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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim of study.

The research aims to document the socio-political changes that have occurred in the lives of the amaXhosa, as reflected in isiXhosa novels, from the newspaper era and the time of the appearance of the first IsiXhosa works, in 1909 to 2006. It is of interest to establish how the lives of these people are depicted in the literature and what changes are discernible in the periods under scrutiny.

The impact of the changing scene on the writers of the twentieth century, when literary production took a new turn among the amaXhosa, is depicted as follows by Malan (1987:4):

The scene to which the writers reacted changed considerably during the first half of the twentieth century with the advent of urbanisation, industrialisation, the large scale use of black labour, the disruption of the traditional tribal life, etc. The written tradition of the eight indigenous African literatures (North Sotho, South Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu) mostly originated in the first decades of the century, with a strong thematic emphasis on the acculturation and uprooting process as an ever increasing number of blacks are subjected to a Western and urban lifestyle.

This survey is all the more significant if one bears in mind what Satyo (in Gerard 1983: 88) once said about the state of isiXhosa literature some years ago:

Further, the remarks about the role played by some events in the life of the Xhosa, should be taken as another pointer to the expected things in Xhosa literature: we are in a state of flux; we don't know what to expect next; in terms of those none of us is "old" or "old enough" to say this for the next generation – if there is to be any next generation it is this one – it is us.

About the importance and the need for such research, Satyo (1981:77) emphasises that:

Xhosa literature has long been crying for a close study of the background against which the fiction writers started doing their work. The background of the practical language of the time when fiction writing became a reality, the theoretical framework or just the frame of mind which helped in the shaping of this fiction warrants such a study.

Satyo makes an important point regarding the writing of isiXhosa books. The writers had no literary training or theoretical knowledge. The only thing they had was an oral literary tradition that enabled them to express themselves. According to Satyo (1981:77) they just had a frame of mind which helped in the shaping of this fiction:

To me therefore, it follows that whether the writer is conscious or not, he does have a frame of mind or some vague theoretical framework which helps him shape his material. It is unfortunate that none of our authors ever thought of writing this down for future generations. Nevertheless the present day critic who wants to delve into this aspect of literature can do so, perhaps by solely depending on reconstructing the reasoning or dialectic that was at work during the writing of this type of fiction.

As indicated in the title, the focus will be on social, economic and political changes. The study will be deliberately selective as far as the choice of books to be scrutinized

is concerned. The decision to confine the study only to novels is deliberate because novels give a more immediate reflection of life and social circumstances than do other genres. They lend themselves better to the reconstruction of the frame of mind and the world-view of the authors concerned.

Boulton (1979:5) stresses the efficacy of reading novels by pointing out that “a good novel is *true* in the sense that it gives us a sincere, well observed, enlightening picture of a portion of human life.’

The relationship between the novelist and the historian comes out clearly in Boulton’s (1979:15) pertinent comment:

However, we can feel in general that the good mainstream novelist is intending to give some kind of true picture of life. He is something like a historian. A historian has to try to make a coherent, meaningful narrative of what, when people lived in it, seemed – and was – an enormous, ever moving, endlessly interlinked, much misreported, bewildering flow of world events, charged with many contradictory emotions, muddled, illogical, never seen by anyone as a whole. Similarly, a novelist uses selection and pattern to try to make sense of the muddled turbulence or dreary chuggings of human life, and to give them a clear causal sequence.

As people who have undergone remarkable change because of the impact of Westernisation in all its manifestations (church, school and workplace), the amaXhosa have an interesting socio-cultural history that is fast disappearing. The changes in their lives define who they are and they also give a sense of belonging to the up-and-coming generations. With globalisation adding to the challenges posed by Westernism, it is important for them to know their past in order to chart their future.

Mbeki (2007:1) articulates the importance of this kind of exercise as follows:

There is no doubt that as part of the process of our redefinition of ourselves, we must do everything possible to spread knowledge of literature and other material written or recorded in the African languages since this material began to be published in our country from the beginning of the 19th century.

As we seek to redefine ourselves, and because our history was not properly recorded and presented, literature could be a useful approximation of that history. Among other things, this would expose all of us to important lessons about how the traditional value system of *ubuntu*, and the sense of identity and self-pride among the oppressed, responded to colonial and apartheid domination from the 18th to the present century.

The process of change that forms the main concern of this study, is adeptly articulated in the following comments by Pauw (1982: viii):

The main concern of this study, I would say, has been the interplay of Western and traditional Xhosa culture, and urbanization. These factors cannot be separated, as if the interplay of the two distinct cultural traditions is confined to the cultural level, and the dynamics of urbanization to the structural level. Firstly, although it is useful to distinguish between cultural change and structural change from an analytical point of view, the two are so closely related that change at the one level is not isolated from change at the other level. Further, Western values and Christian teaching have had their effect on the social structure of the Xhosa, even in rural areas. Traditional customs and values, we shall see, have again retarded structural changes primarily related to urbanization, while urban living, besides its structural implications has also affected customs, interests, and patterns of behaviour. The factors of Western culture, traditional Xhosa culture, and urbanization should rather be seen as a triangle of forces exerting pressure on the urban Bantu society with effects at both the structural and cultural levels.

This study is broad-based. It does not seek to make a distinction between cultural and structural change. Its main concern is change in its over-arching sense. The change

from oral to written transmission of culture has added significant value to the African cultures, hence the popularity of the latter among African writers. Obiechina (1980:32) points out in this regard:

Oral tradition implies a situation in which cultural transmission is carried on by word of mouth through direct contact between individuals depending largely on memory and habits of thought, action and speech for cultural continuity. Within a literary tradition on the other hand, cultural transmission is also carried on through writing and the existence of written records. Literacy makes face-to-face contact as a mode of cultural transmission irrelevant.

Obiechina (1980:262) shows the relationship between literature and culture as follows:

Cultural and social change provides the novelists with their themes and subject matter. Different stages of cultural and social change are represented in the novels, from the early contact between the classical traditional culture and modern industrial culture to the present time of considerable adjustment and synthesis. The novelists see the situation in terms of traditional- modern or rural-urban differentiation and consequent clash of values. They show that the behaviour of characters has been largely conditioned by the social, economic and political environment, which in turn has been very much affected by social and cultural change. They show their perception of this change by dramatizing the tensions and conflicts which result from it and which are reflected in the structure of social relationships.

The current research is premised on the assumption that there is a link between African novels and real life as well as the theme of change in all its manifestations with particular emphasis on cultural change. Mtumane (1995:19), citing Chinweizu, attests to this idea as follows:

With respect to the theme, African novels are said to be situational and many of them are said to be autobiographical or preoccupied with culture conflict or unnecessarily fascinated with the African past (Chinweizu 1980:7).

This clearly indicates that there is always some correlation between literature and real life. The authors try to give a reflection of real life situations in their literature. Sirayi (1989:54) aptly points out with regard to isiXhosa novels:

The novel addresses a particular audience or society at a particular point in time. It must be relevant to the societal norms and values of the time. Needless to say, the novel must incorporate social circumstances that surround its actions and characters. Such circumstances must, of course, relate to the theme and style.

It is, however, important to make a distinction between real life and the mediated life that we find in literature. Literature is not a true and complete representation of life as we know and live it. It is a reflection of life, close enough to enchant us but also distant enough to intrigue us. In short, it is not the final picture of life.

In support of this, Grace (1965:7) gives us a plausible exposition of the relationship between literature and real life:

The importance of literature in relation to the life of the reader may be simply stated by saying that literature concentrates our impression of certain areas of human experience. We have in literature a suitable medium for clarifying the meaning of experience and thus organizing our own reactions, actual and potential, to the experience of life.

It seems reasonable that we should read literature not only to appreciate it as an art, to recognise its beauty of form, but also to gain experience, a vicarious or imaginative experience that has an analogy to reality.

“Vicarious” is a word etymologically derived from a Latin word meaning “in place of.” Literature gives us a special knowledge of life that is not identical with that of real experience but provides a profitable supplement in terms of intellectual and

critical values. In this sense, the term 'vicarious' has a lot in common with 'verisimilitude' that Shipley (1979: 354) explains as follows:

Verisimilitude. A degree of likeness to truth that induces belief that the action and characters in an imaginative work are probable or possible. In both ancient and modern criticism it is generally agreed that some element of actual or idealized reality contributes toward making an imitation verisimilar and credible.

These views resonate with what Boulton (1979:15) says in this regard:

Since the serious novel in some sense portrays real life, great effort goes into giving it verisimilitude, likeness to truth. We know the things did not happen, but must be made to feel that they could have happened. Since real life experience is not the same for us all, some people will find one novelist more convincingly true to life, others, another; and at any time anyone may have a new experience that will confirm or modify his opinion.

The link between fact and fiction is discernible from the following comments by Mendilow (1972: 88):

The work of every novelist, whether it treats of the contemporary situation or leads one to escape from it into an ivory tower, is explicitly or implicitly a social commentary on the time in which it is written. Even the Utopian novel is essentially a negative taken from the print of reality and indicates what the author regards as evil in the world of his day.

The role of literature in reflecting reality and pointing direction is described as follows by Tibble (1970: 12):

Literature is a deeper part of our lives than is sometimes agreed on, or than perhaps we yet know: not as 'uplift', or therapeutically, but as a basic part of our 'Immense Journey' from shoregoing fish, tarsiers and first cousins of primates. Devoted scholars maintain and expand poetic beauty. They further knowledge of language's complexity. Writers themselves constantly explore this knowledge and those traditions to transcend rule and law and create new literature. Nearly always writers' voices are relevant in that they reflect the life and times they live in; they point new directions; often they plead a necessary balance or foresight.

From the above, it is clear that our contention that there is a link between literature and the lives of the authors or their people is supported by a number of literary scholars. Of course this link stems from the fact that black authors, especially in their formative years, wrote from practical experience. This later became tradition as later writers emulated their predecessors.

This view is supported by Jordan (1974: 77) who states that:

The Xhosa prose and verse writings of the last thirty years of the nineteenth century provide a wealth of material not only on the intellectual and literary development of the African peoples, but also on the drastic political, economic and social changes affecting all groups in Southern Africa.

On the vexing question of fact and fiction, an easy way of getting around the problem is to adopt the popular stance of calling isiXhosa writings of this kind 'faction' because they include fact and fiction at one and the same time. In this regard, Scholes and Kellog (1967:372ff) use two related words – representation and illustration – as follows:

That kind of art, literary or plastic, which seeks to duplicate reality we will designate by the word “represent” in its various forms. For that kind of art which seeks to suggest an aspect of reality we will use the word “illustrate.”

As said above, our stance will be to regard isiXhosa literature as both representative and illustrative. Scholes and Kellog (1967: 377) also adopt this middle course by pointing out that “there are of course some narrative works which gain many of their effects precisely by straddling this precipitous border between the illustrative and the representational.” In generalising about isiXhosa literature, this is the broad view taken in this study.

Of all the changes that are discernible in amaXhosa novels, cultural change is primary, as indicated by Mtumane (1995:20):

It should be remembered that Africans started writing only after their initial contact with Europeans. This contact therefore meant the coming together of different cultures. It should not be surprising, therefore, that African novels tend to show “culture conflict” because, on coming into contact with the Europeans, their culture conflicted with this “new” (foreign) culture. Had African novelists not shown this culture conflict they would have misrepresented a very important aspect of the daily experience of the African.

The link between literary criticism and culture is also clearly outlined by Fowler (1973:44):

Culture. Metaphorically, of cultivation (agri-cultura); the cultivation of values; by extension, a body of values cultivated ... More recently, sociologists and anthropologists have employed the term to denote the totality of customs and institutions of a human group (cf. society) Literary criticism has traditionally concerned itself with culture as a body of values, especially those values transmitted from the past to the future through the imaginative works of men.

African authors always operate from within their culture. Cultural nationalism forms an integral part of their writings as pointed out by Obiechina (1980:14):

The novelists were driven in the direction of cultural affirmation, towards expressing and affirming the past of the ex-colonial people, validating their autochthonous values (especially so far as these survive into the present), often at the expense of the received new values. The novels have, in other words, a strong impulse of cultural nationalism in them.

This is particularly important because the impact of Westernism undermined the integrity of African culture. Obiechina (1980:15) articulates this as follows:

A direct result of the European colonization of Africa was the stereotyped image of Africa and Africans in the popular European imagination. The imposition of political control also involved a conscious or unconscious devaluation of the African culture. Loss of political freedom was inevitably attended by loss of cultural confidence by the Africans themselves. The popular image of Africa in the European mind was a place with primitive institutions, inhabited by primitive, irrational people on whom the civilizing will of the European needed to be imposed.

This resonates with Ngugi Wa Thiongo's (1988:2) comment:

My approach will be different. I shall look at the African realities as they are affected by the great struggle between the two mutually opposed forces in Africa today: an imperialist tradition on one hand, and a resistance tradition on the other. The imperialist tradition in Africa is today maintained by the international bourgeoisie using the multinational and of course the flag-waving native ruling classes. The economic and political dependance of this African neo-colonial bourgeoisie is reflected in its culture of apemanship and parrotry enforced on a restive population through police boots, barbed wire, a gowned clergy and judiciary; their ideas are spread by a corpus of state intellectuals, the academic and journalistic laureates of the neo-colonial establishment.

The interface between the imperialist tradition and the resistance tradition as suggested by Ngugi is reflected in isiXhosa literature and in all literature where one nation has been conquered or subjected to domination by another. IsiXhosa literature reflects this tension throughout. There are cases where one clearly sees the authors battling to respond to political pressures by toeing the line, or in other cases they are seen opposing this avalanche. **The Wrath of the Ancestors** is a classical example of this resistance, as will be seen later, whereas Jongilanga's **Ukuqhawuka kwembeleko** challenges tradition and advocates Westernism when a young woman enjoys the right to choose her own marital partner.

1.2 Method and approach of study

Conventional literary methods of analysis will be used to analyse a selected number of isiXhosa novels in the chosen periods. The selection of, and confinement to, the study of novels will serve to reduce the material to a manageable corpus that will be wide enough to touch on the main issues in the periods concerned.

The key elements of the analysis will be certain structural literary techniques such as psychoanalysis, structuralism, aesthetics and stylistics. These techniques will involve setting, plot analysis, characterisation, theme, and other attendant techniques such as point of view, satire and humour. They help us understand the author's attitude to certain social and political practices.

Setting is basic to these processes as it reveals the place and environment, the background, in which events take place. Abrams (1988: 172) explains setting as follows:

The setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs; the setting of an episode or scene within a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place.

Setting, also called background, context or milieu, is very important in this kind of writing and research as pointed out by Boulton (1979:125):

The background of a novel is also more than a backcloth for a drama; all novels, even the lightest, have some sociological implications; for, though the major novelist is most often interested in a fairly small number of human beings and their personal experiences and relationships, human beings do not exist independently of the society in which they live.

What makes background particularly useful is that it can take various forms as pointed out by Boulton (1979: 126) and each can give a particular colour or shade to the message of the novel:

Background may be on a large or small scale: we may have a picture of a city with its buildings, crowds, buses, but also a detailed picture of the inside of a house in the city – rich, comfortable or wretched, happy or full of irritations, elegant or tasteless or imaginative.

Characterisation is another crucial strategy in literature. It introduces us to the *personae* in a work of art, and it brings out their personality traits so that we can relate to them. It reflects the *status quo*.

Theme is a central feature in literature as it points us to the author's own attitude to the issues reflected in the novel which comes out clearly in the central message,

contained in the theme. In addition to the other aspects, theme is fundamental in this kind of study as can be seen from Scholes' (1981:12) pertinent comment:

This interpretative aspect of literary analysis is the most difficult, we should say, for the reason that in order to attempt it we must not only look carefully at the work itself but also look away from the work toward the world of ideas and experiences. Discovering theme or meaning in a work involves us making connections between the work and the world outside it. These connections are the meaning.

The overall significance of these three key elements of literature – setting, characterisation and theme - is explained as follows by Knickerbocker, Reninger, Bratton and Legget (1985: 3):

Storytellers are the perennial delight of humankind. As they begin, we are immediately confronted with people – characters, the most interesting thing in the world. We may be entertained by the sequence of events (plot), we may be given a fresh insight into human personality (character), or we may be offered a penetrating comment on the human situation (theme). The meaning of plot, character, and theme is determined, we shall later discover, by the storytellers' attitude toward the facts they relate.

Jafta (1982:60) stresses the importance of adopting the aesthetics of a total view when considering literature:

The aesthetics of the novel has to be considered as a totality of various aspects that help to expose the theme of the novel. Besides the culture and era of the work there are artistic aspects like the narrative style, plot structure and characterisation which distinguish the novelist as an artist.

Sirayi (1989:4) points out that 'a study towards an aesthetics of the novel must not exclude the extra-textual parameters which bear upon the novelist's creative responsibility.' He (ibid:4) cites Boralin-Williams (1981:77) who strongly affirms that:

Because the work of art is itself mediated by a constellation of socio-historical phenomena ... literary criticism must itself be mediated by history and society in order to achieve profound illumination into the particular work of art and the totality of literary production.

Sole (1979:144) sums up this stand by contending that "criticism that ignores or pays lips service to the social and referential side of literature usually beclouds its own judgment."

That literature cannot be divorced from culture is obvious from the following comments by Grace (1965:7):

Literature as cultural study. Culture in this sense should be understood as something more important than group mores or social convention. The word "culture" has a wide connotation, but it always implies the embodiment of the fruits of thought in actual living ... Literature brings the test of experience to a wide range of ideas drawn from different fields of study. Literature in itself embodies actual material from wide and different fields. In order to gather and supplement those fruits of thought needed for a deepened culture, a person must go to literature.

Culture is important in understanding the novel according to Mafela (1996:16) who contends that:

There is one important element which must not be ignored whenever a literary text is interpreted, and this is culture. It is not easy to interpret the meaning of a literary text without considering the culture of the society for which it has been written because it affects the other elements of a literary text. For readers to understand the deeper meaning of a literary work, knowledge of culture is essential.

While the traditional Western Aristotelian theoretical tools and approach will be the major analytical tools employed throughout the study, the study will also, of necessity, lean towards a dialectical theory of African literature which Amuta (1989: 89) explains as follows:

[T]he cornerstone of a dialectical theory of African literature is the need to historicise that literature, to re-establish that organic link between literature and its informing and sustaining historical milieu which bourgeois criticism in its purely formalistic manifestations constantly obfuscates.

The books will be related to their historical times, i.e. their original year of publication, when relevant, will be used to analyse what happened at the time. In this way literature helps us understand society and the dynamics of each period. Studying literature in isolation, without reference to its historical time, always deprives us of vital information about the time. Besides, it makes the study of literature mechanical and technical.

A burning theoretical question that needs to be addressed in the research is the relationship between literary studies and culture. The bold move towards bringing literature and culture close to each other in this kind of exercise, instead of treating the two as separate disciplines, was taken by UNISA some years back when it introduced a 'literary and cultural studies' course in its English Department.

This deviation from the academic norm immediately drew the need for the following explanation from Daymond:¹

Of the many questions facing English departments in South Africa today, I will concentrate on that of treating “literary” and “cultural” studies as equal and related components of the syllabus. For those who are apprehensive about the idea and perhaps have not tried working with a syllabus of this kind, the question that will probably be uppermost is whether or not introducing “cultural studies” in an English department would be to abandon the difficult task of encouraging in students the wish, the intellectual skills and the knowledge necessary to ask for themselves the crucial questions about “literature”. I will argue that far from being a move which jeopardies (sic) “literature”, it is one which enables fundamental questions to be asked in ways that arise from the generic and other challenges of “cultural” texts and from the varied social experiences of our undergraduate students.

On the more vexing question of departing from the extant theories in order to accommodate this newcomer, Daymond² points out that theories are there to serve human needs and are subject to the needs of those who use them:

Theories are to be developed, investigated and used according to one’s purpose – they have no “natural” being and while simple eclecticism is obviously unsatisfactory, it may be that one theoretical position will not prove appropriate to all purposes, times and places. What decides the purpose of an individual critic must be a choice made by that critic, freedom in the sense specific to scholarly enquiry, must be allowed.

¹ Margaret Daymond, 2007, in : <http://72.14.205.104> , p.1

² Ibid

1.3 Context of the research

Literature is generally regarded as a reflection of society. Since the introduction of book writing at the beginning of the 20th Century, amaXhosa authors have attempted to reflect the lives of their people in their creative works. In this way, their works reflect all the aspects of their society, albeit in mediated form – the social life, the economic problems, and the political aspirations of the people. No wonder then, that as the people's lives changed with time because of the impact of Westernisation, their depiction in the literature followed suit. This was particularly so because the earliest literary endeavours were, by nature, very imitative. They were largely based on personal experience. The authors acted as chroniclers and watchdogs.

Obiechina (1980:3) reflects this relationship between literature and society as follows:

The relationship between literature and society has long been recognised; but it has not always been fully appreciated how far a particular society both influences the themes and subject matter of its representative literary types and also profoundly affects their formal development. This study is an attempt to establish the determining background factors of the West African novel. It relates the writings to their cultural and environmental situation; it aims to show that the changing cultural and social situation in West Africa both gave rise to the novel there, and in far-reaching and crucial ways conditioned the West African novels' content, themes and texture.

Scholes (1981:6) confirms this view of literature as an imitation and approximation of life when he says that "literature offers us an 'escape' from life, but also provides us with new equipment for our inevitable return. It offers us an 'imitation' of life."

Change is taking place all the time in all societies as attested by Beattie (1985: 241):

Change is taking place in all human societies all the time. Sometimes it is sudden and catastrophic as when a system of government is destroyed by a revolution and replaced by a different one; sometimes it is gradual and hardly perceptible, so that even the members of the society scarcely notice it. But it is always there, and social anthropologists who wish to understand the working of the societies they study must take account of it.

While there is clearly a marked paucity of isiXhosa literary research on what is generally referred to as ‘change literature’, it is interesting to note that this kind of research is very popular overseas. The thrust of such research is twofold. Firstly it deals with socio-political change as reflected in literature as well as change as reflected by what authors write about. While the latter seems to be the other side of the same coin, the two thrusts are not mutually exclusive as they come together once again because of the impact of lived experiences on literary activity and vice versa.

In this way, literature acts as a mirror in which society can look at itself and thereby effect changes in how it acts socially, culturally and politically as pointed out by Christini:³

Imaginative writing can be both literary and political simultaneously, and inevitably is, to varying degrees. In its own way, fiction can accomplish something similar to what Noam Chomsky and many other progressive workers try to accomplish through non-fiction: the creation of works that clarify and better the world socially, politically, culturally ...

³ Toni Christini, 2007, in <http://www.socialit.org>, p.1.

This power of literature to capture and reflect social change stems from what Lye calls 'representation' or 'reflection of reality' which he explains as follows:⁴

According to this argument literature is "mimetic," that is to say, represents 'reality', 'nature', or 'the way things are'. It portrays moral and other experiences in a compelling, concrete, immediately felt way through its aesthetic devices and powers, yet allows as well for reflection, for theorizing or reconsideration of the experiences evoked, as we are both 'experiencing' the world evoked and are separated from it.

Literature is not only meant to entertain. It can also have a deeper and broader objective – advocacy for change - as can be seen in what Roberts says about African-American women writers:⁵

The 19th and 20th Centuries have brought a group of dynamic African American women writers and poets. These writers joined their elders in the struggle for justice and equality to chart strategies and work for change in the conditions of all African Americans. Cultural messages to and for the people expressed black pride, strength, power and beauty, despite oppression along with the call for freedom for all African Americans.

The University of London's School of Advanced Study, Institute of English Studies, runs a course on this subject that the convenor, Coral Anne Howells, explains as follows:⁶

⁴ John Lye, 2003, in: <http://www.brocku.ca/english/jlye/uses.ht>, p.2.

⁵ Cynthia Roberts, 1997, in: <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti>, p.1.

⁶ Coral Ann Howells, 2007, in: <http://72.14.205.104>, p.1.

This is a historically oriented course directed towards an understanding of the role of literature in the construction of a national identity in a period of dynamic change.

Change literature is taken seriously by both academics and literary scholars overseas. The United States established a prestigious prize called the 'Bellwether Prize for Fiction in Support of A Literature of Social Change' which is defined as follows:⁷

Socially responsible literature, for purposes of this award, may describe categorical human transgressions in a way that compels readers to examine their own prejudices. It may invoke the necessity for economic and social justice for a particular ethnic or social group, or it may explicitly examine movements that have brought positive change.

1.4 Literature overview and scope

This study is, to a large extent, unique in that it is the first known full-length research wholly devoted to the theme of transformation, in all its manifestations and ramifications, in isiXhosa literature. Changing imperatives in scholarship as a whole make new demands on academic research. If language can no longer be taught in isolation from the rest of the curricular imperatives then literature should, by the same token, be informed by the same imperatives. Delivering his remarkable inauguration address on 27 September 2006, at Rhodes University, Professor Saleem Badat (2006:9) cited a very pertinent comment by Professor O'Connell who states that universities

⁷ Bellwether Information, 2007, in: <http://www.bellwetherprize.org>, p.1.

[C]annot rest on their laurels ... and simply teach the same curricula ... year after year with minor changes and presume that this is sufficient. If the demands made on students by a fast-changing world are greater, so too are the demands on lecturers and researchers. We have constantly to unpack the assumed constants in our respective fields to encourage students to interrogate what we and they have learned to take for granted.

This move towards revisiting conventional literary approaches to embrace what is called 'a pedagogy of reconstruction,' which underpins the theoretical basis of this study, is explained as follows by Selepe (1997:139):

While it can be conceded that a tradition has already been established in literary scholarship, and taking into account that certain approaches and methodologies have over a period of time been developed, formalized and institutionalized, this paper asks whether literature departments should not revisit their approaches in light of the unfolding socio-political situation in South Africa. The central question here is whether or not literature departments are in fact affected or should be affected by that process. The answer to this question lies partly in another curious question whether or not literature is indeed affected by the unfolding socio-political situation.

Earlier and popular research focused on certain aspects of change and attendant conflict and tensions. Most of this research, such as Dokolwana's Characterization in selected Xhosa novels of the 90s (2001), employs characterization to depict social change in the selected works. The present study goes beyond this singular aspect of transformation, to embrace social, political, and economic change in black society.

Bokwe's An Analysis of Characterisation in P.T. Mtuze's novels (2002) is interesting but it, too, does not go beyond character revelation as could be seen from Bokwe's (2002:257) comments hereunder:

The aim of the study has been to investigate the role of character portrayal in Mtuze's novels as well as the influence of setting in character development. The study also examined the role of characterisation in plot development. The observation is made that Mtuze attempts to portray his characters not only to act but also to ensure a recreation of human life in fiction.

It is precisely this 'human life in fiction' that is mentioned by Bokwe that the current study focuses on. Human life is variable. This comment by Bokwe brings us close to the purpose of this study which is to throw light on how the authors concerned project the broad spectrum of life in their works, and how that mediated life reflects, in turn, that society, not only particular individual characters and their peculiar character traits.

Dlali's The Depiction of Space in Four Xhosa Novels (1992) adopts a relatively broader focus on characterisation by using the space theory as its analytical tool. This immediately gives his research both breadth and depth, as well as practical relevance. The only discernible negative, albeit intentional perhaps, is that the research does not point boldly at transformation. The current study is more interested in, and focuses on, what could be termed 'spatial dynamics' instead of static space per se, as implied by Dlali and Sirayi's strikingly similar parlance – geographical setting, social setting, and historical setting.

Qangule's A Study of Conflict and Theme in A.C. Jordan's INGQUMBO YEMINYANYA (1974) depicts the change very admirably although it is also only confined to social change.

Sirayi's The Xhosa Novel (1989) deals with various aspects of the novel and touches on key aspects of novel writing such as setting, plot, characterisation, point of view, and theme. This in-depth study of the isiXhosa novel also mentions transformation in

passing without any conscious effort to bring it to the fore. *Vide* Sirayi's (1989:111) pertinent comment in this regard:

Mqhayi's **UDon Jadu** abounds in archetypal actions and communal elements. The hero, Dondolo, is not the focal point of the narrative. Instead, he is a microcosm of the African society undergoing socio-economic and political change.

Sirayi picks up the discourse on political life among the amaXhosa oppressed groups but his (Sirayi 1989: 334) overwhelming interest in paradigmatic units overshadows the political changes reflected in the writings of Siyongwana and Mtuze's works, respectively:

The paradigmatic units which determine the thematic structure in Siyongwana's novel cogently illustrate the aforesaid dialectic confrontation. They also show the factors that aggravate the confrontation, such as discrimination, and the presence of apartheid like detention and banning orders ...

The evils of the current apartheid regime in South Africa are the dominant theme in Mtuze's **Alitshoni Lingaphumi**. Such evils are exemplified in the master-servant relationship which involves the Whites' exploitation and reduction of Blacks to the expendable units of labour, and also in the Goup Areas Act which permits the forced removal of Blacks from urban centres to rural communities. Mtuze's treatment of the political theme bears similarities to Siyongwana's exploration.

This study differs from the above studies mainly because it consciously seeks to focus on change in amaXhosa society as reflected in the relevant novels. While in most research, up to now, we have been given fixed or static glimpses of images of amaXhosa socio-economic-political life, this study deliberately seeks to present a

sustained reflection of the changing lives of the amaXhosa people in all the aspects of their lives. In this sense, it is not something altogether unheard of in literary studies, because it is *ipso facto* related to the history of literature as undertaken by various scholars such as Opland, Gerard, Satyo, Qangule, Ntuli, Swanepoel, Smit, van Wyk, Wade and Jordan, to mention just a few. (*Vide* references).

One study that stands out very clearly in the kind of research undertaken here is Saule's Master's dissertation entitled A consideration of S E K Mqhayi's contribution to Umteteli waBantu under the the pseudonym 'Nzululwazi' (1989). As suggested by the title, Saule's study focuses on Mqhayi's writings to the newspaper concerned. No attempt is made to force the research into conventional methodology.

There is a marked similarity between isiXhosa literature and Afro-American literature of the mid-1800s in that both literatures used realism as they sought to reflect life and people as they were perceived to be, albeit in mediated form, as pointed out by Pierson:⁸

The second form of emerging literature was realism, which started in the mid-1800s. In the years following the Civil War and with the industrialization of American industry, realism became very popular. The main characteristics of realism were that people were depicted as people and were the masters of their own destiny. The characters were very well developed and were often shown in rural situations and having some form of human struggle, be it with right and wrong, cultural differences, or trouble with moving into the big city.

Saule's Master's research on Mqhayi's journalistic writings paved the way for creative research, as attested by his (Saule, 1989:128) comment:

⁸ Gabriel Pierson, 2002, in: <http://7.14.205.104>, p.2.

Since the study is the first of its kind, i.e. a research on literary contributions under a pseudonym, tremendous interest will definitely be generated as regards other writers who also published under pseudonyms in newspapers. To examine the reasons which led to the use of pseudonyms by some writers and analyse their contributions in terms of quality and other possibilities, exposes a new field of researching in Xhosa literature.

This research will be structured as follows:

- Chapter 1 will cover the usual introductory material.
- Chapter 2 is an overview of change in the newspaper era.
- Chapter 3 is an analysis of isiXhosa novels in the period 1909-1923.
- Chapter 4 focuses on isiXhosa novels in the period 1924 – 1953.
- Chapter 5 covers literature in the period 1954 – 1983.
- Chapter 6 focuses on the period 1984 - 1993
- Chapter 7 covers the period 1994 -2003.
- Chapter 8 covers the period 2004-2006
- Chapter 9 reviews the impact of language boards on isiXhosa literature.
- Chapter 10 is a general conclusion.

The books and the material pertinent to each period have been selected and the divisions are designed to coincide with the appearance of significant literary contributions in each decade.

1.5 Topicality and relevance of study

Although this research focuses on change as reflected in isiXhosa novels, it cannot be gainsaid that the different literary genres, especially with respect to theme and subject matter, cannot be forced into watertight compartments. Doing that would stifle research and undermine mutual enrichment of these cognate genres. Segmentation can only lead to fragmentation. For this reason, reference will be made here to relevant poetry and essays, albeit very briefly.

Having said that, let me hasten to say that this does not imply that these genres should be thrown willy nilly into one melting pot in our analyses. On the contrary, they should be treated as complementary aspects of the same literature. How to treat them will depend on the outcomes that the researcher wishes to attain. This strategy was successfully employed by Mdaka in his thesis Images of Africa: A Selective Comparison and Contrast of Themes and Preoccupations Between Xhosa and Other African Writers (1992). Although the subject of his study is prose, he uses examples in poetry to substantiate the views expressed by the authors in prose. (*Vide* Mdaka, 1992: 9 -14).

It is interesting to note that the theme of cultural change is also very popular among the poets. The reason for this widespread interest is not too difficult to find. It is because change affects everyone. It knows no theoretical or academic boundaries.

The four authors chosen to illustrate the above point have all made significant input in this discourse in their chosen poems. These comments, interestingly enough, cover a wide period of time from the one author to the other. All four decry the corrosion of African culture by Westernism.

The first author to make a clarion call to the nation that all was not well was W B Rubusana in his monumental work **Zemk' inkomo magwalandini** (1911). The

writer, determined to salvage his cultural heritage from extinction, made a collection of a diversity of material in this book, ranging from poetry, language, customs, traditions, rituals, social life, important figures, praises of various chiefs, essays on various topics and many more culture-related matters. Among the many poems in the book, Gqoba's '*Ingxoxo Enkulu YomGinwa nomKristu*' touches on the question of changes brought about by Westernisation on African life and values. As with all the other authors, the poem will be included here in part or in full followed by a loose translation and a brief commentary to highlight the main issues raised.(Vide Rubusana 1911:27-28):

'Ingxoxo Enkulu yomGinwa nomKristu'

(Part 1)

(WWG)

*Umhlab' uyolile, uvus' okudala,
Zintlombe, 'migidi, kwa neziheula;
Kusinw'ingondwane, 'miqolo yenamba,
'Midudo, kuleqa akuko qitala.
Kusilw' imitayi, Kuselw' indloloti,
Kuselelw' ukufa nasezikolweni;
Inkol' itshitshile, ipel'isidima,
'Ma-Kristu zintusi, ngo-Jingqi-mabala.
Kusel' idyakana, kujole omdala,
Kusil' otitshala, kunxil' abantwana;
Akukho mahluko kum-Kristu neqaba,
Bahleli behluti indyeb'eliteya. (Abridged)*

‘The big debate between a non-believer and a Christian’

This happy land digs out the old ways,
It entices you with singing and dance parties
Then you dance endlessly singing those songs,
And you take part in all the traditional activities.

Free sorghum beer served with brandy to add,
Even in the schools they drink like fish;
Gone is the faith because its dignity is no longer,
The Christians engage in all kinds of activities.

Even the deacon brews beer and the elder serves it,
The teacher brews beer, and school children get drunk;
No difference between Christian and non-believer,
They are all always full of this abundant frivolity.

The poet decries the degeneration that has come into society, more so because it is a society that had accepted Christianity and education. It had become worse than what it was before the advent of Christianity. Their ‘worldly’ behaviour makes them do very demeaning things. They are supposed to have been converted Christians but they go to beer drinks with unconverted red-blanket people, they are no longer regular church-goers, even deacons and elders indulge in beer drinking. Teachers and school children are also guilty of this unseemly behaviour. All this comes through the poetic character *Pakade-likoyo* (existing world) and *Zwelizayo* (next world) who defends the Christians and blames moral degeneration for the waywardness of the church people, not the church. The emerging picture shows a lose-lose situation. The traditionalists have lost eligible members to enlightenment, and enlightenment has lost them back to the traditionalists who can no longer gain anything from the members concerned.

The ravages of Christianity on the African social fabric are articulated as follows by Jordan (1974:55):

The essay on ‘The Believers and the Pagans’ also shows that the gulf is widening between the converted and the pagan. The converted has lost *ubuntu* (generosity, respect for man irrespective of position). The pagan can no longer expect hospitality amongst the Christians. Soga gives an instance of a pagan traveller who spent a cold night in the open veld because none of the Christians in the village would admit him into their homes.

The second commentator on this issue is none other than Nontsizi Mqgweto, an umXhosa poetess, who contributed poems to the early newspapers between 1920 and 1929 and disappeared until Opland collected her poetry and produced the monumental book entitled **The Nation’s Bounty: The Xhosa Poetry of Nontsizi Mqgweto** (2007). Among the long list of issues she wrote about in her poems, Opland (2007: xiv) mentions “territorial and cultural dispossession.” Extracts from one of her poems with a translation by Opland (Opland 2007: 60-61) will be included here.

‘Mayibuye! I Afrika! Awu!’

By Nontsizi Mqgweto

Nikony’ izililo? Niti maibuye nopala nisopa makubuye nina

Akuko nasiko lakumisa umzi akukho bukosi akuko ntwisento.

*Seninje ngenkumbi zisele kwezinye nashiywa bubuzwe nashiywa
bubuntu*

Nashiywa yimfuyo zonke ezo zinto senizixolisa ngo Cimizingqala.

Uti maibuye? Makubuye wena wonwaya intloko ulila ngabani,

*Nanko noNtsikana kade akutyela zuyeke imali siqu sempundulu.
Mfondini wotutu lwakud'eAfrika wazonela ngani? Phambi koYehova,
Nalo ke ne China lize ngemitombo nalo ke ne Kula lize ngama empty.
Ukony'izililo? Makubuye wena sala ukutyelwa sabona ngolopu.
Ukumbule apo waw'uvela kona ufun'osiyazi bahlab'ezintloko.
Taruni zinduli zase South Afrika baf'abantu benu! Lemk'izwe nezizwe
Sikala ngakona siti maibuye ivuse inimba yakuma kowayo. (Abridged)*

'Come back Africa! Awu!'

Are you raising a cry, saying "Come back"?
You'll cry yourself hoarse: you must come back!
Gone are our customs for setting up homesteads,
monarchy, values, nothing is left!
You leave like locusts left by the swarm,
You've lost all pride, your sense of a nation,
lock, stock and barrel, everything's lost:
you seek balm in the bottle that blots our all pain.
You say "Come back"? You must come back!
You scratch your head in search of a scapegoat.
Ntsikana warned you a long time ago,
'Money's the lightning-bird: leave it alone.'
Child of the soil of far-flung Africa,
what have you done to so offend God?
Here the China sells you malt for your home-brew,
there the Coolie buys up your empties.
Are you raising a cry? You must come back!
Spurn advice and you'll come a cropper.
Always recall where you came from:
seek the seers to tell you straight.
Mercy, South African hills, while your people die

strangers cart off your country!
With cause we cry, saying "Come back"
to induce birth pangs in her people.

In this poem Nontsizi Mqweto bemoans the fact that people keep on saying Africa must come back while they themselves have forsaken Africa by moving away from their traditional cultural values. Demanding the return of Africa while they, the people of Africa, have alienated themselves from Africa by neglecting their traditional values is pointless. She appeals to them to seek advice from those who know so that they could take their rightful place in the country of their birth. Nationhood, *ubuntu* and other social values have forsaken them. They do not even have customs by which they could correct the situation.

Mtuze has written a number of poetry books since his first novel **UDingezweni** (1966). His poem, '*Isikhalo seAfrika*' appears in his book **Vingcan' amazibuko** (1982: 45). The poem also decries the erosion of cultural values by westernism.

'Isikhalo seAfrika'

By P T Mtuze

Zijikile izinto bantwana benkos' entle

Zijikile izinto bantwana beAfrika.

.....

Salahla uQamata namasiko ethu,

Sayilahla imbeleko sagculel' iziyaca

Ngumbhodamo wenene kumnyam'eAfrika,

Zijikile izinto ndifung'uMgolombane (Abridged)

Africa's lament

Things have changed my chief's children,

Things have changed children of Africa.

.....

We threw away Qamata and our customs,

We threw away baby rituals and ritual necklaces,

Africa is topsy-turvy and plunged in darkness,

Things have changed I swear by Mgolombane.

In the poem Mtuze shows how things have changed in people's social values. Family respect and discipline have deteriorated, old people are no longer given the respect they used to get. Women are also treated impolitely. *Ubuntu* principles are no longer upheld. In the past disciplining children was communal in that every adult could call an errant child to order. Finally moral and spiritual values have disappeared. Africa is in a state of confusion.

The final author Mtumane's poem '*Iyemk' iAfrika*', appears in his book **Sanya izapholo** (2006: 66). In this debut poetry book, Mtumane strongly decries the erosion of African culture and the denigration of anything African, including our language and our customs.

'Iyemk' iAfrika

By Z Mtumane

Yabuy' iAfrika sancoma,

Yaphel' ingcinezelo saphumla,

Lwaphel' ulawulo lwamakoloniya kwamnandi,

Safuman' amalungelo kwasekhaya,

Yahlonitshw' imiDaka kwalunga,

Kodwa ngath' isemka yon' Afrika.

