

**Meaning in Small, Snyders and Pearce:
an application of Lotman's semiotics
to 'coloured' literature**

by

DAVID SOLOMON HAROLD ERNEST

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SUPERVISORS: PROFESSOR R.A. GRAY

MRS I. NOOMÉ

To my wife Tilly, for all the love and support she has shown me throughout our marriage.

I also dedicate this research document to my son Jacques Pierre Marcel Ernest, who entered God's kingdom on 15 May 2004, in the service of his country.

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ABSTRACT

In this study, a semiotic point of view of selected literature written by ‘coloured’ writers is examined, using some of the semiotic theories of Jurij M. Lotman, one of the leading Soviet semioticians of the school of Tartu.

Selected theories of Lotman are applied to ‘coloured’ literature. These include an examination of *poetic language* (based on Lotman’s theory of a *primary and secondary modelling system*), the *iconicity* of the text, the *aesthetics of identity and opposition*, the distinction between *text and extra-text*, and the relationship that exists between the *extra-text, culture and code*.

The literary texts chosen for analysis are works by three contemporary ‘coloured’ writers, namely Adam Small, Peter Snyders and Robert Pearce, who have all contributed poetry, prose and drama to Afrikaans literature in general, and *original* Afrikaans literature in particular. The selected dramas are *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978), *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983) and *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (Pearce 1988b)*. These writers’ works span approximately three consecutive decades and their work can be examined for commonality and differences. The three chosen dramas were written five years apart respectively; yet they reveal thematic similarities. The dramas also feature a common ‘deviant’ language code used by ‘coloured’ people and discussed in this study as *original* Afrikaans. This code, which is juxtaposed with *standard* Afrikaans, is one of the basic areas of interest that motivated the choice of subject for this study.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the differentiation that Lotman makes between the various sign systems that operate in natural language (the primary modelling system) and poetic language (a secondary modelling system), and to determine whether these sign systems can be detected and are functional in ‘coloured’ literature. In addition, an investigation is made of the iconicity that operates in poetic language (which, according to Lotman, is the basis for differentiation), and to ascertain whether iconicity occurs in these examples of ‘coloured’ literature and to what extent it influences meaning. In the process, *intratextual relations* within the poetic text were scrutinised to establish whether the manipulation of language, devices and codes raises any particular expectation in the poetic plays

* Pearce’s drama *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* is itemised as 1988b to maintain the chronology of his

text, and also to detect whether *oppositionally* constituted code-systems which set up their own patterns of expectation within the syntactic and lexical levels of the poetic text clash with and contradict prior expectations.

In addition, an analysis has been made to determine whether a new understanding of the texts can be reached, based on Lotman's *aesthetics of identity* and *opposition*, and to what extent the reader is forced to collaborate in the modelling process of the texts when the reader's expectations are undermined by an *aesthetics of opposition*.

The study has successfully corroborated and substantiated all the selected aspects of Lotman's theory. The differentiation that Lotman makes between the primary and secondary language model is demonstrated especially by the iconicity that operates in poetic language. Examples are abundant in the selected literature and are conspicuous, especially through the manipulation of the language, devices and codes employed by the authors to defamiliarise objects so that they transcend their familiar characteristics and perceptions, and sometimes signify a totally new concept. In this way, readers' expectations are subverted and they are invited to collaborate in the modelling process of the texts. These techniques are also an integral part of both the *text* and the *extra-text*, and their presence justifies Lotman's claims that the meaning of a literary text cannot be understood outside its cultural or historical context.

In retrospect, it can be argued that this research has opened up some additional avenues for an analysis of meaning in 'coloured' literature.

KEY TERMS:

Adam Small	<i>original</i> Afrikaans
aesthetics of identity and opposition	Peter Snyders
deviant devices	poetic language
dialect	<i>Political Joke</i>
<i>Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad</i>	primary modelling system
defamiliarise	Robert Pearce
extra-text	secondary modelling system
iconicity	signified
<i>Joanie Galant-hulle</i>	signifier
Lotman	semiotics

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CHAPTER 1

‘COLOURED’ LITERATURE AND SEMIOTICS: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The decision to conduct a semiotic study of meaning in selected ‘coloured’ literature¹ was made because extensive bibliographical research and interlibrary searches² revealed no semiotic reading or analysis of this literature to date. Criticism and studies of ‘coloured’ literature that were found in the search, such as Hendricks’s (1978) *Sinchronies-Diachroniese Studie van die Taalgebruik in die Drama Kanna Hy Kô Hystoe van Adam Small*, Brink’s (1980) *Tweede Voorlopige Rapport* and Damakude’s (1996) *Die Dramas van Adam Small as Sosio-politieke Kommentaar*, featured only the prevailing methods of analysing literature, namely New Criticism or Marxism.

Hendricks’s³ (1978) *Sinchronies-Diachroniese Studie van die Taalgebruik in die Drama Kanna Hy Kô Hystoe van Adam Small* is a study of language usage in Small’s drama *Kanna Hy Kô Hystoe* (1965). Although the study mentions various deviations in the usage of the language, such as the mixing of Afrikaans and English vocabulary in the same sentence (Hendricks 1978:174, 229), which would complement a semiotic analysis, the study concentrates mainly on synchronic-diachronic variations in diction (an historical overview) and the linguistic implications of such variations.

Brink’s *Tweede Voorlopige Rapport* (1980), on the other hand, exemplifies a socio-political commentary on Small’s drama *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978). Brink’s report (which can be more accurately described as a review) seems to concentrate mainly on comparing Small’s drama *Kanna Hy Kô Hystoe* (1965) to *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978). Brink’s

¹ An extensive explanation of the term ‘coloured’ and the concept ‘coloured’ literature are provided in Section 1.2 of this study.

² A search was made by the Merensky Library at the start of this research and again in February 2004.

³ Additional information on Hendricks’s work is furnished in Section 2.3 of this study.

comments clearly indicate that the emphasis of the review is the historical artistry of these dramas.

Damakude's (1996) thesis entitled *Die Dramas van Adam Small as Sosio-politieke Kommentaar* is also a socio-political commentary which examines Small's dramas as aspects and 'examples of socio-political theatre' (Damakude 1996: Summary). The main objective of Damakude's study is to establish the historical relationship between the political and social dimensions of the characters in Small's dramas.

There is no question that the methods of procuring meaning mentioned above are effective, but subjecting a selection of 'coloured' literature to a selective semiotic analysis can perhaps show that it is possible to supplement the methods of analysis that have hitherto been used to explore this literature, such as New Criticism, Marxism or even The New Historicism. Such a semiotic analysis could also result in the discovery of additional and complementary avenues of obtaining meaning in 'coloured' literature, because historical, cultural and ideological factors are integral components of semiotics.

An element that connects the methods of analysis mentioned above is history. Literary meaning in texts is generally attained via an analysis of various thematic and other elements that appear in the texts. These are often identified within the context of the historical elements (political, social or cultural) that are or were dominant at the time a text is or was written. This approach can be traced in the reading of the texts produced as far back as the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. For example, in a number of Shakespeare's plays, there is some emphasis on Renaissance class systems (class systems may also occasionally be divided along racial and ethnic lines). One such example is *The Merchant of Venice*, written circa 1598. In *The Merchant of Venice*, ethnic prejudice comes to the fore, and the bigotries of the Elizabethan age that are portrayed in Shakespeare's play are not very different from some forms of discrimination during the apartheid era⁴ in South Africa. In an introduction to *The Merchant of Venice*, Hudson (1879), cited by Fletcher in his introduction to the play (Shakespeare [circa 1598] 1978:161) confirms the above

⁴ Apartheid is the policy of racial segregation instituted by the Nationalist government of South Africa and it was at its height between 1948 and 1994 as discussed at length in an article by P.W. Coetzer in *An Illustrated History of South Africa* (Cameron & Spies 1986:271).

assumption in the following statement:

As to the moral temper of *The Merchant of Venice*, critics have differed widely, some regarding the play as teaching the most comprehensive humanity, others as caressing the narrowest bigotries of the Elizabethan age.

Although it would not be fair to assume that Elizabethan attitudes were uniformly hostile towards Jews, ethnically based hostility did exist, even if it is difficult to pinpoint to exactly what extent. W.M. Merchant (1967), in his introduction to *The Merchant of Venice* (Shakespeare [circa 1598] 1967:9), also claims that racial and economic conflicts are present in the play (even while he expresses a *caveat*):

... it is clear that *The Merchant of Venice* is much preoccupied with two matters of Elizabethan concern: Jewry and usury. So pervasive are these two questions that it is dangerously possible to assume that the play is “about” race and greed; indeed, when a director tries to give edge and point to a new reading of the play in the theatre, it is all too easy to explore these Elizabethan aspects of the play in terms which refer to our present concern with racial and economic conflict.

Shakespeare strongly suggests that ethnicity and economic concerns elicited mutual hatred from those who felt that they were being persecuted or disadvantaged. An example is Shylock’s confrontation with Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice* (Shakespeare [circa 1598] 1978:34), in which Shylock accuses Antonio of both verbal and physical abuse:

Shylock: ... You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spet upon my Jewish gaberdine, ...
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard, ...

In the lines that follow, Antonio admits to committing these deeds. The appraisal of Antonio by Shylock (Shakespeare [circa 1598] 1978:31) a few lines earlier confirms the argument that the feeling was mutual:

Shylock: (*Aside.*) How like a fawning publican he looks!
 I hate him for he is a Christian;
 But more, for that in low simplicity
 He lends out money gratis and brings down
 The rate of usance ...

Here, Shylock not only refers insultingly to Antonio by calling him a grovelling ‘publican’ (tax collector), but in no uncertain terms declares his hatred for Antonio and Christians in general. The continuing history of such attitudes and persecutions was most notoriously reflected in the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany during the Second World War.

The triple jeopardies of race, class and gender have often been aspects of literary concern and have long occupied writers. For instance, some of Dickens’s novels portray the inequality of the class system dominant in the era in which they were written. In *Hard Times* ([1854] 1970), the focus is primarily on bourgeois capitalist factory ownership and education *versus* the suffering of the proletariat. The novel demonstrates how members of upper and middle class Victorian society manipulated various institutions to oppress the people of the lower class (Gray 1969:3).

Some ‘coloured’ literature which has comparable political, social and economic overtones also portrays such thematic preoccupations. Allusions and direct references to past racial and ethnic discriminatory laws⁵ introduced in South Africa during the period from 1949 to 1994 are common. Examples of some of these thematic preoccupations are found in two local novels, Richard Rive’s *Emergency* (1964) and Bessie Head’s *Maru* (1971). These two novels depict both racial and ethnic discrimination and the inequality of the South African class system. *Emergency* (Rive 1964), which centres on a ‘coloured’ youth’s struggle to free himself from the impoverishment brought about by the unequal class system during the apartheid era in South Africa, is analogous to the examples in European literature mentioned above. The protagonist’s struggle in this novel is not only classified as political insurrection by the White authorities, but also as an immoral act⁶ because he dares to love a

⁵ Some of these discriminatory laws include: the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Act No 55 of 1949, the Immorality Amendment Act, Act No 21 of 1950, the Population Registration Act, Act No 30 of 1950, The Group Areas Act, Act No 41 of 1950, the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, Act No 49 of 1953 (Coetzer, in Cameron & Spies 1986:271; Terreblanche 2002:334-335).

⁶ The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Act No 55 of 1949, and the Immorality Amendment Act, Act No

White woman. *Maru* (1971) depicts a young ‘coloured’ (Masarwa) woman’s struggle to be accepted in a Black Batswana-dominated society. Her situation is compounded by the political predicament which surrounds her, as both her enemies and her friends have power and position, something that she lacks. Thus, the elements mentioned above are common in literature, and are utilised not only to demonstrate historical events of the past, but to compare and contrast these to contemporary situations.

The point that emerges from the above discussion is that history as the context in and of literature is an integral part of literature. The impact that history has on literature and also the relationship between history and its literary representation seem to be inseparable. In other words, meaning relies to a large extent on the historical context of the literary product. This argument has been presented by numerous literary theorists such as Chidi Amuta⁷ (a proponent of African literary criticism), Mikhail Bakhtin⁸ (a theorist focused on dialogism), and Michel Foucault⁹ (a proponent of new historicism), to name but a few.

In this study, a semiotic perspective on the function of history as an integral part of literature is examined using the semiotic theories of Jurij M. Lotman (alternatively spelt Yuri by his translators), one of the leading Soviet semioticians of the school of Tartu. Lotman (1976, 1977; also Lotman & Uspensky 1978) argues that the meaning of a literary text cannot be understood outside its cultural or historical context. He expounds this concept at great length in two studies, *Analysis of the Poetic Text* (1976) and *The Structure of the Artistic Text* (1977). In these studies, he discusses aspects such as literary tradition, historical and ideological frameworks, and the extent to which art represents and embodies the views and values of a community. This is one of the reasons that a selection of his semiotic theories is applied to selected ‘coloured’ literature in this study. Other reasons for choosing the theories of Lotman for this analysis are discussed in Section 1.2.2, following a

21 of 1950 were rescinded by F.W. de Klerk in 1994, but were still in force in 1964, when the novel appeared.

⁷ Chidi Amuta, author of *The Theory of African Literature: Implications for Practical Criticism* (1989), is well known for his dialectical approach to African literature.

⁸ M.M. Bakhtin was a proponent of dialogism and speech genres. His *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* appeared in an English edition in 1990 and his *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* appeared in an English edition in 1986 (see Bakhtin 1986, 1990).

⁹ Michel Foucault’s work straddles the disciplines of philosophy, history, sociology and literary theory. See *Foucault: A Critical Introduction* (McNay 1994).

definition of what is meant by the term ‘coloured’ and ‘coloured’ literature in this dissertation. Semiotics and Lotman’s theory are set out in Sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 respectively.

1.2 DEFINING THE TERMS ‘COLOURED’ AND ‘COLOURED’ LITERATURE

The term ‘coloured literature’ is used in this study to signify the literature produced by ‘coloured’ writers, in other words, writers who have mixed ancestry (for example, Black and White).

In most parts of the world, the term ‘coloured’ (when referring to people) is generally accepted as synonymous with ‘Black’. However, in South Africa, the term has come to identify a specific ethnic group. The word ‘coloured’ was first used in or around 1834 by the ruling British colonial government to classify the race of half-breeds that emerged as a result of miscegenation between the colonists, the settlers, the Khoi-Khoi, the San and the imported slaves in the Cape Colony (Van der Ross 1986:3). Since then, successive governments until 1994 have adopted the term (Van der Ross 1986:374, 388). To some of the people so classified, the word ‘coloured’ has come to represent a politically sensitive and contentious situation. February (1981) stresses this view when quoting the Reverend A. Hendrickse (who became the leader of the Labour Party of South Africa in 1984). According to February (1981:5), Reverend Hendrickse probably speaks for all those classified as ‘coloureds’:

The term Coloured is not of our own thinking, and if we look at the circumstances of the South African situation then you must ask why. We have no peculiar colour, we have no peculiar language and if other people see these peculiarities they see them not because they see them but because they want other people to see them I do not want to be labelled Coloured ... all I want to be known as is South African.

Confirmation that the majority of South Africa ‘coloureds’ would like to be known only as South Africans can be found in a survey on the ‘coloureds’ in Johannesburg, conducted by

Edelstein (1974:77), entitled *What Do the Coloureds Think?* Nevertheless, a contingent of the ‘coloured’ people see the term as a unifying symbol of their genealogy (February 1981:6), which is particularly relevant to the treatment of the term by the three dramatists selected for discussion in this study. To acknowledge the concerns of people who find the term offensive, the word ‘coloured’ is written in lower-case letters and is placed in inverted commas throughout this study.

Coupled with the issue of the concept ‘coloured’, there is the issue of the origins of Afrikaans. Many ‘coloured’ people believe that the origins of the language can be linked back to their Khoisan forebears. This argument is echoed by February (1981:20), who states:

Historically, it is an indisputable fact that the Khoi, the slaves, and later on the ‘Cape coloured’, have all contributed to the rise of Afrikaans as a language.

February and the ‘coloured’ people who support this argument are probably correct, because an entry in Van Riebeeck’s diary (Van der Merwe 1975:52) on the fourth day after his arrival reads:

...die van Saldanha door teijckenen ende veel gebroocken Duijtsche ende Engelsse woorden (apparent vant verongeluckte Haerlems volk geleert ende onthouden) te verstaen gevende ...

[...these people from Saldanha, with the help of signs and a lot of broken Dutch/Lowland German and English words (apparently learnt from the crew of the wrecked Haerlem and remembered) made themselves understood ...]

The people from ‘Saldanha’ that Van Riebeeck refers to are a group of Khoi-Khoi (some of the ancestors of the ‘coloured’ people). According to the above quotation, the indigenes mixed two language codes (English and ‘Duijtsch’) and supplemented this mixture with non-verbal signs in order to communicate with the colonists. This implies that the indigenes had used this form of communication prior to their meeting Van Riebeeck to communicate with shipwrecked sailors. The mixture of the languages mentioned plus the

gestures are most probably the foundation of a crude but new language – ‘original’ Afrikaans. The majority of the ‘coloureds’ still resort to mixing language codes without any difficulty.

Although it is not the intention or aim of this study to determine the politics surrounding Afrikaans, the manner in which the majority of the ‘coloured’ people speak Afrikaans has to be examined. In short, the socio-linguistic aspect (concerning the ‘coloured’ people and the way Afrikaans is used) has to be addressed, as it has deep-seated implications for and a direct bearing on this study. The utterances, pronunciation and the meaning of many of the words used by many of the ‘coloured’ people differ noticeably from the way most White people speak the language. Some linguists regard this difference as merely a shift in dialect, which is normal from region to region, especially if it incorporates pronunciation and diachronic variations (Akmajian *et al.* 1990:229), while others, such as Sapir (1921:153), regard the terms ‘dialect’ and ‘language’ as purely relative terms, which ‘are convertible as our perspective widens or contracts’.

What this study is interested in, is the shift in meaning that occurs when an utterance deviates¹⁰ from the expected and accepted norm, which, in this case, is *standard* Afrikaans, also previously known as *AB-Afrikaans* [Algemene Beskaafde Afrikaans – general civilised Afrikaans]. This means that deviations have to be examined to see whether the ‘transgressions’ represent any change in meaning.

In semiotics, when norms or standards are breached, any infringement or violation is identified as a *device*. This concept, which originates from Russian Formalism (1920-1930) and the Structuralism practised by the Prague Linguistic Circle (1935-1939), is one of the cornerstones of semiotics. Terence Hawkes (1977), one of the outstanding critics of structuralism and semiotics, examines the theory concerning the cognitive and expressive functions of language in his book *Structuralism and Semiotics* (1977). Hawkes (1977:75) concludes that

¹⁰ The terms ‘deviate’, ‘deviation’ and ‘deviance’ are used throughout the study in their semiotic sense, to indicate when language diverges from its expected or accepted norm or rule. These terms are not used in a hierarchical or judgmental sense to imply any ‘wrongness’ or abnormality, or to imply any preference for one form of Afrikaans over another.

language is being used “poetically” or “aesthetically” when its expressive aspect is dominant: that is, when its language deviates maximally from ‘normal’ usage, by means of devices which thrust the act of expression itself into the foreground.

The discussion in this study examines the expressive aspect of Afrikaans *versus* the ‘normal’ usage, and it is from this socio-linguistic perspective that the cultural, historical and ideological meaning of the three chosen texts is explored.

To make it easier to identify the differences in discourse, the generally accepted form of Afrikaans is referred to in this study as *standard* Afrikaans, while the variation in discourse (the Afrikaans used by ‘coloured’ people) is referred to as *original* Afrikaans (deriving from the argument that the ‘coloured’ people contributed to the origin of Afrikaans).

1.3 SEMIOTICS

The word ‘semiotics’ derives from the Greek word ‘*semeion*’ (sign), and it refers to the study of signs, sign systems and semantic processes (Hawkes 1977:123). This ‘science of signs’ came about through the efforts of Ferdinand de Saussure¹¹ (a Swiss linguist) and Charles Sanders Peirce¹² (an American philosopher), who explored the same principles at the same time as Saussure, but independently. Saussure’s work incorporates a linguistic model, while Peirce’s work was developed without such a linguistic underpinning.

Saussure proposed a systematic approach to literature which requires language to be studied principally as a system of signs. This systematic approach includes the concept of the division of a linguistic sign into a *signifier*, which is the formal aspect of the sign (usually manifested as a sound image or its graphic equivalent) and the *signified*, which is the concept or meaning conveyed by the sign. Saussure regards the relation between these two elements as arbitrary and conventional, and not as natural or self-evident (Hawkes 1977:130).

¹¹ Saussure’s role in both structuralism and semiotics is discussed at length in Ryan and Van Zyl’s (1982) overview of literary theory, *An Introduction to Contemporary Literary Theory*, in Chapters 4 and 5 of this study.

¹² Peirce’s work is discussed in detail in *A Sign is just a Sign* (Sebeok 1991).

Almost simultaneously, Peirce formulated a similar systematic theory of signs (Hawkes 1977:126). Peirce's theory also held that the bond between a sign (the signifier) and its *referent* (the signified) or the object that it denotes is usually arbitrary and conventional. These two approaches gave rise to what is generally known as semiotics. The terms 'semiology' and 'semiotics' are synonymous. The main difference is that the term 'semiology' was used by Saussure, while the term 'semiotics' was coined by Peirce.

Although much of the discussion in this study follows on from the work of Saussure, it was decided that the term 'semiotics' be used instead of 'semiology', because 'semiotics' is the more widely accepted term.

1.3.1 Semiotic theory

The object of study in semiotics is basically the relationship between the sign and the code. Fundamentally, the rule is that a sign can only be a sign if it functions within a code (a rule-governed signifying system shared by a community of speakers). Semiotics is concerned with the manner in which the codes that are embedded in a text govern every aspect of the text, and interact with each other to produce both the meaning and the specificity of the text. It further emphasises the conventionality of the code, which means that the text is not seen as a self-enclosed system. In fact, this automatically places the text within a broader social context, since conventions presuppose a society and social acceptance.

Because the emphasis on conventionality concentrates on the social acceptance of a text and its codes, it suggests that meaning relies on the conventions of a given society, which in turn implies that texts are better understood within their cultural and historical context. Also, the precept that literary and other artistic codes are related to socio-historical factors is most probably the factor that most influences our expectations of texts, and the way in which we read them.

According to the categorisation set down in an essay by Susan Van Zyl (1982:74-75), semiotics can be classified into two groups:

- ‘classical’ semio-structuralism, which is comprised of the work of theorists such as Roman Jakobson (formerly of the Prague and French linguistic circles) and Umberto Eco (the Italian semiotician); and
- the new synthesis in historical semiotics, which includes the work of theorists such as Jurij M. Lotman, Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva.

Although the semiotic theories of Barthes¹³ and Kristeva¹⁴ are equally valuable, the choice to employ selected theories of Lotman was made because his theories not only incorporate the distinctive nature of literary language proposed by Saussure and Jakobson,¹⁵ but also reflect the theories of Peirce (who – as already noted – saw the relation between a sign and the structure of the language that describes it as arbitrary) and Eco¹⁶ (who perceived the dynamic character of the sign as having the capability of revealing the flexibility and creativity of language). More important, Lotman’s theories go beyond the parameters set up by Saussure, Jakobson and Eco, who describe the nature of literary language only in terms of linguistic or structural characteristics, without taking into account the specific social or historical contexts of the literary text.

1.3.2 Lotman’s semiotic theory

Lotman is regarded as one of the principal proponents of semiotics. His theories span, integrate and expand on Russian Formalist, structural and post-structural notions of literature. His work consistently focuses on central literary issues such as the characteristics of poetic language, the structure of the artistic text, and the association between text and context.

Because his theories span such a vast area of semiotics, a few selected theories have been

¹³ Barthes’s theories are discussed in detail in *Structuralism and Semiotics* (Hawkes 1977:106-122).

¹⁴ Kristeva’s theories are examined in Ryan and Van Zyl’s (1982:86-89) *An Introduction to Contemporary Literary Theory*.

¹⁵ Jakobson’s literary theories are discussed in Ryan and Van Zyl’s *An Introduction to Contemporary Literary Theory* (1982:46, 57-59) and Hawkes’s *Structuralism and Semiotics* (1977:76-87).

¹⁶ An introduction to Eco’s semiotics can be found in Ryan and Van Zyl’s *An Introduction to Contemporary*

chosen for application to ‘coloured’ literature. These include an examination of *poetic language* (which is based on his theory of a *primary and secondary modelling system*), the *iconicity* of the text, the *aesthetics of identity and opposition*, the distinction between *text and extra-text*, and the relationship that exists between the *extra-text, culture and code*.

In his theory on poetic language, Lotman distinguishes between the different sign systems that operate in poetic language, and he bases his differentiation on the fact that poetic language is characterised by a complex organisation of elements and devices that produce meaning. These devices can be found at any or all of the various levels of the poetic text, for example, the phonological, lexical and syntactic levels (Lotman 1977:53). According to Lotman, these devices of poetic language create a multiplicity of new semantic values especially rich in information (Van Zyl 1982:75).

Lotman’s concept of devices is basically modelled on the Formalist notion of *defamiliarisation*, but is much more complex. Defamiliarisation, according to Russian Formalist Viktor Šklovskij (Ryan & Van Zyl 1982:17), provides the means to transcend the automatic quality of familiar perception. In other words, defamiliarisation takes place when objects (through the use of devices) transcend their familiar characteristics and perception to signify a totally new concept. Lotman’s (1977:53) formulation is similar, but he regards devices as elements with a specific function in a structure, namely to regulate meaning at various structural levels. Lotman believes that meaning is not only found in the underlying deep structure of the text. This means that the surface structure of the poetic text must also be examined, to interpret the different meanings the devices may convey.

The differentiation between the different sign systems which operate in natural and poetic language is also the basis for Lotman’s notion of *iconicity*. This notion is based on the idea that an iconic sign has a visual nature and is usually representative of the object in question. Lotman regards natural language as a *primary modelling system*, and poetic language as a *secondary modelling system*. The secondary system is dependent on the primary system. The precept is that although natural language models or exhibits external reality, it is incapable of sustaining an *iconic relation* with the external reality which it models. In other words, natural language is merely the manner in which reality is made

intelligible, perceptible or discernable. Poetic language, on the other hand, is characterised by iconicity, and its model of external reality is both motivated and sustained by that iconicity (Lotman 1977:56).

Lotman's theory regarding the *aesthetics of identity and opposition* also emanates from this theory of iconicity. The *aesthetics of identity* (Lotman 1977:289-290) presupposes that sender and recipient hold near-identical codes. This implies that the structures of the texts are codified and conform to rules which generally fulfil the reader's expectations with regard to the particular language, genre or code, and make it possible for the reader to easily assign meaning to the given texts. Texts based on an *aesthetics of opposition* (Lotman 1977:292), on the other hand, deliberately obstruct the reader's expectation(s) with regard to language, genre and meaning. Because the codes of the sender and recipient differ, the codes used oppose and contradict the expectations set up by the recipient. This theory also propounds the manipulation of language, devices and codes in the poetic text. Van Zyl (1982:76) interprets the phenomenon as a unity of intersecting sign-systems which semiotically saturates the text, making it 'artistic'. In other words, the elements affect and are affected by each other through manipulation to produce maximum information, or what Ryan and Van Zyl (1982:76) refer to as an 'unusually high information load'.

Closely linked to the aesthetics of identity and opposition is Lotman's distinction between *text and extra-text*. The *extra-text* includes aspects such as literary tradition, and the historical ideological framework attached to literary works of art. Lotman proposes that art embodies the ideals, beliefs and values of a given community and advocates that attention should not only be centred on the artistic text itself, but that it should focus even more on the community from which that art emanates. This means that particular qualities of the text as a sign could be emphasised, but that greater emphasis should be placed on the nature of its relation with the wider cultural and social *extra-text* (Lotman 1977:286).

Lotman's interest in the role of the reader is based on his belief that the meaning of a literary text cannot be understood outside its *cultural* or historical context. Just as the recipient of a linguistic message must know the *linguistic code* in order to interpret the message, so the reader of a literary text must know not only the language in which the text was written, but also its literary code, to be able to decode the text.

Lotman not only regards the reader as part of the semiotic process of the poetic text, but also views the text as one of the reader's codes. He bases this distinction on the reader's interaction with the texts. Lotman firmly believes that the resulting interface is not isolated from other artistic codes, but that both literary and other artistic codes are intimately related to ideological and socio-historical factors which play a part in the expectations associated with the texts and the ways in which they are read.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

Although a number of linguistic and structural studies have been undertaken to elicit meaning in 'coloured' literature (as stated in Section 1.1), no semiotic study of 'coloured' literature could be found. This study attempts to open up semiotics as an additional avenue for interpreting meaning in 'coloured' literature to supplement or enhance existing methods of appreciation applied to 'coloured' literature.

The objectives of this study are:

- to examine Lotman's differentiation between the different sign systems that operate in natural language (primary modelling system) and poetic language (secondary modelling system), and verify whether these sign systems are detectable and functional in selected examples of 'coloured' literature;
- to investigate the iconicity that operates in poetic language (which, according to Lotman, is the basis for the differentiation between natural and poetic language), and to ascertain whether iconicity exists in the selected 'coloured' literature and to what extent it influences meaning;
- to compare different meanings as they appear in natural language and poetic language, and to determine whether these modelling systems are apparent in the selected 'coloured' literature;
- to scrutinise *intratextual relations* within the poetic text in the selected 'coloured' literature (according to Lotman, such relations are brought about by the manipulation of language, devices and codes that raise specific expectations in the poetic text);

- to study and detect *oppositionally* constituted code-systems which set up their own patterns of expectation within the syntactic, the lexical, and the phonological levels of the poetic text that clash with and contradict prior expectations, causing a change in meaning;
- to ascertain whether a new understanding of the texts in the selected ‘coloured’ literature can be reached based on the *aesthetics of identity* and the *aesthetics of opposition*; and
- to determine to what extent the reader is forced to collaborate in the modelling process of the texts under review when the reader’s expectations are contradicted by the *aesthetics of opposition*.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The texts chosen for analysis are works by three contemporary ‘coloured’ writers, namely Adam Small, Peter Snyders and Robert Pearce, who have all contributed poetry, prose and drama to Afrikaans literature in general, and *original* Afrikaans literature in particular. The choice of writers is intentional, because their works span approximately three consecutive decades. This spread provides an opportunity to examine their literature for commonality, differences and progression.

The study also presents a generational and regional range of ‘coloured’ drama in that Small, Snyders and Pearce were born in 1936, 1945 and 1956 respectively. Small and Snyders were born and grew up in the Cape, whereas Pearce was born and reared in Pretoria. Today, all three are acquainted with each other, and are familiar with each other’s endeavours. An examination of their dramatic *oeuvres* can be said to provide a varied view of ‘coloured’ drama. Their *oeuvre* is briefly summarised below (Sections 1.5.1 to 1.5.3).

The scope of this study is restricted to a semiotic analysis (using Lotman’s theory) of three dramas only, in the expectation that the subjection of this selection of ‘coloured’ literature to Lotman’s theories will open up new avenues of criticism for ‘coloured’ literature.

1.5.1 Adam Small

Of the three writers, Adam Small is the best known, because most of his writing has been published. He has had the most exposure, especially after his drama, *Kanna Hy Kô Hystoe* (1965), had received nationwide acclaim. Some of his poetry has been incorporated into widely distributed and prescribed Afrikaans anthologies such as *Digters en Digkuns*, edited by P.J. Nienaber (1994) and *Senior Verseboek*, edited by D.J. Opperman (1985). His own published anthologies include the following: *Kitaar my Kruis* (1961), *Sê Sjobbolet* (1963) and *Oos Wes Tuis Bes, Distrik Ses* (1973). He has published three dramas – *Kanna Hy Kô Hystoe* (1965), *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978) and *Krismis van Map Jacobs* (1983) – and the novel *Heideseë* (1979). *Lantern*, a bilingual magazine for knowledge and culture published by the Stigting vir Onderwys, Wetenskap en Tegnologie (1975:57), has listed him as one of the pioneers of Afrikaans literature.

His drama *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978) has been selected for analysis because many of the themes of this drama concur with themes in the other selected dramas. The drama portrays the destitution of the ‘coloured’ community, and also focuses on the uprooting of ‘coloured’ families from their homes under the Group Areas Act of 1950 during the apartheid era. (A synopsis of the drama appears in Section 1.6.1.)

1.5.2 Peter Snyders

To date, only two of Peter Snyders's dramas have been published, namely *Political Joke* (1983) and *Political joke 2* (2000). Two collections of poetry, namely *'n Ordinary Mens* (1982) and *'n Waarskynlike Mens* (1992) have also been published and some of his other poetry has been included in the anthology *Brekfis met Vier* (Le Roux Du Toit *et al.* 1981).

Political Joke (1983), the first of the published plays, is used for this analysis. This play was chosen because it is set in the aftermath of the forced removal of 'coloured' communities in South Africa and centres on various social and political issues which affect the 'coloured' community. (A synopsis of the drama appears in Section 1.6.2.)

1.5.3 Robert Pearce

In contrast to the work of the other two writers chosen for this study, Robert Pearce's work has not had the same public success as that of Small and Snyders. Pearce's unsuccessful efforts to get his work published can possibly be linked to the reduced demand for literature in Afrikaans. Some of Pearce's poetry has been published in South Africa and in the Netherlands, but it has not been included in any South African anthologies. Some examples are 'Lied vir Azania / Suid Afrika' and 'Stil Naweek' published in *Concept* (Pearce 1993:124) and 'Dood van Skrywers' published in *Concept* (Pearce 1995:78). Pearce has also written quite a few dramas which, although they are unpublished, have been registered at Dalro. Some of these dramas are *From Hippie to Normal* (1977a), *Die Dronkies* (1977b), *Die 'Meeting' oftewel Vergadering* (1980), *In Glass Houses* (1985a), *Die Ontwortelde Boemelaars* (1985b), *Die Highbucksbende* (1987a), *Till death do us part* (1987b), *Ons vir jou Azania* (1988a) and *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b).

His drama *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (Pearce 1988b) was chosen for the purposes of this dissertation, because it depicts the adversity and misfortune brought about by forced removals in accordance with The Group Areas Act.

1.6 SYNOPSES OF THE SELECTED DRAMAS

Synopses of the selected dramas are presented below to relate the general content of the selected plays, especially since the texts are not freely available, particularly Pearce's work. It is hoped that the inclusion of such summaries of the plays will facilitate the comprehension of the story line which will, in turn, provide a basis for the discussion of the various facets of meaning that may be encountered in the texts in later chapters. No attempt is made to evoke preconceived 'meaning', nor is it the intention to advance any contrived semiotic notions at this stage of the study.

1.6.1 Adam Small's *Joanie Galant-hulle*

Joanie Galant-hulle (Small 1978) depicts the displacement of Joanie Galant and her family from their home in Woodstock, because it is proclaimed a 'White area'. Her mother dies before the move, but her brother Davy goes with Joanie and her husband. They are then housed in a municipal council flat on the Cape Flats in an area where poverty and crime are rampant. Here, Joanie's husband Joseph is waylaid on the way home from work one Friday evening. He is robbed and beaten up by 'skollies'¹⁷ (crooks or gangsters), leaving him with a permanent limp. He also loses the sight of one eye. Joseph loses his job as a result of his injuries, and the family are evicted from their flat because they cannot afford the rent. They finally end up 'squatting' in the bush.

Their eviction from Woodstock has a detrimental effect on the entire family. They are plagued by one misfortune after another. Joanie's mother dies of a broken heart six months after they receive the letter of eviction. After moving to the 'council flat', Joseph is reduced from a self-confident artisan to a disabled person who is unemployed. The eviction from both their home in Woodstock and later from their council flat affects Joanie's brother, Davy, so negatively that he leaves school, finds a menial job, and eventually becomes an unemployed drunkard.

¹⁷ A full explanation of the term 'skollies' is given in Section 3.2.1.3.

They are forced to build a shack in the bush, and are once again attacked by gangsters, who break down the door of their shack. Joanie's pregnancy barely saves her from being gang-raped. Joanie gives birth to Maggie in the camp, but the poverty and squalor in which they are trapped finally claim the life of two-year-old Maggie. The child becomes ill and dies because they cannot afford a doctor. The death of the child is the final event that drives Joanie beyond the brink of sanity. She refuses for days to let the child be taken for burial. Joanie is eventually institutionalised.

The Galant family is reduced from a happy middle-class family to an impoverished, fragmented 'squatter' family. Their trials and tribulations are compounded by the insensitivity around them, and their constant fear and helplessness. The two remaining family members, Joseph and Davy, take to wandering around aimlessly, having totally lost their self-worth and identity.

1.6.2 Peter Snyders's *Political Joke*

The play *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983) focuses on a number of characters who frequent a *shebeen*,¹⁸ or what could be referred to as a 'drinking house'. The place belongs to Antie [aunty] Rosie, who in the opening scene receives Ralph and Sammy as 'guests' who have come to purchase and consume a bottle of wine.

While they drink the wine, they indulge in what seems to be harmless conversation. Ralph makes a racist joke, which then inspires Sammy to tell a joke about five men from different ethnic groups sitting around a table. While attempting to describe the five men, Sammy uses what Ralph classes as 'derogatory' descriptions. From this point onwards, all the other characters in the play (Sally, Budget, Whitey and Vincent), who are incidentally there to buy or consume liquor, are drawn into the conversation.

