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Blurred lines in AC Jordan's novel *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* (*The Wrath of the Ancestors*): a literary geography of factual and imaginary spaces

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ABSTRACT
This article serves to fill a theoretical lacuna in African language literary scholarship. To date there have been very few literary geographic analyses related to South African literature and there are none that deal with African language literature. The purpose and objective of this article is to apply theoretical aspects of literary geography to an isiXhosa novel, *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*. This novel, written by AC Jordan is perhaps the best known and most widely read and translated novel written in isiXhosa. The authors of this article aim to contribute to postcolonial studies by reading the novel of A.C. Jordan spatially, using Hones's conceptual framework of the novel as a spatial event, considering the complex relationship between the author, the text, and the readers. The background of the author and the historical circumstances that surround the writing of the novel are also explored to see how Jordan's own spaces are reflected in the novel through characterization and other techniques. The core focus of the article lies in the descriptions and relationship to real or imaginary or in-between spaces and places in relation to the research question, namely how space and places are depicted in *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya,* as part of the spatial event.

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Introduction

Africa is often described in stereotyped ways in novels, the media and even in academic literature. Novels about Africa written by authors from the Global North are often given more recognition while a legacy of novels written by African authors in African languages are hardly researched. Exceptions

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exist of course. Studies mainly focus on urban agglomerations like Johannesburg or Mogadishu. The focus of this study is on a novel written by the famous South African author A.C. Jordan, namely *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* (translated as: The Wrath of the Ancestors). The aim is to research the blurred lines between "factual" and "imaginary" spaces. Furthermore, this novel plays out in a rural South African setting, the present-day Eastern Cape Province. Further aspects which will be researched are the translation challenges of place names or landscape descriptions and how these are reworked into Afrikaans and English. Incorporating an isiXhosa novel into literary geography research can only be a first step to decolonising African language literature. Further research is necessary in that regard, including analysing the work of other authors writing in other languages as well as developing a clearer conceptual and analytical literary geography tool for novels of the Global South.

To date, a scientific analysis or focus of literary geographies of African countries or places seems largely not to have been undertaken. There are some exceptions, notably Deborah Hart's study about literature geography focusing on the South African township of SOWETO, though again from a stereotyped point of view. She emphasized how "Soweto" seems inseparable from and connected to violence, dehumanization and even placelessness. It is also seemingly entirely disconnected from "white" South African literature up until the mid-1980s when she conducted her study. Such pejorative descriptions often include a combined description of the place or sights with sounds or smells (Hart 1986, 192). Her publication is rather a rare example of a very early literary geography study of South Africa. Another example of Apartheid South Africa is by Pirie, who studies novels and their description of townships, an area totally ignored by "white" geographers during Apartheid (Noble and Dhussa 1990, 57). Therefore, there exists a lack of any deep literary geography analysis for South African novels or authors and time periods, specifically those writing in African languages. Consequently, the authors aim to analyse this spatial event of *Ingqumbo Yeminyana* by shedding light on the complex author-text-reader relationship. A.C. Jordan is among the most influential authors who have written in both an African language, isiXhosa (an isiNguni Bantu variety) as well as in English in South Africa. Nevertheless, up until today there are hardly any literary geography studies focusing on African language novels, and specifically on *Ingqumbo Yeminyana.*

This curiosity regarding space issues was informed by a philosophy referred to as literal geographies wherein space is used as an angle of validating the factuality of the story. This is, in simple terms, geographic research, a manner of perceiving the world through the lens of literature. To this view, Michel Foucault argued that "today's anxiety concerns space in a fundamental way, much more than time", and the implications of this claim remain to be fully worked out (Foucault 2000, 177) in relation to Jordan's creative

work. Within the field of geography, the distinction between space and place is very important and clearly defined. Space describes objective areal relationships on the earth's surface and is at the core of spatial analysis and map making. Contrary to this, the concept of place contains a very special meaning for geographers. Places describe locations with its associated values or identities. These include places of worship, shops or brands, our homes or other frequently visited locations as well as specific distinctive locations. Human Geographers developed the term "sense of place" in the 1970s. This term emphasises our attachments to the above-mentioned places, but also to locations someone has never visited before. Some evoke a global sense of place: Jerusalem, Mecca, or Cape Town, (O'Donnell 2017) while others remain regional or national: Kruger National Park, Johannesburg, Durban or the Garden Route (Ivanovic 2014). A sense of place also exists for specific landscapes: beaches, ocean, forest, town, villages, farms or mountains and involves individual sense of being (Butz and Eyles 1997).

According to Philo, "literary geography might be regarded as one specific articulation of the cultural turn in human geography, which had its beginnings in the early 1990s" (Philo 2000, 27). This cultural turn has seen geographers and literary critics engage closely with film, dance, sculpture, and the visual arts as well as literature in an exploration of the specific modes of geographical thought that cultural texts afford and are afforded. Human geographers have been interested more "in what literature can teach them about the relationship between humans and the non-human environment; and a well-established strand of literary criticism considers the role of place, region, and landscape in literary texts" (Alexander 2015, 4).