Kubi ke ngob' izimkela ngokwayo,

*Akusekho makolonyali nabacinezeli,
Kodw' ubukolonyali bunamandla,
Bungene bendel' ezingqondweni zama-Afrika,
Kungoku nje sebusebenza bungaqhutywa bani,
Abufuni kuphum' ezingqondweni,
Asazijongele phantsi kunanamhla,
Asazibukul' izint' ezizezawo,
Adludla nezo zamakolonyali nabacinezeli
Iyashenx' i-Afrika kubu-Afrika ma-Afrika. (Abridged)*

Africa is going away
Africa came back and we were full of praise,
Oppression went away and we got a rest,
Colonial rule ended and we were happy,
We got civil rights and we felt at home,
Blacks got respected and all was well,
But it seems as if Afrika is going away.
What is sad is that it is leaving on its own,
There are no colonialists and oppressors,
But colonialism is very strong,
It penetrated deeply into African minds,
Now it keeps on working automatically,
It refuses to get out of their minds,
They still undermine themselves till today,
They still shun their own heritage,
They run for those of the colonial oppressor,
Africa is going away from Africanism, Africans.

Mtumane voices his concerns about loss of identity among the black people. They are still in the grips of colonialists and oppressors long after they have gone. Although they have obtained untold rights under the new dispensation, they are still enslaved

mentally and psychologically as they shun their own cultural values and run after those of the oppressors and the colonialists. The rest of the poem deals with the undermining of the isiXhosa language, with black children wanting to speak English only. Black culture has just become a curiosity item instead of a reality.

The poems, although handled superficially for obvious reasons, clearly show how authors feel about the changes that have happened in black communities over the last hundred years. The people have lost their own and they have not managed to get what they hoped to get from the new cultures. The longing is there but the forces of change are too strong for them to re-discover their roots. The outcome is that they are misfits in both the cultures around them. In this way the poems have thrown light on an issue that is fundamental in the study that is to be undertaken on change in selected isiXhosa novels from the time of the early newspapers up to and including the present period.

Lindi Nelani Jordan (in Jordan, 1974: viii) aptly stresses the importance of understanding the social forces at work in African society if we are to be able to analyse African literature effectively:

If literature reflects the society which produced it, then understanding the social forces at work in that society is vital to appreciating that society's literature. Unfortunately most of those who write about the literature of Africa are locked in ivory towers. Periodically they produce weighty dissertations on such subjects as how Achebe, Soyika, La Guma, Rive et al; place their commas, periods, colons, and quotation marks, and, for Southern Africa, ignore hundreds of writers who use the African languages, a medium quite foreign to most of the "experts."

He (Jordan in Jordan, *ibid*: viii) concludes this interesting debate by pointing out that "what African literature needs is work by African scholars who know and understand the cultures and peoples of Africa."

The topicality of the issues raised is also attested by Mbeki (2007:1) who contends very strongly that African languages in the new dispensation should contribute to shared understanding and the fostering of a national identity in the country:

We are about to conclude our Heritage Month. We put this month on the national calendar as an important part of what we have to do as a people to fashion our national identity, to formulate an image of ourselves, refusing to be defined by others. We have to do this in the context of our unqualified respect for the fact of our unity in diversity, and our common resolve to achieve national reconciliation, national and social cohesion.

As an important part of this, each of our language/cultural groups should make an effort not only to understand itself, its language, culture and customs, but also the languages, cultures and customs of the other compatriot formations, so that our shared understanding of one another serves as the cement we need to bond our new nation.

AmaXhosa essayists have, over the years, added their voices to these concerns by discussing various aspects of African life and change, sometimes for the better and at other times for worse. A few of these will be highlighted here.

Bokwe comments as follows in his preface to Jolobe's collection of essays, **Amavo** (1940:unpag.) about the state of affairs in Africa in the middle of the twentieth century :

Abo kuthi banakho ukugqala ukuhambiseka kwezinto, abanakuba abaziphawulanga iinguqulelo ezithe zabakho ebomini babantu abaNtsundu beli lizwe kwisiqingatha sesibini kwezine kule nkulungwana sikuyo. Ezi nguqulelo zibe buvunduvundu njengento eyenzeka ebusuku kuse seyikho, Enye yezi nguqulelo zibalulekileyo ibe yenxulumene nemfundo. Sakuthabatha imizekelo embalwa ephathekayo sibona oku.

Phambi kweminyaka emashumi mabini anesihlanu egqithileyo kwabe kungekho ziko lamfundo iphakamileyo kulo lonke eli laseAfrika, apho umfundi ongumAfrika ebenokuthi afumane khona imfundo enomsila. Enyanisweni kwakunqabe nomfundi ophumelele iMatriki, ndingasathethi ngomfo nentombi engaba inemfundo yeYunivesiti. Loo nto yenza ukuba athi othe ngebhaqo wabakho abe ngutyhinityhini ukubukwa sisizwe.

Those who can observe developments, could not have missed noticing the changes that have come about in the lives of black people in this country in the second half of this century. These changes have been sudden as something that happened overnight. One of those important changes related to education. If we could just take a few examples this is what emerges. Twenty five years ago there was no institution of higher learning in the whole of Africa, where a black student could study towards a degree. In truth, one could not even find someone with Matric, let alone a man or woman with a university degree. Consequently people would greatly admire anyone who happened to acquire such a qualification by some dint of luck.

According to Bokwe (in Jolobe 1940:unpag.) the following phenomenal changes have occurred over the years, radically changing the face of Africa:

Matanci kube kunzima nokucenga abazali ukuba bathumele abantwana kwizikolo zemini ndingasathethi ngezikhulu. Namhlanje izinto ziphethukile. Amadodana anemfundo enemisila angamashumi-shumi, abaneMatriki bangamakhulu, babe abantwana bezikolo zemini bebalwa ngamawaka. Enyanisweni abasemagunyeni baphantse ukuphelelwa ngamacebo okuhlangabezana noku kwanda kwabumini kwemfundo yama-Afrika. Umlambo uyazalisa, isisikhukula kunjalonje, kwaye akukho mntu onokuma ngaphambili kuba owona msinga useza. Phambili ma-Afrika!

In the past it used to be difficult to persuade parents to send their children to day schools, let alone institutions of higher learning. Today things have changed. There are tens and tens of graduates, and hundreds have Matriculation, while day scholars are several thousands. In actual fact, those in authority seem to be running out of plans to accommodate

this phenomenal rise in the education of black people. The river is flooding and no one can block it because the greatest tide is still coming. Forward, Africans.

One can see from the following overview of Jolobe's essays by Kwetana (1987: 48) that Jolobe was concerned with change in amaXhosa society:

The nature of Jolobe's essays must be described before the treatment of the structure and style. As indicated in Chapter 1 Jolobe addresses himself to national issues and offers "solutions" to problems afflicting the Xhosa in particular as well as the South African Blacks and Whites.

Tamsanqa was another prolific isiXhosa writer, better known for his plays and novels. In the essay 'inkolo' (in **Imitha yelanga** 1967:18) he discusses amaXhosa beliefs. He clearly demonstrates that all nations have their peculiar beliefs and superstitions, and that this is not unique to amaXhosa people only. (Vide Tamsanqa 1967:18):

AbeLungu bathi sikholelwa kakhulu kwinto ekuthiwa kukuthakatha, kanti asisedwa kuloo nkolo, ikho nakubo noxa iye iphela ngokuhambela phambili kwempucuko, nangokuba namagama ako ukuthakatha anje ngo"witchcraft", "wizard", no"magic". Loo magama onke ngawesiLungu, akabolekwanga siNtwini. Bathe ukuze babe negama okanye amagama ento kanti ayikho kwathini? Ayingeze into yaba negama layo kanti ayikho.

Whites say we strongly believe in what they call witchcraft, but we are not alone in that belief, they also have it although it is disappearing with the coming in of civilisation, even though they have the words for a number of issues related to witchcraft, such as witchcraft, wizard, and magic. If they never had witchcraft, where did they get those words from? How could they have those words without them having witchcraft?

The whole essay is an apologia for African belief systems. It is clear that Tamsanqa is trying to defend African culture from ill-informed judgements and prejudices. Once again, this clearly shows that amaXhosa writers were doing everything in their power to resist cultural domination and misrepresentation.

This tendency to defend African culture can be seen in many other essays by eminent essayists such as Budaza's **Khawufan' ucinge** (1980), Mtuze and Mjamba's essays in **Ugeme**, (1984), Tom's **Ndithungile selani** (1986), and Yekela's **Amaxesha empucuko sisingise phi na?** (1989).

1.6 Recapitulation

This first chapter was introductory in nature. It addressed standard literary aspects aimed at focusing on the main objectives of the study, its context, scope and relevance. A major consideration for the eventual success of the whole study is its methodology. The chapter shows that the study is multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary in that it engages methodological insights from various theories to present its thesis which is, in fact, a synthesis of methodological approaches from more than one discipline – psychoanalysis, structuralism, aesthetics, stylistics and dialectical theory.

One of the major issues to emerge from this chapter is the relationship between literature and reality. The life represented in literature is a reflection of real life. Because amaXhosa authors, especially in the formative years, write from personal experience or life around them, this mediated life forms the background of most of their works.

Reference to other genres such as poetry and essays clearly affirmed the relevance of this kind of research in amaXhosa social life. Poets and essayists alike have expressed their concerns about the erosion of amaXhosa cultural values by Westernism in all its manifestations.

CHAPTER TWO

CHANGE IN THE NEWSPAPER AGE

2.1 Introduction

The introduction of literacy among the amaXhosa was certainly a milestone in the development of this nation. The first large scale manifestation of this benefit was the emergence of the early newspapers. This immediately drew, like a magnet, great numbers of writers to the newspapers.

Obiechina (1980:3) comments as follows about the spread of literacy in West Africa, a situation that is analogous to our own:

The spread of literacy has been, obviously, a major source of change in human life and society. Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* describes how the establishment of mass literacy introduced far-reaching changes in the culture and social habits of the British working class. The introduction of literacy into the predominantly non-literate West African societies brought about an even more profound social change. And this, in turn, registers unmistakably in the history and content of the novel in West Africa.

This addition to the study will anchor the study and focus it on the relevant issues that will inform it as we move deeper in the subject. The newspapers preceded formal literary production. A major factor is that the newspapers reflected the global views of the people of the time on various social and political issues in which the ensuing cultural debates are rooted. No serious study of isiXhosa literature could be complete without reference to the newspaper era as the foundation of isiXhosa literature and a backdrop against which it should be seen.

The start of the new printing and publishing era is explained as follows by Shepherd (1955:27):

The cherished aim of providing literature was greatly furthered by an event which took place in 1823. In September of that year the Rev. John Ross, a new missionary of the Glasgow Society, arrived in Cape Town. Ross had with him a small printing press, with a quantity of type, paper and ink. These he put on a wagon, and travelled through the Karroo with them, the journey from Cape Town to “Chumie,” with some detours, covering about a thousand miles. Arriving at “Chumie” on December 16th, the press was got in order on the 17th; on the 18th the alphabet was set up; on the 19th fifty copies were thrown off; and on the 20th Bennie recorded that a new era had commenced in the history of the Xhosa speaking people.

The period before the advent of written literature in 1909 was not an idle one. On the contrary, it was characterised by the appearance of the early newspapers and a flurry of correspondence between them and various writers who ventured their opinions on several social and political issues. One of the most influential newspapers or journals in this period was *The Kaffir Express/Isigidimi Sama-Xosa* which, as suggested by the title, appeared in both English and isiXhosa, from 1870 to 1876 when its name was changed to the *Christian Express*.

The following comments by Shepherd (1955:36) are informative on this pioneering drive:

In 1870 Dr. James Stewart took charge of Lovedale Institution. The Franco-German war began in that year, and it was thought that its exciting events might be used for creating, through the press, an African reading public, by establishing a bilingual newspaper with the English title of *Kaffir Express* – translated in the vernacular *Isigidimi sama-Xosa*.

In the leading article of *The Kaffir Express* (November 1870:1), the target audience and the aim of the newspaper are clearly set out:

The paper will be addressed to the intelligent portion of the native community who are able to read or have interest in what is going on in the world beyond their own dwellings. To make its contents suitable to those who are utterly uneducated would be a mistake, even though the paper could be read to them.

2.2 Changes in the legal system

Various interesting changes manifest themselves in this early edition of the journal. In the very first volume, under the topic *Izinto ngezinto* (literally titbits), readers are introduced to a major cultural issue – the need to redress the blacks when they go into the urban areas. They had to abandon their own clothing in favour of the White man's clothes as their own traditional clothes had suddenly become objectionable. This legal order is reported as follows in *Isigidimi Sama-Xosa* (October 1870: 6):

Umteto wokuvata

Asikuko nokuba ngoku umteto uqinile eQonce wokuba abantu bahambe benxibile kakuhle ingubo zabelungu pakati komzi. Abatengisi bakalazela ukuti wenziwe bukali kakulu, ke ngoko utintele into eninzi yabamnyama enge yisiza kutenga.

The law on how to dress.

The law is tough in King William's Town these days. It requires people to be decently dressed in white people's clothes when they visit town. The business people are complaining that the law is too harsh as it prevents many black people from coming into town to buy.

The early Africans used to wear garments made of sheep skin and hides. Women wore *izikhaka* (traditional dresses made from hide). When these became difficult to make, both men and women resorted to blankets and such material. The new dress law forbade them from entering town wearing blankets. There are many interesting stories about how men struggled to come to terms with these dress laws which had placed them in a very invidious position. On the one hand, they had to go and pay the compulsory Poll Tax in town, while on the other they could not enter town wearing traditional blankets. It is said that the men had to take turns using one pair of trousers to go and pay the tax, leaving the others waiting outside town for their turn.

The law regulating dress went hand in hand with a law that governed criminal behaviour that, in turn, came with the Western penal system of police, magistrates and judges. Offenders faced jail, an institution that had not been there before in traditional society. This is reflected as follows in *Isigidimi* (October 1870: 6):

Indoda ebetiweyo ngase-Sheshegu

Ngokuhlwa okutile mayelana pakati kule nyanga ifileyo, infengu yase-Sheshegu yati ivela E-Dikeni igoduka yabetwa kunene ngokoyikekayo ngamaXosa amabini. Kutiwa loma Xosa omabini abanjiwe afakwa etolongweni.

Man assaulted near Sheshegu

One evening towards the middle of last month, a Fingo man walking home from Alice was severely assaulted by two Xhosa men. It is reported that the two Xhosa men have been arrested and detained in jail.

The long arm of the law had begun to arrest wrongdoers. Common games such as stick-playing suddenly became unlawful practices. The law could not approve of the practice of hurting one another with sticks and calling it a game. A murder case reported in the *Isigidimi* (October 1870: 6) clearly illustrates the changing landscape:

Umntu obulewe ngenduku

Kwesika-Mabandla amakwenkwe amabini ate ngokuxabana aselesilwa ngenduku, enye yawo ingu mzikulwana ka-Mabandla. Kwakuti nqi yabaleka leyo ingumzikulwana ka-Mabandla, yati xa iti tshiki yakupa ngenduku enye yayihlabanisela etloko, bapuma ubuc'opo.

Imantyi yati makeze atyandwe kodwa lati lakuya kona igqira elingu Palmer akavuma u-Mabandla ukulibonisa inc'waba. Kwabuya kwapindwa kwayiwa akavuma. Kute ngokwesitatu kwaya ishumi elinesitatu lamapolisa lix'obile, akwaba saqaba ntoke.

Someone killed with a stick.

In Mabandla's area two boys had a quarrel and ended up fighting each other with sticks. One of them was Mabandla's grandson. When things became hot Mabandla's grandson ran away. A few paces from his adversary, the other boy struck him a fatal blow with a stick on the head, fracturing his skull.

The magistrate ordered that a post-mortem examination be held – but when Dr Palmer went to Mabandla's place, the latter refused to show him the boy's grave. He went there for a second time, meeting with the same refusal. On the third occasion thirteen fully armed policemen went there, and there was no resistance.

Mabandla was a traditional leader in the area. While in the past such cases were tried in his court, the arrival of the new dispensation saw his jurisdiction drastically

curtailed. All serious cases had to be tried by a magistrate and the chief had to surrender all culprits to him. They could henceforth only try petty cases and civil disputes. Mabandla had one dilemma regarding the case – according to amaXhosa custom one does not temper with a buried corpse. The Western system of justice, on the other hand, demanded that the corpse be exhumed to enable the authorities to establish its exact cause of death.

A common national amaXhosa beverage was sorghum beer that had been enjoyed by all for many years. When the church came in, it supported the illegalisation of this beverage largely because it kept potential converts and new converts away from church. The police were also bent on doing away with it because it led to constant fighting and serious cases of assault among the residents. One of the meetings called to deal with the problem is reported as follows in the *Isigidimi* (October 1870: 7):

Utywala Bama Xosa

Kwiveki ezidlulileyo kusand' ukubako intlanganiso ezinkulu ezintatu E-Mkubiso, zingokuc'asa lento ibutywala, nokwandisa inani lababuzilayo. Eyokuqala yangena ngokuhlwa, eyesibini yangena emini, neyesitatu yako ngolwesitatu. Iziq'amo zezo ntlanganiso ziyatandeka. Baba mayela emak'ulwini amane abantu kweyase mini. Ekupeleni kwaleyo yangokuhlwa kwabako intlanganiswana yokup'ung' ikofu, abantu besemashumi amat'andatu.

Translated as On Kaffir Beer

There have been within the last few weeks three large gatherings at Burnshill, with a view to discourage drinking habits, and to increase the numbers of the Native Abstinence Society. Two lengthy lectures, the first held in the evening, the second at midday, in the large Church, and the third meeting on Wednesday, 14th ult. The results have been satisfactory. About 400 people attended the meetings. At the close of the last, a tea or coffee meeting took place at which about 60 of the members were present.

The article reveals the people behind the organisation of these meetings as being the Rev. Mr Laing, Dr Laing, and Mr Temlett 'whose efforts in this cause are most praiseworthy and untiring' , according to *The Kaffir Express* (October 1870:4). The need for this drastic step, a step that was clearly a serious encroachment on the right of the people to enjoy their liquor, is explained as follows in the journal (*The Kaffir Express* October 1870: 4):

Considering the number of fights, broken bones, and fractured skulls, giving work to doctors, and to magistrates, which may every year be traced to Kaffir beer – and without doubt to Boer brandy as well – to say nothing of all that immorality which every year decimates the roll of members in so many churches, we cannot but wish such meetings God's speed.

The persistence of the liquor problem could be seen much later in the encounter when *The Kaffir Express* (November 1872: 4) had reason to condemn the menace even much more strongly:

NATIVES SPEND FIFTY THOUSAND POUNDS A YEAR FOR BRANDY

In the Eastern Province at least the above sum must be spent in the body and soul-destroying strong drinks, and it is doubtful if not half that amount is not spent in British Kaffraria alone ...

The Kaffirs, Fingoes, and Basutos were once considered above the degraded, drunken Hottentots; but alas! Their glory is departing, and many of them are becoming mad for drink, throwing their property away and destroying themselves.

The seriousness of the alcohol problem, however, manifested itself in another article written to *The Blythswood Review* (of June 1926:49) by a so-called Native Correspondent who expressed himself very strongly against this scourge:

Xosa Beer.

Amongst other things that retard the progress of the Native people, economically, morally and religiously, Xosa beer is one of the deadliest. This curse has long been fought against by some Churches, but owing to the slackness of other Churches, matters are getting worse every year. Unless all the Churches combine in their efforts to fight this evil, no good results may be expected. Many of our people have been impoverished by this beverage. As the harvest is now approaching, many bags of mealies and kafir-corn are to be wasted in brewing this drink and the worst of it all is that in these days one sees at beer-drinking gatherings all sorts of people, and many young persons, a thing that would not have been allowed or tolerated in the olden days, when discipline of young people was austere and rigid. Things have now altered considerably in this connection. It is, therefore, the duty of all sensible fathers and mothers to make a pause and ponder over the present condition of affairs with all seriousness. If things go on as they are going to-day, what is to be the future of the present generation?

2.3 Socio-economic changes

Change did not only manifest itself on the social front, but also on the economic side, as could be seen by the numerous advertisements in the journal. Two of these are repeated here (ex *Isigidimi* October 1870: 8) to point to the varying interests of both the merchandisers and those of the new consumers:

E-DIKENI NASE-MKUBISO

U-J.B. TEMLETT

Uhlala enempahla

EZITENGISAYO EZILUNGILEYO

Ezinje ngentlobontlobo zengubo, iswekile nekofu

Intlobontlobo zekomityi nepleti

Izivato zokutshata nezinye intlobo zezi vato.

NAZO ZONKE INTLOBO ZEZILIMO ZINGA TENGWA

ALICE AND BURNSHILL

J.B. TEMLETT

Always has quality goods

FOR SALE

Such as a variety of blankets, sugar and coffee

A variety of cups and plates

Wedding dresses and other items of clothing

AND A VARIETY OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Besides plying their trade and trying to attract customers by addressing their changing social and economic needs, some of the advertisers focused on the educational needs of the communities concerned, as exemplified hereunder (Isigidimi October 1870:8):

INCWADI ZESIKOLO

ZAMA-NGESI NEZAMA-XOSA

AMAPEPA, IINTSIBA ZOKUBALA NE-INK,

ZIHLALA ZIKO

E-LOVEDALE

KWINDLU YOKUTENGA INCWADI

SCHOOL BOOKS
ENGLISH AND ISIXHOSA
PAPER, PENS AND INK
ALWAYS AVAILABLE
AT LOVEDALE BOOKSHOP

Throughout the journal long lists of commodities are published, ranging from fat, butter, skins, hides, pork, vegetables, groceries, hay, maize meal, plants, to corn, axes and poles. These clearly attest to the changing circumstances and needs of the black communities, alongside those of their white compatriots.

The clash between amaXhosa and Western culture clearly manifested itself in the 19th Century Eastern Cape. Liquor and the problem of girls being carried away in marriage (*ukuthwala* custom) continued to bedevil relations between the missionaries and the colonialists, on the one side, and the indigenous people of the land, on the other. An urgent meeting called to discuss the matter was reported as follows in *The Kaffir Express* (November 1870:3):

NOTES FROM THE TRANSKEI

(By a correspondent)

Just recently, the British Resident, Captain Blyth, called all the headmen together to hear their opinion upon several matters of importance; among others, on the sale of brandy, and the carrying of girls.

On the sale of brandy, it is gratifying to know that those headmen, with two exceptions, wished the sale to be prohibited among the natives of Transkei.

2.4 Religious and social changes

The stranglehold that Christianity was beginning to have on African life and customs is attested to by the opening of one of the most famous Methodist missionary churches in the country, Healdtown, outside Fort Beaufort, on 19 October 1870. The church was one of the strongest catalysts of social change, hence the coverage of this event by *Isigidimi* (November 1870:9):

Ukuvulwa kwe Tyalike Entsha

Kwisikolo sama Wesile esise Nxukwebe kuvule ityalike entsha, ngosuku lwe 19 ku October. Kwabako ngalomini into eninzi yabantu. Kwakungati inkoliso yeso sikolo ibibutene ngase tyalikeneni. Abelungu ababekona babe ngapezu kwekulu, bevela esi Nqenqeni [sic] nakwezinye indawo. Yazala indlu leyo, kwada kwabako neqela elikulu ngapandle. Inani labo bonke ababe kona belimayela namakulu asibozo.

The Opening of a New Church

A new church was opened at the Healdtown Methodist School on 19 October. On that day a large number of people gathered there. It was as if the majority of the student population had converged outside the church. There were more than one hundred white people there, coming from Fort Beaufort and other places. The house was filled to capacity, with many people forced to follow the proceedings from outside. The crowd that was there on that day was estimated at around eight hundred people.

It is interesting to note that the priests and laypersons who participated in the service were all white. This clearly indicates that the bulk of the amaXhosa were unconverted

or at best newly converted. The Rev. Mr Lamplough read the first scripture reading and Mr Impey delivered the sermon. His choice of topic is interesting. It was from Revelations Chapter 21 verse 22: “And I did not see a temple there.” One can only surmise that the relevance of this text was largely based on the fact that a new temple was built at Healdtown as there had been no temple there beside what the missionaries regarded as pagan temples.

Healdtown soon served as a beacon of hope to those who wanted to become teachers and other schooled and skilled workers. The changes in this regard are attested by the conferences that were held there to educate both the missionaries and those who were undergoing training. Langham Dale wrote to *The Kaffir Express* (November 1872:3) as follows in this regard:

In the Kaffir Express of 1st October a proposal is broached for a general South African Missionary Conference; and there are many and great results to be anticipated from such a meeting ...

In choosing a place for a Conference, I would advocate a town or a station where there is much active and good work going on, suggestive of topics for discussion and of ways and means worthy of imitation. Such a model day-school as that at Heald Town, with its applications for training Native Teachers, would present to the eye of the Missionary (who comes from a distance where a few untutored savages mumble their a,b,c, in a Kaffir hut), so many lessons for his guidance and encouragement, that his visit could not be altogether fruitless.

Mission was the strongest catalyst of change in African societies, so we need not wonder at the comments of Dale and his own pioneering work that culminated in Lovedale. No sooner had the church been established than there arose a problem regarding the paucity of suitable hymns to sing during the church services and in wedding ceremonies. This solicited the following appeal in *The Kaffir Express* (December 1870:4):

KAFFIR SONGS

A correspondent in Grahamstown suggests the desirability of endeavouring to get some good Kaffir songs composed on different subjects, for use at weddings and other gatherings of Christian natives. Such songs, which should be neither light nor foolish, might be used instead of the Psalms and Hymns, which often come in, very much out of place, even in the middle of the innocent mirth of such occasions. Compositions of the latter class should be used with reverence and with due regard to time, place and circumstance.

The missionaries, as undisputed leaders of social change, were even prepared to pay composers for suitable church songs. It is interesting to note that the common traditional wedding songs could not be adapted for the purpose. They had to be replaced with suitable church music. This is even of greater interest when one considers what is happening today. The songs, choruses and the hymns sung in services and weddings are exuberant and highly rhythmic, far from the cry of the early missionaries.

Perhaps one of the clearest indications of change in amaXhosa society was the rising crime rate even as far back as the nineteenth century. Cases of theft, violence and murder were regularly reported in the journal. Women abuse, the scourge of the present century, reared its ugly head even in those days as reported in *Isigidimi* (January 1871:14):

AMATYALA ABEKO EDIKENI

(Pambi kosesikundleni se mantyi)

NGU P.A.MADER, Esq.

Thursday, ngo 2 December

U-Zipo enetyala lokuba ete wabeta umfazi ngokufuna ukumbulala. Latetwa elotyala kwafuneka ukuba lilinde umgwebi Kwabonakala entetweni yomfazi ukuba kuthe fuleni utile kwa Gaga, uzipo waqubisana nomfazi wakhe, wambuza ukuba uye ngelikabanina kowabo, engavunyelwanga nguye nje; waselembetake ngoswazi emwisa pantsi ehlala pezu kwake erola isitshetshe emsika emqaleni efuna ukumbulala.

RECENT CASES IN ALICE

Before the acting magistrare. By P.A. Mader, Esq.

Thursday 2 December

Zipo was accused of assaulting his wife with the intention of murdering her. The case was tried provisionally but had to be referred to the judge. It turned out in the wife's evidence that as she was in the vicinity of the Gaga stream she was accosted by her husband who asked her who gave her permission to go to her parent's home as he had not given her permission to do so. He then beat her with a switch, pulled her to the ground, and set on her before taking out a knife to cut her throat obviously determined to kill her.

The changing judicial system introduced police, magistrates and judges. This ushered in a completely new penal system. Unfortunately the woman's evidence could not be corroborated by any witness since the couple was alone when the offence took place. The man was found guilty of common assault and fined one pound sterling.

It should be clear that the amaXhosa society, as early as in the nineteenth century, was undergoing remarkable changes in its fabric. Society itself was divided because there were those who revelled in the changes, and those who decried them.

The following article in *Isigidimi* (January 1871:10) points not only to divergence in people's opinions but also to the emerging of a group of amaXhosa who would have nothing to do with traditional culture and all that goes with it.

Kokela (literally meaning Lead), obviously perturbed by the erosion of amaXhosa culture and the treatment meted out to his people, wrote an article in **Isigidimi** that seemed to be fairly innocuous had it not been for the sensibilities and the sensitivities of the time, challenging the younger generation to take their culture seriously.

Seen in the context of our time, the article was nothing else than an expression of the author's nostalgia for the good old days that were lamented even by such greats as W.B. Rubusana in his famous book *Zemk' inkomo magwalandini* (There go your cattle, you cowards!), a war-cry that decried the erosion of amaXhosa culture. A fierce storm broke out with one of the younger, enlightened correspondents taking him to task for his comments in *Isigidimi* (January 1871:10):

... Nditike kubo. Ewe, kaloku kuyaqondakala ukuba ubuni bupelile bohlanga lwa Ma-X'osa. Nditeta ubuni kuba belusisizwe, esibe sizipete ngamaxesha angapambi kwala, sizipakamela ebukulwini baso, pakati kwezinye intlanga ezimnyama zelilizwe. Londawo ipelile. Ukuba ayikapeli igqibeleleke ngoku kumaxa igqitayo, itshonelayo. Oko koko, oku kokunye.

KuMx'osa ovelayo wamaxosa atshonayo atshona nobux'osa obudala, ndiyabuza nditi, uyazazina izinto zakowenu? Uyabazina oyihlo bako? Kulomafana bakushiyana nawo? Lo mafana uwabambilena? Ulahle kwapela na ngecala lakowenu, kuba namhla uvelelwe lelitsha? Umx'osa ebux'oseni bakhe ubenge nyamakazi yasendle, ebenge nguye Umtwa wasezintabeni. Ube ngumntu, ekangele, esiva, ecinga, eteta, ehamba. Uyamazina ukuba ubenjalo? Uyabazina abo Bantu abehleli ngabo emhlabeni? Ebeyinkosi ebukosini bake. Uyabazina obobukosi bakhe? Ubenesiko azipete ngalo, wazilumkela ngalo kwezinye intlanga, ezikwa nje ngaye. Elo siko uliqondilena?

I say to them. Yes, it is quite clear that the Xhosa nation has lost some of its sense of identity. I mean the identity they had as the nation when they were a nation that governed itself in years gone by, a nation with integrity among other black nations of the country. That has disappeared. If it has not disappeared completely, it is slipping by, and on the verge of disappearing. The times have changed.

To the emerging Xhosa person, born of the fast disappearing Xhosas who are disappearing with their Xhosa identity, I would like to ask, do you know your cultural values? Do you know your fathers and forefathers? Did they leave you with any heritage? Have you preserved that heritage? Have you jettisoned everything from your home side because today you have acquired new things? The Xhosa person in his original Xhosa state was not an animal from the wild, he was not a Bushman from the mountains. He was a person who watched, listened, thought, spoke, and walked. Do you know that he was like that? He was King in his own kingdom. Do you know that kingship? He had his custom which governed his life, and with which he defended himself from other races like him. Are you aware of that custom?

Little did Kokela know that his remarks would unleash one of the worst storms in the journal with strong reactions from his fellow blacks and from the editor of *Isigidimi*, Dr Shepherd. The first heavy salvos were fired by a respondent who called him/herself Fundani Makowetu (literally be educated my people), *A Member of the Going-Astray Generation*. This was clearly in reaction to the earlier correspondent's name: Lead. Fundani Makowetu wrote a venomous response to Kokela in *The Kaffir Express* (February 1871: 4) part of which read as follows:

The writer Kokela, evidently a Kaffir of some distinction, tells us that there is a great difference between a Kaffir of the last generation and that of the present. The change from the one to the other is almost, if not altogether, complete.

To this I may only say, I am very sorry that I cannot fully agree with him. For in reality the progress amongst the natives is far less than it should be. The principal thing that Kokela seems to mourn over is, that the Kaffirs are not so independent as they used to be. My reply to this is – oh! That their independence had been much less than it is. And whether it is more advantageous, as they are, to be under the English, or to be independent, I appeal to the Intelligent natives to decide. For my own part I say, to be under the English is more advantageous. However, I do not mean to debate the point here.

In the letter Fundani attacks Kokela very strongly, taking each of his comments and condemning it. He tears into Kokela over several issues – the differences between the earlier and the later generations; the mission as the major place of change; Kokela's assertion that the change is for the worse; his decrying the forsaking of valuable amaXhosa customs, to mention but a few.

As if this was not enough, the editor, Dr Shepherd, entered the fray on the side of Fundani, and retorts angrily in the same *Isigidimi* (February 1871:3):

It is very plain, that there are two parties even among the natives – the progressive, and the other conservative of the old customs and non-progressive – to whom the times gone by are the brave days of old, - far better than the present. Our sympathies are with the party of progress. There is very little in old Kaffirdom worth preserving – and we think it will be the wisdom of the natives as soon as possible to move forward into day – and secure the blessings which the present time brings them.

The statement should certainly count as the climax of missionary arrogance especially coming from someone who obviously knew very little about the culture he condemned. The sentiments expressed by Kokela are not manifestly different to those expressed by current leaders such as President Mbeki with regard to the African Renaissance and being an African.

2.5 Political changes

This concern for change in African political life is also reflected in other contemporary newspapers such as *Umteteli Wabantu* published in 1920 to 1929. Saule (1989:8) comments as follows in this regard:

Umteteli Wabantu (Speaker for the People) immediately caught the eye of the public as it concerned itself with matters directly affecting the Blacks throughout South Africa. As the title suggests, it viewed itself as the spokesman of the people (Opland, 1983). It focuses attention on Black politics, education, race relations, traditions and customs, the improvement of the standards of living of Blacks and social change.

An example of Mqhayi's concern about political change in amaXhosa society comes out very clearly in the following extract from *Umteteli Wabantu*, article 1 dated 4 June 1927 as cited by Saule (1989:133):

Indlela yenkosi

Yintonina imbangi yokuba sithi isizwe sakusoyisa esinye siphange ekunqumleni ulawulo lwaso, nokususa inkosi esihlalweni, nokuphelisa ubukumkani baso? Inyanisa yaloo nto iphandle; kuba sisukuba sivingca umthombo ophakathi kwaso noThixo, ukuze sitshe ngamalanga zingalungelelani izinto zaso, siye sinzonzisa side siphelile yintliziyo yobuntu, siphile ukuzithemba, ibe kukufa kwaso ke oko.

Izizwe zeAfrika esezantsi, zonke ziphela, mazibe zizikhangele ukuba zisephakathi kwawo na umqokozo wolawulo lukaThixo? Ziyakuthi zakwenjenjalo zifumane ukuba sezikude nayo loo ndawo. Iinkosi azisekho seyiligama; ubukhosi buphelile tu, bukhosi osebukho bobamaYurophu. Umntu angake athi abeSuthu kwaMshweshwe basazilawula, naseSwazini, nakubeTswana, kanti hayi, ezo nkosi sezilawula ngemithetho yePitso ehlangana kanye ngonyaka yonganyelwe yiRhuluneli-jikelele; engako oko nazo zisemgama nemithetho yazo yobuzwe.

The situation of the chief

Why is it that when a nation conquers another nation it hastens to end that nation's rule, and to remove that nation's chief from power, and end his sovereignty? The reason for that is obvious – it is that it is breaking the link between that nation and God, so that the conquered nation burns in the sun with none of its traditional values operating properly, then it would diminish and lose its human heart, lose self-confidence, and plunge into its demise. The nations of South Africa, all of them, should inspect themselves to see if they are still within God's rule. When they do so, they will find themselves far removed from God's rule. The chiefs are only there in name these days; chieftainship is no longer in existence, the only chieftainship that is reigning is that from Europe. One could think that baSothos govern themselves, same with those in Swaziland and Bechuanaland, one could imagine, yet the opposite is true, those chiefs are governed by Pitsos that come together only once a year, chaired by a Governor General; they too are far from their traditional rules.

A final change that could be highlighted here is from *Umteteli Wabantu's* article 6 dated 4 May 1929, as cited by Saule (1989:144). The article deals with one of the major issues in amaXhosa society – bringing children up properly and the difficulties caused by working parents:

AmaXhosa eli xesha

Asengxakekweni enkulu malunga nokondla kuba wona ngokwawo aphethwe akaziphethe. Azizicaka, baye nabafazi bawo bazizicakakazi. Kuvukwa kusasa kuyiwe emsebenzini ngabantu abakhulu bonke, babe abantwana bengenabani ubakhangeleyo, nobangxolisayo bakwenza isenzo esinxam. Abazali bafika ngokuhlwa kuphela kungekho tuba lakuqeqesha mntwana. Umntwana sisidalwana esingqondwana zaso ezibazileyo kunjalo nje. Uyakwazi ukubabonelela abo bamondlayo ukuba bazizidenge kunaye, abaqhathe ke kamnandi, beba bona akazi nto lusana, kanti hayi nguye obakrobileyo wabafumana ukuba unokwenza ngabo nantoni na ayithandileyo.

The black people of our time

They find themselves in great difficulties as far as bringing children up because they themselves are ruled by others, they do not govern themselves. They are servants, men and women alike. All adults have to wake up early in the morning and go to work, leaving the children alone at home without anyone to look after them and discipline them when they do wrong. The parents arrive late in the evening too tired to discipline the children. A child is a very clever little creature. It can take advantage of the situation when it notices that those supposed to be in charge are not bright enough and they think that the child knows nothing, and yet the child is clever enough to do what it wants with them.

One could go on *ad infinitum* about the social and political changes in the lives of the amaXhosa reflected in the early newspapers. Suffice to say there were clear indications that amaXhosa people had entered a totally new era. Some changes were for good but others were certainly for worse.

The era of the periodicals and the newspapers also sheds light on the rising political and cultural dynamics between the demands of the westerners and the needs of the indigenous people of the country. Opland (in Smit, van Wyk and Wade, 1996: 110) stresses that ‘we ignore the ephemeral journals at the risk of producing an imbalanced and partial treatment of the course of Xhosa literature’:

A proper study of the history and development of Xhosa literature must take account of verbal art in three media: oral discourse (including folklore), books and newspapers. Since the nineteenth century there has been steady scholarly interest in folklore, and all surveys of Xhosa literature treat published books, but to date only A.C. Jordan has paid serious attention to literature published in newspapers. This neglect is problematic, for in nineteenth-century newspapers Xhosa literature takes its first hesitant steps into print, confronts the dominance of European models and editorial control, and grows into maturity – all this before the emergence of literature in books in the first decade of the twentieth century.

As can be seen from the self-imposed watchdog role played by Shepherd and Stewart during the newspaper age, isiXhosa literature was in chains from its inception. Ntuli and Swanepoel (1993:27) articulate this dilemma as follows:

When the written literatures started to emerge, the freedom of authors had already been repressed by the prescriptive milieu in which they had been educated. This happened in spite of the pressing socio-political problems that faced both the Xhosa and Sotho peoples at the turn of the century.

Authors, through close association with the Christian culture at and around mission stations opted to subscribe to the doctrine, to such an extent that a critical view of the socio-political environment hardly featured in their emerging fiction. In this sense the liberation to the written medium meant a sacrifice of the civil liberties their oral compatriots had freely exercised in a performance genre such as the praise poem.

The culmination of these stringent measures was the establishment of language boards set up to monitor African literature as will be seen later. Censorship and repression run like a golden thread from the newspaper age to the actual appearance of books and other materials, hence the need to conclude the study with an overview of the role of the language boards in directing the course of isiXhosa literature. (*Vide* Chapter 9).

The language boards determined the texture, the tenor and the tenure of African literature for over forty years. One very powerful figure straddles both eras and carried out his unsympathetic censorship of anything anti-establishment or pro-African culture – Shepherd. He edited *The Kaffir Express* and was the head and book reviewer of the oldest publishing house, Lovedale Press, as well as a member of the notorious language boards.

2.6 Recapitulation

IsiXhosa literature has its roots in the newspaper age. No serious study of this literature could be complete without reference to this tap-root. It was in the early magazines and newspapers where the first literary attempts were made as writers and correspondents started sharing ideas and views on various issues, mainly social, economic and political concerns. The changes brought about by Westernism rated high on the list of issues that were debated in the newspapers in the nineteenth century. While some of these articles were discursive prose material, others were in poetry as can be seen from the large volume of poems produced by Mgqweto in *Umteteli wabantu* in the period 1920-1929.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BEGINNINGS: 1909-1923

3.1 Introduction

Having dealt with the period that preceded the writing of books, attention will now be given to the first years of written literature among amaXhosa. This period is important in that it consists of the formative years of isiXhosa written literature. Having whetted their writing appetites in the writing of newspaper articles and other forms of writing such as poems and rhymes, amaXhosa writers turned to novels and other genres as means of expressing their views and feelings about life. Change features strongly in all this literature.

The following novels will be discussed in this chapter:

<u>Uhambo lukaGqobhoka</u>	1909	H.M. Ndawo
<u>UTandiwe wakwa Gcaleka</u>	1914	L. Kakaza
<u>Ityala lamawele</u>	1914	S.E.K. Mqhayi
<u>UNomsa</u>	1922	G.B. Sinxo
<u>UZagula</u>	1923	J.J.R. Jolobe

Before embarking on this analytical exercise, it is important to stress that finding the gist of any novel demands a close reading of the text and prior knowledge of what one is looking for in the novel under scrutiny. Mayhead (1974:93) articulates this as follows:

It can be said straight away that, for all but really experienced readers, a novel of the finer type will not reveal its full significance on the first reading. There is no need to be depressed about this. Even when a second reading has brought the reader more closely into touch with the book, there will remain new aspects of its meaning to emerge with each subsequent experience of it. However striking the initial impact of a fine work of art may be, its deeper significance is brought home to us in a *cumulative* way, developing over the years as we ourselves develop as human beings. It is nevertheless true that a deal of time and effort can be saved if the reader has some idea of what to look for when he approaches a novel for the first time.

