

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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ZAKES MDA'S SOCIAL VISION FOR POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA:

AN EXAMINATION OF *FOOLS, BELLS AND THE HABIT OF EATING.*

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL
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Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree in any other university or any other award.

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to establish how Zakes Mda crafts his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa through his three plays: *The Mother of All Eating*, *You Fool How Can the Sky Fall?* and *The Bells of Amersfoort* collected under the anthology *Fools, Bells, and The Habit of Eating*. The study is premised on the recognition of the fact that a writer does not only create works of art for art's sake but create art that is aimed at educating the readers about the present and future realities. The thesis aims to study Mda's social vision not as a novelist as he is popularly known but as a playwright. The study focuses on the examination of the thematic and characterization respectively. It then moves on to an examination of the specific literary styles and devices that Mda uses to bring out the above mentioned concept. The study engages the Dialogism theory as articulated by the Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin. These ideas are invoked as a theoretical tool for shedding light on how Mda creates his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa. This study employs textual analysis to collect, organize, analyze and interpret data on Mda's social vision for post-apartheid South Africa as portrayed in his plays under study. It is qualitative in nature and informed by the phenomenological research philosophy. The study found that elements such as characterization, thematic concerns and choice of diction are instrumental in communicating a writer's vision. Metaphors of social vision in the dramaturgy is one of the tenable areas for further research.

Key words: Social Vision, Post-Apartheid South Africa, Mda, Dialogism.

Dedication

To the Man of my heart:
Dialogue of your spirit;
Integrity and selflessness,
Makes humanity blossom
Frankincense soul-flower.

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Operational definition of terms

Post-apartheid: a period in South Africa after the end of racial segregation and discriminatory governance from 1994 onwards..

Home: the physical and psychological coming into being of the ‘self’ in temporal and spatial category so that all subjects in post-apartheid South Africa become and feel an integral part of the country despite their cultural diversity.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION: MDA'S PARADIGM OF SOCIAL VISION

1.1 Background to the study

This study investigates how Zakes Mda crafts his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa as revealed in his plays *The Mother of All Eating*, *You Fool How Can the Sky Fall?* and *The Bells of Amersfoort* all collected under the anthology titled *Fools, Bells, and the Habit of Eating*. Though some critics like Theodor Adorno argue that literature serves no didactic function but exists as “art for art’s sake,” there is no doubt that it performs an inalienable social function. African writers such as Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka dismiss the claim that art is autonomous as Eurocentric and a limited view of literature. In *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, Achebe asserts that “art for art’s sake is just another piece of deodorized dog shit” (19). In effect, literature cannot be divorced from the social context, which it both reflects and refracts. In *Myth, Literature and the African World*, Wole Soyinka describes “the qualities possessed by literatures of social vision” as “a creative concern which conceptualizes or extends actuality beyond the purely narrative, making it reveal realities beyond the immediate attainable” (66). This means that African writers use literature to map a social path for their societies, which they believe would propel them away from past and present social challenges into a socially productive future.

Social vision is built on a shared consciousness which both grants a people a sense of identity and allows them to move in a common social direction. For Soyinka, writing literary texts is “a concern which upsets orthodox acceptances in an effort to free society

from historical or other superstitions” (66). In pursuit of this argument, this study investigates how Mda uses these plays under study as an attempt to literary order post-apartheid South Africa into a body with a shared consciousness from her fragmentations by creating an interlocution that is both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature between the characters, themes and form. Dialogue is theorized in this study to include not just relations between physical bodies but also between social values as well as temporal and spatial context. Accordingly, thematic concerns in the plays become interlocutors within themselves and between each other - for instance, if the plays feature a corrupt actor(s), corruption as a theme dialogues with itself and with the theme of integrity in the mind of the actor(s); the fraudulent actor(s) dialogues with other actors who may be corrupt as well or honest; and form therefore plays an important role in the interaction. The plays under study can, thus, be perceived as architectonics which Mda uses in his attempt to organize social fragments of post-apartheid South Africa into a whole body with a common social destiny.

In *The Mother of All Eating*, the drama revolves around a lone explicit character called The Man who dialogically shifts from the position of integrity to that of being overly and self-righteously corrupt. This character engages with various interlocutors – whom the audience is made to perceive from the mind and the voice of The Man – in spatial and temporal space in a germane mode which spins a spectacle through which the cognitive faculty of the armchair director (the audience) is relationally drawn into the debate on the apparent logic of engaging in corruption or eating, as the Man christens sleaze.

In *You Fool, How Can The Sky Fall?* a fallen government with all its dignitaries including the president is in prison. The relation between the interlocutors in the play rotates between the illusion of political power and the terror associated with betrayal and the subsequent crippling of the “self”. The General of the Armed Forces, the Minister of Culture, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Agriculture illusorily serve the president in their portfolios as though they are still in power, and they refuse to acknowledge that they have lost all their political positions and that now they are political prisoners at the mercy of the incumbent government whose prison machinery is torturing them one at a time through inhuman methods such as being exposed to ear-splitting sounds that threaten to break one’s sanity. The dignitaries mistrust the young man who is brought to the cell and think of him as a spy. Each time one of them is called for interrogation, they tremble with fear. Soon, they finally discover that their interrogators know everything about their dubious political dealings, and they start accusing each other of betrayal. Each claims that they are innocent and that they are able to hold themselves during the torturous grilling. However, the “other” prisoner, the young man, who joins them in the cell, advises them to engage their cognitive faculty dialogically in order to discern the traitor. Eventually, they are traumatized to learn that the president for whom they have given everything – though he has never been summoned for interrogation – is the one who has been spilling the beans during his regular introspection.

In *The Bells of Amersfoort*, the oppressor and the torturer in apartheid South Africa – on one hand – dialogically shifts and joins hands with his victim in healing and developing the racially-torn country. On the other hand, the former revolutionist –

fighting ruthlessly for the end of apartheid – swings to the position of the new oppressor in post-apartheid South Africa after the espousal of vices like corruption under the black empowerment frenzy.

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study endeavors to examine how Mda employs the three plays under study to build his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa. The study examines how Mda deploys the interface of thematic concerns, characterization and style in the selected plays to communicate his social vision. The study further focuses on how the playwright enacts dialogue within and between themes, characters and form in the selected plays in order to communicate the a fore mentioned concept.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- i) To examine how Mda deploys thematic bodies in his plays under study to build his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa.
- ii) To interrogate how Mda organizes characterization in his plays under study in order to shape his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa.
- iii) To investigate the stylistic devices and literary techniques that Mda employs in the selected plays to mark his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa.

1.4 Research questions

The following research questions inform this study:

- i) How does Mda deploy thematic bodies in his plays under study to build his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa?
- ii) How does Mda organize characterization in his plays under study to shape his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa?
- iii) What stylistic devices and literary techniques does Mda employ majorly in the selected plays to mark his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa?

1.5 Research Assumptions

This study makes the following assumptions:

- i. That Mda communicates his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa through the thematic bodies in his plays under study.
- ii. That Mda organizes characterization in his plays under study in a unique way in order to communicate his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa.
- iii. That Mda uses stylistic devices and literary techniques in his plays under study to mark his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa.

1.6 Justification and significance of the study

Though Mda has been studied extensively, the tendency has been to concentrate on his prose fiction rather than his plays, which have received an unequal critical attention from a genre based perspective. Rare still are detailed studies of his plays after the turn of the century. In addition, the few studies done on his plays are mostly articles and not full length studies. Caroline Duggan studied Mda's plays but only up to 1989. However, Mda

has continued to write in response to the harsh social realities of apartheid as well as the new challenges faced by South Africans after the ban of Apartheid and the subsequent multiracial General Election of 1994. Interestingly, the author has put together three of his recent plays in an anthology titled *Fools, Bells and the Habit of Eating*. The study is premised on the appreciation that Mda's anthology forms an architectonics of literary sensibility of Apartheid and Post-Apartheid's actualities. The study, then, hopes to find out how Mda uses the three plays to create a social vision for Post-Apartheid South Africa. The plays are assumed to entreat the audience to re-invent themselves for a better society cognizance of humane interaction among all citizens.

1.7 Scope and delimitation

Mda is an accomplished novelist having authored several novels which include: *The Whale Caller, Black Diamond, The Sculptors of Mapungubwe, Rachel's Blue, Ways of Dying, The Heart of Redness, The Madonna of Excelsior* and *Cion*. He has also published several plays which include: *Dark Voices Ring, The Hill, We Shall Sing for the Fatherland, Collected Plays, And the Girls in their Sunday Dresses, Dankie Auntie, Let us Play* and *Fools, Bells and the Habit of Eating: Three Satires*. He is also an accomplished poet and his poetry is widely published, debuting with a collection titled *Dance of the Ghost*, published in 1977 and culminating with the printing of *Slaughtered Gods* and *Uninspired Graffiti* in 1996.

This study is delimited to the anthology of plays *Fools, Bells and the Habit of Eating*; because the three plays appear as a trilogy and hence they dialogue with each other as well as raise related issues concerning Post-apartheid South Africa.

1.8.1 Literature review

Reviewing critical works on Mda's literary texts is aimed at contextualizing this study in terms of thematic concerns, characterization, literary mode and theoretical framework. It also legitimizes the objectives of this study by revealing the gaps existing in the critical corpus on Mda as well as offering insights on how writers in general and Mda in particular deploy their literary writing as means of shaping the social destiny of their societies

In "A Critical Analysis of Athol Fugard's Social Vision in Four Selected Plays," Mwihi Margaret Njoki acknowledges that "many critics of South African literature tend [to] emphasize the theme of apartheid," but, she posits that her study, "moves beyond theme to explore Athol Fugard's artistic vision as presented in four of his published plays" (64). While not disparaging Njoki's justification of her study, it doesn't seem convincing at all because social vision could still be categorized under theme. Nonetheless, she aptly asserts that "Fugard continues [...] writing more plays decade after decade opposing apartheid [which] justify[es] [a]n examin[ation] [of] what social vision he has that gives him the reason to write against a regime that is expected to naturally favour him as a white" (64). Here, Njoki's observation implies that Fugard writes as a literary means for influencing change from the harsh social realities of the fictionalized Apartheid South Africa.

In *Writers in Politics*, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o avers that an African writer in postcolonial Africa must unwaveringly "show [literary] commitment [to the] actual struggle of the African people" (80). What could be deduced from Ngugi's observation is that writing done in political context, like Apartheid, more often than not, responds to the

social challenges facing the society in question. Subsequently, the writer tries to entreat for workable solutions through their writing.

In *Homecoming*, a collection of essays, Ngugi posits that a writer's literary work reflects their experiences together with those of the society from which they live (47). It follows, then, that the ultimate goal of the literary artist would be to chart a social vision for their society, rather than merely recording the past and present social actualities. It is from this critical understanding that the study approaches Mda's literary texts.

Many critical works on Mda's literary texts have been written. In *'Interpretations in Transition': Literature and Political Transition in Malawi and South Africa in the 1990s*, Fiona Michaela Johnson Chalamanda makes some important observations on Mda's *Ways of Dying*. First, she notes that for Mda, "a dialogic form is appealing to a writing space such as South Africa, which is itself trying to reconcile different ontologies without one dominating or subsuming the others" (100). It follows that carnival-like dialogue involving the various social voices in post-apartheid South Africa would be critical in shaping the country's social destiny. Chalamanda's observation, in effect, legitimizes this study's investigation on how Mda formulates his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa through his plays under study. Quoting Bakhtin, Chalamanda explains that the carnival-like dialogue in *Ways of Dying* "is concerned with 'lower stratum of the body, the life of the belly and the reproductive organs; it therefore relates to acts of defecating and copulation, conception, pregnancy and birth'" (103). Subsequently, this study infers that Mda enacts carnival-like dialogue in his literary works as a means of invoking social change and renewal from the grotesque body of

official authority and social degradation. In terms of theoretical framework, Chalamanda's observation lends credence to the engagement of Bakhtin's Dialogism theory in this study to investigate how Mda knits together his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa. Chalamanda further notes that a dialogic vision, "is an issue foregrounded during the transition in South Africa, where, in a gesture to level previous hierarchies of value, there is a more widespread desire to accept the equal value of different people" (112). The inference evident from this observation is that Mda deploys carnival-like dialogue in his works of art as an attempt to enact meaningful interaction between different value systems in post-apartheid South Africa which reveals the potential of dialogue to negotiate for a shared consciousness which would enable all South Africans to work together for the common good of their country.

In *The Rediscovery of South African Cultural Identity in Zakes Mda's Ways of Dying*, Kiren M. Valjee observes that for Mda, "the South Africa he creates, both in the past and the present, embodies what the real South Africa is and isn't, and what it has potential to be" (3). In effect, by exploring the potential of what South Africa can be in his literary Works, Mda attempts to craft a social vision for post-apartheid South Africa. Valjee also notes that Mda's literary texts, "contain critiques of each period [apartheid and post-apartheid], but they are not hateful or full of anger" (8). Valjee's observation implies latitude of reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa which would be a rich ground for a dialogic vision rallying all the divides of the country into a shared consciousness. Valjee observes that Mda's literary works "[...] acknowledge a painful past, but celebrate the culture(s) of South Africans and their ability to keep on living in the face of such oppression and brutality as well as forge new relationships in the

aftermath of apartheid” (8). The inference drawn from this observation is that Mda is concerned with creating a new interactional space through his art in order to overcome the heinous realities of apartheid South Africa. Valjee observes that Mda “is able to break free from the suffocating grasp [of apartheid] to produce a body of literature that ‘rediscovers the ordinary’” (53). What this critic means is that Mda uses his works of art to draw people from the grip of the hateful dichotomies of apartheid back to the simple reality of life: healthy interaction/ carnival-like dialogue involving all South Africans.

In “How to live in Post-apartheid South Africa: Reading Zakes Mda’s *Ways of Dying*,” Irene Visser observes that Mda “presents an answer to the call for a new fiction for post-apartheid South Africa expressed since the mid-1980s by various theorists” through his literary works (1). This study infers that the call for ‘a new fiction’ means literature of social vision which would help to propel post-apartheid South Africa from her past and present social challenges into a nation of a people with a common social direction which guides their interaction at all conceivable social levels. Visser notes that in *Ways of Dying*, “Mda gives shape to a new post-apartheid novel in South Africa, inviting readers to a new way of reading based on the receptiveness to the experience of the interrelations between African spirituality, art and social engagement” (10). Visser’s observation implies that dialogism is an appropriate theory for investigating the interrelations between the social forces operating in the context of Mda’s literary works. She further observes that for Mda the overall situation in post-apartheid South Africa is “the pressure [...] to find the resources, policies, and vision to ‘bind the nation together’ and to take its people decisively from a traumatized past to a reconstructed future” (8). Her observation gives credence to this study’s assumption that post-apartheid South

Africa needs a social vision to help her overcome her past and social challenges, and build a united nation with a common social destiny.

In “Catastrophe and Beauty: *Ways of Dying*, Zakes Mda’s Novel of Transition,” John Van Wyk notes that “Mda [produces] an intricate analysis of the historical nightmare of the ‘death producing’ [...] transition and its predecessor - post-apartheid” (90). Wyk’s observation points to the interaction in the temporal space and its potential for change and renewal of the society. It justifies the proposition in this study that Mda creates his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa by enacting interaction of characters, themes and form within the temporal and spatial space of (post)apartheid South Africa. He notes that in Mda’s writing “past narratives contain determining signs that go beyond apartheid and which are shared by all humanity” (90). What he means, here, is that the past is not static but it engages with the present realities and future possibilities for post-apartheid South Africa as revealed in Mda’s literary works. Wyk observes that Mda uses his literary texts to identify a potential beauty of South Africa from the chaotic post-apartheid context: “beauty is the product of the dream in the midst of catastrophe” (86). The inference made from his observation is that Mda deploys his literary works to formulate a social vision for post-apartheid South Africa.

In *Magic Realism in Zakes Mda’s Ways of Dying and She Plays with the Darkness*, Venugo Naidoo notes that “Mda displays, in his project as a novelist, the continuing concerns of black writers who saw the novel as a tool for socio-political change” (ii). Social vision which is at the heart of this study is meant to bring about positive socio-political change and thus, his observation lends credibility to this study’s

assumption that Mda uses his plays under examination to formulate his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa. Naidoo observes that for Mda, deploying magic realism to “rewrite time and space and the consequent laws of cause and effect is a substantial step in the creation of novels that affirm the functioning of language in eliding binary oppositions such as self/other, male/ female, centre/ periphery, white/ black, privileged/ underprivileged or magic/ reality” (304). The inference this study draws from Naidoo’s observation is that Mda uses dialogic language in his literary works to enact interaction between the binary oppositions in the post-apartheid context in order to bring them together under a shared consciousness which would transform the fragmented country into a nation. Naidoo observes that “the freeing of the imagination [through magical realism] is thus both empowering and liberating” (302). The argument would be that magical realism enables Mda to forge interaction between social forces in the post-apartheid South African context which always try to undermine each other but rarely dialogically negotiate with for accommodative space.

In *Fractious Form: The Trans/ Mutable Post-Apartheid Novel*, Ken Barris observes that “Mda in *Ways of Dying* uses orature as a humane and elevating principle that relieves the oppressive universality of death” (118). Barris’ observation implies that dialogue like ‘the word of mouth’ has the potential of making social fragments in post-apartheid South Africa to shift their differing stands to the dialogic ‘I’ which is significant in formulating a common social identity. He notes that Mda uses “death as a signifier of traumatic social transition, rather than reflect it as an accidental consequence of transition” (117). It follows that the social meaning of post-apartheid South Africa

finds construction from the chain of signifiers past, present and future and the interaction between the signifiers.

In “The Supernatural’s Role in the Juxtaposition of Ideas of Modernity, Traditionalism and Identity in Mda’s *The Heart of Redness*,” Thabo Lucky Mzileni observes that “the supernatural in this novel permeates every aspect of the modern context and actively shapes how characters perceive themselves and their world through their decisions and actions” (1). What this study infers from Mzileni’s observation is that dialogue like magical realism is the channel needed for enacting carnival-like interaction in all aspects of life in post-apartheid South Africa in order to elide social factions and create a unified nation. Mzileni notes that for Mda “the novel as a postcolonial work, serves to ultimately help society diagnose its problems that are as a result of [apartheid] and then suggests new ways to move forward” (17). His thought confirms that Mda does not just deploy his literary texts to appeal to aesthetic pleasure but he also aims to communicate the philosophical aspect of life which is addressed through the social vision he crafts for post-apartheid South Africa as revealed in his plays under study.

In *South African Satire: A Study of Zakes Mda’s The Madonna of Excelsior*, Sonja Van Vuuren observes that “Mda comments on apartheid society and racial prejudice by focusing on historical happenings in South Africa, when nineteen people were arrested for having sexual relations across the so-called race barrier” (23). Her observation points to the censorship curtailing interaction in (post)apartheid South Africa. This study infers that dialogue is the literary tool needed to break the official censorship in post-apartheid

South Africa, and formulate an interactive South African society inspired by the same social goals.

In *Dance of Life: The Novels of Zakes Mda in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, Gail Fincham observes that “*Cion* is a novel about the importance of ancestors and centrality of the past in shaping the future” (100). It then follows that for Mda the interaction of temporal space in the post-apartheid South Africa is significant in his attempt to craft his social vision for his motherland through his dramaturgy under investigation in this study. Fincham notes that in *Cion*, Mda “imbricates the story of [his] first protagonist, Toloki the professional Mourner from *Ways of Dying*, with the quilt-making traditional skills of a poor rural community in Appalachian America, where Toloki comes to live with the Quigley family” (100). Fincham’s observation on how Mda enacts dialogue between his literary texts legitimizes the choice of the three plays being investigated in this study which appear as a trilogy. She also notes that *Cion* like several of Mda’s novels “alternates two time-scales in its story-worlds: the past of the plantation slaves in the South and the present of their ancestors in Kilvert, Ohio” (101). Fincham’s observation reaffirms that time and space are significant entities in the dialogic process of meaning-making, and that they bear great importance in understanding how Mda uses his plays under investigation to construct his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa. On Mda’s *The Whale Caller*, she observes that ecological issues are part of the future of post-apartheid South Africa: “*The Whale Caller*, from the beginning of his story, feels his connection to the natural world” (136). It is adducible from this observation that the social destiny for post-apartheid South Africa is dependent on the interaction of all social fragments in the country together with the physical environment.

In *The Collective Voice in The Madonna of Excelsior: Narrating Transformative Possibilities*, N. S. Zulu notes that by using a collective voice Mda “reveals that crossing of borders is a process characterized by cultural contact that reduces cultural polarization and makes social transformation possible” (107). Zulu’s observation implies that dialogic contact between different cultural values is necessary for social transformation in post-apartheid South Africa as revealed in Mda’s literary texts. He observes that the collective voice in Mda’s literary works “is an outward-looking omniscient voice that is complex and multiple, self-critical and self-mocking, ironic and satirical. It [...] subverts notions of racial and political homogeneity during and after the demise of apartheid” (108-109). What he implies is a carnival-like dialogue which brings together the ‘self’ and the ‘other’, and creates a platform in which there is shifting of identities from extremities to a shared consciousness.

In “*The Rising of the New Sun*” *Time Within Sindiwe Magona’s Mother to Mother and Zakes Mda’s Heart of Redness*, Heather P. Williams observes that Mda is “concerned with writing the new national identity of the Xhosa people, and the people of South Africa after apartheid” (54). Williams’ observation about Mda’s deployment of his literary texts to formulate social identity for post-apartheid South Africa is in tandem with Soyinka’s characterization of ‘literature of social vision’ expressed in the background of this study. The dialogic potential of language in formulating social vision for a society is invigorated by her observation about social interaction within the temporal space of (post)apartheid South Africa: in *The Heart of Redness*, “Mda [...] speaks to the passage of time, and the relation between the past and the present within the Xhosa cosmology and philosophy” (42). She means that the past speaks with the present

realities and vice versa in a dialogic context which implies that neither the past nor the present contains social meaning in isolation.

In *Negotiating Memory and Nation Building in New South Africa Drama*, Busuyi Mekusi observes that Mda writes drama which no longer concentrates “on apartheid but on new realities such as forgiveness and reconciliation, violent crime and rape, corruption, exile experience and the stultification of culture(s), which form significant part of the remains of the apartheid era” (2). What is inferred from Mekusi’s observation is that Mda uses his literary texts as an endeavour to create a renewed post-apartheid South Africa which dialogically reconciles all its social fragments into a unified social unit guided by a common destiny. He notes that in *The Bells of Amersfoort*, Mda “rekindles the link between Holland and South Africa. While the former is representative of the roots of white South Africans Dutch ancestry, the latter functions first as a place of ‘exile’ and secondly a place that has been appropriated as ‘home’ by them” (116). His observation implies that Mda uses his literary texts a means of enacting dialogue between binary oppositions in (post)apartheid South Africa within temporal space with the aim of negotiating for a home to which all South Africans irrespective of their racial origin would ‘feel at home’ and ‘pour their hearts out’ to improve.

Bakhtin’s Dialogic theory identifies the interaction between ‘self’ and ‘other’ as a significant process in meaning-making and formation of identity. Bakhtin’s argument is given credence by Mekusi’s observation that in *The Bells of Amersfoort*, Mda “emphasizes and blurs the binaries of ‘self’ and ‘other’ that helped perpetuate racial discrimination and, subsequently oppression in apartheid South Africa” (116). In effect,

his observation lends credence to the employment of Dialogism theory in this study to investigate how Mda organizes his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa through his plays under study. He notes that spatial progression in *The Bells of Amersfoort* is developed through “the patterning of the stage into three worlds” which allows character(s) to interact with different spatial existence (131). Mekusi’s observation brings to our mind Bakhtin’s dialogic imagination in which character(s) engage in the same experience simultaneously from different spatial points, and hence need to dialogue to make meaning out of their seemingly singular existence. Mekusi reaffirms Bakhtin’s dialogic conception of time and space as fluid but not static when he opines that “the shifting space and time in [*The Bells of Amersfoort*] and the speculation about form is reinforced when [we consider] that magic realism ‘tells its story from the perspective of people who live in our world and experience a different reality from the one we call objective’” (123). It follows that the carnival-like dialogue conceptualized by Bakhtin as a process of constructing social meaning and identity works like magical realism through collapsing barriers between different bodies existing in spatial and temporal space and thus allows the bodies to speak freely with one another. Therefore, Dialogism would be an effective theoretical tool for investigating how Mda crafts his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa by challenging the monologic realities of the different social fragments in South Africa to speak freely with each other.

In *Experiments in Freedom Explorations of Identity in New South African Drama*, Anton Krueger makes significant observations on Mda’s *The Bells of Amersfoort*. Krueger observes that Mda uses characterization to challenge the sense of belonging South Africans attach to their country: “the commitment [Van der Bijl] feels to South

Africa is equated with his fidelity to his wife. His relationship with the Netherlands, in contrast, is transposed onto dealings with the nameless prostitute” (86). What is adduced from Krueger’s observation is that carnival-like dialogue in which strong emotional attachment is deeply felt is needed to establish in South Africans from all walks of life unshakable sense of commitment for their country. Bijl is a character in *The Bells of Amersfoort* who cheats on his wife by consorting with a nameless prostitute justifying his infidelity by claiming that he feels nothing for his wife. Krueger notes that Mda’s plays reveal that “if the investment of the memory is split between the body and the land, then the two must be joined in order to create a historical memory that is citable or representable” (86). It then follows that dialogic interaction would be the most appropriate tool for bringing the two entities together. Krueger problematizes the issue of identity by interrogating the relation between body and location: “If one’s identity is tied to a specific land mass, how does one’s sense of self alter when one is removed from that location which one has suffused with meaning?” (86). In pursuit of this question dialogic interaction becomes a viable theoretical lens for investigating how Mda projects his dream of social destiny for post-apartheid South Africa through his plays under study.

From the foregoing, it is evident that Mda is a writer committed to bringing social change in post-apartheid South Africa through his literary texts. Many critical works on his novels as well as plays have been written but there seems to be a gap on how Mda crafts his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa through his trilogy of plays *The Mother of All Eating*, *The Bells of Amersfoort* and *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?*

1.8.2 Theoretical framework

This study engages the Dialogism theory as conceptualized by the Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin to articulate the social vision that Mda crafts for post-apartheid South Africa in his plays under study. The theory posits that all meaning is realized in a relative sense and that it comes about only as a result of the relation between two bodies in simultaneous but different spaces. Bodies in this context may be configured as concrete as well as abstract existence - ranging from the immediacy of our physical bodies to political and ideological bodies. The theory is appropriate for this study since social vision has to do with the way individuals occupying simultaneous but different spaces are organized into a social unit that enables them to work together for the common good through a shared consciousness.

In *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World*, Michael Holquist notes that, for Bakhtin, existence is made up of units which he calls “self” and “other” and the interaction between them in cognitive time/ space (21). This means that consciousness is otherness not in the sublation sense but as “the differential relation between a center and all that is not that center” (22). Bakhtin’s concept of existence as a dialogue aids this study to investigate how the interaction of thematic bodies, characters and stylistic figures in the plays under study enables Mda to construct a social vision for Post-apartheid South Africa. A social vision entails a shared consciousness which can only exist through the dialogue between bodies that make up the society in question.

Bakhtin also conceptualizes meaning as a dialogue between the mind and the world. Here the “self” interacts with cultural bodies and all that we call the world which

is not-the-self – physical, political, ideological and religious. It is through this interaction that the self becomes in terms of values and ethics that govern their existence. In effect, Bakhtin’s conceptualization helps this study to explore how Mda employs the interface between the characters and thematic bodies in his plays under study in order to thread his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa. It follows that even when a text uses a single visible character as in *The Mother of All Eating* dialogism becomes the viable optical lens for establishing the process of meaning-making by observing the relation between the lone body (character) and the cultural figures that constitute his/her world as manifested in the character’s mind. Bakhtin believes that no utterance is made without an addressee. Consequently, it is plausible to argue that in a monologue there is a dialogue involving the speaking subject and other voices which may be invisible but exist in the physical or abstract context of the subject.

In *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* and *The Bells of Amersfoort* which employ more than one actor, the concept of dialogism as relations between “self” and “other” - between one actor and another -where both are observers occupying different space and time in the same event helps this study to establish the dialogic meaning in the two plays and to investigate how Mda employs the relations to develop his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa. The “self” and “other” perceive themselves and the world from different centres in both spatial and temporal space. Their contact, of essence, entails not just physical but also the ideologies they inhabit. This means that dialogism aids this study to investigate how the actors in the plays under study, operating as distinct centres, relate with their physical as well as ideological existence which determines who they are.

Dialogism and language bear an intimate relation, which Bakhtin employs to explain language as a dialogic process. Holquist notes that “the formal means of expressing subjectivity occupy a unique place in any language” (23). The argument is that the word “I” has no referent in the way other words such as “tree” nominates a particular thing. The function of the word “I” is to indicate the person uttering the present occurrence of the discourse containing “I”. Holquist observes that for Roman Jakobson the pronoun “I” is a “shifter” because it moves the centre of discourse from one speaking subject to another (23). It follows that the “self” as a unit of existence in dialogism is denoted in language by the pronoun “I” which means that like the pronoun it is “empty of meaning” without the other (addressee). Bakhtin’s theoretical argument on the dialogic nature of language helps this study to investigate how Mda uses style which is a feature of language in his plays under study to formulate his vision for post-apartheid South Africa.

Language like “self” and “other” exists in spatial and temporal space. Holquist notes that, for Bakhtin, when a particular speaker utters “I”, he or she fills it with meaning by providing the point needed to calibrate all further time and space distinctions (23). Subsequently, dialogism invigorates the investigation in this study by offering means of perceiving how Mda deploys space and time in the interaction of actors in the plays under study to formulate his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa. The word “I” marks the temporal differential space between “now” and “then”. It also denotes the spatial difference between “here” and “there”. This argument about “I” as a marker of time and space in dialogue is in tandem with the markers of social vision - the interface between individuals in time and space.

The units of existence that Bakhtin calls “selves” can be compared to the units of language called “words” because for both, the core characteristic is being what others are not. Holquist observes that for Ferdinand de Saussure “in language there are only differences” (31). What this means is that language is a system of values. The function of language, therefore, is to offer a mechanism for differentiating one thing from another. It uses values to distinguish specific differences. The purpose of doing so is to establish order to the flux of lived experience. Consequently, Dialogism offers insight for this study on how Mda uses language to communicate the function, means and purpose of his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa as portrayed in his plays under study.

