

**JRL RAFAPA:
AN EXPLORATION OF HIS NOVELS**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that **JRL RAFAPA: AN EXPLORATION OF HIS NOVELS**, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.L. Boshego', written over a horizontal dotted line.

SIGNATURE
(P.L. Boshego)

30 NOVEMBER 1998

DATE

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people who have helped me to make it over the hump:

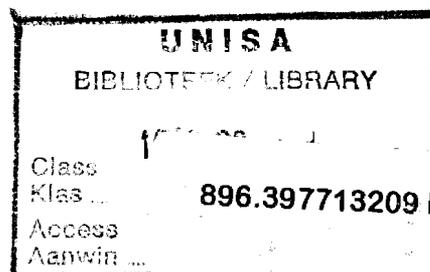
First and foremost, my supervisor Prof. SM Serudu. I sincerely appreciate your patience and expert guidance through this study. May the Lord God preserve you. Mokwena!

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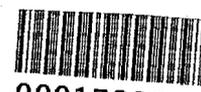
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896.397713209 RAFA BOSH



0001728897

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to: my late father, Matšeutšeu à Monare, Motlókwa à Mamphele à Boroku, Kolobe! and to my mother, Matemane Ngwa' Mashile, Motau!

SUMMARY

The main objective of this study is to explore the literariness in JRL Rafapa's novels published between 1979-1991. This study was prompted by views of literary scholars who claim that post-O.K. Matsepe writers such as Rafapa were all influenced by Matsepe's writings to such an extent that they actually emulate his themes, settings, characters, plots and so on. This kind of emulation is said to have put the Northern Sotho Novel in a cul-de-sac. The modus operandi in this study is as follows:

Chapter one deals with the aim of study, critical comments on the post-Matsepe writers, biographical sketch on Rafapa, literary approaches and method as well as the scope.

The second chapter concentrates on the relationship between the writer and characters as his creations. It also deals with conventional character stereotypes such as the hero, the opponent and the supporter. Narrative strategies such as self-display or exteriorization, the narrative voice and the creation of an autobiographical narrative are also looked into.

Chapter three explores Rafapa's themes. The main themes discussed are: social decay, madness and vengeance, as well as protest and conflict. We conclude the chapter by examining Rafapa's titles.

Chapter four focuses closely on "place" and "time" in Rafapa's novels. The two mentioned aspects of setting are discussed separately according to:

- place as a space of action and place as acting space.
- convoluted time and chronological time.

The chapter ends with a brief discussion of the functions of setting.

Rafapa's idiolect is dealt with in chapter five. Here, we consider the word as the writer's main tool of communication. The use of words in different types of sentences as well as in various types of paragraphs come into focus.

Chapter six looks into Rafapa's use of non-prose forms such as the interior monologue, the dialogue and the praise poems as the writer's means of extending meaning.

Chapter seven is the recapitulation of the main findings in the thesis. It also touches on aspects which may form bases for future research. It is followed by a bibliography and an Appendix.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIM OF STUDY

Matsepe's unique workmanship in the manipulation and presentation of his subject matter has placed the Northern Sotho novel in a cul de sac. Each and every budding novelist wants to dress his thoughts and ideas in the style and language of Matsepe, which remain an indelible mark on the mind of any avid reader of his works (Serudu, 1993:301).

This thought-provoking statement is the genesis of this thesis. As the above quotation may suggest - our primary aim is not to make a comparative study of OK Matsepe and JRL Rafapa, who is a post-Matsepe writer, but rather to explore the literariness of Rafapa's novels. We shall also look into the relationship that exists between the writer's corpus and life experiences of this celebrated Northern Sotho writer, who began writing from the early age of seventeen and has contributed a large body of literary works to the Northern Sotho language. His short stories and novels are widely read at both high schools and tertiary institutions.

This study grew out of a two-pronged interest in literature and criticism and in the relationship between the two. Provocative and scholarly views held by two distinguished literary critics, namely, SM Serudu and PS Groenewald stimulated our interest to want to explore Rafapa's novels. Both these scholars maintain that OK Matsepe's excellence in prose fiction writing duly influenced younger generation of writers among whom is JRL Rafapa. This generation of writers is said to emulate Matsepe in both language usage, choice of settings, choice of characters, and the plotting of their stories.

The aforementioned assertion gave rise to the second interest, which is to investigate whether Rafapa's past has any bearing on his writings as well as on his involvement with the novel form, that is, the utilization of the novel in exposing and expressing the writer's views, life experiences, cultural norms and values as well as their impact on the social fabric.

1.2 CRITICAL COMMENTS ON THE POST-MATSEPE WRITERS

Although Serudu and Groenewald are in agreement about Matsepe's influence on the younger generation of writers, Groenewald sounds more optimistic about this group's writings than is Serudu whose view is rather pessimistic. Besides claiming that Matsepe has placed the Northern Sotho novel in a cul de sac, Serudu asserts that younger writers such as

D.P. Sekhukhune, P.M. Lebopa, J.M. Moswane, M.J. Koma and J.R.L. Rafapa, have tried to use traditional life as well as Matsepe did, but in vain since they do not possess the insight into such life that Matsepe had, let alone the ability to transform it to be relevant to common humanity (1993:301).

The above critical thoughts sound comparative and judgmental. However, thoughts which immediately come to mind are: Has there ever been any serious investigations into the works of any of the post-Matsepe writers? Is there any literariness in their works at all? What about the notion that each writer writes in his own mould and camp?

The post-Matsepe writers may not have had Matsepe's kind of social background and experiences but their individual experiences and background should be taken cognisance of. They wrote perceiving, experiencing and rationalizing matters individually and uniquely. To say that they failed to transform the use of traditional life to be relevant to common humanity is surely an overstatement. In fact, these are mere farcical assumptions of no scholarly substance, merely made to discredit them.

Writing eight years after Matsepe's death PS Groenewald's optimism about the young generation of writers, which includes Rafapa, is quite clear:

The influence of Matsepe is unmistakably discernible on the younger generation of prose writers. Now eight years after his death a new period is looming around the corner, and the indications fill the reader with new expectations. A steady flow of juvenile literature is coming from the press, while the latest volumes of short stories, of which some are traditional stories newly introduced, are characterized by freshness, an authoritative touch in the presentation of relevant data (1983:11-12).

Groenewald does not see the Northern Sotho novel as being trapped in a cul de sac. He does not talk of any writer as having failed in any respect whatsoever. He does not see the younger writers as being emulative, rather, he sees a promising development in the continual use of the novel form. The new development fills him with expectations and enthusiasm. Perhaps he reserves his critical opinion, not to compare the young writers with Matsepe since he recognizes each one's individuality and uniqueness.

Still on the question of emulation and the quest to dress one's thoughts and ideas in the style and language of another writer, Obed Musi quotes the Irish play-wright George Bernard Shaw as saying that:

"Originality is undetected plagiarism" (City Press News Paper: 27.09.1995).

Musi's argument is that a writer cannot say or claim that any song or poem or novel is originally from the writer's own mind. He further argues that, what the writer thinks is original is actually something which he must have heard from somebody else, with the only difference being that the writer may coat it in his own colours and then make it appear original.

George Bernard Shaw's ideas vindicate the younger generation of Northern Sotho prose writers from the accusation that they emulate Matsepe.

Nevertheless, if it be so, Matsepe himself would surely not be an exception to the rule, moreover that, as Groenewald would observe:

Matsepe, so word vertel, was die stille deelnemer aan die gesprek, die geduldige luisteraar wat aandag kon gee, en fyn dopgehou het waar ander vertel. Hy het geleef in 'n tyd tussen mense toe gesels nog 'n tydverdryf, tewens 'n kuns was. 'n Skat van verhale het hy opgebou, 'n onuitputlike bron waarop hy later sou terugval toe hy begin het om te skryf. Boonop was dit hom beskore om uit 'n kapteingeslag te kom, en met die intriges wat binne die hoë politieke kringe afspeel, was hy goed bekend (1989:14).

(It is said that Matsepe was the silent participant in the conversation, the patient listener who could pay attention to and closely observe the narration of others. He lived at a time amongst people when talking was still a pastime, also an art. He accumulated a treasure of stories, an inexhaustible source which he would later resort to when he started to write. Moreover, it was his lot to have come from a generation of chiefs, and he was well acquainted with the intrigues which took place in the higher political circles.)

Be it as it may, in a friendly letter to me dated the 30th April 1995, Rafapa acknowledges the influence of other prose writers, including Matsepe, on his writings in this manner:

I think Matsepe like Dickens, Mamogobo, Madiba, Kgatle, Phalane and others, have created me as a writer for I read them before I could be an author myself. They inspired me, most of all Matsepe and Dickens.

What is interesting about this acknowledgement is the absence of a word which may in any way suggest "emulation" or any other idea to that effect, except "influence". However, on commenting about his first novel, Leratosello (ibid), he says:

If anyone were to say in Leratosello there is a Matsepeic influence I would agree. But anyone who would say I imitate Matsepe would be wrong.

To justify his adoption and use of the traditional rural milieu, Rafapa explains thus:

The reason why my settings are rural is because I have lived in a rural setting all my life. I depict life as I experience it. I live in places of *Magoši* and I maintain that an author should aim to chastise his fellowmen about the sociological flaws in the society in which he lives. (Letter: 13 August 1995).

He further explains that (ibid)

Surely we are not living in the past! Even if the setting can be in the past, the writer must transcend the bounds of past society. But if you write about *bogoši* of the past when men still wielded spears as armies, you are saying nothing about the present! Today, *bogoši* is in a totally different mould, no armies, no spears. Today's *bogoši* is not Matsepe's *bogoši*, it is *bogoši* which you find in Rafapa's novels.

Whether Matsepe or Rafapa writes better about kingship, is surely of no consequence to this study. However of essence here is the message contained in this excerpt, which makes it quite clear that Rafapa does acknowledge Matsepe as one of his mentors. But both were inspired by the traditional rural life. Both possess some insight into such life although differently. That Rafapa may, in one way or the other, have been influenced by Matsepe may not be misconstrued or equated with emulation. To critically juxtapose their works would be unfair, particularly because each one of them writes in his own class.

Whilst Matsepe wrote pure fiction which depicts the life of the Bakopa clan, Rafapa's novels are a hybrid between fact and fiction. Equipped with both written and oral communications about his lived experiences, one cannot miss the skilful blending together of the two in the make-up of his stories.

Several general and basic remarks may arise concerning all the views and explications above. However, we basically need to take cognisance of the fact that whilst writers do influence each other in style or language each writer is unique and views matters from a unique and individualistic perspective. It is this individuality of the writer - serving as the mirror, teacher and critic of his own society - which we are interested in. Therefore, in the quest for an objective evaluation of Rafapa's works, the perception of this thesis is that two writers may be informed by the same environment, i.e, its conditions and situations but they may not necessarily, experience and respond to the particular environment in much the same way. To be fair, and to recognize Rafapa's individuality, the focus will fall on the literariness of his creations.

1.3 STUDIES ON JRL RAFAPA

There has never been an in-depth research conducted on Rafapa save for a few honours articles which merely hint at his works and were mostly written by students of the University of the North. Among them we find:

- * **Rafapa's language in Mogwane o a Ila:** A critical literary appreciation by E.M. Mailula. It appeared in 1983. Basically, this article concerns itself with a variety of literary language aspects. Most of them are merely mentioned with very little description or explanation offered. Perhaps the author knew too little or he hid behind the length and scope restrictions usually imposed on such articles.

- * **A critical analysis of character portrayal in some of Rafapa's novels** by M.I. Badi was completed in 1991. This article too lacks in detail. Badi discusses characterization, categorizing the text characters into; "flat" and "round" characters. What is lamentable about this categorization is that, the author only succeeded in mentioning these stereotypes but falls short when it comes to defining and selecting appropriate examples from the

text in support of his assumptions.

Another observation is that Badi seems to have experienced difficulties in providing suitable and relevant examples to support his claim that Rafapa uses "the stream of consciousness" in his characterization. Failure to define this concept, to apply it and to furnish convincing examples, reveals that the author may know about the stream of consciousness as a literary term, but does not understand it nor its functions in relation to characterization.

* **Protest in Rafapa's novels** by B.N. Motubatse.

This is a fairly well planned essay which manages to expose the social maladies Rafapa wrote about. However this essay has its own pitfalls which often spoil the smooth flow of thought and arguments, the main problem being the author's constant mind-drift into unnecessary explications and the outlining of stories, instead of concentrating on Rafapa's line of protest. Be it as it may, this article was a worthwhile exercise.

1.4 BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The information on Rafapa's biography is taken from an assortment of sources. The main sources and the ones frequently quoted in this study, are the three personal letters he wrote to me dated 11 January, 30 April and 13 August 1995 respectively. Other sources include an introductory document secured from **Radio Lebowa** (Now called **Thobela FM**) introducing him as a guest speaker to **Setotolwane College of Education** students in 1990 and personal interviews with the writer himself, his former teachers, colleagues and friends, as well as book reviews .

Jacobus Ramokokobadi Lesibana Rafapa was born on February 16, 1960 at

Sandsloot, a tribal village in the jurisdiction of Potgietersrus. He is a member of the Northern Ndebele - speaking group and a son to Rev. Elias and Mrs Lydia Rachel Rafapa. As it could be deduced from his father's designation, both parents are ardent Zion Christian Church members, as such, Jacobus was brought up on Christian principles. He explains himself to be "a fourth-born in a family of nine siblings and that economically theirs is a peasant family". He is now married and blessed with three sons and a daughter.

Rafapa started his primary education in 1967 at Sandsloot Primary School completing the then primary standard six certificate in 1974 with a distinction (aggregate 'B' symbol). The "World" newspaper which eventually came to be banned under the apartheid legislation, carried Rafapa's performance story, mainly because his results were the best - among black pupils - in the whole Republic of South Africa in the then Department of Bantu Education.

From 1975 to 1979 he attended Madikana High School, Mošate Village, where he completed his high school education. Many developments occurred during his stay at Madikana. When he started at that school in 1975 he was doing 'form one', which was actually the repetition of standard six, a rule imposed on all black pupils by the apartheid government. In 1977 he repeated his standard six feat by obtaining a distinction pass in the then standard eight external examinations. In the same year, he obtained position two in the Lebowa Youth Science Olympiad, a competition normally meant for standard ten pupils, thus just missing a chance to represent Lebowa in the Youth Science Olympiad held in London, England.

What could be termed a period of mixed fortunes, commenced in 1978 while he was in standard nine. In that year he could not write both the half-yearly and the end of the year examinations due to some illness. His illness caused much controversy among both pupils, teachers and the villagers, as they came to believe that he was a psychotic case. This allegation is vehemently refuted in the

personal letters he sent me as well as in; Mogwane o a Ila, Bohwa bja Madimabe and Bowelakalana. However, the afore mentioned novels - which this study refers to as "the trilogy", do expose the fact that Rafapa did actually suffer from some mental illness. For instance, during a personal interview conducted among some of his former teachers at Mmadikana High School, on the 30 January 1995, one of them, responding to the question why Rafapa broke off his studies in 1978 - in a matter-of-fact way - promptly answered:

"Rafapa is one of the most brilliant pupils this school has ever had. However, he had his own social weaknesses, as he abused drugs and eventually became mad and had to spend the rest of that year at a mental asylum."

The alleged intake of drugs was confirmed that same afternoon by Rafapa himself during an interview we had at the Park Hotel in Potgietersrus. He explained that, like any other boy of his age then, he used to smoke dagga. He also confirmed to me that, prior to being a member of the Zion Christian Church, he used to drink a lot of beer, but refuted allegations that he abused those drugs and that he was once mad. The issue concerning allegations that he was once "mad", was once more raised in a friendly letter dated 13 August 1995 in which he says:

"One paper you showed me by an honours greenhorn falsely states that in high school I suffered a nervous breakdown. This is "not true". Dr Van der Hooft of Groothoek hospital diagnosed my problem as "stress" which led to "nervous tension" which culminated in "depression." Please avoid the untruth in your thesis."

However, contents of both the biography and the former teachers' explanation of the writer's absence from school in 1978, duly complement the statement contained in the afore mentioned honours paper. Probably the information was gleaned from Bohwa bja Madimabe in which Rafapa - through the voice of

doctor Ngake - exposes both his absence and the kind of illness responsible, in this manner:

Ke ile ka kwešwa bohloko ke ka mo batho bao ba kilego ba lwala bolwetši bja monagano ba swarwago makgwakgwa ka gona ke maloko a setšhaba. Ke ile ka re ge ke sa le morutwana wa mphato wa senyane ka babja. Bolwetši bja ntšhogatšhoga ka lebelo. E be e le nakong ya ditlhahlobo tša mafelelo a ngwaga... Ka kwa bohloko kudu ge ke ile ka tlamega go kgaotša dithuto tša ka... Madi a be a nkitimela hlogong ... (1983:60).

(I was once hurt by the manner in which those who once suffered from mental illness are badly treated by members of the community. When I was a standard nine student I fell ill. The illness quickly weakened me. It was during the end of the year examinations. I really felt the pain when I had to abandon my studies. Blood was rushing to my head ...)

Now we know that in 1978 Rafapa suffered from mental illness. Another interesting observation is the appearance of Dr Van der Hooft. He is real and was formerly the chief psychiatrist at Grootboek mental asylum (Sekutupu). He is now retired and lives in Holland. Dr Van der Hooft, features much - as a character - in both Rafapa's Mogwane o a lla and Bohwa bja Madimabe. In both novels, he is the psychiatrist dealing with "mad" characters.

Nevertheless, whether Rafapa was ever mad or suffered a nervous breakdown or suffered from any kind of mental illness, is not the main concern of this study. Ours is to explore the literariness of his works. During the interview with his former teachers, I also came to learn that, on his return to Mmadikana High School in 1979 he was automatically placed in the std 10 class instead of having to repeat std 9. The reason why this was done is said to have been for fear that should he see his peers being in std 10 whilst he was made to remain in std 9, that might cause him to worry a lot which might have rekindled his mental problems.

After matriculating, he went to the University of the North where he studied for a B.A. degree majoring in English and General linguistics. Nevertheless, his stay at the University was short-lived, as he came to endure the wrath of the University Management Council, when he was refused registration for the 1983 academic year, the reason being his involvement with the student magazine on campus called "Turflux". This hampered his progress until 1986 when he was re-registered after Prof. CH Muller, then head of the English Department, had presented a special motivation to the University Council for his reinstatement.

After obtaining his first degree, he obtained a Higher Education Diploma in 1990 and a B.A. (Honours) degree in English in 1991. Rafapa taught at the following schools: Mantutule Secondary School, George Langa High, Matladi High School where he even started a school magazine called "Matladiana", Marobathota Secondary School and from 1996 he came to be employed by Mokopane College of Education where he is teaching English.

He is the founder member of "Lekgotla la Bangwadi" (Lebadi), an organization for Northern Sotho writers which came into existence in 1977 under the chairmanship of Mr CP Senyatsi of the "Wamba" magazine fame. As a prolific writer, primarily of novels and short stories, Rafapa has thus far contributed the following literary works to Northern Sotho literature:

YEAR PUBLISHED	TITLE	PUBLISHER	GENRE
1979	<u>Leratosello</u>	JL Van Schaik	Novel
1981	<u>Mogwane o a lla</u>	JL Van Schaik	Novel
1982	<u>Tšhila ya Tsebe</u>	Educum	Short stories
1983	<u>Bohwa bja madimabe</u>	De Jager Haum	Novel
1985	<u>Maikemišetšo</u>	S.A.B.C.	Radio drama
1987	<u>Bowelakalana</u>	De Jager Haum	Novel

1991	<u>Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago</u>	Kagiso	Novel
1991	<u>Mabudutša</u>	Kagiso	Short stories
1994	<u>Northern Sotho Study Guide (std 10)</u>	Bard	Study Guide

Four of these novels have already won him five literary prizes: viz

- Bohwa bja madimabe "De Jager Haum Literary Prize" 1982.
- Leratosello "EM Ramaila Prize" 1984.
- Bowelakalana "De Jager Haum Literary Prize" and "EM Ramaila Prize" 1986.
- Diphiri tša Soweto tše di Gagolago "EM Ramaila Prize" 1993.

Baphakamonola was published in 1996, a few months after the conception of this study. Therefore it is not included in the list of the five novels this thesis aims to study.

1.5 SYNOPTIC SURVEY OF THE FIVE NOVELS TO BE STUDIED

1.5.1 Leratosello

It has already been mentioned that 1978 was a year of mixed fortunes in the life of JRL Rafapa. The reason for this was that, on the one hand, he came to suffer from what he calls "mental depression", whilst on the other, this became the year in which he made an indelible mark in the Northern Sotho literary circles when Van Schaik publishers published his first novel, Leratosello. This first endeavour at creative writing came to be a booming success. It enjoyed a wide readership and was prescribed for both high school and tertiary students. Its success culminated in winning him the coveted *EM Ramaila prize* in 1984.

This novel concerns itself with a love affair between Kgaladi, a commoner from gaSeroboka, and Senoinoi, the most beautiful princess and daughter to king Sephuma - King Seroboka's rival. This love story exposes conflicting interests between the old and the new generations, as traditionally, a love affair such as this one is doomed from its inception, as commoners and kings are not allowed to intermarry. Kgaladi and Senoinoi were very much aware of this cultural belief and the consequences of their deliberate ignorance thereof. Therefore it came as no surprise when their failure to comply with this traditional norm came to cause a lot of suffering and many fierce battles, loss of both limb and life as well as the destruction of both the kingdoms of Seroboka and his rival, Sephuma. Kgaladi and Senoinoi survived and came to establish a family, free from traditional and cultural shackles.

Commenting about Leratosello as his first initiative at writing, Rafapa says:

One reason why I wrote Leratosello was because I found writers of Northern Sotho novels lacking. I wrote because I wanted to achieve what these writers, including Matsepe, had failed to achieve ... I wrote Leratosello to write about love which not a single Northern Sotho novelist had successfully done. In Leratosello you read for the first time in Northern Sotho, a love story that explores love introspectively, intensively, sensuously, psychologically and politically. All other minor themes to love are subordinated and, or tangential (Letter: 13 August 1995).

He continues to say (ibid)

Motuku in Morweši and Leratorato had intended to write about love but had instead written about cultural clashes and generation gaps between parents and their children and how these impact on their marital engagements. Matsepe wrote, always about *bogoši* in the dull anachronistic sense. Where you come across love affairs in his works, these are subordinated to simply enrich his handling of the theme of *bogoši*.

Interesting though regrettable, is the realization that Rafapa seems to have discarded this initial intention of writing love stories, as soon as he finished writing Leratosello. This is quite evident in the four novels sequel to Leratosello as they treat divergent themes. Nevertheless, we expected him to pursue his otherwise two-pronged dream, viz: to quench the love story thirst in Northern Sotho literature, and to prove his assumption that prolific Northern Sotho writers have failed to exploit the love theme satisfactorily. Perhaps his intentions were thwarted by the mental illness which came to bedevil him.

In conclusion let it suffice to say that Leratosello concentrates on two main issues, viz: Generation gaps and romance affairs. It shares most of the characteristic features of the English romantic story. According to Abrams (1981:119) the English romance story has as its ancestors, both the chivalric romance of the Middle ages and the Gothic novel of the eighteenth century. He perceives the romance story as being characterized by the following features:

- The development of the Protagonists.
They are sharply discriminated against as heroes and villains, masters and victims. The principal character is often set in the historical past with the atmosphere being such that it suspends the reader's expectations based on everyday experiences.

- The plot.
The plot of the romance story emphasized adventure and it was frequently cast in the form of a quest for an ideal or the pursuit of an enemy. Events in such a story are often said to project symbolically the primal desires, hopes and conflicts in the mind of the protagonist.

Macdonald (1977:1172) narrowly defines such a story as fiction which deals with love affairs or any affair characterized by romantic atmosphere or feeling.

Therefore the characteristic features of the romance story expounded above, will be dealt with in subsequent chapters when Leratosello is discussed.

1.5.2 Mogwane o a Ila

This is Rafapa's second novel published in 1981, approximately two years after Leratosello. It is the first to signal the beginning of an inwardly directed phase in the author's life. Its main focus is on the principal character, Mmadikila - on how she violated the cultural norms and values and thus came to evoke the wrath of the ancestral spirits. Her transgressions affected her family and eventually she died a violent death.

Married to Ntlheke Tibang, Mmadikila came to divorce him because of a murder incident. Lesibana Tibang was Ntlheke's elder brother and a psychopath. One day, in a fit of rage, he destroyed his family including his parents with an axe. The only relatives spared the ill-fate were Ntlheke, his wife and their two children. The murder served as an alibi for Mmadikila to divorce her husband, Ntlheke. This happened irrespective of protracted entreatments from her husband, her parents and the community at large. She claimed that she was afraid that Lesibana, who had since been sent to a mental asylum in Pretoria, would one day return and murder the remaining family members. Though she had a sound argument, she was violating the cultural norm which forbids divorce where murder is cited as the cause.

Such a transgression is regarded as an abomination and an omen of evil. Nevertheless, Mmadikila abandoned her husband and went back home to her parents, where she eventually became a prostitute and later married Seloma Mašiane, a teacher at the local school. Mmadikila's second marriage was doomed from its inception. First, she lost her son Podile of whom it is said that he was the pride of the entire Dithabaneng community because of his intelligence at school. Podile died of a severe mental illness after his father,

Ntlheke refuted pleas and arguments from his former-in-laws, that Podile could be cured of his illness if Ntlheke could perform ritual rights on the grave of Podile's grandfather, Mpaleratha.

Secondly, Podile's younger sister, Mmalehu, went back to stay with her father, Ntlheke. Before she went away, she wrote a note wherein she told her mother and stepfather that she was going back to live with her biological father. Thirdly, Mmadikila's marriage to Seloma failed to produce a child and thus they ended up adopting a child whom they named Kholofelo. At the end she suffered the very same fate she divorced Ntlheke for, because Thongwa, Seloma's younger brother, developed mental problems and eventually stabbed her to death with a knife.

Mogwane o a Ila is the only novel which has never won Rafapa a prize or been prescribed at educational institutions. He cites both the political and racial overtones as the main causes for its neglect by educational institutions. He claims that:

In Mogwane o a Ila there is an incident in which a tribal gathering at a chief's kraal taunts and insults a white nature conservationist. They call the Blackman accompanying the Whiteman Judas (biblical allusion) - "sell-out". The Whiteman is rejected by tribesmen because he comes with a message from the white government that says blacks must stop chopping trees for firewood and hunting game for relish. The white ranger and "Judas" leave fuming with rage, threatening to come back with an army of armed security police to shoot the people, thereby causing rebellion. In this way I protest against imposed colonial "civilization" (letter: 13 August 1995).

In the succeeding paragraph (ibid) he cites an incident in which two men engage in a fist fight:

One man is black, the other is white. Now, the Blackman defeats the Whiteman to the extent that the Whiteman wets and soils himself. I was politically trying to foretell that in

South Africa's liberation struggle, the Blackman shall finally overcome. One white member of the Department of Education and Training (DET) made sure that this novel is never prescribed for school use ... Van Schaick publishers even asked me to edit-out these portions, at one time.

1.5.3 Bohwa bja Madimabe

This novel was published in 1983, the same year as the author's first volume of short stories, Tšhila ya tsebe. It is Rafapa's third novel. The novel is concerned with the detection of the causes of Molahlegi's mental illness, the chief aim being an endeavour to find a solution to her problem.

Beset by his wife's illness, Majagohle Lebelo junior, the husband to Molahlegi and heir to the farm on which events in this novel unfold, invited doctor Ngake, a famous psychiatrist from South Africa, to come to his wife's rescue. It was while he was conducting investigations into the root cause of Molahlegi's illness that Ngake came to discover that the causes were more complex than he had thought them to be. Molahlegi's illness was traditionally and culturally bound. She could not be cured by a medically trained person nor through chemotherapy.

Her problems emanated from a curse, thus she was being tormented by an evil spirit, said to be that of a murdered farm-hand called Jakopo and his son called Malose. To survive, she needed spiritual cleansing by the supernatural powers.

According to this story, Lebelo Junior's grandfather, Majagohle Lebelo, after whom he was named, is said to have been a cruel man. He was hated by many people, particularly the farm-hands. However there was, among them, his favourite man-servant called Jakopo. When Jakopo married, Majagohle helped him in paying his bridal fees. Matters took a turn-a-bout on the day Jakopo celebrated his marriage. That evening, Majagohle and his group of drunken male friends visited Jakopo's place of abode. Mesmerized by the beauty of Jakopo's

wife, he raped her. When Jakopo protested, Majagohle chopped his head off with an axe. That is when Jakopo's torsoless head came to curse him.

It is said that as a result of that rape incident, Jakopo's wife became pregnant and gave birth to a baby boy who was named Malose. He grew up on Lebelo's farm but later died. Rumour had it that Jakopo's son was a ghost and was always seen traversing Lebelo's farm. On the other hand it was not long before Jakopo's curse manifested itself. Majagohle Lebelo junior - grandson and heir to Majagohle the rapist - married Molahlegi and came to live with her on that inherited farm.

One evening Lebelo was unceremoniously summoned to their bedroom by the screams of his wife. She had retired to their bedroom earlier than her husband, only to be raped. The rapist first appeared to be a whirlwind which entered their bedroom through the window. It then transformed into a long figure which became a huge animal that emitted a repugnant smell. During the rape, Molahlegi could not alert other members of the family as her voice mysteriously could not come out.

After these misfortunes, Molahlegi did not only become a psychotic case but pregnant as well - just like it happened with Jakopo's wife. Not getting a cure for his wife, Lebelo's only hope and trust came to rest on doctor Ngake. Unfortunately Ngake could not help in spite of his expertise on mental illnesses because of the supernatural being responsible. Molahlegi remained mentally deranged until the day she gave birth to a baby boy, who was identical to Malose, the son of slain Jakopo. Molahlegi died immediately after the delivery of her child. On seeing what had happened to his wife, Lebelo junior - who had always hidden the truth about the source of his wife's illness - committed suicide, by shooting himself. Thus Jakopo's curse was fulfilled.

Most of the characters peopling this novel are either suffering from some kind of mental illness or they once suffered from such, for example doctor Ngake explains himself to Lebelo junior as having once suffered from a mental illness which on recuperation aroused his interest to become a psychiatrist (cf. p.59-63 of this novel). In this novel too there are parallels which can be drawn between the text and the writer's lived experiences concerning mental illnesses.

Another point worth mentioning is that this novel, Bohwa bya Madimabe, evolves from Rafapa's short story, contained in the volume Tšhila ya tsebe, called "Dithuru tša bogadi". Literally the title means, small animals kept in hiding and used for witchcraft by the in-laws. The subject-matter of these two stories is the same, the only difference being the naming of characters.

1.5.4 Bowelakalana

Mpitiki Legodi is the principal character in this novel. He is portrayed as a thirteen year old lad who, like a weathered tree after the winter season, begins to show some life by growing green leaves. The reason being that Mpitiki was born a psychopath and ever since his birth he was incarcerated in a mental asylum at Phedišang hospital.

Under normal circumstances one would have expected Mpitiki at the age of thirteen to talk and act like all other boys of his age. However, matters in this story are different; for it is only now, at the age of thirteen, that Mpitiki Legodi starts to show signs of becoming conscious of his surroundings in an intelligible manner.

It is said that thirteen years ago, Mmaahwile - Mpitiki's mother - was rushed to Phedišang hospital by unknown people after she had been severely assaulted by an uncle, Makobe, with whom she lived. At the time of the assault, Mmaahwile was due to give birth to a baby-boy. The assault caused her a lot of

internal damage which also affected the foetus. She was certified dead on arrival at Phedišang hospital. Fortunately the doctors managed to save the foetus which the hospital staff came to name Mpitiki.

As misfortunes never come singly, Mpitiki did not only lose his mother but, he was also diagnosed a psychopath. With time, Mpitiki's mental disorders came to be healed. That he has gained consciousness of the reality, is revealed by the constant, inquisitive questions he asked his psychiatrist, doctor Matšato, concerning his origin, his relatives, the abnormal behaviour of the mentally ill incarcerated with him in the asylum, and many other questions.

It was mostly the unanswered questions about his origin and relatives he has never seen or heard of which ultimately forced him to escape from the asylum even though he did not know where he was heading to.

His escape from the asylum, which actually served as his only home and sanctuary, exposed him to many realities of life. For example, one day he witnessed a friend being mauled and killed by a leopard. Shortly thereafter, one of the whitemen he was working for, assaulted him badly for drinking milk without permission. To Mpitiki this was no reason to be punished for. Nevertheless that made him realize that he could not continue living with such people. Fearing for his life he abandoned his work and became a vagrant.

Despite the many problems he encountered after abandoning his employment, Mpitiki told himself that he would not go back to Phedišang hospital. Perhaps he thought that he might be put back into the asylum because of his irresponsible actions, and that might have been construed as denoting that he is still mentally not sound. Fortunately his wandering days were not to be long. One day some white priests found him wandering on the road towards Lydenburg. They gave him a lift and left him at the police station in Lydenburg whereupon his place of origin and relatives were traced and subsequently he was re-united with them.

The fact that Mpitiki was born with mental disorders but came to be healed reveals that Rafapa has this notion that mental illness can be cured and that chemotherapy is not the only solution. Given a chance, such an illness may naturally fade away.

However, it is interesting to note that the three novels sequel to Leratosello, deal with more or less the same type of characters, i.e. characters plagued by psychotic problems, weird characters in weird environments and situations characterized by inexplicable events and mysterious endings. Therefore, these novels - Mogwane o a Ila, Bohwa bja Madimabe and Bowelakalana - may usefully be grouped together into a trilogy.

As has already been mentioned above, the trilogy forms an inwardly directed phase of Rafapa's life and his writing career. Although these novels treat divergent themes, their similarity lies in their main preoccupation which is the sub-theme on the mentally ill and the stigma usually attached to such unfortunate sufferers.

Another distinct feature of the trilogy is its didacticism. Herein Rafapa sounds like a desperate preacher whose main objective is to educate and to convert the ignorant about psychosis. He wants them to be aware that psychosis is but one of the social maladies and a social reality. Where possible, psychotic problems can be cured, depending on the relationship between the sufferer and his family, relatives, the community at large and one's faith in God.

Rafapa's "sermons" culminate in Bowelakalana. Herein, he sounds like one who has finally purged himself of the stigma of being labelled a psychopath. He also sounds like he has finally convinced the ignorant about the possibilities of psychosis being cured by chemotherapy or by other means.

In Bowelakalana, the reader witnesses the development of the mind and

character of the protagonist, Mpitiki, through the passage of time, mysteries, varied life experiences which include a spiritual crisis, culminating in maturity and the recognition of the self.

1.5.5 Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago

This is the last novel of the five this study aims to explore. Psychosis or characters beset by such ailments do not appear in this novel. Actually, Rafapa seems to be experimenting with the historical novel.

This novel concentrates on a poverty-stricken family whose head, Kgakgathu, did not care about its well-being. Kgakgathu's ancestry is traced to a Venda royal family of King Mphofi. Kingship disputes forced them to abandon their ancestral land in Venda and they came to settle among the Bakone people. After gaining refugee status, the family went on to make drastic changes. They changed the family name and also adopted the Bakone totem *tlhantlhagane* - "the siskin bird". All this was done to disguise their identity, since they feared that those who usurped their kingship in Venda might trace and destroy them.

Events in this novel unfold through the naive thoughts and actions of Molahlegi, Kgakgathu's youngest son. The lad finds it difficult to comprehend why their family had to suffer so much that at times they went to bed with empty stomachs. He could not understand why his father, Kgakgathu, strong and healthy as he was could not, like other men, go and seek employment so that he could maintain his family.

Molahlegi's favourite pastime was to fantasize about being a powerful leader or a king. He was obsessed with the pomp and glory which goes with such positions and many other matters concerning leadership. What evoked all these thoughts was a story about their ancestry, once told by his elder brother, Bjelele.

Bjelele told him that they were the grandchildren of Mphofi, the king of Vendaland. Their father, Kgakgathu, was supposed to be the king after Mphofi but now they were living in hiding among the Bakone people, because the family had been deprived of its kingship. Those who had deposed them were still searching for their family in order to destroy it. He was further told that as they were now living in secrecy, their father would be very angry with them if he came to know that they ever talked about Mphofi.

Whenever Molahlegi thought about his brother's story, and compared it to the poor conditions of his family, he grew more and more impatient and frustrated. Nevertheless, Bjelele had told him that if he, Molahlegi, wanted to know more about their ancestry he should consult their uncle Mphoši. Unfortunately Mphoši was always reluctant to be engaged in such discussion. Several visits to his home, only succeeded in making him more elusive. Molahlegi became more and more desperate as he could not solicit any satisfactory explanation from his uncle. Perhaps Mphoši thought it worthless to burden the young man with such important family secrets. As a responsible adult, Mphoši might have realized that his nephew was merely driven by childish inquisitiveness. Even if he could be told the truth, there was surely nothing he could do about such matters.

However, Molahlegi's worries were soon to be answered positively when his father fell ill unexpectedly. Afraid that he might die with the secret about his origin and correct identity, Kgakgathu publicly exposed himself. His people from Venda came to fetch him so that he could go and reclaim his throne. As he was already old, he instead chose Molahlegi to take his place. Thus Molahlegi came to accomplish his childhood dream of one day becoming a powerful leader of the people.

In a comment which is actually a revelation of both the lived experiences and the relationship which normally exists between the writer and his creations, Rafapa says:

Less significantly, this novel is also slightly autobiographical. The Rafapa clan are originally of a Venda royal family. My name is Ramokokobadi. I was named after my father's grandfather. Ramokokobadi only came to stay among the Bapedi and Ndebeles after a relative in Venda, Chief Mulaudzi, had usurped his kingship. Rafapa was originally Mulaudzi. My great grandfather, King Ramokokobadi Mulaudzi, changed the surname to Rafapa so that he could not be trekked down and killed, as he was fleeing from Venda (Letter: 13 August 1995).

He further says that (ibid):

Before Ramokokobadi Mulaudzi and his people could be in Venda, they came from Zimbabwe. That is why the Rafapa people today are praised as Bakgalaka. Our totem is "mosela wa pudi" (the goat's tail) so that we are praisefully called "Mailamoselawapudi" (those who shun the goat's tail). My father Elias Rafapa, even today calls me "Kgoši ya Matswetla" (King of the Vhavenda) when he is in high spirits. This is because I was named after my great-grandfather who died a deposed chief of a Vhavenda clan.

The writer's explications about his ancestry, supports the assumption that this novel is Rafapa's attempt at writing a historical novel. Its historical preoccupations and other reasons advanced in the preceding paragraphs, aptly qualifies it as a historical novel of which Abrams (1981:121) opines thus:

What is specified as the historical novel not only takes its setting and at least some of its chief characters and events from history, but develops these elements with careful attention to the known facts, and also makes the historical events and issues important to the central narrative, even when the protagonists are fictional rather than historical characters.

1.6 LITERARY APPROACHES AND METHOD

To make a critical evaluation of Rafapa's novels is, in this study, viewed as a stylistic technique according to which the novels' merits and demerits are assessed. These novels are mostly the communicative utterances from the life experiences of the writer himself. Through these utterances, the writer appeals to society, which comprises his readers, for many other reasons. For instance, he points out injustices or evils that exist in society and challenges the reader to seek social or political reforms.

Ngara makes the following statement concerning the relationship between the writer as the source and bearer of the communicative experience, and his readers:

A work of art, like other language acts, is a communicative utterance produced by the author and received by the reader. The link between the author and the reader is the art form itself (1982:14).

Ngara's statement is understood to emphasize the importance of these three communicative components, viz. the writer, the text and the reader;

- The author or the writer is, in this study, seen as the source of the communication. He is the bearer of the message which comprises life experiences, which he aims to share with others, his readers.
- The text is the means, the tool the writer employs to convey his life experiences, the communicative utterances, to whoever comes to read them.
- The reader is the receiver and the target of the writer's communications. As the writer appeals to his readers for many other reasons, they - the readers' responses - are their own prerogative.

No appraisal or evaluation of a writer's creations could be complete if one of these three components of the communication process is left out. Therefore, our approach to this study would be comprehensive. Different approaches and methods will be employed to facilitate our discussions. As there are quite a good number of approaches and methods towards the study of literature, we find it imperative to discuss briefly some of those which are relevant to this study.

1.6.1 The historical-biographical approach

Swanepoel (1990:4) quotes Guerin et al, as saying that:

This approach saw the literary work, if not elusively, then for the greater part, as a reflection of the author's life and times; of the life and times of the characters.

This approach emphasizes the importance of that cohesive relationship which exists between the writer and his creations. The life experiences which serve as the main sources of information to the author's literary works and the development of his creativity, are held supreme. The sources may emanate from the author's family, age, race or his social environment in general. Links formed, and contributions by all these elements in influencing the author's writing, are very important.

1.6.2 Marxist approach

Basically this approach concerns itself with economics, the society and its history as well as the revolution. Pertaining to literature, Marxism explains literary works in relation to society. According to Serudu (1991:18) Marx himself is said, never to have ever formulated a complete literary theory. His references to literature are said to have been confined to a few suggestive but brief comments in passing. His opinion was that literature should be analysed in characteristically historical materialistic terms, the reason being that literature is an integral part

of the society which informs it, and in turn rests on an economic foundation.

This literary theory sees literature as a social product, depicting the economic standing and conditions, the history and the overall social experiences and awareness of the community at large.

1.6.3 Structuralism

Ryan and Van Zyl's comments about this approach, which is often referred to as the analytical approach, are that:

When structuralists examine particular works, they typically do so in order to exemplify general principles of structuralism. Poetics not criticism, is the goal of structuralism; and this goal is validated not by the capacity of structuralism to generate superior interpretations - but rather by what it can reveal about literature as a human institution, ultimately by its capacity to shed light on two of the most profound and fundamental human activities: the production of verbal art and the production of meaning (1982:57).

This extract reveals that "text" and its "meaning" are the main points of focus in this approach. The critic sees a literary work of art as a coherent and intricate structure or organism. His main task, is the recognition of the connections which exist between literature and the external world, i.e. the social world (experience) serving as the informant of the writer's craftsmanship.

1.6.4 The pragmatic approach

Pragmatism deals with events in the light of practical lessons or applications. In other words, literary properties are defined according to human experience and values. The reader's response is very important here, with the society's value systems serving as the writer's watch-dogs. Buell's observations are that, a critic who adopts this approach, besides merely reporting what his likes or dislikes are

about a literary work of art, is bound to ask questions such as:

Why does this work move me as it does? Is my reaction typical or eccentric? What kind of emotional effect, in general, does literature have on people? Why do people read literature at all? (1973:27).

What can be deduced from these questions is the fact that this approach is purely reader-oriented, focusing mainly on the relationship between the literary work of art and its audience, the readers.

1.6.5 The comparative method

It is imperative and essential to give an account of the nature of the comparative method in this study, the main reason being that, in the course of our discussions, some literary aspects being discussed would need to be compared.

C.F. Swanepoel traces the history of comparative literature to the year 1827 when the German author and scholar, Johan Wolfgang von Goethe, postulated his views of world literature. During that period, comparative literature is said to have been a wide field of study as it was an integral part of many approaches (1990:14). However, Fokkema - also in Swanepoel, (1990:42-43) - came to narrow this method by distinguishing various levels of comparison within a literature, i.e.:

... from the level of one text, comparative investigation could proceed to the works of one author and the literary code of the author's works. From there it could move to all texts of a particular period with its code. On yet another level all texts of a specific genre could be compared and the common code be established. Over and above these, comparison could be carried out within the texts of one literature. The literature within a shared cultural tradition and finally, the literatures from different traditions.

The suggested first level of comparison is relevant to this thesis, as it is in concurrence with our aim, which is to explore the novels of one writer - JRL Rafapa. In support of our aim, Diaches (1984:251) says:

Evaluative criticism tends to use the comparative method as a device for establishing degrees of excellence.

Let us conclude all these explications with Serudu's noble opinion, which befits the main thought of this thesis:

A study of any literary work will be rewarding if its social and cultural backgrounds are understood by the reader or the critic (1987:33).

1.7 SCOPE AND COMPOSITION OF CHAPTERS

The scope of this thesis confines itself to the exploration of the literariness of Rafapa's first five novels written between 1979-1991. The composition of the chapters will be as follows:

- Chapter 2 will consider the relationship between the writer, Rafapa, and his characters who are actually the verisimilitude of the writer's fellow human beings. The power that the writer has over his creations, his characters, will be explored. His own position within the narrative as well as the main types of characters he uses will also be looked into, using examples picked randomly from the five novels being studied. The main aim of using such examples will be for illustrative purposes only.
- Chapter 3 focuses on themes of preoccupation. Besides various views expounded by various scholars on this literary aspect, a variety of literary means Rafapa adopts in exposing his themes will be discussed. We will also look into the way in which the writer uses themes as didactic tools to teach and to educate the society at large.

- Chapter 4 will consider place and time as the most important aspects of setting in the story. In our discussion of the aspect of place, the focus will be on space as a place of action and space as acting or thematized place. The discussion of the time aspect will focus on the convoluted time and chronological time. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the functions of setting in the narrative.
- Chapter 5 will concentrate on "Rafapa and his idiolect", the main reason being that the written word is the only tool through which a writer is able to communicate with his readers. As such, emphasis will be on the choice of words and their usage, the sentence and the paragraph.
- Chapter 6 will explore the use of non-prose forms such as the interior monologue, the dialogue and the praise poem.
- Chapter 7 will be a recapitulation of the whole thesis and it contains a postulatory statement about future research projects.

CHAPTER 2

THE WRITER AND HIS CHARACTERS: A QUESTION OF POWER

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this chapter is to investigate the relationship that exists between the writer, Rafapa, and the characters that populate his novels. Furthermore, the chapter will explore various but specific narrative strategies he uses in his novels, as instances of character portrayal.

Although the main approach here will be essentially phenomenological, it will have sociological and biographical implications since literature is a human exercise born out of the life experiences of a single individual, the writer. Observed from a sociological perspective, a literary artist has an important role to fulfil within his or her society. He or she is the mirror and the critic of the given society. Being part and parcel of a given unit, a society, the writer is endowed with that extra civic duty of being the conscious observer of the day to day human interactions and responses, favourable or otherwise, to the circumstances in which people find themselves. It is also through these important functions, that intimate relations between writers and their respective societies are established.

During a conference on "Commonwealth Literature" held at Leeds University in September 1964, Donatus Nwoga asked Chinua Achebe to indicate what he thinks is the duty, the privilege and responsibility of the writer in a society. On the surface, such a question may appear to need a long-winded answer, particularly because of the composite elements of the request viz. duty, privilege and responsibility. However, Achebe managed to circumvent the long explications by giving two poignant yet comprehensive answers.

At first he explained that he perceives the writer as the society's "teacher". Teaching, not in the narrow sense of helping people to pass examinations but teaching which in the wider sense, has a deeper meaning. Reflectively he explained as follows:

What I think a novelist can teach is something very fundamental, namely to indicate to his readers, to put it crudely, that we in Africa did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans (Duerden and Pieterse, 1972:7)

Secondly (ibid) he cautioned fellow African writers against complacency. He warned that as teachers of the society, they should not take the society for granted, because as he said,

I think we might be neglecting our proper function if we take anything for granted instead of thinking what exactly is our society, what are its needs, what can I do, and what can I contribute.

Achebe's comprehensive answers, are sentimental and clearly expose his understanding of the profound bonding which exists between the writer and his society. Nevertheless, his answers go further to indicate that, as literature is written by, for and about people, the writer should not take advantage of the high standing accorded him or her by the society, irresponsibly. The writer's works should display responsibility and sensibility towards the norms and values of the society being mirrored.

Responsibility goes hand in hand with honesty, truth and clear conscience. Moreover, it should be noted that writing is the product of consciousness.

Reflecting about the writer's conscious acts, Abrams quotes the Polish theorist Roman Ingarden, as saying:

... a literary work of art originates in the intentional acts of consciousness of its author - "intentional" in the phenomenological sense that they are directed toward an

object. These intentional acts are recorded in a text, and so make it possible for a reader to re-experience the work in his own consciousness (Abrams, 1981:133).

Roman Ingarden's comments above, express the fact that a literary writer's observations together with his writings, are intentional but purposeful, conscious acts. Moreover the conscious comments appearing in literary works concern human beings and their disposition. The main objective is to highlight certain social aspects which concern man's own existence.

Concluding a speech in which he quite categorically spelt out the role of the writer in society, Wole Soyinka castigatingly called upon the African writer to rise and act:

... as the record of the mores and experience of his society
and as the voice of vision in his own time (1993:20).

The centrality or the importance and the impact of the writer, artist, in society, may perhaps be summed up appropriately in Achebe's profound thoughts on writers and their works of art:

"I still insist that art is, and was always, in the service of man. Our ancestors created the myths and legends and told their stories for human purpose (including, no doubt, the excitation of wonder and pure delight); they made their sculptures in wood and terracotta, stone and bronze to serve the needs of their times. Their artists lived and moved and had their being in society, and created their works for the good of the society" (Killam, 1983:viii).

The writer's day to day observations of the environment, people's preoccupations and interactions, constitute a body of life experiences, here seen as the matrix from which the writer's literary works of art are extracted and textualized. The subject matter may, among other things, be based on geographic, health, economic or political conditions, depending on that which the writer chooses to bring to his readers' attention. What is written about is in many

instances old information but defamiliarized to suit the present, with readers being the ones to read and to interpret that which has been written and said about their own existence, thus re-experiencing life either positively or otherwise or seeing matters from a different and new perspective. After all, literature is reality in disguise.

As the repository of his society's life story, its observer, interpreter and mediator, the writer does not only create the text but also the agents. These agents serve as the vehicles or the means of transmission. In other words, agents are the writer's means of effective communication of his textualizations. In literary circles, "agents" are often referred to as "characters".

The two terms, "agent" and "character" are often confused to be synonyms. In reality, the dictionary meaning of an "agent" is a person or thing that exerts power or produces an effect, whilst a "character" is a person in a novel, play etcetera. The definition of the agent is inclusive, as it refers to both the animate and the inanimate. Alexander Gelly's observation in this regard is that:

The structuralists, taking their lead from Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*, focused their work initially on the more schematic forms of narrative, and sought to limit the concept of character strictly to that of an agent or participant with respect to define "character [le personnage] not as a being [Un 'être'], but as a participant" (1987:60).

The structuralist view of the concept "character" can well be juxtaposed with the view held by the narratologists, here represented by Mike Bal, on the literary term "actor". Arguing from a functional perspective, he proclaims that:

... I have constantly used the term actor. I did so because I wished to include the various acting entities in the broadest possible term. The term covers a larger area than a more specific term could do. In other words, a dog, a machine, could act as an actor (1985:79).

“Performance” is the common denominator in the two quotations above, because of the fact that both the agent and the actor are participants in the narrative processes. Both are equated to the “character” since they both have the capacity to perform functions of the character in the narrative. That being the case, the term ‘character’ becomes a generalization.

To clear the confusion surrounding these two terms and to put matters in their rightful perspective, the term “character(s)” will in the context of this study, as argued from a sociological point of view, refer to the writer’s imaginary person(s), endowed with human attributes. After all, characters in a narrative are understood to be the verisimilitude of ourselves, the people, as we co-exist within the frame-work of human experience (Fenson and Kritzer, 1966:18).

2.2 THE CONCEPT “CHARACTER”

Literature is written by, for and about people. A story without a character(s) is not a story at all but a body without a soul. Characters occupy a central position in literature and above all, they serve as the pivot of all the literary preoccupations. In other words, we cannot talk of the writer’s works, while excluding the characters that populate them. Roberts and Jacobs perceive character in literature generally, and in fiction specifically as:

... an extended verbal representation of a human being, the inner self that determines thought, speech and behaviour (1987:119).

In support of the above theorists is Abrams who takes the definition a step further and defines character in specific terms. Instead of referring to characters as verbal representations, he views them to be:

... persons presented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with moral and dispositional qualities that are expressed in what they say - the dialogue - and by what they do - the action. The

grounds in a character's temperament and moral nature, for his speech and actions constitute his motivation (1981:20).

We comprehend the preceding views to reveal the fact that although the characters speak and act like real people, in essence they are mere verbal representations of live people. They are a facsimile of human beings with all their good and bad traits, and above all, they are the writer's personal creations who,

... in a novel, can be regarded as agents through whose nature, actions and interactions, the novelist signals the meaning, or the theme or the "message" of his work (Serudu, 1987:329).

The above quotation highlights two salient points about a character, i.e. its nature and function in the narrative. Commenting on the function of a character, Makgamatha observes that characters in the Northern Sotho narrative play:

... the role of a connecting thread that helps the reader to orient himself/herself amid the numerous and various details, as well as that of a means of classing and ordering particular motives in the narrative. This functional status of character not only promotes (in the reader) awareness of the persistent struggle between good and evil (which is usually portrayed in the narrative) but also reflects on the didactic pursuits of the narrative in general (1992: 84).

Harvey agrees with both Serudu and Makgamatha about the nature and function of the character, but goes a step further and adds a third element, namely, the relationship between the character and the text. He observes that in this relationship, characters are:

... the vehicles by which all the most interesting questions are raised; they evoke our beliefs, sympathies, revulsions; they incarnate the moral vision of the world inherent in the total novel. In a sense they are end products; they are what the novel exists for; it exists to reveal them (1966:56).