3.2 Religious changes

Uhambo lukaGqobhoka (1909) is generally regarded as the first fully-fledged isiXhosa novel to appear. The book is patently an imitation of the popular allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress* (**Uhambo lomhambi**) written by John Bunyan in 1658 and translated into isiXhosa by the renowned Tiyo Soga. A sequel to this famous book was written by Bunyan in 1684 and translated into isiXhosa by J.H Soga. The latter publication was less successful and less well-known than the first.

Ndawo should be commended for this wonderful attempt to emulate Bunyan's allegory. The fact that the book was an assimilation of Bunyan's work does not diminish the fact that he was creative to produce such an excellent book in the indigenous language, satisfying the broad definition of an allegory which Abrams (1988:4-5) explains as follows:

An allegory is a narrative in which the agents and action, and sometimes the setting as well, are contrived so as to make coherent sense on the “literal” or primary, level of signification, and also to signify a second, correlated order of agents, concepts and events.

It cannot be doubted that **Uhambo lukaGqobhoka** is the epitome of the changes that missionary endeavour brought into the lives of amaXhosa especially in the social domain. The book reflects humanity’s transformation from the so-called pagan state to a Christian state. AmaXhosa are depicted as being on a symbolic journey from a pre-Christian to a Christian mode of existence.

Transformation is the essence of the novel, with change manifesting itself in various ways as the convert, Gqobhoka, divests himself and his people of traditional and primal life. Typical of change in the South African context, the first issue to be changed was the convert’s name. This is described as follows by Ndawo 1958: 1):

Elona gama lam lakowethu nguNgqola, eli lokuthi Gqobhoka liza mva.

My personal name was Ngqola. Gqobhoka came afterwards.

It is important to note that the original name meant Unbeliever, in contrast with the new name that means Convert. Of course this is in line with allegorical writings where the names encapsulate character traits as allegory itself is defined by Coleridge (as cited by Scott, 1967:6) as “the employment of a set of agents and images to convey in disguise a moral meaning – those agents and images being so combined as to form a homogeneous whole.”

Abrams (1988:5) comments as follows with regard to the personification of abstract entities as can be seen in Ndawo and Bunyan’s works:

The central device of the second type, the sustained allegory of ideas, is the personification of abstract entities such as virtues, vices, states of mind, modes of life, and types of character; in the more explicit allegories, such reference is specified by the names given to characters and places. Thus Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* allegorizes the doctrines of Christian salvation by telling how Christian, warned by Evangelist, flees the City of Destruction and makes his way laboriously to the Celestial City; en route he encounters characters with names like Faithful, Hopeful, and the Giant Despair, and passes through places like the Slough of Despond, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and Vanity Fair.

The battle for what was called Christian names spanned the lives of many generations before and after Ndawo's time. Mqhayi explains the craze to change from African names to European names as follows in his famous autobiography, **UMqhayi waseNtabozuko** (1975:29) that was originally published in 1939:

Ngaloo mihla amagama esiLungu (isiBhulu nesiNgesi) ayesabukeleka kakhulu, eziinto ezingathi zihla entla kwenkundla. Kwaye kundawonye nokucinga ukuba igama lesiXhosa alisafuneki nganto. Ubesakuthi ke nobenegama lesiXhosa lodwa, athiywe elinye igama mhla aya esikolweni okanye mhla angeniswa ebandleni likaKristu; kuba engenakubhalwa kwezo ndawo ngegama lesiXhosa elilelobuhedeni.

In those days European names (Afrikaans or English) were fashionable, as if they came from higher up. This was coupled with a misconception that the Xhosa names were no longer necessary. Even those who only had Xhosa names were given other names when they started attending school or on the day they started going to church; for they could not be entered into the books of the school or the church with Xhosa names that were regarded as heathen names.

Mqhayi (1975:29) was given the Hebrew name Samuel concerning which he expresses the following wild protestations:

Ngako oko ke mna, andibanga nayo inyhweba yegama lesiXhosa, ibingeze loo nto ide yenziwe ngubawo, kanye kanye – umntwana wabafundisi, ababefanele ukubonela kuye nabanye abantu! Njengomfundi weZibhalo ke, ubawo undinike igama lokuba ndinguSamuel, uSamuweli; apho ange wayetshilo nokuthi, nguSicelo, okanye uMcelwa, uCeliwe njalo-njalo. Kodwa nanko esiya kuvumbulula intetho yesiHebhere, enyanisweni eba yena uthiya ngegama lesiNgesi.

I therefore never had the pleasure to have a Xhosa name. My father – a child of the missionaries who ought to set an example for all to follow - could not do that! As someone who was a Bible reader, my father then gave me the name Samuel instead of Africanising it into various Xhosa names that mean the same. On the contrary, he paged through the Bible and came up with a Hebrew name thinking that it was an English name!

Setting, as said earlier on, is another useful device in this kind of research. It cogently reflects the changes experienced in society because, as explained by Abrams (1988:172):

The setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs; the setting of an episode within a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place.

Ndawo (1958:1) depicts the traditional amaXhosa setting in Mhlangeni before Christianisation as follows:

Kwakwaxhiwe imizi, imizi iziingqili. Loo nto yokuba ibe ziingqili ibangelwe ziinto ezimbini eziphandle. (1) Iintshaba ezazikholisa ukuhlasela abantu bengenxanga lutho zazingezizo, ngako oko kubonwe ililungelo ukuba imizi ingahlukahlukani ukuma kwayo, ukuze iintshaba zingabafumani abantu besisisulu bengabanye, zitshayele. (2) Abantu belo xesha bekungekukho nokuba babethandana.

The homesteads were well built solid structures. That was caused by two factors. (1) There were numerous enemies that attacked innocent people, as a result it was deemed necessary that the homesteads be built in close proximity to one another, so that enemies could not find people easy isolated targets. (2) The people in those days loved one another.

The geographical layout of the homesteads ensured both unity and protection. Living in close settlements enabled the members of the community to come to one another's rescue when faced with danger. Ndawo ((1958:1) also stresses that the members of each family lived in love and harmony:

Unyana ubemva uyise, unina, umkhuluwa wakhe nabadala kunaye. Intombi ibimazi unina, ihlonele nabanye abangengabo onina. Umolokazana ubewuhlonele umzi ngentlonelo ephakamileyo, ebephakamisele apha uyise noninazala, engavumeli moya mbi ukuba ungene phakathi kwabo. Izihlobo ezilunge kulo mzi uyazazi uziphakamisele apha.

The son obeyed the father, the mother, his elder brother and those older than him. The daughter knew her mother, and she also respected other people who were not her biological mother. The daughter-in-law highly respected her married home, and held her parents-in-law in very high esteem, not allowing any bad feelings to come between them. She knew all the relatives of this homestead and held them in high esteem.

Ndawo gives an interesting depiction of amaXhosa life and traditions, showing how the people lived in perfect traditional style – including observing the seasons and

performing the necessary traditional rituals such as propitiating the ancestors and performing the usual rights of passage for boys and girls, *ukwaluka* and *intonjane*, respectively.

The new world to which Gqobhoka migrated was a land of milk and honey – the proverbial New Jerusalem symbolising our journey to heaven, as well as our journey to God's new kingdom that Christianity brought to all nations. This symbol of migration to salvation encapsulates the lives of all nations that were evangelised by Christianity. It is interesting to see how well amaXhosa had adjusted to this new way of life and how much of the old life they brought into it.

3.3 The impact of Western education

Letitia Kakaza was the first woman to write novels in this period. Her book **Intyatyambo yomzi** (The flower of the home) was published in 1913 followed by **U Tandiwe wakwa Gcaleka** (Tandiwe, a maiden from Gcalekaland) in 1914.

The novelette **U Tandiwe wakwa Gcaleka** (1914), like Ndawo's novel above, depicts rural life in fine detail – the beautiful homesteads, the natural surroundings decorated with wild flowers and trees, the cattle kraals and the large stocks of animals that clearly indicate the status of the head of family.

The first indication that life has changed in this family is that there are children who attend school. Most people do not have a clear idea of the importance of the school in bringing about change amongst the blacks in this country. In the same breath, they do not realise the great role played by the churches in ushering in this enlightenment among the masses of illiterate blacks. Thirdly they cannot imagine the humble beginnings of this massive agency that set the solid foundations for government to proceed with black education in later years. The following extract from *The Blythswood Review* (January 1926: 5) sets the stage for the beginning of a massive

programme of education that should be seen as background to all educational endeavours in this country:

An Outline of Native Education in South Africa

First Paper

It has been long the policy of South African Missions to begin educating people as soon as Christianity was introduced among them. The School was attached to the Church as an auxiliary thereof, and was utilised in the interests of evangelistic work. It was held in the Church building and in most cases was a very primitive concern, regarded from an educational point of view. Very often the school room was but a hut of wattle and daub, with a few forms, a blackboard and a desk. The Missions were completely responsible for the carrying on of education in this humble way. This picture, primitive in its simplicity is still to be seen in missions that are working amongst “red” or heathen, for it is that of the first stage in moral civilisation. Half the pathos and half the humour of mission work are associated with the hut-church and school stage of development. But evolution proceeds with some celerity in these days of change, and the church has to make strenuous efforts to keep its school organisation in touch with the times.

That was the background against which the writing of books at the turn of the twentieth century should be seen, and the backdrop against which we should see Kakaza’s characters as they enter school. We immediately discover that one of the two girls and her parents do not see eye to eye regarding her future. She would like to continue with her high school or teacher training but the parents want her to get married and raise a family. The influence of education is neatly encapsulated by Kakaza (1914:6) in the following passage:

Unina u Madlamini ebesisikutalikazi esikulu, intokazi ekunoneleleyo ukufundisa abantwana bayo umsebenzi; itanda ukuwucokisa umzi wayo. Ibongo lake lilelokuba intombi yake u Tandiwe iyaku lotyolwa ngeshumi lonke lenkomo mhla yenda. U Tandiwe wayahlukile ngalonto kubazali bake, yena waye zimisele ukufunda ade apumelele unyaka wesitatu.

Her mother, MaDlamini, was a very industrious person, and she carefully taught her children how to do the house chores; and she also liked to do her work to the best of her ability. Her ambition was that her daughter would be *lobola-ed* with ten head of cattle the day she got married. That was where Tandiwe differed from her parents. She wanted to go on with her education until she had completed her three year teacher training.

Another discernible change in the book refers to the names of the characters. The main character is Tandiwe followed by her sister Seliwe, but the two brothers are Ben and Walter, a clear indication of the impact of the church on this family. The church had also started having a strong grip on the family although, as indicated by Kakaza (1914:12), they did not have the same motives for going to church:

Iminiye Sabata ifikile; ilanga limane ukuvela pakati kwamafu. Ivakele intsimbi kwangexesha

‘Yenzani msinya bantwana intsimbi seyibeta; andisayikuba nako ukuhamba mna kumanzi kakulu.’

‘Ewe mha sesiza kugqiba’ wapedula u Tandiwe.

‘Masikauleze toro Tandiwe, ndifuna ukubona uNanziwe xa angenayo nabayeni bake, ebete bayakubako kulecawa.’

The Sabbath day has come; the sun appears and disappears behind the clouds. The church bell has started ringing.

‘Hurry up, children, the church bell is ringing; I won’t be able to go to church, it is very wet.’

‘Fine, mother, we have almost finished,’ answered Tandiwe.

‘Let us please hurry Tandiwe, I would like to see Nanziwe come into the church with her groom; she said they will be there today.’

Besides showing the impact of the church and the school, this passage also clearly indicates that customary unions are being gradually replaced by civil marriages. It was customary in those days for the newly married couple to don their best dresses and attend church on the day after the wedding. This interest in the dresses of the newly-weds is revealed by Seliwe's comments to her mother (in Kakaza 1914:13):

'Kanene wawungeko ngalacawa u Annie waye ngenisa abake abayeni waposwa, ke mha. Wayenxibe ilokwe ebomvu, nesifuba esiluhlaza, waza wabopa iribhini elubhelu esinqeni, iqiya wayitwala uhlobo...'

'By the way you were not there when Annie brought her grooms-group to church. You missed a lot of fun, mother. She wore a red dress with a green (blue) chest, and she had a yellow ribbon around her waist, and she tied the headgear around her head in a fashionable manner ...'

As far back as in 1914 Kakaza touches on something that has continued to impact very negatively on people's lives – the extravagant funerals. When Ben dies the members of the local community are surprised to see elaborate funeral arrangements at his home as if there was a wedding. This is revealed as follows in Kakaza (1914:20):

'Kwenziwanina kulamzi?' ivakele isitsho enye intokazi kwenye zidlula ngendlela kufupi nomzi wakwa Tshungu, 'ukuba baninzi kwabantu; kukoni betu? Inga ngumtshato? Pofu ngati azininzi imbiza ngolohlobo.

'Hai, mna mntu welilizwe ndiyabona ukuba asinguwumtshato, ngumngcwabo, kaloku kweli siyaxela sipeke ngomhla womngcwabo, sitye sihlute.'

'Wenzani na wetu! Kwenzelwani? Ababantu babujelweyo babuye benze isidlo?'

'A! Mntakabawo awungezi fezi ezizinto. Lento seyisuke yalisiko, kwaku fudula kusenzelwa abembi ikomityana zekofu; ngoku wonke umntu oza

emngcwabeni ulindele ukutya. Into embi kukuba kubonakala ngokungati eyona nto ipambili kukutya uvelwano aluko lwapelakudala; uyakuti umntu ebelila pezu kwedlaka uvekwa yena selehlelekela pezulu epete ilungu lenyama.'

'What is going on in that homestead?' one woman asked another as they walked past Mr Tshungu's house, 'there are so many people, what is happening? Is it a wedding? But there do not seem to be very many pots on fire.

'As someone from this part of the country, I do not think it is a wedding. In this part of the country we slaughter a beast on the day of the funeral, and eat until we have had enough'

'Don'tell me? Why? Should the bereaved also have to provide a feast?'

'My mate, you can never fully comprehend all these things. This thing has now become a standing custom. It used to be just coffee for the grave diggers. Today everyone comes to the funeral expecting to be fed. What is sad is that it appears that what is foremost is the food, there is no longer any empathy; you would see someone who was crying sadly at the graveside laughing out heartily with a piece of meat in hand.'

Mtuze (1977:9) once expressed the same sentiments in an essay entitled 'Izibhadlalala zamatheko' (Huge feasts) in which he decries the unbelievably huge expenses people get into when they bury the dead. Mtuze (1977: 9) comments as follows in this wide ranging essay on today's funerals in African societies:

Andinqweneli kufa okanye kufelwa kule mihla siphila kuyo. Andazi nokuba ndiyile nto kuthiwa sisiqonda-ndleko okanye igogotya kusini na kodwa iindleko ezinkulu ekungenwa kuzo ngabafelwa kule mihla zinditsho ndixhalabe xa ndinomkhuhlane, nditsho imfixane le yembala, okanye xa umama abika ihlaba elimthe go ephangweni.

I do not wish to die or to lose someone close to me these days. I do not know whether I am a miser or what, but the expenses the bereaved go into these days make me shudder when I have a bout of flu, an ordinary cold, or when my mother complains of body pains.

3.4 In defence of traditional social justice

Mqhayi's **Ityala lamawele** (1914) is a classic example of setting in amaXhosa society. The book is set in a typical traditional amaXhosa society. It involves twins – Wele and Babini – locked in a bitter wrangle over seniority. Once more the author introduces us to the intricacies of the amaXhosa judicial system untainted by Western systems of justice and mediation.

Gerard (1971:55) highlights the aim of this book poignantly:

The story takes place during the reign of Hintza, chief of the Gcaleka Xhosa, who was killed while attempting to escape from British imprisonment in 1835. The plot was suggested by the story of the birth of Thamar's twins in Genesis 38: 27-29. It concerns a legal dispute between twins over who is the elder and therefore entitled to their father's inheritance. Mqhayi's memories of Nzanzana's court enabled him to provide, as Alice Werner pointed out, "a very illuminating picture of native judicial procedure."

The case is heard in an open court by the chief and his councillors. Everyone has a right to prosecute the case, even those passing by on horseback as illustrated in the following extract (Mqhayi 1931:3):

*Uthe xa akwelo undimangele, kwathi thu uKosani, umVala, noDlisa,
umGorha, bekhwel' emaqegwini bephalisa begqitha, babuza:*

"Khawutsho! Ukho ngani na komkhul' apha?"

"Hayi , ndingundimangele."

"Umangalele ntoni na?"

“Ndimangalel’ uBabini.”

“Thetha.”

“Uth’ umzi kaVuyisile ulunge kuye.”

“Thetha.”

Ngeli xesha ke uDlisa noKosani baye kutshonela, kuba bebengamisanga kakade.

When the complainant was at that point in his presentation, Kosani of the Vala clan, and Dlisa of the Gorha clan, came passing by riding on their oxen, and asked:

“Tell us! What brings you to the Great Place?”

“I am the complainant.”

“Who are you complaining about?”

“I am complaining about Babini.”

“Speak.”

“He says he is the boss in Vuyisile’s homestead.”

“Speak.”

Dlisa and Kosani disappeared in the distance, because they had not stopped.

The book was widely used as a reference work for judicial officers. It is a very powerful apologia for the African culture and justice system. It clearly shows that the Chief is not autocratic and dictatorial in handling legal and other tribal issues. He sits in court with his councillors and other participants. The system of justice is open and participatory. Experts from society such as midwives and sages who have knowledge of precedents in this regard are called in to deliberate the case.

The amaXhosa setting is further enhanced by the use of clan names as indicated above. These clan names root the story in traditional society and they clearly show that there is nothing wrong or even sinister about being traditional or umXhosa. This

is commendable given the fact that in the same era, people, including Mqhayi himself, were brainwashed to undermine their amaXhosa names and their origins. The significance of these clan praises and the attendant associative eulogies is explained as follows by Sirayi (1989:16):

Associative eulogies are predominant in **Ityala Lamawele**. The courtiers are referred to, in irregular frequency, by **iziduko** or clan names. It should, however, be mentioned that these associative eulogies are often followed by phrases parallel to what Opland (1983:128) calls “descriptive or commemorative phrases”, also known as elaborate eulogies.

Sirayi (1989:16) gives the following examples of an associative eulogy – **UmTshonyane, iciko** elikhulu lakwaKhawuta, **UmQocwa, inkonde** yakhona, to mention but a few. These also help to root the characters in their cultural setting. The only improvement to Sirayi’s exposition here could be to extend the bold type to the whole expression so that it could be taken as one whole, e.g. **UmTshonyane, iciko elikhulu lakwaKhawuta**.

The idea of extending the eulogy is also common in African praise poetry. In fact this technique abounds in all declamatory poetry. Suffice it to say that Sirayi has laid his finger on the pulse of an important phenomenon in isiXhosa traditional discourse.

The richness of traditional cultural setting, clan names and associative eulogues are depicted very poignantly in the following extract from **Ityala Lamawele** (1931:4):

*Ithe yakuba le ndawo ityetyeshwe yenjiwanje enkosini, ikunye namashumi omabini evayo amaphakathi, ityetyeshwa nguFuzile noGqomo, igqala lasemaBambeni, bathe bakutshonela, wawakala uWisizwi, umTshonyane, iciko elikhulu lakwaKhawuta, lisithi, “Ndaza ndakuva, zwindini!” Watsho eqongqotha inqawa. Uthe uMancapha uMqocwa, inkonde yakhona, “Ndalihlala, ndalihlala eli phakade, ndada ndeva neenyongo zalo.” Watsho **erhola ivithi abelifake engxoweni yakhe.***

When this matter was presented to the chief and his twenty strong group of councillors by Fuzile and Gqomo, *a veteran from the Bamba clan* and after they had finished, Wisizwi, *a very eloquent person from the Khawuta clan* said, “You never stop learning!” **He cleaned out his pipe.** Mancapha, *a veteran from the Qocwa clan*, was heard saying, “I lived in this world until I went through all its intricacies.” **He took out his tinder which he had put into his pocket the previous day.**

The isiXhosa setting is evidenced by numerous strands neatly woven together in this powerful novel, ranging from court proceedings, leading and hearing evidence, cross-questioning, calling witnesses and experts, poetic relief, conflict resolution and ancestral appeasement. The latter phenomenon is revealed as follows by Mqhayi (1931:40):

“Inkomo ekwenziwa ngayo inkonzo leyo yaba lilunga elikhulu elimpikwane, lasekhay’ apha, elithe kwezi ntsuku kubhungwa le nkonzo, laphika nokuba kusisa nje ukuvulelwa oku kwalo, lithi ngqo liye kuma phambi kwendlu leya yakuloWele noBabini likhonye, landule ukulandela ezinye iinkomo, lize libuye lenze loo nto phambi kokuba lingene.

The beast that was slaughtered for the cleansing of the home was a big black and white ox with back facing horns from the family herd that did something awesome as the deliberations regarding the ritual proceeded. Every day when the gateposts were removed it went straight to the area in front of Wele and Babini’s home and bellowed before following the rest of the herd. On the return of the herd it did the same before getting into the kraal.

3.5 AmaXhosa beliefs under the spotlight

Setting in **UNomsa** (1922) clearly depicts a traditional homestead that prizes livestock and good living. Sinxo (1965: 1) opens the book with the following description of Ntobeko's homestead:

Kwisithili saseQonce, eXesi, kumlambo ekuthiwa yiNjwaxa, phambi komzi omkhulu, omhle, ophahlwe ziintlanti nezitali zamahashe, kwakuhleli phantsi komthi omkhulu, owawenze umthunzi omnandi ngelixa lemini emaqanda, uMnumzana uNtobeko, kunye nenkosikazi yakhe

In the district of King William's Town, at Middledrift, in front of a huge homestead, in the shade of a big tree with a good shade at midday, we see Mr Ntobeko and his wife.

After an elaborate description of the character traits of both parents, the author quickly moves over to the main issue in the book – education. The couple's only remaining child, Nomsa, has just finished training at St Matthew's, one of the best known teacher training colleges of the time.

Change in Nomsa manifested itself when she travels to Richmond where she has a teaching post – away from her own comfort zone. When she arrived in Richmond, her primary challenge is language. She soon faces a cultural shock that she had not envisaged – she could not communicate with local fellow blacks because their language was a mixture of isiXhosa and Afrikaans. Sinxo (1965:7) describes her plight as follows:

Lo mhlaba waseRichmond wayefika kuwo utitshalakazi, ngowamarhanuga, apho kuthethwa isiLawu, apho nenxalenye yamaXhosa seyahlukeni mpela nolwimi lwesiXhosa, kuba ngamaLawu into eninzi, nabeSuthu. Ngoko ke kwafuneka etolikelwe utitshalakazi nasekubuzeni impilo nto leyo eyaba buhlungu kakhulu kuye, wayengumntu onobubele obungazenzisiyo. Waza ke wazimisela okokuba ayifunde le ntetho kamsinyane, ukuze athi namhla agodukayo avise abazali bakhe okokuba kukho into entsha ayifundileyo. Eyona ngxaki yaba seCaweni, ngokuba kwakusetyenziswa kwale ntetho. Yasuka le ngxaki yakhula, kuba wayeza kufundisa abantwana abakwizifundo ezisezantsi, abangazi nesuntswana lesiNgesi. Kuloo mashumi mane babengagqithanga esihlanwini abasivayo isiXhosa.

The Richmond area she had come to was inhabited by detribalised blacks, where the language of communication was Afrikaans, and where some of amaXhosa people had lost their mother-tongue, because the area was predominantly inhabited by Coloureds and baSothos. She had to communicate via an interpreter even when she inquired after someone's health. This frustrated her very much as she was a very personable character. She resolved to learn this language so that when she went back home she could show her parents that she had learnt something new. The greatest problem, however, was in Church because the same language was spoken. The problem was compounded at school as she was teaching learners in the lower classes and they had no knowledge whatsoever of English. Out of the forty learners in her class, not more than five could understand isiXhosa.

The realities of life outside home soon dawn on Nomsa when she encounters men such as Themba who had given their whole lives to liquor. If language baffles Nomsa in Richmond, life intrigues her completely. She had to contend with trickery and treachery. Nongendi, her landlady's daughter makes life difficult for her as she loves Themba who seems to be more interested in liquor than in her. His friendship with Nomsa who only acted as his adviser drives Nongendi to crazy plotting and scheming against the innocent Nomsa. She ends up shooting Velesazi to death confusing him with Themba whom she actually intended killing for refusing to marry her.

Perhaps the greatest change in Nomsa's life is when she is threatened with sorcery by the jilted Velesazi. He threatens to send her all kinds of afflictions associated with sorcery and because Nomsa ended up taking the threats seriously, she falls ill with 'flu-like symptoms. When she recuperates she falls in love with Themba who turns out to be a respectable young man from Middledrift who had drowned himself in liquor because he was disappointed by his former girlfriend.

The cycle of life turns full scale in the book when the two, Nomsa and the converted Themba, gets married and returns to Njwaxa, Middledrift, where they lived happily thereafter. If the story showed anything very insightful about life and people, it is that the shift of setting from Njwaxa to Richmond was also indicative of a radical shift in morality and cultural rootedness. The equilibrium could only be attained when the couple went back to their roots – Njwaxa. What is also very clear about the story is that it confirms that age old stereotype of country or rural life being the safe haven and the cradle of morality and justice, while urban life is equated with debasement, trickery and crime.

Themba's complete metamorphosis, from being a hopeless drunkard to being a respectable gentleman, is concrete evidence of humankind's potential for change. It is a pointer to the fact that those who have fallen down, morally and socially, by indulging in liquor and such other waywardness, are capable of rising to the highest levels, with a bit of help and lots of willpower.

UZagula (1923) by J.J.R. Jolobe, the doyen of isiXhosa literature, highlights an aspect of amaXhosa life that has been a sore point for many generations – belief in witchcraft.

The seriousness of this matter reached its climax when *The Blythswood Review* (July 1924) carried the following article:

Reaction to Heathenism

In these days of enlightenment there appears to be a renaissance of heathenism amongst all classes of the population. This is manifesting itself in the stupidities and the crimes of witchcraft. Young men, even of some education have been tyrannised by their fellow blacks into the putrid customs of heathenism. Old men, of some education and experience have sat quietly by doing nothing to stem the tide of immorality, or have encouraged in the interests of expediency the reaction towards the customs of the past.

The setting is once again a rural village but right from the beginning of the book, one senses the impact of Christianity when Jolobe (1958:7) says:

Izinto zazisenzeka zibuye zilityalwe elalini. Abahambi neendwendwe ndawonye nabeze ngemicimbi yezeLizwi – abanje ngaBavangeli – babebonwa futhi. Malunga neli xesha lokuqalwa kweli bali kwakusandul' ukubonwa indodana yeBhulu eyayihambisa iiNdaba zoXolo eyathi njengoko yayihamba ingena iphuma ukucela abantu bokuyixuma kwiinkonzo eyayiza kuzongamela yaphuma endlwini yexhegokazi elithile incoma intombi yaloo mfazi mkhulu ngokuthanda kwayo iintsana.

Things happened and were soon forgotten in the rural village. Visitors and foreigners together with people who came for religious purposes – such as Evangelists – were frequently seen there. At about the time of the beginning of this story an Afrikaner young man was seen going in and out of the houses requesting people to support him in conducting prayer services in the village. He came out of an old woman's house full of praise for the old woman's daughter who loved children.

The story happens against the backdrop of modernity and enlightenment as Jolobe (1958:7) describes a school concert, as follows:

Imbonakalo yendlu nesihlwele sabantu yaye iyile ithi xa umntu avela phandle itsho angamboni nomntu amqhelileyo ngenxa yezinxibo ezihle zamanene namanenekazi, kwanezifanayo zeqela ngalinye labavumi, nokuxinana kwabantu nokukhanya okwakungathi kukhulu kumntu ovela ngaphandle. Ngoko ongenayo kwakufuneka akhe acime kancinane ukuze abone indawo yokuhlala azi nokuba ubani uhleli phaya njengokuba kwelinye igumbi apho ukukhanya namehlo abantu kwanokuva kwakungekho kakhulu, kwaye kuhleli intombazana entle kunene.

The appearance of the house and the crowd that was there was such that anyone coming from outside had difficulty recognising people they knew in there because of the beautiful attire worn by men and women, as well as the choir uniforms, and because of the place was crowded. The glare of lighting seemed to be particularly strong for someone who came from outside. Those entering the house had to close their eyes for a second before being able to see where to sit or realise where so and so was sitting because in the other room the light, the gaze from people's eyes and the acoustics were not great. It was where a beautiful girl was sitting.

The story begins with an interesting conversation between two lovers, Nonkungu and Phike, about the *lobola* custom, While Phike does not reject *lobola* as an institution, he believes that it can never compensate a person's real worth. This is a subtle swipe at those who commercialise *lobola* instead of looking at it as a bond between two families. This view clearly resonated with the girl's own views on the matter, as Jolobe (1958: 9) says in this regard:

Umfana akubona ukuba intombazana iyayihlafuna le ndawo wazuza ithuba lokuyibethelela ukuze azuze umandisi wezi zimvo zakhe ejonge ukuthi namhla wamzuza lo mtshakazi wakhe baya kuba nokumela into enye njengendlu enye. Yaneliswa nayo intombazana yingxoxo le nangona ingazanga itsho ngomlomo ...

When the young man realised that the girl was considering the matter seriously, he emphasised it, so that he could get someone to propagate these views when he gains this lady so that they could tackle the matter together as a family. The girl was satisfied with this discussion although she did not like to declare that openly ...

Clearly this new generation questions the commercialisation of *lobola*. This is a radical change in outlook as the custom was entrenched in amaXhosa society, and the greater the *lobola*, the higher the girl's esteem. This clash in outlook is depicted as follows by Jolobe (1958:12):

“Ndiyamvela loo mntwana,” wazinikela uMakhulu, “kuba kakade usel’erole kakhulu, kodwa uNdwenga akafuni nokuva nento le ngale ndawo. Uthi yena maliphelele ikhazi ngaphambi kwento yonke.”

“I feel sorry for the young man,” conceded the old woman, “he has already paid so much, but Ndwenga is adamant that the *lobola* must be paid in full before everything could be finalised.

Male domination is also highlighted in the story as Zagula and her daughter, Nonkungu, had no say over what her son, Ndwenga demanded and what he did with the *lobola* afterwards, as attested by Jolobe (1958:13):

Ngeyiba yamenzakalisa kakhulu uZagula le nto koko kwase kukho anzulu kakhulu kuneli amanxeba. Wayecinga ukuthi njengoko unyana wakhe wayezithabathe zonke iinkomo ngaphambi koku wothi njengoko le iyintombi yokugqibela oko kutsho indlela yokugqibela awayengazuza ngayo inkomo yokusenga abe nenceba.

This matter hurt Zagula very much were it not for previous deeper wounds she bore. She was thinking that seeing that her son had taken all the *lobola* beasts and because this was her last daughter for whom *lobola* could be paid and therefore the last hope of getting a beast for daily milking, he would be merciful.

The book ends pleasantly as Zagula is exonerated from the unfounded accusations that she has bewitched her own grandchildren, Ndwenga's daughters. The story clearly shows that belief in witchcraft is unfounded. This view is *in tandem* with Christian teaching. *Vide* the follow comments from the Venerable Archdeacon Mather (in Jolobe 1958:3):

I cannot pretend to be anything of a siXhosa scholar but I can at any rate claim to have read a good number of novels, so while it would be foolish of me to say anything about the language, style and form of *UZagula* I can say that those who read it will be much interested.

The obvious reason for this support by one of the best known pioneers of Christianity in this part of the country could certainly be ascribed to the fact that the book reflects on this important theme – the futility of belief in witchcraft. It is true that while a large number of people found it very difficult to untangle themselves from this belief, a growing number of them were gradually evading its grip.

3.6 Recapitulation

Literary works produced in the period 1909 – 1923 clearly illustrate the change from traditional to Western lifestyle and values. It is also remarkable to note that the authors cherish rural village life as can be seen from their elaborate descriptions of rural settings in most of their books. The home is regarded as the focal point in family and tribal life. Against this hankering for the good old days one also sees the impact of both church and school on this pristine rural life. Traditional values are being eroded and the people are gradually losing their sense of traditional values as can be seen from **UNomsa**. Jolobe, on the other hand, focuses on the futility of belief in witchcraft, thus clearly showing the influence of the church in people's lives while Mqhayi's **Ityala lamawele** seeks to vindicate traditional social justice.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHANGES INTENSIFY: 1924 -1953

4.1 Introduction

The next decade of the writing of isiXhosa books saw many authors coming forward to address burning social issues. They took it upon themselves to be the spokespersons of the nation in attempts to warn the public about the corrosive influence of certain practices in amaXhosa society – belief in witchcraft, political oppression, the decay in family and social fabric and the consequences of neglecting revered traditional values and customs.

It is interesting to note that in the short space of twenty years since the first isiXhosa novel was published, isiXhosa writing had matured so much that this period produced, among others, three authors whose books are treasured by readers and critics even today – Mqhayi, Sinxo and Jordan.

The following novels will be discussed in this chapter:

<u>UDon Jadu</u>	1929	S.E.K. Mqhayi
<u>Umzali wolahleko</u>	1933	G.B.Sinxo
<u>UJuju noMhlangenqaba</u>	1939	Z. Futshane
<u>Ingqumbo yeminyanya</u>	1940	A.C. Jordan

4.2 Socio-political changes

Changes in the period 1924 – 1953 coincided with a period in which amaXhosa found themselves in a cultural wilderness. Economic pressures forced the men to seek work in towns and cities away from their traditional homes and families. This exposed them to a totally new social order. One of those pressures was the notorious Poll Tax (1926) that forced men to go to the mines to avoid being arrested for failing to pay tax.

The Blythswood Review (December 1924:27) describes the promulgation of this notorious Bill as follows:

Native Taxation

The text of the Bill is as follows:-

The Bill to be introduced into Parliament next session relating to the taxation of natives provides that from January 1, 1926, a tax (called the general tax) of £1 shall be paid by every adult male in the Union; and, secondly, a tax (called the local tax) of 10s., which shall be paid in addition to the general tax by every male adult whose permanent home is in a native location in the Union, provided that such local tax shall not be paid by the owner of any allotment of land held under quitrent title in the location which is his permanent home.

Lapping (1986:25) comments as follows in this regard:

To make the Africans come and work, the governments of the colonies introduced poll-taxes or hut taxes. To pay the tax, at least one member of most African families had to leave home and earn cash. In the 1890s the mining magnate and Prime Minister of the Cape, Cecil Rhodes, said of the policy: 'If you are really one who loves the Natives, you must make them worthy of the country they live in ... You will not make them worthy if you allow them to sit in idleness.'

Besides this hurtful burden on all able-bodied men, the government was forging ahead with oppressive laws and measures that discriminated against blacks. One of these was the notorious Colour Bar, apartheid's predecessor, that is described as follows in the *Blythwood Review* of March 1925: 31):

The Colour Bar

During the past month the minds of the native communities have been greatly perturbed over certain proceedings in the Parliament of the Union. The Labour Bill that will practically exclude natives from certain industries and trades, and the speeches of those who support it are the main causes of native uneasiness throughout the Union. The Bill is supposed to debar the native from work for which he believes himself perfectly fit. To him it appears a new spade that will be used to dig deeper the gulf between white and black races in South Africa. The Bill broadens the colour-bar against the interests of the black. On this account men of all classes, the simple minded and the agitator, have protested against what they deem an injustice and have sent various resolutions to the Prime Minister as Minister of Native Affairs.

In his popular Utopia, **UDon Jadu** (1929), Mqhayi reflects amaXhosa striving to unshackle themselves from oppression and deprivation. This kind of book lends itself admirably to the creation of an ideal situation or state as an alternative to the status quo.

Abram's (1988:195) definition of Utopia confirms this view:

Utopia was the title of a book about an imaginary commonwealth, written in Latin (1515-16) by the Renaissance *humanist* Sir Thomas More. The title plays on two Greek words, "outopia" (no place" and "eutopia" (good place); and the **utopia** has come to signify the class of fiction which represents an ideal, non-existent political state and way of life.

The relationship between fact and fiction comes out very clearly in the following comment by Gerard (1971:58) on Mqhayi's motive for writing the book:

In his autobiography, Mqhayi explains that the idea for *U-Don Jadu* can be traced back to his school years at Lovedale. He used to make frequent visits to his father in Grahamstown, and during those trips, he had to pass through the little town of Alice. There it was, he tells us, that he became aware for the first time of the antagonism between black and white. So far he had lived a sheltered life at the court of his great-uncle and in the quiet multiracial seclusion of Lovedale.

No sooner has the main character, Don Jadu, left the comfort of his own rural village, than he meets with disparagement and undermining by his own blood. A black policeman who tries to impress his white boss demands his pass and utters very derogatory things to him. Don realises immediately that things have changed for the worse, for, under normal circumstances, this very black policeman should have been his protector and refuge, as could be seen from what Mqhayi (1975:8) says:

Ndihlabile nam ndahamba indlel' am, - ndahamba ndiyicinga le nto yoku kungxanyelwa kwam kungaka ngoyena wakowethu umntu. Koko ndibuye ndakhumbula ukuba kanene, impilo yalo mfo wakowethu, neyentsapho yakhe ikuyo le nto, ngaphandle kokungqavula enjenje, akukho kunyuselwa nokuthembeka kungakanani kuye; ndahamba ndinosizi sisizwe endisiso; kuba namhlanje ndingumhambi nje, ikhaya lam ibingulo mfo unga ndingaya kulala kwindawo embi, kuba isisonka loo nto kuye.

I also went my way, - thinking about how this man who was supposed to be from my own people was hostile towards me. However I soon remembered that his and his family's livelihood is in this thing. Without his barking and biting at me, there would be no hope for being trusted and promoted for him. As I proceeded with my journey I felt sorry for my people, because being on the journey, this man should have been my home, instead of him wanting to see me go to a bad place – jail, just because that would be his means of livelihood.

The next incident in this interesting account shows clearly how life among amaXhosa was undergoing tremendous change. Don is confronted by robbers bent on killing him, behaviour that baffles him as can be seen from his comment (in Mqhayi 1975:9):

Okwenene ndeenjenjeya, ndihamba ndiyicinga le nto yaba bafo bakowethu banxanelwe igazi labantu bakowabo bade bahambe begcwagcwalaza ezintsunguzini befuna lona – ndisuke ndaliyilo.

As I continued my journey I was thinking about these fellow men who were so desperate for the blood of their own people, so much so that they went to hide in dense forests in search of that blood. I am baffled.

Don's experiences as he goes on his journey to his aunt's place teach him several lessons about his own people. The fighting ostriches who abandon their own fight when they see him – an enemy – makes him wonder about his own people (Mqhayi 1975:12):

Indicingise nzulu le nto yezi nciniba, ukuthi bezisilwa ngokoyikekayo kangakaya, zikwazi ukuthi zakubona utshaba lwasemzini zikhe ziyeke izahlukwano zaphakathi kwekhaya, zisukele le nto yasemzini. Ndiqondile ukuba zifundisa mna, mna kanye, nabantu bakowethu; thina singakwaziyo ukukhe sizibeke phantsi iingxabano zasemakhaya, ngenxa yotshaba lwasemzini oluthe lwafika. Isiphumo soko ke sihlala sifunyanwa ziintshaba zethu sizizisulu; kulwiswe omnye ngomnye, sichithane sibe ziimpanza.

This act by the ostriches made me think very deeply, because even though they were fighting so fiercely with each other, when they saw an enemy approach they dropped their domestic quarrels, and faced the enemy. I realised that they were teaching my people and me a lesson, because we fail to put aside our own quarrels and face the enemy in our midst. The result of that behaviour is that the enemy always finds us easy target and it uses the one to fight the other, and it succeeds in dividing us.

The harassment and ill-treatment of Don Jadu by a Boer family thereafter further illustrates how the blacks were subjected to inhuman treatment outside their own reserves, expressly because their oppressors wanted them away from white areas. The insults and the threats he receives make him feel unwanted and unworthy of being called a human being. He is saved from further insults and possibly assault as well by the appearance of a large group of workers who are walking past on their journey from the mines.

Mqhayi's political aspirations and his wish for a better place in the sun for his people come out very strongly in the book. Gerard (1971: 58) confirms this view as follows:

U-Don Jadu grew out of these experiences and this realization. It was not meant as a realistic description of a situation that every one knew anyway. It was designed as a blueprint for the future coexistence of both races in South Africa. And it was conceived in a spirit of compromise and syncretism. There are only three things that Mqhayi forcefully rejects: the South African government, the prison system, and imported hard liquor as opposed to the native home-brewed beer. His ideal state is not a preliminary study in Bantustan. It is a multiracial society that places a high premium on education and progress, and it is a Christian society that has incorporated many of the beliefs and customs dear to African hearts. In the elaboration of this Bantu utopia, Mqhayi exhibits an uncommonly powerful intellectual imagination.