Holquist observes that “Dialogism is a form of architectonics, the general science of ordering parts into a whole” (29). There are basically three parts that make up dialogue - the centre (the I-for-itself); the not-centre (the not-I-in-me); and the relation between them. This means that dialogue comprises of the ratio and proportion of the three parts. Holquist notes that Bakhtin “emphasizes that relation is never static, but always in the process of being made or unmade” (29). From this argument, it is evident that Dialogism helps this study to understand how Mda deploys the ratios and proportions of the centre and the not-centre and their interaction to create a voice which speaks for his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa as revealed in his plays under study.

Social vision is a shared way of perceiving the world which makes a people to feel and act as one whole social unit. Holquist observes that this shared consciousness is “exploited in language very much as the single eye of the fates in Greek Mythology [in which] the three old women all pass around the same organ. If they did not share their

eye, they could not see” (29). The argument is that in order to see ourselves we must appropriate the vision of others. Dialogism as an appropriation of the other aids this study to investigate how Mda creates his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa in his plays under study through the way the centre and the not-centre interact hence appropriating each other’s vision.

In conclusion, Dialogism offers this study the means to understand how the interaction of thematic bodies, characters and form in the plays under study helps Mda to construct a voice(s) from which he communicates his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa.

1.9 Research Methodology

This study investigates Mda’s social vision as envisaged in his collection of the three plays, and therefore, the methodology is qualitative in nature.

Descriptive research design was used since the design enabled the writer to read the plays critically and give her opinion on how Zakes Mda communicates his social vision.

Purposive sampling was used to make the choice of the texts, the leading principle being the presence of common features in the selected texts which are in line with the objectives of the study.

The study employed both primary and secondary methods of data collection due to its complementary nature. A close textual reading of Mda’s three plays: *Fools*, *Bells and the Habit of Eating* formed the source of the primary data. The plays were read critically in line with the objectives of the study. A critical analysis of the selected plays

was then undertaken with the aim of analyzing how the plays communicate the writer's vision.

In terms of secondary data, library research was used extensively to gather enough secondary material to validate information gained from primary data. Published scholarly articles, journals, essays, biographies, Internet materials and other published scholarly materials enriched the primary data. Library research aided the researcher to get an in-depth understanding of the topic, research objectives and understanding of the problem.

Textual analysis was a validated qualitative research methodology as it helped in relating the analysis and conclusion of this study to what other researchers have done thus aiding the researcher to avoid duplication as well as identifying the gap in knowledge. Textual analysis enabled this study to describe the content, character and literary mode which Mda deploys to communicate his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa.

The interpretive and descriptive tools of textual analysis empowered this study to analyze primary data in relation to the objectives of the study. The analysis was then presented in line with the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 SOCIAL VISION: THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN “SELF” AND “THEMATIC BODIES”

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines how Mda deploys the dramatic universe in *Fools, Bells and The Habit of Eating* in order to enact dialogue between “self” and “thematic bodies” as a literary means of developing a social vision for post-apartheid South Africa. As noted in chapter one, Bakhtin configures existence as comprising two segments which he calls “self” and “other,” and that the meaning of life is created through the relation between the two segments. Michael Holquist observes that for Bakhtin “self is dialogic, a relation,” and that “whatever else it is, self/ other is a relation of simultaneity. No matter how conceived, simultaneity deals with ratios of same and different in space and time” (18). Holquist’s observation implies that the meaning of existence is dependent on how the ratios of same and different between the “self” and “other” interact. Integrity, for example, is a body of ideology, and it interacts with all other bodies of ideas with same or different ratios. Holquist notes that for Bakhtin, “all meaning is relative in the sense that it comes about only as a result of the relation between two bodies occupying simultaneous but different space, where bodies may be thought of as ranging from the immediacy of our physical bodies, to political bodies and to bodies of ideas in general” (19). Holquist’s observation implies that bodies could be understood in terms of ideas or thematic concerns. In this context, integrity and sleaze are two bodies whose relationship is simultaneity, ratios of same and different.

This chapter is structured into three main sections. The first section examines how Mda envisions the “self” as the home for post-apartheid South Africa through the enactment of dialogue between the “self” and the “other”. The second part discusses how the playwright attempts to create a homeland for post-apartheid South Africa by enacting a dialogue aimed at freeing the “self” from the subversive use of art which blocks the cognitive resulting to unreachable world of the “other” whose absence from cognition locks the “self” in a penitentiary and subsequently holds the South Africans captive to retrogressive practices such as corruption and political power-mania. The jailed-innocent find themselves in the same prison cell with the jailed-criminals, and people from all walks of life inhabit the reformatory with no ontological privileges. In this study, the idea of prison stretches from the physical to the ideological. The third part examines how the playwright enacts a dialogue in which the “self” attempts to free itself from the blockage of the cognitive in order to arrive home.

2.2 The “Self” as Home for Post-apartheid South Africa

The concept of home does not have a single definition but it conjures up both physical and psychological coming into being of the “self” in temporal and spatial space. *The Mother of All Eating*, for instance, begins with the character called The Man arriving at his house from Johannesburg. The ardent feeling of arriving home is marked in the stage directions: “music, guitar and drums. Lights rise. There are two chairs on the stage which is otherwise devoid of sets. Humming outside. A knock. Another knock. THE MAN walks in” (3). Here, the stage directions indicate that arriving home is a joyous experience which seems to make the “self” and even the surrounding to become musical.

The “knock” implies that the “self” expects someone to open the door and usher them home.

However, the Man finds no one to usher him home. Subsequently, when he enters he fervently calls, “Honey, I am home! Now where is she? Hello! Honey! I am home!” (3). The Man’s utterance implies that the “self” is home but since the “self” is dialogic, the home is empty of meaning without the interaction with the “other”. In *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World*, Holquist notes that for Bakhtin “self is dialogic, a relation” (19). Bakhtin’s argument that the “self” is a relation may help the audience to understand why the Man’s physical arrival at home does not offer him any rest but becomes the beginning of a frantic search for a relation with the “other.” For The Man, home could only gain an all-inclusive meaning with the endearment from the “other”. Successively, home can be perceived as an abode of endearment in which the “self” and the “other” must interact in order to bring out the underlying music that joins the souls of the “self” and the “other” into a carnival of life. In the stage directions, “[The Man] looks around the room but ‘honey’ is nowhere to be seen,” (3) and the Man’s spirit seems to roam in search of the “other” with whom to celebrate life.

Fête of life is perhaps the major spectacle at the heart of The man’s home. How The man interacts with this festive space may well be the defining element of the kind of domicile he creates for himself and others. In *The Mother of All Eating*, the festivity of existence unfolds in a dialogue within and between integrity and corruption in which the “self” is an active participant. The Man mainly speaks from the position of fraud and tries to draw everybody else to that position: “I hear whispers and your snide remarks. Who of you here can claim to have clean hands? Now, you tell me! Did you buy those BMs and

Benzes that you drive with your meagre salaries? I am no different from any one of you. The word that we use here at home is that we eat!” (10). The Man’s utterance implies that gaities of life can only be obtained from engaging in corruption – what he calls “eating”. For the Man, driving prestigious cars such as BMs and Benzes is one of the markers of magnanimous life; and since such lustrous vehicles are quite expensive to buy, the Man seems to be of the opinion that one must of necessity engage in fraudulent deals.

The Man boasts of having a good life and pities those who have positions they could use for enriching themselves but fail to grab them. For example, the Man commiserates with Joe, one of his classmates for refusing to indulge in corruption: “Joe was the counterpart. He was being trained to take over one day as Managing Director. I was so happy for him, for I knew that he was going to eat. As M.D. of a big corporation like that you can eat left, right, and centre” (18). The Man appears to party for Joe since Joe’s new position affords him a great opportunity to “eat”. The Man believes that the corruptible “self” – now that Joe has become a man of influence and authority – has gotten the perfect opportunity to transform Joe from a pitiable fellow into a happy millionaire. Earlier in the play, The Man advises whoever cares to listen to him that “the shortest road to becoming a millionaire is to join the civil service or one of the parastatals” (11). Joe is now a boss in one of the parastatals and therefore he can become a millionaire many times over. Holquist argues that for Bakhtin “the activity of the world comes to each of us as a series of events that occur in the site I, and only I, occupy in the world” (24). It is plausible to argue, then, that The Man sees himself in Joe and is blissful, not because his friend is going to “eat,” but because the corruptible “self” for which he identifies with is hopefully coming into being.

The man in the corruptible “self” seems to look for home in material comfort at the expense of others. People who speak with the voice of the venal “self” act as one man in the palaver of fraudulently amassing material wealth. The “self” becomes a gate to the cacophony of the voices attributable to corruption and its attendant evils. Explaining the connivance in corruption the Man observes, “You see, in the government here, when they discover your corruption they promote you. There are two reasons for that. The first one is that they want to shut your mouth so that you won’t reveal what you know which might expose some of the top guns in the government” (16). From the Man’s exposition of what goes on in the government circles, it is clear that collusion is what gives corruption tenancy in the human society. Nevertheless, the Man reveals to the audience that covering up corrupt government deals is not the greatest motivation for the top government officials: “The next reason, which is more important, is that they appreciate your brains, and want to bring you closer to them up there, so that they can benefit from your expertise in corruption – learn new techniques from you” (16). The man’s observation implies that corruption thrives from a kind of pedagogy which rallies the voices of venality into a dialoguing platform.

This study theorizes that there are two significant categories of the “self” whose dialogue gives meaning to human existence. The first is the theoretical “self” which is marked by the voice of idealism. In *The Mother of All Eating*, this category is revealed to the audience by The Man as he describes the attitude Joe and he have when they join the Civil Service: “Both Joe and I started work as starry-eyed youths. We were straight from school, mind you, with all the idealistic enthusiasm of building the nation, and of working hard for the development of our country. Like all idealistic youths we were

prepared to sacrifice for our country [...]” (12). The Man’s observation implies that the idealistic or theoretical “self” is ready to incur expenditure in order to improve humanity. In other words, the theoretical “self” is selfless and appears to be guided by the belief that improving others is the only plausible means of making the “self” better. The Man further observes that “Our driving force was the spirit of patriotism that we had cultivated in ourselves through political activism at university. We looked at life through rose-coloured glasses” (12). The Man’s cynical tone suggests that the theoretical “self” is impractical “rose-coloured” implies romanticized perspective of life. The Man’s observation also means that the theoretical “self” is brought to the fore through crusading and hence it is dependent on some kind of pedagogical dialogue.

The second category of the “self” is the practical “self”. This category is marked by two distinct voices which materialize from the interaction of the theoretical “self” with the event in the world. One of the voices appears when the theoretical “self” wise up to the culture in the universe of work. In *The Mother of All Eating*, The Man disappointedly realizes that the event of work grants him a lowly position despite his university education: “purchasing officer? That’s a junior job. I come from the university with a degree, and they make me a purchasing officer. Better positions, or what I thought were better positions, were occupied by old unschooled civil servants who looked at us young graduates with suspicious eyes” (12). Perhaps The Man is not satisfied with the station assigned to him because it does not seem to have the capacity that would enable him to exploit his full potential for nation building. To be precise, the reality at the event of work appears to be insupportable to contract with whatever the spirit of Man is looking for. Before long, The Man discovers that his seniors eye his undesirable post of a purchasing

officer since it has the potential of getting extra money from kickbacks by reps who sell a variety of things to the government departments. These reps are eager to recruit The Man into their culture of “eating”. The Man reports to the audience that “At first I refused. I was a scared greenhorn. But my friends advised me, ‘Don’t be stupid. People are eating out there. Everyone has his or her hand in some till [...]” (13). Subsequently, The Man listens to the voice of the culture of “eating” and appears to find it plausible. Eventually, the Man’s attitude towards the theoretical “self” shifts from the principle of civil service to what may be called the cultural “self” – the “self” that conforms to whatever traditions it finds in its universe; this kind of “self” does not fathom any life outside those mores.

In *The Mother of All Eating*, The Man dialogues with the old hands he finds there and they impress on him that the theoretical “self” is nothing more than a misapprehension of existence: “The big ones, our leaders, are eating, but they expect us to sacrifice and work for our country out of some illusory concept called patriotism, whilst they are busy looting the coffers of the state” (13). The Man is, thus, recruited to the culture of eating and henceforth he perceives the world from that position of sleaze. Holquist notes that for Bakhtin, “the self, moreover, is an event with a structure [...] that structure is organized around the categories of space and time” (21). It follows, then, that the ‘self’ makes meaning of their existence through the event of work, and more specifically by interacting with the culture that ambiances this event. The Man dialogues with categories of time and space in a bid to justify his shift from the spirit of the theoretical “self” to that of the self-seeking practical “self.” The Man would like the audience to believe that the wisdom of occupying such a station in life is universal in both temporal and spatial categories: “well, don’t pretend you are surprised at all this. We

are not at all peculiar in this sort of thing. You remember in America a few years back, during the days of Mr Reagan's sleaze factory, the big guns at the Pentagon would buy a single nail for a thousand dollars" (13). The Man appears to enfranchise corruption by bringing to being the voice of history and making it to dialogue with the present event of work.

The other voice of the practical "self" is the principled "self" whose standpoint is firmly grounded in the theoretical "self," and thus, the "self" refuses to bend to the culture surrounding the event of work whenever such a philosophy is not congruent with the ideals of the "self". The principled "self" dialogues with the event of work in a firm voice whose chief goal is to convince the corrupt "self" to revert to the site of integrity. The Man observes:

The new Deputy Principal Secretary was a vigilant man. He had just been promoted to the post. He was the type I despise, the Joe-type, an honest man, a man on a crusade, a man who thought he could single-handedly wipe out what misguided people like him call corruption. (14)

The Man's description of his new boss' outlook reveals to us that the principled "self" is marked by a virtuous concept of the world whose dialogic voice is aimed at turning the world around from the culture of "eating" so that the theoretical "self" and the practical "self" are ushered into the same values of honesty, hard work and sacrifice for the "other" when each enters the gate of "I" in the event of work.

In *The Mother of All Eating*, the voice of integrity – represented by Joe and the Deputy Principal Secretary (D. P. S.) – is quite vibrant in the event of work but the prevailing culture of "eating" frustrates any feasible benefits. The D. P. S., for example,

puts the Man to task over his fraudulent activities which involve ludicrous inflation of prices: “You are in this with his rep. The rep is surely going to lose his job, and I’ll be damned if I don’t see to it that you lose yours as well. It is people like you who have made the Third World the laughing stock of the so-called developed world” (15). Here, the principled “self” is taxing the corrupt “self” to stop occupying the event of work. For the principled “self,” the Third World has earned herself a bad name due to corruption. It is conceivable to argue that the principled “self” finds a home in a good name – being forthright and virtuous. However, the Man – representing the cultural “self” – is cynical of the crusading voice of integrity: “oh, so now he wants to save the whole Third World from the likes of me” (15). The Man’s utterance indicates that the Third World is suffering due to corruption but a lone voice of integrity, in spite of its firmness, would not salvage it.

Ominously, nothing happens to the Man despite the threats of dismissal by the Deputy Principal Secretary. The Man gloats, “A month passed. Nothing happened. To me, that is. Guess what I received the following month. Come on, guess. A letter of dismissal? [...] I received a promotion! I was made Deputy Principal Secretary in place of that nosey D.P.S. who thought he could get me expelled from the civil service” (16). The Man’s utterance suggests that corruption is entrenched in the event of work and that it is not easy for anyone to dismiss the corrupt workers even when there is overriding evidence against them. The corrupt “self” is apparently insulated from consequences of engaging in sleaze by the dialogically fraudulent context of the event of work. Thus, the Man triumphantly addresses the audience, “You see, the big bosses, the ministers and all those closer to God, saw that [the D.P.S.] was a dangerous man who was bent on

exposing so-called corruption. If he started by exposing me, his junior, he would surely end up exposing them all” (16). The Man’s revelation indicates that the voice of integrity is sequestered from the event of work through a discrete dialogue among the voices of fraud in order to prevent it from changing the status quo – the culture of “eating”.

According to Bakhtin, “conceiving being dialogically means that reality is always experienced, not just perceived, and further that it is experienced from a particular position” (Holquist 21). It is therefore feasible to argue that the big bosses and the ministers in Mda’s dramaturgy perceive and experience existence from the position of graft, and subsequently when that position is threatened they are obliged to protect their own category irrespective of the station such category occupy in the event of work. The forces of corruption comprehend the militant voice of integrity as a threat to their cosmos. Consequently, condemning the D. P. S.’s position of integrity, the Man declares: “He was dangerous. So they transferred him” (16). However, The Man seems to understand that transferring the Deputy Secretary Principal is not a permanent solution for the forces of corruption since his position of existence is unlikely to change. Therefore, the Man knowledgeably observes that the D. P. S. is punitively transferred to the “[...] Director of the Department of Manpower Development – a very harmless post for a man like him. Or so they thought, for I have no doubt [...] he started rooting out all those who gave scholarships to their lovers and relatives, or those who sold them to prospective candidates” (16). From the Man’s observation, it becomes clear that the particular position from which the “self” perceives and experiences reality is what determines their coming into being – arriving home.

For The Man, sticking to the position of integrity is some kind of idiocy which appears to lock the “self” in poverty and a life of misery. The Man dialogically tells Joe’s story as a way of revealing to the audience how unpleasant life can be at the site of honesty:

While I was busy oiling myself with the fat of the land, enjoying the fruits of independence, what our East African brothers call *matundu uhuru*, Joe was a hardworking clerk at the Power Supply Corporation. You know the organization that lights up our lives. (17)

The Man seems to celebrate the material comfort afforded by the position of graft while he spites the hard work which the “self” occupying the position of integrity is pleased to embrace. For the Man, the full meaning of independence is a lived experience at the position of graft whose chief aim is to gratify the “self” by amassing wealth through the culture of “eating” which appears to be the order of the day the world over. The Man reveals that he has nothing against Joe but what disgusts him is the site Joe occupies in the event of work: “Let me tell you, and you will see why I am disgusted with him. Perhaps I will tell the story best if I become Joe – just for a short while though for I wouldn’t want to be an idiot for a long time” (18). The Man’s revelation indicates that he would not like to experience life at Joe’s position of integrity since for him the site spells no festivity but absurdity. The fact that the Man is able to shift from his site of sleaze to that of integrity in order to tell Joe’s story implies that in the event of work, like in dialogue, it is possible for the “self” to shift from one standpoint to another.

Inauspiciously, The Man lets his “self” to shift from corruption to the site of integrity not as a sacrifice for the “other” but to prove to the audience that there is

nothing good to be attained from experiencing life from the site of veracity. Successively, The Man goes to great length to prove why the site of integrity is an undesirable location to experience life from. The Man – as Joe – apparently leads a life of anxiety which seems to occupy the site of integrity for the “self” at that site is a stickler for hard work and punctuality while indolence and dishonesty ambience the event of work: “My God! This traffic is slow moving. There is no doubt that I’ll be late at the office today. And that’s going to be a very bad example. I am a stickler for punctuality. That’s one thing they hate about me at the office” (18). For The Man, experiencing hatred from fellow workers is hardly a celebration of life. The spirit of The Man seeks for a carnival and since the experience at the site of integrity appears to be full of animosity and little – if any – friendship, the Man portrays it as utterly undesirable to any person who boasts to have some measure of wisdom.

However, for the principled “self,” the kinetic in the event of work is a dialogic force which forms a prerequisite for meaningful societal development. Unfortunately, the culture of “eating” abstracts the kinematic into a monologue which benefits only a small section of the society. The Man at the post of integrity observes:

Our colonial masters had no intention of making us a beautiful city we could all be proud of. It seems it was meant to be a temporary administrative camp, with no potential for growth. And then we took over after independence and reinforced the bad planning. (19)

The Man complains about the poor structuring of Maseru, Lesotho’s capital city. The Man’s observation suggests that the colonial masters are just out to exploit the resources in Lesotho for their monologic advancement, but not for a carnival which would celebrate

the “self” through the betterment of the “other.” Holquist notes that “Bakhtin conceives [existence] in kinetic terms as situation, an event, the event of being a self” (21). It follows then that Lesotho or any other African country on the path of development must initiate a dialogic platform with noticeable motion enabling an observer to see the movement of that particular country from the grim colonial exploitative situation to the ethos of selflessness and hard work in the civil service meant for the development of the entire populace.

The coming into being of the “self” is a dynamic but not a grounding event. The Man observes, “In a month’s time we are going to have our baby boy [...] who will inherit all the riches that I have accumulated throughout my years in the civil service” (12). The Man’s observation implies that existence is meaningful only if it guarantees the future. The Man is in a celebratory mood for the apparent coming into being of the “self” who looks forward to the birth which would make his future worthwhile but he is forlorn for the “other” whose future looks barren: “So you see, I have fulfillment in my life. And I wish Jane had the same kind of fulfillment. But she got married to a very stupid guy, who goes by the adage that honesty is the best policy” (12). From the Man’s observation, it is evident that fulfillment happens at the site of the “I.” Holquist observes that for Jakobson “the pronoun ‘I’ is a ‘shifter’ because it moves the centre of discourse from one speaking subject to another” (23). It is, therefore, credible to argue that the fulfillment the Man revels about is not borne out of true development, since advancement, like the “self,” is dialogic in nature: the “self” experiences expansion through the improvement of the “other”.

Occupying the sleaze-standpoint oscillates the “self” within the locus of acquisition of luxuries, by whatever means, and the attendant monologic celebration of life rather than the enhancement of the public. The Man invites the audience to peer at his luxurious lifestyle, “Go and see my sumptuous, nay palatial, house. Walk inside and admire my furniture. Relax in my Jacuzzi if you like” (15). The Man appears to be giving the audience a first-rate occasion to experience the festivity which comes with the accomplishment of easily-gotten wealth. The Man admits that the “self” in this station does not bother to invest because opportunities of engaging in more skullduggery would bring in more wealth: “As the money comes you spend it. You know that tomorrow you’ll make some more” (15-16). The Man hopes to boundlessly feast from the spoils of corruption but the voice of integrity occasionally threatens to end the festivity: “I’m going to lose my job [...] now all of a sudden the feast is over!” (15-16). The Man is shaken when the new D.P.S. threatens to sack him.

The “self” in Mr Modise (the Man) cannot fathom living a Joe-type life – wallowing in poverty. The Man is surprised that the D.P.S. is trying to stop him from engaging in corruption: “A problem with the figures? ‘Yes, Mr Modise; we have been billed fifty thousand Rands for fifty bedpans.’ ‘Well, I don’t see anything wrong with that, sir.’ ‘What kind of bedpans, Mr Modise, would cost one thousand rand each?’” (15). The Man is quite staggered to be confronted by the voice of integrity since he is used to the familiar voices of the culture of “eating”. The Man innocently offers the D.P.S. an explanation for the exorbitant price of a bedpan: “This is not just a simple chamber pot. It is specially designed for use in a hospital. And you know that hospital equipment is generally expensive, sir” (15). The D.P.S. laughs at the preposterous explanation given

by the Man upon which the Man contemptuously regards his boss: “What the shit is he laughing at? Look at his big ugly teeth. Look at his rough stupid face, a face that has been scarred by poverty. Smell the fumes of poverty emitted by his unwashed mouth” (15). The Man considers the D.P.S. to be stupid because of occupying the site of integrity which is apparently characterized by poverty instead of using his prestigious position in the event of work to enrich himself through corruption.

The voice of integrity constantly questions the impoverishment of the spatial categories like roads and other structural social amenities. During the colonial times the European masters are blamed for under-developing Africa but now that “[...] we have our own people who have come back from abroad with Master degrees and PhDs in urban planning, in all fields of architecture, you get newly created slums such as the one you find at Lithoteng Ha Seoli” (19). Civil service is meant to render amenities to the public but those entrusted to run the various ministries and government departments are said to have acquired a new expertise which has become the country’s pastime. The voice of integrity wonders what all the highly trained experts earn their salary for but promises to tell us what they are doing: “They are eating. Yes, that’s our national pastime, eating! Our engineers, our town planners, our bureaucrats of all sorts, have gained expertise in a new field altogether, that of eating! [...] the mother of all eating is happening right here in this country at this moment in history” (19). Here, the cultural “self” is portrayed as having turned corruption into some kind of festivity permeating all sectors of the government in Mda’s dramatic universe of Lesotho and any other fraudulent country in the world.

The feast of corruption appears to bite chunks off the road of development making it to become quite bumpy and fatal. The Man in Joe sneers at the destruction done by the mouths of corruption, thus, “These are death traps. I think this is somebody’s plan up there, somebody who is trying [to] take a short cut in decreasing the escalating population of this country. Somebody has seen that family planning and child spacing programmes do not seem to work” (18). The Man is complaining about the potholes and ditches which have been dug on the roads by the constructors and left undone due to corruption. In *Syndromes of Corruption: Wealth, Power, and Democracy*, Michael Johnston notes that “[...] corruption delays, distorts, and diverts economic and democratic development” (17). In the above case of corruption, the Man criticises the distortion of the road from an infrastructure to a carnage which robs the Lesotho in Mda’s dramatic cosmos a few lives. The Man condescendingly observes that the corrupt “self” creates these death traps “with the hope that they will take the lives of quite a few people” (18). The Man’s observation implies that the corrupt “self” is aware that corruption might lead to death but this kind of “self” does not care about the life of the “other.”

The voice of integrity in the person of Joe is out to rout venality at the Power Supply Corporation (P.S.C.) where he works but his principled perspective is staved off by the networks of corruption controlling the event of work. Joe has a bitter confrontation with the Managing Director (MD) – a European who is said to have been sent by his country as an expert to oversee some donation to the P.S.C. – for accusing him of portraying a seemingly oppositional stand against the culture contiguous to the event of work. Joe protests to the MD:

Yesterday you accused me of creating bad working relations with my fellow workers, only because I insisted that a technician who was using a company car as a taxi must be punished ... And all because you do not want me to clean up the corruption here. (20)

Joe's observation indicates that corruption thrives due to abuse of power with impunity which cuts across local and international borders. The European countries appear to sympathize with Africa's fledgling economies to the extent that they give African countries donations which are meant to initiate and sustain development.

Nonetheless, Joe questions why the European countries seem to be keen on maintaining corruption in Africa. Joe demands an answer from the European MD:

What I want to know is, what you are getting out of this rotten situation? Why do you want to maintain it? [...] well, you don't even have to boast to me about that, for I know very well that the money that established this corporation is from your country. (20-21)

The answer to this perturbing question does not appear to be forthcoming from the MD but the Man seems to openly supply the answer later in the play when he appeals for understanding of corruption from the audience:

All countries in the world will do anything to protect their interests. The U.S., that citadel of democracy, will commit acts of terrorism by mining the harbours of Nicaragua, or will assassinate foreign leaders through their CIA. (29).

What the Man suggests, here, is that corruption is pervasive the world over, and that it comes in covert forms which are passed on to the citizens as means of protecting national interests.

The voice of corruption appealingly furthers the reasons for engaging in the vice.

The Man pleads for sleaze:

What am trying to say here is that no country in the world that will not engage in underhand activities in order to protect the interests of that country. Why do you expect Lesotho to be different? It is in the interests of this country that you should have some millionaires like us. (29).

The Man's prerogative indicates that it is not the whole country which extracts benefits from graft but only a few who become dotting millionaires while everybody else wallows in excruciating poverty. The Man repeatedly asserts that Lesotho need not be different from other countries: "Why should we be different? We are just as good as any country, so we are going to engage in filth like any other decent country in the world. All am saying is that we now need to engage in these activities openly" (30). The Man's assertion implies that Corruption is an act of immorality (filth) but since it has become a global culture, it is apparently acceptable and should be done without shame.

The Man offers the consequences of poverty as one of the reasons he and other fraudulent people engage in corruption. The Man tries to convince the audience that the site of corruption is meant to rescue him and his cartels from the misery of poverty:

so please don't give me that look of disgust. Do you know the consequences of poverty? Poverty is a sin, punishable by death. Would

you rather I join the ranks of the poor like Joe, in spite of my talents? I am scared of poverty! (31).

The Man does not appear to be cognizant with the fact that corruption is a major contributor to the poverty he is so scared of. Logically speaking, the man should be more scared of corruption because it is through the venality's insatiable mouth that the world becomes poor. The Man confesses:

I refuse to be poor! If this [corruption] explodes in my face, and I am kicked out of my job, I am well protected from poverty. I have cushioned my nest very well with wise investments. For instance, I bought all the houses that were built by the Housing Corporation – built to relieve the housing shortage (31-32).

The Man's gloating implies that the corrupt "self" gratifies itself at the expense of the "other" who are meant to be relieved by the housing project. The Man looks richer but the world becomes poorer.

In actuality, corruption appears to operate through the politics of exclusion in which the self-seeking "self" tries to prevent the "other" from becoming a "self" by occupying the dialogic space alone. Even within the world of corruption itself, the "self" tries to lock out the "other" from accessing the undue benefits from corrupt deals. The Man, for example, has cheated members of his elite cartel out of their share of the four million rands gotten fraudulently from the road that leads to the Southern towns: "Well, the Chief Engineer and the Director of Tenders, You heard their problem. The Director of Works' problem is the same one. The road. They all want a share from the proceeds of the road! Oh, how I hate that road! (28). The Man would like to keep all the proceeds

from the road so as to gratify the “self” while locking out the “other” on the grounds that they have contributed little in bringing the corrupt deal to fruition.

In *Syndromes of Corruption: Wealth, Power, and Democracy*, Johnston observes that Elite Cartel Corruption takes place “where interlocking groups of top politicians, business figures, bureaucrats, military and ethnic leaders share corrupt benefits among themselves [and] build networks and alliances that solidify their power and stave off the opposition” (89). The Man and his elite friends fit into this kind of corruption because they interlock at the departmental level as they award government tenders, and they collude among themselves to engage in corruption. The Man complains about his Elite Cartel members:

All these people [...] I have made them rich. Not this time. I use my brains [...] I do all the leg work, and all they ever want is to share. I gave [the Chief Engineer] twenty thousand rands, and that’s it. That’s enough for the part of the work he did. And that applies to the others as well. (8)

The corrupt “self” only thinks about their own gratification, and dismisses the “other” as the indolent, lacking brains and valour, but wanting to rip more than they sowed. The Man wants to take virtually everything for himself, sardonically heaping himself with the filth which he claims every decent country must engage in.