The view that the text (novel) exists for and is there to reveal characters, is a truism that should not be over-emphasized. After all, stories only exist where both the text, which comprises the events, and existents - characters - occur (Chatman, 1978:113).

Nevertheless, Harvey (1966:56) warns that even though characters are regarded as highly important components in this relationship, it would be unwise of literary practitioners to generalize about other elements - writer, text - as each one of them is seen as existing individually and thus demands special consideration.

Whilst speaking of relationships, it should be borne in mind that both the text and the characters are creations of the writer. Both emanate from the impressions that time and society have imprinted on the writer's mind. As such, both can legitimately be attributed to him. In this master-servant relationship, the writer is in a powerful position wherein he holds sway over these creations, particularly over the characters.

In the quest to draw a convincing picture of the social conditions that nurtured him, the writer's powerful position makes it possible for him to create and to manipulate his characters in such a manner that through their actions and interlocutions his intended messages are propagated accordingly. In other words, the writer has the sole power, control and licence to create and to destroy characters when and if they are no more of consequence to his will and purpose.

The writer does not only create but he also selects, organizes and manipulates his characters at will. Through skilful manipulation of the characters' actions and interlocutions, characters should be convincing enough as real people. Moreover the characters in the narrative do not only represent an illusion but also serve as the writer's means of carrying on a dialogue with his society - the readers.

The creation of characters as heroes and heroines, opponents and supporters, is guided by the writer's will and purpose with his writings. The same will and purpose applies to his character depiction and portrayal.

Examining Rafapa's art as a novelist, particularly his ability to choose and to create simple but unusual characters, is intriguing. His style of character creation enables him to create characters who are virtually real, i.e. characters with real human traits and personalities the reader can readily identify with and recognize as the next-door neighbour, a friend, an acquaintance, a family member, etcetera. These creations are simultaneously there to fulfil the writer's principal objective, which is to enable his readers to understand and to experience real people in real life situations.

Common characters found in Rafapa's novels are actually the conventional stereotypes comprising: heroes, opponents and supporters.

2.3 THE CONVENTIONAL STEREOTYPES

On reading Rafapa's novels, one is immediately struck by these simply plotted stories, occupied by characters who, through their actions and interlocations, we are able to recognize as heroes, opponents and supporters. In these stories the relationship of these three types of characters is exclusively characterized by the heroes and heroines being always pitted against those who oppose them, whilst each group is backed by its supporters. Opponents may be fellowmen or the socio-cultural forces whose sole mandate seems to be aimed at thwarting the hero's ambitions. As this depiction is important to our discussion, this chapter will in subsequent paragraphs, focus on the relationship between these three main character types Rafapa preoccupies himself with. To make the discussion of these stereotypes easier, each novel will be treated separately. We shall begin our discussion with the novel, Leratosello.

2.3.1 Leratosello

Leratosello is a novel about many conflicts: conflicts between families, conflicts between tribes, individuals, parents and their children, and conflicts between individuals and their traditional lore. In this novel, the whole cycle of conflict pivots on a love affair between Kgaladi, a commoner from King Seroboka of gaSeroboka and princess Senoinoi, the daughter of King Sephuma of gaSephuma.

Kgaladi and Senoinoi are the heroes of this novel. Kgaladi's quest to marry Senoinoi is a cradle for conflict. His quest was doomed from inception. As a commoner, Kgaladi is socially and culturally not the relevant suitor for Senoinoi. As a commoner he is culturally bound to marry another commoner like himself. The same applies to Senoinoi. She is a princess, as such, she is being groomed to be the wife of a prince with whom she is supposed to rule.

We observe with interest Rafapa's deliberate mismatch of lovers, deliberate, because it is likely to result in the whipping up of emotions which would eventually lead to violent explosion of tempers and conflict among individuals, families and nations. It would appear the writer did this deliberately to give momentum to the development of the plot of this novel and to lay bare its theme. Love knows no bounds and cannot, unfortunately, humble itself to the dictates of the mores of the society. That can be detected from Senoinoi's unwavering, profound feelings for Kgaladi.

“Moratiwa, ke duma ge nka be re tla dulela ruri gona mo, ka wona mokgwa wo, re bolela ditaba tšona tša mohuta wo. Le tlala e be e ka se ntshware. Mogau o be o tla ntle phaphi. Tšohle di be di tla ntle lekekema. Moratiwa, ke duma gore le mohla re hwago nkabe re tla hwa mmogo gore ke se tlo jewa ke bodutu ge ke tomatomega ke nnoši tseleng ya petleke ya go ya gaModimo, gore re upše re sepedišane tsela. Moratiwa, ke a go rata” (1979:5).

(“My love, I wish we could stay here forever, in this manner,

discussing matters of this nature. I would not even feel hunger. Thirst would pass me by. Everything would pass me by the side. Darling, I wish that the day we die we would die together, so that I should not be lonely when I walk alone on the wide path leading to God's place, so that we could keep each other company. Beloved' I love you".)

The above sentimental words clearly reflect Senoinoi's feelings of love for Kgaladi. Her exaggerated pronouncements seem to be inspired by the stolen moments of pleasure she had shared with Kgaladi. These stolen moments of pleasure blur the reality of who she is, and what is customarily expected of her. Both she and Kgaladi are bewitched by love to the extent that when they are together, everything comes to a halt. When they are together, nothing matters. No thirst, hunger or any person can stir them. This tranquility evokes the feeling that death would serve them right if it were to come to them and they were to die together.

To Senoinoi's endearments Kgaladi reciprocates profoundly by saying:

"Ke go rata ka lerato la baratani ba go ratana ka lerato la go ratega. Ge ke go bona ke bona tsheoga ya bophelo bja ka. Ke wena monoki le mokgabiši wa ditoro tša ka; e ka ba tša lethabo, e ka ba tša manyami. Mohla ke tlogo lora tše mpe ke thoma ka go lora wena, ke go lore o lla. Moratiwa, o letswai dijong tša ka. O mohlodi dijong tše o ke di jago ka moka" (1979:5).

("I love you with the love of lovers who love each other with genuine love. When I see you, I see the early rains of my life. You are the seasoner and decorator of my dreams; be they of happiness or of sadness. When I am about to have a nightmare I first dream about you crying. Darling, you are the salt in my food. You are the flavour of all the food I eat".)

These two characters, Kgaladi and Senoinoi, are seriously in love. Their words clearly explain the kind of love which bind them together. But the question is are their parents and the people at large sharing their sentiments? If not, then these

two might find themselves faced with a cul-de-sac. What about the society's lore and customs, which are both expected to be observed and respected without fail? Should they be sacrificed to satisfy the whims of these two inexperienced lovers? What about the fact that their relationship might cause war between King Sephuma and King Seroboka, and that such a conflict could lead to destruction of both life and property?

At this point in their lives, all these questions are of no significance to them. What matters is their love for each other and their togetherness. Love is therefore the major issue leading to the crisis in this novel. Both Kgaladi and Senoinoi's interests are pitted against internal forces comprising mainly King Sephuma and his supporters in collaboration with external forces or what we may call the socio-cultural forces, which comprise the values and norms of their society.

In literary circles, the important opponent against whom the hero of the story is pitted is called the antagonist (Abrams, 1987:137). King Sephuma, Senoinoi's father, is the main antagonist in this story. His opposition to the love affair between his daughter and Kgaladi is strengthened and legitimized by the dictates of custom. As the king and thus the custodian of his people's norms and values, there is no way he could be expected to fold his arms and allow Kgaladi and Senoinoi to ignore the rules and regulations of the society.

That is why when Senoinoi disappeared for days without trace, Sephuma instituted a search party consisting of his warriors called Makeke. Makeke's search could not yield anything and thus it became apparent that wherever Senoinoi was, she was with a lover. Her disappearance angered Sephuma and Makeke so much that when she returned two days later, she found herself in a hostile village.

The writer humorously explains the situation in this manner:

Mosetsana a re ge a gadima madira, a hwetša ka moka ba sentše difahlego, ba šutša nke ba bipetšwe ke ditoro. Ge a getsola bakgomana ka moselana wa leihlo a hwetša nka ba jele digwagwa ... ka moka ba šinyaletše. Ge a kaya Sephuma ka ntaka a hwetša tau ebile e tshotshoma sethitho phatleng le nkong, a se sa befetšwe a dio gagola bjalo ka phiri. A kwa a duma nka lefase le ka pharoga a tsena ... (1979:14).

(When the girl furtively looked at the warriors, she found them all looking very angry, puffing as if they had eaten too much prickly-pear. When she stealthily looked askance at the noblemen, they appeared as if they had eaten frogs... all of them having grimaces on their faces. When she glanced at Sephuma, she found the lion already oozing sweat, on his forehead and nose, no longer angry but tearing like a wolf. She wished as if the earth could crack open and swallow her...).

To lessen the people's anger, Senoinoi surrendered herself to a severe beating about which the writer observes thus:

Senoinoi a tla a kgeilwa ke lešaedi ka moretlwa a ba a šala a lla sepudimmee. A re go kgeiga kgoro ya rutlomologa mongwe le mongwe a gopotše lapeng (1979:14).

(Senoinoi was lacerated by a callous person with a *moretlwa* stick until she cried like a bleating goat. After receiving the hiding the court dispersed with everyone going home.)

On the other hand, Kgaladi arrived home and had no problem. His parents were relieved that he had come back home. The only word of admonition was that he should have told them that he would not be coming back home for those two nights. Commenting about the family Kgaladi claimed to have been staying with, his mother said:

Bjale wena ngwanaka, wa dia robala wa ba wa dia robala, gabedi? Gona ba kua o tšwago o dio ba tena o se ting. Ba

be ba šetše ba dia tšhaba go go laela, ruri kgorutlana ya ka (1979:16).

(But you my son, you slept and slept, twice? Then the people you were staying with were tired of you even though you are not sour-porridge. Honestly my last child, they were just afraid to tell you to go away).

We observe with interest the writer's deliberate use of contrast, contrasting the circumstances, the situation and the feelings of the two fugitives' parents and relatives when they returned to their respective homes. Senoinoi is made to return to a hostile situation whilst her counterpart is welcomed back home with relief and even spoken to with endearing words such as "ngwanaka" (my child) and "kgorutlana ya ka" (my last child).

On the contrary, Sephuma's angry mood on the day of his daughter's return, is best described by the use of metaphors such as "tau" (lion) and "phiri" (wolf). By being equated with these two ferocious animals, Sephuma's character is exposed. The use of contrast as a literary device seems to serve a two-fold purpose in this regard. Firstly, it helps to shed more light on the characters and their roles in the narrative, thus helping the readers to be able to distinguish between the heroes, the opponents and their respective supporters. Secondly, through contrast the reader is able to observe how people, even though they may be faced with similar situations or circumstances, often respond and even act differently.

The two days Kgaladi and Senoinoi spent away from their respective homes denote the fact that they were no more little children. They had lost their childlike innocence and were now young adults, playing adult games and thus ready to wrestle with adult matters. Having interpreted the lovers' situation accordingly both Kgaladi and Senoinoi's parents obliged by inviting their customary suitors. Prince Dikutupu came to visit his cousin princess Senoinoi, whilst Kgaladi's cousin Mmapitsi was brought in to finalise marriage ties with him. Here follows the conversation that took place between Senoinoi and her mother during

Dikutupu's visit:

"Ngwanaka," MmaSenoinoi a thoma go bolela le Senoinoi a mo tsepeletše ka mahlong, "le tla robala ka ngwakong wola wa ka mafuri ..." "Ka baka lang? ... ngwako wo ke robalang ka go wona ke o tseba? Go tla bjang gore ke huduge?" "Theeletša ke go botše. Lehono le tla swanela ke go robala ka moo ke go laetšago ka gore ngwakong wa gago lehono go tla robala yola Tšhitšhiboya le Sethukhu, bafelegetši ba yo motswalago. O nkwele gabotse?" (1979:27-28).

("My child", Senoinoi's mother began to talk to Senoinoi looking her straight in the eyes, "you will sleep in the back-yard hut ..." "What would be the reason? ... I know the hut where in I sleep? How come that I should move out?" "Listen let me tell you. Today you will have to sleep as I have ordered you, because today it would be your cousin's companions, Tšhitšhiboya and Sethukhu who would sleep in your hut. Did you hear me well?").

The above dialogue makes the intentions and the purpose of Dikutupu's visit quite clear. The visit is blessed by both the parents and the customary laws. Senoinoi is not expected to resist or to have an opinion which might appear to suggest anything contrary to what the society expects of her. After all she is the princess and the bearer of the values and norms of her society.

On the other hand Kgaladi wa also faced with a similar problem at his home:

"Ke nna, motswi. O se makale gore ke kgonne bjang go ala le go bona matata. Ke aletšwe ke rakgadi."

"O aletšwe ke mma?"

"Ee, motswi."

Lesogana la ema hlogo la re tuu! Pelo ye nngwe ya re a mmolaiše dingwathameratha, ye nngwe ya re aowa... Bošego ka moka go se na le ka thokgothokgo. Mokone a ikomeletša a lala a file mothepa sephoto (1979:34).

("It is me, cousin. Do not be surprised as to how I managed to prepare bedding and to find the skin blankets. The bedding was prepared for me by my aunt".

“My mother prepared the bedding for you?”

“Yes, cousin.”

The young man was mystified and tongue-tied! One thought said that he should beat her up, but the other one countered... The whole night there was no movement. Mokone became frigid and spent the night with his back to the lass.)

The meeting between Kgaladi and Mmapitsi went awry. The extract above is indicative of Kgaladi's lack of interest in his cousin. In spite of having spent the night with her under the same wrappers, he did not touch her nor even made love to her. The same happened between Senoinoi and Dikutupu. Senoinoi would not allow Dikutupu to touch her. In fact, she made it quite clear that she was not interested in him and that he should not even entertain the slightest thought that they would ever be lovers:

Dikutupu, basetsana ke mobu, hlabela pele. Wa gago yo o mmpetšwego o gona. Ke a kgolwa o nkwa gabotsebotse, ngwana malome... O se ka mpitša moratiwa wa gago! Ge o nyaka gore ke go tšhele ka mabu ka mahlong o mpitše “moratiwa”! (1979:29).

(Dikutupu, there are many girls, go away. The one who is created for you is somewhere out there. I believe you understand me well, my uncle's child. ... do not call me your beloved one! If you want me to throw soil into your eyes, you should call me your “darling!”)

However, Kgaladi and Senoinoi's love for each other is quite apparent. Denying their cousins sexual consummation is an act of defiance. Defiance is not only of these traditionally rightful suitors alone but also of their parents and the values and norms of their societies. In fact, they rebel and even go against the very fabric of the societies which have nurtured them. But defiance can only result in conflict. The question we ask ourselves at this juncture is: what will King Sephuma, the main opponent, do when he comes to discover the true facts and the causes of his daughter's defiance? He, Sephuma, is a leader and the custodian of the very same values and norms Senoinoi and Kgaladi are acting

against. Will he let their will be done? After all, their actions seem to be more whimsical than anything else.

What makes the whole spectacle even more interesting is that Senoinoi's defiance only resulted in her losing her freedom of movement. Her parents confined her to her home thus making it impossible for her to meet with Kgaladi. Restrictions imposed on Senoinoi caused Kgaladi severe mental anguish and eventual illness that nearly caused him his life. The writer describes this thus:

... Kgaladi ga e sa le yola re mo tsebago wa maloba le maabane. O galogile lebala la gagwe le nopeletše. Mahlo a gagwe a gohlometše gomme moriri wa gagwe o hlafile... O otile tša go šišimiša moo motho a kago hlatša ge a ka re a sa ja a feta hleng gagwe (1979:35).

(... Kgaladi is no longer the one we know of old. He has changed and his colour darkened. His eyes have fallen in and his hair is ruffled ... He is so lean and gruesome that a person can vomit should he happen to pass nearby whilst that person is eating.)

As a revered warrior to King Seroboka, his unexplained illness worried the whole community. This prompted the king to call all his men together in order to find out what the cause of his illness might be. Kgaladi did not beat about the bush, and as the writer explains it:

O hlalošitše gore mohlodi wa bolwetši bjoo bja go nyaka go mo thotha ke lerato la gagwe go Senoinoi, morwedi wa Kgoši Sephuma wa ka kua leboa la dithaba. Gore a fole a phele, re tla swanelwa ke go yo mo nyalela. Fela bjang? Le ge go le bjalo, re swanetše (1979:38).

(He explained that the cause of the illness that nearly killed him is his love for Senoinoi, the daughter of King Sephuma who lives on the northern side of the mountains. For him to recover and live, we must go and marry her for him. But how? Be that as it may, we must.)

King Seroboka and Sephuma are arch-rivals. The question asked in the above extract is “but how” will they manage to marry these two? They share the same norms and values with Sephuma’s people and they know very well that there is no way that King Sephuma could bend the customs of the society, deviate from the norm, and allow a commoner to marry his daughter. On the other hand Seroboka does not want to lose his revered warrior and kinsman, hence the king’s steadfastness that whatever it would take, “they must” go and get Senoinoi.

Together with his kinsmen - supporters - they tried to devise strategies to get Senoinoi and to save Kgaladi’s life. However, whatever plan they came up with, failed as they all seemed to have been loaded with many pitfalls. Most of the suggestions raised concerned the use of force to get Senoinoi from her people. Such plans, if followed, could have caused war between Seroboka and Sephuma. Eventually Kgaladi decided to go on his own and King Seroboka gave him his blessings:

Ge ke dutše ke tsitsinkela taba ye, ke bona seboledi sa mphêla se tloga se opile kgomo lenaka gobane mogale ga a swanelwa go kgatelwa eupša o lebanwe go lokollwa a itaetše bogale, gore bosasa re tseb’o ipshina ka go mo tumišetša 'tirogale tša gagwe (1979:40).

(When I examine this matter closely, I realise that the last speaker spoke well because a hero should not be stopped, but he is supposed to be set free so that he can expose his bravery, so that in future we would be able to enjoy praising him for his heroic deeds.)

King Seroboka’s words and actions are of encouragement to Kgaladi and his ambitions, thus he qualifies to be termed a supporting character in this instance. What we are now waiting for is to see whether Kgaladi will indeed be bold enough and venture into Sephuma’s territory whilst, knowing very well that if Sephuma discovers who he is and that he is the cause of his daughter’s disobedience, he will kill him.

Nevertheless, encouraged by the full backing of his king and the warriors, Manong, Kgaladi forsook his parents and family and left for Sephuma's place. Arriving under disguise as Mahlaba from king Lehlagare, he asked Sephuma to harbour him and recognize him as a refugee particularly because he was running away from king Lehlagare's might. After gaining asylum, Mahlaba went on to be King Sephuma's best medicineman and leader of Makeke. Having gained the trust of both the king and his warriors, Mahlaba (Kgaladi) eventually managed to elope with Senoinoi, taking her back to king Seroboka's place.

Kgaladi's mission has been accomplished, but the battle lines with King Sephuma have also been drawn. At this juncture we observe with interest how the writer has thus far managed to sustain suspense in this story by keeping the main opponent, King Sephuma, in the dark about his daughter's love life. He is deliberately denied knowledge and the identity of the person who is causing a rift between him and his beautiful daughter. We, the readers, are kept in suspense as to what the opponent, Sephuma, is going to do when the truth is eventually revealed.

Using the device of suspense, the writer successfully prepares his readers for the final unravelling of these conflict-charged incidents raised in the story build-up. The final stages of this story came to be characterized by wars which culminated in the destruction of both life and kingdoms. All of a sudden Kgaladi and Senoinoi, now living together, found themselves protected by Seroboka and his warriors, Manong. On the contrary Sephuma and his Makeke were not impressed by the whole chicanery.

King Sephuma was faced with the stark reality that, notwithstanding his effort to protect and to ensure that Senoinoi married in accordance with tradition, he had failed. He has not only failed as a parent and king but he has failed the whole nation. Failure causes frustration, tension and anger. He could not sit back and watch Seroboka and his subjects trample on the values and norms of

his people. The only option left was to fight.

At this juncture the writer brings the heroes, their opponents as well as their supporters face to face in fierce battles. The ensuing battles brought about the destruction of the kingdoms of King Sephuma and that of his supporter King Ntwampe, the father to Dikutupu as well as the kingdoms of King Seroboka and that of his uncle, King Motsepe. The destruction of these kingdoms gave our heroes, Kgaladi and Senoinoi their freedom. Tradition and its customs have been defeated and the commoner, Kgaladi, became a noble man helping King Segodi to rule over the remains of the destroyed four kingdoms who managed to survive the carnage. By upsetting the traditional status quo using “love” as their weapon, Kgaladi and Senoinoi have not only fulfilled their ambitions but they have also ushered in a new order, thus reminding us of Lord Arthur’s immortalized cautioning words to his last Knight, Sir Bedivere, when he proclaimed thus:

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
lest one good custom should corrupt the world.”
(Tennyson in Houthton-Hawksley & Eaton, 1982:176).

2.3.2 Mogwane o a Ila

Approached from a comparative point of view, there are striking similarities between the ambitions pursued by the heroes of Leratosello and the hero in Mogwane o a Ila. The main ambition of pursuit is freedom - freedom from the shackles of traditional lore, its beliefs and customs.

Traditionally the decision regarding marriage ties between suitors is made by parents and the question of whether the suitors love each other is never taken into consideration. What the parents have decided upon is final and has the blessings of the king of the area and thus the blessings of the society as a whole. If one of the married partners later decides to quit, he or she would

become an outcast and have to endure the wrath of the whole society.

Already married to Ntlheke Tibang, Mmadikila, the heroine of this novel, came to fall in love with Seloma Mošiane, a prosperous young school teacher. As she was already committed, her behaviour was regarded by the whole community as being deviant from the norm and thus they regarded her as a prostitute. That being the case, the whole society, including her parents, era in the context of this study considered to be her main opponents. We thus have, Mmadikila, the heroine, versus the society with its norms and values.

In desperate search for an occurrence which would bail her out of her unfortunate situation, her brother-in-law, Lesibana, came to her rescue. Suffering from a severe mental illness, one day Lesibana, who was Ntlheke's elder brother, used an axe to exterminate his entire family including his parents. The only close family relatives spared the carnage were Ntlheke and his family. That being the case, Mmadikila seized that unfortunate occurrence and used it as a reason to gain her freedom from Ntlheke by divorcing him, claiming that:

“Nna ga ke rat’o hwa la selepe” (1981:8).
(I do not want to die of an axe.)

Mmadikila's decision to divorce her husband could not be left unchallenged particularly because her own husband, Ntlheke, had no part nor influence in the murder that took place. But her insistence that they should divorce lest Lesibana come back from the mental hospital and wipe them out, could only be interpreted as an act of arrogance.

We observe with interest how the writer deliberately allows his heroine to adopt this unbecoming kind of attitude and stance towards her husband and his family's unfortunate circumstances. Mmadikila is the only one at this juncture who can offer Ntlheke a shoulder to cry on, but she does the opposite. Her arrogance intensifies the suspense in this story and thus elicits the reader's

interest to continue reading the story up to its logical end and to discover some new insights about human life.

At first it appears as if their king was in support of Mmadikila and her weird actions as he came to rule in her favour, thus granting her a divorce and also allowing her to keep custody of the family's two children, Podile and Mmalehu. As the readers, we know very well that the king's decisions were manipulated by Mmadikila's uncle, Sebelebele. At that time he was the king's bosom friend and very influential in the king's decisions.

Here again we see the writer's deliberate manipulation of his characters as we now brace ourselves for the aftermath of the king's ruling in this case. The questions we ask ourselves are; was the king just and fair in his judgement? Surely Mmadikila had no reason to ask for a divorce. Would Ntlheke not feel disparaged by this kind of judgement? He would surely feel the king was biased in his judgement. If Ntlheke and his supporters felt cheated in this matter, then both the king and Mmadikila were looking for trouble.

The writer exposes the aggrieved Ntlheke's feelings towards his king and Sebelebele in this manner:

... sa go nyerišetša Ntlheke pele ke gore mošate gona o tloge a tseba gore a ka se re phankga! Malome wa Mmadikila le Kgoši ke nta le tšhila, ga ba kgaoganywe e bile bagwera ba sa tsena sekolo mmogo, go fihla ge kgoši a tsokamišwa setulo morago ga phularo ya mokgalabje. Yo e lego wabo Mmadikila a ka se tsoge a llwe ke molato ka mošate, e sego ge malom'a Mmadikila a sa phela (1981:25).

(... what discourages Ntlheke even more is that at the king's palace he would not even be listened to! Mmadikila's uncle and the king are like a louse and dirt, they are inseparable. They became friends whilst they still attended school together, and until the king was throned after his father's death. Whoever relates to Mmadikila will never be found

guilty by the king's palace, not while Mmadikila's uncle is still alive.)

Ntlheke's feelings tell us much about Mmadikila's support base, hence her wantonness. But the fact of the matter is that the king is seen by his people as the sole representative of God Himself here on earth, hence the kind of respect they accord him. As the bearer and the custodian of the society's norms and values, he cannot afford to appear irrational on serious matters of this nature or to be seen to be practising nepotism. He should regard all his subjects as being of equal importance and thus deserving equal treatment. To allow Sebelebele to manipulate his decision-making, is a gross failure in executing his duties in a fair and equitable manner.

Having divorced Ntlheke, Mmadikila and her two children went back to her parent's home, the Motšhaki household. But her parents, like Ntlheke, were equally just not impressed about her divorce. As parents they share the same values and norms, responsibilities and beliefs of their society with others. Living in the traditional rural milieu, they are afraid of the wrath of the gods on people who divorce citing death as the cause of their action. They know very well what would become of them if the gods are angered. The writer aptly describes their situation thus:

Ba tšhogetše sewagodimo kahlolo ya badimo. Ee, gape badimo ke bona ba bonago ramakoko ba mo tumula mafega, ke bona ba bonago katse phadišadinala ba di konola. MmagoMmadikila le rragwe ba robala bja mmutla e sego borokokgomo; ba fšega pefelo ya medimo thumulwa ke morwedi "Lehu ga le hlalwe" (1981:33).

(They are scared of a plague, judgement from the gods. Yes, of course the gods are the ones who see the impudent and clip his wings, they are the ones who see the cat that shows off its power by its talons and they brake them. Mmadikila's mother and father sleep like a rabbit and not the real sleep; they are scared of the wrath of the gods provoked by their daughter. "Death cannot be divorced".)

The belief that when the gods are angered they must be propitiated otherwise they become sorcerers, is shared by many people, especially those diehards who still believe that man's destiny lies in the hands of the ancestral spirits, a belief contrary to that of Christians who believe they are accountable to Jesus Christ. As such, Mmadikila's parents could not be exceptions to the rule. Their daughter's unbecoming behaviour is a deed worthy enough to provoke the gods' anger. Knowing very well what would happen to them, her relatives persistently endeavoured to make her change her mind, but their pleas always fell on deaf ears.

“Ke re Mmadikila o gomela ga-Tibang a Dikolobe, ... A rwešwe thoto tšatši le tia phogwana, a tsene gaTibang motsekgoparara o mo hlola ka matsikangope go etša ge a tšwele ka phagahlo o mo hlola ka matsikangope” (1981:35).

(“I say Mmadikila is going back to Tibang of Dikolobe ... She must be caused to carry her luggage at midday and enter the Tibang's household with the whole village peeping through windows just as she left in turmoil whilst the village was watching her through the windows”.)

The excerpt explains the feelings of Mmadikila's aunt. She too opposed Mmadikila's actions and would have liked to see her go back to her husband. Moreover, ever since Mmadikila came back home, she was said to have turned into a slut. Eventually the whole village joined the fray and vehemently opposed Mmadikila. The question being asked is would Mmadikila manage to wade through the stormy weather alone? At this juncture, the writer meticulously evokes the reader's imagination and invites him to consider the heroine's situation by posing sarcastic questions about Mmadikila's uncle,

Sebelebele, who had since made a round-about-turn and joined those who believe that “Lehu ga le hlalwe” (You cannot divorce because of death):

Eya? Sebelebele lehono ke yena a kago bolela bjalo? Yena yo maloba kua kgorong a bego a bonwa ke mang le mang e le yo a emago le Mmadikila? Kgane maloba o be a se a

ka a e naganišiša gabotse gomme ke gona bjale a lemoga gore ga se tabanyana? (1981:36).

(Really? Is it Sebelebele who today can talk like that? He who the other day at the tribal court was seen by everybody to be supporting Mmadikila? Or can it be that the other day he had not as yet considered the matter thoughtfully and it is only now that he realizes that this is not a simple matter?)

We now know the feelings of the entire village concerning the divorce between Mmadikila and Ntlheke. We also know that our heroine, Mmadikila, is not only opposed to the whole village's perception towards death and divorce but that she is also opposed to the very canon of values and norms of her society which forms the fundamental fabric of the entire society. She remains steadfast and arrogant. Her arrogance and pettiness cause more tension in this story and thus lead to more suspense being created. On the other hand, her arrogance and pettiness are indicative of the fact that she needs something stronger than ordinary fellow human's persuasion to make her aware that it is wrong to ignore certain things which the society collectively recognizes as taboo. After all, no man is an island and Mmadikila could not have thought it otherwise.

Opposed by almost everybody and the laws of the society, she should have stopped and pondered on this issue before taking the decision to divorce because of death. Having gained victory over fellow mortals, the writer causes our heroine, Mmadikila, to clash head-on with the might of the supernatural. Her genius son Podile, regarded by both Dithabaneng school and community as their rising star, one day just collapsed and became delirious. The following conversation which took place between Podile's grandfather, Mr Motšhaki and Mr Kaapu, Dithabaneng school principal, explains how Mmadikila's son suddenly became ill:

"Ee, tate, lesogana le le dio re tlaba ka yona tsela yeo ke laodišago."

"Thaka! O re bohloko bo letše kae?"

"Moo ga ke tsebe, tate Motšhaki, ka gore o dio hlaba mokgoši gatee a napa a lahla hlogo fase. ... Fela, nna ke

hutša gore bohloko bo ka hlogong gobane ditšhika tša gagwe tša hlogo di bonala di ngangegile, le mahlo a gagwe a rotogile” (1981:41).

“Yes, father, this lad just surprised us the way I am relating”

“Man! Where does he say he feels the pain?”

“There I would not know, father Motšhaki, because he just screamed once only and threw down his head... But I suspect the pain is in the head because his head tendons seem to be strained and his eyes have popped out.”

On arrival at the hospital, Podile was diagnosed as suffering from psychosis. Endeavours to cure him chemotherapeutically failed. In that confusion, old man Motšhaki was left with no option but to consult with the traditional medicine man in order to rescue his grandson's life from this rare disease. The traditional medicine man's diagnosis revealed that Podile's illness is the result of the gods' unhappiness with Motšhaki's continual harbouring of Tibang's children in his household.

“Ga go leago ka gae - ganetša?”

“Lona go hloka le la nthathana, mongaka.”

“O ruile hlogwana tša Podile ka fa.”

“Ke kgonthe ya go ponapona yeo hle, bile le go leka go e tšweša lekgeswa go pala padi!”

“Taba tše di rumotše bahu-baladi. Bolwetši bjo bo tsetela bona. Pheko e tee fela! ... Rwalang thagaletswalo ye ya morwa Tibang, le felegeditšwe ke yena, khukhamang hlogong tša bagologolo ba bobedi - le phase. Fao gona bolwetši bo tlo fo re tlogi!”

(1981:44-45)

“There is no peace in the family - deny it”

“Not even a small piece of it, my Lord.”

“You have harboured Podile's children in here.”

“That is plain truth, which does not even need hiding!”

“These matters have provoked the dead. This disease is the manifestation of the gods. There is only one cure! ... Carry this first born of Tibang's son, accompanied by (Ntlheke) himself, and kneel down on the heads of these two ancestors and sacrifice to them. There the disease will just vanish!”

The question we ask ourselves is whether Ntlheke will put aside all the differences he had with his former in-laws and for the sake of his dying son feel pity for him and agree to accompany the Motšhakis to go and make a sacrifice on the graves of his father Mpalera and his grandfather Podile. How are the Motšhakis going to face this man whom their daughter divorced for no apparent reason? Ntlheke and Mmadikila are divorced and therefore they are no more relatives. She has won the children, as such they do not belong to Ntlheke Tibang anymore. Ntlheke is surely caught between the hammer and the anvil. He has to take the right decision. Having joined the opponents, Ntlheke's decision was detrimental as he refused to help. Eventually Podile died. The writer describes Mmadikila's situation at the funeral of her son as follows:

Mmadikila o ruthagane mmung. O matlakane ka mmele go hlepha - mmele hlephišwa ke selo sa toto ... O thulanya sefahlego sa gagwe le sa Podile, o thoma go tlawatlawega ka selo ... Lehu la Podile ke sehlabi pelong ya gagwe (1981:52).

(Mmadikila fell hard on the ground. She fell because of the body being weak - the body being weak because of crying for her loss ... Her face collided with Podile's face, and she started prancing around crying. Podile's death is a pain in her heart.)

This time our heroine seems to have been beaten hands down. She now seems to have met her match. Will her loss perhaps make her change her life style and even force her to learn to listen to good advice or perhaps go back to her husband and ask for forgiveness? She may decide to remain adamant but the consequences thereof are hard to contemplate. Nevertheless, her stubbornness only helps to sustain suspense in this story and to cause more tension.

At this juncture the writer introduces Seloma Mašiane. He is Mmadikila's lover and the person whom she subsequently came to marry. Although Mmadikila seems to have found solace in this marriage, even though it was widely rumoured that it was actually he, Seloma, who caused her to divorce Ntlheke,

her marriage came to be dogged by one misfortune after the other. She could not conceive a child for Seloma. Whenever they consulted traditional medicine men they were told that she would never bear children, because the gods were angry with her for divorcing Ntlheke because of a death occurrence. She ended up adopting a child, Kholofelo.

As misfortunes never come singly, Mmalehu, the only child remaining from her former marriage with Ntlheke, deserted her and went back to her father. His house also came to be struck by lightning. Throughout the story the writer keeps on repeating the proverb “Lehu ga le hlalwe” which simply means that one cannot divorce because of a death occurrence unless that person wants the gods to be against him or her. Mmadikila has thrown down the gauntlet and the gods have duly picked it up and now she finds herself being on the receiving end.

Employing the element of irony the writer brings the tussle between our heroine, Mmadikila, and her opponents to a close. Mmadikila divorced Ntlheke citing her fear of being murdered as the principal reason for her action. Unfortunately, she did not realize that by so doing she had actually sealed her own fate, scheduling her own destiny to be decided through murder. Similar to Lesibana, Ntlheke’s elder brother, Thongwa who was Seloma Mošiane’s younger brother and of course Mmadikila’s brother-in-law, came to suffer from a mental illness and subsequently stabbed Mmadikila to death with a knife.

2.3.3 Bohwa bja Madimabe

Bohwa bja Madimabe emanates from the short story “Dithuru tša Bogadi”, contained in Rafapa’s volume of short stories called Tšhila ya Tsebe, which was published in 1982. As the title implies, this novel is Rafapa’s version of the biblical admonition:

“I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of

the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me..." (Holy Bible, 1611:66).

This admonition from the book of "Exodus" chapter 20 verse 5, compares well with the proceedings in this novel, the only difference being that in this novel the admonition is made by a person who had been wronged, and thus he cursed the Lebelo family for the wrongdoing.

The hero in this novel is a doctor Ngake - who actually impersonates our writer (cf. chapter 1 page 9-10). Ngake is a psychiatrist who claims to have once suffered from a mental illness and thus came to endure the wrath of his community. During the illness, he came to gain the bitter experiences usually experienced by the mentally ill, who are ridiculed and shunned by fellow human beings. Those unfortunate personal experiences later coming to serve as positive motivation, prompted him to study psychiatry so as to be able to assist the afflicted. His intentions are clearly spelt out in this passage:

Kgoši ya ka, ke ka baka la bohloko bjoo ke ilego ka bo kwa bophelong. Ge ke sepela ka mo ntle, ke be ke ekwa bohloko kudu ge ke gahlana le balwetši ba monagano bao ba hlokomologilwego gomme ba ebela le mekgotha nka bona ga ba tswalwa ke monna le mosadi bjalo ka nna le wena. Gape ke ile ka kwešwa bohloko ke ka mo batho bao ba kilego ba lwala bolwetši bja monagano ba swarwago makgwakgwa ka gona ke maloko a setšhaba (1983:60).

(My lord, it is because of the pain I experienced in life. When I move around I used to feel bad when I met the mentally ill who are neglected, roaming the streets as if they were not born of a man and woman like me and you. I was also hurt by the manner in which those who once suffered from mental illness are badly treated by members of the community.)

In this story, our hero's ambition is to cure a mentally ill patient called Molahlegi. Molahlegi was Mr Lebelo's wife. She surprised both her husband and family when she fell ill just two days after her arrival in the family. At first they thought

that it was mere delirium, but with time and with her not getting better, they realized that she was mentally deranged. Therefore they invited Dr Ngake to come to their rescue. Ngake came from the Republic of South Africa, and they living in Botswana had read and heard people talking of his expertise as a psychiatrist. Concerning this matter, Ngake explains himself as follows:

“... ke ngaka ya monagano. Ke alafile balwetši ba bantši ba go se ipshine ka hlogong gomme ke a ba tseba gore ba bjang” (1983:11).

(I am a psychiatrist. I have cured many patients who are mentally not well and I know how they are.)

These feelings can only come out of a person who is sure about his vocation. Confident as he was, Ngake arrived at Lebelo's homestead, which was on a farm, only to find that his supposed-to-be-mad patient was actually different from the ones he had treated before and helped to restore back to normality. Our heroine, Molahlegi's illness was quite queer. Some of her supporters who had tried to help her like Dr Matsapola, had already given up any hope of having her cured as it became clear that her illness could not be cured through chemotherapy.

Another problem facing Ngake was Molahlegi's pregnancy and because of her unpredictable mood-swings, he was always confused, not knowing what and how to start working on her madness. Moreover, he had already set himself a target date to return to South Africa. His thoughts are well represented in this monologue:

“Ke rata gore ke re ke gomela gae Lebowa morago ga kgwedi tše pedi, e be ke tšhitšhila ka phenyo, ke phethile seo ke se tletšego mo ka katlego. Ke rata go kgotlakgotla bolwetši bjo, ke bo hlomare go fihla bo phurumela kua kgolekgole gomme bo efa ngwana yo wa batho kefogo. Ke rata go alafa Molahlegi gore a šale a re tswee!” (1983:34).

(“I would like that when I go back to Lebowa I should be carrying victory, having successfully achieved what I came

here for. I want to meddle with this disease, pursue it until it jumps very far, thus giving this poor child some relief. I want to cure Molahlegi until she is fine!”)

The mentally ill are unpredictable. To fulfil his ambition Dr Ngake would have to work vigorously particularly because of the time constraints, but would the patient cooperate? As she was not of a sound mind, she could not be blamed for not being cooperative. Tension mounts with the discovery that the late Majagohle Lebelo senior, grandfather to the present owner of the farm and Molahlegi’s husband was once cursed by Jakopo, a farm-hand the old man murdered after raping Jakopo’s wife. Rumour had it that Jakopo’s curse seemed to have manifested itself in Molahlegi.

The writer’s comment about this matter is that:

Mabarebare a re Jakopo o ile a re pele a kgaogela ruriruri a ahlama gomme a hlatša mantšu a: “Le tlo di bona ... le tlo di bona ... morwa wa gago yo a tlogo go reelela o tlo di bona ... ngwetši ya gago ya mathomo e tlo di bona ... Modimo ke molefetši” (1983:65).

(Rumour has it that before Jakopo died he opened his mouth and vomited these words: “You shall live to regret ... you shall live to regret ... your son who names his son after you shall live to regret ... your first daughter-in-law will suffer ... God is the leveller”.)

Will Dr Ngake still manage to accomplish his ambitions given this weird history of the Lebelo family? He is a scholar trained to deal with psychological problems and surely his studies have no meeting-point with the supernatural. His ambition that within two months he would be returning home to Lebowa victorious, seems to be just a pipe dream, moreso because here he is antagonized by supernatural forces which he, the mortal, dare not challenge face to face. Even his supporters, the Lebelo family and all those friends and relatives who wanted Molahlegi to be cured of her disease could do nothing to help.

Matters being as they were, the prophecy of children or generations suffering the aftermath of the wrongdoings of their parents and their grandparents became a reality. It also became apparent that our hero, Dr Ngake, was to return to Lebowa with his mission unaccomplished. Truly, he did not even endeavour to cure her of her illness after he had learned of the Lebelo's history.

Applying the technique of "a twist in the tail" the writer, instead of curing Molahlegi and thus bringing the story to a happy ending, opted for a tragic ending. He destroys her and her husband, Majagohle Lebelo junior. All this happened after Molahlegi had given birth to a son who was a direct replica of the murdered Jakopo's son, Malose, thus making true the rumour that it was actually Malose's ghost which raped Molahlegi on the second day of her arrival at Lebelo's farm, avenging his parents. The rape resulted in Molahlegi becoming pregnant. Baffled and frustrated about her misfortunes, she became mentally ill. On the other hand, Majagohle Lebelo, came to be frustrated by the death of Molahlegi, who died after giving birth to a son who was clearly not his, therefore he gunned himself to death.

2.3.4 Bowelakalana

This novel opens up with the writer directly introducing his readers to the psychological make-up of its hero, Mpitiki Legodi:

Ga gešo ke kae? Mma le papa ba sa phela? Naa ge ba sa phela ke go reng ge ke sa ba tsebe? Afa ke na le borakgadi, malome, mogatšamalome, bomotswala, baratho le dikgaetšedi? Mo ke go kae, ka baka la eng? Ruri le ge ke na le batho mo, gabotsebotse ke nošinoši mo lefaseng le (1987:1)

(Where is my home? Are my mother and father still alive? If they are still alive why don't I know them? Do I have an aunt, uncle, my uncle's wife, cousins, brothers and sisters? Why am I here and for what reason? Honestly, even when I have people around me in reality I am just all by myself in this vast world.)

Said to be thirteen years of age, Mpitiki must surely be facing serious problems to ask questions such as these ones. He is said to have come to his present place of confinement, Phedišang mental asylum, before birth as his mother arrived there pregnant and in a coma. Subsequently she died and doctors had to apply the caesarean section and save the child whom they came to name Mpitiki. The unfortunate part is that this boy was born mentally deranged, hence he grew up in Phedišang's mental asylum. At the age of thirteen, the mental problem vanished and that is when he started asking so many questions about himself and about whether he had any parents and relatives. The other factor which perhaps forced him to ask such questions as the above, was that ever since he was born, none of his relatives had ever paid him a visit.

Given our hero's historical background it is not surprising that he had to ask these somehow childish questions. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that such questions can be expected from a confused mind, the mind of a person who has totally lost touch with reality. On the other hand constant outbursts of

Ke nyaka go ya gae, nna. ke ya gae! Ke ya gae! ke re ke a ya! Ke a ya! Nkišeng! Ijoo-o-o-o, ke a ya! Ga ke sa nyaka go dula mo! Ke ya gae! (1987:2).

(I want to go home. I am going home! I am going home! I say I am going! I am going! Take me there! Ijoo-o-o-o, I am going! I do not want to stay here anymore! I am going home!)

may be indicative of the fact that Mpitiki is now back to normal and longing to be reunited with his people even though he does not have the slightest knowledge of who they are and what they look like. On the other hand, these outbursts are the writer's means of presenting the hero's "ambition". He feels he is now cured of his illness and he wants to leave the asylum to go and live with normal human beings.

Supporting Mpitiki's cause were all the nurses and doctors at the hospital and they duly joined hands and embarked on the search for his people. Commenting about factors hampering the search and thus prolonging Mpitiki's stay at the asylum, the writer says:

Gore Mpitiki ga e sa le molwetši ka moka ba a tseba. Ba a tseba gore šetše e le mengwaga ye mmalwa a fodile, o dio dudišwa fela ke gore batho ba go tliša mmagwe e sa le e eba mohla ba tlo tšea setopo sa mmagwe ya be ge ba tsene ka monga wa seloko (1987:3).

(That Mpitiki is no more ill they all know. They know that he had been cured for several years, he just stayed longer because the people who brought in his mother were last seen when they came to collect her corpse and since then they have disappeared.)

These kind of comments are the writer's tools used to let the readers sympathize and experience the feelings experienced by his characters. With these comments, the writer is able to sustain both the tension and suspense in this story. Readers would like to see Mpitiki taking a decision about his own life, particularly because he has already indicated that even among other people he feels he is all by himself.

Will he resign himself to the fate of the hospital staff since it is the hospital which is offering a roof over his head? If he were to run away, where will he go to? Surely he finds himself betwixt and between. The longer the time spent looking for his relatives, the more impatient he became and eventually he decided to run away even though the hospital had already moved him to doctor "Matšato's" house. By so doing he has taken a plunge into the unknown, in search of freedom and the reunion with relatives he has never known before.

His first acquaintance came to be a herdboycall called Mogofe. In the ensuing discussion which followed their introductions, Mpitiki was overcome by emotions which are an indication that even though he has now gained freedom from the

mental asylum his heart is still striving and longing to accomplish his main ambition, which is to find and be reunited with his people:

Ke nyaka go ya, ke nyaka-a-a go-o-o ya le wena ga geno.
Ga ke sa nyaka, ga ke sa nyaka go gomela gaMatšato.
Mma le tate ga ke tsebe gore ba kae. Ga ke ba tsebe. Ga
ke nabo. Aowa, ga ke nabo. Ga ba gona. Ga ke ba tsebe.
Mogofe, ke a go rapela hle. Ntumelele ke sepele nago
(1987:8-9).

(I want to go, I want to go with you to your place. I don't want anymore, I don't want to go back to Matšato's place. I don't know where my mother and father are. I don't know them. I don't have them. No, I don't have them. They are not there. I don't know them. Mogofe, I beseech you please. Allow me to go with you.)

Mpitiki is desperate and prepared to go anywhere with anyone as long as he can move away and far from Phedišang hospital and its mental asylum. Together with his newly found friend Mogofe, they took employment with a group of whites, travelling on an oxwagon. Those white people were on their way to the Free State, and wanted young boys who would serve as oxwagon leaders.

Mpitiki had never worked before nor had he ever been far away from the precinct of Phedišang hospital and its mental asylum. For him to accept this employment and to want to go to the Free State, just goes to show how naive he was. Surely he did not even have the slightest idea of what employment meant nor what it means to travel through the wilderness. Nevertheless he took the employment. After all he had nothing to lose, as long as he could just see himself far away from Phedišang hospital and its people.

Somewhere in the wilderness, he abandoned his job and ran away from his employers. His actions show that he could not get settled. He was always tormented by this ambition which he had to fulfil at all costs: the ambition of being free and being able to reunite with his relatives. Describing the discussion he had with Mogofe before he left him and their employers in the wilderness, the

writer says:

Bašemane bale ba tšere nako ye telele ba ngangišana. Mpitiki o be a feditše le pelo ya gagwe gore o a tloga. Mogofe o lekile go mmontšha dikotsi tše di kago mo wela. O boletše ka dibata le Maono; a bolela ka madimo majabatho; a bolela ka ditladi mohla pula e nago. Tše tša šitwa ke go letefatša pelo ya Mpitiki (1987:29).

(Those boys took a long time arguing. Mpitiki had decided that he was going away. Mogofe tried to advise him about the dangers that might affect him. He told him about dangerous wild animals and the Zulus; he talked about cannibals; he talked about thunderbolts on rainy days. All these failed to soften Mpitiki's heart.)

We quite understand Mpitiki's unthoughtful decisions, particularly because they are taken from a naive standpoint. Actually his behaviour portrays a non-caring attitude towards life itself. After all, why should he worry, when he seems to have lost almost all the relatives? People such as Mogofe and their white employers are here seen as Mpitiki's supporters, whilst his conflicting inner feelings serve as his own enemies, particularly because they keep on forcing him to make wrong decisions. Things were just not going well for him. Eventually he parted company with his companions. Thereafter he came to land into the hands of a Mr Hau who gave him shelter but enslaved him and subjected him to heavy manual work.

As his situation became worse everyday he eventually absconded, thus leaving behind the sanctuary Mr Hau had offered him. We observe that ever since Mpitiki left Phedišang hospital he has not been successful in getting nearer to discovering his relatives. Instead, his search seems to be plagued by one misfortune after the other as he keeps on moving from one bad situation into the other. Perhaps the writer deliberately subjects him to these uncomfortable situations as a way of inducting him into the real world full of life realities. However these uncomfortable life realities are also here seen as our hero's

opponents as they duly make his life unbearable.

By luck, Mpitiki eventually got to a police station where he was introduced to a labourer called Job. As Job was from Majaneng village, he took Mpitiki along and introduced him to the village chief who in turn gathered all the villagers together and introduced Mpitiki to them. This came to be the turning point in Mpitiki's life and the end to his days of wondering as he came to find that his relatives were actually staying in that village and had also been searching for him. His ambition to be reunited with his relatives has thus been accomplished.

2.3.5 Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago

This novel, which is an indirect reportage, concerns the dreams and adventures of a solitary young hero called Molahlegi of Katanong village. Born in utter poverty, his main ambition was to be a wealthy and powerful leader in his adult life just like his king, King Leribalanoka. Paupers like his father, Kgakgathu, were not good role models as he was a weakling who always failed to provide for his family's needs.

The writer aptly exposes Molahlegi's inner feelings of reverence towards his king in this manner:

Moya wa Molahlegi o gapilwe ke maatla a a aperego sefahlego, mahlo, sefatanaga, polelo le dikgato ka moka tša moaparankwe yo. Maatla, ke ra gona gore ge o gohlola mohlanka a tamiše mabu ka khuru, ge o balelwa o imetšwe mereto ... Molahlegi ga a tsebe gore o dirwa ke eng, fela gantši ge a kaname ka bolaong a ile le megopolo ... o fela a duma go ba le maatla - go ba nkgwete ya thaka tša gagwe goba kgoši goba mopresidente wa naga (1991:20-21).

(Molahlegi's soul has been attracted by the power that engulfs the face, eyes, the motor car, the speech and all the steps of this king. Power, I mean that when you cough a servant should kneel down, when you choke you should

be showered with praises ... Molahlegi does not know what is the matter with him, but in most instances when he is lying on his back in his bed thinking ... he sometimes wishes to have power - to be the top-dog to his mates or a king or the president of a country.)

Pregnant constructions of thought indeed. After all, this young man has the advantage of youth, as such he has much of a future to look forward to. The only antagonising factor which might come to prove to be a stumbling block may perhaps be the utter poverty besetting his family. However, backed by his youth, education, and the will to achieve, he could plan and shape his destiny accordingly, using his ambitions as the main ingredients for a fruitful life.

At this point in time, the hero's thoughts and ambitions may sound naive and farfetched, since that kingship is not meant for everybody. One other thing is that his thoughts may sound naive as he seems not to know that uneasy lies the head that wears the very crown he is yearning for. Moreover, all these thoughts are evoked by the ambition to possess material wealth and power like those already in power.

Nevertheless, we the readers are eagerly waiting to see how our hero paves his way to become a top-dog and thus fulfil his ambitions. At this juncture it becomes apparent that whilst the writer has endowed his hero with wonderful ambitious thoughts which should help in the development of the plot and the exposure of the theme, he opted for the anticlimax.

This becomes apparent when the writer chooses to portray the hero as a flat character whose ambitions are not challenged by any opponent or supporters. The lack of clearly defined opponents and supporters to the hero's cause has not only weakened its plot but has also reduced the whole novel into a mere reportage of events which culminate in the hero's dreams becoming a reality, when he is crowned as a chief in Vendaland, without any effort.

Commenting about the plot structure of this novel, G.J. Moloisi observes in “*the Northern Sotho Language Board Book Review Report*” of 10 September 1993, that:

The novel has no defined plot. It deals with isolated rural and urban episodes.

This is a sensible observation which can be supported by the fact that, as will be substantiated with the writer’s own words, the novel seems to have been conceived and written with different perspectives in mind. In a friendly letter dated 13 August 1995 he writes:

I could easily call my later novel Diphiri tše di gagolago but I included tša Soweto. This is purely political. As a youth, I feel the great deeds of the 1976 schoolchildren have not been celebrated enough. So my title is partly a celebration of June 16 1976. And the novel is also about power (not bogošī). At the end of the novel people who have been cheated out of power by political thugs are restored. Less significantly, the novel is also slightly autobiographical. The Rafapa clan are originally of a Venda royal family.

The above excerpt is evidence enough that the writer wanted to write about many subjects, but all of them represented in one character. However, our writer, Rafapa’s great merit is that he tells his stories the way it suits him. He is not dogmatically married to any Eurocentric philosophy of story telling guided and controlled by straight-jacketed formulated paradigms or principles, which emphasize clearly defined plots, themes, settings, etcetera. In other words, instead of concentrating on structural concerns, he concentrates on the revelation of those issues which concern culture and humanity. This can be seen in the survey of the characters he creates, which basically concentrates on the exploration of the human character within the framework of an African world vision, society and culture. The survey of Rafapa’s characters also reveals that he implements various but specific narrative strategies in his novels as instances of character portrayal.

2.4 NARRATIVE STRATEGIES

The simple dictionary meaning of the word strategy reveals that it is a science and art of conducting a military campaign with the express purpose of achieving a result. The writer's campaign is to tell and also to teach fellow human beings about issues which affect their lives. The content is usually well known facts but different in that they are told from individualized, personal life experiences of the writer, using characters as human representations.

Rafapa employs many of these strategies in portraying his characters with the most frequently used being:

- Self-display or exteriorization
- The narrative voice; and
- The creation of an autobiographical narrative.

