (op. cit.: 69) declares that some of the reasons for men to relax their disciplining of their wives are
Fears of being excommunicated from the church and/or being charged at the magistrate's court for assault.

12. Schapera, I. (1953: 95) describes the status of a married woman: ... as measured by the number of children she has borne, the birth of a child is hailed with great joy as an event of importance to the whole village.

13. Shaw (1972: 91) comments about social confllict as a struggle between man and man. Much popular fiction is based on social conflict: two men trying to win the love of a girl, etc.

14. Qangule (op. cit.: 28) comments about the criticism levelled by traditionalists against the behaviour of modern married women: They resent the fact that they wear very short dresses and parade bare headed in the courtyard ... They detest their disrespect for custom and tradition.

15. Elliot, A. (1981: 48-49) eplains hlonipha as the payment of respect by umtshakazi (the bride) at her new home. From now on she must never again say the name or use any word in which the first syllable contains the syllable of her in-laws ... if in her carelessness does say the father-in-law's name, it is a very serious matter.

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CHAPTER FIVE

5. CHARACTERIZATION

Characters are people created by a writer in his works of art. They are assessed on the basis of what the author tells the reader about them, and on the basis of what they do or say. (vide: Peck and Coyle: 1993: 110). The author creates such characters as part of a broader pattern: they represent the members of society in the world, and reflect the author's view of the how people relate to one another in society.

Abrams (op. cit.: 23) defines characters as

> the persons presented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with moral, dispositional and emotional qualities that are expressed in what they say - the dialogue - and what they do - the action.

Msimang (op. cit.: 99) says characterization

> ... is a sum total of techniques employed by an artist in presenting characters in a literary work of art so that such characters are perceived by the audience/reader as persons endowed with moral and dispositional as well as physical qualities.

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Characters are persons skilfully created by the writer to the extent of being convincing and lifelike, whereas characterization is the expertise in portraying believable characters in the work of art. Bongela uses most of the traditional methods in portraying the characters of his novels. The following are some of the ways employed by authors in character depiction: direct description by the author, the showing method, dialogue between characters, habits of a character, what the other characters say, a character's reaction to various stimuli, a character's likes and dislikes, a character's physical appearance, the naming method. (vide: Satyo: 1977: 47-48)[1]

In discussing characterization in Bongela's novels only the major characters involved in conflict will be reviewed. For the sake of brevity, only the relevant methods of characterization, used by Bongela in his novels, will be analysed.

5.1 DIRECT DESCRIPTION BY THE AUTHOR

This is the commonest and most popular method of depicting character in Xhosa literature (vide: Mtuze 1986: 79). What Mtuze says is true because this is the easiest method for any writer, but to be effective and captivating the writer must have the command of the language.[2] Bongela uses direct comments extensively when introducing his characters. In Umzi Omtsha he describes David Qoloza as follows:

> Phakathi kwamatyala ayeza kuxoxwa kwaye kukho isintsompothi setyala likaDavide ityendyana lomfana elithe ncothu kuhle, ebunzi lalo landlalekileyo. Lo mfana wayenodevana oluthe rhwe phezu komlomo, kunye namashiya aqhamileyo waza wanesicukwana seendevu apha esilevini. (1970: 3)
>
> (Among the cases to be reviewed there was an intricate case of David, a young man of medium height, with a wide forehead. This young man had a newly-grown mustache on the upper lip, with thick eyebrows and little tuft of beard on the chin.)

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The author further informs the reader that David was twenty-one years old. David's physical description reveals energy, intelligence and zest for life. When introducing Mbulelo Nyasana the author says:

> Phakathi kwabafana ... kwaye kukho umfana othe ncothu kuhle phofu, engemde engemfutshane. wayentsundu bumnyama ngebala, enodevana oluncweliweyo kancinci lwahonjiswa apha phezu komlomo, into ethi xa ikukhangele ngathi ikugocagoca ngaphakathi engqondweni. Lo mfo wayengathandi ukuthetha kakhulu kodwa wayesithi xa sekude wathetha naye ancokole ngokukhululekileyo ude ulibale ukuba usisithuli. (1970: 13)
>
> (Among the young men ... there was one who was of medium height. He was dark-brown in complexion, with a finely cut narrow strip of beard in the upper lip. When he looked at you, it was as if he was probing your mind. He was not a talkative man but as soon as he started conversing, you would forget that he was reserved.)

A further description of Mbulelo is that he is a humble man who likes playing rugby and going to church. On Fridays at five o'clock during youth services, he would preach like an evangelist. In the male hostel he would make a long devout prayer to such an extent that the other students would start 'suffering from coughing'. The students nicknamed him 'reverend'. From Bongela's comments Mbulelo is revealed as a humble, neat, sharp-eyed and peace-loving man.

