NORTHERN SOTHO HISTORICAL DRAMAS: A HISTORICAL-BIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

by

MALEKUTU LEVY BOPAPE

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I declare that **NORTHERN SOTHO HISTORICAL DRAMAS: A HISTORICAL-BIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

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DATE

(Mr M L Bopape)

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(c) **KGOŠI MMUTLE III**

Legora Campbel Molaba
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Mmampedi Ntsoane
Fred Motlokwe Phatudi-Mphahlele
Maleka, M.R
and Sophia Mamabolo

DEDICATION

To the memory of my late parents, Tlhagane Lot and Mabore Selina Bopape. May their souls rest in peace.

SUMMARY

The main aim of the study is to make a historical-biographical analysis of four selected Northern Sotho dramatic texts. Chapter one illustrates that the texts we have selected are historical dramas since they deal with the life histories of historical characters. In order to comprehend these texts, it is important to view them as evidence of oral history. The chapter also discusses the approach used by Fleischman which consists of the following parameters: authenticity, intention, reception, social function, narrative syntax and finally narrator involvement.

Chapter two discusses the play *Marangrang* as a reflection of the consequences of Shaka's imperialism and how this affected the Eastern Transvaal in 1820. The chapter illustrates that in order to understand the life history of Marangrang, it is important to discuss it in relation to this period, popularly known as *difaqane*. It is clear that information about Marangrang has been deliberately distorted because of fear.

Chapter three deals with the destructive consequences of Western religion on the traditional African religion. The chapter is based on the life history of Kgašane, who was murdered in 1884, allegedly for his devotion to Christianity. The chapter shows the importance of the need to make a re-interpretation of missionary writings, specifically those surrounding the Berlin Mission Society in South Africa.

Chapter four focuses on the role of formal education in the destruction of the Bakgaga ba GaMphahlele history. The chapter is based on the life history of Kgoši Mmutle III in bringing formal education to the people of Mphahlele and how this destroyed certain traditional institutions such as chieftainship.

Chapter five deals with the problems experienced by mineworkers and also shows the sufferings of Africans at the hands of the government. The chapter is based on the life of Serogole Mathobela, who once worked in the mine.

Chapter six is a conclusion where the findings of the previous chapters are made. The reasons why the authors of these texts suspended certain information while highlighting other information varies from fear to propaganda. In conclusion, it is observed that in order to do justice to oral history more financial support is needed.

Key Terms: dramatic text, historical approach, biographical approach, authenticity, intention, reception, social function, narrative syntax, narrator involvement, oral history.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 AIM

The basic aim of this study is to make a historical-biographical analysis of four Northern Sotho historical dramas. The point of departure for this study is an assumption, implicit in the title, that these dramas are historical, that is, these dramatic texts are some sort of evidence of oral history. As a result of this assumption, the study proposes to explore the nature and limits of their historicity by applying a method that is historical-biographical in nature. At the same time we wish to illustrate that the use of this type of method can help us in understanding texts that purport to be 'records' of historical events. Obviously, our objective is twofold: first to test the historicity of the selected plays and secondly to test the suitability of using an approach we have suggested. Before discussing the basic tenets of a historical-biographical approach, we would like to define what 'oral history' is. This definition will help us to understand the scope within which we will be treating the texts we have selected.

There are various definitions of what oral history is. For the purpose of this thesis, we will give only four. According to Webster's Dictionary, oral history is "a cohesive record of an individual life or of an event (usually relevant as social history) assembled through systematic interviewing of person or persons concerned" (1995:705). From this definition, two things emerge, firstly that oral history is a record of an individual or an event and, secondly, that oral history involves the collection of data through interviews. On the other hand, Cruikshank (1994:404) sees oral history as a "more specialised term usually referring to a research method where a sound recording is made of an interview about first hand experience occurring during the lifetime of an eyewitness". Thus to Cruikshank, oral history is a research method. A clear picture of what oral history is emerges when one considers the definition of Allen et al (1981 :23). They see oral history as both a method and the product. This is what they say: "the term oral history is used in two ways. It can refer to the method by which oral information about the past is collected and recorded, and it can also mean a body of knowledge that exists only in the people's memories and will be lost at their deaths". They further say that they would "prefer to think of oral history, therefore,

not only as a method of acquiring information but also as a body of knowledge about the past that is uniquely different from the information contained in written records".

We would like to conclude this section by quoting Caunce (1994: 11) who defines oral history as,

> ...a method of gathering material, a contribution to the general process of making sense of the past so that we can better understand the present and plan for the future. It is one type of historical source among others, albeit an intrinsically interesting one, and a very neglected one that has needed to have a spotlight turned on it to make people aware of it.

Caunce also regards oral history as a method but goes further and shows that oral history is an important element of historical source despite the fact that it has been neglected for quite sometime. Caunce's concerns are also the concerns of this research. The approach to be adopted in this thesis is that oral history is both a method of gathering historical information as well as the information that has been collected.

One of the basic characteristics of oral history is its varied nature. There are normally a countless number of stories on a particular historical event. It is usually the responsibility of the researcher to collate these views together and remove embellishmental details. In removing these embellishmental details the collector must always keep in mind what Cruikshank (1994:414) has observed, namely that oral traditions cannot be treated simply as evidence to be sifted for 'facts'; they are told from the perspectives of people whose views inevitably differ depending on context, social position, and level of involvement. This means that the perspectives of the collector as well as that of the contributor or contributors to influence (oral) history must be kept in mind all the time so as to guard against subjectivity.

There are in all many characteristics of oral history, but for the purpose of this thesis we have decided to follow those identified by Allen et al (1981:27). They identify eight of these characteristics as follows:

> ...orally communicated history is characterised by disregard for standard chronology; emotional association of persons as a primary organising principle; clustering of oral accounts around significant events or persons; reliance on visual imagery and striking detail;

> compression or telescoping of historical time; displacement of original actors in a historical event with others; migration of dramatic narrative elements among historical accounts; and patterning of oral accounts of different events along similar lines".

It will be clear in our discussion how the four texts we have selected exhibit all or some of the characteristics. The approach we are going to adopt is that these texts represent the 'truth' about the lives of the historical characters they purport to portray. Our job will be to test their historicity against the prevailing information among the people touched by the persons or events.

The plays we have selected for this purpose are *Marangrang* (1971), *Kgašane* (1958), *Kgoši Mmutle III* (1966), and *Serogole* (1948). We have selected these plays because they satisfy certain criteria. Firstly, they reflect a unique historical pattern characteristic of African culture, and Northern Sotho culture in particular, under the influence of certain elements both internal and external. These elements are distinguished as tribalism, religion, education and lastly socio-economic factors, in that order. Secondly, these historical dramas have been selected as they cover a wide range of the history of the Northern Sotho speaking people, namely Bakone history (*Marangrang*), Balobedu history (*Kgašane*), Bakgaga ba GaMphahlele history (*Kgoši Mmutle III*) and finally history of Africans in South Africa in general (*Serogole*).

Finally, of all Northern Sotho literary works, these are the ones which can withstand the rigid test of a historical-biographical investigation. In other words, these works are the ones about which it has proved possible to gather the largest amount of historical and biographical information which will enable us to understand the Northern Sotho speaking people's history better. At the moment, they lend themselves better than others to historical-biographical treatment. The decision has also been brought about by the reliability of these dramas to the historical 'truth' and again because the sources that informed these dramas can be verified, to a large extent, by employing various techniques. The techniques to be used in gathering information on the historical event or experience portrayed by the drama will have to involve, firstly, an interview with the author if he is still alive, secondly, interviewing people directly touched by the event or experience portrayed by the work and lastly, making a bibliographical research on the historical event the play attempts to portray.

1.1 A HISTORICAL-BIOGRAPHICAL METHOD

A study of this magnitude needs an appropriate research methodology. A brief survey of literary methods used recently reveals a host of contradictions which McGann (1985:3) ascribes to certain internal divisions and contradictions in literary studies. This period McGann describes was marked throughout by, on the one hand, "a series of institutional self-investigations and indictments, and, on the other, a proliferation of new 'textual strategies' which seek to salvage, by subtle and sometimes ingenious modifications, the customary methods of close reading and analysis". The reason for these contradictions within these "types of stylistic, formal, 'readerly', and structural methods" is that they placed much emphasis on form at the expense of content (McGann 1985:4). The unsuitability of these methods for invoking historical experience is aptly described by Msimang (1990:40) who remarks:

> These theories focus on the text and its literariness and completely disregard extratextual factors such as the cultural context of a work of art, or the reader who interprets such a work of art. This preoccupation with the text means that the only setting recognised by the critic is the one drawn and defined by the author.

The other problem with these approaches, which has also been observed by Msimang above, is that these methods see the meaning of any literary work as arising from the text only. This problem was brought about by the New Critics who failed to "recognize that meaning exists only within a specific language, or more precisely within a specific discourse, and that it cannot therefore inhere timelessly within the words on the page" (Belsey 1991:18). McGann (1985:3) is of the opinion that one of the basic prerequisites of literary studies today is the need to re-integrate the entire range of socio-historical and philological methods with an aesthetic and ideological criticism of individual works. In this way, McGann continues, one will be able to resolve contradictions which are part and parcel of literary studies. It is for these reasons that we have decided to use variations of the historical-biographical method as no single method is sufficient in literary studies.

A historical-biographical method is defined by Guerin et al (1966:5) as the method that sees "literary work, ... as a reflection of the author's life and times; of the life and times of the characters". The method in its traditional sense involves the collection of facts which are then related to the author and his work. These facts include the author's letters, prefaces, interviews, et cetera, which form part and

parcel of the author's life and times. In this way one is able to make a 'complete' interpretation of the author's message and intention. It is unfortunate that it was at that point that the method committed a crime against literary works in that it concentrated only on the author and content with little regard to other important elements of the literary process, such as form. This, in turn, led to a stage where "little facts were accumulated in great numbers, while books or pictures interested [the critic] chiefly as 'signs' or 'documents' which could be used as evidence of some phase in the history of the human spirit in the past. The general characteristics of a work of art were largely due to the fact that the artist acted under the impulse of aspects such as heredity and environment" (Babbitt cited by Swanepoel 1990:4).

Indeed, the method lost its worth in the face of the New Critics who charged that the approach disregarded the central importance of the literary text by concentrating on "the externalities of historical, social and cultural issues and thus ignoring the internality of the text" (Rabinowitz 1982:27). Fortunately, there are scholars such as Fleischman (1983), McGann (1985) and others who call for reconsideration of the significance of using the basic ideals of a historical-biographical method. In their endeavour to resurrect the method they employ reception-oriented literary history to prove the desirability of re-integrating various methods. It is the combination of these approaches, they maintain, that has the potential to yield the most fruitful insight into the textual production of societies temporally and culturally far removed from our own (Fleischman 1983:279).

The procedure to be followed in applying this method is explained more fully by McGann (1985b:10) when he writes:

> First, we must reconceive the literary 'text' as the literary 'work', i.e. as a related series of concretely determinable semiotic events that embody and represent processes of social and historical experience. Second, and following from this, is the concept of a critical methodology as embracing two large and related fields: the history of the literary work's textualizations and the history of its reception. Both of these histories occupy themselves with three important heuristic distinctions: between the work at its point of origin, the work through its subsequent transmissions, and the work situated in the immediate field of a present investigation. Third, these topics and focusses of critical work must be seen as moments in a dialectical investigation. They cannot be pursued in isolation; they must be integrated into a critical process which encourages various points of view to comment upon and critically illuminate each other. Finally, 'meaning' in the literary experience will also be reconceived as the process by which literary works are produced and reproduced. Meaning in [literary

> work] is neither the ideology of the [work] nor the ideology of the critic; it is the process in which those ideologies have found their existence and expression.

Important points are obvious in the excerpt above, namely the recognition of the text as a series of semiotic events representing social and historical experience; the histories of the text's textualisation and of its reception; the need for a dialectical investigation and lastly that meaning in a literary work is the meeting point of various ideologies. Any study of literature which ignores these essential aspects is bound to fail in its endeavour to interpret any text. This is the basis of what we intent to investigate in this study.

1.1.1 Historical method

It should be clear by now that in reading literature, more specifically African literature, one is always involved in history since this literature deals predominantly with socio-political issues and is not bent on presenting a fictional world for the sake of aesthetics. This peculiar involvement of African literature with history immediately calls upon the critic to invoke the basic principles of a general theory of historical criticism.

The historical method is defined by White (1984:2) as the investigation of documents in order to determine what is the true or most plausible story that can be told about the events of which they (documents) are evidence. It is apparent from this explanation that a historical method involves verification of documents to determine the authenticity of the historical truth portrayed by the text. In their endeavour to verify *authenticity*, critics who used the method during the advent of the New Criticism were faced with numerous problems. Most of these problems can be attributed to the fact that these critics accepted the views of the New Criticism which isolate the text from its social setting. McGann (1985b:18) explains the problem of this approach as follows:

> Such practical decisions will always remain problematic so long as the critic agrees to accept the great commonplace of the twentieth century literary criticism: that a [literary work] is fundamentally a word-construct, a special arrangement of linguistic units, or - as we now like to say - a 'text'. Once that idea is accepted, the originally heuristic categories 'extrinsic' and 'intrinsic' are instantly reified, and the so-called [literary work] becomes alienated from its social setting. Consequently, the practical problem... how does a person decide when to invoke historical materials or methods reveals itself as fundamentally a procedural question. A comprehensive theory will show that we need not doubt the relevance of 'extrinsic' methods and

> materials; rather, what the critic must weigh are the problems of how best and most fully to elucidate the [literary work's] (presumed) networks of social relations.

The excerpt above illustrates vividly the weaknesses of accepting the views of the New Criticism. It is an indisputable fact that no literary text can be studied in isolation. For a complete interpretation of any literary text, one must elucidate its network of social relations.

It must be pointed out immediately that documents, though considered primary and at times secondary sources on which historians rely for the collection and verification of evidence, are not always reliable. They reflect the ideology of those in power, and it is for this reason that they are considered an 'official version'. It is, therefore, important to balance this official information with unofficial evidence collected from the powerless, those on the periphery of power. These texts, which we call 'hidden transcripts', will help the researcher find very salient facts which official documents have always sought to avoid. It is for this reason that we are going to interview various people from different categories, such as those in power, the powerless and even those far removed from the historical events portrayed by each text in order to achieve that balance. Lutherans will, for example, not always be reliable in narrating the story of Kgašane. Part of what they say may be exaggerated for sentimental reasons. This might also be the case with Kgoši Mmutle's children regarding Mmutle's life history.

1.1.2 Biographical method

According to the communication model propounded by Jakobson, the act of communication starts with the addresser or sender of the message (Serudu 1987:44). This is the writer who writes his text for a particular purpose. Flowing from this view is the idea that a knowledge of the author's socio-cultural background, to some extent assists in understanding a literary work. Lindenberger (1975:5) sheds light on the importance of the writer's biographical data when he says that:

> ... the contemporary meaning of a historical play cannot be defined simply in terms of the dramatic conventions within which it is expressed. It has long been commonplace that historical plays are at least as much a comment on the playwright's own times as on the periods about which they are ostensibly written.

In Northern Sotho, various scholars have adopted variations of this method in their studies. Amongst these scholars we have Makwela (1977) who applied the biographical method in his study of E.M. Ramaila's works. Later both Mashabela (1979) and Serudu (1989) applied biographical information in their interpretation of O.K. Matsepe's poetry and prose narratives respectively. They both reached the conclusion that Matsepe's family and social life informed most of his works. Kgatla (1988) in his study, *E.K.K. Matlala: Mongwadi wa Tšhukudu*, used biographical information and reached the conclusion that "Matlala's writings can be comprehended clearly against his social and cultural milieu. His politically motivated writings are a point in question". From what has been said it is clear that the author's biography is an indispensable tool the critic can use in order to understand a literary text.

It is against this backdrop that we feel we need biographical information about the author to help us understand his views on the role of education in history and literature and vice versa. In order to determine the author's view on education, literature and vice versa, the critic basically needs to know the author's life history, his motive(s) for writing the work, his method(s) of gathering information for the work and his problems and fears. This information should be structured to give the reader an idea about the author's views on the role and function of literature and history as well as education in society. In short, such structured biographical information will help the reader to make a "complete interpretation" of the work (McGann 1985).

We cannot deny the crucial role played by the author's views on history and literature in his representation of the historical and cultural 'realities' of his society. The only way to know these is through an interview. We are fortunate in that of the four authors of the plays we have selected, two are still alive while two are dead. Even though the two are no longer alive, we are fortunate that biographical data is available as both were well-known members of the Northern Sotho community. These are the former Chief Minister of Lebowa, the late Dr. N.C. Phatudi, and E.K.K. Matlala, a well-known Northern Sotho author, journalist and businessman.

1.2 THE APPROACH FOLLOWED IN THIS THESIS

In our attempt to make a historical-biographical analysis of the dramas we have selected, we intend following the procedure utilized by Fleischman (1983:281) in

her endeavour to explore the nature of the relationship between history and fiction in the Middle Ages. In her study, Fleischman uses six different investigative parameters. These are the **authenticity** of the historical material, the **intention** of the author, the **reception** of the work by its intended audience, the **social function** of the texts, the **narrative syntax** of the discourse and lastly the **narrator involvement**. In view of our intention to follow her approach, it is important that we explain each parameter in detail.

1.2.1 Authenticity

By the authenticity of the text, Fleischman (1983:281) refers to "the extent to which the configuration of the events and personages in a text correspond to historical fact, insofar as we can ascertain, and to what extent is it merely fanciful invention, figments of the imagination". Note the importance assigned to events and characters in the excerpt above. Obviously the events and personages in a text that purports to be historical must be based on the past. We are aware that we are now entering the controversial aspect of our study, namely how do we separate history from fiction. In our endeavour to distinguish history from fiction, it is important to take note of what White (1984:2) says in this regard:

> ... what distinguishes "historical" from "fictional" stories is first and foremost their *contents*, rather than their *form*. The content of historical stories is real events, events that really happened, rather than imaginary events, events invented by the narrator. This implies that the form in which historical events present themselves to the prospective narrator is found rather than constructed.

In this study, we are mindful that it is difficult to try and establish historical authenticity from literary texts as they (literary texts) are artefacts of imagination, but at the same time would like to warn that "to eschew for this reason any attempt to judge the historical merit of a text serves only to foreclose the possibility of further insight for which even an approximate determination of historical accuracy provides a starting point" (Fleischman 1983:281).

In an article, relevent to this study, on Thomas Mofolo's *Chaka*, Swanepoel (1988) evaluates the text's historicity. He bases his study on an investigation of the possible sources Mofolo might have consulted while writing his novel about Shaka, the legendary Zulu warrior. He discovers that Mofolo may have worked with some oral and written sources. He bases his observation on three factors, that there is agreement on certain aspects of the life of the historical Shaka and

Mofolo's *Chaka*; similarities in the presentation of some material by the author and certain historians; and circumstantial evidence. In the end, Swanepoel finds that Mofolo distorts historical records in certain areas to achieve his objective which, in Mofolo's case, is to write a folk narrative and not a true story. Swanepoel concludes by raising an important point regarding the relationship between history and myth. He recommends that in order to explore the historicity of the work, it must be judged in relation to the fictitious and mythological phenomena which are superimposed on the historical.

In this inquiry we will first analyse the content of the text then conduct a comparative study of all available sources on the same historical event portrayed by the text. We even hope to interview people who have been directly touched by the historical event. The author will also be interviewed, if he is still alive, to ascertain his motives for writing the text and other questions related to his methods of gathering information for the text. In short, the method will be textual, bibliographical and, lastly, comparative in nature. We hope this will enable us to test the historicity of the historical plays we have selected.

1.2.2 Intention

The second parameter identified by Fleischman (1983) is intentionality. She regards intentionality as a tool that can be used to ascertain, wherever possible, whether a text was intended as fact or fancy. Despite the controversy in literary circles surrounding the author's intention, we will use it to try and determine the author's aim in writing a particular text. This also raises the question of what the author and his intended readers understand by historical truth. In order to understand the author's intention, Gossman's view should be borne in mind. He feels that, in order to understand the author's perception of history and literature, it is important to illustrate the following:

> ... the literary dimension of historiographical texts, the historical dimension of literary texts and of the institution of literature itself, the role of education and educational institutions in the formation of our notions and expectations of literature and history, and the role of literature and history in education (1990:3).

The excerpt above illustrates the procedure to be followed in understanding the author's intention. Obviously, it is important to look firstly at the literary dimension of the text. In other words, one must investigate whether the author wanted to write a literary document or a historical document. Secondly, one must assess

the text's historical dimension to determine whether or not it is indeed a historiographical text. Finally, one must investigate the role of education in history and literature and of history and literature in education. Our major source of information on the author's intention will obviously be interviews with the author to determine whether or not he has maintained some balance between the literary nature of the text as well as its historicity.

1.2.3 Reception

In incorporating the reception of the text, we focus on how the text (stories) are received by their intended audiences and posterity (Fleischman 1983:282). The use of this parameter is important in as much as it involves the reader who has been ignored by various approaches used in literary studies. We feel the use of this parameter will enable us to understand the text much better since a reception-oriented approach emphasises the reader and specifically the differences between the intellectual assumptions of the author and the present critic. Thus, in the end this becomes the investigation of evidence of the effect the texts have had on history and on historiography and not of how history has shaped such literary genres (Fleischman 1983:282). In this regard, three important issues must be taken into account, namely; literacy, the importance of language for self-understanding and empowerment and the role of monopolies in the control of mass-media, big business and the state in moulding the minds of citizens. "Since changes in these three areas will inevitably result in changes throughout the whole of society, including the production and the reception of texts " (Degenaar 1992: 10).

Pertinent to the focus of our inquiry are the works of Swanepoel (1989) and Msimang (1990). These scholars have applied the receptionist theory in their articles. In his study, Swanepoel (1989) focuses on the history of how Mofolo's *Chaka* was received by Basotho readers at the time of its publication. In his case, it was easy to gather useful information about the reader's response to Mofolo's work from a journal called *Leselinyana la Lesotho*. In this journal Basotho readers were able to voice their views on the book and even criticise the author. Swanepoel also depended on the views of the author through an informative letter the author wrote in response to one of his readers. There can be no doubt that the journal helped Swanepoel a great deal with regard to the reader's view on the work's historicity as well as its fictionality. The study is important as it shows that Mofolo's readers accepted "the work's aesthetic merits, as well as the problematics of its historicity and fictionality".

On the other hand, Msimang (1990) investigates the impact a television play called *Shaka Zulu* had on various audiences in general, and on Zulu viewers in particular, within the framework of the receptionist theory. In this study, Msimang uses various techniques for gathering information on the viewers' reception of the play. Firstly, he uses his knowledge of Shaka as well as the views of other cultural and historical activists. Secondly, he gathers some information about viewers from newspapers and through informal interviews. Msimang concludes his study by urging historical playwrights to consider seriously the expectations of historical/cultural activists who will challenge them if there are historical/cultural distortions in their works.

It is clear from both Swanepoel and Msimang that in order to apply the basic tenets of the receptionist theory information must be available on the reader's response. In our case, there is absolutely no history of the text's reception. What is available, however, are the historical consequences of the historical events as portrayed by the plays in this study. As a result of this handicap, we have decided to base our argument on interviews with people affected by the historical events portrayed by the texts as well as on publications dealing with the same historical facts. We hope, in the end, to be able to determine the response of the text's possible or intended audiences. Both Swanepoel and Msimang base their study on the views of only Basotho and Zulus respectively. We hope to take into account the views of people from not only the same language group but all over.

1.2.4 Social function

In order to investigate the social function of historical narratives, the views of Cebik (1986:72) must be taken into consideration. He asserts that a study of literary texts should not only be strictly epistemic in nature, but must also be heuristic. This heuristic method, he continues, should seek to analyse the functions of narratives and the means by which we achieve their successful performance. He continues by saying that,

> Since institutions are complex, a single[narrative] object may function diversely to educate or edify; to inform, correct, revise, or update; to entertain; to inspire actions or attitudes; to imbue with values... to explain; to prove a thesis or establish a theme; to persuade or convince, for example, of the correctness of what happened; how to view what happened; to reform or revolutionize; to teach... Just as the types of narrative objects may seem illimitable, so too will appear their possible functions, without however, a necessary one-to-one correlation between objects and functions (Cebik 1986:72).

One can, broadly speaking, subdivide the social function of a text into different functions such as celebration or commemoration, instruction and edification, moral-ethical exemplification, glorification and panegyric, propaganda and persuasion and so on (Fleishman 1983:282). This parameter also involves the reader or the people directly affected by the events as they also have adopted a particular stance on the historical character the text portrays.

1.2.5 Narrative syntax

The fifth aspect is narrative syntax which refers to the structure of the discourse, in other words, the manner in which the events are related to one another. It is obvious that this refers to various types of emplotment employed by the author to give his story its peculiar structure. Regarding the structure of a historical text, Topolski (1981:49) says it is by assumption a sequence of non-fictional statements linked together by a common content that refers to the past, with statement as its basic element. He furthermore says that:

> A number of statements which are thematically connected form a certain whole which we shall quite conventionally call a "story". An historical narrative is thus a specific sequence of statements grouped into stories, but a specific structure in which smaller stories are embedded in more comprehensive ones.

It should be mentioned immediately that literature, in its structuring of history, cannot claim to represent it verbatim. The author in his restructuring of history has a right to choose from a veritable chaos of events. What is difficult to discover is what orders and governs the author's choice. What is clear is that besides the "reality" to which the text ostensibly refers and the principles of literary composition, the author's source of inspiration plays a role. However, in the end, the author has the right to use a process of exclusion, stress and subordination to arrive at his story. In this process the artist is again "dictated [to] partly by his natural leaning and inclination and partly by the historical data and the pressure of the present circumstances" (McKay 1972:124).

1.2.6 Narrator involvement

The last aspect is the narrator's involvement in the text. One should not make the mistake of underestimating the degree to which the author of a historical narrative has been influenced by the needs and assumptions of his times, not to mention any ideological framework or preoccupations which may have modified his or her

vision. There is no doubt that the author of history must have a choice among various types of emplotment. What is difficult to find is the reason for this choice. As Gossman (1990:295) points out:

> ... something accounts for the historian's choice of one mode of emplotment rather than another, but what that choice expresses is both extra-historical and extra-philosophical; it represents an aesthetic or political preference, as a matter of individual taste or commitment.

It is clear from the exposition above that the author of history has many pressures. These pressures can be grouped into two groups, namely internal and external. Besides the internal pressures to which we have referred above, there are also pressures originating from outside the author himself. These include pressure, for example, from Language Boards, editors and publishers who might compel the artist to modify history.

1.3 THE NATURE OF HISTORICAL DRAMA

The task in question is to determine the relationship between history and literature. In other words, we must investigate the relationship that exists between history and literature. For a long time there was no question about the relationship between history and literature, since history was seen as a branch of literature (Gossman 1990). The relationship was not problematic until the advent of Romanticism and later, Neoclassicism as supported by Hegel and his followers, who wanted to compartmentalise knowledge into subdivisions for their own academic benefit. In the end, this division gave rise to a new concept of both literature and history. The new concept of literature is explained more lucidly by Gossman (1990:229) when he says:

> It allowed the products of art to appear as essentially different from all other products of labor in the degraded world of industry and market, but in order to do so, it foregrounded, indeed fetishized, the product, concealing or mystifying the processes of its production. Literature thus ceased to be thought of as an art by which ideas could be conveyed effectively and elegantly, and which could be pursued with varying degrees of skill and success by all educated people. More and more it came to be regarded as a magical or religious mission, which only those endowed with the gift of prophecy or second sight could fulfill.

The result was an artificial separation of history and literature with its destructive consequences. The separation opened the way for abuse by writers, literary critics and historians. Despite our wish to separate history from literature, the two

remain inseparable. McKay (1972:38-39) has interesting views on the inseparable relationship between these two concepts. He feels that even though the two are related, literature, and drama in particular, is more in depth than history because drama reveals the character's feelings and thoughts more lucidly than history. He elaborates more on this relationship as follows:

> For after all, what does history give us? Events, which, so to speak, are known only from outside; what men have performed; but what they have thought, the feelings which have accompanied their deliberations and plans, their successes and their misfortunes, the conversations by which they have impressed or tried to impress their passions and their wills upon other passions and other wills, by which they have expressed their anger, poured forth their grief, by which, in a word, they have revealed their individuality: all this history passes by almost in silence, and all this is the domain of (drama).

The study rests on the idea that literary texts are an essential, and not an accidental, characteristic of historiography. Literary texts, even though they are a product of imagination and, as such, are regarded as aesthetic objects, can be used as a means of understanding past societies. According to Dunne (1987:7):

> ... there seems to be no reason why literary texts cannot be used successfully as primary source material for all aspects of the most difficult, yet most fundamental feature to understand about any age or society, the ways in which it perceived and interpreted reality. These texts offer the testimony of those who were particularly concerned with such perceptions and interpretations.

In this study Dunne's view that literary texts are primary source materials for understanding history is accepted. To find out how literary texts could be used as primary source material for understanding past societies, requires an investigation aimed at finding a way of testing or separating history from literature and vice versa.

In our endeavour to distinguish history from fiction, we are mindful of the fact that, "the artist can have recourse to poetic (or dramatic) licence, which sets him free from the rigid and often undramatic constraints of an authentic, cultural and historical milieu" (Msimang 1990:40). But this does not set him free to interfere with history. We cannot allow the artist to abuse his poetic right or licence as "no right is absolute" and it "is the duty of the critic to ascertain whether or not the artist has exceeded the limits of the poetic licence" (Msimang 1990:40). We subscribe to McKay's view that "the artist may not distort the historical record, though he might alter it in order to embody a theme or idea that will strengthen the

audience's (or reader's) sense of a living connection between past and present" (1972:124).

We must now define what we mean by historical drama. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (1989:948) a historical work is

> ... a work of fiction that attempts to convey the spirit, manners, and social conditions of a past age with realistic detail and fidelity to historical fact. The work may deal with actual historical personages, or it contains a mixture of fictional and historical characters. It may focus on a single historic event. More often it attempts to portray a broader view of a past society in which great events are reflected by their impact on the private lives of fictional individuals.

From the above definition of a historical drama (or work), we can extract numerous basic elements of a historical work. Firstly, a historical work remains a work of fiction because it is a product of the author's imagination. Secondly, the setting the work tries to portray has taken place in the past. Thirdly, the characters in the work may be actual characters or a mixture of historical and fictional characters. Finally, the work must concern itself with great historical event(s). Hawthorn (1985:15) supports this definition when he says:

> As its name suggests the historical [drama] sets its events and characters in a well-defined historical context, and it may include both fictional and real characters. It is often distinguished (in its more respectable forms) by convincing detailed description of the manners, building, institutions and scenery of its chosen setting, and generally attempts to convey a sense of historical verisimilitude... In its more recent popular, 'pulp' form it tends to abandon verisimilitude for fantasy, and in some ways can be seen as the present-day version of the romance, encouraging more an escape from reality than a critical and imaginative scrutiny of it.

What comes out clearly from these definitions is the importance of continuity between past and present in a historical work. On the relationship between the past and present Lindenberger (1975:6) says the following:

> The continuity between past and present is a central assertation in history plays of all times and styles. One of the simplest ways a writer can achieve such continuity is to play on the audience's knowledge of what has happened in history since the time of the play.

McKay (1972:40) agrees with these views but proceeds to indicate that a knowledge of the historical peculiarity of the past alone is not sufficient for historical drama. He adds:

> At its best, therefore, the historical drama demands not only the ability to grasp the historical peculiarity of characters and events but also an understanding of history as a process, of history as the concrete precondition of the present, which alone will ensure the authenticity of the historical collision depicted, as well as the creation of characters who are not eccentric.

It is clear from this excerpt that history must always be understood as a reflection of what happened in the past and how this influences what is happening today. This influence of the past on the present, as McKay indicates, will ensure that the historical conflict depicted by the text is authentic. If the artist ignores this relationship, it will be impossible for him to create historical characters in the real sense of the word.

Two general problems are discernible in most historical works. According to McKay (1972:47), failure to grasp the essence of the genre has given rise to two essentially unhistorical tendencies. The first tendency is didactic while the second is romantic. In the first, there is a link missing between the past and the present. The dramatist ignores the uniqueness of the past and uses it simply as illustrative material for the problems of the present. In the second tendency, the author seeks to escape from the meanness of the present and as such is attracted principally by the strangeness of the past. Here history is treated as mere costumary because it is only the curiosities and oddities of the milieu that matter. McKay (1972:50) concludes:

> Both these tendencies have the effect of devitalising history, to the detriment of the quality of the crisis depicted and of the characterisation. The failure to portray the hero of the drama as the world-historical individual, in other words, to represent simultaneously the historical necessity of this particular individual personality and the individual role that he plays in history, results in the treatment of social-historical necessity in a mystified or propagandist fashion, while the historical figure is either romantically monumentalised and dehumanised or his significance is reduced to the level of private psychological trivia.

We fully agree with McKay that the challenge faced by authors of history is to avoid being too didactic or romantic. Many authors who have attempted this type of genre have produced mediocre works. A case in point is "the purely escapist costume romance, which, making no pretence to historicity, uses a setting in the past to lend credence to improbable characters and adventures" (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1989:948).

1.4 BROAD PERSPECTIVE OF HISTORICAL WORKS IN NORTHERN SOTHO

Before giving a broad perspective of historical works in Northern Sotho, it is important to explain what the terms "African history" and "African literature" mean. The two terms mean many things to many people. With regard to what constitutes South African history, Clingman (1985:34) asserts the following:

> There have been the original wars of conquest and resistance, internal class and nationalist conflicts between the settler polities, the oppression and exploitation of the colonized and later proletarianized masses, the modern elaboration of apartheid and, throughout, a moving record of resistance. To mention all this is to give only the broadest and crudest features of South African history... In these circumstances it is axiomatic that whatever writing has taken place has, positively or negatively, consciously or unconsciously, deliberately or by accident, been involved in the wider processes of South African history.

To Clingman, South African history begins with original wars of conquest and resistance, followed by internal class and nationalist conflicts between the settler polities, followed by oppression and exploitation of the colonised, and lastly resistance to apartheid. We hope to illustrate how this historical experience has been reflected in Northern Sotho literature in due course.

Regarding African literature in general Clingman (1985) states that this type of literature is always characterised by "an historical consciousness". According to him, this historical consciousness is found in popular themes for African literature such as "the invasion of European merchants, administrators and settlers; political, economic and cultural imperialism and resistance; struggles for independence and liberation; the appearance of neo-colonialism". He feels this is nothing else if not the stuff of an essentially historical experience. It is not surprising that "African literature has been intrinsically bound up with its historical circumstances" (Clingman 1985:34).

Clingman's view on themes found in African literature is supported by Makgamatha (1990:92) when he says:

> ... Africa as a whole emerges as the general theme for most of the African novelists. Understandably, this broad African theme can be broken down into numerous 'subthemes', all of which reflect aspects of the African past and present, such as the following: the theme of warrior heroes, the theme of colonization (which depicts the intrusion

> of the white man into the African continent as well as agitation against the colonialists), the theme of the African's life under colonial rule, the theme of the clash of cultures or the conflict between the European and the old traditional values, and the theme of oppression of Africans by Europeans, to mention only a few. The prevalent theme in most of the productions is corruption, while the general mood is that of disillusionment. Quite naturally, the novelists were influenced in their selection of subject matter by the historic events.

As far as Makgamatha (1990) is concerned, Africa as a whole is a popular theme in African literature and this includes themes such as warrior heroes, colonialisation, African life under colonial rule, the clash of cultures and oppression. Most of these themes have been touched upon by Northern Sotho literature as well, as will be shown in the next few pages.

On the other hand, Groenewald (1986:150-151) divides Northern Sotho literature into various thematic periods. He describes these periods thus:

> In the beginning they [the Northern Sotho people] could not cope socially and culturally with this way of life, and the early authors described a picture of misery and wretchedness. A period of despondency followed which was carefully documented in the literature, followed by a period of introspection which was documented even better than the previous one. The Northern Sotho came to recognize the problem he was confronted with, and he drew his fellowmen's attention to these problems. In the beginning criticism was levelled totally at the traditional way of life, glorifying the new way of doing things. Drunkenness and witchcraft were, to the author, part of the tradition, and were for that matter to be condemned. The trend changed afterwards when the Northern Sotho author recognized merit and demerit in both the modern and the traditional way of life, and he encouraged his fellow men to extract the good from both. He also reprimanded the Northern Sotho for taking to some bad habits in his clothing and make-up, as well as for exploiting his own people, etc. In the end he views the laws on liquor, the carrying of passes, etc., critically... The socio-political situation of the Northern Sotho was touched upon in what can be viewed as literature of protest. The socio-cultural problems the Northern Sotho was confronted with, were not overlooked, and he was encouraged to meet the challenges of the day.

It must be mentioned immediately that this thematic division by Groenewald is not the only way Northern Sotho literature can be divided. In this study we will divide Northern Sotho literature into four thematic categories. These categories are those works which deal with the Northern Sotho traditional setting, those which deal with religion; those which deal with education and lastly those which deal with the socio-political situation of Africans in South Africa.