The road of corruption gives the Man a lot of headache, eventually, the messenger comes and warns the Man that members of his Elite Cartel are planning something sinister against him. The Man wonders why his friends hate him to the point of wanting to harm him:

Is it because I do it better than everyone else, with a lot of finesse and sophistication? Do they hate me because I am a big time eater, and I am in the big league of the eating game, while they remain small time eaters in the little leagues? (25)

The Man has earlier on dismissed the likes of Joe and the D.P.S. as stupid for wallowing in poverty instead of using their bureaucratic positions to enrich themselves through corruption, and he delights about his sophistication in the game of eating but now his wisdom of corruption appears to be leading him to the worst kind of poverty – death. The playwright seems to be sending a firm message that corruption breeds death of the entire society.

Accordingly, the Man encounters fatal glitches on the road of corruption: “... oh, that road, I hate that road! ... That road has given me so many problems, and now it has killed the people I love ...” (34). The Man had hoped that his wife is going to bear a son for him who would inherit all the millions he has accumulated through corruption but the very road, leading to the Southern towns, whose deplorable condition is directly attributable to the corrupt “self” of his Elite Cartel, kills his son who is about to be born – his future – and his friend Joe. The Man’s wife, whom the Man has been yearning for since the beginning of the play, is terribly maimed and left fighting for her dear life in a hospital which is ill-equipped due to the Man’s corruption. The man gets a shocking telephone call from Morija hospital: “Hello, is that you, Jane? ... Hey, who is this now? ... What is that you say ... My wife? ... Yes, that is her name [...] Oh, my God! Oh, my God! ... Will she live? ... What about the baby? ... He is dead! ... My baby boy is dead!” (33). The Man thinks that the road of corruption leads to some material heaven which

affords the “self” endless opportunities of celebrating life but he soon perturbingly discovers that venality is some kind of endemic death.

As the Man is grappling with the death of his loved ones, suddenly there is a rude knock: “Who? ... What? ... It’s my loyal messenger. Have you brought me news about those snakes? You’ll have to wait. I have to go to the hospital in Morija. My wife ... What do you mean I am going to nowhere? ... Hey, what’s wrong with you? Have you come to attack me? ... Why?” (34). The encounter with the messenger suggests that in corruption there is nothing like permanent loyalty. A member of your Elite Cartel may be your friend today when you are sharing the spoils but tomorrow they might become your bitter enemies. In precise terms, there is no home in corruption. Ironically, the man comes to this truth only at the point of his own death: “Oh, please, don’t hit me so hard ... please forgive me ... I will share with you all the money I have ...”, but blows continue to rain on him making him to scream for mercy, “Please forgive me, my friends. [Blow.] I am very sorry for what I did to you. [Blow.] I will never do it again” (36). The road of corruption leads the man and his world to collapse and fall from the illusory sky of ill-gotten wealth.

The play ends with the Man cautioning the members of his Elite Cartel who are trying to beat him to death that the messenger says that their turn will also come: “Do you hear what the messenger is saying, you my friends who are trying to kill me now? [...] even you, your day will dawn. He is not on your side” (36). The messenger seems to be an observer in Bakhtin’s conceptualization of existence in kinetic terms. Holquist notes that for Bakhtin, “[...] the position of the observer is fundamental. If motion is to have meaning, not only must there be two different bodies in relation with each other, but there

must as well be someone to grasp the nature of such relation: the non-centredness of the bodies themselves requires the centre constituted by an observer” (21). The messenger is able to observe almost everything which transpires among the Elite Cartel members since he/she occupies the space of loyalty and is often used as a link of secret information. The messenger finds it difficult to identify with the Cartels as his lowly position does not appear to afford opportunities to engage in graft.

At the point of death, the Man also becomes a dialogic observer who is able to perceive the motion of the corrupt “self” on the road of sleaze. Holquist observes that for Bakhtin the “self” conceives their beginning and end as a whole life “enacted in the time/space of the other: I may see my death, but not in the category of ‘I.’ For my ‘I,’ death occurs only for others, even when the death in question is my own” (37). Subsequently, as the Man faces death he recognizes and understands what his corrupt fellows are unable to make out from their site of greed for wealth: “[The Messenger] says he is going to whip up the emotions of the common people who will rise against you ... He says he will do it even if it takes him a hundred years ... so you can beat me up now, but our time will come too ...” (36). The man appears to comprehend that the “mother of all eating,” the pervasive corruption in his country, does not bring the society into being but demise. Members of the Man’s Elite Cartel seem to remain in the ‘stupid’ perspective that corruption is a road to material heaven. Holquist further observes that for Bakhtin the self, “is a cognitive necessity, not a mystified privilege” (22). It follows, then, that the Man finally comes into being through the dialogue between the cognitive and the cultural world in the event of work.

By organizing the thematic voices in that way, first, corruption gloats about the wealth it eats from the economy with impunity, then, sleaze is confronted by integrity but through networks corruption is able to stave off integrity, but eventually corruption is divided amongst itself with fatal results and cries of forgiveness, the playwright undoubtedly communicates the message that for the human society to come into being corruption must be eliminated. People must understand that engaging in corruption is a sure way of killing the future. The home of humanity is in the selfless “self” who works hard and honestly to improve the “other” through civil service, and engages their cognitive in order to recognize and understand the direction the event of work is taking their country.

2.3 Cognitive Blockage: The Art of Corruption

In *The Mother of All Eating*, the locus of fraudulent activities is kleptocracy involving Elite Cartels who collude to steal public wealth using covert means and then they share the spoils. However, in *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* the prevalent kind of corruption is what Johnston terms, in *Syndromes of Corruption: Wealth, Power, and Democracy*, as having a locus in Official Moguls whose “corruption is rapacious and involves the unilateral abuse of political power rather than quid pro quo exchanges between public and private interests” (155). Whatever the type of corruption in operation, blockage of cognition appears to be at the centre of the motion or stillness which constitutes the fraudulent activities.

In “The Concept of Inhibition in Cognition,” Colin Maclead argues that “Cognition inhibition is the stopping or overriding of a mental process, in whole or in part, with or without intention” (5). In this sub-chapter, the idea of “stopping” or

“overriding” the mental process is pertinent in the ensuing argument that corruption operates through the cognitive, and that in order to create a feasible vision for post-apartheid South Africa Mda deploys *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* to reveal how corruption has become a ‘culture of eating’ which threatens to munch the whole body of humanity yet most people are prevented from taking cognizance of this fatal menace through well-orchestrated political mechanisms. In “*Dialogicality in Languages, Minds and Brains: is there a Convergence between Dialogism and Neuro-biology?*” Per Linell notes that the brain is dialogic: “the brain interacts with the rest of the body; the mind is embodied, not just embrained, and the body is mindful” (607). Linell’s observation implies that the ‘self’ comes into being through the dialogue between the mind and the body.

In *The Mother of All Eating*, the Man perceives himself as the brains which have enriched all the members of his Elite Cartel: “I use my brains, you know, I do all the leg work, and all they ever want is to share” (8). The man identifies the “other” as the body which is dependent on the sharp brains his “self” possesses. Holquist notes that for Bakhtin, “from the perspective of a self, the other is simply in the world along with everyone and everything else” (22). It might, therefore, be plausible to argue that when the world becomes oppositional, the “self” feels that it is in the process of being unmade; in other words, the sky of the “self” falls but the ‘self’ blames the “other” for apparently acceding the fall. Subsequently, *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* dialogically appears to textually connect with the collapse of the Man’s skies of corruption at the end of *The Mother of All Eating*. The world of the Man appears to have come to a standstill – death.

Unlike in *The Mother of All Eating* which begins with light rising on stage and music playing accompanied by humming of the Man as he arrives at his home of corruption, *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* starts with stillness of the grandiose: “Lights rise on the stage. Four figures are frozen in what looks very much like a pose in an Old Master Painting. They are a unit, but are on different planes” (42). The stage directions, here, suggests that the four figures have had a life of celebration whose kinetics seems to have been halted so that their grandiose being is now like a motionless painting. The stage directions further expose the space/ time categories: “The emphasis is on a little man, quite scrawny in fact, with a bony face and penetrating eyes. He is old and frail, and looks as if he might break at any moment. He wears a tattered suit that has a sheen of filth, [...] he is His Excellency THE PRESIDENT” (42). The president, together with his ministers, is locked up in a dingy cell after being overthrown by a dissenting group.

The General suddenly comes to life and addresses the audience about the ‘Masterpiece’ of the President and his ministers. Indicating the Masterpiece, the General informs the audience: “there is art even in the humblest of things [...] all art is valid only if it serves the interest of the people. And in what better way can the interests of the people be served, if not by creating masterpieces of their venerable leaders?” (43). The General’s assertion implies that creativity, an element of cognition, is blocked into a monologue meant to serve the Official Moguls’ interests which artistically masquerades as the interests of the people. The General explains that “[t]he affairs of the state stood still while [the artist] immortalized [the venerable leaders] on canvas. If this came out well, he was assured of continued employment, for he would be required to create a new

painting every month” (43). Here, art is used to celebrate, preserve and exalt the Official Moguls at the expense of the people whose being is artistically crafted to bring the “self” of the corrupt political leaders into being.

With Official Moguls, Johnston observes, “officials and politicians enrich themselves through corruption more or less at will, at times moving into the economy by converting whole state agencies into profit-seeking enterprises [...]” (155). In *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* for example, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting suspends all its programs for a whole week in order to highlight, nay celebrate, the Minister of Agriculture daughter’s wedding at the behest of His Excellency The President. During the special Cabinet meeting convened to discuss the wedding, the President declares: “As you all know, our colleague’s daughter is getting married in a week’s time [...] I have already sent the necessary instructions to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting about the content of their programmes for the period of one week” (45). Here, the president turns a whole ministry into a private enterprise meant to reward one of his sycophants by painting the daughter’s wedding as the “wedding of the decade” through a one-week ravish media coverage.

During the week, all the media houses are ordered to create “[...] news on the groom, his life history, his achievements, interview his teachers from grade school right up to college ... and [do] the same for the bride [and] profile the designer who has been imported to design the bridal gown” (45-46). By issuing this order, the President hopes to paint a grand portrait for the Minister of Agriculture and by extension improve the perception of his, otherwise, unpopular government. The President orders the General to enforce the decree without fear or favour:

And you, General, shall see to the implementation of this decree. See to it that every citizen throughout the land is in a jolly wedding mood. In shebeens and taverns let the discussions centre on the Wedding of the Decade. In discotheques and nightclubs let them dance to wedding marches (46).

The President tries to rob the citizens of their democracy to cognition by transforming a private connubial theatre into a state function which is enforced through military might.

In addition, the President rents the Ministry of Works to the private interests of the Minister of Agriculture by ordering, “And General, see to it that the Ministry of Works paves the road to our colleague’s house ... make sure it is properly tarred. The road to the groom’s house too” (46). The decree amounts to abuse of power which accords undue benefit to a minion at the expense of the public. Later in the play, the audience learns that the Ministry of Works is notorious of deploying art to play around with the acuity of things so that the people mistake artistic distortions with real developmental projects. The Ministers are amused by the artistic trick they play on the Pope during a visit he makes to their country. The Minister of Agriculture reveals to the President, “When you announced that the pontiff was paying us a holy visit, there was not time nor money to tar the road that leads to the racecourse. And the racecourse was the only open field that was big enough to accommodate the multitudes who were expected to come and see the Holy Father” (47-48). The Minister of works is said to have come up with an ingenious idea to solve the economic and temporal hardship, and the Pope went back to the Vatican a jolly Pontiff.

The minister of Justice confides to the President, the “[road] was never tarred, sir. It was painted black,” and the Minister of Agriculture adds, “And named after the Pope”

(48). The Pope does not realize that the beautiful road which the government names after him is a sham born out of the resourcefulness of the art of corruption. The President himself finds it incredible that the tarred road is non-existent: “Well, at least the road did impress the Pontiff, so did the beautiful houses” (49). The filibustering artistic manoeuvres give a favourable perception of the world while covering up the truth in order to serve the selfish cloistered interests of the Official Moguls. Here, creativity is penitently deployed not to make the world a better place for humanity but to give the impression that the world is better for political mileage.

The president believes that the gorgeous houses along the exquisite-artistic-tarred road exist: “Of course there are houses. On both sides of the road. Lovely double-storeyed houses in sunny colours” (49). The President’s credulous attitude towards the existence of the houses indicates that the art of corruption can deceive even those who claim to have mastered deception. The president is surprised when the Minister of Justice discloses, “What you and the Holy Father saw were just the fronts of houses. The same kind of things they use when they shoot movies” (49). The Minister’s revelation implies that the government in Mda’s dramatic universe is run as a movie and most of its developmental projects are just fronts meant to divert the truth from the people. Like a movie, the architects of corruption are able to enact a theatre which can credibly simulate all kind of things including people. The Minister of Justice amusedly divulges the trick to the President, “Some windows, yes, there were people waving. They were really standing on a pile of garbage behind the Masonite boards. Children waving little flags. Sweet old ladies waving rosaries,” and Agriculture completes the portrait, “But most of them were painted faces [...]” (49). The president wonders how his Ministers could simulate people

with smiling faces waving at him and the pope so well that the portrait mapped real existence.

Holquist observes that for Bakhtin, existence is centred on the question: “How can I know if it is I or another who is talking?” (13). The president, for example, asks many questions about the road leading to the racecourse because he runs the country through decrees but here is something he has not uttered into existence. The president says that he feels devastated that no one bothered to tell him about the idea of painting the road and the creation of the ‘movie’ houses:

And all the time I thought it was a new housing project. There were flats and apartments and stores. I was wondering how I was left out when a percentage was negotiated with the contractors, and why I didn’t see my account unexpectedly bulging. I should have known better. (49)

The President’s tenancy in corruption appears to prevent him from recognizing and understanding that the road and the double-storeyed houses are fake. Instead of the voice of the “self” coming into being, the sleaze (corrupt “self”) speaks with a suspicious tone that seems to calibrate the other Official Moguls as greedy traitors who are unwilling to share the spoils.

In practicality, the apparent beauty of corruption fades away, sooner or later, leaving nothing but ugliness which eats into the advancement of the human society. The Minister of Health confesses to the President, “And when the rains came, they swept the black paint away. And opened up the gullies. There is no road, sir, and no one ever told you about this” (48). It is plausible to argue, then, that corruption enacts not a real motion in human advancement but an illusion – an image which simulates motion. The plastering

of things may work temporarily in communicating falsehood as though it were the truth but art like nature soon reveals the obstructed truth. The Minister of Health pities the Pope for priding himself with a lie which he believes to be the truth: “And the pope, poor fellow, I’m sure he is sitting over in the Vatican boasting to his friends, ‘Guess what, guys, I have a road in that country. My own road, named after me.’ He does not know” (48). The Minister’s pity for the Pope implies that the Pope does not know that he is not the one speaking but the “other” who has successfully blocked his cognition from the true condition of the road leading to the racecourse.

The president and his Ministers are gripped by fear when they learn that the Daughters of the Revolution are planning to hold a beauty contest because they know that the fake art which the government deploys to perpetuate corruption will not stand the test of time. The President, self-importantly, declares:

We know about their plans for a beauty contest. We are going to nip it in the bud. I am going to make a very important decree. Now the government must control and regulate beauty contests. Of course, we’ll not say we are doing it to stop the Daughters of the Revolution. (88)

The President’s declaration implies that legislation is also used by the Official Moguls to block the truth from coming into cognition for the populace.

In “Governance Rankings: The Art of Measurement,” Marie Besançon observes that “measurement of governance could set standards for improvement and achievement as well as indicate where funds could best be of use and where policy might prove most effective” (2). It follows then that the political actors in Mda’s dramatic cosmos fear that the Daughters of the Revolution might design the Beauty contest as a measure of the

government's service to the people thereby exposing corruption in high places. However, the government is too late for as they learn from the Young Man, "[the Daughters of the Revolution] have [already] held their beauty contest" (88). The President worries that the beauty contest has taken place despite the government's fool proof vigilance. Panic stricken, the President inquires of the Young Man, "What! When? How is that possible? Did you see it? Does the populace know?" (88). The Young Man narrates how the beauty contest is conducted and the unusual categories used to judge beauty.

The Young Man is privileged to watch the beauty contest from his sleeping box in the streets:

I peeped, and saw men fleeing for their lives. I knew that the Daughters of the Revolution were up to something. [...] usual naked march. But no, they were holding a beauty contest, [...] categories that were being judged was the number and extent of shrapnel scars on their naked bodies. (88)

From the categories being judged in this beauty content, it is evident that for the Daughters of the Revolution beauty is marked by fighting for the truth and consistently snubbing falsehood which is at the core of human retrogression. Ironically, the winner of the beauty contest is the minister of justice's old mother. The Young Man relates, "I'll tell you who won. An old old woman. She was very graceful, and carried her scars with such pride I could have kissed her. I heard them say that her good-for-nothing son is a Cabinet minister" (89). The Minister of Justice is said to hide his face in shame while all his Cabinet colleagues stare at him. It is plausible to argue that the minister hides his face after realizing that he is obnoxious when judged against the category of fighting for the truth and shunning falsehood.

Being ugly is repugnant for the “self” but coming to the realization that others know is disdainfully worse. The Minister of Health mourns, “It was a blow. They have given us a blow from which we may never recover,” while the Minister of Justice wakes up to the shocking truth, “The populace now knows that they have triumphed over us. They will lose all respect for us” (89). The Ministers’ observation suggests that recognizing and understanding the truth is a significant category for the “self” to come into being. In a corrupt society, it can be credibly deduced, overcoming the blockage of cognition – created through the art of corruption – is what makes the selfless “self” to triumph. The president complains that the government has given the Daughters of the Revolution symbols of what they ask for, but: “[t]here is no satisfying these Daughters of the Revolution. We gave them symbols. Still they complain. Great symbols! Flags! Anthems! Street names! All changed to reflect the new order of freedom” (89). The president’s complaint reveals that his government tries to obstruct the Daughters of the Revolution from pursuing the truth by ceremoniously appointing some of them to take up prestigious government position, but to no avail.

The corrupt government is always creating strategies meant to stop the truth from coming to the fore, especially to the public. Subsequently, the Minister of Justice proposes a strategy to counter the damage done by the beauty contest: “I know what we can do to offset the beauty contest. Let’s enhance the image of the Wise One” (90). The Minister’s strategy implies that corrupt governments use the politics of image-building to barricade the truth. The President is accorded superfluous titles destined to endear him to all sections of the populace. The Minister of Justice recommends, “Another proposal. The titles of Chosen one and Anointed One will certainly get us a following from the

believers. We need another title to get intellectuals in our houses of learning on our side. Students are becoming restless too” (91). The Minister’s recommendation indicates that the titles are used to try and win the hearts of the populace, but there is no substance for human development behind the titles.

Eventually, the President’s image is introduced by the Minister of Justice to the populace: “Ladies and gentlemen of the Cabinet! Boys and girls! Here’s the Supreme Commander, the One and Only, the anointed One, hey the Chosen One, His Excellency the Wise one, Father of the Nation Dr President!” (91). The pompous introduction implies that the President’s “self” does not come into being, but he exists as an expectorating façade of corruption. However, the Young Man knows what the President and his Ministers actually are: “I am sure you would make him President of the whole universe if you had the power. But you are all a bunch of thieves, I say” (92). The Young Man’s accusation brings into being the Official Moguls as indolent powerless people who shamelessly survive on the sweat of others. The Cabinet hires the Young Man to make portraits for them and then later pays him with commendation letters bearing the signature of the President instead of paying him in monetary terms.

The Young Man complains about the pervasive traitorous nature of the government, “Then you came back to me, and asked me to paint the sets for you because the Pope was coming. I said no, pay me first for the paintings of the Cabinet. You promised [...] everything would be all right. I painted the most beautiful houses [...] smiling faces. But still I got nothing” (93). The Young Man is the artist who is employed by the Cabinet to paint development projects and emotions of love designed to deceive the populace that the government is carrying out its social mandate effectively. Besançon,

notes that there is a social contract between the ruler and the ruled upon which “[a] well governed nation provides: rule of law; political and civil freedoms; medical and health care; schools and educational institutions; roads, railways, the arteries of commerce; communication networks [...]” (1) among other essential services. It could be reasonably argued that the dialogue between the ruler and the ruled marks the process of the society being made or unmade.

The president is surprised to hear the Young Man say that he got nothing after painting for the Cabinet: “What does he mean he got nothing? Didn’t he get the papers that I signed myself, and that were countersigned by the Honourable Minister of Culture – the papers that honoured him as a great artist of the people. What more payment did he want?” (93). Here, the President appears to suggest that one should serve their country without demanding anything from the government. He questions the artist’s patriotism for his country after the Young Man complains, “There! These are the slips of paper with which you paid me. They don’t mean a damn thing. Just some stupid honour for serving my country” (93). The papers do not have any value for the Young Man since they cannot earn him a living even after having spent many months painting for the government. The Young Man tasks the President:

You know how many stupid pieces of paper I have here? More than a hundred. After each painting you gave me one slip of paper. I did dozens of paintings. Then you decided that the new image that you were cultivating was that of benevolence [...] more slips of paper. (94)

The government seems to be exploiting the populace and killing their talents by forcing them to put their art to the wrong ends.

The various Ministries are deployed to kill the lives of the populace, for when a person's life is reduced into an empty sign with nothing to feel it with meaning, one is as good as dead. The Cabinet tries to kill the Young Man after he insists to be paid for the painting. The president is surprised that the Young Man is still alive: "Was I not informed that the young artist had died? How did he resurrect himself?" (94). The President's wish that the young artist were dead reveals that his government uses the talented populace to do its dirty work and then dumps them. The artist cynically responds to the President's utterance: "Ha! You thought I was dead, didn't you? When I began to bother you demanding that the pieces of paper be converted into cash since I couldn't eat them, you set your guards on me" (94). The artist's observation implies that the government tries to kill him in order to abscond its duty of paying for the services he has rendered to the Cabinet.

The ministry of Culture is re-organized not to enhance culture but to kill it. The Minister of Justice reminds the Cabinet, "If my memory serves me well, the Wise One decreed that in fact the Honourable the Minister of Culture should play an active role in killing culture by destroying all people who have dances and carvings" (57). The Minister himself seems to have come up with this decree in order to kill the artist's mother for protesting in public and demanding for the body of her son whom the government declares dead. The President says he does not remember issuing such a decree but all the same it serves the Cabinet well. Confronted by the President, the General admits, "No such decree, sir. There was a Cabinet decision that culture is not on the national agenda. But there was never a decree to kill producers of cultural products" (57). The Minister of health wonders why there should be a minister of culture while culture is not on the

national agenda upon which the President defends his decision: “Because it is fashionable to have a minister of Culture and that closes the subject” (57). The explanation appears to mark the President as a dictator.

The vicious cycle of corruption with every new regime is killing the society – blocking the populace from the cognition of love, the ingredient that makes the society human. Revealingly, after terrible torture by the machineries of the current government the former Minister of Culture mourns, “I’ll never love again, beautiful princess. They humiliated me so much ...they forced a rod up my anus as I was given electric shocks ... they kicked and punched me ... they pushed needles under my nails ...” (52). Culture appears to have been emptied off the substance of love which reduces it into a worthless category that is not part of the national agenda. A cultured society is refined and treasures human values but the governments in Mda’s dramatic universe appear to have lost the capacity to love. The President, for example, bans all garden flowers after he is informed that the Minister of Culture is discussing flowers with the Minister of Health: “Flower garden? That’s even worse than I thought. Now listen carefully all of you. I hereby make this decree without fear or favour. All flower gardens are banned. Henceforth no one will plant flowers [...] only the luxuriant leaves of wheat tobacco and hops” (56). The decree reveals that the President is only interested in cash crops which would bring in some foreign exchange for his vain “self”.

The President seems to dread culture because it reminds the populace of their humanity and enhances love which militates against the pervasive oppressive tendencies of his government. Dances such as the *Pitiki* encourage the culture of rebirth of the society in carnival-like context where women who recognize and understand the

importance of birth, dance around a pregnant woman to welcome the baby. The government trembles at the mention of the *Pitiki* because none of the members of the Cabinet understands the importance of new life as they have all been busy killing humanity through the art of corruption. The Young Man informs the Cabinet that “The Daughters of the Revolution are geared for one final act of defiance that will destroy [the Official Moguls] forever! [...] after the success of their beauty contest they now plan to perform the whole *Pitiki* theatre of rebirth, including the *Ditolobonya* dance, in public” (96). In the *Pitiki* theatre of rebirth the women dance naked and men flee from this kind of catastrophe believed to rob men off their sight.

The Minister of Justice wants to know the implication of this kind of protest upon which the President educates him:

Catastrophe! That’s what it means. The *Pitiki* theatre of rebirth, with its *Ditolobonya* dance, is a very secret performance that is done by women for a women only audience. A public performance will bring catastrophe to the land. We’ve got to stop it at all costs (96).

The trepidation in the President’s voice indicates that *Pitiki* is an extreme form of protest which can ruin the government of the day. The thought of the emotions the theatre would rouse in the populace humbles the President into the admission that the Cabinet needs to be sorry for hurting the young artist who used to help the government out of its crises in the past. The President advises the minister of Justice who is reluctant to be sorry over a decree which the Wise One had issued, “There might be need to be sorry, even though when the decision was made it was wise. It was the truth of the day. Who can say it’s still true today?” (97). The President’s benevolent tone indicates that the Cabinet admits its

mistakes only as a strategy to win back talented people who might help it to overcome the immediate challenges it apparently faces from the populace.

The Cabinet does not know the details involved in the *Pitiki* but the young Man knows the *Pitiki* with its *Ditolobonya* dance having seen it being performed to welcome his aunt's baby: "So, one day I was sleeping in my box when the women came and begun to perform. You know, this kind of theatre is performed to welcome a new baby into the world. They were welcoming my aunt's baby who was staying with us" (101). Associatively, the Cabinet has never given forth to any baby (development) which explains their ignorance about the *Pitiki*. The Minister of Health admits her ignorance, thus: "I do not know anything about the *Pitiki*. I never had children. Only women who have experienced giving birth are allowed into the room where the performances are held" (100). It could be credibly argued that the government, like the women, is endowed with the capacity to bring forth babies – that which ensures the continuity of the society – but corruption appears to have utterly eroded the government's fecundity.

In *Feminizing the Economy: Metaphors, Strategies, Politics*, Jenny Cameron notes that conceptualizing the economy as production "is only half the picture [...] missing is the sphere of reproduction [...]" (6). It could, then, be reasonably argued that without reproduction the government is barren and, subsequently, the future of the society is in the process of being unmade. In a well-functioning society, different governmental departments have healthy social intercourse which initiates the kinetic for renewal of the society through the reawakening of the civil service for human advancement. In *The Mother of All Eating*, the baby the Man is expecting is killed on the road of corruption which is a creation of the Man himself and his Elite Cartel: "[...] my

baby, who by then had fought his way out of his mother's womb without anybody's help, also died instantly" (34). The society becomes immortal through the continuity offered by its children but in the case above that immortality is denigrated by the fatal consequences of corruption. Additionally, in *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* the Minister of Health condescendingly dismisses the Minister of Agriculture as ineffective: "You are a joke of a man. I doubt if you even have it" (50). The minister's condemnation of Agriculture is centred on the reproductive member which, Agriculture as a crucial government structure, is expected to deploy in plant and animal reproduction for the country's food sufficiency.

People are usually put off by the realization that their government is incapable of reproduction. Subsequently, in *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* the Young Man accuses the Cabinet of reproductive malfunctioning by quoting from the *Dausi* which is an epic poem about the rise and fall of the Wagadu Empire of West Africa. In "Gassire's Lute – A West African Epic," the poem is said to begin, "Four times the Wagadu rose. A great city, gleaming in the light of day. Four times Wagadu fell. And disappeared from human sight. Once through vanity. Once through dishonesty. Once through greed. Once through discord" ("Gassire's Lute"). The vices of vanity, dishonesty, greed and discord characterize the corrupt government in Mda's dramatic cosmos. Like the Wagadu, the populace has lost their home many times through the vicious cycle of corruption perpetuated by a succession of dictatorial regimes.

The Young Man quotes the *Dausi* to stir up the Cabinet from their stupor of ill-gotten wealth and power. The *Dausi* is a fine piece of art which survives the gloom of the *Wagadu* Empire, and the young artist refers to it as a reminder to the Cabinet that art is

noble and should be used to build the immortality of the society rather than building knockdown heavens for individuals at the expense of the populace:

All creatures die, be buried, and vanish.
Kings and heroes die, are buried, and vanish.
I, too, shall die, shall be buried and vanish
But the *Dausi*
The song of my battles, shall not die (99).

For the young artist, the *Dausi* is a time/ space category which the Cabinet should interact with so that they can know the position they ought to occupy in the advancement of humanity.

Accordingly, the artist cynically educates the Cabinet: “And I tell you, Honourable Members of this foolish Cabinet, *Wagadu* – the homeland of the Soninke – was lost and recovered and lost many times. But the *Dausi* endured. Governments shall come and go” (100). The artist’s assertion implies that empires, governments, Official Moguls or Elite Cartels may unkindly deploy art to enrich themselves at the expense of the populace but sooner or later the illustrious heavens of wealth and power they create for their “self” will fall and expose the foolishness of looking for a home in corruption. Nonetheless, art will survive all the treachery of inhuman governments or organizations. The artist assertively deduces from the *Dausi*, “Empires shall rise and fall. Even civilisations shall come to pass. But art is forever. It lives beyond politicians, beyond governments, beyond empires, even beyond civilisations” (100). The artist is undoubtedly vilifying corrupt politicians who seek for home in a mirage instead of laying the foundation of their home on the truth.

