

**THE FORM, CONTENT AND STYLE IN  
P.LESEYANE'S  
LETLHAKU LE LEGOLOGOLO**

by  
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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

**MAGISTER ARTIUM**

in the subject

**SOTHO LANGUAGES**

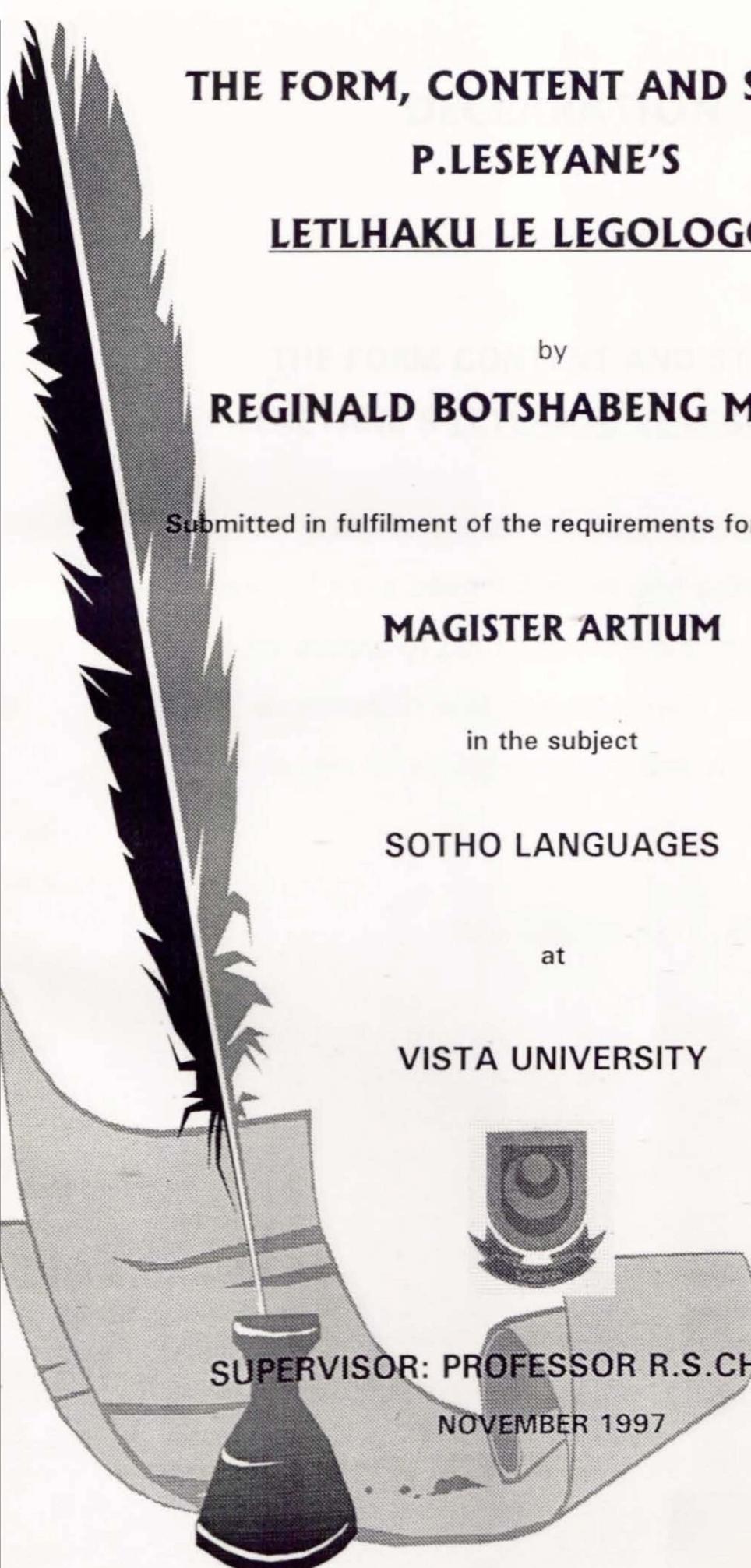
at

**VISTA UNIVERSITY**



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**NOVEMBER 1997**



# DECLARATION

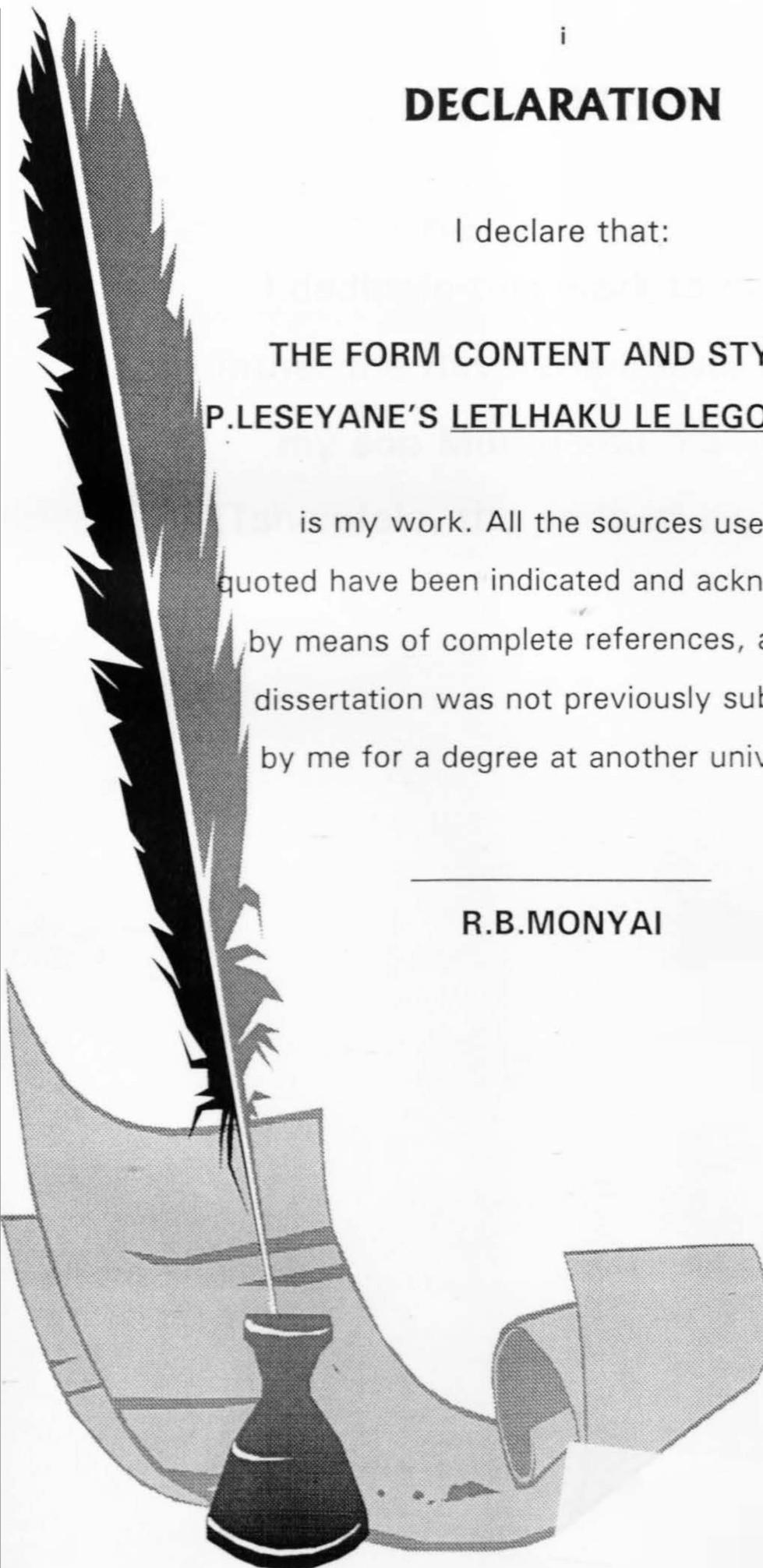
I declare that:

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P.LESEYANE'S LETLHAKU LE LEGOLOGOLO**

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

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**R.B.MONYAI**



## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late  
father the Reverend Muntu Monyai,  
my son Muntu and the lovely  
Tsholofelo, the pride of my family.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever, with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.

I am humbled by the professorial and professional motivation and counsel by my supervisor, Professor R.S.Chaphole. The conception and completion of this work is attributed to his scholarly thought.

I wish to thank Doctor N.J.Manyaka for his openness and constructive strictness at critiquing this work.

I wish to put on record my gratitude to the following people: Mr A Mahlase, the unsung hero who is vested with cultural wealth, Mr D.M.G Sekeleko, for being my mentor and father, Mr Mabule, for reminding me to plan my work and work my plan, Effie, Mrs Mathibela, Messr Mampuru and Maseko, for sharing their study material with me. May God bless you all.

A word of thanks goes to my SETSWANA 300 Literature class of '97 for its critical eye in literary analysis. I gained a lot of insight from you guys.

I am particularly grateful to my mother, Mmatshabi for making a man out of me at all cost.

To Lebo, my wife, the greatest manager of them all, for her ingenuity at organising our family when I was unavailable, for giving our children love, and for teaching them respect. I thank God for our relationship: **Mosadi yo o maatlametlo o tswa mo Modimong** (Proverbs 19:14).

Finally, I am indebted to Vista University for financial assistance.

## ABSTRACT

Much memory, or memory of many things, is called experience. Again, imagination being only for those things which have been formerly perceived by sense, either all at once or by parts at several times; the former, which is the imagining the whole object as it was presented to the sense, is *simple* imagination, as when one imagineth a man, or horse, which he hath seen before. The other is *compounded*; as when, from the sight of a man at one time and of a horse at another, we conceive in our mind a centaur. So when a man compoundeth the image of his own person with the image of the actions of another man ..., it is a compound imagination, and properly but a fiction of the mind (Thomas Hobbes in Hollander *et al* 1973:1001)

This study sets out to expose the literariness of Leseyane's Letlhaku le legologolo as an essay. The point of departure here is that in the Setswana language, there seems to be a lack of the essay as an art-form. Guided by this we first define the term essay according to different scholars, in an attempt to set ground rules for our discussion. The structure of the essay in its classical form, as well as the relationship between the essay and the essayist, and between the essay and other literary forms, are discussed.

**ABSTRACT** - *Continued*

The second chapter reveals the theoretical background as relied on in chapters three and four. Chapter three focusses on the content of the essay, discusses the various themes, and is the beginning of the discussion proper of our text, Letlhaku le legologolo. The relationship between the essayist and the reader is hinted at in this chapter since the content of any given essay usually belongs to the world view of the society that produces the author thereof.

Chapter four is the product of the first and third parts of the title: The form, content and style in Leseiane's Letlhaku le legologolo, namely form and style. These are discussed together because of similarities in their approach. We also discuss space and text in this chapter to reveal the relationship between literature and the society that produces it.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The essay, although somewhat morbid and escapist in nature, happens to be a literary genre which, like all similar forms, needs to adhere to certain rigorous attributes to qualify as an art-form. We intend in this work to investigate the form and/or structure of the essay in Letlhaku le legologolo.

By form here we specifically refer to the morphology of the essay, what makes a classical outline of this genre, and whether Leseiyane's work conforms to the classical pattern, and if he deviates, is it an offence to the literary analyst, or poetic licence. We are interested in the flow of the essay from the introduction through to the conclusion with the golden thread pervading the art-form without necessarily being too liquid.

We also intend focusing on content, which aspect has to do with the ingenuity of the author in his presentation of his ideas. The fact that the essay is usually short, with the author being somehow a master of the subject he chooses to deliberate on, does not give him absolute prowess over the reader, nor can he take the reader for granted. While the reader is there to be convinced at all cost by the writer, the latter should have his facts straight.

As such, our intention is to look at the authenticity of the facts, given the fact that this volume Letlhaku le legologolo is based on the Setswana proverbial wealth, and an average Motswana is most likely to have a general inkling of the basic meaning of any given proverb.

Lastly, we cannot claim that any work that does not conform to a particular theory is not literary. We are informed that there is both the formal and informal essay, which accounts for the possibility of digression sometimes deliberate by the author. Style is thus another tool we will employ to investigate Leseiane's work. We are interested here in his ability to merge poetic licence with rigor mortis.

### 1.1 *Aims of Study*

There is a dearth in Setswana of the essay as an art-form. In essence M.O.M. Seboni's Koketsa-kitso ya lefatshe had for quite some time been deemed to be an essay, although it does not meet much of the prescribed features of this genre. Then came Letlhaku le legologolo, which upon publication, was classified as a short-story. It was however, reclassified as an essay. We would like to find out thus the versatile qualities that Leseiane's work has as an art-form.

Our observation is that this piece of writing deviates somewhat from the simple definition of the essay. Such aspects as preciseness, brevity, lack of characterization and a host of others,

seem not to be observed in this work, so we wish to look deeply into the form of this literary work, that is, the movement from the introduction to the conclusion in a cohesive and convincing manner, as well as the linking of ideas according to paragraphs. We also are keen on the author's style in his presentation of ideas, to be specific, we are keen on establishing how he manages to manipulate his content in a diplomatic and as far as possible, less controversial manner, that is, does he worship prescription at the expense of originality, or does he entertain much at the expense of formality?

## 1.2 *Scope of Study*

Chapter 1 forms the introductory part, and gives definition of the major constituents of the essay.

Chapter 2 is the theoretical background to the study. Structuralism and stylistics and their relationships with the essay are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 3 focuses on the content of Leseyane's essays in Letlhaku le legologolo.

Chapter 4 discusses the form and style of Letlhaku le legologolo.

Chapter 5 looks back on the form, content and style evinced in Leseyane's compositions, as well as recommendations for further research.

### 1.3 *Framework of Study*

We elect to employ the following theories in our investigation: a merger of structuralism and stylistics since the study is much about style and form. Traces of Russian Formalism will be evident particularly in the discussion on content.

### 1.4 *Literature Review on Letlhaku le legologolo*

There has not been much attention to the essay as a literary art in Setswana. Letlhaku le legologolo has for this reason not previously been investigated, except the work by Malimabe where she discusses aspects of the literary essay with reference to Letlhaku le legologolo. She sees the primary function of the essay as:

- go tliša kgakologelo
- go phopholetsa
- go bona kitso le botlhale go tswa mo tthagisong e e rileng mo botshelong (Educamus 37:6:19).
- (to remind
- to take a wild guess
- to derive knowledge from a particular life experience).

She also exposes the relationship between the essayist and the reader, that the essayist should always focus and imagine the reader, and she says:

a mokwadi o itse kana o tsaya batho ba a ba kwalelang tsia? O akanya batho ba a ba kwalelang ba na le kitso e e kana kang ka ga setlhogo se a kwalang ka sona? (Educamus 37:6:19).

*(Does the writer know, or take his reader seriously? What does he think about his reader's competence regarding the subject he plans to discuss?).*

## 1.5 *The essay as an art-form*

### 1.5.1 *Definition of the essay*

Whereas the three Aristotelian literary forms, that is, drama, verse, and prose, can be easily defined according to their relationship with each one's audience, as in drama, where the author uses the *dramatis personae's* dialogue as a vehicle to relay his message to his readership, and in verse, the narrator talks to himself with the reader overhearing his wandering thoughts, and in prose — novel, short-story, and novelette — the narrator sort of tells or narrates the story-line to his audience, the essay adopts a somewhat eclectic stance, as it accommodates features of all the above forms.

This renders the essay difficult to define, as (Obaldia 1985:02) aptly puts it, that

*the essay is an essentially ambulatory and fragmented prose form.*

He further asserts that

*... the one commonly accepted fact about the essay is that indeterminacy is germane to its essence.*

It is thus difficult to offer a reasonably common definition to this kind of literary hybrid, as Obaldia (1985:03) says:

*It combines a seemingly arbitrary mixture of literary characteristics.*

For the mere fact that the essay stretches itself across the tripartite genres, and its ability to adapt to these forms comfortably, this morbid piece of literature acquires the stature of the richest and perhaps the most powerful in literature. The following definitions serve as an attempt at exposing the vastness and scope of the essay as well as its heterogenous nature:

The Oxford Advanced Learners's Dictionary of Current English defines it as:

*a piece of writing, usu. short and in prose, on anyone subject. Testing or trial of the value of sth. Attempt.*

Van Rooyen *et al.* (1984:163) define it as:

*a prose composition of moderate length, dealing in an easy and casual way with any chosen subject, reflecting the writer's own point of view, often persuasive in nature, but showing no conscious attempt at exhausting the subject.*

Longman (1949:02) says the word essay comes from the French *essais* and *essayer*, meaning to attempt, to experiment, to try out, and further back from the Latin *exagium*, suggesting 'weighing' an object or an idea, examining it from various angles, but never exhaustively or systematically.