Sharp (1904), the novelist who coined the term "literary geography", argues that the term "literary geography" means more than the specific places and / or regions associated with individual writers. It can also refer to the various ways in which those geographical entities are reimagined in their texts (Sharp 1904). Miles Ogborn on the other hand makes a distinction between "textual geographies" and "the geographies of texts", where the former entails detailed readings of the meanings of texts, spaces, and their conjunctions, whilst the "geographies of texts" offers a materialist study of the geographies of literary production, circulation, and reception (Ogborn 2005, 149). To add to this Joanne Sharp (2000, 327) contends that the relationship between geography and literature offers an engagement with literary fiction that analyses the content and form of the text. Engagements with literary and other texts, according to geographers such as Brosseau (1994), Pocock (1988), Noble and Dhussa (1990), Hart and Gregory (2009) and Adams (2009) might be divided into (1) text in space and place, and (2) place and space in literary texts.

Literature has been introduced to us as something fictional and / or fictive that is linked to something real. There is also the possibility that the fictional is moving towards factual and literature as we know it today is based on

reality and true events, though it is presented as distorted reality. Positioning fiction into real-world maps does not mean that the imaginary aspect of fiction disappears. The literary geography notion has led to the quest of finding reality or factuality of the tale or story, something which calls for philosophical analysis. For the purposes of this article, the focus is more on literary geography as representations of spaces and places in the text itself. Hence, this article aims to contribute to postcolonial studies by reading the novel of A.C. Jordan spatially by using Hones's conceptual framework of the novel as a spatial event, considering the complex relationship of author-text-readers. The interaction of those three elements with their various space-time trajectories allow the novel to "happen" as Hones powerfully described it (Hones 2012, 253):

> It is in this sense that a work of fiction comes to life – happens – in the interaction of various elements, conventionally stabilized in the tripartite division "author-text-reader," but with each element within that structure characterized by internal variation and multiplicity. Through their interaction in space-time, these individually multiple elements collectively generate particular contexts within which the novel emerges as a spatialized and transitory event.

The article is structured as follows: Initially, the methodology and the conceptual framework will be described. This is followed by a section about the author and the historical circumstances during his writing of the novel to contextualise the analysis of the novel and his role in the complex author-text-reader relationship. The core focus lies on the descriptions and the relationship to real or imaginary or in-between spaces and places in relation to the research question, namely how space and places are depicted in *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* or *The Wrath of the Ancestors* as part of the spatial event. The setting of a novel, for example description of landscapes, towns, specific localities, regions and spaces and places remains the core aspect of interest for literary geography studies. Additionally, actors and places are inextricably linked with each other. Therefore, even "factual" or "real" spaces are not a real factual description of certain towns, landscapes or buildings, but rather the literary imagination of A.C. Jordan's places, which each and every reader interprets again quite differently depending on various variables (Neumann 2015, 97).

Methodology

The methodology followed in this article is that of a close reading of A.C. Jordan's novel, *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* (1940) translated into English as *The Wrath of the Ancestors* (1980). Such a close reading method allows for the text to be linked to the conceptual framework that is outlined below. Essentially the methodology seeks to create synergies between the actual

literary text, the sense of place in the text and the theoretical paradigm of literary geography by using Hones's spatial event of the novel. Hence, part of the methodology is the analysis of the author-text-reader relationship. This allows us to see how the author's life and work have become embedded in the actual novel in relation to both lived and imaginary places in order to construct the text together with the relevant spatial imagery. The perceptions and distribution among various global readerships are also included in this analysis. This approach is similar to Ferré (1946), who included in his analytical frame the life and personal experiences of the author's visited places and its potential reflection in a novel.

Literary geography: a conceptual framework

Geography is by its nature an interdisciplinary subject. By focusing on its literal translation of its Greek origins, the core focus of Geography is to write about the world. There is no absolute consensus on the origin of the term Literary Geography. According to Pocock (1988, 88) the earliest attempts of some kind of literary geography appeared in 1910 in England, written by Hugh Robert Mill and in 1923 in North America. Hill saw some unused potential of novels for the teaching of geography through the rich narrative of certain geographical or climatic descriptions within novels. As mentioned above, others see the first usage of the term by William Sharp in 1904 with his book publication *Literary Geography,* or a publication by Vidal de La Blache with a short Geography article of the Odyssey. Collot (2015) argues that the discipline began with André Ferré's *Géographie littéraire* in 1946 (based on his PhD thesis "Géographie de Marcel Proust" from 1939). For half a century, very few authors worked in this field, which was still within the area of historical geography just by adding a "literary point of view" (Noble and Dhussa 1990, 51; Brosseau 1994, 334).

Only in 1974 did the American Association of Geographers (AAG) dedicate a specific session at their annual conference to landscape in literature. In the 1980s and 1990s intensified research started again, which was closely related to the spatial and cultural turn mentioned above. Literature as well as art or music were seen as a very valuable source to research relationships of communities and societies with the environment, their space and place of living and being. Cultural artifacts such as language, religion or cultural beliefs and traditions, music, art and myths or literature become the core of certain countries or regions and groups (Fabio 1996). Many publications focused on rather "exotic" countries at that time due to their sheer distance from the Global North such as India, the Caribbean, but also South Africa (Pocock 1988, 88). Travel literature is one manifestation of such, referring to the relevance of space within novels. The description of any places in a

novel, either "factual", "real" or "imaginary" ones are now seen in the broader context of the entire novel, the author and time of writing. Even "real" spaces reveal more than what is suggested at first sight. Although describing factual spaces, authors see and define such spaces as their specific places through their own eyes, revealing their concepts and definition of certain places as well as certain concepts such as "town" or "nature". Pocock summarized the relationship of settings and character as well as the author's work and concluded that it has to be contextualised in time, but also in place: "Meaning is connected with relationships, and as contextual beings we are beings-in-the-world, which means not only beings-in-culture but also beings-in-place. The case for the importance of our relatedness, our rootedness, is supported by a variety of writers" (Pocock 1988, 91).