In the first thematic division we have identified, texts exist which deal with the origin of the various tribes, the problems of tribal wars, internal conflicts amongst members of the same tribe as a result of feuding about the chieftainship and the role and function of a chief in solving family or tribal feuds. Ramaila's historical novel entitled *Setlogo sa Batau* (1938) is based on the origin of the Batau tribe and its division into various sub-tribes as a result of a feud over the chieftainship. We also have *Mebušo* (1941) written by Hoffman and another one written by Schwellnus called *Tša Magoši le Dilete* (1947). The two books deal with traditional chiefs of various tribes in South Africa. There is another historical novel based on the people of Mphahlele called *Ba-xa-Mphahlele* (1942) by S.M. Mphahlele and S.M. Phaladi. We also have Matlala, who depicts the life of Tšhaka in his two historical dramas *Tšhaka Seripa sa I* (1976) and *Tšhaka Seripa sa III* (1983). We also have Maloma with his historical drama called *Marangrang* (1971) which concerns the legendary Mokone warrior, Marangrang. The play deals with the problem of tribalism and is closely related to Matlala's two historical dramas regarding Shaka's imperialism. *Marangrang* is the dramatic text we will discuss in this section. Makgaleng's historical drama and historical novel respectively entitled *Tswala e a ja* (1964) and *Batau ba Tšitlana* (1973) deal with the origin of the Batau tribe, in the historical novel, while the feud over chieftainship, is the subject of the historical drama. The reasons Makgaleng puts forward for writing the two texts is that he was not entirely happy with Ramaila's version and wanted to correct it. Additional works include *Kgoši Sekwati Mampuru* written by Nkadimeng and *Mokone wa Mabula* (1974) by Boshielo. It is interesting to note that the majority of these works are historical in as much as they are based on real events that took place. However, this does not mean there are no fictional works dealing with the theme identified in this category. In this regard we have P.D. Sekhukhune's *Lešiko la Baaparankwe* (1973) and almost all of Matsepe's nine novels which deal with the role and functions of a chief in solving tribal and family feuds.

The second thematic category is the one illustrating the effect of religion, more specifically Christianity, on the traditional setting. In this section we are interested in those works that illustrate the problems faced by early Christians and the resistance offered by people to the missionaries and their Christianity. There is no doubt that Christianity brought misery with it for early converts, some of whom were even killed while some had to flee from their own communities. The problems experienced by early Christians in the Sekhukhune area and the formation of a refuge station called Botšhabelo is well documented. Under this

section we intend making an intensive study of *Kgašane* (1957) by S.P.N. Makwala. This is a historical drama dealing with the death of a religious martyr in the Bolobedu area who was killed for his religious belief. In addition, the historical play entitled *Ke sefe Senakangwedi* (1976) by G.P. Tema, deals with the problem faced by early Christians in the Mamabolo area under the leadership of Lechadimane who ruled the tribe after the death of Mankweng. In the play, Tema shows the people of Bjatladi killing Christians and forcing others to attend the initiation school. It is ironic that this play was banned by the Northern Sotho Language Board as it felt the book contained a reversal of values. Other works on this subject which are more fictional in nature include works such as *Mahlodi* (1968) by J.S. Mminele, *Puledi le Thobja* (1958) by K.R. Makoala, *Tsakata* (1953) by E.M. Ramaila, *Thaka ye kgwadi* (1953) by E.M. Phatudi, *Tša maabane* (1953) by M.M. Sehlodimela, *Tšhiwana* (s.a) by G.J. Moloise, etc.

The third thematic category of works deals with education. In this section we will only select those works which deal with the destructive consequences of education on the traditional Northern Sotho milieu. The works depict a clash of cultures, as most of the works in this category are characterised by confrontation between the traditionalists and those who have accepted a modern way of life. It is interesting to note that most of the works in this category are more fictitious than those in the previous historical phase. This is partly due to the literary sophistication of the authors of these works. This category includes works such as *Setsiba ganong* (1982) by M.P.N. Mphahlele, *Makgale* (1978) by H.D.N. Bopape, *Masela wa Thabanaswana* (1972) and *Sealogana* (1971) both by C.K. Nchabeleng, *Lesang bana* (1968) by G.J. Khomo, *Mo go fetileng kgomo* (1968) by H.P. Maredi and *Nnang* (1960) by M.S. Mogoba. The book that will be discussed in this section is a historical drama written by N.C. Phatudi called *Kgoši Mmutle III* (1966) which deals with the life of the author's father. The play is based on the history of the people of GaMphahlele under the leadership of Mmutle III, who is credited with bringing education to the Mphahlele people.

The last thematic category we will discuss deals with the problem experienced by Africans in South Africa under apartheid. This can be regarded as a protest against the injustices confronting the Africans in South Africa. Most of these works developed at the time of the introduction of apartheid by the South African government. The style and thematic concerns of writers became inherently related to this unique experience. Furthermore, the new literature has its own distinctive character, depicting the crisis and conflict between capitalism and

Christian morality, industrialisation and urbanisation, the land act, education, and overall socio-political situation in the country. This category contains material dealing with economic hardship, such as Lentsoane's poems entitled "Apara re sepele" and "Masenyaahomotše" which deal with the problems of influx control while "Mophamoladikanapa" which deals with the economic hardship brought about by job reservation. These themes are also dealt with by Puleng in some of his poems. In *Leobu* (1977) by Nchabeleng and *Madireng a Redutše* (1962) by Kgatle, the authors are opposed to urbanisation and its ugly twin sister, lack of accommodation and the problem of gangsterism in most townships. Rafapa in *Bohwa bja madimabe* comments on the evil of discrimination as does Ramaila in his collections of short stories in a volume entitled *Molomatsebe* (1951). In addition M.S. Serudu's drama entitled *Naga ga di etelane* (1977) deals with the problem of exiles in their adopted countries. E.K.K. Matlala, in his poems and short stories, voices his concern about pass laws, taxes, the land act, etc. The book that will be studied in this section is *Serogole* (1948) in which Matlala deals with the problem of the exploitation of mine workers by mine bosses.

1.5 SCOPE

Chapter one is an introduction outlining the basic objectives of the study, the methodology to be followed and delimitation of the scope for research.

Chapter two deals with the Bakone history and the effect of tribalism on their life history. The discussion will also touch on the impact of Shaka's imperialism on the Bapedi and the Bakone during 1820. The drama to be discussed in this section is *Marangrang* by L.M. Maloma, which concerns the legendary Mokone warrior, Marangrang.

Chapter three deals with the Balobedu history and the effect of religion on their life history. The discussion will also include the role played by missionaries in that area, and more specifically the role played by Fritz Reuter. The play which will be discussed is *Kgašane* by S.P.N. Makwala, which revolves around the problems faced by Kgašane in bringing Christianity to his people and his tragic death in 1884.

Chapter four deals with the history of theBakgaga ba GaMphahlele and the effect of education, both past and present, on the tribe's life history. In our discussion, we will also touch on the role played by educational pioneers such as Lucas

Dikobe Molaba and Makobatšatši Mphahlele. The play to be discussed in this chapter is *Kgoši Mmutle III* by N.C. Phatudi. The play portrays the problems Mmutle III faced while trying to bring education to his people during 1914.

Chapter five concerns the effect of a socio-economic system foreign to the Africans in South Africa on their life during 1940. This was at the height of industrialisation and urbanisation. The play to be discussed here is *Serogole* by E.K.K. Matlala, which deals with the problems faced by mine workers and their exploitation by mine bosses.

Chapter six is the conclusion in which the important findings of the study are discussed.

CHAPTER TWO

MARANGRANG AND BAKONE HISTORY

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In chapter one we enumerated the reasons for the selection of *Marangrang* for analysis in this chapter. One of the reasons which we pointed out is that Marangrang's life history is linked to a specific tribe within the all-embracing term "Northern Sotho tribes", namely the Bakone tribe. We prefer to use the term "Northern Sotho tribes", for lack of a better term, to refer to tribes in the Northern Province who speak the Sotho language. This does not in any way exclude those people in other provinces who speak Northern Sotho. It must be highlighted immediately that the Bakone tribe is one of the tribes amongst the Northern Sotho tribes whose history is not well documented. This is the case if one compares their history with that of the Bapedi and Balobedu. The tribe, as defined by Masie (1905:48;79), came from the Zambezi and divided into three main groups. The first group went to the Middelburg district, another moved to Leydsdorp while the third and largest portion moved to the present Matlala's Location in Pietersburg. According to Masie (1905:48) the descendants of these three groups of the tribe respectively were found as follows in 1905: the Maake section were found in the Haenertsburg district; their junior branch, the Dikgale section, were found north-west of Haenertsburg; the other section, called the Mahuoa section (Mahupa, probably), who once lived in the Duiwelskloof and, after being attacked by the Boers, was split into two groups with the other group joining Sekhukhuneland; and lastly the Matlala section as found in the Pietersburg district. The Bakone who are the focus of our attention are those found in the Lydenburg district before the arrival of the Bapedi. The majority of them supported Sekhukhune in his wars with the Boers, Swazis and British. Even though information on the Bakone is sketchy, we are able to distinguish them from the Bapedi and other tribes. In this chapter our emphasis will be on the present Bakone tribe found in the Sekhukhune area, namely the Maloma and Masha tribes. We will also focus our attention on the Rantho tribe.

Secondly, we have selected *Marangrang* because the play represents a specific historical period in the development of Northern Sotho societies or, for that matter, the Bakone tribe in the eastern Transvaal. The period is the *mfecane* or *difaqane* period of the 1820's, which has been defined differently by different historians.

The play exposes the problem of that period and emphasizes, in particular, tribalism and its consequences - tribal wars. It must be stressed here that this does not imply the play is reticent regarding other factors such as the economic and the ecological, which had an impact on the life of the historical people portrayed by the play. However, the problem of tribalism has been reiterated and has, therefore, been chosen to receive prominence in this thesis.

The sources of our research will be the following texts: Two articles written by Winter and Hunt respectively, these are entitled *The history of Sekwati* (1912), *An account of the Bapedi* (1931). We will use Phala's poem entitled "Ina la Morena Marangrang" (1935). The following books will also be used: Ramaila 's book entitled *Setlogo sa Batau* (1938), Mphahlele and Phaladi's book entitled *Ba-xa-Mphahlele* (1942), *Tša magoši le dilete* (1947) written by Schwellnus, "Bogale bja Marangrang" in a book by Ziervogel entitled *Noord-Sotho Leerboek* (1953), Mönnig's *The Pedi* (1967), Maloma's *Marangrang* (1971) and Delius's *The land belongs to us* (1983). We will also make use of the information we gathered during our fieldwork. In this particular case we will use the information obtained from two old men born in approximately 1889, namely Karl Mmagwaile Rantho of the Rantho tribe and Monoge Masha of the Masha tribe. We will furthermore use the information gleaned from Matome Masha of the Rantho and Koloi Maloma of the Maloma tribe. We interviewed these four men in 1992 and 1995. We will also use the information gathered from our interview with the author of the play *Marangrang*, Lucas Mafege Maloma.

The basic objective, of this chapter is to illustrate the destructive consequences of tribalism and tribal wars of the 1820's on the Bakone history, simultaneously indicating one's difficulty in trying to disentangle the truth from myth in the historical texts dealing with this experience. The problem becomes even more difficult when one considers how easily historical events, over a long period of time, fuse with myth. As a result of this fusion, it becomes impossible to separate history from fiction. We are, therefore, going to note Swanepoel's view that in order to understand historical texts, one must judge them "in relation to fictitious and mythological phenomena which are superimposed on the historical" (1988:23).

2.1 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF L. M. MALOMA

2.1.1 Life history and school life

Lucas Mafege Maloma was born on the 27th June 1944 at Schoonoord. He is the youngest of a family of seven. Maloma was very unfortunate as his parents died early in his life. His father passed away when he was doing sub-standard B while his mother passed away while he was in Matric. He attended school at Schoonoord Primary School and Sekhukhune Secondary School. In 1963 he went to Hebron where he completed his Matric.

2 1.2 Occupation

After completing Matric, he was employed by the Department of Information and Foreign Affairs in 1965 as clerk responsible for despatching a journal published by the department entitled *Tšwelopele* in Northern Sotho and others in different languages, to various subscribers. This job did not impress him, but he used it to subvert the effect of influx control. It was while working at the Deparment of Information and Foreign Affairs that he was encouraged by one of his white supervisors to register for a commercial degree with Unisa, as commercial subjects open doors to well paid jobs. Indeed he registered for a B.Com degree and to this day he has six degree courses to his credit. These courses are political science, economics, accounting, business economics, commercial law and English. He failed to complete his degree because he registered for various financial, business and management diplomas.

In 1967 Maloma left the Department of Information and Foreign Affairs and joined the Bantu Investment Cooperation (B.I.C.) where he worked for a period of six years. In April 1973 he left the B.I.C. and joined Barclays Bank where he worked for 13 and a half years. At Barclays Bank he worked for two years as a clerk and two years as Business Development Officer. In 1978 he was promoted to the post of accountant where he worked for nine years running the Hammanskraal-Temba branch of Barclays Bank. Later he was promoted to the rank of manager, a position he held for four years. In 1990 he was employed as a manager of the African Bank in Mamelodi until 1994. He is, at present, the manager of the South African Housing Trust in Pretoria.

2.1.3 Literary interests

While working for the Department of Information and Foreign Affairs, Maloma worked under Mr Rammala, the editor of the Northern Sotho publication, *Tšwelopele.* Maloma regards Mr Rammala as the man who influenced and initiated his career as a writer. Rammala, who remains his mentor, invited him to write articles for the journal under his editorship and this influenced Maloma. It was during this period that he wrote two radio serials which were broadcast on Radio Bantu. Later, when he intended sending a manuscript of Marangrang to Radio Bantu, Rammala intercepted it and, after reading the manusript, encouraged him to send the manuscript to Van Schaik publishers. The manuscript was later given to the late Professor P.C. Mokgokong who also recommended that the manuscript be published.

In an interview, Maloma told me that he decided to write plays because he felt Northern Sotho plays in that period lacked literary merit. We can, therefore, conclude that in writing Maloma is aware of the literary limitations of a play. Later, in 1983 he wrote another play entitled *Ga a mo swanela*, which was also published by Van Schaik.

2.1.4 Family and social life

Maloma married Joyce Selebannye in 1974 and the couple is blessed with four children, three boys and a girl. Maloma's wife is the principal of a pre-primary school in Mamelodi. Initially Maloma was involved in various organisations until work pressure compelled him to withdraw from other social involvements. He was involved in the financial affairs of the former first division football team called Pretoria Callies, for a short period. At present Maloma is the chairman of the management board of a primary school in Mamelodi.

2.2 A HISTORICAL-BIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF MARANGRANG

2.2.1 Authenticity

Before conducting a historical analysis of Marangrang's personality, it is important that we should elucidate the source of conflict during the 1820's in South Eastern Africa. Eldredge (1992:35) enumerates the causes of this conflict as arising from

> Increasing inequalities within and between societies coupled with a series of environmental crises [which] transferred long-standing competition over natural resources and trade in South Eastern Africa into violent struggles.

This is what is popularly known as the *mfecane* or *difaqane* period, a period defined differently by different historians. Cobbing, as cited by Hamilton (1992:38), identifies four key elements in the notion of *mfecane*, namely, (1), 'a self-generated internal revolution' (2), attacks by the Zulu on neighbouring chiefdoms (3), a 'cataclysmic period' of Black-on-Black destruction (including cannibalism) (4), the restoration of security with the advent of the Europeans. Even though we do not agree with Cobbing's categorisation, especially the last point, his categorisation is important as it gives an idea of what took place during that period. Besides what we have said, we could say *Marangrang* falls in category three. We concur with Eldredge (1992:3) that "there is no simple monocausal explanation for these disruptions", but we believe it is possible to isolate tribalism and analyse it as one of the sources of these disruptions. The causes of the disruptions in the Eastern Transvaal can be linked directly to the rise of Shaka and the ensuing turmoil in Natal and the surrounding areas.

It is thus imperative that the *difaqane* period be discussed in detail. It must be remembered that this was the period of the struggles and migrations unleashed by the conflict which accompanied the emergence of Zulu dominance in Natal. This period also refashioned the political as well as the economic history of the Bapedi. The period is aptly described by Eldredge (1992:1) as follows:

> The period was marked by massive migrations, sporadic raids and battles and frequent periods of privation and famine for many people in the region. The so-called 'mfecane' has been explained in many ways by historians, but never adequately. The socio-political changes and associated demographic turmoil and violence of the early nineteenth century in Southern Africa were the result of a complex interaction between factors governed by the physical environment and local patterns of economic and political organisation.

From the excerpt above it is clear that three things played a very important role in bringing about these disruptions. These were the physical environment, the local patterns of economic and the political organization in the area concerned. These elements had a decisive impact on the political instability in the Eastern Transvaal before the arrival of the Boer trekkers.

In order to understand the Bakone history it is important to discuss it in relation to the Bapedi history, as the two histories are intertwined. The advantage of this is that the Bapedi history is better documented than the Bakone history. Even though there is agreement on various aspects of the Bapedi history, there are two main problems which are relevant for this study. The first problem concerns the question of who attacked the Bapedi during the *difaqane*. Various historians hold different groups of people responsible for these attacks on the Bapedi. The second problem relates to the exact dates on which these attacks occurred. According to Winter (1912), Hunt (1931) and Mönnig (1967), Thulare, the father of Malekutu, Matseba (poisoned), Phethedi, Mothodi, Sekwati, and Makopole (exiled) died in 1824. In 1826 the Matebele advanced to Bopedi where they attacked the Bapedi and killed all of Thulare's sons, except Sekwati. Sekwati, with the remnants of the Bapedi fled across the Olifants river. The Matebele remained and settled on both sides of the Steelpoort mountains for one year, by which time they had completely denuded the country of all stock and grain.

Delius (1983:23) disputes the idea that the Bapedi were attacked by the Matebele. He attributes this false perception to the fact that Ndebele tradition says very little about their encounter with the Bapedi. Delius (1983:19) is of the opinion that principal amongst the groups which were responsible for the moulding of the Bapedi polity were those which were propelled northwards namely, the Ndwandwe, the Ndebele and the Swazi. These groups moulded a new Bapedi polity which was further crushed by internal struggles after the death of Thulare, who according to Delius, died in approximately 1820. In the midst of these internal conflicts, Delius continues, the polity was attacked by the Ndwandwe under Zwide, and all of Thulare's sons were killed, except Sekwati. Delius (1983:25) quoting Bryant even claims that their leader, Zwide, was poisoned by Modjadji and died in the eastern Transvaal. Furthermore, the Ndwandwe defeated Sobhuza and Dingiswayo, but were defeated by Shaka in 1819. After this they were divided into three contingents under Soshangane, Zwangendaba and Zwide, who moved northwards. Delius acknowledges that the history of these groups is shrouded in mystery. However, he states that the group under Zwide returned to Natal and fought with Shaka in June 1826. They were, however, defeated in a war that surprised even Shaka (Delius 1983: 23).

On the other hand, Bundy (1988:88) states that the Ndwandwe were defeated by Shaka in 1818, and not 1819 as Delius says, but says "in 1822, the Ndebele attacked and defeated the Pedi, remaining in their territory long enough to deplete

stock and food supplies. Raids by the Ndwandwe provided other serious setbacks and the theft of cattle and grain effectively wrecked the Pedi economy" (Bundy 1988:92). It is clear that Bundy does not agree with Delius even though they do agree on the dates. It is also interesting to note that Delius agrees with Bundy that there were in fact two attacks on the Bapedi during the 1822, but they differ on who attacked the Bapedi polity first. Delius says it was the Ndwandwe who were followed by the Matebele while Bundy says it was the Matebele, who were followed by the Ndwandwe. Delius (1983:23) attributes the perception that the Bapedi were attacked by the Matebele to the missionaries and the informants, when he says

> The problem remains why the Ndebele have so consistently been held responsible for defeating the Pedi and devastating the eastern Transvaal if the Ndwandwe were the principal culprits. Part of the explanation probably lies in the tendency of traditions to remember the powerful and forget the defeated even if they were once strong. The separate identity of the Ndwandwe was effectively extinguished in 1826 while the Ndebele prospered. It was thus on the basis of Mzilikazi's subsequent career and power that he was retrospectively granted command of perhaps as many as five separate armies in Pedi traditions. This tendency was encouraged by missionaries who recorded these traditions. The missionaries' received view of the history of the Transvaal was that the Ndebele had a decisive and fundamantal impact while they knew little of other groups who might have passed through the region. The Trekkers also partially based their claim to authority over the Transvaal on the fact that they were the legitimate heirs to the Ndebele state and thus had a vested interest in sustaining the largest possible definition of Mzilikazi's power. (Delius 1983:23)

After the Ndwandwe had left, there was nothing left to feed the remaining tribes. This initiated a period of cannibalism among the starving remnants of the older tribes hiding in the Ohrigstad hills. This awful event soon spread to those in Leolo. This idea of cannibalism is viewed with suspicion by Delius (1983:24) who feels that it might be an exaggeration by both the people who wanted to show the dire consequences of the destruction of properly constituted authority and the missionaries, particularly Merensky, who wanted to show or confirm their suspicions that these societies teetered on the edge of barbarism.

The idea of cannibalism amongst the Bapedi has been perpetuated by Merensky who even claims to have seen some of the caves used by cannibals (Mönnig 1967:20). The other controversy regarding the idea of cannibalism is that according to Mönnig (1967:20) a roving band of cannibals entered the Bapedi country during the reign of Morwamoche but they were soon defeated by the

Bapedi. The problem here is ascertaining whether the two are referring to the same event or are talking about different occurrence. At face value they appear to be talking about different things as Mönnig mentions cannibals at the time when the chief was Morwamoche while the ones discussed by Delius appeared during Sekwati's reign.

Sekwati, after crossing the Olifants river, first met Kgoadu, the chief of Batlokwa and the Buys, called Kadishe by the Bapedi. According to Hunt (1931:287), Sekwati returned to Bopedi after four years, that is in approximately 1830. However, this view is rejected by Delius who states that Sekwati returned after wandering for two years, thus making his return in 1828. It was then that he discovered that there was a Mokone warrior called Marangrang, who had begun to assert himself. He was tremendously strong and very tall. He raided his neighbours and eventually became the terror of the countryside. He even fought with a band of cannibals who had stolen his cattle. Though he failed to exterminate them he considerably reduced their activities (Hunt 1931). Hunt's idea that Marangrang wanted to destroy cannibalism is supported by Delius (1983:25) who describes him as follows:

> The most powerful figure to emerge in this period, however, was a *commoner* - Marangrang - who initially built his following in the south-east from the remnants of Koni chiefdoms, [he] subsequently successfully challenged the power of the Magakala and Mphahlele and partially incorporated Kgabe and his adherents. He also turned his attention, with some success, to extinguishing the raiding bands in the area. (My emphasis)

When Sekwati returned home he was encouraged by chiefdoms in the region of the Olifants River to challenge Marangrang. They viewed him as a potential ally against the growing power of Marangrang and the attacks of the various raiding bands (Delius 1983:26). Sekwati settled at Pshiring, and initially made a show of acknowledging Marangrang's supremacy, however, that did not prevent him from conspiring against Marangrang. According to Hunt (1931:287) the first thing that Sekwati did was to send a royal bead and a woman to Marangrang. This woman was Marangrang's undoing, as she deceived him into crossing the Olifants river where he was ambushed and slain by the people of Mphahlele at Sekwati's instigation. Delius (1983:26) says very little about Sekwati's role in the death of Marangrang except that he (Sekwati) took the opportunity to launch an attack on the Bakone settlements and captured their cattle, killing Kgabe who, after the death of Marangrang, acceded to his position.

There is no doubt that Maloma's drama is historical in nature since the play deals with the 'real' life history of Marangrang, the legendary Mokone warrior of the 1820's. Even though we cannot be absolutely sure when he rose to predominance, it might be surmised that it was at the time of Zulu imperialism, the so-called *difaqane* or *mfecane* period. Marangrang's life history is intertwined with the repercussions of this period in the Eastern Transvaal.

Marangrang only became known in approximately 1826 after the attack by the Ndwandwe, if we accept Delius's view. When Sekwati returned from exile he found Marangrang ruling the greater part of the Bapedi kingdom. It is estimated that this was around 1828 to 1830. Sekwati returned and settled at Pshiring where he, together with chiefs in the surrounding area, plotted to overthrow Marangrang.

Despite the agreement on most aspects of Marangrang's life history, there are fundamental disagreement about important aspects of his life such as his origins, including tribal affiliation, deeds and death. We are going to discuss these one by one.

2.2.1.1 Origin

As far as Marangrang's origin is concerned there are varying interpretations. Even though Ziervogel (1953) says nothing about Marangrang's tribal affiliation, he says that Marangrang grew up with two kings, namely Masha and Magolego. They chased him away when they realised that he wanted to start a war between them. He fled to king Sekwati where he looked after cattle with other boys. Ziervogel's view was reiterated by Maloma, in a personal interview with us, but he differs with Ziervogel on the idea that he was chased and fled to Sekwati. Maloma is of the opinion that Marangrang was chased from the Masha people and went to stay with the Maloma people where his bravery made him famous. Furthermore, Maloma asserts that Marangrang is the son of a girl from the Magolego family and a refugee called Lethoke from the Mapulana tribe.

The majority of our informants say he is of Swazi or Ndebele origin, as indicated by reference to him as *lepono*, a term used in Northern Sotho to refer to a person of Nguni origin. The description of Marangrang's origin, according to this view, is that he came from the East and stayed with the Baroka of the Masha or the Bakone of Maloma or the Magolego as a refugee. This view is held by an old man

called Monoge, whom we had the opportunity of interviewing in 1992 at GaMasha. Monoge is an old man born in approximately 1889, and when we interviewed him in 1992 was very old and blind. He says they are *"dithobolo"* meaning they are great-great-grandsons of Marangrang and not "*ditlogolo*" great-grandsons. According to him, this is a sign of the generational distance they have to Marangrang. He initially refused to divulge any information. The reasons he brought forward were noble and not sinister in as much as he regularly emphasized the fact that what he was going to tell us is merely hearsay. He acknowledges the fact that the story is sketchy and varies from area to area. All that he could recall was that Marangrang was of Swazi origin and, is therefore, a *lepono*. He states that he came from the East and that he was of the Matenche clan or household (*kgoro*). His father was Lethoke, the son of Modiokwane. He met the Baroka of Masha and stayed with them. After staying with the Masha people for some time he changed into a conqueror (*phokgo*) who even surprised his own people.

According to our records, few people we have talked to and books we have come across are prepared to venture a guess as to Marangrang's origin. Others such as Mmagwaile, an old man of Monoge's age, who when we interviewed him in 1992 was staying at GaRantho, Koloi Maloma, born in 1911 and the son-in-law of Monoge and Matome Masha of the Rantho, all say Marangrang came to stay with the Masha people as an adult. Even though there is an agreement on certain aspects of his origin amongst these people there remains a slight difference. The difference is that some such as Maloma maintain that he was born within the tribe while others such as Ziervogel state that he grew up amongst the Masha and Magolego tribes, but do not say where he was born. In the third category, we have people such as Magwaile, who say that he came to those tribes as an adult.

In conclusion, it is apparent that the origin of Marangrang as well as his tribal affiliation and the tribe in which he grew up is a mystery. The view that he is of Swazi origin does not hold water as by that time there were no Swazis in the Eastern Transvaal. According to Delius (1983:30) the first major Swazi raid on the Bapedi heartland took place some ten years after Sekwati's return from exile, which would place it in approximately 1838. As a result of this confusion it is difficult to draw a convincing conclusion, except to say that Marangrang was either a foreigner or that both his parents were foreigners. If this view is accepted, it might be surmised that his father was probably a foreigner. What is known is that he became popular when the tribe he stayed with were at a place called

Kolokotela or Lepatšeng, that he was related to Magolego and that he was of the Matenche or Matšiane clan or household.

2.2.1.2 Deeds

In analysing Marangrang's deeds one is surprised to encounter various views on them. Some sources are totally negative while others are positive. In other words, some sources see his whole life history as a miscarriage of bravery because they concentrate on his evil deeds. Amongst those who focus on his evil nature are Maloma, Ramaila, Mphahlele and Phaladi, Schwellnus and Ziervogel. Those sources which expose his evil as well as his positive nature are Phala's poem, Winter, Hunt, Mönnig and Delius.

Sources which focus on Marangrang's evil behaviour are of the opinion that Marangrang was a social miscreant who abused people. Our biggest problem with this group is that they seem to ignore the prevailing circumstances under which he grew to adulthood, namely the tribal wars. The idea of Marangrang's evil behaviour was generally reiterated by the informants we managed to interview. Monoge, for example, says Marangrang pushed his brother into the bushes, but fortunately he was saved by tree branches and was thus rescued. After this incident, he started killing people. Monoge says it was Sekodimoto who, because he was as strong as Marangrang, decided to confront him. Sekodimoto managed to remove Marangrang's ear with a sharp assegai. But in the end Marangrang managed to kill Sekodimoto with an axe called "*selepe sa mereleba*". After killing Sekodimoto he attacked Rantho. He plundered Rantho's cattle in front of the people who looked after them and they were forced to flee. After attacking Rantho he attacked the cannibal, Komane and defeated him. However, on the other hand, Karl Mmagwaile Rantho talks of Sekodimota and not Sekodimoto as Monoge says. Mmagwaile says Marangrang saved Sekodimota, the king of the Rantho, from the cannibal Komane. He says Sekodimota was taken captive together with his royal kinsman, Kgalabje Mmokele. The cannibals wanted to kill Sekodimota because he was fat and dark of complexion. It was as a result of Marangrang's intervention that the two, Kgalabje and Sekodimota, were allowed to escape from the cannibals and were never to be seen again.

Ziervogel, in contrast, maintains that as a consequence of Marangrang's bravery he was outstanding in fighting against wild animals. The other boys were afraid of him. One day he wanted to kill a bull with red white spots (*tshega*) in order to

make shields, but the other boys told him that it was the king's favourite bull and if he wanted to kill it, he had to ask the king. Indeed, he asked the king for permission but the king refused. He forced the other boys to kill the bull and thereafter took the thigh and the hide to the king. The king was very angry but there was nothing he could do. He gave Marangrang a shield, but after this incident Marangrang decided to return to his people. On reaching home he asked for soldiers to attack the Phokwane people because he felt they had many cattle. On returning from this attack, Masha and Magolego fought against each other and killed one another. It was left to Marangrang to take over the monarchy. He even captured the Bapedi people.

It is surprising that a few of the sources we have come across say very little or nothing at all about Marangrang's noble idea of stopping cannibalism. It is said Marangrang tried during his reign to liberate people from cannibalism and distributed cattle he had captured so as to discourage them from engaging in acts of cannibalism. This idea, that Marangrang wanted to stop cannibalism, is discussed by Winter (1912), Hunt (1931), Mönnig (1967), Delius (1983) and a poem written by Phala (1935) which, in praise of Marangrang says:

> Ke nna Manyala-a-hlala a boNthepeng,
> Phološa'a dithšaba, phološa batho e
> se ke ya ba makxema,
> Ba se ke ba ja batho.
>
> [I am the brother of Nthepeng, the one who marries and divorces,
> The Rescuer of tribes, the rescuer of people so that they
> should not be cannibals,
> So that they should not eat people]

If this noble idea about Marangrang is true, it is disturbing that Maloma says nothing about it. In our interview with him he did not reject this idea but failed to convince us of his reasons for omitting this from his book. He accepts the idea that this might have been Marangrang's mission in life, but says his main idea in writing the play was to show the evils of lust for power.

2.2 1.3 Death

The other controversy involves the reasons advanced by various sources as to the cause of Marangarang's death. Maloma's views regarding the death of Marangrang are partially supported by Karl Mmagwaile Rantho, who says Marangrang was bewitched by the Bapedi when he was given a wife (Maloma says he was given gifts). After realising that he had been cheated he was very

angry and went to attack the Mphahlele people. He was killed by young initiates from Mphahlele. According to Monoge, after defeating Komane he went on and fought with the Masemola people followed by an attack on the Bakgaga. Before he was killed by young initiates he wounded himself between the fingers and this act diminished his prowess as a warrior. He was buried in the Mphahlele area. Maloma, on the other hand, says Marangrang committed suicide when he realised he had no chance against the enraged young Bakgaga initiates.

According to Koloi Maloma, after four years Sekwati returned only to be informed that Marangrang had become the ruler in his absence. At this time Marangrang attacked the Masemola tribe at Pshiring and thereafter went to Mphahlele and attacked their initiation school, which included as initiates both Sekhukhune and Mampuru. He did, however, notice that he had made a mistake and sent eight cattle to Mphahlele to ask for forgiveness and make reparation. Typical of Marangrang, he returned unexpectedly and attacked the Mphahlele again. This he did despite the fact that the divining bones warned against undertaking such an attack. It is said he changed the "language" of the bones to suit him when they discouraged his mission. In the end he was killed by Mphahlele's initiates amongst whom, it is alleged, was Mmutle II, who died in 1889, approximately 59 years after the death of Marangrang (Mphahlele et al 1942:47).

The death of Marangrang, according to Ziervogel (1953), occurred after he had chased Sekwati to Mapulaneng. While at Mapulaneng, Sekwati bewitched two bulls and sent them to him so that when Marangrang killed them he should become a fool. Sekwati even sent his messenger with a bewitched necklace called "*pheta ya thaga*" and also asked the messenger to take hair from his loin skin. Sekwati's messenger succeeded and brought back those articles. The articles brought back by Sekwati's messenger made it possible for Sekwati to bewitch Marangrang. After this he told the people not to be afraid of Marangrang anymore, but as the people were convinced that he was dangerous, they would not believe anything to the contrary.

Ziervogel (1953) furthermore says Sekwati returned from Mapulaneng and requested the other tribes to kill Marangrang on his behalf. At that time Marangrang decided to attack Mphahlele, but the divining bones indicated to him that there might be a problem on the way. He defied the bones and attacked the Mphahlele tribe even though his people tried to stop him. However, because they were afraid of him they still accompanied him on his futile mission. When the

Mphahlele initiates fought back, his men realised the danger they were in and fled. He was left to fight alone. It is said he fought alone the whole day until his shield turned into a cloth as a result of the number of assegais which were hitting him. One of his attackers threw a stone that weakened him to the extent that he told them to go and call their fathers who would finish him off. The young initiates refused and killed him. They took his head and gave it to Sekwati. He was buried at Sepitsi.

In the abovementioned information there is agreement on one thing, namely that he was killed by the Mphahlele people. However, there is some disagreement on the role played by Sekwati. Some people do not agree that Sekwati had anything to do with Marangrang's death while others believe he played a big role.

2.2.2 INTENTION

Maloma's intention in writing this play was clearly to write a literary document. In our interview with him he told us that he had written this play because he had realised that drama writing in Northern Sotho was, as he puts it, wanting. Initially he wrote a radio drama, but the manuscript was intercepted by his mentor, Mr Rammala, who encouraged him to publish the manuscript. In the preface the author says: "*Ke tiragatšo e sego tiragalo. Le tla ntshwarela ge ke tšama ke fetotše mabaka a mangwe a tiragalo, mo le mola.*" [This is a dramatic text and not a dramatic event. You will excuse me for changing the narration of certain events in the play.]. This is a sign that the author acknowledges that this is fiction and not the real story. At that stage he had already written two radio dramas whose titles he unfortunately cannot recall.

Regarding his methods of gathering information for this play, he indicated to me that he gathered the information by listening to older men in his village who narrated the story of Marangrang like a fairytale. On the question of who influenced his literary interests, he says the Shakespearean plays encouraged him to write a play in his home language. Even though his plays are not written in a Shakespearean style, he justifies this statement by saying that poetic language has a limited audience since not all can understand the lofty language used in poetry.

In our discussion with Maloma he confessed to us his fear in writing this book. It is this fear that compelled him to change the names of certain characters in the play.

The reason, as he puts it, is that since chieftainship amongst his people is a sensitive matter, he decided to fictionalise those aspects of history which might have antagonised certain people. It was with this in mind that he turned to fiction in order not to hurt some people. One of the names he changed is that of Sebuša, whose real name is Phatane. It is important, therefore, to realise how fear of revealing the truth can have an effect on the portrayal of history. Obviously, because of Maloma's fear, there will be aspects of his story which will not be comparable with historical records. There are various places in the book, as will be shown later, where Maloma changed historical records under the pretext of writing a literary document.

2.2.3 RECEPTION

The history of Marangrang was received differently by different people or tribes. The sources of our research were, as we have pointed out earlier, books and articles. It is interesting to realise that of these books and articles, three are based on one source. These three are Winter, Hunt and Mönnig, who based their argument on Merensky's writings. It is also interesting that one of them, namely Winter, was a missionary and Hunt was the native commissioner while Mönnig was an academic. As a result of basing their argument on one source, there is no difference between their arguments regarding Marangrang.

Early in 1992, while conducting research on this play, we had the opportunity to interview people from different tribes in the Sekhukhune area. We decided, firstly, to interview people from Mamone, and later those staying at GaMasha, GaRantho and GaMaloma. The results obtained from these groups of people were so interesting that we decided to divide them into two groups, namely those who view Marangrang's life as an embarrassment and those who view it as an achievement.

Most of the people we interviewed at Mamone only remember about Marangrang from the time when he attacked Sekwati to the time when he was killed by the Mphahlele people. Marangrang's life history, as portrayed by these people, is viewed with contempt. This is so because of their emphasis on his evil deeds and because, to them, Marangrang was nothing but a commoner who harassed them and their tribes. Included amongst the people we interviewed at Mamone was Mr Kgoloko Mampuru, the man whose help Mönnig acknowledges in his research on the Bapedi. Their emphasis on Marangrang's evil deeds and their dislike of him as a result of his actions is surprising as, comparatively speaking, Marangrang did

nothing worse than Shaka, the legendary Zulu warrior of the same period as Marangrang, who is known worldwide for his "historic" deeds. Some of Shaka's deeds were crueller than those of Marangrang, but Shaka is regarded as a great hero while Marangrang is reviled. It is obvious that there is an element of bias in Marangrang's case. Maybe this is because he was not of royal blood as was Shaka.

The other group of tribes we managed to visit were those of Masha, Rantho and Maloma. In talking to the people from these tribes, one is astonished by their love of Marangrang's life history. There is no doubt that there is an element of pride amongst these people, some of whom are proud to be associated with him. To these people Marangrang was a brave and intelligent warrior who was regrettably killed because of his cruelty. What is interesting about this group is that they know a great deal about Marangrang after his mercurial rise from a nobody to a great warrior. It is amongst this group that a clear picture of Marangrang's origin, his parents and how he grew up, emerged. Even though the whole explanation of his origin is shrouded in mystery, one is able to confirm that Marangrang was a Letšiane and that those currently related to him use the surname Matenche. The reason for this lack of interest in Marangrang's early life can be attributed to the prevailing view of the time that what was important were the deeds of children from royal families. Since Marangrang was a commoner, his deeds were not important until he started protecting his tribe against other tribes and uniting the Bakone in their fight against cannibalism.