The 'reverend' is in love with a lady the author describes as

> ... intombi entle nayo entsundu, ekuncuma kuvelisa izinxonxo, ethi yakuhleka kuvele umhlantla; kuthi thetha nayo rhoqo nokuba ubungazimisele. Yayixandile le ntombi phofu ingengabo aba bantu bamizimba mikhulu gqitha. Yayimile kakuhle ithandeka. Igama lale nzwakazi yayinguNontando intombi kaQoloza phesheya kweNciba. (1970: 13)

> (... a beautiful woman also brown, with dimples whenever she smiles, a gap between the front upper teeth would be seen whenever she laughed; you would be charmed into conversation with her even if you were not keen. This lady was broad though not obese. She was well poised and attractive. The name of this beauty was Nontando, the daughter of Qoloza from Transkei.)

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The smile and laughter in Nontando's description depict love and peace. These two features, together with her attractive body, are the fatal attributes that will attract enemies to her. No normal young man will pass such a beautiful lady without uttering a word of appreciation: bees and butterflies flock to brightly coloured flowers. It is a natural disposition.

From the outset the author's description of Zuzekile Mahlathi, though brief, is couched in negative epithets:

> ... weva uNontando sekukho ilizwi elitsho emva kwakhe ngobubele. Uthe ejika wabe sebona kusiza kuye umfo omde onamatuma, onamehlo agwangqa bubomvu. Lo mfo kubonakala ukuba wayemazi uNontando (1970: 18-19).

> (... Nontando heard a voice amiably calling behind her. As she turned she saw a tall man with whiskers, his eyes were reddish brown. Apparently this man knew Nontando.)

There is some craftiness in this man in the fact that Nontando does not see him coming. His coming is reminiscent of a snake in the grass, and consequently she has no chance to avoid him. His skill in slyness is further revealed by the manner in which he greets Nontando. He pretends to be harmless so that she can relax and drop her guard. His tallness when compared to Nontando's physical appearance depicts incompatibility and something unfathomable, subtly suggesting that they will never be in good terms in future. "Reddish brown eyes" are symbolic of imminent danger. Worst of all, it is implied by the author that the man pretends not to know Nontando. The whiskers are symbolic of a bridle. This man will control Nontando's destiny whether she likes it or not.

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In Alitshoni Lingenandaba the author comments about Dora Nonzwakazi Somlilo.

> Wakhiwe umntwana womntu. Yinto ekumila kuthe potso, ebuso bucwengileyo bacikizwa kukufaneleka kwalo mpumlwana nangaloo mehlwana ngathi ngawosana. Isikhumba siyakhanya, unwele lumnyama khaca, luthi ke lwakwenziwa ezi zangotsha zabasetyhini kuthi hlamba amehlo. Mayifulathele ikhwele kuloo micekethwana yezihlangu zizithende ngathi zizilanda, kuthi yeka nale ubuyenza. (1979: 11)
>
> (Somebody's child is exquisitely shaped. Her body is erect, the face is clear and calm and is made more beautiful by the small nose and small eyes like those of a baby. Light in complexion with black hair, and when it is properly trimmed in lady's style one's eyes are riveted. When she turns her back wearing those pencilled high-heeled shoes, one's attention is riveted.)

There is a hidden evil in the hypnotism of Dora when compared with the innocence of a baby. The hair neatly tucked away and those sharp high-heeled shoes are symbolic of danger. The fact that the alluring beauty is completed when looked at from behind denotes an element of danger which she is successful in hiding. The small eyes and nose appear innocent and harmless, thus disarming whoever is approaching her. The erect body subtly suggests determination, inflexibility and forcefulness in getting what

she wants against all odds. The exquisite build depicts intelligence and complete control of herself. This is the beauty queen of East London.

5.2 THE USE OF DIALOGUE BY THE CHARACTERS

Bongela involves his characters in a dialogue so that they can reveal their true inner feelings, especially when emotionally aroused. This method allows the reader free rein to make his own judgement when assessing them from what they say. Peck and Coyle, (op. cit: 137) quoting Bakhtin, argue:

> ... all utterance are dialogue: they all imply a situation of dialogue or are directed at the listener.[3]

The following long extract taken from Alitshoni Lingenandaba suitably reveals the two characters Vuyisile and Rubin, and thus advance the action of the plot:

