'CRAFTSMANSHIP AND PARTISANSHIP IN ZAMBIAN PROSE FICTION SINCE INDEPENDENCE: A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE NOVELS OF MULAISHO, MASIYE, SAIDI AND SIBALE'.

By

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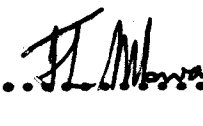
DEDICATION

To my wife Mary O. Mayepi and my children Tania, Neto, Frank and Victor.

DECLARATION

I wish to solemnly declare that this dissertation is truly my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at this or another University.

Signature: ..... 

APPROVAL

This dissertation of Joseph Likokoto Mbwayu is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in African Literature by the University of Zambia.

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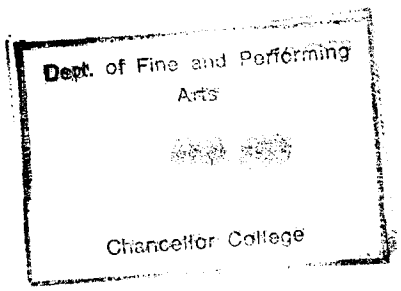

ABSTRACT

This study examines partisanship and craftsmanship in the following texts: Before Dawn by Andreya Masiye, Between Two Worlds by Grieve Sibale, The Hanging by William Saidi, The Tongue of the Dumb and The Smoke That Thunders by Dominic Mulaisho. The detailed examination of these texts takes place in the second chapter as the first briefly deals with the methodology of the dissertation.

Partisanship of the writers is studied not because it is essential to the artistic success of a text or even universally desirable; it is examined in relation to Zambia's alleged socialist orientation in the economy has also spread to the literary field. In addition, a socialist perspective provides a new window through which Zambian prose fiction can be studied.

Under craftsmanship, the skills of the writers are assessed to discover the artistic

abilities of the writers. This is done because we realise that a writer is primarily an artist and as such if he is to win recognition from the readers, especially students of literature, he must be seen as an accomplished artist or craftsman.

After the examination of the texts, the dissertation reveals several things. Firstly, the commitment of the writers is not socialist. In most cases, the writers are not even aware of the existence of classes - a serious handicap since there are classes during the period in which the novels are set. Omission of this fact distorts their texts in that not all factors are being taken into account in the creation of the works.

Secondly, the technical skills of the selected writers are generally clumsy and this is shown in several ways: the characters tend to be wooden; there is usually unnecessary inclusion of sociological information for its own sake; and in language and style there is a tendency to overuse the direct style, a practice which tends to reduce the significance of the texts, as we explain in the third and final chapter of the dissertation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In writing this dissertation, I am greatly indebted to many people but since I cannot mention all of them due to space limitations, I will only mention several.

Firstly, I thank most sincerely my supervisor, Dr. Stewart Crehan. Despite his immense academic commitments, he always helped me in my work without complaining. Even when I piled him with my scripts, he always found time to examine them and give me his invaluable advice. For this spirit and his undoubted ability, I salute him.

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CHAPTER 1: METHODOLOGY

As the title of this dissertation indicates, we intend to examine Zambian prose fiction in English from the point of view of craftsmanship and partisanship. An examination of this craftsmanship will help us find out how aesthetically accomplished Zambian writers are. In order to do this, we are going to examine five out of fifteen novels in English written by Zambian authors between 1967 and 1980[1].

Dr. Chileshe in 'Literacy, Literature and the Ideological Formation: The Zambian Case'[2], has already examined most of the texts we are going to look at; however, he does not specifically examine craftsmanship and partisanship[3].

In examining partisanship, we are going to use a socialist perspective, one of the extrinsic approaches to literature, to see what it yields[4]. We shall also be testing Ngugi wa Thiong'o's views on commitment.

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Calling for the liberation of African literature, Ngugi asks African writers to produce works which highlight the historical origins of the present African bourgeoisie; which show the class conflicts raging in society; and which persuade readers to adopt a socialist outlook. This literature - which he calls revolutionary - should be encouraged, while escapist fiction, he says, must be abandoned. By escapist literature, Ngugi is referring to fiction which is not designed to reflect the realities of society, especially the class struggle and the fight for liberation from colonial and neo-colonial domination, but rather to make the reader forget and escape from reality[5].

Recognising that the views above would reduce all literature to propaganda and lead us to forget that a writer is primarily an artist, Ngugi qualifies his statement on commitment by telling us:

> While not rejecting the critical demands of the more formal elements and needs of any art, we must subject literature, whether African or otherwise, to a most rigorous criticism from the point of view of the struggling masses. We must detect what is positive, revolutionary and humanistic in a work of art, support it and strengthen it; and reject what is negative in the same or other works[6].

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In addition, Marx and Engels believed that some bourgeois writers had greatly served the cause of the working class simply by their deep revelations of the social conditions of the working class in capitalist society. Balzac, for instance, is considered by Frederick Engels to have exposed the decadence of bourgeois society in France by showing how hollow the lives of the people were in his country[9]. Engels was particularly referring to Balzac's 'critical realism'.

As far as the analysis of craftsmanship is concerned, we intend to use a largely intrinsic approach, in that we shall assess how the texts achieve their effects and what it is that makes them into literary texts rather than discursive articles, for example. In analysing the artistic qualities of the texts, we shall examine their narrative structure, characterisation and language and style. By combining the extrinsic approach and the intrinsic, we hope to produce a more balanced study of Zambian prose fiction[10].

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We have decided to look at five novels written in English, firstly due to space limitations, and secondly, because we feel that the five selected works can be taken as a representative sample. Out of thirteen novels published by the National Educational Company of Zambia, (NECZAM) between 1967 and 1980, we have selected three: Before Dawn, The Hanging and Between Two Worlds. Before Dawn is selected because it was the first novel written in English by a Zambian to be published by NECZAM, now publishing division of the Kenneth Kaunda Foundation. Between Two Worlds is one of the few novels written by a University of Zambia graduate. The Hanging exemplifies the type of fiction which deals with present social conditions. We have selected Mulaisho's two novels, The Tongue of the Dumb and The Smoke That Thunders, because they are the only ones so far that have been published abroad.

Although four out of the five novels are set in the colonial period, they are still important in that they provide a reflection or mediation of the colonial period through the eyes of the post-independence bourgeoisie.

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NOTES

1. For further information see J.D. Chileshe, 'Literacy, Literature and ideological formation: the Zambian case'. Ph.D. thesis, Sussex, 1983.

2. See Chileshe, 'Literacy, Literature and ideological formation',

3. I have not been able to read Dr. Michael Okenimpke's thesis on Zambia prose-fiction due to the difficulty of obtaining it from Nigeria. Although I am unable to say whether or not he has examined craftsmanship and partisanship, it will not be harmful to investigate these also. A coincidence of views might lend more validity to the features identified.

4. In literary study, there are basically two approaches: the extrinsic and intrinsic approaches. The former is largely concerned with the social context in which the text is produced - Marxist and sociological

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approaches are examples - while the latter, the intrinsic, is more concerned with examining a text on its own merits, concentrating on its artistic qualities. The New Critics are among the strongest adherents of the intrinsic approach to literature.

5. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Writers in Politics (London: Heinemann., 1981), pp. 31-32.

6. Ngugi, Writers in Politics, p. 31.

7. Carolyn Baylies and M. Szeftel, 'The Rise of a Zambian capitalist class in the 1970s'. Journal of Southern African Studies Vol. 8. No. 2 (April 1982) pp. 200-210. See also C. Baylies, 'The State and class formation in Zambia'. Ph.D. thesis, Wisconsin, 1978., A. Beveridge and A. Oberschall, African Businessmen and Development in Zambia. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979., and M.R. Bhagavan, Zambia: Impact of Industrial Strategy on Regional Imbalance and Social Inequality Uppsala: The Scandinavian I.A.S., 1978.

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8. W.K. Wimsatt Jnr. and M.C. Beardsley, 'The intentional fallacy' in 20th Century Literary Criticism (ed.) David Lodge (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 334-344.

9. See Frederick Engels' letter to Margaret Harkness in London of April 1888 in Selected Correspondence (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), pp. 380-381.

10. This does not mean that socialist analysis totally ignores craftsmanship; there are many works by Marxist critics on the subject. See, for example, Maxim Gorky, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Alexei Tolstoy and Konstantin Fedin on the Art and Craft of Writing trans. Alex Miller (ed) Progress Publishers. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972.

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CHAPTER 2. ANALYSIS OF PARTISANSHIP AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

A. Partisanship

Before we can begin our discussion of commitment, a clarification of key concepts is necessary. Gérard Genette has stated that it is naive to assume that a narrator is the same as the author[1]. This is so because writers, the experienced and successful ones at least, distance themselves from their narrators since this seems to help them in creating more significant texts. Moreover, distancing protects a writer from being directly criticized for the views of his narrator or narrators since the two are not the same.

