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KINGSHIP IN MARANGRANG AND TSWALA E A JA

BY

MPHATO ASSER MAHLARE

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JOHANNESBURG

SUPERVISOR: MR S.A. MAKOPO

CO-SUPERVISOR: MR H.C. GROENEWALD

NOVEMBER 1993
I declare that *KINGSHIP IN NORTHERN SOTHO DRAMAS: MARANGRANG AND TSWALA E A JA* is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.
I wish to express my gratitude and deep appreciation to the following:

- Mr S.A. Makopo, my promoter and co-promoter,
  Mr H.C. Groenewald, for their patience and scholarly guidance.

- Mrs Linda de Kock for typing my dissertation neatly and accurately.

- My wife, Mohwele Cornelia for untiring encouragement and support which I needed most during the preparatory stages of this study.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my late father Modilati Gustav and also to my aging mother Mokopu Ziphora.

Morwaswi le Meta.
SUMMARY

The aim of this study is to make a critical survey of the development of Northern Sotho drama and specifically the treatment of kingship in Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja.

Kingship in real life is usually accompanied by conflicts. The dramatists Maloma and Makgaleng in Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja respectively are aware of this fact. The two texts are based on kingship conflicts.

Conflict is an important element in drama, especially tragedy.

Kingship is studied under the following headings: Characterization, Plot and Dialogue.
OPSOMMING

Koningskap as 'n instelling was oor die jare heen 'n bron van konflik onder nasies en stamme regoor die wêreld.

In letterkundige genres soos die drama en die roman word hierdie soort konflik - tussen 'n heerser en sy onderdane - telkens uitgebeeld.

In hierdie studie word twee Noord-Sothodramas, nl. Marangrang van Maloma en Tswala e a Ja van Makgaleng letterkundig ontleed, met die klem veral op konflik en karakterisering.

Albei hoofkarakters, Marangrang en Matlebjane, is bekende historiese figure onder die Bapedistamme.

Marangrang is 'n hoog ambisieuse selfaangestelde koning, terwyl Matlebjane as regente opgetree het. Laasgenoemde kom in botsing met sy seuns en vrouens omdat hy nie respek toon vir sekere tradisionele gebruike nie.

Negatiewe karaktereienskappe in albei lei tot hul ondergang en uiteindelike dood.

Behalwe karakterisering val die fokus ook op ander aspekte soos plot, tema, handeling en die aanwending van dialoog.
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CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

The institution of kingship is as old as mankind. It has, however, been a constant source of conflict among nations and tribes also in Northern Sotho society. This conflict is reflected in Northern Sotho drama.

Northern Sotho literature is comparatively young and few dramas have been written. From 1940 to 1990 plays in the region of forty-five have been published. Of these a few are based on the kingship theme. These are: Marangrang (1972) by Maloma, Tswala e a Ja (1964) by Makgaleng, Kgosi Mmutle III (1966) by Phatudi, Kgašane (1964) by Makwala, Sealogana (1971) by Nchabeleng, Makgale (1971) by Bopape, Bonang Tša Bopudi (1983) by Tseke, Modjaddi (1957) by Franz G.H.

1.2 The scope and approach of this study

The basic aim of this study is to analyse Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja which are two historical plays on the tribes of Sekhukhuneland.

These two texts were chosen for study because they provide contrasting heroes in the history of Bopedi. Marangrang came to power in the period when the region was ravaged by wars and it was essential that brave warriors should emerge to defend it. Matlebjane is the custodian of Batau custom and it is unfortunate that he became the victim of those customs.

These two texts represent tragic experiences in life. In Marangrang man’s lust for power is portrayed. The tragedy shows the disaster that befalls people as a result of the actions of ambitious characters.

In Tswala e a Ja the Batau community is split asunder by the actions of a regent who cannot take advice and who is infatuated with his junior wife.
Studying the two texts invariably implies comparing and contrasting them as tragedies. The dramas will be compared according to theme and also according to some structural features.

The approach used is essentially formalism which emphasizes the literariness of a text.

Each of the two texts mirrors a unique experience in human life. The two plays provide a contrasting set of tragic heroes: One young and strong, the other old and weak.

In *Marangrang* man's vaulting ambition which consumes itself and brings harm to other people is depicted.

In *Tswala e a Ja* the reader meets a defiant old man who is otherwise respected and honoured.

The study will focus on: themes, character types, plot types, dialogue and conflicts. The study will trace the development of Northern Sotho drama and how kingship conflicts have brought suffering and death to the Northern Sotho.

To the writer's knowledge no research has been conducted on kingship relations in Northern Sotho drama. The nearest attempt made could be classified as follows:

1.2.1 Research Articles submitted to the University of the North in the Department of Northern Sotho in partial fulfillment of a B.A. Honours degree.


Mokgobu, P.S.M., 1985. Character Delineation in Northern Sotho Tragedies - Makgaleng’s *Tswala e a Ja* and Matlala’s *Tšhukudu*.

Moloisi, G.J., 1989. The structure of the plot in M.S. Serudu’s *Kelelagobedi*.


1.2.2 Masters dissertations


Moto, S.G. Plot in Northern Sotho Drama with special reference to C.K. Nchabeleng’s works.

Neither of these unpublished dissertations dealt with the kingship theme. The character *Tšhukudu* in *Tšhukudu* was a brave soldier.

C.K. Nchabeleng’s *Sealogana* is based on kingship but the researcher S.G. Moto described only the plot.

It is, therefore, imperative to embark on this research because clearly only a limited number of studies have been conducted on Northern Sotho drama.
In chapter one a brief outline of the development of classical drama will be sketched. The influence of Western drama on traditional performance and written drama in Northern Sotho will also be traced.

The history of the Bapedi, Bakone and Batau tribes will be traced in chapter two with the purpose of revealing how kingship was the source of the conflict in these tribes and how this conflict is reflected in the two plays.

Chapter three deals with the themes in Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja. The analysis reveals how conflict brought about the demise of Kone and Tau kingship.

Chapter four is devoted to a character analysis of the tragic heroes.

The focus in chapter five will be on plot: exposition, the tragic cause, conflict, climax and peripetia.

Chapter six will deal with dialogue and conflict.

The concluding chapter will be an assessment and evaluation.

1.3 Development of drama: a brief outline

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica (1973) the word drama comes from the Greek word 'dran' signifying action. It was used for the first time in the sense of dramatic action in 560 BC by a Greek called Thespsis when he introduced a costumed and masked performer to the songs and dances in his religious choirs.
Greek and Western Drama

Greek drama dates back to the 5th century B.C. The performance of plays in Greece began as a festival in honour of Dionysus (Bacchus), the god of fertility, wine and merriment. Athenian or Attic drama had the greatest purity and refinement. Plays were produced in large open-air theatres three times per annum: in the great (city) Dionysia, the Lenaea and the rural Dionysia.

Choral songs were sung where the leading singer would interact with the rest of the choir.

Later action was introduced. Scenes with dialogue (episodes) developed. Credit is given to Thespis for introducing dialogue.

The actors put on masks and peculiar attire. A crane was used to introduce deities travelling through the air onto the stage. Thus we have the expression deus ex machina, god from the machine. The Encyclopaedia Britannica (1973) explains further that violent action was rather described by the messengers.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica mentions that the ritual performance in honour of Dionysus dictated the form and style of Greek tragedy. Ritual dramas were written on Greek legends and heroes and performed in festivals during spring and winter. The chorus would provide the emotion and thought of the audience.

The religious and ritual function of Greek theatre shaped both the play and performance. This aspect was lost when the Romans adapted Greek tragedy and comedy. The Greek dramatist generally kept to the unity of place and time. In other words the action takes place in one locality and is completed within a specified time. Unity of action was restricted to one main action, which started immediately before the catastrophe and thus resulted in concentrated intrigue.

The language used was poetic and this influenced the Elizabethan
verse drama and subsequently also the Northern Sotho dramatists Matlala in Tshukudu (1958) and Makgamatha in Tau Mudulathoko (1987).

Greek plays mainly concerned themselves with human values like love and death. Greek theatre is, therefore, the origin of classical tragedy. The main conflict of the Greek tragedies evolved from the clash between the will of the gods and the ambitions and desires of man and showed the futility of the efforts of man to circumvent the decrees of fate. The Greek tragic poet probed the philosophical and religious problems of suffering, lack of justice and destiny. Some of the great Greek dramatists such as Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides dramatized the dilemma of man. Western drama originated from Greek drama and could be classified according to the content and form or mode of presentation. Classification according to style includes two broad categories namely tragedy and comedy. Tragedies usually end in death and comedies in peace.

Amongst the many themes Western drama tackled is the theme of kingship in which monarchs are the main characters. Kingship in drama could be traced from the Greek tragedies through the Renaissance and Elizabethan eras in England to African drama and Northern Sotho drama.

A number of Shakespeare's dramas, especially the tragedies, were based on the lives of kings, for example: Richard II, Richard III, Henry III, Henry IV, Julius Caesar, Othello, King Lear and Macbeth, to name a few.

European dramas were written to be performed and not only to be read. Shakespearean dramas were meant for the stage. Brooks et al (1975:541) assert that:

The appreciation of a play gained from reading it is not quite the same thing as gained from seeing it.
Plays which are written mainly for reading and not for performance are called closet plays. The reader may enjoy the play as if it were performed provided he has an adequate understanding of the convention and a powerful and creative imagination. A playwright, however, writes a play with the assumption that the audience will use their imagination in the pleasurable experience as a result of watching a performance rather than reading a text.

In drama construction the playwright uses his imagination or adapts a known story concerning persons and incidents. He does not describe, narrate or explain what happens. The actors or characters themselves must enact the story in such a way that it should seem plausible. This apparent realism should not be confused with naturalism which maintains that a performance should depict things exactly as they are, not only in setting but also in the content of the play.

The playwright does not relate the story himself. He employs characters to enact the story. He therefore relies on a character's actions and on dialogue. The characters imitate or represent actions as in real life. Boulton (1960:3) refers to literature that walks and talks before our eyes.

Imitation or representation cannot reproduce real life as it is. It cannot produce a replica of life. It remains imitation. The actors merely translate the text of the play into sights, sounds and actions on the stage. The emphasis is on action. Bently (1960:18) says that "the essence of drama is not words but action".

The hero in Greek and Western drama is usually someone of high estate in his community. Kings are usually the main characters in Western drama, especially tragedy.

A detailed discussion of the tragic form began with Aristotle in his *Poetics*. He analyzed the tragedies of his contemporaries:
Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, then developed theories on tragedy. His theories could therefore not cover modern tragedies which have different types of plots ending in a catastrophe. There are two types of tragic construction: Aristotelian and non-Aristotelian.

Abrams (1988:190) defines Aristotelian tragedy as:

The imitation of an action that is serious and also as having magnitude, complete in itself in the medium of poetic language and in the manner of dramatic rather than narrative presentation, incorporating incidents arousing pity and fear wherewith to accomplish the catharsis of such emotion.

Tragedy then is an imitation of an action which must be serious and important. The action should be presented in a dramatic manner and not narrated as in prose. Incidents should arouse pity and fear in the audience.

The tragic hero should neither be absolutely good or evil but "better than we are", higher than ordinary moral worth. Such a tragic hero must suffer change in fortune from happiness to misery because of a mistaken act to which he was led by his harmatia, the tragic flaw.

Pretorius and Swart (1982: 24) emphasize the personal weakness in a tragic hero as follows:

In tragedy there is usually a tragic hero who in some way or another rises above the ordinary person but who has a tragic flaw which after a heroic battle either external or internal leads to his/her downfall.
The audience feels pity for the tragic hero because he is not an evil man who deserves punishment and he moves the audience to fear because they recognise similar possibilities of error in their own mortal, fallible selves.

Fourie (in his address at Sebokeng Inter-college Festival: 6) expresses the effect of the fall of the hero on the audience this way:

When a man of status, struggling mightily against dynamic forces finally falls, the audience expresses what Aristotle calls 'catharsis', a purging or cleansing, the most forceful purgation is experienced when we realise that the doomed hero has seen life more perceptively than most men could ever hope.

Senecan tragedy was written to be recited but the English playwrights performed it on the stage. There developed two versions: the first, Senecan tragedy which used a chorus and stuck to the three unities of place, time and action. Violence was not enacted on the stage.

The second type, the Elizabethan (1585-1625) by Marlowe and Shakespeare, departs radically from the Aristotelian norm. Macbeth is not a good man who commits a tragic error. He is ambitious and knowingly turns his great gifts of courage to evil purposes. He therefore deserves his punishment.

Elizabethan dramas, especially Shakespearean dramas depart radically from Aristotle's paradigm by introducing humorous incidents called comic relief. This led to the development of tragic comedy, a mixture of tragedy and comedy; for example, Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice mingling character of high status (Shylock) and the clown
Western drama was brought to Africa by missionaries, who converted Africans to Christianity and established schools to educate their converts so that they could read the Bible. In the process, the Western literary heritage, including drama, was brought to Africa.

1.3.2  **African Performance**

There is no agreement on whether Africans had drama or not. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1973) maintains that:

> Drama in some form is found in almost every society, primitive or civilized and has served a wide variety of functions in the community.

Each community, therefore, has its own form of drama but the functions, form and content differ from community to community. Finnegan, (1970: 517) contends that drama as it is known in the West does not exist in Africa:

> There is no tradition in Africa of artistic performance which includes all the elements which might be demanded in a strict definition of drama.

Finnegan, however, concedes that African indigenous artistic forms nevertheless possess some of the elements associated with drama.

Thiongo (1986: 123) on the other hand maintains that there was drama in Africa:

> Drama in pre-colonial Kenya was not then an isolated event, it was part and
parcel of the rhythm of daily and seasonal life of the community. It was an activity among other activities, often drawing from other activities. It was also entertainment in the sense of involved enjoyment; it was moral instruction, and it was also a strict matter of life and death and communal survival.

This drama was not performed in special buildings set aside for the purpose. It could take place anywhere - wherever there was an 'empty space' to borrow the phrase of Peter Brook.

According to Thiongo, drama in Africa was part and parcel of the daily life of the people and not a separate aspect of life as it is in the West. Robert Kavanagh (1985:43) also questions Finnegan's contention on African drama and asks:

Could she (Finnegan) really be sure there is no tradition?
Did she really expect to find in Africa exactly what she was accustomed to in Europe?

The Western and African connotations of drama differ. The differences are essentially cultural. There are, however, similarities. It would therefore be appropriate to refer to indigenous African performances rather than drama.

Central to all varieties of African dramatic expressions and performances are songs, dance and traditional poetry and occasional mime. Jafta (1978: 45) says:

Songs and dance are central to nearly all rituals celebrating rain, births, the
The whole group takes part in the performance. There is no distinction between the players and the audience. The performance is based on myth and rituals.

The African performance has, however, been influenced by classical drama as a result of colonization and acculturation. There developed in Africa drama with a Western form while the content reflects the African situation. In written African drama we have an admixture of Western drama and indigenous performance.

1.3.3 Written African Drama

The Christianization of the African people led to the development of African drama (in the Western context). Missionary schools were established and plays were written and performed.

Three distinct categories of drama developed: conformist, adaptive and Black consciousness drama.

Conformist drama was written in vernacular and was meant for prescription in African schools. It avoided contentious political themes e.g. Maredi’s *Mo go fetileng Kgomo*.

The second type, the adaptive drama, had to satisfy the detribalised black taste. It was usually written in English for the cosmopolitan theatre. Like the conformist drama, adaptive drama avoided contentious political themes but concentrated on social and moral issues. Gibson Kente’s initial plays like "Manana, the Jazz prophet" and H.I.E. Dhlomo’s "Moshoeshoe" are good examples.
The third type, the Black consciousness theatre, was a product of the Black power philosophy. It aimed at making blacks aware of their conditions. It had as its primary theme the social and political freedom of Africans. Black consciousness theatre aimed at informing and inspiring black people. Pascal Gwala's group maintains that the cultural dialectic of negation and affirmation is to provide the dynamic for social and political change.

Northern Sotho drama is essentially a conformist drama, mainly written for school prescription or performance. In practice the Northern Sotho drama texts are mainly read in schools rather than watched in performance.

A.P. van der Merwe in her article "Drama and Theatre of Semiotics" in the South African Journal of African Languages vol. II (1991:112) corroborates this contention:

Probably more people read drama texts than see performances of these texts especially in African Literature.
In schools and at universities for example texts are studied quite independently of any performance.

Van der Merwe's argument is that there is no tradition of theatre in African communities. She therefore recommends that the emphasis should be placed on both the drama texts and the performance.

1.3.4 Traditional Northern Sotho performance

Traditional Northern Sotho performance differs from Western drama in the sense that it is not written and is communally performed. Western drama is a specialised art form, separate from other art forms like music and dance. Accordingly special venues, theatres, have been established
for drama performance. The audience watches a performance and derives pleasure. The drama script is first written before it is adapted for performance on the stage.

The traditional Northern Sotho performance is a product of communal efforts. No single individual can lay claim to its composition.

There are no special places or theatres to stage a traditional performance. The village or any open space may be the venue.