2.4.1 Self-display or exteriorization

Under this strategy we find the writer restraining himself from saying things on behalf of his characters, thus giving them the voice and a chance to explain themselves. Traditionally this strategy is referred to as "the self-delineation" of characters. Arguing from the relationship point of view between the writer and his caricatures, Serudu observes that with "the self-delineation" strategy

... the writer allows his characters to think, to speak and to act in their own way. Essentially their thinking, their talking and their actions, are still his (the writer), while their relative "freedom" to do their own thing, is closely bound up with their function in fulfilment of theme and the overall intention of their creator (1995:50).

That being the case, the character's thoughts, speech, dialogues and actions, are the main characteristic elements of this strategy.

Pledging her undying love to Kgaladi at their love recluse, Senoinoi declares:

Moratiwa, pelo ya ka e tlopusela le go tlo mogatlomoga ka lethabo. Ge ke na le wena ga ke foe selo. Ge ke na le wena ga ke nyamišwe ke selo. Ge ke na le wena ga ke nagane ka se sengwe, ge e se lerato la rena leo le rego tšhiritšhiri (1979:5).

(My love, my heart wallows and throbs with pleasure. When I am with you I don't worry about anything. When I am with you nothing depresses me. When I am with you I don't think about anything else, except our love which is fire hot).

Senoinoi's words allow us, the readers, into the realm of her thoughts and her feelings towards her lover Kgaladi, and also, her thoughts and feelings about their love affair. Through self-exteriorization the writer has allowed her and even given her the voice to expose her thoughts about her newly acquired paradise wherein everything is peaceful and flawless. By giving her the voice Senoinoi is able to express her inner feelings, out of her own free will, without the writer's interference. Thus we are not surprised that she came to stick with Kgaladi through thick and thin, until they became married even though their union was not sanctioned nor blessed by their parents. After all, what is of greatest importance in a love affair, is an unstressful happy relationship.

In the novel Mogwane o a lla, we see how the writer skilfully affords his heroine, Mmadikila, a chance to think quickly and thus free herself from a trying and embarrassing situation at the tribal court:

Kgoro yešo, Modimo ke yo mogolo. Ke ka maatla a gagwe ge lehono ke sa buša moya. Ke gantši ke rarankga ka tlase ga selepe sa Ntlheke a re o a mpheleletša. Gantši sebakwa o hwetša e le gore ga se ka mo šebetša nama ya manoni dijong. Ge ke re a itšhebetše le gona o gana nnang, o re o nnyaletše go mo šomela. Batho bešo, ke lapišitšwe ke go hlwa ke keketwa (1981:26).

(The honourable court, God is great. It is through His mercy that I am still alive today. I have on several occasions wriggled underneath Ntlheke's axe, as he was trying to kill me. On several occasions the ruckus would be caused by his dissatisfaction over a lean piece of meat in his food. When asked to help himself to a fat piece of meat he would also refuse claiming that he married me to labour for him. Fellow countrymen, I am sick and tired of the constant beatings.)

Mmadikila's lie exposes her to be a cheat, liar and dishonest. Caught in a tight corner with no chance of wriggling out of her marriage with Ntlheke Tibang, Mmadikila saw telling a lie as the best option of freeing herself and ultimately getting a divorce. Eventually her lies procured her the divorce she was yearning for. Nevertheless here too we observe with interest how the writer allows and even affords his characters the voice with which to express their thoughts and thus, subsequently they come to reveal themselves as good or bad characters. After all in real life we come to know much about the thoughts of characters depicted in a novel through their sayings and their actions. Commenting about self-display or exteriorization Stephens reflects:

After all in real life, I judge my most intimate friend by his outward manifestation, by the things he does, the things he says and the way he says them (1972:165).

At times Rafapa employs dialogues in his narratives as devices of self-display or exteriorization. For example: To fathom the causes of Molahlegi's mental illness, Dr Ngake realized that he could not concentrate much on the use of chemotherapy but that he needed to know much about her historical background. Such information was vital for him to be able to determine the treatment. The dialogue that follows is but one example of those he held with Sebolaiši, Molahlegi's Sister-in-law.

"Na, moratiwa, mantšu ao a bego a a bolela lebakeng la ge a fafatla e ka ba o sa a gopola?"

"Ee, ke sa a gopologelwa, le ge e le ka bosese".

"E ka ba o be a reng?"

“Ga ke sa gopola gabotse, fela leina la mohu rakgolo Majagohle lona le be le sa tloge molomong wa gagwe. O be a kwala a mo hlapaola”.

“E ka ba o be a bolela ka phufulelo?”

“Ye kgolo.” (Bohwa bja Madimabe, 1983:37-38)

(“My love, do you still remember the words she spoke whilst she was delirious?”

“Yes, I still remember them even though slightly.”

“What was she saying?”

“I don’t remember well, but she never ceased to mention my late grandfather’s name. She was swearing at him.”

“Would you say she sounded angry?”

“Very much so.”)

Dr Ngake’s probing questions do not reveal the nature of his profession alone, but also his determination; the determination to get to the bottom of Molahlegi’s illness by collecting every little detail about his patient’s behaviour in order to arrive at those factors which might have contributed to her illness.

In the following dialogue from Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago, the writer allows the hero of this novel, Molahlegi to expose his feelings of dissatisfaction about his autocratic father in this manner:

“Nnaena kgale ke go botša ke re, bokaone o dio ikhomolela. O tla gola wa nyala wa tšwa ka lapeng leno wa ya go la gago wa ipuša.”

“Fela Malome ke gona ke sa feleletša thutwana tša ka.”

“Bjale?”

“Ke ra gore ke sa tlamega go ikgobokeletša mengwaganyana pele nka nyala. Le gona nka se longwe ke lapa e le lešo, aowa. Le gona wena, Malome, o ka re o ema le tate. Ga o bone gore o ntshwere ka la mpati mola la mmagoja le le gona” (Diphiri tša Soweto, 1991:14).

(“I for one have been advising you for quite long that the best option for you is just to keep quiet. You will grow up and get married, leave your family and go and establish your own where you will be independent.”

“But, Uncle, I am still to finish my schooling.”

“So?”

“I mean I still have to accumulate some monies for a few years before I could get married. In fact I cannot suffer in my own family, no ways. Moreover, Uncle, you seem to be supporting my father. Don't you see that he is ill-treating me?”

It is through this kind of dialogizing that characters come to expose themselves as to who they are, their thoughts, feelings and their aspirations in life. In other words the writer deliberately allows his characters to converse with each other thus delineating themselves.

Often, we find characters' thoughts and feelings about certain matters or issues compelling them to act in a particular manner. Constantly persuaded by the longing to meet and to re-unite with the parents he has never come to know, including relatives, Mpitiki, the hero of Bowelakalana was forced to escape from Phedišang mental asylum, a place which had served as his sanctuary from birth. He decided to go anywhere far away from his sanctuary, even though he knew nothing about the world outside the asylum and its problems which might come to endanger his life. This becomes quite clear by his agitation when he spoke to Mogofe, the very first person he met after his escape from the asylum:

Ke nyaka go ya le wena ga geno. Ga ke sa nyaka go gomela ga Matšato. Mma le tate ga ke tsebe gore ba kae. Ga ke ba tsebe. Ga ke nabo. Aowa, ga ke nabo. Mogofe, ke a go rapela hle. Ntumelele ke sepele nago (1987:8-9).

(I want to go with you to your place. I don't want to go back to Matšato's place. I don't know the whereabouts of my mother and father. I don't know them. I don't have them. No, I don't have them. Mogofe, I pray you, please. Allow me to go with you.)

The urgency with which Mpitiki is beseeching Mogofe for help, led him into taking a decision to take employment with Ditsebe and company. Such an action serves as another means of self-delineation particularly because in the first place, Mpitiki had no reason to run away from Phedišang, moreover that the hospital had already embarked on a search for his people. As such his actions

characterize him as an impatient person. This reminds us of Boulton's opinion on the importance of action as a means of self-delineation or exteriorization, upon which she muses thus:

Yet we do learn about character in a novel rather as we do in real life; from people's actions, from what they say about themselves ... We may be told just what to think or to be left with some of the ambiguities we feel in real life (1975:89).

2.4.2 The narrative voice

The narrative voice signifies the angle from which a story is told. M.H. Abrams, for instance, maintains that the term "voice" in criticism

... points to the fact that there is a voice beyond the fictitious voice in a work, and a person behind all the dramatic personae, including even the first-person narrator persona. We have the sense of a pervasive presence, a determinate intelligence and moral sensibility, which has selected, ordered, rendered, and expressed these literary materials in just this way (1981:132).

In his quest for a vivid elucidation of the disposition of his characters, through the process of characterization, Rafapa employs both the "voice" of the writer and those of other characters. Where the writer or one of his characters makes a direct comment(s) about the disposition of another character, the mode of comment is usually referred to as "the direct expository technique". Wymer, explain this technique as follows:

In direct presentation, the author tells us about a character through direct exposition, a straightforward explanation, or through comments about a character made by or other characters. (1978:33).

Let us examine this example from the novel, Bowelakalana:

Mpitiki o be a tshelatshela bjalo ka bana ka moka, le ge pelong a be a kalokana le dipotšišo tša mašarašara. Moya

wa mo ga o sa mo nkgela bose - moya wa go bipelwa ke monkgo wa dihlare tša Sekgowa le dijo tše motho ge a yo di ja a swanelago ke go ikidibatša gobane e le tše tee matšatši a beke a matee (1987:1).

(Mpitiki was playing around like any other child, even though in his heart, he was wrestling with various confusing questions. The air around here does not smell nice to him anymore - the air is pregnant with the odour of medicine and the food compels one to want to faint first, before one could eat it, as it remains the same all the time).

The message contained in the above excerpt makes it quite clear that Mpitiki is no more happy with his situation and that the bad circumstances he finds himself confined to, make him to wrestle with a lot of questions for which he cannot get an answer. Of interest about the above excerpt, is the voice and the angle from which it is reporting. The first thing that comes to one's notice, is that the voice reporting or telling us about Mpitiki's disposition is nameless. This brings us to conclude that it should be the voice of the writer himself, that is, the writer has assumed the position of the narrator, telling us everything he observes or thinks about his character(s). Kane and Peters refer to such a voice as the "persona", which they define as "a word used to designate the author in his role of story teller" (1975:515-516).

Let us examine yet another example extracted from the novel, Leratosello. In this extract, Kgaladi, the hero of this novel, has become a source of great concern to his parents. He has now reached marrying age but yet he seems not to have nor show any interest in women like other young men of his age:

"Naa wena Mmadikeledi, yo morwa o reng nka o tloga a sa re butšwetše? Nkane nka ga a heme le la go re gorošetša mm'arena? Gape ge o tle o kwe ge ba re leihlwana le tee ga le bonwe ke go fahlwa, ba ra tšona tša mohuta wona wo. Motho o napa a dio ba kgakgarapa e kaaka fela a hloka le go hema la phôrôkgôhlô!" (1979:7).

("You Mmadikeledi, why does our son seem not to come of

age? Why is he not even coughing out a word which indicates that he wants to marry? In any way, when you hear people saying that one eye is prone to being blinded, they actually are referring to matters such as these ones. How can a person just grow so big but fail to show any interest in females!”)

In the extract above, the writer has given the voice to other characters, like Kgaladi’s parents, to make a comment about the hero, Kgaladi. He, the writer, has now taken the peripheral position like us, the readers, and he is now merely a listener. Listening to the feelings and observations of the characters he has created. On the other hand, we come to know part of Kgaladi’s personality through the eyes and the voice of other characters in the story.

At times Rafapa moves us, the readers, from what is going on in the mind of one character into the mind of another character without personally getting directly involved in the process. In other words, he allows his characters the freedom of the voice, with which they express their feelings, observations, their fears and their aspirations without any hindrances from him. The following dialogue serves as a good example of the above explications:

“Mmadikila mogatšaka!”

“Ke go tonkuletše merulane, bolela!”

“O tla nkwa, Mmadikila mogatšaka?”

“Ka se go kwe bjang mola ke emišitše mešomo ka moka ke theeditše wena?”

“Lahla go nkomela ka taba ye e bohloko. Bjoko bja ka ge bo e tlantla ga e bo tsefele; e bo galakela wa go bo lomiša mala. Molwetši ga a segwe - o tlo ikogela magala hlogong...”

“Le bitletšwe ke bolwetši. Bolwetši bja le šathetša ka lešaša šathešathe” (Mogwane o a Ila, 1981:20).

(“Mmadikila my wife!”

“I have cleaned my ear of the cerumen, talk!”

“You will hear me, Mmadikila my wife?”

“How can I not hear you when I have stopped all the work that I was doing to listen to you?”

“Stop being sarcastic to me about this painful matter. When my brain gnaws on this matter, it does not enjoy it; the

matter is so bitter that it causes it (my brain), stomach ache. A sick person is not supposed to be laughed at - you will invite problems on yourself ...”
“You have been entombed by a disease. A disease has shut you in with a branch for eternity.”)

The conversation, in the excerpt above, is between Mmadikila the heroine of this story, and her husband Nttheke Tibang, just on the brink of their divorce. What provoked this heated argument was Mmadikila’s constant reference to an incident of murder, wherein Nttheke’s elder brother, Lesibana destroyed his own family including his own father and mother with an axe after he had been affected by a mental illness. Whenever Mmadikila talked about this matter, she did it with scorn and contempt towards her husband. The mockery eventually came to cost them their marriage and the unleashing of a chain of repercussions which ultimately cost Mmadikila her life.

The writer deliberately gave these two characters the voice and the freedom to expose themselves to us. Another important point worth mentioning is the use of both the exclamation and the question marks as punctuation marks in this dialogue. They affect the narrative structure, and in this way evoke that feeling of anguish on the side of Nttheke, whilst in Mmadikila it evokes scorn and sheer malicious joy.

2.4.3 The creation of an autobiographical narrative

Oftentimes one comes across characters whom Rafapa seems to have created with the express purpose of using as his personal representations to tell us, the readers, about his own personal past. What makes these characters interesting is the fact that they are not just ordinary characters in fiction, but characters whose experiences have much in common to share with the life history of the writer himself. For instance, in 1980, two years after his illness, Rafapa’s second novel Mogwane o a lla, was published. In this novel we find Podile, a character who seems to have been deliberately created to personify Rafapa’s painful

experience of suffering from a mental illness. The narrative tells about how Podile, the most intelligent pupil of Dithabaneng High School, just all of a sudden collapsed in the classroom, was taken to hospital and diagnosed as suffering from severe mental or nervous breakdown. The following conversation between two of his teachers, explains Podile's situation accordingly:

“Ke tloga ke hlalošeditšwe ke ngaka ka wa gagwe wa go ja bogobe gore Podile o bolawa ke ngangego ya megalatšhika.”

“O tloge o kwele ngaka ka wa gagwe wa go fohla meratha? Ijoo, ngwana wa batho! Bana ba! Re ba kgala tšatši ka tšatši gore motho ge a bala a iphe nako ya go khutša, le gona maisana a matšatši a a iphile diphilisi tša ditagi kudu. Motho ga a swanela go ithuta ka ditagi le gatee!” (1981:45).

“It was directly explained to me by the doctor himself that Podile is suffering from nervous tension.”

“Did you hear it from the doctor's own mouth? Oh no, poor boy! These children! We admonish them every day that when a person is reading he should give himself time to rest, on top of that, these days these chaps have given themselves to drugs. A person should not depend on drugs at all whilst studying!”)

The two teachers' conversation makes it quite clear that drugs also contributed to Podile's problem. What happened to Podile does not differ much with the contents of Rafapa's curriculum vitae and the friendly letter cited in “Chapter 1” of this study. Nevertheless, in the novel Bohwa bja Madimabe the writer who continues to expose and to explain the anguish of a mental sufferer, now assumes the role of a psychiatrist and no more that of a patient. The story is narrated from the first person point of view, and the writer is masquerading as Dr Ngake. However his true identity is exposed when in desperate need to get information about Molahlegi, his patient, he first has to disclose his own personal past to Mr Lebelo:

Ke ile ka re ge ke sa le morutwana wa mphato wa senyane ka babja. Bolwetši bja ntšhogatšhoga ka lebelo, bja ntšubatšuba wa go nkgakantšha ... Ka tlhago ke be ke filwe hlogo e boleta dithutong. Kua sekolong ke be ke tšea

maemo a pele ka mehla. ... Kganthe go na le bagwera ba bangwe ba ka bao taba ye e bego e ba seleka. ... Taba ya bolwetši bja ka ya tuma ka pela. Sehlophana sa bale ba go ntlhoya sa re go kwa gore bohloko bja ka bo ka hlogong, sa tšama se phatlalatša taba ya gore nna ke a gafa ke bile ke išitšwe digafing (1983:60).

(When I was still in std 9 I fell ill. The disease wore me out quickly thus confusing me. ... By nature I have been blessed with intelligence. At school I always obtained first position Unfortunately I didn't know that there were some of my friends who felt bad about this matter. ... Information about my illness spread quickly. A small group of those who hated me went about spreading a rumour that, as my pain was in the head, I was mad and that I had been taken to a mental asylum.)

From the information gathered from personal interviews, friendly letters and the curriculum vitae about the writer's personal life experiences, there is no doubt that there exists a link between the writer, Rafapa, and these two fictitious persons, Dr Ngake and Podile respectively. Another point worth noting is the constant appearance of Dr Van der Hooft's name. In the writer's friendly letter, (cf. page 9-10 Chapter 1), Dr Van der Hooft happened to be his psychiatrist during his stay at Groot Hoek hospital. But in the novel Mogwane o a Ila he appears as a fictitious person and Lesibana's psychiatrist, who told Ntlheke that because of drug abuse Lesibana was suffering from permanent brain damage. The writer expresses Ntlheke's feelings about the doctor's words as follows:

Bongaka van der Hooft ke banna bao ge ba bolela taba, ba šomišago mantšu afe goba afe - e ka ba a borutho goba a go thonkga mokwi pelo - ... Ntlheke ge a etšwa ka bookelong a retollela dinao morago gae ke ge mantšu a Ngaka Van der Hooft a sa mo ngwapa kgopolong bjalo ka dijo tša matlabotša kgokgokgong ya leseana leo le sa tšogo bona tšatši, e boletiana (1981:24).

(People like doctor Van der Hooft are those men who, when they talk, they just use any word - irrespective of whether those words are pleasant or hurting - ... When Ntlheke left the hospital, going back home, Dr van der Hooft's words were still scratching his mind like rough food in the soft

larynx of a newly born baby.)

All this information brings us to the conclusion that in order to facilitate the narration of his story, and to give his narratives a particular and unique flair, the writer chose to create characters who are in reality personal musks who narrate his own personal history, thus making his narratives to appear to be autobiographical.

2.5 RÉSUMÉ

From the foregoing explications it is clear that by virtue of being the creator of both the story and the characters peopling it, the writer has power over these creations. Characters are created to serve a particular need. For example: Characters created and used to teach fellow human beings about culture and customs. Characters used as voices or representatives of certain types of human beings like the rich, the poor, despots, the care-free etcetera. When these characters have served their purpose and they are no more of consequence to the writer, he stops manipulating them and eventually discards them.

Another salient point exposed by this chapter is the confirmation of the assumption that writers always draw their material from lived experiences, what they might have read or from stories told them by other people. That can clearly be noticed in the kind of stories Rafapa preoccupies himself with, as most of the experiences he narrates are genuine lived experiences elucidated by the narrative strategies he employs.

CHAPTER 3

THEMES OF PREOCCUPATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the relationship between the writer, Rafapa, and the characters portrayed in his novels as well as the writer's centrality within the social realm. As a way of linking up, this chapter therefore, aims to continue exploring those important roles expected of the writer within the society he writes about, viz: as its observer, interpreter and critic, its mirror and its teacher.

To fulfil these important functions successfully, the writer - as the repository of his society's life experiences - would depend much on the stories he writes, the themes embodied in them, and the appropriate utilization of the characters portrayed in those stories. In other words, the relevance of the content-material of the writer's stories and their meaningful impact on the lives of the people they are intended for, cannot be over-emphasized.

Commenting about writing as a worthwhile exercise, Ngugi wa Tiong'o in Duerden and Pieterse observes thus:

Writing, I take to be a kind of confession where the writer is almost confessing his own private reactions to various individuals, to various problems, you know the feeling of shame here, the feeling of inadequacy there, the love hatred (etcetera) (1972:128).

Ngugi's views reveal the importance he attaches to both the story writer and his stories. He exposes the fact that writing is a purposive conscious act which at the same time needs to be done responsibly, and moreover that the main objective of serious story writing is to highlight certain aspects pertaining to human life. Through his stories, a writer makes comments about his society, life

views, personal feelings, experiences and circumstances. After all, writers have ideas about life in general, which they want to communicate to other people - their readers (Roberts, 1995:98).

Usually the writer's comments would, in one way or the other, come in the form of accolades or chastisements, depending on that which the writer aims to highlight. In other words, the writer's stories serve as his main tool of conveyance, of his personal views, life experiences, ideas, messages, etcetera, using characters as the exponents.

Talking about "the story" as the writer's main tool of communicating ideas and messages, it is imperative at this juncture to briefly look at the concept of "theme" which is one of the main elements of the story, i.e. that which the story is all about - the heart of the story itself. As Knickerbocker et al observe:

Every good story is shaped by a controlling theme or idea. This controlling theme selects and arranges everything that goes into the story; the characters, the action, the resolution of the conflict and everything else used by the writer to dramatize their total meaning (1985:10).

Expanding on the nature of the concept theme, is Perrine who explains it as follows:

The theme of a piece of fiction is its controlling idea of its central insight. It is the unifying generalization about life stated or implied by a story (1978:105).

Both Knickerbocker and Perrine's definitions share one common but important point of convergence which is the concept of theme being viewed as the unifying and controlling element in the story. Their observations illuminate the importance, the impact and the place of "theme" within the story framework. As the observer, the critic and the teacher of his society, the writer's themes are very important. Serving as the strongest binding or cohesive factor within the

story, the concept of theme is here understood to be so important to the story that a story which lacks in theme cannot be regarded as a story in the true sense of the word.

Scholars such as Scholes (1981:12) define theme in terms of the story's "meaning". His main argument is that it is that meaning we get after we have read or experienced the story which is its theme. Meanwhile, Mafela further explains the concept "meaning" thus:

When we talk about the meaning of a narrative, we talk about its theme. Meaning, which is the act of making sense, is rooted in experience. Meaning depends upon life and experience, and exists between art and life. In order to understand life and experience it fully, we have to be closely involved in it. Readers cannot interpret a narrative satisfactorily if they have not been confronted with the life and experience of the particular society which the narrative deals with. In order to discover the theme of a narrative, readers should make connections between the work and its context (1996:22).

Mafela's ideas serve to explain a simple fact of reality, which is that the relevance of the theme of a story to the life circumstances and situations of the intended recipients - the readers - cannot be overemphasized. All thoughts and explanations cited above - regarding the concept of theme - reveal that the theme of a story is its life-wire, the golden thread that permeates the entire story thus giving it its meaning. Moreover, a writer is mainly concerned with highlighting certain aspects of his environment, his society or the whole society in relationship to himself (Kofi Awoonor in Duerden & Pieterse, 1972:35).

Since the concept of theme serves as a generalizing factor about human life, the communicability of the writer's stories would then depend much on the clarity of his themes, i.e. those life aspects which he wants to focus on and bring to the attention of his readers, issues which he wants to teach his readers, as well as all those observations and life experiences he would like to share with them.

Reading Rafapa's novels, one is intrigued by the kind of themes he preoccupies himself with. Simplistically defined, Rafapa's themes are transitional in nature. He writes about the transition of societies, changing from the old life styles into modernity. Change is always characterized by various problems, which can be seen in the characters Rafapa portrays in his stories. In most instances his characters are depicted in situations wherein they find themselves uncomfortable with the society's intransigent traditional life styles. Another interesting aspect about Rafapa's themes is their fluidness. For example, the theme of "madness" runs through three consecutive novels, without overshadowing the main themes of the novels concerned.

Rafapa explores a *mélange* of themes, with the most common and dominant being those themes which are mainly concerned with love, social decay, generation gaps, madness and vengeance, protest and conflict. In most cases, these themes are concurrently treated.

3.2 SOCIAL DECAY

Social decay is one of Rafapa's main thematic concerns. Stories concerned with this theme reveal that total submission and unwavering adherence to one's cultural norms and values is important in the eyes of the community concerned. Deviation from the norm is always unacceptable and would usually evoke the wrath of fellowmen or even the gods. The end result is usually that the perpetrator(s) is isolated, chastised, becomes ill or even dies in the process.

Rafapa writes about African communities, their day to day interactions, their problems and how they respond to their situations and circumstances. To facilitate his arguments and thus clarify his themes, Rafapa has devised his own peculiar method whereby he juxtaposingly divides characters peopling his novels into two groups, namely: those who through their behaviour and actions qualify as adherent subscribers to the *modus operandi* of the old order on the one hand,

and the deviants on the other. The deviants' group - constituted mainly by the youth - is characterized by the trappings of modernity. They are depicted as non-conformists, who seem to derive pleasure out of challenging, questioning and even clashing with the status quo of the old.

In accordance with African culture, royal families are not only respected by their respective subjects and neighbours but they are also regarded as being sacred in nature. As such, a status quo is maintained in institutions such as "marriage", i.e. that royal family members cannot inter-marry with commoners irrespective of whether there is love between the two people involved or whether the commoner in question is allegiant to the royal family involved. This seems to have been Rafapa's main idea when he wrote Leratosello. His deliberate mismatch of the two principal characters - Kgaladi and Senoinoi - vividly expounds on this matter. As a commoner, Kgaladi stood no chance of marrying princess Senoinoi. She was expected to be groomed for marriage with a prince, a person with whom she was to rule after the death of her parents, a prince for whom she was to bear future princes and princesses, thus ensuring the continuity of the royal lineage.

Both Senoinoi and Kgaladi knew the laws and the demands of their societies well, but all that was overshadowed by the genuine love they had for each other. The excerpt below - a dialogue between the two - is a very good illustration:

[Senoinoi]: Moratiwa, pelo ya ka e tlopusela le go tlomogatlomoga ka lethabo. Ge ke na le wena ga ke foe selo. Ge ke na le wena ga ke nyamišwe ke selo. Ge ke na le wena ga ke nagane ka se sengwe, ge e se lerato la rena leo le rego tšhiritšhiri.

[Kgaladi]: ... Lebone la pelo ya ka, naa o sa bolela o sa dio roka molomo? Ke go rata ka lerato la

baratani ba go ratana ka lerato la go ratega.
Ge ke go bona ke bona tsheoga ya bophelo
bja ka. Ke wena monoki le mokgabiši wa
ditoro tša ka; e ka ba tša lethato, e ka ba tša
manyami (1979:5).

[Senoinoi]: My love, my heart wallows and throbs with pleasure.
When I am with you I don't worry about anything.
When I am with you nothing depresses me. When I
am with you I don't think about anything else, except
our love which is fire hot.

[Kgaladi]: ...The light of my heart, are you still talking,
why don't you just keep quiet? I love you with
the love of lovers who really love each other
with genuine love. When I see you, I see the
early rains of my life. You are the seasoner
and decorator of my dreams; be they of
happiness or of sadness.

If this incongruous love affair between Kgaladi and Senoinoi should succeed even though it seems to be built on shifty ground and is by all probability destined for failure, the laws of the society or of nature itself would have been defeated. Their actions are sure challenges of social norms and values. They are challenges of the laws of nature itself and people like king Sephuma - the custodian of the laws and the lives of his people - would certainly not be impressed or turn a blind eye to such chicanery. After all he is a king and he must lead by example and that is also expected from all members of his family including Senoinoi.

Also impacting on this incongruous relationship between Kgaladi and Senoinoi

is their tribal origin and the rivalry between King Sephuma - the father to Senoinoi - and King Seroboka, to whom Kgaladi is a subject. To add fuel to the fire, these two kings are said to have been arch-enemies. For example, giving a careful description and recording of the responses of King Sephuma to the talk of his men about King Seroboka's stubbornness, Rafapa writes:

“Ke kwele le bolela ka lešoboro lela Seroboka. Seroboka ke eng mo pele ga ka? Ga se selo! Ga a ntsebe botse! Nna ke Sephuma, ke a phuma. Le mmotše le a kwa, ke re mo nna le yena re gahlanago re tla lwa, ra foforana meno, ra lwa ra thubana mahlo, ra lwa go fihlela yo mongwe le yo mongwe wa rena a šala ka oto le tee. Ke nna Sephuma-dithaba-di-se-kaaka. Dithaba tše tša Mabupudung nna Sephuma nka rata nka di phuma. Le noka ye ya Motimalenyora, nna Sephuma ge nka rata nka e kgalema gore e se sa elela kuwa gaSeroboka gore ba omelele ka lenyora go fihla ba e hwa” (1979:26).

(I overheard you talking about that uninitiated chap, Seroboka. What is Seroboka in front of me? He is nothing! He does not know me well! I am Sephuma, I demolish. You tell him, do you hear me, I say where we can meet we will fight, we will pulverize each other's teeth, we will fight and gouge each other's eyes, we will fight until each and every one of us remains with one leg. I am Sephuma dithaba-di-se-kaaka (the big mountain). If I want to, I Sephuma, can demolish these Mabupudung mountains. Even this Motimalenyora river, if I so wish, I Sephuma can order it not to flow in Seroboka's direction so that they can go thirsty until they die.)

Even though it is said that self-praise has no recommendation, the excerpt above depicts Sephuma to be a stubborn but open-minded person who does not beat about the bush when he wants to expose his feelings about another person, particularly Seroboka whom he hates so much. This open expression of hateful thoughts by Sephuma serves as a prelude to the fierce battles that came to rage between these two kings after Kgaladi and Senoinoi eloped and went to stay at King Seroboka's place.

Seroboka is a king, therefore a leader who should lead by example. In all probabilities, he is a fellow subscriber to the same social norms and values King Sephuma subscribes to. If he, Seroboka, welcomes Kgaladi and Senoinoi into his kingdom and allows them to live in concubinage, he would be perceived as a weak and useless leader. His actions would be seen to be a gross violation of King Sephuma's integrity and the watering down of the social fabric itself.

Ironically King Seroboka came to forget all his responsibilities and gave Senoinoi a sanctuary - a blatant irresponsibility and a direct challenge to King Sephuma indeed. The aftermath thereof was the total destruction of both the kingdoms of King Sephuma and King Seroboka. Kgaladi and Senoinoi lived together as husband and wife, with Senoinoi having lost her princess status but she and Kgaladi having triumphed over the old social order.

As the repository of his people's life experiences and responses on matters affecting them, Rafapa did not miss to observe and to record incidents wherein the younger generations continue to plunder and to defy old traditions unabashedly. The divorce case between Mmadikila and her husband, Ntlheke Tibang illustrates this problem accordingly.

According to African culture, divorce cases are a taboo. No matter how difficult the couple's situation may be. Backed by the Christian religion on this matter - particularly the Roman Catholic Church - married couples are expected to hold on to each other until death separates them. Like kingship, marriage is one of those social institutions believed to be sanctioned by God Himself and thus, sacred. To the adherents of the old order, it is an abomination to divorce and particularly if "death" is cited as the cause. Therefore it is no wonder that in Rafapa's Mogwane o a Ila, the main character in this story, Mmadikila, came to be loathed and shunned by the majority of elderly people of Dithabaneng village because she divorced Ntlheke Tibang.

To gain her freedom, Mmadikila is said to have lied to the tribal court. She claimed that she was living in fear for her life because of her husband's arrogance, daily beatings and constant threats to chop her head off with an axe just like his mad brother, Lesibana, did to the whole lot of the Tibang clan, save for NtIheke and his family. However, it was during one of these tribal court sessions that one old man reminded Mmadikila that through her conduct, she had forgotten and actually drifted away from normal traditional practices.

“Mmadikila ngwanaka, tšhaba leepo. Mmadikila ngwanaka, go realo o tšhaba lehu? Tseba, lehu ga le tšhabje, ke Sesotho. Go realo o hlala lehu? Tseba, Seswaneng lehu ga le hlal we. Mahlalalehu ke kgoboga, o tlo hlomarwa ke madimabe go fihla lehung. Taba yeo ke leepo. Bana ba lehono le a re thuthumetša. Bana ba lehono le a šiiša, poo ka maswi e a šiiša ... Le dira di se dirwe. Le thunthela madibengmatala a mmamogašwa; o tlo le gogela teng ga madiba la pšhelela. Madimo a wona a go šutša ka mabefi a tlo le tšutlatšutla la ngatologelwa. Le tlo swaba!” (1981:22).

(“Mmadikila my child, avoid slander. Mmadikila my child, as it is are you dodging death? You should know, death cannot be eluded, that is the African belief. As it is you are divorcing death? You must know that according to the African Traditional belief, death cannot be divorced. He who divorces because of death is cursed and would be dogged by misfortune for the rest of his/her life. Such an occurrence is mockery. You, today's youth scare us, you poke into the puff-adder's eyes, you make us tremble with fear. You, today's youth are frightening, to you a bull has a lot of milk ... You are tampering with matters you are not supposed to tamper with. You will come to grief!”)

After this kind of chastisement we expect Mmadikila to have a change of heart and mend her ways. But if the writer, Rafapa, allows her to succumb to the old man's words of wisdom, he - the writer - would have failed to expose his theme clearly, moreover that his main objective with this story is to show how today's youth do not care about nor take traditional practices seriously. That being the case, the writer goes on to portray Mmadikila as a hard nut to crack. Her attitude

becomes more and more hardened. Her quest for a divorce and thus freedom grew stronger by the day. Her traditional upbringing - norms and values of her society - fell by the way side. The tribal chief in collaboration with Mmadikila's uncle, Sebelebele, forgot the responsibilities he had towards his people. He forgot that as a leader, he is actually seen as the embodiment of the whole corpus of his people's wisdom. He succumbed to Mmadikila's lies and judged the case in her favour.

Mmadikila's mission has been accomplished, but the community is sad. The writer aptly explains the community's feelings as follows:

Motse wa Dithabaneng o a di bona o a iphoalatša. O getsola Ntlheke ka kwelobohloko mola Mmadikila o mo gerula ka bonaba bja go rorometša. Diputswa di tia manxa, di kgotsa ka pelobohloko ka mehla ge di bona ka fao sefero sa Mpaleratha se tswaletšwego ka lešaša la mokgalo ka ntshe. Mmadikila o kgotswa le ke thaka e kgwadi ka bogoboga le leepo, tšeo di mo mometšego (1981:38).

(Dithabaneng village observes the proceedings and reproves itself. It looks pathetically at Ntlheke whilst on the other hand it looks askance at Mmadikila with ferocious enmity. Elderly people sulk, and their painful hearts are astonished by the way Mpaleratha's gate has been stopped with a branch of a wait-a-bit (mokgalo) tree. Even youngsters are astonished at the libel and mockery which have befallen Mmadikila.)

Mmadikila's triumph seems to be heading for a disaster. If almost everybody - both young and old - are not happy about her divorce, then her freedom is worthless. Nevertheless, as what is at issue here is an assessment of the two opposed sets of values embodied by the society, on the one hand, and challenged by Mmadikila, on the other, we can only expect that there is a fierce battle looming and that one of the contesting forces is bound to lose. Rafapa seems to have deliberately created this kind of a situation which serves as the turning point in the life of Mmadikila - the heroine of this story. From this point onwards, our heroine who seemed to have triumphed over traditional lore, came

to face the deluges of the failures of modernity.

At this juncture, Rafapa introduces the readers to the might of the gods who are traditionally believed to hold sway over mortals. Mmadikila has defeated ordinary mortals like herself, and what remains to be seen is, what is going to happen to her as the immortals have now joined the fray? It did not take long before Mmadikila's son Podile became mysteriously ill. He showed signs of madness. The unfortunate part is that chemotherapy could not help cure the young Podile's illness.

Eventually, Mmadikila's people turned to traditional medicine with the hope that the gods would have mercy on the young man, cure him and thus alleviate him of his pain. However, the diagnosis always pointed at Podile's ancestors. Mmadikila's people were categorically informed that Mpaleratha, Podile's paternal grandfather was displeased about Ntlheke and Mmadikila's divorce, mainly about the reasons advanced by Mmadikila during their divorce proceedings. Therefore, Podile's illness was a sign of the gods' anger over Mmadikila's transgressions. To get cured, Podile accompanied by his father, Ntlheke - was expected to go and pray next to Mpaleratha's grave and thus appease the gods.

This seems to have been a fair proposition by the gods and a simple matter to resolve in order to alleviate Podile of his pain and suffering. Unfortunately the divorce did not only cause a rift between the Motšhaki and the Tibang people but it had actually created bitter enmity between them. Here we observe with interest how the writer skilfully evokes the feelings of his readers, by introducing them into the realm of his characters. Readers are made to feel the same kind of pain and anxieties felt by the characters they are reading about. This the writer does by causing characters like Ntlheke to act irrationally by refusing to help his son. He is divorced and as such, Podile is not his son anymore.

Ntlheke's rigid, irrational attitude makes us - the readers - to sympathise with Mmadikila's predicament even though she had ignored the wise advice by the elders, forbidding her to divorce Ntlheke, as they feared that such an action might provoke the wrath of the gods. Furthermore, the writer exposes Ntlheke's thoughts about Podile's situation as follows:

Pelo ye nngwe ya Ntlheke e fela e re a phasetše Podile gobane a mo kweša bohloko ka ge e le madi a gagwe ... Fela o sobile sebete a beta pelo; o rato babišetša Mmadikila thakgalo go etša nama ya sebete ge e tsarameditšwe ke santlhoko - ka go ganela Podile ka phuphu semetša rakgolwagwe. O rato khwamola Mmadikila diphego, go mo ruthaganya ka sephoto morago mmung. O rata go mmušetša mono go šatakago kgomommu le wa kotopedi (1981:50).

(One of Ntlheke's hearts keeps on coaxing him to make a sacrifice to the ancestors for Podile's sake, particularly because he pities him as he, Podile, is his own blood ... But he is steadfast, he wants Mmadikila to feel the pain and to spoil her happiness, just like the liver, which has been spoiled by bile - by denying Podile access to his grandfather's grave. He wants to clip Mmadikila's wings, to cause her to fall and strike hard on the ground, with the back of her head. He wants to bring her back to this world traversed by cattle and human beings.)

That Ntlheke loathes Mmadikila is clearly shown by the above extract. Nevertheless, our-readers-sympathy goes to Mmadikila and her sick child. Podile's life is at stake. Whilst it is true that Ntlheke is deeply hurt by the divorce and thus seeks retribution against Mmadikila, what remains is the question: where is his compassion? Is he going to let his son continue to suffer the pain and perhaps ultimate death, just because he wants to destroy Mmadikila's pride?

Ntlheke stood his ground and refused to help. Ultimately Podile died. All the cautioning and fears expressed by elderly people in the quotations above - concerning the envisaged backlash from the gods - became a reality. Mmadikila

who thus far had managed to challenge and to defeat fellow mortals, was now faced with the might of the gods, as fellow custodians and protectors of the social norms and values which she was challenging.

The gods were now on the war path and, as if Podile's death was not enough punishment for the Motšhakis, the gods destroyed Mmadikila herself. Ironically, Mmadikila died in a similar way to Mpaleraatha and his immediate family members. She was knifed to death by Thongwa, her new brother-in-law, thus confirming the traditional social belief that, "he who divorces citing fear of death as the cause, will live to endure the same fate". In this novel, Mmadikila's death symbolizes triumph of the old order over the new.

There are quite a number of cultural lessons which can be drawn from the excerpts quoted above. For instance: in accordance with African tradition, any elderly person - be it a commoner or king, rich or poor, stranger, disabled, etcetera - deserves respect. This qualification is based on the belief that "age" represents maturity and wisdom. This acquired wisdom relates the elderly more closely to the mythological world of the ancestors. Traditionally, the ancestors are believed to be the ones who bless and protect people against all evil, whilst on the other hand, they bring evil upon those who transgress their orders. Mmadikila knew all this but as a representative of modernity - here represented by the youth and their aggressive conduct and attitude towards the old order - she did not care about nor listen to the advice of the village elders.

A household gate stopped with the branch of a wait-a-bit tree (mokgalo), has some significant symbolic meaning to an African person acquainted with African traditional values and practices. It symbolizes that all members of the concerned household are dead. In this case, Lesibana who was Ntlheke's elder brother - suffering from a bout of madness - had chopped and killed all members of his father, Mpaleraatha's, family with an axe, save for Ntlheke, Mmadikila and their children.

Nevertheless, Mmadikila's disrespect for the elders and the traditional norms and values, exposes her as the epitome of today's youth. To them, the traditional lore represents uncouthness, ignorance and stupidity. To them, traditional values are worthless and cannot inform the present. Anything deemed old is never taken seriously, hence the transgressions, and disobedience. Anything old belongs to the elderly and their dull life styles.

Be that as it may, quite a number of observations and generalizations can further be deduced from the two novels used as examples, to explain the theme on "social decay". For instance, Leratosello exposes social prejudice. In the African culture there is this belief that "Kgoši ke Kgoši ka batho" (the King is a King because of people). The surface meaning of this statement is that we can only talk about "a king" if there are people to preside over. Thus the statement further goes to emphasize the importance of the king's subjects. Unfortunately, in the African tradition there is a lot of discrimination particularly when it comes to class distinctions. Subjects are seen as nothing else but servitors. In other words, fellowship ends with servitude. Persons are considered in accordance with their social standing. Commoners' dreams and aspirations are stifled without hesitation or any remorse on the side of their masters - the rulers.

In Leratosello, Rafapa as the observer and the teacher of his society shows that whilst he acknowledges and respects Africanism he is against the categorization of people. Thus he deliberately created Kgaladi and Senoinoi - as people from two different classes in the society - to champion his cause by challenging the rigid and the seemingly impenetrable old traditions. When these two characters finally came to live together as husband and wife without first having to consider whether they are compatible in accordance with the social classifications, then modernity had triumphed over traditional norms and values. People's mind-set, that the traditional social order is pure and devoid of iniquities, has been cracked and thus exposing the decay in the traditional social systems.

On the other hand, in Mogwane o a Ila, Rafapa takes us through another excursion of the decaying traditional social systems. This he does by introducing yet another life dimension of the gods, and their importance in the day to day human interactions. Of interest in this novel, is to see how the writer, whilst challenging the status quo of the traditional value system, simultaneously reminds us, the readers, that it is not everything which is regarded as being old, which should be seen as part and parcel of archivalia. As the old informs the present, the writer reminds modernists that besides the prejudice and iniquities of the traditional social system, there are those norms and values which cannot be sacrificed nor ignored. Those norms and values of the old, need to be respected, obeyed and observed without fail. Whosoever transgresses them - like Mmadikila, the heroine of Mogwane o a Ila did - is sure to suffer severe backlashes from the gods as the custodians who are jealously guarding over them.

3.3 THE THEME OF MADNESS AND VENGEANCE

After the completion of his first novel, Leratosello, Rafapa's life came to be one that was punctuated by the vicissitudes of life, particularly the mental problems. That is evidenced by his thematic focus on the mentally ill. On reading these three succeeding novels - which this study refers to as the trilogy - namely: Mogwane o a Ila, Bohwa bja Madimabe and Bowelakalana respectively, one gets the feeling that Rafapa deliberately brought in this subsidiary theme of madness in order to educate the society that it should not always be taken for granted that whoever has a mental illness is mad. In the trilogy he goes on to express the fact that there is a difference between neurosis, psychosis and total madness and above all, he makes a plea to the people to be sympathetic to those afflicted by these mental ailments.

As this study is not pathological but a literary exploration of all the characters so perceived to be mad, they will be discussed according to their roles in the stories

and above all, they will be discussed in accordance with their functions in relation to the theme of madness.

In an article titled *madness and memory*, Mazzaro observes that madness is:

... the inability of individuals to function in the world, whilst in providing intelligibility, memory relies on the proper registering, storage and retrieval of forms (1985:97).

Rafapa's mad characters clearly reveal the kind of deficiencies described in the quotation above. Their actions and behaviour depict them as being abnormal and thus unstable of memory and character. Mogwane o a lla depicts four mad characters whom the writer uses for different purposes. They are Lesibana, Podile, Thongwa and Motšhene.

Lesibana is portrayed as being mad as a result of a head injury he sustained at his place of employment in Johannesburg, which came to be aggravated by his excessive intake of drugs. During a discussion between Ntlheke and Lesibana's doctor, the doctor - Dr van der Hooft - explained Lesibana's condition as follows:

Mogolwago ke rile go mo alafa morago ga kotsi yela, ka mo laya tsebegokwa gore a se tsoge a lekile go kgoga lebake goba seela sa segwai seo se tagago ge motho a se kgogetše mafahleng. Ditagi tša mohuta wo ke diokobatši tše kotsi kudu megalatšhikeng ya motho. Tšona ka noši di a gafiša - gomme ge o di kgoga o le moalafša wa bolwetši bja bjaša e dio ba fela go ikgogolela magala hlogong. Bjale mogolwago ge ke mo hlahloba ke humane seokobatši sa lebake ka bontši bjo bogolo mading le megalatšhikeng ya gagwe. Gomme tshenyo yeo lebake le e dirilego bjokong bja gagwe ke ya go ya go ile, e ka se alafege (1981:24).

(After I had cured your brother for that injury he sustained in that accident, I cautioned him never to smoke dagga or to drink liquor or to inhale any intoxicant. Such drugs, particularly their effect on a person's nerves, are dangerous. They alone can cause madness, and if you use them whilst at the same time you are suffering from some

mental illness, you will be aggravating matters. When I examined your elder brother, I discovered that both his blood and nerves have been affected severely by the intake of dagga. As such, the damage caused by dagga on his brain is incurable.)

The writer presents the causes of Lesibana's madness as being unnatural, resulting from an accident and the deliberate excessive intake of drugs. Drugs have rendered him incurable and permanently brain-damaged. All these factors led to his inability to act and to think rationally. Thus it came as no surprise when he murdered his entire family including his parents. We observe with interest, the deliberate creation of this mad character - Lesibana - whose presence and actions become the pivot of all incidents in this novel.

It is generally believed, in the African tradition, that "lebadi la monna ga le segwe" (you cannot rejoice over another person's misfortune). It is also believed that, "lehu ga le hlalwe" (one cannot divorce one's spouse because of a death occurrence). But in this novel we see the writer deliberately allowing the main character, Mmadikila, to contravene these adages. To intensify conflict and sustain the suspense in this novel, the writer assigns Mmadikila the role of a rebel. Commenting about Ntlheke's feeling concerning his wife's uncaring attitude, the writer says:

Bohloko bja pelo bo godišetšwa pele ke gore kua lapeng mogatšagwe e lego Mmadikila yena o itšhupa nka ga a mo dikiše sellong se ... O kwa bohloko kudu ge Mmadikila yena lehu le la ba Tibang le itšhupa le se la mo kweša bohloko ka mo go bego go mo swanetše (1981:25)

(His heartache is aggravated by the fact that in his own family, his wife, Mmadikila, seems not to support him during this time of grief. His pain becomes even more unbearable on realizing that the death of the Tibang people seems not to bother her at all.)

Instead of consoling her husband in his grief, Mmadikila rejoiced. By rejoicing over her in-laws' misfortunes, little did Mmadikila know that her actions would

evoke the wrath of the gods. They took revenge on her for her unbecoming behaviour by inflicting Podile - her only son - with the same kind of illness suffered by his uncle, Lesibana. When Mmadikila remained adamant that she would stay divorced from her husband, Ntlheke, and that she would do as she pleased with her life irrespective of whether her conduct was in line with the social norms and values, the gods intervened and destroyed her pride by killing her brilliant son, Podile.

We expect Podile's death to serve as a purge to Mmadikila's unbecoming conduct. We expect her to mend her ways and perhaps, to decide to go back to her husband, Ntlheke, and even to remarry him. But to develop and to sustain both the story's plot, suspense and theme, Rafapa causes Mmadikila to become more stubborn, irrational and eventually turning to prostitution.

When Mmadikila - who had since married Seloma Mašiane - relentlessly continued to flout the community's norms and values, the gods were left with no choice but to stop her once and for all. To achieve this, the writer ironically introduces yet another mad character called Thongwa. Thongwa was Seloma's younger brother and therefore, Mmadikila's brother in-law. They had adopted him after their marriage had failed to yield a child. With time, he too became mad and eventually came to stab Mmadikila with a knife, killing her in the process.

The morality in this story, which is embellished in the aspect of irony, goes to prove true the adage that "You cannot run away from death". Mmadikila divorced Ntlheke Tibang ignoring advice from various people. She emphatically announced that:

"Nna ga ke rat'o hwa la selepe. Lehu ke rat'o thothwa ke la bolwetši" (1981:8).

("I do not want to die of an axe. I want to be carried away by the kind of death caused by an illness".)

The manner in which both Podile and Mmadikila died is indicative of the might of the gods upon those who deliberately ignore and even transgress their orders. Indeed "*Mogwane o letše*" (the switch has lashed out). Mmadikila died an ironic death, murdered by a mad person - the kind of person who forced her to divorce her husband, Ntlheke. She missed dying of an illness as she had wished. Her ironic death proved true the adage that, no man can choose or decide his or her own destiny and that each and every person's destiny has already been predetermined.

Whilst still on the theme of madness in Mogwane o a lla, we observe with interest how Rafapa duly introduces yet another mad character, namely Motšhene. What separates Motšhene from fellow mad characters already discussed, are his cynical commentaries on the society which run like a golden thread throughout the novel. His foolish, naive and nonsensical cynical remarks make him remain closest to the real world. Rafapa seems to have deliberately created Motšhene to help him advance his theme on madness. He endeavours to prove to his audience, the readers, that to be mentally afflicted does not mean that one is mad, a point which he vehemently argues as follows:

Batho ba bantši, gagolo ba go se rutege ka tshwanelo, ga ba hlathe pharologanyo gare ga bolwetši bja megalatšika le bogafi - go bona ke selo se tee (1981:46).

(Many people, particularly the not so well educated, fail to differentiate between an illness of the nerves and madness - to them, they are all one and the same thing.)

However Motšhene's cynical remarks and behaviour equate him to the Shakespearean "fool" in King Leah, whom Hazel Barnes proclaims as:

An unbalanced person who has difficulty in fending for himself in the normal world ... a "failed genius"(1986:214).

The role of Motšhene as the jester of Dithabaneng village is evidenced by incidents such as the one which occurred during the celebrations of Podile's

birth. Whilst everybody was celebrating, praising and congratulating Mmadikila and NtIheke for having been blessed with a son, Motšhene interrupted the joviality by announcing his presence in this manner:

"Tšie lala, batho ba gešo! Na le tlaeditšwe ke eng? Ke re na le a gafa naa? Le thabetše eng le sa lle? Le ka thaba bjang mola ngwana yo mongwe wa gaborena yo a bego a ikhuditše kua leteng sa badimo bjale a tlile mono faseng la lehloyo le metsoto? La thaba bjang mola go tloga lehono le yena a tlo tuntela bodibeng bja maraga a mašula le dinyamišo tša lefase le? Aowa batho bešo, a re se tšwafeng go nagana!" (1981:13).

("Silence, Silence please countrymen! What confuses you so? I say are you mad? Why do you rejoice instead of crying? How can you be happy whilst one of us who was enjoying himself in the land of the ancestors has come into this world of hate and quarrel? Why rejoice when as from today he is going to be affected by this world's sadness and misery? No countrymen, let us not be lazy to think!")

When considering the kind of miseries Podile came to endure in his short life time, we can only come to a reasonable conclusion that although Motšhene is said to be mad, his utterances qualify him to be more of a clown, a fool, which in the previous paragraphs has been explained as a "failed genius" who remains closest to the real world. His utterances which of course were prophetic about the vicissitudes of life and the miseries which were to befall Podile, can only come from a mentally sound person. But to emphasize the fact that he was mentally not balanced and that the whole Dithabaneng village considered him to be nothing else but the village "clown", the writer is quick to extol his jests as follows:

E tla be e se Motšhene! Gohle mo a fihlago go a fetoga, gwa nkg a yena fela (1981:13).

(That is Motšhene! Wherever he goes the situation changes, and he becomes the centre of attraction.)

In yet another example, Motšhene's mental retardation is exposed by his lack of judgment between serious and trivial matters. The writer does this by involving

him in a situation where he, Motšhene, and his fellow king's men were gathered at the king's court. The gathering was being addressed by the conservationist, Koos van Tonder, nicknamed "Hlaregadirengwe". Van Tonder was chastising the tribal court about the chopping down of wild live trees and the killing of wild animals. For fear of their extinction, he warned that those who were going to continue with such practices should know that, as what they were doing was illegal, the culprits would be arrested and be prosecuted by law.

Amid such a tense situation wherein even the king was afraid to express his opinion on the matter, Motšhene stood up and jokingly said:

"Alalaa! Lena banna, hono gona re duletše ditšiebadimo. Gona bjale ekwang gore o reng! O re mebutla e fedile mo nageng. Gomme se se lego mo nokeng ya ka ke eng?" (1981:30).

("Now you see! You men, in today's meeting we are actually listening to utter nonsense. Just listen to what he is saying! He claims that hares are extinct in the land. What is this that is hanging on my waistline?")

Motšhene's ignorance of such a volatile situation just goes to show that his madness is tantamount to childlike foolishness and lacks the ability to think rationally.

