

**THE TSWANA SHORT STORY: FROM BD MAGOLENG TO OK BOGATSU**

by

**PHALADI MOSES SEBATE**

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**PROMOTER: PROFESSOR MJ MAFELA**

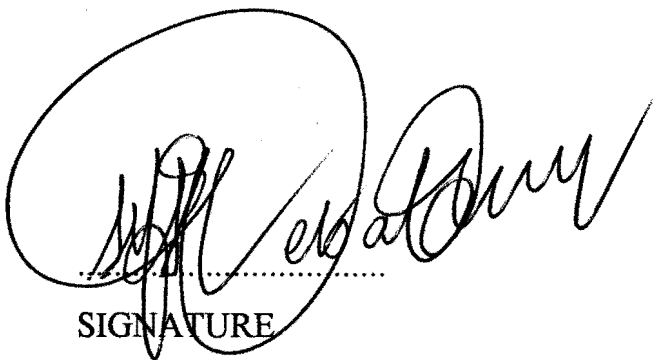
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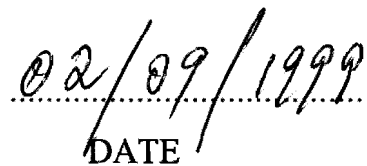
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**"I declare that THE TSWANA SHORT STORY: FROM BD MAGOLENG TO OK BOGATSU is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references".**

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, written over a dotted line. The signature appears to be 'PM Sebate'.

SIGNATURE

(MR PM SEBATE)

A handwritten date '02/09/1999' in black ink, written over a dotted line.

DATE

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## SUMMARY

Chapter One of this thesis investigates the growth and development of the Tswana short story. It commences with an evaluation of studies done on this genre and proceeds to a brief exposition of the Tswana short stories published prior to 1995. It also provides theoretical background on the modern short story.

The main focus of Chapter Two concerns the major themes explored in Tswana short stories. These include tradition and culture, love and marriage, the *makgoweng* motif, religion as well as corruption and other social problems. This thesis has discovered that the Tswana writers not only criticise the negative aspects of these realities, but also recognise their significance and beauty.

Chapter Three examines the organisational pattern of the Tswana short story and tests it against the structural pattern of the West. It is revealed that the Tswana short story, like short stories of other cultures, shows a continuous sequence of exposition, development and resolution. However, it occasionally deviates from the norm and commences with philosophical commentaries and details irrelevant to the developmental phase. In structuring their stories, the Tswana writers also use flashback and foreshadowing to link their events. However, what has been discovered is that foreshadowing occurs less frequently than flashback in the Tswana short story.

Chapter Four focusses on the word, the sentence and the paragraph and refers to other related elements such as repetition, rhetorical questions, proverbs, idioms and Biblical allusions. These elements serve to enhance the style of the Tswana short story and bring the readers into a dialogic relationship with their language and culture.

Creative writing in Tswana illustrates a strong, dynamic relationship with oral tradition. Chapter Five shows how writers have drawn from the wealth of their traditional and cultural heritage original and unique devices to improve their works of art. The threads of oral tradition that reveal themselves in the Tswana short story pertain to the organisation of material, characterisation, setting, style and language as well as narrative perspective.

In Chapter Six the findings of the earlier chapters are highlighted and recommendations for future research are outlined.

**Key terms:** *theme, style, structuralism, setting, short story, allusion, tradition, proverb, foreshadowing, flashback*

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 AIM AND CONTEXT OF RESEARCH**

The motivation for commencing this study was provided by the perceived lack of interest regarding the treatment of the short story as a genre in Tswana. Apart from this deficiency, my interest in this artform was sparked by the meticulous handling of conflict, suspense and silence in some of the short stories under study. Some of the Tswana short stories show peculiarities which demand literary study, peculiarities such as relaxed narration and the intrusion of expletives which add an atmosphere of spontaneity, authenticity, vividness and intrigue to the stories concerned. It is not only these features which prick one's interest in the short story as a genre, but also the way the Tswana short story writers have learned to adapt and add spice to the modern short story by using various folkloristic ingredients. Although the popularity of the short story as a written and read genre grows daily among the Batswana, many scholars have completely ignored its existence. Various factors account for this ignorance or neglect, factors such as the negative attitude of critics to the study of the shorter narratives and their insatiable appetite for bigger and better things rather than for smaller and lesser things.

The main aim of this thesis is to investigate the growth and development of the Tswana short story from its early beginnings to 1995. The focus will be on the short stories of selected Tswana writers, thereby showing the extent of the growth, development and maturity of the Tswana short story, particularly in respect of themes, organisation of material, style and language and oral tradition in the Tswana short story. These Tswana short story writers include BD Magoleng, SF Motlhake, JM Ntsime, RM Malope, BM Malefo, JS Shole and OK Bogatsu. The choice of these authors rests on the fact that there are very few authors who have been as prolific, successful and widely read as they.



Furthermore, it is quite impossible within the scope of this study to treat in detail the works of all the Tswana short story writers; and it is also undesirable in the light of the distinction that normally exists between the short story and the essay, a distinction that is sometimes ignored by some short story writers. Therefore, it is essential to select authors, and also only those stories of each author which best illustrate the outstanding qualities of their art.

## **1.1 METHOD OF RESEARCH**

We shall use only those short stories which are relevant to and suit our argument best. We intend to subject these short stories to literary theories in order to investigate their essence and literariness. Although subjecting these stories to literary theories, we in no way want to undermine the unbiased reading and independent and natural response of readers to these short stories. Literary theories, in our opinion, are significant only if they facilitate the criticism of our specific works of literature. As Makgamatha (1995:5) aptly puts it, "if we are serious with literature, we cannot ignore the deeper issues raised by the major literary theorists". In this study, we adopt an eclectic approach to the study of Tswana short stories. Our main objective in our stance to adopt an intergrated mode of analysis, is that this method has the obvious advantage of revealing the general principles behind the artistic prowess in the short stories as a body. It is the best way of establishing the essential elements in the thematic and artistic preoccupations of the authors concerned. We shall employ a synthesis of three of the major theories, namely, Formalism, Structuralism and New Criticism fused together. These critical approaches have distinguished themselves as complementary rather than contradictory, therefore, it is very difficult to exclude any and opt for a specific critical theory. We shall, thus, not limit ourselves to a single approach, particularly since literary facts cannot be exhibited without comment and in that way we have to be as general as possible. The following discussion of these theories is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to serve as a guide in the process of literary investigation.

### **1.1.1 The Formalist theory**

Formalism is generally seen as the basis of modern literary theory. It is one of the earliest attempts to make the study of literature an independent and particular discipline. It stems from the emphasis it places on "the formal patterns of sound, words and literary devices instead of the subject matter and social values of literature"(Abrams,1988:235). Formalism originated as a result of discussions on literary issues that were begun by the Moscow Linguistic Circle and the Opajaz group in St. Petersburg. These two groups of students developed a theoretical basis for literary study in reaction to the emphasis by literary critics on the content and social significance of literature. The prominent scholars in these two groups were Roman Jakobson, Victor Shklovsky, Eikhenbaum, Osib Brik and Tynyanov.

The Formalist theory is adopted because it helps us analyse the writer's technical prowess and skill. It distinguishes literature as an object of inquiry and concentrates specifically on it. The Formalists focus their attention on the literary text as a work of art. They see literature as an independent reality which is governed by its own regulations independent of the influences of culture and other contiguous spheres. The most significant issue is not the writer's personality, humanity and psychological attributes, nor the education that formed him, "but the description of that which makes literary texts literary reality" (Makgamatha,1990:7). Thus the basic concern of the student of literature is to determine the literariness of the text, that is, that which makes a given work a work of literature (Swanepoel,1990), and the author simply fades into the background. For the Formalists, literature uses language in a peculiar manner because it deviates from ordinary everyday speech. This means that Formalism has its own specific laws, structures and devices which have to be studied in themselves rather than reduced to something else. The literary work is regarded as a material fact whose functioning can be analyzed and it is made of words, not objects or feelings. It would be unfair to see it as an expression of an author's mind. Formalist theorists examine the stylistic devices of plot and assess the structure of

the narrative. In their opinion, literariness is brought about by a technique in which words, expressions and other devices are defamiliarised or made strange in the literary work in order to give it an aesthetic value. Victor Shklovsky (1965) states that the sole aim of literature is to make strange or defamiliarise its medium. Literary language defamiliarises everyday perceptions by disrupting the everyday methods of language usage. The writer also defamiliarises the raw material or familiar actions he uses to build his story, by slowing down, drawing out or interrupting the sequential flow of the original actions. In this way, he creates suspense so that he is able to arrest the reader's attention.

The Formalists have played a significant role in the evaluation of the structure of the narrative. They draw a distinction between *fabula* and *syuzhet*, and state that *fabula* is the raw material in its original and natural order, while *syuzhet* is seen as an arrangement of events through art devices. In other words, whereas the *fabula* refers to the chronological sequence of events, the *syuzhet* refers to the order and manner in which the events are presented in the narrative. These two terms, *fabula* and *syuzhet*, refer to story and plot respectively. However, the Formalists are less concerned with the "story", that is, *fabula*, and are more concerned with the arrangement of the events that build up the "plot structure", that is, *syuzhet*. According to the Formalists, plot is not only the arrangement of events, but also includes all the devices used to interrupt and delay the narration (Selden, 1986). These include devices such as flashback and foreshadowing. The Formalists maintain that the contents of a work of art are not proof of its literariness, but that which is of significance is the manner in which the contents are arranged. They believe that artistry can be judged by the author's use of stylistic devices.

In their attempts to discover the literariness of narrative works, the Formalists identified aspects such as perspective, static and dynamic characters, story line, plot line, story time and reading time as fundamentally narrative aspects. The Formalists actually prepared the way for the Structuralists who followed in their wake.

### 1.1.2 The Structuralist theory

It is important to note that the emergence of Structuralism was influenced by Formalism. Therefore, the two approaches do share common ideas to a certain extent. In its broader sense, Structuralism is a way of looking for reality not in individual things but in the relationships among them (Scholes, 1974). It essentially explores the connectedness between the system of literature and the culture of which it is a component.

The word structure is derived from the Latin word *stuerere* which means *to build*. A structure can, therefore, be described as a set of components or patterns which have a particular relation, a relation that can be defined in exact terms. The concept structure, in a literary sense, refers to the totality of relations within a text. Thus Structuralism is a method that investigates objects, works as a whole, or totalities in terms of the relations that exist between the parts. In its investigations, it does not study the elements of a whole, but rather the complex network of relationships that link and unite those elements. It, therefore, tries to uncover the internal relationships which give different languages their form and function. It is appropriate to say that structural analysis attempts to determine the mutual relationship between the components, how they are distributed, and how they combine to form a meaningful unit. In this sense the structure of the short narratives which are the topic of our study comprises a problem situation; a temporary association of characters; the conflict that arises from this association and the resolution of the conflict.

The essential task of literary structuralism is not to discover the meaning of a text, but to provide the rules that govern the production of meaning; that is, how and by what means is meaning possible (Makgamatha, 1990). The Structuralist ignores the author and other elements exterior to the text, concentrating on the text in accordance with the validity and coherence of its language. For the Structuralists, literature as an art-form does not consist of sentences, but sentences make signs in a second-order literary system

(Swanepoel,1990:16). In saying that literature is an art-form we mean that there is a difference between the everyday language of communication and the literary language of creative works. Although in both cases the medium is language, the difference lies in how language is employed. In literature, language, episodes and events are defamiliarised or presented in an unfamiliar manner.

Structuralism is an approach that looks at literature as art for art's sake with primary emphasis laid on structure or form. Although it has positive points, it also has its own negative points. Some of these negative points include the fact that Structuralism attaches overwhelming importance to structure and the relationship between linguistic units; that the origins of literary works are ignored; that the author is entirely excluded in the Structuralist analysis because more emphasis is placed on the text; and that meaning and reality do not form an integral part of Structuralism.

### **1.1.3 The New Criticism theory**

New Criticism originated in England in the 1920's and came to flourish in the USA in the 1930's. Although they originated in different countries and at different times, the Anglo-American New Criticism and the Russian Formalism share numerous similarities in approach. Like the Formalists, the New Critics see the literary text as "a self-defining and self-sufficient matrix of formal structures" (Swanepoel,1990:13). Both New Criticism and Russian Formalism reject the positivistic literary scholarship and call for a renewed attention to literature as literature. They both reiterate the differences between literature and other kinds of writing. Both schools of thought give a central role in their definitions to ideas of structure and interrelatedness, and treat the literary text as an object independent of its author and historical context (Jefferson & Robey,1989). However the two movements differ in their notion of structure. The New Critics' notion of structure is narrower than that of the Formalists which comprises different levels of the text and not just meaning. Furthermore, the New Critics are less interested in defamiliarisation or

deviance which the Formalists emphasise.

Abrams (1988) states that the key concepts of New Criticism deal with meaning and interactions of words, figures of speech and symbols. The New Critics' concern in evaluation and analysis is focussed on the text itself, that is, how it is structured and how the critics should proceed with the interpretation of the text. Ransom established that the primacy of the text as a structure of organic interrelations emphasised the interpenetration of form and content, and focussed attention on the internal context of the work (Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982). Rabinowitz explains this further when he says that "each word of a work can be interpreted in terms of its place in the total [poetic] context without reference to the origins and effects" (Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982:31). We can thus conclude that New Criticism is an intrinsic approach to analysis, that is, the critics look at the text from the inside rather than from the outside. An important tenet of New Criticism is that it views literature as an independent or autonomous entity. This implies that the text is studied as a text in itself and not as a piece of biographical, sociological and psychological evidence or for any other reason (Gray, 1984). Therefore, the New Critics view the biographical, sociological and psycho-analytical approaches to literature as inappropriate because they look at it from the outside.

The New Critics are more interested in the nature of the literary work, its shape and effect, and on how these are achieved. As a result of this interest, they have developed a method of text analysis called "close-reading", which concentrates on the internalities of the text rather than on the externalities. This means that the reader has to read the whole literary work in terms of language, imagery, structural patterns or the whole question of the arrangement of words in order to understand the real revelation of the work. Although this would prove a tiresome affair in long narratives, it is less exhausting in the short story because the reader can read and reread the whole text repeatedly. Being short as they are, the short stories allow the reader to work forward and backward without sacrificing or forgetting the core images of the story. As Swanepoel (1990:13) puts it, "a

well-written short story will obviously possess that balance and design, that polish and finish that a narrative of its length needs”.

### **1.3 THE MODERN SHORT STORY: A brief introduction**

Since narration has been part of human interaction for centuries we often indulge in it spontaneously. This is because our literature is firmly embedded in the oral tradition. Oral art deals with persons and events with which all the members of its audience are closely acquainted. One of the most favourite genres in Africa's oral heritage is the short story which, for some reason, is called the folktale when it is not the outcome of written composition (Gerard, 1993). This in itself shows that the history of the short story through its phases of folktale, anecdote, and sketch cannot be determined with precision. Hence, little is known about the history of the short story genre in Tswana. However, amazingly, the history of the modern short story is measurable and very brief. The Batswana have been rather sluggish in recognising the modern short story as a genre, a genre that owes its existence to Edgar Allan Poe. The modern short story is a deliberately fashioned work of art, and not merely a straightforward tale of one or more events. Although it has a definite structure, "it has no set form, no set procedure. It may use a set of careful documentation or it may not even tell us the principal character's name" (Wessels, 1982:3). It may start with action or conversation, and end when the activity ends, or mediate after the ending of the activity. The short story can deal with any topic about which the author feels happy to write; it can be on traditional or modern themes; it can be about fair or unfair love affairs; from plotted short stories to psychological short stories. It is, therefore, a flexible artform and, as such, has not been adequately defined.

Many scholars have attempted to define the short story, but the flexibility associated with its form often gives rise to difficulties. It is often defined as a piece of short fiction that can be read in half an hour or at one sitting. However, Hartney (cf. Head, 1992:1) noted that the reader is "apt to devour short stories singly on a newsheet", but that he would be

disinclined to read them in collections. The reason for this was and is the "unusual concentration the genre demands, a concentration which permits no respite in a series of short stories because 'starting and stopping' exhausts the reader's attention just as starting and stopping uses up the petrol in a car" (Head,1992:1). Edgar A Poe, who is often regarded as the originator of the modern short story, says that in the whole composition of the short story there should be no word written whose tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the pre-established design. This means that the writer has to avoid irrelevancies so that the reader can give his undivided attention. Elizabeth Bowen (cf.Wessels,1982) endorses this view when she says, "the first necessity of the short story is necessariness; that the story must spring from an impression or perception pressing enough, acute enough, to have made the writer write". This shows that one of the tests of the short story is the measure of how compellingly the writer utilises his selected incidents or facts, words or sentences, idioms or proverbs. The short story writer should know, beyond any shadow of doubt, his intention with his facts or incidents and should fulfil it and should exclude all irrelevancies.

If the short story has to possess unity of impression, it follows that it should have only a limited number of main characters, preferably one; and the whole focus should be centred around him/her. Unity of impression demands that the story should deal with a single predominant incident and that it should have a single and simple plot. In a short story, as in other narrative forms, the writer has a particular slice of life or experience to share with the reader. In the actual writing, the writer's scope should be limited to that particular slice of life or experience about which he is writing. This becomes clear from the following definition which describes the short story as:-

a brief fictional prose narrative concerned with a single effect conveyed in a single significant episode involving a small number of characters (Encyclopaedia Britannica,1986:761).

Here it is important to note that more emphasis is placed on singleness. It is this



singleness of effect that determines the length and essence of the modern short story. Pritchett (cf. Shaw, 1983:48) describes the short story as a "flash that suddenly illumines then passes"; Chekov (cf. Wessels, 1982:5) reminds writers that if they describe "a gun hanging on a wall on page one, sooner or later that gun must go off"; while Sedgwick (cf. Wessels, 1982) maintains that "a short story is like a horse-race, that it is the start and finish that count the most". It is difficult to make readers read, especially to make them read against their will, thus the short story writer has to recognise the great value of instant contact with the reader. Therefore, the writer should remember that the short story is that genre in which anticipation of the ending is always present. This is true in that non-closure in the short story generates its effects from the tension with the closure it denies. Head (1992) says that this tension is governed more by the anti-closural gesture than by an anticipation of closure; that the idea of progression-toward-an-end concentrates thought and regulates feeling, whether or not the end really comes. Hemingway (cf. Wessels, 1982) indicates that the short story writer should practise a kind of self-denial, that is, the denial of irrelevant material, literary tricks, emotions of luxury, literary descriptions and literary faking. This means that the writer has to omit things that he knows the reader knows, and those that he feels the reader feels, and restrict himself to the essential. We need to bear in mind that the short story has characteristics alien to a story that is short, characteristics such as, a tight structure, swift progress, strong concentration and precision. Mansfield (cf. Shaw, 1983:22) observes in this regard that, "if a thing has really come off, there must not be one single word out of place, or one word that could be taken out".

However, a nagging question remains. What is the ideal length of a modern short story? Poe's rule that the short story should be of a length that allows it to be read at one sitting, does not prescribe the exact length associated with it. Maxwell-Mahon (1984) has attempted to provide guidelines regarding the length of the short story. Firstly, he distinguishes between a short short story and a long short story. From this point he then estimates the length of a short short story at 750-1500 words, that is, three to five pages,

while the length of a long short story is estimated at 4000 to 7000 words, that is, ten to twenty pages. Although he emphatically states that stories of less than 200 words are close to anecdotes and that a story of more than 10 000 words tends toward the novellette, he does admit that these limitations of length are mere guidelines. Reid (1977) feels that arithmetical criteria should not be used to evaluate a genre, as the sheer word-count cannot be of help in assessing the essence of the short story. Head (1992) supports Reid when he says a measure based purely on a word-count is a misleading one because it centres on symptoms rather than causes. Even though the short story has a particular shortness, it is very difficult to determine length boundaries for it on the basis of the number of words.

Shortness is not an intrinsic property of everything, but occurs only in relation to something else. The short story is short in relation to the novel. Therefore it would be necessary for one to compare the short story with the novel. The two types of narrative differ in that the novel is a bigger and greater genre while the short story is a smaller and lesser genre. The novel mainly explores life, reflects and describes in detail the fulfilment, destruction or fruition of human emotions and desires; the short story, on the other hand, limits itself to the essential facts of particular truth and restricts its scope and means severely, using repetition through pattern. While the narrative task of the novel is "elaboration", that of the short story is "limitation". The novel has the scope to develop characters, the short story only has the space to show, to illuminate a certain aspect of character or situation in a single moment of insight (Head, 1992:18). As Mark Shorers (cf. Head, 1992:18) says, "the short story is an art of moral revelation, the novel an art of moral evolution". A novel whose characters were never named, whose location and time were never stated, might impose upon its reader a strain that the reader would justifiably refuse to bear; yet many a short story has characters who bear no more marks of identification than the anonymous and universal label of "boy" or "girl", "man" or "woman", and in most cases it uses the technique of the pronoun without a referent (Bonheim, 1982).

### 1.3 STUDIES ON TSWANA SHORT STORIES

While it is accepted and acknowledged that the Tswana short story has made tremendous strides in development, not much research has been done on its literary importance, historicity and development. Hereunder will follow a literary review of previous studies on Tswana short stories. A pioneering work on the study of the Tswana short story has been made by Mashike (1988) in his Master's dissertation entitled **Tshekatsheko ya dikhutshwe tsa ga RM Malope mo go Mmualebe**. In this study Mashike uses a Historical-biographical approach integrated with Positivism and New Criticism. In defence of his implementation of a traditional approach such as the Historical-biographical approach, Mashike says (1988:161) "even though these approaches have been long in existence in other languages, in Setswana circles they are beginning to see the dawn of the day". Although the author's background might not be of any significance in modern literary analysis, it is sometimes necessary to comment or implement it because both the author and his work are inseparable. The only disappointment we experience in this dissertation is the fact that the researcher does not fulfil the objectives he has set himself. For example, instead of implementing the approaches he proposes to use, he applies Formalism and Structuralism. He gives a critical investigation of **Mmualebe** in terms of features such as theme, characters, time, setting, plot, style and language. Furthermore, the researcher promises to give a brief survey of the development of the Tswana short story, but gives only a chronology of about nine volumes.

Another major contribution to the study of the Tswana short story has been made by Sebate (1992) through his study of setting, plot structure and narrative point of view in the Tswana short story in his Master's dissertation, **Setting, plot structure and narrative point of view in JS Shole's short stories in "O foo, ke fano!"**. Although the study concentrates on Shole's short stories, it provides a foundation for the study and appreciation of Tswana short stories. This study assesses the manner in which Shole

manipulates setting, plot structure and narrative point of view in the process of creating his narrative art. In analysing setting, attention is paid not only to the geographical position and time of the events, but also to the relationship between the place and the characters. The structure of the short stories is evaluated in terms of the three phases, namely, exposition, development and resolution. The study also examines Shole's manipulation of the first and third person points of view to create a sense of involvement, establishing closeness between characters, and the manner in which the author probes the inner thoughts of the characters.

Sebate (1989) has also written a brief review on Magoleng's short stories as contained in **Mokaragana**. This review appears in the SAJAL supplement on African Languages, Volume 9. In this review Sebate discusses the themes touched upon by Magoleng, namely, the organisation of the material, narrative perspective as well as the time and place of the events. Sebate has also written three articles on the Tswana short story all published in the ALASA journals, Volumes 14 and 15 of 1994 and 1995 respectively. In his article (1994) entitled **Compression in Magoleng's short story "Ga le a ka la tswa"**, Sebate discusses compression in this short story, giving particular consideration to features such as characterisation, time, plot and style. In concluding this article, Sebate emphasizes the need for compression in the short story, and stresses that compression is an element without which the short story would be paralysed. In the article (1994) entitled **"O foo, ke fano!" The angle from which the narrator tells it**, Sebate examines narrative perspective with special reference to the first and third person narrative perspective. In this article he indicates the relationship between the teller and the tale and how this relationship helps to control the reader's impression of the narrative. He concludes that point of view in the short story is successful when it is used to achieve a unified effect and when it controls the reader's impression of the story. He also states that because the short story is described as "a flash that suddenly illumines then passes" (Shaw, 1983:48) it shuns detailed comments, descriptions and explanations. Sebate's (1995) third article entitled, **A region down to its dust: An examination of setting in**

**Shole's short stories**, examines setting and action as well as setting and characterisation in Shole's short stories. In this article, Sebate views setting as an attempt to direct the reader's visual imagination. He indicates how Shole conveys setting in terms of objects, through informative words or phrases, and the manner in which contrast in setting is used to portray the prevailing emotional atmosphere. Shole's short stories are placed into a particular historical period through the exploration of the characters' behavioural attitudes, morals, manners and wisdom. In these articles, Sebate highlights the concept of the maturity of the Tswana short story, which adds a fascinating dimension to the study of this genre. This maturity can be measured in terms of the modern techniques that the Tswana short story writers employ in their artistic endeavours, such as the revelation of setting through objects and informative words as well as the use of contrast in setting and the utilisation of characters' behavioural attitudes, morals and wisdom to reveal the historical period of the short stories. Other measures involve the usage of compression and appropriate narrative perspectives in Tswana short story writing.

Peega (1987) in his UNISA Honours article, **A critical analysis of "Ke a go bolelela" by Magoleng**, gives a critical assessment of Magoleng's short stories in *Ke a go bolelela*. He commences with a brief definition of the nature of a short story, and proceeds to analyse the form, structure and themes of short stories such as *Ga le a ka la tswa*, *Dilo tsa badimo* and *Sepoko*. He also discusses different methods of character delineation, with special attention to character traits that reveal or clarify the meaning and reasons for the particular name of the character. Mfoloe (1992) on the otherhand, makes a close study of Magoleng's short story *Ga se gase*, concentrating on description and analysis of structure, in his Master's dissertation entitled **Tshekatsheko ya "Ga se gase" ka Magoleng**. He treats the content of the short story according to the narrative explanatory model which Strachan (1988) uses in his analysis of the Zulu short story. Elements of the story which receive attention include episode, characters, milieu and time. In his analysis of the structure of the short story *Ga se gase*, Mfoloe emphasises the interrelationship between various elements which make a story a meaningful whole. Different techniques

such as focus, viewpoint, rhythm and tempo are explained. Mfoloe concludes his research with a stylistic analysis of the short story under study. Lekala (1984) has also written an Honours article, on the short stories of Magoleng and those of Moroke, entitled **Ditlhokego tsa botlhokwa tsa kgankhutshwe**. In this article, Lekala evaluates the short stories contained in **Ke a go bolelela**, **Mpolelele dilo** and **Tsa fa isong** in terms of structure, title, setting, characterisation, dialogue, theme and style.

The maturation process of the Tswana short story cannot easily and satisfactorily be determined from an examination of books and studies by researchers. From the foregoing it is clear that the number of articles, reviews, dissertations and theses published to date on the Tswana short story is not sufficiently advanced to cover the better part of the Tswana literary community adequately; and much will have to be done before one is able to consider an advanced history of the Tswana short story. Although the short story has gained popularity among Tswana writers and readers, for whatever reasons, literary scholars seem to have completely ignored its existence. This thesis does not propose to account for all the irregularities of Tswana short stories; it concerns itself only with the short story achievements of representative individual writers, their popular themes, the organisation of their material, style and language, and oral tradition in the Tswana short story.

#### **1.4 A HISTORY OF THE EMERGENCE OF TSWANA SHORT STORY ANTHOLOGIES**

Although Tswana was one of the first African Languages to be committed to writing during the early nineteenth century, by the 1920's it was overtaken by work done in languages such as Xhosa and Southern Sotho (Willan, 1984). During this period, Tswana possessed no literature except Sol Plaatjie's compilations, a small number of religious and educational materials and a small dictionary. The forerunners of creative literature in Tswana are undoubtedly the translations done by the missionaries and those by a

Motswana, Sol T. Plaatjie. Apart from Sol Plaatjie himself, no Motswana had written or published anything in his or her language. However, there was a constant need to provide suitable reading matter in Tswana, and this need was significantly appeased in 1937 and 1940 with the publication of the first Tswana collection of poetry, **Moretlo**, by SS Mafonyane and the first Tswana novel, **Mokwena**, by DP Moloto, respectively.

## **A chronological exposition of the emergence of Tswana short story anthologies**

**1965** Niemandt, JJ. *Mamepe a dinotshe*. SABC: Pretoria

**1968** Moroke, SA. *Tsa fa isong*. Beter Boeke: Pretoria

**1972** Magoleng, BD & Ntsime, JM. *Mpolelele dilo*. Via Afrika: Kaapstad

**1974** Magoleng, BD. *Ke a go bolelela*. Van Schaik: Pretoria

**1982** Malope, RM. *Mmualebe*. Vista University: Mamelodi

**1982** Thobega, CLS. *Mathaithai*. Van Schaik: Pretoria

**1983** Magoleng, BD. *Mareledi*. Van Schaik: Pretoria

**1983** Malope, RM, et al. *Mantswe a a robong*. Maskew Miller Longman:  
Kaapstad

**1983** Setshedi, JE. *Mosekaphofu*. Maikatlapele Publishers: Mmabatho

**1985** Magoleng, BD & Motlhake, SF. *Mokaragana*. Van Schaik: Pretoria

**1985** Malefo, BM. *Bo tsholwa bo le molelo*. De Jager-HAUM: Pretoria

**1985** Setshedi, JE. *Magana go utlwa*. Maikatlapele Publishers: Mmabatho

**1985** Shole, SJ. *O foo, ke fano!* De Jager-HAUM: Pretoria



- 1986 Mmileng, MT. *Mangotelo*. Maikatlapelo Publishers: Mmabatho
- 1986 Setshedi, JE. *Masope a mabedi*. Maikatlapelo Publishers: Mmabatho
- 1987 Chikane, OK. *Mafaratlhatlha*. Maikatlapelo Publishers: Mmabatho
- 1987 Magoleng, BD. *Le Pelong*. Van Schaik: Pretoria
- 1987 Molebaloa, MK. *Letlhokwa la tsela*. MK Molebaloa: Garankuwa
- 1987 Naanyane, RSA. *Se time tsala*. Van Schaik: Pretoria
- 1987 Sikwane, LZ. *Iphimole dikeledi*. Anderson Publishers: Mabopane
- 1987 Mashike, JWP. *Pelo Segole*. Maikatlapelo Publishers: Mmabatho
- 1987 Thobega, CLS. *Sekitikiti*. Maikatlapelo Publishers: Mmabatho
- 1989 Serobatse, TM. *Ntshologe mokgosi*. Educum Publishers: Johannesburg
- 1990 Mashike, JWP. *Mpuru o faretswe*. Tlhologelo Publishers: Mmabatho
- 1990 Thobega, CLS. *Khupamarama*. Makgonatsotlhe Publishers: Gaborone
- 1990 Thobega, CLS. *Ditedu tsa Nkwe*. Makgonatsotlhe Publishers: Gaborone
- 1990 Tsagae, SM. et al. *Monate wa teng*. Via Afrika: Pretoria
- 1991 Gaedirelwe, GP. *Mmaba Motseng*. Magononyane (Pty) Ltd: Serowe

- 1991 Molaphele, AT. *Moanegi*. Juta & Co.: Johannesburg
- 1991 Motlhaga, AM. *Utlwang metsontsodi*. Educum Publishers: Johannesburg
- 1991 Malebye, TK. *Sabobi*. LZ Sikwane Publishers: Mabopane
- 1992 Bogatsu, OK. *Moapayabodila*. De Jager-HAUM: Pretoria
- 1992 Magasa, MJ & Molokoe, BK. *Le nna ke ngwanake*. Educum Publishers: Johannesburg
- 1992 Peega, LR. *Ga a site*. MacMillan Boleswa: Johannesburg
- 1992 Mphepya, JS. *Ka di lema, ke di lemile*. LZ Sikwane Publishers: Mabopane
- 1993 Dichabe, S. *Moremogolo*. Artistic Value Studio: Tlhabane
- 1993 Mokgoko, EMN. *Mpepu Nnaka*. LZ Sikwane Publishers: Mabopane
- 1993 Mokua, SS. *Kgotla o mone*. Educum Publishers: Johannesburg
- 1994 Magoleng, BD. *Ga le tshetse*. LZ Sikwane Publishers: Mabopane
- 1994 Motsilanyane, IK. *Botsala jwa megopo*. Molema Publishers: Mmabatho
- 1995 Bogatsu, OK. *Dilo tsa ga Mmanapo*. LZ Sikwane Publishers: Mabopane
- 1995 Bogatsu, OK. *Tšhwelapitseng*. LZ Sikwane Publishers: Mabopane

**1995** Malebye, TK. *Batho ba bosigo*. Acacia Books: Hatfield

**1995** Baloyi, LJ. *A ke phoso*. Shuter & Shooter: Pietermaitzburg

Although the development of Tswana literary works showed steady progress after the publication of **Moretlo** and **Mokwena**, the short story remained a neglected genre. The reason for this neglect is really hard to find if one considers the fact that the short story is the medium of story-telling nearest to the traditional folktales. Instead of being a popular means of expression among the Batswana, it proved the opposite. It was only in 1965 that Niemandt whetted the Batswana authors' appetite for the short story with his compilation of a collection entitled **Mamepe a dinotshe**. In 1968 Moroke produced his first attempt at short story writing, namely, **Tsa fa isong**. This attempt did not satisfy the accepted literary standards for this genre. The stories in this collection are too didactic, with badly-structured plots. Like folktales, these stories can only teach readers legitimate behaviour, righteousness, respect and good morals. Mashike (1988) says that the narratives in this book are essentially folktales; that they are full of humour, but that they do not have plots; and that they have no truth in them. The groundwork for Tswana short story writing was undoubtedly laid by Magoleng and Ntsime with their publication of **Mpolelele dilo**, in 1972. In this collection each author contributes five short stories. These short stories reveal different themes such as love, religion, riches, love and marriage and witchcraft. Magoleng proved that his first publication was not a fluke with his publication of a collection entitled **Ke a go bolelela** in 1974. In this collection Magoleng deals with various themes that include, theft, evil versus good, faith, witchcraft, crime, love and marriage. Although stories such as *Dilo tsa badimo* and *Sepoko* reveal themselves as sketches, the other short stories in this collection have well constructed plots and excellent characterisation. Magoleng also uses his graphic and economic language and style to enhance suspense in his art.

Thobega in his volume, **Mathaithai**, published in 1982 is sensitive to time manipulation, although he spoils the unity of impression with an episode on a snake in the short story *Molotsana*. Setshedi's **Mosekaphofu** which appeared in 1983 comprises four short stories, namely, *Ga di gaise*, *Mosekaphofu*, *Botlhale jwa phala* and *Thuto ke ya botlhe*. The short story, *Ga di gaise*, reveals that today's children are different. In this story

Pulane arrives home from Kilnerton school with her boyfriend, Lenny. This behaviour and action causes conflict between her parents. Traditionally, and culturally too, this is an immoral and unacceptable act. However, at the end of the day, both parents come to accept that things have changed. In the two short stories, *Mosekaphofu* and *Botlhale jwa phala*, the author gives autobiographical sketches of how his struggle for Tswana to be taught through the medium of Tswana at the University of the North and how he helped his parents to dig a borehole. *Thuto ke ya botlhe*, on the otherhand, deals with a story in which a German clergyman encourages graduates to work under the Whites so that they can pay their taxes. The language used in these short stories is rich, fluent, flowing, and embellished with idiomatic expressions and proverbs, although here and there we find traces of dialecticism.

**Mantswe a a robong** appeared in the same year as **Mosekaphofu**, namely 1983. This anthology comprises nine short stories and is the joint effort of nine different authors, namely, Malope, Leseiane, Lephogole, Tsambo, Sephoti, Makgaedise, Marobe, Magoleng and Mmileng. The short stories contained in this collection vary in structure, subject matter, and length. Makgaedise's *O thantse lo le tsebeng* uses symbolism and satire to present a message. She also uses a folktale to illustrate and emphasise meaning. Lephogole's *Mo letlalong la nku* can be regarded as an unstructured long short story. Its introduction is clumsy and irrelevant, for the reader only becomes acquainted with the main character, Nkwe, and his problem on the third page. While the structure of the other short stories deserves a critical eye, Magoleng's *Botshelo kwa meletwaneng* and *O thantse lo le tsebeng* can be regarded as successful short stories. Malope's *O nkutlwe* also qualifies as a long short story for it comprises a few episodes which build up to a single main event. The only problem with this story is that it introduces a policeman, Seraki, who reports the death of Kedisaletse's husband, Mofeti, to the reader. This introduction is done so extensively that it gives the impression that Seraki is the main character, only to have him disappear unceremoniously from the scene of the action.

Another significant literary contribution in the area of short story writing was also released in 1983 by Magoleng with the title, **Mareledi**. The short stories in this book deal with various themes such as love, detection, and the behavioural attitudes of business people and those of school pupils. In these short stories, Magoleng attempts to teach readers to be alert, watchful and critical in their dealings with other people and that people should not come to unfounded and nasty conclusions about the other people's personalities without making a thorough investigation.

In 1985 Malope published his collection entitled **Mmualebe** in which he advocates adherence to Tswana culture and tradition. He maintains that the Batswana have lost their identity and direction; that they do not respect certain taboos that have guided them through the ages. Malope's short stories show great influence from the folktale. In all the short stories contained in this collection, the old MmaMmualebe acts as a narrator and the young Morongwa acts as the listener. From the interrelationship of the two, it is discernible that these stories serve a didactic purpose. MmaMmualebe moralises to Morongwa and prepares her for adult life. All the short stories are well structured, with a rich language use and good character depiction. The year 1985 saw the appearance of another anthology, **Mokaragana**, under the authorship of Magoleng and Motlhake. The short stories in this collection deal with themes of love and marriage, love and witchcraft, unrequited love, and stressful marriages. Both authors emphasise their disregard for stressful marriages, witchcraft in love affairs, and domination in marriage from whatever partner. The authors use expository and the dramatic techniques in the portrayal of their characters' behaviour, attitudes and personalities. While Motlhake uses mainly the third person narrative perspective in his narration, Magoleng brings us closer to his characters by using the first person narrative perspective.

The year 1985 was also blessed with another collection by Malefo entitled **Bo tsholwa bo le molelo**. This anthology of short stories was awarded the first prize of the DE JAGER-HAUM Literary competition for 1984. It consists of nine short stories which

reveal themes regarding familial problems. All these stories are based on the realities of life as expressed in proverbs and idioms. Many of the titles of these stories are shortened forms of proverbs and idioms. These short stories are badly plotted, with a loose chronological sequence of events and unnecessary digressions. These digressions have caused these stories to lose an important characteristic of short stories, namely, the fast tempo of events. Setshedi's *Magana go utlwa* also appeared in 1985. The short story *Magana go utlwa*, which bears the title of this collection, reveals the author's message that the youth should heed the commands of their parents and/or elders. Unlike his predecessors, Shole in his *O foo, ke fano!* (1985) treats divergent themes and brings a new development to Tswana short story writing. His themes, though modern and interesting are not necessarily educational, moral and/or didactic. His short stories are characterised by conflict, tension, suspense and respect for silences. His style shows a slight deviation from stereotyped, moralistic and restrictive rules of language usage. His language not only consists of relaxed speech, it also depicts his characters effectively. It sometimes tends to be vulgar by the intrusion of occasional expletives. However, this in no way invalidates this volume as a laudable contribution to Tswana short story writing. As Ngara (1982:31-32) puts it, although the reader or a critic can paint an author's style as vulgar, the vulgarity does not affect the aesthetic element of the work.

The year 1986 saw only two volumes of short stories, namely, Mmileng's *Mangotelo* and Setshedi's *Masope a mabedi*. Mmileng's *Mangotelo* consists of four short stories which deal with different themes relating to modern people's problems in life: Chiefs and headmen are in conflict because of poor leadership, stubbornness and greed. One short story treats the problem that is normally caused by mixing western and traditional ways of life. Mmileng shows himself to be a master of his language in these short stories. His language is engrossing, suspenseful and fluent. In 1987 Mashike's *Pelo segole* appeared. It deals with themes that centre around calf love. All the short stories have an advisory message to the youth regarding calf love. The author's language is rich in idiomatic expressions and proverbs. Magoleng (1987) in his recent short stories in *Le Pelong*,

shows himself to be a mature short story writer. In these stories he deals with various themes on love, crime, abortion, et cetera. His treatment of these themes is both educational and recreational in that he reproaches and abhors these practices. Magoleng's ability to use suspense in these short stories consist of respect for silences, economy of means and the choicest selection of words. All the short stories are well-structured, with well-depicted characters and well-revealed settings. One of the most valuable contributions to the Tswana short story is Molebaloa's **Letlhokwa la tsela** (1987). Through this anthology Molebaloa not only places Tswana short story on the map but also introduces the short short story into the Tswana literature. These stories are well-structured with unity of events; and they are all built around vivid conflicts with plausible outcomes. Thobega with his **Sekitikiti** (1987) has also contributed to the number of short stories found in Tswana. With this anthology, the author admonishes readers against jealousy and stubbornness. The short stories abound with the choicest selection of words, symbolism and metaphors. Other publications which appeared in 1987 include Chikane's **Mafaratlhatlha** and Naanyane's **Se time tsala**. Chikane's collection comprises four short stories which deal with social problems involving adults and youths; men and women; love and hate.

In 1989 Serobatse's **Ntshologe mokgosi** was published. In this book, Serobatse treats different themes that include religion and beliefs; the problems experienced in life; human behavioural attitudes; and so on. The author's language is marred by the erroneous use of archaic and coined words, ineffective metaphors and malapropism. As a result, his short stories are tedious, boring and difficult to understand. In 1991 four volumes appeared, namely, **Mmaba motseng**, **Moanegi**, **Utlwang metsontsodi** and **Sabobi** under the authorship of Gaedirelwe, Molaphele, Motlhaga and Malebye respectively. In **Moanegi**, Molaphele treats themes that include crime, theft, love, marriage and different spheres of life. Each short story has its particular nature and form. The author's language is completely amateurish, boring, tedious and dialectical. He uses both the present and the past tenses simultaneously, with an abundance of spelling errors. The year 1992 also



experienced a growth in short story writing with four volumes, by Bogatsu, Magasa and Molokoe, Peega, and Mphepya, namely, **Moapayabodila**; **Le nna ke ngwanake**; **Ga a site**, and **Ka di lema, ke di lemile**, respectively. Peega's **Ga a site** comprises eleven short stories which deal with various themes relating to the problems experienced in modern times. The setting of most of his stories is rural. In addition to using engrossing language to captivate the attention of the readers, one moment he utilises narration and the next moment switches to dialogue to enhance suspense in his art. Through dialogue he is able to bring readers closer to the experiences of his characters and through narration he involves the reader in the narrative events as they progress. **Ka di lema, ke di lemile** under the authorship of Mphepya reveals his vast experiences in life through quite a number of short stories contained in this collection. He touches on the various realities that often confront people in their different walks of life. His style and language is very simple, easy and fluent. Although these short stories are not didactic or educational, they are a valuable contribution to Tswana literature in general and to Tswana short stories in particular.

Dichabe's **Moremogolo** (1993) deals with the problems of life in general. The author's language is wordy, difficult, and tedious. The structure of the short stories leans more towards the structure of the folktale than that of the short story. In 1994 Magoleng released his sixth volume, **Ga le tshetse**, which consists of five short stories. In these short stories Magoleng deals with themes such as love, crime, love and crime, and love and marriage. In the short story, *Se ba etseng*, Sebaetseng befriends her colleague Kopaolale. They fall in love even despite Sebaetseng having vowed against losing her love to a man. Kopaolale is transferred to Madikwe on a temporary assignment, and this strengthens the love between the two. Their love culminates in marriage. In *Ga di twe sepe*, Gaditwesepe is assassinated by Mpudule on suspicion that he informed the police that Mpudule had stolen a car. His sister, Serati, confesses to the police that Gaditwesepe has been murdered by Mpudule. In an attempt to arrest Mpudule, Gasebonwe is shot dead. In *Lo dira eng* Reboadimilwe, Nkitseng's spouse, is found dead late in the

afternoon. What is amazing is the revelation that there was no peace between Reboadimilwe and his wife Nkitseng. It is self evident that Mofeti was killed by Lodirang because he was in love with her daughter Lorato, and because she had revealed that her father ill-treats her. At the end of the story they are all arrested. Magoleng uses interesting, rich and fluent language in these short stories. His language is rejuvenated by the unusual utilisation of riddles in narration and dialogue. It is also rich in idiomatic expressions, archaic words, proverbs and poetic language. Motsilanyane's **Botsala jwa megopo** (1994) deals with various themes. The first short story in this anthology deals with the results of illicit love affair, that there is no secrecy in life. The second narrates about the dangers of an unfair friendship. The third story shows how togetherness and communalism can help solve people's problems, while the fourth short story comments on the short-sightedness of selfishness. The author's language is rich, easy-flowing, and embellished with idiomatic expressions and proverbs. The only weakness discernible is the forced and unnatural utilisation of poetic language. This weakness in language usage is also prevalent in Mokoka's **Motswedi wa Dikeledi** (1994). The authoress uses easy, unsophisticated and unengrossing language that is also devoid of idiomatic expressions. In this book, Mokoka deals with themes such as the life of orphans, prostitution, perseverance and crime.

In 1995 four volumes were published. These are **Dilo tsa ga Mmanapo** and **Tšhwelapitseng** both written by Bogatsu; **Batho ba bosigo** by Malebye; and **A ke phoso** by Baloyi. The common message in Bogatsu's **Dilo tsa ga Mmanapo** is do unto others as you would have them do unto you. In life people like nice things but in most instances their liking breeds enmity, jealousy and greed, things which sometimes drive people to gossip, quarrels and murder. In the short story that bears the title of this volume, *Dilo tsa ga Mmanapo*, Dintle loves Lekgomane for material things and not for sentimental reasons. She is determined to bleed money out of Lekgomane and leave him impoverished. In the other short story, *Matlhabisaditlhong*, the main character Modiradilo stealthily walks into the old lady Abueng's house with the evil intent of raping

and murdering her. Fortunately, the old lady's loud shouts and Modiradilo's fear of being apprehended save the lady from attack. In **Tšhwelapitseng** Bogatsu deals with the different tricks to which people fall victim at the hands of their friends and other people. These, in most cases, relate to love matters and business dealings. According to Bogatsu, life is no longer what it used to be; he reveals that there is much unfaithfulness and untrustworthiness, that the evil in snakes and other animals has found refuge in people. The message contained in this volume is that people should be faithful and shun trickery and crime as they do not pay; that adulterous behaviour is unGodly and Satanic.

## **1.5 RESEARCH OUTLINE AND STRUCTURE**

In order to give a comprehensive view of the development of the Tswana short story, we will concentrate on specific authors who have excelled in their art of short story writing; and we will confine ourselves only to those stories that illustrate our subject best. Where the need arises, we will also refer to those authors whose works have not been chosen, to elucidate a particular aspect or argument.

In chapter One we give a brief introduction to the thesis which includes research problem, the context of the problem under investigation, a theoretical background to the short story genre, an introduction to and synopsis of studies conducted on the Tswana short story, and a chronology of the emergence of the Tswana short story with a brief survey of these stories.

Chapter Two presents a discussion of the dominant themes of Tswana short stories and what they represent. Therefore, the themes relating to love and marriage, religion, tradition and culture, the makgoweng motif, corruption and other social problems are representative and not conclusive. This chapter also investigates the manner in which the authors manipulate their themes and examines other external factors which might have influenced the authors.

In chapter Three we accept that a short story has to assume a specific pattern or structure in order for its message to be effective and we measure the Tswana short story against these yardsticks. A short story, therefore, has to have an organisational sequence, which involves the expositional phase, the developmental phase and the resolutive phase. Apart from these three phases, this chapter identifies and examines flashbacks and foreshadowing which are manifest in Tswana short stories. Attention will also be paid to the utilisation of suspense and silence, how the authors handle them and the effect they have on the Tswana short story.

In chapter Four we examine the stylistic and linguistic characteristics of the Tswana short story. For any short narrative to be effective and engrossing the narrator has to employ the choicest selection of words, use simple, but powerful and expressive sentences, utilise poetic diction where it suits best and embellish his language with proverbs, idioms and, to a lesser extent, riddles. This chapter confines itself to how Tswana short story writers handle these aspects in the process of producing their art. It also investigates the effect that these constructions have on the entire artistic product.

Chapter Five investigates oral tradition in relation to Tswana short stories, with particular reference to the organisation of material, characterisation, style and language, setting and narrative perspective.

Chapter Six, which is the last chapter, is devoted to the final conclusions and assessment of the Tswana short story. We consider the tendencies and achievements of the Tswana writers and whatever link or influence oral tradition might have had with or on their short stories.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A THEMATIC SURVEY OF TSWANA SHORT STORIES

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Although we adopt the Structuralist theory in this thesis, particularly its liberation of the reader, in as much as the reader should be free to derive meaning from the text and that he should not be bogged down by the author's tyranny, we shall, in some instances, consider the author's significance where the need arises. In this case we shall also adopt the Biographical approach to deal effectively with the material that warrants its adoption. The Biographical approach sees a work of literature as a reflection of the author's life and times. It holds the view that the author writes his text with and for a particular purpose in life. As a result, the knowledge of the author's socio-cultural background and experiences usually helps us understand his literary work(s) better, particularly because authors often project their idiosyncracies in their works. The author reveals himself through his literary work and he uses it to expose his feelings concerning life. This method teaches us that in order to fully understand the depth of short stories such as *Taafite le Jonathane* by Shole, we must know the problems of discrimination, apartheid and immorality which are manifest in the South African society.

This also brings into our study the Marxist approach which emphasises that the author should have a role to play in addressing oppression and deprivation in society in addition to highlighting the other problems of the poor. According to Marxism, a work of literature is useful only in as much as it helps uplift the standard of living of the people. This approach maintains that the author's will to write should be triggered by the historical and socio-political environment in which he lives and not necessarily by his knowledge of language or his knowledge of artistic devices. This means that an artist is an artist through his people, as his work of art is borne by his history, politics and ideology.

According to Selepe (1993) Marxist criticism holds the view that literary criticism, as the product of the social conflict, should reflect that conflict. As such, Marxists are of the opinion that the question of whether literature is good or bad serves no significant purpose, but is of secondary importance. This view eliminates the essence of the "goodness" or "badness" of a work of literature by whatever standards, but foregrounds the essence of the ideology of literature. Therefore, in order to understand an author's work of literature better, it is imperative that we know the socio-political and historical environment in which the author lived, as well as the problems experienced in his society. The Marxist and the Biographical approaches are therefore adopted solely because, sometimes, the author's ideas, perceptions, idiosyncracies, historical, ideological and social background are necessary in order to understand the text. As Catherine Belsey (1980:7) puts it, "literature reflects the reality of experience as it is perceived by *the author*, who expresses it in a discourse which enables *the readers* to recognise it as true".

From this opinion, we can deduce that the author gives a particular form to his particular experience and perception of human beings, situations and problems; and the reader thinks about them, interprets and realises their truthfulness in the world in which he lives. Although we accept the significant role of the author and his perception about reality, we still subscribe to the belief that meaning is never a fixed essence inherent in the text, but that it is always constructed by the reader (Barthes, 1980). We have to accept that a story will always mean something different to different readers, just as it will always mean to a reader exactly what the writer intended it to mean. Once the reader accepts the author's perception of reality as true, the shared perception becomes a conclusive truth about the reality of experience. It is common knowledge that when the author tells a story, he actually generalizes his personal experiences and conclusions on human beings and their problems, (Scott & Madden, 1980) which he feels he should share with other people. These generalizations and conclusions that the author feels compelled to share with his readers constitute what is literally referred to as theme. In the words of Scott & Madden, (1980:10) theme can be defined as

the generalization, stated or implied, that lies behind the narration of a specific situation involving specific individuals; and theme exists in fiction because human beings live in the same world, share similar emotions, react in similar ways to similar stimuli, and face common problems.

It is clear from the above quotation that emotions are significant in theme development as they play a major role in the enhancement of interest. Makgamatha (1990) puts it more aptly when he says that successful narratives are designed to produce a spontaneous effect on their reader, that the emotions they excite in the reader are their chief means of holding attention; and that the work becomes real only when the listener sympathizes, becomes indignant, joyful and disturbed. Another thing that comes out clear in the quotation above is that the theme of a literary work generalizes about life, as stated or implied by the story. When a short story portrays specific characters in specific situations, it essentially talks about the essence of all human beings in their interrelationships and in their relationship to the universe. Usually, the theme of a story cannot be reduced 'to plat maxims' (Scott & Madden, 1980:11) since human behaviour and experience are complex, and this complexity can come up in different ways. It is not enough to categorically state that a theme refers to generalizations about life because a 'given generalization is not always true, but will be true only under certain circumstances' (*Ibid*).

Beauchamp (1969) views theme in literature as a significant ingredient of narrative art because it allows the readers to understand the motives and follies of human behaviour. It is essentially one of the three most basic elements of fiction, namely, conflict and character. The theme of any narrative is its controlling or central idea, the unifying idea about life that the author implies or exposes through the actions and thoughts of his characters. The idea that is expressed by the theme of a story is the idea that gives an epitome of the story and establishes its unity. As such we can conclude (Mafela, 1993) that a story's theme is its reason for its existence or a central insight into human experience. As a central controlling idea, theme unites and links all the details or the

loose elements of a story into a coherent narrative structure. In the words of Burnett (1975:135), "it is that recurring insistence on the subject which is made increasingly explicit by the actions of the characters and plot". As Mafela (1993:25) puts it,

Whatever happens in a narrative must have a bearing on theme. If theme is the controlling idea, then all the elements of a narrative, be it characterisation, plot progression, setting, point of view, style and language, are controlled by it, because they directly mirror the central idea of a story.

It should be borne in mind that theme is not a variant or an equivalent of 'a subject', 'a moral' or 'a lesson'. Scott & Madden (1980) give a clear distinction in this regard when they say that, theme is not 'a subject', but a statement about the subject; that theme should not be equated with 'a moral' or 'a lesson', since good stories do not teach, but reveal; do not preach, but interpret. The theme of a short story is not there for readers to learn about life, however it is there for readers to think about life. The readers do not learn about experiences, but think about experiences.

It is difficult, within the confines of this thesis, to make an exhaustive investigation or analytical survey of all the themes revealed in modern Tswana short stories because these stories are many and each story treats a different theme from a different perspective. Therefore, this thesis offers a discussion of only the major themes which are representative of the wide spectrum of Tswana short story themes. As such, we shall discuss only those themes that relate to tradition and culture, love and marriage, urban life, corruption and other social problems and religion.

## **2.1 THE THEME OF TRADITION AND CULTURE**

Tswana short stories, more often than not, emphasise different aspects of the Batswana culture and tradition. These stories are more eloquent in their treatment of aspects such as witchcraft, modern/traditional marriage and rituals, both from affirmative and critical



perspectives. The most outspoken exponent of an affirmative approach to traditional culture is Malope (1982) in his volume, *Mmualebe*. In *O nkutlwe* Malope sketches the conflict that presently exists between tradition and modernity. He feels that not enough has been done to reconcile modern values with traditional values. According to him the Batswana people unwittingly discarded their own tradition in their contact with the white missionaries; and he feels that ever since the Batswana people lost their true identity and adopted Western lifestyles, they have been swimming in a pool of confusion, for they are unable to reconcile their culture with Western civilization. Malope is of the opinion that the conflict that exists between tradition and modernity has a negative impact on societal behaviour and attitudes, particularly because those traditional norms and values which held families together are no longer adhered to, while problems abound. Here, he refers specifically to problems experienced after the death of a spouse. These problems include caring for the widow, rearing the deceased's children and maintaining the family as a whole. In this short story, the death of Kedisaletse's husband, Mofeti, leaves Kedisaletse with the dilemma of nurturing and fending for her children; in addition to mourning the death of Mofeti. Tradition tells her that she has to stay home, while practicality tells her that she has to find work to pay rent, feed and dress her children and continue living as normal. Malope feels that such problems are easily solved through traditional practices of the sororate and the levirate. In the traditional Batswana culture, death does not immediately dissolve marriage. As Kedisaletse is still fairly young, and her children are all minors, the traditional custom would require her husband's younger brother to enter Kedisaletse's hut and maintain his elder brother's marriage. Hear what the old man Matlapeng says:

"Tlhang le phatlalatsa kgoro ya Matlapeng boemong jwa go e kgobokanya? Fa lo sa dise dikgongwana tsoora Matlapeng, le raya fa di tla phuthwa ke mang? A lo ka tlogela madi a ga Matlapeng a gasaganngwa le lefatshe ke tlala le tshotlego, ntswa le ka kgona go a boloka? Mosadi, banaka, ga a nyalelwe motho. Mosadi o nyalelwa kgoro. Ke ka ntlha eo yole morwadia Ketlamoreng a lebaneng wena Tholo, gore o tle o dibeke bana ba mogoloo. Lona lo a re bogologolo fa ba

ne ba re lebitla ga le tlhadiwe ba ne ba raya eng? Lo tsaya gore ba ne ba bua maaka fa ba ne ba re lebitla la mosadi le kwa bogadi? Lebitla la mosadi le kwa bogadi gonne mosadi ke wa dikgomo. (Malope, 1982:51)

(Why do you allow the Matlapeng clan to disintegrate instead of knitting it tight? Who will gather the Matlapeng cattle if you do not herd them? Would you allow the blood of the Matlapeng to spill all over the countryside because of hunger and miseries when you can save it? A woman, my children, is not married to an individual. A woman is married to the tribe. That is why Ketlamoeng's daughter is now yours, Tholo, so that you can protect and take care of your elder brother's children. What do you think our ancestors meant when they said a grave is not divorced? Do you think they were lying when they said a woman's grave belongs to her in-laws? The grave of a woman is where she has been lobola'd because a woman is bought with cattle.)