While recognising the differences between the writer and his narrator or narrators, it would also be myopic to deny that the ideological viewpoint of a novel as a whole can be assimilated with that of the author since it is his creation and is therefore bound to reveal the writer's deeper concerns. In other words, the gulf between the writer and his text, is not absolute.

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We can also say a writer's selection of material can make an ideological statement. If, for argument's sake, a writer in a society gripped by civil war writes only about birthday and wedding parties and the hero's soirées with glamorous girls in expensive hotels, he is indirectly telling us that the war is not significant to him. He has expressed this by his omission of it in his book, by his silence. It is Macherey who said that silence on ideological issues is in fact ideological. He says:

> ... It is the significant silences of a text, in its gaps and absences that the presence of ideology can be most positively felt[2].

This is not to say that a text cannot be clearly political from its conception since a book like Animal Farm is intended to make a political statement. However, for some writers, Orwell's overt didacticism does not appeal[3]. Instead, they tend to be more oblique and subtle, as we shall see in the Zambian texts. Moreover, even an overtly 'ideological', 'political' text may contain ideological and political silences.

Writers also express their views through one of the functions of a narrator - that is, as a comment-

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ator. Genette tells us:

> ... The narrator's interventions, direct or indirect, with regard to the story can also take the more didactic form of an authorized commentary on the action. This is an assertion of what could be called the narrator's ideological function[4].

Genette goes on to state that many authors 'smuggle' their ideological views into the texts by using narrative commentary. Their views are usually identified through a discovery of a discrepancy between the level of understanding of issues in the narrative commentary and that of the narrator shown in other parts of the narrative. In other words, when an author intervenes, his ideas in the commentary tend to be more advanced than those of the narrator exhibited in other passages of commentary.

The author's views can also be related to those he has expressed elsewhere. Here, we have in mind, views stated by writers in speeches, articles and other publications. If a direct relationship can be established between the ideas in these vehicles and the 'advanced' narrative commentary, then the argument that it is the author speaking is strengthened.

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The third main way in which writers intervene is through the creation of heroes and anti-heroes. In most cases, the anti-heroes' views are rejected by the author, while he shares many ideas with his hero. This is particularly true in tendentious works, since the writers then tend to teach through identification with their heroes. Genette tells us:

> ... Of all the extranarrative functions this is the only one that does not of necessity revert to the narrator. We know how careful great ideological novelists like Dostoevski, Tolstoy, Mann, Broch, Malraux were to transfer onto some of their characters the task of commentary and didactic discourse[5].

Through this discourse, the writer can express his ideological views.

Moving from the abstract to the concrete, from theory to practice, we would now like to relate what we have said above, coupled with Ngugi's views on revolutionary literature, to assessing the commitment of the selected works discussed in this dissertation. From the outset, we would like to state that an examination of Zambian prose-fiction dealt with here shows that none of the texts is revolutionary, and we have several reasons for saying this.

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Firstly, the people, that is, characters who are representative of the ordinary people, are generally depicted by the writers' narrators as mere background, or as gullible and not intelligent, whereas in revolutionary literature the people are the active, intelligent actors.

For instance, in The Tongue of the Dumb, one point which clearly comes out is how easily the masses can vacillate. For example, at the beginning of the narrative, they support Mpona, then hate him all of a sudden due to Lubinda's oratory and then hate Lubinda in the end. They are portrayed more or less as children who are uncertain about what they want in life. If Mulaisho were a socialist like Sembene Ousmane, he could have used a narrator or narrators who would have shown us that the people are not as unprincipled as his narrator depicts them[6].

Also, in The Smoke That Thunders, even though the people are supposed to be the major destroyers of colonial rule, they are treated mostly as background, while focus is on the leaders through whom the story is focalized[7]. For example, Kawala, the

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leader of the People's Army of Liberation Party (PALP), a black nationalist Party, Katenga, the military leader in PALP, Ray Norris, the leader of the white racist Party and Sir Baker, the British Governor of the colony of Kandaha, are some of the characters through whom the story is focalized. There is no focalization through the people. This seems to be an elitist treatment of the struggle in the sense that many elites believe that history is made by the actions of great, wise and intelligent men rather than by the people[8].

Similarly, in Between Two Worlds, we notice that while Sibale's narrator depicts Chifutu as an anti-hero, a person who opposes the people's desire for independence, this does not mean that the people are portrayed as active and intelligent participants in a consistent manner. In many places, they are simply ignored: we do not know what they think and feel.

And again, in The Hanging, despite the bias of Saidi's narrator in favour of the masses, there is a weakness in the way he portrays the people.

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Among other things, instead of showing us through scenes how the people speak, think, and act, he merely reports or comments on them in a detached, generalised fashion, as the example below shows:

> ... There were old men with craggy faces lined with a misery slightly tampered with hope. Their eyes mirrored their toil, also their hope for a future they were not absolutely certain of its meaning.
>
> They walked, or they cycled sometimes confidently, believing in something-believing the spirits of their ancestors, believing in the integrity of their leaders, or in the fairness of the Almighty whom the white people had told them had a forgiving nature[9].

He then tells us that "they held on to that future-God's future - their hope a small flame in the dark"[10]. Though the narrator's sympathies lie with these 'poor' naive and simple people, we are merely told about them. Moreover, the depiction of the people as naive is a weakness in a revolutionary sense, as pointed out earlier.

In addition to the use of non-socialist narrators, we can also attach significance to the concentration by the writers on leadership in the pre-independence period. Highlighting the theme

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of leadership might be seen as ideological because in showing that there is no gulf between leaders and led in the writers' pre-independence societies, and in illustrating the widely held idea that leaders were level-headed custodians of their communities, the writers would seem to be inculcating into the people the idea that modern bourgeois leaders are continuing the traditions of a close identity of life between these leaders and the led and are, in the same way, custodians of the interests of all the people. The focus on leadership in pre-independence society in The Tongue of the Dumb, The Smoke That Thunders and Before Dawn provides a clear example of this thematic concentration.

The third major criticism concerns class. While the writers are conscious of racial differences and show us this through their narrators, they tend to gloss over the class differences that must surely have been found among the blacks, as Szeftel and Baylies suggest[11]. It is true that Saidi's narrator tells us that Mr. Matya's father - Matya is the rich businessman-turned-murderer in

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The Hanging - was a rich man in the colonial days, thus revealing the existence of social classes in pre-independence society. Also, to a limited extent, Masiye's narrator, Kavumba, makes us aware that Chief Tembo belonged to the ruling clan, which at the time could be equated with a ruling class. He points out that the Chief attached significance to his social class.

While this is the case, when we turn to Mulaisho and Sibale's narrators we notice their silence on black classes. They seem to perpetuate the false assumption that pre-independence African societies were classless. Gilbert Mudenda has argued that this is a bourgeois notion advanced by the enemies of socialism in Africa to stem the growth of socialist consciousness[12]. By insisting that African societies are inherently classless it might be shown that scientific socialism, which assumes the existence of classes and class struggle, is irrelevant to Africa.

Furthermore, as Macherey would argue, the omission of the existence of classes in pre-independent African societies by Mulaisho and Sibale shows

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that they are engaging in ideological mystification.

Related to the issue of class is the subject of scientific socialism. According to Ngugi, genuine revolutionary literature should be founded on this ideology. But in the selected texts, the subject is rarely mentioned. In the few cases where it is, such as in The Smoke That Thunders and Between Two Worlds, it is depicted in a comical light. Take, for instance, the quotation below which is from The Smoke That Thunders. It is Katenga who is speaking, the only believer in scientific socialism in the story:

> ... Don't trust capitalists. Trust only the socialists. Why is Jango in turmoil today? Because the people there left the colonial capitalist carcass before they even skinned it. The carcass resurrected. That is why capitalism, with all its guns, is there today. Only scientific socialism is good for us. You cannot kill a cobra by sending another cobra into its hole. You cannot kill exploitation of capitalism by using capitalism. That is what you do when you speak to colonialism.[13]

An analysis of this passage shows a subversion of logic and also an oversimplification of situations.

Firstly, we have such absolutes as "trust only the socialists", when life has taught us that

scientific socialists too are as nationalistic as capitalists, that where it is expedient, they can even betray their fellow scientific socialists if it is in their own national interests[14].

The other absolute is that only scientific socialism is good for us, as if the ideology is a panacea for all ills while capitalism, on the other hand, is the source of all problems. This is a gross oversimplification in that development theory has long proved that socialist countries too have economic problems. Furthermore, development is retarded not only by external factors such as capitalism but by internal factors as well[15].