What pervades the above three definitions is the supposed preciseness of the essay as well as the responsibility of the author thereof. The essayist seems knowledgeable about a topic of his

choice, which he expertly tries out, as put by van Rooyen *et al.* (1984:163), with no intention at all to exhaust it. Kwetana (1985:06) says the essayist

*writes to convince through explicit expression or implication of an opinion.*

The versatile nature of an essay is explained better in Carl Claus' words, that the essay is a very flexible form, where he refers to Montaigne — father of the essay — as having used it for exploring himself and his ideas about human experience, and his essays were, in a sense, a means of thinking on paper, of trying things out in writing quoted in Obaldia (1985:02).

The above idea warrants some exploration into the relationship between the essayist and his audience, — as it borders around the voyage by the essayist into himself — his view or opinion about human existence, nature and other phenomena about life, how he perceives of them and how he puts them across to the reader on paper, as well as what the reader makes of the writer's subjective experience and opinion.

### 1.5.2 *The Relationship between the essayist and the reader*

Since the essay is an attempt at a sensitive, intriguing and sometimes controversial subject, it calls for the writer to be highly knowledgeable and proficient about what he writes, as which Gardiner confirms, quoted by Kwetana (1985:06) that

*essays are written by highly literate and sensitive men and they promote that sort of literacy in their own readers.*

This is likely to impress upon the reader and force him to be gullible to some point, whatever point of view he might be holding about the topic under discussion. Maphike (1978) skilfully chooses words such as shrewdness and/or efficiency as a good essayist's tool to keep the reader's attention gripped, as well as to make the experience he is sharing with his reader indelible.

The author should not take the reader of the essay for granted. Montaigne, in Obaldia (1985:34) agrees in principle that

*we register the appearance of objects; to judge them we need an instrument of judgement; to test the veracity of that instrument we need practical proof; to test that proof we need an instrument. We are going around in circles ...*

Precisely, what it means is that the writer should understand that the reader out there is equally inquisitive and enthusiastic about different phenomena as he is, and that the reader needs to be convinced, and where possible, even be proselytized.

The onus lies with the essayist not to treat the reader with utter contempt or undermine his intelligence and/or imagination by being either too frivolous or too serious for that matter. Frivolous, superficial, and trivial because he only touches upon his subject here and there, 'impressionistically' because he writes mere 'anecdotes' of the intellect', and being too much 'arty' and pedantic in one's presentation surely should be a sign of lack of expertise by the writer (Obaldia 1985:19).

There is thus no point in time when the author should forget to take his companion — the reader — alongside him on their journey to newer and fascinating truth values, especially since the cultural fibre is usually at the pivot of one's writing.

The fact that the essay is predominantly subjective makes it vulnerable to immediate difference of opinion. It is thus not surprising that very few writers make an attempt at this type of writing, perhaps the most accessible reason that in Setswana in particular not much has been produced in the form of the essay.

### 1.5.3 *The Relationship between the essay and other literary forms*

Different people read for different reasons; for mere appreciation, self-enrichment, or for systematic criticism, so literature presents itself in three distinct facets, the first one being literature as art. Here the author consciously involves style and vivid imagination to lure his reader, as clearly implied in Burgess' (1958:07) words, that

*literature is exploitation of words,*

which is confirmed specifically by Percy Schelly on poetry, in The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Quotations (1969:215), that it is

*the record of the best and happiest moments of  
the happiest and best minds.*

Coleridge says that prose is words in their best order, and poetry the best words in their best order (The Concise Dictionary of Quotations 1969:67). Art is thus the fundamental reason behind literature writing.

We can also take literature as an exposition of one's personal life experience. The life experience of Emile Bronte, that of utter bitterness, frustration and despondence on her bereavement, is expressed in her Wuthering Heights' depiction of little Richard.

D.H.Lawrence's alleged poor physical development is made manifest in his unending reference of his male characters to a horse — a symbol of virility, potency and strength, — as a means to hibernate his sexual desire which he seldom realized.

Another example could be that of J.M.Ntsime's pervasive Christian theme, where he makes sure that the Christian faith emerges victorious over all other religious practices, as evident in his Madi ka Madi and Letshwao la kolobetso in Mpolelele dilo. These suggest the said author having had a closer affinity with the saving power of the Lord.

Lastly, literature can comment on life as it presents itself to us, since man is a *homo sapiens*, and can observe and make sense of such observation. The influx — afflux control measures of the

apartheid past are made manifest in Malope's Matlhoko-Matlhoko, and the social imbalance caused by strife and jealousy are reflected in Raditladi's Motswasele II.

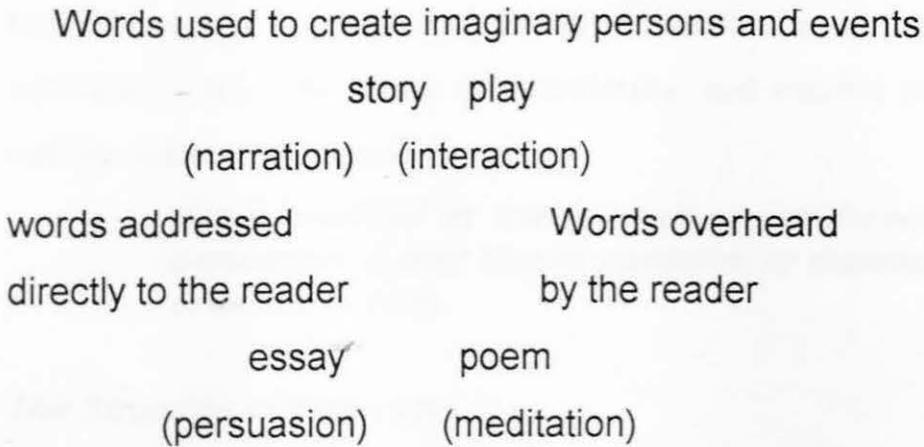
Monyaise reflects on the theme of love and kingship in his Bogosi Kupe, phenomena which we all know are with us practically. The author thus sits and carefully thinks on paper and preserves what the ordinary eye might have let slip away from posterity.

Whether the writer chooses to write for the sake of art, or to relate his personal experience, or perhaps even to touch on real life and human experience, there should be a specific path to take. He might choose to be a storyteller, where he employs a narrator to relate his story, or he can elect to talk to himself and let an audience to overhear his imaginative thoughts. He might feel the best modus operandi to convey his ideas could be to assign a few characters the task. These ways of presentation lend themselves to being prose, verse, and play respectively.

While we said earlier that it is hard to define and classify the essay, Obaldia (1985:05) stresses the fact that its form

*makes it a member of literature and does, for some theorists, grant it the right to establish itself as a fourth literary genre alongside the other three.*

The following diagram by Scholes *et al.* (1969:xxx) is an attempt at revealing the relationship between the essay and the other three genres:



Words used to express ideas and feelings

There is a close affinity between the above four types because of the indispensable fusion of thought and style as well as the lavish and generous use of the narrative, poetic, and dramatic features of literature observable in essay writing (Scholes *et al.* 1969:08). It is thus the reason we have the narrative essay, where the essayist

presents an argument via a narrator, the dramatic essay, where he creates a world of characters who, through exchange enact a story, as well as the poetic essay, where the reader sorts of eavesdrops on the artist.

In summing up, Scholes *et al.* (1969:08) confirm what we said earlier that the essay is ambulatory and morbid in nature, when they say it

*is not confined to the form of straightforward persuasion; it may also be narrative, or dramatic, or poetic in form.*

## 1.6 ***The Structure of the essay***

Since we intend looking into the form and style of Leseyane's essays, discussing the aspect of structure is imperative. The essay does not deviate much from the classical format of the other literary genres, and would warrant an introduction, a body, and a conclusion as its constituent parts.

### 1.6.1 ***The introduction***

The introduction is usually one paragraph long. It introduces what follows, that is, the body, and is concise and to the point, (Kumalo 1985:08). It tells us about what the writer is going to say. It is, according to van Rooyen *et al.* (1984:163) a point of departure where the attention of the reader is drawn to the aspect the essay

intends discussing. This should not be absolute, for the informal essay does not subscribe much to form as to content, as discussed under the meditative essay.

Shipley (1970:106) reflects on the essay's brevity and restriction of a topic, by which the formal essay develops, so to say, the subject logically. This is where structure becomes important, and a formalised introduction essential.

Maphike (1978:78) explains that

*the introduction in the essay serves to arouse the reader's interest by immediately enabling him to identify the plan and extent of the essay.*

It is in other words, some form of dovetailing of the topic, narrowing down the scope and easing the startled mind about the *quo vadis* from the topic. The essayist is in a process of channelling the reader's mind and interest, leading him along with him so that the reader does not get lost.

### 1.6.2 ***The body***

The body of the essay, like most other genres, is ideally divided into paragraphs of varying lengths and number. Each paragraph is pregnant with one main idea which is not divorced from the subject under discussion. There should ideally be a golden thread piercing through the first to the last paragraph.

The idea that the writer introduced in the introduction is developed further logically, and since a string of paragraphs is the vehicle to relay the message, they have to be linked. Boulton (1972:41) defines the paragraph as:

*a small group of thoughts that hang together... In normal paragraphing it is also usual to have the last sentence of one paragraph and the first sentence of the next linking the sense in some way without necessarily being too contrived and artificial. Somewhat short paragraphs provide some sort of tension relief from long and tedious ones, as such there should be a mixture of both types.*

Kumalo (1985:08) agrees with Boulton when saying that

*each paragraph must form a unit, the sentences being connected with each other, all centred on one main idea. The paragraphs must be clear, with the main idea being logically developed. Each paragraph should be complete and a fitting part of the whole. The initial sentence in each paragraph introduces the main idea in it.*

What the above scholars agree about is that the essayist's work should not be fragmented as to cut the golden thread of unity. The reader should be provided with guidance without necessarily spoon-feeding him.

Finally Maphike (1978:79) says that any bit of information intended for the reader should be conveyed in a carefully considered form. There is thus no way that a formal essay can evade the aspect of precision and structured form.

### 1.6.3 *The conclusion*

The classical conclusion usually comprises one paragraph. It rounds off the idea introduced in the initial paragraph. It prickles the mind of the reader about the subject, since the essayist commits himself in the first place to being an expert. This reminds us of the part played by the reader that he is so involved that the writer should be on his toes. The conclusion should as such, be as close to the point and relevant as possible.

According to van Rooyen *et al.* (1984:164),

*it should, therefore, leave the reader with a clear lasting impression, a feeling of enlightenment and a renewed zest for knowledge and wisdom.*

## CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Introduction

We aim in this chapter to provide a broader theoretical background to our study. Since we are dealing with three notions, namely, **form**, **content**, and **style** in Leseyane's work, we would have liked to invoke three schools of thought, that is **structuralism**, **Russian formalism** and **stylistics**.

We will nonetheless focus on the first and the last, that is, structuralism and stylistics, and only in passing — during analysis — touch on Russian formalism. Chaphole, in van Wyk (1993:24) says in this regard:

*In our choice of a framework for the analysis of African literature, can we afford to pick up an approach that will deliberately bracket content,*

and further that

*I admit and accept that there is a lot of sense to be derived from the defamiliarisation of Russian Formalism; I admit further that we can learn a lot from the system of linguistic signs which are the underbelly of structuralism... A fuller interpretation of African Literature will require a trio of concepts namely FORM, CONTENT and CONTEXT.*

The above argument forms the basis of our theoretical framework in this chapter. Having to deal with the form, content and style in Letlhaku le legologolo prescribes the three theories mentioned above, and they are nicely intertwined. For example, in his essay Pheko ya gole e tsewa ka

motlha wa tsholo, Leseyane beautifully in poetic form, plays about with idiomatic expressions, showing the relationship between song and the Setswana proverb. This essay is in one dimension meditative and another, narrative. We will discuss relevant examples in chapter 3 under content.

The content is well defamiliarized as he wanders in his description of the concepts of the proverb under discussion, and his style is seen in his elaborate presentation. The very title of the essay Pheko ya gole e tsewa ka motlha wa tsholo employs the Russian Formalist's aspect of literature as verbal art. This and other examples to be discussed in the ensuing chapters try to explain the fact that it is not an easy task to divorce content from form.

Lastly, on style, the author's recurrent use of illustration to back his argument up is worth noting. His account of his visit to the then Bechuanaland Protectorate and how he practically became enlightened about the essence of this proverb, is — we might say — one among other stylistic attributes he employs to keep either the reader in suspense, to search thoroughly, or further still, since this is a meditative essay — as will be discussed later — he wanders alone and leaves the reader behind him, hence the somewhat devious presentation at times.

Having said that, our approach will be eclectic in nature, informed by Bertolt Brecht in Makaryk (1993:vii), when he says:

*a man [woman] with one theory is lost. He [she] needs several of them, or lots!(Gender reference mine).*

## 2.2 *Structuralism: Background*

Perhaps the most salient way to foreground this theory is to adopt the imagery as put by Mary Douglas in her Purity and danger, in Culler (1988:168) that

*where there is dirt there is a system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, insofar as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements... Shoes are not dirty in themselves, but it is dirty to place them on the dining table. Food is not dirty in itself, but it is dirty to leave cooking utensils in the bedroom, or food bespattered on clothing; similarly, bathroom equipment in the drawing room; clothing lying on chairs; out-door things indoors; upstairs things downstairs; under-clothing appearing where overclothing should be, and so on. In short, our pollution behaviour is the reaction which condemns any object or idea likely to confuse or contradict cherished classification.*

What becomes readily conspicuous in the above quotation is the idea of coherence, completeness, a system which is made up of constituent parts. Interference of any kind renders the system awkward and therefore makes it lose its original aspect of totality.

Each constituent part is therefore meaningless and detached on its own unless connected to its system. A linguistic example in our case would be the distinction between phonetics and phonology.

With the former, speech sounds are analysed individually without any reference to any other speech sound, whereas with the latter, the value

of a speech sound is established with the whole sound system in mind. For instance, the rule that a labio-velar glide may never follow a labial sound in Setswana explains the application of certain phonological processes as determined by the morpheme structure conditions.

These conditions are made possible by the whole sound system of the Batswana. It is on this principle of the system that structuralism is founded, which The Oxford Paperback Dictionary defines as

*the theory that societies, languages, works of literature, etc. can be understood only by analysis of their structure (rather than their function).*

This is so because structuralist ideas derive from linguistics and Anthropology, firstly, according to Jefferson (1982:93), on linguistics

*because of its exemplary status, language was to be used as 'the master pattern for all branches of semiology' — science of signs,*

and secondly, according to Selden (1985:69), on anthropology because

*at the heart of structuralism is a scientific ambition to discover the codes, the rules, the systems, which underlie all human social and cultural practices.*

A particular focus will be put on Ferdinand de Saussure's contribution to structuralism, narratology according to Propp, as well as on unravelling the relationship between the simple forms and the origin of the essay.

### 2.2.1 *The Basis of Structuralism: linguistics and the System*

The preoccupation by Russian Formalism of confining itself to the study of literature, language and defamiliarization, because the essence of literature is pure aesthetic intentions, invited criticism from other quarters with new thoughts. Marxist theory for instance, according to Gräbe (1986:144), condemns the obsession by Russian Formalists, of purely pleasure purposes in literature and propose that literature should change its readers by prescriptive education.

Another criticism which paved way for structuralism is contained in Mikhail Bakhtin's The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship, in which he is against the Formalist's preoccupation with the theory of poetic language at the expense of the social nature of literature (Makaryk 1993:57).

In accordance with Selden's (1985:55) idea that "*underlying our use of language is a system, a pattern of paired opposites, binary oppositions,*" Ferdinand de Saussure distinguishes between *langue* and *parole*, signifier and signified, syntagma and paradigms in an attempt to bring literature closer to linguistics.

He relies heavily on semiotics, or the science of signs (Jefferson 1982:93) in his study. The drive to indulge in such study was apparently inevitable, as aptly put in the review of Terrence Hawkes' (1977: Review page) work that we live in a world of signs, and of signs about signs.

A growing awareness of this situation has involved modern man in a momentous change of perspective which has gradually forced him to accept that in such a world 'reality' inheres not in things themselves, but in the relationship we discern between things; not in items, but structures.

In his Course in General Linguistics Saussure (1915:16) comments on the reciprocity between language and semiotics thus:

*Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them ... Linguistics is only a part of the general science of semiology; the laws discovered by semiology will be applicable to linguistics, and the latter will circumscribe a well-defined area within the mass of anthropological facts.*

The world of signs, the laws that prescribe orderly patterns as well as the interdependence between language as a science and the study of human relations, are what Hawkes (1977:124) is in agreement with Saussure when he (Hawkes) says:

*semiology's boundaries (if it has any) are coterminous with those of structuralism: the interest of the two spheres are not fundamentally separate and, in the long run, both ought properly to be included within the province of a third, embracing discipline called, simply, communication.*

Since the theory of the sign must cohere with a theory of meaning-systems, Saussure, in Carusi (1992:23) elects to differentiate langue

from parole. Langue is said to be the overall shared system of a language. It is, as defined by Selden (1985:53), the social aspect of language; it the shared system which we (unconsciously) draw upon as speakers and as defined by Culler (1975:08), a system, an institution, a set of interpersonal rules and norms.