"Nkqo! Nkqo" lavakala ilizwi emnyango kanye ukubetha kwentsimbi yethoba. Kwangoko uxhume wema ngeenyawo wafaka umpu wakhe esingxotyeni. Phambi kokuba avule, uVuyisile ebesewuvulile umashini.
"Tyhini sewulele?"
"Le nto kutheni?" waphendula omnye engatyhilekanga.
"Hayi ndibona le nto yokutshixa kwangethuba".
"Kaloku kuselokishini apha."
"Hayi phofu unyanisile."
"Seningene nonke?"
"Sonke nabani?"
"Hayi bendiba uhamba nomntu."
"Hayi ndihamba ndedwa," waphendula omnye eyekelele umzimba
"Ibiyintoni ke?"
"Kaloku uyazi ukuba andihambelanga mcimbi wumbi ngaphandle kokulahleka kwemali yase`Orient Beach Fishing Depot'."
"Ke, imali yase `Fishing Depot' ifunwa kum?"
Uthe ukuba awubuze lo mbuzo uVuyisile wamjonga ntsho.
"Tyhini uzama ukuthi Rubin?"
"Andizami kuthini, kuphela ndiyabuza. Ukuba loo mbuzo ukuxakile ndoda ndikhwelele torho ndilale, ndidiniwe."
"Kulungile ke mandikuphendule. Le mali ikwisithuba sam-R4,000 yaseFishing Depot ndimelwe kukuyibuza kuwe ngezi zizathu ..."
uye watyatyadula ...
"Hayi hayi, undenzel' ingxolo torho Mbuya. Andiko nkundleni yamatyala apha. Khawuleza uphume ukuba akufuni nto imbi."

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"Ndiphume ndingayifumananga imali yeFem?"
"Ulipolisa leFem wena? Ndiza kukwenza ke ukuba ungaze uphinde uzenze impimpi," utsho warhola umpu ngokukhawuleza (1979: 161-162).

("Knock! Knock!" a voice was heard at the door exactly at nine o'clock. He stood up instantly and put his gun in his pocket. Before opening Vuyisile switched on the machine.
"Are you already asleep?"
"Why?" asked the other sullenly.
"I notice you have locked the door quite early."
"By the way this is a township."
"Yes, that is true."
"Are you all in?"
"All and who else?"
"I thought you were accompanied."
"No, I am alone," answered the other, composed.
"What do you want?"
"By the way you know I came for no other matter except the money belonging to the Orient Beach Fishing Depot."
"Why do you come to me for the Fishing Depot's money?"
As he asked this question, Vuyisile stared at him.
"Actually what are you trying to say, Rubin?"
"I am not trying to say, I am asking. If this question is baffling you, man, please leave me to sleep, I am tired."
"Right, let me tell you. This money worth about R4,000 ... I must demand it from you ..." he explained on and on ...
"No, no, you are making a noise, please, Mbuya. I am not in a court of law here. Make haste and get out if you don't want trouble."
"Must I leave without Firm's money?"
"Are you the Firm's police? I will make you never become a betrayer." So saying he flipped out a gun.)

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It is deduced form this excerpt that Vuyisile is vigilant, apprehensive and intelligent. Apparently he does not trust Rubin. Preparing for any unexpected reneging deed from Rubin, he secretly carries a recording machine. He switches it on before talking to him. He, however, makes an error of judgement by relying too much on the machine and relaxes his guard. He is rudely brought back to reality by Rubin's questions. The long explanation he gives pertaining to the stolen money is actually recorded. At the same time this is a ruse to lure Rubin into a conversation that will be damning evidence against him. He, however, did not provide for Rubin's unexpected intention to kill him. He should have taken heed of the maxim,

Easy to know a man's face but hard to know his heart.

Rubin on the other hand is depicted as a treacherous, unreliable and vicious man. He shows a daring and unco-operative attitude because there is a gun in his pocket. He makes sure that Mbuya is alone and there will be no witness before revealing his true intention. His derisive and offensive attitude is reflected in the manner in which he questions Mbuya, as if he is indeed ignorant about the stolen money. He regards Mbuya as the firm's informer, who discovers the real thief. He must, therefore, be silenced permanently. Rubin is also a cowardly crook, brave only when the gun is in his hand. He should have faced the consequences of his action as a man or fought Mbuya on equal terms. Crooks, however, have no scruples about using any means at their disposal to reach their goals. A word of honour has no meaning for them.

5.3 THE HABITS OF CHARACTERS

It is unacceptable in the Xhosa setting for a woman to dominate the homestead. Eliot (1981: 37) argues:

> The Xhosa man is master of his home and no one is ever left in any doubt of this fact. Occasionally a strong woman emerges and dominates the family and her husband, but this is not common and when it does happen, it is usually the result of a weak man having a strong-willed wife. The father is head of the family and its spiritual leader on earth ...

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In Kusa Kusihlwa the passage that illustrates clearly the habit of dominating in the homestead is reflected in the relationship between Nomakhwezi and Lungile. As a man who has recently bought a shop, Lungile is fond of regularly visiting his friend, Sigwali, who is a businessman, in connection with business matters.

Wrongly informed by Nozililo, Nomakhwezi confronts her husband regarding his "philandering habits". She utters a lambasting ultimatum:

> Ukususela ngoku, akusobe uphinde ulubeke olwakho unyawo kwaMashu. Ukuba uyaya siza kuhamba kunye. (1979: 24)
>
> (From now onwards, you will never set foot in Mashu. If you go there, we will go together).