If this had been portrayed as the warped thinking of one crude Marxist, we would not have attached any significance to it, but, this is not the case. It seems to be presented as the Marxist position because Mulaisho's narrator does not provide us with another character, a well-balanced one, who would show that not all Marxists are as naive as Katenga. Therefore, in the circumstances, we are forced to conclude that the whole Marxist position is being criticized.

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The attitude to Marxists shown above is expected from Mulaisho. In an interview in a magazine, he once said that he believed that man will always be a mixture of baseness and nobility, therefore, he cannot subscribe to the view that man is perfectible. If we remember that Marxism believes in the perfectibility of man, then it is not surprising for Mulaisho to reject Marxism as well.

In addition, his biography makes it difficult for him to espouse socialism. Briefly, Mulaisho is one of the few Zambians who have risen to affluence through the largely capitalist orientation the country has pursued. Now he jointly owns Shonga Steel, a large private firm, with Patrick Chisanga, and the company seems to be thriving. With such a background, he is more likely to support capitalism for it is the system which has brought him wealth. Admittedly, referring to Mulaisho's biography might seem misplaced since there is little evidence to suggest that his works are autobiographical. However, we are bringing in this information because we feel that even works that are not autobiographical carry the ideological thrusts of the writer, as stated above (p. 9).

Mulaisho is quite sophisticated. Instead of championing capitalism, he hides under support for pragmatism, since the word capitalism has a highly tarnished image. See, for instance, how his hero Kawala, a perfect man - note the contradiction - tells us:

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> ... Kandaha is not in Europe. It is not in the Middle East. It is not in Eastern Europe or the Far East or America. It is a jewel embedded in the stone of Mother Africa. Therefore its solutions must be African solutions. Some of you have spoken of capitalism, scientific socialism, communism, as if the world must be either one or the other of these and as if one of them was a saint and the other evil ... I invite you to follow the history of all these isms in the countries they were born. They are isms of blood. Whole generations of men have been wiped out in the furtherance of these ideologies by a few. No ism has spread except by the fire[18].

In contrast with Katenga's, this quotation from Kawala is permeated with a recognition of the relativity of issues and concepts and the importance of taking local conditions into consideration. Things are not simply either black or white but a shade of both. This rationalism is ascribed only to the pragmatist while the Marxist, on the other hand, is steeped in myopia.

Similarly, in Between Two Worlds, the Marxist characters, Simon and Pwele, later called Kabanje, are depicted as dogmatic, uncouth and irrational men. There are no well-balanced Marxist characters even in this case. We are therefore free to assume that their criticism extends to the entire Marxist position.

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B. Craftsmanship

1. Narrative Structure

Before beginning our examination of narrative structure, we feel it is prudent to state that we shall use a number of Genette's terms. Genette is selected because we feel his study of narrative structure has important lessons for narrative theory. Of course, this is debatable but we have selected him to see whether his ideas can be applied to the analysis of Zambian prose-fiction.

Anachrony is one of the terms we shall use. It means "any form of discordance between two temporal orders of story and narrative".[19]. In other words, there is an anachrony wherever there is a lack of correspondence between the chronological order of the story and the narrative order. There are four main types of anachrony. The most common ones are analepses and prolepses, while the others are ellipsis and paralipsis. An analepsis is "any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at any given moment",[20] while a prolepsis is "any narrative maneuver that consists of narrating or

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evoking in advance an event that will take place later"[21]. Thus, an analepsis and a prolepsis are opposites. This is not the case with ellipsis and paralipsis. The former is "the elision of a diachronic section"[22], the skipping over of moments in a narrative, whereas the latter, a paralipsis, is "the omission of one of the constituent elements of a situation in a period that the narrative does generally cover"[23]. In other words, only partial truth is given initially with the full truth being told later.

In addition to the five concepts above - though ellipsis will rarely be examined - we shall use the concept of focalization which we have already seen. In a narrative which is focussed by only one character (single focalization) the narrative structure is generally not altered significantly since continuity of narration can be maintained. For instance, in a narrative with an autodiegetic narrator such as Robinson Crusoe, it is relatively easy to see continuity of narration in that Crusoe recounts the events in a chronological order[24]. No other character enters the story to narrate his own view of the events, a practice which would create breaks in the narrative flow. This happens in narratives with multiple focalization.

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To begin the analysis of the narrative structure of Before Dawn we would like to state that even though the story opens on an incredible note in the sense that Kavumba is made to tell us how he was born in a dramatic style, this story comes alive through a chronological order. There are very few analepses and prolepses. We only found three prolepses in the entire work[25].

The narrative is also focalized from a single character and this helps in maintaining the unilinear structure.

It is Goldknopf who stated that a novel with a unilinear order usually shows development or is based on the idea of progress. He says that in the victorian era, the idea of progress was believed in and most texts such as the Bildungsromane, used the unilinear structure to show implicitly the idea of human progress[26]. Though Goldknopf's ideas are controversial, it is true to say that in Before Dawn, development takes place in the sense that the hero, Kavumba, shows us how he developed into an adult. This developmental structure is characteristic of the Bildungsroman.

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At another level, we could also say the unilinear structure is patterned on an African traditional belief that after one's wanderings, it is the village which brings about one's peace of mind, which is the climax of one's life. Kavumba, like Ofeyi in Season of Anomy and Chifutu in Between Two Worlds, considers that a return to the village is the climax of one's life. He is only at peace in his village, not in towns or in Somaliland and Burma.

Between Two Worlds' narrative structure is more complicated than in Before Dawn in that it is based on contrasting perspectives. That is, Sibale tries to depict life in both the rural and urban areas by shifting quickly from a portrayal of life in the village to life in town then back again in an attempt to give a wider perspective. However, these shifts are generally clumsy and somewhat obtrusive.

Moreover, there seems to be a certain amount of padding in the novel as the examples below indicate. Firstly, although the Maphenenga ceremony is a significant event in the story in that it is at this ceremony where Chifutu and Nthope, his wife,

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meet and fall in love, the description is too elaborate. One gets the impression that we are being given mere sociological information. Secondly, there is a very detailed description of how marriage negotiations are conducted in this community even though this aspect could have been summarised without significantly altering the narrative. The same thing applies to many descriptions of rural events. This is why we would agree with Sarvan that most of the "... Chapters set in the village merely pad out the novel, providing cultural descriptions ..."[27]

Criticism of the text does not mean that its structure is very simple. As we stated earlier on, this work's narrative structure is more complicated than Before Dawn's. The clearest example of this is revealed in where they begin. Whereas Before Dawn begins with Kavumba's birth and proceeds in a chronological order to show how he grows up, Between Two Worlds begins with the young married adults, Chifutu and Nthope, and through analepses and flashbacks, we learn several things: their childhood, their falling in love, the negotiations preceding their marriage, their wedding, the migration of

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young men to Northland and the problems which the marriage is facing. Thus, in Between Two Worlds anachronies are much more frequent than in Before Dawn but paralipsees are not as pronounced.

In The Hanging, on the other hand, there are more paralipsees than in Between Two Worlds. The first paralipsis of note in the text mainly concerns Mr. Matya Senior's acquisition of wealth. While it had been assumed and even stated by Mr. Matya that the former had achieved his success through hard work, Mrs Motika, the latter's only sister, revealed in court that her father had made love to her in his quest for wealth.

Another paralipsis is the issue of how Mr. Matya's mother died. While her death had been assumed to be due to natural causes, Mrs. Motika again reveals that her mother had committed suicide as a result of what her father had done to her.

The third and final paralipsis we shall cite concerns Mr. Matya Senior's death. As in his wife's case, his death had been assumed to be due to natural causes but Mr. Ndaba's (the

prosecutor in the murder case) coroner's file indicates that he had been given an overdose of insulin by a close friend or relative. It turns out that Mrs. Motika is a highly trained nurse and is the person who used to give her father the insulin doses.

As pointed out earlier, the use of paralipsis subverts chronological order in the sense that the order of narration that is found in an extra-diegetic story is not reflected in the narrative flow of a text[28]. In the story, for instance, we would have known much earlier how Mr. Matya's father made love to his daughter, how his wife died and also how he died. But in the text, these are given to us much later.

Subversion of chronological order in The Hanging is further manifested by beginning in medias res. By the time the narrative begins, a murder has already been committed and the prime suspect, Mr. Matya, identified. There is an unexplained skipping of the circumstances that led to this murder. To make the background clearer, the narrator

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gives us a number of analepses. For instance, we learn from the analepses about tribal rivalry raging in the society, particularly among the wealthy classes, and we see how this factor was manipulated by the Old Man, the secret leader of the tribe to which Mr. Matya belongs.