The Northern Sotho performance is usually coupled with other art forms like music, poetry and dance. It is an integral part of the cultural and social life of the people. It is, therefore, difficult to separate performance from economic and social activity. In this context traditional performance is collective art.

An activity like 'letšema' has strong economic, musical and dramatic contents.

'Letšema' (communal work) is part and parcel of Northern Sotho traditional life. People usually form work groups to assist one another in the execution of particular duties. These duties include the construction of a kraal, (kgoro) working in the fields, hoeing, harvesting, building 'mafao' (fences) and dwellings.

'Makgakgasa' is performed by elderly women (mathari) aged between forty and fifty. They perform essentially per invitation by any person of social standing who can afford to transport and entertain them. They originally performed in ceremonies organized by the king. They do not charge anything but perform for pleasure.

They perform at the host's place but the host must pay
tribute to the king. That is why Matlebjane in *Tswala e a Ja* (1964: 10) receives "sebego" (gifts) from Rachidi but questions the social standing of the Rachidi's.

Go ile gwa tla bjang gore kosa ya Matuba e binelwe ga-Rachidi? Bahlanka ba ke ba binelwe kosa?
(How did it come that a song of Matuba be danced at Rachidi’s?
Can the commoners be honoured with a dance song?).

The significance of music and dance is observed by Finnegan (1970:517) when she says:

Though different elements of drama are stressed in different cultures one of them that seems to run through almost all these African performances is the overriding significance of music and dance, the secondary importance of the spoken word.

1.3.5 Northern Sotho written drama

Northern Sotho was not a written language before the advent of missionaries. The Berlin Lutheran missionaries were the first to reduce the spoken Pedi dialect to writing and thereby laid the foundation for creative writing.

The initial aim of the missionaries was to teach the black converts to read the Bible and other religious writings. The process of learning to read implied learning to write. Western literary wealth was bequeathed to the Blacks.

Apart from helping in the translation of religious books and scriptures the early converts were encouraged to do some writing of their own in their own languages.
Several plays by black playwrights have been produced. Most plays are of questionable literary standard, because playwrights are not conversant with requirements of drama.

Few plays based on the kingship theme have been written. Some of them are: Sealogan (1971) by Nchabeleng, in which conflict is caused by succession.

In Rangwane ke go Paletše (1971) by Maggie M. Rammala conflict is also caused by succession. Sefara’s son Paledi wants to succeed his father but his uncle Kukutwane clings to the regency.


The above-mentioned tragedies are fictional with no claim to historical reality. The tragedies, Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja on the other hand are historical dramas. They are based on kingship. Though Marangrang was born a commoner he eventually usurped the kingship of the Bakone, and became the most powerful military ruler in Sekhukhuneland. In the text he is portrayed only as a brave warrior.

Matlebjane in Tswala e a Ja, on the other hand, was of royal blood. After the death of his brother, Matlebo, the king of the Batau tribe, he ascended the throne.
CHAPTER 2

KINGSHIP CONFLICTS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Conflicts in royal families have a long history in drama. Kings have been held in high esteem throughout history and their fall from grace and glory due to their inherent weaknesses and their clash with accepted norms of behaviour formed the basis of drama.

From time immemorial kings have been honoured. Their conflicts with social norms have been extensively recorded. The wise king Solomon for example was respected. He built the temple of God. His weakness was his lust for women and this impaired his judgement and brought him into disfavour with his subjects.

Most Shakespearean tragedies are based on kings who fell from their high positions.

King Lear's love for his daughter and Mark Anthony's infatuation with Cleopatra made them clash with social norms, culminating in their downfall.

Macbeth's vaulting ambition was a tragic flaw which precipitated his downfall.

Kings also occupy an important place in Northern Sotho drama. Typical Northern Sotho plays based on kingship are for example Makwala's Kgašane and Phatudi's Kgoši Mmutle III.

In Kgašane Kgosi Kgasane's Christian convictions made him unpopular with his people and he was shot dead.

Kgosi Mmutle in Kgoši Mmutle III started progressive projects which brought him at loggerheads with the Bakgaga
The term conflict has been defined differently from different perspectives. From a literary point of view a conflict is a contest of opposing forces. These forces may be within a character or operating from outside. There is, therefore, internal and external conflict.

An external conflict is explained by Lawson (1974: 881) in the following terms:

The essential character of drama is social conflict - persons against groups, or groups against other groups, or individuals or groups against social or natural forces - in which the conscious will, exerted for the accomplishment of specific and understandable aims is sufficiently strong to bring the conflict to a point of crisis.

A character may clash with other characters or with natural, supernatural or social forces.

A conflict is internal when the clash of views or ideals takes place within a person. The hero's motives and ambitions are thwarted. A character's thoughts and loyalty may also clash with those of society. He is waging war within himself. In Kgašane, Kgoši Kgašane's conversion to Christianity affected him emotionally and mentally and he was eventually socially ostracised.

Conflict is central to any drama. It is the essential dynamo of action. There can be no drama without action and no action without conflict.
There is no clear distinction between internal and external conflicts. An external conflict may arise from an internal crisis.

According to Lloyd (1982) the tragic hero's ideals and aspirations transcend the limitations of his physical being and this brings him into conflict with his world or cosmos, resulting in his eventual destruction.

Conflict in *Tswala e a Ja* for example may be classified as external. King Matlebjane clashes with the social order of the Batau people and is eventually assassinated.

In *Marangrang* conflict is basically external. Marangrang is engaged in physical combat with other characters.

The dramatists Maloma and Makgaleng in *Marangrang* and *Tswala e a Ja* respectively made use of historical facts to construct their plays. They have not, however, slavishly adhered to a historical sequence of events but have adapted historical material to their requirements.

Maloma (1972) depicts Sekwati as the founder king of the Bapedi who found the Kone of Marangrang reigning over the area presently known as Bopedi. Mashabela, king of the Baroka, was a subordinate of Marangrang. Oral history, however, records that the Bapedi kingdom was founded by Thobela who fled with his mother Mmathobele from a Kgatla tribe under Diale in the Marapyane-Pretoria area to the Leolo Mountains at Mogokgomeng in the Tubatse river valley.

Conflict arose when Diale's other wives alleged that Mmathobele's baby, Thobele, cried in her womb. Diale advised Mmathobele to trek eastward until they found a suitable settlement.

This myth of a baby crying in the womb is used by Maloma
when Phaahla alleges that Marangrang cried in his mother’s womb, indicating his unnaturalness.

Serolorolo seo, go kwala gore se ile sa lla se sa le ka maleng a mmago sona. (That savage is alleged to have cried in his mother’s womb).

The Bapedi then changed their totem from Kgabo (ape) to noko (porcupine). Maloma (1972: 58) attributes this to Sekwati’s declaration:

Ke tla bina noko go tloga bjale.
Kgabo re a e hlala gobane babini ba yona ba šwalalane. (I shall from now henceforth use the porcupine as a totem. We are discarding the ape as the people who used it as a totem have scattered).

The Bapedi came into contact with other tribes such as the Bakone and Baroka. Inter-tribal conflicts ensued. Kgosi Masabela of the Baroka tribe, in Maloma (1972: 59) reports

Go fihleng ga lena (Bakgatla).
Ke tsebišitše mohlabanedi yo mogolo wa lefase le, Marangrang gore ke le file marobalo, o dumetše ka pelo ye tšhweu. Re leta Mapono ka go thušana...
Lefase le ke laka, eupša Bakone ke bahlabani ba bagolo. (On your arrival (you Bakgatla) I informed the great protector of this land, Marangrang that I have offered you a place to sleep; he agreed whole-heartedly. We will co-operate in watching the Swazis
... This land belongs to me, but the Bakone are great warriors.)

The Baroka of Mashabela and the Bakone of Marangrang were united by their opposition to the Swazis. The pact was, however, shortlived.

Delius (1985: 70) claims that the Baroka were the first arrivals in Bopedi across the Olifants and assumed paramountcy over later arrivals like the Pedi, Tau and Kone. The Bakone, however, exploited the inter-tribal conflicts and rivalries between the Baroka and the Bapedi. That is why Kgosi Sebusa (Maloma 1972: 9) proudly says:

Ge e le bo Mashabela le bo Mongatane bona ga ke sa bolela, re tla no swiela ka lerumo. Le ge e le beng ba naga ba tla tamiša rena balepa tshipi ya Bakgalaka.
(I no longer talk about the Mashabelas and the Mongatanes, we shall destroy them with spears. Even if they are the owners of the land they shall pay tribute to us, the smelters of iron from Bokgalaka).

The Bakone recognise the paramountcy of Baroka but still plot against them.

It was during this time that the commoner Marangrang came to prominence. Mönning (1976: 122) records that:

It was under these conditions that a Koni warrior of exceptional strength and bravery, Marangrang, raised himself to the position of a chief, organising the remnants of tribes to resist the cannibals.
Inter-tribal conflict had reached the highest proportions. These conditions required and nurtured a military leadership of Marangrang’s stature.

Delius (1985: 25) concurs with Mönning about Marangrang’s organizational ability and his consequent rise to power.

The most powerful figure to emerge in this period, however, was a commoner - Marangrang - who initially built his following in the South-East from the remnants of Koni chiefdoms, subsequently successfully challenged the power of the Magakala and Mphahlele and partially incorporated Kgabe and his adherents. He also turned his attention, with some success to extinguishing the raiding bands in the area.

Oral history recalls that it was during this period of Difaqane that king Shaka reigned with terror and some Zulus fled from his rule. They in turn caused havoc in their path.

Ramaila (Setlogo sa Batau: 47) affirms what Mönning and Delius have stated. There were inter-tribal conflicts in Bopedi and Marangrang was ruling supreme. Other tribes attempted to appease him with women to no avail. He was given wives by the Masemola's, Phaahla's and Matlala's. That is why he praised himself (Maloma: 1972: 57):

Ke mokgonyana' Phaahla manyala a hlala a yo gapa a boela Lepatšeng.
(I am the son-in-law of Phaahla who marries and divorces and reclaims his dowry and returns to Lepatšeng).
The conflict within the Koni chiefdom enabled Marangrang to exploit the situation. The dramatist adapted the usurpation of kingship by Marangrang instead of making Phahlane quarrel with Magolego, he (Maloma 1972: 15) makes Magolego and Mokoloto (Marangrang's brother) kill each other at Bonwatau over a heifer. Marangrang then appoints himself the leader of the army:

Go tloga lehono thwadi ya dira tša Bakone ke nna Ke kgoši ka kgang. (From today the leader of the Bakone army is myself. I am the king by force)

Intra-tribal conflicts plagued the Pedi royal family and weakened the kingship structure. Delius (1985: 15) notes that:

Conflicts which started in the reign of Mohube escalated during the regency of his brother Mampuru.

The Ndebele under Mzilikazi and the Bakone under Marangrang exacerbated the situation.

Sekwati, the only surviving son of Thulare, gathered his followers, about forty men and women and fled to the north where he took refuge under Ramapulana. Sekwati returned to Bopedi after four years to reclaim his kingship.

A confrontation loomed between him and Marangrang. Mönnig (1976: 23) puts it in this way:

When Sekwati returned after an absence of four years with whatever following he could gather he intended to
re-establish the old Pedi ascendancy. It was obvious that sooner or later he would have to challenge Marangrang but as yet powerless to do this, he sent Marangrang beads and a woman in appeasement. This woman eventually led Marangrang to the Kgaga of Mphahlele, where the latter was waiting in ambush; after fierce fighting Marangrang and all his warriors were killed.

The dramatist did not deviate from historical facts. He however added the element of witchcraft by making the two girls offer Marangrang a poisoned liver.

The conflict between Sekwati aided by Bakgaga of Mphahlele and the Bakone of Marangrang eventually erupted into open battle at Sepitsi. Marangrang's power was annihilated.

Marangrang, however, defended himself valiantly. Mokgoma (Maloma 1972: 77) points out that:

Godimo ga makgolo a seelago go šetše masome a senyane feela.
(Out of six hundred warriors only ninety survived).

Marangrang is reputed to have killed five hundred and ten Bakgaga warriors. He was endowed with supernatural military powers though he weakened those powers by his lust for women.

In _Tswala e a Ja_ the dramatist Makgaleng follows the historical chronology of events closely. The major cause of conflict in the royal family is Matlebjane's disregard for customary practice concerning the distribution of tributes from his subjects. Tributes should be distributed
from the great house and not from any junior house. Matlebjane's love for his favourite wife Mmamadupe made him disregard the custom, eventually precipitating his assassination.

Conflicts in the two works are differently treated. In Marangrang the main conflict between Marangrang and Bakgaga comes at the end. Conflict in Tswala e a Ja on the other hand between Matlebjane and the tribe is the initial causative conflict resulting in the death of Matlebjane. Both Marangrang and Matlebjane in spite of being kings, remain forlorn. These two legendary characters and their deaths are historically real.
3.0 THEME

3.1 Introduction

Theme may be described as the principal idea of a narrative or drama. A play may have several conflicting incidents but running through them all is a central idea. Brooks et al (1959: 15) define a theme as:

The governing idea implicit in the original situation of conflict that becomes in the end the focal idea - that is, what we take to be the "meaning of the whole".

A theme is often contained in a story. This idea is supported by Pretorius and Swart (1982: 17) when they define theme as:

That statement, implicit or explicit, which a work makes about its subjects, just as a play can encompass more than one subject, so it is possible - especially in a complex work - for a play to have more than one theme.

The overriding theme is referred to as the main theme, other secondary themes are sub-themes.

A theme is an important structural principle of drama because it gives insight and evaluates a particular aspect of man's reality. The dramatist may expound on an aspect of reality like greed, ambition, cruelty, sin or salvation. These meanings are deduced by the reader.
A theme may also be didactic when the message of the dramatist is explicitly expressed by a particular character. The dramatist gives a moral lesson to the readers. Such didactic utterances may not have any direct relation with the theme of the play. In the play Nnang for example the theme is love but the dramatist preaches against witchcraft through a character.

A theme is intertwined with other structural elements of drama like plot, characters and dialogue.

In a well-knit plot the message emerges clearly. There is no need for didacticism.

A dramatic dialogue reveals a theme more clearly than a non-dramatic one. A non-dramatic dialogue retards the unfolding of a theme.

The unity of dialogue and characters in the revelation of a theme is aptly expressed by Alternbernd et al (1966: 61) as follows:

The meaning of a specific play grounded by a playwright in the unity of its subject is seen by him to be in the total response of the audience to the story and its agents, the characters. His plotting of the story, the dialogue and other actions of the characters are among his means of leading the reader to the meaning.

The response of the reader is also important. The reader's emotions of pity and fear, according to Aristotle, are purged or purified in what he calls "Katharsis". The reader identifies with the hero and he relives the pain and
pleasure experienced by the tragic character.

The discussion of a theme in a tragic text therefore involves: plot, character, dialogue and the reader's 'katharsis'.

The treatment of a theme by a dramatist is also important. Two plays like Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja may be based on the same topic, kingship, but they may not have the same theme and message. The viewpoints of dramatists towards the theme may be different: the tone of treatment may either be tragic or comic.

Makgaleng regrets the disintegration of Batau kingship and sympathises with the old regent Matlebjane whereas Maloma extols the bravery of Marangrang.

3.2 Theme in Marangrang

The story in Marangrang centres around a brave legendary warrior of the Bakone.

The tragedy in the play is the overriding ambition of the tragic hero to become an absolute military leader who uses his supernatural knowledge of war medicine to consolidate his power. He is brought to his downfall because of his lust for women and scorn for the advice of his councillors and even that of his mother.

Social order requires that an individual conforms to the norms and values of society. Marangrang, however, rebels against social conformity. In his youth he often assaults his peers including king Sebusa's son Ngwato and is brought before King Sebusa for judgement. Marangrang uses his intelligence and eloquence to prove that he acted in self-defence. He is acquitted but punished for assaulting his future king.
Marangrang defies social laws of behaviour by killing other people’s goats to eat the liver only. Naturally the owners disapprove of this individualism and self-centredness. Marangrang’s mother Botsana, also disapproves of Marangrang’s behaviour. In her own words:

O ra gore ke bothakga ge
morwago a tšama a utswa dipudi
tša batho?
(Is it good for your son to go about stealing other people’s goats?)

She is apprehensive that this bad habit will eventually lead to his death. Her prophetic foreboding came true when Marangrang was weakened by eating a poisoned liver.

Marangrang’s military powers and superior knowledge of herbs instils fear in his enemies. Phaahla (Maloma: 1972: 57) declares that Marangrang:

Ga se wa lefase le.
Badimo ba re otla ka yena.
(He is not of this world. The gods punish us through him).

His lust for power is evidenced by his self-appointment as the leader of the army: (Maloma 1972: 58)

Go tloga lehono thwadi ya dira
tša Bakone ke nna.
(As from today the leader of the Bakone army is myself).

Power corrupts. Marangrang’s lust for power makes him loose respect for his seniors. He calls himself "kgosi ya dikgoši" (King of kings) and refers derogatively to king Mashabela as "kgosana", junior king. He is prepared to
kill anybody who stands in his way.

He is oblivious of the fact that the mighty are often conquered by the weak. Samson was killed by David, Tshukudu was weakened by Selomi. She cut the source of his strength in his hair. Marangrang is also defeated by the young initiates of Bakgaga.

