

***CHARACTER IN THE NOVEL MNTANAMI, MNTANAMI***  
***BY C.L.S. NYEMBEZI***

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## ***ABSTRACT***

Different methods for the representation of character were studied in this min-dissertation. These were especially applied to the representation of character in the novel *Mntanami, Mntanami!* by the author CLS Nyembezi.

With regard to theories in terms of the links between characters and characterization, the following deductions can be made:

As regards the existence of a character, this study sides with Brink (1987:68) when he says that

*The build-up of character from the data in the narratorial text is an activity that has to be undertaken by the reader!*

A character, to my mind, is therefore something that comes into being from constructions made by readers. The character, according to Brink (1987:69) comes into being through the interaction among text, story and the narrational process and should be seen in terms of being a function of the three worlds. Characters are therefore not subservient to events or wholly independent, but exist as part of the whole of the narrative elements.

The adjusted model of Bal (1980:96-98) can be used very fruitfully in the study of character in *Mntanami, Mntanami!*.

The author used the sources of information as outlined in the theory to discuss the characters. Explicit information about each character was given. The implicit information can also be picked up by the reader. The author is very well informed about Zulu tradition and is an excellent exponent of the language. The reader has to read with care and take good note of the traditional Zulu customs in order to obtain this implicit information.

The general literary theory is applicable to the specific literature, as emerges from this study.

A classification of Greimas' model of binary oppositions of actants was used fruitfully in this study to place the characters and to explain the intrigues in the story.

Finally it needs to be said that characters and characterization constitute a topic which rests very strongly on personal notions, but there are general rules for the representation of character. The author, C.L.S. Nyembezi represented the characters in the novel *Mntanami*, *Mntanami!* in accordance with these rules, but still in a unique manner, because he is a person with very special abilities.

## **OPSOMMING**

Die bestaan van verskillende metodes van aanbieding van karakters is in hierdie studie bestudeer. In die besonder is die studie toegespits op die aanbieding van die karakters in *Mntanami, Mntanami!* deur die skrywer C.L.S. Nyembezi.

Wat die teorie in verband met karakters en karakterisering betref, kan die volgende afleidings gemaak word:

Wat die bestaan van 'n karakter betref, sluit hierdie studie aan by Brink (1987:68) wanneer hy sê:

*Die opbou van 'n karakter uit die gegewens van die verteltekst is 'n aktiwiteit wat die leser moet verrig!*

'n Karakter is dus na my mening iets wat ontstaan vanuit leserskonstruksies. Die karakter bestaan volgens Brink (1987:69) uit die wisselwerking tussen teks, storie en vertelproses en moet in funksie van die drie wêreldes gesien word. Karakters is dus nie ondergeskik aan gebeure of heeltemal selfstandig nie, maar bestaan as deel van die geheel van die verhaalelemente.

Die verwerkte model van Bal (1980:96-98) kan met vrug gebruik word in die ondersoek na die karakterisering in *Mntanami, Mntanami!*

Die skrywer het die informasiebronne soos in die teorie genoem, gebruik om die karakters aan te bied. Daar is eksplisiete informasie van elke karakter gegee. Die implisiete informasie kan ook deur die leser opgemerk word. Die skrywer is 'n baie goeie kenner van die Zoeloetradisie en 'n puike gebruiker van die taal. Die leser moet "fyn" lees en goed let op tradisionele Zoeloegebruike om hierdie implisiete informasie te kan bekom.

Die algemene literatuurteorie is toepasbaar op die besondere literatuur soos blyk uit hierdie studie.

'n Klassifikasie van karakters volgens Greimas se model van binêre opposisies van aktante is met vrug in hierdie studie gebruik om karakters te plaas, en die intriges in die verhaal te verduidelik.

Ten slotte kan dus gesê word dat karakters en karakterisering 'n onderwerp is wat baie op persoonlike idees berus, maar dat daar tog algemene reëls is vir die aanbieding van 'n karakter. Die skrywer C.L.S. Nyembezi het die karakters in *Mntanami, Mntanami!* aangebied volgens hierdie reëls, maar tog op 'n unieke manier omdat hy 'n persoon met besondere vermoëns is.

# CHAPTER ONE

## POINT OF DEPARTURE

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the general point of departure of this study is the main focus. In the first place the main problem statement is posed, followed by the main aim and various objectives of this study. In the last instance the chapter outline is presented.

### 1.2 CONTEXTUALIZATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

An analysis of *character* in the novel *Mntanami, Mntanami!* implies an investigation which focusses on the people (personages/actors) in this novel. It also implies to a certain degree an investigation which explores the way C.L.S. Nyembezi has portrayed these people as characters in the story.<sup>1</sup>

In Zulu literature, nobody has done any research on the topic *character in the novel Mntanami, Mntanami* by C.L.S. Nyembezi. Although Kunene (1994) did research on a number of Zulu novels, he did not follow the theoretical framework which will be used in this analysis. He also illustrates how the characters are affected by the social environment in which they find themselves. He did not focus on any actants and actors explicitly.

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<sup>1</sup> In this analysis it is maintained that character can not go without characterisation. The view is maintained that through characterisation, the characters become visible.

Ntombela (1995), although he applied the same theory than this attempt, had character and characterisation in the novel *Akuyiwe Emhlahlweni* in focus. It obviously differs from the present attempt in that it deals with another novel by another author.

The following questions can therefore be regarded as relevant to this research attempt:

- What does character in narrative fiction entail?
- Which actors and actants can be identified in the novel *Mntanami, Mntanami*.

### 1.3 *AIMS AND OBJECTIVES*

This research aims at answering the abovementioned questions by means of the following aims:

- a. to determine the theoretical principles that underlie character in narrative fiction, and
- b. to analyse the actors and actants in the novel *Mntanami, Mntanami!* according to the theoretical principles mentioned in (a).

### 1.4 *THEORETICAL ARGUMENT*

In the pages that follow character will be dealt with on two narratological levels, viz. the story (fable) and the text (suzjet) level.

### 1.5 *CHAPTER OUTLINE*

In Chapter Two the theoretical principles of narratology are presented with special reference to character. In this chapter some attention will also be given to characterisation principles. In Chapter Three the various characters of the novel *Mntanami, Mntanami!* by C.L.S. Nyembezi will be analysed according to the theory stated in Chapter Two. Special attention will be given here to the various actants and actors in the novel *Mntanami, Mntanami!* In Chapter Four a general summary and conclusion will follow.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **CHARACTER: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter a theoretical outline is presented which will assist in analysing the novel *Mntanami, Mntanami!* in Chapter Three.

When a study of character in prose is undertaken, there arise a myriad of terms with a similarity of meaning. Each one of these terms is the product of a particular person's viewpoint with regard to characters. In order to choose a term which will be employed in this study, these viewpoints and the approaches which accompany them must be compared and contrasted with each other.

In conjunction with this we can, on the basis of different principles, identify various types of characters. In this chapter an attempt is also made to take a closer look at the different types. Thereafter a suitable method of differentiation for the purpose of this study will be chosen.

#### **2.2 CHARACTER AND THE TWO LEVELS OF NARRATOLOGY**

Character is dealt with on two narratological levels, namely the story (fable) and the text (suzjet) level.

At the story level the characters are grouped together and they are called actants. But Greimas, according to Rimmon-Kenan (1983) makes a distinction between actor 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 inanimate objects (e.g. a magic ring) and abstract concepts (e.g. destiny) (see Ntombela, 1994:131).

The second level of narration is what is referred to as the text level. At this level we refer to characters, rather than actors (as is the case with the first level). We get to know the characters in the text level in four main ways: repetition, accumulation, relationship with other characters, and transformation (Ntombela, 1994:131).

In the following paragraphs the concept “character” will be compared and contrasted with other closely related concepts.

## **2.3 AN ANALYSIS OF THE TERM “CHARACTER”**

### **2.3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Character as a figurative element stands in a fixed relation to the other narrative elements. It is part of the elements which constitute the complete work. The manner in which it is bound to the other narrative elements is a question which will not be addressed in this research attempt. What will be regarded as relevant to this analysis are the various semantic attachments theorists are making with regard to character in prose.

*What is character?* is the question to be answered in the following paragraphs.

### **2.3.2 WHAT IS CHARACTER?**

Around the concept *character* there exist a number of terms in the same semantic field, namely: people of words; persons of paper; letterlives; individuals of ink; character; personages; and figures. These concepts create the idea that characters are only relevant when presented in written form, on paper, by a writer.

Rapoo (1993:57) contends that:<sup>2</sup>

*The growth and development of narratology encourages authors, readers and theorists to ask questions as to what characters are. Through a novel the writer portrays a certain aspect of life and he has to devise means whereby this aspect of life should be convincing and appear real. In this the author can succeed only if he is able to create characters who are lifelike. The author creates his own "creatures", whose lives will be controlled by him in the world that he has created in the novel. They (the characters) they will narrate all that he wants to reveal to the readers.*

Malope (1977:95) in his turn proposes the following view of what characters are:

*Baanelwa ke dibopiwa tsa mopadi ... 'Modimo' kana motlhodi wa baanelwa ke mopadi ka esi.*

[Characters are the 'creatures' of the novelist ... 'God (the Creator) or the originator of character is the author himself.]

From these viewpoints it can thus be stated that the author becomes the know-all of the characters because their lives in the novel are in his hands, they exist in the novel by his will and power.

At this point it seems as if characters do not exist outside the written work. In the following paragraphs this question is explored further.

### **2.3.3 CHARACTERS AS PEOPLE (HUMAN BEINGS)**

The question whether characters are human beings or not, is addressed by Rimmon-Kenan (1983:31) when he speaks of

*The mode of existence of character, people or words.*

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<sup>2</sup> This quotation was presented in Tswana by Rapoo and was translated by the researcher.

*The Purist Approach*, which can be traced as far back as Aristotle, asserts that characters have no independent existence. Characters exist only as agents, important only in terms of their action (actantial) structure in the intrigue. It implies that they are dependent, among others, on the events in the narrative. Rimmon-Kenan (1983:31) argues that:

*any attempt to extract the characters from the text, and to describe them as living human beings is a sentimental misunderstanding of what literature is.*<sup>3</sup>

**Realists** assert that characters, during the course of the events, must develop a type of independence from the environment and events wherein they live, and that is why it is alleged that characters can be described at a distance from the text.

The realists regard characters as imitations of people and treat them as though they were our neighbours and friends.

According to the *Mimetic Theory*, characters are made the equivalent of human beings, whereas characters in semiotics are submerged in the text.

How these divergent viewpoints can be reconciled or whether an entirely new solution should be sought remains a problem. What do prominent theorists say in this regard?

- Bal (1972:2) says the following:

*het verschil tussen mensen en personages sou zijn dat mensen van vlees en bloed zijn en personages van papier.*

- Brink (1987:66) reacts to this assertion by asserting that personages do not consist of paper, but of words on the paper.

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<sup>3</sup> This view emphasizes the unity of the literary work, and the connection and interdependence of its different parts.

- Rimmon-Kenan (1983:36) is of the opinion that a story character is a construction constituted by a reader out of the different indications and observations he derives from the text.
- Barthes (1974:92) regards the construction of a character out of the text and the process of naming as synonymous with the reading action of the reader. A character is for him also a construction or an accumulation of “semes” which the reader derives from the text, and groups around a noun.
- Brink (1987:66) contends:

*en tog weet ek as skrywer, wat soms maande, soms jare met 'n karakter 'saamgeleef' het voordat hy of sy op papier genoteer is, dat karakters bestaan.*

- Rapoo (1993:58) maintains that:

*... their (the characters') personality ends in the text because they are portrayed as resembling human beings but they cannot be extracted from the text to eat porridge with normal human beings.*

Taylor (1981:62) dispels any confusion with regard to the question whether a character is human or not, when he says:

*a character in a novel or play is not a real human being and has no life outside the literary composition, however well the illusion of reality has been created by the author.*

What characters really are becomes clear when consideration is given to the following views of different researchers and theorists. These critics emphasize the fact that characters are merely imitations of human beings and not human beings who inhale or exhale oxygen.