The narrator also frequently uses analepses to explain the backgrounds of his characters. For example, between pages 7 and 8, the narrator refers back to the recent history of Meke's father and on pages 10 and 11, to how the Meke family had been persecuted by tribalism. We also learn of the history of Meke's relationship with Josephine de Klerk". "... They had met at the house of a mutual friend ..." (p. 18). Similarly, we learn about the past of the lonely white woman living opposite Josephine through an analepsis[29].

When we turn to The Tongue of the Dumb we notice that while the novel has a largely chronological sequence like Before Dawn and Between Two Worlds, it also has contrasting perspectives. These contrasting perspectives are the constant shifts between the portrayal of the white missionaries

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at Katondwe Catholic Mission and the blacks at Mpona village. Unlike in Between Two Worlds these shifts work, in the sense that Mulaisho directly relates the issues that are dealt with in the two areas. For instance, in both cases, ambitious power-hungry men are trying to wrest power from what they consider weak leaders. In addition, in both cases, there is also the debate about how tradition should be treated in a changing world. Furthermore, in both cases, the characters can be divided into either good or evil men.

As far as the chronological sequence is concerned, we see how it is dependent on unravelling the mysteries which appear at the beginning of the narrative: Dulani dies rather mysteriously; his death is followed by locusts and frost which bring hunger; all these and many more events need to be explained. In the course of the narrative, through the creation of a world which accepts the existence of witchcraft and its predictive omens, we learn that Lubinda is the culprit, a wizard. While the chronological order tends to establish tight unity in a text, there is a sense in which The Tongue of the Dumb betrays

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Focalization also influences the structure in that a number of focalizations are used in the text and the effect of this is to disrupt the narrative flow. By this we mean that to describe one event in the story we have several narrators telling us about it from their own viewpoint. On the valley, for instance, we have three different perspectives: the narrator's, Natombi's and Mwape's.

> ... By the break of day they had covered a long distance and were almost on top of the hill which marks the boundary between the valley and the unknown land on the eastern side. Mwape stopped and looked back into the valley. The mother's gaze followed him. There was the Kaunga valley spread out before them, serene and calm as though it was a peaceful valley full of love. The massed foliage, the other hills firmly marking its boundaries, the Kaunga river in the faint misty background; they all looked like jealous guards of the peace and love of the valley. Yet for her it was a pit inhabited by scorpions and poisonous snakes. As she looked into the misty valley below, she tried to close her eyes firmly to forget the indignity, shame and deprivation she had suffered. But in closing her eyes the little mound of earth, the tall trees surrounding it, the grave diggers, the large reed coffin covering the swollen body, all these memories crowded into her head ... Mwape took in the scene. For him this journey was just an adventure, even though he was hungry; after all, he had been hungry for many weeks now. For him, the valley only held happy memories, memories of the excited

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these dreams act as a second narrative and thus interrupt the flow of the first.

Shifting focalization is also widely used in this text, as we pointed out when we were dealing with partisanship. At the risk of repetition, the story is focalized through Katenga, Kawala, Mrs. Kawala, Ray Norris, Governor Baker, Mrs. Eckland and Malherbe among others. The net result is that the flow is continually disrupted whenever each character is allowed to focalize the story.

And again, the technique of simultaneous narration which is used in a few places helps in the disruption of the narrative through the introduction of a sense of immediacy in a largely subsequent narration. See for example:

> ...The women, the boys (servants), the crowd, then the miners. They come. The woman, she is trying to get out of the gutter into which she rolled. Blood gushes off her thigh. She falls. They look on speechless. Then she cried. (p. 12)

Here, the use of the present tense, the tense for simultaneous narration, gives a sense of immediacy.

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Similarly, the narrative technique of flash-backs, as evidenced by that in which we are told how Katenga ended up in jail (see pages 25 to 30), and also the one showing us how Malherbe had first met Kawala (see pages 59 to 66) and as it is used in this text, crudely breaks up the narrative. This is beause the flashbacks stand out; they are not well integrated into the work.

There is also a wide use of analepses and paralipses in the text. The major paralipsis involves the British Government's definition of Kandaharian independence. While the Kandaharians believe it is real economic and political freedom, the British, on the other hand, consider it to be a subtle economic control of Kandaha. Again, we learn that Kawala had once threatened to dump a white body in a whites-only butchery at a later time in the narrative when Katenga's bar companions reveal this to him, the narratee, and indirectly to us. This incident is a clear example of paralipsis.

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2. Characterisation

In characterisation, we have noted basically four tendencies: using stock characters and caricatures; providing insufficient background of characters; creating strained speech and dialogues; and making characters utter the authors' ideological views.

Beginning with the use of caricatures, we would like to state from the outset that we are not legislating against this, for it depends on what the writer's purpose in writing is. If it is merely to entertain, as Simukwasa's Coup suggests, then the author is more at liberty to use caricatures. But in texts which are meant to make the narratees or the readers think much more about the serious issues in the texts - as serious as those raised in our five chosen texts - it is more common to use much more complex characters, in the sense that they are a mixture of baseness and nobility rather than simply either good or evil.

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Continuing with the subject of caricatures, we notice that in The Tongue of the Dumb, the evil or good side of the characters is heightened to emphasize their positions in the moral schema of the texts. Thus, Lubinda is a picture of an evil, insensitive, power hungry demagogue with no humane features, while Gonzago and Aruppe are naive and uncritically pro-Africa - they are just too pure and lovely to be human. On this point, Mulaisho violates his own ideas on characterisation referred to earlier.

Similarly, in The Smoke That Thunders, we find a simplistic division of characters into either evil or good men. We have racists such as Ray Norris, Malherbe and Katenga on one hand and Kawala, George Norris and the Ecklands on the other. The white racists are also depicted as versions of the slave-driving Gullet and Moreau in Houseboy while the good white people are generally naive or again, uncritically pro-Africa.

Like The Smoke That Thunders, Between Two Worlds has a number of insipid caricatures and one-dimensional figures. The main character, for instance, strikes us as one-dimentional in the sense that he

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ters Mulaisho's narrator does several things: he makes a character speak or think in absolutes or have absolute faith in others; exposes the dishonesty of a character and satirizes the use of characters' features or habits.

Of thinking in absolutes and having total faith in others, Mulaisho's narrator gives us Amphunzitsi, the teacher, as a prime example. The narrator tells us that "Every night he walked round it (the new low mud-walled classroom) as he recited the rosary. He prayed God to bless every particle of mud that went into the building, every pole, every blade of grass ..." (p. 23)

Later, we are told that the teacher's thoughts ran along the following lines: "... Had Father Chiphwanya who knew everything, not emphasized these points before sending him to this village ..." (p. 26)

Another example is Father Chiphwanya. He talks in absolutes as the excerpt below will show:

> ... These black people of yours must be taught that they owe everything to the white man-their health, their salvation from slavery, their salvation from hell. Do you realize that

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> only five years ago the Cikunda were terrorizing these Nsenges? Do you realize that without us, the white men, the gospel would never have been spread? Jesus had to be born white. No civilized person would have listened to a black Jesus... (pp. 28-29)

Lubinda is the clearest example of the use of satire in exposing the hypocrisy of characters. While discussing Natombi at a beer party, Lubinda tells us that:

> ...Even white men are now involved. Did you see ... how that white missionary held Natombi by the hand, and in public, before all our eyes, as if some of us were not her fathers-in-law? That is to behave like a dog-even for a white one ... How long shall we go on giving away our women to white men, to teachers? Even women in sorrow like Natombi whom we should protect? (p. 63)

And yet later in the narrative we are told that:-

> ... It was on one of these evening visits to the well by this secret and frightening path that she heard a voice whisper from behind her, so near that she jumped forward before she could turn round.
>
> 'Natombi,' whispered the voice in clear tones. 'Natombi'.'... Natombi I want you, you and only you, 'whispered the hoarse voice, panting with emotion... Natombi ... I don't want to harm you. But, if you dont agree, I will ...' saying that the voice lunged forward. She felt hands close

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> upon her, cold, slippery but firm hands. She struggled and yelled. It was Lubinda ... (p. 110)

This is a clear example of Lubinda's hypocrisy.