The conversation which ensues is political, but also includes socio-economic issues. Sammy tries in vain to complete the joke – each time he continues, he uses a 'derogatory'

¹⁸ Irish/Scottish word for a house where illicit liquor can be bought and consumed, incorporated into township jargon in South Africa.

term. It is interesting to note that Ralph, who is so particular about rejecting derogatory remarks, tells a derogatory joke himself, which in fact incites Sammy to begin the joke about the five men. Sammy's joke remains incomplete, and the play ends with a derogatory term. The drama reveals the various problems and constraints that the characters encounter in the course of their daily lives.

1.6.3 Robert Pearce's *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad*

Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad (Pearce 1988b) portrays the 1976 eviction of the remaining 'coloured', Indian and Chinese people in Marabastad, a multiracial urban area bordering central Pretoria. By the evening depicted in the play, most of the inhabitants had already moved to the new group areas voluntarily.

The Blacks were moved first (around 1950), while the rest of the people living there were moved by 1975. The Blacks were relocated to Atteridgeville and Mamelodi, while the 'coloureds', Indians and Chinese were relocated to Eersterust, Laudium and Claremont respectively. The geographic locations of all these 'townships' were a considerable distance from the central Pretoria business district.

The play centres on the protagonist, Bobby Lewis, who refuses to conform to government pressure, even after his parents, wife and children have left. He adamantly rejects the government's decree to vacate the area, and chooses to remain there until the bulldozers arrive.

The play is a monologue which depicts the final evening (New Year's Eve), before Marabastad is bulldozed to the ground. Bobby decides to prepare a 'Last Supper' to commemorate the occasion. While preparing the meal, he relives the good and the bad memories amassed in Marabastad. The playwright uses a series of flashbacks to recollect the events that took place. At times Bobby is tempted to join his family and friends, but he always ends up resolutely resisting and defying the decree.

At the end of the play, the bulldozers topple the house while Bobby is still inside it. Bobby

loses his life because he refuses to be relocated.

1.7 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Designated aspects of Lotman's theory are represented and incorporated into each chapter and applied to various sections of the texts of the selected dramas with the aim of examining whether these aspects occur in all three dramas, and also to observe whether the application of Lotman's theory supplements or enhances existing methods of interpretation, or whether it provides an additional avenue for interpreting meaning in 'coloured' literature. The different observations are compared and contrasted after applying Lotman's theory to record the similarities and differences between the selected dramas.

A breakdown of the contents of each chapter of the study is set out below.

1.7.1 Chapter One: *'Coloured' literature and semiotics: Introduction*

The first chapter is a brief introduction to 'coloured' literature, semiotics and the theories of Jurij Lotman. The objective of this chapter is to outline the background concerning the terms 'coloured' and 'coloured literature', and to explain the general concept of semiotics. The chapter also briefly describes the specific semiotic theories of Lotman that have been chosen for this study and the questions that were posed in the study to extract meaning in the selected literature. A brief overview of the *oeuvre* of the designated 'coloured' writers is provided, as well as synopses of the three chosen dramas.

1.7.2 Chapter Two: *Poetic language in 'coloured' literature*

The second chapter distinguishes between poetic and natural language. Poetic language, which is characterised by a complex organisation of elements of meaning known as code systems, and found, for example, at the phonological, rhythmic, graphic, syntactic, lexical and semantic levels of a poetic text, is examined in the selected texts, accompanied by a

discussion of the contribution of these code systems toward the meaning in the selected texts. Lotman believes that meaning is not only found in the underlying deep structure of the text; hence, the surface structure of the text is also examined.

1.7.3 Chapter Three: *Iconicity in 'coloured' literature*

The discussion in Chapter Two serves as an introduction to Lotman's notion of iconicity in Chapter Three. This complex theory is applied to the selected texts with the objective of verifying the manner in which the iconicity emulates reality, and also its value in determining meaning, expectation and deviation from the expected meaning if and when it occurs.

1.7.4 Chapter Four: *The aesthetics of identity and opposition*

Chapter Four examines Lotman's theory regarding the aesthetics of identity and opposition, which emanates from his notion of iconicity. The theory is applied to the selected literature in order to examine the methods used by the writers to manipulate the language, devices and codes, either to comply with or to contradict the reader's expectations in the text. The examination also scrutinises Lotman's theory to see whether the elements mentioned (language, devices and codes) affect and are affected by each other in the selected texts through manipulation, to produce maximum information.

1.7.5 Chapter Five: *Extra-text – culture – code*

In Chapter Five, Lotman's distinction between text and extra-text is examined and applied to the selected texts. This theory, which is closely linked to his theory concerning the aesthetics of identity and opposition (and includes aspects such as literary tradition and the ideological or historical framework of a work), provides an opportunity to examine the particular qualities of the text as sign and also the nature of the relation of the sign to the wider cultural and sociological extra-text. This chapter also discusses the relationship

between the extra-text, culture and code as they appear in the selected examples of ‘coloured’ literature and the manner in which these elements affect and elicit meaning in the various texts.

1.7.6 Chapter Six: Conclusion

Chapter Six consolidates the discussion of the semiotic theories of Lotman that have been applied to the selected texts, and evaluates the conclusions reached by the semiotic analyses. The main objective of this chapter is to ascertain whether the analyses have been useful in locating, correlating and enhancing meaning in ‘coloured’ literature. Limitations of the study are pointed out and suggestions for further research are made.

1.8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study aspires to introduce an additional method of analysing meaning in ‘coloured’ literature by semiotically examining, categorising and systematising the meaning in three texts.

The main objective of this study is to open up new avenues of evaluation, which may prove to be beneficial not only in the interpretation of meaning in ‘coloured’ literature, but also advantageous in the sense that they will enable the criticism to be assimilated and merged with other existing methods of interpretation. It is further hoped that these new approaches will help to construct an optimum way of reading ‘coloured’ literature. A quotation by Hawkes (Elam 1980:3) is pertinent because it aptly underscores the points made:

...we are living in a time of rapid and radical social change. It is much less easy to grasp the fact that such change will inevitably affect the nature of those disciplines that both reflect our society and help to shape it. ... Modes and categories inherited from the past no longer seem to fit the reality experienced by a new generation ... [we should] ... seek to encourage rather than resist the process of change, to stretch rather than reinforce the boundaries that currently define literature and its academic study.

CHAPTER 2

POETIC LANGUAGE IN ‘COLOURED’ LITERATURE

2.1 LANGUAGE USAGE IN THE SELECTED DRAMAS

Semiotically, the term ‘language’ is seen by Lotman (1977:8) as ‘any communication system employing signs which are ordered in a particular manner’. According to Lotman (1977:7,8), every language uses signs which constitute its vocabulary. These signs form a hierarchical structure which, in turn, governs the rules for their combination.

Lotman’s (1977:9) concept of language is thus grounded in Saussurean semiotics. However, Lotman rejects equating the word or symbol with a thing or referent in favour of a sign, a combination of a signifier (in other words, the written or spoken ‘mark’), and the signified (the concept, the thought when the mark is made). Raman Selden (1985:53) explains Lotman’s idea as follows:

The elements of a language acquire meaning not as a result of some connection between words and things, but only as parts of a system of relations.

Saussure’s distinction between *langue* (the shared, pre-existing language *system* which speakers unconsciously draw upon) and *parole* (the individual *utterance*) is thus the essential linguistic basis for Lotman’s concept of language and indeed for ‘all later structuralism theories’ (Selden 1985:53).

Building on Saussurean semiotics, Lotman’s concept of language is grounded in the notions of *langue* on the one hand and a system of relations on the other. It encompasses three aspects, namely, ‘natural languages’ (for example, English and Afrikaans), ‘artificial languages’ (such as the language of science and conventional signs like road signs), and ‘secondary languages’ (secondary modelling systems constructed on the model of a natural

language). For the purposes of the examination of selected texts in this study, attention is focused mainly on natural language and a secondary modelling system (comprising the ‘poetic’ text) which operates on natural language.

The selected dramas employ a form of Afrikaans (referred to in this study as *original* Afrikaans) which not only deviates from *standard* Afrikaans, but is often juxtaposed to it. This phenomenon illustrates the application of a secondary modelling system (*original* Afrikaans) operating on the primary or ‘natural’ system (*standard* Afrikaans), mentioned above. It also suggests two intended groups of recipients – speakers of *standard* Afrikaans, and ‘coloured’ people who are conversant with both dialects of Afrikaans (*standard* and *original*). This supposition concerning the two groups of recipients is confirmed by Small (1978:5) in his dedication in *Joanie Galant-hulle*:

Ek dra “Joanie Galant-hulle” op aan twee groepe mense: die duisende ontworteldes van die Kaapse Vlakte; en, dan, die mense ‘aan die ander kant’ wat min en selfs niks weet van die lyding van dié ontworteldes.

[*Joanie Galant-hulle* is dedicated to two groups of people – the thousands of uprooted people of the Cape Flats, and also the people ‘on the other side’ who know little or even nothing about the suffering of these uprooted ones.]

In the above quotation, Small is referring to the ‘coloured’ people of the Cape who were forcibly removed from their original homes during the apartheid era, and relocated to the Cape Flats. The people ‘on the other side’ are in effect all those (particularly Whites) who either did not know the amount of anguish suffered by the uprooted ‘coloured’ people, or did know but did not care. It is interesting to note that the dedication is written in *standard* Afrikaans, which implies that Small assumes that ‘coloured’ people understand both dialects of Afrikaans. This assumption by Small is most probably based on the fact that ‘coloured’ people are exposed to both varieties of Afrikaans – the form that is compulsory in school (*standard* Afrikaans) and *original* Afrikaans, which is used in their daily discourse.

Pearce makes a similar dedication in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b:1). Although Snyders does not dedicate *Political Joke* (1983) to anyone in particular, his

system of language reveals a particular system of meaning: one that is common to the so-called ‘coloured’ people, which, in turn, implies his intended audience, an audience familiar with the two language systems. More interesting in the context of the present study is the fact that Small, Snyders and Pearce employ *standard* Afrikaans for the didascalia and *original* Afrikaans for the discourse of the characters in the three selected dramas. (This point is discussed in more detail in Section 2.3.2.1.)

2.2 POETIC LANGUAGE

Lotman (1976:132,133) views the poetic text as a ‘powerful and deeply dialectical mechanism’ that comes into effect ‘when it enters into conflict with the automatism¹⁹ of language’. In other words, the divergence from and projection of poetic language on natural language becomes a source of artistic effect. According to Lotman, natural language provides a primary modelling system on which a secondary modelling system of poetic language operates. Lotman (1977:35) summarises this notion as follows:

A secondary modeling system is a structure based on a natural language. ... Meanings in this secondary system can be formed according to the means inherent to natural languages or through means employed in other semiotic systems.

In other words, poetic language uses the various functions and rules of natural language, but adds several diverse and unique features to these functions and rules to supplement or to change meaning in the text. Lotman (1977:53) explains:

The text is divided into subtexts (the phonological level, the grammatical level, and so on) each of which can be viewed as an independently organized text. Structural relations between these levels become a specification of the text as a whole. It is these stable bonds (within each level and between levels) which give the text the quality of an invariant. Functioning in its social environment, a text has a tendency to break up into variants.

¹⁹ Lotman defines the automatism of language as ‘those structural regularities lacking alternatives in natural language’ (Lotman 1976:133).

Simplified, this means that the structural relations at these levels (for example, at the syntactic and lexical levels of natural language) serve to stabilise the text by providing the text with a structure of elements that are both ideal and meaningful. When these structures deviate from an expected norm, for instance, an expected genre, rules of a language or code, *variants* are created and these phenomena are seen by Lotman as poetic devices which have an artistic effect on the text and its reception. For example, in social circles where *standard* Afrikaans is the accepted norm, the use of *original* Afrikaans would immediately be classified as deviant, or in Lotman's terms – as a variant – and thus as poetic language.

The variance in language usage (*original* Afrikaans) as it appears in the selected dramas could be a hindrance to both *standard* Afrikaans-speaking and *original* Afrikaans-speaking audiences or readers owing to spelling or pronunciation, but as will be seen in the discussion below (Section 2.3) these devices in a text provide a source of artistic effect.

The choice made by Small, Snyders and Pearce to use *original* Afrikaans as part of their dramatic discourse not only creates deviance within the genre of drama, but also variance in the language. Lotman regards a writer's choice of genre and style as part of the writer's attempt to reach a particular reader (in this discussion the term 'reader' should be seen as synonymous with 'audience'). According to Lotman (1977:18), this preference automatically includes a specific language which is usually 'made' in accordance with the intended message and recipient:

When a writer chooses a certain genre, style or artistic school, he is also choosing the language in which he intends to address the reader. This language enters into the complex hierarchy of the artistic languages of a given epoch, a given culture, a given people, or a given humanity (in the end, the question must be posed in this fashion too).

This also implies that any deviation inscribed by the writer while using the language (whether intentional or otherwise) is considered 'artistic' by Lotman. The choice of 'natural' or 'secondary' language inevitably contains cultural ties to a specific group of people. These ties should always be considered when reading such texts, because the relation of the device to the text, the text to the 'natural' or 'secondary' language, and this

language system to the culture of the given people is uniquely connected and interrelated, and is vital in an attempt to assign meaning to the text.

2.3 DEVICES IN ‘COLOURED’ LITERATURE

Lotman (1977:95) insists that the

artistic effect of a “device” is always a relation (for example, the relation of a text to a reader’s expectations, the aesthetic norms of an epoch, the customary plot or clichés of other types, rules of genres, and so on).

When the expectations created by a text are subverted, the effect of a device in the text becomes the focal point and the source of artistic effect. But merely detecting a device or examining the device outside the organic unity of a text is regarded by Lotman (1977:95) as a valueless exercise, because only within the confines of a text can the purpose of the device be explained in relation to the text and the language code(s) used.

In the selected texts, there are numerous devices which defamiliarise the text in terms of the conventional expectations regarding the norms and rules of *standard* Afrikaans. Most of these variants are used mainly by ‘coloured’ people when they speak Afrikaans, and similar variants are examined by Hendricks (1978) in his synchronic-diachronic study of the Afrikaans used in Small’s (1965) drama *Kanna Hy Kô Huietoe*. Although Hendricks examines the occurrence of these variants in detail, his findings are primarily focused on linguistic aspects. Unlike Hendricks’s examination, this study concentrates on the broader semiotic aspect, emphasising the meaning and the change in meaning that these devices produce. In other words, although some of the findings in the examination of the surface structure of the texts may appear similar to those made by Hendricks (mainly linguistic), the focus here is on the devices that are employed, the reason for the deployment of these specific devices (lexical and syntactic), and the meaning that they produce.

In addition to an examination of the deployment of devices in the texts, the texts are also scrutinised for commonality and differences in Section 2.3.1. Examples that confirm the existence of these devices are extracted from the beginning, the middle and the end of each

drama to demonstrate the consistency or variation of these devices and the manner in which the devices are used by the three authors (Sections 2.3.1.1 to 2.3.1.3).

2.3.1 Lexical devices

Original Afrikaans contains an assortment of elisions and addenda which appear to have been foregrounded by Small, Snyders and Pearce in the selected dramas and are juxtaposed to the *standard* Afrikaans in the same texts. These elisions and addenda, which occur in all three dramas, differ slightly from one another. The differences can probably be attributed to the locality or setting of the plays (Small and Snyders are from and write about the Western Cape, while Pearce is from and writes about Gauteng), the age of the writers (all three writers began to write in different decades, which can be argued to have had an impact on their writing style), or the systematisation²⁰ of the deviance from *standard* Afrikaans by the respective writers. Some of these differences are examined in the course of the discussion below.

2.3.1.1 Lexical elisions

Three forms of elision, namely *aphaeresis*, *syncope* and *apocope*, are an integral part of the code that all three writers employ. *Aphaeresis*, which refers to the dropping of an initial letter or syllable, is apparent in all three dramas. An example is the use of ‘is’ instead of ‘dis’²¹ [it is / it’s]. In Small’s (1978:17) drama, the two forms are juxtaposed (bold is used to highlight the specific words under discussion):

JOANIE: **’Is** ’n lang tyd ... [It is (It’s) a long time ...]

JOSEPH: **Dis** ’n lang tyd, ja. [It is (It’s) a long time, yes.]

²⁰ The term ‘systematisation’ is derived from ‘systematise’ and means ‘arrange in a well-organised system’ (Hornby 1989:1305). All the descriptions and explanations of the English terms used in this study have been cross-referenced with *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1989) prepared by J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner (Volumes I - XX).

²¹ ‘Dis’ is itself an example in *standard* Afrikaans of *syncope*, shortening ‘Dit is’.

Most of Snyders's characters in *Political Joke* (1983) also use this particular form of elision. For instance, Rosie uses it when she speaks to Sammy²² and to Budget²³. Other characters that use this elision are Ralph²⁴ and Sammy²⁵. This type of *aphaeresis* also appears in *Kanna Hy Kô Huistoe* (Small 1965)²⁶, and it is interesting to note that it has become so entrenched that almost 25 years later, Pearce's character Bobby (Pearce 1988b:3) also uses the same *aphaeresis*, as can be seen in the following extract:

... **Is** 'n pity ou Michelle en Mummy-hulle kan nou nie hier wees om my stew te proe nie. ... **Is** 'n regte pity dat hulle gewaai het.

[... It's a pity that Michelle, Mummy and the family can't be here to taste my stew ... it's a real pity that they left.]

There is no apparent reason for the use of this elision, except that it represents an abbreviated form of speech, and has become everyday usage in the colloquial discourse of 'coloured' people.

Another form of elision that is commonly used is *syncope*, which is the shortening of a word by the omission of one or more letters (usually vowels) or syllables in the middle of the word. This elision is common in the dramas of both Small and Snyders, but not in Pearce's play. Small's characters frequently join two words, simultaneously dropping one or more letters: '... ek **wil't** nie ...' for 'ek wil dit nie' [I do not want to] (Small 1978:14); '... **Wat's'it** met jou, ...' for 'wat is dit' [literally, 'what is it' (with you), or 'what is wrong with you'] (Small 1978:17); and '... maar toe mis **ons't** net' for 'ons dit' [we (just missed) it] (Small 1978:34).

Snyders's characters use the same form of elision: '... ons wiet **djy't** baie swaar gekry ...' for 'jy het' [you have (suffered)] (Snyders 1983:5); '... Nou, **watsit?** ...' for 'wat is dit' [what is it?] (Snyders 1983:6); and '**Wiesit** ...?' for 'Wie is dit?' [Who is it?] (Snyders

²² ROSIE: **Is** béd vir business. (Snyders 1983:9)

²³ ROSIE: (*op*) Oe, **is** djy BUDGET. (Snyders 1983:16)

²⁴ RALPH: (*klap sy hand op die tafel*) **Is** stupid remarks soes dit (Snyders 1983:29)

²⁵ SAMMY: (*baie bekommerd*) Hel, **is** fokken gevaarlik om 'n joke te vertel. (Snyders 1983:32)

²⁶ Makiet: Roeslyn! **Is** Kietie, Roeslyn! (Small 1965:21-23)

1983:8). It is perhaps worth noting that Snyders has deleted the punctuation which indicates the dropping of an initial letter or syllable (for example, ‘watsit’ for ‘wat’s’it’), and that this type of elision used by Small and Snyders is not used by Pearce’s character Bobby. It can be argued that Snyders regards the systematisation as evidence of current usage, or else he could be openly defying convention. Pearce, on the other hand, could have omitted the use of this form of elision in oversight, but it is more likely that his choice is evidence of either the strong academic influence of *standard* Afrikaans on Pearce’s use of Afrikaans or regional differences with regard to ‘coloured’ usage of this form.

Apocope, which involves dropping the last letter or syllable of a word, is also used in the discourse of both Small and Snyders’s characters. For example, the word ‘kô’²⁷ is used instead of ‘kom’ [come] by Small and ‘hoekô’ is used instead of ‘hoekom’ [why] by Snyders.²⁸ This elision is likewise not used by Pearce’s character, Bobby, probably for the same reasons as those mentioned above.

Once again, the reasons for the use of this elision are the conveniently abbreviated form of speech, or the rhythm of the word in relation to the other words in the same sentence. This point is explained by Small (1965:5) in his foreword in *Kanna Hy Kô Hystoe*, where *syncope* and *apocope* operate concurrently:

Die titel van die stuk, “Kanna Hy Kô Hystoe”, moet ietwat vinnig uitgespreek word sodat die ritmiese effek van die opeenvolgende K-H-K-H tot sy reg kan kom.

[The title of the drama, *Kanna Hy Kô Hystoe*, must be articulated somewhat quickly in order for the rhythm of the consecutive sounds of the title (K-H-K-H) to take effect.]

In fact, all the lexical elisions discussed above seem to reveal both phonologically (sound, in the case of pronunciation) and grammatically deviant tendencies. This means that Lotman’s (1977:53) explanation is applicable, and these lexical elisions can be regarded as ‘variants’, because they deviate from the conventional grammatical structures of *standard*

27 JOANIE: (Stem.) Dis die removal-mense! Kô, help! (Small 1978:37)

28 RALPH: ... Maar hoekô gaat klop jy nie aan die dominee se deur nie? (Snyders 1983:14)

Afrikaans and also function in a particular ('coloured') social environment. This characteristic is also discernable in the following discussion concerning *lexical addenda*.

2.3.1.2 *Lexical addenda*

In the selected texts, addenda such as *epenthesis* and *paragoge*s are part of the discourse of most of the characters. As with forms of *elision*, *epenthesis* (the insertion of a letter or sound within a word) is more apparent in the works of Small and Snyders than in the work of Pearce. An example in *Political Joke* (1983) is the word 'versigtaggies' [carefully] (Snyders 1983:4). This *epenthesis* is used by Ralph when telling a joke about a farmer and his farm worker, Jonas. The *standard* Afrikaans word is 'versigtig', but Ralph adds a diminutive form to the word in order to stress the level of caution exercised by Jonas. Another type of *epenthesis* appears in the word 'spieële-kas' [dressing-table] (Small 1983:7), used by Davy. If he were using *standard* Afrikaans, the word that Davy should use is 'spieël-kas'. There are no logical reasons for the inclusion of these addenda; however, this usage lends authenticity to the text by employing a lexical form peculiar to the secondary model or language system. Another possibility is that Davy uses a deviant plural of 'spieël' [mirror], 'spieële' [mirrors] (the *standard* Afrikaans plural is 'spieëls'), because many dressing tables contain three mirrors – one large fixed mirror and two smaller adjustable mirrors.

The influence of English is particularly apparent in the *paragoge*s (the addition of a letter or syllable to a word, for example, affixes in the form of prefixes and suffixes), which appear in the texts of the three dramas. These addenda, which are abundant in the selected literature, deviate from the *standard* Afrikaans, in the sense that they constitute words which have English roots and Afrikaans affixes, as illustrated below. The root holds the fundamental meaning, while the affix indicates the tense or number of the word. Other modifications also include the formation of new compound words by combining or joining an English word with an Afrikaans word. This type of deviation from *standard* Afrikaans can be traced as far back as Small's *Kitaar my Kruis* (1961), where the writer uses phrases such as 'djy moet djou aeroplane-motorkar' [you with your aeroplane-motorcar] in a poem

entitled ‘Doemanie’ [*standard* Afrikaans translation – Dominee, English translation – Minister].

A few of these *paragoges* are identified below as an introduction to a more detailed examination of the mixing of language codes which follows in Section 2.3.2. In order to differentiate between the English words and the Afrikaans affixes, the English words are printed in bold. Examples of these addenda in Small’s drama are the following: ‘yt-ge**check**’ [checked it out] (Small 1978:14), ‘in-ge**force**’ [forced in] (Small 1978:29), ‘toe-ge**bandage**’ [bandaged] (Small 1978:30) and ‘ge-**report**’ [reported] (Small 1978:67). An example of the formation of a compound word, by combining an English and an Afrikaans word, is the word ‘**bicycle**-kettings’ [bicycle-chains] (Small 1978:44).

Similar addenda used by Snyders’s characters are: ‘get**ryn**’ [trained] (Snyders 1983:4), ‘get**errorise**’ [terrorised] (Snyders 1983:38) and ‘ge-**use**’ [used] (Snyders 1983:65). An example of a compound word is the word ‘**non**-kant’²⁹ [non-white side] (Snyders 1983:43). A special feature of the word ‘**non**-kant’ is that it could also imply a pun, especially when it is directly translated, for example, ‘non-side’, in other words, neither one nor the other when reference is made to Black and White, or as a play on the *standard* Afrikaans word ‘onkant’ [off-side].

Pearce’s character also uses the same types of addenda, for example, ‘ge-**sign**’ [signed] (Pearce 1988b:2), ‘ge-**influence**’ [influenced] (Pearce 1988b:10), ‘ge-**destroy**’ [destroyed] (Pearce 1988b:17) and ‘**naggery**’ [nagging] (Pearce 1988b:9). An example of a compound word is ‘Pilchards-kerrie’ [Pilchard curry] (Pearce 1988b:3).

Once again, it is interesting to note that these addenda, which are used by all three writers, are not punctuated uniformly. Some of the addenda are hyphenated, while others are not. Perhaps the consistency of the manner in which these addenda are written is not a fundamental issue. The fact that all three writers make use of the deviance is more important, particularly in the light of the present argument. In other words, what is

29 Here the word ‘non-kant’ represents the phrase ‘non-white side’. The word ‘non-white’ is a remnant from the apartheid era and it was used to distinguish and separate Blacks from Whites.

important is the fact that the above-mentioned devices represent the cornerstone of a specific language code – *original* Afrikaans.

Arguably, another noticeable aspect of this language system is the lexical device of vulgarism.

2.3.1.3 *Vulgarism as a lexical device*

Vulgarism is common in all languages, and can often be classified, up to a point, as synonymous with colloquialisms. Authors tend to avoid vulgarisms in formal contexts because vulgarisms are generally regarded as unacceptable. However, in the selected texts, Small, Snyders and Pearce have inserted some words, phrases and expressions that would be classified as rude in polite circles. This could indicate that these vulgarisms have been included to serve a specific purpose, for instance, to add to the characterisation, to simulate authenticity, or to capture local flavour. Also, vulgarisms could be deployed to signify emotional outbursts or to represent a variety of new meanings. Nonetheless, it should be noted that ‘coloured’ people do not use obscenities as a matter of course when they speak or converse. In fact, Joanie in Small’s (1978:53) play objects to her brother’s use of crude language. She constantly reproaches Davy about his language – her morality has been instilled in her by her mother. In *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978), none of the protagonists (Joanie, Davy or Joseph) use obscenities while they live in Woodstock (Small 1978: 14-18). They only begin to use such language after the death of Joanie’s mother when they are evicted and forced to move – first to a Council flat and then to a shanty.

To illustrate some of the contexts mentioned above, a selection of obscenities is examined to elicit the projected emotive meaning.

In the three selected dramas, vulgarisms are abundant and are an integral part of the utterances of most of the characters. These vulgarisms generally have conventional meanings and can be understood by the majority of Afrikaans-speaking people, but a number of the vulgarisms are doubly deviant in the sense that they are socially unacceptable on the one hand, but also defamiliarise conventional denotations on the other.

These vulgarisms are used as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs and are deployed to intensify various emotional outbursts. To avoid a lengthy discussion, only three of the many vulgarisms encountered have been chosen for discussion, namely the word ‘kak’ [excrement], the word ‘bastard’ and the word ‘fokken’, which is derived from the English word ‘fucking’ (literally ‘copulation’, but generally used as an expletive).

The Afrikaans vulgarism ‘kak’, which conventionally signifies human excrement, is used in a variety of situations in all three plays. Although the usage varies according to the situation and the context, the term does not carry its literal meaning. In *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983:9), for instance, Sammy uses this word (vulgarism bolded) when he chides Sally for her insensitivity:

SAMMY: Wát? Moet d jy nie oek jou **kak** start nie.

[What? Don't you also start with your nonsense.]

The word ‘kak’ is used in place of the noun ‘nonsense’, but could also mean irritating foolishness, silliness or absurdity. Another example is where Sammy (Snyders 1983:53) agrees with Sally after a discussion about laws and justice:

SAMMY: Sy's reg; ons word al weer 'n klomp **kak** ingedja.

[She's right. We are being fed a lot of lies again.]

Here, Sammy uses the vulgarism as a noun, to suggest that they are being (politically) indoctrinated and forced to accept a lot of lies.

Two further examples of the above vulgarism are used by Bobby in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b). The first instance is where he comments angrily (Pearce 1988b:4):

BOBBY: ... Daarvoor gaan hulle nog **kak** die honde! ...

[... For that, they are going to pay, those dogs! ...]

Projecting future political repercussions, Bobby angrily warns the government that they are some day going to pay for uprooting ‘coloured’ families. The word ‘kak’ is used as a verb in place of the word ‘betaal’ [pay]. What is implied is that the government will pay heavily for the injustice. The second instance is similar; it is where Bobby (Pearce 1988b:18) remonstrates against the harsh decree of the government:

BOBBY: ... Die Government kan gaan **kak** vir my part ...

[... The Government can go to blazes for all I care ...]

Bobby defiantly refuses to move from Marabastad, and bids the government to ‘go to blazes’. In this instance, the word ‘kak’ is used as a highly emotive verb following the modal auxiliary ‘kan gaan’ [can go] indicative of wishing that those in power will rot in the fires of hell.

Small’s character Joanie in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:36) uses the word ‘stront’ which is a synonym of the word of ‘kak’, but has the same conventional meaning in Afrikaans:

JOANIE: Freedom?! Aag, julle praat net, Bliksems! Práát net ... Grand woorde ... Maar **stront** ...

[Freedom?! Aah, you are just talking, you Blighters! Just talking ... Grand words ... But nonsense ...]

The word ‘stront’ in this utterance is used to emphasise the fact that the concept of freedom is, for her people, meaningless and empty. Joanie uses the word ‘stront’ in conjunction with the vulgarity ‘Bliksems’ [blighters, lowly, immoral people] to describe ‘coloured’ people who collaborate with the Whites to persecute ‘fellow-coloureds’ while they do not enjoy freedom themselves. Joanie’s brother Davy also uses the word ‘stronte’ (Small 1978:53) which is the plural of ‘stront’, when referring to the police, who are useless, in his opinion, because they are never there when they are needed:

DAVY: (*Skel voort.*) Wanneer hulle daar móét wies, is hulle nêrens om te help nie ... **Stronte** ...

[(*Scolds on*) When they should be there to help, they can't be found ... filth ...]

In the following extract from Snyders's *Political Joke* (1983), the obscenity 'kak' is used to denote a specific feeling. Sammy (Snyders 1983:61) is devastated by Ralph's remark that 'coloured' people are regarded as the contemptible aftermath of immoral miscegenation according to the Population Register:

RALPH: Soe ons, die bruinmense, die reputed children of sin, according to die boeke, is die shocking, sordid product of immoral mixing. Hoe voel djy nou?

SAMMY: Lekker **kak**.

[RALPH: So we, the brown people, the reputed children of sin, according to the books, are the shocking, sordid product of immoral mixing. How do you feel now?

SAMMY: Very bad/disillusioned/frustrated/disappointed.]

Sammy's response is a mixture of dismay, frustration and disappointment, all conflated into one word – 'kak' – as the realisation is driven home. As can be gathered, the vulgarism 'kak' can denote an assortment of meanings, depending on the specific situation. This deviant vulgarism as a signifier can also denote a variety of other meanings (signifieds), such as feeling sick, sad, depressed, remorseful, regretful, disappointed, frustrated and disillusioned, to name but a few. The spelling of the word itself remains the same when it is used, but the meaning varies according to the situation. The grammatical form of the word obviously changes to suit the situation, and it can be used as an adjective, noun, verb or adverb, depending on the context.

Also in the above extract (Snyders 1983:61), another adverb 'lekker' (loosely translated above as 'very') is used as an oxymoron to intensify the adverb 'kak'. A direct English translation of the two juxtaposed words 'lekker kak' would be 'pretty shitty'. The

contradiction represented by these two words draws attention to Sammy's response which is a mixture of extreme frustration and bitter disappointment.

The second vulgarism to be discussed here is the word 'bastard', which is the English version of the Afrikaans word 'baster' and generally has the same conventional definition in both English and Afrikaans, namely an illegitimate person, half-caste or half-breed (Sykes 1982:73). In the *original* Afrikaans used by the characters in the selected dramas, this vulgarism generally describes people who are unscrupulous, wicked, corrupt or immoral.

In *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978), Davy frequently uses the vulgarism 'bastards'. He uses this word to refer to the people who evicted him from his home, namely the officials of the City Council, the 'skollies' who attack their shanty on the Cape Flats, and the 'haitie-taitie' (derivative from the English adjective *hoity-toity* or *high-and-mighty*) doctors who refused to come out when Joanie's daughter Maggie was seriously ill. The vulgarism is first used by Davy (Small 1978:18-19) to signify the unscrupulousness of the people responsible for the eviction notice:

DAVY: Toe het die brief gekom. (*Pause.*) **Bastards!**

[Then the letter came. (*Pause.*) Bastards!]

According to Davy, all the people involved are responsible, namely the government, the City Council and even the person who brought the letter. Davy (Small 1978:53) also uses the same vulgarism to allude to the 'skollies' who forcefully enter their shanty in the squatter camp:

DAVY: (*Sis deur sy tandes.*) Dis die skollies wat probeer inkom. ...

JOANIE: (*Selvs in hierdie omstandigheid is daar nog die ou moraliteit van 'Mama-hulle'.*) Davy, jy moenie vloek nie!

DAVY: (*Steur hom min.*) **Bastards!** Hulle's die hele plek vol ... Blêrrie Wittes wat ons hierso ingeprop het! Blêrrie skollies! Vuilgoed! Blêrrie municipality!

- [DAVY: (*Hissing through his teeth.*) It's the gangsters who are trying to get in ...
- JOANIE: (*Even in these circumstances the morality instilled by their mother still prevails.*) Davy, you mustn't swear!
- DAVY: (*ignores her*) Bastards! They're all over the place ... Bloody Whites that stuffed us in here! Bloody gangsters! Filth! Bloody municipality!]

Anyone even remotely involved in the destruction of his family and other 'coloured' families is regarded by Davy as a 'bastard'. This includes the unscrupulous officials (Small 1978:53) of the municipality who evicted them and thousands of others from their homes, the corrupt police (Small 1978:53) who fail to protect them from marauding gangsters, and the money-grubbing doctors (Small 1978:59) who demand payment before ministering to Joanie's daughter Maggie (who incidentally dies as a result of the doctors' refusal to respond). Davy also views the hoity-toity 'coloureds' (Small 1978:53) – who wittingly or unwittingly assist the government in degrading other less fortunate 'coloureds' – and the newspaper reporters (Small 1978:64) – who thrive on the misfortune of others for their stories – as 'bastards'.

Another vulgarity is also used in the above extract, which is derived from the English word 'bloody' ('blerrie'). This vulgarity is used in almost the same manner, namely to signify the apathy and indifference of the parties mentioned.

Bobby Lewis in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b) also uses the vulgarity 'bastards'. He not only uses it to refer to the government, the police, the army and the bulldozers, but also uses this swearword when referring to his family and friends. In the following extract (Pearce 1988b:13), Bobby refers to government officials and the police who dictatorially decide for the 'coloured' people:

- BOBBY: Hulle decide lank genoeg vir ons. (*In die stem van 'n outoritêre figuur*): “Julle Nie-Blankes mag net daar bly (*hy wys verhoog links*)...Julle mag net in daardie treine, taxis en busse ry” (*hy wys verhoog regs. In sy eie stem*): Asof ons **fokken** melaats het wat die Boere kan aansteek. Hulle is tot

in jou kooisake en wil jou vertel hoeveel kinders jy moet het,
die **bastards!**

[Too long have they decided for us. (*Using the voice of an authoritative figure*): “You Non-Whites may only live there (*indicating left of stage*) ... You may only ride in those trains, taxis and buses” (*indicating right of stage*). (*In his own voice*): As if we have incurable leprosy that will infect the Whites. They even interfere in your love-life and want to dictate how many children you should have, the bastards!]

In the above extract, Bobby takes on the role of spokesperson for the ‘coloured’ people. He is tired of being dictated to and wants to decide for himself. His anger and frustration are summed up in the word ‘bastards’ and are aimed at those in authority who are the cause of his annoyance. In the given excerpt, Bobby also uses another vulgarism ‘fokken’ [fucking], to express the intensity of his anger. The vulgarism, used as an adjective of contempt, foregrounds an irrational fear of disease in those that want separate amenities.

In the next extract, Bobby, using the same vulgarism ‘bastards’ (Pearce 1988b:23), challenges the City Council, the army, the police and the drivers of the bulldozers to attempt to destroy what he represents:

BOBBY: Dit sal meer as die Council, die Army, die Cops en bulldozers vat om Bobby Lewis te destroy. (*Hy gooi die leë whisky bottel na die denkbeeldige Stootskrapers*): **Bastards!** Ek is nog ek!

[It will take more than the Council, the army, the cops and the bulldozers to destroy Bobby Lewis. (*He throws the empty whisky bottle at the imaginary bulldozers*): Bastards! I am still Bobby Lewis!]