- Scholes (1979:17)

*no character in a book is a real person ... characters in fiction are just like real people.*

- Chatman (1978:11)

*... characters are products of plots, that their status is 'fundamental' that they are, in short, participants or actants rather than personages, that it is erroneous to consider them as real beings.*

- Visser (1980:41)

*character at most is a verbally generated illusion of identity, a tissue of inference which the reader draws from verbal signals.*

- Taylor (1981:62)

*a character is a mere construction of words meant to express an idea or view of experience ...?*

- Hochman (1985:59)

*to deal with people in literature we must remember that they are not alive ... they do not exist, except in our imagination or as words on a page.*

- Smuts (1989:17)

*die term 'karakter' dui op die figure of persone wat in 'n epiese werk of drama optree en het binne literêre verband niks te make met die karaktertrekke of eienskappe van 'n persoon nie.*

In the secure knowledge that characters do not have an independent existence as has been stated by some of the theorists quoted above, the writer must make a serious attempt to create probable and lifelike characters. Groenewald (1985:78-79) states that a writer can instill life into his characters by assigning to them certain human

attributes. This gives rise to a number of questions which determine whether the writer has succeeded in this very difficult task. The questions are:

- Are characters fully developed?
- Are they of flesh and blood?
- Are they probable?

It is only when satisfactory answers have been obtained to the above questions that it can be said that the author has succeeded in his task. The writer makes every attempt to satisfy all the above questions by creating characters which are lifelike and probable.

#### **2.3.4 CHARACTERS IN RELATION TO EVENTS**

Another matter over which there is no consensus, is the matter as to what extent character is related to events in the text. Rimmon-Kenan (1983:34) calls this phenomenon “being or doing”.

Formalism and Structuralism regard characters as mere “agents” or executors of actions in the text, although each school of thought provides its own reasons. This point of view might derive its origin from the analysis of narrative texts where an analysis on the basis of events is deemed easiest. It is again grounded in the so-called “verb-centred grammars” which makes it more acceptable to make a character dependent on events.

The various theorists have the following to say on this subject:

- The “purist” argument, according to Rimmon-Kenan (1983:31), asserts that characters act only as agents to cause certain events. He regards characters as completely dependent on events.
- Propp (1968:25-65), as a formalist, supports this view with his study on the Russian folktale. He regards characters mainly as the result of their actions in

Russian fairy tales. He categorises characters in seven general roles.<sup>4</sup> A character can fulfil more than one role in a text.

- Greimas (1979:3) also regards characters chiefly as executors of functions on the level of events. He makes a distinction between actors and actants. Actants are subordinate categories which generally occur in all narrative texts. The actants (general categories) which he distinguishes, are the following: sender, receiver, helper, opponent, subject and object.

The actors are placed in the text with different characteristics which are human. An actant is thus a group of actors with a common purpose.

- Earlier Barthes (according to Sontag, 1982:15-18) maintains that characters do not exist in the text as such, but that they form part of actantial patterns within the text.
- The latter Barthes (1974:131) gives a new code for character (“semiotic code”). He is of the opinion that the proper name of a character as a semantic whole is of great importance in the text.
- Todorov (according to Chatman, 1978:113) sees characters as narrative nouns in a text and he distinguishes between narratives which place emphasis on characters and narratives which place emphasis on events.
- James (1962:80) does not agree with the idea of “novels of character” and “novels of action”. He regards characters and events in a text as inextricably bound together and both are essential components of any narrative text. He says:

*What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character?”*

- Rapoo (1993:57) says in this regard:

*When the writer is satisfied with his creation of the characters, the events acquire a certain meaning and reveal his intention in full.*

---

<sup>4</sup> These seven roles will not be explained in detail due to limited space in this dissertation.

- Taylor (1981:62) explains the importance of characters when he says:

*it is, of course, not possible to have action without characters; events are determined by character and character is also defined by events.*

From the foregoing viewpoints it can thus be said that character constitutes a major function in narrative art. It is also inextricably bound together with events to such an extent that it is difficult to determine which one is more important than the other.

### 2.3.5 CHARACTER IN THE FOLKTALE

In the folktale the author can use anything as a character, while at the same time aims to achieve something with the characters. Groenewald (1985:78) puts this view in perspective by saying:

*whatever aim the author has in mind, the characters are always used with a certain end or purpose.*

This serves to prove that characters of folktales will continue to exist as long as they serve a certain purpose. This does not reduce their value because they are just as usefull as characters in any other narrative.

In the folktale the writer has no limitations, he can use anything as a character. In this regard Swanepoel (1982:116) contends:

*die volgende tipes (karakters) word in die Tswana-volksverhale aangetref: mense, diere, plante en bonatuurlike wesens.*

Mokgoko (1983:16) elaborates on this when he says:

*diphologolo le dinong tsa naga le tsa gae; le batho ba madi le nama ke baanelwa ba ditlhangwa.*

[animals and wild and domestic vultures and people of flesh and blood are characters of folktales.]

To summarize, it can be said that in the folktale characters can be people, animals mountains and trees. All these are able to speak, to cry, to die, to feel pain, to rejoice like people of flesh and blood. These characters can perform miracles according to the design of the author.

This is an indication that in the folktale characters were used as agents and not as human beings. The characters of the folktale were far removed from everyday life in many instances - folktales were successful because the readers or listeners were attracted by what they needed and were connected to the writer in that way. Groenewald (1985:78) says the following in this regard:

*the reader ... believes every word the author has written, and even if he had to read about goldilocks and the three bears, he will concur, he will take the written word as true, indeed as if the incidents being described in this story, as being part of the reality to which he himself does belong.*

The writer presents the character and the events in the folktale in such a way that they will be probable and acceptable as having really happened, as though they were performed by a real living being. With the folktale the writer's primary aim is to bring across the message or to convey a moral lesson to the readers or listeners.

Visser (1980:44-45) illustrates the miracles found in folktales by saying:

*I have know many who have passed through the stories without noses, or heads to hold them; other have lacked bodies altogether, exercised no natural function, possessed some thoughts, a few emotions, but no psychologies, and parently made love without the necessary organs.*

In the following paragraphs a distinction is drawn between the characters in the folktales by Propp and the characters in the folktales by Greimas.

### **2.3.5.1 CHARACTERS IN THE FOLKTALES BY PROPP**

Propp studied and analysed Russian folktales and came to the conclusion that the functions of the character were more important than the character himself. He

(1979:78-80) came to the conclusion that the following functions exist in any folktale: villain, donor, helper, princess, hero and false hero.

Rimmon-Kenan (1983:34) elaborates on Propp's view in that he identifies seven general roles. He says the following in this regard:

*thus Propp ... subordinates characters to 'spheres of action within which their performance can be categorised according to seven general roles'.*

The categorization of Propp's characters according to seven spheres of action involves the following: villain; donor; helper; princess; hero, and false hero.

This classification of characters by Propp opens the way for any character to perform various different functions in the same folktale. The character can be a "helper" because he helps someone, or a "villain" because he wants to injure someone, or a "hero" because with his skillful scheming he ultimately defeats someone.

This emphasizes the fact that Propp places the emphasis on the function of the character and not on what the character is or looks like. The characters in a folktale contribute to the success of the folktale if they perform their functions fully to achieve the aim of the writer. The aims are achieved easily when characters act jointly and perform their functions while focusing on one single objective.

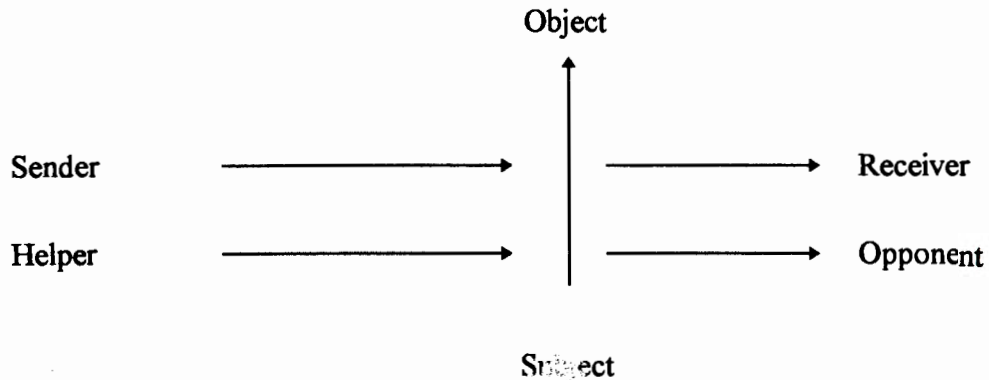
#### **2.3.5.2 CHARACTER IN THE FOLKTALES BY GREIMAS**

Greimas as a structuralist agrees with Propp's classification of characters according to their functions. He approves the correlation between the elements and makes him focus primarily on the character and the events. He does this looking at and examining the reasons which caused to perform a certain function and how he would end. He does this in knowledge that what the character does has a specific aim, and this aim is revealed by the different functions performed by the characters. Brink (1987:66) explains it in this way:

*met Greimas is ons egter volledig terug in 'n teorie wat karakters hoogstens as funksies van die gebeurlaag beskou.*

Greimas arranges his characters in pairs in three categories that are able to connect characters with similar objectives to contribute to the success of the folktale.

Greimas's model is represented by Du Plooy (1986:180) as follows:



The above diagram explains that in the folktale characters can be performers of actions according to their relation in the events of the folktale. The three groups of pairs can be arranged as follows:

- subject                    versus                    object
- sender                    versus                    receiver
- helper                    versus                    opponent

Greimas has realized that by arranging the characters in pairs they are enabled to perform the drama in the folktale in full. When the characters have a common aim in mind he calls them "actants" because they all act in unison to achieve a common purpose.

In this way Greimas distinguishes between actors and actants. This finds emphasis in Rimmon-Kenan (1983:34) when he says:

*the difference between the two is that actants are general categories underlining all narratives, while actors are invested with specific qualities in different narratives.*

The actions of these characters, who act in pairs, are observed in so far as they enable them to reach common objectives. This is done irrespective of whether these

characters are people of flesh and blood, supernatural beings or not. This viewpoint enjoys the support of Rimmon-Kenan (1983:34) who says:

*acteurs and actants ... both are conceived as accomplishing or submitting to an act and both can include not only human beings but also inanimate objects and abstract concepts.*

Greimas's model fits the folktale by illustrating how the characters act in forming the folktale, the novel or any other narrative.

#### **A** *Subject versus Object*

According to Greimas, in any folktale the subject also strives towards the achievement of an object. This subject can be a person or an impersonated animal. The object may be pleasant or unpleasant or any idea whatsoever. Therefore, the subject and the object are very important in the folktale because they hasten the action that is designed to achieve the objective that the subject has in mind.

#### **B** *Sender versus Receiver*

According to Greimas's folktale characters, the sender is the character who helps the subject to achieve his object. The receiver is a subject although in many instances that is not the case.

#### **C** *Helper versus Opponent*

The pair of helper and opponent does not show any relationship with the object. The relationship that we observe in this pair is found chiefly in the action that is related to the subject. The function of the helper is to support the subject to reach or achieve his object while that of the opponent is to frustrate the subject in achieving the object. According to Greimas this pair of helper and opponent, is the most interesting in the folktale or any other narrative.

### 2.3.5.3 *SUMMARY*

Character is a term which refers to the people who act as verbal constructions in the novel. The concept character within the context of prose can be defined as one of the components of the *suzjet* complex, which stands in an essential relationship with the other components of the complex (see Van Eetveldt, 1985:72).

Characters also have an important semantic function within the work of prose as a literary communication system. It stands in an essential relationship with events, time and space. Character has the further important function in that it acts as a conveyor of meaning in the novel, novelette, or short story.

Character can not exist outside the story. The author, however, has the task of presenting it as humanly as possible. Characters are known to be analysed according to certain functions they perform in any narrative work.

### 2.3.6 *TYPES OF CHARACTERS*

A narrative, according to Brink (1987:69), consists of the dynamic interchange between text, story and narration. He is of the opinion that character stands in the service of these three worlds, and should be regarded as such. On this basis he distinguishes between referential characters, linking characters and anaphoric characters. To follow is a discussion of each of these types of characters.

#### 2.3.6.1 *Referential characters*

The reader identifies this character out of his mythological, historical, political and social knowledge of the outside world. The character himself or the characteristics the character possesses, will enable the reader to identify the character. The knowledge and involvement of the reader in the abovementioned worlds will greatly influence his ability to recognize these characters. Examples of such types of characters are, for example, Hitler, an emperor, a prophet, a teacher, an advocate, etc.

### **2.3.6.2 *Linking characters***

This type of character is read as a sign of the author, the reader or his/her representatives. These characters bring in another perspective from another level - other than that of the story in the narrative.

### **2.3.6.3 *Anaphoric characters***

This type of character originates in the narrative itself. The characters help the work to establish itself as a work with a right of existence. These characters have a right of existence in the specific story, so they act as a yardstick for the reader.

They point towards what will still happen in the story, and refer back to what has already happened. They plant the information which enables the story to develop. While this view regards character as carriers of action, Propp and others are of the opinion that characters are only the results of their actions.