An intriguing aspect in Rafapa's Bohwa bja Madimabe is his employment of contrast as a figure of speech. Through contrast a revelation is made about madness as a naturally caused physical illness which can be cured, whilst on the other hand, where madness is chosen deliberately, nothing can be done to relieve the afflicted. The afflicted person, Molahlegi, is said to be mad. The source of her madness is said to be "difetela", a curse cast upon her by the dead.

Molahlegi's plight compares well with that of Podile in Mogwane o a Ila. The

sorcerers used them as tools of vengeance, the only difference between them being that whilst Podile was made mad as a result of his mother's wrongdoings, Molahlegi's madness appears to be the writer's endeavour to prove the adage:

"Lentšu ga le boe go boa monwana."

"You cannot reverse the word but the finger"

The surface meaning of this dictum is that once a person has uttered some words, those words cannot be blotted out nor reversed from the listeners' comprehension. In Molahlegi's case, the sorcerer, Jakopo, had cast a curse upon the tyrant Majagohle Lebelo, who had raped Jakopo's wife and when Jakopo tried to come to her rescue, Majagohle chopped his head off with an axe. Jakopo's last words were:

"Le tlo di bona, Le tlo di bona. Ngwetši ya gago ya mathomo e tlo di bona ... Modimo ke molefeletši" (1983:65).

("You will live to regret it, you will live to regret it. Your first daughter-in-law will come to grief ... God is the leveller.")

Jakopo's curse, which is here seen as a chosen purposive act, indeed came to fruition when Majagohle Lebelo junior, a nephew to the cursed Majagohle Lebelo senior, and duly named after him, got married to Molahlegi. Unfortunately for her, she was to be the first daughter-in-law of the Lebelo family, to whom Jakopo's curse was directed. Truly she did come to grief when barely a week at her in-laws, she was raped by a ghost, which she claimed, first appeared as a gust of wind which came in through the window. The wind then changed into the animal form which pinned her onto her bed and raped her.

A further suggestion of the rapist having been a ghost is detected in the explanation of Sebolaiši - Molahlegi's sister-in-law of the circumstances of that fateful night:

O be a hlakahlakane, dikobo le tšona di ferehlegile, mo

mpeteng e le mpherehlakana. Phapoša e be e tletše ka monkgo wo mongwe wo motho a bego a ka gopola gore ke wa dimela tšeo di khuntheditšwego gomme di thoma go bola. Ka moka re be re ithibile mašobana a dinko ka go a šukumetša menwana ye megolo, monkgo wa ntshe o re patla dipelo (1983:36).

(She was mixed up, blankets dishevelled, the whole bed was in shambles. The room was filled with the smell like that of decomposing vegetables which have been covered with soil. All of us had to close our nostrils with thumbs, that pungent smell was unbearable.)

The pungent smell from what seems like decomposing vegetables which had been covered with soil, is suggestive of the decomposing corpse in the grave. Rumour also had it that there was a ghost traversing the Lebelo's farm. That ghost was said to be that of the slain Jakopo's son, Malose. Malose had been conceived on the day the old man Majagohle Lebelo raped Jakopo's wife. The boy was rumoured to have died and thus had come back to Lebelo's farm to torment the family and thus avenge his father's murder.

Be that as it may, Molahlegi - the first daughter-in-law of the Lebelo family - came to be the accidental participant in the turmoil as she came to be raped by the ghost of Jakopo's son. At this juncture, we may deduce that Molahlegi's rape is the eventual fulfilment of the slain Jakopo's curse cast upon the Lebelos and that the old man's guilt had been purged. Unfortunately the aftermath of the rape ushered in a flood of problems. Molahlegi became pregnant and because of the traumatic experience, she became mad.

The first signs of Molahlegi's madness, as seen through the eyes of her sister-in-law Sebolaiši, are aptly explained to the writer's audience as follows:

"Ge ke lebelela mogadibo ka thoma go lemoga gore nka ga a re phafo! gabotse. Sefahlego sa gagwe e be e se sa motho yo a rego tswee! Kgopolong ... Go nyama le go gakanega di be di ngwadilwe ka ditlhaka tša go nona sefahlegong sa gagwe. A napa a thoma go fafatla

ditšiebadimo le go kitima. O thomile a tshetshetha ka lebelo le lesese fela mafelelong ke ge a tloga a tonaletše, a eja fase, ka mafuri ga gagwe go tupa lerole. Re mo topile kgole kudu." (1983:37)

("When I looked at my sister-in-law I realised that she was not well! Her facial appearance was that of a mentally abnormal person! ... Sadness and confusion were written with big bold letters on her face. Then she became delirious and gibberish, and then started running. First she started by running slowly but then ended up running very fast, actually flying, her back followed by a trail of dust. We caught up with her very far from here.")

The above quotation does not only expose Molahlegi's madness through the eyes of the others, but her lunatic antics qualify her as being mad. Strange she was indeed, as she is said to have constantly lapsed into some bouts of unprovoked rage. On the days when she would seem to have retreated back into some normality, she would keep to herself and spend much of her time in the family's study room, reading books about evil spirits and their love lives. As her life was already predestined, like Podile, Molahlegi could not be cured chemotherapeutically. She had to purge the guilt of her in-laws, therefore she eventually died without recovering from her madness.

The subtlety with which Rafapa employs his communication skills to communicate ideas and experiences, makes his works quite a marvel to read. His employment of the voices of the other characters to make comments and explanations about the situation and the circumstances of fellow characters, enhances his thematic development.

Bowelakalana is the last novel in the trilogy and the one which serves as Rafapa's summation of the theme on madness. In this novel Rafapa perceptively points out that madness which results from natural causes is curable. To illustrate this perception, Rafapa introduces the readers to Mpitiki, a thirteen year old boy who is said to have been born mentally retarded and thus confined

to a mental asylum. At the age of thirteen the boy suddenly started showing signs of rationality.

"Ga gešo ke kae? Mma le papa ba sa phela? Na ge ba sa phela ke go reng ge ke sa ba tsebe? ... Mo ke go kae ka baka la eng?" (1987:1)

("Where is my home? Are my mother and father still alive? If they are still alive why don't I know them? ... Where am I here and for what reason?")

These kind of questions were revelations to all staff members at Phedišang mental asylum that Mpitiki's madness has been cured. His psychiatrist - doctor Matšato - acknowledges the boy's healthy condition and the hospital's plans about his future as follows:

"Ngwana yo o fodile - ke kgale. O tlo dula lapeng la ka sebakanyana ge re tlo be re sa leka go humana thušo ya modirelaleago. Ke modirelaleago yo a ka kgonago kanyakanya ya go gohlometša mošemane yo setšhabeng gomme a dula hlenkge! a sa kokonelwe" (1987:4).

("This child is cured - a long time ago. He will reside with my family for a while whilst we are still battling to solicit help from a social worker. It is only a social worker who can help solve this difficult task of re-incorporating the boy back into the community so that he can live comfortably without any disturbance.")

Mpitiki has been cured of his madness and so closes the chapter on the theme of madness. Nevertheless, quite a number of ideas have surfaced out of our discussion of the theme on madness. Among others is "the writer's reflections of the self" in the trilogy. The writing of the trilogy seems to have been provoked by what he claims to be a malicious rumour that he was once "mad", a rumour emanating from the mental illnesses which plagued him whilst in standard 9 just

like Podile, a character in Mogwane o a Ila. This is evidenced by page two of his curriculum vitae dated 11 January 1995 which reads:

In 1978 when I did standard 9 I fell ill before half-yearly exams and was hospitalised until school re-opened in January 1979. When I returned to school the Mahwelereng Circuit Inspectorate had promoted me to std. 10 without my having done any std 9 work. I grappled with both std. 9 and 10 work in that one year and managed to obtain an M pass in matric.

In the curriculum vitae Rafapa does not explain or disclose the nature of his illness, but in a friendly letter dated 13 August 1995 he states:

One paper you showed me by an Honours greenhorn falsely states that in high school I suffered a nervous breakdown. This is NOT TRUE and probably based on rumour and NOT research. Dr van der Hooft of Groothoek Hospital diagnosed my problem as stress which led to nervous tension which culminated in depression.

The illnesses mentioned in the two extracts quoted in the curriculum vitae and letter, prompt us to conclude that Rafapa's "trilogy" is somehow biographic as it is a hybrid of fact and fiction. We are also prompted to conclude that characters such as Podile, Dr Ngake and Mpitiki are direct representations of the writer himself. Our argument here is based on the fact that Podile became ill whilst in matric after suffering a nervous breakdown. But because people generally do not make a distinction between the different mental illnesses nor different levels of madness, they just clubbed him together with lunatics. This is the kind of stigma Rafapa came to endure as many people, including his school mates, regarded him as being mad. This view is supported by the discussion in which Mr Lebelo asked Dr Ngake the reason why he chose to study psychiatry which to him seemed a difficult course to choose. Ngake answered the question thus:

Kgoši ya ka, ke ka baka la bohloko bjoo ke ilego ka bo kwa bophelong. Ge ke sepela ka mo ntle, ke be ke ekwa

bohloko kudu ge ke gahlana le balwetši ba monagano bao ba hlokomologilwego gomme ba ebela le mekgotha Ke ile ka re ge ke sa le morutwana wa mphato wa senyane ka babja. Bolwetši bja ntšhogatšhoga ka lebelo. E be e le nako ya ditlahlobo tša mafelelo a ngwaga (1983:60).

(My lord, it is because of the painful life experiences that I came to endure. When I walked around I used to feel the pain whenever I met mentally ill persons, who are shunned and roaming the streets ... When I was a standard nine pupil I fell ill. The illness quickly weakened me. It was during the end of the year examinations.)

Dr Ngake's explanation concurs with what appears in Rafapa's curriculum vitae. What makes it even more absorbing is the writer's skilful infiltration of the realm of his characters. Masked behind their names, he assumes a better stance to elucidate his themes. The trilogy exposes Rafapa's painful endeavour to clear the notion that he was once "mad". To restore his personal integrity and to clear misconceptions about the whole range of mental illnesses, he directs his blame on the uneducated sector of the community.

Batho ba bantši, gagolo ba go se rutege ka tshwanelo, ga ba hlathe pharologanyo gare ga bolwetši bja megalatšhika le bogafi - go bona ke selo se tee (Mogwane o a Ila, 1981:46)

(Many people, particularly the not so well educated, fail to differentiate between an illness of the nerves and madness - to them, they are all one and the same thing.)

This notion appears again in Bohwa bja Madimabe wherein the writer makes a self-confessed statement that he once suffered from mental illness. He is quick to explain that:

Malwetši a monagano ga se bogafi fela. Ke gore ke ra gore ga se gore ge go thwe motho o babja bolwetši bja monagano re swanetše ra phakiša ra goga gore o lahlegetšwe ke tlišologanyo gomme ga a sa tseba ye ntsho le ye khubedu. Go na le malwetši a go etša ngangego ya megalatšhika ao e lego a monagano fela a lego kgole kudu le bogafi. Bjale batho ba gaborena gagolo

ba go se rutege, taba ye ga se ba ka ba e lemoga
(1983:60-61).

(Mental illnesses do not pertain to madness alone. What I am saying is that when it is said that a person is suffering from a mental illness of some sort, we should not rush to think that that person has lost his or her mind and can no longer separate black from red. There are illnesses like nervous breakdowns which are mere mental illnesses but are far from madness. But our people, particularly the uneducated, seem not to be aware of these differences.)

The writer's use of expressions such as depression, nervous tension, nervous breakdown, stress, madness etcetera is not convincing but merely give him an excuse to stop the stigmatization by those who believe that he was once upon a time mad. Nevertheless, given the contents of his curriculum vitae and the kind of experiences contained in the three books of the "trilogy", in which the self-consciousness about the writer's first hand experience on madness is so evident, we are left with no choice but to agree with those who view his writings as being biographic in nature. Our view is strengthened by the fact that all characters appearing to be mentally disturbed in the "trilogy", are all said to be mad, with the writer self using terms such as "bogaswi" "gafa" "segaswi" at all times. If per chance, some of these characters were meant to depict any other kind of mental affliction other than madness, then the writer has failed dismally in this regard.

Finally, and notwithstanding the self-consciousness in the "trilogy", Rafapa has successfully managed to blend together lived experiences and imaginative art to express the tensions, stresses and conflicts experienced by both the mentally ill and the societies concerned. His expressions do not only clarify the theme on madness alone but also help in schooling the audience - the readers - about psychotic problems; their causes, ways and means of dealing with the afflicted, and above all, the fact that there is hope for the afflicted's health to be restored

back to normality. This hope is reflected in this self-consolatory statement:

Batho ba bantši ga ba tsebe gore batho ba bantši bao kgale ba kilego ba gafa lehono ke barutiši, boradipolitiki, baoki, dingaka, bagoeledi, baagi le maloko a mangwe gape a bohlokwa setšhabeng (Bohwa bja Madimabe, 1983:62).

(Too many people do not know that many of those who were once declared mad, are today's teachers, politicians, nurses, doctors, announcers, builders and many other important members of society.)

Given this kind of a scenario it comes as no surprise that in the third and the last book of the "trilogy", Bowelakalana, the main character - Mpitiki - born mentally deranged, out-grows his madness at the age of thirteen and rejoins the community to lead a normal, meaningful and fruitful life. This theme (on madness) - put quite simply - re-affirms Achebe's assertion, quoted in Killam, that:

The writer cannot be excused from the task of re-education and re-generation that must be done. In fact he should march right in front. For he is after all - as Ezekiel Mphahlele says in his African Image - the sensitive point in his community ... Perhaps what I write is applied art as distinct from pure. But who cares? Art is important but so is education of the kind I have in mind (1983:8).

3.4 PROTEST AND CONFLICT

Protest - characterized by resistance, rejection, disapproval and conflict - is rife in Rafapa's novels, and in most instances it results in tragic resolutions. For instance, protest in Leratosello proceeds from the intimate love affair between Kgaladi, a commoner and subject of King Seroboka, and princess Senoinoi, King Sephuma's daughter. The two's self-assertiveness to continue with their affair and to marry against the cultural dictates, serves as the main source of conflict in this novel. To evoke this, Rafapa has constructed a complex yet unified dramatic treatment displaying a combination of events which lead to tragic

consequences at both the individual and social levels.

When both Senoinoi and Kgaladi's parents realized that the two of them were grown-ups and suitable for marriage, they immediately arranged that they meet with their culturally recognized suitors - Senoinoi met with prince Dikutupu whilst Mmapitsi came to visit Kgaladi. Unfortunately, both Dikutupu and Mmapitsi were ignored and rejected by their supposed suitors, who claimed not to "love" them. By rejecting these supposed traditional and cultural suitors, Kgaladi and Senoinoi registered their protest not only against their own parents but also against their own social values.

On the other hand, the two families' endeavours to get Kgaladi and Senoinoi to marry Mmapitsi and Dikutupu respectively, were not mere personal whims but endeavours to comply with social values and their dictates. Moreover, in accordance with social values, Kgaladi was classified a commoner and therefore could not marry a princess. No wonder that when he told his parents about his wish to marry Senoinoi, his father dismissed his request as ludicrous. Here Rafapa dramatically explains what once transpired at a family meeting:

"Ge o re Sephuma e ka ba o bolela ka Kgoši yela ya ga Sephuma?"

"O opile phala mmala, tate."

"Ijoo! Ka Mašakwe! Kgaladi o reng o nyaka go dia nkgaoa letswalo? Sephuma? Sephuma-dithaba-di-se-kaaka? Kgoši yela ya go dula ka kua ga dithaba? Ngwana towel! O rata go dia re wetša kotsing e? Ke dia go rapela hle ga di dia napa di dia felela gona mo." Mmadikeledi a re go realo, ntle ga go okaoka a napa a emelela, a tšwa a yo swiela lapa. Kgaladi a napa a šala le Masenya ba le babedi. Masenya a hlaba Kgaladi ka mahlo, a mo lebelela a re tuu! go ipontšha a eja hlogo. Kgaladi a re ke a kgotlelela a ba a dio tšhaba. Kgaladi o rile go tšwa ka lesoro go sa tsebje gore o ya kae, mokgalabje a šala a re go mokgekolo: "Sešemanyana sela se a gafa" (1979:31-32).

("When you say Sephuma can it be that you are talking about that King of Sephuma clan?" "You are quite right, father." "Oh no! By Mašakwe! Kgaladi, why do you want to

frighten me? Sephuma? Sephuma-dithaba-di-se-kaaka (the-big-mountains)? That king which resides beyond the mountains? You spoiled brat! You just want to put us into trouble eh? I beseech you to please stop everything we talked about right here". Having said that and without wasting time, Mmadikeledi - Kgaladi's mother - stood up and stepped outside to go and sweep the court-yard. Kgaladi was then left with Masenya alone. He stared at Kgaladi, and looked straight at him without saying a word! showing that he was deep in thoughts. Kgaladi tried to stand his father's fixed stares but eventually he was forced to run away. After Kgaladi had gone out of the gate without anyone knowing where he was going, the old man remained saying to his wife: "That boy is mad.")

Masenya's fixed stares and deep thoughts and the seriousness embodied in Mmadikeledi's words of advice, as well as the way she took fright when King Sephuma's name was mentioned, foreshadows the tragic consequences which might come to plague their family unless Kgaladi stops his chicaneries, recognizes that he is a commoner and thus an unsuitable suitor for princess Senoinoi. Hence his old man's comment that "he is actually mad". However, Kgaladi followed his mad mind. He and Senoinoi ignored all advice that their love relationship was against tradition and cultural values. When they eventually eloped and came to seek sanctuary among Seroboka's people, their mission was accomplished and they had clearly registered their protest against rigid traditions. The unfortunate part of it all is that although they had achieved their dream, their actions unleashed fierce battles which came to destroy their own parents.

Rafapa's second novel Mogwane o a lla continues to explore the theme of protest against inflexible social norms and values already exposed in Leratosello. Having lost interest in marriage, Mmadikila - the principal character - found herself in direct conflict with the laws and the value system of her society. She needed a divorce from her husband Ntlheke, but unfortunately her wishes and dreams to be unshackled of what she has come to regard as a burden-marriage - was not to be granted easily. She had to pay a price, particularly

because her society, which is larger than an individual, regarded marriage as a sacred institution, an institution whose laws remain rigid and unchallengeable.

To gain her freedom Mmadikila had to tell a lie against her husband and her in-laws, claiming:

Kgoro yešo, Modimo ke yo mogolo. Ke ka maatla a gagwe ge lehono ke sa buša moya. Ke gantši ke rarankga ka tlase ga selepe sa Ntlheke a re o a mpheleletša. Gantši sebakwa o hwetša e le gore ga se ka mo šebetša nama ya manoni dijong. Ge ke re a itšhebetše le gona o gana nnang, o re o nnyaletše go mo šomela. Batho bešo, ke lapišitšwe ke go hlwa ke keketwa (1981:26).

(The honourable court, God is great. It is through His mercy that I am still alive today. I have on several occasions wriggled underneath Ntlheke's axe, as he was trying to kill me. On several occasions the ruckus would be caused by his dissatisfaction over a lean piece of meat in his food. When asked to help himself to a fat piece of meat he would also refuse claiming that he married me to labour for him. Fellow countrymen, I am sick and tired of the constant beatings.)

Although this was a blatant lie, the manner in which it was formulated and presented caused the king and his court to grant Mmadikila a divorce and thus her freedom. Ironically, the community at large, including Mmadikila's parents, did not share in her temporary victory. The writer skilfully exposes this unhappiness in the following dialogue between a dissatisfied mother and a defiant daughter:

"Mma, le godile. Le batho ba matšatši ale a mafuri; dilo tša sebjalebjaale di a le tlatlafatša, ga le di tsebe. Le itshwenyetšang ka rena ba lehono ge re tlaralala le tša lehono, moka gona ge e le go ithopefatša re ithopefatša mebele ya rena?"

"Ngwanaka, o nkweša bohloko. Mantšu a gago a ntlhaba pelong. O tlo mpakela bopaladithwana. Ke tlo hwa ke tšewa ke pelo gomme o tlo di bona."

"Mma o ikopišetšang hlogo ka lefeela? Lena batho ba kgale le a šokiša ruri. Le šaletše morago kudu. Le dira dilo tše

nkago mehla e sa le yela ya mola le sa le makgarebjana
Ye ke mehla ye mengwe. Le gona, lena bakgekolwana ba
matšatši a le sele kudu. Le duma tšeo di dirwago ke bana
ba lena" (1981:55).

("Mother, you are old. You belong to the archaic world,
modern things confuse you, you do not know them. Why do
you have to worry about us the modern people when we
flow along with the modern current, otherwise if we are
destroying ourselves, are we not destroying our own
bodies?"

"My child, you hurt me. Your words pierce my heart. You
will cause me a stroke. I will die of a heart attack and you
will live to regret it."

"Mother why do you cause yourself a headache over
nothing? I pity you old people. You are so backward. You
handle matters as if the times have not changed ... These
are different epochs. On top of that, you today's old women
are too shrewd. You are yearning for things suitable for
your children".)

This dialogue intimates Mmadikila's confrontational course chosen against the old order. Her ageing mother is representative of the old order which she so much disapproves of and rejects with contempt. Her mother's words of advice are disregarded and taken for foolishness. Her advice is void of any substance except for the desperateness of an old woman hungering for a taste of the joyous modern times and its utopian trappings.

The manner in which Mmadikila altercates with her mother in the dialogue above is indicative of the worthlessness of her freedom gained when she divorced her erstwhile husband, Nttheke Tibang. Her freedom is not used constructively and this worries many people. However, what is more worrying about the above altercation is the mother's concern and anger about her daughter's conduct and the stern warning that if she does not mend her ways she would come to grief.

As Mmadikila continued to disregard her mother's advice, her life came to be plagued with many disasters. First she lost her only beloved son Podile who failed to recuperate from his mental illness and eventually died. Her only

daughter, Mmalehu, could not come to accept her mother's second marriage to Seloma Mašiane. In protest she ran away and went to live with her biological father, Ntlheke Tibang. Mmadikila's life came to a tragic end when her new brother-in-law, Thongwa, stabbed and killed her with a knife.

What is most intriguing though is that, whilst Rafapa is a modern and contemporary writer, he sounds more of an ancestral worshipper. That is clearly revealed in constant inclusion and intervention of the ancestors in human affairs, particularly in instances where human effort seems to have failed. When Mmadikila divorced Ntlheke thus gaining her freedom and eventually turning to drunkenness and prostitution, she rejected all advice from the village elders and her parents - as the dialogue above indicates. To tame her and bring her rebelliousness to an end, the ancestors had to intervene by first inflicting her son with mental illness and subsequent death. When Mmadikila failed to change, they destroyed her in the same manner in which she so much loathed to die.

The theme of ancestral intervention and vengeance is continued in Bohwa bja Madimabe wherein old man Majagohle Lebelo wronged his farm hand, Jakopo, by raping his wife. To make matters worse, the rape was committed in the presence of Jakopo and Lebelo's drunken friends. Bemused by his master's bedevilling act, Jakopo showed his protestation by attempting to chop his master with an axe. Unfortunately Majagohle Lebelo wrenched the axe from him and in turn chopped off Jakopo's head with it. But even in death, Jakopo continued to defy his master's actions by cursing him, thus registering his final protest. Rafapa explains the tragic end of that dastard relationship between master and servant in this fashion:

Mabarebare a re Jakopo o ile a re pele a kgaogela ruriruri
a ahlama gomme a hlatša mantšu a: "Le tlo di bona ... le tlo
di bona ... morwa wa gago yo a tlogo go reelela o tlo di
bona ... ngwetši ya gago ya mathomo e tlo di bona ...
ngwetši ya gago ya mathomo e tlo di bona ... Modimo ke
molefeletši (1983:65).

(Rumour has it that whilst Jakopo was on the brink of death he opened his mouth and vomited these words: "You will live to regret it ... you will live to regret it ... your son who will come to name his child after you will live to regret it. .. your first daughter-in-law will live to regret it ... God is the leveller.")

Jakopo's protestations against his dishonest and careless master came to fruition when the supernatural, in the form of Malose's ghost - Jakopo's son - entered the fray. The Lebelo family's first daughter-in-law, Molahlegi, was mysteriously raped by a ghost. In the process she became pregnant, even though she and her husband had not as yet consummated their marriage. Actually, what happened to Molahlegi was not different from what had happened to Jakopo's wife when she was raped by Majagohle Lebelo senior. To add to the Lebelo's misery, Molahlegi was also inflicted with madness and when she came to give birth, her child was a replica of the dead Malose.

Overwhelmed by the mysterious spectacle, Molahlegi's husband - Majagohle Lebelo - the one named after the cursed Majagohle Lebelo senior, was left with no option but to take a gun and register his protest by committing suicide. Commenting on the situation and the circumstances prevailing before the death of both Majagohle and his wife, Molahlegi - who died immediately after giving birth - Rafapa writes:

Morago ga sebaka ra kwa segotlane se gotla. Re sa re re nyako wa dipelo ra bona mookimogolo a etla go rena a sentše sefahlego. A se sentše o a nkwa? A re re tsene. Ge re tsena re hweditše Molahlegi a patlame mpeteng a tswaletše mahlo, a sa itšhikinye, a itaetša a le seemong sa go šiiša. Ka makala go kwa Lebelo a šetše a hlatša maroga ka marama: "Ditšhila! Ditšhila! Ga se ya lešaka le! Ke wa Malose morwa Jakopo! Ditšhila!" Ge ke mo utswa ka meselana ya mahlo ka hwetša sefahlego sa gagwe se tuka bogale, mahlo a gagwe a phadima bogale bjaka a mokopa - ino la lehu o thuntšha meši ka dinko (1983:94-95).

(After some time we heard a baby crying. As we were beginning to feel relieved we saw the nursing-sister

approaching, with a contorted face. She really looked bad you know? She asked us to enter. On entering, we found Molahlegi lying on the bed with her eyes closed, and not even moving, which showed that she was in a critical situation. I was surprised by Lebelo who was already vomiting profane words with his cheeks: "Rubbish! Rubbish! It (the baby) does not belong to this kraal! It belongs to Malose, Jakopo's son! Rubbish!" When I looked askance at him I saw by his face that he was furious, his eyes were shining with anger like an infuriated venomous mamba.)

Malose is said to be dead and thus part and parcel of the late, Jakopo's ancestral lineage. The inclusion of his ghost and its interference in the life activities of the erstwhile tormentors of its people, does not only show the importance of its purging functions but also the extent to which Rafapa upholds the importance of the ancestral presence in human life. Although he is a self-confessed member of the Christian church - as his curriculum vitae reveals - which rejects the belief in ancestors, Rafapa's writing supports ancestral worship. Furthermore they seem to support the African belief in the existence of a strong bonding relationship between the living and the dead. Thus making true the notion that the living exist but under the grip of an overriding destiny which predetermines every sphere of the human life whilst they themselves have no control over it.

Events in Bowelakalana are basically about the protestations of the human soul concerning incarceration in places foreign to its origin. Etymologically this title which comprises a compound name *Bowela* (where something has fallen) and *kalana* (a twig) refers to a person's place of birth or origin, that is, a place where one's umbilical cord is supposed to have been buried. Ironically the principal character in this novel, Mpitiki, was born at a hospital called Phedišang, far from the village where he was conceived.

His mother died during his birth and he was confined to the hospital due to the discovery that he was born mentally disturbed. But by the age of thirteen, he had regained his normality and had the urge to go home even though he had never

known any other home except Phedišang mental asylum. Bewildered by his unfortunate circumstances Mpitiki is said to have, on regular occasions, started wailing spasmodically:

"Ke nyaka go ya gae, nna. Ke ya gae! Ke ya gae! Ke re ke a ya! Ke a ya! Nkišeng! Ijoo-o-o-o, ke a ya! Ga ke sa nyaka go dula mo! Ke ya gae!" (1987:2).

("I want to go home, I am going home! I am going home! I say I am going! I am going! Take me there! Oh no-o-o, I am going! I do not want to stay here any more! I am going home!")

It was this kind of urge within him which eventually forced him to escape from Phedišang. Given the nature of Mpitiki's problem, Phedišang hospital had to rely on the services of the department of social welfare to trace and to locate his relatives before he could be released from his confinement. This goes to reveal that both time and patience were of essence here. Whilst the social workers were to speed up their search for his relatives, he too was supposed to be patient. Unfortunately, the quest for freedom could not let him be.

Although, he was removed from the hospital - after it was realized that he had been cured - and placed under the care of his psychiatrist's family until his relatives could be found, Mpitiki escaped. The story gives the sense of his escape as having been fuelled by the lack of knowledge that social workers were busy trying to trace his relatives. Adding to this lack was the anguish he felt about his dependency and the void of not knowing his relatives. This void and mental torments are clearly expressed in this extract:

Pelo ya gagwe e be e šutša ka phišegelo ya tokologo - tokologo ya go kgona go mo kgontšha go apara nagakgomo ye le go tseba mmagwe le tatagwe ... Tihologelo ya go tseba modu wa gagwe ya fela e gola le matsatši go fihla ge ka nako a dio imakalela ditsebe di lla marwerwe, a e kwa nka lentšu la mosadi le mmitša le le kgolekgole meeding le maweng a go gowagowa go apeša lentšu la gagwe kuane ya seriti sa go fšegiša le re:

"Thorwana ya ka wee, Mpitiki, ke mono gae ntlentle, ntate ka bosese le bofefo" (1987:5).

(His heart was puffing with the anxiety for freedom - freedom to enable him to traverse and know the land and to be able to know his mother and father. The desire to know his origins grew by the day until at times he would be surprised by his own ears which would feel like hearing a woman's voice calling him from some far away place, of echoing watercourses and caves, which cover her voice with frightening sounds, calling: "Mpitiki, my only child, I am here at home, quite far away, come to me with ease and lightness.")

The pestering voice - which is said to have been from the western side of the hospital - can only be attributed to his dead mother, particularly because at the end of it all, it was discovered that his mother's village was on the western side of Phedišang hospital and mental asylum. That being the case, we see how the supernatural once more plays an important role or comes to be involved in human affairs. Having escaped from the sanctuary which had protected him for thirteen years, the writer goes on to show how Mpitiki became a wanderer. But under the guidance of the same voice which had caused him to want to leave Phedišang hospital, he finally arrived at his village, and was re-united with his relatives, thus gaining his freedom.

In Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago, protest is also confined to an individual, Molahlegi. His main problem was his father - Kgakgathu - who seemed reluctant to seek employment in order to support his family like all other men did.

"Tate, ke monna ofe yo a nago le mosadi le bana wa thaka ya lena mono Katanong yo a tšhabago go yo šoma le thaka tša gagwe kua toropong gomme a duletšego go gerema le motse a re ke rekiša ditlolo le mangina le ditamati? Gomme mma le sentenyana ya mangina le ditamati tšeo ga se a ka a e bona! Ge o tla reka lesaka la bupi ke ge mma a go šekile pele mo nkego ga se boikarabelo bja gago go fepa dimpa tša mogatšago yo o mo nyetšego le bana ba o ba tlišitšego lefaseng wa ba tloša ka legodimong mo ba bego ba iketlile. Gomme bjale ge nna o nkgodišitšego ka sehlogo

le bana bešo ke reka phahlo go tsoša lapa lešo, wena o a e phatlalatša. Mokgalabje, gabotse o nyaka gore re direng?" (1991:43).

(Father, what kind of a man is he, of your age, who has a wife and children but is afraid to go and seek employment like men of his age do, but rather choose to be a vagabond claiming to sell body ointments, earrings and tomatoes? On top of that, my mother has never seen a sent from the proceeds of your tomatoes and earrings! For you to buy a bag of mealie meal is only after my mother has forced you as if it is not your responsibility to feed your own wife you married and the children you have removed from heaven where they were comfortable. Now when I, who together with my sisters had to bear with your painful treatment, try to buy some goods to uplift my family, you give them away. Old man, actually what do you want us to do?)

This kind of disrespect for one's father is quite inappropriate and cannot be condoned. The ironic side of it all is that Kgakgathu had a darker side of his life-history which he kept to himself, not wanting anybody including his family to know about it. As a descendant of King Mphofi's ancestry, who were forced to abandon their kingship because of a coup d'etat by Mafonko, a headman, Kgakgathu had to save his skin and that of his family by changing his surname and his totem. It was this will to ensure the survival of his family which made him reluctant to seek employment, since he was afraid that his actual identity would be discovered and thus put his life and that of his entire family in danger.

Kgakgathu's quest to keep his actual identity a secret, alienated him from his wife and children as they came to regard him as a despot, lazy and an uncaring father. After Molahlegi had qualified as a teacher, he decided to register his feeling of disregard towards his father, in public. Hence the kind of talk to his father quoted in the extract above. Although this kind of altercations persisted between father and son and the estrangement between the father and his family grew, Kgakgathu continued harbouring his historical secrets and thus preferred to suffer in silence.

It was to be Kgakgathu's illness and the arrival of messengers from Vendale - who had been sent to come and collect him from his hideout, Katanong village, so that he could return to Venda to rule over his people - that would disclose his actual identity. Molahlegi's protestations and anger against his father came to an end when he - Molahlegi - was crowned king of a large group of the Vhavenda people and was renamed King Mphofi II. However what is most interesting about this semi-historical novel is that, whilst Kgakgathu managed to thwart off possibilities of himself and his family being destroyed by Mafonko and his supporters, his family had to suffer utter poverty even though in reality they were supposed to be kings and living in affluence. Kgakgathu himself suffered unnecessary estrangement from his family. Because of all these factors, the tone and atmosphere of the whole novel are charged with intense tension and suspense deliberately created to sustain this story by withholding the disclosure of the secret of Kgakgathu's ancestry.

3.5 TITLES

The titles of Rafapa's novels are intriguing. At best they can be classified as suggestive titles as they give clues about what is contained in the story. Musing about the title and its relationship to the meaning of the narrative as a whole,

Grobler concludes thus:

It (title) has to be telling, yet it should not tell too much either. It has to catch the eye of the reader and excite his curiosity (1993:44).

Grobler's views intimate the fact that, a well chosen and formulated title should not be too obvious but rather appeal to the reader's imagination thus exciting his/her curiosity coaxing him/her to want to know more about the contents of the narrative as a whole as well as those factors which might have influenced the writer to choose titles of such interpretive nature. Sometimes a title points the reader's thinking in a particular direction or focuses its attention on particular

elements in the narrative. Let us briefly look into the titles Rafapa gave to the five novels being explored by this study and find out how these titles relate to his themes.

3.5.1 Leratosello

Leratosello is a compound name composed of two nouns, viz: “Lerato” (Love) and “Sello” (mourning or sorrow). By compounding these two contrasting nouns to coin a title is suggestive of the fact that the contents of this novel are mainly concerned with both happiness and sorrowful matters. Happiness is here represented by the passionate love affair between Kgaladi and Senoinoi. Unfortunately, their love affair failed to get blessings from their parents as traditionally they were incompatible.

Ignorance of their incompatibility led to battles and subsequent destruction of both the kingdoms of gaSephuma and gaSeroboka. Both Kgaladi and Senoinoi’s parents perished during those battles. Their death symbolizes sorrow thus bringing us to the conclusion that there is a strong relationship between “Leratosello” (Love and Sorrow) as suggested by the title and the two main themes treated concurrently in this novel which are the themes of “love” and that of the “generation gap” here expressed by the wanton plundering of the society’s norms and values by the youth who regard their parents as old-fashioned and outdated.

3.5.2 Mogwane o a Ila

Semantically, this title can be translated as, “the switch is lashing”. Under normal circumstances, a “switch” is used to punish naughty children. In this novel, which is a continuation of the treatment of the theme on “generation gap”, the switch is directed at the erring Mmadikila - the principal character in this novel. As an adult, the community expects her to uphold and to cherish cultural norms and

values without fail. Moreover, as an adult she is also perceived as the custodian of the traditional beliefs of her people. Unfortunately, Mmadikila chose to be defiant. Among African traditionalists, the ancestral spirits are in charge of all that pertains to human life, and they are therefore believed to jealously guard against those who deliberately and stubbornly transgress the social taboos. Whoever errs they chastise, often in a harsh manner. In Mmadikila's case "the lashing of the switch" came in the form of death, as the ancestral spirits sent in their emissary, Thongwa - Mmadikila's brother-in-law - to murder her. Thus the switch had lashed, destroying Mmadikila in the process. On the other hand, this title, subtly exposes the belief of the writer, Rafapa, in the existence and importance of the ancestral spirits in human life.

3.5.3 Bohwa bja Madimabe

The title of this novel is also contradictory. Explained semantically, the word "bohwa" means inheritance whilst "madimabe" means bad luck or misfortune. This title is an allusion to the biblical admonition in which God sternly warned the erring Israelites that as a jealous God He would visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him. As it came to be, the wrongs of Majagohle Lebelo senior were to be endured by Majagohle Lebelo junior who was heir to Lebelo senior's wealth.

During his lifetime, Lebelo senior is said to have erred by raping the wife of his trusted farm-hand, Jakopo, in his presence. When Jakopo protested, Majagohle Lebelo killed him by chopping his head off with an axe. Jakopo cursed him before he died. Thus ironically, that curse came to manifest itself in Lebelo junior who had inherited his erring grandfather's wealth. His life was marred by one misfortune after the other and as such he never had the opportunity to enjoy his inherited wealth and he subsequently killed himself.

3.5.4 Bowelakalana

The title of this novel suggests that East, West, South, home is best. The story is about a lad who was incarcerated at Phedišang mental asylum because he was born insane. When he outgrew the insanity, the longing for a decent home and the wish to be re-united with his family grew to uncontrollable proportions thus forcing him to escape from his sanctuary - Phedišang mental asylum - and to become a wanderer as he did not know the whereabouts of his family. Once again, this title is suggestive of its theme which is mainly about the spiritual yearning for freedom and the quest to be reunited with one's place of origin.

3.5.5 Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago

Phiri (hyena) is one of the most feared animals among Africans as it is used to euphemize as well as symbolize "death". The expression "O tšerwe ke phiri" simply means that he or she is dead. Rafapa satirically refers to the marauding Zulu hostel dwellers in Soweto as "Diphiri", particularly because during the period 1990-1994 they pestered, plundered and killed many Sowetans. Thus the title of this novel already gives us some clues about the contents of this novel.

Commenting about his choice of the title for this novel, Rafapa says:

I could easily call my later novel Diphiri tše di gagolago. But I included tša Soweto. This is purely political. As a youth, I feel the great deeds of the 1976 schoolchildren have not been celebrated enough. So my title is partly a celebration of June 16, 1976. And the novel is also about power (not bogoši). At the end of the novel people who have been cheated out of power by political thugs are restored (13 August 1995).

Ironically, the contents of this novel are about events of 1990-1994 and not 1976. Be it as it may, our observations about Rafapa's "titles" is that, besides his unique style of formulating titles using "contradiction" as a literary device, his

titles are subtle, they do not tell too much about the content of the story and above all, they elicit the reader's curiosity to want to read the novel up to its logical end without pausing. These unique formulations exonerate him from Grobler's criticism in which he laments thus:

Many African writers from our region subvert their own efforts by failing to select significant titles for their works. Titles are often so self-explanatory that they hardly appeal to imagination of the reader. In fact, the titles of some works undermine the aim of the authors to seize the attention of their readers through the creation and sustainment of suspense, because the outcome is too obviously implied on the covers. As a result the message comes as "old news" with little or no impact (1993:44).

3.6 RÉSUMÉ

Our impression is that Rafapa's themes, including that of Leratosello, do not in particular and specifically concentrate on love matters per se but rather on subjects such as the generation gap, social decay, madness and protest, among others. Each novel carries a broader comment on life thus exposing a slice of experience, or probes the conscious and unconscious layers of human action, thus making true Perrine's argument that:

Good writers do not ordinarily write a story to "illustrate" a theme, as the writers of parables or fables. They write stories to bring alive some segment of human existence. When they do so searchingly and coherently, theme arises naturally out of what they have written (1978:144).

We also observe that where a love affair occurs, such an occurrence merely serves as the source of conflict between tribes or between the old and the new social value systems. Leratosello is a good example in this regard. The main characters, Senoinoi and Kgaladi's obsessive emotions about their love for each other are not properly explored, the main reason being that the writer concentrates much on character description more than depiction. This led to

descriptions of battles between the kingdoms of Sephuma, Seroboka, Motsepe, Ntwampe and others, thus causing the writer to lose focus on what he initially aimed to write about, namely love themes which not a single Northern Sotho novelist had thus far managed to successfully write about (Friendly letter: 13 August 1995).

CHAPTER 4

THE CONSIDERATION OF PLACE AND TIME IN RAFAPA'S NOVELS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The novel is unlike oral literature in its insistence on the "precise spatial and temporal location of individual experience." The folk-tale (the nearest thing in the West African oral literature to the novel) begins with "Once upon a time" and then tells a story set in never-never land where fantastic things happen. The novel, insisting on a life-like adherence to the details of human action, would have it set in a particular place and for a certain duration of time. The novelist can only make sense of individual lives by placing events and incidents connected with them within temporal and spatial dimensions (Obiechina, 1975:122).

Obiechina's brief comparative overview of both the novel form and the folktale in view of their setting, exposes the one important fact that events in a novel occur at a particular place or location and within a particular society at a given point in time. As Kenny observes:

Society has both its spatial and temporal aspects. A society is obviously related to place but one's role in society changes and develops with time (1966:106).

Both Kenny and Obiechina's profound observations, highlight two of the most crucial aspects of literature, viz. "place" and "time". These two aspects together constitute one of the most important considerations in literature, namely setting. According to Roberts:

Setting refers to the natural and artificial scenery or environment in which characters in literature live and move. Things such as the time of day and the amount of light, the trees and animals, the sounds described, the smells and weather are all part of the setting. Paint brushes, pitchforks, rafters, horses, automobiles, apples and many other items belong to the setting. Reference to clothing, descriptions of

physical appearances and spatial relationships among the characters are also part of setting (1982:7).

In this regard Abrams also argues that:

The setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action occurs; the setting of an episode or scene within a work is the particular physical location in which it takes place (1981:175).

Conclusions which can be drawn from the above extracts are that the setting of a narrative comprises the sum total of references which constitute the social environment and circumstances, the physical and the temporal objects, the artefacts as well as the psychological make-up of the characters peopling the story. Generally explained, setting in this study is understood to be that element of fiction which reveals to the reader, the where and the when of the events, i.e. the point in time and space at which events in the story occur.

However Mphahlele warns that, as setting is the place where the action of the characters occur, readers should be clear in their minds as to what kind of place it is. They should at times pause to imagine it: the house, landscape, the air, all physical features of the place as all these enrich the story. Furthermore, the time of day, year or period in history should also be taken into consideration since they help to clarify the action and characters in the narrative (1981:9).

Let it suffice to conclude by saying that, although to ground characters and events in an authentic background is a major function of setting, some differentiations between setting in time and setting in place must be made. Both the writer and the reader should be acquainted with the fact that even though it is difficult to separate place and time - as they are usually collectively determined - the fact is, when reference is made to place, it involves the localization of the narrative, characters and their actions as well as the atmospheric conditions prevailing within the social environment (O'Toole, 1982:180).

Like all opinions cited above, this study acknowledges the fact that it is difficult to discuss one of these two aspects - time and place - without mentioning the other as they are closely related. However, for the sake of convenience and clarity, this chapter purports to discuss them separately when examining the setting of JRL Rafapa's novels. We shall also look into the functions of setting as well as the relationship existent between setting and other important elements of the narrative such as theme, plot, character, mood, unity, etcetera.

It is intriguing to notice that Rafapa - born and bred in Sandsloot (Ga-Mokopane), a typical traditional rural environment - shows a strong link and broad understanding of his rural origin through his writings. All the five novels being explored have the traditional rural background or setting as their base. The strong bonding existent between the subject matter of preoccupation and his settings enhances the quality of his narrative and thus renders the kind of life portrayed by his characters more realistic than mere fiction. His choice of setting reminds us of Maxwell-Mahon's advice to writers that,

... it is wisest to choose a setting that you know from personal experience, some locality or environment with which you are familiar(1979:6).

Sharing in Maxwell-Mahon's thoughtful advice is Hawthorn who has also discovered the importance of the correct and relevant choice of setting, in facilitating the writer's communication endeavours. As he would explain it:

Sometimes the choice of a suitable setting helps an author to avoid the need to write about things that he or she is not good at, or interested in writing about (1985:60).

Let us now examine Rafapa's settings in accordance with these two most important aspects: "place" and "time".

4.2 PLACE

Characters in a story enact their roles in varied but precise spatial settings. According to Bal (1985:93) the term "place" or space, usually denoting a geographical location, refers to the topological position in which the actors or characters in the story are situated and events of the plot occur. This concept-space or place - is related to the physical, mathematically measurable shape of spatial dimensions. In literature, the spatial setting is regarded as the fixed area where events of the story take place. To facilitate our discussion, place is further sub-divided into: place as a space of action and place as acting space.

4.2.1 Place as a space of action

A detailed presentation of the place of action leads to a more concrete picture of that space as it serves as a base of action. Let us examine the following passage:

Thaba ye ya Mabupudung ke mmagodiphediphe. E tšere bosejamorogo, bosejanama le bomajaasahlale ya bea gotee ... Meetse a noka yeo e ngayago thaba ye ka bogare ke a matalana a go tonya. Ke a go thola ge motho a a lebeletše ka godimo, fela a go kitima ka lebelo le legolo ka fase. Noka ye ke phariri e bile ka go iša e kgotla maleng a lefase. Kua e felelago gona, aowa ruri, le baagi ba metse e mebedi ye, wa gaSephuma le wa gaSeroboka, ga ba tsebe, ešita le kua a thomago. Nokeng ye ya Motimalenyora, ke mo batho ba metse e mebedi ye ba rego go lapišwa ke go lema, go koba dinonyane mašemong le go bina menyanyeng ba nape ba phonkgele ka madibeng a yona a botšiditšana bja go lapološa, ke moka ba re ge ba etšwa ba boe ba thobegile ditho, ba mpshafetše megopolo. Noka ye e be e tloga e le tatagobadudi ba metse ye (Leratosello, 1979:1).

(This mountain of Mabupudung is the mother to various creatures. It has gathered together the herbivores, the carnivores and the omnivores ... Water from the river that flows through the middle of this mountain is green and cold.

In appearance it looks still on the surface, but flows swiftly underneath. This river is very broad and its depth touches the bowels of the earth. Where it ends, no one knows for sure, and even the inhabitants of these two villages, gaSephuma and gaSeroboka, do not know, nor do they know its source. It is at this river - Motimalenyora - where people from these two villages come to refresh themselves after various hard day's work. This river was truly a father to the inhabitants of these villages.)

The scenic description of both Mabupudung mountain range and Motimalenyora river as well as the naming of the two villages of gaSeroboka and gaSephuma, vividly exposes the main places of action. Both villages of gaSephuma and gaSeroboka benefitted equally from the fauna and water derived from this mountain and the river. The writer's opinion that this river was truly a father to the inhabitants of these villages - expressed in the extract above - is suggestive of a peaceful and harmonious coexistence which prevailed, then, among the inhabitants of these two kingdoms. However the imagery of the water which appears to be still on the surface whilst running swiftly underneath is an ironic prediction of the looming confrontations which came to mar their peace. The culturally incongruous love affair between Senoinoi, King Sephuma's daughter, and a commoner called Kgaladi, a subject of King Seroboka, came to cause all the problems in this novel.

When the two lovers - Kgaladi and Senoinoi - are introduced for the first time to the readers, they are in a secluded spot on Mabupudung mountains where they are said to have been in hiding for two consecutive nights. At this hide-out the topic of concern was their feelings for each other:

- Senoinoi: "Moratiwa ..., ge ke na le wena ga ke nyamišwe ke selo. Ge ke na le wena ga ke nagane ka se sengwe, ge e se lerato la rena.
- Kgaladi: "Ha! ha! ha! Lebone la pelo ya ka, naa o sa bolela o sa dio roka molomo? Ke go rata ka lerato la baratani ba go ratana ka lerato la go

ratega. ... Ke wena monoki le mokgabiši wa toro tša ka" (1979:5).

Senoinei: "My love ..., when I am with you nothing depresses me. When I am with you I don't think about anything else except our love."

Kgaladi: "Ha! ha! ha! The light of my heart, are you still talking, why don't you just keep quiet? I love you with the love of lovers who really love each other with genuine love. ... You are the seasoner and decorator of my dreams".

Secret lovers like Kgaladi and Senoinei can of course say these kind of reassuring words of love to each other at secluded places like this one where they are all by themselves and do not fear anybody spying on them. Commenting about their situation the writer says:

Mantšwana a maebanamabedi a a be a bolela sekhung, ka mokgahlo ga matlapa, ka gare ga mašohlošohlo moo ba ka se fihlelelwego ke motho gobane taba ke tša babedi (1978:5).

(The voices of these two lovers were mumbling in a hiding place, between rocks deep in the bushes where they could not be disturbed by anyone, as matters of this nature are meant for two people only.)

On the other hand, the two villages of gaSephuma and gaSeroboka are merely mentioned as places where these two lovers abode and were bound to return to after abandoning their love camp. However, what is interesting about Rafapa's handling of the place of action is the deliberate combination of scenic descriptions of some places whilst others are merely mentioned. A good example of the latter is the mere mentioning of the two villages of gaSephuma and gaSeroboka. Even though these two villages serve as the main centres of action, Rafapa did not bother to paint a detailed description of their physical

features or their influence on the two lovers' actions. Instead, more emphasis seems to have been on the localization of the main characters - Kgaladi and Senoinoi - and their actions.

Nevertheless, Mabupudung mountain range, Motimalenyora river, gaSephuma and gaSeroboka serve as the places of action for the clashes which ensued between the kingdoms of Sephuma, Ntwampe, Seroboka, and Motsepe, the main cause being the culturally incongruent love affair between Kgaladi and Senoinoi. Clashes which took place between these kingdoms, eventually led to their total destruction and thus triumph for Kgaladi and Senoinoi who eventually came to live together without any cultural hindrance.

Another observation worth mentioning, concerning space as a place of action, is its dynamism. Throughout Leratosello events resulting from character's actions are patterned into shifting scenes of action and are thus convoluted. Action constantly shifts from one locality to the other and at times even creating cyclic movements. For example: Kgaladi and Senoinoi are lovers but stay in different villages - gaSephuma and gaSeroboka respectively. Because of his undying love for Senoinoi, Kgaladi moved away from gaSeroboka and went to stay at gaSephuma. After some time, he and Senoinoi eloped and went back to gaSeroboka. However, Kgaladi and Senoinoi's elopement had directly caused a confrontation between kings Sephuma and Seroboka.

On the night of their arrival, King Seroboka ordered his warriors, including Kgaladi, to go back to Sephuma's place, to destroy his kingdom and to capture the royal family. Kgaladi and his men succeed in their mission and as such, King Sephuma came to be King Seroboka's captive. Thus the movement of action from one locality to the other can here, best be explained as convoluted and cyclic. The inclusion of King Ntwampe and Motsepe who were actually uncles to the two warring kings furthers the dynamism of the place of action within this novel. Remnants of escapees from Sephuma's destroyed kingdom went to seek

refuge at his uncle Ntwampe. On learning about his nephew's plight, Ntwampe immediately took up arms against Seroboka. In the battle that ensued, Ntwampe emerged the victor. Unfortunately his victory was short-lived as Seroboka's uncle, King Motsepe entered the fray, fought and defeated Ntwampe and thus brought together the remnants of the wars fought between those four kings, among whom were Kgaladi and Senoinoi.

On the other hand events in Mogwane o a lla are localized within one place, Dithabaneng village. There is no detailed description of the physical features of this village or how its environment influences the main character's actions. However, more emphasis seems to have been directed at the actions of the main character- Mmadikila - as well as how those actions help in revealing her character and the main theme, which concentrates on attitudes and generation gaps. The confinement of the events to one main locality - Dithabaneng - could perhaps be attributed to the fact that all events are focused on one main character - Mmadikila.

Furthermore, the principal place of action - Dithabaneng - is sub-divided into smaller spaces of action such as a house, tribal court, school, footpath, hospital, graveyard, etcetera. For instance, the main problem in this novel pivots around the mass murder of the Tibang family. To pinpoint the actual space of the occurrence, the writer exposes it dramatically in this short dialogue through the voice of a messenger:

"T-t-tama .. e-e mahloko, ba ga Tibang"

"Mahloko?"

"Ee, mahloko. Kua ga mokgalabje Mpaleratha ditaba di eme ka lešele. Seo se hlagilego ga se phulege, se a iponelwa. Ka go realo ke ra gore nkgateng mohlala dinko le šupile gona ka kua gae" (1981:14).

("G-g-greetings ... yes, bad news people of Tibang."

"Bad news?"

"Yes, bad news. There at old man Mpaleratha's place things are not well. What has happened cannot be

exposed, but needs to be seen in person. By so saying I mean you should follow me, pointing your noses directly there towards home.")

The use of locative formations in phrases such as:

- * Kua ga mokgalabje (there at the old man's place)
- * gona ka kua ga mokgalabje (right in there at the old man's place),

do not only indicate the specific space within which events took place but also emphasize the preciseness of that particular space. In this novel, the mass-murder took place in old man Mpaleratha's house. From Mpaleratha's house, the action moved over to the tribal court where the king and his counsellors were sitting in judgement of a divorce case between Mpaleratha's son, Ntlheke and his wife Mmadikila. The problem which led to their divorce emanated from the very mass-murder committed by Ntlheke's elder brother, Lesibana. According to Mmadikila, she was living in fear for her life and those of her children. She claimed that since they were Lesibana's only relatives still alive, Lesibana, on leaving the mental asylum where he had since been incarcerated, might kill them just as he had killed his other relatives.

