ABSTRACT

Apartheid is an Afrikaans term, which means, “separation”, and in the South African context it means racial discrimination. It is a policy initiated by the Nationalist Government after 1948 and it has always been a device for separating and dividing the people of South Africa in order to facilitate the domination and exploitation of the majority (the blacks) by the minority (the whites). The present research work examines the nature of Apartheid in South Africa, before and after the nation attained political independence in 1994 and to explicate signs and codes embedded in culture in representational texts:

- *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948/2002) by Alan Paton;
- *Kaffir Boy* (1986) by Mark Mathabane;
- *Ways of Dying* (1991/95) by Zakes Mda; and

The selection of the texts is based on the facts that these novels can be treated in accordance with the chronology of their production or publication and their being pre-Apartheid, Apartheid and post-Apartheid. The theme of South African Apartheid is dealt in a realistic manner in these texts and they provide a qualitative ground and potential for semiotic analysis.

The aim of the study is to explore the meaning potentials of the above mentioned novels as a semiotic system. For the textual analysis, the levels or codes as illustrated by Roland Barthes in his analysis of a French novelette, “Sarrasine” in his *S/Z* (1970/1974 in English) are taken and the notion of ‘archetype’ from the point of view of Umberto Eco has been employed. In other words, each novel is analysed in terms of Barthean codes which conclusively is harboured with respective archetype thereof.