

**THE DRAMAS OF J.H.K. MALAO: PHITLHELA
AND MOTLHODI**

BY

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the following family members who have since passed away:

- Mpoki Elizabeth Tlhapane (my mother)
- Mmashadi and Ntofole Raseleka (my maternal grandparents)



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim

The aim of this study is to analyse the dramatic skills of Malao with reference to **Phithela** and **Motlhodi**. In the process, his contribution to the development of Setswana literature will emerge. Through this critical analysis, the scholars of Setswana literature and African literature in general will note the strengths and weaknesses of Malao's dramas and employ them to improve on future texts. The study is aimed at identifying the literary merit and giving interpretations of the texts.

1.2 Motivation

This study is prompted by the fact that Malao has written several books in different genres but nobody has examined his writings. He informed the researcher that he has written two novels, two folklore collections, a grammar book series for grades 7 to 12 (as co-author), four poetry books, one book on creative writing and three dramas. Quite a large number of people informally spoken to, including some authorities in the language, do not know a drama like Malao's **Motlhodi**. This study focuses on Malao's dramas, **Phithela** and **Motlhodi**. Malao's third drama, **Ga bo jelwe**, could not be incorporated into this study as it is presently out of print and inaccessible to the researcher. The author himself tried in vain to procure a copy for the researcher.

1.3 Approach

In this study, the researcher will be working according to a formal approach. Formalism as introduced by the Russian Formalists provides some points of departure. In principle formalism identifies formal features of texts in order to show how the particular text has renewed the art of writing through defamiliarisation. In this study then, the researcher will attempt to identify the features in the dramas of Malao that make his dramas unique.

If, on the other hand, Malao has not renewed the tradition in some respect, this will also be pointed out.

The aspects of drama that will be handled in various chapters of this study should not be seen as watertight compartments that are sealed from each other. Instead, these aspects are interrelated. The way various aspects refer to one another as elements of dramatic structural unity will be outlined below.

The theme of a drama is drawn from the story events that unfold in the presentation of dialogue. In this way, theme and dialogue are interrelated structural units of drama. The theme and message of drama as depicted by dialogue and various forms of didascalies will indicate the type of drama written.

The characters portray themselves through speech and behaviour as revealed in dialogue. In this way, dialogue reveals character types. The naming of characters and the description of their roles as listed at the beginning of a drama supplement the portrayal of characters in dialogic presentations and other forms of didascalialia.

The concept didascalies refers to the interface between the drama text and its performance, including all information the dramatist provides about aspects such as, among the others, acts and scenes, movements of characters and the like.

1.4 The history of Setswana drama from 1930 to date

The history of Setswana drama, as will be outlined, is based on the information gathered by Masiea (in Andrejewski et al, 1985), Ranamane (in Gerard, 1993), White and Couzens (1984), and the findings of the researcher. The original and translated dramas in Setswana are chronologically presented under the following subheadings: The pre-Apartheid period, the Apartheid period and the post-Apartheid period; previous research in Setswana dramas; the author's life history and summaries of the texts under discussion.

1.4.1 The pre-Apartheid period

The first phase of this period is marked by Plaatje's translations of Shakespeare's plays. According to White and Couzens (1984:89) Plaatje's first translation was **Julius Caesar (Dinchoncho tsa boJulius Kesara)** in 1917. This translation was, however, only published in 1937 by the University of Witwatersrand's Bantu Treasury after it was submitted by Professor Lestrade, long after the death of Plaatje in 1932. **Merchant of Venice** and **Comedy of Errors** were translated in 1920 as **Mashoabishoabi** and **Diphoshophosho** respectively. Other Shakespearean translations by Plaatje were **Othello**, between 1922 and 1923, and **Much Ado About Nothing (Matsapatsapa a lefela)** in 1929. **Diphoshophosho** was published in 1930. **Mashoabishoabi**, **Othello** and **Matsapatsapa a lefela** remained unpublished by 1930.

The first play to be written in Setswana is **Motswasele II** by L.D. Raditladi. It is a rewrite of the original **Serukhutlhi** (The rioter) which was written in 1937.

1.4.2 The Apartheid period

In 1957 S.A. Moroke translated **The Reign of King Pharaoh** as **Puso ya ga Kgosi Faro** and also wrote **Lobisa Radipitse** in 1960. In 1961 M.O.M. Seboni's contribution towards Setswana drama came about in another translation of the **Merchant of Venice** as **Morekisi wa Venisi**. In 1965 three dramas were published: **Maragana** (A mix up) and **Gareng ga Metswi** (Between the arrows), both by D.M. Modise, and J.M. Ntsime's **Pelo e ja serati** (The heart chooses its lover).

In 1968 Ntsime published **Kobo e ntsho** (A black blanket), the title of which is a Shakespearean expression (Through the blanket of the dark) in **Macbeth**. In the same year L. D. Raditladi published another play, **Sekgoma 1** (one of the first dikgosi of the Bangwaketse tribe).

Setswana plays published after 1970 include: Ntsime's **Pelo e ntsho** (Black heart) in 1972. In 1974 D.M. Modise wrote **Magagana** (Battle axe), structured in the same manner as **Maragana**. **Maragana** earned the author the Sol Plaatje Award in 1981. In 1976 three plays emerged: **Ngwanaka o tla tsoga o ikotlhaya** (My child, one day you will be sorry) by S.A. Moroke, **Monna Motlhoki** (The poor man) by T.S. Metsileng and Ntsime's **Matlhotlhapelo** (Heartrendings). **Matlhotlhapelo** consists of three one-act plays, namely: 'Ga ke mosimanyana' (I am not a small boy), 'Letlhokwa' (Stalk of grass) and 'Ikotlhae' (Confess). Ntsime published **Lerato ke eng?** (What is love?) in 1978. A play conspicuously left out by Ranamane in his history is **Molato ga se wa me** (It is not my fault) by Moroke in 1979.

After 1980 there was a slight increase in the publication of dramas. These include: Rantao's **Ditiragalo** (Happenings) in 1982, Ntsime's **Se se jeleng rre** (What has killed my father?) in 1983, **Ikarabele** (Answer for yourself), with three one act plays, by Keamogetse in 1984, **Marothodi** (Drops) by L.Z. Sikwane and **Ngaka Lepadile** (Doctor Lepadile) by K.M.S. Rammutla in 1986. **Phithhela** (The secret way) by J.H.K. Malao was published in 1987 while **O nkutlwe ke nna molao** (Take from me, I am the law) by D.M. Tiro, Sekeleko's **Molatswana wa ga etsho** (Our valley), Malao's second play, **Motlhodi** (Bad influence) and C.D. Ditsele's radio play **Melodi** (Whistles) were published in 1989.

In 1990 the following plays were published: **Sethunya sa bohutsana** (The flower of suffering) by C.D. Thobega, **Ke jewa ke lerato** (I am suffering from love) by M.J. Magasa, **Bobi ba segokgo** (Spider's web) by T.M. Malebye and **Maropeng** (Home is the best) by Rammutla. In 1991 S.G. Seabelo published **Kana mme o rileng?** (What has my mother said?) and in 1993 Rammutla published her second play, **Mma o nthutele ngwana** (Mother, take care of my child).

1.4.3 The post-Apartheid period

Plays published in 1994 include: **Megagaru** (Greed) and **Ofentse** (Triumph) both by Rammutla. In 1995 G. Moka'e's **Kaene le Abele** (Cain and Abel) and S.F. Motlhake's

Kae le kae (Everywhere) were published. Mokae's play won him the African Heritage Award. D. Matjila and M. Mfike published **Go jela bothoko teng** (To keep in bitterness) in 1996.

It is important to note that there may be a number of plays recently written in Setswana, which the researcher may not yet have come across.

1.5 An outline of previous research in Setswana drama

In 1987 the first academic research thesis written in Setswana appeared. It was S.J. Shole's **Mefama ya diterama tsa Setswana** (Aspects of Setswana drama) presented to the then University of Bophuthatswana, now the University of North West for a M.A. degree. Shole adapted it into a book in 1988. The study focuses on various aspects of drama, viz: theme (morero), action (sedirego), conflict (kgotlhang), characterisation (boanedi), dialogue (mmuisano) and stageability (bodiragatso). The dramas analysed are Modise's **Maragana, Gareng ga metswi** and **Magagana**; Ntsime's **Pelo e ja serati** and **Pelo e ntsho** and Raditladi's **Dintshontsho tsa lorato, Sekgoma I** and **Motswasele II**.

M.C. Thubisi's M.A. dissertation, presented to the University of North West (then University of Bophuthatswana) in 1991, is titled **Kgotlhang mo ditlhangweng le diterameng tsa Setswana** (Conflict in oral literature and Setswana dramas). The study deals with conflict as it emerges in all Ntsime's dramas: **Pelo e ja serati, Se se jeleng rre** and **Pelo e ntsho**; Modise's dramas: **Gareng ga metswi, Maragana** and **Magagana** and in folktales and traditional songs.

V.K. Motsilanyane's M.A. thesis, titled: **Lerato jaaka tlhotlheletso mo diterameng tsa ga J.M. Ntsime tsa go fitlha 1990** (Love as an influence in J.M. Ntsime's drama up to 1990) was presented to the Potchefstroom University in 1992. As implied in the title, the study is thematic in nature. The theme of love is discussed as it reveals itself in Ntsime's dramas: **Kobo e ntsho, Pelo e ja serati, Pelo e ntsho, Matlhotlhapelo** and **Lerato ke eng?** Though largely thematic in nature, the study also touches on other aspects of drama such as conflict.

D.M.G. Sekeleko (1993) wrote **Naming Practices in J.M. Ntsime's Drama, Pelo e ja serati**. He observed that names do not only depict character but also help to develop the plot and show how setting influences the events and characters in the text. He furthermore showed that characters act according to their names, making it clear that names play an important role in the tradition of the Batswana.

G.E. Pilane's M.A. mini-dissertation entitled **Naming: An Aspect of Character Portrayal in Dintshontsho tsa lorato by L.D. Raditladi** presented to the Potchefstroom University in 1996, explores how Raditladi uses naming and how it is related to character delineation and the cultural life of the Batswana in general.

Conflict in J.M. Ntsime's drama text: Pelo e ja serati, an M.A. mini-dissertation by B.J. Katametsi submitted to the Potchefstroom University in 1998, investigates the nature and function of conflict in **Pelo e ja serati**. It further determines the relationship between conflict and conventional socio-cultural boundaries.

1.6 The author's life history

Doctor Jacob Henry Kgosi Malao was born at Bethanie village, the headquarters of the Bakwena-ba-Mogopa near Brits. He attended school there until he completed his Junior Certificate, the equivalent of the now Standard 8. He then went to Hebron Training Institution where he completed his matric and Junior Secondary Teacher's Course (JSTC).

While occupying various positions in the Department of Education, Malao enrolled for university studies through correspondence. This saw him obtain B.A. and B. Ed. Degrees from the University of South Africa, and M. Ed. and D. Ed. from the University of Potchefstroom.

While Malao wrote several different genres in Setswana, he informed the researcher that he is most interested in poetry. He said that his love for poetry was influenced by the

writings of Ngugi wa Thiongo. The books that Malao wrote include a novel: **Phitlhelelo kwa Setlhoeng** (The rise to the top); dramas: **Phitlhela**, **Motlhodi** and **Ga bo jelwe**; poetry: **Mokgako wa poko** (as co-author), **Ke lo boketse**, **Tlhaloganyanya poko** (as co-author) and **Ngatana** (as co-author); folklore collections: **Sekgwama sa Setswana** and **Letlotlo la Setšhaba**; creative writing: **Seikokotlelo** and grammar book series for grade 7 to 12 (as co-author).

1.7 Summaries of Phitlhela and Motlhodi

1.7.1 Phitlhela

Kgosi Kebalemogile of the Bakwena tribe at Mosopa convened a kgotla meeting for all the menfolk. The meeting was to consider the traditional rainmaking through ritual murders as was proposed to Kebalemogile by Letlantheng, his self-proclaimed advisor. This was in view of the fact that the entire tribe was befallen by drought and starvation.