Compacting their case was not fear alone but also her lying to the tribal court that her husband, Ntlheke, constantly kept on attempting to kill her with an axe. The tribal court is a respectable place which deals with the most important and serious cases such as this one. The king is the most respected person as he rules and even presides over serious cases of this nature. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that on explaining the situation which prevailed on the day of judgement, the writer would metaphorically say:

Leratadima le šišitše ka maru a maratha a malebuka a go šiša ka meetse, a go lepologa mo nkago pele le tshela kgomo mokokotlo magodimo a tlo tsurutla matlorotloro. Lebakeng la ge banna ba pharelana ka ntle ga kantororo ya setšhaba, Kgoši ke ge a tsena ka kantorong le makhuduthamaga a gagwe. Banna ba re go ema ka tlhompho, bokgoši ba dula bodulong bja bona ka kantorong. Banna ba letela ka pelotelele mo ntle, ba tseba

gore bokgoši ba tlo re go ahlola melato seng, mono ntle ba tšwelela ge ba tlo bega dithemo tša melato yeo le go diga seo se lebanego go šogwašogwa ke kgoro kgoparara (1981:25-26).

(The sky was heavily laden with fragmented rain clouds full of water and hanging down as if it would start raining heavily before noon. As men were gathering outside the tribal office, the king went inside with his executive council. After the men had stood up (as a sign of respect), the king and his council took their respective seating positions in the office. The men waited patiently outside knowing that the king and his executive would, after deliberating on the case among themselves, come outside just to announce their judgements and those other matters which still needed to be discussed by all the members of the tribal court.)

The metaphor of, "the heavily laden sky with fragmented rain clouds, ready to start falling at any time," denotes the seriousness of the cases which the tribal court was to judge as well as the anticipated outcomes of such cases. The African culture does not favour marital divorces. But because of the kind of evidence given by Mmadikila to the tribal court, their divorce case was ruled in her favour, whereupon she was given custody of their children - Podile and Mmalehu.

Having gained her freedom, Mmadikila relocated and went to live with her parents. Her relocation caused the shift of the scene of events, from the tribal court to the Motšhaki household. Here the novel concentrates on the unpleasant relationship between Mmadikila and her parents. They were dissatisfied with her wayward behaviour of excessive intake of intoxicants, roaming the nights with young boys and practising prostitution. Her bad conduct culminated in her parents wishing her bad luck and thus causing her to lose her son Podile, whom the gods - as a way of reprimanding Mmadikila - inflicted with madness which subsequently killed him.

Hereafter, the scene of action shifts from the Motšhaki household to the Mašianes, who are Mmadikila's new in-laws. She had married Seloma Mašiane,

a teacher at the local school. The main event that occurred at her new place of abode, was that of being murdered by her insane brother-in-law called Thongwa. Mmadikila divorced her first husband, Ntlheke, claiming that she feared she might be murdered by her brother-in-law, Lesibana. Ironically she came to be murdered by her also insane brother-in-law, Thongwa. Her ironic death seems to be a deliberate ploy by the writer to justify the wrath of the gods on those who willfully trample on the values and norms traditionally cherished as sacred by the people.

Mmadikila's murder completes the life cycle of this novel, from the divorce from her husband, Ntlheke Tibang because of her fears that she and her children might be murdered, to her ironic death at the hands of the same kind of person she ran away from in her first marriage. Actually, her fate could idiomatically speaking be equated with jumping from the frying pan into the raging fire. Nevertheless, of interest here is to note that whilst in Leratosello, the place of the events was moved from one village to the other, in this novel - Mogwane o a lla - Dithabaneng village serves as the main centre of action. Events occurring within households, offices, grave-yard, schools etcetera, of that village.

4.2.2 Place as acting space

Contrary to place functioning merely as the place of action, the acting place often referred to as "thematized space", influences characters to act and to behave in a particular manner. In other words, the spatial setting is no longer seen as only a place where action occurs but as the source of influence or the controller of events in the narrative. Characters' actions are influenced by the circumstances relevant to the particular space. Bal (1985:93) regards such a place or space within which characters perform their actions as "the frame". He further explains that "the frame" may either be safe or hostile to the character, thus causing such a character to behave or act in a particular manner.

The use of the term “frame” to denote space or place has also been adopted by Grobler and Strachan (1987:67) in the preparation of some notes on setting in *modern prose*. These two scholars further explain and even refer to “the frame” as the “cadre”. However, as our focus is on the functions of such a place, we may conclude by saying that stories of this kind therefore are those in which the actions of the characters are the direct results of conditions in the environment or situations within which they find themselves.

Let us consider how Rafapa uses “thematized” space or “frame” to elicit various kinds of responses from his characters. Events in Bohwa bja Madimabe - Rafapa’s third novel - are set in a variety of such thematized spaces. Set on an unnamed farm somewhere in Botswana, we only come to know the location of the events as taking place at Lebelo’s farm, which in actual fact is the name of the farm’s owner. The bizarre occurrences on that farm are told through the voice of the first person narrator, Dr Ngake. Coming from the Republic of South Africa where he practised as a psychiatrist, his fame and successes in healing mentally deranged people, had spread as far as Botswana where the Lebelo family invited him to come and treat Lebelo’s wife, Molahlegi.

Right from the opening chapter of this novel, the reader is taken on an excursion of various spots of action on the farm. For example, Dr Ngake came to Botswana by bus. To reach the farm house, using the footpath, he had to pass underneath a huge tree whose branches hovered on both sides of the path thus casting a black shade underneath the tree, obscuring vision even during broad daylight. The writer explains Ngake’s feelings on reaching that particular spot as follows:

Ke ile ka re ke sa holofetše mosepelo ebile ke sa opela ka molodi ke thabile, ka kwa ke itiwa ke letswalo, ke fokelwa ke moya wa go fiša wo o ilego wa nkgopotša wo o kilego wa mphokela mohla ke tla bona sepoko. Ka ema ka foša mahlo kua le kua bjaka tšhwene e tsena tšhemong ya lehea. Kgonthe ge ke foša mahlo ka letsogong la mpati ... ka bona mabitla. E be e ka ba a mahlano ka palo. Ka tšhoga ka ge kgonono ya ka ya sepoko e ile ya matlafala,

ka roromela ka ba ka kwa morwalo wa ka o thoma go nkimela. Mabitla a a be a tšhoša gobane a be a le moriting wo mosomoso wa morula wa ntšhutha gomme ka baka la leswiswi motho a šitwa go bona gabotse ka tlase ga more wo le ge e be e le mosegare. ... tsela ya ka e huhumela ka moriting wo wo moso, hleng-hleng ga lebitla la go phethela. Pelo ye nngwe ya re ke phamoge ke šekologe moriti wo, ye nngwe ya re ke bete pelo ka ge e be e sa le pudigoroga gomme e se bošego bja dipoko ge e se bomphukudu (1983:2).

(When I was still concentrating on my journey, enjoying myself by whistling a fine tune, I suddenly felt some hot air blowing over me, which reminded me of the kind of air which once blew over me on the day I came to see a ghost. Suddenly I stopped, with darting eyes like those of a baboon stealing from a mealie field. Truly, when I cast my eyes to the left ... I saw graves. They could have been five in number. I became scared as my suspicion of a ghost grew stronger, and I trembled and even felt my luggage becoming too heavy to bear. Those graves were frightening because they were located underneath a pitch black shadow of a thick set morula tree but because of the darkness underneath that tree it was always difficult to see what was happening under that tree even during daylight ... my path passed through this dark shadow, close to the last grave. A second thought said that I should by-pass this shadow, but another one said that I should remain steadfast particularly because it was still early in the afternoon and not late in the evening.

The strange and weird feelings that overwhelmed Dr Ngake at that particular spot - the morula tree and the presence of the five graves underneath the hovering branches which darkened the area underneath - are indicative of how the space or the place of action can influence the character involved to behave in a particular manner. The creepy situation prevailing at that morula tree enhanced by the presence of the five graves, is explained in this novel as the place within which lay buried the mystery of Molahlegi's psychotic problems. Particularly because in one of those graves lay buried the remains of the accursed original owner of the farm, Majagohle Lebelo. As already explained in the previous chapter, Majagohle Lebelo, senior, once erred against his farm-

hand Jakopo, by raping his wife in his presence. When Jakopo protested, Majagohle chopped his head off with an axe. That is when Jakopo spurted out these last words which were actually a curse:

“Le tlo di bona, le tlo di bona. Ngwetši ya gago ya mathomo e tlo di bona .. Modimo ke molefeletši” (1983:65).

(“You will live to regret it, you will live to regret it. Your first daughter-in-law will come to grief ... God is the leveller”.)

Truly, their first daughter-in-law did come to grief. The unfortunate part of it all was that whilst the late Majagohle Lebelo was the perpetrator, his nephews came to endure the consequences of his uncouth behaviour. Dr Ngake’s situation at the morula tree was made worse by the strange sight of a person leaning against the trunk of that tree, busy smoking a cigarette. Explaining how he felt at that particular point in time, Ngake says:

Ka itebala gore ke seithuti, Ngaka ya kalafo! Pelo ye nngwe ya re ke thinthe marago ke lebile morago. Ke sa goletša borokgo gore ke iphoše ka kwa lentšu le re: “Tama!” Gwa re ke kgaoge! (1983:2)

(“I forgot myself that I was an educated person, a medical doctor! Another thought said that I should shake my behind and run for it, going back where I came from. Whilst still positioning myself to run away, I heard a voice saying: “Greetings to you!” I felt like dropping down dead!)

Although Dr Ngake found himself trapped in the situation, his encounter with the strange man he thought to be a ghost was an eye opener. The strange man introduced himself as Malose the son of the slain Jakopo. He went on to tell Ngake that the farm owner, Majagohle Lebelo nephew to the accursed Majagohle Lebelo senior - had hired him specifically to keep watch over the five graves. He further went on to point at the late Majagohle’s grave accusing him of having been a bad person during his life-time. The information Ngake gathered at that morula tree only came to make sense to him at the end of the

story after he had failed to make a success of his mission to Botswana, particularly because he could not make use of his medical expertise to undo a curse.

As if taking his readers on an excursion, the writer moved the place of action from the morula tree to Lebelo's household. Here Ngake met with Majagohle Lebelo junior himself, his wife Molahlegi who was to be cured, and Majagohle's younger sister called Sebolaiši. The grotesque occurrences he experienced whilst staying with the Lebelo family discomfited him. For example, relating his experiences of the first night on Lebelo's farm, whilst he was looking outside through the window, the narrator says:

Kgopolo ya sepoko e rile go nyarela hlogong ya ka ka tlelwa ke letšhogo ka tšhoganetšo. Ka kwa ke gopologelwa se ke se bonego mosegare kua moruleng wa mabitla. Ka kwa ke bethwa ke moyana wa go fiša wola wa go mpetha mosegare ge ke batamela morula wola wa mabitla. Ge ke lebelela mehlare le dimela tšeo di lego hleng ga ntlo ka bona di šišinyega. Ke sa gakanegile kgopolong ka bona selo se seso se nkago moriti se putla gare ga mehlare yela. Ka kwa ke itiwa ke letswalo leo le ilego la dira gore ke tswalele lefasetere le garetene ka pelapela. Ka kitimela mpeteng ka fihla ka kanama ... ke tšhogile mo ke bilego ke kolobile. E be nka ke a lora. Ka itshoba go kgonthiša gore ga ke lore. Bophelo bja ka ka moka ga se ka ka ka tšhoga go etša thapameng yeo (1983:9).

(When the idea of a ghost came to mind I immediately became scared. I remembered what I saw during the day at the morula tree of graves. I felt the same kind of hot air I felt during the day when I approached the morula tree with graves blowing over me. When I looked at the trees and the other plants next to the house, I saw them shaking. Whilst my mind was still confused I saw something black which looked like a shadow passing through those trees. I became so frightened that I immediately found myself closing both the window and curtains. I rushed to the bed where I lay on my back. ... so frightened and even wet. It was as if I was dreaming. I pinched myself just to make sure that I was not dreaming. Throughout my whole life I have never been so frightened like that afternoon.)

This extract reveals that the narrator, Dr Ngake, was directly influenced by the bizarre occurrences in his host's house as well as on the farm as a whole. His experiences that afternoon about ghosts guarding graves and weird physical feelings still lingering fresh in his mind, caused him not to sleep even though he had had a long and tiring journey from the Republic of South Africa to Botswana. Given this kind of scenario, the immediate questions that fill one's mind are: will Dr Ngake in his present state of mind, clouded with ghosts and creepy feelings, manage to accomplish what he had come to do in that household? Will his expertise in dealing with the mentally deranged not elude him?

His anguish became worse when he eventually met with his patient, Molahlegi. Upon being introduced to each other, Molahlegi did not waste time in exposing her irritability and frustrations about her in-laws' place. The writer sympathetically explains her irate feelings as follows:

“Ke nyetšwe ngwagola. Go se tsebe ke kotsi”. O be a bolela ka pelo ye bohloko. “Ge nkabe ke tsebe nkabe ke ganne go nyalwa polaseng ye. Polase ya mmolai! Noga!” (1983:31).

(“I was married last year. Lack of knowledge is dangerous.” She was saying this with a sore heart. “If I had known I would have refused to be married to this farm. The farm of a murderer! Snake!”)

On hearing this kind of frustrated and bitter feelings from a person alleged to be insane, Dr Ngake must have realized that Molahlegi was not his usual kind of an insane person, for, there was a lot of rationale in what she said. On the other hand there is convergence between the information he got from Malose (the ghost) under that weird morula tree and what Molahlegi had just said about the late Majagohle Lebelo and his bad conduct. Both Molahlegi and Malose loathed the place, i.e. Lebelo's farm and its original owner even though it is said, that the three, Majagohle senior, Molahlegi and Malose never knew each other.

Reference to the late Majagohle Lebelo senior as having been a bad person, a murderer and snake, intimate the fact that even in death, and because of the curse cast upon him by Jakopo, his influence on the inhabitants of the farm still abounded. Actually the content of what Molahlegi said in the extract quoted above, is understood to suggest that she regarded and even viewed her misfortunes, on that farm, as resulting from her marrying Majagohle Lebelo's nephew and thus coming to stay on that farm. Because Molahlegi was the first daughter-in-law, she eventually came to grief just as it was predicted in the curse.

The influence of the place here is quite clear. The behaviour of the residents of Lebelo's farm was influenced by the circumstances prevailing around them. In an endeavour to establish the actual cause of Molahlegi's illness and to be able to set strategies of cure, we see the writer causing Dr Ngake to fall in love with Sebolaiši, Molahlegi's sister-in-law. As this affair was kept secret, their meeting place kept on shifting from one place of action to the other, for instance, from Lebelo's house to the river bank, from the river bank into Sebolaiši's bedroom etcetera. Being at these spots all by themselves their feelings for each other would always overwhelm them whereupon they would find themselves making love even during daylight.

During this love affair Dr Ngake gathered a lot of information about Sebolaiši's grandfather, Majagohle Lebelo senior and how Jakopo came to cast a curse upon their family and why things seemed to be going wrong with them, Molahlegi's illness and so on. The influence of the place on them was too much. That rendered Ngake's expertise on dealing with madness futile particularly because theirs, Lebelo's family, was a supernatural problem which could only be solved by propitiation and not through chemotherapy.

Bowelakalana is another good example of a story wherein characters act, influenced by circumstances prevailing within their environment. The place of

action is not static but dynamic as events in this story occur in different locations. For instance: This novel commences with Phedišang mental asylum depicted as the place where its main character, Mpitiki, has been incarcerated from birth. At the age of thirteen he has just recuperated from insanity. Signs of recuperation were evidenced by his rejection of his continual incarceration at the asylum as well as his rejection of other inmates he grew up with. This change in attitude had not been observed before by both his psychiatrists and nurses. Thus when he started questioning things, they knew that he had been cured.

The writer describes things which discomfited Mpitiki at Phedišang, the only home he had known since birth, as follows:

Bophelo bjo bo be bo mo tsene mading. O tennwe ke go hlwa a šoma ka motšhitšhi wo le ge o bopša ke dihlogwana tše dintši e bego e le selo se tee sa go apara seaparo se se tee; sa go ja dijo tše ditee; sa go šoma mošomo wo motee; sa go sepela ka morethetho wo motee go ya ka mo se laelwago ke lentšu le tee la motho wa dikobo tše ditšhweu; sa go phela bophelo bjo botee - e sego bja go natefišwa le go phadimišwa ke batho ba bantši bao mongwe le mongwe a iphelelago ka mo go ratago pelo ya gagwe. Meago ya mo le tša yona di mo nkgetše, Mpitiki (1987:2).

(He has had enough of this kind of life. He is tired of working with this swarm even though it is composed of many heads of like persons, who wear the same kind of clothes; eating the same kind of meals; doing the same kind of work; persons who walk according to the same kind of rhythm they have been ordered to follow by the voice of one person in white clothes; a swarm which leads the same kind of life - which is not made pleasant by many people each of whom lives in accordance with the way he or she deems it fit to live. Buildings of this place and their contents bore Mpitiki.)

The extract says it all, about how a thematized space or frame can influence a character to act or feel in a particular manner. Be it as it may, boredom of the place and the longing to be reconnected with his family members, particularly his mother and father he had never known, coaxed him to run away from Phedišang

even though he had already been separated from those who were still mentally deranged.

After running away from Phedišang, Mpitiki came face to face with the stark realities of life. Firstly, he joined white travellers travelling by oxwagon from the Northern Province heading to the Free State. Being a carefree, he did not worry as to where those white travellers were taking him to. He just wanted to go away, far from Phedišang hospital and its mad and boring inhabitants. However, little did he know that as a leader of an oxwagon, death could strike at any minute. That happened to a fellow leader called Mogoši, who was mauled by a leopard whilst leading their oxwagon.

Whilst still trying to recover from the traumatic experiences, one of those white men called Ditedu, came to give him and his friend, Mogofe, a severe hiding for having drunk milk without permission. With the place having turned hostile to him, Mpitiki was left with no option but to once more run away from his tormentors. But, as he did not know where to go as he had no home to run to, he found himself just wandering alone in the dangerous forest full of poisonous snakes and dangerous wild animals.

Commenting about Mpitiki's situation after he had left Mogofe and company, the writer says:

A tshetshetha bjalo ka kgwale go fihla a kgotsofetše gore o kgole le boMogofe. A napa a ema sebakanyana. Hlogo e be e re hwee! Pelo e re ruthuruthu, ki! ... ntle ga go gadima a napa a ngašula lefase. A se na mosebe goba lerumo, a iponaponela. Tšhiwana ya batho! Gape mathata a diriša motho dilo. Mathata a ka go diriša dilo tše yo a sego mathateng a ka rego ge a di kwa a re o lešilo goba o segafa. ka pelong ya Mpitiki go be go tuka hlase ya kholofelo ya gore gagabo gona go gona gomme tšatši le lengwe o tlo fihla (1987:30).

(He ran slowly like a partridge until he was sure that he was

far from Mogofe and company. Then he stopped for a while. His head felt hollow. His heart was pumping very fast ... without glancing back he continued running. He had no arrow nor a spear, he was just empty-handed. Poor boy! Of course problems can cause one to take wrong decisions. They can cause you to do things which a person who has no problems may come to conclude that you are either a fool or insane. In Mpitiki's heart there was a flicker of hope that his home is somewhere and that some day he would ultimately get there.)

The flicker of hope in his mind, that he would some day reach his home where he would be afforded solace, protection and love, spurred him to keep on searching for his family. That he had nothing to protect himself with nor the slightest inclination as to which part of the world his parents were in, was of no consequence to him. He had made up his mind to leave that sanctuary manned by Ditedu and company with their powerful rifles. What made matters or his situation even worse was the fact that he was just naive to life itself.

Having just recuperated from insanity which had bogged him down since birth, he had no knowledge of wild animals, let alone to be able to differentiate between the meek and the dangerous ones. As could be expected, his naivety came to be exposed on the day he arrived at the first village, since he left Mogofe and others. As he was just about to enter that village, he saw two people - a man and a woman - driving a donkey and coming in his direction. Just as he was about to meet with them:

Phoofolo tsoko ya putla mokgahlo ga gagwe le batho bale.
E be e le phoofolo ya go šiiša, ya go tshela bjalo ka
nonyane ka lebelo le legolo, ya mmele wa digobagoba le
mariri, ye tshela ya mmele wa go ya fase maotong a
morago fela wo mogologolo kua pele (1987:35).

(A certain animal passed between him and those people. It was a frightening animal, which jumped like a bird but at high speed, with a well developed body and a mane, gray in colour with a body that tapers towards its hind legs but quite big at the front.

From this elaborate explications of the animal, it becomes apparent that the kind of description given befits a lion. However, the use of a phrase like “a certain animal”, in the extract above, is suggestive of uncertainty. Therefore we come to the conclusion that Mpitiki did not know what kind of animal he had come face to face with. Nevertheless, the ferocity with which that animal came to kill the donkey which was being driven by these two people, and the kind of fright they showed by fleeing back to the village forced Mpitiki to turn away and flee from the scene without thinking.

As he ran away taking the easterly direction, he eventually landed in a village said to be occupied by the Barolong and Swati tribes. Here he was enslaved by a mister Hau. Before long the hostility of Hau’s family became unbearable and Mpitiki once more found himself on the road again. Eventually he found himself at Lydenburg police station, where after some investigations about his origins, his relatives were traced and he was subsequently reunited with them.

It is interesting to note that all the places mentioned in this novel were in one way or the other influential on Mpitiki’s behaviour. Seeing that such influence was always negative, he kept on moving, even though he was not sure of the direction to take, until his longing to be reunited with his people was fulfilled. Another interesting point about this novel is that whilst Obiechina (1975:122) states that the novel insists on the precise spatial location of individual experience (contrary to the folktale, of course - my own insert), Rafapa’s place or location of events in this novel, is not always explicitly stated. However, where the place is vague or has not been explicitly stated, spatial markers such as

- mono magaeng > here in the rural areas
- motseng wo mongwe > at another village
- ga gabo > at his home
- thabeng > on the mountain, etcetera,

have been used without the writer bothering to give the precise names of such referents.

Be it as it may, the above discussion of place as a “place of action” and place as “thematized or as the source of influence on a character’s behaviour”, has illustrated the importance of “place or space as an aspect of setting” in the narrative. The discussion has also highlighted the fact that characters in fiction, as the verisimilitude of real people in real life situations, cannot exist in a vacuum. They must be based in convincing make-belief social situations within which they can perform their actions.

4.3 TIME

Actions and incidents acquire meaning only when placed within a particular space in time. Acknowledging the importance of time in the narrative - although not prioritising it over place or space - Gelly says:

Time cannot be a determination of outer appearances; it has to do neither with shape nor position, but with the relationship of representations in our inner state. And just because this inner situation yields no shape, we endeavour to make up for this want by analogies. We represent the time sequence by a line progressing to infinity, in which the manifold constitutes a series of one dimension only; and we reason from the properties of this line to all the properties of time, with this one exception, that while the parts of the line are simultaneous the parts of time are always successive (1987:42).

Although this extract may sound a bit stilted and abstract, its simple meaning is that pure time, as an equivalent to the inner sense, can only be experienced by the readers and is not susceptible to representation in a pictorial sense. However, it is imperative to note that actions and incidents in a story acquire meaning only when they are placed within a particular space in time, moreover, events in a story happen during a certain period of time and occur in a certain

order. This time locus involves the time of the day, the date, the month and the year.

On reading Rafapa's novels, one is intrigued by his treatment of time. His time ordering can at best be categorised into two main streams, viz, convoluted and chronological.

4.3.1 Convoluted time

It is a fact that in reality events happen chronologically while in a story - which is the fictitious representation of that reality - those events may be arranged according to priority. In other words, the arrangement would depend solely on the aims of the writer and what aspects of life he wants to emphasize. Those events he aims to highlight would always get first preference irrespective of their time locus. The juggling of the time of the events is called the convoluted time ordering. Kane and Peters' observations are that:

In convoluted presentation (of time) the writer works back and forth from present to past to future to past to present and so on in patterns that can become very intricate. When a writer so complicates his handling of time, he wishes to blur the sharp (if illusory) line separating past and present and to suggest a more intricate relationship, perhaps for example, that the past rather than being "over", continues to exist within the present (1975:522).

Rafapa adopted this technique in the ordering of the time of events in Mogwane o a Ila and Bohwa bja Madimabe. Mogwane o a Ila is set in a semi-modern time frame. That is revealed by its theme of preoccupation, which concentrates on the generation gap. This novel describes Dithabaneng village's elderly people as being scornful towards the youth as they refuse to conform to the old social value systems. In his introductory chapter the writer applies the technique of suspense by convoluting events. The major event of this story which is the "death" of the main character, Mmadikila, appears first in the introductory

chapter. In other words priority wise, the writer chose to tell his readers about this event and thereafter went on to explain what actually happened during the principal character's lifetime and the reasons why she had to die such a brutal death.

This kind of prioritizing events comes as no surprise to a conscientious reader. Particularly because in this story, Mmadikila divorced her first husband, Ntlikeke, amid advices that, as divorce in the African social systems is taboo, she might provoke the wrath of the gods and thus come to grief. But to sustain the story and its suspense Mmadikila went ahead and divorced Ntlikeke thus deliberately ignoring good advice from both her parents and the village elders. As she cited fear of being murdered by her insane brother-in-law called Lesibana, we the readers journey through this novel anticipating how she would die, i.e. either through natural causes, as she so wished, or murder.

The opening paragraph of this novel which also serves as the prelude to the fateful event which took place in that village, reads:

Motseng wa Dithabaneng, ka baka la phišo yeo e kago femiša motho gore e ka nyaoša senkgamafadi, ye e aparetšego motse wo, ntho ka moka e kgorohlantše dihlogo fase ga mere ya ntšhutha. Ge go itše tuu! bjale, mollwana wa setsentsere wa kgaosetšwa ke lentšu tsoko le nkago ke la motho a lla (1981:1)

(At the village of Dithabaneng, because of its overwhelming hot temperatures which can provoke one to think that such heat can melt a pig, all people were shielding their heads under thick-set trees. In that quietness, the chirping sound of a cricket was cut off by a certain voice which sounded like that of a crying person.)

This extract has a two-pronged purpose. What we deduce from it is that, except for its hazardous atmosphere, Dithabaneng village was peaceful until that tranquility came to be disturbed by Mmadikila's murder. Secondly, we come to the deduction that the hot air which forced people to seek refuge under the

shade of trees, was caused by the sun, which denotes the time of the murder as having occurred during the course of the day and not at night.

Hereafter, the writer takes us from the present state of affairs into the past by exposing the inner thoughts of Ntlheke Tibang who, after learning of his former wife's murder, came to reminisce about their relationship prior to their divorce:

Mantšu a Mmadikila a ka se a lebale. Mmadikila o itše pele a ka hlala Tibang, a mo tsipa pelong ka mantšu a go pšhatlakana wa mosebe: "Sematlabokgola towe, nna ke tlo go tlogela, wa šala o tlatlafetše le mahlakwana a gago. Nna ke lethari, ke tlo itanyetša ka manopi mpho tlabakelwa tshadi ke medimo. Nna ke lethari ke tlo bonwa." Mmadikila o be a bolela bile a ntšhitše ntlhana ya leleme, a fela a kgotla Tibang kgara ye ka letswele, nke o tloga a mo gaša ka legoswi gore ge go kgonega maledu a monna a foforege, "wena o bitlafetše o ka se sa bonwa!" (1981:7).

(He would never forget Mmadikila's words. Before she divorced him she hurt him badly through verbal abuse: "You idiot, I will abandon you and you will remain agape with your house. I am a young woman, I will still manage to trap men with my god-given beauty. I am a young woman and I will still be attractive to men." Mmadikila was saying all this with the tip of her tongue popping out of her mouth, whilst she kept on poking Tibang's chest with her fist, as if she would soon whack him with a slap so that if possible, his beard should fall off, "you are worn out and can never be attractive to anybody!")

This kind of talk aptly reveals that Mmadikila had had enough of her marriage. In her eyes, Ntlheke Tibang was worn out and thus not different from a corpse. No wonder that despite his numerous pleas he still could not salvage their marriage. From Ntlheke's thoughts about his past life, the time frame shifts into the future. That is indicated by the adoption of what Gennete (1980:67) refers to as "anticipation" or "prolepsis". Here the writer foreshadows Mmadikila's future as seen through the eyes of one of the village elders:

"Go realo o hlala lehu? Tseba, lehu ga le tšhabje, ke

Sesotho. Tseba, Seswaneng lehu ga le hlalwe, o tlo hlomarwa ke madimabe go fihla lehung ... Le tlo swaba!" (1981:22).

("By so doing you are divorcing death? Beware, you cannot divorce because of death, that is the African tradition. Beware, in the African tradition, one cannot divorce because of a death occurrence, you will be pursued by misfortune until you die ... You will come to grief!").

That Mmadikila might come to grief unless she stops her plans to divorce Ntlheke Tibang, using her fears of murder as an alibi, is indicated by the speaker's use of "tlo", which is the future tense marker. For instance: -tlo > "will", as in - le tlo swaba > "You will come to grief".

Once more, the writer keeps on shifting the time frames, in this novel, i.e. from the present into the future and back into the past and so on. The change in time frames are controlled by the time of occurrence of the events being told. Grobler refers to this kind of time ordering as "temporal order". In his explanation:

Temporal order, works with the relationship between the succession of events in the story and their arrangement in the text. ... It involves, in other words, the connection between the chronology of the story and the way in which this chronology is arranged or rearranged in the text (1989:7).

Regardless of the manner in which time has been ordered, this novel goes on to tell us more about Mmadikila's life since divorcing Ntlheke. We come to learn more about how those predictions postulated by the village elders - which she refused to listen to - came to fruition as she came to lose her two children and eventually her own life. The convolution of time and events, has exposed well the theme of this novel which is concerned with the generation gap as well as the fact that the past, rather than being over, continues to exist within the present.

Another point worth commenting on in this novel, is the writer's use of "repetition", as a literary device. The contents of chapter one - which concerns Mmadikila's murder - is once more repeated, in full, in chapter eight which is also the last chapter of this novel. Our argument is, if the repetition of the same contents, told in the same tense, was deliberate and for the sake of emphasis - which is of course the main function of repetition in literature - then the writer's objective has been accomplished. But if it is repetition just for the sake of expanding the volume of this novel - which seems to be the likelihood in this case - then the writer has not only tainted the suspense of this story but has also failed to give it a proper plot structure.

The time of events in Bohwa bja Madimabe - which pivots around a curse cast upon the late Majagohle Lebelo, with repercussions coming to be endured by his nephews - is also convoluted. Told from the first person point of view, its introduction reads:

Ke be ke šetše ke thoma go pshirwa ke sethogothono seo se bego se ntšwele gore ke kolobe tsodii! Phefšana ye e bego e ntšhithola e tšwela ka bodikela e be e dira gore namana tša mmele wa ka di binabine ka boipshino. Ka kwa ke mpshafala mmeleng le kgopolong. Ka foša mahlo kua pele (1983:1)

(I was beginning to get sapped by the sweat! The light breeze blowing over me from the west caused the flesh of my body to feel with pleasure. I felt myself refreshed both physically and in mind. Then I cast my eyes to the front.)

The use of tense forms, in the extract above, such as:

- the auxiliary verb > "was", and the
- principal verb > "sapped, refreshed, cast", etcetera,

denote that the time frame of commencement of this novel is set in the "past". With the progression of the story, time frames keep on assuming different tenses, influenced by the prioritisation of the events.

If the main events in this story were to be ordered chronologically, the historical background of the first generation of Lebelo's family and how they came to be cursed by Jakopo, would have been given first preference. Then probably, the event to follow would be how that curse came to affect the Lebelo's third generation, followed by the invitation of Dr Ngake to come and help and so on, until the story reaches its logical end. But because of the prioritisation of the events, which also affect the time frames, the story commences with Ngake having been invited to come and cure the insane Molahlegi. This is followed by his discovery of the fact that Molahlegi could not be cured through chemotherapy as her illness involved the supernatural forces emanating from Jakopo's curse, which happened some time in the remote past. Then the story comes back into the present and explains the tragic end of the lives of both Molahlegi and her husband Majagohle Lebelo junior.

As this story unfolds through convolution of the time of events from present to past to future and so on, the following phrases were used to denote the time of the occurrences:

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| - | E be e sa le pudi goroga | > | It was late in the afternoon
(The time during which goats come back to the kraal) |
| - | Letšatši le tshetše kgomo
mokokotlo | > | In the afternoon |
| - | Ka morago ga mengwaga | > | After some years |
| - | Ngwaga o latelago | > | the following year |
| - | Ke sa le ngwana wa sekolo | > | Whilst I was still a school child |
| - | Ka ngwedi wa Letopanta | > | During full moon |
| - | Ka sekgalela | > | At midday |
| - | Ke a bona | > | I see (present) |
| - | Ke ba bone | > | I saw them (past) |
| - | O tlo swaba | > | You will come to grief (future),
etcetera. |

Nevertheless, let it suffice to say that in convoluted time the present is always informed by the past. Through these two time frames, readers are able to determine the future.

4.3.2 Chronological time

During our discussion of the convoluted time, we mentioned the fact that unlike reality, events in a written story, text, do not always appear in their chronological order but appear convoluted depending on those aspects of the human life the author aims to highlight first. However, reading Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago, Bowelakalana and Leratosello, one is amazed to see how well Rafapa managed to employ the chronological time ordering. This approach to time, which is often referred to as “the straightforward time presentation” is defined in this manner:

In the chronological presentation of time, the action begins at the the earliest point and proceeds in strict chronology to the last (Kane and Peters, 1975:522).

In Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago action starts with the presentation of Molahlegi, the principal character. He is portrayed as a naive school boy who always questions things, particularly the misfortunes of his family. His naivity is aptly revealed by these kind of thoughts:

O be a tlabega gore tatagwe o tlo lahla neng. Ke neng ba nwešwa teye ya go ponapona ... Ke neng ka Lamorena bona ba sa ikweše ka nama go etša malapeng a gabobagwera? (1991:12).

(He was always wondering as to when his father was going to stop. Why were they made to drink tea which had nothing else to go with it (milk or bread) ... Why didn't they ever eat meat on Sundays as their friends' families did?)

This kind of thinking can only come from a naive person like Molahlegi, who fails to understand that his family cannot afford luxurious food as both parents are unemployed. But in this naivety there came to grow a wish that one day he would grow to become a wealthy man or even a powerful political leader. As they grew up, he and his elder brother, Bjelele, enjoyed playing games about kingship. Foolhardy as they were then, Molahlegi would teasingly be reminded by Bjelele, that even if their wishful thinking was to become real, people would choose to be ruled by him rather than Molahlegi by virtue of him being the eldest of the two.

Their wishful thoughts are aptly exposed through Bjelele's painful reminder to his younger brother:

“Makoko a bomammati ruri! Balatalata ba basehla bjalo ka nna le wena re lorelang ka lehumo la pelo ka tsela ye re sa dio itlhoboga? Gona ge o ka hwa o tla fetola eng ka gore le ge bogoši bo ka fofela ka gešo sa borena se tlo imetšwa marago ke nna ka ge ke le mogolwago? (1991:23)”

(“We are really imagining things! Why should paupers like me and you dare to dream about wealth of the heart in this manner instead of just giving up? Even if you could die what difference would it make because even if kingship could come into our household, I would be the one to take the throne as I am your elder brother?”)

Dreaming as they were, little did they know that in reality they were Vhavenda kings. Bjelele was killed during the political unrests, whilst working in Johannesburg. Thus Molahlegi - who was by then a grown-up and had since qualified as a teacher - remained the sole contender for kingship. Events in this story are arranged in a straightforward or chronological order, with the first event causing a ripple of reactions and incidents up to the last event which usually resolves the problem the main character or characters were facing.

Bowelakalana is another example of Rafapa's novels in which the time of events is chronologically ordered. This novel is a success account of a lad called Mpitiki, who was born insane but came back to normality at the age of thirteen. He is said to have been wrestling with two strong longings, viz. the longing to be free from the mad environment at Phedišang mental asylum, peopled mainly by insane people. Secondly, he had a quest to be reunited with his family even though he had never known them before. The two forces raging in him eventually caused him to escape from his incarceration only to become a wanderer.

Through a series of chronologically arranged events, the writer maps out Mpitiki's journey after escaping. At the beginning his journey seemed to be a journey to nowhere, particularly because ever since he was born, he had never had the chance of venturing out of the precincts of Phedišang hospital and its surroundings nor did he know the whereabouts of his family. But as Rafapa would have it, a strange voice kept on calling him from the western direction, and like a guiding angel that voice kept on directing him until he eventually came to meet and reunite with his family.

However, our observation, is that the chronological treatment of the time of events in the story, is probably the easiest way of handling the time factor. After reading Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago and Bowelakalana, it becomes apparent that the chronological presentation of time offers the reader the day to day account of events in a straightforward order. Thus the writer communicates his life experiences and thoughts effectively to his readers when presenting the time of events chronologically, employing the principle of selectivity, selecting the various events he wishes to portray. These selected events are then communicated to the readers through suitable time words and phrases which serve as links or bridges co-ordinating one event with the other.

The main events in Leratosello take place at the villages of Kings Sephuma and Seroboka. Applying the principle of selectivity, Rafapa chooses to introduce the two kings to his readers, through a brief proleptic historical background.

Mabarebare a re kgale mola maswika a sa le boleta, basadi ka moka ba sa mela ditedu, phiri le nku di sa nošana a motšega, mola lehu e sa le phoofolo e nngwe ya dihlogo tše dintši le matšhukutšhuku, le sa bonwa ka mahlo ge le lata motho gomme ba mahlatsa motho a ngwatetše setsiba a le šie ka lebelo, rakgolokhukhu wa kgoši Sephuma le rakgolokhukhu wa kgoši Seroboka e be e le magoši a mabedi a go ntšhana sa inong, e le bagwera ba bohloko le melato ba rerišana, ba tšeišana mello. Ya re ka gore seo se sa felego se hlola, segwera se sa tapa ge a dutše a tlala a epšha madiba a hutelela madibana. Seroboka le Sephuma ge ba thanya ba hweditše segwera seo se dutše se tapile gomme e šetše e le fela dijo tša ditsebe. Le ge bjale bobedi bja magoši a bo hlompha segwera sa ba bagolo, e nngwe e fela e ipotšiša gore ge e ka tsoga e tsogile lekhureng kang e ka lala le mang (1979:4).

(Rumour has it that a long time ago when stones were still soft, and all women still grew a beard, the hyena and the goat still being bosom friends, when death was still some kind of multi-headed hairy animal, which could be seen with naked eyes when coming to fetch a person, and the lucky ones would outrun it, Kings Sephuma and Seroboka's great grandfathers were bosom friends who shared everything. But as nothing lasts for ever and has to come to an end, that friendship came to weaken with the advent of new generations. When both Seroboka and Sephuma grew up, what still remained of that friendship was mere hearsay. Even though at present the two still respected their ancestor's friendship, they eye each other with suspicion, each wondering as to who of them could emerge the victor, should they come to fight.)

Having been introduced to the two kings and their tottering friendship, various questions start flashing through our minds: Will the love affair between princess Senoinoi and her commoner lover Kgaladi succeed? What will be King Sephuma's response when he learns that his beloved daughter, Senoinoi, is in love with a commoner and subject of King Seroboka, and that Seroboka already

knows about this relationship? If these two have all along been dying to fight it out, then the love affair between Kgaladi and Senoinoi would help to precipitate their confrontation.

At this juncture, the writer deliberately creates suspense, in this story, by keeping Sephuma ignorant of what was happening with his daughter, thus prolonging the crisis. This he does by selecting and employing a protracted chain of events which concern among others: the invitation of the two lovers' suitors by their respective families, Kgaladi's illness which emanated from his longing for Senoinoi, Kgaladi's treacherous visit to Sephuma's place and the elopement of the two lovers which eventually triggered off fierce battles which eventually destroyed both kingdoms of Sephuma and Seroboka.

To link various incidents selected, chronologically, the writer used "time markers" or "time bridges" such as:

- | | |
|---|---|
| * Mabarebare a re <u>kgale mola</u>
maswika a <u>sa le</u> boleta. | Rumour has it that a <u>long time ago</u>
<u>when</u> stones <u>were still</u> soft. |
| * Basadi ba <u>sa</u> mela ditedu | <u>When</u> women <u>still</u> grew a beard. |
| * <u>Go tloga mola</u> maboto a kahlogano
magareng ga metse ye mebedi ye a
kwatlišwago. | <u>Ever since</u> the walls of separation
<u>were</u> strengthened between the two
villages. |
| * Fela go diregile eng <u>tšatši la</u>
<u>mathomo</u> ge a mpona? | But what happened on the <u>first day</u>
that he <u>saw</u> me? |
| * <u>Lenyaga</u> batho ba tla ikhutša go tšwa
letšema la mošate gobane makgoba
a tlile. | <u>This year</u> people <u>will</u> rest from doing
communal work for the king as the
slaves have come. |
| * Ke <u>ngwaga bjale</u> ba thopilwe. | It <u>is now a year since</u> they have been
captured. |

The underlined examples of time markers given, appear mostly in both “the past and the present” tense. This is an indication of the fact that the present is always informed by the past and that these two tenses, together, assist in foreshadowing the future. Throughout the five novels, the time focus vacillates from specific to non-specific. For instance:

SPECIFIC TIME

- | | |
|---|--|
| * Kgonthe bjalo gona šetše e le <u>seruthwane</u> , <u>selemo</u> kgale se fetile. | Truly, it is <u>spring</u> already, <u>summer</u> is long past. |
| * O tlo swanelwa ke go phela ka diokobatši <u>nywaga ye mehlano</u> ka moka. | He would have to be on drugs for a period of <u>five years</u> . |
| * Mamohla ke <u>Laboraro</u> . | Today it is <u>Wednesday</u> . |
| * Ka moka ba bona <u>Labohlano</u> mosegare Bjelele a tlo kgonago go hlwa le ba lapa kua Katanong | All of them see <u>Friday</u> as the day on which Bjelele would spend the day with his family at Katanong. |
| * <u>Le tshetše kgomo mokokotlo</u> | In the <u>afternoon</u> . |
| * Ke <u>ngwedi wa Letopanta</u> | It is <u>fullmoon</u> . |

Although the use of specific time locus is fairly distributed throughout the five novels under discussion, the absence of specific dates like 20th June 1996, 3rd July 1998 etcetera, is quite conspicuous.

NON-SPECIFIC TIME

- | | |
|--|--|
| * O mmone a e sa ne matšatši lehono šo ke monna o gotše. | He saw him whilst he was still a few days old, today he is a grown-up man. |
| * Morago ga mengwaga. | After many years. |
| * Tšatši le lengwe o tla bonala gape. | One day he would reappear. |
| * Kgalekgale. | Long-long time ago. |

Time reference in the examples given above, can at best be explained as being vague, thus giving Rafapa's narratives a peculiar flair. The use of non-specific time reference, which is the hallmark of the folktale, brings us to the conclusion that Rafapa's narratives are in one way or the other, influenced by the folktale.

4.4 FUNCTIONS OF SETTING

Our discussions of place and time, as the most important aspects of setting, pronounced "setting" as one of the crucial elements in literature which helps in bringing about clarity and unity in the narrative. For the purpose of analysis, we shall employ Kane and Peters' (1975) principles in regard to the functions of setting in the narrative.

By its nature, setting is primarily realistic. For instance, the use of realistic place names like Moletsane, Soweto, East Rand and Gauteng respectively, would readily evoke those feelings of realism about the characters portrayed in Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago. Moreover, events depicted in this novel, particularly all those events which occurred in Soweto and its precincts, are true annals of mass murders of people in Soweto, Boipatong, East Rand townships and so on, allegedly perpetrated by the marauding Zulu warriors of the INKATHA Freedom party. Put in their rightful time perspective, these mass murders occurred between the 2nd February 1990 - the date on which the bans on the ANC, the PAC, the South African Communist Party and thirty one other illegal organizations, were lifted (Mandela, 1997:666) - and the first democratic elections of the Republic of South Africa on the 27th April 1994.

The setting helps in defining the social status and personality of characters. King Sephuma's fearlessness and leadership prowess are depicted as follows:

Kgoši Sephuma-dithaba-di-se-Kaaka ke mogale wa bagale.
Ge a šetše a pokile lerumo le swarwa ke yena a etella
madira pele. O na le pelo ya tau. Ga a katakate. Go hwa ga

se selo seo a se tšhabago ka fao go bolaya ke selo se senyane go yena. Batho bao ba mo tsebago ba re le mokopa ge a o bona ga a katakate, o hwa nao. Ba re le mekopa šetše e mo tseba, ge e mmona e a tšhaba e hlanole direthe (Leratosello, 1979:23).

(King Sephuma-dithaba-di-se-Kaaka is the bravest of the braves. When he is really agitated he personally carries a spear and leads his warriors. He has the heart of a lion. He does not retreat. Death is not a thing he fears therefore to kill is something very small to him. Those people who know him better claim that when he sees a mamba he does not retreat, but dies with it. They claim that even mambas know him, when they see him they run away.)

This extract aptly defines King Sephuma as a leader who leads by example. He does not wait for his warriors to fight to protect his life. He is the leader of the people therefore to maintain his people and his status he takes the lead in protecting them, thus making true the adage that: “Kgoši ke Kgoši ka batho” (The King is a King because of the people). If he neglects them, other kings will come and take them away and without people he will be disregarded as a king and will subsequently lose his title. Regarding his personality, we now know that king Sephuma is obstinate and brave. His obstinacy and bravery are not only known by fellow human beings alone but wild animals as well.

The same can be said about his rival, King Seroboka. He is portrayed as:

... monna wa mereba, ga a ipelaele. Ga a bone gore kgoši e nngwe ke eng mo pele ga gagwe. Madira a gagwe a ipitša “Manong”, Ke gore moo a lego go ditopo .. a ke re ba realo ba re “Mo setopo se lego gona re tla bona ka manong?” Gore Seroboka o itshepile eng ga go tsebe motho, fela ba bangwe ba re o gwabišwa ke malomeagwe, yoo a agilego kua borwa, gobane Motsepe e be e le semane. Wa kgotla yena o ikgogoletše magala hlogong (1979:23).

(... an obstinate man who does not doubt himself. He disregards other kings. His warriors call themselves “Manong” - vultures - which means that wherever they are,

there are dead bodies ... of course, is it not said that "where there is a dead body we shall see by the presence of vultures?" Whatever Seroboka relies on, no one knows, but others say that he is so stubborn because of his uncle, who lives in the south, for he, Motsepe, was a killer bee. You poke him, you would have actually dragged live coals on your head.)

By contrasting the character traits of these two rival kings, the writer has successfully managed to prepare his readers for the fierce clashes which were to take place between the kingdoms of these two kings and which culminated in their total destruction. Nevertheless, what is of vital importance to us, the readers, is the two kings' personal traits and their social status.

On the other hand, the setting of a story may be the projection of the emotional state of a character: the emotional storm within a character, for instance, has its counterpart in the immediate surroundings of the character concerned, like say, a mental asylum, a dilapidated house or just any of the non-conducive social situations. Explaining Mpitiki's emotions about his continual confinement at Phedišang hospital's mental asylum even though he was no more sick, the writer says:

Mpitiki o be a tshelatshela bjalo ka bana ka moka, le ge pelong a be a kalokana le dipotšišo tša mašarašara. Moya wa mo ga o sa mo nkgela bose - moya wa go bipelwa ke monkgo wa dihlare tša sekgowa le dijo tše motho ge a yo di ja a swanetšego go ikidibatša gobane e le tše tee matšatšing a beke a matee. O be a thomile go hlafelwa ke bophelo bja mo (Bowelakalana, 1987:1).

(Mpitiki was prancing about like all other children even though inwardly he was wrestling with a variety of thoughts. The aroma of the air around here is no more sweet - the air is full of the smell of the Whiteman's medicine and the kind of food which one has to first make oneself unconscious for, before eating it as it remains the same for all the same week days. Life around here was just becoming intolerable for him.)

The same can be said of the emotional storm raging within Molahlegi in Bohwa bja Madimabe. She was so perturbed and overwhelmed by her misfortunes which befell her ever since she came to live on the Lebelo's farm, that she became insane. The only words which she could manage to say whenever spoken to came to be:

“Ke nyetšwe ngwagola. Go se tsebe ke kotsi. Ge nkabe ke tsebe nkabe ke ganne go nyalwa polaseng ye. Polase ya mmolai, Noga!” (1983: 31).

(“I was married last year. To be ignorant is dangerous. Should I have known I would have refused to marry on this farm. The farm of a murderer, Snake!”)

The kind of torment or mental anguish suffered by Molahlegi is well emphasized and exposed in the extract above.

Furthermore, the setting may contribute towards an understanding of characterization, especially when the environment negatively or positively influences the fictional human beings. For instance, in Bohwa bja Madimabe, the tortuous environment of the Lebelo's farm, was just not conducive for the newly wed Molahlegi. Instead of enjoying her marriage to the wealthy Majagohle Lebelo junior, she was raped by an evil spirit and ended up a mental wreck. In other words, the affluence of Lebelo's farm was a mixed-bag of opulence and misfortunes, thus exposing the fact that the setting may be an environment which severely limits or even destroys a character.

Molahlegi's unfortunate situation shows that she was merely the recipient of the aftermath of a curse cast upon her in-laws - her husband Majagohle Lebelo's grandparents. Therefore we can only come to the conclusion that Rafapa chose this setting - the mysterious Lebelo's farm - with the express purpose of suggesting to his readers that man is a victim of social or cosmic forces over which he has little control.

While still discussing the function of setting in Bohwa bja Madimabe it would be important to make mention of the fact that the five graves under the thick-set Morula tree among which lay the cursed Majagohle Lebelo senior, are symbolic. They harboured the secrets of that farm, which are the ones the story of this novel pivots around. The strange and weird feelings that Dr Ngake experienced on approaching that Morula tree is indicative of the evil spirits lurking in those graves. It comes as no surprise that the evil here suggested by the five graves under that tree, manifested itself in the ghost of Jakopo's son called Malose. Unknown to Ngake that he was talking to a ghost, he came to learn about how bad and evil the late Majagohle Lebelo senior was, particularly towards his farm-hands.

The knowledge shared with Malose's ghost, later came to assist Dr Ngake in piercing the mysterious occurrences of killings, curses, rapes and mental illness on Lebelo's farm. He also came to understand why the lives of the Lebelo family were bogged down in such misery amidst all the wealth inherited from their parents. Nevertheless, we observe with interest how Rafapa, through skillful manipulation of events, managed to use setting to acquire unity of the plot structure in Bohwa bja Madimabe by confining his story to a single setting - which is Lebelo's farm.

4.5 RÉSUMÉ

Our discussions of place and time as the two most important aspects of setting revealed quite a number of facts:

First and foremost, all of Rafapa's novels, being appraised by this study, have the traditional rural background as their base. He affirms this, in person, by explaining that:

In Leratosello, I chose the rural setting. Not only rural as in books about the present which are not about township or city life. My setting is rural and historical. I chose it to be so,

because I felt that Matsepe, whose setting is also rural and historical, gave readers the wrong impression that in the past our forefathers knew nothing about erotic, romantic love, for this kind of love is absent in his books about people who lived in the past. So I was correcting Matsepe, I wanted to illustrate that we, people of the present, are no better lovers than our ancestors in the past, nor are we any cleverer. In my later novels, the setting is still rural. The reason why my setting is rural is that I have lived in a rural setting all my life and I depict life as I experience it. I live in places of *magoši*, farming, advent of imposed nature conservation and so on (Letter, 13 August 1995:3-4).

The letter extract quoted, clearly shows that Rafapa wrote about the life of the people he knows best; their traditional beliefs in mores, customs and values of their societies; their adherence to their value systems and the reluctance to accept the changing times and their fashions; the value system which still regards a society as being a unit, with everybody being seen as part and parcel of the nucleus, the community, and which is expected always to work or do things in collaboration with others, and the king as the sacred leader of the people. His choice of the traditional rural setting and the reasons he advances for doing so, goes well with the idea that, in his choice of setting, the writer should choose the kind of setting he is well acquainted with, as he is not expected to write on things he is not sure about (cf. Maxwell-Mahon 1979 on page:6 and Hawthorn 1985:60).

One other observation is that Rafapa's novels reveal his awareness of the close connection between the aspects of place and time. For instance, in locating an action or experience in time, he always finds himself instinctively driven to give that experience, reality in space or place. However his reference to both place and time in general terms, for example the use of terms such as, during the morning, one day, long time ago, his village, river and so on, seems to be indicative of the direct influence of the folktale on his writings. Given the kind of settings depicted by his novels, their generalization of place and time comes as no surprise at all, particularly because in the folktale both concepts of place and

time are not particularized but generalized. Nevertheless, the use of generalizations gives his stories a feeling of remoteness. Perhaps this is deliberate seeing that his novels appear to put much emphasis on the aspect of theme.

CHAPTER 5

RAFAPA'S IDIOLECT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The written word is the novelist's main tool for putting across the ideas of his narratives and their significance. In this regard Obiechina comments that:

The novelist's tool is words. His description of his character's appearance, clothes, actions, habits and inner feelings and thoughts, his exposition of a particular moral or vision, the ordering of his incidents and events to convey that moral or vision are conveyed entirely by his manipulation of language (1975:155).