The interaction of the abovementioned categories with the other elements and with each other is also of value in this research (see in this regard Pretorius, 1990:39-40).

## **2.3.7 *THE CLASSIFICATION OF CHARACTERS***

An early writer who attempted the classification of characters is Forster (1960:75). The most important part of his discussion is the part where he divides characters into round and flat characters.

A flat character is viewed as two-dimensional while a round character is three-dimensional. A flat character develops minimally or not at all; he is usually predictable and without exciting moments. Such a character can be introduced quickly.

The advantages of the flat character are that he is easily recognized, does not need to be introduced beforehand, and does not need to be observed for development. To create a flat character is not such a great achievement according to Smuts (1975:9), and he states further that this character often forms the comic element of the narrative.

The round character in contrast can be convincingly exciting. This is the test that is applied to determine whether the character is round or flat. If a character is not exciting it is regarded as being flat. If the character excites, but not convincingly, it is flat, but it has the appearance of being round. Smuts (1975:9) says in this regard:

*only the round character can portray the tragic, and it is an achievement to create a truly round character.*

The contribution of Forster is that it was the first attempt to systematize characters of novels. Smuts (1975:10) criticizes Forster's classification as follows. He says that:

- *his view is unnuanced because he only concentrates on the extremes whereas the universal character cannot be reduced to the extremes only;*
- *he gives scant attention to a structural approach in the distinction between characters, and does not examine characters within the totality of the text;*
- *to use tension as the norm is not only a tentative measure, but it can also be extreme and superficial to judge characters in this way;*
- *Forsters' terminology has not been carefully selected to indicate character differentiation in the novel, because it belongs more to the plastic rather than verbal art.*

These norms, according to Smuts, cannot be summarily rejected, but it is clear that the measures should be applied with care.

### 2.3.8 **THE BUILDING OF A CHARACTER**

Groenewald (1985:77) explains the topicality of literature as follows:

*... letterkunde en die aktualiteit daarin niks anders is as fiksie aan die een kant en 'n weerspieëling van die realiteit aan die ander kant nie. Die leser en die skrywer het albei histories deel aan hierdie realiteit. Letterkunde voorsien in alle behoeftes, die werk strek vanaf die*

*verbeeldingryke werke van Shakespeare tot by komiese strokies, prente en selfs die daaglikse grappe.*

What is of great importance in these words of Groenewald is the correlation that has to exist between the reader and the writer so that the text can be properly understood. Nothing will be as misleading as to view literature as a whole as fiction or as a reflection of reality. There is a divergence of opinion over this matter, but proponents of each standpoint assert their correctness.

The reality of literature accommodates both points of view. The distinction between fiction and reality is not important from a literary point of view. The most important point of interest is the correlation between the author and the reader. The reader believes every word written by the author, because as soon as he picks up a book, he has already made this choice.

With regard to character in the narrative art, Brink (1987:12) states:

*In die verhaalkuns ontstaan die konsep van karakter deur die 'opbou' van paradigmatische konstruksie van persone via alles wat omtrent hulle in die teks te kenne gegee word, maar die aanbieding van daardie gegewens geskied opeenvolgend, sintagmaties.*

The writer always uses the characters in a certain way to achieve the goal he has set with the work. Rimmon-Kenan (1983:36) is of the opinion that a story character is a construction constructed by the reader out of different signs obtained from the text. This reconstruction is according to Barthes (1974:92) part of the naming process which is synonymous with the reading action. He says:

*to read is to struggle to name, to subject the sentences of a text to a semantic transformation.*

Brink (1987:74) rationalizes a character as follows:

*'n Karakter bestaan as 'n 'oop ruimte' in die teks, benoem deur 'n naam, daarvandaan word daar op 'n verskeidenheid van maniere eienskappe, attribute, ens. in- en aangevul waarvolgens die leser 'n geheel opbou.*

With reference to the above one can deduce that a character is characterized by the author in the text, and that it is the task of the reader to extract these characteristics from the text and to reconstruct the character.

How does this characterization occur?

Brink (1987:76) asserts that this characterization takes place in the following manner:

*Om 'n begrip te vorm van die prosesse van karakterisering is dit nodig om te kyk na watter bronne van informasie daar bestaan waarop die leser hom/haar kan beroep in die opbou van karakters.*

Bal (1980:96-98) provides a model of information sources which originates from the distinction between explicit and implicit information which is given about characters in the text. In the following paragraphs this distinction is investigated (see Brink, 1987:76-79).

#### **2.3.8.1 *Explicit information***

This information can be provided in three ways:

##### ***a. By what the narrator tells about the character***

In this relaying of information the reader has no choice but to believe all that is said by the narrator, especially in the older prose where the all-knowing narrator was always present.

As soon as the narrator himself/herself acts as a recognizable factor in the text, the case becomes more problematic. It must now be ascertained whether the narrator precisely mean what he says or whether anything should be read into it.

##### ***b. What other characters say about the character***

It also includes what other characters think about the character. The reader must be very careful here because what a character says or thinks about another character can also be a reflection of himself. Such particulars must always be judged in context as communication within a complicated set of relations. It is important to know the

circumstances of the person who makes the revelations and to take his emotional condition into consideration.

*c. What a character says about himself/herself*

Here the reader must also be very careful, because how does he decide which speaker is completely honest in speaking about himself/herself? Unless there are correctives on the revelations presented in the text, it is almost certain that this information can be interpreted through other indications in the text. Every revelation that a character makes about himself must be weighed against everything that the reader has already learnt about the character from other sources, as well as what he will know later about the character.

**2.3.8.2 *Implicit information***

This information is provided in Bal's (1980:96-98) model because of the action of a character whereby the reader can make presumptions about the character. These presumptions can be made according to Barthes's (1974:78) process of name-giving. A reader can, according to Brink (1989:78), argue that a character exists because of relations and that he sets in motion trends and steps of existence in the text.

The reader must consider implicit information very carefully and read together with other information about the character. It does not present a static picture, but portrays a character full of development potential. It implies that the reader is helped to predict future actions by the character. The actual complex character will always include an element of the unpredictable.

The reader is encouraged to read the character as a dynamic code. Brink (1987:79) extends the speech-act as used by Bal, not in terms of what the character says, but in terms of the way in which he says things, the idiolect that he/she uses. This speech is recognizable as a finger print. A character speaks flat, letteredly, self-consciously, etc. This own nuancing of language provides information about a character (see in this regard Pretorius, 1990:40-47).

### 2.3.9 SUMMARY

In this subsection it was found that character is a term which refers to the people who act as verbal constructions in the novel. It was also found that character cannot exist outside the story. The author has the task to represent the character as humanly as possible as characters are inextricably bound up with events.

Character can stand in the service of the three world *text*, *story* and *narration*. With this in mind referential characters, linking characters and anaphoric characters can be identified.

Characters can be flat or round. A flat character is viewed as two-dimensional while a round character is three-dimensional. While a flat character develops minimally the round character can be convincingly exciting. If a character is not exciting it is regarded as being flat. If the character excites, but not convincingly, it is flat, but it has the appearance of being round.

A character can be built by the author or the reader. It means that they can use certain criteria to determine the characteristics of the character. They can use explicit information, such as (i) what the narrator tells about the character, (ii) what other characters say about the character, and (iii) what a character says about himself/herself. They can also use implicit information whereby the reader/author can make presumptions about the character. A technique here will be, for example, name-giving.

The term *actant* is used by Greimas (1971:165) in his actantial model. He joins Propp (1968:25-65) who analysed the functions and actions in the Russian fairytale. The different action categories identified by Propp are: the villain, the benefactor, helper, the princess, her father, the messenger, the hero and the false hero.

The current semantic universum is too vast for Greimas and that is why he works with an abstract micro-universum. Greimas sees the combination of the above-named two models as the ideal methodology for the narratology. He (1971:159-160) views actors with reference to the events that they cause and undergo. He presupposes that human thought and actions are goal-directed and he thus attempts to depict the relation to the object striven for. Actors who strive towards a certain object, are placed into a class

and that class is known as an actant. He accepts that all narratives exhibit a fundamental structure. He reduces Propp's seven action categories to three binary oppositions which include all the actants of any narrative. He divides the actants into the following actantial categories:

- ***Subject and object***

The category coincides with Propp's hero (subject) and the person or task that the hero wishes to achieve. The relations coincide with those of subject and object in a sentence.

Greimas (1971:61) observes that for Propp the two categories stand in a relationship of desire with each other. The subject is always a person or an impersonated animal, while the object can be impersonal, because a person can also strive towards a non-personal situation.

- ***Sender and receiver***

It often happens that the subject (hero) is not in a position to achieve his object and that he is helped by other powers or prevented from achieving his object. The actant who helps the subject in his striving towards an object is called the sender and the actant who is the receiver of the help is called the receiver.

The sender can be a person or an abstraction like the community, time or a personal attribute of someone. The sender is usually the subject, but because this is not always the case, the class actors are distinguished as an actant.

- ***Helper and opponent***

All the four actants mentioned above appear principally in every story although each might include many actors. A narrative which consists of the four essential elements will develop very fast.

The actants of helper and opponent cause complications and make the narrative more interesting. The categories coincide with the adverbial determinations in the sentence structure. The helper and opponent don't stand in direct relation with the object, but in relation to the function which binds the subject and the object. It is often difficult to

distinguish between the sender and the helper and between negative sender and opponent. Bal (1980:39) indicates four points of difference to facilitate the distinctions:

\* *Sender (negative sender)*

- ◇ influences the whole undertaking;
- ◇ is often abstract;
- ◇ often remains in the background, and
- ◇ often only one.

\* *Helper (opponent)*

- ◇ only acts incidentally;
- ◇ is often concrete;
- ◇ is often in the foreground, and
- ◇ often numerous.

Because the helper and opponent only influence the narrative periodically, they play a secondary role. They only get involved circumstantially and are participants in terms of available opportunity. They stand in the same relation to the chief actants as the adjective is to the noun and the adverb to the verb in a sentence.

For Greimas it is true that all actants appear in every story, whether by one actor or actants which fall together. The first four actants determine the basic structure of the story and the helpers and opponents create tension and make the story interesting.

Greimas (1971:165) calls his actantial model the mythical actantial model of the semantic universum and he represents it simply: sender; object; receiver; helper; subject and opponent.

Du Plooy (1986:180) gives the following examples of Greimas's (1971:166) actantial model.

- Within the *philosophy of the classical period* the contents of the actants can be represented as follows: subject; object; sender; receiver; opponent; helper; philosophy; the world; God; humanity; materialism and spirit.
- Within the *Marxist ideology* the model can be presented as: subject; object; sender; receiver; opponent; helper; human; being; community without division into classes; story; humanity; nobility and labour classes.

Du Plooy (1986:181) is of the opinion that Greimas's model can be used as the most general model for narratology - being a universal scheme that forms the basis of all narratives, and can be used to seek this basic role division in every work. If the characters and the relationships between the characters are brought in relation to the model, it can simplify the relationships in the text as well as the meanings of the relationships and of the narrative as a whole.

To summarize, one can say that the term actant creates a distinction between a character and an actor, because the model is based on the classification of actors; on the basis of their actions in the text.

The term personage is used as a person or personage in texts. It is but a nuance of character and as we can deduce from the name, the character is viewed here as a human being, or one can say a living being. The German and Dutch literary theorists, e.g. Bal (1979:2) and Klaus (1979:72-76) speak of "personages". Van Eetveldt (1985:72) is of the opinion that character or "personage" is a term which refers to people who act as verbal constructions in the novel.

An actorial role refers on the individually characterized personage. An actantial role refers to a classification according to function which the personage performs with respect to events. An actor is the representation of a person or character on an abstract level.

Klaus (1979:76) says "personages" are character who act out of their free choice, while actors act involuntarily. As soon as an actor is invested with distinguishing characteristics, i.e. as soon as he is individualized, he changes into a personage or character. The term person and character are thus very much related.

In the following chapter *character* will be the main focus in the novel *Mntanami, Mntanami!* by C.L.S. Nyembezi.

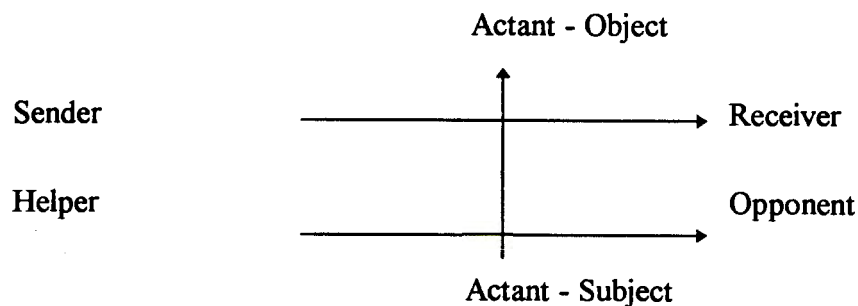
## **CHAPTER THREE**

### ***ACTORS AND ACTANTS IN THE STORY LEVEL OF MNTANAMI, MNTANAMI***

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter consideration will be given to the actors and actants at the story level of the novel *Mntanami, Mntanami!* In particular the focus will be on Greimas's actantial model and the categories manifested therein. Greimas's model will then be applied to the novel *Mntanami, Mntanami!* In the last instance the characters will be discussed on the basis of the explicit and implicit information given about each character.