One of the devoted Christians in the village, Gabonthone, Kebalemogile's elderly paternal uncle, objected to the traditional rainmaking. He also objected to the fact that he and his younger brother, Kenyaditswe, were not consulted first as elderly members of the royal family, before the meeting was held. For his objection he was fined two oxen. These would be served to the kgotla. The same applied to Kenyaditswe for having not attended the meeting.

After the tribal meeting, Kebalemogile and his councillors met witchdoctors under the leadership of Maphekola to arrange for the ritual murder. On being informed about the plan by Remoneilwe, one of the councillors who was a Christian, Reverend Berens approached Kebalemogile to advise him against that, but he furiously rejected him. Kedinnetse was captured and murdered for traditional rainmaking.

When Kebalemogile ordered that Reverend Berens be stripped naked and beaten, the Christians strongly objected to it and stopped the attempt to do that. Letlantheng had

proposed to the Kgosi to have Reverend Berens beaten on the grounds that he had been misleading some members of the tribe to be disloyal to the tribal authority.

As drought and starvation persisted, indicating the failure of rainmaking through ritual murders, Kebalemogile convened a tribal meeting. At the meeting he told his subjects how he was having nasty dreams about the fact that he was ill-treating and disregarding his paternal uncles and that he had been misled by Letlantheng. He then pulled out an assegai and fatally stabbed Letlantheng. He further ordered the killing of the witchdoctors. He was later found having hanged himself.

In this play Christianity is challenged by tribal traditions and customs. The traditional way of making rain through ritual murders is followed by praying, as advocated by the Christians. Against this milieu the dramatist shows how a character commits various social and criminal offences and is punished for them. The play can thus be called a cultural play with moral overtones.



1.7.2 Motlhodi

In the context of this play “motlhodi” means bad influence. This bad influence is displayed by Gabankitse, who plays the role of a turncoat in the play. It all started when Gabankitse planned to break up the intimate friendship between Lerotho and Rantlapunya and their families out of jealousy.

Gabankitse approached Rantlapunya to tell him that he heard Lerotho speaking bad about him (Rantlapunya). He said Lerotho told him that Rantlapunya enriched himself by crooked means. He was responsible for the disappearance of Legogodi’s cattle while he and his wife were engaged in witchcraft. He further told Rantlapunya that Lerotho was intimate with a diviner whom Lerotho used to kill Rantlapunya.

After Rantlapunya discussed Gabankitse’s allegation with his wife, they immediately felt that they must go to Lerotho and his wife to express their concern and call them to order. On arrival there they shouted at Lerotho and his wife and declined to disclose the name of

Gabankitse as the one who informed them that Lerotho and his wife had spoken badly of them. Lerotho and his wife drove them out.

From Lerotho's place Gabankitse proceeded to Rantlapunya's family to instigate them further against Lerotho's family. Meanwhile, Lerotho went to report his problem with Rantlapunya to Kgosi Mperetli and one of his councillors, Legogodi. Rantlapunya was subsequently called to the kgotla (tribal council) for the hearing of the reported matter. Rantlapunya was fined two oxen for refusing to disclose the name of his informant. At the second trial Rantlapunya felt obliged to disclose his informant as Gabankitse. Subsequently Gabankitse was ordered out of the village while Rantlapunya and his wife had to apologise to Lerotho and his wife.

For getting other people at loggerheads with each other, Gabankitse earned himself dismissal from the village as punishment. An order by Kgosi Mperetli to Rantlapunya's family to apologise to Lerotho's family taught them that allegations must never be taken seriously before being proved true. As the play deals with moral issues it can be called a moral play.

1.8 Scope

Although Doctor Malao wrote three dramas to date: **Phitlhela**, **Motlhodi** and **Ga bo jelwe**, the study will be restricted to the first two since the third book is unavailable.

This study comprises five chapters:

- (i) Chapter one situates and directs the study as it provides the method of research, short history of Setswana drama and an outline of the previous studies in Setswana dramas.
- (ii) Chapter two focuses on thematic structure while chapter three deals with dialogue.
- (iii) In chapter four attention is given to character and characterisation.
- (iv) Chapter five discusses didascalies.
- (v) Chapter six is a summary of all the findings from the previous chapters.

CHAPTER 2

THEME

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Boynton and Mack (1993) maintain that when stories are written, the authors thereof intend to have something to say about human experience by taking the readers through a series of events that will change their views. What happens to the characters in the story and how they respond to events is said to mirror general human behaviour and gives a commentary on the meaning of being human. A further point made by Boynton and Mack (1993) is that theme is a set of human values embodied in the story.

Dikgale (1996:40) is of the opinion that a good theme must treat real life and must not be vague.

In this research an attempt is made to find out how Malao has presented themes in **Phitlhela** and **Motlhodi**.



2.2 Definition of Theme

It is important that we differentiate between theme and other concepts that are closely related and often confused with it, namely topic and motif.

Diamond (1993:1) differentiates between topic and theme or subject by regarding topic as general and theme as specific. She regards theme as the insight that the dramatist attempts to convey to the reader by means of all the components of the play. This accords with the following definition of theme by Cuddon (1985:695):

... properly speaking, the theme of a work is not its subject matter, but rather its central idea, which may be stated directly or indirectly.

Dikgale (1996:40) gives an example of direct presentation of theme as the title of some plays. He further explains indirect presentation of theme as when the author just presents a story to the reader and leaves it to a reader to discover the theme.

Dikgale (1996:40) prefers the indirect presentation to direct presentation of theme. He regards as a capable writer the one who will be subtle in giving his short stories appropriate titles for the reader to discover the theme for him- or herself. He argues that the reader will pride himself or herself with the discovery or contribution towards the ultimate solution of the narrative. The same can be said about drama.

Diamond (1993:1) notes that while theme is the leading idea in a text, motif is the smallest significant entity of the text. A text may have one central theme but many motifs.

Following on the definitions of theme outlined above, the story events of the two plays under study, **Phitlhela** and **Motlhodi**, will be closely followed and analysed with a view of drawing out themes entailed in them. Quotations from the plays relating to some identified themes will be made whenever the need arises.

2.3 Theme in **Phitlhela** and **Motlhodi**

In **Phitlhela** Malao presents conflicting ideologies over rainmaking among the Bakwena-ba-Mosopa tribe under the leadership of Kebalemogile. Traditional rainmaking is in conflict with praying for rain, which is a Christian practice. Against this cultural background certain moral issues are explored.

Kebalemogile, instigated by Letlantheng, subscribed to the traditional way of making rain. Human flesh is mixed with muti and the mixture spread all over the tribal land. Kebalemogile obstinately enforced this method despite vigorous opposition to it by the Christian community, led by Reverend Berens and the kgosi's paternal uncles, Gabonthone and Kenyaditswe. Traditional rainmaking is alluded to in the title of the drama **Phitlhela**, which can be interpreted as 'doing it in a secretive or hidden way'.

The intended secrecy stems from the fact that the womenfolk and children are not to know about the practice. In this sense **Phithhela** is a cultural play: it implicitly evaluates the cultural practice of rainmaking through ritual murder.

Phithhela also has moral overtones. Malao shows us that we need to weigh options. This can be facilitated by giving people with different opinions a hearing in order to draw out better advice. It is morally acceptable to respect and heed the advice of the community elders.

People who are oppressive, resist change and do not consult with relevant stakeholders, finally end up in the wilderness. Rigid-mindedness and impervious stubbornness do not pay. Kebalemogile is a case in point. He turns a deaf ear to all good advice advanced to him by his paternal uncles and the Christian community, but instead he allows himself to be misled by Letlantheng, a lowly ranked affiliate of the tribe. He had to pay a heavy price for that: he finally committed suicide.

People who mislead others also pay a bitter price. Letlantheng was finally stabbed to death by Kgosi Kebalemogile for his misleading influence on him. The tribal diviners who misled Kebalemogile into believing in traditional rainmaking, also got their share of punishment when they were massacred and thrown into caves.

The following motifs are relevant at arriving at **Phithhela's** theme:

- (a) Tradition, as opposed to Christianity, as it relates to advocacy for making rain through ritual murders as opposed to praying for rain.
- (b) Lack of consultation with and respect for the relevant community elders, as it relates to Kebalemogile towards his paternal uncles and Reverend Berens.
- (c) The effect of stubbornness, cruelty and oppression as it relates to Kebalemogile.
- (d) The effects of instigation as it relates to Letlantheng.

In **Motlhodi** Malao reflects how one person can have bad influence on the others. The word 'motlhodi' is part of the Setswana proverb 'Motlhodi wa motho o gaisa wa ting' (The sour-making of a person is worse than that of the soured porridge meal). It means that bad influence is more destructive than any other force.

The bad influence of one person on the others may arise from, inter alia, jealousy. This accords with Tlooke's view in Mashabela (n.d.87) that jealousy is the source of conflict and misunderstanding. This is the case with Gabankitse in **Motlhodi**. He enjoyed getting Rantlapunya and Lerotho at loggerheads with each other, because he was jealous of their intimate friendship. He even had the courage to express that with impunity to his wife, Tebogo. The following utterances by Gabankitse to his wife Tebogo illustrate this position, which corresponds with the statement by Tlooke as given by Mashabela (n.d.: 87) that jealous people do not like success or happiness in the lives of other people:

Nnyaa mmaabo se tshoge ga se sepe ke batla fela go ba ruta magokonyane a botshelo. (p. 13)

Re tla re eng mma, kana go monate jang go bona batho ba ba ntseng ba gopola gore ke ditsala ba lwa! (p. 39)

Ba dirwa ke botlaela jo bo mo go bona. Nna Mosimane wa Motaung ke ba thulanya ditlhogo. (p. 40)

(No, my children's mother, don't worry as I only want to teach them the tricks of life.)

(What else can we say my children's mother, it pleases one to see people who have been thinking that they are friends fight against each other!)

(They are what they are because of their foolishness. I, the Motaung boy, will get them at loggerheads with each other.)

The topic implied in the title of this drama is bad influence, and takes the form of instigation by Gabankitse. Subsidiary to it is the need to verify any given facts. In this regard, Rantlapunya and his wife, Goitsewang, believed without any verification, Gabankitse's allegation (p. 3-6) that Lerotho told him that they practise witchcraft and enriched themselves wickedly. In this mood they arrogantly approached Lerotho and his wife Ketshabamang and refused to disclose their source of information. (p. 7-11)

For his part Lerotho deemed it necessary to verify the allegation at all costs, hence he approached Kgosi Mperetli's council for intervention. In this way, the allegation was finally found to be untrue and consequently Gabankitse was expelled from the village. The moral education is that instigation does not pay.

Motlhodi is a moral play as it shows that to get other people at loggerheads with each other through bad influence is morally unacceptable and finally punishable. For instigating Rantlapunya and Lerotho and thus dismantling their friendship Gabankitse was finally expelled from the village. Rantlapunya regretted having accepted the allegation by Gabankitse that Lerotho spoke badly about him without verification and had to apologise to Lerotho for that after the allegation was proved wrong in the kgotla (tribal council).

2.4 Conclusion

As referred to earlier, we differentiate between a direct and indirect presentation of themes in texts. We regard as praiseworthy the author who opts for indirect presentation which allows the reader freedom to draw out themes through his or her own comprehension and interpretation. Malao presents the theme in this way in **Phithela**.

The reader is obliged to formulate a set of themes. In **Motlhodi** the title clearly indicates that the play will explore bad influence. Although relevant to any society, Malao's presentation of the theme in the mundane squabbles of people, does not result in a very interesting play.

CHAPTER 3

CHARACTER AND CHARACTERISATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the focus will be on character and characterisation. Though the two concepts are intertwined they will be discussed separately and applied to the texts under study.

