

**THE INTERACTION BETWEEN CULTURE AND
CHARACTERISATION IN UTHINGO LWENKOSAZANA BY D.B.Z.
NTULI WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE SHORT STORY
IPHASIKA**

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this dissertation has been to investigate character portrayal from a cultural semiotic point of view in DBZ Ntuli's collection *Uthingo lwenkosazana* with special reference to the short story *iPhasika*.

Character portrayal takes place via techniques, which fall into two broad categories, namely direct and indirect. Naming as a characterisation technique is seen as a typical Zulu characterisation device, which resorts under the indirect technique.

Culture has been described as a learned, not inherited thing, which derives from ones social environment and distinguishes itself from human nature on the one hand, and from individual personality on the other.

The sign is a conventionalised representation of something else, which aims to communicate something, which in literature can be conventionalised within the boundaries of the text. Cultural signs signify a certain norm or principle.

In *Uthingo lwenkosazana* character portrayal and culture cannot exist without the other. In this novel:

- (i) culture can merely constitute the social setting in which a character finds itself, without characterisation as such;
- (ii) a character can constitute culture;
- (iii) a character can interact with culture, in which case it:
 - (a) shows superiority towards that culture, or
 - (b) is dominated by that culture.

In *iPhasika*, Kholiwe has dynamic interaction with culture although she is dominated by it whereas uSikhumbuzo in *Bafanele ukugcotshwa* and uVusumuzi

in *Iziqongo zezintaba* do not interact dynamically with their cultures although they are dominated by them.

OPSOMMING

Die doel met hierdie ondersoek is om karakterisering te ondersoek vanuit 'n kultureel-semiotiese perspektief. In hierdie verband word breedweg gekyk na D.B.Z. Ntuli se kortverhaalbundel *Uthingo lwenkosazana*, maar in besonder na die kortverhaal *iPhasika*.

Karakteruitbeelding vind plaas deur uitbeeldingstegnieke wat breedweg in twee groepe ressorteer, naamlik direkte- en indirekte tegnieke. Naamgewing is 'n tipiese tegniek wat onder die hoof "indirekte uitbeeldingstegnieke" tuishoort.

Kultuur word beskryf as 'n aangeleerde, geensins oorgeërfde ding nie, wat uitspruitende is uit 'n mens se sosiale omgewing en homself distansieer van menslike natuur aan die een kant en individuele persoonlikheid aan die ander kant.

Die semiotiese teken is 'n konvensionele verteenwoordiger van iets anders wat ten doel het om iets te kommunikeer, wat in letterkunde konvensie verkry binne die teks. Kultureel-georiënteerde tekens binne hierdie raamwerk is eerder beginsel- of normgedrewe van aard.

In *Uthingo lwenkosazana* word bevind dat karakteruitbeelding en kultuur in 'n variërende mate met mekaar in verband gebring kan word. Dit word bevind dat:

- a) kultuur bloot die sosiale omgewing eksplisiteer sonder dat invloed ugeoefen word op die karakter en die uitbeelding daarvan;
- b) 'n karakter kultuur kan reflekteer;
- c) 'n karakter in dinamiese interaksie met kultuur kan wees, in welke mate dit:
 - (i) kultuur domineer; of
 - (ii) deur kultuur gedomineer word.

Hier word bevind dat uKholiwe in *iPhasika* 'n dinamiese interaksie met kultuur het ofskoon sy gedomineer word daardeur terwyl uSikhumbuzo in *Bafanele ukugcotshwa* en uVusumuzi in *Iziqongo zezintaba* wel domineer, maar nie 'n dinamiese wisselwerking met hul onderskeie kulturele omgewings gehad het nie.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

According to narratological principles the concept character can also be interpreted as the end result of a process of intervention by an author (cf. Barthes, 1975; Rimmon-Kenan, 1983; and Genette, 1980). Seen from this perspective, an analysis of character will include a study of the expository style, which includes techniques, which the author has used to portray his/her characters.

In the short story *iPhasika* ("iPhasika weekend") the main character, Kholiwe, is portrayed as a teenage girl from a Christian religious background, who undertakes a journey to her friends. Peer pressure leads her to react in contradiction to her own background and nature.

In *Bafanele ukugcotshwa* the main character Sikhumbuzo, who is to be ordained as a priest, is also portrayed as a character that reacts in contradiction to his religious nature and engages into an extra-marital relationship with Betty, a girl from a nearby neighbourhood.

In these short stories there seems to be a significant link between character and cultural background. The narrator lets, amongst other things, characters and the way they are portrayed, interact with culture. In the short story *iPhasika* "Easter Weekend" and to a lesser extent in *Bafanele ukugcotshwa* "They need to be ordained" two different cultures are in conflict with each other: a Zulu Christian religious culture and a Zulu urban culture. In both these short stories, the latter dominates the former and the other characters have non-African features such as names, places where they stay, etc. while the main characters always suffer because of their influence. The main characters are part of a Zulu culture, which is imbedded into the Christian religion while the antagonists are Zulu people who share a Western background without a religious consciousness. The

protagonists have traditional Zulu names while the antagonists were given Western names.

In *iPhasika* Ntuli uses conventionalised signs such as the church, the bible, clothes, people singing religious songs and the church bell to represent the religious Zulu culture while signs such as clothes, liquor, the city, the beach, the non-attendance-of-religious-ceremonies are conventionalised to indicate the culture that belongs to the peer group.

From a cultural semiotic point of view it can thus be deduced that these signs have a referential function, as they are representative of the various cultural groupings in the story. The question is, therefore, how do characters in a short story reveal their character by interacting with these signs and how are these signs conventionalised within the boundaries of the text via the characters.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine:

- what interaction there is between culture and characterisation in the short story "*iPhasika*" on the one hand in the collection "*Uthingo lwenkosazane*", on the other;
- which working definition depicts the relation between culture and character portrayal in narrative fiction from a cultural semiotic point of view;
- what is the relation between culture and character portrayal in the short story *iPhasika*;
- whether there is a trend with regard to culture and character portrayal which repeats itself in the collection *Uthingo lwenkosazane*;
- relation between character portrayal and culture in the collection *Uthingo lwenkosazane*; and
- whether the link between character and culture in *iPhasika* can be regarded as a trend in the collection *Uthingo lwenkosazane*.

1.4 THEORETICAL STATEMENT

Character and characterisation are concepts that are interrelated and the one is known by virtue of the other. A character acquires identity in the cultural, historical, social and religious contexts in which it is placed by the author, especially when it is confronted with foreign contexts.

1.5 CHAPTER DIVISION

In Chapter 2 the theoretical aspects of character from a narratological point of view and from a cultural semiotic point of view is expanded upon while in Chapter 3 character in the short story *iPhasika* is discussed from a cultural semiotic point of view. In Chapter 4 characterisation and culture in the collection *Uthingo lwenkosazane* is discussed. Chapter 5 concludes what has been stated in this mini dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

CHARACTERISATION IN NARRATOLOGY FROM A CULTURAL SEMIOTIC POINT OF VIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Characterisation is an act whereby an artist “invents” character. This person thus develops character that acquires identity within a certain demarcated topic. In the process of revelation the artist will let this character react on certain things and images, amongst others such as events, space, time, other characters and cultural norms and values. The latter (i.e. cultural norms and values) resort under the general sphere of “reality”, applied to literature in particular under the field of semiotics. Recipients will, by being exposed to the character’s reaction on these things, derive “character” from these characters.

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- determine what characterisation is and how cultural norms and values influence characterisation;
- determine what the concept “narratology”, and more specifically “characterisation in narratology” entails;
- demarcate culture in literature as well as the overlapping of culture and characterisation; and
- to expand on the concept “short story”.

2.2 NARRATOLOGY

2.2.1 WHAT IS NARRATOLOGY?

According to Bal (1980:3), narratology is “a literary theory of narrative texts”. Its main concern, therefore, is narrative texts. Most theorists agree that the first criterion of a narrative text is that it should be “a language text”, excluding texts such as comic strips or a non-linguistic sign system such as a picture (cf. Bal 1989:4).

Bal (1980:5) contends furthermore that a narrative text is a text in which “the agent relates an event”. Rimmon Kenan (1983:2) expands on this when he sees it as the “narration of a succession of fictional events”. Narration then suggests two main features of narrative texts namely:

- A communication process in which an addressee transmits the narrative, as a message.
- The verbal nature of the medium used to transmit the message (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:2)

The second criterion, which is the “succession of fictional events”, excludes non fictional verbal narratives such as news reports, history books, personal letters etc., from narrative texts because they are not considered as fictional events.

Three basic aspects or levels of narrative texts can be distinguished, namely, events, their verbal representation, and the act of telling or writing them. Different theorists, however, use different terminology to name this distinction. Genette refers to these respectively as historic, recite and narration (Genette, as cited in Rimmon-Kenan (1983:3). Bal (1980) uses the Dutch terms “geschiedenis”, “verhaal” and “text”, while Rimmon-Kenan (1983:3) prefers to label these levels story, text and narration. In this study, Rimmon-Kenan’s terminology is used.

Although three levels in a narrative are distinguished, it is very important to keep in mind that these three levels do not exist independently of one another. The story can be reconstructed from the text by placing the events in their chronological order.

The story differs from the text in that the events have not yet been arranged in a specific way. This actually means that the story exists before the text.

In the following paragraphs a distinction between text-level and story-level is made.

According to Strachan (1990:8) the **text** involves the arrangement and organising of the events as they are presented to the reader whilst he/she is reading a narrative fiction. It could, however, also be a spoken discourse (see Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:3).

Strachan's point of view presupposes that the text is the sequence in which the author arranges events. It is therefore what the reader reads. Events do not necessarily appear in chronological order. Characteristics of the participants are also dispersed throughout the text. The narrative content is filtered through the prism or perspective called the focaliser.