Obiechina's thoughts about the word and its significance to the writer are echoed by Serudu who functionally muses in this fashion:

It is through words that the writer is able to crystallize his thoughts, to realise his emotions and to bring the images of the mind to the life of literature (1993:122).

Views embodied in the excerpts above show the importance of words as the ingredients of language. In support of the thoughts expressed about the word and its significance above, Irmischer (1975:67) opines that the writer's vitality, the imaginativeness, and the beauty of his creation, all depend on "words" which enable writers to describe their characters' appearances, deportment, inner feelings and thoughts clearly and appropriately.

The thoughts advanced above about the word are sufficient evidence to show that the writer must be well-versed with the literary language which, at its best, is always charged with the cultural heritage of his linguistic group. In addition to his vast knowledge of his language, the writer should adopt an individualistic

mode of expression, which would help in exposing his intentions, feelings or tone, thoughts and his life experiences. The particular mode the writer adopts to express himself is - in literary circles - called his "style". Style, which sometimes seems to be a dauntingly nebulous concept, can be precisely studied, for it is concerned with the writer's ability to choose and to manipulate the wide-ranging vocabulary at his disposal skilfully. However to achieve his objective, the writer cannot rely on his knowledge of the idiom of his language alone, but he should also be able to manipulate language into the creation of the work of art.

As difficult as it is to define what literary language is, so it is with style. However some critics have endeavoured to define its nature. A critic like Marjorie Winters - who defines style in broad terms - proclaims it to be

... the ways authors express themselves ... the product of the selection and arrangement of language within the boundaries of context (1981:57).

In concurrence, Holman views style as:

The arrangement of words in a manner which at once best expresses the individuality of the author and the idea and the intent in the author's mind (1983:432-433).

Whilst both Winters and Holman seem to emphasize word selection, arrangement and expression as the hall-marks of their definitions, Lucas simply defines style as:

... a means by which a human being (writer in this instance - *own emphasis*) gains contact with others; it is personality clothed in words, character embodied in speech (1974:49)

The common factor in all these definitions is that style is the manner of linguistic expression, how a writer says whatever he says or wishes to say. In other words,

and without sounding pedantic, style is the means or the mode of the writer's expression of the self. Furthermore, let it suffice to say that individual writers will always have their own peculiar style, with words, which might be good or bad. It is that particular style that comes nearest to the perfect representation of the experiences, feelings and ideas of the writer concerned, all embodied in his accurate and appropriate use of language.

The individualistic nature with which words are used to particularize individual styles of writers is perhaps well explained by Currie whose scholastic opinion is that:

Two authors may write superficially similar stories, but stylistic features of their work may indicate very different personalities... Thus we see why style is so very important in fiction. It is not just a matter of literary elegance, it is a matter of the very identity of the fictional story itself (1990:132).

We conclude our discussion of what style is, with Serudu's proposition:

Style can never be given a watertight definition since it involves not only the choice of words and their appropriate use in sentences and paragraphs, but also the entire pattern that a literary work assumes. It registers not only in the theme (message) but also its impact. Style reflects the words of the work and may be an index to the author's world view (1993:118).

The foregoing statements about the written word (language) and style expose one important fact, namely that these two literary elements are inseparable. We cannot discuss style without using words. To communicate their ideas and life experiences effectively to their readers, writers depend solely on the written word which, in turn, each writer chooses and uses in a particular manner to achieve a certain result. The main thrust of this chapter, therefore, is to examine and to make comments about Rafapa's idiolect, usage of words and the unique stylistic devices characterizing his writings. Our approach in this chapter will be

sociological, which we adopt particularly because every linguistic phenomenon carries along with it the cultural background of its own society.

5.2 CHOICE OF WORDS AND THEIR USAGE

Rafapa's choice of words or vocabulary, which is also referred to as diction, is in the main drawn from the reservoirs of everyday discourse. On reading through his novels, one is intrigued by his choice and usage of words. His vast knowledge of the Northern Sotho idiom enables him to communicate his ideas and experiences in a lucid manner without his language sounding forced or elevated. Furthermore, he enhances peculiarity of style and clarity of communication in his novels by blending both the colloquial and literary language. His peculiar word choice and usage is observed in quite a number of ways, evidenced in the following examples:

- (a) Letšatši le re tserr! Go itše tuu! Go kwala melotšana ya bothaga le bomokuru, ka kua ba dutše ba amogetšwa ke morwa setsentsere (Leratosello, 1979:1).

(The sun is excruciatingly hot. The day is peaceful. The only sound heard is that of the weaverbirds and the doves whilst being assisted by the son of the cricket on the other.)

- (b) Ke wena monoki le mokgabiši wa ditoro tša ka (1979:1).
(You are the spicer and the decorator of my dreams.)

- (c) MmaSenoinoi a re go bona nka Senoinoi ga a ipshine a di tshela kgoši (1979:42)

(When Senoinoi's mother realized that she seemed not to be enjoying herself she poured them on the king.)

- (d) Ntwampe o be a šetše a bone phenyo ka mahlo (1979:72).
(Ntwampe had already seen victory with his naked eyes.)
- (e) “E ka ba ke wena Senoinoi, letšoba la pelo ya ka?” (1979:113).
 (“Can it be you Senoinoi, the flower of my heart?”)

The underlined words in the above sentences - which are not exhaustive of Leratosello - are but a small selection of examples from this novel with which we aim to illustrate Rafapa’s prowess in the choice and usage of words. Sentence (a) serves as an introductory sentence to Leratosello. The novel is preoccupied with a love affair between Kgaladi and Senoinoi and later led to the destruction of quite a number of kingdoms. Two ideophones appear in sentence (a), viz: tserr! and tuu!. These preludial words were deliberately chosen and used to suggest a peaceful atmosphere which prevailed among the tribes discussed in this novel, until it came to be spoiled by Kgaladi and Senoinoi’s love affair. The employment of personification, as a figure of speech, referring to the cricket - an insect - as morwa (son) intimates Rafapa’s prowess with words.

In sentence (b) Rafapa used the deverbatives monoki (spicer) and mokgabiši (decorator) respectively. The two deverbatives derived from the verbal stems -noka (spice) and -kgabiša (decorate) respectively, semantically do not mean to spice food and to beautify a person. In actuality they seem to have been picked to emphasize the kind of satisfaction Kgaladi and Senoinoi derive from loving each other.

Instead of Senoinoi’s mother telling the king that Senoinoi is sick or unhappy - in sentence (c) - she opted for the figurative ipshine which has the double meaning of unhappiness or sickness. Meanwhile, the verb stem -tšhela (pour) is used to mean that she “told” him about Senoinoi’s condition.

Sentence (d) vividly explains those feelings which spurred Ntwampe to continue

fighting against Seroboka amidst the possibility of incurring heavy casualties, in the loss of warriors and possibly his kingdom, by employing a hyperbole a bone phenyo ka mahlo (having seen victory with his naked eyes.) Victory is abstract and cannot be seen with naked eyes. The choice and use of this figure of speech - which Abrams (1981:77) explains to be an overstatement or extravagant exaggeration of fact, used either for serious or comic effect - is in this instance used for the sake of emphasis. Ntwampe realized that in his fight against Seroboka's warriors, chances were that he was going to emerge the victor. Hence the writer's use of this overstatement to reveal Ntwampe's situation at that point in time.

When Dikutupu met with Senoinoi for the first time, in captivity, since their last encounter at King Sephuma's palace - when Senoinoi came to spurn Dikutupu's marriage proposals - he profoundly asked Senoinoi: "E ka ba ke wena Senoinoi, letšoba la pelo ya ka?" ("can it be you Senoinoi, the flower of my heart?"). The word "flower" is in this instance symbolically used to denote Dikutupu's profound love for his cousin. Contrastingly Senoinoi replied unenthusiastically by saying to him:

Naa Dikutupu, le lehono o sa boeletša phošo yela ya go mpitša moratiwa wa gago? Naa o lebetše gore ke ile ka go kgalela taba ye, tšatši lela o šetše le nna re le babedibedi ka moraleng, bomma ba šetše ba ilo robala?" (1979:113).

(Dikutupu, even today you still repeat that old mistake of referring to me as your darling? Have you forgotten that I once reprimanded you on this matter, on that day that we remained being only the two of us in the kitchen when my mother had already gone to bed?)

Senoinoi's reminder to Dikutupu is a clear indication that he should not take a chance, thinking that being together with Senoinoi in captivity might cause her to have some reversal of love feelings for him. What is most interesting about this kind of reply is the remembrance of all the little detail of what was said, happened and the place and time of the occurrences.

Let us examine yet another sample of words randomly picked from Rafapa's second novel Mogwane o a Ila:

- (f) Lebakeng la ge motšhitšhi o lebile gaMašiane go rola hlogo, thak'a tshogana ya tsena masodi go phorophotša mmolai (1981:3).

(At the time when the swarm was moving towards Mašiane's place to unload the head, young men entered the forest to search for the killer.)

- (g) Rathana tša gagwe bobedi di a šokiša. Di itšatšara gar'a mmilobilo. Di dutliša morohlogo selo di phutše marutlatlhaka (1981:4).

(Her two brats were a sorry sight. They were crying bitterly amidst the multitudes. They were shedding tears of pain whilst crying loudly.)

- (h) “Maaka! Yola o a re apea. Ge nka be lehu e le phoofolo le bonwa ka mahlo gomme ra bona šetše le tšwelela mo, tšona ditšofe tše ke mohla o tlogo lemoga gore ge go befile lebelo le sa tsoga. Bophelo ga bo khorwe” (1981:5).

(“It is a lie! That one is cooking us. If death was an animal which can be seen with naked eyes and we just see it suddenly appearing in front of us, that would be the day on which you would come to realize that these very old men still have some running in them. You can never be satiated with life”.)

- (i) Batswadi ba bogetše ba šubaretše mahlaa. Tša Mmadikila di ba nkgela go etša tša phaku. Fela ke tšhila ya popelo ya

bona, ba tlo itheng? O amogetšwe ka pelo ya magotšane,
ya go pharelelwa ke dišo tša lekhwekhwe. O dutše ka rago
le tee a sobile sefahlego: O hladile Tibang o hladile lehu
(1981:33).

(Parents are merely spectating whilst pressing hard on their
jaws. Mmadikila's nonsensical escapades smell pungently
to them. But she is the dirt from their own womb, what can
they do? She was received with chapped hearts, full of
scab abscesses. She is sitting on one buttock with a sulky
face: She divorced Tibang, she divorced death.)

- (j) Seloma le Mmadikila ga ba ipshine. Ba hloka sadithamana.
Mmadikila madibamaso o laetše ka Mmalehu (1981:61).

(Seloma and Mmadikila are not happy. They do not have a
child. Mmadikila stopped giving birth to a child with the
birth of Mmalehu.)

- (k) Mmadikila o be a na le sefahlegwana sa go ntšha mokopa
bogale ka botse (1981:1).

(Mmadikila's face was so beautiful that it could tame even
the most venomous snake like the mamba.)

- (l) Seloma morwa Poponono Mašiane sekolong o godišitšwe.
Ke hlogo ya lefapa, matšatši a. Mmadikila o sa tšeketa
kantorong ya pušoselete. Ka fao kgomotšhipi e ba tšena ka
mmetela, ba makhureng (1981:66).

(Seloma the son of Poponono Mašiane has been promoted
at school. He is now head of a department. Mmadikila is

still a secretary at the local government's offices. As such they earn a lot of money, they live in luxury.)

In describing the arrival of Mmadikila's corpse and the commencement of the search for her killer - in sentence (f) - the writer used both a collective noun motšhitšhi (a swarm) and an idiomatic expression go rola hlogo (to off-load a head) respectively. The noun motšhitšhi (a swarm), which in its normal use refers to non-human beings, for example "a swarm of bees", has in this instance been metaphorically used to denote a large number of men who helped in carrying home Mmadikila's corpse. Basically, go rola hlogo (to off-load a head) does not make sense in the usual daily discourse. However, in this instance it was idiomatically used to euphemize about a dead person.

At times Rafapa picks and uses a word which does not only express a basic meaning, but also reflects a variety of nuances. In paragraph (g) the diminutive noun -rathana (tiny tot or brat) has been used as a synecdoche as it actually represents the meaning "child". The reason for referring to the child by means of the diminutive noun -rathana might have been that the writer wanted to alert the readers about the extreme helplessness of the children Mmadikila was leaving behind. The metonymical idiomatic expression go dutliša morohlogo which loosely translated would read to leak-out gravy from the head, actually means to shed tears. However, this idiomatic expression seems to emphasize that Mmadikila's children shed a lot of tears. The compound noun marutlatlhaka (to cry loudly) in its literal sense, means to blow off the roof. Connotatively as used in this paragraph - it gives the sense of a piercing loud cry which could be heard from far.

The idiomatic expression o a re apea (he is cooking us), in paragraph (h), has been used as a synecdoche in the place of he is lying. A character called Motšhene was standing with a group of men during Mmadikila's funeral. He overheard one old man lamenting Mmadikila's death and telling his friends that

death is cruel as it chooses to kill young people like Mmadikila instead of them who are old, have nothing to live for and are not even afraid of dying. Avoiding to say that the old man was lying, Motšhene opted for the humorous expression, “the old man is cooking us”. Sarcastically he went on to tell his friends that if death was to appear in front of them - whilst the old man was still bragging about his not being scared of dying - the very same old man would out-run them all. Hence Motšhene’s use of the idiomatic expression lebelo le sa tsoga (he can still sprint). In defence of his views, Motšhene went on to remind them that whether a person is young or old, bophelo ga bo khorwe, one can never be satisfied with life.

Instead of just saying that Mmadikila’s parents were worried about her unbecoming behaviour, the writer chose the verb stem -šubaretše (to press hard) to denote both concentration and surprise at the kind of life Mmadikila had opted for. She had decided to go against the society’s norms and values by divorcing Ntlheke Tibang, turning herself into a drunk and subsequently a prostitute. Thus moving away from a respectable family woman, choosing to slide into a life of loose morals. Unfortunately her parents, to whom she had returned to live with, could not sway her back into leading the kind of life acceptable to them and the community at large, because she was a grownup. Besides, she had children of her own to whom she was expected to be exemplary. To emphasize their dispondency about her, the writer says in paragraph (i): ke tšhila ya popelo ya bona, ba tlo itheng? (she is the dirt from their womb, what can they do?).

That her parents were unhappy that she had come back to live with them, is metaphorically explained in the writer’s symbolical use of chapped hearts, scab abscesses and the sulky faces. In the main, these maladies are representative of the anguish, discomfort and hopelessness Mmadikila had brought upon their household.

Although Mmadikila later married again, her marriage to Seloma Mašiane was unhappy and marred by various misfortunes. The writer expresses those misfortunes through idiomatic expressions such as go se ipshine, used in paragraph (j). Basically, go se ipshine has a double meaning. To be ill physically or - as used in this context - to denote unhappiness. Literally translated, the diminutive noun sadithamana would mean something which has cheeks. But in this context it has been used as a synecdoche as it actually represents the meaning “child”. The reason for the use of the synecdoche, sadithamana (something which has cheeks) may be that this word evokes a picture of a healthy baby with shining cheeks which is actually the envy of each and every married couple. In many instances, a marriage which fails to produce a child often ends up with unhappiness and subsequently a divorce.

Be it as it may, Seloma and Mmadikila clung to each other. Seloma seemed to be the one who had a problem in impregnating Mmadikila, since Mmadikila had had two children of her own - Podile and Mmalehu - whilst still married to Ntlheke Tibang. Hence the writer’s comment that Mmadikila madibamaso o laetše ka Mmalehu (cf: paragraph (j) above) which actually means that she finished having children when she gave birth to Mmalehu. As there was no child forth-coming to sustain their marriage, Seloma and Mmadikila ended up being forced to adopt a child whom they named Kholofelo. However as our focus is on word choice and usage, it is imperative to semantically analyze the noun madibamaso as used in this paragraph. Concocted from the plural form of the noun bodiba (pool) and the adjective ntsho (black) respectively, when loosely translated it would be understood to mean blackpools. However, it is figuratively used to denote confinement or birth, a process which is regarded as mysterious and dangerous as many a woman dies whilst giving birth.

Mmadikila is said to have been a beautiful woman, towards whom men always found it hard to suppress their erotic feelings. On meeting with Seloma Mašiane - a materially wealthy young teacher - Mmadikila, who is alleged to have been

status-conscious, forgot that she was married to Ntlheke Tibang. She accepted Seloma's love proposals and subsequently divorced Ntlheke and married Seloma. Commenting about Mmadikila's bewitching beauty, in sentence (k), the writer hyperbolically says, o be a na le sefahlegwana sa go ntšha mokopa bogale ka botse, which simply means that she had such kind of beauty which could tame even the fury of venomous snakes like a mamba.

In paragraph (l) Rafapa used the verb stem -godišitšwe (caused to grow). This verb stem does not mean literally to be caused to grow physically but paradoxically refers to a change in status. Seloma who has been a mere teacher had been promoted to the position of a head of a department. Meanwhile, the verb stem -tšeketa onomatopoeically bears reference to writing. Therefore, to tell us that Mmadikila was still the secretary at the local government's offices, the writer decided to announce that figuratively to his reader. The reason for telling us about Seloma and Mmadikila's employment and financial positions seems to be the writer's way of showing his readers that even though employment wise the couple was successful, inwardly they suffered as they could not have a child of their own.

To sum up their economic success story, the writer used the synecdoche kgomotšhipi (the iron cow) as a figure of speech which actually represents the meaning "money". He figuratively says that kgomotšhipi e ba tsena ka mmetela, which semantically means that they are both earning a lot of money. He furthermore emphasizes the fact that the two - Seloma and Mmadikila - are rich by employing the locative noun makhureng (in the fat). However, their living in wealth could not help them get a child nor entice Mmalehu not to abandon them, as she did abandon them and their wealth to go and live with her biological father - Ntlheke Tibang - a pauper, living in abject poverty.

Choosing and using words in this fashion, reveals the writer's ability to manipulate language to his own advantage whilst at the same time, enhancing

communication with the reader.

5.2.1 Choice and usage of compound nouns

One other element of Rafapa's artistry with words, which warrants a separate comment, is his extensive use of the compound noun. He picks and uses them in the description of certain events or situations, in all the five novels being considered by this study. Let us consider a few examples:

- (a) Lefelo leo ba ilego ba le fenyekola go fihla le kgoboga ke Morathomatete (Leratosello, 1979:7)

(The place they searched until it was frayed is Morathomatete.)

- (b) Bao ba bego ba hlomola dipelo ke bommagobana ka ge mmagongwana a swara thipa ka bogaleng (1979:18).

(Those who could make you sad at heart were the mothers as the mother of a child holds the knife by its blade.)

- (c) Ka kua mošate kgoši, mmakgoši le Mmatšatši bahlakane hlogo (1979:58).

(In the palace, the king, the queen and Mmatšatši were mad.)

- (d) Lena banna, yo Ngwato o nkgā kgomommu tše tharo! (1979:65).

(You men, this man Ngwato smells three beasts.)

- (e) Naa ge nka fihla gae ke re mohlomongwe mongdiji ke tla mmona a tiilo phuphutha? (1979:65).

(What then if I get home hoping to see the owner coming to apologize?)

- (f) Lesogana le be le mo lebile le hubaditše mahlomahubedu taumalehu, bogong le mometše thipantonono (Mogwane o a lla, 1981:1).

(The young man came straight to her with red eyes flickering death, holding a long, sharp knife.)

- (g) A katana le go tsarogišana digoba tšeo di bego di dilafaditšwe ke letšhogo, ka hlogong matsogothoromedi a kakatletše legapa (1981:2).

(Struggling to raise those muscles which have been weakened by fear, on the head, trembling hands holding fast to the calabash.)

- (h) Majadihlogo le kgadi ba ikulautše morago ga go tabatabelwa, ba iphoša ga-Motšhaki le sa šunya nko (1981:34).

(The uncle and the aunt left after they had been briefed and eventually arrived at the Motšhaki's household at sunrise.)

- (i) Hleng ga mpete go be go le tafolana ye nnyane, godimo go le sethinthelamelora (Bohwa bja Madimabe, 1983:7).

(Next to the bed there was a small table, on top of which there was an ashtray.)

- (j) Boemapese bo be bo tloga bo le kgole (1983:8).
(The bus-stop was quite far.)
- (k) O ra gore Majagohle a ka mo swarela? (1983:54).
(Do you mean that Majagohle can forgive him?)
- (l) Afa ke na le mogatšamalome? (Bowelakalana, 1987:1).
(Do I have an uncle's wife?)
- (m) Mompoti e be e le mofetikatsela (1987:34).
(Mompoti was a passerby.)
- (n) A na le monna tsoko yo mosomoso (1987:24).
(He was accompanied by a very dark skinned strange man.)
- (o) Gopodišiša ka tayo ye ba e fago Mmameetse le Mmakoša
(Diphiri tša Soweto, 1991:4)

(Just think about the kind of orders they give to Mmameetse and Mmakoša.)
- (p) Mminanoko o bolela ka lentšu le boleta (1991:29).
(He who venerates the porcupine speaks with a soft voice.)
- (q) Go ya ka mo ditšhupabodulo tše di mo laelago (1991:50).
(According to how these addresses direct him.)

- (r) Le ge a tsena botshwamare ke ge a falatša megokgo ye fišago (1991:60).

(Even when he entered the toilet he was shedding hot tears.)

The above examples of compounds do not only reveal the descriptive nature of compound words but also their varying structural patterns. For example:

- (a) Botshwamare (toilet)

-tshwa (spit) + mare (saliva)

↓

↓

verb stem noun in class 6: This compound consists of the verb stem -tshwa (spit) and the class-6 noun, mare (saliva). Taken contextually, it describes the place where the spitting action takes place, viz. at the toilet.

- (b) Boemapese (the bus-stop)

-ema (stop) + pese (bus)

↓

↓

verbal stem noun class-9: This compound consists of the verb stem -ema (stop) and the class-9 noun, pese (bus). In Bohwa bja madimabe, this compound noun was used to denote the fact that Dr Ngake came to Lebelo's farm by bus and had to alight at the nearest bus-stop. From there he took the footpath which led him to the thick-set Morula tree under which there were five graves, which harboured the secrets of that farm.

- (c) Kgomommuu (a lowing head of cattle)

kgomo (head of cattle) + mmu

↓

↓

Noun class-9

ideophone:

The compound which consists of a noun and an ideophone was used in a lawsuit at a tribal court where a man called Ngwato was charged with negligence for letting his cattle plunder a fellow villager's field. As a way of admitting guilt, the court asked him to pay three live head of cattle. Instead of unnecessary elaborations about live cattle and so on, the speaker opted for a simple compound word "Kgomommuu" (a lowing cattle).

(d) Mongdiji (owner of the cattle)

mong + -ja
 ↓ ↓

noun class-1 verb stem: This deverbative noun was used in the lawsuit described above in item (c) - to refer to Ngwato as the owner and the cattle as diji (eaters).

(e) Majagohle

Maja + gohle
 ↓ ↓

Verbal stem - ja quantitative pronoun, class - 15: This compound noun is used in Bohwa bja Madimabe as the name of the original owner of Lebelo's farm and the one who was cursed by Jakopo. The name itself is descriptive of Majagohle's character. He had his own wife but still went out to rape other women like Jakopo's wife.

(f) Mahlomahubedu

Mahlo + mahubedu
 ↓ ↓

Noun, class - 6

ma - prefix

hubedu - adjectival stem: This compound was

used in Mogwane o a lla to give the readers a vivid picture of Thongwa's facial expression and the seriousness he showed when chasing after Mmadikila, before he murdered her. Also used in the same sentence, is

another descriptive compound noun; thipantonono (long, sharp knife):

Thipa (knife) + ntonono

↓

↓

Noun class - 9 descriptive adjective: This long, sharp knife (thipantonono) was, in this story, used by Thongwa as the murder weapon with which he killed Mmadikila.

- (g) In describing the contents of the bedroom allotted to him by the Lebelo family - in Bohwa bja Madimabe - Dr Ngake names an ashtray as one of the utensils. In Northern Sotho an ashtray is said to be sethinthelamelora which loosely translated would mean "the utensil in which ash is dusted". Structurally this word is compounded from the applicative extended verbal stem -thinthela (dusted) plus the noun melora (ash), of the noun class - 4.
- (h) In describing how scared Mmadikila was when she realized that her brother-in-law, Thongwa, was chasing her with a knife in hand (Mogwane o a lla), the writer uses the ideophonic compound noun matsogoromela (trembling hands).

This word can structurally be represented as follows:

Matsogo (hands) + -roromela (trembling)

↓

↓

Noun class - 6

verbal stem

Although we are not dealing with linguistic analysis here, it was essential for us to give the structural analysis of some of these compound words which are extensively used in Rafapa's novels, to give a better understanding of their meaning and usage. Be it as it may, this kind of word manipulation reveals Rafapa's vast knowledge of the vocabulary of his language enhanced by his peculiar mode of communicating life experiences and thoughts to his readers.

5.2.2 Other word types

There is quite a large number of other word types extensively used in Rafapa's novels. Among others, this study intends to examine briefly, the choice and usage of ideophones and interjections. The reason for choosing them is that, beside their extensive usage they seem to have been employed as stylistic devices to render certain important functions like:

- To describe situations.
- To expose the mood of characters about the circumstances or situations facing them.
- To intensify communication by sensorially evoking the readers' participation in various matters and situations.
- To draw the reader's attention to or to expose salient matters through their use in exclamation sentences.

Let us examine a few examples to elucidate some of the functions mentioned above: Describing the kind of feelings which ran through Mpitiki, after he had successfully managed to run away from the white travellers he was accompanying on a journey to the Orange Free State, Rafapa observes thus:

O tshetshetha bjalo ka kgwale go fihla a kgotsofetše gore o kgole le boMogofe. A napa a ema sebakanyana. Hlogo e be e re hwee! Pelo e re ruthuruthu, ki! (Bowelakalana, 1987:30).

(He ran slowly like a partridge until he was satisfied that he was far from Mogofe and company. Then he stopped for a while. An empty feeling was going through his head and his heart was pounding very fast.)

The ideophone hwee! appeals to our inner feelings. We come to feel that kind of confusion and emptiness which engulfed Mpitiki in those circumstances. Adding to the confusion could also have been the fearful thoughts that he had

run away from Mogofe and company who were actually serving as his sanctuary ever since his escape from Phedišang mental asylum. As he is said not to have known any home or any place outside Phedišang hospital, his empty feelings, fear and confusion, are quite understood.

The white men with whom they were travelling had guns and that guaranteed his protection from dangerous wild animals. But because of constant beatings received from them, he abandoned that sanctuary and ran into the unknown dangerous wilderness. In the same paragraph quoted above, we find the ideophone ruthuruthu, Ki! This onomatopoeic ideophone, which appeals to our auditory perception, has a sound which is imitative of a fast pumping heart which sends blood gushing through the veins. If aggravated by fear and anxiety, the heart makes a pounding sound which becomes quite audible to those near the affected person. By picking and using words like these, the writer has managed to expose Mpitiki's uneasiness about the terrain he found himself in. Moreover, he did not know the place where he was nor the direction to take. One other thing which might have contributed to his anxiety could have been the experience he had when his friend Mogoši, a fellow traveller, was mauled by a leopard right in front of his own eyes. So he knew very well that dangerous wild animals were lurking somewhere behind the bushes he was wading through.

Describing the tense situation Mpitiki once found himself embroiled in with Ditsebe - one of his white employers - the writer dramatically says:

Gwa direga gore (Ditsebe) a phoše mahlo ka gare ga komiki. Agee! O topile ka ntaka gore komiki ye e sa thapile bile e thapile bošweu. Pefelo ya dira gore a nabogele Mpitiki a mo swinetše sešitaphiri se ka menwana ya matsogo. "Ga se nna! Ga se nna ke le tee. Ga se ke nwe maswi!" (1987:33).

(It so happened that (Ditsebe) cast his eyes into the cup. Oh no! At a glance he discovered that the cup was still wet and that it had some whiteness. Anger made him to jump at Mpitiki and to press him down hard by the nape with the

fingers of his hand. "It is not me! It is not me alone. I did not drink the milk!")

The use of the interjection agee! (Oh no!) evokes our sympathy for Mpitiki as we already contemplate what kind of punishment he is going to get from the cruel Ditsebe. It also draws our attention to the fact that Mpitiki's naughtiness - of stealing milk - has been discovered and, knowing the kind of fierce temperament of Ditedu, the writer already feels pity for him even before Ditedu has acted. As expected, Ditsebe was swift in meting out a severe punishment. Mpitiki could not defend himself but reciprocated by first denying that he drank the milk, then confessing but claiming to have shared the milk with the others and then reverting back to telling a lie, claiming that he actually never drank that milk. Mpitiki's contradictions are nothing else but the writer's style in trying to expose the mood of those two characters involved, how they felt about their circumstances and situations at that point in time.

In yet another example of vivid descriptions of situations facing his characters, the writer has this to say about Mphoši's destitute circumstances in Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago:

Oborolo ya gagwe ya ga ralawei mo e sa lego a thoma go šoma gona e sa le mošemanyana le yona ka ge e le ya go dula gae, gomme mmele wa yona o šetše o tšwele difepifepi le maphegwana ka go ipala gore ke kadija, e bile e tsošitše ya yona košana ke bbb-buku buku ... bbb! (1991:15).

(His overall obtained from the railways, where he started working whilst still a lad, is worn-out as it is worn daily. What remains of it are whips and pieces of cloth which are indicative of the fact that it has been in use for a long time, whereupon it always makes its own tune (as he walks or runs) of bbb-buku buku bbb!)

The ideophone bbb-buku buku ... bbb!, which appeals to both our visual and auditory perceptions, is suggestive of the sound usually made by a worn-out

garment with many holes in it which just let the air pass through freely, thus causing this kind of sound as a person is walking fast or running. The use of metaphors such as difepifepi (many whips) - as used in this context - is symbolic. The writer seems to have deliberately chosen and used this contradictory word to evoke, in his readers, the mental picture of a worn-out apparel. What remains of it being nothing else but threads and torn-out pieces of its original form. As the wearer walks fast or runs, the threads and pieces of cloth would be caught in the wind thus causing the kind of sound suggested above.

In exchanging cordial greetings with his mother, Molahlegi, the main character in this novel expresses himself as follows:

“Tsweetswee! Mma, re ka botšiša lena?”
“Re gona, Lahli!” (1991:39).

“Fine! Mother, and how do you do?”
“We are fine, Lahli!”

This kind of greeting reveals the cordiality between mother and child. Whilst Molahlegi employs the compound interjection tsweetswee! (fine-fine!) to assure his mother that he is still in good health, his mother - who seems to be delighted to learn that her son is still happy - reciprocates Molahlegi's greetings with a praise, calling him “Lahli” instead of Molahlegi. This short exchange of greetings does not only reveal the cordiality of the situation or the circumstances of the speakers alone, but also helps in intensifying the reader's understanding of the characters' communications by sensorially evoking the readers' participation in various matters and situations in the story.

Bewildered by the unrelenting poverty in his family, Molahlegi's father, Kgakgathu, once said to him:

“Ruri, mohlako ke leabela! Mangana! Ke gore wena Molahlegi ngwanaka, mo lefaseng le ge o le ngwana wa tšhuana go etša boKgakgathu ge ba le bjalo, mahlatse a

lehumo ka mehla a ganana le wena?” (1991: 27).

(“Truly, poverty is passed over from the forebears! Mangana! - a circumcision peer group - does it mean that you Molahlegi, my child, as you are the son of a poor man like myself, Kgakgathu, the luck to have money always eludes you?”)

The circumstances under which these words were said are quite clear. Molahlegi’s father was unemployed and he, Molahlegi, was still at school, which meant that there was actually no bread-winner in their family. However, of interest here is the choice and usage of the two interjections ruri! (really!) and Mangana! Ruri! (really!) has been used as an exclamation to register Kgakgathu’s bewilderment about the state of affairs in his household. The same applies to the use of Mangana!, a circumcision peer group. This name is only used by males who have been circumcised and under special circumstances. Thus it is not part of the usual daily discourse nor can such an expression be uttered by a woman. Nevertheless, the two interjections clearly expose the dejection and the hopelessness of Kgakgathu’s situation which only came to be remedied when Molahlegi became a school teacher.

A tense mood is evoked in the following conversation between Majagohle Lebelo junior and Dr Ngake:

“Bjale tatago yena o kae?”

“Boyabatho. O šetše a ithobaletše”.

“Eya, e šetše e le mogologolo?”

“Aga!”

“Aowa!” Ke be ke šetše ke šia dinamana tša mmele (Bohwa bja Madimabe, 1983:18-19).

(“Now where is your father?”

“Where all other people go. He is already dead”.

“Is it, so he is an ancestor already?”

“Yes!”

“Really!” I was already becoming apprehensive.)

Ngake's questions were aimed at fathoming the source of Molahlegi's illness - Majagohle Lebelo junior's wife. Majagohle's unelaborating short answers are indicative of the fact that he did not want to be engaged in such discussions. That made Ngake to feel very uneasy. The use of the interjection "eya" (is it), actually is not meant to be a question but just an exclamation to indicate a surprise. The same applies to "agaa!" (Yes!) which in actuality is a mere acknowledgement of what has been said by the other speaker. Dr Ngake's "aowa" (really!) - which in actual fact should be translated as "no" - has in this instance been used to denote bewilderment.

In addition to the few examples of ideophones and interjections already discussed, let it suffice to tabulate a few more prominent ones appearing in the five novels being explored:

- Pšhatlaa!	"Cracking sound"	> appealing to our auditory perception
- Phura!	"The sound made by something falling"	> for auditory perception
- Tswee!	"Sweet/nice"	> for taste
- Hototo!	"Smelling awful"	> for smell
- Tuu!	"It is quiet"	> for the inner feeling
- Hubêê!	"Red (with blood)"	> for visibility
- Ijoo!	"Oh!"	> for fear
- Ruri?!	"Truly?!"	> for doubt
- Afaye?!	"Really?!"	> for doubt
- Ee!	"Yes!"	> for agreement
- Ee?!	"Yes?!"	> for surprise
- Monna!	"Man!"	> for bewilderment
- Morena! Kgoš!	"Sir!"	> for drawing attention
- Itšhu!	"Oh!"	> for feeling pain
- Agaa!	"That is right!"	> for acknowledgement
- Agaa!	"Yes!"	> for agreement

- Aгаа! Agee! “There you are!” > for drawing attention, etcetera

Let us conclude our brief discussion of these two word types by acknowledging that it is through this kind of word selection and their usage that Rafapa managed to carry out his communications clearly and successfully. He has also managed to create a certain effect which particularizes his writings.

5.3 FROM THE WORD TO THE SENTENCE

Another aspect worth considering are Rafapa’s sentences and their functions in communicating life experiences and thoughts without ambiguity. Words have been used to build up sentences which vary in form and content, hence short and long sentences are distinguished.

5.3.1 Short sentences

Rafapa uses short sentences for quite a number of functions. For instance, he has a peculiar way of introducing new ideas in his novels using short sentences which help in eliciting readers’ interest, thus compelling them to read through the whole novel to discover the fate of the characters concerned. Let us examine a few examples of such short sentences:

Badimo thušang hle? Mmadikila o thešitšwe a re fase šihla! Thongwa a mo pharama godimo (Mogwane o a lla, 1981:2).

(Spirits of the ancestors please help! Mmadikila has stumbled and fallen with a thud to the ground! Thongwa squatted down on her.)

These three sentences punctuated with exclamation marks introduce readers to the imaginary scene of Mmadikila's murder. The first two short sentences, punctuated with exclamation marks, seem to have been deliberately selected and used to intensify communication by sensorially evoking readers' participation in the gruesome murder of Mmadikila. The evocation of the ancestors' spirits is a clear indication that Mmadikila's life is in danger. Thongwa, a brother-in-law and a fellow human being cannot protect her life, instead he is the one who threatens its existence. In other words, Rafapa picked on this kind of evocation to reveal both Mmadikila's desperate situation and the fact that fellow human beings failed to protect her. Hence the desperate call for the supernatural to come to her rescue.

Unfortunately, even the ancestors could not help. Mmadikila is said to have lived in transgression and denial of their existence. She deliberately transgressed the cultural norms and values of her own society, the very same norms and values which are generally believed to be the creations of the immortals themselves and the means through which they relate with mortals. Thus total adherence and reverence to these norms and values by the mortals is of supreme importance. He or she who fails to comply is simply destroyed. Thus it came as no surprise when they - the ancestors - turned a blind eye to Thongwa's ugly actions. In other words Thongwa may in this instance, be regarded as the agent of the ancestral spirits, deliberately sent out to destroy the erring Mmadikila.

In concluding the story of this novel and giving us the ultimate destruction of the disobedient Mmadikila, Rafapa employs a short but compact sentence comprising three descriptive idiomatic expressions which give us, the readers, a vivid imaginary picture of Mmadikila's murder:

Go pshinyafetše, go lokofetše, go šebelekane (1981:65).

(It is awful, it is bad, the whole situation is just a mess.)

In introducing Mpitiki's plight of not knowing his parents, the place of his origin, his surroundings, etcetera, the writer subjects him to asking himself a string of rhetorical but short questions

"Ga gešo ke kae? Mma le papa ba sa phela? Mo ke go kae? Ka baka la eng?" (Bowelakalana, 1987:1).

("Where is my home? Are my mother and father still alive? Where is this place? Why am I here?")

Questions asked above can only be from a confused mind. Of course, Mpitiki - the principal character in this novel - is said to have asked himself these questions at the age of thirteen. The main reason for asking such childish questions was that he was born insane and only came to regain his sanity at that age. Nevertheless, to introduce as well as to portray the abnormality of the main character- Mpitiki, Rafapa opted for those short rhetorical questions quoted above. In his childlike state of mind, Mpitiki has started on a new clean slate to learn about the names of people, names of a variety of both animate and inanimate things. He had to learn about his own relatives; their whereabouts; the name of the place, the hospital, where he was confined and the reasons therefore, and so on.

The same kind of short sentences are once more used in exposing his inner feelings of relief, after he had managed to search and to discover his relatives who subsequently came to be his custodians:

Kofifi. Kofifi, Mpitiki a nagana. Fela pelo ya gagwe e šweufetše e re twaa! O thabile ge lehono a humane batswadi le legae ... Setimela se ja fase. Se letša mokgoši phatla se dutše se lebile borwa (1987:63).

(Kofifi (Sophiatown). Kofifi, Mpitiki muses about it. But in his heart he is very happy! He is excited that today he has found both parents and a home... The train is moving fast. Blowing its horn whilst its head is facing towards the south.)

Sometimes short descriptive sentences are used to introduce important characters. For instance, when Dr Ngake first arrived at Lebelo's farm the first person he came across was Malose. Not knowing that Malose was actually a ghost, Ngake exchanged some cordial greetings with him even though at first he was startled by the fact that Malose was enjoying a cigarette at an awkward place - a thickset morula tree which harboured five graves:

"Tama!"

"Go tamiša nna, kgoši ya ka!"

"Bjale kgoši leina ke tla re ke mang?"

"Malose" (Bohwa bja Madimabe, 1983:11).

("Good day!")

" Good day to you my Lord!"

"Who would I say my Lord's name is?"

"Malose.")

The name "Malose" forms a complete sentence on its own. The fact, that it has no predicate, does not in any way impair our comprehension of the full identity of the person being spoken to by Dr Ngake. However the importance of introducing him to the readers is that he is the one who first exposed the evil deeds of Majagohle Lebelo senior to Dr Ngake. Ngake, who had been invited to Lebelo junior's farm to come and cure his insane wife, Molahlegi, came to rely on the information he got from Malose, as he realized that Molahlegi's illness was the direct result of a curse cast upon Lebelo senior by Jakopo - Malose's father. As Molahlegi's insanity was unnatural, caused by the supernatural forces, Dr Ngake could not cure her even though he is said to have been an excellent psychiatrist. Ultimately, she died.

Kgakgathu - as one of the main characters in Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago - is also introduced to the readers through the use of short sentences:

O tsebe gore Kgakgathu e be e se wa ledumedišego. O be a timilwe disegišabaeng, a timilwe pelo ya boi. E le sekobo (1991:1).

(You should know that Kgakgathu was not a pleasant person to deal with. He had been denied dimples, he had been denied a timidity. He was ugly.)

The afore-mentioned three short sentences, aptly and vividly paint an imaginary picture and even warn readers about Kgakgathu's temperament. He is ill-natured. He has a fierce temper. He is spiteful and ugly. These three short sentences are used to emphasize certain qualities of Kgakgathu's character and thus help the readers in their characterization effort. As these three sentences appear in the opening paragraph of this novel, where the reader is duly invited to join the writer in exploring Kgakgathu's life, suspense is created and the reader would want to read further so as to know more about the main character(s) and their escapades.

The writer's deliberate choice and usage of short sentences in the telling of his stories, do not only provoke the reader's interest, to read the story up to its logical end, but also help to elevate the reader's concentration. Nevertheless a good writer would always combine short and long sentences, particularly because short sentences help to break the monotony of the long elaborate ones.

5.3.2 Long sentences

Our discussion of a few examples of short sentences has revealed that these kind of sentences are actually the writer's concise descriptive devices, whilst long sentences are usually employed for detailed descriptions and explanations. For example:

Nokeng ye ya Matimalenyora, ke mo batho ba metse e mebedi ye ba rego go lapišwa ke go lema, go koba dinonyane mašemong le go bina menyanyeng, ba nape ba phonkgele ka madibeng a yona a botšiditšana bja go lapološa, ke moka ba re ge ba etšwa ba boe ba thobegile dintho, ba mpshafetše megopolo (Leratosello, 1979:1).

(Here at Matimalenyora river, is where people from these two villages, when they are tired of ploughing the fields, chasing after birds from the fields as well as being tired of dancing at the feasts, would converge and fling themselves into its cool refreshing pools, so that when they emerge they would be refreshed both physically and mentally.)

With this kind of description we are able to follow with ease the importance of Matimalenyora river to both the villages of King Seroboka and Sephuma. It was in the waters of this river of Matimalenyora - which in this instance serves as a symbol of unity, uniting these two kingdoms - that people from these kingdoms always found solace from their worries. Therefore, Matimalenyora also served as a life wire which was there for everybody without any bias. The unity of these two kingdoms, as symbolized by this river, is said to have prevailed from time immemorial. That notion is aptly described in this long and elaborative sentence:

Mabarebare a re kgale mola maswika a sa le boleta, basadi ba ka moka ba sa mela ditedu, phiri le nku di sa nošana a motšega, tatagwe pitsi le tonki a se a hlala mmagwe pitsi ka ge a re o itshwara sephoofolo, ditoro di sa bonwa ka mahlo ge di sa phaphaila le lefaufau, mola lehu e sa le phoofolo e nngwe ya dihlogo tše dintši le matšhukutšhuku, le sa bonwa ka mahlo ge le lata motho gomme ba mahlatse motho a ngwatetše setsiba a le šie ka lebelo, rakgolokhukhu wa kgoši Sephuma le rakgolokhukhu wa kgoši Seroboka e be e le bagwera ba bohloko le melato ba rerišana, ba tšeišana mello (1979:4).

(Rumour has it that a long time ago when stones were still soft, when all women still grew a beard, when the hyena and the sheep were still bosom friends, before the father to the zebra and the donkey divorced with the zebra's mother claiming that she behaves like an animal, when dreams could still be seen with naked eyes as they wandered around, when death was still a hairy multi-headed animal and could still be seen when it comes to collect a person, whereupon lucky ones would tighten their cruppers and run for dear life, the great-grandfather of King Sephuma and the great-grandfather of King Seroboka were bosom friends who used to share in both happy and sorrowful moments.)

The hyperbolic expressions in the extract above, are suggestive of the remoteness, of unity and peaceful co-existence between these two kingdoms. This kind of time presentation in a story can only be found in the folktale. Therefore, it brings us to the conclusion that Rafapa deliberately picked on this stylistic device to give his story a particular flair. However this peaceful co-existence is said to have weakened with time, so much that - with the present kings - it was only a single mishap which needed to occur between them, which would then help in precipitating that fragile unity into total collapse. To show that the present kings were no more relating like their forebears and were always eyeing each other with suspicion, the writer comments humouristically thus:

Le ge bjale bobedi bja magoši a bo hlompha segwera sa
ba bagolo, e nngwe e fela e ipotšiša gore ge e ka tsoga e
tsogile lekhureng kgang e ka lala le mang. ... Go
pepeneneng gore dinganga tše pedi tše mohla di kago
swarana ka dijabogobe, moo ba tla bego ba
pitikamišetšana ntshe go tla etša mo go rotetšego tonki
... bjang bo tla huduga hudugihudugi (1979:4).

(Even though at present these two kings still respect the friendship of their forebears, each one of them is asking himself as to who of them would emerge a loser should they one day have to fight it out... It is quite clear that these two obstinate fellows, on the day that they would have a fist fight, where they would be rolling (wrestling) with each other, would remain like a place where a donkey has pissed ... grass would never grow again on that particular spot.)

Indeed that happened when Kgaladi, a commoner from King Seroboka, provoked King Sephuma by falling in love with his only daughter, princess Senoinoi and even ended up eloping with her. Kgaladi's action was not only a clear and direct violation of King Sephuma's integrity alone but even that of his own traditional value system. Be that as it may, their elopement unleashed fierce battles between King Sephuma and King Seroboka, which eventually destroyed the two kings' lives and subsequently their kingdoms.

Expressing Mpitiki's inner feelings of happiness and relief at gaining his freedom from confinement at Phedišang mental asylum, the writer says:

La mathomothomo mo bophelong bja gagwe Mpitiki a etšwa mo e sa lego a kgonyeletšwa a sa wa; la mathomothomo mo bophelong bja gagwe a kgona go bona motse wa kgoparara wa dikarolwanakarolwana go ya ka mebotu, naga ya go tšhepha ka mere ya meetlwa le merula ya sekgotho mo le mola (Bowelakalana, 1987:5).

(For the very first time in his life Mpitiki came out of the place where he had been locked in from birth; for the very first time in his life time, he was able to see a vast village divided into various sections spreading over hills, a land decorated by a variety of thorn trees and a clump of morula trees here and there.)

It was the quest for freedom fuelled by the authorities' enforced incarceration, even though they were aware that Mpitiki had long regained sanity, which forced him to run away. Although his escape from Phedišang mental asylum, which had served as his sanctuary ever since he was born, meant escaping into the wilderness which might put his life in danger, Mpitiki did not care. However, what we want to illustrate with this kind of a long expressive sentence is just to show that long sentences are often employed to ease the tempo of events in the story and to feed readers with more information about characters' circumstances and their disposition.

Let us examine another example of a long sentence wherein the reader is given an imaginary picture of one of the most beautiful landscapes, of a river and its surroundings, which Mpitiki came to see for the very first time in his life. The scenery which made him to feel and to think that he was in wonderland:

Bjang bja mo khwiting e le bjo botalana bjalo ka bja nageng ya ditoro le dikatapoo; mere ya go farafara molapo wo e le ya go nywanywa ka manoni le bokhorane mo e bilego e itšhita mamipi bile e gogobiša makala ao a kgoromilego ka dikenywakenywa, makala ao a pipilwego ke legogwa la dinonyane tša mebalabala (1987:7).

(The grass on the river bank was green like the one in fairyland; trees bordering this river looked lush and thickset, struggling to carry their own branches which hovered under the heavy loads of a variety of succulent fruit, branches which are covered by flocks of birds with a variety of colours).

It is for the very first time in thirteen years that Mpitiki is able to consciously see the beauty of nature surrounding him, and to be able to attach some meaning to it. Quite a number of things are said in this sentence and for stylistic purposes, the writer opted to punctuate his ideas with commas instead of full-stops. This instils a sense of a relaxed mood in his long sentences. Such a relaxed description enables the reader to fathom the characters' circumstances, their feelings and responses about their situations as well as those factors which cause them to react in a particular manner.

Let us conclude our discussion of the short and the long sentences by citing Serudu who states that, through the use of sentences the writer can achieve the following objectives:

- Clarify the relationship between a number of ideas.
- Channel the reader's attention and focus his interest on a key phrase by placing it conspicuously in the sentences.
- Create the mood of the work of art. (1993:173).

5.4 THE PARAGRAPH

The novel is a long story composed of a variety of paragraphs. However, a paragraph should have unity and coherence which actually stems from the fact that it is about a single subject whilst its coherence results from the harmony of its sentences which fit together to make a connected whole. Musing upon what a paragraph is, Stone and Bell (1971:60) opine that:

Paragraphs are not just hunks of prose marked by indentations, they are the basic units of thoughts out of

which an essay is composed. They are building stones, parts of a large whole. They are in fact inseparable from the whole. They must be written in such a way as to make effective - an integrated whole.

That being the case, we shall in this subsection concentrate on Rafapa's paragraphs, particularly, their main purpose in the story. Our discussion will concentrate on the opening or introductory paragraph, the middle paragraph and the closing paragraph.

5.4.1 Introductory paragraphs

Fundamentally, introductory paragraphs, also known as expository paragraphs, serve as the means through which the writer sets the tone of what is to follow, sets the reader's expectations as well as to elicit his interest to want to read the story up to its logical end. Let us examine the opening paragraph of Bowelakalana:

Mpitiki o be a tshelatshela bjalo ka bana ka moka, le ge pelong a be a kalokana le dipotšišo tša mašarašara. Moya wa mo ga o sa mo nkgela bose - moya wa go bipelwa ke monkgo wa dihlare tša Sekgowa le dijo tše motho ge a yo di ja a swanelago go ikidibatša gobane e le tše tee matšatši a beke a matee. O be a thomile go hlafelwa ke bophelo bja mo, mošemanyana yo wa motekatekana yo a ka bago le mengwaga fela ye lesometharo a bone letšatši (1987:1).

(Mpitiki was jumping around like any other child even though in his heart he was wrestling with various questions. The air around here no longer smelled nice to him - the kind of air impregnated with the smell of European medicines and the kind of food which one has to make himself unconscious for before eating as it remains the same on every day of the week. He had started to feel bad about life here, this young lad whose age can be estimated to be thirteen years old.)

There is an element of contradiction in this paragraph. However, the employment of contradiction as a literary device seems to have been deliberately chosen to give this introduction a peculiar style. From the outside, Mpitiki appears to be a happy young man. Playing and running around like all his peers incarcerated with him at Phedišang mental asylum. Yet inside him, there were raging fires of discontent. He had gained sanity, thus he could not understand why the asylum continued his incarceration. He could not understand the reason why he should continue to live, eat and play with insane children. His situation and circumstances caused him discomfort, thus he was very unhappy.

Wrestling with such painful thoughts evoked a great yearning in him; a yearning to be re-united with his family and relatives; a yearning to know his actual place of origin; a yearning to get out of Phedišang mental asylum and gain his freedom. It is this kind of introductory paragraph which sets the tone of the story, pricks the reader's interest thus forcing him to want to continue reading the story up to its logical conclusion.

In Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago, the introductory paragraph - which is composed of several short descriptive sentences - is a direct exposition of the principal character of this novel, called Kgakgathu, as told from the first person point of view:

O tsebe gore Kgakgathu e be e se wa ledumedišego. O be a timilwe disegišabaeng, a timilwe pelo ya boi. E le sekobo -sonasona sekgotlaphiri. Fela e sego sekobo sa sebopego. Aowa, sekobo sa pelo. Bjale bokobo bjo bo be bo tloga bo leša kgopolo ya Molahlegi bodutu. Ka mehla ge a gopola ledimo la mabefi le le šutšago phedišanong ya bona ka lapeng o be a ipona a šetše a tšhologa megokgo ye e fišago, bophelo bo mo šulafalela (1991:1).

(You should know that Kgakgathu was not a pleasant person to deal with. He had been denied dimples, he had been denied timidity. He was ugly - a real bad person - but not physical ugliness. In no way, but ugliness of the heart. As such this ugliness used to torment Molahlegi mentally.

All the time, whenever he thought of the tempests usually raging in their household, he would at times just find himself shedding hot tears and life becoming unbearable to him.)

The opening sentence of this paragraph is gripping. It evokes the reader's attention whilst at the same time it introduces Kgakgathu as the unpleasant character the reader would have to bear with in the story. The other sentences that follow the first one, go on to portray him as spiteful thus causing great discomfort to the lives of the members of his household, mainly to his son, Molahlegi, who is also a fellow principal character in this novel. To emphasize the frequency of Kgakgathu's family clashes, and their ferocious nature, Rafapa deliberately picked and used the word "ledimo" (tempest). Basically, a tempest is a violent windstorm, frequently accompanied by heavy rains, snow or hail. All the elements of the tempest mentioned here, would normally cause havoc in people's lives. Therefore, in this prelude paragraph, Rafapa seems to have picked and used this word - tempest - to whet the interest of his readers, to set expectations of what is still to come as well as to urge them to want to read on with the aim of discovering for themselves whether Kgakgathu's bad temperament would ever be tamed or not.

The introductory paragraph of Bohwa bja Madimabe - also narrated from the first person point of view - opens up in this manner:

Ke be ke šetše ke thoma go pshirwa ke sethogo thogo seo se bego se ntšwele gore ke kolobe tsodi! Phešana ye e bego e ntšhithola e tšwelela ka bodikela e be e dira gore nama tša mmele wa ka di binabine ka boipshino. Ka kwa ke mpshafala mmeleng le kgopolong. Ka foša mahlo kua pele (1983:1).