Furthermore, when we look at Father Oliver, even though he is a priest, Christ's representative on earth, his words, thoughts and actions do not attest to this. His treatment of Africans is a case in point. We are told by the narrator that:

> ... Just before reaching Mwabvi's village, he (Oliver) rode off into the bush in order to avoid a crowd of people. Father Chiphwanya was very angry with them for not giving way. But when he realised that they were carrying a corpse to the burial place, he relented and simply asked, 'A Christian?'
>
> 'No' said the man at the head of the procession.
>
> 'A pagan!' yelled the priest, 'why didn't you call me to baptize him? Satan! Satan! If you dont bring your sick to the mission, I will tell the D.C. to imprison you. (pp. 40-41)

In addition, Oliver's treatment of his colleagues at the mission is uncharitable. For instance, he hysterically and angrily stops Brother Aruppe from merely touching his Christmas cards. When Gonzago is in his death throes, as he is vomiting heavily,

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Oliver shouts at the man rather than helping him. He refers to Africans as "hordes of half-naked unwashed natives begging for presents". (p. 32)

Turning to the comical description of features and habits, we may note here what the narrator says of Gonzago: "the old man always lifted his helmet at the mention of the name of Jesus". (p. 29). His eyes "reminded you of a little rabbit glaring into the torch-light of the hunter. They looked so ardent and so innocent..." (p. 28). The narrator is trying to underscore Gonzago's naivete in a comical manner. Of Aruppe, the narrator says:

> ... Brother Aruppe was a small man with a weather-beaten scaly skin, hairy arms, and a back curved into a bow from lifting heavy bags and stones. His head was pointed and only at the apex was there any sign of visible hair growth. He was so light and small that sitting before the enormous organ he looked like an ugly little sparrow treading on a heap of maize. (p. 30)

As we have noted above, satire in The Tongue of the Dumb and The Smoke That Thunders is achieved in three ways: through exposure of hypocrisy, through

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comical depiction and by making characters speak in clichés.

As far as the exposure of hypocrisy and dishonesty is concerned, we see a number of examples. In the first place, St Claus, the white Commanding Officer of Selope Maximum Detention Camp, the prison where Kawala is being held, tells the latter that "blacks are monkeys my nigger friend" (p. 182) and yet Kapini, a black prison warder, reveals that:

> ... Don't you know he (St Claus) likes Kaffir beer very much? Why do you think he doesn't dismiss me, even though you fellows may escape when I'm on duty? Because I get him the stuff. And so you know where we drink it? Not at his house. Where else can a white man meet Kaffir beer except in a Kaffir house? (p. 186).

This reveals St Claus' double standards. Similarly, Norris in public utters uncharitable words about Africans and yet he is kind to his African servants[34]. Malherbe too considers blacks to be baboons and yet he has a black woman as his lover[35]. Another example is Mrs. Jackson, a member of the civilized race (according to Norris), who instead of showing high moral principles is steeped in immorality[36]. She

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even walks naked at her parties. Also, the British government is said to be led by men of honour and yet the incumbents, in the narrative, are unprincipled liars[37]. Finally, Katenga claims he is a scientific socialist and yet he is a tribalist and racist[38].

Regarding the comical depiction of characters, particularly those who are racists, the narrator has many examples but the outstanding ones are of Malherbe, Norris, Mr. O'Flaherty, the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mrs Thomson, the highly educated wife of Mr. Thomson, the Kandaharian Secretary for Native Affairs, and Katenga. All of them are described as ugly.

As for the use of clichés, we see several examples. Norris tells us:

> ... Don't you know, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the hallmark of black is savagery, that the onrushing lava of black savagery is cascading towards our very doors and that we have but little time to stop it? (p. 43)

Expressions such as "black is savagery" and "onrushing lava" are stale and overworked. So is "starry eyed idealism" in "... George, I won't

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have this starry-eyed idealism". (p. 47) Mrs. Thomson also utters clichés when she tells us:

> ... The hot lava of black savagery is cascading down into the white valley. It will consume us in flames before we know where we are... Black is savagery. (p. 55)

The clichés in the quotation from Norris above are merely repeated by Mrs. Thomson.

From the discussion above, we can see how the creation of caricatures could have been influenced by a satirical intention in most of the texts, even though we have only dealt with The Tongue of the Dumb and The Smoke That Thunders.

Related to the technique of caricatures is the tendency by authors to gloss over periods in characters' lives. For example, in The Tongue of the Dumb, we are not shown why the characters have become either good or bad men before we meet them in the text. Despite what we have learnt about *human psychology since the days of Freud, i.e.* that a person's behaviour can be traced to his *childhood past, we do not delve into these charac-*

ters' pasts not are we shown the pressures which

have shaped Mpona, Gonzago, Lubinda and Oliver into what they are. Socialization could be one of the factors, but Mulaisho seems to ignore this in his characterisation. Heredity plays a part but Mulaisho does not show this either.

Similarly, in The Smoke That Thunders, there is inadequate explanation or provision of background to explain why some characters like Katenga are depicted as evil men at the beginning of the novel, and why they remain so throughout the text. They are fait accomplis. The same thing applies to the Ecklands, whom we see throughout as good people; little background is provided.

Masiye too in Before Dawn glosses over important periods in his characters' lives or provides insufficient background. We have several reasons for saying this. Firstly, we are told that "... when mother was alive Father was very kind" and yet, in this chronological narrative, we are not shown his kindness to Kavumba during that period. Secondly, it is too much to believe that Tiku, Kavumba's aunt, would be such a narrow-minded married girl as to be, "unable to comprehend or accept Mother's departure" and to continue "searching from hut to hut". (p. 54)

In Between Two Worlds, this lack of provision of background is taken to new heights in the depiction of Kapitao, for instance. All we know is that he is a Chief District Messenger and has occupied that position for a long time. We also know that he comes from another tribe, a matrilineal society, and is already married to two women from his area even though he loves Nthope. For a person who plays such an important role in the novel, a novel which is written from an omniscient point of view, such information is scanty.

On the same point, Sarvan tells us that even in Chifutu's case, glossing over periods is present: "How our 'hero' secured employment in the mines, how he became a procurer, are not explained ..."[39] Furthermore, "in the last scene, husband and lover fight (how the former caught up with the runaway couple is not narrated) ..."[40] The net result of not providing sufficient detail about characters is that the reader fails to consider them believable.

Apart from the points noted above, there is also a tendency to create strained speech and dialogue particularly in Between Two Worlds, The Hanging and The Smoke That Thunders.

In Between Two Worlds, for example, white friends relaxing in an informal atmosphere are made to engage in a ludicrous dialogue. One of them says: "I guess it's indisputable to declare, without any sense of equivocation ..."(p 70-71).

And again, in a conversation with her husband, Nthope is made to state:

> "Are you not the one who was the first to finish tilling your alloted piece of land at Nakanthuleko's ndanjira when she invited the most hardworking and fastest cultivators in the village to clear her fields in the Vibanda plains which had been lying fallow for years in return for a grand beer party?" (p. 54)

In everyday speech, people simply do not utter such long sentences nor do they use the diction of the kind Nthope uses here. Conversational speech is characterised by short statements, usually incomplete, due to false starts, ellipses and other features. In this context, the quotations above are examples of unnatural speech.

Turning to The Hanging we come across what must surely be an unbelievable speech from Fransesca, a prostitute with 'O' levels. Saidi's narrator makes

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her utter the following words: "I have to take phenobarbital and sometimes ... dipheylhydantion sodium. Fascinating, isn't it? My disease". (p. 123) Even if Fransesca has 'O' levels, it is too much to expect her to say "dipheylhydation sodium" with such accuracy particularly in an informal conversation.

Also, in The Smoke That Thunders, in an informal discussion between Andy Mortimer and Sir Ray, the narrator has Andy state:

> Her Majesty's Government will insist on a clear and unequivocal undertaking that all British investment in Kandaha - public and private - shall be fully guaranteed against (a) arbitrary and unilateral confistication; (b) capricious changes in the tax law of that country, such changes for example, as might discriminate against our investment (c) the free and unimpeded remission to Britain of all earnings of British nationals and corporations; and finally (d) an undertaking that the new colony, sorry dominion, will honour all agreements entered into by her Majesty's Government in connection with the continued payments ... (p229)

This reads like a written text rather than conversational speech.

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However, in spite of what we have stated above on speech, we have discovered that some of the writers, through their narrators, show an ability to depict differences of characters through speech.

Firstly, in The Tongue of the Dumb we see, for example, how Lubinda's language differs from all the other characters'. Lubinda, speaking tells us:

> 'There is a killer, a witch, an eater of human flesh in our midst' Lubinda paused 'where he has come from we don't know. Why he has come to our village, all the way from beyond the hills and beyond, we don't know ... But we know one thing, that in our midst now is a man whom the Kamcepe condemned for witchcraft and whom, through lack of fire in our bellies, through the timidity of our leadership in this village, we let go - as if he had not killed Dulani, our own flesh and blood, as if he had not killed our own children before; as if to kill him would have brought death on the whole village'. (p. 130)

And again, later, Lubinda says: "Do not weep, Natombi. You sold your child, your only child, because you do not have the heart of a woman. Mwape is dead. I know it. That is the reason

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for my anger". His style is characterised by a number of parallel phrases such as "a killer, a witch, an eater" and the repetition of emotive terms. It is a highly rhetorical style, the kind used by demagogues. Compare this with Mpona's speech. In a discussion with Lubinda, a person who had openly showed his dislike for the former, Mpona said to Lubinda:

> 'My son,' ... 'a family that calls in a kamcape will no longer remain a family. Even though the diviner may prove that there is no witch, the spear of hatred will have been sharpened It is the same with us here. We are not only one village but one family ....' (p. 71)

The quotation, as it proceeds, shows that Mpona's language is not rhetorical like that of Lubinda, who postures before his audience. Mpona's language is the kind usually found among those who are sensitive or warm-hearted, a quality which is indeed shown in Mpona's behaviour in the story. It is true that he is weak as a leader, but he has more love for the people than Lubinda.