Social order dictates peaceful co-existence of tribes. The other tribes: Batau of Masemola and Phaahla, Bapedi of Sekwati, Bakgaga of Mashabela and Bakone of Matlala want to live in peace with the Bakone of Marangrang by appeasing him with tributes and women. He scorns them and continues to plunder their villages and raids their cattle posts, boasting (Ibid: 157):

Ke mokgonyana' Phaahla manyala
a hlala, a boela a yo gapa a
boela Lepatseng.
(I am the son-in law of Phaahla
who marries and divorces and
reclaims the dowry and returns to
Lepatseng).

The other tribes disapprove of Marangrang's social defiance and deviation. They plot to neutralise his supernatural herbal powers.

Sekwati and Naswana, a medicine woman from Tswetla, send Marangrang poisoned liver and two beautiful girls with orders to remove a lock of hair from his skin drape. The purpose is to weaken Marangrang's power.

Mankge is suspicious of the visitors' motive and tries to advise Marangrang against accepting the gifts and relaxing amongst foreigners (Ibid: 71):
Marangrang, blinded by his lust for beautiful women scorws his advice and retorts "Ba tla ntirang?" (What can they do to me?)

Sekwati's magic charm weakened him. He became powerless and lost his marksmanship. He is assaulted by the initiates of Bakgaga. He misses his target with the spear. For the first time Marangrang finds himself cornered. He regrets the reversal of his fortune and commits suicide.

The main theme in Marangrang is therefore Marangrang's eccentric individualism. Though he is well talented and endowed with supernatural powers he does not enjoy the support of his people, including the king he serves. The dramatist is trying to expose the futility of good talents in a wrong character. The reader then starts to doubt the value of power in social isolation.

Although the story is serious, the theme is not well conceived. There are few dramatic incidents which help to unfold the theme. Only once is the tragic character involved in a serious conflict, that is when Marangrang is confronted by the Bakgaga's initiates. Throughout the play Marangrang does not meet any serious confrontation. The play, however, gives the reader insight into modern political power struggle. Marangrang's personal pride inhibits him to compromise and accept advice from his mother Botsana and especially his confidante Mankge.
3.3 Theme in Tswala e a Ja

The story in Tswala e a Ja is based on the life history of a legendary Tau figure, a patriarch of the present Batau people. The Batau lead a traditional type of life and respect and uphold their customs. Violation of any custom is treated with contempt.

Matlebjane is a regent. He reigns on behalf of his brother’s son Magaswa. Matlebjane overstays his period of regency. He grows too old and does not hand over the kingship sceptre to Mogaswa.

The tragedy in Tswala e a Ja, however, is that Matlebjane lives and dispenses royal gifts in the lower house of his favourite wife Mmamadupe. He flouts the Tau custom on the reception and distribution of royal tributes. This causes great concern amongst Matlebjane’s other wives and councillors as it is interpreted as transferring kingship to Photo’s home. That is why Ntlaletše (Makgaleng 1964: 6) retorts:

A ka se bo bone (Photo) ...
Mogashwa ke wa Matlebo, ke kgoshi ya Babinatau ka moka.
(He (Photo) will not inherit the kingship...
Magaswa is heir to Matlebo’s throne.
He is the king of all the Batau).

The greatest tragedy and dramatic irony is that Matlebjane does not realise the danger of his actions. He scorns the advice of his councillors. When brought to the ‘kgotla’ (court) and warned about the consequences of his actions he replies (Ibid: 13):

Ke re bjale ke tšofetše ke itulela
ka fa ga ngwana wa barwa
ba Tladi, dilo di ntaila ka ntshe, 
molato ke eng moo?
(I say now that I am old and stay in this 
house of the daughter of the sons 
of Tladi and tributes follow me there. 
What is wrong with that?)

This reply reflects Matlebjane's tragic flaw, a costly 
mistake. He is naively ignorant, unrepentant and adamant 
when he is expected to be knowledgeable and an embodiment 
and custodian of Batau customs.

Matlebjane's self-centred individualism and favouritism 
compel his wives Moriane, Ntlaletse and MmaPhaahla to plot 
his death. They incite their sons Selwane, Masemola and 
Phaahla to remove "tšofa", the old thing. They eventually 
assassinate him.

The reasons advanced by Matlebjane's sons for his execution 
are unsatisfactory: that is he is old "setholwane" 
(Zombie); that he does not dress properly and is a shame 
to the Batau people. This exposes the generation gap that 
exists between the old generation represented by Matlebjane 
and the young generation represented by his sons.

Remorse comes too late for Matlebjane. In his death throes 
when told that it is Photo who has stabbed him he revokes 
his blessings to Photo and curses him (Ibid: 29) "go tloga 
lehono o tla hlaolwa ke bana beno" (From today onwards you 
will be discriminated against by your brothers).

The main theme in Tswana e a Ja is the egocentric 
individualism of Matlebjane, which flouts the wise counsel 
of his wives and relatives.

The play opens with a dramatic dialogue of Matlebjane's 
sons planning to execute their father. The plan is
supported by their mothers. The councillors foresee the tragedy but are powerless to prevent it.

The theme therefore is a comment on the problem of succession caused by the custom of surrogacy. In modern political circles this problem of succession still haunts nations especially in Africa where the solution is through coup d'états. Although Makgaleng wrote the drama over thirty years ago, the theme is still fitting in modern political set-up.

The theme in Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja is based on kingship. Neither Marangrang nor Matlebjane are born kings but both die being "kings". Marangrang has usurped the Bakone kingship and Matlebjane reigns on behalf of Mogaswa indefinitely.

Both tragic heroes display self-centred individualism. Marangrang's lust for power blinds him to sound advice. Matlebjane's love for Mnamadupe makes him reject warnings of death. They both violate the social order and norms of behaviour and pay dearly. Marangrang commits suicide. Matlebjane is killed by his sons. The reader feels pity for the old man Matlebjane but questions the advantages of supernatural powers and Marangrang's intelligence.

In both texts kingship is accompanied by conflicts and death.

Dialogue in Tswala e a Ja is dramatic. The lines are short. The dramatist uses repetition to enhance the dramaticity of his dialogue. The following words are repeated several times in the text: "tloša" (remove), fofotša (kill), "lehu" (death). They all signify death.

Dialogue in Marangrang is less dramatic. The characters are verbose.
CHAPTER 4

4. CHARACTERIZATION

4.1 Introduction

The foregoing chapter on kingship conflicts in historical perspective points to the social and political milieu in which the tragic heroes Marangrang and Matlebjane operate. This world includes the social and historical background of the characters. A milieu in this study, therefore, refers to both the physical and historical environments.

The norms and values of the Bakone communities govern the behaviour of the characters in both texts. Any violation of the expected social conduct of behaviour results in conflict and ostracism.

The concept tragedy as used in this study refers to the suffering of a tragic hero, which suffering may either be physical or spiritual and is essential in a tragic text. The hero’s suffering also affects the reader or audience emphatically through what Aristotle calls catharsis, the process by which the feelings of the audience are purged.

The tragic hero takes a tragic action which results in conflict with other characters. The main character is deluded into believing in his invincibility and commits a tragic mistake. He then suffers the consequences thereof.

A dramatist creates an imaginary plausible world peopled with real-life characters endowed with particular characteristics. The dramatist, however, does not aim at making replicas of real people. He strives for verisimilitude, an illusion that characters created are real. The reader is reminded of real people in his world.

The characters in the two tragic texts under scrutiny are
historical.

It is essential that characters be differentiated, as Heffner (1965: 257) explains:

Characterization is the differentiation of one agent from another agent in action. This differentiation is accomplished by means of ascribing traits of different kinds to the agents. Any differentiation of agent from agent is, therefore, characterization.

Characters are subjected to certain conditions, realities, conflicts, and situations in which they must act and react. That is why Pretorius et al (1982: 6) conclude that:

Characters are revealed to the reader through their actions and reactions and also through that which is said about them and that which they say themselves.

Characters are then classified according to their characteristics and the role they play in drama. Each character should be distinct and unique, that is, each character should be different from others. Contrast is essential in characterization.

Some characters develop and change with changing conditions of plot and action. Such characters are referred to as round characters. Others remain static and are called flat characters.

The roundness of a character is aptly described by Groenewald (1979: 163):

'\textquotesingle n Ronde karakter is een wat 'n
A round character has strong, positive and weak qualities and is therefore dynamic and complex.

Characters like Marangrang and Matlebjane in Maloma (1972) and Makgaleng (1964) respectively are round.

A flat character, on the other hand, is superficial and unchanging. He has typifying characteristics. Groenewald (1979: 163) describes a flat character as characterized by "enkele hoedanigheid". However, a flat character also has an important role to play in drama. He portrays a particular human characteristic. In this way he serves a useful purpose. A flat character becomes a weakness if he was not intended to be flat by the dramatist. A character like Tlale in Marangrang is flat. He is a coward. Whenever there is war he feigns illness and after the war he becomes healthy again. He is not known by any other characteristic except cowardice.

This study will concentrate on the round characters Marangrang and Matlebjane who are also main characters, protagonists or tragic heroes.

A protagonist is the most important character in a drama. The story revolves around him from the beginning to the end. In a tragedy the protagonist or tragic hero is usually a highly esteemed character who ends up in disgrace or death due to an inherent weakness or flaw in his psychological make-up. That is why Robinson (1961 VIII)
The ideal tragic hero, continues Aristotle, must be a highly renowned, though not a pre-eminently virtuous, man whose misfortune is brought upon him by some error of judgement or frailty, rather than vice and depravity.

This fall from happiness to misfortune is due to a flaw in the hero’s character, the harmatia.

The opposite of a protagonist is an antagonist, whom Cronje (1971: 127) defines as:

"Teenstander of teenwerker". In die Afrikaanse woordeboek word antagonis op toneelgebied aangebied as agtervolger, bedrieër en kweller, deur wie die voorspeler in krisis gewikkel word.

The main function of the antagonist is to generate a crisis or conflict so that the protagonist’s good qualities and weaknesses are brought to the fore.

There are three schools of thought concerning characterization. Firstly there are authorities who emphasize character as more important than other elements of drama like plot, dialogue and milieu. There are critics who hold a contrary view and lastly there are critics who hold the view that all elements are equally important.

Brooks and Warren (1959: 71) hold the view that character delineation is the basis of literary appreciation. They maintain that:

So important is character in fiction that one way in which to approach the basic
pattern of a story is to ask: "whose story is that?" In other words, it usually is of first importance to see whose fortunes are at stake, whose situation is settled by the events that are described.

Freund agrees with Brooks and Warren concerning the importance of characterization. He (1947: 202) expresses this view thus:

Very often the difference between what is deemed first-rate and second-rate in literature lies mainly in the achievement of better characterization. To be classic, a novel (drama) must be about people, portrayed with insight, who are always credible and in some instances dynamic.

There are critics who over-emphasize the importance of characterization. One such authority is Arnold Bennet cited by Virginia Woolf (1924: 409). He states his standpoint thus:

The foundation of good fiction is character-creating and nothing else ... style counts, plot counts, originality counts. But none of these count anything like so much as the convincingness of the characters. If characters are real the novel (drama) will have a character. If they are not, oblivion will be its portion.

There are also those authorities who emphasize the importance of the milieu as opposed to characterization.
One such authority is Stephens (1972: 68). According to him:

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

Scholes and Kellog (1975: 171) agree with the view expressed by Stephens that other elements are also important. They assert:

A successful narrative need not emphasize the inward life and present it in details but it must be prepared to compensate with other elements if it is to remain an object of interest to men.

The third school of thought emphasizes the equal importance of all elements. One such authority is Serudu (1979: 12). He contends that the prominence of an element "depends upon the point of focus designed by an individual writer."

The researcher agrees with the view that all elements, character, plot, milieu and dialogue are equally important in a good drama.

The dramatist of an historical drama like Marangrang or Tswala e a Ja must strive to blend character with the historical milieu. The king must behave like a king in his royal environment.
There are several techniques which are used by writers in characterization. Some of these methods are more suitable to novels than to drama.

Some of the techniques used are: expository, dramatic, the interior monologue, the ‘stream of consciousness’ and the naming technique.

In the expository method characters are described or discussed by the writer or one of the characters. This technique is suitable in novel characterization.

The interior monologue and the stream of consciousness technique are more or less the same. In the consciousness technique the writer gives the "direct quotation of mind - not merely of the language area but of the whole consciousness" (Kumar and McKean, 1969: 364). These techniques are not used by Northern Sotho dramatists.

The naming technique is popular with Northern Sotho dramatists. The name usually reflects a particular situation when the child was born or a certain quality. Thus the name Marangrang was given to Lethoke’s child by his uncle Tsiane. When the child was born there were thunderstorms. Tsiane (Maloma 1972: 24) predicts that when Marangrang grows up

\[\text{mo a fetilego go tla lliwa sa mmajoo} \]
\[\text{(where he passes people will cry tears).}\]

The technique used by Maloma (1972) and Makgaleng (1964) is the dramatic technique.

Serudu (1979: 13) explains this technique as follows:
The dramatic technique presents characters in action. They are allowed to unfold themselves through their actions. It is from what they say, their behaviour, their thoughts and attitudes, as well as their relationships with other characters that we can judge their personalities properly.

4.2 Marangrang's character

The preceding chapter discussed the encounter of several tribes in Bopedi. This encounter resulted in conflicts amongst the Baroka under Masabela, the Bapedi under Sekwati, the Bakgaga under Makgaga and the Bakone under Sebusa.

King Sebusa's protection and power lay in the strength of his military army and medicinemen. For this reason Marangrang's father Lethoke and uncle Tsiane were invited to settle in King Sebusa's domain because of their strong physique and powerful war medicine. The diviners Madikgake and others maintained that they were sent by the gods (badimo) to strengthen the Bakone kingdom.

These giants gave birth to Marangrang and bestowed supernatural knowledge of war medicines on him. Marangrang was born great. At his birth there were thunderstorms and lightning to indicate that nature announced the birth of a great man. And indeed Marangrang was a huge baby: "thaba ya ngwana" (a mountain of a baby) as big as a nine-month old.

Tsiane gave the new baby the name Marangrang, meaning mystery and destruction. Marangrang was to be feared by the villagers for his travesty.
His fame spread to neighbouring villages. Maila (Maloma 1972: 39) concludes that "Marangrang o tšhabja mo gohle" (Marangrang is feared everywhere). Phaahla (Ibid: 57) concurs and says "ga se motho wa lefase le" (He is not a person of this world).

Marangrang possessed supernatural and mysterious military powers. He was injected with war medicines by his father. Masabela (Ibid: 59) relates how Marangrang killed all the Rantho warriors and their king with a single throw of an assegai and that when he appeared all people trembled with fear.

He was also intelligent and eloquent. At his trial when still a young man he acquitted himself quite well.

As a military leader he conquered his enemies through tricky diplomacy. He conned the sick king Sekotoma to destroy his assegais and urged his warriors to do the same, thereby making themselves vulnerable to annihilation.

The dramatist portrayed Marangrang as an illustrious leader who commanded respect and fear in Bopedi.

Marangrang relates poorly with his peers, parents and superiors. He bullies his friends and arrogantly addresses king Masabela as "kgošana" (junior king) and Sebuša's war doctor as "ngakana" (petty doctor).

He does not accept advice from his mother Botsana. She warns him against witches, and advises him to consult diviners, to get married and stop killing other people's goats. Marangrang does not heed her warning or Mankge's admonition not to meddle with foreigners.

Marangrang is self-centred and has a strong lust for women. That is why he falls into Sekwati's trap with two beautiful
girls who remove a lock of hair and neutralise his powers.

It is ironic that although he has a lust for women he cannot keep them. He marries and divorces "mokgonyana 'a Phaahla manyala a hlala" (the son-in-law of Phaahla who marries and divorces).

Marangrang has misused his admirable qualities: intelligence, military skills and eloquence. At the end he regrets his stubbornness (Ibid: 77) "mola ke theetše mantšu a Mankge" (If only I had heeded Mankge’s words).

Maloma in Marangrang employs both expository and dramatic techniques in portraying character development in Marangrang. This expository technique is used by the dramatist from the beginning of the play until the end.

The dramatist makes use of other characters to depict the development of Marangrang’s character from birth to death.

At birth his uncle Tsiane discusses the circumstances of Marangrang’s birth with his mother Botsana. When Marangrang was born there were thunderstorms and the baby was huge "senatla sa Mokone" (Maloma: 1972: 24) and Tsiane (Ibid) after giving him the name Marangrang which means "mararankodi" (complexities) predicts that:

Ge a ka gola, a tloga a eba
monna bjalo ka nna, mo a fetilego
go tla lliwa sa mmajoo.
(If he can grow up and become a
man like myself wherever he passes
people will cry tears).

The dramatist here introduces Marangrang’s character in a variegated situation characterized by dramatic dialogue. A typical example is when Marangrang is an adolescent of
seventeen years and is involved in serious situations. Firstly he is attacked by his peer group and he defends himself successfully, though he hurts Ngwato, King Sebusa’s son in the process. He is brought to trial and he eloquently and intelligently acquits himself very well by proving that he fought in self-defence. He is, however, punished along with others for hurting his future king. King Sebusa refers to him as "serolorolo" (thug) (Ibid: 32).