The reforms that the Don Jadu group of six men brought about at Zathuza clearly showed that a new era had dawned. Several modern social institutions were introduced to fight poverty and deprivation. Taxes were reduced and new work opportunities for men and women were created. Blacks began acquiring farms and other properties from the whites, thus introducing them to commercial farming, as attested by Mqhayi (1975:39):

Into yokuqala ayenzileyo lo mfo akuba ewuthabathile lo mzi, kuthiwa ibe kukutyalwa kwemithi njengoko sasibona kunjalo, wenza namahlathi, emva koko ungene ekuyileni izitena, wayifundisa loo nto, kweza nophi, nophi ukuza kufunda ukwenziwa kwazo, nokuqingqwa kwamatye nokwakha ngawo. Enye into efundwayo kulo mzi, kukoja izikhumba, nokuzisuka, nokwenza izihlangu ngokwalaa ndlela indala yamaBhulu yezihlangu zexhosha.

The first thing that this man did after he bought the farm was to plant trees as we have seen. He created plantations and thereafter he made bricks and taught other people how to make them. People came from far and wide to come to learn how to make bricks as well as stone masonry. They also learnt how to prepare and tan skins and to make shoes from hide following the age old Boer tradition of making shoes.

If there is anything that could be reaped from the revolutionary innovations at Zathuza and Mnandi, it is that the lives of black people were not destined to be confined to reserves and infinite serfdom. They could also rise to higher levels like all other nations, like the Boers who looked down upon them as if they were subhuman. This sense of self-worth and consciousness can only be lauded, considering the time these sentiments were expressed.

Sirayi (1989:111) sums up the envisaged change in amaXhosa society as reflected in this book as follows:

Mqhayi's **UDon Jadu** abounds in archetypal actions and communal elements. The hero, Dondolo, is not the focal point of the narrative. Instead, he is a microcosm of the African society undergoing socio-economic and political change.

Ntuli and Swanepoel (1993: 32) sum up the great contribution of this novel to isiXhosa literature and its reflection of change as follows:

Mqhayi's **UDon Jadu** (Don Jadu: 1929) with its Utopian portrayal of an idealised country, may have more relevance to the South Africa of today than critics would have been prepared to admit before 2 February 1990, the day State President F.W. de Klerk unbanned the African National Congress, The Pan Africanist Congress and the South African Communist Party, and announced the release of ANC leader Nelson Mandela. The work idealised the reunification of the Xhosa people in an idyllic province of the Eastern Cape called Mnandi (Sweetness; Bliss), under Don Jadu, an upright black prime minister, yet the "exceptional faith which he has in the goodwill of men" (Qangule, 1968: 16) may well be Mqhayi's prophetic sensing of what would be needed and what could be established in a new South Africa.

4.3 Socio-economic changes

Sinxo, in his novel, **Umzali wolahleko** (1933) address the fundamentals of change in any society. The book is a classical example of didactic literature that characterised the missionary era. This kind of literature helped the missionaries to promote Christianization. Abram's (1988:42) definition of didactic literature points to the suitability of such literature for change:

The adjective “didactic” (from the Greek word meaning “skilled in teaching”) is applied not only to a work that is designed to expound systematically, a branch of theoretical, moral, or practical knowledge, but also to literary works which embody, in a persuasive imaginative or fictional form, a moral, religious, or philosophical *theme* or doctrine.

If we are to change our society we need to ensure that our children are exposed to the family values that we want to inculcate in them. We need to bring them up in a manner that will foster love, respect, humility and a work ethic in them. He clearly shows that these values have to be nurtured and inculcated at home. He decries the moral disintegration that is creeping into amaXhosa society because the parents are abandoning their traditional parental roles of discipline and oversight.

The relevance of this theme is articulated as follows by Mkonto (1988:29):

The revelation of this theme is that disciplining and/or instilling a moral sense into a child is a stage that attaches sacramental importance to a traditional Xhosa parent. The writer views the disintegration of good behaviour as an element of permissiveness and over-indulgent application of parental love which is antithetically self-destructive.

Sirayi (1989:56) also comments poignantly about family disintegration as reflected in the book:

Sinxo has employed the same devices as above in the rendering of the social setting in **Umzali wolahleko**. The summary narrative has been used for the localisation of characters and their social positions. The immediate scene allows the reader glimpses into the outlook of Gakhulu, a traditionally-minded character, who purports to be a strict disciplinarian. She is far-sighted. Her comments make the reader anticipate family disintegration due to lack of family discipline and moral education.

Menzile's home is a respectable rural home with everything expected of a decent amaXhosa homestead. His genealogy is also respectable, going back to his great grandparents who were renowned warriors and members of the chief's council.

The fly in the ointment in the life of this family is that Nojaji was Menzile's second wife as his first wife, Nomaneji, had predeceased him, leaving behind a helpless boy, Ndimeni. Nojaji has her own son by Menzile, Ndopho, whom she spoils and pampers. She cannot help favouring her own son in whatever she was doing.

The only pillar of strength for Ndimeni is Menzile's mother, Gakhulu, who stands for righteousness and justice in the home. She is the epitome of correctitude, as opposed to Nojaji's partisanship and waywardness, hence the title **Umzali wolahleko** (The Prodigal Parent).

When things start going wrong with Ndopho, Menzile blames the teachers and Gakhulu was equally quick in pointing out that the blame could not be placed with the innocent teachers. His wife should be blamed for failing to bring up the child properly. Sinxo (1986:3) expresses this altercation very clearly:

"Uthi ke, ma, kukho imfundiso kwezi titshala, xa abantwana banokuba nje?"

"Hayi, Menzile, asizontishana; ngumkakho – akakutyaphi ukululeka. Woyisiwe mpela yilaa tyhagi, kanti isaya kunililisa, ndifung' ubhuti!"

"Could there be any discipline on the part of the teachers if the children could be like this?"

"No, Menzile, the teachers are not to blame; your wife is to blame – she has failed to discipline the boy, and she will regret it one day!"

The book is a classic example of how things had changed in family life. The boy, Ndopho, grew up as a prodigal boy although the blame should be placed on his mother as suggested by the book's title.

Ndimeni's good behaviour contrasts with Ndopho's waywardness as evidenced by Sinxo's (1986:13):

Ngelo xesha ke uNdopho achithela ixesha lakhe ebundlavinini nasebutshiveleni bokuyekelwa, wathi qho yena uNdimeni wahamba esikolweni. Waye eyinkwenkwana eqavileyo, ekhuthelayo, nenembeko. Wathi ke ngenxa yeso similo waba ngumntwana othandwa kakhulu ziititshala zakhe nangabantu bonke baloo lali.

While Ndopho, on the one side, spent his time in waywardness because he was not properly disciplined, Ndimeni, on the other, carried on with his schooling. He was a bright little boy, very diligent and respectful. Because of his good behaviour, he was liked by his teachers and all the village people.

The parents are strongly blamed for the behaviour of the youth, hence the following comment by Sinxo (1986:21):

Hi, Gosa, baza kulunga kuba belungiswa yintoni? Elo bandla lithandaza, lithandazela ukungena enyhwebeni kaThixo, kodwa libayekelele bona abantwana ukuba babe kude neempembelelo zezulu! Umntu xa afumene into entle, uyingwenela ukuyixhamla kunye nabantwana bakhe; lizulu elinjani eliya kuze libayolele aba bazali, xa usapho lwabo lukwenye indawo? Akwaba "besinokusindiswa thina kunye nezindlu zethu."

Tell me, church steward, how are these children going to come right? Your congregation keeps on praying to be admitted into God's glory, but they leave the children outside the sphere of influence of God's kingdom! If one has received something beautiful one normally wishes to enjoy it with his children; what kind of heaven will that be that is going to be enjoyed by the parents without their offspring? How I wish "we could be saved with our offspring."

It is clear from this lament that the author discerns a breakdown of relations between parent and child. The parents, according to him, had failed their children. They had failed to inculcate the right values in them.

The benefit of a good upbringing is demonstrated by Ndimeni's successful life outside home. He starts working himself up, from being a seller of bones and bottles to someone knowledgeable in East London. He loses this up and coming business when the authorities pounce upon him for engaging in unlicensed trading. Although this forces Ndimeni to go to Port Elizabeth, it has given him the experience of being self-employed. Unlike people in his own village, Njwaxa, he had tasted the fruit of self-development and independence.

This independence receives a strong boost when he meets townsmen such as Dr Zinobee, in Port Elizabeth. Zinobee's sense of self-development comes out very clearly in what he says (Sinxo 1986:24):

Righto! Come here sonny! *Thina sinee-experiences neeauthorities ngale ndawo. Siya kukufunela umsebenzi.*"

Righto! Come here sonny! We have experiences and authorities about this place. We will find you work."

The meeting between Ndimeni and Dr Zinobee Jameson is also indicative of a change in lifestyle and language. Zinkobe has suddenly become Zinobee, and Jomsini had also become Jameson. These changes were no longer forced on people by missionaries and other forces but the new generation adopted them voluntarily, as pointed out by Sinxo (1986:25):

Lithe lakutsho igqirha lancuma, laman' ukujonga kuNdimeni, yonke into yalo ingumbuzo othi, wakhe wamva phi na umntu oMnyama okhumsha ngolu hlobo. Lo mfo wayesithi nje ukuzibiza ungu“Zinobee Jameson” elona gama lakhe lakowabo lalinguZinkobe, into kaJomsini. UZinkobe lo ke waye eyinto yasemaJwarheni, ekhaya layo likwasemaGqunukhwebeni, ePhewuleni. Umzi wakowabo wawukwangomnye wemizi enegama kwanjengalo wakuloNdimeni emaGqunukhwebeni apho. Kodwa ke yonke loo nto ayizange iminqande lo mphakathi, kangangokuthanda kwakhe ukukhumsha, ekubeni azilahle athi unguJameson, elahla igama elimnandi nelinodumo kuyo yonke imiJadu.

The doctor said that with a smile, constantly looking at Ndimeni, as if he wanted to know from him if he had ever come across a black person who spoke English so well. The man who called himself Zinobee Jameson, was in reality Zinkobe Jomsini from the amaGqunukhwebe area, at Perksdale. He came from a well known family in the amaGqunukhwebe area, just like Ndimeni. But all this did not deter this gentleman who loved speaking English so much, from throwing his true identity away by calling himself Jameson instead of Jomsini, thus throwing away a lovely and famous name in the whole imiJadu area.

Zinobee is the single catalyst for the change that happened to Ndimeni. His advice is always enlightened and progressive, in spite of being so detribalized. He encourages Ndimeni to be self-employed and not to rely on being employed by whites. Sinxo (1986:33) depicts this as follows:

“Khona ndayenza loo nto, Doctor,” ebuza uNdimeni, enandipha, “ucinga ukuba yeyona nto ingandihlawulayo leyo?” “Ndabona le nto mna ndizisebenzela nje,” ephendula ugqirha, “bonke abeLungu aba bavumelene nento yokuba bamhlawule umvuzo ophantsi umntu oMnyama. Uya kuba ngaya naphi na, ufike omnye umLungu efana nomnye ngohlobo lokukuphatha nelokuhlawula. So trouble Whitemans seeking work no more. Go plough the ground, cultivate the ground and be an agriculturist.”

“If I were to do that,” asked Ndimeni in deep thought, “do you think that is something that could benefit me?” “I am self-employed because that is what I discovered,” answered the doctor, “all the white people have conspired with one another regarding the meagre wages they should pay a black person. No matter where you go, they are all the same in so far as the wages and the treatment they give to black people. So trouble Whitemans [sic] seeking work no more. Go plough the ground, cultivate the ground and be an agriculturist.”

The characterisation of such persons as Zinobee and Ndimeni, men who strive to be independent and self-employed contrasts with persons like Ndopho who want to be perpetual employees of the white people.

Ndopho is the epitome of someone adversely affected by urban life. He associates with thugs and ends up smoking dagga and indulging in heavy drinking. This change from bad to worse is depicted so articulately by Sinxo (1986:46):

Indlela awayephila ngayo kwelo Bhayi yelusizi kakhulu, nebanga iinyembezi kubantu abawaziyo umzi wakowabo. Wayesehleli ubungxungxu, ephile ngokutyiswa ngabafazi awayebancedisa ekuhluzeni imiqombothi nasekubagweveleni utywala bomLungu. Wawungafika kwinto enyinyithekayo yintsila, emlomo sewubomvu butywala, edlakazela okwesigebenga, edakwe yaphela butywala.

He led a very pathetic life in Port Elizabeth, especially to those who knew his home. He led the life of a beggar, surviving only by being given food by women he helped to strain their sorghum beer and to buy them liquor from the bottle store. He was very dirty and his skin was shining. His mouth was scorched red by liquor. He was in tatters like a giant, completely drowned in liquor.

The demise of Ndopho who dies in very sad circumstances, stabbed to death by fellow gamblers, is contrasted with the amazing success of Ndimeni who ends up as one of the most respected business persons in Njwaxa and Port Elizabeth. Sinxo (1986:75) describes the quality houses built by prosperous blacks in Njwaxa, including Ndimeni's beautiful mansion, as follows:

Phakathi kwaloo mizi mihle ke, kumi ipomakazi lebhote, elingathi yindlu yomLungu. Loo ndlu yekaNdimeni wethu. Lo mzi wakhe ke ufanelwe kakhulu ngumnikaziwo, intombi kaZinkobe Jomsini enguNoshumi; kuba kwathi yakugqiba loo nzwakazi ukufunda, batshata.

Among those beautiful houses was a great mansion that resembled the beautiful houses built by white people. That was Ndimeni's house. That house befitted the stature of the lady of the house, Zinkobe's daughter, Noshumi; because when the beautiful lady completed her schooling, the two got married.

The book's message is that each household has an important role in bringing up children to be future leaders in the country, children who have to carry the great values of love, respect, dignity, devotion to work and the upliftment of the country. The moral of books such as **Umzali wolahleko** and **UNomsa** by Sinxo, and, in later generations, **UDingezweni** by Mtuze, is that children are brought up for the ultimate good and benefit of the nation or tribe, and that selfish refusal to adhere to community values results in children being outcasts and misfits in society.

Unless the parents play their role in time, from the formative years of a child's life, the message is that our children will have no future. The various flat characters in the book serve as vehicles for us to see at once that good is rewarded and bad is punished. Parents are called upon to equip their children with values for the changing times.

4.4 The influence of the school and the church

Following on the footsteps of Letitia Kakaza, the first female isiXhosa author, Zora Futshane took up the cudgels in the third decade to raise various issues that concerned her in the evolving amaXhosa society. Her book **UJujuju noMhla ngenqaba** (1939) combines two novelettes she wrote over the years.

The setting of **UJujuju** is rural and traditional life. The huts depict typical village life and the activities of the people also point to this kind of rural existence as can be exemplified by the following graphic opening two paragraphs by Futshane (1960:5):

Bekusebusika, kanye ngexesha lokufa kweyeNtlaba, umzi uhlangene kwaZenzile. Yinyambalala ngasebuhlanti phaya sekungathi bubugqwangu obu. Apha naphaya phakathi kwale ntlaninge yabantu ubungabona ukumenyezela kwebhekile nongxawu botywala. Malunga ngaphambili kobuhlanti kuthe tshitshilili iqela longxawu abezamazamana nabo amadodana athand' ukusukela ubuqina. Ecaleni kobuhlanti amadoda amakhulu ebehleli nocumse nawo; eli xa abafana bebeman' ukuphazanyiswa ngophakathi kwezinye. Kwakusitshiwo futhi ukuthi le nto umfana ayilungi yakuthandana neendawo ezinoJongwaliphela – iganyana ababebuteketisa ngalo obu tywala.

It was in winter towards the end of July, the whole village had converged on Zenzile's homestead. The crowds had swarmed around the cattle kraal, just like ants. Here and there among this huge crowd you could see the dazzling of the liquor beakers of various sizes. Towards the centre of the cattle kraal you could see a number of liquor beakers from which the middle aged men were taking turns to drink. At the side of the kraal senior men had their own large size beaker; while the younger men had to make do with their middle size beaker. The older men kept on remarking that it was not good to have young men frequent drinking parties.

The scene lends itself to an impeccable picture of rural life, with everyone enjoying themselves but with everyone knowing where he or she fitted in the social pattern. The society was strongly stratified. Age counted a lot as each group had to sit strictly in accordance with their age and social standing. Even the liquor was dished out in that order. It is interesting to see how the women fitted in this social tapestry. Futshane (1960:5) describes their placement as follows:

Abafazi bona babezalise ezantsi kobuhlanti phaya. Kambe bona bebengenasigxina kwesi siyunguma, ngaphandle kokumana kubizwa nje lowo nalowo : "Nobani khawuze kurabula apha! Nonantsi vela urabule!" Arabule ke lowo ubiziweyo ayibuyise ibhekile leyo. Bebengafuni bona nto ngaphandle kwamashiqa ebebethi bazilibazise ngawo ngexesha amadoda abo asaselayo.

The women had also converged at some distance below the kraal. They were not taking an active part in the beer drinking except being called one by one and offered drinks by the men. The one so called would take a sip and return the beaker to the one who offered her the drink. They did not want anything except the unstrained beer to while away time as they waited for their men to finish drinking.

It is interesting to note that the women merely showed courtesy to the men by not refusing the beer offers they made, but preferred to spend the time taking sips of the

unstrained beer only. No doubt, the fact that the beer was unstrained constrained them from taking large quantities thereof.

Life itself was totally different from what it is today. Young people used to go to the neighbouring bush where there were plenty supplies of wild fruit, as described by Futshane (1960:6):

Olu dada lukhulu kunene belusaziwa ngokuba kuseGqubeni. Eli gama le ndawo yalifumana ngokusuka ithi phakathi ehlathini ibe neendwo eziyingqushu. Kucacile ukuba kulapho kuhlangukanyisana khona zonke izihandiba zehlathi. Noxa abantwana babengazange bavunyelwe ukuba bahambe apha ngenxeni yobunzulu obabuye bubekho kwezinye iindawo; bekusithi bakufika neziqhamo eziyolisayo – ozingwenye, oziphingo, omigxube, onontongwana, umswi njalonzalo – banyibilike onina, ibethwe ngoyaba into yokuya kwabo egqubeni.

This dense bush was very big and the people called it *egqubeni* (old cattle kraal). The name was derived from the fact that in the middle of the bush there were places where the vegetation was trampled down. It was clear that those were the meeting places of unknown wild animals of the forest. Although the children were not allowed to cross the bush because it had deep marshes, when they brought back enjoyable fruit – bushberries, wildcherries, edible shrubs, watertree berries, etc-, this prohibition was often overlooked.

The link between people and wild life is remarkable. People knew that they had to take care of nature because of its power to sustain life. This rural life is further highlighted by Zenzile, the main character's marrying two wives, Nowayiti and Nosayini. The strong ties between people and nature could be seen in how the community depended on agricultural produce for their social life. Futshane (1960:9) describes the dilemma of the community when the sorghum produce failed in one year:

Kusekungeneni kokwindla. Umbona akakafulwa. Amazimba agwangqa kucacile ukuba akalindwanga ngenyameko abayi kuzuza nto abawalimileyo. Phezu koko, yonke indoda mayibe nesisele samazimba. Andithi kaloku wonke umfo oselayo kufuneka esilile? Nguwuphi umfazi onokwenza utywala obububo ngaphandle kwamazimba?

It is at the beginning of Autumn. The maize has not yet been harvested. The millet is brownish and it is clear that if it is not watched carefully, those who planted it would not reap anything. Besides, every man has to have a millet pit. Doesn't every man who drinks beer have to brew beer some time? Which woman would be able to brew proper beer without millet?

There were clear indications that change had entered even this traditional and rural community. The church and the school had begun to make inroads in the people's lives as can be seen from this description by Futshane (1960:10) of the encounter between the red blanket group and the church lay preachers:

Sonke isinxibo esizukileyo siyathandeka. Ubungemangaliswa wakubona nabashumayeli bemile ecaleni lendlela bebuka isinxibo sala maqaba evela ezintlombeni nase mitshotshweni ngentsasa yecawa. Omnye wobuza – la maqaba engazi nto nje wona, engenaSabatha ayikhathaleleyo yintoni na ebibanga ukuba ahlale iveki yonke; aye emitshotshweni nasezintlombeni ngemini yeNkosi?

All decent dress is admirable. You would be surprised to see even the lay preachers stopping on their way to admire the dresses of the red blanket people coming from their social gatherings on a Sunday morning. One could even ask why these red blanket people who did not have to observe the Sabbath day have to choose this very day out of the whole week, and go to their social gatherings on the Lord's day?

The story abounds with various kinds of children's pastimes and games. The boys enjoy themselves looking after their parents' cattle and when the reaping season is over, they spend the time in the wild playing various kinds of games and catching birds in their traps. Hunting birds and mice was the most popular pastime. Although unthinkable and unknown to most people, the boys also eat worms which they fried.

Among the proliferation of rural and traditional descriptions in this book, one cannot fail to observe how Futshane (1960:19) describes a traditional diviner:

UMayeza lo ubeludlwabevu lwesanuse. Ubemde engumcheya, emnyama ngokwentsikizi. Entloko ubefake isidlokolo sakhe sephuthi; emqaleni enxibe umngqi wamakhubalo namazinyo. Ukususela esinqeni kuye emanqineni, uyayakazela ziindidi ngeendidi zeemfele zeenyamakazi ezicazululwe zayimitya. Kanti ezihlahleni, nasezingqinibeni ebezithe ntshi ngezizityana zofele lukaxam nengwenya.

Mayeza was a very powerful diviner. He was a tall person with a dark complexion. He wore a bluebuck hat; with a necklace of various traditional herbs and animal teeth. From the waist down to the feet he wore various pieces of animal skin shredded into thin laces. Around his wrists and on his elbows he wore tight fitting pieces of leguan and crocodile skin.

Perhaps the greatest social change in this community is evident where the diviner smelt out MaDongwe, Zenzile's first wife, as the witch responsible for the illness of his second wife's child. Futshane (1960:22) correctly points out in the story that the only thing that saved her was the fact that prevailing Western justice prevented communities from taking the law in their hands and kill those suspected of witchcraft:

Yaba buhlungu intliziyo kaZenzile. Oyise noyisekazi babegqibe kwelokuba makagxothwe lo mfazi; njengokuba ilizwe selaba phantsi komLungu engasenakubulawa. Kodwa yena siqu wayemthanda, nangaphezu koko, wayethanda lo nyana wakhe uJujuju.

Zenzile felt very sad. His father and his uncles had decided that she should be chased away, because she could not be killed as the country was under Western law which prevented such action. He loved her, and what is more, he loved his son Jujuju.

Nowayiti is saved from a fiery death by fleeing in the night with her son Jujuju. This plunges the whole community into sorrow and mourning as they thought they all died in the fire. Futshane shows in the subsequent pages how the church played a role in trying to bring about peace and hope in the family.

The additional support role of the school ends with Jujuju getting a bursary to go to high school. After a few mishaps and ups and downs that included the outbreak of a war between the neighbouring villages, he had a break but returns to complete his qualifications as a teacher. Thereafter he marries his loving girlfriend, Kholiswa.

The transition from the dark days of witchcraft accusations, suspicion and arson, to the enlightened days of the church, school and education spans the whole book and its gripping story. Futshane has succeeded in this novelette in highlighting the plight of women who were falsely accused of witchcraft. In the same token, she also clearly shows how such practices as polygamy sometimes led to jealousy and enmity between women.

In the second novelette entitled **UMhla Ngenqaba** (1949) Futshane's setting is still strongly rural, starting with two men enquiring after each other's health. Unlike the brief Western style of doing so, the two men inquire after each other's health, the health of their neighbour who is now recuperating, and the conversation stretches to the good harvests. This agrarian life is described as follows by Futshane (1960:5):

Kwakusekuphumeni kobusika kweyeKhala. Ngakwicala lezilimo amadoda ayemi kakuhle, iindladla phandle zide zabamba ukungathi ziza kuba zizibaya zamatakane ububanzi. NoMakhosi into yakwaGoqolo wayephakathi kweqela elivunileyo, phofu ingeyiyo nto angayiqhelanga ukuvuna kuba ebelima esandleni kwezo ntili ziphezu kweGcuwa.

It was towards the end of winter in July. As far as fresh produce was concerned, the men were well off. They had maize barns as big as lamb byres. Makhosi the man from the Goqolo clan was among the men who had had good harvests although this was not unusual with him because he used to plough in the sweet veld in the Butterworth valley.

The influence of Christianity is discernible in the following statement by Velaphi, a councillor, when the country was ravaged by a severe drought. Futshane (1960: 8) relates this incident as follows:

Kuphakame uVelaphi emva koku. Umfo lo ubeligosa lebandla lamaWesile wabhekisa enkundleni wathi, "Noko ngekusiyiwa kucelwa imvula eNkosini. Kunje nje nje siyohlwaywa ngenxa yezono zethu ezininzi ezifike zadala ulundi phakathi kwethu nendlebe kaSomandla. Ndingathi le nto yakha yenzeka kudala kumaYiputa, athi akuzenza lukhuni iintliziyo zawo iNkosi yathumela izibetho."

Velaphi stood up thereafter. He was a church steward in the Methodist church. He addressed the gathering, saying, "I suggest that we go to pray for rain. We are probably being punished because of our many sins that have become a mountain between us and the Almighty's ear. This kind of thing once happened many years ago to the Egyptians when they refused to listen to the Lord. He sent his plagues upon them."

The red blanket group blame the converts for the drought. They consider the drought as God's punishment for the latter group's sins. Consequently, they resort to their own traditional methods of making rain. Futshane (1960: 8) describes their objection as follows:

“Kahle Velaphi!” Kungenelele uMbangendlu, “kahle ngemvuselelo, asiyiyo ndawo yayo le. Uthetha ngento engathi isemva ngoku. Ingathi kum, manene akwaGwanini, oku kukhankanywa nguVelaphi asikukona sikufunayo apha enkundleni. Aba bantu – ukuba anikabaqondi ngabo kanye aba basiqhotsa ngelanga. Fuda kungekho zimbalela komawokhulu, kungekho magqobhoka....”

“Wait, Velaphi!” interjected Mbangendlu, “just wait with your revival crusade, this is not its place. It seems what you are talking about is out of step. It seems to me, gentlemen of the Gwanini clan, what Velaphi is talking about is not what we want here in this country. These people – if you have not discovered that yet, are the cause for this severe drought. There were no droughts during the times of our ancestors...”

It is interesting that the newly-found religion is not trusted by the red blanket group. They prefer their own way of doing things. Their solution to the drought is depicted as follows by Futshane (1960:9):

Sisengamakhwenkwe, siqubha aph’ eGcuwa besihlala sibaliselwa ukuba mhla kunyembelelekileyo kunzima kumaxesha amandulo, imvula inqabile, kwakuye kuzingelwe intsikizi ifakwe esizibeni. Yothi ke zakuba ziphelile iintsuku ezingummiselo ine imvula. Ukuba inkundla ibiya kuhamba nam besiya kukhe sitsale kwelo qhinga. Kubi.”

“When we were boys, swimming in the Gcuwa river, we used to be told that in the olden days when things became bad, with droughts, the people used to hunt the ground hornbill, and it was submerged in a river pool. After a certain number of days, the rain would come. If the court agrees with me, we should try that option. Things are really bad.”

It is interesting to note that the Fort Hare **Greater Dictionary of isiXhosa** by Tshabe (1989: 418) confirms this belief:

Ground hornbill ...this bird is regarded by the Xhosas as a bird of evil omen ; if it flies over a homestead it presages death; in times of severe drought ground hornbills used to be hunted by men, first on foot, then later on horseback, who contrived to keep these heavy birds in the air until they were exhausted; one was caught, killed and immersed in a pool in the river where it was left to decay; it was believed that this would bring rain which would continue until the bird was removed from the river.

It is also interesting to note that Futshane highlights the fact that a married woman could not call her husband by name. This is reflected as follows in Futshane (1960: 13):

“Le nto iligqibe lonke. Umnakwabo Nozinto, umyeni wakwam, ebeye eQutsa phesheya kweTsomo kule veki iphelileyo. Ubuye eyibabaza indlala kwelo...”

“This thing is wide-spread. My sister-in-law Nozinto’s brother, my husband, paid a visit to Qutsa in the Tsomo district last week. He came back quite taken aback by the drought in that part of the country...”

The persistent drought leads to crime in society. Even trusted men resort to crime. One of them suggests that they go and hijack wagons that were transporting maize from across the Kei River to places such as Butterworth, Ngqamakwe and elsewhere in the Eastern Cape.

The attack on the unsuspecting wagon crew is swift and effective. After flooring the assistant while the leader had gone away for a short while, the thieves carry the bags of maize to their hidden wagon. Futshane (1960: 20) describes this incident as follows:

Zathiwa hlasi ezo ngxowana ngabantu abenziwe iziralarume liphango – iingxowa ezima-30 zasiwa ezileyni. Kwathi ngephanyazo zabe iinkabi sezinyuka lo mimango, zikhweza lawo mathambeka, umkhondo ulahlekile mpela kwingxolo yodyakalashe nezikhova nengqangqolo ezibufumana ubusuku bulithuba lokumemelela.

Those bags were swiftly taken away by people who had been turned criminals by hunger – 30 maize bags were taken to the sledges. Very soon, the oxen were going up those steeps, going down the slopes, leaving no trace behind in the noise of the jackals, the owls and the Cape dikkops who find the night a time to sing.

Another radical change in the lives of the black people as reflected in the book is that the Western criminal justice system had taken over. Normally boys were ignored for stealing pigs and for committing minor misdemeanours. When Mhlangenqaba and other boys stole a pig they stayed in jail for a lengthy period of time because they once tried to escape from jail.

Jordan's **Ingqumbo yeminyanya** (1940) is by far the most classical example of social change in amaXhosa society. While it is fashionable to look at this classical novel from the point of view of heathenism conquering enlightenment, as represented by the school and the Christian religion, the real gist of the novel is the demise of traditional life because of the impact of Westernisation in all its manifestations.

Sirayi (1989:312) depicts change in this novel as follows:

Jordan's treatment of the cultural theme comprises two phases. The first phase concentrates on the portrayal of the socio-economic atmospheric background essential to the development of his theme. The essence of the phase is the socio-politico-economic change the African society undergoes consequent on its exposure to Western values and influences.

Transformation manifests itself in various ways in this monumental work. The book is set in a traditional milieu as evidenced by the following opening comments by Jordan (1979:3):

Kwakuxa libantu-bahle. Amathunzi eenduli zaseNgcolokini aye enabe ada aya kuthi rhece ezintlanjeni ezantsi. Enkalweni kwathi thaphu iinkabi zamahashe ezimalunga neshumi zathambeka intaba, zanjumla amathunzi, zenjenjeya zibetha kuhle; zaya kuthi gubu phesheya kwentlambo, zaqingqa enkundleni kumzi omkhulu, phezu kwamanzi eThina.... Abahambi babonakala ukuba lo mzi beze kuwo ngokuwazi. Bazonwabela nangona kungekho mntu wasekhaya apha ubonakalayo.

Kwacaca ukuba abalindele kugxothwa. Aba bahambi abahlukanga kuyaphi kubahambi esibabona imihla nezolo kwaNtu. Ngezinxibo bonke babefake iibhulukwe, nangona babini-bathathu babebonakala ukuba iibhulukhwe yinto yabumini kubo. Singabalula kuphela babe babini phakathi kwabo. Omnye liqina elinesiqu, elacaca ngokundileka ukuba linobukhosana. Nokuhlala lalixhagiwe ngamanye amadoda lawo. Owesibini ngumfana oselula kakhulu, omalunga kumashumi amabini eminyaka. Wayebonakala ngesinxibo nangesithomo ukuba lithambo lasesikolweni, waye ethwele umnqwazi onendwe yaseLovedale.

It was late in the afternoon. The shadows of the Hills of Ngcolokini had lengthened and touched the valleys down below. A group of ten horsemen suddenly appeared on the horizon. They descended the slope at a steady pace, crossed the evening shadows, ascended the opposite slope and came to a halt in the *nkundla* of an imposing homestead overlooking the waters of the Thina River...

It was clear that they had come to a house they knew well, for although none of the people of the house were to be seen, they seemed quite at home. There was obviously no fear of being sent away. These men looked like village travellers. They were all in riding-breeches, but it was obvious that two or three of them wore trousers only on very special occasions such as this one. One was a stout middle-aged man whose bearing suggested that he was a minor chief; for even as they sat, he occupied a central position. He was of the Tolo clan. The other was a mere youth of about twenty, whose dress and bearing indicated that he was a college student. He wore a hat with the Lovedale College badge. *(Translation from English version, Jordan 1980:3)*

This setting clearly points to a traditional environment – the riding of horses, the traditional homesteads and the general behaviour of the visitors. The characterisation of the main characters so far also attests to a conventional traditional background. The men know how to approach the homestead they were visiting. They are not unduly worried by the fact that they had to sojourn outside the home without being invited in.

Their dress is indicative of the change that is coming into traditional life. They are all wearing trousers although, as the author remarks, it was clear that this kind of attire was new to them, if not outright foreign. The impact of the school is also visible on the younger main character as indicated by his wearing a Lovedale High School hat and emblem.

The traditional milieu of the novel is further enhanced and highlighted in the following extract from Jordan (1979:4):

Ahlala ke amadoda ee nqwadalala, eqhumisa iinqawa, kwada ngelikade kwavela umfazi ethwele igaba namahlahlana eenkuni. Wayehamba nentwazana emalunga neshumi leminyaka. Lo mfazi wonda ngeendwendwe ezi phofu wanela ukuzibulisa ngomlomo; babeka iinkuni ebabezithwele enkundleni, umfazi wathula isitshixo phezu komnyango, phakathi kwengca nodonga, wavula, batshona endlwini bobabini nentombazana. Wathi quu nje endlwini umfazi, wakhulula umfinyezo, waphuma weza kubamba iindwendwe isandla.

The men sat down at their ease smoking their pipes until at last a woman approached carrying a hoe and a small bundle of firewood on her head. With her was a little girl of about ten. The woman walked towards the guests and said a word of greeting as she walked passed; then she put down the wood on the ground, drew out a key from between the wall and the thatch and disappeared into the hut with the little girl. Inside the hut she undid her girdle to let down her skirt, this being a sign of respect, before coming out again to shake hands with her guests. (*Translation from the English version, Jordan 1980:4*)

The smoking of pipes, the appearance of a woman and a girl carrying bundles of firewood on their heads, and the search for the key in the thatched roof of the house all point to a traditional setting. This is further affirmed by the demeanour of the woman who greeted the visitors by word of mouth, entered the house, dressed properly and came out to shake the visitors' hands. After she had greeted all of them, she went to sit on the grass outside, instead of looking for a chair.

Another hint at traditionalism in the story was when the author pointed out that the middle aged man was of royal blood.. Royalty is the gist of the story. The whole book deals with Zwelinzima. The visit to Mzamo's home was in connection with Zwelinzima's position in the royal house. This group was secretly preparing for his return from where he had been "hidden" by his tribe to avoid trouble from contenders.

Jordan adeptly describes the traditional hospitalities that took place in Dabula's house, thereby affirming the traditional milieu in which the story took place and the background against which all the incidents should be viewed. One of the most graphic descriptions of this traditional life is found when Jordan (1979:60) describes Ngxabane, one of the key figures in the story, the epitome of traditionalism:

Phakathi kwaba bamelwane kwakukho ixhego elambethe "intakamlilo". Yayiyingwevu, ufafa ekubonakala ukuba lwaluyinto ngeemini zalo. Lixhego elidala lakwaNgxabane, elaliyinduna enkulu yasemaMpondomiseni.

Among Mzamo's neighbours was an old man who wore a bright red blanket. His hair was grey, but he was tall and still carried himself well. He must have been an impressive figure in his day. His name was Ngxabane. He had once been counsellor among the Mpondomise in the Tsolo district. (*Translation from the English version, Jordan 1980:7*)

Ngxabane is spurred into deep discussions about the amaMpondomise royalty and traditions. He makes a very telling comment when he says (in Jordan 1979: 8):

Okunene ingwe wayeyiphethe emsileni! Lavuleleka ixhego libabalisela ngeenkosi zamaMpondomise, libala zonke iziziba ezangcwatywa kuzo eThina naseMzimvubu. Lagqibela ngokuthi umhlaba wemka nabeLungu nje, ngamashwa eza noku kulahlwa kwamasiko.

He had indeed touched the leopard on his tail. For now the old man loosened his tongue and told a score of legends of the Mpondomise Kings, naming all the deep pools of the Thina and the Mzimvubu rivers where they lie buried. Finally he declared that it was because they had abandoned their ancient customs that the Mpondomise had suffered such great calamities and lost their land to the White man. (*Translation from the English version, Jordan 1980: 9*).

The conversation goes deeper and deeper into memories. They all tell about life when everyone kept their customs and traditions. Several myths and legends about the olden days clearly show that their past was very important to them, even though they were under the influence of Westernism in all its manifestations. The amount of cultural and traditional life depicted in this book could lead this discussion to a long compendium of amaXhosa customs. Suffice it to say Jordan has clearly laid out a milieu that was strongly underpinned by traditionalism.

The stressing of rural setting and its relevance are explained as follows by Obiechina (1980:140):

In a sense the novels are largely preoccupied with the description of setting. This is mainly the result of the “engaged” attitude of the novelists. They attempt to portray village life in its entirety in order to stress its logicity and its autonomy and self-sufficiency. There is no extended effort to describe “scenery” as such, because nature is not apprehended as an independent reality or in its decorative aspect but as an integral part of the traditional world.

The missionary-oriented scholars look at the theme of Jordan's **Ingqumbo yeminyanya** from only one angle – the triumph of darkness over light. They greatly lament this tragedy in what is otherwise regarded as a classical novel by a writer of great literary ability. While the theme as expressed in this way is not altogether wrong, it is wrong to end there. This is only one way of looking at Jordan's **Ingqumbo yeminyanya**.

Peteni, in his introduction to the English translation of this great novel comes close to what is to my mind a plausible way of looking at the novel when he says (in Jordan 1980: ii):

The novel is constructed on a grand scale. Its characters are kings and queens, princes and princesses, priests and counsellors of great dignity. The issues presented are of the greatest importance to mankind, and are both local and universal in dimension. One of the main themes is culture conflict: the western way of life clashing with African custom and tradition.

In the culture conflict that is so brilliantly depicted in the book, one cannot fail to observe that Westernism has, as usual, played a huge role in causing tension in the traditional life of the amaMpondomise. Zwelinzima is educated at Lovedale under the strong tutelage of the missionaries. On his very first day at Fort Hare where he was going to do his matric, he meets with a Bishop. Jordan (1979:27) describes their relationship as follows:

Wathi akufika ke kwaNokholeji lo mfana wabe esamkelwa ngobubele yiBhishopu eyayingumphathi wabafundi baseTshetshi. Yathi akuba ezazisile, "O! kukhw' incwadi yakho apha evela eLovedale..."

UZwelinzima wayeyazi le Bhishopu ukulunga kwayo, kuba wayefudula eyibona oko wayeseseLovedale, elwazi nodumo lokulunga kwayo.

On arriving at Fort Hare the young man was received with great warmth by the Bishop who was Warden of Beda Hall. As soon as he had introduced himself the Bishop said, “Ah! There’s a letter here for you from Lovedale... Zwelinzima knew the Bishop’s reputation for kindness for as a student at Lovedale he had met him often. (*Translation from the English version, Jordan 1980: 27*).

One can see from this comment that the Bishop is an important and crucial icon for the young chief. He knows him from Lovedale and the Bishop was also a chaplain at Fort Hare where young Zwelinzima was doing matric. Needless to say, from that time onwards, Zwelinzima was strongly under the influence of the Bishop. There was, except for Mphuthumi who told him about his background, very little or no orientation from his cultural group’s side. The church was gradually gaining a hold on him, his life, and his spirituality. Whenever he had something worrying him, he would go to the Bishop for help, even soliciting his help on matters royal, as said by Jordan (1979:37):

Okunene bakuphanyaza ogesi ngentsimbi yethoba waya eMnqubeni uZwelinzima, wafika inyange selilapho lithandaza. Wathi engacinganga weva naye selewe ngedolo, ezibika kuSombawo. Akukhova ukuthandaza wabalisa lonke ibali lobomi bakhe, waza kuthi ga ngale ncoko yakhe noMphuthumi ngezolo. Akazange ayilibale uZwelinzima intetho yelo xhego. Bahlala apho kwalila iinkuku, eboniswa imfanelo yakhe yiBhishophu.

Immediately after the nine o’clock signal for “lights out”, Zwelinzima made his way to the chapel and there found the old man kneeling in silent prayer, and he too involuntarily went down on his knees, commending himself to the care of the father of all. When the Bishop indicated that he was ready to hear what he had to say, he related his life story up to the conversation that had taken place between himself and Mphuthumi the previous day. In after years Zwelinzima always remembered this interview. They remained talking till cockcrow and during all that time the Bishop was pointing out to him the path he must take. (*Translation from the English version, Jordan 1980:37*).

The Bishop strongly encourages Zwelinzima to go back home and take up his chieftainship according to his father's wish. Zwelinzima was ill-prepared for the huge responsibility facing him in this regard. Instead, his Western orientation had completely alienated him from his cultural life, hence the serious problems he picks up when he got home. The traditionalists wanted him to marry a woman of royal blood from the amaBhaca clan, against his own wish to choose his school girl friend who was a commoner. To sum up, he sticks to his wish for a while but, in face of seemingly insuperable difficulties, he gives in. There is tension between him and Thembeke because Thembeke was also strongly influenced by Westernisation. The only person who could give her advice, from the Western point of view, was Sister Monica.