3.2 CHARACTER

Chauke (1998:19) defines character as the invented or imaginary person in a dramatic or narrative work that is given human qualities and behaviour. These collective qualities or peculiarities entailed in character, according to Fowler (1984: 117), differentiate an individual or a group. This implies that characters are not real people, but may represent recognisable types.

Abrams (1981: 21) notes that the moral and dispositional qualities of characters in a dramatic or narrative work are expressed in their words and actions. Expressing the intention of the author when using a character in a dramatic or narrative work, Taylor (1981: 62) says:

A character is a mere construction of words meant to express an idea or view of experience.

3.2.1 Classification of characters

Characters can be arranged into various classes on the basis of various criteria. The classification to be applied here is that proposed by Ewen (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 41). Ewen proposes the classification of characters along three continua, namely: complexity, development and penetration into inner life. The first two will be applied to the plays.

Along the axis of complexity there are: characters constructed around a single or one dominant trait on the one end and complex characters on the other. Characters constructed around a single or dominant trait include allegorical figures, caricatures and types. To suit the texts under study I will adapt Ewen's character types as follows: name-based figures and types. Caricatures and complex figures do not feature in Malao's dramas.

3.2.1.1 Name-based figures

According to Ewen (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983: 41) and Gule (1996: 84), allegorical figures are denoted by a proper name used to represent a single trait around which that character is constructed.

Notable cases in point of allegorical or name-based figures in **Phitlhela** are: Kebalemogile, Letlantheng, Gabonthone, and Kenyaditswe. Kebalemogile, the tribal kgosi's name means 'I am aware of them', implying that he is aware that they (his paternal uncles) want to undermine him and confuse his people with their Christian principles.



Letlantheng means 'There is nothing you can do to me'. This implies that Letlantheng already has Kebalemogile in his palm to mislead him while nobody is capable of alerting him.

Gabonthone means 'It (chieftaincy) is not unsuited for me'. It indicates that as the paternal uncle to Kgosi Kebalemogile he can also assume the throne, and thus he should be esteemed by lowly placed subjects like Letlantheng.

Kenyaditswe means 'I have been despised'. By virtue of being a paternal uncle to the kgosi (chief) and supposed to be one of his natural advisors, he felt despised when he was not consulted on a serious matter like traditional rainmaking.

In **Motlhodi** the following cases of allegorical or name-based figures have been identified: Gabankitse, Lerotho and Rantlapunya.

Gabankitse means ‘They don’t understand me’. This implies that he can split up intimate friends without them noticing.

Lerotho means ‘A wild, bitter herb (morogo)’, cooked and eaten as a vegetable. The bitterness symbolizes Lerotho’s strict insistence that Rantlapunya must release the name of the person who told him (Rantlapunya) that his family was involved in witchcraft and had enriched itself wickedly. This saw him reporting the matter to Kgosi Mperetli who ensured that Gabankitse was revealed as Rantlapunya’s misinformer.

Rantlapunya means ‘A person who plunges into things’. He just believed what Gabankitse told him about Lerotho.

3.2.1.2 Types

In types a prominent trait represents a type of person rather than purely an individual’s quality.

In African tribal life some people of a low social status often slyly intimate themselves to the tribal leaders and finally take charge of their lives. Letlantheng exemplifies this type in **Phitlhela**. He is portrayed as an instigator who had become the self-proclaimed personal advisor to Kgosi Kebalemogile, who dances to the tune of his music. In the process, Kebalemogile’s paternal uncles, who are regarded as royal elders and personal advisors of the kgosi, were sidelined. Kebalemogile readily agreed to and implemented Letlantheng’s idea of traditional rainmaking through ritual murder, despite vigorous opposition from his paternal uncles and members of the Christian community led by

Reverend Berens. Letlantheng persisted in his pretended unwavering support for Kebalemogile after he misled him to send for Kenyaditswe to try him before the kgotla

when he did not come for the discussion of the traditional rainmaking. Letlanheng incited the kgosi as follows:

Ba ba go nyatsang bona o ba rathamolole setladi. O be o ba ditse ba tle ba itse gore ga di ke di bopa lesope le le lengwe. (p. 11)

(Those who despise you, you must strike like thunder. Then you must impoverish them so that they know that there cannot be two bulls in one kraal.)

Letlanheng remained unchanged as an instigator even when he was condemned and rebuked by several characters for his interference in the royal administration and his ill-advice to Kebalemogile. His unchanging behaviour earned him death from Kebalemogile's assegai. He can be regarded as an undeveloping type.

In **Motlhodi** Malao portrays a type of person who is bent on getting people at loggerheads with each other. Gabankitse emerges as such a type. Despite the concern of his wife Tebogo, Gabankitse continued to derive pleasure from causing conflict between Rantlapunya and Lerotho, as illustrated in the conversation between Gabankitse and his wife Tebogo:

Gabankitse: Nna mosimane wa Motaung ke ba thulanya ka ditlhogo.

(I, the Motaung boy, let them bang their heads against each other.)

Tebogo: Rraabo, a o ke o mpolelele, ke ka ntlha ya eng o lwesa batho ba ituletse sentle?

(My father's children, just tell me, why do you make people fight when they have been living together peacefully?)

Gabankitse: O a bona, ke gore, botsala jwa bona bo ne bo ntena. (p. 40)

(You see, this is because their friendship sickened me.)

Gabankitse remained unchanged as an instigator and a liar throughout the play until he

was banished from the village. He is an undeveloping type.

3.3 CHARACTERISATION

Whereas character refers to the nature of the characters in a play, characterisation refers to how these characters have been presented in the text.

3.3.1 Techniques of characterisation

Two methods of characterisation to be applied to this research are direct description and indirect presentation.

3.3.1.1 Direct description

Direct description or the expository method of characterisation as literary critics define it, occurs when the author portrays or reveals his characters directly. Instances of direct characterisation include self-analysis and the character's self-revelation to others.

Self-analysis is when the character talks about himself. This method does not form part of Malao's characterisation. We could have expected the dramatist to have given an unscrupulous figure like Letlantheng space to boast about his evil deeds.

The character's self revelation to others, referred to by Chauke (1998: 43), is a situation whereby a character talks to other characters about himself or herself. Malao made use of this device in his dramas, **Phithela** and **Motlhodi**. Cases in point appear below.

Living up to the expectations of his work and role within the community, Reverend Berens describes himself to Kgosi Kebalemogile as a peace-lover and a peacemaker. He says:

... Ga ke mo ntweng. Ke mo kagisong. (**Phithela**, p. 18)
 (... I am not fighting. I am for peace.)

Rantlapunya describes himself to Gabankitse as one who can keep a secret:

Ntshepe nkgonne ke marinini a thata. Dikhupamarama re ya badimong ka
 tsona. (**Motlhodi**, p. 3)
 (Trust me brother, I am tight-lipped. I will be secretive to death.)

3.3.1.2 Indirect characterisation

Indirect characterisation is when the character's traits are shown in other ways than being mentioned.

Chauke (1998: 30) says that the various ways in which the character is displayed and exemplified, leaves it open to the reader to infer. In this way he regards indirect presentation of character as being opaque.

Aligning herself with Chauke (1998: 30) and Boshego (1993: 36), Kutumela (1998: 47) says that this dramatic method, as indirect characterisation is often called, involves characters exposing their traits. She says that the behavioural patterns and personalities of characters in literary works can be judged from what such characters say, do, and think.

Kenny (1965: 35) says this about indirect characterisation:

In the dramatic method, the author allows his characters to reveal themselves to us through their own words and actions.

The various ways through which the indirect method of characterisation takes place include, according to Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 61), action, speech, external appearance and

analogy. Driver (1983: 30) shows that indirect presentation can also embrace thought report.

With regard to action, Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 61) differentiates between one-time actions and habitual actions. One-time actions interrupt the character's usual behavioural pattern and thus render such a character dynamic. On the other hand, habitual actions reveal the character's personality.

The following categories of one-time actions can be identified:

- ◆ An act of commission is something performed by the character. In **Phitlhela** Kgosi Kebalemogile murdered Letlantheng. In **Motlhodi** Kgosi Mperetli expelled Gabankitse from the village for having instigated Lerotho and Rantlapunya against each other.
- ◆ An act of omission is something a character neglects or refrains from doing. In **Phitlhela**, instead of the Christians fighting against traditional rainmaking, they withdrew themselves. In another instance Kgosi Kebalemogile was supposed to reconcile with his paternal uncles when his father expressed anger to him for having ill-treated them. Gabonthone and Kenyaditswe also withdrew from the kgotla instead of fighting for their rights and authority as royal elders.

In **Motlhodi** Gabankitse as a married adult was expected to act responsibly. Tebogo, his wife, tried in vain to advise him not to cause commotions between Lerotho and Rantlapunya. Another case is when Rantlapunya declined to disclose the name of the person who ill-informed him about Lerotho. He was subsequently fined two oxen.
- ◆ A contemplated act is something the character thinks about but did not do. It is an act of unrealised intentions of the character. There are no identifiable cases of contemplated acts in **Phitlhela** and **Motlhodi**.

The following cases of habitual actions are identified:

In **Phithela**, we can deduce from Letlantheng's action that he was a suppressor and bully of other people. He always cut other people short whenever they referred badly to or opposed his ideas. These are habitual acts as they are perpetuated throughout the play.

Kenyaditswe advised Kebalemogile against relying on lies and bad influence of servants like Letlantheng. To cover up for himself and divert the attention of members of the meeting from what was said about him, Letlantheng created a misconception about what Kenyaditswe said and redirected the focus of the meeting to it. Letlantheng says (p. 10):

Bagaetsho rre Kenyaditswe o a re roga. Ga ke itse gore rre Kenyaditswe o swa ntshu a ogola eng fa borraarona ba ne ba tshameka fafi kwa Maleikampa. Nna ke tshikhinya gore rre yo a atholwe gore a tle a bakele go nyatsa lekgotla le Bakwena.

(Fellowmen, Mr Kenyaditswe is swearing at us. I do not know why Mr Kenyaditswe has to worry about the fact that our fathers played dice at Maleikampa. I propose that this man be fined so that he must regret belittling the Kgotla and the Bakwena.)

3.4 CONCLUSION

With regard to character types, it is evident that name-based figures and types are preferred to individualistic, complex figures in Malao's plays.

The names of characters correlate with their action patterns. The types identified in both plays, Letlantheng in **Phithela** and Gabankitse in **Motlhodi** are necessary (despite them being undeveloping types) as they display the unchanging behaviour which is conducive to the particular theme of the plays.

With regard to direct description of characters, Malao has employed the character's self revelation to others. As far as it concerns indirect characterisation, Malao has

exemplified various categories of one-time actions as well as habitual actions. One-time actions covered in Malao's plays include: acts of commission and omission.

Malao's dramas show that African drama relies heavily on types to illustrate topics of a moral nature.



CHAPTER 4

DIALOGUE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Speech can be regarded as the most important aspect of drama. As Madja (1992: 12) maintains, the impact of drama is borne in the words that go along with actions and events in which the characters are involved. Nicoll (1962: 144) also asserts that a playwright must be an artist in words.

Different kinds of speech modes in drama include monologue, duologue and dialogue.

4.2 Monologue

Monologue is when a character speaks at length to a character or to the audience, addressing them directly without being interrupted by another character. Shipley (1964: 272-273) distinguishes between monologue and soliloquy as follows:

Monologue is distinguished from dialogue by its length and relative completeness, and the soliloquy (except in the case of the interior monologue) by the fact that it is addressed to someone.

A soliloquy is spoken by one person who is alone or acts as though he is alone.

This device is used minimally by Malao in his dramas.

The following is an example of monologue in **Phithela**: Kebalemogile speaks to his subjects as they enjoy the meat of the cattle. He says:

Morafe wa ga rre ke a le dumedisa.

Ke le phuthile jaana go tla go le bontsha gore fa mongwe a tletse lenyatso

ke tle ke direng ka ena. Ke le biditse go tla go ja dinama tsa kgomo tsa batho ba ba nang le menyo e balega mo motseng wa ga rre.