Nomakhwezi is not interested in verifying the truth by hearing Lungile's explanation, but merely instructs him what to do henceforth.

She also dominates Yolisa and Thamsanqa, her close relatives, who are assisting her in running the shop. Remarking on Nomakhwezi's attitude towards these two the writer asserts:

> Bathi bakungena aba babini, kwatsho kwavakala ukuba kukho abanye abantu ngoku kuba latsho iqela labathengi lenyuka. Kaloku abantu babetsalwa yimbeko kaThamsanqa noYolisa. Nabo ngaba babevana xa bekunye kuba babehloniphene benomdla wokuba ivenkile kaLungile inyuke. Phi ke? UNomakhwezi wayesoloko ekho phakathi kwabo ebovuyavuya xa ethanda ebabonisa ukuba umntu oyaziyo le venkile nguye phezu kwabo. (1984: 31)
>
> (When these two started, it was noticeable that indeed new people had arrived and the number of customers improved. By the way people were attracted by the kindness of Thamsanqa and Yolisa. They would have worked well together since they respected one another, both interested in upgrading Lungile's shop. What? Nomakhwezi was always among them ruffling them whenever she chose, making them aware that she knows how to run the shop better than they do.)

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Thamsanqa is the real younger brother of Lungile. Yolisa is her father's sister, both are older than herself. They get instructions from Lungile, her husband, on how to run the shop. By bragging about her skill in managing the shop, and harassing them at the same time, she is actually defying and bullying her husband. Mkonto (op. cit.: 120) aptly condemns the bullying of husbands as heads of families by women epitomized in the person of Nomakhwezi:

> The female is on the offensive for she is scrambling for social power. Self-assertiveness, confidence and energetic disposition with disregard for the rights of others characterize her. In her bid to climb to a higher social rank of recognition she may resort to cruelty, callousness and ferocity.

5.4 THE NAMING METHOD

The naming of a child among the amaXhosa, particularly in rural areas, is usually determined by an event taking place more or less at the same time. The reason behind this custom is to make it easy to remember the child's date of birth since the majority are illiterate. It is interesting to note that some of the educated, and living in so-called enlightened areas, name their

children after important personages. Probably they wish their children to emulate these celebrities. Elliot (op. cit.: 59) comments about child naming:

> The two popular categories of names are, firstly, that which links the time of the birth of the child with some important event which took place about then, and the other is where the person naming the child simply likes the sound of any particular word and uses it as his child's name.[4]

The reason forwarded by Elliot (loc. cit) for calling a child anything that sounds appealing to the person naming it is because

> The Xhosa have no vocabulary of common names ...

Satyo (op. cit.: 50) argues about the naming technique:

> This technique of naming characters is what O.R. Dathorne (1970: 91) calls "pre-stabilization of character." By this he means that the audience can predict from the very outset what the character will do in the end.

On 'name' symbol Qangule (op. cit.: 136) says:

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> In Xhosa literature the name of a character is usually a description of the bearer, for example in P.T. Mtuze's novel UDingezweni, the chief character Dingezweni (Stranded-in-the-world) meets many difficulties and feels insecure.

The views expressed by the two critics last mentioned are applicable in respect of the chief characters of Bongela's novels, as will be indicated. In discussing the naming technique the researcher will deal only with those characters whose names reflect negative connotations and consequently their behaviour as well.

In Umzi Omtsha Bongela names the antagonist Zuzekile Mahlathi. The name 'Zuzekile' (One-obtained) and the surname 'Mahlathi' (Forests) conjure up in the mind negative connotations. A growing tree is a symbol of life. A forest is a large area covered chiefly by fully grown trees where wild animals, birds and, sometimes bandits, find shelter. It is difficult to see what is in a densely grown forest. A forest may therefore be a place to hide away from enemies, and yet it can be a dangerous hiding place for robbers.

When Nontando is stranded in Healdtown, late in the day, Zuzekile comes to her rescue:

"Tyhini, yintoni titshalakazi ingathi kukho into ekukhathazayo nje?" wabuza umfana.
"Ewe, ndikhangela imoto ebendize ngayo, koko andiyiboni."
"Hayi torho titshalakazi mus' ukuzikhathaza sewungena kule yam; ndakukwehlisa edolophini eDikeni ..." (1970: 19).

("Oh, what is wrong mistress, is there something worrying you?" asked the young man.
"Yes, I am looking for the car that brought me here, I cannot see it."
"No, don't worry mistress get into mine; I will drop you in Alice."

Superficially Zuzekile appears to be helping a stranded lady like a forest serving as a hiding place from enemies. On discovering however, that Nontando, whom he offers to help, is Mbulelo's girlfriend, this same man meditates gloatingly:

Wathi ukuba aqinisekise ukuba uNontando uthandana noMbulelo waziva umfo kaMahlathi enemihlali ngaphakathi. Ngoku kwakufikelelwe kwisithuba sokuba kulunge into ekwakudala eyizungula, impindezelo apha kuMbulelo. (1970: 21)

(After making certain that Nontando is in love with Mbulelo, Mahlathi's fellow feels excited. Now is the time to fulfill what he has been itching for, revenge on Mbulelo.