In this case, Tholo, Mofeti's younger brother, would not be regarded as Kedisaletse's husband, but as her guardian and would protect and support her and her children and look after Mofeti's estate. Malope, in this short story, affirms and sanctions the belief in tradition and custom. Kedisaletse denies the traditional custom of continuing to bear children with Mofeti's younger brother, Tholo and instead cohabits with an outsider, Pekwa. The consequences of this cohabitation become tragic to both Kedisaletse and Pekwa: Kedisaletse bears a child with Dain's syndrome while Pekwa contracts a terrible disease called "boswagadi". Malope, in describing this situation, says:

Fa morula o tla wa, motho a batla a bolaya mmaagwe. Ya re masea a goroga a eteletswe ke tlhogo pele, ena a wa ka dinao. Ga nna maragaraga. ... Ka Modimo o sa je nkabo, Kedisaletse a tswa mo bookelong a tlherepane. Ngwana .. e le serabu; ka tshobotsi e le khukhwane - tlhogo, mabogo le dinao go sa felelela go gola. ....Pekwa ... a utlwa a babelwa mo mokwatleng, diso tsa menologa jaaka mofero mo tshimong, tsa anama le marago, dingwe tsa ntsha ditlhogo mo dimpeng. (Malope, 1982:54)

(The baby nearly killed her mother during birth. Where babies are borne headlong, this one fell on her feet. It was horrible ... But through the grace of God, Kedisalese gave birth in a very weak condition. The child ... was a mongol; with the appearance of a beetle - her head, hands and feet were not fully grown. Pekwa .. felt an itching on his back, and sores protruded like weeds, and spread all over his buttocks, with some appearing on his stomach.)

Magoleng's *Ga le a ka la tswa* is another short story that affirms the belief in tradition. In the exposition of this short story the author initiates the main action with Kesentseng (the main character) in a pensive mood over his fierce, beloved dog which his younger brother has sold for one rand to a traditional doctor, Gaolekwe. Kesentseng cannot bear the loss of the dog because it was a gift from his uncle and, according to tradition, a gift should never be lost or given away. In the Batswana tradition there is a belief that if a gift changes hands this might cause mishaps later in life. This is a crucial situation in which Kesentseng finds himself. Thus, Kesentseng requests its retrieval; and this request arouses Gaolekwe's ire and his temper soars. Gaolekwe then curses Kesentseng, dooming him to die the following day.

The mysteries connected with traditional culture, particularly sorcery and witchcraft, make Kesentseng believe that he will not see the dawn of the next day. This is heightened by the fact that Gaolekwe is a traditional doctor; and when the weather becomes unruly and thunders, Kesentseng's father, panic-stricken, stumbles into Kesentseng's hut and strangles him to death, thinking he is a witch. In this story, setting contributes heavily to the preconceived idea of sorcery and witchcraft which is part and parcel of the community in question. Owing to a strong belief in supernatural powers in the village, we understand why Kesentseng's father, on hearing screaming noises in his son's hut, stumbles into it and strangles the "witch" to death. Thus Gaolekwe's threat that Kesentseng is doomed to die the next day materializes even though it is not of his own doing.

Malebye (1995) in his volume **Batho ba bosigo** highlights the belief in witchcraft and the ability of the dead to continue to live in this world even after death. In the story that bears the title of this volume, *Batho ba bosigo*, the author emphasises this belief as a living reality and as such he encourages it as a tradition that needs to be treasured. This is illustrated through the events that affect Ratholo and his daughter directly and indirectly. In this story, Ratholo's daughter dies mysteriously, and Ratholo finds a traditional doctor who identifies the witches who are responsible for the deed. Ratholo discovers from the traditional doctor's divining bones that his daughter is not dead, but has been turned into a zombie. The mourners and other funeral attenders witness the mysterious powers of the traditional doctor, Ndenjero, who, after having sprinkled his charms over the grave of Ratholo's daughter, succeeds in bringing the daughter back to normal life. The people attending the funeral are amused and terrified by the instant sight of the witches who die one by one around the grave of Ratholo's daughter. On seeing the powers of the traditional doctor the chief of the village orders Ndenjero to cleanse the village of all witches. Ndenjero identifies witches or sorcerers through his magic spells. After having ordered the mass murder of all the identified witches, the chief and his cleansed subjects feel relieved that the village has been purified from all wicked deeds and that people can now sleep peacefully. Through this story Malebye shows that witchcraft and sorcery are treated as irrefutable truths among the traditional people; even in his narration, he does not cast doubts on witchcraft as an existing practice. Therefore, Malebye's *Batho ba bosigo* is a personal attempt at arousing people's awareness of the existence of witchcraft, particularly through exposing the successful methods of the traditional doctor in carrying out his duties.

The situation in which girls and sometimes boys are forced to marry partners of their parents' choosing is depicted in Malefo's (1985) *Go sa bitseng motho*. In this story we hear of a girl whose parents are uneasy over her unmarried state. This girl is Dikeledi, who falls in love with a boy called Mothobatho and is prematurely forced by her parents to become engaged to him:

"Bona fa, Nkele-mme," ga bua rraagwe a mo reta jaaka a a tle a mo rete fa a ne a katlampola sebotlana. "O tla bo o na le dingwaga di le somaamabedinngwe ka Setemere, mme ke ngwaga wa boraro o ntse o gana nnang wa banyana fa mongwe wa makawana a itela bobotlana mo go wena. Mothobatho ke yo, e kete o beile mowa mo go ena go feta mongwe osele, le rona ga go selabe sepe se re ka se mo pegang .... jaanong se tota o se emetseng ke eng? O a mo rata. Ganela!" "Go menagane gantsi rra. Mme le gale ka mokgwa mongwe - e seng go le kalo, ga go a lekana, ke ithaya ke re ... Ga ke tlhomamisa-" ... Dikeledi a leka go ntshetsa mmaagwe sephiri. "Mme kana, mma, metlha eno ga se ya ga Lowe!" Dikeledi a iphitlhela a phamogile fela, e se ka fa tlwaelong ya gagwe. (Malefo, 1985:53-54)

("Look here, Nkele," said her father praising her as he used to. "You will be twenty one years of age in September, and this is the third year that you have been objecting to men's proposals for marriage. Here is Mothobatho and he seems to be head over heels in love with you; we also do not bear any grudge against him ... So what are you waiting for? You love him. Don't you!" "Terribly, father. But in a different manner - not that much, it is not enough, I think .....I am not sure." Dikeledi tried to reveal the secret to her mother. "But, mom, these are not those olden days of Ga-Lowe!" Dikeledi answered haphazardly, in a manner which was uncharacteristic of her.)

Dikeledi discovers that she has no love for Mothobatho and wonders how she can save herself from him. She runs away from this unwanted love affair and in her doubt and worry, she meets a gentleman called Kathotha Poloko. Kathotha Poloko also falls head over heels in love with Dikeledi and even believes that Dikeledi is a Godsend. Ultimately, the relationship of both Kathotha and Dikeledi ends up in a happy marriage, with both of them living a happy life. On the other hand, Mothobatho is jilted and left biting his own nails in embarrassment. In another short story by Motlhake in Magoleng & Motlhake (1985), *Ka lenyalo ke bakile*, Molekwa shows his anger at his tradition and wants to break it by marrying a woman he loves instead of the woman of his parents' choice, that is, according to the established custom. Molekwa's father and Molekwa express their worries and complaints as follows:

"Molekwa, morwaaka, ke a go utlwa, fela ga ke dumelane le lepe la mafoko a gago. Mosadi, fa o batla go nyala, o kwa Mmakau, kwa gagabo mmaago," Molebatsi a bua a lebile morwae mo matlhong. "Ao, rra! A jaanong ke latlhe ngwana ke mo tsetse?" "Ee, le fa ba ka ne ba le kae! "

.....  
"Letuku, ke gakgamaditswe ke rre, a nthaya a re fa ke batla mosadi ke ye go mo tsaya kwa Mmakau, gagabo mme. A kgotsa ke sona Setswana seo, molekane?"  
(Magoleng & Motlhake, 1985:30)

("Molekwa, my son, I hear you, but I do not agree with any of your words. If you want to marry a woman, you will find her at Mmakau, at your mother's hometown," said Molebatsi looking deep into his son's eyes. "Alas! Father, should I now reject the child I gave birth to?" "Yes, however many they might be!"

.....  
"Letuku, my father has amazed me, he says if I want to marry I should go to Mmakau, to my mother's hometown. Or is it the Batswana culture, my friend?")

Despite his emotional outbursts and obstinate attempts to cling to his beloved girlfriend, Molekwa realises that he cannot change his father's traditional leanings. Through this character, the author tells us that there are parents who are still obsessed with the established custom that holds that a suitable marriage-partner should be chosen from rural rather than from urban areas; that she should belong to one's cultural group and that she should be one's cousin. Traditionally, any partner outside the prescribed realms was not a suitable candidate for marriage. Molekwa leaves the woman he loves for his cousin, Mmadira. Although Molekwa yields to his parents' insistence, he later experiences the tragic consequences of yielding to traditional custom. He discovers that he has no love for Mmadira and that Mmadira is a witch.

Although Motlhake (Magoleng & Motlhake, 1985) is critical of traditional marriages, he still affirms the belief in tradition as Molekwa uses witchcraft to obtain a solution to his problems and divorces Mmadira on the grounds of her being a witch. Traditionally, a

woman could not simply be divorced except when she was a witch. In this story Motlhake highlights the belief in witchcraft and the ability of the dead to influence the lives of the living. This belief is encouraged and nurtured because most Batswana people, directly or indirectly, openly or secretly, depend on witchcraft and ancestral powers during trials and tribulations. This is the reason for Molekwa's initial decision to leave the love of his choice for a customary one to please his ancestors, and later, the motivation for his acceptance of the prophecies of the witchdoctor as irrefutable truths. Magoleng's (1974) short story, *Modise o a nyala*, is another story that affirms the belief in tradition, particularly when things go wrong. In this story we meet Modise who apparently is shy or afraid of wooing a woman, and his ageing parents are worried that they might die before he marries. Modise, however, is not necessarily denied the right to choose for himself the woman whom he would marry. Rather here Modise does not seem to have either the interest or the courage and ability to confront a woman and woo her. Therefore, his parents select him a woman of their choice only because they realise that age is going to catch up with him.

Malope (1982) in *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng*, treats traditional marriages with respect. He reveals that a total disregard of traditional norms and values in marriages causes terrible marital conflicts between couples. In this short story, the barrenness of Malešwane, Makeketa's wife, causes quarrels in the house. Makeketa becomes unhappy at home, and commits adultery with another woman, a behaviour which is contrary to tradition. In this regard Malope says that the sadness and the conflict that prevail in Makeketa's house could be solved through an established custom. He says;

Bothata jwa lelapa la ga Makeketa bo ne bo phekolwa  
botlhofotlhofo gonne mosadi o ne a nyalelwa lelapa le le  
duleng kgomo - e seng monna. Fa monna yo o mo  
tlhatlhelelang dikgomo fa di suthile a sa kgone go tshola bana  
nae, mme a ba lelela jaaka Makeketa, mongwe wa  
barwarragwe o ne a sala a mo tlhatlhelela tsona fa a sa ile  
bolebelebe ka thulaganyo. Fa boreaitse le pitsana eo ya maano  
ba paletswe, motho a tshwana le Malešwane a ka salwa

morago ke tlhatswadirope, kana ga tswa dikgomo go nyalela Makeketa mosadi wa bobedi. ... Gompieno mathatanyana ano a fetogile dithaba gonne re taboga le modumo wa meropa ya bangwe. (Malope, 1982: 14)

( The problem of Makeketa's family could very easily be solved through the established custom, because a woman was traditionally married to the family and not an individual. If a man who has married you cannot produce children, yet cries for them, one of his brothers would produce for him in his absence - levirate. If a woman was barren and could not bear children, this was circumvented by the sororate, whereby the husband would produce children by the wife's younger sister. Today, these problems are insoluble and they are in abundance.)

A short story writer who is obstinately critical of tradition is Shole. In his (1985) short story *E romilwe ke Jehofa*, he condemns the backward tradition of ritual murder. Apart from portraying it as negative, primitive and barbaric, Shole shows the power that religion or Christianity has over these evil practices. In *E romilwe ke Jehofa* we encounter an uneasy, terrifying and heart-breaking situation in which a business man, Ndaba, hires murderers to mutilate a person (in this story, Mfoloe) alive, so that his business can flourish and be saved from collapse. The fact that this ritual murder could not succeed, because of the intrusion of a "Godsent snake", indicates that Shole is critical of and against tradition and ritual murder, but sanctions the power of religion or Christianity over tradition.

## 2.2 THE THEME OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE

A study of Tswana short stories provides ample information concerning love, the admiration and pleasure it yields, the unfairness and adulterous behaviour in which partners become involved, the suffering and pain it projects onto the caring spouses, and the bitterness with which divorcing spouses view unfaithfulness. Although nearly all Tswana short stories recognise love as a biological need, they also elucidate the good and



the bad aspects of it. The commonest type of love expressed in the Modern Tswana short stories, is the love between opposite sexes, namely, a male and a female. This love is expressed in the form of an intense admiration and adoration of the physical beauty of one partner by the other in such a way as to indicate feelings of sexual desire, lust and cohabitation. These feelings of intense admiration and adoration often culminate in a bond called marriage, the fruits of which are children. Love keeps marriage intact and a marriage that is devoid of love, experiences constant bickering and quarrelling between spouses, with the result that such a marriage becomes contaminated by intruders and inbetweeners and ultimately disintegrates.

Quite a number of the Tswana short stories explore the attraction which prompts partners to become involved in love affairs only to lose the infatuation when a baby is conceived. Explaining why he is hesitant to agree to marry Tsholofelo, Thebe, in Malefo's (1985) short story, *Bo tsholwa bo le molelo*, emphasizes that their relationship is based solely on infatuation, that it is devoid of true love, and that the baby has been conceived out of sheer innocence. This shows that love and sex can be dangerous, because one could fall pregnant when the partner is not emotionally ready to cope with the responsibilities that go with having a sexual relationship. In this short story, Malefo depicts the ugliness that lurks behind the attraction and infatuation with which lovers fall in love. One of the bitter experiences of infatuation is that it, more often than not, veils the eyes of lovers and encourages the unwise to enter into marriage without considering all the implications. Thebe is coerced into marrying Tsholofelo by the elderly Kgakololo, and Tsholofelo has to bear the brunt of living with an unfriendly mother-in-law. What we observe in this story is that parents have an influential role to play in their children's decision-making. That is why even in love affairs children tend to heed parental advice and accede to their wishes. Tsholofelo's unpleasant marital experiences land her in a hospital with terrible labour pains, sobbing and regretting her decision to marry. However, ironically, the significance of a child in marriage is highlighted when Thebe's mother cuddles Tsholofelo's newborn baby and apologises to her for the negativity with which she welcomed her.

Tswana short stories touch on a wide spectrum of love, including unfaithfulness in love affairs, women's yearning for marriage, and the bitterness and vengeance with which individuals become involved in illicit love affairs. In Malope's (1982) short story, *Bodiba jwa go ja ngwanaa mmaago*, Moatlhodi's excited admiration of Tselane motivates him to a stove of determination to marry her, unaware that she has another lover. Tselane accepts his proposal of marriage for convenience and out of fear of being an old maid. However, she soon realises that all is not fair in love and marriage: She marries Moatlhodi knowing full well that she loves Mathulwe. Moatlhodi tells her that she is not yet ready to have a child, and she (Tselane) personally discovers that Moatlhodi loves his books more than he does her. The excitement with which she rushed into marriage turns into a bitter disappointment and frustration. When Mathulwe, who is equally frustrated and disappointed at his loss, realises that his intentions to marry Tselane in his own time have not been appreciated and endured, he decides to woo Tselane into being his mistress. Mathulwe's intention is to make Moatlhodi feel the pain he has felt. This is why when Tselane conceives his child, his bitter anger immediately turns into a feeling of sweet revenge, so that he proudly says: "Let Moatlhodi also feel the bitter pain I have felt".

Shole's (1985) short story, *Molala-le-ntsala*, also belongs to the category of stories dealing with the experiences of love and marriage. It reveals the theme of a woman who is heartbroken because she is pestered by women who are in love with her husband. This theme is revealed through Ntswaki who is tired of Moroka's adulterous behaviour and wants concrete grounds for divorcing him. Ntswaki lures Letshabang, who seems to be Moroka's favourite lady, to Mme-ga-mpone under the pretext that she is Moroka's cousin. She warmly welcomes Letshabang into her house and lies to her, telling her (Letshabang) Moroka will arrive shortly. Although Letshabang finds comfort in her beauty and in Ntswaki's ugliness, Ntswaki's freedom of movement and relaxation in the house make her doubt the truth of Ntswaki's words, that she is Moroka's cousin. Here Shole reveals the impatience with which women sometimes deal with their husband's lies and adulterous behaviour; that they resort to a divorce only when they realise that irreparable damage has

been done to their marriages. Ntswaki has patiently endured her husband's cheating and absence from home; so she finds no alternative but to file for a divorce. Ntswaki's decision to file for a divorce is characteristic of the modern world in which she lives. Traditionally, she would not have tracked the movements of her husband and ultimately called Letshabang to confess. She would have accepted the old adage that men exchange hands. Shole's mastery of his events is shown in the manner in which he successfully twists the events of *Molala-le-ntsala* to build another short story, *Ntswaki*. In *Ntswaki*, Shole treats the theme of a woman who has been deceived into believing that her lover is a married man, only to be told later that this is merely a joke. This woman is Letshabang, and her lover is Moroka, while the mischief is perpetrated by Ntswaki. In this story, unlike in *Molala-le-ntsala*, Ntswaki is in a happy mood and makes fun of Letshabang. She shows Letshabang an album with photos she has deliberately arranged so that Letshabang can believe that Moroka is in love with her (Ntswaki). Ntswaki even tells her to prepare to be a witness in a court of law where she will be divorcing Moroka on the grounds of adulterous behaviour. After Letshabang's emotional suffering, humiliation and self-pity, Nnyenyane explains to Letshabang that Ntswaki's boyfriend is Tigedi and not Moroka as has been alleged. Ntswaki also admits that she is truly Moroka's cousin, that she purposefully arranged the photos in the album, to sustain her fun. The significance of Ntswaki in these two short stories is that she inflicts the pain of loving and suffers the pain of loving. In *Molala-le-ntsala* Ntswaki suffers emotionally because of her husband's adulterous behaviour, while in *Ntswaki* she happily inflicts pain on Letshabang. Ntswaki's joke is reminiscent of April fool fun-making.

Many Tswana short stories do not treat only love and marriage, but also explore themes of concubinage and adultery in marriage. In *Mokaragana, ngwanaka*, Magoleng (1985) examines the bitter repercussions of adulterous behaviour. In this short story, Diile is lured and deceived by Sadinyana into conducting herself immorally, as though she is not married. Sadinyana's main objective is that she and Diile should extract the hard-earned money from the male workers by providing them with the pleasures of prostitution. Diile

then falls in love with Papa Solly. She receives Barati's advice and reprimanding with scorn. This ultimately harms her marriage as her husband, Disang, contracts a terrible sickness that kills him. Diile remains in misery as she also contracts a contagious and incurable disease. Her friends shun her while Papa Solly disappears without a trace. This story reveals how Diile regrets her wayward behaviour, how she succumbs to her illness and how in the end she commits suicide. Through this narrative, the author is critical of adulterous love affairs.

Magoleng's (1985) other short story with a similar theme, *Ke mosadi*, shows the disregard and irresponsibility which married couples display towards their marriages. In this story we meet Seyantlo who destroys her marriage by conducting an illicit sexual relationship with Moleki, Kelebile's husband. Although Bakai, Seyantlo's husband, constantly calls Seyantlo to address their marital problems in a reconciliatory mood, Seyantlo refuses for she has felt the warmth of concubinage and adultery. Seyantlo's immoral behaviour and attitude leave Kelebile's family in tatters. Magoleng, in this story, accurately reflects the feelings of pain and bitter anger experienced by Bakai and Kelebile, who are subjected to the degradation of crying and longing for the spouses that are legitimately theirs. On the other hand, the story shows the hurt and disappointment felt by Moleki, who is indignant at hearing that Kelebile also has a lover. Moleki feels remorse and he returns to his wife, Kelebile, while Seyantlo is left in utter shame and misery having divorced her husband. She now imagines that she has lost both the shadow and the substance.

The point being made in the above, and in Motlhake's (Magoleng & Motlhake, 1985) short story, *Kgathatso*, is that concubinage and adultery destroy families. The great destroyers in Motlhake's story, are Kgathatso, Kedibone's husband, and Diketso, Mokgethisi's wife. Kgathatso falls in love with Diketso, and they have sufficient opportunity to cohabit because Kgathatso frequently delivers cargo to distant places while Mokgethisi is often away during weekdays. When Diketso finds work at a place called Protea, she shows

herself to be a nymphomaniac of great charm when she falls in love with a third man, Mpheane. In this story, infidelity seems to arise from the distance that prevails when couples work far apart; and it proves to bring remorse, pain and divorce into the family. Kgathatso is arrested after having been caught in the act of making love with Diketso, while Mpheane is assaulted. Here, we witness the immoral behavioural attitudes of irresponsible adults devoid of trust, respect and commitment in their respective marriages.

The denial of personal freedom to women in love is the concern of Shole's (1985) story *Seteropo ke sa gago*, in which Senatla denies his wife, Sedie, the right to be free to visit and be visited. Shole highlights this denial of personal freedom by explaining how Senatla restricts and monitors Sedie's movements. Everytime he arrives home, Senatla asks Sedie for the names of those who may have come to visit her during his absence; he interrogates neighbours on the question of troublemakers who visit in his absence; and he even posts a tape-recorder under Sedie's bed to record whatever might happen in the bedroom in his absence. This is a typical example of a relationship that is devoid of love based on mutual friendship and respect for each other's feelings, wishes and ambitions.

### 2.3 THE THEME ON THE MAKGOWENG MOTIF

The stories that treat the theme of urban life tend to stress the negative influence of the city/town on its helpless inhabitants, and seem unconcerned about highlighting the positive aspects of urban life (Balogun, 1991). In Shole's story *Molala-le-ntsala*, the town of Mme-ga-mpone is depicted as an elegant urban area which lures people to it. Shole describes Mme-ga-mpone as

Motse monana o go tweng o tlhapisa pelo. O moswaana le bosigo mme baagi....e thaka e tshesane, bonyalontšhwa.  
(Shole, 1985:1)

(A glittering town that is said to be pleasing to the heart. It glitters even during the night, and its residents ...are youths, the newly-weds.)

The glamour, pleasure and notoriety of Mme-ga-mpone are mirrored in the events occurring within Ntswaki's house. The phrase 'glitter even during the night' does not only suggest that it is illuminated by the street lights, it also suggests that the place glitters from the beauty of the people who inhabit it. Therefore, the beauty is not merely restricted to the physical external glitter of the urban facilities, but even more importantly, it concerns the attraction of the offer of freedom for youths to do as they please and escape parental restrictions (Balogun, 1991). The people who inhabit this place are young, some are newly-wed while others are unmarried. They are of approximately the same age, but of different marital status. Their immorality, as inferred from this description of setting, is in accordance with the developmental level of Mme-ga-mpone. This is also a young urban area which, unlike traditional rural villages, experiences rapid change and development. This change is reflected in the swift moral changes that its people undergo. The sudden change can be attributed to the sudden transition from a rural to an urban way of life; and, this suddenness causes moral crises particularly because of the absence of elderly people or parental restrictions. This is evident from the actions of Letshabang who lives in three worlds simultaneously. Her home is at Lerwaneng, a rural village; she studies at the University of the North; and she is in love with a Mme-ga-mpone urbanite. Thus, she can afford to do mischief behind her parents' backs. Although her conscience often reminds her that what she does at Mme-ga-mpone is immoral, unwarranted and against the wishes of her parents, the experiences of this place tell her that life and love should be enjoyed while there is still time.

The allurement of the beauty of the city on people also shows itself in the short story, *Kokwanyana, robala*. In this story the city's rapid development and elegance are some of the aspects that lure different people of different cultures to the city centre. The convergence of different cultures and people from different family backgrounds into the city of Mmabatho, creates a rapid decline in moral and social standards. School pupils wander into the city centre to look for romance as they saunter along the roads in mini dresses. Auma's behaviour is a case in point. Apart from strictly looking for romance, she

also goes into Mmalekorwana's shop and steals a large packet of chicken for relish. The facelessness of Auma symbolizes a loss of individuality and dehumanizes her, for she preys on an innocent and helpful old woman. These loose morals are also discernible in the association between Legotlo (a teacher) and his pupils. Legotlo's pupils treat him disrespectfully, calling him by a nickname, and speaking with him in an irreverent fashion. They even act out their anger, frustration and disappointment with him in his presence. Hear the following conversation:

"Tota ga o dire sentle jaanong, *meneer*, waitse."

.....  
 "Meneer, kana fa o mpona ke riana ke ne ke re ke a go botsa Auma ka ga manyanyabea a lo reng o a dirile. Jaanong wena o raya batho o re ..." A tlalelana. Legotlo a mo iketlela.....Mosimane a tlhakana tlhogo a sa itse gore jaanong ga twe di lebisitse kae. A simolola a gakologelwa gore go tilwe ogatogile maphodisa. A simolola go kopa sakerete sele a itebetse gore o na le morutabana wa gagwe. "Meneer, se nkgoge mowa ke a rapela, *Asseblief*. Ke utlwile go lekane." (Shole,1985:115-116)

("But, meneer, you are really not doing the right thing, you know." .....

"Meneer, as of now I was going to cross-question Auma about the mess you say she has done. Now you say to people that ....." He sobbed. Legotlo was patient with him. The boy got confused and did not know what direction things assumed. He then remembered hearing that the police had arrived immediately after his departure. He then asked for a cigarette oblivious of the presence of his teacher.

"Meneer, do not infuriate me, I beg you, Please. I have had enough.")

Motlhake's (Magoleng & Motlhake, 1985) *Sello o batla tiro*, draws our attention to the plight of the people who, unsuspectingly, come to look for work in the city, only to be drawn into the filthy mire of city crimes, bribery and involvement in police corruption. In this story we hear of a young man who has been lured away from his original intention of looking for a decent job to the indecent frustration of being a police informer. Sello

leaves his rural village to look for work in the city of Johannesburg. He roams the city until he meets a policeman, Garamase, who beats and arrests him for failing to produce a passbook. When Garamase tries to apprehend another man, Dintwe, Dintwe fights back and kills Garamase before he is able to flee. The police, in utter frustration, arrest Sello on suspicion of murder. When he explains to them that they have wrongfully accused him of murder, Sello is told to help find the murder suspect. Sello then overhears Seipati and Lemang expressing their happiness over the murder of Garamase, and he immediately reports the incident to the police; after which the suspect is arrested. Although Sello could not find a job, the possibility of a better lifestyle is promised when the police dangle a R600,00 reward in front of his eyes for having helped apprehend the real suspect:

"Jaanong ka re o intshitse! O a bona, Sello, molao o emetse tshiamo. O ila tshiamololo. Molao o rata tshiamo gareng ga batho. O ne o dule lejako, mme wa gobala. O gobetse mo letsholong la go batla tshiamo, tshiamo ya me le ya gago! Puso e bone go tshwanela go go tlhatswa diatla mo seabeng sa gago, go tlisa mmolai pele ga molao. Amogela makgolo a le maratara a diranta!" (Motlhake, 1991:58)

(Now you are out of trouble! Sello, do you realise that the law stands for justice. It hates injustice. The law loves justice among people. You were looking for a job, and you got hurt. You got hurt in your journey to justice, for your justice and mine. The government has seen it fit to reward you for bringing the culprit to book. Receive the six hundred rand!")

Having no work to do and no one caring enough to give him a job, Sello eventually becomes a police informer, living a life which he did not seek when he came to the city. Similarly, the short story writer continues to emphasize that the attraction of the city for rural people is the promise of jobs and the possibility of a better way of life. Unfortunately, in most instances, the opposite is the case.

In Thobega's (1982) short story, *Mosepele o o mafaratlhatlha*, Dikeledi is attracted to the city of Gaborone by the hope of finding a lucrative job and a better lifestyle. Dikeledi



arrives in the city having heard about the pleasures and glamour of city life. So, when she alights from the bus in the city her first concerns relate to the beauty with which she has to go into the city. This is why she immediately embellishes and decorates herself so that Gaborone would warmly welcome her. She meets a city woman, Matlakadibe, who seems to be very knowledgeable about city life. Explaining how she came to be familiar with city life, Matlakadibe, says that she came to the city from the rural area on the promise of a decent job just like Dikeledi. However, when she realised that the promise could not be fulfilled, she decided to lead a restless, hedonistic and immoral life. Even her attempts to turn herself into a coloured person could not bear fruit as she was quickly discovered and sent to prison. Through this explanation, Matlakadibe lures Dikeledi into being a prostitute and even tells her that she earns so much from prostitution that the price is often negotiated before services are rendered. The author in this story contrasts Matlakadibe's knowledgeability about city life and prostitution with Dikeledi's unsuspecting innocence with which she arrives in the city. Dikeledi becomes involved in prostitution with some reservations and hesitancy while Matlakadibe is cunning and develops tricks to bleed the hard-earned money out of men's pockets leaving them empty ducks of poverty and frustration.

In this story, we discover the dangerous pitfalls which await rural people who easily adapt to city life. Owing to their scant knowledge of city life they become embroiled in prostitution, crime and corruption which often cripple them either mentally or physically, ultimately leading to their untimely and unnatural demise. Hence the following conversation:

"O tswa kae, tsala ya me?" ga botsa Matlakadibe a nyenya".  
"Dumela tlhe. Ke ya kwa gae. Ke batla go boela kwa Kgalagadi, ke ya go nna le mme," Dikeledi a bua a totoba ka dithobane. O ne a le segole, a kgaotswe leoto ka ka lengole le ne le senyegile, tlhobolo e mo tšhwetlile mme marapo a se ka a kgona go momagana. Matlakadibe a bona koloi e e neng e ya Gauteng. A leka go e sianela. Batho ba leka go mo kganela, ya mo thula mme a robega leoto. "Tsala ya me, a re kgaogane ka kagiso. Botshelo jo re bo lekileng ga bo thuse sepe." (Thobega, 1982:51)

("Wherefrom are you, my friend?" asked Matlakadibe as she smiled. Hallo, I am going home. I want to go back to Kgalagadi, to live with my mother," said Dikeledi as she walked on her crutches. She was crippled; her leg was amputated because a gun had completely fractured her knee, and her bones could not heal. Suddenly, Matlakadibe saw a car leading to Johannesburg. She tried to run after it. People tried to stop her, but it knocked her down and broke her leg. "My friend, let us part in peace. The type of life we have tried does not help.")

Dikeledi returns home to Molepolole empty handed, with a leg amputated because of a gunshot, while Matlakadibe dies in a car accident. Some of the awful experiences of urban inhabitants are that the irresponsible job seekers lose patience in the process and lead a nomadic type of life or become city hobos. This often has unpleasant consequences such as those illustrated in Mmileng's (1986) *Monwetsa* in which Phadima suffers the frequent and embarrassing police requests for a passbook; the beating he receives from criminals; the ultimate surrender to drunkenness; and the loss of hope that the city has any future for him, culminating in the humiliating decision to return to his rural home in utter poverty and despair.

Quite a number of Tswana short story writers treat the awful experiences of crime, parasitism and degradation that people have to contend with in urban areas. In *Go tshela yo o dithetsenyana*, which is contained in the volume *Dilo tsa ga mmanapo*, Bogatsu (1995a) illustrates how people are attracted by the apparent beauty and easy life of urban areas only to fall prey to the indignity with which urban crime, corruption and illicit trade welcome them. Bogatsu depicts the total ugliness with which the urban areas welcome unsuspecting and sometimes hopeful rural visitors. In this story we read of a young man who is tricked into buying banana peels and papers thinking it is a bargain of two shirts. Here Bogatsu warns people against buying things they cannot see and feel. On the same note he also warns against living a sophisticated, artificial and expensive life, the type of life which is almost above one's income. Bogatsu uses the character, Maiteko, to illustrate these nasty incidents with their repercussions. Maiteko boasts of how wealthy he is,

particularly since he has received his Christmas leave bonus. He instantly buys a car and decides to visit his uncle where he loses his car to urban criminals, never to return to the touch of his hands. Bogatsu, in highlighting this sad experience through his characters, says:

"Ke Gouteng mo. Go tshelwa ka go iphataphatela. .... Fa a re matlho tsaya o lebe, a e bona e tswa ka kgoro ya segotlo. Ga a ise a tlhole a re jwa ga mme bo a tlhotlhwa. A ragoga a ntse a tlhabeeditse mokgosi. Fa a e atamela ke fa mosimane a e wetsa mo tseleng. O ipone a e fophola dimpa ya bo e le fa a e tshwere la bofelo. .... "O a tshameka wena! Mo, ke Josi. Fa o robetse ka ditlhako o tla direla balekane ba gago." (Bogatsu, 1995a:48)

(This is Gauteng. Survival is for the fittest ....." As he turned his eyes to have a look, the car was being driven out of the yard. He did not waste a minute. He ran after it shouting at the top of his voice. As he approached it, the driver swiftly sped off. He could only feel its body, and it was for the last time. "You are joking! This is Jo'burg. If you are dumb and stupid, you will work for other people.")

Bogatsu here depicts the ugliness and terror that hide behind the beauty, glamour and enchantment with which the city entices rural people. Maiteko tries to be sophisticated, decent and maintain the standards of the inhabitants of the city Gouteng (Johannesburg) only to receive a slap in the face when his car is cunningly stolen. What is more embarrassing and hurtful is the laughter and lack of sympathy with which his uncle and colleagues receive the sad news of his loss. This facelessness and lack of concern dehumanizes the city inhabitants.

## **2.4 THE THEME OF CORRUPTION AND OTHER SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

Tswana short stories treat the theme of corruption not only as a social problem but also as a malady that alienates people. Corruption is so prevalent in different life circles that we experience and witness it daily. According to Mafela (1993) corruption came to black

people through western civilization in that the high administrative posts which were characterised by corruption were mainly occupied by Whites with only a few Black people being offered these posts. Malope in his short story only concentrates on the corruption that is perpetrated by Black people in the so-called independent states. However, he condemns corruption from any source. The most dominant corruption treated in these stories relates to corruption within education circles. Malope (1982) in his short story *O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba* expresses his disillusionment with the filthy corruption prevalent within the Department of Education. He emphasizes that the present education standards are corrupt and useless as people are more interested in certificates than knowledge and true education; that people are more interested in academic regalia than in the efficient execution of duties and expert knowledge; that today's so-called educated people do not have the expertise and right morals to be exemplary; that it is the common practice of the Department of Education that people are paid according to the number of certificates they have obtained, not according to output, expert knowledge, efficient teaching and active participation in the teaching fraternity. According to Malope, the South African so-called independent states are the worst culprits in corruption because they are infested with impatient civil servants, who do not fulfil the promises made in their job interviews, who are easily bribed, who suddenly turn a blind eye to the ethos and ethics of their respective jobs.

As this story shows, most teachers in the Department of Education have been disappointed and disillusioned at the manner with which their patience has been tampered - that it is common practice in this important department that teachers work for three to six months before they are paid their salaries. The author shows that this anomaly has come to be accepted as part of the induction process of new teachers. Malope demonstrates that Black people are as bad as their White counterparts in ill-treating and denigrating other Black people. He emphasizes the corruption and incompetence with which civil servants execute their duties. In this story, we read of how Morongwe's headmaster constantly encourages her to meticulously execute her duties, while he, on the other hand, does not process

Morongwe's forms for assumption of duty, but keeps them in his office. Malope uses this incident to stress his feeling that the introduction of Black people in the posts of administration has not improved the lot of Black people, but rather that these people have turned out to be even more bossy, corrupt and inefficient in the execution of their duties than the Whites. When Morongwe shows her concern regarding the non-arrival of her salary for three months she discovers that the circuit inspector is not aware of her appointment, that her principal has not submitted her forms and certificates to the circuit office, and that her forms and certificates have not reached the head office. Morongwe had been led to believe that the head office had received her forms and that her salary could arrive at any time. As a result she had remained quiet and loyal to her job with sheer innocence, unsuspecting of the corruption prevalent in education circles. However, as soon as she discovers the attitude of the Department of Education, she regrets her silence and wonders why the pride and integrity of Black people has suddenly become rotten. She expresses her concerns as follows:

O godile a utlwa go opelwa pina ya gore go batlega barutabana; gore morafe le setšhaba di ka se gatele pele kwa ntle go dikolo tse di fatlhosang batho; gore gompieno ba ikemetse ka bosi, ga go tlhole go le Basweu ba ba laolang: Mogokgo wa sekolo sa bona ke Montsho. Motlhatlhobi wa sedika ke Montsho. Diofisi tsa Lefapha di tlhankelwa ke Bantsho ka botlalo. Tona ya Lefapha ke Montsho. O kile a bo a bolelelwa gore le ena a ka tsoga e le tona ya Lefapha. Fela ga go ope ka monwana, yo o kileng a mo loma tsebe gore go thata jaana go duelwa mo Lefapheng la Thuto. (Malope, 1982:30)

(She grew up hearing that teachers are in great demand; that the nation cannot have progress without proper education in the schools; that now they are independent, and that Whites are no longer in control: The headmaster of their school is Black. The Circuit Education Officer is Black. The offices of the Department are administered by Blacks. The Minister of the Department is Black. She once was told that she could be the future Minister of the Department. But, there is no single person who has ever whispered to her that it is so difficult to receive a salary in the Department of Education.)

The situation is serious and it is worth pondering on the fact that when it is working time, clerks, at the head office of the Department of Education in the erstwhile Bophuthatswana, play cards, talk to one another, do not attend to queries, look at waiting people without concern, but are very quick to take tea-breaks and luncheons leaving poor souls waiting. Some sleep while people wait to be served; some have their lunch while people wait to be served. Although the Head Office is expected to solve people's problems, instead it has proven to be a place of horrible incidents of corruption. There is widespread feeling, highlighted in this story, that the administration of the Department of Education is, at best, the worst kind of evil from which the ordinary teacher can expect little in the way of sympathetic treatment, unless he/she has access to or knows someone at Head Office. Morongwe's hopes for a better life in the teaching profession are easily frustrated by her principal and circuit inspector; and, at the Head Office, she resigns herself to an acceptance of a situation in which she is expected to surrender to sexual harassment before she can be guaranteed help. When Modisaotsile (Morongwe's attendant at head office) sees Morongwe looking for help, he quickly finds reasons to chase out other help-seekers so that he can take his time with Morongwe. Morongwe agrees to Modisaotsile's proposal for love only to procure the help she so desperately needs, knowing full well that she does not love him. Modisaotsile even makes lofty promises to Morongwe:

"Ga ke ye go baakanya dituelo tsa gago fela. Ke ya go go dira mogokgo ntswa o le morutabana. Ke ya go dira gore madi a gago a tla, a bo a feteleditswe go feta a a go tshwanetseng gararo. O tla amogela mogolo wa kgwedi o o lekanang le wa mogokgo go fitlhela bofelong jwa ngwaga".  
(Malope, 1982:36)

(I am not only going to prepare your payments; I am going to make you a principal even though you are an assistant teacher. I am going to ensure that when you receive your salary, you earn thrice your normal salary. You will receive a salary equal to that of a principal until the end of the year.)

This paragraph is the epitome of the corruption that is rife in this important department. Morongwe, with her compliance to sexual harassment, is promised not only good service, but also an inflated increment - she is going to be made a principal even though she is an ordinary assistant teacher, and her salary is going to be tripled.

Another aspect relating to social problems concerns apartheid, which is racial discrimination that respects the rights of the so-called superior White race while denying any rights to the supposedly inferior Black and Coloured races (Balogun, 1991). In Shole's (1985) short story, *Taafite le Jonathane*, Charlie, a Black traffic-officer, loses his job for quarelling and involving a White person in a car accident. This story reveals that Gerrie, a White person, tries to beat a speed trap on seeing that it is supervised by a Black traffic-officer. Thus, Charlie chases after him and involves him in an accident. Although Charlie is a person of authority in his job and in this situation and Gerrie is guilty of contravening traffic rules, Charlie observes a subordinate role in dealing with the problem. This story also makes it obvious that as a supposedly superior person, Gerrie makes Charlie aware of his inferior social status regardless of his job description. Gerrie shouts at Charlie as if Charlie is in the wrong and even calls him a kaffir. He is so insulting that Charlie even recalls the words of his father when Charlie left his home village, Moshana, for Pretoria:

"Monna, legae la gago kana o itse gore ke Moshana. Ga o na le lengwe gape. Kwa o yang teng koo, o ya go nna lelata fela. E se ke ya re o tsena ko Pitoria, wa thula makgoa. O tsamae o ba dumedisa." A itse gore masego a gagwe a fedile fa e le ka tiro ya sekgoa. A ka mpe a ya go ithutela borutabana. (Shole, 1985:35)

(Man, you should know that your home is at Moshana. You do not have any other. Where you are going, you are only going to be a servant. On your arrival in Pretoria, you should not stumble against Whites. You should give way to them and greet them, we have been greeting them up to this age.)

In this story, Shole deals with two political and unnatural states of mind, namely apartheid

and homosexuality across the colour line. These states of mind are revealed through three characters, namely Charlie, Gerrie and Paula. Charlie's behavioural attitudes reveal the world of a Motswana working within the structures of an apartheid-conceived state. Charlie feels uneasy and confused over meeting a White person in an accident. This reflects on the social problems of interaction within the South African context. Gerrie's arrogance, pride and stubborn refusal to admit his guilt is sufficient proof of the false philosophy of White supremacy and Black inferiority. However, when he later pleads with Charlie to become his friend, and visit him regularly, we witness a change of heart that shows the present transition from an apartheid-conceived state to one of mutual acceptance and democracy. This human acceptance is shown by Gerrie when he no longer sees Charlie as a "kaffir", but a "lover". Gerrie's attempt to involve Charlie in a homosexual relationship across the colour line infuriates his wife, Paula. Although Paula abhors the relationship purely on racial grounds, Gerrie's heart and soul are committed. Gerrie chooses to be a homosexual on the grounds that Paula does not give him the love for which he yearns, but Paula hates it as an inhuman practice. Shole here tries to clarify that homosexuality is wilfully embraced for selfish reasons, that homosexuality is not an innate tendency, but that it is acquired. When the police catch Gerrie and Charlie in the act of fondling and arrest them, they (the police) highlight how illegal and sinful homosexuality is. As explained in Leviticus Chapter 18 verse 22: "One shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination". Therefore, the author makes it clear that it would be a mistake to argue that the society should regard homosexual acts as normal.

Tswana short stories deal not only with the problems of racial discrimination and homosexual relationships, they also explore themes on marital problems. Magoleng's short stories reflect the problems of married life and the bitterness with which married couples harbour grievances and keep secrets from each other. On the other hand, these stories also show the problem of married couples who try to earn their children's love and trust by pampering them with material gifts; problems of conceiving a child outside marriage; and problems of being married with an illegitimate child. In Maogleng's (1985)



*Ga ke mmolai wa gagwe*, Bogadi marries Eweditse, but keeps the existence of her illegitimate child a secret. Eweditse discovers this on his own and resolves Bogadi's dilemma by requesting her to bring Tlhobogang, a child she bore with Molatlhwa premaritally, home to come and live with them. Bogadi then tries to earn Tlhobogang's love and trust by showering him with expensive material gifts. Bogadi buys the motor-bike for Tlhobogang, which eventually causes his accidental death. The death of Tlhobogang hurts and angers Eweditse who uncompromisingly shows his indignation and disappointment at Bogadi's pampering. Notwithstanding this fact, Bogadi continues to pamper their daughter, much to the chagrin of Eweditse. Eweditse constantly refers Bogadi to the death of Tlhobogang and often reminds her that she should not repeat her mistakes with Molekwa, their daughter. Bogadi becomes hurt and angry with Eweditse for calling her a murderer, so she attempts to commit suicide by jumping into a nearby dam. She is, however, saved by her cousin, Moruanyi.

The question of keeping secrets from others is still discernible in Magoleng's (1985) *Lekunutu la pelo*. Magoleng shows the bitterness which often results from keeping secrets from a partner and presents various progressive steps through which one can solve ones inner problems and miseries. In this story we read about how Lenna is disheartened by her lover's silence regarding his intention to marry. Lenna then agrees to Pro's proposal for a date knowing full well that she loves Maadimo. After a terrible quarrel with Maadimo over her relationship with Pro, Maadimo in utter indignation, rides his motor-bike at high speed and meets his death in an accident. Lenna becomes guilt-ridden and holds herself responsible for the death of Maadimo. However, she holds the secret close to her heart and does not divulge it to anyone. On the other hand, we read of another character, Mmabantsi, who also blame herself for her husband's accident and fears for his death. However, Mmabantsi lessens the heaviness of her grief by confessing the secret of her worries and troubles and the reasons for holding herself responsible. People console Mmabantsi that she ultimately accepts her husband's accident as a natural phenomenon that could have happened to anyone. Lenna, through Mmabantsi's example, also realises

that she need not carry a secret burden of problems undivulged, that she should share her problems and life experiences with other people. This short story makes it obvious that bottling up ones emotions leaves one miserable, anti-social and unhappy; that problems should be verbalised, so that they can be known, weighed and resolved.

Motlhake (Magoleng & Motlhake, 1985) is another short story writer who highlights the intriguing problems of married life. It is obvious that he does not exclude himself from these experiences, but that they are universal. Motlhake uses love and marriage as the basis to highlight the problems of partners. In the story *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng*, Motlhake (Magoleng & Motlhake, 1985) treats the problem of marrying a haughty and educated woman. He feels that having a proud and boastful wife, whose social standing and earnings are higher than those of her husband; who loves to gain power over her husband, with or without witchcraft; who usually has no respect for her marriage; and in most cases sees no wrong in divorcing and living a life of her own, is indicative of a marriage based on material rather than sentimental motives; so that when the husband becomes bankrupt the love of the wife stops abruptly. The author also highlights the problems that men encounter with mothers-in-law who teach their daughters to bewitch their husbands into being submissive men who deny their wives nothing they desire. The story shows that women are tired of being oppressed or being subordinates, that they would love to gain sovereignty over men, hopefully in order to be the heads of families. In this story, we read of women destroying their marriages. Sebolai is a nurse and earns more than her husband. Her husband, Mmolawa, suddenly loses his job and the little money he brings home is not received with the respect it deserves. Sebolai despises, ill-treats and denies her husband love, even demeaning him in conversation with her mother, who advises Sebolai to murder her husband, Mmolawa. Sebolai accepts her mother's advice and Mmolawa is burnt to death in the house.

Chikane (1987) in her short story *Sego sa metsi* shows the animosity and inhumanity with which newly-wed women are introduced into their husbands' communities. Denied the usual freedom of association and sisterly love, and deprived of pride and the basic access

to her husband, the new bride soon discovers the difficulties of adapting to and associating with unfriendly in-laws. In this short story a character, Mothusi, puts his wife, Naomi in his family, but by being devoted to Naomi and also completely loyal to his family, he becomes torn between serving two masters. The story also shows the hurt and disappointment Naomi feels when the delicious food she prepares is only nibbled at and left. She is only consoled by her husband who is quick to praise and recommend the tastiness of the food. The relationship between Naomi and her husband's family is one of cat and mouse. Everyone in the family has suddenly learnt to disapprove and be aware of Naomi's inadequacies. Even her mother-in-law has the audacity to tell Naomi's husband that he should give her money without negotiating with Naomi. The following extrapolation summarises the manner in which daughters-in-law are received and perceived within the husband's community:

"Go bua nnete, re lapile ke Naomi. Go fitlha ga gagwe fa, go re tšhonisitse. A o go tshereantse gore ka nako tsotlhe o nne o mo rerise fa madi a tshwanetse go tswa? A ga ke mmaago? A ga ke a go godisa ka madi a kwa dikhitšhining ka go dira motho? Tlisa madinyana ao! go seng jalo Naominyana yoo o tla re itse".

.....  
"Heela! Nnana, a o lelela madi a ga abuti? Kajeno o tla ntshiwa o rata kana o sa rate. Go sa nneng jalo o tla tswa fa 'tlhako di le seatleng, rona re sale re a rutha o boetse kwa gaeno. ... Re lapile ka wena. Re tla go tlhorontsha gore o sale o le maratswana". (Chikane, 1987:53-54)

(To tell the truth, we are tired of Naomi. Her arrival here has impoverished us. Has she stupified you that you should always negotiate with her whenever money has to be given out? Am I not your mother? Have I not brought you up with "kitchen money" until you are now fully grown? Bring that money! Or else, that Naomi will know us better.

.....  
Hey! Baby, are you crying over my brother's money? Today you will move out, like it or not. Or else you will walk out barefooted, and we shall stay and use up all of it in your absence. We are tired of you. We shall ill-treat you until you become skinny.)

The short story writer here makes it obvious that daughters-in-law are often received with much negativity in the husband's community, particularly in situations where the husband's sisters have not been married and thus live with their mother at home. The other point Chikane makes is that the husband often finds himself in a dilemma: having to be true and loving to his wife, and having to remain obedient, loving and loyal to his sisters and mother. The need to put an end to wife abuse or the abuse of daughters-in-law is made evident in Bogatsu's (1995a) story *Makukunopu*, which shows that wife abuse is inhuman and that it destroys a wife's dignity and self-esteem. In this story, Makukunopu's daughter-in-law, Dimakatso, is made to work like a slave - she harnesses donkeys to collect dry wood and water for the family. Even during harvesting time she spends the whole day in the fields harvesting corn while her sisters-in-law stay at home drinking tea. However, at the end of the story, it is the inhuman Makukunopu who becomes enslaved and equally suffers the ill-treatment he doled out to Dimakatso while Dimakatso receives the freedom and happiness for which she has been yearning.

## 2.5 THE THEME OF RELIGION

Tswana short story writers treat the theme of religion with the objective of reinforcing Christian beliefs and practices in addition to revealing the authenticity and universality of Christianity. Moroke's (1968) short stories not only affirm the integrity of the Christian religion, but also emphasize the power that God has over earthly or worldly things. Moroke's (1968) short story, *Mhalatsi*, relates the protagonist's (Mhalatsi) concern about the spread of the Christian religion and his fear that the unrestrained spreading of this Western religion might diminish the chief's powers and lead to the demise of the Batswana culture. Mhalatsi calls for the support of other villagers to stem the tide of Christian expansion. His reason for not tolerating the Christian religion rests solely on the insubordination of the Christian converts. He is of the opinion that this religion threatens to undermine chieftainship. Before its arrival people obeyed their chiefs out of sheer goodwill and that there were no problems. As the story progresses, Mhalatsi complains

that Morapedi (who is the propagator of the Christian religion) has instilled a spirit of terrorism on people; that people are no longer obedient and loyal to their chief; and that people have been so converted that they only speak of the kingdom of heaven and have forgotten about "the kingdom of the chief". Mhalatsi's concern is to protect his chief's people from the corrupting influence of the missionaries. The main source of his concern is the inability of the missionaries and their priests to teach the converts to remain loyal to the authority of the chief. In this story, the converts refuse to uphold the traditional norms and values that force them to honour and respect their chief, but instead accept and submit their allegiance to Jesus Christ as their only Saviour and King. Not only does the Christian religion gain victory over tradition against all odds, even the followers of Mhalatsi realise the futility of their attempt to fight the spread of Christianity. Another character, Togamaano, in his advice concerning Mhalatsi's unsuccessful attempts to curb the spread of the Christian religion, says:

"Rra, fa o ka ya kwa go Morapedi le balatedi ba gagwe ka ntwala le polao, ba tla bofagana ba nne seopo se le sengwe. Fa batho ba le mo ditlalelong ba gopola Modimo wa bona. Mo nakong ya mathata ba boifa go dira bosula. Ba khubama ka mangole ba rapele Modimo gore o ba thuse. Phenyoya ya bona e mo thapelong." (Moroke, 1968: 63)

(Man, if you can go to Morapedi and his followers in a fighting mood, they are going to unite and be one. When the people are in trials and tribulations, they think of their God. In times of troubles and sorrow they do not want to do evil. They kneel down and pray to their God to help them. Their victory is in prayer.)

In spite of his obstinate determination to fight and crush the Christian religion, Mhalatsi experiences an unquenchable thirst during his expedition, a thirst that makes him lose consciousness. When he recovers consciousness, he discovers that he is in Morapedi's house. Mhalatsi then reads from the Bible some verses from Psalm 139; after which his name is changed from that of Mhalatsi to that of Mmoledi. Although this event tells in principle that Mhalatsi is converted to the Christian religion, its plausibility is highly

questionable in that there is no spiritual conviction which persuaded or forced him to convert to Christianity. This is in no way reminiscent of the mysteries found in the Bible, particularly the mystery of the conversion of Saul.

The revelation of the theme of religion is also found in Magoleng & Ntsime's (1972) short stories. Magoleng & Ntsime's short story *Letshwao la kolobetso*, is an attempt to eradicate the African beliefs in circumcision, ancestor worship and traditional magic from the lives of the Batswana. In spite of the contact that the Batswana have had with Christianity and Western education, they still have fears and superstitious beliefs connected with sorcery, circumcision and ancestor worship. This is clearly illustrated by the actions of Goitseman's parents, namely Segale and Sekanyana in *Letshwao la Kolobetso*. We have to bear in mind that the "expansion of Christianity in Africa has been associated with the expansion of western colonial power" (Kupa, 1980:1) and that the missionaries penetrated Africa accompanied by Western explorers and traders who also became involved in the gospel of God for selfish reasons. Therefore, it is not surprising that the missionaries were viewed with suspicion, particularly because they viewed the "indigenous culture as barbarous, demonic, inhuman and heathenish" (Ibid), an attitude which created many problems that dissatisfied African people.

With the introduction of the Christian religion into African culture, African children built relationships with people outside their family circles; a tendency which weakened parental authority over children. This is clearly illustrated in *Letshwao la kolobetso* which is contained in the Magoleng & Ntsime's (1972) anthology *Mpolelele dilo*. Here we experience a situation where two religions are in conflict, that is, the Christian religion and the traditional African religion which involves ancestor worship. Segale's daughter's (Goitseman) conversion to the Christian religion is not welcomed by her parents because of their staunch belief in African culture and religion. Goitseman easily accepts and identifies with the Christian religion and begins to despise her own traditional beliefs. Tension between Goitseman, Segale's daughter, and her parents arises when her parents

insist that they cannot allow her to be baptized, that they have their own gods and that they cannot pray to foreign gods such as Jesus Christ. Ntsime (Magoleng & Ntsime, 1972), through this story, reveals that where two religions come into contact, it is the more sophisticated and advanced religion that swiftly influences, changes and dominates the underdeveloped religion. In this story, it is the Western Christian religion that influences the traditional African religion, a religion which involves ancestor worship, circumcision schools and ritual performances. As a result, the younger generation, as represented by Goitsemanang, rejects its own traditional religion in favour of the Western Christian religion. This is the reason for Goitsemanang's father's complaints about her behaviour, particularly her lack of respect and the non-observance of the social taboos which are common among African parents. We do understand Segale's problem because for him, as a traditional Motswana the day to day life, directed by the morals and ethics of the society, brings people together, since a child is answerable to the parents, and to the whole society at large; he knows that a child grows up in relation to the codes of the society and whatever he/she does is a reflection of him/herself to the society and a reflection of the society in which he/she lives (Kezilahabi, 1988).

A major problem that is highlighted in this story concerns the inability and the unpreparedness of the White missionaries to reconcile the African religion with the Christian religion. When Goitsemanang haunts her parents by asking their permission to be baptized, confirmed and allowed to partake of holy communion in the Christian church, her parents look at her askance, and insist on her attending a circumcision school. The problem that her parents have is that Goitsemanang seems to be "culturally floating" and that she wants to sever her ties, and/or pull away from the "corporate morality, customs and traditional solidarity" (Kezilahabi, 1988:47). Her parents begin to abuse her both physically and emotionally thinking that she will give up, unaware that her heart grows as hard as stone each time she is punished and abused. She says the following in response to her suffering:

Fa ke swela tumelo ya nnete go molemo, gone Morena Jesu o ne a bogisiwa jalo a bo a bolawa ka ntlha ya molemo wa gagwe wa go pholosa badiradibe. (Magoleng & Ntsime, 1972:37)

(It is good to die for a true religion, for even Jesus Christ suffered and got killed for his goodness of saving heathens.)

Goitsemanang's obstinate determination to hold onto the Christian religion leads to her untimely death as she is fatally assaulted by her parents; who then bury her under a rocky outcrop. From the short story, we learn that Goitsemanang's ghost haunted her parents with the request for baptism. As Segale and Sekanyana wearied of Goitsemanang's frequent appearances, they resolved to divulge the secret concerning the murder and burial of Goitsemanang to Reverend Tshepe. Goitsemanang's spirit is ultimately saved and laid to rest according to the Christian religion: She is baptized, confirmed and given a share of the holy communion, and above all she is given a Christian burial. Obviously, Ntsime, while he is quite prepared to acknowledge Christian thinking and the wonders and pleasures of Christian life, also deems it necessary to discourage and criticise traditional religion with its practices. He associates everything that is traditional with heathenism, hard-heartedness and darkness; and everything Western is regarded as Godly, good, pure and worthy of eternal life.