Pele le ka simolola go iphanya bagaetsho, ke rata go bua le lona morafe wa ga rre. Go na le dilo dingwe tse di dubileng maikutlo a me go gaisa metsi a mogobe a sena go ralalwa ke motlhape wa dikgomo. Go na le batho bangwe ba ba lebetseng kemo ya bona ma motseng o wa ga rre.

Borangwane ba ntshiamololetse mo ke sa itseng gore nka ba dira eng go ba tlhokofatsa. Le jaanong fa ke bua jaana ga ba na le rona fa. Lenyatso la bona ga le na botlantlanyetso, fela ke tlile go ba supetsa gore nna ke mang. Fa ba sa ikele tlhoko ke tlile go ba humanegisa.

Mongwe gape yo o ntlapetseng go feta mafura a kolobe mo motseng o wa ga rre ke morutinyana yo ke mo fileng bonno mo motseng wa ga rre ke sa itse kwa a tswang teng.

Ke rata gore ditlhodi tsa gagwe tse di mo gare ga rona di ye go mmolelela gore morago ga dijo tse re di jang fano, a ke re fa dingaka di sena go mpoolelela gore di weditse tiro ya tsona, ke tlile go apara kobo e le nngwe le ena.

Ke rata gape go lemosa batho botlhe ba ba tsiediwang ke morutinyana yole wa leferefere gore le bona ke na le bona mo setekeng.

Ke tlile go feela matlakala mo motseng ono wa ga rre. (p. 25).

(My father's tribe I greet you.

I have assembled you this way to show you what I can do to anybody who is insubordinate. I have called you here so that you can feed on the meat of the cattle of a few people in this village of my father.

Before you start to enjoy yourselves fellowmen, I would like to speak to you, my father's tribe.

There are some issues that disturb me more than marshy water, polluted after having been trampled by a herd of cattle. There are some people in this village of my father, who have forgotten their positions. My younger paternal uncles have offended me so much that I do not know what to do to hurt them.

Even now as I am speaking, they are not with us here. Their insubordination is immeasurable, but I will show them who I am. If they are not careful, I will

impoverish them. Another person in this village of my father, who sickens me like pig fat, is that cleric whom I have accommodated in this village of my father, even though I did not know where he came from.

I want his spies among us here to go and tell him that after the meals we are having here, let me say after the bush doctors have told us that they have finished their work, I will get him.)

A monologue in **Motlhodi** is seen when Lerotho explained to the kgosi's council how his family was approached and verbally attacked by Rantlapunya and his wife:

Lerotho: Bagaetsho e rile maloba ke ntse ke itisitse fa gae maitsiboanyana le mmaetsho le mogatsa Gabankitse, ka bona go goroga rre Rantlapunya le mogatse.

Rre Rantlapunya o ne a nthaya a re o batla go bua le nna le mmaetsho. E rile go utlwa mafoko a, mogatsa Gabankitse a lemoga fa a ne a sa batlege mme a bo a laela a boela kwa ga gagwe.

E rile fa Tebogo magatsa Gabankitse a sena go tsamaya ra bo re tlaselwa ke Rantlapunya le mogatse.

Ba ne ba re roga ba re bolelela fa ke tsamaya ke kopa kwatlase ka leina la bona e bile ke tsamaya ke ba senya leina. (p. 42)

(Lerotho: Fellowmen, the other day as I was having some time at home with my wife and Gabankitse's wife in the afternoon, Mr. Rantlapunya and his wife arrived. Mr. Rantlapunya told me that he wanted to speak to me and my wife. When hearing that, Gabankitse's wife realised that she was unwanted, and then bid goodbye and left for home.

After Tebogo, Gabankitse's wife, had left, we were verbally attacked by Rantlapunya and his wife. They swore at us and told us that I go about using their name, to get pasella and speak bad about them.)

4.3 Soliloquy

Malao uses soliloquy in **Motlhodi** where Gabankitse boasts of having caused a misunderstanding between Lerotho and Rantlapunya. He speaks boastfully to himself as follows:

E tla bo e se nna mosimane wa Motaung. ... Ke ba thulanya ka ditlhogo, gore ba bo ba nne sentle. Ga ba ise ba dire sepe.

... Jaanong ke ya kwa ga Lerotho. O tshwanetse gore fa ke tswa fa ga gagwe fale a bo a fufuletswe. Rantlapunya yo wa lesilo yo o gopola gore nna nka ya kwa tshekong. Fa ba jana ka meno kwa lekgotleng kwa nna ke tla bo ke hupa fa ga Mmutle (p. 34).

(Not when it is I the Motaung boy. ... I will make them collide head on until they are smart. ... Now I am going to Lerotho's home. He must be perspiring when I leave his place. That fool Rantlapunya thinks that I will go to trial. I will be having a sip of beer at Mmutle's place when they will be at each other's throat at the kgotla.)

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In **Phithhela** there is no soliloquy.

4.4 Duologue

A form of dialogue called duologue can be regarded as a conversational interaction between only two characters in a dramatic space.

In **Phithhela**, there is duologue between Reverend Berens and Kgosi Kebalemogile who were involved in a serious discussion about the way of making rain. The duologue led to the point where the reverend was called to the kgotla, to be punished like a small boy in front of women and children.

Another duologue occurs between Kgosi Kebalemogile and Matlakala, a member of the church, where they were involved in a serious discussion about the fact that Reverend Berens was supposed to be lashed naked, in front of women and children. The duologue led to a point where Matlakala was forced out of the kgotla meeting by the Manaila regiment at the instruction of the kgosi.

Duologue occurs also between Kebalemogile and Motlhatswa (a church member) when they were arguing on the intention of the kgosi to have Reverend Berens stripped naked and lashed before children and women. Taking that to be disgraceful, Motlhatswa had to tell the kgosi that it was then time that the kgosi should respect his elders, and that if he did not want a fierce battle, he dare not lay his hands on the reverend.

In **Motlhodi**, duologue is seen when Rantlapunya and Lerotho were involved in a serious discussion about false allegation. The bone of contention was that of accusing a person before verifying the facts.



4.5 Dialogue

By its very nature as a form of discourse, as Herman (1995:1-2) notes, dialogue is interactional as it involves a conversational exchange between and among participants with one's speech being in relation to that of another.

Hodgson (1982: 93) considers good dialogue as that which is usually highly individualised and immediately comprehensible. It must be straightforward and to the point, and avoid awkward phrasing and impediments to its memorisation or delivery.

Gule (1996:112) refers to internal communication between characters and external communication within the dramatic space as two axes of dialogue. While the internal communication ends between the characters, external communication draws reactions from the audience.

Groenewald (1991: 29) distinguishes between features of dialogue that hinder the dramaticity of a play and those that enhance it. This is the approach followed in this study.

4.5.1 Inhibiting dialogue features

Features that inhibit or hinder dramaticity are those that do not contribute to the theme of the play. These features may include aspects of a domestic, conventional, didactic, cultural, and repetitive nature as well as divergent dialogue.

4.5.1.1 Domestic and conventional features

Domestic features refer to issues of a highly personal or domestic nature that digress from the subject matter of the drama. Such issues dilute the dramaticity of a play.

Conventional features refer to the customary action of greeting, for instance, which weakens the development of drama when done excessively.

There are no excessive cases of domestic and conventional features in **Phithela**.

In **Motlhodi** the whole of page 1 is about greetings and how Gabankitse always enjoyed sorghum beer and not tea. This delays the real issue of contention in the drama, namely, how Gabankitse spread a fallacious report about Lerotho. Part of the conversation goes as follows:

Gabankitse: Madume nkgonne.

Rantlapunya: Ahee mogaetsho.

Gabankitse: A le tsogile?

Rantlapunya: Re tsogile motho wa gaetsho, fa e se mmaabona ke ene a ntseng a lela ka noka malatsi ano. A lona le tsogile?

Gabankitse: Mogolole re tsogile.

Re iponela ona mogote wa malatsi ano, le gale re tla reng ka re se na thata ya go fetola sepe.

Rantlapunya: Kedibone ngwanaka, a o ke o re direle mogodungwana foo.

Gabankitse: Nnyaa, e seng mogodungwana.

Ga ke motho wa mogodungwana.

Rantlapunya: Jaanong re a bo re tla go naya eng ruri?

Gabankitse: Se tshwenye ge rra fa e le gore ga o na phafananyana.

Kana nna ke yona fela e e reng fa ke e e nwa ke be ke ikutlwa gore ke nwa sengwe.

Rantlapunya: Nnyaa yona e teng.

Ke ne ke setse ke akanya gore go sa ntse go le phakela go ka hupa?

Gabankitse: Mogolole, a menate eo e na le nako? Kana selo se se monate se jewa nako nngwe le nngwe, le fa e le fa gare ga mpa ya bosigo.

Rantlapunya: Nna tota ga ke kgone go hupa phakela.

Kedibone ngwanaka, tshelela rraagomogolo bojalwanyana a tle go hupahupa. Nna o ntshelole tee.

Gabankitse: Kedibone ngwana wa ga nkgonne, o se ka wa tshaba go tepa, kana re tshwanetse go ikgotsofatsa re sa ntse re tshela.

Kana ga re itse gore re ya go swa leng.

(Gabankitse: Good morning my elder.

Rantlapunya: Yes fellowman.

Gabankitse: How are you?

Rantlapunya: We are well fellowman, except for my wife, as she has been complaining these days about hip ache. And you, are you well?

Gabankitse: My elder, we are well. We only experience the heat these days, all the same, what can we say as we do not have the might to change anything.

Rantlapunya: Kedibone my child, will you please prepare tea for us?

Gabankitse: No, not tea. I am not a tea person.

Rantlapunya: Now what will we give you?

Gabankitse: Don't worry sir, if you do not have a small vessel of beer. It is the only thing of substance to me.



Rantlapunya: No, it is available, I thought that it is still early to have a sip.

Gabankitse: My elder, can there be any time to which this delicious substance is restricted? A delicious thing is consumed at any time, even deep in the night.

Rantlapunya: As for me I never sip in the morning. Kedibone, my child, serve your paternal elderly uncle with beer so that he can sip. Then serve me with tea.

Gabankitse: Kedibone, my elder brother's child, do not fear to scoop a lot, as we need to satisfy ourselves while we are still alive. Mind you, we do not know when we are going to die.)

4.5.1.2 Didactic, repetitive, and superfluous references

Gule (1996:118) defines didactic and cultural features as cultural facts that have little or no bearing on the development of the play, while repetitive features are utterances that are repeated without any innovations.

In **Phithela** superfluous references emerge as Letlantheng is redundantly provided with space to interrupt and overwhelm other people whenever discussions were held at kgotla meetings. Kgosi Kebalemogile listened to him more than to anybody else, including his paternal uncles. The fact that voices of other people were curtailed and suppressed and Kgosi Kebalemogile could not listen to them, eliminated the possibility of a conflict of ideas and actions.

The following are cases of superfluous interruptions and instigations by Letlantheng:

He fabricated a misconception that Kenyaditswe was swearing at the entire gathering to divert attention from himself. By so doing he ensured that Kenyaditswe's genuine complaint that the kgosi disregarded him as a royal elder was not listened to. This is reflected in the dialogue below:

Kenyaditswe: Ngwana wa ga nkgonne ntshekegele tsebe.

Se re tsenye matlho a batlhanka ka tsela e.

Ke a go kopa se senye bogosi ba ga rre ka maaka le tlhotlheletso ya batlhanka. Bagaetsho ke ne ke seyo mo mosong fano. Ke ne ke beilwe ke pelo e e botlhoko kwa gae. Ka metlha fa ke tsena mo lekgotleng le ke kgopisiwa ke go bona re busiwa ke bontholeng, balala ba e rileng fa borrarona ba reka dinaga borrabona ba be ba tshameka fafi kwa Maleikampa. Ka rre ga ke gaggamale fa naga ya Bakwena e wetswe ke leuba le le kana le. Leuba le ke kotlhao e borre ba re itayang ka yona gonne rona ba madi a mankgwe re tshotswe ka la molema mo motseng ono e bile re ronisiwa dilo tsa gaabo rona.