Thembeke, who is equally Westernised, could not countenance a polygamous marriage. She is a total misfit in the royal role she has to play. Everything she does is totally at variance with custom and tradition. Jordan mentions a number of actions on her part which were against tribal expectations and norms. To crown it all, she kills the revered royal totem, uMajola, bringing havoc upon her and the whole family.

The couple's relationship ends in disaster as both of them fail to come to grips with their new roles, all because of the changing environment. Even the wise words of the abaThembu chief who stuck to his traditional beliefs and followed the dictates of his tribal position even where his own personal convictions were not in agreement with them, fails to educate them in this regard.

The winds of change had blown even in royalty as, in the past, the chief had to follow the subjects' wishes and the customs of the tribe without question. He had to marry the woman chosen and preferred by the tribe and had to marry as many wives as dictated by custom. The wives had to obey these customs and live with them. The behaviour of both Chief Zwelinzima and his wife, Thembeke, is completely at variance with tradition, leading to the wrath of the ancestors.

Thembeke's background is in fact a replica of Zwelinzima's, as far as education is concerned. They are both depicted as educated persons who are strongly under the influence of well known white educators or role models. While Zwelinzima was under the influence and tutelage of the Bishop, Thembeke was just as much under the influence of Sister Monica. She was the only person she could confide in, even more than her own mother. This is how Jordan (1979:119) depicts Thembeke's visit to Sister Monica to go and share a secret with her instead of confiding in her own mother:

Kwasa exelela unina ukuba makancedwe abolekwe ihashe aye eNgcolosi, kuba ufuna ukudibana noSister Monica nokuba sekutheni na. Unina yamoyikisa inkangeleko yomntwana wakhe, kuba wayebonakala ukuba akalalanga. Yabhadula yagabadela ingqondo yomzalikazi, kodwa wayiqokelela, wathi kulungile makabotshelwe ihashe ngamakhwenkwe. Unina wayenganalo nofifi lokuba intombi yakhe ithandana nenkosi.

The following morning she asked her mother to arrange that she be given a horse on which to go to St Cuthberts as she desperately wanted to meet Sister Monica. Thembeke's appearance concerned the old lady very much because it was obvious that she did not have a good sleep the previous night. Her mother's mind wandered but she decided to keep her cool and she arranged that the boys inspan the horse. She had not the faintest idea that her daughter was in love with a chief. (*Translation from the English version, Jordan 1980:129*).

The whole book, **Ingqumbo yeminyanya**, reflects the drastic changes that have taken place, and that are continually taking place, in amaXhosa society. First of all, Thembeke's parents refused to force Thembeke into marrying Mthunzini. Jordan (1979:25) reflects this as follows:

Wabhalela ekhaya ke uMthunzini, ecela unina ukuba athethe noyise aye kumcelela uThembeka kubazali bakhe, enethemba lokuba abazali bakaThembeka baya kuhamba nale nto. Noyise kaMthunzini wasukela phezulu engathandabuzi ukuba uza kuphumelela. Koko wothuswa kukuba abazali bakaThembeka bathi abanakho ukwenza into enjalo xa uThembeka angahambiyo nayo.

Mthunzini wrote home asking his mother to request his father to go to Thembeka's parents to arrange a marriage with their daughter, hoping that Thembeka's parents would approve. Mthunzini's father took up the matter with great excitement confident that he was going to be successful. He was shocked when Thembeka's parents said they could not do such a thing, if Thembeka did not approve of it.

This enlightenment on the part of Thembeka's parents is depicted as follows by Jordan (1980: 23]:

Nomvuyo wondered if the Mthunzini affair had risen again from the earth. Could it be possible that Thembeka was now being forced into this marriage by her parents? "Impossible!" She answered herself. "Thembeka's father is an enlightened old man. He wouldn't indulge in such awkward, ochre practices.

Zwelinzima freely visits Thembeka at the college and gets welcomed by the matron and other senior staff, something uncommon in African culture. Jordan (1979: 42) depicts this warm welcome by the matron or housemistress as follows:

"O! Selufikile, Zwelinzima." Watsho umphathikazi ebulisa ngobubele. "Usaphila? Asikuko nokuba ndavuya ndakubon' igama lakho kwiingxelo zoviwo." Kaloku abaMhlophe bona xa babuza impilo abalindeli kuphendulwa. Uya kuthi usathinta isikhohlela usithi uza kwenza umnembelele uchaza iimbalela neerhafu nezikhonkothela zabantwana, abe yena umntu oMhlophe selethetha ezinye.

O! Have you already come, Zwelinzima?” said the matron greeting him warmly. “How are you? I was very glad to see your name on the pass list.” White people do not engage in protracted response to asking after one’s health. They leave you clearing your throat to start telling about the drought and the taxes as well as children’s coughs, and move on to something else.

The difference between the two cultures is clearly demonstrated in this passage. It also clearly shows that the background from which Thembeke and Zwelinzima came was totally different from their new roles.

Thembeke is deeply steeped in the Western culture. She does not readily believe anything from Zwelinzima’s cultural roots. She does not even believe that Dingindawo could send a dog to bite a piece off Zwelinzima’s arm to be used for *muti* so that Dingindawo could ascend the throne as chief of the amaMpondomise. This strange incident is told as follows by Jordan (1979: 17) using the character, Mphuthumi to retell the story to Thembeke:

“Wathi xa aminyaka mine ezelwe, wadliwa yinja engalweni, edlala nabanye abantwana kwayisekazi uDingindawo. Le nja yakhupha isihlunu esikhulu engalweni yomntwana. Nanamhla nje asaziwa apho saya khona eso sihlunu – nokuba yasiginya, nokuba yasithini na...”

“When the child was four years old he was bitten by a dog on the arm while playing with other children at Dingindawo’s place. The dog bit off a large piece of flesh from the child’s arm. Up to today no one knows where the piece went, whether the dog swallowed it or what...”

Thembeke’s response clearly indicates that she does not believe such stories (Jordan 1979: 17):

“O! Kazi ooNongqawuse aba boze baphele nini na kule Afrika?”

“When are these fantastic Nongqawuse tales ever to end in this Africa of ours?” (*English translation from Jordan 1980:18*)

This radical change of outlook on the part of Thembeke is described as follows by Mtuze (as cited by Ntuli and Swanepoel, 1993:63):

For P T Mtuze, whose approach is a feminist one, Thembeke (Zwelinzima’s wife) is drawn as a free woman, yet finds it difficult to comprehend Thembeke’s overall attitude towards certain aspects of Xhosa culture. Her missionary education and upbringing cannot (but) be blamed for divorcing her from her own culture to such an extent that she becomes a total stranger to her own people. Of course the motivation for her behaviour is not difficult to find. Thembeke is a fugitive from her Xhosa culture. She is driven into this state by a gross sense of “alienation” as she represents black people with an identity crisis, who refuse to be identified with black culture and who want to become pseudo-whites (Mtuze 1990:55-56).

Zwelinzima is also caught in this Western trap. He finds it very difficult to agree to be immunized against the evil machinations of potential enemies (Jordan 1979: 123):

Wayede athi uNgxabane yinto yakhe kakade umntu onobuthi ukumlalisa ingqondo umntu, watsho esithi uyaqiniseka nangoku kuba uDingindawo engaphumelelanga nje ezikhalini uza kumnoboza ngobuthi uZwelinzima lo, ukuba akaziyeki ezi nkani anazo zokwala ukugonywa...

Ngxabane even went to the extent of saying it is typical of evil minded people to make their prey complacent, and added that he was sure that now that Dingindawo has failed in open warfare, he was going to resort to using muti to destroy Zwelinzima, if he does not desist from his stubbornly refusing to be immunized against such attacks...

Zwelinzima's whole behaviour is completely Western. He drives a car with his wife to Bhunga (Council) meetings. He acts wisely by visiting the abaThembu chief for guidance and advice but fails to take the wise advice thereafter. He does something radically opposed to the people's customs by trying to push through the Bhunga a motion on the elimination of goats because he wanted to discourage his subjects from going to diviners. (*Vide* Jordan 1980: 178):

As was expected, the motion concerning the extermination of goats came up but to his astonishment the Thembu Chief, whom he respected and trusted more than other chiefs in the Transkei, made an eloquent speech against the motion, pointing out convincingly to the Bhunga that in view of the requirements of the diviners, herbalists, and novice-diviners, the goats could not be exterminated.

This total submission to missionary brainwashing is depicted as follows by Mdaka (1992: 201):

Zwelinzima in Jordan's **Ingqumbo Yeminyanya** is so complex that it is difficult to see him as a quisling because he has both good and bad qualities. One has to look carefully at the reforms he introduces to see that he has been co-opted through acculturation. For instance, he supports the delimitation of stock, a strategy initiated by the white man to impoverish the Africans. He also argues in favour of the extermination of goats, which is a calculated move of the white man to deliver a death blow to African culture, for goats are used in many African rituals.

Mdaka (1992: 201) continues to comment as follows about Zwelinzima's being uprooted from his culture and being implanted lock, stock and barrel into the white man's culture:

Although we condemn Zwelinzima for these “reforms”, our knowledge that he has been cut off from his roots (i.e. taken away from an African setting) and placed in the custody of missionaries and Christian converts at a very tender age, makes us sympathize with him. Furthermore, there are times when he doubts the wisdom of championing western values. For instance, there is a marked change of attitude in Zwelinzima after an eye-opening discussion between himself and an educated Thembu chief who has more diplomacy than he. Because these two streams - African culture and Western culture - have been placed on a collision course as antagonistic poles throughout the book, the inevitable happens when the final showdown occurs in the climax of this great novel. Neither side wanted to give in and in the end, tradition crushes the so-called enlightenment. This led to earlier Western oriented critics condemning the theme of the book as one that encourages darkness to prevail over light.

This is expressed as follows by Shepherd (1945: 89):

The publication of A.C. Jordan's *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* was noteworthy for more than one reason. It was on a larger plan than former novels, and it was an ambitious attempt to reveal the workings in the soul of an African awakened to the claims of a higher type of life and yet in a pagan environment and fighting a grim fight with conservative and reactionary forces. But more: the author showed himself to have a conception of artistic values that was praiseworthy. At the close of the book the forces of evil, of paganism and reaction, win, and there is a veritable blood-bath. Some who read the book in manuscript begged the author to give it a different and more happy ending. But Jordan turned a deaf ear to such pleadings. “This is how it came to me,” he declared and declined to do violence to his own artistic conceptions.

Needless to say, such a conclusion is judgmental and biased. It presupposes that everything African is darkness. The right thematic reading of the story ought to be that cultures should respect one another otherwise there is going to be a crisis that would benefit none of those engaged in the encounter.

Jordan used the names of characters to reflect traditionalism in this monumental work. The main characters are Zwelinzima and Thembeke, and the other characters are Mthunzini and Nomvuyo. This traditionalism can also be seen in how the other important characters are named. They mostly bear traditional isiXhosa names such as Dabula, Ngubengwe and Mzamo. In this way the author succeeded in creating a real traditional setting. In this way the dichotomy between Western and African traditional was accentuated.

Obiechina (1980:219) sums up the impact of change in black societies as follows:

The first impact of change undermined collective solidarity and tradition and therefore the ideological matrix that held the pre-colonial traditional society together. The introduction of Christianity, for instance, alienated the converts from their traditional loyalty to the ancestors and with that went, for them at any rate, the strongest sanction for individual action, social attitudes and behaviour. The collective conscience was split and the community could no longer speak with one voice.

4.5 Recapitulation

A third element of change that manifests itself in this period in isiXhosa literature is politics. Mqhayi's Utopia **UDon Jadu** starts questioning the *status quo*. He criticizes the treatment meted out to blacks and even goes to the extent of suggesting radical changes to the way the country is run. His democratic innovations for Zathuza and Mnandi were very creative for someone who wrote so long ago. While Mqhayi was trying to find a place on the political bandwagon of the time, Jordan was countering the tide with his **Wrath of the Ancestors**. To him implicit belief in Westernism was eroding the African sense of values and identity as can be seen in the lives of Zwelinzima and Thembeke. The entry of women authors in the writing of books also brought in a fresh way of looking at the role of women in literature, as well as the characterisation of women in books. Gradually, women are taking the lead in bringing about change in their homes by acquiring education and by educating the nation.

CHAPTER FIVE

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS, 1954 – 1983

5.1 Introduction

The third decade of isiXhosa literature shows growing maturity in the themes and the issues the writers tackle. While the earlier books seemed to be exploratory as they sought to lay down solid foundations for the literature that was going to follow, Jordan did not only lay a firm foundation in novel writing, but he also set a standard that has not been surpassed ever since. Having said that, let me hasten to point out that that comment is not intended to devalue valuable contributions by other authors. Many books have appeared since Jordan but none of them has managed to dwarf **Ingqumbo yeminyanya**.

The following novels will be discussed in this chapter:

<u>Umvuzo wesono</u>	1954	E.S.M. Dlova
<u>Ukuqhawuka kwembeleko</u>	1960	D. M. Jongilanga
<u>Alitshoni lingenandaba</u>	1971	K.S. Bongela
<u>Ithemba liyaphilisa</u>	1979	W.K Tamsanqa
<u>Kwazidenge</u>	1980	R.L. Peteni.

5.2 Social changes in the fifties

The story, **Umvuzo wesono** (1954), revolves round residents from semi-detribalized villages in the Peddie area. The author makes use of the omniscient narrator which Cohen (1973:27) explains as follows:

An omniscient author, a narrator, or a persona is generally conscious of the effect of time and place on human experience. These elements together constitute one of the most important considerations in literature, the *setting*. Although the place may be specifically named or identified, and the time may be either vague or very specific, setting embraces the totality of an environment.

Cohen (ibid:29) continues to show how setting dovetails with a number of literary features to give the reader a view of those concerned:

Analysis of setting may also contribute to an understanding of characterization, especially when the environment reflects or influences the fictional human beings, or when they are in conflict with or in rebellion against their surroundings. Setting may suggest social position or status, which in turn may indicate a character's mode of dress and his manner of speech.

The setting of Dlova's **Umvuzo wesono** is therefore semi-rural as indicated by Dlova (1954: 1):

Iilali eziphakathi kweRhini neBhayi zaziwa ikakhulu ngokuba ziilali zamaRhanuga. Isizathu saloo nto ke kukuba abantu abalapho bakude nobukhosi neminye imithethwa-thethwana yesiNtu. Abantu noko abangengomaRhanuga yile mpi yaseMnyameni kwaNdlambe, nesininzi samaMfengu aseNgqushwa, kanti kwabona abo bantu ngabo aba bazalise ezo dolophu, loo nto ke ingabenzi msulwa nabo ebuRhanugeni. Khawuye phaya elwandle eBhayi, uze ubuye undixelele ukuba bangaphi na ooDlamini baseNgqushwa abaqeshwe ezinganaweni.

The rural villages between Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth are generally known as detribalized people's villages. The reason for that is because the people who stay in those areas are far from tribal chieftainships and all the African rules that govern them. The genuine traditionalists are those in the Mnyameni area in Ndlambe's place, and the majority of the Fingo people in Peddie. The very same people can be found all over the urban areas, rendering them equally detribalized. You just have to visit the harbour in Port Elizabeth where you could find many Dlamini from Peddie working at the harbour.

The success and failure of Christianity is described as follows by Dlova (1954:12):

Enye into afika wayiphawula uNosekeni ibe kukuba uGinyela walahla ngakwicala lembola. Wayesel'engumntu onxibayo, oko kunxiba ke kambe komntu esuka ebuqhuphu-ghuphini bobuqaba, engacingi ukuze akhe aqale akhangeleke kakuhle. Ukungxungxa kwakhe empahleni kwakufana nokuya kukaMzingisi. Ingqwangangqwili yeqabakazi yayiyinkosikazi yakhe uMamThembu. Hayi indoda yakhe yamtsho yamncama, kubanzima ke xa iyinkosikazi enjalo. Kuthi zekubekho ithenjana kube kuxa iyindoda ingqola, ibe ke iza kuthantanyiswa, ithundezwe yinkosikazi. Amadoda wona ahle oyisakale. Akanawo naloo monde ungako, abe ke umfazi xa seleyinkalane uyinkalane. Yayidla ngokuthi indoda iphuma isiya emthandazweni kusasa, abe yena ephuma esiya kufuna iingcwele kwimizi ebididiyele, kuze kuthi ngokuhlwa kuthandazwa nje ibe intokazi ipokotyise ngomchweya wenqaw' ende yesiXhosa, itshaya mpaku! Mpaku! Imana ukutshica!

Something else that Nosekeni noted was that Ginyela had stopped associating with the red blanket group. He changed to western dress that fitted him awkwardly clearly revealing that he came from the red blanket group. He was as shabby in western clothes as Mzingisi. His wife, MamThembu, remained an unadulterated red blanketed person. The husband tried in vain to get her to go to church. It is always difficult when it is the wife that is like that. There is always hope if it is the husband that shies away from the church, and then the wife would coax him along. Men soon give in. They do not have patience to resist, but if a woman is difficult in this regard, she really becomes difficult. When the husband went to a morning prayer session, the wife would go out and look for beer in the village, and when the time for evening prayer came at home, she would quietly smoke her long traditional Xhosa pipe, constantly spitting away.

The conflict between traditional religion and Christianity is evident in the book. It revolves round *Qamata* as known in traditional religion and *Thixo*, the Christian Deity. MamQhinebe resolves to challenge Ginyela's wife over her funny behaviour. Dlova (1954: 12) describes this encounter as follows:

Wayibukela, wayibukela uMamQhinebe le nto wada akaba nakuyinyamezela, wazidina ngenye imini wabuza, "Ungaba unyanga ntoni MamThembu le nto ukuthi kungxengxezwa kuQamata ube wena ungakhathali, umtshicela?"

Waphendula uMamThembu wathi, "UYise kaDose wayethe kum akathandazi uQamata uthandaza kuThixo. Ke andizange ndive ubawo endixelesa ngoThixo mna. Kwaye olu hlobo lokungxengxeza andiluthandi mna, andilwazi. Ucinga ukuba ndingayiphumelela into yokuthi ng'a umlomo, ndidwekesha, ndithetha nento endingayiboniyo?"

MamQhinebe watched this for some time, and she got tired of tolerating it. One day she took it upon herself to ask her, "What are you up to, MamThembu. Why do you behave this way: when people pray to Qamata, you spit on his face?"

MamThembu replied and said, "Dose's father said to me he did not pray to Qamata, he prays to Thixo (God as called in Christianity). I never heard my father (in-law) say to me anything about Thixo. I do not like this way of praying, I do not know it. How do you think I could manage talking to someone I cannot see?"

Several people try to convert MamThembu in vain until one day she succumbs to Dinani's persuasive preaching. She joins the church and becomes one of its staunch supporters until the end.

As could be expected, the church and the school play a very important role in changing the lives of the people in these villages. The same happens in the Mount

Coke area where one of the main characters in the book, Twatwa, grew up. Dlova (1954: 29) describes this influence as follows:

Ngeli xesha ke kuxa umoya weVangeli ushushu apho eMkhangiso, ufike uTwatwa kukho ubuxhobongwana obukhoyo besikolo. Apha abantwana bebefundiswa isiBhalo esiNgcwele ikakhulu, ukufunda isiXhosa nokubala.

At that time the evangelization spirit was very hot at Mount Coke. When Twatwa arrived there, he found a modest school. The learners were mainly taught the Bible, reading and arithmetic (mathematics these days).

This obvious enlightenment did not happen in a vacuum. Traditional practices were difficult to uproot overnight. Traditional medicine, amongst other factors, held sway in the area, as indicated by Dlova (1954: 30) herebelow:

Okunene uTwatwa usiwe egqirheni elathi isihlabo salo udliswe ngamafutha echanti ephithikezwe nezinkcwe zikaThikoloshe! Litsho igqirha lalatha ixhwele elithile emakuyiwe kulo. Usetyenzwe lelo xhwelo ke wada wachacha kakhulu, wabuyela kwimo yakhe yangaphambili. Kucaca ukuba ngethamsanqa iingcambu zeli xhwele zachanana nale nto wayenayo.

Twatwa was taken to a diviner who diagnosed that he was poisoned with the river snakes' fat mixed with Tokoloshe's saliva. The diviner referred them to a particular herbalist for treatment. That herbalist treated him until he recovered fully. It was clear that his herbs were suitable for his ailment.

The changes in the environment also lead to discernible change in the life of Dlova's main character, Twatwa, when he arrives at Mount Coke. He starts having visions, one of which is described as follows by Dlova (1954:30):

Phakathi kwezi ntaba ke kuvakala ukuba wayekh' aman' ebona imibono, aze athi akulala ngokuhlwa aphuph' amaphupha. Omnye wemibono awayibonayo apha yaba ngowombane awathi esachophe phezu kwelitye apho phakathi kweentaba, ejongene nenye yazo ezo nduli, ecengceleza iziBhalo, wabona kubaneka ngamandla. Uthe akuyibona le nto wee nqum, wakhangela, kwaba kuloku umbane utyityimba entabeni, wanga uyamgezela.

Between those mountains it is said he had some visions and at night when he went to bed he had certain dreams. One of those visions was a flash of lightning that appeared to him as he sat on a stone in the veld between the two mountains. He was facing one of the mountains, busy reciting his Biblical passages. A strong flash of lightning appeared. When he saw that he stopped and took a close look. The lightning appeared to be dancing and teasing him.

Dlova counterpoints the growing Christianization with the rise of criminality in the relevant societies, resulting from the declining moral fibre. He (Dlova 1954: 53) introduces this change and decay in the moral fibre as follows:

Ndiba bendikhe ndayithi thsuphe into yokuba kwakufuphi nale ndawana yaseMjikweni, phesheya kwentlanjana eliGume, igama layo, yayiyenye ilalana eyayibizwa ngokuba kusemaHlubini, kutshiwo ngokuba yayikhulisa ngamaHlubi ikakhulu, impi yakwaRhadebe neyakwaLubhelu; iyilali emizi exineneyo, isisinyophonyopho, esingathi xa sifuna ukuzoba umfanekiso wayo ezingqondweni, siyifanise neGomorha neSodom, noxa singazange sizibone ezo ndawo.

I have alluded to the fact that not far from this Mjikweni Village there was another village called the amaHlubi Village, because it was mainly inhabited by people of Hlubi origins and the Lubhelu families. It was very congested and we could liken it to the Biblical Sodom and Gomorrah, to give a clear mental picture of the place although we have not seen those places before.

This escalating vice and crime culminates in the murder of Twatwa's son. He is murdered by henchmen hired by Gezenga who bears a never ending-grudge against Twatwa. This grudge emanated from envy and rivalry because when Twatwa came to stay in Gezenga's village, the latter lost his position as the most respected man in the village.

The intervention of the Western judicial system gives rise to the private investigation of this murder case by a detective who poses as a filthy, dimwitted tramp. The culprits were brought to book and Gezenga is sentenced to death for his part in the murder, leaving his rival, Twatwa, introducing social reforms such as fencing the fields and orchards in order to give young people a chance to go to school.

Jongilanga's **Ukuqhawuka kwembeleko** (1960) deals with an interesting clash of cultures and social change – the repercussions of forced marriages. This theme is also reflected in the development of English literature as shown by Tibble (1970:139) who describes a strikingly similar incident in British social life:

The exploration of character and character motive in *Clarissa Harlowe* pointed a way the novel could advance. It is a story of the property marriage then usual among the ambitious families. Arranged marriages had been discarded among the unillustrious, though girls still received and listened to practical advice from parents and friends. Clarissa, an intelligent, beautiful, pious girl of eighteen, was to be forced by parents, elder brother and uncles into marriage with much older, illiterate but wealthy man: this arrangement was to gain money and lands, and a chance for her elder brother of a coveted title. Rather than marry a man she cannot love, Clarissa flees from home. Another suitor, a wealthy rake who has declared his devotion, betrays her when she seeks his protection: not believing in her ignorance of the world, and enraged by her steady refusal to marry him, he rapes her. Clarissa dies of a 'broken heart', alone.

Sirayi (1989:90) summarises the theme of Jongilanga's book as follows:

Almost throughout the narrative, the heroine, Zoleka, suffers deadly agony because of having to forfeit her promising future through the fault of her father, Zenzile, who leans on traditional values and decides her marriage partner. The inadequacy of Zenzile derives from his tenacious adherence to traditional norms and his failure to reconcile them with the modern norms to which he has voluntarily exposed his child.

It was obvious that Zoleka's generation is opposed to arranged marriages. No amount of coercion and torture by her father can change her from this resolve. She is determined to continue with her schooling and marry a man of her own choice when the time came.

Jongilanga's handling of the plot brings us close to the real situation. The verisimilitude he succeeds in creating in the book is in line with what Fowler (1973:127) says about the novel:

The fascination of the novel is that, because of its representational dimension, it raises the problem of the nature of a fiction at a point very near to familiar, *unfictionalized* versions of reality. The propensity of novels towards 'giving to the imaginary the formal guarantee of the real', their dependence on recognition and their formal contingency, are essential features; though clearly 'reality' is not a stable object.

Bongela's **Alitshoni lingenandaba** (1971) is one of the clearest examples of social change and its attendant crises. The setting of the novel is the notorious township, Ziphunzana, in East London. The township is characterised by dark streets and street lights that keep on going off during thunderstorms. This lighting and going off of the street lights is symbolic of the lives of the people there who go through times of brightness and joy and times of darkness and gloom, hence the title, **Alitshoni lingenandaba** (lit.every day has its news.) Bongela (1971:1) starts the story as follows:

Bekuhlaleka nje umzuzwana ubone ngolenye wombane obusitsho kube semini ngaphezu kokuba bekuzanyiwe ukukhanyiswa zezo nkwenkwezana zidwelileyo zezibane zogesisi. Ukanti ubusithi umbane lo wakuphindelela ngokoyikekayo zitsho zinikezele ezo zikagesi kuloko kuvele isithokothoko sobumnyama. Esibhakabhakeni, kube kunyunduka, futhi kunyuquka amafu awoyikekayo athe noko ubusuku bebudalelwe ukuba nenyanga, atsho ubukho bayo bakhanyeleka.

Every now and then, lightning flashes lit the sky as if it was daylight emitting more light than that provided by the flimsy electric street lights. When lightning flashed repeatedly and fearsomely, the street lights gave in, plunging the whole area in pitch darkness. Frightening clouds rose up in the sky clouding everything so much that one doubted that there was a moon in the sky.

The urban setting is typified by the number of cars that defy the rain and the accompanying thunderstorm. One of them clearly shows that its driver belonged to the middle class. He is a business person driving a top quality car that Bongela (1971: 20) describes as follows:

Phakathi kweemoto ezibe zihamba kulo mgaqo kube kukho nomnyobo olubhelu obe uphinyela ngamendu nakubeni izulu libe linje. Ugqotse wada waya kuma phambi kwendlu ezotywe kakuhle kufutshane nenye yeevenkile zabaNtsundu ezikuloo lokishi. Ithe ngxishishi kanye phambi kwesango izibane zikhanyise ngqo endlwini. Kuphume umfo omde onxibe isinxibo esimdaka. Uthe xwashu xwashu ukubaleka wafika wema emnyango, wankqonkqoza kabini kathathu, lwathi gungxu ukuvuleka ucango.

Among the cars that travelled on that road there was a posh cream coloured car that traversed the street at a high speed although the weather was inclement. It continued at that speed until it came to a stop near one of the black owned shops in that location. It stopped in front of the gate with its headlamps directly on the house. A tall man wearing a dark suit came out of the car. He carefully ran across the pools of water and stopped at the door. He knocked once or twice, and the door was opened.

The changed family life and values is evidenced by the fact that the woman who worked in the house that the driver visited had fled from her marriage in the rural villages and moved into town to seek work in one of the urban factories in East London. Failing health forces her to look for gainful employment in the township where she is employed by a man called Rubin who was unmarried.

Further cultural change can also be evidenced by what is playing the kind of music in the house. These are described as follows by Bongela (1971:2):

Uthe akungena lo mfo ngokungxama ngenxa yemvula, wafika apha kweli gumbi lokuqala kukhanyisiwe phofu kungabonakali mntu ngaphandle kwalo mntu ubemvulela. Into ebivakala yintsholo emyoli ephuma kunomathotholo obekhedame ekoneni. Umculo lo phofu ubungaphumi kuye ncam koko ubuphuma kwisekela lakhe elidlala iipleyiti kwalapha kuye. Ngoku ke bekubekwe isikhephelele sento enkulu.

When he entered the house hurriedly because of the rain, he found the lights in the front room on but no one could be seen except the person who had opened the door for him. What could be heard was the sound of music that emanated from a radio on the far corner, but the music itself did not come from the radio. It came from a record player that formed part of it. A long playing record was being played.

Vuyisile's purpose for visiting the house is to recover money allegedly embezzled by Rubin, who stayed in the house, at his place of employment at Orient Beach in East London. Urban dwellers, as can be noted from this incident, had fallen victim to white collar crime because of their tendency to live above their income levels. Rubin, the culprit, is characterised as someone who enjoys good living. He was preparing to take a trip to Mauritius with his girlfriend.

The changed circumstances and life-style are depicted as follows by Bongela (1971:10):

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, intokazi ebiyincutshe ekulenzeni likhawuleze lingenise imali.

Le shibhini ebisaziwa ngokuba kukwaNdokwenza, ibisebenza kakhulu ngexesha langokuhlwa xa impi eninzi ibuyile emsebenzini. Umniniyo uThamsanqa into kaGebe, umQwathi isiduko, ubelichule kuba ebenendlu enkudlwana yokuphumla ebizala yifenishala ngexesha lesemi ukuze ngokuhlwa isuswe kuvulwe isithuba sokudanisela nokudlala imidlalo-dlalwana eyonwabisayo ngeli xa kusaphuzwayo.

In Tsolo location there was one of those very popular shebeens. You would be surprised to see the beauty of the top quality furniture inside those houses and the music that came from a giant music system. If you watched how the business was conducted, you would find out that there was, besides the music, a lady who was very good at generating money in the business.

The shebeen known as Ndokwenza was a very popular night spot when most people had come out of work. Its owner, Thamsanqa Gebe, of the amaQwathi clan, was a very clever man. He used to convert his fully-furnished spacious lounge into a dancing and games room while people enjoyed some drinks.

Dora, the shebeen queen, was known for her musical prowess and her ability to entertain men. She was used as bait by the owner, keeping them entertained and interested which in turn made them more willing to part with their hard earned money. She was, unlike her country counterparts, very assertive, typical of all shebeen queens.

The characters in the book are given both so-called Christian and isiXhosa names but in the end the Western names seem to gain the upperhand as the people move further and further away from their cultural roots. Rubin Mthuthuzeli Mdaka ultimately

becomes Rubin and finally *Bra Rubs*. Vuyisile becomes *Bra Vuy*. The basic setting, however, shows the interplay between rural and urban as the traditional clan names persist even in the urban locations. We meet MamTshawe, mQwathi and MaDlambulo.

5.3 Nostalgia for the old order

Ithemba liyaphilisa (1979) by W.K Tamsanqa reflects a rural setting in the rural village of Holela in the then Transkei. Chiefs played a prominent role in governance. The untouchability of the chief could be seen when Chief Phalo seduced his uncle's daughter. Because of his high position in the nation he cannot be punished for this incestuous act. Instead the girl is accused of having enticed him and she is punished by being banished with Gando, her father. This was a far cry from today's legal principle that no one is above the law.

The role of the main character as one of the councillors of Chief Sarhili, a prominent umXhosa king, is depicted as follows by Tamsanqa (1979:3):

UKhohlela lo wayengumphakathi omkhulu weNtsundu yoNomsa, intyulubi mhla ngogayi, ikhalipha mhla ngempi. Wazibalula umKwayi omkhulu eSithebe mhla kwahlangana abaThembu namaGcaleka ngoNongxokozelo ukuze abaThembu baswantsuliswe bayokungena eSinaleni eMgwali, banqandelwe nguHagile (Revd Hargreaves).

Khohlela was a senior councillor of Chief Sarhili. He was a renowned traditional dancer during tribal ceremonies, and a fearless warrior in war. He showed his fighting skills during the war of Nongxokozelo when the Thembus and the Gcalekas were involved in fierce fighting. The Thembus were repelled and chased up to Mgwali where they were saved by Revd Hargreaves' intervention.

Traditional dances abound in the story. In fact Khohlela's prowess in this regard wins him the love of his youngest wife, Nomasebe, whose married name later became Nofundile. The church and the school are conspicuous by their absence in this traditional society.

A further indication of traditional life and setting in the book is attested by the fact that Khohlela has three wives. The normal jealousies arise and one of the wives is accused of dabbling in witchcraft in order to curry favour with her husband. Her position becomes even more perilous when she is the first to fall pregnant, even before the other two who were married before her. The crunch comes when she struggles to give birth to the child. She has to be taken to hospital, clearly indicating that things had begun to change in this primitive society.

It is interesting to note the conflict between mother and father regarding the naming of the child. The father wants the child to be named Zanenkanyamba because of the hurricane that struck the village at the time the child was to be born. The mother wants the child to be named Themba because she wanted the child to be her hope in life. The husband objects saying that that was a so-called Christian name that obligated the child to the missionaries right from birth.

A further complication in the matter is that the husband's sister wants the child to be named Chasabelungu (lit. the one who opposes whites.) The reason for this suggestion is that although the mother had been taken to hospital she was discharged before she gave birth to the child and the child was born at home. That name cannot be accepted by the father because he says it will make things difficult for the child in life as they depended on white people for a living. The name Zanenkanyamba won the day until the teachers at school change his name to Gilbert, much to the annoyance of his grandparents.

As could be expected, Themba, Zanenkanyamba or Chasabelungu ends up attending school and going to work in Johannesburg afterwards, thus following the normal pattern of change from rural to urban life.

5.4 Tradition under threat

Although Peteni's **KwaZidenge** (1980) is set in a rural village in Keiskammahoek, it is interesting to note that one of its main characters is an evangelist's daughter, Zuziwe. The tug of war between the boys of the two neighbouring villages revolves round her. The queen of **KwaZidenge**, Zuziwe, is characterised as a beautiful girl with a reputation for enticing young men.

Whatever the rumours and local jealousies are about Zuziwe, she is a lady with an independent mind, assertive and fearless – a far cry from the attributes of the girls depicted in earlier novels. When Diliza tries to influence her against having relations with hated neighbouring abaThembu boys, she, (in Peteni 1980:2), retorts as follows:

Ndingas'ke ndingabi nabantwana kunokuba ndibafundis' obo bubhanxa. Abantu balaa lali ndiyazalana nabo, neentombi kukhw' endivana kakhulu nazo, endizixabise ngaphezu kwezi zalaph' emaHlubini. Umalume wam, owancanc' ibele washiyel' umam' ondizalayo, uhlala kulaa lali. Ngabantwana bakamalum' ab' uth' abalunganga. Akubazi wena, mna ndiyabazi.

I would rather not have any children than having to teach them that madness. I am related to that village's residents, and I am friends with some of the girls from there, and I respect some of them more than those from my own Hlubi village. My uncle who comes just before my mother stays in that village. The people you say are no good, are my uncle's children. You do not know them. I know them.

It is quite clear that this kind of young girl is something new in amaXhosa social life where women were expected to do as they were told. The young women's conversation as they go about their daily chores reveal a new dynamism in their thinking as shown by Peteni (1980: 5) in the following passage:

Aba bafazana bathanda ukuya kukha amanzi malanga, kwakuphola, bahambe beliqela. Babaliselana ngayo yonke into ebisenzeka ekhaya, ngobudenge bamadoda nokukhohlakala kooyisezala, ukungathembeki kwabafana nokuhula kweentombi, ubuhedeni bamakholwa nokunyoluka kwezityebi, ukugeza kwabantwana babamelwane nokundweba kwababo abantwana, ukwanda kwezifo nokuthakatha kwamagqwirhakazi.

These young women liked to go to draw water in the afternoon, when it is cooler, walking in groups. They told one another about the events of the day at their homes, the folly of men, and the cruelty of their fathers-in-law, the fickleness of men and the low morals of the girls, the heathenism of the believers and the corruption of the rich, the naughtiness of the neighbours' children and their own, the spread of diseases and those who practise witchcraft.

Family discipline is strictly enforced in the milieu depicted by Peteni. When Ntombi defies his father and shows no remorse for bad-mouthing Zuziwe, her father, Dakada, loses his temper and gives her a good hiding. Peteni (1980: 23) describes this incident as follows:

Wahlala ethe tu uNtombi ejonge kwelinye icala. Wayiphakamisa imvubu uDakada wayifaka kuNtombi ethangeni. Wawuqinisa umzimba, kodwa akakhala, uyise emngena ngemvubu, sel' engathi uyaphambana akubona intombi yakhe ithe zole, ingakhali. Wamdwaba nje apha emzimbeni engakhethi.

Ntombi sat down quietly looking the other way. Dakada lifted up the sjambok, and struck her on the thigh. Ntombi bit her teeth but did not cry while her father gave her a hiding. Seeing her daughter sitting quietly and not crying made him even more furious. He struck her all over the body.

This change is also discernible in Zuziwe's mother, MaMiya. She shows signs of being progressive-minded when she supports Zuziwe's rejection of male domination.

Zuziwe's brother, Duma, objects to Zuziwe's seeing Bhuqa who belongs to the abaThembu group. Peteni (1980: 26) reflects this incident as follows:

'Akayaz' int' ayithethay' uDuma. Ebesith' uZuziwe uza kuthini xa kufike inkwenkw' ayiqhelileyo yathetha naye? Ebefun' abe krwada angathethi, okany' ayigxotho? Umlamb' udalwe nguThixo, akukho mntu unelungelo lokugxoth' omny' umntu kuwo. UDuma akayicing' into phambi kokub' ayithethe. Uyandikruqula mna torho.'

'Duma does not know what he is talking about. What did he expect Zuziwe to do when she is approached by a boy she knows to talk to her? Did he expect her to be rude and chase him away? The river was created by God. No one has a right to chase anyone away from it. Duma does not think before he talks. He really makes me fed up.

Zuziwe is the epitome of free and unfettered love. Her actions during a romantic love encounter with Bhuqa are depicted as follows by Peteni (1980: 51):

UBhuqa wamwola wamphuza. UZuziwe wayeqala ukuphuzwa ngolu hlobo. UNtabeni wayebanda, uZuziwe akhawuleze amtyhalele phaya esaqala. Kudala, eseyintwazana encinci, wayekhe abe nento yokwenza neentwana ezilingana naye. Kodwa kwakungekho bushushu xa zimphuza. Wayeqala ukuyiva le nto ikukuphuzwa, wabuva ubumnandi bayo nobuhlungu bayo. Babethene nca kamnandi kuba babephants' ukulingana ngesithomo.

Bhuqa hugged and kissed her. Zuziwe had never been kissed so warmly before. Ntabeni was cold, and therefore Zuziwe used to push him away right from the beginning. Long ago when she was still a young girl she used to have romantic plays with boys of her age. However, there was no warmth in their kisses. She had never been kissed like this before, never experienced the joy and pain of being kissed. They pressed their bodies against each other comfortably because they were almost of equal height.

The book clearly depicts the changes that have entered amaXhosa society – enmity between boys from neighbouring villages just separated by a river, enmity between the girls of the same village, willingness by girls to have illegal abortions and readiness on the part of the boys to kill one another for no reason at all. On the deeper level, the book also points to women's resolve to fight and even die for their rights.

5.5 Recapitulation

The early fifties ushered in dramatic changes in amaXhosa society. These were years of great turmoil and tension in the country, starting from the Defiance Campaign in 1952 and the country-wide protests against Bantu Education around 1954 onwards. The rift between traditionalism and Westernism was growing wider and wider as can be seen from Jongilanga's **Ukuqhawuka kwembeleko**. The incidence of crime and violence as reflected in Dlova and Bongela's novels clearly shows how things were changing for the worse. Peteni introduces something remarkable in isiXhosa literature by depicting Zuziwe, a female character, as someone assertive and totally different from the docile women characters of earlier generations.

CHAPTER SIX

NO TURNING BACK 1984 – 1993

6.1 Introduction

1984-1993 is one of the most interesting periods in isiXhosa literature. What makes the period interesting is that it was the pinnacle of racial oppression, coming in just before the fall of the old regime and ushering in the new democratic, non-racial, non-sexist dispensation. Culture-wise, politically and economically, blacks were at their lowest ebb as they had lost touch with real traditional culture, they had no political rights and economically they were at their worst as they had become vassals under a regime that did not bother to treat them equitably.

The following novels will be discussed in this chapter:

<u>Izono zakho ziya kukujikela</u>	1984	S Dazela
<u>Nyana wam! Nyana wam!</u>	1985	W K Tamsanqa
<u>Alitshoni lingaphumi</u>	1986	P T Mtuze
<u>Unyana womntu</u>	1989	N Saule
<u>Etshatile engatshatanga</u>	1990	S Satyo

6.2 More dramatic changes in social life

Dazela's **Izono zakho ziya kukujikela** (1984) (Your Sins Will Find You Out) is of great significance in this section because it is the only novel written by a woman in this section. The title could be regarded as preachy in that it resonates with conventional church warnings to those who engage in evil.

