

"NNETE FELA" - NORTHERN SOTHO DETECTIVE

STORY - A CRITICAL EVALUATION

by

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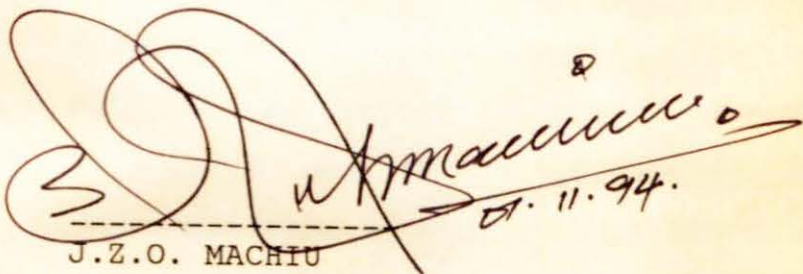
DECLARATION

I declare that:

"NNETE FELA" - NORTHERN SOTHO DETECTIVE STORY -

A CRITICAL EVALUATION

is my own work, that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this mini-dissertation was not previously submitted by me for a degree at another university.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke. The signature is written over a dashed line that separates it from the printed name below. To the right of the signature, the date "11.11.94." is written in a similar cursive style.

J.Z.O. MACHIU



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Le ka moso, mong wa me."

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Le ge 'Mmamarama' a e lere ka 'keledi-e-tala',
Merwalela e dule kgakala le ngena.
Ga go molato, go siame hela 'klara' hela!

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Ba re go balago re a e dibetša tema.
Rebetiele ka dingwalo tša bohlae
Gola, kaka Tlou, tšhukudu o e
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Tlou 'a legola la thaba.
Thaba 'a Modimolle 'a badimo
Badimo ba tswalellanago le tlou.
E a dumago ke e a sa rego: Šatee!"

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Mokone 'a ntšhidikgolo.
O letše melodimebose Tlhantlhagana,
O ekiše dinonyana tša Matlala,
Matlala 'a thaba ya badimodimo.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study is to make a critical evaluation of M.A. Kekana's Nnete fela applying the basic elements of a detective novel. Use will be made of the views of different scholars and authorities on the detective novel.

Northern Sotho has very few books that can be said to be true detective novels. Attempts in this regard were made by, amongst others, D.N. Moloto with his work Tshipu e rile ke lebelo (1962), H.N.D. Bopape with his novel Lenong la gauta (1982) and V.M. Moloto with the book Letlapa la bophelo (1983).

We also have very few works in Northern Sotho evaluating and criticising the detective novel, hence this humble attempt. The traditional approach will be used by which the features of a detective novel will be applied to the chosen text.

The study will comprise seven chapters. Chapter one will serve as introduction giving the aims, objectives and scope of the study as well as the definitions of a detective story and its nature.

The second chapter dealing with the line of action in Nnete fela will focus on a brief synopsis of the text of the novel under

review.

The third chapter looks at the concept theme. - Here the focus will be on the theme in a detective story; the theme in Nnete fela; the committed crimes and their detection as well as the detective's pattern of inquiry.

In the fourth chapter the concept of plot will receive attention and the concentration will be on the exposition, motorial moment, complication, climax and denouncement.

Chapter five will deal with the milieu which includes life in the city (urban), a township (urban) and Majaneng near Hammanskraal which is typically rural.

The sixth chapter will look at characterisation - the characters and their different roles in the novel. Here focus will fall on the victim, the murderers, the suspects, the detective and the police.

In the last chapter I wish to assess whether Kekana has made good use of all the tools of a detective novel at his disposal in Nnete fela or whether he has failed in producing a detective novel of any significance. Some concluding remarks will wrap up this chapter.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.

The aim and purpose of this study is to make a critical evaluation of M.A. Kenana's Nnete fela applying the basic elements of a detective novel. Use will be made of the views of different authorities (scholars) on the detective novel.

Northern Sotho has very few books that can be said to be true detective novels. Attempts in this regard were made by amongst others, the following:

- Moloto, D.M., Tšhipo e rile ke lebelo. (1962)
- Bopape, H.M.D., Lenong la gauta. (1982)
- Moloto, V.M., Letlapa la bophelo. (1983)
- Maphoto, A.N., Leabela le a fetiša. (1983)

We also have very few literary works in Northern Sotho evaluating the detective novel, hence this humble attempt. The traditional approach will be used by which the features of a detective novel will be applied to the chosen text, viz. Nnete fela.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY.

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The sixth chapter will look at the characters and their different roles in the novel. Focus will fall on the victim, the murderer, the suspects, the detective (sleuth) and the police.

In the seventh (last) chapter we wish to assess whether Kekana has made good use of all the tools of a detective story at his disposal in Nnete fela or whether he has failed in producing a detective novel of any significance. Some concluding remarks will wrap up this chapter.

1.3 DEFINITIONS OF THE DETECTIVE STORY.

There are many definitions of a detective story postulated by different scholars. Some of these definitions are not very direct and appropriate in the postulation of the detective novel but are merely guides to assist us in understanding the detective novel better.

The theme of a detective novel centres around the crime committed - usually murder - the intelligence and wit of the criminal(s) to evade arrest and the cunning manner in which the criminal outwits the detective because of his fast thinking and action although at the end he ends up arrested and brought before the law for his deeds. Allen and Chacko (1974: 353) identify with this statement by asserting:-

" It will be noticed that, on the whole, the tendency in early crime-literature is to admire the cunning and astuteness of the criminal. This must be so while the law is arbitrary, oppressive and

brutally administrated."

Murch (1968: 19) in describing the criminal in a detective story regards him to be:

" --- presented as romantic, amusing and 'sharp', often to be admired for his bravado and effrontery, his quick witted avoidance of capture, and skill in escaping the punishment he richly deserves."

But in the end this astute and shrewd criminal must be arrested, brought before the law to answer for his deeds and be given the punishment he very richly and certainly deserves. To this end Haycraft (1942: 252) says:

" --- the person who gains by the death of another is usually quite readily discoverable."

Murch further maintains that in a detective novel the primary interest lies in the methodical discovery, by rational means, of the exact circumstances of a mysterious event or series of events. What she regards as being most important in a detective novel, is the detection. That is why she (1968: 19) asserts:

" But when there is an appeal to the readers emotions, instead of solely to his intellectual faculties, he is led to feel indignation or horror at the

crime, enjoyment of the hunt for evidence, and satisfaction when the guilty person is discovered. It is an important point that the detective story, in direct contrast to the crime story, recognize is the activities of the criminal as reprehensible and not to be tolerated, much less regarded with amusement and admiration."

On the contrary, Erik Routley regards the solution to the crime as being the most important aspect in a detective novel. He defines a detective novel as a story that involves crime, a police force, a detective who may not be a member of the force and a solution.

In a story where there is no detective, the detection is done by the society, in that a little careless mistake by the criminal would cause society to suspect him and later discover that he has indeed committed a crime and he would thus be punished one way or the other by fate, society or law. This will then augur well with Erik Routley's assertion in that the most important aspect of his definition is that there must ultimately be a solution to the mysterious event. On the contrary John Carter maintains that a detective story must centre around the detection and must have a qualified detective, whether professional; or amateur.

In a story where there is a detective, in most cases the criminal has more intelligence, shrewdness and agility than the detective, he is faster in movement, in rational thinking and in evading suspicion and arrest, although in the end he has to be arrested for his deeds, because in the end the detective must emerge as the hero of above normal aptitude. Symons (1972: 173-174) has this to say about the detective:

" May be professional or amateur, and if amateur may run a detective agency or inquiry agency, or get involved by chance in criminal cases. Always at the centre of story's action, most often the hero, and generally a keen observer who notices things missed by others."

Stewart (1980: 124) also alludes to the fact that an author may decide to employ the services of an amateur detective to be at the centre of the story's action, a keen observer and ultimately a hero thus:

" --- a story in which an amateur is deliberately set by the author to score off the police ----."

Haycraft (1942: 229) also adds his voice to the above in saying:

" In any detective story worth the name, at once the most important

name, at once the most important
and most difficult integer is the sleuth."

A true detective, Stewart (1980: 157) maintains, must be unknown to the public and tight-lipped about his activities until, and only until he has brought the culprit(s) to book, with the solution of the crime. Thus Stewart gives this answer from a 'dismayed detective' who was pursued by an assortment of sensation - seekers (ie. civilians, reporters editors etc.) who chanted to him to explain what he was doing in the investigation of a crime:

" --- how can I my objective gain
If I my methods explain?
It certainly would not be wise
To tell my plans, - drop my disguise."

The above answer was confirmed by the detective's Commissioner, Sir Charles Warren in Stewart (1980: 137) who explained:

" Do you think the detective's so green
As to let you know all that he's traced?
Surely goodness alone knows what next
you'll expect!
You forget a detective is meant to detect."

1.4 THE NATURE OF A DETECTIVE STORY.

Puzzle stories, mystery stories, crime stories and stories of deduction and analysis have existed since the earliest times - and the detective story is closely related to them all. Yet the detective story itself is purely a development of the modern age. Chronologically it could not have been otherwise.

Early civilization did not have any police force at all in the modern sense of the word. The suppression of crime work left to the military ably assisted by private guards who Haycraft (1942: 5) says:

" --- relied on bludgeons rather than brains
for the meager results they achieved"

With the development of modern civilization these crude methods had to give way to a more methodical apprehension of offenders in order to adequately control and curb crime. To this end Haycraft (1942: 5) says:

" So torture slowly gave way to proof,
ordeal to evidence, the rack and the
thumb-screw to the trained investigator -
And once the investigator had fully
arrived, the detective story followed,
as a matter of course."

It is very clear that the detective novel is more refined as compared to the other types of novels. It unleashes the reader's interest and curiosity, it is fascinating and magnetic, it activates our rational thinking and enhances our power of forming conclusions and it also takes our minds on a long, exciting and spine-chilling excursion accompanying the hero, the detective, until he solves the mysterious event with his skills, intelligence, bravado and rational thinking. This is also postulated by Winks (1980: 5) where he says:

" --- in a detective fiction the divine tension between the exact and unknown produces the central thrust of the story. Since death is a central puzzle to all major and minor writers, the detective story is seen to be sensational because it focuses on the cause and methods of death rather than on the fact of death itself."

It is commonly known that there is natural and accidental death, yet the detective novel postulates that death is for a particular cause or emanates from a cause which may, during detection, be rationally exposed. That is the reason why death, in a moral story and in real life is the end whereas in a detective story death is only a means to an end, which is - detection. This mysterious event, death, has its facts in a detective novel

concealed from the reader promoting a suspense for as long as the culprit is not yet brought to book. Groenewald (1977: 19), in special reference to the Northern Sotho detective novel, endorses this view thus:

" The code story in Northern Sotho can be divided into the moral story and the detective story. The latter includes for the time being such examples as thrillers, suspense stories, etc. The detective story differs in two ways from the moral story:

(a) Some important facts are kept away from the reader by some or other means. (In the moral story the plot is being expanded at the end to obscure the final solution.)

(b) Suspense is being kept as long as the criminal has not been identified. (In the moral story the criminal is a known factor.)

Sometimes death in a detective story may appear to be accidental, suicidal or natural and therefore would not warrant any public interest. But it is equally true that such death may later be

discovered to have been cold-blood murder of the victim and this would then call for public interest and inquiry thus the services of a detective solicited. It is at this point in the story that emotions run high and many a character come into play as suspects, witnesses, tipsters, lovers, etc. These characters have a direct bearing on the plot structure and may have a negative effect on the detective's work as well as on the credibility of the detective novel. The interest of the readers and society in the murder is espoused by Auden in Winks (1980: 17) who says:

" Murder is unique in that it abolishes the party it injures, so that society has to take the place of the victim and on his behalf demand atonement or grant forgiveness; it is the one crime in which society has a direct interest."

However the 'direct interest' of society in the murder as well as the emotional high charge in which the society finds itself should not in any way divert the attention of the detective in the execution of his duty. The detective should remain balanced and neutral at all times. He should execute only his professional duties and skilfully follow the scientific clues necessary for his work. He should be emotionally detached from the case he is detecting and be as objective as possible. Groenewald (1977: 19) also supports this view thus:

" Objektiviteit beteken hier afstand, afsydigheid; m.a.w., dat die skrywer se hantering van sake sy persoonlike onbetrokkenheid daarby weerspieël."

Groenwald (1977:19) goes on to emphasize this objectivity of the author (detective) in the murder by saying:

" Menslikheid, deernis, ja, enige vorm van meegevoel kom nie ter sprake nie. Die skrywer kan hom enkel van die gebeure soos weergegee, distansieer as hy sekerheid het dat die leser geen bykommende toeligting of leiding nodig het om hom in staat te stel om te begryp wat daarin aangaan nie."

With the author having distanced himself without pity and empathy he can thus be in the best possible position to highlight the detective's intellectual prowess in procuring and analysing the clues and skills, dexterity and methodology he uses to unravel this mysterious event to the satisfaction of all concerned. With the author's feelings and emotions sidelined, the reader is thus given ample room to suspect any of the many characters involved at the initial stage of the novel including the very detective who will be cleared at a very late stage and the victim who is cleared in the early stage of the novel.

A detective novel is often punctuated by numerous love events which detract the reader from the crime and its detection trend by holding the reader's attention while the detective relaxes in his pursuit of the criminal. These incidents which include sport and recreation should not be allowed to disturb the flow of events in as far as crime and its detection is concerned. This view is also endorsed by Murch (1968: 12) saying:

" Humour and love-making almost invariably play an important part of the crime story, providing the only happy, human side-light upon the rogues career and securing the reader's interest."

The above episodes should not take much of the novel because laughter and love-making do not readily mix with analytical reasoning and should thus actually have no real place in a detective novel. Should these incidents take much of the detective novel then it turns to be a love-story, as Sherlock Holmes once remarked to Dr. Watson in Murch (1968: 12) thus:

" Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science, and it should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner. To tinge it with romanticism produces much the same effect as if you worked in a love-story or an elopement

structure of a detective novel thus:

" There is one respect, at least, in which the detective-story has an advantage over every other kind of novel. It possesses an Aristotelian perfection of beginning, middle and end. A definite and single problem is set, worked out, and solved; its conclusion is not arbitrarily conditioned by marriage or death. It has a rounded (though limited) perfection of a triolet."

The above structure enables the reader to logically follow the plot of a detective story because at first he expects to see a crime, (murder) committed. The reader will then accompany the detective through a series of pushes and pulls in the detection of the murder. In the end the reader awaits the unravelling of the mystery, the judgement, the revelation of the criminal's identity and his motives for committing this horrific murder. The central part of the plot, which is characterised by many moves and countermoves concentrates solely on the investigation of the crime. This is the part that arouses the interest of the reader most. Endorsing this view, Mampuru (1986: 52) asserts:

" Of all sorts of crimes, murder is the one which arouses a lot of interest in the reader."

Winks (1980: 16) postulates the idea that only the murderer knows the truth which he conceals. The detective is a total stranger who is fair and not involved in any crime but has a very sound reasoning and accurate deductions which will finally lead to the unravelling of the mystery. Murch (1968: 14) also attests to this when he says:

" The detective story seeks to leave
nothing unexplained: ----- "

The above plot structure, particularly the middle portion that grips the attention of the reader must carry the suspense like a golden thread throughout the novel up to the end. It is only at the end where the solution of the mystery is procured through the detectives sound reasoning, careful calculation and observation, swift and agile actions and accurate deductions.

Willard Huntingdon Wright in Palmer (1978: 93) asserts that the basis of a detective novel is the rational solution of a puzzle. He strongly believes that:

" The detective story is not really
fiction, it is a complicated and
extended puzzle cast in fictional
form."

Howard Haycraft in Palmer (1978: 93) has formalised the above notion into a set of six rules, and says in a detective fiction:

- " (i) all the clues should be put before the reader;
- (ii) no evidence should be made known to the reader but not to the detective;
- (iii) there should be no false clues;
- (iv) coincidence should not play a role;
- (v) 'all determinative action shall proceed directly and causatively from the central theme of crime-and-pursuit;' and
- (vi) no strenuous factors (such as stupidity or 'forgetting') shall be allowed to divert or prolong the plot in any essential manner."

Haycraft (1942; 226) also comments on the 'readability' commandment of the detective story which does not only mean the ordinary literacy competence, but that the detective novel must avoid becoming a static and immobile puzzle on the one hand, and that:

" --- it must forswear the meretricious aid of the hokum, on the other."