Letlantheng: Bagaetsho rre Kenyaditswe o a re roga.

Ga ke itse gore rre Kenyaditswe o šwa ntshu a ogola eng fa borrona ba ne ba tshameka fafi kwa Maleikampa. Nna ke tshikinya gore rre yo a atholwe gore a tle a bakele go nyatsa lekgotla le Bakwena. (p. 9-10)

(Kenyaditswe: My elder brother's child, listen attentively to me. Don't make the servants degrade us in this way. I beg you, don't spoil my father's chieftancy through lies and influence of servants. Fellowmen, I was not here this morning. I stayed away at home due to sadness. Every time when I come to this kgotla, I am angered by the fact that we are ruled by affiliates, serfs whose fathers were playing dice at Maleikampa when our fathers bought lands. Certainly, that is why I am not surprised that the Bakwena land is befallen by so much drought. This drought is a punishment to us from our fathers as we from the royal family are ill-treated in this village and are denied access to our things.)

Fellowmen Mr. Kenyaditswe is swearing at us. I don't know what Mr. Kenyaditswe has to do with the fact that our fathers were playing dice at Maleikampa. I suggest that this man be fined so that he must no longer despise this kgotla and the Bakwena.)

Letlantheng further ill-advised Kebalemogile to humiliate Reverend Berens by stripping him naked and lashing him. He said:

Letlantheng: Mong wa me o tshwanetse go sekisa monna yo mme mo katlholong ya gagwe o mo sotle. Ka e bile a se na le kgomo e o ka e mo atholang o mo athole jaaka mosimane, o mo neye e nkgwe ... (p. 19)

(Master, you must try this man and in your verdict humiliate him. As he does not even have any cattle you can fine him, you must fine him lashes ...)

No inhibiting didactic, cultural and repetitive features are evident in **Motlhodi**.

4.5.2 Enhancing features

Features that enhance dramaticity can be summarised as polarity, informativeness, coherence and progression.

4.5.2.1 Polarity

Gule (1996:121) sees polarity as all situations in which characters or groups are opposing one another, be it playful or serious. In drama, polarity commonly takes the form of conflict. Conflict can be seen as an important feature for plot and character development.

Shole (1988: 17) defines conflict as follows:

Kgotlhang ke thulaganyo ya ditiragalo, ya baanelwa le ya morero, e e supang matlhakore a mabedi a a thulanang ka ntlha ya lebaka lengwe la botshelo go fitlha lengwe la matlhakore le fenyela kgotsa a fenyega oomabedi.

(Conflict is a well arranged series of events, characters and theme whereby two sides would debate upon certain facts of life until one side wins or both lose.)

Abrams in Gule (1996: 121) outlines conflict as follows:

In addition to the conflict between individuals, there may be the conflict of a protagonist against the circumstances that stand between him and a goal he has set himself, and in some works, the conflict is between opposing desires or values in a character's own mind.

Cohen (1973: 181) tabulates the various types of conflict as follows:

- ◆ Between people
- ◆ Between ideologies and concepts
- ◆ Internal conflict, which can come from any of the forces above, from feelings within a person, or from causes unknown.

The conflict in **Phitlhela** arose between tradition and Christianity relating to rainmaking. The traditionalists won the first phase of the battle without any strong resistance from the Christians. At the instruction of Kgosi Kebalemogile the diviners, led by Galephirime, pounced upon Kedinnetse at night and murdered him with knobkerries. His flesh was mixed with muti and the mixture spread all over the tribal land. The traditionalists managed to have things their way, despite the fact that the major part of the tribe comprised Christians. Even the intervention of the clergyman Berens failed to prevent the ritual murder, which he regarded as sinful. Things only took a dramatic turn when Kebalemogile tried to have Reverend Berens stripped naked and lashed. This infuriated Christians like Ralefatlha, Matlakala and Motlhatswa, who stopped Kebalemogile from taking such action. Finally, Kebalemogile realised that an attempt to have rain through ritual murder was a futile exercise. This prompted him to kill Letlantheng and to order the Maswene regiment to chop up the witchdoctors and throw their remains into the caves. Finally, Kebalemogile took his own life. In this way, the traditionalists were completely defeated.

The potential for conflict against this background is enormous. However, in this play there are no real intense interactions between the two factions while the balance of conflict is not evenly poised to create the maximum tension as well as uncertainty as to who will win the battle of ideologies.

Intense interaction by the family members and relatives of the murdered Kedinnetse, the man whose flesh was used for muti, could also have enhanced the effect of conflict in the development of the drama.

An example of conflict in the dialogue in **Phithela** (pp. 41-43) is when the Christians prevented Kebalemogile from having Reverend Berens stripped naked and lashed. An extract from the dialogue is as follows:

Kebalemogile: Poru! Poru! Atamela kwano o tle go thala leferefere le. (p. 41)

Motlhatswa: Bakwena le ka nna la mpolaya fa le kgona. Ke kwa kae kwa monna wa lelapa a kileng a kgwathisiwa teng?

Matlakala a a ntseng jaana ga a kitla a diragala. (p. 42)

Ralefatlha: Gompieno kgosi e tshwanetse go lemoga gore ke kgosi ka morafe. Fa morafe o sa rate sengwe kgosi e pateletshega go tsaya maikutlo a morafe tsia. (p. 42)

Kebalemogile: Borra le letlilwe ke mang go bua? (p. 42)

Motlhatswa: Mokwena ga go thuse gore o re botse gore re letlilwe ke mang go bua. Boammaaruri ke go re fa o batla ntwa e e matlhomahibidu o leke fela go kgwathisa moruti. E setse e le nako e telele o senya dilo tsa morafe gonne o sa gakololwe. Itse rra gore motsi o tlile wa gore o itse gore ga re banyana. Bangwe ba rona fa, re borraago. (p. 42)

Kebalemogile: Bakwena! Le fa gone ke buseditse katlholo ya dithupa kwa morago morutinyana yo wa lona a itse gore o mpherosa dibete ka go sunya nko ya gagwe mo mererong ya motse wa ga rre. Bona fa monna Berens! Ga go poopedi fa. Poo ke nna e seng wena. O lemoge gore ga di ke di tlhakanela lesope. (p. 43)

Motlhatswa: Bagaetsho ke batla go bua puo phaa gompieno! Ke rata gore banna ba lekgotla le kgosi ba lemoge gore le rona Bakeresete re na le taolo mo motseng o, ga re kitla re letla gore moruti wa rona a sotlwe fela go sa re

sepe jaaka sekatana. Ga re kitla re letla gore tiragalo ya gompieno e diragale gape. Sa bofelo ke rata go bolelela moruti phatlhalatsa gore a dige makgwafo. Sa gompieno ga se kitla se diragala gape. (p. 43)

(Kebalemogile: Poru! Poru! Come forward here to lash this crook. (p. 41)

Motlhatswa: Bakwena, you better kill me if you can. Has a family man ever been lashed? Such nonsense will not materialise. (p. 42)

Ralefatlha: Today the kgosi will have to realise that he is the kgosi because of the tribe. If the tribe does not want something, the kgosi is bound to respect its feelings.

Kebalemogile: Gentlemen, who allowed you to speak? (p. 42)

Motlhatswa: Mokwena, it does not help to ask us who allowed us to speak. The truth of the matter is that if you can lash the clergyman, a fierce battle will ensue. It is a long time that you have been spoiling tribal matters, as you cannot be advised. Now sir, it is time that you know that we are not small children. Some of us here are your fathers.

Kebalemogile: Bakwena! Even if I have withdrawn the fine of lashes, this clergyman of yours must know that he is tampering with my feelings, by interfering in the affairs of my father's village. Look here Mister Berens! There are no two bulls here. I am the one who is a bull, and not you. Know that bulls never share the kraal.

Motlhatswa: Fellowmen, I want to talk straight today! I want the tribal councillors and the kgosi to realise that we the Christians, also have control in this village. We will not allow our cleric to be torn apart like a rag for fun. We will not allow today's event to happen again. Lastly, I want to tell the cleric straight-forwardly that he must relax. Today's events will not occur again.

In **Motlhodi** the conflict is between the two couples: the Rantlapunyas and the Lerothos. The conflict was created by Gabankitse because of the jealousy he had concerning the intimate friendship between the two families. This conflict has not been intensified and consolidated. This is because there is only Gabankitse as the turncoat but no supporters to the conflicting parties, to heat up things to a crisis. The battling parties had only one verbal battle when the Rantlapunyas approached the Lerothos on Gabankitse's allegation that the Lerothos had spoken badly of them.

By the time the conflict between the Rantlapunyas and Lerothos was presented to Kgosi Mperetli to solve, it was still in its embryonic stage and could justifiably be referred to more as a difference than a real conflict. This is despite the fact that the author tried to delay the solution to the conflict with the view to allow Gabankitse's conflicting influence upon Rantlapunya and Lerotho to continue to show how strong the bad influence of a person is. This would prove that 'Motlhodi wa motho o gaisa wa ting' (Man's bad influence exceeds that of the soured porridge meal.)

The only notable case of conflict in the dialogue in **Motlhodi** is seen when Rantlapunya and his wife approached Lerotho and his wife to question them on Gabankitse's allegation that they spoke badly about them. Part of the dialogue (p.10) is as follows:

Rantlapunya: Rre Lerotho le wena mma re tla jaana e le ka ntlha ya masula a re a utlwang ka lona.

Lerotho: Masula?

Goitsehang: Ee, masula. Re le dirileng fa le re setse morago jaana?

Rantlapunya: Mma baya pelo ke bue.

Lerotho: Tota la re molato ke eng?

Rantlapunya: Rra, itse gore le fa le ka e buela lengopeng magakabe a a le bona.

Ketshabamang: Rra, se re bopele kgomo ya mmopa.

Lerotho: Mmaabo iketle ba ga rre Rantlapunya ba re bolelele gore re ba dirileng.

Ketshabamang: Ke buisiwa ke gore mafoko a bona a a mpipela.

Rantlapunya: Rra, fa o tsamaya o kopa kwatlase ka leina la me le la mosadi wa me mo matlong a bojalwa o gopola gore go siame?

Lerotho: Nna tota?

Rantlapunya: Ee, wena maloba o ne o kgatlha matagwa ka maina a rona o a raya o re re a tshwaratshwara e bile re phela ka maano a bolotsana.

Lerotho: Rra mafoko a o a tsaya kae?

Goitsehang: Ba ba re ratang ga ba fetwe ke ba ba re ilang.

Ketshabamang: Nnyaa mma seo re a se itse, fela bagaetsho se re tlholeleng ka tsela e.

Lerotho: Bagaetsho mafoko a lona ke a a utlwa fela nna a a ntaga.
Nna tota bagaetsho ke palelwa ke go seka maaka ka jalo ke bona go ka nna botoka gore re bitse mong wa mafoko a, a tle a tlhalose fa pele ga rona rotlhe gore o tsaya kae mafoko a a tshosang a.

Rantlapunya: Rra, o ka bua mafoko o be o a itatole?

Lerotho: Mogaetsho se mpateletse selo ke sa se dira.

(Rantlapunya: Mr. Lerotho and you madam, we have come here concerning bad news we heard about you.

Lerotho: Bad news?

Goitsemanang: Yes, bad news. What is it that we have done you that makes you be so much after us?

Rantlapunya: Madam, wait let me speak.

Lerotho: Really what is the problem?

Rantlapunya: Sir, know that even if you can try to do something as secret, it will be exposed.

Ketshabamang: Sir do not fabricate things for us.

Lerotho: Mother of my children, wait so that the Rantlapunyas must tell us what we have done to them.

Ketshabamang: I speak because what they say constipates me.

Rantlapunya: Sir, is it fair for you to go about in shebeens besmirching my name and my wife's in order to be given handouts?

Lerotho: I, really?