Equally, in The Smoke That Thunders, Mulaisho, through his narrator, shows his ability to depict differences of characters through speech.

To illustrate, Sir Ray's speech is clearly distinct from Katenga's or Kawala's in style. Although to prove this many quotations would be needed, we have selected a few to show the distinctions. Ray tells us:

> ... To condemn South Africa for practising Apartheid is like condemning the human hands for being a separate organ from the legs. We the white people are different from the blacks. If we are different, it follows *we live differently*. Have the Honourable Official members across the floor ever tried living with their cookboys? There is a difference between black and white: but there is no difference between a black professor and a black cookboy. That is the problem. That is the crisis. That, Mr. Speaker is the tragedy, a tragedy of over reaching human proportions, a tragedy which if not contained can hound civilisation, the white race out of this world. (p. 43)

This quotation shows Ray's skillful use of repetition, of what he sees as key concepts and the use of parallel statements both to hold the listeners' attention through repetition of structure and the effect of block-building, as a mason piles one brick on top of another.

When we meet Ray later on in the novel, at the Ecklands' burial, he tells us in his graveside speech:

> Why did we have to come so far, not only from this town but from Gunsbury and all the centres where the white man resides, to come to this burial? To render human and

> deific testimony to the burial of that which has already been cremated? Why?' ... He raised a handkerchief to his face. His eyes steeped in an unusual murderous mysticism, he said in short stabbing words, 'Lift your arms to the Lord, for my metal is already lifted. Kill the evil in our midst - for that evil is the thirst of the black man for the blood of the white man. For this country, our country because we know no other birthplace, has a rendez-vous with civilization ... (pp. 141-142)

If we look at this excerpt we again see the skillful use of repetition and parallelism. In addition, we see the skillful use of the rhetorical question followed by pauses. We also see, as in the other quotation, such glittering phrases as "rendez-vous with civilization", "to render human and deific testimony". Such expressions are usually indicative of a showy person, one who is play-acting and seeks cheap popularity.

Let us compare Ray to Kawala. The latter says:

> Comrades, now you are real comrades. On this occasion let me remind you all of what our mission in life is. It is to liberate this country from the yoke of imperialism and colonialism. We fighters for our people,

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> and our people means all peace-loving people, black, white, yellow or any colour. Our enemy is colonialism. It is also racists like Norris. These we must single out and attack until they are dead ... I do not have a quarrel with Norris. I have a quarrel with the sedition against humanity which he represents. If tomorrow, nay tonight, Norris were to say, 'I am wrong, the majority must rule, all men are equal', I would be the first one to embrace him ... (p. 90)

See again the already - quoted excerpt:

> ... Kandaha is not in Europe
> It is not in the Middle East
> ... (p. 239)

In comparison with Norris's language, although the quotations show a few clichés, such as "yoke of imperialism" "peace-loving", and the glittering phrase "sedition against humanity", they generally lack the parallelism and emotive terms found in Norris's speech. This style is indicative of a rational man who chooses his words carefully before uttering them lest he causes unnecessary offence. He is therefore more sensitive. This assessment of Kawala's character is borne out by the rest of the narrative.

The fourth and final tendency we have noted is that of direct authorial intrusion and making characters utter the author's ideological views.

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As implied earlier when discussing partisanship, this tendency is particularly pronounced in The Tongue of the Dumb, The Hanging and The Smoke That Thunders.

To start with, in The Tongue of the Dumb, Mulaisho's narrator directly intrudes and addresses the readers through what Genette has called metalepses[41]. This novel is rich in metalepses. Here are a few examples.

> When you are bitten by a snake you panic first, then you realize what has happened, and afterwards you feel the pain of the poison wriggling up from your foot to your head ... (p. 19) Move on to the other bodies on the shelves and briefly look at the death-grimaces that were once human faces. You would see the scraped skulls and the bones stretched out and you would ask what the purpose of life really was. By the time you have finished with your inspection you would have counted twelve skeletons, the toll which malaria had extracted from the white man in two years. (pp 37-38).

While metalepses were common in Sterne's time, they are now at best frowned upon or ridiculed. Admittedly, even though one of the functions of a narrator is to maintain a close relationship with

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Meke's father, who claims he cannot understand the essence of tribalism, later discusses ideas which are expressed with perfect ideological clarity. This could only mean that it is the writer rather than the character who is speaking. See for example, the excerpt below, which is on the significance of purges to change the corrupt political system portrayed in The Hanging. We are told:

> "... It's like changing plough oxen. This pair is getting old, so you change it with a fresh pair ... your problem ... is not the oxen. It is the plough. It has a blunt blade".
>
> "In other words, it's the system", Meke said.
> "What else?"

It is too much to accept that Meke's father can articulate these largely pro-Marxist ideas with such pat assurance especially given his failure to even understand tribalism.

3. Language and style

In language and style we have noticed that following what is widely regarded as Achebe's successful bending of the English language to accommodate African speech and imagery, many writers in Africa have emulated him[43]. The four Zambian writers

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selected here are no exception. However, it is in The Tongue of the Dumb and Before Dawn where Zambian idioms are mainly used. Let us begin with Before Dawn. In this text, to show us the use of African speech, Ganizo, the principal village councillor tells us:

> It's not a heavy matter. I bring it at the Bwalo because many rainy seasons have gone by since Menyani's household received a male child. I've waited all this time to see if the father of the boy you see here would bring me the head of a slaughtered goat. People, up to now I've received nothing. So I want to know what Menyani is thinking about our village rules...

Here the use of the word "people", which translates in Nyanja - Masiye's mother tongue - as antuni, would be considered as a rather unnecessary repetition in standard English, but its use here suggests a non-English context. Masiye, also gives us a number of vernacular expressions and songs to suggest that his characters are speaking in vernacular. See, for instance, such expressions as ndagwaza (I have stabbed) Menya (hit), panda (slap), Mulandu suola (a case never dies) and others.

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In The Tongue of the Dumb an attempt is likewise made to devise an African vernacular style which simulates the idiom of the Nyanja native tongue. See, for example, the widespread use of traditional songs. We also have occasional translated expressions. From the numerous examples, we have drawn two. In the first place we have: "But now I hear the chief of the village throws a leg there ..." (p.108)(In Nyanja to throw a leg on a woman is to be having an affair with the woman). Later we are told that Lubinda "is a bush child" (p.46) (In Nyanja a bastard is a bush child).

In addition, Mulaisho's narrator uses African sayings and proverbs, such as "the brotherhood of the axe", which in Nyanja refers to casual relationships between people. Earlier, we saw how African symbols are used to create imagery. We are referring here to the singing of cicadas, the mating of snakes in broad daylight, and the owl and the python.

Measurement of distances is also Africanised. Instead of using kilometres and miles, distance in

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traditional African society is measured in the days or moons it will take to cover the distance. For example, in The Smoke That Thunders, the chief in Boko tells us that his place is many moons' walk from Musasa.

All the techniques above are aimed at manipulating the English language to suggest that the characters are using vernacular, or simply to show an English speaker how African authors are capable of bending the English language. It is this phenomenon which made Tucker and Ferres comment:

> ... English words vary in meaning from country to country, while different idioms, constructions, grammatical and syntactical forms have also evolved, giving the language of each country a particular stamp not duplicated elsewhere. Although to the purist these mutations may be deplorable, they demonstrate the rich adaptability and essential vitality of the language and suggest why it has become an international medium of communication and literary expression[44].

However, it would be too much to ascribe some of the grammatical errors, weak imagery and clumsiness we find in a number of these Zambian texts to the 'domestication' of English. The first ones that

come to mind are in The Tongue of the Dumb. We have:

> Looking at it (the moon) on that night was like looking at the deep Kawe pool in the Luangwa river. It never looks more peaceful than when a crocodile has just pulled a human being into its inner caverns. (p 22)

If this image is meant to reveal to us how deceptive and cruel nature is, then it is weak, since the use of a restricted image, 'the Kawe pool in the Luangwa', fails to capture the imagination of a reader who knows little about the pool.

