The Evolution of the Sesotho sa Leboa Young Adult Novella: A Critical and Comparative Study (1940-1969)

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

in the

Department of African Languages

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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November 2020

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own original work. Where secondary material is used, this has been carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with university requirements.

…… ……

SIGNATURE DATE

ETHICS STATEMENT

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this dissertation, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval.

The author declares that he has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of ethics for researchers and the Policy guidelines for responsible research.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my children: Kagiso, Tebogo, Kutollo and Lerato. I deeply feel blessed that God granted me the opportunity to be your father. You remain firmly rooted in my heart and soul.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to record my gratitude to Dr M.V. Mojela, my supervisor, for his unwavering support and encouragement to soldier on independently, as I was toiling through this work. His meticulous comments helped me to stand my ground as a researcher. *Motlaika …!*

I am also extremely grateful to Prof M.S. Serudu, who has that rare analytic gift. Very many thanks for having given me your time and shared with me great thoughts about literature. I have known you throughout not to be a fan of status. *Mokwena …!*

Dr R.D.M. Kekana, my mentor, whom I have known during my teen years as a student at Hwiti High School. You have been an advocate of my dreams. You taught me that in life, each and every moment to mankind brings with it a choice, either to achieve or not to achieve. *Tlou …!*

To T.J. Segooa, thanks so much for reinventing a new world around us. We have been a perfect match throughout our trials and tribulations. Together, we were able to hear voices of celestial messengers. *Serogole …!*

May I heartily thank the University of Pretoria library staff, particularly Adrienne Warricker, for her dedication and professionalism, in acquiring relevant study material towards this thesis. Thank you so much for your immeasurable support without which this journey would have been just a mere dream. Stay blessed.

It would be an unpardonable offence if I cannot acknowledge Bishop M.T. Makobe. Molopeng, you have been a ray of sunshine throughout my studies with the University of Pretoria. Thank you so much for brightening my way when days were dark. *Tau …!*

Fond memories go to Prof L.J. Rafapa, my bosom friend, who always encourages me to allow my head and heart to be guided by constructive criticism. To that end, I have come to realise that there is victory in all circumstances. May God continue to shower you with blessings. *Mokgalaka …!*

I hereby acknowledge my indebtedness with great pleasure to Dr L.S.T. Maphoso, for his complimentary opinions as regards the set-up of this work. *Lenyokgo …!*

A special word of gratitude is due to Dr Francinah M. Kanyane. Thanks so much for your unwavering support and much more, for planting a seed of faith in me. God is in control. *Kgapu …!*

Ocean of thanks go to Prof Andree-Jeanne Tötemeyer, who has played a pivotal role in the initial stages of planning and organising this thesis. I cannot pretend, you really opened my eyes by not hiding to me the treasure in your heart. What a blessing you have been to me.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to Jennifer A. Croll, for proofreading and technical editing of the thesis. I am humbled and appreciative of your magic touch.

SPECIAL THANKS

I thank you my Creator,
For wrapping up my life with integrity,
Humility and wholeness;
I thank you for having given me eyes
To admire the beauty of your creation,
And to respond to your call with equanimity.
I thank you for having given me ears
To listen to your voice and gentle tone;
I thank you for your incredible mercy.

HONOUR

To my great grandparents
from the maternal side,
Phikolo and Moshibudi Molele.
I've never seen your faces nor your pictures,
Here I am, your protégé,
I salute your undying spirit.

SUMMARY

This is a critical and comparative study that examines the blossoming and maturation of the Sesotho sa Leboa (Northern Sotho) Young Adult (YA) novella from the canon of novels in that language. The periods under examination are divided into three decades, namely, 1940–1949, 1950-1959 and 1960-1969.

Taking into account the significant research done by scholars in Sesotho sa Leboa, very little is known about YA literature and in particular, the Young Adult novella (novelette or novel). This somewhat confusing sub-genre is clarified and dissected by literary theorists from different orientations and traditions (schools of thought).

It is envisaged that this research work will help language practitioners in Sesotho sa Leboa, and other languages to make informed decisions about the classification of the sub-genre in terms of its literary elements. Defining the age cohort of the young adult has also been, and still is, a hotly debated terrain. Arguably, the problem stems from diverse societies trying to provide a uniform definition of a global community. In many instances, the age definition of ‘who is the young adult’ seems to be more complex and political in nature.

In the final analysis, the study provides guidelines for the literary evaluation of texts for use in secondary schools, tertiary institutions and for the selection of books for libraries.

Novice writers, in comparison with their predecessors, will also become more conversant with the requirements of the sub-genre. For this reason, Sesotho sa Leboa literature will continue to grow and develop in all facets in relation to quality, insight and world view.

KEY TERMS

Age cohort, canon, children's literature, comparative, critical, distinct category, emerging adult, gender, global literature, interrelatedness, narrative, novella, reversal, sub-genre, taxonomy of genre, young adult literature.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie is 'n kritiese en vergelykende studie wat die bloei en volwassenheid van die Sesotho sa Leboa (Noord-Sotho) jong volwassene (YA) novelle vanuit die kanon van romans in daardie taal ondersoek. Die periodes wat ondersoek word, word in drie dekades verdeel, naamlik 1940–1949, 1950-1959 en 1960-1969.

Met inagneming van die beduidende navorsing wat wetenskaplikes in Sesotho sa Leboa gedoen het, is daar baie min bekend oor jong volwassene-literatuur en veral die novelle van jong volwassene romans. Hierdie ietwat verwarrende subgenre word deur literêre teoretici uit verskillende oriëntasies en tradisies (denkrigtings) verhelder en gedissekteer.

Daar word voorsien dat hierdie navorsingswerk taalpraktisyns in Sesotho sa Leboa en ander tale sal help om ingeligte besluite te neem oor die klassifikasie van die subgenre in terme van die literêre elemente daarvan. Die definisie van die ouderdomsgroep van die jong volwassene was, en is nog steeds, 'n baie gedebatteerde terrein. Die probleem spruit waarskynlik uit uiteenlopende samelewings wat probeer om 'n eenvormige definisie van 'n wêreldgemeenskap te gee. In baie gevalle,lyk die definisie van 'wie die jong volwassene' is, meer kompleks en polities van aard.

Uiteindelik bied die studie riglyne vir die literêre evaluering van tekste wat gebruik kan word in sekondêre skole, tersiêre instellings en vir die keuse van boeke vir biblioteke.

Beginnersskrywers, in vergelyking met hul voorgangers, sal ook meer vertroud raak met die vereistes van die subgenre. Om hierdie rede sal die literatuur van Sesotho sa Leboa aanhou groei en ontwikkel in alle fasette in verhouding tot kwaliteit, insig en wêreldbeskouing.

SLEUTEL TERME

Ouderdomskohort, kanon, kinderliteratuur, vergelykende, kritiese, afsonderlike kategorie, ontluikende volwassene, geslag, wêreldliteratuur, onderling verband, vertelling, novelle, omkeer, sub-genre, taksonomie van genre, jong volwasse literatuur.

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

AIDS:	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CD-ROM:	Compact Disc Read-only Memory (a pre-pressed optical **disc** that contains data)
DVD:	Digital Versatile Disc or Digital Video Disc
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LGBTQ:	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (or Questioning)
LTSM:	Learner Teacher Support Material
MMLs:	More Marginalised Languages
PanSALB:	Pan South African Language Board
PMLs:	Previously Marginalised Languages
SADiLaR:	South African Centre for Digital Language Resources
SARIR:	South African Research Infrastructure Roadmap
SLs:	Source Languages
TAR:	The ALAN Review (Journal for Young Adult Book Reviews)
TLs:	Target Languages
YA:	Young Adult
YAL:	Young Adult Literature
YALSA:	Young Adult Library Services Association

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Sesotho sa Leboa[1]

Sesotho sa Leboa or Northern Sotho is the standardised language spoken in the following three provinces of the Republic of South Africa:

- Gauteng
- Mpumalanga and
- Limpopo

According to the 2001 census data, Sesotho sa Leboa is used as a home language by 4 208 980 (9.39%) South Africans. It can be stated that the language is closely connected to two other languages that belong to the Sotho language group, namely, Sesotho and Setswana. In essence, the two languages comprise a wide range of dialects. However, the three languages overlap in one way or another. Mokgokong (1966:8-9) states that Sesotho sa Leboa encompasses a variety of about 27 dialects.

The following is a map indicating the geographical area in the Republic of South Africa where Sesotho sa Leboa language is spoken by a significant number of people. The brown colour highlights the area:

[1] Readers must be aware that the primary sources used in this thesis are written in Sesotho sa Leboa old orthography. Words which are spelt differently in the majority of the excerpts, should not be taken as spelling errors.

Figure 1: Map of South Africa indicating where Northern Sotho is spoken

[Source: English-Zulu Zulu-English dictionary: Doke/Malcolm/Sik ak an a/Vilakazi].

1.2 From humble beginnings

An attempt has been made to identify and select narratives written in Sesotho sa Leboa that could be classified as YA novellas. It is important to explain at the very onset that the YA novella (novel) is an offshoot of YAL. The YA novel bears specific literary features that defy hitherto classifications of Sesotho sa Leboa literature into three categories, namely, children's books, youth novel, and adult novels. However, the three traditional categories serve as reference points in the comparative approach of the literary analysis of the exhaustive list of YA novellas of the language for each decade within the demarcation of the study.

In the same breath, for a literary text to qualify as a YAL material, firstly, it has to pass the age cohort test. Secondly, the age cohort has to match the theme that should be able to move the story forward (Wells, 2003). A broader perspective as regards the autonomy of this sub-genre has been adopted by modern scholars such

as Nilsen and Donelson (1993); Cormier (1994); Ammon (1995); Hunt (1996); and Cart (2010), to name but a few.

In selecting primary sources for this study, the researcher faced the following major challenges:

- Most of the earlier books are not dated
- The modern syndrome of self-publishing
- Emerging publishers parading under the auspices of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE)

The last two points make it very difficult to access the recent wealth of literature published in Sesotho sa Leboa as books are sold from the boots of cars and by street vendors. Besides, due to modern technology, some authors prefer to use social media to publicise their literary output and, unfortunately, such information is at times not readily available, or very reliable. Further, one has to contend with challenges of verification, such as access (log in), registration, pin code, and/or password.

It has to be borne in mind that the South African publishers focus mainly on three broad market areas, namely, academic, education, and trade. For that matter, educational publishers target the school market and supply approved learner and teacher support materials (LTSM) from Grade R to Grade 12. Tertiary institutions also benefit from the said market. Trade publishing has to do with the provisioning of different kinds of books meant for the public and general readership.

The development of literature in Sesotho sa Leboa coincided with the propagation of Christianity by missionaries (Serudu, 1983:94). The missionaries aimed to “Christianise” and “westernise” African communities with a political agenda of polluting the African cultural identity. What has occurred over the past decades is also noted by scholars such as Schreiter (1985, 2009); Setiloane (1986); Baur (1994); Isichei (1995); McCain (2000); and Kalu (2005).

To achieve the above-hidden agenda, the missionaries established congregations and preached the gospel of repentance (Van der Merwe, 2016:559) in order to downplay the norms and customs of aborigines. The Bapedi clan was no exception as the Berlin Lutheran missionaries did the same to them. Other missionary stations spread throughout the then Northern Transvaal (now Limpopo Province of the Republic of South Africa), covering the Basotho ba Leboa villages.

Over and above this, Onyinah (cited by Van der Merwe, 2016:564) acknowledges the contribution made by missionaries as follows:

> … the establishment of schools, the introduction of Western medical systems, and social advancement of African society, such as the abolition of capital punishment and slavery. In addition, the missionaries were responsible for promoting translation, including the creation of vernacular alphabets and production of grammars and dictionaries …

By way of promoting literature and orthography in the vernaculars, the work of missionaries also included “single-author” and “multi-author” reading material tinted with a religious touch (Kollman, 2010:4). It is not surprising that later on, language boards were also established to standardise and to monitor the purity of the languages. Such led to the formation of the Sesotho sa Leboa Language Board. Likewise, “terms with a high usage frequency were selected and included” in the Sesotho sa Leboa terminology list (Northern Sotho Terminology and Orthography).

In tracing the history of Sesotho sa Leboa novel writing, Serudu (1993:4) states that the first novelette in Sesotho sa Leboa is *Moelelwa* by Sehlodimela, published in 1940. Serudu (1993:2) further points out that the greatest weakness of pioneer writers in this language is that they had inadequate knowledge of the requirements of a particular genre.

The YA novellas written between 1940-1960 were characterised by didacticism. Great writers of the period such as Sehlodimela (1940); Madiba (1942, 1955); Dolamo (1965), amongst others, embraced the dominant trajectory of morality and

regarded Western culture as profoundly superior in their literary output. By and large, religious material formed the bedrock of earlier books written in Sesotho sa Leboa. Though the mentioned writers wrote in the African idiom, their approach seemed to be more Eurocentric. Thackeray (cited by Eagleton, 1987:58) is of the opinion that during a certain period "morals and manners" were regarded as the best themes. This view is also shared by Evans, Joubert and Meir (2018:91) as follows:

> … children's books throughout history have been highly didactical – moralising sermons intended to teach children, to guide them and frighten them into becoming good and obedient, and to keep them quiet and out of the way.

What is common knowledge is that all fables exhibit a moral lesson. A perfect example in Sesotho sa Leboa can be taken from Madiba's (n.d.) reader series entitled *Mahlontebe*. To cite but a few examples, the following stories in *Mahlontebe IV* had moral axioms with a cultural background: *Modiši wa go botega* (pp.8-15), *Mpompala* (pp.16-20), *Mmabaafana* (pp.21-24) and *Tšhuputša* (pp.59-62). The series catered for primary school children during the 1960s-1980s. Focus for the beginners was on phonics. For higher classes, the author introduced adventure stories, legends, fables, and poems. Moreover, Madiba's writings enchanted teenagers because of humour, a tint of sarcasm, satire, and simple language.

In comparison, Zulu (2004:199-216) has this to say about the earliest published novels in the African languages of Southern Africa:

> A high percentage of the African novels written during the apartheid literary period represent the youngster as the prodigal son. The typical situation in the novel is that of a male protagonist who rebels against his rural parents and moves to urban areas where he is corrupted and frustrated.

In addition, Zulu (2004:199-216), in his endeavour to trace similar patterns and trends of novels in the African languages of South Africa, goes on to point out that

themes in such novels were in line with the policy of separate development. It is evident that most of the themes bordered on laws such as the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act. Zulu paints the following picture as regards the scenario:

> Such novels are amazingly silent about rural poverty and other social problems that resulted from obsession with race and ethnicity, which became the foundations of open discrimination. Little is also said about labour exploitation and the devastation wrought by forced removals, which characterised apartheid's "tribalisation" mission.

Matsepe's contribution, which bubbles with cultural content, stands at the heart of the Sesotho sa Leboa literary canon. No wonder, he is revered as a prominent author and visionary. Serudu (1993:8-12) reveals that the period between 1970-1980 was dominated by Matsepe, a prolific author. His themes revolved around tribal authority and chieftainship – typical communal life.

To be exact, Matsepe's literary output could be traced back from the period 1960-1981. Because of his innovative and unique style of writing, his influence had a direct or indirect bearing on writers who published during and after his time. For example, Mminele (1967); Matabane (1972)' Sekhukhune (1973); Lebopa (1975); Rafapa (1978); Letsoalo (1981); Moswane (1985); Phasha (1986), just to name a few, show the influence of Matsepe. The cited authors may have a different outlook on life. However, in one way or another, their style of narration, characterisation, choice of theme, and milieu resembles that of Matsepe (Serudu, 1983:96).

Collectively, Matsepe's prose writings could be classified as 'adult' rather than 'young adult' novels or novellas. The reason is not far-fetched. The main characters in his novels and novellas are depicted as men and women who have seen it all in life. What is noticeable in common is that writers who followed in his footsteps, fall into this category. It becomes very clear that Matsepe became a torch-bearer and source of reference for many aspiring writers in Sesotho sa Leboa.

It was not until 1990, that the Sesotho sa Leboa writers, began to tackle a myriad themes. Books in the market show that in recent times, writers in Sesotho sa Leboa, write discretely about almost every aspect of life. Hot themes that are at the forefront, include career pathways, family values, culture, identity, money, politics, globalisation, relationships, sexuality, show business, technology, and many more. These themes have a great influence and impact on the modern youth. By and large, “this is an evolution to be welcomed” (Eagleton, 2012:ix).

Current research has proved that the subject matter of the YA novel is being transformed. Unlike in the past, where oral tradition and didacticism played a major role, the modern-day has provided an information explosion. To that extent, it may be said that the internet offers remarkable information which may be advantageous or disadvantageous. Authors grapple with topics and themes that deal with reality as it is experienced day-by-day. Young people today are “self-absorbed” in their quest for “personal identity” (Chao 2007:3).

1.3 Transformation of the subject matter

While concerned with the present, Brannen (2013:1) argues that “the trials and tribulations of growing up take many forms” nevertheless “they comprise a classic and rich theme in YA realistic fiction”.

The other problem that has overshadowed the classification of the sub-genre over the years is the definition of the age cohort of the young adult. There are polarised views about who is the young adult. As if that is not enough, some critics also hold the view that young adults are ‘a separate generation’ or ‘a distinct group’. Defining the age cohort of the young adult has been a hotly debated terrain. Arguably, the problem stems from diverse societies trying to provide a uniform definition of a global community. In many instances, such is not the case. The views are conflicting and contrasting.

The www.usacanadaregion.org divides the young adults into four categories:

Table 1: The four categories of young adults

Years of age	Status
1. 18 – 23	College/Career
2. 24 – 35	Single
3. 24 – 35	Married without children
4. 24 – 35	Married with children

Taken broadly, Baumann, Ebata, Izzi, Lowicki-Zucca and Wilson (2006:15-16) argue that definitions, as regards the youth, differ markedly "across time and space". The difference is mainly prompted by "cross-cultural variation as to when an individual becomes an adult" (Baumann et al., 2006). Indeed, the age definition of who is the 'young adult' seems to be complex and political in nature. Moreover, many concepts such as 'adolescent', 'emerging adults', 'juvenile' and 'youth' are used in global treaties.

As Nandigiri (2012:114) observes:

> Beyond a constantly shifting age limit, there's no agreed universal concept of who exactly is youth and why. The United Nations defines "youth" as those between 15 and 24 years of age, adolescents as between 10-19 years, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child defines 'children' as persons up to the age of 18 (United Nations, 2011). To add to the confusion, age-based definitions are different regionally and from country to country. The African Youth Charter defines youth as 15-35 (African Union, 2006).

Like all other age groupings, the young adult age grouping is associated with a transition in human growth. This transition, according to Jekielek and Brown (2000:i), includes, amongst others, "citizenship, educational achievement, disconnectedness, employment … as well as measures of family and household formation." For this

reason, trends, policies, decisions, and definitions of 'what is a young adult' or 'who is a young adult' differ from one country to the other.

1.4 Statement of purpose

The study intends to explore patterns and trends of the YA novellas published between 1940-1969, in the indigenous language, Sesotho sa Leboa, which is one of the eleven official languages in South Africa. Firstly, the YA novel is defined and demarcated from children's books, the youth (junior) novel, and the adult novel. Secondly, the study gives a critical and comparative evaluation of the selected YA novellas of Sesotho sa Leboa. Thirdly, it pinpoints "hot button topics"[2] (Howell, 2011:3) that are intended to benefit the Sesotho sa Leboa author while adding value to the canon. Fourthly, underlying ideas, thoughts, and ideologies that cut across the genre are unravelled. To that end, contemporary literary criticism and theory are engaged.

Building on previous research and modern critical thinking, this study provides a composite picture and reflects on the type of literature that speaks to the lives of the emerging adults (Paytash & Ferding, 2014:8; Crumpler & Wedwick, 2011:65). For this reason, the following two key questions need to be answered within this comparative research:

- What is a YA novella (novel)?
- What is not a YA novel (novella)?

As of now, it has to be noted that the landscape of this important sub-genre, remains unexplored in Sesotho sa Leboa.

Finally, the state of the Sesotho sa Leboa language is also investigated in the hope that the study could stimulate the writing and production of quality YA novels in this language. On this basis, the young adult in this study is perceived to be a person who is between 15-35 years, as stated in the African Youth Charter (2006:11), guided by the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

[2] Blatantly realistic topics.

1.5 Problem statement

Categorising and defining the Young Adult novel in Sesotho sa Leboa has been a major problem. Only two scholars have made an attempt in this language. Groenewald (1993:65-66) wrote a brief comment about children's literature and the elements of a youth novella (novel). However, Groenewald (1993) does not map out the distinctive features of the YA novella (novel) within the broader block of the youth novel.

Taking a cue from Groenewald, Kekana (2015) makes a general treatment of children and tweeners' literature. The study is a potpourri that includes nursery rhymes, folktales, readers, different kinds of poems, and surprisingly, biography. To compound matters, the title is also misleading as it refers to the youth ("bafsa"). In short, this one-size-fits-all approach (which lacks specificity and foregrounding) is the main limitation of Kekana's doctoral thesis.

Serudu (1996:133-134) makes a clear distinction between a novelette and a novel. He goes on to pinpoint popular trends of the novel with aplomb but excludes the YA novella (novel). Admittedly, it has to be pointed out that this sub-genre occupies a unique space in the literary domain. For this reason, there is a need in Sesotho sa Leboa to fill this void as it has not been given attention.

1.6 Contribution to the body of knowledge

This study generates new knowledge and benefits language practitioners and scholars in the advancement and understanding of the specified sub-genre. Furthermore, the study resolves current and past controversies in demarcating children's literature from young adult and adult literature in the domain of the said language.

1.7 Research

In defining what research is, Pandey and Pandey (2015:7-8) divide the word 'research' into two, namely, 're-' + '-search' meaning to "to search again". The two scholars go on to explain that:

> … research means a systematic investigation or activity to gain new knowledge of the already existing facts.

To clarify the definition, Pandey and Pandey (2015:7-8) go further to say:

> Research is an intellectual activity. It is responsible for bringing to light new knowledge. It is also responsible for correcting the present mistakes, removing existing misconceptions and adding new learning to the existing fund of knowledge. Researches are considered as a combination of those activities which are removed from day to day life and are pursued by those persons who are gifted in intellect and sincere in pursuit of knowledge.

Leedy (2010:2) defines research as:

> … a systematic process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting information (data) in order to increase our understanding of a phenomenon about which we are interested or concerned.

On methodological guidelines, Mouton and Marais (1993:192) argue that:

> The quality of research findings is directly dependent on the accountability of the research methodology followed. For this reason, researchers should fully describe the way in which their research has been planned, structured and executed in order to comply with scientific criteria.

1.7.1 Research design

Different scholars agree that the aim of a research design is mainly to provide a framework that would enable a researcher to carry out a research project coherently. To illustrate this point, Mouton and Marais (1993:193) concede that:

> A research design is an exposition or plan of how the researcher decided to execute the formulated research

> problem. The objective of the research design is to plan, structure and execute the project concerned in such a way that the validity of the findings are maximized.

Durrheim (2004:29) regards a research design as an intended strategic framework geared towards a particular action. In addition, Hammond and Wellington (2013:131) define it as follows:

> Research design is concerned with turning a research question, a hypothesis or even hunch or idea into a manageable project.

Hofstee (2013:113) points out that the research design is "the overall approach" that is meant to "test" the "thesis statement." Babbie (2007:112) contends that research design is a strategy with a particular focus on the end result. Defining research design, Kothari (2004:31) argues that "the research design is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data." On the other hand, a research design could be referred to as a particular framework that delineates steps to be taken by the researcher.

In light of the above quotations, it could be deduced that research is an undertaking which has the sole purpose of finding answers to unclear questions within a certain framework. The information has to be collected, analysed and interpreted according to prescribed standards. In order to abide by professional ethics, collected information has to be examined critically with a view to providing accurate answers to pending questions in a particular discipline or field. Procedures and methods used in this regard are crucial as they are going to be in the spotlight. Consequently, conclusions drawn should be based on facts rather than opinions and moreover, be without drawbacks (Kothari, 2004:8-10).

1.7.2 Research methodology

The researcher has a duty to choose a method or methods that would best suit his/her topic or field of research. Though this study rests mainly on the qualitative

research design, it does, however, not exclude quantitative research design. This is because some statistics are provided in order to advance an understanding of the nature of the problem under investigation.

For content validity, the following is taken into consideration: the age cohort of children, including the youth and/or young adults, the three decades in terms of novellas selected for this study, as well as the number of novellas published per decade. Though subjective, the range of meanings dealing specifically with the facets that make up the YAL and YA novel (novella) will also be covered (Rubin & Babbie, 2001:194; Punch, 2005:97; Babbie, 2007:147).

As in literature, qualitative research mainly focuses "on qualities of human behaviour" and helps the researcher to "understand and interpret the meanings and intentions that underlie everyday human action" (Mouton, 1988:1). According to Shank (2006:8), the main function of qualitative research is to examine the text and to find out more about its meaning. On the other hand, Schnetler (1989:2) asserts that quantitative research is based on survey as it "awards numerical values to non-numerical characteristics of human behaviour, thereby facilitating generally valid interpretations of these characteristics."

Deelport and Roestenburg (cited by De Vos et al. 2012:171), point out that quantitative research hinges on data collection methods which include, amongst others, questionnaires, checklists, structured observation, structured interview schedules, indexes, and scales. It has to be noted that when applying this method, the researcher is compelled to have knowledge of "certain concepts and principles that are fundamental to measurement before considering the specific measuring instruments".

To conclude, in quantitative research, structured approaches and methods are engaged in this study in order to arrive at expected answers. On the other hand, in qualitative research, unstructured approaches and methods are employed as a way of exploring the nature of a particular problem. The key to this exercise is objectivity. The researcher, as a matter of fact, must be seen to be unbiased in his/her inquiry or drown deep in self-interest. As "ethical challenges and dilemmas are unexpected and emerge as research unfolds" - the researcher in this study takes his cue from "ethical

frameworks used in social research" (Wiles, 2013:9-10). As a result, both qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed methods research) are used in this study.

1.7.3 Research questions

For research to occur there must be a 'question' or a 'problem'. Mindful, if not polemical, the essence of research questions is to ascertain the aims and objectives of the research undertaken. It could further be added that in spite of other findings by previous scholars, research questions provide clarity to the research problem at hand. By comparing arguments of scholars such as Patton and Chochran (p.7), as well as Maree (p.3), it can be seen that scientific procedures are engaged, in order to accomplish intended results or to resolve the dilemma in a particular field.

Research becomes more eminent "when there is genuine uncertainty about answer to a question" (Patton & Cochran, 2002:7). This argument is supported by Jansen (as cited by Maree, 2016:3) who is of the opinion that the aim of a research question is to direct the focus of a particular study.

In order to explore, guide, and put into perspective this study, the researcher answers the following questions within the literature review and selected texts:

- What are the elements of the YA novella (novel)?
- In what way does the YA novella (novel) differ from the adult novella (novel) and the novella (novel) for youth?
- What is the target group for whom this novella (novel) is written? (Demarcation of approximate age group)?
- Has the Sesotho sa Leboa YA novella (novel) evolved over the years as far as theme, background and ideology are concerned?
- Has there been a change in the literary quality of the Sesotho sa Leboa YA novella (novel) of past years as compared to the literary quality of contemporary Sesotho sa Leboa YA novellas (novels)?
- Have moral values underlying the Sesotho sa Leboa YA novella (novel) changed?
- What role has didacticism been playing in the older Sesotho sa Leboa YA novellas (novels) as compared to the modern Sesotho sa Leboa YA novellas (novels)?

By answering the above-mentioned questions, the researcher intends to mark some milestones and give details of what entails YA literature and, in particular, embark on a critical and comparative study of the Sesotho sa Leboa YA novella. In relation to national transformation, the study also reflects on the role of female characters "for the promotion of a new national consciousness" by means of integrating "traditional values into a contemporary context" (Smart, 2016:2–3).

1.8 Comparative literary study

There is a clear distinction between comparative literary study and general literary study. Firstly, a comparative literary study is devoted to "literary history". Secondly, the study illuminates "the relations of literature to the social, political, and philosophical background" (Alridge, 1969:2). In a sense, the said relations may be "between one particular literature and the others which it touches". On the other hand, the general literary study goes beyond national boundaries.

It could conceivably be hypothesised that "the two tendencies usually merge …" and can both be used as points of reference (Alridge, 1969:2). Even so, it can be argued that the main objective of comparative literary study is to track similarities and differences in literary texts.

De Vos et al. (2012:9) hold the view that:

> The researcher should continue to be as objective as possible and must scrupulously conduct the project so that personal bias does not affect the findings.

Comparatists have come to agree that comparative literature, as a branch of literary scholarship, denotes both the "historiography" and "the aesthetic aspects of the literary work of art" (Weisstein, 1973:4). For this reason, there should be a need to establish a basis for comparison in order to draw similarities and differences. Grounds for comparison should be clearly stated by means of empirical inquiry.

Bernheimer (1995:44) is of the view that in the contexts of its practice:

> Comparative literature should be actively engaged in the comparative study of canon formation and in reconceiving the canon. Attention should be paid to the role of noncanonical readings of canonical texts, readings from various contestatory, marginal, or subaltern perspectives.

On the other hand, Guillén (1993: 3) has this to say about comparative literature:

> More than anything else it invites continued reflection on some basic dimensions of literary history ... For this reason, I would also like to suggest that we are faced not only by one branch … but also with a trend of literary studies, or rather a form of intellectual exploration, a task spurred on by uneasy feelings and specific questions.

Given ideas about the broadened scope of perspectives in respect of literary studies, there are still “conservative” and “cynical” ways of undermining certain cultures in canonical and non-canonical texts (Bernheimer, 1995:47). The idea of “literary influence” as advocated in comparative study “seeks to trace the mutual relation between two or more literary works” (Enani 1996:12 & 15). For that matter, “literary comparative studies are linked to history”.

The researcher in this study, compares “what is common and what is shared across contexts” (Hammond & Willington, 2013:27) of the Sesotho sa Leboa YA novellas (novels). The novellas under the spotlight were published across three decades (1940-1969). In one sense, the selected novellas are examined without losing sight of the premises behind individual texts not excluding their interrelatedness (Clements, 1978:194). Correspondingly, the study also takes into its embrace the artistic strategies employed by the authors.

1.9 Literary theories

The aim of this section is to provide, in a nutshell, the theoretical framework of this investigation. In advancing arguments and reasons for a particular hypothesis, the researcher admits that “meaningful scientific research” does not occur in a vacuum (Mouton & Marais, 1993:189-195). Over the years, literary critics have used this body

of ideas (critical theories) as standpoints to evaluate literary texts (Habib, 2005:562). Engaged collectively, these integrated perspectives will help to contextualise the selected YA novellas in Sesotho sa Leboa spanning the decades under review.

Literary theory and criticism play a pivotal role as regards study in the fields of humanities and social sciences. Bressler (1994:3) observes that "literary criticism is a disciplined activity that attempts to study, analyse, interpret, and evaluate a work of art". To support his argument further, Bressler says: "Without the work of art, the activity of criticism cannot exist." It has become apparent that researchers work within certain frameworks in order to bring out strong evidence about what is being investigated.

Basically, in all its manifold guises, literary theory and criticism provide rich insights one finds in texts. Modes of inquiry for this research, encompass a mosaic of the following literary theories:

- Cultural Criticism
- Historical Criticism
- Reception Criticism
- Postmodernism Criticism
- Marxist Criticism
- Psychological Criticism and
- Gender Criticism

According to Mulvaney and Jolliffe (2005:103), relevant theories help the researcher to "see" and moreover, to "know" the "story" and be able to analyse it within certain parameters. It should become very clear why the researcher has adopted a mélange of different approaches and not stuck to only one approach. The intention is to operate on a wider scope of analysing, interpreting, and evaluating the selected primary texts (Peck & Coyle, 2002:177).

1.10 Literary features

The following are some literary features frequently used in the study:

Table 2: Literary features and definitions

Literary features	Meaning
Characters	Role players/People who interact with one another in a particular work of art.
Climax	Turning point/The most intense moment.
Conflict	Tension between opposing forces in a work of art.
Exposition	The section that is meant to introduce the background of the context in a literary work.
Falling action/Anti-climax	Conflict comes to an end.
Genre	The various literary forms.
Narrative point of view	The way a story is being told and its perspective (1st person, 2nd person or 3rd person narrator).
Novel	A prose narrative of considerable length (no prescribed length), having a plot structure or sub-plots made up of a variety of characters.
Novella/Novelette	An elongated short story with a simple plot structure/A prose fiction of reasonable length (between 50-150 pages).
Plot	Sequence of events or actions, intended to achieve emotional effects in a literary work.
Protagonist	The main character in a literary work.
Resolution	Untying of the knot (conclusion). Brings finality to the storyline but may not necessarily be a blissful ending.
Rising action	Part of the story that offers a variety of events to complicate the main character's situation.
Theme	The main idea in a work of art (central point which can be summed up in a word or few words).

1.11 Outline of chapters

This study is divided into six chapters, each of which presents the answers relating to the research questions.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The introduction comprised the following sub-headings:

- Background information

- The status of Sesotho sa Laboa as one of the eleven (11) official languages of the Republic of South Africa
- A brief history of novel writing in Sesotho sa Leboa
- Aim of study and scope
- Problem statement
  - Central thrust of the study
  - Problem to be studied
- Potential contribution of the study
- Research questions
- Methods and approaches
- Comparative literary study

Chapter 2: Literature review

The chapter focuses on previous research and scholarly sources pertaining to the topic. A critical and comparative synthesis of YA literature in general and the novel, in particular, is presented. Most importantly, the study justifies how a gap or problem is addressed in Sesotho sa Leboa YA novella (novelette/novel) writing. In this way, the study makes an immense contribution to the authors, language practitioners, curriculum advisors, educators, lecturers, and stakeholders in literary circles.

It has to be noted that the purpose of a literature review in research is to help the researcher to 'survey' and 'critique' relevant sources in line with the chosen topic. In this way the researcher is able to analyse texts and make sense of 'existing ideas and arguments' with accuracy (www.ntu.ac.uk/library).

A number of sharp perceptions prevail as regards the field of investigation. However, the following provides a brief account of what the researcher intends to describe in more detail in this chapter:

- Children's literature
- Youth literature
- YA literature
- Adult literature
- Themes and characters in YA literature

- Controversies around age cohort of the young adult
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Questioning (LGBTQ) themes and
- Some aspects of a novel

The ALAN Review (TAR; ISSN 0882-2840 [Print], ISSN 1547-741X*)* appearing in Wikipedia, publishes from time to time, most interesting articles about YA literature. In short, the articles "explore, examine, critique and advocate for literature for young adults and the teaching of that literature" (Glenn, Ginsberg & King, 2015). The TAR journals form part of the discourse for this study. The contributors' arguments and methods are taken into account. The researcher explains the differences of opinion and definition challenges of the sub-genre.

Chapter 3

The evaluation of the selected YA novellas of the decade 1940-1949 is the subject matter of this chapter:

3.1 *Moelelwa* by Sehlodimela, M.M. (1940)

3.2 *Motangtang* by Phalane, A. (1943)

Chapter 4

The evaluation of the selected YA novellas of the decade 1950-1959 is the subject matter of this chapter**:**

4.1 *Tsakata* by Ramaila, E.M. (1953)

4.2 *Puledi le Thobja* by Makoala, K.R. (1958)

Chapter 5

The evaluation of the selected YA novellas of the decade 1960-1969 is the subject matter of this chapter**:**

5.1 *Morutiši Dinyepo* by Dolamo, E.R. (1965)

5.2 *Ngwana wa Mobu* by Mminele, S.P.P. (1967)

All the selected novellas (from chapter 3-5) are evaluated according to the distinctive literary features listed in the table of contents. Insofar as comparative literature is concerned, it should be noted that:

> … the quality of artistic construct cannot be measured by the effects they produce … (Weisstein, 1973:91)

From a critical perspective, a variety of approaches are integrated with methodology in order to compare and evaluate the selected literary texts.

Chapter 6: Integration of the study findings and direction

The objective of this chapter is twofold: 1) to summarise the findings of this study and 2) to point new directions towards future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Since prehistoric times, before pen could be put to paper, stories have been there. To be concise, literature for the young ones found its way through word of mouth. The diverse stories which formed part of the lore were told by either parents or elders at night around a fire. The sole purpose was, and still is, to entertain and educate children. Neville (cited by Fenwick, 1968:46) observes thus:

> The problem in dealing with the social or moral issue in fiction for children or adults is that the author must not preach, must not make the reader's decision for him, must not indulge in the fallacy that all nice people do good things and that all evil things are done by bad people.

The assertion above clearly shows that 'good' or 'bad' people have no birthmark[3]. From this analysis, it could be deduced that handsome people may be 'evil at heart' while ugly people may be 'kind at heart'. It is just unfortunate that this aspect of analysis is often neglected and overshadowed in children's literature. It is doubtful whether or not children realise that this anomaly is justifiable.

To add, Mambrol (2019) says:

> "A distinctive literature about childhood has existed since the Victorian era, but not so about adolescence as a stage of life with its own integrity, concerns and distinct problems."

The ray of light thrown by Mambrol (2019), as regards the orality of folklore, has been a living tradition for countless generations and nations of the world. It is for this

[3] Commenting on Serote's poem *The Seed and the Saints,* Kekana (2018:76) says that among his saints Serote has "figures like Sobukwe, Mandela, Sisulu and not the traditional all-whites saints". He says that in this way, Serote "protests against the imposed religious order" (p.76), Christianity. Again, commenting on Mutjuwadi's poem *White Lies,* in which he wants to teach "black Truth. / That dark clouds aren't a sign of doom / but hope. Rain. Life", Kekana (2020:140) says that "Mutjuwadi says this to contradict the popular belief that everything white is good and black is bad."

reason that today, no one can claim authorship of the lore (Halsey, 1972:239; Abrams, 1981:66-67). Although folklore is culture-specific and anonymous, it provides universal messages. To put it succinctly, Finnagan (1984:14) says:

> … 'oral tradition' (including what we should now call oral literature) is passed down word for word from generation to generation and thus reproduced verbatim from memory throughout the centuries; or, alternatively, that oral literature is something that arises communally, from the people or the 'folk' as a whole, so that there can be no question of individual authorship or originality.