Like a thick forest Zuzekile is harbouring evil intentions about Nontando's boyfriend, and will use Nontando to get even with Mbulelo. Like his surname Zuzekile nurtures a grudge against any person related to Mbulelo throughout the novel. Like a dense forest he hides dangerous intentions unknown to Nontando.

In Alitshoni Lingenandaba coincidentally Rubin Mdaka and Dora Somlilo are strong opponents of Vuyisile Mbuya. Both surnames, Mdaka and Somlilo incidentally depict destructive things. Mdaka > literally it means dark or dirty; figuratively it means evil. Somlilo < the prefix So- is the contraction of 'uyise wo-' (the father of). It is the male personifying prefix, and means 'the male who is associated with, or has the quality of', the thing mentioned. The stem 'mlilo' > fire or burning; figuratively it means full of

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wrath. (vide: Kropf, A., A Kafir-English Dictionary, (1915: 394); Pahl, H.W., The Greater Dictionary of Xhosa, vol.3 (1989:213).

Like his surname, Mdaka is full of dirty tricks. He is jealous of Vuyisile. He deliberately disorganizes the Firm's records for Vuyisile to blunder. He secretly writes a letter as if by a person in Transkei and posts it to the Orient Beach Fishing Depot. He organizes other employees in the work-place to oppose and if possible to force Vuyisile to leave the firm in disgrace.

His evil intention is portrayed clearly in this paragraph:

> Ethathwa nje la manyathelo, besekudala emonisele uVuyisile apha ezincwadini wenze inyhude apho ngokubhala amanani angengawo ezincwadini. (1979: 82)
>
> (As these measures were taken, he had already tampered with the records that were to be used by Vuyisile. He falsified the recorded numbers in the books.)

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Dora Somlilo is the beauty queen of East London. The reader expects her as a woman to be humble, peaceful and perhaps defenseless. Dora takes after her surname by being the most fiery character in the whole novel. On several occasions she defends herself successfully against males, inter alia,

> Uthe ukuba ayiphose yagoba kwakanye waphontsha ngemva kwayo uMqwathi. Ivuke nesihlangu esibukhali, yakhelela ingabuzanga. Uthe eqabuka uMqwathi wabe selebomvu kuba ibimxhofoza ubuso obu. (1979: 14)
>
> (As he struck (with a clap), she bowed and Mqwathi missed her back part. She arose with a sharp heeled shoe and struck back. Mqwathi realized too late as he was already red (with blood) because she was stabbing him in the face repeatedly.)

On one occasion Mqwathi hires some thugs to kill Dora Somlilo. The writer captures the episode as follows:

> Bathe besamelwe yingqondo becinga ukuziphosa, kanti ngephanyazo uDora uthe hlasi kuqala laa kom ibe inamanzi

> ashushu, wawaphosa onke kubo eshushu. Uyithe qithi ngokukhawuleza waphuthuma laa mbiza ibilayo eziko wayiphosa kwakubo ... uDora ufumene ithuba lokuthabatha umqobo wentsimbi ... wavuna ephindelela evula umtyhi. (1979: 23)
>
> (While they (thugs) were confused and still planning to attack, Dora quickly picked up a basin full of hot water and threw at them. She threw the basin away and quickly grabbed a pot of boiling water and threw it at them .. Dora got a chance to grab an iron rod ... beat them repeatedly to escape.)

In Kusa Kusihlwa Nozililo and Ntongana Makhwetshu are the evil characters opposing the Ntsibande family. Nozililo > no- is the contraction for 'unina wo-' (the mother of). It is the female personifying prefix. `-zililo' is the plural form of `-sililo' meaning weeping, lamentation, mourning. (vide: Kropf: 1915: 276). Her name therefore means 'Mother-of-lamentations'. Ntongana is the diminutive form of `ntonga'. It means a small stick. In keeping with his name Ntongana makes ineffective efforts in opposing the Ntsibandes and gaining possession of the shop. The blows of a small stick are infuriating rather than fatal. Ntongana does not initiate conflict as against the Ntsibandes, his wife does, but is her tool. The author illustrates thus this lack of initiative:

> "Hi Nozilili, uqinisekile ngale nto uyithethayo? Uthetha ukuthi kanti sihleli nje siphise ngelifa lakwaMakhwetshu kula mabhulampu akwaNtsibande? (1984: 81)
>
> (Hey Nozililo, are you sure of what you are saying? You mean that all along we have gratuitously given the Makhwetshu heritage to these Ntsibande plunderers?"

It is unbecoming of Ntongana as the head of Makhwetshu family, to be ignorant of his rightful heritage and only be informed by a mendi (married woman). There is something wrong somewhere. Either Ntongana is not the real heir or Nozililo is fabricating a story.