Rantlapunya: Yes you. The other day you entertained drunkards with our names, saying that we are engaged in witchcraft and we survive by crooked means.

Lerotho: Sir, where do you get what you are saying?

Goitsemanang: Those who love us are not outnumbered by those who hate us.

Ketshabamang: No madam, that we know, but fellowmen do not cast a bad omen for us in this way.

Lerotho: Fellowmen, I hear what you say but it intoxicates me. I fellowmen, cannot be involved in arguments over lies. As a result I think it will be better if we can call forward your informer so that he or she can explain before all of us where he or she got this frightening news.

Rantlapunya: Sir, can you say something and then deny that?

Lerotho: Fellowman, do not force upon me what I did not do.)

4.5.2.2 Aspects of informativeness: Extraspection, Postponement of the answer, Prospection and Retrospection

Informativeness refers to providing interesting information. Informativeness surfaces in various ways and includes extraspection, postponement of the answer, as well as prospective and retrospective propositions.



Extraspection

Extraspection refers to events which were not enacted; they are narrated. It renders the story complete.

The following extracts are cases of extraspective propositions in **Phitlhela**:

The fact that Kebalemogile's paternal uncles turned their backs on him is not enacted.

The event is created extraspectively when Kebalemogile speaks to Letlanheng:

... Borangwane ba njetse huralelabeno, ba oletse dinao tsa bona mo lekgotleng la ga rre ... (p. 1)

(... My paternal uncles have turned their backs on me, they have removed their feet from my father's kgotla ...)

The people's dissatisfaction with Kebalemogile is revealed by Letlantheng as follows:

... E rile maabane fa re ntse re hupa fa ga Kesentseng ka utlwa ba re e kete kgosi ga e kgathale le fa e bona leuba le humanegisa morafe mo go kana. Ba re bona ba itse borraetsho ba ne ba tle ba dire sengwe fa go ne go ntse jaana. (p. 2)

(... Yesterday when we were having a sip at Kesentseng's place, I heard them saying that it seems as though the kgosi is not concerned even when the drought is impoverishing the tribe so much. They say that our fathers used to do something under these conditions.)

There are no actions in the play whereby members of the Christian community influenced the villagers against traditional practices such as initiation schooling. The information about the church's previous effect upon traditional affairs is only revealed extraspectively by Kgosi Kebalemogile as follows:

... Kereke le yona e faposa morafe wa ga rre mo setsong. Fa ke re basimane ba ye bogwera kereke e ba nyemisa mooko. Ke lemoga ke ikgogetse metsi ka moselo ka go bo ke dumetse gore baruti ba tsene mo motseng ono wa ga rre. (p. 2)

(... The church also derails my father's tribe from tradition. When I say that the boys must get to the traditional school, the church discourages them. I have noticed that I have invited problems for myself by agreeing that the clergymen must come to this village of my father.)

Postponement of the answer

Postponement of the answer is the situation whereby some information is withheld from a character and/or the reader to create suspense and the desire to know about the hidden facts.

In **Phithela** the issue that was only known to the witchdoctors but hidden to members of the tribe was the fact that the person murdered for ritual rainmaking was Kedinnetse. This was only revealed by Kgosi Kebalemogile when Kedinnetse troubled him in his dreams.

In **Motlhodi** the revelation of the name of the person who misinformed Rantlapunya about Lerotho was eventually revealed by Rantlapunya himself as Gabankitse. The fact that Gabankitse has been antagonising Lerotho and Rantlapunya was thus finally revealed to his wife, Tebogo.



Prospective and retrospective propositions

Prospective features of dramaticity refer to future actions while retrospective features refer to past actions. Prospective propositions arouse anticipation while retrospective propositions unify the past activities with the present. Looking forward and backward co-ordinates the play into a coherent and progressive whole.

The following are cases of the prospective propositions in **Phithela**:

Kebalemogile vowed that he would take his paternal uncle, Gabonthone, to task for allegedly confusing the tribe:

... Go supega sentle gore rangwane o tota a ikaeletse go tlhakatlhakanya morafe wa ga rre ... Ke rata go bua fa pele ga lekgotla le ke sa feleke ... gore se rangwane a se jalang o tlile go se kotula tadi e amusa. (p. 5-6)

(... It is clear that my paternal uncle is determined to confuse my father's tribe ... I want to say in front of this kgotla without any doubt ... that what my paternal uncle is sowing he will reap in daylight.)

The vow made above was accomplished when Kebalemogile fined his paternal uncles, Gabonthone and Kenyaditswe two oxen each (pp. 10 and 11.)

Gabonthone warned Kebalemogile that he would land into trouble if he insisted on fining Kenyaditswe. He said:

... Ke a go ikanela ngwana wa ga nkgonne fa o sa buse mowa ga o ne o robalelwa ke ditlhokwa. O tle go palangwa ke sekwakwalala ... (p. 10)

(... I bet you, my elderly brother's child, that if you don't change your mind, the ancestors will not rest for you. You will be befallen by bad luck.)

Speaking to his wife Otlasebona, his brother Kenyaditswe and Kenyaditswe's wife Kedibone, Gabonthone further predicted Kebalemogile's downfall.

... A lona ga le lemoge gore motho yo bogosi jwa gagwe bo ya bokhutlong? Mo tlogeleng a re sotle, a kgatlhe ditsala tsa gagwe ka rona a tle a galefise badimo mme morago ba tle ba mo palamise sekwakwalala.. (p. 29)

(... Don't you note that this person's chieftaincy is coming to an end? Let him humiliate us to please his friends and anger the ancestors who will get him into trouble.)

The prediction above materialised as Kebalemogile was finally perturbed by nasty dreams relating to the fact that he ill-treated his paternal uncles and ordered the killing of Kedinnetse for traditional rain muti. He finally took his own life. (pp. 45 and 48)

Very few cases of prospective propositions appear in **Motlhodi**.

Lerotho vowed that Rantlapunya will have to reveal the name of the person who misinformed him:

O tlile go mo ntsha tadi e amusa. (p. 11)

(You will reveal him in daylight.)

Lerotho further told his wife Ketshabamang about Rantlapunya and his wife:

Maaka ona re tlile go a ba ntsha. Kana maaka a maoto makhutshwane.(p. 15)

(We will take lies out of them. By the way, lies are shortlived.)

Indeed, Rantlapunya finally spoke the truth by revealing the name of Gabankitse as their informer. This was after he was fined two oxen by Mperetli. (p. 44)

Tebogo had warned her husband, Gabankitse not to land himself into trouble by antagonising Rantlapunya and Lerotho. Tebogo said:

Rra, o ikele tlhoko o se ka wa tsoga o di gama o sa di tlapela. ... Ka nako e nngwe ba tlile go lemoga puo yaago. (p. 40)

(Sir, be careful not to get into trouble. ... At some stage they will note what you say.)

Rantlapunya finally suspected that Gabankitse was bringing him into conflict with Lerotho and finally revealed him as the slanderer. Gabankitse was expelled from the village by Kgosi Mperetli. (p. 53)

The following shows retrospection in **Phithela**:

Kenyaditswe: ... Bagaetsho ke ne ke seyo mo mosong fano. Ke ne ke beilwe ke pelo e e botlhoko kwa gae. Ka metlha fa ke tsena mo lekgotleng le ke kgopisiwa ke go bona re busiwa ke bontholeng, balala ba e rileng fa borraarona ba reka dinaga ba be ba tshameka fafi kwa Maleikampa. Ka rre ga ke gagamale fa naga ya Bakwena e wetswe ke leuba le le kana. Leuba le ke kotlhao e borre ba re itayang ka yona gonne rona ba madi a mankgwe re tshotswe ka la molema mo motseng ono e bile re ronisiwa dilo tsa gaabo rona. (p. 9-10)

Kenyaditswe: Fellowmen, I was not here in the morning. I was kept at home by heartache. Every time when I come to this kgotla, I am angered by the fact that we are ruled by affiliates, serfs whose fathers were playing dice at Maleikampa when our fathers bought lands. By my father, I am not surprised that the Bakwena land is befallen by so much drought. This drought is a punishment to us by our fathers as we of the royal blood are maltreated in this village and denied access to our things.)

That Kenyaditswe had to account for his absence from the kgotla meeting that discussed how to handle the drought that had befallen the tribe, confirmed an earlier concern by Kgosi Kebalemogile (p. 1) that his paternal uncles had since turned their backs on him and stayed away from kgotla meetings. An account given later in the play by Kenyaditswe (p. 9-10) for his absence from the kgotla meeting refers back to that.

4.6 Conclusion

Dramaticity depends largely on dialogue. The features that hinder dramaticity as have been discussed, include domestic, conventional, didactic, cultural and repetitive features. On the other hand, features that promote dramaticity include polarity and informativeness. The potential for conflict, as a major form of polarity, was not utilised optimally in both Malao's dramas. In **Phitlhela** the imminent showdown between the traditionalists and Christians over rainmaking has not been allowed to take its course as

personal wrangles between Kebalemogile and his paternal uncles were allowed to interrupt the dramatic flow. In **Motlhodi** the conflict between Rantlapunya and Lerotho is not intensified to result, for instance, in a crisis. On a positive note, informativeness is a redeeming factor in the plays.



CHAPTER 5

DIDASCALIA

INTRODUCTION

Keuris (1996: 64) refers to didascalia as everything in drama that is not dialogue. It embraces aspects like the title, lists of characters, foreword, prologue and stage directions. According to Van der Merwe (1993:1) these aspects of the dramatic text contain instructions that pertain to how performance should take place.

According to Alter (1981:113) there are two media of expression adopted in the semiotic approach of theatre, viz: text and performance. He differentiates them as follows:

As a text, it presents a network of verbal signs, which usually appear in the form of plays made of written words and involve primarily linguistic, but also literary and cultural codes. As performance, it offers a network of many types of signs, which in addition to words, include body language, costume, sets, light, colours, props, intonations, etc., each type belonging to a discrete semiotic system with a discrete code, but all of them conveniently summarized as staging signs, involving common theatrical and cultural codes.

5.1 The title

The main function of the title of a play as it appears on the cover page is to name the fictional dramatic world. As Keuris (1996: 65) maintains, it is a first indication to the reader as to what the play is all about.

The titles of Malao's dramas convey an important meaning to the reader about the subject matter of the plays. **Phithela** refers to the secretive way of traditional rainmaking. It is to be kept a secret to murder somebody for human flesh to be mixed with muti to be

spread over the tribal land in order to cleanse it. **Motlhodi**, which literally means the porridge meal souring substance, figuratively means bad influence.