As with other global literatures, including Sesotho sa Leboa, African literature is firmly grounded in oral tradition. It must be stressed from the point of view of the researcher that the content of most earlier prose narratives, share common characteristics peculiar to folktales. The same view is supported by scholars such as Propp (1927); Mofokeng (1955); Bamberger (1974); Luigi (1974)' Whitley (2012); Gwekwerere (2013) and many others.

2.2 Traces of folklore in global literatures

In the literatures of the world there are noticeable traces of an origin in oral tradition of some classics. As they introduce the argument, Evans, Joubert and Meir (2018:92), take a cue from both Raines and Isbell (1994) and Pellowski (1990) by saying:

> Storytelling is one of the oldest means of communication as well as a universal concept with the power to "remember, entertain, teach, inspire, create and know". All cultures engage in storytelling as a way of making meaning and passing on traditions from generation to generation. It is one of the ways we give our children a sense of belonging, their culture, their language, their heritage and their history.

It is not surprising that bits and pieces of folklore such as “asfaeries, witches, magic, spirits and ghosts” are found in the plays of William Shakespeare. The books by Mark Twain are known for their touch of folklore. His storylines were to a greater extent enacted in culture and society. Another renowned author is William Butler Yeats. His writings bear the hallmarks of Irish folklore (Pitlanemagazine, 2019).

Another example is the collection of *Aesop’s Fables* that was “translated and published in England in 1484 by William Caxton” (Halsey, 1972:240). Other masterpieces of literature for children, amongst others, include a popular novel by Lewis Carroll entitled *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (quoted from *The World Book Encyclopedia*). This novel was published in 1865. The same novel, by the same author, was continued and published in 1871 with a different title, *Through the Looking-Glass.*

By way of acknowledgement, the significance of Aesop’s contribution towards the development of children’s literature is noted by Lerer (2009:35) who says:

> No author has been so intimately and extensively associated with children’s literature as Aesop. His fables have been accepted as the core of childhood reading and instruction since the time of Plato, and they have found their place in political and social satire and moral teaching throughout medieval, Renaissance, and modern cultures.

It has to be noted that Aesop’s fables have been translated into several languages and have defined the landscape of children’s literature. Above all, the fables became a “touchstone for an understanding of life itself” by means “of turning abstractions into reality” (Lerer, 2009:38). For this reason, modern scholars skilfully blended the term “Aesopica” to acknowledge the rich literary texts Aesop produced.

Evans, Joubert and Meir (2018:92) go on to explain the root of folklore thus:

> Every culture in the world has its own stories and folklore, even though not all have been documented in written form. Folklore includes folk tales, myths, legends, rituals,

> superstitions, songs and even jokes handed down orally in specific cultures over generations.

Put differently, Nwauche (2010:54) categorically states that folklore "represents the culture of a people". This literary art manifests itself with community members as well as their milieu. Over and above this, it constitutes a rich literary heritage and defines human society immeasurably.

Another interesting debate as regards the didactic nature of African literature, not excluding Sesotho sa Leboa, is its tendency of endeavouring to "correct, inform and educate readers" (Awuzie, 2015:159). The bedrock of didacticism in African literature cannot be wholly attributed to the influence of European literary culture. What is noticeable is this that didacticism is "inherent in African oral traditional storytelling" and subsequently, "carried over to the written literature".

2.3 Children's literature

Stevenson (as cited in Wolf, Coats, Enciso & Jenkins, 2011:180) contends that it is not easy to define "children's literature" as this branch of literature is vast and complex. It is worth pointing out that children's literature is made up of plays, poems, and stories, primarily with a moral code. This type of literature is intended to educate those persons who are under the age of fourteen years or are pre-teens.

As Akers (2011) argues:

> … children's literature, based on its lengthy history, is a valid form of literature possessing unique literary distinctions that elevate it above the plain aesthetics of genre fiction.

Quinn (2004:54) observes that:

> Apart from nursery rhymes and FAIRY TALES, children's books were largely educational and edifying until the middle of the 18th century.

The evidence presented by the aforesaid is supported by scholars such as Aguire (2011); Andersen (2005); Becket (1997); Dalley (2000) and Glazer (1997). Collectively, these scholars brush aside misconceptions about the sub-genre by reflecting on the role played by storytellers many years ago. From a critical perspective, it is quite clear that children's literature is the offshoot of oral tradition.

On the contrary, Nikolajeva (1996:14) argues that historians of children's literature are caught off guard by maintaining that "folktales, myths and legends were never created for an audience of children." This statement is rather misleading. Scholars such as Evans, Joubert, and Meier (2018); Fenwick (1968); Finnegan (1984), and Lickteig (1975) agree that children's literature is rooted in the long history of the lore. The reasons advanced by Nikolajeva (1996) that some folktales are "obscene and amoral" fail to convince literary scholars that the lore is not part of children's literature.

Opposing Nikolajeva's (1996) view, Lerer (2009:1) states that:

> The history of children's literature is inseparable from the history of childhood, for the child was made through texts and tales he or she studied, heard, and told back.

This body of literature, which is designed for children, is defined by Fadiman (cited from Britannica website) as follows:

> … first clearly emerged as a distinct and independent form of literature in the second half of the 18th century, before which it had been at best only in an embryonic stage. During the 20th century, however, its growth has been so luxuriant as to make defensible its claim to be regarded with the respect – though perhaps not the solemnity – that is due to any other recognized branch of literature. (www.britannica.com)

Evans, Joubert and Meier (2018:93-94) point out that in every culture across the world, stories were not only a means of entertainment but were also used as a vehicle to transmit “codes of behaviour” and “social order” to children.

Within the boundaries of literature, Lickteig (1975:4) defines the sub-genre of children’s literature as “a world of wonder, courage, laughter, and enduring love.” On the other hand, Hunt (2005:2) says that “the boundaries of genres are not fixed but blurred”. On this point, many literary works cannot in one breath, be easily classified or categorised.

2.3.1 Characteristics of children’s literature

Children’s literature encompasses picture books and easy-to-read stories. The genre also includes fairy tales, fables, folk songs, lullabies, proverbs, riddles, and sayings. The characters are people and animals. The issues are problematised and the main characters are at the centre of the tension.

In addition to the distinction made above, Finnegan (1984:363) brings the following to light:

> There are tales about various supernatural, human, and animal characters: about hunters, women, twins, orphans, or children-born-to-die; about the trickster deity …

Female characters are in a number of instances, depicted as objects of admiration. Ugly grannies with exaggerated body parts are depicted as witches. Men are depicted as decision-makers and as powerful heads of families. Animals represent the interaction of man and his fellow men, probing the depth of human nature. A point that comes up again and again, is that most of the stories end up with a moral or religious message (en.wikipidia.org).

2.3.2 Illustrations in Children’s Literature

Children derive much pleasure from reading illustrated material. In many instances, their attention is drawn to colourful and attractive material relevant to their age-group (Groenewald, 1993:65). Pictures serve as “an extension of the text” at hand and also amplify understanding (Evans, Joubert & Meier, 2018:78-79).

In support of the previous statement, Mohamed (2015:23) comments thus:

> … picture books and stories that are accompanied by colourful illustrations that synchronise with the text are essential. They help children to stay focused and assist them in understanding the text better.

From Mohamed's point of view, it becomes evident that children are fascinated by illustrations. Moreover, illustrations enhance the meaning of the text and arouse curiosity, and interest in the child to read further. In this way, children are able to familiarise themselves with the environment around them and identify things within sight. Images help children to relate and describe things better. Meaning speaks louder through pictures. Not only in children's literature do images play an important role; but in the modern world, print and visual media dominate human space.

2.3.3 The child and childhood

First and foremost, it would certainly be prudent to pose the following questions:

- Who is a child?
- What is childhood?

Whiteman (n.a.) defines "childhood" as follows:

> … is the most impressionable age. It (Childhood) has the ingredients of a soft clay which can be moulded in any way. It should be the duty of parents and the society as a whole, to create the favourable atmosphere which would draw out the special talents, the particular inclinations and tendencies of a child and magnify these to their fullest extent (p.99).

To shed more light on Whiteman (n.a.), Evans, Joubert and Meir (2018:91) concede that:

> The concept of “childhood” as a separate stage was only recognised in the early 1800s and can be seen as the time when children’s literature was officially recognised as a genre. Before that, children’s literature was mostly an oral tradition of stories and songs to educate children in morals and religion.

Child critics are working tirelessly “to get a better understanding of children’s reading experiences” (Evans et al., 2018, p. 25). Unfortunately, their findings to date cannot satisfactorily explain who is a child. On the other hand, childhood studies undertaken by “sociologists, historians, teachers, lawyers, doctors, anthropologists and literary critics” bring forth conflicting views in terms of explaining “who is the child” and “what is childhood” (pp.24-25). The views seem to be useful rather than confusing as they engage interest to further research.

Hornby (2000:188) provides the following four answers to the two questions of this sub-section:

1. A young human being who is not yet an adult.
2. A son or daughter of any age.
3. A person who is strongly influenced by the ideas and attitudes of a particular time or person.
4. (Disapproving) An adult who behaves like a child and is not mature or responsible.

There are more inherent questions than answers to the question. Wikipediastreamlines further the following questions, as regards the age cohort of a child:

- Is a 12-year-old a child?
- Is a 17-year-old a child?
- At which age are you classified as a child?
- Is a 16-year-old a child?
  (en.wikipedia.org. wiki)

According to the information sourced from Wikipedia, stated above, the 12-year-old children are likely to be in Grade 7. Physiologically, this is the stage of puberty with reference to someone who is a preteen. In the South African context, the 12-17-year olds are learners from primary to secondary school. Interestingly, the Department of Basic Education provides the learners with LTSM, including literature that is graded according to phases (bands/grades). These bands are divided into two, namely, the General Education and Training band (i.e. Grade R-9) and the Further Education and Training Band (i.e. Grade 10-12).

Article 1 of *The Convention on the Rights of a Child*, defines a child as "a person below the age of 18 unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger." (www.unicef.org)

2.3.4 Modern construct and childhood

To date, there has been little agreement on what 'childhood' is or is not. The concept is defined differently by different cultures and societies, both in rural and urban areas. James and James (2008:122) view this construct as "a theoretical perspective that explores the ways in which 'reality' is negotiated in everyday life through people's interactions and through sets of discourses".

Lerer (2009:2), taking a leaf from Ariès in *Centuries of Childhood* (first published in France in 1960), points out that "the periods before the modern age had no concept of childhood". Conversely, today, a child is regarded "as an emotional, or economic, [or] investment". By omission or commission, in earlier periods a child faced "neglect, abuse, or indifference" and had no say or voice of authority.

Taking the argument further, Lesnik-Oberstein (1994; 2004) points out that references such as "childhood" and "adulthood" are manifestations of adults, emanating from their own understanding. Other critics such as Nodelman (1992); Stephens (1992) and McGillis (1996), maintain that since children cannot decide for themselves, they remain "colonised" by adults. Based on this failure of decision making and having no independent control (Evans, Joubert & Meier, 2018), children's literature is "shaped by intentional" adult thinking.

On a grand scale, the modern age has provided children from diverse cultural and social backgrounds with digital texts. Families have television sets and computers. Children are able to access information at their fingertips. Arthur (2001:295) says:

> The interactive and modal nature of CD-ROMs, DVDs, Internet sites and computer software, as well as their links to popular culture, makes these technologies particularly attractive to children.

Arthur (2001:.295) goes on to say:

> Most children find the narratives of popular culture pleasurable, identify with the characters and, through discussions of characters and plots with peers, establish a sense of community and shared understandings.

Taken together, the arguments by the scholars mentioned above, suggest that the totality of a child is made up of a number of factors. These factors include, amongst others, “cultural values, social conditions, economic conditions and political conditions” (Evans, Joubert & Meier, 2018:43). Moreover, “legal system, and mass media”, cannot be overlooked. Alongside the fact that literature portrays society, it is for the modern writer to consciously consider “impulses and desires” (Peck & Coyle, 1987:143) of children in his/her craft. Besides being a member of a particular family and society, the modern child is a member of the global community.

2.3.5 Children’s literature in Sesotho sa Leboa

Due to its colonial history, children’s literature in South Africa has been flooded by translations from Afrikaans and English as Source Languages (SLs) and African Languages as Target Languages (TLs). The “borrowed stories” hindered the flowering of indigenous languages, not excluding Sesotho sa Leboa (Evans, Joubert & Meier, 2018:103). It is only after the new political dispensation in 1994, that publishers opened the doors for writers to come up with stories that learners in the Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase and Senior Phase would be comfortable relate to.

The following is the snapshot of children's books which have been published recently in Sesotho sa Leboa:

Table 3: Recent children's books published in Sesotho sa Leboa

Author(s)	Year	Title	Publisher
1. Mabitje, S.J.I.	2003	Kgomo le modiši	Mabinka
2. Puleng, N.S. Makobe, B.M.T. & Mojapelo, T.M.	2007	A re yeng madišong	Vivlia
3. Puleng, N.S.	2009	Re ja diagammele	Vivlia
4. Puleng, N.S.	2009	Dinomoro le diema	Vivlia
5. Puleng, N.S. & Maphoso, L.S.T.	2010	Nthute ke go rute	Vivlia
6. Puleng, N.S. & Maphoso, L.S.T.	2010	Thalalatsoku	Vivlia
7. Maja, M. Sefoka, T. & Sefoka, S.	2013	Letšema (Padišo) Mphato wa 9	Ilima
8. Rafapa, J.R.L.	2013	Kgale kua Sekuruwe	Vivlia
9. Mothemela, M.F.	2017	Naga ya gešo ye botse	Macmillan
10. Mohlake, K.L.	2017	Matswalo a rena	Macmillan

Going through the books mentioned above, one finds them balanced and enriching. They explore topics such as: communal life, economy, education, health, identity, religion, sports, technology, and many more current issues.

2.4 Young Adult Literature (YAL)

What is Young Adult Literature or Adult Literature?

Literary critics hold divergent views insofar as the definition of YAL is. Very often the following two thorny questions are asked:

- Who is the young adult?

- What is young adult fiction/literature?

Amid the slippery nature as regards many definitions of the YA sub-genre, a vast array of information has been published in more recent times. Formal reviews, monographs, journal articles, and theses shed light on the status of YA literature "as being the subject of literary scholarship" (Hipple, 1992:5-13).

Page (2005:9) argues that the construct "young adulthood" is very fluid and diabolic to say the least. Further, the terms "young adult" and "young adult literature" are neither new nor old. Nevertheless, scholars have not yet provided "definitive answers" to explain meanings of the said constructs. Among other scholars, drawing a line between children's literature and YAL, Hunt (1996:4) has this to point out:

> Theorists in the wider field of children's literature often discuss young adult titles without distinguishing them as a separate group and without, therefore, indicating how theoretical issues in young adult literature might differ from those in literature for younger children.

The underlying message from the above quote, is that children are regarded as persons who are pre-adolescent or not yet teenagers. On the other hand, young adults are perceived to be persons who are post-adolescent.

Defining YAL, Glaus (2014:408) succinctly says:

> YA literature can be described as texts in which teenagers are the main characters dealing with issues to which teens can relate, outcomes usually depend on the decisions and choices of main characters, and oftentimes "all traditional literary elements typical of classical literature" …

According to Cart (2010:95), there is a thin line of demarcation dividing adult and young adult literature in terms of theme. Some prominent themes handled in both adult and young adult literature include, amongst others, science fiction, fantasy,

horror, mystery, thriller (espionage), humour, love, and romance, as well as gay and lesbian (homosexuality) romances. Nevertheless, the latter seems to be a taboo in African culture.

Instead of writing about homosexuality, most writers in vernacular, Sesotho sa Leboa included, resort to portraying characters of both sexes trapped in a love triangle or drowned in the stressful conditions of their age as they search for wealth and happiness. The aforesaid is the compulsive malaise that has engulfed humanity from time immemorial.

Page (2005:77) goes further to make the following distinction about the YAL:

> YA literature is not in competition with adult literature, but provides characters, situations, quandaries and possibilities of particular interest to readers in their teens. As such, this literature has developed its own imprints as a means of signalling to potential readers and buyers that books published under these imprints will be of particular interest to young adults.

In addition, Cole (2008:49) argues that over the last half-century, critics struggled to explain accurately the meaning of YA literature. In consequence, the following names come into play:

- Adolescent literature
- Juvenile literature
- Junior books
- Books for teens
- Books for tweeners and
- Problem novel

The names given above describe in a nutshell, texts that bridge the gap between children's literature and adult literature. Better still, most literary critics today agree upon 'young adult literature' with, as its target group, young people.

2.4.1 Prevalent features of the YAL

While a variety of definitions of YAL have been suggested, this study adopts the definition suggested by Lisson (200:56) who says that this type of literature, is primarily "to appeal to young people". These young people are featured as protagonists who strive to make a statement out of their households. Adapting to the outside world and acquiring self-independence, also poses emotional insecurity to young adults. The idea of self-worth is also prevalent. In short, these are some of the universal topics explored by authors in YAL.

Howell (2011:1) makes the following distinction:

> Pinpointing the components of the YA genre is difficult. The structure changes and popular trends emerge. These trends are challenging and controversial, but they bring beneficial elements to the younger reader. The language and sexual content of young adult literature are controversial aspects that are not only arguable, but conversely helpful.

On the contrary, Glenn, Ginsberg and King (2015:4) accentuate the realisation that:

> In young adult texts – fiction and nonfiction, historical and contemporary and futuristic – this dynamism can encourage the critique of our collective past, helping us question assumptions about what came before and reconsider our responsibilities to the present and future.

In order to shape young adults, Kaplan (2005:17) contends that it is necessary for them to find self-expression at "home, school, church … if they live in seemingly rootless social world".

Reflecting on YA literature, Wells (2003:64-66) points out that themes handled by authors have a lot more to tell than a reader can see on the surface. Indeed, books from different periods are no exception as they address reality in society which is not 'sugar-coated'.

Bodart (2006:31-34) brings to light the fact that modern authors make use of plots which are classic in nature and supplements them with twists that have a bearing on the teens. Put in perspective, the stories end up with a moral code or a lesson to coming-of-age problems and related issues.

According to Whitely (2012), texts that mark off a distinctive territory of YA fiction are characterised by protagonists who embody the malaise of their respective eras. The very same protagonists find it difficult to fit, as expected, into the already established order. In this way, their continuous search for happiness and alternative identities does not yield anticipated results.

According to Matos (2017:85), books written for this age group should:

> … possess the ability to change lives. Young adult literature offers narratives in which teenagers are able to learn from, if not overcome, the harsh realities of everyday life. Even more so, it provides readers with the potential to explore different ways of existing in the world that depart from normative thinking and values.

The findings of this study confirm that the youth's transition towards adulthood is compounded by disruptions caused by personal circumstances. To be in touch with reality, present-day issues and patterns of human behaviour, have to be addressed in Young Adult novels. No wonder Mitchel and Smith (2003:217-220) register a serious concern about the shortage of youth novels dealing with the scourge of HIV/AIDS affecting Africa.

Groenewald (1988:102–108) discusses some aspects of Sesotho sa Leboa YA novellas from 1935-1960. He argues that Sehlodimela's *Moelelwa* (1940), Phalane's *Motangtang* (1943), Serote's *Molato* (1945) and Madiba's *Tsiri* (1942), "can structurally be compared to the picaresque novels of earlier centuries in Europe …" for the simple reason that "they belong thematically to the category which can best be called the genre of the moral story." Groenewald (1988:108) goes on to say:

> Phatudi's *Tladi wa Dikgati* is the pathetic story of a small boy who dies while attending an initiation school. But the story reaches further than that and symbolizes man's struggle in life – also that his fate has been determined beforehand.

According to Cart (2008:1-2), YA literature refers to 'realistic fiction' aiming to deal strictly with challenges facing the young readers. In recent years, this growing and expanding narrative art form continues to be very dynamic. It is for this reason that the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) is committed to the promotion of this kind of literature.

> YALSA also acknowledges that whether one defines young adult literature narrowly or broadly, much of its value cannot be quantified but is to be found in how it addresses the needs of its readers. Often described as "developmental," these needs recognize that young adults are beings in evolution, in search of self and identity; beings who are constantly growing and changing, morphing from the condition of childhood to that of adulthood. The period of passage called "young adult" is a unique part of life, distinguished by unique needs that are – at minimum – physical, intellectual, emotional, and societal in nature (Cart, 2008:2).

Glaus (2014:408) holds the view that "bridging young adult literature with some canonical works continues to be an appropriate method for building levels of text complexity". There are four levels for this complexity, namely, "multiple levels of meaning, narrative structure (order of events), language (conventionality/clarity) and knowledge demands (life experiences)" (Glaus, 2014:410). Taken together, these levels suggest that a text could be interpreted from different perspectives. Thus, the overall plot and characters must carry messages of hope and life lessons.

2.4.2 The age factor of the adolescent or young adult

Generally, it is accepted that the age range for adolescence is 10-20. Moje, Overby, Tysvaer and Morris (2008:110) argue that in defining adolescence, one is bound to be careful about the changing nature of "physical and cognitive development on youth literacy practices." The dilemma, as regards this assumption, is that social and cultural contexts have a direct bearing on an individual. Taking a cue from Pearson and Hunt (2011:245), Evans, Joubert and Meier (2018:12) reveal that a child is "a product of a particular culture and the ideologies that inform it".

There are complicated and overlapping definitions applied to the meaning of YA novel or YA literature with reference to age. In recent years, most critics subscribe to the notion that there is a clear demarcation between adult and young adult books. Cart (2010:120) contests a redefinition of young adult books thus:

> As it now stands, the term – at least as applied to literature – includes books for readers as young as ten (the category includes middle school literature for ten- to fourteen-year-olds) and as old as twenty-five … Literature for twelve- to eighteen-year-olds (or thirteen- to nineteen-year-olds) could officially be described as "teen" (a descriptor that more public libraries are using anyway for what had formerly been called young adult services); and books for eighteen- (or even sixteen-) to twenty-five-year-olds could be categorized as "young adult" [literature].

Talking about the age cohort of his readers, Achebe (cited by Olaniyan & Quayson, 2007:103) says:

> Most of my readers are young. They are either in school or college or have only recently left.

Page (2005:15) is of the opinion that perceptions about 'young adults' and 'young adulthood' are decided by persons who are in power (government). The researcher contends that whether people are classified as children, young adults or adults, there

is a need of relevant literature for each age group. It may be for educational or leisure reading, any written material is 'reader-intended'.

2.4.3 Characterisation in YA novel

Touching on characters, Peck and Coyle (2002:114) say that: "A lot of novels have young people as the main characters". To this they add, "for it is often the young who feel themselves to be most at odds with conventional standards." A closer reading of a particular novella (novel) makes one marvel at "certain individuals" who are called characters.

In a YA novella (novel), characters search for their identity and interestingly, strive towards discovering the world and unearthing opportunities that arise. To substantiate, in YA fiction "characters are discovering and pushing boundaries to discover themselves, in adult literature, characters turn to be constrained by those limits and are living within them" (csulb.libguides.com).

Flowing from the above, it can be concluded that authors need to navigate paths that emerging-adults try to take today. The YA novella (novel) has to offer itself to characters who try to come to terms with unemployment and survival, peer pressure and relations, doom and gloom or perhaps hope and accomplishment. Decisions taken by young adults may at times be good or bad. It has also to be borne in mind that the storylines of YA novellas (novels) must not be seen to be simple. Every transition in human life has its intricacies.

The following are characteristics that permeate the genre:

- The main character is always a teenager.
- Events revolve around the main character and his/her struggle to conquer under all odds.
- The story is told from a particular viewpoint in the voice of a young adult.
- The story does not always have a "happy ending" as in children's books.
- Parents are mainly absent or at loggerheads with young adults (Cole, 2008:49).

In some instances, the reader comes across characters who feel rejected. A common trend in most novellas is that characters try by all means to open up new avenues in search of happiness and a good life. The consequence is that the very same characters get into trouble with parents or authority. When all is not well, these characters revert to grandparents for help (Wells, 2003:67).

Providing an impression about characters, Forster (1985:72) has this to say:

> They 'run away', they 'get out of hand'; they are creations inside a creation, and often inharmonious towards it; if they are given complete freedom they kick the book to pieces, and if they are kept too sternly in check they revenge themselves by dying, and destroy it by intestinal decay.

The analogy above defines complex characters who have multiple personality traits. In a way, complex characters resemble people of this world, with innermost feelings and determined to transform their lives. The inference here is that YA characters, strive to achieve beyond their greatest dreams. Rather than be concerned with what today brings, they are concerned with what the future holds.

Safe to say, in prose fiction, there are primary characters (rounded) who are immensely engaged in the development of plot. On the contrary, there are secondary characters (flat) who only have one or two personality traits and are only partially concerned with the burning issues of the storyline.

2.4.4 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Questioning (LGBTQ) themes

Though Sesotho sa Leboa literature is flourishing, to date YA novellas (novels) with gay-themed characters have not seen the light of day. In big cities around South Africa, people see colourful parades of gays and lesbians. Latrobe and Drury (2009:191) quote the YA novelist, James Howe, who says:

> Whether or not a child is gay, all children live in a world among gay people and they need to overcome their

> discomfort and the bigotry they've been taught in order to be accepting of themselves and others.

On the other hand, Selden, Widdowson and Brooker (2005:244) argue that:

> For many critics the past offers alien constructions of sexuality in a contrasting relation to the present, rather than possible identifications or celebratory moments.

It would be both naïve and irrational in literary circles, to discriminate or fail to affirm homosexuality. The gay/lesbian people, in fact, form part of the global community, pride themselves in their sexual orientation, and resist any form of persecution. While there have been many attempts to invalidate and radicalise gay/lesbian relations, it behoves a modern writer as a "teacher" to refocus and be less overt in approach. As pointed out already, blanket condemnation has no place in the modern age. Better still, literature thrives only when writers are not blind to reality.

D'Emilio (cited in Abelove, Barak & Halperin, 1993:467) notes that:

> For gay men and lesbians, the 1970s were years of significant achievement. Gay liberation and women's liberation changed the sexual landscape of the nation. Hundreds of thousands of gay women and men came out and openly affirmed same-sex eroticism.

It is worth noting that homosexuality has won "civil rights protection" in a number of cities, worldwide. Trying to bridge the divide and address the denigration, Lara (1998:157) says:

> … no solidarity is possible if the discourse does not form a bridge to the other's understanding of what are considered to be worthy features and needs of human beings …

By way of emphasis, D'Emilio (cited in Abelove, Barak & Halperin, 1993:467), maintains that:

> … a new, more accurate theory of gay history must be part of this political enterprise.

In order to uphold 'solidarity' and to raise Sesotho sa Leboa as a language, out of its past morass of mediocrity, modern authorship and scholarship should best be relevant to its time and promote self-worth. In this respect, creative writing in this language would become a true reflection of the rainbow nation moving together with the global community.

2.4.5 The taxonomy of genre

As literature evolves, so does its classification or re-classification. Weisstein (1973:103) argues that:

> One must also consider the possibility that a genre known and cultivated in antiquity has actually vanished, but that its name persists and serves as the label for a modern genre that may, or may not, be its correlate.

To further clarify his standpoint, Weisstein (p.103) says:

> In such a case, the comparatist among literary historians is charged with the responsibility of investigating and analysing the changing conditions responsible for this survival, and the process by means of which the label was severed from the original content.

Questions have been raised by scholars about the taxonomy of genre. To be exact, genre is a term frequently used in the arts and in particular, literature. However, like other literary terms, the term has eluded definition. Stam (2000:14) poses the following questions: "Are genres really out there in the world, or are they merely the construction of analysts? Is there a finite taxonomy of genres or are they in principle infinite? Are genres timeless Platonic essences or ephemeral, time-bound entities?

Are genres culture-bound or transcultural? Should genre analysis be descriptive or proscriptive?" The cited questions sum up the problem of definition and classification.

To add to the problem of classification and definition, Gledhill (1985:64) argues that: "Genres …" to a great extent, "are not discrete systems, consisting of a fixed number of listable items" for genres overlap in terms of content and resemblance.

Taking the argument further, Christie (2013:12) holds the view that:

> The relationship of text to context is very intimate: context is only known because of the text that gives it life, while text is only known because of the context that makes it relevant.

Latrobe and Drury (2009:69), quoting Makaryk (1993:79), mention the two aspects of genre criticism as follows:

- The classification and description of literary texts and
- The evolution or development of literary forms

In one way or the other, the two sets of analogy are members of the same family, the reason being that they share common elements. It becomes a very serious problem when certain scholars remain fixated. At any rate, literature is fluid and continues to grow beyond the limits, and requires flexibility in approach. For example, in a crime story, dominated by young characters, that type of narrative could as well be classified as YA material.

Another example may be a love story of young couples who are starting a life together. Such a theme also belongs to the sub-genre of YA literature. What matters most is the focus of the critic and the intended audience (Latrobe & Drury, 2009:69-81). Moreover, contemporary genre theories contend that it does not merit debate to classify a title into a single straight-jacket genre. Books in nature cut across a dichotomy of subjects.

In tracing the development of Sesotho sa Leboa novellas with a critical eye, it is evident that there are hidden sub-genres or sub-groupings which have been neglected by researchers. These hidden areas vary in style and subject matter and include, *inter alia,* the YA novel. The reason is not far-fetched, taking into account that: “Genres are not simply features of texts, but are mediating frameworks between texts, makers and interpreters” (Chandler, 1997).

In view of all that has been said by different scholars, so far, it could be concluded that:

> As a true form of unique literature, children’s and young adult novels cannot fairly be judged as “good” or “bad” based on the measure of other forms of literature understood as for adults, and therefore, it requires a formalized frame work for evaluation based on its unique nature (Akers, 2011:ii).

As the focus of this study is the YA novella, the following main question has to be answered: Who is the intended reader? Over and above this, YAL, like global literatures, “address the entire spectrum of life”. The intended reader is the emerging adult who is ushered “into the adult world” (Van der Staay, 1992:48).

2.4.6 Conflict as a literary device

The backbone of literary fiction, not excluding the YA novella (novel), is conflict. Likewise, conflict may be external or internal. External conflict takes place when a character navigates a path to reach a goal but confronts exterior forces. It may be between two or more characters, most often, a protagonist and an antagonist, including supporters of the antagonist. On the other hand, internal conflict only exists in a character’s mind. It has to be noted that when conflict is resolved between opposing forces or groups, it brings about a sense of closure to the plot.

According to Monteleone (2004:68), “characters need to have questions to be answered, things to be found, and obstacles to be removed”. There is no qualm appertaining to the aforesaid assumption. Conflict is what makes the storyline mutate

as it creates uncertainty and heightens tension to what may or may not happen at the end. Good narratives are built on highly intensified conflict.

The following are basic types of conflict in fiction, commonly classified as follows:

2.4.6.1 Man against society

This is the type of conflict which occurs when a character has a new idea, and is opposed by a particular social force, propelled by members of society. Moreover, this conflict could involve a bold character or characters at loggerheads with an unjust government. It may be a rebellious group of young adults who feel that parents cross their paths deliberately or intentionally. A syndicate may also be involved in looting state coffers but thwarted by the police. Service delivery protests may ensue but be nipped in the bud by state agents.

2.4.6.2 Man against man

In this type of conflict, one character does not see eye to eye with another, but their desired goals may be different. What ignites conflict among characters could perhaps be achievement, jealousy, pride, status, survival, or a host of other factors. The key to this kind of conflict is the fact that the author develops two equally bold characters, each having admirable goals. The underlying factor is that the author should convince the reader by bringing out sound motivation in terms of characters competing to achieve their goals. In this regard, personal conflict and human error should be at play but not so obviously.

2.4.6.3 Man against self

This is an internal conflict which is also referred to as cognitive dissonance. It has to do with holding opposing views and inconsistent opinions about moral standards and other encompassing sets of beliefs. It is a battle within the self. In such a conflict, a character is driven to make a choice between two or more pathways. The pathways may in the final analysis, prove to be evil or good. Likewise, the conflict mainly rests on the human psyche, where aspects of personality play a role. In many instances, such a conflict leaves a character in a dilemma throughout the storyline or ends at a particular point.

2.4.6.4 Man against nature

This is another example of external conflict. In this type of conflict, characters are caught up in unpredictable, unstoppable, and apathetic forces of nature. These forces include, amongst others, animals, climate change, drought, global warming, earthquakes, insects, hurricanes, storms, and tornadoes. In short, this is without choice; it is about how man and nature co-exist, and moreover, how man responds in the face of adversity (Folarin, 2014:13-25).

In conclusion, the crux of the above-mentioned conflicts cut across most of the six novellas selected for this critical and comparative study. As characters push each other to the limit, their conscious or unconscious desires come to a boiling point. For this reason, conflict does not only affect characters, but also theme and tone. Most importantly, going through the analysis of the said novellas, it would be fully realised that conflict drives the narrative and thickens the plot (en.wikipedia.org).

2.4.7 New ideas about YAL

Kaplan (2003:6), analysing YA novels, points out that:

> … there is a definite embedded link between body image, weight, and sexuality: thinner young women are portrayed as powerful and in control, while larger women are depicted as sexually passive and irresponsible. Young adult literature … reflects societal stereotypes, and although literary critics often ignore this genre, it remains an important body of work that deserves our attention for not only whom it entertains, but also for what it says about the human condition.

Risku (2017:16-17) argues that YA fiction “as a distinct category”, has a duty to “characterize the power relationships that define” the emerging adult. To complement Risku (p.16-17), Trites (2000:23) admits that “social institutions” foster “socialization”. Individuals, through self-selected associates or vice versa, that very act of coming together, creates identity. The most important task of the writer or scholar involves two basic elements: choice of theme and what makes the YA tick. Modern technology, including social media, seem to entice the YA.

According to Hornby (2002:592) 'an idea' is the aim or purpose of something. On the other hand, Bullon (2006:758) defines the concept as "a general understanding of something, based on some knowledge about it". The two definitions provide a glimpse of what Cart (2007) brings to light when he argues that YAL in origin is "restless". Suffice to say, the context of this type of literature is determined by contemporary issues and other resurgences, whether material or immaterial, that capture the hearts and minds of young adults.

2.5 The novel/novella and its extent

Since the broader scope of this study is the evolution of a novella in Sesotho sa Leboa, it would also be of paramount importance to define what a novel is. Coyle (1987:102) says:

> Novelists frequently focus on the tensions between individuals and the society in which they live, presenting characters who are at odds with that society. A lot of novels have young people as the main characters, for it is often the young who feel themselves to be most at odds with conventional standards.

No matter how complicated or simple the plot is woven, in the final analysis, the basic story comes in a form of a parable which may be seen as a "picture of life" (Peck & Coyle, 2002:116).

According to Quinn (2004:232-233), recent times have produced different kinds of novels. These kinds include, amongst others, novels which emphasise character, "as in the psychological novel; on action, as in the ADVENTURE STORY; on a social problem, as in the sociological novel …"

Forster (1985:25), quoting Chevalley, defines the novel as "a fiction in prose of a certain extent (*une fiction en prose d'une certaine étendue*) … the extent should not be less than 50, 000 words." In a novel, the narrator is at liberty to develop intricate sub-plots and sub-themes. Better still, the characters should grow and change as time goes on.

From the above inference, it could be deduced that most of the prose fiction published in Sesotho sa Leboa (1940-2015), including the sub-genre of YA novel, are actually not novels but novellas, owing to their limited number of pages. The argument in contestation here is supported by Serudu (1996:131-134) and Groenewald (1993:12-16). Both critics, point out that according to literary studies, most of the Sesotho sa Leboa prose narratives, classified as novels, read more like "long short stories".

The following is the snapshot of the novellas published in Sesotho sa Leboa during the indicated period:

Table 4: Novellas published in Sesotho sa Leboa between 1949 and 2015

Title	Author	Pages	Year
1. Kgamphuphu	Mamogobo, P.M.	85	1949
2. Nkotsana	Madiba, M.J.	71	1955
3. Lešitaphiri	Matsepe, O.K.	100	1963
4. Notsa todi lemapong le	Matabane, R.L.	57	1972
5. Solang le sa fetše	Mashala, P.P.	44	1995
6. Mathaka a Dioborolo	Bopape, D.	80	1996
7. Kabelo	Puleng, N.S.	78	1996
8. Dilo tšela ke batho	Mphahlele, M.C.	94	2007
9. Ya ka tsela	Mamabolo, M.J.	64	2012
10. La fata ga le boe fela	Motimele, M.	58	2015

2.6 Conclusion

So far, there are a few prose narratives in Sesotho sa Leboa that could be classified as full-length novels, which are necessarily not YA material. A great contribution to this category includes, amongst others, novels by Matsepe (*Kgorong ya Mošate,* 1962; *Letšofalela,* 1972; *Kgati ya Moditi,* 1974; *Tšhelang gape,* 1974; *Tša ka Mafuri,* 1974; *Mahlatse a Madimabe,* 1981).

Taking a leaf from Motuku (*Morweši,* 1969), it is encouraging to note that emerging authors such as Kekana (*Nonyana ya Tokologo,* 1985; *Nnete fela,* 1989); Molele (*Mmaphefo le Maphefo,* 2008) and Machitela (*Kgalagalo tša Setu,* 2013), try their hand at contemporary issues and better still, write full-length novels. The cited novels have the ingredients of YA material. The contribution of these up-and-coming authors is a most welcome one towards the development of novel writing in Sesotho sa Leboa. It is anticipated that this trend and pattern will be sustained by the generation of authors to follow.