The other characters also call him names: Ratau (Ibid 29) calls him "serolorolo seo sa madi a bothopša" (a thug of slave origin). Phaahla (Ibid: 57) also uses the word "serolorolo" to describe Marangrang. All characters use derogatory terms to describe Marangrang in his absence. They all fear him. Maila (Ibid: 39) confesses that he is afraid of him: "nna ke a mo tšhaba" (I personally fear him).

Marangrang’s character remains arrogant even in his mature stage as a warrior. He uses his intelligence to avoid poisoning by Ngaka and Kgosi Masabela.

Marangrang is self-centred, full of confidence and a feeling of invincibility. When Mankge warns him not to mix with foreigners, he retorts that "Mokane ga a hwe" (a Mokane does not die). He is immortal.

At this stage the dramatist uses the dramatic method to illustrate the turning point in Marangrang’s character. When Marangrang realises he is betrayed by the Bakgaga in colluding with Sekwati to destroy him he attacks them. His fellow warriors flee away but his pride prevents him from doing likewise. He puts on a brave front (Ibid: 76): "ke ba tsoma mola ba re dikile, ke ba gagare" (I want them in hordes so that I can destroy them). Eventually he concedes defeat:
Ke nyatsamolala, ke hwela molaleng mola ke theetsé mantšu a Mankge, e ka be ke sa le senatla, le lehono. (I was stubborn. Had I listened to Mankge I would still be a great warrior today).

Marangrang becomes aware of his error of judgement and he reproaches himself for shunning Mankge's advice.

The dramatic moment occurs during Marangrang's monologue (Ibid: 77):

kgosana ya Bakgaga ge e ka mpona ke sa phela, e ka kwa bose ya hlwa e ntomela senonyana. (Bakgaga's petty king will be happy to find me alive and mock me like a bird).

Even in his death bed Marangrang is spiteful. He refers to the Bakgaga chief as a petty chief. He, however, acknowledges his mistakes, and he commits suicide.

The dramatist has, however, not employed this dramatic method effectively throughout the play. The dramatist has succeeded in depicting Marangrang as a fearless brave warrior who lived at a time in history when martial qualities were appreciated. Thus even when he usurped the kingship powers none could object.

4.3 Matlebjane's character

The tragic hero in Tswala e a Ja is based on the historical figure Matlebjane who descended from the founder of the Batau, Ngwato a-Tswako the great.
He reigns on behalf of Matlebo’s son Mogaswa, surrogately. As a polygamist he has four wives: Moriane, Ntlaletše, MmaPhaahla and Mnamadupe; and their sons are Selwane, Masemola, Phaahla and Photo respectively. This is a traditional way of life of the Batau.

Matlebjane relates well with his sons and subjects. He is revered as "rrawešo" (our father). His favourite son Photo (Makgaleng 1964: 15) praises him:

"Hlabirwa 'a Phahlane" (Hlabirwa of Phahlane)
"Tau ya Tswako" (the lion from Tswako).

Ramogotowane affectionately calls him "ngwana-a-Ngwato 'a Mphela" (son of Ngwato of Mphela).

Matlebjane also reciprocates his subjects’ praises:

Ke wena Ramogotowane
Ke wena Mparnokgala
(It is you Ramogotowane
It is you Mparnokgala).

He showers praises on Photo: (Ibid: 8)

Ke Photo. Ke wena ngwanaka?
Mophoto a mogolo wa mokgomotšhweu
(It’s you Photo. Is it you my child?
The great Mophoto of a white cow).

He is a virtuous king and speaks and acts regally.

The fact that he has reigned until he is so aged shows that his subjects supported and loved him.

Mathule in the obituary of the old man likens him to
"lebone" (lamp) (Ibid: 138): "naledi e kgolo gare ga dinaletšana tše dingwe" (a great star amongst small ones).

Matlebjane’s death is symbolised and heralded by a falling star and a Batau man, Monna II (Ibid: 22) knows that a great king is dead.

The negative qualities of Matlebjane are few but are tragic; a virtuous king with an unfortunate frailty.

The main weakness of Matlebjane is his self-centred individualism. He regards himself as a ‘god of Mount Leolo’. He praises himself: (Ibid: 15)

‘Nong e kgolo Matlebjane-a-Ngwato-a-Nkwana; e tšwa Tswako.
(The big vulture Matlebjane of Ngwato of Nkwana from Tswako).

The councillors summon Matlebjane to court to be admonished for his violation of the custom regarding tributes. He should stop dispensing tributes from Mamadupe’s house as it is wrong and will lead to his death "lehu šeleo ge, Nkwana". (There is death for you, Nkwana).

Matlebjane’s pride and stubbornness make him scorn advice. He (Ibid: 15) murmurs "ba tlile go nthuta tša motse wo wa ka le go ntaela gore ke di phethe bjang". (They came to teach me how to run the affairs of my family). This happens to be a tragic action. It leads directly to his assassination by his sons. Intransigence comes before a fall. Family conflicts lead to the murder of a noble king.

The dramatist in Tswala e a Ja makes use of the dramatic method in his characterization.

The dialogue in Tswala e a Ja is dramatic and it enhances
characterization in the drama. And as Groenewald (1979: 37) says:

Daarenteen is ’n figuur ’n dramatiese karakter indien die dialoog self dramatiese spannings beliggaam.

The play (Makgaleng 1964: 1) opens with the statement "a re phakiseng go phetha taba yela re sa eletswe" (let us implement our decision now). This statement is an extra-perspective reference to the decision taken in the past and which must be implemented without delay, otherwise procrastination is the thief of time. That decision in the word of Selwane is (Ibid):

Bjale re re a re fofotseng setholwane se, se re segiša mantho a ka moka. Re tšea marumo a rena ra mo hlaba ka nako e tee. (Now let us kill the zombie, it makes us a laughing stock. We take our assegais and stab him simultaneously).

And it is Photo, Matlebjane’s favourite son, who must actually perform the dirty work. Masemola (Ibid) advises that "ke yena a swanetšego go fofotša tšofa yela" (It is he who must kill that old man).

This opening dialogue is dramatic and full of tension. The reader expects something ominous to happen and the irony is that the father must be killed by his sons, especially the favourite one.

The reader is able to form a picture of the situation and that of characters like Selwane, Masemola, Photo, Mogašwa and also Matlebjane. He is old and vulnerable. According to Serudu (1979: 13) the reader is allowed to "form his own
opinion about the characters by observing their own actions and behaviour". Shipley (1970: 41) points out that:

This sense of self-activity also draws the receptor more fully into the flow of the talk.

The character of Matlebjane, the tragic hero, is adequately portrayed in the first act without him uttering a single word. He is delineated as an old man who causes dissatisfaction amongst his wives and community by favouring his junior wife and son, Mmamadupe and Photo. His senior wife, Moriane (Ibid: 4) complains that:

O (Mmamadupe) šetše a re le morwagwe ke yena kgoši ya Batswako ... Le tla di bona (dibehe) di feta, di putla le mekgoba di eya kua mosego.
(She (Mmamadupe) already says that her son (Photo) is king of the Batswako ... you will see tributes pass, traversing passages leading to the back).

Moriane’s complaint is shared by all subjects including the tribal councillors, Potu and Makgaditsi.

The other characters talk about Matlebjane and describe him indirectly and because of the tension that develops, his character becomes dramatic.

The idea of introducing and portraying a character indirectly is well explained by Groenewald (1979: 164) as follows:

Die prosedure om 'n karakter eers indirek ter sprake te bring is dramaties omdat 'n sekere karakter
Makgaleng has used this technique successfully. The reader knows Matlebjane and the controversy surrounding him even before he can appear on the scene.

When Matlebjane appears on the scene for the first time in Act II, Scene I and utters his first words in praise of his son Photo the reader's perceptions and suspicions are confirmed. He (Ibid: 8) addresses Photo as follows:

Ke Photo. Ke wena ngwanaka?
Mophoto o mogolo ...
(It is Photo. Is it you my child? the great Mophoto ...)

These words are innocent and natural, showing paternal love to a son. They however confirm the allegations made by other characters especially Moriane.

Tension is mounting and the reader feels something ominous and inevitable is about to happen. The dramatist, however, keeps the reader in suspense.

The first stage of the unfolding of the inevitable takes place when Matlebjane is brought to the "kgotla" (court) for trial. Potu (Ibid: 12) introduces him to the councillors: "Mokgalabje ke yo Batswako" (Here is the old man Batswako). During the whole trial Matlebjane only speaks once. He (Ibid: 13) says:

Ke na le polelwana e se nayo.
Ke re bjalo ge ke tšofetše ke
itulela ka fa ga ngwana wa barwa ba Tladi, dilo tše di ntsatelela ka ntshe, molato ke eng moo?
(I have something to say but nothing to say. I say now that I am old and stay in the house of the child of the sons of Tladi and these things (tributes) follow me there, what is wrong with that?).

Matlebjane's words are contradictory. He however, confuses that he distributes tributes from the junior house of Tladi. He does not see anything wrong.

The dialogue is dramatic and it makes Matlebjane a dramatic character. Tension continues to mount. Mokgaditsi does not beat about the bush in his judgement. He (Ibid) says:

Ke phošo, bogoši ga bo abelanwe;
Lapa ga le je lengwe.
Dilo tša bogošing ke tša bogošing.
(It is wrong. Kingship cannot be shared. A family cannot live on another family. Things royal belong to royalty).

The first warning shot of impending disaster is fired by Potu (Ibid: 14):

Lehu šeleo ge, Nkwana. Gomme rena ga re rate go go hloka
(Death is approaching, Nkwana. But we do not want to miss you).

The dramatist makes Matlebjane speak as little as possible but still remain at the centre stage. He is economical with words. The only time Matlebjane speaks at length is in his soliloquy (Ibid: 15) when he rejects the advice of his councillors about impending death. There is dramatic
irony in the air.

The reader is aware that some characters, Matlebjane's wives and sons plan his murder. The councillors, Potu and Mokgaditsi are aware of the possible assassination and warn him but he rejects the warning. The reader realises that Matlebjane's death is inevitable. The assassination eventually takes place in Act IV, Scene 1. Matlebjane's sons all stab him. Some have blunted their spears so that they do not penetrate the skin. It is Photo's spear that penetrates and kills Matlebjane. Matlebjane (Ibid: 29) manages to ask: "Ke mang a mpolayago?" (Who kills me?). The answer: "ke Photo" devastates him. The knowledge that it is his favourite son Photo who actually kills him changes his attitude to him completely.

In comparing characterization in the two texts Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja the following could be said: in Marangrang the dramatist has relied more on expository than on the dramatic technique. He has not succeeded in creating dramatic dialogue to portray dramatic characters.

In Tswala e a Ja on the other hand the dramatist has used the dramatic method effectively. The dialogue is dramatic and develops dramatic characters. Matlebjane is economical in his speech but the few word he utters reveal his character.

One researcher agrees with Cassill (1975: 159) when he says:

Dialogue has always seemed to be one of the indispensable devices for shading and particularising a character.

A similar idea of the importance of dialogue in character portrayal is expressed by Albright (1931: 118) when he
Although in real life deeds are more important indications of a person's character, in the world of fiction speech is fully as important because it can be made to serve the author's purpose more subtly in revealing thought and feeling.

Makgaleng has succeeded in using dialogue to delineate the character of Matlebjane in dialogue more successfully than Maloma in portraying Marangrang.

Makgaleng makes Matlebjane use few words effectively whereas Maloma makes Marangrang use more words with less effect. A comparison could be made between Marangrang and Matlebjane's praise poetry.

Marangrang's praise poem (Maloma 1972: pp 29-30) fills a page and half, again on pages 71-73 his praise poem occupies three pages. Both these are irrelevant to the unfolding of the plot and dialogue. He is not aware that one word may portray character better than a whole passage, as Burnett et al (1975: 129) advise:

We must be able to catch the word patterns knowing as someone has said, that, "a chance word out of place can reveal character as clearly as proof of law that a man has committed murder". All dialogue should be of vital significance to someone.

Matlebjane on the other hand uses speech sparingly. His longest monologue (Makgaleng 1964: 15) does not fill a page. The reader can however follow the development of action and the character of Matlebjane with ease.
Matlebjane changes in personality and grows to a new awareness of life sadly at the end of his life. At the beginning of the play Matlebjane’s character is shadowy and indeterminate but at the end he is a living personality and as Albright (1931: 124) would say:

A whole person, real and true
not wholly good and not wholly
bad: complex, doubtful and
problematic, struggling, tempted,
even sinning, it may be - but on the
whole and in the end conquering,
a character interesting from start
to finish in the process of becoming.

Dialogue as a device of delineating character reveals the shades of character, such as that of Matlebjane. Traditional milieu is depicted by dialogue in Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja, as is the kind of society the characters live in. (Serudu 1979: 175).

Marangrang and Matlebjane are two kings who essentially bring about their own downfall. Neither heed the advice and warning about the tragic consequences of their actions. Their harmatia causes their demise. Both characters are legendary and epitomise the era in which they lived, characterized by tribal wars and conflicts. Marangrang was feared whereas Matlebjane was respected but both died tragically.
5.0 PLOT

5.1 Introduction

Plot has been defined in many ways by different writers and critics. A few definitions will subsequently be examined.

By plot is meant the logical sequence of events or actions with cause and effect. Tennyson (1966: 124) defines plot in the following terms:

"Plot is the arrangement made by the playwright of the events of the story of a play, an arrangement designed to show not only sequence but also cause and effect. Plot in its entirety is the pattern of interlocking events that propels a story forward."

Jafta (1978: 72) also says that:

"Plot is a series of carefully devised and interrelated actions that progress through a struggle of opposing forces (conflict) to a climax and denouement."

The structure of a tragic plot is special. Actions must result in conflict and this conflict should be resolved by the protagonist. The effect of the protagonist’s suffering on the reader or audience is what Aristotle calls "Katharsis" - the purging of emotions of pity and fear.

The protagonists Marangrang and Matlebjane in the two tragic texts Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja initiate actions which cause conflicts and result in suffering and death.
Conflict between characters results in further action and reaction. Action refers to what a character does to resolve a crisis or problem. It is axiomatic that to every action there is an opposing and equal reaction. Action is that which is done in drama. A dramatic action may exist between characters and within a character. Ould (1948: 41) defines dramatic action as:

... the movement from one mental or emotional state to another
No play, however quiet, however lyrical, however spectacular, can exist without.

Even the soliloquy of Matlebjane, meditating on his trial is dramatic. He wrestles with the crisis mentally and is in the process emotionally disturbed. Dramatic action is an action which brings about change for the drama to progress to its logical conclusion. The term action then encompasses whatever takes place in the drama. Conradie (1968: 7) concurs with this assertion when he says:

Die begrip handeling kan baie wyd opgeneem word om eintlik alles in te sluit wat die spanning verhoog en die gang van die intrigue bevorder.

Conradie is of the opinion that anything that increases tension and intrigue can be regarded as action, but action may not necessarily resolve a crisis.

Action in drama usually results from two opposing forces of equal strength. Two characters of unequal strength can not engage each other in physical combat. The protagonist and antagonist should have equivalent potentialities to generate dramatic action and reaction. Tension then
develops and this creates interest and suspense in the reader.

Action in drama should be progressive i.e. one action must lead to or result from another action from the beginning to the end.

Action that takes place at the beginning of the play and results in conflict is called exposition. The protagonist and antagonist are identified and the cause of the conflict comes to the fore.

Tension between the protagonist and the antagonist rises. This results in what is called a motoric moment.

Altenbernd L. and Lewis L. (1966: 23) explain the motoric moment as:

... that part of the exposition which contains a challenge, threat or danger to the condition of the protagonist as first glimpsed.

Tension amongst characters continues to rise and intensify resulting in what is termed complication. The conflict becomes more fierce, so that the tension progressively rises.

A stage is reached where eruption is inevitable. This phase is what Jafta (1978: 79) calls:

A stage where actions and counteractions of contending parties are so heightened that they clash with such a bang that something cracks, after this there is a re-alignment of forces and the parties are so strained that they can no longer control themselves.
After the breaking point a decline or anti-climax sets in. The tension decreases and finally the protagonist's fortunes are reversed and the problem is resolved.

These phases are not as clearly demarcated as implied in this discussion. It is not always possible to differentiate clearly the various phases and pin-point clearly where one phase stops and where the other starts. The phases usually merge into one another.

The division of drama into phases or stages as outlined above is criticized by Groenewald who regards it as a fruitless activity because he (1979: 32) argues that:

Sulke besprekings in die verlede geneig was om oppervlakkig en bloot deskriptief te wees. Boonop kan so 'n bespreking dramas in 'n vooraf opgestelde skema dwing.

The writer concurs that literary appreciation which slavishly applies stereotyped format becomes shallow.

Groenewald also offers comprehensive structural principles schematically as follows:

| Dialoginhoude | Dialogaksies en reaksies |
| Dialogaksies en reaksie | Dialogooginteraksies |
| Dialogooginteraksies | Dialogoogsituasie |
| Dialogoogsituasie en dade | Handelingsgeheel |
| Handelingsgehele | Toneel |
| Tonele | Bedryf |
| Bedrywe | Volledige gebeure van drama |
This diagrammatic representation of what Groenewald calls "struktuurprinsipe" is not intended to substitute dramatic phases or stages as discussed.