Some authors developed conceptual frameworks, but those are still mainly basic and limited. An example is the "home-insider" or "away-outsider" frame developed many decades ago by Porteous (1985), who stressed the (still existing) persistent interest in rural landscapes, despite the diminished population living in such rural settlements. Despite such early studies or interests by Geographers on literature, for many decades hardly any new research or publications emanated. Many authors emphasised the rather unidirectional interest on literary geography (Pocock 1988, 87). Up until recently, disciplinary differences or as Hones (2008, 1307) calls it "two strands remain stubbornly distinct" hamper any holistic, overall accepted theory of literary geography as well as one commonly accepted conceptual framework. Therefore, approaches and developments are seen as twofold: Either as a spatial turn within arts and humanities such as literary studies or as a manifestation of a cultural turn for human geography. Furthermore, literature influences perceptions of humans and societies about certain geographical spaces, some being positive while others are negative. Novels influence geography itself and for literary geographers, descriptions of spaces and places in novels are no longer a mere décor, but rather play a much more active role in modern literature (Collot 2015, 220–221).

To add to this complexity there are terminologies that co-exist, describing different aspects of literary geography, such as imaginative geography, literary cartographies, geocriticism or ecocritism, geopoetics, geohumanities or geography of texts, just to name a few (Collot 2015, 217–226; Alexander 2015, 5). Research about literary geography are far more advanced and widespread among French or English academic literature compared to German publications and are predominantly concentrated in France, the United Kingdom and North America. Another very interesting sub-field or related field to literary geography is research about literary maps or literary cartography (Luchetta 2017; Piatti 2015). Research focusing on

postcolonial studies or world literary studies are an emerging and growing approach in literary geography, but remain limited. To reflect such plurality a plural term is preferably used, reflected in a journal named *Literary Geographies*. Furthermore, the point of analysis varies between scholars. Some focus on analysing description and meaning of places and spaces by selecting one novel or one author, and others will select an entire body of work or publications. Others analyse information related to a specific novel, including, but not limited to its publication history, its regional or national or even international circulation, as well as its changing reception throughout history.

Another often ignored aspect is the relationship of the fictional text and its readers. Their perceptions and interpretations of a specific novel and its description of places differ and create rather a "text-as-event" or "text as it happens" (Hones 2008). Readings and definitions of A.C. Jordans novel differ in Africa, America and Europe. Just as Saunders (2010, 449) put it so rightly by stating "that meaning and significance often lie at the intersection of creation and consumption, production and reception". Therefore, as mentioned above the authors in this article use Hones's author-text-reader framework to analyse the novel as a spatial event.

In *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*, there is a rich selection of spaces and places by the author which directly correlate with the early life and upbringing of A.C Jordan. The places reflected in this novel speak to his early life, growing up in a rural area of the old Transkei region, prior to his appointment to the University of Cape Town where he set up the African Studies discipline. This was also prior to his departure to the United States where he chose to escape the ravages of the apartheid system. He became a professor and never returned to South Africa. These early places are reflected in the novel through commonly recognised spaces in the area related to towns, rivers, mountains, places and so on: Xhokonxa (a mountain); Gcina, Tsitsa, Umzimvubu and Thina (rivers); Fort Hare (a historically black university); Lovedale and St Cuthbert's (early mission stations) Mthatha, Tsolo, Alice (towns); Jenca (a rural area); ikomkhulu (the Chief's Great Place). Those mentioned spaces symbolise what Thacker (2017) calls "textual space", the existing interaction between social spaces and spatial forms in a written novel. Such descriptions of places as well as the overall novel is not a mere neutral pure description of real and/or fictional spaces and places. Rather, A.C. Jordan's novel and his views and perceptions are influenced by his own socialisation and remain a product of society and clearly visualise the complex author-text-reader relationship of the novel. Like all authors, A.C Jordan is not an extraordinary and neutral creator of his novel by narrating some universal truth, but rather he is deeply embedded and articulates his positionality within a broader socio-spatial context namely his novel *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* (Brosseau 2017, 11).

The spatial event of *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* and the influence of A.C. Jordan

Ingqumbo Yeminyanya from A.C. Jordan can be interpreted as a spatial event or as "text-as-it happens" (Hones 2008). A.C. Jordan's life and educational upbringing influence clearly the novel and are reflected on several occasions. Many of Jordan's characters, places and situations are close to reality. The character Nomvuyo came from Idutywa, the home of Jordan's wife. The lengthy train journey from Mthatha to Alice had a long sojourn in King William's Town (now Qonce). This also happened for Thembeka and Mphuthumi and for the party that went to fetch Zwelinzima from the university in order to allow for him to take up the chieftaincy. The advice given to Zwelinzima that he should consult "eliya xhego leBhishopu" (that old Bishop) related to Bishop Edward Smythe of the Anglican Hostel at Fort Hare University who, in reality was known to always has a sympathetic ear for students. Zwelinzima's arrival in Mthatha and his stay at a local boarding house also reflects in reality such a space that existed in Madeira Street during that apartheid time when black travellers could not stay in formal hotels (Makalima in Kaschula, 1991, 2-3). The novel therefore in many instances reflects a text as it happens (ibid.). Jordan's life story and experiences of space as discussed below are indeed inextricably linked to events that take place in the novel.