Nozililo (Mother-of-lamentations), as her name suggests, is behind all the sufferings incurred by Lungile and Mpumelelo, leading up to the former's

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death. She also unwittingly brings about her own and her husband's death, because her mind is deeply immersed in evil. The author paints the consequences of Nozililo's machinations clearly:

> Yaba ngathi impelaveki ayifiki. Ingqumbo, umsindo, uxakaxa, ugwebu, zazimphethe zonke ezo nto selebona intshabalalo yodwa phambi kwakhe. Umphembi yena wathi akubona ukuba yokhelekile, wazichitha iintente. (1984: 41)
>
> (It seemed as though the weekend wouldn't come. Wrath, anger, phlegm, froth were all controlling her (Nomakhwezi), imagining danger only in front of her. When the gossiper (Nozililo) observed that it had fomented, she disappeared.)

About Nozililo and Ntongana Bongela paints a hideous end. During the middle of the night their neighbours see their house on fire. By then it is already impossible to save anything because of the blazing flames. Some people start suspecting that the friends and relatives of jailed and killed thugs are responsible for deliberately setting Makhwetshu's house on fire.

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In The Silent People Bongela has included a method that has derogatory connotations when depicting one of the characters, Silo (a beast). When the writer attaches depreciatory implications to certain characters, Mtuze (op. cit.: 77) claims:

> The purpose is clearly to depict them as despicable or as unworthy.

Though Margaret, Silo's mother, maintains

> It's not the child I want to call a beast. It's your people I'm talking about - (1983: 7)

in the final analysis it is her son and herself who behave like beasts. By insulting her in-laws:

> To me they are dogs, vipers, jackals foxes ... They make me sick (loc. cit.)

Bongela here employs verbal irony in order to make Margaret's behaviour more poignant because she is actually describing herself and her son. She is also actually revealing to the reader what type of person she is.[5] Only the

beasts that know nothing about relationships and respecting their elders behave like Margaret does. Bongela's resentment and abhorrence of Silo are aptly portrayed in this description:

> Silo had become a tough and muscular young man, his head and face marked by knife scars. He had been around the Witwatersrand for nearly fifteen years, a man of the city who spoke to no one of his rural origins. His eyes were constantly alert, and his body continually poised for action. He rarely smiled.
>
> He had learnt to manage on very little sleep. Whenever `big business' was involved, even if it had nothing to do with daggar, Silo was ready to offer his services. He would use his skill with the voracity of a hungry lion tailing its prey. If the victim offered resistence he would kill with accurate dexterity, whether he used a blade, a heavy weight or a gun. His victims ranged from black professional men to rich white businessmen. (1983: 63).

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Though he is a well-built young man, Silo's head and face are full of scars, depicting a violent man. Like an animal that has no permanent lair, that is always on the move, Silo thinks and says nothing about his home. Behaving like a wild predatory animal, he is ever prepared to kill or be killed. Hunting like a beast of prey he will proficiently persue and take by surprise the intended victim. If resistance is offered, the victim will be quickly and expertly killed. The author's disgust and contempt for Silo's deadly and despicable profession is levelled, in particular, against the indiscriminate killing of professionals as though they are responsible for his present predicament.

Like a predatory animal, either chasing the victim or being chased, Silo hurriedly leaves Witwatersrand for Transkei. He not only moves physically from one place to another but has also symbolically moved from a position of stubbornness to one of obedience to the Miya elders and ancestors. Reconciliation is achieved and peace prevails once more.

5.5 SUMMARY

In all four novels discussed above Bongela has used various orthodox techniques in portraying his antagonists. It is observed that none of his evil characters, except Silo, changes. They are therefore predictable because they have taken after either their names or their surnames that have negative connotations. They depict evil behaviour throughout their lifespan in the novels. Such characters are termed flat or type. Abrams (op. cit.: 24) quoting E.M. Forster, argues about such a character:

> ... it is build around 'single idea or quality' and is presented without much individualizing detail, and therefore can be fairly adequately described in a single phrase or sentence.

One possible reason for these characters remaining static is that their names or surnames have been taken from stationary, inanimate or abstract objects. Mahlathi (Forests): A forest grows on one spot for years whether the nutrients are exhausted or not, whether there are floods coming, it will not move, so it is with Zuzekile Mahlathi. Even when `winds of change' are blowing stronger against him, Mahlathi still swims against the tide of reconciliation between Mbulelo and Nontando. The result is death.

Mdaka (Dirty): Unless dirt is physically removed, sometimes forcefully, it will remain on one spot. Mdaka sticks to crime until forced late by circumstances to change. Consequently he spends the rest of his life in prison.