All the above rules postulated by Haycraft, like a holier

decalogue may however be condensed into two main requirements, viz:

- (i) The detective story must play fair.
- (ii) The detective story must be readable.

Haycraft's rules for a detective fiction are encompassed in the "Ten Commandments or Decalogue of a detective fiction" postulated by Ronald Knox in Winks (1980: 200-202) in which he enumerates principles which the detective story writer should take cognisance of if he wants to produce work of acceptable standard. He says a good detective story must:

"(i) mention the criminal in the early part of the story, but not to allow the reader to follow his thought until his real identity is revealed at the end of the book. - The author should at all costs avoid bringing into the picture a strange character from nowhere. This spoils what could otherwise have been a good story.

(ii) rule out all supernatural or preternatural solutions or agencies. - This view is endorsed by Sherlock Holmes in Murch (1968: 14) when he retorted:

" This Agency stands flat-footed upon the ground, and there it must remain. The world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply."

- (iii) not allow the inclusion of a secret room or passage. - This may be, and may be allowed only if the scenery and action allows and if the right devices as expected are at hand, otherwise these are fully discouraged.
- (iv) not use or permit undiscovered poison because this will need a thorough and long explanation at the end of the story. - Some authors use crime that emanates from poison or other appliances. These require long-winding and detailed scientific explanations which are cumbersome and boring. These should be avoided at all costs as they spoil the credibility of an otherwise good detective story.
- (v) use ordinary citizens of society, where the supermen are only used in stories like folklore and myths. - A detective story must deal with people as ordinary members of a community.

The use of a superman makes the detective novel reads like a fable, a myth or a folktale.

Knox in Winks (1980: 201) endorses this view thus:

" No Chinaman must figure in the story."

(vi) have the detective to investigate the crime and showing us clues which do not come by accident or through help from unexpected quarters. - The duty of a detective is to detect the crime by making use of all available clues that he may procure. He should be accountable for all the clues he uses and should not find them by accident or intuition.

Knox in Winks (1980: 201) says:

" No accident must help the detective nor must he ever have an unaccountable intuition which proves to be right."

(vii) have a good and honest detective whose duty is to solve crime and not to commit it. - It is unacceptable that a detective should during, the course of his duty, also commit a crime because this could result in two detective novels in one as another

detective will have to be engaged to investigate his colleague's crime who will in turn be investigating a crime as well.

- (viii) lay all clues to the reader so that he can be able to examine them. - All clues procured by a detective in the course of his duty must be fully exposed to the reader so that he can examine them and convince himself. This will grip the reader's attention and keep it.
- (ix) not have the detective's friend, the Watson who conceals any thoughts which pass through his mind. - Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in all his detective stories about the brilliant Sherlock Holmes will always make use of the stupid Dr. Watson as a character. It is this Dr. Watson who accompanies the reader in the course of detection because he sees but does not observe and consequently he needs every clue explained to him by the brilliant Sherlock Holmes. Knox in Winks (1980: 202) has this to say about Dr. Watson:

" --- his intelligence must be slightly, but very slightly, below that of the average reader."

Groenewald (1977; 22) also alludes to this element when he says:

" Waar die moraalstorieverteller deur 'n neweintrige 'n wending aan die gang van die gebeure verleen, hou die skrywer van die speurverhaal sekere essensiële besonderhede onopsigtig van sy leser terug. Conon Doyle, Agatha Christie, e.a. doen dit deur die skepping van die Watson figuur waarmee die leser se aandag afgelei word."

(x) not to have twin brothers, and doubles unless we have been duly prepared for them. These will confuse the reader if used. - The use of twins is most likely to create misleading clues. It is recommended that the use of twin brothers be avoided at all costs in the development of the plot structure of a detective novel.

Auden in Winks (1980: 17) also postulates five elements of a

detective story. These elements are enumerated as follows:

- (i) the milieu,
- (ii) the victim,
- (iii) the murderer,
- (iv) the suspects and
- (v) the detective(s).

Having looked at the rules, commandments and elements of a detective story postulated by Haycraft, Auden and Knox we are now better equipped with the necessary skills, devices and tools to understand, examine and evaluate a detective story better. Most literary scholars eg. Winks, Haycraft, Forster, etc. stand to believe that the first person narrator is the best viewpoint to be adopted in a detective story. The narrator should preferably be a detective. A detective novel must preferably have one principal detective whom the reader will accompany in the course of his detection. The reader will also associate and identify quite easily with this detective. Should there be more than one detective in a story, the reader's association and identification may be hampered and weakened, thus reducing his interest in the story. Groenewald (1984 (2): 6) supports this view thus:

" Die verhaal moet 'n ek-vertelling word
 waarin die speurder as verteller optree,
 sodat die leser hom met niemand anders

as die speurder kan identifiseer nie."

Combinations of viewpoints by the author is confusing to the reader and may also weaken the credibility of the story. On this score, Haycraft (1942: 234) says:

" --- nothing is more irritating than the story seen now through the detective's eyes, now through the observation of one or more of the characters, and again from the 'omnipotent' angle."

Once the author has arrived at a motivating theme for his detective story, the next and infinitely more difficult step is making the story fit the crime. For a novice faced with the problem the solution can best be found from Wright in Haycraft (1942: 229) who says:

" --- the detective tale must at all times possess 'unity of mood'."

All what Wright means is that characters, crime, style, dialogue, setting, the person of the sleuth, in fact all the structural minutiae, must be kept sternly and prayerfully 'in key'. All the above elements in a detective story must be integrated and closely knitted together to form a coherent whole.

Stripped of its decorations, ornaments and untrue details, the bottom line of a detective story is only one thing which according to Haycraft (1942: 258) is:

" --- a conflict of wits between criminal and sleuth, in which the detective is traditionally victorious by out-thinking his adversary."

The detective must be a man of action. He must move around and mix evidence with events and clues before him or otherwise you will end up with a bored and yawning reader. That is why Haycraft (1942: 255) says:

" Don't sit your detective at a table and parade the witnesses before him."

Finally the end of a criminal in a detective story is once again echoed by Auden in Winks (1980: 20) thus:

" --- as to the murderer's end, of the three alternatives - execution, suicide, and madness - the first is preferable, for if he commits suicide he refuses to repent, but if he does not repent society cannot forgive. Execution on the other hand, is the act of atonement by which a murderer is forgiven by society."

It is important that we should first give a brief outline of the action of the story before we venture into the critical analysis of the detective novel, Nnete fela.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LINE OF ACTION IN NNETE FELA.

Nnete fela is a detective novel that is based on the detection of a syndicate of crooks, robbers, defrauders and murderers living in the sprawling township of Atteridgeville, west of Pretoria. This syndicate is composed of, amongst others, Noko, Mokaba, Mabusha and his son, Kwena together with the syndicates' hired sharpshooters. - Champ, Thoba and Sello.

On the other hand Noko and Mabusha were very close friends who lived in affluence and did their things their own way (Kekana 1990:42):

"O a tseba mo go nago le selo se ba rego
ke kwano go tle go direge le se motho a
bego a ka se akanye gore se ka kgonega.
Ba ga Noko le Mabusha ke mohlala go seo.
Ka baka la segwera sa bona se segolo se
ba be ba dira dilo sebona mo yo a sa

tsebego mabaka a bona a tla rego ke
 bošāedi go ya ka mo yena a tsebago dilo
 di swanetšē go sepetšwa ka gona."

(You know, where there is this thing
 called co-operation certain issues that
 may appear difficult become possible.
 The Noko's and Mabusha's are a good
 example of that. Because of their very
 intimate friendship they used to do their
 things their own way so much that an outsider
 who is not informed about them may think that
 they are inconsiderate because they are not
 doing their things in accordance with the
 usual procedures.)

The main operation of this syndicate was to defraud major
 commercial banking institutions of vast sums of moneys which they
 used to establish big businesses for themselves and consequently
 live in affluence together with their families, driving in
 expensive luxury cars. All members of the public who suspect
 the activities of the syndicate, all those who interest
 themselves in their operations and not in their luxurious lives
 and all those who resign from the syndicate are regarded as
 enemies and are brutally murdered because they are traitors and
 thus a threat to the security and continuation of the syndicate.
 To commit these murders the syndicate procured the services of

hired sharp-shooters, Champ, Thoba (who was later fatally wounded by Bubbles) and Sello. This is revealed to the reader by Noko (Kekana 1990:190) when he turns against his daughter, Bubbles stating:

"Banna ba gešo, nna ke le tsebiša gore ke paletšwe ke morwediaka. Ke lekile go mo sokolla fela o gana go kwešiša. Ga se sengangele fela o fetogile moradia le lenaba la rena. Ke emiša diatla ka yena. Nka se kgone, le lena le ka se kgone. Ke re a a dirweng ka mokgwa wo o swanetšego bahlanogi. Tlhologelo ya ka ye kgolo ke go bona polokego ya sindikheiti. Ke be ke mo rata kudu yola morwediaka, fela ke rata polokego ya rena go fetiša. Ke neetše morwa pele ka lebaka lona le, mme le bjale ke le fa Bubbles ke re, dirang ka yena ka mo go swanetšego."

(Gentlemen, I am informing you that I am beaten by my daughter. I have tried to persuade her but she refuses to understand. Not only is she hard-headed but she has also turned out to be a deceiver and our enemy. I give her up. I cannot and you cannot. I say you should do to her in accordance

with what should be done with traitors. My main interest is to see to the security of the syndicate. I used to love that daughter of mine a great deal but the syndicate's security is above her. I have earlier on given up my son because of this very reason. Even now, I am giving you Bubbles saying that you should deal with her accordingly.)

Noko, a very affluent businessman in Atteridgeville, owns amongst others a cinema and a night-club and has two children who are a set of twins - Bubbles, a university graduate and a son, Karabo, a high school drop-out. Bubbles is fully responsible for her fathers' businesses while Karabo messed up his night-club business and has degenerated almost to the level of a beggar. It is Karabo, who in the period of idling at home writes a radio serial that portrays and exposes the activities of the members of the syndicate and sends the play to be edited and produced by Ariel Meso, the announcer at Radio Alpha. A Pandora can of worms is opened when Noko comes to discover this serial and immediately the syndicate starts searching for the script in earnest while endangering Ariel's life in the process. Bubbles is immediately assigned by the syndicate to use her beauty, personality and power of persuasion to procure the script from Ariel before more hell breaks loose. Meanwhile the syndicate handed over Karabo to the hired murderers, Champ and Thoba, to wipe him off the earth's surface.

In persuading Bubbles to help the syndicate in the tracking down of Ariel, Noko desperately tries to show his daughter the disadvantages of Ariel's revelation and the subsequent arrest of the syndicate members (Kekana 1990:115) thus:

"Go tla re tšea lebakanyana gore re hwetše Meso ge wena o sa thuše. Mme lebakeng leo re sa katanago le go mo hwetša bjale o ka ba a re thaketša a ya maphodiseng mme ra tsena kotsing. Gomme gopola, ge re ka swarwa le wena o ka se šale - o bile mothuši. Le ge nkabe o ka se swarwe, gopola ka dilo tše o tla di lobago ge nna nka swarwa. E tla ba tšohle tše bophelo bja gago bo ithekgilego ka tšona. Go thoma ka nna, go ya go legae, go fihla go thoto yohle ya kgwebo. Taba ya lenyalo la gago le yona e tla senyega. Gobane o a tseba, Kwena le rragwe ba gotee le nna molatong."

(It will take us a while before we can lay our hands on Meso without your help. And while we are still struggling to get him, he may overtake us and report to the police thus endangering us. And remember that if we are apprehended, you will not survive - you are an accomplice. Even if you are not

arrested think of all the things that you will lose if I be arrested. It will be everything in which your life is anchored. It will be myself, the house and all the business properties. The issue of your impending wedding will also be in jeopardy, because you know very well that Kwena and his father are together with me in this criminal case.)

Ariel Meso is a former high school teacher who is presently an announcer with Radio Alpha. Ariel became interested to know more about the activities of the syndicate after reading Karabo's script. He takes it upon himself to do investigations while trying to use Bubbles who is simultaneously trying to use him to secure Karabo's script. This war of nerves between the two results in a very strong love affair. This endangers their lives even more. Bubbles is regarded by the syndicate as a traitor. She has also jilted Kwena, Mabusha's son to whom she is engaged more so with the wedding only a few months away. Ariel is regarded as knowing too much of the inner activities of the syndicate. This propelled the syndicate to double their efforts in killing Ariel quickly while Ariel was in turn also activated to quickly wrap up his investigations to expose the syndicate and have it brought to book.

The syndicate members had their hired sharpshooters, Champ and Thoba sent to Pretoria (Atteridgeville) for the purpose of murdering Ariel. They have already performed a few missions for the syndicate and are thus trusted for their efficiency in such assignments (Kekana 1990:139):

"Maisa a bego a tlilo dira modiro wa polao e be e le ona ale a go utswa sengwalwa le go tšea Karabo, Champ le Thoba. Maisa a basindikheiti go tšwa Gauteng ba ba rometšego go tlo dira ka mokgwe wona woo ba dirago, ba hirilwe ga maloko a sindikheiti. E be e le mafahla bosenying, ba se ne letswalo goba letšhogo goba lenya. Ka moaparo e be e le mapantsola ka dipelo magomotš'a."

(The two chaps who had come to commit the murder were the same chaps who stole the script and removed Karabo from home - Champ and Thoba. These chaps were hired by the members of the syndicate in Johannesburg to come and carry out this duty for them. They were equals in crime, without conscience,

fearless and daring. In dress they were 'pantsolas' and in their hearts they were 'I - don't - cares'.)

Bubbles Noko is a very pretty lass, daughter to Noko the tycoon and twin-sister to Karabo. She is a graduate, presumably with a B. Com.degree. She has a very strong personality that contributes largely to her achievements in business. She is quite competitive in her lifestyle and has a very strong power of persuasion. She has only one bosom friend, Pula, a widower who owns a travelling agency. Pula's personality is the same as Bubbles' that is why they are close friends. While Bubbles is assigned by the syndicate to monitor the movements of Ariel and to lure him to a 'safe' spot where he could be murdered, she strongly falls in love with him. The result is that she lures Ariel's prospective murderers to some house in Mokwele Street, Atteridgeville where in a wild free-for-all shoot-out, one Thoba is fatally wounded by Bubbles while his colleague, Champ is injured but manages to scuttle into Mabusha's car and made a get-away. This incident set the police on Ariel and Bubbles' trail and infuriated the syndicate even more. Bubbles and Ariel ran away and found temporary sanctuary in Pula's second house in the village of Majaneng near Hammanskraal (Kekana 1990:154):

"Bošegong bjo Bubbles le Ariel ba ile ba ikhwetša ba le gona Majaneng."

(This evening Bubbles and Ariel found

themselves there in Majaneng.)

Kwena is Mabusha's son. He has his own businesses and has just recently been accepted as a member of the syndicate. Kwena is engaged to Bubbles Noko and their wedding is to take place in a few months' time. Kwena and Bubbles are close friends to Pula and are always seen together at Pula's regular parties. While Kwena has allowed Bubbles to get closer to Ariel Meso for the sole purpose of luring him to his death-trap, she falls in love with him, shoots and kills Thoba and finally elopes with Ariel. This evokes anger and frustration in Kwena who goes all out hunting Ariel on his own over and above the efforts of the syndicate to follow and murder him. While on this mission Kwena is killed by a ricochet bullet from his own pistol while fighting with Ariel's hired killers. The death of Kwena bedevils relations between the syndicate and Noko's family and between Mabusha and Noko because this unfortunate incident which threatens the security of the syndicate is blamed squarely on Bubbles.

Pula is also of the opinion that Ariel and Bubbles have contributed greatly to the death of Kwena or they are actually directly involved in this murder. Hence Pula (Kekana 1990:214) blames Kwena's death on their romance:

"Pula o ile a tšhoga go kwa ka lehu leo la Kwena. O be a bile a belaela gore o bolailwe mabapi le taba ye ya Ariel le Bubbles, gomme ba babedi ba ba swanetše go ba ba tseba ka polao ya gagwe. Mogopolo wa gagwe o be o tiile tabeng ya go ba naganela gore ba kgathile tema polaong ya Kwena."

(Pula got a shock of her life on hearing about Kwena's death. She even suspected that his murder is related to the romance of Ariel and Bubbles and that the two should be held accountable for his death. In her mind she strongly believed that they were closely connected to and had played a part in Kwena's murder.)