Segale and Sekanyana, who are hardened traditionalists, are thrown into trials and tribulations being cursed as heathens, primitive and barbarous, simply because of their stance against Christian thinking. When Segale shows his stubbornness against the Christian influence, Ntsime twists the events to suit his propagandistic agenda that traditional religion cannot survive in the face of the Christian religion. Segale dies of an incurable disease, and his spirit wanders all over, from the gates of heaven to the gates of hell, but does not find refuge. In heaven he is told that he is not clean and christian enough to enter the kingdom of heaven, while in hell he is so frightened by the smouldering fire and the red hot forks, that he swiftly runs away. At this point Segale comes back to life and asks for baptism and forgiveness. He also asks his wife to surrender her life to Jesus



Christ. What we witness in this short story is a pure propagandist stance the aim of which is to present the Christian religion as an irrefutable truth and as the sole religion on earth. Even the events of this short story are hardly plausible and true to life. For example, after the reverend has conducted baptismal rites, the author writes that:

Fa moruti a digela tirelo ya phitlho, batho ba utlwa mongwe a opela "Gaufi le Morena", mo lefaufaung. Fa ba tsholetsa matlho ka kgakgamalo ba bona Goitsemanang a pagame leru le lesweu, le ene a apere bosweu a potilwe ke baengele ba basweu ba babedi ka fa le ka fa. Sefatlhego sa ga Goitsemanang se ne se benya kgalalelo e e neng e ba fatlha matlho, a rwele tlhoro e e phatsimang jaaka gouta. Fa pele ga leru go ne go eme sefapaano. Mo letlhakoreng la leru go ne go kwadilwe mafoko a, "Loso, lebolela la gago le kae. Botlhe ba ba fentseng ba tla tlhatlogela legodimong ka yona tsela e". (Magoleng & Ntsime, 1972: 40)

(As the reverend concluded his funeral service, people heard someone singing "Gaufi le Morena" (Nearer my God) in the sky. When they raised their eyes in disbelief they saw Goitsemanang, clad in white, riding a white cloud with two white angels on both sides. She was wearing a golden hat and her face was shining bright. Infront of the cloud stood a cross, and by the side of this cloud were these words, : "Death, where is your sting. All the victors shall rise to heaven the selfsame way".)

Ntsime's short story is clouded with mysteries and fantasies which are hardly plausible. His emphasis of the "white" colour as symbolising brightness, Godliness, good and pure, seems to suggest that everything black is evil and dark, barbarous and heathenish. What Ntsime seems to forget or close his eyes to, is that the Batswana communities had lived a religious life long before the coming of Christianity, and that they had conducted their communal and tribal affairs in a manner to them most orderly and civilized. As Setiloane, puts it, "the Batswana have been participating in "bomodimo" long before the missionaries. Beyond and around them - beyond, yet all-pervading the whole cosmos - is MODIMO, the great IT, the source of "bomodimo" (the numinous), the Protector and Sustainer of all.

Hence the Tswana phrase "motho ke Modimo" which means much more than the English "there is something of the divine in every man" (Setiloane, 1976:21). Ntsime's short story takes the Tswana-speaking people for heathens, as if they only came to know God with the coming of the missionaries; whereas the Tswana have been born with "bomodimo" and that in whatever dealings and actions they undertook and undertake they put Modimo (God) before everything.

## **2.6 RESUME**

Tswana short stories treat various themes which include tradition and culture, love and marriage, urban life, corruption and other social problems, and religion. These short stories shed light on the social conditions in South Africa, the peculiar experiences of discrimination, the pleasures and problems of love and marriage, as well as the hard road of the life hereafter. Although the Tswana short story writers are dedicated to encouraging Christian thinking among the Batswana, their criticism of African religion is not sufficiently convincing and authentic. It is devoid of the reconciliatory mood which is essential when two foreign cultures meet, an error that was also committed by the earlier missionaries. This is not surprising since these religious short story writers share a common ground with missionaries: Moroke was a priest in church and Ntsime a renowned church leader. Although the theme of religion is sufficiently treated, its purpose is to enforce Christian thinking and discourage Africanist religions and traditional cultures; and, though the superstitious belief of ancestor worship and circumcision still prevail, the religious short stories have succeeded in discouraging people from being extraordinarily entangled in traditional cultural practices.

From the survey of the theme of tradition and culture, it becomes obvious that Tswana short story writers not only criticise the negative aspects of African tradition and culture, but also give credit and recognise the positive aspects which need to be upheld and preserved. As Kezilahabi (1988) points out, the coming of Europeans to the African continent affected the social ways of life; and the traditional culture, which was the basis

of both economic and political stability, started weakening when the younger generation was assimilated and taken away from their traditional solidarity becoming vehicles to ferry the new cultural changes. In treating the theme of love and marriage, the short story writers concentrate heavily on the pleasures of love and marriage, the adulterous behaviours that go with it, the suffering and pain that is inflicted upon caring spouses by unfaithful lovers and marriage partners, and also the bitterness of divorce. The denial of personal freedom to women is another concern that is raised under the theme of love and marriage. I concur with Kezilahabi (1988) that this world has turned out to be a world in which men use their money and power to make love, women become victims because they need money to live; with the result that love for women nowadays is based on material gains while for men the whole world of love is based on sexual gratification.

Tswana short story writers are also greatly concerned with the theme of urban life, even though they tend to emphasize only the negative influence of the urban areas on its hapless and helpless "Jims come to Jo'burg". These urban short story writers treat the awful experiences of crime, parasitism, and the degradation that people have to contend with in urban areas. Some of the other experiences involve leading a nomadic type of life, being a hobo, being disappointed with the promise of a decent job, accidental death and surrendering oneself to the ills of prostitution. On the theme of corruption and other social problems, the short story writers reveal these issues as a malady that estranges relationships. Although Mafela (1993) maintains that corruption has been borrowed from Westerners, it is clear from the survey done that it now pervades all structures administered by Blacks. It is obvious from these stories that the introduction of Black people into the posts of administration has fuelled the intensity and sophistication of corruption in the workplace; and that these Black administrators do nothing to improve the lot of Black people, but turn out to be more bossy, corrupt and inefficient than their White counterparts. Another social problem that is treated by Tswana short story writers concerns apartheid, which is racial discrimination that respects the rights of Whites while denying any rights to the Black and Coloured races. In treating these political and unnatural states

of mind, the writers criticise the practice and its perpetrators. Other social problems that are treated with disgust include marital problems, the problem of not divulging one's secrets, the intriguing problems of association and the problem of living with unfriendly and uncompromising in-laws.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE ORGANISATION OF MATERIAL**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

The modern short story is not only short because it is narrated in a few words; it is also short because it has a well-defined plot that includes one complete action. Plot is a unified and purposeful organisation of raw and related events which show an element of causality in themselves. These events are organised in such a manner that they achieve a particular emotional and artistic objective. This objective cannot be achieved if the plot of a short story does not function as "a system of cogs, with each part working into the next part so that it is actually necessary to the movement of that part; and that the value of the whole will be lost if the parts are not consistent and adapted throughout" (Notestein, 1974:52). From Notestein's words we realise that she emphasizes elements of interrelatedness and causality in respect of the organisation of the events of a work of art, and this means that the events should show signs of sequential flow and of causality in order to achieve a single impression. This can only happen if the plot of a story "develops out of a conflict between the motivations driving its characters, with the main character striving for something and being opposed by others, by nature or by something within himself" (Barry, 1966:69). Therefore, plot is built out of a series of events during which the main character strives to achieve a particular objective and, as such, everything that happens arises from and leads to events before and after this particular objective. This brings to thought the idea that whatever happens in the short story is borne of necessity and purposefulness, and that displacements and omissions are things that would show the poorness of the unity of the short story. As Notestein (1974:77) puts it:

Every detail must have a reason for its existence and for its position. Each sentence, each description, each remark, must be chosen for its harmony with the single effect and fitted into the place where it counts for greatest strength.

It is also very important to remember that "if a short story is to achieve a single concentrated impression, then it must move swiftly, it cannot linger to unfold for the reader the little incidentals and wayward episodes, the dull patches and uneventful intervals" (Shaw, 1983:46). The short story can be swift and continuous only if its plot does not have digressions, unnecessary explanations and irrelevant details; only then can we say that its plot is unified, in which case it will show a continuous sequence of **exposition** (beginning), **development** (middle) and **resolution** (end). In this thesis we prefer to use the bolded terms instead of beginning, middle and end respectively, on the grounds that they precisely describe what happens within the short story. Since the short story deals with a problem situation, we shall prefer to speak of the phase in which the problem is exposed, the phase in which the problem is developed and the phase in which the problem is resolved, and not the beginning of the problem, the middle of the problem and the end of the problem.

### **3.1 THE STRUCTURE OF THE SHORT STORY**

#### **3.1.1 Exposition**

The first paragraph of a short story is usually the most significant because it essentially exposes the problem situation. As an exposition, it is that phase of the short story which is followed by anything else, but which is in itself not preceded by anything. This is the phase of the short story that introduces characters, setting, and supplies essential material which helps in the understanding of the short story. The exposition not only arouses interest in the reader and builds the emotional tone of the story, it also introduces the main character with his gripping problem or objective. This is done through the employment of different devices such as narrative, comment, dialogue and description, while exercising brevity, conciseness and economy of means. The exposition of the short story may be a sentence, a paragraph, two or three paragraphs, but it cannot be as "indefinite in length" (Notestein, 1974:110). The significance of the exposition lies in the fact that

it provides an essential impression to the reader because it is at this stage of the reading or of the short story that the mind of the reader is free and ready to receive whatever the writer tells or shows him. It is on the basis of this structural positioning that it deserves meticulous manipulation. Therefore, the exposition is a phase that cannot be neglected by both the writer and the reader, because it supplies not only the background information, but also arouses the reader's curiosity, hope and fear which have a significant effect on the movement of plot.

As stated above, modern short story writers often employ various techniques in exposing the conflicts of their short stories. Shole (1985) exposes the conflict of his short story *Taafite le Jonathane*, contained in the volume, *O foo, ke fano!*, with a philosophical commentary on the way in which enmity between women and friendship between men start. He writes as follows:

Botsala jwa banna bo kgona go thaega monate mo ntweng,  
mme fa e le basadi bona, modi wa bobaba jwa bona o mo  
botsaleng jwa bona. Mme motho yo o itseng kgang eno sentle  
ke tsala ya me Poroti. (Shole, 1985:33)

(While the root of men's friendship is in their fighting, the  
root of women's enmity is in their friendship. My friend,  
Poroti, knows this very well.)

Shole combines this philosophical commentary with narration and speech. It is through the philosophical commentary that the author alerts the reader to the ensuing conflict situation, and it is through narration and speech that he initiates the main events of the story. Although the opening paragraph of the story seems to be shorter, it essentially occupies the greater part of the story, for it reflects on the conflict between Charlie and Gerrie. Mokgoko (1983) does the same thing as Shole in his short story, *Molakalaka*, in his volume, *Mpepu, nnaka*. He begins it with a philosophical commentary on the different dispositions of people and the effect of such dispositions on other people. Then he singles out one particular character and makes him the main character of the prevailing

conflict. Having identified this character as a model for his philosophical comment, Mokgoko proceeds to give a description of this character:

E ne e le monna wa lerapo le lesesane. Kwa tlhogong moriri o le malepelepe. Mo pounameng e e fa godimo, ditedu di lepelela go ya kwa seledung. Botsiditsana jwa tshokologo eo bo ne bo mo apesitse jeresi e e mothalo mosetlha le mothalo o mohibidu mo dimpeng. O ne a le mahapha moo e leng gore fa a gata e ne e kete o na le tllhabegonyana ya go thetha. (Mokgoko, 1993:45)

(He was slenderly built. His hair was dreadlocked. The beard on the the upper lip was pointing to the chin. He wore a jersey with grey and red stripes because of the cold breeze. He walked lazily as if his legs were aching.)

Malebye (1995) on the other hand, begins his short story, *Batho ba bosigo*, which bears the title of his volume, *Batho ba bosigo*, with narration and description to provide background information concerning action, the place of events and characterisation. This is dealt with at length in the first two paragraphs of the exposition;

Kgosi ya motse wa Matlapeng e rile ke itlhaba ngololo, ya bo ya tshokane e eme ka dinao. E rile go tse, 'kgosi thotobolo', ena ya bo e kete o tla fetoga thaba. Dingongorego le ditlalelo di mo tlela letsatsi lengwe le lengwe. Bontsi e le tsa batho ba ba sa kgoneng go oba ntshi, ka ntlha ya go lala ba gatakiwa godimo. Ba bile ba tshaba go tsamaya mo mebileng ka tokologo bosigo. Batho ba bosigo ba itirile setlhabetsi mo motseng. .... Motho mongwe le mongwe yo o tlang ka selelo kwa go ena, o ipha nako ya go mo reetsa le go mo thusa ka moo a ka kgonang. (Malebye, 1995:16)

(The Chief of the village, Matlapeng, tried to shut his ears, but in the end he had to listen. He was almost a dumping ground for all the daily grievances and mishaps of his people. Many of these grievances related to the inability of the people to find sleep. They were even afraid of walking freely along the streets during the night. The sorcerers-by-night had turned themselves into thorns in the village. ... The Chief listened to everyone who came to him with a complaint, and he tried his best to address every problem.)



The first paragraph of this story identifies a gripping problem, the wrath of sorcerers-by-night, with which Chief Ratsebe had to contend, and it shows the action he took and the concern he had for his people. However, what we realise is that this is fixed action, or a pattern of regular behaviour that exemplifies the way of life of the people of the village of Matlapeng, as well as the Chief's way of treating the grievances, trials and tribulations of his people or his manner of doing things which, to some extent, helps establish his situation and his character. Therefore, the first paragraph describes action that is fixed, repetitive or constant before the story occurs, since afterwards, as a result of this repetitive action, something of a similar nature is triggered with unfortunate consequences. Although the second paragraph tends to tell us more about the location in which the events occur, that is, the village of Matlapeng, and more about the character of Chief Ratsebe, the information is relevant towards the development of the plot. Matlapeng is a rural village and it is thus not surprising to experience practices of witchcraft and sorcery. Action here is static and not dynamic. It is only in the third paragraph that the potential action relevant to the story is exposed, when the writer shows us the mysterious death of Ratholo's daughter. The mystery that surrounds this death is in accordance with the regular pattern of behaviour, experiences and grievances that had almost become typical of the action in Matlapeng. Not all modern Tswana short stories open this way. Some Tswana short stories open without any kind of fixed pattern of behaviour or background information.

Bogatsu (1995b) in his short story, *Magatwe*, contained in the volume, *Tšhwelapitseng*, begins his action with a recollection of past information and events. He plunges the reader into the conflict situation that confronts the people of Magong, Maologane, Nkogolwe and Tlhatlaganyane. He uses the exposition to inform us about the state of confusion and uneasiness that prevails in these areas; and to single out the character who stands above the others in the action of the story, namely Matlhamutlhamu. It is through this exposition that Bogatsu gives an epitome of the havoc wreaked by Matlhamutlhamu in these neighbouring villages. The writer explains that it has taken the inhabitants of these

villages a considerable period of time to realise that this menace of a person is not a man, but a woman. The author writes as follows:

Go tsere sebaka se seleele gore batho ba dumele gore ga se monna ke mosadi. Dipopego tsa gagwe di ne di sa itshupe fa e le mosadi. Seledu sa gagwe se ne se gomilwe ke ditedu e bile di itogile. O ne a se matlhamutlhamu jaaka leina la gagwe le kaya, fela tsona di ne di se ka di pongwa. Bohibidu jwa matlho a gagwe bo ne bo sa iphitlhe gore ke jwa motho a ka karalatsa yo mongwe kgotsa gona go mo dira tshwenyana e e se nang boa. Kgang ya gagwe e ne e itsiwe sentle ke batho ba kwa Nkogolwe le ba kwa Tlhatlaganyane le Maologane. (Bogatsu, 1995b:36)

(It took a long time for people to believe that it is not a man, but a woman. Her features did not resemble those of a woman. Her chin was bearded and some had turned themselves into dreadlocks. The beard was not thick, abundance but had never been shaven. Her red eyes were a clear indication that she could knock anyone out. Her deeds were known very well by the people of Nkogolwe and those of Tlhatlaganyane and Maologane)

What is immediately discernible in this exposition is that this short story is replete with suspense which emanates from the conflict situation described. The reader becomes anxious to discover how the inhabitants of these villages dealt with their problem and how the main character eluded the trap that these people laid for him, since it is alleged that it took the people a long time before they could determine this person's sexual status. Apart from introducing a gripping conflict, the writer uses another device which enhances suspense in the exposition, the device of withholding the name of the main character. The author simply uses pronouns "he" and "him", and qualifies "him" as having male features, but avoids committing himself to a name-giving trap. The device of withholding the name of the main character in the exposition is also discernible in Shole's (1985) *Kokwanyana, robala*. The writer prefers to call the short story's main character, "ngwana" (a child) and "mosetsana" (a girl). It is only in the developmental phase that the short story writers announce the names of the main characters. In *Magatwe*, the name of the main character,

Matlhamutlhamu, is disclosed in the second paragraph of the first page of the story; in *E romilwe ke Jehofa*, the name of the main character, Mfoloe, is given only in the middle of the second page of the story; while in *Kokwanyana, robala*, the name is provided only in the middle of the story.

Sometimes the exposition does not expose characters and a gripping problem situation, but becomes interesting in as much as it places the reader in a receptive mood in which he simply settles down and pays attention to what is narrated. Notice how Tsambo (cf: Malope, 1983) in *O dirile ka bomo*, taken from *Mantswe a a robong*, puts the reader in a receptive mood:

Letsatsi e ne e le gona le reng le ntsha nkwana ya lona e khibitswana mo gare ga pitso e e epilweng ke dithabana tsa Ntswanalemetsing, Kolosane, Matlhwane le Moremogolo. E ne e kete tshweu e ne e tlišitse makgaolakgang mo go se dithaba tse di letseng di se baka. Marang, barongwana ba lona ba ba sa itsemeletseng, a ne a setse a gasagasitse lenaga, dinonyane di lelela boatleng. .... Le fa tlhabo ya letsatsi e ne e itumeletswe ke botlhe, go ne go na le mowa o o neng o kgarakgatshega, o sa isise mong wa ona tlhogo moriting ..." (Malope, et al. 1983:49)

(The reddish rising sun showed itself between the hills of Ntswanale-metsing, Kolosane, Matlhwane and Moremogolo. It seemed as if the daylight had brought the final verdict to the fight between these hills. The rays, the unwavering messengers of the sun, had already spread their light through the veld, and the birds were singing melodiously. ...Even though everybody rejoiced at the rising sun, there was one soul that wandered and could not give its owner a rest .....)

Although this exposition is slow in tempo, it is mildly interesting in content. The first two sentences do not capture the reader's curiosity, but are simply informative. These sentences create a vivid picture that satisfies the reader so that he does not have to ask unnecessary questions. The reader only marvels at the beauty of the landscape, "the

reddish rising sun veiled by the hills, the sunrays, and the singing birds" (Malope, et al. 1983:49). Although there is no surprise or suspense in the first three sentences of the exposition, the fourth sentence captures the reader's interest. This sentence arouses a questioning attitude within the reader: Who was the unhappy person in such a jovial context? Why was he unhappy? What had brought happiness into the hearts of the other people? These are questions that arise from the fourth sentence. The writer does not answer them in the exposition so that the reader's curiosity should urge him to read the developmental phase to find relevant answers to these questions.

That the exposition plays a significant role in the structure of the short story is beyond doubt. In the short story, *Ramotlhaba*, in Naanyane's (1987) *Se time tsala*, two characters, Motshegwane and Sebetso meditate and converse about Ramotlhaba's reluctance to marry. Ramotlhaba shows a weakness regarding love for women. Thus, Sebetso asks his wife Motshegwane whether Ramotlhaba has not discussed his problem with her. Notice how Naanyane exposes the events of the short story, *Ramotlhaba*:

"Ga ke itse , Motshegwane, mogatsaka. Kana Ramotlhaba o godile fa a ntse jaana. Jaanong, mma, fa e le fa e kete mosimane o itshetse mmele ka metsi, sa gagwe e le dibuka fela go ya go ile, wena o bona kgang e jang? A kgotsa wena o setse a go lomile tsebe ka ga isagwe ya gagwe? Ke raya jaaka e kete makgarebe ga a re sepe mo go ena. Kgotsa ke wena o itidimaletseng fela o ntse o tshotse dikgang?" ga bua Sebetso go bonala gore o a ngongorega. (Naanyane, 1987:20)

("I don't know, Motshegwane, my wife. Ramotlhaba is an adult as he is. Now, my wife, where do you think the problem lies, for here he is, clumsy as always, with his daily reading of books? Or has he whispered something into your ears about his future? Because it seems girls do not have any impact on him? Or have you just been keeping quiet with the good news?" said Sebetso as he complained.)

From the above exposition we discover the concern of Ramotlhaba's parents and their wish to see him married. It is through this paragraph that the reader is introduced to

characters and to the conflict of the short story. Apart from this, the paragraph also captures the reader's concentration through the rhetorical questions that build the exposition.

What the exposition of the modern short story often does is, state the theme of the story right from the very first paragraph. This is often done by a brief description designed to establish the setting or mood, or sometimes by a dialogue, as we see in Motlhake's (1985) story, *Ka lenyalo ke bakile*, taken from the volume *Mokaragana*, which is about forced love and marriage which cannot last:

"Molekwa, morwaaka, ke a go utlwa, fela ga ke dumelane le lepe la mafoko a gago. Mosadi, fa o batla go nyala, o kwa Mmakau, kwa gaabo mmaago," Molebatsi a bua a lebile morwae mo matlhong. "Ao, rra! A jaanong ke latlhe ngwana ke mo tsetse?" "Ee, le fa ba ka ne ba le kae? A ke wena motho wa ntlha o tla bong o hularela bana?" (Magoleng & Motlhake, 1985:30)

("Molekwa, my son, I hear you, but I do not agree with any of your words at all. If you want to marry a woman, there is one at Mmakau, at your mother's village." Molebatsi said this looking deep into his son's eyes. "Oh, father! Should I leave a child of my blood?" "Yes, whatever number they might be? Would you be the first to cast away your children?")

It is certainly true that every successful short story must have a good exposition which shows all the essences, but the exposition of some modern Tswana short stories does not meet these standards. In their attempts to make dialogue work for them the Tswana short story writers use dialogue, which sometimes seems like an ordeal-by-the-fire even though it provides an exposition of the problematic situation. As Hills (1987) puts it, if information is to be imparted from one character to another, as we experience in the above excerpt, there has to be a reason for it, some request or demand on one character's part for an explanation from another. Bonheim (1982:115) is also of the opinion that speech gives

us "an opening *in medias res*, which on closer inspection turns out to be a gentle fraud, for stories almost always require exposition, for obvious reasons: We are plunged from reality into fiction, into a strange environment". Hills (1987) on the other hand maintains that dialogue or speech cannot really exist at the beginning of the story, but that it can certainly exist in the middle or toward the end of the story, in which case the reader may be interested in how Molebatsi and Molekwa come to meet and raise such information. This does not necessarily mean that it is compulsory for the short story writer to create an exposition which begins at the beginning. Although various scholars tend to disapprove of dialogue in the introductory paragraphs, the expositional paragraph above is direct, vigorous and insistent for it makes one listen. The first two sentences bring forth a standpoint: "Molekwa, my son, I hear you, but I in no way agree with your words. If you want to marry a woman, there is one at Mmakau, at your mother's village"; while the following sentence is a question designed to heighten the reader's anxiety regarding the situation of the main character: "Oh, father! Should I leave a child of my blood?". It is evident from the expositions of the short stories quoted that Tswana short story writers sometimes launch right in and reveal their conflicts, beginning as near the developmental phase as possible.

Another exposition which cannot be surpassed opens with these words:

Dipuo o ne a setse a mo kwaletse makwalo a le mararo go se na karabo e e tlang. O ne a setse a tla tswa manga a go ya go tlhola poso letsatsi le letsatsi ka tsholofelo e e sa boneng le fa e le la lesidi. "Dipuo o gopotse kae fa o ipaakanya jaana?" "Nkele o se ka wa tlhola o botsa, ntheye o re tsamaya sentle."

"Wa tla wa di gatelela gompiano. O intsha le mang?" "Ke ya kwa Matlosane." "A o bone gore o mo latelele?" Dipuo a se ka a araba. A nna a ikama moriri o o gadikilweng ka mafura a a sa buduseng tlhogo. Go butswa moriri fela! (Sikwane, 1987:8)

(Dipuo had already written him three letters without any reply. She checked her post daily with a hope that was never rewarded. "Dipuo, where are you headed with these preparations?" "Nkele, do not ask, just say, go well." "Today you are elegantly dressed. Who is taking you out?" "I am going to Klerksdorp." "Have you decided to follow him?" Dipuo did not reply. She continued combing her curled hair.)

The first sentence highlights the conflict that prevails between two characters; while the third sentence triggers one's listening senses. It is a question that cries for a valid reply. The next sentence is an indirect reply, and it presupposes known information for it ends with words which call for encouragement: "ntheye o re tsamaya sentle". Although this sentence relieves the reader's anxiety, in a sense, the following sentence arouses an inquisitive interest: "O intsha le mang?". The questioner knows that the friend is going out with someone, but feels that she, as a friend, has the right to know the name of her friend's date. However, when she continues to ask another question: "A o bone gore o mo latele?", the reader wonders why there's such an urgent interest in someone's comings and goings. The questioner in this regard expresses concern for her friend and wonders whether her friend is bold enough to visit a lover at his home. It is at this point of the exposition that we sense complicated incidents in the developmental phase. Conflict is brewing, the main character (Dipuo) is introduced and her activity makes her stand out above the other characters. Although Bogatsu's (1995) short story *Motseothata o peloethata* contained in the volume, *Dilo tsa ga mmanapo*, has an exposition that takes the form of action, both character and action are indicated as entering into the story. Notice how Bogatsu exposes the events of this story:

"Wena rraabo ka ditshotlo tse tsa gago! Ngwana a ka bo a tshaba legae a iphetola phage. Selo se, ke ngwana o sa ntse a gola. Tlhokomelo le itlhokomelo di sa ntse di le mo tseleng", ga bua mmaagwe Matlholadinama a fedisitswe pelo ke go kgariepetsa ga monna wa gagwe. "Motho o fitlhele a ijele ka magale e kete o omanya ngwana wa dikgora kgotsa letlaleanya. Yo ngwana ke wa me. O mpetsa po! mo phatleng", a wetsa komano ya gagwe jalo mmaagwe Matlholadinama. (Bogatsu, 1995a:39)

("Hey, you are so ridiculous! A child would even vanish and turn into a wild cat. This is a child, and he is still growing. Caring and self-discipline are still to be realised", said Matlholadinama's mother, almost impatient with her husband's reproaches. "You sometimes ridicule the child as if he were an illegitimate child. This is my child. He is definitely mine!" Matlholadinama ended her quarrel.)

This exposition immediately places the reader in a questioning attitude: Does Matlholadinama deserve to be ridiculed? Doesn't Matlholadinama's mother want her son to be advised? Why does she identify herself as the sole parent of her son? Is Matlholadinama his father's illegitimate son? These are some of the questions that arise from the exposition. However, the exposition does not provide any answers to any of the questions. As a result, the reader is trapped in suspense and is eager to read on in order to discover the truth. Matlholadinama does not seem to be industrious. His mother speaks for him, but his father is not prepared to keep his mouth shut. The development of the apparent conflict is sensed and the story begins. The main characters are introduced and the special anxiety of Matlholadinama's father to turn Matlholadinama into an industrious son singles him out as the most important of the three characters.

Although there are short stories with beautiful and successful expositions, there are also some short stories, the expositional phase of which does not link well with the phases of development and resolution respectively. For example, Malope (1982) in his short story *O nkutlwe* taken from the volume, *Mmualebe*, exposes certain facts about his characters, his setting, and the conflict situation, facts which in no way interrelate with the phase of development nor that of the resolution of the story. Though the facts are exposed directly through description, and though the writer does not hide behind dialogue, he falls short of relevant expositiveness. He writes as follows:

Batho ba a gakgamatsa ruri. Modimo o ba tlhodile ka dibopego tsa methalethale. Ke mang yo o neng a ka akanya gore Seraki a ka gola a be a nna lepodisi la segatlhamelamasisi? Mo dithakeng tsa gagwe ga go na le a le



mongwe ka monwana yo o neng a gopola gore e ka nna mosimane a tswang motsing thamo ya phala e hibitse. Ba ka go bolelela ba ba godileng nae kwa Mmamahutsana kwa, gore o ne a boifa lefifi le mogokolodi lebaibai. (Malope, 1982:40)

(People are so amazing. God has created them in different shapes and sizes. Who would think Seraki would grow up to be such a courageous and brave policeman? There is no one among his peers who would have thought he would grow up to be a man who would venture where the cowardly fear to tread. His peers can tell you that he was afraid of darkness and millipedes.)

It must be understood that this first paragraph has to have a purpose. However, what happens in this instance is that this paragraph provides the type of information which does not affect the course of the action of the story. Seraki is not a character to whom the events of the story have consequence; he is not affected in one way or the other by the events of the story and even the valour or bravery that we hear of in the above excerpt has little or no bearing or relevance to the action of this short story.

From the foregoing discussion, we can conclude that the exposition is structurally and strategically positioned to make first impressions on the reader; to arouse an interest that captures the reader's curiosity and to stimulate further reading. In our investigation of the Tswana short story, we have realised that the most important way of capturing reader-interest, is by putting the reader in a questioning attitude. However, these questions that arise in the reader's mind are often left unanswered and, as a result of this, the reader becomes curious and continues to read in order to find answers to these questions. The significance of the exposition, however, does not solely rest on providing suspense or capturing reader-interest, but it also rests on suggesting character, action and setting. However it should be kept in mind that expositions differ from one short story to another. They may be short or long, descriptive or dialogic, suggestive of conflict or character or merely place the reader in a receptive mood. On the other hand, the exposition may contain information that is irrelevant to the development of the action of the story.

### 3.1.2 Development

"Development" is the term that has a definite reference to the role of the middle of a piece of fiction. What is meant here with "development" is development of the situation presented by the exposition and development of conflict, tension, suspense or reader interest by a rising pattern of action (Hills, 1987). That is why the developmental phase is regarded as that phase which is preceded by something (exposition) and followed by the third thing (resolution). Once the writer has exposed the problematic situation involving the main character, he develops his action and suspense up to the resolution. The significance of this phase lies in the fact that it answers questions posed in the exposition and provides relevant material that validates the resolution. The phase of development encompasses within its domain components such as rising action, complication and climax. Cohen (1973:68) supports this view when he says that the phase of development includes that part of the story from the first event of the plot to the climax. In concurring with Cohen, I would like to emphasize that it is more appropriate to refer to "the middle" of the short story as a developmental phase because the pace of the movement of the story increases gradually in relation to the development or unfolding of events found in the exposition. Every event and each incident that is added in the development of the story exemplifies the conflict or tension that has already activated the preceding phase. It is during this phase that the story marches and its pace increases with the development of conflict, when characters become more involved and tense and when the opposing parties feel compelled to act. This is a phase that presents increasing difficulties encountered by the characters in their movements towards stability. This is supported by Cohen (1973:69) when he says that here the author indicates the development of his basic situation, suggests any important conflicts and develops his characters.

In Shole's (1985) *E romilwe ke Jehofa*, the action of the story begins to unfold when the main character, Mfoloe, wonders why his kidnappers have not drugged him. Mfoloe is

fastened to a tree trunk in preparation for his body being mutilated. From this moment we experience the most important events. This is the point that clearly illustrates that Shole has organised his events in an ascending order of importance, which culminates in the point of no return. What greatly concerns the hero of the story, Mfoloe, is his awareness that he cannot escape, as well as the thought of the loss of his body parts and the thought of his imminent death. He imagines all the sins he has committed, and wonders whether the three men have not committed more grievous sins than he. The author leaves the reader here and narrates the event surrounding the experience of the Molobane's children. He describes how Nnyana flees in terror from whatever she has seen. It is at this point that the moment of complication gains momentum when some of the occurrences make the conflict difficult to resolve. The author cannot afford to employ the luxuries of fiction, such as comic relief and digression. Suspense, in this regard, centres on whether Nnyana has been frightened by the snake or by the sight of a man fastened to a tree trunk. When she is asked what she has seen, she just points in the direction from which she has come.

The author does not answer the question we ask ourselves, but leaves us to trace the flow of events. He then flashes back to the three men and narrates on their drunkenness and individual innocence. Lekabe is sent to collect a plastic container, Rambeo is sent to call Lekabe, and Selepe wonders why they do not arrive. The reader becomes anxious to know the reasons for their delay and their silence. He tells us nothing about this incident but leaves us in suspense as he simply describes how Mfoloe groans and sniffs himself as he touches every part of his body to verify its wholeness. And, as the snake slithers down Mfoloe's shoulder, Shole can only say:

A palelwa ke go dira sepe, le go goa tota. Mmele wa repa.  
Metsi a fologa ka go ithebola. Mofufutso wa tswenatswena.  
... Selalome sa fologa ka iketlo sa bo sa ya go tshetha fa  
dinaong. A kgaoga gape. (Shole, 1985:51-52)

(He could not do anything, let alone raising a shout. His body was lame. Water flowed down freely. Sweat oozed out. The monster slithered down slowly until it fell at his feet. He became lame again.)

What we observe from the above description is that, in order to make their stories effective and more attractive, short story writers often utilise suspense to hold the reader's interest during the progression of events.

In his story, Shole uses one of the techniques of suspense, namely, tension and anticipation, throughout the story to hold the reader's interest. The tension caused by the imminent mutilation of Mfoloe's body is stretched taut and the reader anxiously awaits the act to spring loose. Through the above excerpt, the reader is made aware of Mfoloe's dangerous situation and his impending demise and at the same time suspense is created. However, for the reader, it is not the suspense of the uncertainty concerning Mfoloe's mutilation, since the reader realises that there can be no escape, except through a miracle. What makes the reader wonder is whether or not Mfoloe can be rescued and if so, how would it be carried out. What pricks the reader's emotions and keeps him reading on is wondering when Mfoloe will be mutilated, how he will be mutilated and what the three men will do with his body. As the story develops, we wait in anticipation of what will happen next, knowing what might happen, but not knowing when and how it will happen. In developing the story, the author uses tension in order to sustain the reader's interest. The flow of the narration, however, grips the reader because of constant referrals to the main character's pain and emotions such as fright and despair. When the snake slithers down his feet, he realises the complete danger with which he is faced. The closeness of the three men and the snake promise him nothing but certain death. This is the moment that brings a major change in the whole story, where the main character, Mfoloe, is brought to the most critical phase in his life.

The events of *Metsotso ya dikgobalo* under the penmanship of Shole (1985) are also logically linked together not only in accordance with the law of causality, but also on the basis of rising tension and anticipation. The writer maintains tension and anticipation in this story by concentrating the events on a single main character and on a single place. He also uses Kedi's fear of being dismissed as a student-nurse, as a central controlling idea

that links all the events together. It is this fear in particular that increases the pace or the tempo of the events of the short story. Kedi's boyfriend, Sebata, drives at high speed so that Kedi should not arrive late at the hostel and when the car has a puncture, Sebata drives on to be on time. Shole utilises time indicators to intensify the tension that prevails in the story. He narrates that Kedi and Sebata arrived in the vicinity of the Ga-Rankuwa Hospital with forty minutes remaining before the gates could be locked; that as they are busy trying to lift the car to replace the punctured wheel, the available minutes lessen to thirty. Sebata goes to Tebele to borrow a jack, and on his arrival only twenty minutes remain before locking time. Kedi takes a short nap and wakes up with five minutes remaining. Realising that she only has a few minutes to be inside her room, she leaves Sebata's car unattended and jumps into the hospital yard at only three minutes before ten o' clock. With the use of these time indicators, the writer captures the reader's interest and concentration. The reader also experiences tense suspense and anticipates a safe arrival for Kedi. The short period of time that Shole uses functions as a literary shorthand for the writer, and with each passing minute that the writer mentions, tension and anticipation is created.

Tswana short story writers employ varying techniques to add an air of interest to their stories. The other technique of suspense that short story writers use is one of mystery and curiosity. In Malebye's (1995) *Batho ba bosigo*, taken from the volume, **Batho ba bosigo**, the writer deliberately confuses the reader in order to keep him reading on until the end. However, this is done at too great an expense because the main idea of the story is too closely concealed to be easily understood. When Ndenjero gives Ratholo some charms and orders him to leave immediately, the reader wonders whether or not Ndenjero is gifted and good at traditional medicine and whether or not he can do anything to bring his daughter back to life. However, ironically, Ndenjero promises that he will follow him with some more charms which will resurrect his daughter. Ratholo wonders whether Ndenjero is simply trying to be rid of him; and why Ndenjero emphasizes that they should continue with the burial of his daughter. Ratholo's mind is filled with a variety of questions which

enhance suspense in the short story: How can he agree to the burial of my (Ratholo) daughter, and in the same breath allege that she is not dead? Is he not playing monkey tricks with me (Ratholo)? These are some of the questions which intensify the mystery and tension that pervade the story. The narrator tells us that Ratholo's daughter is buried on a Friday and, as usual, people went back to the home of the bereaved to wash their hands and eat 'mogoga'. When the people leave the cemetery for home, Ratholo wonders whether Ndenjero will arrive. Suspense here centres on Ratholo's ignorance of Ndenjero's arrival. The events progress towards a climax when Ndenjero and Ratholo see five women around Ratholo's daughter's grave with the daughter on top of the grave. Ndenjero performs a ritual that brings Ratholo's daughter back to life. The events ultimately reach a climax when Chief Ratsebe requests Ndenjero to sniff out all witches and wizards in his village. After having sniffed out hundreds of witches, Ndenjero is paid six cows while the sorcerers are banished from the village.

While it is a fact that the short story uses suspense to grip the reader's interest and concentration, it is also true that every part of the story furthers the progression toward a predetermined resolution and between the crises of the story itself there is no weakening of interest and suspense (Notestein, 1974:83). In developing the events that build up *Mokaragana, ngwanaka*, Magoleng (Magoleng & Motlhake, 1985) reveals different crises: The first crisis is Diile's rejection of constructive advice from Barati in favour of destructive advices from Sadinyana. The next crisis is experienced when Diile's marriage crumbles, and her husband, Disang, contracts a terrible illness which kills him. The third crisis is Diile's contraction of an incurable disease (boswagadi) that leaves her spiritually poor; and in the fourth crisis, all her bosom friends, including her favourite lover Papa Solly, reject and abandon her. What we experience here is a crescendo or a gradual progression of events toward the climax. The climax is, obviously, Diile's humble regret, submission and preparation for death. There is a natural emotional progression between the crises and the story moves swiftly, interestingly and directly toward the resolution without boring the reader with dull patches.

It is interesting to note that various devices of suspense help the short story writer to keep the reader's interest in the palm of his hand. Another device of suspense which I found fascinating and enriching in short story writing, is the device of silence. Modern short story writers seem to adopt a view that they can benefit more from what they refrain from sharing with the reader. Most of them retreat at significant moments during the narration and leave certain things unsaid, unexplained and unwritten, for the reader to deduce, to infer and to substitute (Sebate, 1994:40). Sarah Orne Jewett (in Shaw, 1983:264) says, "if you bring silence into the short story, you bring something to the reading of a story that the story would go lame without; but it is these unwritable things that the story holds in its heart, if it has any, that make the true soul of the story and these must be understood". Silence is of paramount importance in as much as it helps the story achieve a rich effect. This silence might be the silence of characters, the silence of the author or the wordless understanding that passes between the characters. Silence can be ambiguous and bring forth different interpretations of the character's silence. Therefore, we have to accept that these silences exist and mean something. Whenever a character or an author does not speak, he is silent, but this does not mean that all the instances of silence are significant. This section examines only those instances or occasions when a character's or an author's silence has a specific meaning or effect on the reader.

Magoleng's (1974) ability to use silence in the short story *Ga le a ka la tswa* which is contained in the volume, *Ke a go bolelela*, allows him to succeed in keeping the reader in suspense. When Kesentseng walks down to Mmapoto's shebeen after he has received his dog, he is not aware that he will receive a rebuff and a fatal threat from Gaolekwe. We then ask ourselves what motivates the author to say "Kana go fedile" ( By the way it's over). This misleads us into thinking that everything is in order and this is the reason for our surprise when the author introduces the imminent conflict between Gaolekwe and Kesentseng. We do not expect Gaolekwe to harbour grievances against Kesentseng as his money is returned. Kesentseng has apparently forgotten everything connected with the dog and is unaware of the imminent disaster. At a shebeen, Gaolekwe returns

Kesentseng's one rand in public and tells him that he is doomed to die before the next dawn. However, Gaolekwe remains silent on how he will ensure that Kesentseng dies before the next dawn. The reader wonders whether Gaolekwe, as he is a witchdoctor, will bewitch Kesentseng or whether he will prepare lightning to strike him to death. Gaolekwe's words shock Kesentseng to such an extent that he tells his parents. The events reach a climax when Kesentseng, still frightened by Gaolekwe's words, walks out of his parents' house as lightning strikes. On hearing screaming noises from Kesentseng's hut, Kesentseng's father fumbles into the dark hut and strangles the "witch". Magoleng relates this event in exclamatory sentences as follows:

Moloi wa go swa , ra ka ra mo ikhutsa! Go mo tshwara,  
monnamogolo ... a itoma sesino. "Mmaagwe, tshuba  
mokgwaro! Gompieno gona moloi ke mo tshwere! ...  
Kesentseng o kae a thuse? Moloi o a tšhwamola!" Mosadi a  
tshuba lobone. ... Morwadi le mmaagwe ba retelelwa ke go  
itshwara. (Magoleng, 1974:7)

(A witch worthy of death that we may rest. Grabbing him, the old man licked his lips as he clenched his teeth. "My wife, give us some light! Today I have caught a witch! Where is Kesentseng that he may help? The witch wriggles away!" The wife lights a lamp. Mother and daughter cannot hold back their tears.)

From this extrapolation, the author frequently refers to a "witch" and describes how Kesentseng's father strangles this "witch". However, he remains silent about who this "witch" is and about Kesentseng's whereabouts in the hut in order to create the possibility of multiple inferences or deductions. The reader keeps guessing whether the "witch" referred to here is Gaolekwe or Kesentseng. Not only does the reader feel the author's silence, but he is also made to feel Kesentseng's silence. The author remains frustratingly but purposefully silent on this crucial matter and allows Kesentseng to remain silent. When Kesentseng's father calls for Kesentseng's help, the reader becomes more anxious about Kesentseng's whereabouts. The author knows the reality of his silence, but refuses to share this reality with the reader. His use of silence suggests that he wants to shock the



reader into making judgements. When Kesentseng's mother lights a lamp, Kesentseng's father, mother and sister cannot hold back their emotions. Kesentseng's father says:

Robala ... ngwanaka. Ga re o sa le o bolela ... Bona fela jaaka  
ngwanake a didimetse, mmele fa fatshe o digaletse.  
(Magoleng, 1974:9)

(Sleep ... my child. You have actually foretold ... Just see  
how still my child is, the body on the ground is dumb.)

The short story closes with the author telling us that Kesentseng was buried the following day. Apart from this, the author remains silent about the incident that night. The reader is not directly told who actually killed Kesentseng, whether he has been killed by "lightning" prepared by Gaolekwe or, ironic as it might be, what role his father may have played in his death. The reader can only infer that it is Kesentseng who was mistaken for a "witch", and that it is not Gaolekwe but Kesentseng's father who killed Kesentseng. The point we note here, is that the reader can create for himself whichever ending he desires, and his ending will tell us more about his interpretation than about Magoleng's short story. Magoleng has successfully experimented with the technique of having the narrator refrain from telling or portraying for the reader important matters which he would normally expect to be told or portrayed. While this short story has given some readers great pleasure, it has bothered other readers.

Although Shole (1985) in his *Kokwanyana, robala*, uses the technique of having the narrator refrain from telling the reader everything, his story does not make the reader scratch his head for very long. The only device of suspense that is stretched taut concerns silence, the silence of both the writer and the character, Auma. The events of this short story begin to unfold when Auma steals a large packet of chicken, squeezes it into her dress and fastens it. Mmalekorwana, the shopkeeper, mistakes Auma's bulging stomach for pregnancy, and when she sees her walk rigidly with water flowing from her thighs, she immediately calls for an ambulance. Mmalekorwana's human eye is deceived by Auma's

body into believing that she is pregnant. She is not aware that Auma's body bulges from the large packet of chicken stolen from her shop. Auma is frightened that if it is discovered that she has stolen a large packet of chicken she will lose a year of study by being imprisoned. Therefore, she keeps silent when she is mistaken for being pregnant. The author uses Mmalekorwana's confusion and deception to create suspense. The author's tactfulness in the manipulation of his events consists of respect for silences and unstated feelings (Sebate, 1992:61). Sometimes it is Auma's silence or the author's silence; and sometimes it is the wordless mutual understanding that passes between the other characters. When Mmalekorwana sees Auma's rigid movement and sees the water that flows from Auma's thighs, she organises a jacket to throw over Auma's body. Auma is then cut off from the unnerving eyes of passers-by and is wrapped in solitary guilt and silence. She keeps silent over her assumed pregnancy, while the other characters keep guessing at her body. The truth is hidden, and Mmalekorwana's lack of awareness is a sign of the vast innocence with which her shop welcomed Auma. Auma's friends remain silent and watch the drama with interest because they are familiar with the facts.

The reader endures Auma's silence and awaits that significant moment when Auma will reveal the secret concerning her pregnancy. It is only towards the end of the story that Auma breaks her silence when she asks the ambulance attendants to wait as she lifts her dress. The author describes this event as follows:

Fa mosese o tla go fenoga, sengwe sa tšhelemela le mpa sa bo  
sa tla go re poo! fa fatshe! Heela! Paki fela e e mpetleke ya  
sephuthelo sa dinama tsa dikoko sa lebenkele la ga  
Mmalekorwana. Bathong! Ngwanyana a ne a rile o  
leka go jaka sešabo! (Shole, 1985:116)

(When she lifted her dress, something slithered down and fell  
with a thump on the ground. Heavens! People, a large packet  
of chicken from Mmalekorwana's shop. The poor girl had  
tried to find relish!)

The author's ability to use silence meaningfully is shown by the contrasting events he has developed. We realise that (i) Auma carries a large packet of chicken from Mmalekorwana's shop; Mmalekorwana thinks Auma is pregnant; (ii) The water that melts from the chicken flows down Auma's thighs; Mmalekorwana mistakes it for the water associated with childbirth; (iii) Auma is taken to prison; Mmalekorwana thinks Auma is taken to hospital.

Malope is another short story writer who enhances suspense in his stories through the device of silence. Although he does not stretch it to the same extent as Shole, he manipulates it so meticulously that the reader laughs at the follies that some characters reveal to the other characters. The title of Malope's (1982) short story, *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng*, in itself tells the reader that someone is doing some silly deeds in secret, but that there are silent people watching with interest. In this story, Makeketa lives with his wife in Mabopane and has a mistress in Zone 16, GaRankuwa. His aunt in GaMosetlha dies, and he has to go there to assist with the funeral arrangements. In this death he sees an opportunity to date his mistress. Therefore, he tells his wife, Malešwane, that he will return on Friday to fetch her to attend the funeral. When Makeketa does not arrive home, Malešwane and her relatives decide to use public transport to ferry them to GaMosetlha. Malešwane, on arrival, asks her uncle, Ditsele, about Makeketa's whereabouts. Uncle Ditsele, unaware that Makeketa has not reached home, tells Malešwane that Makeketa left on Friday to fetch them to attend the funeral. Malešwane realises that her husband has lied to her; but, she remains silent and does not become emotional and hysterical. Even when she does not find him home on their return, she silently looks at her relatives in dismay. The author says,

"...a tsidifala mokwatla pele a tshologa mofufutso. ...Ba tsena mo tlung ka setu jaaka batho ba tsena mo phaposing ya molwetse wa ditsebe". (Malope, 1982:23)

(...she got cold shivers down her spine, before she could perspire. ... They went into the house silent as patients suffering from an ear disease.)

Malešwane chooses to love Makeketa and be silent. Her only fears are concerning his whereabouts, whether from accidents or cheating. Makeketa arrives, in good health, minutes after his wife's arrival. Malešwane looks at him with a silence that suggests anger, hopelessness and bitterness. The presence of other silent characters in the house distracts and disrupts the excuse Makeketa has been rehearsing on his way home. He, therefore, abruptly and tactlessly relates how he, was stuck in mud and slept in the car and then, the following morning, decided not to come and fetch Malešwane to attend their aunt's funeral as he was late. Note what the author says through Makeketa in this regard:

A ba tlhalosetsa jaaka a ne a rile a bowa kwa GaMosetlha ka Labotlhano maitsiboa, koloi ya tshwarwa ke seretse... mme a lala a e disitse. "Ka go bona dinako di tloagantse, ka se tlhole ke tla Mabopane, ka mpa ka menoga ka gopola GaMosetlha ka lo itse gore 'phitlho tsa koo, ke tsa mo mosong .. Ke tlhotse koo ke beile seatla mo phatleng, la bo la phirima. ... Fa ke goroga jaana ke tsoga kwa GaMosetlha. Rangwane Ditsele o ne a bile a rile ke tloge maabane ka a ne a fedile pelo go itse gore go rileng ka lona." (Malope, 1982:24)

(He explained to them how, on his way from GaMosetlha on Friday evening, his car became stuck in mud ... that he slept in it. "Seeing that time had run out, I could not come to Mabopane, but went back to GaMosetlha, as you know funerals there are early in the morning ... I spent the whole day waiting for you, until the sun set. ... I woke in GaMosetlha, as I arrive now. Uncle Ditsele had even suggested that I should leave yesterday as he was worried about your whereabouts.)

From the above quotation Makeketa insinuates that his car got stuck in mud and slept along the road, unaware that Malešwane and her relatives used the same route to travel to GaMosetlha; Makeketa explains that he was forced to return to GaMosetlha because funerals there are held early in the morning, unaware that his wife attended the very same funeral. Makeketa alleges that he woke up in GaMosetlha, unaware that his wife spent the whole day there; he also alleges that Uncle Ditsele even suggested that he should leave

on the day of preparations, unaware that the very first person Malešwane talked to was their uncle, Ditsele. Malešwane, however, knows the truth and listens silently, for she realises that her husband is in a distracted state. It is through her silence that the narrator captures the reader's attention and concentration until the very end. Malešwane's respect for her husband also forbids her from disagreeing verbally, so she silently endures his lies. Even when Malešwane realises that her husband is at a loss for words to account for his absence, both at the funeral and at home, her anger and love for her husband are most eloquently expressed by her silence. She even feels pity for him when her relatives show their amazement. Malešwane's silence dramatizes the love she bears for her husband and enhances her disagreement with the lies told by her husband. Her silence impresses the reader not as inarticulateness, but as an appropriate device of suspense employed by the narrator and also as a real sign of her womanhood and humanity. She is human enough not to show her enraged emotions in the presence of other people and her feelings and silence are readily understood by the other characters in her company because they are familiar with what actually happened: She was with them when uncle Ditsele told them that Makeketa returned home to Mabopane on Friday and that Makeketa said he was going to fetch them to attend the funeral. That is why the author says:

"Ka nako e, ya fa a tthalosa, ke fa bareetsi ba sule bokidi, ba tshaba go lebana". (Malope, 1982:24)

(At this moment of his explanation, the listeners were dumbfounded and afraid of looking at one another.)

These silent characters establish an atmosphere that is not in accord with what is spoken by Makeketa. Their silence subverts any chance for his explanation to be taken seriously at such a moment. Malešwane, in this short story, exemplifies the proverb that "silence is the best ornament of a woman" and when she ultimately breaks her silence, she only says these words that conclude the short story:

"E le fa o lopilwe ke mang go tlhalosa, mogatsaka? Re tswa kwa GaMose tlha fa re riana. Re tswa phitlhong fa re riana. E le fa o lopilwe ke mang go tlhalosa?" (Malope, 1982:24)

(But who has asked for your explanation, my husband? We have just returned from GaMose tlha. We are from the funeral as you see us. But who has asked for your explanation?)

Makeketa's explanation exemplifies the Setswana proverb, "kgomo e tshwarwa ka dinaka, motho o tshwarwa ka loleme" (A cow/ox/bull gets caught by its horns, a person gets caught by his tongue). While it is true that the short story uses suspense in its phase of development to grip the reader's interest and concentration, it is also a fact that every part of the story furthers the progression toward a predetermined resolution and between the crises of the story there is no weakening of interest and suspense, particularly because suspense is enhanced through a variety of devices.

What the short story also shows in its phase of development is that the moment of "movement of character" normally appears at the end of the developmental phase when the resolution begins. Hills (1987:12) explains that a character is "moved" in the sense that at the end of the story he is not in exactly the same place he was in the exposition; that he has been "changed" and is somehow different. Although this movement may be slight, the reality of the matter is that something has happened or that the character has "moved" or changed emotionally. In Malefo's (1985) *Botlhale jwa phala bo tswa phalaneng*, contained in her volume *Bo tsholwa bo le molelo*, Koloti's child suffers emotionally and physically because of his father's marriage to Mokgaotsi (his stepmother), just as Matsetsele suffers the wounds of an old and unrequited love. The child's suffering highlights Koloti's insensitivity, stupidity and neglect, and this changes or moves him (the child) into becoming a thief. His acts of stealing force Matsetsele to moralise and educate him in such a manner that he (Matsetsele) also changes his behavioural attitudes. He realises that even though Koloti's and Mokgaotsi's neglect and insensitivity have made them unhappy, they should not make their lives miserable and worthless, but rather they should be patient, have courage, be consistent, strong and adopt a positive attitude to life.

Matsetsele awakes, and stretches his arms out to Legakabe's love and forgets the love he has been denied by Mokgaotsi. Note what the author says about this change:

Botshelo jwa ga Matsetsele jwa fetoga e le ruri. A lemoga gore se ileng se a bo se ile, lesilo ke moselateledi. E rile a re o laya Ontiretse, ntekwane le ena o tla itaya. A ithaya: "Lenyalo ke kabelo. Ga se gore fa ke ne ke sa lebagannngwa le Mokgaotsi, ga ke a lebagannngwa le banna botlhe". (Malefo, 1985:76)

(Matsetsele's life changed tremendously. He realised that he should not cry over spilt milk. As he gave Ontiretse some advice, he also learnt a lot from it. He spoke to himself: "Marriage is a gift. It is not that if I was not meant for Mokgaotsi, I am not meant for all men.)

Here we would like to concur with Pretorius and Swart (1982:13) when they say that the main character should emerge after the climax, changed; that he should be stronger or more vulnerable or filled with gratitude or determination. From the quote above, we realise that Matsetsele is not the same person he was before the turning point, he is changed; and as such he becomes aware of his weaknesses and resolves to face life with greater vigour and strength. Similarly, in Magoleng's, (1985) *Mokaragana, ngwanaka*, Diile, as a moved character, does not have the same experience at the end of the story as she had at the beginning. Although she initially could not listen to constructive criticism, regarding it as a sign of rural stupidity, she ultimately comes to realise her faults and weaknesses. In her silent soliloquy, she imagines her marriage with Disang and discovers that Disang loves her more than Papa Solly did. Papa Solly's sudden disappearance when he discovers how terribly ill Diile is, affects and changes Diile's thinking: She realises that Papa Solly does not love her, but has only used her to satisfy his lust and that Barati has been a true friend as she has constantly advised her against prostitution. In this sense, Diile is presented as a dynamic rather than a static character.

Tswana short stories are not without some innovations in their development. Some are divided into chapters, and these divisions are usually marked by a row of asterisks or by breaks such as "Kgaolo 1" (Chapter 1) in the pages. Although this practice may be of great help in understanding the story, it cannot be excused, particularly because of the warning signal, "Chapter..", since this signal diminishes the suspense created in the story. In Lephogole's (1983) *Mo letlalong la nku*, which comes from the volume, **Mantswe a a robong**, the story is divided into four distinct chapters which are built up from numerous incidents. Although Chapters One, Two and Three are not complete units in themselves, Chapter Four is complete in itself. Notice the following summary of events that comprise the four chapters:

- (i) In Chapter One Nkwe is retrenched; he relaxes at Bogadi's shebeen; he remembers the old women of Melorane; he then looks at a wall-picture of criminals and later he robs sergeant Pitse of his police uniform.
- (ii) Chapter Two deals with Nkwe's disguise as a traffic officer, and the fines he levies on motorists for dirty car engines and other mechanical problems. Captain Khali appoints Bofa to investigate the crime.
- (iii) In Chapter Three Nkwe deposits the fraudulently acquired money into different bank accounts and plans to build a shop in Tlhabane location, which he ultimately does.
- (iv) Chapter Four deals with Bofa's investigation of the crime. He interrogates sergeant Pitse, the manager of Datsun garage, and searches Nkwe's house. Nkwe, on the otherhand employs Maestro to bribe Bofa with R1000 to abandon the investigation. Maestro and Nkwe are arrested. Nkwe receives two years imprisonment, after which he is sent for military service.



The textual space given to each chapter is as follows:

- (a) Chapter One ----- ten pages.
- (b) Chapter Two----- ten pages.
- (c) Chapter Three ----- three pages.
- (d) Chapter Four ----- twelve pages.