The text is the only thing directly available to the reader. Through it the reader acquires knowledge of the story (its objects) and of narration (the process of its production). It is presented for a specific perspective and contains aspects, which do not appear in the text in which the same story is related or told differently by different people.

The story can be defined as the narrated events and participants in abstraction from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order (see Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:3).

Eco (1983:27) and Chatman (1983:24) refer to this level as "the basic foodstuff". It is the level, which has been viewed by the formalists as:

- Keten motieven in hun chronologische volgorde (Van Luxemburg et. al., 1981:48) (motives in their chronological order)
- een reeks handelingen verricht of ondergaan door personen in een bepaalde tijd en op een bepaalde plaats. (Dautzenberg, 1973:24)
(a sequence of actions performed by persons in a specific time and on a specific place)

The story is therefore the original version of the narrative text, before the material has been presented from a specific point of view and before a narrator has narrated it. During the reading process, the reader is involved with the story on the one hand and with the adaptation and presentation thereof on the other hand. Literary meaning is established when the reader compares the story (as he has reconstructed it for himself) with the text. Through this he discovers what specific treatment it has undergone in view of an organising instance (see Jooste 1983:2).

To distinguish between the two concepts, one can agree with Chatman (1974:295) when he contends that the story is the what depicted and the text is the how.

2.2.2 OBSERVATION

The term "narration" suggests two things namely (i) a communication process in which the narrative message is transmitted by addresser to addressee and (ii) the verbal nature of the medium used to transmit the message. Narratology is the scientific discipline where the narrative texts are analysed according to certain narratological principles. In this discipline two levels of analysis are relevant, namely a text-level and a story-level. The former involves the arrangement and organising of the events as they are presented to the reader whilst he/she is reading a narrative fiction. The latter represents an abstracted form of the text. To compare these levels one can say that where the story is the original level of the narrative, before the material has been presented from a specific point of view and before it has been narrated by the narrator, the text is the opposite of that, a result of an intervention by the author.

2.3 WHAT IS A SHORT STORY?

The main aspect of a short story is that it is a matter of a single effect, which is communicated, in a *single meaningful* episode or scene. Johnson and Hamlin

(1966:1,2) agree that the short story, when compared with longer narratives such as the novel, distinguishes itself insofar as it attempts to achieve a single effect.

It follows then that, not only are there usually fewer characters in a short story, but there is less written about them. Less space is being given to the description of characters while they are placed within the context of an event and are observed by both author and reader.

The reader of narrative art such as the short story has to interpret what he is reading. He cannot rely on the author for explicit statements regarding characters, their virtues or the importance of their actions. In a short story few explanations are given. The reader mostly has to draw his own conclusions. The reader should pay attention to actions, gestures, expressions and descriptions as a good short story contains nothing that is superfluous. **Everything is essential and contributes to the unity of the story.**

The short story, since it attempts to achieve a single effect, communicated in a single episode, distinguishes itself from longer epic art forms in that it has less characters, explanations, space, etc. while at the same time everything that is communicated is essential.

2.4 CHARACTER IN NARRATOLOGY

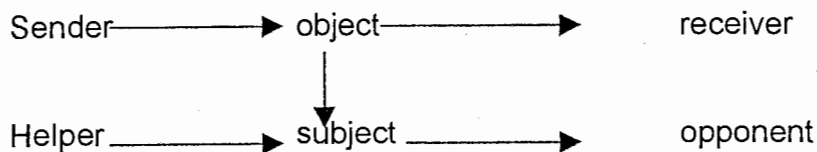
2.4.1 INTRODUCTION

It is clear by now that a general distinction can be drawn between character on the text level and character on the story-level. Character on the story-level are people of flesh and blood, while those on the text-level are creations rather than lively people. To follow is a discussion of the difference between these two concepts.

2.4.2 CHARACTERS ON THE STORY LEVEL

At this point in time one can concur with Rimmon-Kenan (1983:3) that the story-level designates the narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in these events. A story is, therefore, a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors (Bal, 1980:5). The story can thus be seen as an abstraction, or a construct and that it is not directly available to the reader.

At the story level characters are perceived as accomplishing or submitting to an act. Here they are grouped together and are called "actants". Greimas, according to Rimmon-Kenan (1983:30) distinguishes between "acteur" and "actant". He states that both are conceived as accomplishing or submitting to an act, and both can include not only human beings, that is characters, but also animate object (e.g. magic ring) and abstract concepts e.g. (destiny). According to Greimas (1966) the "acteurs" are numerous, whereas the number of "actants" is reduced to six, namely:



The **subject** is usually the main character. There may be more than one subject in a particular narrative. The subject struggles towards a goal object. What pushes and motivates the subject to attain this goal, is referred to as the power. The power is something abstract, for example, bravery, cleverness, fate etc. It can happen that the subject and the **receiver** correspond if the subject succeeds in attaining his goal, he becomes their receiver.

The subject always meets with some measures of resistance in his struggle to reach the object and also needs help. An opponent exerts resistance on him.

The **helper** is the one who helps the subject to attain his goal. At times it becomes difficult to distinguish between the helper and the power.

Some obvious differences between the two are :

1. While the helper helps only the subject the power controls everything in the story.
2. The power remains abstract while the helper is always concrete.
3. The power is in the background while the helper is always in the foreground.
4. There is only one power but there can be more than one helper.

(Bal, 1985:25)

2.4.3 CHARACTERS ON THE TEXT-LEVEL

Whereas story is a succession of narrated events, text is the spoken or written discourse, which undertakes their telling (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:3).

The text is thus the level on which the author arranges events, i.e. that which is read. From an events-point-of-view one can say that story differs from text in so far as that the events in the text do not necessarily appear in their chronological order whereas in the story they do. The story can be reconstructed from the text by placing the events in their natural or chronological succession. This suggests that the story exists before the text. The text is however, the only narrative, which is directly available to the reader. Furthermore, it is through the text that the reader acquires knowledge of the story.

The importance of characters is due to the fact that fiction deals with changing human relationships. In order that the story be classic, it must be about people portrayed with insight who are always credible and in some instances dynamic. At this level actors are transformed or changed into characters. They are no longer seen as groups, they become individuals with distinctive human characteristics, unlike an actor, which is a structural position). A character is a complex semantic unit, which resembles a human being. It possesses features, which make psychological and ideological descriptions possible (see Bal, 1980:80).

Character on the text-level will be dealt with in full detail later on in this chapter.

2.4.4 CONCLUSION

Character and characterisation help to lay bare the meanings of these concepts and their place and significance in literature is thereby highlighted. Characterisation is important at two levels, namely the story (first level) and the text (second level). At the story level characters are grouped together and called actants.

The second level of narration is what is referred to as the text level. At this level we refer to characters, rather than actors. The story differs from the text in that events in the text do not necessarily appear in their chronological order. This suggests that story exists before text.

2.5 CHARACTERISATION

2.5.1 INTRODUCTION

Characterisation is the sum total of techniques employed by an artist in presenting characters in a literary work so that such characters are seen by the readers as persons endowed with moral and physical qualities. These figures, which are used by the author in the text assume some form of human status for the reader, because they (the characters) are representations of persons.

In this subsection characters are discussed as:

- fictitious creations, which are presented as lifelike characters in relation to their world.

2.5.2 WHAT IS CHARACTERISATION?

Character is connected to human beings and their conditions in a literary work of art. Characterisation is an act performed by someone or something. Chatman (1983:107) defines this concept as "the manner in which the writer shows qualities, actions, sayings and reactions of the people in his hand".

On the basis of Chatman's definition, characterisation can be regarded as the art of creating fictional people who are nonetheless endowed with real human identity. It is, therefore, the depiction of persons, their actions and their way of life in general.

Characterisation is the writer's way of delineating the people's participation in the story. It is through the art of character depiction that the reader can acquire knowledge of what goes on in the minds of characters. By means of what they do, say or the way they respond to situations. The ideas and experiences of the author, are in this way, revealed through characters.

On the other hand, Cohen (1973:77) looks upon characterisation as a means whereby an author establishes the illusion that the person, created by his words, are indeed people or are like people with traits and personalities which a reader can recognise and analyse. From the perspective of the two-level distinction, characterisation is a narrative device used by the author to give a human identity to the otherwise non-human figures in the story. In order to be convincing, the characters must first of all be grounded in reality. They must be true not so much to our world but to the world, which the artist has created for them. They must always be credible and dynamic in order to produce in our minds an understanding of the characters as people who might really exist (cf. Msimang 1986:99).

Characters can also be distinguished according to their functions in relation to the theme and other crucial issues of the plot. A recognition of the roles they

play enables the reader to understand their actions. They must have some sort of human dignity, so that they are taken seriously.

The reader should be able to identify with the speeches and behaviour of the characters. Characters must be consistent from the first to the last. It simply means changes should not be drastic in a character's personality. Character, in a work of art have consequences. They influence events, they create difficulties and later, in different circumstances, they dissolve them.

Characterisation, being an act by someone or something, actually equals the sum total of techniques in presenting lifelike characters. To follow is an in depth discussion on each one of these techniques.

2.5.3 METHODS OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL

2.5.3.1 INTRODUCTION

The ultimate objective of character portrayal is most probably to create the person in his entirety. Such people will then appear to the reader as real and believable beings that can be identified in the real world. According to Heffner (1965:257) characterisation equals the concept "character depiction". From this angle, characterisation is the writer's way of delineating the people participating in the story. It is through the art of character depiction that the reader acquires knowledge pertaining to what goes on in the minds of characters, why they do what they do, say what they say or respond the way they do in certain situations. The ideas and experiences of the author are in this way revealed through characters.

Although character is important at two levels namely story (first level) and text (second level) we will concentrate on the second level only. At this level reference is made to characters rather than actors as is the case with the first level. Characters are depicted in four main ways:

- (i) repetition
- (ii) accumulation
- (iii) relationship with other characters and
- (iv) transformation

(Bal, 1980:85-86)

These principles work together to construct the image of the character. A classic but still useful distinction between two basic ways of creating characters is through **telling** and **showing**. Shipley (1968:52) elaborates on this when he remarks that the writer may present his characters in two general ways:

- (a) directly, telling the reader person's qualities.
- (b) Through action showing the person's deeds, by which his character may be known.