Karabo is Noko's son and a twin-brother to Bubbles. He is a high-school drop-out and has since been given a night-club to manage in Johannesburg. He became careless in the administration of the business, lived a care-free life of drinking and jollification until he ran bankrupt. His father reprimanded him very strongly and disowned him. This greatly pleased Bubbles who then became their father's favourite child. It was during his time of worklessness that Karabo got a chance of writing about the activities of the syndicate that caused all the moves and

fee, to the murderers, Champ and Thoba to be killed. These murderers were in turn Nicodemasly given a bigger sum of money by Noko to spare his life. Noko later took him to his friend, Mabetlela for sanctuary. Noko gave this information to Bubbles shortly before he was murdered by Mabusha (Kekana 1990:262) thus:

"Ke nna ke mo ntšhitšego dinaleng tša lehu.
E rile mola Champ le Thoba ba swanetše go
mmolaya ka ya ka ba reka ka sephiri ka ba
nea tšhelete ya go feta le ye sindikheiti
e ba hirilego ka yona gore ba mo lese a
phela. Ka ya ka mo khutiša Bopedi."

(I rid him from the jaws of death. When
Champ and Thoba were supposed to kill him,
I secretly bribed them with more money than
the syndicate had hired them with to let him
live. I then took him to the Great North for
sanctuary.)

Champ and Thoba are professional assassins that are hired from Johannesburg to murder opponents, suspects, enemies and traitors of the syndicate. They are very good at their work but Bubbles surprised them by foiling their attempt at murdering Ariel that she ended up having shot and killed Thoba as well as injuring Champ. When Champ was hired again to murder Bubbles and Ariel in

Majaneng, he was now with another colleague, Sello. The two were seriously injured by the detectives in a wild shoot-out before they were arrested for their crimes (Kekana 1990:270):

"Metsotsong ye mebedi ye e latelago ke
ge Sello le Champ ba kgokagantšhitšwe
ba dutše ba ripitla ka mading a bona
ka tsela yeo."

(In the next two minutes Champ and Sello were handcuffed and lying there writhing in the pool of their own blood.)

Ditshego is one of the best detectives attached to the Atteridgeville Police Station. However good he could be in his work, Ditshego could not have been able to penetrate the activities of the syndicate, investigate them and have them arrested without the mammoth work done by Ariel as an amateur detective. It is his contribution that ultimately led to the arrest of all the members of the syndicate.

It was whilst hiding in Pula's house at Majaneng that Bubbles decided to tell Ariel the truth and only the truth about the activities of the syndicate. Ariel was then able to see the whole story in it's perspective and to love, to respect and to admire Bubbles as well as to empathise with her even more than

before. The hired assassins had also, in the mean time found Bubbles' sanctuary and were preparing to pounce on and annihilate them. The police in Atteridgeville were immediately contacted by Ariel and Bubbles, briefed in full about the syndicate, its membership and its activities. Detective Ditshego and his colleague rushed to Pula's home in Majaneng to waylay the assassins whilst protecting Ariel and Bubbles. Champ and Thoba fell into a trap (Kekana 1990:267) that was prepared by the detectives thus:

"Champ le Sello ga ba ka ba bona
sefatanaga sa boDitshego goba se
sefe pele ga ngwako woo, gobane di
be di tlošitšwe go tsena ka karatšheng."

(Champ and Sello did not see Ditshego's car or any other car in front of that house because they were removed from there and parked in the garage.)

On that fateful evening when the killers stormed into Pula's Majaneng house, they got a very unpleasant reception from Ditshego and his colleague. They were seriously wounded in the shoot-out before they were arrested, hand-cuffed and frog-marched to hospital under police guard.

Back in Atteridgeville Noko was shot dead by his one-time friend, Mabusha, for being a traitor. Mabusha was also avenging the

death of his son, Kwena, because it was very strongly believed and accepted that his death was caused by Bubbles - Noko's daughter. This scenario is exposed to the reader (Kekana 1990:264) thus:

"Mme Mabusha ka ntle le lentš^u le
 tikatiko bjale a mo thuntš^{ha} thwii
 mo pelong, gabedi. Mabusha a mmogela
 ge a ya fase. Ge a wele a sa laetš^e
 bophelo bofe a ya go yena. A fihla a
 mo emeletš^a, mme a lemoga gore o hwile,
 o hwile bjalo ka lefsika."

(And Mabusha, without a word or waste of time shot him straight in the heart, twice. Mabusha witnessed him going down. Whilst floored and showing no sign of life, he picked him up and confirmed that he was dead - stone-dead.)

All the syndicate members were immediately rounded up on this very unfortunate evening and brought under lock and key. Karabo was fetched from Mabetlela's hide-out in the Great North and reunited with his twin-sister - Bubbles (Kekana 1990:274):

"Bubbles o ile a mo lebelela ka lethabo,
 nke o bona motho yo a tš^ogo tsoga bahung.

Gomme o be a se sa na sekgopi sefe le yena."

(Bubbles looked at him with elation as if she was seeing someone who rose from the dead. And she no more harboured any malice towards him.)

Ariel and Bubbles are once more together in a very happy and contented mood with all their past problems in the process of fading like mist behind their backs. It was at this juncture that the two realised how they loved one another right from their first meeting at the Commissioner's office to date. They both realised that their lives have since changed because of the truth, for in the truth there is everlasting happiness. They proposed to get married soon because Bubbles had now found her footing in life hence it is said about her. (Kekana 1990:278)

"Ke fao nakong ye a ilego a gadima
Ariel ka lerato le ka se lekantšhwego,
lerato le fetošitšego bophelo bja gagwe
mo mamohla a bilego a kgona le go ela
hloko mantšu a kwago mminong. 'Ke
rena ba swanetšego ke go ba gotee'."

(That is why at this moment she turned to Ariel with immeasurable love, the

love that has changed her life to a
large extent from the song that says:
'We are obliged to be together'.)

CHAPTER THREE

3. THE CONCEPT THEME

Every author always has an experience that he wishes to share with his readers. This experience, which is embedded in the story is called the theme of the story. The theme is not the topic of the story and neither is it the incidental, philosophical thought expressed in the story. Pretorius and Swart (1987:4) define it thus:

"The theme is the interpretation of life as conveyed by the story as a whole."

Theme is the main or central element around which all events in the story should revolve. The centrality of the theme renders it the strongest binding force that keeps all the events of a story in place and in unity. The theme will thus uphold the cohesion of the story with all the events related to one another and the one event flowing into the other. Shipley (1979:333) has this to say about the theme:

"The subject of discourse; the underlying action or movement; or the general topic, of which the particular story is an illustration."

That theme as the underlying action or movement suggests that it is the foundation or basis on which the story is developed and should thus run like a golden thread throughout the story.

Grove (1982:12 endorses this very view thus:

"Die strekking van 'n werk; die sentrale of abstrakte idee wat bv. deur die romanverloop na vore gebring word."

Heese and Lawton (1979:97) are also of the same opinion because they have this to say about the theme:

"The theme is the central idea, the basic issue with which the novelist or playwright is concerned, and on which he comments through the medium of his story."

Theme can also be regarded as a motif because of the regularity of its appearance in a novel, which motif persuades the reader to

read on. Abrahams (1981:11) defines it thus:

"Theme is sometimes used interchangeably with motif, but the term is more usefully applied on an abstract claim which an imaginative work is designed to incorporate and make persuasive to the reader."

That all the elements of a story together with the events revolve around the theme because it is the pith of the story is fully endorsed by Meij and Snyman (1986:50) when they say:

"Tema is 'n goeie ontrafelingspunt want, soos reeds gesê, as 'n mens die tema verwoord kom jy eintlik by die kern van die verhaal uit. En as 'n mens die kern verstaan, verstaan jy nie net die verhaal nie, maar is jy al goed op die weg om die funksioneliteit van die onderskeie struktuurelemente in die verhaal te peil."

Finally, the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary explains theme as:

"The subject of a talk, a piece of writing or a person's thoughts."

3.1 THEME IN A DETECTIVE STORY/NOVEL.

After a very careful consideration of the definitions of a detective story postulated by different scholars we strongly acceded to the fact that a detective story focuses on the detection of a crime, usually murder and not on the committed crime itself. The criminal, who in the initial stages of the story seems too intelligent, astute and cunning ultimately has to be unmasked, exposed for what he really is, brought before the law and punished for his sins to society. This will leave our criminal defeated, and apprehended and the detective a hero and saviour. Haycraft (1942:234) alludes to this when he says:

" ----- murder has come to be the accepted theme of the detective novel, for reasons too numerous and obvious to require attention."

The same Haycraft (1942:253) adds on the above by saying:

" --- must not lead the would be writer to forget (as too often happens) that the crime in a detective story is only the means to an end, which is --- detection."

Winks (1980:5) is also of the same opinion because he endorses it thus:

" ----- the detective story is seen to be sensational because it focuses on the cause and methods of death rather than on the fact of death itself."

The above arguments from scholars of erudition are also espoused by Sayers in Winks (1980:77) with the remark:

"Though a detective story deals with the most desperate effects of rage, jealousy and revenge, it rarely touches the heights and depths of human passion. It presents us only with the fait accompli and looks upon death and mutilation with a dispassionate eye. It does not show us the inner workings of the murderers mind - it must not; for the identity of the murderer is hidden until the end of the book."

The author of a detective novel has pleasant or shocking experiences that he wants to convey to his readers so that they, each one of them as an individual, can find out where they stand in relation to what they have read about. The story should thus be an authentic representation of real human life that can be

used by the readers to mirror on their personal lives.

The author's imagination together with his lived experience will help him come up with an appropriate message or theme. This theme, it is argued, should have a direct link with what is happening in real life. In a detective novel, this theme should represent a very loud societal cry against crime in general and a strong revulsion against murder in particular.

All other events and incidents in the story should revolve around the theme and contribute to bring it out clearly and prominently to the reader. This will persuade him to read on.

3.2 THEME IN NNETE FELA.

Ariel Meso's interest in the activities of the syndicate led him to become an amateur detective. During the course of his detection of the members of the syndicate's activities he insisted it to Bubbles that he expects from her the truth and only the truth. (Nnete Fela). It was in persuance of this truth that the three murderers Champ, Thoba and Sello showed up and Ariel then found himself no more investigating a case of fraud only but ultimately cases of attempted murder as well as that of murder. It is in his untiring and unrelenting search for the truth in which the theme of the detective novel, Nnete fela is embedded.

Bubbles, whose beauty, femininity and personality were misused by the members of the syndicate for their personal advantage, ultimately came to know that man is driven by greed, jealousy, avarice and deceit. She also came to realize together with the readers that evil, crime and dishonesty do not pay dividends at all. At the end of the story Bubbles and the readers were very clear of the fact that:

"Nnete e bose, go na le khutšo go yona."

(The truth is sweet, there is peace in it.)

The above theme enlightens the reader that all those who were greedy and avaricious, those who live in deception and thrive on theft may live happily for some time but the law will ultimately catch up with them. Some will die miserably like Noko, Kwena and Thoba while others will end up committing suicide yet others will end up in prison for their crimes. But those who live a truthful life are always assured a peace of mind at all times as well as legal protection. It is against the above theme that Kekana would like to see where his readers stand in their lives as individuals because out of his imagination and life experiences he has created for them a mirror in which they may as individuals examine themselves.

All events in this detective story, amongst others the hiding of Karabo at Mabetlela's shop, the pursuit of Ariel by the hired assassins, the murder of Thoba in Mokwele Street, Atteridgeville, the death of Kwena during the struggle with Champ and Sello to mention just but a few, are all revolving around the theme of the story. It is this theme that keeps the unity of these events and acts as a binding force to have them related to one another, the one flowing into the other and kept as a coherent whole.

3.3 THE CRIMES.

From the aforementioned discussions, arguments and definitions it has become an established fact that murder is the main reason for a detective story to be written. However this does not necessarily mean that other crimes that are not murder need not be detected. All crimes of whatever nature warrant detection and in-depth detection that will finally bring the criminal to book to be punished for his unbecoming behaviour.

There are a number of crimes that are being detected in Nnete fela. The very first is the fraudulent activities of the members of the syndicate who were milking the banks huge sums of money to enrich themselves in the process. These members' activities are portrayed by Kekana (1990:57-58) thus:

"Maloko a'sindikheiti' a be a bula diakhaonte

tše mmalwa makaleng a dipanka ka fase ga maina a fapafapanego. Gomme a fana ka ditšheke tša tšhelete ye ba se nago nayo ka pankeng fela ka bofora ba kgona go e ntšha. Noko le Mabusha e be e no ba maloko fela, dikomangkanna tša 'sindikheiti' e be e le ba bangwe ba e bilego ba sa dule mono Tshwane ka moka."

(Members of the syndicate were opening a number of accounts at different banks under different names. They then signed cheques for one another for huge sums of monies which they did not have in the said banks but were able to withdraw the monies. Noko and Mabusha were mere members while the think-tanks of the syndicate did not even all stay in Pretoria.

Serious criminal events were to overtake Ariel's investigation in quick succession because while he was still investigating the activities of the syndicate members, Karabo, who revealed their activities in his radio drama script was kidnapped by the syndicate's hired assassins and whisked to some unknown destination - there to be murdered. Kekana (1990:79) says:

" ---- gobane Karabo mantšiboa ona a o
 tšerwe ka gae go šupiwa ka sethunya,
 a tloga ka sefatanaga le batšhabiši
 ba babedi."

(---- for on this very evening Karabo was
 taken from home at gunpoint accompanied by
 two men in a car.)

It was at this juncture of Ariel's investigation that the
 syndicate decided to annihilate him because they thought that he
 knew too much of their activities and would soon expose them
 for what they are. For this the syndicate wanted to use Bubbles
 to lure Ariel to his death trap, but she obstinately refused
 (Kekana 1990:110) thus:

"Ke re nka se ke, yang le mmolayeng ka bolena!
 Ga ke kgathale ka yena. Fela e sego le mo
 hwetše ka nna ---- "

(I say I won't. Go and kill him on your own
 accord, but you should not get him through
 me ----)

After a lot of persuasion by the members of the syndicate, Kwena
 in particular, Bubbles ultimately promised to lure Ariel as
 scheduled. But Bubbles had her own secret plans up her sleeve.

Instead she lured the very assassins into their own death trap killing Thoba instantly and seriously injuring his colleague, Champ. This is how Thoba was killed (Kekana 1990: 148):

"Ya bobedi kolo ya mo hwetša mafahleng,
mme ka nako yeo ke ge a ya fase le yena."

(The second bullet struck him on the chest,
but by that time he was already collapsing
too.)

And about how Champ got himself seriously injured, Kekana (1990:148) says:

"Gomme a (Bubbles) ba nakong go gahlana
le Champ. Mme kolo ya hwetša monna yoo
legetleng a ya fase."

(And she (Bubbles) was in time to come face
to face with Champ. The bullet struck this
man on the shoulder and he went down.)

When Kwena made the last desperate attempt to murder Ariel by himself, he got into a tussle with Champ and Sello during which he was killed by a ricochet bullet from his own gun. (Kekana

1990:211):

"Champ le Sello ba ile ba kwa a lepelela
ka diatleng tša bona gatee fela ge kolo
e seno kwala."

(Champ and Sello felt him crumbling lamely
in their arms immediately after the
bullet sound.)

After Noko was realised and exposed to be a traitor of the
syndicate he was bound to be killed and it was his best friend
Mabusha who spied on him who had the unpleasant task of shooting
him at a very close range. Kekana (1990: 264) witnesses it thus:

"Mme Mabusha ka ntle le lentš^u le
tikatiko bjale a mo thuntš^{ha} thwii
mo pelong."

(And Mabusha, without a word or waste of
time shot him straight in the heart.)

The attempted murder of Ariel and Bubbles which was to be
executed by Champ and Sello but was unfortunately foiled by the
intervention of Ditshego and his colleague was very well planned
and almost reached its logical end (Kekana 1990:266) thus:

"Re ba bolaya gotee, o tseba kganyogo

ya boMokaba."

(We kill them both at once, you know the wishes of Mokaba and company.)

It is interesting to note that the intervention of the detectives, Ditshego and his colleague caused, a miscarriage of the planned cold-blooded murder of Ariel and Bubbles by the assassins, Champ and Sello. Instead they found themselves entangled in a trap of their own making, cornered, seriously injured and arrested. This is revealed (Kekana 1990:270) thus:

"Metsotsong ye mebedi ye e latelago ke ge Sello le Champ ba kgokagantšhitšwe ba dutše ba ripitla ka mading a bona ka tsela yeo."