Another weak image in our view, in The Tongue of the Dumb, is found in this excerpt: "The first cock had just crowed, but they still sat huddled together like rejected market fish ..." Is rejected market fish usually "huddled"? Then we have "he remembered the attentive ears forever pricked and the distant eyes listening for sound beyond this life". Given that this is not a poem, how can eyes listen for sounds? This is an example of a mixed metaphor, and these clog the imagination unnecessarily.

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In *Between Two Worlds*, apart from the clichés and strained speech of characters noted earlier, we have a number of syntactically faulty sentences in description. See, for instance, this: 'Having left himself unguarded as a result of the sweeping miss, Chifutu took advantage ..." (p. 54). But it is not Chifutu who left himself 'unguarded'. This is a wrong construction of a participial phrase.

In *The Hanging* we have among others, this: 'In the villages, Meke thought, portraits of people with the Original nothing abounded. Not in the city, not in the capital ..." (p. 54). The meaning here is obscure due to ambiguity. If this ambiguity had drawn us to the significance of the subject it would have been justified, but the subject is quite trivial.

There is also a tendency in *The Hanging* to use abstract rather than concrete words. Concrete words include those describing sound, sight, smell, taste, and touch. In contrast, abstract words refer to ideas such as love, honour, patriotism and the like. While we cannot legislate against

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the use of abstract words, since they also have their purposes, it has been observed that when a passage is rich in concrete words it attains concreteness, in that a reader can visualize, without great difficulty, the picture the writer is trying to create.

In this light, let us look at a passage from The Hanging. The narrator tells us, when describing the Motikas' home that:

> ... She, Mrs. Motika, had a white turban on her head. She seemed to have emerged from a foam bath. Her white bathrobe came down to slippered feet. He followed her into the quietly furnished lounge with copper lampshades and animal skin rugs. All of it looked unattainably expensive. Awed to the core, Meke sat down. In ambience the room had something more delicious than the room where he had met the Old Man ... (p. 49)

Abstract words and phrases such as "quietly-furnished", "unattainably expensive", and "something more delicious", do not create the vividness that could have been produced by concrete words. A lack of vividness is also found in the following: "Cycling amid the affluence of the suburb, he thought again of Death ..." (p. 52). The "affluence of the suburb" is seen by the author and not by the reader.

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This weakness in clarity of description, found in several passages in this novel, is particularly unfortunate in the sense that in showing the gulf between the people and the rich, Saidi could have used the power of concrete description to describe the rich people, their homes and household-effects, and contrasted these with those of the people. Alex La Guma, in A Walk in the Night, shows the power of concrete words in creating vivid imagery for social contrasts. But Saidi allows the chance to use this tool to slip away.

However, in spite of the weakness we have noted above, there are passages in the texts which become vivid through the use of concrete language and a direct style: that is, through simple, relatively short sentences, avoiding the complication brought about by elaborate co-ordination, subordination and modification. Elsewhere, repetition is effectively used to communicate thoughts and ideas. Here is one example. It describes the thoughts of Father Chiphwanya on Christmas Eve:-

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> ... He thought of the chimes that used to break over Cracow at midnight to announce the arrival of Christmas, of the many Christmas trees that used to glitter and grace the windows of the houses, of the tinsel decorations upon these trees and the load of presents that would bend the branches down. He thought of the turkey dishes and the rich Christmas cakes. He thought of himself there at the altar saying the midnight mass before a packed congregation of dignitaries. There he could speak his true thoughts and be understood. There he could use his oratory in the service of God. Then there were the babies in lily-white baptismal gowns to be baptized on Christmas Day. His thoughts reverted to the midnight mass. He would stand before them all in his white vestments streaked with red-gold borders, and calling out loud and clear he would announce the birth of the infant Jesus ... (p. 33)

In using such repetitions as "he thought", repeated twice, and "there" united by the pronoun "he", as well as using words referring to sight, such as "glitter", "tinsel", "lily-white" and "red-gold", Mulaisho manages to create a vivid picture of the thoughts of Chiphwanya. The following describes Mpona's thoughts and perceptions:

> When the shower stopped, Mpona came out of his house. He surveyed the clear skies briefly and his eyes followed them to the horizon, where they became tucked into the ground.

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> For a moment his eyes lingered over the rough-hewn precipice of the hills in the misty distance. His small nose sniffed at the horizon. He could smell the heavily-scented flowers and the hazy mist from the distant hills. He looked at the rocks tarred with the dark brush of age and worn into furrows by the merciless hammering of the rain and streamlets of water chasing each other into the valley. Then his thoughts turned back to the Kaunga river, the river that bounds the valley on the fourth side, the river that creeps along with unobtrusive quiet during the dry season. He thought of its calm, clear, water, of the fish turning their fat bellies down into the bottom of the clear water. Then of the peace of death that would descend upon the quiet waters and of the surface that would be carpeted with the fat bellies of sweet river bream. This was the Kaunga, which became a vicious and vengeful terror during the rainy season, which had been clouded with the mud of turbulence and roared and galloped downstream in a mad bid to seek revenge. 'Dulani', he sighed to himself. (pp. 26-27).

Words referring to sight such as "rough-hewn", "hazy", "clear", "fat" and "clouded"; personification as in "the river that creeps", "the Kaunga which became a vicious and vengeful terror", and "roared and galloped in a mad bid", Mulaisho succeeds in giving a vivid description which both evokes the setting and highlights one of the themes of the book - the hostility of nature.

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Masiye adopts a direct simple style in

Before Dawn.

> ... I woke up, next to mother on the reed-mat. The inside of the hut was warm and it smelled of smoke. Ever since my birth Father seldom slept in our hut and so, on this night, we were alone. She was fast-asleep and snoring away loudly. My back was bare and I pulled the flimsy cloth covering us. It was entangled with her legs and the firelogs. Bugs had kept me awake most of the night. I stirred and noticed that the fowls and goats had began their morning noise. I tried to stop them but they continued to march round the inside of the hut. Mother was used to it all. It had always been like that.

This quotation is full of simple sentences composed of subject and verb, subject, verb and complement, subject, verb and direct object. But vividness is created through the choice of diction, and the passage also succeeds in evoking the life and mind of a child in an African village.

See also the description of the dying scene of Kavumba's mother:

> That evening, there was a terrifying ghastly imminence in our hut. Old women had heard that mother had fainted and they came. Speaking in low whispers, they brought food and sat down, exchanging looks.

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> Mother did not stir. Nor could she eat any food. After a while, the women left, one by one, leaving us all alone in our harrowing solitude. We retired early that night. The inside of the hut was depressing. The fire glowed smokelessly. We looked forward to our sleep, sound and deep, we hoped ... (p. 45)

Although in this quotation we have more modification and subordination, the incisive descriptions are usually in the simple sentences which are more suitable for evoking immediacy of experience. The longer, more complex sentences are generally needed where there is some intellectualizing of experience.

This tendency by the Zambian authors is motivated by their inordinate concern with depicting "local dramatic events"[45]. This requires, usually, a direct style.

This direct style is also found even in The Hanging where the events are not as local and dramatic as in The Tongue of the Dumb. In the following, the style is used to portray the elite.

> There were old men and young men, old-women and young women, doctors, lawyers, nurses, teachers, lecturers, engineers, journalists and the so-called literati, men who had written one novel and spoke forever of how

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> their next book was progressing. They all wore clothes which reeked of extravagance. They laughed discreetly, not opening their mouths too wide. They tried to speak in half-whispers, as if backbiting each other, which they did on a grand scale. Their English was spoken with an attempt at perfection, everyone on the lookout for solecisms, at which they guffawed mercilessly. With vehemence, they disclaimed the title of elite, believing themselves magnanimously to be no better than the ordinary folk in the shanty townships. (p. 62).

Through the use of such short relatively simple sentences as "they all wore clothes which reeked of extravagance", they laughed discrectly, not opening their mouths too wide and "they tried to speak in half-whispers as if backbiting each other ..." we are made to feel the intensity of the narrator's dislike for the elite. He is particularly angered by their artificiality and pretence. In many ways, he is like Egbo in <u>The Interpreters</u> who is also opposed to the artificiality of the elite.

This then shows that in the handling of language and style, we also find vividly evocative passages in the texts even though the works are generally characterized by clumsy language.

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NOTES

1. Gérard Genette, Narrative Discourse trans. Jane Lewin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), p. 213.

2. As quoted by Terry Eagleton in Marxism and Literary Criticism (London: Methuen and Company, 1976), p. 35.

3. This is what Ezekiel Mphahlele says in 'African Literature and Propaganda'. The Jewel of Africa Vol. 1. No. 3. (1968) p. 22.

4. Genette, Narrative Discourse, p. 256.

5. Genette, Narrative Discourse, pp. 257-258.

6. For example in God's Bits of Wood, the people are depicted as the active intelligent participants in the struggle against the railway owners and their collaborators.