Bobby uses the vulgarism in contempt. He regards the destroyers of his home as the same people who have destroyed his way of life. It is ironic that these two above-mentioned characters (Davy and Bobby), who are ‘coloured’ and are regarded as ‘bastards’ or ‘bastards’ themselves, should refer to others as ‘bastards’. This clearly indicates a change in the signification. The word ‘bastards’ is thus commonly used by the characters in these extracts to chastise people who are despicable and cruel, who use their authority to degrade

and exploit others. The symbolism also includes people who abuse their positions for financial or social gratification at the expense of others.

The final vulgarism to be discussed (as already touched on) is the Afrikaans word ‘fokken’ which is a derivative of the English vulgarism ‘fucking’. Although the vulgarism is used by the many speakers of both *standard* and *original* Afrikaans, it does not appear in *standard* Afrikaans dictionaries such as the *HAT Verklarende Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* (Schoonees *et al.* 1976) or *Groot Woordeboek* (Kritzinger *et al.* 1970). This omission strengthens the argument in favour of its usage being mainly *original* Afrikaans. The English version of the word is defined in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Sykes 1982:397) as an act of copulation. In the selected literature, this form of abuse loses its carnal connotations and is used to intensify various statements. In most cases, it is used as an adjective or adverb. For example, in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:27), it is used as an intensifying adverb:

SKOLLIE: Oppas! Hy’s **fokken** sterk ... (*Gestoei.*)

[Watch it! He’s very strong ... (*Wrestling.*)]

The ‘skollies’ (gangsters) who have waylaid Joseph to rob him of his weekly wages admit that he is an extremely powerful opponent. In *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983:32), the same vulgarism is again used as an adverb in a similar way:

SAMMY: (*baie bekommerd*) Hel, is **fokken** gevaarlik om ’n joke te vertel.

[*(very worried)* Hell, it’s very dangerous to tell a joke.]

Sammy, who is attempting to tell a joke, is accused by Ralph of using derogatory language. After Ralph’s explanation of the trouble it can cause, Sammy is worried about the grave danger he faces and the consequences of telling a joke.

A different interpretation of the word is encountered in an extract from *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:29):

DAVY: ... **Fokken** skollies ...township ... (*Joanie kyk na hom. Hulle ry. Sy praat nie.*) **Fokken** Wittes wat ons hierso in-geforce 'it ...

[... Detestable gangsters ... township ... (*Joanie looks at him. They drive. She is quiet.*) Despicable Whites that forced us in here ...]

The above example occurs in a scene after Joseph has been brutally beaten by the gangsters. An ambulance transports Davy, Joanie and the critically injured Joseph to the hospital. Davy's distress and agitation are focused on the people responsible – the gangsters who pillage, steal and murder, and also the Whites who, according to Davy, are responsible for the predicament. The vulgarism above is used as an adjective to describe both the 'skollies' and the Whites as detestable and despicable, thus subtly conflating the two.

Bobby in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (Pearce 1988b:18) uses this vulgarism to refer to the government who, he feels, has destroyed not only his home, but also his marriage:

BOBBY: Against all odds en obstacles het ons tog 'n success van ons marriage gemaak en ge-prove dat 'skape en bokke tog meng'. Totdat die **fokken** Government dit kom destroy het.

[Against all odds and obstacles we still made a success of our marriage and proved that sheep and goats can mix. This was until the detestable government destroyed it.]

In the above extract, Bobby is referring to the fact that although his wife is classified as an Indian, their marriage, up to the enforcement of the Group Areas Act of 1950 (Footnote 5), had been a success. The 'odds and obstacles' which Bobby refers to include the laws which forbade mixed marriages (The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act and the Population Registration Act), which are discussed in Footnotes 5 and 6), and the social, political and religious restrictions which prevailed. Although Bobby's wife belonged to the Muslim faith and was classified as Indian, these obstacles did not deter Bobby and Michelle from marrying and starting a family. According to Bobby, the execution of the Group Areas Act

destroyed this relationship, because his wife chose to adhere to the decree and moved to Eersterust with his parents, while he resented and resisted it. Bobby's resentment against the government is emotively portrayed by the utterance 'fokken'.

There are also other variants of the above vulgarism which appear in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978) and in *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983). One of these variants is the word 'fokôl' which is used in place of the word 'niks' [nothing], to intensify the utterance. A typical example occurs in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978:55):

STEMME VAN DIE BENDE: Djulle kan **fokôl** maak, man!

[VOICES OF THE GANG: There's absolutely nothing you can do, man!]

The gang members use this vulgarism after breaking down the door of the Galant-family shack. The finality of the vulgarism heightens the impact of the incident, because the gang members revel in the vulnerability of the Galant family.

A similar intensity is portrayed in *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983:30). Ralph is lecturing Sammy about using the derogatory term 'whitey'. According to Ralph, Sammy's utterance confirms that Sammy not only shows contempt for the 'master race', but also spurns the electorate:

RALPH Nou wat bedoel dit? (*Deur sy tande.*) Dat dji contempt het vir die master race; dat dji **fokkol** van die electorate dink.

[Now what does that mean? (*Through his teeth.*) That you show contempt for the master race, and that you think nothing of the electorate.]

An interesting point is the variation in spelling. Small spells 'fokôl' with a circumflex, while Snyders doubles the 'k' ('fokkol'). The variation can be attributed to the fact that the code has not been fully systematised. Pearce does not use this particular form of the vulgarism in his play, despite its common currency.

The use of vulgarism in the selected literature not only conveys resentment for a specific situation, but also portrays the deterioration of moral values and the systematic disintegration of society.

Vulgarisms in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978) signify the systematic deterioration of an upper middle-class 'coloured' family to one that is forcibly reduced to poverty. The vulgarity marks the social disintegration of the family and also the community. There is a definite change in Joanie's character. In the chronological sequence of events, Joanie is initially depicted as shy and conservative. She constantly reprimands Davy for using bad language, but after they are evicted and have to face the trauma of being homeless and helpless, she gives in to using vulgarisms herself. These vulgarisms signify the change Davy and Joanie's personalities have undergone, and indicate the crudeness and coarseness of the lifestyle that they are forced to adopt. On the other hand, Joseph, who undergoes just as much anguish, does not resort to using vulgarisms. Perhaps this suggests that vulgarisms need not be used, because poor language is not the answer to the problems facing the Galant family or the 'coloured' community as a whole. In Joanie's case, her use of vulgarisms could be indicative of her deteriorating mental condition. Also, Davy drinks heavily, which could be the reason he succumbs to swearing.

The same deterioration is apparent in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b). Bobby curses and swears at the Whites, Blacks, Indians and also his own family and friends. Although he has evolved into a coarse nonconformist, his account of his background and family contradicts the apparent transformation. For instance, the contempt he displays towards the Indian shopkeepers who are allowed to keep their shops in Marabastad and the Indian truck owner who transports the possessions of the evicted 'coloured' people indicate the frustration of a victim rather than racial hatred. It could be that Bobby's character is meant to portray a microcosm of the community as a whole, but there are questions which hamper such an assumption, such as: Does Bobby use vulgarism when addressing his family? Does his family speak the same way? Do all 'coloured' people speak this way? Most probably not. There are really no suggestions in the texts that confirm or deny these assumptions. What can be considered is that the vulgarisms seem to introduce and portray a bolder person whose personality has been infused with defiance and resistance.

In *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983) the deterioration of ‘coloured’ society seems to be part of the *status quo*. The characters, who are placed in a setting where the apartheid laws are already embedded in what might be considered a cross-section of the ‘coloured’ community, are both racist and profane. All the characters who participate in the conversation, with the exception of Sally and Rosie, freely use vulgarisms. Sally, a teacher who is an alcoholic, surprisingly does not utter a single swear-word, nor does she mix the two language codes (English and Afrikaans). Rosie, who has to take care of business and is not really part of the conversation, takes on the role of matriarch and chastises the other characters when they resort to vulgarisms. Evidence of this is her warning to Sammy (Snyders 1983:9):

ROSIE: (*kwaad*) SAMMY! Djy moet daai mond van jou control.

[*(angry)* SAMMY! You must control that mouth of yours.]

In *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978), Joanie takes on this role and chides her brother Davy for swearing, but she also begins swearing. Bobby, on the other hand, because *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (Pearce 1988b) is a monologue, tries to keep himself in check. The explicit reminders to the characters not to use vulgarisms is perhaps a deliberate communiqué by the authors that not all ‘coloured’ people are profane, coarse or vulgar.

2.3.1.4 *Summative comments*

The use of the *aphaeresis* seems to be commonplace among all the characters of the various dramas. The occurrence of the same type of elision in all three dramas not only confirms the systematisation of the elision by the three respective writers, but also indicates a deliberate deviation from *standard* Afrikaans. This means that the elision can be classified as a semiotic sign, indicative of the manner in which the majority of the ‘coloured’ community speak Afrikaans.

As far as the other elisions (*syncope* and *apocope*) are concerned, there is a marked distinction between Small and Snyders’s characters as compared to Pearce’s character,

Bobby. Bobby uses neither *syncope* nor *apocope*, which either indicates that the influence of *standard* Afrikaans is greater in Gauteng than it is in the Cape, or that Pearce's personal preference and use of the dialect has affected his portrayal of his protagonist's character and language. It is also apparent that Small and Snyders's characters are all from the Western Cape, but there may be a difference in discourse which could accrue from the settings of the two plays. Small's characters are directly involved in the aftermath of the Group Areas Act, while Snyders's characters are a product of relocation and are residents of the Cape Flats.

The displacement of the 'coloured' people, which is a major theme in all three plays, seems to be the root of 'coloured' discontent, and the vulgarity employed by the characters presents a makeshift outlet through which their anger and frustration are unleashed. On the one hand, the vulgarisms seem to depict a coarseness which has become an integral part of 'coloured' ideology and discourse. On the other hand, the deviance highlights or foregrounds the adaptability and flexibility of *original* Afrikaans. This deduction is based on the ease with which *original* Afrikaans accommodates the vulgarisms. The same adjustability is not apparent in *standard* Afrikaans and is corroborated by the scarcity of meanings for the vulgarisms in *standard* Afrikaans dictionaries. If and when other individuals resort to using vulgarisms, it is a sign that these individuals have either intentionally adapted the deviant form of Afrikaans referred to in this study as *original* Afrikaans, or that they are unwittingly utilising this makeshift outlet to unleash anger or frustration.

In conclusion, the addenda, affixes and vulgarities which are employed by all three writers in the selected literature serve to strengthen the argument that, although the deviations have not always been systematised, there is an element of consistency. The above examples, which have been purposely extracted from the beginning, the middle and the end of each drama, demonstrate this consistency, the elements of which in turn verify that these lexical terms are not contrived, but are an integral part of the discourse of the characters.

Moreover, the lexical choices, in other words, the selection of elements from the secondary language system, express the dramatists' competence in handling the system. The speech (*parole*) of the characters in the three dramas not only presupposes a system (*langue*); the

actual selection of lexical elements within *la parole choisie* also reflects the particular syntagm.³⁰ These lexical choices are further enhanced by the discussion on devices used in a syntactic context in Section 2.3.2.

2.3.2 Devices used in a syntactic context

To augment the previous discussion which focused on lexical deviations in the form of elisions, addenda and vulgarisms, an examination of devices embedded in the syntax of the selected literature follows. For a clearer understanding of these devices used in a syntactic context, the term ‘syntax’ needs to be defined. Sykes (1982:1084) defines the word ‘syntax’ as an analysis of the grammatical arrangements of words in speech or writing to show their connection and relation and the set of rules governing this arrangement. When this set of rules is transgressed by placing words ‘with different meanings into a position of maximal equivalence’ (Lotman 1977: 165-166), the text can be said to be ‘poetic’. In semiotics, the selection and combination of these transgressions are closely scrutinised in order to evaluate their poetic meaning.

Because these poetic structures dominate much of the meaning in texts, some of these deviant syntactic constructs are examined in the selected dramas. An example of such structures is the mixing of two language codes, English and Afrikaans. Because these deviant structures are embedded in the texts in all three dramas, they are examined and discussed in Section 2.3.2.1 to ascertain whether they influence meaning. A series of deviant metaphoric and idiomatic expressions (which appear in the texts of the selected dramas) is also analysed and discussed in Section 2.3.2.2 for the same purpose.

30 Word or phrase forming a syntactic unit (Sykes 1982:1084)

2.3.2.1 *The mixing of language codes as a poetic device*

The mixing of language codes resonates with a notion postulated by Saussure, known in semiotics as *axes of relation* (Van Zyl 1982:68). According to Saussure, the axes of relation which are distinguished as *paradigmatic* (rules of selection) and *syntagmatic* (rules of combination) operate together to furnish conventional meaning in a sentence.

Lotman (1976:18), like Saussure, believes that all languages are organised along these two structural axes. To construct a conventional phrase or sentence in a given language, a selection of words has to be made from the existing vocabulary and strung together to denote or represent something specific. When this transpires, the ordering of the selection of language elements is perceived as *paradigmatic*. At the same time, the selected linguistic units have to form a ‘correct’ chain. In other words, the sentence must be constructed so that there is concord or agreement among the selected words in order for the utterance to be understood. When this is achieved, there is an ordering along the second structural axis, and this ordering is perceived as *syntagmatic*. Every linguistic utterance is ordered along these paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes and coincides with the rules of the selected language. When there is a discrepancy, the occurrence is regarded as deviant in semiotics.

Generally, the inclusion of a word from another language in a specific sentence of a given language presents a problem for a reader, because it comes into conflict with the ‘automatism’³¹ of the given language (Lotman 1976:133). Deviation from the expected norm (for instance, the expected genre or the rules of the given language or code) creates *variants* or poetic devices which have an artistic effect on the text and its meaning. In the case of *original* Afrikaans, the English vocabulary adjoined to Afrikaans syllables and affixes, as demonstrated earlier in Section 2.3.1.2 is augmented by English vocabulary strategically placed within a predominant Afrikaans sentence. In the process, a deviant language code is forged (*original* Afrikaans). The diverse code is especially conspicuous in the written form, because it is juxtaposed to the *standard* Afrikaans sentences and phrases which appear in the didascalía.

31 See Section 2.2 and Footnote 19.

A very basic example of this type of deviation is taken from Small's (1978:14) *Joanie Galant-hulle*:

JOANIE: ... En ons het 'n **surprise** vir julle, ... (text)
 [... En ons het 'n **verrassing** vir julle, ...] (*standard* Afrikaans)
 [...And we have a **surprise** for you, ...] (English)

Both the *standard* Afrikaans and English equivalents of this sentence have been provided to highlight the difference of the choice made by Small. All the parts of speech in each of the above sentences are in agreement (paradigmatic). Considering the situation and setting – it is Joanie's birthday and she is conversing with her brother and her future husband, who both understand *standard* Afrikaans – it is expected that Joanie will use *standard* Afrikaans. Yet the dramatist has opted to substitute the *standard* Afrikaans word 'verrassing' with the English equivalent 'surprise' for no apparent reason, causing a deviation from the *standard* Afrikaans syntagmatic ordering. The insertion of the English word cannot be seen to signify a lack of knowledge of or competence in *standard* Afrikaans on Joanie's part, because prior to this sentence she uses typical *standard* Afrikaans (Small 1978:14):

JOANIE: ... ek wil net 'n stil geleentheid hê, net met onse huismense.
 Net 'n stigtelike verjaarsdag ... En ons het 'n **surprise** vir
 julle, ek en Joseph....

[... I just want a quiet occasion with the people of our house.
 Just a (quietly) decent birthday ... And we have a **surprise**
 for you, Joseph and I ...]

What is striking about the deviance is that in Joanie's utterance, the paradigmatic and syntagmatic elements not only conform with the *standard* Afrikaans and English ordering, but remain grammatically correct even though there is a deviation from the *standard* Afrikaans ordering brought about by Joanie's choice to insert an English word in an Afrikaans sentence. Joanie's selection of the word 'surprise' instead of 'verrassing' defamiliarises conventional expectations of the natural language system. It poses the question: Why the deviation? The answer seems to point to the need to characterise Joanie, not only foregrounding the dialect (*original* Afrikaans), but also focusing attention on or

highlighting the character's language, identity, culture and possible ideology. Re-examination of the text discloses that Joanie intends to celebrate her birthday – the surprise is probably the announcement of Joanie's engagement to Joseph. Besides this information, the text also reveals her shy personality through expressions such as 'stil geleentheid' [quiet occasion], and her conservative moral standards by her use of words such as 'stigtelike' [decent]. Her predominant use of *standard* Afrikaans words such as those just mentioned is proof that her *standard* Afrikaans vocabulary is more than adequate. Hence, the inclusion of an English word in her discourse seems to be a deliberate choice on the part of the dramatist in order to foreground the characterisation through the code-mixing that is integral to *original* Afrikaans.

In the three selected dramas, the type of deviance mentioned above is common. From the opening lines of *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:11), the *standard* Afrikaans that is expected by Afrikaans readers is strewn with an array of English words. The emphases below are used merely to distinguish the English words used in the mixture (Small 1978:11):

JOANIE: ... Joanie Galant ... **My maiden name was ... Anthony** gewees ... (*Pause.*) Van die **Anthony's** van **Woodstock** ... (*Die angs begin in haar stem kom, en haar stem is die hele stikdonkerte vol.*) Meneer ... Maar, maar ... julle kan nie ons huis van ons af ... wegvat nie ... Nee ... (*Pouse. Sy praat "deurmekaar".*) Die **rent**? ... Meneer ... gee vir ons uitstel ...

[... Joanie Galant ... My maiden name was ... Anthony ... (*Pause.*) Of the Anthony's of Woodstock ... (*Anxiety enters her voice which fills the deep darkness.*) Sir ... But, but ... you can't take our house ... from us ... No ... (*Pause. She speaks confusedly*) The rent? ... Sir ... give us an extension ...]

The sentences and phrases in the extract which contain English words (indicated in bold) represent *original* Afrikaans usage, while the didascalia, written in italics and inserted in brackets, feature *standard* Afrikaans usage without deviations. Some of the words indicated in bold such as 'My', 'was', 'Anthony' and 'Woodstock' could arguably, in their written form, be taken to represent *standard* Afrikaans words. But those who are acquainted with *original* Afrikaans expressions and the manner in which 'coloured' people speak would

recognise these expressions and words as a combination of English and Afrikaans words and expressions, namely *original* Afrikaans.

The above extract, the opening lines of Small's drama, is Joanie's retrospective reminiscence of the events that took place prior to her being institutionalised in a mental facility. The utterances serve as an introduction to the type of dialogue that can be expected in the text throughout the play. In addition to this, the utterances also project the chronological sequence of events which unfold during the course of the play. For instance, the opening of the monologue by Joanie to the end of the second line 'van Woodstock' ['from Woodstock] introduces the reader to the protagonist, Joanie, her maiden surname, the fact that she is married, her current surname and where she is from. Lines three and four which include the words 'julle kan nie ons huis van ons af ... wegvat nie' [you can't take our house ... from us] reveal that Joanie and her family are being forcibly removed from their home in Woodstock. The utterance 'Die rent? ... Meneer ... gee vir ons uitstel ...' [The rent? ... Sir ... give us an extension ...] intimates that they are also being evicted from a council flat that they rent. Here, the mixing of language codes and the chronological disclosure seems to be a deliberate attempt on the part of the dramatist to foreground both these elements in this part of the exposition in the play.

The assumption is confirmed when (in the remembered dialogue that follows), Joanie's husband's voice (Small 1978:11) is also heard in the dark, stating that the man with the eviction notice has arrived:

JOSEPH: Dis die man met die **notice!**

[It's the man with the notice!]

Although Joseph's utterance is also part of the echo in Joanie's memory, it nevertheless contains an English word, which not only augments the unconventionality of the utterance in terms of *standard* Afrikaans, but also confirms the application of the device (the mixture of English and Afrikaans). Furthermore, the intrusion of the English word in the otherwise *standard* Afrikaans sentence emphasises the importance of the 'notice' in their existence.

In both extracts the sentences and phrases may at first look unintelligible to readers unacquainted with *original* Afrikaans because the discourse consists of two different language codes (English and Afrikaans) as compared to the didascalia which are strictly *standard* Afrikaans. On closer scrutiny, the seeming lack of intelligibility is nullified, because the text correlates syntactically; in other words, the English words and phrases combine with the Afrikaans to form meaningful sentences or meaning-carrying phrases because the basic grammatic code is not violated. However, this understanding depends on the reader's being able to understand and/or speak *original* Afrikaans, or to follow the *standard* Afrikaans grammar and the English vocabulary.

Apart from adding to characterisation in the drama, the deviant discourses illustrated above foreground a number of other aspects which enhance the meaning of the utterances. For instance, they highlight the pride that the 'Anthony's van Woodstock' once felt and the powerlessness that replaces that pride as they succumb to the 'man met die notice'. The pointed irony inheres in the fact that Joanie practically begs to live in a house that belongs to her, and that the syntagmatic code she uses implies cultural solidarity with the rest of the 'coloured' people.

A similar code-mixing device also occurs in Pearce's drama, *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b). Bobby has had a few drinks and is singing while preparing a meal (Pearce 1988b:2):

BOBBY: (*singend*) Marabi ... Marabi **is the music** ... Marabi ... (*roer weer pot*) ... Marabi ... **New Year's eve thirty-first of December 1975** en 'n Man (*sic*) hou alleen **party**. ... **Gone**, weg. Almal is Eersterust toe die **cowards**. (*Proe weer aan kos*).

[*(singing)* Marabi ... Marabi is the music ... Marabi ... (*stirs pot*) ... Marabi ... New Year's eve thirty-first of December 1975 and I'm having a party alone. ... Gone, gone. Everyone has gone to Eersterust, the cowards. (*Again tastes the food*).]

The extract not only reveals a mixing of language codes, but also provides additional emotional and historical information. Bobby, whose singing might signify happiness, is actually dismayed by both his family and the 'coloured' community's willingness to accede to the government decree, and sees their decision to move as cowardly. His disgust is

evident from the repetition of the word ‘gone’, first in English and then in Afrikaans (‘weg’) – emphasised by the finality introduced by the full stop – and also by the English word ‘cowards’. His reference in English to the date marks the mandatory removal³² of the ‘coloured’ people from Marabastad.

The smoothness with which the English words and phrases are incorporated into the *standard* Afrikaans as part of a switch to *original* Afrikaans in the above extract suggests that the deviations are not devised purely by the dramatist. What can be categorised as deliberate is the systematisation and presentation of this unconventional mode of discourse (in the selected dramas) against the backdrop of the *standard* Afrikaans used in the didascalía. This choice by the author is in line with Lotman’s notion of two modelling systems and establishes *original* Afrikaans as a secondary modelling system which uses not one but two natural languages (*standard* Afrikaans and English).

Similar examples of this type of systematisation and presentation are also found in *Political Joke* (1983). However, Snyders adds another dimension to the modelling. Sally, a character in the play, uses either English or *standard* Afrikaans when she speaks, but does not mix the two. The reason could be that Snyders’s depiction of Sally (a teacher) is intended subtly to imply a difference in the status of the speakers. Sally’s language usage seems to indicate a kind of value judgement of *original* Afrikaans compared to *standard* Afrikaans and English – both of which are natural languages. It could also be a demonstration that *original* Afrikaans can be effortlessly understood, even by purists such as Sally seems to portray. One further implication is that the author has deliberately employed this characterisation to foreground Sally’s speech so that it highlights the convergence of the two primary modelling systems (English and *standard* Afrikaans) with the secondary modelling system (*original* Afrikaans). An example of the convergence is a conversation between Sally and Sammy as they discuss the government and the law (Snyders 1983:24):

SAMMY: Wat doen hulle **about it**?

32 In accordance with the Group Areas Act, Act No 49 of 1953.

SALLY: **They go through the telephone book, trying to make people out of numbers.** (*Snik saggies.*) Wat weet julle van eensaamheid?

SAMMY: (*skud sy kop en plaas sy hand op haar skouer*) Toe maar, SALLY. (*Pouse.*) Arme SALLY.

[SAMMY: What are they doing about it?

SALLY: They go through the telephone book, trying to make people out of numbers. (*Sobs softly.*) What do you know about loneliness?

SAMMY: (*shakes his head and places his hand on her shoulder*) There now, SALLY. (*Pause.*) Poor SALLY.]

Sally's speech contains an English sentence (bold), and a question posed in *standard* Afrikaans, while Sammy's first utterance is *original* Afrikaans because it contains two English words (bold). The device is augmented by the didascalia written in *standard* Afrikaans. One explanation seems plausible – that the convergence of the three language codes (whether intentional or unintentional) produces a focal point for the foregrounding of *original* Afrikaans against the background of both English and *standard* Afrikaans.

Although Small (1978) has not included any English dialogue as an alternate primary modelling system, the dialogue of his text (*original* Afrikaans), which is juxtaposed to the *standard* Afrikaans didascalia, reveals comparable lexical and syntactic choices. The *standard* Afrikaans used in the didascalia (written in italics and in brackets) of all three dramas contains no deviations, and therefore signifies what Saussure calls *langue* while the *original* Afrikaans and its variations which either precedes or follows the didascalia signifies *parole*.

No apparent reason can be found in the texts for the didascalia to be written in *standard* Afrikaans. It could have been done for the benefit of actors and directors who are not 'coloured', but then questions arise concerning the *original* Afrikaans used in the dialogue. The dramas may thus have been written in this manner to accommodate people who have no working knowledge of *original* Afrikaans. However, the majority of speakers of Afrikaans do seem to be able to decode *original* Afrikaans both in its written and spoken form, as suggested by the successful rendition of the play *Kanna Hy Kô Huistoe* (1965) by

a White director and White actors to a White audience in the State Theatre in Pretoria in 1969.

The use of *original* Afrikaans is apparently intentional, as Small's annotations in both *Kanna Hy Kô Huistoe* (1965) and *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978) show. In his prologue in *Kanna Hy Kô Huistoe* (1965:5), for example, Small states that the deviations and inconsistent spelling are based on his personal perception of the poetic context:

As die spelling van afwykende vorme nie deurgans konsekwent is nie ... het ek redes daarvoor, hoofsaaklik redes van hoe, binne sy konteks, die geskrewe woord my oog getref het, en redes van, soos dit vir my gelyk het, die poësie van die betrokke woord.

[If the spelling of the deviant forms is not consistent throughout ... there are reasons for that, reasons mainly concerning how the written word within its context struck my eye, and also the poetry associated with the word concerned.]

This resonates with a similar statement made by Lotman (1977:165) on poetic form:

Poetic form was born of the effort to place words with different meanings into a position of maximal equivalence. The poetic structure employs every form of equivalence – rhythmic, phonological, grammatical, syntactic – so that the text will be perceived as a construct governed by the law of mutual equivalence of parts, even when this is not clearly expressed in the explicit structure ...

Small has, in a sense, placed various English words and expressions and culturally-based *original* Afrikaans words in positions of 'maximal equivalence', and, in his attempt to justify this deviance, has unwittingly systematised the deviant code used. This systematisation is reinforced thirteen years later in his foreword in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978:5):

Soos elders, is my spelling van hierdie 'volkse' taal nie deurgans konsekwent nie ... Dit maak seker nie saak nie.

[As elsewhere, my spelling of this vernacular is not consistent throughout. ... It probably does not matter.]

This time he classifies the code as a vernacular ('volkse taal'), but is not very specific about the spelling discrepancies. This is most probably because he assumes that all Afrikaans-speakers are proficient enough (in terms of their *standard* Afrikaans background or their general knowledge of *original* Afrikaans) to understand the code he uses and to recognise the discrepancies.

Both his statements (the one in 1965 and the one in 1978) have far-reaching consequences. They not only affirm the use of a deviant code, but also imply a deviant encoding structure with its own rule-governing system. Small's remark on the inconsistency of the spelling seems to direct the reader's attention to the manner in which the words are used in their poetic context. On their own, some of the words could be classified as mere lexical deviations from *standard* Afrikaans, but in a syntactic structure they represent characterisation and the ideology of a particular group of people.

This lexical and syntactic system seems to have become a systematised 'norm' when portraying 'coloured' characters. Besides 'coloured' writers like Snyders and Pearce who have adopted this encoding system, a number of prominent White writers have also used this system to portray various 'coloured' characteristics. Examples are André P. Brink's translation and adaptation of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, *Kinkels innie Kabel* (1971), *Die Bobaas van die Boendoe* (1973) and Bartho Smit's *Bacchus in die Boland* (1974).

An alternate semiotic view could argue that because the volume of *original* Afrikaans used is greater than that of *standard* Afrikaans, *original* Afrikaans could somewhat paradoxically be considered the natural language and primary modelling system, and *standard* Afrikaans the secondary system in Small's plays. It is more likely, however, that, given Small's own acknowledgement of deviation, that the choice of *parole* over *langue* is itself a syntactic poetic device, what Small (1965:5) calls 'die poësie van die betrokke woord' [the poetry associated with the word concerned], as quoted above.

2.3.2.2 *Metaphoric, idiomatic and derogatory devices*

In the selected literature, the use of figurative language may seem incongruous, or even contradictory, to readers who are not ‘coloured’, because many of the metaphoric and idiomatic terms used in the literature have been derived from and incorporate historical and cultural elements. Some of the metaphors that are used to refer to people or to the characteristics of the people mentioned are abusive and vulgar. They are in fact metaphoric in the sense that they invoke images which, although controversial in some respects, can be figuratively associated with the people or events being described. As mentioned above, most of these images have historical or cultural connotations because they emanate from poverty³³, maltreatment and the like. These elements are analysed in the course of the ensuing discussion in order to examine the connection and connotations of these metaphoric, idiomatic and derogatory devices, because their interpretation is crucial when linking signifiers to signifieds in ‘coloured’ literature. It may be even more important to understand that these devices represent the core of the manner in which *original* Afrikaans deviates from *standard* Afrikaans.

Although a random selection of examples has been made, a number of the metaphors chosen for discussion can conveniently be classified as vulgarisms. An example is the vulgarism ‘gat’ which in Afrikaans conventionally indicates the posterior or anus of a person. Although the meaning of the vulgarism does change somewhat when it is used as a metaphor or an idiomatic expression, it still remains a form of abuse. The change in meaning depends on the context, because the word ‘gat’ is often combined with another word to form a new signifier.

An example is the metaphor used by Davy in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:12):

DAVY: Mense met geld ... wat sikkerets weggooi! (*Kyk na die stompie*)

Windgatte wat so half rook.

[People with money ... that throw away cigarettes! (*Looks at the stub*) Windbags who only half-smoke a cigarette.]

33 A detailed comment concerning poverty is made in Section 4.2.1.2 of this study.

The metaphor ‘windgatte’ alludes to ‘windbags’ or people who boast and flaunt their success publicly. The metaphor is a combination of the Afrikaans expression ‘windmaker mense’ [people who talk big] (Small 1978:32) and the Afrikaans vulgarism ‘gat’. Another example is the metaphor ‘geldgatte’ (Small 1978:36):

DAVY: Syp darem lekker, hulle, daar binnekant, syp lekker dja
...Crayfish ... Prawns ... **Geldgatte**, hulle. Multiracial! Ekke,
ek koop maar penny polony ... wat die honne ook vreet ...
hulle honne!

[Guzzling and enjoying their drinks, those people, inside,
guzzling and enjoying their drinks yes ... Crayfish ... Prawns
... Filthy rich people. Multiracial! Me, I only buy a penny’s
worth of polony ... that dogs also eat ... their dogs!]

This metaphor (bold) is a combination of the word ‘geld’ [money] and ‘gat’. It is used by Davy to describe the wealthy (Whites and ‘coloureds’) who thrive on the envy and subordination of those who are indigent. Davy is not only envious of and angry at both parties, but also bewildered. Davy sees Whites who mix with people of colour as demonstrating a type of ‘false’ liberalism, and ‘coloureds’ mixing with Whites and eating at expensive restaurants as selling out.

Davy’s use of ‘syp’ [guzzle] and ‘vreet’ [gorge] emphasises the gluttony of the people in the restaurant as opposed to his poverty. Equally important is their choice of food (‘Crayfish’ and ‘Prawns’), which also contrasts Davy’s indigence (a penny’s worth of ‘polony’) with their luxurious meal.

Both the metaphors (‘windgatte’ and ‘geldgatte’) mentioned above are used by Davy in contempt and in criticism of wealthy people who look down on poorer people.

Other examples of this type of metaphor can be found in both *Political Joke* (1983) and *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b). In *Political Joke* (1983), both Vincent and Sammy use the metaphor ‘vuilgat’. The metaphor is made up of the word ‘vuil’ [dirty] and ‘gat’ [backside], and is used to signify people with few or no morals or scruples. Vincent uses

this metaphor to refer to Jan van Riebeeck – under the pseudonym ‘Jo-hack van Flapjack’ (Snyders 1983:59):

VINCENT: He was a big **vuilgat**, he. He picked himself a lekker “Hottie”, but the books say it was his wife. ... She was the chief jinto, and he was the chief pimp.

[He was unscrupulous. He chose a pretty Khoi-Khoi for himself, but the books say it was his wife. ... She was the chief prostitute, and he was the chief pimp.]

Vincent accuses Van Riebeeck of being a ‘vuilgat’ [an unscrupulous person / a lecher] and blames Van Riebeeck for the miscegenation which took place in the Cape. According to Vincent, Van Riebeeck (‘the chief pimp’) ran a brothel at the fort for his men and all the sailors who rounded the Cape. The ‘chief jinto’ that Vincent refers to is a Khoi-Khoi woman named Eva who lived in Van Riebeeck’s household. Van Riebeeck, who was dependent on the Cochoquas (one of the Khoi-Khoi tribes) for his livelihood, used Eva (the sister-in-law of the Cochoqua chief) to interpret and act as intermediary in his dealings with the Khoisan (Patterson 1953:19). In *original* Afrikaans, the signifier ‘jinto’ refers to a ‘prostitute’.

The metaphor ‘vuilgat’ is also used by Sammy (Snyders 1983:60):

SAMMY: Soe 'n **vuilgat**!

[What a scoundrel / lecher!]

Sammy is replying to Vincent’s recounting of the escapades of ‘Pieter Die Tief’ (a mocking nickname for Piet Retief, one of the leaders of the Great Trek in 1836). The pseudonym ‘Die Tief’, which is also an *original* Afrikaans expression, carries a sexual innuendo. The English translation, ‘The Bitch’ of the *standard* Afrikaans expression ‘Die Teef’ is taken from *Groot Woordeboek* (Kritzinger *et al.* 1970:532). When the expression is transposed from the female animal to the human, the figurative translation is given as ‘wulpsse vrou’ in the *HAT Verklarende Handwoordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal*

(Schoonees *et al.* 1976:876) and the term is interpreted by Kritzinger *et al.* (1970:648) as signifying ‘wanton’.

According to Vincent (Snyders 1983:60), Piet Retief betrayed the trust of his host (most probably Dingaan – king of the Zulus) by seducing one of Dingaan’s wives at a party given in Retief’s honour. The encounter ends in tragedy, because Dingaan has Piet Retief and his followers killed.

Showing the *original* Afrikaans currency of the mark ‘vuilgat’, Bobby, in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b:9), also uses this metaphor when referring to the government:

BOBBY: Almal ge-brainwash deur die **vuilgat** Government-varke.

[Everyone is brainwashed by the unscrupulous Government pigs.]

Another metaphor frequently used by Bobby is the term ‘banggatte’, which consists of the word ‘bang’ [afraid] and the plural of the word ‘gat’. The metaphor signifies fear and cowardice, and is used by Bobby to chide the community (Pearce 1988b:4):

BOBBY: Die ander Marabastad-mense het sommer self getrek: ... Die **banggatte**.

[The other people of Marabastad took it upon themselves to move: ... The cowards.]

He uses the same metaphor again to reproach his family (Pearce 1988b:9), then the Christians in the world (Pearce 1988b:19) and then the government (Pearce 1988b:22).

Other metaphors derived from combinations with the term ‘gat’ are used by both Davy in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978) and Rosie in *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983). Davy (Snyders 1983:51) refers to the ‘coloured’ politicians as ‘gatkrypers’. The term is the equivalent of the English vulgarity ‘arse-creeper’ or ‘brown-nose’ and when used as a metaphor signifies people who go to any lengths to flatter those in power for personal gain.

Rosie (Snyders 1983:17), on the other hand, uses the metaphor 'oepgat' to describe Budget (one of her customers). The adjective 'oep' [open] combined with the noun 'gat' signifies people who are spendthrifts, who behave extravagantly when they have money. This metaphor also has sexual connotations and can refer to loose women who are always ready to have sex.

Some of the other metaphors used in the three dramas are centred on two animals, namely 'varke' [pigs] and 'honde' [dogs]. These terms are used in a derogatory manner, in the sense that a pig is classed as an unclean animal and is shunned by a large number of people, especially those who follow the Muslim and Jewish faiths. Dogs are also seen as unclean animals who even procreate within their own bloodline.

In *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:32), Davy refers to the wealthy Whites as 'varke'. His reasons are that they are selfish and oblivious to the sufferings of others, and should therefore be shunned. He also regards the 'skollies' as 'varke' (Small 1978:44), because they callously cripple Joseph when they attack him to take his hard-earned wages. Davy (Small 1978:51) also uses the word 'varke' to refer to 'coloured' collaborators who assist the government in spreading racist policies under the guise of Christianity.

The metaphor 'vark' also appears in *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983). Ralph, who unsuccessfully attempts to cover up his own racist beliefs, accuses Sammy of using derogatory terms. But it is Ralph who tries to put words into Sammy's mouth by using terms such as 'Hanover Park-vark' (Snyders 1983:7), which refers to 'coloureds' who live in Hanover Park, and 'wit vark' [White pig], which refers to Whites in general (Snyders 1983:30).