The aspect of man's ability to speak is inferred here, that is, the linguistic potential, as Scholes (1974:14) and Lechte (1994:151) respectively emphasize that Saussure's point is fundamentally that language is a social institution.

The social nature of language is further corroborated where Lechte puts a case that language is dynamic, and that it changes independently of its speakers, because it is by itself a fountain from which the speakers draw (Scholes:1974:14).

Langue is thus the greater part, the collective, the iron-ore from which the refined metal is smelted, the phonological system from which the smallest unit in an utterance derives, the gestalt philosophy of the entire man, the nervous system which aids sensation. The structuralist asserts that the linguistic system is the carrier of meaning and not the individual speaker.

Parole on the other hand is the actual performance of a given language by the individual. The battle between semantics and pragmatics is insinuated here, that is, competence versus performance. It is according to Selden (1985:53),

*the individual realisation of the system in actual instances of language.*

We could not agree more with Culler (1975:05) when he states that parole comprises the actual manifestations of the system of the system in speech and writing. Let us consider the following linguistic example:

**Raditladi o ntheketse boro**  
*(Raditladi has bought bread for me).*

The above example is the surface structure and therefore the actual realisation of the deep structure, which is

**Raditladi o reketse nna boro**  
*(Raditladi has bought bread for me).*

The speaker of the Setswana language makes sense of both sentences the same way and understands that if the object *nna* precedes the verb in the form of the objectival concord n, and therefore *n* and *r* are juxtaposed, then the phonological process of plosivation occurs. This can only be derived from the knowledge of the system, moving from the deep to the surface structure.

Broekman (1974:23) adds that parole

*refers to the individual moment in my speaking, and thus indicates how the language is used.*

The question of text versus context becomes useful here, since the Russian Formalist concentrates on the text in isolation as the producer of

meaning, while the structuralist relies heavily on the community that moulded the individual's production.

The structuralist thinks along Jefferson's (1982:95) words, that

*it is not the speaker who directly imparts meaning to his utterances, but the linguistic system as a whole which produces it,*

and that

*individual elements have meaning only in so far as they are part of the overall system.*

To conclude on the distinction between langue and parole, Sturrock (1979:08) sums it thus:

*Language is the theoretical system or structure of a language, the corpus of linguistic rules which speakers of that language must obey if they are to communicate; speech is the actual day-to-day use made of that system by individual. This distinction can usefully be compared to the rather better-known one popularized more recently by the American grammarian Noam Chomsky, who distinguishes between our linguistic competence and our linguistic performance, meaning respectively the theory of language we appear to be able to carry constantly in our heads and the practical applications we make of it. For Saussure the linguist's proper job was to study not speech but language, because it was only by doing so that he could grasp the principles on which language functions in practice. This same important distinction emerges, ... as one between structure and event, that is to say between abstract systems of rules and the concrete, individual happenings produced within that system.*

The next binary set of oppositions which follows naturally is the signifier versus signified. The relationship between these and the set we have just discussed is quite significant, since the notion sign is commensurate with relations and the system. Also, signs form the foundation for semiology, and since language is among the many sign-systems (Selden 1985:54), involving semiology in structuralism is only logical.

According to Lyons, in Louwrens (1987:04),

*the meaning of linguistic expressions is commonly described in terms of the notion signification: that is to say, words and expressions are held to be signs which, in some sense, signify, or stand for, other things. The word, thus, in terms of semiology, is not a thing but a sign which both consists of the signifier and signified.*

Selden (1985:53) explains that it is only as constituent parts of a system of relations that the elements of language, that is, words, acquire meaning. As a sign of hospitality, an Eskimo offers his wife to his guest, which may sound strange particularly to an African. The act of offering is a sign and the signified is the hospitality meant. Another example is the religious rites of rising and sitting in the former Tswana region and the Zulu region of the Lutheran church.

In the Batswana Lutheran church, congregants would rise as an outward sign to show respect when praying, and the amaZulu congregants argued that sitting down was closest to kneeling down and thus a sign of respect for ones senior. A junior may not stand before a king, what more

before the Holy altar. Kneeling down thus becomes our sign in this example and reverence and awe are the signified.

The Tempest, by Shakespeare offers another example of the text as a signifier. The anagrams used for the characters represent real life experiences. Prospero is an anagram for prosperity, and thus signifies wealth. Miranda is an anagram for miracle and has qualities of a deity, as evident in Alonso's words, in Hollander *et al.* (1973:504)

*Alonso: Is she the goddess that hath severed us,  
And brought us thus together?*

These attributes are not strange to us as we live in the times of fortune-tellers and spiritual-healers, people with extraordinary qualities.

Saussure also studied the sign system in terms of the distinction between syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships. He posits the idea that language is a system of interdependent terms each of which acquires and produces meaning through simultaneous interaction with others.

The distinction Saussure makes between paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations is in line with the fact that each word has a linear relationship with the words that may go before it and come after it, according to Cuddon (1991:946)

Lyons (1977:240 *et seq.*) hints at the notion of the interdependence of elements in an utterance in his account for syntagmatic relations, that

*the syntagmatic relations which a unit contracts are those which it contracts by virtue of its combination (in a syntagm, or "construction") with other units of the same level.*

The relationship in this type of sense relation is horizontal or sentence dependent. A look at the following example by Molefe (19???:51) clarifies this point:

**Kgopolo ya motho bodiba ba kwena  
O ka go metsa ntse o mo lebile  
Motho o tshwana le khai tsa makgoa  
O ka apara paka wa ipelafatsa  
Wa gata ka popota wa tswa makoko  
O sa itse fa phepheng e iphitlhile  
Ya go konya mo gare ga lekoko.**

*(The mind of a person is a crocodile's well  
He can eat one up alive  
He is like clothes  
which one can proudly put on  
without knowing that they harbour  
a poisonous scorpion in them).*

The words in line one are in a syntagmatic relationship in the sense that **kgopolo** (*mind*) is a human feature and thus can be used with **motho** (*man*). The same applies with **bodiba** (*well*) and **kwena** (*crocodile*), since both are compatible. The relationship does not end here. The possessive **ya** (*of*) is in concordial agreement with the abstract noun **kgopolo** (*mind*) which belongs to class ten whose noun class prefix is the now deleted (**N**).

The same goes for the subjectival concord **ba** (*of*). The copula **ke** (*is*) has been left out for poetic reasons and it too adds meaning to this combination of words to make a coherent sentence. Deriving such a sentence as: **Kgopolo ba tonki di bodiba tsa nonyane**, would thus be nonsensical, since it lacks concordial agreement and reference. **Ba** in **ba tonki** does not agree with the head noun **kgopolo**, and **di bodiba** is not grammatical as well.

It has been pointed out that the mode of language is fundamentally one of sequential movement through time. It follows from this that each word will have a linear or 'horizontal' relationship with the words that precede and succeed it a good deal of capacity to 'mean' various things derives from this pattern of positioning. Hawkes (1977:26-27) says:

*... the meaning 'unrolls' as each word follows its predecessor and is not complete until the final word comes into place.*

On the horizontal feature of the syntagma Scholes (1974:18-19) goes:

*The syntagmatic element of language has to do with the positioning of a sign in any particular utterance. In a given sentence, for example, the meaning of a single word is determined partly by its position in the sentence and its relation to the other words and grammatical units of that sentence.*

The indulgence of structuralism in syntagmatic relations better explains the sense relations as espoused by semanticists. These include among others synonymity, oppositeness of meaning and meaning inclusion

(Louwrens 1987:35). While we recognize their relevance in syntagmatic relations, we prefer to discuss them fully under style.

With paradigmatic relationships, Manyaka *et al.* (1994:06) write:

**Paradigm e re kaela dikgolagano tse di tsepameng  
(vertical) tsa mafoko (ao a ka refosanwang mo  
tiragatsong)**

*(A paradigm refers to vertical relationships of words),*

and according to Cuddon (1991:946), a paradigmatic relationship implies that a sentence is in a relationship with other words that are not used but are

*capable of being used — and by being capable are thus associated... this is a relationship in absentia, i.e., between the element in question which is there, and other elements, which are not there in that particular message.*

For example, in lines three and four of our poem above, the word **khai** (*garment*) is in a vertical and thus paradigmatic relationship with **apara** (put on). Certainly, clothes are meant to be worn. Also, **bodiba ba kwena** in line one is in a paradigmatic relationship with **bolotsana** in line nine as well as **sentlhaga sa nonyane** in line eleven. The three linguistic words have an essentially similar meaning. Still waters spell danger and a bird's nest sometimes harbours snakes which hide in there both to eat the eggs and to bite any hand that searches for nestlings.

We opt to shelve much discussion here as well for the chapter on style.

### 2.2.2 *Structuralism and Literature: narratology*

Although structuralism derives much from linguistics and semiotics, it has always been intended for literary purposes. The point in caressing linguistics by structuralists is simply that literature uses language, and because language and society are compatible, in terms of structure, they both give birth to literature.

Another fountain that feeds structuralism and literature is syntax, which is the fundamental model of narrative rules, according to Selden (1985:57). He first probes the essence of a linguistic approach to literature if literature is said to have a linguistic provenance.

He employs Todorov's inclination toward a general 'grammar' of literature, in which he (Todorov) advocates the general rules that govern literary practice. These have become the origin of the narrative syntax, and since syntax comprises the **Noun Phrase** as well as the **Predicative Phrase**, Todorov translates these into literature, and takes the connection between the subject in the **Noun Phrase** and the doing word in the **Predicative Phrase** as tallying up nicely with the connection between, say, the (main) character and the events in a given genre.

It was mentioned earlier on that sense relations in grammar are concerned with the world of syntagmas and paradigms, which aspects belong to syntax. Structuralism thus seeks to explain literature as a system of signs and codes, including relevant cultural frames (Davies con 1985:296).

Todorov is quoted in Jefferson (1982:96-97) as emphasising the fact that structuralist poetics should, in as much as linguistic theory can account for the structure and organization of language as in unspoken sentences — better explained in paradigmatic terms —, account for the rules governing literature as yet

*unwritten works of literature: each work is therefore regarded only as the manifestation of an abstract and general structure, of which it is but one of the possible realizations. [So that] this is no longer concerned with actual literature, but with a possible literature.*

Back to narrative syntax, Swanepoel (1986:17-18) reflects on the fact that while the folktale and its thirty-one functions, as propagated by Vladimir Propp, was the foundation of structuralist poetics, Genette used such terms as tense, mood, as well as voice to describe temporal structures of plots (tense) and employing them as metaphors of typical narrative elements.

Todorov too worked with aspects of grammar to find the narrative in folk-tales. He equates the subject in the **Noun Phrase** with the hero in the prose narrative, and the predicate represents the actions which develop the plot.

The aspects of grammar as described by Todorov are divided, it has been noted, into thirty-one functions.

*A function is the basic unit of the narrative 'language' and refers to the significant actions which form the narrative (Selden 1985:58).*

It is in simple terms an event in the unfolding of the plot of the narrative. It is essentially analogous with the predicate of the syntax, and its relationship in the whole narrative can be said to be syntagmatic. It is the parole of the narrative and it has a closer affinity with the whole plot structure.

Different scholars propose different functions for different reasons, and as a result these cannot be rigid. We choose to focus on Bascom's categorisation because it seems to reveal the perfect model of what the Russian Formalist would call *syuzet*, that is, the sequence of events with their causal factors.

The classification is divided into motifemes as follows, and we employ the folktale Mogapaemang in Dipale (1989:19):

- 2.2.2.1 **Lack**, where there is a need by both the hero and the villain, and their clash of interests propels action. The lack, or need, which is an event (and predicate in simple grammar), becomes the causal factor for the next motifeme.

It resembles the exposition in prose and drama, since as in these, the main character(s) and the issue — the actual need or lack in our

case — are introduced. There is a lack of a biological mother in our example, which causes Lena - the main character - to reside with her maternal uncle.

2.2.2.2 **Lack liquidated**, where a solution to the lack in 2.2.2.1 above is made possible or attainable. In our folktale the need is taken care of when Lena's ghostly mother avails herself to her and gives her food, and the charm to be the prince's favourite and bride.

2.2.2.3 **Interdiction**, which is actually *law*. It brings to memory the Marxist and feminist contention that literature, however embellished, must at all cost relay to society's pedigree its values and imprint. It is the law governing survival that **X** is good and **Y** bad.

It may not necessarily have been negotiated between, say, the hero(ine) and the elders. It may be a given, for instance one needs not be told that falling from a tree might break their limbs. Lena knows exactly her aunt's attitude toward her, based on the preferential treatment she practices.

She relies on the *langue*, the family setup which enables her to make inferences about her relationship with her aunt.

2.2.2.4 **Violation**, where the hero(ine), especially out of childish curiosity and daringness, transgresses the law. This is yet another event which leads to the next, and this time around, trouble. In prose and drama we can liken it to the climax.

The rules are broken when one party violates the interdiction. Lena pays her aunt a visit knowing quite clearly the repercussions of doing that. She is turned into a bird and Mogapaemang, Lena's niece, wears her beautiful royal clothes. It is her punishment for violating her knowledge of her aunt in favour of her sympathy and unprejudiced love.

2.2.2.5 **Attempted escape**, where the transgressor seeks ways to salvage him/herself from the mess caused during the violation. As an attempt to save her skin, Lena, in her new form as a bird, visits the cattle herders daily and catches their attention. Upon catching her they identify her as Lena and not as a bird.

2.2.2.6 **Consequence**, which normally follows violation, is the actual result of nonconformity as Lena is punished when turned into a fowl. So that one action (predicate in grammar) leads to another nicely until the end of the tale.

### 2.3 *The Relationship Between Andre Jolles' Simple Forms and the Essay*

We noted the jellylike and ambulatory nature of the essay in the preceding chapter. This by itself raises an enquiry as to the actual genesis of the essay. Can we safely claim that it derives from drama, as implied by the dramatic essay, or from verse as suggested by the meditative essay, or perhaps even from prose, since the essay is practically presented in prose form?

Andre Jolles, in Scholes (1974), whom we will rely heavily on for this discussion, provides a beautiful picture of the simple form. We elect to discuss the relationship between these simple forms and the essay because they are the basis of prose narratives, which the structuralist is charged to analyse, based on structure.

A simple form, for Jolles, is a kind of structuring principle of human thought as it takes shape in language ... Simpler forms exist in the same world in which ideal linguistic entities like the noun and verb exist. And just as man learns to speak a language, using the nouns and verbs it provides, man learns to "actualize" the simple forms (Scholes 1974:42-43).

The manifestation of the linguistic phenomena in the simple forms, that is, the subject-predicate relationship, is the principle Todorov uses in his thirty-one functions of the myth. The actualization of the simple forms signifies Saussure's **langue** versus **parole** principle, and is thus relevant in our discussion.

Scholes (1974:42) goes on to say:

*In the beginning is the simple form an unfilled but specific possibility of structure which we may call "myth" or "riddle," etc. These formal possibilities become concrete when a culture develops a particular myth or joke, etc. These actualisations of simple form may then be used consciously by writers to produce literary forms, some of which will combine many of the simple forms, modifying them accordingly.*

The fact that society develops a particular myth or joke makes the simple form even more relevant to structuralism. It is not the writer but his or her immediate community which makes literature. The study of the simple form involves Saussure's **diachrony** versus **synchrony** since the analyst needs to start with what he or she has at present and attempt to arrive at the ideal form like the comparative analyst does.

To figure out the ideal proto language, as in Ur-Bantu, the comparative linguist studies features that are akin to others inter language and postulate the ideal mother tongue of African Languages. The same applies to the study of the simple forms, where we are to explore nine possibilities, and try to create space for the essay among some of these possibilities.

### 2.3.1 *The Legend*

Scholes talks of the legend as the results of man's insatiable desire for ideals of conduct. The need to set up role models to achieve such ideals is intended to justify a particular behaviour from childhood, for the legend is originally aimed at the child. As such it embodies a superhuman ideal, which was nonetheless imitable, approachable, perhaps even attainable by society's ancestors. In the legend man makes his aspirations and values real.

It is based on the culture's heritage of good, and forms an inspirational model for society's offspring. Although Jolles would refer to the legend as universal, it is only universal in terms of definition and content. With content the legend becomes subjective and culture-bound, like the education system, which can be universally defined but practised differently, as each nation prescribes what it deems good for its members.