Authors may, therefore, present their characters either directly or indirectly. If they adopt an omniscient point of view, they may even elucidate thoughts and feelings of their characters.

2.5.3.2 METHODS OF CHARACTERISATION

There are many methods and techniques of character portrayal but, in the final analysis, they fall into two categories, namely direct (explicit) and indirect (implicit) characterisation.

2.5.3.2.1 THE DIRECT METHOD OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL

The direct presentation of characters is an explicit way of characterisation. Here the narrator himself describes his characters. He tells us what they look like physically and he may even describe what they think and how they feel (cf. Kenny, 1966:34).

Direct characterisation can happen in three ways:

- i. Through **self-analysis**. This when the character talks about himself to himself.
- ii. When the **character talks about himself to other characters** using dialogue. They are likely to respond to what he is saying by either supporting or denying what he is saying.
- iii. When the **narrator makes explicit statements** about characters. Things such as their appearance, their behaviour, habits etc. Here the narrator himself describes his characters. If he adopts an omniscient point of view he may even be analytical and tell you what and how they feel.

Msimang (1986:100) is of the opinion that it often happens that the author uses one of his characters to be his spokesperson (as is the case with an autobiography).

2.5.3.2.2 THE INDIRECT METHOD OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL

Here the narrator does not tell us about characters - he shows them to us. This is a dramatic method of character portrayal. Through the use of for instance environment or a character's words and actions the reader is put in a position where he can deduce for himself what kind of a character he is presented with.

The reader does not only see the character doing things, nor does he hear him saying things, but he is actually introduced into the character's psyche so that he (the reader) may know what he (the character) thinks or feels. This can be done in a number of ways by observing:

- the character's actions and behaviour,
- his speech,
- his surrounding or environment,
- his/her appearance; and
- the character's name

(Raselekoane 1991:26)

A trait may be implied by a one-time action or by habitual actions. We learn a great deal about a character by closely observing his/her action. There are countless questions, which one can ask about a character in action. A one-time-action tends to evoke the dynamic aspect of the character and it often plays a part in a narrative turning point (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:61).

Habitual action, suggests, as the term implies, the action that is typical of a certain character. A character can be characterised by his/her speech. This means that the language of any given character is extremely central to his/her personality. This means not only the kind of words which the character uses, but also the manner of his/her utterances. What one character says about another character is important in that it may characterize, not only by the kind of words which the character uses, but also by the manner of the utterances. What one character says about another is important in that it may characterise not only the one spoken about, but also the one who speaks (Reaske, 1966:47).

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

Rimmon-Kenan (1983:66) further contends that a character's physical surroundings (e.g room, house, town, street, etc.) as well as his social environment (e.g. family, social class etc.) are also often used as a trait.

Name-giving is another technique that needs explanation since this is such a dominant aspect in African culture, and also a characterisation technique in African literature, the next paragraphs will endeavor to explain this technique.

2.5.3.2.3 NAME-GIVING AS A CHARACTERISATION TECHNIQUE

(i) NAME-GIVING FROM A ZULU-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Name-giving is a practice that is prevalent in all cultural groups although the pattern and purpose may vary from one cultural group to another. Africans have a strong regard for the practice of name-giving, a child is not just given any name. Many factors come into play when a child is given a name, while it is only elderly people who are charged with the task of giving a name to a child.

Finnegan, (1976:40) recognises the importance of naming in African Societies. She states that "one of the most striking aspects is the way a name can be used as succinct and oblique way of commenting on their owners". Koopman (1989:35) enhances this aspect by stating that "in Zulu society, on the other hand, the name givers are always aware of the name, and literal meaning of the name is always directly related to the reason for giving it". Evans-Pitchard (1939:8) contends in connection with African names that "names of all kinds are social structure and define his relations to other members of society".

This statement is certainly true to Zulu names. Zulu names reflect the position of the individual both within the immediate family and the wider family. They show relationships between brothers and sisters, between parents and children.

Koopman, (1976:30,31 & 37) describes how a child is named in a Zulu society. According to him the following should be borne in mind:

- The role of God in the birth where parents see the birth of children as an activity by the family's ancestral spirits, e.g the common boy's name is Mandlenkosi (the strength of God).
- The relationship between parents and children. Often a parent will give a child a name, which is an injunction - a reminder to the child of the

behaviour patterns which the parent expects the child to follow as it grows up. An example is Bhekinkosi (look up to the Lord).

- The circumstances which parents find themselves at the time of birth. Such names may refer to the circumstance of the mother, particularly during pregnancy or birth. They may refer to the father, or they may refer to the relationship between the parents, particularly if there is a friction between them. An example is Phumzile (girl) from ungiphumuzile (she has given me rest).

(ii) NAME-GIVING AS A LITERACY DEVICE

Characters are identified not only by their words or actions, but also by their Names. Name-giving, therefore, goes a long way in delineating character. It is, however, regarded by many critics as the simplest form of characterisation.

Naming as a literary device falls under the rubric of onomastics, which aims at investigating the "levels of signature of names in drama, poetry, fiction and folklore. This includes names of places, characters, cosmic symbols etc. as they relate to theme, structure and other literary considerations". (Alvarez-Altman, 1987:220).

Naming has thus been described as the process by which words become names through associations and other cultural criteria. Names help to create characters in a work of fiction and are able to comment upon and judge moral and political issues in fiction. Names in literature frequently demand to be considered as if they were complete little poems, because names reveal the success of the writer in balancing freedom and control.

The names of most of the characters were invented by the author and their adoption, as conventional given names, can be pin-pointed precisely and attributed to the author's work. It is interesting to note that characters can be predictable, i.e names that will make readers predict what is going to be the

outcome in the short story. Some characters are named according to the manner in which they behave themselves. Mkhize (1977:42-56) writes a story entitled uNtozakhe (his own things) in *Emhlabeni*. Ntozakhe, the name of a character is described by the narrator as:

UNtozakhe, njengoba negama lakhe lisho, wabe engumuntu weziga, izigigaba nezigameko ezingapheliyo.

(Ntozakhe, just as his name suggests, was a person of status, numerous incidents and events).

In the story this character experiences many shocking events, which causes him to become angry.

Mkhize (1977) names some of his characters in the novel according to their appearances or what they are wearing. An example of a character who is named according to her appearance is Ndilinga. Others are named according to their attire e.g Kapisi (Cap) the above character, Ndilinga is from the story *Uyalibuka uyaligcina* in *Emhlabeni* (1971:121-135), whilst Kapisi is in the story *Onakho uyaphiwe kuvame* in *uYothi* (1981:25-36). We feel that Mkhize has done something remarkable in this character, Kapisi, who wears a cap. The word Kapisi means **cap** (clothing). In a Zulu society it plays a very important role in as far as identification is concerned. The cap, in most cases, is not worn by dignified men. So it does not surprise us when we see this character being caught by police.

2.6 CULTURE, CULTURAL IDENTITY AND SEMIOTICS

2.6.1 WHAT DOES CULTURE MEAN?

According to Hofstede (1991:6) culture is "learned, not inherited. It derives from one's social environment, not from one's genes".

Culture emerges from a particular place and develops from measurable time. A culture represents an original system of values between persons and a geophysical reality. It is defined as series of active meanings that help people adapt to change by evoking the future.

Hofstede (1991:4) distinguishes between two interpretations of the concept **culture**; culture one and culture two. Culture one relates to culture in the narrow sense. Example: Culture is civilization in education art and literature.

Culture two, which is a broader concept than culture one, is common among social anthropologist. In social anthropology culture is a catchword for all those patterns of thinking feeling and acting. According to Hofstede, it deals with much more fundamental human processes than culture one. It deals with the things that hurt. It is dynamic, a learned entity which is not inherited. It is derived from one's social environment and not from one's genes.

Human nature is what all human beings have in common. It represents the universal level in one's mental software. Culture should be distinguished from human nature on the one hand and from individual personality on the other.

Cultural differences like symbols, heroes, rituals and values manifest themselves in several ways. Symbols are words, gestures, pictures or objects that carry a particular meaning, which is only recognized by those, who share the culture.

2.6.2 WHAT DOES CULTURAL IDENTITY MEAN?

It is said that culture is an ever-changing entity and something, which cannot be inherited, only acquired. It belongs to a particular group of people, which share the same norms and values. Due to the fact that social change sometimes challenge the nature of a culture of a certain community, the individuals of that community's cultural identity is also tested.

Cultural identity is thus the identity of a particular group of people and is partly determined by their national identity.

Culture is much more than merely something that is visible in education, literacy, or other so-called cultural entities. It deals with much more fundamental human processes, it deals with the things that hurt. It is a collective phenomenon, because it is at least partly shared with the people who live or lived within the same social environment where it was learned.

2.6.3 SEMIOTICS

Language is a system of signs that expresses ideas. It is therefore comparable to writing, to the alphabet, symbolic rites etc. Semiotics is a science that studies the life of signs in society.

A sign is a stimulus – the mental image of that which is associated in our minds with that of another stimulus. The function of the former stimulus is to evoke the latter with a view to communication. Communication is, therefore, essential in our understanding of what a sign is. Clouds are a sign of rain, smoke a sign of a fire, but no communication takes place here. A sign is always marked by an intention of communicating something meaningful.

Codification is therefore essential in identifying a sign. Codification entails that the relation between signifier and signified is conventional, i.e. it is the result of an agreement between those who use it.

Because arts are representations of nature and of society, the aesthetic sign (which is found in literature) is the result of a “maker”, an inventor of signs. It achieves its semiological status only to the extent that it is generalised and that its signifying relation becomes explicit.