Archibald Campbell Jordan was born at Mbokotwana near the village of Tsolo in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa on 30 October 1906. He attended St Cuthbert's Mission School and obtained a teacher's training diploma from St John's College in Mthatha. Thereafter he attended Lovedale College and went to Fort Hare University where he passed matric under the Joint Matriculation Board (JMB) and in later years he became a lecturer there. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1934. Jordan then took up teaching posts, firstly at Kroonstad, then at Healdtown before returning to the Kroonstad Combined School, which prided itself in obtaining excellent JMB results, comparable to any school in the then Union of South Africa (Makalima in Kaschula 1992). Ndlela (2014, 207) refers to A.C. Jordan as follows: "Seemingly forgotten, this teacher, visionary scholar and political activist was one of the key figures in the advancement of the Black literary tradition in twentieth century South Africa and beyond its borders."

In 1942, A.C. Jordan obtained his MA degree before lecturing at the University of Fort Hare. Thereafter he was appointed as a lecturer in African languages at the University of Cape Town where he obtained his doctoral degree in African Studies in 1957. He then left South Africa for the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the United States of America where he became a professor and remained with his wife (Phyllis Ntantala) and family until his death. Ndlela (2014, 207) sums up this part of Jordan's life as follows: "After a

year of teaching at Fort Hare University Jordan was appointed as a lecturer in African languages and literature at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 1946. It was there that he began a new method of teaching isiXhosa to non-mother tongue speakers, which he published as *A Practical course in Xhosa* (1966)." The sad reality is that Jordan was not able to remain in South Africa due to his political activism against apartheid. Ndlela (2014, 207) continues to comment as follows: "In 1961 Jordan was offered a Carnegie scholarship to do research in the United States, but was refused a passport by the South African government. As a result of political pressure, he was forced to leave South Africa on an exit permit." This meant that Jordan could not return to the country of his birth.

While in South Africa, Jordan was a political figure and an activist. He belonged to the Cape Voter's Association which campaigned for the extension of the then Cape franchise to all four provinces for all adults, black and white, as part of a call for universal adult suffrage. A.C. Jordan was also part of the Transkei Organised Bodies (TOB) to which all organisations in the then homeland of Transkei were affiliated, leading to a peasant revolt in 1960 sparked by the enforcement of the *Bantu Authorities Act* and separate development for blacks as opposed to whites. He was also a member of the Cape African Teachers Association (CATA) which stood against the implementation of Bantu Education. Jordan also became a member of the All Africa Convention (AAC), a national federal body in South Africa that accommodated all political groupings and rejected apartheid laws of segregation. He was also a member of the then Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) in an attempt to bring together Africans, Indians and the Coloured community into a single political fold, creating a " … unity of the oppressed … " in the country (Mda 1995, 6). Ndlela (2014, 208) refers to Jordan as someone who " … ranks as one of those "value-oriented" intellectuals who were maligned by the establishment for daring to speak the truth. He consciously deployed his scholarship to advance the cause of the underdog, the voiceless and the marginalised."

At heart, A.C. Jordan remained bound to his rural roots: adept at traditional stick fighting and carrying his knobstick at ceremonial functions (Mda 1995, 7-8). However, due to the apartheid policies, he and his wife left South Africa for the United States of America in the 1960s where he taught as indicated above. He died in exile and unfortunately never returned to South Africa, leaving behind a legacy in the fields of African literature and education.

Spatial temporalities and culturally shaped places in A.C. Jordan's *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*

The work of Jordan is textually and texturally bound to the physical spaces that are depicted in works such as *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* (*The Wrath of the*

Ancestors). This novel has been translated into a number of languages including English and Afrikaans (Neethling 1997). Its different perceptions, understanding and conceptualisation among such diverse readership remain difficult to analyse. These translations have also led to challenges when reconstructing these geographic spaces through other languages. The smells, sounds, physical spaces and landscape are integrally linked to the thematic repertoires and characterisation that occurs in the novel. The broad area that is covered in the novel moves from the amaMpondomise district of the village of Tsolo, St Cuthbert's Mission Station through to the Fort Hare University campus in Alice. These are all geographic areas with which A.C. Jordan was extremely familiar. According to Makalima in Kaschula (1992, 8): "When he left St Cuthbert's and went to Fort Hare he had experienced and enjoyed to the full the joys and distresses of rural life, and knew all its vicissitudes. He was Pondomise born and bred. He drank deep from the rich fountain of Pondomise folklore and history … " Makalima (*ibid.*) therefore firmly locates Jordan within this geographic and cultural milieu of the Eastern Cape Province, a province which is spatially integrally connected with his creative writing. The spaces described by A.C. Jordan are very familiar places not only for himself, but also among amaXhosa readers. Other South African readers might interpret these places very differently depending on their individual spatio-social upbringing and contacts with those described spaces in the novel.