What the western man cherishes as legendary may be completely different from the African view of a legend. The legendary Shaka, for instance is a symbol of unity among the Africans as he endeavoured to unite the Black nation, much as the Norman conquest contributed a lot in the etymology of the English language.

The legend, therefore is an attempt by society to transmit an ideal to posterity through example. To this end Cuddon (1991:483-484) says:

*Originally legends were the stories of lives of saints which, in monastic life, might be read in church or in the refectory and therefore belonged to hagiography.*

Shipley (1970:174-175) sorts of agrees with Cuddon's account of the legend and says of the legend, that it is:

*a book of saints' deeds to be read in church ... Unauthenticated narrative, folk-embroidered from historical material, sometimes popularly deemed historical.*

From the above assertions by Cuddon and Shipley emerges the pure, the ideal, some pristine values about society. The monks in a present day monastery are ideally shown the reward of an ascetic, celibate but crystal clean life by being told of monks before them.

The relationship between this form and the essay is content. This reminds us of the obligatory mission of the essayist not to underestimate his or her reader. What the essayist puts on paper should — no matter how literary—be compatible with the cultural frame of his or her audience.

We should not interpret culture here narrowly to imply a geographical boundary. That the sun rises in the east is universal, for instance, and under no circumstance can an essayist argue for the contrary. Also, we agree that both the legend as a simple form and prose narrative and the *narrative essay* share a common quality, that of being narrated.

### 2.3.2 *The Tale*

This in its classical form is an art of telling or recounting stories. The notion of purity applies here as well, as in the legend. The world of treachery and sorrow is compared with the ideal pristine one. The tale shows that virtue overcomes evil, and that good quality life is earned through hard work and commitment.

*The tale takes place in a world which is deliberately set against our own world as other, different, better. The tale is a progress towards justice through potentially tragic obstacles. It is ethical in its orientation, firmly insisting that the*

*world it presents is different from ours — long ago and far away — and better than ours, for in it justice is done* (Scholes 1974:47).

As with the legend, the tale has a strong resemblance with the essay by its telling and recounting practice. The point of the essay as *history* has close links with this simple form— mark long ago and far away in Scholes above.

Fowler (1987:156), as will be noted in 3.2.2 below, talks of the importance of the narrative in the production of history and how culture permeates the author's pen that it involuntarily infiltrates the alphabet.

### 2.3.3 *The Proverb*

Shiple's account of the proverb is rich with societal values and cohesiveness from which the proverb is drawn. Structuralist poetics thrives on this one because the proverb, like any literary piece of work, is community based and seldom individualistic. It derives from shared experiences, interests and vision.

Diane ke mabolelo a a nang le molaetsa wa kgakololo e e bothale mabapi le botshelo, e le molaetsa o re o tshwantshetswang ka puo e khutshwane ya papiso, e bile e rulagantswe ka mokgwa o o ka se kang wa tlhatlhamololwa. Molaetsa wa seane o lebisitswe botshelo jwa setho, mme o theilwe mo maitemogelong a botshelo. Seane sa Setswana se gaisa sa Sekgoa gonne mo puong e se tlhamilweng ka yona, o kgona go lemoga gore se theilwe mo ditiragalong kgotsa mo mekgweng ya lobopo ya nnete. Ga se puo ya bothale jwa maitirelo

**fela. Fa go twe "lore lo ojwa lo sa le metsi," ga o ka ke wa ganela gore fa lo obiwa lo omile lo ka robega (Shole 1991:21-22).**

*(Proverbs are wise and informative sayings about life. They are usually figurative and short in nature, and their construction is such that it may not be rearranged. The Setswana proverb has an edge over the Western because its foundation is real events in life).*

The same idea of communal heritage and therefore *langue* in the formation of the Setswana proverb is found in Leseiyane (1984:09):

**Motho wa bogologolo, yo o neng a tlhama seane [se], o ne a tlhagisa ka botlalo boteng ba kitso ya gagwe ka ga botshelo ba dibopiwa tsa lefatshe, go akaretsa le ene motho ka nosi. O ne a dira seane [se] ha a sena go ithuta le go lemoga mokgwa o sebopiwa sengwe le sengwe se solofelang botshelo ba sona ka ona.**

*(The wise, when constructing this proverb, was exposing his vast knowledge about the world's creatures, including man. He observed the unique way with which each living creature protects itself).*

The proverb, it seems, because of its vivid and embellished nature, corresponds quite nicely with the meditative essay. Language use and the selection of the best words become a vital instrument in the production of both forms. By virtue of its definition, the proverb is endowed with deep and resonant imagery and crystal imagination.

### 2.3.4 *The Memoir*

Scholes (1974:46-47) describes it as

*that form which seeks to record in concrete detail the unique features of a typical event—or the typical features of a unique event ... The complex forms of realistic writing, then, have drawn upon the memoir for techniques and values in establishing their own dominance in the world of letters .*

Thus while the legend entertains an ideal, the memoir is a somewhat realistic account of events, although sometimes it becomes too contrived to give a literary spice. Shipley (1991:23) compares the memoir with the autobiography and argues:

*Memoir, journal, diary, letter; may be grouped together as literature of personal revelation; in each instance, a large part of the interest resides in a conscious or unconscious self-portrayal by the author. Within this group, epistolary writing(q.v) is marked off by the interplay between composer and intended reader, the delicate "give and take" essential to all good correspondence.*

The four Gospels in the New Testament as well as the epistles by Paul are examples of the memoir, and, as Obaldia aptly puts it, the essay as a formless genre covers among others the memoir, letter and epistle, and the epistle is essentially a letter.

### 2.3.5 *The Riddle*

Another form with its dose of rhetoric and obscurity, the riddle, seems to feed the essay appropriately. There is one instrument the essayist employs in his or her art, and that is language, which is the cornerstone of the riddle. The essay thus sups from the riddle the ability not only to impart but also to let the reader think. Ridout *et al.* (1971:311) refer to the old usage of the term riddle as meaning 'to read' and having to do with anything obscured or puzzling. It originally used to be rendered orally and its primary aim, apart from entertainment, is to test ingenuity among members, perhaps even to jog the mind a little. To this effect, The Oxford Paperback Dictionary (1979:689) defines it as

*a question or statement designed to test ingenuity or give amusement in finding its answers or meaning.*

Of all the simple forms, the riddle carries the banner in its use of linguistic devices as style to obscure meaning. Its relevance to structuralism is that the answer to the question belongs to the treasury bequeathed to society and never idiolectal. One who does not belong to a particular language group may find it difficult to provide a quick and witty answer or solution to the riddle.

Apart from these five simple forms we also have the case, the joke, and the myth. We presume the ones we have treated show the best possible link between the essay and the simple form.

## 2.4 *Structuralism and Stylistics*

**Le style est l'homme meme.**

*(Style is the man himself)*. Buffon in The concise Oxford Dictionary of Quotations (1969:45).

In structuralist terms reference to man in the above quotation implies, one can argue, *parole*, or the actual performance by an individual of *langue*, or the competence level available to all language users. Individual differences dictate that from the same pool of the lexicon we coin remarkably different linguistic structures to say the same thing. It is for this reason that we agree with Buffon that style is the man himself.

It involves tendencies, attitudes, practices and most importantly imitations by the particular man in question. It seems inevitable in our present study to touch on stylistics, which is

*concerned with variations in the use of language, whether spoken, declaimed, broadcast, or written ...*  
(Chapman 1973: review page).

Style without language would be futile because it is through words that man sells himself, and no discourse can emerge triumphant without language. The author of any work is ideally a master not only of his or her ideas but of the vehicle he or she employs to transmit.

Abrams (1912:245) indicates in this regard that stylistics makes use of modern linguistic concepts to interpret and analyse works of art. He mentions phonology, syntax, semantics and rhetoric as among other devices stylisticians use in their analyses. The following stanza of a poem

sheds light on the phonological level of interpretation:

**Bagolo ba kgerisa bana;  
Ga ba itse fa e le rona banna ba bona ba ka moso,  
Ga ba itse fa e le rona basadi ba bona ba ka moso,  
Re tla ba nyala re ba golola mo magwatateng,  
Rona bana ba segompiano (Thobega 1976:43).**

*(Parents bully their children;  
They seem not to know we are future husbands and  
wives; We, the youth will marry them and free them  
from these hard times).*

On this level, the alliteration or repetition of the [b] sound can be analysed thus: [b], which is +anterior, +voiced, +resonant and +plosive best describes the attitude of the youth in this poem titled **Ke ganne** (*I refused*). The youth tend to conveniently pretend the elderly are not wise any longer, hence they want to usurp all positions of authority and leadership (+ anterior).

They want to have a voice in the decision making processes of governance and are tired of things done for them instead of with them (+voiced, +resonant). They feel to get what they want, if peacefully it does not work out, they can resort to force and tantrums (+plosive).

In essence it is not what is said but how it is said which is important. Aspects like word order, emphasis and focus are some of the linguistic apparatuses the author uses to relay his message. To this end Abrams (1912:230) remarks:

*...the most disciplined writing is the most creative because what the writer creates is himself.*

Chapman (1973:12) supports the relationship between language and stylistics when he purports that

*there is no use of language that is not open to stylistic investigation.*

This notion is further advanced by Wellek (1942:177) that the sole purpose of stylistics is to contrast the language usage of a given literary work with the everyday usage of a given language group at a particular point in time.

A thorough grounding in general linguistics, he suggests, is pivotal if we are to embark on stylistics in a formal manner. He (Wellek 1942:178) further corroborates Abrams' idea, that

*all devices for securing emphasis or explicitness can be classed under stylistics: metaphors, which permeate all languages, even of the most primitive type; all rhetorical figures; syntactical patterns.*

Stylistics aims not only at noting these linguistic devices but to mark the effect that these features have in text, as evident in the poem above. Stark repetitions, emphases, deviations and symbols in a work of art, have a purpose, and that is to enthuse and to entertain.

He (Welleck 1942:180) asserts further that deviations, such as alliteration and assonance, inversion of word order to effect focus as well as embellishments for aesthetic purposes are the task of the literary stylistician. He, goes:

*Only if this aesthetic interest is central will stylistics be a part of literary scholarship; and it will be an important part because only stylistic methods can define the specific characteristics of a literary work.*

Still on the question of language, Mngadi (1993:61) asserts that the ability of a writer to synthesize all the elements a language can provide, determines good or bad style. She further contrasts the stylistician from the conventional critic thus:

*Both the stylistician and the conventional critic are interested in the theme, plot and character, but the stylistician's interest has more bias towards the role played by language in delineating these features.*

Weber (1996) proposes a multifaceted approach to stylistics and departs from the strict and rigorous formalist and particularly intrinsic approaches and advocates a holistic one. The formalist and perhaps classical stylistician views style as inherently belonging to the text. The reader is a passive participant and his or her reception does not matter much. Although literature has benefitted much from this school it has come to be viewed as rigid, lifeless and unfair to the reader.

The functional stylistician argues that a formal feature should only be considered stylistical if it is functional, effective and has value. The omission of the copula ke by Monyaise in his Ngaka, mosadi mooka

*(Doctor, a woman is a mimosa tree)*, should have a purpose and effect. There should be a very good reason why he has cut the proverb from **mosadi mooka o nya le mariga** (*a woman is a mimosa tree she drips resin in winter*).

The Marxist will discern the usefulness of a woman in this, that she contributes to the development of the economy, which is a worthwhile cause. The feminist on the other hand would prefer to see gender discrimination in it, that a woman is viewed by the larger society is an object of hard labour, and even concentrate on the derogatory element of the verb stem nya (*defaecate*).

Yet another person might detect chaos and disorder as being preempted by the omission of the copula. It might imply rush, lack of thoroughness, emptiness and hollowness on the part of women. In Bett's (1932:163) words the omission could as well be

*to give a sense of the heaped disorder of chaos. This is produced partly by the quick succession of short words, and partly by the omission of the copulative.*

The effect that a linguistic feature has on the unfolding of the text is thus the issue with the functionalist. Another quick example from Tamsanqa's Botsang rre: On several occasions when Boikobo appears in a scene, reference is made of **mosi** (*smoke*) to introduce the idea of suffocation, anger, simmering, repression and impending explosion, as most of the time Boikobo is seen roaming in a closed hut full of smoke.

In Weber (1996:02), Affective stylistics is said to view style as  
*dynamic effects produced by the reader in the  
 process of reading the text,*

as opposed to the traditional view that meaning is inherent in the text. The reader, for whom the text is intended, is entitled to a response. It is a stimulus response situation. The reader is engaged in the process to further the writer's aim of appealing, and Quiller — Couch, in Chapman (1973:12), puts it better that

*style in writing is much the same as good  
 manners in other human intercourse.*

It is the reader's emotion, heart, perhaps even psyche that the writer should appease, which practice should involve all possible norms of propriety. We are reminded of the appeal that the essayist should not take his reader for granted or underestimate his potential. Good timing, according to Abrams (1912:234), earns the writer credit, since

*very often we find that the most successful writers  
 break rules at the right time.*

The danger with affective stylistics is relativity, and to guard against this Stanley Fish in Weber (1996:02) advocates the establishment of `interpretive communities` whose aim is to provide a pool from which members can draw tools for interpretation.

The other types of stylistics which we will not discuss because of their remoteness from our topic are the pedagogical, the critical, pragmatic, feminist and cognitive stylistics.

Finally Bett (1932:136-137) in his discussion of position and emphasis brings in another dimension. He talks of the effect a dynamic introduction and a touching conclusion has in the reader.

*The first note in a piece of music strikes our attention because it is the first; the last note lingers in our ears because it is the last. It is remarkable how far much more striking passages in literature owe, when we examine them closely, to a memorable opening, or an interesting close, however splendid may be the thoughts and words that lie between.*

This only reminds us of the structure of the essay, an introduction which is pregnant with information, a body which develops the idea put forth in the introduction, and a convincing conclusion. The stylistician's eye would for instance focus on the inclination by Lesevane to first provide background information before getting to the introduction proper as we will see in ensuing chapters.

We have already mentioned the fact that this is only another dimension to the whole view of syntax — **remember narrative syntax**—in which we move away from the sentence as defined traditionally and look at the *syuzhet*. He speaks also of movement and rhythm, in other words the ease with which the author lets his discourse unfold. For example, he, Bett (1932:164) moves that too much use of conjunctions in a sentence slows the flow because

*the very action of making a definite connection between the verbs really separates them.*

We elect to confine ourselves to the above facts and acknowledge that stylistics is a never ending story. For our purposes it suffices to note the relevance of stylistics to structuralism and hence our study. The fact that stylistics is language-based makes it akin to structuralism which operates from the premise that language is the point of departure in literary studies.

Narratology, the brainchild of syntactical analysis, provides fertile ground for stylistics because the stylistician would be interested not primarily in the content of the narrative but in how the hero manages to overcome his obstacles to achieve his set goal or even how the narrator justifies his fall.

That style is the man himself is the same argument as advanced by the structuralists. We take man here as the actualization of the inherent potential to communicate. Man is thus the parole, the ability of an individual—in this case the writer — to manipulate the available resources to his advantage. The resources that he invokes are the langue, the perennial thicket from which he plucks.

Also, the linguistic devices the stylistician relies on are the sense relations as in syntax and paradigms. Aspects like synonymity, euphemism, exaggeration, focus and ordering, among others, are enjoyed by both the structuralist and stylistician, the only difference being that the latter wants to know why a particular device at a particular point.

To conclude, Chapman (1973:12) has this to say:

*There is no use of language that is not open to stylistic investigation. Some areas, however, are richer in material for such investigation because they show a high incidence of special features.*

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to investigate the content of Leseayne's essays. Our point of departure is that the theme and/or sub-themes it wishes to convey determine the content of any given essay. Christie *et al* (1980:11) distinguish the mandates responsible for the production of literature in our country, as

*Romance, Pastoral, Realism and Fabulation.*

While these are the product of colonialism, our literature has come to transcend this tendency. This is largely in line with the proposition that literature should be relevant, which relevance corroborates the argument of literature as a reflection of life as we see it daily.

Governed by structuralist poetics, we posit that Leseayne's essays, as expected from any colonial production of stringent laws, cover mostly themes on society, religion, history, moral, tradition and mostly, nature. The author longs for the pristine, utopian world, hence the moral arsenal that dominates this work. The reference to nature in most of the essays might be subconsciously, the cry for rebirth, the closeness to the Almighty, exactly the Brook Benton's way, that *if you think God is dead, just look around.*

We also posit in this chapter that the content of each essay in Letlhaku le legologolo tallies with at least one of the types of the essay as will be exposed below.