Society is a system of relations between individuals: its aims are procreation, defence, production, etc. Social life is a game in which the individual plays his own role. Therefore the individual's participation in the group is signified. He does that by inter alia identifying with certain signs such as; signs of identity (uniforms, totems, tattooings, etc) and of polite behaviour (greetings, tone of voice, table manners etc (Guiraud, 1975: 90-91).

2.7 SUMMARY

It has been stated that the term *narration* suggests a communication process in which the narrative message is transmitted by the addresser to the addressee. It also implies the verbal nature of the medium used to transmit the message.

Two levels of analysis in narratology were distinguished, namely a story-level and a text-level. Where the former involves a chronological sequence of events, performed by real people, in real settings according to real time, the latter is an intervention of the former, namely a reorganised version of the former, performed by the hand of an author.

Character and characterisation were therefore discussed on these two narratological levels. On the first level (i.e. story-level) characters have been identified as "actants", i.e. types of people. At the second level (the text-level) the group of characters assumes full personality traits and is thus treated as individual characters instead of "actants".

Characterisation is an act performed by the artist to produce lifelike characters. Two forms of characterisation techniques were distinguished: direct and indirect characterisation. Where the former involves direct comments by the narrator pertaining to the character of the character, the latter has to do with things that the reader has to deduce.

It has also been established that characters can be identified not only by their words or actions, but also by their names. From a Zulu-perspective a name can

be linked to parents, their circumstances and social structure. In Zulu literature a name of a character is often an indication of the role he/she has to play in the story.

Culture is a community-thing that is acquired, not inherited. It is a catchword for all patterns of thinking, feeling and acting. It should be distinguished from human nature on the one hand and from individual personality on the other. The identity pertaining to culture is partly determined by national identity.

Semiotics has as its main field of study, the sign. It is a conventionalised something that stands for something else. In literature, due to the fact that it is a representation of reality, the sign, culturally or not, is also part and parcel thereof.

Culture and character portrayal in narrative fiction from a cultural semiotic point of view therefore entails an analysis of **character portrayal**:

- with special reference to methods and techniques used;
- with an analysis of conventionalised signs which stand in relation to character; and
- which should be done with the distinction of story-level and text-level in mind.

CHAPTER 3

IPHASIKA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Characterisation is an act whereby the writer/author/narrator transforms characters on the story-level to characters on the text-level. He changes persons of flesh and blood to become characters on paper. By so doing he applies certain techniques to portray them to the reading audience. Such characters will then appear to the reader as real and believable beings, which can be identified with by the reader because the same cultural background and identity is shared.

The purpose of this chapter is to determine:

- Who the characters in *iPhasika* are;
- What their cultural surroundings are; and
- What interaction there is between the surroundings and character.

3.2 THE CHARACTERS IN *IPHASIKA*

3.2.1 INTRODUCTION

iPhasika is about Kholiwe, a good-looking teenage girl from a Christian rural area who is in search of her own identity. She visits friends who stay in Durban. Although very uncertain of herself, she enjoys every moment with especially Velaphi, who incidentally also enjoys Kholiwe's friendship. She is very uncertain as to how she should act in the presence of these people. Consequently, she drank too much alcohol, which led to her untimely death.

Ntuli uses characters to portray Kholiwe. Other than Kholiwe, the following characters are found in *iPhasika*:

Ben: Lucy's boyfriend. A negative character that stays in Durban. He personifies the urban culture that is non-religious in nature.

Lucy: Ben`s girlfriend. She has already adopted the urban lifestyle although she is a friend of Kholiwe`s.

Velaphi: An acquaintant of Ben and Lucy. He is Kholiwe`s boyfriend in Durban and the one who suffers because of her death.

Khathi: Kholiwe`s proud father because she is such a good "Christian".

MaDonda: Kholiwe`s loving mother.

Religious people: On the train and on the beach. Masses who enter the church building and who constantly remind Kholiwe of her religious background.

In the next paragraphs the techniques used to portray the character of Kholiwe is investigated.

3.2.2 CHARACTERISATION IN IPHASIKA

3.2.2.1 INTRODUCTION

As stated earlier, techniques of character portrayal can be divided into two groups, namely direct (explicit) and indirect (implicit) portrayal.

3.2.2.2 EXPLICIT (DIRECT) CHARACTERIZATION

All three forms of explicit characterisation have been used in *iPhasika*.

(i) SELF ANALYSIS

Self-analysis is a method of characterisation that has been defined in terms of the character talking about himself (Bal, 1985). Such utterances reveal some personality traits within a character with which we can describe him/her. There are a few instances in which Kholiwe talks to herself about herself in this short story:

In the first instance Kholiwe is found thinking:

“Uyacabanga ukuthi konje abazali bakhe bangathini uma bengena lapha manje bambona esefake lamabhulukwe esimanje kanti abawafuni nakuwabona”. (Ntuli, 1978: 91)

(She took a deep breath thinking of what her parents would say if they came in at that instance and found her in trousers, she knows very well how much her parents were against them).

“Suka lapha ngiyingane yini, eseziphendula ngombuzo ephuma ephindela esihlalweni sakhe” (Ntuli, 1978:91)

(She consoled herself by reminding or recalling that she was no longer a child. Rhetorical question is depicted in this self-analysis).

“Eyakhe ingubo yesonto isingaphansi ebhokisini lumuthi thwansi uvalo. Hhayi kodwa nami phela kumele ngibone umhlaba”.(Ntuli, 1978:93)

(Her church uniform is right underneath in the suitcase, she got a fright but consoled herself that she has to grow up and experience the world, she thought to herself).

Kholiwe is in a state of being frightened and guilty. She appears to be having an inner conflict. She is torn between two worlds (situations), i.e. the outward nature, which portrays her as a Christian and the inner nature that reveals her as soon as she left her home. Her behaviour changes with different environments. Instead, her parents have faith in her.

Kholiwe's mother, maDonda regards herself and her husband to be lucky to have a child who is devoted to the church:

“Sisenenhlanhla thina Baba izingane zanamuhla ngumsebenzi ukuzisunduzela enkonzweni” (Ntuli 1978:91)

(Her parents acknowledged how lucky they were as it was difficult to persuade young people to go to church).

Kholiwe's father, Khathi, repeated his faith in his daughter as follows:

“Kunjalo - Donda. Ha, bayozizwela nakhona eThekwini ezimvuselelweni isifakaza ingane yami, pho, ikhuluma uzizwele nje ukuthi le nto eyikhulumayo iphuma ngaphakathi kuyona” (Ntuli 178:91).

(Kholiwe's father started praising his daughter for her intelligence and the manner in which she will testify about the word of God. She is confident and speaks from her heart to impress her listeners.)

It is evident that Kholiwe is not the Christian she pretends to be. There is an inconsistency between what her parents believe of her, and what she thinks of herself. According to her parents she was going to attend a religious ceremony. Her aim instead, was to reach Durban to enjoy the company with her friends.

By means of self-analysis Kholiwe is portrayed as somebody who is no longer a child, but someone who is determined to experience the world, no matter what it takes. She suffers from peer pressure but she is determined to achieve her desire - that of meeting with her friends and especially her boyfriend, Vilaphi.

(ii) A CHARACTER THAT TALKS ABOUT HIMSELF TO OTHER CHARACTERS

There are a number of instances where Kholiwe, our main character, reveals her personality when talking to other characters in this short story.

Kholiwe certainly knew how to approach her parents in order to convince them that she should go to Durban:

“Phela akusikhona ukuvakasha lokhu mame, ngiya esontweni. Mina angiboni ukuthi kuyasiza ukuba ngihlobe sengathi ngiya emcimbini

yemibungazo kanti eqinisweni yisikhathi senzilo lesi, lapho kungafanele ukuba kube khona ukuzinaka okutheni” (Ntuli 1978:89).

(Well mother, this is not really a visit, I am attending a church service.

I do not see any point in making myself beautiful as if I am going to a party whereas it is a mourning period and there is no need to make yourself beautiful) Kholiwe convinces her mother about the clothes she is wearing and that she is only attending a church service, as it was Easter, a time for mourning).

She accepted the fact that she lied to her parents, but also took responsibility for her actions:

“Awazi wena phela, bebengeke bavume. Nami ngazisiza ngokubabamba ngengqondo ngithi kumele siye nawe enkonzweni yePhasika” (Ntuli, 1978:92.)

(You have no idea! They would not have allowed me if I didn't lie by telling them that you invited me over for the Easter Service).

Kholiwe knew that if she hold the truth she would not been granted permission. By so doing she was brave enough to go against traditions norms and values.

“Kodwa bengizomisa kanjani Lucy uma bengibatshela iqiniso lokuthi ngiyazivakashela nje. Ubengeke avume neze uBaba”(Ntuli, 1978:92).

(But I did not have another option except lying, Lucy. If I told them the truth that I was only visiting, my dad wouldn't have allowed me).

Kholiwe is uncertain whether she is attractive or not, nor is she certain about her ability to swim:

“Angithi ukuphathile okokubhukuda? Ngikuphathile, angazi-ke noma kuyongifanele yini. Asazi-ke ngoba nokubhukuda olwandle angikwazi, ngisazofunda” (Ntuli, 1978:93).

(Did you bring your swimsuit? I did. Even though I am not sure if it will suit me. Worst of all, is that I have never swam at the beach, I still have to learn.)

Kholiwe`s background was that of the Christian religion. Her life and her parents' life are clearly imbedded into the church. It was her family's culture to respect and attend religious ceremonies performed by the church.

Signs such as the church bell, the Bible, church uniforms, the attending of religious ceremonies, people praising the Lord and being without any sin were conventionalised by Ntuli to represent this background of Kholiwe.

Instead Kholiwe used this very same norms and values to pursue her dream to be with her boyfriend. Kholiwe thus acted in contradiction to her own cultural background to pursue her own dream.

(iii) EXPLICIT STATEMENTS BY THE NARRATOR

The narrator describes Kholiwe's father in a simple and straightforward manner like:

“Kusho uKhathi umdududla wendoda lapho othi uma uyibheka ubuso bayo ukhangwe ngokwenama” (Ntuli, 1978:88).