Briefly, the novel revolves around the amaMpondomise Chieftainship and succession. The present Chief is aging and it is hoped that Zwelinzima – the world is difficult – (now a young student at Fort Hare University) will succeed the Chief. However, Dingindawo (the one who seeks a place), the Chief's brother, wishes to succeed him and there is a constant threat from Dingindawo against Zwelinzima. There is a twist in the tale when Zwelinzima marries Thembeka (who is then renamed Nobantu – person of the people – in terms of custom). They are both educated and cannot relate to the traditional amaMpondomise people and their traditions. The young couple have a son, Zululiyazongoma (thundering heavens). The climax comes when the son is visited by the Nkwakhwa snake, a harmless snake that is regarded as bringing acceptance and blessings from the ancestors to the young boy, who in terms of custom will ultimately succeed his father as the first born. Thembeka proceeds to kill the snake, fearing that it presents a danger to the boy. This is seen as a rejection of the ancestors and the community. Therefore, the snake itself symbolises specific cultural places within this novel. Thereafter tragedy begins to strike, leading to the deaths by drowning of Thembeka and her son, while Zwelinzima also takes his own life. The novel therefore has the underpinnings of a Shakespearean tragedy. Neethling (1997, 18) states that "[w]hen *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* … was published by Lovedale Press in 1940, it was soon hailed as

representing a milestone in the development of modern Xhosa writing as well as in the greater context of the (black) Southern African languages. It soon came to be known as a classic in the literatures of the African languages, a position it still holds today."

As indicated above, Makalima (1987, 2) makes the point that "Many of Jordan's characters, places and situations are so close to reality that at times one may forget that it is a novel that one is reading." Makalima (*ibid.*) further points out that the Character Nomvuyo (one of happiness) came from the town of Dutywa where Jordan's wife initially lived. The train from Mthatha to Alice where the University of Fort Hare is located took a long break in then King William's Town (Qonce) which is exactly what the characters Thembeka and Mputhumi (Zwelinzima's friend and contemporary, whose name refers to the one that fetches) experience in the novel on their way to fetch Zwelinzima in order to inaugurate him as the new Chief of the amaMpondomise. When Zwelinzima arrives back in Mthatha there is also the issue of where to stay as during apartheid, hotels were reserved for white people. This meant that Zwelinzima had to stay with someone who provided a bed and a meal informally. According to Makalima (1987) this scene is reminiscent of Mrs Ntshona's establishment in Madeira Street. "She also had a piano and her son became an excellent entertainer on the instrument. One cannot help imagining that Jordan had this place in mind when he described the scene at the arrival of Zwelinzima" (Makalima 1987, 3). Another special feature that occurs in the novel is the Chalmers Bridge, a swinging bridge. According to Makalima (1987, 3) this was a foot bridge " … between Fort Hare and Lovedale which had been put up by the headmaster of the high school and his students in 1930 … "

The presentation of country scenes in Jordan's novel are plentiful. A further example of presentation of rural spaces is the vivid picture of travellers on horseback. Waiting to be received in a relaxed manner, their horses grazing while the lady of the house returned with a bucket of water carried on her head, welcoming them cordially while she reached for the house key under the thatch roof above the door.

Spatially this novel also enters the realm of psychological spaces. This is the first important socio-cultural and psychological space dimension to be examined. This is related to beliefs in the ancestors of the amaMpondomise as mentioned above, hence the title of the novel. In brief, the now educated Chief (Zwelinzima) and his wife Thembeka, both fresh from the University of Fort Hare, do not believe in traditional values and ancestors. When Thembeka's first born male child is visited by the harmless Nkwakhwa snake, a totem of the Royal House of Majola, which represents acknowledgement of the infant by the ancestors, she kills the snake, thereby rejecting the space of the ancestors and creating a space for calamity to follow. The Chief should have a relationship with the snake which also links the royal

house to the ancestors. In this case there is total disregard for the ancestors and the snake. Nyamende in Kaschula (1992, 230) points out the effect of this spatial distance in the surrounding villages when he states that " … after the killing of the snake, tension continues to rise among the Mpondomise people. Frank talk and confrontation dominate the ensuing discussions at the royal court and spread out to the villages. The escape of Nobantu to her own people, the withdrawal of the children from school and the skirmishes within the villages, resulting in the death of Ngubengwe and Jongilanga (warriors and protectors of custom) are all pointers to the wrath of the Mpondomise people." One can extrapolate from this that the tranquil rural landscape has been disrupted both physically and psychologically by the killing of the snake by Nobantu. The only way for them to remove themselves from this space in for Zwelinzima to commit suicide and for his wife and son to follow him in death through a drowning incident.

The son's name is Zululiyazongoma: "Thundering heavens" or "rumbling sky" and this also presents an ominous space in which the child exists within the realm of pending thunder and doom. Spatially, one can infer that the chaos has moved from earth to the heavens with the use of "izulu" or heavens in the title of his name. This alluded to the wrath of the ancestors. The associated lightning is also feared and brings with it a sense of spatial destruction. Property will be destroyed as well as people's lives, culminating in the deaths of Thembeka (Nobantu), Vukuzumbethe, Zululiyazongoma and at a later stage Zwelinzima. Vukuzumbethe was Zwelinzima's friend who tried to save Nobantu and the young Zweliyazongoma from drowning, but he also perishes in the process once Nobantu enters the waters of the Bedlana River with her son.

The incident of the killing of the Nkwakhwa also represents a spatial conflict between the schooled and unschooled amaMpondomise people, the latter being known as the ochre people due to the red ochre that they painted on their faces. When Zululiyazongoma is born the ochre people complain that the chief's umbilical cord is left in the hands of strangers before being anointed by a traditional diviner or doctor. Thembeka's mocking of the tradition related to the Nkwakhwa and her killing of the snake to protect her child sets a rift with the ochre people. She therefore invokes their wrath as well as that of the ancestors, causing an irreversible rift between Thembeka and her people. She is therefore spatially removed from the traditional values, the ochre and earth from where she emanates.