CHAPTER 3: DECADE UNDER REVIEW: 1940-1949

The evaluation of the selected YA novellas of the decade 1940-1949 is the subject matter of this chapter**:**

3.1 *Moelelwa* by Sehlodimela, M.M. (1940): Cultural Criticism

Tyson (2015:282) holds the view that:

> "… a literary text, or any other kind of cultural production, performs cultural work to the extent to which it shapes the cultural experience of those who encounter it, that is, to the extent to which it shapes our experience as members of a cultural group"

The ideas expressed by Tyson, undeniably bring to light the fact that culture models an individual. It follows then that characters depicted in a given literary text, exhibit various aspects of their culture as they interact with other members of society. By so doing, characters or individuals, move together to reaffirm their heritage and social relations. Under the circumstances, culture cannot be regarded as old-fashioned or redundant, but can best be preserved for posterity.

In a recent online article, Huson (2014) goes further to say:

> It is literature itself that most often asks us to *critique* our hidden assumptions, and the best literary texts often ask us to rethink exactly what is going on in the highest part of culture, literature itself. Whether or not critique belongs to the very essence of literature, there is no doubt that, of all parts of culture, literature is what best performs the role of critique.

It would perhaps be appropriate at this stage, to point out that earlier attempts at prose fiction in Sesotho sa Leboa were born out of missionary influence. In analysing *Moelelwa* (1940), a bit of cultural understanding is imperative. Culture in literature is

transmitted in different forms. For example, events and activities of characters may provide a window that would enable a reader to familiarise themselves with the setting. Cultural games, human experience, apparel, and artefact provide the reader with values central to the text at hand.

Culture, in literature, is regarded "as a coherent and self-regulating tradition of serious artistic achievement" (Castle, 2007:72). By the same token, it is evident that people are distinguished by their cultural differences. Numerous studies in literary theory have shown that Cultural Criticism bears the hallmarks of Marxist Criticism. To that end, one identifies the use of the following Marxian terms in Cultural Criticism – "base" and "superstructure". The two concepts are premised on the idea of materialist conception since society is viewed as being heavily dominated and influenced by class conflicts which are, by nature, cultural.

3.1.1 Plot structure

3.1.1.1 Exposition

Sehlodimela (1940) portrays Moelelwa as a young adult who regards herself as too young to perform household chores as if someone needs to be employed to do that on her behalf. Moelelwa's bedroom, kitchen, and kitchen utensils, smack of uncleanliness. Preparation of foodstuff is a mammoth task for her to contend with, so much so that nobody enjoys food prepared by Moelelwa. Moelelwa's female peers, on the other hand, excel in general cleanliness of dress, bedrooms, and kitchen utensils.

Young adult suitors propose love to Moelelwa because she is an astute dancer and champion of traditional African dance. Most young male adults admire Moelelwa, so much so that every one of them tries to lure her by all tricks available. Moelelwa becomes a celebrity and is elected leader of her dance group which becomes famous even in adjoining villages**:**

> Ka baka la bothakga go bineng, Moelelwa a kgethwa go ba mmamokgadi wa basetsana (p.6).

(English translation)

> Because of her exceptional ability to dance, Moelelwa was elected leader of her dance troupe.

Moelelwa's parents worry about her distinctive unhygienic behaviour and wish she might appreciate hygienic conduct like her peers but in vain. Any reader of *Moelelwa,* the literary work, cannot help but foresee failure in Moelelwa's future life.

3.1.1.2 Rising action

Moelelwa attracts the eyes of a horde of young adult males who propose love to her. She is an attractive celebrity of fancy dress and exudes self-confidence. She rebuffs the advances of Jan, Nakampe, and Moroka (the traditional healer), amongst others:

> Setlatla ga se tsebe ge e le sona setlatla gomme ebile ga se tsebe ge ba bangwe ba se tseba ka botlatla (p.17).

(English translation)

> A fool does not know that it is a fool and on top of that does not know that it is known by other persons as such.

A road construction company arrives at the village where Moelelwa lives (p.19). Most of its employees are male young adults, some of whom are Swati nationals who cannot speak the local language proficiently.

Notwithstanding the language barrier, Janaware, proposes love to Moelelwa and succeeds, and finally Moelelwa elopes to eSwatini while her mother is at large on a drinking spree, as usual. Moelelwa is welcomed with a feast that befits a new bride although the formalities of Swati marriage are not followed. The in-laws of Janaware were not known:

> ... ka molao wa bona gwa dirwa bjala bjo bontšintši bja go amogela ngwetši, le kgomo ya llelwa ke mphaka (p.26).

(English translation)

> ... according to their custom they brewed a large quantity of beer in order to welcome the bride, and a beast was also slaughtered.

3.1.1.3 Climax

After three weeks, Moelelwa's happiness in eSwatini comes to an abrupt end as she is instructed to change her way of dress for that of Swati nationals, leaving her hair to grow into a ruffled tuft and striving to speak the Swati language properly (p.27). Some kind of culture shock besets Moelelwa for the whole year until she is blessed with a baby boy (Makezi) whom she regards as some form of consolation as her official name becomes Mmamakezi.

The season for tillage arrives and Moelelwa is afforded a piece of land on which to produce requisite foodstuff for her family (p.27). Moelelwa is expected to plough and weed the piece of arable land manually against the grain of her laziness and lack of practice because her peers are doing it. Moelelwa bungles her routine duties so much that ordinary cooking is a nightmare for her:

> Ge monna a boa a tšwa medirong ya gagwe o tla hwetša magobe a mabjang? Dilo ruri! (p.28).

(English translation)

> When the husband comes back from work, what kind of food will he find? Trash!

One day, Moelelwa receives a letter including £2 (R4.00), a considerable amount of money during the decade in question, from Janaware who works in Noroso Mine, where gold is mined in *go la Gauta* (Gold Reef), probably the present Gauteng Province, (p.28). Moelelwa is exhilarated and impulsively spends it on luxuries before taking the letter to Tom, who can read, only to discover that the money was meant for hiring Shilling to till all the arable pieces of land for her. The latter can only till an

insignificant portion thereof for her at five British shillings (R0.50) and that vexes her in-laws (p.29).

Moelelwa is visited by the relatives of Janaware, whose intention was to welcome the newly born son of Janaware, only to meet filth and shabbily cooked food in the offering (p.29). The visitors are greatly disappointed that they go about spreading far and wide the shabbiness observed of her. Moelelwa, cannot even afford her son affectionate treatment, to the extent that her in-laws decide to advise Janaware to divorce her and marry a better wife according to their custom. Of this, Sehlodimela (p.31) avers:

> … ngwana a fo iphelela bjalo ka phoofolo le tšhiwana.
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … the child lived like an animal and an orphan.

Sehlodimela presents Moelelwa, the female character, as an utter failure. Moreover, Janaware's relatives do not cherish a daughter-in-law who fails to perform household chores. In addition, the infant, Makezi, does not receive proper treatment from Moelelwa and that offends the visitors who in turn, advocate that Janaware divorce Moelelwa.

3.1.1.4 Falling action

A falling action appears as the superlative negligence and recklessness of Moelelwa reaches Janaware's ears and he goes home on leave to find how the money sent to his wife was expended, only to be welcomed by Moelelwa in a drunken stupor, singing as she did in her heyday back home. Child neglect at its worst is observed as the baby boy hangs hazardously on her back:

> O šitwa le ke go ema, ngwana o lekeleditše hlogwana ka mohlana o šaletšwe ke go itšhikinya a wele fase (p.32).
>
> **(English translation)**

> She cannot even stand up; the baby hangs his head on her back where a mere shaking of himself will send him falling down.

Out of sheer anger and disappointment with the spectacle, Janaware severely assaults Moelelwa by hitting, fisting, and kicking her with his protective boots until she loses consciousness (p.32). Thereafter, Janaware offers Moelelwa money enough for train fare only to travel back to her home:

> ... tšhelete yeo a neilwego yona ke ya setimela fela, ge e le ya dijo ya ba 'Ndoda ya zibonela' mo tseleng (p.33).

(English translation)

> … the money afforded her is for train fare only, with regard to food she would fend for herself.

Sehlodimela (1940:33) successfully appeals to the conscience of the reader of the piece of literary work by painting a grim picture of a young female adult with a baby on her back, facing an obvious prospect of suffering from hunger. The author simplifies matters by making mention of generous passengers who afford them food (p.33). This makes Moelelwa seem to be a loving parent to Makezi.

Moelelwa wanders about with the poor baby on her back, to the place where motorcars ferry persons between eSwatini and the Transvaal (now Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Gauteng, and North-West). The transport service to the relevant train station does not cost relatively much money and she affords it:

> Ka ge di be di sa bitše mašeleng a mantši go selela ka mono, Moelelwa a kgona go lefa mašeleng ao (p.33).

(English translation)

> Because of the low cost of crossing the border, Moelelwa afforded it.

A train arrives at dawn and Moelelwa boards it to Kobene (p.33). The reader sympathises with Moelelwa and her infant, Makezi, on her back. Moreover, the generous passengers who supplied Moelelwa with food are praiseworthy. The author employs African humanism in order to supply the shortage of food for which Janaware did not cater. This proves to be a typical gesture of *ubuntu* ("humanity") which is embedded in kindness.

Flowing from the above observation, it is interesting to note that the concept of "African humanism" and its "dissemination" is also accentuated by Rafapa (2006). By analogy, this is a thread that runs throughout the writings of most African writers irrespective of colour, gender, or race. Consciously or unconsciously, there has been an attempt by writers and scholarship to expose colonial values in African culture and customs.

3.1.1.5 Resolution

At sunrise at Kobene train station, Moelelwa finds Kumane, another transport operator, who ferries her home in a donkey-cart (p.33). This tells, in an implied fashion, the reader of *Moelelwa*, the work of literary art, that Moelelwa, the protagonist, and Makezi, her baby boy, travelled by train on hungry stomachs the previous night.

The shabbily dressed Moelelwa, in Swati dress, arrives home with Makezi, an unknown baby, on her back. People are surprised to see her alive because she had bidden nobody farewell when she eloped to eSwatini. She is so emaciated that they are thankful that she is alive and she is surprised to see her female peers and former prospective suitors leading successful family lives of plenty and happiness. She thanks God that her mother is still alive (p.34). From what Phalane asserts at this point, the reader may conclude that Moelelwa is remorseful.

On learning that Moelelwa is back home, Rasidi, her grandfather, visits her to admonish her, but she leaves the homestead unceremoniously:

> Nare! Wa re ga ke kwe batswadi o tla kwa dinonyana (p.34).

(English translation)

Nare! If you disobey your parents, you will suffer in life.

The researcher commends the two authors on not concluding their narratives by killing characters. Moelelwa in Sehlodimela (1940) and Lekope, Moswe, Tilo, and Motangtang in Phalane (1943), are still alive in both narratives. Despite the similarity of Moelelwa (1940) Lekope, Moswe, and Tilo, in Phalane (1943) illuminates an inference of their remorseful past. In both narratives, there is a measure of resemblance as indicated to the reader by both Sehlodimela (1940) and Phalane (1943). Motangtang in Phalane (1943), succeeds in life against cultural shock in urban areas.

3.1.2 Theme and character delineation

The theme of *Moelelwa* is summarised in this fashion by Rasidi, Moelelwa's grandfather, even though the researcher does not purport it to be of an exclusive kind because, in a number of other literary works, some themes are "explicit" or "implicit" (Abrams, 2015:230). For instance, archetypal scholars search for "themes as that of the scapegoat, or the journey underground, through myths and social rituals …". Correspondingly, most of the themes in literature are universal as their spotlight fall on the human condition. On the other hand, some themes become conspicuous when they are realised by careful readers or critics. The following serves as an example:

Nare! Wa re ga ke kwe batswadi o tla kwa dinonyana (Sehlodimela, 1940:34).

(English translation)

Nare! If you disobey your parents, you will suffer in life.

The theme of the novella under review is considered by the researcher as the recklessness of Moelelwa and her parents (p.9). Illustratively, Moelelwa is ill-treated

in eSwatini (p.27) as uttered by Rasidi, her grandfather, after her return from eSwatini (p.34).

In addition, Sehlodimela (1940) summarily offers the following sub-theme as some kind of reinforcement:

> Thutelabogolo e a roba (p.34).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Learning when too old is burdensome.

Both Sehlodimela (1940) and Phalane (1943) are commended on their portrayal of character, social circumstances, and time in support of their choice of themes. Conflict, as illustrated by the two authors, points to the extension of the themes in question. Although both authors are didactic, they differ in presenting their themes.

3.1.2.1 Moelelwa (the protagonist)

There is open disobedience on the part of the protagonist. She disobeys parents (Sehlodimela, 1940:9) and is in conflict with their best wishes. Her mother, though, does not exert much effort to train her concerning household chores. The mother is frequently away from home on a drinking spree:

> … ka mehla ge ba be ba tla go etela morwedi ba be ba sa mo hwetše ka ge e be e le mmaleoto (p.23).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … frequently when they visited their daughter she was at large because she liked leaving her home.

The author further portrays Moelelwa as a glamorous young lady, who finds beauty in clothing and things that some people find odd and imperfect. In addition to this, she is an astute traditional African dancer. Some measure of conflict surfaces as the reader fails to reconcile these attributes and her unhygienic conduct pertaining to her

bedroom (pp.5, 9 & 29), cooking methods (pp.5 & 6) and kitchen utensils (pp.29 & 30).

The reader becomes utterly incensed as the protagonist employs insolent and abusive language when she responds to an affable Nakampe and a Moroka traditional healer who propose love to her alternately (p.23). After the birth of her son in eSwatini, most relatives cannot visit her because they are repelled by her artful use of abusive language as if she is not a newly-wed woman:

> O tsentšhetša ngwanaka moya phoofolo towe (p.27).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> You are exposing my child to draught, you bloody creature.

She elopes to eSwatini and that makes the reader view her as a disrespectful young adult whose parent does not approve of it. Mmanare spends sleepless nights because of her unruly conduct while she is tortured by culture shock caused by the language barrier, her first journey by train, and heading to a place that no one of her relatives had ever visited (p.25).

She is once more viewed as a person who gives no thought to health care (p.29) and is not suitable to take care of a baby. She crowns her unbecoming conduct by visiting places of alcoholic drinks with the baby on her back (p.32). The reader, therefore, indicts Moelelwa with gross negligence of the baby:

> … ya ba gona MmaMakezi a boa gae, a bile a gapa dipudi, a boile ka melala (p.32).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … it was only then that MmaMakezi returned home, in a drunken stupor.

Janaware, then working in South Africa, sends Moelelwa money for the tillage of their pieces of arable land back in eSwatini by mail (p.28). Out of recklessness, illiteracy and ignorance, she impulsively purchases luxuries before taking the letter to Tom who can read and write (p.29). Her sacrifice of Janaware's effort to provide for the family is viewed by the reader as carelessness on her part.

The author portrays Moelelwa mainly as a flat character who laughs only when in the company of her female peers like Mokgadi, Matlala, and Mapute (p.15). This is said of her as the author himself intervenes authoritatively in order to describe, and often to evaluate, the motives and dispositional qualities of this character (Abrahams, 1981:20).

3.1.2.2 Janaware

Janaware, a construction worker, is an ordinary young male adult who goes all out for the acquisition of young adult female celebrities as lovers but meets an unhygienic and unscrupulous young adult, Moelelwa (p.19). The reader regards him as normal, unfortunate, and very usual:

> *Janaware: Lumelang ka muka. Ni kayi na? Na ki gone, sia ni rata* (p.19).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Janaware: Greetings to you all. How are you? I am well, we love you.

Janaware and some of his companions cannot speak Sesotho sa Leboa and are not ashamed of the queer pronunciation and intonation they subject it to because of their drunken stupor (p.19). Janaware proposes love to Moelelwa and succeeds so much that an appointment for a formal visit the following Sunday is made (p.20). In this way, the male young adult triumphs over a language barrier that could easily have caused him a culture shock:

> Ge ba kgaogana ba tshephišana gore Sontaga e tlago ba tlo etelana (p.20).

(English translation)

When they parted ways, they promised to visit each other one more time the following Sunday.

The following Saturday, after a refreshing bath with a fragrant soap in a nearby river, Janaware puts on his best clothing outfit of a bowtie, green sunglasses, and borrowed shoes that did not fit well (p.20). The author portrays him as a young adult beaming with self-acceptance and self-confidence walking with the aid of a decorative walking stick. The reader finds the Saturday visit incongruent with an appointment made for Sunday earlier on. What would have happened to them if Moelelwa and her peers, had gone to collect wood in the bush? The author exacerbates the issue by making mention of several female young adults visiting Moelelwa's home on the day (p.20).

One day Janaware and his friend, Setemere, arrive at their workplace later than usual and do not assist their employer's wife by washing kitchen utensils for her as they always do. Their employer takes exception and forbids them to visit the adjacent village again, which makes the young adults angry for they love Moelelwa and Mokgadi a lot (p.22). They decide to leave the employment of an oppressive and exploitative white man after requesting to visit the adjacent village against the employer's previous warning. The researcher, therefore, regards Janaware and his friend as rebels and people who do not suffer from indecision.

After a full month, Janaware and his friend leave their employment after serving notice and head for Moelelwa's home as they do not have a place to sleep and wait for the train to Komatipoort, known as Nkomati today (p.22). The gesture displayed points to an expectation of hospitality but they meet the strange Mmanare who chucks them out of her home (p.23). The duo pleads with her but to no avail, until they decide to spend the night in nearby bushes to be consoled by the infatuated Moelelwa who follows them when they leave her home:

> Ge ba re ba fihla lepatlelong, a ba swara direthe ngwana wa mosetsana, dipelo tša masogana tša thoma go sedišega (p.23).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> When they reached an open ground, the young woman caught up with them and the hearts of the young men became happy.

The author presents Janaware spending a night in the bush with Moelelwa as they 'reinforce their love'. The reader of the literary work is left to think and infer what kind of reinforcement of love is involved. What remains is that the two lovers agree to elope to eSwatini (p.24). The reader views Janaware as a young adult easily blinded by new love so much that with his beloved by his side, the two never think of any danger that lurks in the bushes at night:

> … ge mosetsana le lesogana ba tlema tša lerato gore le tie, di se šišinyege … (p.24).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … whilst the young woman and the young man reinforced their love so that it becomes unshakable.

Surprising to the reader, Janaware elopes with Moelelwa to eSwatini and a pleasurable feast is organised to welcome Moelelwa. Moreover, the reader struggles to understand why Janaware's parents accept Moelelwa and even slaughter a beast to welcome a person whose parents they have never met to solidify their relationship (p.26).

Janaware sends Moelelwa money, which act portrays him as understanding her laziness. He thinks of her as loving and mindful of his family but Moelelwa impulsively expends the money on luxuries (p.29). Conflict between Moelelwa's and Janaware's value systems emerges as the money is not used for its purpose.

3.1.2.3 Mmanare

The author depicts Mmanare as just as unhygienic and reckless in conduct as her daughter, Moelelwa. Her house is never tidy because she spends a considerable amount of her available time away from home:

> Ge a sa ile mmagwe a šala a tsena, a tšwa madileng, a gapa dipudi, a bile a sa tsebe gore ke yena mang (p.8).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> When she was still away her mother returned home from a drinking spree, terribly drunk and totally disoriented.

The reader classifies her as a drunkard who cares little about her family responsibilities, among them, nurturing Moelelwa for a better future. Despite Mmanare's negligence and addiction to beverages, Mmanare wishes Moelelwa may perform household chores in a dedicated fashion like other female young adults and tries to guide Moelelwa against bad habits (p.9). Mmanare's habitual drunkenness cannot totally stifle Mmanare's parental love as reflected in her occasional guidance and reprimand:

> … o be a fela a re ke leka go kgala, ke šupa morwedi tsela ya ba bangwe (p.9).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … she frequently tried to guide and reprimand her daughter.

One day a very aged Moroka traditional healer visits Mmanare's home and is immediately recognisable as such because of his red eyes and unkempt hair (p.10). Although Mmanare is frequently drunk, she is portrayed as an observant person in life.

The aged Moroka traditional healer comes back the following day to intimidate Mmanare with divining bones and herbs so that he may marry Moelelwa, but to no avail (p.11). The traditional healer further boasts of his large livestock and many wives but fails dismally because Mmanare's vigilance sees through his intentions:

> Dikgang tše di rego Moelelwa a nyalwe ke ngaka ya Moroka ga se tša thabiša mosadimogolo Mmamoelelwa …. (p.13).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> The news that Moelelwa should be married to the Moroka traditional healer does not please Moelelwa's mother.

However, the Moroka traditional healer succeeds in causing a rift between Mmanare and Moelelwa's aunt by telling a lie purporting to warn them that the aunt has cast a bad spell on the family (p.12). Mmanare gets angry with her sister-in-law and starts ill-treating the sister-in-law to the latter's surprise (p.13). The author presents Mmanare as a person who believes in witchcraft at this time, a belief that has destabilised communal life and created animosity in African societies.

Finally, Moelelwa rejects the proposals of the traditional healer, as per arrangement with her mother, by belittling the traditional healer through abusive language and the traditional healer leaves her home very disappointed. Subsequently, the aunt is appeased with a goat as some form of African traditional fine and their usual peaceful relationship is restored (p.14). Mmanare, thereby, becomes a peace-loving person.

After Janaware and Setemere have left their place of employment, they head for Moelelwa's home (p.22). Mmanare returns home to find the two strangers relaxed and enters the kitchen without greeting them and spills the hot water that was intended for making tea by kicking the container (p.22). Mmanare further enquires about the strangers who struggle to explain the cause of their visit and she drives them out of her home (p.23). Mmanare's actions point to a person who does not like strangers and this forces the reader of the literary work to infer the cause thereof.

Moelelwa elopes to eSwatini (p.24). Because of her worry, Mmanare spends sleepless nights weeping for her lost daughter (p.25). She, under the circumstances, reports the matter to her male neighbours so that they may search for her everywhere:

> Ge ba ka kgona sona gona ba tla mo hwetša? (p.25)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> If they can search will they find her?

When Moelelwa returns home from eSwatini, she is in Swati dress, emaciated, and carries the unknown Makezi on her back but Mmanare is just happy to see her alive once more (p.34). This characterises her as a sympathetic and loving parent who cares about her daughter's life and not the history behind her disappearance.

3.1.2.4 Nakampe

He appears for the first time in the narrative when a dance festival is held at Makgwathole and is attracted to Moelelwa with her exceptional play on traditional African drums (p.7). Nakampe is a shy character that cannot approach female young adults for proposing love to them in a crowd and that creates conflict between his disposition and his desire:

> … ka ge go be go tletše batho le masogana a mangwe (p.7).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … because the venue was full of people and other male young adults.

Like other male young adults such as Jan, Jim, Janaware, and Setemere, Nakampe is attracted to female young adults in order to propose love. The researcher views him as normal and life-like despite his shyness.

To add to his discomfort, Jan and Jim keep near Moelelwa who is targeted by the timid Nakampe who is, in turn, disappointed and offended by the set-up. The disappointment is aggravated further when Jan and Jim create an opportunity to isolate her from the rest of the crowd and Jan holds her hand:

> Aowa, ba e gapagapa masogana ao, ba ba ba e ntšha gare ga lekoko la batho … (p.7).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Indeed, the young suitors escorted her out of the crowd …

The reader detects some weakness with regard to the author who presents Nakampe as walking behind them ("go ba šala morago") and looking back to the centre of his attraction ("a lebelela morago") at the same time (p.7). The author goes further to emphasise the fact that he was walking in front of them by making mention of them finding him sitting beside a fireplace in the courtyard at his home later (Sehlodimela, 1940:8).

It is natural, normal, and life-like for a young suitor to be disgusted, disappointed, and vexed on seeing what Nakampe sees.

Jan, with Moelelwa in his hand, teases Nakampe who responds with great anger:

> O tla re go tseba wa dira eng? (p.7)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> What would you do if you knew?

What hurts Nakampe most is inferred as Nakampe sees Jan and Jim walking away happily with the beautiful Moelelwa and Mokgadi (p.8). It is very normal for a young suitor to feel jealous about such an occurrence. Like some young suitors, Nakampe gave up with regard to a chance of falling in love with Moelelwa.

3.1.3 Milieu and time

The author depicts a traditional African milieu of drums, dance, and spectators witnessing a beautiful and skillful female young adult, Moelelwa, performing prolifically as compared to her peers or competitors (p.5). This denotes a primitive period in African development where an open field ("lepatlelo") was an arena for an occasion like a competition. The author says:

> … mo go binwago ntshe … (p.5).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … the venue for a dance …

A demeaning situation is portrayed when a beautiful and able dancer, Moelelwa, prepares food in a kitchen and fails against the expectations of everybody (p.5 & 9). All this happens because Moelelwa believes that she will start performing household chores and responsibilities when she is married and living in her own house:

> … o tla thoma go šoma mola e le mosadi, a na le lapa la gagwe (p.5).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … she will start working when she is a woman with her own family.

A fireplace conveys to the reader the time when electricity supply was just a dream for people of African descent. The author employs this to denote a kitchen without any form of energy, but fire and a period of lack thereof (p.6).

One day the dance competition shifts to Makgwathole Village (p.5). This is the time when Nakampe gets to know Moelelwa and her exceptional ability of playing on the traditional African drum and dancing.

The author makes mention of hills and valleys over which Jan (Nakampe's competitor) and Moelelwa (Nakampe's aspired lover) walk hand-in-hand. Similarly, Jim and Mokgadi, against extreme jealousy in Nakampe's heart (p.7), also walk hand-in-hand. The distance travelled from Makgwathole Village to Moelelwa's village, is pretty long. Consequently, the reader is driven to develop a sense of the long time that Nakampe experiences disappointment and disgust:

> … ba fetša meboto le mebotwana ba kgoramelane (p.7).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … they travelled over hills and hillocks clinging to each other.

In expectation of Jan and Jim of Makgwathole Village, returning home, Nakampe looks back and accidentally trips over a stone that causes him to walk with a limp that develops in him a period of pain (Sehlodimela, 1940:7).

The author depicts a road that leads to Moelelwa's home but passes near Nakampe's home which Jan (Nakampe's competitor) and Jim are obviously expected to use. This is presented as a road and time of Nakampe's misery (p.7).

The researcher finds time and space not amenable to writing about all examples of milieux and times that appear on almost every page of the novella under review but selects to mention those that are of great interest.

After an unhappy day, Nakampe follows the road that leads to Moelelwa's home (p.15). It is here that the author errs because earlier on he asserts that Moelelwa and Nakape's homes are in the same street:

> Tsela ya go ya ka ga boMoelelwa e be e feta kgauswi le kgoro ya boNakampe (Sehlodimela, 1940: 7).

(English translation)

The road leading to Moelelwa's home passes near Nakampe's homestead's entrance.

After Nakampe has met Mokgadi and her peers in the absence of Moelelwa, he does not sleep well that night because he dreams of dawn although no cock has already crowed (p.16). Nakampe cannot wait to meet Moelelwa the following day because he adores her immensely.

Nakampe travels to the bush where female young adults, among them Moelelwa, are collecting dry wood in the bush (pp.16-17). This denotes daylight because dry wood cannot be collected in the night due to its requirement for the preparation of supper. Consequently, this tells the reader about time.

The author introduces a road construction firm to the village thereby telling the reader to remember a period of government workers who would impose themselves on the chief within the chief's jurisdiction (p.19). This is mentioned against the backdrop of lack of consultation with the royal kraal and denotes the colonial period in South African history.

Moelelwa elopes to eSwatini without a passport that is needed today and that speaks of old times (pp.23-26). She arrives at eSwatini after a long travel by train. A mammoth of a feast is organised in her honour although disappointments befall the in-laws thereafter because Moelelwa cannot perform the duties expected of a daughter-in-law (pp.27-28). The reader is, thereby, of the impression that British colonialism was in total control of the administration between eSwatini and South Africa.

Summer arrives in eSwatini and young adult women prove their worth in manual tilling of arable land that Moelelwa cannot do (p.28). Janaware tries to solve the problem by sending Moelelwa money by mail but Moelelwa expends it impulsively at the shop of an Indian trader. This tells the reader of the period of domination of Indian mercantile traders in eSwatini.

Conflict results between Janaware and Moelelwa so much so that Moelelwa goes back and arrives home after a prolonged struggle. This is Moelelwa's time to realise that recklessness in life is corrosive and destructive (pp.33-34).

3.1.4 Narrative point of view (Narration)

3.1.4.1 The third-person narrator

Sehlodimela (1940) portrays Moelelwa, the protagonist, as a gorgeous female young adult who attracts almost all-male young adults of the time (p.5). In this way, the author drifts to a point of making the reader develop an inference about Moelelwa. Because of this feature, the author is regarded as a third-person narrator which includes an omniscient narrator who becomes intrusive (Abrams, 2015:233) as he does not only report but freely comments on his characters, evaluating their actions and motives and expressing his views about human life in general:

> Moelelwa le ge e be e le nka ipolaya ka yena mo go binnego ka gabo go be go fapane naye kgole mo ponagalong (Sehlodimela, 1940:5).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Although Moelelwa was a consummate dancer, her home differed from her in appearance.

The author expresses the feelings of the characters when Nakampe is disappointed to realise that Jan and Jim also are attracted to Moelelwa who attracts him (p.7).

The same feature of Sehlodimela (1940) rears its head when a Moroka traditional healer visits Moelelwa's home (p.10). Moelelwa is disgusted to realise that she has attracted a very old Moroka sangoma who looks unattractive in every possible way and invites abusive language:

> Ka nyalwa ke Moroka, wa Morokaroka! (p.14)

(English translation)

I marry a Moroka, a mere Moroka!

Sharply, the author expresses Moelelwa's dislike of traditional healers. In light of this, traditional healers are depicted as unattractive, shabbily dressed, and deceptive characters. Anybody engaging in a love affair with such persons is degrading himself or herself. Though traditional healers, like all persons, should be respected as important members of society, the reader is driven to disrespect them due to the influence of Christianity.

3.1.4.2 The employment of dialogue

Sehlodimela (1940) uses dialogue as a literary feature to "represent characters' speech" (Quinn, 2004:88). As a result, the omniscient narrator's employment of dialogue enables the characters to communicate their disposition to the reader:

Nakampe: "Kgang tšeo ke di lebiše go bomang?"
Mokgadi: "A o ra gore rena boMokgadi re bahlankana na?" (Sehlodimela, 1940:17)

(English translation)

Nakampe: "Where should I send my message?"
Mokgadi: "Do you regard us as male young adults?"

The other illustrative case of the all-knowing narrator appears when Moelelwa and some peers meet Janaware and Setemere for the first time. The author gets to express their feelings and thoughts in this way:

"Ni si sege mani, ki ya ni lata." Gwa realo Janaware.
Banenyana: "O ra mang?"
Janaware: "Ke ra yela ya bugari." (p.19)

(English translation)

"Do not laugh, I love you." Said Janaware.
Young women: "To whom are you referring?"
Janaware: "I refer to the middle one."

The feature appears again as MmaMoelelwa chucks Janaware and Setemere out of her home (p.23).

3.2 *Motangtang* by Phalane, A. (1943): Historical Criticism

This approach seeks to investigate a literary text in terms of its cultural, social, and political circumstances, as well as its faith base and intellectual context. Historical critics believe that their approach is verifiable as it deals with what has happened. Further, the critics hold the view that art at its best, is an inner expression and a mirror of an environment which an artist inhabits. The examples provided cannot be viewed as different interpretations of a literary text, but merely as presenting a given literary text from multiple perspectives (Aldridge:61-88).

Bressler (1994:11) contends that:

> Questions concerning the value, the structure, and even the definition of literature undoubtedly arose in all cultures as people heard or read works of art. Such practical criticism probably began with the initial hearing or reading of the first literary works.

By linking literature with history within the world created by the author, the reader can follow pressing issues of the period in which the text was written. Examples of these are issues about citizenship and relations, government and governance, socio-economic problems, and, moreover, politics about race, class, and gender.

3.2.1 Plot structure

3.2.1.1 Exposition

Phalane (1943:1) paints a picture of a rural village into which many male babies are born in the same year, including Motangtang, Tilo, Lekope, and Moswe. In addition, the livestock of the village bears male young in great numbers. The year is regarded as prosperous because there is a need for a continuous supply of warriors who can defend the village against the ravaging Amandebele armies of Moselekatse who, at this time, crisscrossed the vicinity of that village and sowed the seed of death and destruction. Fortunately, the arrival of European settlers reduces the might of the aggressive Amandebele through the use of gunfire, and a situation of peace prevails:

> Ka baka la go tla le go ikepela ga ba bašweu, dintwa, ditlaišego le polayano ya ba baso ya fela, gwa ba šebešebe ... (p.7).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Because of the arrival of European settlers and their permanent settlement, wars, suffering and extinction among indigenous tribes came to an end and peace prevailed ...

Most of the rural communities yearn for schooling and a primary school is established for the small village. The youth of Motangtang's age is afforded schooling and the foursome of Motangtang, Tilo, Lekope, and Moswe join the pioneering school population.

Phalane (1943) presents Motangtang as an ambitious protagonist who is dedicated to his schoolwork. He has Tilo, Lekope, and Moswe, as friends and peers. They attend school as much as the unqualified teachers of the period can afford. Motangtang concentrated on his studies even though the rest enjoyed the activities afforded by traditional African concerts (pp.9 & 11). Motangtang, the protagonist, tries by all means to guide their lives positively with regard to dedication to schoolwork but in vain. By hindsight, the reader is able to see through what the future holds for the four young adults.

3.2.1.2 Rising action

Phalane (p.14), on the other hand, propels Motangtang, Tilo, Lekope and Moswe, to the urban area of Tshwane in search of employment as the rural economy of their homeland is viewed as unsuitable for learned young men of their calibre. It is exhilarating for Tilo, Lekope and Moswe, to graduate from school and join the workforce. This denotes a great measure of adulthood and independence from parental control (p.16). They enjoy freedom from the corporal punishment that characterised their school career because they were not dedicated to their schoolwork. As the plot thickens, Motangtang meditates about their future in Tshwane:

> Masoganeng a, yo a bego a bonala a le bodutwana ke Motangtang (p.15).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Of all those young men, Motangtang seemed lonely.

Moswe boasts of his pugnacious behaviour and the wealth that he contemplates amassing so that people may adore him (p.14) while the reserved Tilo, laughs continuously and the handsome Lekope, a dandy, envisages smart outfits that will make him outsmart his peers (p.15).

They enthusiastically prepare themselves for the journey to Tshwane and cannot wait for the day. Great enthusiasm overtakes them as they travel on foot to the train station in Polokwane (p.16). Ultimately, they slouch their way and reach the first destination with raised hopes. Their arrival at the station compensates for their long walk on foot and they regard it worthwhile as Moswe asserts loudly**:**

> Le ge re eya kgole le gae**,** re ya felo mo gobotse, felo mo go thabišago, felo mo go sa hlokwego tše botse le tše bose (p.16).

(English translation)

> Even if we are going to a far-off place we are traveling to a beautiful place, a pleasurable place, a place of beautiful and tasty things.

Against the jubilation of Tilo, Lekope, and Moswe, Motangtang, foreshadowing their pending experience, starts by agreeing with what they say but summarises it by warning them against worldly pleasures:

> Ke therešo re ya kgole le gae, kgole le meloko, re ya gare ga mašaba a batho, ka gona re swanetše go pepulana, ra ba kgopa e tee, ra eletšana, ra logišana maano, gore re se metšwe ke metse yeo ya makgowa (pp.16-17).

(English translation)

> It is true that we are going far from home, away from relatives, we are going to meet people of various characters, customs and ethnic groups, therefore, we must take care of one another, we must unite, advise one another, assist one another, so that we may not be swallowed by those urban areas reserved for the whites.

The train to Tshwane arrives and a long journey starts amid their shouts of joy and the hustle and bustle on the train until early dawn. At the Tshwane station, they alight from the train and are surprised by many beautiful buildings so much that they are baffled. They do not know where to go until, after enquiry, a good Samaritan guides them on how to move about town:

> Ba fologa, ba makatšwa ke meago ye mentši ye mebotse ya motse woo, ba tlalelwa, ba talatatša mahlo, ba sa tsebe mo ba ka sepelago gona … (p.17).

(English translation)

> They alighted and were surprised by the many beautiful buildings of that town; they became confused and looked around helplessly; they could not find their way …

In a single file and like ants, they move from house to house in search of employment for a considerable period and ultimately succeed. Motangtang becomes the first of them to get employment (p.17). Later on, all of them find jobs, and a life of plenty is expected but culture shock awaits them.

For the first time in their lives, they experience a community of people of different ethnic groups, languages, customs, and cultures living together in a place ravaged by robbery, murder, and theft:

> Batho ba bantši gona moo motseng o mobjalo, ba be ba phela ka go thopelana le go bolayana (p.17).

(English translation)

> Many people in such a township, lived by murder and robbery.

3.2.1.3 Climax

Phalane (p.20) persuades the reader to understand why the protagonist, Motangtang, and his peers, Tilo, Lekope, and Moswe, find jobs in Tshwane. In the same vein, the reader can foresee the culture shock that besets the three of them, but Motangtang surviving, whereas Tilo, Lekope, and Moswe, are overwhelmed thereby.

After parting ways, Tilo, Lekope, and Moswe, are overwhelmed by the availability of multiple drinking holes at adjoining villages/townships that serve as residences for black people. A considerable variety of concoctions of intoxicating beverages are brewed and made easily accessible there. The protagonist tries, by all means, to

guide their lives positively but in vain, as they swim deeper into an undesirable lifestyle.