(Replied Khathi a lefty man and when one looks at him his face was filled with joy)

Her mother as:

Yasho inkosikazi emfushanyana yaphuma yabheka ekamelweni akulona uKholiwe”(Ntuli, 1978:90).

(His wife replied, a shortish person who emerged and proceeded to the room where Kholiwe was busy packing.)

Kholiwe as:

“Inhle le ngane bo, kulapho isisekugcwaleni impela ebuntombini. Indoni yamanzi ewugamfu lapha ihamba igqishazele intokazi kaKhathi madoda” (Ntuli, 1978:89).

(This child is beautiful, she was in her teenage stage. She was dark, well built and she had a beautiful walk).

The Christians that entered in the train were described as:

“Kungene amakholwa okubonakala ngezingubo zawo ezimhlophe ezinokuhlaza ukuthi ngabaseZiyoni. Kukhona oshaya isigubhu” (Ntuli, 1978:90).

(Then entered the Zion Christians, who were clearly identified by their white and green uniforms. There was one who was beating the drum).

3.2.2.3 IMPLICIT (INDIRECT) CHARACTERISATION

3.2.2.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Implicit characterisation is the opposite of explicit characterisation. In implicit indirect characterization, a trait displays and exemplifies itself in various ways. Rather than mentioning it, as is the case with direct characterization (Rimmon-Kenan 1983). Some of these ways in which a trait displays or exemplifies itself is through action, speech, external appearance and environment.

3.2.2.3.2 ACTION

A trait may be implied by a **one-time action** or by **habitual action** (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:61) and Tennyson (1967:45). Actions, which are one time usually tend to evoke the dynamic aspect of the character. The habitual actions tend to reveal the characters' unchanging or static aspect.

Habitual actions are especially obvious in Kholiwe's behaviour. When she entered the train she kept quiet because she was reminded of who she was and where she came from, and she suddenly looked frightened. But throughout the story she appeared to be frightened. This is evident in the following:

“Usengene esitimeleni uKholiwe, umbone ebheke ethule. Uyambona usedonsa umoya okomuntu othukile” (Ntuli, 1978:90).

(Kholiwe has entered the train, deep in thought she takes a deep breath like a frightened person).

“Lumuthi heqe kancane uvalo” (Ntuli, 1978:91).

(She got a little fright).

“Lumuthi thwasu futhi uvalo” (Ntuli, 1978:93).

(She got a fright).

Lucy who was with Kholiwe reminds her that Velaphi would be coming:

“Ethuke ngokunye uKholiwe, kodwa angakhulumi kubonakale ubugubhagubha besifuba nje ukuthi ngethukile lapha” (Ntuli, 1978:93).

(Kholiwe was too scared and kept silent, though her heart was beating fast).

A one-time action happened when Kholiwe suddenly became “brave” and started drinking with her friends. Another “fatal” one time action was when she wanted to prove to her friends that she could swim. She died as a consequence of this braveness.

3.2.2.3.3 SPEECH

The speech of a character can indicate a particular trait both through its content and through its form. This occurs whether the speech is in conversation or is a silent activity of the mind.

Kholiwe is torn between two worlds, that of being a Christian and that of being a member of the peer group. She was certain of the Christian world, but very uncertain about the peer-group world, because of the overprotective nature of the former. She thought that she could take alcohol, like in the following extract:

“Kuyancokolwa, kumnandi kudlule isikhashana babuye bathi phohlo futhi, baphuzephuze. Kulokhu kusho kuKholiwe ukuthi akenqabe kodwa abuye athi kokunye akuzukumenza lutho lokhu, ngcono angaphoxi, uthe uma esethi ufuna ukumthelela futhi uBen kwabhoka uVelaphi manje” - underlining - ZDS (Ntuli 1978:96).

(They were sharing jokes and the mood was good. After a little while they paused for a drink. Kholiwe wanted to refuse but she thought that it was not going to harm her. Velaphi came to her rescue when Ben wanted to give her another glass).

Kholiwe's sense of right and wrong reminded her frequently that she was doing the wrong thing, although the wrong always wins:

“Bagijime nje uKholiwe ude eqalaza unovadlwana nje lokuthi kungenzeka kube khona umuntu wangasekhaya. Uzothini embone ekulesosimo? Akhumbule abazali bakhe ... akhumbule usuku ... azame ukukhohlwa lokhu agijimele olwandle” (Ntuli, 1978:97).

(As they were running Kholiwe is not feeling at ease she has a little fright that it might happen that somebody from nearby her home sees her what will she or he say when they see her in this condition. She is reminded of her parents ... the day (Easter) ... she tried to forget and ran to the sea).

The final conflict of events in *iPhasika* actually takes place inside of Kholiwe. From this perspective one can deduce that she was both protagonist and antagonist of the story. Crisis occurred when she couldn't handle the rough seas while the climax is when she consequently died. The final battle therefore took place when she overestimated her own skill pertaining to the norms and values of the peer group, and consequently died in the waves.

3.2.2.3.4 EXTERNAL APPEARANCE

Since the beginning of the narrative fiction, external appearance was used to imply characters traits (Rimmon -Kenan, 1983:65). Even during our times the relation between external appearance and character traits has remained a powerful resource in the hands of writers, and Ntuli in *iPhasika* is no exception.

He especially gives a clear description of the physical appearance of Kholiwe. The narrator describes her:

“Inhle le ngane bo, kulapho isisekugcwaleni impela ebuntombini. Indoni yamanzi ewugamfu lapha ihamba igqishazele intokazi kaKhathi madoda”
(Ntuli, 1978:89).

(This child is beautiful, she was in her teenage stage. She was dark, well built and she had a beautiful walk). She was also praised by her friends Lucy and Velaphi:

Lucy remarked:

“..unomzimba omuhle dade”

(..you have a beautiful body, sister..) (p92)

Velaphi is amazed by her beauty:

Afike uVelaphi aphelelwe amazwi ...

(On arrival Velaphi did not have words..)

Because of her Christian background she is inexperienced as far as the new culture is concerned. Her age, shyness and beautiful body make this character a dynamic one.

The narrator also describes Kholiwe`s father:

“..umdadudla wendoda lapho othi uma uyibheka ubuso bayo ukhangwe ngokwenama” (Ntuli, 1978:88).

(.....a lefty man and when one looks at him his face was filled with joy)

And her mother as:

“..inkosikazi emfushanyana”(Ntuli, 1978:90).

(..a shortish person...)

These two characters clearly portray the background from which Kholiwe originates. Ben and Lucy portray the urban culture. The latter two are in conflict with the former two characters.

3.2.2.3.5 ENVIRONMENT

A character's physical surroundings (eg. House or cave, town or farm) as well as his human environment (social class) are also often used as trait-connotation metonymies (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:66).

Kholiwe uses the environment to portray herself. Her behaviour changes with different environments such as in her home, in the train and at the beach. She is a superficial character, at her home. She is a Christian and staunch believer, a person who had insight and knowledge most adults did not have. In the train the Christians who were praying and singing were too noisy for her. When she met her friends in Durban, she was as very uncertain of the peer group-culture and of herself, which led to her drinking alcohol that contributed to her death. The different environments portray all sides of this character - from a confident

Christian (at her home) to an irritated individual (in the train) to an uncertain person (amongst her friends).

According to Shaw (1983:153) when characters extend their environments and exploit the unknown or travel their consciousness is magnified and enhanced, and the impacts are sharper - an aspect which is very true, as far as this story is concerned.

3.2.2.3.6 CHARACTER NAMES

Ducrot and Dodorov (1983:225) state that, "their characters are manifested by the name that announces in advance the properties that will be attributed to a character". In *iPhasika* the character, Kholiwe, appears to be a Christian (as her name indicates) and a law-abiding child. Her parents are proud of her. This is supported by her father, when he says:

"Ha, bayozizwela nakhona eThekwini ezimvuselelweni isifakaza ingane yami. Pho ikhuluma izizwele nje ukuthi lento eyikhulumayo iphuma ngaphakathi kuyona" Ntuli, (1978:90).

(Kholiwe's father started praising her daughter for her intelligence and the manner in which she will testify about the word of God. She is confident and she speaks from her heart to impress her listeners).

But she is also the initiator of the conflict in the story. She seems to be the one responsible for causing problems for herself, her friends and parents. The "Kholiwe" (protagonist) is confronted with the uncertain one who seeks new cultural ground. The one who is against Christian people in the train, and on the beach she is the antagonist, the one who conquers the protagonist at the end.

A child is subjected to her peer group and parents. The parents are to blame in this instance because they did not allow her to grow. Kholiwe was, at a vulnerable stage. This is a clear indication to the reader that Kholiwe is acting

according to her name. She has respect for her parents but has a problem with peer pressure. Kholiwe believed that her parents did not suspect anything that she lied about her journey. Though Kholiwe believes in individual autonomy, her perspective is that every person possesses his or her own inviolable individuality and, therefore she chooses freely. This makes her act unbecomingly to gravity and dignity:

“Awazi wena, phela bebengeke bavume. Nami ngazisiza ngokubabamba ngengqondo ngithi kumele siye nawe enkonzweni yePhasika” (Ntuli, 1978:92).

(You have no idea! They would not have allowed me if I did not lie by telling them that you invited me over for the Easter service).

Kholiwe's parents had no reason not to grant her permission as they were Christians and she was a believer. Her parents were proud of her.

Kholiwe convinced Lucy that they should at least attend one church service so that she will have something to say to her parents.

“Hhu, angisazi-ke manje, kodwa-ke kuzodinga ukuba nakanjani ngesonto okungenani sithi qu eSontweni, senzele ukuba kube khona into oyofike uyixoxe ekhaya ngezinkonzo zakithi” (Ntuli, 1978:92).