The other problem relates to the apparent lack of interest in Marangrang's noble mission in life, namely to unite the remnants of the Bakone scattered in the Ohrigstad area and the need to eradicate cannibalism. This mission of Marangrang is reported in great detail by Winter (1912), Hunt (1931) and Mönnig (1967). The three based their work on the missionary, Merensky, who arrived in the Eastern Transvaal in approximately 1860. He is the one who mentions something about Marangrang's fight against cannibalism. Why this noble idea was swept under the carpet is difficult to understand and accept. The only plausible reason is that people who did not like Marangrang decided to ignore this noble mission, and, instead, deliberately concentrated on his evil deeds or that the Bakone tribes, as weaker tribes, were forced to ignore their history because of repression by the stronger tribes. Monoge's reluctance to grant us an interview at first and Maloma's escape from reality by using fictitious characters and events support our feeling that repression alone is at the root of this shift of focus.

One can conclude this section by saying that the repression of smaller tribes by the powerful tribes played an important role in distorting the life history of Marangrang. From what we have gathered it may be surmised that people who were closely associated with Marangrang were harassed after his death to the extent that they denounced him. It must be remembered that after he was killed, Sekwati used the opportunity to attack the Bakone and subjugate them. It is obvious that they did not want to offend him by claiming to be Marangrang's relatives particularly when they were protected by him and later by Sekhukhune against the Swazis and the Boer raids. During our research on Marangrang we discovered that the majority of our informants were, at first, reluctant to discuss the life history of Marangrang. This reluctance may indicate the feeling of insecurity shown by the people after Marangrang's death.

2.2.4 SOCIAL FUNCTION

The play was written as a form of entertainment, as the author started writing the play while working for the then Department of Information and Foreign Affairs. He was, therefore, aware of the role of literature in society. In the preface of the play the author writes:

> Se ke se dirago ke go le lemoša ka ga bophelo le mekgwa ya segagešo mabakeng a a fetilego. Gape tiragatšo e re ruta gore melao ya setho ga e tshelwe."
>
> [What I am doing is to make you aware of the traditional customs of my people in bygone days. Again this text teaches us that traditional rules of humanity should not be transgressed.]

Besides this obvious need to write a literary document, Maloma wanted to record past life. There is a subtle desire for the author to inspire action or attitude and to force the reader to see what happened in another light.

From reading the play it is obvious that fiction was the author's main interest. He was at liberty to change historical names and events, such as the problem of cannibalism; the changing of the totem by the Bapedi; Marangrang's deeds and his death to suit his story. But this does not diminish the fact that he also wanted to write history, as indicated by his use of historical signs or names such as the period of cannibalism, Sekotoma, Rantho, Magolego, etc. Reference to these signs and names indicates that the author was consciously trying to write history, as well. It is, however, unfortunate that his desire to write a literary text and not

history interferred radically with historical records, particularly regarding his discussion of Marangrang's mission in life and his death.

In 1993, while doing research at the Bakgaga ba GaMphahlele, we were informed of a visit by a distant relative of Marangrang who wanted the Mphahlele people to show her where Marangrang had been buried. It is said that she wanted to perform certain rituals at the site. This shows Marangrang's continued social functions with his descendants.

2.2.5 NARRATIVE SYNTAX

In this section we are going to analyse the text act by act, and scene by scene. The play is divided into four acts each consisting of an unequal number of scenes. Act one, for example, has five scenes; Act two has seven, Act three has five and Act four has six.

2.2.5.1 ACT ONE

In **scene one** we are introduced to Tšiane and his brother, Lethoke. Madikgake, a medicine man, finds them eating a piece of lion meat. When he comes closer he realises that they are Mapulana as they are wearing *tswaki.* In his conversation with them, we learn that Madikgake is a Mokone of Masha because he says: *"Ke...Mokone wa kua ga Maša, ke tloga ke le ena Maša ka nama. (p.l)[I...am a Mokone from Maša, let me just say I am Maša in person].* From their discussion with Madikgake we also learn that they are refugees as their village had been attacked and destroyed. They say they have turned into cannibals. They say: *"Re šetše re iphetošitše makgema a ga Komane." (p.2)[We have changed into Komane's cannibals*]. They later ask him to organise women for them.

The scene reveals that Lethoke, Marangrang's father, is a Lepulana whose village was attacked by either the Matebele or the Ndwandwe according to historical records. The fact that Maloma here mentions the idea of cannibalism is historically incorrect as this period took place after Marangrang's birth and not before he was born.

In **scene two**, Madikgake informs chief Phatane (Sebuša), who is praised as *"Phatane morw'a Mmammene, a boMakgale wa Mashego, wa bonare ya Masekgoarana" (p7) [Phatane, the son of Mmammene of Makgale of Mashego of*

the buffalo of Masekgoarana], about the two Mapulana people he encountered in the bush. They ask the divining bones for direction and from them it is discovered that they are indeed refugees who, in the end, will help protect the tribe against attacks. However, in their divination, it is realised that the two people's offspring might be problematic, as Madikgake says:

> Fela ge ke lebeletše kua pele, o ka re ba tla tswala tša phaku tše di tlogo tsenya mahlo a batho. Gona kua kgolele ke bona leru la Bokone le hlafile. (p.9)
>
> [But when I look into the future, it seems they will give birth to a child who will be an embarassment. Further in the future I see the skies of Bokone in turmoil]

In the end they agree that Madikgake should summon them. It is also agreed that he should take along with him two girls and that among them there should be a girl called Masilo, the daughter of Mphagahle. One of the reasons why Phatane accepts them into his village is because:

> Ge e le gore ke matšwagodimo gona, ga ba gokwe ba tle ba re tswake ka peu ya dibata. O ka re ke a bona gore makgema a gaKomane a tla nkela kae ge ke hweditše dinare tše pedi tšeo...Ge e le boMašabela le boMongatane bona ga ke sa bolela; ... (p.9)
>
> [If indeed they are mysterious then, let us entice them so that they strengthen us with the blood of predators. I don't know where the cannibals of Komane will run to if I can get those two buffaloes... With poor Mašabela and Mongatane, I don't know ...]

Phatane is so confident of his prize that he even says these tribes will respect him and his tribe. He refers to his people as "*balepa tšhipi ya Bokgalaka*" (p.9) meaning they are Baroka from Zimbabwe.

In this scene we are enlightened about Phatane's reasons for accepting Lethoke and his brother, Tšiane, into the village and that the Maloma people are Baroka from Zimbabwe.

In the **third scene** Phatane informs his wife about Madikgake's discovery. From their discussion it is obvious that Phatane's wife is unimpressed as she warns Phatane against the idea. In the end she reluctantly agrees that they should be brought to the village.

This scene serves to inform us of the resistance offered by Phatane's wife with regard to the acceptance of the two refugees into the village. The scene is fictitious and is used to achieve foreshadowing, which is a literary technique.

Scene four takes place along the Tubatse river. Madikgake with his entourage are with Lethoke and his brother, Tšiane. Eventually, Tšiane marries Mašilo while Lethoke marries Botsana, the daughter of Magolego. They are then intergrated into Phatane's village.

As in the case of the previous scene, this scene is fictitious, however, the important thing mentioned is the name Magolego, which is historically linked to Marangrang.

Scene five deals with the birth of Marangrang. Initially we are introduced to the conversation between Mmamagolego, Botsana's mother, and Lethoke. It is from their conversation that we learn of Magolego, Botsana's father. Mmamagolego tells Lethoke that Magolego was very brave. She explains that he died at the hands of the Mapono fighting alone to protect his chief. Suddenly, there is a whirlwind and Lethoke leaves the household. It is during his absence that Marangrang is born under mysterious weather conditions. When Mmamagolego looks at the newborn baby, she is surprised and worried that the Bakone might be jealous and do something to harm him. It is at this time that Tšiane arrives. He is so impressed with the information he receives from his brother's mother-in-law that he gives the baby the name Marangrang. Tšiane mentions that if the baby grows up to be like him, then where he has passed people will be left crying.

This scene is also fictitious in as much as the author includes certain material for dramatic purposes. The entire process involving the birth of Marangrang is not supported by historical data.

2.2.5.2 ACT TWO

In **Scene one** we encounter Marangrang at the tribal court. He is accused of beating his friends including the chief's son, Ngwato. With extensive use of his glib tongue, he manages to avoid the severe punishment appropriate for his crime. However, his action results in serious conflict between chief Phatane and his uncle, Tšiane. It also results in a bitter confrontation between chief Phatane and his medicine man, Madikgake, when chief Phatane accuses Madikgake of being a traitor. Eventually, he and his peer group are each sentenced to five strokes of the cane.

This scene exposes Marangrang's weakness, namely his disrespect for tribal laws. He had no right to beat the chief's son. It is not clear whether the idea brought about by this scene is historically correct or not. The author says it is true that Marangrang at one stage did beat the chief's son in a fight, but other informants do not corroborate this assertion. Monoge, for example, maintains that he killed the chief's cousin and was subsequently expelled from the village.

In **scene two**, Botsana is concerned about Marangrang because he steals other people's goats and kills them. After killing them he takes their liver and leaves the carcass. She says it is worse with Sekotomo as Marangrang has finished his goats. She reports that he is called names such as *mmakaipea* (p.33), a bully and that he tolerates no opposition. To Botsana's surprise his father is impressed by Marangrang and even extolls his bravery to Botsana. Lethoke continues and says Marangrang killed a drunkard (*sehwiri*). This does not impress Botsana who feels the Bakone will kill him. It is there that we learn of the source of Marangrang's strength. His father says he has been fortified. Lethoke takes the opportunity to inform Botsana that Marangrang will lead his regiment, the Mankwe, the following day to attack the Mashabela and the Rantho because they did not bring presents (*dibego*) to Phatane.

This scene exposes Marangrang's weakness and the source of his powers. It also exposes Marangrang's bravery. Whether this is fictitious or not is difficult to ascertain despite the author' s insistence that it is true. None of the informants we have questioned agree with Maloma on this point. Note that Maloma talks of Sekotomo, while some of our informants talk of Sekodimota and other talk of Sekodimoto .

Scene three is about Marangrang and his regiment's plot to attack the Mashabela. It is in this scene that we learn of Phatane's plot to assassinate Marangrang. He has asked the medicine man to poison Marangrang. Marangrang anticipates the plot and, instead, forces the medicine man to drink the potion and die. After this he instructs his regiment to shorten their assegais. He also informs them that they should wait for him while he and two members of his group go to Mashabela's village. This surprises his peers who want to attack. It is after Marangrang's departure that we learn of the group's dislike of him. They feel he is insane and that he abuses his powers. Ngwato, in particular, is worried that his peer group fears and respects Marangrang more than him. Ratau even calls him an opportunist with foreign blood [*serolorolo sa madi a bothopša* (p.39)]. To

show Ngwato's dislike of Marangrang, he says:

> Marangrang o lebetše gore o belegwe ke mofaladi; o kgole le bogoši. A ka se bo latswe. (p.39)
>
> [Marangrang has forgotten that he was born of a refugee; he is far from chieftainship. He will not taste it.]

This scene relates Marangrang's fight for chieftainship. In other words, the author in this scene implies that Marangrang's actions were such that others, such as Ngwato, Phatane's son, are of the opinion that he wants to usurp the chieftainship. Whether this is historically correct or not cannot be verified.

Scene four takes place at Mashabela's place. Marangrang informs Mashabela that Phatane wants cattle. It is during his conversation with Mashabela that we learn of his lack of respect. He continues to call Mashabela a petty chief despite Mashabela's protests. He refuses to eat the food he is given as he suspects that it has been poisoned. After he has left, Mashabela reveals to the audience that it was actually a trap by Phatane that Marangrang should be given poisoned food. It is from Mashabela that we learn that Marangrang is disliked, not only by chief Phatane, but also by the whole village. After he has left, Mashabela and his advisers agree to send cattle so that the plot should not be discovered.

In this scene the author wants us to know that the Mashabela tribe was very weak as they were constantly under the authority of a Bakone chief. Whether this is true or not cannot be verified.

Scene five concerns Marangrang's plot to cheat the Rantho people. This is after he has successfully forced Mashabela to bring cattle for Phatane thereby making himself Phatane's subject. As in the previous scene, the author informs us that the Rantho tribe was weaker than the Bakone, something that cannot be proved historically.

In **scene six** Marangrang is at the Rantho's village. He discovers that their chief, Sekotomo, is ill and pretends that he is a powerful medicine man. He deceives them by saying they must throw their assegais into the Tshwanaswi river as their gods are angry with them. After agreeing with them that he will meet them at the river he goes away to inform his group about the ambush.

During our research we came across the name Sekotomo, Sekodimota and Sekodimoto. The parts this person is given in Marangrang's life history differ radically. In our interview with Monoge, he maintained that Sekodimoto was a powerful character like Marangrang and once challenged Marangrang, however, the latter managed to kill him. Mmagwaile, on the other hand, says Sekodimota was a chief of the Rantho who was saved by Marangrang from the clutches of the cannibal, Komane. Both Maloma and Mmagwaile agree that this man was a chief of the Rantho, but the problem is whether the correct form of the name is Sekodimota or Sekotomo. The problem is further exacerbated by Phala (1935) in his poem when he talks of *Sekotoma sa Rantho* and also of *Sekodimolo'a Rantho*. We are, therefore, unable to take a decision on the correct form of the name

Scene seven takes place at the river. Marangrang is back and after a short ceremony he asks Sekotomo to start by throwing his assegai into the river to be followed by his warriors. They all proceed to throw their assegais into the river, only to be mercilessly killed by Marangrang and his regiment. After successfully defeating Sekotomo he praises himself by saying he is "*letšiane la mekgetla le mekgeledi ya marumo*" (p.49) [He is letšiane who lacerates and causes blood to drip with his spear].

This scene reveals Marangrang's clan or household, which is the Letšiane. Historically this seems to be correct as we had come across this reference to his household or clan on previous occasions.

2.2.5.3 ACT THREE

Scene one takes place after one of Marangrang's raids. In this scene, Makoloto, Marangrang's brother, and Magolego, Marangrang's cousin, fight over a beautiful cow and in the end they kill each other.

The content of this scene is surprising in as much as, according to the information we had gathered, Marangrang tried to kill his brother himself but his brother was saved by tree branches. We cannot understand why Maloma changed this fact. In our interview with him about this issue, he said he did this for dramatic effect.

In **scene two,** we find Marangrang with his mother, Botsana. Botsana is concerned about him and advises him to consult the medicine man so that he could be fortified, but he ignores her. She also asks him to marry as she is ageing, but because of his stubbornness he takes no notice of her.

This scene is fictitious but, reflects on another of Marangrang's weaknesses, namely his stubbornness.

Scene three takes place at Pshiring where Phaahla informs the Batau about Marangrang's deeds. He says Marangrang comes from the East (*bohlabatšatši*) and that he fought and killed the cannibals of Komane. From Phaahla's description of Marangrang we learn about his physical features. According to Phaahla he is a mountain of a man (*thaba*), an elephant (*tlou*), and that he has very large hands. Phaahla praises him as follows:" *Ke mokgonyana' Phaahla manyalaahlala, a boela a yo gapa, a boela Lepatšeng"* (p.57) [I am the son-in-law of Phaahla the one who marries and divorces, and returns to take his cattle back to Lepatšeng.]. It is in this conversation between Phaahla and the Batau that we also learn of Marangrang's supernatural powers.

This scene reveals Marangrang's origin, his features as well as a further weakness - a love of women. We are also informed about a place called Lepatšeng. During our research the name Kolokotela also appeared as the place where Marangrang once stayed. The stage directions at the beginning of this scene are historically incorrect since in these the author says the Batau were staying at Pshiring. Historically the first person to stay at Pshiring was Sekwati.

Scene four takes place in the Leolo mountains. The Bapedi have no place to stay because they are fleeing Mosilikatse. It is in this scene that they change their totem. They arrive at an area Mashabela gave to the Bakone. Mashabela takes the opportunity to inform Sekwati about Marangrang. From their conversation we learn of Marangrang's war against the Mapono and that he is seeking allies to assist him against the Mapono. We are also introduced to Sekwati's messenger, namely Kgobalala.

As in the previous scene, this one is historically incorrect. It is not true that the Bapedi changed their totem after returning from Bokgalaka. They actually changed their totem when they reached Bopedi, a long time before the birth of Marangrang. After returning from exile, the Bapedi stayed at Pshiring, where they plotted the downfall of Marangrang.

In **Scene five**, Kgobalala is sent by Sekwati to ask for a place to stay. On reaching the Bakone village, they are introduced to Marangrang, who is asked by chief Phatane to grant them an audience. Unfortunately, no agreement is reached

as Marangrang does not accept their presents, more particularly, their meat which was full of bones.

This scene reveals Marangrang's lack of respect for others and is fictitious.

2.2.5.4 ACT FOUR

According to the stage directions for **scene one**, the Bapedi are now staying in the Leolo mountains. Kgobalala has returned after being chased away by Marangrang, who refuses to receive gifts from Sekwati. The reason he states is that there is no liver among Sekwati's gifts. Sekwati is angry and wants to avenge this slight by Marangrang. He visits Bokgalaka of the Ramapulana.

Historically this scene is incorrect as the Bapedi stayed in the Leolo mountains long after the death of Marangrang. They moved to the Leolo mountains after abandoning Pshiring after they had been attacked by the Boers and the Swazis. That Sekwati returned to Bokgalaka is also fictitious.

In **scene two**, the Bapedi are at the Olifants river and Sekwati is informing the Bakgaga that he has returned and would like to challenge the power of Marangrang. Mokgaga discourages him and warns him against, what he calls, a monster (*ledimo* p.65). Sekwati refuses to listen because he sees Marangrang as nothing but a destroyer of the tribes. This is what he says:

> Go godiša setšhaba ga a go gopole. Sa gagwe ke go se šwalalanya. (p. 65)
>
> [He does not think of enlarging the tribe. He only thinks of destroying it.]

It is during Sekwati's conversation with Mokgaga that we learn of Marangrang's love of women. It is said he marries and divorces at will. Mokgaga is concerned about Sekwati's wish to attack Marangrang as Marangrang also uses the assistance of the cannibals from Komane in his attacks (p.66). When Mokgaga realises that Sekwati cannot be dissuaded from his mission to attack Marangrang, he asks Sekwati to leave his place.

Historically the plot to overthrow Marangrang could have been hatched with other tribes, more particularly the Bakgaga ba Mphahlele. The idea that Marangrang used cannibals to attack other tribes might also be correct, as it would have

formed part of Marangrang's method of stopping cannibalism. He could, therefore, have used them when attacking other tribes after which he could have distributed the cattle they had plundered amongst them.

In **scene three**, Sekwati, with the help of Naswana, the girl he kidnapped from Bokgalaka, plots to neutralise Marangrang's charms. Together they decide to send him the liver of an animal as well as two beautiful young girls who both possess magic powers intended to entice him. They are aware that he is very fond of liver and beautiful girls. The girls are further instructed to take hair from his royal skin [*lethebo*] for use in a magic potion.

The idea of Sekwati abducting or running away with a girl from Bokgalaka is historically correct, but whether he used this girl to overthrow Marangrang is difficult to confirm.

Scene four takes place at Marangrang's home. On reaching Marangrang's place, Sekwati's messengers, under the leadership of Kgobalala, present their case to him. Without hesitation, Marangrang snatches and swallows the liver. When Mankge tries to protest against Marangrang's carelessness about eating food that could have been poisoned, the latter dismisses his objections as unfounded saying no one can harm him. There is a long poem in which we learn of his place of origin, namely Lepatšeng and his role in trying to stop cannibalism. The scene reflects on yet another of Marangrang's weaknesses, his love of meat and liver, in particular.

In **scene five,** Kgobalala and his entourage return home and Marangrang discovers that he has been bewitched. The realisation that he has been cheated infuriates him. In a fit of anger, he retaliates and kills one of the girls who bewitched him, but the other manages to escape. Meanwhile, Sekwati is aware that Marangrang's power has been weakened and has sent Kgobalala back to intercept him.

In **scene six**, Marangrang and his warriors subsequently decide to attack the Bakgaga tribe for not informing him of the presence of Sekwati, his arch-enemy, in the village. On his way to annihilate the Bakgaga tribe, he is confronted by a group of young initiates from the enemy tribe. When he tries to attack them he realises that they are prepared for war. He tries to throw an assegai, but for the first time in his fighting career he misses, much to his astonishment. By this time

the young warriors are more determined to fight than ever. It is only then that he realises his own mistakes and curses himself for despising advice. Upon realising that he has no chance against the enraged young warriors, he commits suicide. He feels ashamed that a brave man like himself should be killed by young boys.

Historically it is incorrect for Maloma to say Marangrang committed suicide as the generally accepted version is that he was killed by young initiates from Mphahlele, who included in their number, Mmutle II (Mphahlele et al 1942:47).

2.2.6 NARRATOR INVOLVEMENT

The first important thing to look for in narrator involvement is the point of origin of the play. In this case we will have to look at the author. As far as the author is concerned we have no problem as he mentions in his preface that he has changed the story here and there to achieve his objective, namely to produce a literary document. It is true that, besides this obvious desire, he also wanted to record history. To show that he also wanted to write history, he claims in one of our interviews with him, that he changed certain events and names because he did not want to hurt certain people. He says he preferred to use the name Sebuša, in the book, instead of Phatane, as he felt by mentioning this name he would be provoking certain people. He says he did not want to start a controversy as the whole life history of Marangrang has been politicised, especially during the era of separate development when the whole of the Sekhukhune area was divided into unnecessary chiefdoms, some of whom did not have any claim to chieftainship.

In our interview with the author he told us he had changed certain events for the sake of fiction. In the preface the author says: "... *tiragatšo e re ruta gore melao ya setho ga e tshelwe.*[the theme of the play is to teach us that traditional rules of humanity should not be transgressed]. It is obvious that the author wants to communicate a moral lesson. As a result of this desire to moralise, he unfortunately distorts historical records. In the book, Maloma reiterates that Marangrang committed suicide. By saying this he denies the fact that Marangrang was killed by the Mphahlele people. By allowing Marangrang to commit suicide, he diminishes his status from that of a hero to that of a coward. Furthermore, the author does not mention Marangrang's crucial role in eradicating cannibalism, in the book.

The second important aspect to look for when trying to comprehend narrator involvement, is the role or influence of the publisher, including the reviewers. Maloma's peculiar storyline is surprising if one accepts the claim he made that the play was reviewed by the late Prof P.C. Mokgokong, whom we strongly suspect knew the story of Marangrang as narrated by Ziervogel, his mentor and colleague. The differences between the story of Marangrang as narrated by Maloma and by Ziervogel cannot be ignored. When Prof P.C. Mokgokong reviewed this play for publication, he was aware of Ziervogel's story. In 1971 when this play was published, besides the one published by Ziervogel, the following authors had already published their work, namely Phala (1935), Ramaila (1938), Mphahlele and Phaladi (1942) and Schwellnus (1947). To pretend that Mokgokong or for that matter Rammala, the then editor of the Northern Sotho journal *Tšwelopele,* were not aware of the account of the story in these books, does not hold water. The thorny question involves their reasons for sanctioning this play even though it differed from books published earlier. If they knew about the contradictions in these stories, why did they not intervene? Did they allow it because they wanted to get another side of the story? In that case they sanctioned the play because they believe the story is vast. We will never know their reasons.

There is no doubt about narrator involvement in this play. Maloma is undeniably and forcefully present in the play. His fear about portraying the truth is a case in point. At one stage during our interview with him he told us that now that he is older he is prepared to tell the truth and not fiction, however, we have not been able to extract the truth from him as he is fearful of touching on sensitive issues.

2.3 RÉSUMÉ

As far as Marangrang is concerned, there are very few aspects on which consensus cannot be reached regarding his life history. These involve Marangrang's place of origin, his deeds and, ultimately, his death. Most of the sources we have consulted differ radically from one another as far as Marangrang's place of origin is concerned. However, the few that touch on his origin agree that he once stayed at Kolokotela or Lepatšeng. The sources of this information are Maloma, Monoge and Magwaile. The majority of the informants are of the feeling that he joined the Baroka of Masha as an adult. He is related to Magolego and is the son of Lethoke of Modiokwane and is a Letšiane. He became popular after the Bapedi were attacked by either the Ndebele or the Zulu in approximately 1824.

The main bone of contention is his deeds. According to Maloma, Marangrang at one stage beat the king's son in a fight. According to Winter (1912), Hunt (1931) and Mönnig (1967), Marangrang helped to unite splinter groups of the Bakone who were scattered around Ohrigstad after the war with the Zulus and tried to stop cannibalism. These records agree that Marangrang was killed by the Mphahlele people, but on how this was achieved they do not agree and it is rather controversial. Some say he changed the language of the divining bones. In other words, he disregarded advice to the contrary and went to war. Others say he was bewitched by Sekwati and killed by the Mphahlele people at Sekwati's instigation. What is clear is that he was killed by the Mphahlele people and was also buried there. It is generally accepted that Marangrang died as a result of his attitude towards other people. He tolerated no opposition and was very cruel. He loved women and meat. Most of the sources we managed to access agree on these points.

We are surprised by the lack of interest on Marangrang' s fight to stop cannibalism and how people do not appreciate his fight against all odds. Most of the sources consulted tend to overemphasize Marangrang's badness. They tend to ignore the prevailing situation under which Marangrang operated. The situation is aptly described by Delius (1983:25) in this manner:

> The societies which remained and surfaced in the wake of the Ndwandwe departure had to struggle to survive in a difficult and hostile environment. Production had been comprehensively disrupted, and there was an ever-present threat of attack by Ndebele and other external raiders whose demand for and seizure of captives, cattle and grain compounded the difficulties of recovery. This economic and political insecurity in the absence of overarching forms of authority encouraged rapidly changing patterns of alliance and conflict and a high level of violence. The chiefdoms which had survived intact competed for followers and for control of key resources with the new foci of power which emerged from the debris of the destroyed political system, and both had to contend with 'cannibals' whose raiding threatened the lives and subsistence of those attempting to revive production on the land.

This is the situation under which Marangrang's bravery was noticed.

CHAPTER THREE

KGAŠANE AND BALOBEDU HISTORY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter our investigation is based on the play *Kgašane* as a reflection of the history of the Balobedu during the 1880s. As we have pointed out in Chapter One, the Balobedu tribe is one of the most important tribes in the Northern Province. Its history, comparatively speaking, is well documented. Unfortunately, most if not all of it, is from missionary writings, notably by Fritz Reuter, the first missionary to live amongst the Balobedu. Later, their history was written by academics such as Mönnig, E.J. Krige and her husband J.D. Krige. However, even though these academics conducted their own research, they depended on Fritz Reuter's writings.

It is generally believed that the Balobedu tribe originated from Zambia and settled in their present area in the seventeenth century. It is alleged that the tribe came into being when one of the sons of the Monomotapa dynasty (what Qunta 1995:17 calls the Munhumutapa empire) quarrelled with his father and established a kingdom of his own (Cartwright 1974: 24). Furthermore, it is alleged that the first chief who broke away from Monomotapa had a daughter called Dzugudini who was seduced by one of her brothers and bore a son. Dzugudini did not tell her father about the identity of the father of the baby she was expecting, and she eventually fled from the royal kraal accompanied by her mother and the baby, whom she named Makaphimo, called Magaphimo by Mőnnig (1963:50). They took with them the sacred beads of the tribe and the rain charms. They were followed by a handful of followers and fled across the Limpopo to settle on the slopes of the Drakensberg next to the present site of Duiwelskloof.

Cartwright (1974:25) alleges that the tradition of appointing daughters as rulers of the tribe came into being when a chief called Mugudo, generally called Mokoto by the Balobedu, felt that the practice of allowing only sons to the throne was causing a great deal of strife amongst his people. He, therefore, decided to inform his counsellors about his intention to change the tradition. He then approached his favourite daughter with a proposal to commit incest with her so that she might give birth to a girl who would be his direct descendant, but the proposition was

rejected. He then put the idea to another daughter named Modjadji who was very ambitious and unmarried at the time. She accepted the idea and this resulted in the tradition of having female rulers accepted amongst the Balobedu up to the present day. This explanation of how the tradition of allowing only sons to the throne was changed by the Balobedu should be viewed with caution. The main reason is that since this information arises from Reuter's writings, there is a possibility that it might not necessarily be true. Indeed, the possibilities of distortions cannot be ruled out given the colonial ideology which went with Christianity as a means to imperialism. This suspicion becomes even more justified when one takes into consideration the fact that Reuter probably received this information from his converts. The possibility that these converts were lying in order to discredit the Balobedu culture cannot be wished away. The other possibility is that Fritz Reuter himself misrepresented the truth for his own religious purposes. Lastly, we feel Reuter has ignored the fact that there is a strong matriarchal culture in the North of Africa in countries such as Sudan.

In addition, our views that this piece of history be viewed with caution are confirmed by reading Reuter's views about the Balobedu culture. From his writings it is clear that he did not understand it and consequently disliked this culture. In his analysis of the tribe, Reuter (1905:243) attributes the power of the tribe as arising from the fact that the tribe was able to produce rain. This ability to produce rain, Reuter believes, "brought this heathen race to a power and authority so immense" that it became popular. According to him, many people and tribes paid tribute to the queen in order to receive the necessary rain. He claims that twenty-two Zulu people from Natal once came to the village for six weeks to fetch rain, but it did not fall. When rain did not come Modjadji attributed this to certain issues which were not in order. According to Reuter, one of these issues was Christianity. This is what he says about this period:

> In 1884 it was stated that the Christians who had been converted out of her tribe were to be blamed for it, and had to be killed first. This was actually done. A force of about 10 000 men suddenly attacked *my* Christian village on Good Friday, and murdered the Christian chief, with 40 men, women and children. In 1892 it was said that the invasion of the white people into the Low Country had aggravated rain-production, and again forces were set a-going to burn down their homesteads; a white man was also murdered. Two native wars resulted from this. [My emphasis]

From this excerpt it is clear that Reuter sees the cause of this conflict, not as between Christianity and tradition, but as a scapegoat for Modjadji's failure to bring rain.

What makes the whole explanation surprising is when one considers the fact that this murder took place three years after Reuter's arrival at Modjadji's place and for him to call the people who were killed in 1884, *my* Christians is farfetched. The truth is that these people were in fact Kgašane's people. From the excerpt again, it is interesting to realise that Reuter is failing to portray the actual causes of the conflict as he says it was caused by Modjadji's failure to bring rain. It is our feeling that the main cause of this conflict was a lack of accommodation, of African culture on the part of the Christians. A closer look at what Reuter says about the Balobedu culture confirms our view that the main reason for this confrontation was Christianity, whose sole purpose was to suppress and undermine the culture of the Balobedu. In the same article written by Reuter in 1905, he describes the injustices meted out to one of Modjadji's people whose fate, he claims, was decided upon by a dice. To him this practice was not fair and was evil. He further describes Modjadji as "a bloodthirsty monster, who felt neither pity nor mercy" (1905:243). To describe a leader of the people he was living with, in this manner, is tantamount to treason and lack of respect. All these observations indicate that Reuter's writings, especially those regarding the Balobedu culture, be viewed with caution. We need to bear in mind that these people were viewed by missionaries as savages and barbarians who needed to be cleansed of their primitive culture.

The main sources consulted when conducting this research were documents written by Fritz Reuter (1885; 1905), Welhelm Krause (1963) and his wife Maria (1953), Dr G.F.T. Kuschke (s.a), the granddaughter of Fritz Reuter, a book written by Makwala called *Kgašane* (1958), an article written by Pastor Elias Ramokgola and a casette produced by Ramokgola for radio broadcast on the role played by Reuter in bringing Christianity to the Balobedu. These sources were later used in personal interviews with many people touched by this great historical event. The people we have interviewed over a long period are Makwala, Ramokgola and Matthew Modiba. The interviews with these people were conducted between 1992 and 1995. Matthew Modiba unfortunately passed away in 1993 while we were still busy with this research. We also conducted a series of interviews with Kgašane's grandchildren, namely Piet, Nimrod and Rebecca. The first two are the sons of Kgašane's second son, Andries while Rebecca is the daughter of Kgašane's third son, Paulos. We also had an opportunity to talk to Obed Rathupetšane who claims to be the grandson of Kgašane's second wife. Early in our research in 1992, we also wanted to talk to Reuter's only remaining daughter, but we were denied the opportunity by her daughter, Dr Kuschke, who insisted

that we talk to her first. Even though it was understandable as her mother was probably very old, we found her refusal suspicious and demoralising. Our suspicions were further confirmed when she agreed to send us a copy of a paper she delivered at the Human Science Research Council, in which she talks of the role of her grandparents, Reuter and Kuschke. When the copy arrived, we discovered that she had deliberately wiped out certain information from the paper which she considered controversial. We then lost interest in persuing her.

3.1 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF S.P.N. MAKWALA

3.1.1 Life history and school life

Silpha Phaladi Ngwako Makwala, the fourth child in a family of seven children (five boys and two girls), was born on the 29th March 1925 at Mabjepilong, a preaching station in the Bolobedu district. His father, Paulos Makwala, was an evangelist and opened a preaching station under the guidance of Reverend Fritz Reuter in 1912. Silpha started school in 1935 at GaMošakga where he stayed with his uncle because there were no well established schools at Mabjepilong till 1937. From GaMošakga he went to Medingen mission school for a year. In April 1939 he left Medingen and went to Kreuzburg (Makotopong) where he attended school from standard three to the end of standard six in 1942.

Lack of finance forced him to leave school and start teaching. He taught for a year (1943), working hand in hand with Reverend Wilhelm Krause to start a preaching station called Botšhabelo II with an elderly evangelist, Zebilon Rasetsoke. Botšhabelo II is actually the place where Kgašane's followers fled after he was killed. The name alludes to the place as a place of refuge, just like Botšhabelo in the Middelburg district.

In 1944 Makwala completed Form I at Tšhakuma and in June 1945 was promoted from Form II to Form III which he successfully completed in 1945. Amongst his teachers at Tšhakuma was Dieter Giesekke. From 1946 to 1947 he studied for the Primary Teacher's Certificate (P.T.C.) at Botšhabelo, this time under Hans Dieter Trumpelmann.

3.1.2 Occupation

At the beginning of 1948 he was employed as a teacher at Medingen Primary School where he taught standard 6. Here, he worked under Reverend Krause. He taught at this school for four and half years during which he studied privately for Matric, which he completed in 1951. In June 1952, he was asked by his former teacher, Dieter Giesekke, who was the principal of Tšhakuma at the time, to come and teach with him. It was while he was teaching at Tšhakuma that Makwala registered for a B.A. degree with the University of South Africa. The degree was completed in 1957.

In 1958 he was transferred to Mokomene High School in Botlokwa where he stayed for two years. In 1960 he was appointed the principal of Tshebela High School at GaMolepo. He stayed at Tshebela for ten years and in 1971 was appointed as circuit inspector for the Hlabina district in Tzaneen, where he stayed for eleven years. In 1983 he was transferred from Hlabina circuit office to Polokwane circuit in Pietersburg until 1986. In 1987 Makwala was appointed Chief Inspector and at the end of that same year was promoted to Director of Education in the former self-governing state of Lebowa until he retired in March 1989. At present Makwala is a businessman at Medingen.

3.1.3 Literary interests

It was at Tšhakuma that Makwala became interested in writing. While studying for a B.A. degree, he was compelled to read prescribed books of a mediocre standard. According to him, *Maaberone*, which was one of the prescribed books for one of his courses is very poor in terms of form and performance. The book challenged him to write something in Northern Sotho. He initially wanted to write a historical novel about Kgašane, but changed his mind when he discovered that there was an immediate need for dramatic texts in Northern Sotho. He started writing the play in 1956 and completed it in 1957. The play was published by Van Schaik publishers in 1958. Makwala also wrote a novel called *Tselakgopo* published by A.P.B., the year of publication is unknown. Makwala was a member of the Northern Sotho Language Board and progressed from being a member to secretary and finally to chairman, until he retired in 1989.

3.1.4 Philosophical attitudes

Makwala was raised in a religious household. His father was an evangelist who opened a preaching station in 1912 called Mabjepilong. Clearly Christianity was the cornerstone of his life. This religious upbringing was further enhanced by the type of education he received at various mission schools, namely GaMošakga, Medingen, Kreuzburg (Makotopong), Tšhakuma (Venda) and Botšhabelo (Middelburg). It should be borne in mind that the basic aim of this type of education was to win the child for Christ. Dieter Giesekke (in Minutes of the Synodal Assembly, 1 October 1952) describes the aim of this education at Tšhakuma, Makwala's Alma Mater, thus:

> Book knowledge and examination results are not the (real) goals of education for a person, but the forming of his character, which could only be reached through study of the scriptures. What must be achieved is that the young person should have respect for God, for his fellow human beings and for himself...we should work via the parents to attain supervision of religious instruction and make it our goal to win the teachers as co-workers. Also, we should emphasise our christian interests more than the denominational and try to establish closer contact between clergymen and teachers. In this way the Church should show an interest in the school with the aim of winning the child for Christ. (A free translation from German by Mrs E S C König)

That religious instruction was the cornerstone of education at the mission schools, which undoubtedly sharpened Makwala's religious views, is supported by the fact that in 1938 "a law was included in the regulations of school authorities which explicitly prescribed Christian education and according to which a minimum of half an hour per day per class should be devoted to religious instruction" (Synodal Minutes 1/10/1952)

Even though Makwala is a Christian, he is not afraid to challenge what he feels is not right. One thinks immediately of what happened at the end of 1943, when he had to persuade Reverend Krause to allow him to return to school to complete his Junior Certificate. According to Makwala, Krause did not approve of him returning to school because Krause felt obtaining higher education was meant for Whites only and that Makwala should remain and continue to teach his people Christianity. What Krause meant was that Makwala should continue to carry the burden of being an unqualified teacher and of being an evangelist at the same time. This angered Makwala who defied Krause and went to Tšhakuma to complete his junior secondary education.

Makwala's defiance of missionary authority reappeared again when he was involved, for the second time, in a confrontation with Krause. The root cause of this conflict was that Makwala, by then a qualified teacher, refused to teach his class, standard six, according to mission school curriculum and instead followed the primary school syllabus. From then onwards, Krause did not trust him.