However, Motangtang keeps on advising them against their new habits so much that he becomes a thorn in their flesh that needs to be avoided at all costs. Faced with hostile avoidance, Motangtang dedicates his time to work, saving money and furthering his studies on a part-time basis:

> Ka fao a itaya gore o swanetše go ithuta ge a rata go šoma gabotse (p.18).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> In that way, he admonished himself, telling himself that he has to further his studies in order to find a decent job.

Moswe is a pugnacious character that adversaries find difficult to defeat and he injures many people and is sometimes injured by others. In this way, he comes home bleeding profusely although that does not happen frequently (p.20). Moswe becomes boastful of his conquests so much that some cowards find it necessary to give him money so that he may protect them against their enemies as his body is scarred by the regular fights that make him boastful of his bellicosity:

> Poo e bonala ka mabadi (p.20).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> A bull is recognisable by its scars.

Moswe then leaves work and depends on the money paid to him by cowards for a living and turns into a thug that forgets about the bit of education he acquired from schooling. Theft and murder become his daily bread, although he was a talented learner who bungled his schoolwork during his school career (p.12). He becomes notorious due to cruelty and mercilessness despite Motangtang's tireless advice against his lifestyle.

Lekope, a peace-loving person, is frequently found among persons addicted to the abuse of intoxicating substances although he is an attractive, well-built, and mature young adult (p.20). Lekope gradually becomes weak because of the bad habit and falls sick and cannot work any longer as he was also addicted to intoxicating substances. He eventually loses his job:

> … fela ka lebaka la go hloka boitshwaro, o ile a thoma go fokola le go gwahlafala (p.20).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … but because of lack of restraint, he became sick and weakened.

Lekope then earns a living by performing menial jobs for young women who brew concoctions of intoxicating beverages and earns money that is spent lavishly on liquor. Fights erupt and he cannot flee and resultantly, his body is full of scars caused by the knives and knobkieries of his assailants. Later, he is engaged in performing menial jobs for a certain man, who pays him with food and old clothes because he regularly goes to bed hungry. Ultimately, he becomes a hobo (p.22).

Tilo, a fanatic for happiness and laughter, does not appear at drinking holes, bungalows, and shebeens frequented by Moswe and Lekope, and joins a dance club. He acquaints himself with a mixture of persons of appreciable and non-appreciable character, some of whom are women. The young women are then attracted to his engaging manner of dancing, his generosity with money, and his caring conduct. Consequently, that affords him the opportunity of falling in love with several of them at the same time (p.23).

Tilo is always flirting with several different young women as he appears in attractive outfits. Over and above this, his residence becomes a regular place of refuge and home for different beautiful women. The ever-presence of young women at his place of abode and work causes a clash between him and his employer and this leads to the loss of his job. Under the unbearable circumstances, now Tilo moves from pillar

to post in search of possible employment. The horde of young women disappears from the scene because people are attracted by the life of plenty:

> Batho ke bo-mo-ora-o-tuka, wa tima ba a tloga (p.23).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Friends are many when times are good, and when times are hard, friends are few.

Tilo moves from house to house in search of work but in vain (p.23). Ultimately, he finds a job but because bad habits die hard, his place of abode is again full of young women who buy him suits with money, the source of which he does not know. Tilo welcomes all that happens and becomes famous with young women and men and leads a pleasurable life again:

> Yena a leboga, a fetoga setšhepi, a tuma gagolo ka baka la botšhepi gomme a phutha methepa e mentši, a phela gamonate (p.23).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> He was thankful, he became a dandy and was famous because of his dapperness and he amassed young women and led a life of enjoyment.

The reader identifies with the dandy Tilo, who dresses smartly as a means of self-expression, in an urban area that befits young adults like him. Moreover, he lives in luxury with a house, children, and wife. In contrast, Moswe lives by mugging people and thuggery, whilst Lekope performs menial jobs for shebeen queens.

3.2.1.4 Falling action

Phalane (pp.25-31) brings forth the protagonist, Motangtang, as a force that tries to salvage what is remaining of his homeboys against the addiction of substance abuse, flirting with various young women, thuggery, murder, and robbery, but fails.

Motangtang does not leave everything to himself but makes Setumo, a caring homeboy of theirs, aware of their predicament:

> Monna yo a bego a mmotile ka baka la botho le temogo ya gagwe, e be e le Setumo, monna wa tšhaba sa Bakone, monna wa thaka ya Matlakana (p.29).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> The man he trusted because of his humane conduct and wise life experience, was Setumo, a man of the Bakone tribe and of the Matlakana regiment.

Phalane (1943) drives the reader of this YA novella to ask pertinent questions about the whereabouts of Lekope, Tilo, Moswe and Motangtang, in the social turmoil of the urban area of Tshwane. One by one, the trio is brought to the attention of Phalane's anxious and sensitive readers who indirectly become acquainted with Lekope, Tilo and Moswe's different characters.

Motangtang, the socially adhesive character who fights for social cohesion, consults Setumo who is full of good intentions about them, to intervene. Setumo does this with commendable self-sacrifice:

> Setumo, monna yo wa Bakone, o dirile seo a bego a bona e le tshwanelo ya gagwe le ge a be a le kotsing ya gore mohlomong o be a ka gobatšwa, a ntšhwa kotsi goba a sekišwa ka go dira ba bangwe dihlola (pp.33-34).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Setumo, this man of the Bakone tribe, did all he deemed due to them although he was in danger of being assaulted, hurt or prosecuted because of causing others to be viewed as rascals.

Tilo marries a woman the origin of whom he does not care to know due to his overwhelming fame, wide circle of friends, and amassed plenty. What surprises the reader further is that Tilo does not even know her maiden surname and that bespeaks carelessness on his part. Moreover, Tilo endures life with a dissolute wife who is talkative and violent. But even so, Tilo hopes for the total maturity of the wife as their children grow older:

> Monna yoo o ile a felela fase, a tetelwa madi teng, le ge go le bjalo, a ipea pelo a ba le kholofelo ya gore selo seo sa gagwe se tlo tlelwa ke mogopolo wa setho, se tle se lese go mo hlokiša lethabo (p.49).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> The man pretended, endured suffering, consoling himself that with time, that beast of a wife would develop humane conduct and treat him well.

Setumo and Motangtang visit Tilo, the head of a household notorious for the frequent insolence of his wife, regular assaults, and general family discomfort:

> A dula a ipofile a kgotleletše go orela matlhapa a seforo seo sa gagwe sa mosadi wa go topša (p.47).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> He tolerated the insolent obscenities of his vixen of a wife who was not married according to African custom.

Interestingly, Tilo has several children and property that befits a family man, despite the discomforts of his general family life:

> Aowa, ke gae ka gore bo a robalwa, ke mosadi ka gore o a mo apeela, o mo dirišitše hlogo tša batho (p.46).

(English translation)

> Well, it is home because he is able to sleep peacefully, she is a wife because she prepares meals for him, and together they are blessed with children.

As fate would have it, and unfortunate for Tilo, once upon a time, he comes back from work to find all movable property in their house nowhere to be found. A small notice on a scrap of paper advises him that the house is to let (p.58). With all movable property and children gone, Tilo cannot figure out what course to take because he does not know the place of origin of his wife and her maiden surname. In this fashion, the reader uncovers utter folly on the part of Tilo, who becomes a *persona non grata* after a life of fame, celebrity, and plenty:

> Tilo bjale ga a sa na maatla a go šoma go iša kae gobane e šetše e le sekoka, e šetše e le pala-dithwana (p.60).

(English translation)

> Now Tilo has no energy to perform work because he is a weakling due to chronic illnesses.

The scene is employed by the author to satirise Tilo's conduct that conflicts sharply with his aspirations on their trip to Tshwane:

> Tšohle re tlo di bolela ge re tšwa go boa; gobane dikgomo di retwa ge di boa mokatong (p.15).

(English translation)

> We will discuss everything when we come back; because actions speak louder than words.

Tilo becomes more frustrated as he does not know what to do, where his movable property has been taken to, and how to retrieve it. This has been caused by him not

having background information about his wife or her maiden surname (p.46). The author encapsulates Tilo's concern thus:

> Tilo ga a tsebe gore ga gabo mosadi ke kae, le gona ga a tsebe gore ke ngwana mang (p.46).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … Tilo does not know the origin of his wife or her maiden surname.

Phalane (1943) adds another interesting dimension to the narrative by presenting Moswe and his gang of thugs, murderers, and thieves going on a campaign to loot, kill, and rob (p.31). By deliberate decision, the author pits the intended menace of the merciless gang against the police who are determined to root out criminal activities on that day:

> … ba e hwetša thaka ya mpša tša mošate, ya ba šoboka ka moka ya ba iša kgolegong (p.31).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> ... they were no match for the police and were all arrested and imprisoned.

The whole gang of ruthless murderers and robbers is arrested, sentenced to serve a four-year jail term and Moswe meets his match in prison. Prisoners assault Moswe who is a fierce leader of his gang concerning fist-fights and armed combat successfully and for the first time in his life, he succumbs (p.31).

After serving the full jail term, Moswe, is released and comes back and pursues his criminal career once more. The author says:

> Moswe o rile a dira ona manyala ao a gagwe, a iketlile a sa gopole selo, ge e se go bolaya le go hlakola, a hlabega, a babja (p.51).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> When Moswe was busy with his criminal activities, relaxed and not mindful of anything else but murder and robbery, he was attacked by a disease and fell ill.

By presenting Moswe as an invalid, Phalane (1943) removes him from his habitual criminal activities intending to avoid an insipid work of literature and, of rendering him unfit to be the leader and mastermind of his gang.

Lekope disappears from the scene (p.31) as he has become a hobo who indulges in intoxicating beverages and avoids his homeboys at all costs. He is performing menial tasks for a certain man who remunerates him with food or second-hand clothes and he finds accommodation in a shack (p.48). This makes it difficult for Setumo to access and advise him:

> ... ka ge lesogana le bjale e be e le sedula-lefereng (p. 31).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> ... because this young man had turned into a shack-dweller.

With Lekope turned hobo, Tilo, a victim of loss of important property and Moswe, an invalid, Phalane (p.31) insinuates their imminent return home. Comparatively, Motangtang conducts himself appropriately against the backdrop of the characters of Lekope, Tilo, and Moswe.

3.2.1.5 Resolution

The author exposes Moswe, a merciless robber and murderer, first, to the resolution of this literary work as if he recognises him as boss of a gang that used murder and robbery to ravage life in Tshwane. He then extenuates matters by bringing forth Tilo, an apparent successful person in life, and Lekope, an utter failure in life from the beginning of their life in the urban areas. The researcher views the trio in their order of apparent successes and against their disappointing failure in life.

3.2.1.5.1 Moswe

To resolve the plot, the author purposefully presents Moswe who is sick and cannot work anymore (p.51). He has the murder and robbery gang only as his acquaintances and pseudo-relatives as they live together in hideouts.

Moswe's sickness almost frustrates the gang but suggestions come up as some members become happy because their violent, feared, fierce, and unchallengeable boss is sick (p.51). The second group thinks of murdering him because his invalid state can lead to their arrest.

The author creates a third group that decides on his removal from their hideout. A consensus is reached and he is removed to a desolate and destitute building so that rascals like them, may not be suspected of murder in case of him being found dead (p.51). This mission is planned and accomplished successfully as evidenced by the following:

> Ba mo lahlela ka mo gare gore a hwele gona (p.52).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> They threw him inside so that he might die there.

By this time, Moswe is out of sight, unable to speak or hear. The researcher immediately suspects that he is on the verge of becoming obsolete. Without providing more details the narrator says:

> … o be a šetše a ipolelela le badimo (p.52).

(English translation)

… he was already speaking with the gods.

One member of Moswe's gang of murderers and robbers reveals their heartless action to his friend who then relays it to another person until it spreads like wildfire and reaches Motangtang's ears (p.52). Motangtang, a sympathetic character, then without a waste of time, confides in Tilo and together they agree on how to rescue Moswe from the inescapable bondage and Motangtang seeks medical help.

Moswe is taken to Tilo's home but the researcher finds this to be contradictory because earlier the author portrayed Tilo's wife as a person who is not hospitable and who could not have allowed Moswe in her home (pp.47-49). However, Motangtang, consults a medical practitioner who does not take long to examine Moswe and raises their hopes of a chance of his survival although he is about to die, and the medico advises Motangtang to take Moswe to the hospital (p.52).

Moswe recuperates and Motangtang discusses the medical costs involved only to find him penniless. Motangtang bears the medical expenses, thanks to the doctor, visits Moswe regularly, and admonishes him against his unbecoming conduct (p.53). In addition, Motangtang advises him to leave town life:

… mpholo wa muši ke go o tlogela (p.52).

(English translation)

… the evasion of smoke is avoiding it.

Moswe agrees but indicates grievous poverty as the cause of failure to oblige. Motangtang, once more, sympathetically offers to carry the cost of sending him home and Moswe, the former boss of a fearless gang of thugs, leaves the urban area by train only to be unrecognisable to acquaintances and worst of all, also to his parents on arrival (p.54).

3.2.1.5.2 Tilo

After losing movable property only, Tilo visits Motangtang to relate his horrific domestic experience and a sickly state of life that debars him from finding employment (p.60).

The researcher contends the author's presentation of facts because no mention is made of the resolution concerning the empty house and the cat that was left by Tilo's abusive wife. In addition, the mention of arson as mentioned (pp.56 & 60) is not acceptable to a keen reader.

However, Tilo thinks of returning home despite the lack of money for train fare. He works for three months, derives money therefrom, and heads home (p.61).

On arrival, Tilo lives like a hermit to avoid persons who knew him earlier on. He is depressed by poverty and illness from the incessant assault meted out by his wife in Tshwane (p.64). Tilo, surprisingly, visits Moswe one day and the two relate in a relaxed fashion, laughingly and reciprocally, their lived experiences (p.65).

Tilo displays a measure of remorse by appearance and utterance:

> O a sega, na o re di a segiša, di a lliša, a ka be a upše a ntshwenye, a se ke a nkhula thoto le batho (p.65).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> You are laughing, do you think it is laughable; it is sorrowful; torturing me was better than robbing me of property and children.

Moswe, answers Tilo by indirectly evoking the proverb that adds to the theme of the narrative as they think of Motangtang's humane efforts:

> ... nyatša molala e hwela molaleng … (p.65)

(English translation)

….. a person should heed advice …

All in all, the author advocates didacticism by reflecting failure as against success. By so doing, Phalane (1943) advises young rural adults about different lifestyles with regard to rural and urban areas. Finally, to resolve the plot the author brings Lekope, Tilo, and Moswe home in a remorseful condition.

3.2.1.5.3 Lekope

Lekope's parents start feeling pity for their son because Moswe and Tilo, disappointing and not adorable, but acceptable persons by African custom, have come back home:

Ka baka le, batswadi ba Lekope ba be ba le matshwenyegong … (p.65).

(English translation)

For this reason, Lekope's parents were not comfortable …

A decision is reached to seek Lekope's whereabouts after his father's lengthy reasonable arguments. Lekope's mother becomes a powerful motivator and her brother supports her as witnessed by his belated willingness to bring Lekope back home (pp.88-89).

Papetši, Lekope's father, sells two oxen to acquire the money that helps ferry him and his brother-in-law to Tshwane (p.70). The duo searches for three days around the town and find Lekope at Mmakadija's place on the fourth day (p.71). They buy Lekope new clothes so that he may look presentable and head homewards.

Lekope is also shy to face members of the community and spends most of the time indoors. Lekope's parents are happy to see him alive and back home:

Ba leboga masa (p.71).

(English translation)

They were pleased to see him alive.

Lekope, Tilo and Moswe lead an unenviable life at their home village whilst Motangtang and other mindful peers revel in pleasurable marriages. Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope become examples of failure in life so much that one man advises the village to guide their sons and daughters against bad conduct (p.74).

3.2.2 Theme and character delineation

The researcher regards a warning to rural young adults against culture shock as the theme of Phalane (1943). Two characters, including the protagonist, are discussed in this respect:

3.2.2.1 Motangtang (the protagonist)

Motangtang is not overwhelmed at the end of his primary school career and meditates about the awaiting urban life (p.15):

Masoganeng a, yo a bego a bonala a le bodutwana ke Motangtang.

(English translation)

Among these young adults, Motangtang seemed lonely.

In Tshwane, Motangtang finds employment, dedicates time to his work, and furthers his studies on a part-time basis (p.28). Later on, Motangtang marries a woman from his rural home (pp.37-46). Consequently, and having triumphed against an overwhelming culture shock, he arrives back home a victor (pp.72-75).

3.2.2.2 Moswe

Moswe, a pugilist from as far back as his primary school days (p.9), persists in this character by bullying and injuring other thugs in the Tshwane urban area (p.20).

Moswe becomes notorious, is paid a protection fee by thugs who cannot match him, robs people, and commits murder on many occasions and ultimately lands in jail

(p.31). To the relief of his fellow thugs, Moswe falls ill and is removed to a desolate and unoccupied building and is left to die (p.51).

Motangtang, as usual, seeks Moswe, finds him, affords him medical attention, and gives him train fare homewards (p.53). Similarity emerges between Moelelwa's and Moswe's train fares in both the works of Sehlodimela (1940) and Phalane (1943) respectively.

3.2.3 Milieu and time

Phalane (1943) conveys to the reader an African rural village north of the Lekwe River during the period before colonisation by Europeans:

> … ge naga ye ya mošono wa Lekwe e se ya hlwa e atelwa ke batho ba bašweu … (p.1).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … when this part of the country this side of the Vaal River was not yet flooded by the whites …

The author sounds somewhat a student of the South African colonial history and a subtle rebel that could not express it then because of the lack of freedom of opinion and expression. The village is described by the author as lying among scattered hillocks that defended it against the ravaging Amandebele, of Moselekatse, and the white colonisers. For an ardent student of South African history, the time hurts.

Black persons get to learn the danger of technology. Contrary, at the time, white settlers defeat the art of using spears with gunfire, against the Amandebele who thitherto had known no defeat:

> … lerumo leo le bego le sa tsebje madireng ao a Matebele (p.1).

(English translation)

… a weapon unknown to Amandebele armies.

To the exasperation of the reader, Phalane (1943:9) depicts schools that could offer lower primary education only in that area of South Africa. Teachers of the period did not have appropriate teaching qualifications or none at all.

Motangtang, Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope attend school. Amongst them, Motangtang excels in his schoolwork while Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope bungle their schoolwork and enjoy weekends of partying and promiscuity. This foreshadows in the reader of this YA adult novella, Motangtang's success in future life.

A grassy land of plentiful fruit, wild animals, and dangerous beasts is presented by the author to depict the splendour enjoyed and dangers open to Motangtang, Tilo, Moswe and Lekope, and their peers (p.10). However, they enjoy and survive the circumstances of their young lives.

Motangtang, Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope graduate from their rural life and head to the urban area of Tshwane (p.14). The author thereby reflects a motif of black young adults moving to urban areas in search of work and a successful career.

Motangtang, Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope, arrive in Tshwane and search for employment on foot:

… ba ba ba kgona go sepela-sepela le mekgotha ya metse yeo ya makgowa … (p.17).

(English translation)

… ultimately, they could explore the streets of those industrialised areas.)

Luckily and finally, Motangtang, Tilo, Moswe and Lekope, find employment and part ways although they do not mean to separate forever as underpinned by the following

proverb "... melato re a rerišana" which means we need to help one another in times of need (p.17). The reader is disappointed to note that this would involve Motangtang alone in the future.

The time of robbery, theft, drunkenness, fights, and thuggery in Tshwane emerges as the author relays it to the reader (p.17). The author exacerbates the situation by mentioning arrests and jails. The reader of this literary work of art develops a grim picture of urban, as compared to the rural, life known to the foursome. Motangtang, Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope have not known this kind of life before coming to the urban area of Tshwane.

Motangtang, the protagonist, finds employment first in Tshwane, and the author arranges the narrative accordingly to suit the time. Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope follow because they are antagonists that are going to create for Motangtang some socio-psychological tough time during their stay in Tshwane (p.17).

The author portrays the Tshwane townships as full of robbery, theft, drunkenness, fights, and thuggery during the time. He goes on to depict Tshwane townships as characterised by fights, theft, drunkenness, and other evil acts (p.18). This arrangement of facts duplicates what the author relays to the reader of this YA novella and is viewed by the researcher as not convincing.

Motangtang, a careful character, as depicted by the author, listens to his conscience and chooses to further his studies, so that he can find decent employment. After careful consideration and deep reflection, he decides unobtrusively to keep away from his mates (p.18).

Some township residents, who are unemployed, make a living by brewing intoxicating beverages of various kinds. It was so then as it is now:

> … le lehono go sa le bjalo (p.18).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … even today it is still the same.

Moswe, every day, finds a place to reveal his provocative and pugnacious character in the townships of Tshwane. He emerges a victor most of the time but comes back full of blood and horrible stains on his clothes and body. It could be realised that he is fortunate to become the fearless and fierce ruler of Tshwane township thuggery during the colonial era in South Africa (p.20). The author, knowingly, portrays Moswe in this manner against the background of the fact that age is going to catch up with him.

Moswe, unscrupulously and exceedingly, charted his fate by pursuing a life of thuggery that lands him in prison after meeting the might of the police (p.31). The author goes on to say:

> … ge a botšišitše a botšwa gore lesogana leo le tšwile kgolegong … (p.49).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … when he enquired, he was told that the male young adult is out of jail …

Moswe develops body pains and later, of age, falls ill from injuries sustained in his early YA age in Tshwane. He becomes a problem for the thugs so that they finally decide to leave him for dead in a desolate and unoccupied building in the dark of the night (p.51). The narrator, once more, justifies Motangtang's concern after he has heard of Moswe's circumstances and his conveying him home at his own expense.

The narrator directly and purposefully deletes Lekope from Tshwane luxuries by turning him into a person addicted to concoctions of intoxicating beverages that make him lose his job (p.22). Lekope relies on young adult women who earn a living by brewing concoctions of intoxicating beverages for a fee and turns into a hobo:

> A fetoga seo go thweng ke seepamokoti (p.22).

(English translation)

He turned into what is called a hobo.

Matters come to boiling point when Lekope is employed by a person who requires him to perform menial tasks, sometimes affording him pecuniary payment, food or old clothes as he is hidden in a make-shift house (p.31). The make-shift house comes in handy when the author makes the reader of his literary piece understand why Motangtang cannot attempt to salvage what is left of Lekope.

Later in life, Lekope's parents decide to look for him in Tshwane (p.67) because even Tilo, who has come back home from Tshwane does not know of his whereabouts. After an extended and quarrelsome argument at home, Lekope's father, Papetši, accedes to the advice of his wife and sells two oxen to acquire money for the trip to Tshwane (p.70). Lekope's father and uncle set out a search of him, find him after several days, buy him presentable attire and bring him home (p.71).

By comparison, Tilo, in opposition to Moswe's notoriety, becomes a dedicated employee and a famous and accomplished dancer in Tshwane to whom gorgeous female young adults are attracted (p.22). He is always seen in the company of different young and gorgeous female adults who are known for their happy-go-lucky lifestyle:

Tilo lehono o bonwa a kata le yo, ka moswana le yola …
(p.23).

(English translation)

Today Tilo is seen gallivanting with this one, tomorrow with that one …

It is normal for famous male young adults to attract female young adults who become their tentative lovers. Some male young adult readers of this literary piece of Phalane (p.23) may be tempted to be jealous or envious of Tilo because he can easily pick and choose a lover among gorgeous female young adults.

This privilege leads to Tilo marrying one of the gorgeous female young adults whose home and origin he does not know (pp.32, 46 & 47). Later on, Tilo and his wife own a township house. The family is blessed with several children and apparent property. As time goes on Tilo's free movement comes to a halt:

> … lesego le Tilo a bego a le nalo go tloga bjaneng bja gagwe ga le sa le gona, le fedile, le tšhiphile (p.47).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … the laughter that Tilo had from an early age was not to be seen any more, it had disappeared, it had withered.

The preceding quotation suggests to the reader that Tilo is no longer a famous and accomplished dancer as he used to be. He is grounded and cannot enjoy nightlife as most young adults do. His wife cannot tolerate the throng of gorgeous females around her husband. Tshwane has become distasteful to Tilo. He is like a prisoner in marriage. The unfolding circumstances in Tilo's life also come to the notice of Motangtang (pp.46-47).

Nevertheless, Tilo lives for a long time in Tshwane although his family life is characterised by assaults, insults, an irritable wife, and menial duties when respectable visitors are in attendance. He hopes for an improvement in the intolerable conditions of his family life when their children have grown older (p.56).

One day Tilo returns from work only to find a shell instead of a home after Mmapateng, his wife, has removed all the property except a cat (p.56). It is unbearable for Tilo to realise that the female young adult has removed his lovely children also (p.59).

The narrator creates confusion to the reader by making mention of arson (pp.56 & 60) and Tilo sleeping in a crouched position and a hungry stomach in the same house (p.59). The reader deems burnt walls and a floor decorated with soot as

unhabitable. To add to the desolation, the narrator presents the following disheartening scenario:

> … le molodi wa masenke ge a bobodišwa ke phefo … (p.58).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … and the sound of corrugated iron sheets slightly fluttering and murmuring in the wind.

Tilo suffers from mental depression because of the huge loss and poverty that he has never known before that results in the degeneration of his health (Phalane, 1943: 60). Tilo contemplates a return home but is penniless (p.61). He works for three months and heads home (pp.61-66).

The researcher commends the narrator for causing Moswe and Lekope to return home with the assistance of Motangtang and Lekope's father and uncle, respectively. Tilo is mainly compelled by circumstances of an uncomfortable life and poor health. Motangtang, in turn, returns home of his own accord. The narrator further exaggerates the theme by employing illness on top of the failure experienced by Moswe, Tilo, and Lekope.

3.2.4 Narrative point of view (Narration)

Phalane (1943), like Sehlodimela (1940), assumes the third-person omniscient point of view role as evidenced below. By engaging this technique, the narrator is free to move from character to character, place to place, and time to time (Abrams, 2015:233-235).

3.2.4.1 The third-person narrator

In Phalane (1943), Motangtang, Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope are born in a rural area, herd calves and goats, and later attend a primary school under the supervision and care of their parents (pp.5-13) This happens at a time when most rural villages do not have schools and the reader perceives the village and community as comparatively and relatively progressive.

After their primary school career, Motangtang, Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope head for the urban area of Tshwane in search of employment with the sole aim of acquiring plenty of money and property for their future prosperous families (p.13). The researcher regards ambition in young adults as normal and usual.

In Tshwane, as fate decided, Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope are overwhelmed by town life as they indulge in pleasures accompanying dance, thuggery, and intoxicating beverages. respectively (pp.20-42). The reader regards Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope as normal persons because they suffer from indecision like some members of normal every-day communities.

Motangtang dedicates his time to employment, pursues part-time studies, marries an ambitious woman of his choice, and succeeds in life (pp.37-50). On the other hand, the author presents Tilo, Moswe and Lekope, as failed persons in various ways.

Moswe resorts to thuggery and theft that land him in jail. Poor health overtakes him until Motangtang conveys him home (p.53). Lekope indulges in various intoxicating beverages, becomes addicted to them, loses his job and becomes a hobo who performs menial tasks for shebeen queens and kings (pp.21 & 31) until he is located and taken home by his father and uncle (p.71).

Tilo appears famous, dedicated, and progressive as he marries one of the gorgeous female dancers and creates an appreciable home and family. However, he is robbed of all movable property by his beautiful, abusive wife, is depressed and develops poor health that propels him back to the rural home (pp.46-50).

3.2.4.2 The employment of dialogue

The narrator assumes a position of all-knowing narrator when characters become involved in dialogue. Motangtang's peers say this after their primary school career:

"Sa koša ke lerole, re tlo di bona pele re yago …" (p14).

(English translation)

"Let us proceed, we will see how things work out in future …"

Finally, when Tilo arrives at his rural home, his parents cannot even recognise him. The author employs dialogue to reveal the character's emotions and to show the reality of the narrative:

"Maaka ga se makhura, motho yo ga ke mo tsebe." (p.62).

(English translation)

"I do not want to lie; I do not know this person."

Another omniscient narrator position is assumed when Mmanare and Papetši, Lekope's parents, plan to find him in Tshwane and relay him to their rural home:

"O gopola gore motho yo a swanago le nna ke motho wa go tšwa tšhelete?" (p.68).

(English translation)

"Do you think a person like me has money?"

By engaging the third-person omniscient point of view technique, the narrator brings to the reader an open world of characters. By so doing, the reader can fathom the innermost feelings and deep thoughts of the characters.

3.3 A brief comparison of the decade

3.3.1 Plot structure

3.3.1.1 Exposition

By way of exposition, Sehlodimela (1940) presents characters living in a rural area without schools (pp.5 & 7) whereas Phalane (1943) sets his characters in a rural area with schools that some villages do not have yet (pp.5 & 7). The reader, therefore, accepts the fact that villages did not have schools at the same time during the colonial period in South Africa. It clearly shows that a bigger slice of the budget was "spent on schools for white children, so they have better facilities" than black children (Christie, 1992:11).

Introducing background information to the reader, Sehlodimela (1940) proceeds to make mention of the following: African traditional dance, belief in sorcery, female young adults collecting firewood in the bush, and the appearance of road construction workers (pp.7, 10 & 19). On the other hand, Phalane (1943) presents a group of male young adults heading for the Tshwane urban area in search of work (pp.114-19). In a nutshell, the two authors adequately describe the setting and the mood as a means of raising a curtain before the action takes place.

3.3.1.2 Climax

The climax of Sehlodimela (1940) surfaces when Moelelwa cannot match the expectations of life in eSwatini and worsens matters by expending money impulsively on luxuries instead of paying for the tillage of the piece of arable land (p.29). Janaware "divorces" Moelelwa and affords her money for train fare sufficient only to return home. Phalane (1943) creates a culture shock that overwhelms Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope while Motangtang struggles to bring them back on track in various ways (pp.25-36). By so doing, the two narrators adeptly present to the reader the decisive moments that all action builds up to in their narratives.

3.3.1.3 Resolution

To untie the knot, Sehlodimela (1940) causes the protagonist with a foreign baby on her back to return from eSwatini (pp.33-34). Similarly, Phalane (1943) returns Tilo, Moswe and Lekope home after they have experienced horrific lives in the urban Tshwane. The return of Moelelwa, the protagonist, in Sehlodimela (1940) and that of

Motangtang in Phalane (1943) differ in that Moelelwa is remorseful and crestfallen while Motangtang returns home with pride. Moelelwa's remorse is equal to that of the antagonists, Moswe, Lekope and Tilo when they reach their homes. By way of comparison, the two narrators successfully managed to bring out in their narratives the human touch that leaves a lasting impression in the minds of readers.

3.3.2 Theme and character delineation

The researcher regards the theme of *Moelelwa* as presented to the reader, as follows:

> Nare! Wa re ga ke kwe batswadi o tla kwa dinonyana (Sehlodimela, 1940:34).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Nare! If you disobey your parents, you will suffer in life.

The theme of Sehlodimela (1940), is disobedience and recklessness of conduct in life.

Truly, Moelelwa, the protagonist, suffers in eSwatini, during the journey back to her rural home without food, and on arrival at home when she finds her peers, Mokgadi, Matlala, and Mapute, leading successful family lives (Sehlodimela, 1940:34).

The theme in Phalane (1943) surfaces as a veritable warning for rural guys to be wary of culture shock that results from working in urban areas.

Contrary to what happens in Sehlodimela (1940), the protagonist, Motangtang, in Phalane (1943) arrives back a happy and successful young adult as opposed to Moelelwa in Sehlodimela (1940). The three antagonists in Phalane (1943), namely, Tilo, Moswe and Lekope, arrive home full of remorse as opposed to the three antagonists, Mokgadi, Matlala and Mapute in Sehlodimela (1940) who enjoy a life of well-being.

3.3.3 Milieu and time

Moelelwa, the protagonist in Sehlodimela (1940), moves from a rural area like Motangtang, Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope. However, Moelelwa in Sehlodimela (1940) moves to a foreign country, eSwatini whereas Motangtang, Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope move to an urban area of the same country. For Moelelwa in eSwatini, it is the period of extensive manual labour on arable land that frustrates her because she is not used to hard work. Tilo, Moswe, and Lekope in Phalane (1943), like Moelelwa in Sehlodimela (1940) are overwhelmed by culture shock and fail in life.

3.3.4 Narrative point of view (Narration)

3.3.4.1 The third-person narrator

Both Phalane (1943) and Sehlodimela (1940) employ the omniscient third-person point of view and when the dialogue surfaces, as it were, the all-knowing narrator relays the storyline. Both authors are didactic in their approach but Phalane (1943) preaches the Christian dogma more than Sehlodimela (1940):

> Ke holofela gore go hlepha mo ga boitshwaro batho ba ka itshwara setho ba holana bakeng sa go hulana le go bolayana (Sehlodimela, 1940:26).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> I hope that the immoral behaviour of people may change to benefit society instead of robbery and murder.

Phalane (1943) and Sehlodimela (1940) employ the third-person narrator who is intrusive and whose judgement is authoritative.

3.3.4.2 The employment of dialogue

The narrator, Phalane (1943), becomes the omniscient narrator and in so doing, renders the text to be didactic. Further, when reading Sehlodimela (1940), there is also a trace of the all-knowing narrator. The two novelists are warning young adults against culture shock in foreign places, eSwatini and urban Tshwane, in the decade. The characters also engage in dialogue to put their views across:

> “Ke tla botšiša yena, gomme re tla kwa therešo gosasa.” (Sehlodimela, 1940:13).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> “I will ask her, and we will know the truth tomorrow.”

The dialogue is a response by Mmamoelelwa to the traditional healer who wants to marry Moelelwa. However, Mmamoelelwa does not approve of the proposal of the medicine man but reserves her opinion until Moelelwa has been consulted. Mmamoelelwa shows remarkable considerateness, taking into account the right of her daughter to assent or not to assent. In this dialogue, the omniscient narrator invites the reader also to make his point of view.

Tilo arrives home after a long stay in Pretoria, and his parents cannot recognise him as he is emaciated because of the loss of his house, furniture, and family. Stress has befallen him, so much that he cannot bear it. The following dialogue demonstrates this fact:

> “Yo o a mo tseba na?” “Ke tlo mo tseba ke mmone? Ga ke re ke gona ke sa dula fase?” (Phalane, 1943:62)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> “Do you know this one?” “Can I know him when I have not seen him? Don’t you realise that it is only now that I am sitting down?”

The dialogue paints a pathetic picture of a parent who has failed to recognise her own child, asking another parent if he knows him. The dialogue points to utter perplexity and dismay on the part of the parents which leaves the son utterly crestfallen.

3.4 Conclusion

A number of factors contribute towards the history of the evolution of the Sesotho sa Leboa novel writing. Though oral tradition has played a role as regards the identity of Basotho ba Leboa (the Northern Sotho people), the question of culture and customs cannot be brushed aside. To add to this, the impact of Christianity, whose drivers were missionaries, was immense. It had a direct influence on the production of written material in Sesotho sa Leboa.

Notable novellas published during the 1940s include, amongst others, *Tsiri* by M.J. Madiba (1942), *Kgamphuphu* by P. Mamogobo (1949), and *Motangtang* by Phalane (1943). It has to be understood that besides the propagation of the word of God, the missionaries also had a hidden agenda. Selepe (1999:85) has this to say about missionaries:

> They were also part of the colonial conspiracy to conquer Africa and other parts of the Third World.

It has to be emphasised that the novellas of the 1940s in Sesotho sa Leboa, were not only religious in nature, but didactic. Over and above this, religion, and education, formed part of the hidden curriculum with the aim of shaping society in totality. It is for this reason that during this period, authors delved into morality. Another important point is that of industrialisation which attracted young adults to the workplace. This trend contributed towards the fragmentation of traditional and cultural consciousness. Nevertheless, there is no denying that the overall approach of writers during the period, focused on “the effects of urbanization and industrialization on the lives of young black workers who move from the country to the city” (Lindfors, as cited by Klein, 1988:186-188).

CHAPTER 4: DECADE UNDER REVIEW: 1950-1959

The evaluation of the selected YA novellas of the decade 1950-1959 is the subject matter of this chapter**:**

4.1 *Tsakata* by Ramaila, E.M. (1953): Reception Criticism

A literary critic who deploys Reception Criticism can analyse a text from different perspectives. For this reason, a reader or critic is empowered to repudiate the claim that a text is complete within itself. It can further be argued that Reception Criticism is open to multiple interpretations in the reading of a text. There are no absolute meanings in texts, it all depends on how a reader receives a text. Safe to say, according to Reception Criticism, a reader is entitled to fill in the gaps found in the text at hand.

As Fokkema and Kunne-Ibsch (1979:136) observe:

> The recipient [reader] has become an integral part of the purpose of literary research, and reception is integrated into the possible definition of literariness.

From the preceding statement, it becomes very clear that literature primarily corresponds with history. The approach acknowledges that facts in a literary text are determined in terms of their "historicity". For that matter, Lotman (cited by Fokkema & Kunne-Ibsch, 1979:137), asserts that:

> The historical and cultural reality which we call the 'literary work' is not exhausted in the text. The text is only one of the elements of a relation. In fact, the literary work consists of the text (the system of intra-textual relations) in its relation to extra-textual reality: to literary norms, tradition and the imagination. [4]

[4] Mphahlele (cited by Kekana, 2020:20) says that "The literature of Black Africa is intimately wrapped up with history. The writer consciously wants to give an account of himself as a product of historical process. He feels he must be accountable to history."

From the above observations, the researcher is convinced that Ramaila's work (*Tsakata*), is "valid for art as well as history" (Fokkema & Kunne-Ibsch, 1979:137). It must be noted in effect, that the thread that runs throughout the said YA novella, illuminates the conditions faced by South African young adults during the apartheid era – a quest to attain material wealth in urban areas. The aforesaid is supported by Selepe (1999:54), who says that "literature as a product of history" and intends to "portray the people's reaction [including authors] to their own history by showing desire to preserve or change it (history)".