Finally, the artist is able to take apart the mirage the Cabinet has been living in by helping them to overcome the cognitive blockage that prevents them from recognizing

that corruption is a sardonic circus of betrayal in which no one is at home. Through elimination method, the Young Man is able to convince the Cabinet that the traitor who has spilled the beans to their torturers is none other the President to whom they all automatically pledge their loyalty. Cornered, the President admits his crimes against the Cabinet: “I did it for the good of the nation. You, Honourable Members, must be proud that you have suffered pain and humiliation for your people” (106). The members of the Cabinet feel terribly aggrieved by the monumental unbelievable act of betrayal from the very figure they would have protected with their lives. The President informs the General that he had appointed him to the Cabinet with ulterior motive: “You don’t think I know that you once planned a coup against me? Why do you think I made you a minister? To bring you closer so I could watch and see to it that you’re not up to any mischief” (107). The General is devastated at this level of betrayal.

Dialogism perceives the “self” as coming into being through the interaction with the “other” in cognitive time/ space categories. It follows, then, that the Cabinet is perturbed by how the President’s traitorous nature conceivably interacts with the torturers for the President has never been taken from the cell for grilling. However, they shockingly learn that the President betrays them through the power of the mind. The President reveals, “It was through my dreams. I conjured up the torturers in my dreams, and they featured in them. I interacted with them in my dreams, and gave them all the information they wanted” (107). The President’s revelation implies that betrayal is conceived in the mind, and therefore, to counter corruption or any other kind of betrayal, the mind should be the locus. The President further discloses, “Of course when there were urgent messages I communicated with them through my thoughts, during my

moments of introspection” (107). The disclosure is indubitably poignant since the Members of the Cabinet always excuse the President whenever he feels like having introspection and they stand over to prevent anyone from disturbing him.

At the end of the play, the President squelches the spitting done on him by the Members of his Cabinet by pointing out that they are also guilty of betrayal:

What you enjoy doing is building gods, putting them on a pedestal, worshipping them for a day, and then throwing stones at them and knocking them down. You have a very short attention span in the admiration of the gods that you create! (108).

The President’s observation implies that politicians are the ones who create dictators through sycophantic interaction with their superiors.

2.4 Coming Home: The Art of Democracy

In *The Mother of All Eating*, the Man looks for a home in dishonestly-accumulated material wealth but ends up killing his loved ones and jeopardizing his own life. Here, the Man perceives corruption as an attractive channel for gaining freedom from the acrimonious consequences of poverty. Then, in *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* the Man seems to search for home in the self-gratifying vanity of wealth and power, and appears to succeed to an illusory extent but the power-wealth-heaven he has created for himself comes tumbling down through a coup d’état. Henceforth, the Man is entangled in the web of the pervasive abuse of power and corruption which irrevocably spews him together with his sycophants into a dingy cell that appears to bring his life to a standstill. Subsequently, the apparent freedom he has found in illicit power and wealth is lost into a tumultuous sea of torture and pain. Gaining the knowledge that they have lost

their home through the Man's monumental corruption, the people are determined to regain their homeland through political agitation which is championed by the Daughters of the Revolution and the Young Man who enacts the spirit of the *Dausi*.

In *The Bells of Amersfoort*, the *Dausi* – song of the people's battles for freedom – is being danced in Apartheid South Africa. Luthando, one of the brave agitators of freedom, keeps his girlfriend, Tami, who is in self-exile in Holland aware of the way the fight for liberation is moving on back at home. Luthando writes, "Dear Tami, since you left, the boys have come out thrice. Maybe four times. I have lost the count. And the rains continue to cut deeper into the already wounded earth, taking with them bits of soil from the barren hills into the Telle River" (114). Luthando's letter implies that the movement for the agitation for freedom continues to gain strength but at the same time oppression from the apartheid government is becoming worse.

The historical connection between Holland and South Africa is symbolically communicated in the letter through the movement of the soil eroded from South Africa: "From the Telle River into the Orange River. From the Orange River into the Atlantic Ocean. The rich soil of our scarred Qhoboshane Valley enriches distant oceans. What do oceans want with our soil when they already own a world of sands?" (114). Luthando's question implies that to bring South Africa into being, a dialogue between apartheid South Africa and the Boers from Holland is a necessary time/ space category. No wonder, Tami runs away from South Africa due to the oppressive tendencies of the apartheid regime to a refuge in Holland – the historical homeland of the Boers of South Africa who are the architects of the inhuman race-based segregation.

Tami's coming into exile is calibrated through her relation with Katja who is a caring lady whom "[t]he Dutch-South Africa Solidarity Movement sends [...] to see it that [Tami] [is] comfortable ... that [her] needs are met" (117). Despite her homeliness, Tami is rude to her and does not seem to appreciate her exhaustive efforts to keep her comfortable and well-catered for. When she is brought food by Katja, she refuses to eat and complains that the ugly food does not satisfy her needs: "The English are world famous for their terrible cooking. I think the world forgot about the Dutch. They match the English pound for pound" (117). Tami's accusation seems to stem from the historical category of colonialism since both the English and the Dutch colonized South Africa, and both dished out meals of oppression to the native South Africans. Questioned by Katja why she is so ungracious to her hosts, and why she wears a mood of not being nice, Tami responds: "You wouldn't be in a nice mood either if you were cooped up in this musty flat all day long" (117). Tami's response implies that she feels secluded for Holland does make her come home.

Katja challenges Tami to drop her feelings of seclusion: "And who is keeping you here? You are your own prisoner, Tami. You refuse to go out. You just want to sit here and stew in your self-pity. When you first came you were quite different. You used to be carefree" (117). Katja's observation implies that Tami is a prisoner of her bitter apprehending emotions whose locus is the oppression meted out on her and her people by the apartheid South African government. Tami says that her carefree attitude when she arrived in Holland was just a mask which she wore to give herself a happy face. However, Tami's explanation does not seem to satisfy Katja: "You used to honour invitations to talk about the situation back home. You used to attend demonstrations. You

used to visit friends. What happened to you, Tami?" (117). Here, Katja seems to be searching for Tami's happy, warm "self" whom she had interacted with and yearns to bring into existence. However, that "self" appears to have gone into seclusion, leaving Tami a shell of her "self" in a homeless space.

Tami feels like an unnecessary burden to the people of Holland and hence she keeps her "self" in isolation: "I wouldn't be here burdening you with my problems if your people had not forced me out of my country? (117). Katja is surprised that Tami accuses her people of forcing her out of her country while they are the ones taking care of her needs here in exile. Tami explains to Katja: "The Boers ... the Afrikaners ... they came from here, didn't they? (118). From Tami's explanation, it becomes evident that time/space category is what appears to remove Tami from the ability to interact freely with her hosts. It could reasonably be argued, then, that the cognitive is what marks a place as becoming or in the process of becoming a home. Katja responds to Tami's accusation, thus: "We cannot take all the credit for creating those people ... the Afrikaners. Some of their ancestors came from France. Go blame the French as well!" (118). Katja's defence suggests that engaging in a blame game is not going to bring the "self" in South Africa into being. There are many voices which interact to bring apartheid into existence, and Katja suggests that searching for space on which to calibrate the discourse of apartheid with blame might be an endless futile exercise.

Tami craves for the world of South Africa she left behind despite its oppressive tendencies which have forced her into exile in Holland. The play begins with Tami nostalgically reminiscing the home back in South Africa: "At home there were aunts and uncles. There were grandmothers and grandfathers. There were friends and neighbours.

And, of course there was Luthando” (114). Tami’s nostalgia calibrates South Africa as the home which has been taken away from her, and Holland as the “other” whose weather communicates not the joyous feelings of home but gloom and isolation. In her letters, Tami informs her love about Holland’s abysmal cognitive-incarcerating meteorological conditions: “Dear Luthando, when the sky clears a little and a few malnourished rays hit the gloomy faces of the people here, it is a miracle. Gloom melts away. Everybody looks to heavens and says, ‘The sun is up’” (115). Tami’s present world in Holland appears to be almost permanently frozen due to the colonial/ historical binary occupying the space between South Africa and Holland. The warmth from the sun changes the appearance of the people who burst into celebration but only for a short while. For Tami, Holland seasonally becomes a home when the sun is up and everybody tilts their faces to heaven to receive a kiss from the sun.

Nonetheless, Tami cannot identify with Holland despite staying there for many years, and even receiving her degree on Rural Development and Economics from one of the universities in Holland. Even the most beautiful things in Holland appear to put off Tami, and they pitch her into loneliness and alcoholism. Katja accuses Tami of trying to seek for a home in alcohol: “I know ... you were looking for some medicine that you could drink and that would give you happiness,” but Tami retorts, “I was not looking for happiness. I just wanted to numb the pain [of the bells]” (119). Katja does not seem to understand why Tami is bent on destroying her own life through reckless drinking and wallowing in self-pity. For Katja, Tami should try to make something of her life despite having passed through a lot of awful things. However, Tami appears to calibrate her present world as hell though Katja points out to her that there is only the “self” to blame:

“And what’s nice about it is that you have sent yourself [to hell]. With wine” (118). Katja’s assertion implies that the “self” is at the centre of the dialogue through which a society comes into freedom or loses that freedom. Tami, for example, seems to have chosen to interact with wine instead of the human “other” which spews her into a prison of alcoholism.

The pain that Tami tries to drain away with wine is lodged in her mind and it is created through a semiotic space/ time binary between the tintinnabulation of the torturous life in apartheid South Africa and the associations the victim carries over to sounds of ordinary things in exile. As Katja is explaining to Tami about her own difficulties and how she fights to make something out of life despite the odds, for example, “The bells [of Amersfoort] toll. At first softly, and then in crescendo until they become very loud. Tami freezes and the glass she is holding crushes to the floor. She is obviously in agony [Katja] holds Tami in her arms as Tami writhes in pain. The bells stop and her agony ceases” (119). The Bells’ affront on Tami’s psychological space implies that dialogue is cognitive, and that for Tami to find a home, her mind requires reconciliatory interaction in cognitive space/ time category with the Man who inflicts torturous pain on her through the structures of apartheid which transforms the tolling of Church Bells into a nightmare of pain.

Holquist observes that, for Bakhtin, existence is the “unique and unified event of being” (24). Following Bakhtin’s definition of existence, it might be plausible to argue that Tami fails to come into being because the event that her “self” occupies is not unified but fractious which blocks interaction that would otherwise create meaning. Tami, for instance, perceives Katja as a Boer whose people try to salve their conscience by

showering the victim of their torturous apartheid schemes with kindness. Without meaning which is created by interaction the “self” is not in the position to know either it “self” or the “other.” Katja tries to educate Tami:

And by the way, I am not some spoilt brat from some rich family who has so much time in her hands that she decides to do some charitable work for ungrateful refugees [...] I grew up on a houseboat on one of the canals of Amsterdam.

Without a mother. She died quite early from alcohol abuse. (119)

Tami responds by saying that she feels sorry for not being in the know. But Katja reprimands Tami and challenges her to take some action that would enable her to make something of her event of being.

Katja seems to echo Bakhtin’s argument that the “[self] has been given the task of not being merely given. It must stand out in existence because it is dominated by a ‘drive to meaning,’ where meaning is understood as something still in the process of creation, something still bending toward the future as opposed to that which is already completed” (Holquist, 23-24). Bakhtin’s argument could be used to explain why Tami wallows in self-pity and refuses to stand out in existence and locks herself up in her room. It could, therefore, be reasonably argued that Tami is inclined to the past and her “self” seems to consider the event it occupies as completed. Subsequently, Tami doubts the “other” who believes that it is possible for the “self” to fight for freedom, despite its situatedness in exile: “So, you think I can liberate my country from Holland?” (119). The question implies that Tami seems to consider her physical exit from South Africa as a completed event which locks her out of the continuing struggle for freedom back at home.

It is clear that the knowing of the “self” is not complete without the “other”. Katja, for instance, becomes a “self” when she is speaking but her situatedness in the dialogue denies her access to the knowledge of the “other” until she acknowledges the “other” as the “self”: “I don’t understand how such beautiful bells can have such a devastating effect on you,” upon which Tami responds, “[laughing]: I am so stupid, Katja! So very stupid!” (119). Tami’s world remains locked out of reach for Katja since Tami does not free her tortured “self” from its situatedness in her mind but she tries to cover her embarrassment with laughter and some self-accusatory impenetrable explanation. Hence, the relationship between Tami and Katja still lacks the art of freeing meaning from the cognitive space/ time category of self/ other due to its fractious nature.

However, Tami tries to communicate her agony to her love, Luthando, who is in another world that she cannot currently occupy. Tami confides in Luthando, “Dear Luthando, did you receive the postcards that I sent you? Did you see how beautiful Amersfoort is? It is a quiet and serene place. Yet there is no quietness in me. Because of the demons that have got hold of me” (121). Tami acknowledges the gorgeousness of Amersfoort but she cannot interact with its home to bring forth the jubilation that comes with beauty. For Tami, Amersfoort’s beauty is motionless, locked up as in a portrait, lacking the art of democracy that would defrost it into a gelatinous space which the “self” can enjoyably interact with.

Tami’s existence is ironical as she cannot identify with Holland yet she fears to go back to South Africa because she has not healed from the injustices meted out on her by the inhuman apartheid government. Tami informs Luthando about her melancholy:

I do want to come back. I long to return like those who have returned. But I am shaking with fear. I must first extract myself from the hole that I dug myself into [...] people here have been nice ... very nice. But still it is not home. I remain a foreigner. I can never be truly part of them. (121)

Tami's revelation implies that the art of democracy involves creating a home-relation which translates the "self" as truly part of the "other". Failure to have interaction with the "other" blocks meaning from coming forth to the "self," and henceforth the "self" pitches itself into a hole – emptiness of meaning.

The art of democracy involves the dialogue which enables the "self" as well as the "other" to reach a dialogic home where the presence of self/ other anticipates a celebratory future. When Tami sends postcards to Luthando, she is trying to invigorate the kinetic that would maintain the meaning of the self/ other relation bent on healing the apartheid-torn home in South Africa. However, Tami is cognitively hampered and her voice does not strongly anticipate a celebratory space: "Dear Luthando, yesterday I was walking here at Onze Lieve Vrouwe Square... I told you about Long John ... when I sent you the postcards ... the remnants of the cathedral from whose tower the bells that torture me come... [Laughs]" (121). Tami's voice embarrassingly speaks of the torture of her "self" by the beautiful bells which calibrate doom for her instead of joie de vivre, and she appears to look forward for consolation from the "other" whose response is only possible through letters.

The "self" without the self/ other relation, like a solitary swallow, does not mark the coming of the warm season – freedom. Tami reveals:

Yesterday I was walking under the shadow of Long John when I saw one swallow. One stray swallow doesn't make a spring, right? Then today I saw a whole flock of them. Inkonjane. The swallow. I knew exactly where they came from. (121)

Tami's observation suggests that the art of democracy entails flocking together with the aim of seeking a favourable space which would give life to everyone.

Arriving home also happens in cognitive time:

[the swallows] have flown from your world. Some of them might even have seen you. Might even have built their mud nests under your eaves. It is April. Your autumn. Our spring. They have flown thousands of kilometres in just one month [...] to find that it is spring only in name. (121)

Tami appears to be telling Luthando that though the world of South Africa and that of Holland occupy the same time of the year, the weather is different which makes the swallows to migrate from South Africa to Holland. Tami's observation about the migratory kinetic of the birds as they look for a more favourable home implies that the art of democracy entails more than just shifting from one standpoint to another since the birds arrive in Holland expecting to find Spring but they discover a frozen weather. The dialogic home is a relation between the "self" and their world which they occupy in cognitive time; and it does not necessarily involve ambulatory migration but cognitive kinetic.

In practicality, the art of democracy is like the coming together of different artists to form a band which harmonizes different instrumental sounds into pleasurable music. Tami plays the Trombone to communicate to her man. Tami informs Martijn, the

drummer Katja matches with Tami to form a little band: “[...] I didn’t play [the Trombone] when I was over there. I learnt it a few months after I had got here. Somehow it connected me to Luthando. He used to play the trombone in the Boy Scout band. That’s how we met. I was in drum majorettes and he played in the band” (140). Tami’s revelation implies that music has the capacity to connect people. The Trombone connects Tami to Luthando despite the oceans separating them physically.

However, playing an instrumental for monologic reasons may upset other people who do not know why the “self” is playing. Katja, for example, accuses Tami of playing the Trombone in order to annoy her neighbours: “Still use it to attract the anger of the neighbours?” upon which Tami responds, “It is the only way to get them to talk to me. When they shout and bang at the walls and scream that I am making noise. I don’t know why noise scares them so much. Noise is the essence of life” (124). Tami’s response indicates that when people fail to talk to one another the essence of life is lost leading to a sense of isolation but when you make noise in order to try and make people talk, you only end up annoying them. It follows, then, that the art of democracy is not found in making noise but in organized sounds which interact with one another and anticipate a celebration but not chaos.

Through Katja’s initiative Tami is joined by the following artists and together they form a band: Martijn, the drummer; Fritz, a painter across the street; and Catharina, Tami’s neighbour who is obsessed with cleaning windows. The band is creating multicultural waves which make a considerable case against racism. When Tami informs the band members that she has made up her mind to go back to South Africa, Martijn is reluctant to let her go: “Just when things are happening for our band? Just when we are

beginning to make multi-cultural waves?” (154). Martijn’s reluctance to let Tami go indicates that the band is artistically freeing the sun from the frozen weather, and subsequently Holland is becoming a home for people from different worlds. The different artists interact on the plane of the band and make pleasant music which creates a name for Tami and the band among the people in Holland. Martijn observes: “You have made a name for yourself and the people want your stories and your dances” (154). Martijn’s observation implies that existence is both a story and a dance which must be brought to life through the dialogic process of art.

Dialogic art involves a genuine interaction of the “self” and the “other” with the aim of celebrating life. Tami’s band has a healing power both for the “self” and the “other”. The television camera man who interviews Tami for a show makes Tami realize the great responsibility the “self” carries for the “other”: “It was quite a responsibility I had yesterday, carrying the hopes of the black races of the world on my shoulders!” (155). Tami’s observation implies that the “self” gains freedom when they realize that the hopes of the “other” squarely lies on their shoulders. Successively, Tami gets healed from the pains of the bells through the art of the band: “The bells toll. Nothing happens. Tami is not attacked by a bout of pain. They all look at her in surprise. She is also amazed. They remain like that for the duration of the bells. When they stop everyone breaks into laughter” (155). The cognitive shift from the previously torturous bells to a celebratory laughter indicates that there is a healing power in the self/ other relation.

The art of democracy creates a dialogic space upon which the “self” arrives home not just physically but cognitively as well: it gives the dialogic “self” a clear conscience ready to forgive and move ahead with life knowing that the “other” is an integral portion

of their “self”. Johan van der Bijl, the Boer who forces Tami to escape to Holland after torturing her under the machinery of apartheid is not at home even when he receives amnesty from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: “I should be free. I got the amnesty. But my conscience continues to eat at me. Unlike the elders who were rewarded with big pensions and are enjoying the fat of the land with their smug smiles, I was burdened with a conscience. I turned to God and became his servant” (152). Johan’s observation implies that the conscience is what makes the “self” to seek for a home; bending to a future which anticipates an erasure of the painful past space and an eventual creation of a celebratory space for humanity.

Johan pleads with Tami for forgiveness: “When you get back to South Africa you will see that people are trying very hard to put the past behind them. I hope you too, one day, will learn to forgive” (152). Johan’s observation implies that the art of democracy entails dialogic reconciliation in which the “self” interacts with the “other” on a plane that purges guilt and bitterness, and brings forth true forgiveness but not just institutionalized amnesty which is advocated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. Johan explains to Tami: “It is not my fault, Tami Walaza. You were not there to tell your side of the story. They said you had disappeared in exile. That you had not returned when the others were returning. In any case it was not a requirement that I could only be granted amnesty if you, the victim, forgave me” (151). Johan’s explanation indicates that the amnesty is lacking in terms of the art of democracy since the voice of the victim is blocked from interacting with the “other” voices on the plane of truth and reconciliation.

The art of democracy is a celebratory nuptial space which brings forth music and dance. Mzamo, a bishop, presides over the wedding meant to bring Tami and Luthando home: “Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to bond the two lovers, Tami Walaza and Luthando Vela, with the super-glue of holy matrimony” (130). The announcement initiates music and dance which makes everyone to burst into celebration. The stage directions describe the festive mood: “Enter Tami and Luthando. They are the bride and the bridegroom. The SINGERS dance around them. The couple falls into step with them. The singing and drumming rise to a frenzied pitch, and then on cue from Mzamo everything freezes” (131). The bonding between the “self” and the “other” creates a unified sense of life with the “self” becoming an integral part of the “other,” eternally made one by love. Tami vows to love and to cherish in order “[t]o heal the wounded earth,” upon which Luthando responds, “Yes, to heal the scarred earth” (131). The vow implies that the art of democracy involves serious commitment bent on making existence for both the “self” and the “other” better and worthwhile.

However, without a complete wedding it is impossible for the “self” and the “other” to arrive home: “But we had not taken the vows. Can’t we just finish the ceremony? Guests have come from faraway places. They want to see a complete wedding. What has she done? What do you want with her? You can’t do this Captain Johan van der Bijl” (131). Johan interrupts the wedding, an action which puts Tami and Luthando’s almost unified existence in the process of being unmade. The commitment in the art of democracy, like that in marriage, is binding and the “self” is ready to die rather than sell out the “other”: “For how long do you think you are going to hold on Tami Walaza? You could be saving yourself all the pain by confessing at once. You know what

will happen when the bells toll. [Laughs menacingly.] They will come, and they will beat the hell out of you” (146). Tami refuses to sell out her people despite the torture she is subjected to.

Those who practise the art of democracy remain faithful to the cause of freedom despite the changing world around them. Johan, for instance, is seeking for dialogic space that would enable him to unfreeze the motion which the apartheid structures have blocked in order to prevent the blacks from arriving home in South Africa. Tami is surprised that “[Johan] came back after all,” and Johan explains that “[t]he longing for the smell of the gravel roads after the rain was too much to bear” (160). For Johan, South Africa is his home and he looks forward to a dialogic home which accommodates all the people irrespective of their race or social background. Johan informs Tami: “I had a second mission though. To preside over your marriage, as your minister, if you and your fiancé will have me. Since I was the one who destroyed your marriage even before it happened, I want to be the one who joins you together in holy matrimony” (160). Johan appears to have learnt the art of democracy, albeit through the hard way, which gives him the proclivity to restore the self/ other relation he had torturously disrupted.

The art of democracy gives a sense of cohesion which binds the “self” and the “other” into a unified freedom. Tami champions for unified freedom in South Africa:

With freedom we need to find a new cohesion. The cohesion of free men and women. We have not found it yet. Apartheid had its own cohesion. When it was destroyed it was as if something had been ripped off one’s life (160)

Tami's observation implies that freedom which does not have a cohesive power to enable people to interact with one another in cognitive time/ space is still not complete. It could be reasonably argued that the art of democracy frees people even from freedom itself so that they are able reach a dialogic home which celebrates the entire humanity.

2.5 Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is clear that South Africa, as represented in the texts, finds a true home in the "self" who is dialogic as opposed to monologic. The promotion of the self/ other relation in cognitive time/ space enables a genuine interaction to take place between and among the various fractious voices, made during apartheid, in a way that orders South Africa into a unified entity anticipating celebration of her freedom which speaks of the new-found potential of turning the country into a human society. For South Africa to reach the dialogic home, she must tackle her challenges such as corruption, through eccentric means which are potent enough to convince people that the culture of eating is pitching the nation into a pit of death. The cognitive potentialities of the country should be engaged in the dialogue to heal the nation instead of being employed to loot public wealth. It is also clear that South Africa becomes a home for all her people through a dialogic vow/ commitment to heal the scarred earth.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 CHARACTERIZATION AND SOCIAL VISION: THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN “SELF” AND “OTHER”

3.1 Introduction

This chapter interrogates the use of characters as tropes that lead to the development of the writer’s social vision. Characterization is dialogic and it can only elicit meaning through the interaction between the “self” and the “other.” The chapter examines Mda’s deployment of person within the time/ space categories of nature, honour, eccentric and charm in *Fools, Bells, and the Habit of Eating* as a tool for creating his social vision for Post-apartheid South Africa. For Bakhtin, Holquist observes, “[w]hatever else it is, self/ other is a relation of simultaneity. No matter how conceived, simultaneity deals with ratios of same and different in space and time” (19). It follows, then, that the sort of character coming into being or being unmade in Mda’s dramatic universe is dependent on the ratios of same and different in space/ time category which interact within and around the person. This chapter focuses on the kinetic of the character as self/ other relation, and the meaning the motion brings forth.

The chapter is stratified into two major sections. The first one examines how the process of becoming a character may lead to death – stillness with fatal artistic impressions. Here, the person interacts with the categories of honour, nature, eccentric and charm in ratios which make the person to degenerate into a character of death. The future of the society is bereaved by the character of death. The second one discusses the inherent potential of releasing a life-giving spirit during the process of becoming a character which creates a conducive (re)birthing for the advancement of the society. At this juncture, the person interacts with the categories of honour, nature, eccentric and

charm in ratios which create reawakening of a healing love for humanity and the continuity of the society – the character immortalizes the society with life-giving art.

3.2 The Process of Becoming a Character of Death

The character of death is not static but, like the “self”, it is in the process of being made or unmade through the dynamism of the ratios of same and different in space/ time category. The coming into being of the character of death makes the society poorer but when death is unmade, the society experiences a check from degeneration. In *The Mother of All Eating*, the character of death comes into being through the Man and his Elite Cartel while the President and his Official Moguls personify death in *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* In *The Bells of Amersfoort*, death is in the process of being made or unmade through the perpetrators of apartheid, like Johan van der Bijl; or the agitators of freedom, such as Luthando Vela.

This study itemizes four significant proportions in the process of becoming a character of death. The first is ‘life/ life’ relation which is characterized by birthing and rebirthing. Here, the “self” utters life to the “other” through an honourable vivacity of civil service, and the “other” responds in the same measure. In the second quotient, there is a shift of ratios to form a new relation ‘death/ life’. Subsequently, the “self” utters death to the “other” through corruption which makes the life of the “other” miserable. The third relation is formed by the ratios of ‘life/ death’ upon which the “self” thrives on the death of the “other.” The “self” soars to heavens of corruption while the “other” wallows in the hell of poverty. The “self” knows that the “other” is dead and incapable of initiating any oppositional response. In the fourth relationship, the ratios change to ‘death/ death’ in which the “self” realizes that they are facing imminent death from the

chaotic plane of venality but they interpret their death as the death of the “other” with whom they occupy the same site of corruption.

In *The Mother of All Eating*, the Man begins his career in the civil service with a lot of enthusiasm. The Man utters life when he informs the audience that he embarks on serving the “other” in the Public Service, “with all the idealistic enthusiasm of building the nation, and of working hard for the development of [their] country” (12). In this space/ time category, the Man’s character is defined by the traits of working hard and sacrificing for the common good of his country. The Man charmingly identifies himself with the interests of the populace. The ratio of charm in the Man cultivates an appealing patriotic trait upon which the Man draws his strength for diligently serving the “other”: “Our driving force was the spirit of patriotism that we had cultivated in ourselves through political activism at university” (12). The ‘life/ life’ relation demonstrated by the Man in the above case is attributed to education which implies that education is an important voice for building a “self”/ “other” relation with unalienable potential for the advancement of humanity.

However, the ‘life/ life’ relation is altered by the Man’s interaction with the category of nature in the event of work. The space/ time category of selflessness is replaced with disgruntlement which eventually shifts the Man’s true human voice to that of artificial materialism. The Man dies and becomes a heap of materialism which mercilessly exploits the “other” through corruption: “I refuse to be poor, sir! I refuse! I refuse! No one wants to be poor. Even traffic cops don’t want to be poor. This evening on my way from the airport I paid a bribe to a traffic cop” (32). The Man aggressively rejects poverty but he chooses the wrong road for seeking freedom. The Man’s ratio of

honesty reduces as he becomes greedy for material wealth. The Man admits that instead of giving honest service for the “other,” he “[...] concentrated on making a living the old-fashioned way, by inflating invoices and taking kickbacks from companies which sold the ministry all sorts of things. Sometimes things which were not essential, or even necessary, for the hospitals [he] would buy just so as to get [his] commission” (14). The Man’s admission implies that healthcare for the “other” is reduced to a quotient of fraudulently acquiring wealth but not a service for ensuring the well-being of the nation.

The Man is challenged by one of his seniors in the ministry of health for inflating prices: “What kind of bedpans, Mr Modise, would cost one thousand rand each?” (15). The Man’s name is Modise which means shepherd in Botswana. Nonetheless, the way the Man interacts with the ratio of honesty turns his beautiful name into a mere tag. As a shepherd, the Man is expected to marshal, steer and propel the resources in the ministry of Health in order to offer the best medical services to the public. In his capacity as a government officer, the Man calibrates the quality of the government: “It is people like you who have given this government a bad name” (15). The D.P.S levels the accusation at the Man for being corrupt. The Man is hypocritical, and he could be compared to the wolf masquerading as a shepherd in a sheep’s skin. Hypocrisy pitches the Man on the process of becoming a character of death.

In “Oration at the Funeral of Joe Modise,” the post-apartheid South African government pays its tribute at the death of Joe Modise who is described as a firebrand agitator of freedom during apartheid, and later a hero and a patriot as the Minister of Defence in the late President Mandela’s government. The tribute for Joe Modise acknowledges that “[time] will say that death is not possible unless there has been life.

Life is not possible unless it is integrated within the cycle of death” (“Oration at the Funeral”). The observation in the tribute implies that existence could be understood as a cyclic ratio of life/ death. In *The Mother of all Eating*, Modise expires when he immerses himself in the (art)ificiality of materialism, and hence the “other” accuses him of having become “[...] a rotten piece of shit” (35). The life category which forms a controlling link between the “self” and the “other” is blocked, and life could be said to be in the process of being unmade.