Somlilo (Father-of-fire): The fire has one glaring weakness and that is its burning non-stop as long as there is material to destroy. It dies out after by burning everything in its path. Dora by being inflexible and unreasonable "burns herself out". She dies on the road to Hennenman still with intent to avoid arrest and to get married to Rubin.

Ntongana (Small-stick): When the stick is dry it offers some resistance by being unbendable. It appears to be strong but when extra force is applied it breaks. Ntongana's weak efforts to confront Thamsanqa are ineffective. Worse still, when the latter is prepared to resort to physical force, Ntongana's intention dissipates into thin air.

Nozililo (Mother-of-lamentations): Lamentation is the result of severe suffering physically, spiritually and emotionally. As something that cannot be seen, it cannot be easily cured or stopped. Nozililo's deceit is not seen by Nomakhwezi.

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After some time, however, forgetfulness heals the unseen wounds of suffering. Nozililo's evil scheming, secretly done, results in the death of Lungile and Nomakhwezi and the suffering of Mpumelelo. Nozililo's underhand plotting, however, also unintentionally leads to her and her husband's mysterious deaths. Since the antagonists are 'reluctant to change', Bongela gets rid of them through death or life imprisonment.

Silo (Beast): In order to survive the beast must always be on the move from one spot to another, hunting or escaping being hunted, killing or being killed. Physically Silo flees Witwatersrand for Transkei, his real home. This move symbolically means going back and accepting his roots, as it were. He completes the circle of the journey (vide Chapter on Plot above) by returning home, to peace and security. Since this journey forms a full circle, it is implied that all the sides of Silo have been seen, so to say. He is dynamic round character. Abrams (loc. cit.) warns the reader of passing sweeping statements, however, because

> such a character therefore is difficult to describe with any adequacy as a person in real life, and like persons, is capable of surprising us.

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Silo, though wrongly named by his mother, is a fully developed character. He shows all the facets of a real human being and is easily acceptable to the reader.

5.6 NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Roberts, E.V. (1983: 56-57) mentions only four as: What the characters themselves say (and think if the author expresses their thoughts); What the characters do; What other characters say about them; What the author says about them, speaking as storyteller, or observer.
   This method is effective when employed by good writers with excellent command of the language.

2. The description of King Hints by Mqhayi in Ityala lamaWele depicts a complete picture because of the author's choice of words befitting a king.

3. Shaw, H. (1982: 113) maintains that dialogue involves an exchange of opinions or ideas and is used in narrative poetry, short stories, novels and plays to reveal the characters and to advance the action of the book.

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4. Sinxo, G.B., 1969 in UNojayiti wam castigates Nojayiti for naming her son Cannibal simply because "it sounds so nice though I do not know its meaning."

5. Shaw, (op. cit.: 71) says that writers use any or all of several basic means of characterization: a character is revealed by (1) his actions, (2) his speech, (3) his thoughts.

CHAPTER SIX

6. CONCLUSOIN

The main aim of this study has been to identify and investigate the skill of K.S. Bongela as a novel writer. In Chapter 1 the biography of Bongela has in the words of Sirayi (1985: 197)

> ... shed light on the influences that were formative in his career.

The list of books written by Bongela is indicative of the vast contribution he has made to the general development of isiXhosa as a language and to its literature in particular. He has also written one novel in English for a wider readership since English is a medium for international communication.[1]

The researcher hopes that this study will contribute something worthwhile to the Xhosa students in the analysis of setting, plot, conflict and characterization. This study of Bongela's four novels has revealed certain similar dominant features.

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6.1 Setting

The dominant setting in the novels written by Bongela is the Western civilization that is gradually grasping and influencing the behaviour of township people. The events in Umzi Omtsha, for the greater part, occur in Centres of Education, first in Alice and later on the Witwatersrand; in Alitshoni Lingenandaba very little happens outside East London and its immediate townships; in Kusa Kusihlwa major incidents occur in Blythswood Institution, around Durban and the European countries. The major occurrences in The Silent people take place in venues depicting Western civilization or where its influence is strongly felt. Most of Bongela's characters, especially those who are least educated, are easily carried away by the influence of Western civilization. Bongela is probably warning his fellow Africans, and amaXhosa in particular, in a subtle manner to get educated and to tread very carefully when coming into contact with Western civilization, bearing in mind the Xhosa saying:

> Ungalahl'imbo yakho ngophoyiyana.
> (Do not throw away your prized possession for a plaything.)

6.2 Plot

The plot in Bongela's novels has been studied under three aspects in order to delimit one's scope of study. They are the exposition, the middle and the dénouement. Bongela has discarded the obsolete conventional approach of starting the narrative at the beginning of events. Instead he has adopted what is known as in medias res, that is, he plunges into his narratives at the point of the climax and by so doing he succeeds in arresting the attention of the reader from the beginning.[2]

Umzi Omtsha begins with the court scene, in a case involving father and son, the son being accused of attempted parricide. In Alitshoni Lingenandaba the conflict starts when Vuyisile warns Rubin to return the money he has stolen from the Orient Beach Fishing Depot, failing which he (Vuyisile) will report him to the firm's management and the police. In Kusa Kusihlwa narration begins with Mpumelelo, the principal character, suffering from extreme pyrophobia. Bongela starts The Silent People with a prologue, where he introduces Silo, the prodigal son, attacking his father with an axe.