4.1.1 Plot structure

4.1.1.1 Exposition

By way of exposition, Tsakata, the protagonist, is born and his grandfather blesses him, according to the African religious belief:

> Mala a basadi a rwele digolo, a rwelego le bo Tsakakata a ditsaka. (Tsakakata, 1953:1)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Women's wombs bear wonders, they bear the likes of Tsakata, of gifted persons.

An addition to the exposition is expounded by further blessings from his grandfather:

> O tla ja maatla a thaka tša gago. O tla ngwala ba go lebeletše. (E.M. Ramaila, 1953:1)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> You will use the powers of your peers to your advantage. You will write even as they are looking on.

Flowing from the above prophecy, Tsakata rejoices, knowing that the world is in his pocket. On the contrary, it should be borne in mind that, in society, an individual is not really free to do as he pleases. Pursuant to the prophecy, a careful reader

anticipates somewhat new developments in the life of Tsakata. What all this suggests is that the author uses humour as a literary technique to hook the reader.

4.1.1.2 Rising action

Like every young adult African, Tsakata herds kids, goats, and cattle; he attends primary school before he is admitted to a high school where he executes adolescent relevance (p.2). Tsakata, the protagonist, like some of his peers at the secondary school, is naughty and is expelled from school and ordered to leave the student residence:

> Go lelekwa ga Tsakata mo sekolong se e ile ya ba lerumo le botlhoko go botlhe (p.3).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> The expulsion of Tsakata from the school became an unbearable pain to all persons.

It is unreasonable of the principal of the school not to afford Tsakata a hearing. This constitutes a lack of due process in respect of disciplinary procedures. The reader is forced to abhor the unilateral decision of the headmaster. The reader will be wrong to think of a vanquished Tsakata.

4.1.1.3 Conflict

Tsakata is expelled from secondary school and heads for the urban area of Johannesburg, like most of his peers of that era (p.3). Unlike most of the young adults of the time, Tsakata never struggles to find employment although he loses it after some time.

Tsakata learns the tricks of survival for a rural young adult and later, comes across his homeboys (Ramaila, 1953: 5). The best and most helpful of his mates is Phokwane who affords him a place of abode among blacks and whites in a hotel. Some blacks are rented sleeping accommodation by their employers while on duty:

> Diphapoši tše dingwe ke tša baeng ba baso ba tlang mo le beng ba bona ka go tšama ba bapatša tša mediro ya bona (pp.5-6)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Some rooms are occupied by black visitors who come with their employers who market their goods.

One good night, Phokwane teaches Tsakata the strategies of survival in urban areas because Tsakata can speak and write the languages of white people.

Upon the advice of Phokwane, Tsakata starts writing *night permits* for blacks; by so doing contravening the then law of the then Union of South Africa (p.7) because blacks were restricted from walking in town at night except when they had a written permit:

> Morwa Monare le yena o ile a thoma go ngwalela batho dipasa tša bošego, le go kgopela moputswanyana o monnyane go e nngwe le e nngwe (p.7).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> The son of Monare also started writing night permits for people for a nominal fee.

Gradually, Tsakata becomes rich and can afford a rented place of residence in Alexandra Township where he continues with his unlawful business. Tsakata can write different initials or names and surnames of numerous white persons with legible handwriting which few or no black person has (p.7).

The reader gets to understand that apartheid was just an improvement on and an extension of what the British colonial rulers did to blacks. It has to be noted that colonialism in Africa and apartheid in South Africa had far-reaching political implications. The said forms of government undermined human rights; this is

reflected and re-imagined by Ramaila in the novella under review. Men and women, in particular, try their luck in different ways in their quest for survival.

One night in Prospect Township, a white policeman demands *night permits* from black persons and finds the Du Toit surname spelled Du Doit. This attracts his attention to the extent that the owner, Monyamane, is taken for interrogation to reveal the writer of the *night permit* (p.7). Tsakata is arrested hereafter and send to Cinderella Prison in Boksburg (p.10) where he learns advanced thuggery.

After Tsakata's release from prison, he continues with unlawful business in deep secret to such an extent that he buys a luxury car afforded by black thugs only (p.16). He frequents a dance club in Johannesburg and is always accompanied by Flora, a concubine, who is married to another man in Orlando Township (p.15). Flora has always lied to her husband about her trips to town until the husband gets wind of the love affair with *Evangelist Davidson*, waylays him (Tsakata) and assaults him so severely that he loses most of his teeth. Tsakata is picked up by the police and lands in hospital (pp.17-18). *Evangelist Davidson's* luxury car is repossessed during his long stay in hospital.

Upon Tsakata's recovery from the serious injuries, he decides to move to the East Rand (now Ekurhuleni) where he smuggles intoxicating beverages to several shebeens because blacks are not allowed to sell intoxicating beverages (Ramaila, 1953:20). He becomes rich and buys another luxury car that helps him smuggle a bigger quantity of liquor per day. However, the luxury car is impounded following an arrest in Benoni (p.22).

Tsakata now runs his unlawful liquor business by bicycle and buys liquor from poor whites in Benoni or Boksburg (p.23). The police are on his trail but fortune favours him (p.36). Tsakata moves to Springs to avoid the police in Brakpan and Benoni:

> Monna ga a bone gabedi (p.36).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Once bitten, twice shy.

Tsakata disappears from the world of thuggery and nobody can trace him until one white man realises that there is someone who sleeps in his car during the night (p.37) and stumbles upon Tsakata's set of false teeth in his car. The set of teeth is taken to the police for investigation. The police refer the matter to a goldsmith who has only one record of a black person. Tsakata's identity is now positively linked to the person sought by the police but Tsakata is never arrested (p.38).

A newspaper article makes mention of *David Munaring* who is arrested among several black persons who have committed a serious crime in Brits (Ramaila, 1953: 39). After three months, the suspects, including *David Munaring,* are sent to the High Court in Pretoria only to find that the *David Munaring* of the newspaper article is Tsakata, alias David Sebatane Monare (p.42).

4.1.1.4 Falling action

The author inaugurates a falling action when Titus Tšhilwane, Tsakata's maternal uncle in rural Kgautšwane, receives a letter from Tsakata that requests him to assist in bringing him to Kgautšwane because he is carrying an enormous load of goods in Lydenburg (p.44).

Titus Tšhilwane investigates the whereabouts of Tsakata in Lydenburg and finds him in a township house occupied by a female, Molly Windvogel, and her parents (p.46).

Titus Tšhilwane and his two handmaidens convey Tsakata to Kgautšwane where he lives in utter social, political, and economic isolation by choice (p.49). Tsakata becomes an unlawful hunter (p.49) and later becomes a matriculation student through part-time studies (pp.46-57).

After matriculating, Tsakata decides to register at the famous Lemana Teacher Training College on a full-time basis (pp.62 & 64). Tsakata completes his teacher training at Lemana but does not try to find employment because of fear of his history of thuggery in the urban areas around Johannesburg (p.68). He envisages teaching in Kgautšwane where his maternal uncle lives:

> Ke baka leo a boetšeng gape mo ga malomeagwe, 'me a dumang ge a ka fiwa modiro gona mo Kgautšwane (p.68).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> That is why he returned to his uncle's home where he wished to find employment right here in Kgautšwane.

4.1.1.5 Resolution

Tsakata applies for work at a primary school in Kgautšwane but his application is unsuccessful because of the number of teachers at that school including Titus Tšhilwane (p.68). He then discusses that with Titus Tšhilwane, an old evangelist, for the evangelist to leave his teaching function for a monthly R6 (£3) of Tsakata's expected monthly salary of R30 (£15). It is agreed and the elderly evangelist relinquishes his teaching post which affords Tsakata employment (pp.69 -70).

Tsakata excels at the school, becomes a famous choir conductor during night concerts, and is respected by the chiefs of the area (p.74). All these happen, despite the jealousy and envy of the principal of the school, Albert Nape, who spies on him and frequently sends unfavourable and abominable reports to Rev. Gustav Schweigenberg's office (pp.84-85). Such reports bring Tsakata at loggerheads with the supervisor of schools in the Lydenburg district.

Tsakata feels uncomfortable in Kgautšwane, applies for a teaching post in Johannesburg, and succeeds (p.105). He excels in Standard 6 (Grade 8) final examination results, choral music competitions, and community service as a member of the Advisory Board of the Town Council (p.111). Tsakata marries, resides in Bantuville, and leads a prosperous life (p.113). Despite the meagre salary of teachers, Tsakata becomes a property owner in Sophiatown, Alexandra Township, and Lady Selbourne (p.133).

The government security agency becomes suspicious of his life of plenty because he competes against some of the rich white people (pp.133-134). To supplement his salary, Tsakata traffics dagga from eSwatini and reverts to his old business of writing

unlawful night permits, exemptions, and employment references for black persons (p.135).

Matters come to a head when Tsakata writes permits bearing the forged signatures of two renowned judges for bearers to buy intoxicating beverages for black persons (p.137). Tsakata is arrested, fined R190 (£95) or faces three months of imprisonment but he appeals to a higher court at R50 (£25).

The author of the literary piece chooses to employ peripety or reversal in Tsakata's fortunes to close the plot (Abrams, 1981:139).

4.1.2 Theme and character delineation

The theme of the literary work surfaces at the end when the author becomes didactic by employing the wisdom of King Solomon of Israel:

> Yo a kgatlollago morako, o tla longwa ke noga (Ramaila, 1953:138-139).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Whoever demolishes through a wall, will be bitten by a snake.

Tsakata is expelled from secondary school and heads for Johannesburg in search of employment (p.3). He meets an unemployed Phokwane who advises him to become rich by writing unlawful *night permits*, exemptions, and other documents for black persons who need them, and Tsakata obliges. Because of his dexterity in writing, law enforcement agencies cannot decipher that the documents are unlawful and written by a black person (p.7). However, this fraudulent activity eventually causes conflict between Tsakata and the oppressive laws of The Union of South Africa and he is arrested and imprisoned:

> Ka lebaka la go ngwalela motho pasa, Tsakata a atlholelwa go ya kgolegong. (p.10)

(English translation)

> Because he was found guilty of illegally writing an identity document for someone, Tsakata was sentenced to imprisonment.

On his return from incarceration, Tsakata's unlawful habits do not stop as he pursues other tricks of life. He becomes an affluent celebrity and buys a luxurious motor car that even some white persons cannot afford (p.16). This denotes a measure of his resilience against the unjust, discriminatory, and inhumane separatist laws of the period in question.

Tsakata tries his hand at betting on the horses, but that proves to be a failure. Unfortunately for him, his car is repossessed because he cannot pay his creditors from what he earns (p.19).

Tsakata changes his residence in Orlando (p.19) for one in Benoni which is a place of refuge for smugglers (p.20). In Benoni, Tsakata buys another car on credit and uses it to buy liquor from poor whites for purposes of its delivery to female owners of drinking holes in black townships:

> Ge a fitlhile diatleng tša basadi, a a thibollwa, a tle a oketšwe ka tše dingwe tše di tsebjang ke bona ba nnoši … (p.20)

(English translation)

> When in the hands of women, they [liquor bottles] are opened and some substances known only to themselves are added.

Bad luck befalls Tsakata, as one day, a police roadblock finds the boot of his car full of different kinds of intoxicating beverages that blacks are not permitted by law to buy (p.21). The car is impounded by the police and legal costs leave him almost penniless (p.22).

Even if Tsakata is now penniless and without a motor vehicle, he continues to smuggle liquor from poor White suburbs in Benoni and Brakpan into black townships. A bicycle is used as a mode of transport and he is not the only one in this type of trade (p.23). The police aim to arrest Tsakata and detectives investigate him till they discover his ways and methods (p.26). He changes his storage place after someone has stolen his hidden goods twice at various places:

> Ka kgonthe a latlha tšhengwana ye e thomileng go ba le metlholo. A lemela thoko tše dingwe (p.29).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Really, he abandoned the storing place that started to be full of miracles. He stores his goods somewhere else.

The police hold a consultative conference in Johannesburg and agree to bring the smuggling of intoxicating drinks into black townships to a halt because criminal activities are on the rise. That is what causes one white detective to keep a watchful eye on Tsakata, who always wears a grey coat. In spite of the preparations, Tsakata's criminal activities are not detected successfully by law enforcement agencies. Luckily, Tsakata escapes a police roadblock because, in his haste, he leaves money at his place of residence and does not have a load of liquor bottles on his bicycle (p.32).

Tsakata changes his place of residence for one in Springs where he lives comfortably for some time and rumour has it that he has a set of artificial teeth coated with gold fitted. After some time, Tsakata disappears from the scene and nobody knows where he resides. A white patron of the Lion Hotel complains angrily about someone who sleeps in his car regularly and the white man one day pounces upon a set of artificial teeth coated with gold as evidence:

> … lehono ke na le botlhatse, gobane motho yo o lebetše meno a gagwe šea (p.37).

(English translation)

> … today I have got evidence, because that person has left his teeth and here, they are.

The set of false teeth is relayed to the police who consult a manufacturer for more evidence. The manufacturer refers to his records and gives them Davidson's (Tsakata's *nom de guerre*) name. The police search everywhere for Tsakata but their efforts draw a blank (p.37).

Surprisingly, Evangelist Titus Tšhilwane of Kgautšwane (Tsakata's maternal uncle) receives an unstamped mail in the post from Lydenburg and can detect that it was brought by hand to Rev. G. Schweigenberg of their church:

> Malome! Tseba ke mono Mašišing, gomme ke šitwa go fihla fao ka baka la merwalo. Nka thušega bjang? (pp.44-45).

(English translation)

> Uncle! Know that I am in Mašišing, and I fail to reach there because of heavy luggage. What should I do?

The narrator artistically brings Tsakata back to the rural areas. In a way, some novice readers may be made to suspect that the David Munaring, arrested among the merciless murderers of Brits, is Tsakata.

Initially, Tsakata enjoys a solitary life in Kgautšwane (pp.47-49). Later, he studies for a secondary school certificate on a part-time basis (pp.57-58). Tsakata goes on to enrol for a teaching qualification at Lemana College (pp.61-62) and finally, becomes a teacher at Kgautšwane (p.71).

Tsakata clashes with the school principal who is spying on him and Rev. G. Schweigenberg (supervisor of schools) who receives reports of the espionage regularly, although Tsakata excels in teaching and choral music and is a celebrity

among the pupils, the villagers and the chiefs, because of his exceptionally good human relations (pp.71, 73 & 102):

> … Albert Nape ke yo mongwe wa bao goba ke yena gagologolo a bolelang Tsakata gampe kua ga Monere (p.85).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … Albert Nape is one of the people or the main person who badmouths Tsakata at Monere's office.

Tsakata decides to leave Kgautšwane for a teaching job in Johannesburg where he excels in teaching, choral music, and community activities (pp.111 & 122). What surprises many people about him is his wealth although teachers receive meagre salaries:

> O na le 'dierefe' le nywako ka Sophiatown, Alexandra Township le Lady Selbourne, mo a phuthang tefa e ntši go badudi ba fao kgwedi e nngwe le e nngwe (p.133).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> He has residential sites and houses in Sophiatown, Alexandra Township and Lady Selbourne, where he collects rent from tenants every month.

Tsakata's wealth arouses suspicion among blacks and whites because the majority of teachers are poor but he buys luxurious motor cars every three years. White law enforcement agencies suspect him of crime but find no cause to bring him to book (pp.133-134).

A newspaper article on unlawful identity documents, night permits, exemptions, and other documents such as references for work that are forged on the Rand (Gauteng) has been published. This comes about after the law enforcement agencies have

realised that a few printing presses have been seized and many runners arrested but the masterminds of the organisations have evaded the police. Tsakata commits all these crimes under the names of two judges (Evangelist R. S. Gould and Evangelist C. H. Grobler) in Gauteng (p.135).

The judge convicts Tsakata on all counts and fines him 95 British pounds (R190) or three months' hard labour. Tsakata contests the sentence and plans to appeal at the cost of 25 British pounds (R50) (p.137). The reader needs to know that the amounts involved were considerable then.

4.1.3 Milieu and time

Tsakata is expelled from secondary school during his last year of study because of gross misconduct. Learners, black teachers, white teachers, and the principal who expels him, are sorry and shocked:

> Ka manyami le ka pefelo mookamedi wa sekolo o ile a šupetša morwa Monare tsela … (p.3).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Sorrowfully and angrily the principal expelled the son of Monare from school …

Tšhungwane, a learner at the secondary school, clashes with Evangelist Brown, a white teacher, who expels him from the classroom (p.3). That suggests the power of teachers to deny learners the right to learn for a certain period as a technique to maintain discipline although the teacher may have wronged the learner.

The learner, Tšhungwane, then lodges an appeal at the headmaster's office but meets a racist and unfair judgement:

> Ga ke rate go tshwenyana le dikgomo tša gešo ka baka la tabana tša kgogo (p.4).

(English translation)

I do not want to worry my fellow cattle because of matters concerning a fowl.

On the grounds of the discriminatory committee's judgement, Tšhungwane is expelled from the school (p.4). The expulsion, without a due process of conflict resolution, signifies the power that white principals had over black learners in that decade in history. The author, hereby, makes subtle reference to white supremacy in this fashion with reference to the utterances made by the white principal of the school (cf. supra). Black learners are equated with fowls whereas white teachers are equated with cattle and a measure of inequality of status is thereby expressed.

Tsakata heads for Johannesburg in search of work (p.4), finds it, earns a lot of money and makes a considerable number of friends, some of whom are from his rural village, including Phokwane who remains faithful to Tsakata throughout:

Mogwera wa Tsakata wa mafelelo wa potego ya šala e le Phokwane, yo a beng a feletšwe ke modiro ka lebaka leo (p.5).

(English translation)

An unemployed Phokwane, by then, remained Tsakata's only faithful friend.

Tsakata loses employment and Phokwane invites him to his unlawful place of residence in the premises of a hotel for whites only because black workers mix freely with their jobless friends in the backyard (p.5). Black hotel workers, drivers of motor vehicles of hotel patrons and job seekers consist of a population that the police cannot discriminate easily.

In the backyard of the hotel, Phokwane and Tsakata, survive on disposed chicken heads and feet because many fowls are slaughtered there (p.6). The author craftily

creates a situation where jobless black workers can survive unnoticed by the security agencies for a long time.

One night, Phokwane engenders the spirit of unlawful activities in Tsakata because Tsakata is relatively learned and has wonderful handwriting. Tsakata agrees and they plan to make money by writing night permits that allow black persons to walk in town at night (p.5). Their market research is not complicated because the majority of black people, including hooligans, are not allowed to walk in town at night without night permits, according to the statute.

Tsakata starts writing unlawful night permits for black people by using fraudulent and imaginary names of White persons for a nominal fee. In this way, Tsakata becomes famous with different kinds of criminals as they buy night permits from him (p.7). Black peace-loving citizens and criminals are afforded freedom of movement unlawfully and, thereby, increase the rate of crime in residences meant for whites only. The narrator conveys a trace of racism and the separatist policy of the period to the reader of the novella.

Tsakata devotes a considerable amount of time to writing *night permits* at night. The police cannot suspect that such documents are unlawful and written by a black person because he confirms them by using forged signatures of different White names (p.7).

Tsakata accumulates relatively much money and seeks a rented residence in Alexandra Township, and changes his method of survival (p.7). One night, the police raid Prospect Township unexpectedly and a white policeman notices the wrongly spelt surname of “the white person” (Tsakata) who made a handwritten entry in Monyamane’s passbook (ID document today). This arouses suspicion and Monyamane, is horribly interrogated until he agrees to lead them to Tsakata’s home. The following investigation leads to the arrest and conviction of Tsakata (p.10):

> … mme a ngwala ka pela leina le a le botšwang la Hendrik du Doit (p.8).

(English translation)

> … then he immediately wrote the name of Hendrik du Doit which he was told to write.

The narrator aptly depicts Tsakata as a three-dimensional character who makes spelling mistakes. He depicts the era as an era of statutory oppression of blacks by whites as seen in the system of impromptu night raids, horrible interrogation, and imprisonment. On the other hand, blacks, including Tsakata, developed improved survival tricks against the oppressive laws of the period.

Tsakata is sent to the notorious Cinderella Prison in Boksburg (p.10). His welcome consists of a clean head shave, cold shower, and prison attire. Instead of the corrective effect of the imprisonment, Tsakata learns more unlawful tricks that turn him into an advanced criminal (p.11).

Tsakata learns about the hierarchical seniority of inmates, the need to report his arrival to the prison's *pseudo* leadership, and *pseudo* teachers who coach inmates and specialise in improved methods of committing crimes and avoiding incarceration during court procedures, if arrested (p.11). In this way, the author foreshadows Tsakata's unrepentant and remorseless criminal conduct that follows in various places over time. The social classes of prisoners become clear to the reader, as depicted.

Inmates welcome new arrivals by assaulting them in rounds as if it is a boxing encounter during the night. Some sympathetic old inmates shout for mercy and prison warders quell the noise by drenching the whole prison cell with cold water:

> Sa bona ke go tsenya lethopo la meetse, ka godimo, ba a bulela, ba nošetša lešata le (p.15).

(English translation)

> Theirs is to insert a hosepipe, high above, open a tap and drench the noise.

The Cinderella Prison becomes an institution where Tsakata is subjected to other callous forms of ill-treatment by his fellow inmates, the worst of which is the gruesome “Blue Sky”. This involves a prisoner being spread-eagled on the floor during the night, lifted into the air upon instruction from the prison cell’s self-made-leader, and released to fall mercilessly on the floor (p.15). The author creates suspense the reader by not mentioning Tsakata’s release from prison so that he may introduce Tsakata as the Evangelist Davidson:

> A re tlogeleng Tsakata ka mo. Re tla kgatlhana nae ka mabaka a a tlang” (p.15).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Let us leave Tsakata in here. We will meet him next time.

It takes an astute student of literature, to be able to decipher the technique employed by the author.

Evangelist Davidson flirts with Flora, a married woman, in Orlando at night. Subsequently, the married couple develops marital problems so much so that Flora is assaulted and locked in their house one night (p.16). The characters are portrayed as three-dimensional young adults when Flora’s husband is disgusted by her behaviour but Evangelist Davidson, together with Flora, cannot stop their mischief especially because Evangelist Davidson owns a luxurious motor vehicle. It is unusual for a black person to own such a vehicle that even poor and middle-class whites cannot afford to buy.

After getting wind of the unsavoury news, Flora’s husband dresses in women’s attire and waits for Evangelist Davidson at the usual spot where Flora habitually waits for her secret lover (p.16). Evangelist Davidson brings the car to a halt, walks towards the expected Flora only to be met by a severe assault with a knobkierie from the man. Evangelist Davidson loses most of his teeth during the assault (p.17). It is usual for a jealous young adult husband to assault mercilessly a competitor who flirts with his wife. To that end, the action denotes that Flora’s husband grabbed the

opportunity to punish. It is interesting to note that Flora's husband may be construed as a sadist because of severely assaulting his wife and locking her up following on the assault on Evangelist Davidson who was left for dead near his luxurious motor car.

Evangelist Davidson is picked up by the police, ferried to hospital and his car is taken to the police station for custody (p.18). Phokwane is the first person to know about Evangelist Davidson's hospitalisation and relays the bad news to several people:

> Ba bangwe ba bantši ba kwele ka yena, bjale ba tšama ba botšana, gobane monna yo wa babina tau yo, ke motsebalegi (p.17).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Most people heard about it from him and spread the story because this man of the lion totem is a celebrity.

Various versions of the rumour about Evangelist Davidson's (now Tsakata) hospitalisation abound but not the real cause of hospitalisation, especially among women who loved him (p.18). The author inadvertently or indirectly reveals that the Evangelist Davidson in question is Tsakata and small wonder that young adults of both sexes adore him because they yearn to be celebrities or be associated with celebrities.

Tsakata changes his residence from Orlando to Benoni after his recovery from the injuries and smuggles liquor in the whole district (Benoni, Brakpan, Springs and Boksburg). Tsakata's clientele consists of young adult women who buy the intoxicating beverages, open the bottles, add some toxic additives so that they may gain a 100 percent profit, and become significantly affluent (p.20). That was a way of flouting the law that restricted black persons from buying liquor without a permit that was afforded whites and middle-class blacks only. It is important to note that law enforcement agencies busy themselves with upholding the law against culprits like Tsakata and their clients but not the poor whites from whom the smugglers buy the liquor secretly. The researcher views the policy as an expression of utter deliberate

discrimination between blacks and whites living in one country in the pre-democracy period in South Africa.

When next we meet Tsakata, he is on the New Kleinfontein road with his car almost full of the smuggled intoxicating beverages and he runs into a police roadblock and his car is impounded. The court case that follows costs him a considerable amount of money and he is nearly bankrupt although he still lives better than persons employed on a full-time basis (p.21).

Without his luxurious motor car, Tsakata pursues his unlawful trick of smuggling liquor. He is riding a bicycle and is always on the alert when he buys from poor whites living on the outskirts of Benoni and Brakpan which is somewhat promising because of the lakes and lush bushes around it. It was a suitable environment for smuggling because when one feels threatened, the loot can be hidden in one of the lakes or forests. (pp.23-24). The lakes and forests are a favourable place for smuggling which is encouraged by the oppressive laws of the country of that era.

All the time when law enforcement agencies raided black townships without prior notification, a lot of liquor is found and confiscated. Shebeen kings or queens are arrested, but the source of the liquor remains unknown. Tsakata forsakes the New Kleinfontein road for the Old Kleinfontein road that runs from the old Apex Coal Mine where few people travel. Traps are set and Tsakata's tactics are discovered and he survives two attempts to arrest him because an unknown person stole his loot from the hiding place twice:

> … eupša ba hloka maatla a go mo swara gobane se ba beng ba se gononwa mo go yena ga ba se humana." (p.28).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … but they did not find cause to arrest him because what they expected to find on him was nowhere to be found.

Tsakata changes his time of smuggling liquor from early dawn to midday because he has realised that unexpected police raids are executed either at early dawn or at night on Sundays. He performs unlawful activities at the residences of the poor whites at midday (p.31). The author is free to change the time in the text from early dawn or night to midday just as he is free to change Orlando to Benoni, Brakpan, Boksburg, and Springs.

A police conference is held in Johannesburg where a senior police officer remarks about the increase in concocted and intoxicating beverages in black townships. Many smugglers of liquor in black townships and residences of poor whites are arrested while one white detective becomes suspicious of Tsakata's regular movements near the Matarapane lake and State Mines dunes (p.32). This happens during a period of police roadblocks aimed at black liquor smugglers near the Matarapane lake where blacks hide their liquor loot to avoid arrest.

One Sunday morning, two black detectives lie in waiting for Vaaljas (Tsakata) but cannot make any arrest. Their senior detective advises them to spend a long time investigating Vaaljas although he does not know what the suspect is carrying on his bicycle. They heed his advice for three weeks and near the Matarapane lake, novice liquor smugglers are arrested but not Vaaljas:

> Ke re 'Vaaljas' o gona, ke mmone gantši le ge ke sa tsebe gore o thothang." (p.33)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> I say 'Vaaljas' is around, I have seen several times although I am unable to know what he ferries.

All these fortunate encounters of Tsakata point to his awareness of safe times and places with regard to the plans of law enforcement agencies. For Tsakata, wise timing for the smuggling of liquor and places for hiding his loot is paramount for his survival as a wanted person in a black township.

4.1.4 Narrative point of view (Narration)

In *Tsakata*, the author assumes a third-person narrator role as he presents characters, events, actions, and settings which constitute the narrative (Abrams, 1981:142).

4.1.4.1 Third-person point of view

The protagonist is presented as a little boy in the arms of an old man, his grandfather and namesake, who showers the little boy with well wishes and bad spells against whoever should try to antagonise the protagonist:

> Gape o tla ratwa ke batho wa ba lešwalo la bona. Yo a go hloyago o a itlholela. Yo a go kgwathago o tla gobala (Ramaila, 1953:1).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> And you will be loved by people as their cause of luck. He who hates you will cause himself ill-luck. He who touches you will meet bad luck.

Flora, a married young woman, flirts with Tsakata, against the wishes of her husband who hates the secret love affair and dance concerts. Flora is addicted to dance so much that all advice cannot deter her from the habit. Besides, Tsakata is a rich young man who drives a luxurious motor car:

> Flora yena di mo tsene mading, ga a kgone go di lesa (p.16).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Flora is addicted and cannot refrain.

Flora's husband is tipped off by a friend of his about the secret love affair, assaults Flora, and detains her in their home while he goes on to waylay Tsakata at his and

Flora's meeting place. Further, Flora's husband assaults Tsakata severely and Tsakata loses many teeth (p.17).

The author becomes an omniscient narrator who can present the feelings of Flora about the nightly dancing concerts and her love for Tsakata, to the reader of the text. The feelings, experiences, thoughts, and actions of Tsakata's grandfather above, are relayed to the reader of the text in the same manner.

4.1.4.2 The employment of dialogue

The author employs dialogue to enable the reader to know, experience, infer and find out about the characters as the author himself becomes a peripheral or minor participant (Abrams, 1981:144), when Tšhungwane, a learner, is expelled from the classroom by Evangelist Brown:

> "O tla šala o tsena ge ke feditše thuto ya ka mo setlhopheng se, ge go tsene moruti yo mongwe." (Ramaila, 1953:3).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> "You will return to the classroom when I have completed my lesson in this group and another teacher has come."

Tšhungwane rushes to the principal's office because he views the expulsion from that lesson as an unwarranted punishment but the principal sides with Evangelist Brown because Tšhungwane approaches the principal angrily and the headmaster responds:

> "Nna ke bjalo ka motho wa mohumi yo a ruileng dikgomo, dinku le dikgogo." (Ramaila, 1953:3).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> "I am like a rich person who keeps cattle, sheep and fowls."

The reader is tempted to interpret the headmaster's response to refer to the teachers as cattle, the learner leadership as sheep, and the other ordinary learners as fowls. This points to social stratification and the attendant inequality in the treatment of the different individuals.

The principal's response further gives the reader an indication that the headmaster is white because he refers to Evangelist Brown as a fellow member of the cattle category:

> "Ga ke rate go tlhwa ke tshwenyana le dikgomo tša gešo ka tabana tša dikgogo." (p3).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> "I do not like to worry my fellow cattle with the petty affairs of fowls."

Flowing from the few excerpts of dialogues above, the narrator brings to life the narrative. The reader is able to see the world through the eyes of characters who now express their feelings by word of mouth.

4.2 *Puledi le Thobja* by Makoala, K.R. (1958): Postmodernism Criticism

Post-modernism has mainly to do with socio-cultural issues, for that matter and is closely linked with global power shifts. The theory adds voice to the notion that the world is tragic and also decries the loss of meaning or focus in life. Further, it is important to note that Postmodernism, in its criticism, depicts the world as engulfed in Disorder instead of Order. By implication, it becomes very clear that the social systems of all countries are contaminated by the fallacy of introjection.

Selden, Widdowson. and Brooker (2005:197) assert that Postmodernism could be viewed as follows:

- A branch of modernism

- A designation of philosophy which embraces:
    - Social and political values of reason
    - Equality and justice

Notwithstanding the diversified trends within Postmodernism, mainly the literary approach is concerned with periodisation as regards a particular art form. The researcher takes into cognisance cultural, political, and social factors in the analysis of the novella under discussion as advocated by postmodernists. Further, in relation to the alluded approach, the researcher cannot rule out the fact that the author depicts characters whose mindset seems to be captured by Western values at the expense of African customs.

4.2.1 Plot structure

4.2.1.1 Exposition

The author creates Puledi, the protagonist, into a beautiful, helpful, generous, industrious, and attractive of dress young female adult who is liked by almost all the members of the community. However, the protagonist lives with her mother and two younger brothers in abject poverty that causes them to go to bed on empty stomachs on some days because Puledi's father has passed on a long time ago (Makoala, 1958:5).

By a happy stroke of good fortune, Phetola, an old male neighbour, feels pity for the poor family and affords Matome and Thobja the opportunity to herd his cattle, in order to obtain milk for relish:

> Mošimane ge a diša dikgomo tša banna o šielwa lešokotšo le a ka išang ka gae go šeba (p.5).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> When a boy herds men's cattle, he is given milk to take home as relish.

By way of recognition of the service rendered by Matome and Thobja, Phetola gives them a heifer which, after three years, bears a male and female calves at the same

time (p.7). As a result, their circumstances shift from abject poverty to a relatively richer one. Puledi's family can, like most families, enjoy different types of milk such as colostrum, fresh milk, and sour milk:

> Ba thoma go thekga tšhikwana, go rema mange [go ja makgahla], go ja mafsi a mothitho le … (p7).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> They started to cook milk in a small pot, enjoy curdled and creamy milk and …

In a similar manner, Puledi, a helpful young adult, helps Mmahlaku, an old female neighbour, by tending kids; putting them in and out of baskets so that they may not accompany their mothers to the pasture lest they be devoured by wild animals (p.7). The helpful Puledi, unknowingly, wins a she-goat from Mmahlaku and it translates into a small herd (p.9). In this way, the helpful and industrious disposition of Puledi, Matome, and Thobja drives abject poverty out of their homestead.

The narrator introduces a Christian mission station (Setaseng) near the village where Puledi, Matome, and Thobja reside (p.9). The reader of the novella, thus, expects the mission station to have some kind of interaction with, and influence on, the life of the adjacent rural village as the general locale of the work.

4.2.1.2 Rising Action

Interestingly, Puledi hears of the adjacent Christian mission station (Setaseng) with its dwellers who wear dresses and trousers instead of loin cloths and other traditional African forms of dress:

> Gona mo Puledi a kwa ba re batho ba ba dulang gona ba apara dikobo tše ba rego ke diroko (p.9).

(English translation)

> Then Puledi heard that residents of the place wear clothes called dresses.

The narrator brings such type of dress to Puledi's notice so that the reader may not be surprised why the character in the work is aggressively attracted to Christianity. Puledi visits Setaseng, is attracted to the way of dress but fears to communicate her desires to her mother for fear of conflicting principles and ideas of both mother and child:

> Ge ba fihla gae Puledi a fšega go botša mmagwe gore o duma dikobo tša batho ba go dula kua Setaseng (p.9).

(English translation)

> When they arrived home, Puledi is afraid to tell her mother that she admires the clothes of the people residing at Setaseng).

Gradually, the way of dress of the residents of Setaseng, and later, the attendant Christian religion, attracts Puledi to the life at the mission station.

Some kind of flashback to Puledi's betrothal to the Pampe family when she was ten years old (p.9) is employed by the author to cause conflict between Puledi's present choice of a marriage partner and the traditional African marriage arrangement and/or negotiations. In this way, the Pampe family clashes with the Mamailas about dowry paid earlier and the way of life chosen by Puledi.

4.2.1.3 Climax

The rising action reaches a climax when Puledi becomes engrossed with putting on dresses. She experiences internal conflict of whether to relay the message to her mother or not, but Thobja reveals to Matome that Puledi would like to wear a dress. Conflict arises between Matome and Puledi as Matome attempts to reveal Puledi's secret (p.10).

The crisis develops further when Matome tells their mother that Puledi desires to wear dresses but the mother thrashes Matome with a grass broom because she suspects that Matome and Thobja are worrying Puledi:

> "Le tshwenya Puledi." (p.10).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> "You are worrying Puledi."

Against that punishment, the author creates a truthful Thobja who reveals that Puledi is interested in wearing dresses like the people living in Setaseng. Consequently, a crisis develops between the mother and Puledi concerning the dowry paid by way of betrothal when Puledi was ten years old:

> "Puledi! Puledi!! [N]a o rata go ntweša le batho?" (p.10).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> "Puledi! Puledi!! Do you want to cause conflict between me and other people?"

Matšie, Puledi's mother, is so incensed, she cites witchcraft as a way of discouraging Puledi from following the Christian *modus operandi* (p.10).

One day as Puledi is tending Mmahlaku's flock of goats, she sees girls wearing dresses, coming from the neighbouring shop (p.11). Puledi is attracted to the attire of the girls that she concentrates on it so much so that she trips over a stone and spills the milk she is carrying.

The author emphasises Puledi's interest in the dresses worn by the Christian converts and thereby obliquely indicates her attraction to Christianity. During the historical period in question, it was normal to classify persons as civilised and uncivilised, according to the way they dressed.

The author causes Puledi to clash with Maphari as the cousin tries to discourage Puledi from following the Christian religion. She tells Puledi that the Setaseng people practise sorcery:

> O kwele mmagwe Mpheiwane a re kua Setaseng go na le batho ba bantši ba go loyana ka maphepha; le gore go na le Mokome yo a tla tlang a ntšha baloi ba (p.11).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> She heard her mother Mpheiwane saying that at Setaseng there are people who practise sorcery by means of papers; and that there is a Diviner who will reveal the sorcerers.

Despite all the detailed explanations of Maphari, Puledi does not believe anything at all because of her desire to wear a dress instead of the loincloth (p.11). Apart from the threat of sorcery among persons wearing dresses, Mphari insults Puledi through hurtful and purposive utterances:

> “O lesola motswalaka. Na o be o hlokile eng?” (p.11).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> “You cause bad spells, Cousin. Why do you lack to behave in this manner?”

Puledi is severely hurt because of the utterances of Maphari, and the pain in Puledi’s heart is aggravated by her mother who refers to Puledi’s woes to Mmakhetšhe. The aim is to find a traditional healer who is expected to heal Puledi who is suspected of suffering from a disease caused by witchcraft, which drives her mad about wearing a dress (p.12).

To the surprise of Puledi's mother and grandmother, Puledi arrives at the traditional healer's homestead. Disappointment meets Puledi's mother and grandmother as the African medico makes them aware, after hearing Puledi's version, that there is no witchcraft involved but just a strong desire in her (p.12). In this fashion, the traditional healer comes to the rescue of Puledi which comes as a surprise to the reader who considers advocates of Christianity as persons who view traditional healers in a bad light.