The events surrounding Bofa's investigations and the arrest of Nkwe have received the most attention because they provide the essential conflict and thematic implications of the story. In this chapter, that is, Chapter Four, Bofa interrogates Pitse, the manager of Datsun garage, and searches Nkwe's house. Nkwe is arrested and imprisoned for two years. Although Chapters One and Two have been given much textual space, most of their contents do not contribute to the total effect of the story. They abound in elaborate explanations, digressions, sermons, advertisements, files and unnecessary comments which interfere with the sequential flow of events and break the form of the short story. This division into chapters has shown itself to be a terrible mistake firstly because it tempts the reader to rest with each break and secondly, the story fails to produce a single and lasting impression of the action.

This is not the only structural flaw that we find in Tswana short stories, there are other short stories which are plotless and lack the element of sequential causality. Magoleng's (1974) *Dilo tsa badimo* contained in the volume *Ke a go bolelela*, is an example of a plotless short story the events of which lack an element of sequential causality. In this short story, Magoleng gives a description of a train journey to Tzaneen, the dam of Rramadipa, and the mountain of the gods. In this "story" one reads with disbelief how a train moves in a circular manner to the top of the mountain, and curls itself as if it is a different train altogether. Sometimes the head passes passengers from behind at a terrible speed. When the train reaches the top of the mountain, the passengers become frightened when they look down and see how small the river is at the foot of the mountain. Although

Magoleng wants to reveal the mysteries of creation to the reader, he does not show he merely tells, there is no action as there are no characters. As such it is difficult to classify *Dilo tsa badimo* as a short story because it is more of a sketch than a short story. This kind of description represents the story itself as a whole. There are two other descriptions, as stated above, which validate the assertion we have made and which also lower the whole art to a plane where it may be thought to be the work of a novice.

This investigation clearly shows that the developmental phase is a phase in which the pace of movement of the short story increases gradually in relation to the development or unfolding of the events presented in the expositional phase. The developmental phase essentially encompasses that part from the first event of the plot through complication, rising action to the climax. What is observable in the developmental phase of Tswana short stories is that the writers utilise suspense during the progression of events in order to make their stories effective, attractive and absorbing. Suspense increases in these stories through different devices which include tension and anticipation, mystery, curiosity and silence. What Tswana short stories also shows in the developmental phase is that the main character undergoes a particular change so that at the end of the story he is not exactly the same character he was in the exposition. This is clearly illustrated by a good number of Tswana short stories, particularly because the element of didacticism filters through most of these stories. Tswana short stories have their own structural weaknesses. Some short stories are divided into chapters which could have been developed into individual short stories, while others are plotless and fail to qualify as short stories, but rather simply qualify as stories that are short.

### **3.1.3 Resolution**

The resolitional phase of the modern short story does not require a long summary of what happened afterwards. It should only tell the reader what happened in the story itself, and clarify the slight movement which has taken place. The resolution that occurs at the end

of the story is not brought about by the final development of the plot, but by the introduction of some thematic note, be it a new image or a piece of description that indicates a new attitude (Hills,1987:107). It essentially contains the solution to the problem posed earlier. The contemporary short story writer should not make explanations in his endings, the resolution should be sharp and should satisfactorily fulfil the promises of the story. As Notestein (1974:104) says,

It is the function of the "resolution" not only to bring a story to a fitting close, but to fill it out to completeness by presenting the single impression in its final intensity.

Although most short stories are traditionally concluded with the resolution of conflicts, with characters achieving their aims or objectives or accepting failure of one kind or another, with the plot strands drawn together and knotted up, there are some short stories whose narrations stop in mid-air, with conflicts unresolved, with characters continuing to live their lives beyond the finish line. From this extrapolation we can conclude that the resolution is a phase that represents that part of the story in which the writer explains or unravels what has happened in the developmental phase. According to Brooks & Warren (1979:36) it is a phase that gives the reader the outcome of the conflict, the solution of the problem and the basis for a new stability after the instability of the developmental phase. However, what needs to be remembered is that a short story may stop abruptly at the moment of climax, another may continue for a few sentences or paragraphs. However, be that as it may, all short stories should end the moment the resolution has been achieved. For example, the resolution of *O thantse lo le tsebeng*, is simple, relevant and unadulterated. The short story writer, Makgaledise (cf: Malope, 1983), completes the story with the following words:

Boitumelo a mo leba lobaka lo loleele. A utlwa a tlelwa ke mahutsana. "A ke ene moratiwa wa gagwe yo o buang a se na sepe yo. A o ne a rata Bafedile?" Boemong jwa go leta karabo a mmolelela fa Bafedile a itshenyeditse nako le batho ba ba se nang maikutlo. "Fa e le gore le ene o tla se lemoga seno se,

ruri o tla bo a thantse lomapo lo le tsebeng. Materone o ntshenoletse sengwe se se nkutlwisang botlhoko ka ga Bafedile. (Malope, 1983:79)

("Is he really her lover, speaking so carelessly. Did she love Bafedile?" Instead of waiting for a reply, she told him that Bafedile had wasted her time with people who have no feelings. "If she will discover this, she will also realise how late she has been".)

We feel satisfied knowing that Bafedile's unwillingness and stubborn refusal to heed Boitumelo's advice ends in a pregnancy that spoils her school performance. Bafedile's ultimate disappointment and regret reiterates the content and meaning of the title of the short story, *O thantse lo le tsebeng* (she woke up with a wooden peg on her ear). Thus the resolution of all the expectations the reader acquired with the first impression. The resolution is the natural ultimate outcome of the action of the story, but sometimes it may be provided in a concealed manner until the last sentence. Notice how Magoleng (1987) resolves the conflict of his story, *Lorato*, taken from the volume, **Le Pelong**:

Ya re a bona madi a keketla, a latlhela serope sa kgogo kgakala, a pimirigana mo gare ga bona a se na maatla. Ba sule boobabedi, monnawe le mogatse. Ka ona motsotswana oo, nnete ya tswela pepeneneng. A itse gore Lorato o ne a sa itse fa a le morwa Khumoyagae. Ee, a itse gore Bapaki ga a na molato ope o a ka o bolaelwang. Ya re a re o gagabela sethunya, mmaagwe a tlhaga a ithwele megono. A gadimela gosele, a phoka lofulo. .... Ya re morago ga dibeke tse pedi Moilwe a latolwa. Lorato a itse gore o tla fetsa ngwaga a mo lelela. (Magoleng, 1987:15-16)

(Seeing blood ooze terribly, she threw away the gun and fell powerlessly between them. The two of them died, his brother and his wife. At that moment, the truth was evident. He knew that Lorato had not known that he was the son of Khumoyagae. Yes, he knew then that Bapaki was not guilty of a punishable offence. As he stretched out to grab the gun, his mother came running. He then looked aside, with his mouth foaming. .... After two weeks Moilwe was pronounced dead. Lorato then knew that she would mourn for him for the whole year.)

At the end of the seventh sentence, the reader still experiences tense suspense. Has Moilwe murdered his girlfriend and younger brother thinking they are in love? Suspense is entirely relieved when the answer is given "At that moment the truth was evident. He knew that Lorato had loved Bapaki because she had not known that he was the son of Khumoyagae". It is the very last sentence that tells us that it is Moilwe who dies and not Bapaki or Lorato. When one reviews the events of the story one realises that Lorato was in love with both Moilwe and Bapaki, unaware that the two were blood brothers. When Moilwe saw Lorato with Bapaki in a room he snatched a gun, walked up to them, shot and missed his targets. In this story's resolution we discover the action of a lover who is eager to recognise and retain his girlfriend as his sole and only lover.

There are various types of resolution employed in short stories. Shole, (1985) in his volume, *O foo, ke fano!*, resolves the conflict in *Taafite le Jonathane* by introducing a dialogue indicative of a new attitude and outlook. Charlie's silence when police enter Gerrie's hotel room serves as a suitable and sufficient response which indicates his servile guilt. Charlie realises that Gerrie's friendship with him was intended to culminate in a homosexual relationship. With the entrance of the police into their room, this motive is determined and immediately curtailed. Some short story resolutions have a sense of an ending, for they echo the emotions and ideas contained in the phase of development. In the short story, *Taafite le Jonathane*, this is done through the repetition of ideas concerning Charlie's hotel experience, as well as the strained relationship between Gerrie and his wife, Paula, and Gerrie's homosexuality. We can conclude that some short stories repeat the earlier elements in their resolutions, but that others repeat these elements in not quite so obvious a manner. This is done only in order to link the ending to the middle and it must be remembered that this is not necessarily a summary of the given story, but signals that the story is about to close. If we look at Magoleng's (1983) short story, *Kgetse e a tswenatswena*, taken from *Mareledi*, the resolution repeats elements such as, "nama" (meat), "pampiri" (paper), "bolao" (bed), "kgetsana" (bag), which link very well with the content of the phase of development. These elements are referred to in the developmental

phase as "kweletla ya nama" (a large piece of meat), "kgetsana e ntšhwa" (a new bag), "khurumolola šiti" (open the sheet), and are also used as signals to indicate that the story is about to close.

Another popular way to resolve the conflict of the short story is to end it more like "closing a door or window, or the death of a character" (Bonheim, 1982:119). This is evident in Shole's *E romilwe ke Jehofa* in which the conflict is resolved by death. However, this is not the death of the main character, Mfoloe, but that of the subsidiary characters, Lekabe, Rambeo and Selepe. The three characters are punished with death for their iniquity of kidnapping an innocent Mfoloe for mutilation. Although the death of the three men seems to be the only solution to save Mfoloe's life, it is presented in the guise of superstition or religion. The three men die from snake bites, and Mfoloe is discovered hanging from a tree. After killing the snake that had killed the three men, the minister explains that:

"Modimo o romile noga go tla go thusa motlhanka wa Ona foo batho ba paletsweng teng, jaaka o kile wa e romela go thusa setšhaba sa ga Mošhe. E feditse tiro ya yona. E tloga e senya ". (Shole, 1985:54)

(God has sent the snake to rescue His servant where people could not succeed, the same way he once sent it to deliver the nation of Moses. It has fulfilled its duty. It may do harm.)

Here the author tries to show that the fate of human life does not depend entirely on worldly circumstances but that it is predestined and predetermined by God - hence the title, *E romilwe ke Jehofa*, (It is sent by God/Godsend). Similarly, Magoleng (1985) resolves the conflict of his story *Mokaragana, ngwanaka* with death, the curtain closes, and there is no life thereafter. The story is closed with the main character's introspection. She says:

Ka ipotsa gore tota ke ka bo ke tshelela eng fa Papa Solly a se yo, le rraagwe banake a se yo! Bothale jo bo mo ditlhomesong

jo bo tla dira tiro. "Badimo ba me nkamogelang!"  
(Magoleng, 1985:4)

(What is my life worth when Papa Solly has walked out of my life, and when the father of my children is no more! This wire on the rafters will do duty. "My dear ancestors, welcome me.")

From the above excerpt we discover that the resolutions of some short stories often stand in the present tense in contrast to the past tense in which most of the narration of the story tends to be formulated. Apart from this, what we see in this excerpt is that, in concluding his story, Magoleng focusses more on the main character's fate and soliloquy, and withdraws altogether from action involving other characters. When we look at these resolutions, they actually close the progression of events and no life continues beyond. However, there are Tswana short stories whose resolutions do not necessarily close off the progression of events, but instead, leave the conflicts unresolved or insoluble, in which case the action is suspended and not concluded. This is true of the resolution of the short story, *Nono Moaisi*. In this story, Shole only reveals the true identity and name of Nono Moaisi; that Nono Moaisi is actually Virginia Mokae, Seth Mokae's wife. He also tells us that Tlhonthoro (Seth Mokae) used his wife's name as a *nom de plume* so that his books would not be discriminated against; particularly because he was already in the bad books of the Language Board members. What we realise in this story is that its ending is open because its action and dialogue continue to the very end and the author leaves the conflict in Mokae's family unresolved. We are not told whether Tlhonthoro's wife really did divorce him, and, if she did, whether she left him without the honours of his works because she is the one whose name appears in the contracts. Tlhonthoro and Virginia's divorce is left virtually unexplored, it almost hangs in the air.

Sikwane's (1987) short story, *Taxi ya Matlosane*, from the volume, *Iphimole dikeledi*, is another short story whose conflict ends in mid-air, with the conflict unresolved, with characters waiting for a case to be opened, so that a solution can be reached. The first sentence of the ending, "Even today they are still there", is a clear summary of the author's

refusal to resolve the conflict of the story as evidenced by the following:

Le gompieno ba sa ntse ba le koo. Bapagami ba taxi le bona ba kwa kgolegelong ga go ise go bulwe kgetse ka gone batlholakgetse ba le kwa bookelong. Ga re itse gore e tla nna e e jang. Boitshepo ga a ka a isiwa bookelong, o ne a isiwa kgolegelong, gone a ne a sa bona kgobalo e e tshwanetseng. (Sikwane, 1987:11)

(Even today they are still there. The passengers of the taxi are also in prison, a case has not yet been opened because the suspects are in hospital. We do not know what the outcome will be. Boitshepo was not taken to hospital, but to prison because he did not suffer severe injuries.)

Sometimes the resolution may come as a surprise. This may come about or be precipitated by a reversal in the main character's fortunes, leading to success or failure. This is what is often referred to as a "twist in the tail", or a resolution which the reader did not quite expect. Shole's (1985) short story, *Kokwanyana, robala*, is a perfect example of where one finds a reversal in the main character's fortunes. It is in the resolitional phase of this story that it is discovered that the main character, Auma, is not pregnant, but simply carries a very large packet of chicken stolen from Mmalekorwana's shop. Shole twists the events of the story, aided by the device of silence, in such a manner that the reader has no chance to realise that Auma's "pregnancy" is a false pregnancy. The same device of twisting the tale, is discernible in Sikwane's (1987), *Moranang o a rogwa*. In this short story, Selina visits her uncle, Ralegotlo, and tells him that she has been sent by her other uncle, Seitsego to tell him that Seitsego will be receiving lobola for Seitsego's daughter the very same day. Ralegotlo is furious and decides to go and warn Seitsego against disregarding their cultural procedures. Culturally, Ralegotlo should be the very first person to receive the news and he should hear it from Seitsego personally. This is the event around which the conflict of the story revolves. However, eventually, the resolution becomes a happy surprise for the whole family when Ralegotlo, Seitsego and Selina's mother discover that Selina has merely been playing an April fool joke. At the end of the



story Ralegotlo vows that he will no longer forget the first day of the month of April. Notice how Sikwane brings the story to a fitting close:

Morago ga go nwa tee, Ralegotlo a tshega a lebile Selina a eme fa lebotana la lapa le kopanelang teng le mokgoro. "Kana ke ne ka gwantela kwa beseng mosong ono ke lebetse gore ke bolawa ke noka". "Ee, o ne o e sidila rangwane". Selina a bua a tshega. Seitsego a laela mme a tsamaya le mogatse ba tlogela Ralegotlo le MmaSelina ba tsere dikgang. Ralegotlo a ipolelela gore o ya go tlhokomela letsatsi la ntlha la Moranang fa le tlhaba ngwaga mongwe le mongwe. (Sikwane, 1987:17)

(Having had tea, Ralegotlo laughed as he looked at Selina standing at the corner of the hut and the communal wall. "I literally dragged my waist as I hurried to the busstop this morning." "Yes, it was one way of treating it, uncle", said Selina as she laughed. Seitsego and his wife bade Ralegotlo and MmaSelina farewell leaving them in discussion. Ralegotlo vowed that he would be aware of the first day of April every year.)

From the afore-going, we determine that the last impressions that the short story generates are definite because nothing follows to modify or change these impressions (Notestein, 1974:103). Therefore, it is befitting to conclude that the resolution of a short story enforces the single effect and, as such, it is that part which may leave the reader happy if it fulfils the reader's expectations, or leave him disappointed if it is not effective. The function of the resolution does not solely rest on bringing the story to a fitting close, but it also rests on filling the story out to completeness by representing a single impression in its final intensity (Nguna, 1997:89). This feature has been achieved by Tswana short story writers because they often leave the reader with a single impression. For example, in the short story, *E romilwe ke Jehofa*, (Shole, 1985) the reader is left with the single impression that, the fate of human life does not depend entirely on worldly circumstances but that it is predetermined by God. However, it is true that the resolution of the Tswana short story is not solely determined by the creation of a single and lasting impression, but

that it is also determined by the unique nature of the story. This is the reason that, although most short stories are traditionally concluded with the resolution of conflict and with the plot strands drawn together and tied up, there are some short stories whose stories stop in mid-air, with conflicts unresolved and with characters continuing to live their lives well beyond the finish line. Cases in point are short stories by Shole, Sikwane, Magoleng and Mokgoko, to mention but a few writers. While conflict in some short stories is resolved through a character experiencing a new attitude and outlook on life, conflicts in other short stories are resolved through a repetition of elements in the resolutional phase that also appeared in the developmental phase, sometimes in not quite so obvious a manner. This is normally done in order to link the resolutional phase with the developmental phase. Another popular manner of resolving conflicts is one of ending the short story with the death of a character, in which case, the curtain closes and life ceases.

### **3.2.0 SOME STYLISTIC DEVICES**

A narrative text usually comprises events which are brought about by the actions of the characters. The short story writer arranges his material in such a manner that there exists a logical connection of events. Sometimes the author may interrupt the sequential flow of events through the use of flashbacks, that is, the narration returns to a past point in the story; and foreshadowing, that is, the narration takes an excursion into the future. This implies that the writer is free to recall some important past events linked with the present events and to advance future events into the present.

#### **3.2.1 Flashbacks**

The exposition above refers to a flashback as a device through which the writer recalls some important past event or events linked with the present. The writer returns to the past in order to clarify the present events or events that are about to happen. These interpolated narratives are significant in the construction of plot because they provide a better

understanding of the motives and personalities of the characters. It is through flashbacks that the modern Tswana short story writer breaks up the chronological sequence of events by taking the reader to the past event, and it is through flashbacks that these writers succeed in making narrative fiction more intelligible to the reader. This is because the importance of flashbacks lies in the fact that the reader is provided with the background information concerning the characters or the causes of the conflict.

Magoleng (1972) unfolds the events of his short story, *Dikeledi*, from the volume, *Mpolelele dilo*, with a sorry spectacle witnessed by an ailing and grieving Gadifele. Gadifele is confined to bed as a result of a terrible accident that affected her spinal cord. As she looks out through the window to marvel at the beauty of nature, the clear blue sky, and the fluttering and singing birds, she suddenly catches a sight of her daughter, Dikeledi. She watches how she plays with chickens; how she shares her food with them; and how some chickens steal a big piece of meat from inside her dish. After having introduced this spectacle or scene, the writer flashes back to an earlier event in order to provide relevant information regarding the early days of Gadinkame's love with Gadifele, and how she became confined to bed. The mood and tone of the narration is not cheerful, but it is intimate, sombre and sorrowful. As intimate, sombre and sorrowful as it may seem, the flashback is ominous for it unveils the state of worry and regret that Gadifele experiences and it also foreshadows the imminent and ultimate act of suicide about which Gadifele ponders. Magoleng employs the device of flashback once again in the middle of the story to account for Gadifele's frustration and loss of hope with her husband. When Gadifele remembers how unwilling she was to undertake the visit that crippled and confined her to bed, she holds herself responsible for acceding to her husband's requests and for showing him unwavering love. She remembers Gadinkame's erstwhile passionate love which has suddenly grown cold; the loud and lovely stories Gadinkame used to tell her which have suddenly degenerated into a deafening silence of boredom:

Tshimologong monna wa me wa lorato, tshika ya pelo ya me,  
o ne a ntekola ka metlha fa a tswa tirong, re tseetsee maele

mmogo, re ntshe la motlhagare, mkgwa o tlhokagale. Ke gopola ka letsatsi lengwe a mpontsha dipadi tse di mo dikgokeng tsa gagwe, mme a mpolelela ka moo ba kileng ba re ba le basimanyana ba fitlhela ditonki tsa batho ba sa di itse, ba di tana mme nngwe ya sekwera, ya kwela ka ene, ya phura ditomo, ya mo watanya mo mongeng, a ba a tla go kalololwa ke ba bangwe. .... Morago jaana, o tla mo go nna, e se ka lorato, e leng ka kutlwelobotlhoko, a fete a tlhona fa thoko ga me jaaka moeng, gongwe motho a tsamaisa nako, kana a phetha molao. (Magoleng, 1972:10)

(At first my loving husband, the main artery of my heart, came to visit me regularly after work, talked and laughed with me. We used to talk about different things, things he used to do as a boy, how a wild donkey once threw him into a 'wag-'n-bietjie' tree. These days he comes to me not out of love, but out of sympathy. He comes and sits next to me like a visitor, because he feels he must be next to me, maybe just to while away time.)

Gadifele's recollection is a reminder to her, that if she had not gone to Gadinkame's aunt she would not have been paralysed, and Gadinkame would not be in love with his aunt's daughter, Kedibonye. She recalls these experiences at a critical moment of her life, at a time when she has lost her good health and her husband's love. The writer narrates that Gadinkame made life unbearable for his ailing wife, Gadifele. It is this situation that essentially makes Gadifele remember how warm and caring Gadinkame's love was before the accident. Unfortunately, their love and marriage came to be infested with quarrels, disrespect, boredom, impatience and the uncaring coldness that Gadifele perceives. This indifference and the cold shoulder that Gadifele receives are exacerbated by Gadinkame's careless words that are almost devoid of emotion:

"Gape mosadi, le wena o tshwanetse go nna o itekateka, o dira sengwenyana fela, e seng go itshela moriti o tsididi jaana. A fa o raya gore e tla nna bophelo!" (Magoleng, 1972:11)

(Woman, you must try to do something, not just to sit here and do nothing. Do you think you are going to spend the rest of your life like this!")

Although the plot of this short story is restricted, it is a special design that involves a combination of threads. The plot is so simple that the reader's mind is not distracted in any way. The short story writer has connected each incident with other incidents from the distant past through flashbacks to build a meaningful chain of events.

While it is true that the above short story plunges the reader into the centre of the conflict of the story, it is also true that Magoleng's (1985) other short story, *Mokaragana, ngwanaka*, starts with an exposition *in medias res* because its content belongs to a stage which has been caused by the events after it. This story begins with Diile's attempts to cure her illness and, although this event is not the beginning of the story in its natural chronology, the writer uses it to initiate the unfolding of events. The writer uses a flashback here as the narrator relates the incident that recalls Diile's attempts to cure her disease. It is natural that, after this exposition, the events that preceded the beginning and can explain it better have to be related through flashbacks. This beginning also enhances suspense because the reader becomes anxious to know what caused Diile's illness; why her friends and Papa Solly turned their backs on her; and whether or not she recovers. The story of *Mokaragana, ngwanaka*, revolves around Diile's illness and it is constructed from the following events in their natural order of sequence:

- 1) *Diile wanders through the city streets in search of a job and meets Disang who marries her.*
- 2) *Later, Diile finds a job and falls in love with Papa Solly.*
- 3) *Barati warns Diile against infidelity and tells her to attend to her husband and family.*
- 4) *Disang falls ill, dies and is buried by his family. (Diile knows nothing about this)*

- 5) *Diile consults different doctors in her attempt to cure her disease.*
- 6) *Diile's mother reproaches Diile for not attending Disang's funeral and gives Diile some herbal treatment to cure her of "boswagadi".*
- 7) *Seeing that all her friends have walked out of her life, Diile commits suicide.*

Even though the events begin *in medias res*, the narrator has successfully used flashbacks to unite the events of the story. When we analyse the order of the events' occurrence, we realise that Diile's attempts to cure her disease (event **five**) is narrated first, followed by recollections of her wanderings through the streets in search of a decent job (event **one**), through events, **two**, **three**, and **four**, to event **six** where we encounter narration on Diile's mother's reproaches and treatment of her daughter. If we look at event **five**, which is narrated first, we realise that it forms the present narrative or the narrative which initiates the unfolding of the events. It tells us about Diile's present state of health and what follows is the narration or explanation of what has led to Diile's present condition. On the fourth page of the short story Diile says:

Ka beolwa ... ka nwa mesetlha, ka ba ka e rwalarwala ka ya go e nwa le Papa Solly, mme ga pala, go tsamaya go nna jaaka go ntse jaana. (Magoleng & Motlhake, 1985 :4)

(My hair got cut ... I drank some herbal treatment and took it along to drink with Papa Solly, but to no avail, until it got to this condition.)

What is her condition? The narrator describes this condition in the exposition of the short story. Diile has tried her best to cure her disease, but all in vain. The disease worsened until she found herself confined to bed, unable even to attend to her own sanitary needs. Papa Solly gradually walked out of her life, her friends could not tolerate her incessant cough and foul-smelling phlegm and they also turned their backs on her. When she realised how much of a menace she was to other people she decided to commit suicide

and joined her ancestors.

The principle according to which the starting point of the text is not the starting point of the story continues to show itself in Malope's (1982) short story, *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng*. The structure of *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng*, can be reflected by tracing the sequence of the story events. The following is an exposition of the chronological order of sequence and the achronological order of events that build up the story. The order of events as they appear in the text is as indicated by numerals and the order of events as they happened in nature is as indicated by letters of the alphabet:

- 1) {L} *MmaMmualebe asks Morongwe what she would do if Makeketa were unfaithful to her.*
- 2) {J} *Malešwane asks Makeketa why he has disappointed her in the presence of her relatives.*
- 3) {G} *The narrator describes how Makeketa's marital problem was solved by tradition.*
- 4) {A} *MmaKedirileng, Makeketa's father's aunt dies and Makeketa goes to GaMosetlha to help with the funeral arrangements.*
- 5) {B} *Makeketa tells his wife, Malešwane that she should not force her employer to grant her leave to attend the funeral.*
- 6) {C} *While Malešwane waits for Makeketa to come and fetch her to attend the funeral, Makeketa goes to his mistress in Zone 16, GaRankuwa.*
- 7) {F} *Makeketa recalls the gravediggers in GaMosetlha, and Malešwane in*

*Mabopane.*

- 8) {D} *Malešwane, with her relatives, uses public transport to go to GaMosetlha and discovers that Makeketa is not attending the funeral.*
- 9) {E} *Makeketa wakes up at 10h00 on Saturday in GaRankuwa, late for the funeral.*
- 10) {H} *On her arrival in Mabopane, Malešwane discovers that Makeketa is not home.*
- 11) {I} *Makeketa arrives and tells how he got stuck in mud as he was trying to come and collect Malešwane and her relatives to attend the funeral.*
- 12) {K} *Malešwane cautions him that they have also just returned from the funeral.*

When we analyse the chronological arrangement of the events in the story, we realise that there are flashbacks which interrupt the flow of events. What we realise in this investigation is that the writer does not keep his narration in strict chronological order, but breaks up this sequence by rearranging events in an achronological order. Malope, therefore, begins the events of this story *in medias res*, the principle according to which the starting point of the text is not the starting point of the story - - - the text commences with an event which occurs later (Grobler, 1989:297). Through this technique, the writer enhances suspense and captures the reader's attention and concentration right from the outset because the reader is introduced to the crux of the matter without wasting any time. The question that MmaMmualebe poses to Morongwe regarding Makeketa's immoral behaviour is actually the result of the barrenness of Malešwane. What we realise here is that the beginning of the story is not the actual starting point of the events as they happened in their natural sequence. For example, narrative event three constitutes a flashback reaching far back in time to a point before Makeketa cheated on his wife,



Malešwane. We arrive at this conclusion because even the narrator, in closing the flashback, says:

Gompieno mathatanyana ano a fetogile dithaba gonne re taboga le modumo wa meropaya bangwe. (Malope, 1982:14)

(Today these problems are abundant because we run after the sound of other people's drums.)

In presenting the flashback the narrator says:

Bogologolo - nnyaya maloba a maabane fela fa, bothata jwa lelapa la ga Makeketa bo ne bo phekolwa botlhofotlhofo gonne mosadi o ne a nyalelwa lelapa le le duleng kgomo - e seng monna. Fa monna yo o mo tlhathelelang dikgomo fa di sutlhile a sa kgone go tshola bana nae, mme a ba lelela jaaka Makeketa, mongwe wa barwarraagwe o ne a sala a mo tlhathelela tsona fa a sa ile bolebelebe, ka thulagano. Fa borea-itse le pitsana eo ya maano ba paletswe, motho a tshwana le Malešwane a ka salwa morago ke tlhatswadirope, kana ga tswa dikgomo go nyalela Makeketa mosadi wa bobedi (Malope, 1982:14).

(Long long ago - no, only recently, the problem in Makeketa's house was resolved very easily because a woman was married to the family that paid out cattle - not to an individual. If the man with whom you are in love is unable to bear children with you, but cries for them like Makeketa does, one of his brothers would procreate on his behalf in his absence, per agreement. If the traditional doctors and this pot of advice do not succeed, Malešwane would be succeeded by her younger sister, or lobola cattle would be paid out for a second wife for Makeketa.)

The present narrative provides the reader with an account of Makeketa's actions, which are contrary to the tradition and culture of the society of his forebearers. Makeketa cheats on his wife and sometimes sleeps out. The narrator, through the flashback quoted above, would like to emphasize that this is a problem that troubles and damages present marriages, but which was easily solved through traditional and cultural norms and values. He does this by recalling an earlier event which explains how problems of infertility and other such related problems were avoided: "o ne o batlelwa tlhatswadirope" (she would

be succeeded by her younger sister). The use of this flashback is not necessarily a celebration of artistic excellence because it creates a particular meaning. The flashback not only refers us to a past practice or incident, but also serves to indicate Makeketa's reason for his infidelity towards Malešwane, and why today's marriages are infested with problems which often lead to divorce. Chronologically this narrative event (**three**) comes even before the narrative event (**one**), which also constitutes a flashback as, in its natural occurrence, it happened after events **four, five, six, seven, eight and nine**. In order to give advice to Morongwe, MmaMmualebe refers Morongwe to an incident that happened long ago. She flashes back to what Makeketa did when he realised that his wife was infertile and could not bear children, that he became involved in an extra-marital love affair with a mother of two children. As the above quotation states, the problems relating to extra-marital affairs are abundant, but they all go unaddressed.

The short story, *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng*, by Malope (1982) has a few instances of flashback. The first line of the second paragraph on page twenty of the volume also marks the beginning of a flashback which recounts how Makeketa remembers that it is Saturday and that a game between two major clubs would be shown on television. This recollection elicits a series of memories which include flashes on "the progress of gravediggers", "the cattle that recently ran amok and refused to be inspanned", "Malešwane in Mabopane", and "the funeral of his father's aunt". It is clear from this illustration that Malope has violated the conventional narrative style which was recently adopted by writers such as Ntsime (cf: Magoleng & Ntsime, 1972), Moroke (1968) and now recently Molebaloa (1987), who adhere strictly to the natural order of sequence. The above flashes of memories, have a purpose for they indicate Makeketa's confused mental state and guilty conscience: He should have transported his wife and relatives to attend their aunt's funeral; he should not be cheating on a faithful wife; and he should be caring for the wealth and property of his family. Of course, this flashback is related by the narrator who views the action from outside and is therefore able to give every detail of Makeketa's mindset and worries. If we look seriously at the above representation of the events that

build our story, it becomes very clear that the earliest and the latest events of the story appear far from the beginning and end of the text itself. For example, the message which is derived from the story is located approximately at the beginning of the story in the form of a question posed to Morongwe, and the final event, that is, narrative event **twelf**, is mentioned in the middle of the first page of the story itself. This represents a visible evidence of the flashbacks that appear in Malope's short story. Grobler (1989) says that, the abundant use of flashbacks, such as those we have in Tswana short stories, brings about the notion of passing time, the movement of man on his way to his final destination; and that the recalling of the past into the present, reinforces the concept of timelessness.

It is interesting to note that Tswana short story writers do not just open flashbacks, but they also close them and return to the present narrative. What we observe in Tswana short stories is that the flashbacks often open with different marks, marks such as elliptical dots, transitional lines and recollective phrases such as, "A gakologelwa..." (He remembered); "Bogologolo---nnyaya, maloba a maabane fela fa--" (Long ago---no, just recently--); "Mogopolo o mo tšhwemoge; a fitlhele a boetse..." (His thoughts would wander; he would relive...); "Ke gopola..." (I remember...) or "Ke gopola ka letsatsi lengwe..." (I remember one day...). In Malope's short story (1982), *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng*, the closure of the flashback is indicated by the words, "A boela mo diatleng", which not only means the return of the character into the hands of his mistress, but also the return of the narration to the present narrative. Apart from using a closural phrase, the narrator also uses the elliptical dots to emphasize the transition to the action that was narrated before the start of the flashback. These closural phrases make it easier for the reader to realise that he is exiting the flashback and returning to the present narrative. These closural phrases appear in different phraseology, which include examples such as, "Morago jaana..." (Just recently...) and "Gompieno..." (Today).

### 3.2.2 Foreshadowing

The short story writers do not only employ the use of flashbacks in their narratives, but they also use the device of foreshadowing to link their events. Foreshadowing is a plot device which enhances the inevitability of the action without diminishing suspense. Souvage as quoted by Mafela (1993) defines foreshadowing as a plot device which is based on association in time and through which future events and scenes are prepared and anticipated. Foreshadowing, as such, is an essential artistic device which reinforces the coherence of the narrative. This is emphasized by Cohen (1973) when he states that foreshadowing links elements in different parts of the story and helps establish unity of structure. From this assertion we can conclude that the significance of foreshadowing lies in the fact that it contributes to unity of structure because it connects the different events of the story. The introduction of any device of foreshadowing normally suggests, suspends and demands utilisation or requires a complementary balance. According to Grobler (1989) foreshadowing basically consists in temporal anticipation or advancement of a particular episode to fill in ahead of time a later blank or to advance and repeat it again later. Although foreshadowing does not occur frequently in the Tswana short stories, when it occurs it comes up in devices (of foreshadowing) such as descriptions, symbols, parallelism, chronological inversion and in dialogue. Grobler (1989:50) states that a reason for this might be the fact that the very essence of foreshadowing is subversive of the principle of narrative suspense, that when it occurs it replaces suspense.

Shole (1985), in his short story *E romilwe ke Jehofa*, employs parallelism as a device for effecting foreshadowing to expose Selepe's ignorance of the situation that confronts him. The writer refers to similar incidents or events to give this story a sense of universality. He narrates how Selepe, while patiently waiting for his colleagues, remembers a narration of long ago. Shole writes that:

A gopola naane ya moruti yo o kileng ... a bona phuthego e momonega a e lebile. Fa a roma mongwe gore a ye go bitsa

ba ba kwa ntle le ena a ele ruri gore go bo go romelwe yo mongwe. A roma mogogi .. le mmamoruti. Kgatele ga ikisa ena, le ena a iphitlhela a setse a tsokotsa letheke! (Shole, 1985:51).

(He remembered a folktale about a priest who once witnessed his congregation grow smaller and smaller. Everyone whom he sent to call others stayed away. He sent a church leader ...and his wife. He then went in person, and he also found himself dancing with the others.)

Although this foreshadowing is narrated in the past tense, it predicts what the future holds for certain characters. Selepe in his meditation remembers a folktale in which the future events are implied. It should be kept in mind that this brief account (folktale) forms part of the short story. It is an incident that Selepe remembers as he patiently waits for the arrival of Rambeo and Lekabe. He associates what happens at the moment of his waiting, with what happened some time ago in one priest's church. When we analyse this folktale in consideration of the case of the three men Selepe, Lekabe and Rambeo, we determine the following parallels:

- A1. *(Folktale). The Priest sends a church-leader to call members of the congregation from a dance held outside. The church-leader joins the dancing.*
- A2. *(Story). Selepe sends Lekabe to bring a plastic bag from the car in which to put the body parts. The snake kills Lekabe.*
- B1. *(Folktale). The Priest sends the Priest's wife to call the church-leader and members of the congregation from a fun dance. The Priest's wife joins the dancing.*
- B2. *(Story). Selepe sends Rambeo to call Lekabe and bring the plastic bag from the car. The snakes kills Rambeo.*

*C1. (Folktale). The Priest goes in person and becomes absorbed the same way.*

*C2. (Story). Selepe goes in person and is killed the same way.*

Therefore, the narrative above is a foreshadowing of the death of the three men because it contains events which are ominous to the circumstances that surround Lekabe, Rambeo and Selepe. Parallelism is defined as “correspondence, in sense or construction, of successive clauses or passages”, (Schapera, 1965:17) and it occurs in the examples cited above, where the incidents of the folktale are almost identical in wording and implication to the incidents or events of the story itself. If we look at example "C",

C1. The Priest / goes in person / and / becomes absorbed / the same way.

C2. Selepe / goes in person / and / is killed / the same way.

we realise that the word order in the two sentences is identical and that although they might be different in meaning, they are basically alike in action and effect. When Selepe sets out to look for his friends who do not arrive, he is not aware of the fate that has befallen them, the fate that also awaits him. The content of the folktale alerts him to his impending demise, but he is ignorant of its implication or meaning. The fact that the church leader, the Priest's wife and the Priest himself join the dancing indicates that this is a foreshadowing of the death of Lekabe, Rambeo and Selepe (who are mysteriously killed by the snake).

It is in this very short story that Shole employs symbolism as a device of foreshadowing to prepare the reader for some events of the story. Shole uses a snake that slithers down Mfoloe's body as a symbol that prepares for the rescue of Mfoloe and the death of the three men. The appearance of the snake suspends the reader, for he patiently awaits the utilisation of its powers to resolve the conflict that prevails in the story. When it slowly slithers down Mfoloe's body the reader experiences tense suspense and closes his eyes in a stage of prepared waiting for the expected and/or unexpected outcome. As a symbol of

evil and death the snake prepares the reader for death. However, in this short story, the writer uses inversion. The snake, which symbolises evil and death, ironically saves Mfoloe's life by inflicting death on Mfoloe's would-be murderers; and it also receives accolades from a religious man, the priest, who says that it is a Godsend.

Tswana short story writers employ not only parallelism and symbolism as the sole devices of foreshadowing, they also use foreshadowing in dialogue to reach into the future. Magoleng (1974) employs foreshadowing in dialogue very successfully in his short story, *Ga le a ka la tswa*, taken from the volume, *Ke a go bolelela*. Through the dialogue between Gaolekwe and Kesentseng, Magoleng intimates an action that will follow:

"Ke maswabi, rre Gaolekwe. Ke nko go sa dupe." Kesentseng a araba a swabile fela thata, matlho a bile a setse ... a bonya. Gaolekwe a ntse a mo supile ka ranta. "Ka re tsaya maswe a gago ke a!" Kesentseng a tsaya ranta. Gaolekwe a itoma sesino, a ba a mo leba ka medilolo ya monna a le mafega a ntwana. "E tlatlabolole ka bojalwa, o itumele!" A thwantsha monwana ka seatla sotlhe sa moja. A supa legodimo. "Le ka se go tlhabele! Ke a go bolelela. Ba go lemile, ke a bona!" O le buile, ba ba neng ba mo tonetse matlho, ba thaakanya ditsebe. (Magoleng, 1974:8)

("I am sorry, Mr Gaolekwe. I could not have known." Kesentseng replied in shame, his eyes blinking incessantly. Gaolekwe, pointing a one rand note at him, said: "I say take this dirt of yours!" Kesentseng took the one rand. Gaolekwe clenched his teeth, and looked at him slyly with the harshness of a fight. "Buy liquor with it, and be happy!" He struck the palm of his hand with a finger; and pointed at the sky. "You are doomed to die before the next dawn! I am telling you. You have been pampered, I think!" He said it and, those who were gazing at him listened attentively.)

What we deduce from this quotation is that Gaolekwe and Kesentseng talk between themselves about an event which is relevant to the rest of the story. The connection between the action and the dialogue between Gaolekwe and Kesentseng is Gaolekwe's direct statement of his intention: "Le ka se go tlhabele! Ke a go bolelela. Ba go lemile, ke a bona!" (You are doomed to die before the next dawn! I am telling you. You have been

pampered, I think). Foreshadowing can be seen as a reach into the future because it consists of temporal anticipation or advancement of a particular incident. In *Ga le a ka la tswa* Gaolekwe tells in advance what the significant consequences of the retrieval of Kesentseng's dog will eventually be for Kesentseng, even though he cannot foretell and delineate them. As the events flow, the reader becomes more and more aware of the imminent disaster facing Kesentseng. Ever since Gaolekwe doomed Kesentseng to die before dawn the reader has been left in tense suspense as to the weight the threat carries. The writer repeatedly reminds the reader of the passing of time. He couples this with tension-brewing phrases such as 'it began to thunder', 'lightning struck' and with Kesentseng's fear and his parents' concern. Suddenly there is a loud noise in Kesentseng's hut, and his father strangles 'the witch' to death. In the subsequent events, we hear of the parents' emotions. Kesentseng's mother and sister cannot hold back their sorrowful tears and Kesentseng's father can only say:

Robala, Kesentseng, ngwanaka. Ga re o sala o bolela ... Bona fela jaaka ngwanake a didimetse, mmele fa fatshe o digaletse. Letsatsi la botshelo le diketse. Naledi ya Tlounge phirimile ...Mmaagwe, mogatsaka, go diragetse! (Magoleng, 1974:9)

(Sleep, Kesentseng, my child. You had actually foretold....  
Look how silent my child is, the body on the ground is dumb.  
The sun of life has set. The Tlounge star has set. Oh, my wife,  
it has happened!)

Although Magoleng indicates the beginning of his foreshadowing by this statement: "Le ka se go tlhabele!" (You are doomed to die before the next dawn! or put more simply, You will not see the next sunrise!); he marks the end with the phrase: "Ga re o sala o bolela" (You had actually foretold it). From the above quotation, we are told, in so many words, that Kesentseng has died. Words such as 'robala', (sleep) 'didimetse' (is silent), 'digaletse' (has fallen), 'diketse' (has set), and 'phirimile' (has set), all refer to one significant fact, that 'go diragetse' (it has happened); Kesentseng has died before the next dawn. What Gaolekwe threatened has ultimately happened.



### 3. RESUME

It is evident from the above exposition that modern Tswana short stories show a continuous sequence of exposition, development and resolution. Although there are beautiful and successful short story expositions in Tswana, there are also some expositions which do not link well with the other two phases. Some short stories open without preparing the reader for the action, but with few flashes of past events. As such, Tswana writers launch right in and tell their conflicts, beginning as near the middle as possible. While it is a fact that the Tswana short story uses suspense in its phase of development to grip the reader's interest and concentration, it is also true that every part of the story furthers the progression toward a predetermined resolution; and between the crises of the story there is no weakening of interest and suspense. What the Tswana short story shows in its phase of development is that at the end of the story the main character is not in exactly the same place he was in the exposition, but that he has been changed and is somehow different. Although most short stories traditionally conclude with the resolution of conflict; with characters achieving their aims or accepting defeat or failure of one kind or another; with the plot strands drawn together and tied up; there are some short stories whose narrations stop in mid-air, with conflict unresolved, and with characters continuing to live their lives beyond the finish line.

In organising their material, Tswana short story writers not only employ the use of flashbacks in their narratives, they also use the device of foreshadowing to link their events. It is also interesting to note that these writers do not merely open flashbacks and foreshadowings, they also close them and return to the present narrative. Although Tswana writers employ both devices, it has been realised that foreshadowing occurs far less frequently in Tswana short stories than its counterpart, flashback. This might be attributed to the fact that foreshadowing is sometimes "subversive of the principle of

narrative suspense" (Grobler, 1989:13). It is also clear from the above discussion that Tswana short story writers employ silence as a device of suspense to keep the reader wanting to know more. This silence allows the reader to create for himself whichever alternatives he desires; and his ultimate alternative will normally tell us more about his interpretational ability than about the short story.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **STYLISTIC AND LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

Language is the primary medium of expression in literature, be it written literature or oral literature. Although a work of literature comprises a variety of aspects, which include plot, theme, characterisation and narrative perspective, without language these aspects would not be realised and given form. It is, therefore, very important that, in dealing with literary study, cognisance should be given to a thorough knowledge of language, its nature and function. Nguna (1997) supports this view when she says that language is the basic element of style and that to arrive at a satisfactory understanding of literature, one must have an understanding of language, its function and operation. Language, as a means of communication, helps convey meaning and message and because literature is written or verbalised in language, using the different features of language such as similes, metaphors, idioms, proverbs, allusions and sentences, literature has a meaning and message to which the reader has to respond.

The right of the writer to make his own choice of words to express or narrate his events tells us that every writer has his own linguistic peculiarities which give his work a distinctive style. The word "style" is derived from the Latin word "stilus" which means a man's way of writing, and his way of expressing himself in speech (Lucas, 1955). This assertion presupposes the existence of an intimate relationship between the writer's personality and his literary style. Murray (cf. Msimang, 1986) emphasizes that the writer's style is closely associated with his personality, which means that traces of his personal feelings, thoughts and experiences are discernible in the type of language he uses. This means that even though the stylistic analysis of a work of literature is to a greater or lesser degree possible without any knowledge of the writer's background, it is essential to be

acquainted with the factors that may have shaped or affected his personality as they may be reflected in his literary style. Style can be seen as a manner of putting thoughts, idiosyncracies, emotions and attitudes into words, or it can be seen as a specific or particular way of managing words to reveal these elements. Kirkman (1992) concurs with this idea when he says that style in writing is concerned with the choice of words from the enormous resources of a whole language, and that the choices the writer makes create style. Much as it is difficult to define what literary language is, it is equally a daunting task to define style.

As we could determine through research, many scholars and critics have attempted to define style in terms of words or word choice, syntax and idiomatic expressions. Serudu (1993) also emphasizes the significance of words in determining style. He maintains that 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. From Serudu's definition and argumentation, we can conclude that words are essential for discerning the vividness of the writer's imagination, creativity, artistic excellence, and for giving colour and rhythm to the characters' feelings and thoughts which are expressed in sentences. Cohen (1973:49) also concurs with this assertion when he says:

Style pertains to an author's choice of words and their arrangement in patterns of syntax, imagery and rhythm. These arrangements of words constitute the author's imaginative rendering of whatever thoughts, emotions, situations or characters he chooses to create and communicate.

What we observe from the definitions on style is that style is commonly seen as a mode through which the writer expresses himself; a mode which might be peculiar to himself, be it good or bad, rich or poor, easy or difficult. Therefore, style can be seen as a manner of expressing oneself in words, how one arranges words to express ones sayings, emotions and thoughts or how one says whatever one wants to say. Furthermore, we can say that

style has to do not only with the word choice, but also with the arrangement of words into sentences and how these sentences are arranged and patterned into paragraphs to produce a literary work. Serudu (1993:118) supports this statement in his assertion that

Style can never be given a watertight definition since it involves not only the choice of words and their appropriate usage in sentences and paragraphs, but also the entire pattern that a literary work assumes.

In this chapter, we discuss the stylistic and linguistic characteristics of Tswana short stories, paying particular attention to syntactic and structural constructions, figurative language, the proverb and idiom, and allusion. The short story is the most interesting and compact form of art whose success depends on "the most unscrupulous discipline in the use of words" (Balogun, 1991:27). It flows clearly from this assertion that the short story writer must use common words "uncommonly well", and to achieve this, he must evaluate each word written for its relevance and sense, and think of its effectiveness, its embellishment or colour, whether or not it gives a vivid meaning, weight, feeling and particularity, because "a single inappropriate or superfluous word can ruin a good short story" (Balogun, 1991:27).

#### **4.1 SOME SYNTACTIC AND STRUCTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS**

This section falls into five parts: First, a discussion of the choice of words as evident in some short stories; second, reference to the utilisation of short sentences, short rhetorical questions and long sentences and their impact; third, an examination of repetition and its effect; fourth, an account of the largest unit after the word and the sentence, namely, the paragraph; and fifth, a discussion and analysis of figurative language, proverbs and idioms, as well as Biblical allusions.

#### 4.1.1 The word

Words and their arrangement in sentences are significant in building up literary texts and literary works. According to Jefferson and Robey, as quoted by Mafela (1993:185):

Words articulate our experience of things, they do not just express or reflect it; they give form to what, without language and other sign systems, would merely be a chaotic and undifferentiated jumble of ideas. Instead of things determining the meaning of words, words determine the meaning of things.

From the above quotation, we determine that without a word there can be no literature as there would be no medium of communicating literary ideas. In emphasizing the importance of the word, Mafela (1993) states that words can paint pictures, evoke feelings and control the distance between the speaker and the listener or between the writer and the reader. The way a writer chooses his words and arranges them in sentences to elicit a particular meaning constitutes what is called style. Style is of significance in making a vivid impression. It is, therefore, necessary that the short story writer use words which are characterised by conciseness, brevity and economy; words which compel a reader to visualize and promote his lively experience of the things described or depicted. The writer must be simple and direct in his usage of words because one can only express profound emotions through simple words and it is this simplicity which has the power to move a reader. A style loaded with archaic, complicated and difficult words detracts from "the real effect and produces a counter impression" (Notestein, 1974:179). However, simple words compel the reader to visualize, to be in a certain "attitude of receptivity, because they [simple words] strike a sensitive chord in the reader" (Notestein, 1974:181).

Tswana short story writers draw their words from the vast knowledge of their language. Their language serves as a reservoir from which they draw words to use in constructing

the sentences and in building the paragraphs that constitute their short stories. Although these short story writers possess a vast knowledge of the vocabulary of Tswana, the degree of vastness and their choice, ability and skill of word usage differ to a great extent. Every writer has his own peculiar manner of choosing and using words to communicate his experiences. In sharing his experiences with the readers, Mmileng (1986) uses these sentences:

(A) Jaaka metlha yotlhe fa e le letsatsi la Tshipi o tsena ntlo ka setu, a fitlha a sitlhama mo setulong, magokelo a sone a ba a ngongorega. (Mmileng, 1986: 12)

(As on other Sundays he goes into the house quietly and throws himself onto a chair with such force that its hooks complain.)

(B) O ne a tlakaula mosetsana yo ka mabogo oobedi fa diatla tse di popota di a parola. (Mmileng, 1986:15)

(He grabbed this girl with both arms while the hands tore and prised apart her rigid hands)

(C) Dikeledi o tswa go mmoletsa matsogo mo teng, sepalamo se setse se gokolotswe maremo e bile se tsentswe mo monoketsing wa go tswa ka sammamorago. (Mmileng, 1986:22)

(Dikeledi greeted him inside the house, the brakes of the car were already released and it was put into reverse gear)

The word "sitlhama" in sentence [A] has been used in the place of "dula" (sit). "Go sitlhama" means to fall forcefully or with all one's might onto something. This word is usually used to refer to the way a tall and big tree forcefully falls onto the ground. Therefore, here the writer wants to provide an effective meaning; a meaning which precisely describes how Serame sat on the poor chair. The word implies that Serame forcefully sat on the chair or threw himself onto the chair with great force. He did not sit on the chair like a gentleman, but fell onto it. Mmileng has used this word to reveal the

exhaustion and helplessness with which the character threw his body onto the chair. In the same sentence [A], Mmileng uses the word "magokelo" to mean hooks. The meaning that is derived from this word usage is that the seat of the chair was made up of leather straps hooked onto the wooden part of the chair. Thus when someone throws himself heavily onto the chair, the joints of the chair complain (ngongorega). "Ngongorega", in this instance, means to complain, and it is used in such a manner that it essentially personifies "magokelo". What the writer implies is that these joints, like a person, complain because of the careless and forceful manner in which Serame throws himself onto the seat of the chair.

Mmileng's ability to choose precise words which express his ideas clearly is shown also in sentence [B]. The word "popota" in sentence [B] is often used to qualify objects or substances which are as hard as a rock or which are in a solid state. However, in this context, the word simply means that the hands were rigid or tight. Thus the writer chooses to use a word that shows more emphasis, "popota" than a lightweight word "tšile" (strong). Mmileng shows himself to be a master of his language and an expert in word choice. His expert choice of words and ability to be original and ingenious in his sentence construction is illustrated in sentence [C]. In this sentence, Mmileng uses the phrase "se tsentswe mo monoketsing wa go tswa ka sammamorago" to denote that the car was placed in the reverse gear. The writer comes up with an original word "monoketsing" and succeeds in avoiding a common loan-word "mo kereng" (in gear). It is without doubt that Mmileng succeeds in capturing the attention and concentration of readers with his masterly choice of words. In the same sentence that has the word "monoketsing", the writer says, "sepalamo se gokolotswe maremo" to mean that the car's brakes were disengaged. In this instance, Mmileng uses the word "gokolotswe" (unhooked) in the place of "bofolotswe" (unfastened). The word "gokolotswe" is usually used when we refer to the act of unhooking, as in unhooking a safety-pin. Although we normally use the word "bofolotswe" to refer to the act of unfastening the brakes, Mmileng's choice of word is more precise and appropriate because, yes, the gear lever gets hooked when it is engaged and it gets unhooked when it is disengaged from a particular gear.



It is abundantly clear that some writers are capable of choosing and using words effectively to drive their meaning and message home. Serobatse (1989) in his sentence [D], expresses his observation of human relations very succinctly. In this sentence, the writer uses the word "moroba" instead of the word "lekgarebe". This word is normally used to refer to a young cow which has not given birth to a calf and is still very energetic, but it is used in this context to refer to a young woman who is still a virgin. In the same sentence, the writer uses the word "dipipanapipe" (the unrevealables) to refer to secrets. The word does not just refer to ordinary secrets, it essentially refers to highly confidential matters which ought not to be divulged to any person or friend under any circumstances. It is derived from the verb stem "-bipa" meaning to cover. In his attempt to give his sentence an appropriate rhythm, the writer has elided the noun prefix "Le-" from the word "Lekgwatlhe" (a bachelor). The idea of being unrevealable, hidden or covered is also contained in the word "kgwatlhe". We know that "kgwatlhe" is a person who denies the world future children because he cannot multiply. Apart from this meaning, the reader might be tempted to read and understand the word as "kgwatlha" which means a pocket for hiding valuables like money.

(D) Mo go ena, fa moroba o itaya mogala, ke dipipanapipe  
le kgwatlhe. (Serobatse, 1989:52)

(For his own part, when a young woman dials a call, it is  
usually a secret deal with a bachelor.)

(E) Bagolo ba gagwe ba ne ba gailega mo tletleregong ya  
dijanaga gaufi le toropo ya Swartruggens.  
(Serobatse, 1989: 67)

(His parents were decimated in a terrible collision of cars near  
the town of Swartruggens.)

In sentence [E], Serobatse creates a vivid and weird picture of the accident that killed Karabo's parents. He uses the word "gailega" which means to be decimated, to describe the intensity of the impact of the accident on the bodies of Karabo's parents. Any person

who finds himself in a state of having been decimated cannot have any hope of survival. Instead of using the word "thulanong" (in collision), Serobatse opts for the word "tletleregano" (in collision), derived from the ideophone "tletlerrrr" (ripp), to express the sound made by the two cars as they collided. It is as if the strips of metal used to manufacture the two cars are being torn apart and thus produce a tearing sound, "tletlerrrr" (rripp). This word has been used not only to reveal the pressure and force that was involved in the process, but also to reveal to the reader that the two cars in which Karabo's parents were travelling were devoid of even a slice of life.

Although most short story writers use simplicity and directness of style in their narratives, there are also some exceptions to the rule. A few writers can be faulted from the angle of language usage. Serobatse's (1989) *Ntshologe mokgosi*, is a case in point. This volume is so infested with archaic, difficult and incomprehensible words and sentence usages that the short stories in it do not capture the reader's interest, and themes are very difficult to deduce. Serobatse seems to have been so preoccupied with word choice that the level at which he handles his language is generally too high to be easily understood. What I am trying to suggest is that although an excellent and extremely high level of language usage may be applauded in certain circles of writing, in short story writing simplicity and directness is more powerful and effective. Language usage is the most crucial aspect of the short story as a genre. What Serobatse (1989) has failed to realise is that, in defamiliarising certain words that he uses, he makes his art even more inaccessible and incomprehensible to the reading public. Although there is an assertion that the success of the short story depends on the most scrupulous discipline in the choice and usage of words, the discipline referred to here emphasises compactness and terseness and not verbosity and absolute obscurity.

Serobatse sometimes even tends to lose the semantic content of some words he uses. In his short story, *Ngwana ke wa ga mang*, he commences by saying: "Fa motho a setse a iphotlhere, a ka bapa le tsela go leba koo" (Serobatse, 1989:52) (if a person is almost

destitute, he may walk along the road to arrive there). "Go iphotlhara" is the incorrect choice in the sense that it essentially means, "to be destitute or to fold ones arms across ones chest as a sign of despair", and does not have any element of "at a loss for transport", which the writer intended to convey. This is another instance where Serobatse tries to exaggerate situations by defamiliarising words, possibly with the intention of enriching his style. It is not surprising that even in scene-setting, Serobatse becomes more idealistic than realistic. He exaggerates everything that he describes to the point of absolute obscurity and disbelief. If we take the following sentences as examples, we realise how he tried his best to be deliberately obscure and difficult:

Go na le dipharaphara tsa matlo le dijanaga tse di manobonobo fale le fale. Go na le barutegi ba ba ebelang ka dipurapura mme ba ntse ba gwalalela setaataa ka tharabololo ya maboko a bona. Matlotla le ona a ntshitse magetla ka e le ponagalo ya motse mongwe le mongwe. ... Go totomela mo motseng o, o ka iphitlhela o lebile mo ntlong e e maphatsiphatsi ka matshola a a sephara. (Serobatse, 1989:52)

(There are vast expanses of houses and elegant cars here and there. There are educated inhabitants who roam the streets with academic regalia, as they stretch up to the firmament with the resolution of their mentalities. Deserted and delapidated houses raise their shoulders high as they are a feature of every village. ...If you plunged into this village you would find yourself looking into an elegant house with large windows.)