Bobby, in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b), also uses both these metaphors to refer to the government and Whites. He blames the 'government-varke' (Pearce 1988b:9) for brainwashing his family into leaving, the 'government ... honde' (Pearce 1988b:4) for uprooting his family, and all the other 'honde' (which includes the city council officials, the police, the army, and the 'bulldozers') for evicting him and destroying his life and home (Pearce 1988b:20, 22, 23). Bobby's use of the metaphors 'varke' and 'honde' is similar to his use of the term 'bastards' (Pearce 1988b:13).

A metaphoric expression that appears in *Political Joke* (1983), but not in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978) or *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b), is ‘Gam’³⁴ (/xam/) which is a derivative from the Dutch word ‘Cham’ (Nationale Synode 1899:14), which was later dropped in favour of Ham (/ham/) to coincide with the English word. The *Groot Woordeboek* (Kritzinger *et al.* 1970:171) describes the word ‘Gam’ as ‘Ham’ or ‘Native’. According to Genesis 9:25, Noah curses his son Ham and all Ham’s descendants, saying they will be the slaves of others (Bible Society of South Africa 1977:12). This point is a centre of discussion in *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983:48-52), because Sammy refers to the myth that the ‘coloured’ people are the descendants of Ham. Ralph tries to convince Sammy that the statement is untrue, derogatory and an unfounded myth. As can be deduced from the discussion in Snyders’s (1983:48-52) text, this metaphoric signifier is looked upon as derogatory when used by other ethnic groups.

Another metaphoric expression that appears in *Political Joke* (1983), but not in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978) or *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b), is the one used by Ralph while speaking to Sammy (Snyders 1983:14) about people who lie, brag and steal, but deny that they are doing so. According to Ralph, these people generally make fools of themselves and of God:

RALPH: Djy maak net 'n **guy** van jousef en 'n **guy** van jou Maker.

[You are merely making a fool of yourself and a fool of your Maker.]

The metaphor ‘guy’ alludes to Guy Fawkes, who attempted to blow up the British parliament building on 5 November 1605. His attempt failed, and he and his accomplices were hanged. Since then, ‘November 5 is celebrated as Guy Fawkes day in England and in other parts of the British Empire; bonfires are lit and fireworks are set off to commemorate the discovery of the plot’ (Morse 1958:3100-3101). Since South Africa was part of the British Empire until 1961, this celebration was carried over to the South African populace. Even now, on 5 November every year, some ‘coloured’ children and youths paint their faces, wear shabby clothes and take to the streets singing and dancing for money. This

34 A further comment can be found on this metaphoric expression in Section 4.2.1.2

tradition is still practised in some ‘coloured’ areas and children still sing a traditional song, the origin of which could not be traced by the researcher:

Aunty sjee penny vir die guy-guy, or you won’t go to heaven when you die-die.

[Aunty give a penny to the guy-guy, or you won’t go to heaven when you die-die.]

The ‘guy’ mentioned in the song alludes to Guy Fawkes. Although this ritual has practically died out (probably because South Africa is no longer part of the British Empire and November 5 is not a local public holiday), the researcher has found in an informal survey that many older ‘coloured’ people still remember the foolishness, gaiety and even the above song that accompanied the occasion. Thus, Ralph’s use of this metaphoric expression ‘guy’ (signifier) actually points to the foolhardiness of Guy Fawkes and the fact that he thought he could get away with his treacherous deeds (signified).

Although the signifier and signified of the above metaphoric expression allude to a British historical event and basically originate from a different primary modelling system (English), ‘coloured’ users have culturally and ideologically adapted this sign as part of a secondary modelling system – *original* Afrikaans. In other words, although the *parole* (the individual utterance) ‘guy’ emanates from English, ‘coloured’ users have modified it to produce meaning via a secondary modelling system – *original* Afrikaans (*langue*).

Apart from the metaphoric expressions mentioned above, there are idiomatic expressions in *Political Joke* (1983) and in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b) that are different from those used by Small’s characters in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978). This is probably due to the progression that most languages and dialects undergo in the course of their existence. There is a marked difference in the dialect of Snyders and Pearce’s characters compared to that used by Small’s characters. Although Small is the pioneer of written *original* Afrikaans, one can detect a slight wariness in his drama concerning derogatory language or abusive terms.

Small's characters tend to use metaphoric and idiomatic expressions which are modelled on *standard* Afrikaans and also have English equivalents. Examples are: 'nat agter die ore' [wet behind the ears] (Small 1978:15), and 'haar hart sit op die regte plek' [her heart is in the right place] (Small 1978:16).

By contrast, Snyders's characters in *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983) tend to use new and imaginative metaphoric and idiomatic expressions. Snyders sometimes revitalises 'dead' idioms by giving them new and innovative analogies. An example of a fresh idiom appears at the beginning of the play when Sammy, who is short of funds because he is unemployed and cannot buy an additional bottle of wine, apologetically comments (Snyders 1983:1):

SAMMY: Maak dit maar een, RAPLH. Djy wiet die pap is maar dun my way.

[Make it one Ralph. The porridge is thin on my side.]

This expression is in direct contrast to the *standard* Afrikaans expression 'Die pap dik aanmaak' [making the porridge thick] which figuratively means to exaggerate. Literally, 'pap' is a mixture of maize flour (mealie meal) and water. To make it thick ('dik') one would have to use a lot of maize flour which would obviously make it more expensive to prepare. On the other hand, a thin ('dun') mixture would be less expensive, because more water is used. Thus, when Sammy says 'die pap is maar dun my way' it means that he does not have much money. The term 'pap' is revitalised into a signifier which refers to the signified 'money'. The expression can be varied either to mean being in possession of a lot of money, or to mean not having any money at all. This is done by modifying the signifier 'pap', either by using the adverb 'thick' ('dik'), or by using its opposite 'thin' ('dun').

The above idiomatic expression is thus based on *langue* (the shared, pre-existing language system which speakers unconsciously draw upon), but the actual meaning emanates from the *parole* (the individual *utterance*). In other words, the utterance, although based on a natural language (*standard* Afrikaans), produces meaning via a secondary modelling system – *original* Afrikaans.

Another innovative idiomatic expression in which the syntax is *standard* Afrikaans is ‘die blok is benoud’. It is used by Whitey (Snyders 1983:37) when he tries to explain to the occupants of Rosie’s shebeen the difficulties he underwent during the 1976 riots in South Africa because of his light complexion:

WHITEY: ... Maar die tyd van die riots was die **blok** daem **benoud!**

[During the time of the riots the block (situation) was terrifying!]

The ‘blok’ that Whitey is referring to in the above quotation, is the block (in days gone by) that was used for decapitating people. The term ‘benoud’ on the other hand, relates the fear and anxiety of the situation. The expression ‘die blok was benoud’ [the situation was frightening], is a transference of the anxiety and fear felt by the person in the situation, to the inanimate block used for execution. The imagery that is evoked (fear) is transferred from the person, to the person’s neck, and finally to the block on which the person’s neck is placed. In other words, the block becomes the sign (signifier) which conveys the meaning (signified), namely the frightening or terrifying situation. In Whitey’s case, the situation he faced during the riots in 1976 was comparable to that of a person facing execution.

Thus, the idiomatic expression in question can be traced back (historically and culturally) to the French Revolution. Many ‘coloureds’ – because of miscegenation – can trace their ancestry back to the French Huguenots who came as colonists in 1687 and 1688. But the actual origins of the expression can probably be traced to the later miscegenation that took place between the French soldiers who went into exile with Napoleon to St Helena in 1815 and the inhabitants (Patterson 1953:20-21; Van der Ross 1979:39-41). Therefore, knowledge of the type of execution mentioned above and awareness of the guillotine used during the French Revolution (1789-1793) is common to ‘coloured’ people.

Bobby Lewis in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b) uses the same expression discussed above, namely ‘die blok is benoud’ (Pearce 1988b:23):

BOBBY: Au, die Boere is regtig serious hê? Nou is die blok benoud...

[So, the Whites are really serious hey? Now the situation is scary ...]

His utterance is a response to the terrifying situation that develops when the City Council workers, aided by the police and the army, bulldoze and level his home while he is still in it. Bobby also compares the anxiety that he undergoes to the anxiety of someone about to be guillotined. Again, although the syntax of the idiomatic expression is *standard* Afrikaans and contains the signifier, the meaning (the signified) lies in *original* Afrikaans, the secondary language model.

The guillotine discussed above is also a source of the following idiomatic expression. In *standard* Afrikaans, the guillotine is known as a ‘valbyl’ (/falbeil/). The term ‘byl’ [chopper] is used by Bobby in another totally different idiomatic expression (Pearce 1988b:8):

BOBBY: ... Michelle wou my ook **stompbyl** ...

[... Michelle also wanted to **trick me into believing** ...]

According to Bobby, Michelle tried to bamboozle him into believing that the new ‘coloured’ group area held a bright future for their family. The signifier ‘stompbyl’ literally represents a blunt (‘stomp’) chopper or hatchet (‘byl’). Figuratively, a blow from a blunt chopper would only daze or stupefy a person so that they would not be able to think clearly. In other words, ‘stompbyl’ carries the meaning of confusing a person. In addition, the expression could also be used to indicate a situation when someone has lied or is trying to lie. Although this compound term is produced by the combination of two *standard* Afrikaans words (an adjective ‘stomp’ and a noun ‘byl’), the meaning (signified) relies on the *langue* (the shared, pre-existing language system which speakers unconsciously draw upon) – *original* Afrikaans.

Both the above idiomatic expressions (which are centred on a person’s head), provide an introduction to a third idiomatic expression which Bobby uses (Pearce 1988b:22) after he realises that the representatives of the City Council have arrived in full force to evict him

from his home. He initially hides under the table when the searchlight is focused on his home, but realises the folly of his actions. He emerges and reassures himself:

... Dis nie nodig om te **shafkop** nie ...

[... It's not necessary to hide ...]

Although the term 'shaf' is derived from 'shove' which means to push, lift, or raise, it actually represents the opposite when coupled with the word 'kop' [head]. The expression 'shafkop' alludes to hiding one's head, which figuratively means dodging or evading one's duty or responsibility. The expression is also used to denote lazy people who hide when there is work to be done. Although the *standard* Afrikaans word 'kop' seems to feature prominently, the meaning has to be sought in the secondary language system – *original* Afrikaans.

In the final idiomatic expression for discussion, the opposite of the word 'hide' features as the core of the utterance. Bobby, who has chosen to defy the Group Areas decree, dares the City Council workers, the police and the army to evict him (Pearce 1988b:23):

BOBBY: ... Kom julle honde...Steek uit...!

[... Come on you dogs ... Show yourselves ...!]

Besides the metaphor 'honde' (dogs), which was previously explained earlier, Bobby also adds the expression 'steek uit'. The *standard* Afrikaans expression 'steek weg' can be translated as 'hide away', whereas the expression 'uitsteek' means 'stick out'. Bobby transposes the verb 'steek' and the preposition 'uit' to form a new idiomatic expression which is actually paradoxical in the sense that it represents an antithesis of 'steek weg' (hide away) and signifies 'come out' or 'show yourself'. The paradox not only highlights the idiomatic value, but in fact emphasises the *langue* of *original* Afrikaans by way of the *parole*.

Many of the expressions used by the character Bobby show the vibrance and flexibility of *original* Afrikaans – a flexibility that is also illustrated by the dialect’s ability to adapt and include words from another language code, namely English. This flexibility is stretched even further to include some of the Black languages. For instance, Bobby’s dialogue in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b) is filled with words which have been absorbed from a variety of Black languages and assimilated to form an assortment of new metaphors and expressions in *original* Afrikaans. A good example is his utterance (Pearce 1988b:15) ‘... ’n man is ’n bietjie ge-**tjwalla** ...’ [I am a little tipsy] which includes the term ‘tjwalla’ (/tRwala/) which originates from the Zulu ‘*tshwala*’, the word for beer or intoxicating liquor (Doke *et al.* 1990:824). The term ‘tjwalla’ from the primary modelling system or code (in this case, Zulu) is transformed by adding the prefix ‘ge’ taken from another primary modelling system (*standard* Afrikaans), to form the (past participle) gerundive ‘ge-tjwalla’ [drunk]. The syntactic amalgamation of these two primary modelling systems allows the secondary modelling system (*original* Afrikaans) to become operational. Because the variant that is produced by the hybrid deviates from both primary modelling systems, it becomes a poetic device which has an artistic effect on the text. In other words, the expectation of the text is jarred, because the customary rule of a primary modelling system (in the above case, two primary modelling systems) has been transgressed, causing a defamiliarisation of the text. This defamiliarisation then forces the reader to scrutinise the text more closely.

The defamiliarisation can also be compounded, as demonstrated in another utterance by Bobby (Pearce 1988b:20):

BOBBY: ... Jy mag nie **baiza** vir elke **Maspoengan** kakwa ...

[...You can’t allow yourself to be confused by every faeces-carrying/stinking sewerage truck ...]

The two above terms are adapted from Zulu words (highlighted for convenience). The term ‘baiza’ (/baiza/) is adapted from the Zulu word *bayiza* and signifies being confused and afraid (Doke *et al.* 1990:27). The other term, ‘Maspoengan’ (/maspunga:n/) is also an adaptation from a Zulu word, *phunga*, meaning bad odour (Doke *et al.* 1990:678). By utilising a *paragodic* device, (‘Ma’ and ‘n’ used as a prefix and a suffix respectively),

Pearce manipulates the term to refer to a person. The term is used in this case as a derogatory description for a person who works with dirt or bad-smelling filth.

In the scene from which the extract is taken, Bobby is startled by the sound of sewerage trucks. He thinks that the bulldozers have come to level his home. Right up to the late 1950s, sewerage trucks carted human excrement from parts of Pretoria that had no sewerage facilities to a facility situated at the north end of Marabastad. The trucks drove down the main street (Cowie Street) through the residential area of Marabastad with their contents. Bobby refers to this type of truck as a 'kakwa' (/kakva/). The word 'kak' [excrement] is joined to another word 'wa' [wagon] to form a new compound word or *solideme* that means exactly what it says. Although both these words ('kak' and 'wa') are part of the primary modelling system (*standard* Afrikaans), the compound formed ('kakwa') does not exist in the vocabulary of the primary modelling system. The *standard* Afrikaans term *nagwa* [night-wagon that removes excrement] (Schoonees *et al.* 1976:561) is used as a euphemism instead. This necessitates that the meaning be sought in another semiotic system, namely *original* Afrikaans, which is also identified as a secondary modelling system.

In addition, the meaning in the second deviation, which entails the inclusion of two adapted Zulu words ('baiza' and 'Maspoengan'), has to be sought in a different semiotic system. This invokes a third language system (Zulu), another 'natural language', a secondary or tertiary modelling system here.

The convergence of the three systems demonstrates the versatility of *original* Afrikaans while lending support to Lotman's (1977:35) summary which states that 'meanings in this secondary system can be formed according to the means inherent to natural languages or through means employed in other semiotic systems'.

In addition to the above metaphors and idiomatic expressions, there are expressions and terms in the three dramas which also have racist and derogatory connotations. Some of them are well known, while others are somewhat obscure or ambiguous. Although terms like 'kaffer' (Snyders 1983:5), 'koelie' (Snyders 1983:6), 'Bushies' (Pearce 1988b:9) and 'Boere' (Pearce 1988b:3) are regarded as racist and derogatory, they are nevertheless

integral elements of the texts and the *langue* and the *parole* of *original* Afrikaans. A few of these terms and expressions are defined and discussed below.

The term ‘kaffir’, which originated from the Arabic ‘*kāfir*’ (infidel), has been notoriously used in a derogatory manner in South Africa to refer to a Black person (Sykes 1982:546; Silva 1996:342). The abusive use of this term reached its peak during the apartheid era. The term ‘koelie’ (coolie) which originates from the Tamil word *k_li* – an oriental labourer (Funk 1946:297; Silva 1996:169) was also used offensively during the apartheid era to refer to the Indian population in South Africa.

Likewise, the term ‘boesman’ (Bushman) which derives from the Dutch word ‘*boschjesman*’ (Sykes 1982:123; Silva 1996:100), still used by some historians to refer to some of the original inhabitants of South Africa, also became a derogatory term during the apartheid era, and was used to refer to the San and the ‘coloured’ inhabitants of South Africa. The White inhabitants in turn were referred to as ‘Boere’ by people of colour as a retaliatory measure. *Funk and Wagnalls’ New Practical Standard Dictionary of the English Language* (1946) indicates that the word originates from the Dutch word ‘*boer*’ and refers to a Dutch colonist, or person of Dutch descent in South Africa (Funk 1946:152; Silva 1996:80-82). The alternate description indicates a coarse, ill-bred Dutch peasant or farmer (Funk 1946:157). It can be assumed that the latter description was alluded to during the apartheid era.

In the selected Snyders and Pearce dramas, the above-mentioned terms are used as part of the dialogue of some of the characters. There is no clear reason for Small’s characters’ not using these derogatory terms, unlike Snyders and Pearce’s characters. However, one could speculate that in 1965, Small was more wary of using such terms on stage.

Pearce’s character and some of Snyders’s characters openly use expressions that are considered taboo. For instance, Ralph (Snyders 1983:5) uses the word ‘kaffer’ while telling a joke, but immediately reprimands Sammy when Sammy uses the term ‘koelie’ (Snyders 1983:6) while narrating his own joke. Pearce’s character Bobby also uses the term ‘koelie’ (Pearce 1988b:4-5) to refer to the man who carts away the furniture and belongings of the ‘coloureds’ who are evicted from Marabastad. Other instances occur when Bobby refers to

the Indian businesses (Pearce 1988b:6), the Indian shops (Pearce 1988b:16), and the Indian films (Pearce 1988b:18) shown at the local cinema. He also uses an additional derogatory term, 'tjarre', when referring to Indians (Pearce 1988b:7,8,20). This term is almost exclusively used by 'coloureds' and is derived from the bottled pickles called 'atchar' (/atja:r/) – a spicy pickle or relish of sliced or chopped vegetables or fruit (Silva 1996:29, 147).

Bobby's use of the term 'kaffer' is comparatively limited. During one of his flashbacks (Pearce 1988b:6,7), he talks about the 'kafferbier' [a beer brewed by Blacks] that he drinks when he is short of money. He also talks of a plan (Pearce 1988b:20) to start a new family with a buxom ('sterk') Black woman ('kaffermeid') to replace the family he has lost.

Most of the dialogue in both plays is laced with racist, derogatory and biased expressions, which to a certain extent reveal the anger and division caused by the racist ideology that was encouraged in South Africa during the apartheid era. The preoccupation with and use of these derogatory expressions by the characters in both plays reveal both partial acceptance and abhorrence of this ideology. As will be noticed, some of the derogatory terms are culturally-based. A few of these terms are analysed below.

In *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983:10), the term 'Slams' (/slams/) is generally used by 'coloureds' when referring to a 'coloured' person who follows the Islamic faith. Another popular word (used mainly in the Cape) for such a person is 'pankie' (/panki/) (Snyders 1983:16). These terms are regarded as derogatory by 'coloured' Muslims. Another derogatory expression attached to the Islamic religion is the word 'doekoem' (/dukum/) (Snyders 1983:12). 'Doekoems' are believed to practise a type of witchcraft which is in contrast to what seers or spiritualists in the Muslim faith actually do, namely to heal spiritually disturbed people. 'Coloured' people who do not belong to the Muslim faith tend to misinterpret the concept and generally regard it as witchcraft. There are 'doekoems' who exercise spiritual healing, but also some who practise witchcraft.

In *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (Pearce 1988b), Bobby frequently uses the word 'slams'. He mentions some of the superstitions (Pearce 1988b:14) that have been adopted by 'coloured' people (Christian and Muslim), differences in culture (Pearce 1988b:17,18),

Indian delicacies (Pearce 1988b:18), and the fact that the boxer ‘Mohammed Alie’ [*sic*] also follows the Islamic faith (Pearce 1988b:21).

The only sexist derogatory term in the three selected plays is used by Vincent (Snyders 1983:59), when he refers to the ‘Hottie’ [Hottentot / ‘coloured’] woman (most probably Eva) who lived in Jan van Riebeeck’s household, as already noted in Section 2.3.2.2 of this study. Vincent calls her a ‘jinto’(gentoo), which is a derogatory word used to refer to a prostitute or harlot (Silva 1996:251, 331). The term ‘pimp’ which Vincent uses to refer to Jan van Riebeeck retains the generally accepted meaning (someone who runs a brothel).

Other terms used in *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983) and *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (Pearce 1988b) that have derogatory or racial connotations are ‘mapoesa’ (/map_isa/) and ‘lanie’ (/la:ni/). The term ‘mapoesa’ is derived from the expression ‘ma-polisa’ which originates from the word ‘police’, and is used to refer to a person who represents the law. The term has been assimilated in most of the African languages (Silva 1996:443). The term ‘lanie’ on the other hand is a derivative of the expression ‘la-di-da’ which in English means a person who is pretentious (Hornby 1989:696). In *original Afrikaans*, Whites are referred to as ‘lanies’. One could speculate that during the apartheid era, most Whites were branded as pretentious because of the few that were. It seems that Whites are referred to this way merely on the basis of colour.

In *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983:37), Whitey recounts the dilemma caused by his light complexion. Because Whitey resembles a White person, ‘coloured’ people who do not know him personally either consider him to be a policeman or regard him as a White person (‘lanie’). It is interesting to note that more recently the term ‘lanie’ has come to be used by Whites to signify ‘rich people’.

Bobby, in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b), also uses the above-mentioned terms, namely ‘mapoesa’ and ‘lanie’. He refers to the security guard at the beer hall who is Black as a ‘Mapoisa’ (Pearce 1988b:6). Although the spelling of the term differs in the two plays, the meaning remains the same. Bobby’s dialogue is also peppered with the term ‘lanie’. He uses this term with affection when he mentions his White grandfather (Pearce 1988b:7,15), and with indifference for the Whites in general (Pearce 1988b:11,19,22). But when he is

belligerent, he varies the term referring to the Whites as ‘Boere’ [Boers] (Pearce 1988b:3), ‘varke’ [pigs] (Pearce 1988b:9) or ‘honde’ [dogs] (Pearce 1988b:20).

Another interesting usage, which appears in both Snyders and Pearce’s plays, is that of ‘darkie’ (a racially offensive colloquialism) which refers to a Black person. In both plays, the word ‘darkie’ is used as a euphemism when the characters speak about Blacks. Whitey (Snyders 1983:37) uses the terms ‘darkie’ and ‘lanie’ to describe the predicament caused by his complexion. Bobby’s comments, on the other hand, are sometimes marked with sentiment when he speaks about his Black grandmother (Pearce 1988b:7) and the Black labourers and workers who are forced to travel far distances in order to work (Pearce 1988b:11). Here, the term ‘darkie’ has no derogatory nuance and is used euphemistically to signify compassion.

Another racially offensive colloquialism that appears in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b), is the word ‘bushie’ [bushy]. The metaphor is derived from the word ‘bushman’ (already explained), and derogatorily refers to a ‘coloured’ person. This term is used by Bobby to refer to himself: ‘... Bobby Lewis! The Bravest Bushie alive ...’ (Pearce 1988b:8), his friends: ‘... Ou Dolly, my Bushie Bra ...’ (Pearce 1988b:12), the community: ‘... Ons Bushies ...’ (Pearce 1988b:9) and the ideology of the ‘coloured’ people: ‘... Bushie cultural nonsense ...’ (Pearce 1988b:14). As can be gathered from the above quotations, the expression is used in a mostly positive sense. Bobby seems to use a self-reflexive irony by adopting it as a term of pride and identity. When it is used by other race groups (regardless of the circumstance), this expression is considered abusive. A similar situation exists in the United States concerning the term ‘*nigger*’ which is regarded as abusive when used by non-African-Americans to refer to African-Americans, but may be a term of identity if it is used by African-Americans.

2.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

As can be gathered from the above discussion, *original* Afrikaans can easily be distinguished from *standard* Afrikaans by the English and other vocabulary strategically placed within a predominantly Afrikaans sentence. Although the utterances are deviant in

the sense that they contain English and Afrikaans vocabulary within the same sentences, and sometimes even another language code (in the case looked at above, Zulu), the preciseness and accuracy of the choice of vocabulary by means of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic selectional axes enhance, rather than hinder, the linguistic flow. Moreover, the smoothness with which the English words and phrases are incorporated into the *standard* Afrikaans sentences confirms that the deviations are characteristic of a specific group of people and their language. Detection of the device is easy, because the *original* Afrikaans used by the characters in their discourse is juxtaposed with the *standard* Afrikaans sentences and phrases that appear in the didascalialia. Although the reason for the *standard* Afrikaans didascalialia is uncertain, its inclusion provides the paradigm substantiating the proposition of this study that *original* Afrikaans is a secondary modelling system based on not one but two or more natural languages (*standard* Afrikaans, English, Zulu and so on). Furthermore, it is clear that *original* Afrikaans, in its verbal form, has long functioned as a natural language. However, in the written form, and as a theatrical medium, *original* Afrikaans as a choice on the part of the author renders this language a secondary modelling system. Finally, the devices in these texts not only highlight *original* Afrikaans, but also provide additional emotional, personal and sometimes historical information that is crucial to the specific meaning in the texts.

The mixing of language codes is endorsed by a variety of metaphors and idiomatic devices, which often consist of vulgarities and racist terminology but generally enrich the meaning. The terminology and construction of these expressions are specifically bound to the culture of the 'coloured' people, and can be traced to specific circumstances, situations and emotions. As has been argued at length, metaphors like 'windgatte', 'geldgatte', 'vuilgat' and 'banggatte' are directed towards specific entities, and signify the emotions of the various characters in the selected literature in relation to the situation. As signifiers and in terms of reception aesthetics, these expressions defamiliarise conventional expectations not only because they are vulgar, but also because they represent unfamiliar signifieds to audiences not culturally bound to this specific population group (the so-called 'coloured' community). Other metaphoric and idiomatic expressions which were examined in the preceding discussion, such as 'guy' and 'die blok was benoud', demonstrate the eclectic or multifaceted historical character of 'coloured' culture.

The foregoing argument lends credence to the conclusion that the innovative metaphoric expressions and idiomatic phrases found in *original* Afrikaans are a vibrant component of the dialect, and can be seen as the essence of the manner in which *original* Afrikaans deviates from *standard* Afrikaans. The changes in the meanings of words and word groups as well as the speech forms of these expressions are culturally and ideologically linked to ‘coloured’ people. Without insight into and cognizance of these expressions and their meanings, the linking of signifiers to signifieds would be an arduous task.

The continuous appearance of the devices such as the lexical devices and other devices used in a syntactic context mentioned previously not only portray a deliberate deviation from *standard* Afrikaans, but focuses attention on the deviant code itself. This intentionally organised foregrounding of the code by means of various recurring and identifiable techniques echoes a distinction made by Van Zyl, in *An Introduction to Contemporary Literary Theory* (Ryan & Van Zyl 1982:70). Van Zyl views this type of device as aesthetic in the sense that it depicts a particular relationship between the message and itself. Her explanation is this:

Because the aesthetic sign tends to be analogical and iconic, it draws attention to or “foregrounds” itself, emphasising its own shapes and beauties as code. Instead of being primarily a vehicle for information, the aesthetic object may be seen as having a meaning in and for itself: its deviant encoding procedures emerging as both intentional and systematic.

The various communication functions of the device are regarded by Van Zyl (Ryan & Van Zyl 1982:70) as being both self-reflexive and auto-referential, which is an appropriate introduction to Lotman’s theory concerning iconicity, as discussed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

ICONICITY IN ‘COLOURED’ LITERATURE

3.1 ICONICITY

To understand Lotman’s concept of iconicity better, and in order to interpret this phenomenon appropriately, it is necessary to clarify the notion of the icon. The word ‘icon’ is derived from the Greek *eikōn*, and it is mainly used to describe images and statues, according to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Sykes 1982:494). In semiotics, the term has been modified to refer to a type of imagery used in literature. The term was first coined by Charles Sanders Peirce in *Collected Papers* (1931-33, Vol. 2:§247)³⁵ and it rapidly became a seminal term in modern semiotic theory.

3.1.1 Peircean iconicity

American logician and one of the founding fathers of modern semiotic theory, Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) classified signs into a trichotomy of sign-functions – the *index*, the *symbol* and the *icon*. In his classification, Peirce (1931-33, Vol. 2:§247, 277) distinguishes three classes of *icon* – the image, the diagram and the metaphor. A brief synopsis of Peirce’s *index* and *symbol* is set out below, because these two sign-functions coincide with Lotman’s theory (as mentioned in Section 2.3.2.2 of this study) concerning metaphors and the imagery that they produce. These sign-functions also correspond with Lotman’s classification of the *icon*. Peirce’s classification of the diagram is omitted from the discussion because it is centred on paintings and drawings and does not have any direct bearing on the selected theories of Lotman, or the three texts under discussion.

35 In the collected works of Peirce, references to C.S. Peirce’s work are to volumes and paragraphs, not to pages. Paragraph numbers are preceded by § .

Peirce (1931-33, Vol. 2:§248) views an *indexical* sign as ‘a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that object’. The most common example is that of smoke representing fire. In this category, Peirce also includes the pointing (index) finger which relates to the pointed-to object through physical contiguity, the rolling gait of the sailor indicating his profession, and a knock on the door which points to someone outside it (Elam 1980:21-22).

The *symbol* is defined by Peirce (1931-33, Vol. 2:§249) as ‘a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas’. Elam (1980:22) interprets this as a conventional and unmotivated relationship between the ‘sign-vehicle’ or signifier and the signified, because no similitude or physical connections exist between the two. He specifies the linguistic sign as the most obvious example of a symbol. An example of this type of symbol is the set of non-verbal gestures indicating ‘yes’ and ‘no’, which are not dependent on any specific language (Hawkes 1977:128-130; Eagleton 1983:87).

An *icon*, on the other hand, is described by Peirce (1931-33, Vol. 2:§247) as

... a sign which refers to the object that it denotes merely by virtue of characters of its own, and which it possesses. ... Anything whatever, be it quality, existent individual, or law, is an Icon of anything, in so far as it is like that thing and used as a sign of it.

Although iconicity is usually associated with visual signs, where the similitude involved is most readily apparent, it is a mistake to limit the notion only to visual images. The above assertion by Peirce virtually encompasses ‘anything whatever’, which seems to allow for the inclusion of verbal and non-verbal signs. Elam (1980:23), quoting Patrice Pavis (1976:13) in a discussion concerning signs in the theatre, agrees with Pavis that ‘the language of the actor is iconized in being spoken by the actor’. This means that the discourse of the actor becomes the representation of something supposedly equivalent to it. Elam is convinced that during dramatic performances especially, the audience is encouraged to take both the linguistic signs and all other representational elements as directly analogous to the denoted objects (Elam 1980:23). The following comment by Peirce (1931-33, Vol. 3:§433) corroborates the above observations of Elam and Pavis:

Not only is the outward significant word or mark a sign, but the image which it is expected to excite in the mind of the receiver will likewise be a sign – a sign by resemblance, or, as we say, an *icon* – of the similar image in the mind of the deliverer.

This implies that the iconic sign is not necessarily visual, but can also include a verbal representation, as long as the image reveals some resemblance between the sign and the object to which it refers. This means that not only a photograph, a drawing or a painting of the actual object should be considered an icon, but also linguistic signs which reveal a resemblance to the object, however obscure.

An example of the visual nature of an iconic sign is the blue and red lights used by the police and the ambulance services respectively. In South Africa, a flashing blue light mounted on a vehicle is an accepted code that signifies 'police'. Similarly, a red light would indicate 'ambulance', even though there are no verbal signs. But this does not mean that remote societies such as those in the Amazon jungle would automatically comply with or even access the meaning. They will in all probability assign a new meaning to these signals that depends on their personal and communal interpretation of the sign, and also the code that they use to express the signified (in so far as that society has encountered the signified at all). Signification generally occurs when a signal provokes a response from an addressee or when someone is called upon to assign meaning to something. The signal relies on a code for its meaning, and the meaning depends largely on a community or society that conventionalises the specific code concerned.

Verbal icons operate on the same principles as the visual icons discussed above. A verbal iconic sign also relies on a linguistic sign for conventionalisation, and a code and community or society for its meaning, in terms of Peirce's (1931-33, Vol. 3:§433) description quoted above. The image in the minds of the sender and the recipient may not always coincide. An example is the word 'bulldozer', which appears in both *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:11) and *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (Pearce 1988b:22). Conventionally, the word is used to describe a machine used for clearing land in order to build. In both dramas, the word is used as a verbal icon, and signifies the powerful, wanton

and ruthless acts of destruction of the homes of powerless people. Such an act easily evokes a conditioned response in people who have undergone the specific trauma of losing their homes in this manner. In those who have not, this verbal iconic sign would not necessarily evoke the intended imagery, but may merely signify a machine used to level the ground for building. This example demonstrates that the interpretation of specific verbal iconic signs depends largely on knowledge of the code in which the iconic sign has been conventionalised.

Although Peirce's comment (1931-33, Vol. 3:§433), mentioned above, envisions that the image in the mind of the recipient should be similar to the image in the mind of the sender, this is not always the case. Unless there is correspondence in the code used – for example, a cultural correlation – misinterpretation could easily result. Umberto Eco (1976:204) mentions this point in his study, *A Theory of Semiotics*:

... to say that a certain image is similar to something else does not eliminate the fact that similarity is also a matter of cultural convention.

According to Eco (1976:204), culture allows a recipient to draw the necessary analogy between the 'standing-for' and the 'stood-for' objects, whatever the actual material or structural equivalence between them. Eco's point is a fitting introduction to Lotman's (1977:55) complex theory, which states that human culture is organically linked to the use of iconic signs:

The signs of a natural language, conventional with regard to signifier and signified, and intelligible only within a particular code, can easily become unintelligible, and where the coding semantic system is enmeshed in the life of society, the signs can easily prove false. The sign as a source of information can just as easily become a source of social misinformation.

It is clear that Lotman regards culture as a distinguishing factor when it comes to sign systems, and particularly to iconic signs. This point recurs throughout Lotman's theory, which is discussed in detail below, and is vital to the ensuing discussion.

3.1.2 Lotman's theory of iconicity

Lotman's concept of the iconic sign is similar to that of Peirce, but is perhaps slightly more complex. Lotman is convinced that in the process of artistic communication, artistic texts are transformed into codes and modelling systems that are comprised of diverse iconic signs. These signs (Lotman 1977:55) are characterised by various intersections or demarcations of the expression plane and the content plane:

Verbal art begins with an attempt to overcome the fundamental property of a word as a linguistic sign – the arbitrariness of the connection between the planes of expression and content; it constructs a verbal artistic model according to the iconic principle, as in the fine arts. This is not accidental, but organically linked to the use of signs in human culture.

The above extract indicates that Lotman views culture as the basis for all signs. Even more important is the realisation that he distinguishes the icon as a means of overcoming 'the fundamental property of a word as a linguistic sign'. This implies that conventional words with deep cultural connotations could be used as icons to signify diverse images which defy the arbitrary connection between the two planes (the expression and the content plane), so that the recipient is presented with a more comprehensive image. Lotman (1977:56) refers to these images as *secondary representational verbal signs*:

From the material of natural language, a system of signs that are conventional but so comprehensible to an entire collective that their conventionality ceases to be felt against the background of other, more specialized languages, there arises a secondary representational sign (which could very well correspond to the 'image' of traditional literary theory). This secondary representational sign has the properties of iconic signs: it bears a direct resemblance to the object; it is graphic; it gives the impression of being less dependent on a code and therefore would seem to ensure great truthfulness and greater intelligibility than conventional signs.

The correspondence of iconic signs and imagery in traditional literary theory has, to a large extent, been examined indirectly in the discussion of metaphors and idiomatic expressions in Chapter 2. Although Lotman's focus is on the resemblance and similarity of the iconic sign to specified objects, the ensuing discussion in this chapter focuses on the explicit

image of signs that linguistically express particular objects in language, but which represent different signifieds. To augment this point, the discussion includes an examination of linguistic signs which perform a dual role as secondary representational signs. Lotman (1977:56) makes provision for this phenomenon in his study, and states:

This sign has two inseparable aspects: its similarity to the object designated and its dissimilarity to the same object. One feature is always accompanied by the other.

In other words, these iconic signs could bear a direct resemblance to specific objects, for instance, a graphic similarity between the signifier and signified or between the structure of the sign and its content. In such a case, the sign does not need the application of complex codes before it is understood. Simultaneously, these iconic signs could also differ from these designated objects, in the sense that the signs could correlate ‘with many attendant historical, cultural and psychological structures’ unknown to the reader (Lotman 1977:285). Although the correlation of these signs to the above-mentioned structures is discussed in detail in Chapter 5, the analogies are also pertinent to the current discussion.

3.2 ICONICITY IN THE SELECTED LITERATURE

Iconicity in the selected literature is both abundant and varied. The icons chosen for this discussion, namely ‘Meneer’ [Mister], ‘die man met die notice’ [the man with the notice], ‘skollies’ [gangsters], ‘Wittes’ [Whites], ‘Haitie-taitie Bruinmense’ [Hoity-toity Brown-people], ‘poelies’ [police], ‘Ambulance’ and ‘Bulldozers’, taken from Small’s *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978), are culturally and historically based, and spring from the persecution, oppression, harassment or injustice suffered by ‘coloured’ people during the apartheid era. These icons are discussed in detail in Sections 3.2.1.1 to 3.2.1.8.