That Makwala is, indeed, a Christian is confirmed further by his present involvement in church affairs. He is a lay preacher in the parish, a church elder, a parish representative in the circuit council, a circuit representative in the diocesan council and a diocesan representative in the general assembly. He is also a steward co-ordinator in the circuit. In a personal letter to us, which was a reply to the letter in which he was asked how he thinks Christianity can help to heal the wounds of the past and create a new order in South Africa today, he replies:

> By preaching love and practising it amongst all inhabitants of the earth, high and low, rich and poor. To forgive and forget and to sacrifice one's talents, time and possessions in the best possible service to all mankind. When all these are fulfilled, a new order in South Africa will be created.

3.1.5 Family and social life

Makwala married in 1950 and the couple is blessed with six children (four girls and two boys). All are teachers except the youngest, who is a motor mechanic. Mrs Makwala, who only studied up to standard six, has assisted in running the family shop in Medingen throughout their marriage. In addition to his church involvement Makwala is also a member and vice-chairman of the Bolobedu Community Development Forum.

3.2 A HISTORICAL-BIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF *KGAŠANE*

3.2.1 Authenticity

The play, *Kgašane*, depicts the conflict between Christianity and traditional African values and norms. The events in the play are centred around the deeds of a Molobedu religious martyr called Kgašane who was born around 1846, according to Makwala. Like young men of his age, Kgašane together with his friends left home to look for greener pastures in Port Elizabeth where they hoped to buy guns. This movement of people from rural areas to urban areas was the beginning of migrant labour system.

In Port Elizabeth, Kgašane met friends who included Peka Napondo, who eventually influenced him to accept Christianity as they were Christians. At first he hesitated but later joined them. However, this was after he had fled for a period of three days during which he dreamt about what he had seen on his first day in Church. It was after this dream that Kgašane returned to the compounds. He was later baptised by Reverend Keizer in approximately 1870. According to Reuter (1885), after he was baptised, Kgašane was taught how to read and write and was later appointed as a teacher in a nursery school. It was in Port Elizabeth that Kgašane received the name Swartboy (Reuter 1885). Nothing is said about when he returned home. However, on his return, a large welcome ceremony was held, befitting the son of a chief. After his return, he tried desperately to convert some people into Christians, but it was difficult at first. The conflict between Kgašane and his people began the moment he started recruiting people to accept the Christian religion.

The people refused because of their concern about Whites who were always associated with the Bible. The tribe did not like his book because they were afraid that their land will be confiscated after accepting the word of God. Their rejection of the missionaries seems to be correct when one considers the fact that:

> "the expansion of Christianity in Africa has been associated with the expansion of western colonial power. The missionaries penetrated Africa together with the western explorers and traders." (Kupa 1980:1).

And whenever western power expanded African land was usurped. It is true that some of the missionaries worked closely with the colonisers to rob Africans of their land and stock. Thus the first reasons for Africans to reject Christianity was that it was always followed by whites who in the end confiscated land and stock from Africans.

The second important factor in rejecting Christianity was that most missionaries "condemned African culture as barbarous, demonic, inhuman and heathenish" (Kupa 1980:1). As a result of their condemnation of African culture, many tribes were divided along religious lines. The division of the tribe into Christians (*Majakane*) and heathens (*Baheitene*) gave rise to great dissatisfaction among Africans with the resultant conflict, death and loss of property. It was a rule at that time that those who wanted to be Christians were, as Kupa (1980:1) puts it, "culturally circumcised before they could be saved". Kupa (1980:1) continues and says that the attitude of the missionaries towards African culture was that of

resentment when they declared that in order to be good Christians Africans were compelled to be "bad Africans" (Kupa 1980:1). Kgašane was no exception. He showed his dislike of African tradition by refusing to participate in traditional rituals even though his father was of royal blood. This angered the tribe which, under the influence of Malebelebe, accused him of collaborating with Whites to steal their land. The arrival of the missionary Knothe in 1879 and later in 1881 of Fritz Reuter angered the tribe further. Looking at the historical events of the time, one can, in a way, justify the tribe's anger in Kgašane's behaviour. The arrival of the two missionaries coincided with the first Anglo-Boer war in which African tribes were also attacked. It must be remembered that it was this war that gave rise to numerous groups of notorious boer commanders such as Abel Erasmus and Piet Joubert. The latter is known to have played a role in the cruel murder of Makgoba of the famous Makgobaskloof, who was allegedly beheaded. Thus it was because of this, together with the fact that there was severe drought and sickness that plagued the village that compelled the tribe to resent Kgašane's stand.

Kgašane's refusal to take part in traditional matters aroused the community's anger. They reported him to Masalanabo about his association with Whites. The latter was very angry to the extent that, it is alleged, her soldiers decided to kill him. When Kgašane became aware of this plan, he passed the information to Fritz Reuter, his friend, and asked him to look after his family should he be killed. When the tribe's desire to kill him became very serious, Fritz Reuter informed Tšewawa, a nickname given to a cruel soldier, who was ruling the Soutpansberg at the time. There is a controversy regarding the status and nationality of this man. Krause calls him Albasini and describes him in this way:

> Wanneer daar moeilikhede tussen stamme ontstaan het, het die Regering in Pretoria gebruik gemaak van die Portugees Albasini wat met 'n boerenooi getroud was en Shangaans as soldate gebruik het om die twistende stamme tot bedaring te bring (Krause 1962).

Krause's views on this man are supported by Cartwright (1974:21) who says this man's name was Joao Albasini. Note how Balobedu corrupted his name Joao to Tšewawa. Cartwright (1974:21) says Albasini was a trader whose mission was to see to it that everything valuable like ivory was sent to Lourenco Marques. Cartwright, however, does not know his nationality but suspects that he was of Portuguese origin. As if to support Matthews who says he only knows Tšewawa as a cruel soldier, Cartwright says Joao Albasini was involved in slave-trade. As if his past history was not important, he was later appointed a native commissioner

and tax collector. According to Cartwright he managed to avoid being charged for criminal activities due to the fall of Schoemansdal.

As we have already pointed out, Tšewawa was called by Fritz to mediate in the conflict between Kgašane and the Balobedu. After listening to the tribe's complaints, he discharged Kgašane saying the tribe's charges against him were unfounded. This made the tribe very angry and did not hide their determination to kill him. It was on the 11th of April 1884 that he was brutally murdered while holding a church service for some of the people who did not go to the main service at Mphome. It was Nathaniel Mmolawa who informed those members who were at Mphome at that time about Kgašane's death. His followers were scattered all over Bolobedu and the surrounding areas. Some went to GaMamaila while others followed his wife and children to Medingen where they were looked after by Fritz Reuter, Kgašane's friend. Later others followed and so Medingen mission station was started. Through Reuter's determination to bring Christianity to Bolobedu, numerous mission stations were established and thus Christianity was finally accepted by some Balobedu.

It was in 1894, ten years after Kgašane's death, that the tribe's fears became a reality. The tribe was attacked by Boer soldiers under the command of General Piet Joubert and their land was reduced to "a location of some 18 000 hectares" by the new rulers (Cartwright 1974:29). Ever since that day the tribe was subjugated to foreign forces with Reuter as the link between the foreign rulers and Balobedu. This was after the destruction of heathen rulers, as the missionaries were expected to do (Kuschke). The role of Fritz Reuter in the confrontation between the Balobedu and Piet Joubert leaves one with a feeling of doubts. It is said he saved the tribe by telling them not to resist or wage war with Joubert as the latter was heavily armed while they, the Balobedu, were not armed to match him. If we take into account Kuschke's views as correct, then it may be surmised that Reuter said these to the Balobedu in order to achieve his objective, namely that of destroying the institution of chieftainship as this institution had the capacity to resist his mission. When this opportunity arose, he used it effectively.

It must also be remembered that Reuter, who himself was a soldier in the Franco-Prussian war, was involved in the attack on Barend Viljoen's farm-house at Duiwelskloof. He is the one who called the notorious Bushveldt Carbineers to come and protect Africans who were allegedly harassed by the Boers. Again it is alleged that "armed blacks from his mission aided Captain Hunt in his attack on

Viljoen, and that he was a supplier of ammunition" (Davey 1987:38). This was probably the reason why the Boer resented the presence of a Bushveldt Carbineers outpost at Medingen mission and Reuter was taken to task by General Beyers. When one considers the fact that Reuter was involved in the burial of Frank Eland and Hunt at the station, his involvement in the whole episode takes a new turn. The consequences of this action is well documented as it had made headlines and ended in the execution of the leader of the Bushveldt Carbineers, Breaker Morant. As a result of Fritz's involvement with this group we reserve our suspicion on his highly publicised idea that he helped the Balobedu.

A quick survey of the play shows that Makwala has indeed written a historical drama. The events, setting and characters are real. The realities he portrays are Kgašane's departure from Bolobedu to Port Elizabeth; his conversion to Christianity; his return from Port Elizabeth; his problems in spreading the word of God to the people of Bolobedu; his meeting with Reverend Knothe and Reuter, his harrassment by Balobedu tribe and ultimately his death at the hands of assassins, allegedly Masalanabo's soldiers, who accused him of collaborating with Whites. The storyline seems to be "real". The same applies to the setting in Bolobedu.

The names of the characters are real, as is their role in the real drama. Amongst the characters who are real we have Malebelebe, the man who played an important role in the death of Kgašane; Reverend Fritz Reuter, the first missionary who came to Bolobedu in 1881; Reverend Keizer, the man who baptised Kgašane in Port Elizabeth and Tšewawa, the native commissioner at the time. In our interviews with the author he told us that, as far as the characters are concerned, he had used real names, except in case of some of Kgašane's friends in Port Elizabeth such as Makeše, Mathintha and Makepisi, who are all fictitious characters. The only name known to him is that of Peka Napondo, a Xhosa friend of Kgašane, who played an important role in influencing Kgašane to became a Christian.

While there is agreement on various aspects of Kgašane's life history, certain points remain difficult to understand, such as his original status in society . In the play, Makwala uses the words *kgoši* and *kgošana* interchangeably, something that gives the impression that he is also confused about Kgašane's status. Makwala, in personal interviews with us, maintains that Kgašane's father was Masalanabo's headman who ruled over Modubeng. Makwala's view is supported by Wilhelm

Krause, Fritz Reuter's son-in-law, who took over the running of the Medingen station after Reuter; Pastor Elias Ramokgola, a man who was born in 1912 and grew up in Krause's house with the latter's youngest son and Mr M.P. Moselekwa, a church elder at the Medingen church. However, a biography of Kgašane written by Fritz Reuter in 1885, a year after Kgašane's death, presents a different picture. According to this biography, Kgašane's greatgrandfather was a chief who ruled over Modubeng. This is a free translation from German to English of what he says:

> Kgašane stems from the ruling family of Bolobedu, whose genealogy goes back to king Mokhota. Mokhota's son was called Seale and his children were Kgašane and Mokhota II. The right of inheritance led to a violent war between the two brothers, which resulted in the division of Bolobedu. By mutual agreement Mokhota became king of Bolobedu and Kgašane ruled over the other big part of the territory which became known as Modubeng...(Reuter 1885:3)

Reuter's view of Kgašane's original status is supported by his granddaughter, Dr G.T.F. Kuschke in an unpublished article. The views of Reuter and Kuschke are supported by Matthew Modiba, the son of Magdelina, Reuter's domestic servant and Piet Mamatlepa Kgašane, the grandson of Kgašane. We find it difficult to understand the reasoning behind the change of Kgašane's status of royalty in the story's subsequent textualisation. At present, it could be surmised that somebody changed his status from royalty to that of a headman. The first suspects are the missionaries, noteably Krause. Missionaries might have deliberately reduced his status because they were aware that their insistence on Kgašane being of royal blood might have angered Masalanabo to the extent that she would neither have allowed them to continue preaching Christianity nor have accepted it herself. This view is supported by the fact that after killing Kgašane, Masalanabo's people did not continue fighting against Christianity, that is everything Kgašane stood for, but allowed the missionaries to carry on teaching the people about Christ. In addition, Reuter's articles which were accessible to us state that Kgašane was of royal blood, and even Reuter himself calls him a "Christian chief" (Reuter 1905:242). It is only those documents written by Krause which state that he was an induna. We, therefore, conclude that Krause is the one responsible for changing Kgašane's status. Our views are supported by the fact that Krause is hated by almost all the grandchildren of Kgašane for what he has done to them since taking over from his father-in-law, Reuter, in running Medingen mission station.

The second problem regarding authenticity is Kgašane's grave. At present the grave is on the farm owned by Dr D.S. Read. During our research in 1992, Makwala took us to the site of the grave. There are three graves next to one another, and to tell the honest truth it is difficult to identify Kgašane's grave. Even though we have seen the grave, we are not entirely convinced of its authenticity. This stems from the fact that according to legend, after Reuter was informed of the death of Kgašane and David Setsoge, Reuter went to Modubeng, a distance of about 10km, with the aim of helping the people to bury him, but the people refused saying:

> Ons kan Kgašane nie oordag begrawe nie. Hy is 'n onderkaptein. As die heidene weet waar sy graf is kom hulle in die nag en neem van sy hare, sy naels en ingewande en maak daarvan medisyne. Ons moet hom in die nag begrawe. (Unpublished article by Krause 1963)

What emerges clearly from this is that Reuter himself did not know where Kgašane and David Setsoge were buried. He was only told by those who were present. If we take into account that the burial took place during the night and in an extreme state of fear, our doubts that the grave might not necessarily be his are vindicated. The majority of our informants acknowledge that the grave might not necessarily be his. Matthew Modiba, whose mother, Magdelina, was Kgašane's niece, told us that the only person who could identify Kgašane's grave was Nathaniel Mmolawa, the man who informed members of Kgašane's congregation about Kgašane's death at Mphome. Even Piet, Kgašane's grandson, agrees that the only person who knew the site of Kgašane's grave was Nathaniel Mmolawa. Thus, considering that only one person knew the site of the grave, it is possible that the 'official' site of the grave might not necessarily be his.

The third problem regarding authenticity in this play concerns the reasons for Kgašane's murder. According to Kgašane's grandchildren, he was murdered because he refused to keep tribal charms (*dithokgola*) and, instead, threw them inside the trunk of a large *morula* tree. This angered the tribe and, under the instigation of his brother, Malebelebe, Masalanabo's soldiers were tricked into attacking and killing him. We have already indicated that while Makwala says Malebelebe was Kgašane's uncle (*rangwane*), his grandchildren say he was Kgašane's paternal brother. The conflict between Malebelebe and Kgašane, according to his grandchildren, concerned Malebelebe's habit of taking young girls, regarded as Mmamatlepa's wives, as his and this angered Kgašane, who confronted him. This resulted in terrible conflict, which culminated in Kgašane's

death. According to Makwala, the source of Malebelebe and Kgašane's conflict is unclear. He has a vague idea about the reason for their quarrel. As a result we are inclined to accept Kgašane's offsprings's explanation, since it is clearer than that of Makwala.

The fourth problem relates to the date on which Kgašane went to Port Elizabeth. According to his grandchildren, Kgašane went to Port Elizabeth around 1867 and returned in 1869 while Makwala, Ramokgola and Krause say he went to Port Elizabeth between 1870 and 1879. The three, Makwala, Ramokgola and Krause, say very little about when he returned. But according to one of his grandchildren, namely Obed Rathupetšane, Kgašane left for Port Elizabeth shortly after the birth of his first son, Johannes whom he says was born in 1864. According to Rathupetšane, he returned in 1869, and, in 1872 his second son, Andries was born. It was after his return from Port Elizabeth that Kgašane, according to Rathupetšane, took another wife, Moyahabo, the daughter of Lebea and Sekhoto, the mother to Hotlo and Hermanda, whom he had to divorce because of his religious principles and Reuter's influence. Kgašane's third son, Paulos, was born three months after his death on the 27 July 1884. The view that Kgašane returned from Port Elizabeth in 1879, as suggested by Makwala, Ramokgola and Krause is not compatible with historical data. It must be remembered that Kgašane met Knothe in 1879 and it is logical that by then Kgašane already had a few followers. Therefore, the suggestion that he returned earlier than 1879 seems valid.

The fifth problem regarding authenticity relates to the Bible Kgašane was given as a gift by his friends when he left Port Elizabeth. Most of our informants, including Piet and his brother Nimrod, say the Bible is still in existence and was written in Southern Sotho. However, an unpublished document written in 1986 by Max Steinbach, the grandson of Knothe, says the Bible was written in Dutch (p23). We were shown the Bible Kgašane's grandchildren claim is the original in 1995 and it is, indeed, written in Southern Sotho and is nicely bound in a neat leather cover. The Bible is greatly valued by his grandchildren and we had to wait for a period of two years before we could see it, with the gun which Kgašane brought with him from Port Elizabeth. Why Max says the Bible was written in Dutch is difficult to understand. Max's view that the Bible was written in Dutch is indirectly supported by Delius (1983:63) when he says that some Lobedu certainly participated in migrant labour system and that by "1870 the Zoutpansberg was peppered with individuals who had some grounding in *Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerk*

teachings from the Cape and Natal". This excerpt clearly supports Max's view that the original Bible might have been in Dutch. It must be remembered that Knothe was the first missionary to meet Kgašane and as such his view cannot just be rejected. The authenticity of the Bible we were shown by Kgašane's grandchildren can be verified by checking its original date of publication with an old Southern Sotho version which we hope we would be able to find in the archives. We are sure this would shed some light on the controversy. However, our problem is gaining access to the Bible presently in the hands of Kgašane's descendents as they are very protective and have refused to allow us to make even a photocopy of one page. Consequently, we are frustrated and cannot verify the date of publication of the Bible.

The last problem concerns cultural distortions. In the play, Makwala says there was a feast to install Kgašane as the new chief. This is surprising as he would not have been permitted to take over from his father while the father was still alive. Culturally, this seems to be incorrect as the new chief only takes over the reigns after the death of the old one. Secondly, Makwala says Kgašane was given women to be his wives. If indeed, this is true then it supports Kgašane's descendent's views that he was a chief and not an induna. If he was not a chief, why would he have been honoured like a chief? In our conversation with Makwala regarding these two points, he said it is an accepted rule in the Balobedu culture to install a new chief even if the old one is still alive. On the question of why Kgašane was honoured like a chief, he maintains that as far as he knows Kgašane was an induna and the feast was in accordance with the procedures followed in those years. We find it difficult to accept these explanations. Furthermore, Krause (1963) says the people refused to bury Kgašane during the day because they were afraid that heathens would take parts of his body for medicinal purposes. This would have applied for a chief and not for an induna.

What has been presented thus far are some of the aspects which must be verified before we accept the historical authenticity of the play. However, they do not, in any way, affect the historicity of the play. This is so because the aspects we have mentioned do not distort the work historically and/or culturally.

3.2.2 Intention

We have already indicated that what challenged Makwala to write, was what he perceived as the poor quality of the prescribed books that he was compelled to

read, such as *Maaberone*. It can, therefore, be concluded that Makwala wanted to write, first and foremost, a literary text since he knew the basic features of a dramatic text when writing this play. In one of our interviews with him, he told us that the most important elements of a dramatic text are form, content and performance.

The second factor that compelled Makwala to write this play was, as he puts it, to keep a record of this great man so that younger generations could know more about him. In short, the main aim was to record and store the history of Kgašane for future reference. We would like to point out that when recording historical events one must always take cognisance of the possibility of distorting historical data, intentionally or unintentionally. It is the responsibility of the recorder to be vigilant as we cannot allow him to distort historical records simply because his main objective is merely to record historical events. We would expect him to verify most of his information before committing himself. This is the approach we are going to adopt in analysing Makwala's play.

There is no doubt in our mind that to record history was clearly Makwala's intention in writing this play. Proof of this is the author's deliberate use of passage of time in his stage directions. At the beginning of each scene the author puts in the lapse of time in days, weeks, months and even years. The use of this technique conclusively illustrates the author's wish to record history. The main problem, however, with this noble intention is that it has compelled the author to record even certain controversial issues without research. These controversial issues relate to Kgašane's original status and the whereabouts of Malebelebe or his descendants. These issues are very important to this research but to Makwala they were not important as they do not in any way enhance the word of God. We conclude this section by saying that for Makwala to have ignored an investigation of the role of Malebelebe after Kgašane's death and his original status in terms of whether he was a chief or an induna, shows that he had compromised the need to investigate in order to monumentalise Kgašane's life history.

3.2.3 Reception

What is important to investigate here is how Kgašane's life history has been received by various people since the event's textualisation. To do this we will tentatively divide the reception into two categories. For the sake of clarity, we will call the first the "Christian" or official and the second the "non-Christian" or

unofficial perception. By "Christian" or official perception we mean the story as perceived by those associated, in one way or another, with Christianity. In this category we will include writings and interviews with Fritz Reuter, Krause, Makwala, Ramokgola and Moselekwa. These people believed everything said or written about Kgašane by Reuter to the extent that their views are almost similar. We call their perception of the story of Kgašane Christian because they received the story from their religious education which we strongly believe was perpetuated by Reuter and W. Krause. All the people we have mentioned under this view have, at one stage, worked first under Reuter and later under Krause once the latter took over the running of the mission station after Reuter. To these people, with the exception of Reuter, Kgašane was an induna who was murdered by Masalanabo's soldiers because of his religious beliefs. To them Kgašane was a hero because he died for his beliefs. There is no doubt that this later became the official version regarding Kgašane's life history.

By "non-Christian" or unofficial perception we mean the view of people whose understanding of the story is not Christian. In this group we have people whom we can regard as Kgašane's descendants. This includes Matthew Modiba, an old man who unfortunately passed away in 1993, while we were busy conducting this research, at an approximate age of 103. We had the opportunity to interview him twice during 1992. We had hoped to obtain more information from him as he literally grew up in Reuter's house as his mother was Reuter's servant and in 1897 went to Germany at the age of seven with his mother. The other members of this group are Piet Mamatlepa Kgašane, his brother Nimrod Kgašane, their sister, Rebecca, the daughter of Paulos and Johanna Kgašane and Obed Rathupetšane, the grandson of Kgašane's second wife. Amongst this group, Piet is the most vocal against most of the things said by the first group. Piet is a knowledgeable man who is able to relate more details of the story of Kgašane than the others and, in some cases, is supported by documents we came across. To this group, Kgašane was a chief and was killed because he refused to continue doing the job that was done by his father, namely that of being the traditional doctor responsible for running the initiation school for Masalanabo. To this group what angered Masalanabo was when Kgašane threw charms used for this purpose inside the trunk of a morula tree. The group also differs with the first group in as much as they say Malebelebe was not Kgašane's paternal uncle (*rangwane*), as Makwala alleges in the play, but that he was Kgašane's paternal brother. They have even shown us the house belonging to Malebelebe's descendants to prove their point of view. The group, noteably Rathupetšane, disputes the fact that Kgašane had only

one wife, saying he had two wives, but was forced to abandon the second one as a result of pressure from Reuter. What is astonishing about this group is their obvious hatred of W. Krause and everybody associated with him. This is due to what W. Krause did to their families who were forced to leave the mission station to stay at a place called Senopelwa, where they are now living.

We have deliberately left Fritz Reuter out of the two categories, especially the one dealing with Kgašane's status as Reuter states that Kgašane was of royal blood in the document he wrote in 1885, a year after Kgašane's death. This, in a way, supports the views of Kgašane's descendants. We had hoped to secure an interview with Reuter's only remaining daughter, Magdelina Kuschke (called Mmakobo by the Balobedu), but in vain. We had hoped to persuade her to grant us an interview as she might have shed some light on this controversy, though it might be too late as she is most probably very old, since she was born in 1903. We were frustrated, as we have already indicated, in our endeavour to see her by her daughter, Dr G.F.T. Kuschke, who was a lecturer at Potchefstroom University and is now a lecturer at the University of the North where she has been since 1995. In an unpublished article she wrote in 1992, she says that "the Balobedu royal house was divided between Khashane and Modjadji" and that Kgašane was deprived of his chieftainship by Modjadji because of his Christianity. From her article it is obvious that she also agrees with the views held by Kgašane's grandchildren.

3.2.4 Social function

In order to understand the social function of Kgašane's life history, we are going to use the same division used in the previous section, that is to divide the audience of his life history into two categories. The first category as we have already indicated views his life and death in religious terms. To people associated with this view, Kgašane's life history illustrates the power of the word of God. Among those who held this view, Fritz Reuter (1885), refers in detail to some of the incidents that prove how powerful the word of God is in a report we have already mentioned. The problem with such a view is that, in the end, it is too didactic and the events in the story are treated in a "mystified or propagandist fashion, while the historical figure is romantically monumentalised" (McKay 1972:50) This is exactly the case in Reuter's report.

Besides using Kgašane's name for glorifying the word of God, the missionaries and their supporters used the name for financial gain. An example of how this was done is a trip organised in 1897 which, according to a letter written by Maria Krause dated 11/11/1953, included "65 black Christians and heathens who visited Germany in connection with a Transvaal exhibition under the leadership of Fritz Reuter". Even though the letter does not mention the financial benefits of the journey, the motive is apparent. Amongst this group was Matthew Modiba, who told me that the reasons for the trip were for Reuter to show the Germans Black South Africans and to ask for donations. His views are supported by an unpublished article by Dr G.F.T. Kuschke when she says " it was also thought that the interest generated at the exhibition, could have financial benefits for the Balubedu". We managed to get hold of a copy of the names of the people who went to German. What surprises us most is that this document is called a contract and it includes even the amount each person was given. Unfortunately it could not be determined whether the amount each person received was from Germany or from Reuter. Our suspicion is that these donations were given to Reuter, who had to determine the amount each person was supposed to get. If these donations were given to each person individually, Matthew could have informed us as the main reason why the trip was arranged in the first place. It is a shame that these financial benefits never reached the people they were intended to help, but only helped the missionaries and their supporters. In this regard, stories abound which tell of how W. Krause, in particular, denied Kgašane's grandchildren their rightful share and abused them. Some are even happy that his two sons died while they were still young since he was trying to save the money for their inheritance.

The third social function of Kgašane's life history amongst Christians is commemorative. It is said that while Reuter was still alive, Christians used to commemorate his death during the Easter holidays. They used to stay for three to four days at the site of the grave singing and dancing. This was stopped by the owner of the farm where Kgašane's grave is located because, it is alleged, of misunderstandings that arose between Krause and Douglas (nicknamed Dekeles by the Balobedu), the owner of the farm. Some of our informants, particularly those related to Kgašane, blame Krause for this misunderstanding. After Douglas had refused them permission to continue commemorating Kgašane's death on the farm, they decided to erect a tombstone as a memorial in his honour at Medingen where they could continue to remember him.

It is interesting to note that there is even a performance text based on Kgašane's life history which is still performed in church during the Easter holidays. Of late, it is performed irregularly and mostly by women. We have had the opportunity of watching and recording it on video cassette. What is surprising about the play is that it is not entirely based on the life history of Kgašane but mainly on that of Fritz Reuter. Kgašane's life history is mentioned only in passing. We have tried to find out the reason for the sudden change of focus but no one was prepared to give an answer as no one seems to know who wrote the play. Some suspect that it was written by Makwala, who denied having written the play when challenged. Our suspicions are that it was written by Krause and modified, probably by Ramokgola. Thus, the social function of Kgašane's life history in this group varies from commemorative to glorification to instruction.

With regard to the other group, one can say they want to reform or revolutionise the life history of Kgašane. This becomes apparent when one considers the fact that our two main informants in this group, namely Piet and Matthew, reject most of the things said by Makwala, Ramokgola and Krause. It is interesting to note that both these two do not in any way challenge Reuter's views because, to them Reuter was fair and gentle. However, if one mentions Krause one experiences a totally different reaction. Piet, in particular, cannot hide his hatred of Krause. In Piet's case he would like to use the story of Kgašane as a source of revenue, as illustrated by his excessive demand for money. It was this demand for money that nearly ruined our research, as he initially refused to grant us an interview saying that we should contact the SABC for a copy of the documentary he said he produced for the SABC in 1984. When we failed to obtain a copy from the SABC, he demanded a great deal of money for an interview. Money which we did not possess.

Before we commenced with this research on Kgašane's life history in 1992, a war of words erupted between Kgašane's descendants and the representatives of the church in Medingen. The cause of this conflict, notably spearheaded by Piet, is that certain of Kgašane's descendants want to take Kgašane's tombstone to Modubeng where he was murdered and where his grave is situated at the moment. This is, however, challenged by the church as represented by Makwala, Ramokgola and the current priest, Rev Kgatla. Their conflict is centred around who owns the tombstone. According to the church representatives, the tombstone was bought with church money and, therefore, belongs to the church. This is, however, challenged by Piet who says that the money used to buy the tombstone

was collected by his family, but the tombstone was erected at Medingen because of Krause's interference which ended in the owner of the farm refusing to allow the tombstone to be erected at his farm. By 1992, the conflict had reached the magistrate and had also been referred to the dean of the church for his decision. To us this indicates, in no uncertain terms, that the conflict between Christianity and tradition, as a historical fact, still exists amongst the Balobedu. The source of this conflict, to our mind, is due to the social functions the two groups attach to Kgašane's life history.

3.2.5 Narrative syntax

3.2.5.1 Act One

The **first scene** in this act takes place at Mamatlepa's place. In this scene, Makwala introduces to us a discussion between Kgašane and his parents in which he informs his parents of his intention to go to Port Elizabeth. When his parents refuse to give him permission, he informs them that he will defy them and go without their blessing. During the conversation, his uncle Malebelebe, who stays at Tswapane enters. Note that Makwala says *rangwane*. When he is informed about Kgašane's wish, he is also opposed to the idea of Kgašane going to Port Elizabeth. When they inform him about Kgašane's determination to go to Port Elizabeth irrespective of their refusal, Malebelebe says this is because Kgašane is a spoiled child.

In this scene we learn about Kgašane's arrogance. This scene is fictitious, and is utilized by Makwala to illustrate that Kgašane followed the correct protocol by asking for permission to go to Port Elizabeth. Whether or not Kgašane openly defied parental authority is not clear. Secondly, it is surprising that Makwala calls Malebelebe Kgašane's uncle while the acceptable notion amongst his grandchildren is that they were brothers. Why Makwala says Malebelebe is Kgašane's uncle is not clear. The third aspect to be noticed from this scene is the view expressed by Malebelebe that Kgašane is spoiled. Whether this is true or not is difficult to ascertain.

The **second scene** takes place during the night following the previous scene. Its setting is Mamatlepa's house once more. In this scene we find Kgašane's parents discussing his wish to go to Port Elizabeth. They are worried that because Malebelebe knows about Kgašane's wish to go, he might divulge the information

to chieftainess Masalanabo. They do not trust him as he is regarded as a spy by the community. This makes them feel uncomfortable. It is while they are still talking that Kgašane enters. Mamatlepa takes the opportunity to explain to Kgašane why he does not like his idea of going to Port Elizabeth. This is what he says:

> Ke re ga go kgonege gore ke go fe tumelelo. Kgoši Masalanabo Modjadji o tlo go neela sethunya. Le gona, tseba, gobane o tlile go tšiya legato la ka bogošing, a ga o mpone gore ke tšofetše? (p14)
>
> [I say it is impossible for me to give you my permission. Chief Masalanabo Modjadji will give you a gun. Besides, remember that you are going to take over the reigns after me, can't you see that I am old ?]

Once again, Kgašane refuses to accept his father's recommendation saying he does not want a gun that has been given to him. He wants to work for his own gun. When his father insists that he should not go, Kgašane informs them that they should not be worried when they discover that he has left. After saying these words, he leaves. Kgašane's arrogant behaviour worries his father so much that he feels the need to visit a traditional doctor and ask him to do something to discourage Kgašane from proceeding with his plans. However, his mother refuses saying the doctor might place her son in a trance. They are still busy talking when Lebea, (Kgašane's uncle, *malome*, according to Makwala) enters. When he is informed about Kgašane's wish he also does not agree. Lebea's feeling is that Kgašane wants to go there to marry Xhosa women. He also advises them to visit a traditional doctor.

In this scene, there are two interesting facts, the historicity of which must be verified. The first one is the exposition of the hostile relationship between Malebelebe and Mamatlepa. It is difficult to ascertain from the play and even from Makwala, the exact cause of this hostility. Furthermore, it is difficult to ascertain whether this is a historical fact or not. The other aspect deals with the idea of visiting a traditional doctor, as suggested by Mamatlepa, but rejected by his wife. The reason advanced by MmaKgašane against this visit is that she feels the doctor might place Kgašane in a trance. Could this indicate that even at this early stage, Kgašane's mother was already a "Christian"? Even though Makwala says this is a historical fact, we have our doubts. How could she be against the traditional doctors if we take into account the fact that Mamatlepa himself was a traditional doctor? As a result of this, we think MmaKgašane's words are historically incorrect.

Scene three takes place after three days. Its setting is in Mamatlepa's house. In this scene, we meet other characters such as Ramahlane (Kgašane's uncle *Rangwane*, according to Makwala); Phalafale, Malebelebe's son, according to Makwala and Madiwele, Mamatlepa's friend. Ramahlane finds Lebea, Mamatlepa, Phalafale and Madiwele discussing Kgašane's disappearance. In their conversation, Ramahlane informs them that he was told by someone that some people had met Kgašane at GaSekgopo on his way to Port Elizabeth with six other boys of his age. It is only after Phalafale has left that Madiwele reveals to them that he overheard Malebelebe informing Masalanabo about Kgašane's wish to go to Port Elizabeth. Mamatlepa is worried, particularly about Masalanabo's reaction to the news. He is even more worried after he is informed that the chieftainess was actually pleased about the news. Ramahlane then suggests to him that he should procure a charm called *bolebatša* (that is something that would make one forget) from the great traditional doctor, Rasenyolo.

The scene sounds like it is fictitious, enabling the writer to create conflict and suspense. When Makwala was asked about the authenticity of this scene, he maintained that this is a true scene and that even the names of the characters he had used are historically correct.

3.2.5.2 Act Two

The **first scene** in this act takes place after one year and three months. Its setting is in Port Elizabeth. We meet Kgašane and his new friends, including Pheka Napondo. The main discussion in this scene concerns Kgašane's friends advising him to accept Christianity, but him refusing saying he has no interest in Christianity. The main reason why he is not interested in Christianity is that, since his father is an *induna* (*Kgošana*), he is going to inherit the reigns of leadership after him. Secondly, Kgašane informs his friends that he shudders to think what Masalanabo will do to him when she is informed that he is a Christian. Thirdly, Kgašane tells his friends that since Christianity is opposed to polygamy, this will create a problem for him since, according to tradition, he is supposed to marry more than one wife. During their conversation, it transpires that Reverend Keizer is coming the following Sunday. Kgašane's friends ask him to be present, but he refuses.

The entire scene is fictitious as is the conversation. Even Makwala acknowledges that this is fictitious, however, it is important as it helps to portray Kgašane's initial refusal to accept Christianity. What is interesting, however, is Makwala's reference to Mamatlepa, Kgašane's father, as an induna (*kgošana*) and not a chief as he had previously indicated.

The **second scene** takes place after five days. Its setting is in the residential compounds. Kgašane is invited by his friends to accompany them to church as it is Sunday and Reverend Keizer is coming. He reluctantly agrees to accompany them. There is no doubt that this scene is fictitious.

The **third scene** takes place in the church where the priest and the congregation are singing. The priest starts his sermon and during this sermon he talks about those who refuse to accept the word of God. The service is concluded with the singing of a well-known Lutheran Church hymn called "*Tlang bjalo go Morena*". Even though Makwala says the scene is true historically, we cannot verify.

In **scene four** which takes place in the compounds, we encounter Kgašane and his friends. It is after church and his friends are trying once again to convince him to convert to Christianity. Kgašane suspects that he has been manipulated as he feels the songs and the sermons were aimed directly at him. His friends try to the best of their ability, to convince him that this is not true, but he refused to accept their explanation. It is during their discussion that it is mentioned that Reverend Keizer will be coming into the compounds to see those who have not yet accepted Christianity. When one of Kgašane's friends jokingly says the Reverend is coming for Kgašane, Kgašane does not like the idea and runs away. His friends remain unsuspecting until the Reverend arrives. It is then that they start suspecting that something is wrong with Kgašane as it has been a long time since he left. Makwala and Ramokgola say Kgašane, indeed, did flee and hide in a thick forest called "*phiri*". They are supported by W. Krause (1963) who also talks about the thick forest.

Scene five takes place after two hours. Pheka Napondo returns after assisting Reverend Keizer by introducing him to new and potential converts. By then Kgašane has still not returned. It is then that his friends realise that he has fled. What is historically interesting in this scene is that we learn that Kgašane does not drink beer. Whether this is true or not is difficult to assess, even though the author mantains the scene is historically accurate.

Scene six takes place after three days, during the night. Pheka, Kgašane's friend, is worried as Kgašane has not returned. Makepisi, a fictitious name given to one of Kgašane's friends, jokingly suggests that perhaps he is in the township with a beautiful Xhosa woman. Makeše, another fictitious name for one of his friends, suggests that they should look for him. Pheka feels that if he does not return that night he will report the matter to the police. While they are talking, Kgašane enters. The first thing he asks for is water to drink and he looks exhausted. After drinking the water he tells them that he had thought he was running away from them and Reverend Keizer, but God forced him to come back. He also informs them that after disappearing he hid in the bush because he did not want to accept the word of God. During those three days, he had a number of dreams. In the first dream he saw a congregation wearing white clothes singing a hymm called:

> "E a botileng Modimo fela
> O tlo imollwa, o tlo phela, (p.29)
>
> [One who trust God only
> Will be helped, and will live]

In the second dream, he heard the priest preaching about those who refuse to accept the word of God. In the third dream he heard the congregation singing a song called:

> Tlang bjalo go Morena;
> Sokologang dibeng ...
>
> [Come now to God
> Turn your backs on sins]

After this he saw a person wearing white clothes who told him to wake up and go to the priest to be baptized. Kgašane told them that he had dreamt these dreams everyday in the same sequence. He asked them to take him to the priest to be baptized. It is generally believed that this scene is true historically.