(I was already becoming sapped by the sweat which had already caused me to be very wet. A light wind blowing over me from the western direction was causing my flesh to feel good. I felt myself refreshed both physically and mentally. I cast my eyes to the front.)

This paragraph, which is introduced in a matter of factly way, only gives a hint to the narrator's feelings whilst walking towards Lebelo's farm house. It does not specifically concentrate on the issue at hand, which is Molahlegi's insanity. As a psychiatrist Dr Ngake has been invited to come to Lebelo's farm to come and help cure their daughter-in-law, Molahlegi of her madness. We would have thought that the writer - Rafapa - would be direct and readily use this paragraph to introduce the main character(s), the place of the events and the main subject of discussion. However, he decided to elicit readers' attention and interest by circumventing real issues by opting to open his narration with matters of no consequence.

Compared to the two examples of introductory paragraphs already discussed - Bowelakalana and Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago - which readily introduce the main characters - this opening paragraph to Bohwa bja madimabe serves as a variant thus showing that to avoid monotony and to enhance his style with the objective of provoking readers' interest, Rafapa does not rely on one kind of approach when introducing his stories. Thus we can conclude by saying that varying introductory or opening paragraphs enhance the writer's style, attract readers' attention, activate imagination and even cause readers to feel and to sympathize with characters and above all, foster readers' desire to continue reading the rest of the novel once they have started reading it.

5.4.2 The middle paragraph

These are the paragraphs which constitute the body of the novel. They are descriptive by nature as they comprise explanations of events by the writer and at times, by the characters themselves involved in dialogues. Their main functions are to develop characters, theme and the plot of the novel.

One of the main characters in Mogwane o a lla, Lesibana Tibang, is subjected to a lonely gibberish thus exposing the seriousness of his own madness:

“Mošaa, morabaraba ... moruba ... mošaa ... aga-a-a, ke a leboga .. lloo! Sefatanaga-e-ehlogo ... ee, seo ke sešebo sa bosana ...” (1981:15).

(“Rogue, morabaraba ... moruba ... rogue ... (both are types of games of entanglement played with stones) there-you-are, I thank you ... Oh no! A car-yes-a head ... yes, that is a nice titbit ...”)

It is difficult to comprehend the contents of this paragraph. However Rafapa chose to describe the seriousness of how far mentally inflicted this character was, whose madness is alleged to have been aggravated by his constant intake of dagga, by letting him express himself in this gibberish nonsense which to a normal person is illogical. Given this kind of a character, it comes as no surprise when he came to commit the most ugly deed by destroying all members of his family, including his own parents, with an axe save for Ntlheke and his erstwhile wife - Mmadikila.

Here follows another example of a middle paragraph:

Malomeagwe o tšhwile a bona ka go mo tsogelela e sa le nako tša dikereke gore ga a tliše tše botse. Gape mošemane yo o dio gana go kwa dikgogo di kutumpa a napa a fagahlela boemapese gore a sware pese ya go tla mono Mapatšakeng ga gabommagwe - le ge lapa bjale e le la malomeagwe wa phejane (Diphiri tša Soweto, 1991:13).

(His uncle had already noticed by his visit so early in the morning - during church time - that he was not bringing good news. The problem was that this boy just refused to hear the crow of the cock as he would immediately jump out of bed and rush to the bus stop to catch a bus which would bring him here to Mapatšakeng, which is his maternal home - even though the household now belongs to his uncle who is the last-born in that family.)

In this paragraph, the writer does not bother to mention the names of the characters involved. The reason is not hard to find as this is a middle paragraph and the names have already been mentioned in the introductory paragraph(s). As the names are already known to the readers, the writer here uses pronouns such as *he*, *him* and *his* to represent the principal character, Molahlegi, and his uncle Mphoši as the persons being spoken about. In our discussion of the first paragraph or the introductory paragraph of this novel, it was mentioned that Molahlegi's father, Kgakgathu was a difficult person to deal with. Therefore, his son who always found it difficult to live with him would find solace in his uncle. Hence the visit described in this paragraph. Nevertheless, what we aimed to illustrate with these few examples of middle paragraphs, was to clarify our argument that in the main part, middle paragraphs, are used to describe events in the story whilst they simultaneously help in the development of character(s), plot and the theme.

5.4.3 The closing paragraph

Basically the closing paragraph should reveal in some fresh light, what the work has been driving at all along. This thought is supported by Kane and Peters whose observations are that, the closing paragraph is:

... the author's most striking effect for which he has been preparing all through the story and generally it bears directly upon the theme (1975:508).

Rafapa closes his first novel, Leratosello, with praises being showered on King Segodi - the son of the late King Seroboka who had managed to defeat all the other kings in his neighbourhood like Sephuma and Ntwampe. He had brought together people from all these kingdoms and was now reigning over them:

"A Kgoši Segodi a buše ka go sa felego, go be le khutšo lefaseng! Pula! Pula! Pula!" (1979:115).

("Let King Segodi reign forever and ever, and let there be peace on earth! Rain! Rain! Rain!")

What is interesting about this short ending paragraph is the evocation of "pula" (the rain). Semantically, the word "pula" is the equivalent of hurrah! in English. But to put matters in their correct perspective, in the African tradition "pula" (the rain) means "life". Sometimes it is even equated with "makhura" (fat). Thus we understand Rafapa to have deliberately picked and used this word to symbolize the importance of Segodi as people's leader, particularly because all those people had just emerged from fierce wars which destroyed their kingdoms. Therefore this evocation was befitting to King Segodi, from whom they expected good life and prosperity.

On the other hand Mogwane o a lla closes on a moral note:

Dithabaneng e lebeletše e šia meno; Dithabaneng e lebeletše e swere mahlaa. Bangwe ba re Thongwa o romeleditšwe; bangwe ba re sa go wela Mmadikila ke kotlo ya badimo gobane o be a sa tšhabe leepo.

"Mogatšamotho ke mogatšamotho thabong le mašuleng, ngwanaka, wa hlanogela mogatšago mašuleng o kgotla medimo, mogwane wa lla, wa moriri a itšatšara" (1981:68).

(Dithabaneng is watching and is scared; Dithabaneng is watching and is mourning. Other people allege that Thongwa was sent by someone; others allege that what has befallen Mmadikila is the wrath of the gods because she was not worried by mockery. "A person's spouse is a person's spouse in happiness and in sorrow, my child. If you abandon your spouse in sorrow you will provoke the gods, and the switch would sound and a person would come to grief.")

These moralizing words are said to have been voiced by Motšhene, the village clown. He was actually reiterating the warning once sounded by one of the village elders on the day Mmadikila came to divorce Ntlheke Tibang at the tribal court. She did not heed those warnings and steadfastly claimed that she was afraid that her husband, Ntlheke, might do to her what his brother Lesibana did

to his family. Although this was a blatant lie, the king ruled in her favour and Nltheke was divorced. Ironically, she died of murder and not of natural causes as she had wished.

There is an element of contradiction in the manner in which Rafapa concludes these two novels, Leratosello and Mogwane o a Ila. In Leratosello the destruction of all the old kingdoms of gaSephuma, Seroboka, Ntwampe and Motsepe, respectively - which perpetuated old beliefs and customs - and the advent of Segodi's reign, is a symbol of national cleansing. A commoner like Kgaladi was now free to marry with princess Senoinoi without fear of any traditional impediments. However, in Mogwane o a Ila, Rafapa seems to retract from his belief in modernity and its trappings. Its main character, Mmadikila, just like Kgaladi and Senoinoi, did not believe in traditional customs and all that it stood for. But unlike her two counterparts, her actions came to provoke the wrath of the gods and she was eventually destroyed. It is this kind of inconsistencies which are indicative of the fact that when coming to matters of belief, Rafapa takes the middle path; not forsaking the traditional cultural norms and values nor embracing modernity and its trappings in its entirety. Perhaps it would not be farfetched to say that his personal religion - the Zion Christian Church - has an influence in his writings as it combines both the Christian and the traditional cultural practices.

There is an element of "surprise" in the closing paragraph of Bohwa bja Madimabe, which reads as follows:

Ka kwa moyana wola o ntšhithola gape. Ka tsenwa ke letšhogo le legolo leo le ilego la mpakela mororomelo. Go sepela ke go bona. Ka thoma go gopola ka matšatši a ka ka moka mono gaLebelo. Aowa hle, go sepela ke go bona; le gona go gola ke go hlogola, go bona dikgolo (1983:95).

(I felt that air blowing over me once more. I became so scared that I even started trembling. To move around is to gain experience. I started remembering all the events that

took place during my stay here at Lebelo's place. Truly, to visit foreign places is to gain experience; and to grow older is to grow wiser and to gain more experience.)

The element of surprise, in the paragraph, is embodied in these two proverbs; "go sepela ke go bona" (to visit foreign places is to gain experience) and "go gola go hlogola go bona dikgolo" (to grow older is to grow wiser and to gain more experience). Should Dr Ngake have declined the Lebelo's invitation to come to Botswana to help in curing Molahlegi's insanity, as a psychiatrist well trained and experienced in modern medicine, he would not have had the chance of experiencing the archaic world - a world in which people's lives and well-being are determined by the will of the ancestors and not by the will, knowledge nor the experiences of man himself. Dr Ngake had failed to cure Molahlegi of her illness as it had been caused by the supernatural forces. Everyone staying on Lebelo's farm was under the spell of the supernatural. The uneasiness he experienced is well expressed in the first line of this paragraph, which forms a link with the discomfiting feelings he experienced when he first set foot on this farm, explained in the introductory paragraphs of this novel.

Rafapa concludes Bowelakalana in this manner:

Setimela se ja fase. Se letša mokgoši phatla se dutše se šupile borwa. Ge o lebelela Moipati a humana a tekumiša hlogo ka boroko, sefahlego sa gagwe sa dipatsopatsa tša mabadi a dingwathameratha le ditlolo, sa go apara mangina le mo nkong se be se fela se nyaka go thula serope. Mpitiki o bogile boikalo bja naga ka lefesetere. Dithokgwa tše di mo gopotša boDitsebe ... di mo gopotša Mogofe ... di mo gopotša Mogoši ... (1987:63).

(The train continued on its journey. It blew its whistle whilst its forehead kept pointing to the south. On looking at Moipati, he saw her slumbering, her face which displayed a variety of scars - some of which were a result of beatings and facial creams - donning ear and nose rings, kept on coming near to touching her thigh. Mpitiki gazed at the landscape through the window. These forests reminded him of Ditsebe and company ... they reminded him of Mogofe ...

they reminded him of Mogoši.)

The composition of this paragraph is suggestive of the relaxed and happy mood in which Mpitiki now finds himself. In the opening paragraph of this novel, Mpitiki was portrayed as a tense young lad, always throwing tantrums, to register his protest about his continual captivity at Phedišang mental asylum. He wanted freedom and the chance to be re-united with his relatives even though he did not know them. In this closing paragraph, all that he yearned for has been accomplished. On this trip to Johannesburg, he is accompanied by aunt Moipati with whom he would reside in Kofifi township. Reminiscence of the unpleasant past, evoked by the landscape they were travelling through, are here represented by the broken line of thought in the closing sentence.

The harmonious ending of Rafapa's narrations is continued in Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago:

Kgoši Mphofi II o šupile phatla marung, o leka go latela semelo sa setšhaba sa gagwe go thoma kua Bokgalaka. Go tloga kua moragorago mohlala o a mo timelela, fela go thoma ka Mphofi I o tloga a sa gakwe ke selo ka ge Kgakgathu a tšhabile go ya le tšona badimong ka go šoma senna a mo anegela tšona. Le yena o ikana gore o tlo anegela bana ba gagwe, gore le bona ba di anegele bana ba bona, bana ba bona le bona ba di anegele bana ba bona. Ditaba tše di tlo phela go ya go ile, go fihlela ge ditlogolo di tlo be tša di thea nonwane ka gore: "E rile e le nonwane: E le Mphofi le Mafonko ..."
Seseuwe sa mosela wa seripana (1991:76).

(King Mphofi II's forehead is turned towards the sky as he endeavours to fathom the origins of his tribe from Bokgalaka (Zimbabwe). To trace the lineage from its remote past is very difficult, but starting from Mphofi I he knows everything as Kgakgathu - afraid to die with all that knowledge - came to tell him everything he wanted to know. He too has vowed to tell his children so that they too could tell their children and their children would also tell theirs. This knowledge would live forever and ever until such time that the grandchildren would turn it into a folktale and say:

“There was a folktale: about Mphofi and Mafonko ...”
That is the end of the story.)

This is Rafapa at his best. His artistic craftsmanship in handling the novel form cannot be overemphasized. He is an erudite story teller, drawing and manipulating knowledge at will, from both the world of the novel form and that of the African oral tradition. Molahlegi, now called Mphofi II, grew up as a son of a pauper, now he is a king living in abundance.

Rafapa's closing paragraphs can be classified into two main categories. The first category, comprises three novels, namely, Leratosello which is preoccupied with the old order yielding to the new, whilst Bowelakalana concentrates on the struggles of a young man, Mpitiki for freedom and the yearning to be re-united with his family, whilst Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago is preoccupied with the escapades of a naive lad who spends his youth dreaming of becoming a leader and eventually coming to accomplish his dreams. The second group consists of two novels, Mogwane o a Ila and Bohwa bja madimabe. These two novels have tragic endings. However, what is intriguing about these two novels is that the tragedy in them seems to emanate from the human refusal to recognize the existence of the ancestral spirits. As such Rafapa seems to want to remind his readers that whilst it is generally believed that human life and destiny are controlled by the supernatural forces, the ancestral spirits are part of that force. Thus reopening the old debate which has been raging between Christians - who deny the existence of the ancestral spirits - and traditionalists - who embrace this belief.

5.5 RÉSUMÉ

Vast knowledge of the Northern Sotho idiom and the stylistic prowess in its manipulation do not only foster clarity of communications in Rafapa's novels but also afford him better opportunities in the handling of his teaching and educating endeavours which might otherwise appear coarse when rendered in difficult to

comprehend or unrealistic language.

His diction shows unwavering competence with words at his disposal to bring out clarity of meanings of various instances. To express thoughts and life experiences clearly, he employs stylistic features which give his narratives that easy grace and pace of colloquial speech with his main aim being to interpret man and his circumstances and over and above that, to teach man about life itself.

Let us conclude with Achebe's profound thoughts about his own role as the people's teacher, quoted in *Obiechina*:

I for me would not wish to be excused. I would be quite satisfied if my novels, especially the ones I set in the past, did no more than teach my readers that their past - with all its imperfections - was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them. Perhaps what I write is applied art as distinct from pure. But who cares? Art is important but so is education of the kind I have in mind. And I don't see that the two need be mutually exclusive (1975:265).

CHAPTER 6

NON-PROSE FORMS AS THE MEANS OF EXTENDING MEANING

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Excellent knowledge and command of the idiom of his language afforded Rafapa the opportunities to frequently venture into and even borrow from the realm of non-prose forms such as drama and poetry without jeopardising both the clarity of his communications and the structure of the novel-form. The most common, non-prose features appearing in Rafapa's novels are: the interior monologue, dialogue and poetry. These literary features were popularized by OK Matsepe who successfully employed them in his novels. As Matsepe is Rafapa's mentor, it is not surprising that he, Rafapa, adopted these narrative devices with the sole objective of clearly and effectively communicating his thoughts and life experiences to his readers.

6.2 INTERIOR MONOLOGUE

Robert Humphrey views the interior monologue as,

... the technique used in fiction for representing the psychic content and processes of character, partly or entirely unuttered, just as these processes exist at various levels of conscious control before they are formulated for deliberate speech (1954:24).

Our focus here is on these unuttered thoughts. They represent the content of the character's consciousness in its inchoate stage prior to being formulated for deliberate speech. Exposing the multifarious thoughts going through Mpitiki's mind Rafapa writes:

"Ga gešo ke kae? Mma le papa ba sa phela/ Naa ge ba sa

phela ke goreng ge ke sa ba tsebe? Afa ke na le borakgadi, malome, mogatšamalome, bomotswala le baratho le dikgaetšedi? Mo ke gokae, ka baka la eng? Ruri le ge ke na le batho mo, gabotsebotse ke nošinoši mo lefaseng le le legologolo mo motho a sa tsebego gore ka mathoko le gotše go fihla kae, ka godimo, ka fase gona ...” (Bowelakalana, 1987:1).

(“Where is my home? Are my mother and father still alive? if they are why don't I know them? Do I have aunts, uncles, uncle's wives, cousins, brothers and sisters? Where is this place and why am I here? Truly, even though I am with other people here, in actual fact I am all by myself in this wide world which one does not know how big its sides are, on top, at the bottom ...”)

With these kind of questions readers are able to fathom Mpitiki's conscience. The lack of basic knowledge of things like his family, parents, the place where he lives and the reason why he lives there, is enough evidence to show that this boy, who was born insane, still has a lot to learn about life and its realities. These naive questions led to his escape from Phedišang hospital in search of the parents and the home he had never known before. Whilst travelling alone in the unknown wilds, Mpitiki is said to have eventually arrived at a certain village where he came to live with the Hau family. Once more, the writer subjects him to an interior monologue to reveal his feelings about his new environment:

“Naa Rre Hau o tlo se tsoge bošego a tla a mpheleletša ka lerumo? E ka ba lapa le le motse wo ke wa bathobatho goba ke wa makgema? Botsebotse ke nnete goba ke toro dilo tše ka moka? Afa ga se ke tšewe ke sauwe? E ka ba dilo tše ke nnete di gona bophelong?” (1987:40).

(“Won't Mister Hau wake up in the dark and kill me with a spear? Does this village and this household belong to real people or maneaters? Am I dreaming or just making up all these things? Am I not just in dreamland? Can it be true that all these things are existent?”)

Mpitiki is not speaking directly to anyone within the fictional scene nor in effect to the readers. But through the writer's skilful choice and usage of the written

word, Mpitiki's consciousness - his feelings about his situation - is directly presented to the readers.

Let us examine yet another example of an interior monologue:

O ra lefase le! Lefase towe, gabotse o ntšea bjang? O ntšeatšeelang? Modimo, badimo, le nkotlela tshenyo efe ye ke sego ka ikobela yona ka sebele? Ke goreng ke le ngwana wa lona lapa le, tate e le yena yo? Ke go reng le se la nkgethela go belegwa lapeng la borutho mohlamonene ke sa le meriting ya tlholo lefaufaug la go ba gona? Go sego bjalo le reng le se la nkhutšiša ka go ntira nta, meetse, letlapa, noga, serurubele goba letšatši goba ngwedi, le ge e ka ba lefaufau? (Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago, 1991:1).

(You mean this world! You world, actually how do you regard my integrity? Why do you torment me? God, ancestral spirits, which violation are you punishing me for, of which I did not partake in personally? Why am I a child of this family, and my father be this very man? Why did you not choose a happy family for me to be born into? Otherwise, why did you not relieve me of these miseries by turning me into a louse, water, stone, snake, a butterfly or the sun or the moon or even the atmosphere?)

This monologue gives readers a glimpse of the principal character, Molahlegi's mental privacy. He is disgruntled about the household allotted to him by nature. He envies those born in well to do families. All this causes him to question both God and the ancestral spirits as to why, innocent as he is, they should subject him to such misery. To register his disenchantment about his situation, he suggests that it would have been better if he could have been a louse, water, stone etcetera, rather than a human. However, this interior monologue, which forms part of this novel's introduction, appears to have been chosen and used to introduce and to prepare readers for all tribulations and triumphs Molahlegi came to endure in his life time.

One other point worth mentioning is the writer's comments which precede these monologues. For instance, he would say:

- * O be a ipotšiša dipotšišo tše bohloko (He was asking himself painful
tše boima (Bowelakalana, 1987:1) but difficult questions.)

- * Pelo ye nngwe ya bofšega e fele e (Some cowardly heart would
mmotša tša go mo tšhoša (1987:40) constantly tell him about things
which frighten him.)

- * O rile ge a sepela a nnoši a thoma (Whilst walking along he was
go tlelwa ke megopolo e mentši ya beset by numerous conflicting
go farakana (Leratosello, 1979:101). thoughts.)

These introductory comments evoke suspense and elicit readers' interest to wish to join the writer in prying into the privacy of characters' consciousness. The all-time presence of the writer and his prior knowledge of what his characters would be thinking next, enhances both the writer's stylistic prowess and communication skills. His readers become spell-bound as they are always fed with every little detail of what is taking place in the make-believe world of characters. As such, readers become the writer's fellow travellers throughout the narrative journey, sympathizing with and commending those characters who do good and abhorring and ridiculing wrongdoers.

All the monologues cited, are entirely unuttered and remain representative contents of characters' consciousness and in all instances serve a prelude purpose. For example, after learning about the conflicting thoughts teeming in Mpitiki's consciousness (cf. page 212-213 of this study), readers are told about a flood of tantrums resulting from those painful and difficult questions he is said to have asked himself:

"Ke nyaka go ya gae, nna! Ke ya gae! Ke ya gae! ... Ke re

ke a ya! Ke a ya! Nkišeng! Ijoo-o-o, ke a ya! Ga ke sa nyaka go dula mo! Ke ya gae!” (1987:2).

(I want to go home! I am going home! I am going home! ... I say I am going! I am going! Take me there! Oh no-o-o please, I am going! I do not want to stay here anymore! I am going home!”).

These outbursts are representations of the inner conflicts said to have been raging in Mpitiki’s consciousness. He yearned for freedom and to be re-united with his family in the quest for also being able to lead a normal life. But administrative delays at Phedišang mental asylum forced him to escape into the wilderness and become a wanderer.

6.3 DIALOGUE

Dialogue like monologue is not the most important element of prose fiction. However, prose forms, of course, can contain dramatic scenes thus gaining some dramatic effect. This literary device is extensively used in Rafapa’s novels as a stylistic device to reinforce the process of communication with his readers.

Let us examine a few examples of dialogues to see how Rafapa manipulates the written word in dialogues to expose among others, class distinctions among people, reveal traits, mood, circumstances and so on. In sharing with his readers the disillusionment of Kgaladi’s parents concerning his unbecoming behaviour, Rafapa says:

[Mma]: “Šakwe! Naa yo Kgaladi o dirwa ke gona go nyatša kapa e dio ba eng ge a napa a dio re ngweselele! le go laela a se a dio laela? Nna gape wena tatagobona ke dio tlabega ge ke le mo!”

[Tate]: “Aowa mogatšaka, ke dilo tša masogana, o ka di tseba?”

- [Mma]: “Alo, ge e ka ba e dio ba bona bosogana bja go dira gore a dio sepela a se a laela, nna ga re sa dio tseba”.
- [Tate]: “Naa wena Mmadikeledi, yo morwa o reng nka o tloga a sa re butšwetše? Nkane nka ga a heme le la go re gorošetša mma'rena?”
- [Mma]: “Aowa Mokone-a-Ntšhidikgolo, o se ke wa mo felela pelo. O mo felela pelo ka gore le yena šo o dio ikgolela. Gabotse yo Kgaladi e sa dio ba wa maabane.” (Leratosello, 1979:6-7).
- [Mother]: “Man! Is Kgaladi doing all that he does because of disrespect or what, as he just disappears unceremoniously without bidding anyone farewell?”
- [Father]: “No my wife, those are the ways of young men, can you understand their conduct?”
- [Mother]: “Well, if it be their youthfulness which causes them to gallivant without even saying goodbye, then we really do not know what next.”
- [Father]: “But Mmadikeledi, why does it look like our son would never come of age? Why does he never make a hint at bringing a daughter-in-law?”
- [Mother]: “No Mokone-a-ntšhidikgolo, do not rush him. You worry too much about him because he too is just growing big. Actually this chap, Kgaladi, is still very young”.

Besides concerns of disillusionment raised in this dialogue, by Kgaladi's parents, other salient points come to the fore. Kgaladi's mother, Mmadikeledi, shows her respect for her husband by addressing him by his clan name, Mokone-a-ntšhidikgolo. Loosely translated this name would read "Mokone with big eyebrows". As head of the family, it is befitting for Kgaladi's father to be venerated like this. This kind of reverence also helps in exposing the origins of Kgaladi's family. If Kgaladi's mother was to address her husband by his actual first name, viz. Malesela, Lesiba and so on, instead of using his surname or clan name, she would, among traditionalists be construed as being uncouth and spiteful.

On the other hand, Kgaladi's father reciprocates by addressing his wife as Mmadikeledi. We observe that the name Mmadikeledi is here used as an adoration since Dikeledi is the name of their daughter. Among those Africans whose traditional customs have not as yet been contaminated by Western cultures, all daughters-in-law are, on arrival, allotted names irrespective of whether such a woman would bear children or be barren. Culturally, such names are meant for the first born children, who will then come to be named.

- Dikeledi from Mmadikeledi > Dikeledi's mother
- Mpho from Mmampho > Mpho's mother
- Kwena from Mmakwena > Kwena's mother
- Pheagana from Mmapheagana > Pheagana's mother, and so on.

Reference to the mutual of praise or adoration names, denotes a pleasant atmosphere prevailing between Kgaladi's parents. Meanwhile, in Mogwane o a lla, Rafapa chose and used a combination of swear and spiteful words in a dialogue between Ntlheke Tibang and his divorcing wife Mmadikila to denote disrespect and bad relationship.

[Mmadikila]: "Sematlabokgola towe nna ke tlo go tlogela,

wa šala o tlatlafetše le mahlakwana a gago.
Nna ke lethari ke tlo bonwa, wena o bitlafetše
o ka se sa bonwa!”

[Ntlheke]: “Ruri, mogatšaka, o nkweša bohloko. Mantšu
a mogatšaka a tlogela sehlabi pelong ya ka.
Hle, a nke o tlogele tše re tšee magang a
šele. Le gona o elelwe gore bana ba re
theeditše. Ba tlo naganang?” (1981:7).

[Mmadikila]: “You bloody fool, I will divorce you and leave
you stupefied in your house. I am a young
woman and men would still propose love to
me, you are finished, nobody will have an
interest in you! ”

[Ntlheke]: “Truly, my wife, you hurt me. Your words, my
wife, leave some pain in my heart. Please let
us rather change the subject and talk about
other matters. Besides, you should remember
that the children are listening. What will they
think of us?’

Mmadikila’s reference to her husband as a “bloody fool” is surely not a sign of endearment but rather that of disenchantment. Culturally, an African woman would never ever, even in her wildest dreams, address or enter into an altercation of this kind with her husband, as that would be a definite invitation for a thorough beating or even a divorce - something very far-fetched among the Africans. As head of a family, every African man is king in his own household and should therefore be revered. With the advent of modernity, African women have come to embrace the unmannerliness of their Western counterparts who

seem to be licensed to engage their husbands, openly, in fierce arguments or even going to the extent of whacking them without flinching. Hence the numerous family breakups, divorces and suicides.

Another point worth mentioning about the dialogue is that it must be natural and functional. It must contribute towards the development of the plot of the story. The language used by speakers should not sound forced but placid, so as to foster communication and clarity of facts. For example, the love affair between Kgaladi and Senoinoi was culturally and morally wrong. If discovered they could have faced possible death.

The fact that they too knew very well that they were gambling with their lives, comes out clearly in this dialogue:

[Senoinoi]: “Nagana! Ge nka be e le gore tšatši lela go ahlolwa mmamogolo ke be ke se ka ngwakong ka baka la bolwetši? O be o tla re ge o tšwelela ka goa ka re, “Moratiwa!” gomme banna ba be ba tla makala gore Dikutupu a le gona wena o moratiwa ofe. Ke a go botša moratiwa, nkabe o bolailwe.”

[Kgaladi]: “Fela go diragetšeng tšatši la mathomo ge o mpona?”

[Senoinoi]: “Ke go kitimetše ke goa, ka go atla”.

[Kgaladi]: “Hleng ga se ba mpolaya ke mo?”

[Senoinoi]: “Ga se ra bonwa ke motho. Mmatšatši o rile ge a tšwelela ya be šetše re beelane mabaka kgale (Leratosello, 1979:53).

[Senoinoi]: “Just think about it! If on that day of my aunt’s judgement I was not confined to the house because of an illness? I would have

screamed, “Beloved one!” when you arrived, and all the men would have been surprised because they know of Dikutupu (as her suitor) and not you. I am telling you my dear, you would have been killed.”

[Kgaladi]: “But what happened on that first day when you saw me?”

[Senoinoi]: “I rushed at you screaming and I kissed you.”

[Kgaladi]: “So then, why did they not kill me?”

[Senoinoi]: “Nobody saw us. By the time Mmatšatši arrived, we had already made our arrangements”.

For the mere fact that Senoinoi acknowledges the existence of Dikutupu, as the man culturally expected to marry with her, is enough evidence to show that she knew very well that her love relationship with Kgaladi was wrong. Nevertheless the dialogue between herself and Kgaladi, aptly reveals the strong bond of love that existed between them. Faced with various cultural obstacles, which hampered their freedom to express their feelings of love for each other, whenever they got a chance to be alone, they always re-kindled their feelings for each other with this kind of pep-talk.

At times Rafapa employs longwinded dialogues to give impetus to the development of his plots and themes as well as the revelation of character traits. For instance:

[Mma]: “Mmadikila ngwanaka, le ge o sa kwe nna mmago, hle itshole o boele tseleng ya setho! Ga go botse go ba mpogeng. Batho bohle ba o ba bonago ba phela ka boipabalelo o ba sema mašilo? Ngwanaka ...”

- [Mmadikila]: “Mma, le godile. Le batho ba matšatši ale a kua mafuri; dilo tša sebjalebjaale di a le tlatlafatša, ga le di tsebe. Le itshwenyetšang ka rena ba lehono ge re tlaralala le tša lehono, moka gona ge e le go ithopafatša re ithopafatša mebele ya rena?”
- [Mma]: “Ngwanaka o nkweša bohloko. Mantšu a gago a hlaba pelong. O tlo mpakela bopaladithwana. Ke tlo hwa ke tšewa ke pelo gomme o tlo di bona.”
- [Mmadikila]: “Mokgekolo, o itshwenya ka lefeela. O ikweša bohloko ka lefeela. Ke phela bophelo bja ka le wena o phela bja gago.”
- [Mma]: “Ijoo, ngwanaka, o a itiholela! Ngwanaka, mphe tsebe hle. Ijoo, nna ka tla ka belegela fase! Ruri dipopelo tša basadi ba bangwe di rwaletše morwalo mašidi! Lehono ke bone; pelego e phalwa ke boopa!”
- [Mmadikila]: “Mma o ikopišetšang hlogo ka lefeela? Lena batho ba kgale le a šokiša ruri. Le šaletše morago kudu. Le dira dilo tše nkago mehla e sa le yela ya mola le sa le makgarebjana. Le bjalo ka hlapi ntle ga meetse e dutše e se na nko ya go hema, goba nonyane ka gare ga meetse e dutše e hloka maswafohlapi. Ye ke mehla ye mengwe. Le gona, lena bakgekolwana ba matšatši a le sele kudu. Le duma tšeo di dirwago ke bana ba lena. Seo se dirago gore le hlwe le ratharatha ke gore le a duma - le duma ge nka be le sa le basetsana, le duma dilo tša rena”.

- [Mma]: “Ngwana towe, motho ge a bolela o bolele ka molomo! Lešilo towe!”
- [Mmadikila]: “Ge e ba ke lešilo, ke abetše wena! Bjalwa bjona ke sa tlo bo nwa - bile gonabjale ke sa bo raloša” (Mogwane o a lla, 1981:55).
- [Mother]: “Mmadikila my child, even though you despise me as your mother, please just turn about and come back to humanity! It is not proper to be swollen-headed. Do you think all these people who take care of their lives are fools? My child ...”
- [Mmadikila]: “Mother you are old. You belong to the remote past; modern things stupefy you, you do not know them. What is it that worries you about us, modern people, when we flow with the wave of modernity, after all, if you worry about us ruining ourselves we are actually destroying our own bodies!”
- [Mother]: “My child you hurt me. Your words pierce my heart. You will cause me to suffer from multiple ailments. I will die of a heart attack and you will live to regret it.”
- [Mmadikila]: “Old woman you worry yourself too much over nothing. You hurt yourself over nothing. I live my kind of life and you carry on with yours”.
- [Mother]: “Oh no, my child, you will bring bad luck upon yourself. My child please listen to my words. Oh no, my confinement was worthless! Truly

the wombs of some women just carry worthless loads! Today I have come to realize that it is better to be barren than to bear children!"

[Mmadikila]: "Mother, why do you cause yourself a headache over nothing? You elderly people are just a nightmare. You are so backward. You perceive matters as if you still live in the olden days when you were still young girls. You are like a fish without water whilst it has no nose to breathe with, or a bird inside the water whilst it has no gills. These are different times. On top of that, you old women of today, you are too cunning. You envy things done by your children. What makes you to keep on complaining is your desire - you wish you were still young girls, you desire our things."

[Mother]: "You bloody child, when a person speaks he should speak through the mouth! You bloody fool!"

[Mmadikila]: "If I am a fool, I have taken after you! As for drinking beer I am still going to drink more of it - plus at the moment I am still playing, as I am not drinking enough."

Mmadikila's mother sounds very concerned about her daughter's unbecoming behaviour. She is portrayed as an emotionally agitated person, whilst her daughter sounds obstinate and spiteful. She talks to her mother as if she is talking to her peer. However, of intrigue here is not only the manner in which characters are portrayed but also, the meticulous way in which the writer is able

to manipulate the language at his disposal to reinforce communication with his readers.

6.4 THE PRAISE POEMS

Five poems appear in the novels being explored. They are used to elucidate quite a number of issues, for example; the praise of the heroic deeds of King Ntwampe:

“Agee bana ba tšiekgalaka agee!
Šouwe ke Ntwampe a bogo la nkopo,
Ke lesogana la pelo ya tšhipi,
Ke tlogolo sa Bakone ba Bokone.
Bale ba phetšego mehleng yela ya Mpo le Tšhikidi,
Mola pitsi le tau di sa bapala gotee,
Mohla fale mošemane a sa itlema letheka ka mokopa
Wa ino la lehu,
Kgalekgale mola maswika a sa le boleta
Thaba di sa bopša,
Ke ngwana-mmopša-le-mabu šowe!
Ke morwa Ntana kgarebe ya boi.
Ke kgaetšedi a mothepa a nala la go ga meetse.
Ke galagala ke bitša wena Ihlolekoti yoo e lego kgale a ile,
Ke re tsoga o tsorame godimo ga phupu o bone,
O bee mokganyaphatleng o phoše mahlo keno.
O bone tše re di bontšhwago ke kgorutlane ya’go
Ke tše bose šedi tša go tsefa go feta le mmoka.
Ntwampe a Bokone lehono šo o tšo thopa sefoka.
Ntwampe wa ga Ihlolekoti hono o a tšhitšhila,
O a tšhitšhila gape o šitwa ke phenyo,
Yeo e mo pipilego wa go mo šitiša tshepelo.

Hleng o ka re ga le nkwe gabotse Bakone?
Nka be le nkwa nka be le tšholla legoa.
Ke re Ntwampe o tšo wiša Seroboka ka mpa' sebete.
Ngwana lena o tšo wiša taukgolo
Ya ka kua borwa bja Mabupudung.
A e swara ka leetse ngwan'a Bakone,
Ya re ke tswatetša mosela a e goga ka mosela
A e tiantšha le lefase Ntwampe o mogolo
Gomme hono e bethile ka senkanankana nala di kwaetše.
Iiiu! Šate! Yo a sa rego šate o a baka!" (Leratosello, 1979:76).

(Hail to you the children of "tšiekgalaka" hail to you!
There he is Ntwampe with a bended arm,
He is a young man with the heart of iron
He is the grandchild of Bakone of Bokone.
Those who lived long, long time ago,
During the times when the zebra and the lion were still playmates,
During the days when boys still tied their waists with the
mamba snake
With the teeth of death,
A long time ago when stones were still soft
When mountains were still being moulded,
He is the child who was moulded simultaneously with the
soil, there he is!
He is the son of Ntana the timid maiden.
He is the brother of the spinster with the nail for scooping
water.
I am echoing calling you Ihlolekoti who have been gone for a long
time,
I say arise and perch yourself on top of the grave and see,
Shade your eyes with the hand and fling your sight in this

direction.

And see what your lastborn is showing us.

They are so sweet, here they are, and they are sweeter than honey.

Ntwampe of Bakone here he is today returning victorious.

Ntwampe of Ihlolekoti today is moving about with pomp,

He is moving with pomp heavily laden with victory,

Which has covered him so much that he could hardly walk.

Why does it appear as if you do not hear me well Bakone?

If you hear what I am saying you would be showering praises.

I say Ntwampe has defeated Seroboka and left him lying flat on his stomach.

Your child has fallen the big lion of the western side of Mabupudung

He held it by its mane the child of Bakone,

It tried to put its tail between its legs but he pulled it by the tail

He flung it to the ground Ntwampe the great

As such today it is lying on its back and its talons are upside-down.

Hail to you! He who does not praise is jealous!")

Among Ntwampe's heroic deeds of having defeated a feared person like King Seroboka and enslaving his subjects, we now know that his subjects perceive him as their protector. Phrases such as

* Lesogana la pelo ya tšhipi - A young man with the heart of iron

* O tšo wiša taukgolo - He has fallen the big lion,

do not only expose his bravery but also the high esteem with which he is being regarded by his subjects. The praise singer tells his audience about Ntwampe's

origin and his ancestry. He is said to be the grandson of Bakone from Bokone. The son of the late Ihlolekoti and Ntana, the timid maiden, the brother to a spinster whose nail is so big that it can be used to scoop water and so on. We are also informed about the geographic position of the two villages. Ntwampe resides on the eastern side of Mabupudung mountain range whilst Seroboka is on the southern side. The praise singer also calls for unity among Ntwampe's subjects by asking them to extol his bravery and heroic deeds by joining her in showering him with praises.

In the previous poem the writer gave one of Ntwampe's subjects a chance to expose people's general feelings about their king. In the following poem, one of the characters, Mpaleratha, is given a chance to praise himself and his son simultaneously, viz:

NtIheke a Sekolobeng Bakolobeng,
A se heme la phorokgohlo mmantepa.
Ke morw'a Mpaleratha o se lebale,
Ke morw'a sogana serethadiphaka,
Ke rethile sefaka Matebeleng Mmadikan'a thimola,
Matebejana a nkutswautswa ka mesel'a mahlo,
Matebejana a nnyakurela ka mekganya phatleng,
Ba tšhab'o batamela nna Mokoko-o-mogolo,
Mokoko mokopa ka rati tshadi e se tšešo,
Gwa hloka mokoko o tee ralengotloletelele,
Go ema pel'a Mpalerath'a tshoganadiepe.
GaMokopane phaka go retha ke ethimodišitše
Mmadikana-dipula-ge-Magope-a-ka-thopa;
Matebejana Maponokgobogi a nkatoga -
A re e lego a ethimodišitše timamello,
Balata Mpaleratha re tlo mmotšang?
Ngwan'a tadi o tsebega ka mereto;

E maswi e a ikgampa ga Mpaleratha kolobe;
Ntlheke o ntlhekile wa hleka le mekgwa ya ka,
Pele ke ya mošimamohlaelathupa,
Makoti ka ntaka 'tlo be ke getlile!
liiiu! Šateel! Iii-u-u-u! Bakolobe! (1981:11)

(Ntlheke of Sekolobeng Bakolobeng,
Did not dither to talk about a woman.
Do not forget that he is the son of Mpaleratha,
He is the son of the young man the wielder of the forearms,
I wielded forearms among the Ndebeles and Mmadikana sneezed,
Ndebeles looked at me suspiciously,
Ndebeles peeped at me shading their eyes with their hands,
Being afraid to come nearer to me the big cock,
The cock that makes love to women whenever
It feels like as they are not my relatives,
Not a single cock with a long shin,
Could dare to challenge me Mpaleratha the brave one
At Mokopane, by wielding forearms I have caused
Mmadikana-dipula-ge-Magope-a-ka-thopa to sneeze;
Ndebeles, the discredited Ngunis, moved away from me -
Saying, if he has caused the main man to sneeze,
What can commoners like ourselves do to Mpaleratha?
Tadi's child is known by its praises;
The milky one milks itself at Mpaleratha Kolobe's (the pig's)
place;
Ntlheke you have treated me with respect and you have
actually taken after me,
Before I die,
A daughter-in-law with my naked eyes I would have seen!
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! Bakolobe!")

This praise poem seems to emanate from mere pleasure when Mpaleratha realized that his son had come of age. That he was now talking about getting married showed his father that his son had reached manhood. The thought that he would see a daughter-in-law before he died excited him. That his son wanted to marry was seen as emulation of himself as the father. Hence the simultaneous praise of himself and his son. However what is more interesting is the kind of audience listening to the recital. Under normal circumstances, a praise poem like this is recited in public, in the presence of many people and to praise heroic deeds. But in this novel the poem was recited in Mpaleratha's bedroom where the only member of the audience was his wife alone. Perhaps this was done deliberately to emphasize Mpaleratha's character as he exposes himself as being brave and feared by all the Ndebeles as well as all the women whom he claims to have bedded without any hindrance. Be it as it may, this poem too has vividly exposed Ntlikeheke Tibang's ancestry through the family's totem - "Kolobe" - wild pig, and the use of praise names.

In the following poem Rafapa stops the praise singer's self-exteriorizations but concentrates on exposing people's history or their ancestral lineage. The poem is also used for aesthetical purposes.

Hei wena motse wa serakalala!
Hei wena kgakabje ya mahlo a baagi ba gaSegodi!
Botsana bja gago ke molebatša,
Bo re lebaditše maphaaphaa madiba' madi a thaga,
Maloba ge go thulwa madi a šaka la bogoši.
Ruri motsebodutwana towel
O mphufutšo wa phatla tša badimo,
Ge ba tlatlamaditšwe ke tlihabano
Ya go ka ya re kgeila matswalo.
O roto sa megokgo ya badimokhukhu,

Ge ba kgereša ka megokgo ba llela madi-matšhollwa,
Mohla fale Segodi a re ke nna ke nna,
Mohla fale kgorutlane ya Seroboka-kgong-tša-meketla
E rora e šišinya meboto e sa itire
E beketlwa ke madi a šika la bogoši
Ao bošego le mosegare a bego a runyarunya ditšhikeng.
Hle, a ka botse bja gago re lebale
Mohla wola motse o tlokatloka
Batho ba tšubutiwa ke 'dimmo la lehu,
Bošegong bja 'swiswi la tebetebe.
A ka wena dipula tša medupi matlorotloro
Di re nele! (Leratosello, 1979:106).

(Hail you vast village!

Hail you the jewel of the eyes of Segodi's subjects!

Your beauty helps us to forget,

It has made us forget the wide pools of blood of our people,

The previous day when there was bloodshed of the royal family.

Truly you bloody village of solitude!

You are the sweat of the foreheads of our ancestors,

When they were confused by the turmoil

Which befell us.

You are the diligent one from the tears of the gods our ancestors,

When they weep lamenting the shed blood,

On the day Segodi identified himself,

On that day Seroboka-kgong-tša-meketla's last born

Was roaring shaking the hills unintentionally

Prickled by the blood of the royal lineage

Which day and night was pumping in his blood vessels.

Please, through your beauty let us forget

That day when the village was restless

People being tossed around by the tempest of death,
In the sticky night of darkness.
Through you let the gentle rains fall!)

Quite a number of things can be deduced from this poem. Whilst its main purpose is to extol the beauty of King Segodi's new palace, the praise singer seems to have been seized, on the spur of the moment, to reminisce about the battles which came to destroy the kingdoms of Seroboka, Sephuma, Ntwampe and Motsepe respectively. The new king, Segodi, the son of the late King Seroboka-kgong-tša-meketla, had managed to salvage all the remnants of people whose lives were spared during the destruction of the afore mentioned kingdoms, among whom we find the two fugitives, Kgaladi and Senoinoi.

Once more the ancestral spirits take the central stage. The praise singer unequivocally showers them with praises which intimates that it is through them - the gods - that she and fellow villagers are still alive. Furthermore, it is through the will and might of their ancestral spirits that they managed to build and to complete their new palace for their new King Segodi. Therefore, the praise singer calls upon them to arise and come to help them forget the past misfortunes and to bless them with rain - which symbolizes peace and prosperity. We also observe that once again Rafapa has used a poem to praise three things simultaneously, viz. the new palace, King Segodi and the ancestral spirits.

Another point worth considering is Rafapa's use of the praise poem in ritual matters. For instance:

Ke ra boMaopalekokotlo makgolo a noga tšohle,
Ke Mošopšadi šo o tlišo kwatama.
Ke kwatamago ke setlogolwana sa Mmadipela
Hle Maopalekokotlo boela madibeng a magolo,
Ke tla re go goma wa boa gobane noka ke yeno!
(Leratosello, 1979:78).

(I mean you Maopalekokotlo - the largest water snake - the grandmother of all the snakes,
It is Mošopšadi, here she is, she has come to propitiate you.
Propitiating, I am Mmadipela - the mountain snake's - grandchild
Please Maopalekokotlo go back to the big pools,
After I have left you can come back because the river belongs to you!)

This short poem is said to have been the poem recited by every citizen from King Ntwampe's village, whenever they brought a sacrifice to the ancestral spirits. This kind of ceremony is said to have taken place at Molapong river where they believed that its pools were homes for the ancestral spirits. This kind of ritual was performed only in the evening. The propitiator would first plead with the mysterious water-snake to give way and allow him/her to make a sacrifice to the gods. Whilst pleading with the snake, showering it with eulogies, the propitiator would also identify himself/herself as Mošopšadi and so on as well as identifying his/her ancestry, e.g. "Ke setlogolwana sa Mmadipela" (I am the grandchild of Mmadipela - the mountain snake). Rafapa seems to have deliberately picked and used this short introductory poem into the mythical and mysterious world of the African tradition to tantalize the imagination of his readers.

In yet another praise poem, the writer introduces his readers to yet another form of a ritual, which is about African customs on how an African child, particularly the first child who is a boy, is given a name:

"Dikolobe le Ditlou!
Ba Tibang le ba Motšhaki,
Re ngwathišeng tsina le menototsi;
Le tutile manyololong ke topile,
Morw'a Mpaleratha o tšibotše;
Kgoro ya Tibang e a tlaralala,
E tlaralala le go petlekana wa go metša naga;

Mowabosweng yo ina ke Podile.
Ke Podile monkana' Mankwe,
Podile thwala kgošana tsholong." (Mogwane o a Ila, 1981:13).

("Dikolobe and Ditlou! (Pigs and Elephants!)
The Tibang and the Motšhaki people,
Share with us the sweet and nice things;
You are living in abundance, I heard,
Mpaleratha's son has the first-born;
Tibang's court is growing big,
It is growing big and wider swallowing the land;
This new-born child's name is Podile
He is Podile the mate of Mankwe
Podile the protector of the king's son in expedition.")

In the African culture children are not just given any name that may come to the parents' mind. The usual practice is that children, are always named after their grandparents. If it is a boy, he would be named after his grandfather. If it is a girl she would be named after her grandmother. This ensures continuity and even after death people using same names are believed to still interlink spiritually. However what is most intriguing about this belief is the agreement it brings between Christianity and traditionalism as both believe that there is life beyond death. That is why at some rural villages, particularly where people concerned are blood relatives, you will find certain names, viz. Lesetša or Mankwana in every household. This is a solemn practice, deviation from the norm is taboo and those who deviate are always warned that they might evoke the wrath of the ancestral spirits.

Be it as it may, it is said that when Mpaleratha came to his son's house to give his grandson a name, he brought along a goat. According to the African tradion, a goat is a sacred animal used for sacrifices to solemnize the relationship

between the mortals and immortals. Therefore Mpaleratha couldn't have brought a sheep along as it is not the correct animal for such a ritual. During the ceremony and before telling the audience the child's name, Mpaleratha first announced the new-born child's line of ancestry. He announced the Tibang lineage which is paternal, and the Motšhaki lineage which is maternal. Having done that, he went on to reveal the boy's birth to be a surety ensuring the growth of the Tibang's lineage. Satisfied that the child had been duly introduced to both the people and the gods, then the child's name was announced as "Podile", named after the old man "Mpaleratha" himself. Hence it is not surprising that after his death, Mpaleratha still had some influence in the young Podile's life.

6.5 RÉSUMÉ

The use of non-prose forms as communication and stylistic devices brought out the following salient points:

- * The diction in his monologues and dialogues often reflect the feelings much appropriate to the characters peopling his novels.
- * Though Rafapa is a self-confessed Christian but in his writings, particularly the praise poems, he appears not to have any problem or objection whatsoever to traditional religion and ancestral worship. That can be seen in his characters who are always quick in soliciting help and protection from the ancestors whenever they are faced with problems.

His continual revelation and emphasis of the importance of the ancestral spirits in the life of man without forsaking Christianity reminds us of Mashabela's profound comments about what he terms "O.K. Matsepe's line of confession of faith and the doctrinal - liturgical practices", wherein he criticizes those who take sides in matters of faith:

He (Matsepe) rejects the schisms, the yelling and the screaming of the sects and their making of churches dens

of thieves, that characterizes Christianity; as much as he does the ancestral spirits and medicine men of the traditional religion. On the plane of confession of faith he finds very little or no differences. Hence his successful attempt to explain basically Christian concepts in traditional terminology. His God is the creator, the Maintainer, the Dispenser, the Chastiser of evil and the Comforter. Even the cliché “Modimo le badimo” he uses to express the Christian concept “God and His angels”. The traditional faith is thus shorn of its objectionableness by this grand conceptualization. He is a Christian who tries to infuse into Christianity what is not objectionable in traditional religion; not unlike the African Theologians, who believe that Christianity without the cultural base of the people becomes to them an empty display of awe and reverence, a candleswax emotionalism that does not stand the litmus test of genuine Christian living (1979:263).

- * What is also intriguing about his poems - except the two by Mpaleratha which appear in Mogwane o a Ila - is that all the poems, including those on rituals, are recited by women. Under normal circumstances it is unheard of for women to sing praises, as in their nature praise poems are meant to praise either the king, a brave soldier or any of the male heroic deeds. Therefore the praise singer is usually a male person. Perhaps this was done deliberately, particularly because, as mentioned in previous chapters, Rafapa's themes are transitional, as such unusual occurrences are not a surprise in his works.

CHAPTER 7

RECAPITULATION

This final chapter serves as a recapitulation on the main purpose of this thesis which was to explore the literariness of Rafapa's novels and their place within the Northern Sotho language community. The exploration has thus far yielded quite a number of observations videlicet: literariness and education. Over and above, it has revealed that there need not be panic about the present and the future of Northern Sotho literature particularly because the passing-away of O.K. Matsepe did not knell the end of creativity and good literature writing in this language.

It is an undisputable fact that the five novels explored by this study qualify as novels, particularly because they satisfy all the aspects required of the novel form. Over and above that, they each have a story to tell; a story which explains certain issues concerning man and his circumstances and situations, stories peopled by characters who are the verisimilitude of people with whom we interact daily; stories which contain themes through which the writer communicates and educates his fellow sojourners of this world, using the written word as the main tool of communication.

In his opinion, Rafapa sees the role of the writer as "aim" directed, aiming to teach fellow humans. Thus he muses as follows about this point:

An author should aim to chastise his fellow men about the sociological flaws in the society in which he lives, surely, we are not living in the past! Even if the setting can be in the past, the writer will have to transcend the bounds of past society (Letter: 13 August 1995).

His aim is quite evident in the kind of themes he wrote about - discussed in chapter 3 of this study. These themes are used for teaching and educating his

fellow men. Of the themes discussed the one that immediately comes to mind is the one on “madness” in which he duly chastises the uneducated section of the society for their ignorance of the various types of mental illnesses which usually do affect people. His main accusation of this group is that they always spread false rumours about the mentally afflicted, claiming those people are “mad” even though in many instances they are merely suffering from nervous tension or temporary nervous breakdown.

Consequently what emerged as Rafapa’s aim with this kind of theme seems to have been to teach and to educate people that first and foremost, the mentally ill should be loved and cared for. Secondly, that not each and every one who suffers from some kind of mental illness, should be regarded as being mad. Thirdly, that if afforded good care, such persons could recuperate and come to live and lead meaningful and fruitful lives. Hence this argument:

Batho ba bantši ga ba tsebe gore batho ba bantši bao kgale ba kilego ba gafa lehono ke barutiši, boradipolotiki, baoki, dingaka, bagoeledi, baagi le maloko a mangwe gape a bohlokwa setšhabeng. (Bohwa bja Madimabe, 1983:62)

(Too many people do not know that many of those who were once declared mad, are today’s teachers, politicians, nurses, doctors, announcers, builders and many other important members of society.)

What is interesting though is the contradiction reflected in his own constant reference to all the mentally ill characters he portrays, as being “mad” (gafa) thus joining the ranks of the uneducated group he accuses of clubbing together all mental illnesses as “madness”.

What also emerged from his themes is that, as the context of his novels is largely determined by social and cultural change, his themes can at best be described as generally transitional i.e. from the traditional past into the modern present. In these novels, the elderly people are depicted as adherents to the old

order. Even where old traditions seem unfair and disparaging, they would unwaveringly continue to obey their demands. The reason for this appears to be their fear to anger the ancestral spirits whose wrath is always so severe that no man can stand or protect himself against it. Because of their age the elderly are always regarded as bearers and custodians of the mythical experience.