Puledi escorts Mmakhetšhe to her home and she uses the opportunity to reiterate her desire to wear dresses but Mmakhetšhe condemns the residents of Setaseng as sorcerers (p.12). Mmakhetšhe is thus reinforcing what was said by Aunt Pheiwane and Maphari in an endeavour to dissuade Puledi from converting to the Christian religion.

Puledi visits Aunt Pheiwane and is told about the residents of Setaseng who practice sorcery in the night by using sheets of paper (p.13). Despite the horrific accounts surrounding the people who wear dresses, Puledi confides in Thobja her strong determination to wear dresses:

> A re le ge ba ka bolela ditaba tše dintši tša go fšegiša tša baloi ba Setaseng ba go lala ba loyana ka maphepha a ka se lese go apara diroko bjalo ka bona (p.13).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> She said that even if they give many horrific accounts of the sorcerers of Setaseng who spend nights practicing sorcery by means of sheets of paper she will not be discouraged from wearing dresses like them.

4.2.1.4 Falling Action

One day Puledi catches wind of a cart drawn by four mules ferrying a White person to Setaseng and relays the interesting news to her mother. However, the mother discourages Puledi by referring to the White person as Mokome (witchdoctor) who is going to reveal the sorcerers of Setaseng by divination (Makoala, 1958:13).

Conversely, Puledi requests to visit Setaseng in order to see Mokome reveal and expose sorcerers. In addition, Puledi requests to be accompanied by Thobja from Phetola who accedes to it (p.14). To the surprise of Puledi and Thobja, a church bell starts chiming and Puledi respectfully greets Evangelist Paulus Modiša, the bell ringer, and requests to meet Mokome who exposes sorcerers at Setaseng.

In this way, the author causes the church bell to invite Puledi and Thobja to a church service and, further, introduces Puledi to Evangelist Paulus Modiša, the bell ringer who is going to be an important factor in Puledi's subsequent course of life (p.14).

As Evangelist Paulus Modiša is conversing with Puledi and Thobja, Reverend Hermann, the white man (supposed Mokome), passes by on his way to the church building with books in his hands. Puledi requests to enter the church building and is allowed:

> Puledi a kgopela go tsena ka kerekeng (p.14).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Puledi requested to be allowed into the church building.

Puledi, in traditional African attire, mixes with people dressed in modern Western clothes and she desires that her aspiration may be fulfilled. In addition, Puledi's wish to see Mokome expose sorcerers is blighted, and instead, she sees congregants sing from hymn books and members of the confirmation class, in white dresses, stand before the congregation (p.14).

The reader is, in this way, invited to picture a happy and inspired Puledi in church with a white man standing in the pulpit. However, the reader cannot help but ask why the pastor is not a black African because black African ministers of religion were to be found in the decade in question. Conversely, the author introduces Puledi and Thobja to white people who are regarded by many as the vanguard of Western civilisation.

From then on, Puledi attends church in her traditional African attire and beads around her ankles for three months (p.15). Most importantly, the author depicts Christians as persons who do not despise the African traditional attire of loincloths and anklets.

Furthermore, Puledi requests that her mother sell a goat to acquire money for buying dresses:

> Ka morago mmagwe a mo dumelela ba rekiša Mahlabane ka mašeleng a lesome ba nyakela Puledi diroko (pp.15-16).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Thereafter her mother agreed to sell Mahlabane at ten British shillings and bought Puledi dresses.

In this way, Puledi achieves her desire and aspiration of wearing dresses and attending church at Setaseng.

4.2.1.5 Resolution

The resolution of the work involves a reversal of the fortunes of the witty Puledi, the protagonist. The bedrock in Puledi's moral values and temperament is the motivation that appears first as the main road that leads to Setaseng where the kind of attire for female residents is dresses. Puledi requests her mother to allow her to visit the village and she is highly impressed:

> … ba ema ba hlalela batho ba Setasi ge ba sepela-sepela le motse ba apere dikobo (p.9).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … they stopped and witnessed the residents of the mission station walking around in clothes.

The motivation propels Puledi to clash with her mother (Matšie), cousin (Makgari), aunt (Mpheiwane), grandmother (Mmahlaku) and the Pampe family that had betrothed her at the age of ten years (p.9). Despite the conflicts that arose, Puledi insists until she attends church wearing traditional African attire of loin cloths for three months (p.15).

Evangelist Paulus Modiša teaches her how to memorise the Lord's Prayer which poses as some form of possession by ancestral spirits to persons not yet initiated into the Christian religion (p.16). However, Puledi learns the rudiments of reading and writing under Evangelist Paulus Modiša.

Finally, Puledi's mother and Aunt Mpheiwane buy her dresses, allow her to associate with the Christian way of life and the mother accompanies her to church on the day of Puledi's baptism. In addition, the congregants congratulate Puledi by means of handshakes and pecuniary presents to the amount of fifteen British shillings and Puledi's mother is highly impressed by this gesture of goodwill (p.17).

The narrator reasonably introduces a male young adult, Piet Mohlala, into the work. Piet Mohlala is portrayed as a teacher, staunch member of the church and helpful character who matches the dispositions of Puledi so much that it does not fail to foreshadow to the reader the marriage between Puledi and Piet Mohlala. Moreover, the white minister of religion likes Piet Mohlala very much:

> Le Moruti Hermann o be a mo rata kudu (p.17).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Reverend Hermann also loved him very much.

The above scenario creates a comfortable milieu and favourable circumstances for Puledi in her new environment and what can be reasonably expected, and this leads to the ultimate resolution of the plot.

It is small wonder therefore, that Evangelist Paulus Modiša visits Puledi's family to arrange the marriage between Puledi and Piet Mohlala (p.18). The author says:

> Puledi a nyalwa ka dikgomo tše lesome … (p.19).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Puledi's dowry consisted of ten heads of cattle …

Puledi, a literate young female adult now and a Christian convert, is married to Piet Mohlala, a young male adult teacher, a staunch member of the church, and blue-eyed boy of Reverend Hermann. The reader is thus made to expect a prosperous life in the future for Puledi as Piet's match and life partner.

Consequently, a matrimonial ceremony is arranged and is attended by Matšie, Mpheiwane, Phetola and Maphari who are former antagonists to Puledi. Each former antagonist conducts himself/herself in a way that denotes a changed disposition towards the Christian religion (p.20).

Ultimately, Piet Mohlala becomes church leader after Evangelist Paulus Modiša and most of the people of Selemela convert to Christianity because of Piet Mohlala's laudable leadership (p.22). The author deliberately substitutes Piet Mohlala, Puledi's husband, for Evangelist Paulus Modiša so that the people of the rural and traditional village of Selemela may be converted to the Christian religion.

4.2.2 Theme and character delineation

Bopape (1991:92) notes that a theme in a literary work can only be discovered by looking closely at all the facets of the structure of the work. Therefore, the reader regards Christianity as the theme of the work because Puledi, a female young adult from a traditional village, prefers dresses worn by Christian women to traditional African attire:

> Puledi a botša Thobja gore o rata go apara bjalo ka batho ba, fela ga a tsebe gore dikobo tše a ka di bona kae. (Makoala, 1958:9)

(English translation)

Puledi told Thobja that she likes to dress like these people but does not know how to access the clothes.

As a consequence, Puledi develops internal conflict as she fears to tell her mother about her desire to dress like women residing in Setaseng (Makoala, 1958: 9). The author skilfully employs dress to draw Puledi to a village where Christians live so that she may get to learn something of the Christian religion.

Gossip between Thobja and Matome about dresses causes both oral and physical conflict between the brothers (p.10). As a result, their mother assaults Thobja with a traditional broom suspecting that the two brothers bully Puledi, and the action extends the conflict about dresses. Due to the assault, Thobja tells the mother about Puledi's admiration of dresses, and the conflict shifts to Puledi and the mother because Puledi is betrothed to the Pampe family:

"Ga o tsebe gore batho bao ba dulago Setasi ga ba nyalwe ka dikgomo?" (p.10).

(English translation)

"Do not you know that persons residing in Setasi do not get paid dowry in the form of cattle?"

By extension, one day Puledi is milking goats, and female residents of the Christian village pass by. Puledi is overwhelmed by their way of dress and gait so much that she bunks her duty for a while, trips over a stone, and spills the milk (p.11). The scene of dresses causes conflict between Puledi's usual dedication to duty and the attraction to dresses that causes her to trip over a stone and spill the milk.

The admiration for dresses in Puledi worries her so much that she braves circumstances surrounding her and requests to visit Setaseng in order to see Mokome (the reverend) "revealing sorcerers" (p.13). The narrator purposefully introduces Puledi to the sound of the church bell, the hospitable bell ringer, and the

welcoming congregants that spur Puledi towards Christianity. In addition, Puledi can hear and see congregants singing, each with sheets of paper in their hands. Thus, it is proved that Aunt Mpheiwane and her daughter Maphari do not tell the truth when they say that Christians use sheets of paper as instruments of sorcery and as reality dawns on her, Puledi insists on joining the Christian religion (p.14). For this reason, Puledi's mother changes her attitude towards the Christian religion:

> A thoma go di lebelela ka mokgwa wo mongwe (p.15).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> She began changing her attitude.

Matšie's change of attitude towards the Christian religion paves the way for the new convert to attend church in traditional African attire for three months (Makoala, 1958:15). Following on the three months of church attendance is the sale of a goat for the purpose of purchasing dresses for Puledi and the happy welcome Puledi receives on the following Sunday (p.16).

As a sequel, Evangelist Paulus Modiša teaches Puledi the oath of baptism in addition to the Lord's Prayer in preparation for her climax and confirmation of her conversion to Christianity (p.16). The reader cannot help but expect the day of Puledi's baptism as a final confirmation of her conversion to the Christian religion.

On the day of Puledi's baptism, her mother accompanies her to church and is greatly impressed by the warm welcome accompanied by the features of the baptismal ceremony (p.17). The author makes the mother express total acceptance of the Christian religion and, by so doing, foreshadows the impending baptism of Puledi's mother by levelling the playing field in advance.

Incidentally, an unmarried male adult and a qualified teacher, Piet Mohlala, is a staunch member of the church (p.17). The teacher falls in love with Puledi of all the young female congregants of the church and the action points to Puledi's unique characteristics or nature, although she is a newcomer.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, when Evangelist Paulus Modiša arrives at Puledi's home to initiate marriage negotiations between Puledi and Piet Mohlala (p.18). Appropriately, the negotiations succeed, dowry is paid and a vibrant matrimonial ceremony is arranged to the jubilation of Puledi's supporters and former antagonists together, as the Christian religion triumphs over her past trials and tribulations (pp.20-21).

As a consequence, Puledi joins the association of married women members of the church who fortify the Christian church services (p.22). Finally, the author retires Evangelist Paulus Modiša from leading the churchto pave the way for the dedicated and hardworking Piet Mohlala as teacher and leader of the church in Molototse (p.22).

4.2.3 Milieu and time

The general locale of the novella, at the exposition of the theme, is the rural village of Selemela at the advent of the Christian religion in some adjacent rural villages. Coupled with the rural village background is utter poverty that reigns in the home of Puledi who is depicted by the author as a beautiful, generous, helpful, and hardworking female young adult (p.5).

Circumstances surrounding the young adults of the period include the type of attire which compares relatively poorly with the attire worn by Christian converts (p.9). Because of the disparity in dress, there is cause for one kind of attire to influence the actions of the young adults wearing what they deem an inferior type of clothing.

One day when Puledi is tending Mmahlaku's goats, a group of female young adults passes by and attracts her so much that she loses concentration on her duty. The cause of attraction is the dresses they have on and the way the group swings their hips as they walk:

> O be a hlaletše basetsana ba ba diroko, a bile a etšiša tshepelelo ya bona (p.11).

(English translation)

> She was eyeing these dress-wearing girls and imitating their way of walking.

By way of comparison, Puledi looks down upon her form of dress in favour of the attire worn by the ladies who follow the Christian religion.

One day Puledi learns of a mule cart that passes along the main road that leads to Setaseng. The four mules and a white male person on board serve as an added attraction (p.13). The main road becomes the milieu of circumstances that change Puledi's disposition concerning the circumstances of life.

Puledi braves potential conflict and requests her mother to allow her to visit Setaseng to see the White man and his tricks of exposing alleged sorcerers and her mother consents (p.14). Furthermore, she learns of the ringing of the church bell, the bell itself and the bell ringer who introduces Puledi to the minister of religion (p.14). All that Puledi has heard and seen at Setaseng on that Sunday becomes the milieu and time that encourages Puledi to strive for a process of joining the Christian congregation.

Puledi suffers due to a lack of money to buy Western clothes but finds an alternative way of making money by suggesting that a goat be sold for this purpose. However, lack of money does not deter Puledi from attending church in traditional African attire, for three months, although her appearance sacrifices her status among young female adults of her age (p.15).

To Puledi's relief, her mother buys her dresses and the congregation is elated to see Puledi in an attire aligned with that of the female young adults among them (p.16). The reader, therefore, is enabled to draw a picture of a Puledi with added self-acceptance and self-esteem and to identify with the character that has a high potential of success in life.

Evangelist Paulus Modiša visits Puledi's home to start the marriage negotiations between Puledi and Piet Mohlala, the teacher. After four months, the bride price is

paid, the matrimonial ceremony prepared accordingly and Puledi and Piet Mohlala are married amid happy relatives and fellow congregants (pp.20-21). The particular physical location of episodes changes frequently in order to facilitate the smooth development of the theme as the plot unfolds.

Apart from all this, Piet Mohlala becomes the leader of the Christian congregation after the retirement of Evangelist Paulus Modiša, this, on top of his teaching career (p.22). As a result, Puledi finds a warm home when she joins the association of married female members of the Christian congregation:

> Phegelelo ya Puledi ya go rata go apara diroko bjalo ka batho ba Setaseng e mo diretše lešoto le legolo la go ba Mokriste. (p.22)

(English translation)

> Puledi's urge to wear dresses like the residents of Setaseng brought her great fortune of conversion to Christianity.

In this novella, the narrator brings to life the rural environment. For example, the environment consists of livestock kraals, homesteads of thatched buildings, and abject poverty against the backdrop of Puledi's generosity. Over and above this, Puledi helps Mmahlaku by tending her goats and their kids. On the other hand, Matome and Thobja herd Phetola's cattle. The reader is, thereby, compelled to sympathise with the suffering family.

4.2.4 Narrative point of view (Narration)

4.2.4.1 Third-person narrator

The author establishes a perspective by which the reader is presented with the characters (Abrams, 1981:142). Makoala (1958) authoritatively exposes Puledi, the protagonist, as a beautiful, helpful, generous, and hardworking young adult female (Makoala, 1958:5). The author refers to characters by names such as Puledi, Matome, Thobja, Mmatšie, Mmahlaku, and thereby becomes a third-person narrator.

Further, the author presents the reader with the actions of the characters which he explains as an omniscient third person narrator in different physical localities like Selemela, Setaseng, Molototse, goat kraal, main road, church building, and many others. The actions in the different physical localities are presented to the reader with authority. For instance, Puledi voluntarily tends to kids belonging to Mmahlaku when Mmahlaku goes to the cornfields to take care of food security (Makoala, 1958:7). Additionally, Puledi can milk goats and store the milk without the assistance of Mmahlaku, the owner:

> Gape Puledi o be a bile a kgona go gama dipudi tša koko Mmahlaku. (Makoala, 1958:8)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> In addition, Puledi could milk Granny Mmahlaku's goats.

Mmahlaku gives Puledi a ewe as a gesture of thankfulness occasioned by Puledi's voluntary and helpful service, and the goat bears a female kid (Makoala, 1958:8). Needless to say, the goats will multiply easily because of the two ewes.

Subsequently, the narrator presents to the reader the ringing of a church bell, the bell itself, and the bell ringer, through the consciousness of the protagonist, Puledi (p.14). In this way, the impression that falls on Puledi's consciousness is accentuated by the author in order to make the reader accept the effect of Christian tools like the church bell, for instance. Thereafter Puledi is induced to enter the church after seeing Reverend Hermann entering with books in his hands:

> Puledi a kgopela go tsena ka kerekeng (p.14).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Puledi requested to enter the church.

The positive impression of the church is further accentuated by the sight of confirmation class learners standing in a row and dressed in white before the congregation for their turn to become full church members (p.14). The same impression is captured by the author when he says:

> Thobja a re yena o thakgaditšwe ke basetsana bale ba diroko tše tšhweu le monna yola wa lekgowa wa go ema ka pele a bolela (p.14).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Thobja said that he was pleased by those girls in white dresses and that White man who stood in the front and talked.

From the above, the reader deduces that the church bell, the bell ringer, and the sound of the church bell are factors that draw Puledi towards Christianity. After all these external factors, Puledi finds further attractions inside the church in the form of the rituals like the sacraments.

4.2.4.2 The employment of dialogue

The narrator employs dialogue to develop the theme of the novella. By way of illustration, Puledi's mother (Matšie) talks to Puledi to find out the cause of the conflict among the siblings and Matome utters the following in self-defence:

> "Ga se nna, ke Thobja." (p.10).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> "It is not me, it is Thobja."

As a consequence, Matšie makes Puledi aware that her interest in wearing dresses is going to cause conflict between Matšie and the Pampe family to whom Puledi has been engaged since she was ten years of age:

> “Puledi! Puledi!! Na o rata go ntweša le batho?” (p.10).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> “Puledi! Puledi!! Do you want to cause conflict between me and other people?”

The novelist continues to employ dialogue between Puledi and Matšie when Reverend Hermann is visiting the congregation at Setaseng. Better still, Matšie is so impressed with the reception at the evangelist’s home, the church service, and Puledi’s baptism. Puledi’s congratulatory handshakes by the congregants and the attendant monetary and gifts, add to the impression. The mother feels obliged to confess to Puledi the truth about all her attempts to discourage her from becoming a Christian:

> “Ka go rialo re be re rata go go tentšha go ya Setaseng.” (p.17)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> “By so doing, we were trying to discourage you from visiting Setaseng.”

The employment of dialogue in the narrative is meant to enhance the storyline. This literary feature makes reading more appealing and realistic. As the plot unfolds, the narrator comments on issues and events closely related to the theme. By so doing “characters’ thoughts, feelings, and motives” are ignited and rekindled (Abrams & Harpham, 2015:301).

Matšie, interestingly, encourages Puledi, Thobja, and Matome to cherish hope for wealth in the future, notwithstanding the prevailing abject poverty in their home:

> “Le tla gola bana ba ka, le lena la kgona go itshelela.” (Makoala, 1958:5)

(English translation)

"You will grow up, my children, and be able to fend for yourselves."

Further, Matšie commends Puledi on tending Mmahlaku's goats and earning an ewe from Mmahlaku, because the family has had no livestock before:

"Nase o mosadi wa basadi." (p.8).

(English translation)

"Today you are a lady among ladies."

In contrast, Maphari (Puledi's cousin) attempts to discourage Puledi from converting to Christianity after learning that Puledi desires to affiliate to the Christian religion but fails (p.11). As if that is not enough, Maphari snarls at Puledi as a way of fortifying her discouragement:

"O lesola [sehlola] motswalaka." (p.11).

(English translation)

"You are causing bad spells, Cousin."

The narrator has successfully used the third-person narrator who "is presumed to know everything" (Quinn, 2004:260). As it were, the reader finds the technique contributing to a better understanding of the theme of the novella. Actions, characters, settings, and events are presented convincingly.

4.3 A brief comparison of the decade

4.3.1 Plot structure

4.3.1.1 Exposition

Puledi (the protagonist), in Makoala (1958), does not attend school at an early age but grows up helping her mother, Matšie, with household chores and tending the kids

and goats of Granny Mmahlaku. In added fashion, Puledi is a skilful decorator of the courtyard (*lapa*) floor, a consummate dancer and accomplished drummer, over and above her helpfulness, generosity, cleanliness. Her natural beauty and humility are the cherry on the cake. In contrast, Tsakata, in Ramaila (1953), grows up in a middle-class environment, attends primary school and then secondary school.

4.3.1.2 Climax

According to Makoala (1953), Puledi is frustrated by the intimidation relating to the supposed sorcery of the Christians with hymn books in their hands, as alleged by her antagonists, but she soldiers on. In support of the advent of Christianity, Puledi and Thobja visit Setaseng, attend church and find all the conditions receptive. The narrative becomes more convincing as the narrator describes in more detail, circumstances leading to the flourishing of the attraction of Puledi towards the Christian religion.

Tsakata, in Ramaila (1953), on the other hand, uses his astute intellect and prolific writing dexterity to write permits of all kinds for restricted persons and derives monetary benefit from the practice. As a sequel, Tsakata becomes a celebrity in Alexandra Township, is later arrested and transfers his survival tricks in the West Rand to the East Rand (now Ekurhuleni). It is in the East Rand that Tsakata is forced to move to Kgautšwane in the rural area. All this is how the author prepares the reader to find Tsakata in the rural area once more.

4.3.1.3 Resolution

By way of resolution, Puledi in Makoala (1958) converts to Christianity, marries a teacher, and joins the religious women's league. In contrast, the opulent Tsakata of the urban Gauteng loses his fortunes and the narrator leaves it to the reader to figure out Tsakata's future. The storyline includes, amongst other things, plenty of action and exciting incidents. There are "positive messages and life lessons" (Miller, 2013). It is also interesting to notice that to unravel the knot of the narrative, the narrator does not kill Tsakata.

4.3.2 Theme and character delineation

The theme of *Tsakata* (1953) could, in short, be described as 'the unlawful practices of acquiring wealth'. On the other hand, the theme of *Puledi le Thobja* (1958) could be described as 'the lawful and respectable ways to a well-to-do lifestyle'.

It is not unusual for young adults to face expansive challenges of life in pursuit of their ambitions. One of the distinguishing factors is the job-search process or the need for sustainable employment. In many instances, young adults find short-term vacancies, low-paid or insecure employment opportunities (Moore, 2019:91-108).

The above observation is affirmed by Ramaila (1953) and Makoala (1958). Equally, both Tsakata and Puledi have ambitions in life although the ambitions differ drastically and prescribe various pathways of achieving them. Tsakata consciously elects unlawful means of acquiring plenty in the form of smuggling intoxicating drinks in different settings (Ramaila, 1953:23-31). Alternatively, Puledi tends the kids and goats of Granny Mmahlaku (Makoala, 1958:5-6) while, equally, Thobja and Matome herd Phetola's cattle (Makoala, 1958:5-7) voluntarily and moderate wealth is thereby attained progressively (Makoala, 1958:6-8).

The reader notes a measure of resilience in both Tsakata and Puledi, who could not otherwise have succeeded against the hurdles in the respective pursuit of their different ambitions. For example, Puledi braves utter poverty, tending kids, ridicule, the alleged sorcery of the Christians, and learning basic literacy on a part-time basis (Makoala, 1958:11-13 & 18). Similarly, Tsakata meets the challenges of expulsion from secondary school, smuggling liquor, a grievous injury, loss of property, incessant arrests, study through correspondence, and emotional abuse by the superintendent of schools, to mention but a few (Ramaila, 1953).

Ramaila (1953) and Makoala (1958) smack greatly of didacticism in presenting the respective themes of their work. Accordingly, Ramaila (1953) sounds a warning to his readers against acquiring wealth through unlawful or illegal means. On the other hand, Makoala (1958) encourages the readers of his novella to convert to Christianity despite the challenges they face in their social and personal circumstances.

Ramaila employs a Biblical quotation (Ecclesiastes 10:8) to develop and support the theme of his novella:

> Yo a kgatlollago morako, o tla longwa ke noga. (Ramaila, 1953:138-139)

(English translation)

Whoever demolishes a wall, will be bitten by a snake.

In the same vein, Makoala has the following quotation:

> Go [Ba] lehlogonolo ke ba ba tlaišetšwago toko gobane mmušo wa magodimo ke wa bona bao. (Makoala, 1958:11)

(English translation)

> Blessed are those that are persecuted for justice; the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them.

It should be noted that the above excerpts are consciously repeated in this chapter in order to bring out the aesthetic meaning of comparison. It is apparent that both authors, Ramaila and Makoala, harness biblical injunctions to drive their didactic statements home. This is prompted by the pithy nature of their assertions. Due to practical constraints, the researcher does not purport to have exhausted the comparison and critical evaluation of the two novellas under discussion. In fact, no approach is conclusive; any literary work is open to many theoretical approaches. This implies that different scholars could use different lenses to evaluate a work of art.

4.3.3 Milieu and time

Makoala (1958) swings from Selemela to Setaseng often, but includes Phalaborwa, when Thobja becomes successful in life. The shift of milieu and time denotes the authority of the author to pursue themes that smack of didacticism. An instance of this is when Puledi visits the church in Setaseng for the first time and several other times, marries an evangelist and teacher, and subsequently becomes a member of a women's religious association.

On the other hand, Tsakata, in Ramaila (1953), moves freely from a rural village where he attends primary school, heads to a secondary school, and is unfairly

expelled because the due process is not followed. The narrator employs a zigzag movement to shift the character to the West Rand, the East Rand and finally back to the rural Kgautšwane.

Tsakata pursues his secondary school studies on a part-time basis and moves to Lemana where he acquires a teaching qualification. Tsakata excels in teaching and choral music in Kgautšwane but meets challenges of a jealous principal (Albert Nape) and the Superintendent of schools.

After an altercation with the Superintendent of schools, Tsakata leaves and once more, goes to the urban area of Johannesburg. He becomes a principal of a school who lives beyond his means and ultimately meets the might of the law. The reader cannot understand how the principal of a school can own several rented properties at various sites. The might of the law, ultimately, catches up with Tsakata and his fortunes are turned upside down:

> Molao wo o dirilwego ka tlhologelo ya go dira go loka, ga o tlhalefetšwe (pp.138-139).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> A law that is designed to achieve justice cannot be flouted.

The author skilfully presents the theme of the literary work in this way. Consequently, the researcher commends the author.

4.3.4 Narrative point of view (Narration)

4.3.4.1 Third-person narrator

Makoala (1958) harnesses a third-person narrator as he narrates, by exposition, the origin of Puledi, her desire for wearing dresses, her gradual conversion to Christianity, and her ultimate marriage to a teacher and leader of the congregation at Setaseng.

Adeptly, the author presents a women's religious association to which Puledi affiliates.

Puledi, the protagonist in Makoala (1958), does not attend school at an early age but is taught reading and writing skills by an evangelist after taking a firm decision to be a Christian convert (Makoala, 1958:18). In contrast, Tsakata, the protagonist in Ramaila (1953), attends primary and secondary schools but is expelled from high school before completing his studies (Ramaila, 1953:3). The reader ascribes the difference in the two protagonists' acquiring literacy levels in the two different texts to the difference in the advent of schooling in the various parts of the then Transvaal (now Gauteng, North West, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga).

Puledi yearns to be converted to the Christian religion. Subsequently, she is baptised, and leads a life of middle-class persons after living in abject poverty before the conversion (Makoala, 1958:22). Conversely, Tsakata yearns for wealth and indulges in unlawful practices, succeeds to an extent as evidenced by his luxurious cars and a high class of friends and lifestyle. However, he later meets the might of the law that causes him to secretly return to his uncle's home in Kgautšwane (Ramaila, 1953:45). The difference in the ways of fending for themselves for Puledi and Tsakata, severally, can be ascribed to the difference in lifestyles in rural Setaseng and in urban areas, respectively.

Tsakata, in Ramaila (1953), registers for part-time studies to complete his secondary school education (Ramaila, 1953:57) and thereafter acquires a teaching qualification at Lemana and becomes a qualified teacher (Ramaila, 1953:68). Similarly, Puledi in Makoala (1958) studies basic literacy only so that she can read and write letters for unlearned persons at Selemela at no cost although some generous persons offer her fowls or corn (Makoala, 1958:18).

Both Ramaila (1953) and Makoala (1958) portray rounded characters who change the course of the storyline. Tsakata and Puledi are individualised in their quest to live a better life and attain material success. The voice that tells the story is that of the narrator who is invincible. The two characters, Tsakata and Puledi, have ambitions in life although the ambitions differ drastically and subscribe to various pathways of achieving them.

It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by comparison; Tsakata elects unlawful means of acquiring plenty in the form of smuggling intoxicating drinks in different settings (Ramaila, 1953:23-31). Conversely, Puledi tends the kids and goats of Granny Mmahlaku (Makoala, 1958:7), while equally, Thobja and Matome herd Phetola's cattle (Makoala, 1958:6) voluntarily and moderate wealth is thereby accumulated progressively.

What is interesting in the circumstances is that both Tsakata, in Ramaila (1953) and Puledi, in Makoala (1958), display an inclination towards the Christian religion. Puledi ardently yearns to be a Christian convert and is baptised and marries Piet Mohlala who later becomes a teacher and evangelist (Makoala, 1958:22).

In a somewhat similar manner, Tsakata flees the turbulent urban Benoni, Johannesburg, Brakpan, and Springs (Ramaila, 1953:19-21, 25-26, 37-38) for Kgautšwane where Evangelist Titus Tšhilwane, his maternal uncle, is a teacher and evangelist (Ramaila, 1953:45). Tsakata's stay in Kgautšwane for the period of his studies through correspondence and during the early years of his teaching career points, accordingly, to no aversion to Christianity.

Ramaila (1953) and Makoala (1958) smack greatly of didacticism in presenting the respective themes of their work. Accordingly, Ramaila (1953) warns his readers against acquiring wealth through unlawful or illegal means. On the other hand, Makoala (1958) encourages his readers to convert to Christianity despite challenges in their path.

The researcher does not purport to have exhausted the comparison and critical evaluation of the literary texts under evaluation. There is still a lot of information hidden in the texts. It only requires other determined scholars to search for either Afrocentric or Eurocentric thoughts hidden in the narratives and bring them to light.

4.3.4.2 The employment of dialogue

The novelist presents a character who is living an opulent life and can sue someone. Subsequently, the Superintendent seems to be in trouble when Tsakata says:

> “Ka tate ke tla mo sua.” (Ramaila, 1953:91)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> “I swear by my father, I will sue you.”

Purposefully, Tsakata intends to fight the authority of the inspector of schools in Lydenburg. In hindsight, Nape could not influence the Superintendent General to dismiss Tsakata from work.

By contrast, Thobja appreciates his experience in the church. Matome and Thobja talk about what Thobja saw in the church. The following ensues:

> “Maaka! Maaka!!” Mmagwe a botšiša a re: “Ke eng Puledi?” Puledi a re: “Ke yena yo; Matome o a nkgoela.” (Makoala, 1958:10)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> “Lie! Lie!!” The mother asked: “What is happening Puledi?” Puledi answered: “It is this one; Matome is provoking me.”

The omniscient narrator brings to the reader the fact that Thobja has experienced everything else. The mother is concerned but gets the truth when told by Thobja. Further, Thobja tells their mother that he appreciated the white reverend who baptised congregants. The whole church service left an indelible mark on his heart and mind, hence her attraction to conversion to Christianity.

4.4 Conclusion

The decade 1950-1959 produced several novellas tinted with didacticism. One could count amongst others, *Nkgekgetane* (1953) by Kgatle, *Kgopotso go Beatrice wa Botlokwa* (1953) by Moloisie, *Thaka ye kgwadi* (1954) by Phatudi, *Nkotsana* (1955) by Madiba, and *Dithomo* (1959) by Motuku. Mokgokong (1981:222) laments that comparatively, all the cited narratives “are but a concatenation of events from which

a moral is learnt". It is for very valid and potent reasons that Mokgokong (1968:62) goes further to say that during the period cited above, the authors "crystallized their own culture in their works."

In conclusion, the decade epitomises a culture of learning to survive in a foreign milieu where the values learnt in the rural setting become devalued. The overriding motif is the Jim-goes-to-town one. In their eagerness to learn the new urban values, however, the young adults find themselves in a confused state which leads, in many instances, to disaster. Mokgokong (p.62) is therefore right when he says, as stated above, that the narratives of this period are a combination of events that convey a moral. The lesson to the reader, in this case, is that he should beware of the imminent danger that life in the new setting entails. Mokgokgong (pp.60-67) is supported by Serudu (1983:95) who acknowledges that:

> Works which appeared during this period were characterised by the tendency to moralise. Most of the stories were based on the experiences of Black youths in industrialised areas. After exposure to urban life, which in most cases took them by storm, they returned to their homes, having become "human wrecks".

From the above excerpt it becomes very clear that the authors tried "to create meaning for the world around them" (Mokgoatšana, 1999:20). Indeed, that is the dichotomy that cuts across earlier narratives in Sesotho sa Leboa. In addition, this cannot be viewed as a deliberate attempt by pioneer authors to downgrade Sesotho sa Leboa literature. Every literary text is a mirror of its time and space.

CHAPTER 5: DECADE UNDER REVIEW: 1960-1969

The evaluation of the selected YA novellas of the decade 1960-1969 is the subject matter of this chapter:

5.1 *Morutiši Dinyepo* by Dolamo, E.R. (1965): Marxist Criticism

Karl Marx is regarded as the father of Marxism. This critical approach or theory is based on the premise of class conflict and societal structures. In as much as bias is seen to be rooted in human behaviour, according to Marxism, socio-economics is seen to be the dominant factor of the human experience. The main focus is on socialism rather than individualism. In recent years, scholars in Marxism have broadened their scope of criticism. These scholars view a literary text as a reflection of the age in which it was produced.

According to Tyson (2015:52), Marxist theory thus advocates:

> … all human events and productions have specific material/historical causes. An accurate picture of human affairs cannot be obtained by the search for abstract, timeless essences or principles but only by understanding concrete conditions in the world.

The foregoing assertion informs the reader that the whole ideology of class reference is anchored in the “haves” (those who have power and control of the economy) and the “have-nots” (those who live in abject poverty, performing manual labour for their bosses). The “haves” may also be referred to as the *bourgeoisie* and the “have-nots” as the *proletariat* (p.52).

After reading *Morutiši Dinyepo* (Dolamo, 1965), one can fairly conclude that the novella is a response to the circumstances faced by young black adults in South Africa, before the new political dispensation. This is somewhat the approach which was known as the ‘makgoweng’ motif (Jim-goes-to-town motif), used then by authors in Sesotho sa Leboa, which remains a subject of criticism today.

It has to be noted that after the discovery of gold in Gauteng (“A place of Gold”) in 1886, many young men from the rural areas flocked to the then Transvaal to seek

employment, mainly in the mines but also in other industries. Indeed, the mining industry ushered in a new economic era in South Africa, full of glitter and glamour. For this reason, the researcher cannot downplay Marxist criticism, in the evaluation of Dolamo (1965), as it sheds light on the exploitation of those who sell their manual labour to those who have economic power, for a cash wage. Those who could not make it in the industries sought other means to make a living. Some became notorious thugs, others became priests and others still became police officers, nurses, and teachers.

5.1.1 Plot structure

5.1.1.1 Exposition

By way of introducing the storyline to the reader, the writer makes a distinction of classes as part of the problem and not a solution. The following excerpt bears testimony to the argument:

> Bophelo bja batho ba baso ke bjo boima mehleng ya lehono. Bothata bo tlišwa ke go leka go phela maphelo a mehuta ye mebedi. Ka letsogong le, go swerwe bja segagaborena; ka mo ke bja sekgowa. Fao go re šupa gabotse gore mebila e mebedi. Phukubje ya mekoka mebedi e pharoga noka (Dolamo, 1965:5).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> The life of the black people today is very difficult. The problem stems from the fact that they are trying to live two kinds of lifestyles. On the one hand, they cling to a traditional African lifestyle; on the other they practise a Western lifestyle. It is quite clear that they straddle two paths. A jackal that straddles two paths, breaks its hip.

In the very beginning, characters and locations are not mentioned. Reference is only made to “illusions, habits of thought and conceptions of life” (Williams, 1977:76). The author magnifies culture, social order, and imbalances, leaning on the premise of

superiority and inferiority complexes. By so doing, the author entices the reader to further explore the text.

The following extract clearly explains the underlying class struggles and acculturation:

> Ge bjale re lebana le bophelo bja sekgowa, re tloga re hwetša boimanyana. Le bjona ga re kgone go ka bo phetha ka tshwanelo le ka botlalo. Boima bjo re bo hwetšago e le lepheko la mathomo ke gore bophelo bjo re a bo rutwa fela, ga se bjoo re bo tsebago go tloga tlhagong ya bjona. Re kwa fela ge go thwe; tšea se, o lahle seo; lahla sela, o tšee se. Re ithuta ka go dira (Dolamo, 1965:5).

(English translation)

> As we are now faced with Western life, it becomes tedious for us. We are unable to fully comply with its demands. The first hurdle we find unbearable is that we are taught this life, but it is not the type of life that we are accustomed to from the onset. We are compelled to comply when we are instructed; take this, throw that away; throw the other one away; take this one. We are learning by doing.

Flowing from the quote above, it is revealing that “the relations of force” (Satgar, 2015:6) existed between the whites (“the haves”) and the blacks (“the have-nots”). What stands out starkly here is how the author depicts the actual history of the class struggle. Perhaps for one to survive, especially the oppressed, one must go through formal education. The following bears testimony to this argument:

> Thuto le yona motho o swanetše go ka e hwetša ge go le ditseka le bahlahli (Dolamo, 1965:6).

(English translation)

> You can only be educated when you are financially sound and close to those who would be able to guide you.

It is important to remember that education is not only meant for the elite. Dolamo (p.6) vividly draws a picture of separate development in the mind of the reader. Significantly, unlike in the past, it is only now in South Africa that there are no-fee schools. In recent times, that is, during 2015-2016, tertiary institutions learners engaged in hashtag campaigns such as #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall (Booysen, 2016:239).

As indicated in the preceding paragraph, it is interesting to note that Dolamo (1965) is aware of liberation literature concerning the African child or young adult. According to Hamilton (1993), cited by Jackson and Boutte (2009:109), literature at best should allow "the reader to travel with characters in the imagined world of the book and bear witness to the character's trials, sufferings and triumphs."