(In the next two minutes Sello and Champ were handcuffed and lying there writhing in the pool of their own blood.)

3.4 THE DETECTION.

In a crime novel some events are scantily exposed while others are deliberately withheld and concealed. This is what makes the

reading of a detective story interesting, fascinating and gripping to arouse the reader's curiosity. The major interest of the reader lies in finding out the circumstances that led to the crime, usually murder, when the reader accompanies the detective in his analysis and examination of clues to arrive at the cause(s) of the crime, the solution and the apprehension of the culprit(s). There may be, as in the case of the novel Nnete fela a series of crimes committed by the culprits when trying to mislead the detective and evade arrest with cunning dexterity and fast thinking but in the end justice must prevail with the culprit brought to book and the detective emerging as a hero.

The detective is continuously engaged in interviews with members of the public, studying, examining and analysing clues as well as following the past tracks of the culprit. This is what fascinates the readers most. Mampuru in SAJAL (1986:152) says:

"Of all sorts of crimes, murder is the one which arouses a lot of interest in the reader."

The above view is endorsed by Auden in Winks (1980:70) who elaborates on this by pointing out that:

"Murder is unique in that it abolishes the party it injures, so that society

has to take the place of the victim and on his behalf demand atonement or grant forgiveness, it is the one crime in which society has a direct interest."

Both the detective and the reader of a detective story do not know the truth in all that has happened. Only one character - the culprit knows the truth that he is trying to conceal from everybody, because its revelation may be dangerous and cause his apprehension. A detective, usually an amateur will, detect the crime, discover the truth and expose the truth that the criminal has always made a desperate attempt to hide. While engaged in this detection the detective usually takes along with him the curious readers as Allen and Chacko (1974:360) assert:

" ---- the detective then follows up quietly from clue to clue till the problem is solved, the reader accompanying the great man in his search and being allowed to try his own teeth on the material provided."

When we meet Ariel Meso for the first time we immediately realise that he is a strong and balanced man who is uncompromising in his principles, although he still has human attributes like us. That is the reason why we immediately identify with him, because all

we need of our detective is as Haycraft (1942:232) aptly puts it:

"We readers want to know our heros' names, first, last, and middle initial if any; we want to know where they live, what they wear and smoke, even what they eat for breakfast."

We immediately come to realize that Ariel in manners, the language he uses, his appearance, his fast thinking and manner of deductions is a good man though still human. Commenting on his manner of dressing, Kekana (1990:4-5) says:

"Moaparo wa gagwe o be o laetša gore ke (Ariel) motho yo a tshwenyegago kudu ka gore o lebega bjang."

(His dressing indicated that he (Ariel) was always concerned about his appearance.)

Ariel was working as a radio announcer and not as a detective. This he also admits when he (Kekana 1990:53) personally says:

" ---- gobane ga a bewa moo go ba monyakišiša ka maphelo a lego ka morago ga bao a kopanag nabo fao, goba dimelo tša bona. Ga se yena

letseka."

(---- because he was not placed there to investigate the lives of those he meets there nor their characters. He is not a detective.)

In spite of the above assertion, Ariel was later to find himself an amateur detective about whom Haycraft (1942:231) says:

"The amateur, on the other hand, is inherently livelier and offers much wider latitude to the author ---- "

While in the process of investigation Ariel falls in love with Bubbles, the daughter to one of the criminals - Noko. This is in conflict with the opinion of some scholars of detective stories who strongly believe that love-making and humour do not mix well with analytical reasoning and should thus have no real place in a detective story. This view is endorsed by Sherlock Holme's remark to Dr. Watson in Murch (1968:12) saying:

"Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science, and it should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner. To tinge it with romanticism produces much the same

effect as if you worked in a love-story or an elopement into the fifth proposition of Euclid."

Yet other scholars are of the opinion that love-making and laughter are necessary in a detective story if they do not interfere or break the smooth flowing of the story, if they provide a relief scene, if they contribute to the development of the theme and the plot structure and if they do not disturb the cohesion of the story, because indeed they do provide the reader with the human side of our detective. Hence Murch (1968:12) says:

"Humour and love-making almost invariably play an important part of the crime story, providing the only happy, human side-light upon the rogue's career and securing the readers interest."

Kekana has skilfully and artistically worked into this novel a number of love-making scenes and quite a lot of humour without disturbing the flow of events as well as the cohesion of the story. This arouses the reader's interest in the story to accompany Ariel Meso in his investigations, interviews and examination of clues up to the apprehension of the criminals.

3.5 THE DETECTIVE'S PATTERN OF INQUIRY.

We have already pointed out that Ariel Meso is an announcer at Radio Alpha studios in Pretoria and not a qualified detective. In this novel Nnete fela he then appears as a private detective. The central mystery in this story is the fraudulent activities of the syndicate, which activities culminate in a number of murders and attempted murders. Ariel as an unprofessional detective does not have a well defined methodology of investigation that is why it (Kekana 1990:53) is said about him:

" ---- gobane ga a bewa moo go ba
 monyakišiši wa maphelo a lego ka
 morago ga bao a kopanago nabo fao,
 goba dimelo tša bona. Ga se yena
 letseka."

(---- because he was not put there to
 investigate the lives of those he meets
 there nor their characters. He is not a
 detective.)

But Ariel was later to find himself inadvertently engaged in the work of a private detective which he executed with resourcefulness, intelligence, skilfulness, objectivity, bravery and keen observation. That is why he was able to detect quickly

that there is some concealed 'truth' in the activities of the syndicate, after reading Karabo's script. (Kekana 1990:78):

"Ge a feditš^ée ka sona o ile a lemoga
gabotse se tshwenyago go sona mo
nnete se ka se swanelego go tšweletš^éwa."

(When he had finished reading it he realised that there was something fishy about it and that it should certainly not be exposed.)

Ariel was a clear and deep thinker always with a sober mind, that is why he was good at the execution of his job. It is said by Kekana (1990:91) about him:

"Ariel o be a sa tš^éee nnotagi, e bile
a sa kgoge."

(Ariel did not take liquor, neither did he smoke.)

Ariel was determined to pursue Bubbles in order to extricate the truth behind the allegations made in the script by Karabo. He was not prepared to compromise or deviate an inch from this noble course. Hence Kekana (1990:91) points out:

"Gomme o ikemišeditš^ée go fata go ya

fasefase nnete ya ditaba tše ka moka
tša sengwalwa, ge a tloga mo o tla be
a e hweditše."

(And he was determined to go right deep
to unearth the truth of all the allegations
in the script. When he leaves here he shall
have got it.)

In his determination to get the truth from Bubbles, Ariel
threatened her with the police.

"Ke ya maphodiseng. O a kwešiša? Ke nyaka
nnete."

(I am going to the police. Do you understand?
I want the truth.)

Bubbles got a shock of her life when Ariel disclosed to her that
he has read and knows the contents of Karabo's script
thoroughly. This gave him a clue that Karabo's mysterious
disappearance has a very strong connection with the activities of
the syndicate when he says to Bubbles (Kekana 1990:100):

"Ke tseba gabotse gore nonwane yela ya go
thelela le go gobala ga Karabo ke maaka.
Bjale mpotše, o kae yena Karabo?"

(I know very well that the fairytale about
 Karabo's slipping and injury is a lie.
 Now tell me, where is this very Karabo?)

It is interesting to note that each time Ariel thinks he is nearing a solution he finds himself reverting even deeper into the puzzle. This carries along with it a lot of suspense and increases the eagerness of the reader who is in accompaniment in order to identify with him in his pursuit for the solution. The syndicate then wanted to murder Ariel because they felt he knew too much of their activities and was thus a threat to their existence. In their planning they decided to use Bubbles who refuses thus (Kekana (1990:110):

"Ke re nka se ke, yang le mmolayeng ka
 bolena! Ga ke kgathale ka yena. Fela
 e sego le mo hwetse ka nna ---- "

(I say I won't. Go and kill him on your
 own accord, but you should not get him
 through me ----)

Bubbles, because of her love to Ariel, decided to save his life. To achieve success she had to pretend to be co-operating fully with the members of the syndicate in offering herself to lure Ariel to his already prepared death trap. This is captured in her conversation with her fiancè, Kwena (Kekana 1990:118) when

she accedes to their request thus:

"Ke tla le thuša. Ke tla le gokela yena mo
le tlogo mo hwetša la dira ka mo le nyakago
ka yena."

(I will help you. I will lure him for you
to a place where you can get him and do as
you please with him.)

Because of the sophisticated plan that was devised by Bubbles to save Ariel's life from certain death, she shot and killed one of them - Thoba - and seriously injured his companion, Champ. This incident drove Ariel even deeper into more serious problems with the syndicate. Ariel and Bubbles had no alternative but to run away and seek sanctuary in Pule's house at Majaneng near Hammanskraal to evade the police and the wrath of the syndicate. That is why Bubbles (Kekana 1990:151) says:

"Ke a tseba. Re swanetše go tšhaba, re khute."

(I know. We must run away and seek sanctuary.)

But up to this point in time Ariel does not trust Bubbles' sincerity. Even if they are safely tucked together in Pula's house in Majaneng, still Ariel does not altogether trust Bubbles. The role she played at the Mokwele Street shoot-out,

her answers to his manifold questions as well as her full co-operation are enough to convince him of her sincerity but some sixth sense still tells him that Bubbles cannot be fully trusted. This is asserted by Kekana (1990:164) thus:

"Se sengwe se be se mo seboš^ya gore le maaka
a magolo a gona lekgarebeng le. Mme ke seo
e bego e le tlhotlho go yena go se utolla."

(Something inwardly made him feel that deep down, this girl is actually harbouring big lies, which lies are a challenge to him which he is bound to unearth.)

Ariel now seemed more prepared than ever to double his effort at rounding off his investigations while the syndicate was also making desperate attempts at ending his life together with that of Bubbles who has since been declared an enemy of the syndicate. Kekana (1990:191) says this about this event:

"Mme ge ba šetš^ye Ariel morago ka nako
yeo ba tla kgona go hwetš^ya Bubbles."

(Yet when they are tracking down Ariel they will also be able to get Bubbles.)

The reader is greatly fascinated by the dramatic irony that

abounds in this story. Bubbles is now ultimately tamed and humbles herself before Ariel and apologetically says to him:

"Ariel, ke tlile go go botš^ha nnete
tš^hohle." (Kekana 1990:250)

(Ariel, I am going to tell you all the truth.)

The climax of the story is reached when Bubbles is unmasked and voluntarily revokes her alliance to his father and the syndicate to come in open support of Ariel by exposing his fathers' position in the syndicate and its true activities. In this revelation (Kekana 1990:251) Bubbles says:

" ---- tate ke leloko la mokgatlo wo wa
bofora le ge Karabo a sa mo swantš^ha
papading ya gagwe go etš^ha bo Mokaba."

(---- my father is a member of this
notorious syndicate even if Karabo did
not depict him like Mokaba and company.)

Ariel was amazed, shocked and stupefied at Bubbles' revelation. He had at last found the missing link of all the clues. Bubbles had finally told him the truth after a long time accompanied by a pack of lies but after a long persuasion and at times some coercion, she became a changed person more lovable than ever.

Note what Kekana (1990:251) says about Ariel's feelings:

"O be a rile o nyaka nnete. Bjale o be a e hweditše, mme e ile ya mo tšutlolla mafahleng. Maaka a Bubbles a bego a a logile magareng ga ditaba tše ka moka o be a hwetša tekano ya ona e šiiša ka bogolo mo go amogago mogopolo."

(He had said he wanted the truth and then he had found it and it shook his bossoms. The lies that Bubbles had so skilfully worked into these events were abominable as to make one mad. When he turned to look at Bubbles, he found her to be someone strange whom he is seeing for the first time.)

In the above pattern of Ariel's investigation, Kekana to break the tension, usually introduces love-making as relief scenes. These scenes are very artistically and beautifully pencilled into the story so as to be part of the plot structure and to support the theme. They do not in any event disturb the unity of the story as well as the smooth flowing of the detection process as exemplified (Kekana 1990:132) hereunder:

"Bubbles, Bubbles, ke a go rata."

A hebebetša ao ka go kukega
difahlego tša bona di sa kopane."

(Bubbles, . Bubbles, I love you. He whispered
this with emotion while their faces were
still glued to one another.)

CHAPTER FOUR

4. THE CONCEPT PLOT.

Events and actions of characters in a study are arranged in such a way as to contribute to the development of the theme. This arrangement may generally be regarded as the plot.

Heese and Lawton (1993:217) define plot as:

"---- as narrative of events linked by causality concerning a group of characters, which unfolds consecutively and coherently against a particular background at a specific time."

Cause and effect are therefore the cornerstones of plot. These are brought about by the interaction of the different characters amongst themselves. Each event in the story must have a cause and in turn must have an effect on other subsequent events, causing a chain of reactions. All these events must be united together to form a coherent whole and contribute, each one of them to the development of the theme.

Aristotle in Heese and Lawton (1993:117) has this to say about

the plot:

"---- the plot of a tragedy should have unity of action; it is an artistic whole in which all the parts are 'so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoint and dislocate the whole'."

Meijn and Snyman (1986:36) also endorse the above views thus:

"By die totstandkoming van die verhaal word die gebeurtenisse geselekteer en georden. Met ordering bedoel ons dat die gebeurtenisse in 'n bepaalde verhouding tot mekaar geplaas word. Hierdie komposisie van gebeurtenisse vorm die grondpatroon van die verhaalintrige."

Abrahams (1981:137) also gives a very simple definition of plot thus:

"The plot in a dramatic or narrative work is the structure of its actions, as these are ordered and rendered toward achieving particular emotional and artistic effects."

Forster in Heese and Lawton (1993:135) also echoes the same

sentiments when he states:

" ---- a narrative of events arranged in their time sequences, also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality."

The different events in a story must have cohesion and unity so as to contribute to the plot structure. This plot structure encompasses every means which an author uses to arrange and unify his materials. Thus the plot structure must in effect include the analysis of setting, point of view and characterisation. The plot structure is the most important element of a story - particularly a detective story. Thus Aristotle as quoted by Sayers in Winks (1980:12) says:

"The first essential, the life and soul, so to speak, of a detective story is the plot, and the characters come second."

Shipley (1979:240) also adds his voice to the above by defining it thus:

"A plot is that framework of incidents, however simple or complex, upon which the narrative or drama is constructed; the events of the depicted struggle, as organised into an artistic unit."

We therefore conclude from Shipley's definition that the plot is not the text, neither is it the art-work but it is the deduction the student of literature can make from the text; merely a representation by order which the Russian Formalist called 'fabula'. It is important therefore to note that only logic is expected of a literary text with no room for the unaccountable. Every event should flow smoothly into the other.

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Conflict is at the centre of the plot structure. This conflict must be brought about by the actions of the characters. It is this action which will bring about suspense and tension, with all the events forming an organic and coherent whole. That action is responsible for the causation of conflict, it is therefore safe to assume that there will be no detective story without action and without characters. This conflict emanates from the contest between a protagonistic character or a group of characters and the antagonistic character or group of characters. Heese and Lawton (1993:116) have this to say about conflict:

"The plot of a tragedy is usually concerned with conflict. The protagonist is pitted against an important adversary called the antagonist. This adversary need not necessarily be a person."

The above adversary may be an antagonistic force such as society, fate, nature or environment or it may be a psychological or spiritual struggle with a character itself against a certain aspect of itself. This internal aspect causing conflict within a character may be triggered by an external aspect. Dietrich and Sundell (1967:48) consequently comment thus:

"Sometimes external conflicts are merely projections of internal conflicts."

Aristotle postulates that a detective story should have a beginning, middle and an end. Indeed a detective story begins with a committed crime usually murder, the middle being the detection of the crime and the end being the discovery and execution of the murderer. The detective story has a fixed formula that is well structured and rigid. This postulation also has the approval of Winks (1980:7) who states that the detective story is created with clear rhythms, in four movements. The first movement defines the problem, eg. a murder to solve or a robbery. The second consists of looking for the evidence as it relates to the crime. The third movement or phase is that of assessing the evidence and the fourth brings the action back to the beginning, in which judgement is now passed on the meaning of events, and from this judgement arises the revelation of the identity and more obvious motivation of the criminal.

The plot structure of Nnete fela, as in other novels can also be

divided into clearly definable phases, ie. the exposition, the motorial moment, or the complication, the climax and the denouement. However, the plot structure of the novel Nnete fela is quite complicated. It is composed of a series of flashbacks, foreshadowings, conflicts, suspense and tension.