In **scene seven**, which takes place after six months, Kgašane has been baptized and given the name Johannes. Kgašane now wants to go home and his friends buy a New Testament which they give to him as a gift. In this scene, two things are of interest to us, namely the name given to Kgašane after he was baptized and the language in which the Bible he was given by his friends was written. According to Makwala, Kgašane was given the name Johannes, while Reuter (1885) says he was given the name Swartboy. Secondly, it is generally thought that his friends gave him a Bible written in Southern Sotho but according to Max

Steinbach, the grandson of Knothe, the Bible was written in Dutch. We had an opportunity to examine the Bible believed to have been the one Kgašane was given by his friends and this one is written in Southern Sotho. Reasons for this discrepancy are difficult to find as we had already indicated.

3.2.5.3 Act Three

Scene one takes place after three months in Bolobedu. Kgašane returns and finds his mother cleaning the yard. At first she does not recognise him, then she calls his father, who also does not recognise him at first. Later people are invited and a cow called Lepontiki is slaughtered to welcome him home. Makwala says everything in this scene is true, even the name of the cow that was slaughtered is historically accurate.

Scene two takes place after four days. Relatives and other people are streaming in to come and see Kgašane. His father, who is quite concerned by that time, asks him to read the Bible in private since the Balobedu do not like Christians, but he refuses. Amongst some of the people who come to see him are Malebelebe and Lebea. They want to see the gun, but instead Kgašane shows them the Bible. While he is still talking to Lebea, people sent by Masalanabo arrive. They have been sent to install Kgašane as a chief (*kgoši).*

From this scene there is one thing which is of interest regarding the play's historicity, namely the installation of Kgašane as a chief or an induna. Traditionally the new chief was installed after the death of the one who was ruling. As a result, it is surprising that here Kgašane is installed before the death of his father. Secondly, Makwala says he was installed as a chief (*kgoši*). This is surprising as Makwala's view is that he was an induna and not a chief.

Scene three takes place ten months after Kgašane has been installed as a chief of Modubeng. There are lots of complaints from the tribe about Kgašane and his Bible. Kgašane calls a tribal meeting to try and solve the tribe's complaints. Malebelebe, the main antagonist, stands up to tell Kgašane about the tribe's complaints. The tribe feels the Bible is bringing confusion since it (the Bible) does not allow the chief to follow the dictates of his tradition. Some of the things Kgašane had refused to do were to marry many women, take care of the charms related to the chieftainship (*dithokola tša bogoši*), drink liquor and, furthermore, he was recruiting people to join him. The tribe, according to Malebelebe, feels

that this is leading to a situation where even people from outside Modubeng are coming to him in order to read the Bible. If the Whites came to know that the chief is a reader of the Bible, Malebelebe continues, they will come and take the tribe's land. Malebelebe is supported by Lebea and Phalafale, who even suggest that the Bible should be burned. Kgašane replies by saying that anyone who wants to burn the Bible should be prepared to kill him first. Mphukaša, a visitor, stands up and helps to solve the problem by suggesting that they should leave the chief alone since he is ruling the tribe in an acceptable manner. He tells the meeting that the Bible is something the chief uses as a form of entertainment in the same manner as they use different kinds of traditional instruments to entertain themselves. After Mphukaša's talk the people are satisfied, except for Malebelebe. The tribal meeting is adjourned with Kgašane expressing his appreciation of Mphukaša's views. Makwala alleges that this scene is true and not fictitious with even the name of the person who helped Kgašane during the tribal meeting being correct historically.

3.2.5.4 Act Four

Scene one takes place after many years. Kgašane is impervious to criticism as he still refuses to denounce Christianity, and his followers are growing by the day. The news that Kgašane is a Christian has even reached Masalanabo through Malebelebe. The people of Bolobedu are furious with Kgašane, and Masalanabo feels he is responsible for the drought and sickness. Tšewawa, the native commissioner at the time, is also summoned. It is at this meeting that they suggest that the Bible should be burned and that he be asked to resign as a chief of Modubeng. After listening to various allegations levelled at Kgašane, Tšewawa feels these allegations are unfounded and thus finds Kgašane not guilty and absolves him. However, the people refuse to accept the verdict and threaten to take the law into their own hands.

The general feeling among people is that this scene is historically correct. The only problem here regards the person who summoned the notorious Tšewawa (Joao Albasini). In the book Makwala says he was called by the Balobedu people, but according to Krause's article (1963), Reuter is the one who called him as he had already been used previously to subjugate insubordinate tribes in the Soutpansberg area at the time. It is difficult to understand why Makwala says he was called by the tribe.

In **scene two** which takes place a day after the verdict, Kgašane's father asks him to send a cow to Masalanabo as a gesture of reconciliation, but Kgašane refuses saying even if they gave her a cow, he would not stop reading the Bible. In the end, Mamatlepa takes it upon himself and sends a cow, called Manyemola, with a messenger to Masalanabo. Makwala says this scene reflects what actually took place.

Scene three takes place a day after Mamatlepa and Kgašane's discussion on how the latter should ask for forgiveness. In this scene we learn that Masalanabo has refused to accept the cow. Masalanabo has also informed the messenger that the royal people are furious with Kgašane and that they want to kill him. This information worried Mamatlepa very much, but Kgašane tells him not to worry as the people want to kill him and not his parents. After talking to his father, he leaves and goes to see Reverend Fritz Reuter, his friend. He wants to talk to him about the information he received from the messenger. Makwala says everything in this scene is an accurate reflection of the truth.

In **scene four** we find confusion and tension reaching fever pitch. In the ensuing tension, Kgašane informs Reuter that the Balobedu want to kill him. Reuter is surprised as he had thought Kgašane was at Mphome. Kgašane informs him that he did not go because he feels the Balobedu are now more determined to kill him than before. He also informs Reuter that he suspects they are going to carry out their intention the following day, that is Good Friday. When Reuter offers to send some soldiers to help him in his war with the Balobedu warriors, Kgašane refuses saying it will not help. If the Balobedu want to kill him let them do it, he says. He then asks Fritz Reuter to look after his wife and children should he be killed. Before leaving, Reuter asks him to go inside the house to greet *Jifrou*, Reuter's wife and Kgašane's niece, Nakedi. The feeling amongst people is that this scene is not fictitious but a true reflection of what happened and even the fact that Reuter had soldiers at his mission is generally believed to be true.

It is in **scene five** that Kgašane's fears are realised. The scene takes place on Good Friday. The Balobedu warriors enter Modubeng determined to kill. Kgašane and Ramputla hear people screaming saying that they must flee because the Balobedu are coming. They can hear the sounds of guns. Kgašane requests the women and children to run into the church. David Setsoge is asked to bring the guns. David decides to climb the mountain so as to be able to fight them. The Balobedu warriors start shooting while the women are singing.

Kgašane, who is standing at the church door, asks that they pray. As he says Amen he is fatally wounded. David is also shot dead. The survivours decide to flee to GaMamaila, determined to continue preaching the word of God. It was on the 11th April 1884 that Kgašane was murdered. It was through Nathaniel Mmolawa that the Christians who had gone to Mphome for the main church service were told of the tragedy.

3.2.6 Narrator involvement

A look at the play shows that the author is present in the story. Even during our interviews with him, he told us that the story of Kgašane was related everywhere by almost everybody. This motivated him to write the play as he felt it was important to record it. Secondly, he said he was encouraged to write in order to show the outside world the power of God. Makwala feels that it was because of Kgašane's followers that civilisation was able to reach Bolobedu. We can thus see that in writing this play Makwala's self-consciousness was present and obvious. Like a true Christian, he wanted to show people what the power of God can do.

His involvement in the play will now be examined according to the manner in which he has handled controversial aspects of Kgašane's life history. Our findings are that Makwala's involvement with the story has, unfortunately, spoiled his good work. He seems to have compromised inquisitiveness at the expense of recording history. Since the play deals with the conflict between Christianity and tradition, the attitudes of Christians towards Malebelebe after the death of Kgašane would have been uppermost in one's mind. We feel Makwala should have investigated what happened to Malebelebe as this would have indicated whether or not the wounds brought about by Christianity had been completely healed. We find it strange that he did not investigate the whereabouts of Malebelebe or his children. When we asked him about Malebelebe, he said he did not know anything about him except that he was the one who plotted Kgašane's death. For him to have not investigated the fate of this man is beyond our comprehension.

Makwala also did not investigate other things, such as Kgašane's status despite claiming, in his preface, to having interviewed Kgašane's descendants, such as Mr and Mrs Johannes Kgašane Mamatlepa and Mrs Magdeline Modiba before writing the play. The former are Kgašane's son and daughter-in-law while the latter is

Kgašane's niece who was Reuter's servant. We find it difficult to accept that Kgašane's son would not have known about his father's correct status if, indeed, Makwala had enquired before writing the play. What surprises us further is that even the son of Magdeline disagrees with Makwala to the extent that he does not want to be associated with his story. To Matthew Modiba and Piet Mamatlepa, Kgašane was a chief and not an induna as Ramokgola, Makwala and Krause claim.

It is clear from what we have said that, in the case of this play, narrative immediacy misled Makwala as he did not conduct his own research but, most probably, depended on what was written by Krause without listening and taking into account the views of Kgašane's immediate relatives. We find it difficult to accept that they would have deliberately misled us as their story is supported by Reuter's documents and his granddaughter. Our conclusion is that Makwala ignored their version because he had already gained an insight into Kgašane's life history through Christian eyes, whose determination was to paint African culture black. We are compelled, therefore, to support the allegations levelled against Krause by Kgašane's descendants that everything correct about Kgašane was changed by Krause, who Makwala acknowledges in the writing of this play. It must be emphasized once more that W. Krause is hated by most of Kgašane's grandchildren because they claim he chased their family from Medingen by insisting that they should pay tax even though they were given a farm by the then government. The whereabouts of this farm is not known to Kgašane's grandchildren. After chasing them from the farm most of them settled at a place called Senopelwa where most still live today. There was only one child of Kgašane who remained at Medingen and his name was Johannes Kgašane Mamatlepa, whom Makwala claims to have interviewed before writing the play.

3.3 RÉSUMÉ

It is apparent from what has been discussed thus far that the play *Kgašane* is, indeed, a historical drama whose content is a historical fact or reality. Owing to Makwala's personal involvement in the story, he has spoiled a rather interesting work. This, as we have already indicated, is because he did not investigate controversial aspects of Kgašane's life. The only reason that could be found for this oversight is that he had his own view of the story and his opinion that some aspects were not important from a Christian point of view.

Since the play deals with the conflict between Christianity and tradition, one is inclined to say that this conflict is not, as yet, resolved. This is reiterated by the confrontation between Piet Mamatlepa, on the one hand, and Makwala and Ramokgola on the other. The reason provided by Makwala and Ramokgola for this conflict is that Piet would like to start a new church as he has turned his back on his grandfather's church. Even though this has been proved to be false, they insist that the tombstone was bought with church money. This also seems to have been proved false, as we were told, Kgašane's grandchildren have eventually succeeded in taking the tombstone to Modubeng after a lengthy struggle. To us, this is a continuation of the conflict between Christianity and tradition. In this regard we are supported by Cartwright (1974:24) when he says the following about Reuter's failure to bring Christianity to Balobedu:

> In this remote area Reuter was to labour for fifty years. And here the seed fell on somewhat stony ground for at the end of seventy years's work by Reuter and his successor, who was also his son-in-law, there were only some 1600 Christians in a total population of approximately 30 000. The number has increased since 1940 when Christians' head were first countered and this calculation made. But the heathen still flourish, still cling to the strange superstitions of their forefathers...

This proves that, since history is a process, what happened in the past must have a bearing on what is happening now. This is exactly what the play portrays, a historical event that still affects the lives of the people.

CHAPTER FOUR

KGOŠI MMUTLE III AND BAKGAGA BA GAMPHAHLELE HISTORY

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the play *Kgoši Mmutle III* as a reflection of the history of the Bakgaga ba GaMphahlele. The historical time of the book is the advent of the introduction of formal education and its adverse effect on traditional institutions, with special reference to chieftainship. Unlike the history of the Bapedi and the Balobedu which we have discussed thus far, the history of the Bakgaga ba GaMphahlele is not well-documented. The main source of reference regarding their history is a book entitled *Ba-xa-Mphahlele* (1942) written by Mphahlele and Phaladi. The book was written, as the authors themselves acknowledge, after they had read a book by Ramaila entitled *Setlogo sa Batau*. Ramaila's book encouraged the authors to write something about the Bakgaga ba GaMphahlele history. It must have been easier for the authors to write this book as one of the co-authors, namely Stephen Maputla Mphahlele, is closely related to the tribe. He is the son of Makobatšatši Mphahlele, the man honoured for bringing education and Christianity to the tribe in the 1880s. Maputla was an inspector of schools in Johannesburg in the 1940s and married Rosina, Mmutle III's second senior daughter.

According to the book, *Ba-xa-Mphahlele* (1942), the present Bakgaga ba gaMphahlele originate from the Maake tribe, presently found in the Tzaneen area in the Northern Province. The mother of the Mphahlele tribe was a favourite wife of Chief Maake and was advised to escape lest she be killed by the tribe. Accompanied by her son, she escaped and changed their surname to Mphahlele from the verb "*go iphahlela*" which literary means to fend for oneself or to defend oneself. After the death of Chief Mphahlele, his son Chief Lephalale ruled the tribe to be succeeded by Chief Lekushwaneng. The following diagram from T.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele's unpublished article of 1950, illustrates the Mphahlele's rulers:

Chief Maake
⇓
Chief Lephalale
⇓
Chief Lekushwaneng
⇓
Chief Kgwerane

(was allegedly killed by a tribe commonly known as the Maejane (Mazwi) as revenge for having taken over their chieftainship.)

⇓

Chief MorwaMogale

(His wife was Pebetse'a Phahla'Masehobane, the first queen from the Batau of Masemola.)

⇓

Chief Matime I

(His wife was Marungwane. She died without bearing a child. The chief married a niece from GaMaesela. They were blessed with a baby boy called Matsobane, who became the next chief. Marungwane was the last queen from Batau of Masemola.)

⇓

Chief Matsobane I

(He was the first chief to marry a queen from the Maroteng in approximately 1830 (T.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele:1950). He married Makgobokele, Sekwati's sister. The marriage was blessed with three children, namely Mafete, who married the chief of Magakala; Motodi, who died early; and Phatudi II.)

⇓

Chief Phatudi II

(It is not known when he acceded to the throne, but it is known that he died in 1879.) ⇓

Chief Matsobane II

(It is known that he took over the reigns in 1879, but died in 1880. When he died his successor was not yet born.)

⇓

Mogalatšane

(Acted for a short period while the tribe waited for Matime II to take the reigns as a regent.)

⇓

Regent Matime II

(Ruled the tribe from 1880 to 1914.)

⇓

Chief Mmutle III

(Ruled from 1914 to 1950.)

⇓

Regent Moepadira

(From 1950 to 1953.)

⇓

Regent Mokgobi Trodd

(From 1953 to 1957)

⇓

Moepadira reinstated

From 1958 to 1974

⇓

NgwanaMohube

(She has been ruling the tribe on behalf of her son, Matsobane, since 1974)

It might be interesting to determine the reasons for the tribe's change from taking the principal wife from Masemola to taking wives from the Maroteng. According to Delius (1983:15;55), this was in response to a directive from the Maroteng that compelled subordinate chiefs to take their principal wives from the paramountcy. The prime objective of the directive was to help the Maroteng paramountcy to increase the military obligations of subordinate chiefdoms, thus ensuring both political leverage and inflated bridewealth (Delius 1983). Delius (1983:15;55) claims that the Bakgaga tribe paid one hundred oxen to Maroteng as dowry.

Phatudi II acceded to the throne, after Matsobane I, as illustrate by the diagram above. According to T.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele (1950), Phatudi II took thirty five wives. In the abovementioned article, Phatudi-Mphahlele discusses only six of the socalled "important wives". Here follows a diagram illustrating the position of these six wives according to seniority:

Chief Phatudi II

WIVES	PROGENY
1. Leganabatho - daughter of Sekwati, niece to Makgobokele.	1. Matsobane II 2. Makgobokele II (Married MorwaMotšhe, son of Sekhukhune I) 3.Thorometšane I (chosen as "seantlo" because Makgobokele II died)
2. Kokobele - daughter of chief of Mphanama (Ngwana' Kgaphola)	1. Masampoke - female 2. Masetentša - female 3. Leobu.
3. Mamakokote - daughter of Sebaka (Ngwana Shaku/BaMangwato)	1. Mokgobi 2. Mogalatšane (Kamella) (took over the reigns for a short period) 3. Matane
4. Thakane - daughter of chief of Magakala (Mafefe).	1. Pelane
5. Mante - daughter of Sekwati, next paternal sister to Leganabatho	1. Matime II (became regent after the death of Matsobane II.
6. Mareketle - daughter of Sekwati, next paternal sister of Mante	1. female child - name unknown

After Phatudi II's death, his son, Matsobane II, became the chief. It is said Matsobane II did not rule for a long time as he also died within a year. There is controversy as to when both Phatudi II and Matsobane II died. According to *Ba-xa-Mphahlele* (1942), Phatudi II died in 1889 when he was succeeded by his son, Matsobane II, who unfortunately died in 1890. The book's views are strongly rejected by Legora Campbell Molaba, a man born on the 4th April 1898. Campbell says when his father, Lucas Dikobe Molaba came to Mphahlele in 1881, both Phatudi II and Matsobane II were already dead.

We have no reason to doubt the authenticity of his information as he is one of the oldest former teachers at the village and a prominent member of the community. He is also the son of Dikobe Molaba, as we have already indicated, the man who is credited for his role in bringing education and Christianity to the Mphahlele people. In our interview with Campbell Molaba, conducted from 1992 to 1995 when he unfortunately passed away at the age of 97, it was obvious that the man

had a thorough knowledge of Mphahlele history. It must be mentioned that he also acted, prior to 1976, as the tribal secretary. Campbell also denies the fact that Phatudi II died in 1889, as the book alleges, but says Phatudi II died in 1879 and Matsobane II in 1880. His views are supported by Mmutle III's letter dated 27 March 1943 in which he says by 1881 Leganabatho had assumed the ruling power of the tribe after the death of her husband, Phatudi II and her son Matsobane II. The letter also concurs with Campbell's view that the Mphahlele people came to Hlakoanachoana (Seleteng) in 1890 when the tribe had been harassed by Whites at Molapong. They moved as a result of the influence of Lucas Dikobe Molaba and Makobatšatši Mphahlele, two people honoured for their role in educating the people of Mphahlele.

The death of Matsobane II created the problem of who was going to rule the tribe. The problem was further compounded by the fact that when he died, his successor had not yet been born. The problem could have been solved had it not been traditionally taboo to allow a woman to rule, since Matsobane II's mother, Leganabatho, and her daughter-in-law, NgwanaMohube, were still alive. However, because of cultural discrimination, both were denied the opportunity to rule simply because they were women. According to T.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele (1950), the tribe had to look for a regent amongst Matsobane's brothers and sons. At this point it is important to talk about Matsobane II's wives and children as this will make it easy to understand the tribe's search for a regent. It is difficult to separate Matsobane II's wives from those married by Matime II. All in all, it is said he married twenty two wives. Again, relying on T.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele's article, we will mention only the first eleven wives he discusses. They are as follows, in order of seniority:

Chief Matsobane II

WIVES	PROGENY
1. NgwanaMohube - daughter of Sekhukhune I and niece to Leganabatho	1. Leganabatho II (became queen of Maroteng) 2. Lekgolane (married to Maroteng) 3. Mafete - died early 4. Marungwane - wife of Phatudi brother of Sekhukhune II. 5. Mmutle III
2. Pelepele - daughter of Sekhukhune I and sister to NgwanaMohube	1. NgwanaMohube (had no male child)
3. Mamasegare - daughter of Morwamotšhe, paternal sister to NgwanaMohube, came to Mphahlele in 1902 in accordance with the desire of NgwanaMohube.	1. Leobu 2. female (died young) 3. Gladys (female) 4. Moepadira
4. Ngwana Kekane	1. Tawana - father of Mamakgema, Kgalake, Mokgobi (Green)
5. Mampuru	1. Mankgatleng - father of Henry and Patrick.
6. Ngwana Leshilo	Mogalatšane
7. Kabatane	Sekati
8. Ngwana Phahlane	Makgwane
9. Seageng	Maditsi
10. Ngwana Legodi	Dinao - sons Petje and Mapangkganye
11. Chemola? (came as a servant of the queen, not wife)	Moleke, sons Leobu, Peach and Fredi Thumudi.

Having introduced Matsobane's wives and children, it is time now to talk about the tribe's problems in finding a regent. Regarding Matsobane II's sons, the search fell on his second wife, Pelepele, who unfortunately had no male child. So the search continued amongst his sons in other succeeding families. Even though they were available, they were young and as a result it was impossible for any of them to take over the reigns of chieftainship. According to T.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele (1950), Tawana in particular, the son of Matsobane II's third wife, was at that time still uncircumcised and, therefore, could not become regent

immediately although he was a legitimate candidate for regency. So the position of regent fell to the lot of Matsobane II's paternal brothers. Amongst his paternal brothers, the candidates in order of seniority were: Leobu, the son of Phatudi II's second wife Kokobela; Mokgobi, the son of Phatudi II's third wife, Mamakokote; Pelane, the son of Thakane - Phatudi II's fourth wife; and lastly Matime, the son of Mante - Phatudi II's fifth wife (Phatudi-Mphahlele 1950).

T.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele (1950) alleges that it was due to Leganabatho's interference that Leobu, whose mother was the most senior wife amongst Phatudi II's wives, was refused the opportunity to be the regent. Instead, she insisted that Matime II be the regent since his mother was her paternal sister. This decision forced Leobu to leave Mphahlele and go to Cape Town where, it is alleged, he started Langa Location. While the tribe was still waiting for Matime II to come from Randfontein to take over the reigns, Mogalatšane became regent. Since Matsobane II died before giving birth to a male child, it was expected that Matime II should beget the child for him. Indeed Matime II and NgwanaMohube, the daughter of Sekhukhune I, were blessed with Mmutle III.

The sources for this research were a book entitled *Ba-xa-Mphahlele* (1942); an unpublished article written in 1950 by the late Dr Thema Matikita Phatudi-Mphahlele and documents we received from Mr Fred Motlokwe Phatudi-Mphahlele dating back to 1910. These written sources were supplemented by personal interviews with various people in the area. Amongst the people we managed to interview were: Fred Motlokwe Phatudi-Mphahlele, the younger brother of the late Dr N.C. Phatudi; Campbell Legora Molaba, the son of Dikobe Lucas Molaba and his brother Reverend Bennet Molaba. We also conducted interviews with Mr M.R. Maleka, the former secretary of the tribe and many other people in the area. It is unfortunate that Dr Thema Matikita Phatudi-Mphahlele and his wife, Mafete, were brutally murdered on the 25th February 1994, just before we could make an appointment with them. We also conducted an interview with the late Mrs Sophia Mamabolo, the chieftainness of the Mamabolo tribe. She provided a great deal of information as she was the most senior daughter of Mmutle III, but before we could make a further appointment with her to confirm certain aspects of her information, she passed away in 1995. Regarding the life history of the late Dr N.C. Phatudi, we referred to a book by H.T. Cooper entitled *Let us be partners: The Life and Views of Dr Cedric Phatudi, Chief Minister of Lebowa*. We also made use of various documents recording his speeches in the Lebowa Legislative Assembly.

4.1 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON N.C. PHATUDI

4.1.1 Life history and school life

Namedi Cedric Phatudi was born on the 27th May 1912 at Mphahlele in the Pietersburg district. His date of birth is challenged by the late chieftainess Sophia Mamabolo who says Phatudi was born in 1913 and not 1912. He is the first of the five children born to Ramaredi, the ninth wife of Chief Mmutle III. There is controversy as to the seniority of Mmutle III's wives. Some, like Cooper (1985) and Sophia Mamabolo, maintain that Phatudi's mother was the fifth wife of Mmutle III. However, an unpublished article by Dr T.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele (1950) and an unpublished document from the Department of the Chief Minister by the Ethnological Services dated 11.07.1991 states that Phatudi's mother was the ninth wife. For the purpose of this study, we shall adopt the position that his mother was the ninth, as the table we have referred to earlier indicates. Phatudi started his schooling at the age of six and attended the Dutch Reformed Mission School in his village. After six months he moved to the Presbyterian Mission School, also at GaMphahlele.

In 1921, at the age of nine, Phatudi was admitted to the Mphahlele Community School called Mabjana-Maswana. This is the school that was established by his father and the tribe as a way of replacing all Mission Schools at GaMphahlele. He was later sent to the Kilnerton Methodist Training Institution to study for a three year teacher's course. At this institution, Phatudi took part in all school activities and played both soccer and tennis.

4.1.2 Occupation

After completing his teacher's course, he was appointed a teacher at the Bapedi Lutheran Mission School at Mapela, near Potgietersrus. He was transferred to the Burger Mission School in Sekhukhuneland after only six months. He taught at this school from 1933 to 1935. After this, he was appointed principal of the Marishane Tribal School at Mooifontein. This was the second community school to be established in the Northern Province. He remained there until the end of 1941. It was during his reign as principal that he studied privately and passed Matric by writing the Joint Matriculation Examination.

1942 found Phatudi at Fort Hare University studying for a Bachelor of Arts Degree. At the begining of 1943, Phatudi was offered the post of Supervisor of Schools in Johannesburg. He remained in the post for three years, before returning to Fort Hare to successfully complete his degree in 1946 with History and Languages as his majors. In 1947 he returned to the West Rand where he became an Inspector of Schools. He held this post for a period of twenty-two years, until he was appointed Minister of Education for the Lebowa government.

While he was an Inspector of Schools, Phatudi continued studying and was rewarded for his hard work when he obtained a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of the Witwatersrand. In 1968, Phatudi visited Cambridge University as a guest for two weeks to study developments in education in England. He even spent three months studying educational methods in the United States of America.

4.1.3 Literary Interests

History had always been Phatudi's favourite subject and he was an avid reader of Shakespeare. He translated three of his works into Northern Sotho, namely *Julius Caesar*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *King Henry IV*. He also translated *Robinson Crusoe* into Northern Sotho. He wrote a historical drama about his father, entitled *Kgoši Mmutle III* (1966). In addition to these books, Phatudi also wrote a novel called *Tladi wa Dikgati* (1964). Phatudi was not only interested in literature as he also co-authored a series of readers from sub-standard A to standard five entitled *Balang ka Lethabo* in collaboration with G.P. Mojapelo.

4.1.4 Family and Social Life

Phatudi married Miss Alice Mokwena in 1938. The couple was blessed with five children - four boys and a girl. His two eldest sons died and the remaining sons run the family business at Nebo.

During his years as an Inspector of Schools, Phatudi was involved with various organisations. He became Chairman of the Southern Transvaal Inspectors Association and National President of the Inspectors of Bantu Education of the Republic of South Africa.

Phatudi was not only involved with organisations in his own field, he was also involved with the affairs of his own tribe. Since the death of his father, Mmutle III in 1950, Phatudi was involved in the tribal affairs of the Bakgaga ba Mphahlele and was even elected as Chairman of the Tribal Council. He held this position until he died on the 7th October 1987. The position was not without its controversy as he was frequently engaged in disputes with other members of the tribe. This confrontation reached its climax during the mid 1970's when many people were arrested after the death of the reigning Chief Moepadira, whose death and burial in 1976 was fraught with tension and brought the confrontation to a head (Lebowa Times:20 March 1976).

4.1.5 Philosophical Attitudes

Phatudi became involved in politics in the 1960's when he and his friends started organising monthly meetings in Soweto and the surrounding areas. This group included Mr Richard Maponya and Mr Ratale. These meetings eventually resulted in larger meetings being arranged with the then Commissioner General, Dr Eiselen. His wish to become involved in politics was realised after listening to and reading about statements by Matanzima, the then Chief Councillor of the Transkei. Phatudi states that the key thought on his mind at that time was:

> If the Transkei is going to progress under the leadership of Matanzima, who is himself a graduate and trained lawyer, what is going to happen to the people in the North? And I was satisfied that there was no-one with Matanzima's capabilities in the North" (Cooper 1985:17).

Phatudi felt the position of being a leader of the Northern Sotho people should be taken over by a chief or a son of the chief. After counting the number of chiefs in the North capable of leading the region, he felt there was a leadership vacuum in the region. He felt it was his responsiblity to try and rectify the situation. He then decided to "get into the political picture and work from within" (Cooper 1985:17).

Even though Phatudi entered politics at the height of separate development as proposed by Dr. Verwoerd, he did not support it. He rejected, out of hand, the issue of independence for the people of Lebowa because he felt what was needed was "interdependence and co-operative development" which would make the Northern areas into "one geographical, political and economical entity" (Cooper 1985:19). Phatudi's main objection to independence was that it (separate development) deliberately attempted to keep the races apart. To him this was

counter-productive as it made it impossible for the races to understand each other's fears and aspirations. He said "to remove fears you must open the door for communication and for negotiation and for contact" (Cooper 1985:21).

On the political front, Phatudi was very vocal about what he wanted for South Africa. Phatudi prefered cooperation to separation. He wanted one man, one vote and abhorred discrimination as it excluded 75% of South African citizens. Phatudi define Apartheid as

> ...a monstrous creature with several confusing names. Some quarters refer to it as Parallel Development or Segregation, others speak of it as Separate Freedoms or Separate Development! What is Apartheid after all? To me it is an escape from the world of fact and realism, the world of history and economics into a dream world unworthy of self-respecting people! This is an indictment sufficient to make a proud people to having their heads with shame. Yet White South Africa boasts about the Apartheid policy with surprising impunity" (Address to the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, 12 June 1984).

Phatudi rejected outright proposals that were put forward as ways of solving South Africa's problem. He was specifically opposed to the 1983 constitution that excluded Blacks from decision-making processes. He was not even prepared to enter into negotiations with the government until all political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela, were released. It was in this context that in 1982 he asked the South African government to allow him the oportunity to visit Nelson Mandela in prison, but his request was denied by the then minister of police Louis le Grange. He was, however, allowed to see some of the lesser known political prisoners. This made him even more determined to refuse to negotiate with the government until this condition was met.

Phatudi was of the opinion that South Africa's problem could, after all political prisoners were released, be addressed by the creation of a Federation of States in which the Federal Government would be made up of Black and White delegates from South Africa. This Federal Government would then be responsible for certain areas of action such as defence, taxation, transport and so on (Cooper 1985:5). To Phatudi:

> ...only a Federal Union of this country with a bill of rights to protect the interests of minorities will provide the answers to the vexed problems of life in our time and circumstances. The detail of such a Federal Union must be the outcome of negotiations hammered out by legal men and constitutional experts as well as statesmen with

> profound wisdom, experience and scholarship" (Address to KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, 12 June 1984).

Phatudi's views on education are well known. As a former inspector of schools, he favoured education as the only medium that could solve South Africa's problems. He was also of the opinion that "education is the fundamental key to better race relations, for higher production in industry, commerce, mining and agriculture" (Cooper 1985:27). He rejected, out of hand, the concept of Bantu Education as it denied Africans their right to true educational facilities. In this regard, Phatudi advocated the introduction of free and compulsory education (Message for publication by Setotolwane College Publication, 1975).

4.2 A HISTORICAL-BIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF *KGOŠI MMUTLE III*

4.2.1 Authenticity

In order to conduct a critical analysis of the Bakgaga ba GaMphahlele tribe, and in particular, the role of Kgoši Mmutle III in bringing formal education to the tribe, it is important that his background be sketched very briefly. It must be noted, however, that his role in bringing education to his people cannot be studied without reference to the role played by Dikobe Lucas Molaba, Mmakobatšatši Mphahlele, and the churches. In an address to the Chairman of the Dutch Reformed Church, dated the 27th March 1943, during the ordination of Mmutle's son, E.M. Phatudi, and a J.M. Louw at Mphahlele's place, Mmutle says the first church to operate in the area was the Wesleyan mission which was opened in 1870. Unfortunately, there was a misunderstanding and the church was burned down due to the "subversive activities of the members of that church against the laws and customs of the tribe" (Mmutle III:1943). It was after this act that chieftainess Leganabatho, under the influence of Makobatšatši Mphahlele, asked that four churches be build in the area. These churches were: the Presbytarian Church under Dikobe Molaba; the Church of the Province of South Africa under James Makobatšatši Mphahlele; the Wesleyan Church under James Bannane Matsobane and the Dutch Reformed Church under Sethale Makgati. The role that these churches played in bringing education to the people of Mphahlele cannot be overemphasized. The reason why there were no further problems within the tribe about the existence of these churches was, as Mmutle III puts it, because the founders of the churches were united and were people from the area. In later years each of these churches built its own schools and so education was brought to the area.

It is not easy to say with certainity when Mmutle III was born. On his tombstone it is written that Mmutle III was born on the 30 November 1887. It is also not known which junior primary school he attended. It is speculated that he attended the Presbyterian Mission School, the school started by Lucas Dikobe Molaba. What is known, however, is that he was sent to Lovedale in 1904 by Matime II, under the influence of Lucas Dikobe Molaba, himself an *alumnus* of Lovedale, to do standard five and six, which he completed in 1906. He succeeded Matime II in 1914. It is generally acknowledged by all that Mmutle was very close to Dikobe Molaba, who also acted as his adviser. It is even claimed, in some quarters, that he was raised literally in Molaba's house as he was afraid of his brothers, uncles and aunts. The reason provided for this is that since Mmutle was the youngest child in his family there were obviously people who could have plotted to assassinate him. That is why Mmutle was very fond of Dikobe Molaba and he showed his appreciation by giving one of Molaba's sons as a wife, Selina, his eldest daughter.

Armed with an education from Lovedale, Mmutle III immediately tried to implement his mission and vision, to build schools and to buy farms. It was unfortunate that in his determination to civilise his tribe, he forgot an important aspect of being a good leader: that negotiation and not coercion is the key to success. He failed to consider the tribe's fears and aspirations, even when a major decision was to be taken. It is generally believed by the people in the village that Mmutle III was very fond of equating the role of a leader with the role of a locomotive. It is said he would say a locomotive's function is just to pull and the coaches will follow. Mmutle III also liked to compare his role with that of a baby feeder. She must see to it that the baby eats and if he does not want to eat, she must resort to any means, even to the extent of closing his nostrils, to force him to eat because afterwards he will start playing. By means of these metaphors Mmutle was saying he, as the leader, knew what the tribe wanted. His role, like a locomotive, was simply to pull and push the tribe to where he wanted them to go, even if this meant forcing them to accept certain things they are uncomfortable with. This attitude, eventually, forged a chasm between him and the tribe. He did not manage to bridge the chasm and even today this chasm has not, as yet, been bridged by his children. When Mmutle III realised that it was going to be difficult for him to bridge the gap, he was forced to lean heavily on the Whites. This act alone alienated him further from the tribe and created more problems for him. This is basically what this study aims to indicate: that education destroyed traditional institutions as it created divisions within the society. As a result of

being educated, Mmutle III looked down upon his own people and his own culture. His attitude towards initiation schools and other things associated with the Bakgaga are a case in point.

The first taste of what was to come occurred immediately after his accession to the throne. The first real confrontation took place between 1915 and 1922 when Mmutle III proposed an establishment of a community school. This school was to replace mission schools throughout the Mphahlele villages. It is said Mmutle was concerned about the type of education offered at mission schools. In order to diminish the influence of the missionary education, he proposed that all these schools be closed so that there should be one school in which children from both Christian as well as non-Christian communities would be able to attend school together. He was probably aware of the divisive influence of missionary education which discriminated against people on the basis of religion. The confrontation was basically amongst Christians and non-Christians since the school that was to be opened was opened for children from both communities. The Christians did not want their children to learn with heathen children while non-Chriatians did not want their children to learn with people who had not been initiated (*mašoboro le mathumaša*). Church leaders were also concerned about this proposal. This school, called Mabjana-Maswana, was finally built in August 1919 was officially opened on the 20th October 1921 and started operating in February 1922.

To enhance his reputation as a leader with foresight, in 1919 Mmutle III negotiated for the opening of a hospital at his place. Unfortunately, it took many years for the hospital to become operational even though money for this project was paid as early as 1924. It is surprising that even in 1928, the hospital was not yet operative. Even today no one knows what happened to that hospital or the money earmarked for the project, though sufficient documents exist as proof.

In 1924 standard six was allowed at Mabjana-Maswana for the first time. In 1936 the school was allowed to offer standard eight, the first school of its kind in the Transvaal. As a result of Mmutle III's foresight the Mphahlele tribe became recognised in the Transvaal and most of the first people to be educated from various tribes around the Pietersburg area attended school at GaMphahlele. According to Phatudi-Mphahlele (1950), the first African woman in South Africa to qualify in the Union as a medical practitioner, Dr Mary Malahlela was educated at GaMphahlele. It is no coincidence again that one of the Northern Sotho writers, namely M.M. Makgaleng, the author of *Tswala e a ja*, attended school at

Mphahlele. This shows the important role Mmutle's leadership played in shaping and bringing education to the whole Northern Transvaal area.

In 1928 Mmutle III recognised the Pietersburg local council. Even though the Mphahlele local council was the first to be approved, because there were some difficulties, it operated only after that of Sekhukhune and Zebediela. In this endeavour, Mmutle worked with R.D. Hunt, who was the Native Commissioner at the time. The fruits of this acceptance of the local council was that the tribe was able to buy farms. In buying farms, Mmutle III did not explain clearly to the tribe the importance of buying farms. Instead he used force when certain members of the tribe refused to cooperate. He even confiscated the cattle of those who refused to toe the line. The acceptance of the council and the plundering of cattle resulted in bitter conflict between Mmutle III and the tribe. The root cause of the tribe's complaint was that Mmutle III no longer discussed important community affairs with them. The conflict reached its climax when he wanted to buy a farm called Mogodi. To exacerbate this conflict further, Mmutle III used the service of White policemen instead of community police. This act angered the people who retaliated and used force to prevent their cattle from being plundered. Consequently, some people were injured. Those who resisted and retaliated were arrested and charged. In that group were people such as Leoto Rachuene, Moleke and Mmampedi Ntsoane. We had the privilege of interviewing Mmampedi Ntsoane, who was the first to be arrested during this confrontation, on one of our many trips to the Mphahlele area since 1992.