The story reveals one of the fundamental values that form the pillar of our lives – do unto others as you would like them to do to you. It also stresses that good discipline starts at home which is how family discipline was maintained in traditional society.

The family life is still depicted as the core of community life in Tseseng, Qwaqwa, where we find two families represented in the setting. In Ndonga Notiya and MaMfene's home strict discipline is maintained. Their eldest son, Sosiba's ill-discipline causes him to clash with his father and he is disowned by his father, a practice that was common in the past. Sosiba's recourse to the local headman's office fails to restore the good relations with his father. Sosiba had hoped that his being the eldest son would secure him the right to inherit everything in spite of his waywardness.

The other family in the story is that of Nomeva who is very obsessed with education. Their family is well off even though the head of the household died when her son, Mpumlo, was still young. As an only child, he was pampered and spoilt by his mother. She does not want him to do household chores. She only wants him to study hoping that he will be a respectable educationist one day.

As fate would have it, Mpumlo does not take his education seriously. He plays truant at times and ultimately left school before doing his high school education. The moral of this story seems to be that deviation from normal standards of bringing up children

leads to setbacks. Nomeva's way of bringing her son, Mpumlo, up does not meet with the approval of the extended family, as pointed out by Dazela (1984:13):

Ooyisemncinci bakhali ma bancama. Babesithi umntwana oyinkwenkwe kufuneka kubekho ixesha lokumphatha gadalala ukuze angabi litatasholo. Babedla ngokumboleka kunina befuna ancedise ekulimeni. Wayetshila xa kulapho uNomeva, wayebaxelela ukuba uMpumlo ngumntwana wemfundo, nkqu inkangeleko yakhe yeyeNgesi lokwenyani.

His uncles tried to intervene in vain. They were saying a boy has to be treated roughly at times so that he could be strong. They used to ask his mother to send him to them for a while so that he could help with the ploughing. Nomeva showed her true colours at that point in time, telling them that Mpumlo was a child of education, even his appearance was that of a proper Englishman.

A change in culture is discernible in the story in that the oldest son used to be the heir to all the estate, automatically. Ndonga's stance is a direct opposite of that long standing tradition. In his opinion, the heir must earn the right to inherit. If the heir was useless and did not contribute to the common estate, then he should not have the right to claim, according to Ndonga. Ndonga would rather have the younger son inherit his estate because he deserved it as he was a hard worker. This is reflected as follows by Dazela (1984: 4):

'Kulo wam umzi inkulu iba yinkulu ngemisebenzi hayi ngokuzalwa. UMaqatha yeyona nkulu yam, uyilulamele imithetho yam. USosiba akazi kusetyenzelwa nguMaqatha ukuze yena athathe ngokongama kuba emdala kunaye. USosiba akazimiselanga ntweni, uhla enyuka ezindyalweni ukuze abuye akhubekise uMaqatha lo kunye nonina uMaMfene. UMaqatha uyalima, ubiya iintlanti, ngumphangeli ondizela nemali, ufuye impahla ende nemfutshane, udleka ngokwaneleyo elungisa wonke umonakalo ophakathi kwekhaya.

‘In my homestead the heir earns the right to be so by his actions. Maqatha is my rightful heir because he obeys my commandments. Sosiba is not going to have Maqatha do everything for him so that he comes to take over everything as the so-called heir because he is the eldest. Sosiba is up to no business, he is going up and down and comes back to annoy Maqatha and his mother, MaMfene. Maqatha, on the other hand, ploughs the fields, he fences the kraals, he is the breadwinner in this house, he owns small and large stock, and he spends lots of money putting everything right in this home.

A further change is discernible once more when we see Mpumlo return from Johannesburg with his newly wedded self-chosen wife, Nowam. The very name suggests that he had not consulted with anyone in this decision. Normally young women are called Nowethu (the lady of my home) instead of Nowam (which means her husband’s wife). No one knows whether or not he paid *lobola* in accordance with tradition.

In contrast, Sosiba cannot initiate the marriage proceedings until he has informed his father. He begs his mother to persuade his father to set the proceedings in motion. The members of the extended family are involved as marriage in amaXhosa society is communal. Mpumlo’s decision to do everything by himself is therefore a departure from the norm.

The book reflects a further change in community life when an abusive husband is reported to the police instead of treating such aberration as a family matter. Family intervention had its advantages because the matter would be discussed and settled amicably, and in cases where the husband failed to obey family decisions, he exposed himself to being fined a beast or two by the woman’s family. But there was a down side to this way of doing things because sometimes the family was biased in favour of the husband and the woman would get a raw deal.

Many other changes take place in the book which shows how dynamic societies are. Western liquor starts replacing traditional beer even in the rural villages, young people drive around in cars visiting drinking parties, Sosiba and his wife choose to study by correspondence in order to improve their chances in life, faith and the church play a dominant role in the lives of most characters such as Nowam and Kholiwe and marriages end up on the rocks as can be seen from the following comments by Dazela (1984:62):

‘Konke okuthethayo kuyinyaniso. Inye into endicela undenzele yona, ndiyele ePietersburg, ucenge uNowam arhoxe kuqhawulo-mtshato. Mxelele ukuba abantwana bam makangabenzi iinkedama, xa kunokuqhawulwa umtshato yena uza kuphinda ende.’

Everything you say is true. I would like you to do me a favour. Please go to Pietersburg and beg Nowam to withdraw the divorce proceedings. Tell her not to make my children orphans, as she is bound to remarry if she divorces.’

Modern marriages are personal choices by the parties concerned. The family is not necessarily involved as seen in Mpumlo’s case. The disadvantage of this trend is that the family support system is alienated and it never gets the opportunity to intervene when things go wrong. This militates against the communal and familial nature of African societies.

The book **Nyana wam! Nyana wam!** (1985) by Tamsanqa is written by someone who was one of the most celebrated isiXhosa authors. It opens with images of two important icons in amaXhosa society – a teacher and a priest. Both are acknowledged agents of change in amaXhosa society. This in itself is indicative of the changing social setting.

Change is reflected by the classroom setting in which an encounter between the teacher and the priest takes place. It turns out that the priest, only known as Thole, was Zolile's former student. The influence of Westernism can be seen from the fact that the learners are asked to recite Southey's poem, 'The Inchcape Rock'. To add to the changing setting, it turns out that the priest is not only highly educated but he is also widely travelled. In spite of this sophistication, he still requests the learners to recite an isiXhosa poem by the renowned poet, J J R Jolobe entitled 'Umbongo webhadi' (a poem about a butterfly).

The first thing that baffles and amuses the learners is the priest's first name – Tholelegqwirha (the wizard's child). This kind of name is clearly not compatible with one who was a priest. Besides, this reaction from the learners also points to the changing traditions with the coming of Western education and religion. Traditional African names were quickly getting out of fashion, especially those whose connotations are questionable, e.g. Wizard's child.

As the story unfolds, we see the three friends, Thole, Themba and Sonwabo travelling in the priest's beautiful car with the occupants, including the priest, partaking of liquor in the car. This was another change for the worse in this society. Priests were expected to be exemplary as everyone looked up to them.

The setting moves quickly from Butterworth to Port Elizabeth where we see even more baffling changes in the life of the priest. He gets deeper into alcohol abuse and keeps bad company. Thole's hopes of finding someone who could help him get out of his bad drinking habits are dashed when the girl he thought would be fit to do so was attacked by her boyfriend who caught them playing cards at the girl's home. After assaulting her very badly he turns his anger on Thole and gives him a thorough beating. When he tries to fight back he is confronted by gun wielding thugs who tie him up after beating him almost to pulp. They throw him bound hands and feet into a wardrobe where he had to await his death in the middle of the night.

When the time came, the thugs take him by force to a nearby lake where they aim to throw him. Only the unexpected appearance of the police saves his life. This incident clearly points out to the changing life in urban areas where people's lives count for nothing.

The plot moves from serene hope when the highly qualified priest appears on the scene, to love and hope when he meets a girl who promises to salvage him from his excessive drinking habits, to the utter cruelty of the girl's boyfriend when he and his friends find her in Thole's company. The hopelessness of the changing circumstances is also reflected by the men's bad habits of smoking dagga and maiming people.

Even the language of communication points to the changing times. The *lingua franca* of the group is *tsotsitaal* which Tamsanqa (1985:14) describes as follows:

Lilonke ke eli xesha akuthethwa siXhosa kule ndlu, kungathethwa siNgesi okanye siBhulu, kuthethwa ingxubevange apha yootsotsi ekuthiwa yitaal, isidididi sento othi xa uyimamele ibengathi iza kuba sisiBhulu ingade igqibe, into engenakulandelwa nangubani na ngaphandle kokuba unolwazi ngezelo lasebutsotsini.

All the time the language that was spoken in this house was neither isiXhosa, nor English nor Afrikaans, it was a mixture of a language called *tsotsitaal*, a very confusing language that sounded like Afrikaans but not completely Afrikaans, something that no-one could understand unless one knows about those matters.

6.3 Socio-political changes reflected overtly

Mtuze, the author of the novelette **Alitshoni lingaphumi** (1986), is one of the most experienced isiXhosa writers of our time, having made his debut with the novel, **UDingezweni**, in 1966, followed by **Umsinga** in 1972 and **Indlel' ecand' intlango** in 1981.

The book is ground breaking because it is the first bold step to tell the South African apartheid story in a book that had to be approved by the regime's structures before use in schools. This all happened at the pinnacle of the past apartheid regime's reign. Before then the books were either allegorical or satirical but they were not overtly political in design. Coming just four years before the fall of the old regime, the book is a significant contribution to resistance literature.

The author comes very close to realism as explained by Potter (1967:202):

Realism as a general principle means two things, one implied by the other. First, it means that the subject matter of imaginative literature should be "real life" – and second, therefore, it means that the subject matter must be "true to life" – an accurate representation of real life. Obviously it would seem to follow that if a novelist, for instance, is going to make the characters, the action, and the settings realistic, he has to do so by making them accurate reflections of life.

The greatest discernible change brought about by the author's entry into the literary scene is his interest in rural Karoo life which he came from. This aspect of life was almost non-existent in isiXhosa works largely because all the writers came from either urban or rural homeland backgrounds. The rounded experience of the author enables him to write about life on farms, in urban areas and in rural villages as he has stayed in all three areas. Only one writer, Sinxo, gave a glimpse of life in the Karoo in his novel **UNomsa**.

Satyo (in Gerard 1983:85) was the first to acknowledge this author's contribution to isiXhosa literature when he said:

P T Mtuze should also be named as one of the most prolific authors of the seventies. His major contribution to Xhosa literature is that the setting of all his books is the Karoo, an area that has hitherto been neglected. He portrays the spirit of the milieu of that part of the country admirably. One of his chief weapons in doing this is his magnificent turn of phrase.

The novel is about the experiences of people from the farming communities around Middelburg, Cape, Mtuze's home town. It deals with several issues regarding black lives, ranging from exploitation by white farm owners, landlessness, to their total dependence on the whims of farmers for their life and future. Cheap labour and meagre wages are rampant on some of the farms. Perhaps the worst crises in their lives was that they had no permanent rights to stay on the farms. When they got too old to work, they were chased away from the farms. They ended up sleeping for months on end under the wagon or cart as their only shelter alongside the road.

The first major theme of the book is total lack of land rights on the part of the workers. They were like pawns or putty in the hands of their masters who dumped them alongside the road after sapping all their strength. The crisis was that they were not allowed to enter urban areas under the notorious Urban Areas Act and the many cruel influx control regulations.

Mdaka (1992:67) depicts the plight of farm workers, under a string of oppressive laws during the apartheid years, as follows:

The colonial governments who legislated Africans out of their villages through the Land Acts, Labour Acts and Taxation, subsequently regulated them into servitude on farms owned by white men through pass laws, Master and Servants Ordinances, Resident Native Ordinances and other measures. These laws gave the white farmers virtually unlimited power over their servants, gruesome illtreatment, humiliation and exploitation abounded. Labourers were flogged, starved, raped and convicted, and many were killed. They were paid a pittance but they could not complain.

Sirayi (1989:114) sums up the theme of this novel as follows:

Mtuze's **Alitshoni lingaphumi** addresses the current African experience: namely, the master-servant relationship which involves the exploitation of the Black labour by the White farmers, and also the evils of the Group Areas Act, which are exemplified in the forced removal of Blacks from urban centres to rural communities. The characters which feature in this novel function as a mirror of this group-felt African experience. They are not the focal point of the narrative.

The author, in proper utopian fashion, offers subtle suggestions for the amelioration of the plight of these redundant farm workers – retraining and absorption into some kind of partnership with the farm owners so that they or their children could be gainfully accommodated even after retirement. Phangindawo, the main character, champions the cause of those who were at the receiving end of this merciless treatment.

First of all he insists that there should be a school for children, a church for the farm workers, pension provision for the spouses of deceased farm workers, as well as pension and accommodation for aged farm workers who could no longer be gainfully employed.

Instead of addressing these issues, the farmers chase the farm workers away from the farms. They soon end up alongside the road as no one would employ them. Mtuze (1986:20) depicts this as follows:

Kwezo ndlela zicanda-canda eso sithili seseMetele abantu bayimiqodi ezikhululweni. Yimfuduko phezu kwemfuduko kwindlela evela ngaseRhafu, yimfuduko phezu kwemfuduko kwindlela evela ngaseKaladokhwe, yimfuduko phezu kwenye kwindlela evela ngaseNopoliti, yimfuduko phezu kwenye kwindlela evela ngaseRichmond.

On the roads that criss-crossed the Middelburg district there were crowds of people alongside the road looking for work. There were lots of people in temporary shacks alongside the road from Graaff Reinet, lots of people alongside the road from Cradock, lots of people alongside the road from Noupoot and lots of people alongside the road from Richmond.

One of the reasons given by the author for this mass unemployment was the fact that the farmers started mechanizing. Instead of human labour they were using machinery. Besides this unavoidable problem, the whole country was in the grip of a severe drought that sent most farmers to the verge of bankruptcy. Mtuze (1986:20) describes this plight with great sensitivity:

Isizekabani sale mfuduko yimbalela etsho amafama abhanga ngephanyazo. Amakhulu-khulu ezicaka aphelelwe ngumsebenzi, kwathiwa makazibonele. Ziqhaqhatheka ezikhululweni nje akukho ndawo zinokuqeshwa kuyo kweso sithili siphela.

Iqale mayana inzima yakhe wonke umntu okwezo fama. Kuqala amafama athenge oomatshini bokusebenza abathathe umsebenzi weqela labasebenzi. Kusengwa ngoomatshini, kuvunwa ngoomatshini, kubhulwa ngoomatshini, kulinywa ngoomatshini, kumbiwa ngoomatshini xa kwenziwa imisele njalonjalo kanti oozikhelele bawuthathile umsebenzi emadodeni.

The cause for this mass unemployment was a severe drought that sent the farmers to bankruptcy very quickly. Hundreds of workers lost their jobs, and were told to fend for themselves. They roamed the roads and stayed alongside the road because no one could employ them in that whole district.

Their plight started gradually. First the farmers bought machinery for use on the farms. The machinery took over work that was done by a large number of labourers. Machinery was used for milking, harvesting, ploughing, and making trenches, and besides front-end loaders were used for loading and off-loading goods, thus depriving the workers of their means of livelihood.

The immediate change brought about by all these pressures on the farm labourers was that they put up shacks just outside the Middelburg, Cape black township. They were experiencing the first effects of being uprooted from their farm homes in which they were temporary sojourners, anyway.

The helplessness of these farm workers and their total dependence on the whims of the white officials from the town can be seen when the latter, in anticipation of a ministerial visit to the area, decide to allow the shack dwellers into the township where they established a shanty settlement appropriately named Blikkiesdorp (Tin Town).

One of the fundamental changes in the lives of the township residents was the removal of the Coloured people from the black township to their own township some distance away followed by strict measures against those who keep on coming back into the black township as explained by Mtuze (1986:22 -23):

Kusenzeka yonke loo nto nje kuluxhaphetshu kufuduswa abeBala ukuba bayokuhlala eSummerville, bakhutshwa apha elokishini yabaMnyama apho uninzi lwazalelwa khona. Babexhathisa bengafuni nantwana ukuya kuhlala bodwa, bengawahoyanga naloo mapoma ezindlu nezikolo ezihle kunene.

Ungene xa kulapho ke uNdevuzibomvu nezibonda zakhe ooNgenabhatyi, ooMatrasi, ooTikemnyama nooSikhotshi, babamba nawuphina umphinzangana weBala okhe wabonwa edakasa kuloo lokishi yabaMnyama.

In the midst of all that there was a lot of activity as the officials were frantically moving the Coloured people from the black township where most of them were born, to Summerville. They were resisting because they did not want to go and stay alone there. They did not even care for the beautiful homes and schools that were built for them in their new place of residence.

Ndevuzibomvu, the white location superintendent entered the fray with the assistance of his location constables, Ngenabhatyi, Matrasi, Tikemnyama and Sikhotshi, and arrested any Coloured person seen wandering around the black township.

The first indications of change in life in Middelburg came when all of a sudden a system of Job Reservation was introduced whereby first preference was given to Coloureds before blacks could be employed in Middelburg. This brought about serious difficulties for the blacks who had to wait for ages before the decision was made to give jobs to them. Even when they got some of those jobs, they were jobs that Coloured people did not want to do.

The worst change in the lives of these beleaguered people came about when they were removed forcefully to Msobomvu hundreds of kilometers away from Middelburg, in the notorious Ciskei homeland. The agony of leaving behind some members of their families, their friends and the graves of their ancestors, let alone the churches they belonged to, was more than they could bear. Msobomvu symbolizes notorious places like Dimbaza, Ilinge, Sada and many more where people were dumped without work, proper housing and essential infrastructure.

All these events centre around a political motif that reflects the journey from the farms to Middelburg and from Middelburg to Msobomvu where they ultimately settle and galvanize themselves against further onslaught by strengthening their political affiliations, led by Phangindawo, a veteran from their farm days.

Unyana womntu (1989) by Saule is a novel that reflects dramatic changes in the lives of the black people as they are gripped tighter and tighter by Westernism. Bantu and Bandlakazi (aka Dora) are depicted as urban dwellers whose paths soon part because of the wife's bad drinking habits. Bantu, the husband, tries in vain to dissuade her from drinking. Bantu is a businessman and the wife is a nurse by profession and is also qualified as a social worker. The two are depicted as independent persons so as a result Bantu has very little quality time with his family.

The book is a far cry from, and contrasts radically with, **Ityala lamawele** by Mqhayi. Mqhayi projects how African justice is meted out while **Unyana womntu** reflects the intricacies of the western judicial system. Traditional African justice is dispensed by the chief who presides over civil disputes and other criminal cases with the full assistance and authority of a group of councillors. The participants do not end there. All able-bodied persons have a right to take part in the trial as could be evidenced by the two horse riders who fired their questions while driving past the court scene.

Western judiciary has a judge or magistrate trying a case and deciding the fate of the accused. The perilous situation of the accused in Saule's book was aggravated by the fact that the death sentence was compulsory for certain serious crimes. At a time when the judiciary was white and the accused were predominantly black with no love lost between the two groups, the situation was life threatening as seen in the case of the main character in Saule's book, Bantu.

The changes in this moving novel should be seen in that light to be fully appreciated. The main character finds himself facing the full wrath of the law for a crime he purportedly did not commit. He is immediately placed in the invidious position of having to prove his innocence by producing the necessary evidence. Saule's perception, deliberate or wrongly so, is that he had to prove his innocence instead of the application of the long standing principle that the accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty and that the onus to prove this guilt lies with the state.

The setting of the story reflects urban life where people love and leave their partners at will without family intervention. They travel in cars and spend time watching sport at stadiums and playing fields under the watchful eyes of cameramen and women who record every minute and every moment of the game. It is this technological advancement that came in as a saving grace for Bantu. As said above, with the burden of proof of innocence lying heavily on his shoulders, he is saved from being convicted and probably sentenced to death by the fact that one good cameraman took

photos of the game and could prove that at a particular point in time and moment of the game, he was there, and not at the crime scene as alleged by the state.

The changed milieu is depicted in graphic terms when Saule (1989: 3) says about the house occupied by Bandlakazi after walking out on Bantu:

Phambi kwakhe kwakumi ipomakazi eliqatywe mhlophe. Lalilihle ilelexabiso eliphezulu. Iintyatyambo apha ngaphambili zazidlisela ngeentloko ezingqukuva ezimthubi, ezinye zixube mhlophe nabomvu ... Wathi akungena uBantu kuloo mzi, enyuka ngendledlana eyenziswe ngobuchule bale mihla, wakha wee phaka, engabulibali obunjalo ubuhle.

Before him was a very big house that was painted white. It was very beautiful and of high quality. The flowers in front were round and yellow in colour, and some were white... When Bantu got into the yard and walked up the garden path that was beautifully constructed using modern artistry, he stopped for a moment dumb-struck by such beauty.

When Bantu escaped from jail he is helped by technological changes in urban life – public phones - to phone his friend, Noziqhamo, who comes to fetch him by car and gave him refuge in her house.

The urban residents' ability to pinpoint incidents that happened at specific times in the people's lives, reflects another radical change between rural and urban life, as shown by the following comment on time in rural villages, by Obiechina (1980: 135):

There is no effort to describe minute-by-minute and day-to-day experiences, because this would be meaningless. The absence of a detailed functional time in these novels give a leisurely tempo to life. Neither in the domestic lives of the characters nor in the community assemblies nor at weddings and funerals does one get the impression of eagerness to hurry through what is being done.

The time consciousness in urban areas that saved the life of the main character in Saule's book is described as follows by Obiechina (1980:136):

In the urban environment, time acquires significance. Bureaucratic systems of administration in industry, commerce and the civil service, the need to have numbers of people drawn together from different parts of a large metropolis, require adherence to time schedules. People's lives are being increasingly controlled by the clock.

The title of the book **Unyana womntu** also resonates with the biblical reference to Jesus Christ especially during the time preceding his passion. At these crucial times Jesus repeatedly referred to himself as the Son of Man who was about to be martyred. As we all know he was completely innocent of any wrong doing. This similarity cannot be coincidental, instead it shows the impact of religion on writing. This oblique reference to Christ is not absurd or far-fetched if one considers Obiechina's (1980:105) comment about one of Armah's characters in the book *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, that 'Okolo is a Christ-like advocate of moral revolution in a world darkened by political corruption and materialism.'

Given the political tension in the country at the time Saule wrote the book, one cannot be surprised that the story had another angle to it – political undertones. At the time of writing many able-bodied persons languished in jail for crimes they had not committed. Several landed in jail because they were falsely accused by sinister witnesses, only known as Mr X, in some cases.

Considering that in many instances, black writers resorted to the use of hidden metaphors and symbols to address political issues, this possibility cannot be excluded in the case of Saule's story as the story lends itself very easily to this interpretation.

A classical example of such writing is the use of a dog metaphor in Mqhayi's poem *Umbambushe* to depict the tension between the British and the Boer Republics, the use of animals by Siyongwana to portray the people's revolution, and the use of the bird image by Mtuze to portray the confrontation between Mandela and his captors when they said they could release him if he could just denounce violence to which Mandela responded that it was the state that had to stop violence against the people.

The individualism of the sophisticated African also comes out in the story. Bantu hardly has people around him in the fight against injustice. The fact that he cannot produce someone who could witness that he was there at the sports-field when the crime was committed, points to this individualism. This almost costs him his life.

This individualism is described as follows by Saule (1989:2):

Ukusukela oko umfazi wakhe wathi wazinika amathafa, ulonwabo kuye yaba yintsomi. Kuyo yonke loo nto idabi lakhe wazimisela ukulilwa yedwa encediswa nguThixo wakhe kuphela. Wamzama uDora amathuba amaninzi kodwa engaphumeleli.

Since his wife walked out on him happiness to him was like a fairy tale. In all that, he resolved to fight his battles alone helped by his God only. He tried to rehabilitate Dora to no avail.

The current tendency to eschew the extended family comes out clearly in the following comment by Bantu (in Saule 1989:6):

Akukho nto ndingazange ndiyenze ekuthiwa lisiko lakowethu nalapha kuBandlakazi... Amawethu namawabo ndiwabize kaninzi, atsho ancama. Wasuka uBandlakazi wawathuka ewaxelela ukuba angamaqaba.

I have tried everything and all the rituals to help Bandlakazi... I involved my family and her family in discussions many times, in vain. Bandlakazi swore at them, telling them that they are backward red blanket people.

It is only when Bantu fell back on group dynamics - living his life among other people - that he found salvation. Had he stayed alone, alienated from the rest of the people, he would not have appeared in that group photograph. This proves the amaXhosa adage right that '*umntu ngumntu ngabantu*' (a person is a person through other people, i.e. no person is an island).

Obiechina (1980: 102) says about this individualism on the part of urban characters:

Characters in the modern urban setting tend to be marked by their extreme individualism. They appear as single often isolated individuals. The absence of a unified cultural ethos leaves them with an immense degree of individual initiative and they are much freer in their thinking. The chances thrown up by great social and economic change encourage them to be physically and mentally mobile. A combination of all these factors produces a prototype urban individual.

An important feature of this novel that needs comment is the role played by the female character, Noziqhamo, who literarily saves Bantu from capital punishment, at the last moment by producing evidence that he was at the sports-field when the murder was committed. Had it not been for the brilliance of this character and her determination to save Bantu, Bantu would have been hanged. She is the one who risks her life and safety by giving him refuge and she is also the one who goes out of her way to prove his alibi that he was at the sports-field when the crime was committed.

As for the theme of the story, one should look beyond self-justification, to a sense of fighting for justice even in the face of death. The novelist is clearly saying to the reader, 'your destiny is in your own hands'. Put in more relevant parlance he is saying: 'black person, you have to fight for your rights, otherwise you lose your head.'

6.4 Moral degeneration in amaXhosa society

With regard to **Etshatile engatshatanga** (1990), one of the major developments in the history of isiXhosa literature is that even though writing among amaXhosa was started by men and women with modest school education who produced excellent works considering their qualifications, this improved so much over the years that amaXhosa writers now include a number of highly educated people. Satyo is one of a small band of professors who have enriched this art over the years: Professor A C Jordan, Professor G I M Mzamane, Professor D D T Jabavu, Professor Z S Qangule, Professor P T Mtuze, Professor B B Mkonto, and Professor N Saule, to mention but a few.

Although this is Satyo's debut novel, it established him as a writer of great ability and talent. Its primary significance is its reflection of educated and sophisticated characters and its exclusive urban setting. The book opens with a group of examination markers at a centre in Pretoria. Everyone is educated but the problems go back to traditional and conventional issues of love and philandering with women. The absence of conventional traditional houses and gardens so common in earlier literature is quite remarkable.

The opening scene, the marking centre, does not only reflect modernity and radical departure from traditional settings, but it also reveals the cunning and manipulative tendencies of the educated. Two women educators, desperate to secure a marking job,

are prepared to go to any length to achieve their purpose, including enticing the Chief Marker as indicated in the following extract from Satyo (1990:1):

Ekothukeni komfikilwa yimfikili le inezisini, ude lo uphambi kwam waza kundithi mfuma ngebedlana. Ibedlana nalo lithe njegelungwana elingazi nto bethu liye lathethelelwa ngumninilo ngokuzithoba engxengxeza.

When the one who was pinched by the guy whose front teeth were missing reacted agitatedly, the lady in front of me came close to me so much that her breast touched me tightly. The lady concerned humbly apologised for inadvertently allowing her breast to touch the man.

This scene is a microcosm of what is to follow in the whole story – love, intrigue, infidelity on the part of the married Chief Marker and his newly found girlfriend, Yoliswa. They sink deeper and deeper in this love web as the story develops, exposing the married Chief Marker's loose morals and the woman's total disregard for his status as a married man, hence the title of the novel, **Etshatile engatshatanga** (Married or not Married).

A turn of events that is remarkable in the story is how educated men and women who should have been the first to move away from demeaning traditional practices reverted to them when it suits them.

Politics is used as scapegoat by the two women to induce the Chief Marker to employ them and to seduce him to fall in love with Yoliswa. They sadly narrate that they had been to the white Chief Marker in the same centre but he gave them very few papers because they came late. Dumping him for a black Chief Marker is therefore part of the struggle to free themselves from oppressive white officers. What is interesting is that they do not try the same ruse to win him over as the one they try on the black one whom they entice in order to secure employment. The reason for their dilemma is

purely because of the stringent Immorality Act that prevented love across the colour line. Instead they decide to commit a really immoral act by seducing the married black Chief Marker. Such behaviour was unthinkable in traditional society.

Another important socio-political issue in the book comes to the fore when the Chief Marker, Simeli, drives into the city to pick up the morning's examination papers accompanied by Yoliswa, one of the ladies who came late. They desperately want to have lunch together before returning to the marking centre. Because of the then Separate Amenities Act they could not go into any restaurant in the city. Simeli decides to drive to his hotel much to the embarrassment of his victim, Yoliswa, who pretends not to like the idea of moving into a hotel with a stranger. It is before the man proposes love to her. This is how Satyo (1990:12) describes the situation:

Sithe tshe tshe tshe saya kuthi ngxingxilili ehotele eBurgerspark.

“Tyhini, kanti siza ehotele na?” ubuzile, ndandweba ndisithi mhlawumbi akathandi kodwa ndakhawuleza ndacacisa. “Ewe. Kaloku ngenxa yebala lethu asinakungena kwezi khefi zalapha ...”

We moved swiftly until we came to a standstill at the Burgerspark Hotel.

“Were we coming to the hotel?” she asked anxiously. I got apprehensive, not knowing whether she took exception to this, and quickly answered. “Yes. Because of our skin colour we cannot be admitted in any of the cafes here...”

The political conversation between the two goes on unabated. Yoliswa comments that the whites keep blacks away from their hotels and such amenities by raising the prices and costs. According to Simeli the few cafes set aside for blacks are very small and crowded. Yoliswa ends the political talk by pointing out that the conditions in those cafes are so bad because of the overcrowding, that they are normally untidy and that is blamed on the inability of blacks to keep their places clean.

Culture runs through the story as a thin thread. While the story tries to explain why some young black women fall prey to older black males who bribe them with money and comfort, it also shows that the women also deliberately entice the man for financial gain. This leads the men to a situation where they have to practice polygamy secretly.

The book shows very clearly how things have changed. Educated black males who in the past were epitomes of Westernization, marrying in church, and living according to the precepts of Western marriages, have reverted to what the author refers to as private polygamy.

Satyo (1990: 74) through one of the strong foil characters, Mabhovu, states this as follows:

UMabhovu wayeye ayicacise into yokuba abafazi bathatha ukuba amadoda akhumshileyo ngawona arhumshileyo kuba athe apha ekukhumsheni athabatha ezo ndawo zivalungeleyo azenza, aze akazenza ezinye ezingawalungeliyo. Xa uthabatha umzekelo ungathi buburhumsha into yokuba amadoda ahambisane nomthetho osigatyayo isithembu ngokwasemthethweni, aze wona asiqhube ngokungekho mthethweni. Kuyacaca kunjalonje ukuba azimisele ukukhonza iinkosi ezimbini: umtshato wesiLungu kunye nomtshato wesiNtu ngasese.

Mabhovu used to state that women regard educated men as cunning because they took from education whatever suits them and practise it. For example it is being cunning for men to go along with law that is against polygamy, officially, yet the same men practise that clandestinely, unofficially. Of all the things that Xhosa men do not want to get rid of, polygamy is at the top. It is obvious that black men want to serve two masters: western civil marriage and traditional rites, behind the scenes.

No doubt, in this fine but controversial contribution, Satyo has shown beyond doubt that moral values have been corrupted by both education and enlightenment. What makes the situation even more untenable is that the rot has even affected those who ought to know better.

6.5 Recapitulation

The eighties were perhaps the pinnacle of black oppression in this country. The whole country was thrown into deep turmoil following the death of prominent political activists and the country-wide student protests. This change in the political climate is reflected in Mtuze's **Alitshoni lingaphumi** which was a very bold move to write on this sensitive matter during the climax of the apartheid era on the part of the author. This change in the lives of the black people is also reflected in Saule's **Unyana womntu** which reflects the perils of living under the Western way of life where individualism is the norm. An important change in the way of writing is also evidenced in how Satyo, in his book **Etshatile engatshatanga**, reveals the degeneration of moral values because of the dual roles played by men who regard themselves as being Westernised while they clandestinely practise adultery bordering on bigamy.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DEMOCRATIC CHANGE: 1994 - 2003

7.1 Introduction

This period coincides with the establishment of the new dispensation of a democratic, no-racial, non-sexist South Africa. The new Constitution lays down strict guidelines as far as life and human rights are concerned. These rights and freedoms are enshrined in the Constitution. They are enforceable through the Human Rights Commission, up to the Constitutional Court, the highest court in the country. It can, therefore, not be doubted that such freedoms usher in an era of free speech and free writing on the part of the writers. Consequently, more and more books dealing with burning political issues are coming to the fore. May I point out up front that book analyses ascribed to Dokolwana and extensively cited here were made by me in an earlier research under my previous married surname.

The following novels will be discussed in this chapter:

<u>Iqhina lomtshato</u>	1995	N. Mayosi
<u>Kazi ndenzeni na?</u>	1995	R.F. Mcimeli
<u>Ukhozi olumaphiko</u>	1996	N. Saule
<u>Kusalawula yena</u>	1997	G.B.S. Xundu
<u>Koda kube nini?</u>	1998	L.L. Ngewu
<u>Amazwi!</u>	2003	N. Saule

7.2 New trends in post-apartheid literature

While change cannot manifest itself overnight, the freedom gained in 1994 should, in time, reflect on the literature of subsequent years, leading to the change and greater appreciation of basic freedoms. Up to the fall of the apartheid era, state machinery had been against the production of quality, honest and relevant books by black authors, as pointed out by Zulu (1999a:290):

When South Africa became a democracy in 1994 all eleven official languages were given equal status in the constitution. As yet, however, the languages do not enjoy equal regard. The prevailing view is that the literature of African languages in South Africa does not match the quality of the literature produced in Afrikaans and English.

Zulu's (1999b:10) observation that 'the socio-political events of the Apartheid years have become a major subject matter in the African languages novel of the 1990s, and (they) mark a new literary era in this genre' is both plausible and relevant. The novel, **Iqhina lomtshato**, by Mayosi focuses on political change in South Africa. The love theme is strongly contextualized by placing it within the milieu of political oppression as was evidenced in the apartheid era.

Dokolwana (2001:20) comments as follows on the plot of this novel:

In its characterization, the novel has the plot of fortune where the characters are dynamic, changing with changing circumstances. As the title of the novel reveals, the story is based on love while at the same time it unfolds the political situation of South Africa twenty years back. The main action of the story takes place in what used to be the Republic of Transkei. We find that the story is centred around the intolerable treatment Black people in South Africa get from the government of the time. In reaction to the ill-treatment the people get from the South African government, Skhungo Faku who is the central character in the story escapes. He joins the liberation army in exile and comes back as the so-called terrorist, performing so-called terrorist activities.

It is interesting to note how the author has departed from the run-of-the-mill love story by weaving politics into it. The significance of this thematic device is the accentuation and foregrounding of the black people's plight during the apartheid era. Normal love life and family life were adversely undermined by drastic moves to hunt down all political activists, while some of the police took advantage of the situation by engaging in illicit love with the wives of those who fled the country, as shown by Dokolwana's (2001:20) comment:

What makes the story interesting is to find Skhungo's girlfriend, Sindiswa, having an affair with the senior detective in the Republic of Transkei. Whenever Skhungo visits Sindiswa's place, which is also often visited by Max, the detective, the reader is kept in suspense, not knowing what is going to happen.

The detective bribes Sindiswa who falls prey to Max's advances because of what the latter does for her. In this way she is placed under obligation to accept the detective's clandestine advances. Dokolwana (2001:21) summarises the story as follows:

When the story starts, the reader is introduced to Sindiswa who has just arrived in Umtata, and stays at Bongiwe's place. She is looking for a job. Max Matshayana, a senior detective in Umtata, falls in love with Sindiswa. He takes Sindiswa to the Casino at Mzamba without her consent. He proposes love to her on the way but Sindiswa is not interested. Sindiswa is caught in a dilemma as Max voluntarily does things for her. He promises to find a job for her, to rent a flat for her and moreover he buys some clothes for her in a boutique at Margate, and he also takes her to a salon to do her hair. Thereafter Sindiswa bows to Max's request not because she loves him but because she is ashamed to say no because of what Max has done for her.

From what is said above, it is also clear that the author is depicting an era when women were easy prey for men because of their economic needs. With Sindiswa's boyfriend being away and unable to provide for her, she was an easy target to those exploiters who manipulated her plight for their own profit. This is an important change in women's lives. The demands of the new social order were vying with the demands of the old. Time honoured values suffered in the process.

A further sign of change in the lives of the characters of the novel of the 1990s can be seen in the fact that Max and Sindiswa decide to marry without consulting their parents. The driving force behind this aberration from traditional norms is, of course, Max. This further illustrates change and the vulnerability of the woman outside the protection of family norms.

Dokolwana (2001: 22) describes this anomaly as follows:

Max's arrogance is clearly revealed when he plans his marriage with Sindiswa alone. He does not consult with Sindiswa's parents when he sets the date of the wedding, including when he chooses the venue, and the church minister. He seems to undermine their views. The unilateral planning of the wedding evokes dissatisfaction and concern to Sindiswa's parents and the community as a whole.

The story unfolds as the author reveals rampant exploitation of young women by government officials and homeland politicians who abuse their positions to entice the girls. Girls had to prostitute themselves in order to find employment in the homeland. This is attested by the following remark that constantly crops up in Mayosi's (1995: 5) novel:

Nanjengokuba usafun' umsebenzi nje, ucinga ukuba uza kuwufumana ngalo umpaku-mpaku? Ncama.

As you are still looking for a job, do you think you will get it by only asking with your mouth? Forget it.

A final crucial change in the novel relates to how economic pressures forced many young people to work for the system and help kill many of their own people. Skhungo is forced by economic circumstances to join the police force. It is only after he is given orders to shoot on innocent people that he realizes that working for the system in this way is cruel, as shown by Skhungo's reaction in Mayosi (1995:40):

Kanjani? Ndingayenza kanjani into enjengale? Bahlaselwa njani abantu bengaxhobanga, bengalwi, beme bhuxe? Bahlaselwa njani abantu basetyhini ngolu hlobo?

How? How can I do such a thing? How can we attack unarmed people who are not fighting and standing still? How can women be attacked in this way?

Mcimeli's novel **Kazi Ndenzeni na?** (1995) introduces something new in our literature – sexual inequality and child abuse in our society. Both practices increased with time and change. In the olden days one would be sanctioned heavily by society if one was found guilty of mistreating women and children. Not much evidence of sanction came to the fore in the literature of the time, largely because many people regarded these actions as part and parcel of traditional social life. With the coming in of the new constitutional dispensation, society was called upon to fight these social menaces. This change in the focus of our literature is reflected as follows by Dokolwana (2001:38):

Mcimeli's novel **Kazi Ndenzeni na?** (1995) is an attempt to expose sexual inequality and child abuse in our society. Male domination, women oppression and child abuse are social problems, which are (a) common subject of study in our African literature especially nowadays. However there is not much that is done on this subject of women oppression and child abuse in our literature, which could help to wipe out the tendency to view these unhealthy family relationships as natural and inevitable. The novel unfolds clearly the ways in which male domination in general, women oppression and child abuse in particular, are practised in some families.

One of the first dramatic changes in amaXhosa social norms is clearly reflected when the main character, Nodita, falls pregnant before marriage. In traditional society her illegitimate child would belong to her parents. While the culprit would be punished by being forced to pay five head of cattle, the child would receive full protection at its mother's home as one of the members of its mother's family. She would not be discriminated against in any way. All the normal traditional customs of its mother's home would apply to her.

In **Kazi Ndenzeni na?** we are struck by the first dramatic incident when Weziwe is chased away from her home because of the pregnancy which everyone regards as a disgrace to the family name. This is clearly due to the influence of Christianity and their socio-economic standing in society as evidenced by the fact that the girl's grandparents had hoped that their daughter-in-law would one day be married to a rich young man.

This new social environment leads to disastrous results in the lives of the main characters. The author clearly shows that throwing your daughter out when she falls pregnant does not solve the problem. Instead, it complicates it. Weziwe has to find succour and shelter with Siphiso (aka Spido) a man who ended up abusing her daughter, Nodita. The young daughter has to live school at the man's instigation before she passed standard four. He then decides to get the mother, Weziwe, out of the way by killing her. Nodita kills him in revenge. All these are clear indications of how society had changed.

The impact of the lack of a family support system takes its toll on Nodita. She grows up not knowing her real father. She only knows Spido whom she regards as her father. She has no other relative to turn to when she experiences problems. Things get worse when Spido takes her out of school at the tender age of fourteen years. Battered and abused, she has to endure this unbearable situation because her mother shouts her down when she tries to protest saying that she is only a child, she must obey what she

is told to do. There are times that Spido, with the help of Weziwe, beats her up for no obvious reason. Sometimes she is punished harshly by being starved. Weziwe's harsh words to her come out very strongly in the following extract from Mcimeli (1995:4):

“Thul’ ufe Nodita! Into oyiyo ungumntwana. Uyihlo uyakuqeqesha njengabo bonke abantwana.”