4.1 EXPOSITION

This phase quite often comes at the initial part of the story. In this phase we are introduced to the characters, the background and it gives us an overview of the events to come. Cohen (1973:69) says:

"Exposition, which often comes at the beginning, provides the necessary background material for a reader. It establishes the setting, creates the basic atmosphere, provides information about the pasts of characters, and delineates vital contexts for the events which will soon begin to unfold."

We must however note that in some stories the exposition may be present throughout the narrative and not concentrated in one segment or block. This is indeed the case with the novel, Nnete

fela.

Brooks et al (1971:7) endorse this view when they say:

"Exposition refers to such elements as to inform the readers of facts necessary to understand the plot, for instance, facts of time, persons, the preliminary state of affairs, and what will be at stake in the basic motivations impelling the plot."

The novel Nete fela starts with a conflict between Ariel Meso and the Commissioner's clerk because of Bubbles, who would later turn out to be the notorious Noko's daughter. In delineating Bubbles, Kekana (1990:1) says:

"---- lekgarebe la seemakadinao le leswana la go bogega. Mohuta wa makgarebe a o hwetšago diswantšho tša ona di kgabišitše maphephe a apešago 'dimakasine'."

(---- a lanky lass, dark in complexion and attractive. The type of ladies whose pictures usually decorates magazine covers.)

achiever. That is why she was competing with her twin brother, Karabo. On this score Kekana (1990:6) says:

"Go Bubbles motho o swanetš^he go ralokela fela go feny^ha nakong ka moka papading ye ya bophelo. Ga se taba ye e swanetš^hego go tshwenya gore o raloke ka melao e itš^hego. Wena ralokela go tš^hwa pele fela, o diriš^he makatika afe ao o bonago a ka go tš^hweleletš^ha ---- "

(According to Bubbles, a person has to play solely for the purpose of winning in this game of life. It is not compulsory that one should adhere to certain rules of the game. You are at liberty to use any foul means at your disposal for as long as you emerge a winner.)

The above exposition of Bubbles is also endorsed by Ariel because when he met her for the first time, he was able to conclude (Kekana 1990:9) that:

"O be a lemogile gore ke yo mongwe wa makgarebe a o hwetš^hago a š^homiš^ha botse bja ona bjalo ka bolepu go rea."

(He had come to realise that she was one of those ladies who use their beauty like bait to catch.)

That Bubbles and Karabo were twins, though they competed for their parents' love and achievements in life is aptly brought to the fore by Kekana (1990:15) who says:

"Gomme yena le Karabo e bile babakišani
go tloga lebakeng le sa elelwego;
mohlomongwe la ge ba sa le madibengmaso
mo ba bego ba kgorometšana le go
pataganetšana goba go ragana pele ba
tliilo belegwa e le mafahla."

(Yet she and Karabo were competitors from time immemorial; perhaps since conception, where they were pushing one another, inconveniencing one another and kicking each other before they were delivered as twins.)

When Bubbles met Ariel for the first time she was able to realise that he was a tall and slender fellow, very handsome and a careful dresser. Kekana (1990:4-5) remarks:

"Ka sebopego e be e le yo mosese wa
leemo la magareng, wa lebala le lehlabana,

yo a thabišago mahlo go mmona. Moaparo wa gagwe o be o laetša gore ke motho yo a tshwenyegago kudu ka gore o lebega bjang."

(In stature he was slim and of medium height, ebony coloured and a pleasure to the eyes to behold. His attire depicted him to be a person very concerned about his appearance.)

Ariel is a former school teacher who taught at the local high school. Kekana (1990:106) describes him thus:

"---- lebakeng lela a sa le morutiši sekolong se phagamego pele a tlo ba mogaši."

(---- that time when he was still a teacher at the high school before he became an announcer.)

Presently Ariel is an announcer with a radio service in town. Kekana (1990:9) puts it thus:

"Mme bjalo ditsela tša leba ka Tshwane gape meagong ya kgašo ya Radio Alpha modirong."

(Then the roads again led to Pretoria at the Alpha Radio buildings where he worked.)

Noko is described by Kekana (1990:18) as:

"---- Noko, e lego monna yo motelele
yo mosese ka kagego, wa hlogo ye tšhweu,
yo o rego ge o mmona wa kwa se sengwe ka
ga yena se go šišinya kgopolo ka ga mmino
wa 'jese', go sa kwišišege gore bjang."

(---- Noko, a tall and slender man in stature with a white head. When you see him, something triggers your mind to inadvertantly associate him with jazz.)

Julia, who is Ariel's lover, is introduced to the reader by Kekana (1990:25) thus:

"Julia ke lekgarebe le bjale Ariel a romelanago nalo dikarata tša St. Valentine."

(Julia is the lass with whom Ariel is presently exchanging St. Valentine cards.)

Kekana (1990:25) goes on to describe her beauty thus:

"O be a le botse, sefahlego o ka re
sa popo."

(She was very beautiful, with a doll-like face.)

Pula happens to be Bubbles' best friend. Kekana (1990:32)
reveals her thus:

"---- ke ge ka thokong ye nngwe ya Pelindaba
Bubbles a 'tansa' moketš'aneng wa mogwera wa
gagwe wa pelo, Pula."

(---- at one end of Atteridgeville, Bubbles
was dancing at the party of her bosom
friend, Pula.)

Kekana goes on to elaborate in the revelation of Pula's
personality (1990: 32) as follows:

"Fela se a tsebegago ka sona le go
fetisa magareng ga tšona ke gore ke
'sošalaete' ya go tšwa Pelindaba. Ke
sefahlego se o ka gahlanago naso Maseru,
Mbabane, Mmabatho goba kae meketeng le
mo go kgobakantšhago batho ba legoro la
'jetesete.'"

(But what makes her even more known is because she is a 'socialite' from Atteridgeville. This is a popular face that you may meet in Maseru, Mbabane, Mmabatho or at any party or gathering of the 'jet-sets'.)

Kwena, who is Mabusha's son was in love with Bubbles and in fact wanted to get married to her. Bubbles communicates this information to Pula, (Kekana 1990:33) thus:

"Bubbles a mo sebela gore Kwena o re
o nyaka go mo nyala gona kgwedinyana
tše se kae tše di tlogo."

(---- Bubbles whispered to her that
Kwena says he wants to get married to
her in a few months time.)

Kwena's proposed marriage was the most fascinating and welcome news to both their fathers because they were bosom friends, their friendship dating many years back. This is exposed to the reader by Kekana (1990:37) thus:

"Bubbles o rile go mmotšša tšona ge a seno
boa tšša mo kgahla o šoro. Taba ke gore
yena Noko le tatago Kwena ke bagwera ba

bohloko ba go tloga bosoganeng."

(He was extremely elated when Bubbles informed him about that on her return. The issue is that Noko and Kwena's father are bosom friends from youth.)

Noko had his other two bosom friends who were also members of the syndicate. They were Mokaba and Mello. In delineating Mokaba, Kekana (1990:72) says:

"Mokaba yena ke radipapadi wa go tsebega ka gohle ka kolofu, wa bogolo bja nywaga ye masomenne."

(Mokaba is a popular sportsman in golf who is forty years of age.)

Mello is exposed to the reader. (Kekana 1990:72) thus:

"Monna yo a dutšego ka thoko ga gagwe (Mokaba) setulong se lego kgaufsi le Noko e kile ya ba motlotlegi ka mmimo, o bitšwa Mello, gomme bjalo tlotlo ya gagwe e šetše didikong tša botagwa."

(The man seated on his (Mokaba) side on the chair, that is next to Noko, was

on the chair, that is next to Noko, was once a popular musician named Mello. His popularity was tarnished by drunkenness.)

Champ and Thoba, the hired assassins of Ariel are depicted by Kekana (1990:139) thus:

"E be e le mafahla bosenying, ba se ne letswalo goba letshogo goba lenya. Ka moaparo e be e le mapantsola, ka dipelo e le magomotš'a."

(They were equals in crime, without conscience, fearless and daring. In dress they were 'Mapantsola' and in their hearts they were 'I-don't-cares.')

The detective who cornered Champ and Sello at Majaneng, and ultimately brought them under arrest - Ditshego is described by Kekana (1990:225) thus:

"Letseka Ditshego e be e le monna yo mosesesese yo moteleletelele. Ditsebe di be di phaphametše mo nkego di phakgamišitšwe ke go kwa ditaba tša mohlolo."

(Detective Ditshego was a very tall and thin man. He had cauliflower ears that seem to be so because of the horrible things they hear.)

In conclusion we may say that we are satisfied that we know the past of our main characters and subsidiary characters. We for example know who Ariel is, who Bubbles is, etc. The background of these characters has been revealed to us, thus the suspense and the pricking of our curiosity. This then leads us to the second phase of the plot structure - motorial moment.

4.2 MOTORIAL MOMENT (EXCITING FORCE)

In the exposition, the author has portrayed an equilibrium, a status quo in the lives of the characters during which time something unusual happened which changed the situation. This change is called the motorial moment and it supplies us with the motives of our main characters because that which happens will lead to their decisions and reactions to that which changes the status quo in their lives. In some instances the author may regard more than one event as the exciting force thus making it difficult for the reader to distinguish where precisely it begins and where it ends.

Holman and Harmon (1986:192) defines the motorial moment (exciting force) as:

" ---- the force that starts the conflict
of opposing interests and sets in motion
the rising action ---- "

In the novel Nnete fela the conflict situation is triggered by
(Kekana 1990:44) thus:

"Maabane Bubbles o sa tlo tla le kgopolo
ya gore yena Karabo a ka hlwa a itloša
bodutu ka go ngwala. O be a eletšwe taba
ya gore nkile kgale Karabo a tsenela phadišano
maksineng ya go ngwala kanegelo ye kopana mme
a tšea sefoka sa pele"

(Yesterday Bubbles had just come up with the
idea that Karabo could kill time by taking
to writing. She recalled that some time ago,
Karabo once entered for a competition in some
magazine in which his short story won the
first prize.)

Karabo's script which changed the status quo of the characters in
Nnete fela is further revealed (Kekana 1990:52) in what Ariel
realises:

"Taba ya Karabo e be e le ya dinokwane

tše di nago le maano a go ntšha ditšhelete
 ka bofora dipankeng. Ka nnete go be go bonala
 Karabo a dirile mošomo wa gagwe wa gae ka se
 a ratago go ngwala ka sona."

(Karabo's script was about a group of crooks
 who had devised ways and means of defrauding
 banks of money. Truly it was apparent that
 Karabo had done his homework regarding what
 he wanted to write about.)

Having seen the status quo changing and conflict triggered into
 motion, we now focus our attention on the complication phase in
Nnete fela.

4.3 COMPLICATION (RISING ACTION / CRISIS)

The action that was started by the motorial moment, should be taken further to the climax. Each and every scene must contribute. The situation must become more and more complicated. There will be resistance in finding a solution. The conflict must become more fierce with tension progressively rising hence we refer to this phase as the rising action. Brooks (1975:8) says:

"---- complication implies resistance to the movement toward solution of the problem from which the plot stems."

Meij and Snyman (1986:36) are of the same opinion when they say:

"Die intrige dwing die verloop van die verhaal na 'n punt toe. Hierdie klimaks of slot kan die oplossing wees; of die oplossing kan daarna volg."

This phase is characterised by a number of pushes and pulls that increase the tension while arousing the reader's curiosity.

The complication phase in Nnete fela starts with Karabo's radio script that depicts the activities of the members of the syndicate. His father, Noko, was a member of this fraudulent syndicate. Kekana (1990:52) says:

"Taba ya Karabo e be e le ya dinokwane
 tše di nago le maano a go ntšha
 ditšhelete ka bofora dipankeng."

(Karabo's script was about criminals who
 had devised plans of defrauding banking
 institutions.)

The above revelation threw the whole syndicate into panic and confusion. Karabo had to appear before the syndicate to explain fully what he knows about the activities of the syndicate. This fear is clearly illustrated in Mabusha's inquiry. (Kekana 1990:56):

"Nke o hlatholle gore o tseba bjang sephiri
 sa rena monna."

(Just explain how you happen to know our
 secret, man.)

The syndicate had many members both in Pretoria and outside. Its think-tanks were unknown and did not live locally as revealed in Kekana (1990:58) thus:

"---- dikomangkanna tša sindikheiti e be
 e le ba bangwe ba e bilego ba sa dule
 mono Tshwane ----"

(---- the think-tanks of the syndicate were others who did not even stay in Pretoria.)

Bubbles is sent by the syndicate to retrieve the dangerous script from Ariel. She has to use her brains and beauty to flatter Ariel to release the script but Ariel is adamant. He will not part with the document. In his own words (Kekana 1990:69) Ariel replies thus:

"Fela nka se kgone go go fa sengwalwa se,
ga ke ešo ka thoma go se bala."

(But I will not be able to give you this document because I have not even started reading it.)

Karabo had to be bundled into a car and taken to a far-off place so as to try and reduce the tension and panic created by his revelations. Meanwhile Bubbles was on the heels of Ariel to procure the script. She ultimately lured Ariel to a night-club - Hellas, where she had arranged with Champ and Thoba to rob and dispossess Ariel of the script. This incident urged Ariel to double his efforts at investigation (Kekana 1990:97):

"Gomme o ikemišeditše go ya fasefase ya nnete
ya ditaba tše ka moka tša sengwalwa, ge a
tloga mo o tla be a e hweditše."

(Yet he is prepared to go right deep down

to unearth the truth of the contents of the script. When he leaves here he must have found it.)

Bubbles knew very well that the information that Ariel has is very dangerous to the existence of the syndicate and that this would spell trouble for him (Kekana 1990:104) thus:

"Mme o ile a thaila. A hlatha gore go tllilo sepela gampe ka Ariel."

(She took a guess. She established that it was going to be bad with Ariel.)

Bubbles was assigned to lure Ariel to a death trap where he could be assassinated by the syndicate's hit-squad, but Bubbles refused (Kekana 1990:110) to co-operate, saying:

"Go tše tša polao gona ke a gana, ke a gana ruri."

(On the issue of assassination I refuse, I really refuse.)

But Ariel also needed the assistance of Bubbles in order to investigate the activities of the syndicate. He would use Bubbles to infiltrate this syndicate and expose its members.

"Go e nyakišiša go be go ra gore a se
swarele Bubbles kgole ----"

(To investigate this he had to keep
Bubbles close by ----)

In the mean time Bubbles gained interest in Ariel. She decided to extricate him from being tracked down by pretending to be co-operating fully with the syndicate. She fluttered them by calling Kwena (Kekana (1990:118) promising thus:

"Ke tla le thuša Ke tla le gokela yena
mo le tlogo mo hwetsa la dira ka mo le
nyakago ka yena."

(I will help you. I will lure him for you
so that you can get him and do as you
please with him.)

Ariel's love for Bubbles is revealed in what he says (Kekana 1990:123) to her:

"---- o lebega botse kudu Bubbles."

(---- you look extremely beautiful Bubbles.)

The syndicate, assisted by Bubbles had worked out a sophisticated

death trap for Ariel where two assassins would shoot him dead. Bubbles accompanied him to his pre-arranged place of execution knowing fully well how she was going to save him from the certain death that awaited him there.

"Ka tetelo Bubbles a šala a lebeletše,
a lebeletše, a lebeletše Ariel a ya lehung
la gagwe." Kekana (1990:147)

(In anticipation Bubbles remained gazing,
gazing and gazing at Ariel going to
his death.)

Still Bubbles gazed at this man, Ariel, readily nearing his death trap. (Kekana (1990: 147) thus:

"Nakong yeo ga go bonale Ariel a ka
phonyokga. O tla hwa. A hwa. Ariel.
Ariel wa gagwe yo a mo ratago."

(At that time it did not seem as if
Ariel would escape. He will die.
He will die. Ariel. Her Ariel
that she loves.)

After shooting Champ and Thoba, Bubbles pointed her gun at Mokaba who did not believe his eyes but had to give way quickly to avoid

death. He was scared to death and had to quickly scuttle to safety. (Kekana 1990: 149):

"O rile go bona sera seo se Šupilwe moo
a napa a boela a Širela ka morago ga
legora. A kweŠiša gore le yena o tla
latela boChamp fase."

(When he saw the instrument that was
pointed at him, he hid behind fence-trees.
He realised that he would soon be floored
like Champ and company.)