Although the selected iconic signs are an integral part of the expression and content planes defined by Lotman (1977:55), their exposition and interpretation are complex because of the historical and cultural connotations of these signs. Recognising the deviating intersection (or what Lotman calls demarcation) between expression and content is

complex because, in the selected literature, three variations of the deviance function concurrently.

The first type generally conforms to *standard* Afrikaans principles, in other words the expression plane coincides with the content plane of the usage. The difference lies in the interpretation of specific utterances in the sentence which alter the conventional content (meaning) – an example is the word ‘Meneer’ [Mister] (Small 1978:11) which is mostly used either as a title for a male adult, or as a designation for someone in authority.

The second type of deviance appears to conform to *standard* Afrikaans principles, but differs in the sense that the expression plane deviates from the content plane, because the expressions which are derived from English words and used in Afrikaans sentences contain historical, cultural or ideological connotations peculiar to ‘coloured’ usage. An example is the word ‘poelies’ [police] (Small 1978:11), which is discussed in Section 3.2.1.6 of this study.

The third type digresses from the conventional meaning from the outset, because the expressions deviate from *standard* Afrikaans principles, and also contain historical, cultural or ideological connotations that are again peculiar to ‘coloured’ usage. An example is the expression ‘Haitie-taitie Bruinmense’ [Hoity-toity Brown-people] (Small 1978:11), which describes wealthy ‘coloured’ people who have been assimilated into White society, as mentioned earlier. A full explanation of this expression is given in Section 3.2.1.5.

3.2.1 Icons in the texts

To supplement and emphasise the points mentioned above, an extract from *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:11) is analysed below. Each of the signifiers and signifieds encountered is then compared to similar iconic structures detected in *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983) and in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (Pearce 1988b) or related texts. This text from *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:11) has been expressly selected for examination because the iconic signs that appear in the text contain the deviations mentioned, and include illustrations of the similarities and diversities that govern the expression and content planes

as far as meaning is concerned. Parts of the text conform to *standard* Afrikaans principles, while other sections deviate from these principles in respect of a specifically ‘coloured’ ideology, and a different language code.

Joanie’s retrospective remembrance of the events that took place prior to her being institutionalised in a mental facility projects the chronological sequence of events which unfolds during the course of the play. Though there seems to be a causal progression from one utterance to the other, these utterances represent disparate occasions and different dilemmas that Joanie and her family are forced to endure. It seems a deliberate choice on the part of the dramatist not only to foreground the sequence of events in this manner, but also to use this method to introduce some of the thematic structures such as the displacement of the ‘coloured’ community and the various facets of discrimination that are integral to the plot.

The selected icons in the text (Small 1978:11) are printed in bold for convenience:

JOANIE: **Meneer** ... kan Meneer-hulle ... probeer verstaan ... (*Pause. Haar stem klim tot ’n klimaks op.*) Dis **die man ... met die** ... (*Pause.*) **Notice** ... (*Pause.*) Dis die **skollies**, die skollies ... Die **Wittes** ... Dis die Wittes ... hulle wat ons huis ... af ... **Haitie-taitie Bruinmense** ... Hulle ook ... Dis die **poelies** ... **Ambulance** ... luister ... (*Sirene van ’n ambulans.*) Hulle ... stoot onse huise plat ... Nee! Nee! ... Wat het ons ... dan gemaak? (*Dan skreeu die stem. Snorkgeluide van ’n stootskraiper.*) **Bulldozers!** Bulldozers! (*Dan pleit die stem.*) Waarnatoe? ... Meneer ... Waarnatoe ...

[Sir ... can’t all of you ... try and understand ... (*Pause. Her voice reaches a climax.*) It’s the man ... with the ... (*Pause.*) Notice ... (*Pause.*) It’s the gangsters, the gangsters ... The Whites ... It’s the Whites ... who took our house ... Hoity-toity Coloureds ... They also ... It’s the police ... Ambulance ... listen ... (*Siren of an ambulance.*) They ... pushing down our houses ... No! No! ... What did we ... do? (*The voice screams amidst the droning of a bulldozer.*) Bulldozers! Bulldozers! (*Then the voice pleads.*) Where to? ... Sir ... Where to ...]

3.2.1.1 ‘Meneer’ [*Mister*] and related terms

In the first line of the text, Joanie uses the term ‘Meneer’, which can be translated as ‘mister’. In South Africa, the title is normally used to refer to males, but it is also used to refer to males in authority. Joanie uses the term while speaking to a City Council official, and supports the utterance with the hyphenated pronoun ‘hulle’, which not only refers to the person to whom Joanie is speaking, but also the institution he represents. Although the terms ‘Meneer’ and ‘Meneer-hulle’ are conventional in terms of respect in *standard* Afrikaans terminology, they may contain negative connotations when used by ‘coloured’ people.

During the apartheid era, Blacks and ‘coloureds’ were expected to refer to Whites as ‘baas’ [boss]. Most ‘coloured’ people (with a few exceptions) refrained from using the term ‘baas’. Instead, they used the term ‘Meneer’ which, when articulated submissively, served the same purpose. The expressions ‘Meneer’ and ‘baas’ represent the ideological subservience which was expected from the Black and ‘coloured’ races by the Whites in authority during the apartheid era. It was difficult to gauge whether all Whites expected such subordination, because during the apartheid era these expressions and the ancillary subordination were commonplace, and were not repudiated by the recipients. These terms were also used by Whites in their daily discourse when referring to each other, but then the terms normally connoted (mutual) respect.

In the case of ‘coloured’ people, it could be argued that the use of ‘Meneer’ was a method to feign respect and subordination to suit the occasion, while actually concealing contempt, dislike or resentment. Thus, the term ‘Meneer’ embraces the slippage between two signs, namely the conventional mark of respect and its opposite, disrespect and even contempt. Joanie’s subservient utterance not only signifies the heartless White official who is evicting her from her home, but encompasses White authority in general (‘Meneer-hulle’) that is, those who make unjust laws, those who implement these laws, and those who stand by silently because the laws do not affect them personally. The supplementary utterance ‘probeer verstaan’ [try to understand], while sounding like a plea, is also an indictment against the authorities who have created the crisis, as well as against those who have not questioned or vetoed the decision to forcibly evict ‘coloured’ people from their homes. There is also slippage between the character’s usage (Joanie seems respectful, even afraid,

and old habits of politeness die hard in a character who was brought up to be decent and polite) and the effects achieved by the playwright. While Joanie's plea and her use of these terms are not impolite, the audience/reader will interpolate anger, an indictment, and other negative emotions.

In *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983), the word 'Meneer' does not appear at all. Here it is substituted by other icons with the same meaning. An example is the character Ralph's use of the word 'baas' [boss] while he is telling a derogatory joke (Snyders 1983:4). Ralph merely uses the word to poke fun at the ideology of those Whites who see themselves as bosses. Like Joanie, Snyders's characters do not differentiate between a 'baas' (Snyders 1983:4), a 'whitey' (Snyders 1983:29), a 'witman' (Snyders 1983:30), or the 'government' (Snyders 1983:31). Their understanding is that all Whites are responsible for the alienation that 'coloured' people have to endure. Indifference and dislike towards Whites can be detected in a conversation between Ralph and Sammy (Snyders 1983:30):

RALPH: Let me put it to you this way: as dji "whitey" sê, bedoel dji dit nie miskien met contempt nie?

SAMMY: (*verward maar denkend*) E ...

RALPH: PRECISELY! Wat dji regtig bedoel is die wit vark! Is ek reg? Is ek reg?

[RALPH: Let me put it to you this way: when you say 'whitey', do you not perhaps say it with contempt?

SAMMY: (*confused but thinking*) Uh ...

RALPH: PRECISELY! What you really mean is 'white pig'! Am I right? Am I right?]

The same antipathy is evident in Pearce's drama *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b). Although the expressions 'baas' [boss] and 'Meneer' [Mister] do not appear in the drama, the expressions 'Boere' [Whites] (Pearce 1988b:3), 'Government' (Pearce 1988b:4), and 'lanies' [Whites] (Pearce 1988b:19) are substituted. These carry a comparable contemptuous signification.

The indifference, antipathy and dislike towards Whites in general are part of 'coloured' ideology and can be traced as far back as the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652 (Snyders 1983:59). This attitude was intensified by the Population Registration Act of 1950, which

further divided the 'coloureds' into approximately seven groups; the Group Areas Act of 1950, which confined the 'coloureds' to specified areas; the Separate Amenities Act of 1953, which restricted 'coloured' people in their use of other social facilities; and the removal of the 'coloureds' from the voters' roll in 1956, which politically ostracised the 'coloured' population (Terreblanche 2002:334-335). These laws are an element of 'coloured' life integral to the selected dramas.

The linguistic sign 'Meneer' creates a basic conventional verbal image (icon) which complies with the requirements for an icon at the expression and the content levels. It also conforms to *standard* Afrikaans vocabulary. However, when the more intricate cultural baggage surrounding the term is examined according to Lotman's theory (discussed above), this conventionality is disrupted (what Lotman refers to as 'demarcated') and transformed by the icon, on both the expression and the content planes. The iconic sign, by correlating with historical and cultural structures, produces a dissimilar image which is juxtaposed with the similar image.

3.2.1.2 'Die man met die notice' [*the man with the notice*] and related concepts

The second iconic sign selected for discussion is the one in which Joanie's mind wanders to the day when her family receives the notice that they have to move (Small 1978:11). The iconic sign 'Meneer' is supplemented by the icon 'die man met die notice'. The similarity of the sign to convention is that the appearance of a man with a notice is a normal occurrence when people fail to abide by the rules of a landlord. Usually, an eviction notice is served by a messenger of the court. The document informs the tenants about the breach of rules, but generally allows the tenants an opportunity to defend themselves against the allegation in court. The dissimilarity of the sign is that Joanie and her family are being forcibly removed from their home for no apparent reason and without a hearing. Considering the imagery, the man with the notice could be regarded as symbolic of a callous and cruel landlord, a henchman for the government, while the notice represents the unjust laws imposed upon the 'coloured' community. The icon can also be likened to the proverbial harbinger of disaster. It not only signifies the fact that Joanie and her family will be reduced to poverty-stricken people living in a shack in the bush, but also foreshadows

the same fate for most of the ‘coloured’ community. The intensity of the imagery is reinforced by the comment in the didascalia – ‘*Haar stem klim tot ’n klimaks op*’ [*Her voice reaches a climax*].

Although the same iconic sign does not occur in *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983), the displacement factor which is part of the signified is addressed by the characters. Snyders’s characters envision the forced eviction of the ‘coloured’ community as having far-reaching consequences. In a discussion that includes Ralph, Sally and Sammy (Snyders 1983:23), for example, the characters conclude that the ‘coloured’ community has been ‘... Misplaced, displaced, replaced – Disgraced’. According to these three characters, the heritage of the ‘coloured’ people has been ‘misplaced’ (lost, forgotten or mislaid). They have allowed themselves to be ‘displaced’ as a community (dislodged by the Group Areas Act) and ‘replaced’ by a White minority government as citizens and proprietors. In a sense, they are ‘disgraced’ because of their failure to reciprocate.

The iconic sign of the man with the eviction notice does occur in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (Pearce 1988b). The protagonist, Bobby, feels that all his beliefs, hopes and dreams have been shattered, and that his relationship with his family (especially with his father) has been compromised by the eviction notice from the government (Pearce 1988b:8):

BOBBY: My solid rock wat ge-crush is deur 'n Boere- eviction-notice!

[My solid rock that has been crushed by a White- eviction-notice!]

The ‘solid rock’ alludes to his father, who, according to Bobby, has always been a stalwart when the Lewis family was faced with adversity. Bobby’s confidence is shattered when his father succumbs to intimidation. The phrase ‘solid rock’ also has Biblical echoes. The *Good News Bible* (Bible Society of South Africa 1977:119), contains a similar iconic sign (John 1:42) in which Simon (one of the disciples) is renamed Cephas (Peter) by Jesus. The Latin name ‘Petrus’ means ‘rock’. The similarity between the two icons is that many Christians regard Peter as a founder and guardian of the Christian Faith, which is not unlike

Bobby's faith in his father as head and guardian of the Lewis family. Another similitude is Peter's weakness when Jesus is arrested, which is similar to Bobby's father's submission. It could be speculated that Bobby has not only lost faith in his father, but also in the Christian doctrine.

The man with the eviction notice as an iconic sign also signifies the non-participation of the 'coloured' people in the decision-making attached to their eviction and removal. Joanie's astonishment and disbelief concerning the actions and callousness of the government officials is discernible in her inquiry (Small 1978:11) 'Wat het ons ... dan gemaak? [What have we done?]'. Snyders's characters feel denigrated because they have not been consulted (Snyders 1983:23), while Bobby's emotions are marked by what could be seen as a threat, a warning and a curse (Pearce 1988b:23):

BOBBY: Daarvoor gaan hulle nog kak die honde!

[For that, they are going to shit (pay), the dogs!]

The use of 'hulle' [they] in the above extract is similar to Joanie's utterance (Small 1978:11) 'Meneer-hulle' (the other Whites). But added to this personal pronoun in Bobby's utterance is the pejorative metaphor 'honde' [dogs] which echoes Ralph's utterance 'wit vark' [White pig] (Snyders 1983:30). Although Joanie's utterance may seem neutral, all three expressions imply the contempt, antipathy and dislike directed at all Whites, irrespective of their involvement or non-involvement.

The 'man with the notice', interpreted according Lotman's (1977:56) theory, has two inseparable aspects, the conventional meaning, and the historical and ideological connotations discussed above. The demarcation is enhanced by the *original* Afrikaans phrase 'die man met die notice', which contains the English word 'notice'. This deviation from *standard* Afrikaans also reinforces the cultural aspect of the icon.

3.2.1.3 'Skollies' [Gangsters] and 'tsotsis'

In the third line of the extract from *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:11), Joanie's mind jumps from the occasion of 'die man met die notice' knocking on the door, to another occasion when three 'skollies' try to break down the door of the shack, their last 'refuge'.

The term 'skollie' is a derivative of the *standard* Afrikaans term 'skorrie-morrie'. Both terms are described in the *Groot Woordeboek* (Kritzinger *et al.* 1970:478,480) as meaning 'hooligan', in contrast to the definition in the *HAT* (Schoonees *et al.* 1976:768) which seems to have a more racial approach, and describes a 'skollie' as 'Lid van 'n bende, raserige, bakleierige Kaapse Kleurling wat voetgangers aanval en beroof' [member of a noisy and quarrelsome Cape 'coloured' gang, who attacks pedestrians and robs them]. The *HAT* (Schoonees *et al.* 1976:771) defines the word 'skorrie-morrie' as 'gespuis' or 'gepeupel', which refers to or describes such a character as part of the lowest class of the community. The word 'skollie' is mainly used in the Cape and, judging by the actions of the characters described in Small's play, it is logical to assume that the term incorporates all of the above meanings.

Joanie's allegation involving the 'skollies' refers to two separate occasions, namely after the Galant family is evicted from their home in Woodstock, and after they are evicted from the council flat. After the Galant family are forced out of Woodstock, they rent a council flat where Joseph, Joanie's husband, is attacked, beaten and robbed by the 'skollies'. Joseph, the breadwinner, is rendered unfit to work, and loses his job as a result of his injuries. The Galant family are evicted from the 'council-flat' (Small 1978:32) because they fall behind with the rent. The family is then forced to live in a shack in the bush, where they are once again plagued by 'skollies' who break down the door and attack them. Joanie's reasoning is probably based on the fact that neither of the above incidents would have occurred if they had not been evicted from Woodstock.

Snyders does not refer to 'skollies' in his play, even though his characters live in the Cape. Pearce's exclusion of the term is understandable because he lives in Gauteng, where the term is not often used. However, his character Bobby, in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (Pearce 1988b:19), uses a similar term, 'tsotsi', which is defined by the *HAT* (Schoonees *et al.* 1976:904) as a 'Jong naturel wat rondloop om misdade te pleeg' [young Black man who goes about committing crimes]. The description is also culturally bound, and the meaning

corresponds with that of the term ‘skollie’. It is worth noting that Bobby refers to himself as a ‘tsotsi’ (Pearce 1988b:21):

BOBBY: Is jy so unfit ou Bob? Jy wat so 'n wakeup
Tsotsi is?

[Are you so unfit old Bob? A dynamic person and doer like you?]

Here, a type of self-reflexive humour is applied. Instead of avoiding the stigma of being associated with the term ‘tsotsi’ [criminal], Bobby chooses to identify himself as one. During the apartheid era, ‘coloured’ and Black youths were treated as potential criminals by the police, the only difference being that the terms used to identify the youths differed in the Cape and Gauteng. In the Cape, the youths were seen as potential ‘skollies’, while in Gauteng, they were regarded as potential ‘tsotsis’. Consequently, the difference between being a ‘tsotsi’ and being regarded as one became insignificant. Youths prided themselves in being able to evade persecution and prosecution by the police. This resulted in the iconic sign as being elevated to allude to someone who is streetwise, a dynamic person or a doer, reinforced by Bobby’s chosen adjective ‘wake-up’.

Although the term ‘skollie’ has been assimilated as part of *standard* Afrikaans, it is nevertheless still part of *original* Afrikaans and part of a specific culture. While it could be argued that the icon originated as a result of totalitarian governance, or from what Van der Ross (1979:10) identifies as a ‘sub-culture of poverty’, the important point is that the imagery draws its content from a historical and culturally based ideology.

3.2.1.4 ‘Wittes’ [*Whites*], ‘Whiteys’ and Boere

The next iconic sign used by Joanie in the extract (Small 1978:11) is the term ‘Wittes’ (in the same line as the term ‘skollies’). The manner in which this signifier is used by Joanie seems to include all Whites, regardless of whether they were actively responsible for the predicament of her family and the ‘coloured’ community or not. It is not easy to follow Joanie’s train of thought, but, judging from her utterances, it seems that Joanie believes that all the Whites of South Africa who were alive at the time should have been aware that these

laws were being tabled, accepted and executed. Whether Joanie's belief is valid is difficult to gauge. A similar allegation was made against the German nation after Hitler's reign of terror with regard to Nazi persecution of the Jews. Nonetheless, Joanie's brother Davy (Small 1978:45) supports her allegation that the Whites and the 'skollies' are to blame for their predicament:

DAVY: (*Hy is dadelik driftig.*) Hulle? Ek sal hulle vrek ... Sal hulle ...sal hulle ... vrek ... Skollies! ... (*Dan 'n ander koers in.*) 'Is die Wittes wat ons ... (*Hy wieg rond.*) Group areas ... Ytgesmyt yt onse hys yt ...

[*(He becomes angry instantly.)* Them? I'll kill them ... I'll ... I'll ... kill ... Gangsters! ... (*Adopts a different course.*) It's the Whites who ... (*Swaying around.*) Group areas ... Thrown out of our house ...]

Both Joanie and Davy seem to reason that if the 'Whites' had not introduced the Group Areas Act, their problems would not have arisen. They would not have been forcibly removed from their home, nor would they have experienced any of the trauma caused by the 'skollies'.

The characters in *Political Joke* (1983) use a similar iconic sign ('Wittes') to refer to Whites. Whites are seen by the characters in the play to represent the 'law', and although Ralph's subsequent argument throughout the drama is based on respecting the laws laid down by the government, his statement regarding Whites (1983:40) is somewhat sarcastic and cynical:

RALPH: As dji wit is, is dit laaik die will of God om al die facilities te hê om mooi te bly, jonk te bly, en in power te bly.

[If you are White, it is like the will of God that you have all the facilities to remain beautiful, to remain young, and to stay in power.]

Like the rest of the characters, Ralph resigns himself to the fact that Whites are seemingly supported by all the elements that represent power, including the will of God. The feeling of contempt that should be directed at the Whites responsible for government decisions is

transferred to all Whites, because they all enjoy the ‘facilities’ that government decisions provide.

Pearce’s character Bobby in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b) also blames the Whites for his predicament. According to him, the Whites separated him from his parents, his family and the community of Marabastad. He feels that he has been totally dispossessed (Pearce 1988b:23):

BOBBY: Julle Boere het alles gevat.

[You Whites have taken everything.]

Although Bobby uses a different icon (‘Boere’ – see discussion in Section 2.3.2.2), the signified remains the same. His anger and contempt include all Whites, regardless of whether they are English-speaking, Afrikaans-speaking or representatives of the government.

Although the icon ‘Wittes’ [Whites] may seem conventionally to coincide with the expression and the content planes in both *standard* Afrikaans and English, cultural and historic elements disrupt this view. In the selected dramas, the icon incorporates a wide range of signifieds and connotations which include and which can be equated with other icons and metaphors such as ‘wit vark’ [White pig] (Snyders 1983:30), ‘Boere’ [Whites] (Pearce 1988b:3), and ‘lanies’ [Whites] (Pearce 1988b:19). All these images have negative connotations, and are indirectly levelled at all Whites.

3.2.1.5 ‘Haitie-taitie Bruinmense’ [*Hoity-toity Brown people*] and related terms

Following her reproach of the ‘Wittes’, Joanie’s deranged thoughts next meander towards the ‘coloured’ people that fraternise with Whites who, in Joanie’s opinion, are responsible for her predicament (Small 1978:11). Joanie uses the iconic sign ‘Haitie-taitie (/haiti-taiti/) Bruinmense’ [Brown people] to refer to these ‘coloured’ people. The term ‘Haitie-taitie’ is derived from the English adjective ‘hoity-toity’ which is defined by *Funk and Wagnalls New Practical Standard Dictionary* (Funk 1946:633) as ‘Self-important; putting on airs’, in

other words, people who behave in an arrogant way, as if they are superior to others. The manner in which the iconic sign is used in the extract is also derogatory, similar to the one mentioned above ('Wittes'), but is chiefly directed at 'coloured' people who collaborate with Whites and distance themselves from other 'coloured' people, either because they are materially better off, or because they regard other 'coloured' people to be of a lower social class. A book by R.H. du Pré, *Separate but unequal: the 'coloured' people of South Africa* (1994), discusses this aspect in detail. According to Du Pré (1994:217), even a lighter skin or a smoother hair texture could be a reason for aloofness. Davy's soliloquy (Small 1978:33) as he goes past a restaurant portrays some of the abovementioned contempt and the bitterness such collaboration and arrogance generate:

DAVY: ... Smárt, hulle, daarso binnekant. Coloureds wat met Witmense mix, like, Ja! ... Hulle rook só ... (*Hy wys hoe hulle rook met 'gesofistikeerde' vingers.*) ... en eet só ... (*Wys weer die sofistikasie.*) ... en drink só ... (*Wys.*) Ja! En verstaan kamma nie meer Afrikaans nie! High society! ...

[... Smart, those who are inside. Coloureds who mix with Whites, like ... Yes! ... They smoke this way ... (*He demonstrates the 'sophistication' by the movement of his fingers and hand.*) ... and eat this way ... (*Demonstrates the sophistication.*) ... and drink this way ... (*Demonstrates.*) Yes! And pretend not to understand Afrikaans! High society! ...]

In Davy's opinion, fraternising with White people is tantamount to betrayal. His mimicry in the above extract is mild compared to his angry retort to his brother-in-law's appeal to keep calm (Small 1978:45):

DAVY: Nee, niks is ôlraait nie! Blêrrie haitie-taitie Brynmense ook ... Erger as die Wittes nog ...

[No, nothing is all right! Bloody hoity-toity Brown people as well ... Even worse than the Whites ...]

While corroborating Joanie's allegation, Davy's sense of repugnance towards these types of 'coloured' people reinforces the iconic sign. 'Coloured' people who collaborate with Whites and conspire against other 'coloureds' who are less fortunate are seen to be worse

than Whites in general. The underlying bitterness against, disappointment with and disgust for these turncoats and sellouts, experienced by both Davy and Joanie, can be traced throughout the play.

In the two other selected dramas, similar iconic signs are evident, but are expressed and signified differently. For instance, the character Ralph in *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983:48) sees ‘coloured’ people who discriminate against others as ‘racist-indoctrinated stooges’. Bobby in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* refers to collaborators as ‘government stooges’ (Pearce 1988b:4), and the people who submit to White ideology as ‘cowards’ (Pearce 1988b:2) and ‘quitters’ (Pearce 1988b:3).

Most of the animosities discussed above can be traced back to the discrimination entrenched legislatively by apartheid. The Population Registration Act of 1950, which classified ‘coloured’ people as second-class citizens, not only turned the Black races against each other, but also caused discrimination within ethnic groups. Most ‘coloureds’ did not really realise what second-class citizenship meant and saw the move as a step closer to being White. Actually, the Act ushered in a type of bigotry. According to February (1981), in *Mind your Colour*, Proclamation 123 of 1967 (an amendment to the Population Registration Act of 1950) made it clear that ‘coloureds’ were neither Black nor White. The proclamation classified ‘coloured’ people into seven distinct groups, namely: (1) Cape Coloured; (2) Malay; (3) Griqua; (4) Chinese; (5) Indian; (6) other Asiatic; (7) other Coloured (February 1981:192). This resulted in a bizarre competition as to who would qualify to be top of the list. ‘Coloureds’ who were light-skinned masqueraded as Whites, while Blacks who were light-skinned posed as ‘coloureds’. Many people within the different ethnic groups (with the exception of Whites) tried to be what they were not. This resulted in frustration and name-calling, as discussed in Section 2.3.2.2.

The expression ‘haitie-taitie Bruinmense’, which could basically be considered to have evolved out of envy, could also epitomise an age-old conflict between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’. But it is more likely in this case that the icon signifies anger at the indifference and callousness of some members of the group towards others in the same group. Actions and mannerisms such as those mentioned by Davy (Small 1978:33) automatically invoke a negative icon, which is generally accompanied by a totally derogatory meaning in the

context. Besides the contemptuous denotation, the icon (as explained above) also has historical, political and cultural connotations.

3.2.1.6 'Poelies' [Police] and related iconic signs

In line five of the extract from *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:11), Joanie's incoherent thoughts also linger on the icon 'poelies' [police]. Although this signifier normally signifies an organisation meant to uphold the law and to serve and protect the country's citizens, Joanie and her family hold a contrasting view. In the extract, Joanie is probably recalling the time when her family was evicted from the family home in Woodstock. Those families in Woodstock who resisted were forcibly removed by the police. She could also be remembering the night her husband was attacked and robbed on his way from work, when the police were not there to protect him. Although this is the only time that Joanie mentions the police, it is clear from her utterance 'Dis die polies' [It's the police], that she also blames the police for the family's misfortunes. Davy sums up the family's view of the police when their shanty is attacked (Small 1978:53):

DAVY: Waar's hulle? Poelies, vylgoed ... Ry rond wanneer hulle
nie nodig is nie. Vang dronkmense wat niks kan doen nie.
...Wanneer hulle daar móét wies, is hulle nêrens om te help
nie ...

[Where are they? Police, scum ... Drive around when they
are not needed. Arrest drunk people that can't resist. ...
When they should be there, they are not around to assist ...]

Pearce's character Bobby in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b) echoes the same sentiments. The only difference is that Bobby uses both the iconic signs 'cops' and 'polisie', to denote the conflicting function (as he sees it) of the police, namely to persecute the innocent and protect the guilty. He sees the 'cops' not only as the enforcers of unfair laws, who raid shebeens (Pearce 1988b:17), but also as instruments of apartheid who aid in the uprooting and displacement of 'coloured' people (Pearce 1988b:10, 22-23).

Snyders' characters in *Political Joke* (1983) see the police as representing the 'Styt' [state] (Snyders 1983:31, 33, 36, 56). Judging by the various comments made by the characters, they are convinced that the primary task of the police is to arrest people who behave subversively (in terms of unfair laws). In a debate involving Sally, Sammy and Ralph, it is Sally, backed by Sammy, who accuses Ralph of being a Communist because his statements border on communist beliefs (Snyders 1983:53):

- SAMMY: (*aan RALPH*) Daar; dji's oek nou in die kak. Oppas dat dji nie opgetel word en gegooi word op Robben Eiland, of daar rond nie.
- RALPH: Ek het niks subversive gesê nie. ...
- SAMMY: Dji embarrass maar net die Styt.
- [SAMMY: (*speaking to Ralph*) There, now you are also in trouble. Mind that you are not arrested and thrown on Robben Island, or somewhere else.
- RALPH: I said nothing subversive. ...
- SAMMY: You are merely embarrassing the State.]

Sammy's reference to Robben Island alludes to the apartheid era, when any political opinion that criticised segregation was looked upon as subversive. People who were convicted of such an offence were 'banned' or incarcerated as political prisoners, some of whom were kept on Robben Island. Also, any unruly situation concerning 'coloured' or Black people was looked upon as dissidence and as an attempt to overthrow the government. This was and still is the reason that the police force is equated with both fear and resentment. The fear springs from the fact that arrest and brutality often go hand in hand.

During the apartheid era, political offenders were prosecuted and were dealt with severely. Any person suspected of dissidence could be jailed for unspecified periods of time without trial (90 days or 180 days) according to the Suppression of Communism Act No 44 of 1950 and the Terrorism Act No 83 of 1967. These acts ensured that people could be jailed almost indefinitely at the discretion of the police. In a case where evidence could not be obtained

immediately, the suspect was officially released, but immediately taken into custody again under suspicion. This procedure could continue for an unspecified period, and usually wound up with the suspect unjustly convicted and imprisoned (Cameron & Spies 1986:282, 304).

Sammy's accusation in the above quotation is merely retaliation for Ralph's sarcastic threat to Sammy (Snyders 1983:29) involving the Terrorism Act (1967) mentioned in the above discussion:

RALPH: *(sit sy hand vaderlik op SAMMY se skouer, sag en sarkasties)* Nie, SAMMY. Djy kan maar net opgesluit word onner die Terrorism Act van 1967 – of daar rond, section 83 – of daar rond; die kortste straf is maar net vyf jaar – of daar rond, en die highest penalty is maar net die doodstraf – of daar rond.

[(Puts his hand in a fatherly manner on Sammy's shoulder, saying softly and sarcastically) No, Sammy. You can only be arrested under the Terrorism Act of 1967 – or thereabouts, section 83 – or thereabouts; the minimum penalty is only five years – or thereabouts, and the maximum penalty is only the death sentence – or thereabouts.]

Even petty offences were regarded as contempt of the authorities. Bobby in Pearce's drama *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b:17) recalls how his father and the members of his father's music band were picked up for drinking in a 'shebeen'. Instead of letting them off with a warning, the police drove around with them in the police van for a whole day, only releasing them late that night. This type of ridicule was common and naturally resulted in resentment.

The iconic sign 'poelies' [police] diverges from conventional usage because it conforms to neither the *standard* Afrikaans spelling ('polisie'), nor the English spelling (police). Moreover, as discussed previously, the expression contains historical, cultural and ideological connotations which are often associated with 'coloured' people, especially regarding their feelings and attitudes concerning the police. The deviation of the expression

plane from the content plane (see Section 3.1.2) confirms Lotman's theory by illustrating the icon's similarity to the object designated and its dissimilarity to the same object.

3.2.1.7 'Ambulance'

Immediately after using the term 'polies' [police] in the extract (Small 1978:11), Joanie's irrational thoughts are fixed on the term 'Ambulance'. Although Joanie's thoughts appear to be hallucinatory, the sign she uses creates the conventional image of an ambulance. The image is fortified by her aural suggestion, 'Luister' [listen], and the didascalia 'sirene van 'n ambulans' [siren of an ambulance] which completes the graphic icon.

The signification of this icon used by Joanie is complex. To Joanie, the 'Ambulance' is also involved in her predicament. For instance, the assault on her husband outside the council flat is highly traumatic, because Joseph almost loses his life. When Joseph is attacked, the ambulance took hours to arrive, partly because Joanie's brother Davy cannot find a telephone that works in order to summon the ambulance. The delay could also have been due to the fact that a separate ambulance service existed for 'coloured' people during the apartheid era. White patients were conveyed in ambulances that were set aside for them, while Blacks, which included 'coloured' patients, were transported separately. This was part of the government's 'separate but equal' policy which is discussed in detail by Du Pré (1994).

Although the signifier 'ambulance' does not appear in the other two selected dramas, Snyders, author of *Political Joke* (1983), describes a similar situation in a poem entitled 'Manie was 'n Moderate' published in *'n Ordinary Mens* (Snyders 1982:45). The poem describes how Manie, who is a 'moderate' and agrees with the government's policy of 'separate but equal', is injured one day in a highway collision. Bleeding and in pain, he awaits the arrival of the ambulance. The ambulance finally arrives, but will not aid or transport him, because he is the wrong colour:

... en daar wag Manie vir 'n ambulance
en 'n separate but equal ambulance kom
maar Manie is die verkeerde kleur;

en Manie wag, en steun en wag. ...

[... and there Manie waits for an ambulance
and a separate but equal ambulance arrives
but Manie is the wrong colour,
and Manie waits, and groans and waits. ...]

Vivian Solomons – a journalist and colleague of both Robert Pearce and Peter Snyders – was involved in a real-life highway collision in 1984 (two years after Snyders published the above poem). The scene and the events that took place after the accident followed the same pattern as those in the poem written by Snyders. Solomons (who was seriously injured) had to wait on the scene, and eventually died of his injuries, because the ambulance personnel were unable to decide whether he was White or ‘coloured’. This incident is mentioned by Pearce in an article entitled ‘Sonder Afskeid’, published in *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* (Pearce 1994:38).

As can be gathered from the above discussion, the conventional image of an ambulance also contains various cultural, historic and political overtones, which could present or express an unfamiliar experience of an otherwise conventional sign. Examples given above such as the scarcity of ambulances when they are needed (especially for people of colour), or laxness when the situation involves ‘coloured’ people, represent the dissimilarity of familiar objects and situations, and propagates Lotman’s theory concerning the two inseparable aspects of the same sign, in other words, the similarity and the dissimilarity of the same object. Also, the deviance of the English word ‘Ambulance’ does not affect the content of the utterance, because the image the utterance represents and the expression and image in its *standard* Afrikaans context are the same. The deviance merely demarcates the presence of a dissimilar image.

3.2.1.8 ‘Bulldozers’

The final iconic sign for discussion is Joanie’s frenzied thoughts about ‘Bulldozers’, which appear twice in the last four lines of the extract (Small 1978:11). Because this icon has been defined and partially discussed in Section 3.1.1 of this study, the following discussion

should be regarded as supplementary to those comments. Some of the political, historical and cultural connotations are elaborated upon below.

The Group Areas Act of 1950, which decreed that various race groups should be relocated to specific areas apart from the Whites, created reluctance among Blacks and ‘coloureds’ to abide by the unjust rules set down by the government. It is not clear whether the reluctance shown by the ‘coloureds’ spurred the government on to adopt sterner measures, but the reaction resulted in dates being set for the removal of these people, by force if necessary. To guarantee that the houses were not re-occupied at a later date, bulldozers were employed to demolish the houses. This caused a lot of resentment among the people who were being forcibly relocated. Many people felt that in the process, their culture and ideology were being destroyed.

Davy in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978:11) confirms this feeling:

DAVY: Maar waarnatoe? Mama is gewoon aan die berg, aan die Kaap, aan die dinge hierso, aan die mense, vir jare en jare ... Mama ...ons bly gelukkig hierso vir vyf-en-twintig jare ... Hoekom?

[But where to? Mama is used to the mountain, to the Cape, to the things here, to the people, for years and years ... Mama ... We have been living here happily for twenty-five years ... Why?]

Although Davy seems to predict only what his mother’s reaction is going to be, his comment reflects a microcosm of ‘coloured’ experience.

The reactions of the characters in Snyders’s *Political Joke* (1983:23) are similar. In a discussion concerning the Group Areas Act of 1950, Sally and Ralph agree that the ‘law’ is to blame for the loss of their heritage and the dilemma they face:

RALPH: Because die law fok baie dinge op.

SALLY: Every removed person suffers from an acute lack of friendship, community spirit, love and sharing. (*Pouse.*) Kan daar liefde wees waar daar wet is?

[RALPH: Because the law fucks up (wrecks) everything.

SALLY: Every removed person suffers from an acute lack of friendship, community spirit, love and sharing. (*Pause.*) Can there be love where there is law?]

As has already been discussed in Section 3.2.1.7, Snyders's characters equate the law with White people, and blame them for the disintegration of families, friends and communities, and the collapse of a society to which they are accustomed.

Pearce's character Bobby, in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b), also blames the government for all the misfortunes he has to endure. Some of these hardships include the demolition of his 'supper table' (Pearce 1988b:4), in other words, the disintegration of his family, the uprooting of the community (Pearce 1988b:4), the destruction of hundreds of years of memories (Pearce 1988b:6,15) and the break-up of marriages, his own in particular (Pearce 1988b:18). In Pearce's drama, the destruction is taken to its logical conclusion, when Bobby is killed by falling rubble as bulldozers push down his home.

In essence, the word 'Bulldozers' becomes synonymous with the relocation of the 'coloured' people. The impression or image that emerges from this icon incorporates the callous behaviour of the government officials and the Whites who were involved, and also the harshness of the 'law' which includes the laws governing the action, and the people who execute these laws. Although the 'Bulldozers' were merely a means to an end for the government, to 'coloured' people who were evicted in this manner, the 'Bulldozers' became an icon that spelled destruction, disaster and insensitivity. As already discussed, many 'coloured' people felt that everyone was against them. The protagonist's comment concerning the bulldozers in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b:22) confirms this:

BOBBY: Hulle het die Army en die Cops vir my gaan haal ... Is 'n hele multiracial gathering hier buite...Lanies en Darkies saam ... Ek skrik hulle nie! Met bulldozers en al.