7. Focalization refers to narrating a story through the consciousness of a character or characters. In the past, this concept also referred to focussing the story on a character but this is now held to be a weak assertion by Genette himself.

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8. Plato championed this idea in The Republic and so does Harold Lasswell in Politics (New York and Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1958), pp. 13-30.

9. William Saidi, The Hanging (Lusaka: National Educational Company of Zambia (NECZAM) 1979) p. 125.

10. Saidi, The Hanging, p. 125.

11. See C. Baylies and M. Szeftel, 'The Rise of a Zambian Capitalist class in the 1970s'. Journal of Southern African Studies Vol. 8, No. 2. (April 1982), pp. 200-210.

12. See Gilbert Mudenda, 'Problems and Prospects of class analysis in the study of African Social Formations'. Journal of African Marxists Issue 1. Vol. 1. (Nov. 1981) pp. 65-80.

13. D. Mulaisho, The Smoke That Thunders (London: Heinemann, 1979), p. 236.

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14. For instance, Stalin betrayed the German communists by signing a friendship pact with the ultra-rightist Hitler during the Second World War.

15. This is what the dependency school asserts, in part. See, for example, A.G. Frank, The development of Underdevelopment New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971.

16. D. Mulaisho, 'Doing your writing thing'. The Zambian Review (Nov. 1972), p. 50.

17. For capitalist orientation see, for example, C. Baylies, 'The state and class formation in Zambia'. Ph.D. thesis, Wisconsin, 1978., A. Beveridge and A. Oberschall, African Businessmen and Development in Zambia. Princeton Press, 1979.

18. Mulaisho, The Smoke That Thunders, p. 239.

19. Genette, Narrative Discourse, p. 40.

20. Genette, Narrative Discourse, p. 40.

21. Genette, Narrative Discourse, p. 40.

22. Genette, Narrative Discourse, p. 51.

23. Genette, Narrative Discourse, p. 51.

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24. According to Genette an autodiegetic narrator is a text's internal narrator who is also the hero. Kavumba is a clear example.

25. These are Kavumba's references to the future consequences of: his mother's sore, the father's arrogance and his relationship with Thandiwe.

26. See D. Goldknopf, The Life of the Novel (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1972) Ch. 1.

27. C. Sarvan, 'Zambian Fiction: The NECZAM Library Series: A Review': Ngoma Vol. 1. No. 2. (Jan-Jun 1984), p. 140.

28. Extradiegetic means outside the fictional world created by the text, the diegesis or the first narrative.

29. Saidi, The Hanging, p. 23.

30. The second narrative is the secondary fictional world such as analepses and prolepses whose temporal field is not generally covered by that of the first narrative.

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31. Mulaisho, The Smoke That Thunders, pp. 253-254.

32. Mulaisho, The Smoke That Thunders, p. 126.

33. Gilbert Highet, The Anatomy of Satire Princeton: Princeton Press, 1962.

34. Mulaisho, The Smoke That Thunders, p. 45.

35. Mulaisho, The Smoke That Thunders, p. 64.

36. Mulaisho, The Smoke That Thunders, p. 57.

37. Mulaisho, The Smoke That Thunders, p. 244.

38. Mulaisho, The Smoke That Thunders, pp. 236-238.

39. Sarvan, 'Zambian Fiction', p. 139.

40. Sarvan, 'Zambian Fiction', p. 140.

41. Genette, Narrative Discourse, p. 243.

42. R. Finnegan, Oral Poetry (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1979), pp. 28-29.

43. E. Obiechina, Culture, tradition and society in the West African Novel (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1980), pp. 181-182.

44. J.H. Ferres and M. Tucker, Modern Commonwealth Literature (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1977) p. ix.

45. L. Bloom, A Point of No Return; A Review. The Jewel of Africa Vol. 1. No. 3. (1968), p. 24.

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CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION

Having stated the objectives of this dissertation in the first chapter, and having analyzed Zambian prose fiction from the standpoint both of its craftsmanship and of its partisanship in the second, we are now in a position to draw some conclusions.

Firstly, on the issue of craftsmanship, we have discovered that Zambian prose fiction in English generally suffers from a number of weaknesses. We shall highlight only those in narrative structure, characterisation and language.

While the writers have no cut and dried narrative structure applicable to all - a welcome development in the sense that it shows the uniqueness of each text - there is a tendency by the authors to get carried away by their material, to convey mere sociological information as if they saw literature primarily as a record of Zambian culture. This tendency is pronounced in The Tongue of the Dumb, Between Two Worlds and Before Dawn. Masiye has stated that the role of

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literature in Zambia is to record Zambian life and culture:

> We should understand the phenomena of our existence in Zambia and on this good earth: these are such things as our laughter and sorrows; love and hate, our hopes and despair, our work and leisure. All these, and many other aspects of our personal lives, need to be understood, revealed and recorded ...[1]

Such an approach to literature tends to lead to excessive sociological bias in the texts. It is this bias, prevalent in many African works, which made Mphahlele state that:

> African writers will have to come to terms with the meaning of literature as a criticism of life ... they have to realise that just giving anthropological information or sociological information is not good enough[2].

While Mphahlele's observation is valid in many cases, we feel that when sociological information is essential to the unity of a work, it should be included. However, in the instances we have seen in the Zambian texts, particularly in Between Two Worlds, it is obtrusive, a sign that mere sociological information is being included for its own sake.

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As for characterisation, we have seen, among other things, a rich use of satiric devices. Many characters tend to be stock characters. Their characters are so simplified that we are able to identify their inner selves as soon as we come across them in the texts. In other words, our writers follow writers such as Dickens in the sense that they are using caricatures to help us laugh at the follies in our society. However, the danger with the use of caricatures is that the focus tends to shift from people in the novel to ideas. As Ian Watt says in The Rise of the Novel, it was the desire to depict the lives of individuals in a realistic manner which led to the rise of the novel[3]. Other antecedent genres, such as oral narratives and drama, were felt to be inadequate to express peoples' lives.

Coupled with the excessive use of caricatures is the tendency to leave unexplained gaps in characters' lives; the strained speech of characters, and using characters as mouthpieces. As we saw in the second chapter, this combination of flaws makes the characters in Zambian prose fiction seem generally wooden and unconvincing.

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On language and style, we have noted that, because the writers are mostly preoccupied with "local dramatic events", they tend to adopt a direct style in order to convey a sense of drama and the immediacy of experience. The danger of an over-use of the direct style is that an impression is created in the readers' minds that the significance of a text is lacking since the writer has eschewed a style that distances and intellectualizes experience. One usually associates a more complex, less direct style with more complex, more aesthetically distanced subject matter.

In addition, in a number of cases, the descriptions lack clarity due to the tendency to use abstract rather than concrete words in description. As stated earlier, it is the use of concrete words which creates vividness.

However, even though the language has these weaknesses noted above and a number of ungrammatical constructions, clichés and mixed metaphors, its general simplicity makes it accessible to people of middle-level education. This is related to the concerns of the texts. As pointed out earlier, the writers want to teach us something

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through the texts, and in order to achieve this, they feel they should be as clear as possible so that their messages are understood.

Turning to partisanship or socialist commitment, we have discovered that Zambian writers are not yet proclaiming socialism despite the fact that these works were published in the early 70s, several years after Zambia's independence in 1964 when it had already been decided at the Mulungushi Conference of the United National Independence Party, (UNIP) that Zambia was to have a socialist orientation. There is generally little partisanship with the people except, to a limited extent, in The Hanging and Before Dawn. In other texts, The Tongue of the Dumb, Between Two Worlds and The Smoke That Thunders, there is no recognition of any class struggle, let alone class awareness. It might be argued that the writers were writing about a period which had no classes but this is not convincing enough. The classes which are being recognized today even in Zambian Humanism - Humanism Part 1 denies the existence of classes - could not have sprung up all of a sudden after

independence. Even if well-delineated classes did not exist as such, a perceptive and class - conscious observer would not only have been able to recognize the existence of the rich peasantry - as Masiye does, in recognizing Chief Tembo - but would also have noticed that those who were acquiring education in the colonial system, such as Kakonwadia in The Smoke That Thunders, were beginning to constitute a class. In this sense, the Zambian fiction we have examined in this study lacks socialist commitment at the deepest level = recognition of the reality of class formation and of the class struggle in an African context.

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NOTES

1. A.S. Masiye, 'Zambia's Literary Quest'. The Jewel of Africa Vol. 2. No. 3 and 4. (1970), p. 5.

2. See Ezekiel Mphahlele's statement in The Jewel of Africa Vol. 1. No. 3 (1968), p. 24.

3. See Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel (Middlesex, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), Ch. 1.

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