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6.3 Conflict

Conflict is an important aspect for any narrative work of art. For a conflict to exist there must be two people or parties who are involved in disagreement, or are on a collision course. These two people or parties, in order to create interest and suspense, must have equal strength, or more or less equal power and should display bull-dog tenacity in the struggle for the attainment of their needs.

Sometimes the conflict between the main contending parties in Bongela's novels flags and consequently fails to reach the climax. In Umzi Omtsha the conflict is supposed to be between Zuzekile and Mbulelo. Though Zuzekile is shown plotting against Mbulelo, Nontando and David, nowhere are the former two shown planning a revenge or counter-attack. They merely parry the blows that are continually coming from Zuzekile. Besides, the "contending" parties are never brought together to confront each other. They are always kept far apart.[3] In Alitshoni Lingenandaba the conflict lies between Vuyisile and Rubin. Bongela has succeeded in portraying a real conflict in this novel. These two are shown plotting and counter-plotting

against each other. Even when Rubin wants to succumb to Vuyisile's orders, Dora enters the fray and discourages him from doing so. The way Bongela has graphically presented the conflict in The Silent People has made it difficult to determine who the real conflicting characters are. In the beginning of the novel the conflict lies between the Miya elders on the one hand and Rufus and his wife, Margaret, on the other. All the Miya clan however, Rufus included, is defeated by Margaret. It is only by observing the power of the ancestors that she comes to the elders to beg for forgiveness.

6.4 Characterization

The discussion under characterization has focused only on principal characters and the techniques used by the author in portraying his characters. The prominent technique is 'the naming method'. In Umzi Omtsha the striking example is the name Zuzekile (One-obtained) and the surname Mahlathi (Forests). In Alitshoni Lingenandaba are the two surnames, Mdaka (Dirty) and Somlilo (Father-of-fire). In Kusa Kusihlwa are the names of Nozililo (Mother-of-lamentations) and Ntongana (Small stick), and in The Silent People is the name Silo (Beast). All the above mentioned characters behave in accordance with their names or surnames.

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The evil characters who remain evil throughout, without any redeeming qualities, either are killed or languish in prison for long periods. It seems as if the author advises the reader of the wisdom of being flexible in life, because those who change and adapt to the norms of the majority, are saved from damnation and destruction. In the four novels studied Bongela shows that the victories of evil are transitory and virtue prevails in the end.

Bongela attempts to inform and instruct the public since, it seems, he has travelled widely in the Republic of South Africa (among the towns and cities he has mentioned are Port Elizabeth, East London, Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Henneman, to name a few). It seems as if his level of experience and knowledge surpasses that of some of his readers.
Bongela seems to be sensitive about his origin as well as the behavioral patterns of the members of his society. (vide also Moletsane, 19? :124). Each society has its norms and values that should be guarded and nurtured, such as circumcision, respect for elders and reverence towards ancestors, as emphasized in all four novels, in one way or another.

Where Bongela has not lived up to expectation, he cannot really be criticised because his novels have been assessed according to Western standards and principles. The Africans themselves will have to evolve principles of criticism applicable to genres dealing with African themes and settings before criticism can be made with a fine-tooth comb.[4]

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6.5 NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Qangule (1979: 5) quoting Kole Omotosoe about the writer's responsibility remarks:

   I think he should act as a conscience that can keep on saying "No! No! No!" to any evil that exists in society. Even if nobody listens he should be able to keep on saying "No!" as long as he is alive.

   Hopefully like Mqhayi, Bongela will keep on doing exactly this till his energies dissipate from this world.

2. Abrams (1983: 55) referring to Homeric epics says the narrative starts in medias res, that is "in the middle of things", at a critical point in the action of the book. This technique captivates the reader's interest from the word go.

3. Msimang (1986: 206) declares that a work of art must satisfy certain universal requirements. There is, however, no disputing the fact that such work will always contain subtle nuances which cannot be fully appreciated unless the critic is acquainted with the culture background and the view of life of the people who are depicted in such work of art.

4. Mkonto (1981: 164) quotes Vilakazi's warning that to pass a judgment on our present writers may be very committal, for the opinion of the connoisseurs may be accepted by the general public of today and later on rejected. The real discussion is on the verdict of posterity based on critical and independent opinions of men of taste and knowledge.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1 TEXT BY K.S. BONGELA

7.1.1 Creative works

Umzi Omtsha
1970 Alice: Lovedale Press
Alitshoni Lingenandaba
1979 Pietermaritzburg: Shutter and Shooter
Kusa Kusihlwa
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