[They have summoned the Army and the Cops ... There's a multiracial gathering outside ... Whites and Blacks together ... I am not afraid of them! Even with their bulldozers.]

As can be gathered from Bobby's outburst, the bulldozers represent all the images mentioned, namely the government, the Whites, the army, the police and even the Blacks. The signifiers 'Hulle' [They] and 'Lanies' [Whites] in the above extract incorporate the government and the Whites, while the remaining signifiers, 'Army', 'Cops' [Police] and 'Darkies' [Blacks], represent the other entities employed by the government to do their bidding.

Like the word 'Ambulance' discussed above, the word 'Bulldozers' also represents the deviant language code *original* Afrikaans because it is an English word used in a unison with *standard* Afrikaans vocabulary. This type of deviance does not affect the content of the utterance, because the image that the utterance represents in the English, *standard* Afrikaans and the *original* Afrikaans contexts are the same. The deviance merely demarcates the similarity and the dissimilarity that the iconic sign represents of the same object.

The iconicity of 'Ambulance' and 'Bulldozers' is further heightened by the introduction of the image via sound effects – the siren which represents the ambulance and the roaring or droning of the bulldozers. The added imagery (sound effects) probably is more effective during a performance, but with a little imagination the same effect is achieved by the written word. The siren from the ambulance and the roaring of the bulldozers signify a kind of finality involving death and destruction.

3.3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

All the icons discussed in this chapter derive from the history, culture or the ideology of 'coloured' people. The icons allude to the hardship and trauma that plagued not only Joanie's family, but all the 'coloured' people that were affected by the Group Areas Act of 1950. What is ironic though, is that instead of demolishing the culture or ideology of 'coloured' people (as the 'coloured' people believed was happening), the actions and abuses of the government seem to have strengthened the 'coloured' people as a community and enhanced the existing culture. The new society that was formed because of the Group Areas Act of 1950 was forced to incorporate a variety of additional customs and conventions. This in turn enhanced or rather intensified the 'coding semantic system' mentioned by Lotman (1977:55), to a point where part of the system seems to have become indecipherable, or in Lotman's terms unintelligible, to some of the people who had abused them and even to those who were apathetic and/or indifferent.

The investigation conducted in Chapter Three suggests that Lotman's notion concerning *secondary representational verbal signs* is eminently workable, in the sense that these signs 'correspond to the "image" of traditional literary theory'. These signs have the properties of iconic signs and also bear a direct resemblance to the object (Lotman 1977:56). However, the intelligibility of these signs depends largely on the ability of the reader to interpret the given information, especially when the sign and system are 'enmeshed in the life of society', in this case the culture and ideology of the 'coloured' people (Lotman 1977:55).

The positive aspect that can be procured from Lotman's observation is that the use of icons not only provides additional information, but also enhances existing or conventional information. To Lotman (1977:55), the iconic principle is the means by which 'verbal art' overcomes the fundamental property of a word as a linguistic sign. Lotman argues that in constructing a verbal artistic model by means of icons (images), the arbitrary connection between the planes of expression and content is transcended. In other words, secondary representational signs can ensure greater intelligibility than conventional signs, because they are organically linked to the use of signs in human culture (Lotman 1977:55-56).

In the following chapter, the discussion is centred on the manner in which Lotman combines poetic language (discussed in Chapter Two) and iconicity (discussed in Chapter Three) to formulate his theory regarding the *aesthetics of identity and opposition*.

CHAPTER 4

THE AESTHETICS OF IDENTITY AND OPPOSITION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The notions discussed in Chapters Two and Three, namely poetic language (Chapter Two) and iconicity (Chapter Three), were derived from Lotman's theory regarding the relativity of the opposition between artistic and non-artistic texts. The present chapter attempts to indicate how Lotman (1977:290-292) combines these notions by shifting the focus to a more central and recognisable concept in contemporary literary semiotics, which he identifies as the *aesthetics of identity and opposition*. This concept not only provides the basis for classifying texts but, more importantly, focuses on the relation between the reader and writer, and especially the connection between the two and their collective contribution when determining meaning in the texts.

This section of the discussion deals only with the reader/writer relationship according to Lotman's notions and the manner in which they affect 'coloured' literature. Including a response from an audience would necessarily have to include various other semiotic concepts such as the semiotics of theatre which are not integral to Lotman's notions and the ones chosen for this study.

To illustrate the various functions and intentions of a writer and the diverse perceptions of a reader, Lotman (1977:287) uses the following categorisation of texts:

- The writer creates a text as a work of art and the reader perceives it as such.
- The writer creates a text that is non-artistic, but the reader perceives it aesthetically.
- The writer creates an artistic text, but the reader is not capable of identifying it with any of those forms of organization which satisfy his/her definition of art, and so he/she perceives it as non-artistic information.
- A non-artistic text written by the author is perceived as non-artistic by the reader.

This elementary streamlined method of classifying texts basically allows for an examination of the intention of the writer and the awareness of the reader of that intention. Lotman's classification incorporates the reader's ability to interpret and decode a given text, or alternately to construct a code where the code used by the author is unknown or obscure. An example would be the utterance made by Whitey, one of Snyders's characters (Snyders 1983:37):

WHITEY: ... Maar die tyd van die **riots** was die **blok daem** benoud!

[... But during the time of the riots the block (situation) was very terrifying!]

Irrespective of the reader's knowledge of English or *original* Afrikaans, the *standard* Afrikaans words in the utterance (especially the word 'benoud') should direct the reader to the assumption that something terrifying is being discussed. The word 'benoud' suggests fear and anxiety, and holds the key to the meaning in the utterance. This assumption becomes more plausible when the words that cause the deviance (in bold above) are removed:

... Maar die tyd van die was die benoud!
[... But during the time of the the was terrifying!]

Even by replacing the deviant words with a random selection, for example, 'Maar die tyd van die **oorlog** was die **plek baie** benoud!' [But during the time of the war the place was very terrifying!], the meaning hardly changes. The random selection of words could be words inserted by the reader in place of the obscure words in the text. In doing so the reader would not only be interpreting and decoding a given text, but alternately constructing a code to substitute the unknown or obscure code of the author.

Lotman's premise is based on the assumption that the decoding of an artistic text is an area of co-operation between author and reader in which the author furnishes part of the text and the reader finishes or constructs the rest (Lotman 1977:288). Lotman classifies texts into two distinct categories which, according to him, are typologically correlated and (from an historical point of view) often sequentially related (Lotman 1977:289-292). The first class

consists of artistic phenomena, the structures of which are known beforehand, so that the reader's expectations are met by the construction of the work as a whole. These texts are categorised by Lotman as the *aesthetics of identity*. The second class of structures found at this level are texts that contain a code unknown to the reader 'before the act of artistic perception begins' (Lotman 1977:292). These structures are classed by Lotman as the *aesthetics of opposition*.

These two classes of texts are differentiated on grounds similar to distinctions made by Umberto Eco (Van Zyl 1982:71-72) deploying the theory concerning 'open' and 'closed' texts, and the attributes of the 'readerly/writerly' texts defined by Roland Barthes (Van Zyl 1982:80).³⁶ The similarities of the three theories are compared briefly in the discussion to augment and to supplement Lotman's theory.

Lotman's classification of the *aesthetics of identity* presupposes that the sender and the recipient hold near-identical codes, which indirectly implies that the writer structures the texts so that they conform to rules which generally fulfil the reader's expectations with regard to the particular language, genre or code, making it easy for the reader to assign meaning to the given texts. This theory is similar to Eco's 'closed-text' theory, according to which a text arouses a predictable response from an average reader in a given context (Van Zyl 1982:72), and also echoes Barthes's theory concerning 'readerly texts which embody a standard, institutionalised view of reality in which character, time and events are predictable' (Van Zyl 1982:80).

Texts based on an *aesthetics of opposition*, on the other hand, deliberately obstruct the reader's expectation with regard to language, genre and meaning, because the codes of the sender and recipient differ, consequently the text opposes and contradicts the expectations of the recipient. This theory complements Eco's concept of 'open texts'. According to Van Zyl (Ryan & Van Zyl 1982:72), Eco 'has a precise but flexible reader in mind, one who can participate in the author's many levelled project[s] ... one who is willing and able to travel

36 The reader and aesthetic response theories of Wolfgang Iser are similar to the theories of Eco and Barthes but are more centred on a phenomenological study of reception and reading. These theories are better suited to narratology. An introduction to the phenomenological approach can be found in Ryan and Van Zyl (1982) in an essay entitled 'Literature and the Phenomenological Perspective' by Bijker (1982:161-171) and in Iser's *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1978).

all of them'. Lotman's theory also resonates with Barthes's concept of 'writerly texts', which 'foreground the reader/writer relationship by asking the reader to participate in the production of meaning' (Van Zyl 1982:80).

All three theories hinge on the notion that the text (either by coinciding or conflicting with the reader's expectations) draws attention to itself, compelling a close scrutiny of the text, especially the nature of the language used. In other words, the initial expectations of the text by the reader may be either confirmed or thwarted, depending on the language or code employed by the writer. This also draws on the ability or inability of the reader to interpret the given information in the texts provided. This task is complicated, especially when the signs and system employed by the writer are enmeshed in the life of a society not familiar to the reader (Lotman 1977:55).

Basically, two of the four observations made by Lotman have a particular bearing on the reader/writer relationship discussed in this chapter. Firstly, when the writer creates a text as a work of art and the reader perceives it as such, and secondly, when the writer creates an artistic text, but the reader is not capable of identifying it and perceives it as non-artistic. Scrutiny of these observations reveal that they incorporate both elements, namely recognisable or identifiable texts, and texts that are unknown to the reader or oppose the reader's expectations.

4.2 LOTMAN'S AESTHETICS OF IDENTITY

Lotman's (1977:290) concept of an *aesthetics of identity* is based on the reader's identification of specific logical models of life which he names 'model-clichés'. These 'clichés', a term which Lotman freely interchanges with the term 'stereotypes', play a key role in the process of cognition, and also assist in the process of transferring information that is identifiable. The structure of texts which contain elements of identity, according to Ryan and Van Zyl (1982:80), is generally rule-governed, highly codified, and in most cases known beforehand.

The most typical examples of an *aesthetics of identity*, according to Lotman, are manifested

in a controlled system, which comprises characters, plots and other structural elements that are generally predictable. Lotman (1977:290) acknowledges that these systems sometimes create the risk of relegating each new work of art to being classified as a mere copy of its predecessors, because of the stringent and rigid system of rules applied in the work. To illustrate this point, Lotman (1977:291) mentions the *commedia dell'arte*, as cited in A.K. Divelev's (1954:292-295) *Ital'janskaja narodnaja komedija*, as an example where the principle of identity is the basis for the construction of characters. Lotman's explanation is that the images of the comedy are based on the costumes worn by the characters, and that the artistic effect of the images relies solely on the spectator's knowledge of these characters as embodied in the costume. In other words, the audience identifies the persona's nature by the costume, coupled with the makeup and dialect used by the character. If the actor violates the set of rules of behaviour assigned to the costume, it is regarded as a sign that the actor has not mastered the role.

Such predictable structural elements are still evident in some contemporary fiction. Novels featuring characters such as Ian Fleming's James Bond or Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot manifest an abundant use of both clichés and stereotypes. For instance, the secret agent Bond is known as '007', likes his martini 'shaken – not stirred' and, when confronted, identifies himself as 'Bond, James Bond'. His personal weapon is a 'Walther 35mm pistol' and he has 'a licence to kill'. The detective Poirot, on the other hand, deplores the fact that people presume he is French instead of Belgian just because he speaks French. Poirot is characterised by his exquisite mustache, his immaculate attire, his dialogue that includes phrases such as '*mon ami*' [my friend], and references to his 'little grey cells'.

Although the clichés mentioned above are not stereotypical of all secret agents and detectives, the respective authors have contrived and designed predictable structural elements to represent the two characters in question so that the principle of identity is the basis for the recognition of the respective characters. For instance, in a film or stage version of novels featuring these characters or based on such novels, the attire, mannerisms and dialogue which constitute the artistic effect of the images (fashioned by the respective authors) rely on the spectator's knowledge of these characters. In other words, the audience identifies the persona's personality and temperament by association. If an actor violates the set of rules of behaviour assigned to the particular character, it will be regarded as a sign

that the actor has not mastered the role.

Clichés or stereotypes associated with detective novels generally include a detective or solver of the crime, a victim, a criminal, and it often contains the detective's side-kick and/or rival. Similarly, a romance novel normally contains a man and a woman, a rival, an obstacle such as unrequited love or a love triangle. Certain basic plot requirements also occur. In romance novels the meeting, the separation, the reconciliation and so forth form the basic plot requirements. In a detective novel, the crime, the clues, false deductions, correct deductions, the pursuit and the arrest are all part of the criteria.

The principles of identity discussed above, which are also mentioned in Lotman's explanation, confirm that there are writers who prefer to utilise specific roles which entail clichés and stereotypes in their writing. The reason for the use of specified roles is most probably to aid the reader in identifying predictable structural elements. Acquiring a measure of continuity and progression (as far as characterisation is concerned) fulfils the reader's expectations. The confirmation of the reader's expectations in the texts also arouses a response from the reader (albeit predictable or conventional), which then encourages the reader to assign meaning to the texts.

In the selected literature, the language and characterisation (which include stereotyping and clichés), together with the setting and decor (to name but a few) are also used by the respective writers to assist in the process of cognition. Small, Snyders and Pearce utilise these elements to establish and transfer identifiable information which concurs with logical models of life to the reader. All these elements, namely the language (used in both the utterances of the characters and the didascalia), the characterisation and the stage setting are integrated and interwoven to form an interdependent unit, which in turn aids the reader when unpredictable opposition occurs in the texts. When this happens, the remaining elements converge to reassure the reader. A few of these devices are examined below.

4.2.1 Language and characterisation

On the basis of the discussions in Section 2.1 (which focused on language usage in the

selected literature), and Section 2.3.2.1 (which examined the mixing of language codes as a poetic device), it can be assumed that the use of *standard* Afrikaans and *original* Afrikaans juxtaposed to each other is intentional on the part of the respective writers, Small, Snyders and Pearce. The *standard* Afrikaans used in the didascalía and in a fair portion of the utterances of the characters adequately reassures those readers who are generally accustomed to *standard* Afrikaans, while the *original* Afrikaans utterances sustain the active interests of readers who are conversant with both codes. These two codes used in unison serve a dual purpose. They not only communicate with all the designated readers of Afrikaans (*standard* Afrikaans and *original* Afrikaans readers), but assist (especially through the deviant dialect *original* Afrikaans) with the typecasting or stereotyping (to use Lotman's terms) of the various 'coloured' characters in the selected dramas (see Sections 4.1.1.1 and 4.1.1.2 for more detail).

The didascalía not only supply the reader with identifiable information concerning the nature or mode of the utterance through stress, intonation, kinesic markers and facial expressions, but also serve to meet the reader's expectations regarding the language code (*standard* Afrikaans) regardless of the interference of a deviant code (*original* Afrikaans). To aid in the discussion, a few examples are extracted from the selected literature.

4.2.1.1 *Standard Afrikaans usage*

In Small's '*Chronologie*' in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:11), he furnishes the reader with a concise explanation of the sequence of events:

1 en 2 ("Ek is Joanie Galant" en "Nie 'n blêrie mêtjie nie") lei die stuk in. Die tyd: Wanneer alles alreeds gebeur het. Davy is deur die strate op pad om Joanie "in die institusie" te besoek. Die dinge maal in sy gedagtes.

[1 and 2 ("I am Joanie Galant" and "Without a bloody matchstick") introduce the play. The time: After everything has happened. Davy is on his way to visit Joanie "in the institution". Various thoughts are going through his mind.]

Besides introducing the numbers and titles of the chapters, Small attempts to briefly

describe and illustrate Davy's presence in the scene, his frame of mind and the time in which the event occurs. Apart from the few *original* Afrikaans expressions quoted from the titles of scenes, namely 'blêrie' [bloody], 'mêltjie' [matchstick] and 'in die institution' [in the institution], the rest of the didascalia are written in *standard* Afrikaans. Although the reader's expectations with regard to language and genre may be partially confounded by these deviant expressions, the dominant presence of *standard* Afrikaans ensures and reaffirms the reader's expectations concerning the meaning. The rest of the text which succeeds Small's extract above follows the same pattern. The text is interspersed with various *original* Afrikaans expressions, but is dominated by *standard* Afrikaans sentences that align themselves with the South African Afrikaans-speaking reader's expectations.

The Afrikaans-speaking reader's expectations are also met by Small's description of the characters ('*Karakters*') (Small 1978:7). Here, the text, which is written entirely in *standard* Afrikaans, briefly describes all the main characters, namely Joanie Galant, her husband Joseph Galant, her brother Davy Anthony, and the newspaper reporter. The *standard* Afrikaans used in this section of the didascalia adequately subscribes to the reader's expectations regarding language usage.

A further example can be found in Small's prologue '*Van die skrywer*' ['From the writer'] (Small 1978:5). This part of the text is also written in *standard* Afrikaans, and briefly explains Small's use of the deviant dialect, and points to the specific audience to whom the drama is dedicated. The text also mentions the drama group who first performed the play on stage and contains a general note to potential directors. Besides satisfying the expectations of the readers as far as language usage is concerned, the prologue also alludes to the incorporation of a vernacular which prepares the reader for the unexpected, namely *original* Afrikaans. In fact, it creates expectations which affect the response to the rest of the dialogue.

Although the text (from this point on in Small's drama) is interspersed with what may seem to be the dominance of *original* Afrikaans expressions through the utterances of the characters, these utterances are neutralised by the ever-present didascalia which precede most of the dialogue and which reassure the reader that *standard* Afrikaans is the primary modelling system.

Similarly, Snyders accommodates the reader's expectations in the opening pages of *Political Joke* (1983). The title, which consists of two English words 'Political Joke', that would normally thwart the expectations of an Afrikaans reader, is supported by the subheading 'Gesprekdrama'. The inclusion of this compound word in *standard* Afrikaans, which is made up of two words 'Gesprek' [conversation] and 'drama' [drama], provides the reader with the necessary clarification that it is a drama written in Afrikaans and sets up expectations regarding the genre of the text.

The explication is reinforced on the next page of the drama entitled 'Persone' [Characters]. After identifying the characters, namely Ralph, Sammy, Sally, Rosie, Budget, Whitey and Vincent, Snyders includes the following statement:

Die handeling vind plaas op die Kaapse Vlakte.
Eerste en Tweede bedryf: 1978

[The action takes place on the Cape Flats.
First and Second act: 1978]

The text in question is *standard* Afrikaans and is followed by a prologue (in the same language code) on the following page which explains where and when the play was first staged, the names of the producers and director, and the actual names of the original performers.

Snyders (1983:1) further affirms the language code with his description of the setting and scene of the first act. The decor, stage, music, lighting and general stage direction are written in *standard* Afrikaans, barring three English expressions: 'Jesus Saves' and 'God Bless this House' (titles of pictures hanging on the wall) and the theme music, entitled 'Political Joke'. As with Small's drama, the didascalia in Snyders's play add convincing certainty to the reader's expectations regarding *standard* Afrikaans.

The didascalia in Robert Pearce's *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b) likewise designate *standard* Afrikaans as the dominant factor. With the exception of the title, Pearce's (1988b:1-2) 'Toewyding' [Dedication], *Sinopsis* [Synopsis] and 'Toneel' [Scene]

are all written in *standard* Afrikaans. Although the monologues of Pearce's character Bobby are lengthy and predominantly contain *original* Afrikaans expressions, the texts on the whole contain a fair amount of *standard* Afrikaans. The didascalia (between brackets and in italics) in particular, contain stage directions and a considerable number of identifiable explanations in *standard* Afrikaans:

BOBBY: ... (*Vra homself*) Sal ek rys maak by die stew? (*Soek rys in die kombuis, verhoog regs. Vind net 'n leë rysblik in die kas. Keer dit om*) No rice. Die Government het dit ook ge-deport Eersterust toe. (*Sit rysblik terug. Draai om na Primusstoof*).

[... (*Asks himself*) Should I cook rice to go with the stew? (*Searches for the rice in the kitchen cupboard, stage right. Only finds the empty rice-tin in the cupboard. Turns it upside down.*) No rice. The Government even deported the rice to Eersterust. (*Replaces rice-tin. Turns to Primus stove*).]

There are, of course, longer monologues in Pearce's drama which follow the same pattern, but the longer the monologue, the more frequent the didascalia containing *standard* Afrikaans explanations and directions.

It can be concluded that the *standard* Afrikaans encountered in the didascalia confirms, to a large extent, the Afrikaans-speaking reader's expectations concerning the dominant language. At the same time, it provides the reader with vital data needed for identifying, processing and transferring information in the cognitive process while reading. In addition, the strategic placement of *standard* Afrikaans in the didascalia juxtaposed with the *original* Afrikaans utterances of the characters in the selected dramas not only reinforces Lotman's theory, which outlines the dependency and inter-relationship between the primary modelling system (*standard* Afrikaans) and the secondary modelling system (*original* Afrikaans), but purposefully provides the reader with a means to decipher parts of the text that may hinder the process of decoding and perception. The placement or juxtaposition of the two codes consequently acclimatises the reader to the deviant dialect (*original* Afrikaans), and at the same time allows ample exploratory latitude for any discovery or contribution by the reader.

4.2.1.2 Characterisation

In Small's drama *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978), the roles of the characters are expressly manifested by their own utterances and by information furnished in the didascalia. This strategy is orchestrated or manipulated by Small via the texts. Many of the character traits are organised in the texts as disclosures by the characters about themselves and also about each other. For instance, their 'coloured' status is identifiable by their utterances (*original* Afrikaans), and also by their actions and allusion to actions or events that are part of 'coloured' culture and ideology. Some of the information furnished may be what Lotman distinguishes as being in opposition to the reader's expectations, depending on who the reader is, especially when it encompasses parts of the culture and ideology of the 'coloured' people that the reader is not familiar with. Small compensates for this by providing the reader with other information that usually includes stereotypes and clichés which are recognisable or familiar.

For instance, in the first few lines of the play, Joanie (Small 1978:11) attests to her identity through the use of an *original* Afrikaans expression when she introduces herself. She also supports the statement by naming the area or town in which she resides:

JOANIE: ... Joanie Galant ... **My maiden name was** ... Anthony
gewees ... (*Pause.*) Van die Anthony's van Woodstock ...

[... Joanie Galant ... My maiden name was ... Anthony ...
(*Pause.*) Of the Anthony's from Woodstock ...]

The *original* Afrikaans utterance in the first line, which is highlighted for the purpose of this discussion, indicates the English vocabulary that is mixed with the rest of the *standard* Afrikaans vocabulary, as already discussed. This utterance establishes Joanie's identity, because 'coloured' people speak that way, while the second line, which cites the place where she was born and raised, confirms her identity, because 'coloured' people lived in Woodstock before the Group Areas Act (1950) was initiated and they were forcibly evicted. Such an historically evoked reality of presentation reinforces the reality of content

(that which is believable) in the play.

Despite the possible hindrance that is caused by the *original* Afrikaans expression, the deciphering or decoding facing the Afrikaans-speaking reader is minimal due to the fact that the English vocabulary here possesses the same spelling and meaning in *standard* Afrikaans. The first line of the above quotation contains three words that have the same meaning in English and in Afrikaans. The first word is ‘My’, which also constitutes the possessive form in Afrikaans, but has a slight variation in pronunciation – (/mai/) in English and (/mei/) in Afrikaans. The second word ‘name’ in the same sentence, which in English signifies identity in the singular form, strengthens the Afrikaans reader’s sense of speculation, because it represents the plural form when used in Afrikaans. This phenomenon is produced by the difference in pronunciation, namely (/neim/) in English and (/na:me/) in Afrikaans. The final word in the same sentence, which converges with and corresponds to the reader’s expectation, is the word ‘was’, because it indicates the past tense of ‘is’ in both English and Afrikaans. The only discrepancy is the pronunciation – (/w_s/) in English and (/v_s/) in Afrikaans. These familiar words restore the Afrikaans reader’s confidence in the deciphering process and so in the comprehension of the dialogue.

Besides the examples taken from Joanie’s utterance as quoted above, Joanie (Small 1978:11) also mentions the ‘Haitie-taitie Bruinmense’ [Hoity-toity Brown people] in the lines that follow (not quoted above but discussed earlier in this study, see Section 3.2.1.5). Although the expression ‘Haitie-taitie’ has already been discussed as an iconic sign on a specific semiotic level, the same sign is also employed by Small to stereotype other explicit characteristics. For instance, Small uses this expression to add to the reader’s perception by differentiating between character traits that exist in typical ‘coloured’ people, like the ‘Anthony’s of Woodstock’, who are middle-class people, defenceless against the wrath of those that are in power, and wealthy ‘coloured’ sellouts who obsequiously mingle with these people, for personal gain. By adding the compound word ‘Bruinmense’ [Brown people] to Joanie’s utterance, which is normally understood by any proficient Afrikaans reader, Small elevates the reader’s confidence to identify a specific group of ‘coloured’ people. The word ‘Bruinmense’ which seems to have originated as counterpart to the word ‘Witmense’ [White people] was generally substituted during the apartheid era as a type of

euphemism to avoid more crass and contentious descriptions for people of colour (Schoonees *et al.* 1976:88; February 1981:6-7).

Davy, Joanie's brother, uses a similar phrase, 'Brynes' [Brown ones] (Small 1978:32, 33, 53) on more than one occasion for the same purpose. However, in his case the phrase is almost always preceded or followed by a vulgarity to show his disgust (Small 1978:32):

DAVY: 'Haitie-taities. Wittes en Brynes saam! ... Geldgatte, die varke ...

[Hoity-toities. Whites and 'coloureds' together! Money hoarders, the pigs ...]

The word 'Brynes' can be considered an *original* Afrikaans expression, because it does not conform to the spelling rules of *standard* Afrikaans 'bruin' [brown] and is not listed in any *standard* Afrikaans dictionary. However, to reassure the reader, Small manoeuvres Davy's dialogue so that it strategically includes the term 'coloured' when Davy refers to other members of the 'coloured' community as 'Brynes' (Small 1978:33, 37), even though the expression is used in contempt for their corrupt actions.

To connect the words 'coloured' and 'Brynes', Small employs the personal pronoun 'ons' [us, we]. This device in the dialogue is most probably implemented by Small to confirm the identity of the speaker (Davy), and also to allude to the other 'coloured' people mentioned by Davy in the utterance. The ambiguity of this pronoun consolidates Davy's identity, that of his family, the dramatist and the rest of the 'coloured' community (Small 1978:33):

DAVY: Maar 'is deur hulle ook wat ons so swaar kry. Brynes wat Wit vrinne het! ... Coloureds wat met Witmense mix ...

[But it is because of them that we have it so bad. Coloureds that have White friends! ... Coloureds that mix with White people ...]

This excerpt seems to support any reading – a literal and a figurative 'mix'. For the reader to be able to differentiate between the 'coloured' people who, according to Davy, 'have it so bad', and the 'coloured' people who collaborate and mix with White people, Small

juxtaposes the term ‘ons’ [we] with the term ‘hulle’ [them]. This could also be read as a kind of protest statement. Here, the overt activity, the polarization into self and other, seems to support the argument that there is good and bad (in the sense of being sellouts) ‘coloured’ people – but it could also be a deliberate allusion to the fact that there are good and bad people within any grouping – but they are nonetheless people.

Besides using Joanie and Davy’s utterances to identify the role players as ‘coloureds’, Small (1978:30) also employs the utterance of the White doctor (reported by Davy) in the fifth scene entitled ‘*Non-White Casualties*’:

DAVY: ... Toe kom die dokter. Hy kyk vir Joseph. Blood, blood, blood, (*sic*) Knifings again! sê hy. What’s it with jou (*sic*) people? Tj-tj-tj-tj ... Friday night as usual. What is it with you Coloured people? (Hy lag. ...)

[... Then the doctor came. He looks at Joseph (and says): Blood, blood, blood. Knifings again! What is it with you people? Tut-tut ... Friday night as usual. What is it with you Coloured people? (He laughs. ...)]

In the above quotation, Small utilises the stereotyping that was common during the apartheid era. Generally (as implied in the quotation), all ‘coloured’ people were categorised as violent and lawless. Van der Ross (1979:66), quoting figures from *Crime, Punishment and Reform*, Vol. 3, No 2, June 1974, confirms that 14,3% of a total ‘coloured’ population of 2 005 352 were convicted of assault during the years 1963 to 1970.

Individuals like Van der Ross (1979:36) challenged accusations that all ‘coloured’ people were violent as being prejudicial to the majority of the ‘coloured’ people who are innocent of any crime. Moreover, he attributes the crimes committed by the minority mentioned above to the sub-culture of poverty:

Not only do they feel themselves to be powerless in their social, economic and political situation but all too often they do not believe that their condition will or can change. ... It is these psychological attitudes found in the sub-culture of poverty that cause poverty people [*sic*] to be labelled lazy, slothful, thriftless, having too many children, irresponsibly given to abuse of liquor, and so on.

Van der Ross (1979:36) differentiates between what he calls *poverty people* and *poor people*:

The difference between the sub-culture of poverty (with its *poverty people*) and simple poverty (with its *poor people*), is that poor people are people who do not have many material possessions and do not enjoy as many of the goods, comforts and amenities of life as do the average people in their society. *Poverty people*, on the other hand, are people who are caught up in the almost pathological cycle of poverty. ... As a form of rationalization and of defence, they develop a fatalistic attitude which explains to their own satisfaction, their position in society, their behaviour and their lack of motivation. The expression “*Gam is mos so*” is typical of this form of fatalism ...

The expression ‘*Gam is mos so*’ [Ham is like that] used by Van der Ross (1979:36) in the above quotation echoes part of the explanation given in Section 2.3.2.2 (Metaphoric and idiomatic devices). The expression also coincides with the extract above taken from *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:30) concerning the doctor’s remark about ‘coloured people’.

Small toys with the effect of the remark made by the doctor, who misconstrues the situation. By typifying ‘coloured’ people to his readers through the eyes of a White doctor at Groote Schuur Hospital, Small underpins the stereotype that surrounds ‘coloured’ people, albeit an unfounded perception of ‘coloured’ people. A point to consider is the option provided for the readers, who are given the choice either to accept the insinuation of the doctor or to draw their own conclusions about whether the cliché or stereotype is accurate. The correctness of the readers’ preferences is usually compared by the readers themselves to the characteristics attributed to the ‘coloured’ people, emanating from the rest of the text.

In Snyders’s *Political Joke* (1983) and in Pearce’s *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b), the authors use similar devices. Readers who are generally accustomed to *standard* Afrikaans are reassured by the *standard* Afrikaans used in the didascalia, while the *original* Afrikaans utterances accommodate readers who are conversant with both. Comparable clichés and stereotypes like those mentioned in the discussion in Section 4.2

are also used to denote the identity of the characters.

For instance, in *Political Joke* (1983), Snyders employs Ralph (who regards the term ‘Bruinmense’ as derogatory) to unwittingly acknowledge the categorisation during a conversation with Sammy (Snyders 1983:61):

RALPH: Soe ons, die bruinmense, die reputed children of sin, ...
 [So we, the brown people, the reputed children of sin, ...]

Ralph’s use of the word ‘ons’ [we] unequivocally discloses his identity. His disclosure is supported by the dialect that is generally equated with ‘coloured’ people (the mixing of two language codes – English and Afrikaans).

Likewise, Pearce in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b:3) also constructs the utterance of his protagonist to include the word ‘coloured’. The utterance also incorporates the mixed language codes as part of the stereotyping:

BOBBY: Is 'n pity ou Michelle en Mummy-hulle kan nou nie hier
 wees om my stew te proe nie. Hulle sit mos in Derdepoort
 of Eersterust, die nuwe Coloured Homeland.
 [It’s a pity Michelle and Mom and the family are not here to
 taste my stew, because they are in Derdepoort, actually
 Eersterust, the new Coloured Homeland.]

In Bobby’s utterance, Pearce not only stereotypes this character, but his family as well, by referring to the Group Area (explained in Sections 3.2.1.1 and 3.2.1.8) allocated to the ‘coloured’ people (where Bobby’s family is residing) as ‘the new Coloured Homeland’. Bobby’s identity is also confirmed by the manner in which ‘coloured’ people mix English and Afrikaans when they communicate (which in this study is referred to as *original Afrikaans*).

All the abovementioned devices employed by Small, Snyders and Pearce in the selected literature are centred on the language and characterisation or stage setting, and generally

include a fair amount of stereotyping and clichés, so that most of the expectations of the reader are met. In the three selected dramas, all three writers have structured the texts so that they conform to rules which generally fulfil the reader's expectations with regard to the particular language, genre or code, making it easy for the reader to assign meaning to the given texts, provided that sender and recipient hold near-identical codes (in this case Afrikaans and a general knowledge of English). These devices also focus on the role of the reader/writer relationship, especially the link between the two when determining meaning in the texts. The phenomenon not only confirms Lotman's theory, but also conforms to Eco's 'closed-text' theory (Van Zyl 1982:72) and Barthes's theory concerning 'readerly texts' (Van Zyl 1982:80).

All three writers accomplish a distinct rapport with their designated readers (*original* and *standard* Afrikaans), by manipulating the language, devices and codes to comply reasonably well with the readers' basic expectations of the texts. By the same token, all three writers manipulate other devices and codes to thwart the reader's understanding, by introducing elements which conflict with the reader's general expectations. These methods are discussed in the following section.

4.3 LOTMAN'S AESTHETICS OF OPPOSITION

The expectations of the reader can be impeded by a number of devices used by the author in a particular language or code, for example, unknown elements like words, gestures or idiosyncrasies beyond the reader's frame of reference, which are generally attached to social, customary, cultural or ideological beliefs unknown to the reader. Lotman (1977:295) believes that, in the production of art,

the specific nature of artistic communication is such that the code of the receiver always differs to some degree from the code of the sender. The differences may be comparatively slight, based on the individual's cultural experience or his specific psychological makeup; but they may be also profound, socio-historical, cultural differences which either prevent or reinterpret the artistic perception of the text.

Many of these socio-historic and cultural differences in the selected literature have already been examined in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, albeit under other semiotic concepts of Lotman's theories. Many of the connotations, insinuations and implications contained in the deviant code (*original Afrikaans*) used by the respective writers – Small, Snyders and Pearce – generally represent obstacles to the reader, or to use Lotman's terms, restrictions in the text, because they depict specific socio-historical events experienced by 'coloured' people.

In addition to the lexical and syntactic devices and the iconic structures and images already discussed in the previous chapters under the various theories of Lotman, there are other words and phrases that appear in the selected literature which can also be used to demonstrate Lotman's aesthetics of opposition.

In *Political Joke* (1983:18), for instance, Snyders deploys a few words and phrases, for example, in the character Budget's utterance, which could interfere with an uninitiated reader's understanding of the text:

BUDGET Vryras. Net Vryras. Vir die casey twee borrels staain, en 'n
nog 'n een word vir die trein gekoep.

[Fridays. Only Fridays, I usually buy two bottles of Stein to
take home, and another to drink on the train.]

In the above extract, the restrictions are manifested in the lexical and syntactic devices used by Snyders. The word 'Vryras', which appears twice, seems to be a mixture of *epenthesis* (the insertion of a letter or sound within a word), and *syncope*, which is the shortening of a word by the omission of one or more letters (usually vowels) or syllables in the middle of the word. Actually, the word that should have been used is 'Vrydae' (Fridays), but the word used by Snyders's character coincides with Small's explanation of the 'volks taal' in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978:5), previously discussed in Section 2.3.2.1. Because the vernacular (manner of speaking) is peculiar to 'coloured' people, particularly in the Cape, the utterance may conflict with the reader's initial expectations.

Another term that could differ from the code of the receiver is 'casey', which Budget uses

in the extract. The term is used by Small in Budget's utterance in place of the *standard* Afrikaans word 'huis' [house or home]. It is actually metaphorical in the sense that it compares Budget's home to a suitcase – which incidentally is also the origin of the term 'casey' [small case]. It is also representative of the little square rows of houses that were built on the Cape Flats by the government to house the 'coloured' people in their specific group area.

The phrase 'twee borrels staain' [two bottles of Stein] could also defamiliarise the reader, because of the deviant spelling of all three terms – 'twee' for 'twee' [two], 'borrels' for 'bottels' [bottles] and 'staain' for 'Stein' (the name of a specific type of wine). The utterance is unmistakably *original* Afrikaans (it is interesting to note that the 'coloureds' in the Cape stereotypically prefer wine to other liquor, whereas 'coloureds' in Gauteng stereotypically prefer either beer or hard liquor). This fact is corroborated in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (Pearce 1988b:7), when the character Bobby, who is celebrating New Year's Eve on his own, reflects:

BOBBY: (... *Drink die nip whisky [sic] leeg*). Onthou jy het 'n special Scotch vir die special occasion [*sic*] ge-shopping. Chivas Regal, 12-year old. (*Haal die whisky [sic] uit die kas...*).