5.2 The list of characters

According to Keuris (1996: 65) there are different functions of listing characters in the fictional dramatic world. One function is to identify various characters by giving them names. Another function is to provide bits of information such as age, occupation or relationship alongside the names of characters. The list of characters may be presented in a hierarchical order, which may imply the order of their importance in the community. The following are lists of characters in **Phitlhela** and **Motlhodi**:

LIST 1: PHITLHELA

MATHAKA A MOTSHAMEKO (CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY)

KEBALEMOGILE:	Kgosi ya motse wa Mosopa (the Mosopa village kgosi)
LETLANTHENG:	Mogakolodi wa kgosi (the kgosi's advisor)
PORU:	Moletsalepatata (the trumpeter)
GABONTHONE:	Rangwaneagwe Kebalemogile yo mogolo (the elder paternal uncle to Kebalemogile)
KGOFA:	} Bangwe ba banna ba lekgotla (some tribal council members)
REMONEILWE:	
GALEPHIRIME:	} Dingaka tsa motse (village healers)
PAUTU:	
MAPHEKOLA:	
OTHOLO:	
LEGARE:	
TSHOTO:	
BERENS:	Moruti wa phuthego ya ntlha mo Mosopa (The reverend of the first congregation in Mosopa)
KEDIBONE:	Mogatsa Kenyaditswe (Kenyaditswe's wife)
OTLASEBONA:	Mogatsa Gabonthone (Gabonthone's wife)
SEEPAPITSO:	Moeteledipele wa mophato wa Maswene (The leader of the Maswene regiment)

RALEFATLHA:	Bagogi ba kereke ya ga Berens (Berens's church elders)
MOTLHATSWA:	
MATLAKALA:	Leloko la mokgatho wa bomme ba thapelo (A member of the church women council)

LIST 2: MOTLHODI

MATHAKA A MOTSHAMEKO (CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY)

MPERETLI:	Kgosi ya motse wa Bollatau (The Bollatau village kgosi)
LEGOGODI:	
MOKHURA:	
TLHOBO:	
RATSETSWANA:	Banna ba lekgotla (The tribal council members)
PHARE:	
RANTIKWANE:	
TEBOGO:	Mogatsa Gabankitse (Gabankitse's wife)
GOITSEMANG:	Mogatsa Rantlapunya (Rantlapunya's wife)
KETSHABAMANG:	Mogatsa Lerotho (Lerotho's wife)
MATLHODI:	Morwadia Rantlapunya le Goitsewang (The daughter to Rantlapunya and Goitsewang)
LETLHOGELE:	Ngwana wa ga Lerotho le Ketshabamang (The child to Lerotho and Ketshabamang)

It is interesting to note that list 2 includes names of people who do not appear in the play. Mmampoki and Mmutle are the names of people at whose homes beer is sold, as mentioned in passing by Gabankitse (pp. 3-5); they did not participate in the play. Letlhogela is the child to Lerotho and Ketshabamang (p. 11) and likewise is not a participant in the play. Matlhodi's name appears in the list of characters and on page 31, as the daughter to Rantlapunya and Goitsewang but at the same time, Kedibone is frequently referred to as the daughter of Rantlapunya and Goitsewang (pp. 1, 2, 3, 4, 17 and 22). It is therefore confusing whether Matlhodi or Kedibone is Rantlapunya and Goitsewang's daughter. If it is Matlhodi, she ought not to have been included in the list of characters as she did not participate in the play. On the other hand, if it is Kedibone, she could have been included in the list of characters as she had some speaking turns in the play. One hopes that by referring to Kedibone as the daughter to Rantlapunya and

Goitseman, the author had not forgotten that he listed Matlhodi as one of the characters and the daughter to Rantlapunya and Goitseman.

Finally, nowhere in the play does Serepe participate, or is he mentioned, and yet he appears in the list of characters. This shows that play writers are not acutely aware that plays are written for production. To many playwrights a play is just another way of narrating.

In the lists of characters for both the plays, the author has given information about them. The occupations and relationships of the characters have been provided. In **Phithela**, for instance, Kebalemogile is the kgosi, Gabonthone and Kenyaditswe his paternal uncles, Letlantheng his advisor, etc. (list 1). In the same vein in **Motlhodi**, Mperetli is the kgosi, Legogodi and others the councillors, Rantlapunya and Lerotho some village men, etc., (list 2).

It is also important to note how the author has grouped characters of the same roles and positions together. Examples thereof are Kebalemogile's paternal uncles and councillors in **Phithela** (list 1) and councillors and the kgosi's messengers in **Motlhodi** (list 2).

Top on both the lists are correctly placed persons in terms of importance in the villages, Kgosi Kebalemogile in **Phithela** and Kgosi Mperetli in **Motlhodi**. Thus, the structuring function has been fulfilled. However, Reverend Berens in **Phithela** is not grouped with other Christians.

5.3 Stage directions

Stage directions give information to the reader about the fictional world and how it can be realised in performance. Keuris (1996: 66) refers to three main aspects that help to create the fictional world, namely, information about a characters, time and space. Keuris (1996: 66) goes further to say that information in stage directions has a visual and auditive nature. The three main aspects will be discussed as they apply to the two plays under study.

5.3.1 Character

The two ways by which the dramatic character can be known is visual and auditive information. Visual information about a character in the stage directions relates to the character's physical appearance, facial expressions, gestures and body movements.

5.3.1.1 Physical appearance

The physical appearance involves descriptions such as the character's attire, head and facial coverings such as hats and equipment such as weapons.

According to Gule (1996: 146-148) clothes have a symbolic function. He maintains that clothes convey a particular message about the characters. The socio-economic level of people can be deduced from their attire, e.g. a suit signifying a person of a higher socio-economic level.

In **Phithela** (p. 8), the fact that Kenyaditswe was tied with thongs, his clothes covered with blood, his mouth swollen and his eyes closed, indicates cruelty and disregard for human dignity on the part of Kebalemogile and his messengers. The fact that the bush doctors carried knobkerries with which they murdered Kedinnetse for muti purposes indicates cruelty and a fearsome situation. Reverend Berens was also brought tied to the kgotla by the Maswene regiment, something which frightened the Christians. The same went for the bush doctors when they were chopped up with small axes, knobkerries and assegais, a situation that frightened the tribal councillors.

5.3.1.2 Facial expressions

According to Gule (1996: 149) the facial expressions of characters play an important role in drama. It conveys information about their mood even before a single word is uttered.

Gule further explains that facial expressions have a particular function of creating emotions in a dramatic space. To him, frowning indicates unhappiness, and so on. This is used to supply the viewer of a play with useful information.

In **Phithela** (p. 17) Kgosi Kebalemogile's frowning at Reverend Berens, when he came to advise him against ritual murder, indicates his disapproval of the cleric's presence. In this way there was already little or no chance that the kgosi could heed any advice from the clergyman. That the faces of the Christians who congregated at Reverend Berens' residence were filled with misery shows some great concern, which they wanted to address with the clergyman.

5.3.1.3 Gestures and movements

The utterances made by any character in a play are often accompanied by some gestures and movements. Keuris (1996: 68) distinguishes four possible situations pertaining to gestures and movements, viz. those directed to the self, those directed towards other people, those in group situations and the entrances and exits of characters.

In **Phithela** (p. 18), the fact that Reverend Berens was frightened and dispirited when he attempted to advise Kgosi Kebalemogile, indicates that he had given up that praying for rain will not be accepted but only traditional rainmaking will be allowed.

In **Motlhodi** (p. 4) the fact that Rantlapunya shook his head and took out his smoking pipe, indicates his uneasiness concerning what he heard from Gabankitse about Lerotho's family.

The entrance and exit are other techniques employed as didascalia when characters also contribute to the movement and actions of characters within the dramatic space.

According to Mouton (1989: 186) stage directions must indicate to the reader when a new character comes in and another leaves the stage. Mouton (1989: 187) further argues that

written directions must provide the reader with a wide variety of information about the physical appearance and emotional state of a new character who enters the scene.

In **Phitlhela** and **Motlhodi** there are few cases where entrance directions indicate the state of affairs of new characters who enter the scene.

Cases of entrance that entail information about the state of affairs of the new entrants in **Phitlhela** are as follows:

The sad state of affairs of Kenyaditswe is expressed in the following entrance direction:

(Fa lekgotleng. Banna ba kgobokane ka makatlanamane. Ke ka meriti jaaka kgosi e ne e laetse. Go goroga banna ba bofile Kenyaditswe ka dikgole. Diaparo tsa gagwe di tletse madi, molomo wa gagwe o rurugile mme leitlho le lengwe la gagwe le tswalegile.) p. 8

(At the kgotla, men are assembled in large numbers. It is in the afternoon as the kgosi decreed. Men arrive with Kenyaditswe tied with thongs. His clothes are covered with blood, his mouth swollen and one of his eyes closed.)

The sad state of affairs of Reverend Berens which caused great concern to the Christians is expressed in the following entrance direction:

(Fa lekgotleng morafe otlhe o teng kwa ntle ga borangwane ba ga kgosi. O phuthegile go tla go utlwa gore lelapata le ba bileditse eng. Metsotsonyana pele kgosi e goroga go goroga moruti a golegilwe ke mophato wa Maswene. Pono e e tshosa batho thata mme Bakeresete bona ba simolola go sa lekanwe ke manno ...) p. 38

(At the kgotla the whole tribe except the kgosi's paternal uncles are present. It has assembled to hear what the trumpet was for. Some minutes before the kgosi

arrived, the cleric arrived tied by the Maswene regiment. This scene frightens people very much and the Christians become uneasy.)

A case of entrance which entails information about the state of affairs of a new character in **Motlhodi** will follow. As Gabankitse arrives at Rantlapunya's place his bad intentions as a rogue are already outlined to us.

(Fa ga Rantlapunya. Go goroga Gabankitse, o phuthetse maano a bolotsana mo pelong ya gagwe ka maikaelelo a go tsenya tlhobogano fa gare ga Rantlapunya le tsala ya gagwe e bong Lerotho.) p. 1

(At Rantlapunya's place, Gabankitse arrives harbouring plans of roguery in his heart with the intention to antagonise Rantlapunya with his friend Lerotho.)

Most cases of the exit of characters from the dramatic space do not inform the reader about the state of affairs of characters who leave the scene. Characters are often made to leave insignificantly.

Cases of exit that inform the reader about the state of affairs of characters in **Phithela** follow:



Remoneilwe was concerned about rainmaking through ritual murders. His intentions to see Reverend Berens about his concern are outlined to us in the following exit direction:

(Go a phatlhalalwa mongwe le mongwe o leba kwa ga gagwe. Remoneilwe le fa a se kile a supa gore o kgatlhanong le puo e e neng e rerwa o tshwenyegile thata mme o ikaelela gore o tla ya go bona moruti ka ga se se rerilweng ...) p. 14-15

(People disperse, each one going to his home. Even though Remoneilwe did not indicate that he was opposed to the matter that was discussed, he was very worried and decided to inform the cleric about what has been planned ...)

Reverend Berens is described as being dispirited as he left Kebalemogile's home after he turned down his advice not to commit ritual murder for rainmaking. The exit direction

is as follows:

(Moruti Berens o emelela a tshogile mme e bile a nyemile mooko ...) p. 18

(Reverend Berens stands up frightened and dispirited ...)

Cases of exit that entail information about the state of affairs of characters in **Motlodi** follow:

The disappointment with which Rantlapunya and his wife Goitsewang left Lerotho's home after they had confronted Lerotho and his wife Ketshabamang on Gabankitse's misinformation is expressed in the following exit direction.

(Rantlapunya le mogatse ba emelela ka ditlhong mme ba tswa mo ntlwaneng ba sa laele jaaka dintšwa di ntshitse mowa.) p. 11

(Rantlapunya and his wife stand up and leave the hut with shame, without bidding goodbye and like the dogs having passed wind.)

5.3.1.4 Time and Space

Keuris (1996: 33) notes that performative aspects influence a written play. Aspects of time and space will be discussed in this regard.

Time aspect

With regard to the written play Keuris (1996: 35) distinguishes between reading and fictional time. She regards reading time as the time taken to read a play and fictional time as time covered by the fictional events. We will focus on fictional time.

Three sources of information to the reader of the plot about fictional time given by Keuris (1996: 37) are:

- ◆ stage directions,
- ◆ direct utterances by the characters, and
- ◆ certain actions the characters performed

The time in which events take place as entailed in the stage directions is indicated at the beginning of some scenes at the beginning of some acts. Cases of time referred to in stage directions in **Phitlhela** include the following:

The time which Kgosi Kebalemogile had set for the trial is expressed as follows:

(... Ke ka meriti jaaka kgosi e ne e laetse ...) p. 8

(... It is in the afternoon as the kgosi decreed ...)

The time at which Remoneilwe approached Reverend Berens to inform him about the intention of Kebalemogile and his witchdoctors to have ritual murders for traditional rainmaking is expressed as follows:

(Bosigogare go goroga Remoneilwe kwa ga moruti Berens, moruti wa phuthego ya ntlha mo Mosopa.) p. 15

(At midnight there arrives Remoneilwe at Reverend Berens' place, the cleric of the first congregation in Mosopa.)