This psychological realm is also depicted through water in a spatial sense. Ancestors can also be referred to as River People and it is sometimes believed that ancestors reside in deep pools. It is therefore ironic that Thembeka drowned. Jordan describes the deep waters of the Thina and Umzimvubu Rivers, which are central to the novel. Ancestors are seen as people who have just moved to another world, they feel justice and injustice – hence

the terrible consequences for Zwelinzima and Thembeka when she kills the Nkwakhwa, thereby rejecting the ancestors. The snake is represented in the form of the river by Jordan:

> Isiziba esikhulu esimnyama, esinabe ngathi ngumihlobololo wenyoka usotha ilanga.
>
> (Jordan 1940, 7-8)
>
> A big dark pool, in the shape of a snake basking in the sun.

The river represented spatially as part of the landscape in snake-form is a reminder that the ancestors are always watching over everything in Mpondomiseland. This spatial dimension also refers to the psychological impact of the land being lost to European settlers, thereby further angering the ancestors and resulting in further chaos within the Mpondomise people. This is represented in a conversation where the character Ngxabane (an elder and custodian of culture) is talking about the amaMpondomise:

> Lavakala ixhego libalisela ngeenkosi zamaMpondomise, libala zonke iziziba ezangavatywe kuzo eThina naseMzimvubu. Zagqibela ngokuthi umhlaba wemka nabelungu nje … kulahlwa kwamasiko. "Akuboni ke ngoku!" … Buphi ubukhosi?
>
> (Jordan, 1940: 8)
>
> The old man was talking about the Chiefs of the Mpondomise, counting all the pools of the Thina and Mzimvubu. They ended up saying that the land had gone with the white people … the customs were abandoned. "Can you not see!" … Where is the Chieftainship?

From a spatial event point of view the snake is a common snake seen in the nature around Tsolo and the great place, *Ikomkhulu* of the amaMpondomise people. There is a disconnection between the Chief and his wife Thembeka (or Nobantu) from the physical space and landscape in which they find themselves. They have essentially disconnected themselves from their spatial linguistic and cultural landscape. Scheub, who is quoted by Qangule (1972, 81) sums this up as follows: "Zwelinzima and Thembeka have been cut off from their roots for a long time, and are more completely products of the new world than of the old." Ironically her new name of Nobantu means "one who cares about the people, or one of the people". In her case she was rejected by both the ancestors and the people, or perhaps it is she who rejects herself and by virtue of that she becomes a persona non grata in her own community.

Another example of how Jordan constructs spatial events based on his lived rural experience is contained within the following quotation in the novel where the characters Mzamo, Dabula (young friends of Zwelinzima) and others have gathered at Mzamo's home to discuss Zwelinzima's

appointment as the Chief of the amaMpondomise. The power of spatial events observation with the arrival of the horsemen is clear in the following extract (and English translation):

> Kwakuxa libantu bahle. Amathunzi eenduli zaseNcholokini aye anabe ada aya kuthi rece ezintlanjeni ezantsi. Enkalweni kwathi thaphu iinkabi azamahashe ezimalunga neshumi, zathambeka intaba, zanqumla amathunzi, zenje njeya, zibetha kuhle; zaya kuthi gubu phesheya kwentlambo, zaqingqa enkundleni kumzi omkhulu, phezu kwamanzi eThina.
>
> (Jordan 1940, 1)
>
> It was late in the afternoon. The shadows of the Hills of Ncholokini had lengthened and touched the valleys down below. A group of ten horsemen suddenly appeared on the horizon. They descended the slope at a steady pace, crossed the evening shadows, ascended the opposite slope and came to a halt in the nkundla of an imposing homestead overlooking the waters of the Thina River.

The textured writing builds a spatial event which is identifiable both for the characters and the author as well as the reader who has any knowledge of rural life and spatial dimensions. Horsemen appearing on the horizon is a common and endearing sight. When Mzamo does arrive, this sense of rural space is again manifest when the character comes down the hill – one can imagine the hill being grassed and green with cows grazing.

Another example towards the end of the novel is when Zwelinzima begins to distance himself from his friends and family. This loneliness is represented through the depiction of spatial event in the following extract:

> Yabonakala ngenye intsasa ithabatha intonga ihamba ngeenyawo, iphumela eNtibane isiya kuqabela kuBulembu yodwa. Yahlala imini yonke apho …
>
> (Jordan 1940, 224)
>
> Early one morning the Chief took his stick and walked across the country, up the Ntibane ridge and over the Bulembu rising. There he remained alone the whole day …

Once senses the isolation and alienation of the Chief through the spatial events description.

Spatial descriptions can also be found in Jordan's naming of characters as part of the process of characterisation. The names of the characters are often linked to events and spaces that assist in depicting a certain milieu. This can be seen as a form of literary onomastics (Sibeko in Kaschula 1992). The names therefore carry a form of cultural significance and capital that also relates to cultural spaces. Zanemvula is the "bringer of rain". If Zanemvula (Chief of the amaMpondomise) were to die then his place as heir to the amaMpondomise throne would be taken by his younger brother, Dingindawo, literally "the one without a place". When Dingindawo does take

over as regent (due to Zanemvula's deteriorating health) Zwelinzima (who would later become Chief) is born. His name means "the world is difficult", speaking again to the world being a difficult space for him to survive. His life is immediately under threat from Dingindawo who sees him as opposition. The young Zwelinzima is secretly moved to live with Gcinizibele "keeper of generosity" who raises him as his own child. The spatial dimensions contained in these names are a conscious attempt by the author to further enhance characterisation.