### 3.2 *Types and Classification of Essays*

The concepts: indeterminacy, ambulatory, fragmentary, looseness and randomness, as used by Obaldia (1995:02), suggest the informal nature of the essay. The essayist also has an audience in mind that has to be logically convinced, which Williams (1942:11) confirms when he argues:

*Bacon's compact, laconic style suggests the kinship between the word 'essay' and the mineralogist word 'assay'; for the handful of carefully-washed words which come out in one of Bacon's Essays puts one in mind of the prospector sluicing away the grit until a few clear specks of gold are left in the bottom of his pan.*

The above idea calls for formality in essay writing. Otherwise, all essays would be unstructured and monotonous. It is suggested thus that there are both the formal and informal essays in literature.

Maphike (1978:03) says the formal essay is concerned with information or philosophical truths, while the informal essay is concerned with anything that may interest the writer at the moment. Here ideas are

loosely let free, as in brainstorming, with much ease unlike in the former where objectivity is the rule of the game. Both these types of essays are further divisible into persuasion, history, meditation, and dialogue, (Scholes *et al.* 1969:08 *et seq.*).

### 3.2.1 *The persuasive essay*

*In its purest form the essay attempts to persuade us of something by means of an appeal and argument that the author addresses directly to us, much as any public speaker would address an audience (Scholes et al. 1969:)*

There is a point to be made and this depends on his winning tongue. It is like a debating forum, where the author stands for a particular point of view — which might be controversial — and is prepared to put his head on the block about it.

It is the reader's task, then, to identify the point the author is trying to drive home, as this forms the platform for the argument latent in the point. The persuasive element, the enthusiasm to convince, and the power of will of the author are perhaps best summarized in Williams' (1942:15) words, that he (the author) has a

*zeal to edify and clarify our thought...*

The reader gets immersed in the author's pool of ideas if each time he (the author) makes a point he quickly supports it to cast no

doubt on his expertise. Boulton (1972:05) sees the persuasive essay, which she appropriately calls the argumentative, as an intellectual endeavour, hence she interprets it as an abstract adventure. She goes:

*Good argumentative prose contains sound reasoning and may also include an appeal to emotion; much good argumentative prose aims not so much at convincing in the spirit of a propagandist as at making people think about the problem intelligently.*

### 3.2.2 ***The narrative essay***

According to Scholes *et al.* (1969:09) the narrative essay is that in which the author appoints a narrator, a storyteller whose function is to report to the reader, it is history which employs description, dialogue, and commentary as the author's instrument to pass his ideas.

Fowler (1987:156) argues that there are two aspects to the narrative, the one being the content and assemblage of material the writer has at hand, the other the rhetorical, the how of presentation.

He( Fowler) (1987:156), supports the reference to history by Scholes above, and states that

*the narrative is also of crucial importance in the writing of history... The latter is a mark of the cultural context of the writer and is a degree outside his conscious control.*

This explains the reason we will, over and above a discussion on structuralism and stylistics as our theoretical basis for this work, also comment on intertextuality as a responsible factor in the authorship of Letlhaku le legologolo.

### 3.2.3 *The meditative essay*

As indicated above, here the author talks rather to himself but carries the reader alongside him to, while busy eavesdropping, share in the meditation. He is, according to Scholes *et al* (1969:24), thinking on paper, trying things out.

He sorts of explores new ground or revisits an idea from a fresh, though subjective perspective. The exploration may sometimes be so involving that it blinds the essayist's direction, and he departs from the original mission. We do not intend to discuss it here now, but this happens to be the style Leseyane adopts in many of his essays, which we will analyze under style in our work. Sometimes referred to as the poetic essay, and by virtue thereof, deep imagery is employed.

Symbolism is pervasive here, hence Scholes *et al*. (1969) say that in the meditative essay, the images and details become symbols. Their meanings are primarily suggestive rather than persuasive. The meditative

essayist, in fact, repeatedly observes, and describes, and then thinks about things, allowing one image or thought to produce another through the mysterious generative powers of the mind.

That function of literature as art becomes relevant here particularly. The cultural fibre, as in the narrative essay, finds its way into the writer's thinking on paper. This is yet another form Leseyane's work takes as will be seen under style as well.

Kwetana (1985:24) calls this essay the reflective and imaginative to confirm the fact that literature is imaginative passion. The connection between poetry and the meditative essay is the analogy of composition applicable to both. Words are exploited in an almost similar nature to capture the reader' emotion.

Without necessarily splitting hairs, the writer is generally afforded ample space and time to run riot playing with words and ideas. There seems to be enough poetic license offered to the writer that structure here becomes less important. He does not have to confine himself to form as to content. Scholes *et al.*( 1969:25) state that

*the essay (in general) is, indeed, fragmentary in that it lacks formal autonomy. It provides no unequivocal and final meaning to its propositions, it does not express complete and final solutions to questions, it is not an exhaustive treatment, and it is inconclusive. The truth of this becomes evident in the meditative essay more than any other type of essay. The inherent fragmentariness of the essay seems to be more obvious with the meditative type.*

*This fact should not, however, be considered as a limitation, for it is, indeed, one of its most important characteristics.*

#### 3.2.4 ***The dramatic essay***

Whereas the essayist in a persuasive and narrative essay employs the narrator to convey his intentions, the dramatic essayist makes use of exchange, dialogue, to present his thoughts. Scholes *et al.* (1969:33) are agreed that

*dialogue happens to be the most persuasive means of relaying one's ideas, as it carries in it, the emotional content of conflict, without which, no drama is successful. Specifically, it is not the character, plot or setting which are crucial here, but the persuasive statement about some aspect of experience about real life.*

This type of essay has not been explored in our language, nor shall we furnish any suitable examples on it from Letlhaku le legologolo.

### 3.3 ***Common themes in essays***

Many factors have influenced our Setswana literature, stretching from indoctrination to assertiveness. The moral value contained in the

teachings of the missionaries, the persuasive nature of the Christian Nationalist Education, as well as the resistance literature by the discontent Africa, all paved way for a continuum of themes in Black African essays, among others the social, historical, didactic, political, traditional and nature.

There is a great deal of intertextual relations between the Bible and the authorship of Letlhaku le legologolo. This is evident in the followong essays:

**Moremogolo go betlwa wa taola**

*(Only the diviner's bone can be carved/sculpted, and every individual shapes his or her personality)*

The Biblical parallel which is the likely foundation of the topic: **Moremogolo go betlwa wa taola**, as well as the content as discussed by the author, can be found in the Gospel according to Saint Luke, chapter 6, verse 43 *et seq.*

gonne ga go na setlhare se se siameng se se a tlang se ungwwe leungo le le bosula; le gona, ga go na setlhare se se sa siamang se se a tlang se ungwwe leungo le le monate. Kana setlhare sengwe le sengwe se itsiwe ka leungo le e leng la sona. Gonne ga go ke go fulwa difeie mo ditlhareng tse di mitlwa, le gona ga go ke go fulwa leungo la moweine mo mosung. Motho yo o molemo mo lohamong lo lo molemo lwa pelo ya gagwe ...

*(A tree from good stock doesn't produce scrub fruit nor do trees from poor stock produce choice fruit. A tree is identified by the kind of fruit it produces. Figs never grow on thorns, or grapes on bramble bushes. A good man produces good deeds from a good heart. (The living Bible: Giant print Edition).*

**Ka tlhagolela mookana, ya re o gola wa ntlhaba**  
*(I removed weeds from a tender acacia tree and  
 when it grew up it pricked me)*

In this one, a parent regrets having given birth and having bred a child who has abandoned her in her old age. This one contains the theme of tradition since it had always been the practice that children, after having been fended for by parents during their childhood, are obliged to take care of them in times of desperate need. A companion to this proverb goes:

**Maoto a nong ke phofa,**  
*(The bird's means of walking is its wings),*

which means that:

**Ka ngwana a le bobebe go gaisa motho yo mogolo  
 ka go tsamaya, ke ene diphuka tsa motsadi wa  
 gagwe (1963:23).**

*(Because a child is more active and swifter than his  
 parents, he is his parents' wings).*

There is a theme of nature in this one because it is only natural to age; and the older one gets, the feeble they get, and thus need the assistance by their young ones.

**Bana ba tshipa ba tsaya mmila o le mongwe**  
*(The young genets go a uniform route.  
 Otherwise, they fall prey to traps)*

**Tau e iphutha metlhala e le nosi.**  
*(A lion is selfsufficient on its own but with offspring  
 trouble looms)*

In nearly all these essay topics above, there is an implicit tone of moralizing on self-discipline, unity and parental care. These essays are not only moral in the sense of transmitting cultural values to posterity, but also reprimanding in that a social deviant would be scorned at by being told these for purposes of rehabilitation, as practised at the correctional services' prescriptions.

The didactic theme is found in

**Nonyane e e mephuphutho mebe e iphatlha ka diphuka tsa yone**  
*(A bird with big wings obscures its own sight).*

An elderly person here reminds a youngster that pride comes before a fall. We can deduce it from the above exposition on the thematic concerns of the essayist, that culture, religion, nature, politics and other social determinants are influential in the final product of thinking on paper.

### 3.4 *Content in Letlhaku le legologolo*

#### 3.4.1 *The content of Tshwenyana e e bowa bontlha e a ikilela*

We wish to state from the outset that this is a narrative essay, based on the content thereof. Fowler was noted above as saying that the narrative entails content and assemblage of material as well as the how of presentation, or simply, stylistics. It deals with history in description.

This proverb is the actualization or parole of the system from which our elderly derived it. The observation by the elderly about human survival,

forms part of our heritage and history. Certain rules and norms govern behaviour for survival purposes, and these are the genesis of this proverb.

We agree, however, only to a certain extent with the analysis of the proverb by the author, since he apparently toils to give the literal meaning of this proverb and in transit misses the application thereof. He asserts that

**Motho yo re mmitsang tshwenyana e e bowa bontlha, ke yo e reng a ntse a tsamaya, ... moriri wa gagwe o sosobane go mo tsibosa gore o tla wela mo leganong la sera. (1963:15)**

*(This so-called person with sharp hairs is one whose hair rises instinctively as warning about impending danger).*

This reference is very appropriate but one-sided because it only looks at nature and leaves out nurture. It is true that a newly born monkey, like a kitten, is born without hair. The mother is thus responsible for its survival and will at all cost ensure that no other species sees its offspring in this state until it becomes of age, which period is when it grows hair.

Of interest is that immediately this happens, the poor monkey accompanies the rest to a mielie field, for example to look for food, although its mother carries it on its back. In times of danger, though, the youngster knows it has to jump on the mother's back for flight. It assumes responsibility for its survival because it has graduated from the initial stage of utter dependence—lack of hair—to independence.

The essence of this proverb is thus that one's parents are responsible for him up to a certain stage, after which he must make meaningful decisions by himself. This is a universal phenomenon practised even in church. The Catholic and Protestant denominations believe that a baptized child is its parents' and sponsors' responsibility, until he is confirmed.

At this stage the child becomes a full member of the church and participates at all levels of worship. The parents may not force him to go to church or perform any ritual required of all members because he has, like the monkey in our proverb, transcended the stage of being decided for.

In the same vein, the Batswana used to regard initiation as a point at which a boy graduates to become a full citizen and can make responsible decisions especially for his family, which he qualifies to establish. What is important even with the monkey analogy is that the mother does not abandon the youngster, much as the parents of the initiate do not chuck him out of society, but are there to work with him.

#### 3.4.2 *The Content of Lefifi la ntshwarele ngwana*

This is yet another type of narrative essay. It brings to memory Andre Jolle's simple forms, where oral tradition is responsible for the production of the present literary forms as discussed in the previous chapter. Leseiyane beautifully exposes the origin of this old saying— this time around not a proverb — by narrating a tale.

The theme of didactics is rooted in this essay, commensurate with the general function of prose narratives, that is, teaching and the transmission of society's values to its posterity. While there may be traces of history in this proverb, which would automatically make it a narrative essay, we feel there is much poetic language here and propose to label this essay meditative.

The title of this essay presupposes nature by itself. It carries the essence of its content, that of darkness as a natural entity:

**Lefifi le lentshontsho, le le ntseng jaana, le sala le amogela leina la lona ka ona motlha oo, (1963:54).**  
*(This deep darkness got its name then).*

The didactic element in this essay is that:

**Bosigo ga bo rune nta**  
*(Good things are usually not possible in the dark).*

We can also relate it to the name of the month

**Seetebosigo (o tshābe segagane)**  
*(do not visit people in winter as they might not have enough blankets for you).*

The author is trying to educate us of the evil of darkness by relating the story of the lady who mistakes a hyena for her husband and resultantly loses her baby. What is more striking is the juxtaposing of the heavy night with substance abuse by both the wife and husband. This sounds like an understatement by which the author is condemning substance use and thus associates it with darkness.

Leseyane comments on the physical and natural phenomena to expose the instinct of survival in man, and he goes:

**Maago a, a ne a kgethetswe gore mo dintweng tse merafe e neng e phela mo go tsona ka metlha, batho ba kgone go iphitlha . . . Selo se se neng se lwelwa e ne e le go ipatla ga morafe gore e nne ona mofenyi wa lefatshe lotlhe (1963:50).**

*(These dwellings were chosen as refuge in times of wars, which wars were aimed at monopoly over land).*

### 3.4.3 ***The Social Theme in Bana Ba Tshipa Ba Tsaya Mmila O Le Mongwe***

One element which characterizes the African nation is the affiliation motive. This is embedded in most daily activities of these peoples. The "stokvels," the "masakhanes" and a host of meetings of today reflect the communal nature of the African.

The controversial and not so celebrated homelands and national states of the past all had as their different mottos one unifying theme of togetherness. The Batswana had:

**Tshwaraganang lo dire, pula e ne,**

*(work together so that you can receive blessings (through rain)*

and the Bapedi said:

**Mpshiri o tee ga o lle,**

*(one bracelet does not make music as well as several of them do).*

Both mottos and several others we have not mentioned here serve to reflect the unity aspired for by the African. The author, as an African Motswana messenger, cannot help but make nuances to this theme, which takes us back to the responsibility of the essayist as well as his attitude both toward his audience and to the content he grapples with.

After indicating precisely, the habitat and nature of **tshipa** (*genet*), Leseiyane shows the social theme of self-preservation by saying:

... go tloga kwa tshimologong ya dilo tsotlhe, go sala go dirwa gore botshelo ba motho ke selo se se tlhakanetsweng (1963:177).

*(It has always been that life and survival are a shared aspect of man).*

This is confirmed at different other places in the same essay, and we will group these together for purposes of convenience. First, Leseiyane talks of the proverbs **manong a ja ka ditshika**, literally, (*vultures use blood vessels to eat*), and connotatively (*blood is thicker than water*), and **motho ke motho ka yo mongwe** (*man is aided by another man to be what he is*), which are relevant here because both of them imply that human survival depends on mutualism. He goes:

Ke bua ka ga leago la manong, gone fa re a fitlhelang a nna teng, kgolagano ya botshelo ba ona ke e e fitlhelwang mo merafeng e e sa ntseng e tshageditse mekgwa ya tlholego ya motho (1963:178).

*(I refer to the vulture community, for it resembles the nature of man in nations which still respect human nature).*

He illustrates his point by narrating the story of the eight brothers who choose to part ways after their father passes away, only to be victims of the outside world, exactly what our proverb under discussion sets out to teach. What is striking about the content of this essay is its position in the discussion. It is as if the author has elected to make it the penultimate to make a dramatic contrast from all the previous essays.

Except for **O se bone majwe go katogana** (*do not be fooled by the distance between mountain ranges, they meet at night*), all the essays before this one have a single subject each. For example **tshwenyana** (*monkey*), **nonyane** (*bird*) and **phokojwe** (*jackal*) are all subjects in their respective proverbs.

The order the author chooses to discuss his essays seems to be content based. There seems to be a build up toward the ideal of unity in the first twelve essays. It appears the author is saying in the first twelve that single-handedly we can achieve less. Hence the penultimate choice of a collective essay.

A united nation is like the Christian community which partakes of the Holy communion to celebrate unity under one God.

This is perhaps one strategic reason why this essay is followed by **tau e iphutha metlhala e le nosi**, with a notion of leadership. Much the same

way as Christians have a unified leadership supremacy, a united nation has one ruler symbolized by the lion. Leseiyane manipulates his content to reflect this order, from individualism to interrelationship and finally a strong leadership.

This essay, with its propensity to touch on mutualism and togetherness, seeming to account for the collapse of most nations because of noncompliance with the universal law of unity, is a narrative essay. The author has succeeded in highlighting the social theme.

#### 3.4.4 ***Content in Pheko ya gole e tsewa ka motlha wa tsholo***

We can deduce the universality of man in the content of this essay. Reference to *bolwetse*, *tlala* and *ntwa* (*illness, poverty and strife*) as hindrances to peaceful life, is based on the basic needs of man, namely food, shelter and recreation. One cannot imagine life without these basics, and this proverb seems to have been formulated as man's reaction to insatiety and lack of coping due to limited resources. This is a chain reaction. Lack of food causes strife among the people, which thing diverts their energies to unbecoming acts. The theme of economics, among others is alluded to in this essay.