Discussion in this study will not cover all phases mentioned above namely: exposition, motoric moment, complication, climax and denouement.

The following stages of action will be discussed: tragic cause exposition, climax and tragic action.

5.2 Tragic cause

By tragic cause is meant that which precipitates a conflict; and conflict is the soul of tragedy. The tragic hero generates an action which in turn generates other actions and reactions. These actions lead to a conflict within the tragic hero himself or with other characters or society.

In Mahlodi by Mminele, Mahlodi’s husband dies and according to custom her husband’s younger brother is obliged to continue the marriage. Mahlodi, however, refuses and a conflict develops within her and between Mahlodi and her in-laws.

5.2.1 Tragic cause in Marangrang

The tragic cause in Marangrang starts when Marangrang’s father Lethoke fortifies him with strong medicines to make him physically strong, fierce and frightening.

Lethoke (Maloma 1972: 34) proudly declares that:

Ke šetše ke mo hlabetše ka bohloko
bja mokopa, e bile ke mo lešitše sebete
sa tau le sa kgabonyana di sa dutla
madi. Ba tla mo rera eupša ge ba mmona ba itiwa ke letswalo ba ka se mo thome. (I have already vaccinated him with the poison of a mamba. He has also eaten a lion’s and an ape’s liver while still dripping blood. They will plot against him but will be scared to touch him).

Indeed Marangrang became an unbeatable foe (sera) to his peers, tribesmen and neighbouring tribes. The medicine has made him aggressive and he beats up his peers and steals people’s goats.

5.2.2 Tragic cause in Tswala e a Ja

The tragic hero, Matlebjane, lived peacefully with his three wives: Moriane, Ntlaletše and MmaPhaahla and surrogately with his brother’s wife, Mogašwa’s mother.

Conflict started after his marriage to Mmamadupe. This is a retrospective reconstruction of the plot.

When the play starts (exposition) Matlebjane’s sons Selwane, Masemola, Phaahla and Mogaswa are planning to kill their father (tsofa) and implicate Matlebjane’s favourite son Photo.

Matlebjane’s wives are also planning his murder because he is receiving and dispensing royal gifts in Mmamadupe’s house, a violation of the Batau’s custom.

In Moriane’s words (Makgaleng 1964: 4):

Ga le ka be le swana le nna, re be re ka no ra bana ba tloša mokgalabje yola. (If you were like me, we would say the children should remove the old man).
5.3 Exposition

In drama it is usual for the dramatist to choose the starting point, the problem of exposition. It is a problem for the dramatist to introduce the main characters, the cause of the conflict amongst them, the original situation that gave rise to the conflict, and the time and place where the action takes place.

In a classical five act play exposition usually appears in the first act where the source of the conflict occurs.

Altenbernd (1966: 15) has this to say about the problem of exposition:

The playwright in developing exposition in forward-moving situation, extends knowledge of the preliminary situation backward, and rounds out characters gradually by material that extends their pasts, reveals their secrets or multiplies examples of their reactions.

There are two tendencies in the presentation of exposition: the dramatist may present a series of episodes that leads to conflict or he may start his play with the conflict itself.

This corresponds to what Levitt as quoted by Van der Poll, (1989: 30) calls early or late point of attack respectively.

5.3.1 Exposition in Marangrang

The dramatist in Marangrang presents episodic events in the history of Marangrang that result in Marangrang being at loggerheads with other characters. Marangrang's father,
Lethoke, and Tsiane, Marangrang’s uncle, the sole survivors of the onslaught on their village are invited to live at King Sebusa’s village. Lethoke and Bosana give birth to Marangrang who grows to become a powerful leader.

Marangrang’s clash with society occurs in Act 1 when he is summoned to appear at “kgorong” (court) on a charge of assaulting his peers including King Sebusa’s son Ngwato, in the veld while looking after the goats.

If conflict is the starting point of drama, then its exposition should not be delayed to Act II. The dramatist is trying to dramatize the whole life story of Marangrang: the survival of Lethoke and Tsiane, the destruction of their village, their invitation to stay at Sebusa’s village, the birth of Marangrang, growing up to the age of seventeen, and his eventual conflict with the community. The pattern becomes too diffuse. Van der Poll (1989: 130) criticizes this approach as follows:

The structural pattern of play with an early point of attack is characterized by inclusiveness, the playwright encompassing practically the entire story by dramatization on stage. He panoramically surveys life, his play starting early in life. This type of play usually abandons the unities and since most of the action is staged, there is very little need for exposition.

The introduction of Marangrang at birth as “senatla sa Mokone” (a brave Mokone) and the circumstances surrounding his birth, thunderstorms, prepare the reader for the regal role he is going to play in future. The dramatist could have started the play with the trial of Marangrang.
5.3.2 Exposition in Tswala e a Ja

Exposition in Tswala e a Ja starts with the murder plan of Matlebjane by his sons. Matlebjane's life history is not outlined. He is presented as an old regent who must be killed because according to his sons he is too old and has become a shame to the Batau people.

Selwane (Makgaleng 1964: 1) complains:

O tšofetše ga a sa kgona le go ikhunetša. O re segiša batho ba re baNkwana ba dirile rrabo setholwane ... Bjale re re a re fofotseng Setholwane se, se re segisa mantho a ka moka. Re tšea marumo a rena ra mo hlaba ka nako e tee. (He is too old and cannot even dress up properly. He makes us a laughing stock among people. They say the people of Nkwana have turned their father into a zombie. Let us then kill this zombie which makes all people laugh at us. We take our spears and stab him simultaneously).

Matlebjane's wives, Moriane, Ntlalethus and Mmaphaahla also complain about Matlebjane's favouritism to his junior wife Mmamadupe. He distributes tributes from her house. This is a serious contravention of Batau custom as it bestows kingship status on Mmamadupe's house.

Exposition in Tswala e a Ja starts with the conflict in the play, the structural pattern of the play is concentrated. The dramatic action is confined to a short while before the climax, Matlebjane's rejection of warning by councillors,
Potu and Mokgaditsi.

Expositions in *Marangrang* and *Tswala e a Ja* differ. In *Marangrang* Maloma applies the early point of attack whereas Makgaleng uses the late point of attack which is more effective. Both dramatists succeed in portraying the protagonists as undisputable leaders.

5.4 Climax

At a climax matters have reached breaking point and there must be an outburst.

Hatlen (1975: 14) defines climax as:

> the culmination of a course of action, the maximum disturbance of the equilibrium, the moment of the most intense strain, the crisis of maximum emotion and tension.

Climax is the strongest point of emotional tension. The course of action has reached a stage where there can be no turning back.

A similar view is expressed by Tennyson (1966: 22) in the following words:

> Climax represents the high point of the complication in the action when the various causes, forces and counter-forces have met and determined the direction in which the remainder of the action must flow.

Conflict between the protagonist and antagonist has reached a stage where there must be a fierce clash.
5.4. Climax in Marangrang

Marangrang clashes with several characters and is always victorious. He beats his fellow herdboys, he defeats Masabela, Rantho and Sekotomo. He is feared by all tribes: the Bapedi of Sekwati, the Bakgaga of Mphahlele, and the Batau of Phaahla. Marangrang’s military superiority is established. He has declared himself king and military leader. (Maloma 1972: 51):

"Go tloga lehono thwadi ya dira tša Bakone ke nna"
(From today the leader of Bakone army is myself).

Suspense has been created. The reader is given an impression of Marangrang’s invincibility.

The other tribes plan his downfall. Sekwati and Naswana send Marangrang poisoned liver and two beautiful girls. They capitalise on his craving for liver as he once said (Maloma: 1972: 62):

Botša Sekwati ke tsoma sebete.
(Tell Sekwati I want liver).

Marangrang relaxes amongst Sekwati’s messengers. The climax is reached when he rejects Mankge’s warning not to mix with foreigners.

Marangrang (Maloma 1972: 70-71) instructs girls:

Mpatameleng ke le bone gabotse.
Bommamabejane a ba lebane le
nna ka mahlong ke kgone go le botša
g e ba ntoketše. Le tsebeng gore
kgoshi ga e nyake digahla.
(Ba dira ka mo ba laelwago).
Ditshehlanà tša Bakgatla: Mo ga ka "o a itse" ga e bolelwe.
Afa ga se tše di tlogo bolaya rena bagale, bomorwa' Lethoke la Modiokwane wa Tšate?
(O phamola sebete seatleng sa kgarebe, o a kwametsa).

(Come nearer, so that I can see you properly. Let the young ladies come face to face with me so that I can tell you whether or not they are fit for me. You must know that a king does not want emaciated lasses. (They do as instructed). You light-complexioned Bakgatla girls! At my place don't use "you know". Are they not the ones the will kill us the sons of Lethoke of Modiokwane of Tšate? (He snatches the liver and swallows it.)

Mankge (Ibid: 71) vainly tries to dissuade him:

Ga go bjalo morena, eupša ke tsotišwa ke ge o itahletše gare ga manaba. O reng o lahla legare phokeng mola re botile wena? Batho ba magoro a šele ga ba swanelwa ke go farafara motho ka mokgwa wo.
(It should not be like that my lord, I am uncomfortable when you relax amongst enemies. Why throw caution to the winds? We rely on you. People from different clans should not surround a person
like that).

The reader is fearful. Disaster is about to befall the tragic hero. Tension is at its highest point.

Marangrang does not behave like a leader and an outstanding warrior. His carefree attitude bodes ill for him.

5.4.2 Climax in Tswala e a Ja

Climax in Tswala e a Ja is reached when Matlebjane rejects the advice of his councillors to stop dispensing tributes from Mmamadupe's house. Up to this point Matlebjane defied admonitions from his councillors. This is confirmed by Mathule who (Makgaleng 1964: 13) remarks:

Ke holofela e se mathomo re kgobokanela taba e bjalo mo lehono. Taba ye e re kweša boholoko; re bile re bona gore morago e tliolo hlola madi.
(I presume it is not the first time today that we meet to discuss such an issue. This issue hurts us. We foresee it is going to cause bloodshed).

The issue referred to here is "sebego le lehlakore di sa le ka ga boPhoto" (Liquor and ribs which are at Photo's place).

The dramatist uses what Groenewald (1979: 21) calls "extraspektiewe inhoude" which he explains as:

illusie dat sekere gebeurtenisse in die drama afgespeel het of nog afspeel hoewel daardie gebeurtenisse nie deur die karakter opgevoer is/word nie...
Mathule creates the illusion that several meetings have been held in the past to advise Matlebjane to honour the Batau custom on gifts. Apparently Matlebjane does not want to mend his ways and turn over a new leaf. His attitude confuses the councillors. Potu (Makgaleng 1964: 13) exclaims:

"mo re gakana le ditabe tša motse wo".
(We are confused by this tribe’s issues).

The stage of maximum disturbance of the equilibrium has been reached. Matlebjane’s stubborn willpower resists social pressure. The community is trying to apply counter-force to Matlebjane’s resistance to change.

The dramatist has succeeded in portraying a typical traditional king, who cannot be prevailed upon. The dramatist therefore protests against social institutions which allow a king to rule indefinitely, and also criticizes the aristocracy. Regents and rulers do not take advice from their subjects.

5.5 Tragic Action

A tragic action is an unfortunate action which the protagonist takes. It precipitates his downfall. It is the last straw that breaks the camel’s back. The protagonist is confident that he is invincible only to take a wrong step that leads to his destruction.

5.5.1 Tragic action in Marangrang

The tragic action in Marangrang is the acceptance of gifts, poisoned liver and two beautiful girls from king Sekwati.

Marangrang cannot resist the temptation of two young beautiful girls and some liver even when he is suspicious
Ditshehlanas tša Bakgatla .... afa ga se tše di tlogo bolaya rena bagale, bomorwa' Lethoke la Modiokwane wa Tšate?
(The Bakgatla belles: Are they not the ones that will kill us the sons of Lethoke of Modiokwane of Tsate?).

Marangrang snatches the liver and swallows it. This is a tragic act. Not only is he poisoned but his power will be weakened. It is also a dramatic irony. His death is inevitable. The reader knows it and feels pity for him.

This tragic action is also the beginning of Marangrang's peripeteia, the reversal of his fortune. He is bewitched, realises his mistakes but cannot rectify them. He (Maloma 1972: 76) can only express his regret:

Ke nyatsamolala, ke hwela molaleng; mola ke thee te mantšu a Mankge e ka be ke sa le senatlala le lehono.
(I rejected advice and now I am faced with death. Had I listened to Mankge I could still be a warrior today).

5.5.2 Tragic Action in Tswala e a Ja

Tragic action in Tswala e a Ja is fused with tragic conflict. Matlebjane cannot perceive the inherent danger in his violation of norms and values of the Batau.

Matlebjane's self-centredness blinds him to the looming danger. He rejects the councillors' interference in his
domestic affairs. In his own words (Makgaleng 1964: 15):

Selo se go se tsebe nna ke kotse.
(This thing of not knowing me is dangerous).

He feels because they are still young (mafotwana) they cannot advise him. He feels had he known they would be a nuisance to him, he would have killed them whilst they were still young.

Matlebjane has estranged himself from his advisors, wives and sons. He is vulnerable. He is too old and without protectors. Death is therefore inevitable.

Matlebjane’s peripeteia therefore occurs in Act IV Scene I when his sons kill him. He is killed by his favourite son’s spear. The other sons had blunted their assegais.

Matlebjane curses Photo: (Makgaleng 1964: 29)

Ke wena o mpolayago? Ke hwile ge. Gomme o tsebe, go tloga lehono o tla hlaolwa ke bana beno. O tla hloka motse, o tla re ka re o kgobokanya batho ba gago ba go tšitlanela.
(Is it you who kills me? I am dying now but know that from today onwards you will be discriminated against by your brothers. You will not have a clan. You will try to gather subjects but they will simply scatter).

He then dies - a bitter man. This scene contrasts sharply
with Act II Scene I when he addressed Photo as 'my son' (ngwanaka).

Plot in the two tragic texts is treated differently. In Tswana e a Ja the otherwise respected old man makes one fatal mistake which destroys him. In Marangrang a powerful young man overcomes several obstacles but also makes an unpardonable mistake of not heeding advice and pays dearly for it.
CHAPTER 6

6.0 DIALOGUE

6.1 Introduction

Dialogue like other elements of drama such as characterization and plot, has been defined by several critics. These definitions emphasize different functions of dialogue. Some of these definitions will be considered and their common elements synthesized. It should also be remembered that all elements of drama are intertwined and one element cannot be defined in isolation without referring to the others.

Dialogue, according to Pretorius and Swart (1982: 7) is "a conversation between two or more characters in a story". A similar definition is made by Bopape (1991: 67) when he says dramatic dialogue is "a serious conversation between two or more persons". This conversation may be in the form of prose as used by Maloma (1972) and Makgaleng (1964) or in verse form as used by Matlala (1980) and Makgamatha (1987).

The relationships of dialogue with other elements is emphasized by Grobler et al (1986: 384) when they claim:

Poledišano e bontšha karabikišano
(phetolano) ka mantšu magareng ga baanegwa,
mantšu a o a swanetšego go utolla phapano,
a hlole (bope) phego, a gapeletše tiro
go ya sehlweng se se nago phengwa, mantšu
a a swanetšego go fediša phapano gomme a
bušetše boitekanelo bjo bo itšego Mafelelong
mantšu a swanetše go iša maikutlong a
a mongwe, a kgotsofatše maemong le
menaganong ya babogedi goba babadi.
(A conversation is an exchange of words between characters, words which should reveal conflict, create suspense, force action to reach a climax, resolve conflict and re-establish order and finally words should re-establish the mental and emotional stability of the audience or the reader).

Dialogue therefore interweaves all other elements of drama, such as theme, character, plot and conflict.

The interdependence of all elements is emphasized by Bently (1965: 12) when he states that:

... dialogue often performs four or five functions at once. It sheds light on the character speaking, on the character spoken about; furthers the plot, it functions ironically in conveying to the audience a meaning different from that conveyed to the characters.

Dialogue therefore reveals character. It should be functional and contribute towards the development of the plot or story. Superfluous dialogue which diverts the reader's attention from the theme and disrupts the unity of the story should be avoided as it is undramatic. Only dialogue which suits action, milieu or locality and the audience or reader should be used.

Dawson (1984: 22) agrees with Bently on the functions of dialogue when he asserts that:

... (Dramatic) language gives the audience or the reader the sense of the thought being formed by the character as he speaks under the pressure of the
situation in which he finds himself.

Dialogue assists the reader in following the thought processes, feelings and conflicts of the character. Dialogue should be interesting, simple and economic to capture the spirit of the life of characters.

The dramatist may use dialogue in different ways, some of which are summarised by Conradie (1968: 56) as follows:

... deur middel van gesprekke tussen die karakters moet hy (die dramaturg) die vernaamste besonderhede aan die begin van die drama meedeel; deur middel van gesprekke moet hy die verhaal verder voer en die gevoelens van die karakters openbaar; deur middel van gesprekke moet hy ons ook op die hoogte bring van wat agter die skerms plaasgevind het. Die woord is primêr in die drama en die sukses van 'n drama is grootendeels afhanklik van die kwaliteit van die dialoog.