More simple and direct language could have evoked appropriate emotions and captured the reader's attention and concentration. It is very difficult for the reader to visualise "extremely vast expanses of houses" among "deserted and delapidated houses raising their shoulders high" with "educated inhabitants roaming the streets with their academic regalia", as this is more lunatic and idealistic than realistic or proper to life. Furthermore, the writer says that these educated people "stretch up to the firmament with the resolution of their mentalities", and continues to say, "to plunge into this village, you would find yourself looking into an elegant house with large windows". What is apparent in these

sentences is that meaning and message are not clearly conveyed and words that are used are archaic and difficult to comprehend out of context. The words "dipharaphara" and "setaataa" do not achieve the effect inherent in the lexical definition of the words themselves, and it is very difficult to discern the intended meanings, namely, "vast" and "firmament". It seems Serobatse wanted to experiment with the potentialities of a pompous style. His book is a volume that narrates a variety of short stories in fine words, fine words which show how carefully inflated the writer's style is. These fine words provide a style which is quite unintelligible to both the literate and non-literate. In brief, we can conclude that Serobatse's choice of words and sentence constructions are an embarrassment to the readers who are interested in short story reading and writing.

Every writer has his peculiar manner of choosing and using words as has been and will also be observed in the above and the following examples:

(F) Ba mo olela ba mo sukunyetsa mo butung. Ba fofa ka ena  
ka lebelo le le neng la sala le mo kukile dibete.  
(Shole, 1985:48)

(They picked him up and squeezed him into the boot of a car.  
They then flew with him at a speed that disturbed his  
stomach)

In sentence [F] there are two words which have been used to produce an unusual and intense meaning to reveal the cruel and ruthless manner in which Mfoloe was carried into the car. Instead of saying the three man-hunters lifted Mfoloe up, Shole chooses to say "ba mo olela" (they picked him up). "Ba mo olela" does not only mean that they picked him up, it also has the implication of picking up the pieces. This shows the ruthlessness and brutality with which the three men, Selepe, Rambeo and Lekabe, lifted Mfoloe and put him into the boot. In describing the manner in which these men put Mfoloe into the car boot, the writer chooses an appropriate word for creating the nasty situation which made Mfoloe wish himself dead. The writer uses the word "sukunyetsa" which does not simply mean to put into, but rather to squeeze into something. With this word, Shole successfully

captures the reader's attention and creates the cruelty and ruthlessness of the action of the three men. They did not just put him into the boot, but they squeezed him into the boot like a lifeless object. The writer's undoubted individuality rests entirely on his usage of generally available words. The importance of word choice and word usage is of great significance to his individual style. In making a vivid impression on the reader, the writer adopts picturesqueness of style. He says the three men "ba fofa ka ena" (they flew with him) instead of saying "ba kgweetsa ka lebelo le le kwa godimo" (they drove at a high speed). The word "fofa" means to fly, maybe like a bird, but in this context it means to drive at breakneck speed. In this way the writer uses a word that forces a reader to visualize and thus promote his lively experience and imagination of the speed at which these men were driving. This is also an economical way of describing the speed at which the car was being driven. Economy in this regard is preserved by substituting a colourless phrase "kgweetsa ka lebelo le le kwa godimo" with a single appropriate and metaphorical word "ba fofa".

Short story writers are also known coiners of compounds. However, here we have restricted our discussion of compounds to only three writers and their three compounds in the following three sentences:

(G) Ke fa ga Sebitsasentse sa Mmabatho kana, letsatsinyana le lona le a riana. (Shole, 1985:107)

(By the way it is at the Mmabatho Civic centre, and the sun goes down)

(H) Se, o ne a sa ipha sebaka sa go se sekaseka ka a ne a itirile maratahelele-wa-mpha-se-ke-se-jang-ke-sa-tshedile. (Thobega, 1990:18)

(He did not give himself enough time to evaluate this because he had turned himself into a-kind-of-a-curious-give-me-what-I-can-eat-while-I-still-live)

(I) Ka mabaka a a sa tlhabelweng ke letsatsi o ne a boa letsholo la ga-re-a-di-bona kwa sekolong morago ga go tshetha tsela ya mophato wa borobongwe (JC). Setshedi, 1985:20)

(Owing to some confidential reasons he came back from a we-did-not-see-them expedition after having repeated his standard nine several times)

In sentences [G], [H] and [I] Shole, Thobega and Setshedi have coined new compounds out of ordinary, familiar words. These coinages are "sebitsasentse" (Civic centre), "maratahelele-wa-mpha-se-ke-se-jang-ke-sa-tshedile" (a-kind-of-curious-give-me-what-I-can-eat-while-I-still-live) and "ga-re-a-di-bona" (we-did-not-see-them). These compounds are specific words coined for specific situations, and are not the common compounds that have anchored their existence in the Tswana language. The writers have used these compounds to introduce new ideas, and they do not catch up with common and accepted ideas like common compounds, "mosadimogolo" (an old woman) and "kgosikgolo" (a paramount chief). As Turner (1973) points out, this compounding is a mode of thought in literary writing, an intentional catching of the specific situation, and for this a specific vocabulary is essential. If we look at these coinages we note that the writers essentially suggest a mode of thought rather than economise on word usage. Look at the length of Thobega's compound, "maratahelele-wa-mpha-se-ke-se-jang-ke-sa-tshedile" and Setshedi's compound "ga-re-a-di-bona". Thobega uses compounding to describe a curious person who, in his little life, is only interested in hunger-marching and feels that he has to be given food to eat while he is still alive. Thobega has used quite a number of speech elements to coin this long compound word to capture the saddening situation in which a person has become a parasite and feeds upon other people for the rest of his life.

On the other hand, Setshedi uses a coined compound "ga-re-a-di-bona" as a qualificative to describe the expedition that was undertaken by the village boys. This compound "ga-re-a-di-bona" means we did not see them; but in this instance the writer uses it to qualify the noun "letsholo" (expedition). Instead of using the ordinary qualificative "le le sa atlegang"

(unsuccessful) the writer prefers to capture the reader's concentration and, therefore, he takes the words used by the village boys "ga-re-a-di-bona" and use them as a qualificative. By so doing Setshedi gains a positive effect and leaves a lasting impression on the reader. In sentence [G] Shole uses the compound "sebitsasentse" in the place of the compound "bokgobokanelabaagi" (a place where residents gather). The compound "sebitsasentse" is derived from the verb stems "-bitsa" meaning to call, and "-ntse" meaning to sit; and it is also a transliteration of the English word "civic centre". This compound "sebitsasentse" means that which entices or lures while sitting down and it is more appropriate under the circumstances in which it is used than "bokgobokanelabaagi" which simply means a place where residents gather. As "sebitsasentse" this place does not only entice or lure the residents of Mmabatho, it also lures people from other neighbouring areas. It is a centre where people of different cultural backgrounds and those of different ages converge in order to benefit from the pleasures it offers.

#### **4.1.2 The sentence**

As we have stated above, the short story is a genre whose success depends on the scrupulous terseness and compactness of sentences. The short story usually uses sentences which are concise, brief and economical, yet powerful, expressive and purposeful. It shuns a waste of words and flourishes on an elliptical and cryptic style. It is common practice within the field of short story writing for writers to use short sentences and sometimes to "take the poetic licence to disregard certain rules of grammar" and use "incomplete sentences, one-word sentences, and even paragraphs that are shorter than two lines" (Balogun, 1991:28). However, there are short story writers who sometimes deviate from the usage of short sentences and use long sentences to achieve specific artistic objectives which include humility and humour, and to reflect on the character's relaxed or satisfied state of mind. The nature of the sentences normally determines the tempo of the action of the story and these sentences may be short, in which case the tempo will be fast, or the sentences may be long, in which case the tempo will be slow and reflect a leisurely atmosphere.

#### 4.1.2.1 The short sentence

A good short story writer avoids utilising monotonous and boring sentences so that he can achieve lasting effect and impression. Magoleng (1974) in his short story, *Ga le a ka la tswa*, uses short and simple sentences to effect tension and intensity and long sentences to create the necessary humour and a relaxed atmosphere. In this story, Boiki sells Kesentseng's beloved dog, Thulamotho, for one rand in order to buy maize-meal. When Kesentseng discovers this he becomes empty-spirited and disillusioned. This mood of disillusionment, restlessness and disappointment is captured by Magoleng through the use of short, simple, but powerful and expressive sentences: "A ke yona e Boiki o ka e rekisang? Ena Boiki, e seng yo mongwe" (Magoleng, 1974:1) (Is it the one that Boiki is selling. Boiki himself, none other!). The use of short and simple sentences reveals Kesentseng's anger, disgust and amazement. He is disgusted and amazed at how Boiki could sell a dog that once saved his life from the wrath of a python. Another feature that shows itself in these two sentences is that of the rhetorical question. Magoleng uses the short rhetorical question to great effect in his short stories. Serudu (1993:277) in quoting Guth says

A rhetorical question has a built-in answer. It seems to leave the decision up to the reader, but it is worded in such a way that only one answer is possible.

In its nature, a rhetorical question does not evoke a reply but effects emphasis and directs the reader's line of thinking. Through rhetorical questions, Magoleng forces the reader to participate more actively in the solution of the problem of the story. He also directs our interpretation and reading, as discernible from the examples above. It is through these short rhetorical questions that the writer wishes to impress and convince the reader that Boiki acted wrongfully and with great ingratitude. He should not have sold the dog because he was well aware of its value to its owner. This short story features numerous examples of rhetorical questions. When the python was about to attack him, Boiki first



heard bellowing and galloping cattle and thought that the cattle would fight. However, what ensued was not a fight involving cattle, but a fight between the python and Kesentseng's dog, Thulamotho. Magoleng in beginning the narration on the fight, says "Kae? Ba fitlhela namane e tona ya noga" (Magoleng, 1974:7) (What on earth? They found a mammoth of snake). He uses a one-word rhetorical question, "Kae?" to indicate imbalance and doubt. This rhetorical question essentially implies that the herdboys were completely wrong in thinking that the cattle would fight. Therefore, the implication of this rhetorical question is that what the reader anticipates is not the real event that is about to ensue.

In his description of the action taken by the narrator-character in tracing the lost Mmanakana, Mokgoko (1983) in his short story, *Mmanakana*, also uses simple, but expressive sentences:

Ka tlelwa ke thaloganyo ya gore ke itire mothudi yo o tsamayang a batla diporaemasetofo tse di bobolang. Ka tsena mo obarolong pele ga ke fologa ka mmila. Ka ya go tlhatloga ka o o latelang o gape o bapileng le o ke tswang mo go ona. Ka tsena ntlo le ntlwana. (Mokgoko, 1983:9)

(I thought of impersonating a repair man looking for damaged primus stoves. I wore my overall before going down the street. I went up the one running parallel to the one I was from. I went from one house into the other).

This simplicity characterises the short story, *Mmanakana*, as a whole. Direct and simple, but meaningful, expressive and purposeful. Mokgoko does not engage in boring, long-winded or elaborate explanations which might harm the essence of his short story. He uses a short and incisive sentence that hits the nail on the head, "Ka tsena ntlo le ntlwana" (I went from one house into another). The reader is able to visualise the movement of the narrator-character as he walked from one house to another in search of Mmanakana. In his usage of the repeated "I", Mokgoko achieves great effect because he adds a certain degree of vividness, involvement and life into the action described. The reader is able to

identify with the narrator-character and experience the same emotion experienced by the narrator-character.

In a good short story we find dramatic intensity and all that does not, in one way or another, add strength to the story is pruned away. Every word has its value and every sentence strikes home with its message of suggestion. The direct style need not be beautiful, it needs to go straight to the point without hesitation. The following excerpt from Magoleng's (1987) short story, *Lorato*, contained in the volume, *Le pelong*, illustrates this point:

Dilo tsa bana ba rona! O mang? Moilwe. O mang? Bapaki. Moilwe a latelelwa kwa nageng. Bapaki a letlelelwa go tlolela sefero. Ga tsamaya, dikgwedi tsa feta di le tharo, mme ya re Bapaki a mo kwaletse ya nna gona o bonang kwa noka e elelelang gona -- Khumoyagae. Sefane se sentle. A batla go itse gore o kile a se bona kae gape. Ya re e le fale ga sedimoga -- Moilwe. (Magoleng, 1987:12)

(Our children's mannerisms! Who are you? Moilwe. Who are you? Bapaki. Moilwe was followed to the veld. Bapaki was allowed to jump into the house. After three months, upon receipt of a letter from Bapaki, she then discovered where the river was flowing to-- Khumoyagae. What a beautiful surname. She wanted to know where she had seen it. Then it brightened up -- Moilwe)

This description would be less definite and less forceful if it were not presented in a more simple and vehement expression: "Dilo tsa bana ba rona! O mang? Moilwe. O mang? Bapaki". Magoleng employs simplicity in style to convey simple, but profound emotions, simultaneously utilising simple sentences which provoke figurative expression to reveal a conflict of emotions. Lorato was not aware that Moilwe and Bapaki were blood brothers. That is why upon receipt of a letter from Bapaki she feels an uneasiness to discover that Bapaki shares his surname with Moilwe. The usage of short and simple sentences highlights an awful relationship in which Moilwe and Bapaki shares the love of Lorato.

The tone of the writer in "Dilo tsa bana ba rona" (our children's mannerisms), is one of disapproval, reproach and scorn, particularly towards the behavioural attitudes of modern youth. Although the writer's style is simple, direct and easily comprehensible, it is capable of evoking the deepest emotions of the narrator and characters. It is this directness of word usage that captures the reader's concentration and attention. Although these words are simple and understandable, they possess intense emotion. Although these words are simple and not beautiful, they possess that profound emotion that lingers on in the mind of the reader even a few days after perusal. Through these simple words the reader also understands the discrimination that exists in the treatment of Moilwe and Bapaki from what the writer says: "Moilwe a latelelwa kwa nageng. Bapaki a letlelelwa go tlolela sefero". Notice the poetic diction in, "Moilwe a latelelwa", and "Bapaki a letlelelwa". In contrasting the two words, "a latelelwa" and "a letlelelwa", the writer not only is able to express the uniqueness and individuality of the two brothers, he is also able to express the unevenness of the hand that keeps them. As Notestein (1974:177) puts it:

Nothing over-ornate - ornate to impress rather than to express  
- nothing unintelligible, nothing florid, nothing full of  
allusions of purely intellectual character, nothing insincere,  
may pass openly and unchallenged through the gates of the  
short story.

There is no way one can surpass directness of narrative style, particularly when it is closely linked to simplicity. If one notices the character of the words used in the excerpt from the short story, *Lorato*, above, one realises that even a child can use and understand them. These are words used in everyday conversations, discussions and narrations. For example, there is no way a reader cannot understand the meaning of the word, "tsamaya" (go) and "sedimoga" (light up). Even the sentences that are used in this excerpt are short, yet beneath these words there is intense emotion. Notice the emotion that accompanies the sentences that reveal that Lorato is in love with blood brothers. Lorato discovers that she is in love with the two sons of Khumoyagae, Moilwe and Bapaki. However, what lies beneath this discovery is the sheer innocence that has characterised her relationships with

the two brothers. When the writer states, "Sefane se sentle", he does not only refer to the beauty of the surname, but also refers to the beauty and the love that Lorato saw in the two brothers. Thus her deepest emotions are touched and tested. As Notestein (1974:179) asserts, "profound emotion is always simple and seeks simple expression". Being simple, however, it does not have to degenerate to being commonplace, as this would offend simplicity. This is supported by Balogun (1991:27) when he says that the short story writer must use common words uncommonly well. In order to succeed in this task, the writer should give thought to each word and weigh each one spoken or written for its true sense, its effectiveness and its colour, because each word a fiction writer uses must have meaning, weight, feeling and particularity (Balogun, 1991). It is evident from the excerpt quoted above that there are writers who have diligently obeyed the laws of this literary form.

Although long sentences have specific effect on the organisation of short stories, Magoleng's (1987) sentences are short because a good number of them are simple sentences. The reason for this type of style does not lie in the fact that the writer is incapable of cause-and-effect reasoning and of a more sophisticated mental activity of abstracting generalities out of specifics. No, the reason lies in the fact that the writer wants to capture the concentration and attention of all readers across the language spectrum. If we look at the following sentences, taken from the short story, *Mokgwa wa lorato*, we realise that even a child who has not yet learned the intricacies of language usage can readily read and understand their meaning:

Ya re a itshwara molomo, ka itse gore o ikgalemetse. Ka leka go bua, mme loleme lwa bo lo kgomaretse magalapa. E le gore Bogoma o kae! A e kare morago ga beke fela re nyalane, a bo a se yo fano? Motlholo! Ga batla go apoga. Ee, bona, tlhe! Ke a itse jaanong gore ke ne ke na le ena mo kotsing ya mmotorokara. Ke gona ke elelelwang gore ke eng a se na le nna mo bolaong. (Magoleng, 1987:17)

(When he touched his chin, I knew that he held his emotions in check. I tried to speak, but my tongue had become glued to my palate. But where is Bogoma! Can he vanish from my sight after one week's marriage? Miracles! It has suddenly become clearer. Yes, this is it! I now know that I was in a car accident with him. It is now that I realise why he is not with me in bed.)

Serudu (1993) summarises the significance of the utilisation of short and simple sentences when he says that these sentences assist the writer to achieve economy of expression and touch upon serious thematic issues in a compressed manner. The utilisation of short and simple sentences is in no way a sign of limited vocabulary because these writers also take advantage of the possibilities of subordination in their art, but sparingly.

#### 4.1.2.2 The long sentence

Short story writers often use a high frequency of short or long sentences, or alternate sentences that are short with those that are long in order to emphasize, to show tempo and to highlight a particular atmosphere and a specific mood. Serudu (1993:28) says that, writers often utilise "a short incisive sentence to sum up a key idea or to give a pointed advice", while a long and "elaborate sentence is often used for detailed explanation or argument". Although long sentences are used to achieve a specific effect and to illustrate a particular mood and atmosphere, it is equally important to use correct punctuation to make these sentences intelligible and comprehensible. In their utilisation of long sentences which are correctly punctuated, Magoleng (1972) and Malope (1982) achieve great effect. Look at the following examples from the short stories, *Nko ga e dupe*, from **Mpolelele dilo** (1972), and *Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana 'a mmaago* from **Mmualebe** (1982):

(J) Ke bone matsalaake a tlhaga a ntebile, mme ya re a le gaufi, a nyeba; a nkatla, mme a ntobetsa mo dimpeng.  
(Magoleng, 1972:25)

(I saw my mother-in-law looking deep into me, and when she came closer, she smiled; she then kissed me, and pressed her hand against my stomach)

(K) Mogopolo wa ga Morongwe wa boelela kgang ya ga nkokoagwe .... e seng jaaka a e mo lotlegetse; wa e boelela jaaka ena Morongwe yo a leng gaufi le go ya ditšhabeng a neng a akanyetsa ka fa ditiragalo di neng tsa tlhomagana ka gona, gone gantsi mo dikgannye re tlhaloganya se maikutlo a rona a ratang go se tlhaloganya, e seng se dikgang di se kayang; gantsi re bona se maemo a rona mo botshelong a re letlang go se bona; gantsi re tlhaloganya se maitemogelo a rona a re kgontshang go se tlhaloganya. (Malope, 1982:2)

(Morongwe's mind flashed back to her grandmother's story .... not as she had narrated it to her; it flashed back to it as the person who was about to go into the world, and she narrated these events in their sequential order, because in most cases we understand stories according to the way our emotions or feelings would like to understand them, not what the stories imply; in most cases we see what our status in life allows us to see; in most cases we understand what our experiences enable us to understand)

The accuracy of the punctuation marks and the slow tempo that these two sentences assume enhance the relaxed atmosphere that is prevalent. In example (J) the writer assumes a slow tempo with the utilisation of commas and semi-colons and achieves the appropriate happy mood that exists between the two characters, Morongwe and MmaMmualebe. Notice how the writer conveys this mood, "a nyeba; a nkatla, mme a ntobetsa mo dimpeng" (she smiled; she then kissed me, and pressed her hand against my stomach). The relationship that is described in this sentence is one of intimacy, happiness and true affection. It is with amazing frequency that Magoleng avoids the usage of subordinate conjunctions when he expresses step-by-step action. In example (K) the writer ellipsis, semicolons and commas to introduce new ideas, to emphasise specific thoughts and to provide reasons for particular actions by the characters. Malope uses ellipsis in this sentence to highlight the new idea that concerns Morongwe's imminent marriage which will remove her from the family. He also uses a semi-colon as well as repetition, to emphasise his philosophical thoughts.

The significance of Malope's philosophical thoughts is given greater vividness and emphasis not only by the major punctuation marks, but also by the repetition of words such as, "gantsi" (in most cases), "tlhaloganya" (understand), and "a rona" (our). The three structures quoted immediately above, have three statements that run parallel and this parallelism gives the three parts of Malope's long sentence equal strength. As a result we can conclude that the utilisation of the semi-colons creates an equilibrium and balance of the effectiveness of the philosophical thoughts provided by the three segments. The only instance where Malope has used a comma in this sentence is where he shows a cause-and-effect relationship between his events. This causal relationship is given more weight by the usage of the conjunction "gonne" (because). The importance of punctuation marks in writing cannot be over-emphasised because without them, meaning and message cannot be derived from the text. Notice how Mashike also uses major punctuation marks and commas to convey his ideas with more precision:

(L) Mooki yo moleele yo mokiriga; popo e sa atlega, sefatlhego se raletswe ke mabele a motsing go le kgora, e kete mmele wa noko; a tlhaga a ba eteletse pele -- metsotso e le sometlhano ke sa bolo go goroga. (Mashike, 1987:7)

(A tall and hefty nurse; here creation did not succeed, the face was sprinkled with the sorghum of the great harvest like the body of a porcupine; she came out walking in front of them ... fifteen minutes had already passed since my arrival)

If long sentences are juxtaposed as in the example below, and no major punctuation marks, such as dashes, colons and semi-colons are used, the resulting error is what is normally called a run-on sentence:

(M) Maikaelelo e ne e le go ya go rekisa dipilisi tse a neng a di utswile gone mo ofising fa di sa fitlhlwe go ntshiwa jaaka bosupi mo kgetsing e e neng e le gautshwane le go sekwa. (Thobega, 1990:36)

(The aim was to go and sell the pills that he had stolen from the office while they were still being hidden to serve as evidence in a case that was almost about to be tried)

The absence of punctuation marks in sentence [M] not only makes it difficult for the reader to understand the written communication, but it also contributes to sloppiness in the appearance of a sentence of such a length. We not only cry for the insertion of punctuation marks in the sentence, we also would like to be able to speak the sentence with a relevant pause so that its correct meaning and message can be understood. The writer could have used a semi-colon between the word "ofising" (office) and the word "fa" (while) to improve on its readability. It is some of these discrepancies that make the readability of long sentences difficult.

Although some writers tend to use long punctuated and run-on sentences, other writers use long sentences which combine punctuation with subordination. According to Wells, (cf. Benson, 1975) the logic of sentence structure demands that subordination establish a clear scale of values by subordinating less worthy ideas into dependent clauses. Using dependent or subordinate clauses not only gives variety to the writing, but also helps to illustrate the relationship between ideas in a sentence. One idea may be the cause or the result of another idea in the sentence, or it may give the time of the idea. Here are examples of long sentences with subordination:

(N) Mosadi wa batho keledi e sa kgale mo go ena gonne o ne a lekile go ikgatholosa dipuo le ditshotlo tsa motse wa Morokologadi, mme ga se ka ga thusa sepe. (Bogatsu, 1995a:13)

(The poor woman's tears could not stop because she had tried to ignore the gossips and scorns of the village of Morokologadi, but all to no avail.)

In sentence [N] the subordinate clauses are introduced by the conjunctions "gonne" (because) and "mme" (but) which reveal that although "the act of crying" is more



important in this sentence, it essentially came about as a result of "the people's gossip and scorn". The poor woman tried her best to ignore this gossip and scorn, but to no avail. If we examine sentence [N] we realise that subordination has really established a clear scale of values, because the main clause is more important than the adverbial dependent clause, while the last dependent clause is less worthy because it answers to the first and second clauses. It essentially provides additional information without which the idea of the sentence will not be lost, particularly because its message is contained in the phrase, "o ne a lekile go ikgatholosa" (she had tried to ignore). This phrase obviously has an element of being defeated, which the last clause of sentence [N] repeats.

Although subordination is often used to show a relationship of connectedness, causality and coherence of ideas or events, it is sometimes better to split unnecessarily long sentences in order to improve their readability. For example, Bogatsu's sentence [O] can be divided into two sentences because it contains two ideas that separately give reasons why there was a suggestion to the fact that some of the houses in the village should not be demolished.

(O) Go ne go na le dintlo tse go neng go kopilwe gore di se ka tsa tlhatlhamololwa gore e re fa go sa ntse go agelwa batlhokomedi ba diphologolo bonno, badisa ba bo ba latsa tlhogo mo go tsona, gone letlhaku le lešwa le agelwa mo go le legologolo. (Bogatsu, 1995a:13)

(There were houses which, it was requested, that they should not be demolished so that while houses for the supervisors of the animals were still being constructed, the game rangers would continue to sleep in them, because the new branch gets built onto the old one.)

The general feeling is that if we leave sentence [O] juxtaposed as it is, we tend to lose the meaning and effect of the last clause of the sentence. However, if we separate the last clause from the sentence so that it stands on its own, the emphasis that we derive from the proverb, "letlhaku le lešwa le agelwa mo go le legologolo" which means that the young people should be guided by the traditions of the forefathers, becomes more vivid and effective.

Writers such as Malope (1982), Bogatsu (1995), Lephogole (Malope, et al., 1983) and others, use long sentences to give extensive descriptive or informative details. The longest sentence we have quoted thus far, that is, sentence [K] is an appropriate example of a long sentence in which the writer attempts to provide extensive information. The information contained in this sentence is very important because it provides a particular life view: That in life we tend to only understand what our feelings and experiences would like us to understand. Apart from this philosophical thought, the sentence also alludes to MmaMmualebe's story and advice. It also brings the reader closer to Morongwe's understanding and conception of the old woman's advice. It is clear that the narrator usually uses long sentences to furnish information, be it a step-by-step action or a descriptive detail concerning a specific character.

In the short story, *Mo letlalong la nku*, Lephogole (Malope et al., 1983) uses long sentences to describe Bofa's step-by-step investigative action aimed at the arrest of a confidence-trickster, Nkwe. He also describes how Bofa relaxes in his beautiful garden after one hard day's work. The peaceful and relaxed atmosphere prevalent in the garden is further emphasised by the writer's usage of a long sentence:

(P) A tswa ka setilo le galase ya bojalwa ba Haig, faele e ntse e le ka fa legwafeng, a nna fa tlase ga setlhare se se mo gare ga tshingwana ya gagwe ya dithunya, lefelo le le se nang matshwenyego, a gabola bojalwa go se nene, pele a bula faele. (cf. Malope, 1983:29)

(He went out with a chair and a glass of Haig whisky, with the file still under his armpit, he sat under a tree situated in the centre of the flower garden, a peaceful place devoid of problems, he took a sip of liquor, before he opened the file.)

Lephogole uses a long sentence to furnish details concerning Bofa's rest after a hard day's work. Notice also our assertion regarding step-by-step action in the sentence quoted above: (i) Bofa goes out of the house. (ii) Bofa sits down under a tree. (iii) Bofa takes a sip of liquor. (iv) Bofa opens a file to read. The sentence not only shows a step-by-step

action, it also creates a jovial mood and endorses the view that long sentences are used to describe a happy and relaxed atmosphere. The ideas and descriptions contained in this sentence are reason enough for the view that the resolution of our sorrows, mishaps and frustrations can be achieved by excursions to peaceful, exciting or pleasurable places. What I am trying to suggest is that the long sentence implies that we have to accept that there are problems in life, but that there are also pleasures that can raise our spirits.

#### 4.1.3 Repetition

It has been discovered that sometimes the language used in some short stories is purposefully rhythmic. What makes these stories rhythmic are the extreme terseness of their language and the utilisation of the devices of repetition. Repetition of the same or similar single word and phrase is evident in Thobega's (1990) *Marothodi a dikeledi*, contained in **Ditedu tsa nkwe**:

E re motsadi go dira jaana; a bolelele ngwana gore e re fa monna wa gago a riana, le wena o ngakalale, o riana. Fa a gata kgato ya bobedi, wena, ngwanaka, gata ya lesome, wena! .....O ithute selo se go tweng mosadi; o ka go oka jaaka sethunya se oka serurubele, kgabagare fela fa phefo e tshikhinya sethunya, serurubele se wele fa fatshe ka go tlhoka boitsetsepelo. Se wele fa fatshe se re ruthu! (Thobega, 1990:8)

(As the mother did this; she would tell her daughter that whenever her husband does this, you should also be stubborn and do this. When he takes a second step, you, my child, should take the tenth, I mean you! ..... You should study this thing called a woman; she can entice you like a flower entices a butterfly, and should the wind shake the flower the butterfly would fall down because of the loss of grip. It would fall down with a bang!)

Thobega chooses to repeat words such as, "a riana" (does this), "gata" (takes a step), "wena" (you), "oka" (entice), "sethunya" (flower), "serurubele" (butterfly) and the phrase "se wele fa fatshe" (would fall down), because he wishes to draw the reader's attention to

these words in order to achieve a specific effect. He uses repetition in order to give expression to a powerful feeling, that a woman is capable of luring or enticing a man to her and to emphasise the idea that mothers play a decisive and critical role in the marriages of their daughters. The writer repeats the word "oka" because the meaning of this word is central to the writer's message. The word "oka" means to entice or to lure. The writer combines this repetition with another repetition, this time the repetition of the phrase "se wele fa fatshe" because this combination provides the ultimate results of the action of enticement. Thobega wants to convey the idea that women are capable of enticing men just like flowers entice bees, and that once the intruder comes between them, women are not afraid of discarding a man. By repeating the phrase "se wele fa fatshe", Thobega not only emphasises the intensity of the downfall, but also suggests the abhorrence with which he views this attitude of women.

The above repetition has both aesthetic and utilitarian value for it is a device that gives a touch of beauty or attractiveness to a piece of expression and also serves certain practical purposes in the overall organisation of the short story (Okpewho, 1992). If we look at this passage, what immediately catches the reader's eye is the beauty and attractiveness of the sound of the repeated words. This kind of deliberate repetition is a feature of literature that captures the reader's attention and concentration. The repetition of a phrase, a line or a passage has a certain quality characteristic of a melody. If the repetition occurs between intervals in a story, the reader is often delighted to identify with and to accompany the narrator in going over the passage and the story that have now gripped his interest and concentration. Repetition not only has anaesthetic impact on the reader, it also gives a certain amount of emphasis to a point that needs to be stressed.

In emphasising the closeness of the relationship between the narrator-character and Mmamoki, Mashike (1987:2-3) in his short story, *Di wele morerwana*, from the volume, *Pelo segole*, employs an associative repetition: "Fa e le mathe, ke le leleme; fa e le leitlho ke le keledi; fa e le lenala, ke le monwana" (If he was the saliva, I was the tongue; if he

was the eye, I was the tear; if he was the nail, I was the finger). Although this repetition is employed to mark a feeling of closeness and intimacy between two people, it also shows a sense of utmost delight at how two different people or objects can relate to each other. We know that the saliva and the tongue are inseparably linked together; that both the eye and the tears cannot survive without each other; and that the nail and the finger have a tight bond between themselves. Mashike uses this type of repetition to show the reader the unending and unwavering closeness and intimacy that existed between the narrator-character and Mmammoki. Notice how Moroke (1968) also utilises repetition in his short story, *O potile noga ka fa mosimeng*, to drive his point home:

A tlhatloga, a tlhatloga, a tlhatloga, mme noga le yona ya lelesela e ntse e itshoka ka kutu ya setlhare. Noga ya ntsha loleme. Matlho a yona a thunya kgalefo le polao. Mmele wa yona o tlasemoga jaaka legadima. Tlhogo ya yona e ne e le gaufi le serethe sa gagwe. A lepelela ka lokala lwa setlhare mme a tsholetsa dinao. Lokala lwa robega, mme mosese wa gagwe wa tshwarwa ke lokala lo lo lebaganeng le fa noga e neng e le gona. Ngwana wa batho a ragakanya, a ithutlaka, a goa. Mosese wa gagoga, tlerrrr! (Moroke, 1968:12)

(She climbed, and climbed and climbed, and the snake also slithered up the tree trunk. The snake stuck out its tongue. Its eyes were exploding with a fearful rage. Its body was shining like lightning. Its head was near her heel. She climbed off by the branch of a tree and lifted her feet. The branch broke, and her dress got caught by the branch that was facing up to the direction of the snake. The poor child wriggled, twisted and shouted. The dress tore, rippp!)

In this short story, the old woman, Sara Monageng receives her pension money and goes back home to rest for a while. During her sleep, Madinawa stealthily enters the old woman's room and snatches a tobacco bag full of the old woman's pension money. She then decides to go and hide the money in a tree. Hence the events of the passage quoted above. In this passage Moroke repeats the phrase "A tlhatloga" (she climbed), thrice in order to indicate the height that was reached by Madinawa through her continuous

climbing of the tree. This repetition is not only indicative of the intensity and the fast pace of the act of climbing, it is also employed to avoid the utilisation of qualificatives. Madinawa continues to climb higher and higher because she is closely followed by a slithering and hissing snake. The mere repetition of the word "snake", and its movement up the tree in pursuit of Madinawa reveals the everpresent evil that accompanies Madinawa. Moroke emphasises the snake's incessant pursuit, its presence everywhere and its undying determination to get hold of Madinawa with the following repetition:

- (i) Matlho / a yona / a thunya
  - (ii) Mmele / wa yona / o tllhasemoga
  - (iii) Tlhogo / ya yona / e le gaufi le serethe.
- 
- (i) Its / eyes / were exploding.
  - (ii) Its / body / was shining.
  - (iii) Its / head / was near her heel)

If we look at lines one and two, we realise that the two lines display the similarity of lexical items placed in the same position as: NOUN / POSSESSIVE / VERB. These lines display a uniform structuring to effect semantic equivalence between lexical items that constitute the same word groups and are placed in the same syntactic position. It is very important to take cognisance of the fact that semantic equivalence, in this instance, involves the relationship of synonymity and emphasis. Moroke, through this repetition, emphasises the wrath of the snake and the seriousness of its action in pursuit of Madinawa. In this way the writer uses repetition successfully to depict the manner in which the snake pursues Madinawa and the manner in which she experiences the rapidity and the imminence of her being bitten, as well as the possibility of death. Moroke has used repetition extensively in this quotation, for instance, Madinawa realises that the snake is close on her heels and chooses an alternative route in the hope that she will leave the snake behind and save her life. The writer expresses this change of route in this manner: "A lepelela ka lokala lwa setlhare mme a tsholetsa dinao. Lokala lwa robega, mme mosese wa gagwe wa tshwarwa ke lokala" (Moroke, 1968:12) (She climbed off by the branch of a tree and lifted her feet. The branch broke, and her dress got caught by the

branch). Moroke uses repetition again, not only to express the futility of Madinawa's action, but also to indicate the weakness of the branch. Although she had hoped that the branch would be her saviour in lowering her down onto the ground, she discovers to her chagrin that the branch could not be trusted under those circumstances. The repetition of the word "lokala" (branch) has a nasty tone of contempt as used in this passage. The writer ridicules the action taken by Madinawa as contemptuous and idiotic.

Although Moroke employs repetition of single words, phrases and simple sentences, other writers repeat the structure of the particular part of the sentence itself. Ntsime (1972) in one paragraph includes three sentences with the identical introductory unit:

Fa a dira tirelo ya kolobetso o ne a rothetsa metsi mo phuphung. Fa a dira tirelo ya tlhomamiso le kamogelo mo kerekeng o ne a tsaya mmu wa phuphu gore a tle a o gase mo lebatleng la kereke. Fa a dira tirelo ya selalelo, senkgwe se ne sa tshelwa mo mmung wa phuphu mme beine yona ya tshelwa mo go yona. (Magoleng & Ntsime, 1972:39)

(When he performed the baptismal ritual he sprinkled water onto the grave. When he performed the confirmation ritual in the church he took the soil of the grave so that he could throw it on the church ground. When he performed the holy communion ritual, the bread was sprinkled on the soil of the grave and the wine was poured into it)

It is interesting to note that Ntsime repeats the phrase "When he performed the ... ritual" thrice as a sentence opener. If we look at these three sentences, we realise that Ntsime repeats identical grammatical words and identical grammatical structures and puts them in a particular pattern. He manipulates words into patterns in order to emphasise a specific point: The significance of religious rituals in the life of a human being from the moment of birth, through youth, until the last ceremony of death; which is a sequence of development for every person. And, since these particular rituals referred to in the short story were performed after the death of Goitseman, the writer repeats the word "phuphu" (grave) thrice, parallel to the stages of religious development. This structural patterning

also produces a lasting impression without necessarily losing the inherent meaning of the words used. The parallel structures that exist in the example above, exhibit grammatical, lexical and semantic similarities; and this patterning is used, not only to draw attention to an important similarity in the manner of ritual performance, but also to an important contrast that exists among the three rituals. In the above example from Ntsime's (Magoleng & Ntsime, 1972) short story, *Letshwao la kolobetso*, the introductory parts of the three sentences exhibit a clear device of parallelism, namely, "Fa a dira tirelo / Fa a dira tirelo / Fa a dira tirelo" (When he performed the ... ritual). One of the three clauses points to the theme of the short story, that is, the mark of baptism; and it introduces the linguistic device of close parallelism. The three introductory phrases fall short of complete identity by just three words, "kolobetso / tlhomamiso / selalelo" (baptismal / confirmation / holy communion) that occupy one position. This parallelism foregrounds the differences in the three religious rituals performed for one person, Goitsemanang. The parallelism in grammatical structure between the three lines calls attention to itself. The analysis of the three lines also shows that parallelism does not only appear in the initial part of the three lines, but also in the latter part of these lines:

... o ne a rothetsa / metsi / mo phuphung.  
 ... o ne a tsaya / mmu wa phuphu / ... mo lebatleng la kereke  
 ... senkgwe / se ne sa tshelwa / mo mmung wa phuphu.

(...he sprinkled / water / onto the grave.  
 ... he took / the soil of the grave / ...on the church ground  
 ... the bread / was sprinkled / on the soil of the grave.)

In the interpretation of the three verbs, we realise that they all refer to past events. The present action in, "Fa a dira tirelo", which appears in all the three lines indicates that the ritual is relevant to the present time and the present circumstances that surround Goitsemanang. On the other hand, the three verbs in the simple past tense suggest that the religious rituals performed in the present should have been performed some time ago. The interpretation of, "mo phuphung/ mmu wa phuphu/ mo mmung wa phuphu" (into the grave/ the soil of the grave/ on the soil of the grave) points to a sad experience of death



that exists, that has been in existence and that shall exist, for which religious rituals have never been performed. These words are used to express a change in the life of Goitsewang, from one situation, through another situation to a specific situation. Therefore, the changes we discover in these words suggest a progression toward a specific environment. The baptismal mark that Goitsewang yearned for, even during the time of her life on earth, is what she also cried for during her ghostly appearances to her parents. Now that she has been baptised, that she has been confirmed and has also had holy communion posthumously, her spirit that has been floundering all over, ultimately has been laid to rest. Ntsime emphatically states it that Goitsewang entered the kingdom of heaven after all these ceremonies and rituals. Through the repetition that we see in these three sentences, Ntsime (Magoleng & Ntsime, 1972) emphasises the significance of Christianity and repentance and that one has to go through all the three religious rituals in order to be declared a child of God. It also alludes to the significance of religious needs as opposed to material needs.

There is another deviation noticeable between the three sentences; that is, the fronting of the object in "senkgwe se ne sa tshelwa", ( the bread was sprinkled) as compared with the grammatical norms observable in, "o ne a rothetsa metsi" (he sprinkled water), and "o ne a tsaya mmu" (he took the soil). What we observe in the first example is that "senkgwe" is placed in an abnormal position, with the result that "senkgwe" (bread) becomes more conspicuous. It is abnormal for the object to come before the verb, and if an object is fronted, as in this case, the object acquires greater prominence. This deviation, therefore, affords prominence to the ritual of holy communion over the other rituals, particularly because this "senkgwe" represents the body of Jesus Christ. Although Ntsime employs repetition of phrases and close parallelism in sentence structures, there is another feature of language that is discernible in the third sentence. Ntsime uses long sentences which are either only punctuated to avoid subordination or manifested with conjunctions to indicate subordination to distinguish between worthy and less worthy ideas or clauses.

#### 4.1.4 The paragraph

Sebate (1992) in his M.A. dissertation poses the question "What length pertains to a short story?" In answering this question, reference is made to Maxwell-Mahon's (1984) book, **Van Schaik's guide to creative writing**, which provides guidelines regarding the length of the short story; which also distinguishes between a short short story and a long short story. Maxwell-Mahon emphatically states that the length of a short short story can be estimated at 750-1500 words, or three to five pages, while that of a long short story can be estimated at 4000-7000 words, or ten to twenty pages. By emphasising the importance of words and pages, he forgets another important stylistic unit which is also of great significance in building up the short story, namely, the paragraph.

In Tswana, Lephogole (Malope et al., 1983) is one writer who has produced a long short story that shares a common boundary with the novellette. However, writers such as Shole (1985), Malope (1982), Naanyane (1987), Malefo (1985), Setshedi (1985), Bogatsu (1991), to mention but a few, have written highly successful long short stories which often fall under ten or sometimes under eighteen pages. On the other hand, writers such as Molebaloa (1987), Mokgoko (1993), Sikwane (1987), Peega (1992), Magoleng (1974) and Moroke (1968) have written short stories which qualify as short short stories as they spread between two and five pages, on average. These writers employ accurate diction and condensed syntax and use incomplete sentences, one-word sentences, and paragraphs that are shorter than ten lines in order to achieve an element of compactness and terseness. It does, however, happen that writers such as Malope (1982), Shole (1985), Ntsime (1974), Malefo (1985), Bogatsu (1995) and others, deviate with some intention, from the constraints of conciseness and brevity, and employ a leisureliness of style in order to achieve particular artistic objectives. The didactic dialogue in Malope's *O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba* between MmaMmualebe and Morongwe, their humorous argumentation and circumlocutions, which cover quite a number of paragraphs, for example, are meant to satirise and summarise the impact of the follies of the system of education in the now

defunct Bophuthatswana. Malope concentrates greatly on action and dialogue with the objective of making his short story more dramatic and memorable. It is true, judging by the length of this dialogue and its content, that sometimes a real short story might be too long; and that a really long short story, that should comprise fewer paragraphs might actually comprise too many paragraphs.

In determining the stylistics of various writers, we do not only confine our focus to the word and the sentence, but we also consider paragraphs, as these paragraphs build up what we normally call the long short story and the short short story. Serudu (1993) defines a paragraph as a group of sentences which develop a single idea. Although our study recognises the validity of this statement, it also acknowledges the existence of one-sentence paragraphs that similarly state an idea. Therefore, our study maintains that paragraphs are units of thought that comprise one sentence, two sentences or a group of sentences which contain or develop a specific idea. The length of a paragraph can be determined or gauged by whether the paragraph concerned leads the reader into a dialogue or provides a descriptive background or action. Paragraphs that lead a reader into dialogue are generally shorter than paragraphs that provide descriptive background or action taking place. If we investigate the size of the paragraphs of our short story writers, we discover that the average paragraph length of our short stories is twelve lines and that most of the paragraphs that have fewer than five lines surround dialogue. The concise and brief paragraphs such as those used by Malebye (1993), Magoleng (1987), Mokgoko (1993), Moroke (1968) and Molebaloa (1987) are often utilised to highlight, emphasise and intensify the actions of the paragraphs concerned.

Writers such as Setshedi (1985), Thobega (1990), Mashike (1987), Magoleng & Ntsime (1972), Shole (1985), Mmileng (1986), Magasa (1992), Dichabe (1993) and Bogatsu (1991) utilise paragraphs longer than ten lines for descriptive background and action, and five lines for lead-in paragraphs; while writers such as Malebye (1993), Magoleng (1972;1983;1987), Mokgoko (1993), Moroke (1968) and Molebaloa (1987) utilise

paragraphs shorter than nine lines for descriptive background and action, and three lines for paragraphs that lead into dialogue. However, there are short story writers such as Dichabe (1993) and Shole (1985) whose paragraphs go well beyond twenty-five lines. Dichabe's paragraphs range from thirteen lines, through twenty-eight to thirty-three lines, while Shole has paragraphs ranging from thirteen lines, through eighteen to twenty-eight lines. According to our investigation, these are the longest paragraphs found in Tswana short story writing.

In his longest paragraph of twenty-eight lines, Shole indicates the manner in which Letshabang experiences a conflict of ideas and emotions. Letshabang wonders if Ntswaki is afraid to reveal some sad news to her, and if her own Moroka is not Ntswaki's husband. She even feels some uneasiness that she is in the same blanket with her enemy. The paragraph lengthens as Letshabang thinks more deeply about her precarious situation. However, Letshabang is not prepared to leave Ntswaki's house before she discovers the truth about Moroka's whereabouts. This very long paragraph is broken off only when Letshabang obstinately resolves to stand her ground against Ntswaki, and in her soliloquy she says: "Re tla bona yo o tla phinyang pele" (Shole, 1985:6) (We shall see who will fart before the other). The length of this paragraph is definitely utilised to highlight and intensify Letshabang's confused and worried state of mind. After giving us paragraphs of eighteen lines, fourteen lines, twenty lines and twenty-eight lines, in which Letshabang discovers through a variety of elements that the house she is in belongs to Ntswaki and the man she has been thinking is her faithful lover, Shole abruptly reduces the length of his paragraphs. The writer's paragraphs take a sudden decline from ten lines, through four lines to a one-line paragraph. He uses this one-line paragraph to state Letshabang's emotional reaction to Ntswaki's insinuation that she should take another long nap to pay for her precious night's sleeplessness: "Ka hema setshegonyana ke ntse ke supuga" (Shole, 1985:7) (I gave a spiteful laugh as I jumped into wakefulness). The significance of this paragraph lies in the fact that Letshabang is aware of Ntswaki's friendliness and courtesy, but finds it difficult to relax in her house. This statement also indicates that Letshabang

sees herself as a stranger in an alien world, the world she had thought would ease the stressfulness of campus life. What we observe in the writer's use of paragraphs is that he shifts from the utilisation of long paragraphs to shorter paragraphs to emphasise statements with particular emotional connotations. Shole is not the only writer who tends to use extremely long paragraphs, swiftly shifting to the utilisation of shorter paragraphs when it suits his purpose.

Dichabe is one of the many other writers who do the same. In her longest paragraph of thirty-three lines, Dichabe (1993:2) indicates Keabetswe and Thaamano's long walk to and their arrival at the hospital, their reception and the hearty expressions of sympathy they receive from different people. After giving us three paragraphs of descriptive background information ranging from twenty-eight lines to twenty-four lines and back to twenty-eight lines concerning the attack that was carried out by the lion onto Keabetswe, Thaamano's vigilance and precautionary measures, and Keabetswe's frequent cries of pain, Dichabe shifts from the usage of long paragraphs of narrative action that cover a long period of time to a shorter paragraph of scene description and immediate action. She writes that, "Meriti e ne e setse e ikadile le lefatshe, dinyetse di simolotse go lela mme Thaamano o ne a tshuba dipone. A kgona go thuthafatsa metsi mme a tlhapisa mabadi a ga Keabetswe" (Dichabe, 1993:3) (The shadows had already covered the earth, crickets had begun to sing and Thaamano lit the lights. He warmed the water to wash Keabetswe's wounds). The importance of this paragraph lies in the fact that it is the first indication that the incessant attack of the lion on Keabetswe had come to a halt and that peace prevailed in the area. The small animals also had the opportunity to sing melodiously as the peacefulness of the shadow of the night covered the earth. Thaamano also had time and opportunity to illuminate the house and cleanse his wife's wounds.

It is not surprising that short story writers often shift from longer paragraphs of orderly narrative exposition of events that cover long time spans to shorter paragraphs of fragmented description of immediate action that cover a single event, because they often

provide biographical background or descriptive details on characters in their short stories (cf. Benson, 1975:131). The variations that are effected in paragraph lengths have specific effects on the organisation of the short story. Mmileng (1986) in his short story, *Morwetsa*, from the volume, *Mangotelo*, gives the reader six paragraphs of description of the character Phadima, in which we are told about Phadima's weaknesses regarding doing duty for White people, regarding his type of life and his experience of being robbed. Mmileng not only uses long paragraphs of ten, eleven and twelve lines, he also shifts to shorter paragraphs which provide clear statements or replies to questions. For example, Mmileng, through the voice of Serame says: "Fa ba tla o ntsose. A o a nkutlwa?" (When they arrive you should wake me up. Do you hear me?), and after long paragraphs of narrative and dialogue, he shifts to a very clear statement of the action taken by Dikeledi after the arrival of Kgosietsile and Gape: "A itlhaganelela kwa go rraabo go diragatsa ditaello" (Mmileng, 1986:12) (He hurried towards her husband to carry out the instructions). This one-line paragraph is very significant for it indicates that a promise has been fulfilled and it also sets in motion another action. After this shorter paragraph, the writer uses another short paragraph that indicates that fortunately Serame did wake up before more calls.

It is interesting to note that Dichabe (1993), Shole (1985) and Mmileng (1986), to mention but a few, use paragraphs of varied lengths for varied purposes. They utilise some paragraphs to provide important information regarding character, background information and the development of narrative, while other paragraphs are utilised to make succinct statements which are crucial to the action of the story.

## 4.2 FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

The style of a writer reveals itself in the manner in which it distinguishes itself from the usual or normal way of expressing oneself in a specific language. The writer's style may be *literal*, in which case the writer means exactly and completely what he writes, or *figurative*, in which case the meaning has to be derived through interpretation. Yelland

(1980:74-75) maintains that language is figurative when

the writer calls on our imagination to make comparisons and transfer ideas (as in similes, metaphor, personification) or to realise that he is exaggerating (as in hyperbole) or that he means the opposite of what he says (as in irony).

In figurative language, we realise that sometimes inanimate objects are animated in order to create a vivid picture which would contribute to the aesthetic value of the text. Figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, onomatopoeia and metonymy occur in the short story. These figures of speech build images in the mind of the reader, images that enhance the understanding of the object described. For the purpose of this chapter, we shall only treat two figures of speech, namely, simile and metaphor.

#### 4.2.1 Simile

A simile is an analogical comparison of two different things or objects which share a specific point of similarity or resemblance. Mayfield (1986) supports this assertion when it defines a simile as a figure of speech in which two dissimilar items are explicitly compared. The association of one object or thing with another emphasises, clarifies and enhances the meaning that the writer wishes to bring to the fore. In most cases this arouses the reader's senses of perception and leads to a better understanding and appreciation of the object which is given more life. Therefore, we can conclude that a simile awakens, nourishes, strengthens feelings, and appeals to passions in its analogical associations. A simile is a mode of communication which creates and extends meaning. It is most easily and readily recognised in poetry and prose-writing and, in Tswana, it depends upon linking words such as 'jaaka' (as), 'tshwana le' (like), 'o kare' (as if), 'jaaka e kete' (as though) and so forth. Similes may be easy to recognise, particularly through these linking words, but they are difficult to define and interpret. Like the metaphor, the simile juxtaposes two parallel concepts. Unlike the metaphor, the simile is usually meant to be a direct and overt comparison statement and if one examines the following examples, one

realises that both sides of the comparison are clearly stated (Mayfield, 1986):

(Q) O ne a baya seatla sa gagwe sa moja godimo ga legetla la me la molema; a itshwarelela ka nna jaaka motho a tsikitlela, a hemela tlase jaaka pitsa e loisitswe ke mosadi a apeela letsema. (Magoleng & Ntsime, 1972:8)

(He put his right hand on my left shoulder; and held on to me like a dizzy person, as he breathed softly like a pot whose porridge had been thickened by a woman cooking for a group of people)

(R) A nna boleta jaaka kgole e feditse dikgwedi e khupeditse ka mmutedi. (Magoleng, 1987:12)

(He became as soft as a rope that has been hidden in kraal manure for several months)

(S) Go bona kgetse, bana ba tla ba e dikologa jaaka dikgomo di bokolela fa go buetsweng mogodu wa ya gaabo tsona. (Baloyi, 1995:11)

(On seeing the bag, the children ran circles around it like cattle bellowing over the area where the stomach of their fellow cattle had been torn apart)

(T) O ne a mo phamola jaaka segodi, mme e re batho ba re, "re mmone fa", a bo a setse a lo betsa kgakala, lonao. (Bogatsu, 1995b:36)

(He snatched him up like a hawk, and by the time people shouted "we have seen him here", he would be running far away.)

(U) E ne ya tshabela morago jaaka tshukudu e tlabotswe marago ka molelo. (Dichabe, 1993:2)

(It retreated like a rhinoceros whose buttocks had been scorched by fire)

A simile normally specifies the ground of comparison. In sentence [Q] we have a simile, "a itshwarelela ka nna jaaka motho a tsikitlela" (she held on to me like a dizzy person) in



which "a itshwarelela" (she held on) is stated as the property which the speaker and a dizzy person have in common. The simile, in this regard, shows its quality of definiteness in the sense that it refers the reader to a particular event that shares characteristics with the speaker. What we discover from this image is the loss of balance and the emotional disturbance experienced by Gadinkame. He is emotionally disturbed because he could read in his wife's unhappy face that she was opposed to their visit to his aunt. Hence, he loses his balance as he holds onto his wife, and this loss of balance is reminiscent of a dizzy person. The other simile in the same sentence, "a hemela tlase jaaka pitsa e loisitswe ke mosadi a apeela letsema" (he breathed softly like a pot whose porridge had been thickened by a woman cooking for a group of people) is also definite because it alludes to a particular experience, that is, "go hemela tlase ga pitsa e loisitswe". This simile concentrates on specifics: Gadinkame breathed softly, not like a pot, but like a pot whose porridge had been thickened. This means that he was not only emotionally disturbed, he was also becoming impatient with his wife's time-wasting tricks and her show of reluctance to visit his aunt.

What we observe from the argumentation above is that a simile is generally more explicit than a metaphor. The same holds for the simile in sentence [R]. In this instance, Magoleng tells us with exactness to what Lorato's softness in replying to her aunt, Motlatsi, is compared. It is compared to the softness of "kgole" (rope) that has been hidden under kraal manure for several months. There are no other possibilities that the reader can think of because the intended focal point has been furnished. We are told exactly with what to make comparison and we are not left to vaguely sense the comparisons ourselves. This is the significance of the simile in literary appreciation; it limits our senses to specifics. In the short story, *Tlamelo*, from the volume, *A ke phoso*, Baloyi (1995) describes an incident in which Merafe, as the father of the family brings happiness into his house by providing the wife and children with sufficient groceries. In capturing the reaction of the children to their father's arrival with a grocery, Baloyi uses a simile that appears in sentence [S]. In this instance the children running in circles around the bag of groceries are

compared to those made by the cattle around the "moswang" of a slaughtered head of cattle. We are brought to see the children and the cattle, in which the two are alike concerning the circles run around an object. Thus the reader's experience of the description of the children is sharpened by being brought into exact focus with the behaviour of the cattle under similar circumstances. Both the children and the cattle have a suggestion of their own, and when the children and the cattle are taken together they bring forth a richness which neither has in itself. The reader easily comes to a conclusive opinion that the children were extremely elated and appreciative of the groceries brought by their father.

It is very important that in employing figurative language the writer should make his choices as appropriate as possible. The choice has to be relevant and fitting to the context, and has to make the object under discussion look as similar to the image in terms of which it is represented as is possibly feasible. For example, in sentence [T] Bogatsu (1995b) consciously maximises the ground of comparison when he explicitly compares two dissimilar objects, namely, Matlhamutlhamu and the hawk. Bogatsu, in this regard, discusses the speed with which Matlhamutlhamu snatches or kidnaps children and compares it to the speed with which a hawk snatches chicks. This description becomes more definite and more forceful because the reader can visualize the manner in which Matlhamutlhamu snatches children and relate this event to his experience of the behaviour of hawks. Although there are good simile in Tswana literature, there are also bad similes. In sentence [U] Dichabe uses a simile in which the ground of comparison is doubtful if not ambiguous.

In the short story, *Kgwetlho*, from the volume *Moremogolo*, Dichabe narrates the vicious attack launched by a lion on Thaamano's wife, Keabetswe. The writer describes how Thaamano hit the lion on the forehead with a log so that it swiftly retreated. In capturing this event of retreat, Dichabe (1993:2) says "Tau e ne ya tshabela morago jaaka tshukudu e tlabotswe marago ka molelo" (The lion retreated like a rhinoceros whose buttocks had

been scorched by fire). It is unfortunate that there is an element of indefiniteness, inappropriateness and dubiety in this simile. The grounds of the simile are very important in comprehending the simile. However, the argument does not end here, it is highly important that the reader perceive the relationship that exists between the objects of comparison and be able to differentiate between them, as well as being able to discriminate between their given and non-given attributes. Once the reader can focus on and assimilate the salient attributes of the two objects, he will be able to recognise the resemblance that exists between the tenor and the vehicle. Although the simile does tell us that we should compare the lion with the rhinoceros, the ground of comparison is as dubious as it is infeasible. The ineffectiveness, inappropriateness and dubiety of the comparison lie in the fact that the reader through his imagination cannot readily perceive the similarity in the speed at which a rhinoceros whose buttocks have been scorched retreats, so that this speed can be equated with the speed at which the lion retreated when it was hit by a log on the forehead. The relationship between the two objects imposes certain constraints on interpretation. If we search among the attributes of the lion and those of the rhinoceros for a match between the attributes of the lion and those of the rhinoceros, we realise that the attributes of the rhinoceros obviate any chance of symmetry because these attributes have not been proven and are not true to reality. Obviously, meaning flows from the attributes of the rhinoceros to those of the lion, making it very important to look for a similarity that is applicable to the two objects. After all, a simile is a comparison of two dissimilar objects so that what is known to be true about one thing is said to be true about the other. Notice how Naanyane (1987) and Bogatsu (1995) use simile effectively and appropriately to attract the reader's attention and concentration:

(V) Basimane ba kolokotega ka fa morago ga koloi jaaka maphutshe mo koloing ya ditonki (Naanyane, 1987:4).