We argue that this proverb is universal in application because life is about perfection. We eat to acquire energy, with the unconscious desire to live for ever. People consult doctors to remedy different maladies with the

sole drive to lead a painless life. States build arsenals mainly because of self-preservation since we know that survival is for the fittest. The need to satisfy these desires is perpetual and inevitable.

The author agrees with this universality and presents both the literal and connotative aspects of this proverb. After he exposes the three impediments to life as well as suggest relevant cures for each, Leseyane goes deeper to explore the theme of nature when he tackles the health problem and its supposed cure.

The information that he provides is user friendly, since we all know the big giants of the jungle, among others the elephant and the lion. The author helps us transit our state of ignorance about the utility of these animals for we expect no more from them than loath and unmercifulness. We cannot help it but identify with the information given.

The Batswana as a religious nation believe in anointed leadership. As such, knowing that the elephant's fat and other parts are used to empower the king in his administration of his subjects, is enriching because the family is a microcosm of the nation, where the father, like the king (the lion), sees to the safety and organization of the family he leads.

The social theme is nicely exposed here because society comprises social stratification, which is inferred in the hierarchy as exposed by the king at

the top, with his subjects on lower levels until the last one. We can also observe the social theme in the reconciliation between the lion and the elephant in this essay.

The fact that organs from both these giants are mixed especially for the king's use suggests the reconciliation between humility (elephant) and agility with aggression (lion) into one. Humbleness and strict principles usually characterize a good ruler. Any good leader should strike a balance between permissiveness and unnecessary strictness.

Leseyane in great style highlights the three main threats to humanity which necessitate the ability to protect oneself from them if one is to survive.

**... dilo tse tharo tse e leng tsona dira tse dikgolo tsa botshelo ba motho, le dibopiwa tse dingwe. Dilo tse tharo tse ke bolwetse, ntwala le tlala, mme ha e ka be e se ka kitso e motho a kgonang go iphemela ka yona mo direng tse, ga re itse se botshelo ba gagwe le ba ditshedi tse di ka fa tlase ga tebelelo ya gagwe e ka beng e le sona (1963:82).**

*(...the three main threats to man and other creatures. These are disease/ illness, war and famine, and if it were not for man's ability to protect himself from these enemies, we do not know what his and the creatures under his control would have become).*

The author has managed to be precise and informative, if not resourceful in his explication of the main idea and puts it boldly without fear in the closing line of this paragraph, that

**Kitso e ke ya go lwantsha sengwe le sengwe sa dira tse, ka pheko e e leng ya sona (1963:82).**

*(This is the knowledge to combat any of these enemies with the relevant medicine).*

We are left with no doubt where the author is planning to take us to in the following paragraphs. From page 82 to 83, that is, paragraphs 7, 8 and 9, and page 97, that is, paragraph 40, Leseyane highlights **pheko** as an aid during war. We observe here the protective function of **pheko**:

**Mo ntweng pheko e kgolo ke ditlhabano**  
*(The best cure for war is weaponry)*

We wish to emphasize that the author does not in any way suggest that there should be war. We are reminded of the old saying that the pen is mightier than the sword. What is implied here is that there is no way one can go to war without ammunition, or put bluntly, a country without an arsenal is as good as defeated if war erupts.

The author alludes to the traditional way of solving grudges and schisms among peers, that of engaging them in a clean fight until one of them gives up and respects the victor. The cane with which these boys fight becomes a remedy eventually.

Paragraphs 10, 11, 15 (pages 83, 84 and 85 respectively) refer to **tlala** or *famine* in the literal sense and paragraphs 27, 28 and 29, Pages 89 to 90) are figurative since they refer not necessarily to famine as to drought but to the need for a cure. On the literal front, Leseyane explains that

**Pheko ya sera se go tweng tlala ke dijo**  
*(The cure for famine is food).*

The author in this essay has clearly succeeded not only in exposing the cultural beliefs and practices of the Batswana but also in revealing the universal principle of survival and self-preservation.

### 3.5 **Conclusion**

A spectrum of themes are covered in Leseyane's essays. We tried to discuss the most observable in exposing the content of each essay. A discussion on the types of essays has also been done to reveal the relationship between the content of an essay and its theme as well as between the content and the type of essay. The author's inclination toward the theme of nature in most of his essays became noticeable.

Also, because most of the essays in this collection are meditative, the author has the tendency to cover different themes as he is taken up in his discussion. The content of the essays is remarkable since most of the time he rotates around what is immediate to a Motswana's scope of understanding before he goes deeper into philosophizing about the topic he has chosen.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter we wish to propose that the form that a particular art-form takes is greatly if not completely influenced by the style of the author. We intend to discuss the way in which Leseyane manipulates linguistic devices to reach out to his audience. These devices are the formal aspects of grammar; **the langue**; and how the writer sifts the best in his discourse. Our presentation will be based on stylistics as already discussed in chapter two.

As a point of departure, we adopt Boulton (1972:16)'s position that

*in studying a piece of prose we should consider the exact shade of meaning of all the interesting words, and decide whether the writer has used the best word or only a word that will do.*

We do not single out words for the sake of doing so but because stylistics prescribes it, among other tasks, as evident in Cuddon (1991:922) that

*it is an analytical science which covers all the expressive aspects of language: phonology, prosody, morphology, syntax and lexicology.*

Very important in stylistics is not the appearance or absence of a feature necessarily but the extent to which the intended mission is accomplished. We agree fully with Wellek & Warren (1956:180) in this regard, that:

*there are two possible methods of approaching such a stylistic analysis: the first is to proceed by a systematic analysis of its linguistic system and to interpret its features, in terms of the aesthetic purpose of the work, as 'total meaning'. Style then appears as the individual linguistic system of a work, or a group of works. A second, not contradictory, approach is to study the sum of individual traits by which this system differs from comparable systems. The method here is that of contrast: we observe the deviations and distortions from normal usage, and try to discover their aesthetic purpose. In ordinary communicative speech, no attention is drawn to the sound of words, or to word order (which, in English at least, will normally pass from actor to action), or to sentence structure (which will be enumerative, coordinate). A first step in stylistic analysis will be to observe such deviations as the repetitions of sound, the inversion of word order, the construction of involved hierarchies of clauses, all of which must serve some aesthetic function such as emphasis or explicitness or their opposites — the aesthetically justified blurring of distinctions or obscurity.*

A fusion of structuralism and stylistics has produced the bulk of this chapter for the simple reason that stylistics, which investigates the author's peculiar way to manipulate his linguistic endowment, is interested, among others, in the structure of language, which is in line with what the structuralist endeavours to do as well.

The assumption here is that underlying the enquiry by the stylistician are structural properties contained in a piece of art. The relationship between structuralism and stylistics, therefore, becomes imperative in this chapter.

## 4.2 *Leseyane and Syntax*

The title of Leseyane's work Letlhaku le legologolo happens to be a proverb, which has been defined in chapter 2 as one of the simple forms from which the essay derives. The author elects, most probably for poetic reasons, brevity and melody, to tamper with the completeness of the proverb, contrary to the view held by most scholars, that

**diane di na le popego e e se keng e fetolwa  
bonolo**, (Manyaka *et al.* 1994:45).  
*(Proverbs have a rigid form not so easy to alter)*

Immediately the proverb is tampered with rules of syntax are violated. For example, the phrase structure rule:

**S ----> NP PREDP NP,**

where the (S) = sentence is made up of the **Noun phrase** which is normally followed by the **Predicative Phrase**, which yields yet another **Noun Phrase** or more, followed by either an **Adverbial Phrase**, as in

**Mosimane o ja bogobe ka iketlo**  
*The boy eats porridge slowly).*

In the above example, the constituents of the sentence are

<b>Mosimane</b> ( <i>boy</i> )	= <b>Noun Phrase</b> (subject)
<b>o ja</b> ( <i>eats</i> )	= <b>Verb Phrase</b> ( <i>predicate</i> )
<b>bogobe</b>	= <b>Noun Phrase</b> (object)
<b>ka iketlo</b> ( <i>slowly</i> )	= <b>Adverbial Phrase</b> ( <i>descriptive adjunct</i> )

Rules of syntax command that the verb in the above example should take on an object (NP) since it is transitive, and it would be incomplete if it were to be

**Mosimane o ja ...**  
*(The boy eats) (continuous) ...*  
 without an object.

In the same vein the title Letlhaku le legologolo is incomplete as a sentence, let alone as a proverb. The Phrase Structure rule is violated since we only have a Noun Phrase in Letlhaku le legologolo thus:

**Letlhaku** (*reed*) = Noun  
**le legologolo** (*which is old*) = Adjective.

The question becomes what does an old reed do? The answer to that completes the proverb thus:

**Letlhaku le legologolo le bewa ke le lešwa**  
*(An old reed is balanced with a young one)*

where **le bewa** (*is balanced*) = **Verb Phrase**

**ka le lešwa** (*with a young one*) = **Adverbial Phrase**

and the Phrase Structure rule is complied with fully.

Leseyane has formed a number of headings in the collection in the same way. The following examples will suffice:

**Nonyane e e mephuphuthomebe e iphatlha ka diphuka tsa yona,**

where the underlined part is a **Verb Phrase** comprising a verb, an instrumental adverb and a **Possessive Phrase** and the sentence thus becomes complete. In

**Tau e iphutha metlhala e le nosi fa e na le bana mafaratlhatlha,**

a new dimension of grammar is introduced. The underlined clause which has been left out, is an embedded sentence to the main one tau e iphutha metlhala e le nosi, which is a complete sentence on its own with the Phrase Structure thus:

**S ----> NP VP NP QP**

Guma (1983:91) says of the structure of the proverb, that

*a number of proverbs are made up of two parallel statements in a juxtaposed position. Such statements are contrasting in significance, in that the first may indicate the opposite of the second, and vice versa. They may involve identical parts of speech — a noun or compound noun in the first statement being contrasted with another noun or compound noun in the second one; a predicate with a predicate, an object with an object, depending on the parts of speech that are involved in each section of the contrast pair that constitutes the proverb.*

Instead of the author contrasting the first part of the proverb with the second part, that is e iphutha (*organizes*) and mafaratlhatlha (*confusion*) respectively, he opts to leave the space for the reader.

The most probable reason for Leseyane to end up with such an elided title could be that of leaving an echo on the reader's mind as well as give him a task to fill the gap.

The conciseness of the proverbs, with tau e iphutha metlhala e le nosi in particular, due to their shortening, tends to add a melodious spice to the work under study. Laconic sentences have a vocative propensity to grab attention and to make one desire to know more. Since Leseyane basically complains about our ignorance and naivety with regard to our Setswana heritage, he engages the reader by asking him to fill in the missing word and thereafter provide the missing word himself to come to the aid of the reader.

Leseyane does not interfere with the word order but only shortens the proverb. He does not say, for instance:

**e e boa bontlha tshwenyana e a ikilela**  
*(the one with sharp hairs is self-cautious),*

where the **Noun Phrase's** order is inverted and the noun **tshwenyana** follows the nominal relative **e e boa bontlha**. The effect would have been otherwise had the word order been adversely tampered with.

#### 4.3 ***Narrative Syntax and Tshwenyana e e boa bontlha***

Any discussion of form and style presupposes a reflection on the structure of the essay. We noted in chapter one that the classical essay comprises the introduction, body and conclusion. Ideally the introduction is one paragraph long, but it should not be a prescription, as it is likely to stifle the writer's licence.

#### 4.3.1 *Introduction*

Contrary to the reader's expectation that the writer should expose the intended route in his essay, Leseyane prefers to wander about by first giving background information before presenting his "introduction proper."

From paragraph one to the first half of the sixth he indulges in the quest for language preservation and complains that the Batswana of today shun the treasure of their language and culture. He ponders on the genesis of the proverb under discussion, that it is the principle of survival which prompted our elders to formulate it.

**Botshelo ba motho le ba phologolo ke mokgweleo o mogolo mo go beng ba bona, gonne ga go motho kampo phologolo e e phelang e sa ipabalele mo direng tse di kanakana tsa botshelo ba yona (1963:9).**

*(Life is a heavy burden to both man and animal since both have to fight for self-preservation from their enemies).*

This and the next five paragraphs of necessity form the background element of the essay, and do not introduce the essence of the essay in line with the topic under discussion. The sense contained in the latter part of paragraph six and seven seems, according to the requirements of a classical essay, to make a good introduction.

Let us look at excerpts from both paragraphs:

Fela ha e le ka fa mokgweng wa go iphapha mo go sengwe le sengwe se e leng sera sa botshelo, ga go na pharologano fa gare ga tsela e motho a boifang loso ka yona le e dibopiwa tse dingwe di tshabang loso ka yona (1963:11).

*(There is but no difference between the way man and animals fear death and as such protect themselves from possible enemies),*

and

Pharologano e e leng teng fa gare ga motho le dibopiwa tse dingwe, ka fa mokgweng wa go iphapha le go ipabalela mo dikotsing tsa botshelo, ke gore motho o filwe kebelelo ya go direla sengwe le sengwe se se mo maikutlong a gagwe ka go se naganela tsela e o tshwanetseng go se dira ka yona. Se phologolo e se dirang ha go tla fa, ke go dira fela se maikutlo a yona a tlhago a reng e se dire. Maikutlo a, ke ona mogologolo o buang ka ga ona ha a re, "Tshwenyana e e bowa bontlha e a ikilela" (1963:12).

*(Man is different from other creatures because he acts rationally, unlike an animal, which only acts impulsively).*

The reason we argue that these ideas form the introduction is simply that paragraph six reflects on the fact that life is precious and all creatures fear death, hence the need for self-defence, which is the essence of the topic.

Paragraph seven continues the idea in the sense that the literal connotation of the proverb is brought forward as a means to prepare the reader for the figurative. It is also undoubtedly the introduction because

it is followed in ensuing paragraphs by ideas that link with it and further the main idea.

#### 4.3.2 *The Body*

A point in retrospect is that the idea that was introduced in the introduction is developed further in a logical and coherent manner. On the basis of the above we can safely say the body begins effectively at paragraph twelve, where Leseyane defines the concepts in the topic.

He distinguishes between go ikilela and go iphemela, respectively (*to be wary; self-cautious* and *to defend oneself*).

... o ka iphemela ka go ikilela, fela o ka se ka wa ikilela ka go iphemela. Se re tshwanetseng go se ithuta ke se:o ka iphemela ka go ikilela gone go ikilela go raya go ikgogona le go tlarologa fa sera sa botshelo se le teng (1963:pg. 14).

*(... you can be self-cautious to defend yourself but not necessarily the other way round. We have to learn the fact that one can defend oneself by being wary for being wary suggests taking precautionary measures, being proactive in life).*

The question may be asked: what about paragraphs eight to eleven?. This invites readily the aspect of style in our analysis. The preoccupation by Leseyane of the wrong usage of the proverb and language in general causes him to digress from the topic, as he confesses himself elsewhere that

... le ha mo gongwe e ne ya ne eketi di re faposa mo tseleng ya se segolo se go tshwanetseng ga be go ne go le sona fela fa pele ga mogopolo wa rona, (1963:47).

*(...although at times we were derailed somewhat from the gist of the matter).*

This kind of digression is ultimately the author's style and repertoire as it pervades most of his essays. For example, in paragraph three he introduces the proverbs:

**Sakanye a tshela molapo, o a bo a ikantse boditse jo bo phepa (1963:10),**

*(A hyena trusts its perfect fur for crossing a river)*

and

**Bana ba tshipa ba tsaya mmila o le mongwe, ha ba kgaogana ba tswa dira tsa megotlha (1963:10),**

which are totally divorced from the intended discussion. He plunges into a discussion of the latter proverb and the reader might be misled as to the real topic under discussion.

Leseyane beautifully supports the introduction in paragraphs six and seven by means of an illustration. From paragraph 15 to 17 he relates how one old man witnessed how animals used both the olfactory sense and instinct to evade impending death. The illustration is relevant because the instinct is the mechanism to help one escape trouble.

### 4.3.3 *The Conclusion*

The essayist as our supposed expert needs to be able to round off his debate and leave an unambiguous and lasting impression in the mind of the reader. Our understanding of the topic allows us to deduce that the conclusion here is contained in paragraph 17, since it is the reason for the construction of the proverb. It is after the scene as seen by the old man.

The last paragraph is once again the writer's digression from the topic due to his preoccupation with language preservation.

## 4.4. *Narrative Syntax in Pheko Ya Gole*

### 4.4.1 *Introduction*

The same pattern obtains in this essay as in the previous one in terms of the author's tendency to start at the wrong place. What is crucial of course is the fact that every time he gets immersed in his discussion and becomes personal about his topic, he seems to be didactic. He inadvertently wanders about as in a meditative essay, and tends to forget his reader behind.