Despite Mmutle's successes in bringing 'civilisation' to his people, there is one problem that his civilisation brought to the tribe that refuses to go away and has dented his inspiring life history. The fact that Mmutle died before marrying a principal wife, was an error of judgement the repercussions of which are still felt by the tribe today. The origin of this problem can easily be understood after making a thorough study of his wives and progeny. The following is a table that presents Mmutle III's wives and children. The table is from a Lebowa Government document released by the Department of the Chief Minister for Ethnological services dated 11. 07.1991:

Mmutle III

WIVES	PROGENY
1. Manyaku - the daughter of MorwaMotšhe	She was married as a queen but died before bearing a child.
2. Ngwana Ledwaba	She died with no child. It is alleged she divorced Mmutle.
3. Matshelane	She died with no child.
4. Mampuru Ngwana Lekgau taken as a wife of Mante Selina	Mante Selina 1. Mampuru 2. Tshoane 3. Pelane 4. Lekgalake 5. Ramolokoane 6. Malesela
5. Mohlehle	1. Rosinah 2. Sophia (queen of Mankweng) 3. Violet 4. Angelinah 5. Mokgobi Trodd 6. Cathrine
6. Kanyane	1. Kakanta Nkopodi
7. Ngwana Shogole	1. Raesetša 2. Mokgetletswane 3. Bennet
8. Makgwaraneng (Ngwana Thobejane)	1. Moleke 2. Seputule 3. Lillian 4. Josephine 5. Tswaledi 6. Segadimane

9. Ramaredi	1. Namedi Cedric 2. Motlokwe 3. Matikita (Dr Thema) 4. Mafete 5. Mangakane
10. Mmakomane Ramaredi	1. Gertrude 2. Matane Gregory 3. Josephina 4. Raletšatši Chairman 5. Marungwane Shadi
11. Ngwana Mashoene	1. Thabitha Girly 2. Machupje
12. NgwanaMohube She comes from Mohlaletse and was married in 1974 as queen-mother. She came as the "seantlo" for Manyaku.	1. Nora NgwanaMohube 2. Matsobane (to be the chief) 3. Leganabatho 4. Mante 5. Malekutu

More problems bedevilled the tribe when Mmutle III died on the 5th July 1950. These problems were compounded by the fact that Mmutle III had introduced a new order amongst his people to accommodate the changing times. This, in turn, had introduced a different culture. His death created a problem which was unparalleled in the history of the Mphahlele people. Consequently, the tribe had neither queen nor heir. Again this is unprecedented in the royal history. The tribe had to find a queen and a regent. According to tradition a queen had to come from Maroteng and had to bear a certain relation to the previous queen. The tribe was also required to define the status of this woman in relation to the proposed regent.

According to T.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele (1950), shortly before his death, Mmutle III had begun negotiating with the Maroteng chief to find a queen (*lebone*) for the Mphahlele tribe, that is, to find a woman by whom an heir to the chiefdom would be born. It was the desire of Mmutle III to find an educated woman. It is generally accepted that Mmutle III would say "*Ke nyaka lebone ka ge le nna ke swere mabone*" [I want a lamp because I have lamps] meaning he wanted an educated woman since his sons were educated. Although negotiations were in their preliminary stage, the Maroteng chief had already indicated the appropriate candidate. She was the daughter of Thulare, Mafete, who was doing her final Junior Certificate at Lydenburg High School. According to T.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele, Mafete was the daughter of Thulare's third wife and, traditionally, she was not the appropriate candidate for Mphahlele. The one who was suitable for

this position was Leganabatho, failing which Kgolane would be considered. However, both these were not educated or were less educated than Mafete. Thus Mafete's education was the main factor in her selection as the queen of Mphahlele.

It should be clear by now that the Mphahlele people had a problem. This dilemma, according to this study, was caused solely by Mmutle III himself when he refused to marry according to the *seantlo* practice, immediately after the death of Manyaku. The reason for this delay was that he wanted someone who was educated. Mmutle III was, in accordance with the law of succession, expected to marry the paternal sister of Manyaku, Dithobolong. However, this did not occur because he prevaricated to such extent that Dithobolong went to Magakala as the *seantlo* (T.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele 1950). Because Sekhukhune II had an obligation to compensate for the dowry cattle he received when Manyaku was married, and because there was no paternal sister available, he offered Thorometšane, a niece of Manyaku.

According to T.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele (1950), a niece to a queen becomes queen in the next generation. Accordingly, Thorometšane would have married the son of Mmutle III to become queen, that is, she would have been the daughter-in-law to Mmutle III. We find this statement very difficult to understand as the main problem here was to find the *seantlo* for Manyaku. Why this article by Phatudi-Mphahlele disregards tradition is beyond the critic. Furthermore, it is alleged that Mmutle III did not accept this woman as his own wife because he said *ga ke je mohlana ke lehlalerwa*, that is, I don't marry infants. Once again Mmutle III was defying the tradition which says: *mosadi ga a na bonnyane* [no woman is insignificant]. Thorometšane was subsequently married to the chief of Manganeng.

In an attempt to solve this problem, the tribe decided that they wanted a regent and not a chief. They felt that to say they wanted a chief would create more problems for the tribe. In endeavouring to solve the problem, they felt that the regency must fall to the lot of Mmutle III's sons or his brothers. This would be in keeping with what had happened early in the tribe's history. The tribe decided to allow Moepadira to act as regent immediately after the death of Mmutle III. It is interesting to realise that Moepadira is traditionally the uncle to Mmutle III's children, even though biologically he is their father's child. He acted as regent from 1950 to 1953 when he was deposed and banned from the village. He was

succeeded by Mokgobi Trodd, the son of Mmutle III's most senior wife. He acted as regent from 1953 to 1958 when he was committed to a Mental Hospital, and consequently was no longer able to perform his duties (a letter from the native commissioner dated the 13th January 1958). Moepadira acted as regent again from 1958 to 1974 when the regency was taken over by NgwanaMohube to the chagrin of the tribe and Moepadira himself. This resulted in a violent confrontation between the tribe and a group of kinsmen under the leadership of the late Dr. N. C. Phatudi.

During the confrontation some people, including the leaders of the group, Campbell Molaba and Mmampedi Ntsoane, were arrested for holding illegal meetings as all meetings were banned. The conflict was exacerbated by the death and burial of Moepadira under controversial circumstances, as evidenced by various newspaper reports of 1976. It is interesting to note that NgwanaMohube was only married twenty four years after the death of Mmutle III, apparently as a way of saving the Mphahlele chieftainship from vanishing. She is presently blessed with five children, with the future chief only twelve years of age in 1993.

There is no doubt that Phatudi, in writing this play, wished to honour Mmutle III, his father. The period Phatudi portrays, in the play, is the period during which Mmutle experienced many problems with certain members of his tribe. This period can, historically, be taken as between the year 1915, a year after he took over the reigns from Matime II, and 1928 when the problems with the tribe culminated in violent confrontation. The play deals with the uselessness or otherwise of holding tribal meetings within the Bakgaga village during Mmutle's reign. In the play and even in discussions with certain members of the tribe it was clear that even though meetings were held, Mmutle did not always take the tribe's views into consideration when decisions were to be made. The reasons were that Mmutle felt he was more educated than the tribe and nothing constructive could come from the tribe. This view agrees with the view he is thought to have held that the tribe is like a baby who must be fed even though he might not like to eat. This view also falls into what is generally regarded as his philosophy in which he compares the tribe with train coaches and the leader as the locomotive engine. It is generally believed that Mmutle held the view that if the locomotive engine is fine and willing to run the coaches must just follow. This distorted view about a leader, to us, is regarded as Mmutle's downfall. These views are not of a democratic leader but that of an autocrat. They are the reasons for his failure to rule the tribe

successfully. Unfortunately, Phatudi did not treat the tribe's concerns in a dignified manner, but superficially.

The other aspect handled by the play is Mmutle's problems with the tribe regarding the buying of farms. Even though the idea was good, Mmutle did not discuss the reasons and the logic behind this noble venture with the tribe well. Instead he forced them and they soon accused him of being an autocrat and for plundering their cattle. The other important aspect handled by the play is the confrontation between Mmutle and the Christian community regarding the establishment of a common community school. The Christians did not like the idea because they felt the non-Christians children will contaminate their children. The same reservation was voiced by the non-Christians who also felt common education was not a viable option. In the end, Mmutle did succeed in convincing them to accept common education as the best possible form of education with the establishment of a common school called Mabjana-Maswana in 1922.

The play also deals with Mmutle's opponents, namely Mokone the leader and how they plotted to assassinate Mmutle's counsellors. The confrontation between Mmutle and this group has been superficially handled by Phatudi as he does not even mention the fact that it was between Mmutle's opponents and white police officers and not Mmutle's officers. During my discussion with Mmampedi, the idea that they were attacked by Whites not black policemen made them angry. To him and his friends this showed that Mmutle had no regard for his people and also showed that Mmutle colluded with Whites to suppress dissident voices amongst his own people. This was after Mmutle had accepted the Pietersburg local Government which he joined in 1928. The play ends in a confrontation between Mmutle's counsellors and Mokone's group in which the latter are arrested and handed over to the white policemen. Our thinking here is that Phatudi deliberately twisted these events as the true story is that the group, as Mmampedi and Campbell say, were arrested by White policemen.

However, Phatudi did not use real life characters. The reason for this might be that he was aware of the sensitive nature of Mmutle's life history. For him to use real life characters might have landed him in hot water. So he decided to use fictitious characters, except of course in the case of Mmutle. Even in cases where he used real life characters, the roles that these characters play are not the ones that they played in real life. A case in point is Mogale, the praise name used to praise his younger brother, Fred Motlokwe Phatudi-Mphahlele; Tšhidi, Phatudi's

own praise name and Sikwiri, an old man who once lived in the tribe, but did not play any role in the real life drama.

We have already indicated that our suspicion that the name Mokone, used in the play to identify the troublemaker might refer to Mmampedi Ntsoane, who gave both Mmutle and Phatudi many problems. In Mmutle's case Mmampedi was very vocal against the chief's plundering of their cattle. Mmampedi claims that during the confrontation with the white policemen, some policemen were injured and that this took place during 1928. Furthermore, Mmapedi claimed that he was the first to be arrested during a protest against Phatudi's decision to instal chieftainness NgwanaMohube as the ruler of the tribe in 1976. Mmampedi and his best friend, Campbell Legora Molaba, were arrested once more. We have no reason to doubt that the name Mokone refers historically to Mmampedi Ntsoane. We also suspect that one of the two characters Mazwi and Mogale refers to Dikobe Molaba as it is generally accepted within the tribe that he was Mmutle's adviser and was the target of many people.

4.2.2 Intention

There is no doubt that Phatudi, in writing this book, wished to highlight the problems his father had faced in educating his tribe. We can also surmise that in writing this play, Phatudi was influenced by the historical plays he had read in English, mostly those written by Shakespeare. He even translated three of Shakespeare's plays into Northern Sotho. Secondly, Phatudi wrote this play in order to reiterate the importance of education. It will be observed that he ends the play with a philosophical statement that compares the force of civilisation with the force of a river in flood. There is no doubt that he wrote the play firstly, to honour his father and secondly, to highlight the virtues of education.

As a result of this stated intention, Phatudi did not have a way of avoiding the problems or weaknesses associated with escapism when writing historical plays, namely to ignore the real problem and concentrate on the peripheral issues. As we have already indicated, the book is more concerned with Phatudi's views about certain aspects of life such as education, traditional leadership, the Land Act of 1913 and the problems of Apartheid than with recording history per se. It is unacceptable that Phatudi did not even discuss the problems experienced by the tribe in finding Mmutle's successor, even though the book was only written in 1966, after the tribe had been struggling unsuccessfully to find a successor for

thirteen years. It must be mentioned that during that period Phatudi played an important (or to others destructive) role. Consequently, the play lacks substance as Phatudi did not even hint at his father's apparent disregard for traditional values at the cost of civilisation. Thus the play, degenerates into being merely a record of Mmutle's problems, even though these are handled superficially.

4.2.3 Reception

Mmutle's life history is received with mixed feelings by the members of the Bakgaga ba gaMphahlele tribe. The reception of his life history can be divided into two main categories, namely those who view his life with pride and those who view his life with contempt. Amongst those who view his life with pride are his children and grandchildren. These people, no doubt, worship his deeds and regard him as a hero. To them, his foresight can never be equalled or compared. Talking to people in this group, one is immediately struck by their bias as in their discussion of Mmutle's life, they concentrate solely on his good work in bringing education to the community, paying scant attention to the consequences. The majority of them say very little about the problem of chieftainship that is still bedevilling the tribe in the present. To them this problem of chieftainship is irrelevant and only affects the illiterates.

In the second group, we have those who view his life in contempt. Amongst the people in this group we have men such as Mmampedi Ntsoane. To these people, Mmutle is the one who destroyed their culture and tradition as a result of his stubbornness. To this group, the problems experienced by the tribe with finding his successor after his death, are of his own making. However, this does not mean that they do not appreciate Mmutle's role in bringing education to the tribe. They are more angry that Mmutle and later his children, notably Phatudi, forced education on them and as a result destroyed their culture, and more specifically, the institution of chieftainship which even today is still in disarray. It is interesting to note that Mmampedi Ntsoane had given Mmutle problems in 1928 and also gave Phatudi problems between 1974 and 1976 when Phatudi forcefully appointed the present ruler, NgwanaMohube, as queen. We could regard Mmampedi as illiterate as he did not attend school, however, one cannot say the same thing about Campbell Legora Molaba and his younger brother, Reverend Bennet Molaba. It is ironic that the two Molabas were opponents of Phatudi while their father Lucas Dikobe Molaba worked well with Mmutle and was even Mmutle's only adviser. In our discussion with them, we asked them why are they

turning their back on their father's noble idea. The answer is that Phatudi, in particular, did not have a strategy for winning people over to his cause, but simply wanted to force them to accept his view. It must be remembered that these are educated people, as Legora was a teacher in the 1920s and later became the tribal secretary during Moepadira's rule.

4.2.4 Social function

There is no doubt that Mmutle's life is the subject of commemoration as he played an important role in the life of the Bakgaga ba gaMphahlele tribe. The tribe's successes in the educational and agricultural spheres can be traced back to his foresight. There are those that feel he must be honoured and remembered as the person who brought light to the Northern Province. His son, Fred Motlokwe Phatudi-Mphahlele suggested, in one of our interviews with him, that he feels his father should be honoured with a doctorate in either education or agriculture. This, Fred continues, would be in honour of his role in bringing education to the North and also for his role in changing the people's mindset about buying land, hence the suggestion for an honourary doctorate in agriculture. Unfortunately this noble foresight is not appreciated by the majority of the people in the village, as we have mentioned in 4.2.3. There are those who view his life with contempt.

Be that as it may, we have no doubt that education has divided the Mphahlele people into two groups: the educated and the illiterate. This division still manifests itself amongst the people. The tribe is still divided on educational grounds. The literates are always uninitiated, Christians and rich while the illiterates are always initiated, non-Christians and poor. Thus, Mmutle is regarded by some, especially the literate, as someone who brought light to the tribe. To these people Mmutle represents the good side of the Mphahlele people. However to others, especially the illiterate, he represents the turning point in the destruction of the people of Mphahlele's history and tradition. All problems pertaining to the chieftainship are attributed to his influence.

4.2.5 Narrative syntax

Phatudi has divided his dramatic text into four acts of an unequal number of scenes. The first act has two scenes, the second has three scenes, the third has two scenes while the last has five scenes.

4.2.5.1 Act One

Scene one takes place at Magaseng. It is in the evening. The reader/audience is introduced to Thamaga and Podile who are drinking beer. While they are drinking they hear an old man, Sefatamollo, singing. By means of their comments about Setamollo's singing, they reveal Mmutle's opposition and attitude to liquor drinking. Thamaga says the following about Mmutle:

> O tloga a sa kwane le botagwa! Eupša malwa ke dijo tša batho, gomme go katana le go thibela batho mo go tšona, go ba lahliša mekgwa ya bona, ke namane tona ya modiro! (p.11)
>
> [He (Mmutle) does not like drunkenness! But beer is the food of people and to try and stop people from drinking beer, to make them throw away their tradition, is a difficult job!]

It is apparent from the excerpt above that the two speakers are of the opinion that Mmutle is not being fair to the tribe. While they are still talking, Mokone, who is from Mogohu, enters. In their discussion, it emerges that there is a tribal meeting scheduled for the coming week. While debating the importance of this meeting, we learn about Mmutle's problems with the tribe. Mokone, who is very angry about Mmutle, says:

> Ga le ekwa gore pitšo e biletšwang na? Goba ba tlile go thopa dikgomo gape ka gobane Mmutle o fadile matšatšing ano! Pitšo ka pitšo dikgomo di a rerwa, di a thopiwa, go rekwa se, go rekwa sela. Re amogiwa ka gohle re šala re nkga bodiidi fela. Re hloka mohlakodiši e bile re phalwa ke tšona tšhwene tše llago mo thabeng gobane di na le botšhabelo. (p.12)
>
> [From what you could gather, what is this meeting all about? Or are they still going to plunder our cattle again because these days Mmutle is more determined than ever! Every tribal meeting we talk about cattle, they are plundered, to buy this and that. We are being robbed everywhere and we remain poor. We do not have anybody to rescue us and we are even worse off than the baboons that cry on the mountain because they have a place to hide.]

Surprisingly, Thamaga wants to censor Mokone for what he is saying, but the latter refuses to be silent and accuses Thamaga of being a coward. Mokone feels the tribe's problems are well-known and those who do not acknowledge their existence are cowards.

Obviously, this scene is fictitious, but it is important as it creates a platform for characters to express their views about what Mmutle is doing. It is interesting that

Phatudi uses the name Mokone for a character who is the villian in this book. There is no doubt in our mind that this character is Mmampedi Ntsoane. Mmampedi opposed Mmutle bitterly in 1928 and even Phatudi had a taste of his medicine in 1976 when he was the Chief Minister of the then Lebowa Government.

Scene two takes place after two days have elapsed. Its setting is the royal kraal. Chief Mmutle has called a meeting of counsellors to discuss the tribe's progress and to compile an agenda for the next tribal meeting. It is from this meeting that we learn about the seniority of Mmutle's counsellors. It is clear that Mogale is the most senior counsellor as he is the one leading the meeting. The meeting is attended by representatives from the various royal families according to their regiment such as, Magasa, Mangana, Manala, Mankwe, Madima, Mahlaba, and Madingwana. The meeting is also attended by the chief's brothers. After the normal introduction, Mmutle informs the meeting about his main concerns, namely that the tribe is refusing to denounce the initiation school for fear of relinguishing their culture and tradition; that the priests and Christians are adamant that there should not be a common school for all the children as this will destroy missionary education within the tribe and thirdly, that the tribe has no money to build such a school. The last two problems, Mmutle informs the meeting, have been solved as the tribe, through the help of the Government, has been able to build a common school called Mabjana-Maswana. His main problem at the moment is land. This is what he says about land:

> Tšhaba se ga se na mo se dutšego gona. Mabu a ke a Mmušo, e bile mellwane ya lefase le la Mmušo e segilwe gomme e kotobane gagolo. Bana ba setšhaba se le ditlogolo tša sona di tla hloka bodulo mengwageng yela e ka pele gobane bo Morw'a Mankobjane ba etla. Ke yona taba yeo ke le memetšego yona lehono. Ke feditše. (p.14)
>
> [This tribe has no place to stay. This land belongs to the Government and the borders of such land have already been drawn and are too close. The children of this tribe and their grandchildren will have no place to stay in the coming years because the sons of Mankobjane are coming. This is what I have called you for today. That is all I have to say.]

It is obvious from the excerpt above that Mmutle is determined to buy land. It is surprising that even after he has elaborated on this issue, it is clear from their comments that some do not understand him well. So it is decided that he should give them his own views on what should be done. This is what he says:

> Matšatsing ale a bomaloba, naga e be e ahlamile gomme e sa rekwe. Matšatšing a, naga e a rekwa. Maano lehono ke gore tšhaba se se itokišetše go ithekela naga mo se ka dulago gona go iša ka moo go sa felego... Mmušo o ka se re thibele go reka naga ya rena. Seo se lego gona baMmušo ba tla re hola ka dikeletšo. Ke ona maano ao ke le fago ona. (p.15)
>
> [In the olden days, land was still open and it was not bought. These days land must be bought. The plan these days is that this tribe must be prepared to buy land so that it can stay on it for ever... The Government will not stop us from buying our land. What will happen is that the Government will also advise us. This is the plan I submit to you.]

Mmutle's proposal is not accepted by some people, notably Phaahla-a-Phaahla who is worried, despite appreciating the logic behind buying land, that the Government could still come back and forcefully confiscate their land. Furthermore, he is concerned that it might turn out to be very expensive to buy land. His views are supported by Kgomo-ye-Phaswa who also feels it might not be a good idea to buy land. He says:

> Na go reka naga ga se go itlema ka kgole? Ke gore Mmušo o tla go bofelela mo go yona le ga e sa hlwe e lemega goba mohlomongwe phulo ya yona e fedile. Setšhaba se se hudugile Molapong sa tla fa Hlakwana - Tšhwana. Le gona se tšwa kgolekgole tlase Boroka, se tlile mono gobane ga go dikgole tšeo di se tlamilego! Afa ga re tsenye hlogo ka sefung ga go rekwa naga? (p.16)
>
> [Won't we be committing ourselves by buying land? Because the Government will force us to stay on this land even if the land is not productive as it would be impossible to plough or even unsuitable for grazing. This tribe came from Molapong and settled to this place, Hlakwana-Tšhwana. Furhermore, the tribe originally came from Boroka, but it was possible to relocate because it was not tied to one place! Are we not putting our heads in a noose by buying land?]

The concerns of these people are rejected by Mazwi who feels that their reservations about the idea of buying farms must not become a stumbling block. He continues by saying that since there are people within the meeting with the ability to see the future, those who are unable to do so must simply follow those who are able to see the future. By doing so, he continues, they will not delay the tribe's progress. In conclusion Mazwi, however, undermines his argument by naively arguing that:

> Ba bangwe ba botšiša gabotse gore na Mmušo o ka se re amoge naga re e rekile? Ga ke dumele gore Mmušo wa banna rurirurí o ka dira selo se se bjalo. Mmušo ke seikokotlelo sa mang le mang, ga o tšeetšee fela dilo tša batho. O a di šireletša gobane ke seširo sa batho. (p16)

> [Others are asking reasonable questions about whether or not it will still be possible for the Government to confiscate our land after we have bought it? I do not think a Government made up of men would do something like that. The Government is the supporter of everybody. It does not just confiscate from people indiscriminately. It protects their things because it is the protector of the people.]

At the conclusion of the debate, it is decided that the meeting should accept Mmutle's suggestion about buying land and that the suggestion be put before the tribe at the tribal meeting to be held in the coming days.

Even though the scene is fictitious, it is a true reflection of Mmutle's views about the importance of buying land. What is interesting, however, is Mazwi's views that the Government would not confiscate land from the tribe. This is surprising and absurd if we take into consideration the provisions of the Land Act of 1913. We are compelled, therefore, to argue that this statement cannot be regarded as historically correct as it does not reflect the historical fact. For historical purposes the scene is important as it introduces the idea that the tribe originated from Boroka and stayed at Molapong before coming to Hlakwana-Tšhwana.

4.2.5.2 Act Two

Scene one takes place in Mokone's house at Mogohu. Mokone is talking to Dilepeng and Rakoma. Mokone is angry that the royal house is appropriating their cattle without reimbursing them. He continues by saying that after every tribal meeting their cattle are plundered. In his opinion, the fact that the tribe is not taking action against this indicates that they are cowards. When he is asked to explicitly state his view point, he says the following:

> Le a ikgakantšha ruri. Ka ntle ga tše ntši, ga go khutšo tšhabeng sekhwi. Segagabolena ga se sa le gona mo seleteng sekhwe! Koma e kae? Ba mošate ga ba sa ntšha koma, ba re ke seheitene, ba re go nyakega sejakane gomme bojakane ke bošoboro! Ee, ba lena bana ba tlamegile go ya komeng tša dilete, dija-batho! Ba mošate ba re kiba le diphala le dikoša tša Sesotho ke lešata! Majakane ga a thube mošate, go thuba lena ditlaela tenang. Kgongwana tša lena dithopiwa bošego le mosegare. Eupša bjale le re, 'hene-hene, la se-ntheng' mafšega tenang. (p.19)
>
> [You are really pretending. Besides other things, there is no peace in this tribe. Your culture and tradition is no longer practised in this place! Where is the initiation school? The people from the royal house no longer set up initiation schools, because they say that it is a heathen practice, they say they want Christianity and Christianity means remaining uninitiated! Yes, your children are supposed to go

> to the initiation schools at other places, where they die like flies! They say traditional dancing and trumpets and traditional songs are a noise! The Christians are not destroying the royal house, but it is you fools who are destroying the royal house. Your cattle are plundered night and day. But here you are saying stupid things, you cowards!]

They end their discussion by deciding that the best cause of action will be to use traditional medicine to kill the chief's advisers. The feeling in the house is that if they can kill the chief's advisers they will have eradicated the problem. They plot to prepare beer and invite the chief's advisers to have a drink with them. They will then be given poisoned beer.

There is no doubt that this scene is fictitious. Perhaps what Phatudi wishes to illustrate here are the difficulties that counsellors face if they are not liked by certain members of the tribe, a problem his father faced throughout his life. This hypothesis is supported by the Molaba brothers. T.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele (1950) acknowledges it when he says Mmutle could have been ambushed during the first ten years of his rule had it not been for "his diplomacy and patience".

Scene two takes place after two days. Its setting is Mokone's house. Mokone is talking to his wife while his daughters grind maize. Mokone is very quiet and this worries his wife who wants to know the reason behind his reticence. He dismisses her concerns as being unfounded and unnecessary as he is fine, but when she insists that something is wrong with him, he relents and informs her about their plot to kill Mmutle's advisers before the end of that month. He also informs his wife that they have already consulted an old traditional medicine man called Lepogo, who told them that they should not try to kill Mmutle because he is very strong, but rather to try and kill his advisers who are not as strong. They also consulted another traditional doctor at Bokgaga who agreed with Lepogo. However, Mokone's wife is not satisfied. She is particularly suspicious of Rakoma whom she feels is not trustworthy. Even though Mokone tries to convince her to the contrary, she is not satisfied.

This scene is fictitious and contains nothing worthy of comment regarding its historicity.

Scene three takes place in a traditional doctor's house. Mazwi and Mogale, two of the most important counsellors, are concerned about their safety and that of the chief. The discussion starts with a talk about baboons which are destroying the

doctor's fields and how he intends stopping them. He then informs the two counsellors about Bentsola Podilane's fight with a lion which had taken his game that he had trapped and how he had managed to escape from the charging lion. After a long time they start discussing the real reason for their visit. The doctor informs them that the problem is that there is a great deal of jealousy, gossip and hatred amongst the people. He also says that there is much conflict when poverty-stricken people fight the wealthy, counsellors are pitted against ordinary members of the tribe and Christians against non-Christians. He warns them to be careful as their enemies are plotting to kill them. In his divination, the doctor points out Mokone and his group as the people who are complaining about the royal family. He advises them to be wary of drinking beer from the village as this group wants to give them poisoned beer.

Even in this scene there is nothing relevant to our study except that the scene helps to expose the problems faced by the counsellors and the chief.

4.2.5.3 Act Three

Scene one takes place after a few days. There is a tribal meeting, the main purpose of which is for Mmutle to inform the tribe about how they can procure land. During the meeting, Mmutle tells the tribe that he wants to buy farms because the land belongs to the Whites. The reason for doing so, Mmutle elaborates, is that at present there is no place for future generations to stay, no place where their cattle will graze and finally, not enough space for ploughing. Even though Mmutle is very explicit about what he wants, certain members of the tribe, notably Mokone and Dilepeng are not satisfied. Their main objection to the idea of buying farms is that the Government should give them land. They also complain about their cattle being appropriated. What concerns them most is that, in their opinion, land cannot be bought. It is also in this scene that we learn that some people's cattle had been forcibly taken from them while they were being brought for dipping. Mokone warns the meeting of the impending retaliation by the Madingwane regiment should their cattle be plundered again. The meeting ends inconclusively as the main concerns of the other members of the tribe are not taken into consideration or even addressed. This also indicates that meetings called just for the sake of appearances as the people's views were not considered when a decision was taken.

It is possible that historically such a scene occurred during Mmutle's rule. What is clearly a historical fact, is the views of the people about the land being bought and the plundering of their cattle. These views are not fictitious, but actual problems that Mmutle faced during his term of office.

In **Scene two**, which takes place at the Government offices in Pietersburg, Mmutle is with some of the counsellors. The purpose of their visit is to inform the native commissioner about their desire to purchase land. From their discussion, we learn that the tribe has already bought four farms. It is not surprising when the commissioner, who claims to know African culture, informs Mmutle and his entourage that as far as he knows it is not part of the African tradition to buy farms. He states, furthermore, that as a result the tribe will not have the necessary skills to manage the farms because its members are not civilised. To counter the commissioner's view, Mmutle says it may be true that African and European cultures do not agree, but to him they are the same except that in European culture one becomes the owner of land by buying and living on it while in African culture one becomes the owner by staying on that land with the permission of the chief. In both cases, Mmutle continues, one who stays on the land becomes the owner, however, in European culture the idea of ownership has developed further and to him it is better to follow it. He does not elaborate on the differences in ownership between European and African cultures. Mmutle rejects the commissioner's view that he is outpacing the tribe, saying he is actually educating it. Mmutle then uses a metaphor that is historically associated with him, regarding the function of a leader. He compares the function of a leader to that of a locomotive:

> Ga hlogo e lokile, go phethile. Matorokisi a tla latela. Segagešo se re koša e tšwa mošate, balata re a latela. Go bjalo. Re tla ruta setšhaba se tlhokomelo ya mmu, temo le naga. Ke kgopetše molemi, gomme Mmušo o mphile monna yo a tšwago Mt Fletcher (p.35).
>
> [If the locomotive engine is fine, that is good. The train coaches will follow. Our tradition says the royal house starts a song and we commoners just follow. It is true. We will teach our people to look after the soil, ploughing and land. I have asked for an agriculturist and the Government has given me a man from Mt Fletcher.]

It also emerges from Mmutle's conversation with the commissioner that he registers the farms on behalf of the tribe. He is the custodian of the land on behalf of the tribe. In the end he signs for the farm that he wants to purchase, namely Mehlabaneng, which becomes the fifth farm bought by the tribe.

From this scene, it is clear that part of Mmutle's difficulties in convincing the tribe to move with him historically, was that he had a misconception about the function of a leader. His views are not that of a democratic leader, but an autocrat. This problem is compounded by his other widely acknowledged view in which he compares the tribe to a small baby who must be forced to eat, even to the extent of closing his nostrils so that he can swallow whatever he is given because after that he will start playing (F.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele in personal interview). In order to enforce his will on the people, Mmutle is even prepared to request the Government's assistance in suppressing dissident voices amongst his own people in the name of civilisation.

4.2.5.4 Act Four

Scene one takes place at the house of Mokone's cousin, Napyadi. Initially we encounter Mokone and Tilo who are joined later by Mazwi and Mogale. A plot has been hatched in terms of which Mazwi and Mogale, two of the most hated counsellors, will be given poisoned beer. This was to have been done by Napyadi, the cousin of Mokone. However, when she had to give them that beer, she lost her nerve and decided to put the poisoned beer aside. Unfortunately, she unwittingly poisoned Mokone. He died instantly.

There is nothing in this scene which is relevant to the historicity of the play. Perhaps this is Phatudi's way of showing that the two counsellors were strongly fortified or highlighting the folly of traditional doctors.

Scene two takes place at night in the valley at Mogohu, Mokone's place. Members of the Madingwane regiment are plotting to attack people in the village who support Mmutle's idea of buying farms. Phogole, the leader of the group, informs the group that they should attack Rakoma and Dilepeng as he thinks they are spies. The meeting is also informed of Marema's suspicion that they are going to come under attack from people sympathetic to the royal village under the leadership of Kgomo-ye-Phaswa, a cruel man. It is agreed that they must use axes or assegais to murder the people, but not burn the houses. In addition, the group is instructed by Phogole not to kill children, women and old people, but only kill young men. After the attack they agree to meet in a valley called Maakentlha because it has dense forest. Indeed the group attacks and kills Rakoma and Dilepeng.

Again in this scene there is nothing to write about regarding the historicity of the play. The scene is clearly fictitious.

Scene three takes place in the valley of Maakentlha. A regiment comprising older men belonging to Madingwane under Kgomo-ye-Phaswa and Tšhidi are intent on arresting men belonging to the younger Madingwane regiment, who have been causing trouble. Kgomo-ye-Phaswa informs the group that Mmutle does not want people to be killed. Consequently, it is agreed that the purpose of their mission must be to arrest the leaders of the group, namely Phogole and Marema. This group, under Kgomo-ye-Phaswa, is armed with guns and dogs. They divide themselves into two groups, one under Kgomo-ye-Phaswa and the other under Tšhidi. The group is given instructions by Tšhidi who says that no one must kill an enemy if he is fleeing or surrendering. Furthermore, he informs them that no one is permitted to throw an assegai, but must rather use it to stab an opponent while holding the assegai in one's hands. To throw an assegai is a sign of weakness and is degrading. After the instructions have been read to the group they attack the valley.

Again there is nothing historically relevant in this scene it is obviously fictitious.

Scene four takes place on the other side of the valley. Marema and Phogole, the leaders of the rebel group, are happy that they have killed Dilepeng and Rakoma. What they are demanding is vividly portrayed by Marema when he says:

> Re nyaka segagaborena, e sego mahlakanasela le sejakane seo re botšwago ka sona. Lefase, naga, le a rekwa! Ditšiebadimo! Sejakane le sekolo seo sa bona ga tša bolaya fela koma, di sentše le manyalo. (p. 43)
>
> [We want our culture and tradition back, not this concoction and Christianity that we are always told about. The earth, land, is bought! Rubbish! Christians and their type of school have not only killed our initiation school, but marriage too.]

Clearly, these men's main concern is the problem brought about by Christianity and education. They feel the two are destroying their culture and tradition. What worries them most is, as one man puts it, Mmutle's arrogance and stubbornness. The reason for his stubbornness is, in this man's opinion, that Mmutle is advised by people who did not attend the initiation school and are Christians. From this scene, we also learn that they do not yet know that Mokone is dead until they are informed of his death by Sikwiri. From their discussion it is clear that they are

afraid of Kgomo-ye-Phaswa and Tšhidi as the two are formidable and very brave leaders. While they are talking, they hear the crack of a gunshot and people ordering them to surrender. They identify the voice as that of Tšhidi. When they realise that they have been surrounded they surrender and are arrested.

The scene is fictitious and as a result there is nothing about which to comment as far as its historicity is concerned.

Scene five takes place at the royal village. Kgomo-ye-Phaswa informs Mmutle about their trip and the people who have been arrested, specifically Phogole and Marema. It emerges from this meeting that the majority of the people do not know the reasons for the brutal murder of Dilepeng and Rakoma. The play ends with Mmutle's words to those arrested. This is what he says:

> Noka ya tšwelopele e tletše, gomme ga go motho yo a ka e thibelago. Yo a lekago go e thibela o tla patlwa bjalo ka lena le patlilwe lehono... Le re tsentše mahlo a batho go iša ditlogolwaneng. Bjale molato wa madi a mantši ka mokgwa wo, ga o atleng tša ka, eupša o atleng tša Mmušo. Ka gona ke tshwanelo bjale gore le amogelwe ke mpša tša Mmušo, gomme nna ke hlapa diatla feela ke na le tshepo ye e tiilego gore Mmušo o tla le kgalemela ka kwelo-bohloko. (p. 48)
>
> [The river of civilisation is in full spate and no one can stop it. Anyone who tries to stop it will be defeated as you have been defeated today... You have embarrassed us and even our grandchildren. But a case of this magnitude in which so much blood has been shed is out of my jurisdiction and is in the hands of the Government. And, therefore, it is proper that you be taken by the police and I have nothing to do with this case and I hope the Government will repunish you appropriately.]

4.2.6 Narrator involvement

There is no doubt that Phatudi's views are present in the story. This can be attributed to the manner in which he is narrating this story. Most of the views in the story resemble those of Phatudi and not of Mmutle. There are only traces of the views of Mmutle. To prove Phatudi's involvement, one need only look at the number of fictitious characters he has used instead of the actual characters. The reason why he uses fictitious characters is not difficult to determine. The question of chieftainship amongst the people of Mphahlele is a sensitive matter. Phatudi, probably, felt that using actual characters could have landed him in trouble. Besides the use of fictitious characters, the manner in which Phatudi handles the story highlights the sensitive nature of the topic. One need only look at his views

on the Land Act of 1913, his views on Apartheid and even regarding chieftainship. All these are nothing less than Phatudi's views embodied in the life history of his father.

The manner in which Phatudi involves himself in the narration of the story does not in any way enhance the story, but rather lessens its impact. We find it difficult to accept that Phatudi, in narrating this story does not extend it to include the problem the tribe experienced after the death of Mmutle, particularly, the problem of finding Mmutle's successor. Furthermore, it is unacceptable that Phatudi does not seem to give the views of Mmutle's opponents any legitimancy even though some of their concerns were relevant and legitimate. Instead Phatudi handles them superficially. He has, therefore, diluted his story and, ultimately, ruined its authenticity as his younger brother, Fred Motlokwe Phatudi-Mphahlele acknowledges in one of our interviews with him.