(The boys got tossed around in the police-van like pumpkins in a donkey cart.)

(W) E rile ba mmona a ntse a kotame kwa godimo ga lefetlho la metsi jaaka rotwe, ba tsosa mokgosi wa go re, "Rasekhethe

ke yoo!" (Bogatsu, 1995b:40)

(When they saw him squatting on the windmill like a baboon,  
they shouted, "there is the skirt-man!")

(X) Ba mo mokaganetse o ka re leokotsane le mokaganetse  
lenathwana la lefura (Bogatsu, 1995a:14)

(They clustered around him like ants around a piece of fat)

Both writers use dramatic similes which enable them to provide lively pictures which they would not paint with direct language. In the short story, *Bogodu ga bo thuse*, from the volume *Se time tsala*, Naanyane describes how young thieves easily and fearfully walked into a police-van on their arrest. After their arrest, the police-van was driven at neck breaking speed on a corrugated road and around the corners. In describing how these young thieves were tossed around in the van, Naanyane uses the simile in sentence [V]. Through this simile the writer is able to capture the ruthlessness and cruelty that was shown by the police to these thieves. So ruthless and uncaring was the manner of the young thieves' arrest that their being tossed around from one corner to another is likened to the pumpkins that aimlessly roll to and fro in a van. In this regard, the image provided serves to emphasise, to clarify and to enhance the reader's understanding of the object under discussion. In sentence [W] Bogatsu uses two separate simile, and in each instance, he compares two dissimilar objects, but this comparison creates a similarity between the two unidentical objects. In this simile, both Matlhamutlhamu and the baboon share a particular similarity; they sit on top of specific objects to obtain a clearer view of the world around them. In sentence [X] both Ditshegwana's friends and the ants share similar qualities, qualities that relate to their manner of clustering around the object that gives them happiness. Ditshegwana's friends cluster around her knowing full well that she comes from a rich family and that she is also a beauty to behold. On the other hand, the ants cluster around a piece of fat knowing full well that it is their meal. Therefore, the resemblance that is discernible between the tenor and the vehicle is one of clustering around a worthy object and, as such, the similarity becomes effective and feasible.

#### 4.2.2 Metaphor

Metaphor has traditionally been tied to the world of art, and art is a means of communicating a private connection to the rest of the world through creative compassions (Mayfield, 1986). Whereas a simile is a direct comparison of two things, a metaphor does not announce the comparison but proceeds indirectly towards the identification of the two items that share common features. In other words, the metaphor is a figure of speech where the reader is not asked to visualize one object as being like another object, but where the reader is asked to visualize one object as being another object. It is a way of identifying two dissimilar objects so that what is known to be true about one object is said to be true of the other. This argumentation is motivated by the fact that the metaphor is often defined as a figure of speech in which two or more objects or ideas are linked together without the use of such words as "like" or "as". It is a means of learning something new about one object by identifying it with a second object, a case of making a strange object familiar. The difference between the simile and the metaphor lies in the quality of directness; comparison in the former is direct while in the latter it is indirect, however, both have elements of ornamentality and are used for embellishing language. In using a metaphor, the writer does not say that one thing is like another but that it is another. Notice how Magoleng (1974:9) makes the death of Kesentseng more vivid and clear with his precise word choice and use of metaphor:

"Robala, Kesentseng, ngwanaka. Ga re o sala o bolela ... Bona fela jaaka ngwanake a didimetse, mmele fa fatshe o digaletse. Letsatsi la botshelo le diketse. Naledi ya Tlounge phirimile ... Mmaagwe, mogatsa, go diragetse! Gaolekwe, kana o dirang go riana? Ke yono o ole, Kesentseng - nao lono lo gonegang ke lwa gagwe ... Ao, bona jaaka matlho a ngwanake a ntse ditoto - o ka re o ka nkaraba. Letswalo le a kgerebana, pelo yona e a kgaotsa. Pina ya metlha e a khutla - Kesentseng ga a sa na go nkutlwa". (Magoleng, 1974:9)

("Sleep, Kesentseng my child. You have predicted this... Look how silent my child is, the body on the ground is dumb. The sun of life has set. The star of the Batlounge tribe has set. ....My wife, it has happened! But, what are you doing, Gaolekwe? Here has Kesentseng fallen, this foot that wriggles is his. .... Oh, see how wide open my child's eyes are - it seems he can reply to me. His diaphragm shrinks, and his heart stops. The daily song ends - Kesentseng will not hear me again")

The picturesqueness of the above excerpt is clearly shown. Kesentseng's body remains dumb, still and silent; his eyes remain motionless, and his body is insensitive, and the shadow of death has overpowered him. Kesentseng's father, mother and sister watch his body, but they are powerless to bring life back into it. Everybody is deeply cloaked in an atmosphere of tension and disbelief. Everyone present is forced to look and when he has looked, he falls under the spell of the incident's witchery. Kesentseng's death is reiterated so many words. Words such as 'robala', (sleep), 'didimetse' (is silent), 'digaletse' (has fallen), 'diketse' (has set), and 'phirimile' (has set), all refer to one significant fact, that 'go diragetse' (it has happened); Kesentseng is dead. In the words that have been cited above, the writer uses rhyme to gain emphasis and to paint a vivid picture of death. In the metaphors that Magoleng uses, (i) Letsatsi la botshelo le diketse (The sun of life has set); (ii) Naledi ya Tlounge e phirimile (The star of the Batlounge tribe has set); and (iii) Pina ya metlha e a khutla (The daily song ends), comparison is not made explicit. It functions on the level of connecting different areas of experience. Magoleng uses the sun as an image to portray the characteristics of Kesentseng's life in "Letsatsi la botshelo le diketse". Although the writer compares two objects which are dissimilar, the comparison creates similarity in two dissimilar objects, "the sun" and "Kesentseng's life". This image suggests that Kesentseng's life has the qualities of the sun, that is, the quality of setting, the quality of ending the darkness and the quality of closing the eye.

Another example in which one thing is described as being another thing is "Naledi ya Tlounge e phirimile", in which Kesentseng carries over all the associations of the star. We

are aware that the star shines during the night and that when the sun rises it sets, thus ending its liveliness. Magoleng uses the image of the star to illustrate the fact that Kesentseng's shiny existence has been curtailed and that his life has come to an abrupt end because of the other person. In the other example, "Pina ya metlha ya khutla", the substitution of one element for another is also clearly demonstrated. The implication of an ending song refers to the characteristics of Kesentseng's life. When the metaphor equates the ending of a continuous song with the ending of Kesentseng's life, the connection becomes more vivid and clear to the reader. The reader associates the ending of a continuous song with the ending of a person's life. The picture of death is so compelling, because the writer has used relevant words to achieve his purpose. Here the writer also uses metaphors effectively to gain emphasis and to paint a vivid picture of death. These metaphors are things of beauty, things of beauty because they reinforce the writer's theme and purpose. The short story's central controlling idea, "doomed before the next dawn", is emphasised and given more weight and life by the three metaphorical sentences. Magoleng uses the fewest possible words to describe a tense situation - a critical moment of a life that has reached a cul-de-sac or a dead-end - and successfully generates the greatest possible impression.

Notice the following instances of metaphor as they appear in the different short stories:

(Y) Ya kurutla, tau ya Morolong. (Magoleng & Ntsime, 1972:17)

(It roared, the lion of Morolong)

(Z) Maoto e ne e le diramatla tsa tlou, matsogo rra, dilo o ka re ga twe di adimilwe; e le melamu e mebedi. (Magoleng & Ntsime, 1972:9)

(His feet were the vast expanse of elephant feet, speak of hands, it was as if they had been borrowed; they were two knobkieries)

(AA) Gaabomotho a ikana gore ngwaga mongwe ona,

mosetsanyana o tshwanetse go tla. Gona fa go ka se ka ga nna jalo, o tla khutla a tswetse sepane sa basimane ka kwa. (Molebaloa, 1987:14)

(Gaabomotho swore that one of those good years he would have a girl. But if that could not happen, he would stop only after he had exceeded a span of twelve boys)

(BB) Ngwanangwanaka, Modimo o mogolo, le fa ke le molora, ke tla phuaganya mmaago ka tsamaya le wena. Ga re ka ke ra letlelela lesea go alosa lesea... (Molebaloa, 1987:14)

(My grand-child, God is great, though I am an ash, I will leave your mother and go with you. We cannot leave a baby to rear a baby)

In the short story, *Ipusolosetso*, from the volume, *Mpolelele dilo*, Magoleng (1972) describes how furiously and bravely Maalomabe enters Motsei's house in search of her husband, Teofo. Magoleng then uses a metaphor to describe the manner in which Maalomabe reacts on seeing Motsei. Notice how the writer captures this incident: "Ya kurutla, tau ya Morolong". In this sentence, that is, sentence [Y] from the above list, Maalomabe is that which is under discussion (tenor), while the lion is an image in terms of which Maalomabe is represented (vehicle). Here, the metaphor assumes that both Maalomabe and the lion are similar or identical. The metaphoric transference between Maalomabe and the lion is clear because there is a discernible similarity, a similarity that relates to prowess, bravery and the loud sound that both emit. Both Maalomabe and the lion are powerful as they are capable of fighting to the death; both are brave because they do not fear to tread in dangerous places; and both are capable of a loud sound that frightens their prey or victims. From this argumentation, it is significantly clear that the effect of the metaphor is demonstrated by the similarity of the character traits shared by both Maalomabe and the lion. Magoleng in his utilisation of this metaphor did not think about irrelevant information concerning Maalomabe's character trait - that he was still weak, very light and that he did not have that immense power to release an effective punch. He only emphasised the relevant details and achieved success through statements that followed, such as: "A mo masa ka lentle la seatla mo matlhong a ba a bona molelo". This is a clear epitome of the execution of Maalomabe's prowess and/or bravery; and a clear indication that Magoleng thought only about the relevant details in constructing his



metaphor.

It is possible that if the metaphorical phrase is considered in isolation it may be read literally; but when it appears in a particular context together with other sentences, it assumes a metaphorical status (Grabe, 1985). In Magoleng's short story, *Dikeledi*, for instance, if the metaphorical phrase, "Maoto e ne e le diramatla tsa tlou" (Magoleng, 1972:9) (his feet were the vast expanse of elephant feet) is read in isolation, that provides a literal meaning, but when it is read in relation to other sentences that comprise the text of this short story, it acquires its metaphorical status. In this phrase, Magoleng uses the large elephant feet as an image to portray the characteristic qualities of the feet of the traditional doctor, Kgwanyapa. Although Magoleng compares two dissimilar objects, the comparison creates similarity in the two unidentical objects. Both the feet of Kgwanyapa and those of the elephant share a particular resemblance. The image contained in the metaphor also suggests that Kgwanyapa's feet have the qualities of the feet of the elephant; both are large, the nails are not cut and slight scars can be seen on the feet. If we interpret this metaphor further, we come to a conclusion that Kgwanyapa walked clumsily. It is clear that the interrelatedness of the first metaphor and the second metaphor in [Z] establish a clear description that distinguishes Kgwanyapa from the other people. He is not only distinguished in terms of the large feet that have uncut nails and scars, but he is also distinguished from the other people in terms of his arms. In the metaphorical phrase, "matsogo e ne e le melamu e mebedi", the substitution of one element for another is clearly established. In this regard, Leech (1979) maintains that "matsogo" is the tenor of the metaphor or an object that is under discussion, and that "melamu" is its vehicle, or an image in terms of which the tenor is represented.

When the metaphor equates the arms of Kgwanyapa with two knobkieries, the implication is that both Kgwanyapa's arms and the two knobkieries are identical. The effectiveness and appropriateness of this metaphor lie in the fact that the reader, through his imagination can readily perceive a specific similarity between Kgwanyapa's arms and the two

knobkieries. Magoleng has seen an obvious resemblance between the two objects and we the readers, as we, imagine both Kgwanyapa's arms and the two knobkieries, during our perusal, we realise that both are long, being capable of reaching far; and that both are strong and powerful, being capable of holding victims and objects with extreme tightness. The forcefulness and effectiveness of these metaphors can be established from the fact that the name of the person described, that is, Kgwanyapa, has not been mentioned prior to these metaphors and his physical appearance is directly represented by both animate and inanimate objects. The emphasis that is achieved relates to the fact that Kgwanyapa does not look like these objects, rather he is these objects.

Molebaloa (1987) in his short story, *Maroga*, from the volume *Letlhokwa la tsela*, also calls on the reader's imagination to think of a specific object as being another object. In the metaphor in sentence [AA], Molebaloa implicitly identifies two different objects with each other regarding a specific feature, with the implication that they share a certain degree of commonality. By so doing, we determine that the object under discussion, that is, "basimane" (boys) shares qualities of similarity with the image in terms of which it is represented, that is, the implied "dikgomo" (cattle). Both are of an equal quantity. Within the context of the short story, what Molebaloa suggests is that if Gaabomotho cannot give birth to a girl, he will stop procreating only after he has exceeded a target of twelve boys. The image epitomises Gaabomotho's obstinate determination and desire to have a female child. In the same short story, Molebaloa uses another metaphor that provides a vivid picture. In this story Molebaloa describes how the old woman sympathised with her granddaughter who was in dire need of a nanny. This woman was very keen to help her daughter and granddaughter whenever the need arose, regardless of her aging body.

In sentence [BB] Molebaloa captures the old age of the woman by using a metaphor that portrays her as fireless, cold and powerless. The woman is associated with ash that is borne after a long period of wood burning, in the same way that the woman's age is as a result of a long period of life. Indeed the woman was physically old, weak and powerless,

but she still had an eagerness and the will to help where she might. The metaphoric transference between the woman and the ash is clear because they possess an obvious similarity; both are old, powerless, fireless and are more than ready to face the wrath of the world they live in; the wrath of being thrown away to the dumping areas. Although the woman is powerless and weak, she still entertains herself in her private life with light jobs. She is, therefore, not afraid to accompany her granddaughter to her house to help her with her daily household chores. It is not only the powerlessness and the weakness of the woman that are poignantly depicted, her undying will to help and her strong personality are also highlighted.

The examples below also indicate that the metaphor is the application of a specific term to an object to which it is not literally applicable. Notice how short story writers spice their narratives:

(CC) E tlile ntsu ya dikaka ya fitlha ya mo phamola, Modiradilo, ya leba ka ena dikgageng. (Bogatsu, 1995a:76)

(The desert eagle arrived and snatched Modiradilo, and took him straight to the caves.)

(DD) E ne e rile mo letsatsing leo, banna ba tlhola ba iketlile ka dikeledi tsa motlhotlho, kgarebe e tshetlhana. (Bogatsu, 1991:3)

(It happened that during that day, men were passing their time with the tears of the sieve, the sallow-complexioned lady)

(EE) Fa ba ntse ba isana kwa godimo le kwa tlase jaana, ... a tšhwamola. "...Dingwe o batla go ntobela dintsi". A sutlha. Nare ya tlhoka kwa e ka tšhwesetsang pelo gona ... A tla a tlile ka molamu wa tlhogo e kima. A photha ntšwa a bo a e tlogela e kakaletse, matlho a pelekane .... Ba mo fitlhela a tsapaletse jaaka noga ya tlhware e meditse. Monnamogolo, marokgwe a netswe ke pula, a ritlha mo kupakupeng. A feleletsa e le baesekopo ya bana. (Bogatsu, 1991:7-12)

(As they took the fight to each other, ... he slipped out. "

...The cannibal wants to hide me away from fleas". He sneaked out. The buffalo could not find a victim on which to vent its rage ... He then came with a knobkierie with a very big head. He hit the dog and left it for dead, with eyes twisted.... They found him lying motionless like a python which has just swallowed its prey. The old man writhed in the dust, it had rained onto his trousers. He ended up being a bioscope for children)

In sentence [CC], a descriptive phrase, "ntsu ya dikaka" taken from the animal world and another word "dikgageng" taken from the mountain experience are used to create a vivid picture of a police-van and the speed at which it was being driven when it snatched Modiradilo and ferried him to prison. In this sentence we have two individual metaphors that combine together to reveal a message. These metaphors are in "ntsu ya dikaka ya mo phamola" and in "ya leba ka ena dikgageng". In the first metaphor, the thing spoken about is the police-van while the image used to describe the police-van is "ntsu ya dikaka". The metaphoric transference that is prevalent is a similarity that relates to the swiftness of speed and the capability of snatching the victim unexpectedly possessed by both the tenor and the vehicle. In the second metaphor, the object under discussion is the prison, while the image in terms of which the prison is represented is the caves. When the metaphor equates the prison with the caves, the connection becomes more effective and forceful, particularly because it calls on to play the reader's alert imagination. The reader associates the police-van with the desert eagle and simultaneously finds a connection between the prison and the caves. Therefore, in sentence [CC] we have two tenors and two vehicles as a result of the existence of compound metaphors. The two separate images exist together in order to convey a complete message. It is through the combinatorial functioning of these metaphors that the writer provides the reader with a clear picture of the arrest of Modiradilo. The police-van not only came at breakneck speed to snatch Modiradilo, it also ensured that it took him straight to prison.

From the introductory section to this interpretation, we stated categorically that the metaphor is a figure of speech where the reader is not asked to visualize one object as

being like another object, but that it is a figure of speech where the reader is asked to visualize one object as being another object. Similarly, in sentence [DD] Bogatsu (1991) identifies two dissimilar objects, namely, the sorghum beer and the tears of the sieve, so that what is known to be true about the sorghum beer is said to be true of the tears of the sieve. In this case, the sorghum beer carries over all the associations of the tears of the sieve. There is an obvious resemblance between the sorghum beer and the tears of the sieve, and that is, both are liquids, capable of being drunk; and both are sieved thus removing the unwanted substances. In extending this metaphor, Bogatsu (1991) uses another metaphor in "kgarebe e tshetlhana" in which the element, the sorghum beer, is substituted for yet another element "kgarebe e tshetlhana" (the sallow-complexioned lady). The effect of this metaphor is demonstrated by the point of resemblance which is perceived between the two unidentical objects. There is a particular similarity shared by the sorghum beer and the sallow-complexioned lady and this similarity pertains to colour and the power of enticement. What makes the image provided in the metaphor more effective is that it sustains its metaphorical status to the end. It starts as a metaphor, does not change, and ends as a metaphor.

Our discussion of the metaphor illustrates that images may be expressed directly. Bogatsu (1991) in his short story, *Bopodi ba kgonwa ke ba ba dinaka*, from the volume *Moapayabodila*, describes the scene of a duel between Thubaki and Maramphana with such a powerful choice of words and reference to a number of metaphors which build a vivid picture, that the reader is touched with shock and emotional concern. Notice the extrapolation that appears as [EE] above, that describes the fierce fight between Thubaki and Maramphana. Bogatsu, in this example, uses quite a number of metaphors to create vivid images that successfully convey the fierceness and brutality of the fight between Thubaki and Maramphana. These metaphors illustrate the difference in age and strength between the two fighters. Bogatsu, in this extrapolation, uses a variety of nouns to depict the characteristics of Thubaki. The writer compares Thubaki to "Dingwe" (a cannibal), "nare" (a buffalo) "ntšwa" (a dog), "monnamogolo" (an old man) and "baesekopo" (a bioscope). All these objects are otherwise dissimilar not only on the grounds of being

human versus non-human, but also on the grounds of old age versus youthfulness. If we look at all the metaphors used by the writer in the extrapolation, we realise that the narrator leaves the name, Thubaki, in the background and he represents Thubaki's personality directly by the animate objects of power, strength, fierceness, uselessness or nothingness, old age, humour and laughter. These metaphors dominate the whole narration and the narrated so that what rises above the other are the metaphors and not Thubaki.

The image of Thubaki is firstly represented by "dingwe" (a cannibal); second by "nare" (a buffalo); third by "ntšwa" (a dog); fourth by "monnamogolo" (an old man); and lastly by "baesekopo" (a bioscope). Thubaki is not a cannibal, but his gigantic physical stature and behaviour depicts him more as a destroyer, a savage, a powerful and cruel person; he is not a buffalo, but the manner in which he displays his strength and power make him fearful and dangerous; he is a dog not at all, but the manner in which Maramphana hits and thrashes him with a knobkierie, leaving him for dead denigrates him to a level of insignificance, uselessness and nothingness. Thubaki is not necessarily that old, but the age idea provides an air of disequilibrium or an age gap between Thubaki and Maramphana; he is not necessarily a bioscope, but the manner in which he conducted himself by fighting a person young enough to be his son, is humorous and attracts laughter from children. The manner in which Thubaki has been elevated and completely denigrated through the metaphors illustrates the extent to which the metaphor, as a stylistic device, can be exploited to build the climax and the anti-climax. The last straw to Thubaki, that we find in the extrapolation above, is also highlighted and made more effective by the metaphor "marokgwe a netswe ke pula" (it had rained on his trousers). What Bogatsu describes in this situation is "a ithotetse" meaning he had urinated his trousers, but in order to capture the reader's imagination and attention the writer provides an image in terms of which "a ithotetse" can effectively be represented, and he aptly puts it "a netswe ke pula".

### **4.3 THE PROVERB AND THE IDIOM**

The proverb and the idiom fall under what is normally referred to as stylised didactic prose. The proverb is universally known as a short and pithy expression in common and recognised use, and as a concise sentence, often metaphorical or alliterative in form, which is held to express some truth ascertained by experience or observation and which is familiar to all. Okpewho (1992) defines a proverb as a folk wisdom expressed with terseness and charm; with terseness because it implies a certain economy in the choice of words and a sharpness of focus, and with charm because it conveys a touch of literary beauty in the expression. Although scholars have devoted much attention to its meaning and its philosophical content, little interest has been shown in studying actual proverb usage to discover the variety of twists brought to any one of them by individual writers. Some scholars believe that the form of the proverb is not changeable but established, that it is fixed and rigid; and that the idiom is distinguishable from the proverb as it can change its form. Although an idiom is an expression that can change its form, its overall figurative meaning cannot be derived from the meaning of its parts. Mafela (1993) endorses this view when he defines an idiom as a group of words whose meaning is not deducible from the individual constituent words. Idioms are employed in a general manner; and though they are figurative, they are not didactic, but simply express ideas.

#### **4.3.1 The proverb**

It is without doubt that the proverb plays a very significant part in literature, because the writers use them to moralize, to instruct, to advise and to reflect on everyday occurrences (Mieder, 1993). What this study has noticed is that some short story writers, such as Bogatsu and Magoleng, have since taken an innovative path in their usage of proverbs. They change and twist proverbs to fit the demands of their literary ideas and still achieve great effect. It is not surprising to find well-known proverbs contextualized in telling variations to verbalise human and societal concerns effectively. The examples presented below are proverbs expressed in their varied form to fit certain literary purposes:

[FF] Ga ke solofele gore le GaMose tlha ba itse kwa a supelwang gona. Mo go bona *rakgadi ga se wa mpa, ke wa mokwatla*. (Malope, 1982:16)

(I do not think they can even point in the direction of GaMose tlha. For their part, my aunt is not of the stomach, she is of the back, or 'my aunt is water, she is not blood')

[GG] Ka *sebo ba go batwa sa mokwatla, mosadi a leka go e botabota* gore a se ka a itsenya matlho fa pele ga mooki. (Bogatsu, 1991:11)

(Because it is a wasp on the back that has been smacked, the woman tried to nurse it so that she would not make herself a laughing stock in front of the nurse)

[HH] Khumo e batho ba neng ba itse gore ke ya mofuta mang. *E e nang le dibebebejane jaaka bontle*. (Bogatsu, 1995a:38)

(The wealth that so many people know how it was amassed. That has some irksome disadvantages, like beauty)

[II] Ngwetsi thoothoo! Le fa dinko di ne di le magallele, *mosadi tshwene o jewa mabogo* (Sikwane, 1987:1)

(A real daughter-in-law! Even though the nostrils were like gaping wounds, a woman is like a monkey you can only eat her hands)

In the incident we have in example [FF], Malope highlights the problem of interpersonal relationships, particularly between White and Black. Here, Malešwane uses a proverb as a means of expressing her comments and the attitudes of White people to Black extended families. She is worried about whether or not her white employers will grant her permission to attend her aunt's funeral in GaMose tlha. In capturing this she says, for them my aunt is not blood, but water. In this instance, Malešwane uses her knowledge of proverbs to express her thoughts more succinctly. Through the nouns "mpa" (literally 'stomach', but proverbially 'blood') and "mokwatla" (literally 'back' but proverbially 'water'), Malešwane makes links with the proverb itself and with the situation that is



described. In this manner the writer, through Malešwane conveys the metaphoric characteristics of the proverb. By so doing, he wants to reveal that for the White people Malešwane's aunt can be associated with a wasp on the back that needs to be smacked, and not with one of the front that only needs to be flicked away. In the words of the proverb itself, Malešwane's aunt cannot be equated with blood because she is, according to Whites, a little distant from her nuclear family, but should rather be equated with water. Thus we can realise that Malope, in this regard, plays around with only two words of a proverb to bring into his text proverbial connotations and meaning. He discards all the words that build up the proverb and chooses only two, still achieving great effect.

From example [HH] cited above, it is clear that in the process of altering the sequence of the words of the proverb, Bogatsu has also highlighted its comparative status. In this instance, Bogatsu compares "khumo" (wealth) to "bontle" (beauty), in which the two dissimilar objects share a particular quality of resemblance, that is, the irksome disadvantage. In its traditional and original wording, this proverb appears as "bontle bo na le dibebejane" (beauty has some irksome disadvantages), but in "khumo e e nang le dibebejane jaaka bontle" (the wealth that has an irksome disadvantage like beauty), Bogatsu has tampered with the old text and created a simile out of a proverb. By doing so, Bogatsu brings into prominence the idea that it is not only beauty that carries an irksome disadvantage, but that wealth also has an irksome disadvantage. What we observe in the examples above is that the familiar proverb is consciously manipulated to create new expressions that might fit certain aspects of life precisely. Although altered, these proverbs continue to express and depict a wide range of experiences, problems and situations. While the basic structure of the proverb is maintained in these proverbial expressions, the minor verbal and nominal changes create new challenges that face both the literary critics and prose-writers. These innovative alterations reflect on the needs and concerns of the writers and the readers of literature. It is the writer and the reader's need and concern that the proverb should be as flexible in form as is possible so that it can be twisted and contextualised to reflect on the societal situations. Although Bogatsu and Malope twist

and alter proverbs at will, these proverbs do not in any way take new meanings. Therefore, even though the proverbial texts and the proverbial structures are changed to fit literary needs, the proverbial meaning of the original proverb is maintained.

Bogatsu and Malope take proverbs in [FF] and [GG] above, as sources of wisdom and truism and then they intergrate these proverbs in their sentence structures. Notice how the writer has changed the rigidity of form of the proverb by altering its structure, word sequence and word choice: "Ka seboba go batwa sa mokwatla, mosadi a leka go e botabota" (Because it is a wasp on the back that is smacked, the woman tries to soothe it). In its original form, this proverb reads as "seboba re bata sa mokwatla, sa mpa re a mpampetsa" (We smack a wasp on the back, the one on the front we flick away), but in this instance the writer has changed the active verb "re bata" (we smack) to the passive verb "go batwa" (is smacked), and the proverbial verb "mpampetsa" (fumble) to a variant "botabota" (soothe). Although the writer has altered and twisted the words of the proverb to fit into the pattern and the flow of his sentences, it is not such a complicated task to identify the proverb itself; as well as its meaning, that blood is thicker than water. What is discernible in the proverb in example [II] is that it is a truncated version of the original proverb text, "Mosadi tshwene o jewa matsogo, monna tau o jewa marota" (A woman is like a monkey you can only eat her hands, a man is like a lion you can eat his strength). Sikwane, in this regard, has reduced this longer proverb text to "mosadi tshwene o jewa matsogo" whose literal translation is a woman is like a monkey, you can only eat her hands, in order to drive his argument home. By truncating this proverb, the writer emphasises the traditional value system where a woman was not necessarily married for beauty, but was also married for procreation and for taking care of the daily chores of the household. Although feminists would condemn this usage on the basis that it has a negation of the value of women in society, the proverb shows that men are aware that women serve a very good purpose on earth. Apart from emphasising the point that a woman's worth is in her hands, this truncated version of the proverb satisfies the short story's desire for shortness, economy and conciseness of expression. The reduction of the

proverb text to a mere one-word is also prevalent in short stories.

These shortened proverbial expressions are so common in Magoleng, Malope, Mmileng and Bogatsu's writings that they seem to have replaced the longer versions. In the short story, *Modise o a nyala*, Magoleng (1974) not only changes the words of the proverb, he tremendously reduces the words of the proverb so that we are left with only one word. However, this word merges easily with the sentence in which it is used. Only one subject of the proverb, "Phokokgolo ga e tswe ka ngwana motho" is used, namely, "phokokgolo" (a great matter). This proverb's literal translation is that a great matter passeth not through a respectable man's child and its English equivalent is manners maketh a man. In this regard the writer has economised on a good number of words, including those discarded from the proverb itself. From the preceeding argumentation, we realise that the most striking feature of the proverb within the context of the short story, is its economy of expression. In saying so, we do not want to be misconstrued as saying that every proverb is expressed in fewer words. Some proverbs are expressed in fewer words, but others are expressed in quite a number of words. Economy of words does not necessarily and strictly refer to a certain number of words, it also indicates that in one statement the proverb captures a large situation or experience. For example, the proverb used by Bogatsu (1991) in his short story, *Bopodi ba kgonwa ke ba ba dinaka*, goes thus, "... le pelong ga le tshetse" (A fault confessed is half addressed), and if we are to explain it, it would read as "sephiri se o se tsholang mo pelong ya gago ga se kitla se go itumedisa ka gope" (a secret buried in the heart seldom gives satisfaction). This is a clear indication of how far the writer would have gone if he had used ordinary words or language to express his ideas.

Although modern literary authors have reacted in a critical fashion to traditional proverbs, Tswana short story writers still use proverbs to serve didactic and moralistic purposes (Mieder, 1993). Even though the texts are usually handled to express novel ideas, they are manipulated in such a manner that the original proverbial meaning and message should fit well into the text. It is also interesting to note that modern writers continue to create

short stories based on proverbs. For example, Magoleng found it relevant and befitting to write a short story around the proverb "Poela e a ja" (once bitten twice shy) which also bears the title of the story. It is significantly obvious that the better known short stories that reflect on the traditional wisdom contained in proverbs also belong to Malope. In his volume, **Mmualebe**, Malope (1982) creates short stories around truncated proverbs which bear the titles of these stories, namely, "Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng..." (There is never a stalker without a croucher) and "Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana 'a mmaago..." (The reservoir that drowned your mother's child). This usage of proverbs is consistent with the unquestioning didactic usage of proverbs that we normally observe in our prose literature. Malope uses the proverb "Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng" (there is never a stalker without a croucher) to teach people that even though a person may do mischievous deeds under the cover of darkness or in utterly secretive places, there will always be one who sees him. Every reader gets the message that all secret deals are bound to be revealed at some moment or other.

Another didactic short story is the first in the volume, **Mmualebe**, whose title "Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana 'a mmaago" (The reservoir that drowned your mother's child) makes it clear from the beginning that the short story is an examination and verification of the basic truth of the proverb itself. The introductory part of the short story highlights the content of the proverb; and the illustrative narrative provided in the developmental phase, as well as the critical comment at the end of the short story, all make the intention of the short story writer very clear. Throughout the short story, the writer explores such love problems as flirting, fornication, adultery and abortion by which Tselane tries to solve her frustrating experiences of love. At the same time the sad repercussions that Tselane has to face are brought into prominence. This story functions as clear and straightforward affirmation of the basic wisdom of the proverb "Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana 'a mmaago". With the intermittent repetition of the words and implications of this proverb, the writer wishes to emphasise to Morongwe that she should learn from the sad and bitter experiences that Tselane has experienced, and avoid falling prey to the same misfortunes.

Proverbs continue to be popular as illustrated by the examples discussed. No matter how sophisticated and technologically advanced our society might become, proverbs continue to be popular, and proverbs will always summarize, in colourful metaphors, basic and universal experiences (Mieder, 1993). There are plenty of instances in Tswana short stories where proverbs are used in their original wording to strengthen an argument, to make a particular point, to summarise or to interpret a situation. Notice the following instances:

(JJ) A go raya gore batsadi ba ikobonye fa ba tshwanetse go direla bana ba bona bontle? A gona ba tla bo ba sa fapaane le se se reng *kgakakgolo ga ke na mebala, mebala e dikgakaneng* fa ba ka itlhaba ngololo ba tswa mo go bona? (Bogatsu, 1995a:13)

(Does it mean that parents should think twice if they have to do good things for their children? Will they not contradict the one that says a great guinea-fowl does not have colours, the colours are with the little guinea-fowl if they should remain unconcerned about them?)

(KK) ...*Thotana e se nang khudutlou, bolobete ba ipha naga.* (Mmileng, 1986:4)

(When the cat is away, the mice will play or literally, where a heap is without the giant-tortoise, the little ones graze where they like)

(LL) Kana ga twe motlhala wa motho ke molomo. Go be go twe *ngwana yo o sa le leng o swela tharing.* (Mokgoko, 1983:23)

(By the way, it is said that the mouth is a person's means of direction. And, it is also said that the child that never cries dies on its mother's back or that dumb folk get no land)

(MM) Yo o dinala di metse o tshwanetse go bolawa ke tlala. Yo o dikgoka o tshwanetswe ke moretlwa. *Kgobokgobo e a ikgobokanyetsa, phatlaphatla e a iphatlalaletsa.* (Bogatsu, 1995a:38)

(The sloth should die of hunger. The strong and mighty deserve a thrashing. United we stand, divided we fall or literally, unite-unite doth unite to its own advantage)

In the first place, the proverb in [KK] serves to express and emphasise the content of Mmileng's short story. It is through the function of this proverb that the writer embodies his experience of the natural and real world to add images that would enhance and capture the reader's understanding of the short story. There is no other way in which the writer could have captured the situation where subordinates relinquish their duties and do as they please on realising that their senior is away, as with the proverb, "thotana e se nang khudutlou, bolobete ba ipha naga" (when the cat is away, the mice will play). Here the writer uses a proverb in its traditional, original and longer phraseology, as a means of his own intrusion into the events of the story and through this device he successfully expresses his comment on and evaluation of the situation. The writer also adds some wit and spice to his events and makes their impact felt by using the proverb. In traditional Tswana society, it is the old people who normally are regarded as better qualified to use proverbs than the younger members of the society. This is because there is an assumption that the old people have the necessary experience and knowledge to understand the implications of the wisdom and truth embedded in the proverbs. This does not mean that the younger members of society are restricted from using proverbs, they may use them freely among themselves. However, if they use them in the company of old people, they have to preface such proverbs with courtesies such as, "Ga twe" (It is said that), "Bagologolo ba re" (The old people say), and "Seane sa re" (The proverb says). This situation has since occurred in many of the short story writers' works as evidenced by "se se reng" (that says) and "Kana ga twe" (by the way, it is said) in examples [JJ] and [LL], respectively. Many writers, as we can see, tend to use these formulas as introductions to the proverbs in their narrations. After having provided the introductory formulas, the writers then continue to state the proverb. At the level of their artistic maturity, when writers use these formulas, they seem to suggest that they are not conversant with the content and implications of the wisdom and truth embedded in these proverbs. They also

seem to suggest that they do not align themselves with the intelligence and knowledge or universal truism provided by these proverbs and, therefore, doubt the authenticity of the proverbs.

If we look at Bogatsu's utilisation of the proverbs, we realise that he uses his proverbs as preludes and as interludes. This is discernible where the writer inserts a proverb before or between the events or incidents of the story, as we see in sentence [JJ]. In example [JJ] the proverb serves as a connection link between the events and also serves to emphasise the need for parents to raise and educate their children in the right direction so that these children can write their parents' names high on superscreens. In example [MM] Bogatsu synthesises, summarises and then puts the whole content of the short story within the larger philosophical and cultural perspective through the proverb "Kgobokgobo e a ikgobokanyetsa, phatlaphatla e a iphatlalaletsa" (United we stand, divided we fall). This is another instance where proverb has been used in the text in its original and traditional form. It is under these circumstances that the writers either fashion their sentences to accommodate the original form of the proverb, or simply quote them directly, as evidenced by the examples in extracts, [JJ], [KK], [LL] and [MM].

#### **4.3.2 The idiom**

What this study has discovered, and would like to discuss, is that most of the short story writers use idioms sparingly, while a few, such as Bogatsu, use idioms frequently to decorate their style, and place more emphasis on particular ideas. In order to keep within the restricted confines of this chapter, we found it appropriate and convenient to illustrate our discussion with only a few idioms selected randomly from the wide spectrum of the Tswana short story world. An idiom is a popular expression that is used by different writers to enrich their language and to highlight specific situations, events and ideas. Note the following instances in which the short story writers use their idioms to season and embellish their language. We have given only a literal translation of idioms except where

an equivalent was readily available:

(NN) Ke *utlwile ka letlhokwa la tsela* gore ka ura ya lesome mo mosong ka Sateretaga basimane ba tla go re betsa ka thupa e e botlhoko. (Moroke, 1968:37)

(A little sparrow told me that at ten o' clock Saturday morning the boys are going to give us a good hiding)

(OO) Mongwe wa basetsana ba ba sa itseng go bofa diteme tsa bona ka thudi o tswa go *loma* mongwe wa basimane *tsebe*, ka nako e dikolo di neng di tswaletswe. (Moroke, 1968:37)

(One of the girls who cannot hold their tongues tight, has whispered some gossip into one of the boy's ears.)

(PP) Letlhabaphefo *ntshologe mokgosi*, Dingwe o batla go *ntobela dintsi*. (Bogatsu, 1991:7)

(Window spill me a loud shout, Dingwe wants to hide me from the fleas)

In example [PP] Bogatsu, in his short story *Bopodi ba kgonwa ke ba ba dinaka*, illustrates the seriousness of the situation in which Maramphana finds himself, through the idioms, "letlhabaphefo ntshologe mokgosi" (window spill me a loud shout) and "go ntobela dintsi" (to hide me from fleas). These idioms not only serve ornamental functions, they also assist the progression of the narrative events. Bogatsu uses the idiomatic phrase "letlhabaphefo ntshologe mokgosi" to indicate that Maramphana solicits the help of the window to jump out of the house when fleeing from Thubaki. With the idiom "go ntobela dintsi", the writer refers to the unsympathetic manner in which Thubaki would inflict pain on Maramphana's body or to the manner in which he would murder him and hide his body so that it cannot be seen. Idioms are not solely utilised to develop action, they are also used to enhance suspense and to emphasise particular viewpoints. In example [NN] Moroke, through his character, uses the idiom "ke utlwile ka letlhokwa la tsela" (I heard from the straw of the road) whose English equivalent is "a little sparrow told me", to capture and attract the attention of the reader to his narrative events. Simultaneously he emphasises his stance



regarding the message that he delivers. He does not want to be held responsible for the information that he conveys, he wants other characters to accept that what he furnishes is hearsay, that is, he has been told about it and has not witnessed it personally.

As we have said above, an idiom is an expression whose overall figurative meaning cannot be derived from the meaning of its parts. For example, the figurative meaning of "go sebela" (to whisper) of the idiom "go loma tsebe" (to bite an ear) in example [OO] cannot be derived from the literal meaning of the words "go", (to) "loma" (bite) and "tsebe" (an ear). The literal meaning of these words is to bite an ear, and thus inflict pain on the victim. What Moroke wants to convey here is that one of the girls has revealed information that has been kept a secret to one of the boys. It is easier to retrieve the meaning of the whole idiom than to access the meaning of individual words in an attempt to reach the meaning of the whole idiom. What is very interesting in idiom comprehension, however, is that readers do not switch from a literal to a non-literal mode of processing. They rely on a quick and unconscious process by means of which they seek to discover the independent meanings of the parts of idioms and combine these to recognise what idioms mean as wholes. These meanings are not necessarily the literal meanings of the words in idioms, they only reflect figurative interpretations of different words and word combinations in context.

Sometimes the usage of idioms is associated with the termination of the topic about which the characters or the writer has been speaking and the transition to a new topic. The idiom serves to close the topic through summarising effects; and when the writer uses an idiom he is giving his assessment of what he has narrated, avoiding detail or giving a long story and, as such, an idiom becomes emphatic and gives a special vividness associated with the meaning of the idiom (cf:Everaert et al., 1995:125). Look at the following examples:

(QQ) Ditshegwana ngwanaka, o utlwise pelo ya me botlhoko  
fa o sa tsee thuto tsia. O tlile go thanya lomapo lo le tsebeng.  
(Bogatsu, 1995a:14)

(Ditshegwana my child, you disappoint me greatly when you do not take your education seriously. You will wake from sleep with a wooden peg in the ear)

(RR) Kana le kwa gaabo kwa Tlhakong ba ne ba setse *ba latlhetse teu*. Motho e le phage. Le fa go ntse jalo, bookelo jwa George Stegman bo ne bo sa felela kwa ntle ga gagwe. Balwetse mmogo le badiri mo bookelong ba ne ba mo rata gone e ne e le mmaditshegwana le mmametlae (Bogatsu, 1995b:49).

(Even her people at Tlhakong had already thrown in the towel. She was almost a wild cat. Be that as it may, the George Stegman hospital was not complete without her. The patients and the workers loved her because she was jolly and jocular)

The idiomatic phrase, "fa o sa tsee thuto tsia" in sentence [QQ] which literally means "if you do not take education seriously", refers to the immediately preceding details; that the matron was bitterly disappointed with Ditshegwana's poor performance at school. It also refers back to the whole topic of Ditshegwana's unmannerly behaviour and irresponsible and reproachable conduct; and back to the information that she was very intelligent and had previously passed her subjects with distinction. Through the idiom "fa o sa tsee thuto tsia", the writer refers the reader not only to the present events, but also summarises the incidents that lead to the present pronouncements, thus avoiding the need to provide a detailed description of the events that had precipitated the present confusion. In the second idiom from example [QQ] that is, "o tlele go thanya lomapo lo le tsebeng" (you are going to wake from sleep with a wooden peg in the ear), the writer summarises the possible consequences of Ditshegwana's neglect of her studies. In this respect, the idiom concludes the advice by providing a summary which connects the events beyond the present with those events which immediately precede the idiom itself. If we look at example [OO] we realise that idiomatic phrases are figurative. Therefore, when Dora uses the idiomatic expression "o tswa go loma ... basimane tsebe", she summarises the whole incident surrounding their discussion. This idiom's figurative nature means that she describes the

behaviour of the girl as "go loma tsebe" (to bite an ear), and by so doing refers to this behaviour in a more general manner than she would have done with the literal version of the idiom, namely, "go sebela" (to whisper to).

In example [RR] the writer uses the idiomatic expression "ba latlhetse teu", whose English equivalent is, they "threw in the towel", to refer to the effects that Mmapaseka's unwillingness to heed her parents advice and those of the other authorities had on them in a general way. This idiom is particularly emphatic because of its figurative nature. The authorities and Mmapaseka's parents were not only annoyed with her wayward behaviour, they also came to a point where they just washed their hands of her. They were all devoid of new advice or new information that could help. Through this idiom, the writer would like to indicate that the authorities and Mmapaseka's parents believed that the question surrounding Mmapaseka's misdemeanour had reached a point at which no further attempts could be made to rehabilitate her and that the topic should be brought to a close unless Mmapaseka herself had a better way of dealing with the topic. In this instance, Bogatsu uses an idiom to terminate a topic. Therefore, the idiom here is treated as a closing summary, and as detaching the talk from further development so that no other character can add any further information or advice on the subject (cf:Everaert et al., 1995). There is an important observation that is discernible in the excerpt, [RR], and that is, after the usage of an idiom we notice a transition to a new subject. The two sentences that follow immediately after the idiom, are sufficient evidence that the production of an idiom brings one topic to a close and provides an opportunity for the introduction of the next topic. After having used the idiom "ba latlhetse teu", the writer turns to the positive side of Mmapaseka's personality. The writer narrates that, "be that as it may, the George Stegman hospital was not complete without her; and that both the patients and the workers loved Mmapaseka because she was jolly and jocular" (Bogatsu, 1995b:49). The significance of this sudden change of stance provides evidence for the writer's objectivity in character depiction and narrative development. What is immediately notable about the sudden change of topic is that the events do not occur in a stepwise pattern. In the instance referred to above, we realise that the transition from a subject followed by an idiom to the introduction of a new subject is signalled by "a discontinuity marker that suspends the

relevance of the prior topic" (cf:Everaert et al., 1995:120). This discontinuity marker is "le fa go ntse jalo" (be that as it may), which identifies a clear boundary between the two subjects or topics.

Many idioms do not merely act as closing summaries or points of transition, they also reflect metonymic modes of thought; for they reflect some salient aspects of a specific object, idea or event and then stands for or represent the object, idea or event as a whole (cf:Everaert et al., 1995). For example, "go latlhela teu" (to throw in the towel), meaning to surrender or to give up on some activity, refers to salient acts in a series of events. It is metonymic in referring to the last fighting act that a boxer, through his trainer, does before yielding to another boxer. This is an act that shows the referee and the judges that the boxer has felt the punches of the opponent and cannot continue with the fight. Mmapaseka's excessive drunkenness, her absenteeism from duty, her unmannerliness and her unwillingness to submit herself to codes of conduct, are all a series of events which, like the punches of a boxer, lead to a situation where the matron and Mmapaseka's parents feel they have had enough and thus surrender. Note the following examples that are almost on the same level as the one cited immediately above:

(SS) Setlhabi se se neng se tle se mo kubugele, e se se se tshwenyang go le kalo. Monna o swa senku. (Molebaloa, 1987:1)

(The pain that sometimes attacked him did not give him the creeps. A man dies like a sheep)

(TT) Mosimane a lemoga gore dikgomo di tsene mo masimong. A nagana leano le a ka tswang mo dinakeng tsa kukama ka lona. (Bogatsu, 1995a:17)

(The boy realised that the cattle had gone into the fields. He thought of a plan through which he would go out of the horns of a gemsbok.)

(UU) Matlho a tlola legora a bo a le tlololola. Matlhaku kana go šwa mabapi fa mpuru a faretswe. (Molebaloa, 1987:5)

(The eyes wandered over the fence. By the way when one hedge catches fire it affects those neighbouring it, if one is hindered at giving birth)

In this case, a salient act has a representative relationship to an entire idea or event (cf:Everaert et al., 1995). In Molebaloa's idiom "monna o swa senku" (a man dies like a sheep), the literal referent of the idiom is itself an instance of the idiomatic meaning, as this idiom is simultaneously an ideal exemplar of the act of silently surrendering to pain, torture or death. Another example of this type of an idiom is found in Molebaloa's short story, *Nnete e a boloka*, which reads as "mpuru o faretswe" in example [UU], to refer to an instance of being in trouble. In these instances, the idioms convey meaning by making an indirect reference to certain events, situations or actions. When we examine at the above examples, we discover that Molebaloa employs the same communicative devices as similes and metaphors. In the idiom "monna o swa senku" (a man dies like a sheep), which is found in example [SS], the writer describes the manner in which the character withstands excruciating pain that attacked him. Molebaloa achieves this by grouping the two events into the same class. The endurance of an excruciating pain by the character and the endurance of being slaughtered at knife point by a sheep are similar to each other because both actions constitute a certain degree of surrender.

It is without doubt that many idioms that are used in literature and in conversational circles seem to reflect underlying conceptual metaphors. A situation where things have been disrupted up or damaged, for example, is expressed by Bogatsu with an idiom "dikgomo di tsene mo masimong" (the cattle have gone into the field) in example [TT], which reflects the conceptual metaphor of damage as done by cattle when they gain access to a mielie-field, sorghum-field, or any field of a particular crop. In this case, Bogatsu exploits the implicit allusion to emotional states that are available in the idiom "dikgomo di tsene mo masimong" for a situation where things go wrong, are disrupted or become damaged and the unpleasant results of this action can be anticipated. This idiom shares the same nature as the idiom "go tswa mo dinakeng tsa kukama" (to go out of the horns

of a gemsbok) which idiom can be comprehended as a metonymic allusion to a problematic or dangerous situation.

When we interpret and investigate the essence of these two idioms we realise that they rely on the literal, stipulated and allusional meanings to be literarily effective and appropriate. In the literal sense, when cattle enter a field of any crop they do a great deal of damage to it and the stipulated meaning of the idiom implies that things go wrong or become damaged and disrupted, while at the same time the idiom indirectly (allusional content) refers to a situation experienced when cattle walk into a field with the intent of eating the visibly green or appetising crop and leaving the farmer utterly disgruntled. If there was no idiom to express the meaning of "dikgomo di tsene mo masimong" (the cattle have gone into the fields), as seen in example [TT], the way to express this meaning would be long-winded and possibly even less effective than the idiom. In the Tswana traditional life the experience of cattle moving into a crop field is regrettable and punishable; for all the herdboys who might be in the vicinity of the incident would be held responsible for the damage regardless of whether or not those cattle had been under their herdship. It was a responsibility shared by all, that the cattle should be kept out of the fields.

#### **4.4 BIBLICAL ALLUSIONS**

Biblical allusions refer to the indirect reference that the writer makes to certain ideas, passages, sentences or phrases and names in the Bible. Allusions often evoke images that are embedded in the culture and tradition of a prose-writer; and allusions as they are, should be clear and comprehensible to be effective, because "if they are obscure they fail to achieve their purpose and they deny the reader a clear understanding of the literary work" (Serudu, 1993:257). In brief, we can conclude that literary allusion is a reference in one piece of a literature to another piece of literature, and it is a useful device for both compression and enrichment.

When Shole quotes from the Bible, he manages to add to his short story all the implications, effects and ideas of another text. In his (1985) short story, *E romilwe ke Jehofa*, a snake kills the three man-hunters who kidnapped Mfoloe in order to mutilate him. These three men are Selepe, Rambeo and Lekabe. The minister reveals that the snake has saved Mfoloe's life where no man would dare to tread. Shole expresses this as follows:

Moruti ka go rata gore fa go leng teng a be a ntse a oketsa phuthago a ba rerela ka la gore ke dineelelo tsa Modimo, o o romileng noga go thusa motlhanka wa ona foo batho ba paletsweng, jaaka gone o kile wa e romela go thusa setšhaba sa ga Moše maloba. "Ga se e go tilweng e kgobiwe tlhogo e". (Shole, 1985:54)

(Because the minister liked to increase his congregation wherever he was, he then delivered a sermon about God's curses, God who recently had sent the snake to deliver his servant where man could not succeed, as he once sent a snake to deliver the followers of Moses. "This is not the one whose head has been doomed to be trampled on".)

The interpretation of this passage evokes images about similar experiences that are deeply anchored in the Biblical knowledge of the reader. Although this passage is short, it is a reference to an extensive body of literature found in the Bible and, as such, it is a meaningful device of compression. Shole is also famous of short story titles that bear an indirect reference to the ideas, experiences and names of people found in the Bible. These titles include *E romilwe ke Jehofa*, *Taafite le Jonathane*, and *Tlalelo ya ga Magatalena*. With *E romilwe ke Jehofa*, Shole brings to bear on this title the associations and meanings connected with the relevant text in the Bible; with *Taafite le Jonathane*, he reveals his knowledge of the relationship that existed between the Biblical David and Jonathan, and equates it with the relationship between his story's two characters, Charlie and Gerrie; with *Tlalelo ya ga Magatalena* Shole draws from his stored Biblical knowledge a specific incident which involves the intricate, uneasy and difficult situation experienced by Mary Magdelene and he shares it with his readers, using it to enrich his short story. Although he does not relate it as it is told in the Bible, but indirectly refers to it, our interpretation

of Magatalena's dilemma makes us relate the story of Magatalena to the Biblical Magdelene's dilemma in order to enhance our understanding of the course of events. The writer's frequent references to the Bible relate to his religious background, for, not only is Shole involved in the management of his church, he is also involved in the church choir and in delivering sermons on regular basis.

On the other hand, Ntsime (1972) and Moroke's (1968) strong religious orientations are clearly visible in the manner in which they express themselves in their short stories. What is evident from these writers' short stories is that their expressions are deliberately used to coax the reader towards accepting the word of God. In Moroke's (1968) short story, *Mhalatsi*, Togamaano and Mhalatsi share ideas on how to disintegrate Morapedi's group of Christians. Togamaano advises Mhalatsi that if he wants to dismantle the unity that exists among Morapedi's Christians, he should make them rich. He says that it is then that they will forget about their prayers, about Sundays and ultimately forget their God. They will grow jealous and be at war with one another. The dialogue continues thus:

Togamaano a re; "Ba tla rathana ka dilepe, ba fisana ka molelo. Ba tla roba molao wa kgosi ya bona o o reng, 'O se ka wa bolaya'." Mhalatsi a re; "Nna ke fentse dinatla, boKaifase, moperesita yo mogolo. Ke fentse boJudase. Petore ene ga ke itse gore o falotse jang." Togamaano a re; "O fentse batho ba ba tshwanang le Heroda le Herodiase gonne ba ne ba sa rate go reetsa kgakololo ya ga Johanese wa mokolobetsi gonne o ne a sa huma, a tswala matlalo, a ja ditsie le dinotshe". (Moroke, 1968:65)

(Togamaano said; "They will chop one another with axes, burn one another with fire. They will not obey their God's commandment which says, "Thou shall not kill". Mhalatsi then said; "I have defeated strong men such as Caiaphas, the great priest. I have defeated Judas. I do not know how Peter survived. Togamaano replied and said; "You have defeated the people like Herod and Herodias because they did not want to listen to the advice of John the baptist as he was not rich, and because he wore leather, ate locusts and bees")



What is observable in the above excerpt is that its content is self-explanatory and informative even though it brings into play various Biblical names and experiences. However, what is not readily understandable and clear is the Biblical role played by people such as Caiaphas, Herod and Herodias. It is not easy for the short story reader to have a clear and complete understanding of the message and meaning of this text because of his ignorance of the Biblical context within which these characters acted. We cannot deny that the Biblically inclined readers such as religious ministers, would easily fathom the depth of the images, however the struggling churchians might not readily comprehend the allusion. We do not deny the fact that the writer would love to broaden the reader's mental horizons by providing him with both secular and religious knowledge, but to cut a big slice of Biblical text is mentally taxing as it also retards understanding and interpretation. Therefore, an allusion can create a problem if it passes by a reader unrecognised because the reader will not have the common reading background (Scott & Madden, 1980:161). It is only when an allusion is recognised that it enriches the meaning or effect of the story. It is not as insurmountable a task for Moroke that he should frequently refer to Biblical texts as it is for the reader to understand because the writer's religious background speaks for him; he is a qualified minister of religion.

As we have discussed above, we can conclude that an allusion is a device by means of which an idea or an image is used in a compressed form in order to achieve great effect by economising on word usage. Normally, the writer makes an indirect reference to a particular idea, image, experience or name without acknowledging the source of the reference, believing that the reader will readily know the origin of the reference. Be that as it may, some readers still find it difficult to determine the origin of some references that some writers make, particularly in cases where the writer refers to a large slice of the text. Therefore, it is not surprising to realise that Lephogole (Malope et al., 1983) in his short story, *Mo letlalong la nku*, alludes to a call for help against criminals made by God and the content of the ten commandments; and simultaneously acknowledging the sources of

the texts as Psalm 59:2-3 and Exodus 20:13 and 15. Although some short story writers make indirect references to the Bible and the world of folklore, there are also other writers who borrow ideas or images from the hymn books. Cases in point are Ntsime (Magoleng & Ntsime, 1972) and Molebaloa (1987) in their short stories, *Letshwao la kolobetso* and *Lefu la hao* respectively. In *Letshwao la kolobetso*, the words "Gaufi le Morena" (Nearer my God) describe Goitseman's position in relation to God after having received her last holy communion. Goitseman, through these words, signals her happiness that she is ultimately out of trouble. However, this expression "Gaufi le Morena" also alludes to a religious song in which the singer emphasises that even if the cross of Christianity is very heavy to bear, she will not surrender.

Allusions pertaining to religious songs seem to have found a home in the short stories. This might be caused by the fact that they too are compressed and relevant to the nature of the short story. Because there is no room for digressions and elaborate descriptive details, these religious songs help the short story writers to isolate ideas and experiences which may capture a vast experience in as few words as possible. In *Lefu la hao* for instance, Molebaloa describes a situation in which a woman's husband has died and funeral proceedings for the husband are underway. The writer then uses three lines of a religious song as a reference to what usually happens at the funerals of married men. The writer alludes to a hymn from "Difela tsa Sione" and he quotes these lines:

1. Ke dumetse ho Morena  
-----
2. Lefu la hao le a mphedisa
3. Reko la hao le a ntshedisa  
(Molebaloa, 1987:17)

- (1. I have faith in the Lord  
-----
2. Your death makes my life worth living

### 3. Your redemption grants me life)

Although this allusion occurs as a religious song, Molebaloa places emphasis on two sentences which imply that a husband's death makes a wife's life worth living and that the husband's redemption grants her life. This song is so frequently sung at funerals that so many things are said about the message and meaning of the two lines, that is lines two and three. Thus, even the writer himself is bold enough to say that when the mourners came to sing these lines they put more effort and vigour into them; that even the widow herself would begin to brighten up with the repetition of these lines; and, that men would start to slyly catch a glimpse of the widow's room. The implication we derive from these lines is that although the widow would feel grief at the loss of a wonderful husband, she would brighten up at the thought that the husband's death would bring her financial and other material riches. It seems to suggest that the wife of the deceased rejoices and pronounces her thanks that by dying, the husband gives her reasons to lead her life and that by dying, the husband redeems her from the pangs and clutches of hunger and poverty. We can, therefore, see that this allusion has a wide range of interpretations, messages and meanings.