(Oh I don't know, but since we got ourselves into this situation, it will be a wise idea if at least we go to the Sunday service so that you can be able to say something about our congregation when you get back home).

The protagonist “Kholiwe” is not all a bad person because she still remembers the importance attached to this Easter Weekend that is time for mourning and attending church services.

Velaphi (meaning “where did you come from?”) as his name depicts, acted accordingly to the meaning of his name; where he says:

***“Uthe uma esethi ufuna ukumthelela futhi uBen, kwabhoka uVelaphi manje
"kahle Ben ufuna ukudakisa umakoti wami wena ngiyakubona" usho nje
lizwakala izwi lakhe ukuthi liyavela” (Ntuli 1978:96).***

(When Ben wanted to refill Kholiwe's glass with some drink, Velaphi got angry and said "Ben, wait, you want to make my fiancé' (bride) drunk" he said with his annoyed voice.)

Though Velaphi came from an urban area he was totally against the idea of Kholiwe taking alcohol. Velaphi was unlike Ben and Lucy who wanted to destroy Kholiwe.

Velaphi's name meant it took time for his parents to get him. He was the pride of his family. Though the situation was bad, our first encounter with him was when he showed respect by saying that when they would reach their home, Kholiwe would pose as if she was visiting Lucy. This reveals respect to us. He adhered to acceptable norms and values.

We also notice that each time Velaphi is portrayed, he makes correct and relevant comments. He also did not believe that Kholiwe would drink because she wanted to please them at the beach. He did not believe that a person could lose good morals and stature because of friends, later it contributed to her death at the beach. He also mourned her death for 12 months.

Ben and Lucy are Western culture names that are used in Zulu novels and short stories and are associated with evil. Names that are derived from Western culture often are used in Zulu narratology as characters who are culturally disturbed.

Betty in *Bafanele Ukugcotshwa* destroys Skhumbuzo's dream of becoming a priest. Delsie Moya destroys Mfundisi Gwebu's ambition of becoming a good priest in the novel *Indlela yababi*.

In *iPhasika* Ben and Lucy are the source of destruction towards Kholiwe, exposing her to all wrong things. Lucy took advantage of Kholiwe because she came from a rural area while she (Lucy) was an urban girl. She actually told her how to behave when Velaphi and Ben joined them for the afternoon.

Ben introduces Kholiwe to liquor that she drinks because she wanted to be accepted by the group:

“Ufika kangakanani kulezi wena Kholiwe?

Hhayi, mina, e, angifiki bandla....Konje uzobe useyaphoxa uma enqaba sampela utshwala obushisayo lobu? Abheke kuLucy ubuso ububone buthi ukuhwaqa bese eqhuba uKholiwe....Kodwa ngingaqhabula nje” (Ntuli, 1978:95)

(How much do you drink, Kholiwe? asks Ben.

No, I don't drink at all, however she did not want to disappoint them by declining the liquor. She takes a glance at Lucy's face and is shocked to see a frown of disappointment, but she convinces Kholiwe.... I would just take a sip.

There is a clash of urban and rural traditional ideas. It was very difficult for Kholiwe but she did not want to disappoint her friends Lucy, Ben and Velaphi. She also wanted to share with them their cultural identity.

3.2.2.4 WHO IS KHOLIWE?

- She is the confident Christian daughter of Khathi and MaDonda who can at any time stand up and confirm her knowledge of the Christian faith, norms and values. They are very proud of her.
- She is the frustrated individual who feels that she had enough of Christianity. She wants to explore another culture, that of the urban area.

- She deliberately lied to her parents in order to get their permission to go to Durban.
- She is the individual who is irritated and intolerant towards Christian people who praise the Lord.
- Because she comes from a strict and overprotected background, she does not know anything about the urban culture. She feels very uncertain as to how she should act in front of these people.
- She is the beautiful teenage girl who, for the first time in her life, feels the love feeling for somebody of the opposite sex.
- She is the uncertain person who cannot judge that she is too drunk to swim, and drowns in the process.
- Kholiwe is both protagonist and antagonist of the story. Her beauty, firm background and adamant nature can easily be identified with. The same adamant nature together with her uncertainty as to how she should act towards the new culture is the force that prevents the former one to conquer. Consequently this short story can be classified as a tragic story.

3.3 CULTURE IN IPHASIKA.

3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Culture deals with the things that hurt. It is a dynamic, learned entity, which is not inherited. It is derived from one's social environment and not from one's genes. Cultural identity is the identity of a particular group of people that is partly determined by their national identity.

The question is “which dynamic, not inherited, learned systems are identified with by Kholiwe and the other characters in *iPhasika*? How are they portrayed by Ntuli? How do they contribute to character portrayal in this short story?

3.3.2 KHOLIWE’S BACKGROUND

Christian religion is imbedded in the topic *iPhasika*. The Christian religion thus becomes the first thing the receiver perceives when reading this work.

In the exposition of the story, the narrator, Velaphi, puts *iPhasika* into perspective when he reveals that it has to do with Jesus Christ. He says:

“Abakholwayo babona isithunzi esinye esikhombisa ukuthi ngempela yilanga okukhunjulwa ngalo ukufa kweNdodana yesintu” (Ntuli, 1978:88)

(Christians receive yet another experience that it is really the day when the Son of God died).

He also explains that Christians commemorate this event:

“Seziqalile ezindaweni eziningi izinkonzo” (Ntuli, 1978:88).

(At many places people already gathered.

He mentioned that Khathi and his family also do this.

...abalapha kwaKhathi bazobe besonta khona esontweni... (Ntuli, 88)

(.Those at Khathi’s place will then go to church....)

Khathi and MaDonda allowed Kholiwe to visit her friends on that day. They trusted their daughter because they believe that she was already a grown up Christian. They also believed that she would even be so strong that she would influence her friends to become Christians.

The Zionist preacher delivered a heart-wrenching message in the train:

“Lolu usuku olunzima ngoba iNkosi yethu sikhumbula ilenga ebuhlungwini obubikodwa siyajabula ngoba yayilenga mina nawe ukuba sikhulelwe ekoneni kwethu...Vuma-ke nawe ukuba uzinikele kuYona uthole intethelelo. Uma lapha esitimeleni inhliziyo yakho iselukhuni, unezifiso ezimbi; unezinjongo zobubi, unenkohliso, yazi ukuthi nguweni oyibethelayo iNkosi....

This is a bad day because we commemorate our Lord's pain on the cross...but we rejoice because he was crucified for you and me so that we would be relieved from our sins.....give yourself to Him and receive mercy. If your heart is unwilling, if you have the wrong objectives in life, know that it is for you that he suffered on the cross.....

Various signs were used by Ntuli to portray Christian culture. Signs which are already known by Christians, which are therefore conventionalised by Ntuli to portray Christianity.

- Kholiwe's **church uniform**. She puts it in her suitcase at home to take it with her to Durban but she never wears it. In Durban another person who is on her way to church and who also wears a similar dress than hers, reminds her of her own dress.
- **Simple unattractive clothing**. She wears this garment for her parents to convince them that she is on her way to the church in Durban. She added that she is not on her way to party.
- The **Bible** and **Hymnbook** that she took along in her suitcase.
- The **Church bell** that rang in the distance calling all the Christians to attend the commemoration of Jesus' death.
- The Zionist **preacher** in the train and the one on the beach who reminds Kholiwe of her background, whether she is a Christian or lost.

- **The Christian people** who remind Kholiwe of her home congregation - the girl who wear a church uniform as well as those who attend a service in the distance while Kholiwe and her friends are on the beach.

3.3.3 KHOLIWE`S CHARACTER SEEN FROM THE CHRISTIAN BACKGROUND

Originating from this cultural background one can deduce Kholiwe`s character as one that is very conservative in nature. She does all the right things. Although still a teenager, she could perform like an adult. She has the ability to stand up, convince others of her faith and praise the Lord.

3.3.4 URBAN CULTURE

This culture is portrayed as the direct opposite of the Christian culture:

- People should be attractive. Their appearance (clothes, bodies etc.) must be nice to look at. Kholiwe decides to change her "religious clothes" for something better before she arrives at Durban:

"Afike azikhiphe zonke izingubo ezingaphezulu akhiphe nezincwadi zokusonta. Ibhayibheli kanye nencwadi yezihlabelo. Aze afinyelele kulokhu asefuna ukokugqoka. Alikhiphe ibhulukwe lakhe elide elimpunga"
(Ntuli, 1978:91)

(As she gets there (in the toilet) she then takes out all her clothing that packed on top. She also takes out her books for the church, which are the bible and hymn book. Then she reaches for what she wants to wear now. Eventually she pulls out her beautiful grey slacks).

Young men praised her for this:

"..izinsizwana lezi ebezilaphaya zishaya amakhwela.." (Ntuli,1978:91& 92.)

(...young men who were sitting there made a noise when seeing her)

This does not pass Lucy's attention either:

"Hheyi, usushaya ezesimanjemanje ngempela". (Ntuli, 1978:92).

(You really wear modern clothing).

- There are no religious ceremonies in this culture. Ben, Lucy and Velaphi decided to go to the beach and later to visit relatives of Lucy, but not to attend any church services. Although Kholiwe was exposed to various "reminders" to attend a church ceremony, she deliberately rejected this by focussing on her new culture.
- It is a culture where alcohol plays a major role. On the beach Kholiwe and her friends drank alcohol that changed Kholiwe's personality in such a way that she went into the waves to prove to the others that she could swim.

Certain signs are conventionalised by Ntuli to portray Urban culture:

- **The urban clothes** which Kholiwe wears in the train and on the beach.
- **Sexuality.** Vilaphi, Ben and other people's remarks about Kholiwe's body as well as Vilaphi's remarks about his "bride".
- **The liquor** they consume on the beach.

3.3.5 KHOLIWE'S CHARACTER SEEN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF URBAN CULTURE

- She is a very nervous person because of the unknown.

"Uyambona usedonsa okomuntu owethukile" (Ntuli, 1978:90).