The time the witchdoctors prepared themselves for ritual murder is reflected below:

(Go bosigo, dingaka di kopanela fa ga Galephirime go tla go ipaakanyetsa tiro ya go bolaya motho yo go tla dirwang dipheko tsa pula ka dinama tsa gagwe ...)

p. 21

(It is night, witchdoctors meet at Galephirime's place to prepare for the murder of a person whose flesh was to be used for preparation of rain muti ...)

Cases of time in stage directions in **Motlhodi** include the time Rantlapunya was discussing with his wife Goitsemanang about what he was discussing with Gabankitse earlier that day.

(Go maitsiboa, Rantlapunya o itisitse le mogatse Goitsemanang fa molelong. Bana ga ba yo mo gae, ba ile go itisa fa lelapeng le le mabapi.) p. 7

(It is evening. Rantlapunya is spending time with his wife Goitsemanang by the fireside. Children are gone to spend time at the neighbour's place.)

The time Gabankitse arrived at Lerotho's place to antagonise him against Rantlapunya is presented as follows:

(... Ke mo mosong. Fa ga Lerotho go goroga Gabankitse. O fitlhela Lerotho le mogatse ba nwa tee.) p. 18

(... It is morning. Gabankitse arrives at Lerotho's place. He finds Lerotho drinking tea with his wife.)

The following is example of time drawn from the utterances of characters in **Phitlhela**:

Letlantheng met kgosi Kebalemogile in the afternoon to discuss the drought with him.

He said:

(... Ke tlile fano maitsiboeng ano go go gakolola ...) p. 1

(... I have come here this afternoon to advise you ...)

An example of time drawn from the utterances of characters in **Motlhodi** is when Gabankitse came to Rantlapunya's place and he says:

(... Ke ne ke setse ke akanya gore go santse go le phakela go ka hupa ...) p. 1

(... I was thinking that it was still early to have a sip ...)

Spatial aspect in the play

Just as characters and events are found within a given time, they are also situated within a given place.

Keuris (1996: 39) differentiates between information about the fictional world and that about the stage. Our focus is on the former. Information about where the characters are situated is drawn from three sources:

- ◆ Direct description in the stage directions,
- ◆ Direct references made by the characters, and
- ◆ Certain actions of the characters.

With reference to stage directions, like all other playwrights, Malao informs us as readers about where the characters are situated at the beginning of every scene of every act.

Cases in point in **Phitlhela** and **Motlhodi** follow:

Letlantheng discussed the need for traditional rainmaking to get rid of the drought that had befallen the tribe with the kgosi at his home:

(Fa lelapeng la ga Kgosi Kebalemogile. Go tsena Letlanheng monna yo o neng a itirile mogakolodi wa ga kgosi.) **Phitlhela**, p. 1

(At Kgosi Kebalemogile's home. Letlanheng arrives, a man who declared himself the kgosi's advisor.)

The issue of Gabankitse's allegation that Lerotho spoke bad of Rantlapunya was tabled at Lerotho's home:

(Kwa ga Lerotho Rantlapunya le mogatse ba fitlhela Lerotho a itisitse le mogatse, Ketshabamang le mogatsa Gabankitse e bong Tebogo.) **Motlhodi**, p. 9

(At Lerotho's home Rantlapunya and his wife find Lerotho spending some time with his wife, Ketshabamang and Gabankitse's wife Tebogo.)

Lerotho reported Rantlapunya at the kgosi's place after Rantlapunya and his wife alleged that they have been informed that Lerotho and his wife spoke badly of them and yet they refused to disclose the name of their informer:

(Fa kgosing, go goroga Lerotho. O fitlhela monna wa lekgotla e bong Legogodi a na le Kgosi Mperetli.) **Motlhodi**, p. 25

(Lerotho arrives at the kgosi's place. He finds a tribal councillor Legogodi with Kgosi Mperetli.)

The following are cases in **Phitlhela** and **Motlhodi** whereby we are informed by characters of places at which the events take place.

In Phitlhela:

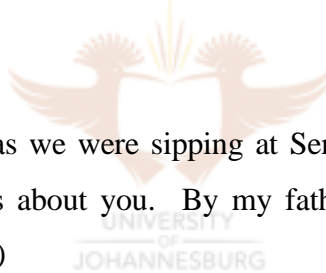
Letlantheng: ... E rile maabane fa re ntse re hupa fa ga Kesentseng ka utlwa banna bangwe ba re e kete kgosi ga e kgathale le fa leuba le humanegisa morafe mo go kana ... p. 2

(... Yesterday as we sipped at Kesentseng's home I heard some men saying that it seemed as if the kgosi is not concerned about the drought that has impoverished the tribe so much ...)

In Motlhodi:

Gabankitse: E rile maloba re ntse re hupa fa ga Serepe ka utlwa a bua mafoko a a tsitsibanyang ka wena. Ka rre ka re mafoko a a maswe, a a ferosang dibete ...) p. 3

(The other day as we were sipping at Serepe's home I heard him saying horrifying words about you. By my father, I say bad words, horrifying words indeed ...)

**5.4 NARRATIVE DIDASCALIES**

Gule (1996: 175) describes narrative didascalies as when the dramatist narrates incidents rather than let characters enact them. The events presented in the narrative didascalies are sometimes those that cannot be dramatised.

He further explains that narrative didascalies can be seen as a sub-text furthering the development of the plot.

In **Phitlhela** (p. 45) Kebalemogile was tormented by nasty dreams in which his late father

expressed dissatisfaction that he had turned his back on his paternal uncles while the late Kedinnetse complained that his children have been orphaned as he has been murdered. This experience could not be enacted and presented in a dialogue but had to be narrated by the author as follows:

(Dikgwedi tse pedi morago ga pula e sena go fetlwa komelelo e ntse e gaketse. Ga go na sesupo sa gore pula e tla na. Kgosi e simolola go tsenwa ke pelaelo ya gore dingaka di paletswe le gore Letlantheng o mo weditse. Bosigo kgosi e tlelwa ke ditoro tse di tshosang. Moswi rraagwe o a mo etela mo ditorong bosigo mme o mmotsa gore ke ka ntlha ya eng a kgaogane le borangwaneagwe. Ka metlha fa a robala o bona sefatlhego sa ga Kedinnetse. Kedinnetse le ena o simolola go etela kgosi bosigo mo ditorong mme o mmotsa gore a o ja monate fa a fetotse bana ba gagwe dikhutsana ka go letla dingaka gore di mmolae. Ditoro tse di dira gore kgosi e simolole go ila Letlantheng le Kgofa. Fa jaanong kgosi e sa tlhole e kgona go itshokela ditoro tse di tshosang tse e epa pitso mme morago ga pitso e swetsa gore dingaka di bolawe gonne di paletswe ke tiro ya tsona.)

(Two months after the rain was prepared, the drought persisted. There is no sign that it will rain. The kgosi starts to suspect that the diviners have failed and that Letlantheng has misled him. At night the kgosi has nasty dreams. His late father visits him in dreams at night asking him why he has turned his back on his paternal uncles. Every time when he sleeps he sees Kedinnetse's face. Kedinnetse also visited the kgosi at night in dreams and asked him whether he enjoys that his children are orphans as he allowed the diviners to murder him. These dreams cause the kgosi to hate Letlantheng and Kgofa. When the kgosi can no longer stand these nasty dreams, he calls a meeting at the end of which he decides that the diviners must be murdered, as they failed to do their work.)

After Kgosi Kebalemogile had told the diviners that in contrast to their promise rain did not result, he ordered the Maswene regiment to kill them and throw their remains into the caves. The scene of the murder and later the kgosi's suicide out of frustration are expressed in the following narrative didascalies:

(E ne ya nna tebo e tsitsibanyang mmele fa Maswene a kgemetha dingaka ka diletswana le melamu le marumo ... Fa go boiwa kwa mabitleng batho ba ne ba fitlhela kgosi e ikgwageditse fa lekgotleng.) **Phitlhela**, p. 48

(It became a frightening scene when the Maswene chopped up the diviners with small axes and knobkerries and assegais ... Returning from the graveyard they found the kgosi having hanged himself.)

In **Motlhodi** Rantlapunya and his wife Goitsewang confronted Lerotho and his wife Ketshabamang at their home about the allegation that they spoke badly of them. They found them with Tebogo, Gabankitse's wife. That Tebogo realised the need to make way for the two families to discuss the matter in contention, is expressed in a narrative didascalies as follows (p. 10):

(E rile fa Rantlapunya a sena go boeela puo ya gagwe ya go eta. Tebogo jaaka mosadi wa Motswana a bo a setse a lemogile gore go nna teng ga gagwe go betisa Rantlapunya le mogatse mafoko. O ne a laela ka letshogo le le boitshegang gonne a lemogile gore ga e ne e a komakoma.)

(After Rantlapunya had repeatedly indicated that they are on a visit, Tebogo as a Motswana woman immediately realised that her presence made the presentation of Rantlapunya and his wife difficult. She bid goodbye with extreme fear as she realised that things were bad.)

Gabankitse was delighted about the fact that he has managed to antagonise the Lerothos and the Rantlapunyas. His delight as he was speaking to Lerotho and his wife is expressed in the following narrative didascalies: (**Motlhodi**, p. 20)

(Fa Lerotho a ntse a bua jaana ke fa Gabankitse a tshegela mo pelong e bile a bua mogopolo a re: "Masilo ke lona ke ya go le thulanya ka ditlhogo, ke ya go le losa gore le be le bolaane." Pelo ya ga Gabankitse e ne e tshamuketse bolotsana.)

(As Lerotho was speaking Gabankitse was laughing in his heart and having this in his mind: “You fools, I will make your heads collide. I am going to get you at loggerheads with each other until you kill each other.” Gabankitse’s heart was overwhelmed with roguery.)

5.6 CONCLUSION

The following aspects of didascalia have been covered in Malao’s drama: the title, the list of characters, stage directions and narrative didascalies. What is noticeable, is the fact that in the lists of characters in the dramas, names of some people who did not participate in the dialogue have been included while those of some who participated in the dialogue have been left out. With regard to narrative didascalies, in some cases, the author takes the easy way out and presents narrative didascalies without exploring other options.



CHAPTER 6

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The indirect presentation of theme in **Phithela** has allowed us self-discovery of themes from the story events. This has rendered Malao a noteworthy playwright. By contrast in **Motlhodi** the title of the play lessens our excitement as it is more explicit and thus gives a good indication of the type of play to follow.

The naming of the characters in both plays amounts to allegorical figures, and this predicts their behavioural patterns. In both plays the characters are undeveloping. For instance, Letlantheng in **Phithela** relentlessly instigates Kebalemogile despite having been rebuked constantly by some members of the tribe. In **Motlhodi** Gabankitse also continued with impunity to antagonise the Lerothos with the Rantlapunyas despite the vigorous opposition by his wife, Tebogo. Self-description or analysis, whereby the character talks about himself or herself is absent in Malao's characterisation. Perhaps an unscrupulous figure like Letlantheng in **Phithela** could have been afforded space to boast his evil deeds.



As the cornerstone of drama, conflict has to be developed. However, in Malao's dramas, conflict is not developed well. A showdown that was looming between the advocates of traditional rainmaking and the Christians in **Phithela** was watered down by diversion to personal wrangles. It was, however, a redeeming moment when the Christians exploded when Kebalemogile wanted to lash Reverend Berens. In **Motlhodi** the conflict between the Lerothos and Rantlapunyas was so placid that it could not get the attention of any members of the community. In fact we may perhaps better speak of a little squabble more than a conflict.

As regards didascalies, different functions of listing characters, are accommodated, viz. naming them, description of their personal characteristics, their relationships and their functions.

Limitations in the lists of characters include the inclusion of some characters who did not participate in the dialogue and the exclusion of others who have been afforded speaking turns in the dialogue.

The physical appearance of characters is well exemplified in **Phithela** but non-existent in **Motlhodi**. The same goes for facial expressions. Gestures and movements are indicated while some cases of entrance directions indicate the mental state of new characters. With regard to narrative didascalies the author perhaps could have employed some form of speech mode like monologue, instead of the lengthy explanation of how the diviners and Kebalemogile died.



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