5.1.1.2 Rising action

Dolamo (1965) introduces a number of twists and turns, preceding the climax. The author creates curiosity in the mind of the reader. Firstly, Dinyepo, who is known to be disciplined and firm, succumbs to peer pressure. Dinong and Kgopa, his friends, lure him to a nearby shebeen. Dinyepo starts to take alcohol. Mmamaria, the shebeen queen and her daughter, Maria, try by all means to make Dinyepo feel at home. Time and again, when Dinyepo visits Mmamaria's family, he is offered first-class treatment. Experiencing the warm reception at the shebeen, Dinyepo becomes elated and radiant.

> Dinyepo o be a šetše a feditše le moya wa gagwe gore o swanetše go botša Maria ka ga seo se lego pelong ya gagwe. Maria o be a šetše a ratile Dinyepo kgale (Dolamo, 1965:13).

(English translation)

> Deep down in his soul Dinyepo has long decided to express the love in his heart to Maria. Maria has long fallen in love with Dinyepo.

On one occasion, Dinyepo, together with his two friends, Dinong and Kgopa, plan to rob a nearby white businessman. The masterplan is orchestrated by Dinyepo who knows exactly where the money is kept after business hours. The trio successfully manages to pull out the locked safe and push it outside the house. All of a sudden, the Flying Squad approaches with bright lights and the robbers vanish into thin air.

Because of his irresistible tendency of stealing, Dinyepo lands in jail after committing murder. He serves a term of three years in jail and returns home empty-handed and very sick. As a cover-up, Dinyepo tells all those who are close to him that he was admitted to the hospital for a long period. His parents try by all means to give him moral support and even provide him with new clothing.

At a later stage, Dinyepo goes back to Gauteng and returns to the fold of bad company. He becomes a fearless and reckless young man and sticks to his old life of a jailbird. Old habits die hard. One day, whilst executing a robbery plan and trying to run away with the cash, Dinyepo is injured. He is caught by the police and taken to hospital where he remains under constant surveillance.

> Mo phapošeng ya ga bo Dinyepo go be go na le monna wa moruti (p.52).

(English translation)

> In the same ward where Dinyepo was admitted, there was a man of the cloth.

The man of the cloth whose name is Ramagaga, realises that Dinyepo is a talented musician as he used to sing for the patients and personnel of the hospital. Reverend Ramagaga encourages Dinyepo to enrol as a teacher and expend his energy in that

direction. Dinyepo does become a teacher and later becomes a choirmaster who is destined to reach great heights. Dinyepo had cited poverty as a reason for not pursuing his studies. Reverend Ramagaga had promised in good faith to pay his tuition fee as well as the trial charge. Under the circumstances, Dinyepo could not bring forward any excuse or objection.

5.1.1.3 Conflict

Dinyepo ties the knot with the gorgeous Thola, a girl from a different clan, in spite of the disapproval of his parents. By profession, Thola is a qualified nurse. Deeply concerned, his father says:

> Mokaona o swanetše go hlwa o kirihla le dinaga ka geno go le gona? O kgotsofala kudu ge nna ke swanetše go tšwa ka difata go ya go kgopela lešaetšana la go nkgela meetse kgole le sefero sa malome wa gago se na le dikgarebe tše di tšwelego mahlalagading? (Dolamo, 1965:67)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Are you supposed to be all over the place whereas you have a real home? Do you certainly feel content when I am the one who is supposed to go out in search of a daughter-in-law who can draw water for me whereas nearby your uncle has matured maidens?

The excerpt above draws a picture of how sceptical Dinyepo's father is about the planned marriage. In a sense, the reader can imagine what will happen hereafter. Suspense is used by the author as the reader is not directly led to the incidents that will occur later. In so doing, the plot thickens and invites the reader to go on reading.

Characters are unique, just like fingerprints and their emotional reactions likewise. It is not until Thola settles down with Dinyepo in their own house, that her true colours

are revealed. The first major problem that Dinyepo has to contend with is that his wife is barren.

> Lethabo le legolo go banyalani mo lapeng le tlišwa ke ngwana. Ge gona ba ka se hlogonolofatšwe ka ngwana, lethabo le fela le gomela le sa tšwelele gabotse (p.69).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> In a family a child brings the greatest happiness between couples. If a family cannot be blessed with a child, happiness takes a step backward and eventually disappears.

Marriage is regarded as a social institution. The gift of children is at the heart of most African families. Lack of children renders marriage an unhappy union.

5.1.1.4 Falling action

Thola leaves her house without a word. Dinyepo alerts the in-laws. To his surprise, the in-laws seem disinterested and not worried about Thola's whereabouts. Dinyepo goes further to inform his parents about Thola's disappearance. The parents advise him to wait for some time in the hope that Thola will show up. Unfortunately, Thola does not.

> Dinyepo yena a tseba gore mosadi o ithakile ka boyena. Bonkgwete bja gagwe bo be bo šetše bo fetogile bogafa. Sebata ge se tennwe ke molete se o tsena ka sa morago (p.89).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Dinyepo himself knew that his wife had driven herself away. Her arrogance had turned into madness. When an ant bear is tired of its hole it enters it in reverse.

We are relieved that the innocent and deeply wronged Dinyepo has eventually given up the hunt for his wife and that he resigns himself to his fate. The vixen has indeed grown tired of tormenting her husband and like the ant-bear has entered her hole in reverse, having grown tired of it.

Thola leaves their home without intending to return and this translates into malicious desertion which supports Dinyepo in his application for divorce. Thola's conduct ushers in a falling action of this novella.

5.1.1.5 Resolution

On reading Dinyepo's letter, Mmaditlhodi is filled with compassion when she learns about all his travails. She knows the kind-hearted Dinyepo very well from the days when he lived in her household. All this kindles her love for him. The novelist says:

> Go Mmaditlhodi go ile gwa tlala kwelobohloko kudu go fetiša lerato ge a gopola tša matshwenyego a morutiši Dinyepo. E ile ge a gopola ka fao a phetšego le lapa labo le ka fao a tshwenyegilego ka gona, a napa a kgaoga pelo. O be a tseba mokgwa le bophelo bja morutiši Dinyepo gabotse ka botlalo. O mo tseba e le motho wa kagišo le lerato. Motho wa boitshwaro le tlhompho e makatšago (p.107).

(English translation)

> Mmaditlhodi was filled with more compassion than love when she thought about Dinyepo's travails. When she thought about how Dinyepo had lived with her family and the way he had suffered, she was heartbroken. She knew teacher Dinyepo's character and life fully. She knows him to be a co-operative and loving person. A person of good conduct and tremendous respect.

The novelist clearly shows how the two lovers' romance blossomed:

> Baratani bao ba ile ba nama ba kgotletša, ba tlema ba tiiša (p.107).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> These lovers then kindled and tied their love securely.

It has never occurred to Reverend Ramagaga that Dinyepo would ever propose love to his daughter. So, when the news is broken to him, he is over the moon:

> E ile ge ditaba tšeo di tsena ditsebeng tša moruti Ramagaga le ba lapa la gagwe, tša thabelwa kudu, tša amogelwa ka dipelo tše tšhweu tšeo di se nago le sehutla le ga e le kgokgono ya mohuta o mongwe. Seo sa tlatša lethabo kudu lapeng la moruti ka ge ba ekwa morwedi wa bona a lošwa ke motho yo bjalo ka morutiši Dinyepo … Go moruti, o be a le bjalo ka morwa wa gagwe (p.107).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> When the news reached Reverend Ramagaga and his family's ears, it made them very happy, and they received it very heartily and without any reservation. The news filled the reverend's family with joy when they heard that their daughter was being courted by a person like teacher Dinyepo. To the reverend, he was like a son.

The novelist's art reaches its peak at the end of the narrative. There is a *reversal* which shows that there is a tenuous line between good fortune and bad fortune. Dinyepo, who has suffered egregiously at the hands of Thola, arrives from his holiday in Durban with his wife, Mmaditlhodi, only to find his former wife, Thola and her lover, dead in a car crash. Deeply devasted Thola, laments thus:

> E kile ya ba mosadi wa ka (p.117).

(English translation)

She was once my wife.

The dénouement of the narrative brings about a *reversal* whereby Dinyepo discovers that fate has had a hand in his life. He returns home from a holiday in Durban with Mmaditlhodi, his new lover, to find Thola who disserted him, and her new lover, dead

5.1.2 Theme and character delineation

One of the novella's major themes is that of *reversal.* The lesson that is put across to the reader is that everyone gets his deserts in the end; what goes around comes around.

Dinyepo grew up in a disciplined family unit; that is what makes him careful in his approach to life, taking time to make decisions. No wonder, the author depicts him as a down-to-earth character, but like many other young men of his age, he has a burning desire to achieve success and amass material wealth. Though Dinyepo lives in Johannesburg because of employment, he does not forget that home is home. Unlike his peers, after every month's end, he sends money back home. Deep down in his heart, he knows that money and success cannot be equated to inner happiness.

5.1.2.1 Dinyepo

Though Dinyepo's life is characterised by irregular emotions of self-indulgence, he has a big heart that enables him to hold himself in the highest regard. The writer illustrates this rare gift by saying:

> Re ka fela re ipotšiša gore yo Dinyepo yena o be a bopilwe ka le le bjang. A pelo ya gagwe e be e le bjang gore a tle a kgone go fenya le go kata meleko yeo e paletšego le banna ba malapa? Dipotšišo tše, le tše dingwe tše ntši, di ka fetolwa ke ge motho a na le tswalego le kgotlelelo (Dolamo, 1965:7).

(English translation)

> Occasionally we ask ourselves what kind of clay Dinyepo was made of. How was his heart that enabled him to solve problems which could not be solved by family men? These questions, and many others, can only be answered if a person is cultured and has perseverance.

As self-respect deepens in him and paves the way for his proper outlook on life, Dinyepo develops the strength to be humble. The writer says:

> Ngwana wa hlogo ye e bulegilego wa boitshwaro le mekgwa ya setho, ka mehla o ratwa ke barutiši mo sekolong (pp.1965:56-57).

(English translation)

> An exceptionally gifted child who is well-behaved and has acceptable social conduct, is always liked by his teachers at school.

Reading through the text reveals that the writer enumerates a few pointers as proof that Dinyepo is an exceptional person. His behaviour and conduct distinguish him as someone who remains unflawed even under adverse conditions. He remains a resilient soul through the lessons of life.

> Ka morago ga ngwaga wona woo wa mathomo, ke ge Dinyepo a šetše a kgethilwe go ba hlogo ya mengwakong ya bašimane (p.57).

(English translation)

> At the end of that very first year, Dinyepo was already chosen as a head of the boys' hostels.

Dinyepo is a born leader. Not only is he trustworthy, but he is dependable and can always be counted on. He is a conductor of note and a sportsman. It is worth noting what the writer says about Dinyepo's character:

> … o be a ile a kgethwa ka lebaka la mafolofolo a magolo a gagwe, ao a bego a na le wona dipapading le dikošeng (p.57).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … he had been chosen because of the great enthusiasm which he had in sporting activities and music.

5.1.2.2 Thola

Thola (Dinyepo's fiancé), is depicted as someone who is heartless, self-centred, bad-tempered, and always querulous. The author says:

> Mosadi yoo wa morutiši Dinyepo o be a le bjalo ka motho yo a sego a ka a tsena ka mojako wa sekolo. Botšhobolo bjoo bja gagwe go monna wa gagwe, bo be bo šetše bo fetogile lehloyo … Tlhompho le tšhabo go monna wa gagwe di be di se gona go yena (pp.78-79).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Dinyepo's wife behaved like a person who had never attended school. Her shrewishness towards her husband had already turned into hatred ... respect and fear of her husband were completely lacking in her.

Thola proved more than enough to be a failure than a supporting mate in her marriage and family life. She humiliated and contemned her husband, including her in-laws. Furthermore, she would not allow her husband to interact freely with persons of the opposite sex.

> Lehufa leo le legolo la gagwe le be le šetše le palediša monna wa gagwe go sega le go ka botšišana maphelo le go boledišana le motho yo e se go wa monna (p.79).

(English translation)

> That immense jealousy of hers made it impossible for her husband to laugh with or inquire after the health of or talk to a person of the opposite sex.

The author personifies absolute female vanity in the character of Thola. In contrast, it has to be noted that according to the African tradition, a woman prevails simply as a helpmate and has less authority than a man. In many instances, where a man exercises authority with caution, marriage as an institution, triumphs.

> Mosadi yoo o be a tshediša Dinyepo mahlo e le ruri (p.82).

(English translation)

> This woman utterly looked down upon Dinyepo.

The foregoing excerpt clearly depicts what Thola stands for as the plot unfolds. She shows neither courtesy nor respect to her in-laws:

> Nna ga ke na le dijo tša go fepa melomo e mengwe gape e mebedi ka godimo. Megolo e mebedi ye e šetšego e fedile dinala go ba kgwara ya ka ga se seo se ka dirwago ke nna (p.81).

(English translation)

> I have no food to feed two extra mouths. Two throats which are without nails to be my burden, is not what can be done by me.

As a pointer, Dinyepo received a letter from his father. The purpose of the letter was to inform Dinyepo that his mother's health was deteriorating. For this reason, Dinyepo's father together with his mother, would appreciate it very much if they could be accommodated at Dinyepo's residence, since the hospital was nearby. Thola would not grant the request.

In a nutshell, Thola is smooth and attractive on the outside, as her name suggests. Nevertheless, her inside is as bitter as the fruit she is named after. The fruit 'thola' is very smooth, and palatable looking but in reality, it is bitter. Thola thinks only of herself and nobody else, least of all, her husband. She had no place in her heart for the helpless elderly in-laws, which bespeaks of her hard-heartedness.

5.1.2.3 Ramagaga

The narrator uses foreshadowing to alert the reader to something that will happen between the two characters, including their families, as the story unfolds:

> Mo phapošeng ya ga bo Dinyepo go be go na le monna wa moruti … le yena ga se ya ba lehlaodi go bao ba bego ba kgahlwa ke go opela fao ga Dinyepo, gagolo ge a be a opela tša Modimo (Dolamo, 1965:52).

(English translation)

> In the same ward as Dinyepo was a priest … he was also no exception to those who were fascinated by Dinyepo's singing, particularly when he was singing in praise of God.

By expressing his innermost feelings, Ramagaga reveals a part of himself that endears him to the reader now and ever after, as the

novella unfolds. The narrator adeptly reveals to the reader, qualities that one should expect in a man of the cloth but which are, however, lacking in many of his vocation.

The narrator continues to say:

> … ge moruti a kwele tšeo, a kwa bohloko kudu, gomme a šokelwa Dinyepo e le ruri. Go tloga fao a leka ka mehla go kgotatša lesogana ka dipolelo le ka dikeletšo (p.52).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> … when the priest heard about this, he was deeply sorry and felt a great compassion for Dinyepo. Thenceforth, he always endeavoured to comfort the young man with words of advice.

The narrator portrays Reverend Ramagaga as a man of great compassion and a profound humanitarian, a veritable Samaritan. Undoubtedly, Ramagaga did not hesitate to be compassionate with Dinyepo, a boy in utter distress. Instead of judging Dinyepo negatively because of his circumstances, the man of God embraced him with all his weaknesses.

5.1.2.4 Mmaditlhodi

Mmaditlhodi is depicted as a professional nurse who associates harmoniously with colleagues, patients, and everybody who comes into contact with her. She becomes in this way, a round character because she changes as the plot unfolds.

> Mmaditlhodi ka boyena e be e le motho wa bagwera ba bantši, wa setlwaelegi, a bile a ratwa ke ba bantši. Ba bagolo le ba bannyane ba be ba mo tlwaetše, gammogo le bona balwetši ka bophara bja bookelo. Motho wa go se fele pelo, a hlokago mafotle go balwetši le bao a šomago nabo (p.92).

(English translation)

> Mmaditlhodi herself was a person of many friends, approachable, and loved by many. The old and the young were all used to her as well as all the patients in the hospital as a whole. She was a patient person who never rebuffed the patients or her colleagues.

The novelist illuminates the humility of Mmaditlhodi, so that the reader is not surprised to discover everybody loving and attracted to her. Even the patients find Mmaditlhodi to be receptive, warm, and kind. The reader infers that Mmaditlhodi's conduct is therapeutic too.

5.1.3 Milieu and time

Dinyepo, the protagonist, hails from a rural area and migrates to the industrialised areas around Johannesburg. The latter is an overarching attribute that provides background information and context to the storyline.

> Metse ya Babašweu ke dira. E a gašanya, e a metša. Bontši bja batho bao ba dulago go yona ba kgona go fetoga bjalo ka naga nakong ya marega. Go hlakana ga meraforafo, ka mekgwa le maboitshwaro ya yona, ke gona go tlišago tšhešerekano mo metseng yeo (p.4).

(English translation)

> The urban areas are dangerous. They scatter, they swallow. Many of their residents change like the landscape in winter. The conglomeration of many races, in customs and conduct, brings about confusion in these urban settings.

The novelist, in the above excerpt, presents a very worrying factor in our lives, that of change of milieu affecting individuals so profoundly that they are barely recognisable.

> Lehono pula e tla na. Mokaona ke Dinyepo yena yo! Go tlile bjang gore a be a fihle mo? Afa lena batho ga se la gapeletša ngwana yo wa batho go tla ka fano gešu? (p.9).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Today it will rain. Is this indeed Dinyepo! How did it come about that he landed here? Have you people not coerced this poor child to come to my home?

Maria's expression of pleasant surprise encapsulates the change that has totally enveloped Dinyepo, to the extent that a complete teetotaller is fast becoming a habitual drinker.

As the novella unfolds, we see a change of environment from rural to urban and how Dinyepo is completely swallowed up by it. His friends take him to the cinema and other forms of entertainment and he learns to jive, visiting internationally acclaimed musical groups like *The Manhattan Brothers*. Because of the company he keeps, he becomes a hardened criminal, with "The Flying Squad" hot on his trail. To crown it all, Dinyepo turns into a murderer, killing a helpless old white lady for her money and he lands in jail.

5.1.4 Narrative point of view (Narration)

5.1.4.1 Third-person point of view

The all-knowing novelist says:

> Go phonyokga ga Dinyepo ngwakong wa lekgowa ga se ya ba thuto e phološang, e holanang mo go yena. Yena o ile a tšea taba yeo bjalo ka bogale le bohlale. E be e re ge a gahlana le bagwera ba gagwe boDinong le boKgopa, a be a ipshina ka go laodiša tša mesepelo yeo ya gagwe bošegong bjoo (p.30).

(English translation)

> Dinyepo's escape from the white man's house was not a corrective lesson to him, which was useful to him. He took the incident as a matter of courage and wisdom. When he met his friends, Dinong and Kgopa, he regaled himself with narrating accounts of what he did on that night.

The omniscient narrator gives an insider's account of all the occurrences of the night of the aborted robbery. Dinyepo, on the other hand, in recounting his adventure to his friends, sees himself in the light of a hero who managed a narrow but triumphant escape.

The following is the author's account of the negative behaviour that Thola has adopted:

> O thomile go lala a tsena mašegogare go sa tsebje moo a tšwago. Ka matšatši a mangwe o tloga a robala malalatle. O be a šetše a thomile le go fela a feta dipitšeng tša mabjala le dinong tše dingwe tše bogale (p.85).

(English translation)

> She started arriving home very late at night, nobody knowing where she came from. On certain nights she slept away from home. She had also started visiting drinking holes and drinking hot stuff.

Having portrayed Thola's character from the point of view of an omniscient narrator, the novelist deems it fit to tell us that Dinyepo is ready to marry and we agree. Moreover, the reader is convinced that what the protagonist needs is a real wife who will affirm his manhood:

> O swanetše go nyaka mosadi yo a tlago mo swanela, yoo a tlago tla a mo phumola megokgo, megogoma le dintho

> tša pelo ya gagwe. Go tsomega mosadisadi yo a tlago go mo dira motho, a mo swara bjalo ka monna (p.106).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> He must look for a suitable wife who will wipe away his tears, bruises, and wounds of his heart. What is needed is a real wife that will make him a real man and treat him like a man.

As underpinned by the above description, the novelist as the omniscient narrator with an insider's knowledge of the characters and their vicissitudes succeeds in convincing the reader that what Dinyepo needs is a wife who will complement him.

5.1.4.2 The employment of dialogue

Undoubtedly, the father is sceptical about his son's love affair. According to custom, a son should marry his uncle's daughter but the times have changed and the younger generation wants to marry for love. This conflict between the generations foreshadows what is to come. Dinyepo's marriage to Thola proves disastrous. The following dialogue ensues:

> "Ee, ke a go kwa ngwana, feela ga ke go kwišiše. O re go ba gona kgarebe yeo ke ngwana wa mang?"
> "Ke ngwana wa Moropa, tate."
> "Moropa!" (p.67)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> "Yes, I do hear you child, but I do not understand you. By the way, you say whose child is that maiden?"
> "She is Moropa's daughter, father."
> "Moropa!"

Almost throughout the novella, there are minimal encounters where characters engage one-on-one. Dialogue is used sparingly. Needless to say, the omniscient, all-knowing narrator, does not need dialogue to put his message across.

5.2 *Ngwana wa Mobu*[5] by Mminele, S.P.P (1967): Psychoanalytic Criticism

Psychoanalytic Criticism is based on a theory rooted in human consciousness, including its impulses and desires. The one who is affected may not be aware since his/her actions are driven by emotions. It can be argued that some actions or wishes, in normal life, are morally not acceptable. That is the reason why critics use this approach to explore certain behavioural patterns in literary texts.

Building on the praxis of psychoanalytic criticism, the researcher intends to highlight the overt and covert values as espoused by Mminele (1967). Put differently, Smith (1954:5) says:

> Ideas arise out of a social milieu. As human personality is shaped by the influences to which the individual is subjected, so is human thought a part of a cultural configuration.

Endorsing what is being articulated in the above excerpt in respect of human personality, Habib (2005:571), says:

> … we bear a form of "otherness" within ourselves: we cannot claim fully to comprehend even ourselves, why we act as we do, why we make certain moral and political decisions, why we harbour given religious dispositions and intellectual orientations.

To substantiate the preceding observation, Habib (p.571) continues to argue that:

[5] The novella *Ngwana wa Mobu* was first published in 1967 by Beter Boeke. However, the 4th edition, 3rd impression, used for this study was published in 2008 by Sharp Shoot.

> … much of our thought and action is not freely determined by us but driven by unconscious forces which we can barely fathom. Moreover, far from being based on reason, our thinking is intimately dependent upon the body, upon the instincts of survival and aggression, as well as obstinate features that cannot be dismissed …

The key concept in analysing the novella under the spotlight is based on the notion of identity and the ego of the character. Phankga, the main character in *Ngwana wa Mobu,* is blinded by his ambition and often uses unscrupulous means to reach his goal. Reading through the novella, it could be concluded that 'we gain part of our identity and self-esteem by comparing ourselves with the groups we belong to' (Hogg, 2003).

5.2.1 Plot structure

5.2.1.1 Exposition

Employing nature, the writer provides a window to show how men can learn to achieve a measure of success if they subscribe to the principle of order and co-existence:

> Bo sele. Tsoša mahlo o a hlabe Bohlabela, o mpontšhe tše ke di bonago (Mminele, 2008:1).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> It is daybreak. Lift up your eyes and direct them to the East and help me see what I see.

The writer uses sunrise to illuminate hope, a new beginning, and awakening. This implies that no matter who we are, we inhabit one world with its open possibilities. Nevertheless, there is cause to be worried, if mankind cannot interpret nature and learn from it. The same obtains in literature. It could also be concluded that man, both as a creature and as an individual, is a product of a social order.

> Le itokišetšeng go laetšwa gore le lena le tle le kgone go laetša. Ke le gafela bophelong bja ka ntle ka kholofelo (p.3).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Be ready to accept guidance so that you too may learn how to guide. I present you to the outside world with hope.

The principal's well-timed and appositely chosen words accurately foreshadow what is to come and serve as a warning to the young graduates to tread carefully in the new world of experienced people. Phankga would have done well to heed a warning like this. By way of emphasis, the principal continues to say:

> Sepelang gabotse le gateng ka tlhokomelo (p.3).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Go well and tread with care.

Unsuspectingly, Lahlang confides in Phankga, a newly employed young energetic teacher who is a "child of the soil" and hails from a well-to-do family. Lahlang has a burning desire to see his school rank among the best if not the top-most in the circuit. He says:

> Ke na le kholofelo ye kgolo ya gore o tla thušana le nna lebaka le letelele ka gobane o le ngwana wa mobu wo … (p.7).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> I have immense faith that you shall co-operate with me for a long time to come because you are a child of this soil.

The headmaster, Lahlang, is receiving the young Phankga warmly, expressing the hope of a grown-up acting in *loco parentis,* that he will be ready to learn from him and other more experienced teachers, only to find, ironically, that the young man chooses to listen to his own immature advice.

5.2.1.2 Rising action

The author has aptly portrayed Phankga's inveterate insolence and conceit. We conceive a chilling sensation and fear for the future of the school when faced with Phankga's malicious intentions. This is exemplified by the following monologue:

> "Nna ka engwa pele ke mofokodi yo mobjalo? Nna ka hlahlwa ke motho yoo ke mo hlahlago, wa thuto ya mogwapa ya matšatši ale go sa buša Kgoši Konkodi? Na Kgoro ya Thuto e kgona bjang go kgotlelela dikoka tše bjalo ka se, di sa tsebego le "A" ya mekgwa ye mefsa ya go bula hlogo ya ngwana ka ponyo ya leihlo?" (p.14).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Me, being led by such a weakling? Me, to be led by a person that I lead, one with an emaciated and outmoded education from time immemorial? How can the Department of Education tolerate such invalids, who do not even know the "A" of the modern approaches which can instantly open up a child's mind?

Flowing from the above excerpt, we can instantly deduce that the headmaster, and the school, as a whole, are heading for disaster. The young man is outrageously arrogant, pompous, and too full of himself. Phankga sees worth and capacity only in himself.

The rising action prepares the reader for what is to come as the narrative unfolds. We can see Phankga's psyche, so full of conceit and selfish intent, very clearly in the following monologue:

> Ruri madulo a, Lahlang o a dutše ka phošo. Mošomo wa go ba hlogo ya sekolo se ke wa ka, o ntshwanetše. Ke WA KA – Tau gare ga Ditau – Ngwana wa mobu wo, gare ga bana ba mobu wo. (p.15).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Verily, this position Lahlang is occupying by mistake. This school's principalship is mine, it suits me. It is MINE – A Lion [his totem] among Lions - A child of this soil, among children of this soil.

Phankga feeds his conceit on the conception that from even before his birth everything pointed to the fact that he is the rightful leader of the school. The hyperbole in "my first voice was heard by this soil", heightens the effect and elucidates Phankga's overweening ambition. The following monologue serves to illustrate the aforesaid:

> Ge ke be ke sa le maleng a mme, mme o be a fela a monoka mobu wo go ntiiša ka wona. Ge ke belegwa, lentšu la ka la mathomo le kwelwe ke mobu wo, gomme ba ntlhapiša ka meetse ao a elago mobung wo. Ke godišitšwe ke eng ge e se dijo tša mobu wo? Bjale, sekolo se swanetše go hlahlwa ke mang ge e se ngwana wa mobu wo? Ke mang? Ke NNA! (p.15).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> When I was still in my mother's womb, my mother often licked this soil to strengthen me with it. When I was born my first voice was heard by this soil, and they bathed me with the water that flows on this soil. What nourished me but the food from this soil? Now, who should lead this school but the child of this soil? Who is it? It is ME!

Phankga's ambition is further fired by the fact that he sees himself as the one pillar on which the school rests. He fancies that the school solely depends on him. After all, he is the only one who can read and interpret the department's directives. The following extract bears testimony to the aforesaid:

> Nna ke bolawa ke mošomo ka lefeela kua sekolong. Lahlang o šetše a mpona motlalo. Ge mangwalo a etla a etšwa go ba mmušo, a fiwa nna gore ke a bale, ke a hlatholle, ke be ke mo thuše go a fetola. (p.17).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> I am unnecessarily overworked there at school. Lahlang takes advantage of me. When he receives official letters, they are given to me to read and explain, and then help him to reply to them.

Phankga takes advantage of Mokhura, his uncle, who is the chairman of Rethuše Primary School to depose Lahlang, his principal. In order to garner support, Mokhura encourages Phankga to take intoxicating beverages so that he may be able to interact with other men and women of influence, and take advantage of the opportunity to lure them to gang up against Lahlang:

> Bjale bothata bja gago o a bo tseba; ga o sware. O tlemegile go ithuta go nwa bjala, le ge e ka no ba go tšea mahlo a tšhipa. (p.22)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> "Now, you know your problem; you do not drink. You are bound to learn to drink, even if it is just to get a little tipsy."

In the rising action, the author clearly encapsulates the protagonist's malicious intention to overthrow the principal. Phankga's arrogance convinces him that he is the man for the principalship. In his conceit, he sees himself as the pillar of the

school without whom the school cannot survive. Nevertheless, all attempts to oust Lahlang are nullified by the inspectorate and supported by some school committee members who were not party to the secret discussions led by Mokhura (Mminele, 2008:54-59). Providing a stern warning, the inspector says:

> Ge le nyaka tšwelopele, Batau, le se ke la ba le mokgwa wa go lebelela gore modiro o dirwa ke morwa goba morwedi wa mang, eupša le lebelele gore modiro o dirwa bjang … (p.55).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> If you want development, Batau [totem], do not fall prey to the habit of considering whose son or daughter is doing the job, but consider how the job is done.

Realising that he has become a villain instead of a hero, Phankga takes a hard look at himself. To get rid of the immense pressure surrounding him, Phankga, later on, decides to marry Lethabo, a beautiful young lady who is blessed with a melodious voice.

5.2.1.3 Climax

Phankga and Mokhura trick Phogole to forge Lahlang's signature. The intention is to counter Lahlang's letter, which was sent to Mokgohlo, a bus owner, to transport the school's choristers to Pretoria.

> Agaa …! Bjale rena re swanetše go ngwala lengwalo re le romele Mohola, re mmotše gore leeto lela la go ya Tshwane le padile ka ge batswadi ba palelwa ke go ntšha tšhelete ye e lekanego leeto leo. Re swanetše go ngwala se nkego ke rena Lahlang, re be re saene leina la gagwe ge re fetša. Ga re botše motho selo, re no re tu! (p.73).

(English translation)

> Aha …! Now we must write a letter to Mohola and tell him that that trip to Tshwane has failed because the parents failed to pay sufficient fare for the trip. We must write as if we are Lahlang, and sign his name at the end. We do not tell anybody anything, we just keep mum!

The above action presents an act of sabotage by uncle and nephew in a bid to overthrow the principal and place Phankga in his position. We see jealousy in action – the principal must be seen to fail in order to pave the way for the malicious nephew.

Phankga continues to say in his malicious intention, that to show the principal to be a failure, the evidence must be provided:

> Taba ye nngwe ye e dirago gore ke senye leeto le le mphišago pelo le, ke gore ke tseba gabotse gore ge re boa kua diphadiphadišanong re tšo fenya, bahlapetši ba thuto le batho ba bangwe ba tlilo tumiša Lahlang, ba re ke ka baka la tshepedišo ya gagwe ye botse ya sekolo ge re tlo be re tšere sefoka …. (p.75).

(English translation)

> Another reason why I want this trip that gives me heartache to fail, is that I know that when we return triumphant from the competitions the education officials and other people will praise Lahlang saying that it is because of his sound administration of the school that we have been victorious.

The learners, parents, and the chairman of the School Committee, Mokhura, together with the principal, Lahlang, wait the whole night patiently and then impatiently until dawn, expecting the bus to pick up the learners for the music competitions. It is only then, at dawn, that the principal realises that there is something amiss about the trip.

Sarcastically, Mokhura says:

> Na motho yo wa gago o reng a sa tšwelele, Nkwe? Ge le nkgethela gore ke felegetše bana, le be le era gore le tle le mpolaiše phefo mo sekolong? A a tšwelele re thuntšhe lerole. (p.76).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Why does this person of yours not turn up, Nkwe [totem]? When you chose me to accompany the children did you want me to suffer from cold at the school? Let him come so that we may hit the road.

Taking into consideration the distance to Pretoria, it becomes very clear that the trip can no longer be undertaken. Lahlang feels mad about the unfolding scenario. Learners together with their parents are instructed to go back home. They all leave disappointed and do not talk to one another. The failure of the trip results in an unpleasant atmosphere in the village:

> Motse wa Makgwareng o a galaka matšatši a. Batswadi ba bana ba sekolo ba ntšha muši ka dinko. Ba ba galakago ka ganong go fetiša, ke batswadi ba bana ba ba opelago sehlopheng sa Phankga. O ka re ba ka phura motho ge ba gopola ka moo ba senyagaletšwego ke ditšhelete ba lokišetša bana leeto la go ya Tshwane, eupša mafelelong la tloga la folotša ka mokgwa wo o sa kwešišegego (p.78).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> The village of Makgwareng is vitriolic these days. The parents are fuming. Those that are the most vitriolic in their speech are those whose children are Phankga's choristers. It is as if they can tear a person to pieces when

> they think how they wasted money, preparing for the children's trip to Tshwane, which in the end failed in an inexplicable manner.

The writer has succeeded in portraying the principal's frustration and the learners and their parents' disappointment, together with Mokhura's pretence. To the reader's dismay, the protagonist and his uncle's devilish plot has succeeded.

5.2.1.4 Falling action

It takes a character of Nthibitha's calibre to see through the evil plot orchestrated by Phankga and his uncle, hence, the following comment:

> Banna, nna ke re Phankga le malomeagwe ba swanetše go be ba tseba ka *borifi* bjo. Mošemane yola Phankga o hlalefetše thoko, ga ke mo tshepe. Lebaka le ka moka bana ba rena ba be ba tšea maeto ka ntle le pelaelo ya boradia. Ga go bjalo? (p.82).

(English translation)

> People, I say Phankga and his uncle must know something about this letter. That boy Phankga is mischievous, I do not trust him. All this time, our children were undertaking trips without any hint of foul play. Is that not so?

The truth has a way of finding its way to the surface, as seen above in Nthibitha's suspicion of Phankga's part in the plot to subvert the school trip. He does not hesitate to speak his mind.

The Inspector of Education promptly reports at the school in the wake of the aborted trip. After consultation with the principal, he steps into Phankga's classroom and asks for his books and lesson plan for inspection. The following ensues:

> O ile a bonala a galogile ebile e ke ga a ne madi, ge a bona mohlahlobimogolo a ikgaša ka phapošing ya gagwe. Mohlahlobimogolo o ile a kgopela dipuku tša gagwe tša maitokišetšo. Mmalo! O bona eng? (p.87).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Blood had drained from Phankga's face when he saw the Inspector of Education stepping into his classroom. The circuit manager asked for his lesson plan. Alas! What does he see?

Lahlang, the principal, was fair and open to the circuit manager. The Inspector collected Phankga's books and lesson plans for inspection. They revealed shocking neglect of work.

> Lahlang ga se nke a ba utela selo, a be a ba bontšha le lengwalo leo la mohlolo. Ba ile ba tšea dipuku tšeo a di saennego, ba thoma go swantšha. Ka lebaka la go tlwaela go bona mengwalo ye e fapafapanego, ba ile ba lemoga ka pela gore mengwalo e nyakile go swana fela ga se gwa saena motho o tee (p.88).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Lahlang kept nothing away from them; he also showed them the mysterious letter. The inspectorate collected the books he had signed and started to compare. Because they were used to seeing different handwritings, they immediately noticed that the handwritings were almost the same but that not the same person had signed.

The Inspector's address to the parents after talking to the principal and inspecting the books, reveals a clear understanding of the matter as seen below:

> Le nkwešišeng batswadi. Ke re Lahlang ke mo tseba gabotse. Sa mathomo, ke mo tseba e le morutiši. Sa bobedi, ke mo tseba a dira mošomo wa gagwe gabotse ka go iketla. Sa boraro, ke mo tseba e le motho wa boitshwaro. Ke moka (p.89).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Do understand me parents. I am saying that I know Lahlang very well. Firstly, I know him as a teacher. Secondly, I know him to do his work painstakingly. Thirdly, I know him to be a well-behaved person. That is all.

His bubble pricked, Phankga is left completely companionless and disgruntled after the unmasking of his selfish plot. Without even touching his food back at home, he speeds away recklessly in his car.

> Erile go ba sekolo se etšwa, Phankga a gopola gae a hlafile. Ketelo ya mohlahlobimogolo e be e mo nkgela e le ruri. Ka ntle le go ngwatha, o ile a no lahlela dipuku godimo ga tafola, a tšea dikgonyo tša khudukgomo, a e kgotla, ya fofa a gopotše boratapelo (p.92).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> When the school knocked off, Phankga headed straight home in utter dismay. The Inspector of Education's visit had left him extremely nauseated. Without eating, he dropped his books on the table, took the car keys, started the car, and it flew, heading to wherever his fancy took him.

The novelist has used his art to bring to light the fact that crime does not pay and moreover, that it is a man's effort that counts, not whether he is a "child of the soil".

Phankga finds himself in a very uncomfortable position where he has betrayed the principal's trust and wounded his pride and cannot undo the harm done.

5.2.1.5 Resolution

The author convincingly succeeds in resolving the conflict between Phankga and Lahlang. It is not until the intervention of the Inspector of Education that Phankga's "evil tricks" are exposed (Nokaneng, 1997:6). Finally, Phankga is transferred from Rethuše Primary School to Ntotolwane Primary School. By so doing, "Peace and order are restored in the community" (p.6). The author sums it all up by using the following allegory:

> Dinonyana tše di bego di šetše di potile ihlo le tee, le tšona di huduegile … Aga-aga! Ye nngwe ya maatla e di bone, e huba e di lebile. E phuphaphupha yela ya makokwana, ebile e e gakantšha le go fofa … Šele! E rakilwe. A nonyana ya makokwana baete! (Mminele, 2008:98)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> The two birds which were looking asquint at each other were also perturbed … Aha! Another and powerful one has seen them; it heads in their direction, fuming. It beats the arrogant one with its wings, frustrating its ability to fly … There it goes! It has been chased away. What a conceited bird, people!