#### **3.2 GREIMAS'S ACTANTIAL MODEL AND THE CATEGORIES MANIFESTED THEREIN**



The above-mentioned categories are dealt with in more detail by Du Plooy (1986:178-179) as follows:

*(a) Subject versus object*

The category coincides with Propp's hero (subject) or the person or object which the hero wants to achieve (object). The relationship between these two actants coincides with their relationship between the subject and the object in the sentence.

Greimas (1971:161) observes that for both Propp and Souriau these two categories relate to each other in the sense of "desire".

An Actor X strives towards an object Y, and X is the Actant-Subject and Y the Actant-Object. The object is not always a person, because X can also strive towards a non-personal object or circumstances. The object is thus disentangled from the person, but because of the teleological nature of the relationship where the subject strives towards an object, the subject is always a person or personified animal or object.

*(b) The favourer and the favoured*

The subject is frequently not in a position to achieve his object and is assisted or opposed by powers that play a role in the tale. The class actors, that is the actants, which facilitate the undertaking of the subject, are called the favourer, and the receiver of the object is the favoured.

A favourer can be a person or an abstraction such as the community, time or even a personality trait. The favoured is frequently the same person as the subject, but because that is not always the case, the class of actors should always be distinguished as an actant.

*(c) Helper and opponent*

Each one of the four actants mentioned above can include many actants (a team or a group or a nation), but in principle all four will appear in all history.

A tale consisting only of the four essential actants will proceed and conclude speedily. The complications which extend and make the tale interesting are caused by the actants of helper and opponent - the subject receives assistance or meets opposition. These categories coincide with adjectival concords in the sentence.

The actants of helper and actant do not stand in a direct relation to the object but to the function which binds the subject and the object. It is frequently difficult to distinguish between favourer and helper and negative favourer and opponent.

Mieke Bal (1980:39) gives four points of difference to facilitate the difference:

*favourer (negative favourer)*

*influences the whole undertaking*

*is frequently abstract*

*frequently keeps in the background*

*usually only one*

*helper (opponent)*

*only acts incidentally*

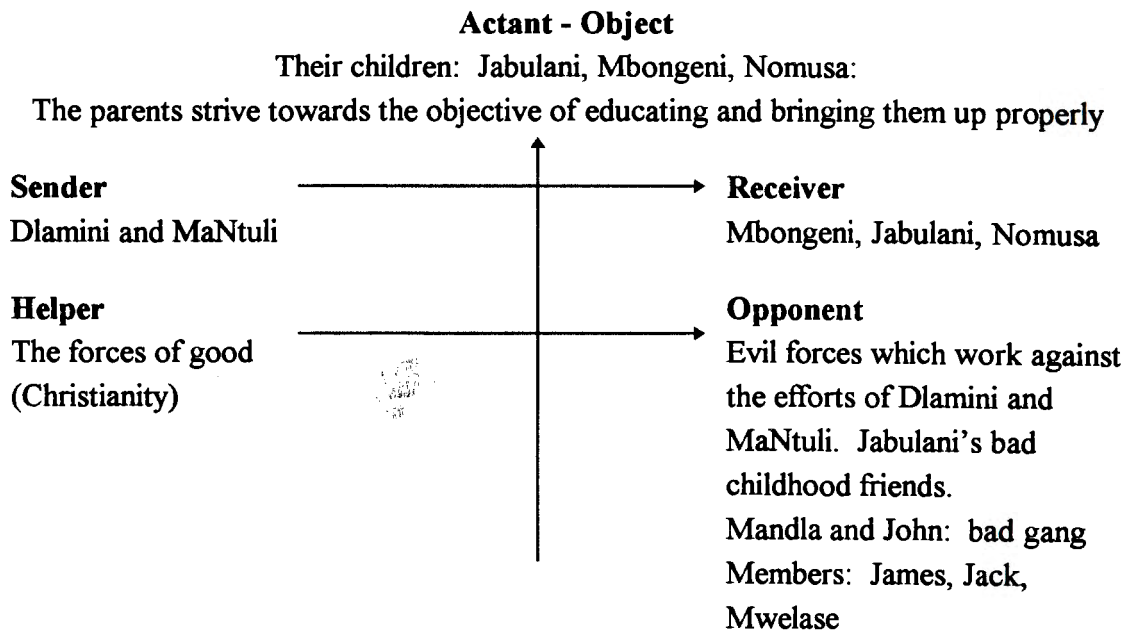
*is frequently concrete*

*keeps in the foreground*

*usually numerous*

### 3.3 GREIMAS'S MODEL APPLIED TO *MNTANAMI, MNTANAMI!*

The actants in *Mntanami, Mntanami!* can be arranged into the six broad categories mentioned above as follows:



#### **Actant - Subject**

Dlamini and MaNtuli (parents) whose object it is to see their children brought up and educated properly

### **DLAMINI (THE FATHER) AND MANTULI (THE MOTHER) AS ACTANT SUBJECT**

Dlamini and MaNtuli, the parents of Mbongeni, Jabulani and Nomusa are the actant-subjects because their object was to see to it that their children are well-educated and grow to become well-respected citizens. The narrator explicitly state the following:

*Umthandazo wabo wafuthifuthi kwakungukuthi inkosi ize ibasize abantwana babo bakhule babe ngabantu abaqotho. (p. 2)*

[Their daily prayer was that the Lord should assist them so that their children would grow and be good people. (p. 2)]

From the above quotation it becomes obvious that the parents prayed to the Lord on a continuous basis to help their children to grow up and become respectable citizens.

MaNtshangase, who was jealous of MaNtuli because MaNtuli had servants who worked for her, also observed that Dlamini and MaNtuli wanted their children educated like Europeans. She said:

*OmaNtuli ngabantu yini dade lokhu ngoNona abamnyana? (p. 4)*

[MaNtuli is a Black Lady (a black woman who lives like a European lady (uNona). (p. 4)]

Dlamini is a disciplinarian. He is strict with his children because he wants them to grow up well. The narrator states that:

*Wayewuphetho ngesizotha umuzi wakhe. (p. 1)*

[He was a disciplinarian. (p. 1)]

Dlamini has high aims for his children. On a certain day he makes that known to his wife, MaNtuli. He says:

*Lababantwana njengoba wazi kahle, bengizimisele okukhulu ngabo, Namanje bengisazimisele ukubafundisa. (p. 42)*

[These children, as you are well aware, I had high aims for them. Even now I was still determined to see them well educated. (p. 42)]

Dlamini wants all his children to attend school, even the disobedient Jabulani. He gives him an ultimatum, either to go to school, or leave his house. Jabulani mentions:

*Ubaba uthi mangibuyele esikoleni, uma ngingabuyeli ngihambe lapha ekhaya. (p. 44)*

[Father says I must go back to school or else leave home. (p. 44)]

This illustrates that Dlamini is serious about his childrens' education.

Dlamini and MaNtuli are staunch church-goers who pay their church dues regularly and also teach their children to attend church.

*Iminikelo yesonto wayeyikhuthalele yonke, wafundisa nabantwana bakhe ukuba balingene isonto. (p. 3)*

[He paid all the church dues, and taught his children to attend the church. (p. 3)]

Jabulani's behaviour is a constant worry to his father, Dlamini. When Jabulani comes home drunk after he getting liquor from Mthabelas place, Dlamini confronts Mthabela.

*Mina ngimangaliswa nguMthabela ukuthi impela basithathaphi isibindi sokunika umntwana utshwala, bazi kahle ukuthi utshwala abudliwa lapha ekhaya. (p. 11)*

[I am surprised by Mthabela why they had the courage to give the child liquor, knowing very well that liquor is not used in this house. (p. 11)]

Dlamini is thus very strict in bringing up his children. Even his children are aware of that, for this is what Mbongeni says of his father:

*Phela yena ubaba uma esethukuthele, hha, yisitwane. (p. 19)*

[When my father is angry, he is an animal (he behaves like an animal). (p. 19)]

Jabulani constantly annoyeshis father with his misbehaviour. Dlamini feels that he might ultimately kill the boy.

*Futhi isigcino ngiyabona ukuthi nokumbulala ngingahle ngimbulale. (p. 17)*

[I think in the end I will kill him. (p. 17)]

### **MBONGENI, JABULANI, NOMUSA (THE CHILDREN OF DLAMINI AND MANTULI) - ACTANT-OBJECT**

Dlamini's children, mentioned above, are the object towards which Dlamini and his wife strive. This can be found in the words of Dlamini when he says of his children:

*Lababantwana njengoba wazi kahle, bengizimisele okukhulu ngabo.  
Namanje bengizimisele ukubafundisa. (p. 42)*

[These children, as you are well aware, I had high aims for them. Even now I was still determined to see them well educated. (p. 42)]

### **THE FORCES OF GOOD : CHRISTIANITY - HELPER**

Here we observe that Dlamini and his wife are Christians and that is what helps them to strive for a better future for their children.

*Umthandazo wabo wafuthifuthi kwakungukuthi inkosi ize ibasize abantwana babo bakhule babe ngabantu abaqotho. (p. 2)*

[Their daily prayer was that the Lord should assist them so that their children would grow up and be good people. (p. 2)]

From the above text it becomes obvious that the parents pray to the Lord on a continuous basis to help their children to grow up and become respectable and well-educated citizens.

### **THE EVIL FORCES THAT OPPOSE DLAMINI AND MANTULI'S EFFORTS AT BRINGING UP THEIR CHILDREN AS THEY WISH - OPPONENT**

The first person who opposes Dlamini and MaNtuli's efforts of bringing up their children as they wished is MaNtshangase (Mthabela's wife). She is jealous of MaNtuli, and calls her a black lady (a black woman behaved like a European) and who also wants to raise her children that way.

*OMaNtuli ngabantu yini dade lokhu ngoNona abamnyama? (p. 4)*

[MaNtuli is a black lady (a black woman who behaves like a European lady (uNona). (p. 4)]

It is MaNtshangase who gives Jabulani liquor as she is jealous of Jabulani's parents and this opposes their efforts at bringing up their children the way they want to:

*Mina ngimangaliswa ngu-Mthabela ukuthi impela basithathaphi isibindi sokunika umntwana utshwala, bazi kahle ukuthi utshwala abudliwa lapha ekhaya. (p. 11)*

[I am surprised by Mthabela why they had the courage to give the child liquor, knowing very well that liquor is not used in this house. (p. 11)]

The other evil forces that oppose Dlamini's efforts at bringing up his children properly include Jabulani's childhood friends, notably Mandla who tells Jabulani to refuse to cook at home, because that is the work of girls and woman. He also teaches Jabulani how to smoke.

*Suka ndoda, kodwa ukuvumelani lokho? Mina angilithinti nokulithinta ibhodwe. (p. 6)*

[Get away man, why do you agree to that? I hardly touch a pot. (p. 6)]

The words above are said by Mandla, while he is telling Jabulani to refuse to cook at home because he, Mandla, hardly even touches a pot himself. He is thus teaching Jabulani disobedience.

Mandla does not end here. He goes even further by teaching Jabulani how to smoke.

*Kanti awubazi ubumnandi apho bulele khona. (p. 7)*

[You don't know where the pleasure lies. (p. 7)]

Mandla refers to the pleasure of smoking.

When Jabulani meets his friends (James, Jack and Mwelase) in Sophiatown he is already a hardened criminal.

\*

## INTRODUCTION

In the paragraphs that follow consideration will be given to the other actants not mentioned in the Actantial Model outlined on page 27.

### SENDER

Mthembu's son whose name is not mentioned, can be regarded as a sender in that he strives towards the achievement of his object, that of sending money to his father.

*Uyiloba nje lencwadi yakhe nangale ngaseBayi usemangele-nje umfana ukuthi, hhawu, kwenzenjani ukuba athumele imali uyise angabe esawuvula umlomo ukuba-nje athi ifikile, noma engasashongo ukuthi ngiyabonga.*  
(p. 27)

[He writes the letter from Port Elizabeth wondering why his father does not inform him that he received the money, even if he did not thank him for that.  
(p. 27)]

### RECEIVER

In this context Mthethwa can be regarded as a receiver because he expects to receive money from his son. Mthethwa does not receive the money as it is stolen by Jabulani who gives some to Mandla and John. The three boys become the receiver, then.