“Shut up, Nodita! You are only a child. Your father is teaching you respect and discipline, just like all other children.

The worst nightmare for Nodita happens when she is cut off from contact with anyone in the neighbourhood. She cannot play with other children or associate with anyone in the neighbourhood. The reason for these severe restrictions is, of course, obvious. Spido does not want her to tell anyone about what is being done to her. What is striking in this story is how Weziwe, the mother, connives with the cruel boyfriend, Spido, for self-protection and her own comfort. She does not want to raise a finger against this maltreatment purely because she does not want to antagonize Spido who has given her shelter. In this way, the author is, once again, drawing our attention to the socio-economic plight of women who find themselves in situations that undermine their rights.

That this kind of upbringing was destined to have disastrous repercussions for society comes out clearly when the author shows how Nodita's behaviour changes for the worse. She becomes aggressive and even attacks boys. This shocks her teachers. Her belligerence and her general behaviour is totally unbecoming for a decent school going girl. Some investigation by her teacher, Maso, reveals that she was emulating Spido, her stepfather. Mcimeli (1995:4) reflects this as follows:

UNodita wayekhule eyibukela le milo kaSpido kunjalonje naye enomnqweno wokunga angathi akukhula afuze uyise lo ngokuba yincutshe ekulweni.

Nodita grew up watching Spido's fights and so she wished to follow her step-father's footsteps when she reaches adulthood and become an expert in fighting.

The only counterpoint in Nodita's life comes about when she escapes to work for the Khwalo family. They counter-balance her experience of family life. She works in a home where there is love and mutual respect between husband and wife, and love for their children. How this was possible in Khwalo's house and so impossible in her own home, perplexed Nodita, hence her cry as reflected in the title of the book **Kazi Ndenzeni na ?** (What Have I Done?).

The author is focusing on something else in Khwalo's family life, which is that although they were rich and had everything, they still regularly went to church on Sundays. Nodita develops love for going to church until she was blocked forcefully by Spido who said in Mcimeli (1995:152):

Uyabona ke namhlanje ndiza kubethela ukuba ubhace kulo mzi uye ekuthandeni kwakho. Kudala uyigila imikhuba kulo mzi ndimana ukukohlwaya nje ndibuye ndikuxolele nje ngomntwana.

You know, today I am going to beat you so much that you flee from my house to anywhere you like. All the time you did wrong in this house, I used to punish you and forgive you as a child.

Dokolwana's (2001:63) comment regarding the essence of this novel clearly focuses on the change and the reason for change in both literature and society:

Mcimeli's novel **Kazi Ndenzeni na?** is a sad story that reveals the atrocities women and children endure within their families. Caught within the patriarchal society and financial dependence, Weziwe becomes economically, socially and emotionally vulnerable to Spido's supremacy as a man, and that also affects her daughter directly. Weziwe lives with a man who had experienced something terrible in his past and (had) never undertaken any therapy for it. In other words, Spido is ill psychologically, and those close to him become victims of the circumstance.

The book is certainly one of the best commentaries on change in social life in modern society. Mcimeli has succeeded in drawing society's attention to the evils of modern society against those who are vulnerable – women and children. The coming in of the new dispensation has ushered in a time for reflection on these matters and it introduced strict laws and rules to curb women and children's abuse. It is good therefore that writers have started highlighting these abuses as the silence on such matters has been deafening up to now.

Ukhozi olumaphiko by N Saule is another milestone in isiXhosa writing. Saule takes up the political theme in our literature to greater heights. This change in the content of isiXhosa literature is depicted as follows by Zulu (1999a:300):

The incorporation of the subject matter of the apartheid era in the novels of the 1990's marks a new literary era in African languages of this country. The tendency to deal with socio-political events of the apartheid era is a general trend of the African languages novel of the 1990s. The 1990s Xhosa novels such as *Ukhozi olumaphiko* (The Champion) and *Iqhina lomtshato* (The knot of marriage) deal with social and political events of the past. Novelists are expected to write about this subject which was taboo before 1990.

The young teacher, Mfazwe, although not directly or openly affiliated to any political organization, is politically minded enough to teach his students the genuine political

history of this country. This leads to his harassment and arrest. The system used by his incarcerators influences him to turn against his comrades by becoming a police informer (the notorious *impimpi* in political circles). His refusal to do so makes his life even more unbearable after his ultimate release without charge. Like all political activists, he had to resort to exile – fleeing the country. This is the new trend in the novels of the nineties.

As can be expected, the modern novel is no longer obsessed with traditional life and setting and religious matters. We soon see the main character, Mfazwe, at university and thereafter he teaches at Funde High School where he is a history teacher of no mean ability. He soon gets to the depths of South African history. He condemns the rampant oppression of his people by the white minority government and believes very strongly that one day his people will be free.

No doubt, these ideas were at variance with the syllabus and they directly influenced the students. No amount of warning and persuasion by his girlfriend, Nokuzola, and their colleagues could dissuade Mfazwe from his stance of presenting South African history. Nokuzola's comment in Saule (1996:6) is particularly pertinent and prophetic:

He Mfazwe, uyayiqonda phofu le mfazwe uyiqhwayayo?

Mfazwe, are you aware that you are inviting a war?

This comment is pertinent because it is a word play on Mfazwe's name which means war in isiXhosa. His political activities were putting him directly on a collision course with the regime. The police soon get to know about his political inclinations and he is arrested for inciting students to engage in political violence. He is branded a communist as indicated in the following extract from Saule (1996:7):

*Ndafika sendinesityholo esingaphambili sokunyola umbuso esweni,
sendiphiwa igama lobuKomanisi.*

When I arrived there, I was accused of plotting against the government,
and I was branded a Communist.

To be branded a Communist spelt doom for anyone in the old South Africa. A communist was enemy number one of the state and no-one could guarantee your safety. The novel, therefore, touches on a raw nerve in the old South African political history. This was even more pathetic when innocent and dedicated teachers such as Mfazwe got arrested. He clearly speaks from his conscience instead of political agitation or a desire to overthrow the government of the day.

Subsequent arrest and detention exposes Mfazwe to the atrocities of the system. He sees people being severely assaulted and one even dying from the brutality. This treatment spurred him to attend political gatherings. Ultimately, like so many others, he decides to go into exile.

The author reveals the complexities of the dynamics of the struggle when some of Mfazwe's contemporaries turn out to be police informers. Attempts by police to make him their informer were unsuccessful. He decides to devote his life to politics, Communism, as they called it, as said by Saule (1996:16):

*Ndatsho ndanento ethi mhlawumbi ndiya kutsho ndibe ngumKomanisi
ongcono kunalo kwakusithiwa ndinguye.*

I had something that told me that maybe I would be a better Communist
than the one they say I am.

A further dynamic in activist politics was the ease with which one could be accused of being a police spy with everyone believing it. Ntsipho's son, he himself a real police informer, goes around spreading news that Mfazwe was a police informer. The community soon rejects Mfazwe and his home is burnt down to ashes. Even Nokuzola, his girlfriend, believes the lies. It is worse when he is thrown out of a public meeting with everybody jeering at him, including his girlfriend, Nokuzola. No doubt this makes him feel betrayed and blackmailed. This is a harrowing experience for him, and a true fact about the struggle. No questions were asked. Even your worst enemy could brand you as a sell-out and everyone would believe it.

It is interesting to note that Saule focuses his spotlight on the struggle instead of focusing it on the system. What happens to Mfazwe was typical of the fate of so many innocent people who were martyred for sins uncommitted. He is left without any choice but to skip the country to join the liberation forces. The journey to Mgazi was long and hazardous but he perseveres. The political prisoners were later released and the exiles were allowed back home, injured and limping. It is only after he defied the police at a school-boy's funeral that the people realized that he was not a police informer. Be that as it may, he is clearly one of the victims of the struggle himself.

The milieu of most of the current novels has moved from rural life and location to, not only urban life, but also to the school, the workplace, the street, as the sites of the struggle. The main characters are determined to fight the oppressive regime and the regime is doing all in its power to neutralize the counter-attacks by turning one activist against the other. The first person narrator style of narration gives the story intimacy and credibility. This is another departure from the bulk of the earlier novels whose authors preferred third person narration and authorial intrusion.

7.3 Economic wealth and moral decay

The setting of Xundu's novel, **Kusalawula Yena** (1997) is the urban area and, in particular, the business world. This Western life style can be seen from the shops, offices and the high life style of the black business people and professionals there.

We are introduced to an established businessman, Mr Majoro, trying to solicit the help of a certain Mr Betinja who was known to be very diligent, to come and help out at his business while he was indisposed after a car accident. No sooner had Betinja come into the couple's home, than he is faced with Mrs Majoro who desperately wants him to teach her to drive. She waylays him as he goes out every time he visits her sick husband, and spends time chatting to him outside the house at night.

One of the major changes in social life pertains to the fact that the businessman is not bothered at all by his wife's chatting to a stranger outside her home, at night, while he is inside the house. We are not surprised to learn that this was a trap by the husband to catch unsuspecting men who dare fall in love with his wife. The motive behind is to make them pay heavily for their amorous indiscretions.

This woman bait is described as follows by Xundu (1997:13):

“Khawutsho, Sesh, akukhange umthi tshe umk'aMajoro, ngokuya ubukwakhe phezulo?”

Lo mbuzo usuke wandiya emathanjeni ngokungathi uyibhaqile indlela endiwe ngayo kule nkazana ...

“Uphosiwe Sesh, ndiyakuxelela. Mna ndambona kwakanye tshu. Kodwa unanamhla oku ndithi ndisakucinga ngaye ndisuke ndive kunambuzela umchachazo kwedini. Sukan' apha maan, mhle umfazi wendoda uphum'izandla!”

Tell me, Sesh, did you catch a glimpse of Majoro's wife when you visited them last night?”

This question chilled my spine as if the questioner had discovered how I fell for this woman ...

“You missed out, Sesh, I am telling you. I saw her once only but up to today my body shivers when I think of her. Boy, the guy’s wife is very pretty!”

It turns out that Majoro uses his pretty wife as decoy to lure men who have money to fall in love with her at the risk of being made to pay heavily for their actions. This wilful blackmailing of other businessmen comes out clearly when Majoro wants to know how much Betinja had in his account, as shown in Xundu (1997: 8):

“Khawutsho ke Betinja, kungokuba unamalini elugcinweni? Ndifuna ukumisa kakuhle izicwangciso zam, gxebe, izicwangciso zethu ndisazi ukuba sinamalini na xa sisobabini.

Tell me, Betinja, how much money do you have in the bank? I want to sort out my plans, pardon me, our plans knowing how much both of us have.

Betinja cannot hide his shock at being asked such a personal question and his response excited Majoro when he said he could have R15 000. With that amount of money in the bank, it was no surprise to see Majoro allow his wife to go out for nocturnal driving lessons with Sesh. The fact that he does not care that his wife could actually have sex with this stranger as long as the trap works at the end is nothing less than prostituting her. Her own willingness to do so also shows the extent of moral corruption one finds in some urban households. Family values have reached their lowest ebb in this home. It is reduced to the level of a brothel.

While the theme or subject matter of Xundu’s novel seems to be pointing to the promiscuity of businessmen in this part of the country, and the looseness of their wives, it is also clearly saying all businessmen are not the same as Betinja resists the

temptation of falling in love with this woman until the end. Strangely enough, with all his concerns and apprehensions, he kept on taking her out for driving lessons at night.

The climax of the plot and the plotting is reached when the car in which the couple goes out is involved in an accident. Fortunately Betinja was not in the car. He had gone to a tavern to buy some soft drinks when Mrs Majoro suddenly pulls away and has an accident shortly thereafter. This sets in motion a chain of events with Skhuvet, Majoro's brother, trying to bribe Betinja to pay Majoro R15 000 for going out with his wife at night. Part of this money is allegedly to bribe policemen to make the case disappear. Some portion of it is to go towards repairing the car.

To confirm that this is a plot done with the full knowledge of Majoro, Skhuvet asks for the same amount of money mentioned in discussions between Majoro and Betinja earlier on as shown in Xundu (1997:77):

“Ukuba ungandinika ishumi elinesihlanu nje lamawaka eerandi ndingakukhusela. Noko loo nto ilula kuwe, njengento kaBetinja kunokuba uyokuhlala kwesimnyama iminyaka-nyaka usebenzela urhulumente fele-fele.”

If you can just give me R15 000 I could rescue you. That should be very easy for you to do as Mr Betinja, rather than going to languish in jail for several years working freely for the government.

After escaping from this plot which backfired on the plotters, Betinja resolves to investigate the criminal actions of what had turned out to be a syndicate of criminal business people. He soon discovers that they have a secret meeting place in a nearby cave where they meet on the third Wednesday of each month. He is shocked to note that the syndicate included top personalities in the Engcobo-Mthatha area. This is explained as follows in Xundu (1997:202):

Ndothuke andalibala ndisakubona nekaMnumzana Mfutshane, oyingqwayingqwayi yamapolisa aseTsomo, iFord Cortina elubhelu. Kusenjalo ndithene mandla neyenqununu yesikolo semfundo ephakamileyo iDaliwonga, iPeugeot 505 emnyama. Ndaba sendibona neyomnini-venkile waseNcorha, obeqhele ukusizisela inqwaba yempahla yaseNcorha ezokuhlanjwa phaya emsebenzini. Ndithe ndiyibona ekaMnumzana Gobizembe, oligqwetha laseGcuwa, ndaba sendothuke ngokwaneleyo ukuba ndingabi sabuya ndiphinde ndothuke.

I was shocked when I saw Mr Mfutshane's car. He was the Police Commanding Officer at Tsomo. It was a yellow Ford Cortina. I also spotted a car belonging to the Principal of Daliwonga High School. It was a black Peugeot 505. I also saw the Ncorha shopkeeper's car. He used to bring to our dry cleaners stacks of clothes to be washed at my workplace. At the time I saw Mr Gobizembe's car, who was an attorney at Butterworth, I was so shocked that nothing could shock me more any further thereafter.

While in earlier generations, these business people were highly regarded icons in the community, life had changed so much that they represented the worst elements in the novel – criminals. What made the situation even more disgusting is that the same persons were VIP by day and criminals by night, a clear indication that things have changed for the worst in black society.

7.4 Shattered dreams and entitlement

Koda kube nini? (1998) (How long?) by L L Ngewu represents another change in theme like most of the novels of the 90s. The story revolves around the frustration of a section of our black community, especially the exiles, those who crossed the borders of this country during the apartheid era, to fight for the freedom of the black people in underground movements. The frustration resulted from unfulfilled expectations in the new democratic South Africa that came into being in 1994. The

author associates this situation with the sudden rise of crime in this country as people seek quick ways of earning a living.

The theme of the book is contemporary and relevant to the lives of many young people who find themselves in the streets with nothing to do and no means of livelihood. The story is about the criminal actions of a young man who leaves school during the Soweto student riots in 1976 to join one of the military forces that were opposed to the apartheid regime. The author raises an interesting issue around the young man's reasons for skipping the country. Ironically he wants to get away from his father who had a pig slaughtering business. The boy has to help him chase the pigs and slaughter them in Nobuhle Township, a job that the boy does not like at all. After spending seventeen years in exile the boy returns to a free South Africa with high expectations.

When the great expectations are not fulfilled, the boy resorts to criminal activities such as bribery, theft, murder and drug trafficking to earn a living. Once again, the setting is the political world, a world that is manifestly broader than the traditional rural village and township life of the past. Even outlook-wise, the world of the modern child is broader than the world of the earlier generations.

The irony of Themba, the main character's life is described as follows by Ngewu (1998:16):

Kuthe kwakuvela olo qhankqalazo uThemba wafumana isebe lokubambelela, wahambela phezulu zisamphulukile iihagu esajongene nomcimbi womzabalazo. Izidube-dube zokukwaywa kwamagumbi okufundela ngabafundi zibonakale zisondeza inkululeko ekudala ijongwe enkalweni ngunyana kaMxhamfele.

When political unrest broke out, Themba used it as a scapegoat, as he engaged himself in the struggle, in that way freeing himself from the pigs. The campaign of boycotting classes by students was seen as the means of liberation from pigs that the son of Mxhamfele had always longed for.

This revelation is not as insignificant as it sounds. The author is touching on an issue that is well known in political circles, that the circumstances and the reasons behind going into exile were far from being unitary. Some of the people who skipped the country had ulterior motives for doing so. Some ran away from impending arrest, others faced serious consequences because of their actions such as killing or burning people alive, and others were of course working for the system.

It is, therefore, clear that when Themba joined the students' political movement in 1976 he had his personal reasons for doing so. To prove that, we find that Themba had no problem with Afrikaans, instead he liked it. He did not utter a single sentence without including an Afrikaans word. We even discover that during the campaign while others were using the slogan "Freedom Now: Education Tomorrow!" Themba liked it in Afrikaans: "*Vryheid Nou: Opvoeding More*".

Of course, it could be argued in Themba's defence that he has no real problem with Afrikaans *per se*, as an individual, but he is fighting for a majority principle that everyone had the right to be taught in a language that he was comfortable in, in which case everybody preferred English as a medium of instruction.

There seems to be a veiled warning in the author's theme that unless we give our youth something constructive to engage in, they will resort to activities that may not be palatable to us. That warning is relevant to the current situation when hundreds of our young people roam the streets with no work and nothing to do.

The contemporariness of the story is accentuated once more when the author tells us about the return of the cadres from the various liberation movements and the summoning of a huge *indaba* in Tshwane (Pretoria then) where the changing of the name of the South African Defence Force to the South African National Defence Force was to be discussed. His cadre ticket was to him a passport to guaranteed employment, in spite of his having dropped out of school at an early age to join the political struggle.

Domination of the Defence Force by the old Afrikaner commanders and other instructors demoralized many returnees as they were hardly beyond the level of trainees. The worst experience for them was the retrenchment of many of them, an action that made Themba realize that, as Margaret Mcingana once sang, “It is not yet Uhuru!” This is how Ngewu (1998:28) expresses Themba’s frustration:

Tata, kungcono ndizivalele apha endlwini kunalaa manyala ndiwabone phaya emkhosini. Inkululeko iya kufika ngeny’ imini yaye ngaloo mini akukho mntu uya kukuxelela ukuba ifikile uya kuyibona ngamehlo akho nawe, Ayikabi yiyo le!

Daddy, it is better for me to lock myself inside this house than face these bad things that I saw in the army. Freedom will come one day and on that day nobody will tell you that it has come because you will see it with your eyes. This is not the one yet!

Having lost his job, Themba ultimately finds something to do. He is employed by a security company. By this time his ego and self-esteem have been so dented by his experiences and broken expectations that he easily falls prey to crime. One of the messages that filter from Ngewu on this character is that he was never really a political activist, but a follower who lacked the integrity to play the political game by its rules, hence his engaging in all kinds of crime, including murder.

Ngewu’s contemporary theme is that all who crossed the boundaries of this country to fight for freedom are not true freedom fighters. True freedom fighters are faithful to the Constitution of this country which clearly holds human dignity and life very high in its priorities.

His misguided sense of entitlement, as reflected in what he says in Ngewu (1998:44) could not compensate for his lack of qualifications and certification for any vocation:

Asikho isisombululo esisiso nesinesongo esinokuba ngaphezulu kwesisombululo sokunika iimbacu amalungelo azo.

There is no real solution besides giving the exiles their rights.

Saule's **Amazwi!** (2003) is one of the growing number of novels that overtly deal with political issues. The novel openly criticises the actions of the former apartheid regime. The book deals with all kinds of modern criminal activities and political issues. Although the political issues are treated cursorily, they are treated overtly. References are made to how police were engaged in the brutal killings of political activists and how they buried them in secret graves. Besides political issues, the book deals at length with bank robberies and how the gang members fight over their loot.

Right from the start of the novel we are introduced to Liziwe who has just returned from exile. She had been in exile for more than twenty years. We learn that she fled the country after being hunted and terrorised by police. Her home was bombed to the ground. Because her two brothers were caught in the house, the police planted weapons in the house to justify their bombing the house, killing their parents.

Saule (2003:2) names some of the ministers of the old apartheid regime who were notorious for oppressing black people – Voster and Botha, in the following extract:

Abantu bothuka baphantsa ukufa ukuthi kanti kuhleliwe nje uMcebisi noNkululeko abanakwabo bafihle intaphane yezixhobo kowabo kwaLanga. Eso sisizathu esabekwa ngamapolisa kaVoster owayeyinkulumbuso yelo ngelo xesha. Yindedeba le eyayibatshutshisela ukubabona oku abantu abamnyama ababezabalazela inkululeko. Uthe akudideka uVorster kwangena ezinyaweni zakhe uBotha ongakhange adende nakancinci kwimikhwa yowayephambi kwakhe. Ukukhula kwengcinezelo kuthe kanti kuyawukhwezela umlo womzabalazo, kuba uthe efika yena uDe Klerk kwabe sekunzima, amadolo e-apartheid engezela mpela, kukuze ke ube lo mhlaba ukule ndawo ukuyo ngoku.

The people were shocked almost to death to discover that Mcebisi and Nkululeko her brothers had hidden so many weapons in their home at Langa township. That was the reason advanced by Vorster's police for their harsh action. He was the Prime Minister at the time. He persecuted the black people who were fighting for freedom during his time. When Vorster could not achieve his objectives, his place was taken by Botha who followed in his footsteps in everything. The intensification of the oppression fanned the freedom struggle even more because by the time De Klerk took over things had really become bad – the apartheid's knees were wobbling, catapulting the country to where it is today.

Saule's book is a far cry from the earlier works that toed the line and were careful not to antagonise the authorities. It is a good example of a post-apartheid novel. Besides dealing with political activism and frank talk, the characters are hardened criminals who are prepared to destroy life and property to achieve their goals, especially in the larger metropolitan centres such as Cape Town and Johannesburg.

The following extract from Saule (2003:54) clearly illustrates how daring these characters are and the ease with which they committed bank heists and highway robberies:

Yeza igibiselekile iveni, iyindlela eyiqhelileyo le, indlela endala ephakathi kweBellville neKapa. Umqhubi akazange abone kwanto, yaya kuntlitheka kwiFord yakudala engakhange abambe neebhriki ezi. Ingene yaphelela gadladla, menqu umsila yaphuma ecaleni, bhulukuqu bhulukuqu ukuphequka, tywaba tywaba, folokohlo ematyholweni.

... Zathiwa hlasi hlasi iingxowa zasiwa kulaa veni yayiqhutywa nguMax, nayo le yayibiwe ngezolo eWynberg, tshwa tshwa phantsi kweseyile, kwabuywa kuyokulandwa ezinye, kwathuthwa kwakhona.

The cash in transit van came speeding because the driver knew the road between Bellville and Cape Town very well. The driver did not see anything amiss in the road. The truck collided with an old Ford without him trying to apply brakes. It crashed into it, overturned, left the road and rolled several times and ended up in the nearby bushes.

... They quickly grabbed the money bags and carried them to the van that was driven by Max which had been stolen in Wynberg the previous night. They packed them away under a canvass, and they went back to fetch more of them.

7.5 Recapitulation

The demise of the apartheid era coincided with the rise of the new democracy. Mayosi's **Iqhina lomtshato** focuses on this change. South Africa was undergoing radical change. Exiles were returning after undergoing military training abroad. The notorious white regime had engaged some black askaris to spy on the political activists. This led to bitter acrimony between those involved in the struggle and the apartheid forces, as illustrated in Saule's **Ukhozi olumaphiko**.

It also becomes clear from this chapter that authors devoted more time to writing about political issues in the nineties. Instead of spending time writing about general social issues, they face political issues directly.

CHAPTER EIGHT

NEW OUTLOOK IN TRANSFORMATION AND SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGE: 2004 – 2006

8.1 Introduction

This period covers the years from the tenth year of our democracy to as recently as 2006. While some of the ideas still reflect traditional thinking about issues affecting the lives of the people of the country, the new writers certainly reflect more on current issues than do the earlier ones. The newly found freedoms are reflected in the way in which the writers comment on life in the new South Africa.

The following novels will be discussed in this chapter:

<u>Esezolo nesimbonono sikaNtu</u>	2004	L. Damane
<u>Iinzingo sisifingo sempumelelo</u>	2004	P. Mayekiso-Dlulane
<u>Nandiweza</u>	2004	M. Nzo
<u>Owu! Hay' ukuzenza</u>	2006	J. Sankqela
<u>Ukutshona kweHotyazana</u>	2006	P. Gongo

8.2 Religion and counter-resistance

The foregrounding of a church image in **Esezolo nesimbonono sikaNtu** (2004) by Damane is significant as it gives a clear indication as to how much the winds of change have blown over Africa. In the earlier works people's residences featured prominently in the settings. The church seemed to be a foreign intruder on the far corner of the complex, if it is there at all.

As Christianity continued to conquer communities the church took a central position in the lives of the people. It was the determining factor in people's lives. The schools were under the churches, the church dictated normative behaviour in society, and the church played a role in marriage and funeral matters. When the government took over schools from the church, this role diminished. In the book under discussion, the church once more takes centre stage but it encounters resistance from some quarters.

Damane (2004:1) describes this imposing church image in the beginning of the novel as follows:

*Kwilali yaseNgqoko phezulu kwenduli ejongene nentaba iZingxondo, kumi ipomakazi lendlu enophahla olubheke phezulu. Xa umgama kule ndlu, utsalwa ngumnqamlezo obheke phezulu onqandwa ngamafu asesibhakabhakeni. Ngaphakathi kule ndlu kukho umbhalo obhalwe ngamagama angqindilili athi “**Ndim ubomi, Ndim indlela, Akakho oya kuya kuBawo engayi ngam.**”*

In the village of Ngqoko on top of a hill facing Zingxondo Mountain, there is a huge building with a high roof. When you are some distance from the house what attracts your attention is a large cross that ascends towards the clouds in the sky. Inside the house there is a written scroll on the wall with the words, “***I am life, I am the way, no one can get to my Father without going through me.***”

It is interesting to note that this huge church structure contrasts with other symbols inside the church. Damane (2004:1) describes these synthetical symbols as follows:

Kwelinye icala lodonga kukho imizobo ebonisa abantu abaNtsundu abazama ukufikelela emnqamlezweni. Kwelinye icala kukho abantu abaguqileyo abajonge egqirheni elalathe kumathambo aphambi kwalo. Abajonge kula mathambo egqirha babebonakala beneembuso ezithuthunjelwayo, besifa zintlungu kwaye behluphekile.

On the one side of the wall there were drawings that show black people trying to reach out to the cross. On the other there were people in a kneeling position staring at a traditional healer whose finger is pointing at divination bones in front of him. Those who were looking at the healer's bones appeared to have tormented faces, suffering from excruciating pains, and they were in distress.

To further illustrate the total subjugation of the chief to the priest, the chief's kraal is described after this elaborate description of the church. Even then the description is very brief. It is Father Young (Mangquku) and his church who dominate the scene as he goes about telling the people to part with their 'heathen customs' – mainly circumcision and polygamy.

Damana has brought the old clash between the missionaries and the black people back on stage. The interesting part in this new struggle is that the black people, as represented by the adamant Bhobhoyi, have turned the tables against the church's domination. They resist the domination displayed by Father Young. This resistance comes out very clearly in the following response by Bhobhoyi to Father Young's threats, as reflected in Damane (2004:5):

Akabisanga kothuka koku uBhobhoyi, wathi khwasu waya ngasemnyango, wabuya wema waphendula esithi "Andingeze ndivumelane noluvo lwakho olungavumelani nondoqo wobomi bam. Icawa ingahamba eyayo indlela, nam ndihambe eyam. Yintoni le nto icawa yasoloko ixelela abantu ngesihogo. Ookhokho bethu babengcono kunathi ngokuba bebethandaza kwizinyanya ngaphandle koloyiko lwesihogo."

Bhobhoyi did not show any signs of consternation, he stood up and walked towards the door, stopped again and answered saying, “I can never agree with your view which conflicts with the essence of my life. The church can take its own course and I will take mine. Our forefathers were better than us because they were praying to the ancestors without any fear of hell.”

It is obvious that the author is opposed to Father Young’s attempts to force the black people to discard their customs, as evidenced by Bhobhoyi’s stand on the matter (in Damane, 2004: 5):

“Mfundisi, isizwe esingenazo iinkolo zaso sisizwe esilahlekileyo. Sifana nomzimba ongenayo intliziyo. Endikuthethayo kokokuba abantu banyanzeliswa ukuba bafulathele amasiko neenkolo zabo baze bamkele ubuKrestu. Ukuba uyabaqaphela abantu bakuthi, uya kubona okokuba kunzima ukuba baphile ubomi bobuKrestu. UbuKrestu abukho egazini lethu kuba buyinkolo esuka eNtshona. Yiyo loo nto abantu abaNtsundu bengxabalazile, omnye umlenze ukubuKrestu, omnye ungaphandle lonke ixesha.”

“Father, a nation without its beliefs is a lost nation. It is like a body without a heart. What I am saying is that the people are being forced to turn their backs on their customs and beliefs, and accept Christianity. If you take note of our people, you will see that it is difficult for them to lead Christian lives. Christianity is not in their veins and blood because it is a Western faith. That is why black people are straddling, with one leg in Christianity, and the other outside all the time.”

The author makes it clear that the courage to stand up against missionary onslaught emanates from the new democracy. The new dispensation has guaranteed the people’s rights as seen in Damane (2004: 27):

“Icawe iyaxoka. Yicawe enjani le ithetha ubuxoki kangaka? Ukuba ifuna ukwazi inyaniso kufuneka ize kum. Lo Rhulumente wedemokhrasi wethu wonyulwa sithi. Nathi siyawaxhasa amanyathelo okulwa ne-AIDS kunye norhulumene wedemokhrasi. Yile cawe elahlekileyo. Siza kuqhubeka neendlela zethu zemveli zokwenza izinto.”

“The church is lying. What kind of church is this that tells so much lies. If it wants to know anything it should come to me. This democratic Government of ours was elected by us. We also support steps to fight AIDS alongside our democratic government. It is this church that has gone astray. We are going to continue with our traditional ways of doing things.

The community defiantly reintroduce the traditional rituals and the customs that were abandoned because of pressure from the church. These are customs such as circumcision, polygamy and *intonjane* (girls’ rite of passage or puberty rites).

What is clear in the novel is that the author is out and out to missionize the church by reorienting the missionaries as to the meaning of some of the African customs. He is out on a restoration process. It is becoming clear every day that the church’s faithful protagonist, Father Young, was fighting a losing battle.

He loses the battle altogether when he falls in love with one of the people he had set himself out to convert – MamNkabane. Their love affair tarnished his image totally. He plunges into worse shame when this woman gives birth literally in his arms as they are making love in a nearby forest. The priest, in pain and in a state of shock, kills the baby and buries it in the sand, thus setting the wrath of the law and the condemnation of the church over both of them.

Perhaps the moral of the story is that sin knows no colour or culture. Everyone is fallible and no nation can boast of being the chosen race.

8.3 Change as reflected by a female writer

Mayekiso-Dlulane's **Iinzingo sisifingo sempumelelo** (2004) appeared exactly on the tenth year of the new political dispensation. It is an important contribution to the discourse especially because it reflects the observations and views of a female writer writing from the vantage point of a non-sexist society.

Mayekiso-Dlulane's awareness of the deprivation suffered by her people during the apartheid era comes out very clearly in the book's introduction (*Vide* Mayekiso-Dlulane 2004: unpaginated):

Mzi omhle kaPhalo, nalo ilizwi linkenteza, livela kwicala langasegoqweni. Bekani indlebe khenive ukuba aningecholi lutho na nongeze kweninayo ukuze niqinise loo madodlwana athiwe nkwa ngumtha wedolo, ngenxa yengqatsini enidubada kuyo nibangwa yimiqobo evela ixananaze, ixabe kwindlela eniyihambayo, nethi idale impixwano ebomini, ifake inkungu nobumnyama kuloo mehlo, uzibone useyela kokaThisayo umgxobhozo.

Phalo's people, there is a shrill voice from the female section. Will you listen to it, maybe you might pick up something, to strengthen your knees after the tortuous journey you have travelled that has caused conflict in life and brought fog and darkness to those eyes, so much so that one finds oneself knee deep in a quagmire.

The opening setting of the book is rural village life just as in earlier conventional writing. The major difference here is that the author touches cursorily on this background as compared to the elaborate description of rural life found in earlier writings.

The reason for this emphasis on rural traditional life was, of course, that this life was regarded as the norm. Everybody of importance and African ancestry had to be connected in one way or the other. Anything else was an aberration, hence the derogatory term ‘*irhanuga*’ (detrified black person) that was directed especially to those who emanate from the country towns. Of course this could be extended to anyone outside the rural villages of the historically black areas.

What comes out clearly in the first chapter of the book is that gender-based division of labour among the children is going out of fashion. This can be noted from the following comment by one of the women (in Mayekiso-Dlulane, 2004:1):

Kodwa inye into endiyithandayo kuMaMbutho, abantwana bakhe ubaqeqeshela ukuwazi umsebenzi bengangekhandlela, basebenza okwabafazi, yaye akanamsebenzi-nduna namsebenzi-mazi, ufaka konke edyokhweni. Ndithi wena nkwenkwe uthwala i-emele uye esapha uyokukha amanzi.

But there is one thing that I like with MaMbutho, she trains her children to work from an early age. They work like grown up women. To her there is no male work and female work. She lets all do all. Boys carry a bucket of water on their heads and fetch water from the river.

While Mayekiso-Dlulane seems to praise MaMbutho’s prolific childbearing, in line with traditional belief that children are a gift from God, therefore the more the better, she clearly highlights the economic difficulties that are associated with having too many children when she says (in Mayekiso-Dlulane, 2004: 3):

Kuye kwabonakala ekuhambeni kwethuba ukuba uDuma makancedisane noyise etorhweni kuba usapho lwandile, ibe nemali engenayo ingabheke phi, nakubeni noMaMbutho wayenobugcwabalalana bokwenza impahla, ethungela abantu belali

leyo aze afumane ubutikana obungephi kuba ilokhwe ephелеleyo yayihlawulelwa indaliso. Iyonke loo nto ayibanga lutho lubheke phi ekuncediseni uZwane kolu sapho lungaka, kungoko ke kuye kwayimfuneko ukuba uDuma makabe uya sincama isikolo.

It transpired as time went on that Duma should help his father by finding work as a migratory labourer because the family had grown, and the income was very meagre even though MaMbutho was earning some money from making dresses for the people of the village because each earned her one shilling and sixpence (in that time's money.) All that did not help anything towards assisting Zwane with the large family, consequently, Duma was forced to leave school.

Another important issue regarding Mayekiso-Dlulane's novel is characters' names. The characters bear normal African names. None of them have the conventional so-called Christian names. They are Duma, Lunga, Bantu, Sipho, Fikile, Veliswa, Nozipho and Nolitha and the older women also bear traditional names such as Nozenzile, MaMbutho and MamQwathi, the latter having been named after their clan names.

As the characters move deeper and deeper into modernisation, their names also get modernised. Duma becomes Dumra and his girlfriend, Nosisa becomes Sisko. These are pet-names in which the stem of the original word is retained and a suffix of the person's choice is added, eg. Dumra or Dumza. Sometimes this changes to Dumboy.

Education is the strongest catalyst for change in this novel. Even after Duma has left school, he continues studying privately. When Nolitha obtains her B.A. degree at the advanced age of 50 years, she feels motivated to go on to do an M.A. degree.

The spinoffs of such self-improvement became evident immediately. Duma gets promoted to a managerial position and Nolitha clinches the lucrative position of Deputy Mayor clearly indicating that the theme of the novel is that education is the key to life, independence and social change.

8.4 Globalization as a new theme in literature

Nzo's novel, **Nandiweza** (2004), is a remarkable contribution to contemporary isiXhosa writing because it adds a new dimension to it – globalization. In the past, the novels were predominantly localized in that their settings covered black rural villages and urban areas. The current novel stretches from Lilongwe in Malawi down to South Africa and the main characters are all expatriates.

Unlike most isiXhosa novels where the author gives a detailed exposition of milieu, Nzo's novel begins *in medias res* with two men chasing after the main character, Luwanika, obviously attempting to kidnap him. As indicated here below, even he himself had no idea why these men wanted to catch or kill him.

This is evident from Nzo (2006:3):

“Ngaba angobani la madoda andileqayo? Athunywe ngubani? Ndenze ntoni? Hayi andazi.”

“Who are these men who are chasing me? Who sent them to catch me? What have I done? I don't know.”

The cause of the bad blood between Luwanika and a number of his compatriots can be ascribed to several issues ranging from jealousy and instigation by enemies. Several accusations are levelled against him, ranging from taking the local chief's girlfriend, impregnating the chief's cousin, poisoning the chief's sister, his ex-girlfriend, and stock theft. A team of enemies, including the local chief, hunts him down from Lilongwe to Durban, South Africa, where he had fled.

Nzo, in a rather winding and all encompassing plot, moves from the internecine feud in Lilongwe to political tensions in South Africa, especially in KwaZulu Natal where the main character hides from his enemies. There were severe conflicts between the INkatha Freedom Party and the ANC. The culmination of this conflict is described as follows by Nzo (2006:93):

Kwezinye iindawo le meko idale ukungevani nodushe olubi. Luqengqiwe ugodo kwiindawo ezininzi, babodwa abahlaselwe emizini yabo neentsapho zabo. Babebodwa abahlaselwe kwiindibano ezithile zolonwabo okanye ezenkonzo. Abe maninzi amaxa apho ulonwabo okanye ezenkonzo ziphethe ziziinyambezi. Kuvela ukungaxatyiswa kobom nentlalo yabantu, ukubulala nokutshiswa kwemizi kube yinto elula. Enye into ekhuthaze abenzi bobubi kukuduka kwabo emva kokwenza oko. Loo nto ibangele ukuduka kwamatyala. Oku kungquzulana kuhambe kwada kwanelinye isolotya elalatha ubuzwe. Kuvela ubutshaba kubantu bantetho isisiZulu nabo bangamaXhosa. Le nto ibangwe yinkolo ethi iNkatha ngumbutho wamaZulu ibe yona iAfrican National Congress iyeyamaXhosa. Le nto iwothusile amanye amaZulu kangangokuba arhoxile amanye kwi-African National Congress kuba esoyika ukuchatshazelwa ligazi. Amanye akakhange achukumiseke.

In other places this led to serious violence and conflict. People died in many places, some of them attacked in their houses with their families. Others were attacked in different social or church gatherings. There were many times where social or church gatherings ended up in tears and bloodshed. Lack of respect for people's lives became the order of the day, killing and burning people's houses happened so easily. Something that also encouraged these criminals was that they just disappeared after committing all those crimes. That led to the disappearance of their cases too. This conflict assumed racial overtones in the course of time with enmity rising between the amaZulu and the amaXhosa people. This was fanned by a false belief that the Inkatha Freedom Party was a Zulu organization, and the ANC was a Xhosa one. This scared some Zulu people away from the African National Congress because they feared reprisals from their own people. But there were those who remained steadfast.

Indulging in politics in this way is not only remarkable but it is also indicative of a change in policy and civil liberties because under the apartheid regime all political

talk and writing was banned. Any reference to politics, religious conflicts and racial conflict would immediately disqualify a publication. It is clear from this author's work that South Africa and her peoples are undergoing tremendous change from the complete denial of basic civil liberties to the guaranteeing of those rights under the new Constitution. Even expatriates, as exemplified in the book, enjoy peace and freedom in their country of exile.

The author counters, albeit subtly, xenophobia by pointing out that all expatriates are not a liability to the country. Some of them are making a vital contribution to the economy of the country as shown by Nzo (2006:96) with regard to Luwanika's work:

Uthe ngenxa yemfundo yakhe ephakamileyo wanyuselwa wada wakwinqanaba eliphezulu. Isikhundla sakhe sibe ngentla kwesabaninzi abaNtshona. Le meko ibingaginyisi mathe kwabaNtshona kuba bona babekhuselekile kwizinto ezininzi. Imithetho yelo xesha ibingamvumeli umntu oNtshona aqhathwe ngoNtshona. AbaNtshona nabo babekhwina phofu bona kucaca ukuba baqweqwediswa ngumona. Babephatha kuthi ngumntu otheni lo oze kuphatha apha bekho abantu balapha.

Because of his high standard of education, he was promoted to a higher position. The post he occupied was above those occupied by white people. This did not go down very well with the whites because they were shielded from competition in many ways. The laws of the time did not allow a white person to serve under a black person. The blacks, on the other side, were moaning but it was clear in their case that they were envious of Luwanika's position. They were grumbling and saying how could this person come and hold such a senior position above the heads of locals.

The theme of Nzo's novel seems to be the universality of people's problems. Merging Luwanika's Malawian problems and enemies with those of his new political home serves to show that expatriates are people with their own problems and their own gifts with which they could serve their new country of abode. They did not come to South Africa for fun, but they were in most cases forced away from their motherland by circumstances beyond their control, some of those dogging them right into their exile.

They therefore need love and support as well as a chance to lead normal lives like everybody else.