Phankga's inexperience as a young teacher, his short-sightedness, and his craving for leadership because he is a "child of the soil", lead to his downfall. The novelist captures very poignantly Phankga's moment of despair and disbelief thus:

> Phankga o lebelela mangwalo, a tloge a lebelele mola lapeng la gagwe, moo khudukgomo yela ya gagwe e fetogilego seriti sa matšatši a maloba le maabane ge e be

> e sa mo fa seriti … o kgona senko, o rothiša dikudumela tša mogopolo wo o imetšwego – megokgo (p.99).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Phankga looks at the letters, then at his homestead where his car has been turned into a shadow of its former days when it used to fill him with pride … he is disconcerted, he is shedding the sweat of an overburdened mind – tears.

The novelist has been adept in his character portrayal as it impinges on the main theme of the novel. The principal, Lahlang, has shown to be a man of integrity, displaying immense ability, trustworthiness, and good conduct. Conversely, the protagonist, his antagonist is the antithesis of the principal. The novelist has shown immense ability in portraying the character of the School Committee members who were relatives of the protagonist and shared his sentiments. The irony is that Phankga, a "child of the soil", together with his accomplices, fails dismally to evince qualities of sound leadership in his own community and as a result, fails to overthrow the principal. In a great sense, the novelist has juxtaposed good against evil and shown that good will always prevail.

5.2.2 Theme and character delineation

The storyline rests on the theme of ethnocentricity, fuelled by "nepotism and discrimination" (Nokaneng, 1997:25). Phankga, the protagonist, lacks foresight and fails to size up his strength and reach the pinnacle of his career as a teacher. It is a brilliant mark of the writer's ability to present an ambitious young adult who is not alert but wants to accomplish his mission by hook or by crook.

In sum, Nokaneng (1997:37) says:

> The overall theme that can be drawn from this novel, is that society has a gloomy future if led by characters such as Mokhura, Phankga and Mafamo or by leaders who carry such names.

Another important point is that what the novelist tries to bring to light is this, that every act that one performs in humility and sincerity is rewarded. In contrast, the conspirators, and all evil-doers, in the end, will have their deserts.

5.2.2.1 Phankga

According to Nokaneng (1997:25), the name, Phankga, denotes “a well-built person, fearless, provocative and an extrovert”. In addition, the author depicts Phankga as a gifted musician. He first proves his competence during his time as a student-teacher at Kopanong College of Education. As a full-time teacher at Rethuše Primary School, Phankga proves to be very good at Arithmetic and Afrikaans. His school choir reaches great heights in choral music competitions. All these attributes earn him respect in the school community and the community, as a whole.

Besides being confident in his approach to life, Phankga is also an embodiment of arrogance and cannot for a moment refrain from this weakness. More often than not, Phankga ridicules his headmaster, Lahlang, and uses derogatory language to label him negatively. To that effect, the reader notes that human beings have a complex, either inferiority or superiority. Like Phankga, social influence and moreover, the personal perception of himself as a “child of the soil”, contributes towards his relegation to the status of *persona non grata*.

Nokaneng (p.25), concedes this about Phankga:

> His success makes him conceited to the extent that he undermines Lahlang [headmaster] and regards him as being incompetent and a leader who cannot execute his duties.

Speaking his mind openly, Lahlang, says:

> Ke ile ka thaba kudu ge ke ekwa tatago a re tšona dithuto tše di sa nthobadišego tše, wena o a di bekiša. Hleng sekolo se sa rena se tla ema ruri! (Mminele, 2008:7).

(English translation)

> I was very happy when I heard your father say these very subjects which cause me sleepless nights, you excel in. Our school will benefit tremendously.

In an ironical turn of fate, what the principal says now in his warm welcome to the new teacher turns out to be the antithesis of what it is. The young man will soon become too ambitious and sabotage the principal. He reflects:

> Mokgalabje yo ga a tsebe gore dithuto tše a di bolelago ke tloga ke etšwa natšo tšhiding. Ge e le Seisimane sona ga ke sa bolela. Ke se nwele moro … Ge ke se bolela ke se ntša ka dinko (p.8).

(English translation)

> This old man does not know that the subjects he is talking about I have studied to the core. As far as English is concerned, I lack words to describe my proficiency in it. I know it thoroughly … When I speak, it comes out through my nostrils.

In his monologue, Phankga betrays his insolence as seen in the use of “mokgalabje” instead of using the more acceptable “Mr Lahlang”. We can discern a modicum of his ambitious conceit in the description of his ability as a teacher.

Realising that Phankga is using a self-made weapon of manipulation to thrust himself into the position of principalship of Rethuše Primary School, Ranthwešeng, a community member says:

> Taba ye e lego gona ke gore mošemanyana yola Phankga, ka baka la boikgogomošo le mahlajana a gagwe a go se tsebalege, o nyaka go ba hlogo ya sekolo se (p.45).

(English translation)

> What is evident is that this young boy Phankga, because of his pride and his mischievous pranks, wants to be a principal of this school.

Phankga uses Lahlang's little knowledge of Arithmetic, Afrikaans, and Music as a springboard to launch his self-esteem and topple Lahlang as headmaster because of his ethnic background. From this point, the reader sees the effects of self-labelling and self-esteem spilling over to the community of Makgwareng.

5.2.2.2 Lahlang

Mashabela (cited in Nokaneng, 1997:28) comments thus about Lahlang:

> … a very unpretentious man – a rough diamond that fools may easily throw away.

In consideration of the above excerpt, and better still, in comparison with the storyline, the reader could deduce that the novelist is "appealing" to the reader's "intelligence and imagination" (Forster, 1985:55). It becomes clear that Lahlang cannot be reduced to nothingness by a newly appointed educator who has not even completed his probation, according to the then conditions of service.

Lahlang is depicted by the novelist as an exceptional leader who places the honour of his subordinates before many other considerations. He has no desire for fame but is a workaholic who tries hard to implement educational policies and make things right, instead of proving others wrong.

As stated in the earlier chapters, elderly characters, according to the requirements of YAL, come into the fold as advisors. Lahlang is depicted as a reservoir of knowledge where young teachers may be able to quench their thirst.

5.2.2.3 Mokhura

Mokhura, the School Committee chairperson, has allowed his judgement to be clouded by his nephew's denigration of the principal whom he has known and worked with for a long time. He is a son of the soil himself and readily takes the side of Phankga, the son of the soil, and states categorically that he and the community are bound by the bond of blood to his nephew. Seeing the principal now as an outsider, he says:

> Motlogolo, taba ya gago e kwala gabotsebotse. Ebile madi a ka a a bela ge ke e gopodišiša gonabjale. Motšwadinageng yo a ka se re iše felo. Ngwana wa rena o tla re fišegelela ka baka la madi ao a re tlemagantšego, a bilego a re rokagantše (Mminele, 2008:20).

(English translation)

> Nephew, your point is very clear. Even now, when I think deeply about it, my blood boils. This outsider will take us nowhere. Our child will show concern for us because of the blood that binds and knits us together.

The ruthless and conceited Mokhura states what has proved to be his character throughout, that to get to the top, one rides roughshod over the heads of others, as seen below:

> Ge o nyaka go namela, o gata godimo ga dihlogo tša ba bangwe. Ge motho yoo o mo gatilego a lla a buragana fase, o gata godimo ga ya yo mongwe go fihla o tsokama madulo ao o a nyakago (p.21).

(English translation)

> If you want to rise to the top, you step on the heads of others. If the one you step on cries and collapses, you

> step on that of another until you attain the position that you aspire to.

In the following description, which is rich in imagery, the novelist depicts Mokhura's character adeptly. He comes late to church even if he stays nearby, precisely because he wants to show off his clothing and perch himself in the front of the church where he almost immediately falls asleep, missing the best part of the sermon:

> O tla re ge a putla mo gare ga phuthego a gopotše go yo itahlela madulong a gagwe kua pelepele, wa hwetša mahlo a digotlane le a difofu a mo dumediša, mokgomana a taramolla maoto se nkego o sela mekero, diatla di sobeletše ka dipotleng, di bile di kukile borokgo ka gonnyane gore dikaušu tša maswi le tšona di dumediše phuthego … (p.33).

(English translation)

> When he swaggers in the middle of the congregation thinking of throwing himself on his seat in the front of the church, one would see the eyes of the toddlers and the blind greeting him, the gentleman stretching his legs as if he was striding across streams, his hands stuck in his pockets, lifting his trousers a little so that his white socks might greet the congregation …

The novelist consciously and deliberately paints a picture of Mokhura as proud, conceited, arrogant, conspicuously bent on drawing everybody's attention to his wealthy lifestyle. His contribution to the church is nothing else but a show of wealth.

5.2.3 Milieu and time

The story world that the author presents to the reader is rural, whereas there are conspicuous signs of development. It has to be understood that rural and semi-urban (or urban) settings are almost unique in terms of location. The benefits of the said settings are also not the same for the inhabitants. As in *Ngwana wa Mobu,* the author

depicts characters who focus on primary activities which provide a few services. We read about institutions of learning, for example, Kopanong and Rethuše.

After completing his teacher-training qualification, Phankga gets employed at Rethuše Primary School. The headmaster, Lahlang, welcomes Phankga with these words:

> Hleng sekolo se sa rena se tla ema ruri! Le mphato wa boselela bjale gona re ka o kgopela re sa ipelaele. Wena o bona bjang, Tau? (Mminele, 2008:7)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Our school will benefit greatly. We can even apply for the introduction of Standard Six without hesitation. How do you view it, Tau [totem]?

Some men are members of the School Committee. For example, Phankga's uncle, Mokhura, is the chairman of the School Committee at Rethuše Primary School. The following excerpt bears testimony:

> Lekgotla la Sekolo le swerwe ke banna ba borutho, ba go hloya tshele e le ruri (p.8).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> The School Committee is led by warm-hearted men who do not harbour any ill-feeling towards anybody.

Although the setting is rural, there are signs of development like big houses. Even the mode of transport is advanced as expressed in the following excerpt:

> Ngwakokgomo ruri! Gomme godimo ga tšeo ka moka a be a kgona go reka mmotoro. Mmotoro! Na go ba le mmotoro ga se yona taetšo ya kakanyo ye e tletšego le

> tšwelopele ye e dumegago le bohumi bjo bo phethegilego? (Mminele, 2008:15).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> A mansion indeed! Over and above those he was able to buy a car. A car! To have a car is it not an indication of full sound-mindedness and admirable progress and complete wealthiness?

Religion also plays an important role. The characters devote their faith to the service of God. So does Lahlang. In times of adversity or hopelessness, he resorts to the Scriptures to uplift his spirit and give himself the strength he needs to enable him to get through each day. The following is displayed on the wallpaper in his house:

> Modimo ke setšhabelo le maatla a rena (p.28).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> God is our refuge and strength.

There is also a church building in the vicinity, where Mokhura, is a member and Mohlala is an evangelist. The author says:

> Mehla le mabaka di a fetoga ruri. Lehono, mo molalaneng wo, go rakaletše thutlwa ya kereke, molala wa yona o ka be wa re o phuleletša legodimong. Ke ye tšhweu ya go agwa ka maswika. Le ge e se ye kgolo ka kudu, e utswa pelo ya mmogi ka sebopego sa yona le bodulo bja yona – Modimo gare ga badimo (p.23).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Conditions of life change with time, indeed! Today in this open space, there stands a lofty church whose spire

> seems to reach up to heaven. It is a white stone-built church. Even if it is not so big, it steals the beholder's heart with its appearance and its setting – God amongst gods.

The men and women of Makgwareng come together to enjoy African beer where there is singing, dancing, and ululating. Mafamo, whose wife is a specialist in preparing home-made beer, says to the gathering:

> Bjala bjo ke bja morwa wa lena yo le mmonago a bokaletše mo setulong – Phankga … O ino tla go nna le mosadi yo wa ka wa setswatswa … a re o kgopela gore re apee bjala gore lena Batau le tle le nwe le kwe maatlana a gagwe (p.49).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> This beer has been provided by your son whom you see reclining on this seat – Phankga … He just came to me and my immaculate wife … asking us to brew beer so that you Batau [totem] may drink and taste his little wherewithal.

Mention is also made of a mountain known as Matlorotloro and a meandering river known as Monepenepe, stretching from northeast to southwest (Mminele, 2008: 4). The river supplies water to the villages scattered around the hills and hillocks and flows into another river, known as Malapološe. The residents depend mainly on farming and livestock.

5.2.4 Narrative point of view (Narration)

5.2.4.1 Third-person point of view

The perspective from which the story is told is a traditional form of third-person narrative, known as the omniscient point of view. In this case, the narrative voice is identified with that of the author who is presumed to be all-knowing. Reading Mminele (2008), we could deduce that he is a very skilful author. The author is able

to portray blood and flesh characters who have “thoughts, feelings, and motives” (Abrams & Harpham, 2015:300-301). Moreover, the author shows mastery of his craft, mainly by matching characters convincingly, with actions and events. The following are just but a few examples:

> O ile a opediša, mošemane wa go se rate go ba ketšaetšane; a ikgamile ka kgamankatsana ye khulwana, mola thaka tša gagwe di ipolaišitše mesela ya dinkhakhane megolong. Ge a fetša ke ge dipelo tša batheeletši di karabetše makhureng, mola tša baphadišani ba bangwe e le digahlana … (Mminele, 2008:2).
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> He conducted his choir, the young man who did not like to imitate others, with his red bowtie on, when his mates had neckties on. When he finished conducting, the hearts of the audience were fully satisfied, whereas those of his competitors were frozen …

The all-knowing omniscient narrator gives us a vivid picture of what transpires at Kopanong College of Education whose motto is “Ntaetše ke laetše” meaning “Guide me and let me guide”. Phankga, the conductor of the choir and a completing student, had certainly stolen the limelight. Indubitably, he was the envy of all the prospective principals present.

Mister Mootli, Phankga’s father, deeply resents Phankga’s untoward behaviour and takes the opportunity to rebuke him, not only for covering his Bible and hymn book with vomit but also for subverting the principal’s authority and throwing the community of Makgwareng into disarray:

> Ngwanaka, ruri o swiswaditše pelo ya ka. O lebantše sethokgwa o pontše. O ikgethetše mogwera yo mošoro wa go hloka kgaugelo le kwelobohloko – bjala (p.42).

(English translation)

> My child, you have disappointed me. You have plunged into a forest with your eyes closed. You have chosen yourself a cruel friend without mercy and compassion – liquor.

In his dismay, Mootli states what is true of so many promising young men thrust headlong into liquor and evil ways. He says to Phankga:

> Bjala bo katile baruti le barutiši bao e bego e le dikokwane le mabone a ditšhaba, mme maatla le mafolofolo a bona tša robaganela sa ruri; bobotegi le maime a bona tša fetoga lefeela – lefeela; tša fofa bjalo ka moko wo o tšewago ke phefo; letago la seetša sa bona la tiba, ka morago la timela sa ruriruri, gomme boikarabelo bja bona pele ga Modimo le batho bja thonkgela ka gare ga mapotlelo le dinkgo tša sona sebela (p.42).

(English translation)

> Liquor has overthrown priests and teachers who were pillars and lights of communities, until their power and energy were broken for ever, their trustworthiness and dignity turned into nothing; the lustre of their light dimmed, and later extinguished forever, and their accountability to God and the people plunged into liquor bottles and pots of beer.

The father's admonition of his son equals his digression. It is true that so many good leaders in the community have been destroyed by liquor, their good standing with God and men tarnished, and their prospects rendered null and void.

5.2.4.2 The employment of dialogue

Dialogue, as it were, is a literary technique in which a writer engages two or more characters. The technique becomes a prevalent tool in a narrative when employed with the utmost care. Moreover, dialogue is meant to "conceal" the "doings, and states of consciousness" in a literary text (Abrams & Harpham, 2015:301). The aforesaid may be noted from the excerpts below:

> 'Re botše hle, Tau. Hleng bjale o a re phafoša.' Go bolela Nthibitha.
>
> 'Pele ga ge ke le botša, anke o ntširoše ka tše pedi moo. Lena le duletše go gampela le hlwaile ditsebe, baisa tenang, le gopola se nkego le nwela ka mpeng ye ya ka, ye!' (Mminele, 2008:84)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> 'Tell us please, Tau [totem]. You are now alerting us.' Says Nthibitha.
>
> 'Before I tell you, stimulate me with two hand-calabashes. You are gulping down beer, pricking your ears, you fellows, you think that as you drink, the beer gets into this stomach of mine, eh!'

Flowing from the above extract, the dialogue which is meant to solicit responses from the participants in the discourse is activated and helped along by beer, a natural stimulant. It is used to extremely good effect to give the reader needful information from the horse's mouth, and this Mokhura does most effectively. The omniscient narrator deftly invites us to peep into the plot to oust Lahlang, which is central to the narrative.

5.3 A brief comparison of the decade

5.3.1 Plot structure

5.3.1.1 Exposition

Dolamo (1965) has as his dominant theme, the conflict between western and traditional life where the protagonist is plunged into evil ways in his attempt to adjust to a modern lifestyle. In so doing, he finds himself at loggerheads with the law. However, through the intervention of Reverend Ramagaga, Dinyepo finds his footing.

On the other hand, Mminele (2008) from the very onset, directs the reader to the fact that it is now the dawn of a new day. The novelist juxtaposes light and darkness which foreshadows Phankga's moral blindness (darkness) and the light of advancement that the principal and the Inspector of Education stand for. This is encapsulated in Mootli's rebuke to his son, saying:

> Tseba gore ge ke go iša sekolong ke be ke nyaka gore o tle o rute batho, e sego go ba gakantšha. (Mminele, 2008:41)
>
> **(English translation)**
>
> Know that when I took you to school, I wanted you to educate people and not confuse them.

Using imagery to good effect, the novelist depicts the light of day chasing away darkness, in the same way, that Mootli educates his son in order to dispel the darkness of ignorance and confusion. Unfortunately, however, Phankga does the opposite of this. Phankga came from college with the prospects of being a good and promising teacher, but contrary to appearance, he harbours thoughts of subversion.

5.3.1.2 Climax

Dolamo (1965) attains climax in his novel when Dinyepo ties the knot with Thola, contrary to the wishes of his parents. The marriage sours in keeping with Thola's name which is an irony like the fruit it is named after, which is deceptively smooth and attractive on the outside but bitter on the inside. Not long after her marriage, she

displayed her true colours, like disrespecting her husband and in-laws, going out of doors without informing her husband, and coming back late.

Mminele (2008) achieves his climax in the middle of his narrative when Phankga and Mokhura connive to get Phogole's signature on a piece of paper so that they can use his skill in signing like Lahlang, to achieve their evil ends. Phankga and Mokhura employ Phogole's skill to stop the bus from coming to ferry the learners to Pretoria for the music competitions. This achieves its desired end but Phankga is thwarted in his attempt to portray the principal as a failure when his fraudulent and subversive action is exposed.

5.3.1.3 Resolution

Dolamo (1965) attains the resolution of his novella when Dinyepo marries the love of his life, Mmaditlhodi, with the parents on both sides' approval and the marriage is blessed with four children, two boys, and two girls. The heavens also seem to approve because the marriage is blessed with children perfectly paired off. In the same breath, the heavens seem to have adjudged Thola accordingly, because she dies in a car crash and as heaven would have it, Dinyepo finds her in this state.

Mminele (2008) adeptly depicts the resolution of the plot in the picture of the two birds, fighting over a nest and the arrogant one defeated and flying away, with the intervention of a powerful one, in this case, the Inspector of Education. Phankga's discomfiture must remind him of his father's words when he said that he had taken him to school so that he may educate others and not confuse them. Better still, his father's admonition was that he should wait for his chance and not fight over positions, that promotion will come when the time is ripe.

5.3.2 Theme and character delineation

In Dolamo (1965), Dinyepo's life is dogged by misfortune. When he arrives in the city, he is a good-natured young man who works and send money home for his parents to eke out a living. Later, however, he surrenders to peer pressure and the life of a jailbird. Nevertheless, he experiences a reversal when he meets Reverend Ramagaga in hospital and the latter discovers that he is a talented singer and recommends that he enrol for a teacher's course when he completes his jail sentence. This he does and becomes a conscientious teacher.

In Mminele (2008), the theme is that of ethnocentricity and the novelist succeeds tremendously in his character delineation. Phankga is a young man full of promise, fresh from college. As the principal, Lahlang expresses his hope that he will co-operate with him for a long time because he is a "child of the soil", Phankga is staring on the floor and seems to realise only now the truth that he is a "child of the soil". The seed germinates and blossoms until it bears the fruit of destruction which is bent on submerging the principal. Phankga, the able-bodied and very conceited young man, bears a name that suits his character. Physically and mentally, the older man, Lahlang, is inferior to him.

5.3.3 Milieu and time

In Dolamo (1965), the narrative setting is in the urban areas, although the narrative focus shifts from time to time. The protagonist, Dinyepo, is born and bred in the rural areas, a young man who goes to school and later, to the industrialised areas. When he gets there, he finds that there is a sharp contrast between the life he has left behind and the one that confronts him now. He soon finds himself in the company of criminals who break into white people's houses (Dolamo, 1965:33, 34). He soon becomes a jailbird, often tracked down by the police.

In Mminele (2008), the protagonist, Phankga is the "child of the soil" of Makgwareng, a rural village in rural Bakantirang. As time goes on, however, the rural village like other villages of its time and age, acquires modern amenities like school, church, butchery, bus depot, cars, and bicycles. Mention is also made of a mountain known as Matlorotloro and a meandering river known as Monepenepe, stretching from northeast to southwest (Mminele, 2008:4). The river supplies water to the villages scattered around the hills and hillocks and flows into another river known as Malapološe. Residents depend mainly on subsistence farming and livestock.

Phankga is a typical product of this milieu where almost everyone is almost everyone else's relative, however distant (Mminele, 2008:7, 81 & 91). This moulds Phankga into a parochial individual who thinks that the only people are his own people, the "children of the soil". He has no place in his heart for outsiders like Lahlang, despite signs of outside influence in his community, like the school, the church, and so forth, as cited above.

5.3.4 Narrative point of view (Narration)

5.3.4.1 The third-person narrator

Both Dolamo (1965) and Mminele (2008) employ the omniscient narrator technique in which the narrative voice, usually identified with that of the author, "is presumed to know everything there is to know about the characters and action" (Quinn, 2004:260). The omniscient narrator is often an intrusive narrator "who not only reports but also comments on and evaluates the actions and motives of characters and sometimes expresses a personal view about human life" (Abrams & Harphan, 2015:301).

5.3.4.2 The employment of dialogue

In Dolamo (1965), Dinyepo's father, after receiving with dismay, his son's intention to marry Thola, breaks the news to his mother:

> "Ke tšona tšeo morwa wa gago a ntšhelago ka tšona. O re yena o bone, a kganyoga, gomme bjalo o rata go goroša." (Dolamo, 1965:67)

(English translation)

> "This is the news that your son has showered me with. He says that he has seen, has fallen in love, and now wants to marry."

The narrator has depicted fully the parents' utter dismay on receiving the news of their son's intended marriage to Thola, contrary to their wishes. Their wish has been for their son to follow tradition and marry his cousin.

In Mminele (2008), Mootli, Phankga's extremely delighted father, proudly congratulates his son on his achievement. He wishes his mother were there to share in their happiness and help them express their gratitude to God:

> "Phankga ngwanaka, o šomile senna. Ke duma ge mmago a ka be a sa phela go re lebogiša Modimo ..." (Mminele, 2008:4)

(English translation)

> "Phankga my son, you have acted like a man. I wish your mother were alive so that we might together thank God."

The use of dialogue in Dolamo (1965) and Mminele (2008) aptly brings to life the personalities of the characters. Through the omniscient narrator, the reader comes to understand, better, the relationships of the characters as well as their social standing, emotional and deep feelings.

5.4 Conclusion

The epoch 1960-1969, saw the emergence of Matsepe with his novel, *Megokgo ya bjoko* ("The harvest of thought," 1969) and Mminele (2008). The two authors set the Sesotho sa Leboa literary scene ablaze. Mokgokong (1968:60-67) comments thus about *Megokgo ya bjoko*:

> Matsepe set out to instil modern narrative techniques into Northern Sotho prose fiction: the story has a complex organization, and is conveyed through the mediation of a narrator who is in a state of almost Brechtian *Verfremdung* with regard to his tale …

The above excerpt goes on to show that Matsepe was not only a literary giant but his "exceptional inventiveness" makes him a complete author. Matsepe moved away from the then popular theme of the 1940s and 1950s of Jim-goes-to-town. The theme was not only popular in Sesotho sa Leboa, but authors in other vernacular languages of South Africa engaged the theme in their writings. Serudu (2019) observes:

> Matsepe seems to wonder why the writers do not write on other facets of life of the African people and their cultures. Hence from this day on, Matsepe set himself a goal in his mind never to write about the Makgoweng motif. He never looked back or changed this mind-set to the end of his days. Do we change our mind set when we realise we have taken a wrong decision?

Mokgokong (cited by Gérard, 1981:223) goes further to say about the 1960s:

> Mminele … introduces a new twist in *Ngwana wa Mobu* ("Child of the soil," 1967) where he castigates the xenophobia which is as much inherent in the tribal outlook as is the tradition of hospitality.

It has to be noted that *Ngwana wa Mobu* was awarded "first prize in the Republic Festival Literary Competition" under the auspices of the Department of Education. The second prize went to Motuku with his novel entitled *Morweši* and the third prize was given to Matlala's novel entitled *Montshepetšabošego* (Serudu, 1993:9). In the same vein, Serudu (p.9) goes on to say:

> Of these three [novels], the only one which compares favourably with the works of O.K. Matsepe, is that of Mminele. Nevertheless, these works do catch the eye in the immediate background of Matsepe's works.

Reflecting on the three decades, the researcher concludes that more than religion and education, industrialisation appears to have disintegrated the African family unit and customs. Young adults flooded urban areas in search of employment. Consequently, young adults earned a consistent income. In the 1940s, Sehlodimela (1940) focuses on the recklessness and disobedience of Moelelwa, as the YA protagonist. On the other hand, Phalane (1943) emphasises the culture shock experienced by emerging adults who seek employment in urban areas.

In the 1950s, Ramaila (1953) presents a school in Kgautšwane, where Tsakata and Nape are male teachers, Violet and Dora are female teachers. This is proof enough that there is equity and equality in Ramaila's work. The author does not only accentuate male characters at the expense of their female counterparts. Similarly, Makoala (1958) elevates Puledi from rural African customs and traditions to Christian women's ministry and part-time studies. In the same vein, Puledi marries Piet Mohlala who later becomes a teacher and evangelist like Evangelist Titus Tšhilwane in Ramaila (1953).

Taking into account the history of African literatures and Sesotho sa Leboa in particular, pioneer authors wrote under strict conditions; censorship played a prominent role, and authors were affected or captured. It is at times diabolic to condemn elementary publications for mediocrity whilst it is generally accepted that every epoch is a generator of its own themes. Critical assessment may affect would-be authors either positively or negatively. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiongo (cited by Lindfors, 1984:7) states:

> So the scholar, as critic, has been in a position to influence the direction of the literature he comments upon. He can play a vital role as an interpreter of African fiction and realities.

Taking the argument further, Selepe (1999:50) observes:

> In African literature, especially the African novel, the reality of history dictates the novelist handling of his material with the consequent result that the group rather than the individual are the object of the novelist's attention [world].

From the preceding arguments, it is clear that the YA novella (novel) which is classified as a literary sub-genre, also presents a story of life. The implication of history in such a literary text, of course, qualifies it to be a significant part of the literary canon in any given language. The Sesotho sa Leboa YA novella (novel) falls squarely in this category. Emerging authors are earnestly encouraged to mutate with the times and never allow themselves to be static. After all, literature is the mirror of society and the authors are its ears and eyes.

CHAPTER 6: INTEGRATION OF THE STUDY FINDINGS AND NEW DIRECTIONS

6.1 Introduction

The study is based on a critical and comparative evaluation in order to:

- Identify and select chronologically the Sesotho sa Leboa YA novellas
- Trace the history of Sesotho sa Leboa novel writing
- Explore current research into the transformation and the subject matter of the YA novel
- Understand trends and patterns of the Sesotho sa Leboa YA novella
- Point out shortcomings of earlier writers as regard application of literary techniques
- Highlight “hot button topics” (Howell 2011:3) that would serve as guidelines to emerging writers

This study is intended to be used by all stakeholders attached to language and the development of literature (government departments and NGOs). The important observation emanating from the study is that “the future is revealed in the past” (Smith, 1954:294-295).

6.2 Earlier novellas in Sesotho sa Leboa

There is a trail that evidently shows that novellas written in Sesotho sa Leboa, initiated in the 1940s, were heavily influenced by Christianity. The missionaries regarded the indigenous African religion as heathen, uncivilised and not something to crave for. Overall, the emphasis was mainly on cultural dominance and “misconceptions” about African identity. In the same vein, the novellas had a touch of didacticism rather than local concerns based on traditional customs (Chinweizu, cited by Lindfors, 1984:13).

Peck and Coyle (2002:11) make a striking comparison as regards “a Eurocentric orientation in African creative writing” by saying:

> If there is one theme that could be said to dominate postcolonial literature it is perhaps the meeting of two cultures, and in particular the way in which an indigenous order has been usurped by alien and intrusive values.

In hindsight, by taking stock of what has been published in the early decades, the secular dictum is noticeable, as pointed out in Chapter 1. However, Rafapa (2016) warns modern researchers not to undermine the solid foundation laid by pioneer authors. For this reason, Rafapa (2016) argues that earlier literary output adds up to the total meaning of "a people's identity" and existence. It will therefore be ironic if modern scholars could be seen not to acknowledge the contribution made by their predecessors.

In *Puledi le Thobja*, the author presents a teacher who is a consummate choir conductor at school, in church and during matrimonial ceremonies. Similarly, in *Morutiši Dinyepo* and *Tsakata,* the protagonists are skilful choir masters. This is the case in *Ngwana wa Mobu* where Phankga, the main character, is depicted as a gifted choir conductor. Evidently, during the time, teacher-training colleges under the administration of missionaries, offered music as a subject. Without any shadow of doubt, it could be concluded that choral music, in the form of hymns written in sol-fa notation, was used by Christian missionaries as a vehicle for spiritual upliftment and aesthetic beauty. Beyond the church, communities practiced folk and ceremonial songs (Serudu, 1990: 40-47).

6.3 Narrative point of view (Narration)

In the primary sources evaluated in this study, the authors employ third-person point of view, i.e., the omniscient narrator technique. The reader is presented, amongst other things, "with the characters, dialogue, actions, setting, and events which constitute the *narrative* in a work of fiction" (Abrams & Harpham, 2015:300). By engaging this mode, the author is able to move freely from one end to the other and supply more information within a short space of time.

The omniscient narration brings to life the world of the story as it deals with the emotions, feelings, and ideals of the characters. For example, Mminele (2008) shows the reader via this mode, how Mootli is deeply touched by Phankga's befriending of a

cruel and ruthless companion by the name of liquor. In Dolamo (1965), likewise, the omniscient narrator shows how Dinyepo's headstrong defiance of his parents' advice leads to an unhappy and fruitless marriage to Thola which collapses in the end. The novelist, who is himself the omniscient narrator, has successfully used the technique of weaving into the fabric of his narrative, the parent-child relationship where the parent is more knowledgeable and is in a position to give advice which is often turned down by the child to his detriment.

6.4 Gender balance

A worrying factor is this that in most of the novellas selected for this study, the world is viewed through the eyes of male characters. The female voice whispers in the background (as if female characters are puppets) whilst male characters think and speak loudly. What must be emphasised, perhaps above all, is that pictorial representation of gender is rather lopsided. The feature is mind-baffling as it fails to impart that principle of individuality and personality in characters of different sexes.

No matter how characters are depicted in any literary work, they should be vibrant, life-like and behave like real people. Their separate identities and fluctuating moods should be at play at all costs (from exposition to resolution). It is regrettable that in most novellas (novels), not excluding other forms of literary fiction, patriarchy is promoted, whereas matriarchy is demoted (Selden, Widdowson & Brooker, 2005:115-137).

Though women are admired in many instances, as singers, dancers, caregivers, and housekeepers, they are often depicted as being dependant on their male counterparts (Smith, 1954:60). Besides the notion of domination, men are often depicted as great lovers of their wives, going all out to satisfy their lovers' wishes. This trend of patriarchy has been part of culture, and social heritage and is also closely related to religious beliefs. In recent years, the trend has been strongly countered by civil and human rights.

6.5 Modern research

It would be much appreciated if modern researchers could come out boldly about how they feel as regards the output of contemporary YA novellas (novels) in Sesotho sa Leboa. The following questions could be probed:

6.5.1 In which ways are recently published novels/novellas progress in harmony with what is happening today?
6.5.2 Do the authors display a clear vision of the social base?
6.5.3 Are the authors able to detect the cancer of corruption and self-enrichment and the effects of unemployment engulfing the young generation?
6.5.4 Do all South Africans enjoy the fruits of democracy?
6.5.5 Are those in power selling the souls of those who elected them?
6.5.6 Is the media misreporting or biased?
6.5.7 Do we still find value in some of the clauses of our constitution, as well as democratic values, as enshrined in the Bill of Rights?

In essence, true literature should endeavour to illuminate the ills of society. Ngara (1985: 31) shares the same view that the novel has become a popular genre (logical choice) for African writers to tell the story of life. In the history of the development of a language, something has to emerge from scholarship, lest we forget.

Further, Petrone, Sarigianides and Lewis (2014) argue that when analysing YAL, critics should view:

> … the characters and storylines as platforms for discussing social, political, and philosophical issues and questions present in our larger society, such as the effects of entertainment built on virtual and violent contexts

Scholars of African literature and Sesotho sa Leboa in particular, first, need to acquaint themselves with feminist views, both in African and Western discourse. Secondly, they need to explain what patriarchy is doing today and where it is going before much is lost to politics. Whilst both camps share the same historical notion about the role of each sex, there is that feeling of discomfort and subversion which seem to be orchestrated by those in the corridors of power. Literary scholars also must not turn a blind eye to this burning issue (Stratton, 1994).

6.6 Emphasis on indigenous literature

The Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), the Department of Arts and Culture, the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR) and the new South African Research Infrastructure Roadmap (SARIR) are all structures that should take a lead in ensuring the development of Previously Marginalised Languages (PMLs) and More Marginalised Languages (MMLs). Moreover, the Department of Basic Education (DBE), as it is mandated to prescribe Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM), also has an important role to play. It has to be noted that the world of fiction, whether for children, young adults or adults, has completely changed in terms of content.

As focus now is increasingly on “the study of indigenous literature in schools and universities” (Rycroft, cited by Lindfors 1984:86), the government must exert more pressure. In so doing, African languages in South Africa, including Sesotho sa Leboa, will be raised to the highest level. It must be pointed out that there are more edifying novels/novellas coming out of the market that “serve to stimulate a new demand” for YAL (Lindfors 1984:90).

6.7 Recommendations

Further study could perhaps look specifically at the following sub-genres in African languages and in particular, Sesotho sa Leboa:

- Children’s fiction
- Crossover novel
- Fantasy fiction
- Novel of sensibility
- Nouveau roman (the new novel)
- Problem novel
- Science fiction
- Sentimental novel
- YA historical fiction and
- YAL with LGBT context

(Abrams & Harpham, 2015: 252-260, 359-362)

It would also be interesting if modern authors and scholarship in African languages could venture into the following kinds of novel-writing:

- Avant-gardism
- Cult, or coterie
- Epistolary
- Pastoral
- Roman à clef and
- The novel of manners

(*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1990:134-138)

The above-mentioned are but a few examples. There is a myriad of sub-genres that require commentary and criticism by modern researchers. Scholars and all stakeholders are geared to benefit if the new generation of authors could, in the main, popularise the YAL sub-genre. Good literature reveals a time and the history of a people.

As Hartley and Wilson (1968:8) argue, “young and intelligent readers” become hooked “in imaginative fiction if it holds their attention, reflects and interprets their contemporary world …” For this reason, the YAL sub-genre, as explored in this study, must be seen to be a vehicle to touch “the inner life of the mind and personality” of its intended readers.

To this end, present scholarship has laid a sound foundation as regards what YAL specifically is and what it is not. Blurred boundaries and intersections between child, young adult and adult literature have been demystified. Over and above this, authors will be able to re-imagine a new approach which is more realistic in subject matter, portraying young adults in their quest to reach greater heights. In as much as culture and history play a role in literary fiction, the new age author is also expected to write beyond the ordinary (Ndebele, 1991:70; Smart, 2016:4).

Finally, the researcher makes recommendations in terms of topics that require closer scrutiny or examination. The recommendations may generate new questions for further research. To have included more chapters based on the remaining periods

(1970-2009) would, in the final analysis, render this study beyond reasonable limit. As Smith (1954:1), points out:

> One of the great tragedies of our age is that a large number of educated persons attempt to understand the present without concerning themselves about the past … Each of us is a part of all that mankind has met and made. We live, whoever we are and wherever we may be, in one world (cf. forgotten books website).

Thus, the researcher has made an attempt not to cover all aspects befitting the YA novella (novel), but a few that would in the meantime suffice and open up whole new vistas for further study. All in all, the Sesotho sa Leboa YA novella has evolved as a fully-fledged and definable sub-genre. Sufficient bibliography has been presented, to enable emerging researchers to navigate YAL with an appreciable amount of confidence.

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