Bubbles who after committing the crime of killing Thoba and injuring Champ was then regarded an enemy of the syndicate and equated with Ariel who is now living in hiding with her. Ariel also knew that their lives were equally endangered. Hence he (Kekana 1990:165) says:

"Ge go tla tabeng ya go tŠhaba ga bona
nakong ye Ariel o be a tseba gore bjale
a bonwego ke bale boMokaba gore o tseba
gakaakang ka bona o bothateng bja go lekana
le bja Bubbles."

(Concerning the issue of their flight Ariel
had by now come to realise that Mokaba and

company know how deep he knows about them and this endangers his life together with that of Bubbles even more.)

The police in Atteridgeville were also desperately looking for them. (Kekana 1990:168):

"Maphodisa a nyakana le batho ba bangwe ba bonwego tiragalong yeo."

(The police are looking for some people who were seen at the scene.)

Mokaba's last attempt to save the situation was to issue telephonic threats to Bubbles (Kekana 1990:176) thus:

"Re tlile go go swara ----"

(We are going to catch up with you ----)

Noko now openly declares Bubbles a traitor and an enemy of the syndicate. She should face the fate of all traitors - death. The syndicate would henceforth double their efforts to find and to assassinate both Bubbles and Ariel. Hence Kekana (1990:191) says:

"Mme ge ba šetše Ariel morago ka nako yeo ba tla kgona go hwetša Bubbles."

(Yet when they are tracking down Ariel
they will also be able to get Bubbles.)

After the death of Kwena from his own ricochet bullet, Ariel and Bubbles had to be even more careful at their hiding place at Majaneng and in their movements because they were now desperately wanted and also suspected of having murdered Kwena. Ariel now realised that he was followed and had to fake his movements.

(Kekana 1190:217) thus:

"Go bolela therešo mamohla Ariel o ile
a timelela boChamp."

(To tell the truth, today Ariel disappeared
in front of Champ and company.)

The reader's curiosity is increased as the tension mounts and the solution is not coming forward. Bubbles and Ariel are tucked away in their Majaneng hideout, Kwena has died and the whole syndicate is thrown into confusion. This leads us into the fourth phase of the plot structure namely climax.

4.4 CLIMAX (TURNING POINT)

The climax is the zenith of the story - that highest point to which all the events in the complication have been moving.

Shipley (1979:51) defines climax as:

"The presentation of ideas or events in ascending order of importance, least first. Now generally used to refer to the highest or culminating point of this series."

The above view is supported by Brooks (1975:8) thus:

"---- this phase is the point at which the forces in conflict reach their moment of greatest concentration, the moment at which as it develop subsequently, the apparently dominant force becomes the subordinates ----"

It is at this point where issues and conflicts in the plot are fully and clearly resolved and to unravel all what has happened up to the climax. This climax can also be a moment of sober recognition of a truth previously unknown to a character.

The climax in Nnete fela is reached when Ariel ultimately procures the truth from Bubbles. Though this truth was bitter

for Ariel to hear, it unravelled many a mystery in the activities of the syndicate and in Bubbles in particular. The climax is embedded in the statement. (Kekana 1990:251):

"O be a rile o nyaka nnete. Bjale o e hweditš^he, mme e ile ya mo tš^hutlatš^hutla mafahleng. Maaka a Bubbles a bego a a logile magareng ga ditaba tš^he ka moka o be a hwetš^ha tekano ya ona e š^hiisa ka bogolo mo go amogago mogopolo. O rile ge a lebelela Bubbles bjale a hwetš^ha e le motho yo a sa mo tsebego yo a mmonago la mathomo."

(He had said he wanted the truth and then he had found it and it shook his bosoms. The lies that Bubbles had so skilfully worked into these events were abominable as to make one mad. When he turned to look at Bubbles, he found her to be someone strange whom he is seeing for the first time.)

This turning point in the story has unmasked the syndicate and Bubbles. That is why Ariel sees her as a new person that he has never seen before. This then leads us to the final phase of the plot structure - the denouement.

4.5 DENOUEMENT (RESOLUTION)

In this phase all the events that appeared to be mysterious to us are unravelled. Shipley (1979:77) defines denouement as:

"The unravelling of the complications of a plot, immediately after the climax."

The denouement is usually of special importance for it gives the clarification of all the events and evidence which have accumulated during the story. It also relates what ultimately happens to each of the characters.

In Nnete fela the denouement is reached when Noko is fatally shot by Mabusha. (Kekana 1990:264):

"Mme Mabusha ka ntle le lentš^u le
tikatiko bjale a mo thuntš^{ha} thwii mo
pelong, gabedi."

(And Mabusha, without a word or waste of time shot him straight in the heart, twice.)

Mabusha was arrested immediately after murdering Noko:

"Maphodisa a ile a tloga naye ge ba tš^{wa}

ka gae ga gagwe". (Kekana 1990:265).

(The police took him along when they left his house.)

Champ and Sello were shot and injured before being arrested for their manifold crimes and the attempted murder of Ariel and Bubbles. Kekana (1990:270) says:

"Metsotsong ye mebedi ye e latelago ke
ge Champ le Sello ba kgokagantšhitšwe
ba dutše ba ripitla mading a bona ----"

(In the next two minutes Champ and Sello were handcuffed and lying there writhing in the pool of their own blood.)

All the other members of the syndicate were rounded up and arrested on that fateful night:

"Bošegong bjoo maloko a mmalwa a
'sindikheiti' a ile lala a etetšwe
ke ba molao, me ba fetša ba swerwe."

(That evening a number of the syndicate members were visited by the police and ultimately arrested.)

Ariel, the detective, emerges as a hero who has evaded certain death at the hands of the assassins Champ and Sello. Accompanied by Bubbles they walk out of their hideout free and happy with the mystery of the syndicate unravelled.

"Lebati le ile la notlollwa, mme Ariel
a tšwa a šetšwe morago ke Bubbles."

(Kekana 1990:270)

(The door was unlocked and Ariel emerged,
followed by Bubbles.)

Bubbles was ultimately reunited with her twin brother, Karabo in happiness. Kekana (1990:274) says:

"Karabo le yena o ile a mo amogela
ka lethabo ---- "

(Karabo also welcomed her with
elation ----)

Finally Ariel and Bubbles are just about to tie the knot. They feel they are meant and bound to be together for the rest of their lives. That is why they are preparing for their wedding. Kekana (1990:277) remarks:

"Mankgapele ba be ba sa tš^o bolela
ka tš^a lenyalo."

(They have just recently been discussing
their wedding plans.)

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SETTING

Setting has to do with the place or environment in which the story takes place. These actions of the characters take place in some place at certain times in a certain environment, and these actions are most likely to be influenced, though sometimes minimally, by the said environment. Hence Beckson and Ganz (1970:201) define it as:

"The time and place in which the action
of a story or play occurs."

Brooks and Warren (1979:514) give a simple definition of setting as:

"The physical background, the element
of place, in a story."

Cohen (1973:27) also gives a short definition saying:

"Setting embraces the totality of an environment."

Abrahams (1981:75) defines setting thus:

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

Brooks et al (1975:10) also add their voice to the above, saying:

"A story occurs, after all, in a particular place, and places provoke, however minimally, certain feelings."

Some literary scholars distinguish between the physical and the non-physical milieu. The ideal literary situation is when the two are complementary. The setting can establish a certain atmosphere and can also influence the characters' actions, manner of speech, mode of dress and social status.

The setting can also influence the believability of the story in the reader as well as simplify the comprehensibility of the story. The idea is also espoused by Haycraft (1942:243) when he

points out:

"---- when real streets, buildings, neighbourhoods, even trains and tram-cars, add so greatly to believability, nay, the fascination, of narratives particularly dependent on verisimilitude for their success."

The well-known situation prevailing at Commissioners' offices all over the country where people are neglected by the clerical staff and have to wait for service for hours on end while the clerks are engaged in long conversations that are irrelevant to their work is responsible for Ariel's unbecoming behaviour and manner of speech when he angrily calls them to order, (Kekana 1990:3) pointing out that:

"Fela o tla elewa gore ye ke nako ya modiro e sego ya magang a bjalo ka ao."

(But you will realise that this is the time for work and not for that type of discourse you are engaged in.)

The above attitude displayed by Ariel was caused by the arrogant behaviour of the clerks (Kekana 1990:1) because:

"---- bašomedi ba babedi ba moo ba swerego

magang ba hlokomologile molokoloko wo o
golago ka morago ga khaontara."

(---- two workers working there were
engaged in a discourse disregarding
the queue that was growing longer behind
the counter.)

Ariel is a former high school teacher who is presently an
announcer and producer at the Radio Alpha studios in Pretoria.
His work situation demands of him to always be nattily dressed.
Kekana (1990:4-5) depicts his mode of dress as:

"Moaparo wa gagwe o be o laetša gore
ke motho yo a tshwenyegago kudu ka
gore o lebelega bjang."

(His attire depicted him to be a person
very concerned about his appearance.)

Mabusha and Noko are both members of the syndicate. Both are
living in affluence and are bosom friends - their friendship
dating back to their youth as evidenced in what Kekana (1990:30)
says about them:

"Taba ke gore yena Noko le tatagoKwena
ke bagwera ba bohloko ba go tloga
bosoganeng."

(The issue is that Noko and Kwena's father are bosom friends from youth.)

The above are the circumstances under which Kwena and Bubbles were raised. Because of this situation Bubbles could not evade falling in love with Kwena. Because their fathers are old intimate friends and both living in luxury that is why Kwena, in proposing love to Bubbles and presenting her with an engagement ring (Kekana 1990:33) says:

"Re belegetšwe go ba gotee. Bubbles."

(We were born to be together, Bubbles.)

Ariel, in his own words maintains that he is not a detective (Kekana 1990:53) when he says:

"Ga se yena letseka."

(He is not a detective.)

But the circumstances surrounding Karabo's radio script and the passage of time were to radically change Ariel's attitude that he later found himself involved in intensive investigations detecting the activities of the syndicate members. Kekana (1990:33) says:

"Fela nako e be e sa tlilo go mmea
tekong ka dikgopolo tšeo tša gagwe

mo a ka se tsebego gore go diregang
ka yena."

(But with the passage of time he would
have such mental exercises that he would
not know what was happening to him.)

A beautiful, cool and calm country-side is a situation that is
usually conducive to and associated with romance. It is to such
a beautiful spot that Kwena took his lover. Bubbles was elated
at the beautiful surroundings that harboured no threat to life.
She fell in love, hence Kekana (1990:75) says:

"Mme a šetša naga ye tšhepilego ka
letago la selemo."

(And she gazed at the country-side that
was enveloped in the beauty of summer.)

It is usually during peak-hours that robbers and pick-pockets
operate in the city. This was the time when Ariel and Bubbles
left the night-club Hellas, walking towards their cars, when
Ariel was so easily robbed of the script that he had in his hand.

"E be e le iri ya bohlano ge ba etšwa
ka moo. Nako ya mpilobilo - batho le
difatanaga, mang le mang a kitimetše go
fihla gae."

(It was at five o'clock when they departed from there. It was peak-hour - people and vehicles, everybody in a hurry to arrive home.)

Bubbles' attitude towards life, her greed to have all the good things in life, her derogatory attitude towards other people, her mode of dress and her pride are all products of the situation and the plush house in which she was brought up. This luxurious house is depicted (Kekana 1990:117) as follows:

"E be e le ngwako wo mobotse ka gare
le ka ntle. Wo o nago le dika tšohle
tša matsaka."

(It was a very beautiful house, inside and outside. It had all the elements of affluence.)

The night-club - Hellas - with its dim lights, cabaret dances and sumptuous dinner enhanced the love between Ariel and Bubbles. After a few rounds of dancing together, Bubbles felt the warmth of Ariel's love even deeper in her bosom. This love emanating from the night-club had increased so much in both of them that it ultimately exploded when they were about to part (Kekana 1990:132):

"Bubbles, Bubbles, ke a go rata"

(Bubbles, Bubbles, I love you.)

Crime usually prevails and thrives very well in urban and peri-urban areas. But the detective story requires a crime to be committed in a very closely knit urban society so that the author could be able to conceal the culprit. Auden in Winks (1980:17) echoes this requirement thus:

"A closed knit society so that the possibility of an outside murderer (and hence of the society being totally innocent) is excluded; and a closely related society so that all its members are potentially suspect."

Auden in Winks (1980:18) further says:

"It must appear to be an innocent society in a state of grace, ie., a society where there is unheard - of act which precipitates a crisis."

Indeed Atteridgeville is one of the very calm, peaceful and tranquil townships with a closely knit society that is in a state of grace. It is an innocent society where there is no need for the police to patrol the township as violence and crime are virtually unknown. This is exposed to the reader by Kekana (1990:138) thus:

"E be e thotše tše nkego e kgalemetšwe
lešata. Motse o be^olebega o le bolo
tše nkego ga go bobo bofe le bohloko
tše di ka diregago go wona."

(It was dead silent as though per
instruction. The township seemed
peaceful as if it was free from evil
and pain.)

The peace that reigns in Atteridgeville is once more endorsed by
the party that was held in Mokwele Street (Kekana 1990:140)
depicted as follows:

"Dikoša, lesego, lešata ka kakaretšo
le ile la dira gore Ariel a akanye
gore go swanetše go ba go na le mokete
wo mogolo ka gona."

(Songs, laughter and general noise made
Ariel to think that there should be a
big party going on there.)

The peace and tranquillity of this township, Atteridgeville, was
disturbed by this abominable act of a shoot-out in Mokwele Street
that ended up in one being murdered by an unknown woman who

disappeared into the darkness of the night. The residents were shocked to the bone as this violence was unknown and unheard of in this township. Many people came to witness the scene of this tragic event. Hence Kekana (1990:158) says:

"Lekoko la batho le be le eme kgauswi
 lefelong la tiragalo ya go thuntšhwa.
 Ba lebeletše ge masogana a mabedi a
 rwalela Thoba ka ambulanseng."

(A group of people had gathered at
 the scene of the shooting. They
 were all looking at the two gentlemen
 carrying Thoba into an ambulance.)

Majaneng has a typically rural setting. This is where Ariel and Bubbles went to seek sanctuary to have peace of mind after the murder of Thoba in Atteridgeville. This setting is depicted (Kekana 1990:229) thus:

"O no re go tšwa hekeng ya bona a se
 ye kgole, a ya a tsena hekeng^{ya} motse
 wa baagišaneng, a khuta lekgabeng la
 lehea le le bjetswego ka moo."

(Coming out of their gate she did not go
 far. She went in through the gate

of their neighbours and hid in the young mealie plants there.)

Temba has a peri-urban setting with a few modern amenities such as a hospital, a clinic, a tarred main road and public telephones here and there. This setting is depicted (Kekana 1990:234) in:

"Gomme bjale ka iri ya boselela o be a le ka motseng wa Themba a hweditše ntlwana ya mogalantš'u ya setšhaba a bolela le Pula.

(But then by six o'clock she was at the township Themba where she had found a public telephone booth and was speaking to Pula.)

Auden in Winks (1980:18) postulates that once the peace of a close society is disturbed the police have to intervene and:

"The law becomes a reality and for a time all must live in its shadow."

Indeed after the disturbance of this tranquility in Atteridgeville the police are now alert. Even the radio announced (Kekana 1990:168) this that:

"Maphodisa a Pelindaba a bega gore go

letše go bile le tiragalo ya go thuntšha
mmileng wa Mokwele gona mo motseng wo
mantšiboa."

(The police in Atteridgeville report
that there has been a shooting incident
in Mokwele Street in this very township
in the evening.)

Auden in Winks (1980:18) goes on further to say that peace will
only be restored with the arrest of the murderer(s):

"With his arrest, innocence is restored
and the law retires for ever."

After the arrest of Champ and Sello together with that of the
members of the syndicate, innocence and the state of grace are
once more restored to Atteridgeville as a whole and to Bubbles
in particular. This situation is revealed to us by Kekana
(1990:276) when he says this about Bubbles:

"Gobane o be a bonala a na le lethabo le
le fodilego."

(Because she appeared to be having
procured internal elation.)

The peaceful and restful manner in which Ariel and Bubbles are

seated, relaxing on the stoep of her home under a red light is conducive to romance. That is why Bubbles' mind is focused only on the victory she has achieved in winning Ariel's love and on nothing else:

"---- o be a nagana ka tebogo tše a
nago natšo. Mme se segolo go tšona
e lego yena Ariel." (Kekana 1990:276)

(---- she was thinking deeply with
gratitude of all that she had. And
above them all was her Ariel.)

The above revelation goes further on (Kekana 1990:277) and says:

"Mankgapele ba be ba sa tšo bolela
ka tša lenyalo."

(They have just recently been discussing
their wedding plans.)