Zwelinzima's world indeed becomes difficult when he is taken from his studies at Fort Hare University to become Chief. His friend Mputhumi "the one who fetches" is used spatially to go and take Zwelinzima, or rather to convince him to give up his intellectual landscape or space for the Chieftaincy of the Mpondomise far away in the rural Tsolo area. Even his praises that are sung by Mputhumi locate Zwelinzima spatially as follows in the city of Mthatha and beyond the Xesi River in his personal praises:

> Santywil" eMthatha, savunduz" umhlaba, Seza kuvumbuluka phesheya kweXesi likaRharhabe …
>
> The one who passes Mthatha, shaking the earth, The one who exposes / digs up beyond the Xesi of Rharhabe …

These place names (Mthatha) and river (Xesi) in the land of the amaRharhabe locate the young Chief and even transport him beyond his borders to the lands of the amaRharhabe clan.

Another reference or name that depicts space is that of the "Mafelandawonye " – the ones who die in the same space or place. In other words, this is a group of men who are prepared to die in the same place (or for the same purpose), namely to keep Zwelinzima in power and to defeat Dingindawo "the one without a seat" when he attempts to displace Zwelinzima as Chief. Dingindawo's is ultimately linked to Jongilanga's death and he chooses to go into exile, thereby removing him spatially from the context of the Mpondomise people, ultimately confirming that indeed he is the one without a space and that he is really a displaced person. This displacement is reflected spatially in the text as follows:

> kuvakala ukuba wakha wabonwa eThekwini; abanye bathi waya kuzifihla eLusuthu.
>
> In other words, it was said that he had been seen in the city of Durban, while others said that he had relocated to the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Lesotho is a neighbouring country or Kingdom. In any event, in terms of the spatial events the character of Dingindawo is removed from the amaMpondomise context. He represents a space of "wanderings" and "scatterlings"

where he will need to find his own way and sense of spatial and socio-linguistic belonging as Sesotho is the dominant language in Lesotho unlike isiXhosa in Eastern Cape. What follows is a discussion of the impact of the spatial temporalities on the lives of the characters.

What has been shown above are the geographic spaces within which the characters operate in the novel. These spaces also have an impact on how the lives of the characters develop and change over time. In other words, these spatial temporalities play a role in the character development of the novel. One is able to trace the changes in Zwelinzima and Thembeka's lives through analyzing the spaces represented before Zwelinzima and Thembeka were married, as opposed to after they attend university and then return to rural Transkei. One is also able to trace the academic influences that made them culturally distanced from the traditional amaMpondomise people. This spatial change that results in an intellectual shift is then at the heart of the title of the novel where the ancestors are alienated in the process, thereby leading to their wrath. These spatial dynamics therefore result in cultural geographies which speak to the changes that the characters undergo, thereby setting up the conflict between traditional values and modernity, between traditional beliefs and Christianity.

These binaries resulting from the change in cultural geographies based on spatial events are what Jordan uses in order to move the conflict along, thereby entrenching the theme of alienation and isolation of the main characters in the novel. The change in spatial dimensions represented through Zwelinzima's university education are portrayed as follows by Nyamende (1992:, 19–20): "It is obvious … that Zwelinzima's values are virtually at odds with those of the majority of his subjects. To him the ancestors have no real meaning. Instead his individual desires prevail over the conditions that accompany his heritage." Jordan depicts this cultural alienation as follows:

> UbuMpondomise wayebuthanda egazini yena, kuba wakhula ebaliselwa iimbali zamagorha eso sizwe, loo nto yamenza ukuba athi naxa sel'enakho ukuzifindela asoloko efuna ukwazi imo yeso sizwe sakowabo … Kodwa yonke loo nto yayise ifana nje nento yomntwana oliNgesi othanda ukufunda amabali kaKing Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table … (1979:35-36)

> Of course he was proud of being Mpondomise, and from early childhood he had listened avidly to the legends of the heroes of his people … All this, however, could be likened to the love that an English child would have for the legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table … (1980:35)

This extract shows clearly the cultural alienation caused by spatial interference through Zwelinzima and Thembeka moving from the rural to the more urban spaces through their respective education, ultimately leading to their tragic deaths.

Lastly, we now turn to the space and translation of *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*.

Translated spaces and places in *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*

It should be noted that Africa is spatially complex: there are rural, peri-urban and rapidly growing urban spaces. These are depicted differently from country to country. There are also different cultural norms underpinning these respective spaces. These spatial differences add to the literary tapestry that interprets these spaces across cultures and languages in Africa. South Africa is a multilingual and multicultural society. It is therefore important for literary texts to be translated from indigenous African languages into English and Afrikaans, but also from one indigenous language to another as well as from English and Afrikaans into indigenous languages. Neethling (1997, 18) in relation to the translation of *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* into English states that.

> Peteni, in the introduction to the English translation, says that it was attempted to give the English-speaking reader a peep into the treasure house bequeathed to humanity by Jordan. He probably quite rightly adds that a translation can at best only be a poor imitation of the original and that the power and the soul of the original text cannot be recaptured in the English version.