*UJabulani phela, nomfana kaMthabela nomfana kaNkosi bantshontshe imali eposini.* (p. 39)

[Of course it is Jabulani, and Mthabela's son (Mandla), and Nkosi's son (John) who stole money at the Post Office. (p. 39)]

**SENDER**

The young white man, whose name is not mentioned, who works at the Post Office, is made to pay the money which he gave to Jabulani to the rightful owner, namely Mthethwa.

*Umpathi-Posi wathi uMthethwa uzomnika imali yakhe kodwa uzoyibamba eholweni lakhe lomfana. (p. 30)*

[The Postmaster said he would give Mthethwa his (the Postmaster's) money, but he would deduct it from the young man's salary. (p. 30)]

**SENDER**

The Postmaster, a white man whose name is not mentioned, helps Mthethwa by giving him his money which he (The Postmanster) would later deduct from the young white man's salary. The quotation from page 30 of *Mntanami, Mntanami* is relevant here.

*Lababantwana njengoba wazi kahle, bengizimisele okukhulu ngabo. Namanje bengizimisele ukubafundisa. (p. 42)*

[These children, as you are well aware, I had high aims for them. Even now I was still determined to see them well educated. (p. 42)]

**RECEIVER**

Mthethwa can be regarded as the receiver as he receives money from the Postmaster as can be observed in the quotation from page 30 of *Mntanami, Mntanami*.

*Umthandazo wabo wafuthifuthi kwakungukuthi inkosi ize ibasize abantwana babo bakhule babe ngabantu abaqotho. (p. 2)*

[Their daily prayer was that the Lord should assist them so that their children would grow up and be good people. (p. 2)]

**HELPER**

Nomusa is regarded as a helper in that she asks Jabulani what he would do now that his father is determined that he should go back to school.

*Pho manje Jabulani uzokwenzenjani njengoba ubaba ekhuluma kanje?  
Kungcono usale usubuyela esikoleni. (p. 45)*

[What would you do now, while our father talks this way? It were better you went back to school. (p. 45)]

Nomusa encourages Jabulani to go back to school, as life at home would be unpleasant when Jabulani is away.

*Buyela esikoleni, Kuzoba kubi lapha ekhaya ungekho. (p. 45)*

[Go back to school. Life will be unpleasant at home in your absence. (p. 45)]

**OPPONENT**

Mbongeni is, quite unawares, an opponent of Jabulani. He helps Jabulani to become as bad as he ultimately does by accusing him wrongfully.

*Efika ekhaya wayebika uMbongeni kunina ukuthi uJabalani ubehambe ebema ngendlela noMandla. (p. 8)*

[When he arrived home Mbongeni told his mother that Jabulani was smoking along the way. (p. 8)]

**SENDER**

James Mazibuko can be regarded as a sender here because he helps Jabulani to get to Johannesburg by hiding him under the seat in the train. He accommodates Jabulani in his house in Tucker Street, Sophiatown.

*Ngena lapha ngaphansi kwesihlalo ulale ngohlangothi, uthi ne ngesisu emapulangweni. (p. 59)*

[Get under the seat and sleep on the side and sleep on your stomach on the planks. (p. 59)]

Here James Mazibuko is hiding Jabulani under the seat because he, Jabulani, has no train fare to Johannesburg.

*Okwamanje Mfana ngifuna ukuba uhlale lapha ekhaya. (p. 76)*

[In the meantime young man, I want you to stay here at home. (p. 76)]

In the quotation above, James is offering Jabulani accommodation at his house in Tucker Street, Sophiatown.

## RECEIVER

Jabulani is the beneficiary of James Mazibuko's hospitality. Jabulani is told by James to hide under the seat of the train as he has no train fare to Johannesburg.

*Ngena lapha ngaphansi kwesihlalo ulale ngohlangothi, uthi ne ngesisu emapulangweni. (p. 59)*

[Get under the seat and lie on your side against the planks. (p. 59)]

Jabulani is later accommodated in James Mazibuko's house.

*Okwamanje Mfana ngifuba ukuba uhlale lapha ekhaya. (p. 76)*

[In the meantime, young men, I want you to stay here at home. (p. 76)]

## SUBJECT

Dlamini becomes the subject when word comes that a "Jabulani Dlamini" and Skethi Mhlongo are appearing before a judge in Durban for murder. He goes to Durban in search of his son.

*Ngomsombuluko walo lona lelisonto bekulethiwe phambi kwemantshi abafana ababili ujabulani dlamini noskethi mhlongo, laba bafana babekwe icala elinzima lokubulala. Kuthiwa mhla ziyishumi nesithupha kulenyanga*

*efile babulala intombazane uNomasonto Nkosi Ngasemsizini. Ubufakazi bonke buyabalahla abafana. Imantshi ibedlulisele emajajini. (p. 64)*

[On Monday this week two young men, Jabulani Dlamini and Skethi Mhlongo, appeared before a magistrate. These young men are accused of murder. It is alleged that on the eighteenth of last month they murdered Nomasonto Nkosi near Msizini. The evidence weight heavily against them. The magistrate has referred the case to the judges. (p. 64)]

Mbongeni, Dlamini's other son, sees the newspaper article and shows it to his father. Dlamini goes to Durban to find out whether or not the Jabulani mentioned in the article is his son.

*Ngifuna ukuba ngiyozidelisa ukuthi ngempela umntanami usephenduke umbulali. Mhlawumbe ngingathola nesithuba-nje sokuba kengimbone ngikhulume naye. (p. 65)*

[I want to go and find out whether my child is really a murderer. Perhaps I can get an opportunity of seeing and talking to him. (p. 65)]

## **OBJECT**

Jabulani becomes the Object to which Dlamini strives because he goes in search of his son. Unfortunately it is a different Jabulani Dlamini.

*Wafica igama elilodwa zwi lithi: AKUSIYE!!*

[He found one solitary word which said: IT IS NOT HIM!!!]

This is the message of the telegram which Dlamini sends from Durban after discovering that it is not his Jabulani.

## **HELPER**

The white Police Sergeant, whose name is not mentioned, and Mncube, in Durban help Dlamini to identify the convicted Jabulani Dlamini.

*Nempela uma efika ejele walethwa lomfana ukuba azombona kwakungu Jabulani Dlamini kodwa hhayi owakhe. (p. 68)*

[Indeed when he arrived at the prison this young man was brought for him to see him. It was Jabulani Dlamini but not his own. (p. 68)]

## **HELPER**

James Mazibuko helps Jabulani by offering him accommodation when he first comes to Sophiatown. He also offers him employment, although Jabulani realizes later that it was not good employment.

*Okwamanje Mfana ngifuna ukuba uhlale lahle ekhaya. (p. 76)*

[In the meantime young man I want you to stay here at home. (p. 76)]

Here James is offering Jabulani accommodation at his house in Tucker Street, Sophiatown.

*Ngempela uJames wabona, wayesethi "Uthini ke Mfana"? (p. 83)*

[Indeed James observed and then said, "What do you say young man? Jabulani replied and said, "It is alright, I will do the work". (p. 83)]

## **OPPONENT**

When Jabulani arrives at James' place Bill is there and pretends to ask for money from James. Actually Bill wants to hear what James is saying to Jabulani. On that night Jack discovers Bill eavesdropping. Jack has never trusted Bill.

Bill is an opponent of the schemes of James and his friends because they suspect him of being police informer.

*Ngisho ngoba angimethembi kahle uBill. Ikhona into engenza ngingamethembu ngiyasola sengathi usephenduke impimpi. (p. 80)*

[I say so because I don't trust Bill completely. There is something that makes me not to trust him. It appears he is a police informer. (p. 80)]

**SENDER**

Mark, the driver, can be regarded as the sender because he transports the gang to various places.

**RECEIVER**

The passengers, who are transported by Mark, James, Jack and Jabulani (now nicknamed Joe Nsele).

**SENDER**

The Chinese shopkeeper, Charlie, who is robbed at gunpoint by James and Jabulani.

*Layibuka imali yalo ishayina ihamba, kwahlengezela izinyembezi, ihamba lingalwanga nokulwa. (p. 100)*

[The Chinese saw his money being taken and tears rolled down his face, when he did not offer any resistance. (p. 100)]

**RECEIVER**

James and Jabulani get the money as is evident from the quotation on page 100.

**SENDER**

Jabulani rescues a Mabaso girl from being molested by a group of naughty boys. He ultimately falls in love with Alice Mabaso.

*Ujabalani waqonda kulona ophethe imali, wamthatha kanye ngesibakela waye wathi khilikithi phansi. (p. 107)*

[Jabulani confronted the boy who had the money, knocked him down. (p. 107)]

**SENDER**

Mandla visits Sophiatown and meets Jabulani, who tells him not to tell his parents that he has seen him (Jabulani). Mandla keeps the promise for some time. He later tells Mbongeni, who tells his parents.

*Impela bayomangala kabi futhi bajabule uma bezwa ukuthi ngike ngakubona.*

*“Wena uyobe ubatshelani?”*

*“Awufuni yini ukuba bazi?”*

*“Cha angifuni ukuba bazi”. (p. 115)*

[They will be happy and surprised to learn that I saw you.

“Why would you tell them?”

“Don’t you want them to know?”

“No, I don’t want them to know.” (p. 115)]

**RECEIVER**

Mandla later tells old Mbongeni and Mbongeni tells his parents. Mbongeni and his parents are the receiver.

*Awu Mandla, wambona impela? Ngambona impela, futhi nganginaye mhla izinswelaboya zakhona zifuna ukungibulala. (p. 163)*

[Oh! Mandla, did you really see him? I saw him. I was with him when the thugs nearly killed me. (p. 163)]

This information enables Jabulani’s parents to know that he is in Sophiatown.

**SUBJECT**

The Shebeen Queen becomes the Subject because she strives towards obtaining a charm to entice customers to buy her liquor. The charm (“Muthi”) happens to be a human organ or part of the human body.

*Wafika umfazi ezofuna*

*umuthi wakhe wenhlanhla.* (p. 150)

[The woman came to fetch her lucky charm (the muthi) that would bring luck. (p. 150)]

## **OBJECT**

The leg of the murdered boy is the object to which the lady strives as it would bring her the luck that would attract customers.

*Nanku umlenze. Sebekhumbula*

*ukuthi isidumbu lesiya sathobwa sinquywe umlenze.* (p. 152)

[Here is the leg. They now remembered that the corpse was found with the leg removed. (p. 152)]

## **SENDER**

Mwelase, James, Jack and Jabulani can be regarded as a sender in that they make it possible for the Shebeen Queen to get the “muthi” by killing the boy. In fact it is Jabulani who drove the sword through the boy’s heart.

*“Joe!”*

*“Mwelase!”*

*“Mphumuze!”* (p. 147)

[“Joe!”

“Mwelase!”

“Let him rest (kill him)”. (p. 147)]

Here Mwelase, the gang leader, is instructing Jabulani to kill the boy.

## **RECEIVER**

The Shebeen Queen is the recipient of the “muthi” for attracting customers who have stopped coming to her tavern.

*Wafika umfazi ezofuna umuthi wakhe wenhlanhla.* (p. 150)

[The woman came to fetch her lucky charm (the Muthi) that would bring luck. (p. 150)]

## **HELPER**

Mwelase, James and Jack and especially Jabulani who performed the actual killing, help the Shebeen Queen to achieve her objective. Pages 147 and 150 of *Mntanami*, *Mntanami* provide the evidence.

*“Ngiyamsola lomuntu, kusho uJack. Usho uBill? Umsola ukuthini?”*  
(p. 144)

["I don't trust this person" says Jack.

"Do you mean Bill? Why don't you trust him?" (p. 144)]

Jack does not trust Bill because, as it has been mentioned in earlier paragraphs, he suspects him of being a police informer.

## **HELPER / OPPONENT**

Mwelase helps the gangsters by preventing them from being arrested after the killing of the boy by killing Bill in his own house. He can also be regarded as an opponent of Bill's attempt to report them to the police.

*“Hawu ngenzeni Mazibuko?”*  
*“Wabe uyaphela njalo”* (p. 157)

["Oh, what have I done "Mazibuko (Mwelase)? and he died. (p. 157)]

These are Bills' last words.

## **SENDER**

After murdering the Boy Jabulani is greatly tormented by his conscience. He confides in Alice and asks her to write to his parents. Alice advises Jabulani to go and confess his sin to the minister, Rev. Maphelu.