(You see her inhaling like a person who is afraid).

"Lumuthi heqe kancani uvalo" (Ntuli, 1978:91).

(A little fear comes over her)

“Lumuthi thwansu futhi uvalo” (Ntuli, 1978:93).

(Another fear comes over her)

“Ethuke ngokunye uKholiwe kodwa angakhulumi. Kubonakale ubugubhagubha besifuba” (Ntuli, 1978:93).

(She is frightened again but does not speak. Her chest moves...)

- She does not know whether she acts according to the new culture.

“Kuyabukeka kodwa Lucy?” (Ntuli, 1978:92).

(Do I look good Lucy?)

“Angazi-ke ukuthi kuzongifanele yini” (Ntuli, 1978: 93)

(I’m not certain if it will suit me).

“...nakubhukuda olwandle angikwazi. Ngisazofundiswa” (Ntuli, 1978:93).

(I can not swim in the sea. I will have to be taught).

“..mhlawumbe uVelaphi uzoze acasuke uma ziziningi kangaka izinto engingazazi mina” (Ntuli, 1978:93)

(perhaps Velaphi will be annoyed with me because I know so little things)

- She did not know how to act. Kholiwe constantly wanted to impress Ben, Lucy and Velaphi. She could not refuse Ben`s persistence with regard to her drinking alcohol. Consequently she became drunk and drowned in the sea.

3.3.6 CHARACTERISATION AND CULTURE IN *IPHASIKA*

3.3.6.1 INTRODUCTION

As stated earlier, Kholiwe's character has undoubtedly been determined by her cultural surroundings. Her religious background can be held responsible for her inexperienced nature pertaining to urban culture. It directly led to her becoming nervous, which in its turn made her act in way that was not expected from her and which led to her untimely death.

At the outset of this section it should be understood that the other characters in *iPhasika* are minor characters that do not develop and which are stereotypes rather than fully-fledged characters. They merely add to the character of Kholiwe, who is the main character. Kholiwe is thus the only character that "interacts" with culture. The other "stereotyped" ones form part of culture, or reflect it in one way or the other.

3.3.6.2 CHARACTERS IN *IPHASIKA* THAT PERSONIFY CHRISTIAN CULTURE

Kholiwe's father and mother **Khathi** and **MaDonda** portray Christian culture. They symbolise individuals who have chosen the Christian way of doing; attending ceremonies, bringing children up the Christian way, caring for them etc. But in *iPhasika* they overprotect their children by keeping them away from reality, especially teenager reality. The characters in *iPhakisa* that personify Christian culture are mainly the:

- **Christians** who praise the Lord in the train and who are on the beach. They speak to Kholiwe's conscience in order that she repents and turn back to her own roots; and the.
- **Christians** who attend church. They also remind Kholiwe of attending ceremonies.

3.3.6.3 CHARACTERS IN *IPHASIKA* THAT PERSONIFY URBAN CULTURE

Ben and **Lucy** are the only ones in *iPhasika* that are typical urban characters who know the urban way of living. They are for one thing familiar with alcohol. They originate from a Zulu culture with a Western influence, i.e. their names. They personify the "everything goes" idea with regard to religion and sexuality.

3.3.6.4 VELAPHI

Velaphi, although he comes from an urban area is totally against the idea of Kholiwe taking alcohol. It is also said that unlike Ben and Lucy who wanted to destroy Kholiwe, he almost tried to protect her.

Velaphi, being the narrator and relating to Christianity, he cannot be placed in the same category in which Ben and Lucy are. Nor do we perceive him as a Christian because he did not show any interest in religious ceremonies when he enjoyed Kholiwe's company on the beach, in fact he participated in drinking alcohol. He is an objective character. Culture could, consequently, not be found in him, nor does he interact with it.

3.3.6.5 CONCLUSION

Khathi, MaDonda, Christian preachers on the train and on the beach and Christian individuals portray the Christian way of living. They, therefore, reflect the Christian culture. Ben and Lucy reflect their urban culture.

Kholiwe interacts with these cultural stances. She originates from the Christian culture and tries to adapt to the urban culture, which she fails to do.

Velaphi, the narrator of this story, seems to be adapted to both these cultural settings. He merely narrates. He does not reflect culture nor does he interact with it.

3.4 CONCLUSION

Ntuli uses both explicit and implicit techniques to portray his characters in *iPhasika*. By using these techniques he establishes Kholiwe as main character who has had a thorough education during childhood, but who is in search of new cultural grounds. Through self analysis, what other say about her, what the narrator says about her, how she thinks, how she acts, etc. she became an individual with a clear-cut character.

Her character varies from a self-confident person in church to a totally insecure individual amongst her peers. Her intensive interaction with her own culture leads to her inability to move cross-culturally to acquire the urban culture. She consequently could not interact with the urban culture. These cultural stances therefore characterised Kholiwe.

Other characters in *iPhasika* who merely reflect culture are: Khathi, MaDonda, the priests, and the various individuals who reflect Christian culture whereas Ben and Lucy reflect urban culture. Velaphi does not interact, nor does he reflect culture.

CHAPTER 4

CHARACTER AND CULTURE IN *UTHINGO LWENKOSAZANE*

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In *iPhasika* two types of culture are distinguished, namely a Christian religious one and an urban one. Both are portrayed by Ntuli to have more or less positive and negative internal aspects.

Ntuli (1978) uses certain signs, which have already been conventionalised and others that he conventionalises to become meaningful to portray culture. Character portrayal happens amongst other things in the manner in which characters react on these signs.

Character portrayal and cultural identity are very closely linked to each other and the main character interacts with culture whereas the other "stereotyped" characters merely reflect it.

The purpose of this chapter is to determine:

- If there are any other stories in *Uthingo lwenkosazane* where the main character is submitted to a journey where he has to adopt to certain "cultural" circumstances; and
- Whether the main character always interacts with culture while the rest reflect it?

In the rest of this chapter the stories in **Uthingo lwenkosazane** are focused on very briefly, investigating culture and character with special reference to character portrayal.

4.2 WHY BAFANELE UKUGCOTSHWA AND IZIQONGO ZEZINTABA?

Culture is a learned thing, which identifies a group of people. It deals with the things that hurt, which they will be willing to fight for. It is derived from an individual's social environment. It distinguishes itself from human nature and individual personality because it is more than that.

In *iPhasika* a dynamic interaction between Kholiwe and the various cultures are identified. Her character is communicated to the reading public insofar as how she reacted to them. The overexposure she had of her own culture and her not knowing how to approach this new culture, eventually led to her death. Various other characters also portray the various cultures. *iPhasika* is, therefore, all about the clash between cultures and that the final battle happened inside of Kholiwe where the protagonist (Kholiwe's background) was beaten by the antagonist (urban culture). This short story can consequently be classified as a tragic narrative.

Culture is a recurring aspect in all the other stories of the collection *Uthingo lwenkosazane* as it encompasses the social structure in which a community lives. Other examples of stories embedded in a cultural perspective are:

- *Uthingo lwenkosazane* in which is found ancient Zulu culture portrayed by Dunguzela, Qolotha, Siqindi and Mpiyakhe, who is the main character.

- *Uphondo lukaSalayedwa* in which is found a peaceful village culture where one person, uSalayedwa, regulates all the other people's daily lives.

In these stories no dynamic relationship exists between character portrayal and culture. Here we find characters only portraying culture:

- In *Uthingo Iwenkosazane* Dunguzela, Qolotha, Siqindi and Mpiyakhe, through their names and how they respond to certain events and other characters, portray ancient Zulu culture.
- In *Uphondo lukaSalayedwa* Salayedwa's regular blowing of the horn establishes a particular culture in that village. When suddenly his horn is silent one morning, equilibrium is disturbed but is again restored when the people of the village were awakened by it again on another morning.

The focus of the abovementioned stories is not culture. It so happens that it forms part of reality because culture is a social reality. In these stories the main character and his fellow citizens are not particularly challenged by another cultural situation.

In two stories, however, a multicultural situation, namely *Bafanele ukugcotshwa* and *Iziqongo zezintaba* is encountered. In the following paragraphs the interaction between character and culture will be investigated as far as these two stories are concerned.

4.3 BAFANELE UKUGCOTSHWA

4.3.1 THE STORY LINE

This short story deals with Sikhumbuzo who makes a decision whilst still a child to become a priest. He enrolls at Ekuthuleni College where he is taught to become a priest. During this period he falls in love with Betty, a woman from the nearby location. Although he is married he does not reveal that to Betty. She falls pregnant and Sikhumbuzo convinces her to move to another place. He tells her that he will contact her as soon as he becomes a priest. In the meanwhile he finishes his studies and prepares for the graduation. Betty writes a couple of

letters to Sikhumbuzo, but he never replies to any of them. She becomes worried and decides to visit him.

On her arrival she attends the graduation ceremony. When he delivers the introductory sermon, he sees Betty and reveals his long hidden secret by the way he reacts when he sees her. The Bishop sees his reaction and enquires into the matter. The college then decides to withdraw his name from the list of successful candidates.

Here Sikhumbuzo's life is distorted by the Christian norms and values he chooses to live by, by falling in love with Betty whilst married and still at Ekhuthuleni College. This shows an immoral behaviour in Sikhumbuzo's character.

4.3.2 INTERPRETATION

4.3.2.1 THE RELIGIOUS CULTURE

One cultural setting that is evident in this story is the Catholic religious scene where Sikhumbuzo is about to be ordained as a priest after having completed his requirements successfully to become a priest. What is prominent in this scene is the church building, the ceremonies, the people flocking together to participate, the church bell, etc.

What is more prominent of the ceremony is the ordaining of young priests. It entails a certain tradition where a particular dress code and protocol is evident. People who are to be ordained must act in a particular manner, walking, sitting, one of them (the one with the highest score) chosen to deliver the introductory speech on behalf of the other class mates, etc.