Dialogue then reveals expository information to the audience, it helps with character portrayal and assists the natural progression of action from conflict situation to the denouement of the problem.

The progression of plot involves movement, development and changes in the feelings and relations of persons.

The dramatist should therefore take great pains when constructing a dialogue. He should compress it and make it do several things at once because drama is a deviation from a norm or normal use of language.

The dramatist therefore should not try to reproduce
conversation verbatim as in real life as it is undramatic and incoherent. This point is stressed by Groenewald (1979: 30) when he warns that the dramatist cannot copy conversation from reality unaltered.

The dramatist should select only those aspects of conversation which will give a suggestion and illusion of reality.

Dramatic dialogue is an imitation of real life conversation. It, however, differs from reality in that it is an illusion about reality. Real life conversation is incoherent and vascillates from one topic to another. Dramatic dialogue concentrates on one topic and it precipitates an action or reaction. In constructing a dramatic dialogue a dramatist must be scrupulous and only select those aspects of real conversation that will make dialogue dramatic and coherent.

Groenewald (1979: 17) explains how dramatic dialogue is constructed as follows:

Die dialoog van 'n drama is dan soos volg gestruktuur. 'n Karakter lewer een of meer dialooginhoud en so 'n optrede is 'n dialoogaksie. Die aangesproke karakter reageer deur een of meer inhoud, oftewel 'n dialoogreaksie, te lewer. So onstaan dialooginteraksies wat op hulle beurt 'n dialoogsituasie daarstel waarin daar oor 'n onderwerpsegment gepraat word of waarin daar in 'n sekere trant byvoorbeeld botsend, gepraat word.
Dialoogsituasies stel 'n sogenaamde handelingsgeheel daar terwyl 'n dialoogsituasie en handelingsgeheel soms in een kan saamval.

If dramatic dialogue is a conversation between two characters which results in action and reaction and produces conflict, then performances and traditional rituals on birth, death, initiation and work had no dialogue but interactions.

Some Northern Sotho dramatists did not take this into account when constructing dramatic texts, and as a result their plays have long dialogues which do not generate conflict.

Dramatists who are guilty of lengthy dialogue are for example: Maredi, (1966); Mminele, (1968) and Bopape (1978).

In Maredi's *Moswang wa Matuba* speeches of the following characters take half a page:

Matlakale (Maredi 1966: 20)
Mashabelwane (Ibid: 52)
Mokgonane (Ibid: 13)


In Mminele (1968) some character's speeches fill two pages. (See pages 57-59 and 132-133.)

It should be remembered that there is nothing wrong if characters make long speeches as long as they do not affect
the dramaticity of the dialogue, but if characters make long speeches unnecessarily then the dialogue becomes undramatic.

Dramatic dialogue in a nutshell therefore, is a conversation between two characters. It enhances characterization and the unfolding of plot. It should be simple, economical, short and create an illusion of reality.

Discussion of dialogue in this study will show how it delineates the characters of the heroes Marangrang and Matlebjane in Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja respectively. It will be shown how dialogue reveals the protagonist’s shortcomings and his downfall. An attempt will also be made to show how dialogue makes realistic or unreal characters and how it reveals the initial situation.

It should be remembered that a round character is dynamic and changes with altering conditions or brings about changes in his milieu. Altenbernd and Lewis (1966) have the following to say on this point:

At the heart of each action, there is usually a developing character. It is he who changes in personality or grows to a new awareness of life.

Another aspect of dramatic discourse, monologue, which is allied to dialogue has been used by both dramatists in Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja. A monologue is a form of dialogue where a character addresses the audience or himself.

Clemen (1972: 16) explains a monologue or soliloquy in the following terms:
(a) soliloquy is usually characterized by the lack of the real partner on the stage. In bringing or using a soliloquy, the author must find imagined partners for his soliloquising character.

In most Greek and Roman tragedies a substitute for this lack is the use of apostrophe. The apostrophe could be addressed as the speaker himself, to his heart, his thoughts, his eyes and other physical attributes or to an absent person or to heaven, or to some personification.

A monologue therefore is closely related to dialogue and serves the same purposes of delineating character and bringing out the meaning of the drama. And to this end Ellis-Fermor (1948: 105) has this to say:

By its rapid and profound revelation of thought and passion (it) serves the very ends of drama. It reveals what could not otherwise divine the depths of the speaker’s mind, compressing into some twenty lines of vivid illumination what might else have taken the better part of an act to convey.

The function of a monologue, like dialogue is to link all elements of the play: theme, characterization and the unfolding or movement of the play. It must be loaded with dramatic qualities.

The loneliness and remorse of Marangrang (Maloma 1972: 76) are vividly expressed in the following monologue:

Ke nyatsamolala, ke hwela molaleng,
mola ke theetše mantšu a Mankge
e ka be ke sa le senatla le lehono.
Bašemane ba feditše banna ba gešo,
go šetše nna morw'a Lethoke la Modiokwane.
(I rejected advice. Had I listened to
Mankge’s words, I could still be a mighty
man today.
Boys (initiates) have annihilated my fellow
warriors leaving me alone, son of Lethoke of
Modiokwane).

The dramatist has used monologue effectively to portray the
character of Marangrang in his last days. His fortune has
been reversed. The reader panoramically pictures a once
mighty Goliath prostrate and helpless on the ground. The
mighty have fallen.

Equally effective is the use of monologue in Tswala e a Ja.
After Matlebjane has been tried at "kgotla" (court) and
found guilty of transgressing traditional custom on
tributes he finds himself alone and isolated and meditates,
(Makgaleng 1964: 15) addressing the absent councillors as
follows:

Selo se go se tsebe nna ke kotse, eh
ba hlwa ba hloma "phapharaphara".
Ba re morw’a Ngwato ke lešaedi
ntsintsi malapaneng a bona ba ke ba
mpone? ... 
Ba tla ntshela ke robotše mohla ba tlile
go nthuta tša motse wo wa ka le go ntaela
gore ke di phethe bjang.
(Not knowing me is a dangerous thing.
They run helter-skelter accusing the son
of Ngwato of incompetence.
In fact do they ever see me in their homes?
They will jump over me whilst asleep (dead)
before they can teach me how to run the affairs of this village).

Matlebjane is unrepentant and in a mean mood. He feels they cannot teach him to manage the affairs of his tribe. They will do that after his death.

Both the meaning and characters of Marangrang and Matlebjane have been well portrayed in the monologues.

6.2 Dialogue in Marangrang

Dialogue in Marangrang, as already stated, is in prose form. It is slow, static and not very dramatic. The whole of Act I informs the reader about the circumstances that necessitated Lethoke and Tšiane to seek refuge in Sebua’s village. They are destitute as their village has been destroyed. They are now cannibals. They are invited to reside in Sebusa’s kingdom because of their military potential. They are strong, well built and have a knowledge of herbs. Lethoke (Maloma 1972: 20) claims:

Mo re tšwago, re be re le dingaka tša marumo. Ge e le dihlare tša marumo tšona ke tšhabo re a bapatsa, re palelwa ke tša moratišo le mekomane fela.
(Where we come from we were war medicine men. We possess a lot of military medicine. We do not have love potions and healing herbs).

The dramatist gives this background to prepare the reader for the birth of Marangrang and his stature. Indeed Marangrang has the potential of greatness; after his trial Madikgake (Maloma 1972: 30) remarks that:

Morena, leboga dimpho tša badimo.
Ga o bone gore ka ngwana yo re tla phološwa.
(Sir, be appreciative of the gifts of the gods. You see, through this child we shall be liberated).

This sentiment is also expressed by Mahlodi (Ibid: 42):

Ga o bone gore ge Marangrang a ka phela Bakone ba tla buša lefase ka moka. Ke sera.
(Don’t you see that if Marangrang can live the Bakone will rule all this country. He is a brute).

Marangrang’s arrogance and provocativeness are displayed in his conversation with kgosi Masabela.

**Marangrang:** Kgošana ya motse o ke mang?
**Mašabela:** Ke kgoši ya motse wo, fela ge a le kgošana ga e gona mo.
**Marangrang:** Le bjale ke sa boeletša, ke re kgošana.
(Marangrang: Who is the minor chief of this village?
**Mašabela:** I am the chief of this village, there is no minor chief here.
**Marangrang:** I will repeat I say minor chief).

Marangrang used the same provocative demeaning language when he referred to Bakgaga’s king (kgošana ya Bakgaga). He has no respect for senior elderly people.

The dramatist in *Marangrang* makes the characters deliver
long speeches which affect the dramaticity of the dialogue. When Mankge (Maloma 1972: 71) advises Marangrang to be cautious with enemies, Sekwati's messengers, Marangrang plunges into three pages of poetry praising himself, (Ibid: 71-73) trying to prove that he is invincible. The flow of the conversation is disrupted. The use of praise poetry in the text if superfluous.

Mankge (Ibid: 73), however, warns him:

O tsebe gore ga o kota.  
E šitago le yona e lewa ke  
ke mohlwa e bole.  
(Know that you are not wood.  
Even wood itself is consumed by ants  
and it rots).

Mankge tries to bring Marangrang to his senses but Marangrang retorts angrily: "homola lefšega tena" (keep quiet you coward). Out of respect or fear of Marangrang, Mankge (Ibid: 73) cows down and apologises:

... ntswarele. Ka ga bolefšega gona,  
ga go llwe.  
(Forgive me. In the home of a coward  
no one weeps).

The dramatist could have created and utilised more such conflict or crisis situations because more conflict situations in dialogue improve its dramaticity. Groenewald (1979: 21) explains the importance of conflict this way:

Veelheid van botsing dra ook by  
tot die waarde van 'n werk;  
veelheid van botsing moet egter  
gesien word as 'n voorwaarde vir 'n  
drama terwyl aard en kwaliteit van
Conflict is central to drama but Maloma makes very little use of it. Dramatic conflict situations occur only at the beginning of the play in the fight between the boys and at the end, in Marangrang's confrontation with Bakgaga's initiates. In the other encounters with his enemies, Rantho, Masabela and Sekotomo, the enemies capitulate before the fight.

There are several contents in the play that inhibit the dramaticity of the dialogue. Groenewald (Ibid: 25) explains such inhibitive contents as follows:

Sulke (dialogoog) kenmerke verwys na inhoude wat soms nie alleen sonder enige dramatiese kenmerk is nie maar wat ook die dramatisiteit wat deur ander inhoude daargestel is, in meerdere of mindere mate weer afbreek. Sulke inhoude sal ondramatiese inhoude genoem word.

The dramatist makes use of drinking and eating not so much to create an illusion of reality but for the sake of domesticity. When Madikgake gets to the great house, Sebuša's greatplace, to report the presence of Tšiane and Lethoke, in the forest, he wastes precious time drinking beer. The dramatist makes use of such household and conventional contents to try to reproduce a real life situation. By putting more emphasis on them he disturbs the dramaticity of the dialogue. The dramatist exhibits his knowledge of Kone customs and traditions. He should have selected a few lines just to give an inkling of what transpired.

6.3 Dialogue in Tswala_e_a_Ja
Dialogue in *Tswala e a Ja* is dramatic. The first scene of the first act introduces the conflict immediately. The exposition reveals the motives of the characters, Selwane, Mogašwa, Phaahla and Masemola. They have assembled together to finalise and implement the plan of assassinating their father, Matlebjane. The plan has been hatched in the past. It is what Groenewald (1979: 21) calls "ekstraspektiewe inhoud" and he explains it as follows:

Ekstraspektiewe inhoude skep die illusie dat sekere gebeurtenisse in die drama afgespeel het of nog afspeel hoewel daardie gebeurtenisse nie deur die karakter opgevoer is/word nie.

The dramatist does not make characters hatch the plan in the present but they only make reference to it. Selwane (Makgaleng: 1964: 1) intimates:

*Bjale ka ge re boletše maloba le maabane, a re phakišeng go phetha taba yela re sa eletšwe.*

*Ge re fela re e fega mo, re e fega mola,*

*e tla kwala ra šitwa go araba.*

(As we have discussed the issue yesterday and the day before, let us hasten and implement the plan while we still remember. If we procrastinate it will be exposed and we will be unable to account).

The impression created here is that the decision was taken in previous scenes. This is just an illusion. This technique condenses the action and accelerates the plot. It makes the play complete.
The implementation of the pre-conceived murder plan is the expositional content which refers to the content at the stage of being enacted.

Selwane (Makgaleng 1964: 1) discusses the application of the plan and suggests a method of execution, i.e.

re tšea marumo a rena ra mo hlaba ka nako e tee.
(We take our assegais and stab him simultaneously).

He recommends the law of joint responsibility.

By starting the play with a problem it creates immediate interest and anticipation. The reader questions whether the children will actually kill their parent. Tension then starts to develop.

This idea of killing the old man is also mooted by Matlebjane's wife Moriane (Ibid: 4):

re be re ka no ra bana ba tloša mokgalabje yola.
(We could just tell the children to remove that old man).

The reason offered by Matlebjane's sons for killing him differs substantially from those advanced by his wives. Selwane's (Ibid: 2) reasons are:

O tšofetše ga a sa kgona le go ikhunela ...
O re segiša batho.
(He is too old and cannot even dress up properly. He makes people laugh at us).
The opinion of the wives on the other hand, in the words of Moriane (Ibid: 4) is as follows:

Ge le ka be le swana le nna, re be re ka no ra bana ba tloša mokgalabje yola: ba mo tloše mosetsana yola a nyapoge re ke re bone ge Photo a ka buša.
Bona, mokgalabje o swaretše ngwana wa mogolowagwe, eupša le rena basadi ba gagwe ba bagolo ga re hwetše selo.
(If you were like me we would instruct our children to remove the old man. They should remove him to spite the girl (Mmamadupe) and we shall see whether Photo will rule.
Look, the old man reigns on behalf of his brother's son (Mogasıwa) but even we his senior wives do not receive anything).

The sons complain about his age and inability to look after himself, whereas Matlebjane's wives wish to spite his favourite wife as they do not share tributes. There is therefore conspicuous animosity between Matlebjane and his sons and wives. The irony, however, is that Matlebjane is not aware of anything.

Conflict does not centre around the sons and wives only, the councillors are also involved. The councillors are worried by the state of affairs of their village. Potu (Ibid: 13) outlines the problem:

Mo re gakana le ditaba tša motse wo.
Re gakana le magorogelo le majelo a dibego tša Babinatau. Re bona ka matšatši di gorogela lapeng le lenyane di be di jelwe gona.
(We are baffled by the reception and
dispensing of tributes of Babinatau. We usually see them being received in the junior house and being distributed there).

The breach of custom on tributes by Matlebjane is the main bone of contention. There is an irony of action between sons, wives and councillors on the one hand and Matlebjane on the other hand. The councillors are unhappy about the flouting of custom by Matlebjane as Mokgaditsi (Ibid: 13) asserts "ke phošo" (It is wrong) and Potu warns:

Taba ye e a re tshwenya rena re dulago le mokgalabje, e bile e hlotše phaphang maloba mo, ra kwa basadi ba rogana. Go omaneng ga bona go thilwe moradu o tla bolawa, mmago Photo a nyapoga. Lehü šeleo, Nkwana. Gomme rena ga re rate go go hloka.
(This issue disturbs us who stay with the old man. It created conflict the day before yesterday. Women were exchanging insults. In their insults it was said the old man will be killed to spite Photo’s mother. There is death, Nkwana. But we do not want to miss you).

Ironically, the old man is ignorant. He innocently asks "molato ke eng" (What is wrong) i.e. if he dispenses tributes in Mmamadupe’s house. He therefore contemptuously ignores the councillors’ warning on the impending death. This conflict situation, love for Matlebjane and impending murder, adds to the dramatic quality of the dialogue.

The dramatist succeeds in imitating dialogue in real life. The dialogue on dowry negotiations gives an illusion that it is a replica of real dowry negotiations. The verisimilitude seems real: (Makgaleng 1964: 23-24)
MOHWADUBA 1: (o ema o hlab a thedi pele ga Mokgaditsi 1) Mokgaditsi, Bahwaduba ba re re tswaleng ka namane e khulwana le nku tše tharo.

MOKGADITSI 1: Mokgaditsi yo mogolo, Bahwaduba ba re re a tswalwa. Ka namane e khulwana le nku tše tharo. O ka di fa borrago re fetole Bahwaduba.

MOKGADITSI 2: Thobela. Ngwato, šidio, Bahwaduba ba re re tswaleng ka Namane e khulwana le nku tše tharo.

MOKGADITSI 3: Marumo’a Hlabirwa, aowa di a kwala. Bakgaditsi, e se re ditsebe di theeditše? Tsebe ya kgauswi e a ikwela. Malope’a Phaahla, bana bale ba gago ba re, Re a lala ka namane e khulwana le kwana tše tharo.


MOKGADITSI 3: Marumo’a Hlabirwa rrago lena a re botšang. Bana bao ba lena ba boelele; Legogwa leo le lekanwego ke dilo tše kao ga le gona.