The setting of this novel, which comprises the urban, peri-urban and rural areas is quite appropriate for this detective novel, Nnete fela. It mixes harmoniously with characterisation and theme whilst it also makes a successful contribution to the development of the plot structure.

CHAPTER SIX

6. CHARACTERISATION

Characterisation is the manner in which an author shows the qualities, actions, sayings and reactions of the people in his novel and how these cause characters to behave as individual human-beings. Added to this, characterisation embraces the manner in which the author creates relationships among the various characters in his work and the purpose for which they were created. It also looks at the interaction among the characters as natural and ordinary people with all the human attributes. Abrahams (1981:20) agrees with the above discussion saying:

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

The same opinion is shared by Meij and Snyman (1986:11) when they say:

"Die mens in 'n verhaal is 'n belangrike komponent van die verhaal. Gewoonlik is dit een mens (of meer) wat aan die ander mens (of mense) vertel wat 'n derde mens (of groep mense) doen of wat met hulle gebeur. Natuurlik is daar verhale wat handel oor diere en dinge, selfs feë en kabouters. Hierdie verhaalonderwerpe het egter altyd menslike eienskappe."

One may also point out that we as human beings are naturally and intensely interested in our own kind. And all our lives we turn to marvel that nature has framed such strange creatures in her time. Thus character is action just as much as action is a demonstration of character. Hence Brooks and Warren (1979:107) say:

"---- for what a man is determines what he does, and it is primarily through what he does that we who observe him know what he is."

Cohen (1973:137) also aligns himself with the above postulation by saying:

"The art of creating fictional characters in words which give them human identity is called characterisation. It is an art

of illusion whereby the characters created seem to become people with traits and personalities which a reader can recognize, respond to and analyze."

Perhaps the other reason why we as human beings are more attracted to the characters more than to other elements of a novel is because to a very large extent these characters represent our own human vices and virtues in life. Forster (1973:64) says:

"Since the novelist is himself a human-being there is affinity between him and his subject matter which is absent in many other forms of art."

Furthermore our contention is that a character does not exist in a vacuum. The person has an environment; he inhabits a place with special physical and social qualities. The degree of importance of place, like that of the importance of character, may vary from instance to instance. What is important for us to note is that all the elements of the novel are interdependent and must be blended together ie. characterisation, a well developed plot structure, a suitable milieu (setting) and an effective narration. This will give us a well rounded off novel. Stephens (1972:68) is cited in Serudu (1979:12) saying this about the importance of milieu (setting) in a novel:

"---- the creation of fictional background or environment is not just a matter of writing into the novel pretty word pictures for the languid reader to skim over. Essentially, it is the creation of a credible world for the novelist's characters to inhabit; a world that like our own, gives it's people life and meaning."

The characters in Nnete fela can easily be distinguished according to their function in relation to the theme and the development of the plot. Aristotle in Winks (1980:33) points out these requirements of the characters in a detective novel thus:

- (i)---- they must be good: even the most wicked of them must be endowed with some human dignity for us to take him seriously.
- (ii)---- they must be appropriate; a female must not be represented as being clever.
- (iii)---- they must be like reality: their mode of dress, language and behaviour should not be over-exaggerated but should be those of normal people that we interact with in daily life.

(iv)---- they must be consistent from first to last: the development of a character should not bring about drastic changes. He should remain the person we have always known from the beginning to the end.

6.1 THE VICTIMS

The Collins Concise Dictionary (1986:1309) defines a victim as:

"a person or thing that suffers harm, death, etc."

Auden in Winks (1980:19) has this to say about the victim in a detective novel:

"The victim has to try to satisfy two contradictory requirements. He has to involve everyone in suspicion, which requires that he be a bad character; and he has to make everyone feel guilty, which requires that he be a good character."

The above postulation augers well with the description of Noko. He appears to be a bad character, reading from his facial expression as described by Kekana (1990:10) thus:

"Mahlo a Noko a be a kgabakgaba ka khuduego
ye o ka tiišago gore ge e tlilo tšhollwa
ka moka ga yona ba bangwe ba tlilo fetša
ba sobeletše go yona."

(Noko's eyes were rolling with that anger
which you could be sure that when it is
going to burst open, some of us end up
drowning in it.)

His angry mood is communicated to the reader when he disowned his
own son, Karabo (Kekana 1990:10) saying:

"Ga se fela moo, o tsebe ka se sebaka
o lobile gape le motswadi le legae."

(It is not only that, you must by now
realise that you have also lost a parent
and a home.)

Noko also satisfies the criteria of being a good character who is
well mannered, handsome and a musician. (Kekana 1990:18):

"Noko, e lego monna yo motelele yo mosese
ka kagego, wa hlogo e tšhweu, yo o rego ge
o mmona wa kwa se sengwe ka ga yena se go
šišinya kgopolo ka ga mmimo wa jese, go sa
kwišišege gore bjang."
(Noko, a tall and slender man in stature

(Noko, a tall and slender man in stature with a white head. When you see him something triggers your mind to inadvertently associate him with jazz.)

Noko became a victim of his close friend, Mabusha. He was shot dead by Mabusha who had secretly found out that he was betraying the syndicate because he knew the whereabouts of Bubbles and had also saved the life of Karabo. For the security and survival of the syndicate, Mabusha had no alternative but to kill Noko. Just to make sure that Noko was dead, (Kekana 1990:264) Mabusha:

"A ^{fi}hla ~~fi~~ a mo emeletša, mme a lemoga gore
o hwile, o hwile bjalo ka leswika."

(He came, lifted him up and realised that he was dead, stone-dead.)

Kwena was killed by his own bullet while engaged in a tug-of-war with Champ and Sello. Kwena has displayed qualities of being a good character when he was courting Bubbles and slipping an engagement ring on her finger (Kekana 1990:33) with this loving remark:

"Re belegetšwe go ba gotee Bubbles.
Gomme se ke sešupo sa gore ke nagana
bjalo."

(We were born to be together, Bubbles.
This is thus an indication that I also
think that way.)

On the contrary Kwena also fulfils the requirements of a bad character because even against the advice of the syndicate he still goes all out to look for Ariel to shoot him for eloping with his fiancè - Bubbles. (Kekana 1990:207):

"Mantšiboa a Mošupologo wo o be a
ikemišeditše go boelela ga Meso, a
re Ariel la gosasa letšatši a ka se
le bone."

(On this Monday evening he was prepared
to get to Meso's place again vowing
that Ariel would not see the next dawn
of day.)

It was during these nocturnal visits to the Meso's that Kwena was engaged in a fight with Champ and Sello. In this fight Kwena was fatally wounded by his own ricochet bullet (Kekana 1990:211):

"Champ le Sello ba ile ba kwa a lepelela
ka diatleng tša bona gatee fela ge kolo
e seno kwala."

sound.)

6.2 THE MURDERERS

Champ, Thoba, Sello and Mabusha are the murderers in Nnete fela.

The Oxford Advanced English Dictionary explains a murderer as being a person guilty of murder, ie. the unlawful killing of a human being.

Auden in Winks (1980:19) says:

"Murder is negative creation, and every murderer is therefore the rebel who claims the right to be omnipotent. His pathos is his refusal to suffer."

Mabusha perfectly conforms to the above postulation. When he realised that Noko had telephonically betrayed the syndicate and that very soon they could be apprehended and thus suffer in prison, he felt threatened, and decided to shoot him. (Kekana (1990:264):

"Noko o rile ge a bea lekopelwana fase a retologela go Mabusha. Mme Mabusha ka ntle le lentš^u le tikatiko bjale a mo thuntš^{ha} mo pelong, gabedi."

(While Noko was replacing the receiver, he turned to Mabusha, and Mabusha without a word or waste of time shot him straight in the heart, twice.)

The author has succeeded in concealing the murderous aims of Mabusha to the reader and to other characters even to Noko whom he later murdered (Kekana 1990:37):

"Taba ke gore yena Noko le tatago Kwena
ke bagwera ba bohloko go tlogo bosoganeng."

(The issue is that Noko and Kwena's father are bosom friends from youth.)

The above fits in well with what is said by Auden in Winks (1980:19) that:

"The problem for the writer is to conceal his (murderer's) demonic pride from the other characters and from the reader, ----."

Haycraft (1940:247) is also of the same opinion when he states:

"Inasmuch as the culprit is concealed among the characters in the modern detective novel, the temptation to the

novice is to hide him by the very multitude of personae."

Champ, Thoba and Sello are also murderers whose type of clothing and behaviour does not benefit their murderous tendencies. They appear to be well-behaved while they harbour devilish ideas, hence Kekana (1990:139) says about them:

"Ka moaparo e be e le mapantsola, ka dipelo magomotsa."

(In dress they were 'pantsoles' and in their hearts they were-'I-don't-cares.)

6.3 THE SUSPECTS

The Concise Oxford Dictionary explains a suspect as being a person:

"---- of suspected character, subject to suspicion or distrust, not unimpeachable."

People become subjected to suspicion immediately after the state of grace in an apparently innocent society has been disturbed and the law is forced to step in. With the emergence of a suspect there appears also the contradiction between the aesthetic individual and the ethical universe. When this society was in a state of grace, there was no need for the law and murder was thus an unheardof act. There thus prevailed only calmness and peace. Auden in Winks (1980:20) has this to say about murder:

"The murder is the act of disruption by which innocence is lost and the individual and the law become opposed to each other. In the case of the murderer this opposition is completely real (till he is arrested and consents to be punished); in the case of the suspects it is mostly apparent."

The suspects in the novel Nnete fela are Bubbles and Ariel Meso, the detective hero himself. The two suspects who later elope

from Atteridgeville to Majaneng are suspected of the death of Kwena. This is echoed by what Pula (Kekana 1990:214) thinks of them:

"O (Pula) be a tseba Bubbles le Ariel ba thulana naye (Kwena) ka baka la lerato la bona, e bile ba tšhaba le go dula Pelindaba."

(She (Pula) knew that Bubbles and Ariel were in opposition to him (Kwena) because of their love affair as well as their fear to stay in Atteridgeville.)

Pula's suspicion of the two regarding Kwena's death goes on (Kwena 1990:214) further:

"O be a bile a belaela gore o bolailwe mabapi le taba ye ya Ariel le Bubbles, gomme ba babedi ba ba swanetše go ba ba tseba ka polao ya gagwe."

(She also suspected that he was killed because of the affair between Ariel and Bubbles and that these two are bound to know about his murder.)

Bubbles can be classified, in accordance with what is said by Auden in Winks (1980:20), as a suspect who has:

"---- a lack of faith in another loved suspect, which leads its subject to hide or confuse clues."

Bubbles managed to reluctantly conceal a number of clues to Ariel thereby causing a lot of confusion in his investigations (Kekana 1990: 204) thus:

"Se se fapanago ka Bubbles le moloi ke gore yena o be a ekwa bohloko ge a fihlela Ariel nnete ka tsela ye. O be a rata nke a ka mmotša tšohle a se mo fe dipelaelo ka tsela ye. O be a rata go tshephega go moratiwa wo wa gagwe."

(The difference between Bubbles and a witch is that she felt sorry for concealing the truth from Ariel in this manner. She fervently wished to tell him all so as to allay his doubts. She wished to appear to be faithful to her lover.)

Ariel and Bubbles were also suspected of the murder of Thoba. It is this murder that caused them to flee out of Atteridgeville to Majaneng for sanctuary. This is echoed by Bubbles words (Kekana 1990:151) to Ariel at the Mokwele Street shooting:

"Re swanetše go tšhaba, re khute."

(We must run away and seek sanctuary.)

The police were looking for them but without a detailed description, identification and finer clues (Kekana 1990:168):

"Maphodisa a nyakana le batho ba bangwe ba ba bonwego tiragalong ye. Wa mathomo ke lekgarebe la meriri ye megolo ye metelele. Monna yo a sepelago naye ke wa leemo la magareng wa lebala la go taga ---- Bobedi bja bona ba be ba sepela ka sefatanaga sa mmala wo o tibilego sa Golf."

(The police are looking for some people who were seen at the scene. The first one is a lady with big long hair. The man accompanying her is of medium height with a light complexion. The two were driving in a dark coloured Golf sedan.)

After Bubbles' confession to Ariel and the report to the police they were both cleared of all the suspicions and saved from being murdered by Champ and Sello. After the injury of the would-be murderers and the arrest of Mabusha and other members of the syndicate, Ariel and Bubbles were now free (Kekana 1990:270) to move about:

"Lebati le ile la notlollwa, mme Ariel
a tšwa a šetšwe morago ke Bubbles."

(The door was unlocked and Ariel emerged
followed by Bubbles.)

6.4 THE DETECTIVE

The Concise Oxford Dictionary describes a detective as being:

"A policeman or other person employed
to investigate crimes eg. by eliciting
evidence or information."

Haycraft (1942:229) has this to say about a detective:

"In any detective story worth its
name, at once the most important
and most difficult intrigue is the

sleuth. The evolution of the fictional detective has been both a curious and a significant one."

Indeed the job of a detective is a very difficult one, because he has to restore the state of grace in which the aesthetic and the ethical are one. In so doing he is in direct opposition to the defiant individual, the murderer. Hence Auden in Winks (1980:21) says the detective must be:

"---- either the official representative of the ethical or the exceptional individual who is himself in a state of grace."

The amateur detective in the novel Nnete fela is Ariel Meso. He is himself in a state of grace. Even in his wildest dream Ariel never thought of being a detective. This is initially what he personally (Kekana 1990:53) thinks:

"---- gobane ga a bewa moo go ba monyakišiši ka maphelo a a lego ka morago ga bao a kopanago nabo fao, goba dimelo tša bona. Ga se yena letseka."

meets there nor their characters.
He is not a detective.)

Ariel as a detective, is opposed to the murderers. This crisis leads the murderers to monitor his movements and track him down with the view of murdering him. But because he must emerge a hero, he always manages to evade their traps. (Kekana 1990:217)

"Go bolela therešo mamohla Ariel o
ile a timelela boChamp a sešo a
tšweletša taba yela ya go fetša
difatanaga."

(To tell the truth today Ariel
disappeared in front of Champ
and company even before he could
exchange vehicles.)

Given the difficult task of a detective, some scholars are of the opinion that this is no task to be assigned to women and boys. Haycraft (1942:230) aligns himself with this idea by stating:

"In all fairness, women and boys
do not make satisfactory principal
detectives."

He goes on further (1942:230) to say:

He goes on further (1942:230) to say:

"They must and often do, figure as important and attractive assistants. The beginner, at least will do well to confine them to such roles."

These scholars are of the opinion that this task is risky, difficult and dangerous. It thus requires strength, skills, courage and intelligence, which attributes are rare or non-existent in women and boys. Hence, as we have said earlier on, Aristotle is cited by Sayers in Winks (1980:33) stating:

"---- a female must not be represented as clever."

Haycraft (1942:230) goes on to say:

"Under all circumstances, a single principal sleuth is advisable, else the readers essential identification of himself with the pursuer is likely to falter."

Indeed the reader has to identify with the detective and experience all events with him. This attracts the attention of the reader in the novel. Hence the reader accompanies Ariel when he walks into his own death-trap with Bubbles watching apparently

helplessly. This is a spine-chilling experience which the narrator (Kekana 1990:147) expresses thus:

"Nakong yeo ga go bonale Ariel a ka
phonyokga. O tla hwa. A hwa. Ariel.
Ariel wa gagwe yo a mo ratago ----"

(At that time it does not seem as if
Ariel would escape. He is going to
die. He is going to die. Ariel.
Her Ariel that she loves.)

Auden in Winks (1980:21) says that in his romantic life the detective:

"In his sexual life, the detective
must be either celibate or happily
married."

This is true of Ariel. He refused a number of offers from beautiful young ladies because he had a premonition that the girl he really loves was yet to come about. That is the reason why Ariel (Kekana 1990:31) thinks:

"Therešo nonyana (Julia) yela
yona e iphile lefaufau. Eupša
atšhii! E ka no ya mo e ratago,

Ariel a nagana. Go ka se swane
 le gore yena a gapeletšwe gore e
 re e sešo a nagana ka selo sa go
 etša go nyala a dire se a sa se
 ratego."

(The truth is that the bird (Julia)
 has disappeared into the atmosphere.
 But gosh! It can get to blazes, Ariel
 thought. It will not be as good for
 him to be forced into marriage when
 he had not yet given that a thought
 which may end up in him doing something
 that he does not like.)