On the contrary, Rafapa's youth are portrayed as hellbent on disregarding old beliefs. They wantonly trample them, thus forcing in their own new radical changes, much to the chagrin of the elders. Representative characters - of the youth - such as Mmadikila in Mogwane o a Ila, eventually came to discover, though too late, that their disregard for the elderly people's wisdom and advice was detrimental. Where they thought they had successfully changed the old status quo, and thus triumphed over the elderly, they actually found themselves having evoked the anger of the gods, the very same supernaturals they did not believe in. As no man can dare the might of the supernaturals, the youth always came to find repercussions of their own actions being a life of misery or even death.

What is interesting though, is the kind of meaning expounded by this kind of theme. First and foremost, this theme exposes generation gaps. The young want to lead a kind of life free from all restrictions observed and obeyed by the elderly. To them there is no such thing as living according to predestined values and customs which the elderly people believe in and cherish. To them life is what they refer to as "monate" (enjoyment). To them life is what is happening today and there is no such thing as tomorrow - the future. On the other hand, the elderly remain steadfast about their old beliefs and sulkily observe the wanton plundering of those values and customs by the youth who can only be stopped by the might of the supernaturals.

Secondly, this theme reveals Rafapa's point of view towards religion. He is a young man and a staunch member of the Zion Christian Church but reveals an

indepth knowledge of the mythical world of the gods and the ancestral spirits, which he is able to convincingly and easily converse about, always bringing them in to chastise the youth where the elderly have totally lost control.

Generation gaps, portrayed by clashes of interests between the elderly and the youth, are here characterized by resentments, which eventually led to fierce actions of protest in these novels.

As the observer of the day to day human actions, the mirror and critic of his society, Rafapa has successfully managed to use the literary concept of "theme" as an effective tool to teach and to educate his readers, thus falling in line with what Bessie Head, quoted in Mackenzie, once said about her achievements as a writer:

I have always reserved a special category for myself, as a writer - that of a pioneer blazing a new trail into the future. It would seem as though Africa rises at a point in history when world trends are more hopefully against exploitation, slavery and oppression - all of which has been synonymous with the name, Africa. I have recorded whatever hopeful trend was presented to me in an attempt to shape the future, which I hope will be one of dignity and compassion (1984:191).

In his bid to elucidate his themes, Rafapa created the kind of characters who are the true verisimilitude of real human persons, giving them roles of heroes, opponents and supporters. Through the writer's own direct comments about his characters and their actions and through characters' self explanations appearing in the form of dialogues and monologues, readers are able to see how successfully Rafapa has managed to handle the process of characterization in his novels.

We also observed with interest Rafapa's use of the technique of self-display or exteriorization. He uses pseudo names and voices - which we also refer to as "masks" in this study - to explain various experiences. Taking from what is

expressed in his biographical notes, characters such as Podile in Mogwane o a Ila and doctor Ngake in Bohwa bja Madimabe, are Rafapa's musks through whose voices and actions, his lived experiences are well exposed. That makes his novels, particularly the trilogy, to qualify to be classified under the category "fact and fiction" in literature. In support of our observation above, is the writer's use of real names of authentic people such as Dr van der Hooft - in the trilogy - who was the writer's psychiatrist in 1978 at Grootboek Hospital's mental asylum - Sekutupu.

Characters do not enact their roles in a vacuum but are based somewhere in the make-believe world of human beings. In settings he has created for his characters, Rafapa uses both authentic and fictional settings. On reading his novels, one comes across names such as Nkumpi river which is the river flowing past Grootboek hospital. He writes about existing townships such as Moletsane, Soweto and so on. He writes about places such as Lydenburg and Kofifi - Sophiatown. He uses these authentic places blending them with fictional ones such as Phedišang Hospital, Mabupudung mountain range, Katanong Township and so on. Places of events are further sub-divided into place as merely a place of action as well as acting place - which in one way or the other, has an influence on the behaviour of characters.

As characters' actions and incidents acquire meaning only when placed within a particular space in time, our observations are that the "time" aspect was also successfully handled. However, the absence of numerical time reference is quite conspicuous in Rafapa's novels. Thus he resorted to "tense markers" and "time phrases" - explained in chapter 4 of this study - to indicate time. The main unique aspect of his time consideration is its ordering. He uses both the chronological and the convoluted time order, thus giving his narratives a unique flair.

Unlike in oral literatures where experiences are transmitted orally, in written literature, “the written word” remains the writer’s only tool of conveyance, conveying thoughts and experiences. That is why chapter 5 of this study has made an endeavour to look into Rafapa’s word usage and how those words used as entities, in sentences or paragraphs, would give a clear meaning of the story without jeopardising anything.

Furthermore, Rafapa used literary features such as interior monologues, dialogues and poetry to further enhance his stylistic prowess and clarity of his communications. We also observe with interest that with the employment of self praise poems, praise names are repeatedly used either by characters praising themselves or by other characters praising them to reveal the praised character’s lineage or history. In the process, individual characters’ good or evil conduct is exposed. Let it suffice to conclude with Balogun in Jones, who comments as follows about the use of poetry in prose and how it enriches the African story as compared to its European counterpart:

The African writer is more inclined than his European counterpart to employ the rhythms of poetry in his prose. This is because the modern story is a continuation of the traditional tale, which employs the devices of oral poetry such as repetition, song, refrain, alliteration and onomatopoeia (1991:55).

Rafapa has contributed quite a lot of literary material to the Northern Sotho literature. Since this study merely concentrated on exploring the literariness in five of his novels, it is hoped that future researchers will explore the new novels recently published, his short stories and radio dramas. One other aspect which needs to be researched is his concept of the relationship between mortals and immortals which permeates the five novels explored.

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APPENDIX A

- Report
- Curriculum Vitae
- Letters



Mr JRL Rafapa

Times February 28, 1987

His interest in English literature led him to write in N. Sotho

MAHWELERENG: The entry of a lecturer of Mokopane College of Education into the rough and tumble world of writing is not by accident, he is an avid reader of books.

The irony is that Mr Jacobus Ramokobadi Lesibana Rafapa was influenced by English literature, but he writes books in Northern Sotho.

Rafapa is gifted as his academic record illustrates.

He passed his standard six external examination with a B symbol at the then Sandsloot Primary School, now called Madikoti-Putswa.

He went on to pass his standard eight external examination with a B symbol at Madikana High School.

Rafapa said, "I did standard nine in only six months, and thereafter I was promoted to standard ten."

"Most of the teachers thought that I would not pass my final examination in standard ten, but I managed to obtain exemption," he said.

In 1981 Rafapa enrolled at the University of the North for a Bachelor of Arts degree majoring in English and General Linguistics.

He became popular with the students and was elected a member of the Student Representative Council and an editor of the student publication, *Turflux*.

He wrote much about politics and that led to his expulsion at the end of 1982.

He was only readmitted in 1986 and completed his BA degree the following year.

In 1991, he obtained a BA Honours degree in English.

He said, "I started writing a book entitled, 'Lerato-Sello' while I was in standard eight at Mmadikana High School in Vaaltyn village in the Mokopane area."

The book, which was a love story, was published in 1979 and was later prescribed for third year BA students of the University of South Africa in 1983.

It eventually won a prize in the Ramaila competition for Northern Sotho language books.

Another, "Mogoane o a lla" was never prescribed at schools because

some white members of the then Northern Sotho Language Board felt it was politically motivated, he said.

Another book, which Rafapa wrote "Tshila ya tsebe" received critical acclaim from many reviewers.

Other books, "Bohwa bja madi mabe" and "Bowela kalana" also won the Ramaila prizes in 1982 and 1986.

"Diphiri tsa Soweto di a gagola" was released in 1992 and it has been prescribed for standard seven pupils for three years.

The latest book, "Baphaka-monola", which dwells on witchcraft killings in the Northern Province, was released last year.

He urged youths, who want to become writers, to work hard.

CURRICULUM VITAE

LESIBANA JACOBUS RAFAPA

PART ONE : PERSONAL

IDENTITY NUMBER : 6002165758087
PLACE OF BIRTH : Potgietersrus, Ga-Mokopane
DATE OF BIRTH : 1960/02/16
MARITAL STATUS : Married
RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS : 790 UNIT C, Mankweng
POSTAL ADDRESS : P.O. Box 510
SOVENGA, 0727
INTERESTS : Reading fiction, theatre, Music

PART TWO : TEACHING CAREER

SCHOOL	PERIOD	SUBJECT
Marobathota Secondary	1989 - to date	STD 10 English
Matladi High School	Jan 1984 - Dec 1984	STD 9 English
George Langa Secondary	Jan 1983 - Dec 1983	N. Sotho
Mantutule Secondary School	Jan 1980 - Dec 1980	Maths, N. Sotho

PART THREE : SCHOOL CAREER

YEAR	SCHOOL	HIGHEST CLASS PASSED
August 1994	UNISA	Submitted my Validation, chapter division and Select bibliography for the M.A. Degree on <i>South African Theatre</i> .
1991	UNIN	Hons B.A. (English)
1988	UNIN	H.E.D
1987	UNIN	B.A. In General Linguistics & English
1975 - 1979	Madikana H. School	STD 10 with Exemption
1977	Management Consultants Training Centre	A Typist Diploma
1967 - 1974	Sandsloot Primary School	STD 6 External: B Aggregate pass

PART FOUR : COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

YEAR	ORGANISATION	POSITION
1994	Marobathota High School Staff Meeting	Elected a representative of Teachers on the P.T.S.A.
1994	SATESOL	Elected Executive Member of the N. Transvaal Chapter
1988	Zion Christian Church (ZCC)	Appointed the founding Secretary of the church bursary fund, catering for students at tertiary level up to now.
1981	Turfloop S.R.C.	Faculty Rep; Editor of student newsletter, Publicity Officer to the press.
1977	Lebadi Authors Guild	Founder Member
1977	Mmadikana High School S.R.C.	Elected as Spokesman during a parents day.

PART FIVE : PUBLICATIONS

The following are the books L.J. Rafapa has written:

YEAR PUBLISHED	TITLE	PUBLISHER	GENRE
1994	N. Sotho Litt. Study Guide	BARD	Study Guide
1991	Mabudutša	Kagiso	Short Stories
1991	Diphiri tša Soweto	Kagiso	Novel
1986	Bowelakalana	de Jager Haum	Novel
1985	Maikemišetšo	S.A.B.C.	Radio drama serial
1982	Bohwa bja Madimabe	de Jager Haum	Novel
1982	Tšhila ya Tsebe	Educum	Short Stories
1980	Mogwane o a Ila	J.L. van Schaik	Novel
1978	Leratosello	J.L. van Schaik	Novel

PART FIVE : LITERARY PRIZES WON BY L.J. RAFAPA

YEAR	NAME	TITLE
1993	E.M. Ramaila Prize	Diphiri tša Soweto
1986	E.M. Ramaila Prize	Bowelakalana
1986	De Jager Haum Literary Prize	Bowelakalana
1984	E.M. Ramaila Prize	Leratosello
1982	De Jager Haum Literary Prize	Bohwa bja Madimabe

1. Personal

I was born on 16 February 1960 at Sandsloot, a village in the Mokopane Local Government near Portgietersrus in the Northern Transvaal province. I am a fourth-born in a family of nine siblings - economically a peasant family. I am married and have been blessed with two sons. I am expecting a daughter soon.

2. School Career

- 2.1. I started school in 1967 at Sandsloot Primary and passed the then primary school external standard six exam in 1974 with a distinction: aggregate symbol B. When the results were announced the Principal Mr A.M. Mokagane, overwhelmed by my performance, asked me to address a gathering of pupils and parents as an honour. The World newspaper also carried the performance story.
- 2.2 At Mmadikana Secondary I entered standard 6 in 1975 and obtained position one in half-yearly and final exam results, with an aggregate of 75% and higher most of the time. This culminated in 1977 in my obtaining a distinction pass in the then external std. 8 exams. I had obtained symbols B in all the subjects other than Religious Education (I got a C, the lowest of my symbols) as well as English (symbol A) and Biology (Symbol A). I was in the Science stream. In the same year I obtained position 2 in the Lobowa Youth Science Olympiad, from the Karabi School standard 10 pupil who won an air ticket to London.
- 2.3 In 1978 when I did standard 9 I fell ill before half-yearly exams and hospitalised until school re-opened in January 1979. When I returned to school the Mahwelereng Circuit Inspectorate had promoted me to std. 10 without my having done any std 9 work. I grappled with both std. 9 and 10 work in that one year and managed to obtain an M pass in matric.
- 2.4 In 1981 I entered UNIN for B.A. studies majoring in English and General Linguistics. Due to my S.R.C. duties as a executive member of the 1981-1982 S.R.C., it proved difficult for me to be registered in 1983. I had a break until 1986 second semester. In the second semester alone I managed to do the English II work of both semesters plus Classical Culture 102 and NSE 202, and passed well.

This was after Prof. CH Muller of the English department had presented a special motivation for me with the University Management. In 1987 I successfully completed B.A. in English and General Linguistics.

- 2.5 In 1988 I completed the H.E.D diploma successfully at UNIN.
- 2.6 During the years 1989 and 1990 I studied part-time for Hons B.A (English) at UNIN and successfully completed the degree.
- 2.7 Last year 1993 I satisfied the basic requirements for the M.A. (English) degree with UNISA. Currently I am working very closely with Prof. Kossick and Mr Myles Holloway of the Unisa English Department in connection with a dissertation on some aspect of South African literature. I hope to complete the M.A. degree in three years' time.

3. Community Leadership

- 3.1 On completing standard 10 the entire student body voted for me to speak on their behalf during the 1977 parents' day, in those troubled days in the wake of June 16.
- 3.2 As a fresher in 1981 on the Turfloop campus I was elected by an overwhelming majority of the Student Body into the S.R.C., due to my verbal participation in all crucial meetings of the students. When the late Thabo Molewa's S.R.C. constituted itself I won myself the coveted portfolio of Publicity and Publications Chairman, where I, inter alia, became Editor of the student magazine called Turflux, which, of course, put me into much trouble with the SB after I had published the picture of Onkgopotse Tiro on the front cover.
- 3.3 I am a founder member of LEBADI (Lekgotla la Bangwadi) which stated to exist in 1977 under the Chairmanship of Mr CP Senyatsi of the Wamba fame.
- 3.4 I am currently secretary for the Bishop Edward Lekganyane Bursary Board which caters for membership needs all over Southern Africa. I have held this position since the inception of the bursary fund in 1988. Under my Board leadership a committee for adult literacy campaign was constituted and is now operational nationwide. Although supervised by my denomination, the literacy campaign is ecumenical in pupil-enrolment and is community-based.

4. Publicity

In addition to the above-mentioned I have been interviewed thrice over the radio and once on TV.

5. Professional career

- 5.1 In 1980, 1983 and 1984 I taught as a subsidised teacher at Mantutule, George Langa and Matladi High schools respectively. I've taught Geography, Mathematics, English and N. Sotho. At Matladi I produced a school magazine called Matladian as Editor where sports activities and arts were the main focus.
- 5.2 From 1989 until now I've been teaching standard 10 English at Marobathota Secondary in Boyne. For the first time since 1989 the school saw A and B distinction passes and a lot of C's in standard 10 external exams, as well as an overall improvement of results. Last year, for instance, the English std. 10 result was 98,7 pass. This has been the pattern ever since I became responsible for this subject in the school.

6. As a writer

- 6.1 I am an author of five published novels in an African Language, all of which have been prescribed at high school, colleges and university. The NSE100 and NSE300 students at UNIN this year are reading two of my novels, for instance. One other novel is in std.7 at high school. All of the novels but one have been honoured with the prestigious De Jager HAUM and E.M. Ramaila prizes, starting in 1982. I have also published a volume of short stories entitled Tšhila ya Tsebe.
- 6.2 I am co-author of a N. Sotho literature study guide published by BARD, highly claimed by standard 10 candidates this year 1994.
- 6.3 I am co-author of two short story anthologies, one of the editors of the anthologies being Prof. S.M. Serudu of Unisa. The anthologies have been approved by the N. Sotho Language Board for school use.
- 6.4 I've written numerous articles, poems and short stories in English. Some of these have been published in small magazines.
- 6.5 My ambition is to translate some of my works into English at a later stage.

The student farewell function of 26 October 1990 at Setotlwane College of Education. The introduction was done by Mr JM Lefakgomo

The guest speaker Mr JRL Rafapa is the son of Rev. Elias Rafapa and Mrs Lydia Rachel Rafapa of GaMokopane near Potgietersrus.

In 1974 he made newspaper headlines for the first time due to his extraordinary performance in the then primary school external std. VI exams. He had passed with an aggregate B symbol which was the highest in S.A. in that year. He completed this at Sandsloot Primary School, presently known as Mmadikoti-Putsoa Primary.

In 1977 he made headlines again in the then World Newspaper through obtaining aggregate symbol B in the then external std. 8 exams. he had obtained symbols B in N. Sotho, Afrikaans, Physical Science and Mathematics, and symbols A in Biology and English. Due to illness he did both STDS 9 and 10 in 1979 and managed to obtain Matric Exemption.

He entered the University of the North in 1981 after teaching privately for one year at Mantutule High School. He enrolled for B.A. in English and General Linguistics. In 1983 he was suspended indefinitely due to his role as an SRC member at the University. He had again made history by being voted into the SRC though a first-year student. This was due to the credit he had amassed in the Student Body Mass Meetings as a good thinker and speaker.

He was refused re-admission to the University until 1986. When Prof. C.H. Muller motivated his case in the executive committee of the University Senate, the university agreed to register him in 1987. Prof Muller was the professor of English. In 1987 Mr Rafapa Completed his B.A. degree, majoring in English and Linguistics.

In 1988 he completed his University Education Diploma (U.E.D). In 1989 he passed the first 3 papers of the English Honours degree and is due to write the last two papers of the degree this year.

He has edited the following two school magazines during his teaching career: The Turflux (owned by the University of the North SRC) and The Matladian (owned by Matladi Territorial High School in Zebediela).

He has taught at the following schools: Mmantutule High, George Langa Secondary and Matladi Territorial High School. He has taught Mathematics, N. SOTHO and English. As a standard 8 pupil in 1977 he obtained position 2 from a standard 10 pupil who won an air ticket to the International Science Week. This was in the very first Lebowa Science Olympiad tests in which the best 20 pupils of Mathematics and Science were selected.

Mr JRL Rafapa is also a prominent writer of N. Sotho prose fiction. His debut novel entitle Leratosello was published in 1978 while he was supposed to be in std. 9. This novel won the author the - EM Ramaila Prize in 1984 together with Matsepe's Mahlatse a Madimabe and Bopape's Lenong la Gauta. This was the inaugural round of the EM Ramaila Prize. All his books have been prescribed for pupils and students in high school and university, as well as in colleges of education.

His other novel Bohwa bja Madimabe won a prize in 1982 in Pretoria in the very first round of the De Jager-Haum African Languages Literary Contest. His other novels are Mogwane o a Ila published in 1981 and Bowelakalana published in 1986. Bowelakalana also won the De Jager-Haum prize in 1986 at the a gala function held in the Burgerspark Hotel in Pretoria. His volume of short stories named Tšhila ya Tsebe is also a classic. Not less than three radio dramas written by him have been broadcast by the SABC, among them a serial running for the whole month.

Mr JRL Rafapa is a founder member of ALA (the Association of Lebowa Authors) which was established in 1978 under the chairmanship of Mr CP Senyatsi. He was also appointed by His Grace the Right Reverend Bishop 'Ramarumo' Barnabas Edward Lekganyane to be the very first secretary of the Bishop Edward Lekganyane Bursary Fund in 1988, under the chairmanship of Dr J.L. Maaga of Mamelodi. Mr JRL Rafapa and Dr JL Maaga were, together with the Bishop's Desk, responsible for the drafting of the constitution for the said Bursary Board when it was founded in 1988. The Bishop also appointed Mr Rafapa as the Students' Representative.

As a lover of music, Rafapa sang tenor in the Mahwelereng ZCC Male Choir while a teenager. Currently he is the trainer of the Sandsloot Male Choir which is famous for the trek Isaiah 2 in the Masogana a Sione album recorded and marketed by the ZCC. He also grew up dancing mokhukhu at the Sandsloot ZCC branch, under the conductorship of Mr Amos Mabusela.

He has also written several poems and short stories in English. Presently JRL Rafapa is the standard 10 English master at Marobathota High School in Boyne.

Forwarded to Mrs N.O. Senyatsi on
91-04-30 by me
J.R.L. Rafapa
J.R.L. RAFAPA

P.O. Box 510
Sovenga 0727
45 April 30

Hello Mr Peter Boshego

Thank you for the lunch on 1945 April 26 at the Park Hotel. It was splendid.

As for talking, I think it was impossible to talk about everything in such a short time. That is why I decided to augment it with this letter.

You know, if your approach is biographical as you said then you have an immense task to probe me as a person. It is easier to approach any author as a writer. I think there are a few people in life who have been very close to me who might shed some light.

Mr Phahyaedi, the Rector of LITC taught me Afrikaans at high school and has had the luck to interview me for a job in the early nineties. He can tell you what I was like as a teenage boy in high school, especially outside class as he was also Deputy Principal. There is a cousin of mine called Kenneth Segwapa of Soshanguve. He is a doctor now, a GP, and his surgery is at Block K, Soshanguve. His father's home telephone number is 01214 3090, house no.: 890 Block K, I think. His younger brother, Matome, too can be of help a bit.

A journalist with the Times/Review newspaper in Pietersburg called Dirk Potgieter can also be of much help. Also concerning the crisis at the high school I'm teaching at and the controversy surrounding my role, a journalist with the SABC in Pietersburg called Jhe Kekana has first-hand information, as well as Simon Molekatedi of TV news in P/Burg. If you happen to be in Mankweng, a group of students staying at Molekatedi's rooms for hire in front of can give you more information about my personality as teacher and casual friend. They are very close to

me. Two of them are studying at university currently but are my former pupils. The boys are Thabang from Tembisa, Duiker from Kagiso, Johnny Sakwe from GaRankuwa and Mosomane from Lesheya. They stay together.

Personally, I've been a very prominent leader in the ZCC, working within a structure called Bursary Board as National Secretary General. This structure works very closely with Bishop Lekganyane as it is responsible even for drawing programmes during conference inviting leaders such as Mandela, De Klerk and Buthe as was the case soon before 1994 elections and, later, recording and selling ZCC music with Chieco Thwala, overseeing the Church funeral and insurance scheme, etc. In 1988 Bishop Lekganyane also appointed me the national Student Representative and this brought me close to the ZCC youth and other intellectuals in general. If you're to approach anyone about this aspect, however, be careful not to come out with malicious propaganda if you approach a wrong person. This is because there is a fierce power struggle right now within the ZCC top brass, with some individual leaders feeling threatened by my leadership prowess and thus hell-bent to remove me from working with Bishop Lekganyane for purely subjective, personal reasons.

It would be an unforgivable omission not to study the numerous articles I wrote for the ZCC magazine, newsletter called the ZCC Messenger. Therein embedded is my philosophy about God, religion, teaching, politics and life in general. One co-leader in my denomination who is part of the editorial committee and who is very positive about me can help you obtain copies of the newsletter with my article. His name is Joe Matebane. His home telephone is number 012 54 719 113. His wife, Julitha also once taught with me at the same school. As a former colleague she can tell you much about me.

Perhaps Mr Letswalela Mochiba can help you obtain from the SABC an unflighted biographical cassette about me. Puleng once told me such cassettes are available on request. I also personally still have to get it for my family. It can help you much. Mrs Olive Noko Senyatsi of Radio Lebowa also once interviewed me very brilliantly — she's very intelligent, that woman. If you obtain a cassette of that broadcast interview from her you'll have secured yourself a wealth as a researcher, for sure!

Prof Groenewald of Tubbies could perhaps also give you a copy of the speech he delivered at my reception party — it's polemical and focusses on my literature. Get the speech from Chris Richter delivered on the same day — he dwells much on my interpersonal relations, and is surprisingly accurately. There are also many letters I wrote to Kagiso Publishers arguing with critics who handled some of my manuscripts. That correspondence can help you so much. I know it will be uneasy to obtain it from them, but a well-calculated approach will ultimately see you in possession of this correspondence. The relevant person there is Mrs Antoinette Bekker.

Privately, I am close to most members of Bishop Lekganyane's family. At one time I was even approached to compile a biography of the family and Church since 1910 when their grandparent founded the Church. The manuscript is complete in N. Sotho and English and is now in Bishop Lekganyane's possession. Yesterday when I was in town in Pietersburg I somehow came to park next to Bishop Lekganyane's caravelle and exchanged greetings briefly with the Bishop's wife and daughter. I also talked trivially with her bodyguard called Thabethe and chauffeur called Sekgotodi. The two gentlemen displayed a deep reverence for me and respectfully stood aside as I exchanged formal greetings with Her Majesty! I am also close to Bishop Lekganyane's son. I'm not sure if ZCC protocol, which is very difficult to penetrate, could allow you one day to talk or write to him and find out from him what observations he has about me as a person. I could give you his phone number but I may not, as I'm not sure protocol allows me.

Of all the critics the one I love most is Prof Serudu. I don't know why. But I think it is because he's my literary mentor for as a 17-year-old inexperienced standard 7 boy I fell in his hands through Van Schaik when I was writing Levatsoella.

Somehow my bond with Molekweni is extraordinarily strong and delicate. If I would meet anyone in the streets or at a gathering slandering Serudu I would feel a deep hurt though I would say nothing in protest verbally. But my bond with Serudu is not as simplistic as all that for I've always felt free to differ with any critic about literary practice and theory, in an objective, scientific way. But I have a certain bond with Serudu.

One day I persuaded Pule and we took Tommie for a drive and drinks around Lebowa and Turfloop in my car — just because he is Molekweni's son. I felt so delighted and embraced and patted the boy's shoulders many times so warmly just because he is Serudu's son. Such is my bond with Molekweni.

One day a gentleman employed by Radio Lebowa lifted the story of Leratosello and wrote it as a radio serial under a newfangled title. I complained to the SABC through my publisher. When my publisher approached a critic for an opinion, which critic I think had suspicious relations with the SABC if not obsequious (he is a former radio announcer), the critic oversimplifyingly reported that Leratosello was an adaptation of the theme of Romeo and Juliet and the Radio Lebowa serial, too, was based on Romeo and Juliet. So that the plagiarist escaped scot free. To me that was the most stupid and frustrating thing I ever heard from a critic. When I wrote Leratosello I had been

inspired by Dickens's Tale of Two Cities and had never known nor read anything by Shakespeare. I was in standard 7. The first thing I read from Shakespeare was Twelfth Night in standards 9 + 10. You know, critics can sometimes talk senseless blue lies that would make you feel ashamed of your language. A Unisa study guide I once read said Levatosella bore thematic parallels with Romeo + Juliet. That I would happily agree to. Any two books on earth can coincidentally or accidentally have stylistic, historical or thematic affinities, I believe.

Now, the Matrepe connection. I loved Matrepe at all times. He sure is a genius - someone ~~was~~ who can write something like:

Le ge go bind kudu go etla le go iatisa
Go bind ba maraga go phahwa ke go iatisa.
(Phalafala ya Roma)

I think Matrepe, like Dickens, Mamogobo, M. J. Madiba of Mahloutbe fame, Kgatle, Phalane and others have created me as a writer for I read them before I could be an author myself. They inspired me, most of all Matrepe and Dickens. If anyone were to say in Levatosella there is a Matrepeic influence I would fully agree. But anyone who would say I imitate Matrepe would be under the spell of midsummer madness, I think.

Some of the short stories I have written do not satisfy the critics' so-called requirements of a short story. I do this deliberately. When I write, my instinct should freely guide me to write something beautiful, something interesting, something

enthralling. Critics can say as they want but when I write I write as I wish. When I wrote Leviathan, for instance, I didn't know there was a term or thing called plot, characterization or whatever, but are they not there in the novel? I was only 17. Between authors and critics who were born first? Between art and criticism what is more natural and which is more artificial? Authors and art came first, and then teachers made deductions from artefacts and from those made rules. At the same time critics can be important because someone might write a very long love letter and call it a two-page short story. If there is no resistiveness between author and critic then art will be too plain, unvaried and dull, not so?

Goodbye /

JRL

JRL RAFAPA

13 August 1995

What I think of O.K. Matsepe

One reason why I wrote Lesatsoello was that I found writers of N. Sotho novels lacking. I wrote because I wanted to achieve what these writers, including Matsepe, had failed to achieve. Besides having read the Mahlontebe and Paradiso series as a primary school pupil, I had read, privately, Madiba's Ukotrana, Senyatsi's Ihavi ya Ihephe, Aphone's Uxtangang, Kgatle's Madiveng a Redutse, Kukoma's Matlhotlomi Morwa Mapudi, Nchabeleng's Wasebana Shabamarwana, Matsepe's Lesitaphisi and Megobgo ya bjoko and two or three more N. Sotho novels I might have forgotten to mention. I had attempted twice to read Matsepe's Kgorong ya Mosate, but each time I threw it away without reaching even its middle. Although I found the language usage very absorbing, its characters and theme I found boring, very boring. This continues to be the case today — all I find interesting in Matsepe's works is his handling of language. I believe this is where Matsepe displays to the maximum his talent as an artist. There is nothing uniquely distinctive in Matsepe's themes, setting and characterisation. He differs in these aspects nowhere from any writer of any language, prior to or after him.

Perhaps I am saying this about Matsepe because I can say the same about Dickens, Uys Krige, Leopoldt Senghor or any other writer. I believe all

writers on earth write about the same themes over and over again. Literary devices like intrigue, suspense, character-depiction techniques and so on belong to all writers equally and timelessly. When, then, does a writer become unique? Only in the handling of language. It is true that some themes are dull while others are interesting. Matzke, to me, writes about a dull theme in his novel — the theme of Geppi. I never write about Geppi. I write about power which is broader than Geppi. Ferrotello is not even about power in the central sense. It is about love. I wrote about love because I felt that no single N. Sells novelist had succeeded to write about love, including Matzke. Matzke in Merese and Ferrotello had intended to write about love but had instead written about cultural clashes and the generation gap and how those impacted on children's mental engagements. Matzke wrote always about Geppi in the dull mechanistic sense. He failed even to write about power in the broader sense. What you come across love again in Matzke's novels, there are invariably subordinated in order to merely enrich his handling of the theme of Geppi. He never wrote about love. I wrote Ferrotello to write about love, which, not a single N. Sells novelist had successfully done. In Ferrotello you read for the first time in N. Sells a love story that explores love introspectively, intuitively, communally, psychologically and politically. All other minor themes for love are subordinate and/or tangential.

Many critics wrongly believe that Matsepe owns the pastoral setting in as far as N. Sotho novels are concerned. I repeat, devices such as setting belong to all authors and are not the area in which an author can reveal uniqueness or innovativeness. Shakespeare wrote in the pastoral setting long before Matsepe, and he also wrote in some of his works about boqoi. But it will be wrong to say Matsepe imitated Shakespeare. Thomas Hardy, too, in novels like The Mayor of Basterbridge, writes in a pastoral setting. Novels like Silas Marner, too, though in them industrialization in its crude form is part of the milieu. So that to me Matsepe was merely a great artist with the handling of language — not with the craftsmanship of structuring a book or being innovative in any other aspect than handling of language.

In Lezatsoello, I chose the rural setting. Not only rural as in books about the present which are not about township or city life. My setting is rural and historical. I chose it to be so, because I felt that Matsepe whose setting is also rural and historical, gave readers the wrong impression that in the past our forefathers knew nothing about erotic, romantic love, for this kind of love is absent in his books about people who lived in the past. So I was correcting Matsepe. I wanted to illustrate that we, people of the present, are no better lovers than our ancestors in the past, nor are we any cleverer. When I was satisfied I had corrected the wrong impression created by Matsepe, I forsook to write about the

past. In my later novels the setting is still rural, but not historical. It is rural AND about the present. Are you aware that Waters never wrote about the present? And he did not re-live the past so that we could be aware of how ancestors lived before us. Culturally he seemed to create our past in retrospect, so that we could value our present as Black people in the Black-consciousness renaissance and realize that our life without the help of westernization has always been well-ordered and complete. So, Redman, know that even now you can do without the white man — "walk tall and feel proud (Black Power!)" You're on your own. I suspect Waters was a PAC member or BCM or AZAPO man.

After correcting Waters's horrible mistake in Leontopeltis, I felt enough had been said about the past. Hence the present-time setting in all my later novels, though still rural as in Leontopeltis. The reason why my setting is rural is that I've lived in a rural setting all my life and I depict life as I experience it. I live in places of mapazi, farming without of improved nature conservation (remember the character Mlangweni in Mqume & a la?), and so on. In this way I am correcting Waters again. An author should aim to characterize his fellowmen about the sociological plants in the society in which he lives, surely, we are not living in the past! Even if the setting can be in the past, the writer will have to transcend the bounds of past society. But if you write about mapazi of the past when men still wielded spears in armies, you are saying nothing about the present. Today mapazi is in a totally different mould — no armies, no spears, there is mapazi with modern offices fitted

with telephones and modern furniture; there are cars, professional policemen etc. Today's bozōi is not Matsepe's bozōi; it is today's bozōi which you find in Rafapa's novels like Mogwame and Diphiri. And bozōi in my books is not the central theme. The central theme in Mogwame is marital union, in Diphiri it is power, for instance. While Matsepe is trapped in the past, in Leratosella I manage to transcend the past and reach the present, for I illustrate the intricacies of a love affair as they happened in the past and are still happening today even though the setting today is different, including the rural setting of today in this attribute of being different. In my Leratosella I am not recording history or re-living it. Matsepe in all his novels is simply recreating history!

Dickens is the same as every writer except that his narrative power due to a unique handling of language makes him outstanding. While Dickens's handling of language could be said to be as rich as that of Matsepe, he beats Matsepe as a writer. While Matsepe wrote about the past, Dickens wrote about the present. He lived in Victorian times and wrote about the Victorian society of England. Dickens, like Rafapa, writes about the present. Matsepe writes about the past. Matsepe himself seemed to be aware of this weakness in crafting the setting of Mahlatsa a Madimabe. In this posthumous novel, Matsepe indicates through the shifting setting that anything after it from him would for the first time be about the present.

GENERAL

1. One paper you showed me by an Honours greenhorn falsely states that in high school I suffered a nervous breakdown. This is NOT TRUE and probably based on rumour and NOT research. Dr van der Hooft of Groothoek Hospital diagnosed my problem as stress which led to nervous tension which culminated in depression. I was partly depressed by the unfortunate tone the rumours took.

2.1 It is true that there is a theme of protest or resistance in my works. I wrote Levatosella during and in the wake of the June 16, 1976 historical event. There is no way I could not immortalise the mood of the time. That is why towards the end of Levatosella you find rebellious slogans like:

"RE BELEGWE RE HLAKIWA GOMME RE TLA HWA RE HLAKIWA". Beyond the pages of the book this is the liberation struggle in S.A. and I intended it to be so. Tangentially, Levatosella is about social justice although centrally it's about love.

2.2 I could easily call my later novel Giphiri tše di gagolaga. But I included tša Soweto. This is purely political. As a youth, I feel the great deeds of the 1976 schoolchildren have not been celebrated enough. So my title is partly a celebration of June 16, 1976. And the novel is also about power (not boqosi). At the end of the novel people who have been cheated out of power by political thugs are restored.

Less significantly, the novel is also slightly autobiographical. The Kafapa clan are originally of a Venda royal family. My name is Ramokokobadi. I was named after my father's grandfather. Now, Ramokokobadi only came to stay among the Bapedi and Mandebele after a relative in Venda (Chief Ramabulana/Mulandzi), an elder brother actually, had usurped his kingship. Kafapa was originally Ramabulana/Mulandzi. My great-grandfather King Ramokokobadi Ramabulana/Mulandzi, changed the surname to Kafapa so that he could not be tracked down and killed, as he was fleeing from Venda. Before Ramokokobadi Mulandzi and his

people could be in Venda, they came from Zimbabwe: That's why the Rafapa people today are praised as Bakgalaka. But if you're a Rafapa you're also praised as a Matswela (a Venda) when you cough or sneeze or greet or whatever. Our totem is mosela wa rudi, so that we are also praisefully called mailamoselawapudi. At times an elderly Rafapa individual praises you simply as Mulandzi or Ramapalana when occasion demands so. My father, Elias Rafapa, even today calls me Kopii ya Matswela when he's in high spirits. This is because I was named after my grandfather's father, and this man died a deposed chief of a Venda clan.

2.3 In Mogwome there is an incident in which a tribal gathering at a chief's kraal taunts and insults a white nature conservationist. They call the black man accompanying this white man Judas (biblical allusion), a sell-out. The white man is rebuffed by the tribespeople because he comes with a message from the white government that says blacks must stop chopping trees for firewood and hunting game for relish. The white ranger and "Judas" leave fuming with rage, threatening to come back with an army of security police to shoot the people down thereby quelling rebellion. In this way, I protest against imposed colonial "civilization".

In the same book, there is an incident in which two men engage in a fist fight — a black man and a white man. Now, the black man defeats the white man to the extent that the white man wets and soils himself. I was politically trying to

foretell that in S.A.'s liberation struggle, the
black man (Nelson Mandela) shall finally overcome.

One white member at DET made sure that
this novel was never prescribed for school use.
Up to now, the book has never been read at
high school. Van Schaik even asked me to
edit out these portions, at one time.

Goodbye,

Yours

JRL
RAFAPA

P.O. Box 510
Sovenga 0727
92-08-10

Mrs C Voster (Editor)
De Jager-Haum Publishers
P.O. Box 629
PRETORIA 0001

Dear Madam

DIPHIRI TŠA SOWETO TŠE DI GAGOLAGO

I apologise for taking long to respond to your letter of 92-07-15.

Below are the particulars as you need them. I've written in the third person:

Date of birth: 16 February 1960

Place of birth: Sandsloot Village, under Chief Kekana of the Northern Ndebele territory called Ga-Mokopane, near Potgietersrus in the Northern Transvaal.

School career: Primary education at Sandsloot Primary school, now called Mmadikoti Putsoa Primary School, from 1967 to 1974. STDs 6 to 10 at Mmadikana Secondary School in Vaaltyn, from 1975 to 1979. In 1980 he taught as a temporary teacher at Mantutule Secondary in Mapela near Potgietersrus. He enrolled full-time for B.A. at the University of the North in 1981 where he took English and General Linguistics as majors. he was refused admission from 1983 to 1986 due to victimisation following the decisive role he played as an SRC member and editor of the student magazine called Turflux. He was only readmitted during the second semester in 1986 and completed B.A. in 1987. In 1988 he studied for U.E.D and started teaching as a permanent teacher in 1989 at Marobathota Secondary school in Boyne near Zion City Moria. Presently he is still the std. 10 English master at the ZCC-owned school, though he has just been appointed as a lecturer in the Department of English at the LITC in Limburg. During his expulsion from university he taught temporarily at George Langa Secondary School in Bakenberg in 1983; as well as Matladi Territorial High School in Zebediela in 1984. In 1989 he enrolled for B.A. Honours (English) part-time at the University of the

North, which degree he completed in 1990.

Further training: He is a qualified typist. He studied typing and secretarial courses in 1977 during school holidays, at a school called Management Consultants Training Centre, located at corner Sauer and Bree street in Johannesburg City.

Present occupation: std. 10 English teacher at Marobathota secondary school.

Books written previously:

Leratosello (published 1978); *Mogwane o a lla* (published 1981); *Tšhila ya Tsebe* (1982); *Bohwa bja Madimabe* (1983); *Bowelakalana* (1987).

Marital status: Legally married on 02 January 1992. The marriage was blessed at a ceremony in his home of Sandsloot on 02 August 1992.

Children: The marriage has been blessed with two sons, Thabo and Katlego.

Any other information: (1) When Bishop Barnabas Lekganyane of the Zion Christian Church constituted a body to administer the running of a bursary fund in the church in 1988, JRL Rafapa was appointed the founder secretary of the Bursary Board, under the chairmanship of Dr Jonathan Maaga of Mamelodi.

(2) Rafapa's three radio plays have been broadcast by the SABC - two one-episode short plays and one 36-episode serial titled Maikemišetšo.

(3) Rafapa's stage-play written in English was staged in 1990 by his pupils at Turfloop. He has once been appointed an adjudicator in such drama competitions at Tshebela High School near Boyne.

Hoping you will find this information handy.

Yours sincerely



J R L Rafapa

APPENDIX B

- Northern Sotho Language Board Reviewers' reports

NORTHERN SOTHO LANGUAGE BOARD
SCREENING COMMITTEE
REVIEWERS REPORT
DRAMA AND PROSE

1. BOOK SCREENED BY G. J. MOLOISI

2. GENERAL FEATURES OF THE BOOK

- (a) Title of Book Diphiri tša Soweto tše di gagolago
(b) Author J. R. L. RAFAPA
(c) Genre NOVEL
(d) Number of pages 76
(e) Publisher De Jager Staun
(f) Year of publication 1992
(g) Quality of binding -----
(h) Quality of print -----
(i) Price -----

3. LANGUAGE:

- (a) Richness of language:
Language employed is rich in idiom and proverb but here and there dialectical.
- (b) Orthography & spelling
In order
- (c) Purity of language
Pure though dialectical; employs terminology that is foreign to standardized N-Sotho eg. makebu, polagane, forola, bogwebere.
- (d) Typographical errors
None.

4. THEME

The title suggests Soweto atrocities but the book contains exposure of rural and urban settings. It also has African mysteries of witchcraft.

5. PLOT STRUCTURE

The novel has no defined plot. It deals with isolated rural and urban episodes.

6. CHARACTERISATION

The characters are many with almost every chapter introducing a new character e.g. Amose and Albino in chapters 5 and 8 respectively.

7. MILIEU

Rural and urban settings comprise the milieu of this novel.

8. STAGEABILITY

N.A.

9. NEGATIVE QUALITIES

(a) Vulgar language Contains some vulgarisms such as didupamarago and mampho.

(b) Erotic language Yes - within accepted limits

(c) Insulting to cultural values of others No

(d) Openly blasphemous No

(e) Extreme and senseless violence including sexual violence No.

(f) Intentionally promoting racial hatred and conflict No.

10. RECOMMENDATION

The novel has already been published by De Jager Hausv.

11. CONCLUSION

(a) Acceptable: YES NO

(b) Recommended standard: Yes.

12. SIGNATURE OF REVIEWER

J. J. J. J.

DATE 1993 09 10

REPORT ON BOOKS SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW

PROSE AND DRAMA

TITLE <u>DIPHIRI TSA SOWETO TSE DI GAGOLAGO</u>	FILE NO. <u>6/1/1/2</u>
AUTHOR <u>J.R.L. RAFAPA</u>	GENRE <u>NOVEL</u>
PUBLISHER <u>DE JAGER-HAUM</u>	YEAR OF PUBLICATION <u>1991</u>
NUMBER OF PAGES <u>76</u>	PRICE _____
REVIEWER'S NAME <u>H.M. LENTSOANE</u>	

1. LANGUAGE:

1.1 Richness of language:

Polelo e nonne ka ge mongwadi a somisitse dika le diema ka tshwanelo, dikapolelo tsa go swana le tshwantshanyo (papišo) le tshwantshiso di somisitwe ka bothaloga kudu.

1.2 Orthography & spelling:

Mongwalo (orthography) le mopeleto (e nno o dumeletsweng ka utle le mantso a sa tswellele go gabotse; Folebeng = foleteng (ga; mogadi bogwe sebaleng sa mogadi bogwe (lett. 51); Makoti & ngwetse (lett. mumofetse > mumofetse (lett. 58); mumofatsa > mumofatsa (lett. 58) oborolo > obavolo (lett. 15); seterata > setrata (lett. 30).

1.3 Purity of language:

Tshomiso ya polelo ga e na bosodi le gatee. Polelo e somisitwe gabotse ka tshwanelo, e na le mohlodi, ga e na le ditlhoka.

1.4 Typographical errors

Ga di gona.

2. THEME

Moreno ke wa go batwa ga bogosi ka bohwinhwini kwa Tswetta. Maatla a badimo mafelelong a utolla metle ya kgosi ya madi ya Tswetta. Bao ba bego ba tlhaka, ba ophikilile ešwe e le dikgosi ba fiwa maemo a bona a metle. Moreno wo o tsweleditwe gabotse.

Bothata bo tswelwa gae ga ditiragalo gomme bo raragana go
fihla sehloheng mo re bonago klogo ya tswella ya dikgetho,
e nyakago kgoši ya mmele ya madi. Pheta ya thaga le
diphatisi. Du Plessis di utolla mmele. Gjelele ka go le
kive o a bawwa mela a swanetie go ba kgoši ya tswella.
Ditiragalo di lozagana gabote go fihla moo re bonago
bothata bo rarollwa. Molahlegi o kewa bogosing gja tswella.

4. CHARACTERISATION

Tshwantsho ya baangwa ke ya bokgwari moo re bonago
dimelo tša bona di utolwa ke mediro ya bona, le gore
ba reng ka bobona, le gore baangwa ba bangwe ba
reng ka bona, Kgalegathu ke kgwana; Gjelele o kewa ke gjelele
ka go se thelebe.

5. MILIEU

Tukologo e tswelwa gabote, ke ya segae le selogoneng.
Basimane gja diphiri tša Soweto tšeo di gagadago ke gja gae
le selogoneng; gae go phelwa bophelo gja Sasotho Selogoneng,
kgoši e sa bona, batso ba sa tšema, gjalobelo.
Ditabelo tšeo di tswelwa ditukologang tšeo pedi tšeo,
di re utollwa ka botlalo gore go phelwa gjang.

6. STAGEABILITY

N/A

7. NEGATIVE QUALITIES (Vulgar or Erotic language, Insulting to
cultural values of others; openly blasphemous; Extreme and
senseless violence including sexual violence; Intentionally
promoting racial hatred and conflict)

Gae di gae.

8. RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Acceptability: YES/NO

8.2 GRADING : Stds 7 & 8

SIGNATURE OF REVIEWER

Jh Jentroune

DATE 31-08-1997

REPORT ON BOOKS SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW

PROSE AND DRAMA

TITLE DIPHIRI TŠA SONE TO TŠE DJI T-AGOLAGD FILE NO. 6/1/1/2
 AUTHOR J RL RAFAPA GENRE NOVEL
 PUBLISHER DE JAGER - HAUM YEAR OF PUBLICATION 1992
 NUMBER OF PAGES 76 PRICE N/A
 REVIEWER'S NAME _____

1. LANGUAGE:

1.1 Richness of language: Go di n̄itšiwane polelo ya maemo a godimo a mehalelwana ye e n̄onego: lentšu la Kya Kgatlu bjalo le tšwele bogale -- le n̄kga lefetha la kgakango: ^(let 3) Aikapelele- phetelele. "a mo ratha ka legadima la mamo ^(let 13) tšhwantšhanyo: "A Halaše ^{mole} bjalo ka phuthi e tšitšwe ke hlware ya tšala ka marthi ^(let 13)

1.2 Orthography & spelling:

Padi ye e ngwadilwe ka mongwalo wo o a mogethwe
 Go ne tšhalaganya selabi' ke tše - tšiso ya pile z
 ebile, matlakeng a mmalwa.

1.3 Purity of language:

Polelo ga e na dilabe. "Tšhantšu ya mongwadi e humile bjalo ka "Ba imelwa ke denkubakha tša dijare
 Let 5.

1.4 Typographical errors

Go go diphosa

2. THEME

Padi ye e tšheilwe godimo ga bogosi le mathata abjona. Mongwadi o lastiša gove: bogosi ga bo tšimlelwe ke lapa la bjona, gomme yo leke go bo tšimlelwe, a tše atlegga Mererwang ye tšišaga mo vev wo mogale ke (i) mathata a

3. PLOT STRUCTURE:

Thulaganyo ga seya alwa thwii. E raraganen Gape, mangwadi ga se a beetanya dikarole tla thulaganyo ka tatlano ya tšhona; Se se hlolwa kege mangwadi a thomilego ditaba ka moselaneig gomme a rathele hlogang - a hlalosa ditiragalo pele a tšweletsa mabaka go a di hlolelego.

4. CHARACTERISATION:

Mangwadi o dirisa metšwako wa haanegwa - bea ba phephagetto ba go hlolelelego dintlha tše di fapafapanego tša semelo-bjalo ka Melahlegi. Kgatgathu yena ga a fetoge. O tsebege e le menna ye mošom ka lapeng wa go latsa bana le tlala.

5. MILIEU

Puku ya e hloilwe godimo ga ditikalaga tše pedi - ya sebjale ka ge re kwa ka diabolitiki, thuta, kgweba bjby. Eupša e nkgalefata le setiro go e theilwe godimo ga bogosi.

6. STAGEABILITY

N/A.

7. NEGATIVE QUALITIES (Vulgar or Erotic language, Insulting to cultural values of others; openly blasphemous; Extreme and senseless violence including sexual violence; Intentionally promoting racial hatred and conflict)

Maroga; "...o šinyalešše o karake masadi a riboga" (Lx12)

"A itshole a šetše ale leribeng la go hlabele marokje le tše diyuwe kamoka tšango bipa mapono. (Lx124),

ka ntle le mehlalaye ga babatšha eo mangwadi a a gatlilego

8. RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Acceptability: YES/NO

8.2 GRADING :

~~...~~ S7d8 Pmtjallo

N/A K M

NORTHERN SOTHO LANGUAGE BOARD

REPORT ON BOOKS SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW

PROSE AND DRAMA

TITLE APHIRI Tša SONEGO TšE DI UPOLOAGe FILE NO. 6/1/1/2
AUTHOR RAEPPA JACOBS GENRE _____
PUBLISHER DE JAGER HAUM YEAR OF PUBLICATION 1990
NUMBER OF PAGES 76 PRICE _____
REVIEWER'S NAME MOHALE M.G.

1. LANGUAGE:

1.1 Richness of language:

GOOD LANGUAGE USAGE - READABLE AND EASY
TO UNDERSTAND

1.2 Orthography & spelling:

GOOD

1.3 Purity of language:

THE AUTHOR USES GOOD LANGUAGE. IT IS EASY
TO READ AND TO FOLLOW THE LINE OF
ARGUMENT.

1.4 Typographical errors

NONE

2. THEME

A BATTLE FOR KINSHIP. ANCESTORS REVEAL
THE TRUTH OF VENDA KING

THE PLOT IS WELL STRUCTURED

4. CHARACTERISATION

WELL DEPICTED AND THE NAMES GIVEN DEPICT
THE CHARACTER OF THE INDIVIDUAL. E.g. KUKUKU
WHO IS A PROBLEM

5. MILIEU

THE NOVEL IS PORTRAYED IN A MODERN
AND TRADITIONAL SET UP

6. STAGEABILITY

IT CAN BE DRAMATISED

7. NEGATIVE QUALITIES (Vulgar or Erotic language, Insulting to cultural values of others; openly blasphemous; Extreme and senseless violence including sexual violence; Intentionally promoting racial hatred and conflict)

NONE

8. RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Acceptability: [✓] YES/NO

8.2 GRADING : 3rd 10 AND ABOVE

J.R.L. RAFAPA BOHWA BJA MADIMABE,
DE JAGER-HAUM.

Bohwa bja Madimabe is a Northern Sotho novel written by J.R.L. Rafapa. The dominant idea seems to be retribution - unpleasant consequences are attached to every cruel human act, here the ill-fated inheritance.

Majagohle senior migrated from Lebowa to Botswana where he bought himself a large and rich farm. He lived in great affluence. He granted certain Jakopo the right to settle on the farm. On the occasion of Jakopo's wedding celebration, Majagohle sr., with the assistance of his friends, overpowered Jakopo and raped his wife. A titanic struggle ensued in consequence of which Majagohle sr. fatally injured Jakopo and seriously injured his wife. This cruel act unleashed the relentless forces of retribution: Majagohle jr.'s wife became mentally deranged, conceived mysteriously and died in confinement; Majagohle committed suicide; his sister, Uora, was murdered with her husband; his other sister, Sebolaisi was medically declared incapable of child bearing which fact thwarted her hope to be married to the psychiatrist Dr. Ugabe.

The author, using effectively a first person narrator, Dr. Ugabe, proceeds by holding the reader's interest as ^{to} what his mission was.

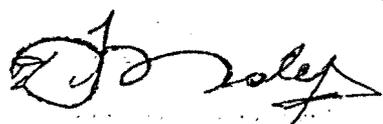
This ability to keep his reader in suspense does not only end with the reading of the novel but beyond - some mysteries still remain unresolved even after, i.e. the truth about boloi, ~~surprise~~ cause of Molahlegi's mental derangement.

For conveying the themes of this novel, the author ably employs characters - simple and complex. Molahlegi jr. is outstandingly enigmatic particularly during his interviews with Ngaha Ngake.

The language of the novel is outstandingly rich e.g. *dihlakheho*, *dielakgatellonedi*, *dielaphiso*, *dielakibopelo* on p. 59; *yaba le farafarilwe ke meduduetšo le nekwetekwetšo ya mekgolokwane* on p. 52; etc. He tends to call a spade a spade e.g. "Ga a bihla ga e ke ga a bobolwa ke utšiyetala ka mo mafuri", " ..bohloko bja lajagelo le wana bo ka go dira bjalo ge nkabe go kgonega gore tsatši le lengwe o bo kweswe ganngane fela" on p. 40, etc.

Typing errors, though few, are not pardoned. i.e. *papano* on p. 3; *tshwenetše* on p. 11; *baba* p. 13; *mabedi a go bete* on p. 18; etc

Recommended for Matric and post-matric studies.



1983.09.20