#### 4.5 RESUME

Style in writing is concerned with the choice of words from the enormous resources of an entire language. These words are arranged into short sentences, long sentences and paragraphs to convey specific ideas; and sometimes these words are repeated a number of times or in patterns by means of which they bring into prominence particular ideas in juxtaposition with other ideas. Tswana short story writers use their language as a reservoir from which they draw words that they need in constructing and building the ideas and incidents that constitute the short stories. Although these writers possess a vast knowledge of the vocabulary of the Tswana language, the degree of vastness and their choice, ability and skill of word usage differ to a great extent. It is interesting to note that some writers when announcing unpleasant events, use a variety of words in an effort to avoid nasty and

unsavoury language. This device of replacing a taboo word or an unpleasant word with a euphemistic word or phrase characterises most short stories. This is not the only device that is discernible in Tswana short story writing. The Tswana short story writers use rhetorical questions to effect emphasis and to direct the reader's line of thinking; thus forcing the reader to participate more actively in the solution of the problem of the short story. Though the character of words utilised in the Tswana short story is easily understandable because the words the writers use are simple and not elaborate, they possess intense emotion that lingers on in the mind of the reader even a few day's after perusal. Being simple, however, their language does not degenerate to being commonplace as this would offend simplicity. Although most short story writers use simplicity and directness of style in their narratives, there are also some exceptions to the rule as some writers tend to use archaic and difficult words which are not readily understood by the reader.

Tswana short story writers often use a high frequency of short and long sentences, and alternate these sentences in their narration in order to emphasise, to show the tempo and to highlight particular atmospheres and specific moods. Although sentences are used to achieve specific effects and to illustrate specific moods and particular atmospheres, the importance of using correct punctuation marks shows itself to be very significant in making sentences more intelligible and comprehensible. Some of the writers use long sentences which combine punctuation with subordination and through this technique they establish a clear scale of values by subordinating less worthy ideas into dependent clauses, and by showing a relationship of connectedness, causality and coherence of events. It is interesting to note that Tswana short story writers use paragraphs of varied length to provide important information on characters, the development of events and to make succinct statements which are crucial to the action of the story. Although we accept and believe in simple and direct language as opposed to fanciful language, we do admit that figurative language and its usage is another means of extending knowledge and highlighting unnoticed relationships between objects. Tswana short story writers utilise

figurative language for it is ornamental and functions as a means of embellishing the language of their short stories. This figurative language shows itself in these short stories to be the "living power and the prime agent of all human perceptions" (Mayfield, 1986:25).

It is without doubt that the proverbs also play a very significant role in literature, for they are not only used for ornamental functions, but also to moralise, instruct, advise and reflect on everyday incidents. It is clear from the argumentation above that although proverbs are bits of wisdom laying bare a course of action, and although they are considered as apparent truths; in Tswana short stories they are called upon in their original form "if the shoe happens to fit and are altered if the shoe does not fit" (Ntshinga, 1998:87). The writer's deliberate alteration of the original form of the proverb is done in order to integrate their flow and rhythm with the structure in which they are used. However, where proverbs are used in their rigid, traditional and original versions, the contextual and syntactic environment becomes fashioned to accommodate them appropriately. Tswana short story writers not only call upon proverbs to do miracles for them in their art, they also utilise idioms to embellish their literary language. These writers use idioms for various functions which include the termination of the topic about which the characters or the writer have been speaking about; the transition from one topic to another and, above all, to emphasise and give special vividness to the events of the story. Apart from these devices, Tswana short story writers often make indirect references to certain ideas, events, passages and names in the Bible to evoke images that are embedded in their culture and tradition. Although these writers utilise allusion to broaden the reader's mental horizon, it is sometimes mentally taxing for the reader to fathom an unrecognised allusion. Such an experience normally retards the reader's understanding and interpretation unlike when the allusion is easily and readily recognisable.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **ORAL TRADITION AND THE TSWANA SHORT STORY**

#### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

Oral traditions are the living and existing works of art which uphold and preserve the African culture and these traditions serve as the reservoirs from which the African writers of modern literature draw the original and unique devices that help them to create their works. Vansina (1985:3) maintains that "oral tradition" applies both to a process and to its products; that while the products are oral messages rendered from generation to generation, the process is the actual repetitive transmission of these messages by word of mouth. These oral messages manifest themselves in various forms which include folktales, proverbs, riddles and idioms, not forgetting culture. What we also need bear in mind is that these forms of oral tradition exist as realities in the culture of the people and are always accessible to the senses because they live in the minds of the people. Therefore, it is not surprising to experience a situation in which this traditional culture is reproduced from memory and utilised through the written word to spice modern literature. We can rightfully conclude that because of this transference of artistic knowledge there is an essential link between traditional and modern literatures.

The link that exists between oral and written literature stems from the fact that people carry their traditional norms, values and cultural artefacts wherever they migrate; and in creating their modern literatures they find nourishment and inspiration from this heritage. Similarly, the short story writers, in composing their works, operate consciously or unconsciously within their specific tradition of story-creation and story-telling. This implies that these writers often find themselves operating within both the traditional and modern cultures when creating their works, since literature mirrors society from past to

present. It is through their direct contact with their folk traditions that these writers use the elements of the folk narratives and sayings in their literary composition because they are familiar with what is embedded in their folklore.

From the viewpoint above, it is beyond doubt that traditional forms have deeply influenced modern literature. Having deliberated on the link, or what in this chapter we call influence, that is prevalent between oral and written literatures, it is befitting to examine the definition of this word 'influence'. The word 'influence' refers to the inspiration that one object derives from another object. Msimang (1986) endorses this view when he says that influence may be defined as the presence of certain elements in a latter work which are similar to those found in a former work. He continues to state that if we are to speak of an influence, it is essentially reasonable that these elements that emphasise or show resemblance should be such that there can be no doubt that the writer of modern literature has definitely induced the oral traditions. It is, therefore, imperative that before there can be talk of influence we should have determined and concluded that the latter work has elements which are similar to those of the former. Msimang (1986) differentiates between overt influence and covert influence. He states that an influence is overt when the writer of the latter work is consciously under the inspiration of the former work and that it is covert when the writer of the latter work is subconsciously inspired and driven by the former work. While overt influence can be referred to as an adaptation of a kind, in covert influence the writer utilises and fuses the elements of a former work with his work at his own free will and in a manner that suits his subject and form.

Research into the influence of oral tradition on modern literature is one of the most interesting aspects in the study of literature. Many literary researchers have indicated that it is modern literature that has directly or indirectly been influenced by the artistic devices of the traditional literature and not the converse. This reasoning does not only stem from the fact that traditional literature is the forerunner, but also from the fact that it is no longer created or crafted. It is essentially the literature that continues to be created that

experiences the effects of the process of influence and in this instance this is modern literature. Although Tswana writers adopted the short story as a genre from the West, they did not leave it totally unchanged. As Julien (1992) puts it, they expanded it a bit by injecting a healthy dose of their cultural and aesthetic values. This serves to illustrate that the short story did not merely find its place in the Batswana community, but it also found its equal in the form of the folktale. From this artistic wealth Tswana writers enriched and embellished their short stories using their traditional narrative devices. It is clear from this argumentation that an artist remains true and faithful to his culture and tradition even if he finds himself creating foreign artefacts or writing in a foreign language. Msimang (1986:1) in citing Iyasere concurs with this statement when he says:

The modern African writer is to his indigenous oral tradition  
as a snail to its shell. Even in a foreign habitat, a snail never  
leaves its shell behind.

Although some critics might mistake this phenomenon as highlighting negative aspects relating to the African literatures, it must be emphasised that such thinking would be a faulty conception and perception for this phenomenon is similarly encountered in other literatures of the world. Botha (1987) states clearly that both the English and Russian literatures were deeply influenced by their respective traditional literary forms of a verbal nature. He states categorically that even prolific and well-known writers such as Shakespeare, Gogol, Pushkin and Turgenev all drew directly or indirectly from the inspiration of the oral tradition. Therefore, it is not an anomaly nor is it surprising to realise that creative writing in Africa, and specifically in Tswana, shows strong influence from the literary traditions of the past. Thus it is clear that Tswana short story writers, in drawing from the wealth of their cultural literariness, have endowed their works with a touch of originality and uniqueness which could only be taken from the traditional splendour of the threads of the oral traditions. By using folk narratives, proverbs, ideophones and other forms of African oral art, the short story writers have resorted to indigenous sources of inspiration and exploited their own cultural heritage to improve on



the essence of the short story. Lindfors (1973:29) in quoting Jahn reiterates this assertion when he says that "if you take possession of a part of a thing, you thereby participate in its life force". Therefore, we can conclude that by taking possession of some of the elements of the Tswana oral traditions, the short story writers affirm the continued existence of these oral traditions and simultaneously add the traditional splendour of these forms to the short story.

It is not the objective of this chapter to give a critical analysis of the genres of oral tradition. The main purpose of this chapter is to determine and examine the extent to which the Tswana oral tradition has appeared, influenced and continues to exist in the Tswana short story. This chapter, therefore, does not concentrate only on the question of influence, it also highlights the link and the existence of oral elements or items in the Tswana short story. The most significant aspects which will be examined in this chapter involve the existence of elements of oral tradition in the organisation of material; the link between oral tradition and characterisation; the influence of oral tradition on the style and language of the Tswana short story; the influence of oral tradition on setting; and oral tradition and the narrative perspective. In the introductory part of each section, we shall provide a very brief account of the nature of the specific aspect under discussion. Since we are restricted by the confines of this chapter, we shall not exhaust the material that could be discussed under oral tradition in the Tswana short story. This subject in itself is an independent area worthy of extensive research.

## **5.1 ORAL TRADITION IN THE ORGANISATION OF MATERIAL**

In this section we are not going to delineate all the different elements concerning the organisation of the material. The different elements pertaining to the organisation of material are discussed strictly in relation to the way the material of the folktale is organised. By organisation of material we mean the arrangement of events and actions in a narrative to convey a message. This arrangement involves a specific problem or

objective which is related to the incidents which are arranged into a sequence of beginning, middle and ending. This arrangement is the overall appearance of the organisation of the Tswana folk narrative.

The beginning of a folk narrative or folktale is basically the introductory or expository phase of the narrative. In this phase the folktale is in a state of calm and it gradually moves from this calmness to excitement. It is during this introductory part that characters and a problem are presented. The second part of the folktale is the middle. This phase is pervaded by conflict and suspense. This conflict is kept alive by the hero's determination to achieve his objective even in the face of strong opposition. The last phase of the folktale is called the ending or the resolution. The folktale normally does not close off its action abruptly, but moves towards the end in a gradual manner. It rounds off the action and leaves no question unanswered. These three phases govern the narrator's organisation of the folktale's material and he builds his tale around them. Even though this is the core structure of all folktales in Tswana, it should be remembered that some folktales can assume circular structures or comprise a number of episodes without compromising the core structure.

Lindfors (1973) says that in folktales which are circular in structure the hero undergoes a sequence of adventures involving a departure, an initiation and a return. This means that a character in the folktale departs from a certain point with the hope of achieving something in his life, but when his hopes are dashed, he returns to the same point from which he fled. As has been suggested above, although some folktales follow a circular structure, there are others which are episodic in nature. This means that they are built up of series of loosely connected events. A folktale is, therefore, episodic if it consists of quite a number of events or incidents. If we critically examine the structure of the folk narrative, we realise that it directly or indirectly shares features with the short story. Therefore, we can conclude that, since the folk narrative is the forerunner of the short story, the theoreticians who designed the short story were directly or indirectly under the

inspiration of the folk narrative.

The usage of the folktale to enrich the short story is found in Shole's (1985) volume *O foo, ke fano!* in which he has titled one of his short stories *Belo ja ga khudu* (The tortoise's race). The writer, in this regard, has used an item of folklore to design the title of his short story. With *Belo ja ga khudu*, Shole alludes to a folktale in which Mmutle raced against Khudu. Khudu (the tortoise) is a character who is vindicated by outwitting the know-all trickster, Mmutle (the hare) in the folk narrative, *Khudu le Mmutle*. Khudu proves to be a clever character who sticks to the business at hand so that he cannot be misled. He uses this quality to his advantage so that he succeeds in fooling Mmutle. In this folktale Khudu, knowing very well that he cannot outrun Mmutle, plants his wife and children at different intervals along the route while he posts himself at the finish line. It is through this trickery that Khudu manages to beat Mmutle to the finish line. Similarly, in the short story *Belo ja ga khudu*, Nkalankata is a character who outwits the other athletes and judges by impersonating his protege. He uses his athletic speed and identity to his advantage and he succeeds in fooling the other athletes and judges. Through the title of this short story, Shole brings to bear on his art a folkloristic image and associates Nkalankata's tricks of impersonating his protege in the hundred metre race with the trickery of Khudu in the folktale, *Khudu le Mmutle*. The effectiveness of Nkalankata's trickery lies in the fact that he completely resembles his protege just like Khudu's wife and children shared identical features with Khudu. In *Belo ja ga Khudu*, Shole not only uses the language of the folk narrative, he also exploits the reader's knowledge of this folktale to bring meaning and message to his short story. The mere mention of the title itself tells the reader that someone is going to be outwitted or tricked. The reader's knowledge of the folktale is, therefore, sufficient indication that he should be on the look out for trickery as he peruses the story.

Traces of oral tradition in the Tswana short story also become evident in the initial sentences of the expositional phase. These can be seen where writers use folktale narrative

formulas in a slightly altered form in the exposition of their stories. Perfect examples can be seen in Ntsime's (Magoleng & Ntsime, 1972) short stories in which he echoes the formula that normally characterises the beginning of a folktale: "go kile ga bo go na le" (once upon a time there was). He retains this introductory formula in short stories entitled *Letshwao la kolobetso*, *Khutsana* and *Sebaka* at the very beginning of these short stories. For example, Ntsime begins *Letshwao la kolobetso* in this way: "Kwa motseng o mogolo wa Lopipi go kile ga bo go na le monna mongwe a bidiwa Segale" (*Once upon a time there was a certain man called Segale in the vast village of Lopipi*). Although this writer begins his short stories with a formula that normally introduces or begins folktales, he tells his stories in locations where both fantastic and realistic things happen. Apart from using folkloristic formulas, the Tswana writers often tell their readers what the action of their short stories entails or signifies. They do this by framing their stories around proverbs and using the characters' actions to illustrate the significance of these proverbs, just like the traditional storyteller. This can be seen in Malope's short stories (1982) *Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana'a mmaago* and *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng*, in Magoleng's (1987) *Poela e a ja* and *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng*, and many more examples found in the vast short story collections of Tswana.

From the argumentation above, we realise that it is impossible to see the Tswana short story as being free from the interference of oral tradition. Most of the Tswana short stories are soaked in traditional marriages, mysteries, witchcraft, ghosts and superstition. As pointed out in Chapter Two, Tswana short stories treat traditional marriages, witchcraft and rituals, both from affirmative and critical viewpoints. In his short story *O nkutlwe* Malope (1982) feels that a widow's problems of nurturing and fending for her children can easily be solved through the traditional practices of the sororate and the levirate. This is because in traditional Tswana culture death does not dissolve marriage and the death of the body is not the end of being. On the other hand, Malebye (1995) in his short story *Batho ba bosigo*, illustrates the belief in witchcraft and the ability of the dead to continue to live even after death. Another example is in Ntsime's (1972) *Letshwao la kolobetso* in

which we hear of Goitsewang's ghost that haunts her parents with the request for baptism.

The continued existence of the elements or items of the oral tradition, specifically of the folktale, on the exposition of the short story does not manifest itself in all Tswana stories. However, we do find instances where the content of the exposition does not lead to events after it. A case in point is the exposition of Malope's (1982) short story *O nkutlwe*. The narrative events of the exposition of *O nkutlwe* do not link with the rest of the story and, as such, are irrelevant to the development of conflict. The reader is confused into thinking that the events of the story revolve around Seraki and that the story will treat traces of Seraki's show of bravery. We cannot, however, regard this as the influence of the folktale as it shows poor craftsmanship. A significant trend that shows itself in Tswana short stories concerns the attempt of writers to enrich and embellish their art with forms and techniques borrowed from oral literature. Therefore, it is not surprising to find oral tales retold and creatively intertwined with the events of the short stories. To this effect we can refer to Shole's (1985) short story *E romilwe ke Jehofa* and Makgaledise's (cf: Malope, 1983) *O thantse lo le tsebeng*.

In *E romilwe ke Jehofa* the writer elicits a foreshadowing in the form of a folktale to expose Selepe's ignorance of the situation that surrounds and confronts him. The writer tells us that Selepe remembers a folktale of long ago which narrates how a priest witnessed his congregation grow smaller and smaller as they joined the dancing outside the church. In this regard, Shole uses the content of the folktale which has a bearing on Selepe's future. In remembering this folktale, Selepe associates what happens to him at the moment of his waiting with the events of a folktale from long ago. The incidents of the folktale are almost identical in wording and implication to the events surrounding Selepe and his friends. Selepe, like the priest, witnesses his friends grow smaller and smaller as they go searching for a plastic bag. Therefore, the writer uses the content of the folktale to indirectly alert Selepe to his friends' death and his own impending demise, however, he is ignorant of its implication. The fact that the church leader, the priest's wife and the priest himself join the dancing (in the folktale content), indicates that this folktale is a

foreshadowing of the death of Lekabe, Rambeo and Selepe (who are mysteriously killed by the snake in this sequence).

As is evident in Shole's art, the usage of folktales in Tswana short stories is not just a question of ordinary elaborations or digressions. They have the intentional purpose of elucidating the narrative contexts within which they are used. This can also be seen in Makgaledise's (cf: Malope, 1983) *O thantse lo le tsebeng*. This short story is concerned with Bafedile's disregard of her studies and her immoral and adulterous tendencies. It also touches on Bafedile's ignorance of the advice she receives from Boitumelo, including her unpreparedness to sit for examinations, and lastly, her ultimate regret when she discovers that she is three months pregnant. Bafedile's mistake is committed when she cannot accept Boitumelo's advice and rebels against her parents' moral upbringing. However, when she returns to her senses and starts studying with all her mind, she begins to remember the precious time she has wasted. It is at this period of her frustration that she experiences an excruciating pain. This is the very period during which Makgaledise inserts a folktale on the locust to elucidate and bring the events of the short story into prominence. It is particularly its structural positioning in the chronological build up of the events that helps highlight the action of the short story. The folktale is told to Bafedile by an elderly woman, Materone.

The content of the folktale illuminates the content of the short story and the characters of the folktale correspond very well to those of the short story. Therefore, this folktale functions as a meaningful metaphor that explains the conflict surrounding the main character of the short story. In this folktale, the actions of Tsie (the locust) illuminate those of Bafedile; the advice of Notshe (the bee) help us understand that of Materone and Boitumelo better; and the behavioural conduct of some students corresponds with that of the white ants. The following is an exposition of the entire connection between the folktale and the short story as it shows itself:

*The folktale*

*The short story*

(i)	<p>Tsie e ne e tsamaya le lesogodi le lengwe mme ya belega ya le tlogela.</p> <p>(The locust flew in a specific swarm but became proud and left the swarm)</p>	<p>Bafedile o ne a tsalana le Boitumelo mme a ikaya yo a godileng a mo tlogela.</p> <p>(Bafedile befriended Boitumelo but thought herself too adult and left her)</p>
(ii)	<p>Tsie e ne e ja e kgora e tlamelwa ke tlholego.</p> <p>(The locust had enough food and was taken care of by nature)</p>	<p>Bafedile o tlametswe ke mmagwe a mo romela sekolong.</p> <p>(Bafedile was sent to school and taken care of by her mother)</p>
(iii)	<p>Tsie ya tlhokomologa go iphataphatela ka e ne e itumelela se tlholego e se e nayang.</p> <p>(The locust could no longer fend for itself as it was satisfied with what nature provided)</p>	<p>Bafedile a tlhokomologa dibuka le go ipaakanyetsa ditlhatlhobo ka a ne a siane le mokaragana wa botshelo le Kefetile.</p> <p>(Bafedile could no longer read her books in preparation for her examinations as she enjoyed life with Kefetile)</p>
(iv)	<p>Tsie ya simolola go sotla ditshedi tse dingwe.</p> <p>(The locust then began to scorn the other living creatures)</p>	<p>Bafedile a simolola go sotla Boitumelo fa a re o a mo gakolola.</p> <p>(Bafedile then began to scorn Boitumelo whenever she tried to give her advice)</p>
(v)	<p>Notshe ya gakolola tsie gore go ipaakanyetswa motlha wa khurano ya meno.</p> <p>(The bee then advised the locust that it should prepare for times of hardship)</p>	<p>Materone le Boitumelo ba gakolola Bafedile go ithutela ditlhatlhobo tse di gaufi.</p> <p>(Materone and Boitumelo advised Bafedile that she should study for her examinations)</p>
(vi)	<p>Tsie ya gana ya tshega notshe ya re ke sampo- kane.</p> <p>(The locust refused and laughed at the bee calling him a nonentity)</p>	<p>Bafedile a gana dikgakololo tse mme a re Boitumelo o santse a itshwere sengwana.</p> <p>(Bafedile ignored this advice saying that Boitumelo was behaving like a child)</p>
(vii)	<p>Motlha wa mariga, wa tlala wa goroga mme tsie ya palelwa ke go o emela.</p>	<p>Motlha wa ditlhatlhobo wa goroga mme Bafedile a palelwa ke go itshokela go</p>

kwala ditlhatlhobo.

(The winter time and the time of  
starvation caught up with the locust  
and he could not withstand their effects)

(The examination time caught up with  
Bafedile and she could not withstand  
the pressure of examination writing)

(viii) Tsie ya gakologelwa  
notshe le makeke go ya go  
batla thuso teng.

Bafedile a gakologelwa maele  
a a ganneng a ga Boitumelo  
le Materone.

(The locust then remembered  
the bee and the white ants that  
could possibly help it)

(Bafedile then remembered the  
advice from Materone and  
Boitumelo that she had refused)

(ix) Tsie e a swa, e bolawa  
ke tlala le serame.

Bafedile kwa bookelong ba  
Ga-Rankuwa o senolelwa fa  
a ithwele mme o boela gae  
a sa tshola setifikeiti sa  
dithuto a imile ngwana

(The locust dies from cold and  
hunger)

(Bafedile fails to write exams  
and returns home because she  
is pregnant)

If we analyse this folktale in juxtaposition with the narrative of the short story, we realise that it has much relevance to Bafedile's terrible experience. It should be remembered that this folktale is told at the time when Bafedile is about to write her examinations and is thinking about the time she has wasted and lost. After the folktale has been told, Bafedile collapses and is carried away to Garankuwa hospital. At the hospital the doctor reveals that Bafedile is three months pregnant. It is after this revelation that Bafedile is no longer in any doubt about her condition and her course of action. She then realises that "o thantse lomapo lo le tsebeng" (she has woken up with a wooden peg in the ear), a price she has to pay for her waywardness, fornicatory acts and lack of discipline.

The structural connection between the folktale and the short story reveals that in both narratives a morally good conduct is rewarded while morally reprehensible conduct is punished. In the short story, Boitumelo, who conducts herself properly and always gives advice to Bafedile, succeeds in completing her university studies. Similarly, Notshe in the folktale, who conducts himself well and gives advice to Tsie, succeeds in gathering enough food for winter. On the other hand, Bafedile (in the short story) and Tsie (in the



folktale) who conduct themselves immorally are punished: Bafedile suffers an excruciating headache and is told that she is three months pregnant, while Tsie dies of hunger and cold. Makgaledise uses the folktale as a commentary on Bafedile's past, present and future actions. This is because this folktale provides an epitome of the most relevant and significant events that build the action of the short story. The summary of events given above is clear proof that Makgaledise intended to emphasise and illuminate Bafedile's improper behaviour through the folktale. Therefore we can conclude that there is sufficient evidence for the assumption that Makgaledise wanted to alert the reader to determine the connection between the folktale and the short story. In addition there is a clear connection between the actions of Bafedile and those of Tsie, between the actions of Materone and Boitumelo and those of Notshe, and lastly between the actions of the students and those of the white ants.

The other device short story writers employ relates to the use of the folktale's circular structure. In Tswana folk narratives, there are folktales the characters of which move from a starting point, experience numerous adventures, only to finally return to the starting point. This is supported by Lindfors (1973) when he says that in circular structures the hero undergoes a sequence of adventures involving a departure, an initiation and a return. In the Tswana folktale entitled *Masilo le Masilonyana*, two brothers set out on a hunting expedition. During their adventures they become initiated into the underworld. Masilonyana has the fright of his life in his encounter with an old woman. He performs duties for this woman and is later rewarded with a wife, children, goats and cattle. Masilo in the process, becomes jealous of his younger brother's acquisitions, and kills him. After this we experience a return home. Masilo returns home with his younger brother's wife, children, goats, and cattle. Later on, Masilonyana is brought home by a huge snake. What we observe at the end of it all is that Masilo and Masilonyana return to where they started. They return to their roots, leave out all the strange or alien influences of life and become improved cultural heroes. A few instances where Tswana short story writers also use circular structures can be found in Motlhake (1985) and Thobega (1990).

In Motlhake's *Sello o batla tiro* the hero, Sello leaves his rural village to search for employment in Johannesburg. He enters a corrupt and separatist world where he merely roams the streets of the city. He ends up being a police informer, living a life which he did not seek when he came to the city. He then thinks of returning to his rural village. In Thobega's *Mosepele o o mafaratlhatlha* the hero, Dikeledi, leaves her home for the city of Gaborone. She then becomes enmeshed in the evil urban acts of prostitution and also unsuccessfully attempts to change herself into a coloured person. Having failed to pluck the fruits of city life, Dikeledi returns home to Molepolole emptyhanded and sad, with a leg amputated as a result of a gunshot wound. What we observe in these examples is that both heroes leave their rural villages for the cities and become involved in the corrupt city life, only to later return to the very life from which they had sought to flee. Austin Shelton argues that the return of Sello and Dikeledi to the type of life they initially rejected is "more than a symbol of the rejection of westernization", that it is in fact an act of "showing that their Africanism militates against their remaining permanently in the city where they have been separated from all the truly vital forces of their people and culture" (cf:Lindfors, 1973:127).

The link that exists between the folktale and the Tswana short story is not solely confined to matters relating to the utilisation of folktale formulas, the illustration of the significance of the proverb and circular structures, it also concerns the episodic elements that are manifesting this artform. The episodic nature of the folktale has influenced the essence of the short story to a great extent. When the plot is episodic, it means that it comprises a series of loosely connected events with each series having its own conflict. In the folktale *Tsholo le lefufa la bomogolowe*, we find four episodes which build up the action of this tale. In the first episode we are introduced to the humble, caring and unselfish Chief Mašapolane and his only son, Sampo. The problem in this episode revolves around the fact that the women of the village all wish to be married to Sampo. The second episode concentrates on another man, called Pitso who lives in the Chief's village with his wife, Seapei and their daughters. The conflict in this episode concerns the

jealousy that Seapei and her other daughters harbour towards her other daughter, Tsholo. In the third episode the focus is on the wedding celebration of the first son of the Chief's uncle. Here Seapei and her other daughters bar Tsholo from attending the wedding celebration of the Chief's uncle's son. Tsholo remains behind and cries bitterly as she is attending to the household chores. She is soothed by a bird which sings a sweet song with a message to wear its clothes and go to the celebration.

In the fourth episode Sampo proposes love to Tsholo who swiftly dashes away. Realising that Sampo is about to catch her, she drops her beautiful ring onto the ground. Sampo walks from house to house fitting the ring onto the fingers of the village girls. He finally arrives at the house of Seapei and the ring fits Tsholo's finger, much to the chagrin of her mother and sisters. It is true that in this folktale, even though the last episode ends, the narrative continues beyond the final resolution. As Msimang (1986) puts it, while there are instances where the episodic plot gives the impression that the story does not end, there are indeed instances where the episode ends with the resolution of the conflict. If we examine Lephogole's (cf:Malope,1983) short story *Mo letlalong la nku* we realise that there are three open-ended episodes or episodes in which the story continues after the end of the episode; and only one episode with a logical conclusion or an episode in which the story ends with the end of the narration (Msimang, 1986). The four episodes we have in this short story are loosely connected. The first three episodes leave room for the continuation of the story after their endings while the fourth episode brings the short story to a conclusive resolution. In this conclusive resolution, the conflict of the story is brought to a close with the arrest of the criminal, Nkwe.

Although some short stories are episodic in nature, they have unity of plot. This unity can be ascribed to the fact that the events are concentrated and revolve around a single main character and a single, central, controlling idea. The significance of concentrating events on a single character also shows itself in the episodic plot of *Mo letlalong la nku*. In this short story we have "a loose agglomeration of adventures" (Msimang, 1986:79)

undertaken by the main character, Nkwe. The central controlling idea that binds these episodes together is Nkwe's confident trickerism (theft). The first episode occurs when Nkwe is retrenched, surrenders to excessive drinking and criminal acts and robs sergeant Pitse of his police uniform. The second episode deals with Nkwe's disguise as a traffic officer and the money that he extracts from poor and unsuspecting motorists in the form of traffic fines, up to the point when captain Khali appoints Bofa to investigate the crime. The third episode occurs when Nkwe deposits the illicitly acquired money into different bank accounts up to the point when he builds a shop in Tlhabane location. The fourth and final episode deals with Bofa's investigation of the crime and the arrest of Maestro and Nkwe, up to the point when Nkwe receives two years imprisonment. The common element in all of these four episodes is Nkwe, who serves to link all the events of the episodes as well as the episodes themselves. It is through an unwavering concentration of events on the main character that Lephogole succeeds in maintaining unity and coherence in his short story. Furthermore, it is through the "law of single-strandedness" (Msimang, 1986:42) or linearity of events as opposed to intricacy or complexity of events that the writer brings unity of plot in this short story.

The question of single-strandedness or linearity, as we prefer to call it in this thesis, tells us that some short stories have simple plots, a feature which normally characterises folktales. Folktales generally have simple plots whose events follow a chronological sequence. There is no trace of intricacy and complexity in the arrangement of the events that build the action of the tale. The reason for this simplicity of plot is attributable to the fact that the folktale is narrated to a listening audience whose interest and concentration needs be sustained to the end. As the short story deals with the complexities and intricacies of life, it is also supposed to illustrate the intricacies of life in the organisation of its material. This means that it has to contain both flashbacks and foreshadowings. However, what we observe in *Mo letlalong la nku* is a simple organisation of material characteristic of the folktale. To this effect Moephuli (1979:68) maintains that the law of "linearity and simplicity" in the folktale implies that the narrator should not entangle the

various threads of plot, but should hold the threads separate, following one another in a linear order. The assertion that the separate threads follow one another in a linear sequence is as relevant to the folktale as it is to Lephogole's short story *Mo letlalong la nku*.

The examination of oral narrative has shown that repetition is its essential ingredient. It is a prominent device that is used by oral narrators to communicate theme, to control and direct the emotional response of the audience and to lay emphasis on specific ideas. The use of repetition in organising the narrative components of Magoleng's (1974) short story *Matsapa o tshabile gape* is significant for directing the reader's attention to the theme the writer wishes to communicate. The recurrence of Bogoma's attempt, success and failure to arrest Matsapa establishes and emphasises the inadequate manpower dispatched to arrest an intelligent criminal such as Matsapa. The essential focussing elements in this story are the repeated escapes of Matsapa and the repeated failure of the police to keep Matsapa behind bars for any length of time or until he has served his prison sentence. What is observable in this context is that Matsapa always plays tricks on the police and often leaves them chewing their nails in embarrassment. It must, however, be emphasised that the writer captures the reader's attention by allowing Matsapa to perform different tricks each time he escapes. It is this manner of tricking the police that accounts for his successful escapes. The tricks that are performed by Matsapa are reminiscent of the actions of tricksters such as Mmutle (The Hare), Khudu (The Tortoise), and Phokojwe (The Jackal) in Tswana oral tales. Every time Matsapa is arrested he intelligently succeeds in escaping from prison or from the clutches of the police. Thus this story has three repeated patterns of *committing crime -- being arrested -- and, escaping*, which build the whole short story. However, something happens at the end of the short story when Matsapa surrenders to the police of his own free will. Even though the police were put on Matsapa's trail to arrest and deal with him for his criminal acts he, like a true trickster, avoids imprisonment until his ultimate surrender.

Repetition is the most significant technical device performers use to organise their narratives; and it is through this technique that the narrator (performer) emphasises the importance of specific actions in the tale. In Magoleng's (1974) short story *Modise o a nyala* repetition is evident when similar incidents happen to the same person, in this case the unmarried Modise. The narrative here deals firstly, with Modise's bachelorhood and his parents' concern about his shyness and disinterest in marriage up to where the father sends him to Ntshamoomo to woo Ntshegeng for marriage; secondly, with Modise's visit to Ntshamoomo, how he shyly squatts in a corner waiting for Ntshegeng to arrive in order to woo her for marriage, up to just after the girls laugh at his behaviour; thirdly, with Modise's visit to Ntshamoomo under strong instructions to woo Ntshegeng for marriage until the realisation of his parents' dream which ends the narrative. All three of these sections emphasise the need for Modise to marry and leave his state of bachelorhood. The first section triggers and emphasises the need for Modise to marry; the second section of the narrative complements the first in as much as an action in the direction of marriage is taken even though it fails; and the third section of the narrative supplements and emphasises the first and the second sections, and, simultaneously emphasising the theme and completing the narrative.

Although the three sections are organised in a very similar manner, the first section provides the best understanding of the second and the third sections. The second section provides us with a hesitant action that ultimately fails; and, in the third section, Modise changes his nature and comes out strongly wooing Ntshegeng for marriage. The fact that Modise, in the third section, takes out a belt and whips the girls who are taunting and laughing at him shows that he is ready to take a woman for a wife and sustain a relationship of love and marriage. Modise's shyness of character is the most undesirable characteristic which essentially kept him from women and marriage. It is only when he discards this characteristic that he eventually marries a woman chosen for him by his parents. It is through the similarity shared by the three sections that the writer classifies and reveals the theme of this short story. It is also through the device of repetition that the

writer communicates the message that marriage is an essential relationship in people's lives and that celibacy is anti-social. Through the utilisation of structural repetition, the writer focusses the reader's attention on the message and on the harmonious arrangement of the story's sections. Lutato (1982:52) regards the kind of repetition noted in the three sections as a "distinctive structural characteristic of oral literature".

This structural repetition also shows itself in Motlhake's (Magoleng & Motlhake, 1985) *Ka lenyalo ke bakile*. In this short story we experience repetition in which the narration repeats an incident. In this regard Molekwa's father, Molebatsi instructs his son to marry at his mother's village (and thereby leave his self-chosen and beloved girlfriend and child). Molebatsi says, "Molekwa, morwaaka, ke a go utlwa, fela ga ke dumelane le lepe la mafoko a gago. Mosadi, fa o batla go nyala, o kwa Mmakau, kwa gagabo mmaago" (Molekwa, my son, I hear you, but I cannot agree with your words. If you want to marry a woman, there is one at Mmakau, at your mother's village") (Magoleng & Motlhake, 1985:30). What follows is nothing but a narration of the process of Molekwa's divorce from his self-chosen woman, Mmaletsatsi and his marriage to Mmadira as his father had suggested. The first section of the short story is made up of similar incidents, in which the same incident affects or happens to different characters. This is the section in which Molebatsi instructs his son to marry at his mother's village and in which Molekwa instructs his woman to marry one of the men who works in a garage. The second section is composed of the narration repeating the incidents. It is in this part that Molekwa, the son of Molebatsi, carries out the instruction of his father by divorcing Mmaletsatsi and marrying a woman from his mother's village, Mmadira. On the other hand, Mmaletsatsi comes to accept the reality of her situation, that Molekwa is leaving her for another woman.

What we have observed thus far is that the action of the tales and that of the short story are presented through various techniques. These techniques involve circular structures, episodic elements, and repetition. They occur in these stories from the expositional phase,

through the developmental phase to the resolutional phase. The resolutional phase in folktales moves from excitement to calm in a gradual line of descending action. In Makgaledise's (cf: Malope, 1983) short story the resolution is simple, relevant and unadulterated, but is achieved after a gradual progression. Bafedile's ultimate disappointment and regret echoes the content and meaning of the title of the short story, *O thantse lo le tsebeng* (You have woken with a wooden peg on the ear). Thus the resolution fulfils what it promised the reader earlier on, all the expectations the reader has are satisfied. Bafedile's pregnancy spoils her chances of furthering her studies. The writer leaves no problem or question unresolved or unanswered. He uses this phase to bring the short story to a complete close just as a folktale resolution rounds off the tale smoothly. In Shole's (1985) *E romilwe ke Jehofa* the conflict is resolved by death. In this regard the hero triumphs and the villains are punished with death. Mfoloe triumphs when his life is saved and Selepe, Rambeo and Lekabe are punished with death for attempting to mutilate Mfoloe's body. As we have said in Chapter Three, the way Shole resolves the conflict of this short story is to end it rather like closing a door or window.

## **5.2 THE LINK BETWEEN ORAL TRADITION AND CHARACTERISATION**

Many storytellers, through the tales they tell, tend to emphasise a particular aspect in each character they create. It is normally this very aspect which determines the character's attitudes and idiosyncracies and also accounts for the course of action the character chooses whenever he comes into contact with the other characters. This device of characterisation is manipulated in order to illustrate the lesson to be learned in the narrative that is told. Mpashi as quoted by Lutato (1982:109) states that:

In fiction one should bear one thing in mind, this is that although the book is fiction, it should have something to teach readers. Among the characters in a book of fiction there are the bad ones and the good ones. The qualities of the good characters should be evident so that the reader can emulate them whenever they are applicable.



Characters in folktales are various and include both animate and inanimate creatures. These may be human beings, animals and supernatural elements such as witches, wizards and ghosts. The appearance of characters of different kinds in the folktale answers to the different worlds they project, namely, the real world and the world of fantasy. Characters who appear in folktales are usually flat, static and symbolic. Flat because they are not multi-dimensional, static because they do not change with the course of events and symbolic because they represent a specific facet of life. The storyteller is often satisfied to create one hero around whom all the action revolves with a few subordinate characters. However, what he does not forget is to concentrate on a single character trait that he creates in the hero. This single facet of a character may, for example, be bravery or prowess as in the case of Tau (The Lion), cleverness as in the case of Mmutle (The Hare), and cunningness as in the case of Phokojwe (The Jackal). Lutato (1982) asserts that the placing of emphasis on a single character trait is part of didacticism which has its roots in the traditional background. What we need to emphasise is that the names of characters in folk narratives and in the traditional Tswana culture play significant roles in highlighting the traits of these characters. Moephuli (1979:118), in expanding on this idea, says that encased in such characters' names are the basic meanings of the names themselves or words from which these names are derived.

As we have said above, the characters in most Tswana folk narratives can be classified into two categories, namely, the good ones and the bad ones. In these folktales, a morally good character is normally rewarded, while a morally bad character is punished. In the folktale *Tsholo le lefufa la bomogolowe*, Tsholo is ill-treated, begrudged and hated by her mother and sisters simply because she is beautiful and loved by her father. She, however, is vindicated when she marries the Chief's son, Sampo, whom her sisters had hoped would choose one of them. In this tale, the conduct of Tsholo's mother and sisters is morally bad because they torment Tsholo with their jealous hearts. On the other hand, the conduct of Tsholo is morally good because, despite being tormented, she still submits to

her mother and sisters and recognises them as her elders. Eventually, she has the last laugh when she becomes the Chief's wife and her mother and sisters become her maidservants.

The same notion of having morally good and bad characters in a story still prevails in the minds of many Tswana short story writers. It is therefore not amazing to find good or bad characters in their works. For instance, in the short story *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng* Malope (1982) gives prominence to the negative attribute of Makeketa's character, namely his sexual promiscuity. The writer concentrates on this character trait in developing the action of the story. Makeketa is revealed as an immoral character whose behaviour is socially unacceptable. The writer emphasises this particular character trait and illustrates how influential it is on Makeketa's actions and behaviour. Because of his sexual promiscuity, Makeketa is not ashamed to leave his wife in need of transport to his aunt's funeral and spend the day with his secret lover. The writer's primary objective in this regard is to make the reader realise the effect of Makeketa's actions which involve adultery, infidelity and an inability to rationalize and distinguish between good and bad. It is at the end of the short story that the writer makes the reader realise that he has succeeded in making Makeketa function as a didactic character. Malešwane's outbursts and cautions in response to Makeketa's lies about his presence at the funeral and his alleged sad experience with the car, emphasise the absolute repulsiveness of Makeketa's character trait. Makeketa's character trait is morally bad and undesirable because it has negative effects on both his marital and familial relationships.

As we have pointed out, Malope emphasises particular traits in his characters in order to teach a lesson. In this short story, that is, *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng*, the message is that even though one may do evil in secret, one's secret dealings will ultimately be revealed. This message can also be observed in the Tswana folktale, *Mmutle le Thitantswane*, in which Mmutle devours Thitantswane's children who have been entrusted to his care until he is discovered. The message of the short story is communicated not only through the behaviour of Makeketa, but also through that of his wife, Malešwane; while that of the

folktale is communicated through the behaviour of Mmutle and Thitantswane.

Malope is highly didactic in this short story, and his didacticism is directed at the preservation of cultural norms and values and the promotion of social harmony (Lutato, 1982). He not only uses commentary, but also the behavioural attitudes of his characters to show these didactic elements. More often than not he emphasises one aspect of characters' attitudes which he deems morally and socially good or bad in order to demonstrate what is socially and morally desirable or undesirable. This he does because he feels that a book of fiction should have something to educate readers and that the good qualities of good characters should be foregrounded to serve as good examples for the readers. Malešwane in Malope's short story *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng*, is understood by the reader as standing at the opposite pole, not only to Makeketa as a character, but also to the other women in the real life situation. She is a character whose behaviour expresses the view of morality that the writer emphasises in the short story. Malešwane's behaviour provides an example that the reader can really take as an example (more on this can be found in Chapter Three of this thesis). Therefore, her behaviour emphasises those elements which are taken to be essential or necessary in a married woman for the continued existence or well-being of a marriage. The reader finds it satisfying and gratifying that Malope proves his significant point, that a marital relationship can withstand the test of time if the attributes of the persons involved are morally proper, through Malešwane because she is a real example of a good character.

Similarly, in the short story *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng* Magoleng (1985) introduces a morally and socially bad character in Sebolai and a morally and socially good character in Molemogi in order to illustrate a didactic purpose. The writer's emphasis on Sebolai's bad character trait results in the murder of her own husband, Mmolawa. The good character trait of Molemogi on the other hand, leads to the correct arrest and detention of Sebolai and her accomplices. All these actions are direct consequences of Sebolai's evil

and Molemogi's good character traits which are given greater prominence. Mmolawa would not have died if Sebolai had not lured him into a love relationship based on material possessions. Sebolai also would not have been arrested and detained if Molemogi had not overheard and discovered Sebolai's plan to murder Mmolawa. Magoleng's emphasis on the evil and materialistic character trait of Sebolai shows that such love relationships are potential breeding grounds for mischief, treachery and murder. As a result, Sebolai's character trait is condemned because it is a negation of how a love relationship in marriage should function. Therefore her behaviour can rightfully be termed bad or evil because it does not illustrate the elements of selflessness, compromise and unity which are essential for sustaining a healthy marriage. If we examine the instances we have outlined above, we tend to agree with Lutato's (1982) assertion that the placing of emphasis on a single character trait is part of a didacticism which has its roots in the traditional background. This stance is upheld because traditional societies expect from verbal art, not only the provision of entertainment, but also instruction to promote societal well-being.

Another device where a single character trait is emphasised is one in which a character is given a name which expresses that trait or where the character trait has a bearing on the actions of the character concerned. Within the traditional Tswana culture children were and are given names which highlight specific incidents or events connected with their births. For example, when a child was or is born during a rainy day or season she/he would be named Mmapula or Rapula. This phenomenon has brought a particular perception within the Batswana community that if one gives a child a bad name one hangs him. As a result of this situation, names of specific characters in certain folktales and short stories have a direct bearing on these characters. The name Masilo (for example) in the folktale *Masilo le Masiloryane* is related to the word "bosilo" which means falsehood, deceitfulness, harmfulness, stubbornness or obstinacy. The action of Masilo in this folktale portrays him not only as described above, but also as a greedy person whose envy leads him to murder his younger brother. Then, on his arrival at home, he fabricates an

excuse about his brother's fate.

In Magoleng's (Magoleng & Motlhake, 1985) short story *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng* we have quite a number of characters whose names express their actions. The name Sebolai, for example, is derived from the verb 'bolaya' (kill) which literally means that which kills. In the name Sebolai, the trait that motivates the character is given prominence. It is because she is endowed with an instinct to kill that she conducts herself the way she does. Therefore we can conclude that this character's name emphasises her particular characteristic. This is not the only instance where the name given to a character reveals her or his actions, behaviour or attitudes. Names such as Mmolawa and Molemogi have a direct bearing on the actions and behaviour of these characters. The name Molemogi means one who recognises or discovers, and Mmolawa means one who is murdered. Within the context of the short story we realise that Molemogi overhears and discovers the plan to murder Mmolawa and truly, Mmolawa is murdered.

The giving of names with significant character traits is not confined to the short stories quoted above. This device is evident in most short stories found in Tswana. For example, the names Mofeti and Kedisaletse in Malope's short story *O nkutlwe* foreground the traits of the bearers. The name Mofeti emphasises a passing characteristic which the bearer shows during narration when he passes away through death. On the other hand, the name Kedisaletse refers to someone who has remained to experience mishaps, problems, trials and tribulations. This name is derived from the verb 'sala' (remain) and it literally means 'I have remained for them', that is, the experiences listed above. It is thus not surprising to discover that after her husband's death she is devoid of happiness and lives in misery and humiliation. Also, the name Mpheane, in Motlhake's (Magoleng & Motlhake, 1985) short story *Kgathatso* which literally signifies a person who interferes in other people's affairs or dealings like a fly, foregrounds the bearer's trait. It is because he is basically a fly that he behaves as he does. Mpheane proves himself to be a real fly in the relationship

of love and marriage between Diketso and Mokgethisi; as well as in the secret love affair between Kgathatso and Diketso. He even interferes in the contract of blackmail entered into between Kgathatso and Mokgethisi. He meddles in all these relationships either as a lover or as a troublemaker. The character's name, therefore, emphasises his particular characteristics.

Similarly, the names Thubaki in Bogatsu's (1991) short story and Dikeledi in Magoleng's (1972) short story all foreground the traits of the bearers. The name Thubaki foregrounds the demolishing characteristic which the bearer blatantly reveals in the first part of the short story *Bopodi ba kgonwa ke ba ba dinaka*, while the name Dikeledi brings into prominence the crying characteristic which the character illustrates throughout the narrative text of the short story *Dikeledi*. What we discover from these illustrations is that whenever the short story writer chooses a name which tallies with the trait of a character, he selects a name that is in common everyday usage. Although names such as Kedisaletse, Mofeti, Mmolawa, Sebolai, Dikeledi and Molemogi are common in real life usage, the writers who adopted these names bring them into prominence by highlighting their significance in relation to their bearers' actions.

Emphasising single character traits and contrasting the characters through the behaviour such traits elicit in them pervades characterisation in Tswana short stories (Lutato, 1982). Diile's unbecoming conduct, in Magoleng's (1985) short story *Mokaragana, ngwanaka*, for example, is related to her adultery and fornication. This behaviour makes her forget all about her husband and their marriage. Her adulterous behaviour begins immediately after she has found work and met people such as Papa Solly and Sadinyana. At the same time we find another character, Barati, whose faithfulness and integrity lead her to reproach Diile and rebuke her for her disregard of her husband and marriage. Here we find a contrast between a character who represents the general breakdown of traditional values (Diile) and the one who upholds the accepted traditional position (Barati). Diile's direct contact with the urban world represents the forces of cultural disintegration, while Barati

represents the forces of cultural stability (Lutato, 19827). Diile represents the forces of cultural disintegration because she forgets the traditional ties of marriage that bind her to Disang. She does not even care when her husband is taken ill and is nursed by his sisters, furthermore, to add insult to injury she does not attend her own husband's funeral, nevermind observe the rituals that go with the death of a husband.

When Diile regrets her acts of adultery, fornication and prostitution and remembers Barati as a faithful and truthful friend, the desirability of Barati's characteristics is highlighted and emphasised. What makes contrast very effective in this short story is that there is change in the character of Diile. Barati is a morally good character while Diile, who is contrasted with her, is a morally bad character. However, as a result of the sexual disease she contracts, Diile changes from being morally bad to being morally good, when she confesses her sins and misdemeanours. Magoleng uses Barati throughout the short story to illustrate what his society terms moral goodness; and uses Diile to illustrate what behaviour is termed moral badness. By presenting Diile at the end of the short story as having regretted her adulterous and fornicatory actions, Magoleng does not only show that Diile has realised the existence of a morally and socially acceptable behaviour, but he has also humanised her. By implementing contrast in characterisation in this way, Magoleng shows that Diile acts not as an angel, but as an ordinary human being capable of misdemeanour. What makes contrast in characterisation very interesting is that characters undergo a certain degree of change in their traits or attributes. For example, in Magoleng's *Modise o a nyala* the focus of the narrative is the change in attribute from bachelorhood to the status of being married; from a state of social and moral disapprobation to one of legitimacy. Similarly, Maramphana in Bogatsu's short story, *Bopodi ba kgonwa ke ba ba dinaka*, undergoes a transformation from a position of insecurity and powerlessness to one of confidence and power, while Thubaki undergoes a reverse transformation.

Within the traditional society, a character's personality as defined through his actions depends on his individual status within the family network. This can be seen in the short

story *Modise o a nyala* wherein Modise as the son or child behaves with respect towards his father and mother. Even when Modise's father becomes angry at his celibacy, Modise still humbles himself and listens to his father's advice and instructions. There is a current of sympathy that flows between mother and son as well as between father and son. Both father and mother show interest in the social well-being of their son and the son also reciprocates their concern by submitting to them. Although Modise's father shows himself to be severe in disciplinary action, he still loves his son and is concerned with his destiny. What is more important in this context is the social definition of the three characters, Modise, Kepaki and Gaoabue. What we observe in the short story in which these characters act, is that immediately after having been identified, their positions in the family network are established. Gaoabue is identified as the husband and father of Kepaki and Modise respectively, while Kepaki is identified as Gaoabue's wife and Modise's mother. As Obiechina (1975) puts it, these methods of defining characters are based on the traditional view of social identification. Obiechina (1975) emphasises that a wife's identification in terms of her husband is the acknowledgement of the patrilineal basis of the organisation of the family and village. Modise, on the other hand, is described in terms of his parentage because he has not attained a measure of independence. It is for this reason that Modise sees himself inside the status which he holds in the family and submits to the pressure put on him. In submitting to this pressure, Modise marries Ntshengeng. By marrying the woman of his parents' choice Modise emphasises the traditional view of group conformism and cultural marriages.

In all its functioning, the traditional society brings into prominence the continual existence of its culture. This can also be seen in Malope's (1982) short story *O nkutlwe*. In this story the incidents that surround characters like Pekwa and Kedisaletse illustrate the influence of tradition over these characters. Although Kedisaletse is shown to be a powerful and beautiful woman, in her conflict with tradition the primacy of tradition overwhelms her when she gives birth to a child with Dain's syndrome and when she is swindled by Pekwa. In the case of Pekwa, it is shown that a person cannot succeed in



undermining the powers of tradition. Pekwa contracts a terrible disease called *boswagadi* through cohabiting with a dead man's wife; and the car that he purchases illegally with Kedisaletse's money is burnt out. As a result of Pekwa and Kedisaletse's disregard for tradition, they receive effective punishment by being ostracised by the Matlapeng family. It is through this short story that Malope wants to illustrate that if "the equilibrium of traditional culture is upset, conflicts arise" with which the offenders cannot cope (Obiechina, 1975:85). Obiechina (1975) maintains that these conflicts take shape when characters attempt to acquire an extra dimension of dynamism or complexity. In the case of Kedisaletse, she refuses to allow her younger brother, Tholo, to sustain his elder brother's marriage, but prefers to cohabit with Pekwa, the trickster. It is when Kedisaletse decides to be indifferent to the traditional culture that she faces the wrath of opposing tradition.

However, the converse happens in Moroke's (1968) short story *Mhalatsi*, where the main character Mhalatsi becomes prominent in his fight for tradition against missionary innovations. In this short story, Mhalatsi sees the introduction of the Christian belief in his village as an attempt by Whites to undermine the traditional rule of the chieftainship. Therefore, he takes it upon himself to protect tradition from innovation. Mhalatsi is alerted to the perceived Christian threat to the traditional ways of his community with the erection of the Christian church in his village. Unfortunately for his endeavour, he is defeated in his fight against the domination of the Christian faith over the tradition of the chieftainship. This defeat can be ascribed to his inadequate knowledge of the Christian ways of life. His solitary attack on Christian establishments proves to be his undoing and results in his defeat. He succumbs to the influence of the very belief he opposed. In his repentance he asks for a Bible from which to read relevant messages. Although Mhalatsi frees himself from the frustration of fighting a losing battle, he learns to accept defeat with the strength and positivity of mind it requires. He also learns to accept the fact that traditional culture can co-exist with the Christian faith.

### **5.3 THE INFLUENCE OF ORAL TRADITION ON STYLE AND LANGUAGE**

In this section we do not propose to define style and language because this has been done in Chapter Four. Emphasis, in this section, is placed on the elements of style and language which derive from oral tradition. Storytellers, like any other writers, use words as tools for narrating their folk narratives and they draw these words from the vast knowledge of their language to communicate ideas as lucidly as possible. Words are arranged into a sentence, and a number of sentences form a paragraph, and a coherent arrangement of paragraphs constitutes a story. Style in the oral narrative consists, not only of sentences and paragraphs, but of both verbal and dramatic elements as well. The narrator or storyteller of the oral narrative uses simple and understandable language so that her audience or listeners should not lose interest in her narration. However, she is still free to use the rich vocabulary of her language. In this instance, words serve a variety of functions which include the construction of phrases, proverbs and ideophones which are often regarded as elements of oral language. On the dramatic level, the storyteller or narrator of oral narratives uses devices which involve the modulation of the voice, gestures and general body movements. Tswana short story writers also use these elements of language to describe their characters, to delve deeper into their characters' inner feelings and thoughts, and even in their provision of a lesson to be learnt. There is thus no doubt that there is a tradition of speech in Tswana writings. Through its allegiance to a tradition of speech the Tswana short story identifies itself with its own Tswana-speaking people. Since it uses Tswana, the Tswana short story is directly available and accessible to the Tswana-speaking community.

Words constitute the primary elements which are often repeated in narrative arts. The significance of repetition, as emphasised in Chapter Four shows that it is not a feature

confined strictly to the folklore world, but that it also surfaces in different forms in short stories. The form of repetition at issue in this section concerns the repetition of verbs or predicates which is reminiscent of the one found in folktales. Repetition of verbs or predicates is often used to measure time, distance and intensity because, in the traditional Tswana world, the concept of miles, not to mention kilometres, did not exist. In his short story *O potile noga ka fa mosimeng* Moroke (1968) uses repetition of the verb to drive his point home. In this regard the writer says; “A tlhatloga, a tlhatloga, a tlhatloga ..” (Moroke, 1968:12) (She climbed, and climbed, and climbed). He repeats the verb “a tlhatloga” thrice in order to indicate the height that was reached by Madinawa through her continuous, vigorous and unpunctuated action of tree climbing. This repetition is not only indicative of the intensity and the fast pace of the act of climbing, it is also used to avoid using qualificatives. It not only indicates the time span that Madinawa took to reach the top of the tree, it is also used to give indication of the distance she covered from the ground to the top of the tree.