[(... *Drinks the last of the whisky in the nip bottle*). Remember that you bought a special twelve-year-old bottle of Chivas Regal Scotch for this special occasion. (*Takes the whisky out of the cupboard ...*).]

Another interesting aspect is that in the selected literature some of the protagonists turn to and rely on liquor to cope with the adversities of life. Drinking seems to be the outlet for their frustrations. The character Davy in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978) starts drinking after his traumatic experiences; the characters of *Political Joke* (1983) – Ralph, Sammy and Sally – are found in a *shebeen* discussing their disillusionment and, as shown in the above extract, Bobby, the character in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b), talks fondly about the whisky that he has purchased.

Tying in with the discussion on the extract from *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983:18), the *original* Afrikaans utterance in the current discussion could also obstruct the reader's

understanding, especially the word ‘ge-shopping’ [bought], because of the *paragoges* represented by the Afrikaans prefix (ge) attached to an English word (shopping), which may be unfamiliar to the reader.

Although numerous other terms and expressions could be extracted from Snyders’s *Political Joke* (1983) to substantiate Lotman’s theory, only two more instances, namely the terms ‘onderkoefia’ (Snyders 1983:20) and ‘hoekhouer’ (Snyders 1983:36), are included in the ensuing discussion.

Ralph (one of the characters in Snyders’s drama), in trying to explain the attire of a Muslim to Sammy (another character), uses the following cynical description (Snyders 1983:20):

RALPH Sien djy nie 'n ou met 'n halfjassie wat soe oor sy pejamas hang nie? (*Sammy skud sy kop.*) Sien djy nie 'n ou met 'n onderkoefia ...

[Don’t you picture a man with a half-jacket hanging over his pajamas? (*Sammy shakes his head.*) Don’t you picture a man with Muslim headgear ...]

The above description concerning the attire is, in a sense, derogatory, in part because the names of the articles of clothing worn by Muslims are largely unknown to people who are unfamiliar with the customs and culture of that particular faith. The ‘onderkoefia’ that Ralph is referring to resembles a skull-cap worn by Jews. The cap is usually white in colour and worn during prayers. Because devout Muslims pray a minimum of five times a day, the skull cap is sometimes worn throughout the day. The ‘koefia’ itself is a cone-shaped maroon hat with a black tassel, worn by Muslims who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca. The rest of the outfit consists of white cotton pants (what Ralph refers to as ‘pajamas’) and a ‘hafjassie’ [half-coat] made of silk or satin. This jacket is slightly longer than an ordinary jacket. Readers who are thus unfamiliar with the Muslim faith, the dress, the customs and the culture will therefore find such texts difficult to interpret.

The final term for discussion, in Snyders’s *Political Joke* (1983), is ‘hoekhouer’ (1983:36). Whitey, one of the characters in the *shebeen*, is recollecting that in Athlone he is considered an ordinary person, regardless of his light complexion. His statement raises the

following question from Sammy (Snyders 1983:36):

SAMMY: Wat van die hoekhouers?

WHITEY: Ja ... hulle. Maar dis maar net nou en dan wat 'n
hoekhouer skrie: Hê! ou WHITEY!

[SAMMY: What about those who hang around on the corners?]

WHITEY: Oh... them. Only now and again one of them shouts: Hey Whitey!]

The 'hoekhouers' mentioned above are generally youths who form a type of gang and hang around street corners. They are seen by the people in the Cape as 'skollies' (discussed in 3.2.1.3). They catcall and taunt passers-by with name-calling and the like. Although the word 'hoekhouers' is a compound expression made up of two *standard* Afrikaans words, 'hoek' [corner] and 'houers' [holders], it has to be classified as *original* Afrikaans, because it does not appear in any *standard* Afrikaans dictionary. Also, the semiotic icon or image projected is centred on youths who hang around on corners, ready to do mischief. The interpretation of this expression once again depends largely on the cultural experience of the reader.

Cultural experience is also required in Pearce's drama *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b). The author also includes words in the dialogue of his character which could present the reader who is unfamiliar with *original* Afrikaans and 'coloured' culture with some difficulty when interpreting the text. Some of these words and expressions are discussed below.

In *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b:7), Pearce's character Bobby, who is about to make a toast to the coming New Year, remembers that he first has to throw out some of the whisky on the ground to honour his ancestors and loved ones who have died. This custom is not only practised by 'coloured' people who drink, but also by Blacks and Indians. Traditionally, before any liquor can be consumed from a sealed bottle, the liquor is first offered to the ancestors. This ritual can thus not be seen as only being part of 'coloured' culture, but must be seen as part of Black and Indian culture which has filtered through and become part of 'coloured' culture. The important point is that readers who are not familiar with the ritual may find it difficult to comprehend the text. The difficulty is compounded

especially when there are other obstacles included in the text. An example is when Bobby pours out the liquor on the ground:

BOBBY: ... vir Antie Violet en Oom Joey wat saam in die Sokker accident dood is ... vir my sieza wat ook jonk ge-up het.

[... for Aunt Violet and Uncle Joey who died as a result of a soccer accident ... for my sister who died young.]

It should be noted that not all ancestors were necessarily drinkers, but in accordance with custom there is an understanding that ancestors and loved ones must be remembered during times of joy and sorrow. It is for this reason that Bobby honours his 'Antie Violet' and his 'sieza' [sister]. (The term 'sieza' is derived from 'sister', and, as a result of mispronunciation and *syncope*, it has evolved into the present term 'sieza'.)

In addition to this deviation, the term 'ge-up' could also add to the reader's disorientation. The term which is a mixture of an Afrikaans prefix 'ge' and an English preposition 'up' creates a totally new image, namely death. The word 'up', which indicates direction, symbolises heaven and the hereafter, the place to which Bobby believes his sister's soul has gone.

Another occurrence which has become an integral part of lower and middle lower class 'coloured' society, and which may confuse an unaccustomed reader, is the playing of *fahfee* (Pearce 1988b:16). Readers who are unfamiliar with this term may have difficulty in interpreting this section of Pearce's text. The term is derived from Mandarin, and is the name given to an illegal gambling game which is similar to the American 'numbers racket'. Punters bet amounts of money on a particular number. The numbers range from one to thirty-six. The winning number is drawn by the person who runs the game. The odds are generally ten to one, favouring the punters. In the South African context, the numbers are linked to various graphic equivalents to accommodate people who are illiterate. For example, number one is equivalent to 'king', number two to 'monkey' and so on. The game is still considered illegal and playing it is punishable by law.

Although much of the writer's intention is dedicated to accommodating the reader's initial

and basic expectations in the texts, the above discussion indicates that the intention of the writer is also to divert the reader's attention to words, phrases and expressions which are uncommon and largely deviant. These deviant words, which thwart the reader's expectations, draw attention to the text itself, compelling a close scrutiny of the text, especially the nature of the language used. In other words, a thorough examination of the text has to be undertaken by the reader, to check which elements of the language or code employed by the writer conflicts with the reader's initial expectations. In the process, both the intention of the writer and the awareness of the reader come into play.

As can be observed by the preceding discussion, the ironic discrepancy between expectations and outcomes, to a large extent, depend on the language or code used in the texts. The customary tension created by the action or the event is overshadowed by the language usage, which not only elevates the reader from a position of passiveness, but promotes interaction between reader and text.

4.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

By shifting the focus to a more central concept in contemporary literary semiotics, Lotman has switched from merely providing a basis for classifying texts, to focusing on the role of the reader/writer relationship, especially the link between the two and the resulting contribution of this shift in focus when determining meaning in the texts.

Lotman's interest in the role of the reader is based on his belief that the meaning of a literary text cannot be understood outside its cultural or historical context. The recipient of a linguistic message must know the linguistic code in order to interpret the message, and the reader of a literary text must not only know the language in which the text is written, but also the literary code, to be able to decode the text. Lotman not only perceives the reader as part of the semiotic process of the poetic text, but also views the text as one of the reader's codes. He bases this distinction on the reader's interaction with the texts, and firmly believes that the text is not isolated from other artistic codes, but that both literary and other artistic codes are related to ideological and socio-historic factors which play a part in the expectation placed upon the texts and the way in which they are read.

In semiotic terms, it means that the writer normally provides the signifiers, and it is left to the reader to envisage the signified. This process is usually dependent on the code used by the writer to encode the text and the code used by the reader to interpret the same text. The choice of code by the author in constructing the text can either correspond with the reader's code, or differ significantly from it. This further implies that the code used by the reader could differ entirely from the one that is employed by the writer. Nonetheless, the similarity or difference between the codes used by the writer and the reader is the factor that determines the meaning that is derived or not derived from the texts.

Van Zyl (1982:77) makes the following distinction:

... actual reader/writer relationships (via texts) are in reality much more complex ... variants or even mixtures of these positions may exist at any one time. What is important is that the reader is not viewed as passive, he has an interest in completing what the author provides ...

In theory, this reiterates Lotman's (1977:295) view that the code of the receiver always differs to some degree from the code of the sender. The differences may be slight, or complex socio-historical, cultural differences which could either prevent or facilitate a reinterpretation of the artistic perception of the text.

Lotman (1977:289-292) regards the *aesthetics of identity and opposition* as the relation between the 'real structure of work' (the real code – which this study identifies as *original Afrikaans*) and the structure that is expected by the reader, in this case *standard Afrikaans*.

In Chapter Five an examination is made of the codes used in the selected 'coloured' literature to ascertain whether the cultural and social ideals, beliefs and values of a community have any influence on the code or codes employed. The examination also attempts to determine whether there is a relation between the ideological, social and historical factors embedded in the codes and the analysis and interpretation of the text.

CHAPTER 5

EXTRA-TEXT – CULTURE – CODE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The discussion in this chapter centres on Lotman's distinction between the text and what he refers to as the *extra-text*. This aspect of Lotman's theory, which is closely linked to his theory concerning the aesthetics of identity and opposition, provides an opportunity to examine the particular qualities of the *extra-text*, as sign as well as to determine the nature of its relation to the text. The chapter also attempts to determine the role played by Lotman's concept of *culture* in the poetic texts of the selected 'coloured' literature and how it influences the *code* or codes employed.

Lotman's concept of *extra-text* is based on the cultural and social ideals, beliefs and values of a community. Lotman (1977:286) believes that the text is not isolated from other artistic codes, but that both literary and other artistic codes that may be found in the text are related to ideological and socio-historical factors which play a part in the analysis and interpretation of the text.

Lotman (1977:286) is quite specific when it comes to extra-textual relations that are embedded in a given culture, because, as he puts it, 'sign communication requires not only a text but a language'. Lotman (1977:286) also proposes that a text can only perform its social function when aesthetic communication is present in the collective within which it operates. He concludes that an

artistic work which is taken by itself, outside a given cultural context and a system of cultural codes, is like "an epitaph written in an incomprehensible tongue".

Lotman thus views the given culture³⁷ and its systemic codes as an integral part of the *extra-text*, because these two elements share a symbiotic relationship – the code or codes³⁸ are generally embedded in the culture.

To clarify Lotman's views, his concepts of *extra-text*, *culture* and *code* are examined and applied to the selected 'coloured' literature.

5.2 EXTRA-TEXT

Lotman (1977:50) describes the *extra-textual* bonds of a work as the relations between the set of elements fixed in the text and the appended elements which correspond to external social, historical, cultural and psychological elements. Lotman (1977:295) believes that the text

enters into a complex system of extra-textual connections; [and] by virtue of the hierarchy of non-artistic and artistic norms on various levels that are generalized by the experience of the artistic past, these connections create a complex code that permits us to decipher information contained in the text.

In other words, Lotman (1977:283, 295-296) regards all texts as part of a textual hierarchy containing various levels of meaning. Textual elements located at various levels of the hierarchy enter into different extra-textual relations with diverse external factors, especially when the signs that are used are divergent or deviate from the expected signs. He also argues that even though some elements in a given text can be expressed using signs dissimilar from those expected, that does not necessarily imply that there is an error in the text. It merely means that the information that is furnished is incomplete (open) and has to be correlated by the reader with various other historical, cultural and psychological external

37 Barthes's *S/Z* (1975) includes a semiotic analysis of Balzac's *Sarrasine* which illustrates the concept discussed in this chapter.

38 In the course of his analysis, Barthes examines five major codes, namely the hermeneutic, the proairetic, the cultural, the semic and the symbolic codes. The last three of the listed codes are more relevant to this chapter; for instance, the cultural code deals with the process of assimilation (making the text intelligible); the semic code deals with the overtones and associations of phenomena other than linguistic ones; and the symbolic code deals with the basic oppositions underlying the work – those which establish the 'positionality' of the text and its final relationship to the reader (see Van Zyl 1982:82).

structures that may provide a comprehensible meaning (closure). Lotman also observes that a given textual element at one level may enter into different extra-textual relations at other levels, and, at the same time, may create separate and different values at each level. To illustrate the latter proposition, a few examples are discussed below.

The first example is the extract taken from *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:50-51):

DAVY: Dan praat hy ook iets van die Here ... (*Joanie staar voor haar uit. Skreeu.*) Lýster djulle?! Van die Here ... in service van djou neighbour, en van djou naaste ... God ... hulle praat mos altyd iets ... van die Here, hulle ... Ons is mos Christians, seg hy ... Christians.

[Then he also says something about God ... (*Joanie stares in front of her. Yells.*) Are you listening?! About God ... in the service of your neighbour, and your nearest ... God ... they always mention God, they ... We are Christians after all, he says ... Christians.]

Davy, who is talking to his sister Joanie and his brother-in-law Joseph, has just returned from a drinking spree, and is recounting the events which he encountered during the day. He is talking specifically about a political meeting that he attended, and about what the speaker (a 'coloured') said.

Davy's language usage (mixing two codes) provides one of the cultural (extra-textual) elements mentioned above. When the two codes (Afrikaans and English) are joined or used simultaneously, along with various other cultural expressions, the two codes can be seen as a new code (or what Lotman refers to as a secondary language model, as mentioned in Section 2.2).

Moreover, when Lotman's notions of text and extra-text are applied, the *standard* Afrikaans which appears in the text (didascalia) can be seen to be on one level of the hierarchy, while the *original* Afrikaans ('Lýster djulle?!') and ('... in service van djou neighbour') used in the same text is on other or different levels because the various words and expressions allude to different extra-textual connotations at these levels, for example, to social, political or cultural nuances. Also, by entering into different extra-textual

relations with miscellaneous external factors at other levels, the *original* Afrikaans utterances at the same time create separate and different values at each level. One example here is the phrase ‘in service van djou neighbour’ [in the service of your neighbour]. Here the English words ‘service’ and ‘neighbour’ are (according to Lotman’s notion) situated on one level because they are divergent, in the sense that they represent a secondary modelling system (*original* Afrikaans). The word ‘service’ could, on another level, also relate to servitude (during the apartheid era). Likewise, the word ‘neighbour’ could also have Biblical connotations on one level, and/or ironically refer to group area restrictions during Nationalist government rule on another. Moreover, the term ‘djou naaste’ which draws a parallel between people who are very close (family, friends, neighbours, even the whole community) similarly focuses attention on comparable extra-textual relations, and alludes to the Biblical injunction in Matthew, 22:39 to love one’s neighbour as oneself (Bible Society of South Africa 1977:119).

In addition, the utterance contains two other terms, ‘hulle’ [they] and ‘Christians’. These two terms generate irony in the sense that these words have ambiguous connotations. The term ‘they’ could refer to the corrupt ‘coloured’ politicians or to the ‘hoity-toity’ ‘coloureds’ or to both parties at the same time. The term also distinguishes between ‘coloureds’ who fall into these categories, as opposed to those who do not.

The term ‘Christians’, on the other hand, sarcastically compares and contrasts the parties involved. Davy’s utterance questions the right of ‘coloured’ politicians and élitists who exploit indigent ‘coloured’ people, to regard themselves as ‘Christians’, because Christian doctrine propounds the brotherhood of man which implies opposition to exploitation. During the apartheid era the term ‘Christians’ was also questioned with regard to the Government officials and the Whites who favoured apartheid. The defence of the people accused was generally based on the assumption that people who are exploited choose to allow others do so, and not on a recognition that it is un-Christian to exploit fellow human beings. The endorsement of this type of exploitation is not limited to apartheid South Africa, as Christianity is also linked to a form of service in an analogous scene in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Lee 1960:255-256). The scene in question is set at a tea party where a (White) woman tells of how she exhorts her (Black) maid to service by telling her to behave like Christ. This cultural (religious) motif, albeit ironically used, is also

conspicuous in the abstract taken from *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:50-51).

Although some of the signs in the above extract from Small relate to the text itself and conform to Lotman's aesthetics of identity, for instance, the reference to God and Christian doctrine, the majority of the signs rely on the relations between the extra-text and the wider cultural and historical implications that the extra-text represents or assumes. For instance, the word 'hy' [he] does not only refer to the 'coloured' political representative speaking at the rally, but to all such representatives who chose to be mouthpieces for the apartheid government. This inference is confirmed by Davy's use of 'hulle' [they] which implies more than one person. The utterance also alludes to the historically acknowledged apartheid system which ostracised 'coloured' people from active political participation and gave rise to corrupt 'coloured' politicians and 'hoity-toity' 'coloured' élitists who preyed on those less privileged than themselves.

The second example is an extract taken from *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983:12):

RALPH: Pre-cise-ly! Soe, drop daai racist term. (*Maak hulle glase vol.*) En Slamse. Wat mean djy by Slamse?

[Precisely! So drop that racist term (*Filling their glasses*). And Muslims. What do you mean by Muslims?]

SAMMY: Ek mean ... ek mean ... Dji wiet mos wie ek mean.

[I mean ... I mean ... You know who I mean.]

RALPH: Mean djy nie miskien mense wat lieg, brêk en steel nie?

[Don't you perhaps mean people who lie, brag and steal?]

SAMMY: Ja.

[Yes.]

RALPH: Wat dagga roek en wyn drink nie?

[Who smoke marihuana and drink wine?]

SAMMY: Ja.

[Yes.]

RALPH: Wat doekoems is en na doekoems toe hardloep nie?
 [Who are witchdoctors and consult witchdoctors?]

The *standard* Afrikaans (didascalia) and the *original* Afrikaans ‘(Djy wiet mos wie ek mean)’ [You know who I mean] also apparent in this text not only support Lotman’s theory concerning primary and secondary models, but also support the observations made previously concerning the status of *original* Afrikaans as a natural language. In addition, the *original* Afrikaans helps to distinguish between two separate and different levels of the poetic text, namely the ordinary text (represented by the *standard* Afrikaans used in the didascalia) and the extra-text (mainly represented by the *original* Afrikaans, for example, words like ‘Slamse’, ‘doekoems’ and ‘dagga’). Excluding the deviance represented by the juxtaposed *original* Afrikaans utterances and *standard* Afrikaans didascalia in the texts, the words ‘Slamse’ [Muslims], ‘doekoems’ [witchdoctors] and ‘dagga’ [marihuana] provide additional cultural and historical external structural levels in the extra-text. A more detailed discussion concerning these words follows.

The term ‘Slamse’ [Muslims], which was discussed in Section 2.3.2.2, is used by the character Ralph in the above conversation with Sammy, in order to chide Sammy about his use of derogatory terms while telling a joke. The term can be considered to be culturally embedded, in the sense that it is used by ‘coloured’ people to allude to other ‘coloured’ people who subscribe to the Islamic faith. The term itself derives from the name of the religion (the Islamic faith). The term (used by Ralph) is generally regarded as derogatory by the people who follow this faith, and is only tolerated when used by fellow ‘coloured’ people. This point is confirmed because Ralph, on the one hand, rebukes Sammy for using a racist term ‘Slamse’ but, on the other, seems to qualify, clarify and even condone Sammy’s derogatory statement.

The word ‘Slamse’ also represents external historical implications, because the source of the Islamic faith in South Africa can be traced back to the slaves or to the political exiles deported to the Cape by the Dutch East India Company. These deportees, referred to as ‘Malays’ (a term which is also not accepted by ‘coloureds’ who follow the Islamic faith), were first imported in 1667 from Java and Bali (Van der Ross 1979:38). Because the term

‘Slamse’ suggests cultural homogeneity and is an inherent part of *original* Afrikaans, it may place the reader at a loss (if the reader is unfamiliar with the term and the culture). In line with Lotman’s notion of extra-text, this part of the text could make a reader who is not conversant with the term feel that the information given is incomplete or perhaps incoherent. In order to remedy this and to provide a comprehensible meaning to the text, the reader has to connect the given information to the relevant historical or cultural external structures. In other words, because the author has inscribed the word ‘Slamse’, perhaps intentionally, in the extra-text, it is up to the reader to make sense of the given information.

Similarly, when deciphering the term ‘doekoems’ [witchdoctors] which is also connected to the Islamic faith, the reader has to connect the given information to the relevant historical or cultural external structures. Readers could, as already argued, initially regard the information as insufficient, until they realise that the code is unfamiliar and thus has to be merged with an appropriate external structure. The term, which was also discussed in Section 2.3.2.2, is frequently misinterpreted as referring to practices of witchcraft (which is why the term ‘doekoems’ has been translated as ‘witchdoctors’ in this extract). This observation is supported by Ralph’s nonchalant use of the term. The procedure used by ‘doekoems’ is in fact, much the same as prayer-healing and the exorcisms practised by some members of the Christian faith. Prayers are conducted by an Islamic priest to heal the sick and to cast out or exorcise evil spirits.

The level that this term designates is therefore external and culture-bound, very much like the term ‘Slamse’. A comparison of the two terms ‘Slamse’ and ‘doekoems’ reveals that both are part of the primary modelling system (*original* Afrikaans), and that both have cultural connotations and are historically linked by the same religion, even though, semiotically, they operate on different levels, namely on a lexical level, an historical level and a cultural level.

The term ‘dagga’ [marihuana], which also appears as an external structure in the extra-text, has to be dealt with along different lines. Most South African readers understand the term, because the term is commonly used by South Africans and it is listed in the *HAT* (Schoonees *et al.* 1976:99). International readers, on the other hand, may find the term a hindrance to full understanding, because the term is not included in the *Oxford Advanced*

Learner's Dictionary of Current English (Hornby 1989), the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995), *Funk and Wagnalls New Practical Standard Dictionary of the English Language* (Funk 1946) or *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* (1999). These dictionaries, which represent British Standard English and its American equivalent, do not list the word 'dagga'. An interesting point is that although the description, the uses and the effects of the drug are included in the *HAT* definition, the origin of the word 'dagga' is not included, which suggests that the word has its origins in *original* Afrikaans. This is corroborated by an entry in the *Etimologiewoordeboek van Afrikaans* (Cloete *et al.* 2003:78) and in *A Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles* (Silva 1996:176-177) which indicates that the word originates from the Nama (Khoi-Khoi) word 'dava-b' which is roughly translated as 'wild dagga'.

Besides this South African cultural aspect, the other historical, geographical and linguistic aspects of the concept have their origins in Mexico where 'dagga' is known as *marihuana*, in Arabia where it is known as *hashish*, and in India where it is called *bhanga*. The extra-textual binding factor is that although 'dagga' is not listed in the English and American dictionaries, all the other words mentioned which identify the same drug are listed and convey a similar definition and meaning, namely dried leaves and flowers from the hemp plant that can be smoked or chewed for their intoxicating effect. The extra-text represented by the term 'dagga' functions culturally on one level because of its local connotations concerning drugs, but is also historically linked on a different level because of its international connections to the drug *cannabis sativa*, which is the Latin name for marihuana, hashish, bhanga and dagga. An interesting point to consider is the *original* Afrikaans word 'roek', which derives from the *standard* Afrikaans verb 'rook' [smoke]. If either of the two words ('dagga' or 'roek') is interpreted correctly or perhaps minimally understood, it will guide the reader to deduce the connection.

The sarcastic insinuations made by Ralph (which seem to confirm Sammy's appraisal or description of 'Slamse') are the types of ethnic libel that were commonplace amongst the inhabitants of South Africa during apartheid (discussed in Section 2.3.2.2). While chastising Sammy for using a derogatory term, Ralph deliberately enumerates the various clichés coupled with the term. Although a generalisation, this type of stereotyping was probably accepted because of the few 'Slamse' who might have used 'dagga' as an

alternative or in addition to drinking liquor, as the quotation suggests. The use of liquor is prohibited in the Islamic faith, whereas no hard and fast rule binds the followers of the faith as far as smoking is concerned.

Socio-historical and religious connotations in the extra-text also appear in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (Pearce 1988b:7), as the following extract shows:

BOBBY: (*Maak die bottle oop*): Eers 'n toast drink voordat ek supper (*bedink homself*). Moet eers 'n bietjie whisky vir die dors ancestors uitgooi. (*Gooi whisky in die bottle se prop en gooi dit bietjie vir bietjie uit soos hy die dooie mense onthou, volgens tradisie*) ...

[(Opens the bottle). First, a toast before I have supper (*reconsiders*). I first have to pour out some of the whisky for my thirsty ancestors. (*Fills the bottle-cap and pours a bit at a time onto the ground as he remembers his dead ancestors, according to tradition*) ...]

The English words ‘toast’, ‘supper’, ‘whisky’ and ‘ancestors’ in Bobby’s utterance signify a deviance in language (*original Afrikaans*), at various levels of the *standard Afrikaans* text and, although this word choice can be linked to a variety of historical connections, the words also refer to several Biblical and cultural external structures of the extra-text.

For example, ‘whisky’, which originated and was first bottled in Scotland, in this case provides the socio-historical reference. This word is connected to Scottish history but is juxtaposed to the word ‘ancestors’, which resonates with African cultural connotations. These two words, ‘whisky’ and ‘ancestors’ when used in conjunction with the two words ‘toast’ and ‘supper’, introduce a further extra-textual, and Biblical allusion – the Last Supper – an allusion to which the reader is also alerted in the title of the play. Although Bobby is unaware at this stage of the play that he is going to lose his life, his toast to his ancestors and the impending danger signified by the bulldozers hints at the Biblical Last Supper described in Mark 14:17-27 (Bible Society of South Africa 1977:66). But more important, and in addition to these relations, is the reference to a cultural tradition among ‘coloured’ people of offering a portion of a ‘toast’ to their ancestors, by pouring some of the contents of a glass on the ground. Although this type of libation to the dead is not an

exclusively ‘coloured’ practice, it nevertheless has become an integral part of ‘coloured’ tradition.

The above gesture also alludes to a wake (Irish), where the body of a dead person is watched over all night, and this vigil is accompanied by conviviality. This type of ritual is also practised by Blacks, and sometimes extends over a whole week. It is therefore not difficult to trace the origins of this behaviour among ‘coloured’ people, some of whom are the descendants of both these groups of people. It must be mentioned though that among ‘coloured’ people, ‘the wake’ has evolved to a gathering after the funeral to celebrate the life of the deceased. It is now known as ‘Die Troosdiens’ [the consoling service], which follows the burial service. This convivial ‘service’ is not organised by the family of the deceased, but by other relatives and friends as a consolation to the bereaved. It usually takes place after the burial has been completed and the meal which is offered to the mourners after the burial has been eaten.

As can be seen from the above discussion, the external socio-historical and religious elements which appear in the extra-texts have strong cultural aspects as well. Since there are many ways of defining and interpreting culture, the following section will attempt to examine Lotman’s concept and apply it to the selected literature.

5.3 LOTMAN’S SEMIOTIC MECHANISM OF CULTURE

Lotman’s concept of culture is complex, but the essence of his perception can be discerned in the following statement from an essay entitled ‘On the Semiotic Mechanism of Culture’ (Lotman & Uspensky 1978:211):

The difference in the semantic content of the concept *culture* in different historical epochs and among different scholars of our time will not discourage us if we remember that the meaning of the term is derivable from the type of culture: every historically given culture generates some special model of culture peculiar to itself. Therefore, a comparative study of the semantics of the term *culture* over the centuries provides worthwhile material for the construction of typologies.

Lotman and Uspensky (1978:211) also maintain in the same essay that, irrespective of the variety of definitions given to culture, certain features which are intuitively attributed to culture in any interpretation of the word can be singled out as common to any interpretation:

... underlying all definitions is the notion that there are certain *specific features of a culture*. Though trivial, this assertion is not without meaning: from it arises the assertion that culture is never a universal set, but always a subset organized in a specific manner. Culture never encompasses *everything*, but forms instead a marked-off sphere. Culture is understood only as a section, a closed-off area against the background of nonculture. The nature of this opposition may vary: nonculture may appear as not belonging to a particular religion, not having access to some knowledge, or not sharing in some type of life and behaviour.

In conjunction with these observations, Lotman and Uspensky's (1978:213-214) argument culminates in the statement that

as the *nonhereditary memory of the community*, a memory expressing itself in a system of constraints and prescriptions. ... culture may be treated as common to all mankind, or as the culture of a particular area, or of a particular time, or of a particular social group. ... insofar as culture is *memory* or, in other words, a record in the memory of what the community has experienced, it is, of necessity, connected to *past* historical experience.

What Lotman seems to be emphasising is that all cultures are peculiar or distinctive to the social groups from which they emanate, and can easily be misinterpreted or opposed as 'nonculture' when, for instance, there is a difference in religion, behaviour, knowledge or lifestyle. Important to this study is the point Lotman makes about every historically given culture generating some special model of culture peculiar to itself. According to Lotman's notion, this peculiarity can be allotted to a particular area, or to a specific time, or to a distinct social group, because culture is 'a marked-off sphere' in the 'nonhereditary memory' of a community. In addition, he believes that this memory is essentially connected to past historical experience.

To examine the practical application of Lotman's theory, three aspects of culture have been

selected for examination, namely language, religion and food (because the aspect of language coincides with Lotman's theory concerning code, it has been set aside to be discussed in Section 5.4).

5.3.1 Religious beliefs among 'coloured' people

The Islamic faith has always had an indelible effect and impact on 'coloured' culture. This can be seen by the discussion of the extract from Snyders's (1983:37) drama above, and the discussion in Section 2.3.2.2. Although Small does not mention the Islamic faith in his drama, both Snyders and Pearce have used the Islamic religion as a motif.

In both Snyders and Pearce's dramas, the utterances of some of the characters may lead the reader to believe that these characters are opposed to the Islamic religion, but close scrutiny reveals that this is not the case. For instance, although Ralph (Snyders 1983:12) plays devil's advocate by revealing some behavioural inconsistencies that can probably be detected in a few members of the Islamic faith (for example, drinking wine and smoking marihuana), he nonetheless, almost in the same breath, condemns the derogatory term 'Slamse' uttered by Sammy, in an extract which immediately follows the one mentioned above (Snyders 1983:13):

RALPH: Wiet djy dat Slams eers 'n honoured term gewies het vir 'n
 follower van Islam? ... Maar nou het ouens soes djy dit 'n
 derogatory term gemaak. ...
 Wiet djy dat Islam mean "goed" in die ware sens van die woord? ...
 Moenie die religion blym nie; blym die persón. ...
 Moenie laat religion jou laat dink djy's 'n anner nasie nie.

[Do you know that Slams used to be an honoured term for a
 follower of Islam? ... But now guys like you have made it a
 derogatory term ...

Do you know that Islam means "good" in the true sense of
 the word?..

Don't blame the religion, blame the person. ...

Don't let religion make you think that you're another

nation.]

Ralph's remarks do not only reveal a measure of understanding, but also a sign of reverence and respect for the Islamic religion. More important, his final remark confirms that the religion is an integral part of 'coloured' culture. The word 'nation' which, in this instance, is part of an argument between two 'coloured' characters (Ralph and Sammy), signifies this inclusiveness while Ralph's comments demonstrate a rejection of the misinterpretation of a different culture as a 'nonculture' in Lotman's sense (see Section 5.3). It can be argued that this word may, in its context, refer to the South African nation, but what must be considered here is that Ralph is discussing the word 'Slams' ['coloured Muslim']. Even if the word choice is attributed to the writer (Snyders), it must be remembered that Snyders (through his characters) advocates that 'coloured' people should not discriminate among themselves merely because of religious differences. Somewhat ironically, this argument between Ralph and Sammy seemingly reflects the then government's racial policy of separate development. However, the satirical thrust of the play as a whole questions the validity of such a division along racial or religious lines.

The discriminatory Parliament Acts of 1950 which were promulgated by the Nationalist government underlined these racial divisions so that words such as 'Slams', which initially contained no racist connotations, gradually assumed derogatory meanings. Evidence that these words were utilised in this pejorative sense can be found in the *HAT* (Schoonees *et al.* 1976:782), where the words 'Slams' and 'Slamaier' (with the same meaning as 'Slams') are listed with what present-day Muslims consider to be derogatory connotations (cf. Silva 1996:651).

Pearce's character Bobby also condemns people who are Muslims in one breath, and praises them in the next. In the following extract, Bobby (Pearce 1988b:14) recalls how difficult it was to be accepted because of his Christian beliefs:

Michelle ...? Onthou jy hoe jy aan die begin niks van my wou weet omdat ek as Coloured volgens jou Slamse mense nie jou type was nie?

[Michelle ...? Do you remember how you did not want to have anything to do with me at the beginning, because according to your Muslim family I wasn't your type?]

Similar attitudes were also encountered by Bobby's wife from his parents (Pearce 1988b:18):

My Mummy en Daddy het jou as Slams ook nie maklik accept nie.

[My Mummy and Daddy also did not accept you easily because you were a Muslim.]

But one can sense that the rejection of the religion is only superficial, because, although Bobby states that his parents did not accept Michelle's faith easily, Michelle achieves acceptance in the family merely by showing Bobby's mother how to prepare Eastern dishes (Pearce 1988b:18):

Toe jy vir Mummy wys hoe om regte Slamse dishes te maak, toe is jy sommer 'n huiskind.

[When you taught Mummy how to prepare genuine Muslim dishes, you instantly became part of the family.]

Bobby (Pearce 1988b:21), like Snyders's character Ralph, at times speaks about the Islamic religion as a source of pride, and even goes as far as to brag about Michelle's religion:

Shadow boxing, soos ou Mohammed Ali. (*Hy skadu boks al om die tafel. Probeer om sy eie skaduwee raak te slaan*): Ou Ali is mos ook 'n Slams, soos ou Michelle se mense.

[Shadow boxing, like Mohammed Ali. (*He shadow-boxes around the table. Tries to punch his own shadow*): Ali is also a Muslim, like Michelle's family.]

These extracts have an important aspect in common. All of them implicitly reveal a tension between tolerance and sufferance in these two religions – Christianity and Islam. Both religions have been absorbed into one ('coloured') culture. Because of this assimilation, it is natural for the characters of both Snyders and Pearce's dramas to converse and even argue about the two religions.

Also, in line with Lotman's concept of the extra-text, the religious motif of the Islamic faith

carries both historical and cultural connotations. In this instance, the situation is somewhat modified in the sense that the external cultural element (the term ‘Slams’/ ‘Slamse’) which appears in the extra-text of the selected extracts is also associated with external historical elements (Section 5.1). The relationship between and preponderance of one of these two external elements is therefore difficult to differentiate.

When singling out the cultural connotations of the term ‘Slams’, it is obvious that the term is not only connected to the motif (of Islamic faith), but ‘generates some special model of culture peculiar to itself’ (Lotman 1978:211), in other words, to a particular social group. It also represents what Lotman (1978:211) refers to as ‘a marked-off sphere’, ‘a closed-off area’ of ‘coloured’ culture which can only become comprehensible if the reader interacts with the interplay between text and context. As Lotman (1978:211) duly observes, inscrutable texts could be easily interpreted as elements of nonculture, especially when the reader is unacquainted with certain cultural or historical elements in the text (in this case the Islamic faith).

These texts suggest an intrinsic link between certain religious groups and the cultural aspect of diet. Hence, a large section of *original* Afrikaans vocabulary is also influenced by the names of foods which appear in the extra-texts of Pearce’s drama. Some of these terms are discussed in Section 5.3.2, below.

5.3.2 Food and culture

Funk and Wagnalls *New Practical Standard Dictionary of the English Language* (Funk 1946:326) describes culture as the ‘training, improvement, and refinement of mind, morals or taste’, which generally coincides with Van der Ross’s (1979:8) definition:

It would be fairly generally accepted that one’s culture is one’s lifestyle, as determined by one’s language, religion, systems of value, moral or ethical codes, dress, legal system, housing, occupation, preparation of food, systems and methods of education, body of scientific and other knowledge, aesthetic values, recreational activities, and so on.

Judging by the definitions provided, food is an intrinsic part of any given culture. Besides representing an alternative religion to Christianity, the Islamic faith has also contributed to the various meals consumed by the ‘coloured’ people and the dishes that they prepare and to South African cuisine in general. The names of the Indian foods that came to South Africa with members of the Islamic faith have also provided *original* Afrikaans with a variety of new words and expressions that have been incorporated in the code.

Similar to the Jewish faith, Muslims also have dietary laws which dictate the type of food that may be eaten. The Jewish faith requires meat and other dishes to be *kosher* (to fulfil the requirements of Jewish law), and the Islamic faith has similar laws which require meat and other foodstuff to be *halal*, in other words, to fulfil the requirements of Islamic law (Sykes 1982:556, 449). A number of words related to foods traditionally associated with a particular religious group have been selected for discussion from Pearce’s drama *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (1988b).

In the extract, Bobby compares the dish he is preparing to the ones prepared by his mother and his wife (Pearce 1988b:2):

BOBBY: Breyani, daai goed met al die stokkies en ilaaitjies, Rooti en Kerrie, Samoosas en Kebabs kon ou Michelle prepare, maar nie stew nie. Mummy se speciality is nou weer Bebbies met Mince of Pilchards-kerrie. Mummy kon ook altyd lekker pickled fish maak wat ons Good Friday met Hot-cross-buns

geëet het.