MOKGADITSI 2: Thobela, Ngwato. Mokgaditsi, ba re botša bana bao ba boelele.

MOHWADUBA 1: E se re o theeditše Mohwaduba’a kgomo?

MOHWADUBA 1: Ke theeditše, thobela.

MOHWADUBA 1: Bolelela gape. Malao, o a tseba, a hlokwa.

MOHWADUBA 1: Thobela (o a ema, o ya go Bahwaduba).

MOHWADUBA 1: Mohwaduba, ke tšo boa mola la go nthoma, bjale ke tšo rakwa ba re malao le a tseba a rekwa ka boteletšana go feta fao.

MOHWADUBA 2: Di a kwala. E, Ngwana’a Gabetse.

MOHWADUBA 3: Thobela.

MOHWADUBA 2: Bakgaditsi ba re oketšang.
MOHWADUBA 3: Go tla ba boimayana, re tla reng bjale. A re nokele pudi tše pedi.

MOHWADUBA 1: (O boela Bakgaditsing, o dula fase pele ga Mokgaditsi). Mokgaditsi, ke boile, kgoši. Ka re Bahwaduba ba re ka namane e khulwana le nku tše tharo le pudi tše pedi re tswaleng.

MOHWADUBA 1: (He squats before Mokgaditsi). Mokgaditsi, the Bahwaduba say accept our dowry of a red heifer and three sheep.

MOKGADITSI 1: The great Mokgaditsi, the Bahwaduba say accept our dowry of a red heifer and three sheep. Tell your elders so that we can reply to the Bahwaduba.

MOKGADITSI 2: I salute, Ngwato, the Bahwaduba say accept our dowry of a red heifer and three sheep.

MOKGADITSI 3: Marumo of Hlabirwa, it is understood. Bakgaditsi, are you listening? Your hear for yourself. Malope of Phaahla, your children say accept our hand for a red heifer and three sheep.

MOKGADITSI 4: Tell the Bahwaduba to say something better. We do not have a mat worth a mere heifer and three little sheep. Tell them to make a better offer.

MOKGADITSI 3: Marumo of Hlabirwa your father says tell your children (messengers) to make a better offer. A mat of that worth is not available.

MOKGADITSI 2: Ngwato, my worship. Mokgaditsi, they say tell your children to return.

MOHWADUBA 1: You are listening Mohwaduba.

MOHWADUBA 2: I am listening.
MOHWADUBA 1: Return. Beds are expensive.
MOHWADUBA 1: I understood (he stands up and goes to the Bahwaduba).
MOHWADUBA 1: Mohwaduba, I have returned from where you had sent me. I was chased away; you know a bed is more expensive.
MOHWADUBA 2: I understand, son of Gobetse.
MOHWADUBA 3: I understand.
MOHWADUBA 3: Bakgaditsi, let’s increase the offer.
MOHWADUBA 3: It will be difficult. Let us add two goats.
MOHWADUBA 1: (He returns to the Bahwaduba and relays the message).

This dialogue represents a typical procedure of negotiation not only in dowry transaction but in all transactions. The protocol indicates the seniority of the negotiators, always from junior to senior citizens. Mokgaditsi 1 and Mohwaduba 1 are juniors and Mokgaditsi 4 and Mohwaduba 3 are seniors in their respective delegations. A senior or king cannot be addressed directly, but only through his intermediary.

This scene serves two purposes; firstly it reduces the tension that has been developing and secondly it gives the reader a picture of traditional protocol. Repetition improves the quality of the dialogue. This technique has also been used by Maloma in Marangrang Act I Scene 2. Madikgale could not get straight to king Sebusa, bypassing the councillors. Maloma’s usage of the technique however does not enhance the dramaticity of the dialogue.

Makgaleng (1964) has used two types of repetition. Repetition refers to the occurrence of incidents several times. Repetition as used in the above dowry negotiations represents the first type. The dramatist imitates a real life conversation.

The second type refers to the occurrence of one statement
made by one or several characters in different parts of the drama either used retrospectively or prospectively. Retrospective contents reflect those contents or incidents which have already been portrayed. Prospective contents place action in perspective and create expectation of what may imminently happen... action that is approaching and is threatening.

In exposition the following words denoting death or murder have been used: Makgaleng (64: 1): fofotša (kill). Masemola says "Photo ke yena a swanetsego go fofotša tšofa yela" (Photo must kill the old man), "hlaba" (stab), Selwane "tho-tse" (fatal blow). Mogašwa says that Photo’s spear should remain sharp to penetrate Matlebjane’s kaross near the heart to deliver a fatal blow.

The words "fofotša", "hlaba", "tho-tse" connotatively mean to kill.

Similar words or words with similar meanings have also been used by Matlebjane’s wives: "tloša" (remove). Moriane (Ibid 4) recommends:

"re be re ka no ra bana ba tloša
mokgalabje yola".
(We could tell the children to remove that old man).

In Act 2 scene 5 Potu (Ibid: 13) echoes the similar foreboding but more explicitly:

Go omameng ga bona (basadi) go thilwe
moradu o tla bolawa".
(In their arguments (women) it was stated that the old man will be killed).

Potu (Ibid: 14) goes further to warn Matlebjane "lehu šeleo
ge" (There is death then). The reader has been prepared for Matlebjane’s ultimate assassination. It therefore does not come as a bolt from the blue. And when Matlebjane (Ibid: 29) also utters the same words: "ke mang yo a mpolayago?" (who kills me?) the reader is not shocked. He saw it coming. The dramatist has therefore made use of the repetition technique effectively. It helps to build the dramatic unity of action in the drama.

The use of dialogue in Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja could be summarised as follows:

The dramatist in Marangrang makes use of the early point of attack technique. He tries to give details of the life story of Marangrang from birth to death. As a result the dialogue becomes too diffuse and inclusive. Exposition of the problem is also affected. The whole of Act I is just information on circumstances that led to the arrival of Marangrang on the scene.

Makgaleng in Tswala e a Ja on the other hand employs late point of attack technique. The problem is introduced immediately. The conflict between Matlebjane and the community (sons, wives and councillors) is introduced at once.

Tswala e a Ja uses concise, short and pithy lines whereas Marangrang’s dialogues are long. This results in superfluous and redundant content.

There are incidents in Marangrang which fall outside the periphery of dramatic action. Refer to the short praise poetry in Tswala e a Ja (Makgaleng 1964: 8):

Ke Photo. Ke wena ngwanaka?
Mophoto o mogolo wa mokgomotšhweu
Mokgomotšhweu ka dikala
Ke wena Lephoti le legolo morwa' Tladi.
(It is Photo. Is that you my child?
The great Mophoto of white cow.
The white cow by colour.
It is you the great Lephoti the son of Tladi).

In Marangrang (29) and (71-73) Marangrang's lyric verse fills one and a half pages and three pages respectively.
In the context of theme of Marangrang these praise poems are superfluous.

The two dramatists, Maloma and Makgaleng have used dialogue to reflect kingship status differently. Both dramatists constructed their dialogue to reflect reality.

In Northern Sotho transmission of information or greetings is always from a junior to a senior person through an intermediary and the king always has the final word. This influenced the dramatist in Marangrang to create circumlocutory dialogue especially in Act 1 Scene 1 where Madikgake has to report the presence of foreigners in king Sebusa's village. Madikgake cannot get straight to kgosi Sebusa to inform him. He has to ask for permission to do so. Manna (Maloma 1972: 5) queries him:

Madikgake, o ka re o le matwetwe wa kgoro ye wa hlwa o kgopela tumelelo go rena mola sa moseo e le sa kgosi le ngaka? (Madikgake, you being a great medical practitioner of this clan - why do you ask for permission to see the king?)

Leboswa (Ibid) explains to him that:

Madikgake o phetha Sesotho.
The dramatist therefore constructs his dialogue to reflect reality but in the process the inclusion of conversational and naive content makes the dialogue undramatic. The dramatic flow of action is retarded.

The dramatist in Tswala e a Ja on the other hand avoids the use of unnecessary words in introducing the regent, Matlebjane to the ‘kgoro’ (court). The following dialogue contrasts sharply with the one quoted above. Potu is asked to summon Matlebjane to the ‘kgoro’ (court) and Potu (Makgaleng 1964: 12) says:

Aowa, Kgaditsi, o tla tla ka ponyoa ya leihlo.
(No, Kgaditsi, he will come within a wink of an eye)

and Potu brings in the old man and asks him to sit down.

Potu: Dula fase Nkwnana
Re re dula fase Mokwena,
Ke gona mo re lego ntshe fa.
(Sit down Nkwnana, we say sit down
Mokwena, this is where we are assembled).

The dramatist has selected only essential elements necessary to promote the tempo and dramaticity of the dialogue.
6.4 Conflict

The term conflict is defined differently by various critics. Some of the definitions are as follows:

Bernard Cohen (1973: 181) defines conflict as:

The collision of opposing forces in prose fiction, drama or poetry.

The opposing forces Cohen is referring to may either be physical, social, mental or spiritual.

Mabley (1972: 6) in his definition is inclined to a spiritual or psychological dimension:

A play depicts a contest, in which the conscious will is employed to accomplish some specific goal, a goal that is hard to reach, and whose accomplishment is actively restricted.

Lawson (1974: 881) on the other hand emphasizes the social aspect of conflict. He maintains that:

The essential character of drama is social conflict - persons against other persons, or individual against groups or groups against other groups or individuals or groups against social or natural forces - in which the conscious will, exerted for the accomplishment of specific and understandable aims, is sufficiently strong to bring the conflict to a point of crisis ...
The above-mentioned definitions of conflict have common elements. Conflict involves a clash of ideals, actions or counter-actions whether they are physical, social or mental. Conflict involves two or more opposing forces.

In drama conflict is marked by contrast and struggle. This idea is aptly expressed by Groenewald (1979: 33) when he indicates that:

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met botsing word bedoel dat die
inhoude in 'n interaksie nie bloot
bevestigend teenoor mekaar staan nie
maar wrywend of wederstrewend, of in
feller gevalle strydend.
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Thus the prominence of protagonist and antagonist in a drama is emphasized. It is the thwarting of the protagonist's ambitions by the antagonist that creates suspense and interest in drama.

The importance of conflict in drama is emphasized by Nicholl (1923: 40) when he asserts that: "all drama arises out of conflict".

The basis of drama is conflict. In drama there are characters with different personalities and different motives and when they are brought together to interact there is bound to be conflict and the dramatist utilizes these conflicting ambitions to construct a play. The reader is kept in suspense until the problem is resolved either amicably or tragically.

It is in this sense that Mabley (1972: 6) concludes that:

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Conflict is one element that seems
to be an essential ingredient,
the sine qua non of every forceful
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dramatic work. It may be taken as axiomatic to say that without conflict we are not going to have a play to which an audience will pay much heed.

There are however other critics who hold a contrary view regarding the essential role of conflict in a play. One such authority is Ould (1948) who maintains that:

... ten minutes of carefully pointed dialogue, in which there is no hint of conflict, may be intensely dramatic.

Ould is supported in this assertion by Archer (1960: 21) who contends that "... it is clearly an error to make conflict indispensable to drama". He prefers the word crisis to conflict. The difference in the meaning of the two concepts is in degree rather than in semantics.

The writer is in agreement with the view that conflict is essential in drama for as Conradie (1968: 7) argues:

dit is moeilik om werklik gang in die handeling te kry sonder dat daar een of ander probleem en gevolglik stryd of botsing is.

Conflict in this study will refer to both internal and external with particular reference to royal families in the two tragic texts. It should also be borne in mind that the elements of drama such as dialogue, characters and milieu are intertwined. What one character says and what is said about him in a dialogue determines his action and reactions in a given milieu. Thus dramatic elements are inseparable. In the two tragic texts the actions and reactions of protagonists Marangrang and Matlebjane will be studied in relation to the traditional milieu of the Bakone and the Batau.
6.4.1 Conflict in Marangrang

Conflicts in Marangrang are essentially external. A conflict is external when a character is engaged in a physical contest with another character or group of individuals. For conflict to be effective it must have ironic properties. That is, one character should be justified, correct or innocent and another or others faulty and aggressive. There should be a misunderstanding between two parties.

Marangrang’s first conflict with society comes when he clashes with his peers. Marangrang (Maloma 1972: 30) alleges he was provoked and fought back in self-defence:

"Ge ke sa kgakgametše, ke ge Mporo a nkgokgotha ka molamo sefegeng ba be ba mpoaboile ... Ke ge ke thoma go itefeletša le go phema.
(When I was still puzzled Mporo provoked me with his knobkierie on the chest. They attacked me. Then I retaliated and defended myself).

Marangrang pleads innocent and claims he is telling the truth. He successfully proves that his peers are telling lies. He is found not guilty, but punished.

Kgosi Sebusa’s (Ibid: 3) judgement reads as follows:

Bašimane ka moka ba hwetša
dithupa tše hlano, gotee le Marangrang le Ngwato. Marangrang ga a ne molato, o otlelwa fela gore a se ke a tlwaela go itia magoši a gagwe."
(All boys will receive five lashes each including Marangrang and Nwato. Marangrang is not guilty but is punished so that he should not get used to assaulting his kings).

The tribal court acquits him but he is punished for assaulting the king’s son Ngwato. It is ironic. The judgement is illogical.

The dramatist has, however, managed to allow the underprivileged to challenge and confront the aristocracy. Marangrang is an offspring of a refugee. He assaults the son of king Sebusa, Ngwato, and the king finds him not guilty.

This initial conflict between Marangrang and his peers leads to the conflict between the king and Marangrang’s father Lethoke and also between the king and his traditional practitioner, Madikgake. Kgosi Sebusa (Ibid: 32) warns Madikgake that:

go tloga lehono ke tla go sesengwa
(From today onwards I shall suspect you).

The dramatist should have made subsequent conflicts more fierce. King Sebusa’s clashes with Marangrang are indirect and subtle.

Kgosi Sebusa schemes with the medicineman to have Marangrang poisoned. Marangrang does not fall into the trap. He (Ibid: 37) forces Ngaka to confess:

Ntlhakodišeng. Ga se nna, ke kgoši a nthomilego gore ke nee Marangrang sehlare sa mpholo.
(Rescue me. It is not me, it is the
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king (Sebuša) who instructed me
to give Marangrang poisonous medicine).

Kgosi Sebusa again colludes with Masabela to have
Marangrang poisoned. And after failing to lure Marangrang
to eat the food or drink the liquor offered, kgosi Masabela
(Ibid: 42) confides in his councillors:

Ga ke bone Phatane molato ge a
ntšhitše lentšu la gore re mo
fe dijo tša mpholo.
(I don’t find Phatane guilty
for saying we should give
him (Marangrang) poisoned food).

The most fierce and violent conflict comes when Marangrang
is confronted by Bakgaga’s initiates. For the first time
Marangrang is engaged in fierce physical combat. He loses
the contest. He (Ibid: 76) surrenders after a fierce
battle:

Marangrang (o bona gore ba mo
fokotše maatla)
Thaetšang, bana ba ka.
Sepelang le yo bitša botataweno ba
tle ba mpheleletše. Ke šetše ke le
lebitla.
(They have sapped his strength)
Listen, my children
Go and call your elders to come and
finish me up. I am already a tomb).

The value of conflict is when it is the consequence of
another conflict and itself generates other conflicts. The
above-mentioned conflict is the first and last major
physical contest of Marangrang.
6.4.2 Conflict in Tswala e a Ja

Conflict in Tswala e a Ja is primarily social and therefore external. Matlebjane is in conflict with a Batau custom which in the words of Mokgaditsi (Makgaleng 1964: 13) dictates that:

Dilo tša bogošing ke tša bogošing.
(Things of royalty belong to the royals).

Potu (Ibid: 13) complains that the royal gifts are received in the wrong house and "di fapana le sefero sa bo tšona sela sa bo Mogaswa". (They bypass Mogaswa’s gate where they belong).

Potu’s remarks are an echo of Moriane (Ibid: 4) who complained:

Le tla no di bona (dibego) di feta, 
di putla le mekgoba di eya kua mosego. 
(You will see them pass, crossing the passages and moving towards the back).

Mathule reports that several meetings were held on the same issue. He (Ibid: 13) claims:

e se mathomo re kgobokanelo taba e bjalo mo lehono. 
(It is not the first time today that we meet to discuss such an issue).

The councillors could not make the regent mend his ways. He (Ibid: 13) retorts:

molato ke eng? 
(What is wrong?)
Matlebjane’s sons and wives decide, through Moriane (Ibid: 4):

re ka no re bana ba tloše mokgalabje
(We can tell the children to remove the old man).

The conflict between the community (councillors and Matlebjane’s wives) and Matlebjane over gifts leads to Matlebjane’s assassination. The physical contest is not dramatic. The opposing forces are not equal and even. Matlebjane is old, helpless, unarmed and asleep. His sons are armed, young and strong. The significance of the conflict lies in its social, legal and political dimensions. Is Matlebjane justified in dispensing royal gifts from Mmamadupe’s junior house?

Conflict is one of the aspects of dialogue which helps to improve its dramatic quality.