8.5 The impact of change on women and children

Sankqela's novel **Owu! Hay' ukuzenza** (2006) decries the maltreatment of young newly married women by cruel mothers-in-law. In the book in question the mother-in-law and her daughter are so cruel to the young daughter-in-law that she lives in pain and torture. One of the major reasons for her being so ill-treated was that she could not bear children.

A major departure in the style of writing is the conspicuous absence of the conventional elaborate description of the setting found in earlier novels. Although the story deals with a newly married couple it is interesting to note that the elaborate wedding arrangements found in earlier literature are also missing in the novel.

The story starts with the author casting his eyes back to the olden days when people performed their customs and traditions happily. The parents arranged marriages between their children and their life partners and they lived happily together, as explained by Sankqela (2006:1):

Siwolane sisangana sizibophelela sifunga siqinisekisa ezo zihlwele okokuba sakwahlulwa kukufa. Kuthi ke ngenxa yebhongo neqhaya labazali bobabini babakhuphe becondoba ngezimhlophe qhwa okweliqhwa iingubo. Ngeenjongo zokuhlaba ikhwelo lokuziphatha kolu lutsha lwenza izinto ngaphandle kwengqiqo luqamele ngombuzo othi 'kobakhontoni?'

We hugged and vowed confirming in front of those crowds that until death do us part. The proud parents from both sides would send the children to their married homes in snow white wedding dresses. The motive behind all this is to call to order the young people who act irresponsibly and who always ask many questions.

A major challenge in the life of the newly married couple described in this novel, is that the husband, Sukude, had to return to work in East London, leaving his wife, Nogolide, behind in the rural villages as was the custom in those days. The young woman is not happy about staying with the in-laws, especially because they are so hostile towards her.

That the times had changed is also borne out by the fact that Sukude (in Sankqela 2006:11) was a member of a Trade Union in East London and they had a right to challenge employment practices that were considered unfair:

“Kambe mzi kaXhosa esihluthayo sesithwethwayo. Ingxaki zehla imihla nezolo ngeli xa imivuzo imi ndawonye. Kaloku madoda ngemivuzo le asijonge kutya kuphela. Thina ngabanye sineentsapho esijonge okokuba zishiyeke nelifa elingusoze, imfundo. Kwathina iziqu zethu zisafuna ukunxityiswa, kwanendawo esihlala kuzo zikwajamele le mali imi ndawonye. Kha nindihlebele ke madoda nithi xa izinto ezi zisenzeka ngolu hlobo ubomi obu sibuphilayo bububo?”

“My fellow amaXhosa people, nothing venture, nothing have. We are experiencing difficulties on a daily basis while the wages remain static. With these wages, we are not aiming at subsistence only. Some of us have families who need to inherit something that no one can take away from them – education. We also have our physical needs such as clothing, and our places of abode depend on this same static wages. Just tell me, you men, if things happen the way they happen is the life we’re living really what we deserve?”

Teenage pregnancies and other related aberrations in the novel show that the times have changed for the worse in black society. A school going girl gives birth to a chubby child and throws her away in the nearby forest because she is scared of her parents. This is how Sankqela (2006:26) describes this dastardly act:

Uthe akugqiba waluthatha olo sana walusongela kumavukuvukwana akhe abe ezithungela wona ngelixa efunda. Wasondela kwisicithi ebesilapha ngasendleleni, waluthi ntimfa apho wasingela. Uthe sele ewelile apho emlanjeni esinga apho ndingaziyo ewudukisa mpela umkhondo, savakala isikhalo sosana sisitsho ngasemva lunga-luyabona okokuba lushiywa lodwa apho.

When she finished giving birth she took the child and wrapped it in pieces of rags she had sewn together while she was still studying. She went close to a bush alongside the road and dumped the child there and left in a hurry. After crossing the river with no one knowing where she was going because she deliberately changed direction, the piercing cry of the baby was heard from behind as if it realised that it was left alone.

What is clear about current writing is that the authors are trying to face social, political and economic issues headlong instead of avoiding them as had happened during the apartheid years. There are no holy cows. Every issue of concern is brought into the book. Up to now there has been little in the form of serious political issues but those that have been caught by the writers' eyes have been made the subject of discussion.

Gongo's **Ukutshona KweHotyazana** (2006) opens its setting with a paragraph that shows the working class people faced with a working class economy that forces them to leave children behind and work all day in town, only to return to the townships towards sunset. This is how Gongo (2006:6) describes their plight in a fast changing world:

Iibhasi ezivela edolophini zazihlanza abantu ngokukhawuleza. Kanti ezisuka elokishini zazindlandlatheka ukubuyela edolophini ngenjongo yokuphuthuma abaphangeli abaseleyo. Iincoko zazimfutshane kuba abantu bangxamele emakhaya. Abantu abalumkileyo nabaxhobileyo babeqalisa ukubasa iimbawula zabo ngamalahle etreyini. Abanye bantumeke amaziko okufudumeza eparafini. Uninzi lwabazali

lwazigqibele ngoqhiza iintsana. Kwakubuhlungu kubazali ukushiya iintsana ngemva, kodwa nangona kunjalo iQosha likaNtsikana lalifunyanwa ngolo hlobo. Kwakunzima ngezo mini ukuba iintsapho zixhomekeke kumvuzo omnye. Iimvulophu zabasebenzi zazincipha ngokuncipha. Abantwana abafundayo babeyiqonda into yokubaluleka kokuphangela kwabazali ababini. Aba bantwana babezihlawula iimfanelo zesikolo ngethuba kunjalo nje babenxiba kakuhle xa besiya esikolweni.

The buses that brought workers from town offloaded them very quickly. Those which came from the townships sped back into town to fetch the remaining workers. The people were exchanging brief chats with one another because they were in a hurry to get back home. Clever people and those who were equipped for the change of season were starting to light their braziers using coal. Others lit their paraffin heaters. Most of the parents had last seen their children early in the morning. It was hurtful to the parents to have to leave their children behind. Nevertheless, that was the only way of getting money. In those days it was very hard for families to depend on one source of income. The salaries were diminishing. School going kids understood the importance of having both parents working. They could pay their school fees in time and they could also buy school uniforms and dress appropriately when they go to school.

The change in this working class society is also discernible from the number of buses ferrying sportsmen to the beach for training and relaxation. Gongo (2006:7) depicts this as follows:

Lo gama abantu bakhwankqiswe sisikhalo esivakalayo, umkhosi wabadlali bombhoxo nababethi bamanqindi, wabonakala udlula kule ndawo. Bebehumzela okweenyosi eziya kufuna ukutya. Imibombo yayijonge eBrighton Beach apho babeza kuthamba khona. Kwakufuneka bekhuphe amaxakaxa bathibaze namaphika ukuze balungele imidlalo yabo. Ngelo xesha iqela elalisemthethweni yaye iyiKwazakhele Rugby Union (iKwaru ke ngokufutshane.) IKwaru ke yayinxaxhile kwiSouth African African Rugby Board eyayixhaswe ngumbuso welo xesha, umbuso wocalulo. IKwaru yayitsala inginginya xa idlala.

While the people were stunned by the unknown cry, an army of ruggierites and boxers drove past. They were buzzing like bees in search of food. They were going to the Brighton Beach for a training session. They had to get themselves fit for the next round of games. At that time the group that had acceptable credentials was the Kwazakhele Rugby Union (Kwaru in short). Kwaru was distinct from the South African African Rugby Board which was sponsored by the apartheid government. Kwaru attracted droves and droves of spectators to its matches.

The setting of the book presents us with a picture of middle class black business people and professionals as seen in Gongo (2006: 7):

Apha ke kwakuhlala izinhanha nezifundiswa. Imizi yayimihle imikhulu. Kwelinye icala lendlela abantu bathandabuza ukuba bebeve ngokuchanekileyo. Kwakuzolile kuthule eThemba Lethu. Kweli cala kwakuhlala abanumzana ooQeqe, Sali, Mama, Cabb, Kondile nabanye ke abantu: iingqanga zomzi waseBhayi. Nokuhleka oku abantu bakhona babehleka ngembeko nesithozela. Kwakungekho bantu bakhwaza ngokungathi basemfuleni.

The rich people and the professionals stayed in this part of town. The houses were beautiful and big. On the other side of the road the people doubted if they had really heard the unusual cry. It was quiet at Themba Lethu. This was where well-known personalities such as Messrs Qeqe, Sali, Mama, Cabb, Kondile and others: the distinguished people of Port Elizabeth resided. People from this area were even discreet in how they laughed, laughing with dignity. You would not find people shouting as if they were walking alongside the rivulet.

Social transformation was clearly discernible from the top quality houses built in this quiet suburb, as described by Gongo (2006:8):

Le ndawo yayithiywe ngothandokazi. Kwabonakala ngokungathi abaphetheyo babenenjongo entle ngabemi bale ndawo. Ngelishwa abaphetheyo babengenanjongo yokuyenza le ndawo ikhule, yamkele uninzi. Kodwa ke izinto zaziza kuguquka. Kwakuza kuma ikomishini eyayiza kukhuthaza urhulumente avumele uninzi lwabantu abaMnyama abanemali bafumane izindlu ezinje ngezi nezibhetele kunazo. Injongo yayikukuba bangacingi ngempatho yoMbuso koko bajongane nokuciciyela loo mapomakazi. Olu cwambu kwakungafuneki lucinge ngohlobo oloyikisa amadoda aphetheyo.

This place was named with great circumspection and love. It appeared that those in authority had positive aims about the residents of the place. Unfortunately those in authority did not plan to let this place grow, and accept more people. But things were bound to change. A commission was about to be established to encourage the government to allow more black people who have the necessary funds to buy houses like these or even better ones. The idea behind it all was that they should not think about how the State is treating them, but to spend their time on those fancy big houses. This upper class group had to be prevented from thinking in ways that would threaten those in authority.

One of the latest evils to hit the changing amaXhosa society was what was popularly known as the “cashing in” of husbands by their wives. This was the conscious planning, by the women concerned, of the murder of their husbands by hired assassins so that they can claim from their life insurance companies. Detective Ludumo (in Gongo, 2006: 29) explains this as follows in the book under scrutiny:

Abafazi bethu baza kusithumela emafini phambi kwexesha kuba befuna iimali ze-inshorensi.”

“Our wives are going to kill us prematurely because they want to claim from the insurance companies.”

As could be expected in all changing societies, consumerism and competition are taking their toll on this upper middle class black society. Men and women go out of their way to buy expensive clothes and cars just to impress their neighbours, as suggested by Gongo (2006: 38):

Banjani abafana eBhayi ngexesha lokugqibela kwakhe ukufunda uBandezwa. Imizi-mveliso engooFord nooGeneral Motors yayibaqesha abafana ize ibathi jize ngeminyobo yeemoto. Iivenkile ezifana nooTrouser House nooHot Stuff zazisazi ukuba aba bafana bafuna ukunxiba ngaluphi na uhlobo. Iimoto zabafana zabaqhumisela ngothuli ootitshala nangona abanye baba titshala baberhuqa izidanga zabo zaseFort Hare.

The young men in Port Elizabeth by the time Bandezwa completed her schooling there were splendid. Factories such as Ford and General Motors used to employ them and provide them with sleek cars. Shops such as Trouser House and Hot Stuff knew which clothes those young men wanted. The young men's cars were beyond the reach of the teachers even though they boasted degrees from Fort Hare University.

Women, according to Gongo (2006:38) were also in the forefront of this rush to patronise expensive outfitters:

Asuka amanenekazi aMhlophe aziva elunywa kukubona amanenekazi aMnyama efaneleke ngolu hlobo. Ayenxibe iimpahla zamaxabiso. Ngelo xesha uNontando uhla enyuka kwaGarlicks ngokungathi wayehamba kwivenkile kayise. UBandezwa wawabona amehlo enamathele kakhulu kuNontando. Ezinye zezinto awayezinxibile wayezithengelwe nguyise kwiindawo ezifana noomaThekwini neGoli.

White ladies felt uncomfortable about seeing black ladies so smart. The black women wore expensive clothes. Nontando was going up and down Garlicks as if she was in her father's shop. Bandezwa could see how the people's eyes were glued on Nontando. Some of the clothes she was wearing were bought by his father in places like Durban and Johannesburg.

One of the tools used by Gongo and the other authors is characterisation as explained by Abrams (1971:113):

The novel is characterized as the fictional attempt to give the effect of realism, by representing complex characters with mixed motives who are rooted in a social class, operate in a highly developed social structure, interact with many other characters, and undergo plausible and everyday modes of experience.

Gongo's novel is certainly an epitome of social change in amaXhosa society. It deals with how society can sink so deep in a foreign culture that in the end very little remains of their own values. The brutal murder of Nontando and rising crime are just some of the issues that show moral decay in the emerging amaXhosa society. We get in this book people who strive towards maintaining the high ideals of Western society with all its highs and lows, but do nothing to retain their own values and respect for life.

8.6 Recapitulation

The period reflects radical changes in amaXhosa society. Although the church has taken over and is enforcing its Christian values, little is happening in reconciliation and equality. There is also a backlash with some communities rejecting missionary domination, and asserting their own traditional values, as can be seen in Damane's **Esezolo nesimbonono sikaNtu**. This resistance is also discernible in Mayekiso-Dlulane's book, while Nzo's novel shows how globalisation has brought people from different political backgrounds together. This political trend is also discernible in Gongo's novel which focuses on the exploitation of workers and the adverse effects of consumerism. This theme links up with the introduction of saleable goods and advertisements in the newspaper age, and the way blacks were being forced into a new economy.

CHAPTER NINE

STRANGULATION BY LANGUAGE BOARDS

9.1 Introduction

The chapter will investigate the censoring and purging of manuscripts and books by the Language Boards and their sub-structures such as Language Committees. The idea behind this is to establish how these bodies enhanced or retarded change and development in the writing of African literature in general, and isiXhosa literature in particular.

A lot has been said about how detrimental the Language Boards set up by the former apartheid regime were for the development of African literature. These structures were aimed at monitoring the publication of African literatures and weeding out anything that fell foul of the vast tentacles of the South African legal system. While they were purportedly designed to promote black literatures and languages, their watchdog role predominated, thus overshadowing whatever semblance of developmental work there was in their operation.

Every single book that aimed to reach the school market had to be screened by members of these Language Boards before prescription. They particularly acted strongly against any literature that espoused politics of whatever nature, church or religious conflicts, or any matter that was considered against good public morals by those in authority. It is because of the rigid and harsh application of those screening principles that these bodies tended to strangle the literature instead of promoting it. The outcome was an emasculated classroom literature that left the general public totally disinterested in reading it. The end result of these stringent rules was the production of literature that was manifestly childlike as pointed out by Zulu (1999a:291):

There are several reasons for the view that literature in African languages is childish. The development of literature was hampered during the missionary and apartheid eras. During the missionary era, in particular, publishers wanted only didactic literature as an extension of the Bible. During the apartheid era, socio-political issues were taboo in books primarily written for school children. Because African languages had no official status, their standing was low and the literature tended to be stigmatised. It is also certainly true that the standard of education of most of the writers was relatively low and the early writers did not move much beyond the experimental stage with regard to written literary genres.

Any assessment of the literature of the apartheid era without due consideration of the conditions in which the authors wrote cannot be fair and complete. The limitations imposed on the authors by the system were enormous as will be seen from what is said in this chapter. This is very important especially because we have moved into a totally different state of affairs where freedom of expression is a civil right that is guaranteed by the country's Constitution.

9.2 Language Boards as government agencies

The period covered by these draconian rules coincides with the coming into power of the notorious Nationalist Party in 1948 to just before the coming in of the new non-racial, non-sexist democratic dispensation in 1994. The equally notorious Language Boards and Committees started to operate in 1955 and ended in 1992, just two years before the emancipation of the people of the country. It is therefore evident that research on transformation and change in isiXhosa literature has to deal with the dynamics of this period if it is to be complete. If causality is an important factor in literature as I think it is, then circumstances behind the changes or even lack of change in isiXhosa literature have to be laid bare.

The rigid application of oppressive censorship measures by these bodies in all the black languages of the country was in fact the extension of the notorious Publications Control Act under all its guises and amendments. Anything considered critical or condemnatory of the government and its operations fell under the ambit of these draconian measures. The resultant product was what many consider to be a classroom literature that is watered down and emasculated.

9.3 Critics' views on the Language Boards

Serudu (in Gerard, 1983:96) writing about "Northern Sotho," decries this situation by commenting as follows:

It is unfortunate that for many years Northern Sotho writers failed to write works which one could regard as social histories of their people. We are looking forward to the time when authors will take cognizance of their environment and produce works which will not only be read in the classroom but outside by the adult reading public. However, as long as our writers aim at producing works for the school market, the future of our literatures will remain bleak. This is not suggesting that our literatures should be reduced to a propaganda medium. All that is necessary is that, like English, French, German and Afrikaans literatures, Northern Sotho literature should reflect the social, economic, historical and political development of its people.

Writing on vhaVenda literature, Muloiwa (in Gerard, 1983: 109) comments pertinently about publishers and Language Boards:

Publishers should also venture into publishing books that are meant for adults and not only for school. The Language Board must also adopt a realistic approach in screening books. Attention should not only be focussed on books suitable for pupils in the primary and secondary school classes. Language Boards and the media must work hand in hand giving literary reviews of new books so as to encourage the public to read.

The impact of these stringent rules of the Language Boards is reflected as follows by Marivate (in Gerard, 1983:112) with regard to the xiTsonga writers:

The ordinary Tsonga man in the street hardly reads Tsonga publications (or publications in other languages for that matter). This conditions the publishers to publish with the school readership in mind. Besides, literary publications meant for the schools go through a screening committee of the Department of Education and Training before they can be used in schools, with regard to their suitability in terms of being free from political overtones and other influences regarded as undesirable. This view in turn influences writers who tend to shy away from themes which might prejudice the publication of their works. For this reason, free expression is greatly thwarted indirectly.

The negative impact of the Language Boards on African literature was also attested by Sirayi in an address delivered at the isiXhosa Arts Festival at the University of Transkei in 1989 (as cited by Ntuli and Swanepoel, 1993:90) who commented as follows about this form of censorship:

The deplorable anomaly is attributed first and foremost to the government and its agencies such as publishers, the publishing advisors (manuscript reviewers) and the language boards which ensure that literary production succumbs to the demands of censorship as stipulated or legislated by the powers that be. The said powers enact censorship laws, which restrict the circulation of sensitive literature; the publishers make sure that such laws are observed through the use of inter alia, publishing advisors and language board members, who possess the expertise to identify, among other things, the so-called “political tendencies”, which are the very tendencies that assert themselves in the popular African literatures written in European languages (Sirayi, 1989:12-13).

9.4 The Language Boards in operation

Having highlighted the objections of literary scholars and researchers to the strangulatory role of the Language Boards on African literary production, the study will now focus on the actual role of the so-called Xhosa Language Committee in promoting or stemming change in isiXhosa literature in the period 1955 to 1992.

The impact of these Language Boards on African literature at large is described as follows by Malan (1987: 7):

At the beginning of the fifties, many laws with a racial basis began to have a drastic effect. According to various experts, the Bantu Education Act of 1953, in particular, had a detrimental effect on the production and content of the African literatures. By virtue of control by the language boards, mainly manuscripts considered suitable for possible school use were accepted for publication. Criticism of the racial situation was thus eliminated from the various literatures.

It must be admitted, from the outset, that the notorious Language Boards had some positive elements in them in that they promoted the development of language and literature but it was its watchdog role that was counterproductive. This duality was the hall-mark of all the Language Boards from their inception to their demise. The list of books and manuscripts that were turned down without even giving reasons at times, is too long for us to consider these bodies as a blessing to the development of our literature. On the contrary, they were truly a bane.

The inception of these structures brought two major Nguni languages, isiXhosa and isiZulu together in meetings that were called Joint Meetings of isiXhosa and isiZulu Language Committees that set the stage by dealing with purely linguistic issues such

as orthography, word division and spelling that culminated in the publication of Blue Books called Orthography and Spelling Rules 2 and 3. The minutes of the Third Joint Meeting of 1-4 May 1956 set the stage by stating that

[A]s member of the Nguni Sub-Committee of the Departmental Central Book Committee, Mr Hallowes raised the question of the prescription of books in Standards V and VI. The meeting was in sympathy with the prescription of suitable books (Novels) other than those belonging to a series of readers.

Prescriptions should be for one or two years only. In this way the development of literature would be stimulated and pupils would be trained to read for pleasure.

The First isiXhosa Language Committee meeting, started in full force as from 30 April to 5 May 1956. A number of isiXhosa books were screened with some decisions deferred for further opinion and other books rejected outright. An extract from these minutes shows quite clearly that this body was unsympathetic towards books or manuscripts considered to be substandard or those that went across the grain of the selection principles. If the following starting picture was gloomy, the next forty years turned out to be even worse.

Imidiliya by Tamsanqa and Bantom was accepted on condition some ‘improvements were made in the narrative poems with the addition of several more suitable poems.’

UToselwa by W.B.M Blie had to wait for a second opinion ‘before a decision would be arrived at as to whether this novel was suitable or not.’

Imitha yelanga by Tamsanqa was accepted on condition the suggested improvements were made.

Uqilimba lwamaGcina by J L Duba had to wait for a second opinion.

A novel by Jezile (no title mentioned) was ‘rejected as unsuitable.’

Amasalela by E P Gwashu had to wait for a second opinion.

UNDina by A.M Mmango was rejected outright.

Ubudoda abukhulelwa by Professor Nyembezi and translated by D M Lupuwana was accepted.

UNtelekiso by G G Putuzo was rejected.

UMaya by Bonsel translated by Rev. J J R Jolobe , has no comment on record.

Izibongo neeMbono by M M Mbutuma was ‘rejected owing to certain defamatory passages in some of the izibongo.’

This pattern was repeated with growing zeal over the next forty years. In the meeting of 13-19 February 1957 held in Port Elizabeth, the Xhosa (sic) Language Committee rejected L K Siwisa’s **Ndibuzen’ Amathongo** for the following reasons:

Because the book entitled NDIBUZEN’ AMATHONGO perpetuated superstitious beliefs, and contained a parody on religious matters the committee felt that it was highly undesirable to prescribe the book, especially for the Junior Certificate examination.

To strengthen the screening machinery even further, the members suggested the establishment of publishers’ reviewers to act as preliminary assessors before the manuscripts came to the Language Boards. The advantage attached to this procedure was two-fold. Firstly, the publishers’ reviewers would do all the spade work before the manuscripts were submitted to the Language Boards and in the process stem the tide of poor quality material going through for final consideration. Secondly, most of

the publishers decided to use the same Language Board members and paid them for this service. In this way, quality control was ensured, and the manuscripts, having been checked and corrected by competent members beforehand, would find their way more easily into the prescription lists.

To further this aim, the following resolution was taken in the Language Committee meeting held in Butterworth on 28 February to 7 March 1961:

EVALUATION OF XHOSA MANUSCRIPTS

The Committee felt that a list of proficient readers could, with advantage, be circulated to enable the Printing Presses (if they so desire) to find themselves their own readers on their own terms.

With the widening of the net, more manuscripts and books were brought under the watchful eye of the Language Committees and their members. It soon became apparent to publishers that unless books were screened by knowledgeable members of the committees, the chances of their acceptance would be nil. The screening machinery steamed on full force not sparing a moment to strike if any book failed to satisfy the unstipulated criteria of the reviewers.

Casualties included Jongilanga's now popular novel **Ukuqhawuka kwembeleko** which was rejected in a meeting held in King William's Town on 23 – 24 August 1961. The following cursory remarks were made:

Rejected. Objectionable; story unsuitable for school use.

Ntuli (in Malan, 1987: 129) gives the following explanation on the rejection of the book:

The language boards give various reasons for not recommending a book for circulation. They are usually sound reasons, but some are quite amusing. Satyo cites a controversy which arose when some experts insisted on the withdrawal from schools of Jongilanga's *Ukuqhawuka kwembeleko* because they felt it had too many bedroom scenes. One of these "naughty scenes" occurs when the husband asks his wife to go to bed because it is late.

The heavy handedness of the committee became apparent when the author appealed against the rejection of another book of his entitled **Ubusuku obungenanyanga**. The response to this in the minutes of the meeting of the Xhosa (sic) Language Committee held in Zwelitsha on 4-6 August 1975 was strong and legalistic:

There was a letter from Mr D.M.Jongilanga, appealing that his book, **UBUSUKU OBUNGENANYANGA**, be reviewed.

The letter was rejected on the premise that the committee does not have a policy of giving ear to appeals. Since the letter was in the hands of the committee, the author is advised that he should heed the remarks by the committee previously, and he should therefore attempt to implement those suggestions.

Of the most debated cases concerning the rejection of a book by the isiXhosa Language Board, perhaps the greatest was that on the rejection of Budaza's **Khawufan' ucinge**. The book contained a story in which cruel white farmers in the Alexandria area threw a recalcitrant black worker into a furnace. When his face concocted and shrank from burning, one of them allegedly said, "*Jy lag nog Kaffer!*" ("You're laughing, Kafir!")

The isiXhosa Language Committee passed the book but the white members representing Pretoria in the committee objected saying the story is offensive. The minutes of 5-6 March 1981 shows this tension and division very clearly:

Khawufan' ucinge by G S Budaza

The members expressed themselves against unnecessary inhibitions and restrictions. Xhosa literature has largely failed to arouse interest in many people because it is very naïve and modest. In Dr Qangule's opinion the passage in question is very innocuous compared to certain English writings like *The Tempest*. Protest literature had come to stay. Literature is a battlefield and a political field.

Mr Satyo argued that a writer cannot go outside his era and regretted the use of "Kaffir" but expressed the hope that with responsible and proper handling no harm can be caused by studying the book as it is.

Mr Swart summed up his Department's view and attitude towards books with political overtones and words like "Kaffir" by saying : "If "Kaffir" appears in a book, we cannot use it in our schools." He warned against "handing down to our children matters we are worried about and for which we have no immediate solutions," and added: "We should discourage writers from writing on these topics if they have the school population in mind."

Representations to Pretoria failed because the National Department of Education refused to accept the isiXhosa Language Boards' so-called recommendation, in spite of the fact that it was an independent body by then in terms of the homeland dispensation.

Subsequent attempts by black members of the Board to induce Pretoria to change their mind failed. The following representations to Pretoria from the meeting held on 27-28 September 1983 failed to achieve the desired outcomes. The matter had become an embarrassment for both Pretoria and the homeland concerned as it clearly showed that even though the former had given the homeland structures so-called autonomy, Pretoria's word was final. This is how the matter is recorded in the relevant minutes:

An interesting discussion ensued on Mr Budaza's book KHAWUFAN' UCINGE. Members confirmed the Executive's feelings that the words "kaffir" and "impimpi", used in the first story, had no derogatory connotations. Members were against any efforts to tone down innocent expressions and thereby water down the language. The story, it was pointed out, dealt with one eccentric individual and did not purport to generalize about Whites. The meeting appointed Messrs Mjamba, Satyo and Swanepoel to look into the matter and formulate a resolution to be submitted to the Executive Board requesting the Executive Board to accept the first story as it is.

The Budaza dilemma was once again on the agenda of the meeting of the Ciskei Xhosa Language Committee Board (sic) held in Zwelitsha on 15-27 April 1984. The relevant entry 5.5 under matters arising comments as follows:

Mr Satyo commented that the essence of the Board's feelings on the book **Khawufan' ucinge** is that "the book contained no racially inflammatory remarks."

The Board resolved to send a memorandum attached to the minutes to the Department of Education explaining the harmlessness of the so-called "offending expression":

Annexure A

IMPIMPI - This word is generally used effectively and not offensive at

all.

THE EXPRESSION: "Jy lag nog Kaffer"

The circumstances and the characterisation of the person who uses this term in the story would lose its impact altogether if the word "Kaffer" is not used.

For certain people no evolution has taken place from the kaffer to Bantu to Xhosa – especially people in certain isolated places. It was a common word, e.g. the title of the Kaffir English Dictionary by Kropf.

The user of this word has not evolved.

In literature a genuine depiction of certain peoples' character has to be depicted in a natural way.

The battle for free speech later raged when the Board expressed disquiet about so-called obscenities in Peteni's **KwaZidenge**, in the meeting held on 1-3 October 1986.

Vide the relevant minutes:

KwaZidenge R L Peteni

The book was recommended for adults and higher levels. There are however some obscene words used. But Dr Satyo saw nothing wrong with the book.

To conclude this brief overview of the role played by the Language Committees and Boards in the development and the transformation of isiXhosa literature, it should be mentioned that this chapter in the history of isiXhosa literature clearly shows what happens when one group of people has hegemony over another. It goes out of its way to protect that hegemony and self-interest to the extent of destroying even the little good it had set itself – in this case, the development of African literatures. The exercise is also an eye-opener to current Pan South African Language Board structures regarding what its predecessors's failures were precisely because of over-regulation.

9.5 Freedom and the way forward

One only wonders how African-language writing is going to develop now that we have entered a new non-sexist, non-racial democratic South Africa. Immediately after the coming in of this new era, with all the euphoria of freedom ringing high in the air, Grobler (1995:58) posed several 'penetrating questions' regarding the way forward:

Now that the notorious restrictions have fallen away, some penetrating questions which open up interesting possibilities for future research, present themselves. Will African-language writers be able to prove beyond doubt that the restraints were indeed the reason for the 'immature' state of African-language writing in South Africa? Will the abolition of the hateful restrictive measures necessarily result in the emergence of masterpiece after masterpiece? Will black writers who have abandoned their mother tongues for English, return to the languages of their birth to help improve the quality of their literatures? And if so, how will they be received by their alienated audiences? Will African-language writers succeed in uplifting their literatures to a level of maturity acceptable to the world, *even if it means criticising the new government*? Can African-language literature obtain the status of maturity simply by picking the bones of apartheid?

Fourteen years after 'uhuru' there are no clear cut or definite answers to these questions. Of course, some of them are rhetorical in the sense that no one can see into the future. Even with fourteen years behind us, from the attainment of freedom till now, we are still busy with reconstruction. No literature can be remodelled in one or two decades especially if the foundations were shaky. Only some of the more pressing questions will be dealt with, albeit cursorily, in conclusion to this chapter.

While the relationship between the apartheid time restrictions and the immaturity of African literatures cannot be denied, no one can guarantee that removal of apartheid is equal to the emergence of mature literature. The 'brain damage' if one could express the condition of our literature in those terms, has already progressed too far. It would need a new generation of writers to uplift the African language literatures from where they were dumped, to levels commensurate with other official languages in this country. But there is an underlying problem – the bad teaching of African languages has produced a huge problem whereby the writing of isiXhosa has suffered tremendously. Unless something is done with this aspect of writing, the production of decently written books will be seriously hampered.

The same problem would apply to black writers who abandoned writing in the mother tongue and came back to it after some time. They would need more than just the ability to think and write in English to be converted into isiXhosa to be able to produce African language writing of calibre, language-wise.

As for writing works that could criticise the new government, that is an open issue, not even literary in essence as press freedom and free speech are basic rights that are enshrined in the Constitution like never before, but whether or not these will be upheld throughout is anybody's guess. History has proved that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely, whether you are in an apartheid state or not. As far as picking the apartheid bones is concerned, the exercise can only be revised if the apartheid monster's bones completely disintegrate with time.

With all these questions, it remains a pity that Grobler throws them from a distance, as a stranger, instead of attempting to address some of the issues raised by his rhetorical questions. As an academic who professes to be part of the very literatures he is writing on, he cannot afford to stand aloof and hope that someone else will come up with solutions to the outcomes of apartheid restrictions.

9.6 Recapitulation

The language committees and boards were an important agency in the writing of isiXhosa books. They did a lot of good work in standardizing the African languages by determining the orthographies and such things as word division, translation of school materials, and prescribing books to be used in the various classes. It was in the latter function that they went overboard in their watchdog role over black literature. They were tacitly extensions of the notorious Publications Control Board. They stifled the publication of mature adult literature as, as said by Malan (1987:7) “they had a detrimental effect on the production and content of the African literature.”

CHAPTER TEN

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The emerging trend in academic research in the new dispensation is to relate all research to development and constitutional rights. Theoretical research that ends up in the dusty library bookshelves and backrooms with no relevance to development remains what it is – backroom research and not developmental or emancipatory research. That is why all learning areas today have to relate to the cause of the ordinary person, if they are to be relevant. The same should apply to research.

Literature mirrors reality and society. It is therefore well-positioned to highlight societal norms, needs, short-comings and foibles. It even has the suggestive power to proffer remedies as the aim of all good literature is to entertain and to educate, albeit subtly. This is made possible because writers are not only social chroniclers, they are also social commentators and social watch dogs. They draw attention to contemporary topical issues in society.

The study is aimed at highlighting transformation and socio-economic changes in amaXhosa society as reflected in the early newspapers and in creative literature such as novels, in later generations, up to and including 2006. Having just come out of a long history of colonialism and oppression that led to confusion and loss of identity among many members of this cultural group, the study comes at the most appropriate time when we are picking up the pieces and trying to find our roots and bearings after a long and dehumanising struggle.

Satyo (1981:79) confirms this transformation as a result of missionary influence:

It has already been indicated that the birth of imaginative literature in Xhosa is inextricably bound up with Missionary enterprise. This enterprise was concerned not only with spiritual enrichment but also with social transformation. It touched ruthlessly on the very essence of the life-style and the philosophy of life of the Xhosas: it aimed at reforming not only their material side of life but also their supernatural beliefs and their world-view. This was bound to be reflected in the literature that followed.

The three major forces that impacted on amaXhosa people were the church, the school and the government. Each of these institutions has its own agenda aimed at transforming amaXhosa for personal benefit or advantage. Each had a vested interest in the encounter between black and white, culminating in the tension that bedevilled relations between black and white for many years as a result of imperialism and resistance.

The poems cited earlier in the research point to the topicality and relevance of the topic under discussion in this study. Mdaka (1992:1) expresses this urge to engage in this liberatory narrative or discourse as follows:

The modern or written literature of Africa constitutes one of the most powerful authorities for this narrative. With very few exceptions, its point of departure is the fact of colonization and disastrous impact of that historical event on the society, culture and psyche of Africans. Again with few exceptions, its destination is decolonization, the liberation of Africans from the foreign yoke and its legacy of political tyranny, economic exploitation and cultural impoverishment.

Since appropriate remarks have been made in each chapter, this general conclusion will only focus on the salient issues that have come to light in the research without repeating what has been said before. This being a general conclusion, no attempt will be made to deal with the issues chapter by chapter.

The newspaper age is significant in the research because it gave the people fundamental training in expressing their views in writing and expanding their vistas and consciousness about life in general. The newspapers were very popular because they carried topical issues that were bread and butter issues for their readers. They reflect the changes in society from how to dress to how to behave and all along the environment was changing from the known to the unknown. The strong views of the authors of some of the articles came out clearly in the debacle about culture between Kokela and others, including Shepherd whose stand on the matter was uncompromising.

The changing times are pertinently reflected in books such as Ndawo's allegorical novel, **Uhambo lomhambi** (1909), clearly indicating that there was no place to hide in what was contemptuously called 'heathenism'.

It is also remarkable to note that while many authors reflected these changes, others clearly challenged the *status quo*, acting as apologiae for their culture. One such book is Mqhayi's **Ityala lamawe** (1914). The book deals with the African judicial system in which the chief tries cases with the assistance of his councillors and interested stakeholders. It was used as a useful handbook on African law and civil procedure for white magistrates for many years in earlier regimes.

Mqhayi's Utopia, **UDon Jadu** (1929), represents a milestone in isiXhosa novel writing. The book has two trajectories – black political aspirations as represented by the Zathuza and Mnandi charters, and defiance of the *status quo*. Don Jadu resists all kinds of injustices until he comes close to the establishment of an egalitarian way of coexistence at Zathuza and Mnandi. As pointed out by Sirayi (1989:111), Dondolo,

the main character, is ‘a microcosm of the African society undergoing socio-economic and political change.’

Jordan’s **Ingqumbo yeminyanya** (1940) is the epitome of the clash between Westernism and Africanism. A major change in life takes place when the ruler to be, Zwelinzima, and his girlfriend, Thembeke, are not only tutored by the white Bishop and the white Sister Monica, but they are so alienated from their own people that they are not counselled by them for the huge responsibilities they were to shoulder when Zwelinzima took over as Chief of the amaMpondomise. Not even the perfect foil, the abaThembu chief who was more tactful in dealing with his tribe’s expectations, could dissuade him from enforcing the rushed reforms that related to doing away with goats that served important ritualistic purposes and other reforms.

This powerful novel is another apologia for amaXhosa culture in that it shows that these traditions and practices have to be taken seriously, otherwise those concerned would have to face the wrath of the ancestors as happened to Zwelinzima and Thembeke and their innocent child. It was that so-called ‘victory of darkness over light’ according to the missionaries as personified by Shepherd that drew the wrath of the book’s critics.

Change is discernible in all the other books discussed in the study, ranging from determination to choose one’s own marriage partner instead of agreeing to an arranged marriage, in the case of Zoleka in Jongilanga’s **Ukuqhawuka kwembeleko** (1960), to resistance by the young woman, Zuziwe, in Peteni’s **Kwazidenge** (1980) who opposes being forced to break off relations with a potential suitor just because there is an endless feud between the amaHlubi and the abaThembu cultural groups. Her steadfastness even to the point of committing suicide by abortion shows that she was not prepared to be bullied.

Further change in political outlook and writing is evidenced in Mtuze’s **Alitshoni lingaphumi** (1986) a novel that departed from the beaten path by reflecting the notorious forced removals at the peak of the apartheid era. The changing lives of the

people is evidenced by their resilience and identification with political activism of the time in order to survive.

Westernism and its intricacies is depicted very well in Saule's **Unyana womntu** (1989) where the scene changes from the traditional court case we saw in Mqhayi's **Ityala lamawele**, to a Western justice system where the onus is on the accused to prove his innocence after his wife was murdered shortly after he had visited her.

All the books discussed show clearly how the black communities have moved from traditional rural life to urban life with all its downsides, e.g. moral degeneration, in the case of Satyo's **Etshatile Engatshatanga** (1990), gender inequality, in the case of Mcimeli's **Kazi Ndenzeni na?** (1995), rampant corruption among professionals and business people in the case of Xundu's **Kusalawula Yena** (2004).

A final discernible change is found in Nzo's **Nandiweza** (2006) which globalizes the plot to include the main character's life in Malawi and later his experiences in South Africa where some xenophobics fail to appreciate the contribution he and his compatriots are making to the country.

In all the books that have been analysed in this study, transformation in the lives of the subjects of study is patently clear. This happens on several fronts, namely on the social, economic and political terrains. Some changes are for better but others are certainly for worse. In this way the writers preserved the experiences of the people over a long period of time albeit in mediated form as all literature is but verisimilitude. It is an approximation of life.

Be that as it may, the exercise should be a useful memory aid as we move deeper and deeper into the global world of the computer and other technology, where identity has been subjected to modernity whereby we are all just elements in a vast formless state of flux, having lost our traditional roots and values. It is that rootlessness that has made us directionless because it is often said you have to know your past in order to know your future and understand the present.

It cannot be doubted, given the above evidence, that Shepherd's (1955: 177) prophecy has been eminently fulfilled as he said:

It can be said with confidence that the future will probably witness the writing and publication of authentic pictures of African life written by Africans. There has been much written about the life of Africans and a great deal of it is valuable, but so far too little of it has come from the pens of Africans themselves. The African has felt and dreamed, laboured and aspired, danced in ecstasy and sunk to the depths of despair; he has seen Western civilization come crashing into his primitive life, changing it in ways his forefathers had no imagination. But through all this he has remained inarticulate, or, when he has spoken, too often it has been in wildness of passion and protest.

Democracy, with freedom of expression as one of its strongest pillars, has prepared the way for what could be a vibrant isiXhosa literature, provided writers take up the cudgels and continue in the tradition of the pioneering authors who built solid foundations, in spite of apartheid, and despite severe limitations from the powers that be. It is therefore imperative to bear the prevailing oppressive conditions in mind when we evaluate colonial and apartheid black literature.

It is only now that we can hope that what Ntuli and Swanepoel (1993:139) once predicted will ultimately materialise:

It is therefore quite possible that the African literatures will be released from their peripheral and submissive role of the past century and be brought back to the centre of South African literature where they had been in pre-colonial times. As the pillars of apartheid vanish in the distance and the sense of convergence and national unity emerges in the viewing of the arts, the developing South African literature will gain momentum, comprising all worthwhile works irrespective of the language medium.

This positive outlook resonates with what Mbeki (2007:1) sees as the new role of African languages in the new dispensation:

Quite correctly, many in our country have expressed concern about the place of the African languages in our society. This relates to such important matters as mother-tongue instruction in our schools, the study of African languages at the school and university levels, publication of books and magazines in the African languages, the further development of these languages for use as media of instruction in our state institutions, in the public discourse and public communication, and so on.

It is hoped, in conclusion, that this study will contribute to the redirection and rejuvenation of interest in research in African languages in the new dispensation. For too long the study of African languages was fettered by outcomes and goals that had very little to do with black interests in a developing country. They had to follow theoretical formulations that were adapted from Western theoretical principles that were rooted in foreign conceptualisation and context. While some of these will be retained in order to forge the ties between African and Western literary theorising, they will, of necessity, be subjected to serious scrutiny and adaptation, if they are to serve a useful promotional role in African languages.

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