[Old Michelle could prepare Biryani, the stuff with all the sticks and cardamom, Roti and Curry, Samosas and Kebabs, but not stew. Mummy's speciality was fatcake and minced meat or Pilchard curry. Mummy could also make delicious pickled fish that we ate with Hot cross buns on Good Friday.]

In addition to the various lexical items (English and Indian words) assimilated in the *original* Afrikaans expressions, extra-textual historical, national, religious and cultural connotations are also present. Words such as Breyani (*biryani*), stokkies (*tuj*, cinnamon sticks), ilaaitjies (*elachi*, cardamom), Rooti (*roti*, Indian fried bread), Kerrie (*kari*, curry), Samosas (triangular pastry savouries containing minced meat or vegetables) and Kebabs (*kab_b*, meat balls) have all derived from *Urdu*, a language based on Western Hindi with an admixture of Persian and Arabic (Sykes 1982:471, 1182). The transformed spellings of these words are a sign that they have been incorporated into *original* Afrikaans, even if their origins confirm their extra-textual historical and cultural denotations. Not only have these words been assimilated into *original* Afrikaans, they also represent 'coloured' culture in the sense that all these dishes and ingredients are cooked and consumed regularly by 'coloured' people and is indicative of the admixture of Eastern culture in 'coloured' culture.

Biryani (an Indian dish), mentioned above, is the equivalent to what has become a South African dish called *potjiekos* (/pBiki:k_s/). Both dishes are made up of various ingredients, for example rice, meat, vegetables and spices that are cooked in one pot. These dishes are also similar to Hungarian goulash, which is also a mixture (stew) containing beef, veal, potatoes and flour and is highly seasoned. One could speculate that these dishes could have their source in various leftover foods from previous meals that were mixed and warmed in one pot, or were cooked from bits and pieces of available ingredients.

The extra-textual elements evoked by the utterance of Pearce's character Bobby (concerning *biryani*, curry, *samosas* and *kababs*) are therefore both historical and cultural. Not only are these foods connected to international extra-textual structures, but they have become deeply entrenched in 'coloured' culture and its lifestyle.

The word ‘Bebbies’ (/bebis/), on the other hand, is *original* Afrikaans and has South African and perhaps even Dutch origins. Although the origin of the word ‘Bebbies’ could not be traced, it is an *original* Afrikaans word (used mainly in Gauteng) and is the ‘coloured’ synonym for ‘vetkoek’ (/fetskuk/) [literally fat/lard-cake], a word that is used by many South Africans. This cake mixture, which is cut up into small rectangular shaped pieces and deep fried in oil or fat, can be eaten with most cooked dishes and is usually a substitute for bread. In the above extract, Bobby reminisces about a dish his mother prepared – ‘bebbies’ and minced meat (curried) or ‘bebbies’ and pilchard curry. In this instance, the extra-textual allusion that is evoked by the word ‘bebbies’, carries with it national and international connotations. It alludes to the South African word ‘vetkoek’ which can be eaten with an Indian dish (‘curried minced meat’). Both connotations comply with Lotman’s (1977:286) concept of cultural and historical elements that are generally present in the extra-text (as mentioned in Section 5.1).

The already mentioned, religious elements (Section 5.2) of the extra-text can be found in Bobby’s utterance in the above extract concerning ‘pickled fish’, ‘Good Friday’ and ‘Hot cross buns’. ‘Coloured’ Christians generally refrain from eating meat on Good Friday, regardless of denomination. This Roman Catholic and Anglican tradition is still currently practised among ‘coloured’ people. Meat is replaced by fish, which is pickled with onion rings and spices adapted from an Indian recipe and eaten with ‘Hot cross buns’. The dough from which the buns are made is leavened. These buns, which contain yeast and raisins, are shaped like ordinary round buns, but have a cross made of batter across the crust of the bun. The cross symbolises the Christian faith.

Bobby’s utterance thus not only hints at the crucifixion of Christ, but also represents a suggestion to the reader or audience of his own death later in the drama. These two allusions are accompanied by multiple other different textual elements located at different levels of the textual hierarchy. One of these elements is the title of the play, which focuses the attention of the reader or audience on the implications of the words ‘Laaste Supper’ [Last Supper]. These different levels enter into multiple extra-textual relations, especially because the signs that are used are divergent or deviant from the expected signs.

The above discussion confirms Lotman's emphasis on the manner in which extra-textual relations that are embedded in a given culture are influenced by external elements. Another noticeable relationship is the correlation between culture and the code or codes employed. However, a detailed examination of language has already been conducted in Chapter Two (especially Section 2.1). Hence the discussion which follows focuses only on the relationship between language and culture and how these two elements affect the reader.

5.4 LANGUAGE AND CODE

Lotman's definition of culture as the memory of a community inevitably raises questions about the system of semiotic rules by which human life experience is transformed into culture, because the 'existence of culture implies the construction of a system, of some rules for translating direct experience into text' (Lotman 1978:214). In order for any historical event to be placed in a category or to be committed to memory, it must first be acknowledged as existing, and it must be identified as a specific element in the language of the community committing it to memory. Lotman's view is that languages (in their actual historical functioning)

are inseparable from culture. No language (in the full sense of the word) can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have, at its center [*sic*], the structure of the natural language.

Furthermore, Lotman (1977:50) proposes that a work of art is a particular model of the universe, and that messages encoded in the language of art cannot exist when they are detached from the language. It follows that a message cannot be correctly interpreted or decoded using an incorrect code.

Lotman's reference to the context of culture and language above is not too difficult to comprehend in terms of inseparability if the language and culture are drawn from one context and are known to the reader. In the case presented by the selected dramas, the secondary language (*original* Afrikaans) is steeped in an admixture of culture that may present interpretation problems to readers who are unaccustomed to that specific culture.

The reader has to be conversant with the code used by the author in order to be able to interpret the text, but must also be familiar with the cultural and historical data contained in the extra-text. ‘Coloured’ people generally have no difficulty in understanding and interpreting the text and extra-text, whether it is written in *standard* Afrikaans, *original* Afrikaans or whether these two codes are juxtaposed, because they are accustomed to it (as discussed in Section 1.5.1).

Familiarity with the elements mentioned above allows the reader to interact easily with the information provided in the text and extra-text and confirms Lotman’s theory concerning the aesthetics of identity. To those who are unacquainted with ‘coloured’ culture and *original* Afrikaans, the text and extra-text may present a hindrance (Lotman’s aesthetics of opposition), which requires the reader to formulate a suitable or appropriate meaning which may or may not coincide with the author’s linguistic intention, but may nonetheless accommodate the reader’s interpretation of the text. In some cases, where the reader’s formulation of the meaning in the text does not coincide with the writer’s linguistic intention, new or alternative interpretations are sometimes exposed for consideration. Lotman (1977:23) foregrounds this concept by stating that besides being able to store tremendous amounts of information into a very small area

an artistic text manifests yet another feature: it transmits different information to different readers in proportion to each one’s comprehension; it provides the reader with a language in which each successive portion of information may be assimilated with repeated reading. It behaves as a kind of living organism which has a feedback channel to the reader ...

To assist readers, the three authors of the selected literature have included a large selection of lexical and syntactic devices in *standard* Afrikaans, namely in the titles, introductions, descriptions of the settings and the didascalia. These devices reinforce the reader’s perception of the literary, artistic and language codes, and at the same time, help the reader to interact with the text. Although these devices serve to accommodate the reader’s perception of the text as a whole, they facilitate a dual purpose – the introduction of *original* Afrikaans as the natural language of a particular community. The culturally embedded words discussed in Sections 5.2 and 5.3 above serve both to define a particular culture and to provide the glue which keeps the culture together. In this way, language

(*original* Afrikaans here) at once defines and distinguishes a culture and is itself predicated upon that culture.

5.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The particular qualities of the extra-text as sign and the nature of its relation to the text are in line with Lotman's view that these two elements, when combined, create a complex code that permits us to decipher information contained in the text. The reason for this is that the text in combination with the extra-text forms a textual hierarchy which generally exposes diverse levels of meaning, depending on the signs employed. These signs enter into different extra-textual relations with external factors which usually correspond to external social, historical, cultural, religious and psychological elements of a given culture, in this way providing additional meaning.

These meanings, however, cannot be fully understood outside a given cultural context and a system of cultural codes. According to Lotman, culture is memory or, in other words, a record in the memory of what a particular community has or communities have experienced. This record binds culture to past historical experience, and has little depth of meaning for a reader who interprets the text totally separately from its extra-textual relations.

Lotman views the reader as part of the semiotic process of the poetic text, and bases this on the reader's interaction with the text. This implies that the reader has to have a fair knowledge of literary and other artistic codes that may be found in the text, if he/she wishes to achieve a full understanding of that text. In the case of the selected literature, a knowledge of *standard* and *original* Afrikaans would be an advantage to the reader, as demonstrated by the foregoing discussion, because both these codes relate to ideological and socio-historical factors in the given texts and play a part in the expectation placed upon the texts by the reader.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The fundamental rule in semiotics concerns the relationship between the sign and the code. A sign can only be a sign if it functions within a code (a rule-governed signifying system shared by a community of speakers). Although the primary objective of any study in semiotics is the manner in which the codes which are embedded in the text govern every aspect of the text to produce both the meaning and the specificity of the text, Lotman (1977:285) considers the conventionality of the code to be of primary importance. This is because the signs within a code correlate with ‘many attendant historical, cultural and psychological structures’ to increase the information load and, in this way, provide additional meaning. This means that a text is not seen as a self-enclosed system. In fact, these structures automatically place a text within a broader social context, since conventions presuppose a society and social acceptance of a code. It also suggests that meaning is totally reliant on the conventions of a given society. In other words, texts are better understood within their particular cultural and historical context.

In the case of the selected ‘coloured’ literature, a distinctive aspect that emerges from this study is that historical and cultural elements are without a doubt an integral part of ‘coloured’ literature. This point is confirmed throughout the analysis by the inseparability of the historical and cultural components found in the texts of the selected literature. The intertwining of the historically based content, the storyline and the characterisation used as motifs by Small, Snyders and Pearce in the three dramas ties in well with Lotman’s (1977:286) semiotic viewpoint on the subject which proposes that the meaning of a literary text cannot be understood outside its cultural or historical context. According to Lotman, who consistently focuses on central literary elements such as the structure of the artistic text, and the association between text and context, historical and cultural aspects are necessary elements for determining [full] meaning in a given text.

6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The decision to apply Lotman's semiotics to the selected literature was prompted by the defamiliarising effect of the selected dramas, caused by the language usage which juxtaposes *standard* Afrikaans to a deviant dialect – *original* Afrikaans, and the numerous historic-cultural aspects that are encountered in the dramas. However, because Lotman's theories span such a vast area of semiotics, only a few of his concepts have been chosen for application. These include his theories concerning poetic language (which is based on his theory of a primary and secondary modelling system), the iconicity of the text, the aesthetics of identity and opposition, the distinction between text and extra-text, and the relationship between the extra-text, culture and code. A brief summary of the findings related to these theories follows, in order to demonstrate the close links that are evident between each theory and the applicability of these theories to the three 'coloured' dramas under discussion.

6.2.1 Poetic language encountered

Lotman's differentiation between the different sign systems that operate in natural language (a primary modelling system) and poetic language (a secondary modelling system) makes it possible to detect these sign systems and verify that they are functional in 'coloured' literature. An examination of the various devices found in the selected 'coloured' literature, such as lexical elisions, addenda and vulgarisms reveals that these devices are an integral part of the discourse of most of the characters in the chosen plays – with the exception of one – Sally in Snyders's *Political Joke* (1983). Sally's role as teacher is probably the reason for her purist language constraints. She does not use *original* Afrikaans or any of the devices mentioned above. Her discourse is either in standard English or in *standard* Afrikaans. This choice by the author can also be regarded as a device to juxtapose the *original* Afrikaans of the other characters to the *standard* Afrikaans and English found in other sections of the texts. The versatility and ability of 'coloured' people to utilise three or more different codes at the same time is revealed when the texts are read semiotically.

6.2.1.1 *Lexical devices analysed*

The recurrent use of elisions such as *aphaeresis*, *syncope* and *apocope* that were detected in the selected dramas indicates a deliberate deviation from *standard* Afrikaans (as a primary modelling system). These deviations not only transform the utterances into poetic language (the secondary modelling system), but also affirm the inadvertent or deliberate systematisation of the elisions by the three respective writers. From a semiotic perspective, the deviations can be classified as a semiotic sign, emblematic of the manner in which the majority of the ‘coloured’ community in South Africa speak Afrikaans.

An important observation is that Pearce’s character, Bobby, uses neither *syncope* nor *apocope*, which either indicates that the influence of *standard* Afrikaans is greater in Gauteng than it is in the Cape, or that Pearce’s personal preference and use of the dialect have overshadowed his protagonist’s character by impacting on Bobby’s mode of utterance. There are also other slight differences in discursive preferences, which could accrue from the settings of the selected plays or which could be attributed to the way in which *original* Afrikaans has evolved.

An interesting innovation found in the texts of all three dramatists is the use of *paragoges* (the addition of a letter or syllable to a word, for example, affixes in the form of prefixes and suffixes). These addenda (discussed in Section 2.3.1.2), which are abundant in the selected literature, deviate from the *standard* Afrikaans, in the sense that they constitute words which have English roots and Afrikaans affixes. As explained in this study (see Chapter Two, Section 2.3.1.2), the root generally holds the fundamental meaning, while the affix indicates the tense or number of the word. Other variations also discussed include the formation of new compound words by joining an English and an Afrikaans word. Evidence of this type of deviation is exhibited as far back as 1961 in Small’s *Kitaar my Kruis*.

Besides confirming the semiotic theory concerning the rules for selection and combination which are discussed in Section 6.2.1.2, which follows, these linguistic characteristics also emphasise the adaptability of *original* Afrikaans which accommodates the assimilation of

words and phrases from other primary languages, for instance, English and Zulu.

Another significant observation is the frequent occurrence of vulgarisms in the utterances of the majority of the characters. Authors tend to avoid vulgarisms in formal contexts because vulgarisms are generally unacceptable. Yet, in the selected literature, Small, Snyders and Pearce have inserted words, phrases and expressions that are generally classified as obscene. The utilisation of these lexical devices serves a dual purpose. The vulgarisms constitute an integral part of the characters' discourse and, at the same time, often denote signifiers which represent perhaps unfamiliar signifieds. It is obvious that the respective writers have included the vulgarity to serve a specific purpose, for instance, to constitute the characterisation, or to simulate authenticity, to capture local flavour, or to signify emotional outbursts. In other words, the vulgarities contribute to the dramatic effect. A focal point of the analysis is the adaptability and flexibility with which *original* Afrikaans accommodates the deviant vulgarisms. The same adjustability is not apparent in *standard* written Afrikaans and this is corroborated by the scarcity of listings for the vulgarisms in *standard* Afrikaans dictionaries. Many of the vulgarisms in question appear in *A Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles* (Silva 1996). In addition to these functions, the use of vulgarity (in terms of Lotman's semiotics) introduces and also illustrates a variety of new and additional meanings that would otherwise not be associated with the numerous relevant historic-cultural aspects that are encountered in the dramas.

The addenda, affixes and vulgarities which are utilised by all three writers in the selected literature serve to strengthen the argument that, although the perceived deviations have not always been systematised, there is an element of consistency, which indicates that the option for systematisation exists. To substantiate and to test the constancy, examples selected for discussion have been purposely extracted from the beginning, the middle and the end of each drama. This exercise not only tested the uniformity of the words used, but has also been utilised to ascertain whether the lexical terms were devices used by the respective writers for a specific purpose. This examination has ultimately revealed that the utterances were deliberate authorial choices to epitomise the natural discourse within the characters' milieu. When viewed from this broader perspective, the utterances also disclosed that the appendages, vulgarities and affixes not only functioned as deviations of *standard* Afrikaans, but were, at the same time, signs functioning within an established

code (*original* Afrikaans) – a rule-governed signifying system shared by a community of speakers.

6.2.1.2 *Devices used in a syntactic context*

The *original* Afrikaans sentences used by the various characters in the selected literature revealed numerous discrepancies which enhance the semiotic theory concerning axes of relation introduced by Saussure (see Van Zyl 1982:68) and expounded by Lotman (1976:18). These discrepancies confirm the theories of Saussure and Lotman.

Despite the sentences being syntagmatic and paradigmatic according to *standard* Afrikaans rules (in other words in agreement with the axes of relation), there are words and phrases in the given sentences (see for example Section 2.3.2.1) which simultaneously make these sentences deviant merely because they contain words imported from another primary modelling system (such as English). Generally, the inclusion of a word from another language in a specific sentence of a given language comes into conflict with the automatism of the given language, and, even though the sentence concurs with the rules of the given language, meaning has to be sought in the semiotic system of the language from which the deviant word originates. In other words, the insertion represents a deviation from the expected norm (for instance, the expected genre or the rules of the given language or code). In semiotics, such a deviation is referred to as a poetic device which consequently has an artistic effect on the text and its creation of meaning. In addition to this (and besides being artistic and, in the context of Afrikaans drama, unconventional), the English words that are inserted into the predominantly Afrikaans sentences are actually culturally consistent even though they may superficially appear to be indiscriminate or casual. The recurrence of such usage rules out the supposition that the utterances are predetermined by either the characters or the writers, because the characters' utterances in the three chosen dramas are consistent with similar deviations. The repetition of these deviations also leads to the assumption that these devices are not really devices in the true sense of the word but are, in fact, conventional attributes which are characteristic of the assimilated cultural heritage of 'coloured' people and the manner in which they speak. These attributes further lend credence to the assumption that *original* Afrikaans is not only a secondary language

model, but could also be regarded as a primary language model – in other words, a code with its own rule-governing system.

This uniqueness or distinction found in *original* Afrikaans is not only restricted to the systematic inclusion of English words adjoined to Afrikaans syllables and affixes or the placement of English words in a predominantly Afrikaans sentence, but also extends to include words adapted from Zulu as discussed in Section 2.3.2.2. This additional “transgression” which invokes a third semiotic system also seems to argue for *original* Afrikaans as a primary code. The convergence of the three systems (English, Afrikaans and Zulu) not only demonstrates the versatility of *original* Afrikaans, but also verifies Lotman’s (1977:35) claim that meaning in a secondary system can be formed according to the means inherent to natural languages or through means employed in other semiotic systems.

Despite the mixing of three independent codes, namely English, *standard* Afrikaans and *original* Afrikaans, the precision and accuracy of the choice of vocabulary by means of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic selectional axes enhance, rather than hinder, the linguistic flow. Moreover, the ease with which the English words and phrases are incorporated into even the *standard* Afrikaans sentences is indicative of the fact that the deviations are not contrived or premeditated, but represent the character of a specific group of people and the manner in which they speak. Detection of the device is easily accomplished, because the *original* Afrikaans used by the characters in their discourse is juxtaposed with the *standard* Afrikaans sentences and phrases that appear in the didascalia. Although the reason for the *standard* Afrikaans didascalia is uncertain, its inclusion provides the paradigm needed to substantiate the proposition of this study that despite a potential shift to *original* Afrikaans as a primary modelling system, for these three dramas, *original* Afrikaans was a secondary modelling system based on a natural language (*standard* Afrikaans). In addition, these devices not only highlight the *original* Afrikaans in the texts, but also provide additional emotional, personal and sometimes historical information that is crucial to the specific meaning in the texts.

The mixing of language codes is further endorsed by a variety of metaphoric and idiomatic devices (Section 2.3.2.2), which often consist of vulgarities and racist terminology. These

devices generally add to or enrich meaning in the texts. The terminology and construction of these expressions are specifically bound to the culture of the ‘coloured’ people and can be traced to explicit circumstances, situations and emotions. The vulgarities in the utterances are usually directed towards specific entities, and signify the emotions of the various characters in the selected literature in relation to the situation. As signifiers and in terms of semiotic concepts, these metaphors defamiliarise conventional expectations not only because they are vulgar, but also because they represent unfamiliar signifieds to audiences not culturally bound to this specific population group (in other words the ‘coloured’ community). On the other hand, the expressions demonstrate the typical eclectic or multifaceted historical nature of ‘coloured’ culture.

The epithets, metaphoric expressions and idiomatic phrases found in *original* Afrikaans are a vibrant component of the poetics of the dialect and can be seen as the essence of the manner in which *original* Afrikaans deviates from *standard* Afrikaans. The changes in the meanings of words and word-groups as well as the speech-forms of these epithets and expressions are culturally and ideologically linked to ‘coloured’ people. Without insight into and cognizance of these expressions and their meanings, the linking of signifiers to signifieds could be an arduous task.

One final important observation is that the continuous appearance of the various devices mentioned above and utilised by all three dramatists not only demonstrates a deliberate deviation from the manner in which *standard* Afrikaans is conventionally used, but also seems to focus attention on the deviant code (*original* Afrikaans) itself. This intentionally organised foregrounding of the code by means of various recurring and identifiable techniques echoes a distinction made by Van Zyl (1982:70), who views this type of device as aesthetic in the sense that it depicts a particular relationship between the message and the device itself. Her explanation is that because the aesthetic sign is analogical and iconic, it draws attention to its deviant encoding procedures so that the process emerges as both intentional and systematic.

It can thus be concluded that Lotman’s theory on poetic language, which distinguishes between the different sign systems that operate in both natural language (the primary modelling system) and poetic language (the secondary modelling system), is confirmed,

because these sign systems are an integral part of the communication that takes place between the various characters in the selected dramas. The complex organisation of elements and devices which epitomise these sign systems and which characterise the poetic language found at any or all of the various levels of the poetic text (for example, the lexical and syntactic levels of all three dramas) produce meaning that is both crucial and essential. As demonstrated in the exploration of some of the lexical and syntactic levels of the plays (Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2), it is apparent that these devices provide the means to transcend the automatic quality of familiar perception. In other words, the objects (words and phrases) are defamiliarised to the extent that they transcend their familiar characteristics and perception to signify an irregular, unfamiliar or even an opposing concept of the same object. This perception (defamiliarisation) is closely linked to Lotman's theory on iconicity, which is discussed in Section 6.2.2.

6.2.2 Iconicity in the texts

The discussion in Chapter Three strives to show that although Lotman's (1977:55-56) concept of the iconic sign is similar to Peirce's³⁹ (1935-36, Vol.2:§363) hypothesis and also Eco's (1976:204) theory, it is perhaps slightly more complex. Lotman's distinction is based on various intersections or demarcations of the expression plane and the content plane which, in the process of artistic communication, transform artistic texts into codes and modelling systems comprised of diverse iconic signs. Lotman (1977:56) refers to these icons or images as *secondary representational verbal signs* and regards them as organically linked to the use of signs in culture. Lotman's claim that culture is the necessary basis for all signs can therefore be accepted.

Recognising the deviating intersection (or what Lotman calls demarcation) between expression and content is a complicated procedure, but the application of Lotman's theory to the selected literature is even more complex because the complexities are concealed in the compound historical and cultural connotations of the signs. These demarcations make the exposition and interpretation of the signs extremely difficult, because the deviations

39 The theories of C.S. Peirce are discussed in Sections 1.3 and 3.11 of this study. Footnotes 12 and 35 contain additional information. Some of the theories of Umberto Eco are discussed in Sections 1.3.1 and 3.1.1 of this study. Footnote 16 contains additional information.

appear concurrently. To limit the scope of the study, only three variations of the deviant function have been selected and applied to an extract from *Joanie Galant-hulle* (Small 1978:11), and to consolidate the findings, the signifiers and signifieds encountered throughout the analysis were compared to similar iconic structures detected in *Political Joke* (Snyders 1983) and in *Die Laaste Supper in Marabastad* (Pearce 1988b).

The first variation encountered generally conformed to *standard* Afrikaans principles, in other words the expression plane coincided with the content plane as far as words and sentences were concerned. The difference lay in the interpretation of specific words or utterances (expressions) in the sentence which altered the conventional content (meaning). An example is the word ‘Meneer’ [Mister] (Small 1978:11) which is used either as a title for a male adult, or as a positive or negative designation for someone in authority.

The second type likewise appeared to conform to *standard* Afrikaans principles, but differed in the sense that the expression plane deviated from the content plane, because the expressions which were derived from English words and used in Afrikaans sentences contained historical, cultural or ideological connotations peculiar to ‘coloured’ usage. An example is the word ‘poelies’ [police] (Small 1978:11), which is discussed fully in Section 3.2.1.6 of this study.

By contrast, the third type digressed from the conventional meaning from the outset, because the expressions deviated from *standard* Afrikaans principles and also contained historical, cultural or ideological connotations that were also peculiar to ‘coloured’ usage. An example is the expression ‘Haitie-taitie Bruinmense’ [Hoity-toity Brown people] (Small 1978:11), which describes wealthy ‘coloured’ people who have been assimilated into White society. A full explanation of this expression is given in Section 3.2.1.5.

All the icons chosen for discussion in Chapter Three, namely ‘Meneer’ [Mister], the man with the notice, ‘skollies’ [gangsters], ‘Wittes’ [Whites], ‘Haitie-taitie Bruinmense’ [Hoity-toity Brown-people], ‘poelies’ [police], ‘Ambulance’ and ‘Bulldozers’, taken from Small’s *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978:11) can be aligned with Lotman’s notion because they are culturally and historically based and, as already discussed in Sections 3.2.1.1 to 3.2.1.8, these icons emanate from the persecution, oppression, harassment or mistreatment suffered

by 'coloured' people during the apartheid era. Some of these icons are also derived from the totalitarianism practised by the people in power at the time, and can be traced to the political and socio-economic situation which existed at the time.

The investigation conducted in Chapter Three suggests that Lotman's notion of the centrality of cultures is correct, in the sense that intelligibility is largely dependent on the ability of the reader to interpret the given information. This feat can become difficult, especially when the sign and system are 'enmeshed in the life of society' (Lotman 1977:55), in this case, the culture and ideology of the 'coloured' people. Lotman points out that when the sign or the system deviates from the conventional (accepted) standard, it could result in a misinterpretation of the signified which, in turn, could mislead the reader during the process of interpreting information.

A further likelihood which could mislead the reader is the fact that the sign represented by the icon generally has two inseparable aspects, namely its similarity to the object designated and its dissimilarity from the same object. The one feature is always accompanied by the other (Lotman 1977:56). In other words, these iconic signs bear a direct resemblance to specific objects, but also differ from these designated objects in the sense that the signs also correlate 'with many attendant historical, cultural and psychological structures' to increase the information load and, in this way provide additional meaning (Lotman 1977:285). Although the correlation of these signs with the above-mentioned structures is discussed in detail in Chapter 5, the analogies are also pertinent to the current discussion.

Positive aspects that can be procured from Lotman's observation are that the use of icons not only provides additional information, but also enhances existing or conventional information. To Lotman (1977:55), the iconic principle is the means by which 'verbal art' overcomes the fundamental property of a word as a linguistic sign. Lotman believes that by constructing a verbal artistic model by means of icons (images) the arbitrary connection between the planes of expression and content is transcended. The secondary representational signs that emerge as a result of the transcendence ensure greater intelligibility than conventional signs, because they are organically linked to the use of cultural signs (Lotman 1977:55-56).

6.2.3 Lotman's aesthetics of identity and opposition

Close scrutiny of Lotman's theory regarding the aesthetics of identity and opposition confirmed that the theory was similar to Eco's (1976:7-8) hypothesis concerning 'open and closed texts' (Van Zyl 1982:72) and Barthes's notion of 'readerly and writerly' texts (Van Zyl 1982:80).

Lotman's concepts regarding the aesthetics of identity and opposition emanate from his theory of iconicity (see Chapter Three of this study). Lotman's aesthetics of identity presupposes that the sender and the recipient hold near-identical codes (Lotman 1977:289-290). This implies that the structures of the texts are codified and conform to rules which generally fulfil the reader's expectations with regard to the particular language, genre or code, and make it possible for the reader to assign meaning to the given texts easily. Texts which conform to Lotman's aesthetics of opposition, on the other hand, deliberately obstruct the reader's expectations with regard to language, genre and meaning (Lotman 1977:292). Because the codes of the sender and recipient differ, they oppose and contradict the expectations set up by the recipient.

6.2.3.1 *Elements of identity*

To confirm whether Lotman's concept concerning the aesthetics of identity (1977:290) is evident in the selected 'coloured' literature, intratextual relations have been scrutinised. The analysis included the use of language, devices and codes and was conducted to ascertain whether these elements were used to manipulate or develop any specific expectation(s) in the poetic text.

The scrutiny revealed that the *standard* Afrikaans used in the didascalia and in a fair portion of the utterances of the characters adequately reassures those readers who are generally accustomed to *standard* Afrikaans, while the *original* Afrikaans utterances sustain the active interests of readers who are conversant with both codes. These two codes

used in unison serve a dual purpose. They not only communicate with all the designated readers of Afrikaans (*standard* Afrikaans and *original* Afrikaans), but assist (especially through the deviant dialect *original* Afrikaans) with the typecasting or stereotyping of the various ‘coloured’ characters in the selected dramas. The manipulation of these devices by the respective ‘coloured’ writers conforms to Lotman’s notion of clichés, which is discussed in Section 4.2. These clichés play a key role in the process of cognition, and also assist in the process of transferring information that is identifiable.

Another device that accommodates the reader’s expectations is the didascalia. The didascalia not only supply the reader with identifiable information concerning the nature or mode of the utterance through stress, intonation, kinesic markers and facial expressions, but also serve to meet the reader’s expectations regarding the language code (*standard* Afrikaans), regardless of the interference of a deviant code (*original* Afrikaans).

6.2.3.2 *Elements of opposition*

The discussion in Section 4.3 confirms that the expectations of the reader can be impeded by a number of devices used by an author in a particular language or code, for example, unknown elements such as words, gestures or idiosyncrasies beyond the reader’s frame of reference, which are generally attached to social, cultural or ideological beliefs unknown to the reader. The findings of this section endorse Lotman’s notion (1977:295) that the code used by the receiver always differs to some degree from that of the sender. The differences may be comparatively slight, based on the individual’s cultural experience, but they could also be significant, socio-historical or cultural differences which could either prevent the receiver from interpreting the text or coerce the receiver into researching and reinterpreting the artistic impact of the text.

In semiotic terms, it means that the writer normally provides the signifiers, and it is left to the reader to determine the signifieds. This process is usually dependent on the code used by the writer to encode the text and the code used by the reader to interpret the same text. The choice of code by the author in constructing the text can either correspond with the reader's code, or differ significantly from it. This further implies that the code used by the reader could differ entirely from the one that is employed by the writer. Nonetheless, the similarity between or difference in the codes used by the writer and the reader in unison are the factors that determine the ultimate meaning(s) that is/are derived from the texts.

Many of the connotations, insinuations and implications contained in the deviant code (*original* Afrikaans) used by the respective writers – Small, Snyders and Pearce – could represent obstacles or restrictions in the text, because they depict explicit socio-historic events that were experienced by 'coloured' people, and that are perhaps not generally known. A further caveat is that these texts could be dated and so effectively redundant or anachronistic. It is precisely this kind of embeddedness that at once provides a challenge and a source of excitement for potential readers/audiences. Although many of these socio-historic and cultural differences have already been examined in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of this study – such as the lexical and syntactic devices and the iconic structures and images – a number of additional words and phrases have also been examined in Chapter Four in an attempt to apply Lotman's theory concerning the aesthetics of opposition.

Words and phrases in the three plays corroborated the notion that much of the writers' intention is dedicated to accommodating the reader's initial and basic expectations in the texts, but also that the bulk of the texts have been designed to direct the reader's attention to words, phrases and expressions which are uncommon and largely deviant. These deviant words, which thwart many readers' expectations, draw attention to the text itself, compelling a close scrutiny of the text, especially the nature of the language used. In other words, a thorough examination of the text has to be undertaken by the reader, to check which elements of the language or code employed by the writer interferes with the reader's initial expectations. In the process, both the intention of the writer and the awareness of the reader come into play.

It is obvious that the ironic discrepancy between expectations and outcomes, to a large extent, depends on the language or code used in the texts. The customary tension created by the action or the event is undoubtedly overshadowed by the language usage, which not only rouses the reader from a position of passiveness, but promotes interaction between reader and text.

6.2.4 Extra-text, culture and code

In Chapter Five, Lotman's distinction between the text and what he refers to as the extra-text was examined. Lotman (1977:286) bases his differentiation on the inter-relationship between the text, the extra-text, a given culture and its systemic codes. According to his theory, these elements share a symbiotic relationship, because the extra-text, its historical context and the codes that comprise the culture are generally embedded in a given culture.

On closer examination, the particular qualities of the extra-text as sign and the nature of its relation to the text have been found to support Lotman's view that these two elements, when combined, create a complex code that permits the reader to decipher information contained in the text. The reason for this is that the text, combined with the extra-text, forms a textual hierarchy which generally exposes diverse levels of meaning, depending on the signs employed. These signs enter into different extra-textual relations with external factors which usually correspond with the external social, historical, cultural and psychological elements of a given culture (in this case the culture of the 'coloured' people). These meanings, it was found, cannot be fully understood outside this given cultural context and its system of cultural codes, because if culture is a record in the memory of what the community has experienced and this record connects culture to past historical experience, it would have reduced meaning for a reader who interprets the text totally separately from its extra-textual historic and cultural relations.

This implies that, ideally, the reader has to have a fair knowledge of literary and other artistic codes that may be found in the text. In the case of the selected literature, a knowledge of *standard* and *original* Afrikaans would be an obvious advantage to the reader, because both these codes relate to ideological and socio-historical factors in the

given texts and play a considerable part in the expectation placed upon the texts by the reader.

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

A number of intriguing features of Lotman's theories had to be omitted from the discussion in order to limit the scope of the discussion, particularly his in-depth concept of the text which entails a full explanation of texts and their extra-textual structures. Although some elements which affect texts (such as expression, demarcation and structure) have been mentioned, other valid elements, such as systemic and extra-systemic structures (Lotman 1977:51-53), were not analysed because they do not have a direct bearing on the present research.

Another fascinating aspect not analysed is Lotman's (1977:35-36) notion of content, which explores the problem of the formation of meaning through internal and external recoding. This theory incorporates both primary language systems and secondary language systems and the manner in which different structures converge to form meaning.

Although quite a few of Lotman's (1977:80, 85, 106, 112) theories have been partly analysed (like those mentioned above), many of his explanations such as the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes of meaning, phonological repetitions, rhythmic repetitions (to name but a few) were also avoided because they were not strictly applicable to this research project.

Other interesting theories that are in line with the current examination that have not been included owing to length restrictions are the reception aesthetics and reader-oriented theories of Iser, Jauss and Fish (Selden 1985:112, 114, 117; Eagleton 1983:83-85; Stevens & Stewart 1987:28-32). These theories also complement Eco's hypothesis concerning 'open and closed texts' (Van Zyl 1982:72) and Barthes's notion involving 'readerly and writerly' texts (Van Zyl 1982:80) as discussed in Chapter Four (Sections 4.1 and 4.2).

Owing to the limitations of this research and the detail that has been selected for discussion in the three dramas, other contemporary pieces of literature written by various other 'coloured' writers have been omitted. It is hoped that this study will initiate such further study.

6.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Although a fair amount of categorising and systematising concerning *original* Afrikaans has been accomplished by this study, a more in-depth investigation of *original* Afrikaans as a dialect (a secondary language system) and also of the factors which suggest that the code merits consideration as a primary language system could be researched. An ideal starting point from which to conduct such an investigation would be to follow up on some of the statements that are made by Small in his prologue in *Kanna Hy Kô Huistoe* (1965:5) and also in his foreword in *Joanie Galant-hulle* (1978:5), mentioned in Sections 2.3.1.1 and 2.3.2 of this study.

Another aspect which could be researched is the manner in which *original* Afrikaans affects and influences *standard* Afrikaans. The type of code-mixing embodied by *original* Afrikaans is on the rise because of South Africa's heterogeneous cultural heritage. The effortless manner in which *original* Afrikaans accommodates speakers of various other codes seems to be the answer to the difficulty that speakers may encounter when they use *standard* Afrikaans.

A further suggestion for research is the compilation of a comprehensive Afrikaans dictionary that includes all the facets of Afrikaans and its evolution, some of which have been examined in this present study.

6.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The subjection of a selection of ‘coloured’ literature to a semiotic analysis has confirmed that additional semiotic avenues to attaining meaning do exist, just as the theories of Lotman that were utilised establish without a doubt that history is an integral part of literature.

As demonstrated in the study, the impact that history has on literature and also the relationship between history and its literary representation seem to be inseparable from each other. It is also clear that meaning relies on the historical, social, cultural and religious context of literature. This aspect (which has been corroborated by this study) is the main reason for the selection of Lotman’s semiotic theories and their application to the literature in question.

The primary objective of this study – which was to open up new avenues of evaluation that may prove to be beneficial not only in the interpretation of meaning in ‘coloured’ literature, but also advantageous in the sense that it will enable the evaluation to be assimilated and merged with the changes that have taken place in literature and in South African society – has (thanks to Lotman’s theories) been surpassed. The hope is therefore that this research will, in Hawkes’s words (Elam 1980:3),

encourage rather than resist the process of change, [and] ... stretch rather than reinforce the boundaries that currently define literature and its academic study.

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