This speaks to the lack of equivalence and other challenges when translating from an African language into English. However, these translations are necessary in order to explore space, reality and fiction from a cross – or inter-cultural perspective. Neethling then proceeded to translate the novel into Afrikaans and he comments as follows in this regard: "The world of the amaMpondomise so aptly described by Jordan in his novel would by and large be a closed book to most Afrikaans readers and a glimpse into this world … would be interesting to the Afrikaans reader … " By using the word "glimpse" this indicates that any translation can never really do justice to the original, especially when it comes to spatial dimensions of a living community, located in space and time, such as the amaMpondomise peoples.

Even so, Neethling (1997, 19) acknowledges that the translation of the title of the book, the first challenge to be encountered represents an almost "direct translation", following the English direct translation. In Afrikaans it reflects as *Die torn van die voorvaders'*, " … notwithstanding the misgivings around the role of the ancestors" (Neethling 1997, 18). Chapter headings are also left as equivalents of the isiXhosa. What is of interest is that the third person narrator in the novel was changed in the Afrikaans version, thereby saving on space. Again, this speaks to how languages vary in terms of the measured use of language, isiXhosa being measured, metaphoric and obfuscating the obvious in favour of lengthy discussion, hence the use of the third person narrator.

Translation therefore comes with its own spatial challenges and complications as some geographical dimensions are difficult to decode as they may be culture-specific. Take for example where the Chief resides in *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*, referred to in isiXhosa as *Ikomkhulu*. This is translated as "The Great Place", but what does great actually mean in this context? Does it refer to the grandeur of the place or perhaps the size of the place? This remains unclear from a spatial perspective but the *Ikomkhulu* in isiXhosa requires no qualification in terms of its greatness or importance.

A further example is when Zwelinzima's praises are sung. These refer to him not only spatially in the sense of cultural and physical belonging, but also spiritually and his sense of belonging (past and present) in the community. However, the term *imbongi* (oral poet) is referred to as praise poet in English. This is highly misleading as the *imbongi* was not only there to praise their subject, but also to criticise them and to advise them socially and politically. There is therefore no equivalence between these two terms.

Neethling (1997) in relation to the translation of these aspects related to cultural spaces makes the following important and interesting point: "In a few cases the Xhosa terms were retained, such as a *lala* of beer, the *inkwakhwa* snake, the *nqwebeba* tree, the *imbongi.* I also left *amafelandawonye* (literally those who die in one place, that is inseparable until death) essentially unchanged, just omitting the class prefix *ama-,* calling them *die Felandawonye* or *die Felandawonye-grope* … For *amaMpondomise omthonyama* (pure-blooded amaMpondomise in the English translation), I decided on *rasegte Mpondomise.* For *amaqaba* (the ochre people in the English translation), I opted for *rooikomberse"* which literally means red blankets. In terms of cultural spaces Neethling (*ibid.*) therefore suggests a combination of using original terms in isiXhosa and where necessary providing suitable explanations. To some degree this helps to retain the authenticity of the original text in relation to spaces that reflect culture, language and identity and even physical spaces.

In relation to physical spaces, it is also interesting to note that place names are not seen as representing any real challenge as these are reflected in various languages. Neethling (1997:, 21) states that in regard to original isiXhosa place names " … that have acceptable Afrikaans (or English) equivalents (exonyms), these obviously posed no problem. Hence *eQonce* becomes King William's Town, *eBhayi* becomes Port Elizabeth and *eMonti* becomes East London. Institutions like *eNgcolosi* and *eMthwaku* become St. Cuthberts and St. Matthews respectively. This obviously is not translation in the true sense of the word. It is rather a case of a particular locality having different representations in different language communities." It is also noted that Afrikaans is rich in idioms and that this made it easier to translate the isiXhosa idiomatic expression in Afrikaans.

Translated spaces related to *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* can therefore be seen as contested. However, as pointed out earlier, these translated spaces provide a glimpse into the locality, the world-view and cultural spaces of the amaMpondomise people which would otherwise not have been possible for English and Afrikaans-speaking readers.

Conclusion

In this article we have drawn a link between literary geography and the spatial representation/events presented in A.C. Jordan's novel *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* by using Hones's conceptual framework of the novel as a spatial event. It is clear that the very essence of the writer's rural upbringing, the textures, spaces and places, form an integral part of the writer's creative imagination and influence the text. Hence, a very close personal nexus between the author and the text becomes very clear. What exists in reality as recognised space within the amaMpondomise community has been transported onto the literary page as interpreted by A.C. Jordan. The author has been able to integrate fact with fiction in this novel in order to make the spaces of his rural upbringing a reality in the novel or at least his interpretation of the reality of such spaces. From the Chief's *Ikomkhulu* or Great Place, the Chalmers Bridge to the city of Mthatha and the University of Fort Hare as well as St Cuthbert's Mission station, all these places are important for A.C. Jordan and represented in the novel. This article therefore has attempted to link the life and work of A.C. Jordan through his novel *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* as part of the author-text-reader nexus to interpret the specific role of certain places for A.C. Jordan as well as the role of translations to the various, different readerships. An analysis of A.C. Jordans novel as a spatial event is something that has not been previously done in relation to isiXhosa literary analysis. The translation challenges especially of translating specific places into Afrikaans and English become very clear, as languages are clearly linked to the socio-cultural and spatial environment from which they originate.

In conclusion, Said's statement about geography and colonialism remains very relevant. There is further research that is required about A.C. Jordan as well as other South African indigenous language authors concerning a literary geography perspective in order to contribute to post-colonial studies:

> Just as none of us is outside geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, forms, images and imaginings.
>
> (Said 1993, 7)

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