In the relation life/ life, the Man stretches his “self” to include the “other” as a necessity for life: “Both Joe and I started work as starry-eyed youths” (12). Here, the Man perceives existence as the self/ other relation with the commonality of building the nation. In *Semiotics Today. From Global Semiotics to Semioethics, a Dialogic Response*, Susan Petrilli and Augusto Ponzio observe that “unlike platonic dialogue, similarly to Dostoevsky, for Bakhtin dialogue is not only cognitive and functional to abstract truth. Rather, it is a life need grounded in the inevitable entanglement of self with other” (49). Petrilli’s observation implies that for the Man to experience life he must of necessity perceive himself not just as Modise but as Joe as well. According to *Macmillan Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, Joe is a word used in spoken context to mean an ordinary man. ‘Joe Modise’, then, could be perceived as a dialogic relation of the ordinary public and those in positions of Civil Service or the shepherds.

Nonetheless, the Man begins to degenerate into the character of death when he becomes sceptical of the self/ other ratio of hard work, honesty and patriotism: “We were straight from school, mind you, with all the idealistic enthusiasm of building the nation, and sacrificing for our country, and we despised those who left to work in foreign

countries in search of greener pastures” (12). By “straight from school,” the Man suggests that Joe and he are naïve, and that their traits of hard working, selflessness, honesty and patriotism are borne out of naivety rather than mature consideration. Subsequently, the character of death may temporarily give life to the “other” until it comes to its (art)ificiality – the fractious art which splits the self/ other relation through cognitive tags of ‘brainy’ and ‘stupid’ respectively.

The Man, therefore, engages the eccentric category to calibrate his wisdom of making his “self” stand out in the material world, and he draws meaning of his existence by comparing himself with the “other” whom he perceives as naïve. The Man gloats about his being monstrously brainy: “You know what, there is something about human beings. The more money you get, the greedier you become. I wanted to be a millionaire within a very short space of time. I got into prohibited drugs. I made connections. My P.S. too was a smart fellow who was on to mandrax” (14). The Man’s observation suggests that the character of death is insatiably greedy, and that it deploys creativity to amass materiality through avant-garde but illegal avenues and practices. As the Man later points out to his messenger, creativity is at the centre of fraudulently amassing material wealth: “There is no work situation in the government service that will not avail a creative worker the opportunity to eat. Any job can be used for eating. You just need to be creative, that’s all ...” (25). The Man’s observation indicates that the character of death is prodigiously materially eccentric and it perceives any event of work as an opportunity for monologic satisfaction of the body of the “self” at the expense of the “other” whose bodily needs are excluded.

For Petrilli, the “self is implied dialogically in otherness, just as the ‘grotesque body’ (Bakhtin) is implied in the body of the other. In fact, dialogue and body are closely interconnected” (49). It follows, then, that when the Man considers the event of work as an opportunity for eating, he equates work to a function of the body. The man considers himself adroitly sagacious in the art of feeding the body, and he offers to give his messenger some informative sessions: “Even though you are a mere messenger, you can devise ways and means of eating ... I will have sessions with you, where I will give you thorough training in the art of eating” (26). The Man’s experienced wisdom is based on the eccentric of wolfing materiality for the carnal gratification of the “self” bodily space. Successively, the character of death is in the process of being made when the Man becomes adeptly knowledgeable in the art of eating.

The “self” perceives the “other” as loathsome – the grotesque body which is to be shunned by all means. The Man, for example, is put off by what he considers to be Joe’s monumental stupidity: “Every time he gets a job with a lot of prospects for eating, he tries to be honest. So they kick him out. I have told him, ‘wake up, Joe! Wake up!’ But Joe will never wake up. Right now he is unemployed” (24). The Man’s perception of Joe implies that for the character of death, honesty is ugliness and a mark of colossal stupidity. The Man appears to consider Joe as plebeian and tasteless – lacking the presence of mind to take advantage of the available opportunities to fraudulently enrich himself. The Man appears to believe that Joe is asleep to the realities of life, and that so long as he does not come round to the art of eating, he is going to be perpetually laid off.

The character of death is otiose since its “self” thrives at the expense of the “other” but pretends to be acting for the common good. It encroaches on the “other,” and

assigns the self/ other space for itself alone. The Man, for instance, tries to justify his corrupt nature by pointing out the apparent self-deservedly foolishness and misery of the “other” in the event of work: “Please don’t look at me like that. Would you rather I remained poor like the rest of the population of this country? [...] Did you hear what happened to Kaunda of Zambia? He ruled for all those years, but was stupid enough not to eat [...] Now he’s poor” (30). The Man’s justification paints the character of death as vain and pretentious. Here, the “self” is monologic, and it thinks only in terms of the “self” while at the same time calibrating the “other” as justifiably weltering in poverty due to their foolishness. In other words, the Man considers himself an erudite shepherd who knows the “other” is sheep to be slaughtered to satisfy his monstrous bodily appetite whetted by a proficiently gained art of eating.

The Man appears to believe that his existence is infallible because the “other” is dead and there is no possibility of their coming back to life. Challenged by the Messenger, the Man retorts: “The people are blind! The people don’t see! Or if they see they have no power to act. The people don’t have any leadership that will create a critical awareness in them that will open their eyes” (35). The Man’s observation implies that the character of death thrives on the ignorance of the “other” which appears to be perpetual. The character of death is, therefore, marked by shrewdness meant to prevent the “other” from becoming aware of the exploitative tendency of the corrupt “self,” or taking any action in case they become wise. The art of eating seems to specialize in maintaining the status quo: “whenever new leadership emerges, even if it begins as honest leadership, it is swallowed by the culture of eating, and becomes one with it” (35). Without having

credibly honest leadership, the people seem to be doomed to the cruel caprices of the corrupt “self”.

The character of death is pathetically insensitive to the well-being of the “other” whose space the “self” continually recreates into a self-serving gold mine. The Man, for example, anticipates a new creation that would offer better prospects for soaring to the heavens of corruption: “We must establish a new ministry. The Ministry for the Promotion of Drug Smugglers, Mafiosi, and Triad Gangs. I wouldn’t mind if I were promoted to that ministry” (30). The Man’s expectancy for an official outfit which would legalize drug trafficking as governmental business implies that the character of death is eccentrically fatal for the “other” who is turned into a plane for all kind of illegal operations. For the Man, the “other” is a kill whose body the “self” feeds on.

Having killed the “other,” like vultures, the corrupt “self” and its sort scraggly sift through the carcass for a sizeable bite. The Man revealingly addresses the audience:

Well, the Chief Engineer and the Director of Tenders, you have seen them already. You heard their problem. The Director of Works’ problem is the same one. The road. They all want a share from the proceeds of the road (28).

The Man’s revelation indicates that the character of death is gluttonously ferocious. The members of the Man’s Elite Cartel aggressively demand for their share of the spoils from the road of corruption but the Man is not ready to share with them. The character of death could, thus, be described as insufferably selfish. The character of death draws its life from the death of the “other,” and it could be described in the proposition life/ death.

The Man together with his Elite Cartel has maimed and killed the “other” including close relatives and friends:

[...] oh, that road, I hate that road! ... That road has given me so many problems, and now it has killed the people I love ... Jane, please, let us be brave. Let us not cry ... What are these problems that I say have been caused by the road? Never mind. You won't understand. (34)

The Man's observation implies that the character of death grieves the demise of the “other,” not as a loss of dialogic relation but that of the gratification of the “self”. For the corrupt “self,” love for the “other” is detached, and unable to reach the very being of the “self” which would make him to cry at the death of intimate ones.

Politically, the character of death perceives democracy as mere talk which lacks the capacity to liberate people from the chains of corruption. The Man squelches about the claim of a new democratic order: “Yes, there is talk of a new democratic order. But political parties canvassing for elections compete over which party has better criminals than others ... The people are doomed to ...” (35). The Man's rejoinder implies that the character of death is criminal and domineering. Subsequently, any government whose character is death experiences lawlessness and a lot of criminal activities which pitch the people into powerlessness and poverty. Nevertheless, the Man in the corrupt government is forced to acknowledge the simmering disquiet of the people by the Messenger of death: “[An obvious kick, a scream.] Okay, okay, I admit. One day the people shall rise. The people have the capacity to rise! The people are not blind!” (35). Violence brings the Man to the realization that he is not infallible.

The “self” is dialogic, and having killed the incorruptible “other,” the “self” draws its meaning through its relation with the corrupt “other,” its sort. In “Mikhail Bakhtin’s Dialogism and Intertextuality: A Perspective,” Prof. Panchappa R. Waghmare observes that “[a] subject internalizes the other in him, so he is not ‘I’, he is ‘we’, who contains many voices, his own voice as well as other voices which he constantly appropriates for communication” (“Mikhail Bakhtin’s Dialogism”). Waghmare’s observation implies that the “self” is essentially dialogic. In *The Mother of All Eating*, the Man is confronted by the Messenger, a junior whom he expects to be completely loyal to him:

How very nice to see you. For a moment I thought this rogue of a messenger had invited his common friends, or what he calls the people, to beat me up ... Oh, you have also come to beat me up [laughs nervous.] Well, at least I’ll be beaten up by people of my class – fellow millionaires. (35-36).

The Man’s observation implies that the character of death is contemptuous of the “other” whom it has made powerless. The corrupt “self” finds meaning in the relation death/ death.

The Man is nervous because he fears to be commandeered into defeat by those whom he has already made powerless. The “self” recognizes the fellow millionaires as the “other” who is potent enough to reckon with. Consequently, the Man perceives his imminent death as the death of the “other’ who is his sort: “Do you hear what the Messenger is saying, you my friends who are trying to kill me now? ...Did you hear him? He says even you, my friends, even you, your day will dawn. He is not on your side” (36). The Man’s observation suggests that his death is a warning to his Elite Cartel to stop their corrupt tendencies or face the same consequences. Death/ death ratio initiates

the realization by the “self” that corruption is fatal, but the “other” who is meting out death is still blind because the character of death is visionless.

According to Petrilli, “Dialogue is not an initiative taken by self. One human being does not enter into dialogue with another out of respect, but rather and predominantly in spite of the other, by imposition from the other” (48). It follows, then, that the Man enters into dialogue with the Messenger of death by the imposition of the Elite Cartel who are angrily beating him up for cheating them out of their share of the body of the road of corruption. The Man speaks from the stand point of the Messenger: “He says he is going to whip up the emotions of the common people who will rise against you ... He says he will do it even if takes him a hundred years ... So you can beat me up now, but our time will come too ...” (36). By “our time,” the Man implies that the Messenger and he have become unified through dialogue, and that the death of the “self” initiates the death of the “other”; it is not the death of ‘I,’ but the death of ‘we’.

The homage in “Oration at the Funeral of Joe Modise,” considers time as a dialogic voice: “Time will forever tell the story of Joe Modise [...] Because he was as human as you and I, that biography will tell a story of positive things and negative things, of victories and defeats” (“Oration at Funeral”). The tribute’s observation implies that the story of the death of the “self” is a dialogue between the ethical and iniquitous voices in the event of work. In *The Mother of All Eating*, Modise’s character of death kills Joe on the road of corruption: “[he] got to the dongas on my road ... Well, that road which has patches all over ... Then the car overturned, and Joe was killed instantly ... And my baby [...]” (34). The Man’s admission of guilt at the death of Joe indicates that his ignominious character of corruption is responsible for the death. The Man himself is later

beaten to death by his Elite Cartel: “He receives a last kick on the stomach which finally shuts him up. He groans, and his body jerks and twitches. He is vomiting. He gasps once or twice, then lies silent” (36). The stage direction implies that death begets death. The man is made to vomit what he has been gluttonously eating from the event of work.

The character of death is incarcerating as opposed to freeing. In *You Fool, How can the Sky Fall?*, the President and his Official Moguls are locked away from the sun: “Somewhere on the floor the sun has drawn bars from an unseen window so that we get the sense that our characters are locked up in a dingy cell. The shapes and position of the bars will change as the position of the sun changes on its journey across the sky” (42). Here, the stage directions implies that the President and his cabinet are experiencing life as a shadow having been overthrown and pitched into prison by the “other” who thinks they are better criminals. The whole cabinet wallows in misery: “[The President] is old and frail, and looks as if he might break any time. He wears a tattered suit that has a sheen of filth, a yellowing shirt that was once white [...] the rest are shoeless members of his cabinet” (42). The description of the Cabinet implies that the character of death is dialogically traitorous creating a vicious cycle of poverty as political regimes oust one another through coup de tats.

For the character of death, the categories of honour and eccentric come into being to serve parochial interests of those in power: “THE GENERAL comes to life and walks downstage in a dignified soldierly manner. He addresses the audience directly. But still the main focus remains on the ‘masterpiece’, particularly on THE PRESIDENT” (42). The general is said to come to life which implies that he has been dead. He does not just come to life but there is honour in the way he soldiers into existence. The honourable

character of a soldier is to protect human life so that the “self” and the “other” are safe and secure. Nonetheless, the General is defined by the character of death which perceives honour and art parochially: “all art is valid only if it serves the interests of the people. And in what better way can the interests of the people be served, if not by creating masterpieces of their venerable leaders?” (43). The General’s perspective of honour and art implies that the people’s existence is meant to singularly serve the close-minded interests of their leaders.

The monologic character of death is experienced as the great artist, employed by the Cabinet, paints the masterpieces of the people’s venerable leaders: “The affairs of the state stood still while [the artist] immortalized them on canvas [...] Earlier on, another decree had been passed ... No children would be born during this period” (43). The General’s revelation implies that the character of death is prohibitive: it suspends the life of the “other” in order to deify the “self”. In verity, the character of death suspends both life and death so as to create gods out of the leaders: “The old and sick, lingering at the door of death, would suspend their transition into the world of ghosts. Fields would not be harvested; rivers would not flow. All life would be in suspended animations until the painting was completed” (43). Suspension of life makes the people poorer as their labour rots in the fields.

At the end of the play, the President laments about the character of death: “What you enjoy doing is building gods, putting them on pedestal, worshipping them for a day, and then throwing stones at them and knocking them down. You have a very short attention span in the admiration of the gods that you create” (108). The President’s observation implies that, politically, the process of becoming the character of death

involves immortalisation of leader(s) or even material things; short-lived obsequiousness; and, then, unpalatable demolition of the gods. The category of honour and eccentric in the character of death could, therefore, be described as intermittent, parochially untrustworthy and traitorous.

The General, for example, understands his honourable duty as carrying out decrees made by the President: “And I, the General, the Honourable the General as I am officially called since joining this Honourable Cabinet, commander of our armed forces, second in command only to the Wise One, His Excellency the Father of the Nation, had to see to [the immortalisation]” (43). The General appears to draw a lot of pride for being close to the god, and having the privilege to execute his decrees. Unctuousness is a commonality in the Cabinet, and hence the Minister of Justice assertively deifies the President as constituting a quorum for the Cabinet meetings: “You know that when the Wise One is there it is a quorum, even when he is just alone” (44). The art of sycophancy elevates the President to an omnipotent person with an unrestricted ability for consolidating the interests of the people without consulting any one whatsoever.

The Cabinet worships the President and the Ministers readily use the President’s god-like status to serve their parochial interests. The Minister of Justice, for instance, makes up a presidential decree in order to kill dissenting voices: “If my memory serves me well, the Wise One decreed that in fact the Honourable the Minister of Culture should play an active role in killing culture by destroying all the people who have dances, and who have carvings” (57). The Minister’s fictitious decree implies that the character of death is eccentrically murderous. The art of death appears to be inclined on eliminating any creativity which gives life to the people. The President does not know about the

decree the Minister of Justice claims he has given: “I don’t remember that decree, although it doesn’t sound like a bad idea,” upon which the Minister of Health asserts: “It is his own composition, Wise One. You can ask the Right Honourable the General, who is the implementer of all your decrees” (57). The President is a creation of the character of death and hence he supports the fictitious decree which is meant to kill culture. The character of death could, thus, be described as fictitiously murderous.

Though the Cabinet adulates the President at every opportunity, their loyalty is bent on their hidebound interests. The Cabinet is, therefore, shamelessly unethical; ready to relegate their dignity in order to blarney the President. Bullied by the Ministers of Agriculture and Justice to dance for them, the Minister of Culture bends to the President for rescue: “See what they are doing, Your Excellency!” (58). The Minister of Culture appears to be childish as he cannot stand his ground like a mature person. The Minister of Health looks up to the President: “Can’t you stop them, Wise One?” but the President responds, “No they are just playing” (58). The bullying in the Cabinet implies that the character of death of sadistic and it enjoys shaming the “other” by forcing them to do embarrassing things. The Minister of Culture degenerates into a character of death, despite being the victim of bullying, since he relents to the bullies just because the President appears to support them.

The President is angry at being disturbed and he dismissively asks the Minister of Culture to, “Just dance and get it over with,” while the Minister of Culture applauds the decision of the President, “The Wise One has spoken, Culture boy dance. Dance your heart out,” upon which Culture accedes, “If the Wise One says so” (58). The Minister of Culture’s character is boyish and he could be said to be immature. Holquist notes that for

Piaget, “ [...] a child of 4 or 5, no matter how gifted, who has been shown two equal amounts of liquid in similarly shaped containers, and is then shown the liquid from one container poured into a taller one, will always conclude that there is difference in the amount of liquid in the last container” (78). It follows, then, that the Minister of Culture’s change of heart from his resolute, “I am not dancing for you, or for anyone,” (57) to “If the Wise One says so,” is comparable to the immature perception of the child in Piaget’s determinism.

The eccentric category in the character of death involves immature perception which is based on the functions of appearance. The Minister of Works, for example, is described by the whole Cabinet as a genius whose resourcefulness is remarkably admirable. The Minister of Health is put off when Justice suggests that perhaps the Minister of Works is dead: “Don’t darling me. He can’t be dead! You just wish him dead! Do you hear me? He is alive!” upon which Justice retorts, “Why would we wish him dead? We all admired him. We all owe our wealth to his resourcefulness” (47). The Ministers’ observation indicates that resourcefulness in the event of work creates wealth. In fact, the President acknowledges the creativity of the Minister of Works: “Yes, he was very resourceful. Always like that. Even during the revolution. And when we took over the government I just had to make him Minister of Works” (47). The President’s observation implies that the Minister of Works’ resourcefulness during the revolution is responsible for his ascension to power.

A case in the Minister of Works resourcefulness is the painting of the “dirty road that leads to the racecourse where the Pope addressed the multitudes” (47) when he had visited the nation in *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* The art of appearance confuses

even the President who is surprised when he is informed that the road is not tarred. Agriculture happily recounts: “Exactly what we mean about the cleverness of the Honourable the Minister of Works, sir. When you announced that the pontiff was paying us a visit, there was not time nor money to tar the road that leads to the racecourse” (47-48). Agriculture’s observation means that the cleverness of the Minister of Works comes into being when he deploys the art of appearance to accomplish what would have been impossible without money and time. Justice pleurably reveals to a shocked President: “[the road] was never tarred, sir. It was painted black” (48). Justice’s revelation implies that the art of appearance could deceive any person. The President is not wiser, and before the revelation by the Cabinet, he thinks that the road is tarred.

Holquist observes that as far as cognitive development is concerned the child of 4 or 5 years “[...] simply does not think as adults do: for children such categories as ‘amount’ and ‘sameness’ are not logical, but merely functions of appearance” (78). It follows, then, that the art of appearance exploits people’s immaturity in cognitive development. In *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* The President’s cognition is marred by his corrupt mind which sees every new development project in terms of kickbacks meant to cause a bewildering swelling to his bank accounts: “There were flats and apartments and stores [along the tarred road]. I was wondering how I was left out when a percentage was negotiated with the contractors, and why I didn’t see my bank account unexpectedly bulging” (49). The character of death is, therefore, eccentrically corrupt. The art of appearance deployed by the character of death lacks a social vision since it anticipates selfish benefits for the leader at the expense of the public.

The character of death carves the category of nature through the art of appearance so that truth serves parochial interests but appears to be constancy. Justice supports the President that those who raise dissenting voices against the government should be bludgeoned: “Yes. Those who disagree with us we bludgeon into submission. It always works” (61). However, the bludgeoning is to be done artistically so that the government does not lose face. The Daughters of the Revolution feel betrayed by the authoritarian government which hijacked their cause for democracy. The President, nonetheless, unconventionally dismisses their truth as having been overtaken by time: “Where has [truth] existed as a constancy? Yesterday were they not heroes when they their ground in the revolution? Today are they not villains when they insist they want a piece of the national dream?” (61). The President’s deployment of truth implies that for the character of death, truth is a malleable category which is readily carved to serve the interests of those in power.

The Minister of Justice justifies the character of death that of knocking truth into the desired shape: “If God’s word is ephemeral ... The church is the eyes, the ears and the mouth of God on earth. It is the interpreter of God’s word. If the church can have ephemeral truth, who are we to have eternal truth?” (61). The Minister’s observation implies that for the character of death truth is transitory. It follows, then, that for the character of death yesterday’s truth is not today’s nor the future’s. The President uses the church as an example for justifying his government’s perception of truth as ephemeral: “You know, of course, that it is not true that truth is forever. Not many centuries ago the church burnt those who disagreed with its doctrines at the stake. It was the truth of the time that they were witches, and it was the truth of the time that witches had to be set

alight and die in flames” (61). The President’s justification of transitory truth suggests that the character of death bends the truth for self-preservation without any consideration for the “other” whose truth is insensitively inverted and termed as fatal lies.

The (art)ificiality of truth puzzles Culture who subsequently queries Justice: “What are we saying? First we say we cannot use force on [the Daughters of the Revolution] because of world opinion. Now we say we are going to use force on them for world opinion” (64). The Minister’s mix-up indicates that for the character of death, the art of truth is illogical and synthetic. Addressing the Cabinet on the measures the government is going to take to neutralize the threat from the Daughters of the Revolution, the President decrees: “We are the creators of our own little truths, remember? We’ll hold a television interview ... we’ll call the international press ... we’ll condemn the killings, and make it clear that they contravene our National Policy of Benevolence” (64). The President and his Cabinet become the character of death through their sardonic art of truth which is deployed to clandestinely bludgeon the Daughters of the Revolution in order to silence their dissenting voices.

Further, the President rules: “We’ll tell [the world] that [the deaths] were by and large self-inflicted by the Daughters of the Revolution themselves, who had disguised themselves as our national army, with the view of calling attention to themselves, and besmirching the name of this benevolent government” (64). The President’s ruling indicates that the character of death is hypocritical and murderous. Successively, the President and his Cabinet come into the death character after deliberately planning to surreptitiously kill the Daughters of the Revolution and then blame the deaths on the victims. The character of death is undoubtedly threaded through a web of flagrant

disastrous lies. The Minister of Justice dismisses imagination in culture/ nature as crazy: “Do you think we have time to have imagination, like the crazy cultural people you deal with, creators of meaningless lies from imagination? We deal with reality here, man! With brave facts!” (65). The Minister’s revelation indicates that for the character of death creativity which brings into being the sensibilities of humanity is not on the agenda of existence. The Minister suggests that the character of death is solely concerned with the art of idiosyncratic survival.

The character of death comes into being through the art of incendiarism. In practicality, the knack of pyromania is laconically described by the young Man, the artist: “This is beautiful. It’s the old trick of starting wars, then stopping them, and winning peace prizes for it” (77). The artist’s observation implies that hypocrisy is at the heart of the character of death, and that the masterful deployment of arson is the life-line of death. The Minister of Agriculture, for example, is accused by fellow Ministers of having risen to power through the art of arson. Culture censures Agriculture: “He went around starting fires, and dancing around them, and then disappeared before he was caught. Then he would boast about it, and justify his actions – sometimes even quoting from the Bible ... any verse where fire was remotely mentioned” (76). Culture’s accusation against Agriculture’s eccentric charm of drawing political attention implies that the character of death comes into being through sanctimonious destruction of life.

The damage done on life by the character of death is colossal. Health reports Agriculture’s destructiveness, thus, “He did a lot of damage, you know. He set fire to barns, and the tears of widows did not touch his conscience,” while Culture complains, “He set fire to crops in the fields. He set fire to houses. Fires that burned on and on,

searing the soul of the community” (76). Agriculture’s art of arson suggests that becoming a character of death involves degeneration of integrity to (con)science which the “self” deploys to duplicitously instil fear in the “other”. The Young Man is nonplussed, “And he was never caught?” and Health offers the explanation, “Never. He had his lieutenants, whom he trained in the art of arson. And they were good at disappearing,” (76) after committing pyromaniac criminalities. Health’s observation implies that the character of death, occupying the political plane, mobilizes some “other” to its sort in order to widen the scale of bereavement in the society.

Agriculture’s science of defrauding the people is complicated by the apparent self-confessed conversion of the adept master arsonist to a militant of peace and love for the people. Health confirms, “Yeah. One day he received a conversion and the fire bug left him. He saw the damage he and his lieutenants were causing the community, and they regretted it,” and Culture adds, “He appealed to his lieutenants to stop, and was hailed as a good man, a man of peace and of conscience” (76). Health and Culture’s observation indicate that Agriculture’s conversion is a calculated move meant to create a desirable opinion for superciliously propelling Agriculture politically. Culture accusingly reveals that “[Agriculture] was hailed as the saviour of the people from the scourge of fire. He was awarded the highest peace prize in the land, and showered with honours,” (77) after, as Health divulges, “He joined the fire brigade and put the fires out,” (76) which his lieutenants had refused to stop having fallen in love with the art of arson.

Culture discloses, “Don’t think that some of us did not oppose the prize, especially because at the time I was the Minister of Agriculture, and the man had destroyed too many farms. The Cabinet insisted that he was being honoured for putting

the fires out” (77). Culture’s disclosure implies that the Cabinet becomes an accomplice at honouring criminalities which then reels the whole Cabinet into the character of death. Culture opposes the Cabinet’s decision by logically arguing that “[Agriculture] started these fires in the first place,” but he shifts ground after, “The Wise One, who is always so wise, convinced [him] when he said, ‘It is not important that he started the fires. What is important is that he stopped them. We don’t focus on the negative. We look for the positive’” (77). By honouring the master arsonist, the President and his Cabinet come into the character of death. For the character of death, the negative/ positive is a fractious relation which excludes the kinetic dimension in order to further parochial interests.

Holquist notes that for Bakhtin, “[...] the act of creating a self is not free: we must, we all must, create ourselves, for the self is not given (dan) to any one of us [...] This lack of choice extends to the materials available for creation, for they are always provided by the other” (29). Following Bakhtin’s argument, it is plausible to deduce that for the “self” to come into the character of death it must of necessity kill the “other” so that death becomes the materials for creating the “self”. In *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?*, for example, Agriculture creates an honourable “self” through the art of arson. Confirming the creation, Health divulges: “Yes. He was awarded the Noble Peace Prize by the government, presented by the Wise One himself at a big ceremony attended by world dignitaries. Because he was a Peace Prize winner he was invited to join the government” (77). Health’s divulgence implies that Agriculture rises to prominence through the art of arson which projects his “self” globally as peace-loving and honourable.

Subsequently, for the character of death, justice is so perceptibly devouring that it bites off the “other” from existence. Justice makes the “other” to live in fear that they are all going to die. While in prison Justice panics:

We are all going to die. They are going to kill us all, except the traitor, of course. They told me that I am next. They said I must go and think about it. [Crying.] I don’t want to die,” and Culture retorts, “You see! That’s how my cockroach felt. It didn’t want to die either. (85)

The anxiety experienced by the Minister of Justice when he is threatened with death communicates that of the “other” in the same situation. Nonetheless, the character of death experiences sardonic joy at seeing the other suffering to death. Justice enjoys seeing his fellow ministers experiencing anguish, and he, therefore, initiates the motion that would make the “other” lose balance. Culture complains about Justice’s morbidity, “[the cockroach] was my pet, and he killed it,” and adds to indicate the cause, “[j]ust for the joy of it. They’ve always been jealous that I had a pet which kept me company. He cut its head off” (85). Culture’s complaint indicates that Justice comes into the character of death through heartlessness.

Health also complains about Justice’s cruelty which she has not forgotten though it happened long time ago. Health nostalgically recalls her pet, the black widow spider:

They were beautiful, those spiders. A huge black widow female and a small male. They mated, and then the female ate the male. Wouldn’t it be nice if things happened like that with human beings as well? (86)

The Minister’s fond recollection suggests that the character of death perceives the sexual relation of the spiders as consummate and attractive because it involves the commission

of murder at the zenith of sexual pleasure. However, later, health is sloped into mourning when, “[the widow] disappeared,” and the Minister accusingly reminiscences, “And of course we know who we suspect for her disappearance [...] we know who it is who threatened to eat her when we had not been fed for many days” (86). Health is hypocritical because when she sees the widow eating the male she experiences a lot of joy and wishes that the same thing could happen with human beings, but when her female spider is eaten by Justice, she complains bitterly.

In *The Bells of Amersfoort*, Luthando Vela comes into the character of death in the process of seeking for political freedom in apartheid South Africa. Luthando begins his motion as a committed freedom fighter whose single aim is to free South Africa from colonialism/ apartheid, and then heal the scarred land. He mobilizes the initiation of boys into young men who are ready to join the political movement seeking for freedom: “Dear Tami, since you left, the boys have come out thrice. Maybe four times. I have lost count” (114). Luthando’s observation implies that the political movement grows stronger with every coming out of the initiates. Luthando celebrates the anticipated quickening of the coming of freedom with every group of initiates which joins the movement:

The last coming out had a particular meaning to me, Tami, because your younger brother was one of the initiates. And he asked me specially to be there since you could not be there. I was there on your behalf, Tami, and everybody recognized that fact. (115)

Luthando’s acting on behalf of Tami implies that being committed to freedom makes the “self” to stand in the position of the “other” so that no gap is experienced from the physical absence of the “other”.

Certainly, Luthando promises Tami: “I will stand by you, Tami. I will stand by you because I know of the things that have happened to you, that broke you and drove you into all this. It was your strength and your love for our people. I know how the road you took started. I was part of that road” (130). Luthando is committed to the struggle of the “other” because he is part of her story. Here, Luthando’s character may be defined by the ratio life/ life since he tries to prevent the “other” from fading to oblivion. For Luthando, the “self” and the “other” are engaged in the same event and their goal is unified, and therefore, there is commonality which makes the position of one to be that of the “other”: “I cannot bear this. I confess. I am the terrorist. She had absolutely nothing to do with it. Please stop!” (147) torturing Tami. Luthando is ready to swop places with Tami because he compassionately loves her and he cannot bear to see her being contrived.