Sayer in Winks (1980:33) postulates that the detective must be:

"---- realistic, ie. with some
 moderate approximation in speech
 and behaviour to such men and women
 as we see about us."

Ariel perfectly fits into this postulation. Nothing about him is
 super-natural or exaggerated. His speech and behaviour is that
 of an average, usual man that we interact with in our daily
 lives. Ariel is quite human when he lovingly inquires from
 Bubbles (Kekana 1990:166) about her illness of the previous

night:

"O robetš^ye bjang? E bjang hlogo?"

(How did you sleep? How is your head-ache?)

At the end of the day our detective must emerge a hero who has returned the society to a state of grace. Ariel has at last proved to be an outstanding man, a creation of power, strength, intelligence and singularity. He emerged a hero even to Bubbles who loves him very much. Ariel's heroism is depicted in (Kekana 1990:253) the narrator's words:

"Bjale e be e le nako ye a ka kwago
boipoto bja gagwe bo godišitš^ywe, a
ikgantš^yha le go ikwa mofenyi."

(This was the time for him to feel
his self-esteem enhanced, to boast
and feel he is a victor/hero with
a sense of heroism.)

In concluding the discussion of a detective one must hasten to pencil in the opinion of Auden in Winks (1980:21) to which I also subscribe, when he says:

"Completely satisfactory detectives
are rare."

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary explains the police as being:

"Members of an official organisation whose job is to keep public order, prevent and solve crime, etc."

The police according to Auden in Winks (1980:21) is:

"---- the official representative of the ethical --- who is himself in a state of grace."

Auden in Winks (1980:21) goes on further to say this about a professional detective:

"---- the detective must be a total stranger who cannot possibly be involved in a crime."

After the shoot-out at Mokwele Street, the state of grace in Atteridgeville was disturbed, as murder was an unheard-of act in this township. Thus the police had to step in (Kekana 1990:168) and investigate:

"Setšhaba se kgopelwa gore ge go
na le se ba se tsebago ka batho ba

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"Setšhaba se kgopelwa gore ge go
 na le se ba se tsebago ka batho ba
 ba boletšwego ba thuše maphodisa
 ka dinyakišišo tša bona ka go
 leletša nomorong ye ya Tshwane: 375-2144."

(Members of the public who know
 something about these people
 mentioned are requested to assist
 the police in their investigations
 by dialling this Pretoria number: 375-2144.)

After Ariel had revealed all the activities of the syndicate to
 the police in Atteridgeville, Ditshego, the detective, realised
 that his efforts at apprehending the criminals and the murderers
 would be futile without the assistance of Bubbles (Kekana
 1990:256):

"O ile a tseba gore modiro wa gagwe
 o tla ba bobebe go swara mokgatlo woo
 ge a ka diriša Bubbles go mo thuša."

(He realised that his task of apprehending
 this syndicate would be easier if he could
 procure the assistance of Bubbles.)

With the assistance of Bubbles and Ariel, Ditshego and his

colleague were able to injure, disarm and arrest the would-be murderers, Champ and Sello (Kekana 1990:259) thus:

"Ditshego o ile a batamela a mo
lebeleletš^še ka tlhokomediš^šiš^šo yena
(Champ) le Sello yo a nyenyebadiš^šego
sefahlego ka bohloko a itshwere leotong"

(Ditshego came near him (Champ) looking
at him very carefully as well as at Sello
whose face was wrinkled with pain while
clutching at his foot.)

The state of grace in Atteridgeville was restored when finally all the members of the syndicate were rounded up and put under lock and key together with their hired sharp-shooters, Champ and Sello. Noko, Kwena and Thoba had also died at the barrel of a gun. The police, at the end triumphed because of Ariel's investigations and the co-operation and assistance of Bubbles. (Kekana 1990:270):

"Bošegong bjoo maloko a mmalwa a
sindikheiti a ile^alala a etetš^šwe
ke ba molao, mme ba fetš^ša ba swerwe.

(That evening a number of the syndicate
members were visited by the police and
ultimately arrested.)

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. LOOKING BACK.

The discussion of the detective novel so far covered has plainly revealed to us that Kekana made good use of the tools of a detective story at his disposal and has consequently made an above average success in producing the detective novel, Nnete fela. He has managed to play fairly close to the "Rules of the game" as postulated by Haycraft. Kekana has managed to put together all the skills required for a detective novel. He has what Poe, cited in Haycraft (1942:223) says:

"---- the ingenuity of unravelling a web
which you yourself have woven for the
express purpose of unravelling."

We have already said that Northern Sotho has very few books that can be said to be true detective novels. For this reason we have to appreciate and laud the humble attempt made by Kekana in producing this detective novel. Even if there are flaws in the "Rules of the game" here and there, we however join the chorus of Haycraft in condemning with contempt the scholars who advocate (Haycraft 1942:224) that:

"---- this sort of ingratiating but essentially false humility has been to convince much of the public that the execution of the detective story is child's play, something that may be accomplished almost at will by any one who wishes to take the required time."

Given the conventions of a detective novel as postulated by different scholars like Haycraft, Winks, Knox, etc. we tend to respect Kekana for the work produced that will benefit and increase such works in Northern Sotho. The novel Nnete fela is fascinating and magnetic. It unleashes the reader's curiosity and interest. It activates our power of rational thinking and enhances our ability of forming conclusions. It also takes us on a long, exciting and spine-chilling excursion accompanying our hero, Ariel the detective in this case together with the victim and suspect, Bubbles.

When the author takes his reader along with him into these dangerous experiences, he neither sympathises nor empathises with the supposed or potential victim of the time. He is merely an objective observer who keeps a very safe distance but observes so accurately as to give us a crystal clear picture of what is happening at the time. It is this detachment that Kekana has handled so superbly in Nnete fela that is postulated by Groenewald (1977:19) when he says:

"Menslikheid, deernis, ja, enige vorm
van meegevoel kom nie ter sprake nie."

Kekana has handled the theme of this novel so well that the reader is better able to understand all other structural elements of the novel. This idea is also postulated by Meij and Snyman (1986:50) when they say:

"---- as 'n mens die kern verstaan,
verstaan jy nie net die verhaal nie,
maar is jy al goed op die weg om die
funksionaliteit van die onderskeie
struktuurelemente in die verhaal
te peil."

With innovative skill and experience, Kekana has managed to blend together all the structural elements of this novel to fully contribute to the development of the theme. The other events in the novel are also beautifully worked out to revolve around the theme to bring it out clearly and predominantly to the reader to grip his attention and persuade him to read on and on. Indeed Kekana has managed to fully expose to the reader, the theme in Nnete fela being (Kekana 1990:278):

"Nnete e bose, go na le khutšo mo go yona."
(The truth is sweet, there is peace in it.)

There are a number of crimes being detected in Nete fela. Amongst others the fraudulent activities of the syndicate, the hiding of Karabo, the death of Kwena, the murder of Thoba, the pursuit of Bubbles to mention just but a few are all contributing to the theme. This well workedout theme binds these events together in a unity and have the one related to the other.

Ariel Meso, as an amateur detective, has been created in accordance with the stipulations of scholars such as Haycraft and others. His manner of detection is quite methodical and livelier than that of a professional detective and satisfies the dictate of Allen and Chacko (1974:360) when they point out:

"---- the detective then follows up quietly from clue to clue till the problem is solved, the reader accompanying the great man in his search."

The love-making scenes in this novel are worked into the story in such a way that they do not disturb the flow of events or the unity of the story. They however provide the reader with humour, breaking the tension as well as providing the reader with the human side of our detective hero. It is while the reader accompanies the great man in his escapades that he immediately realises that Ariel Meso is endowed with above average attributes. Ariel has an enviable and rare ability to combine sincerity, warmth, sensitivity, accessibility, discipline,

dignity, calm and orderly control of his life. Hence Kekana (1990:91) says this about him:

"Ba kgetha go nwa senoselapološi ka bobedi bja bona. Ariel o be a sa tšee dinotagi e bile a sa kgoge."

(They chose to take a cold-drink both of them. Ariel did not take liquor, neither did he smoke.)

Kekana has beautifully portrayed Bubbles as an accomplice of the syndicate. Her beauty, intelligence, charm and strong personality makes her a convincing character in accordance with the postulations of Robin Winks. It is unfortunate that Kekana after such a beautiful depiction transgresses the "Rules of the game" by making Bubbles more intelligent than our detective hero, Ariel, when Bubbles (Kekana 1990:97) thinks thus about Ariel:

"O naganang? Ga o bohlale ka moo o bego o gopola mošemane. Ba maatla ba kgonwa ke ba maano wešo, haa!"

(What do you think? You are not as intelligent as you thought you are, boy. The brawny are often outwitted by the brainy, my man, haa!)

While Kekana had so perfectly depicted Bubbles as a traitor to the syndicate, who is now a fugitive, she is drawn into being a murderer of Thoba. Although some scholars may argue that Bubbles committed this murder in defence of the life of the detective hero, Ariel, who was also in love with her, it may not hold water and sound convincing because she has now been turned into a murderer herself. This flaw is exposed by the author to the reader when witnessing how Thoba was fatally shot by Bubbles (Kekana 1990:148) thus:

"Ya bobedi kolo ya mo hwetša mafahleng,
mme nakong yeo ke ge a ya fase le yena."

(The second bullet struck him on the chest
and by that time he also went down.)

The victims in the novel Nnete fela are very beautifully depicted by the author. He abides strictly by Haycraft's "Rules of the game" by portraying each one of them as a bad character and also as a good character. This is in accordance with the postulation of Winks (198:19) who says this about the victim:

"He has to involve everyone in suspicion,
which requires that he be a bad character;
and he has to make everyone feel guilty,
which requires that he be a good character."

The author has also managed to portray the murderers in a

convincing manner as well as satisfying the criteria set by scholars of erudition like W.H. Auden who says that the pathos of the murderer is always his refusal to suffer. Kekana has also managed to conceal the murderers' demonic pride from the other characters as well as from the reader. This aspect that is also advocated by Auden has been very well handled by Kekana as an experienced writer in Nnete fela. This device in turn has the tendency of gripping the reader's attention and keeping him in suspense. Mabusha's evil intensions were concealed behind his close friendship with Noko which friendship dates many years back. (Kekana 1990:37):

"---- Noko le tatagoKwena ke bagwera
ba bohloko go tloga bosoganeng."

(---- Noko and Kwena's father are bosom
friends from youth.)

It is true what Haycraft says that the most important and most difficult intrigue in a detective novel is the detective hero himself. Indeed Ariel Meso features very prominently in this novel. He is the readers's detective hero whom Kekana has depicted so well. He plays a very important part in the story thus coercing the reader to identify with him and take him very seriously. He gets into very risky and breath-taking situations in the process of his investigations accompanied by the reader and exciting him all the time. His lifestyle and reactions are

those of an ordinary man that we make daily contact with. Our hero also fears death like any other person as revealed by Ariel (Kekana 1990:150) when he reprimands Bubbles thus:

"Ke a tseba gore re a tšhaba. Fela go tla re thušang go tšhabela mabitleng a rena?"

(I know that we are running away. But what will it help us to run to our own graves?)

Ariel Meso, our detective hero, as portrayed by Kekana, may not be the ideal and perfect detective because Auden in Winks (1980:20) sound this warning note about the detective:

"Completely satisfactory detectives are rare. Indeed I know of only three: Sherlock Holmes (Conan Doyle), Inspector French (Freemar Wills Crofts), and Father Brown (Chesterton)."

Given the above postulation one still believes that Kekana has created a great detective of our times in Ariel Meso whose analytical powers are a marvel to the reader if one considers the scarcity or non-existence of detective novels in Northern Sotho. The other characters' personalities Kekana did not outline and

depict with the same precision as that of Ariel, the principal and hero detective as evidenced in the portrayal (Kekana 1990:48) of Saki:

"Saki o be a le tšweletsong ya terama a
thušana le Ariel."

(Saki was a producer of drama, assisting
Ariel.)

The same type of portrayal is given to Mr. Phoko (Kekana 1990:79) thus:

"Morena Phoko e be e le mongwadi wa dipuku
tše mmalwa, dikanegelo le direto."

(Mr. Phoko was an author of a number of
books, novels and poems.)

The portrayal of the above characters is not regarded as a flaw on the part of the author. Kekana has most beautifully employed this technique with the view of having the whole lime-light focusing on the principal detective.

The incidental characters like Mokaba and Sewele to mention just but a few have also been employed to reason for the sake of the minor roles they play. Mokaba is specifically employed as an incidental character to facilitate the murder of Thoba and the injury of Champ by Bubbles and thus increase the complication

phase of the novel (Kekana 1990: 149):

"O (Mokaba) ile a se kgolwe mahlo a gagwe se a mmontšhago sona ge a tšwele ka morago ga legora. Gomme a hwetša banna ba gagwe ba le fase, mme Bubbles a le pele ga sefatanaga sa gagwe sethunya se le ka seatleng ----"

(He (Mokaba) did not believe what his eyes showed him when he appeared from behind the hedge. He found his men floored and Bubbles standing in front of her car with a gun in her hand ----)

The same technique has been used by Kekana to increase the tension between Ariel and Bubbles at Majaneng. Sewele has been employed as an incidental character with her respectable Std. 10 education to further complicate the complication phase and to increase the suspense. She is depicted (Kekana 1990: 229) thus:

"Sewele o be a sa tšo tlogela dithuto tša marematlou ka baka la boimana."

(Sewele had just left a matriculation class due to pregnancy.)

Kekana has made use of the services of the professional police force. Like the other characters Kekana does not make them

appear very prominent in the investigations so as not to steal the lime-light from Ariel, the principal hero. Although the syndicate had managed to outwit the police for many years, Ariel with his strong analytical powers, intelligence, patience and alertness could not be outwitted. Ariel is made to overshadow the police because he is more livelier than them and is always on the spot. In the end it was through Ariel's efforts and revelations that the criminals and murderers were arrested by the police.

Kekana has employed an intricate plot structure in the novel Nnete fela, but this can easily be demarcated into the beginning, the middle and the end.

Kekana has managed to manipulate various incidents to flow together, beautifully blended in unison that leads to a convincing climax and ultimately to a satisfactory denouement.

The complication phase concerns itself with pushes and pulls brought about by several incidents that build up tension whilst drawing the interest of the reader. This tension is quite often relieved by love-making scenes and humour that hold the attention of the reader.

The exposition phase is simple and not elaborate. Kekana leaves the reader to make his own deductions as to the personalities of the characters. Dialogue is the main device that Kekana uses to reveal the traits of his characters particularly the traits of Ariel, Bubbles, Noko and Karabo. Ariel's reprimand of the clerk (Kekana 1990:3) is enough to expose his character to the reader:

"Hee mokgomana, o tla ntshwarela kudu
go kgaoletš[∇]a kgang yeo ya lena e bose.
Fela o tla elelwa gore ye ke nako ya modiro
e sego ya magang a bjalo ka ao."

(Hey, gentleman, you will pardon me
unreservedly to cut short that nice
conversation of yours. But you will
realise that this is time for work and
not for conversations such as those ones.)

Each important incident in the novel contributes fully to the plot structure. The tug-of-war is that of wits with Ariel outwitting the murderers at every turn. At one point in time these murderers felt helpless, beaten and dejected when Ariel had so outwitted them that they had to give up their murder plans (Kekana 1990:187):

"Basindikheiti ba be ba meletš[∇]a Ariel
mare ba mo дума ba mo lebeletš[∇]e a sepela

ka go rata pele ga bona ----"

(The syndicators were envious at Ariel wishing to get at him whilst they saw him going about as he pleased right in front of them ----)

Kekana's novel, Nnete fela really plays fair because all the clues are laid bare before the reader. All evidence is known to the detective and there are no false clues. There is unity of mood, characters, dialogue, milieu, style and the persona of the detective hero. They all form a coherent whole.

In conclusion Kekana ends up the novel without recourse to the law. This is most probably because this exercise entails technical and legal terms and procedures which many a detective novel author are unable to grapple with. We therefore salute Kekana for this conclusion.

Kekana's criminals, Champ, Sello and Mabusha are not executed but arrested. We regard this as a flaw, however minor. Execution is regarded by most scholars as a form of atonement by which the murderer is forgiven by society. For a murderer to merely be arrested is simply not enough for this does not in any way suggest that he will and is prepared to repent for society to forgive him.

Be that as it may, Kekana has produced an excellent, innovative and open novel, Nnete fela. Given the lack of the detective novels in Northern Sotho, we highly appreciate his attempt and great contribution to this genre with this meritorious work, Nnete fela, and welcome it with open arms.

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