In reading Tswana writers’ short stories we become aware of the various ways in which oral language can be conceived and contrived in works of literature (Julien, 1992). These short stories use language to represent the lives of the Batswana as clearly as possible. The writers concentrate on how best they can make the oral language convey the Batswana experiences. In pursuit of their goal they use proverbs. Proverbs are a natural component of the language of every traditional society. There are numerous works by short story writers who seem to be conscious of their oral tradition, and these works abound with proverbs. The reason for this state of affairs is because, for them, proverbs contain the wisdom of the traditional people (Obiechina, 1975). The works spoken of in this regard include those by Sikwane (1987), Mmileng (1986), Mokgoko (1983), Malope (1982) and Bogatsu (1991&1995). These writers manipulate proverbs as sources of traditional wisdom and integrate them into their syntactic structures to emphasise their specific viewpoints. Therefore, they use proverbs to add an emphatic weight to their ideas and to their characters. Look at the following examples:

(VV) *Ka seboba go batwa sa mokwatla, mosadi a leka go e botabota gore a se ka a itsenya matlho.* (Bogatsu, 1991:11)

(Because it is a wasp on the back that is smacked, the woman tried to nurse it so that she could not make a fool of herself)

(WW) *A gona ba tla bo ba sa fapaane le se se reng kgakakgolo ga ke na mebala, mebala e dikgakaneng fa ba ka itlhaba ngololo ba tswa mo go bona ...* (Bogatsu, 1995a:13)

(Will they not negate the one that says a great guinea-fowl does not have colours, the colours are with the little guinea-fowls if they should remain unconcerned about them)

(XX) *Kana ga tse motlhala wa motho ke molomo. Go be go tse ngwana yo o sa lele o swela tharing.* (Mokgoko, 1983:23)

(By the way, it is said that the mouth is the person's means of direction. And, it is also said that the child that never cries dies on its mother's back (or dumb folk get no land))

(YY) *... Thotana e se nang khudutlou, bolobete ba ipha naga* (Mmileng, 1986:4)

(When the cat is away, the mice will to play)

(ZZ) *Yo o dinala di metsi o tshwanetse go bolawa ke tlala. Yo o dikgoka o tshwanetswe ke moretlwa. Kgobokgobo e a ikgobokanyetsa, phatlaphatla e a iphatlalaletsa* (Bogatsu, 1995a:38)

(The sloth should die of hunger. The strong and mighty deserve a thrashing. United we stand, divided we fall)

(AAA) *Ngwetsi thoothoo! Le fa dinko di ne di le magallele mosadi tshwene o jewa mabogo* (Sikwane, 1987:1)

(A real daughter-in-law! Even though she has flared nostrils, [it is said] a woman is like a monkey you can only eat her hands)

As we can see in these examples, the short story writers use proverbs to put their narrative

texts in a traditional context. It is through the traditional wisdom they derive from these proverbs that the writers succeed in bringing their individual perspectives into prominence. It is also quite apparent that by using a good number of proverbs the Tswana writers illustrate their individual attachment to their traditional community and its linguistic world. In showing this attachment or connectedness the writers sometimes truncate or reduce proverbs under a positive assumption that the readers, as members of the Batswana community, have a vast knowledge of proverbial language. Therefore, the act of truncating or reducing proverbs, as we can see in example [F], presupposes a vivid knowledge of the Tswana language. Sikwane (1987) in this example uses a truncated version of an original and traditional proverb. He truncates the longer version down to “mosadi tshwene o jewa matsogo” in order to emphasise the traditional value system in which a woman is not married for beauty, but for procreation and the execution of daily household chores. No matter how sophisticated our society might be, proverbs continue to serve as colourful metaphors that illustrate basic and universal experiences.

In traditional Batswana society, it is normally the elderly people who are better qualified to use proverbs than younger members of the community. This is because old people possess the experience and knowledge to understand the implications of the wisdom and truth contained in the proverbs. Younger members may use these wise sayings freely among themselves, however, if they are to use them in the company of old people, they normally have to preface such proverbs with phrases that acknowledge their inadequate knowledge. These phrases in Tswana are “ga twe” (it is said) and “bagologolo ba re” (the ancient people say) or other versions of the same content or meaning. In this respect, examine examples [WW] and [XX] above. What we observe in these examples is that some of the younger writers, in order to acknowledge their status within their traditional community continue to use these introductory formulas. In this manner they not only acknowledge their youthfulness, they also emphasise the personal bond they have with the society in which they live.

Proverbs are not only economical, metaphorical and status-oriented in nature, they also show their oral character best of all in the appeal they make to the readers (Okpewho, 1992). Okpewho states that this appeal is achieved through devices of repetition such as alliteration and assonance. To this effect we may quote proverbs from examples [WW] and [ZZ]. The semantic impact of the proverb in example [ZZ] is much stronger because of the alliterative effect we find in the plosives [kxh] and [b] as well as [ph] and [tl]. If we analyse these speech sounds we realise that the first pair is articulated with rounded lips while the second pair is articulated with spread lips. The effect we derive from this condition emphasises the meaning that the writer wants to highlight, that if people are united they succeed in their endeavours and that when people are divided their efforts disintegrate. Similarly, in example [WW] we have a repetition of the speech sound [kxh] whose effect gives the proverbial language a superior status to the direct language. Sound repetitions such as these help to add artistic flavour to the proverbs. The proverbs quoted above and used in this analysis are clear indications that proverbs are derived from a detailed observation of the behaviour of human beings, animals, plants, and natural phenomena, from folklore, beliefs, values, attitudes, perceptions, emotions and the entire system of thought and feeling [which are a collective representation] of a society (Obiechina, 1975).

According to Julien (1992) oral language in any written text is neither oral nor a transcript of standard speech characterised by rhythms, pauses, tones and unconventional sounds, but it involves the use of proverbs and ideophones. The ideophone is a linguistic device that depends on sound for its effectiveness. Okpewho (1992) defines it as an idea-in-sound because from the sound of the word a reader or a listener can obtain an idea of the nature of the event or object to which is being referred. In folktales, ideophones are used to achieve an effective sensual or dramatic impact which cannot be illustrated with the ordinary words of a language. The Tswana short story writers also use ideophones to convey an enduring and effective impression. Note the following examples:

(BBB) Dipuo a sela lebotlolo la senotsididi se a neng a se rekile la re, tšhwatla! mo tlhogong (Sikwane, 1987:10)

(Dipuo picked up a bottle of cold drink she had bought, and with a crash it broke into pieces on his head [as she hit him with it])

(CCC) A ema, a itatlhela mo sehubeng sa me, a lela thata kana a ba a nna a re, hii, hii! (Magoleng, 1985:21)

(She stood up, and fell on my bosom, crying bitterly)

(DDD) Lekgetlo lengwe le lengwe fa a ntse a rutlarutla mosese ona o ntse o re, tlerrr! tlerrr! (Bogatsu, 1995a:29)

(Each time he pulled my dress, it ripped even more)

(EEE) A susumologile; digempe di tletse madi di ntse di re, tlereee! (Bogatsu, 1991:6)

(He was sour looking; his shirts were extremely red with blood)

(FFF) Morago ga metsotsonyana ba utlwa, 'pee...poo...pee... pee...poo...pee'. Ba itse gore ke yona. (Bogatsu, 1991:9)

(After a few minutes they heard the wail of an ambulance siren. And they knew it was coming)

(GGG) Mo go latetseng morago go ne go lebega jaaka boroe jwa lee. A re legano la gagwe le ne le nkga, "phuu". (Molebaloa, 1987:41)

(What followed looked like an egg yolk. His mouth had a nasty smell)

Writers such as Bogatsu (1991), Magoleng (1985), Molebaloa (1987) and Sikwane (1987) use ideophones to provide their short stories with a lively and traditional flavour. In addition, these ideophones have a variety of functions which include the portrayal of the sound made by an object. In Bogatsu's *Bopodi ba kgonwa ke ba ba dinaka*, after the nurse has dressed Thubaki's wounds and helped him on with his clothes, she dials for an

ambulance to come and take him to hospital. The ambulance does not waste any time and arrives with sirens blaring, “pee...poo...pee...pee...poo...pee”. The nurse and the other people could tell by the sound that the ambulance was coming; and on its arrival it carried Thubaki to hospital. In example [DDD] Bogatsu describes how Lekgomane incessantly pulls Dintle by her dress. As this dress is forcibly torn from its owner it resounds “tlerrr! tlerrr!”. The dress is torn while Lekgomane remains unconcerned and continues asking for his money. The effectiveness of this ideophone lies in the verbal root from which it has been formed. “Tlerrr! tlerrr!” in Tswana carries the implication of being torn, and Bogatsu uses this ideophone to capture the forcefulness and brutality with which Dintle’s dress is torn and ruined.

Apart from using ideophones to describe an action, Tswana writers also use ideophones to indicate colour, smell and grief. When Bogatsu gives us a picture of the fight between Thubaki and Maramphana, he does not leave out the effects it has on the fighters. We are told that Thubaki’s shirt “di ne di tletse madi di ntse di re tlereee!”. Bogatsu does not tell the reader what injuries Thubaki sustains during the fight. It is only through the sentence that contains this ideophone “tlereee!”, which indicates a deep reddish colour, that we are told about the blood that oozes from Thubaki’s body. This ideophone also indicates that it was not a small quantity, but a large quantity of blood that flowed from his body. On the other hand, Molebaloa (1987), in his description of Molapi’s oral breath, uses an ideophone. The writer tells us that when Molapi finished his traditional treatment “legano la gagwe le ne le nkgale re, phuu!” (Molebaloa, 1987:41). This ideophone suggests the original and terrible odour of a mixture of food and drink that Molapi vomitted. Molebaloa, in this manner, uses an idea-in-sound to give a vivid description of the terrible or nasty smell that comes from Molapi’s mouth.

What we observe in these and other examples of ideophones is that the ideophone occurs in the form of a single word, a sound multiplied twice or several times, and that it also may be traced to recognisable verbal roots. For example, the ideophone in sentence [EEE]



occurs as a single word and its effectiveness is duly felt; while in example [CCC] the sound made by a crying person is multiplied twice to indicate a process that continues for a considerable period. Lastly, in examples [BBB] and [DDD] we have ideophones that are related to specific verbs, namely, 'tšhwatla' and 'tlerrr!' respectively. The sounds that are heard from the two ideophones are actually echoes of the verbs from which they are derived. In this manner I would like to concur with Okpewho (1992) when he says that ideophones are onomatopoeic in nature. The usage of ideophones in Tswana short stories is outright proof that writers have an attachment and a sensitive nerve for what is traditionally embedded in their language and culture.

The influence of oral tradition on the Tswana short story cannot strictly be traced from the existence of oral elements such as proverbs and ideophones. In the folktale, the conveyance of ideas is not only carried out through language, language is emphasised by physical gestures, facial expressions and the modulation of the voice of the performer (Obiechina, 1975). In Malope's (1982) *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng*, both the teller (MmaMmualebe) and the listener (Morongwe) abruptly keep quiet during narration and their eye lashes collide as they blink in grief. These facial expressions show the emotional involvement of both the teller and the listener in the performance of the short story. MmaMmualebe's art of narration makes Morongwe perspire from intense involvement and concentration, and her mouth remains open in amazement at the actions of Makeketa. In Magoleng's (1985) *A ke bona botshelo* language is also emphasised by physical gestures and voice modulation. Here Chief Gabonewe shouts in a loud voice for his child, using his hand in a calling gesture in order to emphasise the meaning of his language. In the same short story, Bra Styles takes Galeyo out on a date. During their conversation it becomes perceptibly tense when Galeyo realises that she is going to be cross-examined about her date with Joe (behind Bra Styles back). The writer explains that it was not necessary to ask whether Bra Styles was very angry as this was written all over his face. He looked at Galeyo with a wrinkled face and to put more stress on his words he spoke in a very high-pitched voice. Therefore, we can conclude that Tswana short story, like the

folktale, uses physical gestures, facial expressions and voice modulation to express specific emotions, thoughts and actions.

The oral character of language shows itself in a variety of elements connected with language. When we look at the examples quoted above and the three short stories contained in Malope's *Mmualebe*, we realise that they have elements that show that they are written to be performed or to be read aloud for people with a knowledge of the folktale. Orality, in this regard, refers to the language and tradition in which the three stories, namely, *Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana'a mmaago*, *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng* and *O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba*, are articulated, as well as the medium in which the writer's readers or listeners hear these stories. It is apparently clear from the reading of these short stories that they owe their allegiance to the tradition of Tswana. This is particularly because they communicate the experiences of Tswana-speaking people, they are written in Tswana, and directed at a Tswana-speaking community.

#### **5.4 THE INFLUENCE OF ORAL TRADITION ON SETTING**

The term setting essentially refers to two concepts, namely, the time when and the place where events of the story occur. Sebate (1992) supports this assertion when he says that setting not only refers to the time when the story occurs, but also involves the place where the events happen. Therefore, within the confines of this study, setting will be understood as referring to both time and place. Within the folktale environs, the place where the events occur is usually described in very vague terms so that it is not readily identifiable. The purpose of a vague description of the place of events is to help make the story credible to the listeners. Even though some places are described within the Tswana folktale, it often becomes very difficult to determine the area in which the described locale is situated. However, sometimes the storyteller describes the locale of the events in terms of common landmarks that give a vivid picture of the place of events. It is these elements that often help listeners to deduce that might have the given common landmarks. Another

aspect of setting that also appears in Tswana folktales concerns time. What is observable in the folktales is that they are normally set in the remote past. This is done so that listeners should believe that these tales actually happened even though it was during the time of their forefathers. The Tswana folk narratives begin with an introductory formula, “once upon a time” and from here they tell their stories in “a never-never land where things happen”, and this phenomenon has made inroads into the Tswana short story (Obiechina, 1975). The reason for this occurrence is that the most significant objective of the folk narratives is the communication of a moral lesson and the provision of entertainment. Therefore, the question of where and when the story occurs seems to be less significant.

In folk narratives, the events are often of the times past, when mysteries and miracles could happen, when animals could speak, when cannibals could marry human beings and when the dead could rise up from their sleep. However, the place where the events of these narratives occurred are not as mysterious as all that. The events occur in villages, forests, rivers, mountains and in all places familiar to a Motswana. Be that as it may, these places are either nameless or vaguely described. Sometimes the events occur in a place which does not exist. When we look at the folk narratives compiled by Dipale (1990) in *Tsholo ya segaetsho*, we realise that the events of the different narratives occur “kwa moseja ga lewatle” (overseas), “mo sekgweng” (in the forest), “kwa lefatsheng lengwe” (in one country), “mo motseng o o neng o bidiwa Manga’amodimo” (in one village called Manga’amodimo); and the time when the events of Kgomoetso Mogapi’s (1980) folk narratives contained in *Sefalana sa dico tsa Setswana* happened is “ka letsatsi lengwe” (one day), “bogologolo-tala” (long long ago), and “bogologolo” (long ago). These are clear examples to illustrate that the place where the events occur is either vaguely described, is a never-never land or is familiar to the community in question and that the time when the events occur is in the remote past or of a general nature. This, however, does not mean that setting is not important. Setting is very significant because it helps to give meaning and identity to the actions of the characters and the events that build the

story. Obviously, the actions and the incidents of the story derive their meaning when they are placed within a particular setting.

What we observe in some of our short stories is that setting is socialised, in other words it considers the people's outlook on life and perception of reality. The traditional Tswana-speaking people did not have a knowledge of the chronometer or watch time. As such they used natural phenomena and the animal world to determine the time of day and night. Msimang (1986) in explaining the socialisation of setting says that the aspect of setting involves the society's way of life at the time and place in which the story occurs. Obiechina (1975) in this regard, believes that time, as another concept of setting, is reckoned not only by events such as the first and second cock-crow, sunrise, sunset, but also by meal-times, time of return from work or farm and so on. Although traditional societies use these time indicators, it does not mean that they indicate fixed watch times. The commonly used meal-times in Tswana include, for example, "sefitlholo, dijotshegare and dilalelo" (breakfast, lunch and supper) and return times are normally, "maitseboa or mantsiboa", (roughly translated as, 'in the afternoon'). Although these times may vary from one individual to another or from one family to another, at least every family has a correct and appropriate idea of the estimated time. One interesting thing about the return time indicator, "maitseboa" is that it means "those who know when to return", while its variant "mantsiboa" implies "a mass return or the return of the masses". What I am trying to illustrate through this analysis is that both terms do not indicate a precise time of return. Be that as it may, these terms indicate that at a particular time of the day all domestic animals and people return home without having to ask for time on a watch. They know when to return and they return in their thousands. It is almost an intuitive knowledge or a matter of instinct that around a particular time this specific event happens.

This traditional method of indicating time manifests itself in the Tswana story. In the short story, *Ga le a ka la tswa*, Magoleng (1974) illustrates the distance between Kesentseng's home village and Gaolekwe's home village in terms of the time it takes to travel between

the two places. The writer explains that the distance between the two places is not long. However, he describes the distance it will take Boiki to travel to Gaolekwe's home village by comparing this distance with the approximate time between the two places. In this regard he says, if Boiki leaves Kesentseng's home village (Bopitiko) when the cock crows incessantly, he will arrive at Gaolekwe's home village around the time of school recess. The time around which the cock crows incessantly is in the region of five o' clock in watch time, and the time around which the school breaks is ten o' clock. The ten o' clock time is arrived at after consideration of the period or year during which this short story was written. During the years around 1974 most schools had their breaks at ten o' clock. Magoleng in this regard uses both the traditional experience (the crowing of a cock) and the modern experience (school breaks) to observe and to indicate time. The writer here uses both experiences to concretise the distance and the time it takes to travel between the two places by using known occurrences and situations. This manner of estimating time and distance is part of the traditional mode of thought. Therefore, I would like to concur with Obiechina (1975) when he suggests that this is an inbuilt mechanism for aiding the human memory in societies in which everything worth knowing has to be converted to memory. Although, at present, we rely much on the written word and on watch time, this kind of mechanism continues to function instinctively partly because of a strong attachment to traditional culture.

Short story writers use the social setting familiar to the community in order to avoid misunderstandings. Some short story writers, particularly those who often emphasise the realities of their traditional life, tend to use natural and traditional time indicators such as the stars, the moon and the sun. In the short story *Kwa letlotleng la ga Ntidi*, Naanyane (1987) describes the situation in which the old man went to sleep while the young folks flocked out of their homes to pass the night away. The writer, in indicating the time around which these events took place says, "kopadilalelo e ne e sa bolo go wela, kgogamasigo e setse e dumedisitse kwa letlotleng la ga Ntidi" (Naanyane, 1987:36) (the evening star had long set, and the midnight star had already greeted the deserted house of

Ntidi). The role of the two stars “kopadilalelo” (the evening star) and “kgogamasigo” (the midnight star) as indicators of time is clearly illustrated. Through these two stars, Naanyane emphasises that the evening time had already passed away and that it was midnight. Both the old man and woman could determine and realise that night has fallen and that it is time to go to sleep. On the other hand, the youths could see that it was time to pass the night away at a place of common ground. Naanyane has not only used the stars, he has also used the moon as a measure of time in his description of the dances and games played by the youths. He speaks of “ngwedi o ne o tagile mo loaping” (Naanyane, 1987:35) (the moon was bright in the sky) to indicate that the moon was full and bright. He also shows that it was the right time for the youths to dance and play games as the moon illuminated the playground.

Naanyane frequently uses the elements of everyday experience to indicate time. For example, in his short story, *Mmatlakgwana*, the character, Etsile, wakes up to discover that it is very bright in her room because “ngwedi o tlhapile” (the moon is bright) and that “kgogo e setse e ledile la bobedi” (Naanyane, 1987:29) (the cock had already crowed for the second time). By “ngwedi o tlhapile” the writer refers to the brightness of the moon and, according to Obiechina (1975) the moon becomes very bright when it is full . Obiechina (1975) emphasises that when the moon is fullest and brightest it stays effective in the sky until morning, and morning is ushered in by the crowing of the cock. It is, therefore, easy to reckon the time around which Etsile woke up. In this case Etsile did not wake up with the first crow of the cock, but with the second. This implies that Etsile woke up around three o’ clock according to present watch time. The writer not only refers to the moon and the second crowing of the cock, he also refers to other characteristic elements of nature, namely, the owl and the jackal in, “lerubisi le arabile phokojwe” (Naanyane, 1987:29) (the owl replied to the jackal). The traditional Tswana-speaking people believe that a jackal is an animal that during the early hours of the morning would go down to the dam or any place of water to wash off dirt from its body. After having cleansed itself of the dirt of the millipedes and the likes, the jackal would cry at the top of its voice to

indicate that the day is dawning and the night dies away. On hearing the sound of the jackal the owl would also hoot in reply to the jackal's message that the day is catching up with them. Both the owl and jackal are nocturnal animals and the sounds that they make are nothing less than oral messages that are sent to remind themselves of the time of day. More significantly, the traditional people use these messages which have been observed through the ages and are thus known within communities to indicate the time.

Most short story writers use the sun to indicate time and the passing of time. In *Ga le a ka la tswa*, Magoleng (1974) emphasises the effect of Gaolekwe's threat that Kesentseng is doomed to die before dawn by indicating the passing of time: "Letsatsi la bo le kobakobela go phirima. Ka maitiso ga senyega ..." (Magoleng, 1974:8) (The sun moved towards sunset. During the evening things became worse ..). The writer does not indicate his time with precision, but he generalises. However, the incident concerning the build up of clouds, the darkness of the weather and the terrible storms, is situated within a particular time frame. The phrase "la bo le kobakobela go phirima" (it was moving towards sunset) and the word "maitiso" (the evening period immediately after supper) are temporal generalisations which create an air of time estimation associated with oral traditions. The use of natural elements to indicate time is exploited maximally in this short story. Note what Magoleng says in estimating the ages of Boiki and Kesentseng:

Dithulaganyane, ba siana ka dingwaga di le pedi. Yo mmotlana o ka nna lesomenne gongwe go feta. O tsetswe le boMmathupayapula, ka ngwaga wa pula ya mabele a mantsho (Magoleng, 1974:6)

(Siblings that were born soon after one another, they are separated by only two years. The younger one may be fourteen years old, maybe more. He was born with a group of individuals of the same age called Mmathupayapula, during the rainy year of the black sorghum)

Within traditional societies exact time is less important than in modern societies. It is evident from the manner in which time is indicated that "punctuality is not one of the

virtues" (Obiechina, 1975:135) of traditional people. Phrases such as "o ka nna" (he may be) and "gongwe go feta" (maybe more) illustrate the lack of precision, exactness and approximation associated with the traditional manner of indicating time. Boiki's age is indicated as fourteen or more years and that Kesentseng is two years older than Boiki. Although Kesentseng's age is not given, it can be indicated in terms of Boiki's age. That Boiki's years could be determined through his peer group called Mmathupayapula, is not far-fetched because this is the mechanism used by the society in which he was born. In traditional societies, children of specific years were born and raised in specific groups. Even though Boiki's age is clarified through his peer group, the writer still continues to give other evidence of Boiki's age. This he does by recalling the natural incident that is significant to Boiki's age: "ngwaga wa pula ya mabele a mantsho" (the rainy year of the black sorghum). Therefore in order to give a year in which Boiki was born, it becomes necessary to establish when this natural phenomenon occurred. "Ka ngwaga wa pula ya mabele a mantsho" is a temporally conceived idea which is less definite, less precise and not readily identifiable as being "in 1961 or 1962". We can, therefore, conclude that in creating his short story, the writer does not feel compelled to give temporal precision to his descriptive incidents.

What happens in some short stories is that the place where events occur is described almost vaguely. This may be attributable to the fact that these stories are set in the remote past. In this regard then, the place of events is not easily and readily identifiable. Although we need to acknowledge the fact that some Tswana short stories do not show folkloristic tendencies, we also need to emphasise that there are many which evince these tendencies. In these stories places where the actions occur are described in almost vague terms, while in some other stories actions happen in a vacuum. To this effect we can mention short stories by, for example, Magoleng (1974), Moroke (1968) and Shole (1985). In Magoleng's (1974) short story *Ga le a ka latswa* we are indirectly provided with the locale of the events of the story. The writer refrains from giving the reader the exact place where the action of the story occurs. He simply tells us that "if one wakes up at Bopitiko



when the cock crows incessantly” and leaves us to guess the connection between the events and this place. In this manner he does not precisely tell us the geographical place where the story is located. Even the landmarks common to the community, that possibly could have helped, are not mentioned. The same vagueness that characterises Magoleng’s short story shows itself again in Moroke’s short story. In Moroke’s (1968) short story *Ntwa magareng a makau le makgarebe* we encounter the following vague description of the place where the story occurs:

Mo sengweng sa dikolo tse dikgolo tsa bana ba batho ba bantsho, se se neng se agilwe gaufi le lewatle, go ne go na le basimane ba ba kgoloamane le basetsana ba ba kgolomasomeamarataro (Moroke, 1968:35).

(In one of the Black high schools that was built near an ocean, there were about four hundred boys and one hundred and sixty girls)

If the purpose of a vague description is that the locale should not be easily and readily identifiable, then this is it. What we observe here is a vague description of setting which breeds problems. We do not deny the fact that this kind of description is used within the environs of the folktale to lend it an air of credulity. However, what it does to Moroke’s short story is that it leaves the reader with unanswered questions. These questions relate to the failure of the writer to give the reader the precise names of the place and locale where the story happens. We are not provided with the exact name of the Black high school, nor given the geographical place where the school is situated, nor that of the ocean bordering the school. The fact that the events occur in a never-never school or land, unlike in the case of folktales, makes them lack credibility and plausibility. As such, this traditional spice or flavour gives an unhealthy taste to Moroke’s short story. In another short story of his, entitled *O potile noga ka fa mosimeng*, the events happen in a vacuum or what we have been referring to as a make-believe land, to indicate the remoteness of the actions of this story. There is no mention made of even the landmarks that could possibly depict the place, except an isolated reference to the tree and the house. This helps

to confirm the view that our short stories bear elements similar to those found in the oral tradition specifically, in this regard, the folktale.

A vague description of setting corrected by an indication of critical landmarks can be seen in Shole's (1985) short story *Molala-le-ntsala*. In this story Mme-ga-mpone serves as the place where the story takes place. Mme-ga-mpone literally means "my mother does not see me", and this explains the traditional adage of giving places significant names. The writer describes it as Mme-ga-mpone and gives critical landmarks which are familiar to the readers. These landmarks include the civic centre and the Rolong dialect spoken by the characters. It is through these marks or identifications that we determine that the story is set in the Mme-ga-mpone in Mmabatho and not the Mme-ga-mpone in Mogwase. After the mention of these marks, we no longer wonder whether this Mme-ga-mpone is the place in Mogwase which bears its origin to the establishment of Sun City or the Mme-ga-mpone in Mmabatho.

Although some short stories simply give the reader a vague description of setting, there are others in which setting is described in terms of common landmarks. Normally, these significant landmarks are known to all the people within the community. This can be seen in Magoleng's (1974) short story *Logaga lwa mmadipela* in which he gives a brief description of the area bordering the setting of his events:

Re ne ra tsena ka Tswaana, re ikaeletse go tshela noka ya  
Kouwe fa e tswa ka letamo la Madima, gore re fete ka  
thabana ya Mmakune, re tlhole re tsoma ka kwa Dikomaneng.  
(Magoleng, 1974:10)

(We walked through Tswaana, so that we could cross the  
Kouwe river at the point where it leaves Madima dam, in  
order that we may pass by Mmakune hillock, which would  
see us into Dikomaneng)

From this excerpt, "the Kouwe river", "the Madima dam" and "the Mmakune hillock" are the most significant landmarks in the mind of the reader, that give him a conclusive idea

that these events happen in the forest of Dikomaneng in Saulspoort. A reader can determine this setting by locating, in his mind, the three known landmarks mentioned. In this manner Magoleng exploits familiar landmarks in his description of setting and calls on the mental prowess of his readers to concretise these associations and identify a relevant place. As Obiechina (1975) rightly puts it, it is a matter of instinct, habit and a sense of general custom or usage that readers will definitely determine the place where events take place from these known landmarks.

## **5.5 ORAL TRADITION AND NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

In folk narratives there exists a relationship between the storyteller or the narrator and the listener. The act of telling and listening and the interaction between the speaker and the listener usually capture the ear of the lover of oral tradition. The relationship of speaker-listener implies that the listener hears the story that the narrator tells. The narrator of the folktale assumes a leading role in the narrative. He can react to the action of the narrative and persuade his listeners or audience to adopt a specific standpoint. This stance is what in the area of literary theory, is called the third person omniscient perspective. Within the literary circles, the third person narrative perspective is the stance adopted by a narrative voice speaking outside the narrative, that is, it does not participate in the action of the story. Through this stance, the narrator can view all the actions of the characters from a distance. He becomes the seeing eye that reports, but does not interpret. Even though he does not interpret, the narrator still remains all-knowing and all-seeing, for he knows all the feelings, thoughts and fates of his characters, and sees all their manners of dress, gestures and facial expressions. In this manner the narrator can delve in and out of the minds and hearts of his characters, comment on their actions, gesticulations, frowns and even address the reader directly. Although the narrator, within the circles of oral tradition, assumes a stance of being all-knowing in the telling of the story, he wants his audience to believe that he has also heard the story from another source; hence the introductory formula, “Ga twe e rile...” (Once upon a time...).

Most of the Tswana short story writers use the third person narrative perspective to manipulate the reader's perceptions of their stories. Because some of these short stories happen in the remote past, the narrator is, in most instances, excluded from participating in the action. Therefore, in adopting the third person narrative perspective, the writers acknowledge the traditional and the usual mode used in folklore. Malope (1982) adopts the third person narrative perspective in order to ensure that he preserves aspects of the Tswana traditions and culture. In his usage of this stance, Malope, with each story he has written in the volume *Mmualebe*, has created voices that convince the reader to appreciate his work and to follow his particular line of thought. These are the voices of the old woman, MmaMmualebe, her grand-daughter Morongwe and the third voice is that of the writer himself. Two of the three voices that permeate through the narratives are not characters in the stories but named and nameless non-participants, while one of these three voices is a named participant, Morongwe.

Malope handles the third person narrative perspective successfully by creating a speaker-listener relationship between MmaMmualebe, as the narrator and Morongwe, as the listener and vice-versa. It is, in fact, the act of telling and listening that the writer evokes; the exchange of voices between the writer, MmaMmualebe and Morongwe; the interaction of personalities; and MmaMmualebe and Morongwe's dynamic presence, that capture the ear of the lovers of tradition (Julien, 1992). Flowing from this statement, I concur with Julien's (1992) assertion that there are short stories that intimate a telling between speaker-writer and listener-reader and that, inside this telling-listening, there are also other tellers and listeners. In Malope's (1982) *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng* MmaMmualebe tells a story while Morongwe listens. The reason why MmaMmualebe, the narrator, tells Morongwe, the listener, this story is because she wants her to learn a lesson from the speech and behaviour of the prominent characters in the stories. MmaMmualebe, as an experienced old woman, gives the youthful Morongwe advice that she should not go searching for a husband who has gone out to meet other men, as do modern women. She

says that Malešwane in (*Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng*) did not know and did not want to know that Makeketa was committing adultery with a woman in GaRankuwa. This is the reason why their marriage withstood the test of time. In conclusion, the narrator (MmaMmualebe) says: “Le wena o dire jalo. O se ka wa batla go itse, ngwana’a ngwanaka. Monna ga a ediwe, e bile ga a wediwe” (Malope, 1982:25) (You should also do likewise. Do not be inquisitive, my child. Do not do what your husband does, (and) do not lay traps for him). In this instance the narrator (MmaMmualebe) interacts directly with the listener (her granddaughter) Morongwe and both are dynamically present in the telling-listening situation. It is the essence of this relationship that adds a touch of traditionality to the short stories of Malope.

Even though MmaMmualebe and Morongwe exchange narrative voices in the telling of *Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng* and *O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba*, there are still some voices that speak and listen inside these short stories. These are the voices of the characters such as Makeketa, Malešwane, Morongwe, and so forth. In highlighting the exchange of the roles of the narrators in the short story *O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba* Morongwe says: “Gompieno sebaka ke sa me, koko. Ga ke bolo go go tlhwaela tsebe. Ke batla o ka utlwa ...” (Malope, 1982:26) (Today it is my turn, granny. I have been listening attentively to you for a long time. I want you to hear..). This example shows that the relationship of speaker-listener is established by creating an impression that the reader hears rather than reads the narrator’s story. Morongwe in this example puts it doubly clear that, as she takes the role of the narrator, someone must listen attentively (tlhwaela tsebe) and hear (o ka utlwa). Thus, both MmaMmualebe and Morongwe are actively present in the act of telling and listening, while the others (characters) are passively present. In illustrating both personalities’ dynamic presence further, Malope uses phrases that denote action, as in this example: “Mosadimogolo MmaMmualebe a katoga molelo go se nene, a ntse a ipharile”(Malope, 1982:26) (The old woman MmaMmualebe wriggled a little further away from the fire). From these phrases we are told in no uncertain terms that this act of telling and listening happens around the fire just as folklore is told around the evening

fire. It is this folkloristic impact, discernible in Malope's short stories, that summarises his close attachment to oral tradition.

In his short story *Tshwene ya lebanta* Magoleng (1974) also creates an intimate and authentic relationship between the narrator and the listener. To this effect he writes:

Nnyaya tlhe, wena! Bo teng, re a bo itse, e seng ba motshegare o o kana. Ke eo tshwene ya gago, Baitlhoki! O tla e reng? A o tla re ga o e itse? Ya gobota, ya ralala motse, ya tlhoka ena yo o ka e salang morago. (Magoleng, 1974:17)

(Oh no, [you]! It (witchcraft) is there, we know it, but not in such broad daylight. There it is, Baitlhoki, your baboon! What would you do to it? Would you say you do not know it? It walked boldly, as it crossed the village, but there was no one to follow it.)

The creation of a teller-listener relationship in this excerpt is initiated by a sentence that expresses the narrator's emotions of amazement and wonder. This sentence, "nnyaya tlhe, wena!" (Oh no, [you]) does not only convey the narrator's emotions, it also acknowledges the existence of a listener in "wena" (you). In the third sentence of the excerpt above, the narrator-listener relationship is started by the words "ke eo" (there it is) which under normal circumstances, is often accompanied by a hand gesture indicating the place to which is being referred (Lutato, 1982:166). It is in this context that the reader readily and automatically supplies a hand gesture to go with the words "ke eo" to indicate the position of where "there it is". The excerpt above helps the reader become aware that the narrator is dynamically everpresent present in the narrative. The impression the words of this passage create in the reader is not one of merely reading the narrative, but one of hearing the story and watching the action in the company of the narrator. What we can detect from the excerpt above is that the narrator assumes a leading role in the narrative, hence his ability to comment freely on the events of the story. Like the oral performer, the narrator in this narrative narrates and reacts to the action of the narrative and persuades the readers to adopt a particular perspective. As we can see, the narrator becomes part of the viewers

and presses his emotional reactions to the actions of the baboon. In order to cue his reader's line of thinking and feeling, the narrator also uses rhetorical questions such as: "O tla e reng? A o tla re ga o e itse?" (What would you do to it? Would you say you do not know it?).

In Magoleng's (1974) other short story *Logaga lwa Mmadipela* the narrator purposefully chooses to emphasise his stance in relation to the narrative:

Dikgang tse dingwe tsa tiragalo e nna, ke tshaba go aka, ga ke  
a di bona, ke di utlwile ka Segaolane (Magoleng, 1974:10)

(Some of the events of this incident, I am afraid I cannot lie,  
I have not seen them, I heard them from Segaolane)

Through this sentence the narrator wants to show that the situation at hand is an oral-aural and a face to face experience. It is also clear from this sentence that the narrator assumes a stance which reminds the reader that he is talking to someone he sees. Similar to the folktale, the narrator wants his readers to take it that he has heard his story from another source and that he should not be held responsible or accountable for some fantastic things with which they might not be in agreement. By commenting freely like this in the narrative, the writer inserts a traditional oral narrative situation into his short story. This comment is directed at straightening the perception of the reader and avoiding questions that the reader might ask the narrator (writer).

## 5.6 RESUME

Research into the subject of the influence of oral tradition on the Tswana short story proves to be an interesting study of Tswana literature. What we have discovered is that it is indeed the short story which has directly or indirectly been influenced by the artistic devices and other forms of oral tradition, and not the other way round. Creative writing in African languages and, specifically in Tswana, illustrates the living and strong

influence of the oral traditions of the past. The Tswana short story writers, in drawing from the wealth of their traditional and cultural heritage, have endowed their works with a touch of originality and uniqueness which could only have been derived from the traditional splendour of the threads of the oral traditions. It is, therefore, not surprising to realise that Tswana short stories are steeped in traditional marriages, witchcraft, ghosts and superstition. The influence that oral traditions have on Tswana short stories is not strictly one-sided, as it shows itself in matters relating to the use of folktale formula, the circular structures and the episodic elements which also owe their allegiance to the folktale. Examination of the oral narrative has also shown that repetition is another essential feature of Tswana short stories. This is the feature that is normally used by oral narrators to communicate theme, to control and direct the emotional responses of the audience and to place emphasis on specific ideas. Repetition in the short story also is also evident where similar incidents affect the same person and where a narration repeats an incident.

More significantly, the characters who appear in Tswana short stories follow the pattern of characters found in the oral narratives. These characters are single-dimensional and symbolic in as much as they represent specific ideas. Emphasising single character traits in order to highlight specific ideas is further achieved by providing characters with significant names. Owing to this method of character depiction, the Tswana short story is characterised by a lack of revelation of the character's inner motives and feelings. The reason for this is primarily as a result of the tendency of the writers to moralise or to comment upon the characters, a stance which can directly be associated with the influence of oral narratives.

Tswana short story writers, like other writers, use words as tools for creating their works and these words, which are drawn from the vast knowledge of their language, are used to communicate ideas as clearly as possible. Therefore, there is no question that there is a tradition of speech evident in Tswana writings. Through its allegiance to a tradition of



speech, Tswana short stories identify themselves with their own Tswana-speaking people and, since they use Tswana, they are directly available and accessible to the Tswana-speaking community. Words that are used frequently are, generally, simple with simple but expressive sentences which even a child can understand. Therefore, we can conclude that, following in the footprints of oral tradition, the Tswana short story uses a simple language which is also embellished with traditional imagery, proverbs and ideophones. It is quite apparent that by using a good number of proverbs, the Tswana writers illustrate their individual attachment to their traditional community and its linguistic world. Furthermore, in showing this attachment these writers truncate or reduce proverbs at will under the assumption that the readers, as members of the Tswana community, have a vast knowledge of proverbial language. Apart from using proverbs to indicate an allegiance to the Tswana language, Tswana writers also use ideophones. They use the ideophones to achieve an effective sensual and dramatic impact which cannot be illustrated through ordinary words. These ideophones are used to provide the short story with a traditional flavour and to indicate, sensations such as colour, smell and grief. Quite a number of the ideophones used by short story writers occur in the form of single words, or a sound multiplied twice or several times while other ideophones may be traced to recognisable verbal roots.

The influence of oral traditions on the Tswana short story does not only pertain to the existence of oral elements such as the proverb and the ideophone. The fact that the ideas in the short story are carried out in the language which is emphasised by physical gestures, facial expressions and the modulation of the voice, shows that the folktale has prominently influenced the Tswana short story. It is a fact that the introductory formula, "once upon a time" which is used by some writers is also derived from the folktale. The Tswana writers not only use this formula, they also locate their stories in a make-believe land, sometimes using significant landmarks to identify the setting. What also happens is that the place where events occur is described almost vaguely, particularly because these stories are set in the remote past. In this regard, the place of events becomes difficult to

identify. It is not only the aspects of language and setting that show traces of folkloristic influence, narrative perspective also shows a particular link with oral narratives. The Tswana short story uses the third person narrative perspective to manipulate the reader's perceptions. Because this short story happens in the remote past, the narrator is, in most instances, a non-participant in the action of the story. In assuming the third person narrative stance, the writers acknowledge the traditional and the usual narrative mode used in folklore.

## CHAPTER SIX

### A GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 INTRODUCTION

The Tswana short story, with its own unique features, has been highlighted in this research project through examination of works of different writers. It is beyond doubt that Tswana short stories bear the literary features characteristic of short stories such as compression, unity of impression, economy of means and originality. It is particularly the element of originality that has, above all, contributed so much to the qualitative development of the Tswana short story. Obviously, narration has been with us for so many decades and centuries that we often indulge in it spontaneously. We can therefore not deny that the roots of the Tswana short story are vividly embedded in the traditional tales. The short story is the favourite of Africa's oral heritage, which for some strange reason, is called the folktale when it is rendered orally, and the short story when it is rendered through the written word. As an independent artform the short story has been practised in the late twentieth century. The Tswana short story in its present form was developed later than the novel, drama and poetry, as if it did not have an equal with the birth of man. The pioneer in the area of the Tswana short story is none other than Magoleng who led the way with his well-designed short stories. We do not in any way wish to denigrate the attempt made by Niemandt in compiling short stories in Tswana, however, his attempt at short story writing is devoid of creativity, originality and genius and, as such, it did not win the heart of the Tswana readership. Thus, his contribution is regarded as a white elephant within Tswana literary circles. On the other hand, Moroke's attempt also did not satisfy literary standards of worthiness. His stories in *Tsa fa isong* are too didactic and have poorly structured plots. Like folktales, these stories can only teach readers legitimate behaviour, respect and good morals. This is the reason for Mashike's (1988) conclusion

that they are essentially folktales, devoid of plot and truth. It is for this reason that I consider Magoleng the writer who undoubtedly laid the groundwork for Tswana short story writing with the volume *Mpolelele dilo* (co-authored with Ntsime, 1972).

Although most Tswana writers have ventured into the area of the short story, there are weaknesses and defects which manifest themselves in their art. These weaknesses pertain to questions involving plausibility, plot and character depiction. However, these weaknesses have not hampered the growth and impact of the short story as a genre in Tswana literary circles. On the contrary, during the course of this research it became very clear that the popularity of the short story as a written and read genre grows daily among the Tswana literate communities. It only suffers the neglect of critics and scholars in highlighting its existence and worth. Most critics and scholars seem to be engrossed and focussed on researching the novel and drama at the expense of the short story. Only a few scholars, exalted as they might be, namely Mashike, Sebate and Mfoloe have taken the trouble of researching this smaller and lesser genre, the short story. It is true that the Tswana short story has made tremendous strides in terms of quantitative and qualitative development. The growth of the Tswana short story can successfully be measured in terms of the number of volumes published to date. Although it was rather sluggish in its early beginnings, it has shown tremendous strides during the 1980's and 1990's. During the period under scrutiny, that is, 1980 to 1995, about thirty seven volumes were published. The qualitative development of the Tswana short story, on the other hand, can be measured in terms of the modern techniques that are employed in its creation. These techniques include foreshadowing, flashback, allusion, compression, structural organisation, originality, appropriate narrative perspectives. We can, therefore, conclude that, while it is accepted and acknowledged that the Tswana short story has made tremendous strides after a rather sluggish start, in the area of quantitative and qualitative development not much research has been done on its literary significance, historicity and development. This thesis is thus another attempt in the direction of making critics aware of the need for research on the short story.

Our research into the Tswana short story has been given direction by major literary theories. The adoption of an intergrated mode of analysis in our study has made it possible for us to reveal the general principles behind the artistic prowess of Tswana short stories. We have adopted the three major theories of literary analysis, namely, Formalism, Structuralism and New Criticism. Theories like the Biographical and the Marxist have however been used to a lesser extent. Formalism has helped us see how the Tswana short story writers, in the process of creating their art, defamiliarise the raw material they use in building their stories, that is, how they control the tempo of events and how they interrupt the sequential flow of these events. It is because of the adoption of this theory that this research project does not only look at the events of individual short stories, but also at the devices the Tswana writers use to interrupt and delay the narration. To this effect the artistry of the Tswana writers is shown by their masterful usage of stylistic devices such as flashback and foreshadowing.

Our study of the Tswana short story, required us to examine a short story as a whole in order to determine the relations that exist between the different components that build it, hence the adoption of a Structuralist theory. In this sense, the structure of the Tswana short story has been examined in terms of the connection that exists between the problem situation, a temporary association of characters, the conflict that arises from this association and the resolution of the conflict itself. In studying the connectedness between the different components of the Tswana short story, the theory of Structuralism has also helped us examine the methods employed by the Tswana writers to present their events in an unfamiliar manner. Apart from these two theories, we also adopted the New Criticism theory. The theory of New Criticism has assisted us in dealing with meanings and the interaction of words, figures of speech and oral language. As a result of the adoption of this theory, we have read Tswana short stories closely in order to come to terms with the usage of language, imagery, and the whole arrangement of words in order to understand the theme and message of the work. Although this is a tiresome affair, we had to read and reread, work forward and backward, in order to understand the core

images of the short story. In studying the Tswana short story, we have also, in some instances, been forced to refer to Biographical and Marxist approaches. This has been done in order to give cognisance to the author's significance in literary analysis; as well as the role the author plays in addressing oppression and deprivation in society.

## 6.1 MAJOR THEMES

Tswana short stories treat a variety of themes which include tradition and culture, love and marriage, the *makgoweng* motif, religion as well as corruption and other social problems. They shed light on the social conditions in South Africa, the peculiar experiences of apartheid and separate development, the pleasures and problems of love and marriage, as well as the hard realities of the life hereafter. It becomes obvious from the reading of Tswana short stories, that its writers not only criticise the negative aspects of African culture and tradition, but also give credit and recognise the positive aspects which need to be upheld and preserved. It is clearly shown in Tswana short stories that the coming of Europeans to the African continent affected the Batswana's social ways of life. During this time the traditional culture, which was the basis of both economic and political stability, started weakening when the younger generation was assimilated and wooed away from its traditional solidarity, becoming vehicles to ferry the new cultural changes. In addressing the theme of love and marriage, Tswana short story writers tend to concentrate on the pleasures derived from love and marriage, the adulterous behaviours that are often associated with these institutions, the suffering and pain that is projected onto caring spouses, and also on the bitterness of divorce. Tswana short story writers are also very concerned with the theme of urban life even though they tend to emphasise only the negative influence of the urban areas on its hapless and helpless "Jims come to Jo'burg". These urban short story writers treat the awful experiences of crime, parasitism and the degradation with which people have to contend in urban areas. Although many people perceive corruption as an aspect of life borrowed from westerners, it is clear from the research done that it has been perfected in black administrative structures. It becomes

vividly clear from the Tswana short story that the introduction of Black people into the structures of power has not only increased corruption in the workplace, but that it has also done nothing to improve the lot of Black people.

Tswana short stories, as has been demonstrated in this thesis, treat quite a variety of themes. The manner in which themes are treated reveals the experiences of members of the Tswana community as well as the characteristics of their culture. The Tswana short story shows that in its early inception it emphasised the quest for a religious, traditional and loving society and discouraged criticism or protests levelled at the government. It is only later, in the year 1985, that Shole shed light on corruption in institutions and on the human conditions of the African people in an apartheid-conceived South Africa. This seems to have unleashed the floodgates for attacks on the social ills that frustrate law-abiding citizens, as can be seen in some of Malope's short stories.

## **6.2 THE ORGANISATION OF MATERIAL**

In this research it was revealed that the Tswana short story, like short stories of other cultures, shows a continuous sequence of exposition, development and resolution. Although it adheres to the structure of its Western counterpart, it sometimes deviates from the rule. Nonetheless, the various elements still bear a direct relationship to the central idea that runs through the entire short story. Most Tswana short story writers achieve this by providing their stories with titles that encapsulate the theme of the narrative. This study has also revealed that the exposition of the short story in general, and of the Tswana short story in particular, is structurally and strategically positioned to make powerful first impressions on the reader; to arouse interest that captures the reader's curiosity and to stimulate further reading. It has also been realised that the most important means of capturing reader-interest is by placing the reader in a questioning attitude. When the reader is in this frame of mind, the questions that arise in his mind make him curious and

he continues to read on to find answers to these questions. The significance of the exposition of the Tswana short story does not solely rest on providing suspense or capturing reader-interest, it also rests on suggesting character, action and setting. However, it is worth remembering that expositions differ from one short story to another. They might be short or long, descriptive or dialogic, suggestive of conflict or character or they may contain information that is irrelevant to the development of the action of the story.

This investigation shows that the developmental phase of the Tswana short story is a phase in which the pace of movement of the action of the short story increases gradually in relation to the development of the events presented in the expositional phase. It is during this phase that writers use suspense to make their stories effective, attractive and absorbing. In organising their material, the Tswana short story writers employ the devices of flashback and foreshadowing to link their events. It is interesting to note that these writers do not simply open flashbacks and foreshadowings, but they also close them and return to the present narrative. What we observe in the Tswana short story is that flashbacks often open with different marks which include elliptical dots, transitional lines and recollective phrases. Flashbacks also close down to indicate a return of the narration to the present narrative. What has been realised in this study is that foreshadowing occurs far less frequently in the Tswana short story than its counterpart, the flashback. Although it occurs less frequently, when it does occur it is evident in devices such as descriptions, symbols, parallelism, chronological inversion and in dialogue. One other thing worthy of note apart from flashbacks and foreshadowings, is the question of the main character in the action of the story. Although in some short stories the main character is static, it does happen in other stories that the main character undergoes a particular change so that at the end of the action he is not exactly the same character he was in the exposition. This is demonstrated by a good number of short stories through whose action the element of didacticism filters. Though this cannot be taken as a weakness in the area of Tswana short story writing, the Tswana short story has its own structural weaknesses. This pertains to



a situation where some short stories are divided into clear cut chapters which could have been developed into individual short stories. Other weaknesses relate to the fact that other short stories are plotless in design and fail to qualify as short stories.

While it is a fact that Tswana short stories use suspense to grip the reader's interest and concentration, it is also true that every component of the story furthers the progression toward a predetermined resolution. It has been shown in this thesis that between the crises of the story there is no weakening of interest and suspense. Although the Tswana short story often ends with the resolution of the conflict, with characters achieving their aims or accepting defeat or failure, its narration sometimes stops in mid-air, with conflicts unresolved and with characters continuing to live their lives beyond the finish line.

### **6.3      STYLISTIC AND LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Regarding the issue of language and style, Tswana short story writers use their own language as a reservoir from which they draw words through which they build and express the ideas and incidents that constitute the short story. This investigation has revealed that the Tswana short story shows a certain degree of vastness in the writers' choice of words and use of language, and that the writer's abilities and skills in word manipulation differ to a great extent. It is interesting to note that some writers, when announcing unpleasant events, use a variety of euphemistic words in an effort to avoid foul and unsavoury language. This is not the only device that is discernible in Tswana short story writing. Other devices include rhetorical questions which are used to force the reader to participate more actively in the solution of the problem at hand, to effect emphasis and to direct the reader's line of thinking. The Tswana short story in general uses a simple style of language to reveal its theme and message. Although its style is simple, direct and understandable, it is capable of eliciting the deepest emotions of the narrator and the characters. There is also a high frequency of the usage of short and long sentences, which

are often alternated in order to emphasise, to show tempo and to highlight particular atmospheres and specific moods. The Tswana short story utilises short incisive sentences to summarise a significant idea, while long sentences are used for detailed explanations and arguments. Although the Tswana short story uses simple and direct language in preference to fanciful language, it does not shy away from utilising figurative language to extend knowledge and highlight unnoticed relationships between objects. Figures of speech which are common in the Tswana short story are the similes and the metaphor. It has been realised in this thesis that it is very important that, when employing figurative language, the writer should make his choices as appropriate as possible. The choice has to be relevant and fitting to the context, and has to make the object under discussion look as similar to the image in terms of which it is represented as possible.

It is obvious that the Tswana short story moralises, instructs and reflects on everyday occurrences. In order to do this successfully, it calls into play bits of wisdom, called proverbs, in order to lay bare a course of action and to give it a touch of universality. What this investigation has discovered, though, is that these proverbs are called upon in their original form if the shoe happens to fit and are changed if the shoe does not fit. It is not only the proverb that does wonders or miracles for the Tswana short story, idioms also embellish its literary language. What this study has discovered is that the Tswana short story not only uses proverbs and idioms to decorate its style, but also to place greater emphasis on particular ideas. As we have hinted above, the Tswana short story writers have taken an innovative path in their usage of proverbs. They change and twist proverbs to fit the demands of their literary ideas and still achieve great effect. With regard to the usage of idioms, it has been realised that idioms not only serve ornamental functions, but also assist the progression of the narrative events. Sometimes the usage of the idiom is associated with the termination of the topic about which the characters or the writer have been speaking and the transition to a new topic. Apart from all these devices mentioned above, the Tswana short story often makes indirect references to certain ideas, events, passages and names in the Bible. This is done in order to evoke images that are embedded

in the Batswana culture and tradition. Although the Tswana short story uses allusion to broaden the reader's mental horizon, it sometimes taxes the reader mentally to fathom an unrecognised allusion. If the writer alludes to an idea or event that is not easily and readily recognisable, the reader experiences a retardation process in terms of understanding and interpretation as opposed to instances when the allusion is recognisable.

#### **6.4 ORAL TRADITION AND THE TSWANA SHORT STORY**

Stories have always been powerful tools in communicating life experiences. They have been narrated with the purpose of entertaining and equipping the hearers with the necessary values that keep society together. During the course of this research project we discovered that whenever Tswana writers narrate their short stories, they do it as if the action unfolds in the presence of the audience. Often enough and rightfully so these writers would comment on the character's modulation of his voice and gestures as well as on the general body language of the narrator. Creative writing in Tswana, therefore, illustrates a living and strong link with oral traditions. We can thus conclude that the Tswana writers, in drawing from the wealth of their traditional and cultural heritage, have endowed their short stories with a touch of originality and uniqueness which could only be derived from the traditional splendour of the threads of the oral traditions. For example, the frequency with which the ideophones are used in the Tswana short story indicates that the written word is used to highlight and express what normally happens in the performance of oral narratives. As Lutato (1982) points out, by using ideophones liberally to elicit an aesthetic response to language, the Tswana short story shows a strong influence from the oral traditions.

The link that exists between the Tswana short story and oral traditions cannot be classified as a weakness because it is this relationship which has been of vital importance in the domestication process of the short story. The influence of oral traditions on the Tswana short story is not strictly one-sided and it shows itself in matters relating to the use of

folktale formulas, circular structures and episodic plots. More significantly, characters who appear in the Tswana short story are one-dimensional and symbolic in nature. As we have said before, this is because the tendency of the Tswana short story is to moralise or to comment upon the characters. Most of the Tswana short story writers are highly didactic, and this didacticism is directed at the preservation of cultural norms and values and the promotion of social harmony. More often than not these writers emphasise particular aspects of characters' attitudes which they deem to be morally good or bad in order to demonstrate what is socially and morally desirable or undesirable. They do this because they feel that a book of fiction should have something to educate readers. Thus the good qualities of good characters are given more prominence than the bad to serve as good examples for the readers. Another device of characterisation found in the Tswana short story, which derives from the oral tradition, concerns the emphasising of single character traits. This is done by giving a character a name which expresses the trait in question or where the character trait has a bearing on the actions of a particular character. This still pervades the culture of the Tswana-speaking communities in which children are given names which highlight specific events or incidents connected with their births. In all its functioning, the Tswana short story brings into prominence the continual existence of its people's culture. This is demonstrated in so many short stories written in Tswana. For example, in some short stories, a character's personality, as defined through his actions, depends on his individual status within the society or family network.

Traces of oral tradition in the Tswana short story are evident in the whole organisation of the events and incidents that build the story. These traces can be seen where writers use slightly modified folktale narrative formulas in the exposition of their stories. Apart from using folktale formulas, they often tell their readers what the action of their stories entails. They do this by framing their stories around proverbs and using the characters' actions to demonstrate the significance of these proverbs. A significant trend that is evident in Tswana short story writing concerns the attempt of the writers to enrich and embellish their art with forms and techniques borrowed from the oral tradition. It is, therefore, not

surprising to find oral tales retold and creatively intertwined with the events of the short story. The retelling of oral tales and intertwining them with the events of the story is not simply a question of ordinary elaborations or digressions. This device has the intentional purpose of elucidating the narrative contexts in which they are used. It is the structural connection between the content of the retold oral tale and the content of the short story itself that brings into prominence the writer's intended message and the reader's derived message. The reader is awarded an opportunity to interpret the action of the short story in terms of the content of the oral tale. The link that exists between oral tradition and the Tswana short story is not solely confined to matters relating to the usage of folktale formulas, the illustration of the significance of the proverb and circular structures. It also concerns the episodic elements that manifest themselves in this artform.

Within the environs of the folktale, the place where the events occur is usually described in very vague terms so that it is not readily identifiable. The purpose of such a vague description is to help make the story credible to the listeners. What is also observable is that the events of these folktales are set in the remote past; and this is also done in order that the listeners should believe that these tales actually happened. We find that this situation is also prevalent in Tswana short stories. There are short stories whose actions are set in the distant past and the place of events is described in completely vague terms. Although we need to acknowledge that some Tswana short stories do not show folkloristic tendencies, we also need to emphasise that there are many which evince these tendencies. In these stories places where the action of the story occurs are described in terms of landmarks common to the communities in question, while in some other stories action happens in a make-believe land. In view of the fact that Tswana short stories evince folkloristic tendencies, it is necessary that even though we consider universal principles when evaluating the Tswana short story, we also need to acknowledge the traditional principles that are embedded in Tswana craftsmanship.

## **6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

During the course of this research project it became very clear that the Tswana short story is in dire need of critics or researchers. It is, therefore, recommended that because of the tremendous strides made by the Tswana short story, researchers should begin to investigate its literariness and specific trends in its development. Critics and researchers need to develop sound critical thought and a good approach. Good critical thought requires close attention to what is being investigated and concentration on the meaning and message of the words and actions. Close attention communicates recognition of the essence of the Tswana short story and the need to subject it to an unbiased investigation. It has become evident that the Tswana short story is insufficiently researched and that critics have tended to close their eyes and ears to the problems and concerns pertaining to researching this genre. This shows that there is a vacuum that needs to be filled. Furthermore, this needs be addressed in order to facilitate further penetration into the salient structural characteristics of the Tswana short story. It is also necessary to redefine the essentials of the Tswana short story to determine the extent to which it differs from the Western short story. This means that research in future should consider paying attention to the subtle difference in features such as plotting, character portrayal, narrative perspective, setting and the revelation of theme. Other topics that need to be researched and dealt with in a more comprehensive and informative manner include imagination and artistic sensibility as well as tension and suspense in the Tswana short story. These recommendations are not necessarily the end in themselves, but are mere guidelines and areas of interest to be examined. We believe that these different fields are relevant research projects which future students can explore.

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