*Uma kukhona into engivelelayo, Ngoba iyangitshela inhliziyo yami Alice ukuthi kukhona ingozi ekhona, uze ubalele ubaba nomama. (p. 177)*

[If anything happens to me, because my heart tells me that there is imminent danger, write to my father and mother. (p. 177)]

## RECEIVER

Jabulani is the receiver of Alice's sound advice and sympathy for the condition in which he finds himself. He goes to Rev. Maphelu for advice, and he is told to hand himself to the police - which he ultimately does.

*"Baba, angiboni ukuthi ikhona enye indela, kungcono kona baba ukuba ngiyozinikela ngithole isijeziso lesingiphelile". (p. 200)*

["Father, I see no other way. It is better that I hand myself over and receive the punishment that I deserve". (p. 200)]

The above are Jabulani's words.

## HELPER

When Jabulani is troubled by his conscience and they discover it, James and Jack give him liquor. That brings temporary relief,

*Kuthe ukuba babone James ukuthi umfana lona uphatheke kabi kakhulu, uyesaba, base beqala manje ukumphuzisa utshwala kakhulu. (p. 168)*

[When James and his friends realized that the boy was suffering imaginary fears, they started giving him a lot of liquor. (p. 168)]

## OPPONENT

Mwelase opposes the idea of his fellow gangsters and wants Jabulani to be eliminated as he might endanger their safety. His fellow gangsters discourage him successfully.

*"Hmm, Ngiyabana ukuthi kuzofuneka ukuba abonelwe icebo lomfana". (p. 169)*

["Hmm. I think something must be done about this boy". (p. 169)]

These are Mwelase's words. He thinks the boy (Jabulani) should be killed as he might endanger their safety.

### **SENDER**

Rev. Maphelu is responsible for fetching Jabulani's parents from Park Station and for accommodating them during their stay in Sophiatown.

*"Sengiyozwa ngaweke Dlamini, ilanga lakho ozimisele ukufika ngalo".*  
(p. 191)

["I will hear from you, Dlamini, which day you will arrive". (p. 191)]

These are the words of the letter that Rev. Maphelu wrote to Jabulani's parents. He would fetch them at the station upon their arrival.

### **RECEIVER**

Jabulani's parents are the receivers of Rev. Maphelu's hospitality.

*Ingxoxo yabo yase iqondiswa ezintweni ezinye-nje ezingahlangene nodaba babeze ngalo oDlamini. Ngokwenze njalo uMaphelu wayezama ukubalibazisa, abasuse ekubeni belokhu becabanga ngoJabulani.* (p. 208)

[Their discussion covered general matters not related to what Dlamini had come for, the aim being to divert attention from Jabulani. (p. 208)]

## **3.4 DISCUSSION OF THE CHARACTERS IN MNTANAMI, MNTANAMI!**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the following paragraphs the characters will be classified into the following categories:

- a) Those who form Jabulani's (the main character's) home environment: Dlamini, his father, MaNtuli, his mother, Mbongeni and Nomusa, his brother and sister, Jabulani himself.
- b) Jabulani's childhood friends.
- c) Jabulani's companions in gangsterland.
- d) The characters who contribute to his rehabilitation.

Each character will then be discussed in the following manner:

#### **NAME OF CHARACTER: DLAMINI**

##### **3.4.1 EXPLICIT INFORMATION**

#### **1. What others say about Dlamini**

##### **a. The narrator**

##### **i. Wealthy**

*Umuntu wayengamfuni umnumzane onothile.* (p. 1)

[it was not difficult to realize that the gentleman was wealthy. (p. 1)]

##### **ii. Highly respected**

*... owayehlonishwa kakhulu yilabo ababemazi ...* (p. 1)

[who was highly respected by those who knew him. (p. 1)]

##### **iii. Diligent (hard-working)**

*Uyohlakulela izihlahla zakhe, kokunye uyodoba amanzi ngomsele azonethisela izitshalo zakhe.* (p. 1)

[he digs round the trees, or draws water to irrigate his plants. (p. 1)]

**iv. Generous**

*Ngumuntu onobuntu, onesisa. (p. 1)*

[he is a generous and upright person. (p. 1)]

**v. Disciplinarian**

*Wayewuphethhe ngesizotha umuzi wakhe ... (p. 1)*

[he was a disciplinarian. (p. 1)]

**vi. Very religious**

*Iminikelo yesonto wayeyikhuthalele yonke, wafundisa nabantwana bakhe ukuba balingene isonto. (p. 3)*

[he paid his church dues regularly, and he also taught his children to attend the church. (p. 3)]

**b. MaNtuli****i. Dlamini unsympathetic with the wayward Jabulani.**

*Pho umshiyeleni yise kaMbongeni? Uzokeswaba ukubuya. Bengingeke ngimlande mina. Thuma uMbongeni amlande. (p. 36)*

[Why did you leave him behind, father of Mbongeni? He will be afraid of returning. I would not fetch him. Send Mbongeni to fetch him. (p. 36)]

**ii. Dlamini autocratic**

*Jabulani must go back to school or leave his house. Ubaba uthi mangibuyele esikoleni, uma ngingabuyeli ngihambe lapha ekhaya. (p. 44)*

[Father says I must go back to school, or else leave home. (p. 44)]

**iii. Dlamini an uncaring husband**

*Namanje awukhathali. Uthi ukuba uyakhathala ngabe awukanyakazi kuze kube manje?. (p. 61)*

[Even now you don't care. If you cared would you not have done something by now? (p. 61)]

**c. Mbongeni**

**i. His father very cruel**

*Phela yena ubaba uma esethukuthele, hha, yisilwane. (p. 19)*

[When father is angry he is an animal (behave like an animal). (p. 19)]

**2. What Dlamini says about himself**

**3.4.2 IMPLICIT INFORMATION**

**1. Comparison and contrast**

Dlamini and his wife, MaNtuli, are both eager to see their children make progress in life.

*Umthandazo wabo wafuthifuthi kwakunguthi inkosi ize ibasize abantwana babo bakhule babe ngabantu abaqotho. (p. 2)*

[Their daily prayer was that the Lord should assist them so that their children would grow up and be good people. (p. 2)]

**2. Repetition and accumulation**

The character traits of Dlamini are given by the narrator in different ways. His dominant character trait, namely that of being religious, is repeated several times in the text.

### 3. Transformation of character traits

There is no transformation of character traits in Dlamini. He retrains his religious nature throughout.

### 4. Name

The name “Dlamini” literally means “he who eats during the day” which implies somebody who works very hard while he has the opportunity. The narrator says of him ... *umnumzane owazibopha ngexhama kwabonakala*. (p. 1)

[a gentleman who worked hard and reaped the good results. (p. 1)]

#### 3.4.3 EXPLICIT INFORMATION

##### 1. What others say about MaNtuli

###### a. The narrator

###### i. Uprightness

... *ngoba inhliziyo zabo bobabili zazifana ngobulungisa*. (p. 1)

[... because they resembled each other in uprightiness. (p. 1)]

###### ii. Respectable and tidy

... *elinono lomuntu engathandi ukuba umuzi wakhe ufaniswe neminye imizi lapho umuntu ehlangatshezwa yizibi emnyango*. (p. 2)

[... she was a respectable and tidy person and did not want her home to be compared to other homes, where you encounter filth when you enter the door. (p. 2)]

###### iii. Religious

*Umthandazo wabo wafuthifuthi kwakungukuthi inkosi ize ibasize abantwana babo bakhule babe ngabantu abaqotho*. (p. 2)

[Their daily prayer was that the Lord should assist them so that their children would grow up and be good people. (p.2)]

**b. MaNtshangase**

**i. That MaNtuli was rich and proud**

*OMaNtuli ngabantu yini dade lokhu ngoNona abamnyama.* (p. 4)

[MaNtuli is a Black Lady (a black woman who lives like a European lady (uNona)). (p. 4)]

**2. What MaNtuli says about herself**

Nowhere in the text do we find MaNtuli saying anything about herself.

**3.4.4 IMPLICIT INFORMATION**

**1. Comparison and contrast**

MaNtuli is compared with her husband as both of them want to see their children growing up to become useful citizens.

*Umthandazo wabo wafuthifuthi kwakungukuthi inkosi ize ibasize abantwana babo bakhule babe ngabantu abaqotho.* (p. 2)

[Their daily prayer was that the Lord should assist them so that their children would grow up and be good people. (p.2)]

**2. Repetition and accumulation**

MaNtuli's character is revealed in the way she walked. She did not walk that way because of pride but because she was always happy.

*Kwakungukudadlaza komuntu onhliziyo ikhululekile yenziwa ukunethezeki, inhiziyo ehlala imamatheka.* (p. 2)

[She walked confidently and leisurely like someone who was at peace with herself and always happy. (p. 2)]

### 3. Transformation of character traits

MaNtuli retains her character traits throughout the text. There can be no talk of transformation of character traits.

### 4. Name

I have gone through the whole novel several times and cannot find any semantic implication in MaNtuli's name.

## NAME OF CHARACTER: MANDLA

### 3.4.5 EXPLICIT INFORMATION

#### 1. What others say about Mandla

##### a. The narrator

##### i. He misleads Jabulani

Mandla is the first person who leads Jabulani astray. He tells him to refuse to do the work of girls and he teaches Jabulani how to smoke.

*Suka ndoda, kodwa ukuvumelani lokho? Mina angilithinhi nokulithinta ibhodwe. (p. 6)*

[Get away man, why do you agree to that? I hardly ever touch a pot. (p. 6)]

When he is teaching Jabulani to smoke he says: *Kanti awubazi ubumnandi lapho bulele khona. (p. 7)*

[You don't know where the pleasure of smoking lies. (p. 7)]

## ii. He and John Nkosi betray Jabulani

When they are arrested with Jabulani they say that Jabulani signed for the money at the Post Office.

*Cha mina, cha mina nkosi angizange ngisayine. Mina ngiphiwe nguJabulani imali. No John naye wathi yena akazange aye eposini. Yena uthe ezimele nje wabizwa nguJabulani wathi kukhona azobakhombisa khona. Icala sebelithatha lonke belithela phezu kukaJabulani. (p. 36)*

[No, sir, no, sir, I never signed. I was given money by Jabulani. John also said he did not sign. While he was standing Jabulani called him to show him something. The whole guilt was placed on Jabulani. (p. 36)]

## iii. He is unreliable

When he meets Jabulani in Sophiatown he promises not to tell Jabulani's parents. He breaks the promise by telling Mbongeni who later tells their parents.

*Yingoba wayethe ngingatsheli muntu lapha ekhaya, nami ngasenza lesosithembiso kuye sokuthi angiyukutshela muntu lapha ekhaya. Kodwa sengize ngasephula isithembiso sami ngoba ngibona usizi olukhulu lwabantu abadala. (p. 163)*

[It is because he told me not to tell anybody here at home, I also made the promise of not telling anybody here at home. I have broken my promise because of the sorrow of the elderly people. (p. 163)]

## iv. Mandla is also sympathetic

He breaks the promise he made to Jabulani because of the sorrow of Jabulani's parents.

*Kodwa sengize ngasephula isithembiso sami ngoba ngibona usizi olukhulu lwabantu abadala. (p. 163)*

[I have broken my promise because of the sorrow of the elderly people. (p. 163)]

**v. Mandla a rural boy**

After his nasty experience in Sophiatown, Mandla goes back home.

*Malume, ngiyabona ukuthi kusasa ngiyahamba, ngiphindela ekhaya.* (p. 123)

[Uncle, I think I am going back home tomorrow. (p. 123)]

**b. Jabulani**

**i. Mandla is a traitor**

In Sophiatown Jabulani tells James and Jack how Mandla and John betrayed when they are together when the crime is committed.

*Lababantu, anazi nina, bacishe bangenza kabi bengithela ngecala lonke ngiyazisola, sengathi ngabe uke washaywa nokushaywa.* (p. 122)

[You don't know that these people nearly put the whole blame on me, even now I am sorry why I did not say you should assault him. (p. 122)]

**2. What Mandla says about himself**

i. He does not do girls' or women's work like Jabulani

*Mina angilithinti nokulithinta-nje ibodwe. Ngipheke! Awu suka ndoda, kantu ngabe kwenziwani. Kuzoze kupheke minanje ngoba enzani umama?* (p. 6)

[I hardly ever touch a pot. Should I cook? Get away man, what is the matter with you? If I have to cook what would my mother do? (p. 6)]

**3.4.6 IMPLICIT INFORMATION**

**1. Comparison contrast**

The character of Mandla is compared and contrasted with that of Jabulani. In their youth Mandla misleads Jabulani by telling him not to wash pots and dishes because that is the work of girls and women. He also teaches Jabulani how to

smoke for the first time. Although Mandla is naughty as a child, he never leaves his home and never becomes a criminal like Jabulani. Mandla visits Sophiatown but returns home very quickly because as a country boy he could not tolerate life in Johannesburg. Jabulani goes from bad to worse and ends up a killer.