Luthando is certain that the torturers are intent on destroying his beloved, and since she refuses to change positions with him he warns her: “They are going to kill you, Tami. They are prepared to kill you, Tami. Do not be stubborn. You are not a martyr” (147). Luthando’s caveat implies that he perceives Tami as the cherished “other” who is not throwaway for the cause of freedom. The “self” appears to understand the event the self/ other anticipates to bring to fruition: “We promised each other that we would heal the wounded earth [...] we need to work with our hands, Tami, as we promised ourselves and our people. We need to heal the land with the warmth of our hands” (129-130). Luthando appears to be bent on fulfilling the promise Tami and he have made of healing the land. It, therefore, seems plausible to argue that Luthando is actually a character of continuity and life rather than that of death.

However, Luthando is not consistent as he occasionally becomes shaky and doubtful: “I do not believe you have kept the promises” (129). Luthando’s unsteadiness and doubtfulness susceptibly puts his “self” on the path of the character of death. Spasmodically, Luthando is feverish with the anticipation of coming into freedom: “After action! He was always like that, Luthando. Left me hanging. My body burning with desire to go on and on and on. He could never go the distance. Frenzied action then everything fizzles out and dies. Left me an unfulfilled woman” (116). Tami’s description of Luthando implies that the “self” who lacks a steady commitment for the “other” is predisposed to becoming the character of death. Subsequently, Luthando goes back on his promises to heal the land: “Dear Tami, those vows ... don’t you think we were young and foolish? Yes, we were young and foolish and overzealous” (135). Luthando’s admission of weakness and immaturity indicates that he lacks the courage to walk the distance to freedom.

The distance the self/ other is required to cover in order for the South Africa to come into freedom appears to be insurmountable for the “self” who is impatient: “We made promises that were beyond us. Oceans and seasons separate. We are human. I for one have to satisfy the needs of the flesh. I am a man” (135). Luthando’s justification of human weakness implies that the “self,” especially his “self” as he is a man, is carnal and bound to fall into the needs of the flesh. It is, then, plausible to argue that Luthando is the process of becoming the character of death because his “self” is carnal and hence it lacks the spiritual substance that would enable him to see with the spirit rather than with the body whose dominant culture is eating.

The category of time also becomes an inhibition for the “self” in the process of becoming a character of death. Luthando, for example, justifies his feebleness: “Everyone has left for better places. No one has stayed to heal the land. I cannot hold on any longer, Tami. Many years have passed” (120). The passage of time makes the “self” who is in the process of becoming the character of death to lose focus. Luthando appears to be quite lethargic and unprincipled. At one moment he is jubilant about the coming of freedom and he heartily anticipates a celebration with the “other” which would unify the event, but before long the enthusiasm fades away:

We are free, Tami, we are free. After almost four hundred years we are free. The burden of humiliation has been removed from our shoulders [...] we walk straight and tall and our bodies are strong, fed with the milk of freedom [...] Come back, Tami. Come back.(129)

Here, Luthando seems to know that his “self” would only come into true freedom through interaction with the “other” whom he subsequently beckons to ecstatically come into the event of being free from servitude.

However, Luthando is impatient and unfaithful, especially when he learns that Tami is not ready for the celebration of freedom as she is still suffering from the trauma inflicted on her by the torturous apartheid regime. Luthando self-righteously explains his position:

It is difficult, Tami. I am sorry I have been silent. But things have not been easy. While you are battling with what you refer to as your demons ... the demons I don't understand ... we here have been having our own battles. It is not easy to be free after nearly four hundred years” (129).

Earlier, Luthando promises to stand by Tami because, as he passionately explicates, he understands where she is coming from, but now he pretentiously claims that he does not understand her demons.

The unity of the event of being tortured by the apartheid regime is in the process of being unmade bringing forth a fractious self/ other relation. Luthando fractiously informs Tami: “You have your demons I have mine. We got free, Tami, and I became a highflier. I cannot help it, Tami. It is the fault of freedom. I didn’t know I had this fetish ... to make love to powerful women. And there are many of them since we got liberated” (135). The commonality, the deferred wedding, between Luthando and Tami is in the process of being unmade. Luthando loses the compassion he feels for Tami, and he imprudently sleeps around with powerful women in order to gratify his “self” which has slipped into obsession; a consuming characteristic of death. Luthando piously questions the worth of a man who does not gratify his ego: “What is a man with a fetish expected to do? Wait for a wife ... no, a fiancée, for we had not completed our vows when Johan van der Bijl broke up our wedding ... wait for a fiancée who is refusing to come home even after we have gained our liberation?” (135). For Luthando, the self/ other relation no longer anticipates the future, but it is rather a completed event.

Luthando becomes the character of death when he appropriates the world of obsession for carnal and materiality, and forgets the nuptial “other” who is human. Now, Luthando perceives the “other” as an object of his fetish: “I became a powerful man in my own right, so my craving for powerful women dissipated. Now I find weaker women more attractive. My fetish now is to care for them. Set them up in townhouses and buy them their own little cars. I will set you up too” (158). Luthando anticipates to make

Tami one of his collection of concubines which implies that the much-awaited wedding is over. Luthando wishes to transform Tami into one of his artefacts: “You are always my queen. Their queen as well. You have always been my queen. After all, we were almost married! But first we’ll have to pretty you up. There are consultants who will give you a makeover” (158). Luthando appears to have lost his natural eccentric tinge, filling its place with the art of appearance.

In the self/ other relation, knowing is arrived at if both “self” and “other” are able to enter the gate of “I” in same event. Luthando tries to block the gate of “I” from the “other” when he considers her as beneath his social standing:

Ah, a bicycle. I hear everybody in Holland rides one. But you know, Tami, here the bicycle is the mode of transportation of the lower classes. The lowest class, in fact. So you’ll have to do away with it [...] seriously, though I cannot be seen by my friends even talking to someone on a bicycle. (158)

Luthando is alive for materialism but dead to the “other”. For Luthando, Tami is now “someone on a bicycle” instead of his fiancée. Luthando accuses Tami of occupying a different time category: “You live in the past. You will learn soon enough that the good times are not yesterday. They are today. Here and now. We are the makers of a new beautiful society. Democratic. Non-racial. Non-sexist” (159). Luthando becomes the character of death when he severs his relation with “other” in time/ space category. The character of death could be described as living in the now-and-here but acknowledges neither the past nor anticipates the future. For the character of death, life appears to be found in the artificiality of materialism.

3.3 Life-Giving Art: Becoming the Character of Natural Life

It has been noted that the character of death is described by the self/ other relation which bends towards a fractious rather than unified event. For the character of life, the kinematic bows towards philanthropic self/ other relation. In “The Art of Life: An Ancient Idea and its Survival,” Teun Tieleman observes that for Stoic Epictetus, “philosophy does not profess to give man any of the external goods [...] For just as wood is the material of the carpenter and bronze that of the bronze-caster, so too is each person’s life the material (hyle) of art with respect to life” (249). Tieleman’s observation implies that for the “self” to become the character of natural life, they must of necessity interact with the “other” philanthropically, not out of respect for the “other,” but because one’s life is the material for building that of the “other”.

In *The Mother of All Eating*, Joe and the D.P.S are the most notable for having civic compassion. The Man describes Joe and the D.P.S. as an honest sort:

The new Deputy Principal Secretary was a very vigilant man. He had just been promoted to that post. He was the type I despise, the Joe-type, an honest man, a man on a crusade who thought he could single-handedly wipe out what misguided people like him call corruption. (14).

The Man’s observation implies that both Joe and the D.P.S. have a commonality in vigilance, honesty, and independently fighting against corruption. Vigilance makes their “self” to become an observer in the event of work. Nonetheless, their efforts to curb corruption do not bear fruit since there is no interaction which would unify their crusade.

Becoming the character of life involves embracing the virtuous qualities of hard work, patriotism, honesty, punctuality and vigilance; not as mere fulfillment of the law,

but as the art of building life through organizing the honourable categories into a dialogic space of benevolence. The Man, for example, describes Joe as conscientious:

Joe was a hard working clerk at the Power Supply Corporation. You know, the organisation that lights up our lives. Joe has always been hardworking. So, through a combination of sweats and tears he diligently worked himself up – climbing the rungs of the corporate ladder very rapidly. (17)

The Man's observation implies that the art of life is a source of light which illuminates people's lives. Joe appears to give away his life as material for making the corporate world of the "other" healthier.

The culture in the event of work, however, militates against Joe's selfless endeavors to make the corporate world become gainfully better for the "other". Joe's vigilance enables him to discover that the Corporation is experiencing loss because of corruption:

A lot of important people in this city bribed meter readers to make electricity meters to reverse instead of going forward in relation to the consumption of electricity [...] I became suspicious when some real big businesses were having electricity bills of one rand a month. (21-22)

Joe is in the process of becoming a character of life when he discovers that there is corruption in the Corporation and decides to fight it.

Tieleman observes that for Foucault the kinetic in morality is not dependent on prohibitions but, "it is the development of an art of life (*art de l'existence*), which revolves around the question of 'I', [...] and the relations it can and has to engage with others" (250). Tieleman's observation implies that for the "self" to become a character of

life it must engage with the “other” dialogically. In *The Mother of All Eating*, Joe seeks for the support of the “other” in curbing corruption which threatens to ground the Power Supply Corporation, but the “other” is not willing to assist him: “From you, Mr Expert, and from my minister I expected support ... Instead I am threatened with sacking. Even though I was trying to root out corruption to make this corporation run at a profit” (22). Joe complains because the “other” in the event of work is preventing him from building the corporate universe into a profitable space. It could be reasonably argued that since the “self” is dialogic, Joe’s efforts to curb corruption can only be completed in the “other” who occupies the same event in the corporate world.

The art of life is dialogic, and of necessity the “self” and the “other” must interact in the same altruistic ratio in order for life to come into being. Joe tries to convince his M.D. about the benefit of working together for the common good of the Power Supply Corporation: “Look right now the people who were discovered to be involved in the [meter readers’] scam are paying back thousands of rands, the corporation is really getting its money back ... aren’t you happy?” (22). Joe expects the M.D. to be happy now that the corporation is making profit after the scam involving the reversing of the electricity meters by some rogue clients with the help of meter readers is undone. Unfortunately for Joe, the M.D. is a character of death and he is not ready to support life. Subsequently, the M.D. abdicates his duty of firing the corrupt meter readers: “All of a sudden I was the one to fire the meter readers ... You knew very well that I could not fire them because they were members of the Youth League of the ruling party” (22). The M.D. passes the buck to Joe because he fears the political swirl that would be created by firing the meter readers.

If the “self” embraces the art of life, they perceive their positions in the corporate or civil service as opportunities for diligently bringing the life of the “other” into existence but not as opportunities for fraudulently enriching themselves. The Man describes Joe, as follows:

You see, he had all the opportunities to make it big there, but he messed things up. He tried to be a goody-goody who wanted to stop everyone from eating. At the same time, he was a thorn in the asshole of the expert managing director. (23)

The Man’s description of Joe implies that the character of natural life is normally abhorred by the corrupt people whom he is trying to stop from engaging in graft. Joe, for example, meets the wrath of the meter readers after exposing their scam:

... Instead I was summoned, actually frog marched, to the party office, where the Honourable Minister instructed me to apologize to the meter readers, and to you Mr Expert, and to all the inconvenienced customers ... Now, let me tell you, Mr Expert, I refuse to apologise! (22).

Joe’s hysterical outburst communicates the frustrations he experiences as a character of life working in an event with ambiances of death.

The character of life does not bend towards what everybody seems to be doing but to what is virtuous, compassionate and civil. The Man reveals that when Joe is made the acting MD after the white MD leaves, he does not change from his position of honesty:

So they made him acting MD. Now if he was smart that should have been his opportunity to make amends and prove himself to his minister and colleagues. He

should have shown everybody that he was capable of eating as well as any man.

But no! His stupidity triumphs again. (23)

The Man's observation suggests that Joe is consistently honest and that nothing, not ascension to power, would make him to be corrupt. Joe's incorruptible nature is a home for him in time of bounty or insufficiency: "Well, the big guns had had enough of Joe and his holier-than-thou attitude towards our noble tradition of eating. They fired him [...] every time he gets a job with a lot of prospects for eating, he tries to be honest. So they kick him out" (24). Undoubtedly, honesty is not an appendage for Joe but the very virtue in the core of his being. It follows then that for the character life, integrity is not an adjunct but the very material for building life.

Changing the incorruptible "self" from one position to another in the event of work does not alter their character of life. The Man observes that transferring the incorruptible D.P.S. to what appears to be a harmless government department does not alter his crusade against corruption: "He became the Director of the Department of Manpower Development – a very harmless post for a man like him. Or so they thought, for I have no doubt that when he got there he started rooting out all those who gave scholarships to their lovers and relatives, or those who sold them to prospective candidates" (16). The description of the D.P.S. indicates that the character of life unswervingly endeavors to get rid of death in order to allow the society to experience life.

The character of life may at times seem to loyally serve the culture of eating as in the case of the Man's messenger. Here, the character of life is suppressed by the indomitable culture in the world of work, but when opportunity arises the character rises

to wipe away the oppressive death. The Man is shocked by the apparent turning around of his messenger:

Hey, what's wrong with you? Have you come to attack me? ... Why? ... You have always been my loyal messenger, my spy, my loyal friend. Now this is my hour of sorrow, and you come to my house to tell me that today I will vomit all the money that I have stolen from people. (34)

The messenger occupies the position of the observer whom the Man mistakes for an accomplice in the culture of eating. The Man learns the true position of the messenger at the point of death: "Did you hear [the messenger]? He says even you, my friends, even you, your day will dawn. He is not on your side" (36). The Man warns his corrupt sort that, though the messenger appears to be an insider, he occupies not their site of corruption, but that of an observer whose crusade is bent on defeating all venality.

In *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* the Young Man, like the messenger, is not in unity with the perpetrators of death. The Young Man questions the Cabinet's activities from an outside position, though he occupies the same event of utterance. The Young Man, for example, tells Health, "I am not quite a child. In years maybe ... but in other ways, no. I have seen many things [...] Things that the eyes of adults would not want to see" (79-80). The Young Man's admission of having been able to access privileged knowledge implies that he occupies a unique position that empowers him to know the unknowable. The Young Man conspiratorially informs Health, "I have seen naked women your age and older. The Daughters of the Revolution. I have seen them dance naked at the Market Square," but what the Young Man has seen appears to be usual for Health who retorts, "Many people have seen that" (80). It is plausible to argue that the

observer in the process of becoming a character of life occupies a position which appears to be common but at a closer look the inimitability of the observer's position comes to light.

The Young Man explains that, “[u]sually men run away because they do not want to go blind,” but his site could not allow him to run, “I was caught by surprise. It was the time I was living in a box in the centre of town by the Market Square” (80). It appears that the Young Man is not an observer by choice but nature has put him in the path of being an observer. Holquist observes that for Bakhtin, “In order to be perceived as a whole, as something finished, a person or object must be shaped in the time/ space categories of the other, and that it is possible only when the person or object is perceived from the position of outsideness” (21). Bakhtin's argument suggests that the Young Man's position of outsideness enables him to attain a surplus of seeing which completes the perception of the Daughters of the Revolution's dance for (re)birth. The Young Man resolutely claims, “I would have run away, I swear. I don't want to go blind. But I was sleeping in my box when [the Daughters of the Revolution] came, I peeped through my peephole and saw them” (80). The Young Man's claim indicates that the Daughters of the Revolution are not aware that they are being observed, and therefore, their action is natural as opposed to artificial.

Occupying the position of observer enables the Young Man to question Health's category of sameness with the Cabinet: “How did you end up with people like these, anyway? You should be out there marching with the Daughters of the Revolution” (81). For the Young Man, the Minister appears to be in the wrong company of the Cabinet whose description is deathly corruption. Health responds, “The Daughters of the

Revolution, eh? [She laughs.] Once we were on the same side as them. They were part of us. They were one with us. We won the war, and soon forgot what it was we were fighting for in the first place [...] They say they still remember” (81). The prodding by the Young Man makes the Minister to admit that the Cabinet was once seeking for freedom from death but after winning the war, and forming the government, they seemed to forget the innovatory home they were trying to create for humanity.

Wakefulness is what makes someone to continue being an observer in the unfolding event of self/ other relation. Health proposes to the Young Man, “You need to sleep sometimes, if only to escape from the sordidness of our waking moments,” and he responds, “There is no escape, ma’am [...] as long as I can see I don’t want to sleep at all [...] I need to see as much of what is happening around me as possible” (83). Uninterrupted seeing is constituted by vigilance or alertness of the observer, but when someone sleeps they cease to occupy the position of the observer. The Young Man resolves never to sleep, forever and “... ever, world without end, Amen. But blindness will get tired of waiting for me to sleep, and will find a way of attacking me while I’m wide awake” (83). The Young Man’s resolution, never to sleep, implies that he fears to lose wakefulness since he does not want to be pitched into sightlessness.

The Young Man is able to see what ails the relationship between the Daughters of the Revolution and the Cabinet. When Health, for example, dismisses the Daughters of the Revolution: “They are hoarders of ancient memories. We say we moved on and talk about the present and the future. They want to talk about yesterday!” the Young Man knowledgeably responds, “Memory is all they have at the moment, ma’am. Now they want to add to it restitution” (81). Through dialogic observation, the Young Man is able

to gain cognition of the unfolding relation between the Daughters of the Revolution and the Cabinet. Holquist notes that for Bakhtin, “An event cannot be wholly known, cannot be seen, from inside its own unfolding as an event” (31). Bakhtin’s argument reasonably explains the difference in seeing between Health and the Young Man. The Minister is inside the unfolding event of the conflict between the Daughters of the Revolution and the Cabinet, and hence, her vision is limited to the narrative of the Cabinet. The Young Man, on the contrary, observes the event from a dialogic outsidership which enables him to see the whole relation, but not just a segment of the dialogue.

For a person to become a character of natural life, they must not only relate benevolently with the “other,” but they must also constantly occupy the position of observer in the event of dialogue. In *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* The Young Man reveals that observation has made him to know many things: “I know. I have seen the theatre of rebirth,” but Health doubts such a possibility, “That is a lie! No man has seen the *Pitiki* theatre,” (100). Health seems to mistrust the Young Man’s knowledge because she does not understand that outsidership offers the observer a vantage point for perceiving the unfolding event. The Young Man assertively confirms his knowledge: “Oh, yes, I did. It is one of the things my eyes were not supposed to see” (100). Seeing everything, including that which is sanctioned, empowers the Young Man to cognitively understand the true nature of the Daughters of the Revolution’s struggle against the Cabinet – they are enacting rebirth as a way of opposing death.

In *The Bells of Amersfoort*, by just looking out of her window, Tami becomes an observer of what she is ordinarily not supposed to see. Tami warns Katja, “You shouldn’t be looking at that window,” and Katja wonders, “Why?” and, then, Tami explains,

“Because it is Monday. At midday you will see things you are not supposed to see” (126). Tami’s warning implies that crossing liminal boundaries takes place in cognitive time and space. Katja does not understand the spectacle she sees across the window: “Lights fall on FRITZ and rise on JOHAN VAN DER BIJL. He is dressed in a dark suit and dog-collar. He walks solemnly reading the Bible to himself,” and Katja inquires of Tami, “Have you named that one too?” (126). Katja’s question indicates that Tami is not a passive observer but that she has been actively naming what she observes at the window. It could be reasonably argued, then, that for a person to grasp the true nature of existence one must of necessity become an active observer of what the society sanctimoniously sanctions.

Tami explains to Katja, “I just call him Dominee. He is a good man throughout the week, except at midday on Mondays and Fridays. Then he becomes very very naughty. Mondays are red days. Fridays are black days” (126). Tami’s explanation does not help Katja to really understand what happens on Mondays and Fridays, and Katja is eager to know and she cannot wait until midday. Eventually, Tami reveals to Katja: “Heleen ... I have named her too ... Heleen will come at midday and fuck his brains out. No ceremony. No foreplay. No communication. She just comes and ...” (127). Tami observes the Dominee and Heleen making love, and she appears to think that the event is different from the conventional way of lovemaking. Katja questions Tami’s role as an observer and wonders why she herself has not noticed it before: “Is that how you spend your time on Mondays and Fridays? Being a voyeur? Why haven’t I seen this before?” (127). Katja’s interrogation indicates that she is surprised that Tami has been a voyeur yet she has not noticed it despite being a frequent visitor in her room.

Nature seems to be the one that puts someone in the path of being a voyeur. Tami gives an apostrophic explanation to Katja on her not being able to observe the spectacle between the Dominee and Heleen: “Because you usually come on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Except today. I don’t know why you came today. Oh, yeah. To gloat that you have come from seeing some people off at the airport. To give me the loud hint that it’s time I packed my bags and left” (127). Tami’s explanation implies that one becomes a voyeur through the imposition of the “self” on the time/ space category of the “other”. For the “self” to know the “other,” there is an obligatory role of observing the event of the “other” in the natural environment – in which the “other” is their “self” without the inhibitions of knowing that they are being observed. Observing the “other” in their carnival-like event, helps the “self” to know the true character of the “other”.

Tami and Katja observe the carnival-like world of the “other” by looking at the window: “At this moment HELEEN enters the third world. She is wearing a red coat and red pencil-heel shoes. She does not acknowledge the Dominee. To the rhythm of Catharina’s and Fritz’s song she takes off her coat. She is not wearing a dress” (127). Heleen’s relation with the Dominee does appear to be governed by respect for the “other,” but it seems to find motion from the song being played outside the window. The relationship is neither marked by any element of shame: “[Heleen] remains only in her panties, red bra and red stockings with a red garter. She spreads her arms to say ‘I am ready for you’. The Dominee, also to the rhythm, takes off his pants and his jacket. He remains in his black shirt and dog-collar. He spreads his arms to say ‘me too’. They make furious love” (127). Both Heleen and the Dominee respond to one another to the rhythm of the song being played by Catharina and Fritz. It could, then, be reasonably argued that

the throb of life is initiated by the expectation of a carnival in which the world celebrates the relation between the “self” and the “other”.

Becoming the character of life involves not just being an observer but also the rhythm of love for the self/ other transcendent relation. The relationship between Heleen and the Dominee transcends carnal knowledge, and though they make furious love: “[...] this lovemaking is highly stylised. They do it standing and must not even touch each other. There must be a distance between them. Catharina’s voice rises to the level of a high-pitched aria, while Fritz’s voice becomes deep humming” (127). Catharina and Fritz not only offer the rhythm of love for Heleen and the Dominee but they also become so thrillingly stimulated by the self/ other’s exceedingly schematic lovemaking that their voices become loaded with tremulous intensity. Katja and Tami react differently to the love affair’s aria: “the high pitched aria stun KATJA while they excite TAMI. She takes her trombone and blows up a storm. She blows and blows and blows ... until the aria and the lovemaking reach a climax [...] Tami sighs in fulfilment, as if she herself has been lovemaking” (127). The observer is not passive but quite active in the affair of the “self” and the “other”.

Nonetheless, Tami is shocked to discover that Heleen and the Dominee have no real attachment – their relation is business. Johan admittedly explains, “I am a man of the cloth. I respect the sanctity of marriage. No one can accuse me of infidelity because there has never been any emotional involvement between Heleen and me. No attachment. Just the gratification of the flesh” (137). Johan’s admission implies that Heleen and he are not in a binding relationship, and that their relationship does not bend to the future – it is just a momentous event. Stunned by the lack of attachment, Tami questions Johan, “Does

Heleen know that she means so little to you?” and Johan responds self-righteously, “Of course she does. I mean nothing to her either. It is a job. She is a sex worker” (137-138). The intermittent relation between Heleen and the Dominee cannot build the character of life because, although it is supported by carnival-like cosmos, it does not look forward to the future.

Johan comes by Heleen through occupying the position of an observer: “I first spotted her in a display window in the red light district of Amsterdam. There were women of different hues and shapes. Blondes, brunettes and redheads. Orientals and occidentals. But immediately I got to Heleen’s window, I knew I should have her” (138). For Johan, his relation with Heleen is paradigmatic, a human diction based on appearance. Johan appears to pick Heleen because she stands for what was then forbidden back in South Africa: “I was struck by her brown legs. Black body parts. Forbidden fruit where I come from. I wanted her for myself. Not in her little cubicle but on my own turf. I negotiated and bargained until she agreed to come here twice a week” (138). The words “negotiated” and “bargained” imply that Johan perceives Heleen, not as nuptial “other” worth of wedding, but as a commodity for the gratification of the “self”. Heleen, on her part, displays her “self” as an article of trade. The business-like relation between Heleen and the Dominee is incapable of bringing life into being because the character of life is based on perceiving the “self” as the art for building the life of the “other,” but not as potential buyer of the objectified “other”.

For someone to become a character of life, they must be answerable for their involvement in the self/ other relation. No one is blameless: not the “self,” the “other” or even the observer. Tami protests when Johan claims that she can bear witness to Heleen’s

worthiness during the amorous sprees, “Don’t mix me up in your sordid affairs” (138). Tami seems to presume that she herself is innocent but the Dominee assertively refutes her innocence: “Oh, you’re already mixed up in them all right. You have watched us. You have taken pains to watch us twice a week. Whether you like it or not you are a participant in my sordid affairs” (138). The observer becomes an answerable participant, especially when they do the observation knowingly. Subsequently, Tami cannot exonerate herself from Johan’s despicable affairs. Johan educates Tami: “You thought you were watching me, you did not know that an eye is always there ... looking at you, even when there is no one there. A much more powerful eye than yours” (138). Johan’s observation means that the observer is also under observation; and he/ she is, therefore, answerable for their action.

The observer is blocked from the self/ other fanfare if the window of observation is closed. Tami, for instance, is prevented from participating in the exhilarating sexual affair between Johan and Heleen: “Martjin joins her at the window, still beating the drum. But he stops when he sees HELEEN stripping to her black underwear. Johan looks at Tami and Martjin. He waves at them and closes the curtains” (142). Tami complains bitterly for being left out from the carnival-like relation between the Dominee and Heleen. When she meets Johan next she expresses her displeasure at being blocked from the affair: “Our paths are destined to cross, Dominee. It was quite a show yesterday. But did you have to close the curtains?” (142). Despite being an observer, Tami seems to be enjoying the show as much as Johan and Heleen. However, becoming a character of natural life goes beyond observation and enjoying what is being observed: it bends to

knowledge; to a relation based on knowing which shifts the ground for a common footing.

For Johan and Tami, there is a hitch to their dialogue due to showiness and pride. Johan, for example, responds to Tami's request that he leaves the curtains open, thus: "Next time I'll open them. I'll do it especially for you. Why, I'll even do it on the streets for you. Or even in your living room" (142). Becoming the character of life involves sincerity and naturalistic response to others. Subsequently, Tami is put off by Johan's insincerity. She responds to Johan's inauthenticity: "You don't have to go to that extreme. Just open the damned curtains, that's all. The way you used to do. That's not asking for too much" (142). By asking Johan to open the curtains, Tami expresses her eagerness to join, as an active observer, the time/ space category of the "other". Johan is not ready to accede to Tami's plagiarizing: "Go get your own! The days of your pirating a ride on my horse are over. Finish and klaar" (142). Johan's protestation indicates that he is uncomfortable with the knowledge that Tami is a deliberate voyeur on his amorous activities. Johan appears to be unsettled by a sense of guilt while Tami is motivated by lustfulness.

Guilt and lust create barriers in dialogue preventing the "self" and the "other" from being swept into a carnival by the guiltless and pleasant pouring out of one's life into the world of the "other". The fanfare experienced in the self/ other relation is only complete through the extemporaneous observer who is nevertheless answerable for the unfolding event. Katja observes that when Tami refuses to go to the window to watch what appears to be a show specially designed by Johan to appease her, Heleen goes away prematurely: "Damn! They are gone. Without doing anything. She had brought him a St

Nicholas gift and had to leave without giving it to him. It's all your fault, Tami. They can't do a thing without the fanfare that you guys usually make" (153). Katja's observation implies that Johan and Heleen could not find the rhythm for their unique sexual affair without the music from Tami, Fritz and Catharina. It can be reasonably argued, then, that for the self/ other to find motion there must be a musical background to which they respond.

The character of natural life draws the "self" to a searching space from which a firm decision is borne. Decisiveness marks a grounding in the process of seeking for a home for the "self". Tami finally announces to Katja: "I have made up my mind. I am going back to South Africa" (153). Katja is surprised that Tami wants to go back to South Africa when she seems to be establishing a grip in Holland through their band but Tami is firm: "I have to go back. There is unfinished business back home" (154). Tami appears to come to the understanding that following through the business she had started back in South Africa is what is going to give substance to her life. However, for Johan there seem to be no place for him in South Africa because Tami has refused to forgive him and he is still weighed down by a guilty conscience. Asked by Katja when he would go home, Johan responds: "Maybe not at all. There is no place for me in Tami Walaza's South Africa. It is a South Africa of anger, bitterness and vengeance" (156). Johan's utterance implies that he is also a seeker; looking for a place he could call a home – a space which ambiances with love, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Despite the ungainly atmosphere in Tami's kind of South Africa, Johan decides to leave Holland and he goes back home. Tami welcomes him, thus: "You came back after all. Riding your bicycle as elegantly as you rode Heleen" (160). Tami's utterance implies

that she did not expect Johan to return to South Africa. She is surprised that he comes back in a cycle which identifies him with the ordinary people. Johan explains to Tami: “The longing for the smell of the gravel roads after the rain was too much to bear,” but that is not all, “I had a second mission though. To preside over your marriage, as your minister, if you and your fiancé will have me” (160). Though Johan has committed many crimes against the black South Africans during the apartheid era, he becomes a character of life since he realises his mistake, seeks for forgiveness and is ready to restore what he has taken from Tami and her fiancé, Luthando.

However, Luthando betrays Tami and moves in a linear motion which does not tend towards the “other”. Tami explains to Johan: “There won’t be any marriage. There is something you can do, though. Help me do what Luthando and I had vowed to do: rebuild the scarred land. Heal the wounds that still ache, that history has imposed on my people” (160). Tami’s appeal to Johan indicates that social vision is a dialogic relation meant to heal the land and bring it back to good health. Becoming a character of life means that both the “self” and the “other” must committedly realise that their lives are the material for building a healthy living society. Accordingly, Johan promises Tami: “I will be with you. It is not an easy task to heal the wounded earth. But I’ll be with you” (160). Johan understands that bringing the society back to life requires a lot of dedication but he is ready to rise to the occasion.