The introduction proper of this essay is difficult to establish because the author takes pains to explicate the terms **pheko**, **gole**, **motlha** and **tsholo**, respectively, **medicine**, **a place far away**, **an era or time** and **a hunt**.

Taking this into cognisance, we can safely surmise that paragraph six is our introduction. This is because in terms of focus and emphasis, the first word **pheko** is important.

In the said paragraph, Leseyane in great style highlights the three main threats to mankind which necessitate the ability to protect oneself from them if one is to survive. We are left with no doubt though, that regardless of the wrong placement of the introduction that the author knows exactly where he plans to take us.

#### 4.4.2 *The Body*

The body of this essay is somewhat a jig-saw of information not properly arranged but very interesting. As discussed in the content of this essay in chapter 3, it was evident that paragraphs 7, 8, 9 and 40 are illustrative of **pheko** as an aid during war. Paragraphs 10, 11, 15 refer to **tlala** or famine in the literal sense and paragraphs 27, 28 and 29 are only figurative. We can thus judge from the content of these paragraphs, that the author gets lost in his discussion.

#### 4.4.3 *The Conclusion*

Our conclusion of this essay will be based on a brief look at paragraphs 6, 14 and 19. If we take paragraph 6 as the introduction, which contains the main idea in short, then the main idea of **pheko** runs through up to the end, and therefore, paragraph 56 (exactly the last paragraph) becomes the conclusion.

The very last sentence of this paragraph, **pheko ya gole e tsewa ka motlha wa tsholo**, with its poetic flavour, is skilfully introduced in paragraph 19, where the formation of the proverb is accounted for. The idea in paragraph 25 that goes:

**A re gakologelweng gape gore go teng dipheko dingwe tsa ngaka ya Motswana tse go seng motlha mongwe o di ka tsewang ka ona, ha e se fela ka motlha wa tsholo (1963:89)**

*(Let us remember that some of the traditional healer's medicines are so rare that they are usually only obtainable during expeditions),*

is summed up in paragraph 56, which goes:

**A re gakologelweng gore dipheko tse, di tsewa mo ditlhareng dingwe tse di epiwang, le mo dirweng dingwe tsa dioka le dibatakomo, mme ga se tiro e e bonolo go kgobokanya dilo tse. Ke gona re laelwang gore le ha re ka ya letsholo kgakala, re se ka ra lebala go tsaya e nngwe le e nngwe ya dipheko tse, fa re tla e bonang teng. Pheko ya gole e tsewa ka motlha wa tsholo (1963:104).**

*(Let us consider that these remedies are obtainable from certain trees and big animals, and it proves difficult at times to collect them. We are thus advised to grab every opportunity to collect these whenever we come across them).*

We can safely, therefore, conclude that the author has beautifully rounded off his essay in this paragraph. Firstly, the notion of **pheko** as advanced in paragraph 6, secondly, the perpetual need for a balanced state of affairs biologically and otherwise, and thirdly, the rhythmic nature of the proverb itself, all are closed in paragraph 56.

The author has effectively tampered with the order of his paragraphs to provide a harmonic blend at the end. We discover that even if the body is confused a little in terms of coherence, the conclusion is well thought of.

#### 4.5 *Lezeyane and digression*

Digression is the author's tendency to depart from the norm. There is no way however we can claim that this deviation reduces the author to a *persona non grata*. We cannot prescribe to a writer what his imprint should be.

The essence of stylistics is to watch the effect that a deviation produces in a piece of art, otherwise there would not be any poetic licence in literature. Freeman (1970b) and Enkvist (1973) respectively hold these views about style, and we single out the first to account for digression.

Freeman(1970b) sees

1. *Style as deviation from the norm.*
2. *Style as recurrence or convergence of textual Pattern.*
3. *Style as a particular exploitation of a Grammar of possibilities,*

and Enkvist (1973) proposes

1. *Style as departure from a norm*
2. *Style as an addition of a neutral pre-stylistic mode/core of expression*
3. *Style as a relation between linguistic units*

For our purposes we emphasize the first in each proposition and see how Leseyane deliberately or inadvertently takes a devious route from what the reader has come to expect of him. Inadvertently because he might be engaged in a meditative/poetic essay where he tends to forget that someone is eavesdropping, and deliberately because he is so preoccupied with transmitting a particular and important history that it becomes his mission to inject the devious information. It is at this juncture that he sits for a narrative/historical essay.

#### 4.5.1 *Leseyane and deliberate digression*

When he needs to make a point at a particular moment, which he feels might be inappropriate, Leseyane has a tendency to confess in advance, as if he is asking to be pardoned and at times to justify his case. In *Phokokwe go ja o o diretsenyana* (*a jackal that is filthy is the one that eats—literal*) (*no risk no gain*) he relates the fable of the jackal and the hen.

Although the anecdote is about a jackal, it is not appropriately put at this point as he admits:

...ga e a tsena mo kgannye e ya rona ka gore gongwe ke ne ke sa itse se nka beng ke ne ka bua ka ga sona. Ke e tsentse mo kgannye e ka maikaelelo le keletso ya go tsosa mo mogopolong wa mmadi, maiteko a go thusa go batlisisa selo se segolo se se neng sa dira gore mogologolo... **Le gale ha ka go tsenya kgannyana e mo kgannye e, go dirile gore ke fapose mogopolo wa mmadi mo go se o neng a lebeletse gore nka be ke ne ka bua ka ga sona, ke kopa gore a intshwarele ka ha jaanong a**

bona se se neng sa nkgameletsa mo go lokeleng kgannyana e mo kgannye e, (1963:38-39) (emphasis mine).

*(I did not include this bit just to while away with time but to impress upon the reader what prompted the old people to construct this proverb. Please pardon me if this is not what you expected of me in this work).*

By implication here the author acknowledges the presence of the reader as well as recognize his integrity. Leseyane admits elsewhere in this essay:

**A re gakologelweng gore dikai tse ke setseng ke di tlhagisitse fa godimo tse, le ha mo gongwe e ne ya ne ekete di re faposa mo tseleng ya se segolo se go tshwanetseng ga be go ne go le sona fela fa pele ga mogopolo wa rona, di tsene mo polelong e, ka lebaka la ha re ntse re menoganya megopolo ya rona go batlisisa ... (1963:47).**

*(Please keep in mind that these examples, although at times somewhat devious, have been included here for the sake of clarity).*

The author, it becomes implicit, seems to be confident about his subject matter, exactly how the essayist should be in relation to his content as observed in chapter one.

#### 4.5.2 *Leseyane and inevitable digression*

Since it seems inevitable for Leseyane to depart from the norm most of the time, we want to align ourselves with what Roger Fowler calls "structural metrics" to appreciate this peculiarity (Freeman 1970:08). In

**O se bone majwe go katogana** the abundance of idiom infiltrates Leseyane's writing.

Instead of concentrating on the heading he has chosen, he makes reference to

**O se bone thola borethe, teng ga yona go a baba** (1963:26).  
*(Do not judge a book by its cover)*

We do not deny that the above is a proverb, but it is not well timed. This deviation though, has a poetic element in that in

O se bone majwe go katogana, and  
O se bone thola borethe teng ga yona go a baba

the underlined parts are the same as in parallelism. Leseyane thus seems to have been overwhelmed by melody that he let his thoughts wander in the production of this sort of unwanted information.

In **Nonyane e e mephuphuthomebe** he continues to wander about as he wonders about the wise old sayings. Instead of introducing the topic to be discussed, he loiters long enough to tell us about **thukhwi o rile ke lobelo motlhaba wa re ke namile** (*murder will out*) right in the first paragraph.

While we are not in a position to account for this particular digression, we can safely surmise that subconsciously the force of gravity influenced him. Perhaps a point had to be proven that although the bird may have the supremacy of the air, finally at some stage, particularly for feeding purposes, it has to come to mother earth.

The explanation that the kind of bird referred to in nonyane e e mephuphuthomebe is that which cannot fly, like poultry and the ostrich, seems to have led automatically to the mentioning of the jackal and land. Nature is in control of Leseyane's mind, who cannot help it but add another proverb

... re se ka ra bona majwe go katogana; mo bosigong a a etelana (1963:18).

*(... let us not be fooled by these rocks at daytime, for at night they do meet)*

The bird, the jackal, land as well as rocks (literal) are natural phenomena and in an ecosystemic relationship. It is thus not surprising that the author unwittingly in two paragraphs comes to mention them. The effect that this digression brings about particularly in this essay is that of the descending order of creation imprinted in man's mind.

Leseyane explains elsewhere that *majwe* are the various kingdoms or tribes whose kings meet at night to discuss diplomatic affairs. The animals, birds and land were created before man, yet when man came to be, he was given authority over all and sundry. It becomes clear thus that Leseyane could never have avoided this tripartite connection, however irrelevant to the discussion it might seem.

#### 4.5.3 *Leseyane and illustration(s)*

This seems to be Leseyane's modus operandi to reach out to his audience. Almost similar to digression here the author has the remarkable tendency to illustrate his point with examples. In most of the illustrations

Leseyane toils to justify his stance to satisfy the reader of his mastery of content. At times however he immerses himself in the pool of facts that he fails to be in charge.

In Ka tlhagolela mookana, ya re o gola wa ntlhaba (page 157), the following examples elucidate this tendency which we classify as style because of its frequency:

After an attractive introduction followed by a fleshy portion of body to make a masterpiece of an essay, Leseyane is overwhelmed by emotions to illustrate the figurative meaning of this proverb, that parents take pains to rear their children in vain.

He first works on the literal meaning by explaining what mookana and other trees are as well as the importance of traditional African medicinal help. We actually feel that the essay could have ended well with the first thirteen paragraphs. All the ideal requirements of a good essay are contained in these paragraphs that any further development taints the whole picture.

From paragraph fourteen to eighteen he gives the example of an abandoned old granny whose history is tragic because her children have left her desolate.

**Bana ba gagwe, ba ne ba le botlhe mo ditirong tse di neng di ba duela sentle, mme go ne go se ope wa bona yo o neng a ikutlwa go mo tshola, kampo go mo tlamela ... Ga ke dumele gore le ha maikutlo**

otlhe a botho a ne a sule mo go yo mongwe lo yo mongwe wa bana ba gagwe, tllhasenyana ya ona e e neng e sa ntse e phela, e ne e ka pala go kgwarwa ke matlhomolapelo a mmaagwe o neng a le mo go ona, ...(1963:166-167).

*(All her children were well off but none of them ever thought about her. One cannot imagine that they were so cold as to lack even a single spark of compassion for their mother).*

Leseyane does not pause to give another example. In paragraph nineteen to twenty another example of an ailing old woman is given. It too is inspired by affect and sympathy.

Mosadimogolo yo o ne a tlogile a se na lesego. E ne ya re a sa le mofša, monna wa gagwe a mo tlogela le bana, a tswa sengae... Basimane ba, ba ne ba se na sepe le ene, re sa bue sepe ka ga basadi ba bona. (1963:167-168).

*(Luckless old lady. Her husband abandoned her and the children early in life ... These boys did not care much about her, let alone their wives).*

Yet another example is given in the same paragraph twenty, this time around to bring about a remarkable contrast. A man moves from rags to riches thanks to his children who are responsible. This appears to have forced itself to balance the equation.

Two grandmothers have been adversely maligned at by their children, and now something positive dilutes the negative. This world of comparisons

serves a purpose in this collection. We saw in 4.3.2 above the distinction between loftiness and humility as represented by the bird and the landscape respectively. Now we see this beautiful contrast between good and bad.

This infiltration of illustration in Leseyane's work clearly becomes his trademark and therefore style. Another example sees its way through the essay, that of an old man whose boys demand equal distribution of his livestock after their mother passes away. This demand pains him almost to death, as epitomised in his deceased wife's words:

**O tla nna mo matshwengegong a o a tlišediwang ke basimane ba gago; ke go utlwela botlhoko (1963:171).**

*(Your sons will continually give you mental agony, pity you).*

It is very interesting to observe the undertone of the title of this essay collection in the present essay under discussion. **Letlhaku le legologolo le bewa ka le lešwa** basically means that cooperation between the old and young pays dividends.

The old possess wisdom and experience while the youth have muscle and energy. They depend on one another in the sense that the elderly are frail to do much demanding work, and the youth often misdirect their energy in a wanton way. It is known that a society without a vision for its youth is doomed because today's youth are tomorrow's adults. The illustrations

by Leseayne thus serve the purpose of weaving this great message contained in the title.

In Moremogolo go betlwa wa taola (Page 125), of the 37 paragraphs the first 19 contain the gist of invaluable, appreciable information about taola (divine bone). From paragraph 20 Leseayne tells a story of how a divine healer helped him recover his lost cow.

He does this in a very longwinded fashion in more than 18 paragraphs. While we do not intend to discuss the content of the example in detail, we wish to reiterate our recognition of this type of illustration as Leseayne's style.

#### 4.6. *Space and text in Leseayne*

The nature versus nurture philosophy is at the helm of our discussion here for the simple reason that not only inherent elements but social factors, among other things, shape our behaviour. Man is brought up to protect his territory and obviate any slightest intrusion at all cost.

There is thus an inevitable intertextuality between literature and society, determined by the value society puts on its monumental heritage. These may be national idiom, culture, song and most importantly for this discussion, space, all of which become national symbols of identity.

It is unfortunate that the Black man's space has been tainted by the invasion and specification of *the other* man, and as such, even our literature produces to a larger extent, the effect either of resistance, consciously and otherwise. We want to argue that these nuances to space in Leseyane's work, are reflective of his style. We are not going to depart from the structuralist perspective of the *signifier* and *signified* since we presume that space permeates the text in Setswana and Letlhaku le legologolo in particular.

At 'The Southern Spaces' conference in London, Maake in Darian-Smith *et al.* (1996:145/6) had this to say about the intertextuality of text and space, that

*if one were to look at these myths in Saussurean semiotics of langue and parole, taking the land as a tabula rasa upon which any parole can be inscribed, the significance which is attached to the signifier moves beyond mere paradigmatic relations of combination and selection, and becomes a myth, which is not static but dynamic.*

The same sentiment about the inseparable nature of the text in the context of space is shared by Mitchel and Carter respectively. For Mitchel, the landscape circulates as a medium of exchange, as 'a site of visual appropriation, a focus for the formation of identity'; the 'semiotic features' of landscape generate historical narratives. In this sense,

landscape is dynamic; it serves to create and naturalize the histories and identities inscribed upon it (Darian-Smith *et al.* 1996:03), and

*for Carter, space is a text upon which histories and cultures are inscribed and interpreted ... The act of naming, and the names themselves, either blatantly ignored or subverted and incorporated preexisting Aboriginal names and histories of the land. Thus competing or overlapping histories are either presented or silenced through the cultural power of maps and place names (Darian-Smith *et al.* 1996:05).*

To further strengthen our proposition, we consider a pamphlet by Kagiso Publishers, that

*the African culture provides a rich source of material just waiting to be transformed into essay form.*

This is exactly what Leseyane has done, hence our critique of him.

#### 4.6.1 ***Space in O se bone majwe go katogana***

In this essay the geographical setup, reference to places by their names as well as kingdoms as reflective of the social order pervade the author's presentation. These are influenced by patriotism and the subconscious drive to preserve his identity for posterity. The physical nature of the earth with its permanence can be found in,

Ha ke raya motho ke re ke itse naga, sa ntlha ke raya gore ke itse mokgwa o e bopegileng ka ona. Ke gore ke itse fa e nang le matlapa, ditlhare, melapo, mesima, dikgatampi, mebila, ditsela le tse dingwe tse dintsi tse e leng matshwao a o ka itseng naga ka ona, di leng teng (1963:73).

*(When I say I know a place I mean basically its structure and appearance, that is, stones, trees, rivers, holes, ashpits, roads and all known physical signs one can refer to).*

These physical attributes are as a matter of fact, given names not only to identify but also to identify with. This is evident in,

**Mo merafeng ya Batswana, go teng maina a a supang kwa beng ba ona ba neng ba tsholelwa teng, le gore go ne go ntse jang motlheng o batho ba, ba neng ba tla mo lefatsheng ka ona. Maina a a tshwanang le Magageng, Matlapeng, Sekgweng, Moruo, Tau (1963:32).**

*(Certain names in Setswana refer to places of birth as well as to happenings at the time a child was born. Such names as Magageng (born in caves), Matlapeng (born in a mountaneous place), Sekgweng (born in a jungle/bush), Moruo (wealth: livestock), tau (referring to the sound of a lion at the time the child was born)).*

These names serve a very important link with our deity, and this perhaps accounts well for the old saying that

**Leina le a rekwa.**

*(A name is not given for free).*

The author here alludes to this great heritage to confirm the close relationship between text and space. We can mention such places as

**Tlhatlaganyane**, where boulders are so neatly packed on top of one another that it is like some person did it, **Pilanesberg**, a natural monument of the Bakgatla in honour of their king, **Taung**, a place of a pride of lions, probably to reflect the pride which the Bataung have over their land and therefore identity.