## **2. Repetition and accumulation**

The narrator does not provide any other information regarding Mandla's character.

## **3. Transformation**

Mandla's character has transformed with age. In the company of Jabulani and John Nkosi he was a naughty boy. He changes after Jabulani has left for Johannesburg. He visits Sophiatown and has some nasty experience which forces him to come back home unceremoniously. He helps Jabulani's parents by telling them where he is.

## **4. Name**

The name "Mandla" implies "strength" or "power". Mandla has a powerful influence over Jabulani, which later helps Jabulani on the way to being a criminal. The irony of it is that Mandla himself does not end up a criminal.

### **NAME OF CHARACTER: JOHN NKOSI**

#### **3.4.7 EXPLICIT INFORMATION**

##### **1. What others say about John Nkosi**

###### **a. Narrator**

###### **i. John Nkosi the innocent boy**

In court John Nkosi tells the prosecutor that although he was with Jabulani and Mandla when they were arrested he did not commit the crime. He is given money by Jabulani.

*No John naye wathi yena akazange aye eposini. Yena uthe ezimele-nje wabizwa nguJabulani wathi kukhona azobakhombisa khona. (p. 36)*

[John also said he did not go to the Post Office. While he was standing Jabulani called him to show him something. (p. 36)]

After this incident nothing further is heard about John Nkosi.

### **3.4.8 IMPLICIT INFORMATION**

#### **1. Comparison and contrast**

John Nkosi is not compared or contrasted with anybody in the novel as he appears only once and disappears from the scene.

#### **2. Repetition and accumulation**

Nothing else is said about him except that he was not found guilty of having stolen money with Jabulani.

#### **3. Transformation**

John Nkosi does not transform.

#### **4. Name**

Nothing is implied in his name.

### **NAME OF CHARACTER: JABULANI DLAMINI**

### **3.4.9 EXPLICIT INFORMATION**

#### **1. What others say about Jabulani**

##### **a. The narrator**

##### **i. Jabulani the obedient boy**

When Mandla asks Jabulani where he is hurrying to he tells Mandla that he is going home to wash pots and draw water. He does girls' or women's work.

*Mina ngiyakwenza konke lokho wena othi okwamantombazane. (p. 6)*

[I do all that you regard as girls' work. (p. 6)]

When Mandla asks him to smoke he refuses and says he never smoked.

*Angibemi mina neze. Ngingawuqala ngithini-nje nempela? (p. 6)*

[I don't smoke at all. How can I really start doing it? (p. 6)]

## **ii. Jabulani wrongly punished turns to disobedience**

Mbongeni finds Jabulani and Mandla. Mandla has given Jabulani his cigarette. Mbongeni wrongfully blames Jabulani of smoking. Both Mandla and Jabulani's explanations fail to convince Mbongeni. He is going to tell their father that Jabulani has been smoking.

*Ngiyofike ngisho ekhaya ngithi uyabema wena. (p. 7)*

## **iii. Jabulani developed hatred for his brother Mbongeni**

From the day he is wrongfully punished because of Mbongeni's lie Jabulani starts hating his brother.

*Ngalelolanga uJabulani wayengafuni nokumbona-nje uMbongeni, athi uma ethi uyakhuluma uMbongeni azithulele-nje athi vu. (p. 9)*

[On that day Jabulani did not even want to look at Mbongeni, and did not respond when Mbongeni wanted to speak to him. (p. 9)]

## **iv. Jabulani becomes stubborn**

After Jabulani's punishment Mandla gives him tobacco and he learns how to smoke. He is punished several times but never leaves off smoking.

*Akabuyange awuyeke futhi ugwayi uJabulani. Kwaba usengene njalo. Abanjwe enogwayi, axexetshulwe ngemvubu kodwa konke lokho kungasho lutho.*

*Inggondo yakhe yayisingenwe ubujila, ukunganaki ukuthi kuthiwani, ngubani.*  
(p. 10)

[Jabulani never left smoking. That was the starting point. He was often found with tobacco, severely punished, but that did not help. His mind was already polluted as he did not care who said what. (p. 10)]

#### **v. Jabulani turns to liquor**

Jabulani, because of Mbongeni, is progressing from bad to worse. He does wrong things without caring what would happen.

Jabulani comes home drunk. He gets liquor at Mthabela's place (Mandla's home).

*Mina ngimangaliswa nguMthabela ukuthi impela basithathaphi isibindi sokunika umntwana utshwala, bazi kahle ukuthi utshwala abudliwa lapha ekhaya.* (p. 11)

[I am surprised by Mthabela why they had the courage to give the child liquor, knowing very well that liquor is not used in this house. (p. 11)]

#### **vi. Jabulani becomes a thief**

It is not so much the bad company of Mandla and John Nkosi that leads Jabulani to commit wrong deeds, but his brother Mbongeni. Jabulani steals people's money at the Post Office. He and his friends are arrested.

*wathatha umshushisi wathi, Jabulani Dlamini, John Nkosi, Mandla Mthabela, nina nibekwe icala lokweba ngobuhilikigi ngokusayina amagama abanye abantu.* (p. 35)

[... the prosecutor said, Jabulani Dlamini, John Nkosi, Mandla Mthabela, you are found guilty of theft by signing other peoples names. (p. 35)]

The other two tell the court that they got the money from Jabulani. The Post Office official identifies Jabulani as having signed for the money.

*Sekungena umlungu waseposini ezofakaza ukuthi ngempela imali uyinike lomfana abathi uJabulani. (p. 36)*

[A white man from the Post Office entered and testified that he gave the money to the young man called Jabulani. (p. 36)]

**vii. Jabulani becomes a liar**

Jabulani is on the train on his way to Johannesburg. He meets a young man in the train. When asked his destination he says he has been sent to his uncle in Glencoe.

*Ngithunywe ngubaba kwaMalume lapha eGilonko. (p. 51)*

[My father has sent me to my uncle at Glencoe. (p. 51)]

**viii. Jabulani becomes a real criminal when he joins a gang of criminals in Sophiatown**

Jabulani is helped by James Mazibuko to reach Johannesburg and is even accommodated by him in Tucker Street, Sophiatown. Jabulani is offered employment by the gangleader, Mwelase, which he accepts. He accompanies James and Jack on many criminal expeditions where they are lucky not to be arrested. All the time Jabulani does not realize that the type of work he has been offered is dangerous until the day he has to kill a human being, on being instructed by Mwelase. He wants to refuse but fears that Mwelase would kill him instead. After concealing the boy's eyes Mwelase instructs him to put his sword through the boy's heart. "Joe!" (Joe Nsele, Jabulani's other name).

*Mwelase. Mphumuze.*

[Mwelase, replied Jabulani. Kill him, said Mwelase. (p. 147)]

**b. Dlamini (Jabulani's father)**

**i. Jabulani beyond correction**

Jabulani annoys or worries his parents a great deal. His father punishes him so severely that he feels he would ultimately kill him.

*Angazi ukuthi ngizomenzenjani lomfana. Futhi isigcino ngiyabona ukuthi nokumbulala ngingahle ngimbulale. (p. 17)*

[I don't know what to do with this young man. I think I will ultimately kill him. (p. 17)]

**ii. Jabulani's behaviour tormented his father's soul**

*MaNtuli, indaba yalomntwana, uJabulani, iyangisanganisa enggondweni nase moyeni. (p. 42)*

[MaNtuli, Jabulani's behaviour is tormenting me mentally and spiritually. (p. 42)]

**iii. Dlamini had high aims for all his children including Jabulani**

Dlamini is not well educated but wishes to see all his children well educated. Jabulani greatly disappoints him.

*Lababantwana njengoba wazi kahle, bengizimisele okukhulu ngabo. Namanje bengisazimisele ukubafindisa. (p. 42)*

[These children, as you are well aware, I was still determined to see them well educated. (p. 42)]

**iv. Dlamini not worried about Jabulani having left home**

When MaNtuli suggests that Jabulani might have met with an accident Dlamini opposes her. MaNtuli wants to know whether her husband is brave enough to chase the child away from home. Dlamini says because Jabulani could not listen to him he has helped himself by leaving home. He would have chased him away because he refused to listen.

*Uma umntwana engakwazi ukulalela umyalo wami akaphume emasangweni ami.*  
(p. 60)

[If a child cannot obey my instructions, he must leave my house. (p. 60)]

**c. MaNtuli (Jabulani's mother)**

**i. MaNtuli worried about Jabulani having left home. She even suggested that Dlamini should report the matter to the police**

*Kodwa pho baba awusa nasemaphoyisemi uyobika ukuthi umntwana ulahlekile? (p. 61)*

[Father (my husband) why don't you go to the police to report that the child has got lost? (p. 61)]

**ii. MaNtuli insists that efforts should be made to look for Jabulani.**

When Dlamini says he would never go to look for Jabulani MaNtuli openly disagrees with her husband.

*Kungcono lokho ukuba sifune nomaphi kunokuba sihlale-nje. Lokho kusoze kungibangale amephupho amabi, mhlawumbe ngigule nokugula. (p. 62)*

[It is better to look for the child anywhere else rather than do nothing. This might cause me to have bad dreams or illness. (p. 62)]

**d. Nomusa (Jabulani's sister)**

**i. Persuades Jabulani to go back to school.**

Jabulani hates his brother Mbongeni for accusing him falsely. The only people he could talk to are his mother, MaNtuli, and his sister, Nomusa. Of all people it is

Nomusa who encourages Jabulani to go back to school. It was also Nomusa who shows any love to Jabulani.

*Buyela esikoleni. Kuzoba kubi lapha ekhaya ungekho.* (p. 45)

[Go back to school. Life will be unpleasant here at home in your absence. (p. 45)]

### **e. James Mazibuko**

#### **i. Jabulani as a brave boy**

When Jabulani gets to James Mazibuko's place in Sophiatown he is sent to buy cigarettes when he is attacked by some boys. Jabulani successfully defends himself and shows his bravery on that very day.

*Isibindi base bebonile ukuthi unaso.* (p. 86)

[They had already realized that he was brave. (p. 86)]

#### **ii. Jabulani was a strong boy**

When the gangleader, Mwelase, asks what he would do if someone whom he wanted to rob fought back he says that he is strong.

*Nginamandla.* (p. 89)

[I am strong. (p. 89)]

#### **iii. Jabulani's bravery put to a severe test**

The Shebeen Queen wants the bodily organ of a human being from Mwelase. He instructs James, Jack and Jabulani to do the killing. The duty of killing the boy falls to Jabulani.

Jabulani wants to know whether there is any way of escaping from this type of work, that of killing people, because he does not feel brave enough to do it. He

is told that he would be killed because he has taken an oath with Mwelase that he would do the work.

*Uma umuntu engasafuni ukusebenza ayikho yini indlela yokophuma? (p. 136)*

[If one is no longer interested in working, is there no way of escape? (p. 136)]

**iv. After Jabulani killed the boy he was troubled by his conscience**

Mwelase feels that Jabulani should be killed but James pleads with him not to do that. The boy is still young.

*Hmmm. Ngiyabona ukuthi kuzofuneka ukuba abonelwe icebo lomfana. (p. 169)*

[Hmmm. I think something must be done about this young man. (p. 169)]

**f. Mwelase**

**i. Jabulani will be a traitor**

When Jabulani starts being tormented by his conscience after murdering the boy Mwelase becomes suspicious of him. He suspects that Jabulani will inform the police about the murder.

*Uzothatha akhulume izinto angafanele ukuzikhuluma. (p. 169)*

[He will say things he is not supposed to say. (p. 169)]

**g. Alice Mabaso**

While in Sophiatown Jabulani falls in love with Alice Mabaso. Alice Mabaso sees Jabulani as:

**i. A brave and sympathetic boy**

Alice Mabaso is confronted by two boys who take her money. Jabulani knocks one of them down and secures Alice's money. Alice thanks him and goes on her own way.

*UJabulani waqonda kulona ophethe imali, wamthatha kanye ngesibakela waye wathi khilikithi phansi. (p. 107)*

[Jabulani confronted the one who had the money, and knocked him down. (p. 107)]

**ii. Jabulani was an unbeliever**

One day Alice tells Jabulani that her employers have allowed her to go to church. She is surprised by Jabulani's attitude towards the church. Jabulani says that people who go to church are fools, being deceived by Ministers of Religion and Whites who take their money and tell them that there is a God.