4.3 RÉSUMÉ

No one can deny the role Mmutle played in bringing education to the far North, but what can also not be denied is the fact that he did not manage to make the two cultures, namely traditional Mphahlele culture and western culture, co-exist. This failure to integrate the good in both cultures has, even at present, caused many problems for the tribe. The inability of the tribe to find a successor for Mmutle for twenty-four years after his death is proof enough of this confusion. Further proof is a letter from the native commissioner dated the 13th January 1958 in which he complains about problems at the village as follows:

> On the 9th September last, the people of Mphahlele caused a disturbance at a meeting I held there and didn't elect representatives in connection with the Local Council. Conditions in Mphahlele location have been very unsatisfactory for the last seven years. Matters cannot go on like that. I believe that part of the trouble is that the people haven't got the right acting chief and I wish to discuss that matter with the tribe. If they feel that they want Moepadira as acting Chief, I would be prepared to recommend to the Department that he be reinstated as Acting Chief. A further matter that requires attention is that the position in regard to the "Seantlo" must be discussed.

Even since NgwanaMohube has been designated as the regent there are still many difficulties relating to the chieftainship. They manifest themselves in the confusion names the tribe is giving to the present chieftainess. Sometimes she is referred to as the daughter-in-law of Mmutle and at others she is called his wife,

as the above excerpt illustrates quite vividly. All these illustrate conclusively the problems Mmutle and his civilisation brought to the tribe. Mmutle, by accepting education, did not want to follow tradition which says he must choose a "seantlo" after the death of Manyaku. After Manyaku's death he was not prepared to marry a "seantlo" as tradition dictates, but instead procrastinated until the one he was supposed to marry was married to someone else, as T.M. Phatudi-Mphahlele mentions in his article. The delay was caused by the fact that Mmutle not only wanted a principal wife, he also wanted someone who was educated. We could say he used education to discriminate against women he was supposed to marry according to tradition. The end result is there for everybody to see, the chieftainship is in disarray. Indeed, education destroyed the institution of chieftainship.

CHAPTER 5

SEROGOLE AND THE AFRICAN HISTORY

5.0. INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is on the play *Serogole* as a reflection of the problems faced by Africans in South Africa in the 1940s. In this dramatic text, the author uses a fictitious character called Serogole, who could represents any African man of working age. As mining was the popular industry at the time, it is not surprising that Serogole is employed in this industry. Like any other African man, Serogole is faced with many problems related to discrimination in the mines and in South Africa in general. These problems are there because of the pass laws, job reservation, low wages and many other oppressive laws. Besides these problems, African men were constantly abused by the mine bosses. It is from this perspective that we take Serogole as a symbol of the sufferings of Africans at the hands of the South African government.

In this dramatic text, Matlala presents the subjugation of the Africans by Whites. This subjugation was driven not only by economic objectives, but also political. In order to achieve the objective of subjugating Africans economically, a series of strategies was adopted by the mining industry with the active support of the government. These strategies included, as Nkomo (1985:80) puts it:

> ...the alienation of Blacks from the land, restrictions on spatial mobility and access to skilled jobs, importation of foreign labourers and ultimately the revocation of citizenship and physical expulsion of Africans from 'White' portions of South Africa to governmentally defined homeland areas".

Nkomo (1985:84) continues and says the separation of Africans from the land "was devastating to their (Africans) economic independence. Becoming migrant labourers was the only alternative to starvation".

Further measures were later introduced to force Africans into cheap labour. Amongst those measures are the Glen Grey Act of 1894, which forced Africans to pay poll taxes and later, the Land Act of 1913 which restricted Africans to 13% of the land. The main aim of these laws was to:

> ... drive squatter-peasants and share-croppers off the land, to turn

> them into wage labourers for the burgeoning mining industry on the Witwatersrand; in 1913, the Land Act would extend this process throughout the Union of South Africa.
> (The Star, Friday, November 14 1997)

No one can deny the extraordinary powers that these two laws gave to Whites in South Africa and the advantages that Whites enjoyed under these Acts. It is, therefore, interesting to note Professor Sampie Terreblanche's submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's business hearing in which he said, the Land Act, in particular, "was more successful than any other measure in proletarianising a very large percentage of the African population and in creating the very exploitative and unjust system of labour repression" (The Star, Friday, November 14 1997).

These are the conditions Matlala exposes in this dramatic text. The conditions are generally expressed via Serogole, a historical figure from the Moletši area. Serogole and his fellow mineworkers from all over the country and beyond are discriminated against simply because they are Africans. They are ill-treated by the white staff as well as the black policemen. The story commences with Serogole and his fellow-workers as passengers on a train from Pietersburg to Johannesburg. On the way some people are fascinated by the train itself, the landscape such as the Modimolle mountain and other interesting things. The conversation also touches on important people such as Makgoba. On reaching Johannesburg, the group is taken to Robinson Deep where they are expected to undergo a 'medical examination'. After this examination they are taken to the compounds where conditions are far from adequate. The worst thing at this compound is the food which is extremely poor. It is not surprising that in 1905 the government was forced to intervene and set standards for accommodation, although these were seldom, if ever, enforced.

Later, Serogole and his fellow-workers are faced with more problems than anticipated. They are given low wages and are constantly beaten for slight errors. There is no doubt that this angered Serogole and his fellow-workers who decided to unite in order to liberate themselves from their bosses. It was an impossible task as any form of resentment was always met with brutality from the white staff and black policemen. The brutality of Whites and black policemen in the mines is well documented.

Despite all these problems, Serogole and his group continue to keep their traditions alive by performing traditional songs and dances. It is during these

songs that traditional heroes and other figures are praised. The figures praised include famous people such as Sol Plaatjie, Jabavu and Makgoba. These figures are known in political and academic spheres. Matlala's knowledge of events surrounding him cannot be doubted. This can easily be noticed from his comments on important issues such as the low standard of education for Africans and the causes of the Second World War as well as the Holocaust. That Matlala is a reader is also beyond debate as he constantly makes skillful use of footnotes to refer the reader to additional texts. The play is written in Matlala's favourite language, Seafrika, and is in verse.

The source we consulted concerning Matlala's life history is Kgatla's dissertation entitled *E.K.K. Matlala: Mongwadi wa Tšhukudu.* Kgatla's detailed biographical information has been of great help in putting together Matlala's life history. Kgatla's foresight in documenting the life history of this great, yet unrecognised, literary giant is greatly appreciated. The only problem is that Kgatla did not make tape recordings of his interviews with Matlala and as such, it is difficult to verify some of the views he presents about Matlala. Despite our problem with Kgatla's method of gathering information about Matlala, his research has been helpful. We also made use of Matlala's detailed prefaces at the beginning of each book he wrote. These prefaces have been invaluable in providing us with Matlala's views on various issues, such as art, language and politics.

The researcher once went to Schoongezicht, Matlala's place in 1994. Unfortunately, this was after he had passed away. We had hoped to talk to his wife and even to gather as much as one could find about Matlala's life history. Unfortunately, nothing of significance was found. We only managed to procure two documents of importance, namely an unpublished article of two pages entitled "*Writing Drama*" and an incomplete copy of an article simply entitled "***H*** *and* ***"NG"*** *in Sotho.* Matlala's mini-library which we were told existed had disappeared, except the room that had housed it. We were informed that some of Matlala's material was taken by certain publishers while other documents were taken by researchers the old lady did not know. This is where we thought Kgatla could have been helpful as he was the last person to talk to Matlala. Unfortunately, as we have already indicated, he did not make tape recordings of his discussion with Matlala. We find this shortsightedness unconvincing and hard to believe especially considering that at that time Matlala was very old.

5.1 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF E.K.K. MATLALA

5.1.1 Life history and school life

Elias Kwena Kgatiši Matlala was born on the 22nd June 1917 at a village called Ramongwane in the Pietersburg area. Thereafter the family moved from Ramongwana and went to stay at GaSemenya. Because there were no schools at GaSemenya, his parents sent him to a school at GaKganyago where Matlala attended school up to standard four. He later went to GaMamabolo to complete standards five and six at Thune Primary School.

After completing standard six, Matlala went to Kilnerton to study for a teachers diploma called, Third Year Teachers' Course in August 1930. He completed the course in July 1934.

As a result of Matlala not having Matric, he was not permitted to register for the profession of his heart, theology. Consequently, he was compelled to complete Matric before he could register at the University of Fort Hare. He successfully completed Matric in 1937 and in 1938 registered at the University of Fort Hare. He completed his B.A.I courses in 1938. He returned to Fort Hare in 1942 to registered for B.A. II courses which he completed successfully at the end of that year. Matlala was back at Fort Hare University in 1948 to complete his B.A.III. It was, however, just unfortunate that he did not complete his B.A. III courses. Kgatla (1988) does not provide the reasons for not completing his B.A. Unfortunately, Matlala died some time in 1990 or 1991.

5.1.2 Occupation

According to Kgatla (1988) Matlala came from a very poor family. It was because of this that he started working at a very young age. Matlala did temporary jobs such as gardening in the Pretoria area to obtain money to buy essential items such as shoes while at Kilnerton. During the December holidays Matlala also worked around Johannesburg in areas such as Rosettenville and Turffontein to help to pay for his school fees.

After completing his teachers' diploma, Matlala was employed as a teacher in August 1934 at Kgabalatsane. He taught here until the end of 1935. After completing his B.A.I courses, Matlala went to Lesotho to do his pastoral work.

Unfortunately, because of his political views, he was forced to abandon theology, and he returned to teaching. In 1941, Matlala was employed as a teacher in Mangaung at a high school called Batho. These are the places at which Matlala learned Tswana and Southern Sotho.

According to Kgatla (1988:38), Matlala was employed as an editor (*morulaganyi*) of a newspaper called *Bantu World*, which was housed at Newclare in Johannesburg in 1943. It has not been possible to verify whether he was an editor or just a journalist. In 1945, Matlala was a lecturer at Union College and also appointed to teach Sotho languages to medical students. He opened a high school at gaMatlala and served as its principal in 1949. Again, because of his political views, Matlala was forced to leave teaching in 1950. According to Kgatla (1988:35), this was because of the harassment Matlala faced after his second play, *Serogole*, was published.

After leaving teaching, Matlala worked with a man called Louis in his business in 1955. It was while working for Louis that Matlala developed a love for business. Indeed, in 1960 he opened his own business at a place called "New Pietersburg", the old township in Pietersburg. In 1961 the business was shifted to Welgelegen where he stayed for seven years. In September 1968, he went to stay at Schoongezicht where his business is still operating today.

5.1.3 Literary Interests

Matlala 's interest in literature was triggered by his contact with books in English and, to a lesser extent, the Bible. Later, when he came into contact with books written in African languages, his interests increased. He is not ashamed to say *Chaka* by Thomas Mofolo influenced him significantly. There is no doubt that Matlala worshipped Mofolo so much that he called him "*letšhadiba le legolo puong ya Sesotho tabeng tša tlhamane, ke kgeleke*" (1976:4) [he is an expert on the Sesotho language when we talk of writing novels]. Matlala did all in his power to facilitate a meeting with Mofolo. This is what Matlala says about his meetings with Thomas Mofolo, his hero:

> Nkile ka dula naye (ka ke le motsamai o mogolo) nakwana e teletšana kwana Matatiele hoteleng yagwe, mme nako tšeo ke beng ke fela ke dula naye ke reeditše magang agwe a a tlhabollang motho kelellong, ka lebala go botšiša ina lagwe la Sesotho. Gore re no fela re mo tseba ele "Thomas" *fela*, dikwalong tša rena go nyaka go sa tsene gabotse. Go go ka ba le yo a tsebang ina lagwe la Sesotho, a

ke a nthuše ka lona tlhe. (1976:6-7)

[I once stayed with him (because I am renowed for travelling) for a very long time at Matatiele at his hotel. Most of the time when I was with him listening to his stories which greatly challenge the intellect, I forgot to ask him his Sesotho name. To know him only as 'Thomas' in our literature is not nice. If there is someone who knows his Sesotho name please help me.]

According to Kgatla (1988:31), Matlala's literary interests developed in 1938 when he was doing B.A.I. This was the year in which he started writing his very first play, *Tšhukudu*. Besides *Tšhukudu* (1940), Matlala wrote the following books: *Mengwalo* (1943), Manose (1950), Tšhaka *Seripa sa I* (1976) and *Tšhaka Seripa sa III* (1983). In writing *Tšhaka Seripa sa III*, Matlala appreciates the accidental meeting between himself and a Mr N.N. Ndebele in December 1955 at Khaiso school. It was during their meeting that Ndebele asked Matlala to read *Chaka Zulu* written by E.A. Ritter. This man even made a point of sending Matlala a copy of the book, which Matlala so enjoyed that he could not forget Mr Ndebele. In the preface of each book Matlala usually provides a lengthy essay in which he indicates, amongst others things, his reasons for writing the book.

Beside Matlala's love of literature, he was also influenced by political motifs in writing many of his books. Kgatla (1988) indicates that Matlala's love of literature was based on his political views of the times. This is why his writings are extremely vocal against the oppression of Africans.

5.1.4 Family and Social life

Matlala married Hermina Moraka from Over Dyke in 1946. They were blessed with three children, two boys and a girl. Matlala was a man who liked to debate issues with people. According to Kgatla (1988:34), it was while Matlala was at Fort Hare University that he was given the name "Vision" in recognition of his interesting and challenging arguments concerning a variety of issues. One could say this is where Matlala's political views were sharpened as he met people who later became political giants in the struggle against injustice.

5.1.5 Philosophical attitudes

Matlala held strong views about art and specifically about drama. He felt that before one could write one should be prepared to read widely about one's subject. The reason for reading widely was, as Matlala puts it, so that one might have a

hero, because "without a hero-worship in writing one cannot achieve much." This is why Matlala himself hero-worshipped Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare and later, Thomas Mofolo. On the question of writing drama in blank verse, Matlala says with this style "which is more African than European", one is able to bring out the best in the language. To Matlala,

> ...drama written in prose is generally flat and uninviting. Unless one is endowed with the gift of Montaigne or Francis Bacon of giving statements in a forceful, terse compact brevity,... one is not likely to give one's enduring impress on one's readers."(unpublished article).

Matlala is angry at being accused of writing in his preferred language, *Seafrika*. This is a language composed of all the languages spoken in South Africa. His anger was first aroused by a certain examiner who commented unfavourably about Matlala's first play, *Tšhukudu*, which was prescribed for matric students. He was further enraged by a letter which was published by *Tšwelopele*, vol 5 1964 no 12, 43, Wednesday, 17 February 1965. Matlala responded to this letter by writing a letter entitled "*Mongwalo le Sebopego sa Sepedi, phetolo go Motlhabi wa 'Tšhukudu'* ". The letter was never published. Matlala's views on mixing languages are very strong and forceful. He says:

> Nna ka bonna ge ke foša ke re: 'Le ge Motsula kapa Mothosa, Motšhakane kapa Motswetla, Mokgalaka kapa Moherero... , a ka re a ngola a tsentšha ntšu la Sesotho, - Sepedi, Setšwana, Sešweše, - ge le lebane le ntšha taba le kgopolo gabotse puong yeo, motho woo o nepile hantle haholo a se ke a thijwa ka letho. (1976:7)
>
> [I personally, if I am not wrong, say: 'If a Zulu or Xhosa speaking person; a Tsonga or Venda speaking person, a Zimbabwean or a Herero,... if when he writes and uses a Sesotho word, - Northern Sotho, Tswana, Southern Sotho, - if that word is correct as it reflects exactly the idea in that language, that person is correct and he should not be discouraged.]

Matlala follows this with a lengthy discussion of words commonly used in Sesotho languages, but which are not originally from those languages, such as 'mokholobaasa' from the Zulu 'umkhulubaas'. Matlala also argues over the use of **tlh** and **hl** by quoting extensively from *Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography no 2, 1962*. He concludes his argument by referring to a Unisa Faculty of Arts decision which prohibits people from majoring in, for example, Northern Sotho and Tswana or Southern Sotho, but permitting them to major in any of the Sesotho languages and any of the Nguni languages. He says:

> Ka baka lang? Ka gore Sepedi, Setšwana, Sešweše, Khuduthamaga ya Molototlou wa Aforika Borwa, e ithutile e nyakišiša, ya bapiša maleme a ka moka, mme ya hwetša maleme a mararo a a a tshwana jwaleka ge Setsula le Sethosa le tšona di batagane kudu ka tshwano e jwalo. (1976:14)
>
> [Why? Because Sepedi, Setšwana, Sešweše, the executive committee of Unisa have learned through research and comparison that these languages are similar just like Zulu and Xhosa which are also very similar.]

After these comments, Matlala lashes out at critics of his orthorgraphy who attempted to force him to use **hl** instead of **tlh** and **go** instead of **ng**. This angered Matlala so much that he quotes from Ramaila extensively. Ramaila was also fighting for the retention of **tlh** and **ng**. He ends his preface with the following plea:

> Ke kgopela jwalo bagešo. Mongwalong wa puku tšaka, eka babadi ba ka se ke ba ntshwenya. Ke motlhaleng o motalatala, o sa leng o phološa ditšhaba go se ne ditšuatšue le lešata. Nke le mpheng khutšo tabeng tša mongwalo, ke tle ke le tlhatšetše ke di fiwang Godimo. Ke a lopa bagešo, tšweetšwee, ... (1976:31)
>
> [I am asking that, my people. My style of writing my books, I ask that readers should not bother me. I am following an old tradition which has liberated nations without any noise. Please give me peace on the question of orthography so that I can tell you those things I have received from heaven. I am asking, please...]

Matlala favoured cooperation between tribes and hated arrogant people. According to Kgatla (1988), Matlala came from an improverished background. When he was at Kilnerton he did not have money to buy shoes and, as a result, he went to school without shoes. He was made a laughing stock until one of the teachers, a Mr Msezana, came to his aid (Kgatla 1988:28). He so appreciated Mr Msezana's gesture that he started asking himself where his own people were when he was helped by a Nguni-speaking person. The only answer he could find was that his people were so arrogant that they did not even want to help him. This is what he says about arrogant people:

> Men of true breeding have dignity, but they are not arrogant; men of no breeding are arrogant, but have no dignity. (1976:18)

With reference to arrogant critics of his style of writing, Matlala says:

> Moya wa boipono o kile wa phediša mang? Ga o na bothakga, ga o na seriti, le boGoliate ba ile fase ka ona. O nyenyefatša motho le tšhaba sa gabo, le ge a le maemong a godimo wa mo ripitliša le fase, le gona marupurupung. Wo na o a nyakega? Le gatee! Moya o bopileng ditšhaba ke wa khutšo, wa lerato, wa tlhompho, wa

kwišišano le kgopolo tša nnete le botho. (1976:17)

[Has arrogance ever helped anybody? Arrogance has no gentleness, has no dignity, even Goliath died because of it. It brings shame to a person and his nation, even though that person might be holding an important position in life it will humiliate him severely. Who wants it? Never! Nations have been built by peace, love, respect, understanding and truth and humaneness.]

On the political front, we cannot doubt Matlala's strong views about discrimination, as Kgatla has pointed out. His books have been informed by political situations. For this reason, after writing *Serogole*, Matlala was harassed and was even forced to leave teaching. According to Kgatla (1988:34) it was at Fort Hare that Matlala met great African leaders such as Seretse, Sobukwe, Cingo, Phatudi, Matanzima and others. This is where his political views were sharpened.

5.2 A HISTORICAL-BIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF *SEROGOLE*

5.2.1 Authenticity

There is no doubt that the book is a true reflection of what happened to Africans who worked in the mining industry. These people were constantly abused, discriminated against and even beaten and humiliated. We have already indicated how the mines worked together with the government to oppress African employees. In highlighting the role of the government in labour matters, Jeeves (1985:10) says:

> It is true that the industry simply could not have established its system, which took forty years to perfect, without the massive and persistent intervention of governments. Through pass laws and other coercive statutes, the state regulated the movement of Africans and brought them under a harsh industrial discipline. Although blacks resisted recruiting abuses, low wages and deplorable working conditions continuously, their attempts to do so invariably provoked massive police repression on the side of the mining employers.

The excerpt above aptly summarises the problems and abuses Africans faced in the mining industry. These abuses were not confined to the workplace, but started with the recruitment process. After being recruited they were taken to a central depot in Johannesburg to await assignment to their particular mine. It was at this depot that the recruit received a "cursory medical examination by being paraded with all the other recent arrivals past a medical officer who rejected few of the recruits that he saw" (Jeeves 1985:21). The process is described by Jeeves

(1985:22) as followed:

> After a short period at the government compound in Driehoek or Germiston, the recruit would be picked up by a black official, an 'induna' or 'police boy', of the mine to which he was contracted, and taken to the compound. Depending on the size of the mine, this could be a rough collection of huts, housing a small group of workers or a complex of barracks accommodating several thousands. The worker would be assigned to a room housing typically from twenty to fifty of his fellows and given one of the tiered concrete bunks which would be 'home' for the contract period...

In these compounds workers were monitored by the mine police and strict laws were enforced. Even though the government laid down standards for the quality of the constructions and food provided in compounds, some mines did not adhere to the regulations as many compounds were unsanitary and overcrowded. The appalling conditions of some compounds resulted in a high "incidence of illness, particularly from pneumonia and dietary deficiency diseases" (Jeeves 1985:22).

In addition to these poor conditions in the mines, mineworkers were also faced with the brutality of white staff and black police. This notoriety was not only confined to the officials but also "the Black compound police on most of these mines were notorious for their brutal and officious handling of the workers" (Jeeves 1985:29). This is the reason for the custom of giving African names to these mines. These names were important as they defined the place. Jeeves (1985:27) aptly portrays this when he says:

> Each mine had its distinctive African name, a name which was often descriptive of conditions which obtain on it. The presence, for example, of an unsympathetic compound manager on a given mine could quickly become widely known, with disastrous effects on recruiting which might take years to overcome.

There is no doubt that the conditions under which miners lived and worked were not appealing. This miserable state of affairs were further excacerbated by low wages and other oppressive measures. The payment of low wages was done deliberately so as to further oppress the Africans. Nkomo (1985:78) aptly states:

> ... the desired emphasis[was] to maximize profit by suppressing wages to the lowest point possible. The other was the intent of Whites in power to maintain apartheid by ensuring that employment opportunities in the mines did not contribute to any change in the existing political, economic and social subjugation of Blacks to Whites in Southern Africa.

These historical events are portrayed skillfully by Matlala in this text. The events are, however, not arranged according to a specific order, but are narrated in a rather loose manner like anecdotes.

Looking at the names Matlala has used, it is clear that he had history in mind. The book contains the names of historical figures such as Makgoba of the famous Makgobaskloof, Sebasa, Lebogo, Senthumule, Tema, Mthimkulu, Nkosi, etc. Matlala has deliberately used these real names to illustrate that people working in the mines were from different tribes or clans or even areas. He also makes use of fictitious names to describe people and their personalities, such as Mohwibidu, Lekubu, Makhina, Maferetlhane and Kilakeresete to portray people.

5.2.2 Intention

Matlala wrote this book under pressure from Mickey Jaspan. Mickey was told by her brother, Mervyn, that Matlala could write books. This was after Mervyn had heard about *Tšhukudu*. This surprised Matlala since Mickey could not have read the book as she did not understand Sesotho, as Matlala puts it. However, what she was aware of was Matlala's opposition to the South African government. According to Matlala, Mickey was interested in finding someone who could write about the Apartheid government. This is what Matlala says:

> ...motho ya a ka ngwalang ditaba tsa Pušo ya Aforika Borwa, - a bontšha MaAforika gore ga a a tswalelwa kgatello mme le ona ge a ka itšhikinya a ka swana le tšhaba tše dingwe a hwetša kgololesego bjaloka mafase a boEngelane le boRašia. (1948:7)
>
> [...someone who could write about things done by the South African government, - and show the Africans that they were not born to be discriminated against and that they also, if they fight, can achieve freedom just like other countries such as England and Russia.]

At first Matlala refused, but did not indicate this to Mickey. When she realised that Matlala was reluctant, she persisted. This is how Matlala describes Mickey's pressure on him to write:

> ... kgarebe yena e ileng ya ntlhomara, ya ntšhala morago matšatši le matšatši, dihora le dihora, tšhipi ka tšhipi go ba go tsena dikgweding, gore nna ke ngwale puku ena ya 'Serogole' ke bolele, ke bontšhe ka gotlhe mathata a MaAforika le bona botlhe ba ba tlhokang lefi la bokgoa mading a bona ka botlalo... (1948:7)

> [... this girl persuaded me, followed me, everyday, every hour, every week for months, insisting that I should write this book 'Serogole' and talk , illustrate wholly the sufferings of Africans and all those who do not have an ounce of whiteness in their blood.]

At one stage, Matlala thought Mickey had vanished when a long time passed without him hearing anything from her, but then he was surprised to receive a letter from her dated the 5th May 1944. In the book he reproduces the letter in which Mickey urges him to write and even offers to take Matlala to court to witness a case. Matlala had informed her that he would love to attend court to witness a case. He was using this as an opportunity to delay Mickey's interest in the book. In the letter she says she has arranged with a Mrs Gillman of the Guardian Office, who was interested in theatre and writing, to take him to court. This is when Matlala realised that there was no escape, he would have to write the book.

The reason why Matlala was reluctant to write the book was that he was already busy planning a second book, an adaptation of *Captain Cook*, the book he was studying at university. The title of his new book was to be called *Kgošidira Moapei*. Because of Mickey's persistence, he relented and wrote this book.

5.2.3 Reception

It is very difficult to assess the reception of this book by the reading public. However, on the political front one could simply guess that the book was not well received by those in power. We know that books written in English about the same things tackled by Matlala were banned and their authors harassed. We could, therefore, be justified in surmising that Matlala was also harassed. This could be the reason why he had to leave the professions of his heart, namely of theology and later, teaching. It is unfortunate that Kgatla (1988) does not give sufficient reasons for Matlala's departure from these professions except to say that it was as a result of his political views. To add to Matlala's misery, his writings were not accepted by the Northern Sotho Language Board. The Language Board did not like his mixture of languages and his orthography. Owing to Matlala's stubbornness about changing his style, his books were banned from being distributed among the reading public, and consequently were not prescribed(Serudu in Unisa Honours Study Guide 1997: 111).

In writing this dramatic text, Matlala was aware of the impact any literary work has on the reader. That is why on pages ten to fourteen he asks the reader various

rhetorical questions related to the merits or demerits of the book. This is what he says:

> Bjale taba ya rena e kgolo še: Bjaloka ge a tshepile gore nka ngwala makgethe, na go tlhile go bjaloka ge a gopotše na?...nna ke fetola gore ga ke tsebe go tla tseba babadi. (1948:10)
>
> [Now our main idea is this: Just like she thought I could write, is this indeed true?...I can only answer by saying I do not know, it is the reader who should make a judgement.]

Matlala ends his preface by saying:

> Tabana tšena ke sebeditšeng ka tšona mola le mola, geeba di bile le moro o mobose kgopolong yago mmadi, a re leboge Modimo gore O re ka kgarebe yena (ya lebala le e seng la gešo le go ba la gešo), O tlhagiše ka mongwadi ono maungwana a a tla fepa bana ba Aforika ka gale a ba die thothomoko tša go ema ka maotong moyeng le kgopolong. Na o a dumela mmadi? (1948:14)
>
> [These things I have said here and there in this book, if they had an impact on your mind the reader, let us praise God for giving us this girl (who has a different skin colour from mine) who produced this writer who could feed the children of Africa and help to make them stronger in spirit and mind. Reader, do you agree?]

5.2.4 Social function

Relying again on Matlala's preface in this book, he explains why he called this book *Serogole*. He says he called it Serogole in honour of a man called Serogole who was brave and strong. He wants black people to always remember this man. According to Matlala, Serogole went to Kimberley during the early 19th century. When he came back he had two things: money to buy cattle and guns and Christianity which was rejected by his people. There were confrontations and he had to flee the village and stay on the mountains where he was secretely given food. He was persecuted, but did not stop his religious teachings. He survived and built churches at GaRamongwana, GaSemenya, GaKganyago, GaTlhatlha, GaRampuru and GaRamongangeng in the Moletši district. This is what Matlala says about Serogole:

> Batho le bana ba tulo tše (gagolo tše tharo tša mathomo) ba hweditše lesedi la Modimo le Tšwelopele ka bogale le bonatla bya gagwe tlholong ya mathata. (1948:15)

> [People and especially people from these areas (specifically people from the first three areas) received the light of God and Progress because of his bravery in the face of difficulties.]

Matlala says Serogole had a strange nature. He loved attending traditional courts and if a week passed without a case being brought to court, it was bad week for him. It is said he once took chief Kabela (Sešego) Moloto to the modern court and the chief was fined eight pounds. To Matlala this was a risky thing to do as he could have been killed by the chief's supporters, but because of his Christianity, he was not harmed. In the book there is a picture of Serogole holding a Bible. Matlala ends the narration of the old man, Serogole, by saying:

> Tšatšing leno o foufetše, mme ge a bolela o kwa botsebotse gore ke motho wa legwadi. Ke morwa Mathobela. Maina agwe a Sesotho ke Serogole, ke Mmakang. Raakgoloagwe ke Serogole Mathobela. La Sekgowa ke Hosia. (1948:16)
>
> [By this time Serogole is blind but when you talk to him you can hear that this person is experienced. He is the son of Mathobela. His Sesotho names are Serogole, he is Mmakang. His grandfather's name was Serogole Mathobela. His European name is Hosia.]

Matlala ends his preface by appealing for more books in African languages to be published. He says:

> Eka dikgopolwana di bang ka mo, di ka ba le thušo go Baswa le Bagolo, le ditšhaba ka mehutahuta ya tšona. Modimo O re thuše go tlhagiša pukwana tša leme la bo-rena ka bontši. (1948:16)
>
> [I hope the small ideas in this book can be of help to the youth and the old people, and also to other nations worldwide. God help us to produce/publish booklets written in our languages in abundance.]

The preface of this book was signed at Pimville Clinic on the 7th August 1947.

5.2.5 Narrative Syntax

The play is divided into five acts of an irregular number of scenes. Act one, for example, has two scenes, act two one scene, act three three scenes, act four three scenes which are strangely numbered, we have scene 4.1, scene 4 (a) and scene 4 (b) while the last act, that is, act five has two scenes.

5.2.1 Act one

In **scene one** we are introduced to Serogole and his group travelling from Pietersburg to Johannesburg by train. In this scene we obtain information that the train was full of people from different areas and this is shown by the names of the characters, such as Setlakalana from Molepo. There is also reference to the Limpopo River, a sign that there are people from Venda as well as beyond the river in the train. These people are all going to work in the mines. Discussions centre around Johannesburg while others are amused to see lights, the train and other things on the way.

In **scene two**, which also takes place on a train, the conversation is about the trip to Johannesburg. In the conversation we learn that others such as Mohwibidu are taking the trip for the first time as they do not know where they are. The conversation then turns to Makgoba who talks about his grandfather who was killed and allegedly beheaded. This is what he says:

> .....Nna ga ke
> Sa bolela gobane Makgolo leho lagwe
> Ga ka a hwa leho la batho: ...
> .....
> O tshwerwe fela a kgaolwa tlhogo, topo
> Sa šala soding sa šalela phiri tša šoka
> Tlhogo le meriri ya gona ba iša Tshwane (1948:25)
> [...I do not
> Want to talk because my grandfather's death
> Was not a natural death:...
> .....
> He was captured and beheaded, his body
> Was left in the Bushes to remain for hyenas
> The head and its hair were taken to Pretoria.]

Makgoba's views are further supported by a song he sings which, besides talking about Makgoba's death, also says something about the person who is generally held responsible for his death, namely General Piet Joubert. This is part of his song:

> Jobere wee, tsoša Makgoba,
> Makgoba yona o llwe ke wena
> Madi agwe a tlhogong yago
> Le botlhebotlhe ba go thušitšeng (1948:26)
>
> [You Joubert, awaken Makgoba from the dead,
> This Makgoba was killed by you
> His blood is on your head
> Together with your accomplices.]

Eventually, they reach their destination, Robinson Deep, called gaMoselekatse by Matlala. It is interesting to note that Robinson Deep, which was situated in the Randfontein area was regarded as one of the notorious compounds in 1908 and was seen as "unfit for human habitation" (Jeeves 1985: 22).

5.2.2 Act two

In **scene one**, we see Serogole and his group being forced to wash by a provocative man called Maferetlhane and his stooge, Sefatlha. Maferetlhane is probably a white man as he persists in addressing Serogole and company as "*dikaforo*" (p.37) (Kaffirs) and "*bobejane*" (p. 41) (baboons). The treatment they face is very harsh, separating the men from the boys. Maferetlhane, the medical officer, does not show any sympathy towards Serogole or Africans in general. In his preemployment medical examination and when administering injections to prospective employees, he is very brutal and unconcerned. Hence, his addressing them as "you damn kaffir" (p.42) which is explained by Ntlhane in this way:

> Ka sekgoa sa gabo ge a itšano,
> O re batamela segogobane towe le marinini
> E kang tema ya lešela le phetšitšweng
> Ke pitša, batamela leobu towe le magalapa
> A magweregwere e kang kefa ya dingaka. (1948:42)
>
> [In his European culture when he says what he says,
> Come here you bird with gums
> Like a cloth which has been soiled
> By a pot, come here you chameleon
> with checkered palates
> Resembling a hat of a traditional doctor.]

There is no doubt that the mere presence of Maferetlhane sent shivers down the spines of many miners. Because of his skin colour, he was very powerful. Given the enormous powers that he wielded, it is not surprising that his brutality is unmatched. His brutality is aptly captured by Lekubu when he says:

> ... o ya tšhabiša! - go tšhabiša
> Ga gagwe e ka tšhukudu ya makgale. (1948:42)
>
> [... he is frightening! - His temperament
> Is like that of a rhinoceros.]

The brutality of Maferetlhane is further amplified by Ntlhane when he says:

Ao, kgoa le ka nnete le lebe!
Matlho agwe a tletše bohwibidu byo e reng
O phela ka digoba tša batho,... (1948:44)

[Ao, this White man is bad indeed!
His eyes are so bloodshot its as if
He lives by eating human flesh...]

They talk for a long time about the treatment they are receiving and how evil Whites are towards the Africans. It must be remembered that this preemployment medical examination forced old men to stand naked before a young white boy who sometimes used a stick to check that the person was not suffering from various diseases. This could hardly be called a medical examination as it was badly done even though this was used to decide whether or not one should be employed.

The conversation later turns to the problems experienced under the pass laws and influx control.

5.2.3 Act three

In **scene one**, we encounter Serogole and company complaining about the fact that they are always forced to stand in lines, especially when waiting for lousy food such as "nyola" (p.51), a concoction defined by Mohwibidu as follows:

Ge go thwe 'nyolanyola' ntšeng e nyolosetšwa
Godimo ka ntswe la pako le thorišo,
Go bolelwa magweregwere a mabyale? Nkane
E le mpheretlhakana? (1948:51)

[When they talk of 'nyolanyola' why is it
That it is being praised and raised as a bone of contention,
Are they talking about this junk? Why
Is it just a concoction?]

This is but one example of the type of food that mineworkers were expected to eat. They were also expected to eat water-like porridge called **ntšhaintšhai** (p.51) and **lampalaza** (p.51). All these types of food were badly prepared. What enraged the workers was that they were even forced to eat this poorly prepared food without any complaint. Those who complained were severely punished. This is aptly expressed by Tema when he says:

Ba re dijo tša mono di garelwa go se
Ntswi la kutlokutlo, wa tlhagiša sekgopišo
Sa pelo o tshwarwa o latlhelwa kgatlamping
Ya mokgotšha o mogolo wa leho... (1948: 52)

[They say the food here is eaten without
A word of complaint because if you complain
You are arrested and thrown into a
Big abyss of death....]

When commenting on the type of food mineworkers were given, Jeeves (1985:22) says in 1905 the government introduced an ordinance that required the mines to improve the food supplied as part of the contract. It was stipulated that the staple mealie meal (maize) porridge must be augmented with fresh vegetables and meat. But, as expected, these regulations were loosely enforced. Jeeves (1985) also exposes the notion that severe beatings took place at most of these mines by White staff and Black policemen.

Scene two takes place at Crown mines. Serogole and his group are performing various traditional dances in the mine compounds. In these performances, they praise their chiefs and other traditional heroes as well as praising the places they come from. There is nothing in this scene except singing and dancing.

In **scene three** the conversation shifts from praising and dancing to Christianity and the Bible to the problem of land. This is what Mthimkhulu says about land:

... ge ke tlhoka le ga bošemo
Go lemela rathana tšaka; ge ke tshwenywa
Ke motšhelo le dipasa tša mokgobo... (1948:75)

[...I am without a ploughing field
To plough for my children; I am being harassed
By taxes and passes which are too much to bear...]

Mthimkhulu is saying what other Africans were saying about the land issue. He also expresses his feelings about taxes and the pass laws. The devastating effect of this historical state of affairs is aptly portrayed by the editorial in *The Star* newspaper of the 6th April 1998. This is what it says:

> In South Africa, during the 19th century, the demands of mining and commercial agriculture gave rise to measures like head and hut taxes to drag as many people as possible into the cash-for-labour economy. The impact on African society was devastating. Independent black farmers were reduced to labour tenants, while many thousands more were obliged to undertake the trek to the towns in search of survival.

There is no doubt that the situation as portrayed by *The Star*, is the situation Mthimkhulu is trying to expose. The question of poor food rears its ugly head

again. Makgoba is not satisfied with the type of food they are receiving. He says:

> Nna banna dijo tsena tša bona
> Di a ntlhola:...
> Re newa metepa yena ya go lepologa
> E tledimoga ganong ga motho e re ke
> Magobe a tletšeng ditepologi dithale
> Tša go uta, ke taba ye e nkgamang kgopolong (1948:83)
>
> [Gentlemen I find it difficult to become
> Accustomed to their type of food...
> We are given this porridge which is very soft
> It just slips in one's mouth as if
> It is porridge full of slimy threads
> Which are rotten, this is the issue that frustrates me.]

Thereafter, Serogole and his group start talking about the cultural differences which they feel must not be used to abuse others. To Serogole and his group it is a good thing to acknowledge cultural differences, but it is wrong to exploit cultural differences for personal gain and to oppress others.