4.3.2.2 THE URBAN CULTURE

Another scene is the circumstances in which Betty finds herself. She lives in a nearby neighbourhood to the Catholic Bible School. She is engaged in an extra

marital affair with Sikhumbuzo. As a result of this relationship she is mother of an illegitimate baby which is her and Sikhumbuzo's.

4.3.2.3 THE RURAL CULTURE

The third cultural setting is the rural one where Sikhumbuzo's family stay. Not too much has been said about this scene, only that Sikhumbuzo has had formal education where he chose to become a priest for this will provide him with status in society. Although a clear-cut analysis of this scene is impossible, one can deduce a scene, which is predominantly rural, in other words traditional Zulu, but westernised because of the high importance of formal education and the church in that situation.

In all three these cultures typical individuals are found who typify these cultures:

- **Betty** is the typical urban female (with a European name) who does not have deeply rooted morals and principles.
- **Sikhumbuzo's wife** and children are that typical rural people who wait for him patiently so that their status could also be lifted in society. They reflect and are reflected by the rural environment.
- The **Bishop** and his company are the stereotyped traditional Catholic tutors. They have very strict norms and principles. As a consequence very few candidates graduate.

The main character, Sikhumbuzo, interacts with these cultures. He originates from the rural scene where he aims for a prominent position. He uses Betty to fulfil his sexual needs while away from his home. He becomes a father because of this but tries to escape this reality by promising Betty things, which he does not adhere to. He is a very successful candidate at college. He is chosen to deliver the introductory speech, something, which is also typical of his character.

4.3.3 THE INTERACTION BETWEEN SIKHUMBUZO AND CULTURE

Sikhumbuzo grew up in the rural area. As a child he already decided to become a religious minister because it would grant him status in society.

“Usebonile nokho ukuthi ngumsebenzi ohloniphekayo lona” (Ntuli, 1978,14).

(He saw that it is a job with high status)

It is, therefore, clear that he had aspirations to become a person of a higher culture. He enrolled at Ekuthuleni College to become a priest. Although this is a tall order in which quite a number of candidates fail, he eventually passes. He thus interacts with this new culture and conquers it.

He meets Betty, a single girl from a neighbouring neighbourhood. He falls in love with her and despite his marital status, engages into an extra marital relationship with her. When she expects his baby he lies to her. He therefore also interacts with urban culture. This culture, however, overruled the religious one.

Sikhumbuzo's character is clearly defined in his interaction with these various cultures: obviously as **an unstoppable, opportunistic kind of person**.

4.4 IZIQONGO ZEZINTABA

4.4.1 STORY LINE

His friend in a car brings Misumuzi, the main character, home while he is critically ill. The doctor tries in vain to cure him. His mother, who is an Isangoma, treats him throughout the cheerless night. As the morning dawns he shows signs of recovery. His mother gets a breathing space and looks towards the east. As fate would have it, the sun rises and it symbolises a new lease of life for Misumuzi for this is the symbol of hope and new life.

Misumuzi did not respect his mother but he looked down upon her because she was an iSangoma. He did not care for her as he thought that he was superior. He was studying for a BSc Degree. On the day of the graduation he pretended not to know her at all. His mother was disappointed and was left stranded with no ticket to enter the hall.

“Bekufanele indodana leyo ikunike ithikithi-ke ngaphandle kwalokho ngeke wangena” (Ntuli, 1978:54).

(Your son was supposed to have given you a ticket. Without that you cannot enter)

Misumuzi suddenly took ill but the hospital could not heal him. He still carried on denying his mother. Yet she takes him home. His friends are surprised to see him home with her. She nurses him back to health. Misumuzi nearly died because he did not want to conform to customary and traditional ways of his ancestors MaMpongose’s strong cultural background helped his son to life.

“Anyakaze uMisumzi athi kubonakala wayelula isandla uMisumuzi embambelela entanyeni kanina wezwakala esethi “Mama” (Ntuli 1978:60).

(Misumuzi moved and stretched his arm and held his mother’s neck and cried “Mother”.)

“Waphendula uMampungose: Mntanami wagoba wayanga indodana yakhe”. (Ntuli 1978:60)

(Replied Mampungose: “My child” she bends and kissed her son).

4.4.2 INTERPRETATION

4.4.2.1 UNIVERSITY CULTURE

Misumuzi lives on campus where he mingles with peers who are university students. They gather socially and attend graduation ceremonies. They drive

cars and are exposed to the best medical treatment should they be ill. He studies to become a BSc graduate.

4.4.2.2 SANGOMA CULTURE

MaMpongose represents Zulu ancient culture because from the earliest time in Zulu history, people like her, performed medical and religious functions in society.

4.4.2.3 MISUMUZI AND CULTURE

Misumuzi studies to obtain a BsC degree. He is a young and upcoming individual who denies the fact that he originates from a Zulu ancient cultural tradition. He becomes critically ill and is taken home after the western medical profession could not do anything for him. The ancient medical practice cures his illness after his own mother treats him.

Misumuzi is exposed to two opposite cultures, in his youth with his sangoma mother, and as a young adult on a university campus. He obviously accepted the latter while denying the former. He thus interacted with them exposing his own snobbish character. He was brought back to reality when only his mother could save his life.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Character portrayal and culture clearly go hand in hand. The one cannot do without the other. On the one hand culture can merely constitute the social setting in which a character finds itself, as is the case with Mpiyakhe or the other characters in *Uthingo Iwenkosazane*. On the other hand a character can constitute culture. Here they create culture as is the case with Salayedwa in *Uphondo lukaSalayedwa*, Ben, Lucy, Khathi and Madonda in *iPhasika*,

Sikhumbuzo's wife, Bishop and Betty in *Bafanele ukugcotshwa* and MaMpongose in *Iziqongo zezintaba*.

A character can also interact with culture. This happens when a character shows more than one side to the reading public, qualifying itself as a main character. The character can show its superiority towards that culture as is the case with Sikhumbuzo towards his own rural culture at home, the urban culture in which Betty finds herself and the College culture in *Bafanele ukugcotshwa*. Another example is Misumuzi in *Iziqongo zezintaba* where he denies ancient Zulu culture whilst at university.

It can be defeated by culture as is the case with Kholiwe in *iPhasika*,

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this dissertation has been to investigate and highlight character portrayal from a cultural semiotic point of view in DBZ Ntuli's collection *Uthingo lwenkosazana* with special reference to the short story *iPhasika*.

As stated earlier, narratology concerns itself with narrative texts, in other words texts that aim to be narrated by a narrator. Consequently there should be a sender who communicates it to a recipient. It also entails a process of intervention by the sender. In the scope of this dissertation, this intervention concerns itself with presenting characters in such a way that the recipients can identify with them. Intervention takes place when the artist translates his own version from the story-level to the text-level.

To present characters on the text-level, the narrator can use various techniques, which fall into two broad categories, namely direct and indirect. The former involves techniques directly referring to the character by means of, amongst other things, people talking about a certain character, the character talking about himself or the narrator directly referring to particular personality trait, the latter involves a character for instance thinking something or showing certain traits. Naming as a characterisation technique is seen as a typical Zulu characterisation device because it is deeply rooted in ancient Zulu tradition. It resorts under the indirect technique.

Culture has been described as a learned, not inherited thing. It derives from the character's social environment and not from his/her genes. It distinguishes itself from human nature on the one hand, and from individual personality on the other. It deals with the things that hurt.

In literature, culture is something that is portrayed by, amongst other elements, characters or *vice versa*. It is that thing that is closely linked to the social environment in which characters find themselves.

The sign is the focal point of Semiotics. It is a conventionalised representation of something else that aims to communicate something, i.e. a traffic sign to enforce certain reactions on the part of car drivers. In literature something can be conventionalised within the boundaries of the text, i.e. a horn that signifies stability in *Uphondo lukaSalayedwa*.

Cultural signs signify a certain way of living, norm, principle, etc. Praising the name of Jesus as part of a social gathering of Christians symbolises Christianity, while consuming alcohol as part of a social gathering of teenagers symbolises urban culture in *iPhasika*.

In *Uthingo lwenkosazana* character portrayal and culture go hand in hand. The one cannot exist without the other. Culture can merely constitute the social setting in which a character finds itself, without characterisation as such (uMpiyakhe and the other characters in *Uthingo lwenkosazane*).

It was also established that a character could constitute culture.

Here they create culture as is the case with Salayedwa in *Uphondo lukaSalayedwa*, Ben, Lucy, Khathi and MaDonda in *iPhasika*, Sikhumbuzo's wife, Bishop and Betty in *Bafanele ukugcotshwa* and MaMpungose in *Iziqongo zezintaba*.

It was further found that character could interact with culture.

It can show its superiority towards that culture like, as is the case with uSikhumbuzo towards his own rural cultural scene at home, the urban culture in which Betty finds herself and the College culture in *Bafanele ukugcotshwa*.

Another example is Misumuzi in *Iziqongo zezintaba* where he denies ancient Zulu culture whilst at university.

Kholiwe in *iPhasika* is portrayed as the beautiful teenage daughter of Khathi and MaDonda who denies her Christian religious background and who explores urban culture, under the smoke screen of attending a church service in Durban, while she actually visits her friends in Durban. Because she is overexposed to her own culture and consequently did not have the chance to acquire urban culture, she could not handle urban culture and died as a consequence of that.

Kholiwe's character develops as soon as she left home. At home the Christian religion was deeply rooted in her, but as soon as she left home for Durban the reader realises that she was in search of something else. In Durban the once adamant person who had the ability to stand up in church, praising the Lord, and performing certain actions, suddenly has to be taught by Betty. She appears to be very nervous, always trying to please others, including the negative character, Ben. He gives her alcohol and she becomes so brave that she wants to show her boyfriend, Velaphi, that she can swim in the sea. She drowns in the waves.

Kholiwe's character dynamically interacts with culture, contrary to Sikhumbuzo and Vusumuzi who show superiority to their cultures.

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