*Nihambe nikhohliswa ngabafundisi laba nabelungu abafuna izimali zemu, bese nithi kukhona uNkulunkulu (p. 109).*

**iii. Jabulani tells Alice about his place of employment.**

Alice takes her day off on Thursdays and usually meets Jabulani on that day. When she asks him where he works he tells her he works at a factory. Alice can see plainly that Jabulani is deceiving her.

*Fekhtri yini le eyakho engasebenzi ngoLwesine? (p. 110)*

[What type of factory is this where people don't work on Thursday? (p. 110)]

**iv. Jabulani goes to church**

Alice is surprised to see Jabulani in church. This is because he has been disrespectful of church and church-goers. Alice suspects that there is something that Jabulani is hiding from her.

*Wamangala-nje uAlice ukuthi kungaba yini elethe uJabalani esontweni, lomuntu olikhesa kangaka isonto. Muva nje kuningi aweyangasakuqondi uAlice ngoJabalani. (p. 171)*

[Alice was surprised what brought Jabulani to church, a person who was so critical of church-going. Of late, there were many things that Alice did not understand about Jabulani. (p. 171)]

**v. Jabulani promises to reveal her secret to Alice**

He tells Alice when he will ultimately tell her his secret she will hate him. Alice promises never to forsake Jabulani.

*Noma kunjani Jabulani, Mntakwethu, ngeke ngikulanle. Ngiyobe ngilokhu ngingowakho njalo-nje. (p. 176)*

[Jabulani, my dear, I will never forsake you, whatever happens. I will always be yours. (p. 176)]

**vi. Jabulani requests Alice to write a letter to his parents**

At this stage Jabulani is undergoing a very difficult period spiritually. He asks Alice to tell his parents that he remembers their efforts in trying to show him the correct ways of behaviour. That he longs for them. That they should forgive him for all the wrongs that he has done.

*Ubatshela ukuthi sengikhumbula konke ababengeluleka ngako bezama ukungenza umuntu, kodwa ngaphenduka isilwane nehlongandlebe. Uthi ngiyabakhumbula kakuhlu. Uthi ngicela ukuba bangixolele konke engakwenza ukonakalisa izinhliziyi zabo, nokunaphaza amagama abo. Mhlawumbe uma abazali bami bengixolela, Alice, noNkulunkulu ezulwini uyongixolela. (p. 177)*

[Tell them that I remember all the advice that they gave me in an effort of making a person out of me, but I turned into a wayward animal. Tell them that I really long for them. Tell them to forgive me for causing them heartaches, and soiling

their good name. Perhaps, Alice, if my parents forgive me, God in heaven will also forgive me. (p. 177)]

**vii. Jabulani's hatred towards his brother Mbongeni changes into love**

All along Jabulani hates Mbongeni, his brother. The only person he loves is Nomusa, his sister. At this stage we see Jabulani repenting and showing love where before he showed hatred. In the letter to his parents Jabulani requests Alice to convey his kindest regards to his brother as well as his sister.

*Uthi nomfowethu nodadewethu nabo ngiyabakhumbula.* (p. 177)

[Tell my brother and my sister that I long for them. (p. 177)]

**viii. Jabulani is advised to confess his sin to Rev. Maphelu**

The guilt of having killed a person weighs heavily on Jabulani's soul. He cannot confess to anybody, not even to Alice, his lover. Alice greatly sympathizes with Jabulani's plight and advises him to go to Rev. Maphelu for advice.

*UAlice wayengazi ukuthi angamsiza kanjani uJabulani. Waze wagcina ethe, Pho Jabulani uma ubona ukuthi kunzima kangaka yini ungayi kumfundisi ufike umlandise yena udaba lwakho, ucele yena ukuba akweluleke.* (p. 177)

[Alice did not know how to help Jabulani. She ultimately said: Jabulani, if you find it so difficult why don't inform the Minister about your problem and ask for his advice. (p. 177)]

**ix. Jabulani goes to Rev. Maphelu for advice**

Jabulani goes to Rev. Maphelu to confess his sin. They agree that he would see Rev. Maphelu again after that. Jabulani feels greatly relieved after this meeting, because Rev. Maphelu advises Jabulani to go and confess to the police that he has killed a person.

*Ngithi mina kuwe mntaka Dlamini, khuluma iqiniso. Hamba uye emaphoyiseni uyozinikela, ukhulule isazelo sakho ngoba siyokuhlupha kuze kuyophela ukuphila kwakho lapha emhlabeni. (p. 184)*

[I say to you, son of Dlamini, speak the truth. Go to the police and surrender yourself, and liberate your conscience otherwise it will torment you for the rest of your life. (p. 184)]

**x. Jabulani confesses to Alice Mabaso that he killed the boy.**

Jabulani goes to Rev. Maphelu for advice as he has been advised by Alice. At this stage Jabulani is ready to tell Alice that he has killed the boy.

*Waze wagcina elikhiphile: Alice, yimi engabulala umfana. (p. 198)*

[He ultimately said: Alice, I killed the boy. (p. 198)]

**xi. Jabulani goes back to Rev. Maphelu to inform him about the confession to the police. He told Rev. Maphelu that he has decided to confess to the police.**

*Baba angiboni ukuthi ikhona enye indlela. Kungcono kona baba ukuba ngiyozinikela ngithole isijeziso lesa esingiphelile. (p. 200)*

[Father, I don't find any other way. It is better for me to surrender myself and receive the punishment that I deserve. (p. 200)]

**xii. Jabulani found guilty of murder**

Jabulani is found guilty of murder by the judge but, because of his age, is sentenced to five years' imprisonment. He is referred to a reformatory. The reformatory will now fulfil the role that his parents wanted to play at the very beginning.

## 2. What Jabulani says and things about himself

### i. That he was not loved by his father, Dlamini, and brother, Mbongeni

Jabulani is accused by Mbongeni of having smoked when he has not done so. His father punishes him severely without first establishing the truth of the allegation. That is when the hatred starts. His father does not go to the school to reprimand the teacher for punishing him wrongfully. That is why he leaves school.

*Futhi sengiyabona ukuthi mina abasangifuni lapha ekhaya. Ukuba ubaba ungikhathalele, ngabe akanginyanzeli ukuba ngiye esikoleni lapho ngizofike ngenziwe isilwane khona. Ukuba nguwe-nje Mbongeni owashaywa, ngabe ubaba wake wayozwisisa kahle ukuthi kwenzenjani. (p. 44)*

[I have come to realize that I am no longer wanted at home. If father cared for me he would not force me to go to school where I am treated like an animal. If you, Mbongweni, were punished at school, father would have gone to school to find out what was happening. (p. 44)]

### 3.4.10 IMPLICIT INFORMATION

#### 1. Comparison and contrast

At the beginning of the novel a comparison is made in the character of Jabulani and Mbongeni. Mbongeni is obedient and pleases his parents. On the other hand Jabulani is disobedient to the displeasure of his parents. We should not lose sight of the fact that Mbongeni contributes to Jabulani's disobedience as has been explained previously.

Although Mandla and Jabulani are naughty as young boys, Mandla does not end up a criminal like Jabulani. The contrast is made to highlight Jabulani's character.

Jabulani meets Alice who is a regular churchgoer. At the beginning Jabulani despises people who go to church. After the murder when he cannot find any peace of mind he goes to church. He even goes to a Minister of Religion to confess his sin. The comparison between Jabulani and Alice serves the purpose

of remoulding Jabulani's character. In the letter that Jabulani asks Alice to write to his parents he is showing repentance for his wrong deeds. He says she should tell them that he remembered all the words they said to him in an effort to make him a better person. He even asks that greetings be sent to Mbongeni whom he hated at first.

Alice suggests that Jabulani should go to Rev. Maphelu for advice. The advice that he obtains from the Minister of Religion can be compared to the religious upbringing that his parents wished for him which he rejected. After Jabulani is found guilty of murder, he is referred to a reformatory because of his age. The reformatory takes the place of his parents who at the beginning want to make a man out of him.

*Sekudhule isikhathi uJabulani ehlezi esikoleni sokulungisa izigwegwe. Abaphathi bakhe bakhuluma ngokumncoma. Bakhuluma amazwi athembisayo sengathi useyawukuthi mhla waphuma, aphume eseyindoda uqobo, ngoba eseke wabuzwa ubunzima ukuthi bunjani. (p. 214)*

[Some time has passed since Jabulani was referred to an institution for rehabilitating wayward children. The authorities are confident that at the end of his term of imprisonment they would have made a man of him, because he would have known what hardship was. (p. 214)]

The quotation above can be summarized as: some time has passed since Jabulani has been referred to an institution for rehabilitating wayward children. The authorities are confident that at the end of his term of imprisonment they will have made a man of him.

## 2. Repetition and accumulation

The narrator provides a lot of information in the presentation of Jabulani's character. He also uses other characters in the presentation of Jabulani's character. In the process many characteristics are repeated.

Jabulani's characteristics which are repeated are:

- he is stubborn
- he is brave
- he is cruel
- he is intelligent

### 3. Transformation

Jabulani's character transforms through the novel. He is at first presented as a naughty boy who ultimately lands in big trouble. His conscience torments him and he confesses his sin. He is found guilty in court and referred to a reformatory where his character is "reformed".

### 4. Name

When Jabulani is born his parents are happy that they have been blessed with a second son. The name means: "Become happy". Jabulani does not make his parents happy at all. They are only happy again at the end when the authorities at the reformatory report that he will end up a good man.

#### 3.4.11 SUMMARY

In the foregoing discussion consideration was given to the actors and actants at the story level of *Mntanami, Mntanami!*

The emphasis was placed heavily on Greimas's actantial model and the categories manifested therein.

Extensive use was made of Du Plooy (1986:178-179) in the discussion of the actantial categories, namely Actant-Object; Actant-Subject; Sender; Receiver; Helper; Opponent.

Greimas's model was applied fruitfully in the analysis of the novel *Mntanami, Mntanami!* In this analysis the following information came to light: Dlamini (the

father) and MaNtuli (the mother), were identified as Actant-Object; the Forces of Good (Christianity), were identified as the Helper, the Evil forces that opposed Dlamini and MaNtuli's efforts of bringing up their children as they wished, were identified as the Opponents. Mthembu's son was identified as the Sender, while his father was identified as the Receiver.

The characters in *Mntanami, Mntanami!* were divided into four main categories, namely: those who formed Jabulani's home environment; Jabulani's childhood friends; Jabulani's companions in gangsterland; those who contributed to Jabulani's rehabilitation.

In dealing with the different characters use was made of explicit and implicit information given about each character.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.1 CONCLUSION**

In the opening chapter of this research we find an introduction, a contextualisation and problem statement, the aims and objectives of the research, and finally a chapter outline.

The second chapter dealt with character: a theoretical framework. Character was dealt with at two narratological levels, namely the story (fable) and the text (suzjet) level. The concept "character" was compared and contrasted with other closely related concepts.

The viewpoints of various theorists with regard to character were given, for example: characters as people (human beings); characters in relation to events; characters in the folktale; characters in the folktales by Propp; characters in the folktales by Greimas.

Types of characters (referential, linking, and anaphoric) were dealt with, as well as the classification of characters (round and flat), and the building of a character by means of explicit and implicit information about the character.

The third chapter opens with an introduction to the actors and actants in the story level of *Mntanami, Mntanami!*

Greimas's Actantial Model and the categories manifested therein are given. In dealing with the actantial categories extensive use was made of Du Plooy (1986:178-179), namely Actant-Object; Actant-Subject; Sender; Receiver; Helper; Opponent.

Greimas's model was applied in the analysis of the characters in *Mntanami, Mntanami!* In this analysis the following information came to light, namely that Dlamini and MaNtuli (the parents) can be regarded as Actant-Subject, while the children (Mbongeni, Jabulani and Nomusa) can be regarded as Actant-Objects. The Forces of

Good (Christianity) can be regarded as Helper, while the Evil forces that opposed Dlamini and MaNtuli's effort of bringing up their children to be good adults can be regarded as Opponent. Mthembu's son can be regarded as the Sender while his father can be regarded as a Receiver.

The characters in the novel were classified into four categories, namely: those who formed Jabulani's home environment; Jabulani's childhood friends; Jabulani's companions in gangsterland; the characters who contributed to his rehabilitation.

Finally each character was dealt with on the basis of explicit and implicit information given about the character.

In conclusion it can be seen that character is a subject that depends on personal ideas, but that there are generally accepted rules for the presentation of a character. The writer Sibusiso Nyembezi presented the characters in *Mntanami, Mntanami!* according to these rules, but in a unique way because he is a person with a unique ability.

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