For the character of life, the “self” and the “other” move not in a linear motion but in globular kinetic which creates a whirlwind that sweeps the individual bodies off their tangential to a centre of collision and carnival-like celebration: “[Johan and Tami] ride around the stage. The FIGURES sing Ndophule [...] They are animated. They clap hands

joyously. The bells toll. But they are distant. The two cyclists ride in a whirlwind around the stage, laughing. The song becomes faster. They ride until they collide” (161). Through their kinetic, Johan and Tami defrost the frozen figures, who represent the agonized people of South Africa, into lively beings. It could, therefore, be reasonably argued that the character of life is defined by decisiveness of the “self” and the “other” to make the society better through the motion of giving out their lives as the art of painting the world.

3.4 Conclusion

From the discussion in this chapter, it is clear that Mda has deployed characterization in *Fools, Bells and the Habit of Eating* to communicate his social vision of how the South Africans may relate in order to overcome their parochial interests borne out of apartheid, and hence, discover a commonality for healing their country. The Boers of South Africa might look like the Dutch of Holland but as the playwright indicates through the mouth of Johan, the Boers are South Africans and they would not feel at home in Holland. Likewise, the Blacks in South Africa may feel aggrieved by the injustices of apartheid but they have no other home away from their country. Having gained political freedom from colonialism and apartheid in the 1990s, South Africa needs to cultivate true freedom by initiating a dialogic relation among her diverse population. To achieve this goal, the segments of the population which may be described as the “self” and the “other,” following Bakhtin’s theorization, must relate with civic compassion in order to find a commonality that would sweep off their individual trajectories into a carnival-like motion, thereby enabling them to forge a live-giving character necessary for living in a democratic society.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 FORM AND SOCIAL VISION: LITERARY LANGUAGE AS DIALOGIC

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines how Mda deploys form in *Fools, Bells, and the Habit of Eating* to communicate his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa. The chapter is sub-divided into two main parts. The first one discusses the way Mda artistically uses language in his dramatic world as form to paint the post-apartheid South Africa as a flamboyantly better place for all South Africans irrespective of their historical or social groupings. The study theorizes that words contain diverse colours which combine in a syntactic construction to paint life. In *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World*, Michael Holquist notes that in painterly terms the “self” must “have contours that are specific enough to provide a meaningful addressee for if existence is shared, it will manifest itself as the condition of being addressed” (27). Holquist’s observation implies that an utterance paints the contours of the “self” to the addressee in such a way that there is perceptible understanding which enables the “other” to respond meaningfully. As the “other” responds to the “self,” there is a differential motion of the brush from one interlocutor to the other – by painting their “self,” the interlocutors, in essence, paint the world if Bakhtin’s argument that life can be divided into two sections which he names “self” and “other” respectively is applied. The interaction, the dialogue, between the “self” and the “other” becomes the motion of the brush which, like the interaction of words in a sentence, creates meaning as the impression, contours, of each (word) is swept aside to give way for the meaning.

The second part examines how Mda deploys the far-sighted art of language in his dramatic universe to communicate his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa. The social vision in language could be easily understood if we consider that each word in a syntactic construction bends to the future as the utterance unfolds; the word does not presume fixity of meaning but it allows its own meaning to glide into the meaning of the following words until the sentential meaning is achieved. Holquist notes that for Bakhtin, Dialogism is “a philosophy more of the sentence than that of the sign” (42). Holquist’s observation implies that for Bakhtin life is syntagmatic rather than paradigmatic. In addition, the syntagmatic calls for response which looks beyond the addressee of the sentence. Consequently, this study theorizes that there is social vision in the language Mda deploys in his world of drama.

4.2 Language as Form: Painting the World

Dramaturgy could be perceived as visual art which creatively uses language as form to enact life. In the play, the event of being comes to the audience through the contours made by both the stage directions and the utterances of the characters. Perception, thus, becomes an unalienable element in the dialogic relation which defines existence. In *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World*, Holquist observes that for Bakhtin “[A]ddressivity is expressivity; what we call life is not a mysterious vitalistic force, but an activity, the dialogue between events addressed to me in the particular place I occupy in existence, and my expression of a response to such events from that unique place” (47). Holquist’s observation implies that life is an expression in which there is utterance of address and response. Subsequently, art – a dialogue of colour – and life become united in the response of the “self” and the “other” in the unique space that they occupy.

The Mother of All Eating opens with “Music, guitar and drums,” and then “Lights rise” (3). The matrix of the melody, guitar and beats interact to create a mood of excitement but the painterly significance of the event is brought into being through the element of light. In “Colour as Text in the Paintings of Stuart Davis,” Kamila Benayada observes that “Colour and light are not opposites, they are the same in that they have the same function: to bring the painting alive for the viewer” (279). Benayada’s observation suggests that the impressions made by the music, guitar and drums dialogically interact with those of the light to bring the setting of the play alive for the audience. The painterly expression of music and light in *The Mother of All Eating* contrasts with the physical where “[t]here are two chairs on the stage which is otherwise devoid of sets” (3). The two chairs emphatically come to the line of perception, and the audience is undoubtedly stimulated to wonder who sits on them, and perhaps where they could be at the moment.

In a short while, the chairs assume a different shade of light when there is “[h]umming outside. A knock. Another knock,” and, then, “THE MAN walks in [...] an executive type in a business suit. He holds a briefcase” (3). The Man’s humming contrasts with the music, guitar and drums to create the meaning that the Man is excited at the prospect of arriving home and uniting with his wife. Benayada notes that “[t]he tonal intervals of music have their counterpoint in painting in intervals of tone, color, contrast, size, and direction” (279). The words which the Man utters on arriving home indicate that Benayada’s observation is also true for Mda’s deployment of language in his dramatic universe: “Honey, I am home! Now where is she? Hello! Honey! I am home!” (3). A closer look at the Man’s utterance reveals that the words in the syntactic structure create intervals of tone, colour, contrast, size, and direction.

By “Honey,” the Man expresses a pleasant colour and a declaratively endearing tone, directionally moving towards intimacy. However, there is change of tone from the declarative to interrogative when the Man realizes that no response is forthcoming: “Now where is she?” The sense of time is still the present but it develops a shade of answerability since “Now” expresses a sense of immediacy. The words which follow the interrogative are said in earnest rather than in the initial mood of expectancy and excitement. “Hello!” is said with a louder voice and it develops a telephonic tone which brushes aside the intimacy expressed at the beginning of the utterance yet it is still soliciting for response. “Honey!” appears to be a repetition but it comes with a tinge of an alarming exclamatory which contrasts with the initial sugary tone. The clauses, “Honey, I am home!” and “I am home!” contrast in terms of texture: the first one is moderately loud with a honeyed voice while the second one is louder and quite abrasive.

The syntactic reflects light on and anticipates another syntactic structure outside itself for answerability. Different syntactic structures interact in the same space, just as colours do in a painting, to create meaning. When the Man calls for “Honey” but gets no verbal response, “He looks around the room, but ‘honey’ is nowhere to be seen,” which provokes the utterance, “Where can she be? She hasn’t even left me a note. [Laughs.] A ‘dear John’ note perhaps. [Laughs.] Not on your life” (3). The absence of “Honey” could be likened to the absence of light in a painting; “Honey” does not come alive for the viewer. The Man is said to look around the room but he sees nothing – the space appears empty without her. The Man’s physical reaction finds description in the surrounding space as he searches for bits of addressivity, such as a note, that might paint the presence of the missing wife. The stage directions - “He looks around the room, but ‘honey’ is

nowhere to be seen” - shifts the perspective from the speaking subject to the visual not only for the Man but also for the audience.

On discovering that his wife is indeed not at home, the Man laughs perhaps at the painting, the reflection, he sees in his mind of the possible whereabouts of his wife. The Man’s subsequent utterance, “A ‘dear John’ note perhaps,” indicates that the absence of his wife stimulates his cones, photoreceptors, to see a possible painting of a wife who has fled from her husband. By “Not on your life,” the Man appears to reject the dialogue of such a painting with his life. The Man uses language to erase, repaint, the possibility of the undesirable painting from his mind. From a different angle, the anticipation of the note paints not just the Man’s expectation but also his name, John, which gives him some familiarity with the audience. He is not a strange being but a human with an ordinary name, and longing for a united happy family. The Man gives the following utterance which sheds light on his family: “We have a good live together. You know, I have been fortunate in many respects, and I don’t stop counting my blessings, especially as far as she is concerned” (3). The Man’s utterance could be perceived as light which is reflected by the painting of his family.

Just like *The Mother of All Eating*, in *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* lights rise on the stage to enable the audience to experience life in Mda’s dramatic universe. The play begins with the stage directions: “Lights rise on the stage. Four figures are frozen in what looks very much like a pose in an Old Master painting. They are a unit, but are on different planes” (42). The Old Master painting appears to visually tell the story of the political figures whose vibrant lives have been frozen in time by a new regime which is intent on torturing the overthrown government. Light interacts with the frozen figures

bringing them to live to the audience as “shoeless members of [the] Cabinet [consisting of] a motley group of [...] men and one woman, plunged into the deepest levels of gloom imaginable: a menagerie of shapes and sizes in tattered and filthy clothes” (42). The reflection and refraction of light by the frozen figures creates meaning in the audience’s brain via the optical nerve. The meaning may vary depending on the position and perspective of the interlocutor - the characters as well as the audience.

The subsequent utterances of the various actors in *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* have the Old Master painting as their focus - light -which enables the audience to perceive and interact with the existence in the dramatic world. The General, one of the frozen figures in the painting, for instance, indicates the master piece and says: “There is art even in the humblest of things ... Yes, even in the most unassuming of situations. [Pause.] When I joined them, honouring a longstanding invitation to contribute my talents for the betterment of society, he was painting their picture ...” (43). The General’s words could be perceived as light which enable the audience to see the genesis of the Cabinet’s painting. The General’s utterance also indicates that there is art even in the most self-effacing things. It could, then, be argued that although language is a modest thing when considered in its conversational day to day usage, it contains painterly elements which interlocutors use for painting the world.

From the General’s utterances about art, it is quite clear that language has the artistic qualities of painting the world: “First there was a decree that art is only valid ... all art is only valid if it serves the interests of the people. And in what better way can the interests of the people be served, if not by creating masterpieces of their venerable leaders” (43). The General’s words undoubtedly paint a dictatorial world whose leaders

form a glorious picture of themselves at the expense of the masses. The General's evocative language about the Cabinet is like a Broad-spectrum which paints the world of politics in a dictatorial regime: "The affairs of the state stood still while [the artist] immortalized [the leaders] on canvas [...] he would be required to create a new painting every month" (43). The General's explication on the Old Master painting clearly indicates that language could be perceived as illumination which enables the picture of the despotic universe in the play to become animated for the audience.

In *The Bells of Amersfoort*, "The stage is divided into three distinct acting areas:

[...] the first represents Tami Walaza's present world. The second represents the world she has left behind, which is also the world to which she will return. The third represents the world she will never reach; the world she observes from her window. (114)

The stage directions imply that Tami's world is divided into three divergent universes in cognitive time and space. For Tami to come into being, the three worlds must unite in her response. The language from each of the three worlds stimulates Tami the way light biologically stimulates the red, blue and green cones in the human eye. When light enters the human eye and stimulates the red cone, the brain receives the information through the optical nerve, and it will interpret the colour as red. The same happens with blue and green cones. However, the simultaneous stimulation of two or all the three colour-coded cones dialogically enables the viewer to perceive all the other colours; each colour being perceived depending on the level and ratio of stimulation. Likewise, Tami sporadically experiences different colours on account of the rise and fall of light on each of her three worlds.

Subsequently, as light rises on her present world, “Tami is discovered standing next to a barstool - the only piece of furniture on this set. On the barstool is a bottle of red wine, an elegant wine glass and an ashtray. On the floor next to the barstool is a shimmering trombone” (114). The objects in her world indicate that Tami is apparently not averse to alcoholic drinks. She appears to lead a life of desolation and emptiness buried in wine and smoking. Accordingly, Tami “pours herself some wine and has a sip. As lights rise on the second world she looks at it expectantly. Nothing happens. It is bare,” and responding to the space she says, “At home there were aunts and uncles. There were grandmothers and grandfathers. There were friends and neighbours. And, of course, there was Luthando” (114). Addressing the world, she left behind, Tami paints a South Africa where she had had a sense of belonging with many relatives and friends who made life bearable. Given is also her love, Luthando, whom she seems to miss a lot.

The blank spaces in Tami’s various worlds, which could be considered some kind of canvas, are painted by the utterances of the people occupying them and Tami’s response. Oppressed by the loneliness in her first world, Tami hopefully looks at her second; for a while there is nothing, but soon “LUTHANDO materializes in the blank of the second world,” and addresses Tami, thus, “Dear Tami, since you left, the boys have come out thrice. Maybe four times. I have lost count. And the rains continue to cut deeper into the already wounded earth” (114). Luthando’s utterance indicates that South Africa is still being eroded by apartheid but the agitation for freedom is also picking momentum. The spectrum of Luthando’s utterance enters Tami’s linguistic eye and undoubtedly paints an oppressive South Africa with unpleasant colours of apartheid-coded subjugation and black political agitation.

The light emitted by Luthando's utterance forces Tami to respond with painterly impressions: "There were fights and there was making up. A little hating and a little loving. But most importantly, there was laughter. We knew how to laugh, and we laughed. Even when we were in pain. Dear Luthando, here they have everything" (115). Tami's linguistic expression paints a nostalgic South Africa whose populace have their daily aches but they are able to find happiness amid their troubles. In Holland, where Tami presently occupies as an exile, there is everything that the political agitators back in South Africa are fighting for: "They have freedom. And everything that goes with it. They have done away with the restrictions that societies often impose on themselves. Yet everyone wears a sad face. No one smiles" (115). Tami's language coats a picture of a sad Holland with unsmiling citizens despite being democratic. The impression given by Tami's painting of Holland is that political freedom does not necessarily make a people happy.

About the third world, Katja points out to Tami: "Your neighbour across the street ... the woman ... I haven't seen her do anything but clean the window" (125). Katja's words illuminate the third world for Tami as well as the audience, and subsequently: "Lights rise on the third world. We see CATHARINA briskly cleaning the window and humming a song. TAMI joins KATJA at the window" (126). Evidently, it is Katja's utterance that brings Tami to the window of observation from which she is able to see the woman joyously cleaning the window across. Tami uses language to paint the woman, "That is Catharina. She likes to clean her window. She cleans it all day long," while Katja responds to the light emitted by Tami's utterance, "Oh, so you know her name? You have spoken with her?" (126). Katja and Tami's exchange implies that language has painterly

conceptual qualities which enable the interlocutor(s) to question and name what they see. Tami's responses to Katja's questions illustrate the painterly qualities of language quite well: "No, I don't know her. I just gave her that name. She looks like a Catharina to me so she is Catharina" (126). Tami uses language to name the woman across the window from her appearance.

Katja uses language to shift the angle of the perspective from Catharina: "And in the window below Catharina's?" and accordingly, "Lights fall on Catharina and rise on Fritz, on the third world" (126). The rise and fall of light create some painterly contrast which enables the viewer(s) to perceive a wider perspective and, thus, gain meaning from the blending, interaction, of the apparently different events across the two windows. The dialogic blending of the events is communicated in the stage directions: "The song CATHARINA was humming continues. FRITZ has a canvas on an easel and is furiously painting a bright picture. He is humming his own Dutch song, which combines well with Catharina's song" (126). Catharina and Fritz's singing could be perceived as an artistic response to the light emitted by the creative activities the two are engaged in. It could, then, be reasonably argued that pleasantly painting the world finds addressivity in song, language arranged in musical notes.

Tami informs Katja that "[The man] paints all day long. I haven't named him yet. I can't think of an appropriate name," upon which Katja responds, "He is Fritz. He looks like Fritz to me," and then, Tami shares Katja's linguistic painting of the man, "Ja, Fritz. That's a good name for him" (126). The name "Fritz" communicates a painting of a kingly man. "Fritz" is the Germanic diminutive form of "Friedrich" which was the name of Kings in Germany ("Behind the Name"). It follows, then, that words are used to

(re)paint the world, and the interaction between the paintings is what creates meaning. To Tami and Katja, the man furiously painting across the window communicates the picture of magnificence, like that of a king, but in the unique space and time that he occupies.

Language is made up of many different words which could be considered as many windows enabling the viewer to see different things in space/ time binary. So, Katja looks on, “And in the next window? There is no one there. Just a well-made bed covered with a grey duvet with yellow flowers,” and Tami sheds some light on the window, thus, “You shouldn’t be looking at that window” (126). Tami’s warning to Katja indicates that there is a self-conscious filter in what we perceive, and consequently the way we paint the world is dependent on our consciousness. Tami explains to Katja that she might not want to look at the window, “Because it is Monday. At midday you will see things you are not supposed to see,” and right on time, “Lights fall on FRITZ and rise on JOHAN VAN DER BIJL. He is dressed in a dark suit and dog-collar. He walks solemnly, reading the Bible to himself” (126). The stage directions paint Johan Van der Bijl as a man of cloth.

Katja wonders whether Tami has also named the man of cloth, and Tami responds: “I just call him Dominee. He is a good man throughout the week, except at midday on Mondays and Fridays. Then, he becomes very very naughty. Mondays are red days. Fridays are black days” (126). According to *Collins English Dictionary*, in South Africa, “Dominee” means a minister in any of the Afrikaner churches. Tami’s utterance, therefore, paints Bijl as a good church minister who intermittently falls into wayward behaviour. Katja is eager to know what happens on Mondays and Fridays, and Tami sheds light, thus: “Heleen ... I have named her too ... Heleen will come at midday and fuck his brains out. No ceremony. No foreplay. No communication. She just comes and

...” (127). “Heleen” could mean “torch” or “corposant,” and hence Tami paints the black woman as a fire that sets the Afrikaner ablaze. Naming appears to be done on painterly terms, and therefore, language could be said to have qualities of painting.

The painting potential of language is clearly confirmed by colour words such as “red,” “yellow” and “dark”. In *The Mother of All Eating*, the Man describes “the spirit of patriotism that we had cultivated in ourselves through political activism at university,” as having “looked at life through rose-coloured glasses” (12). “Rose-coloured” means pink in colour, but by looking “through rose-coloured glasses” the Man means that they were perceiving patriotic service for their country as being better or more positive than it really is. The Man suggests that political activism paints patriotism as rosy - pink and pleasant in appearance. However, when the Man is employed as a purchasing officer with the Ministry of Health, he soon discovers what he considers to be the practicability of life – the culture of eating.

The Man describes what used to happen: “a rep would invite me for a drink at one of the posh bars in town, and there he would lay his cards down. I buy the equipment or drugs from his company, and I get a slice of the cake. At first I refused. I was a scared green-horn” (13). The Man paints himself green to communicate his inexperience in the culture of eating. Later, when he gains a lot of clout in corruption he boasts of leading a rosy life. However, the Man’s life is repainted by his overwhelming greed which initiates his fall out with members of his Cartel who forthwith cry for his blood: “He receives a last kick on the stomach which finally shuts him up. He groans, and his body jerks and twitches. He is vomiting. He gasps once or twice, then lies silent [...] music crescendos and stops as lights fade to dark” (36). The Man’s life loses light, and becomes shadowy.

It could, then, be argued that through colour words Mda indicates that corruption may appear rosy but it eventually disintegrates to the colour of death - the fading of the lights.

In *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall*, Mda uses colour words to paint the miserable world created by corruption and political vanity. A whole Cabinet, the President and his Ministers, are “locked up in a dingy cell. The shape and position of the bars change as the position of the sun changes on its journey across the sky. At night the bars disappear and a dull yellowish light illuminates the lives of the characters” (42). By “dingy,” the playwright implies that the setting is discoloured, greyish and stained which paints a dirty and dull world of imprisonment. The lives of the Cabinet appear unhealthy as painted by “a dull yellowish light” which implies discolouration, unpleasantness and squalor environment. The Cabinet is living in the dark, but “[their] shadows are not totally dark. For instance, when [the] characters are in the Shadows we can see them, and can sometimes identify them. Even now, as our motley individuals pose, we can see another figure in the shadows. He is a military man in tattered uniform” (42). “Shadows” indicates a dark colour and it paints the gloomy life of imprisonment. The shadowy characters can be seen in the dark, but they can only be intermittently identified.

Colour can be used deceptively to paint an impressive world as indicated by the conspiracy of the Cabinet who engages the Young Artist to use colour to give the impression that the road to the racecourse where the Pope was scheduled to address the people was tarred. Justice informs the President, “It was never tarred, sir. It was just painted black,” while Health adds, “And when the rains came, they swept the black paint away [...] the Pope, the poor fellow, I’m sure he is sitting over there in the Vatican boasting to his friends, guess what, guys, I have a road in that country” (48). The

substitution of “tar” with the black paint implies that colour could be used to give the impression that something exists while it does not. Such illusory painting communicates a world borne of corruption which eats away at the substance of life. The “black” painterly quality is used to paint the “dirt road” so well that the President wonders, “The dirt road? There is no dirt road there. I was in the Pope mobile with the Pope on that road. It’s a tarred road.” (47). The President’s certainty implies that painting can completely give the viewer the wrong impression. In language, the paint contained in words can easily be used to flatter someone into believing that something which does not exist really does.

Nonetheless, the colour in language can be used to creatively paint a pleasant world despite the harrowing circumstances the “self” and “other” may be going through. In *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall*, Culture imagines a beautiful flower garden in which Health and he walk hand in hand in spite of their present situation of being held in the dull cell. Culture inspiringly uses language to paint the garden: “Well it’s just a garden. And blossoms scent the air. Many varieties of flowers. From large yellow sunflowers smiling at the moon, to small Easter flowers that fill the ground with deep yellowness” (54). Culture uses the “yellow paint” contained in the word “yellow” to paint the imaginary interactive world of love for Health and him(self). The “deep yellowness” appears to paint a golden universe with fragrance which lifts the gloom of the present setting, and initiates a joyous mood of potential prosperity.

Pleasantness of life has to do with the dialogically painterly relation of the sentence(s) constituting the utterance of the “self” and “other” in time/ space category. In *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall*, the Young Man criticizes Culture for subverting the

sentences in his poetry in order to flatter the President: “If you decide to write you must expect critics to comment on your work. Your poems, for instance, have rhyme which is forced through inverted sentences” (78). If rhyme is the matching of the utterance within or at the end of consecutive lines, then, rhyme could be perceived in painterly terms as corresponding colours, in the same canvas, which paint an interactive world through the sameness in the otherwise distinctively different words. The point of correspondence in the poem(s) is created by the dialogue between one sentence/ line and the next one. In a dialogue, there is carnival-like interaction revolving around genuineness that comes from a free atmosphere, with no inhibitions found in ordinary social life. Asked by Health whether Culture’s poems should have been recommended for schools, the Young Man says: “No. He does nothing in his poems but praise the wisdom of the Wise One” (78). Culture appears to force rhyme in his poems in order to create false pleasantness.

The young Man recites a poem about the genuineness and immortality of natural art, and mortality of “forced rhyme”. A portion of the poem appears below:

All creatures die, be buried, and vanish
Kings and heroes die, are buried, and vanish
I too, shall die, shall be buried, and vanish
But the *Dausi*
The song of my battles,
Shall not die (99).

The poem has both internal and external rhyme which is natural, based on repetition of not just sounds but also utterance(s). “All creatures die” rhymes internally with “Kings and heroes die,” and “I, too, shall die,” to paint the mortality of humans. Subsequently, “be buried,” rhymes with “are buried,” and “shall be buried,” painting the fate of all human beings. “Shall not die,” paints the immortality of the human struggle for freedom.

Further, punctuation marks in a sentence enable the speaker to draw the contours of what is being talked about. As a sentence unfolds, it draws a line from one point to another. A full stop indicates the end of the line; other punctuation marks communicate other various things about the line that is being drawn. In Mda's *Fools, Bells and the Habit of Eating*, there is an outstanding use of ellipsis which makes it a focal point in this study as far as the painting qualities of language are concerned. This study theorizes that ellipsis squarely finds some correspondence in the painterly ellipse - a circle drawn in perspective. In *The Mother of All Eating*, the Man comes home with the linearity of finding his wife there but she is mysteriously absent. As he wonders about her whereabouts the phone rings:

Hello! Oh, it's you, Jane. No, she is not here. I thought she was with you, as a matter of fact ... Oh, my God. I wonder where she is gone to; particularly at this time of night ... well I have just walked in ... From Johannesburg ... By plane, yes. (3)

The ellipses punctuate the Man's telephonic interaction with Jane drawing a circle - a sign - in perspective by interrupting what the person on the other end is saying in order to paint the overriding attitude occasioned by the Man's frantic search for his absent wife.

In *The Bakhtin Reader*, Pam Morris notes that "signs emerge [...] only in the process of interaction between one individual consciousness and another" (52). Morris' observation implies that the Man's expression of expectancy when he picks the phone is modified by Jane's response. The ellipses paint a sign of incompleteness initiated by lack of the answer that the Man expects to hear from the other end: "I thought she was with you as a matter of fact ... Oh my God" (3). The Man's utterance draws a line of

expectation but before it could be completed the answer on the other end changes the direction of the line by bending it onto the earlier emotion of apprehension which is, then, repainted by the exclamatory, “Oh my God.” The contour of anxiety communicates the already said as well as the new, yet to be said: “I wonder where she’s gone to, particularly at this time of the night ... Well I have just walked in ...” (3). The intermittent series of ellipsis break the Man’s linearity of utterance creating a circular motion painting not just the whereabouts of the wife but also the question of where the Man had been when the wife goes missing.

The signs of coming home and the absent spouse/ wife are extended in *The Bells of Amersfoort*. Here, Luthando calls on Tami who has gone on exile to Holland: “Dear Tami, exiles are coming home in droves. Where are you? We do not see your face among the throngs that are arriving” (120). Luthando is at home in South Africa but his spouse is in Holland due to political reasons. Despite the change of political circumstances in South Africa which initiates the return of exiles, Tami is yet to return, and her spouse wonders where she is. In response Tami explains: “I am coming ... I am coming. Let me battle with my demons first. Let me come home in victory. Not in shame” (120). The ellipsis in Tami’s utterance bends the unfolding line of explanation back to the assertion “I am coming,” thereby painting the question not of coming home but when and how. The ellipsis anticipates the contour of nonappearance which is drawn by the syntactic lines, “Let me battle with my demons first,” and, “Let me come home in victory.” The two lines draw contours of Tami determinedly struggling with demons which are preventing her from coming home in victory. The colour of the words “battle,” “demons,” and

“victory” in the two syntactic constructions dye the contours to create the painting of Tami’s struggle with her fears.

The colour of the world must interact with the subject’s life for it to have meaning. Ellipses are used creatively in Mda’s dramatic universe to indicate the motion of the interaction between the painting of the world and the life of the subject. Tami, for instance, explains to Luthando: “The people here have been very nice ... very nice. But still it is not home. I remain a foreigner. I can never be truly part of them” (121). Tami’s utterance paints the Dutch as pleasant people. The ellipsis bends the contour of being pleasant back to pleasantness but it also draws a mismatch - Tami’s unthawed “self” despite the warmth. Morris observes that in dialogic terms, “The external body of the sign is merely a coating, merely a means for realization of the inner effect, which is understanding” (51). Morris’ observation implies that for Tami to feel at home in Holland the paint in her world of exile must unite with her life through her addressivity. The beauty of Holland does not unite with Tami’s life for there exists no dialogue between them.

Ellipsis is also used to draw “seeing,” as in the case where someone is pointing out something to another person. In *The Bells of Amersfoort*, Katja points out for Tami: “Your neighbour across the street ... the woman ... I haven’t seen her do anything but clean the window” (125). Here, the ellipsis is used to draw the picture of the woman and to allow her paint to fill out for the viewer to be able to see her. Besides, the ellipsis draws a question about the woman’s continuous activity of cleaning the window. It could, then, be argued that seeing bends to understanding; creating a circular motion to familiar things or to try and make the unfamiliar knowable. Tami, for example, explains to

Martijn that her longing, not for Luthando, but familiar things makes her a stranger in Holland: “No ... not for him ... for ordinary things ... the smells ... the rain ... the thunder” (141). Tami longs for familiar things in South Africa, the things which calibrate South Africa, but not Holland, as her home.

Lack of unity between the painterly world and the subject’s life creates privileges which hinder inner effect and, hence, no understanding is gained. Subsequently, the painterly world becomes the “other,” which is just an annoying parenthesis. Tami reprimands Katja despite the latter’s caring disposition: “It’s not my fault that you bring out the worst in me. In one sentence - ‘I haven’t brought you anything to eat’ - you have erased the little sunshine that the children brought in my life” (125). Tami’s discomfiture emanates from Katja’s utterance which appears to paint miserliness, lack of generosity. For Tami, Katja’s sentence seems to paint something which is unfamiliar to her: “This is very cruel. You make me get used to your bringing me something to eat, and all of a sudden you stop. First you make me feel dependent and useless and pitiful. And then all of a sudden I must strive on my own” (124). For Tami, dependency is a familiar sign for people living in exile, and being asked to strive on her own becomes an annoying additional burden that she, accordingly, paints through the parenthesis in her utterance.

Language is a system of symbols which significantly interact with life through utterance to create meaning. In *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* The President complains about the demands of the Daughters of the Revolution: “There is no satisfying these Daughters of the Revolution. We gave them symbols. Still they complain. Great symbols! Flags! Anthems! Street names! All changed to reflect the new order of freedom. But are they happy? No! They want more!” (89). For the President, the great symbols

which his government dishes out to the Daughters of the Revolution should have satisfied as well as made them happy. However, the paintings of freedom - flags, anthems and street names - become mere slogans if their interaction with the lives of the Daughters of the Revolution does not create signs of life. Subsequently, the “flags” become mere ribbons; “anthems” are reduced to plain national hymns to which the citizens do not respond; while “Street names” are meaningless appellations.