Sometimes this strong conviction about one's identity emits dangerous emotions with the wish to preserve one's own heritage. In Mminele (1983:43)'s Ngwana wa mobu (*Child of the soil*) Mokhura reminds the Batau of the sensitivity and delicateness of association with one's birth land.

... re nyaka ge ngwana yo wa rena Phankga, e eba hlogo ya sekolo se. Sa pele se se re kgorometšago ke gore **ke ngwana wa mobu wo** (emphasis mine).

*(We demand that Phankga be the principal of this school firstly on grounds that he was born here).*

Still on the question of the meaning attributed to land and objects around us, let us consider what Marcelino dos Santos says in his poem entitled

**Here we were born**

*And it was also  
here  
that you and I  
were born  
Hot land  
of rising sun  
Green land  
of fertile fields  
Soft land  
With a broad bosom  
It was to us  
all this surrendered  
Brimming with life*

*and amorous longing.*  
 II *The land where we were born  
 goes back  
 like time  
 Our forefathers  
 were born  
 in that land  
 And they, like the coarse wild grass  
 were the meagre body's veins  
 running red, earth's fragrance.  
 Trees and granite pinnacles  
 Their arms  
 embraced the earth  
 in daily work  
 and sculpting the new world's fertile rocks  
 began, in colour,  
 The great design of life.*  
 III

...  
*And when the wind  
 whips the sky  
 and the sword falls  
 tearing flesh  
 And horror touches  
 the naked face  
 Our love is not shaken  
 This is the land  
 where we were born  
 Its sorrow  
 is our grief  
 And today's bitter cloud  
 is a moment's pain  
 which the rain must dry ... (Soyinka 1984:224).*

The poet here, without necessarily giving names of places he refers to, indulges in terrestrial qualificatives which reflect patriotism. Reference to land which is red, green and soft, and the lines

*its sorrow  
 is our grief*

reflect the level of commitment the particular peoples have for their land.

Space for a Motswana does not only serve to provide shelter but refuge as well, and a deep sense of belonging.

**Metse yotlhe ya Batswana e megologolo, e agilwe mo teng, kampo fa tlase ga dithaba. Go riana, e ne e ntse e le go aga gaufe le botshabelo jo bo thata ... (1963:32).**

*(The Batswana of old built their villages on mountain ranges for reasons of refuge during wars).*

What Leseiyane demonstrates here is the sentiment held by any sensible African. He makes another reference of this nature to explain that **majwe** refers to different kingdoms, as noted with Pilanesberg above. The reader is enlightened that it is the kings who meet at night, and not the literal mountains as we know them.

**Majwe a a etelanang a, go tewa dikgosi jaaka kgosi ya gore e agile kwa lentsweng la gore, mme ya gore le yona e agile kwa go lele (1963:33).**

*(By these rocks it is meant kings, who control certain geographical areas, specifically mountains).*

This reference to kingdoms marks another important aspect of our history, and that is social order and organization. The special commitment that each subject had, and supposedly should have with regard to one's land and therefore space can be deduced in,

**Banna ba, ba ne ba rekegela kgosi le morafe wa bona, go feta ha ba ne ba rekegela botshelo ba bona. Ba ne ba bolela gore ha ba ne ba ka swela kgosi le morafe wa bona, ba ne ba ka bo ba sule loso lo lo tlotlegang (1963:33).**

*(These men were so patriotic and selfless about their kings and nations that it was an honour to die serving the nation).*

These are not tribe specific happenings. Fatima Meer quotes the constitution of the African National Congress Youth League as saying:

*"The African has a primary interest and inalienable right to Africa, which is his continent and motherland"* (Sundermeier 1975:132).

We do not intend interpreting symbols contained in the merger between language and text, but only to cement the very strong structuralist and stylistic connection between literature and text, that it is the society which produces a text via an offspring of the very community, the author.

What we are saying thus is that we elected to discuss this aspect under style since it surfaces inadvertently but very significantly in Leseyane's essays.

#### 4.7 *Leseyane and Biblical allusion*

Cuddon (1991:29) defines allusion as

*Usually an implicit reference, perhaps to another work of literature or art, to a person or an event.*

He distinguishes between allusion as a reference to events and people, to facts about the author himself, imitative allusion, as well as metaphorical allusion.

While we argue in favour of the structuralist theory that

*behind the structure of the text the structurality of language is at work* (Manyaka 1992:12),

and that words are signs which produce meaning, we wish to acknowledge the relevance of intertextuality in this section. To this end Manyaka (1992:12) asserts that a text can be seen as an intertextual event and is bound to change intermittently since the interrelationships between signs is not static in nature.

We thus want to investigate how Leseyane feeds on the Holy Book to enhance the literariness of his project. This, like digression as discussed above, may and may not be intentional. Tshauke (1995:11) sees the text as an intertextual event. Intertextual to guarantee the innate integrity of the text, as well as to establish structural differences between a given text and others from which it has fed.

#### 4.7.1 *Allusion in Phokojwe go ja o o diretsenyana*

The morality contained in this proverb is tantamount to the fall of man at the garden of Eden. Man's punishment as recorded in the Book of Genesis, chapter 3 verse 19, was

**O tla ja dijo ka mofufutso wa sefathego sa gago**  
*(You shall eat of the sweat from your brow),*

implying toiling and handwork if one is to survive in life. The same goes for the advice given to a young man in the Book of Proverbs, chapter 6 verse 6, that

**Motlapa, eya kwa tshoswaneng, o bone mekgwa ya yona, o tlhalefe.**  
*(Go to the ant thou sluggard, consider its ways, and be wise).*

This morality is better summed up in the author's words, that

**tlhakatlhakano e, e tlisitswe ke go sa tlhokomeleng ga batho molao o mogolo o o salang o newa motho motlhang o neng a latlhelwa kwa ntle ga tshimo ya Etene. Molao o ke o, "Go tloga ka letsatsi le, o tla phela ka moputso wa phatla ya gago" (1963:41).**

*(This disorder is brought about by the fact that people do not adhere to the law that man will eat of the sweat from his brow).*

The teaching goes on as the author alludes to the seventh commandment **o se ke wa utswa** (*do not steal*) in,

**Ke setse ke buile fa godimo ka go sa siamang ga go utswa le ka fa leruo le le kgobokantsweng ka go utswa le sa tshegofadiwang ka teng (1963:42).**

*(I have indicated already that it is bad to steal and also that goods acquired through theft are not blessed).*

We note with appreciation how the author manages to consciously embellish his essay by making direct references to the Bible as host.

#### 4.7.2 *Allusion in O se bone thola borethe*

Even in this one the author invokes the teachings of the Bible as reference to drive his point home. He makes mention of a dream in which he sees a lush garden, and says:

**Tshimo e rure, ke yona re utlwang gore e ne ya re kwa tshimologong, ya direlwa go nna boago ba motho. ...Setlhare se bontle jwa leungo la sona bo phalang bontle ba maungo a ditlhare tse dingwe se, ke sona modi wa bobbe, matshwenyego, mahutsana le dipogisego tse di kana kana mo lefatsheng (1963:59).**

*(This is the garden we are informed was created to be man's habitat ... The root of all this evil, problems and sufferings is this attractive and enticing tree).*

This Biblical allusion is not made in vain, for the author here wants to reveal the theme of appearance versus reality. He knows he has a reader who must be convinced at all cost, and thus strives to have a base for his argument.

To further accentuate his point, and create a dramatic contrast between treasure and envy, which is relevant in this essay because the sight of beauty calls for the desire to possess, he discourages us from this insatiable desire by referring to the ninth commandment thus:

**... re kgalemelwa ke e nngwe ya ditaolo tse some gore re se ka ra eletsa sengwe sa mongwe ka rona (1963:63).**

*(We are warned by one of the ten commandments not to envy).*

The author alludes beautifully and very succinctly to the fourth commandment, implying total allegiance and compliance to one's parents. This is also in line with the book of Proverbs, chapter 3 verses 1-2, and chapter 7, verses 1-2 respectively, and they read thus:

**Morwaaka, se lebale thuto ya me; a pelo ya gago e tshegetse ditaolo tsa me! Gonne di tla go okeletsa bontsi jwa malatsi, le dinyaga tsa bophelo le kagiso.**

*(My son, never forget the things I have taught you. If you want a long and satisfying life, closely follow my instructions)*

and

**Ngwanaka, se lebale mafoko a me; ipolokele ditaolo tsa me. Tshegetsa ditaolo tsa me, foo o tla phela, le molao wa me jaaka thaka ya leitlho la gago.**

*(Follow my advice, my son; always keep it in mind and stick to it. Obey me and live. Guard my words as your most precious possession) (The living Bible: Giant Print Edition).*

A son is here counselled by his father that paying heed to his instructions will definitely pay dividends. We want to believe that this Biblical reference is commensurate with such proverbs as ngwana yo o tlhogokgolo o sira rraagwe and ngwana wa lesilo go rogwa mmaagwe, which are direct reactions to noncompliance among children.

Leseyane gives an example of an obedient son to advance the philosophy in the Book of Proverbs above:

**Mosimane o ne a dumela gore sengwe le sengwe se rraagwe o neng a tla se utlwa kampo a se bona ka ga moroetsana yo o neng a mo rata, ene mosimane o ne a sa ipaakanyetsa go dira sepe se se neng se tla be se le kgathano le thato le taolo ya gagwe (1963:63).**

*(The lad did not disagree with his father regarding the findings by him (the father) about his (the lad) future bride. He was actually not prepared to counter any of his father's wishes).*

A very noteworthy allusion of predestination is made, which brings to memory Chaucer's distinction between simple and conditional necessities, in his The Canterbury Tales. Leseiyane seems to belong to the simple necessity school, which advocates that whatever one does, thinks and is at any given moment of his life, was determined long before birth.

This becomes a fallacy of composition since it deviates from the popular opinion that:

**Moremogolo go betlwa wa taola,**

which proverb goes with conditional necessity, that one is given a particular disposition, energy and potential and he can and must use these qualities to shape one's future. Contrary to this conditional necessity theme, Leseiyane writes:

**Se ke tshupo ya botlalo gore se motho a leng sona, o sona, le gona ga go maatla ape mo lefatsheng a a ka fetolang tlhago e a tsetsweng ka yona (1963:69).**

*(This shows that what man has been destined to be is, and no worldly power can ever change this arrangement).*

We would like to point out certainly that the Biblical allusion as used by Leseyane is not in vain. He does it because he is obliged to, since Culler (1989:139), quoted by Manyaka (1992:27), says:

*A work of art can only be read in connection with or against other texts which provide a grid through which it is read and structured by establishing expectations which enable one to pick out salient features are common to both and give them structure. And hence intersubjectivity — the shared knowledge which is applied to reading and writing— is a function of these other texts.*

#### 4.8 **Conclusion**

We adopt Leech's (1987:120) position that

*Linguistic description and critical interpretation are, to my mind, distinct and complementary ways of "explaining" a literary text,*

for the simple reason that we have no right as analysts to prescribe linguistic rigor and conclude about an author's style or focus solely on general interpretation without considering language to conclude about the same.

We have tried in this chapter to create a balance between stylistics as a linguistic apparatus — which capitalizes on departure from the norm by a writer — and stylistics as a free form of interpretation — which creates space for intertextuality among others.

We discovered that the essay can accommodate aspects of other literary genres like verse, drama and prose. This is because we have the meditative essay, which derives from verse, and the dramatic essay. We had thus to investigate the relationship between the essay and these other types of literature.

We worked from the framework by Scholes (1969) to show the interplay between words used for creating imaginary persons and events (representing narration), words used to appeal directly to the reader (representing persuasion), words that the reader overhears (representing interaction) and words used to express ideas and feelings (representing meditation). We included these in the discussion to show the close connection between the essay and other literary arts.

We also looked into the classical form of the essay. This we did to mark conformity and nonconformity by Leseyane to the universal structure of the essay. We discussed the introduction, the body, and the conclusion of this genre and why each has its features. Aspects like preciseness, coherence and lack of characterization were looked into.

In chapter two we outlined the theoretical background to our study. Guided by our topic, we posited a combination of structuralism and stylistics in our investigation. The bit on structuralism helped us discover the exact origin of the essay, and it is the simple forms as proposed by Jolles.

We noted that narrative syntax is the basis of structuralism, and showed that the essay erupts from prose narratives like the legend, the fable, the memoir and other. We found out that rules of syntax are used by structuralists to analyze literature, which has been the purpose of our investigation.

We revealed the marriage between stylistics and structuralism and its significance to our study. It was proposed that since both the stylistician and the structuralist employ linguistics in one way or other, a fusion of the two becomes not only necessary but inevitable. In this chapter thus, we were ploughing ground for the analysis of form and style respectively.

The content of Letlhaku le legologolo was analyzed in chapter three. We defined content not only in terms of what the author says in a given essay, but also in the epistemic value each essay has to a Motswana in particular and to an African in general. Since our position is that both its theme and type determine the content of any given essay, we discussed the types and themes of essays in this chapter.

As a link to chapter one, we discussed the following types of essays: the persuasive, the meditative, the dramatic and the narrative. These are in line with Scholes' diagram on the relationship between the essay and

other types of literature.

We also established the types of themes relevant to the Black African essay. We alluded to the history of Black African authorship as having been shaped largely by the system of censorship. The themes touched are, among others, the social, historical, nature and didactic. What we planned to find out was the author's manipulation of his content in a manner satisfying to the reader, with themes that appeal to the reader.

To achieve what we set out to do in this chapter, we chose in random order the essays that mostly represent the good and the bad. Good in the sense of truth value and informativeness. Bad in the sense of a myopic approach to a rather versatile topic. We came to the conclusion that the author handles his content in a convincing manner, although he tends to be long-winded.

We differed radically with the author on his approach in **Tshwenyana e e boa bontlha e a ikilela**. We feel that he is rather too literal, which we do not refute, and thus leaves out the figurative meaning of the proverb.

The author has to be commended on the informativeness of such essays as **nonyane e e mephuphuthomebe**, **pheko ya gole e tsewa ka motlha wa tsholo**, **o se bone majwe go katogana** and **tau e iphutha metlhala e le nosi**. He handles the content of these essays in a very remarkable manner, and the reader becomes immersed in the discussion without

doubt.

Chapter four focussed on style and form in Letlhaku le legologolo. We elected to adopt Freeman (1970b) and Enkvist (1973) as the basis for our discussion. Both these scholars agree on style as deviation from standard practice. We divided Leseyane's deviation into deliberate and inevitable digressions respectively.

He has the tendency to prepare himself for digression and apologize in advance for that. Sometimes though the digression just makes inroads into the work inadvertently. This is largely because most of his essays are meditative in nature, and he thus gets lost in the discussion. Our argument was informed by the narrative syntax referred to in the theoretical framework.

We also noted the use of illustration by Leseyane, which becomes his trademark. This illustration is the cause of the digression in his essays. He at times uses this device to expose characters and their names, which practice is not allowed in essay writing.

What we also observed in this chapter is space and text in Letlhaku le legologolo. The author here tends to be crying from within regarding the identity of the African. We can deduce this cry from the title of the collection itself. He seems to be longing for Milton's Paradise lost, for Sol Kerzner's lost city. The tone that pervades this whole work is that of the

desire to attain self-respect, self-acceptance and Black consciousness. This is on the philosophical level.

On the more practical level, the politics of our country before **uhuru** is alluded to in a very succinct way. We discussed this under style since it is so stark yet closed to a superficial eye. What we discovered is that the dispossessed want what is due to them. Their children were given foreign names, their land inscribed with foreign meanings and a host of other denigrating practices.

Among the essays better depicting this inner cry are **o se bone majwe go katogana** and **motho ga a itsiwe e se naga**. We showed the symbolism and deep imagery found in space and text as used by Leseyane.

Discussing intertextuality from the Black Book was inevitable for us. The truth is that much of our African literature has supped from the Bible, for example, the prodigal son theme in Kobo e ntsho by J.M.Ntsime. Leseyane alludes to many Biblical passages in his work, and in structuralist terms, this is relevant to our study. Relevant because Leseyane is a product of the larger whole, the Batswana, whose idiom too is pregnant with Biblical reference. It is no surprise thus that this has infiltrated his style.

We recommend that for further research, the aspect of context in Letlhaku le legologolo could be developed. This is in line with space and

text in the South African scenario. Although we touched on the space and text, we feel it needs focus, which we could not do due to constraints of theory.

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