Internal conflict in Tswala e a Ja could be ascribed to the ambivalence of Matlebjane’s sons wishing to kill the old man and at the same time not wanting to shoulder the responsibility.

It is Photo, Matlebjane’s favourite son, who must shoulder the responsibility. In the words of Masemola (Makgaleng 1964: 1) he recommends:

nna ke re a go bitšwe Photo a be
le rena mo, ke yena a swanešego
go fotša tšofa yela.
(I suggest we call Photo to be with us here. It is he who must kill the old man).

The writer does not agree with Bopape’s contention (1991: 26) that:
Conflict in Marangrang is located within the hero. The conflict is an internal one between the resistant individualism of the tragic hero and the privileged position of his social standing. The hero isolates himself from the society by misusing his supernatural knowledge of medicinal charms. What actually gives him the power and courage to violate normal conventions is his egocentricity.

Marangrang is egocentric and individualistic and is at loggerheads with society but there is no evidence that there is a conflict between right and wrong raging in his mind. He only suffers remorse at the end of his life.

Conflict in the two texts has affected the kingship status. In Marangrang Marangrang usurped power but was not popular with the villagers or his colleagues. They fear him. Consequently after he has committed suicide nobody feels any loss.

In Tswala e a Ja conflict results in the disintegration of the Batau kingship and there is a general feeling of bereavement.

Mathule (Makgaleng 1964: 38) pays his last respects to Matlebjane in the following glowing words:

Manyami a šiišago ke ao, Batswako.
Mabu a utswitšwe; kotse e lahlegile.
Le timeletšwe ke mollolo.
Rrawešo o bolailwe ka lerumo;
O bolailwe ka bana a ba tswetše.
Ke bohlola bjo bogolo ga Nkwana,
ge ngwana a eja motswadi ka lerumo.
Matlebjane II e be e le ntšhakaraka ya lebone ...
(Terrible sorrow, Batswako
The soil is stolen, a shield is lost.
Your fire is extinguished.
Our grandfather has been killed by an assegai. He has been killed by his children. It is a bad omen at Nkwana for a child to kill his father with a spear.
Matlebjane was a great lamp ...).

Mathule’s metaphoric praise is the last dignified epitaph for a great hero.

The disintegration of Batau kingship is prophesied by Mokgaditsi (Ibid: 38):

le tla tšitlana le ka se sa bona leago.  
(You will destroy one another and never have peace).

Some of the criticism on plot construction made by Groenewald (1979) on Zulu drama could also apply to Northern Sotho dramas.

Most Northern Sotho dramatists like Mminele (1968), Maredi (1969) and Maloma (1972) make use of the episodic plan. The events, scenes and acts follow one another in a chronological time sequence. They follow the chronological sequence from birth, adolescence, and maturity to death.

Mmamagolego (Maloma 1972: 24) informs Tšiane that Botsana has given birth to a big baby boy:

Re filwe tlou ya moisa ka mo mokutwaneng.
We are blessed with an elephant of a baby in the hut).

Tsiane (Ibid: 30) gives the baby a name:

Ke šetše ke mo file leina;
Marangrang.
(I have already given him the name Marangrang).

Marangrang reaches adolescence and starts to fight his peers and is brought to "kgorong ya mosate" (court) for trial. Leboswa, as prosecutor, (Ibid: 26) orders other boys to give evidence:

Sa mathomo ke tla botšiša
bašimane ba dipudi gore ba re
botše lebaka le la go dira gore
ba ngapiwe ke katse ba sale ba re
thankga ka madi.
(Firstly I shall ask the herdboys to give us the reason that caused them to be scratched by a cat so that they become blood-spattered).

Marangrang is now a mature warrior and he delights in being engaged in battles. He (Ibid: 37) boasts to his fellow initiates:

Go nna, ntwa ke monyanya wo ke
bego ke o letetše.
(To me a battle is a feast I was waiting for).

Finally he dies by committing suicide. Mokgoma, one of Bakgaga's elders (Ibid: 77) certifies him dead:
Monna yo o ikamogile bophelo.
(This man has taken his life).

The plot in *Marangrang* therefore follows chronological incidents in the life history of Marangrang. The dramatist should not have chronicled the plot, but should have selected only important incidents to portray a character's life history. The dramaticity of the plot is affected by detailed biographical information.

The dramatist in *Tswala e a Ja* on the other hand has used the organic plan whereby only important events in the life of a character are portrayed.

Matlebjane's earlier life history is not chronicled. The reader meets him as an old man. Selwane (Makgaleng 1964: 1) declares:

Mokgalabje o tšofetše kudu ...
O tšofetše ga a sa kgona go ikhunela.
(The old man has over-aged. He is so old he cannot dress himself).

He should therefore be killed. And indeed Matlebjane's sons kill him. His (Ibid: 29) last words are: ke hwile gee (I am now dead).

The dramatist does not aim at giving biographical details of Matlebjane. Only important events in his life and weak qualities are portrayed. The play's dramaticity is therefore enhanced.

An aspect which both dramatists, Maloma and Makgaleng, use effectively, is continuity. They make use of consistent continuity whereby the action is not terminated or interrupted for a long period.
Incidents in scenes follow each other logically and scenes do not treat digressive incidents. The importance of this is reflected by Groenewald (1979: 34) when he says:

'n Toneel is dramaties as 'n dramaturg die dialoog in elke handelingsgeheel met ontwikkelende spanning en/of interessantheid kan aanbied.

This increases the dramaticity of the action. And if the tension and interest can be prolonged extra quality is added to dramaticity.

Incidents and scenes in Marangrang follow a logical natural process. Once Marangrang starts to fight he is obliged to continue to fight. He is brought to trial. He remains calm and intelligently and eloquently defends himself.

The events in Scene I of Tswala e a Ja follow a consistent pattern. Matlebjane's sons plan to murder their father and the favourite son Photo is also implicated. Tension rises and the reader is interested in the execution of the act. In this aspect Makgaleng fares better than Maloma.

In Maloma's Marangrang there are several scenes at the beginning of the play, in Act I, which are static and therefore unnecessary. In Scene II for example Madikgake is supposed to inform Kgosi Sebusa about the presence of two foreign persons in the forest. He spends a lot of time drinking liquor at "kgoro" and talking about unnecessary things. The dramatist tries to portray reality in details, when only essential happenings should be portrayed.
ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

The main purpose of this inquiry was to study two Sotho dramas, namely Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja. It was found that Northern Sotho written drama has its origin in traditional performances. Northern Sotho drama, like African drama in general, has been greatly influenced by Western drama in form rather than in content. Western drama owes its origin to Greek classical drama. Drama developed and changed during different eras like the Medieval, Renaissance, Neo-classical and the Nineteenth Century.

An attempt was made to apply some Western models and drama requirements of tragedy to two Northern Sotho dramas, Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja, the assumption being that these texts are tragic dramas and satisfy the requirements of tragedy and historical drama. It should be borne in mind that the concept of tragedy itself has undergone changes during different eras. Its concern with death has however remained. The tragic hero of high estate undertakes an action in a given world and through an inner flaw makes a tragic error that ends in death.

Mandel (1961: 88) reflects the tragic genre as follows:

A world of art is tragic if it substantiates the following situation:
A protagonist who commands our earnest goodwill is impelled in a given world by a purpose or undertakes an action of a certain seriousness and magnitude;
and by that same given world, necessarily and inevitably meets with grave spiritual and physical suffering.
The world Mandel refers to may be a historical milieu as it prevailed in Bopedi during the reign of Marangrang and Matlebjane. The dramatists, Maloma and Makgaleng, made use of historical facts and legendary characters to construct their dramas. The two tragic texts Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja are based on the history and kingship of the Bakone and Batau respectively.

The encounter of the Bakone, the Bapedi, the Bakgaga and Baroka in Bopedi resulted in inter-tribal conflicts and warfare. The drama Marangrang reflects these conflicts.

The rise of Marangrang from an insignificant position to that of leadership and his subsequent fall make the drama an Aristotelian tragedy. Marangrang used his bravery, intelligence and knowledge of herbs to conquer other tribes and usurp the kingship of the Bakone. He dies ignobly by committing suicide.

The institution of kingship is universal and it has been a popular theme of tragedies especially those by Shakespeare. Kingship, however, had been beset with conflicts and problems related to succession. Northern Sotho is no exception. Tswala e a Ja is based on the kingship of the Batau. Matlebjane reigns on behalf of Mogaswa, the son of Matlebo, Matlebjane’s elder brother. Apparently he does not wish to hand over the kingship sceptre to Mogaswa, and his wives suspect that he wants to transfer "bogosi" (kingship) to his favourite wife Mmamadupe and son Photo.

Moriane (Makgaleng 1964: 4) reflects the feelings of other wives when she claims:

Bona, Makgalabje o swaretše
Ngwana wa mogolwagwe, eupa
le rena basadi ba gagwe
ba bagolo ga re hwetše selo.
Mogaswa ke yena a hweletshe go feta bohle. (Look, the old man reigns on behalf of his elder brother's son but even we, his senior wives, do not receive anything. Mogaswa has forfeited more than us all).

The Batau cherish their customs and will go to any length to uphold them, including the assassination of a frail old regent, Matlebjane. Matlebjane flouts the Batau custom on gifts by distributing them from the junior house of Mmamadupe. He should therefore be killed to spite her and his son, as Moriane (Ibid) explains:

Ba (bana) mo tloše mosetsana yola a nyapoge re ke re bone ge Photo a ka buša.
(They (children) should remove him in order to spite that girl so that we should see whether Photo can rule).

It has been found that kingship has always been accompanied by conflicts. These conflicts could be between kingdoms, or within a kingdom or within an individual, or between an individual and other individuals or society. These conflicts usually result in death.

Conflict in Marangrang is between an individual endowed with supernatural physique, a knowledge of herbs, and intelligence and society. The Bakone needed a brave warrior to protect them against the cannibals. Consequently they welcomed the arrival of Tsiane and Lethoke. Masate (Maloma 1972: 9) claims that they were sent by the gods to protect the Bakone kingdom.

Ba rometšwe ke badimo mono go tlo tšiša sešhaba sa Bakone ka bogale bja bona.
(They have been sent by the gods here to strengthen the Bakone with their bravery).

Indeed they fortified the Bakone militarily and could ward off the scourge of cannibals. Madikgake (Ibid: 30) claims:

Bona, e sa le borragwe ba falalela mo ga go na madira a a ilego a re hlogiša sethogothogo. Ke bona ba re fagoletšego poo tša makgema, mohlang ola a bego a gana go go fa sebego. (Look, since his parents asked for asylum here no warriors have caused us to sweat. It is they who castrated the bulls of cannibals for us that day when he refused to hand over the gifts to you).

Marangrang would continue to fortify them; through him the Bakone would be saved.

Conflict arose when Marangrang started to assault his peers and steal the goats of villagers. When he grew up he raided the cattle posts of Masabela, Rantho and Sekotomo.

He was at loggerheads with the Batau, the Bakgaga and the Baroka. They tried in vain to appease him.

Conflict between man and society is reflected in Tswala e a Ja where Matlebjane could not accept the dictates of society. Simpson (1971: 5) has warned that in such a case conflict is bound to erupt:

The individual man or woman who fails to recognize the real nature of these bonds, who does not appreciate
them inadequate for his or her needs, who misinterprets them, could be opening the way for tragedy to follow.

Matlebjane misinterpreted the customs of the Batau regarding gifts and tragedy followed. The Batau society disintegrated, as Mokgarditsi (Makgaleng: 1964: 40) prophesied "le tla hlabana le sa fetse" (You will quarrel endlessly).

The two tragedies depend on death for their effect. Death is an important component of a tragedy, that may also include torture, misfortune and suffering both physically and spiritually.

The mental torture and humiliation Marangrang suffers when he is defeated by the Bakgaga forces him to commit suicide. He (Maloma 1972: 76) tells Bakgaga's initiates that "mogale ga a bolawe ke bana" (A hero is not killed by children). A great warrior is annihilated by young initiates!

Matlebjane also suffers the same fate. He is killed by his sons and in particular his favourite son, Photo. It is a tragic, unhappy ending of an otherwise beloved old man, "nong e kgolo Matlebjane-a-Ngwato-a-Nkwana". (The great vulture Matlebjane of Ngwato of Nkwana).

The two tragedies Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja end in unhappiness and death. Both mental and physical tortures are the essential and necessary ingredients of tragedy.

The message which the tragedies convey is that kingship is usually associated with conflict and suffering. This is more true when the kingship sceptre has been usurped as in the case of Marangrang, or when the regent clings to power unduly, as with Matlebjane.
The study has also revealed that tragedy depends on the protagonist of high esteem, who is neither too virtuous nor villainous nor very simple. The main character should be better than the average man.

Marangrang is admired by his parents and councillors for his bravery, intelligence and eloquence.

After he had killed a jackal Manala (Maloma 1972: 28) expressed his admiration in the following words:

Ngwana wa dilemo tše lesome
le metšo e šupago a ka bolaya
sebata?
(How can a child of seventeen kill a wild beast?).

Marangrang’s father also admires him. He (Ibid: 33) proudly tells his wife Botsana:

Ke tshephile yena go feta bana baka
ka moka.
(I trust him more than all my children).

Marangrang could fight very well.

His eloquence is displayed when he defends himself at the ‘kgotla’. The prosecutor, Manala (Ibid: 31) could not help but say:

Marangrang o le phadile.
(Marangrang has outwitted you).

This is the picture of Marangrang depicted by the dramatist: "serolorolo". He is however brought to his downfall by his lust for women and for liver. Because he
has a premonition that they may kill him, he (Ibid: 71) murmurs:

Afa ga se tše di tlogo bolaya rena bagale, bomorw'a Lethoke la Modiokwane wa Tšate?
(Are they not the ones who will kill us, the brave ones, sons of Lethoke of Modiokwane of Tsate).

This is an Aristotelian type of tragic hero.

Matlebjane is also a tragic hero. He is a likeable old man. Photo (Makgaleng 1964: 8) affectionately calls him "Hlabirwa 'a Phahlane". Potu refers to him as "Nong" (vulture). Ramogototwane addresses him as "Ngwana-a-Ngwato, Mphela. In Northern Sotho respect is shown by addressing a person by his totem or praise name, for example "Tau ya Tswako", (The lion of Tswako) an honorific name.

The dramatist depicts him as a noble old man but unfortunately his inherent weakness makes him defy the Batau's custom to his detriment. Matlebjane's tragic flaw is his inflexibility, his rejection of honest advice.

The dramatists use tragedy to protest against Northern Sotho society which allows characters such as Marangrang and Matlebjane to follow the dictates of their emotions rather than social morality.

The plot structure of a tragedy requires that exposition should introduce conflict immediately, as in Tswala e a Ja, which employs late point of attack and dramatic technique. The early point of attack used by Maloma in Marangrang makes the structural pattern less concentrated as it is characterized by inclusiveness. The plot includes
unnecessary and undramatic events.

The conventional division of plot into phases such as exposition, motoric moment, complication, climax, denouement and perepetia, has not been used as a point of departure. Only certain stages, like exposition and climax, have been used for this discussion. These were supplemented by aspects such as tragic cause and tragic action which are important in precipitating action and conflict, thus enhancing dramaticity.

It has also been found that Northern Sotho dramatists, especially Maloma, are inclined to make use of certain contents which inhibit the unfolding of the plot. Some of these inhibitive contents are the arrangement of events in chronological order as in Marangrang: birth, adolescence, adulthood and death: the inclusion of unnecessary scenes and over-emphasis of activities such as eating and drinking. These are found more in Marangrang than in Tswala e a Ja.

In drama action should not be impeded by undramatic incidents. One action should lead to another or result from another. Drama is essentially a series of actions and reactions from exposition to perepetia.

Makgaleng fared better in plot construction. The exposition introduces conflict and the action progresses to the climax and perepetia rapidly. The plot pattern is concentrated and it sticks to the unities of time and place. The action takes place only at one village.

Discussion in this study also concentrated on dialogue and conflict. Dialogue is a conversation between characters. This conversation should therefore be able to portray character and develop the theme. This point is succinctly expressed by Alternbernd et al (1966: 61) when they say:
His plotting of the story, the dialogue, and other actions of the characters are among his means of leading the reader to the meaning.

A well-constructed dramatic dialogue not only depicts characters, theme and conflict but also conveys the message and meaning of drama.

Conflict, whether internal or external, enhances the dramatic significance of dialogue.

It has been shown that Maloma's characters use longer dialogue and unnecessary lyric as compared to those of Makgaleng. Makgaleng succeeds in portraying living characters who use words economically. Matlebjane is spoken of more often than he himself speaks, but his dialogue is as dramatic as any character's!

Monologue is rarely used by Maloma and Makgaleng in Marangrang and Tswala e a Ja. In Marangrang the dramatist over-emphasizes household and conventional contents. In Act 1 Scenes 1 and 11, Madikgake spends more time eating and drinking with Tsiane, Lethoke and councillors than in conveying the message.

In Tswala e a Ja the dramatist makes use of repetition.

Both dramatists employ these techniques to try to reflect reality.

Finally it could be said that the two dramatists, Maloma and Makgaleng, have ventured into a new terrain by writing plays based on history and kingship.
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