5.2.4 Act four

In **scene one**, the complaint concerns working conditions. Serogole and his co-workers are complaining about working very hard yet receiving nothing in return. This is aptly summarised by Serogole when he says:

> Banna ge re duo šoma tše di kaa re
> Duo tlhwa re kobotetša, hamola e gamola
> Mala a leswika, meši e thuntše ka gare
> A mešima ya mabaka, role le khurumeditše
> Le rile khurukhuru, re tšwa re tlhatlogela
> Ka ntle re sena le bobono, na ruri banna
> Ke go re re pudufalelwa godimo ga eng? (1948:88)
>
> [Gentlemen, why do we work so hard
> Every day we hammer on
> Rocks deep in the mine, where there is
> Smoke in the cave, where dust will always
> Cover us and when we come out we
> Are very dirty, My question is
> What are we getting dirty for?]

The group is unhappy with what they are being paid and this is further exacerbated by the fact that they had been cheated by the recruiting agency into believing that they would be paid more money. Serogole continues by saying:

> Ba re bolella, ba re khutsetša ka ntswi

Le legolo ge dipepetlana mo re yang
Re yo di nyema ka garafo, dikgolokwane
Le masome a matlakala ona re sa bolele
Re tla kgobela a be a lekana le matlapa
Maswika a Mogoši a tlhatlagane godimo,
... Di kae dilo
Tšeuwe ka moka? (1948:89)

[They told us, they cheated us with words
Big words that where we were going, money
Would be in abundance, notes would be many
We would be able to accumulate so much that
The money would be like the rocks on Mogoši
Mountain on top of one another,
... Where are
All those things?]

The conversation moves from complaining about hard work and low wages to land, especially the evils of the Land Act of 1913. Lebogo feels Whites use this act to force people to leave their place of birth to work in their industries. This was because their cattle would have died of hunger and because they had no ploughing fields.

Matlala strangely named the next act as act four (a) and scene one (b). We do not understand his reasons for this strange way of numbering scenes and acts. In this scene, **scene one (b)**, Matlala talks about Christianity. The scene starts with Lebogo talking about Sol Plaatjie who is called our freedom fighter [*Moretlhabanedi wa rena o mogolo* (p.93)]; he also talks about R.V. Selope Thema, Maphikela, Ncwana, Jabavu, etc. These are people wellknown in political and academic circles.

After this, the discussion moves to a narration by Ntlhane. Ntlhane was injured while working in the mines and stayed for some months in hospital. After being released from hospital, he went to look for his wages. He discovered that the wages were very low. He decided to go back to complain about his low wages. This is what he says:

... ke rwalwa
Ke maswafo a pefelo bakeng sa moputso
Waka wo ke tšwetšeng dithitho ga kale,
Ka kwetlakwetla ka thekesela ka yo tsena
Ka monyako wa Lešimegi. Ao, e sere ke ikiša
Lehong. Ka šimegwa ke motho ka sampoko (1948:107)

[...I was carried
By anger over my salary
That I have worked so hard for
I carried myself struggling and went
To the door of Lešimegi. Alas, I took myself
To my death. I was beaten by a person with a sjambok.]

They also discuss other incidents in which they have been abused by the mine bosses. Raikane also narrates his case. He was beaten by the compound manager. From their discussion, it is apparent that the beatings at the mines were a normal occurrence as Motlhaba also tells the group of how he was beaten. Motlhaba says he was beaten because a spy in the compounds told the compounds manager that he was a troublemaker. It is said, in this scene, that spies are used regularly by mine bosses to identify troublemakers. From there they talk about discrimination and the reasons for the introduction of the hated Bantu Education. Serogole says:

... Le ge re sa tsebe
Go buisa re kwele maloba jaana gore
Matopane a longwa ke kateng bakeng
Sa Thuto le Tšwelopele ya maAforika
Faseng leno la Aforika Borwa. (1948:114)

[...Even though we cannot
Read, we have heard that
Whites are restless
Because of the Education and progress of Africans
In this land of South Africa.]

Matlala supports his views by quoting *The Star* of Tuesday, 3 April 1945 in which a member of parliament from Christiana, a Mr Brink, was quoted as saying the introduction of equal education for Whites and Africans would give rise to stiff competition for limited resources. Even though this was the case, Matlala is proud that Whites did not succeed in their evil attempts to deny Africans the right to a decent education. To Matlala, Dr Moroka is an example of African achievement. He also talked about the University of Fort Hare as a place of academic excellence. The scene ends with Matlala appealing to Africans to become educated in various fields and obtain M.As and M.Scs.

In **scene two**, we are introduced to traditional dances and songs. As was the case with traditional dances and singing in the previous scene, we are introduced to the praises of well-known traditional heroes and legends. Here one can mention Makgoba, whom Matlala had a special interest, especially in his death. This scene also encourages cooperation amongst the different tribes for the sake of defeating discrimination.

5.2.5 Act five

Scene one follows a similar line to the previous one. In this scene Serogole is against people who take other people's belongings. The conversation eventually turns to Christianity and the praising of certain institutions and people of status. Amongst these people we have Michael Hermel, Hilta Watsa, Kotane, etc. The conversation also turned to the second world war. To show that Matlala was well informed about current affairs, he refers to the San Francisco Conference which took place after the Second World War.

In **scene two**, Matlala further indicates his general knowledge and reading abilities by referring to certain causes of the Second World War. He starts his story with the narration of a soccer match, which ironically refers to the war. Furthermore, Matlala uses irony as useful information on the death of Hitler is brought to Serogole's group by a character called Maaka. Maaka says:

> Ra kwa, ka moya, go thwe lona letlaka
> Le legolo la Majakolobe Himilara o ipolaile
> Ka go pyatlela koomana ya moloi. (1948:146)
>
> [We have heard, through the radio, that that vulture
> The big one of Majakolobe Himilara has committed
> suicide.]

Matlala refers to an article in The Star of Friday, 25 May 1945 to justify his opinion that Hitler committed suicide. The conversation also touches on the Holocaust and African history.

5.2.6 Narrator involvement

There can be no doubt that what Matlala is saying in this book is what happened to African men working in the mines. Most of the things Matlala discusses actually happened and he knew about them by reading newspapers and even from conversations with other people. One could, therefore, say Matlala has been involved with the story he is narrating. Kgatla (1988) says after the book was published, Matlala was harassed as the book is indeed political. This is not surprising as Matlala says this was what Mickey wanted. Matlala wanted to write a book that would expose the sufferings of the Africans. There is no way that one can separate Matlala from his story. Matlala is describing what he knows was taking place in the mines and in South Africa in general.

5.3 Resumè

There is no doubt that Matlala wrote this dramatic text with the aim of fullfilling Mickey's wish, namely to talk about the evils of the South African government. Indeed the book is about collusion between business and the government in oppressing Africans, particularly workers in the mining industry. This collusion between the government and business was done in pursuance of the objectives as proposed by Grey, who is quoted as saying:

> ... that facilities should be afforded to White colonists for obtaining the possession of land, therefore occupied by the Native tribes; second, that the Kaffir population should be made to furnish as large and as cheap a supply of labour as possible (Cited by Nkomo 1985:80)

Matlala, as a journalist, knew about the problems that mineworkers were facing on the mines. These problems were the result of a migrant labour system which was based, as Nkomo (1985:79) aptly says, on several considerations:

> First, African domestic labor, in contrast to that of Whites, is not valued in terms of the market because of the monopoly position of the employers. Second, the cultural norm of apartheid results in a segregated economy which means that the reward and the evaluation of Africans and Whites is different. Whites receive necessarily higher rewards for the same work and have access to a range of jobs their African counterparts do not. Finally, force was applied to maintain the inferior position of domestic Africans.

These are the problems Matlala is talking about in this book and one could conclude by saying they have been skillfully portrayed`.

In addition to Matlala's knowledge of the political problems facing mineworkers and current events, he was interested in the history of various tribes in the Northern Province. One of the history that fascinates most is the story of Chief Makgoba and how he was killed. In this regard, Matlala acknowledges encouragement from a M.K. Molepo as follows:

> Mo a rileng (MK Molepo) le ge atlogile, ke šala ntše ke na le matlhatlhaga a mantši mme, ge le ya gaMakgoba ka 1954 go ya go nyaka taba tša phapano ya Makgoba le boPoulo, mme ntweng Makgoba a kgaolwa tlhogo, tlhogo e išiwa Tshwane ka 1896, ke ge le sa le maatleng a lethabo la M.K. Molepo (le ge a le badimong) Molaudi wa dira tša Makgowa e be e le Morena Jobere (General Joubert) (1983: 3).

[Even though he (MK Molepo) is dead, I retained a great deal of enthusiasm, when I went to Makgoba's place in 1954 to research Makgoba's conflicts with Paul Kruger, the war in which Makgoba's head was cut off and taken to Pretoria in 1896, I was still encouraged by the love of MK Molepo (even though he is dead). The leader of Whites during the war was Mr Joubert (General Joubert)].

CHAPTER SIX

GENERAL CONCLUSION

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This study has shown that the texts we have selected are, indeed, historical as they attempt to convey the past. It is, therefore, obvious that they should be regarded as historical dramas as they concern themselves with a portrayal of the historical past. In other words, the discussion thus far illustrated quite vividly that these texts deal with a "well-defined historical context" and that they depict "an authentic historical conflict" and characters (McKay 1972:50). That these texts deal with authentic historical characters is evident from the use of the names of their protagonists as the title of each text. Furthermore, as we have pointed out, the texts are concerned with authentic historical conflicts, namely those between tribalism, religion, education and socio-economic factors. We hope, we have managed to indicate some of the problems faced by the authors of these texts in trying to maintain a balance between writing a text to be appreciated as a literary work and writing a text to serve as a record of the historical event (s).

The study has also indicated that failure to make use of characters who simultaneously represent the historical necessity of their particular individual personality and the individual role that they play in history, leads to the treatment of the characters in a mystified or propagandist fashion (McKay 1972). This failure is most noticeable in the treatment of both Kgašane and Marangrang. Marangrang, for example, is portrayed in a mystified fashion while Kgašane is treated in a propagandist fashion. As a result of Marangrang being treated in a mystified way, his significance or social function is reduced. In the case of Kgašane, he is treated in a propagandist fashion and is consequently romantically monumentalised and dehumanised (McKay 1972).

We hope this study has succeeded in challenging literary scholars to reconsider the significance of the historical-biographical method for understanding literary texts. By means of this method we have been able to discover that the events surrounding the texts we have selected are still discernible today, in other words, the events portrayed by the texts are real historical events. These events still form part of the culture of the communities upon which they impacted. Tribalism is, and

will continue to be a problem, even though certain scholars and politicians would like us believe it is a non-issue. The same applies to conflicts whose root cause can be described as religious, educational and socio-economic. It is interesting to realise that all these factors were used to divide and ultimately subjugate Africans in their land. It is clear, therefore, that when we talk of African Renaissance, we need to acknowledge the destructive role that these elements played in our lives. There can be no African Renaissance if the destructive nature of these elements is not addressed.

6.1 MARANGRANG

In the case of *Marangrang*, we have illustrated that as a result of the author's treatment of Marangrang's life history in a mystified fashion, his authenticity has been affected. This not only refers to the author alone, but to the whole community, including the authors of various sources we have accessed as well as informants. There is no clarity on his origin, parents, status, deeds and lastly, assassin and the manner of his demise. These aspects refer to the areas which have been mystified, thus making Marangrang's life to be controversial. What we are saying does not, in any way, nullify the truth about the existence of Marangrang. What it does, however, is that it affects his social significance which is reduced to that of a commoner and a monster.

This study has illustrated the problems one encounters in trying to verify the *authenticity* of historical documents. It has been pointed out that since these problems are discernible in comparatively well-documented history, for example, that of the Zulu people, in general and of Shaka in particular, they will be more compounded when trying to verify history in lessdocumented histories, such as the Bakone history - and that of Marangrang in particular. A look at various interpretations indicates that the problem concerns times of the attacks and the identity of the attackers. The majority of the sources say the attack was launched by the Matebele, however, Delius (1983) says the attacks were launched by the Ndwandwe first, and only later by the Matebele. Delius relies on the fact that nothing is said about the attack on the Bapedi by sources from the Matebele's side and this idea is further supported by historical data. It is generally believed that Mzilikazi retreated to the Western Transvaal after fleeing from Shaka and consequently cannot be held responsible for the attack on the Bapedi during 1822. Delius (1983) maintains that after the Ndwandwe left Bopedi, the Matebele attacked the weakened Bapedi who offered little resistance. Delius, in saying that

there were two attacks on the Bapedi within a short space of time, is supported by Bundy (1988), even though he says the first attack was by the Matebele, who were followed by the Ndwandwe. They agree that the Bapedi were attacked by two powerful groups of people speaking a similar language, identified as Sepono and hence the people are simply called Mapono. We are, therefore, inclined to concur with Delius's views that the Bapedi were attacked by the Ndwandwe group under the leadership of Zwide. What is difficult to trace, however, is the movement of the Ndwandwe group. They made their presence felt before Shaka in approximately 1817 and then disappeared in approximately 1826. It can be concluded, therefore, that the Bapedi were attacked by the Ndwandwe and that this attack took place in approximately 1822.

With regard to the *intention* of the author, there is no doubt that when writing this play Maloma was aware of the dichotomous nature of his duties. In other words, he was aware that he was writing a literary document which should be worthy of appreciation as an object of aesthetic value as well as a historical document that would serve as a record of the history of the Bakone people. This idea is derived from the fact that when he decided to write, he was aware of the basic tools of literature. It was, he claims, as a result of fear that he decided to change historical records, such as names in the name of fiction. Maloma, in his preface, clearly indicates that his aim in writing the book was to convey a moral lesson, namely that the consequences of transgressing traditional rules are not pleasant. We could say this stated intention to moralise forced him to manipulate the death of Marangrang and treat his life in a mystified fashion.

In order to understand the play's *reception*, we need to look at the textualisation of Marangrang's story. According to Delius (1983:20), Arbousset was the first to document the Bapedi history in 1830 from account of Bapedi visiting Lesotho. Alexander Merensky, in 1862, published a different version from information collected amongst the Bapedi. Merensky is the one who says something about the life history of Marangrang and his fight against the cannibals. In 1912, the renegade Aron Winter, published another story which was similar to the one written by Merensky but differs slightly. He also mentions Marangrang's fight against cannibalism. Hunt, in 1931, published his article in which he draws heavily from Winter, but erred by comparing the life history of Marangrang to that of the Biblical Samson. Phala, in 1935, published a poem about Marangrang in which his role in trying to stop cannibals is explicit. This was followed by Ramaila's book in 1938, in which he says Marangrang was a chief. According to information

at our disposal, Ramaila is the first to overlook Marangrang's role in fighting against cannibalism. The people who wrote their books after Ramaila seem to have followed his storyline as they also disregard Marangrang's noble mission, instead, they concentrated, their energy on exposing his character flaws. Ramaila's book encouraged Mphahlele and Phaladi to write a book in 1942. In their book, they say Marangrang was killed by young initiates who included Phatudi II. This was followed by Schwellnus in 1947. It is interesting that all three books say Marangrang was a chief or king of the Bakone. Obviously this information is based on Ramaila's book as the two authors refer to his book. This was followed by Ziervogel in 1953 who also does not even mention Marangrang's role in eradicating cannibalism. In 1967, Mönnig published his book on the Bapedi. He talks about Marangrang's role in stopping cannibalism, but unfortunately cannot spell Marangrang's name correctly, as he calls him *Morangrang*. In 1971, Maloma published his dramatic text about Marangrang in which he also does not allude to the desire to eradicate cannibalism, except in a praise poem. This is surprising if one takes into account the fact that so much had already been published in this regard. Later, the story was taken up by Delius (1983) who again emphasizes Marangrang's fight against cannibalism. Taking what we have said into consideration, one could say the story of Marangrang was distorted by Ramaila and subsequently by the others who followed him.

Regarding the *social function* of the story of Marangrang, we would like to point out that the problems of fear, subjugation and alliance make it difficult for one to construct a clear picture of Marangrang's life history. There is no doubt that his life history has fused with the whole mythology surrounding Bapedi history. Interestingly enough, this fusion of the two histories has occurred at the expense of Marangrang's life history. He has been intentionally or unintentionally demonised with little regard to the prevailing circumstances in which he lived. During our research into Marangrang's life history the problem of fear kept recurring. We have already mentioned Monoge's reluctance to tell us the story. We can also mention a lady called Mrs Tolo, who was not prepared to tell us the story. There was an element of fear in her, but she was unable to identify the source of her fear. It was an old man at GaMaloma, who identified the source of their fear as the Maroteng polity. This problem of fear is also evident from the manner in which Maloma avoids touching on the sensitive areas of Marangrang's life history. He distorts some aspects of the story, such as the incidence of cannibalism, which he brings forward to before Marangrang's birth. He also changes the time during which the Bapedi changed their totem and states that

Marangrang committed suicide. When we challenged him on these points he maintained that everything was done for dramatic effect. Various people offer various explanations for his deeds. It is surprising that some concentrate on his evil deeds while others consider both his good as well as his evil deeds. What surprises us is that most of the people who talk only about his evil nature fail to look at his life in relation to the prevailing situation of the time, namely the prevalence of tribal wars. However, such people are prepared to afford Shaka the status of a hero even though his deeds were crueller than those of Marangrang.

As far as the *narrative syntax* of the play is concerned, we could conclude that after scrutinising various sources, it is difficult to ascertain Marangrang's origin. The reason for this obscurity, can be ascribed to the notion that since he was a commoner no one cared about his deeds until later when he started to be of use to the tribe. What is clear, however, is that he is related to Magolego. Some sources even confuse his status, such as Ramaila, Schwellnus and Mphahlele, et al, who say Marangrang was a chief or a headman. The other problem which effected the difficulty in constructing Marangrang's life history is that his life history is now legend, it has fused with myth and mythology with the result that it is difficult to reconstruct accurately and scientifically.

Despite what we have said, Maloma should be congratulated for trying to portray the truth about Marangrang in writing this dramatic texts. Of the sources we have consulted, he is the only one who attempted to trace Marangrang's parents, more specifically his father, Lethoke, the son of Modiokwane and his relationship with the Magolego family. One important omission, however, is the fact that he disregarded the role that Marangrang played in trying to stop cannibalism. This despite the fact that literature which mentioned Marangrang's noble mission in life was already in existence when he wrote the play.

6.2 KGAŠANE

We have indicated that the problem with the *authenticity* of the play *Kgašane* is that Makwala handled the story of Kgašane in a propagandist fashion. As a result, he was romantically monumentalised and dehumanised. Kgašane does not behave like a person living in the historical context discussed by the play. The play depicts the conflict between Christianity and traditional African culture. The causes of this conflict are, in the words of H. Kuschke, the results of the "Christianizing forces of the missionary" which gave rise to what he calls

"fermentation" of the traditional African culture (Cited by G.F.T. Kuschke in an unpublished article). Various people all over the world have documented the immense problems caused by this type of conflict in African societies. The consequences of this conflict are elaborated more lucidly by Qunta (1995:17) as follows:

> ... many politically aware young people and adults are lukewarm about Christianity on account of its past relationship with Colonisation and the attendant disruption of indigenous religious and cultural institutions... Their role in destroying the authority of African royalty in the Eastern Cape, culminating in the murder of King Hintsa, is a good example of their excellent service to the British Crown and empire... Essentially, the problem lies not so much in the tenets of religion, but rather in the manner in which it was used by its European converts.

Indeed the role of Christianity in the destruction of African tradition was caused, largely, by the lack of tolerance for other cultures as expressed by its adherents. This stems from the fact that the missionaries failed to reconcile Christianity with the traditional African culture. The sole purpose of the mission work was to superimpose Christianity on the African religion and to sever the Africans from their traditional way of life. In this regard, H. Kuschke's views are relevant as they shed more light on the objectives of mission work. In an apparent reference to the basic objective of mission work, he says that mission work cannot be achieved until the institution of chieftainship, the pillar of the African social order, has been destroyed. This is what he says about this institution:

> What the head and heart are to the living human body, that is the paramount chief to this nation. Take the head or heart away, and the body is lifeless. Take away the heathen chief, and the dissolution of the body of the nation is sure to follow (Cited by G.F.T. Kuschke in an unpublished article).

This is exactly what the missionaries did to the indigenous African culture, its institutions, in general and to chieftainship, in particular. These views clearly support Qunta (1995:17) as it has been indicated above. The result was confrontation between members of the same tribe which gave rise to the use of violence, as is the case in *Kgašane.* This is the authentic historical conflict Makwala should have portrayed in this text. However, that he has portrayed this conflict successfully is a moot point. Our feeling is that he has not, as he has treated the life of Kgašane in a propagandist manner, resulting in Kgašane behaving in a manner anachronistic to his period.

The primary *intention* of Makwala in writing this play was, as we have indicated out, to write a literary document as by then he was familiar with the basic characteristics of a dramatic text. He told us in one of our interviews with him, that he was bothered by the manner in which playwrights handled the question of performance in some of their texts. He decided to change from writing a novel to writing a drama. This change was further encouraged by the fact that the story of Kgašane was being performed in Church. We could also say Makwala wrote this text fully aware that he was writing a historical document, to record the life history of this great man for future reference. It is unfortunate that in his endeavour to record history, he failed to conduct his own investigations. Eventually, he relied solely on the official version which consequently, makes his story unbalanced. We are of the opinion that had Makwala made further investigations, as he claims he did, he could have resolved some of the inconsistencies that appear in his text. We can only conclude that Makwala simply relied on the 'official' version of the story and overlooked the views of the powerless, namely those associated with Kgašane. Even though Makwala claims to have interviewed Kgašane's son, his daughter-in-law, his niece, Nakedi, and her son Matthew, we find this unconvincing. Our doubt stems from the fact that most of the people we interviewed do not agree with Makwala's version.

As regards the *reception* of the story of Kgašane, we could say the story was first recorded by Fritz Reuter in 1885, a year after the death of Kgašane and four years after his arrival in the Bolobedu area. In the article written in German, Reuter talks about the relationship between Kgašane's family and the Balobedu royalty. He maintains that Kgašane was a chief as his great-grandfather ruled over another large part of the Bolobedu territory which became known as Modubeng. Obviously, according to this article, Kgašane was a chief. In another article Reuter wrote in 1905, he talks of Kgašane as a 'Christian chief'. Kgašane's status is changed in the story's subsequent textualisation. Krause (1963), for example, talks of Kgašane as an 'onderkaptein'. Makwala, on the other hand, says Kgašane was a chief (*kgoši*), but later says he was an induna (*kgošana*). We challenged him on this point and did not receive convincing reasons for this obvious confusion. Our interest in tracing Kgašane's original status within the Balobedu concerns the fact that his status influences the interpretation of certain aspects of his life. His grandchildren are adamant that Reuter's view is the correct one.

The *social function* of Kgašane is interlinked with a clear understanding of his exact status. In our investigation, we were faced with glaring inconsistencies in the narration of this story. In evaluating the social function of the story, we identified two versions, the Christian or official version as well as the non-Christian or unofficial perception. The official version is that Kgašane was killed by the Balobedu because he was a Christian, while the unofficial version is that Kgašane was killed because he was seen as a traitor or sellout. If, indeed, Kgašane was considered a sellout, why then did it take less than ten years after his death for the Balobedu to accept Christianity? One would have expected the tribe to fight in the same manner in which they opposed Kgašane to stop Christianity. However, we are told the tribe relented and became slaves of Reuter and later Wilhelm Krause. They were even compelled to pay taxes.

What we have learned from the story of Kgašane is that one must be vigilant because one cannot simply accept everything coming from Christians. The research has indicated, as Delius (1983:108) has also observed, that there should be a re-interpretation of missionary activity as it relates to the South African context. The need for this re-interpretation, according to Delius is that, most of the documents from the missionaries form an essential part of the mythology of the Lutheran Church in the Transvaal and that of the Berlin Missionary Society. He continues and says, these documents were used to highlight the steadfastness of the aboriginal converts to Christianity, to show how great the privations and dangers were that the missionaries had to endure and to reveal how profoundly the missionaries' religion governed their conduct. Delius (1983:108) is worried that most explanations were that Africans were in a terrible state of insecurity and oppression as they were subjected to "the rule of bloodthirsty and despotic chiefs". To Delius, this views are shaped by crude cultural determinism. He continues as follows:

> The dominant missionary view was that the conflicts were an inevitable consequence of the fact that the essential basis of chiefly power was religious. This view of chiefship also facilitated the conclusion which became increasingly prevalent among the Berlin missionaries that Christian advance depended on the destruction of chiefly power.

If we take into consideration what Delius says, it is imperative that we be careful when treating the life history of Kgašane.

The importance of verifying documents originating from missionary evidence is further supported by what we discovered coincidentally while in the Jane Furse area. We learned of the death of a girl called Mantši Masemola who, it is alleged, was killed by her mother in the years between 1923 and 1926 because of her devotion to Christianity. Her death is commemorated annually on the 30th August by the Catholic Church, particularly in the Marishane area. We were interested in her story as it resembles that of Kgašane. We were amused when we interviewed a certain old lady at Jane Furse. She told us in no uncertain terms that the story had been fabricated by the priest and that as far as she was aware Mantši had died a natural death. She said Mantši suffered from a sickness prevalent in that period. After her death her parents buried her without preamble. The parents did not inform the priest and when he discovered that she had died he started the story that she was killed by her mother. It is difficult to judge the truth of this account, but it highlights the importance of the need to investigate orally communicated history in general.

6.3 KGOŠI MMUTLE III

The text, *Kgoši Mmutle III*, deals with Mmutle's life history between 1915 and 1928. This is the period everyone within the tribe acknowledges as Mmutle's difficult years as a ruler of the tribe. Some of the important aspects portrayed by the play are Mmutle 's aversion for the tribe's traditions and customs, such as beer drinking, initiation schools, folksongs and dances; Mmutle's problems in building a community school called Mabjana-Maswana; and lastly Mmutle's confrontation with people opposed to the collection of money to buy farms. These events are historically correct. The problem with the *authenticity* of this play is that Phatudi, like Makwala, treats Mmutle's life history in a propagandist manner. Consequently, his character has been romantically monumentalised and dehumanised. Some of the decisions Phatudi claims were taken by Mmutle, are not decisions befitting that of an educated leader of Mmutle's stature. Insufficient reasons are provided for certain decisions taken, for example, by Mmutle. Phatudi provides insufficient reasons why Mmutle disregarded the tribe's traditions and customs. We have no doubt that Mmutle looked down upon his culture because of his educational status. The author should have hinted at this conflict as it is a key authentic historical conflict, that between the educated and uneducated. The fact that the author treats this conflict in the manner he does, does not impress us and it weakens the play's authenticity. In some cases, Phatudi presents ridiculous reasons as those given by Mmutle for taking important decisions affecting the

tribe. In this text, Phatudi, through one of the characters in the play, Mazwi, says the government cannot confiscate the land of its people as its function is to protect the people. We find this statement insulting, and it has no historical base. We find it unacceptable that Phatudi could make such an obviously false statement. The seriousness of this statement becomes even more insulting if we take into account the provisions of the Land Act of 1913 and the hardships it brought to Africans. For Phatudi to utter such a statement is beyond our comprehension. These observations show that Phatudi did not really write a historical document, but a literary document. As a result, the play is historically disappointing. During our discussion with his younger brother, Fred Motlokwe Phatudi-Mphahlele, the idea that this text was historically inadequate was acknowledged.

We hope the study has illustrated that the main problem with this play is that Phatudi talks only about the good side of his father, neglecting to mention the consequences of Mmutle's action with regard to the Bakgaga ba GaMphahlele tradition and the institution of chieftainship, in particular. There is no doubt that the problems experienced by Mmutle during his time still exist for the present Bakgaga tribe. Phatudi, as one of those who tried to solve these problems, should at least have hinted at some of these problems which were caused by Mmutle's destruction of the institution of chieftainship. We do not believe that Phatudi was unaware of their existence as he mentioned similar problems or conflicts in some of Shakespeare's books which he translated. We are convinced that the author deliberately ignored this conflict for fear of creating further conflicts. Thus, for Phatudi to pretend that this issue is not important indicates that his text is a typical example of "the purely escapist costume romance, which, making no pretence to historicity, uses a setting in the past to lend credence to improbable characters and adventures" (The Encyclopaedia Britannica 1989:948).

There is no doubt that the institution of chieftainship among the Bakgaga ba GaMphahlele is in turmoil. The main reason for this state of affair is the contempt with which Mmutle viewed the institution. This is the area we feel Phatudi should have highlighted. The Mphahlele people remember Mmutle as a hero for bringing progress to the tribe, while simultaneously blaming him for destroying their traditional institutions, such as chieftainship. Mmutle, therefore, represents a historical fact and his whole life history involves authentic historical conflict between the educated and the uneducated. There is no doubt that the problems the tribe is facing can be ascribed to Mmutle's shortsightedness. Phatudi should have portrayed Mmutle's struggle to procure an educated wife after the death of

Manyaku. It is a fact that Mmutle's failure to take a second principal wife gave rise to the problems the tribe is still experiencing today.

These problems are aptly highlighted in an article quoted extensively in this thesis correctly entitled "Problem of Succession to Mphahlele Royalty" written in 1950 by the late Dr Matikita Phatudi-Mphahlele. The document is very clear and unambigious in its view of the problem. After Mmutle's death there was no one to take over the reigns. Mmutle did not inform the tribe of the identity of his successor, despite being warned by his best friend, a Mr Thema, that time was running out for him to marry a *lebone*. The main problem, as the study reveals, was that there was no clear line of seniority amongst Mmutle's wives. It took Mmutle's sons twenty-four years after his death to decide that they needed to find a woman to rule the tribe until a son was born to take over. During those years, the whole tribe was faced with perpetual problems. Mmutle's children were unable to solve the problems because they also looked down upon some members of the royal family, in particular, we refer to N.C. Phatudi and Rev E.M. Phatudi, two famous sons of Mmutle. They are generally regarded as Mmutle's eldest sons and the ones whom Mmutle used as examples of what education could do, by taking them to Kilnerton to further their education.

In our view, the reasons for this state of affairs are to be found in education. Education divided the people into the literate and illiterate, causing people who had been educated to look down upon those who were less educated. It is alleged, and generally believed by the people, that Moepadira was deposed because Mmutle III's sons felt he was illiterate. This allegation is confirmed by the following words by Matikita Phatudi-Mphahlele in the abovementioned article:

> ...all the children of Mmutle III are enlightened while on the contrary his brothers are uneducated or are less so. Reference to the children of Matsobane will show that Moepadira, youngest son of Mamasegare, was senior in rank to all of Matsobane's sons and therefore may be a legitimate claimant to the regency, but he was uneducated (Phatudi-Mphahlele 1950).

From these words, it is patently obvious that education would be used as a yardstick to decide on the one suitable for taking over the reigns of cheiftainship. Moepadira, whom most people believe Mmutle elected as the person to inherit the throne, was discriminated against simply because he was uneducated. We cannot ascribe this type of thinking to Matikita alone,

his brothers supported him. Confidential letters between N.C. Phatudi and Rev E.M. Phatudi, and between N.C. Phatudi and his brothers, Fred Motlokwe and Matikita, highlight this division very clearly. There were complaints in the village, mostly from the uneducated, who refused to be ruled by a person who had not attended the initiation school. To certain members of the tribe, the question of illiteracy was used merely as an excuse to deprive Moepadira of his legitimate claim to rule the tribe. The words we have just quoted and views of certain members of the tribe support the assumption of this study that the Mphahlele people's problems were due to education. Moepadira was considered not suitable for the position of regent, simply because he was uneducated.

In conclusion, Phatudi's text cannot, in the true sense of the word, be regarded as historical as Phatudi only made use of the name and the historical context while nothing in the text suggests that it is historical. Even the names used in the text are fictitious. Perhaps Phatudi was aware of the serious problems the tribe was facing at the time and did not want to aggravate the conflict by using historical names. As a result of this omission, there is no authentic historical conflict in the text. This text, therefore, also fails to qualify as a literary text as there is no real conflict. Thus, Phatudi has failed both in his endeavour to write a literary text as well as in providing a record of historical events.

6.4 SEROGOLE

It is difficult to assess the *authenticity* of the events in this play. The problem is that it is impossible to link the real Serogole Mathobela with the Serogole Matlala mentions in this book. This could easily have been verified had Matlala been alive. All our statements are mere speculation. What we know is that the text, *Serogole*, is dedicated to Serogole Mathobela who played an important role in bringing Christianity to the Moletši areas. Matlala, as we have indicated, wrote this book to honour this brave and foresighted man. There is, however, no doubt that the Serogole we see in the text is Matlala himself. One could say the narrative voice in the text is that of Matlala, a reader and journalist. In this text, Matlala dramatises the systematic subjugation of Africans by the White minority. He refers to specific issues which are, indeed, the bone of contention in most mines. It is difficult for us to say conclusively where Matlala obtained some of the information to which he refers. In other words, it is not clear whether this information came from Serogole Mathobela or from Matlala's reading.

We have already mentioned that Matlala's *intention* in writing this play was to satisfy Mickey, who wanted somebody to expose the evils of the South African government. As a reader of newspapers and a journalist himself, Matlala decided to write about the collusion between the government and the mines in denying the African majority a slice of the profits from the mines by paying them low wages and abusing them. However, Matlala exaggerates here and there.

Regarding the *reception* of the book *Serogole*, suffice it to say the government did not like the play and used state institutions to show their dislike of the text. Matlala was harassed and he was forced to stop teaching in 1950, two years after the book was published and one year after he had been appointed principal of a school in his area. We feel the reason for his resignation was political, as Kgatla (1988) also suggests. On the literary front, Matlala was further harassed by the Northern Sotho Language Board. Initially, Matlala was a great supporter of this body, but later withdrew his support and became the Board's main critic. The reason for the confrontation between Matlala and the Board, was the Board's insistence that Matlala change his style of writing. In other words, he was compelled to use 'standard' orthography and acceptable terminology. He refused and the rest is history.

There is no doubt that Matlala understands the *social function* of literature in general, and of drama in particular. Reading his prefaces, it is apparent that his feelings are that literature exists, first and foremost, for entertainment. To Matlala, this is the primary function of literature, but this does not mean literature cannot be used for other purposes as well. In the South Africa situation, literature was used as means to protest against the evils of Apartheid. We could say Matlala managed to handle this dichotomous nature of literature convincingly. In other words, he adhered to the most important aspects of literature in writing this text. We are, however, aware of those who opposed his type of literature, but our view is that this had less to do with the literary merits of his books than with the style. We can confirm that Matlala had to struggle before his books could be published as most publishers refused to risk their money on a product that was not guaranteed to bring profits. We must remember that publishers are enthusiastic about publishing books that they are sure will be prescribed, however because of Matlala's conflict with the Language Board, there was no way his books would have been prescribed. It was because of these problems that Matlala lost a manuscript entitled *Tšhaka Seripa sa II*. However, we have been unable to confirm this loss.

Regarding the *narrative syntax* of the play, it discusses various problems faced by mineworkers in particular and Africans in general. Some of the major problems portrayed by the text, are the brutal pre-employment medical examination, the terrible state of the food fed to miners, the Land Act, low wages despite hard work and the inability of miners to obtain vacation leave and other fringe benefits, regular beatings and the state of African education. Testing the play against historical records reveals that Matlala knows his subject. Records of the historical time he portrays correspond exactly with the events in the text. In general, Matlala discusses the evils of the migrant labour system. The evils of this system are aptly described by Jeeves (1985) as follows:

> ... remarkable for the hardship it imposed, for the size of the labour force recruited - more than 200,000 low-wage black labourers were delivered annually to the industry's grim, barrack-like compounds - and for the fact that most of the workers were Africans pastoralists without previous industrial experience. Forced to work in appalling conditions amid much squalor and disease, more than 50,000 miners died on the Witwatersrand in a single decade.

Matlala's *involvement* in the story, cannot be overemphasized. His presence is illustrated by the similarity between the story he portrays and his personal life history. We are of the opinion that Matlala was acquainted with and spoke to Serogole Mathobela, whose picture appears in the book, about his life. Obviously, the old man told him stories about the mines. Matlala's knowledge was further expanded when he attended different learning institutions, particularly Kilnerton and the University of Fort Hare as well as his work. In these institutions, Matlala met people from different backgrounds and the gesture of Mr Msezana, impressed him so much that he felt it is important that Africans should be united. Consequently, he hated anything which try to divide African. There is, therefore, no doubt about Matlala's hatred of the system of migrant labour, as the system was used to divide Africans. It is a well-known fact that discrimination is very rife in the mines. This discrimination and the desire to use ethnic differences to achieve political goals are discussed by Jeeves (1985:27) when he says:

> Much of this supervision was provided by black collaborators - 'boss boys' underground, compound police on the surface. In these years many of the mines used Zulu collaborators in these supervisory jobs, particularly in the police. Since the Zulu were under represented as an ethnic group among the mineworkers, this represented an obvious effort to use ethnic differences and rivalries for control purposes.

We conclude this section by stating that, Matlala managed to write a literary document as well as a historical one. He used fictitious characters in historical events to portray problems of a socio-economic nature.

6.5 FINAL WORD

This study has illustrated that in order to comprehend any historical text better, one must consider using an approach that is essentially historical-biographical in nature. In the four texts we have discussed, interesting and challenging new facts about the historical character each play portrays which have not been touched by the texts for specific reasons have emerged. In the cases we have studied, the authors did not touch important aspects relating to historical characters as they felt mentioning them would be controversial. In general, the historical texts are convincing in their treatment of the historical characters and their well-defined historical context. It is unfortunate, that some of the authors's treatment of certain aspects of this historical contexts in their plays is not convincing. The general problem was that authors did not consider, seriously, the impact that environmental conditions had on the character's life and deeds. It has been interesting to observe that in the case of Marangrang and Kgašane, the earlier textualisation of their stories seem more plausible than their later textualisation. Our efforts to trace the earlier versions of these two was made difficult because the original sources, namely Merenskey's and Reuter's writings are in German. We were, therefore, compelled to depend on translation which are very expensive. We hope to seek financial assistance so that these German documents could be translated. We feel this must be done in future research as the documents might offer a better version of the two's life histories.

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