The Young Man tries to explain to the President why the Daughters of the Revolution are not satisfied with mere symbols: “They have tried to eat symbols, but they still remain hungry” (89). For the Young Man, the Daughters of the Revolution are disgruntled because the symbols they have been given lack meaning. Symbols can only create satisfaction when they interact through utterance in a way that creates unity between the colours they paint and the people’s lives. The President claims that flags, anthems and changed street names are indicators of the new political dispensation in South Africa. However, these signs of freedom paint a mismatch instead of unity when they interact with the lives of the Daughters of the Revolution. Since life is dialogic, the overthrown President and his Cabinet are not spared the hunger initiated by the emptiness of the symbols painted by his oppressive political regime.

The president complains: “And what do we eat, eh? Do they know what we eat? Do they know we grovel for our food like dogs? Do they know that sometimes they forget to feed us, and we have to eat our own lice? Do they think it’s a banquet to be a government minister?”(89). “Eating” is a sign that gains meaning only when it interacts with “hunger” to create satisfaction. For eating to take place, there must be food, and for satisfaction to be attained the food must be agreeable. The President and his Cabinet are

in prison because a new regime has forced them out of government for apparently feeding people on distasteful symbols which interact with life to create the meaning of oppression and corruption. Nonetheless, the new regime repaints the world with the same paints of oppression and corruption. In *The Bells of Amersfoort*, Tami accuses Luthando of having learnt the slogans well after he boasts of being progressive: “You live in the past. You will learn soon enough that the good times are not yesterday. They are today. Here and now. We are the makers of history. The creators of a new beautiful society. Democratic. Non-racial. Non-sexist” (159). Luthando, like the politicians in the regimes in *You Fool*, *How Can the Sky Fall?* learns new symbols apparently meant to communicate the new political dispensation in the post-apartheid South Africa. For Tami, Luthando loses the true colour of freedom as he appears to just apply a new coating on the painting of apartheid using the old paint of oppression and corruption.

4.3 Language and Social Vision

It has been noted in chapter one that Wole Soyinka considers, “a creative concern which conceptualizes or extends actuality beyond the merely narrative, making it reveal realities beyond the immediate attainable,” (66) as the main characteristic of literature of social vision. Since language is the medium of communication in literature, Soyinka’s consideration implies that language contains the paint (material) for expressing social vision. For Soyinka, literature of social vision bends to a future that is not directly attributable to the present circumstances; it looks ahead to the yet to be discovered potentiality. Likewise, in language, each word or utterance looks forward to the meaning of the next word/ utterance until the full potential of the interaction is realized. It is,

therefore, plausible to argue that language contains social vision which is maintained by its creativity and ability to express realities beyond the actualities of the interlocutors.

In *The Bakhtin Reader*, Morris observes that “Every word is directed toward an answer and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates” (58). Morris’ observation implies that there is interaction between/ among the words in an utterance; every word, in essence every utterance, is said in anticipation of an answer or addressivity. Telephonic conversation could clearly be used to explain how an utterance anticipates a response. In *The Mother of All Eating*, there is a telephonic conversation between the Man and Jane: “Hello! Oh, it’s you, Jane. No she is not here. I thought she was with you, as a matter of fact ...” (3). Here, the Man’s utterance(s) are responses to what Jane says on the other end of the line. Jane calls wanting to talk to the Man’s wife but the Man picks the call since his wife is not at home. The Man says “hello” hoping that his wife is the one calling but on realizing that it is Jane, he expresses disappointment through the interjection “oh,” yet he looks forward to hearing something that would lift his disappointment. “No she is not here,” is definitely an answer to Jane’s inquiry of the Man’s wife. The Man’s utterance, “I thought she was with you, as a matter of fact,” is the man’s wishful thinking.

Later, Jane calls again; and picking the phone, the Man says: “Hello ... Oh, it’s you again, Jane ... No, she is not back yet ... I am getting worried, Jane. I should be going out to look for her, but where do I begin? You are the only friend she has. If she is not with you I have no way of knowing where she can be ...” (11). Jane’s utterance(s) are not visibly written in the telephone conversation but what she says in every instance is understood in the priming contained in the Man’s utterance(s). In “From Cognitive-

functional Linguistics to Dialogic Syntax,” John W. Dubois notes that “Priming creates cognitive conditions of enhanced activation for recently used linguistic forms and structures, facilitating their reuse in subsequent utterances” (353). Dubois’ observation implies that language is dialogic, in that, the speaker has the tendency of repeating segments of what has already been said. It follows, then, that when the Man says, in the above telephonic conversation, “No, she is not back yet,” there is priming of Jane’s inquiry about the whereabouts of the Man’s wife. The priming suggests that the circumstances of the earlier utterance(s) is still felt in the present, but not all of the utterance is repeated because there is some alteration caused by the linguistic exchange.

In *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall*, Culture sweetly reveals to Health, “I have this recurring dream, beautiful princess ... I walk in a garden full of flowers ... hand in hand with you,” and Agriculture reproduces the idea of the flower garden in his utterance as, “So corny” (54). Agriculture’s utterance repeats Culture’s idea of flower garden but with a disapproving tone meant to paint Culture in negative light. Health reiterates, “Shows how crude you are. To you, of course, flower gardens would be corny. Tell me more about your garden, little prince” (54). Here, Health introduces the idea that for Agriculture, “flower gardens would be corny,” because he lacks a sense of sophistication. The idea of the flower garden is first expressed as a beauty by Culture, then it is primed as corny by Agriculture, and it is extended as a kind of sophistication by Health. It appears that the idea of the flower garden is getting transformed as the interlocutors engage in their linguistic interaction.

In *The Bakhtin Reader*, Morris observes that for Bakhtin, “The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word; it provokes an

answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction" (76). Morris' observation implies that Culture's expression of the recurring dream anticipates and provokes a response from the interlocutors. On one hand, Agriculture's answer is expected to be that of disapproval since, like Culture, he is interested in winning Health's heart. On the other, Health's response is anticipated to be agreeable with Culture's utterance since she appears to be fond of Culture. Health's fondness for Culture does not settle well with Agriculture, especially when "beautiful princess" is responded to with "little prince". Agriculture laughs and disdainfully retorts, "Bah! Little prince! That's a new one, that, just like a puppy's name," upon which Health responds, "Well, if he calls me beautiful princess I might as well call him little prince. Or even handsome prince" (54). From Health's justification of her calling Culture "little prince," it is clear that language has the ability to transform the interlocutors' attitude and extend their expectations of one another beyond the present circumstances.

In *The Bells of Amersfoort*, Katja describes Tami to Martijn by priming Tami's description of herself: "She often says that she is a seeker. Has been looking for something since childhood. But never really knew what it was. Her loneliness is the loneliness of a seeker. I think she looked in the wrong places" (132). Tami's perpetual search for something, despite being unable to put her finger on it, appears to be provoked by her vision of life. In "Yakubinsky and the Circle of Bakhtin: Convergences", Robson Santos de Oliveira observes that for Yakubinsky, as well as for Bakhtin, language is dialogic since "in a response situation," (257) utterances bend towards predicative discourse. Oliveira's observation implies that Tami's description of herself as "a seeker" maps her inner state; and, hence, language can be perceived as the response that tries to

complete or find answers to her situation. Katja's subsequent utterance tends to predicate Tami's search by naming Martijn as the probable site for what Tami is looking for: "Maybe you are it," but Martijn laughs off the proposition, "Does she know you are trying to be a matchmaker?" (132-133). Katja's utterance implies that Martijn could be what is going to satisfy Tami's search for fulfillment in life.

For Bakhtin, Morris observes, "forming itself in an atmosphere of the already spoken, the [utterance] is at the same time determined by that which has not yet been said but which is needed and in fact anticipated by the answering [utterance]" (76). Morris' observation implies that dialogue is predicative in that the response follows what has been said in the same way adjectives and phrases trail the verb in a sentence. In *The Bells of Amersfoort*, Tami and Luthando make a promise to jointly heal South Africa from the wounds inflicted on her by the ills of apartheid. If the interaction between Luthando and Tami is configured in linguistic terms, then, Tami and Luthando would become conjoined subject of the sentence while the act of their "promise" is the verb upon which the predicate follows. The sentence would contain many clauses punctuated with different orthographical marks indicating various contending tones, but moving on, looking forward to what is needed, to what remains unsaid about the promise stated at the beginning.

With passage of time, the sentence develops but the promise expressed at the beginning remains valid unless it is overturned at some time as the sentence progresses. Luthando, for instance, addresses Tami: "Dear Tami, years have passed. The world you knew is no longer the same [...] No one has stayed to heal the land. I cannot hold on any longer, Tami. Many years have passed" (120). Luthando has been looking forward to the

fulfillment of the “promise” of healing the South Africa but there seems to be so many burdensome clauses in the sentence that waiting for it to weather into a complete sentential existence appears to weary Luthando. However, Tami reminds him of the promise they made of holding together until the end: “You promised, Luthando, that you would wait for me ... that we’d heal the land together. You have been strong for so many years. You cannot give up now” (120). Tami’s utterance suggests that language communicates social vision through its dialogic syntax which must hold together until the promise made at the initial stage is achieved.

The interactive nature of language creates social vision as the clauses in the utterance(s) interact to bring into being the accomplishment of the promise given by the subject(s). Some unforeseen shifts may occur along the way as the dialogue unfolds but the tone for making things better remains. Johan feels scandalized by Tami’s refusal to forgive him for having broken her marriage with Luthando in apartheid South Africa. When asked by Katja the day he returns to South Africa, Johan responds: “Maybe not at all. There is no place for me in Tami Walaza’s South Africa. It is a South Africa of anger, bitterness and vengeance” (156). At this Juncture, Johan appears to be weary and ready to opt out of the pre-dominant reconciliatory tone in the dialogue of post-apartheid South Africa. However, later he returns to South Africa because, first, as he tells Tami “The longing for the smell of the gravel roads after the rain was too much to bear,” and second, “To preside over your marriage, as your minister [...] Since I am the one who destroyed your marriage even before it happened, I want to be the one who joins you together in holy matrimony (160). Johan shifts from his earlier attitude of staying away from Tami’s South Africa, and decides to correct his past mistakes.

Language is a system of signs, and as Morris observes, “signs emerge, after all, only in the process of interaction between one individual consciousness and another” (52). The interactive nature of the signs enables interlocutor(s) to correct any mistakes they may have made earlier in their utterance(s) so that the dialogue looks forward to a desirable direction. In the case of Johan and Tami, their engagement begins in apartheid South Africa where Johan, a white Afrikaner police officer, arrests Tami on her wedding day and tries to force her to sell out her people: “You know what will happen when the bells toll [...] They will come, and they will beat the hell out of you [...] Very simple. Confess. Sell your comrades out. They will never know it was you. Confess and go home a free woman” (145). At this point, Johan ascribes pain to the “tolling of the bells” through his utterance such that, in the subsequent moments, the beauty of the tintinnabulation is lost to Tami. In actuality, when Tami meets Johan in Holland, where she lives in exile, the bells in Long John toll and, “[a]s the bells continue to toll TAMI is in agony,” which calls for her description, “I hate those bells,” but Johan wonders, “Such beautiful bells! How can they have such an effect on you? Who are you? What is your story?” (145). Here, the exchange between Tami and Johan implies that the interaction of signs in the interlocutors’ utterances is shaped by the stories ascribed to those signs by each of the interlocutors.

It seems plausible to argue that the story of the “self” and the “other” is hidden in the sign, and its meaning can only come into being through the interactive utterances of the interlocutors. The dialogue of signs tries to overcome inhibitions so that there is a forward-looking motion, which is comparable to Johan’s description of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in post-apartheid South Africa:

Accept that terrible things did happen ... in good faith, mind you ... no one had the intention of hurting anyone ... accept that things did happen and we, the people of the country, came together to work out our differences. And now we are trying to move forward. (149)

Johan's utterance is punctuated by ellipses, commas, upper case and finally full stop. The ellipses and the commas communicate the faltering pace created by the challenges in the interaction between signs for which the pain/ suffering experienced during the apartheid era, immobilization, is ascribed and those which indicate the dialogic urge to move forward despite what has happened. Having accepted that terrible things have already happened, the subsequent clauses try to explain away the misery, while charting a new path to enable the syntagmatic structure to move on to a desirable meaning.

As the addressivity of the sign(s) seek for new path(s), visionary meanings come into being as seen in the marriage between Luthando and Tami with each of the spouses choosing that which inhibits a re-union but allows freedom for the formation of more ingenuous interactions. Luthando chooses materiality over Tami while the latter opts for the interests of the masses: "Are you choosing a bicycle over me?" Luthando asks, while Tami responds, "What's happened to you Luthando? And our vow to heal the broken land? To work with the people to mend the scars of the past?" (159). Tami uses language to question Luthando's change of heart from their vow of healing the apartheid-charred South Africa. In *The Bakhtin Reader*, Morris notes that for Bakhtin "every [utterance] is directed toward an answer and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering [utterance] that it anticipates" (76). Morris' observation implies that "what happened to Luthando" is an addressivity to which Tami is forced to interrogate as a way of response.

Tami's answerability influences Luthando to dismiss the past: "You live in the past. You will learn soon enough that the good times are not yesterday. They are today. Here and now" (159). Perceived as a sentence, Luthando's existence would be like a hanging syntactic structure which lacks the past bits - in a sentence, what has already been said offers some grounding for what is yet to be said.

Luthando appears to conceive existence as an event in the present time/ space, completely detached from the past as well as the future. However, in *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*, Holquist notes that for Bakhtin, "Existence is not only an event, it is an utterance. The event of existence has the nature of dialogue in this sense: there is no word directed to no one" (26). Holquist's observation suggests that utterance(s) does not have completeness in itself but it engages with other utterance(s) in search of an answer to its addressivity. Subsequently, the social vision in language is structured by the very interaction of signs within the space/ time category without which the syntagmatic paradigm cannot come into existence. If existence is utterance, it means that we utter ourselves into being. It follows, then, that Luthando appears to obliterate his life since by dismissing the past and the future categories in his utterance; he denies the dialogue of social vision.

The relationship forming between Tami and Johan, with a shared intention of healing post-apartheid South Africa is, perhaps, a good juncture for understanding how language extends actuality beyond the present circumstances. Accepting that Luthando has changed and is now incompatible with her, Tami seeks for help from her former tormentor, Johan: "There won't be any marriage. There is something you can do, though. Help me do what Luthando and I had vowed to do: rebuild the scarred land. Heal the

wounds that still ache that history has imposed on my people” (160). Tami expresses her shared vision of healing South Africa in her utterance by conjoining the noun “Luthando” with the pronoun “I” in the clause starting with “What”. “Luthando” refers to a specific person with whom Tami has vowed to make things better for her country. The word “I” marks Tami’s unique position from which she responds to the addressivity of the world of apartheid. For Johan to be able to help Tami to heal the land, he must enter the gate of “I” in order to share her vision: “I will be with you. It is not an easy task to heal the wounded earth. But I’ll be with you” (160). When Johan utters the word “I,” he does not only mark his position at the site of healing the land, but he also indicates that his position collaborates that of Tami.

In *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World*, Holquist notes that “in the signifier ‘tree’ we see the signified tree. Most nouns work something like this, but not the pronoun for the self, for what ‘I’ refers to cannot be seen, at least in the same way that the word ‘tree’ enables us to see a tree” (26). Holquist’s observation implies that the word “I” extends practicality beyond what is directly perceivable as in the signifier/ signified interaction of most nouns. For the social vision in language to come into existence, the “other” must be with the “self,” in other words, the “I” and the “you” must enter through the same gate into the same values, purpose and intention in order to bring into being “we” who looks forward to better days irrespective of the present grievous circumstances. In their dialogue, Tami and Johan occupy the alternating sites of “I” and “you,” but before the sharedness of vision emerges these sites are quite lonely, as noted by Tami: “My loneliness continues. It is like I am still in Europe,” and Johan describes it, thus, “it is the loneliness of freedom” (160). The loneliness can only be removed through a collision of

the courses of “I” and “you” to form “we” with a transformed course which can be translated as the social vision in language.

The word “I,” as Holquist notes, “must be empty: ‘I’ is a word that can mean nothing in general, for the reference it names can never be visualized in its consummated wholeness” (26). Holquist’s observation suggests that “I” is not complete in itself but it looks forward for completion in “you,” and since the sites of “I” and “you” alternate in dialogue, “you” is also incomplete, if completeness is understood as fixity of site. The word “you,” like “I,” does not refer to a specific person, but any of the interlocutors can become “you” depending on the direction of the addressivity. In *The Bells of Amersfoort*, there is an interesting incident in which “you” is represented as “figures” to whom Tami inquires of the whereabouts of Luthando: “she finds her way among them, ‘riding’ her bicycle. The figures, which are indefinable, are frozen in agony,” and she says [to the figures], “Please, I am looking for Luthando. Have you seen Luthando?” (157). Here, “You” is indefinable in the sense that it refers to “figures,” that is forms, but not to any one in particular. It is, perhaps, the imperceptibility of “you” that makes the word’s inflection for number untenable. The singular for “you” as well as the plural is expressed using the same form. In dialogue, an observer would actually perceive the “I” and “you,” the interlocutors, as “you” engaging in the same event.

In *The Bells of Amersfoort*, Tami and Johan, “ride around the stage. The figures sing Ndophule. They are no longer frozen in agony. They are animated. They clap joyously” (161). The cyclic motion of the “I” and “you,” forms through alterity of the two pronouns in the dialogue, and the kinetic appears to thaw the imperceptibility of the figures. In actual sense, the figures have been singing: “Ndophule, ndophule, mntakwethu

(Break me, break me my brother/ sister)” (156). By “break me,” the Figures seem to be calling on the “brother/ sister” to respond to their agony of being immobilized so that they are able to surpass their present circumstances and become better. Indeed, the Figures are animated because of the cyclic motion initiated by Tami and Johan’s riding which breaks individualized, parochial interests, into a carnival-like interaction creating a whirlwind: “The two cyclists ride in a whirlwind around the stage, laughing. The song also becomes faster. They ride until they collide” (161). The collision of the two cyclists and the celebration by the Figures bring into being the social vision for post-apartheid South Africa.

In *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* there is an event that clearly indicates that language has the capacity to create social vision through the utterance(s) between interlocutors. Culture responds to the world of torture in the prison, where the whole Cabinet is locked up, by expressing a more desirable and flowery interaction of the “self” and the “other,” in a yellow garden with: “Yellow roses, yellow dahlias, yellow zinnias, yellow petunias” (54). By “yellow,” Culture seems to imply fair, sweet, creamy, and idyllic. However, Agriculture contests the assigning of the “yellow” colour to one of the flowers: “There are no yellow petunias. They only come in white, pink, purple or red” (54). Agriculture’s observation is the actuality of petunias as far as the signifier/ signified conception about the world of flowers is concerned. Nonetheless, Culture insists that what he says is true: “Well, in my garden there are yellow petunias. And there are yellow bees that are so large that a child can ride on their backs” (55). Culture’s claim that what does not exist in the physical world exists in his garden indicates that language has the potential of stretching actuality beyond the physical universe and the present

circumstances. “Yellow bees on which a child can ride,” credibly communicates the beauty in Culture’s social vision for the “self” and the “other” in South Africa. Health appears to love the garden: “It is a beautiful garden” (55). Health’s utterance affirms the possibility of bringing such beauty into existence.

For Culture the garden is even more beautiful when “I” and “you” interact in it: “You make it more beautiful when you walk with me in it, beautiful princess, especially when you are wearing a yellow dress, and I’m in my yellow suit” (55). Culture’s utterance suggests that the response of the “self” and the “other” to the addressivity of the yellow garden is what creates meaning. Holquist notes that for Bakhtin:

The world addresses us and we are human to the degree that we are answerable i.e. to the degree that we can respond to addressivity. We are responsible in the sense that we are compelled to respond, we cannot choose but give the world an answer. (28)

Holquist’s observation implies that the situation in the world demands an answer from those who live there. Subsequently, social vision emerges when the interlocutor(s) respond in language that looks beyond the present statuses into better days in the future. The symbolic nature of language enables the “self” and the “other” to craft a better world for themselves.

Social vision is a shared seeing of the world which aims at making the world a comfortable home for all. The “self” and the “other” must work through language to create the abode since, “the act of creating a self is not free; we must, we all must, create ourselves, for the self is not given (dan) to any one of us” (Holquist, 27). It follows, then, that creating South Africa as a ‘self’ for which all her people would use “I” to express, as

in “I am a South African,” and “you are a South African,” while addressing the “other,” requires a high degree of response to the addressivity of the post-apartheid world. Being able to speak a language does not necessarily bring home in the space where that language is spoken, but the potential of creating a “self” using the language is what brings a person home. In *The Bells of Amersfoort*, Tami tells Johan that she thought he would be at home in Holland since he is an Afrikaner upon which Johan responds: “I cannot say living in Holland has been difficult ... no ... but I never really settled in. I think of South Africa as home. I am an immigrant. A buiterlander. Even if I speak the language. Even though I look like any Dutch person. I live for the day when I go back home” (144). Johan’s explanation indicates that the social vision in language is only possible when that language helps you to envision a home for your “self”.

4.4 Conclusion

The chapter has raised a number of arguments in an attempt to show how Mda deploys the dialogic nature of language to communicate his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa depicted in *Fools, Bells, and the Habit of Eating*. First, it is evident that the painterly qualities of language are ineluctable in communicating the social vision for Post-apartheid South Africa, as social vision has to do with a shared seeing of the world in innovative idyllic colours and striving to bring the envisioning into existence through utterance. Subsequently, words are considered to contain painterly elements, such as paint and light, and that their organization in a syntactic structure creates painting(s) whose meaning is only perceptible through dialogue. Second, language has the capacity to extend actuality beyond the present circumstances through its symbolic nature and the dialogic relation between words in an utterance. It is clear that

Mda's social vision for post-apartheid South Africa comes into being as the characters, as well as the audience, respond to the addressivity of the world created in his drama. The performativity of language enables the playwright to uniquely organize the characters' interaction so that they are able to respond dialogically, looking beyond the individualized physical world into the envisioned beauty of a better cosmos.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

After collecting, organizing, interpreting and analyzing data on social vision as revealed in Mda's dramatic world under examination, the study has come up with the following findings:

- i) That the real home for Post-apartheid South Africa, as portrayed in Mda's world of drama, could only be found in the dialogic "self," whose relationship with the "other," who seems physically different despite occupying the same geographical and socio-political space, is defined by the spirit of integrity in Public Service.
- ii) That corruption operates through pseudo-artistic complexities which are shrewdly manipulated by perpetrators of the vice in order to create cognitive blockage in the Public Service's subject. Subsequently, the subject is cognitively blocked from noticing the sleaze in the Public Service or from fighting it.
- iii) That corruption thrives through complex pedagogics. Consequently, for Mda's fictionalized Post-apartheid South African society to be able to curtail the vice there is need to (re)organize pedagogical structures with the aim of sensitizing the subject that corruption eats away the well-being of a society.
- iv) That dramaturgy is a potent means of (re)painting Post-apartheid South Africa through the painterly elements of language as depicted in Mda's drama under study. Such a formalistic (re)painting opens new frontiers of freedom for Post-apartheid South Africa enabling her to redefine the home for her people.

- v) That Mda uniquely organizes the dramatic space in *Fools, Bells and the Habit of Eating* to lucidly communicate his social vision for post-apartheid South Africa depicted in his dramatic world.
- vi) That there is social vision in language which enables Mda to communicate imagined unrealized social potentialities for the fictionalized Post-apartheid South Africa in his plays under study.

5.4 Conclusion

Dialogic imagination is definitely the epicenter of social vision since it enables a society to envisage the dramatic convolutions of yet-to-be-experienced potentiality through literary spaces; thereby, offering ingenious and insightful perspectives with efficacy of overcoming monologic actualities of the present social realities. Subsequently, it is evident that Mda's *Fools, Bells, and the Habit of Eating* is an architectonics of social vision encompassing Lesotho and South Africa as a block which stands, not in isolation, but interacts with the rest of the world in search of a home for humanity. The political block is bedeviled by a culture of eating whose definition is corruption and oppression. As characters respond to the addressivity of these social challenges they appear to be authoring a book of social vision for post-apartheid South Africa. The social vision comes into being through the performativity in the dialogue between characters who translate into "self" and the "other," or, linguistically speaking, as "I" and "you". The interlocutors act in alterity since in drama, as well as in life, there is really no fixity of site. The actors must enter through the gate of "I" to a shared ness that is termed as "we," in linguistic domain, and "self," in the dialogic context, in order to arrive home.

In *The Mother of All Eating*, Mda lends the site of corruption a candid voice which, self-importantly, tries to corroborate the story about an apparently blissful home built on the spoils from sleaze in the Public Service. This voice is given the tag “the Man,” undoubtedly, to communicate the ambient attitude in the world of corruption that a person’s official capacity is a given (dan) site for self-aggrandizement with little or no regard for the other human beings. Engaging in corruption daringly and creatively, coming up with ingenious techniques of eating, is considered a mark of virility in the shenanigans’ circles. However, the Man painfully discovers that what Bakhtin says about the “other” being the material for building the “self” is actually true. By eroding the world of the “other” through corruption, the Man charts not just the death of others but also his own death. At the point of death, the Man realizes that corruption is a deceptive road masquerading as destined to a site of becoming strong, powerful and full of life; but in actuality it leads to the death of the society. Previously, the Man considers his position of sleaze as the “self,” home, but the “other,” like Joe who says no to corruption, as “you” shrouded in foolishness.

In *You Fool, How Can the Sky Fall?* the political aspect of corruption puts the President and his whole Cabinet into prison after a faction accusing them of bad governance takes power by force. It is clear that corruption imprisons the whole society instead of offering freedom to the individuals or groups who engage in it. The art of corruption works through blocking of cognition so that people think there is some true development while what they see is just a calculated cosmetic coating which wears out before long. By “You fool,” political impunity speaks about the apparent infallibility of the Official Moguls. The sky of corruption appears sound for the Official Moguls but

they agonizingly discover that, in reality, it is a firmament of betrayal and self-imprisonment. The Cabinet realizes that their President, whom they so loyally serve, is the one who has been selling them out to their tormentors through his introspection. It is evident that political corruption is a process of deceptively furthering one's own feelings, thoughts and ideas with no regard for others - it is a monologic process that tries to protect parochial interests while posing as a platform for patriotism.

The response to the addressivity of corruption may be found in complacency or militant opposition from the voice(s) of integrity. Complacency extends the death caused by corruption while militancy tries to heal the land from the wounds inflicted by sleaze. In *The Bells of Amersfoort*, the playwright clearly indicates that restoration of a healthy society is only possible through architectonics which moves all the sections of post-apartheid South Africa away from introspection to a dialogue meant to heal the land. The interests of the people should be marked, not against the creation of masterpieces of their leaders, but on making the society strong, powerful and full of life.

The motivation of the characters in Mda's dramaturgy is clearly a search for a home that would free them from dearth and its attendant social setbacks. The study brings to the fore the insight that home is dialogic rather than materiality. Home is a unique relation between the "self" and the "other" that enables each one of them to enter through the linguistic gate of "I" into the sharedness of virtues, but not vices. The social vision Mda tries to craft for post-apartheid South Africa, therefore, is not just an extension of actualities from the present circumstances but it is, in essence, a search for a dialogic home in which all South Africans irrespective of their pigment, creed or other social considerations would come and work together to heal the land into a beautiful haven for

which “I” and “you” would identify as a “self”. Subsequently, home is a shared “self” rather than an individualized one.

When the segments of existence, “self” and “other,” stand in isolation, they are fractious and they cannot come into being unless they engage in dialogue. Therefore, what life is must be the anchorage in the relation between the “self” and the “other”. The ambience of the anchorage is carnival-like celebration which characterizes Johan and Tami as they ride around the stage in a whirlwind, with the Figures singing Ndophule. It follows, then, that for the post-apartheid South Africa depicted in Mda’s drama to come to life, the fractious segments must look for anchorage by initiating a dialogic relation which, as is the character of dialogue, is going to propel them away from parochial interests to commonalities that make a healthy society. The anchorage has the power to thaw frozen symbols into signs of life; what happens to the frozen Figures in Mda’s world of drama.

It also becomes evident that a home is not given but people must create a home for themselves through the relationships they make and the way they use language as paint to colour those relationships into being. Subsequently, in painterly terms, Mda’s social vision for post-apartheid South Africa is aimed at creating a painting of a blissful world unitedly militating against oppression and corruption in order to reach common aspirations, anchoring all the peoples of the country into a shared “self”. The painting created by the political leaders and most of the public servants in Mda’s *Fools, Bells, and the Habit of Eating* is one of a grotesque body eating away everything including infrastructure, such as roads, leading to death and its attendant miseries. However, the playwright deploys characters who seek for something beyond materiality, such as Johan

and Tami, to paint a carnival-like world in which the courses of individuals run in circles until they collide into a common pathway.

This study does not presume to be exhaustive for Mda's *Fools, Bells, and the Habit of Eating* definitely has other pathways for research which are yet to be investigated. Metaphors of social vision in the dramaturgy seem to be one of the tenable areas for further research. Another idea for research could be "Introspection and the quest for freedom" since all the three plays discuss the theme of freedom against a background of parochial atmosphere.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made from the findings:

- i) That there is need for the fractious units of "self" and "other" to abandon their monologic spaces and come together and dialogue so as to find a real home.
- ii) That a more extensive study on the art of corruption, with the aim of revealing how the vice thrives despite societal efforts to curb it, should be made. A comparative study engaging texts from different authors, occupying different geopolitical terrains, might give more elaborate insights on the art of corruption.
- iii) That corruption could only be effectively countered through artistic means since the vice has gained transcendental ramifications into a pseudo-art whose complexities create nonrepresentational forms of the depravity. Subsequently, a more extensive study needs to be done to find out how art could be used to expose and fight corruption as depicted in diverse fictionalized dramatic spaces.
- iv) That pedagogy is a fundamental tool for fighting corruption because the vice itself evolves through complicated pedagogics which brings on board new troupes and

nifty tactics of deceptively engaging in sleaze. More elaborate study, therefore, should be conducted to research on the pedagogy of corruption and what counter-measures should be put in place to curb the vice.

- v) That there is potential for development of a Linguist Theory of Social Vision which might have greater efficacy for responding to literary works whose main objective is to extend fictionalized actualities beyond the present circumstances of lived experiences in order to communicate tenable frontiers of improving humanity.

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